

History of India 650-1526 CE

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Second Year

Paper –IX

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B.A. (History) - Syllabus

Paper Code: BAHS 1924

Paper: IX

History of India 650-1526 CE

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Unit.2: The Mamluk Sultans - Iltutmish, Sultana Razia, Balban- Khaljis- Alluddin Khilji, Malik Kafur- Tughlaks- Mohammed bin Tughlak, Firoz Shah Tughlaq

Unit.3: Timur Invasion- Sayyids- Khizar Khan Sayyid - Lodis- Sikander Lodi, Ibrahim Lodi- First Battle of Panipat

Unit.4: Establishment of Vijayanagara Kingdom, Bahamani Kingdom- Nayankara System- Vijayanagara- Bahamani Relations

Unit.5: Administration of Delhi Sultanate- Concept of Sovereignty- Central administration- Iqta system- Economic and Social life under the Delhi Sultanate- Art and Architecture- Bhakti Movement

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UNIT - I

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Lesson-1.1: INDIA ON THE EVE OF ARAB INVASIONS - ARAB CONQUEST OF SINDH

- 1.1.1 Objectives
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- 1.1.3 Political Conditions of Sindh on the eve of Arab Conquest
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- 1.1.7 Impact of Arab Invasions
- 1.1.8 Summary
- 1.1.9 Self- Assessment Questions
- 1.1.10 Suggested Readings

1.1.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are

- To understand the condition of north India on the eve of Arab conquests
- To estimate the personalities of rulers and conquerors
- To evaluate the impact of Invasions on India
- To assess the significance of the Arab invasions on India

1.1.2 Introduction

Since ancient times Indian sub-continent had been prone to several invasions. Invaders, either came for territorial expansion of their kingdoms or to amass wealth. The Arab invasions of India were also such invasions. The main motivation for Arabs to invade India was not only to expand their political influence, but also to spread Islam and plunder India. The political condition of the North-Western frontier during the early eighth century favoured them to realize their ambition. Lack of unity among the Indian rulers, heterogeneous social groups, disregard for lower caste groups, lethargic rulers incapable of monitoring the frontiers and arrest the invaders were all causes for the fall of Sindh in the hands of the Arab invaders. In this Lesson, you will be learning in detail the processes by which Sindh had fallen into the hands of the invaders and its impact on the India thenceforth.

1.1.3 Political Conditions of Sindh on the eve of Arab

Conquest

During the eighth century Sindh was ruled by a Hindu king. His kingdom constituted larger area extending up to Kashmir in the north, Kanauj in the east and the Indian Ocean in the South. In the north-west it included a large portion of modern Baluchistan and the Makran coast. Its capital was at Alor (modern Rohri) . The kingdom was divided into four provinces. Each province was in charge of a semi-independent governor. While the king controlled the central part of his kingdom, the governors emerged as the real masters of the provinces. At the beginning of the seventh century the reigning king was Sahiras. He was defeated by Nimruz of Persia who had invaded Sindh and entered Kirman. Sahiras has succeeded by his son Sahasi Rai II. He was overthrown by his Brahmin minister Chach, who killed his master and occupied the throne. Chach married wife of Sahasi Rai II. He also suppressed the rebellious governors who refused to accept his authority. He also conquered part of Makran and Kandabil. Chach was succeeded by his brother Chandar. But the later died soon and there was a dispute for throne between his son Duraj and Dahir, the eldest son of Chach. In the struggle that ensued, Duraj was defeated and expelled from the country. The Hindu kingdom was between the two sons of Chach namely Dahir and Daharsiah (both were sons born from the widowed queen of Sahasi Rai II). On the death of Daharsiah, Dahir became the sole ruler of Sindh.

On the eve of the Arab's conquest of Sindh, the country was weakened with frequent political changes and internal strife. The population was heterogeneous and lacked solidarity. The lower sections of society were oppressed by the ruling elites. It had limited resources. Above all, king Dahir was unpopular as he was usurper's son. It was Dahir who had to face frequent invasions from Arabs, who carved a mighty empire by this time.

1.1.4 The conquest of Sindh by Arabs

Even before the Arabs embraced Islam in the seventh century CE, they had commercial relations with India. The Arab traders entered the ports of Calicut in western coastal regions. The people welcomed the Arabs for trade and commerce and the Zamorin (the ruler of Calicut gave permission to trade in the region. Their attitude towards the Arabs remained unchanged even after they embraced Islam. But, there was a change in the attitude of Arabs, owing to their religious and political

organization. One of the prime factors for the Arabs to invade Indian territories was primarily its vast wealth. The Arabs had a desire to acquire wealth by quick means and this could be possible by fighting and plundering and thus improve their material condition. The second driving force for conquests was their religious zeal to spread Islam and uproot infidel faiths from Sindh and India. Thirdly, the Arab rulers wanted to form an Islamic empire for which they followed a policy of conquest.

Their first conquest took place in 636 CE on Thana near Bombay during the Caliphate of Umar III. But this was repelled. Subsequently, the Arabs made futile expeditions to Broach, Gulf of Debal in Sindh and to Baluchistan (Makran). Despite several defeats, the Arabs continued their raids on the frontier of Sindh both by land and sea.

Arabs attacks were concentrated on Kikan, a hilly region around the Bolan Pass. The Jats, who led a pastoral life, strongly defended their country from the Arab invaders. In 662 CE, after initial success al-Haris was defeated and killed. The Arabs followed the policy of conquest. They led futile expedition under al-Muhallab in 664 CE. After him series of expeditions took place in which the Arabs faced successive failures. Nevertheless, the Arabs continued their conquests and captured Makran which was part of the Sindh kingdom.

In the early half of the eighth century, al-Hajjaj, an ambitious Arab governor of Iraq, sought the support of the Caliph for the conquest of Sindh. According some historians, the immediate cause of Arab's invasion on Sindh was the plunder of Arab ships by the Sindhi pirates near the coast of Debal near Thana. These ships carried precious gifts sent by the king of Ceylon to Al Hajjaj to be distributed among the orphan daughters of some Arab merchants who died in his country. When the ships reached the coast of Sindh they were plundered by Sindhi pirates. Thereupon, Hajjaj who was deeply affected by this incident, wrote to king Dahir to punish the culprits and demanded compensation from king for the loss. But the latter rejected replying that the pirates were not his subjects and hence he cannot punish them. This infuriated Hajjaj and thus, started the first military expedition by Arabs under Ubaidullah against king Dahir. But this expedition failed. Ubaidullah was defeated and killed in the battle field. The second invasion which was under Budail also failed. In 712 CE, Hajjaj sent his third expedition. This time he sent a powerful army under the commandership of his son-in-law Muhammad-bin-Qasim (a seventeen year young boy) to attack and punish Dahir.

Qasim arrived at the coast of Debal, with a strong army of fifteen thousand men, consisting of 6000 Syrian horses, 6000 camelry and a baggage train of 3000 Bactrian camels and five catapults or *balistas* worked by 500 trained men along with 2000 trained artillerymen. On the other hand, Dahir's army was no match to the Arabs army under Muhammad Bin Qasim. They had inferior equipment and limited resources. The population is also less to be employed in the army. Further, Dahir failed to check and arrest the invading army. Qasim's troops outnumbered Dahir's. Despite that, Dahir's soldiers had put a brave resistance but were defeated. Thus the first important town (Debal) of India fell into the hands of the Arabs.

The capture of Debal was followed by the annexation of Nehrun (Hyderabad), Rewar and Brahmanabad. Dahir once again failed to arrest the invasions by Qasim. After several days of skirmishes, on 20th June 712 CE Dahir himself, mounted on an elephant and fought valiantly. But he had met a tragic end after an arrow struck him. After Dahir's death, his wife Queen Rani Bai fought against the Arabs. She had put up a heroic defence within the fort of Rewar. Her garrison rained stones and missiles on the besieging Arabs. But when it became difficult to hold out the Arabs, the widowed queen along with other women followers performed *jauhar* to save her honour. Jai Singh, Dahir's son retired to Chitrur. Qasim occupied the town looted its valuable treasures, taken as captives Rani Ladi, another widow of Dahir and his maiden daughters, Surya Devi and Parmal Devi.

After the conquest of Brahmanabad Muhammad Qasim turned his attention to Aror (Alor), the then capital of Sindh. It was under the control of Dahir's another son, who strongly defended the town, but when it rooved that he can no longer resist, he abandoned. Thus ended the subjugation of Sindh by Qasim. Soon after this victory, Qasim marched towards Multan in early 713 CE. The capture of Multan was possible only through the betrayal of traitorous deserter who revealed to the invader the stream from which the people drew water and cut off from the besieged. The Arabs looted so much wealth that they named Multan as the "City of Gold".

At the peak of his conquests, Qasim was recalled to Iran, where he became a victim of party politics and was killed. Finally, it was under Junaid that the conquest of Sindh was completed. Junaid also tried to conquer Malwa but was let down by the Pratihara Nagabhata I. The

events of the conquest of Sindh was recounted in the 13th century Persian text *Chachnama*.

Notes

1.1.5 Causes for the fall of Sindh

There are many causes for the fall of Sindh.

Firstly, there was no internal unity in the province to resist mighty invaders like the Arabs. The region had sparse but heterogeneous population. Besides Hindus who were on large numbers, there were Buddhists and Jains also. The lower sections of the society like the Jats, the Meds and other lower castes were humiliated and treated badly. They were not allowed to ride horses, carry artillery and wear good clothes. This led to the conspicuous absence of social solidarity.

Secondly, the ruler (Dahir) was incompetent in war and peace. He was disliked by the people for being the son of usurper (Chach). Provincial governors became independent and did not cooperate with the king in the time of crisis. Buddhists and traders also refused to assist the king.

Thirdly, Hindus developed a cosmopolitan attitude of tolerance towards other religions and faiths and people. This coupled with lack of patriotism, made them unable to differentiate between their own countrymen and a foreigner. Defection and treachery on the part of some disgruntled Hindus and Buddhists, who provided valuable information to the invader, no doubt was the important cause for the fall of Sindh.

Fourthly, Sindh had limited economic resources and was not in a position to support large standing army. On the contrary, the Arab invading forces were numerically outnumbered the forces of Sindh. Further, in terms of equipment and artillery, the Arabs possessed far superior quality of weaponry. This gave them repeated successes which also boosted the enthusiasm of the Arab soldiers under the heroic leadership of Muhammad Bin Qasim.

Fifthly, Sindh was isolated from the rest of the country for a long time. In the early eighth century India was divided into numerous independent states, which were concerned with its own affairs. There was no central power to pay attention to the protection of frontier provinces.

Finally, Dahir's ignorance, initial lethargy and want of leadership and his silly mistakes led to his defeat and enslavement of Sindh. The rulers of Sindh failed to notice the revolution in Arabia and were totally ignorant of the impending danger ahead. Further, Dahir also did not react

when important towns of Sindh like Debal, Nirun, Sehwan, Siam fell one after the other into the hands of the enemy. When his turn came, he pitched into the battle field like soldier instead of supervising his men in the battle field like a general. He failed to keep in touch with various divisions of his army. He expiated for his sin with his life, but also paved the way for his country's bondage.

1.1.6 Administration of Sindh by the Arabs

After the conquest of Debal, Muhammad Bin Qasim appointed a military officer as in-charge and stationed a garrison of 4,000 troops under his command. This was repeated in all the places he conquered. The soldiers who were stationed in these places resorted to confiscations, booty, plunder and extortions, to finance their future military expeditions. After the death of Dahir and when the conquest of Sindh was completed Muhammad followed subdued the Hindus by denying them equal rights with those Hindus who embraced Islam. They were required to pay Jizya (a religious tax imposed on Hindus to show they were inferior).

Political Divisions of country: Muhammad Qasim divided the conquered provinces into number of districts called *iqtas*. Each *iqta* was administered by an Arab military officer. The new district officers were required to render military service to the governor. At the same time they were given freedom in the local administration. All these changes were confined to the capital and towns only. However, the administration of rural areas remained in the hands of the local people.

Revenue Administration: The conquerors introduced only two changes in the revenue administration. The most important was the imposition of Jizya. The revenue varied between two-fifth and one-fourth, depending on the produce of the soil.

Judicial Administration: Administration of justice was disorganized. There was no hierarchy of courts and uniformity of justice. The district officers looked after judicial matters in their respective jurisdictions. In the estates, the nobles decided the cases. In the capital and towns, Qazis were appointed to decide the cases according to Islamic law. Punishments were very severe for the Hindus.

The death of Muhammad Bin Qasim: When Qasim was rejoicing his outstanding achievements, he was suddenly called to Arabia and was killed due to political reasons. On Khalifa Walid's death in 714 CE, his brother Sulaiman succeeded him. The new Khalifa is an arch enemy of

Hajjaj. Muhammad, who was a cousin and son-in-law of Hajjaj was dismissed from Sindh and sent as a prisoner to Mesopotamia where he was tortured to death.

After the death of Qasim, it became difficult for the Arabs to expand or even to maintain the kingdom because of the tough resistance offered by the Rajput and the Chalukyan rulers. The Arabs had to quit India by the end of 9th century CE. After the Arabs, the Turks invaded India.

1.1.7 Impact of Arab Invasions on India

The Arab conquest of Sindh had no permanent political impact, as they failed to expand their territories beyond Multan and Sind. Further, they did not bring about any new system of administration. According to late Stanley Lane-Poole, the Arab conquest of Sindh was “an episode in the history of India and Islam, a triumph without results”. Nor did it permanently influence the language, art, traditions, customs and manners of our people. Hence, for many historians, this event appeared insignificant.

However, it cannot be denied that the Arabs left few memorials in the form of buildings, administrative and cultural institutions that made a major impact on Indian culture. Some important outcomes of Arab invasions are as follows:

- It laid the foundation of Islam religion in India. Many poor Hindus were converted to Islam. The new religion had different doctrines and ways of life. This led to the mingling of two essentially different cultures.
- Historians opine that the Arabs had made it easier for Mahmud of Ghazni and Mohammad Ghori to plunder India.
- The Arabs were astonished at the superiority of Hindu civilization and the Hindu philosophical thought.
- Indian art of administration, mathematics, astronomy, music, painting, architecture and medicine became popular with the Arabs.
- Many Indian scholars such as Bhala, Manaka, Bazigar and Sindbad were invited to Baghdad. They acquired great fame at the Caliph's court. Manaka, a physician, cured the Caliph Haru-al-ashid of a serious disease and an Indian physician Dhana served as the chief medical officer of a hospital at Baghdad.

- The Arabs adopted the Indian numerals and with the help of Indian scholars, many noted Indian Sanskrit works on astronomy such as *Brahma Siddhanta* and *Khanda Khadyaka* were translated into Arabic.
- Indian art and architecture influenced the Arab culture. Indian architects, painters and masons were invited to construct mosques and buildings in Baghdad.
- Abu Mashar, an Arab astronomer came to Benaras to study astronomy there for ten years.
- The Sind conquest by Muhammad Bin Qasim in 712 CE gave the Muslims a strong dominance in the Indian sub-continent and also showed the tolerance between the two religions.
- The Arab civilization was thus greatly enriched by its contact with India.
- The Arabs carried Indian philosophy, numerals, astronomy and other branches of knowledge to Europe.
- There was an increase in trade and commerce.
- The Arab merchants settled in port cities on the sea coast.

1.1.8 Summary

In this Lesson, we have discussed the condition of India at the time of Arab conquest of Sindh. Sindh which was in the hands of Hindu rulers. The kingdom faced problems of internal intrigues and lack of solidarity among the heterogeneous people, and low economic resources. Further, the succession of weak rulers who showed least interest in the protection of kingdom was another reason. In this Lesson an attempt was made to give an account of the course of the Arab conquest of Sindh and the impact it made on India.

1. 1.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What was the condition of Indian on the eve of the Arabs conquests of Sindh in 712CE?
2. Explain how the Arabs acquired Sindh province.
3. Estimate the personality of Muhammad Bin Qasim and Dahir and draw a comparison between them
4. What was the impact of Arab conquests in India?

1.1.10 Suggested Readings

L. P. Sharma *History of Medieval India (1000-1740 AD)*

R. C. Majumdar, *History of India*

Ishwari Prasad, *History of Medieval India*

Notes

Lesson-1.2: MAHMUD OF GHAZNI AND HIS INVASIONS IN INDIA

1.2.1 Objectives

1.2.2 Introduction

1.2.3 Developments in West and Central Asia between 10th and 12th centuries CE

1.2.4 Turkish Invasions on India- Causes for Mahmud of Ghazni's Invasions

1.2.5 India on the eve of Mahmud Ghazni's invasions

1.2.6 Mahmud Ghazni's invasions in India

1.2.7 Estimate of Mahmud's character and his achievements

1.2.8 Summary

1.2.9 Self- Assessment Questions

1.2.10 Suggested Readings

1.2.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are

- To understand the condition of India at the time of Mahmud's invasions
- To learn about how Mahmud launched his campaigns in India
- To assess the personality of Mahmud of Ghazni.

1.2.2 Introduction

After the conquest of Sindh by the Arabs, the western world found many advantages of coming into contact with India. Though the Arabs could not sustain in India for a long period, it were the Turks, who found their way into India and established the Muslim rule. Initial conquests were undertaken to plunder the fabulous wealth of India. Later, conquests led to the establishment of Turkish supremacy by defeating the Indian rulers. The Turkish rule brought many changes in India. In this Lesson, the main focus would be on the invasions of Turks particularly highlighting the conquests of Mahmood of Ghazni and its impact on India.

1.2.3 Developments in West and Central Asia between 10th and 12th Centuries CE

West and Central Asia are mountainous regions which are connected to India through geographical passes. Throughout ancient and medieval times many nomadic and semi-nomadic hordes constantly tried to enter

India through these mountain passes. They were attracted by watered plains, fertile soils, flourishing cities, and ports, fabulous wealth, skillful artisans, traders and financiers.

Rise of Islam in the west had and its' slow expansion into Central Asia – (Oxus river) had its impact on India's cultural and political influence in that area, which was largely Buddhist. Buddhism started declining in this region. India's over-land trade with China and West Asia was also disturbed and its Sea trade was also affected. But the Arab Sea traders soon revived it. They strengthened India's sea trade both with West Asia and South East Asia and China. Along with trade, there was movement of other professional groups such as Vaidas (Indian doctors), craftsmen who were invited to Persian Gulf. The Arab traders were welcomed by Rashtrakuta rulers and were permitted to settle in Malabar and to build mosques.

The empire of the Ghaznavids was built on the ruins of the Abbasid Caliphate located in west and central Asia. During the beginning of the ninth century, the Abbasid Empire reached its zenith. Its territory comprised Constantinople and Egypt and extended up to Central Asia and Arabian Peninsula. But by the end of 9th century, this Empire began to disintegrate. On its ruins, many aggressive independent States arose. These states accepted the nominal suzerainty of the Caliph – who legitimized their position by granting them a formal letter or *manshur*. The rulers of these States are mostly the Turks and are called as 'Sultans'.

Till the 8th century, these Turks were nomads who lived in Mongolistan and Sinkiang. They infiltrated into the region called Marwar –un-Nahar (Transoxiana- a "transitional zone" between Central Asia and East Asia). The Abbasid Caliphs and Iranian rulers brought the Turks as slaves, mercenaries and recruited them as palace guards and military commanders after converting them into Islam and assimilated the Iranian language (Persian) and culture. Thus, the Turkish immigrants became Islamized and Persianized. The Ghaznavid and Seljuq states were the result of the Turkish acculturation in the already settled societies in the region. The Turks moved into the Byzantine and Mediterranean territories. The Ottoman Turks conquered Anatolia, which is modern Turkey. In this way they made their presence felt in west and central Asia.

After the disintegration of the Abbasid Caliphate, first the Samanid dynasty (874-999) rose to power in this region. They were followed by the

Ghaznavid dynasty (962-1186). The Ghaznavids were later followed by the Seljukids and then by the Khwarizmins. These kingdoms often fought with each other. This led to the growth of militarism in the region and posed a threat to Indian states because the west and central Asia were connected to Indian geographically through a number of passes located in mountain regions. The nomadic and semi-nomadic hordes would invariably find their entry into India through these passes. Turks were one such group who entered India. The newly Islamized Turks became powerful for the following reasons:

- 1) They had finest and swift horses in the world, which were imported from the steppes of Central Asia into Arabia and India.
- 2) Turkish horsemen more skillful.
- 3) Mountains around Ghor were rich in metals (Iron) with which war materials were produced. Thus the Turks had a plentiful supply of horses and war materials.
- 4) There was a growth of the 'Ghazi Spirit' in West Asia. The Ghazis were the volunteers who were passionately involved in defending and spreading Islam. These volunteers are not paid regularly but their pay was their plunder.
- 5) The Ghazi Spirit was first used for fighting against the non-Islamic Turks and later was used against the nonbelievers in India. Closely associated with this movement was Mahmud of Ghazni.

1.2.4 Turkish Invasions on India- Causes for Mahmud Ghazni's Invasions

The Yamini dynasty generally known as Ghaznavi dynasty, claimed its origin from the family of the Persian rulers. At the time of Arab invasion, the family fled to Turkistan and got integrated with the Turks and thence came to be accepted as Turks. Alptigin was the founder of this independent kingdom. In 963 CE, he marched to Ghazni in Zabulistan (in Afghanistan) and established himself as an independent ruler after defeating Amir Abu-Bakr Lawik. Afghanistan at this time was ruled by Hindu Shahi rulers. Jayapala the Hindu Shahi ruler perceived threat from the rulers of Ghazni and allied himself with former Samanid Governor of Ghazni, the Bhatti rulers of Multan and Muslim Amir of Multan. But Jayapala's invasion of Ghazni failed and the coalition collapsed.

Alp-tigin was succeeded by Sabuk-tigin (977 CE). He carried fight against Hindu-Shahi ruler Jayapala and intruded into their territories. In 990-91 CE, the Hindu-Shahi rulers suffered a decisive defeat. They lost their forts and cities. The provinces of Kabul and Jalalabad were annexed to Ghazni. By 10th century, India lost control of Zabulistan and Afghanistan. The Yamini rulers of Ghazni improved road communications from Ghazni to Kabul and Jalalabad.

In the meanwhile, the Hindu Shahi ruler – Jayapala – tried to make up for the loss of territory in the West by extending his kingdom towards the east. Thus in 991, he occupied Lohvara (Lahore) but was left to the local ruler to rule. But in 999, Lahore was annexed to Shahi kingdom. Shahi kingdom now extended from Peshawar to Beas. However, with all his efforts, Jayapala could not succeed in arresting the growing power of the Ghaznavids. However, it is clear that Jayapala knew the danger of the rising power of the Islam on his border and tried to check it from the beginning by following aggressive policy, though he failed in this attempts.

Sabuktigin died in 997 CE and was succeeded by his younger son Ismail, whom he nominated to be his successor. But soon his accession was challenged by his elder brother Mahmud, who succeeded in capturing the throne of Ghazni in 998 CE.

Mahmud of Ghazni and the causes for his campaigns in India

Mahmud the elder son of Sabaktigin was born on 1st November, 971 CE. He received good education and participated in several conquests during the reign of his father. After he ascended the throne at Ghazni in 998 CE, he first consolidated his position in Herat, Balkh and Bust. He also conquered Khurasan. In 999 CE, Khalifa Al Qadir Billah accepted him as the ruler of these places. He even conferred on Mahmud the titles of 'Yamin-ud-Daulah' and 'Amin-ul-Millah'. It was at this time that Mahmud decided to conduct continuous raids on India.

Historians have given several reasons for the continuous raids carried by Mahmud on India. It was said that from 1000 CE – 1027 CE he led 17 expeditions into India, plundered big towns and rich temples.

1. Contemporary Persian documents suggests two main motives of Mahmud's raids o India. Sources suggest that his primary motive was to establish Islam in India and to spread its message among the masses. That was the main reason why he got the title *Ghazi*. But this point has been

rejected by historians. Professor Muhammad Habib, Nazim, Havell and Jafar contradicts this view. Habib says that Mahmud did not possess any religious zeal nor he was a fanatic. He never obeyed the *Ulema*. Jafar is of similar opinion. He states that Mahmud attacked Hindu temples not because of his religious zeal but purely his desire to acquire the wealth of Hindu temples. Hence, according to these historians, the primary motive of his raids was purely economic.

2. The second reason mentioned by the Persian sources was Mahmud's desire to enrich himself with the wealth of India. He wanted this wealth to continue his policy of expansion of his empire in Central Asia. Therefore, he continuously raided India and looted its temples.

3. The political motive behind these invasions was to put an end to the aggressive policy of the Hindu Shahi rulers who had been constantly fighting with the Ghaznavids since the reign of Alptigin. The success against the Hindu Shahis had encouraged him to penetrate deep into the Indian territories.

4. Mahmud's ambition to get fame and recognition was another motive for his conquests.

5. According to A.B. Pandey, the reason for Mahmud's conquests in India was mainly to procure the elephants and use them in his wars against his enemies in Central Asia.

With all these reasons, Mahmud mounted seventeen plundering expeditions between 1000 to 1027 CE into North India.

1.2.5 India on the eve of Mahmud's Invasions

Politically, India was divided into many regional kingdoms at the time of Mahmud's invasions. These kingdoms often fought among themselves either for fame or to expand their kingdom. When Mahmud invaded they could not unite to fight against him. Multan, Sindh, Hindushahi kingdom under Jayapala, Kashmir, the Pratiharas of Kannauj, Palas of Bengal, independent kingdoms at Gujarat, Malwa and Bundelkhand were all powerful kingdoms, but there was no unity among them.

Socially, sharp differences that were there among different castes and sub-castes had weakened the society. Many lower caste groups like Hadis, Doms, Chandalas, Badhatu, etc., were treated as out castes and forced to live outside the villages. The Vaisyas and sudras were not allowed

to study religious texts. All this had weakened the Hindu society. Hence most of them were converted to Islam.

Religiously, both Hinduism and Buddhism suffered from ignorance and corruption. Temple girls became victims of the corrupt practices of the temples. Educational institutions attached to temples were also not exempted from corrupt practices. The deterioration of society and culture is manifested in the form of depicting erotic scenes on the temple walls.

Militarily, the Hindu rulers did not attempt to improve their war technology. They relied on the rudimentary technology of using sword as the defensive weapon and was in no way match to the advanced military technology of Mahmud of Ghazni. Further, the Indian rulers even did not try to know, understand and learn from what was happening or improvements made in neighboring countries in political, military, social, religious and cultural fields. They therefore, remained ignorant and even developed false pride. However, what really attracted the foreign aggressor was its wealth. India by this time amassed wealth through its agriculture, industries and trade which were in very good condition.

1.2.6 Mahmud's Invasions in India

According to Henry Elliot, Mahmud launched seventeen expeditions in India plundering India between 1000 to 1027 CE. Most of his campaigns were launched in the hot summer months and would leave India before the onset of the monsoons, so that his troops would not be drowned in the floods of the Punjab Rivers. He was also known as *But-Shikan* or the destroyer of idols. Most of his raids were focused around the temple cities like Thaneshwar, Mathura, Kannauj and Somnath, all of which had immense reserves of wealth.

Mahmud's first invasion took place in 1000 CE, when he marched against the Hindu Shahis and occupied the hill fortress of the Hindu Shahi ruler Jayapala. In 1001 CE, Jayapala attacked him in a battle near Peshawar but was defeated and captured along with his army. Mahmud plundered the city of Waihand and got plenty of booty. He released Jayapala after getting 25 elephants and 2,50,000 *dinars* from him. Jayapala who felt humiliated immolated himself to death.

In 1004 CE, Mahmud attacked Bhera. Its ruler Baji Ray was defeated. Before he was captured by the Turks, Baji Ray killed himself.

In 1006CE, Mahmud attacked the Shia kingdom of Multan. Multan was captured and its ruler Abu-i-Fath Daud agreed to pay him an annual tribute of 20,000 *Dirhams*. Mahmud left to fight against the Seljuk Turks who were threatening his territories from the north. He left his Indian territories to Nawasa Shah (grandson of Jayapala who had accepted Islam) and has been appointed as a governor. But when Daud and Nawasa Shah revolted in his absence, he soon came to India in 1008 CE, defeated both of them and annexed all their territories including Multan.

In 1009 CE, Anandapala, the Hindu Shahi ruler sought the support from other Hindu states, collected a huge army and marched towards Peshawar to challenge Mahmud. At Waihand Mahmud defeated Anandapala and from there he conquered Nagarkot and plundered its temple. Anandapala was forced to accept a treaty with Mahmud who by now strongly entrenched himself in Sindh and west Punjab. Anandapala shifted his capital to Nandana and tried to build up his military strength, but could not succeed.

The Hindushahis continued their struggle against Mahmud. Trilochanapala, the successor of Anandapala, fled to Kashmir after the sack of Nandana in 1013 CE. However, Mahmud defeated the combined forces and plundered the places in Kashmir.

By 1019 CE, Trilochanapala retired to Siwalik Hills. He sought the help of Vidyadhara, the Chandela ruler of Bundelkhand. Mahmud defeated both these forces and reduced the Hindushahi kingdom to the status of a petty jagir. By 1026 CE, the power of the mighty Hindushahi kingdom, which had bravely defended the onslaught of Muslim invasions came to an end with the death of Bhimapala, the successor of Trilochanapala.

The frequent defeats of Hindushahi rulers encouraged Mahmud to penetrate deeper into India. With the booty which got from the plunder of Nagarkot and Punjab, he was further encouraged to repeat his raids on India. With no strong political challenge in India, he systematically looted its wealth, dishonoured its women, destroyed its temples and desecrated its idols.

In 1014 CE, he attacked Thaneswar, defeated its ruler Rama, and looted its wealth. All temples were destroyed and the principal deity Chakraswami was transported to Ghazi for destruction in the public place.

In 1018 CE, Mahmud proceeded to Ganga-Yamuna Doab, attacked the temples at Mathura and looted its wealth. Mathura at this time was the most beautiful city with thousands of temples. The idols of gold and silver were studded with costly pearls and diamonds. It was a sacred place for the Hindus. Speaking about the grandeur and richness of Mathura, Mahmud in his memoirs mentions thus: "If anyone would undertake to build the fabric like that he would expend thereon one lakh packets of a thousand dinars, and would not complete it in 200 years, and with the assistance of the most ingenious architects." Mahmud took more than twenty days to destroyed the temples and plunder its wealth. He collected enormous booty from Mathura and then proceeded to Kannauj, the capital of Pratiharas. Though he encountered resistance from the Hindu rulers, he triumphed over them. Pratihara ruler Rajyapala fled and Mahmud could loot the city and destroy it without facing any resistance. After invading some more places on the way, Mahmud went back to Ghazni. Rajyapala was killed by the confederacy of Hindu chiefs led by Ganda (Vidyadhar) for having failed to fight against Mahmud.

In 1019 CE Mahmud, returned to India to punish Vidyadhar. Vidyadhar encountered him with a huge army but with the reasons unknown, he left the battlefield at night. Taking this as an opportunity Mahmud ravaged the territories of Vidyadhar and left to Ghazni.

In 1020, he came again, forced the ruler of Gwalior to submit and then reached the fort of Kalinjar. The siege of the fort lasted for a very long time. Finally Vidyadhar agreed to pay tribute to Mahmud and present him with 300 elephants. In return, Vidyadhar received the right of governing fifteen fortresses from him.

In 1024-25 CE, Mahmud launched his famous expedition to Somnath temple, which was located on the coast of Kathiawar. This temple received lot of wealth in the form of offerings from lakhs of devotees. It also had a permanent income derived from thousands of villages under it. It was a beautiful temple with enormous wealth. The snake hooded canopy of Sivalinga was studded by costly jewels and diamonds. It had heavy bells made with gold. It's ruler at the time of Mahmud invasion was Bhima I, the Chalukyan ruler of Anhilwad. In 1025 CE, Mahmud entered the temple of Somnath looted it and destroyed it. Though Bhima I fled from the city, the devotees to the temple gave stiff resistance to Mahmud. On his way back with enormous booty, Mahmud's

army was guided by Hindu Jats, who led them through the dreary part of the desert, but finally they were able to reach Ghazni with the wealth.

Finally in 1027 CE, Mahmud came to India for the last time, only to punish the Jats who had troubled him on his way back to Ghazni after his Somnath plunder. The Jats were severely punished their properties and wealth were looted and male members were killed. Their women and children were taken as slaves.

In this way, Mahmud led his successful career as an invader and took away immense wealth from India. The wealth thus looted from India was used to create a fabulous city at Ghazni. Recent researches prove that his motive for these invasions was not for the spread of the message of Islam, but was attracted by its immense wealth and for political reasons.

Important outcomes of Mahmud's conquests were, both north and west India were ravished. It cleared the way for the free movement of Turks into India and opened India to future Turkish invasions. It also exposed the weakness of Indian ruler's to give stiff resistance to foreign invasions. Further, it also showed the invaders' effective use of the crossbow while galloping which gave them a distinct advantage over their Indian opponents, particularly the Rajputs. After Mahmud's death another wave of Turkish invaders entered India under Shiahabuddin Mohammad Ghori.

1.2.7 Estimate of Mahmud's Character and his Achievements

Mahmud's invasions on India portrays him someone who harboured deep hatred for Hindus. However, his achievements show him as a courageous soldier and a successful commander. He was regarded as the most successful generals of the world. He possessed many virtues. He extended his small kingdom into a mighty empire which extended from Iraq and the Caspian Sea in the west to the river Ganges in the east.

Mahmud was a great patron of men of letters and arts. In his court lived Al Beruni, the scholar of Turki, Sanskrit, Mathematics, Philosophy, Astrology and History. Similarly other reputed poets like Utbi, Farabi, Baihaki, Ujari, Tusi, Unsuri, Asjadi, Farrukhi and Firdausi adorned his court. With the exploits from India, he established a university, a good library and a museum at Ghazni. In the midst of his career as an invader, he also found time to patronize artists. He invited artists from different parts of the world and engaged them in beautifying the city of Ghazni. He

constructed many palaces, mosques, tombs and other building in Ghazni. Within a very short time Ghazni became the most beautiful city of the East but also the center of Islamic scholarship, fine arts and culture.

Mahmud was also a just ruler. He killed his nephew after he was found guilty of having sexual relationship with the wife of another person. He had very good sense of justice. He was successful in maintaining peace and order, protect trade and agriculture and safeguard the honour and property of his subjects.

The contemporary Muslims regarded him as the champion of Islam. He was titled as Ghazi (slayer of infidels) and the destroyer of idols. The *Khalifa* honored him after his successful plunder of the Somnath temple. However, Al Beruni was very critical about his intolerant religious acts.

Mahmud's greatest weakness was that he was not an able administrator. He failed to form a stable empire. After him, his empire collapsed under the rule of his successors. Regarding his administration Lane Poole writes: "Mahmud was a great soldier and possessed tremendous courage and untiring mental and physical capacity. But, he was not a constructive and far-sighted statesmen. We find no laws, institutions or administrative system whose foundations were laid down by him." He did nothing to consolidate his Indian conquests.

In the history of India, Mahmud was regarded as barbaric, a fanatic Sunni Muslim, a foreign bandit, a plunderer and destroyer of arts and temples. In his every invasions he looted and plunder the wealth of the temples, forcefully converted Hindus to accept Islam. He took thousands of beautiful women to Ghazni, dishonoured many he refused to come with him and burnt hundreds of villages and cities. Thus for Indians of his age, he was a terrifying monster.

Many scholars agree that Mahmud had left no permanent impact on India. He came like a great storm and destroyed everything. The Indian rulers forgot these raids and soon built their cities and temples. But it is also clear that Mahmud's invasions had a great impact on Indian economy. He broke the Indian economic and military strength. His continuous successes against the Indian rulers created a sense of fear and defeatist attitude among India rulers. The inclusion of Punjab, Multan and Sindh in the Ghaznavid empire made it easier for the later Turks to advance into India with more ease.

After the death of Mahmud, a war of succession ensued between his two sons Muhammad and Masud. Masud emerged victorious and ruled Ghazni from 1030 to 1040 CE. He was defeated by Seljuk Turks and the throne was now offered to Muhammad. But soon after, Masud's son displaced Muhammad. The Ghaznavid power started dwindling during his time. Around this time, there emerged two new powers in Central Asia, viz., the Khwarizms and the Ghurs. Ultimately the Ghurs captured Ghazni. Muhammad from this family of Ghurs, about whom you will study in the next Lesson laid the foundation of Turkish rule in India.

1.2.8 Summary

In this Lesson, you have learnt about the Mahmud of Ghazni and his invasions on India. You have learnt the attempts of Hindu Shahi rulers to defend India from Muslim invaders and how the Indian rulers have succumbed to Mahmud's power and ingenuity in warfare. Mahmud's invasions were taken for the purpose of enriching himself and his kingdom. It also exposed the weakness of Indian rulers. On the other side of the coin, Mahmud was a great commander, patron of arts, and scholars and delivered justice without any partiality. Though not a great administrator, he received respect from his subjects. He also paved way for other Turkish invaders to establish their power in India.

1.2.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the causes and results of the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni in India.
2. Discuss the condition of India on the eve of Mahmud of Ghazni's invasions.
3. Give an account of the exploits of Mahmud of Ghazni in India.
4. Critically estimate the personality of Mahmud of Ghazni.

1.2.10 Suggested Readings

Lane Poole, Stanley, *Medieval India under Mohammadan Rule*

Vaidya, C. V., *Downfall of Hindu India*.

Nazim, M., *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni*.

Lesson-1.3: MOHAMMAD OF GHUR'S INVASIONS IN INDIA

Notes

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1.3.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Know about the early life of Muhammad of Ghor
- Assess the achievements of Muhammad of Ghor
- Understand the conditions of India on the eve of Muhammad's invasions

1.3.2 Introduction

It was nearly after 148 years later that India witnessed another spell of Turkish invasions. This time it was the turn of Muhammad of Ghor. Unlike of Mahmud of Ghazni, Muhammad of Ghor's invasions not only depleted our sources, but also led to the establishment of the Turkish rule in northern India. After, his initial setbacks, Muhammad came back again, this time with strong military power and determination to avenge his earlier defeats. In this Lesson, you will study about Muhammad of Ghor early life, battles he fought and an estimate of his achievements.

1.3.3 Shahab-ud-Din Alias Muiz-Ud-Din Muhammad of Ghur- Early Life

Muiz-ud-Din Muhammad hails from Ghur, which is situated at a high altitude of more than ten thousand feet between Ghazni and Herat. He belongs to the Turkish family known as Shansabani. It originally belonged to eastern Persia.

Geographically, the province of Ghur had fertile lands suitable for agriculture. It was also well-known for its good horses and steel in Central Asia, which were the most effective means of warfare during those days. Ghur maintained its independence till the beginning of the eleventh century. In 1009 CE. However, Mahmud of Ghazni succeeded in defeating the ruler of Ghur who was forced to accept his suzerainty. But with the decline of the Ghaznavids the rulers of Ghur began to assert themselves. In the beginning of the twelfth century, they virtually became independent and started competing for power against the Ghaznavids. The contest for power between the royal families of Ghur and Ghaznavids, ultimately, resulted in the destruction of the Ghaznavids. Ala-uddin Husain of Ghur succeeded in complete devastation of the city of Ghazni and earned the nickname of Jahan Suz. Ala-ud-din was succeeded by his son Saif-ud-din and Saif-ud-din by his cousin brother Ghiyas-ud-din. Ghiyas-ud-din along with his brother Muiz-ud-din Muhammad undertook several expeditions. His valour and courage earned for him the territory of Kandahar which was awarded by his brother. In 1173, the two brothers invaded Ghazni, and defeated the Oghuz Turks and captured the city of Ghazni from the Ghaznavids. Muhammad was then appointed as the ruler of Ghazni, by his brother.

While his elder brother tried to extend his empire towards the west and came in conflict with the Khwarizm Shah of Persia, Muhammad tried to extend the empire towards the east. Muhammad always accepted his brother Ghiyas-uddin as his suzerain till his death though virtually he enjoyed the status of an independent ruler.

1.3.4 Muhammad's Invasions on India: Reasons

Muhammad attacked India due to several reasons. Historians have accepted the following reasons among them:

1. Muhammad was an ambitious ruler. Like all great rulers of his age he wanted to extend his empire for power and glory. He decided to conquer India for the same purpose.

2. The royal families of Ghur and Ghazni were hereditary enemies. By that time, the Ghaznavids still ruled in Panjab. Mahmud after the capture of Ghazni desired to annex Panjab as well to his kingdom so that he could finish his hereditary enemy and also provide security to its kingdom in the east.

3. The ambition of the Ghur dynasty of extending their power towards the west was challenged and checked by the rising power of the Khwarizm dynasty of Persia. Therefore, the next alternative before the Ghurides was to proceed towards the east viz ., towards India. Besides, the responsibility of extending the power of the Ghurides towards the west was on the shoulders of his elder brother, Ghiyas-ud-din. Therefore, Muhammad decided to conquer India himself.

4. Probably, Muhammad also desired to acquire wealth from India and this too might have tempted him to invade India.

After having helped his brother in expanding the western frontiers of the Ghurid Empire, Mu'izz Muhammad turned his attention towards India. In 1175 he campaigned against the Qarmatian rulers of Multan and won. From Multan he led his army to Uch, acrossed the desert and reached the Chalukya capital of Anhilwara (modern day Patan in Gujarat) in 1178. Gujarat at this time was ruled by the Chalukyan ruler Mularaja II. Mu'izz's army had suffered greatly during the march across the desert, and the Chalukyas inflicted a major defeat on him at the village of Kayadara (near to Mount Abu, about forty miles to the north-east of Anhilwara). However, Mu'izz Muhammad was able to occupy Peshawar and Sialkot.

Shortly later, Mu'izz Muhammad returned to Ghor, and along with the rulers of Bamiyan and Sistan, helped his brother Ghiyasuddin in defeating the forces of Sultan Shah at Merv in 1190. He also annexed most of the latter's territories in Khorasan.

1.3.5 India on the eve of the Invasions of Muhammad of Ghur

Nearly 148 years had lapsed after the last invasion of Mahmud in 1027 CE as Muhammad's first attack on India took place in 1175 CE. But, there was not a single remarkable change in the condition of India except changes in the ruling dynasties and territories of their kingdoms.

Politically, India was divided into many kingdoms both in the North and the South. Many of them were quite extensive and powerful enough to meet the challenge of a foreign invader but their constant fighting against each other for glory and power constituted their primary weakness because it neither allowed them to unite themselves even in the hour of their greatest danger against a foreign enemy nor left them free to utilise their full resources against him.

At that time, Sindh and Multan were ruled by two independent Shia Muslim rulers while Panjab was in the hands of the last Ghaznavid ruler, Khusrav Shah, Chauhana ruler of Delhi had succeeded in seizing certain places from him. Gujarat and Kathiawar were ruled by the Chalukyas. Their capital was Anhilwara. The Chalukyas had lost much of their power by fighting against the Chauhanas of Delhi and Ajmer. Their ruler was Mularaja II. Delhi and Ajmer were ruled by the Chauhanas. Their ruler was Prithviraja III, who was a capable commander and an ambitious ruler. He had tried to extend his empire at the cost of his neighbouring kingdoms. Therefore, he had provoked the jealousy of all of them. He had defeated and disgraced the Chalukyas of Gujarat snatched away Mahoba from the Chandela ruler Paramaladeva. The Gahadavalas ruled at Kannauj. Their empire was most extensive in the north India. At that time, Jayachandra was the ruler of Kannauj. Prithviraj's love with the daughter of Jayachandra, ruler of Kannauj, had provoked his permanent enmity. Prithviraja III was, no doubt, a chivalrous and daring ruler but he lacked farsightedness and diplomatic shrewdness. Therefore, he failed to receive any support from any of his powerful neighbours in his fight against the Muslim invader. The Chandelas ruled Bundelkhand while the Palas and Senas ruled Bengal. The South was similarly divided politically.

There was no change in Indian society as compared to the eleventh century except that a large section of Muslims had settled in many parts of India peacefully. Some of these small colonies of the Muslims were not effective in any way in the Indian politics but had attained to a high level of culture. For example, Badaun provided good facility of Islamic theological studies long before Muslim rule was established in India. Except this, India had not changed itself socially, culturally or militarily since the days of the invasions of Mahmud.

1.3.6 Muhammad's Invasions and the Establishment of Turkish Rule in India

Notes

Muhammad's attacks on India are as follows:

The first attack of Muhammad in India was on Multan in 1175 CE, which he conquered it with ease. Next, he annexed Uchh and lower Sindh to his territories.

In 1178 CE, he attacked Gujarat. Mularaja II faced him near Mount Abu and defeated him. This was the first defeat of Muhammad in India.

In 1179 CE Muhammad came back again, but this time he followed a different route. He attempted to enter India through the Panjab. Muhammad conquered Peshawar. After two years he attacked Lahore and received huge presents from the last Ghaznavid ruler, Khusrav Shah.

In 1185 CE, he conquered Sialkot and attacked Lahore again in 1186 CE. He imprisoned Khusrav Shah by treachery and occupied the entire territories of Panjab. Khusrav was murdered later on in 1192 CE.

First Battle of Tarain (1190-91 CE)

After the capture of Panjab, the boundaries of the kingdoms of Muhammad and Prithviraja III, the Chauhana ruler of Delhi and Ajmer, touched each other. In 1190 CE, Muhammad attacked and captured Bhatinda. He was planning to come back when he received the news of the advance of Prithviraja against him with a view to recapture Bhatinda. Muhammad proceeded forward to face him. The enemies met each other in the battlefield of Tarain, 80 miles away from Delhi. The first battle of Tarain took place in 1190-91 CE. Muhammad was defeated in this battle. *Hammir-Mahakavya* describes that Muhammad was taken prisoner by Prithviraja but left free with grace. But this view is not accepted by historians. Muhammad was wounded and taken to a place of safety by a Khalji noble. The Turkish army was routed and the battle was won by the Rajputs. Prithviraja, thereafter attacked the fort of Bhatinda but could capture it after thirteen months. In this way, Prithviraja had not only humiliated Muhammad but had also frustrated his attempts to conquer India.

Second Battle of Tarain (1192 CE)

On his return to Ghazni, Mu'izz Muhammad made preparations to avenge his defeat at the battle of Tarain. He collected a strong force of fully equipped armoured men of 1,30,000. With this army, Mu'izz Muhammad captured Bhatinda and then proceeded again to the battle field of Tarain. Prithviraja came with a large to face him and the second battle of Tarain was fought in 1192 CE. Rajputs had a tradition of fighting from sunrise to sunset. But Mu'izz Muhammad, attacked the Rajput army before dawn. With this surprise attack, the Rajputs under Prithviraja Chauhan were defeated and Prithviraja was taken as captive to Ajmer and subsequently executed. Professor Hasan Nizami says, "he accepted the over lordship of Muhammad but, when found guilty of a conspiracy against Muhammad, was punished with death".

The second battle of Tarain proved to be one of the decisive battles of Indian history. It settled the future course of Indian history. D.C. Ganguly writes: "The defeat of Prithviraja in the second battle of Tarain not only destroyed the imperial power of the Chahamanas (Chauhanas), but also brought disaster on the whole of Hindustan.'

The battle led the way to the conquest of India by the Turks. Ajmer and Delhi both were occupied by Muhammad which paved the way for his further conquests in India. Besides, the battle definitely weakened the morale of other Rajput rulers to resist the Turk invader. After leaving Qutb-ud-din Aibak as Governor of Delhi and Ajmer, Muhammad went back. Aibak consolidated the Indian conquests of Muhammad, suppressed the revolts of the Chauhans at Ajmer, made Delhi the capital of Turk kingdom in India in 1193 CE and conquered Ranthambhor, Meerut, Bulandshahar, Aligarh, etc. in the absence of Muhammad.

Battle of Chandwar (1194 CE)

Muhammad came back to India in 1194 CE. This time his target was the kingdom of Kannauj. Jayachandra, the ruler of Kannauj was an enemy of Prithviraja III. Therefore, he had not helped him against the Turkish invasions. Now, it was his turn to face the wrath of Muhammad, all alone. The battle between Muhammad and Jayachandra took place near Chandawar on the river Yamuna between Etawah and Kannauj. The Rajputs were defeated and Jayachandra was hit with an arrow in the eye and was trampled to death in the battle field. His victory at Chandwar gave Muhammad control of much of northern India. But still the Rajput

resistance continued and Kannauj seems to have stayed independent until Iltutmish conquered it.

After his victory at Chandwar, Muhammad proceeded as far as Banaras and occupied all the important places of the kingdom of Kannauj. Now, there remained no other powerful kingdom in north India to resist Muhammad's armies.

1.3.7 Muhammad's other conquests: Role of his Generals

Muhammad went back to Ghazni entrusting Aibak the responsibility of governing the conquered regions. Aibak consolidated his fresh conquests and suppressed different revolts which took place at Ajmer, Aligarh etc. Muhammad came back to India in 1195 CE. This time he conquered Bayana and attacked Gwalior. Pratihara chief Sulakshana Pal accepted the suzerainty of Muhammad and peace was made with him. Muhammad entrusted the command of the territories between Rajputana and Doab to Baha-ud-din Tughril and went back. Tughril captured the fort of Gwalior in his absence after one and a half years of fighting.

Qutubuddin Aibak

After this Muhammad could not come back to India for some years and the responsibility of consolidating his conquests in India rested on his governors, particularly on Aibak. The latter, suppressed a serious revolt in Rajasthan after much difficulty. Thereafter, Aibak attacked Gujarat and plundered its capital Anhilwara in 1197 CE. Aibak also conquered Badaun, Banaras and Chandawar and consolidated the conquest of Kannauj. One of the most important conquests of Aibak was that of Bundelkhand. The Chandela ruler Paramaladeva was now the only independent Rajput ruler in central India and the fort of Kalinjar was regarded impregnable. Aibak attacked it in 1202-03 CE. Paramaladeva died fighting but the Chandelas fought bravely under the leadership of his minister Ajayadeva. But ultimately, the Chandelas had to leave the fort which was occupied by Aibak. Aibak occupied Mahoba and Khajuraho as well.

Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji

The conquest of Bengal and Bihar was not attempted either by Muhammad or Aibak but by a petty noble named Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji. Ikhtiyar-ud-din Khalji began his career as an ordinary soldier and received some villages as his jagir from his master Hisam-ud-din Aghul Bak, the governor of Oudh. There Ikhtiyar-ud-din collected a small force of his own followers and started raiding the nearby

territories of Bihar. To his surprise, he found that nobody tried to oppose him anywhere. That increased his ambitions. He went on increasing his resources and his soldiers. In 1202-03 CE, he attacked Odantapuri and plundered the Buddhist monastery there. Next, he conquered Nalanda and Vikramasila as well. Lakshmana Sena, the ruler of Bengal, took no steps to check him so far and, ultimately, paid the price of his neglect. Ikhtiyar-ud-din attacked Nadia, the capital of Bengal in 1204-05 CE. He moved so fast that he left the bulk of the army much behind and reached the palace gates with only eighteen horsemen. Lakshmana Sena was awed by this surprise attack and fled away out of fear. In the meantime, the Turkish army also reached there and Ikhtiyar-ud-din plundered Nadia. East Bengal remained with Lakshmana Sena while south-west Bengal was occupied by Ikhtiyar-ud-din for Muhammad of Ghur. He established his headquarters at Lakhnauti. Ikhtiyar-ud-din tried to conquer Tibet also but the expedition failed miserably. He had to return from near the border of Tibet because of geographical hazards. On his return journey he was troubled by the hill-tribes and the soldiers of the state of Kamrupa. He could reach Devakot only with one hundred soldiers. There he fell ill and was murdered by one of his own lieutenants, Ali Mardan. But before his death he had brought Bihar and a large part of Bengal under Turkish control which was not even imagined by Muhammad or Aibak.

When the nobles of Muhammad were extending and consolidating his empire in India, he himself was busy in fighting against the Khwarizm Shah of Persia. Muhammad's elder brother Ghiyas-ud-din had died in 1202 CE. and therefore, Muhammad had become the ruler of the entire Ghur empire. Ghiyas-ud-din had always fought against his western neighbour, the Khwarizmians. Muhammad pursued the same policy. But, he was severely defeated by them in 1205 CE, at the battle of Andkhud. He could hardly save his life and reached back his capital, Ghur. This defeat of Muhammad gave setback to his reputation in India and it was rumoured that he was killed. It led to revolts in different parts of India. In the north-west, the Khokars tried to capture Lahore. Muhammad came to India in 1205 CE and fought a battle against the Khokars between the rivers Chenab and Jhelum. The Khokars fought fiercely but were defeated and punished mercilessly. After settling the affairs at Lahore, Muhammad returned to Ghazni. On the way, he was stabbed on 15 March 1206 CE at Damyaka on the banks of the river Indus while he was engaged in his evening prayers, either by Khokars or fanatical Shias of the heretical

Ismaili sect. The body of Muhammad was carried to Ghazni and buried there.

Notes

An Estimate of Sultan Muiz-ud-din Muhammad of Ghur

While making an assessment of the character and achievements of Muhammad of Ghur, one is usually tempted to compare him with that of Mahmud of Ghazni which sometime, unjustly reduces his importance. Muhammad cannot be compared with Mahmud as a military leader. Mahmud was a born military commander. His every Indian campaign was successful and he had been equally successful in Central Asia. Mahmud, thus established an extensive and powerful empire and rightly deserved to be the first Sultan of the Islamic world. Thus, Muhammad's military successes were no match to the successes of Mahmud. While Mahmud remained undefeated during his lifetime. Muhammad was seriously defeated by his different adversaries three times. Mularaia II, the ruler of Gujarat, Prithviraja III, the ruler of Delhi and Ajmer and Khwarizm Shah, the ruler of Persia defeated him in turn. But the greatness of Muhammad was that none of these defeats could weaken his spirits or check his ambitions. He took his every failure as an experience, unproved upon his weaknesses, removed them and got success in the end. The successes and conquests of Muhammad brought about more permanent results than the conquests of Mahmud. Professor K.A. Nizami writes: "This hero of three stupendous defeats - Andhkhud, Tarain and Anhilwara has to his credit the establishment of one of the greatest empires of the middle ages, and, in this, he definitely rises above Mahmud of Ghazni." Thus, Muhammad possessed a higher ideal as compared to Mahmud.

Muhammad, could select the best men for his service, assign them responsibility according to their capability and get the best result out of their efforts. Qutab-ud-din Aibak, Taj-ud-din Yildiz and Malik Baha-ud-din Tughril who proved themselves fairly capable were largely responsible for his successes in India. Professor A.B.M. Habibullah writes: "If he failed to found a dynasty, he yet trained up a band of men who were to prove more loyal to his ideas and better fitted to maintain his empire."

The success of Muhammad was largely due to his own strength of character. He possessed a higher ideal from which he refused to deviate even after his initial failures in India and his defeat by Khwarizm Shah. Muhammad planned his attacks and conquests beforehand, changed them whenever necessary, removed his weakness when known and did not take

unnecessary risks in battles and politics. After his defeat at Anhilwara, he changed his course of attack on India and, once defeated at the battle of Tarain, he came again with complete preparation and even amended his military tactics.

As a military commander, he kept his eyes upon all his campaigns. When he was fighting the Khokars in India, he had not lost touch with his campaigns in Central Asia and was equally interested in the building work of a frontier fortress at the banks of the river Oxus. That is why he was ultimately successful in his military campaigns.

Muhammad was the real founder of Turkish rule in India and therein lay his greatest achievement and greatness. Muhammad had no time to look after the administration of his territories in India. Virtually, he remained the ruler of Ghazni and Ghur. The task of administering of Indian provinces was mostly left to his slave Qutubuddin Aibak, his slave and governor of Indian provinces.

But, Muhammad was also not indifferent to the cultural progress of his subjects. He patronised scholars like Fakhr-ud-din Razi and Nizami Uruzi. However, his greatest achievement was the establishment of the Turkish Empire in India, which added a fresh chapter in Indian history.

1.3.8 Summary

This Lesson tells you about the life and conquests of Muhammad of Ghur. You have learnt how, Muhammad despite his initial failures tried to conquer India again and again. He was successful in defeating the Rajput kings and in the establishment of Turkish Empire in India. His trusted slaves like Qutubuddin Aibak and other have consolidated his position in India in his absence. Muhammad became the virtual master of the entire north India, before he was assassinated in 1206 CE.

1.3.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the causes and results of the invasions of Muhammad of Ghur on India.
2. Discuss the conditions in India on the eve of Muhammad of Ghur invasions.
3. Discuss the causes of the defeat of Rajputs against the Turks in the 11th and 12th centuries CE.

4. Write short notes on

- a). First Battle of Tarain
- b) Second Battle of Tarain
- c) Battle of Chandwar

1.3.10 Suggested Readings

L. P. Sharma *History of Medieval India (1000-1740 AD)*

R. C. Majumdar, *History of India*

Ishwari Prasad, *History of Medieval India*

Notes

Lesson-1.4: CAUSES FOR THE DEFEAT OF INDIAN KINGS

- 1.4.1 Objectives
- 1.4.2 Introduction
- 1.4.3 Causes for the defeat of the Rajputs against the Turks-
Historians Views
- 1.4.4 Political Causes
- 1.4.5 Social Causes
- 1.4.6 Religious Causes
- 1.4.7 Cultural Causes
- 1.4.8 Economic Causes
- 1.4.9 Military Causes
- 1.4.10 Impact of Turkish Invasions on India
- 1.4.11 Summary
- 1.4.12 Self- Assessment Questions
- 1.4.13 Suggested Readings

1.4.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Analyze the causes for the defeat of Indians kings
- Assess the strengths of the Turkish rulers
- To understand the impact of Turkish invasions on India

1.4.2 Introduction

In the previous lesson, we have understood how the Turkish invaders plundered India. While Mahmud of Ghazni's invasions weakened the Indian rulers economically, that of Mohammad of Ghor, exposed the political weakness of India. Though the Indian encountered the invaders bravely, this they did on the individual front, but collectively they lacked unity. In this Lesson, therefore, you shall study about the causes for the defeat of the Indian rulers. At the same time, the Turkish invasions and then their rule also had an impact on India which resulted the evolution of composite culture in India.

1.4.3 The Causes for the Defeat of the Rajputs against the Turks

India, at the time of the Turkish invasions was ruled by the Rajput families in the north, the Chalukyas and Cholas in the south and the Palas

and Senas in the east. In the initial stages, the Indians checked the rising power of Turks successfully for nearly three hundred years on its north-west frontier of Afghanistan. The Arab invasion had remained limited to Sindh and Multan while the conquest of Afghanistan and Panjab was not easy for the Turks. It were the Indian rulers particularly, the Hindu Shahis who gave stiff resistance to the rising power of the Turks and Islam for a long duration. But once their defence in the north-west was broken, the Indians failed against the Turks.

The defeat of the Indians against Mahmud of Ghazni in the eleventh century CE and against Muhammad of Ghur in the twelfth century CE exposed the weaknesses of Indian rulers. However, the Indian rulers particularly the Rajputs courageously confronted, resisted and tried to defend their culture against the onslaughts of the invading Muslim armies. Yet they were defeated in their combat against the Turks, thus paving way for the establishment of Muslim rule in India.

Historians who have tried to analyse the causes of the defeat of the Rajputs are not unanimous in their opinions. The historians of medieval age did not throw much light on the causes of the defeat of the Rajputs or that of the success of the Turks. Hasan Nizami and Minhaj-us-Siraj say nothing about them, while Adabul Harb of *Fakhr-i-Mudabbir* provides some useful information. Therefore, modern historians have been left with no other alternative except to probe these causes mostly with their common sense, logic and interpretation of the then circumstances. As a result, we see several interpretations about the causes for the defeat of the Indian rulers.

British historians such as Elphinstone, Lane-Poole and Vincent A. Smith have ascribed the Indian defeat to the superiority of the Turks who came from the cold climate of the north, who were meat-eaters and had vast experience of fighting against the Seljuk-Turks while their Rajput opponents were mostly vegetarians, inoffensive and gentle. But this view is not acceptable. The theory that tells that “the non-vegetarian people or people belonging to cold climate are better fighters does not stand the test of scientific examination. The Indian soldiers have proved their courage and strength all throughout the course of Indian history”.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar viewed that “complete equality and social solidarity, fatalism that sprang from an absolute reliance on God and

freedom from drunkenness of Turkish soldiers were primarily responsible for the success of the Turks”.

Professor K.A. Nizami has expressed the view that "the real cause of the defeat of the Indians lay in their social system and the invidious caste distinctions, which rendered the whole military organization rickety and weak."

Romesh Chandra Dutt observed that “the Hindus had reached the last stage of their political, social and religious decline at that time and, therefore, became an easy prey to the invading Turks.”

Sardar K.M. Panikkar assigned the responsibility of the defeat of the Hindus “on their lack of contact with the outside world and their declined culture”.

R.C. Majumdar has emphasized on the internal weakness of India and assigned the primary responsibility to the caste-system, revival of Brahmanism and the degraded status of women in Hindu society.

K.S. Lal observed that “social divisions and rivalry between different groups which primarily arose because of the lack of political unity in the country, the absence of an efficient spy-system and defective and out-dated military skill were primarily responsible for the defeat of the Hindus.”

A.L. Srivastava has described that “the absence of political unity, social divisions, rise of Brahmanism, moral degeneration of the Indians and the superiority of the Turks in military skill, organization and resources were responsible for the success of the Turks.”

Thus, we find that various scholars have assigned different reasons to the success of the Turks against the Rajputs. Summing up all these we can classify the causes for the defeat of Indians as political, social, religious, moral, cultural, economic and technological. Let us now discuss these in detail.

1.4.4 Political Causes

One cause that has been pointed out for Indians defeat was political weakness. It was said that after the rule of emperor Ashoka, India could not be united even under the mighty Guptas. India was fragmented into several regional kingdoms. However, it may be argued that though India was divided politically, yet, there were many Rajput states at that time

which were far more extensive and powerful in material resources in comparison to the Turkish invaders. Thus, the division of India into many states cannot be accepted as a valid reason of its defeat.

The primary cause of the weakness of India was that Rajput states were engaged in constant fighting against each other for power and glory and failed to unite themselves against a common enemy even in the greatest hour of danger to their country, its culture and religion. Further, the Rajputs failed to foresee the consequences of the success of the Turks in India. Besides, it is also surprising that even a series of crises of foreign invasions failed to produce a single leader of sufficiently commanding political and military talents to unite the Indians of that time.

Another reason of the political weakness of India was the existence of feudalism which, according to Mr. R.C. Dutt, "took India in the last stage of her political decline." L.P. Sharma points out that "Feudal system of the Rajputs encouraged mutual conflicts and weakened them militarily. The army of a Rajput king was constituted by assembling the armies of his feudal chiefs. Such an army lacked cohesion, unity of command and military skill. Besides, feudalism mixed with the inequality of casteism created a strong wedge between the rulers and the ruled which made their cooperation impossible in resisting foreigners".

1.4.5 Social Causes

Some scholars viewed that the then prevalent social conditions had also weakened India. According to them "Caste system, practice of untouchability, gross social inequality and distinctions and inequitable position of Indian women contributed to the main weaknesses of the Indian society. Political instability and absence of consolidation of India even under some strong unified states also led to its social degeneration. The revival of Brahmanism further strengthened social inequality". The caste system became very much rigid and divided the society into antagonistic groups. The position of lower castes and women was reduced to its lowest ebb. Many social evils crept in under such conditions. Child marriage, female infanticide, Devadasi system and the practice of Sati among higher castes came in vogue while marriage of widows became nearly impossible. Such a society was incapable of resisting any foreign invader as the majority of the people became indifferent to the fate and politics of the country. According to R.C. Majumdar: "No public upheaval greets the foreigners nor are any organised efforts made to stop their

progress. Like a paralysed body, the Indian people helplessly look on, while the conquerors march on their corpse." K.A. Nizami has pointed out that "the caste system weakened the Rajputs militarily because the responsibility of fighting was left to a particular section of the society, i.e., the Kshatriyas". Dr K.S. Lal also writes that "it was very much easy for the Muslims to get traitors from a society which was so unjustly divided. This was one of the reasons why all important cities of north India were lost to the invader (Muhammad of Ghur) within fifteen years. The Muslims, no doubt, faced strong resistance in battles but once a battle was won the rest was easy because there was nobody to challenge them in cities and villages. He contends that once a city was taken by the Muslims it was very much difficult for the Hindus to recapture it because the majority of the population preferred to remain under Muslim rule as compared to Hindu rule which was based on unjust social distinctions. Besides, the Hindus did not accept those people in their society who were forced to accept Islam once. Thus, those who became Muslim once always remained Muslim". Therefore, K.A Nizami says that the caste system and the idea of physical pollution among the Indians were responsible not only for the success of the Turks but also for their continued hold over the land. He writes: "The continuance of Turkish rule in India for a long period and the almost continuous expansion of its sphere of political influence is inexplicable except in terms of the acceptance and acquiescence of the Turkish rule by the Indian people. Had the Indian masses resisted the establishment of their rule, the Ghurids would not have been able to retain even an inch of Indian territory."

1.4.6 Religious Causes

The deterioration in religion was also responsible for the defeat of the Indians. According to Hinduism, religion truly means duty which makes an individual useful for the society and humanity. That is why Hinduism is not based on one prayer, one religious text, one place of worship or even one god which are usually the primary necessities of practically every popular religion. This liberalism of Hindus was its greatest strength but, afterwards, became its greatest weakness as well when it had to compete with Islam and Christianity. Besides, the monopoly of the Brahmanas over religion and the Sanskrit language excluded the common people from the knowledge of true religion. It led to the division of Hinduism in different sects and also ignorance about religion among the populace. That is why true religion was lost; Tantric

sects flourished; and, ritualism and idol worship became popular. It demoralised the society and broke up its unity. Therefore, the Hindus failed to accept the challenge of foreign invaders in the name of one culture and, thereby, one country.

Indians Attitude

The statement of Al Beruni that “the Indians regarded their religion and culture as the best” indicates the attitude of the Indians at that time. Because of this attitude the Indians remained indifferent towards the politics, military tactics and progress in armaments of the neighbouring countries. They did not try to know and learn from the progress achieved in other countries in different fields. They neglected the defence of their north-west frontier. Virtually, the Indians had retarded their progress by their attitudes. This weakened them in every field and thus, became a major cause of their defeat.

1.4.7 Cultural Causes

K.M. Panikkar regarded cultural degeneration as the foremost cause of the defeat of Rajputs. A.L. Srivastava also described it as one important cause of the defeat of the Rajputs. According to them “the growing popularity of Tantric philosophy, the presence of Devadasis in the temples and the corruption existing in the monasteries and viharas were symptoms of growing immorality in religion. The literature and fine arts of this age also suggest the same. The temples and images built then at Puri, Khajuraho, and even in certain temples of Udaipur and Chittor depict sexual images suggesting demoralised society. The Tantrika literature and some other literary books too are also of the same nature”. That is why many scholars have described this age as that of cultural degeneration in India and accepted it as one cause of the defeat of the Rajputs.

1.4.8 Economic Causes

India was once a very rich country. Its agricultural produce, trade and commerce and foreign trade with the countries of the West and South-East Asia had helped in making it rich. Most of India's wealth was concentrated in temples, members of royal families and trading classes. The common man remained poor. The then prevalent economic inequality has been regarded by certain scholars as one inherent weakness of the Indians. Further, the Indian did not use the wealth to build up their military strength which alone could provide safety to their wealth. Instead,

they stored that wealth in temples and palaces of kings which tempted foreign invaders and also became their easy victims.

Therefore, the political, social, religious, moral and cultural weakness of the Indians and also their increased prosperity in its own way, constituted the causes of their defeat against the Turks. R.C. Majumdar is very much right when he writes: "The utter and precipitate prostration of such a vast and ancient land endowed with resources far superior and greater to those of her invaders, can be the result mainly of internal decay and not merely of external attacks, which were its effects rather than the cause."

U.N. Ghoshal has analysed all these causes of the defeat of the Rajputs critically and has observed that many of them have been exaggerated or interpreted adversely. He contends that "lack of political unity has been unnecessarily exaggerated and so is the case with the indifference of the people with the fate of the country. The Rajputs fought the Turks stubbornly and resisted them even when the Turks were firmly entrenched here. It could not be possible without power and cooperation of the people. The same way the deterioration in religion, society, morals and culture too has been emphasized out of proportion. Tantric religion, instead of demoralizing people, gave them a popular religion and strengthened their determination to fight against foreign invaders. The Devadasi system in the temples was also not new. The caste system, though it led to social divisions and distinctions, was yet responsible largely for defending the Hindu culture and society from the inroads of the foreigners. It is wrong to say that the period preceding foreign invasions witnessed deterioration in literature and fine arts. On the contrary, it was a period of progress, particularly in the field of architecture. The forts, palaces and temples built during the Rajput age surpass all those in number, beauty and strength which preceded them. Therefore, some temples and images built at Khajuraho and Puri on the basis of Kamasutra cannot be accepted as sufficient proofs of deterioration in Indian art. On the contrary, architecture, sculpture, painting, music and dance developed during the Rajput age. The same way some books on romance and sex are no proof of deterioration in literature. The Rajtarangini of Kalhan, the Gita-Govinda of Jayadeva and the literary works of Halayudha, Hemchandra, Ganesha, Sridhara, Devana Bhatt etc. were attempted during this age. The degeneration in morals was also nothing new. It is always there in a prosperous society." Therefore, Ghoshal argues that it is wrong to suggest

that "the Indian society and culture had been at the last stage of decline and was responsible for the defeat of the Indians against the Turks. Ghoshal also accepts the political and cultural weakness of India but he contends that it has been grossly exaggerated and, therefore, it cannot be accepted as the primary cause of the defeat of the Rajputs against the Turks.

1.4.5 Military Causes

Yet another reason of the defeat of the Rajputs was their military weakness. All historians agree that the Turks proved far superior as compared to the Rajputs in military organisation, fighting skill, arms and leadership and these constituted the primary reasons of their success in India. Mahmud of Ghazni remained undefeated in India while Muhammad of Ghur, after initial failures, succeeded in defeating all Rajput chiefs whom he fought.

The Rajputs observed certain traditions of warfare and did not mind whether they were able to win the battle or not. It was against their morality to mix poison in water, to attack suddenly or from behind the enemy, to destroy the agricultural fields in order to check the supply of the enemy. On the other hand, the Turks fought to win the battle and adopted all means, fair or foul, for that purpose. U.N. Ghoshal has commented: "The Rajputs, in particular, although they were remarkable for their bravery and contempt of death, were inspired by a high sense of chivalry and military honour which made them often unfit for practical success in warfare."

Irrespective of their efforts, the Rajputs could not build up a strong cavalry instead they depended upon their war-elephants both for defence and offence. But, very often elephants proved a liability than an asset particularly in cases of their fleeing away from the battlefield. Further, the main weapons of the Rajputs constituted their swords, which were useful only in close battle. On the other hand, the Turks depended on their swift-moving cavalry and archers. This gave them an added advantage over the heavy and slow moving Rajput armies. Jadunath Sarkar has also accepted that Turkish cavalry was the best in the whole of Asia. The Rajputs did not possess machines like *Manjonika* and *Arrada* which were used by the Turks for capturing forts. The fighting tactics of the Rajputs also proved inferior to the Turks. The Rajputs divided their armies into three traditional parts, viz ., right, centre and left and they almost invariably

made a frontal attack on the enemy whereas the Turks had two additional parts viz ., the Advance Guard and the Reserve. The Advance Guard was sent to test the strength and find out the weaknesses of the enemy. The Reserve was kept in readiness and thrown in the battle-fray when the enemy had exhausted himself and, thus, played a decisive role in the battle. The Rajputs mostly fought defensive battles. Except the Hindushahi king Jayapala, no Rajput ruler adopted an aggressive policy in order to break the power of the Turks at their base itself. "Offence is the best policy" did not occur to them and that remained their weakness.

One more weakness of the Rajputs was that they lacked capable leadership. Except Prithviraja who was a chivalrous and daring ruler, India could not produced leaders who could be a match to Muhammad of Ghur in foresight and planning. The Rajputs also did not maintain a good spy-system which could have helped them in knowing the strength, movements, fighting tactics, etc. of their enemies and, thus, prepare themselves to face them in advance.

1.4.10 Impact of Turkish Invasions on India

The success of the Turks against the Rajputs led to the establishment of Turkish rule in north India. It affected the fortunes of India in many ways. It brought many changes in the polity, society, economy and culture of India.

Politically, the Turks established a strong centralised government and attempted to overthrow feudalism in India. Sultans like Iltutmish, Alauddin Khalji and Ghiyasuddin succeeded in establishing one uniform system of administration in north India.

Economically, it was pointed out that India forewent its aloofness during the rule of the Turks. It had lost its contact with the outside world during the so-called Rajput age. It revived its contact with countries of Asia and Africa during the rule of the Turks". Professor Habibullah has expressed the opinion that "the conquest of north India by the Turks created an urban revolution. The Turkish rulers permitted every person to live within cities without any discrimination on grounds of class, caste or religion. Therefore, all sorts of people-rulers, labourers, educated ones, traders, the Brahmanas, the Vaisyas, the Sudras etc. lived together in cities and all of these, in their own way, helped in building and developing cities." The Turkish rule revived the contacts with outside

world, brought in administrative unity, witnessed the growth of cities, coinage system, etc. All these helped in the growth of trade and industries which increased the prosperity of India.

Culturally, the Turkish rule introduced Persian as the court language. Therefore, both the Hindus and the Muslims studied it which helped in integrating the culture of both.

Socially, the Turkish rule condemned the caste-system of the Hindus. Though the Turkish rulers could not banish the caste-system from among the Hindus, yet, caste-distinctions and untouchability received setbacks and lower castes got protection of the state.

Militarily, the Turks improved the military organisation and fighting tactics of the Indians. The feudal organisation of the army was disposed off, centralised armies were raised, cavalry was more systematically organised, arms were improved men of all creeds and castes were enrolled in the army and the mobility of the army was increased. All these changes improved the efficiency of the Indian army and it came on par with best armies in Asia. That is why, Alauddin Khalji could successfully repulse all Mongol invasions.

Composite Culture: The rule of the Turks brought Islam and Hinduism together in India which helped in growth Indo-Islamic culture. Both the Hindus and the Muslims contributed in the formation of that culture which created a society in India which was different from the past.

Many artists, painters, musicians also contributed to its growth. Under the influence of several liberal movements in Medieval India, the Hindu and Muslim communities began to imbibe each other's thoughts, traditions and customs in marriage, dress, food, language, music, art and architecture. Even in religion the two influenced each other – as indicated by the teachings of the Sufi Saints and Bhakti Saints.

In the field of scholarship and literature also the two communities came under each other's influence. Muslim scholars studied Hindu philosophy and sciences such as Yoga, Vedanta, Medicine and Astrology. Hindus pandits learnt subjects like Geography, Arithmetic, and Chemistry in which Arabs made striking progress.

Many Muslim rulers married Hindu women. Their entry in the Muslim household became another factor which brought cultural fusion and reconciliation between Islam and Hinduism.

The growth of the Indo-Islamic culture was the continuity of the process of the Hindu-Muslim rapprochement and amicable contact between the members of the two communities.

Consequently, the spirit of synthesis of mutual harmony led to the growth of composite culture which was neither purely Hindu nor Muslim but a happy blend of the best elements of both.

1.4.11 Summary

In this Lesson, we have learnt the various factors that were responsible for the defeat of the Rajputs and the establishment of the Turkish rule in India. It is apparent that the inherent weaknesses of India society such as its caste system, feudalism, untouchability, devadasi system, etc., are some of the social causes. Lack of cohesion and cooperation among the several regional states of north India was also responsible. The concentration of wealth in the hands of few groups and agencies like the temples attracted the foreign invaders. The weaker military technology of the Rajputs in comparison to that of the Turks also led to their defeat.

One important outcome of the Turkish invasions was that it led to their establishment of political power in India, which result in the emergence of composite culture also called as Indo-Islamic culture, which is seen in every aspect of the Indian society.

1.4.12 Self- Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the reasons for the failure of the Rajputs in their fights against the Turks.
2. Analyses the various causes for the defeat of Indians against the Turkish invaders.
3. Explain the impact of Turkish invasions on Indian society.

1.4.5 Suggested Readings

Habibullah, A.B.M ., *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*.
 Haig, W. (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III.
 Lane-Poole, Stanley, *Medieval India under Mohammadan Rule*.
 Nazim, M ., *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni*.
 Vaidya, C.V ., *Downfall of Hindu India*.

Lesson-2.1: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

Notes

- 2.1.1 Objectives
- 2.1.2 Introduction
- 2.1.3 The Ilbari/Slave Dynasty
- 2.1.4 Qutubu-ud-din Aibak (1206 CE-1210 CE): Early Career
 - Achievement of Qutubuddin
 - An Estimate
- 2.1.5 Shamsuddin Iltutmish (1210-1236 CE)
 - Challenges for Iltutmish
 - Military Achievements
 - An Estimate
- 2.1.6 Sultana Razia (1236-1240 CE)
 - An Estimate
- 2.1.7 Successors of Sultana Razia
 - Muizzuddin Bahram Shah (1240 -1242 CE)
 - Alauddin Masud Shah (1242-1246 CE)
 - Nasir-ud-din Mahmud Shah (1246-1265CE)
- 2.1.8 Balban (1265-1287 CE)
 - Early Life
 - Balban's views about Kingship
 - Destruction of Chalisa
 - Administration
 - Suppression of Revolts
 - An Estimate
- 2.1.9 Summary
- 2.1.10 Self- Assessment Questions
- 2.1.11 Suggested Readings

2.1.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Analyse how as new rulers the Turks were able to establish and consolidate themselves on the throne of Delhi.
- Learn about the various mechanisms they adopted expand their power in India
- Know about the features of the new structures introduced by the Turkish rulers.

2.1.2 Introduction

In the previous lesson, we have discussed how the Turks under the leadership of Muhammad of Ghor invaded India and established their authority. Before he treated to his country, Mohammad appointed Qutub-ud-din Aibak, a trusted slave general as the governor of Lahore. The unexpected and untimely death of Mohammad in 1206, when he was returning back to his country, necessitated the appointment of Qutub-ud-din Aibak as the ruler of Delhi. Thus, was formed the Delhi Sultanate which comprised of five ruling dynasties, viz., 1) The Ilbari Turks (1206-1290), 2) The Khalji (1290-1320), 3) The Tughlaq (1320-1413), 4) The Sayyeds (1414-1451) and 5) The Lodis (1451-1526). They ruled India with Delhi as their capital and hence their rule was called as the Delhi Sultanate. A study of these dynasties will be done in other lessons. In this Lesson, the main focus will be on the Ilbari dynasty who ruled Delhi from 1206 to 1290 CE. The emphasis in this lesson would also be to understand the mechanisms of how these rulers tried to expand and consolidate their rule in a new country.

2.1.3 The Ilbari / Slave Dynasty

The first dynasty of the Sultanate was the Ilbari dynasty. Some historians consider it as 'the slave dynasty'. But it is not appropriate to call it as 'Slave dynasty' because out of nine rulers of this dynasty only three Qutubuddin Aibak, Iltutmish and Balban were slaves during their early life. Some other historians used the term 'Mameluq' which signifies 'a slave born of free parents'. But this term is also not applicable as the term slavery does not persist. Few others preferred to call them as the 'Early Turks'. But this terminology also cannot be accepted as there was no later Turkish dynasty. Therefore, most of the historians accepted the term 'Ilbari' as the right term because all rulers of this dynasty belonged to Ilbari tribe of Turks except Qutubuddin who was from Aibak tribe.

Mohammad of Ghor had no sons and therefore, his nephew, Ghiyas-ud-din succeeded him Ghor. After the death of Mohammad his empire was divided among his ambitious governors. Taj-ud-din Yildiz who held the area from Afghanistan to Upper Sindh. Nasir-ud-din Qabacha who held Uchh and Multan and Qutub-ud-din Aibak who was the governor of Indian provinces, declared independence of their respective territories.

2.1.4 Qutubuddin Aibak (1206 CE-1210 CE): Early Career

Notes

Qutubuddin Aibak was a Turk of the Aibak tribe. In Turkish language 'Aibak' means 'Lord of the Moon'. During his childhood Qutubuddin was sold as a slave. After passing through several hands, he was bought by Sultan Mohammad. His loyalty and bravery earned the appreciation of his Master, who entrusted him several responsible positions. Qutubuddin was made in charge of Mohammad's Indian conquests after the second battle of Tarain in 1192 CE. Qutubuddin played an important role in the consolidation and expansion of Muhammad's power in India. For his loyal services, he was conferred with the Viceregal powers and promoted to the rank of *Malik* and *Sipahsalar* by Mohammad of Ghor. After the death of the Sultan Mohammad, the citizens of Lahore invited him to assume sovereign powers. He reached Lahore and ascended the throne after three months of Sultan's death. Lahore became his early capital. Though the title of '*Sultan*' was conferred upon him by Ghiyasuddin, who succeeded Mohammad of Ghor, Qutubuddin remained satisfied with the titles of *Malik* and *Sipahsalar* and did not even struck coins or read the *Khutba* in his name. But he became the *de facto* sultan of the larger part of Indian territories.

Achievements of Qutubuddin

Soon after his accession to the throne of Delhi, Qutubuddin faced many challenges. His main contenders to the throne of Delhi were Taj-ud-din Yildiz and Nasir-ud-din Qabacha. To strengthen his position in Delhi, he persuaded the Turkish nobles to accept his subordination. Next, he got married his sister to Qabacha and his daughter to Iltutmish. Qabacha accepted his claim over Delhi. He also tried to keep himself away from the politics of central Asia. In this way with determination and diplomacy, he was able to tackle many problems encountered during his early years of his reign.

Qutubuddin also faced troubles in Bengal and Bihar. Ali Mardan Khan, who had set himself as an independent ruler, faced problems from Khalji nobles who planned to dethrone him. Ali Mardan escaped to Delhi and sought the help of Qutubuddin. The latter sent Qaiwaz Rumi Khan who tackled the situation both by force and diplomacy and convinced the Khaljis to accept Ali Mardan Khan as the governor of Bengal and Bihar to Ali Mardan Khan. The latter in turn agreed to pay an annual tribute to Qutubuddin.

After he became the ruler of Delhi, Qutubuddin did not make any fresh conquests, but devoted his time to the establishment of law and order, strengthening of army. He ruled only for a short span of 4 years. In 1210, he died of a sudden fall from a horse at Lahore while playing Chaugan (Polo).

Qutubuddin Aibak was famous for his generosity and earned the sobriquet of '*lakh-baksh*' (giver of lakhs). He laid the foundation of Qutb Minar in Delhi after the name of the famous Sufi Saint Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. It was completed by Iltutmish. Qutubuddin was succeeded by his inexperienced and incapable son Aram Shah who ruled at Lahore for few months, but was deposed by Iltutmish.

An Estimate

While critically assessing the personality of Qutubuddin Aibak, some historians are of the opinion that: "Qutubuddin was a capable commander, a practical ruler and a just and generous ruler. But he suffered from certain weaknesses also. He was called *Lakh Baksh* but his killings were also said to have been in lakhs. Which means though he was generous he was also cruel. Qutubuddin was also not a good administrator. He administered his India territories as a military *jagir*, which lacked elements of stability. He could not free Delhi Sultanate completely from the claim of suzerainty by the rulers of Ghazni nor could he provide stability to it. Therefore, Iltutmish had to strive again in order to complete these tasks. Though he left many tasks unfinished, yet he paved the way for the establishment of Turkish rule in India, which came to be called as 'Delhi Sultanate'.

The sudden death of Qutubuddin Aibak created confusion among his followers. His officers at Lahore placed his son Aram Shah on the throne at Lahore but was soon replaced by Iltutmish, the son-in-law of Qutubuddin Aibak who was at that time the governor of Badaun.

2.1.5 Shamsuddin Iltutmish (1210 -1236 CE)

Shams-ud-din Iltutmish was recognized by the *Khalifa* as the first real founder of the Sultanate. Iltutmish was born of Turkish parents of the Ilbari tribe of Central Asia. As a child he was handsome and intelligent which made his brothers envious of him and they sold him as a slave, when he was yet a child. He was bought by his master Jamal-ud-din who in turn sold him to Qutub-ud-din Aibak. Under Aibak, Iltutmish rose to

higher positions by his own merit. Under Qutub-ud-din he held positions as *Amir-i-Shikar* (master of Hunt), as an incharge of the fort of Gwalior and then became the governor of Bulandshahr. He was married to Qutub-ud-din's daughter. He was also appointed as the governor of Badaun. After the death of Qutub-ud-din Aibak, Aram Shah was made the ruler, but was soon replaced by Iltutmish in 1210-11 CE on the throne of Delhi. Delhi was made the capital of his empire.

Challenges for Iltutmish

During the first 10 years of his rule, Iltutmish faced many challenges. His accession to the throne was opposed by some Turkish nobles who revolted against him. They were defeated and killed. When he secured his throne, Tajuddin Yildiz, the ruler of Ghazni still claimed suzerainty over Indian territories. Nasiruddin Qabacha, ruler of Uchh occupied Multan, taking advantage of the initial challenges faced by Iltutmish and extended his hold over Lahore, Bhatinda and Sursuti. Ali Mardan Khan declared himself independent at Lakhnauti and, thus, separated Bengal and Bihar from the Delhi Sultanate. The Rajput rulers also reasserted their independence. Jalor, Ranthambhor, Gwalior and Ajmer became independent and Turkish power was thrown out of even Doab. At the same time, the Delhi Sultanate was threatened by the Mongols at its north-west frontiers. Thus, Iltutmish had to face many difficulties after his accession to the throne of Delhi. He faced them all with success.

Iltutmish's Military Achievements

In order to resolve the challenges he faced, he first and foremost organized the group of Forty Slaves, called *Turkan-i-Chahalgani* with nobles who were loyal to him. This he created after suppressing the revolts by Qutbi (nobles of Qutb-ud-din Aibak) and Muizzi (nobles of Muhammad of Ghur) nobles, who opposed his ascendancy.

Iltutmish behaved very diplomatically with his opponent Yildiz. Iltutmish pretended as if he recognized Yildiz suzerainty over Ghazni, gave him the impression that he was loyal to him and slowly consolidated his position. Finally, Yildiz was defeated in a battle at Tarain and was imprisoned. He then declared the Sultanate of Delhi as an independent state and broke his relations with Ghazni.

The infant Delhi kingdom was threatened by the Mongol invasions, even before Iltutmish hardly consolidated his position. The Mongol leader

Chengiz Khan was advancing towards Central Asia. He occupied Peking in 1215 and Transoxiana in 1220. Iltutmish used his diplomatic skills and saved his infant kingdom from the fury of Mongol invasions and by not venturing into further expeditions up to 1227.

After the death of Chengiz Khan in 1227 – Iltutmish started his reconquests. In 1227-1228, he conquered Multan and Sindh after defeating Qabacha.

During the period of Qutub-ud-din Aibak, the Hindu chiefs of Rajputana and Uttar Pradesh succeeded in recovering some places from the Turks. When Iltutmish ascended the throne they pursued a more aggressive policy and many of them became independent. The Chandelas recovered Kalinjar and Ajaigarh; the Pratihars occupied Gwalior, Narwar and Jhansi; the Chauhanas under Govindaraja turned out the Turks from Ranthambhor and occupied Jodhpur and its nearby places; the Chauhanas of Jalor recovered most of the territories of the south-west Rajputana; and the Bhatti-Rajputs occupied Ajmer and its nearby places.

Iltutmish adopted aggressive policy against the Hindu chiefs. Ranthambhor was attacked and occupied in 1226 CE, Mandor, and the capital of the Parmaras, was also recovered in 1228-29 CE. Udai Singh, the ruler of Jalor was forced into submission.

In the same year, he was recognized as the 'Sultan of Delhi' by the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad who performed his investiture ceremony. This ceremony made him a member of the world fraternity of Islamic States.

After his investiture ceremony, Iltutmish conquered Bayana, Thangir, Ajmer, Nagaur. In 1231 CE he attacked Gwalior occupied it after a year of resistance. Malik Nusratuddin Taisi, the governor of Gwalior was then asked to attack Kalinjar. He succeeded in plundering Kalinjar in 1233-34 CE but has to retreat because of the fierce resistance of the people.

Iltutmish attacked Nagada and Gujarat. But the Guhilots and the Chalukyas defeated him respectively. In 1234-35 CE, Iltutmish attacked Malwa and plundered Bhilsa and Ujjain but failed to occupy any territory. In Uttar Pradesh, Iltutmish succeeded in recovering Badaun, Kannauj, Banaras, Katehar and Baheraich.

The territories of Avadh too were brought under control though the local tribes continued to resist till the death of their brave leader Bartuor Pirthu. The success of Iltutmish against the Rajputs was not complete though he succeeded in recovering most of the lost territories of the Turkish empire. He certainly, could not subdue the power of the Rajputs, yet broke their aggressive strength. Besides, he established a firm administration in these recovered territories.

He was considered by historians as one of the most outstanding rulers of Medieval India. The history of Muslim rule in India actually begins with him. It was he who gave the country a capital, a sovereign state, a monarchical form of government and a governing class or nobility.

Contributions of Iltutmish: An Estimate

Iltutmish divided his kingdom into numerous big and small *iqtas*. Iqtas are land assignments given to the Turkish officers in lieu of their salaries. Iltutmish used this institution as an instrument for liquidating the feudal order in Indian society. He also introduced silver *tanka* and copper jital – the two basic coins of the Sultanate period.

Iltutmish made Delhi his capital and beautified it accordingly. Many minarets, mosques, madarsas, Khangas and tanks were built by him. The famous Qutb Minar was completed by him. In fact, he made Delhi not only the political and administrative centre of the Turkish Empire in India but also the centre of its cultural activity, which attracted and absorbed Muslim scholars from many countries.

Iltutmish was a religious minded person. Minhaj-us-Siraj, the author of Tabakata-i-Nasiri, wrote about Iltutmish thus: “there had been no ruler by then who had been so religious, kind and respectful towards saints and scholars as Iltutmish had been. Iltutmish strictly observed all rites of his religion and spent considerable time at night in prayer and contemplation. He showed profound respect to sufi saints like Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, Qazi Hamid-ud-din Nagauri, Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi, Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariya and Shaikh Najib-ud-din Nakhshabi. But, Iltutmish was intolerant towards the Hindus and Muslim heretics like Shias”. He destroyed the Hindu temples at Bhilsa and Ujjain and the attempt to murder him in a mosque of Delhi by the Ismaili Shias was, certainly, because of his intolerant policy towards them.

Iltutmish was a just king. Ibn Batuta wrote that "Iltutmish got erected two marble statues of lions and bells were hanged in their necks. Anybody could ring those bells and seek justice from the Sultan." Iltutmish was a courageous soldier and an experienced military commander.

"It was he," writes K.A. Nizami, "who gave the country a capital, an independent state, a monarchical form of government and a governing class." A.L. Srivastava also writes: "He laid the foundation of a military monarchy that was to serve later as the instrument of a military imperialism under the Khaljis." Most of the historians agree that was the real founder as well as the greatest ruler of the slave dynasty. He took a brave decision of choosing his daughter Razia as his political successor, thus deviating from the normal practice of selecting the eldest son as successor.

2.1.6 Sultana Razia (1236-1240 CE)

Soon after the death of Iltutmish his second son Firoz succeeded to the throne of Delhi. He was lazy, pleasure-loving and irresponsible. He created dissatisfaction among the nobility through his behaviour. When the governors of Multan, Hansi, Lahore and Badaun marched towards Delhi with their armies to depose him, Firoz proceeded against them. Razia took advantage of Firoz's absence in the capital. With the support of the people of Delhi and the nobles and the soldiers who deserted Firoz, she declared herself **Sultana**.

The accession of Razia on the throne was not peaceful. The struggle between Razia and Turkish slave nobles became conspicuous. While the Turkish nobles were against a women ruler sitting on the throne of Delhi, Razia asserted her rights as Sultana and decided to be the real ruler of her kingdom. Razia was the first Muslim woman ruler of Delhi.

Razia was the worthy daughter of a worthy father. In her personal life she was the first Muslim Sultana who challenged the traditions of Islam concerning women. Politically, she tried to establish absolute rule as Sultana and refused to share her authority with her nobles and provincial governors. This led her into troubles from the beginning of her reign and finally to her downfall.

When Razia ascended the throne, the provincial governors of Badaun, Multan, Hansi and Lahore who had already marched towards the capital with their armies with a view to depose Firoz, made Razia's

position precarious in the very beginning of her reign. However, she moved diplomatically. She sowed dissension among her rivals and broke the confederacy of nobles. The governors of Badaun and Multan fled away, but were captured and killed. Firoz's Vazir Junaidi fled to the hills of Sirmur and died there as a fugitive.

After her initial success against the governors, Razia took power into her own hands and succeeded. Her primary aim was to make the Turkish slave-nobles subservient to the throne. She made fresh appointments of the governors and redistributed the high offices of the State. Khwaja Muhazzab-ud-din was appointed as vazir, Malik Izzudin Kabir Khan Ayaz was assigned the Iqta (province) of Lahore. The army was placed under the charge of Malik Qutb-ud-din Hassan Ghuri. Two other important appointments made by her were the appointment of Malik-i-Kabir Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin as *Amir-i-hajib* and Ikhtiyar-ud-din Altunia as governor of Bhatinda. Both of them rose to eminence as loyal officers of Razia. An Abbysinian, Malik Jamal-ud-din Yakut was appointed as *amir-i-akhur*. Thus, Razia succeeded in bringing about submission of all nobles. The rebel noble Tughan Khan also accepted her suzerainty and, thus, she became the mistress of all the territories extending from Uchh in the west to Lakhnauti in the east. However, she failed to conquer Ranthambhor and Gwalior.

Razia changed her personal behaviour in order to raise the power and prestige of throne. She started dressing herself in male attire when attending the court, left purdah, went for hunting and horse-riding and met the public without veil. This annoyed the orthodox Muslims. But she earned the respect and honour from her subjects.

Razia very diplomatically saved her kingdom from the Mongol invasions. When Malik Hasan Karlugh, the Kwazirizm subedar of Ghazni and Banyana sought her help against the Mongols, she very politely refused to give him military help and thus saved herself and her kingdom from the wrath of the Mongols.

From the third year of her reign, Razia started encountering serious problems from the Turkish slave-nobles, who could not tolerate her policy of concentration of power in her own hands. They conspired against her. The conspirators were led by Ikhtiyar-ud-din, Malik Altunia and Kabir Khan, the governor of Lahore. As they could not attack Razia directly at

Delhi, the conspirators planned to take her away from Delhi. In 1240 CE, Kabir Khan revolted in Lahore. Razia defeated him and he fled away. But Razia pursued him and forced him to surrender himself near the bank of the river Chenab.

Hardly ten days had passed after her return to the capital, Razia encountered another revolt by Malik Altunia at Bhatinda. Razia immediately marched against him and besieged the fort of Bhatinda. However, she was deceived by her Turkish nobles, who killed Jamal-ud-din Yakut and imprisoned Razia. Later Malik Altunia married Razia.

At this time, in Delhi the nobles placed Bahram Shah another son of Iltutmish on the throne. Razia with her husband marched towards Delhi but was defeated by Bahram. Her soldiers deserted her, and they were murdered by some robbers near Kaithal on 13 October 1240 CE.

In this way, the Turkish nobles ruined her valorous career not due to her unorthodox manner of performing royal duties in violation of Muslim social customs, but it was her encroachment upon their monopoly of power that destroyed her.

An Estimate

According to Minhaj-us-Siraj, Razia ruled only for 3 years, 6 months and 6 days. He described that "she was endowed with all admirable talents necessary for a Sultan. But her greatest weakness was that she was a woman". But modern historians do not accept this view. They maintain that those who opposed her simply tried to exploit the situation in their own favour and blamed her for nothing. Of course, she was a woman but she never exhibited any feminine weakness. She was shrewd and diplomatic. Besides, she understood well the permanent interests of the state and pursued them in right earnest. She believed in power and prestige of the Sultan and tried to uphold them with her best abilities. As a woman ruler she opened a new chapter in the history of the Delhi Sultanate by becoming its first Sultana or female ruler. She was a tough soldier and an able commander who personally commanded all campaigns during her reign. Prof. K.A. Nizami also writes: "She was the ablest of the successors of Iltutmish can hardly be denied."

2.1.7 Successors of Sultanana Razia Sultanana

Muizzudin Bahram Shah (1240-1242 CE)

Bahram Shah succeeded Razia Sultana to the throne of Delhi, on the condition that he would hand over all the powers of the state in the hands of his Aitigin who was his naib-i-mamlakat. Bahram Shah initially accepted the power of the nobles but could not compromise with his respect and privileges, imprisoned the conspirators, murdered Aitigin, Sunqar and Taj-ud-din. These acts of the Sultan dissatisfied the Ulema. In 1241 CE, the vazir, Muhazab-ud-din treacherously planned with the Turkish nobles captured and killed Bahram Shah in May 1242 CE. He was succeeded by Ala-ud-din Masud, son of Firoz Shah on the throne of Delhi.

Ala-ud-Din Masud Shah (1242-1246 CE)

Masud Shah was offered the throne on the condition that he would delegate all the powers to 'the forty' and remain the Sultan only in name. Primarily this period marked the rise of Balban as power behind the throne. The conflict between the Taziks and the Turkish slave-nobles, on the one hand and the mutual jealousies of the slave-nobles, on the other gave him the opportunity to build up his position. After building up his position he conspired to depose Masud Shah from the throne. In June, 1246 CE, Masud Shah was deposed and Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, a grandson of Iltutmish was placed on the throne.

Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud Shah (1246-1265 CE)

Nasir-ud-din sat on the throne on 10 June 1246 CE. His accession marked the end of the conflict between the Sultan and the Turkish slave-nobles. Nasir-ud-din was a puppet in the hands of the Turkish nobles who were led by their leader Balban. It has been expressed by some historians that Nasir-ud-din was a religious minded man, had no worldly desires or ambition, copied the Quran and engaged himself in other religious activities.

In August, 1249 CE, Balban married his daughter to the Sultan to strengthen his position. At that time, he was assigned the post of *Naib-i-Mamlakat* and the title of *Ulugh Khan* and thus, the power of the state was legally transferred to him.

The growing prestige and power of Balban provoked the jealousy of certain other Turkish nobles. They organised a group of their own including some Indian Muslim nobles under Raihan. The mother of Nasir-ud-din was with them and, probably, Nasir-ud-din also. On their advice, Nasir-ud-din asked Balban to go to his province of Hansi and thereafter to Nagaur. The provincial governors assured their support to Balban. Thereafter Balban and his supporters collected their armies at Bhatinda and then proceeded towards Delhi. The Sultan also moved out of Delhi to face them. The two armies faced each other but did not fight. Instead, efforts were made for reconciliation.

2.1.1 Balban (1265 CE-1287 CE)

Early Life

Balban was an Ilbari Turk, His father was a Khan of 10,000 families. His original name was Baha-ud-din. In his early youth Balban was taken prisoner and sold as a slave in Baghdad by the Mongols. His master Khwaja Jamal-ud-din brought him to Delhi where he was purchased by Iltutmish in 1233 CE. He won the appreciation from Iltutmish and was promoted to the rank of Khasdar. Later, Razia appointed him to the post of *Amir-i-shikar*. Balban played a treacherous role in deposing Razia Sultana from the throne. During the rule of Bahram Shah, Balban was given the jagir of Rewari and Masud Shah assigned him the jagir of Hansi. Vazir Abu Bakr appointed him as *Amir-i-Hazib*. Balban also consolidated his position among 'the forty'. He conspired against Masud Shah and was primarily responsible to put up Nasir-ud-din on the throne. In 1249 CE, he was appointed to the post of *naib-i-mamlakat* by Sultan Nasir-ud-din and was conferred with the title of Ulugh Khan. During the reign of Nasir-ud-din, Balban practically enjoyed all the powers of the state. After the death of Nasir-ud-din in 1265 CE, he ascended the throne of Delhi.

Balban's succession ended the line of rulers of Iltutmish family. Soon after he assumed power, he faced a serious problem of restoring law and order in Delhi and other parts of the kingdom. He was in a dilemma whether to 'consolidate' or 'expand' kingdom and he preferred consolidation, because on the one hand, the Hindu Chiefs were trying to overthrow him and on the other, Mongols were approaching close to Delhi.

As the first measure of consolidation he strengthened the army. This is important for suppression of internal rebellions and Mongol intrusions. He introduced some changes in the military organization of the Sultanate. These are as follows:

- 1) Numerical strength of the army was increased.
- 2) Additional officers were appointed with higher emoluments and *iqtas* were assigned to them in lieu of their salaries.
- 3) Emoluments of troops also increased.
- 4) Military department was separated from finance department (diwan-i-wizarat).
- 5) Army was placed under a minister for military affairs (diwan-i-ariz).
- 6) Balban did not attempt to centralize the army. The nobles and the governors were free to organise their own armies independently.

Balban's views about Kingship

Balban was the first Sultan of Delhi to discuss at length his views about kingship. He considered this as necessary in order to place the crown on a high and dignified pedestal and eradicate all possibilities of conflict and contest with the nobles. The basic elements of his theory of kingship were derived from Sassanid Persia.

Balban, primarily, emphasized two points regarding the theory of kingship.

- Firstly, that the monarchy was divinely ordained and,
- Secondly, that it was necessary for the Sultan to be a despot.

He expressed that Kingship was the vice-regency of God on earth (*niyabat-i-khudai*) and it was next only to prophet hood and therefore, his actions could not be judged by nobles or the people. The king was the 'Shadow of God' (*zil-i-ilahi*). He declared that it was the King's super-human awe and status which could ensure the people's obedience.

Balban brought these ideas in practice. He claimed descent from the mythical Turkish hero, Afrasiyab of Turan. He gave up drinking wine and pleasure-parties. He kept himself away from meeting not only the people but also the nobles. He never expressed unusual joy or sorrow in public. Even when the news of the death of his eldest son Muhammad was

conveyed to him, he remained unmoved and carried on the routine administration though in his private apartment he wept bitterly. He never came to the court without complete regal dress and never laughed or gave a smile.

He framed certain rules for court-behaviour and enforced them strictly. He adopted many ceremonies of the Persian court. He introduced the practices of Zaminbos and Paibos (prostrating before and kissing the king's feet on the throne). He appointed strong guards who stood round the king with swords. Except high nobles, he ordered the rest to remain standing in the court. The court-dress was fixed for the nobles also. Drinking of wine was prohibited for them. Nobody could smile or laugh in the court.

The yearly festival of Nauroz was celebrated in his court with great pomp and show. The foreigners were simply stunned by the glamour of his court. Whenever Balban used to go outside the palace, his fierce bodyguards marched with him with swords shouting 'Bismillah-Bismillah'.

Destruction of the Chalisa ('The Forty'): Before coming to the throne, Balban had been an active member of the Turkish nobility (*Chalisa* or *Turkan-i-Chahalgani*) and knew its real strengths. He knew the loyalty of *Chalisa* to Iltutmish family and hence decided to end it. He mercilessly executed all members of the family and gave a death blow to the Turkish nobility.

While Professor Habibullah praised the sense of justice of Balban. He described instances of punishment of highly placed nobles as examples of upholding justice by Balban. In this was Balban made justice a tool in his hands to destroy the power and prestige of 'the forty'. On the other hand, K.A. Nizami writes: "Anxious to secure his personal and family interests, he completely ignored the interests of the Turkish governing class. He destroyed the talent amongst the Turkish nobles so ruthlessly that when the Khaljis entered the field as competitors for the throne against them, they were completely outmanoeuvred and defeated. Balban's responsibility for the fall of the Turks' power in India cannot be denied."

Administration: Balban believed in centralized political authority. Hence, most official appointments were directly made by him or with his approval.

For smooth functioning of his despotic rule, and to safeguard his kingdom from Mongal invasions and to suppress the local rebellions, Balban required a strong army which consisted of Sistani and Turkish soldiers. Hindus or Muslims had no place in his army. All his officers were supposed to perform both administrative and military duties. He also introduced an efficient spy system. He abolished the post of Naib and the Vazir had become an insignificant position. Balban succeeded in providing peace and justice to his subjects.

Spy System: Balban owed his success largely due to an efficient organisation of his spy system. He appointed spies (Barids) to watch the activities of his governors, military and civil officers and even that of his own sons. Balban appointed them himself and they were well-paid. They were expected to provide every important information to the Sultan and those who failed were punished severely. Every spy had direct access to the Sultan though none met him in the court. Balban's spy-system proved quite effective and was responsible for his success in administration.

The suppression of revolts. Balban took immediate measures to provide security to the city of Delhi. The forests around Delhi were cleared, four forts were built on the four corners of Delhi and ferocious Afghan troops were placed in them. The robbers and freebooters were killed brutally. Within a year, Delhi became free from the menace of robbery. Next year, Balban suppressed the revolts in Doab and Oudh. He divided the area into several military commands, established military check-posts at several places, cleared the jungles and pursued the rebellious people from one place to another. His measures succeeded and peace was restored in these areas.

Next, Balban went to Katehar. There he adopted semi-barbaric measures to strike terror among the people. He ordered his soldiers to slay the entire male population, burn their fields and Villages and take women and children to slavery. This policy succeeded. Barani wrote that the people of Katehar never attempted rebellion afterwards.

Balban also constructed roads, cleared the jungles and took measures for the safety of the travellers. All these measures ensured peace within his kingdom. Within some years of his accession to the throne, Balban not only succeeded in suppressing the revolts but also in bringing about peace and security to his subjects.

The conquest of Bengal: In 1279 CE, Tughril Khan, the governor of Bengal declared himself independent and assumed the title of Sultan Mughis-ud-din. The rebellion gave a rude shock to Balban's authority. It was the first revolt of a slave-noble. Balban sent three expeditions to suppress the revolt of Tughril Khan. But all three failed. This infuriated Balban. He vowed never to return without the head of the rebel and proceeded towards Bengal personally with a large army. His troops were further strengthened by the troops of Avadh. He reached Bengal with two lakh soldiers and his son, Bughra Khan.

Tughril Khan fled away from Lakhnauti. Balban pursued him and, ultimately, succeeded in killing him at Hajinagar in East Bengal. Balban then returned to Lakhnauti and inflicted a terrible punishment upon Tughril's followers. Balban appointed his son, Bughra Khan as governor of Bengal and advised him to remain loyal to the Delhi Sultanate.

The Mongols: The Mongol menace was a recurring danger for the Delhi Sultanate. Even Balban was not free from that. He had decided not to pursue a policy of conquest. In 1270 CE, Balban went to Lahore and ordered the construction of strong forts on the frontier. He placed strong forces near these forts. Later, he divided north-west frontier into two parts for the purpose of defence. Multan, Sindh and Lahore were placed in charge of prince Muhammad Khan while the province of Sunam and Samana were handed over to prince Bughra Khan. They were supported by an army of eighteen thousand horsemen. When Bughra Khan was appointed governor of Bengal, then the entire responsibility of defending the frontier fell on the shoulders of prince Muhammad who carried on his responsibility successfully till he died fighting against the Mongols in 1286 CE. This was a great shock to Balban who could not recover and within few months of his son's death, Balban also died. With his death ended the rule of the Ilbari dynasty.

Balban was succeeded by his grandson Kaiqubad. The kingdom was in chaos with conflicts among nobles. One group of nobles led by *ariz-i-mamalid* (Malik Firuz, later Sultan Jalaluddin Firoz Khalji) murdered Kaiqubad and seized the throne.

An Estimate

K.A. Nizami has pointed out many weaknesses of Balban. He gives him due credit for establishing an orderly government and peace within

his empire but points out his many failures as well. He writes that "his policy of establishing the supremacy of the Turkish race was more disadvantageous than advantageous to his empire. His greatest weakness lied in the weakness of his army. He could suppress the revolt of Bengal after six years, could not take any aggressive step against the Rajputs and had failed to achieve any remarkable success against the Mongols. The primary cause of his military weakness was the lack of capable officers for which Balban himself was responsible. The occupation of Central Asia by the Mongols had stopped immigration of the Turks in India while Balban was not prepared to give high offices to the people of the other races. This created shortage of capable military officers in the army of Balban. In the same way, viewing his administration, he writes: "Though performing the policeman's duty of maintaining law and order, there was no legislation by which Balban can be remembered. That Jalaluddin Khalji, the mildest and oldest of revolutionists should have overthrown the administration of the Turkish slave officers prove definitely how rickety and worm-eaten that structure had become."

Yet, Balban has been regarded as a capable ruler and he occupies an important place among the so-called slave rulers of Delhi. L. P. Sharma writes: "He had become Sultan by his own efforts. He was a strict disciplinarian and cruel as well but, probably, that was the need of the time. Not only the nobles and the courtiers but even the people had lost sense of respect and fear towards the Sultan and there was widespread lawlessness which was resulting in large scale revolts, robberies etc. In these circumstances, a strong and ruthless Sultan was necessary who could impose his will both on his nobles and the people". Barani wrote that 'by the end of the rule of Sultan Nasir-ud-din the prestige of the Sultan was completely destroyed'. He again wrote: "When Balban ascended the throne, there was no fear of the authority of the state which was the very basis of good governance. By that time, the people had completely forgotten the glory of the state." Balban, however, restored the authority of the Sultan. Besides, he provided justice to his subjects, saved the people from oppression and looked after their economic interests. Balban removed the anarchy which had prevailed within the territory of the Delhi Sultanate during the weak successors of Iltutmish. Balban suppressed the revolts, punished the rebellious governors, preserved the territories of the Delhi Sultanate and brought about peace and order within its boundaries.

2.1.9 Summary

In this Lesson, you have learnt how the Turkish rule was established in India. From Qutub-ud-din Aibak to Balban, each ruler tried to consolidate their position on the throne of Delhi by following diplomatic and aggressive policy. They all faced Mongol menace which was very diplomatically tackled by these rulers. The internal rebellions were ruthlessly suppressed. At the same time they also introduced some administrative changes particularly during the reign of Iltutmish and Balban. Thus they laid a strong foundation for the establishment of Muslim rule in India.

2.1.10 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the career and achievements of Qutub-ud-din Aibak.
2. Assess the contribution of Iltutmish in laying down the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate.
3. "Sultana Razia failed because she was a woman". How far do you agree with this view?
4. Describe the theory of kingship upheld by Balban.
5. Estimate the personality of Balban as a Sultan of Delhi.

2.1.11 Suggested Readings

Habibullah, A.B.M., Foundation of Muslim Rule in India.

Prasad, Ishwari, History of Medieval India.

Majumdar, R.C. (Ed.) The Struggle for Empire (The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. V.)

Srivastava, A.L., The Sultanate of Delhi

Lesson-2.2: THE KHALJIS (1290-1320)

Notes

2.2.1 Objectives

2.2.2 Introduction

2.2.3 Jalal-ud-din Firuz Khalji- Career and Achievements

- Personality of Jalal-ud-din Khalji

2.2.4 Alauddin Khalji- His Conquests

- North Indian conquests
- Malik Kafur- Southern Expeditions

2.2.5 Alauddin Khalji's domestic Policies

- Theory of Kingship
- Reforms of Alauddin Khalji-Regulations against the nobility
- Suppression of Rural Elites
- Revenue Reforms
- Military Reforms
- Market Reforms

2.2.6 Successors of Alauddin Khalji and downfall of the Khalji dynasty

2.2.7 Summary

2.2.8 Self- Assessment Questions

2.2.9 Suggested Readings

2.2.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Learn how the Khalji's expanded and consolidated their position in India
- Highlight the achievements and reforms of Ala-ud-din Khilji
- Understand the personality of Khaljis.
- Analyse the causes for the downfall of the Khaljis

2.2.2 Introduction

After the Ilbari Turks, the Khalji's ruled India. The Khaljis were Turks who hailed from Helmand valley in Afghanistan. They migrated to this valley and settled in a territory called 'Khalji'. Hence, their manners, living and social traditions became similar to the Afghans. Therefore, they were regarded as the Afghans in India. Their rule in India differed from their predecessors, namely the Ilbari Turks. With the coming of Khaljis to power, there was a dynastic change. Their ascendancy to power is known

as 'Khalji Revolution,' because it ended the monopolisation of power by the Turkish nobility and racial dictatorship. The Khaljis initiated a higher imperialism and gave political homogeneity to the Turkish state. Firuz Khalji's accession to the throne brought revolutions in political and cultural history of Medieval India. His successor, Ala-ud-din Khalji expanded the Delhi sultanate to south India. His general Malik Kafur played an important role in his military conquests. Ala-ud-din Khalji also introduced several reforms in the administration, revenue, military and markets, which made him very popular. In this Lesson, you will read about the Khaljis' and their achievements.

2.2.3 Jalal-ud-din Firuz Khalji (1290-96): Career and Achievements

The family of Jalal-ud-din had settled in India much earlier and its members were in the service of the Ilbari Turks for long time. By his merit Jalal-ud-din rose to the position of *sar-i-jandar* (the head of the royal body guard). Afterwards, he was appointed the governor of Samana where he fought many battles successfully against the Mongols. Kaiqubad called him to Delhi, conferred upon him the title *Shaista* Khan and appointed him as *ariz-i- mumalik* (army minister, the highest military position). He was also the leader of the Khalji clan and non-Turkish nobles at the court. When the Turkish nobles conspired to murder the non-Turks, he defeated them and even killed Kaiqubad and occupied the throne of Delhi Sultanate in 1290 CE. His coronation took place at the fort of Kilokhari.

At the time when he ascended the throne he was 70 years old. Due to his advanced age, he could not deal with problems firmly. He was very humble to every one which was considered to be below the dignity of the sovereign. For instance when Malik Chhajju revolted against him, he sent his son Arkali Khan who captured Malik and produced in front of the Sultan, in dirty clothes and chains. The Sultan was moved by his condition and released and invited him for a feast. The Sultan carried his generosity to such an extent that when Thugs and robbers were captured in Delhi, the Sultan sent them to Bengal and then issued an order to release all of them.

He even adopted a conciliatory policy towards the Mongols. When the Mongols under the command of Abdullah attacked Punjab, Jalal-ud-din immediately marched against them and reached the banks of the river Indus. The Sultan though was able to defeat the guards and officers of the Mongols, he was afraid to face the main force of the Mongols. He tried for

peace with Mongols. He got one of his daughters married to the Mongol leader Ulugh Khan, a descendant of Chengiz Khan. Ulugh Khan and his followers embraced Islam. They were called 'New Muslims'. They were conferred with a social rank and were given residential quarters in the suburbs of Delhi with special allowances. The Turkish nobles felt humiliated under his rule. Some of them even revolted against him.

During his time, the most courageous conquests were taken up by Ali Gurshap (later Sultan Alauddin Khalji), the nephew and son-in-law of the Sultan. He led military expeditions against Bhilsa in 1292, for which he was rewarded with the governorship of Awadh in addition to Kara and Manikpur. One of the most important events of Jalaluddin's reign was the invasion of Devagiri – the capital of the Yadava Kingdom in the Deccan. It was led by Ali Gurshap when he was the Governor of Kara. After his successful campaign in Devagiri, in 1296, Ali Gurshap invited Jalaluddin to receive huge wealth, which he accumulated through conquests. Jalaluddin came to Kara in July 1296, where he was murdered by Ali Gurshap. The latter proclaimed himself the Sultan with the title of Ala-ud-din Khalji.

Personality of Jalal-ud-din Khalji

Jalal-ud-din was considered as the most benevolent Sultan. According to A. B. Pandey, "Jalal-ud-din was the first Sultan who tried to adopt benevolence as the base of his administration." He has further written that "while assessing the achievements of Jalal-ud-din, we should not forget these facts that except the unsuccessful revolt of Malik Chhajju, no other revolt occurred during his reign, the nobles though did not agree with his policies, supported and respected him. He ruled successfully without pursuing the policy of terrorism." Dr. A. L. Srivatsava says that "Jalal-ud-din was the first Turkish Sultan who tried to re-conciliate even those who opposed him. He had been a successful general and had successfully repulsed many Mongol invasions prior to his becoming the Sultan. But when he became the Sultan, he left the policy of war and conquest. He behaved more liberally even with his enemies and instead of terrorizing them, tried to win over their sympathies. Yet all this pursued because of his old age." Dr. Srivatsava further adds "Jalal-ud-din was not a coward but his policy of peace and kindness was so pursued to the extreme that it became his weakness which was not in the interest of the state. His generosity was created misgivings about his capability among his nobles. He returned from Ranthambhor without conquering it. This lowered the

prestige of the Delhi Sultanate.” However, though Jalal-ud-din was indifferent to war, he was not liberal to the Hindus, who constituted the majority of his subjects. Dr. A. L. Srivatsava mentions that “he had destroyed several Hindu temples and disrespected Hindu idols.” K.S. Lal concludes that “Jalal-ud-din was certainly a kind-hearted, pious and religious minded person but as a Sultan he failed. However, there is one point which goes in his favour as a ruler. He made no distinction between Turks, non-Turks and Indian Muslims and sought help of all of them in administration. Thus he tried to provide a broad base to Muslim rule in India which was lacking during the reigns of Sultan of Slave dynasty”.

2.2.1 Alauddin Khalji (1296-1326): His Conquests

Soon after Alauddin came to the throne, he eliminated the surviving members of the former Sultan’s family and old Balbani and Jalali nobles. He initiated ‘the imperial phase’. We have noted earlier that after Iltutmish no serious attempts were made to expand the kingdom. In 1297, he repulsed the Mongol invasions. He appointed capable officers to important posts. He introduced ambitious projects in administration. Alauddin broke this tradition and inaugurated a whirlwind period of conquests. He believed that defence, expansion and consolidation could all go together. His success as a conqueror encouraged him to assume the title *Sikandar-i-Sani*. He got this read in the *Kutba* and even superscribed it on his coins.

Alauddin’s North Indian Conquests:

1. Gurjarat and Jaisalmer (1299):- Gujarat was a prosperous state with its capital Anhilwad. It was attacked several times by Turkish invaders. At the time of Alauddin Khalji’s conquest Gujarat was ruled by Vaghela (Chalukya or Solanki) King Karna. In 1298 CE Alauddin sent an army under the command of Ulugh Khan and Nusarat Khan to conquer Anihilwad. King Karna fled to the Yadava kingdom of Devagiri with his daughter Deval Devi. But his chief queen Kamala Devi fell into the hands of the invaders whom Alauddin later married with full honour. The invaders plundered Gujarat, destroyed the temple of Somnath and returned to Delhi with huge booty.

2. Ranthambhor (1300-01):- Ranthambhor was a stronghold of Chauhana-Rajputs. Alauddin moved to Rajputana and conquered Ranthambhor from Hamir Deva, a descendant of Prithviraj-III. Alauddin conquered it for two reasons. One, Hamiradeva provided shelter to

Mongol rebels. Two, Ranthambhor was strategically located. Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan were sent to besiege the fort of Ranthambhor. In this incident, Nusrat Khan lost his life. Alauddin himself came to attack the fort and succeeded in capturing the fort in the year 1301 CE. All Rajputs were killed and their women performed *Jauhar*.

3. **Chittor (1303):-** Chittor, the capital of Mewar. It was ruled by Guhilot King Ratna Singh. Its forts were constructed on high hills and were impregnable. Alauddin attacked Chittor in 1303 CE. According to Rajput sources Rana Ratan defended the fort for seven long months before it was captured by Alauddin. Padmini performed *jauhar* along with other Rajput women. He renamed Chittor as Khizrabad and appointed his son Khizr Khan as its governor. According to various Rajput sources and Malik Muhammad Jayasi's *Padmavat* the main motive of Khalji invasion of Chittor was to acquire Padmini, the queen of Rana Ratna Singh. Amir Khusrau who accompanied the Sultan during this campaign, however do not refer to this point.

4. **Malwa (1305):** Malwa was plunder by Alauddin's predecessors several times, but its conquest was never completed. Malwa was then ruled by Mahalak Deva. He and his commander Harnada (Koka Pradhan) were strong and brave rulers. Alauddin sent Ain-ul-Mulk Multani to conquer Malwa, which he achieved after killing Mahalak Deva secretly at night. Later, Ain-ul-Mulk conquered Ujjain, Dhar, Chanderi. He was also appointed as the governor of Malwa.

5. **Siwana:** Siwana was ruled by the Paramara ruler Shital Deva, who was regarded as one of the most powerful ruler of Rajasthan. Alauddin attacked Siwana in 1308 CE. The Rajputs gave a stiff resistance. Alauddin was able to capture only with the help of a traitor. Shital Deva was defeated and killed in this battle. Alauddin placed Kamaluddin Gurg as its in-charge.

6. **Jalor (1311):** Jalor was only fifty miles away from Siwana. It was ruled by Raja Kaneradeva. In 1311 Kamaluddin Gurg successfully captured Jalor after killing its ruler and all his relatives except his one brother Maldeva, who pleased Alauddin and got the governorship of Chittor.

With this, his northern conquests were completed. He next turned his attention towards the Deccan and south India, primarily to acquire the

immense wealth of the south and to force the southern states to accept his authority. The conquests in the South were led by Malik Kafur.

Malik Kafur's Southern Expeditions

Malik Kafur also known as Taj al-Din Izz al-Dawla, was the most prominent slave-general of Alauddin Khalji. He was a converted slave, who was captured by Alauddin's general Nusrat Khan during his invasion of Gujrat. Malik Kafur's loyalty attracted the attention of Alauddin, when he played a key role in the defeat of the Mongols. Subsequently, Malik was sent to lead a series of expeditions in the south. His expeditions in the southern part of India were against the Yadavas, the Kakatiyas, the Hoysalas and the Pandyas. From these campaigns he brought enormous wealth for the Delhi Sultanate.

1. Devagiri (1307 CE): Malik Kafur's first expedition in the South was against Devagiri, the capital of the Yadava kingdom. Ramachandra Deva was its ruler. In 1294, Ramachandra Deva agreed to pay Alauddin, the revenues of the province of Illichpur. But in 1305 and 1306 he did not remit the revenues, upon which Alauddin became indignant. Another reason for Alauddin to become intolerant was that Ramachandra Deva gave shelter to Raja Karan of Gujarat. He was made the ruler Baglan region.

In 1307 Alauddin sent an army under his *naib* Malik Kafur to conquer south India. In 1307 Malik defeated the Yadava king Ramachandra of Devagiri. The latter sued for peace. Kafur also got a large booty in elephants and treasures. Ramachandra Deva and his relatives were carried to Delhi. Ramachandradeva was released and was made the feudatory and friend to Alauddin. He also agreed to help Kafur in his conquest of South India. S. R Roy writes: "Indeed Devagiri served as the base for Khalji military operations in the Deccan and the far south."

2. Telingana (1309-10): Alauddin's failure to capture Warangal in his previous expedition made him decide to take revenge on the Kakatiyan ruler Prataparudra II. Therefore, he sent Malik Kafur with an army in 1309-10. The Kakatiyan king Pratapa Rudra II of Warangal tried very hard to defend the capital, yet could not succeed. So he sued for peace and accepted the suzerainty of Alauddin. He also agreed to pay annual tribute and gave away was attacked and defeated. Malik got a present of one hundred elephants, seven hundred horses and lots of other treasures.

3. The Hoysalas (1311): Alauddun now directed Malik Kafur to attack the far south. Kafur received war supplies from Devagiri and proceeded to Dwarasamudra, the capital of Hoysala kingdom. The Hoysala king Vira Ballala III was defeated. The latter agreed for peace and to pay an annual tribute. He gave horses, elephants and lot of wealth and also promised Kafur that he would help him in his attacks against the Pandyan ruler.

4. The Pandyas: After his successful conquest of the Hoysala kingdom, Malik then proceeded towards the Pandyan kingdom. Pandyan kingdom at this time was undergoing a political crisis over the issue of succession to the throne. Though he achieved military victory over the Pandyan forces led by Vira Pandya and Sundara Pandya, politically he was not successful as the Pandyan kings refused to submit themselves.

5. The Second Attack on the Pandyan kingdom (1313): After the death of the Yadava ruler Ramachandra, his son Singhana III declared independence and refused to pay tributes to the Sultan. Malik Kafur therefore, again invaded Devagiri and annexed it to the Sultanate.

Alauddin's conquest of the south was neither complete nor permanent. Though the kingdoms of Devanagari and Hoysala remained loyal paying regular annual tributes, the Kakatiyan king and the Pandyan kings never accepted his suzerainty. Yet his dream fulfilled. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who had conquered South India with the help of his able general Malik Kafur.

Mongol Menace: The Mongol invasions continued in Delhi. During the time of Alauddin the Mongols invaded Delhi for more than six times and plundered its wealth. Alauddin tactfully confronted this crisis. He strengthened the army and placed it for the protection of the north-west frontier under his trusted commander Ghazi Malik (later known as Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq). He followed Balban's 'blood and iron' policy in tackling Mongol menace which proved to be successful.

2.2.5 Alauddin Khalji's Domestic Policies

Alauddin was a shrewd politician, statesman and a great administrator. He studied the prevailing situation thoroughly and introduced several reforms in administration, military and economy.

Theory of Kingship

Alauddin was the first Sultan of Delhi who did not pursue Islamic principles in matters of the state. He never sought the acceptance of the *Khalifa* for his kingship. He did not allow the *Ulema* to interfere in the matters of the state. A.L. Srivatsava writes, "Thus to Alauddin belongs the credit of being the first Turkish Sultan of Delhi to bring the church under the control of the state and to usher in factors that might make the state secular in theory. Yet he was a perfect Muslim never opposed the tenets of Islam, pursued suppressive policy against the Hindus and occasionally too advantage of Muslim fanaticism."

Alauddin believed in despotic monarchy. He acted as an absolute monarch with unlimited powers. He believed that the will of the Sultan was law, the Sultan was above all and all powers emanate from him. All his officers were subordinate to him. K. S. Lal states that "During the reign of Alauddin his centralization of administration was complete and despotism reached its highest mark".

Reforms of Alauddin Khalji: Regulations against the nobility

During the early period of Alauddin's reign few revolts occurred which were instigated by the New Muslims. Alauddin, with the help of his loyal officer Malik Hamidu-ud-din had successfully suppressed the revolts.

In order to prevent internal rebellions caused due to dissatisfied nobility made him adopt certain stringent measures against them. Before introducing reforms, he first analysed the causes of internal rebellions and realized that the primary causes of the revolt are as follows:

- (a) Excess wealth and general prosperity of his officials gave them both power and leisure, which allowed evil thoughts to arise,
- (b) Inter-marriages between the noble families made them compact bodies, which would be dangerous to the state.
- (c) Inefficiency in the espionage system which resulted in the Sultan's ignorance in knowing the condition of the people.
- (d) Drinking liquor and liquor parties among the nobles brought them close to each other, which would be dangerous to the state.

These were some of the main reasons of internal rebellions.

To check these, he imposed certain restrictions. Firstly, he confiscated all grants of tax-free land and seized Muslim religious endowments. Secondly, Intelligence system was reorganized and all the secret transactions in the houses of nobility immediately reported to Sultan. Thirdly, public sale of liquor and drugs was totally stopped. Fourthly, an Ordinance was passed curbing social gatherings in noble's houses. No senior officials were allowed to arrange marriages between members of their families without the Sultan's prior consent.

Suppression of Rural Elites:

While the above measures were aimed at controlling the Muslim noblemen in the Imperial court, at the village level, there existed village headmen known as *Khuts* and *muqaddams*, who were very rich.

They frequently offered military help to the rebels. The Sultan's revenue regulations reduced this class to poverty and brought them down to the level of ordinary peasant.

Revenue Reforms

Alauddin Khalji introduced sweeping reforms in the Revenue system. This transformed the economy. Some of his important reforms in this field are as follows:

(a) His first revenue regulation was known as *zabita*. It is related to the measurement of cultivable land on the basis of which the land revenue was determined. The land was measured with a standard unit called *bisua*. The state demand was fixed as half of the produce per *bisua*.

(b) The village chiefs such as *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudhuris* were forced to pay land revenue and other taxes at the same rate as the ordinary peasant.

(c) House tax (*ghari*) and pasture tax (*chari*) were imposed on the agrarian population.

(d) Small *iqtas* were abolished and these were brought under the *Khalisa* land (Crown land).

(e) Peasants were made to pay tax mostly in the form of kind. They were made to sell their produce at the fields itself, in order to check storing of food grains and eliminated middlemen.

(f) He created new department, the *diwan-i-mustakhraj* to enquire into the revenue areas and to collect them.

(g) He resumed several types of land grants such as Inam, waqf, etc.

Thus, as L. P. Sharma states, “although it was not possible to root out corruption from the revenue department, yet Alauddin succeeded in bringing about fair improvement in it by terrorising both his officers and the subjects by his extreme punishments given to them in case of non-fulfilment of their obligations”.

Military Reforms

The frequent revolts, the Mongol threats, the desire to establish a highly centralised and despotic government and the ambition to create an extensive empire in India necessitated a strong army at the centre. Alauddin fulfilled this by keeping a standing army at the capital. To strengthen the army, Alauddin Khalji introduced certain reforms in the military. These include:

(a) He introduced three soldier categories: (i) foot soldiers, (ii) soldiers who were provided with one horse each and (iii) soldiers who were provided with two horses each.

(b) Introduction of *dagh* (branding of horses) and *Chehra* (descriptive roll of soldiers) or *huliya* system and payment of cash salaries to soldiers.

(c) Introduced standing army at the centre for the first time and insisted on a regular meeting of the army.

(d) Soldiers were directly recruited by the *Ariz-i-mamalik*.

(e) He established a separate and permanent army for the defence of the north-west frontier.

(f) He abolished the *iqtas* of the royal troopers and payment of their salaries was made in cash. But the *iqtas* of big nobles and military commanders continued.

All these reforms of Alauddin created for him many enemies. There was dissent among the nobles who were waiting for the right time. His imperial edifice tumbled during his life time amidst rebellions in Gujarat, Chittoor and Devagiri. Alauddin Khalji died in 1326.

Market Reforms

The ‘market control system’ was considered as the most revolutionary and remarkable initiative taken up by the Sultan. According

to Barani, “the main objective for Alauddin to introduce market reforms was to maintain a large and efficient army and to keep them satisfied. He realized that this could be possible only when the prices of essential commodities were reduced.” However, Amir Khusrau, the contemporary of Alauddin Khalji, mentions that “the Sultan introduced ‘market reforms’ for the general welfare of the people and also to collect food grains for the royal treasury. These food grains would be used at the time of famines.” The following economic measures were adopted by the Sultan to control market.

(a) The prices of various commodities including slaves was fixed by the state. No change was permitted in the prices without the prior permission of the state. He appointed *Diwan-i-riyasat* and *Shahba-i-mandi* to regulate the fixed price market.

(b) In Delhi, four separate markets were established for various commodities, viz., a) Markets for grain, b) For cloth, sugar, dried fruits, herbs, butter and oil, c) For horses, slaves and cattle, and d) for miscellaneous commodities.

(c) Each market was placed under the supervision of a *Shahna* (market controller). The Sultan received daily reports on the market from the *barids* (intelligence officers) and the *munshis* (sultan’s secret agents).

(d) All the merchants were to be registered with the commerce ministry the state and had to sign a bond guaranteeing a regular supply of the goods in which they traded.

(e) Strict punishments were imposed for cheating and under weighing. A prior permission of the state was required for lowering or raising the prices. The subsidized items were sold on a permit issued by Permit Officer, appointed by the state.

The market reforms of Alauddin were unique and were regarded as his greatest achievement. The success of these reforms was largely due to the Sultan’s genius and his personal care for his people.

2.2.6 Successors of Alauddin Khalji- Causes for the downfall

Alauddin passed his last days in misery and disappointment. His growing age sapped up his physical and mental energy. His trusted nobles were placed at distant places. His queen Malika-i-Jahan and his eldest son Khizr Khan neglected him. The queen also conspired to break up the power of Malik Kafur with the help of his brother Alp- Khan. Immediately

after the death of Alauddin, Malik Kafur placed the Sultan's minor son Shihabuddin Umar on the throne and became his regent. But soon the bodyguards killed Malik Kafur and placed another son of Alauddin, Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah Khalji (1316-20) on the throne. He liberalized Alauddin's reforms. The new Sultan conferred Khusrau Khan, a Hindu convert of 'Baradu' caste from Gujarat the status of Wazir and Commander-in-chief. In 1320 Khusrau murdered Mubarak Shah. Thus ended the Khalji dynasty.

Khusrau Khan ascended the throne with the title Nasiruddin Khusrau Shah in 1320. He introduced reign of terror in the imperial court. The nobles led by Ghazi Malik resented this. Ghazi Malik, captured Khusrau Khan, beheaded him and ascended the throne with the title Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq.

Causes for the decline of the Khaljis

Both Jalal-ud-din and Ala-ud-din had captured the throne after bloodshed and their dynasty also met the same fate. It finished through bloodshed. The main causes for the downfall of the Khalji dynasty were

- Alauddin's system of administration lacked stability. His entire structure was based on terror and force.
- Such as system continued as long as there was force. But after the death of Alauddin, his incompetent successors could not tackle the situations.
- Mubarak Shah through his attitude and foolishness was responsible for the falloff the Khaljis.

2.2.7 Summary

In this Lesson, we have learnt how the Khalji's have strengthened the Delhi Sultanate. We have seen two contrast personalities. While Jalal-udin Khalji was the most benevolent monarch, who tried to consolidate the king, Aladdin Khalji was the most ambitious and aggressive monarch who believed in power of the state over the religion. We have seen how his rule was marked by several changes in military, administration and revenue. He was na able administrator. His military victories in north and south India made him the great monarch of India. He was a brave soldier and a most capable military commander, a shrewd diplomat, a great conqueror and a successful administrator.

2.2.8 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Assess the character and personality of Jalal-ud-din Khalji.
2. Critically examine the revenue policy of Alauddin Khalji.
3. Describe the Military and Market reforms of Alauddin Khalji.
4. Highlight the role of Malik Kafur in the Southern conquests.
5. Give an account of the northern conquests of Alauddin Khalji.

2.2.9 Suggested Readings

R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian people*, Vol. VI.

U. N., Dey., *Some Aspects of Medieval Indian History*

Satish Chandra, *History of Medieval India*, Vol. I

Vipul Singh, *Interpreting Medieval India*, Vol. I.

Notes

Lesson-2.3: THE TUGHLAQS (1320-1412)**2.3.1 Objectives****2.3.2 Introduction****2.3.3 Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq**

- The suppression of the revolts and the expansion of the empire
- An Estimate

2.3.4 Mohammad Bin Tughlaq

- Theory of Kingship
- Innovative Reforms

2.3.5 Domestic Policies and reforms of Mohammad Bin Tughlaq

- Revenue Reforms
- Raising of taxes in the Doab
- Agrarian Reforms
- Transfer of capital
- Introduction of token currency

2.3.6 Foreign Policy and Conquest of Mohammad Bin Tughlaq

- South India
- The Khurasan expedition
- The Qarachil campaign
- Local rebellions and disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate
- An Estimate

2.3.7 Firuz Shah Tughlaq

- Domestic policies
- Religious policies
- An Estimate
- Later Tughlaqs

2.3.8 Summary**2.3.9 Self- Assessment Questions****2.3.10 Suggested Readings****2.3.1 Objectives**

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Learn about the Tughlaqs and their contribution to Indian culture
- Assess the personality of Mohammad bin Tughlaq
- Analyse his conquests and various policies and its impact

2.3.2 Introduction

In the last Lesson we have learnt how the Khalji dynasty was brought to with the murder of Nasiruddin Khusrau Khan by Ghazi Malik. The latter ascended the throne of Delhi with the new name Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq. He laid the foundation of the Tughlaq dynasty that ruled from Delhi for about 92 years. Under the Tughlaqs Delhi Sultanate was strengthened. The Empire was extended to south India. Mohammad Bin Tughlaq introduced many reforms in the administration and tried to bring many changes but failed. His period also witnessed several local revolts. His successor Firoz Shah Tughlaq was also a great ruler who brought in many interesting changes in the Delhi Sultanate. However, the actual decline of the Tughlaq family started during his time. In this Lesson, you will study about the various policies and programmes of the Tughlaqs and analyse the causes for the fall of the Tughlaq dynasty.

2.3.3 Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq Shah (1320-1325 CE)

Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (1320-1325) became the founder of the third dynasty of Sultanate, viz., the Tughlaq dynasty. The Tughluqs belonged to the 'Qarauna Turk' tribe which was a mixed tribe of the Turk and Mongol stock. According to Ferishta, "the father of Ghazi Tughlaq was a Turkish slave of Sultan Balban and had married a Hindu Jat woman. Ghazi Sultan also served Sultans of Delhi like his father and rose to higher positions of the State till Ala-ud-din appointed him as the governor of Dipalpur and the guard of the north-west frontier in 1305 CE. He successfully defended the frontier, pursued an aggressive policy against the Mongols and attacked the neighbourhood of even Ghazni, Kabul and Kandhar, Khusrav kept him in the same position. But, then, he revolted against Khusrav kept him in the same position. But, then, he revolted against Khusrav, killed him in the battle and became Sultan in 1320 CE".

Ghiyasuddin was an experienced warrior, statesman and an able administrator. He liberalized administration in certain respects. The practice of physical torture in case of economic offences and recovery of debts was given up. He discussed Alauddin's system of land measurement for assessing land revenue and reduced the revenue rate to 1/3rd of the produce. He ordered to give up oppressive methods of land revenue collection. He took keen interest in the construction of canals for irrigation and formulated a famine policy to provide relief to peasants in time of

drought. He built the fortified city and Tughlaqabad. He gave new touch to the architecture of the Sultanate period.

Ghiyas-ud-din was a capable military commander and according to Barani “he loved his soldiers as a father loved his sons. He looked after their welfare and paid them well. But he was a strict disciplinarian as well. He strictly enforced the practice of keeping *Huliya* of the soldiers and that of *Dagh viz.*, branding of horses. Within two years after his accession, Ghiyas-ud-din succeeded in enhancing the strength of his army”.

Towards the Hindus, Ghiyas-ud-din pursued the same policy as was practised by Ala-ud-din. His policy was that neither the Hindus should be allowed to amass wealth so that they might rise in revolt nor they be reduced to poverty so much so that they might leave cultivation of their fields. Thus, the basis of the policy which he adopted towards the Hindus was political. Dr. Ishwari Prasad writes: “If he pursued oppression against the Hindus, it was not because of religious bigotry, but the result of political necessity.”

The Suppression of the Revolts and the Expansion of the Empire

Ghiyasuddin was an aggressive imperialist more than Aladdin Khalji. Alauddin was more interested in getting the war booty from his southern expeditions rather than annex the, But on the contrary, Ghiyasuddin pursued the policy of annexation. Telingana was his first priority. In 1321, he despatched the crown prince Jauna Khan (Muhammad Bin Tughlaq) to re-establish the authority of the Sultanate in the south. The first expedition of Jauna Khan was a failure as his officers deserted him when they heard the rumour that the Sultan had died. Jauna Khan attacked Warangal again in 1323 CE. On a safer side, he conquered Bidar first and then annexed the Kakatiyan Kingdom of Warangal (1322-23), after a siege of five months. Prataparudra was sent to Delhi as a prisoner where he was said to have committed suicide drowning himself in the river. Warangal was now named Sultanpur and the kingdom of Telingana became a part of the mighty Delhi Sultanate. According to some historians, Jauna Khan moved to the Pandyan Kingdom of Madhurai (1323) and annexed the kingdom to the Sultanate of Delhi.

Soon after his return from the southern conquests, Jauna Khan was sent to quell the Mongol attacks in the north-west in 1324 CE. After the

defeat of the Mongals, Jauna Khan appears to have suppressed the revolts occurred in Gujarat.

Notes

In 1325, when Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq was returning after concluding his military campaign in Bengal, Jauna Khan raised a wooden pavilion at Afghanpur village, near Delhi to welcome the Sultan. The pavilion suddenly collapsed and Sultan and other dignitaries were crushed to death. Ibn Batuta holds Jauna Khan responsible for pre-planning this accident.

An Estimate

Contemporary historians regarded Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din as an ideal Muslim ruler. He was interested neither in wine nor in women. He followed the principles of Islam honestly and respected religious men and saints. He was a capable commander. Under his able leadership, the army of the Delhi Sultanate once more became more effective. He was a successful administrator also. He established peace and order in the kingdom. He rooted out corruption in the administration. He cared for the welfare of peasants, increased the area under cultivation, improved the means of communication, transport and postal system, constructed bridges and canals and developed garden. His revenue measures enhanced the material prosperity of his subjects and filled the state treasury. Barani wrote, "All that Sultan Alauddin with so much shedding of blood, and crooked policy and oppression and great violence in order that he might establish his rule throughout the cities of the empire, Sultan Tughlaq Shah in the space of four years accomplished without any contention of fraud or hardness or slaughter."

2.3.4 Muhammad Bin Tughlaq (1325-51)

Three days after the death of his father, Prince Jauna Khan alias Ulugh Khan ascended the throne of Delhi with the name Mohammad Bin Tughlaq. He was the most remarkable personality among the Sultans of Delhi. He was a great scholar of Persian and Arabic languages and well versed in various brands of learning such as astronomy, philosophy, mathematics, medicine, logic, etc. He was a rationalist in religious and philosophical matters. He curbed the political influence of the orthodox Muslim **Ulema**. He believed in Geo-political unity of India and wanted to break all political and cultural barriers which separated the north and south. He was a patron of Jain scholars like Jina Prabha Suri and Raja Sekhara. Tughlaq also built a small city in Delhi that was called Adilabad

or the 'Abode of Justice'. His contemporaries described him as 'one of the wonders of the age in which he lived'.

Theory of Kingship

Mohammad Bin Tughlaq believed in the divine theory of kingship. He believed that he became the Sultan because of the will of God. Therefore, he believed in absolute powers of the Sultan. He did not permit any individual or the *Ulema* to interfere in his administration. In the initial years of his rule Mohammad neither sought recognition of the *Khalifa* nor inscribed his name on the coins. In his rule no body was above the law. He did not show distinction between an ordinary man and the religious man in delivering justice. However during the later years of his rule, he inscribed the name of the *Khalifa* on his coins, sought recognition of his office from him in 1340 CE.

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was the first Sultan of Delhi who attempted for the administrative and cultural unity of the north and south India. Irfan Habib expressed that "Muhammad was the first Sultan of Delhi to have assigned high posts not only to Hindus but also to the people from humble families, particularly the Mongols, foreign Muslims, etc." Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was also the first Sultan to have maintained diplomatic relations with several foreign countries like China, Iraq, Syria etc. He also pursued several innovations in different fields, though he could succeed in carrying out those innovations.

Innovative Reforms

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq had a fantasy for introducing new innovations in the domestic and foreign affairs. His foreign policy aimed at the integration of entire sub-continent through the conquests. His domestic policies are the innovations introduced in different field of administration. However, these adversely affected his fortunes, though they were meant for the best. He was misunderstood on account of his 'five ambitions projects' which utterly failed bringing him ill-fame. The five innovative measures were:

- (i) 1326- Raised the taxes in Doab for replenishing the royal treasury
- (ii) 1327-28- Shifted the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad.
- (iii) 1329-30- Introduced the token currency

(iv) 1330- The Khurasan campaign

(v) 1333- The Qarachil campaign

Notes

2.3.5 Domestic Policies and Reforms of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

- 1) **Revenue Reforms:** Muhammad Bin Tughlaq carried out many measures for the improvement of the administration of revenue. For this purpose, he asked all the provincial governors to prepare a register in which the income and expenditure of all the provinces were recorded. They were asked to submit these records to the concerning authority at the centre. The main motive of the Sultan was to introduce a uniform standard of the revenue throughout his empire and to see that no village remained unassessed. However, nothing is known about the advantages of this scheme.
- 2) **Raising the Taxes in the Doab:** At the time when the Sultan ascended the throne, the royal treasury was in a bad shape. So to replenish the treasury, he had decided to raise the taxes in the Doab region. Though the scheme was not bad as the Doab region is very fertile, the measure proved to be ill-timed, because at this time the Doab region was passing through total famine, followed by plague. This led to the paucity of grains. Therefore, the peasants instead of paying the taxes abandoned their lands and adopted to robbery, especially in the highways. The tax collectors forcefully collected taxes which results in widespread revolts. The Sultan suppressed the revolts severely. But soon, the Sultan ordered for the abolition of taxes, arranged relief measures to the peasantry and supplied to them seeds, bullocks, etc. However, his relief measures came too late, making his policy a perfect failure. He failed to collect even the regular revenues from the Doab and became unpopular among his subjects.
- 3) **Agrarian Reforms:** In order to improve agriculture, Muhammad created a department of agriculture called *Diwan-i-kohi* and appointed a minister, *Amir-i-kohi* to supervise the agricultural production. To further increase agricultural production, he provided loans to the peasants, got several wells dug for irrigation and introduced improved agricultural methods through rotation of crops and formulated a famine code. Moreland wrote about it thus: "In Indian history, it was made clear for the first time that agriculture, improvement in the technique of agriculture and enhancement of

resources for the growth agriculture was the responsibility of the state. In other words, it was the first instance in India when the Sultanate not only emphasised on agricultural reforms but also spent a large amount of money from the state treasury for it.” Yet the experiment failed and the government withdrew the scheme after three years. The corruption of officers, poor quality of land chosen for farming and indifference of cultivators who were assigned the land for cultivation were responsible for the failure of the scheme.

4) Transfer of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad (1327-28):

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was interested in territorial expansion. In order to achieve his ambition and for political and administrative efficacy, he decided to transfer the capital to Devagiri, which was rechristened as Daulatabad (the house of prosperity). The main reason for choosing Devagiri was its Central location and its closeness to South India. Further, the place was strategically located for the regular supervision of the newly conquered regions of South India. The entire Imperial establishment and population were taken to Daulatabad. People who were brought to Daulatabad did not like the environment and there was wide spread resentment against the Sultan. After shifting to Daulatabad, Muhammad lost all of north India even before he consolidated his hold over the South. So he decided to return to Delhi. The transfer and retransfer of the capital proved to be great loss of money, men and resources to the state.

5) Introduction of token currency (1329)

The next controversial project of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was the issuing of bronze token coins known as *muhr-i-mis* in place of silver *tankas*. The global shortage of silver made Muhammad to introduce the low cost bronze coins. But his experiment failed on account of the circulation of counterfeit coins on a very large scale which caused chaos in trade and commerce. Subsequently, the Sultan was compelled to withdraw token currency. He offered to exchange all the token coins for silver coins.

Thus, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq failed to carry out any of his ambitious schemes to success. Those who were in favour of the Sultan expressed that his measures were ahead of his time, his subjects and officials. They failed to understand the worth of schemes and therefore did not cooperate with him. Some others the Sultan himself for the failure of

his schemes. Though the Sultan possessed imaginative mind but lacked practical wisdom. He failed to devise practical measures to make his ideas to become reality.

2.3.6 Foreign Policy and Conquests of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq followed the foot-steps of his father in pursuing the policy of annexations. Whatever territories he conquered he annexed them to the Delhi Sultanate and thus extended his control to the South India. Among his foreign policy of conquests include:

1. South India: In south India, Muhammad cousin Bhauddin Gurshap who was appointed as the governor of Sagar near Gulbarga revolted against the Sultan in 1327 but was defeated. Gurshap sought the shelter with the Hindu king of Kampili. Sultan sent an army to suppress the revolt. Kampilideva was killed while fighting against the forces of Delhi. Before his death, Kampilideva managed to hand over Gurshap to the Hoysala ruler Ballala III. Kampili was annexed to the Delhi Sultanate.

Muhammad also conquered Kondhana or Singharh from Nag Nayak. It was in the vicinity of Devagiri. Muhammad thus conquered a great part of South India and annexed it to the Delhi Sultanate.

2. The Khurasan Expedition (1330)

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq spent huge amounts of money on dealing with the Mongol threat and also wanted to take advantage of the political vacuum in Central and West Asia caused by the decline of Mongol Khans. Barani says that the Sultan raised an army of 3,70,000 soldiers and were paid for one whole year resulting in the further depletion of resources. Soon he had to abandon this scheme and army was disbanded. The disbanded soldiers openly resorted to loot and plunder, making the matters even worse for the Sultan.

3. The Qarachil Campaign (1333)

Qarachil was a Rajput state located in Kumaun Garhwal region in the mid-Himalayan tract. These hilly tracts usually served as a place of refuge for rebels and therefore Sultan wanted to bring them under his control and have a chain of fortifications across the north. In order to consolidate his position in an area of considerable strategic importance, the Sultan sent an army of 10,000 soldiers under the commandership of his nephew Khusrau Malik. But this expedition failed on account of

Khusrau's over-enthusiasm. The soldiers were made to march towards Tibet in cold winter and this destroyed the entire army. Thus this expedition also was a failure and it adversely affected the military strength of the Sultan.

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq also failed to get any success in Rajasthan. Rana Hamir Deo was successful in defeating the Sultan's army. The Sultan now withdrew his attempts to interfere in the affairs of Rajasthan.

Thus Muhammad Tughlaq largely succeeded in carrying out his schemes of conquests. Though he failed at some places, yet his empire was more extensive than any other Sultan of Delhi. R.C. Majumdar writes: "The authority of the Sultan was acknowledged all over India, save Kashmir, Orissa, Rajasthan and a strip of Malabar Coast, and he established an effective system of administration over this vast empire." "Mohammad established good relations with Asian countries. He maintained diplomatic relations with Egypt. Tooghan Timmur, the then Chinese emperor, sent an envoy to Delhi in 1341 CE and Muhammad sent Ibn Batuta as his envoy to China in 1342 CE." During his reign many Muslims from other parts of west Asia and Africa came to India and settled here.

Local Rebellions and disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate:

From the time of his accession to the throne, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq spent his time spent in dealing with 34 rebellions out of which 27 were in South alone. The Sultan suppressed most of them but some of them succeeded and independent kingdoms were formed in distant provinces of the empire. The whole South India came under the rule of independent states viz., the Vijayanagara, Bahamani and the Sultanate of Madura. The Sultan was aware of his military weaknesses and hence made no attempt to recover South. But he wanted to restore order in Gujarat and Sind. He was able to restore law and order in Gujarat, but while moving towards Thatta in Sind, he died in March 1351.

An Estimate of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq's Character

Many historians agree that Muhammad Bin Tughlaq possessed extraordinary qualities as a person. He was well educated and highly learned person. He is well versed in literature, history, philosophy, poetry, logic, mathematics, medicine, astronomy and calligraphy. He knew both Persian and Arabic languages. His memory was remarkable and his intelligence was sharp. He was a scholar and a cultured individual who

patronized scholars and persons of intellectual attainments. He was extremely generous and distributed rewards, gifts and presents with open heart to deserving individuals. He helped poor people, distributed large amount in charity among them, built hospitals and forty thousand people received food every day from his kitchen.

He was a capable commander and a daring soldier. He was the only Sultan who had spent large part of his life in conquests. He was responsible for the conquest of South India. He was very hard working and innovative. His talent can be seen in all his schemes of internal reforms. His failures in his experiments are due to the various circumstances and untimely launch. These depleted the resources of the state and the Sultan was pronounced as a failure as a ruler and administrator. Sultan Muhammad though failed as a ruler, yet has been assigned a prominent place among rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. Ishwari Prasad writes: "Muhammad Tughlaq was unquestionably the ablest man among the crowned heads of the middle ages. Of all the kings who sat on the throne of Delhi since Muslim conquest, he was undoubtedly the most learned and accomplished ruler."

2.3.7 Firuz Shah Tughlaq (1351-88)

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq did not nominate his successor and after his death, the nobles offered crown to Sultan's cousin Firuz Shah Tughlaq. His father was Rajjab, the younger brother of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq and his mother was daughter of Ran Mal, a petty Rajput chief of Abohar in the modern district of Hissar in Punjab. Firuz Tughlaq was a timid person. He neither participated in any successful military campaign nor exhibited any administrative qualities. He failed to recover the areas which were lost during the reign of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. He did not pay much attention to army. His poor administration, weak foreign policy and defective military organization led to the steady decay and disintegration of the Sultanate.

Domestic Policies

Despite his failures in certain aspects of administration, Firuz was famous for his populist approach in administration. He paid attention primarily towards domestic affairs. During the last years of the rule of Muhammad Tughlaq, there was discontent among his subjects. Sultan's policies and administration led to the breakdown of the economy. Many distant rulers declared independence. Firuz Tughlaq did not make any

attempts to recover the lost territories. However, he strived to defend the remaining territories restored confidence among his subjects, restored financial prosperity of this subject, He also won over the confidence of the *Ulema*. Firuz started his reign with liberalism, He assured protection to all members of royal family tried to please every noble, paid back loans on the state and promised to rule according to the principles of Islam. Some of his achievements are as follows:

a) Firuz abolished 24 taxes and substituted them with only 4 taxes namely *kharaj* land tax), *zakat* (2 ½ percent of he income of the Muslims spent on the welfare of poor Muslims), *jeziah* (religious tax on Hindus) and *kham*s (1/5 of the looted property during wars). All these taxes were sanctioned by the Islamic Law. He used coercive methods in the collection of *Jezieh* which was now extended even to Brahmins who were earlier exempted.

b)The revenue was fixed and remained unchanged during his reign. Its advantage was that the income of the state was fixed. But this system was proved illogical as the state could not draw more income when the produce was high.

c) In the field of agriculture, Firuz achieved great success. He promoted agriculture through the construction canals. He introduced irrigation tax at 10% of produce for the fields irrigated by the state constructed canals. More fresh lands were brought under cultivation. Superior crops were introduced and more than 1200 state managed fruit gardens were laid. In the Punjab and Haryana 4 to 5 canals were constructed and new agricultural settlements sprang up along the banks of these canals. According to Feristha, “Firuz constructed fifty dams and thirty tanks or lakes to store water. All these were meant for the purpose f irrigation. All these efforts resulted in the extension of area under cultivation, enhancement of trade and also income tof the state in the form of irrigation tax.”

d) He waived away loans granted during Muhammad Bin Tughlaq.

e) Revised Penal Code revised and punishments were made more humane and restored the privileges of the *qazis*.

f) He made *Iqta* hereditary and assigned thousands of *Iqtas* on hereditary basis to civil and military officers and even to ordinary troops. Even military posts were made hereditary.

g) He entrusted revenue assessment to bidders, contractors and middlemen.

h) Firuz was very fond of collecting large number of slaves. According to Afif, he had a total of 180,000 slaves who were paid either by assignments of land revenue (like soldiers) or in cash, their salaries ranging from 10 to 100 *tankas*.

i) He founded 300 new cities and towns. These include Fatehabad, Hissar, Firuzpur, Jaunpur and Firuzabad in Delhi. Firuzabad near Delhi was his favourite city where he lived most of the time. Now this ruined city is called "Kotla Firuz Shah"

j) He had great interest in civil works. Ferishta says that he constructed 50 dams, 40 mosques, 30 colleges – attached to mosques, 20 palaces, 100 caravan sarais, 30 reservoirs, 100 hospitals, 5 mausoleums, 100 public baths, 10 monumental pillars, 10 public wells and 150 bridges. Besides numerous houses, gardens and pleasure houses.

k) He beautified his new capital Firuzabad in Delhi with 2 Ashokan Pillars which were brought from Topara in Amabala and from Meerut.

l) He distributed large amount of wealth and land among the saints and other religious people.

m) He established an employment bureau which arranged employment of unemployed people.

n) He had set up a separate department called *Diwan-i-khairat* for the help of the poor and needy people. He arranged marriages for poor Muslim girls at state expenses.

All these activities and welfare measures rendered treasury bankrupt.

Religious Policy: Firuz was the first Sultan of Delhi who accepted predominance of Islamic laws and the *Ulema* in the administration of the state. He was intolerant towards the *Shias*, *munhidan* and *ibahatiyans* (Ismaili group of Shias) and Hindus except the Sunnis. He propagated Islam and encouraged the Hindu conversions. In his autobiography *Fatuhat-i-Firuzshahi* he writes: "I encouraged mu infidel subjects to embrace the religion of the Prophet, and I proclaimed that everyone who left his creed and became a Musalman should be exempted from the *Jiziya*." Thus Firuz practiced severe intolerant religious

policy towards Hindus particularly, who constituted the majority, contributed in bringing about the downfall of the Tughlaq empire.

An Estimate of Firuz Tughlaq

Firuz possessed certain personal virtues. He was a scholar and patronized scholars. He was a religious-minded person and observed principles of Islam in his personal behaviour and all other activities. His kindness and liberality were confined only to Sunnis. He was intolerant of all other religious faiths. U. N. Dey gives an appropriate picture of Firuz's character thus: "He was a typical product of his age, ambitious and shrewd enough to wear a mask of disinterestedness. Capable of assuming false appearance of virtue and goodness with dissimulation of real character, he posed as leading a religious life with constant proclamation of his championing the cause of Sunni orthodoxy." Beside all historians agree that Firuz was not courageous or daring. He lacked qualities of a good soldier and a successful commander.

As a ruler, the best success of Firuz was to bring about prosperity to his subjects and the state. He was the first sultan of Delhi who gave priority to peace and prosperity of his subjects. R. C. Majumdar rightly observes "on the whole, in spite of peace, prosperity and contentment that prevailed during the long reign of Firuz Tughlaq, no one can possibly doubt that his policy and administrative measures contributed to a large extent to the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate, and accelerated the process of decline that had already set in during his predecessor's reign. Therefore, Firuz cannot be accepted as a great king of Delhi Sultanate and hence cannot be compared with Akbar, the Mughal emperor".

Later Tughlaqs

The last years of Firuz Tughlaq were full of tragedies, troubles and turmoils. He died in 1388. Firuz Shah Tughlaq was succeeded by his grandson Ghiasuddin Tughlaq II followed by Abu Baker, Mohammad Shah, Allauddin Sikandar Shah and Naziruddin Mahmud who was the last ruler of this family. During his time Timur, the Mongol leader of Central Asia reached Delhi in 1398, robbed and disgraced the city.

Timur's invasion dealt a fatal blow to the Tughlaq dynasty and the Sultanate of Delhi. After the Timur's invasion of Delhi, the Sultanate completely disintegrated and numerous provincial kingdoms emerged in

various parts of the country. The Sultanate of Delhi under the two succeeding dynasties was like any other provincial kingdom.

Notes

2.3.8 Summary

In this Lesson, we have learnt how the Tughlaq dynasty was established on the throne and the various initiatives that have been taken by Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq, Mohammad-Bin Tughlaq in the expanding the extent of the Delhi Sultanate up to South India. Further, the rulers have also introduced various welfare measures. In the case of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, we have seen how his well intended policies have failed and brought him ill fame. On the other hand, Firuz populist approach made him popular, but his lack of administrative acumen had resulted in the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate followed by his death.

2.3.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Estimate Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq as a ruler and an empire builder.
2. Discuss the various domestic reforms of Mohammad Bin Tughlaq. Why was he not successful in implementing them?
3. Discuss the Deccan policy of Mohammad Bin Tughlaq.
4. Analyse the personality and character of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq.
5. Discuss the economic reforms and welfare activities of Firuz Tughlaq.
6. How far was Firuz Tughlaq responsible for the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate? Discuss.

2.3.10 Suggested Readings

L.P. Sharma, *History of Medieval India (1000-1740 AD)*

R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian people*, Vol. VI.

Satish Chandra, *History of Medieval India*, Vol. I

U. N., Dey., *Some Aspects of Medieval Indian History*

Vipul Singh, *Interpreting Medieval India*, Vol. I.

UNIT-III

Notes

Lesson-3.1: TIMUR INVASIONS –THE RISE OF SAYYIDS

3.1.1 Objectives

3.1.2 Introduction

3.1.3 Timur's Invasions- Causes and Impact

3.1.4 The Sayyids

- Khizr Khan
- Mubarak Shah
- Muhammad Shah
- Ala-ud-din Alam Shah

3.1.5 Summary

3.1.6 Self- Assessment Questions

3.1.7 Suggested Readings

3.1.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Understand the impact of Timur's invasions on India
- Know about the Sayyid's rule and their contributions.

3.1.2 Introduction

After the death of Firuz Tughlaq, the Delhi Sultanate crumbled with the succession of weak rulers. They lost practically all the distant provinces, viz., the entire south India, Bengal, Gujarat, Malwa, Rajasthan and Bundelkhand. Jaunpur became independent. Mahmud Sha ruled at Delhi and Nasrat Shah ruled at Firozabad. When Timur attacked Delhi, both the rulers fled away leaving their subjects to their fate. But Mahmud returned with the help of Mallu Iqbal who died fighting against Khizr Khan to Delhi. After the death of Mahmud Shah, the Tughlaq dynasty came to an end. In 1413 CE, the nobles elected Daulat Khan as the Sultan of Delhi. He however, was defeated by and imprisoned by Khizr Khan, who now declared himself as the Sultan of Delhi. He laid foundation to the rule of a new dynasty viz., the Sayyid dynasty. In this Lesson, you will learn about the Timur's invasions on India, its impact and about the Sayyid dynasty which ruled northern India for a brief period of only 37 years.

3.1.3 Timur's Invasions-Causes and Impact

Timur was born in the year 1336 CE at the town of Kech or *Shahar-i-Sabz* about 40 miles south of Samarqand in Transoxiana. His family belongs to Barlas clan of the urks and his father Amir Turghay was the master of a small principality of Kech. After the death of his father, Timur managed Kech from 1361 to 1405 CE.

Timur was a born leader, and a great military commander and astute diplomat. He established an extensive empire, which included Transoxiana, a part of Turkistan, Afghanistan, Persia, Syria, Qurdistan, Baghdad, Georgia and major part of Asia Minor.

Timur was a harsh ruler. His main of his conquests was to amass wealth. Therefore, wherever, he went he brought in destruction, massacres, looting, burning the cities and dishonour to women. Timur paid little attention to administration and welfare of his subjects.

Timur was a great conqueror. In course of his conquests, he was wounded in his leg. So he started limping. For his reason, Timur's enemies called him '*Aksak Timur*' and in Persian '*Timur-i-lang*'. The Europeans used its corrupt form and called him as Tamerlane.

The main reason for Timur's attack on India was to fight against and destroy the infidels. The second reason was to plunder its wealth. Even before Timur attacked India, his grandson Pir Muhammad, the governor of Kabul sent an expedition against India and captured Uch and besieged Multan. In 1398 CE, Timur himself set to attack India. Crossing the river Sindu in September, he entered Panjab and captured Multan. After destroying the city of Bhatnir, Timur proceeded towards Delhi massacring people and destroying everything that came on his way. He reached Delhi in 1398 CE. Sultan Nasir-ud-din had fled and Timur easily defeated Mallu Iqbal, the *vazir*. In December 1398, Timur completely vanquished the Sultanate army. He ordered the massacre and plunder of the city of Delhi. He stayed for several days, killed thousands of people, took away thousands of people as slaves and the entire wealth of the city was plundered for 15 days. On 1st January 1399, he started his return journey. On the way back he plundered Firozabad, Meerut, Haridwar, Kangra and Jammu. Before he left, he appointed Khizr Khan as the governor of Multan, Lahore and Dipalpur.

Impact of Timur's Invasions:

Timur brought about unparalleled devastation to India. Wheresoever, he went, he completely destroyed everything. Thousands of villages were burnt, lakhs of people were massacred and all cities were thoroughly plundered. The city of Delhi was ruined for months. The large number of dead bodies led to the breakdown of epidemics. The Delhi Sultanate under the Tughlaqs, lost its power and prestige. Finally, Delhi was occupied by Khizr Khan, who established a new dynasty called the Sayyid dynasty.

3.1.4 The Sayyids (1414-1451 CE)

The Sayyids was the shortest rule among the Delhi Sultanate. Their rule was limited only to 37 years. In this brief period, the Sayyids did not venture into undertaking any bold decision either in wars and conquests or in administration unlike the Khaljis and the Tughluqs. Sayyid Sultans failed to put forth any inspiring ideal before their followers and subjects. Further, the process of division and disintegration of the empire, which had persisted during the reign of later Tughluqs, continued unabated during the rule of the Sayyids also. The Sayyids restricted their political vision and activities within circumference of 200 miles around Delhi and, finally, failed to defend even that circle and lost their empire to another dynasty, viz., the Lodis.

Khizr Khan (1414-1421 CE)

Khizr Khan was the founder ruler of Sayyid dynasty. He claimed to be a descendant of Prophet Muhammad. Probably, his ancestors originally hailed from Arabia and he utilized this fact in order to strengthen his position on the throne. Khizr Khan was appointed as the governor of Multan by Firuz Tughluq. He participated in the war of succession which ensued between rival princes after the death of Firuz. He collaborated with Timur in his attacks on India. Impressed by his services Timur reward him by conferring the governorship of Multan, Lahore and Dipalpur. After Timur's death, Khizr Khan declared himself as the viceroy of North-west India. In 1414, he invaded Delhi and, finally, succeeded in snatching it from the hands of Daulat Khan Lodi and proclaimed himself as its master.

Khizr Khan never ruled as a sovereign. He always professed himself as he deputy of Timur's son Shah Rukh. He was content with the titles of *Bandgi-i-Rayat-i-Ala* and *Masnad-i-Ala*. He continued to send yearly

tribute to Shah Rukh. His coins also continued to bear the name of Tughluq rulers. It was probably necessary because of the shortage of gold and silver. Besides, he tried to keep his subjects, Turks and Afghans nobles in good humour always.

Prior to his accession to the throne, the empire of the Delhi Sultanate was limited to parts of *Doab* and Mewat. After his accession, the kingdom was extended as far as the Panjab, Multan and Sind. This, however remained as maximum territory of Delhi Sultanate during the reign of Khizr Khan. He also failed to recover Etawah, Katehar and Kannauj. He followed a policy of appeasement towards Turkish nobles and allowed them enjoy ownership of their jagirs. Yet, they remained dissatisfied with him and used their positions to rise in revolt against him occasionally.

Khizr Khan committed one more mistake. He divided the *Iqtas* (provinces) into *Shiqs*(districts) and gave independent powers to district officers. This resulted in local or regional loyalties. Therefore, throughout his reign, Khizr Khan was forced to undertake military expeditions to exact tribute even from those chiefs who formally owed allegiance to him. In this task, he was loyally supported by his minister Taj-ul-mulk. Yet, Khizr Khan failed to subdue permanently the revolting jagirdars. An imposter declared himself as Sarang Khan and revolted in Panjab. He was, however, defeated. The Khokhars under their chief, Jasrath, troubled him constantly in north-eastern Panjab. The rulers of Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur aspired to conquer Delhi though failed in their attempts. Thus, Khizr Khan mostly engaged himself in keeping intact the territory of the Delhi Sultanate which he had acquired in the beginning of his reign.

During his last days, he attacked Mewat and destroyed the fort of Kota. He, then, plundered part of the territory of the state of Gwalior and proceeded up to Etawah whose ruler acknowledged his suzerainty. While returning from there, he fell ill. He reached Delhi but died shortly on 20 May 1421 CE.

Khizr Khan was wise, just and generous and was free from vices common in those days. His personal virtues, therefore, won him the affection of his subjects. Ferishta wrote: "The people were happy and satisfied under his rule and therefore young and old, slaves and free citizens-all expressed sorrow at his death by wearing black clothes." But as

a ruler he could not achieve much. “He failed to solve those problems of the country which had arisen after the dismemberment of the Tughluq dynasty and had left the country in a state of virtual anarchy after the invasion of Timur. The Sultanate of Delhi could not gain ascendancy over other kingdoms in India during his time and therefore, remained one of the states among certain other significant states of the North”.

Mubarak Shah (1421-1434 CE)

After the death of his father, Mubarak Khan ascended the throne without any opposition. He assumed the title of Shah, got *Khutba* read in his name and also issued coins bearing his name. This indicates that he did not accept suzerainty of any foreign power.

Mubarak undertook retaliatory expeditions against Jagirdars and nobles who did not pay revenues. He transferred his governors from one place to another, thus, trying to prove that their *jagirs* or *Iqtas* were not their hereditary property, but only a right to be enjoyed with the consent of the Sultan. These assertions by the Sultan certainly dissatisfied jagirdars and governors, who took advantage of the weakness of later Tughluq Sultans and treated their *jagirs* and provinces as their own property. It created trouble for the Sultan who had to fight against his own nobles in order to keep them under his control. The Sultan attacked Badayun, Etawah, Katehar, Gwalior, etc. solely for this purpose.

But more than that, Mubarak Shah had to face and fight against his foreign enemies. From towards the north-west Jusrath the leader of the Khokhars, the ruler of Malwa from towards the south and the ruler of Jaunpur from towards the east, tried to capture Delhi in their own turn. However, Mubarak succeeded in foiling their attempts. Jusrath attacked Sarhind, Jalundhar and Lahore several times but failed to gain any success. Husang Shah, the ruler of Malwa, attempted to conquer Gwalior several times but failed to capture it and Gwalior remained under the suzerainty of Delhi. Ibrahim, the ruler of Jaunpur, claimed Bayana, Kalpi and Mewat and tried to capture them many times but failed. Rather, in March 1428 CE, Ibrahim was defeated in a battle by Mubarak Shah near Bayana and forced to retreat. It was only after the murder of Mubarak Shah that Husang Shah, ruler of Malwa, could capture Kalpi.

Shaik Ali, the *naib-subedar* of Kabul, also tried to take advantage of the troubles of Mubarak Shah. He supported Pulad, the rebel governor of Sarsuti, Amroha and Tabarhind and plundered parts of Jalundhar,

Firozpur, Lahore and Multan. But, he was defeated several times and therefore, failed to capture any territory of the Delhi Sultanate.

Therefore, the dissatisfied nobles of Mubarak Shah hatched a conspiracy against him under the leadership of his *vazir*, Sarwar-ul-mulk and succeeded in murdering him on 19 February 1434 CE, while he was supervising the construction of his new town Mubarakabad on the bank of the river Yamuna.

While estimating the personality of Mubarak Shah, historian L.P. Sharma states: "Mubarak Shah was the ablest ruler of the Sayyid dynasty. He freed the Delhi Sultanate from the nominal suzerainty of a foreign power and issued coins in his name. He succeeded in suppressing the revolts of his nobles and jagirdars. He also succeeded against his foreign foes each of whom tried to capture Delhi. For thirteen years he fought against his internal and external enemies and succeeded in keeping intact the territory of the Delhi Sultanate though, of course, he failed to extend it further. But, Mubarak Shah failed to select loyal officers and nobles to serve him and therefore, fell a prey to their conspiracy. Except this, he was quite successful as compared to other rulers of Sayyid dynasty. He built a city, Mubarakabad and a beautiful mosque therein. He provided protection to his contemporary scholar, Yahya-bin-Ahmad Sarhindi who compiled the chronicle of his age and that of his predecessors in a Persian work entitled *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*".

Muhammad Shah (1434-1445 CE.)

Mubarak had nominated Muhammad-bin-Farid Khan, the son of his brother as his successor. Farid Khan ascended the throne after the murder of Mubarak and assumed the title of Muhammad Shah. He proved himself as an incapable and sensuous ruler. During the first six months of his reign, virtually the *vazir*, Sarwar-ul-mulk enjoyed the power of the state. The *vazir* gave positions of importance to his own loyal officers and those Hindu jagirdars who had helped him in the murder of Mubarak Shah. However, deputy commander-in-chief, Kamal-ul-mulk remained loyal to the Sayyid dynasty, kept his intentions secret and formed another group of nobles against the *vazir*. The *vazir* sent him to suppress the revolt at Bayana. That proved to be his opportunity. Once he took the command of the army, he disclosed his plan to other nobles to displace the *vazir* from power and then returned to the capital with his army. The *vazir* tried to murder the Sultan but as the Sultan himself was a party to the conspiracy

against the *vazir*, he had taken all precautions. Therefore, when the *vazir* went to murder the Sultan, his bodyguards killed the *vazir* and his supporters then and there.

Muhammad Shah now appointed Kamal-ul-mulk as his *vazir* and freely engaged himself in sensual pleasures. Kamal-ul-mulk was not a good administrator. They both neglected the affairs of the state. This encouraged both internal and foreign enemies to attack Delhi. Mahmud, the ruler of Malwa was the first to invade Delhi. Muhammad Shah repelled the invader with the help of Bahlul Lodi, the governor of Multan. The battle between the two near Talpat did not result in any conclusive result. Muhammad Shah therefore, sued for peace and Mahmud agreed to return as his own capital was now threatened by an invasion by the ruler of Gujarat. Bahlul Lodi attacked him while he was returning and was successful in capturing some booty and imprison some of his soldiers.

Muhammad Shah honoured Bahlul Lodi for his timely help, called him his son, gave him the title of "*Khan-i-Khana*" and accepted his possession over larger part of Punjab. This infuriated Bahlul Lodi who made a futile attack on Delhi in 1443 CE, in order to capture it.

Muhammad Shah failed to safeguard his kingdom from internal disruption and foreign attacks during later years of his reign. The ruler of Jaunpur confiscated some parganas from him, Multan became independent, provincial governors avoided payment of annual tribute and even those nobles who lived within a circle of twenty miles around Delhi exhibited tendency of insubordination towards the Sultan. Thus, Muhammad failed as a ruler and the fall of the Sayyid dynasty began during his reign. He died in 1445 CE.

Ala-ud-Din Alam Shah (1445-1450 CE.)

Muhammad Shah was succeeded by his son under the title of Ala-ud-din Alam Shah. He was lazy and licentious and proved himself the weakest ruler of the Sayyid dynasty. He quarrelled with his *vazir*, Hamid Khan, left for Badaun and settled himself there. Bahlul Lodi once more attacked Delhi in 1447 CE, though failed again. But Hamid Khan, apprehending the forceful occupation of Delhi by some neighbouring ruler, himself invited both Bahlul Lodi and Qiyam Khan, the governor of Nagaur. Bahlul Lodi reached Delhi first and therefore, Qiyam Khan turned back. Hamid Khan had expected that Bahlul Lodi would be a puppet in his hands. But Bahlul who had the ambition to rule Delhi since long could not

share the power with anybody. He imprisoned and afterwards killed Hamid Khan and captured all powers of the state in 1450 CE. Bahlul invited Ala-ud-din Alam Shah to come to Delhi which he politely refused. On his part, Bahlul did not attempt to capture Badaun any time. Ala-ud-din, therefore, ruled over Badaun till his death in 1476 CE.

Badaun was afterwards captured by his son-in-law and ruler of Jaunpur, Hussain Shah. Thus, Ala-uddin Alam Shah was the last ruler of Sayyid dynasty. Though he lived till 1476 CE, but had lost the throne of Delhi to Bahlul Lodi much earlier. K.A. Nizami has commented: "Thus ended the Sayyids dynasty after an inconspicuous rule of 37 years. Emerging as the principality of Multan, it ended as the principality of Badaun. Neither politically nor culturally did it contribute anything worthwhile to the history of medieval India. It was, however, an inevitable stage in the process of dissolution and reconstruction of the Delhi Empire."

3.1.5 Summary

In this Lesson, you have learnt how Timur created havoc in the city of Delhi. His invasions were brutal in character and destroyed the Sultanate to level to which it could not cope up for a very long. After Timur left, Khizr Khan was appointed as the ruler of Delhi who founded a new dynasty called the Sayyid dynasty

The Sayyid rule in India was confined to limited territories and for a short duration. The Sayyids were constantly trying to subdue the local revolts. Hence, they could not achieve much. Their rule can be regarded as a failure, as they could not contribute anything politically or culturally to the history of medieval India.

3.1.6 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the causes and impact of Timur's invasions on India.
2. "The Sayyids failed to contribute anything politically or culturally to the history of medieval India." Comment.

3.1.7 Suggested Readings

- L. P. Sharma, *History of Medieval India*
 A. L. Srivatsava, *The Delhi Sultanate*.
 Haig, W. (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III.

Lesson-3.2: THE LODIS (1451-1526 CE)

Notes

3.2.1 Objectives

3.2.2 Introduction

3.2.3 The Foundation of Lodi dynasty-Bahlul Lodi (1451-1489 CE)

- Conquests and Consolidation
- An Estimate

3.2.4 Sikandar Shah Lodi (1489-1517 CE)

- Sikandar's Conquests
- Measures to control Nobility
- Efficient Spy System
- Economic Policy
- Religious Policy
- Patronage of Literature, Arts and Architecture
- An Estimate

3.2.5 Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526 CE)

- Conflict against his brother Jalal Khan
- Conquest of Gwalior
- Conflict with Mewar
- Conflict against the Afghan Nobles
- First Battle of Panipat (1526 CE)
- An Estimate

3.2.6 Summary

3.2.7 Self- Assessment Questions

3.2.8 Suggested Readings

3.2.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Know the history of Lodis Sultans and their achievements in India
- Understand how they tried to expand and consolidate their power in India
- Assess their contribution to art and architecture

3.2.2 Introduction

In this Lesson, you will learn about the Lodis who were the last rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. The Lodis were Afghans and Bahlol Lodi was the founder of this dynasty. The Lodis ruled India for seventy-five years,

which were filled with bitter conflicts on three fronts. Firstly, they had to fight against equally powerful neighbouring rulers of the states of Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat and Mewar either for the safety of their kingdom or to extend their power and influence. Secondly, Lodis had to wage wars against those nobles and jagirdars of the Delhi Sultanate itself who, taking advantage of the weakness of previous Sultans, had become virtually semi-independent and paid annual revenue only at the point of sword. Thirdly, the Lodis had to fight hard against their own Afghan nobles, who were once the source of their strength had now become their enemies. Despite these political upheavals, the Lodis tried to enhance the glory of India by making significant contributions in the fields of administration and architecture. However, the worst problem of the Lodi Sultans was the tribal instinct of independence. The Afghan nobles failed to recognise the necessity of a strong centralized state under one leader and therefore, failed to cooperate with their Sultans which, ultimately, gave a favourable opportunity to the Mughul ruler, Babur to attack and conquer India. In this, Lesson therefore you will learn the significant contributions of Afghans (Lodis) and their decline.

3.2.3 The Foundation of Lodi Dynasty –Bahlul Lodi

The Lodi dynasty in India was founded by Sultan Bahlul Lodi. He belonged to the Shahu Khel clan of the Lodis. It was an important branch of the Afghans. Bahlul was brought up by his uncle Islam Khan who had taken up service under the first Sayyid ruler, Khizr Khan. Islam Khan found Bahlul Lodi as a diligent and daring man and got his daughter married with him and nominated him as his successor. After the death of Islam Khan, Bahlul became the governor of Sarhind. His power and influence grew steadily. He was also awarded with the title of *Khan-i-Jahan* by Sultan Muhammad Shah of Delhi, for his timely help against the ruler of Malwa. Bahlul, afterwards, attempted twice to capture Delhi but failed. Finally, Bahlul captured the throne of Delhi, when Sultan Ala-ud-din Alam Shah had left for Badaun. Bahlul easily imprisoned Hamid Khan and got him killed afterwards. He invited Ala-ud-din Alam Shah to come to Delhi. The offer was refused. He, then, ascended the throne on 19 April 1451 CE under the title of Sultan Abul Muzaffar Bahlul Shah Ghazi and had his name proclaimed in the *Khutba*.

Conquests and Consolidation

Soon after Bahlul proclaimed himself as the Sultan of Delhi, he encountered many baffling problems. In order to consolidate his position,

he had tackled them very efficiently. His primary tasks were to restore back the lost prestige of the Sultan. For this, he punished disobedient and rebellious nobles and jagirdars. He also undertook a series of military expeditions to Mewat, Sambhal, Rapri, Bhogaon, Gwalior, etc. and forced their chiefs to offer submission and pay annual tribute. His second task was to establish the supremacy of the Afghans in the kingdom. To achieve this he called the Afghans from outside India and gave them jagirs and high offices. He believed that the Afghan nobles alone could help him in strengthening his position. Hence, he gave them extensive jagirs and succeeded in exacting loyalty from them. The third task was to suppress the rebellious nobles and jagirdars and to safeguard his kingdom from jealous neighbours and to consolidate his gains.

One remarkable success of Bahlul was the conquest of the state of Jaunpur after a prolonged strife between Mahmud Shah Sharqi, the ruler of Jaunpur and his successors and Bahlul Lodi. After annexing the kingdom of Jaunpur, Bahlul appointed his son, Barbak Shah as its ruler. The conquest of Jaunpur which was more powerful and prosperous as compared to the kingdom of Delhi was the greatest achievement of Bahlul. It proved his military talents. It replenished his resources and raised his prestige among other rulers. It enabled him to compel the Chiefs of Kalpi, Dholpur, Bari and Alipur to acknowledge his suzerainty. In 1489 CE, when Bahlul was returning after attacking Gwalior, he fell ill and died near Jalali.

An Estimate

Bahlul proved himself a capable ruler. It was due to his exertion and military talents that the Lodi dynasty could find a place in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. He was a courageous soldier and a successful general. He was a realist but was cunning as well. He believed in the principle that the end justified the means and therefore, did not hesitate to have recourse to treachery or fraud when necessary to achieve his object.

He was also generous with his enemy. He captured twice the wife of his enemy ruler, Husain Shah but sent her back to her husband honourably both times. K.S. Lal comments on this: "For a victorious Muslim Sultan in Medieval India this treatment was unique."

Bahlul was diplomatic, possessed common sense and understood his limitations and circumstances. His dealing with his Afghan nobles was even more realistic. He behaved more like friend and a family member

rather than like a Sultan. This policy in course of time had reduced the position of the Sultan to that of a 'chief among equals.' Though this policy helped Bahlul to consolidate his position, yet, it could not help in restoring the prestige of the Sultan and in building up a strong centralized government. On the contrary, this practice also inflamed the ambitious and independent spirit of the Afghan nobles. It strengthened them politically and economically. Later, they contested against the successors of Bahlul for power and prestige which ultimately contributed for the downfall of the Lodi dynasty.

Bahlul was not a successful administrator. He also did not get time to look after it. In this field, his only significant act was to issue the coin named Bahlul, which remained the medium of exchange till the reign of Akbar. However Bahlul was a just and generous king. He was always prepared to look after the welfare of his subjects and did not waste public funds for personal use.

L. P. Sharma points out that “Bahlul was a laborious, courageous, honest, kind-hearted and a religious. minded person. It is said that never a beggar or a poor man was turned away from his gate without some offering. He was courteous and friendly to everybody. He always respected scholars and religious persons. He was intelligent and witty. He had a simple life. He practised the principles of Islam in his personal life and avoided licentious life. But he was not fanatic and pursued a tolerant policy towards his Hindu subjects. Rai Pratap Singh, Rai Karan Singh, Rai Nar Singh, Rai Trilok Chand, and Rai Dandu were some among many other notable Hindu nobles at his court.” He further adds: “The significant achievements of Bahlul were the conquest of Jaunpur, the suppression of the rebellious nobles, particularly the Rajput chiefs of the Doab and the restoration of the lost prestige of the Sultan. He achieved much for his dynasty and prepared the way to achieve further for his son and successor, Sikandar Lodi.”

3.2.4 Sikandar Shah Lodi (1489-1517 CE)

Bahlul had nominated his third son Nizam Khan as his successor, who ascended the throne on 17 July 1489 with the title of *Sikandar Shah*. Sikandar Shah justified the nomination of his father and proved himself as his most capable ruler. He destroyed all claimants to the throne and those nobles who had opposed his candidature. He extended his empire further. Kept his Afghan nobles under his control, destroyed the power of the

nobility, finished all rebellious nobles and forced others to obey and respect him as the Sultan. Thus, Sikandar succeeded more than his father in extending the empire and restoring the prestige of the Sultan and therefore, rightly claimed to be the greatest Lodi Sultan.

Sikandar's Conquests

Sikandar Shah was a good soldier and a successful commander. He was brave and dauntless. He engaged himself in constant fighting either to extend his empire or to consolidate it. He conquered Bihar, forced the ruler of Tirhut to accept his suzerainty and the ruler of Bengal accepted his friendship. In Rajasthan, he conquered Bayana, Dholpur, Etawah, Chandwar and Chanderi and collected tribute from the rulers of Gwalior and Nagaur. He succeeded in suppressing the revolts of Hindu chiefs in the Doab and finally annexed Jaunpur to his empire. Of course, these conquests and campaigns do not assign him the place of a great commander, yet it is largely accepted that he was successful in extending the boundary of his empire and restoring the lost prestige of the Sultan.

Measures to Control the Nobility

Sikander kept Jaunpur under his control and raised his prestige among Rajput chiefs by defeating some of them. Sikandar wisely realised the limitations of his resources and therefore, tried to maintain peaceful relations with other neighbouring Muslim kingdoms. His policy towards Malwa and Bengal was guided by same considerations.

Sikandar Shah in order to keep the Afghan nobles under his control asked all his governors and officers to submit proper accounts of their income and expenditure and punished the defaulters. He enhanced the prestige of the seat of Sultanate by sitting on the throne and compelled his nobles to show formal respect to him in the darbar (court) and even outside. He framed certain rules which were observed by all his nobles and governors to honour the Sultan. The governors were asked to receive his firmans (orders).

Efficient Spy System

Sikandar did not distinguish between the rich and the poor while dispensing justice. He organised an efficient espionage system which helped him in keeping his nobles under his control. He posted spies and informers at every important place including the houses of his nobles. His system proved very much efficient and he was so well-informed about

everybody and everything significant in the state so that the people believed that the Sultan was assisted by supernatural powers. All these measures succeeded and Sikandar Shah was successful in controlling tendencies of tribal independence of his nobles. However, he was not cruel or disrespectful in his treatment towards his nobles.

Economic Policy

Sikandar Shah was a laborious Sultan. He worked hard from morning till midnight to supervise the administration. He encouraged trade and agriculture. He abolished all internal trade duties. He was provided with a rate-list of all articles every day so that he could assess the economic condition of common people. He maintained peace and order within his kingdom. All this helped in the economic prosperity of the state.

He distributed food, clothings, money, etc. to the poor every day. He cared for capable and learned people whose name-list was handed over to him after every six months and each of whom was provided economic help from the state according to one's capability. Thus, the reign of Sikandar Shah was that of peace, order, prosperity and progress.

Religious Policy

Sikandar Shah, however, behaved as a fanatic in religious matters and proved intolerant of other faiths. Contemporary historians Nizammuddin Ahmed wrote: "His (Sikandar's) bigotry in Islam was as great that in this regard he went beyond the bounds even of excess. When he became the Sultan he destroyed Hindu temples, broke their images and raised mosques in their places". According to a contemporary historian he broke the sacred image of the temple of Jwalamukhi at Nagarkot and gave its pieces to butchers to use them as weights. He destroyed the temples and their images at Mathura, Mandrail, Narwar, Chanderi, etc. He prohibited the Hindus to shave their hairs and take bath in the river Yamuna at Mathura. He encouraged the Hindus for conversion to Islam.

Sikandar also tried to check certain bad customs of Islam. He prohibited the processions of Tazias at the festival of Moharram. He forbade the visit of Muslim women to the shrines of saints. He ordered the destruction of the mosques at Jaunpur built up by Sharqi rulers though withdrew his orders afterwards on the advice of the Ulema.

Patronage of Literature and Arts

Notes

Sikandar was well-versed in Persian and wrote poems in that language under the pen name of 'Gulrukhi'. He honoured learned men, encouraged education particularly among children of his Afghan nobles so as to make them cultured. He tried to convert mosques as centres of education, built them on a large scale and appointed one religious preacher, one teacher and one scavenger in each of them at state expenses. His court became a centre of learning due to his patronage to scholars. Seventy learned men discussed academic and religious problems every night by the side of his bed. He called two eminent philosophers-Sheikh Abdullah and Sheikh Azizullah from Tulamba to improve the system of education in his empire. Many scholarly works in Sanskrit were translated into Persian during his time. A Sanskrit treatise on medicine was translated into Persian by his orders and was titled *Farhang-i-Sikandari*. The Hindus and the Muslims felt interested in reading each other's literature.

Sikandar patronised fine arts as well. He himself was interested in music and enjoyed Sehnaï very much. A reputed work on music titled *Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi* was prepared during his reign. He built many mosques, a tomb at the grave of his father. He also founded the city of Agra.

An Estimate

Thus, Sikandar Lodi was considered as the most successful ruler of the Lodi dynasty. Whatever he inherited from his father, he extended and consolidated it further. He extended his empire, administered it better and raised the lost prestige of the Sultan both among his nobles and subjects. K.S. Lal writes: "Sikandar Shah had ruled for twenty-nine years full of glory and distinctions. He was the greatest rulers of the Lodi dynasty, and outshone both his father Bahlul and his son Ibrahim". In his last days, he went to Bayana and after returning from there, he fell ill and died at Delhi on 21 November, 1517 CE.

3.2.5 Sultan Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526 CE)

After the death of Sultan Sikandar Lodi, important nobles unanimously decided to make Ibrahim, the eldest son of the Sultan, would be the ruler at Delhi, while his younger brother Jalal Khan would be the

ruler at Jaunpur. Ibrahim ascended the throne of Delhi and assumed the title of “*Shah*”. Ibrahim Lodi remained the last ruler of the Lodi dynasty.

Important Features of Ibrahim Lodi's Reign

Most important features of Ibrahim Lodi's reign, which finally resulted in the decline of the Delhi Sultanate are:

1. Conflict against his brother Jalal Khan
2. The conquest of Gwalior
3. Conflict with the state of Mewar
4. Conflict against the Afghan nobility

Conflict against his brother Jalal Khan

When Ibrahim ascended the throne of Delhi he accepted his brother, Jalal Khan, as the ruler of Jaunpur. But soon changed his mind and recalled Jalal Khan even before he Kalpi. He even ordered the nobles at Jaunpur and Bihar not to obey Jalal Khan. Jalal Khan, understood the conspiracy and refused to come to Delhi. He declared himself the Sultan at Kalpi and called himself as Sultan Jalal-ud-din. It resulted in a serious conflict between the two brothers. Jalal Khan was ultimately, defeated. He was given shelter by the Raja of Gwalior and then by the Raja of Gonda. The latter imprisoned him and sent him to Ibrahim.

Ibrahim sent Jalal Khan to the fort of Jhansi but got him poisoned in the way. Ibrahim, thus, saved the division of his empire. But this act of Ibrahim created distrust upon him among many Afghan nobles.

Conquest of Gwalior

Ibrahim desired to conquer Gwalior. Previous Sultans of Delhi including Sikandar Lodi had tried but could not succeed in its conquest. But the immediate reason for his conquest was the King of Gwalior had provided shelter to Jalal Khan, brother of Ibrahim Lodi. Besides, the then ruler of Gwalior, Vikramajit proved to be an incapable ruler, unlike his father, Man Singh. Ibrahim sent a large army under Azam Humayun Sarwani to attack Gwalior. Vikramajit put up a brave resistance but failed to defend the fort for long and surrendered. Gwalior was annexed to the Delhi Sultanate. However, Ibrahim liberally granted the jagir of Shamsabad to Vikramajit.

Conflict with Mewar

Encouraged by his success against Gwalior, Ibrahim planned to conquer Mewar. Mewar was the most powerful and respected state of Rajasthan at that time. Its ruler was Rana Sangram Singh, popularly known as Rana Sanga. He was an ambitious and valiant ruler. Both Rana Sanga and Ibrahim Lodi desired to have hold on Malwa. Malwa at this time was ruled by Mahmud Khalji II. He approached the rulers of Gujarat and Delhi, to help him against the growing power and influence of his own minister, Medini Rai. Sikandar Lodi had tried to help him during his reign. Medini Rai, with the support from Rana Sanga of Mewar had thwarted the attempts of the rulers of Gujarat and Delhi. Thus, Rana Sanga had succeeded in extending his influence over Malwa.

Ibrahim Lodi, who himself desired to bring Malwa under his control, decided to conquer Mewar first. Rana Sanga had provoked his anger further, by capturing some places of the Delhi Sultanate during the revolt of Jalal Khan. Hence, Ibrahim waged a war against Rana Sanga. Both the leader met in the battle field of Khatauli near Gwalior in 1517-1518 CE. After a fierce battle, Rana Sanga lost his left hand and wounded in one of his legs. Yet, Ibrahim was defeated and had to retreat. In 1518-19 CE, Ibrahim again took up the offensive but was again defeated near Dholpur. Undeterred, Ibrahim continued his conflicts against Mewar several times without any success. Thus, Ibrahim failed to conquer Mewar. He also lost his prestige and resources. Besides, the Rajputs succeeded in capturing the territory up to Bayana.

Conflict against the Afghan nobility

Ibrahim came in serious conflict with his Afghan nobility. The rebellion of Jalal Khan had made him suspicious of his nobles. He therefore, desired to keep them under his strict control. The nobles found his actions suspicious and his attitude overbearing and unreliable. But the main issue involved in the conflict between Ibrahim and his Afghan nobles was the concept of absolute monarchy of the Sultan on the one hand, and on the other hand, the Afghan concept of regarding the Sultan as one among equals.

Ibrahim started behaving as an absolute despot. Unlike his father who had slowly asserted royal authority without outraging the sentiments of Afghan nobles, Ibrahim decided to centralize all powers by the outright suppression of Afghan nobility. He declared that 'kingship knows no

kinship' and treated his nobles only as his subordinates. He compelled his nobles to stand in his court with folded hands across their chests. He suspected all Afghan nobles of the time of his father and resolved to kill them all or to reduce them to absolute submission. It proved to be a great mistake of Ibrahim.

When Ibrahim tried to destroy the powerful nobles with a view to establish a despotic monarchy, he lost on both grounds. He neither could command their respect nor could utilize their strength in order to strengthen himself or his empire. On the contrary, he forced them to challenge his authority and rise in open revolt. Ibrahim, therefore, wasted his energy and strength of the empire in fighting against his rebellious nobles most of the time during his reign.

Ibrahim further enraged the old nobility by deliberately dishonouring them by reducing their status and raising younger ones to their posts. Miyan Bhua, the *vazir* who was loyally serving Lodi Sultans from the last twenty-eight years was imprisoned simply because of his old age, and raised his son to the position of *vazir*. It was foolish to depend on the loyalty of one whose father was in prison. Thus, Ibrahim annoyed a large section of the Afghan nobility.

The dissatisfaction of the Afghan nobles resulted in open revolt when Azam Humayun was thrown in prison. His second son Islam Khan revolted at Kara and was soon joined by two other nobles. The Sultan's army under Ahmad Khan was defeated by the rebels. The revolt spread in the entire area from Kara to Kannauj. The rebels continued the revolt for several months. The Afghan nobles were killed from both the sides. Therefore, a holy man, Shaikh Raju Bukhari, tried for a peaceful settlement but failed. Finally, Ibrahim succeeded not only in suppressing this revolt but also in breaking the power of the Afghan nobility. But at the same time he lost best of the Afghan soldiers and chiefs. Their absence had certainly weakened the power of the Afghans as well as that of the Delhi Sultanate. Ibrahim had destroyed the very source of the strength of his empire.

First Battle of Panipat (1526 CE)

Ibrahim became more insolent towards his nobles after his success in this battle. Bahadur Khan (Bahar Khan) declared himself independent ruler in Bihar and assumed the title of Sultan Muhammad. The governor

of Ghazipur, Nasir Khan Nuhani and many other disaffected nobles supported Sultan Muhammad, who with an army of nearly one lakh horsemen occupied all territory from Bihar to Sambhal. He succeeded in defeating the army of Delhi several times. Therefore, Ibrahim called up on Daulat Khan Lodi, governor of Punjab, for help. Daulat Khan sent his son, Dilawar Khan to Agra to assess the situation. But Ibrahim Lodi terrorised Dilawar Khan who then secretly slipped away from Agra and informed his father the treacherous plan of Sultan Ibrahim. Daulat Khan, therefore, instead of going for the help of Ibrahim invited Babur, the ruler of Kabul, to attack India.

At the same time, Alam Khan Lodi, uncle of Ibrahim who had been in Gujarat, also invited Babur to attack India. Babur who himself was anxious to attack India was encouraged by these invitations. He attacked India in 1524 CE, as far as Lahore and defeated one army of Delhi which was sent against him. But, then he returned. Daulat Khan who had developed suspicion against Babur now made a common cause with Alam Khan and attacked Delhi in 1525 CE. But they were defeated by Ibrahim.

Babur again started on his Indian campaign from Kabul in November 1525 CE. Daulat Khan, Dilawar Khan and Alam Khan joined him and he easily, conquered Punjab. Babur reached the plain of Panipat. Ibrahim also reached there to give him a battle. But, by then, Ibrahim had reduced much of his strength due to his conflicts with Rana Sanga. The rulers of Malwa and Gujarat were desirous of his defeat and he had lost all his empire in the east. The first battle of Panipat took place on 21 April 1526 CE. Though Ibrahim fought bravely, he was defeated and killed on the battlefield. With this, the rule of the Lodi dynasty and the history of the Delhi Sultanate had ended paving way for the Mughals to make their entry in India.

An Estimate

Ibrahim was courageous, a dauntless soldier and a fairly successful commander. When his soldiers were falling in the battle field of Panipat, he did not withdraw himself from the battle of Panipat and died fighting. Ferishta wrote: "He fought to the bitter end and died like a soldier." Niamatullah also wrote: "No Sultan of India except Sultan Ibrahim has been killed on the battlefield." Thus, Ibrahim was unique in chivalry, courage and determination.

But, Ibrahim was rash and impolitic. L. P. Sharma states that “Ibrahim failed to understand the character and sentiments of his own race. He decided to crush the power of his nobility and remained adamant on it till end. He lost several opportunities to compromise with them due to his adamant nature. It resulted in a direct conflict between the Sultan and his nobles which certainly weakened the empire. Of course, Babur won the battle of Panipat because of his better weapons, strategy and generalship, yet, it is certain that if he would have faced the united Afghan empire extending from Punjab to Bihar his task would have been certainly difficult. Sultan Ibrahim had reduced his military strength, his territory and his resources in fighting his own Afghan nobles. Therefore, the battle of Panipat was a contest between two unequal powers in which Ibrahim, being weaker, was sure to be defeated.”

3.2.6 Summary

From this Lesson, it is clear that, the Afghan rulers were the one among the powerful rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. The founder of the dynasty Bahlul Lodi tried to consolidate his power with the help of Afghan nobility and gave them several powers. Sikandar Lodi tried to control them very effectively, but it was the suspicious nature of Ibrahim that ruined his relationship with the Afghan nobles. Their destruction also led to the fall of the Sultanate. However, in between these wars and conflicts, the Lodis took some time off to patronize literature, arts and architecture. They also provided able and efficient administration to their subjects.

3.2.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write a note on Bahlul Lodi and his achievements.
2. “Sikandar Lodi was the greatest among Lodi Sultans”. Discuss
3. “Ibrahim Lodi’s Afghan policy was the cause for the downfall of the Sultanate.” Comment.

3.2.8 Suggested Readings

- A. L. Srivatsava, *The Delhi Sultanate*
L. P. Sharma, *History of Medieval India*.

Lesson-3.3: DECLINE OF DELHI SULTANATE

Notes

3.3.1 Objectives

3.3.2 Introduction

3.3.3 Causes for the decline of the Delhi Sultanate- Nature of Kingship

3.3.4 Conflict between the Nobility and the Sultans

3.3.5 Crisis in Revenue Administration

3.3.6 Responsibility of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

3.3.7 Rise of Regional States

3.3.8 The Mongol Invasions

3.3.9 Summary

3.3.10 Self- Assessment Questions

3.3.11 Suggested Readings

3.3.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Analyse the factors responsible for the decline of Delhi Sultanate
- Assess to what extent the Tughlaqs are responsible for the decline of the Sultanate.

3.3.2 Introduction

The rule of Delhi Sultanate lasted for three centuries (1206-1526 CE) with five different dynasties ruling India. During these three centuries they introduced many administrative changes and faced internal strife and external dangers. While the continuous struggle between the nobility and the Sultans was the major cause for the decline of the Sultanate, there are also other factors that contributed towards the gradual decline of the Delhi Sultanate. In this Lesson, you will understand the various factors that were responsible for the decline of the mighty empire of the Delhi Sultanate.

3.3.3 Causes for the decline of Delhi Sultanate: Nature of Kingship

Under the Delhi Sultans, there was no clear and well-defined law of succession. Hereditary principle was accepted but not adhered to. The law of primogeniture, where the eldest son would succeed to the throne was not followed. Thus, in the absence of any succession rule, there were intrigues to usurp the power. After Aibak's death, it was not his son Aram Shah but his slave and son-in-law Iltutmish who captured the throne.

Iltutmish's death (1236 CE) was followed by a long period of struggle and strife when finally Balban, Iltutmish's slave came to power.

The struggle for power again started soon after Balban's death. The power of the 'sword' remained the main deciding factor for kingship. Subsequent successions to power happened by slaying the ruler. Kaiqubad was killed by Jalaluddin Khalji who laid the foundation of the Khalji rule. In 1296 Alauddin Khalji, killed Jalaluddin Khalji and occupied the throne. Alauddin Khalji's death signaled civil war and scramble for power. Muhammad Bin Tughluq's reign weakened due to the rebellions of Amirs. Rivalries that followed after Firoz Tughluq ultimately led to the rise of the Sayyids (1414-51 CE). With the accession of the Lodis (1451-1526 CE) a new element, the Afghans was added. Afghan polity was more tilted towards decentralization that created fissures in the end.

3.3.4 Conflict between the Nobility and the Sultans

The nobility under the Sultanate played a destructive role in weakening the Sultanate. Under the Ilbarite rule (1206-90 CE), their conflicts usually revolved around three issues: succession, organization of the nobility and division of economic and political power between them and the Sultans. When Qutbuddin Aibak became the Sultan, his authority was not accepted by the influential nobles. Later, Iltutmish's organization of the Forty nobles (*Turkan-i chahilgani*) suffered with internal strifes and broke down after his death. During Balban's reign, the influence of the *Turkan-i chahilgani* was minimised. Many nobles of the Forty were poisoned to death and the void created in the administration could not be filled with new nobles appointed by Balban. This situation inevitably led to the fall of the Ilbarite rule, paving the way for the Khaljis.

The reign of Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316 CE) saw a broadening in the composition of nobles. He did not admit of monopolisation of the state by any one single group of nobles. State offices were open to talent and loyalty. Besides, he controlled them through various measures like increasing the land revenue and hike in salaries. But this situation was short-lived. The death of Alauddin Khalji brought out once again the dissensions and conspiracies of the nobles, leading to the elimination of the Khaljis as rulers.

As for the Tughluqs, Muhammad Tughluq made attempts to organize nobles again, but all his efforts failed to put them under check.

Even the Khurasanis, whom he used to call "Aizzah" (the dear ones), betrayed him. Twenty-two rebellions by the nobles took place during his reign. Under these circumstances, Firoz Tughluq tried to pacify nobles by giving many concessions like making their iqtas hereditary. The appeasement policy of the sultan pleased the nobles, but in the long run, it proved disastrous.

Under the Sayyids (1414-51 CE) and the Lodis (1451-1526 CE), the situation became even worse. Sikandar Lodi made the last attempt to prevent the looming catastrophe. But dissensions among the Afghans and their unlimited individual ambitions hastened the final demise of the Sultanate.

3.3.5 Crisis in Revenue Administration

Iluttmish had introduced a sound system of revenue assignments (*iqta*) through which the vast bureaucracy was maintained. However, this edifice was weakened when Firoz Tughluq made the revenue assignments hereditary and permanent. Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517 CE) stopped to reclaim the balance (*fawazil*). The tendency of the principal assignees to sub-assign their territories also increased greatly during his reign. All this had deep implications. It meant not only loss of vast revenue resources to the state exchequer but by making the assignments permanent the Sultan allowed the assignees to develop strong local roots which led to wide-scale corruption and turbulence.

3.3.6 Responsibility of the Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

The Tughlaqs established the most extensive empire among all the dynasties of the Delhi Sultanate. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq annexed a large part of the South India. Muhammad bin Tughlaq's period witnessed the rise of Delhi Sultanate to the zenith of the empire. Muhammad Bin Tughlaq expanded the empire both as a prince and the Sultan. But due to lack of proper means of transportation and communication, it became unwieldy to control such a vast empire.

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq also failed both in his foreign and internal policy. He could not regain Bengal and the south. Even the influence of Sultanate was very weak on Gujarat and Sind. The schemes of reforms introduced by Muhammad-Bin Tughlaq failed miserably. These reforms had brought in the economic ruin of the empire. Muhammad Bin Tughlaq also failed to protect and consolidate even that empire which he had

inherited from his father. He bequeathed to Firuz a shrinking and bankrupt empire. Hence, most of the historians consider blame Muhammad Bin Tughlaq as responsible for the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate

3.3.7 Rise of Regional States

The clashes between the nobles and the Delhi Sultans marred the Sultanate from the beginning of its foundation. But, so long as the centre was powerful to retaliate, the rebellions were successfully crushed. Signs of physical disintegration were witnessed for the first time during Muhammad Tughluq's reign in 1347 CE with the establishment of the Bahamani kingdom. The Timurid invasion exposed the weakness of the Sultanate. Many independent kingdoms of Bengal, Malwa, Jaunpur and Gujarat were created, thus shrinking the Sultanate to the radius of 200 miles around Delhi. Further, the loss of provinces also curtailed the vast revenue resources of the state. This, in turn disabled the centre to wage long wars and organise campaigns against the refractory elements. The situation became so critical under the Sayyids and the Lodis that even for regular revenue exactions the Sultans had to send yearly campaigns.

3.3.8 The Mongols Invasions

The Mongol danger first appeared during the reign of Iltutmish which he had overcome it through diplomacy. Their invasions continued up to the period of Muhammad Tughluq with intervals. Balban, Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq were very much conscious of the Mongol assaults and resisted them successfully. Much money and time had to be spent and thousands of soldiers were killed. However, the Mongol invasions were only occasional and did not cause much damage to the economy or the state apparatus of the Sultanate in any substantial manner.

Thus, all the above stated causes led to the gradual decline of the Delhi Sultanate. Historians also blame the Tughlaqs and their policies as the principal cause of not only the decline of the Tughlaq dynasty but also the ultimate decline of the Delhi Sultanate.

3.3.9 Summary

In this Lesson, you have learnt the various factors for the decline of the Delhi Sultanate. It is apparent, that the ambition of the Delhi Sultans like Alauddin Khalji, Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq and Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

made it unwieldy to administer such a vast empire. The weak successors could not arrest the revolts by the local rulers. Further the administrative structure also proved vulnerable for the state. Furthermore, the Delhi Sultanate was frequently invaded by Mongols and Timur which weakened their power and devastated the capital city of Delhi. The successors of Tughlaqs namely the Sayyids and the Lodis confined their power to the Delhi. The final blow to the Delhi Sultanate was given by Mughals, when Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat.

3.3.10 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the factors for the decline of the Delhi Sultanate.
2. “Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was the main cause for the decline of the Delhi Sultanate”. Comment.

3.3.11 Suggested Readings

Vipul Singh, *Interpreting the Medieval History*, Vol. I.

L. P. Sharma, *History of Medieval India*.

Lesson-4.1: ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE

- 4.1.1 Objectives
- 4.1.2 Introduction
- 4.1.3 Theory of Kingship under the Sultanate
- 4.1.4 Central Government
- 4.1.5 Provincial Administration
- 4.1.6 Village Administration
- 4.1.7 Revenue Administration
- 4.1.8 Military Administration
- 4.1.9 Judicial Administration
- 4.1.10 Summary
- 4.1.11 Self- Assessment Questions
- 4.1.12 Suggested Readings

4.1.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Learn about the nature of Turkish administration and its relationship with the Islamic law in India
- Understand the changes in the administration of provinces, revenue, military and judiciary
- Know the new elements introduced in Indian administration under the Sultanate rule.

4.1.2 Introduction

In the last lessons, we have seen how the Turks and Afghans established themselves in India as invincible rulers. Their rule had brought in many changes in India in the fields of administration, economy, society, religion and culture. In administration, one could see many changes. As a rule in Islamic religion, the *Shariat* is above everybody and every law. Even the *Khalifa* is under it. Therefore, the primary duty of every Muslim ruler was to follow the laws of the *Shariat* in administration. Therefore, in administration we can see largely the influence of the Islamic law. However, there were also instances where, the Muslim rulers of India deviated from the Islamic law and ruled according to their will. In this Lesson, you will learn about the nature of Islamic kingship in India and

the administration of newly conquered territories by dividing them as central, provincial and local level administration. Further, you will also learn about the military, judicial and revenue administration carried out by the Turkish rulers in India.

4.1.3 Theory of Kingship under the Sultanate

In theory the Muslim state was a theocracy – i.e., head of the State was also the religious head. He derived this position and authority from the God. Thus the **Caliph** was the supreme head of the whole Muslim world. But before the Turks came to India the Caliphate disintegrated and the powers were divided. Religion was looked after by the *Ulema* and the administration was managed and supervised by the Sultan. However, their policies were influenced by the *Ulema* and Islam was accepted as the religion of the State. Thus the Delhi Sultanate emerged as a theocratic state.

1) Caliph-Sultan relationship Most of the Sultans regarded *Caliph* as the legal sovereign. Most of the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate called themselves as the *Naib* (deputy) of the Caliph, indicating their subordinate position. Caliph's name was included in the *Khutba* (prayer) and *Sikka* (coin). But some Delhi sultans deviated from this practice. For instance, Balban called himself the 'Shadow of God'. Muhammad Bin Tughlaq did not mention the name of *Caliph* anywhere. Only 3 rulers namely, Iltutmish, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq and Firuz Shah Tughlaq sought and secured a *Mansur* or 'letter of Investiture' from the *Caliph*.

2) Law of Succession: According to Islamic Law the following essential attributes are required to be a sovereign:

- He should be a Male adult.
- He should not suffer from any physical disability.
- He should be a free born Muslim, having faith in Islam and acquainted with its doctrines.
- He should be elected by the people.

But in practice there were several violations. Razia Sultana was a woman. Mohammad Bin Tughlaq when he ascended the throne was a minor. Kaiqubad was a paralytic and Nasiruddin Khusrau did not respect Islam.

Allauddin Khalji admitted his ignorance of *Shariat*. And as far as election is concerned it never existed in Islam.

Notes

4.1.4 Central Government

The Sultan: The Sultan was the head of Central Government. He enjoyed absolute powers in every sphere of the state. All legislative, executive and judicial powers were concentrated in him. He was also the highest Legal head of the State. He acted as the Chief Executive and the highest Court of Appeal. He was the Chief of armed forces and made appointments of all the higher civil and military posts. The nobility wielded power if the ruler was weak. Sometimes, the *Ulema* also influenced in policy making. However, Alauddun Khalji and Mubarak Khalji did not accept the interference of the *Ulema* in the state affairs. The main responsibility of the Sultan was to protect the state from the foreign invasions and maintain peace and order within the empire.

Minister and Officers

To carry out the administration effectively, the Sultan was assisted by number of ministers and officers, who constituted the core of bureaucracy. They were placed directly under the control of the Sultan. Ministers and officers who assisted the Sultan are as follows:

- a) **Naib Sultan (Naib-i-Mamlakat):** This post was generally made only when a ruler was weak or a minor. He enjoyed practically all powers of the Sultan and on his behalf exercised general control over the various departments of the Government.
- b) **Wazir:** The Prime Minister was called as the Wazir. He was the head of Finance Department called *Diwan-i-wizarat*. He supervises not only income and expenditure of the state but also all other departments. The position of Wazir is next to the Sultan, if there was no *naib*. Whenever, the Sultan was ill or not in the kingdom, the Wazir can make all the appointments to different posts. In performing his duties, the Wazir was assisted by :
 - (i) Naib Wazir: He acted as his Chief Deputy.
 - (ii) Mushrif-i-mamalik was the Accountant General who maintained a record of accounts received from the Provinces and other Central Government Departments.
 - (iii) Mustaufi-i-mamalik was the Auditor General who audited the accounts and supervised expenditure.

c) **Ariz-i-mumalik:** He was the head of the Military Department called *Diwan-i-ariz*. He was next to Wazir in importance, but not Commander-in-Chief of army, since the Sultan commanded all the armed forces. He enjoys a special responsibility to recruit soldiers, fixed their salaries arranged for the supplies of arms and armaments and other equipment. Inspected and maintained the descriptive roles of horses and men.

d) **Diwan-i-Risalat:** He was the minister of foreign affairs and looked after the diplomatic relations with foreign states and welfare of foreign diplomats and ambassadors.

e) **Sadr-us-Sudur:** He was the head of the public charities and ecclesiastical department. He made grants in cash or land for the construction and maintenance of Mosques, towns, Khanqahs and Madrasas. He also granted allowances to the learned, the saintly, the orphans and disabled people. It had a separate treasury which received collections from **Zakat** (a tax collected from rich Muslims). These funds were used only for the welfare of Muslims.

f) **Qazi-ul-quzat:** He was the highest judicial officer in the state next to the Sultan. Qazis were appointed in various parts of the empire to dispense civil justice based on Muslim law (Shariat). The Hindus were governed by their own personal laws, dispensed by Panchayats.

g) **Diwan-i-khas (Amir-Munshi):** He was the Head of the Records Department, known as *Diwan-i-Insha*. The *farmans* of Sultan were issued from his office and all high level correspondence also passes through his hands. He was assisted by a large number of *dabirs* (writers) in his work.

h) **Barid-i-Mumalik:** He was the head of information and intelligence department. He was responsible for the espionage system. Only noblemen who enjoyed fullest confidence of the Sultan were appointed as the Chief *barid*.

Other Administrative Offices:

Apart from the above mentioned ministers, the Sultan also created other departments and appointed other officers to carry on specific duties. For example, Muhammad bin Tughlaq created a new department called *diwan-i-kohi* or the department of agriculture. The Sultan also kept his personal bodyguards and other officers to manage his household. Among them were:

- (1) *Vakil-i-dar mahal*: Looked after the royal palace and personal attendants of the sovereign.
- (2) *Barbak*: Looked after royal court by maintaining the dignity of the court and assigning to nobles a place in accordance with their ranks and status.
- (3) *Amir-i-hajeb*: Scrutinize all visitors to the courts and checked court etiquette.
- (4) *Amir-i-shikai-shahir*: Organized royal hunts for the sultan and other nobles.
- (5) *Amir-i-majlis-shahi*: Made arrangements for assemblies, feasts, festivals and other special celebrations.
- (6) *Sar-i-jandar*: Chief body guard of the Sultan and also the head of all bodyguards.

The Sultan also maintained *karkhanahs* to manufacture different articles such as cloth, arms, etc. and various officers were appointed there. Though they did not enjoy the rank of ministers, some of them were close to the Sultan as they looked after his personal security and enjoyed considerable influence.

4.1.5 Provincial Administration

Provincial Administration

The kingdom of the Delhi sultans was divided into provinces and tributary states. The tributary states were the south Indian kingdoms which were defeated by the Delhi Sultans and who had accepted the suzerainty of the Sultan and agreed to pay annual tribute. Therefore, the Central government did not interfere in the internal affairs of Tributary States as long as they did not threaten the safety of the kingdom.

Provincial Government was a replica of the central government. The governor also called as *wali*, *muqti*, *naib* and *sultan* (the last two applied only to the governors of distant provinces) enjoyed unlimited powers. They were directly responsible to the central government for proper administration of the provinces.

During the early stages of the Sultanate, the empire was divided into provinces for the convenience of administration. These provinces were called *iqtas*. The number of *iqtas* was not fixed. Hence, there was no

uniformity in administration. But from the reign of Alauddin Khalji,,*Iqtas* were divided into two categories.

1. *Iqtas* which were under the Delhi Sultanate from the beginning
2. *Iqtas* which were brought under the control of the Delhi Sultanate during the rule of Alauddin Khalji.

The head of the *iqta* was called by different names such as *naib Sultan*, *nazim*, *muqti* or *wali*. The *muqtis* or *walis* who were assigned unconquered or semi-conquered territory as ***iqta*** enjoyed more extensive powers as the Governor of land. They brought the newly added territories under the effective control of the Sultan.

They had the same powers like in the Center. Like Sultan at the Centre – the provincial governor had the powers of maintaining law and order, control over local army, regulations and customs, protection of the *ulema*, the warriors and other officials, takes measures for the safety of roads necessary for trade and communication and dispensation of state laws and justice. They sent annual report of the statement of income and expenditure to the Centre and deposited the balance amount in the treasury. They maintained large armies to be provided to the Sultan whenever required.

However, they were under the supervision of the central government carried on orders of the Sultan in their provinces. They could not engage in wars for territorial extension without the prior permission of the Sultan. They were not allowed to assume the title of the Sultan, to hold his own court, use a canopy or royal emblem. They were also not allowed to mint coins in their names and read Khutba in their names. They were rarely transferred and could be subdued by force. In later times, the Sultan conquered territories and appointed his favourites as Governors. The post of *mukti* was transferred more frequently.

The Central government also appointed various other officers such as the *wazir*, *ariz* and *qazi*.in each *iqta* to assist the provincial Governor. The other officers like the news reporters, revenue officers and others were appointed by the central government at the provincial level also. The efficient administration of an *Iqta* depended largely by the power of the Sultan and the *muqti* of the *Iqta*.

4.1.6 Village Administration

The Provinces (*Iqtas*) were further sub-divided into smaller units called *Shiqs* which were placed under the control of *Shiqqdar*. The *shiqqs* were further divided into *paraganas*. A number of villages collectively formed as *paraganas*. The *paragana* was headed by important officers such as *amil*, the *mushrif* (also known as *amin* or *munsif*), the treasurer, the *qanungo* and two *karkuns* (clerks) and an officer called *Faujdar*. His main duty was to maintain peace and order in the village. The *Paragana* was an important administrative unit because it was there that the government came into direct contact with the peasants.

The smallest unit of administration in the province was a village. This was administered by local hereditary officers and the panchayat of the village. Important officials of the village were the *Chaudhri*, the *Patwari*, the *Khut*, the *Muqaddam* and the or *chaukidar*. These village level officers helped the government in the collection of the revenue and enjoyed certain privileges. Villages enjoyed large measure of self-government. The main responsibility of the Panchayat of the village was to look after education, sanitation, etc. It also acted as a judicial body and resolved disputes among the villagers.

Apart from provinces administered by governors, there were centrally administered areas called *khalisa*. The officers in-charge of these areas directly functioned under the supervision of the *Wizarat*.

4.1.7 Revenue Administration

The main source of income/revenue to the state depended largely on the various taxes collected by the state. The taxes collected by the state are categorized into five types. These are:

(i) **Ushr**: It was a land tax collected from Muslim peasants. The state collected 10 percent of the produce on the land watered by natural resources and 5 percent on the land which enjoyed irrigational facilities provided by men.

(ii) **Kharaj**: It was a land tax charged from non-Muslims and ranged from $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ of the produce.

(iii) **Khams**: It was $\frac{1}{5}$ of the booty captured in the war and $\frac{1}{5}$ of the produce of mines or hidden treasures that was found. Four-fifth ($\frac{4}{5}$) of the booty went to the army or to the person who found the treasure.

(iv) **Jizya:** It was a religious tax imposed on non-Muslims. The non-Muslims were divided into three grades (a) The first grade of people paid 48 *dirhams* (b) the second grade paid 24 *dirhams* and (c) the third grade paid 12 *dirhams* annually.

Women, children, beggars, physically handicapped, blind people, old men, monks, priests and brahmans and all those who do not have income were exempted from this tax. However, Firoz Tughlaq imposed *Jizya* on the brahmans.

(v) **Zakat:** This was a religious tax imposed only on the rich Muslims. It consisted of 2 ½ percent of their income.

Besides these taxes the Sultans of Delhi imposed some other taxes during their regimes. For instance, Aluddin Khalji imposed house tax and grazing tax. Firuz Shah Tughlaq charged 10 percent on the produce, which utilised the irrigational facilities provided by the state. Trade tax of 5 percent was imposed on the Hindus and 2 ½ percent on the Muslims. In addition to these, the various presents and gifts offered to the Sultan by the people, nobles, provincial governors all constituted a source of income to the state.

The income thus accrued from various sources of income was spent on strengthening the army, payment of salaries to civil officers and for the personal expenditure of the Sultan and his palace.

Land Revenue:

The land revenues constituted the major source of income to the state apart from those mentioned above. During the Sultanate period, the land was classified into four categories, namely,

(a) The *Inam/ Waaf* land given to the people as a gift or charity, particularly to Muslim scholars and saints.

(b) The land which was under the control of the provincial governors such as *Walis* or *Muqtis*. They collected revenue from this land and the surplus revenues were deposited in the central treasury.

(c) Lands under the control of the Hindu chiefs, who paid annual tribute to the Sultan from the produce.

(d) The land which was directly administered by the Central government was called *Khalisa* land.

The Central government appointed *amil* or revenue-collector in each sub-division of the provincial government for the collection of these different types of land revenues.

The land revenue varied under different rulers. While the land revenue was fixed at 1/3 of the produce, Alauddin Khalji collected 1/2 of the produce. Usually tax was collected in cash. But Alauddin collected both in cash and kind. Except Alauddin and Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, no other Sultan collected revenue based on the measurement of land.

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq established a separate department of agriculture and appointed an officer call *diwan-i-kohi*, which used to carry on a state farming on fixed piece of land on experimental basis but failed. Firuz Shah Tughlaq waived the payment of *taqqavi* loans to be paid by the peasant.

The revenue system under the Delhi Sultanate suffered from certain defects. These are:

- (a) The assessment was arbitrary
- (b) There was no proper measurement of land
- (c) The land was given to contractors who extracted more revenue from the peasants.
- (d) Besides land revenue, the peasant was burdened with several other taxes.

4.1.8 Military Administration

Army constituted one of the core pillars of the Sultanate Empire. The might of the Sultan depended upon the strength of the army. The Turkish rulers had to face many internal revolts from the Hindu kings and some discontented provincial governors on the one hand and the recurrent Mongols on the other. Therefore, the Sultans were forced to maintain a huge army at the centre.

The Sultanate army consisted of four types of soldiers:

- 1) Those soldiers who were recruited by the Centre as soldiers of the army of the Sultan. These soldiers were called as *Khasah-Khail*. *Diwan-i-ariz* was responsible for the recruitment of soldiers and their maintenance. However, there was no regular course of training for these soldiers.
- 2) Those soldiers who were employed on permanent basis by nobles and provincial governors. The Sultan assigned jagirs to the nobles for the maintenance of army. The provincial governors met the expenses of their army from the income they received from their iqtas. Arisz was appointed to take care of the provincial army. The provincial governors placed their armies before the Sultan every year for inspection. These armies render their services to the Sultan whenever required.
- 3) Those soldiers who were recruited only in times of war on temporary basis and were paid only for that period.
- 4) Those Muslim soldiers who joined the army as volunteers at times of war against the Hindus. They regarded this war as Jihad or holy war. They did not receive any pay but given a share out of the war booty.

Apart from the above types of soldiers, the Sultanate army consisted of primarily cavalry, infantry and elephantry. The cavalry formed the backbone of the army. It consisted of two types, viz., (a) *Sauwar*- who kept only one horse and (b) *Do-aspa*- who kept two horses. The horses were imported from Arabia, Turkistan etc. The horsemen were equipped with two swords, one javelin and a bow and arrows with him along with shield, armour and head-gear for self-protection.

Elephantry constituted the second important wing of the army. Only the Sultans were allowed to keep war-elephants. There was a separate department for the training and maintenance of the war elephants.

The third part of the army consisted of foot-soldiers. They were called as *payaks*. They were armed with swords, spears and bow and arrows. The soldiers also used fire-balls, fire-arrows, snakes, stones, etc., which were hurled on the enemy with the help of gun-powder. The Persians, the Afghans, the Mongols, Indian Muslims, the Hindis were recruited as soldiers in the Sultanate army.

The Sultan kept permanent armies in every fort and at all strategic points within his kingdom. The forts were regarded as the main line of defence and were taken care. In most cases the Sultan or the provincial governor was the Commander-in-Chief of the army.

4.1.9 Judicial Administration

The Sultan was the highest judicial authority in the empire. He used to hold his judicial court twice a week and decided all types of cases. He was assisted by *Sadr-us-Sudur* or the chief *Sadr* in the dispensation of justice in the cases of religious nature. The Chief *Qazi* (*Qazi-ul-quzat*) assisted the Sultan in all other cases. In the provinces, the *Sadrs* and *Qazis* decided criminal and civil cases. The Panchayats decided cases in their respective villages.

The punishments were severe during the Sultanate period. The culprits were punished with seizure of their property and wealth, mutilation or death. The nature of justice depended on the personality of the Sultan.

The Sultans did not establish a separate police department. The police duties were performed by the military officers posted in their respective areas.

4.1.10 Summary

In this Lesson, you have learnt how the Delhi Sultanate established their rule in India. They carried an effective system of administration by following the Islamic law called the *Shariat*. The Sultan wielded all the powers at the helm of affairs. He was assisted by many officers who took care of the administration at the central, provincial and village levels. The major sources of revenue constituted the taxes and land revenues which supported the administration. As foreign rulers, they also had to face many challenges from the local rulers. Further, there was constant threat to the nascent empire from the Mongols. Hence the Sultans of Delhi had to maintain a huge army which consisted of infantry, cavalry and elephantry. The judicial administration was another feature of the Sultanate administration. This was though not secular in nature, yet most of the rulers tried to be impartial in delivering the justice. However, the Delhi sultanate also suffered from certain setbacks. The Sultanate consisted of five different dynasties and each dynasty adopted different mechanisms in their rule.

4.1.11 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Explain the salient features of the Central, provincial and village administration under the Delhi Sultans.
2. Describe the relationship between the Caliph and the king, with an emphasis on the theory of kingship under the Sultanate.
3. Discuss the main features of revenue administration of the Delhi Sultanates.
4. Describe how the military and judiciary were organized by the Sultans of Delhi.

4.1.12 Suggested Readings

L. P. Sharma, History of Medieval India

Vipul Singh, Interpreting Medieval India, Vol.I.

Lesson-4.2: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE

Notes

- 4.2.1 Objectives
- 4.2.2 Introduction
- 4.2.3 Economic Condition: Evolution of Iqta system
- 4.2.4 Reforms in agriculture
- 4.2.5 Urban economy
- 4.2.6 Social life under the Delhi Sultanate
- 4.2.7 Slavery
- 4.2.8 Position of Women
- 4.2.9 Entertainments
- 4.2.10 Summary
- 4.2.11 Self-Assessment Questions
- 4.2.11 Suggested Readings

4.2.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Learn about the economic activities during the Sultanate period
- Know about the new technologies introduced in India by the Turks and Persians
- Understand the society and social changes that occurred during this period.

4.2.2 Introduction

In this Lesson, you will learn about the economic and social life under the Delhi Sultanate. The establishment of Delhi Sultanate did not completely eliminate the older systems of agrarian structure, though the Sultanate introduced new ideas in agrarian structures and relationships. The Sultans tried to improvise agriculture and encouraged trade and commerce. This period witnessed revival of foreign trade. The economic changes in way influenced the society. Along with the Hindus, the new religious group viz., the Muslims now came to be added to the already existing society. In this Lesson, you shall learn the economic and social structure during the Delhi Sultanate.

4.2.3 Economic Conditions: Evolution of Iqta Syatem

The establishment of Delhi Sultanate did not completely eliminate the older systems of agrarian structure, though the Sultanate introduced

new ideas in agrarian structures and relationships. An important achievement of Delhi Sultans was systematization of agrarian exploitation. Initially land revenues came as tributaries from the defeated kings. After consolidating their position in India the Delhi Sultans classified the land into 3 categories:-

1. *Iqta* land: It is a land assigned to officials as *iqtas*.
2. *Khalisa* land / Crown land: This land was under the direct control of the Sultan. The revenues from these lands were meant for the maintenance of the court and the royal household.
3. *Inam* land (*madad-i-maash* or *waaf land*):- These were lands assigned or granted to pious persons and religious leaders and institutions.

Evolution of *Iqta* system

The *Iqta* system is a central Asian concept adopted in the Indian context. *Iqta* was a territorial area or unit whose revenues were assigned to officials in lieu of salaries. In India, *Iqta* system evolved in three different stages.

First stage (1206- 1290): During this period military commanders were assigned different regions as *iqtas*. Revenues collected from *iqtas* were used to maintain themselves and their troops. *Iqta* in this stage stood for not only a revenue unit but also as an administrative unit. Transfer of *Iqtas* from one person to another was rare in this period.

Second stage (1290-1351): During this stage, *Iqta* system was modified under the Khalji's and early Tughlaqs. More frequent transfer of *Iqtas* became the feature. The *iqtadars* or *muqtis* (officers in charge of *iqtas*) were insisted to submit the accounts of collection and expenditure regularly and send the balance to the treasury. An estimate of the revenue paying capacity of each area was prepared. The personal salaries of the offices in terms of cash and assignment of the *Iqtas* was fixed.

Third stage (1351-1526): During this stage, a reversal trend of the previous phase was adopted by Firuz Tughlaq. He granted a series of concessions to the officers. Revenues of the *iqtas* was fixed permanently. This allowed *muqtis* to increase revenue. The posts and the assignments of *iqtas* were made practically hereditary. The changes introduced by Firuz

Tughlaq were continued by all his successors and later by Sayyids and Lodis.

Notes

All the above developments in the *Iqta* system were basically due to the changes in the composition of the nobility under the Delhi Sultans.

Nobility initially was monopolized by the Turks. Later gradually others like the Persians, Afghans, Abyssinians, Indian Muslims, and others entered nobility, thus making it more cosmopolitan and heterogeneous.

The entry of new elements into the nobility under the Khaljis and Tughlaqs enabled Sultans to increase their control over *Iqta* system. But once the new elements settled and consolidated, they demanded more powers and privileges. This resulted in liberalization and decentralization under Firuz Shah Tughlaq.

4.2.4 Reforms in Agriculture

India was primarily an agrarian country. The economic prosperity of India depended on its fertile lands, with sufficient means of irrigational facilities both natural and man-made and the Indian peasant who depended solely on agriculture. India was also an industrial and commercial country before the advent of Delhi Sultanate. The products of India enjoyed name and popularity in the markets of the South-East, West and Central Asia as well as in Europe. India carried on brisk and favourable trade with distant countries which was another primary reason of its enormous wealth. The agricultural production and the foreign trade of India remained good even during the medieval period under the Sultanate.

The sultans of Delhi gave more importance to agricultural development. To enhance agricultural production, they provided irrigational facilities, sanctioned *takkavi* loans for different agricultural purposes, encouraged peasants to cultivate cash crops and superior crops. Rich crops, such as, wheat, cotton, rice, sugarcane, oilseeds, indigo, barley, maize, spices, cocoa-nuts, ginger, betel-leaf, betelnut, fruits of many varieties like mangoes, oranges, blackberries, etc. were produced in different parts of India. Rice of Sarsuti, sugar of Kannauj, wheat and betel-leaf of Malwa, wheat of Gwalior, ginger and spices of Malabar, grapes and pomegranates of Daultabad, betelnuts of the South and large variety of oranges were famous and popular even outside India.

According to Barbosa, "Bengal produced rice, sugarcane, cotton and ginger in abundance, Orissa was famous for its animal husbandry and fruit-gardens. Ganga-Yamuna Doab remained always famous for its fertility and large scale production of agriculture. Thus, agriculture was in a most advanced prosperous state in every part of India, which was one of the primary reason of its fabulous wealth." There was overall improvement in the quality of Indian fruits and the system of gardening. Waste land was granted to different people thereby extending the cultivated area.

4.2.5 Urban Economy

Development of Industries

New innovations were brought in the cotton textile industry and other new industries were introduced in India by the Delhi Sultans. In the cotton and textile industry, new techniques were introduced such as spinning wheel, cotton-carder's bow and weaver's treadles (foot pedals). In the silk Industry, Sericulture (production of raw-silk by rearing silk worms) was introduced. This made India less dependent on Iran and Afghanistan for raw silk.

The next important industry was the Paper industry. Production of paper was started by the Turks. It came to be extensively used in India from the 14th and 15th centuries CE. Ivory and sandalwood work were other important industries of India.

Other Crafts:- Leather-making, stone-cutting, sugar industry, metal working, carpet weaving etc., though did not witness any significant technological changes increased demands under the Sultans. The Sultans of Delhi had their own *karkhanas* to manufacture different articles for the royal purpose.

In the construction Industry, several new techniques like the vaulted (arched) roofing and the cementing lime were introduced. This made it possible to build large-roofed brick structures.

Mercantile activities

India had trade relations with Iran, Arabia, European countries, Africa, China, Malaya, Afghanistan, Central Asia, etc. Large number of commodities were exported to Persian Gulf and Red Sea (West Asia) and also to South East Asian Countries. Coastal and Sea trade was in the hands of the Jaina Marwaris, Gujaratis and Muslim Bohra merchants. Overland

trade with Central and West Asia was in the hands of the Multanis (mainly Hindus) and Khorasanis (Afghan Muslims).

Notes

Ibn Batuta described Delhi as the foremost trading centre of the world. Daultabad was famous for its pearl-trade. Brass was imported at the port of Dabhol from where it was distributed all over India. The port of Rander in Gujarat received all sorts of articles from China and Malacca islands from where they were sent to all parts of India.

Major exports from India included cereals, cotton and silken cloth, opium, indigo, sea-pearls, sandal-wood, saffron, ginger, sugar, cocoa-nuts, etc. The Indian imports were primarily, horses, salt, gold, silver, rose-water, coloured velvets, etc. from other countries.

In order to give further boost to commerce, the institution of dalals or brokers was introduced. The term 'Dalal' is an Arabic word which means, one who acts as an intermediary. The Dalals facilitated commercial transactions on a large scale. New roads were constructed and old roads were maintained from time to time to facilitate easy and smooth transport and communications. Sarais and rest houses were maintained for traders and merchants.

Coinage under the Sultanate

An increased agrarian production and growth in towns and cities had increased trade and commercial activities in Sultanate. The availability of several coins belonging to this period also indicates the growth of commercial transactions.

Iltutmish issued several types of the silver *tankas*. His early coins have king on horseback on the obverse. Later coins carry impressions of investitures received from the Khalifa of Baghdad, Al-Mustansir.

Gold *Dinars* were though minted by Masud, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, Balban and Jalal-ud-din Khalji, these were not common until the time of Alauddin Khalji who enriched his treasury by his conquests in South India. Alauddin's silver coins were plenty. He changed the design by dropping the name of the *Caliph* from the obverse and substituting the self-laudatory title 'the second Alexander' on the right hand of the Khalifate. His successor Mubarak's coins appear in square shape. It bears the titles like 'The Supreme head of Islam', 'the Khalifa of the Lord of Heaven and Earth'.

Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq was the first Indian sovereign to use the title 'Ghazi' (Champion of the faith) on his coins. Mohammad Bin Tughlaq was called as the 'Prince of Moneyers'. His coins surpass his predecessor in execution and in Calligraphy. He also issued large number of gold coins in different denominations. He did experiments with coins. There appears to have been two scales of division of coins— one for use at Delhi and other for Daulatabad in the South. In the former, silver *tanka* was divided into 48 *jitals* and in the latter into 50 *jitals*. The coins of the Lodi family bears close resemblance to that of the Sharqi kings of Jaunpur. Mints were established in Delhi.

Growth of Urban Centres:

The three hundred years rule of the Delhi Sultanate, witnessed the rise and growth of several new towns and cities in India. Some of these cities were Lahore and Multan (now in Pakistan), Broach, Cambay and Anhilwara (West India), Laknauti, Gaur and Sonargaon (East India), Daulatabad (Deccan), Delhi and Jaunpur (North India), etc. According Ibn Batuta (Moroccan traveller) 'Delhi' was the largest town in the Islamic East.

Changes in Urban Economy:

The changes in the urban economy can be attributed to several reasons. These can be mentioned as follows:

- 1) Immigration of artisans and merchants from the Islamic countries to India bringing with them their crafts, techniques and practices.
- 2) Abundant supply of docile trainable labour obtained through enslavement.
- 3) Delhi Sultan established large-scale revenue system through which large share of agricultural supply was appropriated for consumption in towns.
- 4) Contemporary historian Isami says that immigration and enslavement was responsible for the growth of urban centres and crafts and their sustenance was provided by the increase in the revenues with the establishment of the new land revenue system.

Thus, the Delhi Sultans despite their political upheavals, did not neglect to develop the rural and urban economies based on agricultural

and industrial development respectively. They introduced new innovations which transformed the character of Indian cities and villages.

Notes

4.2.6 Social Life under the Delhi Sultanate

Even before the Muslims came to India, the Hindu society was divided into different sections. The Hindus were divided among themselves on the basis of castes. With the invasions of the Muslims, the Hindus had strengthened their caste bonds in order to safeguard themselves from the onslaughts of the Muslims. This resulted into formation of new sub-castes and further divisions among them. The members of sub-castes imposed restrictions on inter-dining and inter-marriages with other sub-castes. Each one claimed superiority over others. Thus, the caste-system had become more intricate.

Conversions from one faith to another was an important feature during this period. The Muslim invaders forcefully converted Hindus to Islam. Initially, there were restrictions on the converted persons and were not allowed to come back to their old faith. But later some laxity was allowed. Thus for example, Harihara and Bukka, the founders of the Vijayanagara empire, who were forcibly converted to Islam were taken back to Hindu-fold. Sultan Firuz Tughluq and Sikandar Lodi had to punish certain Brahmanas who encouraged Muslims to accept Hinduism.

During the Sultanate period, the position of Hindus became precarious. They were treated as second rate citizens and were denied high positions in the offices of the state. Further, they had to pay higher taxes as compared to the Muslims. However, the Muslim state could not avoid taking the services of the Hindus, particularly in the revenue department. Trade and agriculture were also monopolised mostly by the Hindus. The Hindus were recruited in the army as well because of sheer necessity. Yet, the position of the Hindus remained weaker because of the prevalence of certain social evils such as untouchability, sacrifice of animals and even human beings, Sati, etc.

Apart from Hindus, there were also Muslims. These were classified as foreign Muslims and Indian converted Muslims. The foreign Muslims constituted the ruling class. They were the most privileged section who wielded great influence in society. They were appointed to the high offices in the state and received jagirs for rendering their services. They belonged to different nationalities such as the Persians, the Afghans, the Arabs, the

Turks, the Abyssinians, etc. The Turks claimed and maintained their superiority up to the thirteenth century. After the Khaljis came to power, the Turks lost their superior position. Thereafter the changed political circumstances and inter-marriages between different sections of foreign Muslims brought them all on par with each other.

The next section was that of the Indian Muslims. They were those low-caste Hindus who were either converted to Islam themselves or were descendants of converted Muslims. The foreign Muslims regarded them as low and were not given equal status with foreign Muslims either in society or in administration.

The caste-system of the Hindus affected the Indian Muslims. They continued to maintain divisions among themselves on the basis of their previous castes. Thus, both the foreign and Indian Muslims were divided among themselves on the basis of their different nationalities and birth.

The Muslims were also divided on the basis of religious sect, education and professions. The Sunnis and the Shiahs differed from each other on the basis of religious sects while soldiers and scholars were divided among each other on the basis of their professions. Yet, there was another class, that is, the Ulema. They constituted the religious community among the Muslims and claimed superiority over all others. The Ulema claimed to be the only interpreter of Islamic laws and therefore, wielded large influence not only among the Muslim populace but also in matters of administration except during the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji, Mubarak Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq. Traders, shopkeepers, artisans, peasants, etc. constituted the lowest cadre Muslims in the society.

4.2.1 Slavery

Slavery was prevalent both among the Muslims and the Hindus. In those times, slaves were sold and purchased in open market. The slaves were treated well though their property and lives were the property of their masters. The slaves of the Muslims were better off as compared to the slaves of the Hindus. The Sultans and nobles kept slaves in large numbers. Firuz shah Tughlaq purchased more than 80,000 slaves. The slaves under the Muslim rulers were provided education and training in military. They were also given an opportunity to rise in their lives so that many of them rose to positions of eminence in the state. Qutubuddin

Aibak, who was the first Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate was a slave of Muhammad of Ghor, who rose to political prominence.

Notes

4.2.8 Position of Women

The Hindu women enjoyed respect in their family, participated in religious ceremonies, were educated and many of them acquired scholarly fame as well. Yet, the status of the majority of women had deteriorated. There were many social evils in the society such as sati. Though, monogamy was the order of the day, the rich could keep many wives. The widows were not allowed to remarry. They either became sati at the funeral pyre of their husbands or passed their lives as women-hermits. The Muslims invaders either molested or captured Hindu women. This resulted in introducing the practice of child-marriages and purdah system. It also adversely affected their education and movements in the society. The birth of a daughter was regarded as a bad omen. This gave rise to the practice of female-infanticide.

However, the lower castes remained free from many of these social evils. There was no purdah system in them and their women were free to divorce and remarry. Even widow-marriages were permitted among them. Devadasi system was another social evil which was prevalent among the Hindus.

There were certain other changes which the Hindus accepted because of their contact with the Muslims. There were changes in their clothings, food-habits, social habits and certain customs as well.

Muslim women also did not enjoy a respectable status in the society. Polygamy was widely prevalent among the Muslims. Every Muslim had a right to keep at least four wives while the rich among them kept hundreds of wives or slaves. Purdah system was strictly observed among Muslim women. They were devoid of education. However, they were better placed in certain respects as compared to Hindu women. They could divorce their husbands, remarry and could claim their share in the property of their parents. There was no practice of sati among Muslim women.

Thus, it can be concluded that the position of women in India was much inferior to men during the period of the Sultanate and they suffered from many social evils pleasure and other handicaps. However, according to A. L. Srivastava, "the Brahmanas gradually liberalised their attitude towards the Sudras and permitted them to listen to the recitation of the

Puranas and engage themselves in trade of certain articles. In general, while the Hindus were mostly vegetarians, the Muslims were non-vegetarians. Except war-like castes and the Sudras, the Hindus used wheat, rice, pulses, vegetables, milk and articles made of milk as their staple food. Among the Muslims, the Sufis or the people who were under their influence avoided meat-eating. For the rest of them, meat was their desired food. Koran has prohibited the use of liquor to its followers. Yet, liquor and opium were consumed both by the Hindus and the Muslims. Even the efforts of Ala-ud-din to check consumption of liquor failed”.

4.2.1 Entertainments

The people engaged themselves in all sorts of entertainments. Different sports, hunting, duels among men, fighting among animals, Chaughan (horsepolo), etc. were their usual entertainments. Different fairs and religious festivals both among the Hindus and the Muslims were also celebrated with great pomp and gaiety. Holi, Diwali, Dasara were the principal festivals of the Hindus, while Id, Naurauj and Shabbe-rat were the important festivals of the Muslims.

However, the policy of religious intolerance of the Sultans and the Ulema did not allow a happy synthesis between the culture and values of the Hindus and the Muslims. While the Hindus showed tolerance in religious affairs, the Muslims were intolerant.

Both the Hindus and Muslims had contradictory values of life regarding religion and society between the Hindus and the Muslims. This prevented them to have cordial relations. They were frequently engaged conflicts during the entire period of the Sultanate. However, the Sufi and Bhakti saints tried to establish a society based on mutual respect by their preaching during this period.

4.2.1 Summary

This Lesson provided you insights into the economic and social life during the Delhi Sultanate period. Economically, the Delhi sultans made all efforts to extend agriculture and provided funding the construction of irrigational facilities. Many new crops and fruit bearing trees were introduced in India. Trade was revived with foreign countries and new technologies were introduced in textiles industry. New urban centres also emerged during this period. Social, the major change which was witnessed was the coming of the Muslims. They occupied highest positions. The

Hindus were forcibly converted or were looked down upon. The position of women was no less good. However, the sufi and bhakti saints tried to bring in some reconciliation in the society.

Notes

4.2.11 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Describe the economic condition of India during the Sultanate period.
2. Describe the chief features of urban economy during the Sultanate period.
3. Discuss the position of Hindus and Muslims during the medieval period.
4. Discuss the position of women during the medieval period.

4.2.1 Suggested Readings

L. P. Sharma, *History of Medieval India*.

Vipul Singh, *Interpreting Medieval India*, Vol. I.

Lesson-4.3: ART, ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURE UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE

4.3.1 Objectives

4.3.2 Introduction

4.3.3 Development of Art and Architecture under the Delhi Sultanate

- Factors for the growth of Indo-Islamic Architecture
- Main features of Islamic Architecture

4.3.4 The Imperial Style of Architecture

- The Ilbaris
- The Khaljis
- The Tughlaqs
- Features of Tughlaq Architecture
- The Lodis

4.3.5 Provincial Architecture

4.3.6 Hindu Architecture

4.3.7 Cultural Contributions of the Delhi Sultans

- Music
- Language and Literature

4.3.8 Evolution of Indo-Islamic Culture

- Factors for the growth of Indo-Islamic culture

4.3.9 Summary

4.3.10 Suggested Readings

4.3.11 Self- Assessment Questions

4.3.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Understand the contribution of Delhi Sultans to the development of art and architecture.
- Learn about the new styles of music and literary genres have evolved in India.
- Comprehend the evolution of composite culture in India during the reign of the Delhi Sultans

4.3.2 Introduction

The advent of Turkish rule in India during the medieval period heralded a new phase in the evolution of composite culture in India. This can be witnessed in the fields of art, architecture, music, dance, and so on.

In the field of architecture, each dynasty of the Sultanate adopted their own style. Along with the new elements, they also borrowed some of the Indian elements and adopted them in their architecture giving rise to the evolution of Indo-Islamic style of architecture. Similarly, in the fields of language and literature, we can see lot of influences. In this Lesson, you will learn about the important contributions of the Delhi Sultans to fields of art, architecture and culture of India.

4.3.3 Development of Art and Architecture under the Delhi Sultanate

In the field of architecture, the Delhi Sultans introduced three styles. The first style is the Delhi or the Imperial style. This style was patronized by the Sultans of Delhi. Therefore it includes all those buildings and monuments built by the Ilbaris, the Khaljis, the Tughlaqs, the Sayyads and the Lodis. The second style is the Provincial style of architecture. This grew under the patronage of the provincial rulers, who comprised mostly the Muslims. Though the Imperial style influenced it, yet, it evolved by its own giving regional character to it. The third one was Hindu architecture which was mostly developed under the Hindu kings of Rajasthan in north India.

Factors for the growth of Indo-Islamic Architecture

The style of architecture which evolved during this period was called as Indo-Islamic architecture because the Indian architecture influenced the Islamic architecture in India. This style of architecture is neither purely Islamic nor Hindu. It was rather the mixture of these two religious architectures. The Islamic architecture on the other hand, was also influenced by the architectural styles of Mesopotamia, Central Asia, Egypt, North Africa, South-east Europe, Afghanistan and so on. The Turko-Afghan rulers of India desired to construct monuments based on the style that existed in Iran and Central Asia. But the exact replicas of their building was not possible in India. There are several factors for that.

1. Firstly, they employed Indian craftsmen who had their own style and method of construction.
2. Secondly, Muslims rulers used the materials of the Hindu temples and palaces which they destroyed during the early period of their rule. They converted some of the Indian religious and secular buildings to suit their purposes.

3. Thirdly, both the Hindu and Islamic architecture used lot of ornamentation in their architecture. However, their use of ornamentation differed from each other. While the Hindu temples were decorated with the sculptures of gods and goddesses, and floral and animals, the Islamic architecture used geometrical patterns such as squares, rectangle, triangles, etc. It also inscribed Koran on their monuments.

Main Features of Islamic Architecture

The main features of Islamic architecture include the introduction of *mehrab* or arch, dome and *minar*. The use of arch and the dome had a number of advantages.

- It gives a clear view of large halls.
- It provides a pleasing skyline

The Turks used fine quality mortar in their buildings. They used slab and beam method which consists of putting one stone over another, harmonizing gap till it could be conversed by a capping stone or putting a beam over a slab of stones in a typical Indian Style. The Muslims applied Hindu scheme of ornamentation to decorate their arches or *mehrab*s. The *kalash* at the top of the Hindu temple was adopted by the Muslims by placing a dome on the top of their buildings.

In decorations they gave up human and animal figures in the buildings as found in Hindu architecture. But instead, they used geometrical and floral designs. Inscriptions on monuments contain verses from the Holy Quran. The Arabic script became work of art. The combination of these decorative devices was called as '*Arabesque*'. They also borrowed Hindu motifs such as bell-motif, lotus, etc. The skill of Indian stone-cutters was fully used. They added colour to their buildings by using red sand-stone yellow sand-stone and marble. Thus, in many ways the synthesis between the Hindu and the Muslim architecture is noted during this period.

4.3.4 The Imperial Style of Architecture

The Ilbaris

The Ilbaris were the first to introduce Islamic architecture in Delhi. Qutub-ud-din Aibak constructed the *Quwwat-ul-Islam* mosque near Qutb Minar in Delhi. It was originally a Jaina temple, which was first converted into Vishnu Temple and later into a Mosque by the Turks. He also

constructed another mosque at Ajmer called the *Dhai Ka Jhonpra*. It was earlier a monastery serving as a Sanskrit college.

The most magnificent building by Turks was Qutb Minar at Delhi. It was originally planned by Aibak but was completed by Iltutmish. It is a unique in many ways. Qutub Minar is purely in Islamic style and was intended to serve as a place for Muslims to conduct their prayers. It became famous as a tower of victory. The red and white sand stone and marble used in panels and in the top stages – gives it a ribbed effect. It's an impressive building. Fergusson remarked that "it is the most perfect example of a tower known to exist anywhere in the world". Iltutmish also constructed *Sultan-Ghari*, a tomb built for his eldest son. His other constructions includes *Hauz-i-Shamsi*, *Shamsi-Idgah*, the *Jami Masjid*, at Badaun and the *Atarkin-ka-Darwaza* at Nagaur (Jodhpur). Iltutmish also built his own tomb at Delhi which was considered as a landmark in the development of Indo-Islamic architecture.

The Khaljis

Alauddin Khalji had better economic resources, so built beautiful buildings. He built a capital at Siri, few kilometres away from the site around Qutb Minar. He built a place of thousand pillars. This city and the palace no longer survives. He added an entrance door to the Qutb Minar. It is called as 'Alai Darwaza'. It has arches of very pleasing proportions. It also contains a dome which for the first time was built on scientific lines. It has been considered as a beautiful specimens of Islamic art. According to Marshall, "the *Alai Darwaza* is one of the most treasured gems of Islamic architecture". He also constructed a magnificent tank called *Hauz-i-Alai* or *Hauz-i-Khas* near his newly constructed city of Siri.

The Tughlaqs

The Tughlaqs did not focus much on construction because of economic difficulties. Ghiyasuddin and Muhammad Bin Tughlaq built the huge palace-cum-fortress complex called Tughluqabad. Ibn Batuta wrote about this palace thus "it was constructed of golden bricks which, when the sun rose, shone so dazzling that no one could gaze at it steadily." However, the palace is now destroyed. They created a huge artificial lake around it by locking the passage of Yamuna.

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq built a tomb for Ghiyasuddin. It marks a new trend in architecture. He also constructed a new city of *Jahanpanah*

near old Delhi, the fort of Adilabad and some other buildings at Daulatabad.

Firuz Shah Tughlaq built the famous *Hauz-i- Khas* (a pleasure resort) and the palace fort known as Kotla Firuz Shah (Presently it is used as a Cricket stadium called 'Firuz Shah Kotla Maidan') at Delhi. Nasiruddin Muhammad Tughlaq Shah built a beautiful building known as *Lal-Gumbad*.

Features of Tughlaq Architecture

The main features of Tughlaq's architecture consists of slopping walls or the 'batter' which gives effect of strength and solidarity to the building. They attempted to combine the principles of the arch and dome with slab and beam in their buildings, particularly noticed in the buildings of Firuz Tughlaq. In the Hauz Khas and Firuz's Kotla Fort alternate stories have arches and the lintel and beam. The Tughlaqs used cheaper and more easily available grey stone which is difficult to carve. Therefore, minimum decoration was used in their buildings.

The Lodis

The Lodis further developed the tradition of combining many of the new devices brought by the Turks with indigenous forms. Both arch and beam are used in their buildings. Balconies, kiosks and caves of the Rajasthani-Gujarati styles were used. They placed their buildings (tombs) on a high platform. Some tombs are in the midst of gardens. Example, the Lodi garden in Delhi. Some tombs are octagonal in shape. Many of these features were later adopted by the Mughals.

4.3.5 Provincial Architecture

The Muslim rulers in provinces also built palaces, tombs forts, mosques and other structures in the respective kingdoms. The provincial styles drew inspiration from the Delhi Imperial style of architecture. However, with the limited sources. The provincial architecture appeared less grandeur than the imperial style. The provincial style of architecture was found at Multan, Bengal, Jaunpur, Gujarat, Kashmir and the Deccan under the Bahamanis.

In **Multan** some of the important buildings included the shrine of *Shah Yusuf-ul-Gardizi*, the mausoleum of Bahlul Haqq, the tomb of Shamsuddin and the tomb of Rukn-i-Alam built by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq.

In **Bengal**, the buildings lack a proper style of architecture. Most of the structures were raised by bricks. Prominent among them are the *Adina Masjid* built by Sikandar Shah at Padua. *Eklakhi Mausoleum* at Hazrat Padua, the *Gunaman* and the *Datasbari* mosques at Gaur, *Lotan Masjid* and *Bari Sona Masjid* at Gaur were some buildings of this period. The Bengal style of architecture adopted Hindu decorative designs and pointed arches on pillars. Yet, the Bengal style was inferior to other provincial style of architecture.

The Sharqi rulers of **Jaunpur** patronized architecture and some very good buildings possessing Hindu and Islamic features. Some of their salient features square pillars, small galleries, and absence of minarets. Some important buildings of the Sharqi rulers include the *Atala Masjid*, completed by Ibrahim Shah Sharqi, the *Jami Masjid* built by Husain Shah and the *Lal Darwaza* mosque.

Malwa architecture closely resembles those constructed by the Delhi Sultans at Delhi. The fort of Mandu, the *Hindola Mahal*, the *Ashrafi Mahal*, the *Jahaz Palace* and the palace of Baz Bahadur and his queen Rupamati. The buildings of Malwa have their own distinct style.

Gujarat provided the best combination of the Hindu and the Islamic architecture. It has several mosques including the *Jami masjid*. Fergusson described the *Jami* mosque of Ahmedabad as “one of the most beautiful mosques in the East.”

Even in **Kashmir** there is a beautiful harmony between the Hindu and Islamic architecture. The most noble building constructed here during the medieval period include” the tomb of Mandani,, the *Jami Masjid* at Srinagar.

4.3.6 Hindu Architecture

The Hindus particularly, the Rajputs maintained their political existence in north India. Therefore most of their buildings in the north were found at Rajasthan only. Rana Kumbha of Mewar erected many forts, palaces and other buildings and victory towers (*Kirti stambha*). In the Deccan the Vijayanagara rulers constructed massive *vijaya stambhas*.

Thus, both the Hindus and Muslims have enriched the Indian architecture by their new innovations and by the fusion of Indian architecture.

4.3.7 Cultural Contributions of the Delhi Sultans

In the field of culture also the Delhi Sultans made significant contribution. Music, literature in various languages were encouraged by the rulers of different dynasties. The Sufi saints also made their contributions.

Music

The Turks inherited the rich Arab tradition of music which had been further developed in Iran and Central Asia. They brought with them number of musical instruments such as the rabab and sarangi.

Amir Khusrau introduced many new airs or *ragas* such as *ghora*, *sanam*, etc. He is credited with having invented the Sitar. Tabla is also attributed to him, but it was fully developed during the late 17th or early 18th centuries.

Indian classical work *Ragadarpan* was translated into Persian during the reign of Firuz Tughlaq. Muslim gathering spread from the abodes of the Sufis to the places of the nobles. The Sufi Saint, Pir Bodhan, was the great musician of the age.

Language and Literature

Persian Literature received encouragement under the Delhi Sultans. The most notable Persian writer of the period was Amir Khusrau (1252-1325). He created a new style of Persian poetry which came to be called as *Sabq-i-Hind* or the 'Style of India'. He praised Indian languages including Hindi (Hindavi). He was also an accomplished musician and took part in the religious musical gatherings (*sama*) organized by the famous Sufi Saint, Nizamuddin Auliya. Other important Persian poets were, Mir Hasal Dehlawi, and Badra Chach, etc.

Apart from poetry a strong school of history writing in Persian was developed in India during this period. The most famous historians of the period were Zia-ud-din Barani, Shams-i-Shiraj Afif and Isami.

During the time of Firuz Shah Tughlaq, many Sanskrit works were translated into Persian. Zia Nakshabi was the first to translate Indian Sanskrit works into Persian.

Sultan-Zain-ul-Albidin of Kashmir got the famous historical work, *Rajatarangini* and the epic *Mahabharata* translated into Persian. Many other Sanskrit works on Music and Medicine were also translated. During this period. Some of the important writers and their works were given below:

Notes

| S. No. | Author | Book | Subject |
|--------|-------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Al-Beruni | Kitabi-i-Hind(Tarik -i-Hind) | Indian Sciences |
| 2 | | Qanun-i-Masuudi | Astronomy |
| 3 | | Jawahir-fil-Jawahir | Numerology |
| 4 | Firuzabadi | Qamus | Arabic Dictionary |
| 5 | Hasan Nizami | Taj-ul-Maathir | History of Ilbaris |
| 6 | Abu Baker | Chach Namah | History of Sind |
| 7 | Bukhari | Lubab-ul-Alab | Persian Anthology |
| 8 | Minhaj-us-Siraj | Tabaqt-i-Nasiri | History of Muslim dynasties up to 1260 |
| 9 | Amir Khusrau | Khazain-ul-Futuh | Alauddin Khalji's conquests |
| 10 | | Tughlaq- Namah | Rise of Ghiyasuddin |
| 11 | | Miftab-ul-Futuh | Jalaluddin's conquests |
| 12 | | Khamsah | It consists of 5 literary master pieces – Mutla-ul-Anwar, Shirin Khusrau, Laila Majnu, Ayina-i-Sikandari, and Hasht Bihisht. |
| 13 | Firuz Tughlaq | Futuh-i-Firuz Shahi | Autobiography |
| 14 | Zia-ud-din Barani | Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi | History of Tughlaqs |
| 15 | Shiraj Afif | Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi | History of Tughlaqs |
| 16 | Isami | Futuh-us-Salatin | Bahamani Kingdom |
| 17 | Ibn Battutah | Kitab-ul-Rahla | A Travelogue |
| 18 | Firdausi | Shah Namah | Mahmud Ghazni's reign |

4.3.8 Evolution of Indo-Islamic Culture

The establishment of Delhi Sultanate in India gave rise to the evolution of Indo-Islamic culture. The term 'Indo-Islamic culture' indicates the growth of a composite culture as a result of contact, intermixing and assimilation of the cultural traditions of India and the Islamic world during the Medieval period.

The association of Indian with the Islamic world was as old as the Arab conquest of Sindh. Arab merchants came and established small colonies in India. Muslims came to India as invaders or settlers and adopted this country as their own. This fusion of cultural traditions of Hinduism and Islam gave birth to a composite Indo-Islamic culture.

There are 2 phases in the development and growth of this culture:

- 1) Sultanate Phase
- 2) Mughal Phase

Factors for the growth of Indo-Islamic Culture

Medieval Hindu and Muslim Saints attempted to create a brotherhood between two communities. This helped in cultural development. Many artists, painters, musicians also contributed to its growth. Under the influence of several liberal movements in Medieval India, the Hindu and Muslim communities began to imbibe each other's thoughts, traditions and customs in marriage, dress, food, language, music, art and architecture. Even in religion the two influenced each other – as indicated by the teachings of the Sufi Saints and Bhakti Saints.

In the field of scholarship and literature also the two communities came under each other's influence. Muslim scholars studied Hindu philosophy and sciences such as Yoga, Vedanta, Medicine and Astrology. Hindus pandits learnt subjects like Geography, Arithmetic, and Chemistry in which Arabs made striking progress.

Many Muslim rulers married Hindu women. Their entry in the Muslim household became another factor which brought cultural fusion and reconciliation between Islam and Hinduism.

The growth of the Indo-Islamic culture was the continuity of the process of the Hindu-Muslim rapprochement and amicable contact between the members of the two communities.

Consequently, the spirit of synthesis of mutual harmony led to the growth of composite culture which was neither purely Hindu nor Muslim but a happy blend of the best elements of both.

4.3.9 Summary

In this Lesson, you have learnt how the Islamic architecture evolved in India. Though this style of architecture made its inroads into Indian with the influence of many foreign styles such as Persian, Turkish, Egyptian and so on, yet, in India, this architecture adapted itself to the local Hindu influences. Similarly, in the fields of culture, we can see local influences. New genres of literary traditions evolved under the mutual influence of Hindu and Islamic cultures. The Bhakti movement also impacted the evolution of composite culture.

4.3.10 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Explain the main features of Indo-Islamic architecture.
2. Highlight the contribution of Delhi Sultans to the field of architecture.
3. Trace the development of Provincial architecture under the Delhi Sultans.
4. Give an account of the contribution of Delhi Sultans for the development of culture.
5. Explain the factors for the evolution of Indo-Islamic culture in India.

4.3.11 Suggested Readings

L. P. Sharma, *History of Medieval India*.

Vipul Singh, *Interpreting Medieval India*, Vol. I

Lesson-4.4: BHAKTI AND SUFI MOVEMENTS

- 4.4.1 Objectives
- 4.4.2 Introduction
- 4.4.3 The Bhakti Movement-Its Meaning and Objectives
- 4.4.4 Important features of Bhakti Movement
- 4.4.5 Prominent Bhakti Saints of Medieval India
- 4.4.6 Sufi Movement- Its Origins, Meaning and Objectives
- 4.4.7 The Sufi Thought- Silsilahs (Orders)
- 4.4.8 Sufi Principles
- 4.4.9 Emergence of Composite Culture
- 4.4.10 Summary
- 4.4.11 Self-Assessment Questions
- 4.4.12 Suggested Readings

4.4.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Know about the main principles of the Bhakti and Sufi saints of medieval India
- Familiarize with the teachings of famous Bhakti and Sufi Saints
- Understand the evolution of composite culture in medieval India

4.4.2 Introduction

Since ancient times, India has been a cradle of several religions movements such as Jainism, Buddhism, Bhagavatism, and so on. Medieval period in Indian history had witnessed two parallel religious movements namely Bhakti and Sufi movements in Hindu and Islamic religions, respectively. Both these movements reached their peak during the 15th-16th centuries CE. In fact, the Bhakti movement is much older than the Sufi movement. The Bhakti movement of this period was a continuation of the Bhakti movement that started in South India between the seventh and the twelfth centuries CE. During this period the Shaiva Nayanars and the Vaishnavites preached personal devotion to God as a means of Salvation. They also disregarded the rigidities of the caste system and unnecessary rites and rituals of Hindu religion. However, the transmission of the ideas of Bhakti Saints from South to north India was rather slow. The ideas of Bhakti were carried to the north by scholars as well as by saints. Among these mention may be made of Namadeva, Ramananda, Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Vallabhacharya etc. The Sufi movement entered India from Central Asia. Both these movements helped in the evolution of composite

culture, which was manifested in different aspects of Indians life. In this Lesson, therefore, we shall try to understand the teachings of Bhakti and Sufi movements and their impact on society.

4.4.3 The Bhakti Movement- Its Meaning and Objectives

Prior to the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, during the Rajput period (647-1200), some philosophers and thinkers, in an attempt to reform the society which was based on inequalities and Hindu religion based on rituals, adopted Bhakti (devotion), Jnana (knowledge) and Karma (action) methods as means through which they could develop cordial relationships and a sense of equality amongst the people.

In Indian culture, concept of 'Bhakti' which means 'Devotion' is old and was accepted by the people since ancient times. But, with the establishment of Muslim rule in Delhi, several changes took place in its nature and objectives. The main aim of Bhakti movement during this period was to obstruct the spread and influence of Islam, stop forceful religious conversions, and revive Hindu religion. Some popular Bhakti preachers from different regions such as Jayadeva, Ramananda, Mukta Bai, Kabir, Sundar Das, Guru Nanak, Vallabhacharya, Sankaradeva, Tukaram, Ekanath, Chaitanya, Mirabai, Tulasidas tried their best in their own style to spread Bhakti movement in different parts of the country.

The writings of Bhakti saints shows that 'Bhakti' is not a movement but is an intense love and devotion to personal God. It is the unity of the 'self' with the 'Almighty'. Scholars like Weber and Grierson considered 'Bhakti' as a way for salvation, and opined that the Indians learnt monotheism from Christianity. Bhakti can be achieved through different ways such as Action (Karma), Knowledge (Jnana), Devotion (Bhakti), and Renunciation (Vairagya). In Bhakti movement monotheism and complete surrender to God are the main principles. It was believed that '*Deham Devalaya Prakto jivo devah Sanatanah*' – "Body is the temple, Soul is eternal".

The main reason for Bhakti movement becoming popular was its focus on cleansing the weaknesses in the Hindu religion and the social system. Buddhism and Jainism posed great threat to Vedic religion. Caste system was further strengthened. Untouchability crept in as an inhumane practice in the society. With the efforts of Shankaracharya and others, austerities preached by the Jains and the Buddhists was disregarded and

they preached personal devotion to God as a means of Salvation. They also disregarded the rigidities of the caste system and unnecessary rites and rituals of Hindu religion. They carried their message of love and personal devotion to God to various parts of South India by using the local languages.

The medieval period, Bhakti movement had shown great transformation in Hindu religion. It was spread with the efforts of Ramananda (14th Century), Kabir, Guru Nanak, Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya, Namadev among others. This movement had long lasting influence on emergence of modern Hindu religion. However, some scholars suggested different reasons for the transformations in Hindu religion. According to European scholars like Weber and Grierson “the Hindus were influenced by Christianity in adopting Monotheism and devotion as a way to salvation. But, some historians did not accept this argument but instead suggested that ‘the Bhakti movement was started by Ramananda who was influenced by Islam. He preached only after he learnt completely about Islam. The concept of Universal brotherhood in Islam became the cause for Ramananda being influenced by this religion’. This proposal was rejected by other historians who believe that it is not correct to say that the Bhakti movement was influenced neither by Islam nor Christianity. Instead, it had its origins in the 6th Century BCE, when Bhagavatism had originated. During that period Bhagavatism in which the ‘Vishnu’ was mainly worshipped spread as a great movement. They argue that Shankara’s Advaita philosophy which was influenced by Hindu Vedanta philosophy and Ramanuja’s *Visishtadvaita* were influenced by Vaishnavite religion.

In reality, Bhakti movement was an integral movement within Hindu religion. This is due to the fact that in Hindu religion one can choose any one of the three *margas* (ways) to attain salvation. These are 1) through the way of knowledge (*Jnana marga*), 2) through action (*Karma marga*) and 3) through devotion (*Bhakti marga*). With the changing times and social necessities, Hindu Saints have selected each of these ways. In the medieval period, the Hindu saints gave more importance to Bhakti as the main source for attaining salvation.

In the medieval period, Muslims rule emerged as an alternative power to the Hindu rule. Their influence was felt in the economic, religious and social spheres too. In order to propagate their religion the

Muslim rulers adopted forceful methods of conversions to Islam. Hindus were considered as infidels. The Hindu religious sentiments were wounded, when the Muslim rulers plundered and destroyed the Hindu temples. At the time when mutual hatred and hostility were spreading due to human ignorance, there appeared a group of serious religious thinkers who by their Sufi and Bhakti movement awakened the people about God and religion. They did everything to establish brotherhood, love and friendship between the Hindus and Muslims. Hence, some historians believe that the Bhakti emerged as a movement to fight against Islamic influence.

Thus the three main objectives of Bhakti movement appears to:

- 1) Reform Hindu religion so as to enable it to withstand the onslaught of Islamic propaganda and proselytization.
- 2) Bring about compromise between Hinduism and Islam and to foster friendly relations between Hindu and Muslim communities.
- 3) And propagate that all people were equal in the eyes of God and that birth was no bar to religious salvation.

4.4.4 Important Features of Bhakti Movement

The concept of Bhakti means single-minded devotion to one God.

- Aim of devotee is to secure grace of God for the sake of salvation.
- The Bhakti cult discarded the rituals and sacrifices as modes of worship and instead emphasized the purity of heart and mind, humanism and devotion as the simple way to realization of God.
- Bhakti emphasized on monotheism.
- Devotees worshipped one personal God, who could either have form (*Saguna*) or be formless (*nirguna*).
- The followers of *Saguna* were further divided into *Krishnamargis* and *Ramamargis*.
- The followers of *Nirguna* bhaktas discarded idol worship. They said that God is omnipresent and resides within the heart of every individual.
- The Bhakti saints of north as well as south India regarded

knowledge (Jnana) as a constituent of Bhakti.

- Since that knowledge could be gained through a teacher / guru, they emphasized on securing knowledge only with the help of a guru.
- It is an egalitarian movement which completely discarded discrimination on the basis of caste and creed.
- Saints of Bhakti Movement were staunch supporters of social unity and purity of mind, character and soul.
- Many saints were from lower classes.
- Bhakti saints preached in the simple language of the masses.
- They contributed to the development of modern Indian languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and Gujarati.
- It was the simplicity of the Bhakti cult and its teachings in local languages that ultimately became the two main causes for its popularity and success.

Results of Bhakti movement:

The results of the Bhakti movement were far-reaching.

- The first and the foremost result was that it minimized the differences and distinctions between the Hindus and the Muslims. The people of one religion tried to understand the people of other religion.
- Secondly, the caste system gradually lost its previous importance as the Bhakti preachers disregarded it. Low caste people could get importance in the society.
- Thirdly, the spiritual life of the people became very simple and more developed than before.
- Lastly, the movement had tremendous impact on the literature and language of the country. It helped the regional languages to get enriched in spreading the cult of Radha and Krishna. Bhakti Literature were produced in plenty in different regional languages. And this Bhakti movement has ever lasting influence on the people of India and outside. Even Akbar the great, was greatly influenced by the Bhakti and Sufi Philosophers, which made him to follow a secular stand in the field of religion.

4.4.5 Prominent Bhakti Saints of Medieval India

Notes

The ideas of Bhakti were carried to the north by scholars as well as by saints. Among these mention may be made of Namadeva, Ramananda, Nimbarka, Vallabhacharya, etc.

Namadeva (1270 – 1350): Namadeva was a Maharashtrian Saint who flourished in the first part of the fourteenth century. He was a tailor who had taken to banditry before he became a saint. His poetry which was written in Marathi is of intense spirit of love and devotion to God. Namadeva is said to have travelled far and wide and engaged in discussions with the Sufi Saints in Delhi.

Ramananda (1400–1480): Ramananda was also a Maharashtrian Saint. He was a follower of Ramanuja. He was born at Prayag (Allahabad) and lived there at Banaras. He was a great devotee of Lord Rama and therefore, he substituted the worship of Ram in place of Vishnu. He introduced *Ramanandi Sampradaya*. He was against caste system and the practice of untouchability. Ramananda founded a new school of Vaishnavism based on the gospel of love and devotion. He laid stress on the Worship of Ram and Sita. He preached in Hindi instead of Sanskrit. Thus, his teachings became popular among the common men.

As an earliest social reformer Ramananda accepted disciples from different castes of Indian Society. Among his disciples Ravidas was a cobbler, Kabir -a weaver, Sena-a barber, Dhanna- a Jat peasant, Pipa- the Rajput. His favourite disciple was Kabir who was a weaver. His disciples also included women like Padmavati and Surasuri.

Kabir (1440 -1518): The name of Kabir stands out prominently among the Bhakti Saints. He was foremost among those who were critical of the existing social order. He strongly appealed for Hindu-Muslim unity. Not much is known about the early life of Kabir. According to a legend, Kabir was the son of a brahmin widow who due to certain reasons left him on the bank of a tank at Banaras in 1440 CE. Fortunately, a Muslim weaver Niru by name saw the baby and took him home. Kabir was not given proper education, but mastered weaving from his foster father and made it his profession. From his childhood, Kabir developed a love for religion. While living at Kashi, he came in contact with a great saint named Ramananda who accepted him as his disciple. Though Kabir was married and had two children, his love for God could not be wiped

out. He did not leave home. By leading his family life, he started preaching his faith in Hindi language. He attracted thousands of people by his simple spell bounding speeches. His followers were both the Hindus and the Muslims.

The teachings of Kabir were very simple. He, first of all emphasized on the unity of God. He said, “we may call the God by any name such as Rama, Hari, Govinda, Allah, Sahib etc. it makes no difference. They are one and the same”. Kabir said God is formless. He strongly denounced idol-worship. He also did not believe in incarnations (Avatara) of God. He omitted formal worships and practices like idol-worship, pilgrimages, bathing in holy rivers.

He advised people not to give up the life of a normal house holder for the sake of a saintly life. He said that neither asceticism nor book knowledge could give us true knowledge. Kabir strongly denounced the caste system. He gave emphasis on the unity of men and opposed all kinds of discrimination between human beings.

His sympathizers were with the poor man, with whom he identified himself. The teachings of Kabir appealed both Hindus and Muslims. His followers were called as *Kabir panthis* or the followers of Kabir. His poems were called as *dohas*. After his death, his followers collected his poems and named it *Bijak*.

In one of his poems, Kabir says “If God appears by worshipping stone, then he is ready to worship a Mountain. If one thinks he will get Mukti (salvation) by dipping in water, then fishes and frogs will get Mukti first”. In another verse he says that “a Pundit means a person who understands love. People’s language is like a perennial river where as Sanskrit is like a well water”. Yet in another verse he said “I am not in temple, I am not in Mosque, I am not in Kaba, not in Kasi, Srihari is in East, Allah is in West- You look at your heart, you find both Kareem and Rama”. Thus through his *dohas*, Kabir was able to bridge the differences between Hindus and Muslims.

When Kabir died a miracle happened. Upon his death, his dead body was claimed by both the Hindu and the Muslim followers. Even a quarrel took place over this issue. After some time a follower out of curiosity lifted the cloth which had covered Kabir’s dead body. To the utter surprise of everybody present there, it was found a heap of flowers at the place of the

body. Where did the body go? Realizing its implication both Hindu and Muslim followers distributed flowers among themselves.

Notes

Guru Nanak (A.D- 1469 – 1535): Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism and one of the great exponents of Bhakti Cult, was born in 1469 at Talwandi (present Nankana) village in the Punjab State. It is 0.50 Kms distance from Lahore. He was born in a Khatri family. From his childhood, Nanak had religious bent of mind and preferred to spend time in the company of sadhus and saints. He travelled widely all over India and visited places like Sri Lanka, Mecca and Madina. During his travel, he attracted large number of followers with his simple and melodious hymns. His followers were called *Mardana*.

Like Kabir, Nanak laid emphasis on the oneness of Gods. According to him only through love and devotion one can get the grace of God and the ultimate Salvation. He said, "Caste, creed or sect have nothing to do with the Love and Worship of God." Like Kabir, he too said, "God does not live in any temple or mosque. One cannot realize Him by taking bath in holy rivers or going on pilgrimages or performing rites and rituals. One can attain him by complete surrender.

He vehemently denounced idol-worship, pilgrimages and other formal observances of the various faiths but emphasised on the purity of character and conduct as the first condition of approaching God. He also laid emphasis on the need of a Guru for guidance. He spoke about the universal brotherhood of man. Through his teachings, Nanak wanted to bridge the differences and distinctions between the Hindus and the Muslims and create an atmosphere of peace, goodwill, mutual trust and mutual give and take. His ideas in course of time gave birth to a new creed called Sikhism. Thus, both Kabir and Nanak could create a new society based on the principles of social equality. Their ideas also had an impact on Akbar, which was reflected in his religious ideas and policies.

Vallabha Charya (1470 – 1530): Vallabha was born in a Telugu Brahmin family that had been living in Varanasi. During the turbulent times of Hindu-Muslim conflicts in the late 15th century, he escaped to Gujarat. As a child, he studied the Vedas, Vendangas and the Upanishads. He founded the Krishna-centered *Pushti* sect of Vaishnavism in the Braj region of India, and the philosophy of *Shuddha advaita* (Pure Non-dualism).

He authored many texts including the *Anubhashya* (a commentary on *Brahma Sutra*), *Shodash Granth* or sixteen 'stotras' (tracts), several commentaries on the *Bhagavata Purana*, *Subodhini*. Many of his writings were in the form of *kirtans* dedicated to Lord Krishna.

In a debate conducted at Vijayanagara, in the court of Sri Krishnadevaraya, Vallabha participated to prove the supremacy of the Vaishnavaites of Madhva over Shankarites over the philosophical question whether God is Dualistic or non-dualistic. Through his arguments he impressed the king, who later conferred on him the title '*Jagadguru*'. He travelled widely and propagated Krishna Bhakti. His wife Mahalakshmi and son Vishwanath further developed Krishna Bhakti.

Surdas (1478 – 1584): Born in a Saraswat Brahmin family, Surdas was a blind saint, poet and musician. He was popular for his devotional songs dedicated to Lord Krishna. He believed that it is only through Krishna bhakti that one can attain salvation. Surdas had written and composed thousands of songs in his book i.e. '*The Sur Sagar*' (Ocean of Melody). His other popular compositions include, *Sur-Saravali* (which is based on the theory of genesis and the festival of Holi), and *Sahitya-Lahiri* (devotional lyrics dedicated to the Supreme Absolute). His melodies reveal his intense love for Lord Krishna and Radha.

Chaitanya (1486- 1534): Chaitanya propagated the Bhakti in Bengal. At the age of 24, he emerged as a spiritual leader. He founded Gaudiya Vaishnavism. His bhakti was based on intense love towards God (Krishna). Chaitanya was the proponent for the Vaishnava school of Bhakti yoga (meaning loving devotion to God), based on *Bhagavata Purana* and *Bhagavad Gita*. He popularised the chanting of the *Hare Krishna mantra*. According to him, "Sri Krishna is the only God and all prayers are for him. He is the Creator of every existing being. We all belong to Him. Our aim of life is to attain the love of his lotus feet. Our life should be dedicated to Him. We can do so by our loving devotion and *seva bhav* (service to mankind), chanting of His Divine name and *nishkam* (pure) Bhakti." He used the love between Radha and Krishna in an allegoric manner to depict the relationship of Love, in its various aspects of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

Meera Bai (1498 – 1546): She was a 16th-century celebrated Bhakti saint, a poetess and Krishna devotee in North India. She was born into a

Rajput royal family of Kudki district of Pali in Rajasthan. She was the only daughter of Rathana Singh Rathor, the ruler of Mertha. She was forcefully married in 1516 at the age of 18 years to Bhoj Raj, the son of Rana Sanga of Mewar. In 1518 she lost her husband who died of battle wounds in wars with Delhi Sultanate. Following her husband's death, her in-laws tortured her in several ways, and tried many times to kill her by poisoning her. But her intense love and devotion to Lord Krishna rescued her all the time. She boldly proclaimed Krishna as her husband, and bravely disregarded social and family conventions.

She composed and sang thousands of devotional poems in passionate praise of Lord Krishna, which became popular in the Indian tradition. These poems are commonly known as *bhajans*. These were composed in Braj bhasha (language) and are popular across India. Hindu temples, such as in Chittorgarh fort, are dedicated to Meera Bai's memory. She breathed her last in Brindavan in 1546.

Tulsidas (1532 – 1623): Goswami Tulsidas or Tulsidas was another popular bhakti saint, poet, reformer and philosopher. He belongs to Ramanandi Sampradaya in the lineage of Jagadguru Ramanandacharya. He was a staunch devotee of Rama and regarded Lord Sri Rama as his spiritual guide and preceptor. He wrote several devotional works on Rama in Sanskrit, Awadhi and Braj languages. His best known work was the epic *Ramcharitmanas* written in 1574 in vernacular Awadhi language. It is based on the Sanskrit *Ramayana* written by Valmiki. He also composed *Hanuman Chalisa*, a popular devotional hymn dedicated to Hanuman. His other popular works include *Gitavali*, *Sahitya Ratna*, *Dohavali*, *Vairagya Sandipani* and *Vinaya Patrika*, which were written in Braj language. He founded the Sankatmochan Temple dedicated to Hanuman in Varanasi. He also started the *Ramlila* plays, a folk-theatre adaption of the Ramayana, which is very popular even till today in North India.

Apart from these above mentioned bhakti saints, there were many other saints like Ravidas, a disciple of Ramananda, Malukdasa of Allahabad, Dadu of Rajasthan whose followers were known as Dadu-Panthis, Sankaradeva of medieval Assam, Narasimha Mehta of Gujarat, Jagjivan, the founder of *Satnami* sect, Ekanatha, Ramdasa, the spiritual guide of Shivaji, and many others propagated Bhakti ideology in different regions of the country.

4.4.6 Sufi Movement-Its Origins, Meaning and Objectives

The Sufi movement is an interesting aspect of Islam. It had its genesis in Central Asia. It entered India even before the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, but became popular as a socio-religious movement from the fourteenth to sixteenth century after a large group of Sufis from different Islamic countries migrated to India. Early Sufis traced their ideas to some verses of the Quran and Hadith (Tradition of their Prophet). To these, they gave mystic interpretations. They were devout Muslims who believed in inner purity. The union of the human soul with God through love and devotion was the essence of their teachings.

The origin of the word 'Sufi' has many explanations. According to one version Sufi saints wore garments of coarse wool (suf) as their badge of poverty and from this word 'Suf' the term Sufi had derived. Some other scholars traced its origin to the word 'Safa' which means 'pious'. They say that those who were pious people were called as Sufis. Yet others, traced its origin to the Greek word 'Sophia' meaning 'knowledge'. The first writer to use the word Sufi is Jahiz of Basra in 869 CE.

The Sufis did not attach importance to namaz, hajj and celibacy. Hence, they were misunderstood by orthodox Muslims. They regarded singing and dancing as methods of inducing a state of ecstasy which brought one nearer to realisation of God. They led a simple life and preached equality of all. There were some leading Sufi saints like Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, Fariuddin Ganj-i-Shakar, Nizam-ud-din Auliya etc. The Sufis in India were organized into 4 main Silsilahs or Orders. They are 1) Chisti Order 2) Suhruwardi Order, 3) Qadri Order and 4) Naqshbandi Order.

4.4.7 The Sufi Thought –Silsilahs (Order)

Sufism was organized into various silsilahs or religious doctrines or orders. They accepted the Prophethood of Mohammad and the authority of the Quran. But in course of time they absorbed a variety of ideas practices from different sources such as Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Hindu Philosophical system (Vedantas and Yoga).

Chisti Order

Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti (1141-1236 CE) was a great Sufi Saint in India. He introduced Chisti Order in India. He was born in 1143 CE in

Seistan in Persia. He came to India around 1192 CE, shortly before the defeat and death of Prithvi Raj Chauhan and settled at Ajmer. He led simple ascetic life and spread the message of love and equality. He discarded caste and religious differences and tried to wipe out ill- feelings present among the people of Hindu and Muslim communities. He lived more than ninety years and preached love and universal brotherhood through music. He had a large number of followers through whom his fame was spread across the country. Moinuddin Chishti authored several books including *Anis al-Arwa* and *Dalil al-'Arifin*, both of which deal with the Islamic code of living.

Hamiduddin Nagori, a farmer by birth was attracted to Moinuddin Chishti's preachings. His Guru gave him the title Sultan-Uth-Tharki' which means the 'King for Orphans'. Through his obedience and liberality he earned the affection of his Guru. He was chosen as a caliph or "successor", along with Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki and they both continued to transmit the teachings of their master through their disciples. This led to the widespread proliferation of the Chishti Order in India.

Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, was another prominent disciple and spiritual successor of Chisti. He invited Moinuddin Chisti to Delhi Court, but Chisti rejected his invitation. He spread Chisti Order in Delhi. The famous Qutb Minar is dedicated to him.

Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar , was popularly known as Baba Farid or Farid Khan (1173–1266) was a great Sufi saint and a Muslim missionary from the Chishti order. Baba Farid raised the Chisti order of the Sufis to the status of an all India organisation by his high mysticism and the religious activities. His dargah is at Pakpattan in modern Pakistan.

Fariduddin's most famous disciple was Nizamuddin Auliya (1325) popularly referred to as Mahbub-e Ilahi "God's beloved". In *Tarikh-e-Firoz Shahi*, Barani praised Sheik Nizamuddin as an impartial Guru. He relieved many people from bad habits through his preachings. Even common people showed interest in his religion and prayers. Through his service to mankind and love for music, he commanded a lot of respect from the people. He shunned political patronization. His dargah is located in South Delhi.

The Sufi saints of Chisti Order led a life of poverty. They avoided the company of the Sultan and the Amirs. They spent most of their time in prayers, discussions and music.

Suhrawardi Order

After the Chisti Order, the Suhrawardiyya Order became popular in India. It was founded by the Sufi Diya al-din Abu 'n-Najib as-Suhrawardi. It is a strictly Sunni order, guided by the Shafi-i school of Islamic law. In India, the order was popularised by Bukhari and his successor Baha-ud-din Zakariya who established a Kanqa in Multan.

Ideologically, the Suhrawardiyya Order differs with the Chishti Order. While the saints of Chisti preferred to live in poverty, these people did not like to lead an impoverished life. They wanted to be strong physically. They are against decaying the body. They had put an end to the system of bending down to Sheik as per Chisti Order and revived the tradition of performing Salam. They were in favour of acquiring assets and by strengthening bonds with rich people and earned money. Their children took interest in studies.

After the death of Zakariah in A.D.1262, his son Sadaruddin Arif, took over charge of Kanqa and ran it for 23 years. A prominent person Syed Jalaluddin Surkbukari established Kanqa in Uchh and invited Hindus.

Qadri Order (Silsila)

The Qadriya Silsila was established in India by Shaba Nayamatullah Qadiri in the 15th century and popularised by Naziruddin Mohammad Jilali. Naziruddin settled in Uchh of Sindh. The prominent people of this branch were Sheik Abdul Khadir, Mian Mir, Mullah Shah Badakshi. Prince Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shajahan became the follower of Qadri Order. He became the follower of Mian Mir and his successor Badakshi and had also written the history of these two Gurus.

Naqshbandi Order

It is a major Sunni spiritual order of Sufism. It was founded by Baha-ud-Din Naqshband Bukhari. This Order was introduced in India by Khwaja Baqi Billah Berang during the end of the 16th century. His most important disciple was Shaikh Ahmed Sirhind. He condemned the mystic philosophy of the 'Unity of Being' (*wahadat-ul-wujud*). In its place, he

expounded the philosophy of Apprentism (*wahadat-ul- shud*). He said that the 'relationship between man and God is that of the slave and the master and not that of a lover and the beloved'. His object was to harmonise the doctrine of mysticism with the teachings of orthodox Islam. For this, he was known as the 'Reformer of Islam' (*Mujaddid*). He could attract Jahangir towards modern Islam.

Thus through their pious deeds and behaviour, the Sufi saints could attract the people to their path. They brought about great transformation in Indian society, which no government acts and organizations could bring. They took care of people who lived in Kanqas. In Syed biography it was mentioned that during the 17th century, the Kanqas were providing shelter and food to 5000 members. In the Kanqa of Syed Adam Banoori an average of over 1000 people used to have their meals daily. These persons were not only great scholars but also established Madrasas and Kanqas for the spread of education. They made many disciples.

4.4.8 Sufi Principles

The Sufi saints had tremendous impact on Indian society. They entered India when Indian society was shattering with rigid caste system and religious pluralism. Along with Bhakti saints the Sufi saints introduced several principles for simple living and set for themselves an ethical conduct. The main principles of Sufism are:

- They insisted on 'devotion of one God'. According to them every person and every thing in the world is part of God.
- To know God one has to love God and one should sacrifice everything.
- They used to live as per Mohammad Prophets teachings '*Shariath*'. They believed in universal brotherhood.
- They condemned orthodox beliefs and faith. While fanatic believers gave importance to outward behaviour Sufis gave importance to internal purity. Sufis believed internal purity is the only way to find god.
- Sufis spent simple life. They sacrificed physical and bodily desires. They considered these desires are the main enemies.
- They had faith in chanting God's name. They believed that music encourages chanting God's name. They adopted *Sama* and *Raqs* (audition and dancing) as a mode of invocation to

God. To Sufis – music was a mean to an end.

- They called Guru as Pir. They believed that no one can reach God without the guidance of a Guru or Pir.
- They chose the language of masses to spread their ideas. They gave impetus to linguistic assimilation and cultural synthesis.
- They imparted education by establishing Madrasas.
- Some Sufis were scholars and teachers. They influenced kings, officials and nobles. But they shunned wealth and power.
- The disciples of Sufi saints were called Murids. They pledge absolute submission and devotion to his spiritual guide called Pir.
- The Sufis in their journey to achieve union with the absolute had to pass through 10 stages, viz., 1) Tauba (repentance), 2) Wara (abstinence), 3) Zuhd (peity), 4) Fags (poverty), 5) Subr (patience), 6) Shukr (gratitude), 7) Khauf (fear), 8) Raja (hope), 9)Ttawakkul (contentment) and 10) Riza (submission to the divine will)
- Sufis had no belief in Namaz (Daily Prayer), Roja (Fasting), Haj (Spiritual Tour).

Sufis lived like Hindu Saints. Only difference is Hindu saints lived in forests where as Sufis lived in villages and towns amongst people. Like Hindu saints Sufis showed the Bhakti way to reach the God. The Suhrawardi Order of Sufis was popular in Sindh, Punjab, and Multan. Chisti Order had spread in entire India. In 15th and 16th centuries, Sufism spread in Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and South India. Sufism emphasized on having cordial relations among the Hindus and Muslims. The development of Urdu language benefitted Sufis.

Sufis criticized Ulema for getting attracted to material gains and telling a different version of Quran. Sufis also charged the Ulema for neglecting religious responsibilities. On the other hand, Ulemas alleged that Sufis were not following Islam. Hindus respected Sufis and became their followers. They accepted Hindu religious principles of Bhakti movement and gave importance to social equality, simple and righteous living, non-violence, discipline and self-control.

4.4.9 Emergence of Composite Culture

Among the greatest transformations in Indian history, Bhakti and Sufi movements are the most important. These two movements helped in establishing cordial relationship between Hindu and Islamic cultures. This in turn led to the emergence of composite cultures. These two religious movements aimed at religious perseverance and social equality. The main features of these two movements were to express dissatisfaction on caste based divisions, reduce the gap between a person and religion, and promote unity among Hindus and Muslims. These movements also helped in developing regional languages. The Sufi and Bhakti movements also worked towards inculcating the religious aspirations along with social service. These are further elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Though religious fanaticism and autocratic rule worked together during the medieval period, yet, Sufi and Bhakti movements succeeded in preventing religious, racial and social differentiation, not through violence but by carrying out a silent (mouna) and bloodless struggle. Simultaneously, these two movements were given a religious identity. Consequently, both Bhakti and Sufi movements uninterruptedly influenced the people of different regions. They freed the Indians from the dogmatic beliefs, ritualism, caste and communal hatred. Conflicts among the people of different religious faiths and castes reduced, as they started living amicably with each other.

Both Bhakti and Sufism contributed to each other's religious ideas and practices. They preached simple religion in the language of the masses and neither craved for political patronage nor bothered for the political developments around them.

In both these movements, the elements of intellectuality went hand-in-hand with that of devotion and in both ritualism and ceremonialism were not as important as the search of and love for one supreme reality.

Love and liberalism were the keynotes of the Sufi and Bhakti movements. Discipline was imparted for the moral advancement of the individual and society by making them rise above the barriers of colour, creed, wealth, power and position.

The Indo-Muslim strands have woven into the texture of India's natural existence, a new design of 'composite culture' emerged by

intertwining the threads of the Bhakti marg with the Islamic Sufi (mystic) traditions, the Indian social customs with the Turko-Iranian modes of collective life. This created new inter-cultural synthesis in which the values of man and social ethics reflected a new ethos.

The cultural synthesis can be seen in the development of Urdu language (a combination Persian, Arabic and Hindi languages). Urdu was popularized by Amir Khusrau. Many Persian words crept into Indian languages. Similarly, Sanskrit works were translated into Persian. Likewise, in the field of architecture, Hindu and Islamic synthesis led to the emergence of new style of architecture called the Indo-Sarcenic' style.

Thus the composite culture of India originated in an environment of reconciliation rather than refutation, cooperation rather than confrontation, co-existence rather than mutual annihilation.

4.4.10 Summary

In this Lesson, you have learnt how the Bhakti and Sufi Movements have originated with the main aim of spreading love and brotherhood among the people of India. Particularly at the time when there was political disturbance in the form of frequent invasions by foreign Muslim rulers and forceful conversions, these two movements played a major role in bringing socio-cultural unity. The various saints of both Hindus and Muslims strived very hard to enlighten the people on the religious front. Their teachings resulted in the emergence of composite culture which was felt in various fields.

4.4.11 Self -Assessment Questions

1. What is 'Bhakti'? What are its main Principles?
2. Discuss the causes for the rise of Bhakti movement in India.
3. Write short notes on Kabir and Guru Nanak.
4. Describe the main features of Silsilahs.
5. Explain the principles of Sufism.
6. What is 'Composite Culture'? What are its features?

4.4.12 Suggested Readings

L. P. Sharma, *History of Medieval India, 1000-1740 AD*
 R. C Majumdar, *An Advanced History of India*
 Vipul Singh, *Interpreting Medieval India, Vol. I*

Lesson-5.1: VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE-POLITICAL HISTORY

5.1.1 Objectives

5.1.2 Introduction

5.1.3 Origin of the Vijayanagar Empire

- Theories
- Sources

5.1.4 The Sangamas (1336-1485 CE)

- Harihara I
- Bukkaraya I
- Haaarihara II
- Devaraya I
- Devaraya II
- Successors of Devaraya II

5.1.5 The Saluvas (1485-1505 CE)

5.1.6 The Tuluvas (1505-1570 CE)

- Vira Narasimha
- Krishnadevaraya
 - o His Conquests
 - o His Achievements
- Successors of Krishnsdevaraya
- Battle of Tallikota

5.1.7 The Aravidus (1570-1644 CE)

5.1.8 Summary

5.1.9 Self- Assessment Questions

5.1.10 Suggested Readings

5.1.1 Objectives

The main objective of this Lesson are to

- Know about the various theories on the origin of the Vijayanagar kingdom.
- Learn how the Vijyanagar rulers expanded and consolidated their kingdom.
- Highlight the military achievements of the Vijaynagar rulers.

- Assess the causes for the decline of the Vijayanagar kingdom.

5.1.2 Introduction

One of the greatest events in the history of south India was the foundation of the Vijayanagar empire in 1336. Historians opine that this empire was founded as a result of the political and cultural movement against the Tughluq authority in the South. The Vijayanagar rulers were the great supporters of Hindu tradition and culture. They were contemporaries to the Dlehi Sultanates under Tughlaqs, Sayyads and Lodis in the north and Bahmanis in the Deccan. Their reign is marked by remarkable achievements in the political, economic and cultural fields. Many foreign travelers who visited the Vijayanagar kingdom praised it as one of the richest kingdoms in the Deccan. After the decline of the Delhi Sultanate the, Vijaynagar rulers wielded considerable power in the Deccan. They also played a key role in the disintegration of the Bahmani kingdom. But, they were finally defeated by the combined forces of the Muslims kingdoms of the Deccan, which emerged after the disintegration of the Bahmani kingdom, Therefore, in this Lesson the main focus shall be on understanding the political relationship between the Vijayanagar rulers and the Bahmanis. This lesson also highlights the origin, growth and decline of the Vijaynagar Empire.

5.1.3 Origin of the Vijaynagar Empire: Theories

The foundation of the Vijayanagar Empire was attributed to two among the five sons of Sangama, namely Harihara I and Bukka. Three theories were put forward by historians with regard to the origin of the Vijayanagar Empire. These are (a) the Kakatiya origin (b) the Karnata (Karnataka) or Hoysala origin and (c) the Kampili origin.

The first theory, proposed by Robert Sewell and N. Venkataramanaiah, was based on the Vidyaranya Kalajnana text and administrative divisions which appear similar to the administrative names under the Kakatiyas. According to this theory, it was stated that both Harihara and Bukka were the Treasury officers (Pratiharis) of the last Kakatiya ruler Prataparudradeva. After the fall of the Kakatiya kingdom to the Tughluqs, both brothers reached the kingdom of Kampili in modern Karnataka. Here they met a Vaishnava saint Vidyaranya who inspired them to found the kingdom of Vijayanagar. The two brothers then laid the foundation of the city of Vijayanagar on the southern banks of river Tungabhadra facing the fortress of Anegondi on the northern bank.

According to the second theory, proposed by Rev. Father Heras, Harihara and Bukka were in the service of the Hoysala king Vira Ballala III, who had founded the city Vijayavirupakshapura, after the name of his son, which later on came to be known as Vijayanagar. The scholars who support this theory are of the view that Harihara and Bukka were feudatories and generals of the Hoysalas.

According to the third theory, Harihara and Bukka were ministers in the state of Kampili. Bahauddin Gurshap, a cousin of Muhammad bin Tughluq, revolted against him and took refuge with the Raya of Kampili. In order to avenge this act of his cousin, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, conquered Kampili and imprisoned the two brothers, Harihara I and Bukka and took them to Delhi. The two brothers were then forced to embrace Islam. But in 1335, when a revolt occurred in Kampili, the Sultan sent the two brothers there to suppress the revolt. The two brothers reached Kampili where they came under the influence of a saint Vidyanaraya who encouraged them to accept Hinduism once again. After their conversion to Hinduism they decided to liberate their people from Muslim domination. In 1336 CE, Harihara founded an independent kingdom of Hampi and was crowned as its first king. On his coronation day, he also founded the city of Vijayanagara (Vidyanagara), which was named after saint Vidyanaraya.

The Vijayanagar kingdom thus established by Harihara and Bukka was ruled by four dynasties. The first dynasty was the Sangama dynasty. As Harihara and Bukka were the sons of Sangama, they named the first dynasty of Vijayanagar after their father as Sangama dynasty. This dynasty ruled from 1336 to 1485. The second dynasty was founded by Saluva Narisimha and was known as Saluva dynasty. This dynasty ruled from 1485 to 1505. The third dynasty which was known as Tuluva ruled from 1503 to 1570. During the rule of this dynasty the fame of Vijayanagar reached its peak. The fourth was the Aravidu dynasty which ruled till about the middle of the seventeenth century. They were weak rulers whose glory remained as a pale shadow.

Sources

Inscriptions found in Telugu, Kannada and Tamil languages form the major sources for the study of Vijayanagara dynasty and their contemporary rulers. Besides, the Vijayanagara rulers also patronized poets whose works shed light on the then contemporary situations. The

works of Ganga Devi, Sri Krishnadeva Raya, Allasani Peddanna, Tenali Ramakrishna, etc., the accounts of foreign travelers such as Nicolo Conti, Nuniz, Domingo Paes, Abdur Razzaq and others provide valuable information on the social and economic conditions of the period. Numerous temples and forts constructed by the Vijayanagar rulers stand testimony to the advancements made in engineering and technology.

The earliest published work on Vijayanagar kingdom was *The Forgotten Empire* (1901) written by Robert Sewell. This work was primarily based on the foreign accounts. After the discovery of Vijayanagara inscriptions in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, historians like K.A.N. Sastri, Burton Stein, Noboru Karashima, Y, Subbarayalu and others did extensive research to understand the nature of state, polity, society, economy and culture of the period.

5.1.4 The Sangamas (1336-1485 CE)

The infant Vijayanagar kingdom soon grew into an empire with the efforts of Harihara and Bukka. **Harihara I (1336-56 CE)**, who was the first ruler of Vijayanagar empire was assisted by his brother Bukka in the conquests and expansion of the kingdom. They conquered the Hoysala kingdom by about 1346, and the Kadamba territories were annexed in 1347. Harihara also sent two armies in 1352-53, one under prince Savanna and the other under Kumara Kampana, against the Sultan of Madura. Kumara Kampana annexed the Sultanate of Madura to the empire of Vijayanagar. This conquest has been vividly described by his wife Ganga Devi in *Madhura Vijayam*. Harihara I also established a sound system of administration, encouraged agriculture and strengthened the fortification of the forts of Badami, Udayagiri and Gooty. His civil administration lasted till the end of the Vijayanagar empire.

Bukkaraya I

Harihara I was succeeded by his brother Bukka I. He ruled from 1356 to 1377 CE. He strengthened and expanded the nascent kingdom. He sent an expedition against Rajanarayana Sambuvaraya, who earlier had been restored to his throne by Harihara and had probably asserted his independence soon after. He also fought with the Bahmani Sultan Muhammad Shah I by assaulting the fortress of Mudgal. The importance of this battle lies in the fact that for the first time artillery was used by both sides in the battle. The Bahmani sultan accepted the defeat and signed a treaty with him. This made Bukka I, the virtual master of the Krishna-

Tungabhadra Doab. Since then the Vijayanagar kings and the Bahmani sultans clashed with each other regularly over the control of three strategic locations, viz., the Tungabhadra Doab, the Krishns-Godavari delta and the Marathwada country. These regions contained fertile lands, ports vibrant with flourishing trade and commerce. Hence, the Vijayanagar kings and the Bahmani sultans cast their coveted eyes on these regions.

Bukka's son Kumara Kampana, governed the Tamil districts. He defeated the Sultan of Madura and annexed his dominions to the Vijayanagar Empire. With this conquest the boundaries of the Vijayanagar Empire now extended up to Rameshwaram in the extreme south.

Bukka centralized the administration and brought the provincial governors under his effective control. He claimed to be the protector of Hinduism and assumed the title of *Vedamarga –pratishtapaka* or the establisher of the path of the Vedas. Fresh commentaries were written on the Vedas and other religious text. He encouraged Telugu literature and patronized Nachana Soma, the greatest Telugu poet of the age.

Harihara II

Bukka was succeeded by his son Harihara II (1377-1404 CE). He consolidated the new kingdom and assumed the title of *Maharajadhiraja*. He conquered Kanara, Mysore, Trichnapalli, Kanchi etc., and forced the king of Sri Lanka to pay him tribute. He repulsed an invasion by the Bahamani Sultan Mujahid Shah who attacked Vijayanagar in 1377 CE. The Sultan was assassinated on his way back to his capital and taking advantage of this turn of events, Harihara II invaded the Konkan and northern Karnataka, captured the ports of Chaul, Goa and Dabhol. Thus Harihara II extended the territory to the west coast of the Deccan. He also attacked the Reddi rulers and occupied the Addanki and Srisailam areas. In the 1398, he defeated the Velamas. He was a successful commander and an administrator. His death in 1404 CE was followed by a war of succession among his sons. His two sons Virupaksha I and Bukka II ruled one after the other for two years, and in 1406 CE Devaraya I overthrew Bukka II and ascended the throne.

Devaraya I (1406- 1422 CE)

Soon after his accession Devaraya I, the conflict with the Bahmanis over the Krishna-Tungabhadra doab was renewed. Devaraya I, faced an invasion by Firuz Shah, the Bahmani sultan attacked Vijayanagar and was

forced to surrender the fort of Bankapur to the Bahmanis. Devaraya I also offered his daughter in marriage to Firuz Shah Bahmani and even ceded considerable part of his empire. But the marriage failed to restore the peace between these kingdoms.

Soon after, Devaraya formed an alliance with Katayavema, his relative and chief of the Reddi kingdom, to counter the activities of Anadeva Choda, an ally of Firuz Shah Bahmani. In a battle fought in 1415 CE, Firuz came to the rescue of Anadeva and Katayavema was killed. After defeating Firuz Shah Bahmani, Devaraya annexed the entire territory up to the mouth of river Krishna. Four years later, however, Devaraya captured Pangal and won a decisive victory.

Devaraya I strengthened his cavalry and recruited Turkish archers in it. Devaraya I undertook a number of schemes for the welfare of the people. He was also interested in the development of agriculture. He improved irrigational facilities by constructing a barrage across the river Tungabhadra in 1410 CE. This greatly helped agriculture and brought more land under cultivation. He also got dug an aqueduct of 24 kilometers long from the Tungabhadra to the capital which had hitherto been suffering from scarcity of water. These canals proved to be of such use to the city that they greatly increased the revenue. He also improved the city by raising walls and towers, increasing the city area and further fortifying the capital city. Towards the close of Devaraya's rule the Italian traveler Nicolo Conti visited the imperial city. He describes it as having a circumference of 96 kilometres and containing 90,000 potential soldiers. Besides describing the city and its king, Nicolo also mentions festivals like Navatri, Dipavali, etc.

Devaraya I was also a great patron of scholars. It was to Devaraya's court that the gifted Telugu poet Srinatha, the author of *Haravilasam* and many other works, journeyed from the Reddy courts of Rajahmundry and Kondavidu seeking recognition for his talents. The 'Pearl Hall' of the palace where he honoured men of eminence is immortalized in literature. His capital became the chief centre of learning of south India. Vijayanagar (the City of Victory) had indeed become Vidyanagara (the City of learning). Devaraya died in 1422 CE and was succeeded by his son Ramachandra. Ramachandra who had been associated with his father in the government of Udayagiri since 1390-91, ruled as emperor of Vijayanagar for six months only. He was succeeded by his brother Vijaya I. Since Vijaya had no

interest in the affairs of government and left it to the care of his son and co-regent Devaraya II.

Notes

Devaraya II

Devaraya II (1423-46 CE), who succeeded to the throne, was the greatest king of the Sangama dynasty. The inscriptions of this ruler are found throughout the Vijayanagar empire and his reign witnessed the height of the imperial glory and prosperity under the Sangamas. He was called 'Immadi Devaraya' and also 'Proudha Devaraya' or the great Devaraya by his subjects. As his rule was of great magnificence, the commoners believed that he was the incarnation of Indra, the celestial ruler of the Hindu mythology. The inscriptions mention him with the title *Gajabetekara* i.e. the elephant-hunter.

Shortly after his accession, Devaraya II had to face an invasion led by the Bahmani Sultan Ahmad I in the Raichur Doab (the region between Krishna and Tungabhadra). But this did not yield any concrete result. Devaraya II was successful in annexing Kondavidu to his kingdom. He also attacked the Gajapati kingdom of Orissa and subjugated a few chiefs in Kerala. Except the Zamorin of Calicut, all other kings and chieftains of Kerala accepted his suzerainty. In 1442 CE, he sent a naval expedition against Sri Lanka and forced the ruler to pay tribute to Vijayanagar.

Devaraya II was a great patron of literature and himself was an accomplished scholar in Sanskrit. He is credited with the authorship of two Sanskrit works, *Mahanataka Sudhanidhi* and a commentary on the *Brahma Sutras* of Badarayana. The Persian ambassador Abdur Razzaq who visited his court gives a vivid account of the empire of Vijayanagar.

Successors of Devaraya II

The reign of Devaraya II was followed by the short reign of Vijayaraya II (1446-47 CE). The next ruler Mallikarjuna was young at the time of his accession. Taking advantage of it, the Bahmani Sultan Alauddin II and Kapileshvara Gajapati of Orissa invaded Vijayanagar. The ruler of Orissa captured the forts of Kondavidu and Udayagiri. According to tradition, Mallikarjuna was assassinated by his cousin Virupaksha in 1465 CE.

Virupaksha II proved to be an incompetent ruler. His rule was not accepted by the provincial governors. This destabilized the Vijayanagar Empire. Taking advantage of this, the Bahmani sultan Ahmad Shah III at

the instance of his Prime Minister Mahmud Gawan advanced into the doab region. The Bahmanis also captured Goa, Konkan and northern Karnataka. The loss of Goa was a heavy blow to the Vijayanagara kingdom. In the east, Purushottama, the Gajapati ruler of Orissa captured Udayagiri and other places from Vijayanagar. The incapability of Virupaksha II to check the advances of his enemies, led to the downfall of the Sangama dynasty. He was murdered in 1485 by one of his own sons who however, renounced his claim to the throne to his younger brother, Praudha Devaraya. During his time, a state of anarchy prevailed in the kingdom. Saluva Narasimha (1485-90 CE), the chief of Chandragiri and a powerful feudatory, usurped the throne and laid the foundation of the rule of Saluva dynasty.

The decline of the Sangama dynasty coincided with the decline of the Bahmani kingdom and its disintegration into five Bahmani succession states. Both kingdoms throughout struggled to take control of the Raichur Doab, a struggle that lasted for nearly a hundred and fifty years. However, this struggle did not affect the fortunes of the Vijayanagar Empire much.

5.1.5 The Saluvas (1485-1505 CE)

Saluva Narasimha remained the first and the last ruler of his dynasty. He saved the Vijayanagar kingdom from further disintegration by keeping the provincial governors under his control. In the early years of his reign, Saluva Narasimha fought against the Sambetas of Peranipadu and the Palaigars of Ummattur, and quelled fissiparous tendencies within the empire. But he failed to capture Krishna- Tungabhadra *Doab* from the Bahmanis. He also failed to check the advancements of Purushottama, the Gajapati ruler, who seized the coastal Andhra.

Before Saluva Narasimha died in 1490, he placed his two young sons under the care of his minister Narasa Nayaka and made him the regent of the kingdom. The elder of the two, Timma, was crowned king but was murdered by a rival and so the younger, Immadi Narasimha, was anointed. The regent Narasa Nayaka, however, sent him to Penukonda and started dominating the politics for over a decade. Narasa Nayaka came into conflict with Yusuf Adil Khan of Bijapur and Prataparudra Gajapati. He asserted his authority over smaller chiefs in the South. After his death in 1503 CE, his son Vira Narasimha became the regent and continued to keep Immadi Narasimha under protection. When Immadi

Narasimha was assassinated in 1505 CE, Vira Narasimha became the actual ruler and started the Tuluva dynasty.

Notes

5.1.6 The Tuluvas (1505-70 CE)

Vira Narasimha was the founder of the Tuluva dynasty. He ruled only up to 1509 CE. During his brief rule, he strengthened the army, concluded treaty with the Portuguese governor Almeida for purchasing horses, pursued a liberal policy in administration and foiled the invasions of the Bahmanis. He was succeeded by his younger brother Krishnadeva Raya.

Sri Krishnadeva Raya

Krishnadeva Raya ruled for twenty years (1509-29 CE). He was considered as the greatest ruler of Vijayanagar Empire. During his reign the empire reached the zenith of its glory and prosperity. The Portuguese traveler Domingo Paes, who stayed at Vijayanagar during his reign, wrote, "He is the most learned and perfect King.....He is a great ruler and a man of great justice".

His Military Conquests

Soon after his accession to power, Krishnadeva Raya launched a career of conquests. His first target was the Bahmani kingdom, which was by now disintegrated into five independent kingdoms. Yet, these states were determined to destroy Vijayanagar. Sultan Mahmud Shah declared *jiha*d and attacked Vijayanagar in the initial reign of Krishnadeva Raya. However, the latter defeated him. Yusuf Adil Shah, the ruler of Bijapur was killed in the battle and Krishnadeva Raya captured Krishna-Tungabhadra *Doab* and the forts of Raichur and Bidar. He successfully invaded Gulbarga and Bidar and restored the puppet Bahmani Sultan Ahmad Shah Bahmani to the throne. To commemorate this act of restoration of the Bahmani monarchy, Krishnadeva Raya assumed the title of *Yavanarajya Sthapanacharya* or restorer of the Yavana kingdom.

Krishnadeva Raya turned his attention towards suppressing the feudatories in the central portion of his empire. He marched against the rebellious chief of Ummattur in Southern Mysore, defeated him and captured the fortress of Sivasamudram.

Krishnadevaraya now felt strong enough to declare war upon the Gajapati king. He defeated Gajapati king Prataparudra and his allies, the sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda and conquered Udayagiri, Kondavidu,

Addanki and Vinukonda, etc. When Sultan Quli Qutub Shah the ruler of Golkonda invaded the coastal region and took possession of Kondapalli, Elluru and Rajahmundry, and tried to intrude into the Vijayanagara territory, Krishnadevaraya sent Vijayanagar forces under the command of Saluva Timma and defeated the Golkonda forces. Thus, Krishnadevaraya controlled the aggressive policy of the Qutub Shahis.

While Krishnadevaraya was engaged in his Orissan wars, the Bijapur sultan Ismail Adil Shah taking advantage of his absence invaded the doab and captured Raichur. In 1520, the Vijayanagar emperor sent Saluva Timma with a huge army. After a fierce battle that ensued between both the forces, the Bijapur army was defeated and Ismail Adil Shah fled from the battle field.

He also concluded a series of treaties with the Portuguese who were trying to capture the territories of the Adil Shahi kingdom, their common enemy. His relations with the Portuguese were governed by two factors: (a) common enmity with Bijapur and (b) the supply of imported horses by the Portuguese to Vijayanagar. Thus, he defeated all his political adversaries and recaptured all the territories and forts of Vijayanagar Empire which were lost by his predecessors.

His Achievements

Krishnadeva Raya was not only a great military leader but also a great administrator. He made many innovations in the Vijayanagar polity. His political ideas are contained in his Telugu work *Amuktamalyada*. He was himself a scholar of Sanskrit as well as Telugu. For his patronage of literature, he was known as *Abhinava Bhoja* and for patronizing Telugu literature he was honoured as *Andhra Pitamaha*. For classical Telugu poets, it was a great age as eight of them known as *Ashta Diggajas* adorned the court of Krishnadeva Raya. Among these poets, Peddana was personally honoured by the emperor for his proficiency in Sanskrit and Telugu.

Krishnadeva Raya was also a great builder. He founded a town by name Nagalapur (near Vijayanagar) and built tanks, *gopurams*, *mandapas* and temples in various parts of empire. The Vijayanagar Empire reached its zenith in peace, power, prosperity and learning during his reign. The Mughal emperor, Babur described Krishnadeva Raya as the most powerful ruler of India in his autobiography *Baburnama*. Domingo Paes, an Italian

traveler, spent number of years in the court of Krishnadevaraya. He has given a glorious description of Krishnadevaraya's rule.

Notes

Successors of Krishnadevaraya

After the death of Krishnadeva Raya, his half-brother Achyuta Raya (1529-42 CE) succeeded him. He proved to be a weak ruler and the central authority started declining during his reign. He was succeeded by his son Venkata, who reigned only for six months. He was succeeded by Sadasiva Raya, the nephew of Achyutadevaraya, in 1542 CE. He too was a weak ruler and the real authority of the state now passed into the hands of Aliya Rama Raya his prime minister from Aravidu family. Rama Raya was an able administrator.

Ramaraya first entered into a commercial treaty with the Portuguese, whereby the Portuguese were told to stop the supply of horses to the Bijapur ruler. Secondly, he defeated the Bijapur rulers in a series of wars. He wanted "to cut diamonds only with diamonds". He tried to put the Bahmani states one against the other. So he allied himself with the Bijapur ruler to inflict humiliating defeats on Golkonda and Ahmadnagar. Thus, he could successfully dominate the politics of south India for about two decades.

Battle of Tallikota (1565 CE)

Ramaraya failed as a diplomat. He tried to create dissensions among the five Muslim states of the Deccan, but failed to prevent the unity among them in their war against Vijayanagar in the name of Islam. The combined forces of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golkonda and Bidar attacked Vijayanagar at Tallikota or Rakshasa Tangadi of Bannihatti in January 1565. It is considered as one of the most decisive battles fought in the history of India. It is interesting to note that in this battle copper coins were used as pellets and loaded into the canons. The army of Vijayanagar was completely crushed. Rama Raya was captured and executed. The city of Vijayanagar, which was the pride of the medieval world, was mercilessly destroyed. After this disaster the Vijayanagar government was shifted first to Penukonda and then to Chandragiri where the fourth or the Aravidu dynasty was founded.

5.1.7 The Aravidus (1570-1649 CE)

The Aravidu dynasty was founded by Rama Raya's brother Tirumala who ruled from Penukonda. Tirumala was succeeded by Ranga II. He was

in turn succeeded by his brother Venkata II. He shifted the capital to Chandrigiri. He may be regarded as the last great ruler of the Vijayanagar empire. Though the dynasty survived till the middle of the seventeenth century, its former glory had vanished. Taking advantage of the weakness of the central government, the Nayakas of Vijayanagar, such as the Nayakas of Tanjavur, Madurai, Gingee, etc., declared their independence and carved out independent principalities. The Deccani states, and later on the Mughals and the Marathas also took advantage of this situation. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the empire of Vijayanagar was reduced to the status of a glorious chapter in the pages of India history.

5.1.8 Summary

In this Lesson, you have learnt how the Vijayanagar kingdom emerged as the most powerful empire in the Deccan and the south. It reached its peak during the reign of Krishnadevaraya, who created a glorious epoch in the history of South India. The rulers of Sangama and Tuluva families also focused on the cultural development of South India by focusing on the development of agriculture, construction of temples and patronization of poets of repute. Many foreign travelers visited the court of Vijayanagar kingdom and appraised the glory of the rulers. Politically, it was apparent, that the Bahmanis and Gajapati proved to be their archrivals with whom they fought incessantly, particularly to control the fertile lands of Krishna-Tungabhadra doab and Krishna-Godavari delta. This illustrious family however, became victim of political treachery and was defeated by the coalition of the Deccan Sultans in the battle of Tallikota in 1565 CE.

5.1.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Explain the various origin theories of the Vijayanagar kingdom.
2. Give an account of the achievements of the Sangama dynasty.
3. Estimate the personality of Krishnadevaraya.
4. Discuss the causes for the decline of the Vijayanagar kingdom.

5.1.10 Suggested Readings

K.A.Nilakanta Sastry, *History of South India*.
 Vipul Singh, *Interpreting Medieval India*, Vol. I
 R.C.Majumdar, *An Advanced History of India*.

Lesson-5.2: ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE

Notes

5.2.1 Objectives

5.2.2 Introduction

5.2.3 Central Administration

- The Imperial Council
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- Village Assemblies
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- The Ayagar System
- Decline of Local Bodies

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- Income of the State
- Expenditure of the State
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5.2.8 Judicial Administration

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5.2.11 Summary

5.2.12 Self- Assessment Questions

5.2.13 Suggested Readings

5.2.1 Objectives

The main objective of this Lesson are to

- Understand the administration structure evolved at the Centre by the Vijayanagara rulers.
- Comprehend the role of provincial governments in the administration of provinces.
- Look at the other forms of administration such as military, judicial and temple administration.

5.2.2 Introduction

In the previous Lesson, you have learnt how the Vijayanagar rulers expanded their political power in south India. To rule the vast empire which they carved out in Karnataka, Andhra and Tamilnadu, they evolved an administrative system depending up on the local concerns. Hence we find variations in the way administration was carried in different regions. However, the emperor appeared to be all powerful in all spheres such as military and judiciary. Another interesting feature of the Vijayanagar administration was the evolution of Nayankara system. Further, this period also witnessed the emergence of temple as a socio-cultural unit. It also emerged as a largest employer. Hence, in this Lesson, you will be familiarized with the various forms of administration that existed under the Vijayanagar rulers.

5.2.3 Central Administration

The rulers of Vijayanagar followed the traditions of Hindu polity in administration. The king was the head of the state and was considered equal to the God. He was the law maker, the highest administrator, the supreme commander of army and the highest judicial authority.

Kings ascended the throne after coronation. The coronation durbar was a grand affair attended by numerous chieftains, officers and leaders of people. Achyutadeva Raya had his coronation performed in the Tirupati temple. Such occasions marked grants to temples and brahmans.

The Vijayanagar kings, like the Chola rulers, generally nominated their heirs, usually the eldest prince, and anointed them as yuvaraja. The Yuvaraja was made in charge of one or more provinces. When kings were too young to govern, regents assumed the responsibility of administration. Saluva Narasimha is known to have entrusted his empire to his general Narasa Nayaka till his sons came of age. But some of the regents like Vira Narasimha and Rama Raya betrayed and usurped the throne.

The king was guided by the rules of *dharma*. The primary duty of the king was to provide protection to all his subjects and redress their grievances. The other was to maintain an efficient police and military organizations in the state to ensure preservation of law and order in the

country. Sometimes, the king interfered in the provincial administration to end the oppression of the people by their chiefs.

The king was also the religious head. Social harmony was maintained in the empire. The king was the highest court of appeal and when the lower courts failed to do justice, the sufferer could appeal to the king who dispensed the justice. The communities made regulations for themselves and the king's duty was only to enforce them.

The king was assisted by a council of ministers in administration. They acted as an important check on the king's authority. Besides the council of ministers, there was the Royal or Imperial Council.

The Imperial Councils: T.V. Mahalingam distinguishes between an Imperial Council and a Council of Ministers in Vijayanagar. The Imperial Council was a large gathering of nayakas from the provinces, feudal vassals, 'pontifical heads', scholars, poets, artists, merchants, and even ambassadors from foreign kingdoms. Both Krishnadeva Raya and his poet-laureate Alasani Pedana refer to such as an assembly. It may be compared to the Privy Council in England whose functions were more ceremonial than administrative.

The Council of Ministers on the other hand, is a small body consisting of important ministers. They played an important part in influencing the policy of the government. It generally met in a hall called *Venkatavilasa mantapa*. A strict secrecy was maintained of its deliberations. The pradhani, was the Prime Minister and he presided over the meetings of the parishad.

The ministers were expected to be able, efficient and possess high qualifications. A minister was "to be a scholar, afraid of *adharma*, well versed in *rajaniti*. He should be between the ages of fifty and seventy, with healthy body and he was not to be conceited". The hereditary principle seems to have been vogue in selecting ministers. It was believed that the son of a minister would make a better minister than a new entrant who might turn greedy with power. There was also the practice of the same persons functioning as ministers under successive kings. For instance, Danadanatha and Sayana are known to have been minister under both Bukka I and Harihara II, Dannayaka served as a minister for Devaraya I as well as Devaraya II.

The Secretariat: In the *Amuktamalyada*, Krishnadeva Raya expresses the view that the efficiency of administration will rise or fall with the increase or decrease of staff.

- The *rayasam* was an officer who recorded the oral orders of the king.
- The *karanikam* was an accountant.
- The *sarvanayaka*, the *mudrakarta*, and the *vasalkariyam* were some of the officers connected with the king and the court. They worked in palace.

Abdur Razzak saw the working of the Secretariat at Vijayanagar in a forty-pillar hall. He called it the *diwan khana* and described how the records were kept and writers seated.

5.2.4 Provincial Administration

The Vijayanagar Empire was one of the largest in south India. According to Paes, the Portuguese traveler, the empire under Krishnadeva Raya had “six hundred leagues of coast, and across it three hundred and forty-eight leagues”. To administer such a large empire more efficiently, it was divided into seventeen provinces. Provinces were known as *rajyas*. In the Tamil country they were sometimes called as *mandalams*. In Karnataka they were known as *pithikas*. Since the size of the *rajyas* varied they were differentiated as minor and major *rajyas*. The major *rajyas* were called *maharajyas*. For example, Tiruvadi was a *rajya* whereas Chandragiri was a *maharajya*. The head of the province was called governor of *Prantpati* or *Nayaka*.

Generally the relatives of the king were appointed to the high offices of the state. They enjoyed extensive powers in administering the provinces. They held right to issue coins in their own names. They held their own courts, had their own officers, maintained their own armies, and ruled their territories without interference from the central authority so long as they regularly discharged their obligations to the imperial house. The governors had their own ministerial councils; and such councils probably consisted of the *pradhani*, the *olai*, the *dalaway*, the treasurer, the *samantadhipikari*, and a few others.

The governors were responsible for the maintenance of law and order in their provinces. They also enjoyed the right of imposing new taxes and remitting old ones. But the kings ensured that the people did not suffer due to oppression by governors. Whenever they came to know

of extortion, the kings interfered and relieved the people of their misery. Deva Raya II, for example, rescued the members of the left-hand and right-hand communities from extortion by his governors and officers. The governors earned their income from the provinces assigned to them. From their income they made financial and military contribution to the king.

5.2.5 Nayankara System

Nayankara System: Another important feature of the Vijayanagar provincial organization was the *nayankara* or *nayakara* system. According to this system, the king was considered to be the owner of the soil and he distributed the lands to his dependents. Those who held lands from the king were called *nayakas*, though the term was later used to denote a variety of offices and communities. In return for the territories granted to them, they had two functions to discharge. First they had to pay a fixed annual financial contribution to the imperial exchequer which, according to the chronicle of Nuniz, was generally half their revenue. Secondly, they were required to maintain for the king a sufficient number of troops and serve him in his wars. They were the guardians of the peace within their jurisdiction, and were held responsible for the detection of crimes as well.

The constitutional position of the *nayaka* was different from that of a governor of a province, though both of them had a few similar obligations to fulfil. The *nayaka* enjoyed comparatively greater freedom in his province. The *nayaka* was usually not transferred from one district to another. The nayakaship, which was in the initial stages based on merit, gradually became hereditary under weak rulers. The *nayakas* maintained two sets of officers at the imperial headquarters. The first officer was in-charge of the military of his lord stationed at the capital. The other officer was kept at the imperial court. He was called as the *sthanapati* or civil agent who represented the interests of his master at the capital.

In the later Vijayanagar period the independence of the *nayakas* was checked by the appointment of "Special Commissioners" who were entrusted with the task of keeping them under control.

5.2.6 Local Administration

The *rajya* was further subdivided into smaller units. The names of these sub regions varied from region to region. In the Tamil country the province was divided into districts called *kottams* or *kurrams*. A *kottam* was further divided into taluks known as *nadus*. A *nadu* was subdivided

into *aimbadin melagaram* or units of fifty villages; below this came the *agarams*. But in the Karnataka region territorial divisions and subdivisions were known by different names. Here, a province was divided into *venthes*, a *venthe* was divided into *simes*, a *sime* into *sthalas*, and a *sthal* into *valitas*.

Village Assemblies: Though the village assemblies were not very powerful and autonomous during the Vijayanagar period, yet their existence continued. The *brahmadeya* villages, which were also known as *chaturvedimangalams* were administered by assemblies called *sabhas*. Sometimes *sabhas* were also called *mahasabhas* or *mahajanas*. The *sabhas* were large bodies. High qualifications were expected of the members. They should have studied the four Vedas, gathered a good knowledge of the performance of sacrifices and had to be capable of hard work. They used to meet in public places like temples and gardens for deliberations.

The Sabha: The *sabha* or assembly enjoyed certain powers. They held the lands on behalf of the village. They had the right to acquire or dispose of lands. Each assembly guarded this right so carefully that outsiders were not permitted to buy lands in its village.

The *sabhas* also functioned as tax-collecting agencies for the imperial government. If the land-holders failed to pay their taxes, they could be deprived of their fields by the *sabhas*. The local bodies had also the right to levy new taxes and remit old ones. But such levies and remissions could be made only on local cesses and not central taxes. But when the government at the centre chose to impose new taxes or remit old ones in villages where the *sabhas* functioned, they need to take the consent of the *sabhas*. Thus the *sabhas* exercised tremendous influence over the revenue policy of the state. The *sabhas* had judicial power as well. The *sabhas* are also known to have confiscated lands of the guilty and assigned them to temples. Thus, the assemblies exercised control over temples also.

The *sabhas* administered trusts and charities. Persons who wanted to leave property for feeding those well-versed in the Vedas and ascetics generally left them in the care of village bodies. An assembly in a non-brahmadeya village was called the *ur*. Though a large number of

epigraphs describe the *sabhas*, only a few refer to the *urs*. The *ur* must have discharged functions more or less similar to the *sabhas*.

The Nadu: The *nadu* was the assembly of a large territorial division. It enjoyed powers similar to those of the village assembly. The members of the *nadu* were known as the *nattavar*. In inscriptions they were mentioned as selling lands and making *sarvamanya* gifts to institutions like temples. But local institutions were subject to the control of the government.

The Ayagar System: An important feature of the village organization was *Ayagar* system. According to it, every village was a separate unit and its affairs were conducted by a body of twelve functionaries who were collectively known as the *ayagars*. These village functionaries were generally appointed by the government. The *ayagars* had a hereditary right over their offices. The *Ayagars* could sell or mortgage their offices. They were granted tax-free lands (*manyams*) which they enjoyed in perpetuity for their services. They were the guardians of the peace within their jurisdiction. No transfer of property could be effected or grant made without the knowledge of these functionaries.

The Decline of the Local Bodies: During the later phase of Vijayanagar period many of the local institutions started declining. The reasons for these are manifold. The development of the *nayankara* and *ayagar* system did not prove conducive to the continuance of local bodies. The *nayakas* prospered at the expense of the local assemblies, and in course of time seem to have transferred to themselves the functions of the *sabha* and the *nadu*.

5.2.7 Revenue Administration

Income of the state: The government derived its income from a variety of sources. They were land revenue, property tax, commercial taxes, profession taxes, taxes on industries, military levy, social and communal taxes, and judicial fines. *Kadamai*, *magamai*, *kanikkai*, *kattanam*, *kanam*, *varam*, *bhogam*, *vari*, *pattam*, *irai* and *kattayam* were among the many terms used to denote the kinds of taxes collected in Vijayanagar.

Land tax was the most important source of revenue. Land was carefully assessed and the state claimed one-sixth of the produce as its

share. The nature of the villages (whether it was *devadana*, *brahmadeya*, *agrahara* or *karagrama*), the tenure of land, the properties of the soil, and the kind of crop raised, were all considered before a tax was levied. Land revenue was paid both in cash and kind. Assessment was generally made on the basis of the gross yield from land. But sometimes the sowing capacity of land or the number of ploughs required for tilling served as the basis of assessment. Inscriptions credit Krishnadeva Raya with a systematic survey of his empire for the purpose of correct assessment. The *nadalavukal*, the *rajavthadankol*, and the *gandarayagandakol* were the names of the measuring rods used for assessment in the empire.

Properties like house, treasure-trove, horses, cattle, and even trees were taxed. Taxes on houses depended on their size and the status of the people who lived in them. For example, the house of *nattar* was taxed at three panams, whereas that of a *vetti* was taxed at one-eighth of a panam. Customs on imports and exports and on articles of internal trade was another important source of revenue. The Kondavidu inscription of Krishnadeva Raya gives a list of fifty-nine articles and the rate of taxes collected on them. Onions and turmeric were taxed at the rate of one *damma* per bag, jaggery and ginger two *dammās* per bag, pepper and sandal six *dammās* per bag.

Professionals like *kaikkotars*, fishermen, shepherds, oil mongers, musicians, etc., paid taxes on the professions they followed. Even prostitutes were taxed. The rate of tax differed from profession to profession. While a goldsmith paid five panams, a fisherman paid half a panam. The tax was paid in cash once a year. Inscriptions of Sadasiva reveal the interesting information that he exempted barbers from paying taxes. All industries were taxed on the basis of net profit. There were taxes on looms, oil mills, furnaces, gold, silk thread and diamond mining. Diamond industry appears to have been a lucrative one.

Duties on trade and commercial transactions contributed a large share to the state revenues. Customs and control duties were levied both on land and water transports at fixed rates. The customs duties due to the government were not usually collected by them directly, but farmed out to local persons who paid a fixed amount to the government. Excise duties were levied on the manufacture of salt and toddy.

For the maintenance of the army and the forts in the empire certain taxes were imposed on the people. An impost was levied for the defence of the conquered country. A few contributions for social purposes were also collected from the people and their organisations. These contributions were either collected by the government and added on to their other revenues or given over to the public and social institutions like temples or schools.

The revenue of the state was collected both in kind and in cash. The taxes on land seem to have been collected in kind by the state while the additional dues charged on land were collected in cash. Taxes collected in cash appear to have been known sometimes as *siddhaya* or 'realised' revenue.

As regards collection itself, four different methods were adopted.

- In the first method, the government appointed its own servants to collect the revenue.
- By the second method, the government farmed out the revenues to individual bidders.
- By the third method, the government dealt with a body or a group of villages.
- By the fourth, the government granted portions of the empire to certain persons, who were called *nayakas*, in return for military service and the payment of a fixed tribute to the imperial government.

The government paid due consideration to the condition of the ryots. When the monsoon was unfavourable or unforeseen circumstances affected the normal yield of land, the cultivator was granted relief from the burden of taxation. Under certain circumstances the government also exempted lands from the payment of taxes for a specific period and fixed grades or incremental rates of assessments for the convenience of the people so that they might bring new lands under cultivation and improved the soil.

The Revenue Department was known as *asthavana* and was presided over by the minister for revenue. He was helped by a large staff of officers and clerks for maintaining regular accounts of the income of the government from the various districts and sources.

Expenditure of the state: The military was an important item of expenditure for the Vijayanagar state. This became inevitable in the context of frequent wars with the Bahmani Sultans, subordination of chieftains, and the expansion of the empire. The kings also spent huge amounts on public endowments and charities to temples and brahmins. Another important head of expenditure was public works. Apart from excavating tanks, lakes, and other irrigation works, they also encouraged the execution of works of art and architecture.

Currency: The Vijayanagar kings took interest in minting gold coins called *varaha* or *panam*. It was in large circulation showing the prosperity of the empire. The *varaha* weighed about fifty-two grains. Silver and copper coins were not unknown. Abdur Razzak refers to a mint where coins were made. But private individuals also owned mints and enjoyed the privilege of issuing coins.

The Vijayanagar rulers used different symbols on their coins. For instance, while the coins of Harihara I and Bukka's depicts the Hanuman symbol, those of Krishnadeva Raya depicted the symbols of *Venkatesha* and *Balakrishna*. The symbol of *garuda* was found on the coins of Achyuta Raya. The symbol of *Varaha* was used on the coins of king Tirumala. These coins proclaim that most of the Vijayanagar kings followed Vaishnavism.

5.2.8 Judicial Administration

The Empire had its own system of laws and courts. The *dharmashastras*, the *Smritis* and the works on polity were the main sources of law.

Treason against the state, the king, the *sanghas*, and the *samudaya* were regarded as heinous crimes. Persons guilty of treason were immediately executed. The law of limitation held that mortgages would be valid for twelve years only and that mortgaged properties would be returned to the owners afterwards. An inscription of an officer of Sriranga III says that mortgages should restore property to the owners without demanding any money for the transfer. The law governing rewards stipulated that lands granted as rewards for services rendered to the state could not be sold or mortgaged or alienated in any way. Those who violated this law were liable for punishment like traitors.

As in most monarchies, the king appears to have been the fountain of justice. Krishnadeva Raya is known to have administered justice in

person. Abdur Razzak refers to the *pradhani* functioning as the chief justice. The assumption of the title *dharmapratipalaka* by the prime minister Saluva Timma indicates that he had judicial functions as well. The provincial governor seems to have decided disputes in the provinces.

Village assemblies, temple trustees, and caste elders administered justice at the village level. Inscriptions refer to these popular courts playing the role of regular courts. They confiscated lands, awarded punishments and exercised all the powers and functions of a full-fledged court. Disputes regarding social and religious practices were decided by the religious heads.

Trial by ordeal was also resorted to in some cases. This would mean divine help was invoked in settling disputes. Nicolo Conti refers to three kinds of ordeals: licking with the tongue a red hot iron, carrying a red hot iron or plate for several paces, and, the commonest of all, putting two fingers in boiling butter. If a person undergoing the trial came out unscathed, it was decided that justice was on his side, otherwise he was declared guilty and punished.

Severe punishment was meted out to those found guilty of offences. Death, mutilation, imprisonment, and fines were among the usual punishments. Traitors were pierced alive. Murderer's heads were cut off in the market-place. A few who were ordered to die were trampled to death by elephants. A thief had a foot and hand cut off. Certain fines were fixed for certain offences. Krishnadeva Raya pleaded that those who were sentenced to death should be given a chance to appeal for mercy three times. A detestable practice in Vijayanagar was the offering of lives of prisoners as human sacrifice. Even Krishnadeva Raya offered such sacrifices to mark "the successful termination of his big irrigation scheme".

Law and order was maintained in the empire by a competent police organisation. There were two kinds of police, namely, one maintained by the state, and the other by the people. Policemen were held responsible for the detection of crime in their respective areas. Those who failed to detect were fined.

The city of Vijayanagar is said to have been guarded by 12,000 policemen. The government paid each of them 30 panams a month. In the provinces, the police duties were performed by the *kavalkaras* under the *nayakas*. The *kavalkaras* generally belonged to criminal tribes. They

were paid partly in cash and partly in kind by the villagers. Sometimes the villages hold the right of policing; this was known as *padikaval*. The tax collected from the villagers for paying the police was known as *arasu svatantram*.

5.2.9 Military Administration

The frequent wars with the Bahmani rulers necessitated the Vijayanagar kings to give utmost importance to maintain a strong and powerful army. The Vijayanagar rulers adopted two methods for recruitment to the army. The first was direct recruitment. In this method, the soldiers were directly recruited and maintained by the kings. In the second which was indirect, military contingents were supplied to the imperial sovereign by the feudal vassals. The empire was divided into a large number of units each of which was granted to a chief in return for a fixed annual financial contribution and the supply of a specified quota of the military to the imperial house. While the former constituted the regular or standing army of the state, the latter remained largely an irregular force supplied by the feudatories at short notice.

The feudatories who rendered such military service to the king held lands of the king on an *amaram* tenure and were hence known in inscriptions as *amaranayakas*. There was a special force at the capital which Nuniz calls the “king’s guard”. It consists of foot-soldiers, horses and elephants. They bore some resemblance to the *Ahadis* of the Mughal court. In the Vijayanagar army the brahmans occupied an important place. They were not only placed in charge of fortresses but were also appointed to lead the armies.

The Military Department of the Vijayanagar period was called the *khandachara*. The army had four divisions: infantry, cavalry, elephants and artillery. Most of the army was made up of foot soldiers. Their weapons included swords, bows and arrows, daggers, battle-axes, muskets, guns, javelins, and bombs. The mainstay of the army was the cavalry. The head of the cavalry was called *asvapati*. Finding native horses weak and lean, Krishnadeva Ray bought every year 13,000 horses from Ormuz. Artillery came into use in south Indian warfare during the Vijayanagar period. Inscriptions refer to the use of guns and gunpowder. Nuniz speaks of Krishnadeva Raya taking canon to the Raichur battle.

The importance of the forts was fully realized. The forts were of four kinds: *sthala durga*, *jala durga*, *giri durga* and *vana durga*. The forts erected in newly conquered areas were known as *padaiparru*. There was a department of navy too. But the Vijayanagar kings gave little importance to it, thus providing easy access to the Portuguese the ports of South India.

5.2.10 Temple Administration

Temples enjoyed quasi-political powers in the Vijayanagar Empire. The temples were granted *sarvamanya* lands. Sometimes they were permitted to collect taxes for their maintenance. Krishnadeva Raya remitted 10,000 *varahas* in favour of the Siva and Vishnu temples in the Cholanmandalam and allowed the temples themselves to collect taxes worth that amount. The temples were treated as landlords and they had the right to sell and buy lands.

The temples provided financial assistance to those who were in distress and thus functioned as banks. Those who could not pay back the money borrowed, settled their account by selling some lands to the temples. There are also instances of temple trustees deciding criminal cases. The temples promoted small industries too. Weavers are frequently mentioned in inscriptions receiving special favours at the hands of temple authorities. Like the village assemblies, the temples conferred honours, particularly on their devotees. Temples reclaimed several lands at their own expense, cleared forests for fields, dug irrigation canals, constructed tanks, planted groves, managed schools attached to the temples, provided free meals to the students studying in temple schools patronized and provided employment to musicians and dancers etc.

Local Officers: Inscriptions mention a number of local officers and dignitaries. The *Parupatyagar* is one of them. He was a representative of the king or a governor in a locality. He functioned as the government's chief tax collector in his locality. He was in charge of the repair and maintenance of forts and works of public utility and acted as the trustee of the grants made by the king. He also served as the channel of communication between his locality and the king. They also exercised some sort of control over the administration of temples.

The *adhikari* was another important officer in the Vijayanagar Empire. Every city and every village had an *adhikari*. He was a high dignitary in the local areas and had many duties. Land documents were

executed in his presence. The *antrimars* played an important part in village administration. They were civilians who controlled the working of the village assemblies and other local organisations and put a check on the absolute independence of the local assemblies. The *nattunayakkars* were superintendents of *nadus*.

The *sthalagaudika* was yet another dignitary in the Vijayanagar Empire. Men who rendered yeoman service, like constructing towers to forts, were appointed *sthalagaudikas* of villages. The *senabovas* were accountants, and kept the revenue registers of their villages or *nadus*. The *madhyastha* was a mediator whose arbitration was sought in real estate transactions. Whenever lands were sold, these arbitrators fixed the price. Another important officer appearing in inscriptions was the *periyannattuvelan*. He is mentioned in connection with the attestation of documents.

5.2.11 Summary

For any kingdom, efficient administration is the key to their success. The Vijayanagar rulers have evolved a comprehensive administrative structure, which had regional variations. The king was the supreme head of the administration. He was assisted by several ministers at various levels. The provincial administration was carried on the lines of the central administration. The Nayankaras played a crucial role in the provincial administration. The Local government was controlled by *ayagars*. Further, efficient revenue administration of Vijayanagar rulers made them the wealthiest state in India. Similarly, the judicial and military administration also made them the most powerful rulers. Several officers were appointed by the state to carry out the administration in an efficient manner at every level.

5.2.12 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the main features of the central administration under the Vijayanagar rulers.
2. Write a note on the Nayankara system.
3. Explain the characteristics of the Local government under the Vijayanagar rulers.
4. Briefly write about the revenue administration during the Vijayanagar rulers.

5. "Temple emerged as a major employer during the Vijayanagar rulers". Explain.

6. Highlight the important aspects of the judicial and military administration under the Vijayanagar rulers.

5.2.13 Suggested Readings

Y. Gopal Reddy, *A Comprehensive History of Andhras*.

R.C. Majumdar, *An Advanced History of India*.

K. A. Nilakanta Sastry, *An Illustrated History of South India*.

Notes

Lesson-5.3: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS DURING THE VIJAYANAGAR PERIOD

5.3.1 Objectives

5.3.2 Introduction

5.3.3 Economic Conditions

- Agriculture
- Trade and Commerce

5.3.4 Social Conditions

- Social divisions
- Position of Women

5.3.5 Religious Conditions

5.3.6 Cultural Contributions

- Literature
- Art and Architecture
- Painting

5.3.7 Summary

5.3.8 Self- Assessment Questions

5.3.9 Suggested Readings

5.3.1 Objectives

The main objective of this Lesson are to

- Learn about the economic prosperity of South India during the Vijayanagara period.
- Understand the social conditions in the Vijayanagara period
- Know about the contribution of Vijayanagara rulers to literature, art and architecture.

5.3.2 Introduction

In the previous Lesson, you have learnt the administrative structure and the functions of various officials during the Vijayanagara period. The efficient administrative system is also key to the economic progress and prosperity. Economic prosperity and the creation of wealth also leads to upward social mobility of various caste based groups. This has what happened during the Vijayanagara period. Many social groups elevated their position. The kings encouraged the meritorious people. Besides, most of the nobles participated in temple building activity along with the kings. They involved in the construction of magnificent temples which had their own distinct style. The rulers of the Vijayanagara kingdom also extended

their patronage to the poets and brahmans with merit. Krishnadevaraya's court was known to have been adorned by the *Ashtadiggajas*. In this Lesson, therefore you will be studying in detail all these aspects of economic, social and cultural conditions that prevailed in south India under the Vijayanagara kings.

5.3.3 Economic Conditions

Agriculture

Agriculture was the chief occupation of the people of Vijayanagar Empire. The rulers provided irrigational facilities. They provided grants for the digging numerous tanks and canals. Krishnadevaraya built a tank near Hampi with the assistance of the Portuguese. The kings encouraged the peasants to bring the virgin lands under cultivation. Crops like rice, wheat, pulses, cotton and ginger were the main crops grown during this period especially in the Karnataka coast.

Trade and Commerce

Apart from agriculture, the Vijayanagar rulers encouraged trade and commerce. They provided all types of facilities to their subjects for their development. The main industries of Vijayanagara were textiles, perfumes and utensils made of various metals. The industrialists and businessmen were organized into trade-guilds called *Srenis*. The head of the *Sreni* or guild was called *Setti* or *Pattanaswami*. They looked after the interests of artisans belonging to different guilds. They maintained financial stability and granted donations and charities to temples. They also built temples, dug canals and tanks. The primary duty of the guilds were to decide and regulate retail and whole sale prices, to avoid disputes arising among the traders, and to decide exchange value of the currency of various areas. They also helped in the collection of taxes.

Mostly gold and copper coins were used though there were some silver coins also. They were called *varaha*, *dinara* and *fanam*. Of all these *fanam* was the most popular coins used during this period. There was brisk external trade relations with distant foreign countries such as Malaya, Burma, China, Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Africa, Abyssinia and Portugal. The main articles of export were cloth, rice, iron, sugar, saltpeter, spices and perfumes while the articles which were primarily imported in the country were horses, pearls, copper, mercury, silk and velvet. The trade was carried on both by land and sea and the Indians manufactured ships

of their own. According to Abdur Razzaq, the kingdom of Vijayanagara had three hundred ports on the east and west. The ports on the west coast were Honnavar, Bhatkal and Calicut and the ports on the east were Motupalli, Pulicat, Madras and Nagapatnam. Ships came to these ports from Burma and Malaya. The Vijayanagara empire kept a small navy as well. Barbosa states that South India got its ships built in the Maldives Islands. Thus, the empire enjoyed widely prosperous economy.

The prosperity, wealth and opulence of the Vijayanagara state was described by several foreign travelers who visited Vijayanagara during the fifteenth and sixteenth century in their accounts. The Italian traveler Nicolo Conti, the Portuguese traveler Domingos Paes and the Persian ambassador Abdur Razzaq described that not only the king and the nobles were rich but even the common people enjoyed prosperity. They mentioned that the common people wore various types of ornaments for different parts of the body. These ornaments were made of gold, pearls, diamonds and other precious stones. The prices of commodities and other articles were very low and there was also provision to store food grains in case of need.

The city of Vijayanagar, hence became the highly visited place by the travelers and traders who praised its beauty and splendor. Nicolo Conti wrote: "In this city there are estimated to be ninety thousand men fit to bear arms. The king is more powerful than all the other kings of India". Barbosa described: "The city is of great extent, highly populous and the seat of an active commerce in country dealing in diamonds, rubies from Peru, silk of China, Alexandria and Cinnabar, camphor, musk, pepper and sandal from Malabar". The rulers of Vijayanagara were largely responsible for this prosperity of their state. Iranian traveler Abdur Razzaq praised the city of Vijayanagara thus: "I have never seen a city like Vijayanagara nor ever heard of a city in the world like it. The city has been encircled by seven walls, one inside the other, for protection". The Portuguese traveler Domingos Paes also wrote: "It is the most beautiful city of the world where wheat, rice, barley, pulses and every other article is available in abundance". He again wrote: "The king has enormous wealth, soldiers and elephants because everything is available here in abundance....You will find citizens of every country here because the people of this city carry on trade, in precious stones particularly in diamonds, with every country of the world". These travelers only visited the capital city and expressed their opinion.

However, the system at the provincial level suffered from serious defect. Mostly the burden of taxation was suffered by the common people which resulted in economic disparity among the people. The Vijayanagar kings collected $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total produce from the agriculturists. In addition to the land revenue the state imposed grazing tax, marriage tax, customs duties, tax on prostitutes etc. Tolls were collected. Sometimes, tax collection was given to the highest bidder. Thus the common people at the provincial and village level were burdened with heavy taxes sometimes even compelled to leave their villages.

5.3.4 Social Conditions

Social Divisions

The society during the Vijayanagara period was organized on *varanashrama* system. The Vijayanagar kings were described as protectors of the interest of all the *varnas* or castes (*sarva varnashrama dharmangalannu palisutta*). The brahmans occupied the most respectable and prominent position in society. Their functions were more varied. They were not only learned scholars and performed priestly duties, but were also ministers. Madhava and Sayana, the learned commentators of the Vedas, were ministers under Bukka I and Harihara II. Brahmans were priests in temples, owners of large estates, traders and merchants, high officials, commanders and so on. A large number of land grants were made to them. Brahmans maintained their high position and status in the society. They led very simple and pious lives. Nuniz describes the brahmans as "honest men, very good at accounts, learnt men and well informed but little fit for hard work."

The absence of the name Kshatriya in the history of Vijayanagar appear very curious. According to B.A.Saletore "the nobles and other high dignitaries, because of their prowess, were included among the Kshatriyas". They were mostly recruited in the army and other executive posts. The Vaisyas were engaged in trade and commerce. The Sudras were the peasants who cultivated the land. Some of the sudra communities like the Balanjas came to prominence as traders and some of them also entered the army by their prowess. In addition to these there were other sub-castes like the weavers, the jugglers and the barbers.

A most significant feature of the Vijayanagara society was the rise of social consciousness among different communities. Each community

clamored for certain privileges and honours enjoyed by members of the higher classes. There was then some sort of a social upheaval for the betterment of a few classes in the social scale; the *vipravinodins* were one such social class. Like the *vipravnodins*, artisans called the *virapanchalas* who consisted of blacksmiths, goldsmiths, brass-smiths, carpenters and idol-makers, fought among themselves for certain rights and privileges. The Belur inscriptions dated 1555 CE, refers to the fight between artisans and cultivators. At times it assumed a serious magnitude necessitating the passing of social legislation.

Kaikkolas (weavers) were a prominent community. They lived generally round the temple precincts. They had a voice in the temple administration and in the levy of the local taxes. They carried on their industry on a small scale and enjoyed certain social privileges. The *tottiyans* or *kambalattars* were originally shepherds and became petty *Palaigars* in the south.

Reddis were responsible for the material prosperity of the land. They exercised considerable influence in the Telugu provinces of the empire. They came into prominence from the time of Devaraya II. The position of barbers rose in towards the middle of the sixteenth century. There were a number of other lower classes, who had no say in social matters. These included the *Dombaras*, *Maravas* or *fisherfolk*, *Jogies*, *Paraiyans*, *Boyees*, *Erkelas*, and *Kallars*. Some among these were converted to Christianity by the Portuguese.

On account of economic development and general prosperity during the period, certain lower castes, which were economically prosperous, attempted to acquire the privileges of the upper castes. Such lower castes which were granted privileges of the upper were known as Sat-Shudras or better or good Shudras and were even allowed to wear the sacred thread without observing the prescribed ceremony or rituals. We find similar conflict among the industrial classes divided into the *Velangais* or right-handers and *Idangais* or left-handers.

Position of Women

Women occupied a very honourable position in the Vijayanagar society. Some of them were very learned and were eminent litterateurs. Gangadevi, the wife of Kumarakampana wrote *Madura Vijayam* and Tirumalamba was the author of *Varadambika Parinayam*.

Monogamy was the general practice, but kings and nobility followed polygamous practices. Early marriages were very common among the brahmins. The plight of the widows was pitiable, but they could remarry. The state encouraged widow remarriage by not levying any marriage-tax on their marriage. Women of the nobility and higher castes were educated. Music and dance formed an important part of their curriculum. There were also women wrestlers, astrologers and sooth-sayers, bodyguards, accountants, writers, musicians and some of them even went to the battlefield.

Another group of women were the courtesans who played a very important role in society. They were of two classes: (a) those who were attached to the temples, and (b) those who lived independently. Women of any community could join as courtesans. They were highly educated and cultured. Most of them were very rich and enjoyed certain privileges.

The Vijayanagar society was not free from flaws. There were child marriages. The prevalence of *sati* or *sahagamana* in the Vijayanagar Empire is proved both from inscriptions and foreign accounts of the period. They provide a vivid and realistic picture of this brutal custom. The widows committed *sati* two or three months after the death of their husbands. Lingayats performed it by being buried alive. The custom was popular because the queens wanted to escape dishonor at the hands of Muslims. Shaving of the head was a punishment for not committing *sati*. The Vijayanagar inscriptions and the foreign travelers' accounts contain direct reference to both male and female slaves. The *besabaga* or the sale of human beings also prevailed. Some of the masters treated them with kindness and consideration. Sacrifices of animals on a large scale at the end of festivals and human sacrifices were common during this period. The latter were offered at the time of opening tanks, dams, temples, etc. Generally war prisoners were sacrificed.

Thus, the Vijayanagar society was praised for its opulence, yet, it were only the upper castes who were prosper and lower casts and especially the peasants condition was always miserable, as they were the most exploited lot by the land lords and tax collectors.

5.3.5 Religious Conditions

Saivism and Vaishnavism were two popular religions prevalent during the reign of Vijayanagara rulers. Jainism also had some followers. Kalamukhas and Pasupatas, the two important Saiva sectswere prevalent

during this time. Vidyaranya, the mentor of Harihara and Bukka was a Saivite. Virasaivism was also popular in the kingdom. It broke caste barriers and rejected the Vedic ceremonies. Nicolo Conti refers to the acts of self-immolation by the Virasaivites. Sakti worship was also followed. All foreign travelers refer to the grand celebrations of the Mahanavami festival.

The Vaishna philosophy of Ramanija was popular in the Vijayanagar Empire. The followers of Vaishnavism were divided into two sects *Vadagalai* and *Tengalai*. Among the Vaishnavites again there were the followers of Vallabha sect, who worshipped Krishna and Radha. Tirupati and Ahobilam became the centres of Vaishnava religion.

The Vijayanagar emperors followed the policy of religious toleration. Durati Barbosa states that Krishnadevaraya treated the Saivites, Vaihnavites, Jains, Christians, Jews and Moors with compassion and love. But he himself was a staunch follower of Vaishnavism. Achyutadevaraya was also a follower of Vishnu. But he gave munificent donations to Saiva temples at Kanchi, Lepakshi, etc. About Ramaraya, it is said that he had the Quran placed before himself, when his Muslim soldiers rendered obeisance to him.

Epigraphical sources state that during the time of Harihara II, sectarian conflicts between Jains, Buddhists and other brahmanical faiths were common. But they were suppressed by the rulers following the policy of toleration.

5.3.6 Cultural Contributions

Literature

The Vijayanagar rulers were great patrons of literature. They granted *agraharas* or tax-free villages to the learned scholars. The rulers encouraged Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada literatures and languages.

Many great works were produced in Sanskrit language. Important among them were the commentaries on the Vedas written by Sayana. His brother Madhava Vijayaranya was also a great scholar. He wrote on the Vedanta. Other works in Sanskrit include Gangadevi's *Madhura Vijayam*, Krishnadevaraya's *Jambavati Kalyanam*, Tirumalamba's *Varadambika*

Parinayam, and the contributions of Appayya Dikshitar and Govinda Dikshitar.

Notes

Telugu literature reached its zenith during this period. King Bukkaraya I encouraged Telugu literature. A reputed Telugu poet Nachana Soma, the author of *Uttara harivamsam*, was his court poet.

King Devaraya II's court was adorned by thirty four poets. King Sri Krishnadeva Raya liberated Telugu literature from Sanskrit influence, thus opening was made for the *Prabhand* style of writing. His court was graced by eight great poets called the *Ashtadiggajas*. Alasani Peddana was the greatest among all. He was described as '*Andhra kavita Pitamaha*'. The following are the eight poets and their works:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Alasani Peddana | - <i>Manucharitam and Harikathasaramsamu</i> |
| 2. Nandi Timmana | - <i>Parijatapaharanam</i> |
| 3. Madayyagari Mallana | - <i>Rajasekharacharitam</i> |
| 4. Dhurjati | - <i>Kalahasti Mahatyam</i> |
| 5. Ayyalaraju Ramabhadradu | - <i>Sakaramatasara Sangraham, Ramabhyudayam</i> |
| 6. Pingali Surana | - <i>Raghava Pandaviyam and kalapurnodayam</i> |
| 7. Ramarajabhushana | - <i>Kavyalankarasangraham, Vasucharitram and Harischandranalopakhyanam</i> |
| 8. Tenali Ramakrishna | - <i>Udbhataradhy Charitramu, Panduranga Mahatyam and Ghatikachala Mahatyam</i> |

Besides Telugu, Krishnadeva Raya also patronized scholars of Tamil and Kannada languages. Therefore, the rule of Krishnadeva Raya marked the zenith of the growth of literature. For his patronage of art, architecture and literature, he was rightly called as the '*Andhra Bhoja*'. Krishnadeva Raya himself was a great scholar. He authored *Amuktamalyada* in Telugu and *Jambavati Parinayam* in Sanskrit. The court of poets was called as *Bhuvana Vijayam* (Conquest of the World).

Achyutadevaraya patronized poet Rajanatha and the poetess Tirumalamba. Ramaraya patronized Ramayamatya, an authority on music.

Vemana, a great socialist and poet of the people lived in this age. He gives a new dimension to the *Sataka* literature. He attacked the social evils of the society like caste system, idol worship and poverty with satire and wit.

The development of Kannada literature was mainly confined to the Tuluva region. It was enriched by the Jain and Virasaiva writers. Bhimakavi, Madhura, Chamarasa Mahalingadeva, Jakkana, Gobbi Mallanarya and Sarvagnamurti were the well-known Kannada poets of the age. The Tamil literature produced many lexicons related to Saivism.

During the entire period of the Vijayanagar rulers, remarkable texts on religion, philosophy, grammar, drama, music, dance etc., were produced. Fine arts like music, dance, painting and architecture also made good progress.

Art and Architecture

The Vijayanagar period witnessed a remarkable development in the fields of architecture, art and painting. The ruins of their capital Hampi, proclaim to the world, the tastes and interest of the kings, queens and their feudatories in building activity.

The Vijayanagar rulers introduced a new style of architecture called “Vijayanagar style in temple construction. Though this style resembles the Dravida style, it has its own characteristic features. These include, intricately sculpted large number of pillars and piers, a *mantapa* or open pavilion with raised platform. Horse was the most common animal depicted in the sculptures of Vijayanagar temples. These temples also have *kalyana mandapa* with elaborately carved pillars. In the central part of the temple, there is a *garbhagriha* or santum sanctorium, in which the presiding deity was installed. Adjacent to this was the Amman shrine in which the consort of the god was installed. There are *prakara* walls with pillared cloisters and lofty *gopura* gateways. The Dravidian architecture reached its climax of grace and grandeur under the patronage of the Vijayanagar kings.

The most magnificent temples built in the Vijayanagara style are Vitthalaswamy and Hazara Ramaswamy temples located in Hampi and Vijayanagar. About Hazara Ramaswamy temple, Longhurst observes: ‘one of the most perfect specimens of Hindu temple architecture in existence.’

About Vithalaswamy temple James Fergusson states that it “shows the extreme limit in florid magnificence to which the style advanced”.

The Virupaksha temple at Lepakshi, the Chennakesava temple at Sompalem, the Jalakhanteswara temple at Vellore, Parvati temples at Tadapatri and Chidambaram, Varadarajaswamy and Ekambranath temples at Kanchipuram are other examples of Vijayanagar style of architecture. The erection of *raya gopurams* or towers in different parts of the empire to commemorate the visit of emperor are also important specimens of the Vijayanagar architecture.

Painting

The art of painting also received its due recognition and patronage under the Vijayanagar rulers. The paintings were found in the temples at Hampi, Lepakshi, Sompalem, etc. They are found mostly on the ceilings of the pillared halls. The Vijayanagara painters followed the Jain miniature painting traditions and techniques. Representation of human beings in profile *purdue* and showing the eye protruding into the space are the dominating features of the Vijayanagara paintings. These paintings represent stories and incidents from *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Puranas*. However, they possessed doll-like look and lack harmonious human anatomy.

Thus, the Vijayanagar Empire occupied an important place in the history of India because of its contribution in polity, economy, administration and cultural progress. One of the most remarkable success of these rulers was their support to Hindu religion and culture against the onslaught of the Muslim aggressions in south India.

5.3.7 Summary

This Lesson highlighted the economic, social and cultural aspects during the Vijayanagara rulers. Economically, the Vijayanagara Empire enjoyed wealth and prosperity. Their markets were flooded with the best quality precious stones, spices, textiles and many other articles, which were sold in the open markets. Many foreign travelers who visited the city of Vijayanagara gave vivid accounts of the city and its prosperity. On the social front, the Vijayanagara society though was based on the *varnasrama* dharma, yet there were many other social groups who improved their economic status. With an increase in trading and commercial activities and the emergence of temple as a major employer, several occupational

groups found secured employment. With regard to religion, the rulers showed tolerance towards other faiths, which led to the peaceful coexistence of the people. On the cultural front, the Vijayanagara rulers, encouraged the production of great literary works. Krishnadevaraya himself was a great poet and wrote masterpieces. Further, the kings also showed great interest in introducing a new style of temple architecture. Sculptures and painting further added to the beauty of these magnificent temples. However, the plight of the common man, particularly the peasant has not improved much.

5.3.8 Self-Assessment Question

1. Discuss the economic conditions under the Vijayanagara rulers.
2. Describe the social composition of South India during the Vijayanagara period.
3. Write about the religious conditions during the Vijayanagara period.
4. What was the contribution of Vijayanagara rulers to the development of literature, art and architecture?

5.3.9 Suggested Readings

K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Illustrated History of South India*
R.C. Majumdar, *An Advanced History of India*.

Lesson-5.4: THE BAHMANIS OF THE DECCAN

Notes

- 5.4.1 Objectives
- 5.4.2 Introduction
- 5.4.3 The Bahmanis: Political career
- 5.4.4 Conflict between the Bahmani and Vijayanagar rulers: Causes and Results
- 5.4.5 Administration of the Bahmanis
- 5.4.6 Social and Economic conditions
- 5.4.7 The Bahmani Architecture
- 5.4.8 Summary
- 5.4.9 Self- Assessment Questions
- 5.4.10 Suggested Readings

5.4.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this Lesson are to

- Understand the contribution of Bahmanis to Deccan polity, economy
- Assesses the relationship between the Vijayanagara Empire and the Bahmani Empire
- Learn about the impact of Bahmani rule on the evolution of Deccani culture, art and architecture.

5.4.2 Introduction

The year 1347 is significant in the history of the Deccan, as it witnessed the birth of the Muslim sultanate, which introduced Islamic culture in the Deccan. The rise of Bahmani kingdom heralded a new epoch in the Deccan. The Bahmanis arose out of the many revolts that broke up the Tughlaq Empire towards the close of the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. The immediate neighbour of the Bahmani sultans in the Deccan were the Vijayanagara kings. These two kingdoms had strained relationship over the control of Krishna-Tungabhadra doab. This has first led to the disintegration of the Bahmani kingdom and later the defeat of the Vijayanagara Empire in the hands of the coalition of the disintegrated powers. In this Lesson, you will learn about the Bahmani's relationship with the Vijayanagara rulers and their contribution to polity, administration, economy, religion, and culture.

5.4.3 The Bahmanis: Political Career

The Bahmani kingdom came into existence during the last days of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq in 1347 CE. It arose as a result of the revolt by Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah, an Afghan rebel officer of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. It was said that Muhammad bin Tughlaq suspected the foreign officials of the revenue department of Daulatabad province for having failed to collect enormous revenues. So he started killing them mercilessly. They therefore revolted against the Sultan. The Sultan imprisoned them in the citadel of Daulatabad. Some of them escaped to Gulburga under the leadership of Hasan Gangu alias Zafar Khan. Hasan gathered a considerable army and defeated the imperial forces. Thereafter, he proclaimed himself the ruler of the Deccan on 3rd August 1347 under the name Sultan Abu'l Muzaffar Alauddin Bahman Shah with Gulbarga as its capital.

Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah traced his descent from a half-mythical hero of Persia, Bahman. However, Ferishta records that he called himself "Gangu Bahmani" in honour of the Brahmin Gangu, for whom he was a slave. Sultan Aladdin Bahman Shah ruled for eleven years till his death in 1358 CE. He waged several wars and defeated Kapayanayaka of Warangal, who surrendered the Kaulas fort. He sent expeditions against the Vijayanagar rulers and occupied the Krishna Tungabhadra Doab. He extended the Bahmani kingdom up to the sea on the west, which included the ports of Goa and Dabhol. The eastern limit was marked by Bhongir, while Penganga and Krishna rivers bounded the kingdom on the north and south. He organized the administration of the kingdom by dividing it into four provinces or *tarafs* namely, Gulburga, Daulatabad, Bidar and Berar, each placed under a governor.

Alauddin Bahman Shah was succeeded by his eldest son Muhammad Shah I (1358-1377 CE). He attacked Kapayanayaka of Warangal, in which the son of Kapayanayaka was killed. Kapayanayaka made peace with him by giving Golkonda. He defeated Bukka I in another battle. Finally, peace was concluded between the two. His greatest achievement was the decentralization of provincial administration. He also established a council of eight ministers including the *Peshwa*. He took measures for the suppression of highway robbery and provided safety and security on the roads.

Mujahid Shah (1377-1378 CE):- He was defeated by Bukka I. ujahid rebuked his uncle Daud Khan for the inefficiency of his operations against

the city of Vijayanagara. Daud Khan conspired to murder Mujahid on 15th April 1378 and made himself king. Within a month, however, Daud was murdered by Muhammad II, the grandson of Alauddin Bahman Shah.

Muhammad Shah II (1378-1397 CE):- He was a peace loving ruler devoted to religion and poetry. During his period, the Vijayanagar ruler, Harihara II occupied the Bahmani ports on the west coast. Muhammad Shah built mosques and schools. He undertook several welfare measures. However, he was a religious bigot. His death was followed by a war of succession. Finally, another grandson of Alauddin I held in overpowering Tughalcin .

Firoz Shah (1397-1422 CE):- Firuz became the king under the tile, Taj-ud-din Firuz Shah. Ferishta considers him as one of the greatest of the Bahamani Sultans. In 1398, he invaded Raichur doab and defeated Harihara II, the king of Vijayanagar. He also crushed the Koli rebellion on the north bank of the Krishna by a Hindu chief. Firoz defeated Devaraya I, who later gave his daughter in marriage to the Sultan, surrendered Bankapur and paid a huge war indemnity. He supported the ruler of Kondaveedu, and put an end to Katayavema Reddi of Rajahmundry. His brother Ahmad Shah murdered him and occupied the throne.

Ahmad Shah (1422-1435 CE):- He invaded Vijayanagar Empire to avenge the defeats faced during the last years of Firuz Shah. Devaraya II agreed for a treaty. The Sultan occupied Warangal and waged war against Malwa and Gujarat, raided Gondwana and spent a year in Ellichpur rebuilding the forts of Gawilgarh and Narnala. On his return from his military campaigns, Ahmad stayed in Bidar for some time and was pleased by the climate over there. He then decided to build a new city called Ahmadabad –Bidar, which later became his new capital.

Ahmad's reign was also marked by beginning of internal rivalry between the foreign Muslims-Turks, Arabs, Moghuls and Persians who were given high positions in military and civil services and the local Muslims called the Deccanis, who were backed by African Muslims. Further, the foreign Muslims were Shias and the Deccani Muslims were Sunnis. These internal disputes had weakened the Bahmani Sultanate in course of time. After the death of Ahmad, his eldest son Alauddin II succeeded to the throne.

Alauddin II (1435-1457 CE):- He invited the jealousy of the Deccanis by surrounding himself with foreign Muslims. He sent his brother Muhammad to collect the tribute from Devaraya II. On refusal by the latter, Muhammad defeated him. Alauddin also repulsed an attack of the ruler of Khandesh, Nasir Khan. He defeated the raja of Sangameshwar, conquered Konkan and married his daughter. He suppressed the revolt of the Governor of Telangana. Alauddin's character degenerated with age. He started involving in sensual pleasure. The Deccanis took advantage of this to destroy the power of the foreign Muslims. Later, the Sultan dismissed all Deccani officials and focused on state affairs.

Humayun (1458-1461 CE):-Humayun succeeded his father Alauddin II. He was inefficient as a ruler. He earned the title *zalim* or tyrant. He was defeated by the Gajapatis of Orissa. The Telangana region fell into the hands of the Gajapatis. Humayun favoured foreigners in the administration. He appointed Mahmud Gawan as lieutenant of the kingdom (*malik naib*) and governor of Bijapur.

Nizam Shah (1461-1463 CE):- He was a minor when he ascended the throne. So, his mother, Makhduma Jahan looked after the administration. Since he met with a premature death, he was succeeded by his brother, Muhammad Shah III.

Muhammad Shah III (1463-1482 CE):- Muhammad Shah III appointed Muhammad Gawan as his prime minister '*Amir-ul-Umara*'. Gawan was born in Persia. He came to the Deccan and joined the service of the Bahamani Sultans. Alauddin II appointed him as his Amir. He suppressed a revolt during the period of Humayun. In the period of Nizam Shah, he repulsed an attack of the Sultan of Gujarat. As a prime minister under Muhammad Shah III, he expanded the Bahmani Empire. Gawan was an able military general. He defeated the Gajapatis of Orissa and occupied Kondaveedu, Kondapalli and Rajahmundry. His armies captured Masulipatnam, Penugoda, Kanchi from Vijayanagar rulers and established their control in the South. He defeated the Malwa king and occupied Goa on the west coast.

Mahmud Gawan was an efficient administrator with vision. He divided the vast Bahmani Empire into eight *tarafs* or provinces, which included the older four provinces. His land reforms were aimed at the welfare of the peasant. He introduced Ryotwari system. Some scholars

described him as a forerunner of Raja Todarmal. He also succeeded in bringing the foreign Muslims (non-mulkis) and the Deccani Muslims (mulkis) together. He was a great scholar and a patron of learning. His famous works include '*Riaz-ul-Insha*', '*Manzirul-Insha*'. He founded a famous madrasa at Bidar which could house a thousand teachers and students. It was one of the most popular educational centre in the entire Deccan, in those times. He developed a big library. It consisted of many valuable books on various subjects. But, he was known as a religious fanatic. His influence and popularity created jealousy in the minds of the Deccani Muslims. They poisoned the mind of the Sultan and created distrust upon Gawan. Finally, Gawan was accused of treason for which he was sentenced to death in 1481 CE. With his death, the Bahmani kingdom was plunged into several revolts.

Muhammad Shah IV (1482-1518 CE): He was the last Bahmani Sultan. He was weak and inefficient. In his period Bahmani kingdom disintegrated into five kingdoms namely, Bijapur, Bidar, Golkonda, Ahmednagar and Berar.

During hundred and seventy five years of its existence, the Bahmani kingdom had witnessed the reign of eighteen kings of whom five were murdered, three deposed, two blinded, while two died of intemperance.

5.4.4 Conflict between Bahmani and Vijayanagar Rulers

The Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms came into existence during the last days of the Tughlaq rule. The Vijayanagar Empire was founded in 1336 and the Bahmani rule in 1347. Both the kingdoms had been engaged in a series of battles for nearly two centuries. Finally, they collapsed. The causes of the conflict between them are political, economic and religious.

Political Causes: The Bahmanis and the Vijayanagar rulers clashed for the sake of political supremacy in the South. There were three areas of rivalry between the two kingdoms. They were the Tungabhadra Doab, the Krishna-Godavari basin and the Konkan area in the Maratha country. They are the areas of strategic importance and extremely fertile regions with flourishing ports that controlled the foreign trade in the area.

Economic Causes: The Muslim rulers had a desire to plunder the rich cities of Vijayanagar. The Bahmani kingdom was poor in resources compared to the territories of the Vijayanagar empire.

Religious Causes: The Vijayanagar rulers were committed to the idea of protecting Hindu religion and culture from devastating raids of the Muslims. The Bahmanis wanted to spread Islam in the South. Thus there was a religious background for the conflict between the two kingdoms.

The Vijayanagar-Bahmani wars started from the beginning and continued till the fall of the Vijayanagar empire in 1565 CE.

Results of the Conflicts

The conflict and wars between the two kingdoms resulted in serious loss of men and material on both sides. The protracted struggles weakened both the kingdoms. The Bahmani's were busy in their wars with the Hindu kings in the South. Therefore, they were not free to go for the rescue of Ibrahim Lodi of Delhi, who was fighting with Babur. Thus, these wars made the foundation of the Mughal empire a certainty. However, Vijayanagar kings could protect the Hindu religion in the South.

5.4.5 Administration

Most of the Bahmani Sultans were tyrants. They were religious bigots. Daulatabad, The kingdom was divided into tarafs or provinces, which were kept under the charge of tarafdars (governors). There were four of them viz., Bidar, Gulbarga, Daulatabad and Berar. During the reign of Muhammad Shah III, Gawan divided each of them into two and appointed governors for them for effective administration and control, as the empire became unwieldy. He restricted the power of the governors by appointing various district collectors. They managed the revenues of certain villages in each governorship. The governors were entrusted with the charge of only one fort, while other forts were managed by different generals of the Sultan. This was a check against the rebellion of the governors. The maintenance of troops by the governors for the king was also closely supervised by the centre.

During the rule of Muhammad Shah I, a council of eight ministers was created, which continued later. They were :

- (i) *Vakil-us-Sultanat* or lieutenant of the kingdom. He was next to the sovereign
- (ii) *Wazir-i-kul* or the supervisor of the work of the ministers

- (iii) *Amir-i-Jumla* or minister of finance
- (iv) *Wazir-i-Ashraf* or minister of foreign affairs
- (v) *Wazir* or assistant minister of finance
- (vi) *Peshwa* or an associate of *Vakil-us-Sultanat*
- (vii) *Kotwal* or chief of police and city magistrate
- (viii) *Sadar-i-Jehan* or chief justice. He was also in-charge of religious affairs.

Muhammad Shah was successful in suppressing highway robbery. Gawan, the prime minister of Muhammad Shah III introduced the ryotwari system. He improved the administration in the kingdom.

5.4.6 Social and Economic conditions

During the Bahmani rule in the Deccan, a new era was started. They considered themselves as the local people. They respected the sentiments of the local people. They tried to utilize their knowledge and expertise in building their vast kingdom. They were instrumental in laying the foundations for the emergence of composite culture in the Deccan. They took measures to improve the condition of the peasantry. They repaired many existing tanks, lakes, wells, canals in Telangana, Karnataka and other parts of their empire. They also encouraged professional groups, guilds. Handicrafts, cottage industries by providing them assistance and tax exemptions. Migrations were a common feature

Bidar was famous for the the production of variety of crafts. The famous Bidriware hails from this place. The local potters of Bidar also produced variety of pottery items. Weavers of Bahmani kingdom earned a very popular name for their best quality of textile production.

Both internal and external trade flourished during the Bahmani period. The Sultan provided security to markets and traders. The accounts of Russian traveller referred to the above facts. Goa, Masulipatnam, Dabul, Mahim, are important ports from where the trading activities were carried during the Bahmani period. External trade was carried with the Arabs, Portuguese and Persia. Internally, the Sultans encouraged their people to organize weekly fairs. Sellers supplied and sold the required goods, articles, animals, birds, etc., in the local markets.

5.4.3 The Bahmani Architecture

The Bahmani Sultans were great patrons of art, architecture and literature.

The architecture of the Bahamani's was a composite mixture of several elements, Indian, Turkish, Egyptian and Persian. The monuments erected by the Bahamani's were modified after the architecture of the Sultans of Delhi. The civil architecture of Persia also exerted its influence. The early constructions did not represent a distinctive style of the Deccan Islamic architecture.

The capital cities of Gulburga and Bidar were the centres of civil architecture of the Bahamanis. At Gulburga there are two groups of royal tombs- one near the south gate of the fort and the other to the east of the town. The first group is represent by the tombs of Sultan Hasan, Muhammad Shah, Mujahid and Daud. These were built in typical Tughlaq style of Delhi. The second group of royal tombs belongs to that of Ghiyyasuddin. For the first time Hindu craftsmanship begins to appear in the carvings of the prayer niche. The splendid mausoleum of Firuz Shah and his family also bears the Hindu influence.

At Gulburga, Muhammad Shah built two mosques viz., Shah Bazar Masjid imitating the Tughlaq architecture of Firuz Shah's reign in Delhi. The other was Jama masjid, built within the fort in 1367 CE. This Masjid was designed by Rafi, who was a native of Persia under the service of the Bahmanis. It has stilted domes and narrow entrances typical of the Persian style. The other features of the mosques are more close to the Delhi style. This design was not repeated later as it was not liked by the orthodox elements.

Bidar comes up from the time of Ahmad Shah Wali (1422-35). The buildings of new capital city of Bidar exhibit a strong Iranian influence. The important feature of the Bidar style was the use of coloured tiles and the wall paintings in Persian style and bands of Kufic and other inscriptions worked out in letters of gold on a ground of deep blue or vermillion. The shining tiles imported from Iran were used to cover the outer portions. There is a distinctive change in the shape of some of the domes, and the drums of these domes are made tall, so as to project the domes in full view. Chand Minar at Daulatabad (1435) of the time of Alauddin Ahmad Shah and the tomb of that emperor are covered with enamel tiles in various shades of blue are also predominantly Persian, as these were constructed by the architects from that country.

The college (Madrasa) of Gawan at Bidar (1472) is the most remarkable building in the Persian style. It has three stories and has towering minarets in the front corners. It contains a mosque, a library, lecture halls, and quarters for the teachers and rooms for students.

The Adil Shahi rulers made Bijapur, their capital city, as one of the most magnificent cities in the whole of India. It has palaces, mosques, tombs, mint and gateways. The material used in construction were red sandstones and white marble of contemporary Mughal architecture. The versatility of the Bijapur workman is manifested in the Gol Gumbaz, the tomb of Muhammad Adil Shah. It has exquisite detail of the miniature Mihtar Mahal, which is a gateway to the courtyard of a mosque. The Gol Gumbaz includes other structures such as a mosque. A gateway and musician's gallery, and other annexes essential to a royal tomb. The other famous buildings of the Bahmani period include 'Solakhand Mosque', Rani Mahal, Gagan mahal, Chinnimahar and Nageenamahar and other secular buildings are symbols of their excellent architecture.

Thus, the Bahmani rule in the Deccan opened a new epoch in the history. Though they came from foreign country they mingled with the local people and tried to contribute to their culture.

5.4.8 Summary

In this Lesson, you have learnt how the Bahmani's rose to political prominence in the Deccan under the rule of various efficient kings. It reached its peak of glory during Muhammad Shah III's reign. It was his Prime Minister Muhammad Gawan who played a key role in making the Bahmani kingdom the most powerful power. The Bahmani's however, were continuously engaged in warfare with the Vijayanagara rulers who were their arch rivals. The Bahmanis also contributed for the development of composite culture in the Deccan.

5.4.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Give an account of the political history of the Bahmani rulers.
2. Describe the causes for the conflict between the Bahmanis and Vijaynagar rulers.
3. Write a note on the achievements of Muhmmad Gawan.
4. Highlight the contribution of the Bahmanis to Deccani art and architecture.