



ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY

[Accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC (CGPA:3.64) in the Third Cycle
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(A State University Established by the Government of Tamil Nadu)

KARAIKUDI – 630 003



Directorate of Distance Education

B.A. [History]

I - Semester

108 13

HISTORY OF INDIA [BEGINNING TO 1707 A.D.]

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Vikas® Publishing House: Units (1, 2, 3.0-3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5-3.9, 5.4, 6.4, 8, 9.3, 9.5.1, 9.6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

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E-28, Sector-8, Noida - 201301 (UP)

Phone: 0120-4078900 • Fax: 0120-4078999

Regd. Office: 7361, Ravindra Mansion, Ram Nagar, New Delhi 110 055

• Website: www.vikaspublishing.com • Email: helpline@vikaspublishing.com

Work Order No. AU/DDE/DE1-238/Preparation and Printing of Course Materials/2018 Dated 30.08.2018 Copies - 500

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INTRODUCTION

NOTES

India is recognized as having a unique and intriguing history and culture. Historical records trace the beginning of Indian civilization to the ancient Indus Valley Civilization. It is also called the Harappan Civilization as Harappa was the first site to be excavated. The sources of evidence about this civilization are the artifacts, pottery, tools, ornaments and ruins of towns. Man began to use metals which continued into the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic Ages. This was followed by the arrival of the Vedic Age which occupies an important place in Indian history. The religion, philosophy and social customs of the Hindus who constitute the majority of our country have their principal source in the Vedic culture. However, with the passage of time, Vedic religion had become quite ritualistic and the caste system had become predominant. This resulted in regional dissent among the masses, which led to the emergence of new classes and the rise of Jainism and Buddhism. Jainism and Buddhism represent a remarkable phase in the religious and cultural development of India. This was followed by the emergence of cities and territorial states, especially the Magadha Empire and the Nandas.

Further, the small cities and territorial states were brought under the control of Chandra Gupta Maurya who laid the foundation of the Mauryan Empire. The decline of the Mauryan Empire led to the arrival and emergence of Indo-Greeks, Shungas, Kharavelas, Kushanas and Satvahanas. India was once again politically united in the Gupta Period. The Gupta Age is marked as an era of unprecedented progress in all aspects of polity, religion, art and literature. The disintegration of the Gupta Period led to the emergence of regional kingdoms. This was followed by the arrival of Arabs and Turks in India. The invasions of the Arabs and Turks eventually led to the formation of the Delhi Sultanates and the Mughal Empire.

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

BLOCK - I
GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES AND INDUS
CIVILIZATION

*Geographical Features
of India*

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UNIT 1 GEOGRAPHICAL
FEATURES OF INDIA

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Physical Features of India
 - 1.2.1 Topography
- 1.3 Impact of Geography on Indian History
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Geographical features are man-made or naturally-created features of the earth. Natural geographical features consist of landforms and ecosystems. For instance, terrain types, and other physical factors of the environment are natural geographical features. The varied physical features of the sub-continent of India have led to the formation of different local zones, political and cultural units. On account of the difference in the physical features and natural barriers, India has come to be divided into different political and cultural units.

In this unit, you will study these physical features of India, and the impact of geography on Indian history.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the physical features of India
- Define the term topography
- Discuss the impact of geography on Indian history
- Explain the important features of the Peninsular Plateau

1.2 PHYSICAL FEATURES OF INDIA

NOTES

India is a vast country with different kinds of landforms. It is blessed with every possible physical feature present on the surface of the earth. India is a combination of the following physical features:

- (i) Mountains
- (ii) Plains
- (iii) Plateau
- (iv) Islands
- (v) Deserts

Different geological modifications have taken place over time which has influenced its relief. Apart from the various geological formations, this large landmass has also been affected by the course of actions, i.e., erosion, deposition and weathering.

Due to the geological processes that take place, there is a movement in the earth's plates causing increase in pressure between the plates and the continental rocks present on the top. This further leads to faulting, folding and volcanic activity. The plate movements function differently and are of three types. Some plates come together and form a convergent boundary. On the other hand, some plates move away from each other thus, resulting in a divergent boundary. When two plates merge, there are three outcomes. The plates may either collide, crumble or one plate may slide under the other. Over a million years, tremendous changes have taken place due to such plate movements. The size and position of the continents have changed due to these plate movements. India too has been influenced by such movements and has been evolving throughout the years attaining the present landform features.

Peninsular India, also one of the oldest landmasses was previously contained in the Gondwana land. India and the other continents such as South Africa, Australia and South America were all part of the Gondwana land as a single land mass. This landmass was split into a number of pieces by the convectional currents ensuing the Indo-Australian plate to drift towards the north, away from the Gondwana land colliding with the much larger Eurasian plate. Due to this clash encounter, the sedimentary rocks present in the geosynclines known as the Tethys, folded to form the mountainous landforms in Western Asia and the Himalayas.

A large basin was created due to the formation of the Himalayas from the Tethys Sea and the sinking of the northern flank of the peninsular plateau. The depression was filled up by sediments that were carried by rivers flowing from the mountainous region from the northern direction and the peninsular plateau from the southern region. The northern plains of India were formed due to extensive alluvial deposits over the years. The Indian landmass has a varied character. The peninsular plateau geologically, comprises of one of ancient landmasses on the surface of the earth and was said to be one of the most stable land blocks. The

Northern Plains and the Himalayas were formed more recently. Geologically, the Himalayan Mountains form an unstable zone and it represents a fresh topography consisting of deep valleys, high peaks and fast flowing rivers. The Northern Plains were formed by the alluvium deposited by these flowing rivers. On the other hand, the Peninsular Plateau was made up of igneous and metamorphic rocks forming numerous hills and valleys.

1.2.1 Topography

Topography is the arrangement of the natural and artificial physical features of an area. The Indian subcontinent is a unique landform due to the presence of different physical features, which are as follows:

- (i) The Himalayan Mountains
- (ii) The Northern Plains
- (iii) The Peninsular Plateau
- (iv) The Indian Desert
- (v) The Coastal Plains
- (vi) The Islands

The Himalayan Mountains

The northern borders of India are lined by the Himalayas, which are geologically young and structurally fold mountains. Located in the region between River Indus and River Brahmaputra, the Himalayan mountain ranges run in a west-east direction. The Himalayas are said to be the most elevated and rugged mountain barrier in the world that covers a distance of 2,400 km in the shape of an arc. Despite its grandeur in size, there is a vast difference in its width. Data reveals the Himalayas to measure around 400 km in Kashmir in comparison to the 150 km in Arunachal Pradesh. The Himalayan mountain ranges have a huge variation in terms of altitude, where the eastern half is slightly more than the western half. In its longitudinal extent, three parallel ranges exist which are dotted with a number of valleys. The northern most range Himadri is also referred to as the Great Himalayas or Inner Himalayas. Home to the highest peaks, it is also the most continuous range. The average height of these peaks is about 6,000 metres.

The core of Great Himalayas is composed of granite and its structural folds are asymmetrical. Since this portion is covered with snow all year round, a number of glaciers are said to descend from this area. Known to be one of the most-rugged mountain systems, the Himachal or Lesser Himalaya is situated south of the Himadri mountain range. The Lesser Himalayas is a combination of highly compressed and altered rocks. With an average width of 50 km, the Lesser Himalayas or Himachal has a varying altitude ranging between 3,700 and 4,500 metres. The longest and the most important range of this area is Pir Panjal range. The other prominent ones are the Dhauladhar and the Mahabharat ranges. The prominent Kashmir valley along with the Kangra and the Kullu valleys located in

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Himachal Pradesh are a part of the Lesser Himalayas. There are many well known hill stations located in this region.

The Shiwaliks are the outermost range of the Himalayas and extend over a width of 10-50 km. The altitudinal variation of this range is between 900 and 1100 metres. Unconsolidated sediments that travel by the rivers from its point of origin in the main Himalayan ranges situated towards the extreme north solidified to form these ranges. Apart from thick gravel, these valleys are also formed by the alluvial deposits brought by the rivers passing through these areas. Duns, which are longitudinal valleys, lie in the region between Lesser Himalayas and Shiwaliks. Some of the well-known duns located in this valley are Kotli Dun, Patli Dun and Dehra Dun. Besides these longitudinal divisions, the Himalayan range has also been divided in terms of regions in an east-west direction.

The river valleys have set the boundaries for the divisions. For instance, while the Himalayan range that falls in the Indus-Satluj region is sometimes referred to as the Punjab Himalayas whereas moving west to east, it is referred to as Kashmir and Himachal Himalayas. The Himalayan range in the Satluj-Kali region is called Kumaon Himalayas. The Nepal Himalayas have been demarcated by the Kali and Tista rivers and the part that lies between Tista and Dihang rivers is known as the Assam Himalayas. The eastern boundary of the Himalayas is marked by the river Brahmaputra.

There is a sharp bend in the Himalayan mountain range when it reaches the Dihang gorge. Moving from the Dihang gorge towards the south, it spreads along the eastern boundary of India. At this location, the Himalayan range is referred to as Purvanchal or the Eastern Hills and Mountains. Composed of strong sandstones, i.e., sedimentary rocks, these hills run through the north-eastern part of India. This region of India is covered with dense forests and these ranges and valleys are mostly parallel to each other in location. The Patkai, Naga, Manipur and Mizo hills form a part of the Purvanchal area.

The Northern Plain

The three rivers Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra and its tributaries mark the Northern Plain. Alluvial deposits form the Northern Plain. The Northern Plains was created due to alluvial deposits that were lying in a large basin at the Himalayan foothills for a million years. An area of approximately 7 lakh sq.km is covered by the Northern Plains. The length of the plain is about 2400 km and the width is about 240 to 320 km. The Northern Plains is said to be a densely populated physiographic division. Due to the fertile soil clubbed with a favourable climate and ample water supply, the region of the Northern Plains is very conducive for agricultural purposes. With the deposition of silt in the rivers of the lower course, they have split into many channels, which are also called tributaries. The Northern Plains is divided into three separate areas. The Punjab Plain is on the western part of the Northern Plain. One unique feature of the Punjab Plain is that a huge chunk of this plain is in Pakistan. River Indus and its tributaries formed the Punjab Plain.

The tributaries of River Indus comprise the following:

- (i) Jhelum
- (ii) Ravi
- (iii) Chenab
- (iv) Beas
- (v) Satluj

These rivers have their origins in the Himalayas. Most of the Punjab Plain is occupied by doabs. Located between the Ghaggar and Teesta River is the Ganga Plain which spreads across Haryana, Delhi, UP, Bihar, in the north and West Bengal on the east. Assam is home to the Brahmaputra plain and is known to be a flat land bereft of any variations in its relief. This conclusion is incorrect as the Brahmaputra plain has varied relief features. The Northern Plain is abundant with varied relief features and is conveniently divided into four different regions. After descending from the mountains, the rivers deposit pebbles in an 8-16 km area lying opposite to the Shiwaliks slopes. This region which is lying south of the Lower Himalayas and Shiwaliks is called bhabar. The streams present in this area disappear in the bhabar belt. Moving southwards, the streams and rivers that disappeared in the bhabar belt re-emerge to form a wet swampy marsh which is referred to as the Terai region. Older alluvium deposits form the largest part of the Northern Plains. This leads to a terrace-like feature to be developed as these deposits lie above the flood plains. This part of the plain is called Bhangar. The soil found in this region is called *Kankar* or calcareous deposits. Khadar is the more recent and younger deposits which are found at flood plains. This area gets renewed every year and therefore is very fertile for agriculture.

The Peninsular Plateau

The Peninsular Plateau is a tableland which comprises of igneous and metamorphic rocks along with crystalline forms. The Peninsular Plateau came into existence with the breaking and drifting of the oldest landmass, the Gondwanaland. The terrain of this area is full of broad and shallow valleys and has a number of well-rounded hills. This plateau has been divided into two parts, which are as follows:

- (i) Central Highlands
- (ii) Deccan Plateau

The Central Highlands lies north of the River Narmada and covers the Malwa Plateau. On the south, the Central Highlands have the Vindhya Ranges and on the northwest region are bound by the Aravalis. The westward expansion slowly combines with the sandy deserts of Rajasthan. The lope in the plateau is indicated through the flow of rivers that drain this region from the southwest to the northeast. The rivers draining this region are as follows:

- River Chambal
- River Sind

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- River Betwa
- River Ken

Moving eastwards, the Peninsular Plateau is known as the Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand. A further expansion towards the east is an area referred to as the Chotanagpur Plateau which is drained by the River Damodar. The Deccan Plateau is a triangular mass which is situated on the south of River Narmada. On the north, the Deccan Plateau is flanked by the Satpura Ranges. On the east, the Mahadev Hills, Kaimur Hills and the Maikal Range cover the Deccan Plateau. On a map of India, the Deccan Plateau is higher on the western side. Moving along in a west-east direction, the Deccan Plateau starts sloping gently on the eastern side. In the northeast, i.e., Meghalaya and the Karbi-Anglong Plateau, the extension of the Deccan Plateau is visible. The fault in the Chotanagpur Plateau separates it from the rest. Garo, Khasi, and the Jaintia Hills are the main hill ranges present in a west-east direction. The Western Ghats and the Eastern Ghats lie opposite in the Deccan Plateau. The Western Ghats, as the name suggests, lies parallel to the western coast. The Western Ghats are also said to be higher than the Eastern Ghats. The average elevation observed in the Western Ghats is 900-1600 metres as compared to the Eastern Ghats where the elevations are only 600 metres. In comparison to the Western Ghats, the Eastern Ghats is said to be irregular and discontinuous. This area is dissected by a number of rivers that eventually drain into the Bay of Bengal. The area between the Mahanadi Valley and Nilgiris form the Eastern Ghats.

The Indian Desert

The Indian desert is located on the western side of the Aravali Hills. The Indian desert can be described as an undulating sandy area covered with sand dunes. Since this region receives very low rainfall—below 150 mm per year—the climatic conditions varying between arid and semi-arid. The Indian desert also has very less vegetation. Though some small streams emerge during the rainy season, this area is very dry and not suitable for cultivation.

The Coastal Plains

The Peninsular Plateau has two coastal strips. One, which runs on the western side along the Arabian Sea and the other which runs along the eastern side along the Bay of Bengal. The western coast is a narrow plain region which is located between the Western Ghats and Arabian Sea. The Western Coast is divided into three parts, which are as follows:

- (i) Konkan, which is the northern part of the western coast, i.e., Mumbai-Goa.
- (ii) Kannad Plain which forms the central part.
- (iii) Malabar Coast or the southern part of the western coast.

The plain region located near the Bay of Bengal is a wide and levelled area. The northern part is called Northern Circars, whereas the southern part is referred as the Coromandel Coast. The large rivers present in this area form huge deltas on the coast. The main rivers of this region are as follows:

- (i) River Mahanadi
- (ii) River Godavari
- (iii) River Krishna
- (iv) River Kaveri

The eastern coast has the famous Chilika Lake which is considered to be an important feature of the eastern coast.

The Island

The Lakshadweep Islands are a group of island near the Malabar Coast of Kerala. Previously, the Lakshadweep Islands were known as Laccadive, Minicoy and Aminidivi. It was only in 1973 that this island chain was named Lakshadweep. Only a small area of approximately 32 sq km is covered by the Lakshadweep Islands. Kavaratti Island is the administrative headquarters of Lakshadweep. This area is also known for its varied flora and fauna. There is a bird sanctuary in Pitti Island which is otherwise uninhabited.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a long chain of islands located in the Bay of Bengal. In comparison to the Lakshadweep Island, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are greater in size. Andaman and Nicobar Islands also have more islands than Lakshadweep which are spread over a vast area. Though many island bodies form the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, they have been broadly divided into two main islands. The northern island is Andaman and the Nicobar Islands form the southern part. The islands of Andaman and Nicobar are known to be summits of a submarine mountain range that lies on the great tectonic suture zone which extends from the eastern Himalayas to the Arakan along the Myanmar border and eventually to the Sumatra and lesser Sundaes. Since these islands are near to the Equator, they have an equatorial climate.

Indian Rivers

For convenience, the Indian River system has been categorized as follows:

- The Himalayan Rivers
- The Deccan Rivers
- The Coastal Rivers
- Rivers of the Inland Drainage Basin

The rivers of the Himalayas remain snow-fed throughout the year and they flood during the winter. The rain-fed rivers of the Deccan Plateau are non-perennial and have an uncertain flow. Due to the limitation of catchments area, most of the western coastal rivers are non-perennial.

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The rivers of the inland drainage basin are very few and are mostly located in western Rajasthan. Some notable rivers are Sambhar, lost in the desert sands, and the Loni, that drains into the Rann of Kutch.

The Ganga basin is the largest river basin in India and it receives water from an area bounded by the Himalayas in the north and the Vindhyas in the South. The main constituents are the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Ghagra, Gandak and Kosi. While the second largest is the Godavari basin, the third is the Krishna Basin. The Krishna Basin is also the second largest river in peninsular India. The Mahanadi traverses through this basin. The other smaller ones are the Narmada basin and that of the Tapti and Penna. Though they are smaller in size, they are agriculturally very important.

In India, rivers hold great importance in the lives of people. They are considered holy and are looked upon with great faith and reverence. Many of the rivers have a mythological connotation associated with it. During special occasions, people bathe in these rivers as they believe that their sins would be wiped off by its holy water.

With a length of 2500 km, Ganges is the longest river in India. It originates from the Himalayas and empties itself into the Bay of Bengal. After travelling a large distance of 2900 km, the Brahmaputra, which originates in Tibet, also empties into the Bay of Bengal. The rivers of Peninsular India such as the Mahanadi, Godaveri, Krishnam and Kaveri flow into the Bay of Bengal. However, the River Narmada and River Tapi end up in the Arabian Sea.

Check Your Progress

1. Define the term topography.
2. List the physical features of India.
3. What do you understand by Peninsular Plateau?
4. Name the largest river basin in India.

1.3 IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHY ON INDIAN HISTORY

As discussed earlier, India is known for her vast dimensions and the various physical features. From mountains to arid deserts, fertile plains and thick forests. All these natural conditions divided India into different territorial units. The history of India developed in essence as the history of its various regions. In the process of historical evolution these regions acquired cultural features of their own. For instance, regions had their distinct languages, art forms, and even their social customs and practices were different from each other. Thus, great dissymmetry in historical change is witnessed between the regions of India.

In the north, the treacherous mountain terrain did not stop the flow of cultural influence from Southeast Asia and South China. The region also witnessed a few military invasions from the east as also the moderate peaceful penetration by people like the Ahoms, from Arakan into the Assam valley. In the west, the western and north-western mountain chains have not been able to keep out the flow of people. Peaceful travellers, traders and a series of invaders entered India through this barrier during pre-historic and historic times.

In the Indus plain, the region of Punjab, literally the land of five rivers – Satluj, Jhelum, Ravi, Beas and Chenab, have made this region the ‘Bread-Basket’ of the sub-continent. The prosperity of this region coupled with its strategic location has always attracted invaders. As a result, a number of intrusive elements have merged into the existing culture and so Punjab is sometimes also referred to as the ‘melting-pot of cultures’. The lower Indus valley and the delta formed by it constitute Sindh. This region has been historically linked with Gujarat. The prosperity of this region can be measured by the fact that it was in this region that the first urban culture of the sub-continent emerged during the 2nd millennium BC. Thus Harappa, the famous and the first excavated site of the Indus Valley Civilization is situated in the Sahiwal district of Punjab, while Mohan-jo-daro is located in the Larkana district of Sindh, both in present day Pakistan.

The middle Ganga plains correspond to eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. This is where the ancient Mahajanapadas of Kosal, Kasi and Magadh were located. It was Magadh which was the seat of the Mauryan imperial power which witnessed the earliest manifestation of the political unity in the country. Magadh remained at the centre of history of this country till the Gupta period or the 5th Century A.D. The lengthy coastline of Gujarat is dotted with several ports, which have been engaged in overseas trade since the 3rd millennium B.C.

The area occupied by the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala constitute the southern extreme of the Indian sub-continent. Geographically, linguistically and culturally, Tamil Nadu has evolved an individuality of its own. At times, interrelated ways of life are attested to in the earliest literature of the land – the Sangam literature. Kerala has a history of spice trade with the west since the post Mauryan times. Relatively isolated by land, its Malabar Coast saw the emergence of a number of flourishing international ports, like Kochi and Kozikhode. It is therefore, not surprising that Kerala became the first region in the South Asia to witness the direct influence of the sea faring Christians and later of the Arabs.

Check Your Progress

5. Which state is also referred as the ‘melting-pot of cultures’?
6. Name the region where the first urban culture of the sub-continent emerged during the 2nd millennium BC.

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1.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Topography is the arrangement of the natural and artificial physical features of an area.
2. The Indian subcontinent is a unique landform due to the presence of different physical features, which are as follows:
 - (i) The Himalayan Mountains
 - (ii) The Northern Plains
 - (iii) The Peninsular Plateau
 - (iv) The Indian Desert
 - (v) The Coastal Plains
 - (vi) The Islands
3. The Peninsular Plateau is a tableland which comprises of igneous and metamorphic rocks along with crystalline forms.
4. The Ganga basin is the largest river basin in India.
5. Punjab is referred as the 'melting-pot of cultures'.
6. The first urban culture of the sub-continent emerged during the 2nd millennium BC in the region of Sindh.

1.5 SUMMARY

- India is a vast country with different kinds of landforms.
- It is blessed with every possible physical feature present on the surface of the earth.
- Different geological modifications have taken place over time which has influenced its relief.
- Peninsular India, also one of the oldest landmasses was previously contained in the Gondwana land.
- A large basin was created due to the formation of the Himalayas from the Tethys Sea and the sinking of the northern flank of the peninsular plateau.
- The northern borders of India are lined by the Himalayas, which are geologically young and structurally fold mountains. Located in the region between River Indus and River Brahmaputra, the Himalayan mountain ranges run in a west-east direction.
- The Himalayas are said to be the most elevated and rugged mountain barrier in the world that covers a distance of 2,400 km in the shape of an arc.

- The three rivers Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra and its tributaries mark the Northern Plain. Alluvial deposits form the Northern Plain. The Northern Plains was created due to alluvial deposits that were lying in a large basin at the Himalayan foothills for a million years.
- The Peninsular Plateau is a tableland which comprises of igneous and metamorphic rocks along with crystalline forms.
- The Indian desert is located on the western side of the Aravali Hills. The Indian desert can be described as an undulating sandy area covered with sand dunes.
- The Peninsular Plateau has two coastal strips. One, which runs on the western side along the Arabian Sea and the other which runs along the eastern side along the Bay of Bengal.
- The Lakshadweep Islands are a group of island near the Malabar Coast of Kerala.
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a long chain of islands located in the Bay of Bengal. In comparison to the Lakshadweep Island, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are greater in size.
- The history of India developed in essence as the history of its various regions.
- In the north, the treacherous mountain terrain did not stop the flow of cultural influence from Southeast Asia and South China.
- In the Indus plain, the region of Punjab, literally the land of five rivers – Satluj, Jhelum, Ravi, Beas and Chenab, have made this region the ‘Bread-Basket’ of the sub-continent.
- The area occupied by the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala constitute the southern extreme of the Indian sub-continent.
- Geographically, linguistically and culturally, Tamil Nadu has evolved an individuality of its own.

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1.6 KEY WORDS

- **Gondwana:** Gondwana, or Gondwanaland, was a supercontinent that existed from the Neoproterozoic until the Carboniferous. It was formed by the accretion of several cratons.
- **Tributary:** A tributary or affluent is a stream or river that flows into a larger stream or main stem river or a lake.
- **Plateau:** A plateau is a flat, elevated landform that rises sharply above the surrounding area on at least one side.
- **Non-perennial river:** A non-perennial river is one that is partially or fully dry for part of the year (perennial means year-round).

- **Melting pot:** A melting pot is a metaphor for a society where many different types of people blend together as one.

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1.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the different major physiographic divisions of India?
2. Write short notes on the following:
 - (i) The Himalayan Mountains
 - (ii) The Northern Plains
 - (iii) The Peninsular Plateau
3. Name any three divisions of Himalayas on the basis of regions from West to East.
4. Write a short note on the impact of geography on Indian history.
5. In what ways did the geography of India influence the development of civilizations?

Long Answer Question

1. Discuss the main geographical features of India.
2. Describe the formation of India from Gondwana land.
3. Distinguish between the Northern Plains and the Peninsular Plateau.
4. Explain the important features of the Peninsular Plateau.
5. Discuss how Kerala became the first region in the South Asia to witness the direct influence of the sea faring Christians and later of the Arabs.

1.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 UNITY AND DIVERSITY

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Languages of India
 - 2.2.1 The Writing Systems
 - 2.2.2 Multilingualism
 - 2.2.3 Language Families in India
- 2.3 Races in India
- 2.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Key Words
- 2.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Readings

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

The earliest form of speech in India was reflected in the texts such as the Rig Veda, the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads*. They are the oldest preserved treatises from which the Indian literary traditions of verse originated. The earliest literary works were composed to be sung or recited, and were orally transmitted for many generations before being written down.

The oldest among the written works are the thousand-odd hymns contained in the Rig Veda dating back to 2,000 BC. These hymns were composed in Vedic Sanskrit. The Vedas tried capturing knowledge that came from the quest for exploring the unknown.

India has witnessed immigration on a large scale. Each group entering into the country has come with the specific traits of its own racial group. This has added to the diversity of characteristics observed in our land.

In this unit, you will study about the Indian writing systems and modern Indian writing system. This unit will also discuss the different types of races in India.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the Indian writing systems
- Explain the modern Indian writing system
- Define India as a multilingual society
- Identify the different types of races in India

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2.2 LANGUAGES OF INDIA

The Indian literary tradition demonstrates that early Indian creative writers interacted very closely with critical thinkers. This resulted in a very rich interpretative tradition. The literary works covered all types of literature—beginning from poetry to epic and from story to drama. The early literary theoreticians could identify various sentiments being reflected in these writings, which have been trend-setters in world literature.

Mother tongues and languages

The concept of ‘mother tongue’ has been defined in the census as ‘the language spoken in childhood by the person’s mother to the person. If the mother died in infancy, the language mainly spoken in the person’s home in childhood will be the mother tongue. In the case of infants, the deaf and the mute, the language usually spoken by the mother should be recorded. In case of doubt, the language mainly spoken in the household may be recorded.’ There are a large number of mother tongues in India, but not all have been accepted as ‘languages’ in their own right. The Indian census of 1961 recognized 1,652 different languages in India. The 1991 census recognized 1,576 languages and 1,796 mother tongues. ‘The People of India’ project of the Anthropological Survey of India reported 325 languages, which are used for in-group communication by the Indian communities. According to the 2001 census, twenty nine languages had more than a million native speakers, sixty had more than 100,000 and 122 had more than 10,000 native speakers. The number of scheduled languages was 22 at the time of presentation of the 2001. The same 22 languages are maintained in 2011 Census also.

There is no unanimity among linguists as to how many of the mother tongues existing in India qualify to be described as independent languages.

2.2.1 The Writing Systems

India has many writing systems. While some of them existed in the past are present even now. A few of them are discussed as follows:

- **The Indus Valley script:** The Indus Valley script was a product of the Indus Valley civilization. The greater Indus region was home to this civilization, which was the largest of the four ancient urban civilizations. Most of its ruins remain to be fully excavated and studied and nothing was known about this civilization until the 1920s. Most importantly, the ancient Indus script has not yet been deciphered although there have been many claims and counter-claims on this issue.

The samples of Indus Valley script are numerous because of the large number of settlements (about a thousand) that spread all over modern Pakistan and parts of India and Afghanistan. However, the main stock of writing samples include 2,000 inscribed brief seals and tablets of six to twenty six symbols

each, which are still un-deciphered. There are several competing theories about the language that the Indus script represents.

- **The Brahmi script:** There were many other systems of writing, but none had as far reaching an effect as the Brahmi script. Scholars like George Buhler have held that the script perhaps originated as far back as in the eighth century BC. Some trace the script to the Indus script. Brahmi is a syllabic alphabet. It means that each character carries a consonant plus a neutral vowel 'a', like in Old Persian.
- **The Kharosthi script:** The Kharosthi script is held by some scholars to be of the same time as the Brahmi, while others have dated it back till the third century BC. It originated in northern Pakistan and east Afghanistan. In structure and sequence, Kharosthi and Brahmi are similar, except that Brahmi had long and short vowel signs, while Kharosthi had only one. This script fell out of use by the third or fourth century AD.

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Writing systems in modern India

According to a recent survey, there are at least twenty five writing systems in modern India and fourteen major scripts. Out of these, twelve have originated from the Brahmi. Like the Greek alphabets, Brahmi also had local variants and gave rise to many Asian scripts like the Burmese, Thai, Tibetan, etc. Emperor Ashoka inscribed his laws as well as Lord Buddha's teachings on columns in the Brahmi script.

2.2.2 Multilingualism

India is a large country with a huge population. With so many states and the number of languages spoken in those states, multilingualism is a way of life. It adds depth to our national conscience because it showcases India as a garland of different languages. The flowers of the garland are held together by our national language Hindi, which is the thread of this garland, and our alternate official language English.

Official recognition of languages

The Indian Constitution, at present, recognizes twenty two languages of India as official languages. These languages find place in the eighth schedule of the Constitution. They also happen to be the major literary languages of India and boast of a voluminous and rich collection of writings in them. The following are the officially recognized Indian languages:

1. Assamese
2. Bangla
3. Bodo
4. Dogri
5. Gujarati

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6. Hindi
7. Kashmiri
8. Kannada
9. Konkani
10. Maithili
11. Malayalam
12. Manipuri
13. Marathi
14. Nepali
15. Oriya
16. Punjabi
17. Sanskrit
18. Santhali
19. Sindhi
20. Tamil
21. Telugu
22. Urdu

Originally, only fourteen languages were included in the eighth schedule of the Constitution. Bodo, Dogri, Konkani, Maithili, Manipuri, Nepali, Santhali and Sindhi were recognized later.

2.2.3 Language Families in India

Historians have estimated that there have been great movements of people and races into India. This movement has made it possible for India to be the home for so many different ethnic groups. The movement of people from the European countries and from the Middle East to India brought with it new cultures, which included their languages. A great intermingling of languages has definitely taken place in India over the last many centuries.

The languages spoken in the South Asian region today belong to at least four major language families, i.e., the Indo-European, the Dravidian, the Austro-Asiatic and the Sino-Tibetan. The Indo-European is represented only by the Indo-Aryan languages.

Approximately, one-third of the mother tongues found in India (574 out of 1,796 languages) belong to the Indo-Aryan family of languages and are spoken by 73.30 per cent of Indians. The Dravidian family of languages form the second major linguistic group of the country and are spoken by 24.47 per cent of our countrymen. The Austro-Asiatic family of languages, 65 in number, accounted for

a total number of 6.19 million speakers in the country. Less than 1 per cent of the total population of the country speaks the languages belonging to the Sino-Tibetan.

The Indo-Aryan languages

The largest chunk of languages and mother tongues belong to the Indo-Aryan sub-family of the Indo-European family of languages. Among the modern Indo-Aryan languages, Hindi and Bengali happen to be the most popular languages internationally. Hindi itself has about 49 varieties and is spread over vast tracts of Northern India.

Western Hindi is a Midland Indo-Aryan language and is spoken in the Gangetic plains and in its immediate region. Around this area, the languages spoken are Punjabi, Gujarati and Rajasthani. Eastern Hindi is spoken in the Awadh region.

The Dravidian languages

Among the Dravidian languages, apart from the four internationally known languages spread in many parts of the world, there are twenty-six other languages at present. Out of these, twenty five are spoken in India and one (Brahui) is spoken in Baluchistan on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Spoken by more than 300 million people in south Asia, the antiquity of Dravidian languages is largely due to the rich grammatical and literary tradition of the Tamil language. Even the other three major Dravidian languages, namely, Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu, possess independent scripts and literary histories dating back to the pre-Christianity era.

The smaller Dravidian languages include Kolami-Naiki, Parji-Gadaba, Gondi, Konda, Manda-Kui, Kodagu, Toda-Kota and Tulu.

The Austric languages

The Austric family of languages is divided into two branches – Austro-asiatic and Austronesian. The latter was formerly known as Malayo-Polynesian. These languages are spoken in India, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands.

The Austro-Asiatic branch has three sub-branches, namely, Munda, Mon-Khmer and Vietnamese-Muong. The Munda sub-branch of the Austro-asiatic branch of language is located in India. The Munda languages in India are spoken in the eastern and southern parts. The well-known Munda languages are Santhali, Mundri, Bhumij, Birhar, Ho, Tri, Korku, Khari, Juang, Savara, etc. The Munda speakers are found mostly in the hills and jungles.

The Tibeto-Burman languages

The Tibeto-Burman family is a part of the Sino-Tibetan languages, which are spread over a large area. This area extends from Tibet in the north to Burma in the south, and from the Ladakh region of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in the west to the Chinese provinces of Szechuen and Yunnan in the east.

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Lepcha, Sikkimese, Garo, Bodo, Manipuri and Naga are some of the better known Tibeto-Burman languages.

There are several smaller languages that cannot easily be fit into any of the above four large families. Therefore, languages like Burushaski in the North-West are known as isolated languages. Besides this, there are separate families of languages like Andamanese, which would include quite a few diverse languages spoken in the Andamans. One could possibly also add the six odd languages spoken in the Nicobar Islands.

Check Your Progress

1. Define the concept of 'mother tongue'.
2. How many official languages does India have?
3. Name the two branches of the Austric languages.
4. List some of the better known Tibeto-Burman languages.

2.3 RACES IN INDIA

Several studies and attempts have tried to acknowledge the actual characteristics of the dominant racial groups in India. Several European anthropologists have made attempts to classify the same. Some important ones have been mentioned in the table below. Although no two classifications are the same, some similarities nevertheless can be seen. In terms of feasibility and application, each of the mentioned classification have considerable weight age.

Racial Groups in India

Based on the Guha's classification, which is the most widely used racial classification system, racial distribution chart of the people of India has been made these are as follows:

- **Negritos**
- **Proto-Austroloids**
- **Paleo-mediterraneans** (long head, medium to tall in height, long and narrow face structure, vertical forehead, brow to dark brown skin colour)
- **Alpo-dinerics** (light to medium colour of skin, round head, hook nose and acrocephalic)
- **Orientos** (broad, head, broad face and medium stature)
- **Mediterraneans**
- **Proto-nordics** (pure to near blond, long head, fair skin, delicate nose, prominent chin and blue eyes)

- **Tibeto-Mongoloids**
- **Paleo-Mongoloids**

The above mentioned list describes the list of races found prominently in India. The names in the list are evident that the races have been formed upon intermixing of the major groups. Thus, giving rise to new races or ethnic groups describing features of each of the above and other minority groups or races found in India is out of the scope of this book, but the above diagram gives the reader an idea about the major races prominent in Indian society. In the following paragraphs, you will find briefs regarding the major contributing races of Indian society.

Negritos: It is the oldest race or oldest type of human beings who survived changing times. Studies prove, Negritos were the first inhabitants of South East Asian regions. Some hints or traces of the presence of Negritos can be observed in the hilly regions especially in the hills of South India, Assam, Burma and Bengal.

Proto-Austroloids: They are known to belong to the West. Prominent in chota Nagpur are the tribes of South India and some parts of central India. These are sometimes referred to as the original inhabitants of the country and thus given the name ‘Adi-Basis’.

Mongloid: Mongoloid races or Mongoloid element is prevalent in groups of people belonging to Northern as well as North Eastern parts of India especially the Himalayan range. Even Eastern Bengal has seen prevalence of racial groups with Mongoloid elements. Other than this Mongolian features have also been observed in the tribes of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.

Other prominent racial elements visible in Indian society is Paleo-Mediterranean, traces from historical excavations have revealed their early arrival in India. The features or traits similar to Paleo-Mediterraneans have been seen among people of North India.

Check Your Progress

5. Who were the first inhabitants of South East Asian regions?
6. Mention some of the races that are found prominently in India.

2.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The concept of ‘mother tongue’ has been defined in the census as ‘the language spoken in childhood by the person’s mother to the person.
2. The Indian Constitution, at present, recognizes 22 languages of India as official languages.
3. The Austric family of languages is divided into two branches – Austro-asiatic and Austronesian.

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4. Lepcha, Sikkimese, Garo, Bodo, Manipuri and Naga are some of the better known Tibeto-Burman languages.
5. Negritos were the first inhabitants of South East Asian regions.
6. Some of the races that are found prominently in India are as follows:
 - Negritos
 - Proto-Australoids
 - Paleo-mediterraneans

2.5 SUMMARY

- The earliest form of speech in India was reflected in the texts such as the Rig Veda, the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads*.
- The oldest among the written works are the thousand-odd hymns contained in the Rig Veda dating back to 2,000 BC.
- The concept of ‘mother tongue’ has been defined in the census as ‘the language spoken in childhood by the person’s mother to the person.’
- The Indus Valley script was a product of the Indus Valley civilization.
- The greater Indus region was home to this civilization, which was the largest of the four ancient urban civilizations.
- There were many other systems of writing, but none had as far reaching an effect as the Brahmi script. Scholars like George Buhler have held that the script perhaps originated as far back as in the eighth century BC.
- The Kharosthi script is held by some scholars to be of the same time as the Brahmi, while others have dated it back till the third century BC.
- It originated in northern Pakistan and east Afghanistan.
- According to a recent survey, there are at least twenty five writing systems in modern India and fourteen major scripts.
- India is a large country with a huge population. With so many states and the number of languages spoken in those states, multilingualism is a way of life.
- The Indian Constitution, at present, recognizes twenty two languages of India as official languages.
- The languages spoken in the South Asian region today belong to at least four major language families, i.e., the Indo-European, the Dravidian, the Austro-Asiatic and the Sino-Tibetan. The Indo-European is represented only by the Indo-Aryan languages.
- Approximately, one-third of the mother tongues found in India (574 out of 1,796 languages) belong to the Indo-Aryan family of languages and are spoken by 73.30 per cent of Indians.

- The Dravidian family of languages form the second major linguistic group of the country and are spoken by 24.47 per cent of our countrymen.
- The Austro-Asiatic family of languages, 65 in number, accounted for a total number of 6.19 million speakers in the country.
- Less than 1 per cent of the total population of the country speaks the languages belonging to the Sino-Tibetan.
- Negritos is the oldest race or oldest type of human beings who survived changing times. Studies prove, Negritos were the first inhabitants of South East Asian regions.
- Mongoloid races or Mongoloid element is prevalent in groups of people belonging to Northern as well as North Eastern parts of India especially the Himalayan range.

NOTES

2.6 KEY WORDS

- **Multilingualism:** Multilingualism is the use of more than one language, either by an individual speaker or by a community of speakers.
- **Austriac:** Austriac is a large hypothetical grouping of languages primarily spoken in Southeast Asia and Pacific.
- **Negritos:** It is the oldest race or oldest type of human beings who survived changing times.
- **Proto-Austroloids:** They are known to belong to the West. Prominent in chota Nagpur are the tribes of South India and some parts of central India. These are sometimes referred to as the original inhabitants of the country and thus given the name 'Adi-Basis'.
- **Mongloid:** Mongoloid races or Mongoloid element is prevalent in groups of people belonging to Northern as well as North Eastern parts of India especially the Himalayan range.

2.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the modern Indian writing system.
2. Differentiate between the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts.
3. What are the different types of races in India?
4. What are the other prominent racial elements visible in Indian society?

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Long-Answer Question

1. Describe the Indian writing systems.
2. India is a multilingual society. Discuss
3. Explain the Indus Valley script.
4. Write a detailed note on the Indo-Aryan or Indic languages.
5. Explain the Dravidian language family.

2.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 3 HISTORICAL SOURCES

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Sources of Ancient Indian History
 - 3.2.1 Literary Sources
- 3.3 Indus Valley Civilization
- 3.4 Later Vedic Age
 - 3.4.1 Society
 - 3.4.2 Religion
 - 3.4.3 Economy
 - 3.4.4 Polity
- 3.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 3.9 Further Readings

NOTES

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Archaeology has contributed a lot to the history of ancient India and its importance cannot be under emphasized. Indian archaeology is a science of recent growth, but it has made wonderful progress during that brief period. The pioneer work was done by the Europeans, but the same is being carried out now by the Indians.

Literary and archaeological records are the two main categories that give evidences of ancient Indian history. This unit will deal with these historical sources. This unit will explain the importance of archaeological sources for the study of ancient Indian history, and discuss the literary sources of history. The unit will also describe the Indus Valley and later Vedic Civilization.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the importance of archaeological sources for the study of ancient Indian history
- Discuss the literary sources of history
- Differentiate between primary and secondary literary sources
- Identify the settlement patterns and town planning of the Indus Valley Civilization
- Describe the prominent features of later Vedic Civilization.

3.2 SOURCES OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

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In archaeology, excavation is the exposure, processing and recording of archaeological remains. The development of excavation techniques has moved over the years from a treasure hunting process to one which seeks to fully understand the sequence of human activity on a given site and that site's relationship with other sites and with the landscape in which it is set. Since independence, various agencies like the Archaeological Survey of India, State Departments of Archaeology, Universities and other research organizations have conducted archaeological excavations in different parts of the country.

The important excavated cities and towns of ancient India include Peshawar (ancient Purushapura), Taxila in North-western Frontier Province and the Punjab; Mathura; Varanasi, Sravasti, Kausambi, Ahichchhatra, Hastinapur in UP; Rajgir (ancient Rajagriha), Nalanda, Bodh Gaya, certain parts of Pataliputra in Bihar; Vrisa, Padmavati, Ujjain, Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh; Bairat, Rairh, Sambhar, Karkotnagar in Rajasthan; Langhnaj, Anhilper, Patan, Amreli in Gujarat; Kolhapur, Kondapur in Deccan; Chandravali, Brahmagiri in Mysore; Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda in Andhra; Virampattanam in Madras; Paharpur, Mahasthana, Pundravardhana, Kotivarsha in Bengal; and Parihaspur, Avantipur, Martand in Kashmir.

Special mention may be made here of the pre-Aryan civilization of Indus Valley, excavated partly in Mohenjo-Daro and Chanhu-daro in Sind, and partly in Harappa in the Punjab during the later phase of British rule in India. With extensive excavations in post-Independent period, sites have been discovered in a large area consisting North-Western India, Rajasthan and the Deccan. Mehrgarh excavations deserve a special mention since Mehrgarh, located on the bank of the Bolan river in the Kochi plain (Baluchistan), is the only known Neolithic settlement in the Indian subcontinent, attributed to approximately 7000 BC.

Since independence, with the initiative of Central and state archaeological departments and different universities, almost every year archaeological excavations are revealing new data on different aspects of pre-history and ancient history of India.

Epigraphy

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

the public. The Ashokan edicts on pillars give us information about the extent of his empire.

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

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

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

Religious and didactic inscriptions deal with religious and moral matters. Possibly, some of the seals and tablets of the Indus Valley were the objects of

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worship and their use as amulets was forbidden. The inscriptions of Ashoka are the best specimen of the religious and didactic types. The edicts of Ashoka are appropriately called *Dhamma-Lipi*.

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

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

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

We have a large number of votive or dedicative inscriptions. It is possible that some of the tablets found in the Indus Valley contain votive inscriptions. The Piprahwa vase inscription records the dedication of the relic casket of Lord Buddha. The Besnagar Garuda pillar inscription of Heliodorus also belongs to this category.

Many of the dedicative inscriptions deal with the installation of images and the construction of temples. Reference may be made in this connection to the Mandasor Inscription of the time of Kumaragupta Nand Bandhuvarman and the Bhitari Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta and the Aihole inscription of the time of Pulakesin II.

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

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

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

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

Copper was the material which was commonly used for the writing of inscriptions. A copper-plated inscription was called Tamrapatra, Tamrasasana, Sasanapattra or Danapattra according to its contents. It is remarkable to note that the land-grants were invariably inscribed on the copper plates and were handed over to the concerned so that they may serve as title-deeds. Fa-hien tells us that in many Buddhist monasteries he found those copper plates which referred to the grant of land. Some of them were as old as the time of Buddha. The discovery of Sohgaora copper plates of the Mauryan period confirms this statement of Fa-hien. Hieun Tsang tells us that emperor Kanishka used to summon a Buddhist council which prepared these commentaries. These were later engraved on copper plates and kept in stone caskets which were placed in the Stupas built over them. It is also stated that the commentaries of Sayana on the Vedas were engraved on copper. Some specimens of the books inscribed on copper plates are to be found in the British Museum. The use of copper for writing purposes was not very common up to the sixth century AD, but it remained quite popular for the next six

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centuries. Copper plates were of different sizes and thickness. Some of them were so thin that they could be bent easily and there were others which were very thick and heavy. The size of a copper plate depended upon two factors, the contents of the document and the size of the commonly used writing material in the district where the copper plate was issued. Sometimes, a document was inscribed not on one copper plate but on many and in that case the copper plates were fastened together by means of copper rings. In this way, the copper plates looked like a book which would be opened easily. Sufficient margin was left on the copper plates.

Numismatics

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

Coins help to build up the history of the country in many ways. They give us the names of the kings who ruled at various times in different parts of the country. In many cases, the coins are the only sources of information we have regarding the existence of certain kings. Without these coins, the very existence of those kings would have remained unknown. Many a time, the information from the coins can be used to corroborate the evidence extracted from other sources such as the Puranas and other religious literature. The coins also help us to fix up the chronology as they mention the year in which they were issued. The existence of a large number of coins issued during the different years of the reign of a king helps us to fix the exact dates for the accession and the death of the king. Coins have helped us to fix the dates of Samudragupta. The location of coins helps us to determine the extent of the territory of a king. The discovery of a large number of Roman coins in India confirms the fact that there was brisk trade between India and the Roman Empire. That also refers to the economic prosperity of India and the coastal activities of its people. The figures of the various kings appear on the coins from where we can get an idea of the head-dresses and attire of those kings. Sometimes, the hobbies or the amusements of the rulers can also be known from studying their coins. Coins give an indication of the prosperity (or otherwise) of a country. If people have gold or silver coins, they are likely to be prosperous. The case is the opposite if they have copper coins alone or more of them than those of gold or silver. Sometimes, the depreciation of coinage gives an indication that the country was passing through difficult times. During the Huna invasion of India, the Gupta currency depreciated. The symbols on the Gupta coinage refer to their zeal for Hinduism. The coins give us genuine information regarding the history of ancient India as there is no possibility of their being tampered with. Coins were issued by the rulers and other authorities like *Srenis*, etc., and there is no possibility of their being issued merely to deceive people.

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

After the Greek invasion of India, the practice of writing the names of the kings on the coins was started. A large number of coins were issued by the Indo-Bactrian rulers who had under their control Punjab and the North-western Frontier. These coins possessed a high degree of artistic excellence and ultimately had a tremendous influence on Indian coinage. The design borrowed in the Indian coinage was the name and the portrait of the ruler. The Greek coins refer to about thirty Greek kings and queens who ruled in India. The classical writers refer to only four or five of them and had these coins remained undiscovered, the names of other rulers would have remained absolutely unknown. The coins of the Scythians and Pratiharas are of an inferior quality but they also give us a lot of historical information. Their coins have enabled us to have an outline of the history of their rulers and without them even the outlines would have been missing. A branch of the Scythians settled in Gujarat and Kathiawar issued coins in which the names of the ruling kings and their fathers were mentioned in the Saka era. These have helped us to reconstruct the history of the Western *Satrap*s for more than three centuries. The Kushans also issued a large number of coins. The existence of the Malawas, Yaudheyas and the Mitra rulers of Panchala is known only from the coins. The coins of the Satavahanas supplement, correct and corroborate the accounts of the Puranas. The Gupta coins also give us a lot of useful information. The Indian coins after the Gupta period do not give us much historical information.

According to historians, V.A. Smith and Rapson, the punch-marked coins represent a private coinage. The view of Smith is that they were issued by guilds and goldsmiths with the permission of the ruling power. The numerous obverse punches were made by different moneyers through whose hands those coins passed. The reverse marks were the signs of approval by the controlling authority. According to Rapson, the obverse marks were the private marks of the money-changers and the reverse marks denoted the locality in which the coins were issued. However, recent researches have proved that the punch-marked coins were issued by a regular public authority. A few of them found at Pataliputra have been ascribed by Dr K.P. Jayaswal to the age of Chandragupta Maurya. A large number of coins are to be found in government museums and municipal museums and with private collectors. A critical study of all of them is bound to give a lot of additional evidence.

Monuments

The ancient monuments like buildings, statues of stones or metals, terracotta, ornamental and decorative fragments, pottery, etc., give us a lot of useful and reliable information. The excavations at the sites of the old towns like Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro and Taxila have revealed secrets hitherto unknown and, thus,

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changed our concept of ancient India. It is after the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization that we began to talk of a civilization in India prior to that of the Aryans. The excavation at Taxila throws welcome light on the Kushanas. A study of the sculptures found from there gives us an idea of the Gandhara School of art. The digging of the old sites of Pataliputra gives us some information regarding the old capital of the Mauryas. The Angkor-Vat in Cambodia and Borobodur in Java bear testimonial to the colonial and cultural activities of the Indians in ancient times. The temples of Deogadh in Jhansi and Bhitargaon near Kanpur throw light on the artistic activities of the Guptas. The excavations add to our knowledge regarding Buddhism and Ashoka. The excavations in China, Turkestan and Baluchistan by Stein prove the intimate contacts of India with those territories. The progress of the archaeological work in India in the near future is bound to enrich our knowledge of ancient Indian history.

3.2.1 Literary Sources

The literary source for the reconstruction of ancient Indian history may be classified as (i) indigenous literature and (ii) accounts of the foreign travellers.

Literary sources: Indigenous, primary and secondary sources

The indigenous literature may be divided into a number of varieties, e.g., religious text, secular or scientific text, biography, poetic writings and regional literature. However, when literary writings are patronized by the king's court, they are likely to be exaggerated ones. Thus, they should be used as sources of history with caution. Foreign accounts are also to be used cautiously as the foreigners, in most of the cases, did not know Indian language and the pattern of life.

Indigenous literature

The Indigenous literature includes the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aryankas, the Upanishads, the Epics (Ramayana and Mahabharatha), the Brahmasastras, and the Puranas. The Buddhist and Jain literature gives knowledge of the traditions prevalent in those periods. The books of this period are in Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit. They give us knowledge about music, dance, painting architecture and administration of various kings. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is a remarkable work on the system of administration. The Sangam literature in south is an elaborate record of life in South India. Though these literatures lack historical sense, they are the main sources to venture into the facts of Indian history.

Primary literary sources

Primary sources are original materials. Information for which the writer has no personal knowledge is not primary, although it may be used by historians in the absence of a primary source. In the study of history as an academic discipline, a primary source (also called original source or evidence) is an artifact, a document, a recording, or other source of information that was created at the time under

study. It serves as an original source of information about the topic. Similar definitions are used in library science, and other areas of scholarship, although different fields have somewhat different definitions.

Secondary literary sources

Secondary sources are works of synthesis and interpretation based upon primary sources and the work of other authors. They may take a variety of forms. The authors of secondary sources develop their interpretations and narratives of events based on primary sources, that is, documents and other evidence created by participants or eyewitnesses. Frequently, they also take advantage of the work of other historians by using other secondary sources. Reference books, popular periodical literature, and general historical works and monographs are the examples of secondary sources.

Scientific/secular literature: Poetry, drama and technical literature

Scientific/Secular literature, comprising poetry, drama and technical literature like grammar, astronomy, medicine, statecraft, provide embedded information often useful to historians. Discovery of ancient texts of Indian poetry and drama has revealed the history of ancient Indian culture. Technical literature reflects the advanced knowledge attained by society in the respective fields.

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

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

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

However, the list is not complete. Different scholars wrote religious and secular texts in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil and other languages at different points

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of time. Among them, many are well known and many more might have been missed. Besides, a student of history should be cautious while going through this literature, whether religious or secular, in an effort to dig out ancient Indian history, as religious history is no historical chronicle and the object of biographical works, in most cases, remains the glorification of the kings while the writings of the foreigners are mostly based upon second-hand information. Yet, though suffering from these handicaps, the literary sources certainly provide valuable help to the students of Indian history.

Religious Literature

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

Hindu religious texts

The first literary source of the Hindus is the Samhita which includes four Vedas namely the Rigveda, the Samveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda. Besides these, there are the Brahmanas (the Satapatha, Panchavis, Atreya, etc.), the Upanishads (the Kathaka, the Isa, the Svetasvatra etc.), the Aryanakas, the Sutras (the Manu, the Vishnu, the Narad, the Brashpati, etc.), the Puranas (the Vishnu, the Vayu, etc. 18 in all) and the Epics (the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*) which assist one in deciphering and understanding the history and culture of India from the Vedic up to the Gupta age. The Rig-Veda provides us some significant information about the civilization of the early Vedic Age while the rest of the three Vedas illuminate upon the specificity of the cultural aspects of the later age. The Brahmanas provide us some critical knowledge concerning the Aryans—their attitude towards east India, religious beliefs, and rituals to be conducted especially during the later Vedic age. The Upanishads, too, were concerned with the philosophical speculations and beliefs of the Aryans such as the transmigration of the soul, Brahma and salvation. The Shastras inform us about the rituals while performing different *Yajnas* and the religious, social, moral and political responsibilities of an individual. The Smritis reveal to us the social and religious conditions of the Indians between 200 BC to AD 600. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are useful for knowing the living conditions of the Aryans during the later Vedic age while the Puranas help us in finding out the history of the rulers and their kingdoms which existed in India after the war of the *Mahabharata* till the sixth century AD.

Buddhist religious texts

The original Buddhist texts are known as the *Tripitaka*. They are three in number and can be categorized as (i) The *Vinya pitaka* which describes the rules and regulations for the guidance of the Buddhist monks and the general management of the Church; (ii) the *Sutti-pitaka* is a collection of the religious discourses of Buddha; and (iii) the *Ahbidhamma-pitaka* which contains an exposition of the philosophical principles underlying religion. Afterwards, the Mahayana and the Tantrika sects of Buddhism created vast religious literature of their own and the penultimate *Jataka*

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

Jain religious texts

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

Foreign Accounts: Greek, Chinese and Arab Writers

Foreign accounts are of immense importance in the reconstruction of ancient Indian history. According to K.A.N. Sastri, 'The accounts of any country and its people by foreign observers are of great interest to the historians of the country. For they enable him to know what impression is made upon the minds of such observers and to estimate with greater confidence the part played by it in the general history of the world.'

- (i) **Greek writers:** Herodotus in his *Histories* gives us information about Indo-Persian relations and the political condition of north-west India in his time. Arrian, a Roman historian, wrote a detailed account of the invasion of India by Alexander. The Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, Megasthenes in his book *Indica*, gives a descriptive account of India at that time.
- (ii) **Chinese writers:** Chinese accounts of Hiuen Tsang and Fa Hein provide us with useful information regarding the life during the reign of Harsha and Chandragupta II respectively. Tibetan historian, Taranath in his *History of Buddhism* gives us information about Buddhism and its spread.
- (iii) **Arab writers:** The Arab accounts of travellers and geographers mostly deal with India and its inhabitants and not history as such. Alberuni's *Tehquiq-I-Hind* throws light on the various aspects of socio-economic and political condition of India at the time of Mahmud of Ghazni.

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Thus, in order to study Indian history in a comprehensive manner, one has to depend on literary, archaeological and foreign sources which help us to form a complete picture of the ancient times. The information provided by literary texts if corroborated by archaeological remains helps the historian to improve the scale of historical authenticity and reliability of fact.

Check Your Progress

1. Define the term epigraphy.
2. What was the material which was commonly used for the writing of inscriptions?
3. What does the Indigenous literature include?

3.3 INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

Up to 1920, nothing was known about the Indus Valley Civilization. Construction workers at a railway track near Harappa were using the bricks from a nearby ruin, when it was realized that the bricks probably belonged to a very old civilization. The railway authorities informed the Archaeological Survey of India. In 1921, two archaeologists, Dayaram Sahani and Rakhal Das Bannerjee carried out excavations at Mohenjo-Daro in Sind and at Harappa, which revealed that a very advanced civilization far older and superior to the Europeans had flourished in India. This generated great enthusiasm, not only in India, but in other countries as well. Further excavations at Lothal, Ropar and Kalibangan revealed that the Indus Valley Civilization flourished beyond the River Indus. The area that it covered at that time was approximately 1.3 million square kilometres.

Figure 3.1 shows us some of the important sites of the Indus Valley Civilization. It is estimated that the Indus Valley Civilization existed between 2500 and 1500 BC almost at the same time as the Egyptian, Sumerian and Chinese civilizations.

It is true that all the civilizations of the world have originated and developed in the valleys of rivers. A common feature of all civilizations is the river, which provided fertile soil for the civilizations to develop in its valley. When rivers flooded the banks, the water left deposits of fine silt, which made it possible for farmers to produce abundant crops. Floodwater was used to irrigate fields in the dry season. Rivers provided humans with additional source of food in the form of fish. Rivers also served as waterways for the transport of people and goods from one place to another. The Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian civilizations developed on the banks of Dajla-Farat, the Egyptian civilization on the banks of the river Nile and the Harappan civilization on the banks of the Indus.



Fig. 3.1 Important Sites of the Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus Valley Civilization was an ancient civilization that had disappeared hundreds of years ago leaving its ruins. Maximum remains of the Indus Valley Civilization have been found in the valley of river Indus, from where the civilization derives its name. The city of Mohenjo-Daro was 640 km away from Harappa. The term ‘Mohenjo-Daro’ means ‘the mound of the dead, which was a local name of a high mountain located on the fields of Larkana. In the context of the Indus Valley Civilization, author and historian Ramashankar Tripathi states, ‘Till so far our way has been full of obstacles but now we can see the horizons of the Indian Civilization.’ It has been established by the remains of the Indus Valley Civilization that hundreds of years before the Aryans there was a pre-established civilization in India.

The cities belonging to Indus Valley Civilization were divided into lower town area and citadel. Historians believe that there was some kind of difference between people who lived in the lower town area and those who lived near the citadel. Occupational groups lived in the lower town area and the nobility comprising the king and his nobles lived in the citadel. Nevertheless, there must have been some controlling authority, otherwise the uniformity of the town plan, standardization of weights and measures, collection of taxes and grains would have been impossible.

Geographical Expansion of the Indus Valley Civilization

According to the Australian archaeologist and biologist Vere Gordon Childe, ‘The geographical area of the Indus civilization was much more than the ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Persian civilizations.’

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The remains of the expansion of this civilization have been found in North India from Ropar of Ambala district to Rangpur district in Kathiawad; from Ahmednagar district in Maharashtra (in South India) to Ghazipur, Varanasi, Buxar and Patna in the east. This proves that the Harappan Civilization was spread across Punjab and Sindh, in the valleys of north-western frontiers mainly Kathiawad, Rajasthan and Doab. Following are the chief towns of the Indus Valley Civilization:

1. **Baluchistan:** This region was important from the perspective of trade and commerce. The main places that were extremely important include Sukagendor (at the origin of river Dashak), Sotakakoh (at the beginning of Shadi Kaur) and Balakot (in the east of Son Miyani at the origin of river Vindar).
2. **North-Western Border:** Significant artefacts have been discovered from this area in the Gomal valley.
3. **Sindhu:** Several remains have been found in the Sindhu region but many sites have been destroyed on the banks of this river. Several remains have been found at the sites of Mohenjo-Daro, Chanhudaro, Judeirjo-daro and Amri.
4. **Western Punjab:** This area has the most important Harappan site which is located on river Ravi.
5. **Eastern Punjab:** An important site of this area is Ropar. In recent excavations remains have been found in Sanghol.
6. **Haryana:** In Hisar and Banvali important remains of the Indus Civilization have been found.
7. **Doab of Ganga and Yamuna:** The remains of Indus Valley Civilization are spread from Meerut to Aalamgir. Recently remains have also been found at Hulas in Saharanpur.
8. **Gujarat:** There are several Indus Valley Civilization sites at the peninsula of Kutch and Kathiawad and the mainlands of Gujarat. Important sites at these peninsula are Sutkotada and Lothal, respectively.
9. **Other sites:** Important remains have also been found at the sites of Bahawalpur, Jammu and Northern Afghanistan.

Dress and Ornaments

The spindles found in the excavations reveal that the Indus Valley people knew the art of spinning and weaving. They were perhaps the first people to cultivate cotton to make clothes. Besides cotton, they wore woollen clothes. Men wore a piece of cloth round their waists and a shawl over their shoulders, while women wore a skirt and do not seem to have worn blouses. Archaeologists have unearthed an idol of a man covered with a shawl. The shawl was tied under the right arm and went across the left shoulder, which left the right hand free. A cloth similar to the dhoti worn in rural India was worn at the bottom.

The discovery of needles at the excavation site points towards the fact that the people of this civilization were familiar with sewing. Both men and women wore ornaments. These were made of metal, bone, shell and beads. The Indus people loved ornaments. The chief ornaments worn by women included necklaces, armlets, bangles, earrings, nose-rings, rings and waistlets.

The ornaments of rich people were made of gold, silver and precious stones, whereas the ornaments of poor people were made of bones, copper and baked clay. Sir John Hubert Marshall who was the Director General of Archaeology in India in 1902 stated, 'seeing the shine and design of gold ornaments it seems that they are brought from an ornament shop of Bond Street (London) and not from a pre-historical house of five thousand years ago.'

Farming and Cattle Rearing

Agriculture was the chief occupation of the people. The climate and seasons were conducive for farming and annual flooding of the rivers made the land fertile. This facilitated the growth of crops. The chief crops were wheat, barley, cotton, maize and millet. They also grew fruits and vegetables. Different methods of irrigation were in use. Channels and embankments were also built to control the flow of water into the fields. Ploughs and sickles were commonly used agricultural tools.

Animal husbandry was also practised, and oxen, buffaloes, goats, sheep, pigs, donkeys and camels were reared. The horse, however, was unknown.

The chief occupation of the Indus people was agriculture. Crops such as wheat, barley, corn and cotton, were cultivated here. According to Dr Basham, the people did not know how to cultivate rice, but the remains of rice at Lothal and Rangpur have proved this conception wrong. Similarly, Dr Lal has said that the cultivation of cotton was the speciality of Indus people. Grinding machines of wheat, barley and crushing machines and storehouses reflect their proficiency in agriculture. Adequate irrigation facilities were developed for agriculture.

Pottery and Trade

Next to agriculture, pottery seems to have been the most popular industry of the people. They were skilled in the use of the potter's wheel. Reddish-brown clay was baked, glazed and decorated with various designs in black. Some broken bits of pottery found in the excavation sites have geometric designs and animal motifs. They speak of the excellent craftsmanship and artistic skills of the Harappan people.

Trade, both by land and by sea, thrived in the Harappan society. A number of seals of Indus origin have been found at various sites in Mesopotamia (Sumer). This indicates that trade flourished between the two civilizations. In order to measure articles, they used a stick with markings on it. They also used various kinds of weights and measures.

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More than 2000 seals have been found at various sites. The seals were made of terracotta and steatite, a soft stone. Most of the seals are rectangular but some are circular in shape. Some of them have a knob at the back, which contains a hole. It is believed that different guilds or individual merchants and traders used these seals for stamping their consignments. They have a carved picture with some inscription on the other side. These seals throw light on the religion, customs and economic activities of the society. The animal shown in the seal may be a sacred bull. Small-scale industries were also chief sources of living.

Carpenters, potters, weavers, goldsmiths, connoisseurs, sculptors, etc., constitute the different professions of the time. Potters made a good living by making earthen toys. The Indus Valley Civilization's economy appears to have depended significantly on trade, which was facilitated by major advances in transport by bullock-driven carts as well as boats. Most of these boats were probably small and had flat-bottoms, perhaps driven by sail, similar to those one can see on the Indus River today. Archaeologists have discovered a big canal and docking facility at the coastal city of Lothal. The artefacts of this civilization found at the sites of other ancient civilizations suggest trade links with portions of Afghanistan, the coastal regions of Persia, Northern and Central India and Mesopotamia.

Settlement Patterns and Town Planning in the Indus Valley Civilization

One of the most remarkable features of the Indus Valley Civilization was meticulous town planning. This is especially evident in the city of Mohenjo-Daro.

Architecture

Evidence of town management of this time is found from the remains of Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Kalibanga, Lothal, etc. Towns were so well managed and organized that it is still a matter of wonder. The roads were very broad. The drainage system was very fine. The remains of Mohenjo-Daro are proof of the unparalleled art of the ancient cities, their cleanliness and construction. It is quite clear from studies that cleanliness was given a lot of importance.

The shape of the city was rectangular. The roads cut each other at right angles and divided the city into large blocks. Within each block, there was a network of narrow lanes. The drainage system was magnificent and lights were arranged on roads. It seems that the town planning was the work of efficient engineers.

Art of Making Buildings

The houses, built of burnt bricks, were constructed on both sides of the roads. There were covered drains along the roads, in which sewage from the houses flowed. Some houses had only one or two rooms while others had several, indicating different living quarters for the rich and the poor. The Indus people were excellent constructors. There are other things related to architecture and idol making,

which are living examples of their efficiency. The interiors of these buildings prove that the Indus people were definitely aesthetically inclined. Of all the remains of the Indus Civilization, the best is the Great Bath. Its walls are cemented. There are stairs on the corners. In order to keep the water safe and the foundations strong, the masons worked cleverly. The system of filling and emptying the water tank was no doubt extraordinary. There was also a system for hot water, which was probably used by the priests. The biggest proof of the durability of the bath is that it was constructed in 5000 BC and is till today totally intact.

Town Planning

Excavations at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro reveal that all these cities were similarly planned. They were divided into two parts—a raised area with large buildings called the citadel at the western end and a lower town. The roads ran at right angles, bringing out the grid pattern of the township. The citadel was built on a raised platform, constructed with bricks and stones, about 12 metre high and rectangular in shape, and surrounded by a huge brick wall with watchtowers. This protected the buildings and the people from the recurrent flooding of the river Indus. The citadel was probably the seat of the government and overlooked the lower town. The ruler or the administrator lived here along with the nobles. It also had public buildings such as the granaries, the assembly or town hall and important workshops. At Mohenjo-Daro, which means ‘mound of the dead’ in Sindhi, the most remarkable feature was the Great Bath. It was situated within the citadel. It resembled a large swimming pool measuring 55 by 33 metres. A flight of steps led down to the pool at two ends. Broad corridors on four sides with a number of rooms surrounded the pool. It is the finest specimen of the engineering skill of the Harappan people.

In Harappa, archaeologists found the Great Granary located in the citadel. It measured 61.5 by 15.5 metres and consisted of two similar blocks with a wide passageway between them. Each block had six halls further divided into smaller rooms and compartments with openings for ventilation. The largest granary was found in Mohenjo-Daro. Close to the granaries at Harappa, circular brick platforms have been found. According to archaeologists, these were used for threshing grain. Grain was brought by boats along the rivers. The grain collected as tax was safely stored to be used in times of crises like floods or famine. The granaries prove that the land was fertile.

Drainage system

Another striking feature of the Indus towns was their drainage system. It was the best drainage system known to the world in ancient times. Drains were constructed on either side of the roads connected to a drain from each house. They were lined with bricks and were covered with slabs of stone, which could be removed in order to clean them. This shows that the dwellers had great concern for health and sanitation.

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Urban decline of the Indus Valley Civilization

Like other unanswered questions about the Indus Valley Civilization, the question of its devastation, of how, when, and why it disappeared, is unanswered. Many historians have given their own opinion. Seven layers have been found during excavations at different sites, which inform us that the Indus Valley Civilization would have been established and devastated a number of times. The chief reason being the floods in the Indus river. The Indus time and again changed its normal course, which was a frequent cause of devastation.

Another opinion regarding the decline of the Indus Valley civilization is geographical in nature including scarcity of rainfall, change in the course of the river, drought and earthquake, which may have devastated this developed civilization. In the opinion of a few scholars, this civilization was devastated due to the attack of the Aryans. Religious books clarify that there is mention of forts and towns of non-Aryans in the Rig-Veda which were probably ravaged in these attacks. The use of horses and chariots made these attacks successful. However, it has not been completely clarified as to how this civilization met its end.

The Indus Valley Civilization flourished for about 1000 years with very few changes in lifestyle, customs and habits. Though this civilization began to decline by 1500 BC, the exact causes of the decline are not known. However, historians have made various suggestions based on evidence, and they can be summed up as follows:

- The most commonly accepted theory is that natural calamities like earthquakes and floods or change in the course of the river Indus may have destroyed the cities or led to mass migration.
- Some historians are of the opinion that epidemics or fire destroyed the cities.
- Others believe that foreign invasions (probably of the Aryans) led to its decline.
- Yet another theory is that ecological changes due to deforestation led to the land becoming dry and uninhabitable.

Check Your Progress

4. Mention some of the chief towns of the Indus Valley Civilization.
5. What was the chief occupation of the Indus people?

3.4 LATER VEDIC AGE

The Rig Vedic period came to an end in 1000 BC. The period from 1080-600 BC is known as the later Vedic period. During this period the Aryans composed

the other three Vedas, i.e., Sam Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. They also composed the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, the Upanishads, the Sutras, the Puranas, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, which are also called Great Epics provide the most reliable account about this period which is also called as the Great Epic Age. Sometime back the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were considered to be fictional rather than of historical works but now their position is quite different and the information derived from them is of most valuable help and gives us a true picture of life and society in that age. The *Ramayana* is the first literary record of the passing of the Aryans beyond the Vindhyas and their penetration by the armed forces into southern India. *Mahabharata* is the second great Epic. It has eighteen cantos and about 100 *slokas* or verses. Similarly, like the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* is regarded as the creation of the imagination of the poets by the European historians. They say that even though some of the princes mentioned in the *Mahabharata* might be historic figures, yet the bards and poets have transformed the story in such a way that nothing true is left in it.

Though some imaginary, fanciful creations might have been inserted in the *Mahabharata*, yet Krishna, Arjuna, etc., were historic figures and Hastinapur and Indraprastha were historic towns. In this way, the story of the *Mahabharata* and the persons mentioned in it belongs to history. In the excavations, ruins of about 300 Aryans sites have been found containing earthen pottery as well as iron weapons. Aryans spread to the Indo-Gangetic plains from the Punjab.

At the very outset they occupied Delhi and Meerut in the Ganges-Yamuna Doab region. They made Hastinapur (modern Meerut District) as their capital. In about 600 BC Aryans advanced towards the eastern regions of Kosala and Northern Bihar. Their continuous success was due to their superior weapons, good horses and chariots. They used iron weapons and because of these factors, they were able to expand continuously.

As the Aryans advanced to the east and the south, their number decreased in proportion to the original inhabitants of those areas. Now they were surrounded by people who differed from them in religion, culture and customs. There was a great interaction and thus there came a great change in the Aryan institutions. Their social, political and economic organizations became more complex and certain corrupt practices crept into their religion. We can study the civilization of the later Vedic Aryans in the following manner.

3.4.1 Society

The family was an important institution during this period. Each *Kula* or family consisted of several members. There also existed joint family system and the heads of the family, called *Kulpati*, either used to be the father or the eldest brother. Marriages, sacrifices and other important duties in the joint family were performed by the head of the family in consultation with his wife. Adoption was resorted to not only in the absence of real children, but also to secure the addition of a specially

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qualified member to the family. There is a prayer in the Atharva Veda which is offered for the unity and love of the family. Guests were entertained with a warm hospitality.

In the family, we notice the increasing power of the father who could even disinherit his son. In princely families, the right of primogeniture was getting strong. Male ancestors came to be worshipped.

Position of women

The general position of the women changed for the worse. They lost the right to the Upanayana ceremony, and all their sacraments, excluding marriage, were performed without the recitation of the Vedic mantras. As in the earlier period, the marriage of women normally took place after puberty. Polygamy certainly prevailed. Theoretically, the wife was still accorded a very high position. Thus, the *Satapatha Brahmana* says that she is half her husband and completes him. But there are unerring signs that her status and dignity were lowered a great deal during this period. Thus, many of the religious ceremonies, formerly left to the wife, were now performed by priests. She was not allowed to attend the political assemblies. A submissive wife who would keep her mouth shut and dine after her husband was held up as the ideal. The birth of a daughter was most unwelcome for she was regarded as a source of misery and a son alone was the saviour of a family. The women were taught to dance and sing and play various kinds of musical instruments such as drums, flutes, lyre or harp, cymbals, and lutes. Although some women theologians took part in philosophic discussions and some queens participated in coronation rituals, ordinarily women were thought to be inferior and subordinate to men.

Classes and caste system

Settled life led to a further crystallization of the four-fold division of society. Brahmins claimed both social and political privileges. *Kshatriyas* constituted the warrior class and came to be looked upon as the protectors of the people and the king was chosen from among them. *Vaishyas* devoted themselves to trade, agriculture and various crafts as they were the 'tax-paying' class. In this way all work, whether religious or secular, became more and more specialized and hereditary. It was obviously easier for the son of a warrior to be trained in the use of weapons than for the son of a Brahmin who was undergoing training in a Vedic school. The same applied to the children of agriculturists and *Vaishyas*. The new conquests brought large number of slaves. Work having become more specialized and complicated, it was necessary to absorb these slaves into the service of the community, so they were included in the social system as *Sudras* whose primary business was to do some kind of unskilled service required of them. While the *Sudras* were absorbed in the social system and while some of them accumulated wealth and even mixed occasionally with the members of the three upper castes, they were never allowed to study the scriptures. The rules relating to inter-caste

marriage began to be rigid. How far the change of caste was possible, we cannot speculate.

Four ashrams

Besides caste system, the life was divided into certain *Ashrams*. The first twenty-five years of life was called *Bramhacharya* stage during which period one was supposed to go to the acharyas and the *guru* for the sake of education. Next came the *Grahashta* stage which lasted up to fifty years. During this period a man was allowed to lead a married life and have children. The third stage was *Vanprastha*. During this period, upto seventy-five years of age, a man devoted himself to the worship of god though he still lived in the family. The last stage, from seventy six to hundred years of life, was called *Sanyas*. During this period one was to go to the forest to lead the rest of the life in devotion to God.

Decline in morality

The rich and the royal classes had begun to marry several times. They were also addicted to drinking intoxicating liquors and gambling. Dancing girls and prostitutes became a source of great pleasure. Killing an enemy by deceit was a common practice. In this connection, the deceit practised by the Kaurvas to kill the Pandvas is a clear proof. In the *Mahabharata* there is a mention of the persons who did not pay taxes and were guilty of weighing short measures. Thus, a gradual degradation in the later Vedic period or Epic society was easily visible.

Food and drink

The variety of eatables had amply increased. Chief among them were *apuka* (cake mixed with ghee, made of rice or barley), *adana* (a mess of grain cooked with milk or curd or ghee), *Karambha* (porridge made of grain or barley), *Yavagu* (barley- gruel), etc. Rice cooked with milk and beans, and fried grains of rice were also known and used. A very large number of milk products were prepared and they were very popular. Chief among these products were *amiksha* (clotted curds), *dahi* (sour milk), *nava-nita* (fresh butter), *payasya* (mixture of sour milk and hot or old fresh milk), *prishadajya* (butter mixed of sour milk), *phanta* (creamy butter), *vajilla* (mixture of hot fresh milk with sour milk), etc. Meat eating was fairly common. The *Satapatha Brahmana* prescribes the killing of a great ox or goat in the honour of a guest. Meat was not only eaten on ceremonial occasions but was also used daily. Cow slaughter was looked at with disfavour. Sura, an intoxicating liquor, often finds mention. But it is often condemned as leading to quarrels and seducing men from the path of virtue.

Dress and ornaments

The people wore cotton clothes. Some of them wore silken clothes also. The dress had lost its former simplicity and became a little gaudy. Likewise, ornaments had become costly and were mostly made of gold and silver.

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Marriage

There are references which indicate that inter-caste marriages took place in this period. However, they were not regarded as good. There are mentions of polygamy by men and dowry system had also started. The marriages between 'sapinds' (within the same generation) were prohibited to the seven generations from the side of father and five generations from the side of mother.

Education

Such a highly developed intellectual life as well as the vast mass of Vedic literature presupposes a well planned system of education. The Upanayana was the religious ceremony by which a boy was initiated into the life of a student and handed over to a *guru* or preceptor. Henceforth he had to live in the house of the guru and lead the chaste life of a *Brahamachari* whose principal duties were to study and serve the teacher. The latter included gathering fuel, tending cows and begging alms. The students got free boarding and lodging at his house and in return did personal service to him and paid fees (*dakshina*) at the completion of their study, though, sometimes, sons of wealthy parents probably gave regular fees. The Aryans themselves had no writing script until much later. It is possible that a script came to be used by about 700 BC since there are references to writing as a normal activity by 500 BC. Judging from the earliest specimens found in India (the stone inscriptions of the emperor Asoka, of the third century BC) the early script may have been influenced by a semantic system of writing. Education was restricted to the upper castes and the teaching of the Vedas was restricted to the Brahmins, although in theory it was open to all *dvija* castes. Arithmetic, grammar, and prosody were included as subjects of study. Some of the Rig Vedic hymns incorporated ritual dancing and the recitation of dialogues thus constituting the rudiments of a dramatic form. The stories of the bards, from which the epic compositions originated, also lent themselves to dramatic presentations.

3.4.2 Religion

People believed in one Supreme God. The power of the Almighty, the Omniscience of God, is recognized in the Atharva Veda. The idea of supreme God like Prajapati the creator and preserver of the Universe and the conception of Brahma is found in the Atharva Veda. The Atharva Veda suggests the idea of Brahma as the first cause of all existence and of the oneness of man with the world-soul. In this period new Gods like Vishnu, Siva, Ganesh, Parvati, Rama, Krishna, etc., took the place of nature gods like Indra, Varuna, Surya, the Earth, Agni, etc., of the Rig Vedic period. In this context, scholars like R.C. Majumdar define that 'in one Upanishad, Krishna is associated with a school of thought that rejected the purely ritualistic interpretation of sacrifice and considered the practices of virtue to be as effective as providing gifts to priest. In the final hour one should, according to this school, take refuge in these three thoughts. You are the imperishable, the never falling and the very essence of life.'

Aim and mode of worship

People worshipped gods for the same material reasons in this period as they did in earlier times. However, the mode of worship changed considerably and prayers continued to be recited, but they ceased to be the dominant mode of placating the gods. Sacrifices became far more important and they assumed both publicity and domesticity which was still in many cases identical with the tribe. Private sacrifices were performed by the individuals in their houses because in this period the Vedic people led a settled life and maintained well established households. Individuals offered oblations to Agni and each one of these took the form of a ritual or sacrifice. Elaborate sacrificial rites undermined the importance of the Rig Vedic gods, some of whom faded into the background. The priests became the chief beneficiaries of the sacrifices and consequently gained power. Cattle were slaughtered at the sacrifices in large numbers. Animal bones with cut marks found in course of excavations at Atranjikhera are mostly of cattle. Public rituals, therefore, led to the decimation of the cattle wealth whose importance for the developing agricultural economy can hardly be overestimated.

Growth of ritualism

The Brahmins were anxious to make themselves more important and respected in the society. To achieve this objective they concentrated their energies upon developing a complicated and detailed system of rituals (the manners of performing religious rites). Indeed, the priestly class now devoted their whole attention to find out the hidden and mystic meaning of the rites and ceremonies. These ceremonies consist of domestic rites as well as great sacrifices and form a body of rituals, probably the most stupendous and complex which has ever been elaborated by man. The domestic rites embrace the whole course of a man's life from his conception in the mother's womb up to his death, or rather beyond it, as several ceremonies refer to the departed souls.

The Brahmins claimed a monopoly of priestly knowledge and expertise. They invented a large number of rituals some of which were adopted from the non-Aryans. The reason for the invention and elaboration of the rituals is not clear, though mercenary motives cannot be ruled out. We hear that as many as 240,000 cows were given as *dakshina* or gift to the officiating priest in the *Rajsuya* sacrifice. In addition to cows, which were usually given as sacrificial gifts, gold, cloth and horses were also given. Sometimes the priests claimed portions of territory as *dakshina*, but the grant of land as sacrificial fee is not well established in the later Vedic period. The *Satapatha Brahmana* states that in the *Asvamedha Yajna*, all should be given to the priest. This, therefore, merely indicates the desire of the priests to grab as much land as possible.

3.4.3 Economy

The Aryans followed a mixed pastoral and agricultural economy. They ploughed their fields by means of a pair of oxen bound to the yoke. In later stages, they used

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heavy ploughs drawn by six, eight, twelve, and even twenty-four oxen. There are references to artificial waterways which make it certain that the system of irrigation was known to them. Their other chief source of income was cattle-rearing. Rather, it would be much proper to say that in the early stages, the primary occupation of the Rig Vedic Aryans was cattle-rearing because we find a heavy impact of the tribal organization on their early social and political set-up. It was only afterwards that agriculture got priority over cattle-rearing. Cows occupied an important place in it and were used as a means of exchange and value as well. Horses were also greatly valued. Other domesticated animals were sheep, goats, asses, oxen and dogs. Hunting also served a useful economic purpose. They hunted lions, boar, buffaloes, deer, birds and antelopes. They also used nets to capture them.

Another important occupation was weaving, both in cotton and wool, which supplied garments to the people. Other professions were those of priest, carpenter, goldsmith, leather-worker, physician, butcher, dancer, musician, etc. Probably, use of iron was known to them.

Dr R.S. Sharma has expressed the view that sea-trade was not carried out by the Rig Vedic Aryans. They, being constantly busy in wars, were not able to produce so much as would have left sufficient surplus for export. But Dr R.C. Majumdar and B.M. Apte have opined that these people engaged themselves in sea-trade and had trade relations with Babylon and other countries in West Asia. However, all scholars agree that internal trade was carried on both by river and land.

The Aryans had no coins and barter system was pursued for the exchange of commodities. However, the cow had become a unit of value and a medium of exchange. There is reference to one more medium of exchange called *nishka* which was probably a piece of gold of a fixed weight and was used as a sort of currency.

On the whole, having natural facilities for agriculture and cattle breeding, the Aryans enjoyed a prosperous economic life.

Agriculture

Mostly the people lived in villages, but by now the big cities had also come into existence. Although very few agricultural tools made of iron have been found, there is no doubt that agriculture was the main means of livelihood of the later Vedic people. Ploughing was done with the help of a wooden plough share which possibly worked in the light soil of the upper Gangetic basin. Enough bullocks could not be found because of cattle slaughter in sacrifices. Therefore, agriculture was primitive but there is no doubt about its wide prevalence. The *Satapatha Brahmana* speaks at length about the ploughing rituals. According to ancient legends, Janakas (the king of Videha and father of Sita) lend his hand at the plough. In those days even kings and princes did not hesitate to take to manual labour. Balarama, the brother of Krishna, is called *Haladhara* or wielder of the plough. In later times, ploughing came to be prohibited for the members of the upper

varnas. The Vedic people continued to produce barley, but during this period rice and wheat became their chief crops. In subsequent times wheat became the staple food of the people in Punjab and western Uttar Pradesh. For the first time, the Vedic people came to be acquainted with rice in the Doab. It is called *Vrihi* in the Vedic texts, and its remains recovered from Hastinapur belong to the eight century BC. The use of rice is recommended in rituals, but that of wheat is rarely mentioned. Various kinds of lentils were also produced by the later Vedic people. Beans and sesames were also known and the latter assumed ritual importance in course of time. The growing importance of agriculture undermined the earlier pastoral economy which could not feed the increasing population well enough.

Arts and crafts

Simultaneously, with the transition from a pastoral to an agricultural economy, there seemed to have arisen several new arts and crafts. In place of the few occupations in the Rig Veda, many are enumerated in later Vedic literature. Mention may be made of smelter, smith or, carpenter, weaver, leather worker, jeweller, dyer and potter. It is difficult to say how far the smelters and smiths were connected with making objects of iron. Probably they worked mostly with copper, which continued to predominate with iron still being rare. Weaving was practiced on a wide scale but perhaps remained confined mainly to women. Leather work, pottery and-carpentry were connected with building activities of which we have some evidence in this period. The later Vedic people were acquainted with four types of pottery: black and red ware, black-slipped ware, painted grey ware and red ware. The last type of pottery was most popular with them and has been found almost all over western Uttar Pradesh. However, the distinctive pottery of the period is known as the Painted Grey Ware. It consisted of bowls and dishes which were used either for rituals or for eating or for both, but by the upper orders. Glass hoards and bangles found in the PGW layers may have been used as luxurious objects by a few persons. The use of metals like tin, lead, silver and gold were known. Gold and silver were used normally for making ornaments and delicate articles like vessels. Medical profession was well established. Many diseases were cured by herbs. Magic spells also were used for the purpose.

Domestication of animals

Being an agriculturist society, the Aryans attached great importance to animals. They were reared both for their milk and agricultural purposes. In fact, cattle rearing received an impetus during this period. We have references which indicate that meadows were carefully looked after so that animals might not face any inconvenience. Large sheds were also created to accommodate the cattle so that they may be protected against wild animals and extreme cold or hot weather. The cow was regarded as sacred during this period. This was perhaps due to their utility. In the Atharva Veda, death penalty was prescribed for cow slaughter. Elephants were also domesticated by the people. Other domesticated animals were sheep, goats, asses, oxen and dogs.

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3.4.4 Polity

The later Vedic period is generally considered to have commenced from the beginning of the first millennium BC. The core region of the Vedic civilization now became the area of western UP, which, according to the literary texts, was now under the control of the Kuru-Panchalas. In this area, the Vedic people seem to have displaced the copper using people whose tools, weapons and pottery types (late Harappan and Ochre Coloured Pottery) indicate that these people flourished in this region between 1700 and 1000 BC. The Aryans, by now, had the knowledge of iron which is evidenced by the discovery of large hoards of iron at Atranjikhera, in the Etah district of UP. Iron also helped the Aryans to clear the dense forests of the region and start agriculture. This resulted in a new agrarian economy and a settled life. A large number of PGW sites, discovered through the excavations, are considered to have been the Aryan settlements during the later Vedic age.

The most startling feature of this age was the firm assertion of the territorial element. One of the hymns of Atharva Veda mentions that *Rashtra* or the territory be held by the king and be made firm by the Varuna, the god Brihaspati, Indra and Agni. We also hear of a permanent royal residence of the Kuru-Panchala kings called 'Ashandivat'. Though the tribal element was still important, now equally important was the element of territory.

Atreya Brahmana mentions ten forms of government present in the different parts of the country and explains as to how the concept of government in its territorial dimensions had come into vogue.

Popular assemblies

In later Vedic times, the popular assemblies lost their importance and royal power increased at their cost. The *Vidatha* completely disappeared. The *Sabha* and *Samiti* continued to hold ground, but their character changed. They came to be dominated by princes and rich nobles. Women were no longer permitted to sit on the *Sabha*, and it was now dominated by nobles and Brahmans. With reference to this A. L. Basham writes, the old tribal assemblies were still from time to time referred to, but their power was waning rapidly and by the end of this period the king's autocracy was in most cases only limited by the power of the Brahmans, the weight of tradition, and the force of public opinion, which was always of some influence in ancient India. However, it did not mean that the king had become authoritarian. The king always attempted to get the cooperation of these assemblies. In the later period, the council of *Brahmanas* also yielded a good influence over the king.

Larger kingdoms

At this stage, it would be interesting to examine how politically some of the old powerful tribes had lost their importance and some others had conquered new territories and risen to power. The conquered lands were named after the victorious tribes. In this way Panchala, Kosala and Magadha were named after the Panchalas,

Kosalas and Magadhas who settled in them. The capitals of the new kingdoms were named sometimes after their kings, like Mithila after Mithi, Vaisali and Taksasila after Taksha. The Ganga was called Bhagirathi after Raja Bhagiratha. The expansion in the territorial limits of their different empires had also increased the powers of the kings considerably. The states had expanded both on their territories and powers.

New name instead of tribe

Initially, Aryans used to call a settlement a tribe but later on the region came to be called *Janpada*. The word *Rashtra* was also first used in this period, though just for a region and not for the entire nation. As the Aryans gradually expanded, they began to call India by the name of Aryavarta.

Many advisors of the king

With the expansion of the kingdoms, the king distributed his work among his advisors. The official in-charge of collecting tax and gifts was called *Sangrahi*.

Besides the priest, *Senapati* and *Gramini* other officials who helped the king were the *Dwarpala*, Judge and other administrative persons.

Army and warfare

During this period, the king did not maintain a standing army. In times of need soldiers were collected from different tribes. The king used to time collectively with the tribals so as to secure their sympathy and loyalty. During this time, elephants came to be used in addition to horses and chariots. New weapons like fire-weapons and poisonous weapons came to be used. During the later part of this period the importance of a standing army also came to be recognized and the king started keeping a standing army.

Kingship

With the emergence of the Varna system in the lower Vedic period, the king now belonged to the Kshatriya class. He always worked to secure the support of 'Brahmanas', who constituted the other powerful Varna and it is because of this reason that the king has been mentioned in *Atreya Brahmana* as the 'protector of Brahmanas' (*Brahmananam gopla*) and 'the eater of the people' (*Vishamallatta*).

Atreya Brahmana lists various types of states prevalent in contemporary India, in various regions, which were mainly differentiated or identified on the basis of the nature of kingship. These states are as follows:

- **Samrajya:** It was the ruler ship of the 'eastern part' where, the king was anointed for 'Overlordship'.
- **Bahujya:** It was the ruler ship of the 'southern part' where, the king was anointed for 'Paramount rule'.

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- **Svarajya:** It was the ruler ship of the ‘western part’ where, the king was anointed for ‘Self rule’.
- **Vairajya:** It was the ruler ship of the ‘northern part’ where, the king was anointed for ‘Sovereignty’. It was generally considered that the king, who was consecrated with ‘Indra’s’ great function’ was ‘Virat’, i.e., worthy of *Vairajya*.
- **Rajya:** It was the ruler ship of the ‘middle region’ where the king was anointed for a ‘Kingdom’.

Satapahha Brahmana clearly distinguishes ‘Samraj’ (one who rules the *Samrajya*) and Raja (One who rules the *Rajya*) from the other types. It says: ‘By offering ‘Rajasuya’ he becomes Raja and, by offering ‘Vajapeya’ he becomes Samraj’. Raja was generally considered inferior to Samraj.

Nature of kingship

Satpatha Brahmana says that the office of kingship is unsuited to Brahmanas but *Atreya Brahmana* mentions a *Brahmana* king. We also have references to Shudra, Ayogava, and even non-Aryan kings in the Vedic texts. An Ayogava was member of a mixed caste, a descendent of a Vaisya by a Shudra wife. ‘King Marutta Avikshita’ has been referred in the *Satapatha Brahmana* as an ‘Ayogava’. In *Chandogya Upanishad*, ‘king Janashruti Pautrayana’ has been referred to as a Shudra. The *Jatakas* refer to kings of various castes.

Kingship was sometimes hereditary and at other instances was settled through the election of a popular choice. The *Atreya Brahmana* prescribes some formulae to secure kingship for up to three generations. The expression, ‘Dashapurushamarajya’, which occurs in *Satapatha Brahmana* indicates kingship for up to ‘ten’ generations. The element of selection was also not unheard of. The selection was mostly done by the people, but the choice was mainly confined to the members of the royal family.

There are in fact some references of persons who did not belong to the royal house becoming kings as a result of popular choice.

Another important development which took place in the concept of kingship during the later Vedic times was the association of divinity with the king. This was totally unheard of in the Rig Vedic age. Perhaps it was the practice of the coronation ceremonies of the later Vedic age in which various gods were invoked to impart some of their qualities to the king that gave an impetus to the development of this notion. The kings were sometimes even represented as gods.

The Royal Ladies: The king during the Brahmana period was allowed to have four queens. They were as follows:

- **Mahishi:** According to *Satapatha Brahmana*, Mahishi was the chief wife and the first one to have married the king.

- **Parivrikti:** She was the neglected or the discarded wife perhaps because she could not conceive a son.
- **Vavata:** She was the favourite wife of the king.
- **Palagali:** She was the daughter of the lowest court official. She was condemned as the Shudra wife.

The *Atreya Brahmana*, however, refers to the 100 wives of Raja Harish Chandra. Many more such examples are also referred to in different texts of the later Vedic period.

Sacrifices of the royal coronation

Now we will shift our attention to one of the most prominent features of the kingship during the later Vedic times, and this was the sacrifices of the royal inauguration. The coronation ceremony involved a number of rituals which are mentioned in the *Samhitas*. Those who aided in the consecration of the king were called 'Rajakritri' or 'Rajakrit'. According to *Satapatha Brahmana*, Suta (Minstrel, Chronicler and the Charioteer) and the *Gramani* (Head of the village) were specified for this duty.

The principal sacrifices conducted for the royal inauguration were 'Vajapeya', 'Rajasuya', *Punar-abhisheka* and *Aindra-Mahabhisheka*. Let us discuss three sacrifices in some detail. The purpose of Vajapeya (the drink of strength) and the Rajasuya was to become the ruler of a Samrajya and a *Rajya* respectively. The purpose of conducting *Punar-abhisheka* (Renewed consecration) was to become eligible for all sorts of royal dignity while the Aindra-Mahabhisheka (closely associated with this was 'Ashvamedha' sacrifice) was conducted with the ambition of becoming an 'Ekarat'. The detailed ceremony of the Vajapeya sacrifice has been mentioned in the *Satapatha Brahmana*. It included a race of seventeen chariots in which the royal sacrifice was allowed to win. After this, the sacrifice, along with his wife, was made to mount on a pole having a ring and then pay homage to the earth. After the sacrifice descended from the pole, he was made to sit on the throne on which a goat-skin was spread. The royal sacrifice was then coroneted by the address of the 'Adhvaryu priest'. *The Rajasuya Sacrifice* was a long sacrifice which started on the first day of the 'Phalguna' and was carried on for two years.

The whole process has been described in detail in the *Satapatha Brahmana*. The main features of this sacrifice were as follows:

- (i) The Ratnam havimshi: This included giving presents to the Mahishi and other important officials (called Ratnins).
- (ii) The Abhishechaniya or the besprinkling ceremony.
- (iii) The Digvyasthapana: It was the symbolic walk of the king towards various directions to indicate his universal rule.

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- (iv) Treading upon a tiger skin- It was believed that by doing so the candidate gained the strength and swiftness of a tiger.
- (v) Narration of the story of 'Sunehshepa' by the Holy priest.
- (vi) Mimic cow raid against a relative or a dramatized fight with a member of the ruling family.
- (vii) Ceremony of enthronement
- (viii) A game of dice in which the king was deliberately made to triumph.

One essential feature of the Rajasuya sacrifice was 'Abhisheka' or the besprinkling ceremony. It included, *inter-alia*, offerings to various deities with water (Abhishechaniya Apah) from seventeen sources. The two important types of *Abhishekas* were *Punar-Abhisheka* and *Aindra-MahabhiSheka*: *Punar-Abhisheka* has been explained in some details in the *Aitareya Brahmana*. Here the king was made to ascend to the 'asandi' (Throne) made of 'Udumbara' wood with 'Munja' grass as the interwoven part. Then the besprinkling was done. The king then got down from the throne and made obeisance to the holy power. 'Janmejaya' the son of Kuru king 'Parikshit' was consecrated with 'punar-abhisheka'. *Aindra-MahabhiSheka* consisted of five ceremonies. First of these five ceremonies was the oath which was administered to the king elected by the priest. Then the enthronement (Arohana) took place. After enthronement came the proclamation (Utkroshana). Here, the king was proclaimed as '*Vishvasya bhutasya adhipati*' (sovereign lord of all beings), *Vishamatta* (*devourer* of the folk) this term alludes to his power of taxation, *Amitranam hanta* (Supreme commander to slay enemies), '*rohmononomgopala* (Protector of Brahmanas) and *Dharmasya gapta* (duty bound to preserve the laws and provide a better administration to the people). After the proclamation, the next ceremony was to address the formula (Abhimantra) after which came the last ceremony, the anointment (Abhishechana).

Ashvamedha sacrifice

Ashvamedha sacrifice was a ceremony closely associated with the Aindra-Mahabhisheka. *Atreya Brahmana* says that those kings who performed Aindra-Mahabhisheka were represented as conquering the world and offering a horse in sacrifice. Both *Aitareya* and *Satapatha Brahmana* give a long list of kings who performed it.

System of taxation

For the first time in the later Vedic polity we find a rudimentary organization of collecting tributes or taxes. During Rig Vedic times the king received *Bali*, i.e., voluntary offerings made to the God or a prince, and so he was known as 'Balihrit' or the tribute giving prince. This concept of voluntary tribute receded during the later Vedic times when a new development took place. This was the coercive and forcible collection of taxes from the clansmen and this is indicated by the term

Vishamatta ‘eater of the peasants’ used in the later texts for the king. *Bhoja*, another term used in the later Vedic texts indicates a tribute-enjoying aspect of the king. These forcible exactions may have started because of ‘the increase in the surplus, an important result of regular agriculture.

There is no clear indication as to what was the rate of taxation during the later Vedic times. The *Satapatha Brahmana* says that the ‘Vaishya’ secretly stores the property and the ‘Kshatriya’ asks the former to deliver it whenever the Kshatriyas want it. This statement does indicate the use of coercive methods to procure tribute.

There is a mention of an official *Bhagadugha* who distributed or disbursed the shares of the collected tribute among the people. He was associated with Pushan, the god of herdsmen, who got converted into agriculturists afterwards. It seems that these shares were given primarily to the peasants in ceremonial feasts.

Administrative structure

New social developments and increased availability of the surplus produce necessitated a more organized administrative machinery. There is, however, no indication of well defined compartments of administration but a number of persons who were given the status of *Ratnins* and had a number of positive functions to perform. The *Ratnins* do not seem to have performed the duties pertaining to law and order and justice rather they were associated with a rudimentary civil administrative system.

Though a number of later Vedic texts have given comprehensive lists of *Ratnins*, but the most widely accepted one is the one given in the *Satapatha Brahmana*. The list mentions 12 *Ratnins* each of whose houses was visited by the king during the ‘*Ratnavimsi*’ ceremony of the *Rajasuya* sacrifice. The *Ratnins* according to *Satapatha Brahmana* include:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|---|--|
| 1. | <i>Senani</i> | - | Commander of the army |
| 2. | <i>Purohita</i> | - | Representative of the priestly class |
| 3. | <i>Rajanya</i> | - | Representative of the warrior class |
| 4. | <i>Mahishi</i> | - | The chief queen |
| 5. | <i>Suta</i> | - | Charioteer and wheel maker |
| 6. | <i>Gramani</i> | - | Head of the people living in a village |
| 7. | <i>Kshattr</i> | - | Chamberlain or distributor |
| 8. | <i>Samgahrtri</i> | - | Treasurer (According to K.P. Jaysawal) and charioteer of an inferior kind (according to R.S. Sharma). |
| 9. | <i>Bhagadugha</i> | - | Distributor of shares. (R.S. Sharma opines that Bhagadugha, because of his association with Pushan, the god of cattle, may have been a distributor of cattle and cereals.) |

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- 10. *Akshavapa* - Literally means, the thrower of the dice. (According to R.S. Sharma, he may have been the distributor of land for sowing, which, he says, was distributed by the lots drawn through the throwing of the dice.)
- 11. *Govikartana* - Literally means ‘the killer of the cows’ He may have been the chief huntsman, and also, the keeper of games and forest.
- 12. *Palagala* - Considered as last of the king’s Ratnins, who seems to have functioned as a messenger. He was, perhaps, a non-Aryan belonging to an aboriginal tribe.

It seems, possibly, that these *Ratnins* constituted the inner coterie of the king and had some specific or general functions to perform. Only two of these Ratnins, *Senani* and *Rajanya* seem to have military functions. As we have already pointed out, there is no evidence of a well defined administrative structure and it is not beyond doubt that one official had more than one function to perform. *Gramani*, it seems, continued with the function of guiding a group of people to the battlefield but he perhaps, also took up the function of the general supervision of the people living in the villages.

Some prominent artisanal functions like, chariot making, metal working and carpentry were associated with *Suta*, *Takshanand Rathakara*. The last two have been included in the list of Ratnins given in the *Maitrayani Samhita*. A prominent function of the distribution of food, cattle, booty and land during the last phase of later Vedic age was perhaps associated with the officials like *Bhagadugha*, *Kshattr* and *Akshavapa*. *Govikartana* was responsible for keeping the forest areas and the animals therein in good condition and also for arranging the hunting expeditions of the king.

Military administration

During most part of the later Vedic age there does not seem to be an indication of a standing army, but the inclusion of *Senani* (the commander of force). In the list of *Ratnins*, of the *Satapatha Brahmana* which was written during the later stages of the later Vedic period, it is indicated that by this time the concept of keeping a standing force had come into being. However, it seems that the army was confined to the kinsmen at the beginning and later it started to include the members of Kshatriya Varna who were not a part of the royal kin. This is indicated by the inclusion of ‘*Rajanya*’ in the list of Ratnins who seems to have represented the warrior class in the king’s inner circle of officials.

Check Your Progress

- 6. What were the principal sacrifices conducted for the royal inauguration?
- 7. Name the three Vedas that were composed by the Aryans during the later Vedic Age.

3.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. In ancient times, the rulers engraved important messages for people on rocks, pillars, stone walls, clay tablets and copper plates. These writings are known as inscriptions. The study of inscriptions is called epigraphy.
2. Copper was the material which was commonly used for the writing of inscriptions.
3. The Indigenous literature includes the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aryankas, the Upanishads, the Epics (Ramayana and Mahabharatha), the Brahmashastras, and the Puranas.
4. Some of the chief towns of the Indus Valley Civilization are as follows:
 - Eastern Punjab
 - Western Punjab
 - Sindhu
 - North-Western Border
 - Baluchistan
5. The chief occupation of the Indus people was agriculture. Crops such as wheat, barley, corn and cotton, were cultivated here.
6. The principal sacrifices conducted for the royal inauguration were 'Vajapeya', 'Rajasuya', *Punar-abhisheka* and *Aindra-MahabhiSheka*.
7. During the later Vedic Age the Aryans composed the other three Vedas, i.e., Sam Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda.

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3.6 SUMMARY

- In archaeology, excavation is the exposure, processing and recording of archaeological remains.
- In ancient times, the rulers engraved important messages for people on rocks, pillars, stone walls, clay tablets and copper plates
- In ancient times, the rulers engraved important messages for people on rocks, pillars, stone walls, clay tablets and copper plates. These writings are known as inscriptions.
- Copper was the material which was commonly used for the writing of inscriptions.
- The ancient monuments like buildings, statues of stones or metals, terracotta, ornamental and decorative fragments, pottery, etc., give us a lot of useful and reliable information.

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- The literary source for the reconstruction of ancient Indian history may be classified as (i) indigenous literature and (ii) accounts of the foreign travellers.
- The indigenous literature may be divided into a number of varieties, e.g., religious text, secular or scientific text, biography, poetic writings and regional literature.
- The Indigenous literature includes the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aryankas, the Upanishads, the Epics (Ramayana and Mahabharatha), the Brahmashastras, and the Puranas.
- The first literary source of the Hindus is the Samhita which includes four Vedas namely the Rigveda, the Samveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda.
- The Indus Valley Civilization's economy appears to have depended significantly on trade, which was facilitated by major advances in transport by bullock-driven carts as well as boats.
- One of the most remarkable features of the Indus Valley Civilization was meticulous town planning. This is especially evident in the city of Mohenjo-Daro.
- The religious beliefs of the Indus Valley civilization had a lot in common with modern Hinduism.
- The people of the Indus Valley Civilization were art lovers and capable of making beautiful and attractive idols.
- The Rig Vedic period came to an end in 1000 BC. The period from 1080-600 BC is known as the later Vedic period.
- As the territorial element gained prominence in the political organization of the later Vedic times, the nature and composition of the *Sabha* and *Samiti* underwent a change.

3.7 KEY WORDS

- **Samrajya:** It was the ruler ship of the 'eastern part' where, the king was anointed for 'Overlordship'.
- **Bahujya:** It was the ruler ship of the 'southern part' where, the king was anointed for 'Paramount rule'.
- **Svarajya:** It was the ruler ship of the 'western part' where, the king was anointed for 'Self rule'.
- **Vairajya:** It was the ruler ship of the 'northern part' where, the king was anointed for 'Sovereignty'. It was generally considered that the king, who was consecrated with 'Indra's' great function' was 'Virat', i.e., worthy of Vairajya.

- **Rajya:** It was the ruler ship of the ‘middle region’ where the king was anointed for a ‘Kingdom’.
- **Archaeology:** Archaeology is the study of human activity through the recovery and analysis of material culture.
- **Numismatics:** Numismatics is the study or collection of currency, including coins, tokens, paper money, and related objects.

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3.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Differentiate between primary and secondary literary sources.
2. What are archaeological sources?
3. What was the contribution of coins and inscriptions towards the ancient Indian historical reconstruction?
4. How was the Indus Valley civilization destroyed?
5. Write a short note on the settlement patterns and town planning of the Indus Valley Civilization.

Long-Answer Question

1. Discuss the literary sources of history.
2. Explain the importance of archaeological sources for the study of ancient Indian history.
3. Describe the position of women in the later Vedic period.
4. Discuss the religious belief of people in the later Vedic period.
5. Agriculture was the main means of livelihood of the later Vedic people. Discuss.

3.9 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - II
RISE OF NEW RELIGIOUS AND ASOKA'S
CONTRIBUTION

UNIT 4 RISE OF BUDDHISM AND
JAINISM

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Jainism
- 4.3 Buddhism
- 4.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Key Words
- 4.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 4.8 Further Readings

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt that literary and archaeological records are the two main categories that give evidences of ancient Indian history. The unit explained the importance of archaeological sources for the study of ancient Indian history, and discussed the literary sources of history. The previous unit also described the Indus Valley and later Vedic Civilization.

In this unit, you will learn about the rise of Buddhism and Jainism. Jainism had left an indelible impact on the social and cultural development of India, the place of its origin. Just as revolutionary as Jainism, Buddhism also became a religion that had great impact on the Indian people, society and culture. This unit will define the basic principles of Jainism and Buddhism. This unit will also explain the causes responsible for the rise of Jainism and Buddhism.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Define the basic principles of Jainism
- Identify the main teachings of Buddhism
- Explain the causes responsible for the rise of Jainism and Buddhism

4.2 JAINISM

The general belief among the common people is that the founder of Jainism is Mahavira. However, Jainas believe that their religion is the product of teachings of 24 *Tirthankaras* (a saviour who has succeeded in crossing over life's stream of rebirths and has made a path for others to follow). There is no detailed information available about the first 22 *Tirthankaras*. The Jainas hold that their religion is as old as the Rig Veda and their first Tirthankara Rishabha was the father of Bharata, the first Vedic *Chakravartin* king of India. Rishabha was followed by 23 *Tirthankaras*. Very little is known about these *Tirthankaras* except the last two.

The 23rd Tirthankara was Parsavanath, who was a historical figure. Parsavanath probably lived in eight century BC, and probably died 250 years before the death of Mahavira. He was a Kshatriya and the son of king Ashvasena of Vanaras. For thirty years, he led the life of an ordinary householder and then became an ascetic. He meditated for 84 days continuously and attained the highest knowledge. The next seventy years of his life were spent in spreading the highest knowledge to the people. His main four principles were as follows:

1. Non-injury to life
2. Truthfulness
3. Non-stealing
4. Non-possession

Parsava's teachings were not that rigid as that of his successor, Mahavira. He permitted his followers to lead a married life and allowed them to wear clothes to cover their body.

Early life of Mahavira

The real founder of Jainism was its 24th Tirthankara, Vardhamana Mahavira. His childhood name was Vardhamana. According to one tradition, Mahavira was born in Kundagrama about 540 BC. He was the son of Siddhartha, who was the chief of a Kshatriya clan called Jnatikas. His mother Trishala was the sister of Chetaka, an eminent Licchavi prince of Vaishali. Vardhamana was given education in all branches of knowledge, was married to Yasoda and had a daughter called Priyadrasana. After the death of his parents, he renounced the worldly life and became a monk at the age of 30. He left worldly life with the permission of his elder brother Nandivardhana and became an ascetic.

Life of Asceticism

For twelve years, Mahavira roamed about as a naked monk doing all types of penances. During this period, he fully subdued his senses. He was attacked and ridiculed; however, he never lost his patience, nor indulged in feelings of hatred and revenge against his enemies. Within these twelve years of penance, meditation and severe asceticism, he prepared himself for the attainment of highest spiritual knowledge.

During this period, he met an ascetic called Gosala Makkhaliputta at Nalanda. For six years, Makkhaliputta lived with Mahavira practising severe

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asceticism after which he separated himself from Mahavira and set up a new religious order called Ajivikas.

In the 13th year on the 10th *Vaisakh*, Mahavira acquired the ultimate spiritual knowledge (Kevalya) under a sala tree on the bank of river Rijupalika near the village Jrimbikagrama, whose identification is uncertain. Mahavira now possessed the four infinites, which were as follows:

1. Infinite knowledge
2. Infinite power
3. Infinite perception
4. Infinite joy

Thus, he became a 'Jina' (a conqueror) or Mahavira (a great hero) at the age of 42 and began his career as a religious reformer. Since then, he entered upon a new stage of life. He became a religious teacher and the head of a sect called *Nirgranthas* (free from all bonds) or 'Jains'.

Later he met the king of Magadha, Ajatashatru, and is said to have converted him. However, the Buddhists say that the king of Magadha followed Buddhism and not Jainism. Mahavira did not have many followers because of the rigorous form of life he recommended to his followers. He asked his followers to remain naked, and said that the noblest act in the life of a Jaina was death by starvation. It is known from *Kalpasutra* that he spent his time at Champa, Mithila, Sravasti, Vaishali, etc., and after 30 years of preaching, he died at Pawa near Rajagriha. We do not know the exact date of passing away of Mahavira. However, Professor Jacobi and some other eminent historians have proved that his death occurred probably in 468 BC.

Main Jain Sects

Jainism has two main sects: (a) Svetambaras and (b) Digambaras. There are differences between the two sects regarding some incidents of the life of Mahavira; the type of food taken by Jain preachers (*munis*); and the question whether women can attain *Nirvana* or not. However, the basic difference is on the use of clothes. Jainism does not concern the followers or ordinary householders but the preachers. The preachers of *Svetambara* sect wore white clothes, while those of *Digambara* sect practised complete nudity.

It is not certain as to when and why schism developed in Jainism. Certain scholars maintain that Parshva did not ask his followers to discard clothes but after him, Mahavira insisted on nudity. Therefore, the differences were there from the beginning on the teachings of Mahavira. But a majority of scholars maintain that the split took place 200 years after Mahavira's death. It is said that during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya, a terrible famine broke out in Magadha which continued for twelve years. At that time, the chief of the Jain community, Bhadrabahu migrated to South India along with his many followers including Chandragupta and left Sthulabhadra as the Chief of the Jains that remained in Magadha. Sthulabhadra convened a council of Tainas at Patliputra when he felt that the

sacred -scriptures of the Jains were in danger of being lost. The council arranged the first 10 *Purvas* (Jains's sacred texts) in 12 *Angas* and allowed Jain preachers to wear white robes. When the followers of Bhadrabahu came back from the South, they found the Jains of Magadha wearing white robes. They protested against it. But when there was no compromise, the Jains got divided into two aforesaid sects. Afterwards, the *Digambaras* even refused to accept the 12 *Angas* (out of them, one is lost now) as authentic.

Growth of Jainism

At first, Jainism was more popular than Buddhism. During his own life time, Mahavira had made it popular in Kosala, Magadha, Anga and Mithila. Many kshatriya kings and a few republican states supported its cause and thereby helped in its popularity. Afterwards, those Jains who settled down in different parts of India participated in its progress. By the time of the Gupta Empire, Jain religion had become popular in Orissa in the east to Gujarat in the West and also in the South as far as Kalinga and Mysore. However, in later times it maintained its strongholds in the provinces of Gujarat, Kathiawar and part of Rajasthan in the north (where *Svetambara* sect dominated) and Mysore and Hyderabad in the south (where *Digambara* sect predominated). Among the ruling dynasties which supported Jainism were mainly the Ganga and Kadamba dynasties of the south and among the important rulers who supported it were Chandragupta Maurya (who probably accepted Jainism in his later life), Kharavela of Kahnga and Kumarapala and Siddharaja of Gujarat.

Check Your Progress

1. Who was the real founder of Jainism?
2. What are the two main sects of Jainism?

4.3 BUDDHISM

Another great religious reformation movement of sixth century BC was Buddhism, which gave the biggest challenge to Brahmanism. Gautama Buddha, a contemporary of Mahavira, was the founder of Buddhism. He was the son of Suddhodan, the chief of the kshetrya clan of Shakyas and the raja of Kapilavastu in the Nepal *terai*. His mother was Mahamaya. Gautama was born in 563 BC.

The *Jatakas* contain the Buddhist traditions about the birth of Buddha. They tell us that Buddha's life did not begin with his birth in the Lumbini Garden. On the other hand, Buddha was the product of an infinitely long evolution through various form of life. Before he descended into this world, he lived in the Tusita heaven. He was then a Bodhisattava and his name was Sumedha. He was greatly touched by Buddha Dipankar, the Buddha of the previous world, and wanted to become like him. He therefore left Tusita heaven and decided to be reborn through Mahamaya.

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Jatakas tell us that before the birth of Buddha, Mahamaya had a dream of white elephant with six tusks entering into her body. The astrologers were called to interpret the dream and they told Suddhodan that according to this dream, his wife would give birth to a very great man, a prophet or an emperor. In 563 BC, when she was returning from her father's house to Kapilavastu, Mahamaya gave birth to Buddha under a sala tree in the village of Lumbini. Later on in 250 BC, Ashoka set up a commemorative pillar there and in the inscription he stated 'Here, Buddha was born, the sage of the Sakyas '(*Hida Budhe jate sakya muniti*)'. However, unfortunately after seven days, Buddha's mother Mahamaya died and his stepmother and aunt, Prajapati Gautami, then brought up Siddhartha (It was Buddha's childhood name).

From his childhood days, Siddhartha exhibited signs of a contemplative frame of mind. The royal pleasure and amusements failed to attract his mind. He was married at an early age to a beautiful girl Yasodhara, the daughter of a Shakya noble. However, the pleasures of the palace did not bind him to the worldly life. He led a happy married life for some time and even got a son Rahul from his union with his wife. A few incidents, which Buddhists call four great signs, occurred and they exercised tremendous influence on the future of Gautama. One evening, his charioteer Channa drove him in the city and he came across an old man. Next, he saw a man suffering from disease; however, it was the sight of a dead man, which touched the deepest chord of Gautam's heart. The fourth sign was that of a mendicant, who had renounced the world and was moving about in search of truth.

Great renunciation

At last, Gautama decided to find out the cause of all suffering and wanted to know the truth. His hatred towards the world was intensified and he realized the hollowness of worldly pleasure. After the birth of his son, Rahul, he made up his mind and decided to leave his palace and his family. One night, accompanied by charioteer Channa and his favourite horse Kanthaka, he left home at the age of 29. This is called *Maha-Bhinishkramana* or the great renunciation; thereafter, Gautama became a wandering ascetic looking for the supreme truth.

Enlightenment

For six continuous years, he lived as a homeless ascetic and sought instructions from Alara Kalama. His next teacher was Udraka Ramaputra. His new teachers failed to satisfy him. He spent some time in the caves near Rajagriha, the capital of Magadh. From Rajagriha, he went to the forest of Uruvela and spent a few years in self-mortification. He then meditated with five ascetics named Kondana, Vappa, Bhadiya, Mahanama and Assagi.

Gautama practised continuous fasting until he was reduced to a mere skeleton. He then realized that mere suffering and sacrifice could not lead to truth. He thought that he had wasted six years. The five disciples also left him alone. At last one day he sat under a Pipal tree (*Asvattha*) on the banks of River Niranjana (the modern Phalgu) at Gaya and took a vow, 'I will not leave this place till I attain

the peace of mind, which I have been trying for all these years.' Finally, Gautama attained supreme knowledge and insight. He found out the truth and the means of salvation from human sufferings. He got the highest knowledge or *bodhi*. Gautama thus became the Buddha, 'the enlightened one' or Tathagata.

The turning of the wheel of law

After attaining supreme knowledge, Buddha decided to impart the knowledge to the common people. From Gaya he went to Saranath near Banaras and he gave his first sermon to his five disciples in the deer park. These five disciples were once his comrades when he was doing penance and fasting. They hated Buddha because he had left the path of suffering. They are known as the five elders. This first sermon by which, he started converting people to his faith is known as turning of the wheel of law or '*dharma chakra Pravartana*', which formed the nucleus of all Buddhist teachings.

For the next 45 years, he preached his gospel and message of salvation to the common people. He visited different parts of the country, spoke to the people in their local languages and illustrated his teachings. He made large conversions at Rajgriha, the capital of Magadha. He also converted his father, his son and other relatives at Kapilavastu. Kings like Prasenjit of Koshala, Bimbisara and Ajatashatru of Magadha became his followers. He died in 483 BC at Kushinagar in the district of Gorakhpur at the age of 80. Thus, Buddha attained *Parinirvana*. After his death, his remains were divided into eight parts and distributed among his followers who were spread in different parts of the country. *Stupas* or mounds were built on these remains to preserve them.

Social Background or Causes of Origin of Buddhism

In post-Vedic times, Indian society was clearly divided into four *varnas*: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. Each Varna was assigned well defined functions, although it was emphasized that *varna* was based on birth and the two higher *varnas* were given some privileges. The Brahmins, who were given the functions of priests and teachers, claimed the highest status in society. They demanded several privileges, including those of receiving gifts and exemption from taxation and punishment. In the post-Vedic texts, we have several instances of such privileges enjoyed by them. The Kshatriyas ranked second in the *varna* hierarchy. They fought and governed and lived on the taxes collected from the peasants. The Vaishyas were engaged in agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade. They appear as principal tax payers. However, along with the two higher *varnas* (i.e., Brahmins and Kshatriyas), they were placed in the category of *dvija* (the twice born). A *dvija* was entitled to wear the sacred thread (*janehu*) and study the Vedas from which the Sudras were kept out. The Sudras were meant for serving the three higher *varnas* and along with them, women were also barred from taking up Vedic studies. They appeared as domestic slaves, agricultural slaves, craftsmen and hired labourers in Post-Vedic times. They were called cruel, greedy and thieving in habits and some of them were treated as untouchables. In brief, in Indian society

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we can say that before Buddhism, there were very wrong social notions and set up. The higher the *varna*, the more severe was the punishment prescribed for him. Naturally, the *varna*-divided society seemed to have generated tensions. We have no source to find out the reactions of the Vaishyas and the Sudras. The Kshatriya who acted as rulers, however, reacted strongly against the ritualistic domination of the Brahmins, and seemed to have led a kind of protest movement against the importance attached to birth in the *varna* system. The Kshatriya reaction against the dominations of the priestly class called Brahmins who claimed various privileges was one of the causes of the origin of Buddhism. Gautama Buddha who founded Buddhism belonged to the Kshatriya clan. He disputed the authority of the Brahmins.

Teachings of Buddha and Indian Society

Gautama Buddha took his message far and wide. He kept on wandering, preaching and meditating continuously for 40 years, resting only in the rainy season every year. During this long period, he encountered many staunch supporters of rival sects including the Brahmins, but defeated them in debates. His missionary activities did not discriminate between the rich and the poor, the high and the low and men and women.

The Buddha proved to be a practical reformer who took note of the realities of the day. He did not involve himself in fruitless controversies regarding the soul (*atman*) and *Brahma* which raged strongly in his time. Buddha laid down a code of social conduct for his followers. The main items in this social conduct were as follows:

- (i) Do not covet the property of others
- (ii) Do not commit violence
- (iii) Do not use intoxicants
- (iv) Do not tell a lie
- (v) Do not indulge in corrupt practices

These teachings are common to the social conduct ordained by almost all the religions.

Check Your Progress

3. Who was the founder of Buddhism?
4. What was the cause of the origin of Buddhism?

4.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The real founder of Jainism was its 24th Tirthankara, Vardhamana Mahavira. His childhood name was Vardhamana.

2. The two main sects of Jainism are Svetambaras and Digambaras.
3. Gautama Buddha, a contemporary of Mahavira, was the founder of Buddhism.
4. The Kshatriya reaction against the dominations of the priestly class called Brahmins who claimed various privileges was one of the causes of the origin of Buddhism.

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4.5 SUMMARY

- The real founder of Jainism was its 24th Tirthankara, Vardhamana Mahavira. His childhood name was Vardhamana.
- According to one tradition, Mahavira was born in Kundagrama about 540 BC. He was the son of Siddhartha, who was the chief of a Kshatriya clan called Jnatikas.
- For twelve years, Mahavira roamed about as a naked monk doing all types of penances. During this period, he fully subdued his senses.
- In the 13th year on the 10th *Vaisakh*, Mahavira acquired the ultimate spiritual knowledge (Kevalya) under a sala tree on the bank of river Rijupalika near the village Jrimbikagrama, whose identification is uncertain.
- Jainism has two main sects: (a) Svetambaras and (b) Digambaras.
- At first, Jainism was more popular than Buddhism. During his own life time, Mahavira had made it popular in Kosala, Magadha, Anga and Mithila.
- Another great religious reformation movement of sixth century BC was Buddhism, which gave the biggest challenge to Brahmanism. Gautama Buddha, a contemporary of Mahavira, was the founder of Buddhism.
- The *Jatakas* contain the Buddhist traditions about the birth of Buddha.
- Gautama practised continuous fasting until he was reduced to a mere skeleton. He then realized that mere suffering and sacrifice could not lead to truth.
- Finally, Gautama attained supreme knowledge and insight. He found out the truth and the means of salvation from human sufferings. He got the highest knowledge or *bodhi*.
- After attaining supreme knowledge, Buddha decided to impart the knowledge to the common people.
- For the next 45 years, he preached his gospel and message of salvation to the common people.
- Gautama Buddha took his message far and wide. He kept on wandering, preaching and meditating continuously for 40 years, resting only in the rainy season every year.

- The Buddha proved to be a practical reformer who took note of the realities of the day. He did not involve himself in fruitless controversies regarding the soul (*atman*) and *Brahma* which raged strongly in his time.

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4.6 KEY WORDS

- **Asceticism:** Asceticism is a lifestyle characterized by abstinence from sensual pleasures, often for the purpose of pursuing spiritual goals.
- **Jainism:** Jainism is a non-theistic religion founded in India in the 6th century BC by the Jina Vardhamana Mahavira as a reaction against the teachings of orthodox Brahmanism, and still practised there. The Jain religion teaches salvation by perfection through successive lives, and non-injury to living creatures, and is noted for its ascetics.
- **Buddhism:** Buddhism is a widespread Asian religion or philosophy, founded by Siddhartha Gautama in NE India in the 5th century BC.

4.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Differentiate between Svetambaras and Digambaras.
2. What are the basic principles of Jainism?
3. What are the main teachings of Buddhism?

Long-Answer Question

1. Discuss the main beliefs of Jainism.
2. Explain the causes responsible for the rise of Jainism.
3. Describe the three main beliefs of Buddhism.

4.8 FURTHER READINGS

- Thapar, Romila. 1990. *A History of India*. UK: Penguin.
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UNIT 5 PROGRESS AND DECLINE

Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Doctrine of Jainism
 - 5.2.1 Rise, Spread and Decline of Jainism
- 5.3 Doctrine of Buddhism
 - 5.3.1 Rise and Fall of Buddhism
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 - 5.4.1 The Edicts of King Ashoka
 - 5.4.2 Ashoka's Dhamma
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- 5.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 5.6 Summary
- 5.7 Key Words
- 5.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 5.9 Further Readings

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5.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about the basic principles of Jainism and Buddhism. In this unit, you will deal with the doctrine of Jainism along with Buddhism. Jainism had left an indelible impact on the social and cultural development of India, the place of its origin. Just as revolutionary as Jainism, Buddhism also became a religion that had great impact on the Indian people, society and culture.

Buddha realized the truth by following a life of purity and discipline and asked his followers to follow the same path. His teachings were simple and he explained them in simple ordinary man's language illustrating them with common tales. He never tried to establish a new religion, but he propounded a new way of life free from dogmas and rituals.

This unit will also discuss about the great king Ashoka. He has an unmatched place in the history of ancient India. He is not only famous for the vastness of his empire, but also for his personal character, aims and ideals. He was an able ruler and an ideal human being. Not every age and every country can give birth to such a king. Ashoka cannot be compared even today with any other ruler from the history of the world.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the causes of rise of Jainism
- Mention the principal reason for the rapid spread of Buddhism

- List the factors responsible for the decline of Buddhism and Jainism
- Discuss about the great king Ashoka
- Define the concept of 'Dhamma'

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5.2 DOCTRINE OF JAINISM

The religious texts written in Pali language do not recognize Mahavira as the originator of a new religion, but as a reformer. Mahavira accepted most of the religious doctrines of Parsavanath though he made some alterations and additions. Parsavanath emphasized self-control and penance and advised his followers to observe the following four principles:

1. *Satya* (truth)
2. *Ahimsa* (non-violence)
3. *Aparigraha* (non-possession of property)
4. *Astheya* (not to receive anything, which is not freely given)

To these Mahavira added one more, i.e., *brahmacharya* (celibacy).

The Jain philosophy shows a close affinity to Hindu Samkhya Darshana (or Samkhya philosophy). They ignored the idea of God, accepted that the world is full of sorrows and believed in the theories of Karma (action) and transmigration of souls. According to Mahavira, salvation can be achieved by freeing the soul from earthly bondage. This can be achieved by means of right faith, right knowledge and right action. These are called *Ratnatreya* or three jewels of Jain religion.

Mahavira advocated a dualistic philosophy, according to which man has two-fold nature, earthly and spiritual or *Ajiva* (matter) and *Jiva* (soul). While *Ajiva* is destructible, *Jiva* is indestructible and salvation is possible through the progress of *Jiva*.

Jain philosophy states that if one desires to attain Nirvana or salvation, it is necessary for him to destroy Karma. One can do so gradually by avoiding evil Karmas. For this, one must observe the five principles, namely:

1. *Satya*
2. *Ahimsa*
3. *Aprigraha*
4. *Astheya*
5. *Brahmacharya*

Through this process, one could attain final liberation of the soul.

Mahavira rejected the existence of god and authority of Vedas

Mahavira did not believe in the supreme creator or God. He believed that no deity has created, maintains or destroys the world; however, it functions only according

to universal law of development and decay. He advocated a holy ethical code, rigorous asceticism, and extreme penance for the attainment of highest spiritual state. He regarded the highest state of the soul as God. He believed man is the architect of its own destiny and could attain salvation by leading a life of purity, virtue and renunciation.

He also rejected the infallibility of the Vedas and objected to the Vedic rituals and Brahminical supremacy. He denounced the caste system.

Principle of non-injury

The Jain philosophy believes that not only man and animals, but plants also possess souls (Jiva) endowed with various degree of consciousness. Jains believe that the plants possess life and feel pain and thus lay great emphasis on the doctrine of *Ahimsa* or non-injury to any kind of living beings. The vow of non-violence (*Ahimsa*) was practiced to the point of irrationality. Even an unconscious killing of an insect while walking was against Jain morals. The Jains would not drink water without straining it for fear of killing an insect. They also wore muslin mask over the mouth to save any life floating in the air. They had forbidden not only the practice of war, but also of agriculture, as both involve the killing of living beings.

Commenting on this extreme form of non-injury, eminent historian V. Smith said, ‘The strange doctrine affirming the existence of Jivas in objects commonly called inanimate extends the Jain idea of *Ahimsa* far beyond the Brahminical and Buddhist notions.’

Jain sects

The main sects of Jainism are Svetambaras and Digambaras. The Svetambaras wear white robes, whereas the Digambaras use no clothes. The Svetambaras are the followers of the 23rd Tirthankara Parsavanath, while the Digambaras are followers of the 24th Tirthankara Mahavira.

Religious texts

Original texts of Jains were called Purvas and were 14 in number. In the third century BC, a Jain council was held at Pataliputra and arranged these Purvas in 12 parts, and named them *Angas*. The last *Anga* was lost and a Jain council held at Balabhi in the fifth century AD rearranged the remaining 11 *Angas*. These books were written in Prakrit language. However, the Digambara sect of Jainism did not recognize the *Angas* and constituted its own sacred texts.

5.2.1 Rise, Spread and Decline of Jainism

There were several causes, which led to the rise, spread and decline of Jainism. The main ones are as follows:

Causes of rise of Jainism

During the time of Mahavira, there arose a discontent amongst the common people against the traditional Vedic religion, as a number of weaknesses and shortcomings

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had crept in the latter. The Vedic religion or Hinduism had become quite ritualistic and the caste system had become predominant. Therefore, the people were disgusted and started working hard to save the society and culture from these evils. At that time, Jainism came as an alternative to the Vedic religion. It tried to clean the society and religion by introducing a number of reforms. Therefore, common people showed interest in adopting its principles.

Secondly, it has also proved to be closer to the more popular religion Hinduism and with the passage of time, the Jains also adored Jain *Tirthankaras* in temples and by the middle ages, their worship was very near to the Hindus with offering of flowers, incense, lamps, etc. Thus, Jainism proved more accommodating to Hinduism and did not offer any serious hostility.

Thirdly, Jainism possesses a tolerant spirit of accommodation with other religions, which helped in its progress and was responsible for its rise. Apart from it, the charismatic personality of Mahavira, simple philosophy of the religion, acceptance of common spoken language of that time as the medium of propagation and patronization of influential rulers were the major factors responsible for the rise of Jainism.

Spread of Jainism

Like Buddhism, Jainism never spread all over India or beyond its boundaries, yet it became a popular religion at that time, and still exists in many parts of the country. During the life time of Mahavira, it spread in Magadha, Vaisali and its nearby areas, but later, the chief activity of Jainism was shifted to Gujarat, Malwa, Rajputana and Karnataka where they are still an influential Jain community. The members of this community have also played an important role in the early literary development of South India.

Causes of the decline of Jainism

Various factors were responsible for the dramatic decline of Jainism in India. After the demise of Mahavira, Gautama Buddha emerged as a great socio-religious reformer of that period. The teachings of Buddha were simpler and people friendly. Therefore, Buddhism posed a great challenge for the existence of Jainism.

Secondly, Jainism was divided into two sects, i.e., Svetambaras and Digambaras, which weakened the religion from its core.

Thirdly, the most important cause of its decline was the great revival of Hinduism. Under the Guptas, Cholas, Chalukyas and Rajput kings, Hinduism got the much needed attention and patronization of the ruling class. Reforms came in Hinduism and it became the most popular religion in India. That was the main reason due to which Jainism was confined to some pockets of India.

Apart from it, the absence of popular religious preachers after the demise of Mahavira, absence of protection by the later rulers and its hard principles led to the decline of Jainism.

Jainism could not occupy the position of a main religion in India or outside India. However, it has contributed enormously in the field of art, architecture, literature and philosophy and has made valuable contributions to the Indian culture.

Progress and Decline

Check Your Progress

1. What is the Jain philosophy?
2. State the five principles, according to the Jain philosophy.

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5.3 DOCTRINE OF BUDDHISM

Buddha pointed out various paths by which one could attain *Nirvana* or salvation from the cycle of birth and death. He denied the authority of Vedas and denounced the method of sacrifice and hegemony of priestly class. Unlike the Brahminical religion, he did not consider Sanskrit as a sacred language, nor rituals an essential part of religion. He was not in support of offering of prayer to god to win his favour. The philosophy of Buddha was rational in its nature. Like Jainism, Buddha denied the infallibility of the Vedas. He rejected the supremacy of the priestly class. Buddhism dislodged the principles of social immobility, inequality and injustice. It upheld the sanctity of human intellect and freedom; people irrespective of their position, caste and colour, were allowed to embrace the new religion.

Four noble truths

After attaining enlightenment at Bodhgaya, Buddha held that there was misery and sorrow all around. Man turned to god and religion to find a cure or an escape from such sorrow and trouble. To escape from the sorrow and miseries of life, he discovered the truth and its cure. His teachings begin with the four great truths relating to sorrow, the causes of sorrow, the remedy for sorrow and the ways for the removal of sorrow. These four truths are; first, there is suffering and sorrow in the world namely old age, disease and death. This sorrow or suffering is due to the existence in the world. Secondly, everything has a cause and the cause of all types of sorrow is *Trishna*, i.e., desires and cravings. Man is a bundle of cravings and desires and so long as he is a slave to these desires, he cannot escape from pain and sorrow. Third is the remedy or cessation of sorrow. This pain of sorrow can be removed by suppressing desires and yearning for possession. Fourth and the last is the true way to conquer desires and removal of sorrow. Buddha says that the desire or *Trishna* cannot be conquered in an ordinary manner. It requires a disciplined life, which he called the middle path or the noble eight-fold path.

Eight-fold path

Buddha prescribed the noble eight-fold paths (the eight spokes of the wheel of law symbolize the eight-fold path) or the '*Astangamarga*', which every Buddhist

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is to follow in order to get deliverance from sufferings. These values included in the eight-fold path are as follows:

1. Right views
2. Right aspirations
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right living
6. Right efforts
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right contemplation or meditation

According to the eight-fold path, the first step is the proper vision leading to the realization that the world is full of sorrow, the basis of life is sorrow and sorrow can end by controlling desires. Second step is right aspiration where one must resolve to abstain from material pleasure. Right speech is the third step and it implies the practice of truthfulness. The fourth step is right action, which means one should be vigilant while acting in life and it must ensure that nobody gets hurt mentally or physically by our actions. Right living is the fifth step, which means to earn by pure and honest means. Right efforts is the sixth step which indicates mental exercise to avoid evil thoughts and in their place to cultivate good thoughts. The seventh step is right mindfulness or correct vigilance. According to this, by self-examination and self-study, control over mind is to be acquired. The last step is right contemplation or meditation. According to this, Buddha says one can still not attain salvation without meditation. Thus, right contemplation is the final and the crown of the eight-fold path. Anyone who would follow this noble eight-fold path would attain *Nirvana* or salvation, which meant freedom from the cycle of birth and death irrespective of its social origin.

Ahimsa

One of the cardinal believes of Buddha was *Ahimsa*. He held that violence and cruelty against animate beings was a sin. He condemned religious sacrifices and eating of animal flesh. He said that one should cultivate love for all beings. He was opposed to all types of violence because it was against the principle of law. However, unlike Mahavira, he did not carry the *Ahimsa* principle to an extreme.

Law of Karma

Buddha however accepted the Hindu doctrine of *Karma*. He believed in the law of *Karma*, its working and transmigration of soul. He held that one of the key features of the universal law of *dharma* is 'as a man acts so shall he be', i.e., man gets the reward of its own action. The *Karma* doctrine implies that thoughts, actions and feelings of the past have determined our present and our present deeds

will determine the future when we are reborn. No person can escape the consequences of his or her deeds. The deliverance from rebirth can be attained through good *Karma*, which again requires a strict moral life. According to his doctrine, not only man, but animals and supernatural spirits like angels, gods are subject to the great law of *Karma*.

Morality

Buddha laid out some principles for practical morality. He gave emphasis on purity of conduct, truthfulness, love and benevolence, respect for older and service to the humanity. Buddha considered non-violence and non-injury towards life in thought, words and deed as an integral principle of morality. Therefore, Buddhism was primarily a religion of conduct and not a religion of observances, rituals and sacrifices. This was the principal reason for the rapid spread of his teachings.

Denounced caste system

Like Mahavira, Gautama Buddha also denounced the caste system existing in the society. He denied the caste distinctions and by that raised the status of the lower class people of the society. Therefore, Buddhism spread to different parts of India and the world. In the subsequent period, the common people came closer towards this religion and, due to this; it got patronization from various liberal emperors like Ashoka, Harsha, etc.

The teachings of Buddha reveal that he originally did not establish any new religion. All what he taught was contained in the Hindu Upanishads, but the difficulty was that these were written in Sanskrit and its philosophy was not followed by the masses. Buddha's greatness lies in simplifying the Upanishadic philosophy and presenting it before the common men in the language they understood and placed practical examples before them from his own life. He organized a monastic order to carry out his teaching to the different corners of the country. The monks who carried the message of Buddha to the masses led the life of a Hindu Brahmana and in course of time a new set of rules were evolved for the Buddhists and at that point, eventually, Buddhism became a separate religion.

Religious texts

Buddhist religious texts were written in Pali and are collectively known as *Tripitika* (three baskets). The first part is *Vinayapitaka*, which lays down rules for the guidance of the monks and the general management of the Buddhist place of worship. The second part is *Suttapitakas*, a collection of the religious discourses of Buddha and the third is the *Abhidhammapitaka*, which contains an exposition of the philosophical principles of Buddhism. Later, the Mahayana sect of Buddhism, created its own texts. Besides authoritative commentaries on the sacred texts, the Jatakas or the stories relating to different births of Buddha also added much to the religious literature of Buddhism.

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NOTES**The main Buddhist sects**

After the demise of Buddha, Buddhism was sharply divided into two sects, namely Hinayana and Mahayana. The followers of Hinayana Buddhism believed in the original teachings of Gautama Buddha and did not want any relaxation. This sect was also known as the lesser vehicle; whereas, the beliefs of Mahayanism were different from the former. The one basic belief of Mahayanism is acceptance of many Bodhisattavas i.e., persons who were in the process of attaining Buddha-hood. The belief in the Bodhisattavas and their prayers, which has been regarded as the basic features of Mahayanism, had developed much earlier than its formal establishment during the period of Kanishka in the first century AD. However, it became a completely different sect after the fourth general council of Buddhism and the credit for the establishment of this sect goes to Nagarjuna. There was no difference between the followers of Hinayanism and Mahayanism with regard to the rules of Sangha and code of conduct or morality. Both lived together in the same Sanghas. However, there were differences in philosophy and principles among them.

Hinayanism did not regard Buddha as a god free from the cycle of birth and rebirth, while Mahayanism regarded Buddha as god and believed in his different incarnations to be all free from the cycle of birth. Hinayana regarded *Nirvana* as a state of permanent peace free from cycle of birth while Mahayanism regarded it as the union with *Adi* Buddha. The religious texts of Hinayanism were written in Pali; whereas, the text of Mahayanism was written in Sanskrit. The Mahayanism remained closer to the concept of Hinduism with regard to *Nirvana*, Brahman, incarnation of god, faith, etc., while Hinayanism was distinct from Hinduism.

5.3.1 Rise and Fall of Buddhism

Let us discuss the causes of rise and fall of Buddhism.

Causes of rise of Buddhism

Buddhism started as a protest movement against the complex system of Hinduism. It tried to reform the existing religious practices, social systems and dislodged the principles of social immobility, inequality and injustice. Moreover, it upheld the sanctity of human belief and its freedom. For its simplicity and people friendly principles, Buddhism spread all over India in a very short span of time.

Various causes are responsible for the spectacular rise of Buddhism in India and abroad. Due to the magnetic personality of Gautama Buddha, his simple and uncomplicated doctrine attracted many followers. During the emergence of Buddhism, the Brahminical religion had more or less stagnated with superstitions, sacrifices and predominance of priestly class. Buddha, with his simple preaching, freed the religion from all expensive and complicated rituals and enabled the poor to observe their religion with proper spirit.

His life was a living example of all that he preached and thus the rational philosophy of Buddha not only appealed to the masses, but the ruling class and the upper strata of the society as well.

Second, during that time, Hinduism had lost its appeal and people failed to understand the religion due to its complexities. Hence, the masses found an alternative in Buddhism. Buddha prescribed a middle path for the attainment of *Nirvana* by observing simple rules of morality, which did not exist in Hinduism.

Third, Buddhism did not believe in caste system. It rejected the supremacy of the priestly class. It prescribed social equality and even women got their desired position in the Buddhist ashram system as nuns. People irrespective of their position, caste and colour were allowed to embrace the new religion. This acceptance of social equality attracted a large number of Hindus into the fold of Buddhism.

Fourth, Buddha preached in the language of the common man. During that period, Sanskrit was the medium and the common man had no idea of Sanskrit language. In contrast, Buddha preached his doctrine in Pali and Magadhi languages, a method that was easily accepted by the lower strata of the society.

Fifth, Buddhism enjoyed the royal patronage of the kings like Ashoka and Kanishka and many royal families. Ashoka elevated the religion to occupy the position of state religion during his reign. He sent Buddhist missionaries to different parts of the world to spread the message of Buddha. Even he sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra to Ceylon with the message of Buddha. He engraved the teachings of Buddha in various pillars and rock inscriptions in different part of his empire. Powerful kings like Kanishka, Harsha, Bimbisara and Ajatasatru of Magadh, Prasnjit of Koshala and many other patronized Buddhism for which it spread in all directions during their reign.

Sixth, Buddhist Sanghas proved to be the best instruments in the propagation of Buddhism. The sanghas were also the centres of Buddhist activities, learning and spiritual exchange for the monks. They also prepared religious preachers or monks who worked for the propagation of Buddhism in India and abroad.

Seventh, after the demise of Buddha, host of Buddhist scholars and monks worked for the propagation of the teachings of Buddha. In addition, various scholars like Nagarjuna, Asanga, Basumitra, Basubandhu, Dinang, Dharamakirti, Chandrakirti, etc., produced vast literature of Buddhism, which provided the base for its rise.

Apart from this, the relaxation of strict rules for masses, absence of any rival sect and lastly the great centres of higher learning like Taxila and Nalanda Universities and several other institutions played a vital role in the progress of Buddhism and established it as a global religion.

Causes of the fall of Buddhism

For many centuries, Buddhism remained as one of the foremost religions not only in India, but also in many parts of Asia. However, slowly and steadily it lost its hold and became non-existent in the place of its origin, India. Many factors were responsible for the decline of Buddhism.

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First, the Buddhist Sanghas, which were created as the centres of learning activity for the nuns and monks, became centres of moral corruption. Huge wealth donated by the ruling class, and women found their entry into the Sanghas. The wealth and women completely ruined the moral character of monks.

Second, the Mahayanism, a sect of Buddhism, which introduced image worship, prayers, religious festivals and processions, brought in ritualism. Thus, effective use and display of wealth was possible. This led to the loss of moral, intellectual and spiritual strength of Buddhism. These were the primary source of strength of Buddhism and when these were lost, its very basis was lost and the entire structure crumbled.

Third, Buddhism was divided into various sects even prior to its great split into Mahayanism and Hinayanism. Each of these sects preached different philosophies and different codes of conduct, which created confusion among its followers and the rivalry between these sects destroyed the image of Buddha among the masses.

Fourth, in contrast to the practice of Buddha, the Buddhist religious texts of the Mahayanism were written in Sanskrit. As Sanskrit was not the language of common people, Buddhism lost its popular contact with the masses.

Fifth, the moral corruption of monks and nuns led to intellectual bankruptcy in Buddhism and resulted in its decline.

Sixth, after facing challenges from both Jainism and Buddhism, the great revival of Hinduism started under the protection of Sunga dynasty, and the efforts of Gupta rulers led the religion to its former glory. Scholars like Shankaracharya, Kumaril Bhatta and many others scholars of the time established the philosophical and intellectual supremacy of Hinduism. The emergence of the Puranic traditions in Hinduism, its tolerant and liberal spirit proved its greatest asset. Even when Buddhism created the cult of Buddha, they failed to create a parallel to the God or *Brahma* of Hinduism.

Seventh, apart from these developments, many Hindu scholars simplified the language of the Hindu religious texts, reformed the society and it got the attention from the ruling dynasties. With these attractions in Hinduism, there hardly remained any difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. Therefore, Hinduism attracted the masses to its fold and once again became the principal religion in India.

Finally, the successors Ashoka did not support Buddhism and other dynasties like Sungas, Guptas and Rajputs strongly supported Hinduism. Invaders like Hunas and Turks destroyed Buddhist sanghas, monasteries, libraries, etc., and thus gave a serious blow to Buddhism. Buddhism thus lost its hold over its country of birth. The foreign invaders were only partly responsible for it but primarily its own weakness and the great revival of Hinduism were responsible for its dramatic fall.

Check Your Progress

3. What is the first step of the eight-fold path in Buddhism?
4. What is the key feature of the universal law of *dharma*?
5. Mention the two sects of Buddhism.

NOTES**5.4 ASHOKA**

Ashoka was a great king not only in the history of India, but also across the whole world. We possess a lot of information about him from his inscriptions and the Buddhist literature. According to the Buddhist tradition, Bindusara had sixteen wives and 101 sons. Sumana or Susima was the eldest son, Ashoka the second and Tishya the youngest son. In the northern tradition, the name of Ashoka's mother is mentioned as Subhadra, but in the southern tradition she is named Dharma. When Ashoka was only eighteen, he was appointed by his father the Viceroy of Rashtra with its capital at Ujjayini. It was there that Ashoka married Mahadevi and his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra were born.

There was a rebellion in Taxila and Ashoka was sent to suppress the same. There was another rebellion at Taxila which its Viceroy Susima failed to suppress. It is stated that when Bindusara died Ashoka captured the throne with the help of the Ministers headed by Khallataka or Radhagupta. That led to a war of succession between Ashoka and Susima. Yuvaraja Susima, was helped by his other 98 brothers except Tishya. The story is that Ashoka killed all his 99 brothers and waded through blood to the throne and thereby got the notorious title of *ChandAshoka*. There are many stories giving details of the cruelty of Ashoka before he ultimately ascended the throne.

While it is conceded that there might have been a struggle for power, it is not admitted that Ashoka was responsible for the murder of all of his brothers except Tishya. Dr. Smith regards the story of the slaughter of his brothers as something absurd and false. He points out that even the inscriptions of Ashoka prove that his brothers and sisters were alive in the 17th and 18th years of his reign and their households were the object of his anxious care. It is pointed out that the fifth rock edict refers to the family establishments of his brothers as existing. This does not necessarily mean that his brothers were also alive. However, there is nothing to show that his brothers were dead.

It is difficult to settle the controversy regarding the first four years of the reign of Ashoka. However, it is certain that Ashoka was consecrated after four years after his accession to the throne.

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Ashoka took up the title of Devanampiya Piyadasi or the beloved of the gods and was of an amiable nature. The name Ashoka is found in literature and also in the Makti Edict of Ashoka and the Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman I. The name Dharm Ashoka is found on the Sarnath inscription of Kumaradevi. Not much is known about the early years of the reign of Ashoka. His personal reminiscences shows that he lived the life of his predecessors, consuming food freely, enjoying the pleasures, and encouraging festive assemblies accompanied by dancing and drinking. During his first thirteen years, he carried on the traditional policy of expansion within India and maintained friendly relations with foreign powers. He was aggressive at home, but a pacifist abroad. He exchanged embassies with the foreign countries. He employed Yavana officials like Tushaspa.

5.4.1 The Edicts of King Ashoka

King Ashoka, the third monarch of the Indian Mauryan dynasty, has come to be regarded as one of the most exemplary rulers in world history. The British historian H.G. Wells has written: ‘Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history ... the name of Ashoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star.’ Although Buddhist literature preserved the legend of this ruler — the story of a cruel and ruthless king who converted to Buddhism and thereafter established a reign of virtue — definitive historical records of his reign were lacking. Then in the nineteenth century there came to light a large number of edicts, in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. These edicts, inscribed on rocks and pillars, proclaim Ashoka’s reforms and policies and promulgate his advice to his subjects. The present rendering of these edicts, based on earlier translations, offers us insights into a powerful and capable ruler’s attempt to establish an empire on the foundation of righteousness, a reign which makes the moral and spiritual welfare of his subjects its primary concern. The Australian Ven. S. Dhammika, the compiler of the present work, is the spiritual director of the Buddha Dhamma Mandala Society in Singapore.

The extent of the Ashoka’s empire

Ashoka himself has given quite an explicit list of the places which were under his rule. These include Magadha, Pataliputra, Barabar hills, Kaushambi, Lumbini-gama, Kalinga, Atavi (the forest tract of mid India), Suvarnagiri, Isila, Ujjaini and Taxila. Even beyond Taxila, Ashoka’s kingdom included the areas around Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra, which were adjacent to the eastern boundaries of the realm of Amityako Yonaraja (Antiochos II Theos of Syria). Exact location of this Yona country has now been confirmed as Arachosia. Apart from this, the north-west frontier of Ashoka’s Empire also included Kamboja, which corresponds to Rajapur or Rajaur near punch in Kashmir, and also Gandhara, territory now west of Indus with its capital Pushkaravati. The inclusion of Kashmir

in the dominions of Ashoka has been confirmed both by Hiuen-Tsang and also by Kalhana in his *Rajtarangini*. Kalhan mentions a number of stupas and viharas built by Ashoka.

Apart from this, we have a clear proof that Gangaridai, i.e., the area of Bengal was under Ashoka, but Kamarupa was out of his dominions. In south India, the areas up to the river Pennar near Nellore formed the frontier of Ashoka's kingdom. There is a mention of some Tamil kingdoms beyond this, which are explicitly addressed as the neighbouring states.

Early life

Though Ashoka is known as the greatest king of India, historians learned about him only in the nineteenth century. In 1837, a British scholar named James Prinsep deciphered the inscriptions on the pillars and rocks that are found in many parts of India. It was in Brahmi script. From these inscriptions, it was concluded that Ashoka and the ruler named *Devanampiya Priyadarsi* were one and the same person. An inscription discovered by Prinsep in 1915 used the name Ashoka along with the other name. These inscriptions gave historians valuable information about Ashoka's rule and the extent and condition of his empire. The land he ruled stretched from the Himalayas in Nepal and Kashmir to Mysore in the south, from Afghanistan in the northwest to the banks of the River Brahmaputra in the east. In the west his territory covered Saurashtra and Junagarh. Kalinga was one of the kingdoms, which remained unconquered and hostile when Ashoka succeeded to the throne. It was important to Ashoka from a geographical point of view, since the route to south India both by land and by sea passed through it. It would also bring added prosperity to the Mauryan Empire. It was for these reasons that Ashoka attacked Kalinga.

Battle of Kalinga

Kalinga was a prosperous little kingdom lying between the river Godavari and Mahanadi, close to the Bay of Bengal. It had an infantry of 60,000 men, 10,000 horsemen and 600 elephants. Ashoka wanted to capture this fertile land, and so had it surrounded. A fierce battle followed in which an enormous amount of life and property was lost. Kalinga surrendered and, for the first time in the Indian history, almost the whole sub continent except the extreme south was under a single ruler. However, this battle affected the king deeply.

In the midst of the battlefield, Ashoka stood with the wounded, crippled and the dead all around him. The sight of the terrible carnage and the miseries of war filled Ashoka with remorse. He vowed never to make war again. The war drums (*Bherighosh*) were silenced forever and henceforth were heard only the reverberations of the *Dhammaghosh* (the call to non-violence and universal peace).

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Fig. 5.1 Mauryan Empire under Ashoka

5.4.2 Ashoka’s Dhamma

The word ‘dhamma’ was derived from the Sanskrit word ‘dharma.’ Ashoka followed the principles of Buddhism—that of truth, charity, kindness, purity and goodness. He wanted his people to lead pure and virtuous lives, irrespective of their religion or culture. He considered all subjects his children. He explained his ideas in his edicts by engraving his principles on pillars throughout his kingdom. The edicts were written in Prakrit, which was the language of the common people, so that they could understand and follow them. Some of the edicts such as those in Afghanistan were composed in Greek for the same reason. The purpose of the edicts was to inform the people of Ashoka’s reforms and to encourage them to be more generous, kind and moral. He strictly prohibited animal slaughtering in the kingdom and asked people to be respectful of each other. People should respect nature, their parents, everything living as well as non-living. Brahmins should be treated with respect and servants should be treated as equals. Donating alms to the poor and the needy was practiced and advised by the state. He preached harmony and peace and advised people to get rid of anger, jealousy, cruelty and arrogance. According to Romila Thapar, an Indian historian whose principal area of study is ancient India, ‘Dhamma was a way of life which was based on the social and moral responsibilities.’

Ashoka was an able administrator, an intelligent human being and a devout Buddhist. He attempted to spread this religion to Syria, Egypt and Macedonia,

and also sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra to Sri Lanka. The Buddhist *Sangha* of the time decided to send missionaries to many places, like modern day Burma and Sri Lanka.

5.4.3 The Foreign Policy after Kalinga

After Kalinga, Ashoka renounced the path of warfare, and this is amply evident by the fact that he made no attempt to annex his neighbouring countries namely, Chola, Pandya, Satiyaputra, Kerelaputra, Ceylon and the realm of Amtiyako Yonaraja, who is identified with Antiochos II Theos, king of Syria and western Asia. The concept of *Digvijaya* was replaced by the concept of *Dhammavijaya*.

Dhamma of Ashoka brought him in contact with the Hellenistic powers. Ashoka looked towards these countries for the expansion of *Dhamma* through *Dhammavijaya*. He says, 'My neighbours too, should learn this lesson.' The text of the Rock Edict XIII says, 'Conquest of the Law of Piety... has been won by his sacred Majesty ...among all his neighbours as far as six hundred leagues, where the king of Greeks named Antiochos dwells, and beyond (the realm) of that Antiochos (where dwell) the four kings severally Ptolemy (*Turamayo*), Antigonus (*Amekina*), Magas (*Maga*), and Alexander (*Alikasudara*) (like wise) in the south (*micha*), the Cholas and the Pandyas as far as Tambapani... .. Even where the duties of his sacred Majesty do not penetrate, those people, too are hearing his sacred Majesty's ordinance based upon the Law of Piety and his instruction in the law, practice and will practice the law.'

Due to such serious efforts undertaken by Ashoka, Buddhism did make a progression in the region around west Asia. Ceylonese chronicles also mention that envoys were sent to Ceylon and Suvarnabhumi (lower Burma and Sumatra). Mahendra, perhaps the younger brother or son of Ashoka along with his sister Sangamitra, went to Ceylon and successfully secured the conversion of *Devanampiya Tissa* and many more people.

The last major recorded event in the life of Ashoka is the issuance of seven Pillar Edicts in around 242 BC. The council of Pataliputra may be placed around 240 BC. The main purpose of the council was to stop heresy, and supervise publication of special edicts to stop the schisms in the *sangha*. Some sources tell us that during his old age, Ashoka wasted huge resources of the empire to give charity to the monks and the *Sanghas*. Some others tell us that he abdicated to pursue devotion, but it is not corroborated through evidence.

Though the exact knowledge as to where and how he died is not available, but he died sometime around 232 BC after a reign of almost forty years. A Tibetan source tells us that he left for his heavenly abode at Taxila.

The Junagadh rock contains inscriptions by Ashoka (fourteen of the Edicts of Ashoka), Rudradaman I and Skandagupta.

Ashoka ruled for an estimated forty years. After his death, the Mauryan dynasty lasted just fifty more years. Ashoka had many wives and children, but

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many of their names are lost to time. Mahindra and Sanghamitra were twins born by his 2nd wife, Devi, in the city of Ujjain. He had entrusted to them the job of making his state religion, Buddhism, more popular across the known and the unknown world. Mahindra and Sanghamitra went to Sri Lanka and converted the King, the Queen and their people to Buddhism. They were naturally not handling state affairs after him.

In his old age, he seems to have come under the spell of his youngest wife Tishyaraksha. It is said that she had got his son Kunala, the regent in Takshashila, blinded by a wily stratagem. The official executioners spared Kunala and he became a wandering singer accompanied by his favourite wife Kanchanmala. In Pataliputra, Ashoka hears Kunala's song, and realizes that Kunala's misfortune may have been a punishment for some past sin of the emperor himself and condemns Tishyaraksha to death, restoring Kunala to the court. Kunala was succeeded by his son, Samprati, but his rule did not last long after Ashoka's death.

The reign of Ashoka could easily have disappeared into history as the ages passed by, and would have had not left behind a record of his trials. The testimony of this wise king was discovered in the form of magnificently sculpted pillars and boulders with a variety of actions and teachings he wished to be published etched on stone. What Ashoka left behind was the first written language in India since the ancient city of Harappa. The language used for inscription was the then current spoken form called Prakrit.

In the year 185 BC, about fifty years after Ashoka's death, the last Maurya ruler, Brhadrata, was assassinated by the commander-in-chief of the Mauryan armed forces, Pusyamitra Sunga, while he was taking the Guard of Honour of his forces. Pusyamitra Sunga founded the Sunga dynasty (185 BC–78 BC) and ruled just a fragmented part of the Mauryan Empire. Many of the north-western territories of the Mauryan Empire (modern-day Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan) became the Indo-Greek Kingdom.

In 1992, Ashoka was ranked 53 on Michael H. Hart's list of the most influential figures in history. In 2001, a semi-fictionalized portrayal of Ashoka's life was produced as a motion picture under the title *Ashoka*. King Ashoka, the third monarch of the Indian Mauryan dynasty, has come to be regarded as one of the most exemplary rulers in world history.

Buddhist Kingship

One of the more enduring legacies of Ashoka Maurya was the model that he provided for the relationship between Buddhism and the state. Throughout Theravada Southeastern Asia, the model of rulership embodied by Ashoka replaced the notion of divine kingship that had previously dominated (in the Angkor kingdom, for instance). Under this model of 'Buddhist kingship', the king sought to legitimize his rule not through descent from a divine source, but by supporting and earning the approval of the Buddhist *sangha*. Following Ashoka's example, kings established monasteries, funded the construction of stupas, and supported the

ordination of monks in their kingdom. Many rulers also took an active role in resolving disputes over the status and regulation of the sangha, as Ashoka had in calling a conclave to settle a number of contentious issues during his reign. This development ultimately led to a close association in many Southeast Asian countries between the monarchy and the religious hierarchy, an association that can still be seen today in the state-supported Buddhism of Thailand and the traditional role of the Thai king as both a religious and secular leader. Ashoka also said that all his courtiers were true to their self and governed the people in a moral manner.

Ashoka Chakra

The Ashoka Chakra (the wheel of Ashoka) is a depiction of the Dharmachakra or Dhammachakka in Pali, the Wheel of Dharma (Sanskrit: Chakra means wheel). The wheel has 24 spokes. The Ashoka Chakra has been widely inscribed on many relics of the Mauryan Emperor, most prominent among which is the Lion Capital of Sarnath and the Ashoka Pillar. The most visible use of the Ashoka Chakra today is at the centre of the National flag of the Republic of India (adopted on 22 July 1947), where it is rendered in a Navy-blue colour on a white background, by replacing the symbol of Charkha (Spinning wheel) of the pre-independence versions of the flag. Ashoka Chakra can also be seen on the base of Lion Capital of Ashoka which has been adopted as the National Emblem of India.

The Ashoka chakra was built by Ashoka during his reign. Chakra is a Sanskrit word which also means cycle or self repeating process. The process it signifies is the cycle of time as how the world changes with time.

A few days before India became independent on August 1947, the specially constituted Constituent Assembly decided that the flag of India must be acceptable to all parties and communities. A flag with three colours, saffron, white and green with the Ashoka Chakra was selected.

Check Your Progress

6. What do you understand by the term 'Dhamma'?
7. What was the language used for inscription by Ashoka?
8. What is the Ashoka Chakra?

5.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The Jain philosophy shows a close affinity to Hindu Samkhya Darshana (or Samkhya philosophy). They ignored the idea of God, accepted that the world is full of sorrows and believed in the theories of Karma (action) and transmigration of souls.

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2. According to the Jain philosophy there are five principles. They are as follows:
 - *Satya*
 - *Ahimsa*
 - *Aprigraha*
 - *Astheya*
 - *Brahmacharya*
3. According to the eight-fold path, the first step is the proper vision leading to the realization that the world is full of sorrow, the basis of life is sorrow and sorrow can end by controlling desires.
4. The key feature of the universal law of *dharma* is ‘as a man acts so shall he be’, i.e., man gets the reward of its own action.
5. The two sects of Buddhism are Hinayana and Mahayana.
6. The word ‘dhamma’ was derived from the Sanskrit word ‘dharma. According to Romila Thapar, an Indian historian whose principal area of study is ancient India, ‘Dhamma was a way of life which was based on the social and moral responsibilities.’
7. The language used for inscription was the then current spoken form called Prakrit.
8. The Ashoka Chakra (the wheel of Ashoka) is a depiction of the Dharmachakra or Dhammachakka in Pali, the Wheel of Dharma (Sanskrit: Chakra means wheel).

5.6 SUMMARY

- The religious texts written in Pali language do not recognize Mahavira as the originator of a new religion, but as a reformer.
- Mahavira accepted most of the religious doctrines of Parsavanath though he made some alterations and additions.
- The Jain philosophy believes that not only man and animals, but plants also possess souls (Jiva) endowed with various degree of consciousness.
- During the time of Mahavira, there arose a discontent amongst the common people against the traditional Vedic religion, as a number of weaknesses and shortcomings had crept in the latter.
- Like Buddhism, Jainism never spread all over India or beyond its boundaries, yet it became a popular religion at that time, and still exists in many parts of the country.

- Various factors were responsible for the dramatic decline of Jainism in India. After the demise of Mahavira, Gautama Buddha emerged as a great socio-religious reformer of that period.
- The teachings of Buddha were simpler and people friendly.
- Buddha pointed out various paths by which one could attain Nirvana or salvation from the cycle of birth and death.
- Buddha prescribed the noble eight-fold paths (the eight spokes of the wheel of law symbolize the eight-fold path) or the ‘Astangamarga’, which every Buddhist is to follow in order to get deliverance from sufferings.
- One of the cardinal believes of Buddha was Ahimsa. He held that violence and cruelty against animate beings was a sin.
- Buddhist religious texts were written in Pali and are collectively known as Tripitika (three baskets). The first part is Vinayapitaka, which lays down rules for the guidance of the monks and the general management of the Buddhist place of worship.
- After the demise of Buddha, Buddhism was sharply divided into two sects, namely Hinayana and Mahayana.
- Buddhism started as a protest movement against the complex system of Hinduism.
- Ashoka was a great king not only in the history of India, but also across the whole world. We possess a lot of information about him from his inscriptions and the Buddhist literature.
- King Ashoka, the third monarch of the Indian Mauryan dynasty, has come to be regarded as one of the most exemplary rulers in world history.
- Though Ashoka is known as the greatest king of India, historians learned about him only in the nineteenth century.
- The word ‘dhamma’ was derived from the Sanskrit word ‘dharma.’ Ashoka followed the principles of Buddhism—that of truth, charity, kindness, purity and goodness.
- Ashoka was an able administrator, an intelligent human being and a devout Buddhist.

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5.7 KEY WORDS

- **Ahimsa:** *Ahimsa* means ‘not to injure’ and ‘compassion’ and refers to a key virtue in Indian religions.
- **Karma:** *Karma* is the sum of a person’s actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences.

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- **Hinduism:** Hinduism is an Indian religion and dharma, or a way of life, widely practised in the Indian subcontinent.
- **Edict:** Edict is an official order or proclamation issued by a person in authority.
- **Chakra:** Chakra is a Sanskrit word which also means cycle or self repeating process. The process it signifies is the cycle of time as how the world changes with time.

5.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What were the causes for the dramatic decline of Jainism in India?
2. What are the four noble truths of Buddhism?
3. Mention the principal reason for the rapid spread of Buddhism.
4. Differentiate between Hinayana and Mahayana.
5. List the factors responsible for the decline of Buddhism.
6. What was the purpose of following the policy of Dhamma?

Long-Answer Question

1. Explain the principle of non-injury.
2. Discuss the causes of rise of Jainism.
3. Describe the concept of eight-fold path in Buddhism.
4. Discuss the various causes responsible for the spectacular rise of Buddhism in India and abroad.
5. Write a detailed note on the battle of Kalinga.

5.9 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - III
THE GOLDEN AGE OF GUPTAS - PUSHYABHUSI
DYNASTY (VARDHA DYNASTY)

The Gupta Period

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UNIT 6 THE GUPTA PERIOD

Structure

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Early Guptas
 - 6.2.1 Samudragupta: Career and Achievements
- 6.3 Administration of the Guptas
 - 6.3.1 Social and Economic Conditions Under the Guptas
- 6.4 The Golden Age
- 6.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 6.6 Summary
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- 6.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 6.9 Further Readings

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The Guptas came to the centre of the political stage, as it were, by the will of God. They were not among the powers that challenged the Kushanas; they did not come up in consequence of their decline. Among their contemporaries, they were undoubtedly the only power determined to restore to the country its lost political unity. They brought the region between ‘the Godavari and the Sutlej’ under their direct authority and also indirectly ruled over most of other parts of the country. They commanded respect for their powerful war machine, military process and political acumen. They massacred the Huns. No one else could do it anywhere in the contemporary world. Their government was based on the accepted principle of centralization and progressive decentralization. The central government was powerful, yet in ‘the district headquarters, the officials of the Central Government were assisted and controlled by popular councils, whose sanction was necessary even if the state wanted to sell its own wasteland. Villages had their own popular councils which administered almost all the branches of administration, including collection of taxes and settlement of village disputes.’ The local opinion was given due cognizance, laws were effective and humane. Public welfare was attended to; poor and sick were provided relief. Roads were well protected. ‘Gupta peace’ brought in its wake all-round prosperity. Agriculture improved, industry progressed, commerce expanded, shipbuilding and foreign trade gained new dimensions. Gold and silver flowed into the country from abroad. Coins of precious metals were in

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circulation; people lived in comfort. As evidenced by contemporary literature and paintings, they used fine clothes and ornaments.

The improved means of communication and transport, movement of men and ideas and the enrichment of urban life stimulated de-linking of varna and vocation, encouraged caste mobility, brought about the transformation of tribes into castes and the assimilation of the foreign racial stocks into the social whole. The position of women remained distinct. The emphasis on the concept of 'ideal wife' inculcated deeper and there was a wider sense of family correspondence and social intercourse.

In this unit, you will learn about the early Guptas, their administrative system and the Golden age.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the Gupta administrative system
- Discuss the social and economic conditions of the Gupta Empire
- Identify the demerits of the Gupta administration system
- Discuss the various achievements of the Gupta golden age

6.2 EARLY GUPTAS

The origin and the early history of the Guptas are not clear. The locality they ruled remains unspecified. The first two kings of the dynasty, Sri Gupta and his son Sri Ghatotkacha are called *Maharaja*. It has made several historians say that they might have been feudatories; but, their paramount ruler is not mentioned. It is, therefore, held that they may have been petty rulers, and like some of that class assumed the title *Maharaja*. The son of Maharaja Sri Ghatotkacha, however, assumed a higher title of *Maharajadhiraja*, implying obviously that he was a more powerful ruler than his predecessors. He may have given extension to his patrimony, gained greater authority and thus assumed a higher title.

I Tsing, who travelled to this country during AD 671–695, referred to a king Sri Gupta who happened to have raised a temple for Chinese pilgrims in Magadha. Some scholars identified him with the founder of the dynasty of the same name, traced the temple in Magadha and consequently, placed his kingdom in Magadha. There is, however, no justification for the view that the temple which this king built for the Chinese was situated in Magadha. 'The bearing and the distance given by the Chinese Pilgrim place it in the western borders of northern or central Bengal and this is corroborated by some other details mentioned by him. We may, therefore, hold that Sri Gupta's kingdom comprised a portion of Bengal.'

Sources of information

The sources of information for the Gupta period comprise both literary and archaeological. These are found all over the country from Bengal to Kathiawar. They are comparatively richer and fuller in content and character and have proved very helpful in reconstructing the main outline of the history and chronology with greater degree of certainty.

Literary sources: The Puranas, especially the *Vayu*, *Brahmanda*, *Matsya*, *Vishnu* and the *Bhagvat Purana* are a rich source of information. They indicate the extent of the domination of Chandragupta I; make a distinction between the territory that the Guptas had under their direct control and over which they exercised paramount control and provide information on the princes subordinate to them and on their contemporaries. The Puranas, in fact, received their touch during this period. The *Smritis* of Vyas, Pitamaha, Pulastya and of Harita though assigned to this period are available only in the quotations found in the Dharmasastras. Among the Dharmasastras, those of Katyayana, Narad and of Brihaspati belong to this period. They provide rich information on the social and religious conditions of the people.

Some dramatic works with political bearing on the Gupta period are obviously helpful. Thus, the *Kaumudi Mahotsava* depicts the political condition of Magadha during the beginning of this period. It is of considerable importance for the origin and the rise of the Gupta power. The *Devichandraguptam* by Vishakhadatta throws light on the manner in which Chandragupta II came to the throne and married Dhruvadevi. It is available, however, only in quotations. Another work of the same author, the *Mudrarakshas*, though an important source of information on the rise of Chandragupta to power, mentions people and tribes such as the Yavanas, Sakas, Kiratas, Cambojas, Bhalikas, Parasikas, Khasas, Gandharas, Cinas, Kaulutas, Maghas and others who existed during the reign of Chandra Gupta II. The *Kamandaka Nitisara*, said to have been the work of Sikhara, the chancellor of Chandragupta II, upholds the murder of the Saka king through disguise.

The accounts left by the Chinese travellers are a rich source of information. Fa-Hien travelled across this country in the reign of Chandragupta II and his record and *Fo-Kuo-ki or Record of Buddhist Kingdom* throws considerable light on the condition of the country during the period.

Archaeological sources: Numerous archaeological source materials on the Gupta period are available. The numerous types of coins that the Guptas issued throw great light on their rise and fall and on the economic condition of the people. The coins both of the early and of the later Guptas have been listed in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*.

The epigraphic evidence available from the Allahabad Pillar Inscription and the Eran Stone Inscription throws light on the military strength and the territorial expansion of Samundragupta. The Mehrauli Iron Pillar Inscription refers to one king Chandra, who defeated a confederacy of enemies, conquered the Vanga countries and defeated Vahlikas across the seven mouths of river Sindhu. He thus achieved sole supremacy in the world.

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The Mathura Stone Inscription, the Sanchi Stone inscription, the Gadhwa Stone Inscription and the Udayagiri Cave Inscription of Chandragupta II give ample information on several aspects of his polity. Some details about Kumara Gupta I are available from the Gadhwa Stone Inscription, the Bilsad stone Pillar Inscription and the Mankuwar Stone image Inscription. The Junagadh Rock Inscription, the Kahaum Stone Pillar Inscription, the Indore Copper Plate Inscription, the Bihar Stone Pillar Inscription in two parts and the Bhitari Stone Pillar Inscription refer to Skandagupta. The Bhitari Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta records his fight with Pushyamitra and probably also with the Huns during the reign of his father Kumara Gupta I.

A large number of seals recovered at Vaishali (in the Muzaffarpur district) give an idea of the provincial and local administration of the period and provide a nomenclature of the officers.

Of the Gupta architecture and art, whatever has come down to us remains a rich source of information. The temples at Udayagiri, Pathari, Deogarh and Aihole reveal much about the evolution of temple architecture and point to the popular gods and goddesses. The sculptural remains are indicative of both their artistic richness and aesthetic appeals and hence of cultural maturity.

Chandragupta I

After Ghatotkach, his son Chandragupta I (AD 319–324) became king of this dynasty. He was the first independent ruler of this dynasty as the previous Gupta rulers were feudatories/vassals. He adopted the title of 'Maharajadhiraja'. He was an imperialist and an important ruler than his predecessors. Chandra of Maharauli is also equated with Chandragupta I, but unfortunately, not much information is available about him.

The main event of the age of Chandragupta was to enter into marital alliance with the Lichchhavis, who were very powerful during that time. He strengthened his position by establishing matrimonial relationship with the Lichchhavis and expanded his empire from Awadha and Magadha to Prayaga in the coastal areas of the Ganges. Chandragupta married Lichchhavi princess Kumar Devi. This marriage had political importance. There are several evidences of this marriage. This marriage not only increased immensely the power and grandeur of the Guptas but it also made Kumar Devi the princess of the Lichchhavi kingdom which she inherited from her father. As a result, the entire Lichchhavi kingdom came under the control of Chandragupta I.

6.2.1 Samudragupta: Career and Achievements

After Chandragupta, his son Samudragupta (AD 325–375) became king of the Gupta dynasty. He established a vast kingdom by conquering different battles and strengthened the Gupta dynasty for centuries. On account of his immense talent, Chandragupta chose his successor in his own life. Samudragupta was an able emperor, skilled commander and a man of great personality. He was a great

conqueror; hence, he is compared with Napoleon. It is popularly said that Ashoka is famous for his peace and non-violence, while Samudragupta is famous because of his victories.

Conquests of Samudragupta

Samudragupta, having established political unity, united entire India under one umbrella. He not only conquered North India, but also hoisted his flag of victory over South India including some principalities of abroad. His victories are described as follows:

First expedition of Aryavarta: The land between the Himalayas and Vindhya was called Aryavarta. It is known that Samudragupta launched victorious expeditions twice over Aryavarta. In his first expedition, he vanquished the following kings:

- **Acyuta:** The first king Samudragupta defeated in Aryavarta was Acyuta. He was the king of Ahichchhatra. His kingdom was around modern Ram Nagar in Bareilly.
- **Nagasena:** It is known from the coins of Naga dynasty of Narwar, situated in Gwalior that he was the king of Naga dynasty and his capital was Padmavati. In Prayaga Prashasti, the letters before 'ga' has been destroyed but the letter 'ga' is readable. Perhaps he might have been the ruler Ganapatinaga.
- **Kotakulaja:** Samudragupta defeated this Kota king as well.

However, several scholars have expressed their views regarding the first Aryavarta expedition. Some scholars consider that the first Aryavarta battle was not his expedition of victory but a defensive battle.

Second expedition of Aryavarta: In his second expedition, he defeated many kings. Some of them are described as follows:

- (1) **Rudradeva:** King Rudradeva was king Rudrasena I of Kaushambi.
- (2) **Matila:** A coin has been found in Bulandashahara, which contains the symbol of Matil and Naga. Probably he was a king of the Naga dynasty.
- (3) **Nagadatta:** He was a king of Mathura and belonged to the Naga dynasty.
- (4) **Chandraverma:** There is a dispute regarding this entry. Some consider him the king of Pusakarana while others consider him the king of Eastern Punjab.
- (5) **Ganapatinaga:** He was a ruler of Vidisha and belonged to the Naga dynasty.
- (6) **Balaverma:** He was a predecessor of king Bhaskarverma of Kamrupa.
- (7) **Nandi:** It is mentioned in the Puranas that Shishunanda Shivanandi was the King of Central India and belonged to the Naga dynasty.

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It is mentioned that Samudragupta defeated all the dynasties of North India. He annexed all these kingdoms to his empire.

He made all the kings of *vana* (forest) his slaves. When he proceeded to conquer South India after his conquest of North India, he subjugated all Atavika kings lying on his way to southern conquest. It is assumed that Atavika state was spread from Gazipur to Jabalpur.

South expedition

Samudragupta conquered south after his first expedition of Aryavarta. He defeated twelve kings of the south and thereafter he returned their kingdoms and made them his loyalists. Thus, on one hand, these kings were independent while on the other, they accepted the suzerainty of Samudragupta. Samudragupta's conquest had three features: to imprison enemies, to free them and to return the kingdoms of the defeated king after the acceptance of conqueror's suzerainty. These kings were as follows:

- **Mahendra of Kaushal:** Mahendra was the king of Kaushal. Modern districts of Raipur, Sambhalpur and Vilaspur were included in it.
- **Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara:** Vyaghraraja was the king of Mahakantara, which was the forest area of Orissa.
- **Mantaraja of Koral:** It was the central part of Orissa and Tamil Nadu and the king of this area was Mantaraja.
- **Mahendragiri of Pishtapur:** Pishtapur in Godavari district is modern Pithapurama.
- **Swamidatta of Kottura:** Kottura is equated with Coimbatore.
- **Daman of Erandapalla:** Erandapalla is considered as Erandola of Khanadesh. Its relationship is also established with Erandapalla near Chinkokole on the coast of Orissa.
- **Vishnugopa of Kanchi:** It was the capital of Pallava. Modern Kanjeevaram near Madras is Kanchi.
- **Nilaraja of Avamukta:** It was a small kingdom in the neighbourhood of Kanchi and Vengi states. Its king Nilaraja was a member of the Pallava confederacy.
- **Hastivarman of Vengi:** It was in existence near Peduvengi in Ellore. Its king belonged to Shalankayana dynasty.
- **Ugrasena of Palakka:** It was near Palakollu on the coast of Godavari.
- **Dhananjaya of Kusthalapur:** Kusthalapur, situated in Arakar district, was Kusthalapur.
- **Kubera of Devarashtra:** It was Yellamanchili in Andhra Pradesh. Some historians believe that southern rulers formed a confederation against Samudragupta and halted Samudragupta near a famous lake, known as Kolekha. Samudragupta conquered this confederation.

Subjugation of frontier states: It is clear that the frontier states, having seen the conquest-expedition of Samudragupta, accepted his suzerainty. These states were: Samatata, Davaka, Kamrupa, Nepal and Karttripur.

There were nine republics on the western frontier which accepted the suzerainty of Samudragupta. These were Malava, Arjunayana, Yodheya, Madraka, Abhira, Prarjuna, Sanakanika, Kaka and Kharaparika.

Policy towards the frontier states: Samudragupta adopted three kinds of policy against these states, such as *Sarvakara*, i.e., these states accepted to pay all types of tributes, *Ajnakarana*, i.e., these states carried out the order of Samudragupta, and *Pranamakarana*, i.e., they appeared individually and greeted the king.

Conquest of foreign states

Some of the foreign states, such as Daivaputra, Shahi, Shanushahi, Shaka, Murunda, Saimhal, etc., were also conquered by Samudragupta. They accepted defeat and offered their daughters to him.

Extent of Samudragupta's kingdom

Samudragupta's empire extended from the Himalayas in the north to Vindhyas in the south and from Bay of Bengal in the east to Eastern Malawa in the west. He had indirect influence over Gujarat, Sindh, Western Rajaputana, West Punjab and the frontier states of Kashmir, and he had friendly relations with Saimhala and the other islands. Samudragupta adopted the policy of expansion of his empire. The main aim of his conquest was to hoist his flag of victory.

Horse-sacrifice

Samudragupta performed horse-sacrifice in the beginning of his reign. His coins also carry depiction of horse sacrifice.

Estimate of Samudragupta's reign

Samudragupta's name is lettered in golden ink in Indian history for his talent and conquests. He was an extraordinary warrior, victor of thousands of battles and emerged invincible during his time. He was a valiant and brave king; able politician and warrior; famous musician; and well-versed and a good-hearted poet. Although he inherited a very small kingdom from his father, he expanded the boundaries of his kingdom beyond India by his talent and valour. He is regarded as the first Indian king who defeated southern and foreign rulers by his prowess.

Check Your Progress

1. Who was the first independent ruler of the Gupta dynasty?
2. What was the main event of the age of Chandragupta?
3. Mention some of the foreign states conquered by Samudragupta.

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6.3 ADMINISTRATION OF THE GUPTAS

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The Gupta administrative system was based on earlier historical tradition to which several amendments had been made to adapt it to the contemporary situation. Gupta administration featured elements of the administrative systems of the Mauryas, the Satvahanas, the Scythians and the Kushanas. According to Chinese accounts, 'The Gupta administrative system was always appreciable because it was liberal and in public interest. And the kings could not have been unrestrained and autocratic in spite of having limitless power.' Undoubtedly, the Gupta governance was of high quality. The fifth century Chinese monk Fa Hien writes about this period, 'The people were happy and prosperous. The people had to give neither account of small things in their houses nor attendance before any justices or kings.'

Features of Gupta Administration

The Gupta government had the following two bases:

Monarchy: The nature of the Gupta administration was monarchical, with the emperor as the supreme authority. In the Prayaga Edict, Samudragupta has been referred to as a king who lived on earth like god.

Feudal system: The Gupta Empire was vast and, therefore, ruling over it was very difficult without decentralization. Hence, the feudal system was introduced.

Central government

King: The king was the axis of the central government because it was a monarchy. The king was the highest official in the government, army, justice and other aspects of administration. According to the Prayaga edict, 'It is the duty of the king to provide good governance. An ideal king is one who has the firm resolve to provide his people from the core of his heart all comfort and happiness.' Officials were appointed and sacked by the king. There was no such concept that the king had the right to be autocratic on account of having a divine character. In spite of having a divine character, serving in the battlefield and obtaining suitable education were essential for the king. The king took up numerous titles such as *Maharajadhiraja*, *Parameshwara Paramamdaivat* and *Rajadhiraja*.

Council of ministers: There was a council of ministers to advise and assist the king in administrative affairs. As a basis for governance, Kautilya's concept that the discharge of royal functions should be done with mutual co-operation and goodwill was recognized. Therefore, it was expedient for the king to appoint a council of ministers to get co-operation and proper advice. Ministers were appointed on the basis of their qualifications. However, this position later became hereditary. Names of some prominent ministers have come down to us. They include *Mahadandanayaka*, *Mahapratihara*, *Mahasandhivigrahika*, *Bhandagaridhikrita*, *Mahapaksapatalika* and *Dandapashika*. Although the king took their advice, he was not bound to accept it.

Provincial administration

The Gupta Empire was very vast. Direct control of such a vast empire was not possible. Hence, it was divided into several provinces. Provinces were known as *bhukti*, *bhoga* and *pradesha*. Such a division of the government was an indication of administrative intelligence and wisdom. Provincial rulers were appointed by the king. They were known as *uparika maharaja*. They generally belonged to the royal family. Their duties were maintenance of peace, law and order in the empire, public interest, and obeying the emperor.

Visaya (district) administration

The province was divided into *visayas* (districts). The head official of the visaya was called *visayapati*. He was appointed by the king or *uparika*. Other officials of the province included *sarthavaha*, *prathamakulika*, *prathama kayastha* and *pustapala*.

Town administration

There were several towns in a province. The chief of the town was known as *nagarapati*. He was appointed by the *visayapati*. Each town had a council, the functions of which were to collect tax, take care of the public health and run the town administration.

Village administration

The village was the smallest unit of administration. The area of a village was fixed. The head of the village was called *gramapati* or *mahattar*. A grama panchayat was indeed a small democracy. People in the grama panchayat performed acts of simple officials. Sub-committees were constituted in the panchayats if there was more work. There were separate committees for the management of irrigation, agriculture, religion, etc.

Judicial system

The judicial system was highly competent. It is evident from Narada Smriti that there were four types of judicial courts – (1) *royal* (2) *puga* (3) *guild* and (4) *family*. According to Fa Hien, ‘The punishment during the Gupta age was not severe. Capital punishment or punishment by amputation was rarely carried out.’ He adds that there were few crimes and criminals were only given medium or high economic punishment. The decision of the king was final. However, according to Kalidasa and Visakhadatta, punishments were very severe.

Military organization

A big and strong army was necessary for the defense of such a vast empire. The government of the Gupta kings was based on military power. The army had four parts – *infantry*, *chariot*, *cavalry* and *elephants*. The smallest unit of infantry was called *chamuya*. The chief of the army was known as *mahasenapati* or

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mahabaladhikrita. 'The highest official of the army was the *senapati* (general). *Mahadandanayaka*, *ranabhandagarika*, *mandashvapati* were under him. No discrimination was made in the military service in respect of any specific caste. The army was under the control of the king. Provinces had some army and they helped the king in the time of need.' There was an armoury to store weapons.

Revenue system

The main source of income was land-tax. The share of produce, which was given to the king or state, was called *bhaga*. There were five kinds of tax that made up the income of the state: (1) controlled tax such as land-tax, (2) periodical tax, (3) economic penalty (4) income from the state's wealth and (5) income from the subjugated feudal. It is evident from Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsha* that the ideal of the tax-collection of the Gupta king was people's welfare. One-sixth of the produce was levied as land-tax. The Guptas' empire was an ideal Hindu state, and they adopted the ancient system to run it. During this time, state tax was not a kind of punishment.

Demerits of the Gupta administration system

The Gupta administration was extremely competent. Its organization in the centre and provinces was very able. The Gupta emperors expanded their empire and established a very high quality of balanced and appreciable administration in the conquered regions, the parallel of which can hardly be found.

However, it suffered from a few demerits as well. It was, above all, a feudal system. Feudal rulers became autocratic. As the provincial rulers were conferred more powers, this proved to be disastrous for the Gupta empire in the course of time.

6.3.1 Social and Economic Conditions Under the Guptas

The Gupta period is known as the golden age of Indian history because of its political, social, economic and religious conditions, arts, literature and cultural life, prosperity and fame.

Able and talented kings

There were several kings of great competence, both from military and strategic points of view, during this period. They increased the prosperity of the nation by protecting it from internal and external dangers.

Political unity

After the decline of the Mauryas, India was divided into small states which the Guptas again organized under one umbrella and protected from foreign aggression.

Economic prosperity

Internal peace, good governance, safety, security and successful administration provided an impetus to local and foreign trade. Consequently, the Gupta age witnessed great progress in trade and commerce.

Religious tolerance

Although the Gupta Kings were followers of Vaishnavism, they were tolerant of other religions, including Brahminism, Buddhism and Jainism. Buddhist monasteries near Hindu temples were a common sight.

Art, literature and science

The Gupta period marked immense development in the field of literature. The Gupta emperors encouraged poets, playwrights and philosophers such as Kalidasa, Bharavi, Shudraka, Vishakhadatta, Vasubandhu, Dandin, Harisena and Varahamihir. The arts of this period were not only limited to royal palaces but they also had close links to daily life.

In science, some of the notable achievements of this age were in the fields of astronomy and mathematics.

Social Conditions

Let us discuss the social conditions of the Gupta Empire.

Joint family system

In the Gupta age, it was the joint family system that prevailed. A separate and nuclear family system was inconceivable. The family was managed by a patriarch who was shown profound respect. All the members of the family obeyed his orders and all family traditions were maintained by him. The father was the owner of all property but it was also shared by the sons and the brothers.

Position of women

The position of women had deteriorated during the Gupta age. Women had to live under various restrictions throughout their lives. In childhood, they had to obey their father, in youth their husband and in old age their sons. They had no individual liberty. Girls were married off at an early age and could rarely attain any higher education. They had no choice when it came to their marriage. According to the law of Manu, a father had to get his daughter married before maturity and if he failed to do so, he shall go to hell. Women were barred from attaining Vedic injunctions or religious education. This, however, does not mean that women were completely uneducated. Many women were experts in dancing, painting and playing musical instruments. They also understood verse. Very importantly, remarriage of widows was allowed. Chandragupta himself married his brother's widow Dhruvswamini. The sati system prevailed, but in a mild form. Sculptural

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representations assert that the purdah system was not in vogue, but it is believed that women of noble families used veils when they went out.

Caste system

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During the Gupta age, the caste system had become the very foundation of society. The Shudras were looked down upon by members of the upper castes. The Gupta period was an age of revival of Hinduism and Brahminism. It was an age of manifold rites and rituals, customs and ceremonies. The Brahmins occupied a respectful place in the society and art and literature flourished. The Brahmins were split into different categories on the basis of the study of the Vedas. A Brahmin who studied the Rig veda was called Rigvedin and others were called Yajurvedin, Samavedin and Atharvavedin. Vaishyas had also organized themselves into different sections. As they were prosperous and wealthy, they commanded respect.

Slavery

Slavery was common in Gupta society. Slaves included prisoners of war, bankrupts and gamblers who had lost their freedom. Their servitude, however, was not permanent.

Food and drinks

Vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals were popular. Fa Hien writes that the people did not consume alcohol, onions, meat and garlic and it was believed that only the untouchables ate such things and reared poultry and pigs. But Fa Hien's accounts cannot be completely relied on. His observations are most likely limited to Buddhist society. According to the literature of the age, people consumed fish, meat and alcohol and according to the *smritis*, only women were restricted from their consumption, especially those whose husbands were not residing at home. The *smritis* particularly allowed meat for sick persons. In southern India, especially in aristocratic families, a variety of meat dishes were known to have been prepared. People also chewed betel leaves after meals.

Religious Conditions

Let us discuss the religious conditions of the Gupta Empire.

Literary and archaeological sources depict the spirit of religious tolerance under the Guptas. State services were open for all irrespective of their religious beliefs. The Buddhists and the Jains were provided with all the facilities that were provided to the Brahmins.

The religious tolerance of Samudragupta can be gleaned from the fact that he readily conceded to the request of Meghavarna, the king of Ceylon, for the construction of a monastery at Bodhgaya. Even economic assistance was given to members of other faiths. The monastery of Nalanda was set up by Kumaragupta. Donating charity was very common.

A number of religious texts were written or rewritten in the Gupta period, including *smritis* and *puranas*. The oral epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata were written down.

Chief religions

The following were the chief religions of the Gupta Empire.

Buddhism: Asanga, Vasubandhu and Kumarjiya were well-known preachers and philosophers of Buddhism. Although Buddhism declined and paved way for a revival in Brahminism, it continued flourishing in Punjab, Kashmir and modern-day Afghanistan. The artistic remains at Sarnath, Paharpur, Ajanta and Nagarjunikonda reveal that the Gupta period was a golden age of Buddhist art. In Bodhgaya, a monastery was made for Chinese pilgrims. In Western Maharashtra, at places like Bhaja, Kuda, Mahar, Bedsa and Junnar, many Buddhist monasteries were built under the patronage of merchants and guilds. Ajanta and Ellora were important Buddhist centres. Ayodhya and Kanchi were full of Buddhist monasteries and stupas.

Jainism: Bengal, Mathura, Vallabhi, Pundravardhana, Udayagiri and Kanchi were important Jain centres. In the south, the Kadambas, Pallavas and Paradya rulers patronized Jainism. In the year 453, a meeting was held to revise the Jain books. Although there was a rivalry between Jainism and Saivism, there was no religious persecution in any form.

Hinduism: The revival of Brahmanism had begun during the Sunga period. The Guptas continued that trend. From inscriptions, we learn that the Guptas constructed many temples and made liberal grants to religious institutions. The Guptas also performed Vedic rites and rituals, although those were probably not popular among the masses. The Guptas also revived the Asvamedha sacrifice.

Vaishnavism had also become very popular, because people believed that Lord Vishnu was an incarnation of the almighty and he had taken birth in the form of various avatars to protect the people from demons.

Shaivism: While the Gupta, Pallava and Ganga rulers patronized Vaishnavism, the Bharsivas, Vakatakas and the rulers of the Nala dynasty extended their patronization to Saivism. Prithvisen and Saba, important officers of the Guptas, were ardent followers of Saivism. Siva was worshipped in different forms.

The majority of the Siva images of the Gupta period combine the phallic with the human form.

Hindu renaissance

Prior to the Guptas, during the Kushana and Mauryan rule, Buddhism flourished in India. Emperors like Asoka and Kanishka spread Buddhism throughout India and also abroad. It was only after the Sungas came to power that Hinduism saw a revival which progressed further under the Guptas.

The Gupta rulers were unfaltering believers of Hinduism and they had profound faith in Vedic scriptures. Brahmins gained importance in society. On

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account of the great progress of Hinduism, the Gupta age came to be termed as an age of Hindu Renaissance. The Gupta age not only saw a revival of Hinduism, but also that of Sanskrit. Sanskrit was made the state language and the rulers adopted it for their coins. The great literary works of this age are all in Sanskrit.

Economic Conditions

The country had greatly prospered during the Gupta period. The Guptas were benevolent monarchs and established peace and order in the country. Without peace, a country can never prosper. Agriculture, trade and commerce greatly flourished under the encouragement of the Guptas.

Agriculture

During the Gupta period, agriculture was the basis of economic life. Agricultural land was not owned by the state but by individual families. Many kinds of crops were grown. Peasants received state assistance when needed. The Sudarshan Lake in Gujarat was repaired by Skandagupta to aid agriculture and irrigation. Scientific methods of improving agricultural produces were encouraged.

Trade and Industry

Trade

Agriculture and different professions gave an impetus to trade. There was brisk internal trade during the Gupta period. Fa Hien's description reveals that traders were given full freedom and could easily move from one place to another. Trade relations existed with foreign countries and internal trade was made possible by good transportation and road networks and also sea routes. Ujjain, Banaras, Vaishali, Gaya, Prayaga, Pataliputra and Mathura were important centres of trade. According to Fa Hien, roads on the trade network were safe and free of any incidents. Merchants mainly carried their goods on bullock carts. Rivers such as the Ganges, Krishna, Godavari and Brahmaputra were also utilized for trade networks. Most of the trade was carried out for commodities such as clothes, wheat, spices, salt, diamonds and precious stones.

Trade through rivers was cheap and comfortable. This period saw the flourish of the ship-building industry. Important ports include Tamralipti in Bengal and Tondai in the south. There are even records of Roman merchants arriving in India for trade in precious stones, clothes, perfumes, spices, drugs, coconut and ivory. Copper, tin, lead, dates and horses were important items of import.

Check Your Progress

4. What were the two main features of the Gupta administration?
5. What was the main source of income in the Gupta Empire?
6. Mention the chief religions of the Gupta Empire.

6.4 THE GOLDEN AGE

The foundation of the Gupta Empire in the fourth century AD describes the beginning of another era. The Gupta monarchs had power up to the sixth century in North India. Art, science and literature thrived greatly during this time. The iconographic canons of Brahmanical, Jain and Buddhist divinities were perfected and standardized. It served as ideal models of artistic expression for later centuries, not only in India but also beyond its border. It was an age of all round perfection in domestic life, administration, literature, as seen in the works of Kalidasa, in art creations and in religion and philosophy, as exemplified in the widespread Bhagavata cult, which recognized itself with a rigorous cult of beauty.

The Gupta Period (AD fourth–seventh) is usually called as the golden age of art and architecture in India. During this period, Sarnath came up as a school similar in quality as the Buddhist art. Some of the most stunning images of Buddha are creations of this school. One of the finest sculptures from Sarnath portrays Buddha giving his first sermon. The images of the Buddhist pantheon comprise the following:

- Indra
- Yakshas
- Dwarapalas
- Winged horses
- Surya
- Yakshis
- Mithuna couples

Gupta Temples

This period saw a huge resurrection of Hinduism when it became the official religion of the Gupta Empire. As a result, this era was also marked by the appearance of countless images of popular Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Images of Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva, Lord Krishna, Surya and Durga were created in this period. The Udaigiri caves in Madhya Pradesh had a huge image of Lord Vishnu. Other statues of this period found in various temples and museums are analytic of the various aspects of early Hindu art and sculpture. During the Gupta period, when basic elements of the Indian temple comprising a square sanctum and pillared porch emerged, a solid foundation of temple architecture was laid.

The evolved Gupta temple also had a covered processional path for circumambulation that outlined a part of the worship-ritual. Former temples of the period had a flat slab-roof, often monumental, but the later temples in brick and stone developed a shikhara. The unhurried development of the Gupta style can be traced by growth of the plan and the decoration on the pillars and door-frame. The frames were decorated with goblins, couples, flying angels and door-keepers.

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Sculptures of deities and their consorts, heavenly beings, couples, directional deities, composite animals and decorative motifs consisted of the majority of images which decorated the walls of the temples. The deities blessed in the chambers were carved firmly according to religious cannons and were fixed by carrying out a unique sanctification ritual. The brilliance of the Indian sculptor rested in his mental picture of the deities' ideal proportions, youthful bodies and kind appearances. Temple sculptures were not essentially religious. Many drew on worldly subject matters and ornamental designs. The scenes of everyday life consisted of military parades, royal court scenes, musicians, dancers, acrobats and passionate couples. Another group of non-religious figures were the apsaras or devanganas (celestial women) and vyalas (composite animals). The Parvati temple at Nachana, the temple of Bhitaraon, the Vishnu temple at Tigawa, the Shiva temple at Bhumara and the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh are among the top models of the Gupta style of temple architecture.

Cave Architecture

The cave architecture also achieved a huge level of enhancement during the Gupta period. The Chaitya and Vihara caves at Ajanta and the Ellora caves are the perfect specimens of cave-architecture of the period. The rock-cut caves at Khandagiri, Udayagiri and Undavalli also belong to this period.

Gupta Sculpture

With the Gupta period, India entered a classical phase of sculpture. By the efforts made over centuries, techniques of art were perfected, definite types were evolved, and ideals of beauty were formulated with precision. There was no more experimentation. A quick grasp of the true objectives and necessary principles of art, a vastly developed aesthetic sense and proficient execution by skilled hands made those outstanding images that were to be the perfect model and despair of the Indian artists of successive ages. The Gupta sculptures not only proved to be models of Indian art for the coming ages, but they also provided a perfect model for the Indian colonies in the Far East.

Gupta Paintings

Painting made great progress in the Gupta period. The most famous paintings of the Gupta period were the caves of Ajanta (Maharashtra) and Bagh (Madhya Pradesh).

Ajanta paintings

There are thirty caves in Ajanta of which 9, 10, 19, 26 and 29 are chaitya-grihas and the rest are monasteries. These caves were discovered in AD 1819 and were rebuilt. All paintings have heavy religious influence and centre on the following:

- Buddha
- Bodhisattvas

- Incidents from the life of Buddha
- Jatakas

The paintings are accomplished on a ground of mud-plaster in the tempera technique. In the caves of Ajanta, the artists observed a specific technique for doing their work. The rock walls of the cave were covered with a mixture of clay, cow dung and smashed rock. On its top a thin coat of lime plaster is applied. It was then smoothed and kept damp. On the surface the outline of the design was first sketched in dark colours such as dark brown or black. After this was done it was filled in, using a variety of colours like white, red, blue, dull green and brown. The theme of these paintings was from the Jataka tales, which is a collection of stories about the life of the Buddha. The paintings describe Buddha in various stages of his past and present lives. According to art critics, the Gupta paintings possess delicacy of lines, brilliancy of colours and richness of expression.

For long there existed a flawed assumption that the Ajanta cave paintings were frescoes. But the making of a fresco entails the application of colours to moist lime plaster whereas the Ajanta paintings were done on dry wall. The plaster made of clay, hay, dung, lime, etc., was applied to the wall and the artisans sketched beautiful drawings using vegetable colours. The brush for painting was made of animal hairs and twigs of certain plants.

The creation of these intricate Ajanta cave paintings still is a mystery due to the obvious lack of natural light inside the caves. Only thin streaks of light infuse inside, which is hardly sufficient for conducting such a painstaking craft. Historians have said that ancient artistes either used oil lamps or employed mirrors for reflecting and magnifying little natural light inside the cave.

Development of Music during Guptas

Music has been an essential part of the cultures existing in India. The range of musical phenomenon in India extends from tribal to folklore to classical to modern style. The flavour of music depends on various aspects of the culture, like social and economic organization and experience, climate and access to technology.

The conditions in which music is played and listened to, and the attitudes towards music players and writers all vary between regions and periods. Indian music has a very ancient tradition and an accrued heritage of years. Indian music has developed due to interface between different people of varied races and cultures.

The Gupta period (AD 320–480) was the golden era in the history of Indian music. The Guptas ruled in most of northern India. The Gupta period was the period of Greater India. During this period, a huge range of cultural activities occurred in India in this period that influenced the neighbouring countries as well. The Guptas not only improved the Indian culture but also had a global impact. Many music treatises like *Natya Shastra* (by Bharat Muni) and *Brihaddeshi* (by Matanga) were written during this period.

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Natya Shastra

The *Natya Shastra* is an ancient Indian treatise on the performing arts, comprising theatre, dance and music. The *Natya Shastra* was incredibly wide in its scope. While it basically deals with stagecraft, it has influenced music, classical Indian dance and literature as well. It consists of stage design, music, dance, makeup and basically every other aspect of stagecraft. It is very important to the history of Indian classical music as it is the only text that gives such detail about the music and instruments of the period.

After the Samaveda that dealt with ritual utterances of the Vedas, the *Natya Shastra* was the first major text that dealt with music at length. It was considered the crucial treatise of Indian classical music until the thirteenth century, when the stream split into Hindustani classical music in North India and Pakistan because of the influence of Persian and Arab music and Carnatic classical music in South India, the stronghold of the Hindu kingdoms.

While most of the discussion of music in the *Natya shastra* concentrates on musical instruments, it also emphasizes several theoretical aspects that remained fundamental to Indian music. *Jatis* are elaborated in greater detail in the text *Dattilam*, which was composed around the same time as the *Natya Shastra*.

The *Natya Shastra* also hints at several aspects of musical performance, specifically its application to vocal, instrumental and orchestral compositions. It also deals with the *rasas* and *bhavas* that may be evoked by music.

Check Your Progress

7. What were the most famous paintings of the Gupta period?
8. What is the *Natya Shastra*?

6.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Chandragupta I was the first independent ruler of the Gupta dynasty.
2. The main event of the age of Chandragupta was to enter into marital alliance with the Lichchhavis, who were very powerful during that time. He strengthened his position by establishing matrimonial relationship with the Lichchhavis and expanded his empire from Awadha and Magadha to Prayaga in the coastal areas of the Ganges.
3. Some of the foreign states, such as Daivaputra, Shahi, Shanushahi, Shaka, Murunda, Saimhal, etc., were conquered by Samudragupta.

4. The Gupta government had the following two bases:
 - **Monarchy:** The nature of the Gupta administration was monarchical, with the emperor as the supreme authority. In the Prayaga Edict, Samudragupta has been referred to as a king who lived on earth like god.
 - **Feudal system:** The Gupta Empire was vast and, therefore, ruling over it was very difficult without decentralization. Hence, the feudal system was introduced.
5. The main source of income in the Gupta Empire was land-tax.
6. The following were the chief religions of the Gupta Empire:
 - Buddhism
 - Jainism
 - Hinduism
 - Shaivism
7. The most famous paintings of the Gupta period were the caves of Ajanta (Maharashtra) and Bagh (Madhya Pradesh).
8. The *Natya Shastra* is an ancient Indian treatise on the performing arts, comprising theatre, dance and music.

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6.6 SUMMARY

- The origin and the early history of the Guptas are not clear. The locality they ruled remains unspecified. The first two kings of the dynasty, Sri Gupta and his son Sri Ghatotkacha are called Maharaja.
- The sources of information for the Gupta period comprise both literary and archaeological. These are found all over the country from Bengal to Kathiawar.
- Numerous archaeological source materials on the Gupta period are available.
- The numerous types of coins that the Guptas issued throw great light on their rise and fall and on the economic condition of the people.
- After Ghatotkach, his son Chandragupta I (AD 319–324) became king of this dynasty. He was the first independent ruler of this dynasty as the previous Gupta rulers were feudatories/vassals.
- The main event of the age of Chandragupta was to enter into marital alliance with the Lichchhavis, who were very powerful during that time.
- After Chandragupta, his son Samudragupta (AD 325–375) became king of the Gupta dynasty. He established a vast kingdom by conquering different battles and strengthened the Gupta dynasty for centuries.

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- Samudragupta, having established political unity, united entire India under one umbrella. He not only conquered North India, but also hoisted his flag of victory over South India including some principalities of abroad.
- The Gupta administrative system was based on earlier historical tradition to which several amendments had been made to adapt it to the contemporary situation.
- The king was the axis of the central government because it was a monarchy. The king was the highest official in the government, army, justice and other aspects of administration.
- The judicial system was highly competent. It is evident from Narada Smriti that there were four types of judicial courts – (1) *royal* (2) *puga* (3) *guild* and (4) *family*.
- The position of women had deteriorated during the Gupta age. Women had to live under various restrictions throughout their lives.
- Slavery was common in Gupta society. Slaves included prisoners of war, bankrupts and gamblers who had lost their freedom. Their servitude, however, was not permanent.
- The foundation of the Gupta Empire in the fourth century AD describes the beginning of another era. The Gupta monarchs had power up to the sixth century in North India.
- Art, science and literature thrived greatly during this time. The iconographic canons of Brahmanical, Jain and Buddhist divinities were perfected and standardized.

6.7 KEY WORDS

- **Monarchy:** A monarchy is a form of government in which a group, generally a family representing a dynasty, embodies the country's national identity and its head, the monarch, exercises the role of sovereignty.
- **Slavery:** Slavery is the system by which people are owned by other people as slaves.
- **Shaivism:** Shaivism is one of the major traditions within Hinduism that reveres Shiva as the Supreme Being.

6.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on Chandragupta I.
2. Identify the demerits of the Gupta administration system.
3. What was the position of women during the Gupta age?
4. What were the economic conditions of the Gupta Empire?
5. What made the Gupta period the Golden age of Indian history?

Long-Answer Question

1. Explain the Gupta administrative system.
2. Discuss the social conditions of the Gupta Empire.
3. Explain the religious conditions of the Gupta Empire.
4. Discuss the various achievements of the Gupta golden age?
5. Write a detailed essay on the achievements of Samudragupta.

6.9 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 7 DECLINE OF GUPTAS AND RISE OF HARSHAVARDHANA

Structure

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Decline of the Gupta Empire
- 7.3 Harshavardhana
 - 7.3.1 Rise of Harshavardhana
- 7.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 7.5 Summary
- 7.6 Key Words
- 7.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 7.8 Further Readings

7.0 INTRODUCTION

The Gupta dynasty had the distinction of providing to the country a galaxy of great kings. Comparatively, they stayed longer at the top. They trained their successors well in the art and science of maintaining a huge empire, peace and fighting wars; and kept the inevitable at bay. They avoided the pitfalls such as neglect of training the successors, single-track approach in polity, dominance of ideology to the neglect of other vital interests, concentration of power at the top, state monopoly in trade, top heavy and expensive bureaucracy and neglect of the war machine. On the political front, however, there is nothing to distinguish the Gupta monarchs from those who preceded and succeeded them. They did not discard the ancient belief that the local power in the interest of total unity should be eradicated and institutions should be developed to train leadership and to encourage the people to participate in decision-making at higher levels. It appears that the people had no direct role in administration and politics. They seem to have been mute witnesses to the succession or elimination of kings and to matters of peace and war. Over the time, the dynasty suffered loss of vitality, vigour and authority. And, as the succession conflicts, internal challenge and external pressure developed, there followed the squeezing of the empire territorially to nothingness and with it, its grandeur too obscured.

In this unit, you will identify the causes of disintegration of the Gupta Empire. You will also list the factors responsible for the rise of Harshavardhana.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the social reasons for the fall of the Gupta Empire

- List the factors responsible for the rise of Harshavardhana
- Identify the cultural achievements of Harsha
- Describe the Harsha's administrative system

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7.2 DECLINE OF THE GUPTA EMPIRE

The causes of disintegration of the Gupta Empire are as follows:

- **Internal dissensions:** The post-Skandagupta period was characterized by internal dissensions within the reigning family. Though the records are silent on the course of events, it is in view of the available information assumed that the dissensions created factions, generated divided loyalties, weakened the political system, rendered the central authority weak and lowered the prestige of the emperor. The death of Samundragupta was tantamount to the removing of the cornerstone of the edifice.
- **Confused succession:** In the present state of knowledge, scholars have not been able to fix among the later Guptas the order of succession and duration of the reigns of several kings whose names have been revealed by the coins and inscription. Some appear to have ascended the throne only to be removed later. The stress and strain under which the political system and administration must have operated is imaginable. It must have caused severe weakness to the system.
- **Short reigns and quick successions:** The later Guptas present a spectacle of short reigns and quick successions. The reigning heads must have been unable to consolidate their position and make their authority felt. Especially, in view of the situation that a king was the pivot around whom everything moved, and that his personality influenced the policy and administration, short reigns and quick success of kings must have wrecked the system in several directions.
- **Centrifugal tendencies:** Factionalism was thus dominant and its impact was percolative. Once the central authority developed infirmities, local chiefs asserted their strengths. Thus, Budhagupta, though acknowledged as the paramount authority, had to make an awkward compromise to maintain the apparent in installing a successor of Bhatarka to the royal status in Malwa. It could never have been to his pleasure. The other provincial heads too made their offices hereditary. Some among them assumed royal titles. The emperor in his high position must have felt his empire crumbling and imagined the inviolable. The centrifugal forces thus demolished the empire steadily.
- **Inability of the reigning heads:** None among the later Guptas had the ability to check the rot that the system had developed from within. The crowned heads failed to stand up to the challenge and arrest the forces of decline. They were mute witnesses to the tragic spectacle.

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- **Lack of political comprehension and mental vigour:** The later Gupta kings lacked these qualities substantially. Budhagupta, Baladitya and the others had hardly any leadership qualities. They were unable to play their rightful role. The case of Baladaliya is highly illustrative in this connection. On coming to know that an attack by Mihirakula, the Hun was imminent, he summoned his ministers and as narrated by Hiuen Tsang, told them: 'I hear that these thieves are coming and I cannot fight with them (their troops;) by the permission of my ministers I will conceal my poor person among the bushes of the morass.' The story may or may not be correct, but it is obvious that the later Guptas did not have the qualities to sustain their authority and integrity of the empire. Their political thinking and military ability was not in agreement with the requirement of their high office.
- **Depredations caused by Toramana and Mihirakula:** The Guptas, unlike the Mauryas neglected the defense of the north-western region. They did not maintain effective control over the mountain passes and the plains of the Punjab. Thus, the Huns came down to the plains unhindered. They caused devastation in the region and had to be fought back on the plains. Later, the region fell to the depredations of Toramana and Mihirakula for the same reason. The wars they engendered and the devastation they caused weakened the central authority and the political system. The depredations caused by Toramana and his son Mihirakula exhausted the nerve of the empire even though both of them were ultimately defeated. Yet it humiliated royalty and frustrated the common man. It must have torn apart the prestige of the great empire in a tragic way. The western part of the empire was most subjected to the barbaric vandalism.
- **Economic disruption:** The depredations caused by Toramana and Mihirakula must have disrupted the economic activity, destroyed security and arrested social mobility. The scarcity of gold coins brought in circulation by Budhagupta and his later debasement of the gold coins indicates that the economic prosperity had suffered a severe dent. The western part of the country had been rendered unsafe.
- **Challenge and rebellions:** The disruption and insecurity was rendered worse by the challenge the rebels threw to the emperor. Harisena (AD 475–510), the Vakataka ruler was the first to unfurl his standard of rebellion. He occupied Malwa and Gujarat. Yasodharman, a local chief of Malwa, established independent authority and carried raids all around and wrecked the empire. Others followed the course. It is difficult to say which of the several causes were more significant than the rest that brought about the end of the empire. It is clear, however, that the story commenced with the internal dissensions. The crowned heads did not show the ability to meet the challenge. The adverse effect of the raids of Toramana and Mihirakula on the course of events cannot be denied. It is, however, obvious that the decline was not sudden. It followed its natural course.

Check Your Progress

1. What were the causes of disintegration of the Gupta Empire?
2. When did the Gupta Empire fall?

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7.3 HARSHAVARDHANA

After the decline of the Gupta Empire, the political unity of India was once again disintegrated. Anarchy prevailed everywhere in the country. Kings started fighting among themselves for the sake of their own interests. In such a situation there arose the Vardhana dynasty in Thaneshwar (*Shrikantha Janapada*, near Delhi). Pushyabhuti was the founder of this dynasty. Because of this, the Vardhana dynasty was also known as the Pushyabhuti dynasty. However, Nara Vardhana is considered as the first acknowledged king of this dynasty because the existence of Pushyabhuti could not be found in the inscriptions or literary sources.

Prabhakara Vardhana was the first powerful king of the Vardhana dynasty. He had two sons, Rajya Vardhana and Harsha Vardhana, and a daughter, Rajyashri. In the last days of Prabhakara Vardhana, the Huns attacked. Rajya Vardhana was sent to face the Huns. During this battle, Prabhakara Vardhana expired.

Rajya Vardhana

When Rajya Vardhana returned to his capital after defeating the Huns, he got the news of his father's death, which made him sorrowful. So he started thinking of renouncing the worldly life. In the meantime, he was informed by his servant that the wicked king of Malwa had killed Grihaverma and his wife and Rajya Vardhana's sister Rajyashri had been imprisoned. He heard the speculation that the king of Malwa wanted to attack his kingdom since the king had expired. Rajya Vardhana attacked Malwa and became victorious in the battle. However, King Shashanka of Gaur killed him.

7.3.1 Rise of Harshavardhana

After the death of his brother Rajyavardhana, Harshavardhana (AD 606–647) ascended the throne at the age of sixteen in AD 606. After his accession to the throne, he vowed to destroy Gaur and kill Shashanka.

Harshacharita, written by Banabhatta, mentions that Harsha marched with a powerful army to take his revenge against Shashanka. On his way, he was informed by his army commander that a king named Gupta had captured Kannauj and his sister Rajyashri had fled from the prison. Handing over the command of his army to his chief commandant and an order to attack Gaur, he personally went in search of his sister Rajyashri. Harsha stopped her from entering into a funeral pyre and brought her back to camp. What happened after Harsha dispatched his commander

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to attack Gaur, is an issue on which, however, *Harshacharita* is silent. It is evident from the Ganjam inscription that Harsha's army forced Shashanka to return to Gaur. Defeating Shashanka, Harsha annexed his empire. It is written in the *Arya Manjusri Mulakalpa* that a king (Harsha) whose name begins with letter 'H' defeated a king who bears the name of 'Soma.

Harsha's achievements

Harsha wanted to hoist his flag of victory over the entire India. He had proclaimed at the time of his accession, 'All kings upto Udayanchal...Subela....Astagiri.... Gandhamadan should be ready to pay him tax or to take up arms to face him in the battle.' Huen-Tsang wrote, 'Soon he took revenge of his brother's death and he became master of India.' Harsha as a great and powerful emperor. He shifted his capital from Thaneshwar to Kannauj for administrative convenience. King Bhaskarverma of Kamrupa sent a proposal of a treaty, which was accepted delightedly by Harsha. It was a diplomatic move. The treaty was in the mutual interest of both as they were common enemy of Shashanka. When Harsha attacked Vallabhi, king Dhruvasena II sought refuge under the Gujars. Making a diplomatic move, Harsha gave his daughter in marriage to Dhruvasena. It is known from Huen-Tsang that Harsha had a desire to conquer his neighbouring states. Hence, he proceeded towards the east and became victorious after waging war for six years. The five states that Harsha conquered were Punjab, Kanyakubja, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Thus, he got control over North India. Harsha plundered Sindh's wealth after conquering it.

War with Chalukya King Pulakeshin II

Once Harsha had conquered North India, he turned his attention towards south. Huen-Tsang wrote, 'He collected an army from Pancha Bharata (the five states of North India), invited the best commanders from all states and himself took over the command of the collected army and marched to defeat Pulakeshin.' But, Harsha was defeated by Pulakeshin II. According to the Aihole inscription, Harsha's elephantry massacred soldiers, but he still could not win the war. The battle in which Harsha was defeated was fierce. The famous battle occurred perhaps between AD 630 to 634.

Nepal conquest

It is evident from *Harshacharita* that Harsha collected tax from the 'mountain region of white snow'. He had conquered Nepal. So, Nepal was definitely under the suzerainty of Harsha.

Kashmir conquest

Huen-Tsang wrote that Harsha had heard that one of the teeth of Buddha was in Kashmir. So, he went to Kashmir and asked permission to see the Buddha-tooth. The Buddhist order granted him permission. Kashmir king initiated mediation and he

himself presented the Buddha-tooth in front of Harsha. Having seen the Buddha-tooth, Harsha was overwhelmed with joy and took away the Buddha-tooth forcefully.

Control over Uttar Pradesh and Magadha

It is evident from the inscriptions found from Banskhera Madhubana (in modern Uttar Pradesh) that Harsha captured Mathura, Govishana, Ayodhya, Prayaga, and Kaushambi. After that Harsha took the title of *Magadharaja*.

Relation with China

Harsha sent his ambassador to China with a proposal of friendship. Besides, he also had diplomatic relationship with Iran (*Pharasa*). These kings exchanged gifts with each other.

Extent of Harsha's empire

Harsha's empire was very vast. Pannikar, an Indian Historian associated with the Marxist school of historiography, mentions that Harsha was the undisputed master of North India. The areas from the Himalayas in north to the Vindhya mountain ranges in south, and Kamarupa in east to Saurashtra in west were included in his empire. Harsha was the last Hindu King of the ancient India. Harsha was called '*Savachakravartinam dhaureye*' and '*Chatuh samudradhipati*'. He had inherited a small kingdom from his father but he established his control over almost the entire India by means of his talent and ability. Harsha extended his suzerainty over the areas from the bank of Shatadru on the north to Narmada on the south and from the frontier state of Western Malwa to the regions near the Himalayas.

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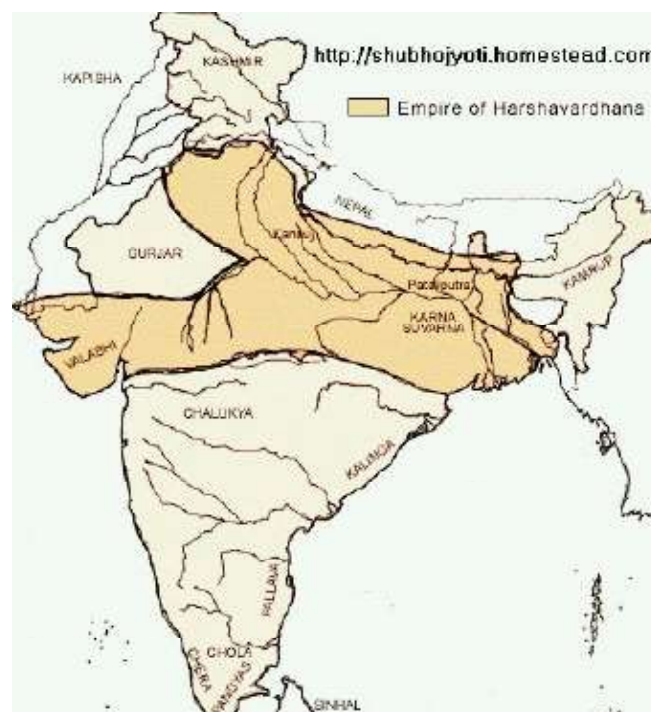


Fig. 7.1 *Extent of Harsha's Kingdom*

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Social and economic condition under his rule

Harsha was undoubtedly one of the greatest rulers of the ancient Indian history. According to Panikkar, Harsha has a high place in the Indian History as a ruler, poet and religious king. Harsha was not only brilliant as a ruler and conqueror but more efficient as an ambassador of peace. Harsha's achievements in the cultural field are immense. His cultural achievements could be narrated as follows:

Kannauj assembly

The first example of the cultural achievements of Harsha was organizing the Kannauj Assembly. Harsha is the only king in the Indian history who is credited with holding public assemblies at regular intervals for religious and cultural purposes. According to Huen-Tsang's accounts, Harsha wished to hold great assemblies in Kanyakubja. All Brahmins, Sramanas and non-Buddhists were ordered to join the assembly so that they would relate to the religious principles of Mahayana Buddhism.

The kings of eighteen countries, 3,000 Brahmins, 3,000 Jains, and 1,000 monks of Nalanda Buddhavihara participated in the assembly of Kannauj, which was chaired by Huen-Tsang. A huge pavilion and 100 feet high *chaitya* were built on the bank of River Ganges. A human sized golden image of the Buddha was installed in it. When Huen-Tsang writes about the proceeding of the assembly, he mentions that a 3 feet high image of the Buddha, kept on an elephant was taken out daily in a procession. The procession reached the assembly hall where the image was installed on a throne and offering was made to that image. Thereafter, the scholars entered into the assembly hall. First of all, the principles of Mahayana were eulogized. And then Huen-Tsang made an announcement – 'If any person proves my proposal logically wrong or creates doubt about it in debate, I will cut off my head on rival's assertion to this effect.' But, Harsha immediately announced for the protection of Huen-Tsang 'If any one touches or hurts the religious teacher, he would be condemned to death and who would speak against him his tongue would be cut off.' Huen-Tsang was given the title of *Mahayanadeva* or *Moksadeva*. In such a situation no one dared to speak against him.'

Brahmins reacted sharply at the promotion of Buddhism. They put this hall on fire and a conspiracy was hatched to make an assassination bid on Harsha. But Harsha survived. He captured five hundred Brahmins and expelled them. An announcement was made in the entire empire of Kannauj that the Chinese pilgrimage traveller established the doctrines of Mahayana after refuting the principles of other religions. No one could dare debate it.

Prayaga assembly

Harsha organized a great assembly in Prayaga. He organized this assembly in every five years. Eighteen kings including Huen-Tsang participated in the assembly. According to Huen-Tsang, 'Harshavardhana worshipped the Buddha statue and offered it all his precious gems. Thereafter, he donated all this offering to the priests living therein. Harsha distributed all his property among students, orphans, widows

and the poor. When nothing was left to him, he donated his gem imbedded crown and garland. When all the accumulated wealth of five years was finished he distributed all his personal ornaments and clothes, and then wore old clothes, which he asked for from his sister Rajyashri. Wearing it he worshipped the Buddha in all the ten directions... It is believed that Harsha established a unique record in the individual charity in the world. Harsha wanted to donate all his wealth for the welfare of humanity in order to receive blessings from Buddha. According to Dr Ishwari Prasad an Indian historian who dealt mainly with the Muslim rulers and the governments of India, 'Harsha had forgotten the partiality of religious intolerance, what he demonstrated in the Kannauj assembly by his expressed charity and liberality in Prayaga assembly.'

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Literary interest of Harsha

Harsha is famous not only for his victories, but also for his books. He demonstrated the best example of his literary talent by composing Sanskrit dramas, *Priyadarshika*, *Nagananda* and *Ratnavali*. Banabhatta called him adept in composing beautiful poetry. Harsha was not only a patron of the learned scholars, but, used his pen as skilfully as he used sword. Banabhatta was his royal poet. Besides, he patronized scholars like Shilabhadra, Jayasen, Matanga Divakar Mayur, etc.

Harsha's religious belief

There is a dispute regarding the religion that he followed. It is evident from *Harshacharita* that Harsha and his ancestors were Shaivites. Although Harsha was bent towards Buddhism, he had faith in Shiva and Surya also. But, seeing his support for Buddhism, some scholars consider him Buddhist. Perhaps he had accepted Buddhism in his later life. Huen-Tsang and Kannauj religious assembly are evidences to it. But it is not entirely clear.

Harsha's administration

Harsha's administrative system was well managed and organized like the Guptas. According to Huen-Tsang, 'Harsha was hard-working and used to forget to take even his food and sleep.' The main features of his administration were as follows:

Central government: Central government consisted of the following:

- **King:** King was the highest official of the administration. He took the titles of *Maharajadhiraja*, *Prameshwara*, *Paramabhataraka*, *Paramadevata*, etc. The responsibility of the entire governance was on the king. Harsha personally supervised his subjects' welfare. He was the supreme judge and supreme commander of his army. Apart from the administrative activities, he was also involved in religious activities and public welfare. According to the Madhubana edict, 'Harsha divided his daily activities into three parts of which one part was reserved for the administrative activities and the remaining two parts were reserved for his personal and religious acts.'

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- **Council of ministers:** The king had a council of ministers to assist him in the administrative affairs. The Council of ministers had an important place in the empire as it had control over the autocratic behaviour of the king. Central administration was divided into several departments. These departments acted under the control of ministers or chairpersons. The important officials were *Mahasandhivigrahaka*, *Mahabaladhikrita*, *Senapati*, *Rajasthaniya* (Foreign Minister), *Uparika Maharaja*, etc. Huen-Tsang had written that the administration of the country was under the control of these officials.
- **Provincial administration:** Harsha's empire was very vast. Therefore, for the sake of the administrative convenience, it was divided into provinces, which were known as *Bhukti* or *Desha*. Its chief official was known as *Uparika Maharaja*. A member of the royal family was appointed to this post. Every province was divided into district (*visaya*). Its head was called *Visayapati*. The *Visayapati* was appointed by the *Uparika Maharaja*.
- **Local or village administration:** Every district or *visaya* was divided into several *pathaka* (circles), and the *pathak* was divided into several *gramas* (villages). *Gramas* was the smallest unit of the administration. An official, known as *Mahattara* was referred to among the village officials, who perhaps looked after the village administration. But, we do not know for certain whether he was a state official or respected elderly villager. *Gramika* was perhaps the head of a village.
- **Revenue system:** The main source of the income was *Udranga* (land-tax). Besides, the other taxes were *Uparikara*, weath, gold, etc. According to Huen-Tsang, royal land had four parts. One part was spent on religious activities and government works. Second was spent over public works and officials. The third part was spent to provide reward and salaries to the scholars and the fourth was spent on donation and meritorious acts. One-sixth of the produce was taken as land-tax.
- **Judicial system:** Huen-Tsang has written that there were no criminals as the administration was run with honesty and the mutual relation between the government and people was cordial. During the time of Harsha, punishment was severe. Hence, the criminals were afraid of committing any crime. The *Harshacharita* states that the criminals were set free on the occasions of festivals, ceremonies, etc. *Dandika* or *Dandapashika* was the title of the chief judicial officer.
- **Department of Defence:** To protect the vast empire, there was a need to have a very efficient and large army. It is evident from the accounts of Harsha that he organized a huge army as well as increased its numbers after extending his empire. The numbers of elephant army were 60,000 and that of mounted army were 100,000. He also increased his arsenals.

- **Espionage system:** The espionage department was under the control of the Department of Defence. This department discovered secretly any disruptive activities taking place within or without the kingdom.
- **Activity of public welfare:** Harsha executed several acts of public welfare because of which he is often compared with Asoka. He donated his wealth every five years. Besides, he also built several *chaityas*, stupas and temples. He worked for the development of the Nalanda University and other educational centres.

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Estimate of Harsha's reign

Harsha's characteristic had the mixture of the qualities of Ashoka and Samudragupta. Like Samudragupta, he launched the campaign of conquest in different parts of the country and attained the status of emperor and also achieved historical unity of the country. Harsha occupies a special place in the Indian history on account of his valour, able leadership, religious tolerance, literary love and charity. He was a distinct person and should be counted among great kings like Ashoka and Akbar. As an administrator of public welfare, literary patron, and an accomplished dramatist, etc., he should be mentioned in the pages of history as a talented and attractive king. Harsha, on the basis of his talent, extended his empire in the whole of India and, thus, united it into a political unity.

Huen-Tsang's account of India

Huen-Tsang had praised the administrative system of Harsha. He considered Harsha as a king endowed with all qualities. According to him, Harsha had a strong control over his administration, which was well-organized. The subjects were affluent and contented. Crime was negligible, and the punishment was so severe that none had the courage to commit any crime. The economic life of the society was primarily dependent on the agriculture but there were many industries and business settlement in addition to agriculture. Huen-Tsang writes that every person fulfilled his needs peacefully. One-sixth of the produce of land was paid as tax. Golden and silver coins were in vogue. Huen-Tsang was especially attracted to the religious condition of India. He found mostly Brahmins in this country. So, he called it 'the country of Brahmins.' Brahmins and the others used Sanskrit language and were divided into several categories. Some appeared with shaved head, garland of skulls, knotted hair or with the ash-painted bodies. Recluses led a life of sacrifice. Huen-Tsang has also talked about the eighteen sects of Buddhism. According to him, Harsha was a follower of Buddhism, but there were also several other religions in India at that time. Brahminism was in a developed condition. Most of the people were either the followers of Shaiva or Vaishnava thoughts.

Check Your Progress

3. Who was the founder of the Vardhana dynasty?
4. Who was the first powerful king of the Vardhana dynasty?

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7.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The causes of disintegration of the Gupta Empire were as follows:
 - Internal dissensions
 - Confused succession
 - Short reigns and quick successions
2. The Gupta Empire ended in 550 CE, when it disintegrated into regional kingdoms after a series of weak rulers and invasions from the east, west, and north.
3. Pushyabhuti was the founder of the Vardhana dynasty.
4. Prabhakara Vardhana was the first powerful king of the Vardhana dynasty.

7.5 SUMMARY

- The Gupta dynasty had the distinction of providing to the country a galaxy of great kings. Comparatively, they stayed longer at the top.
- They trained their successors well in the art and science of maintaining a huge empire, peace and fighting wars; and kept the inevitable at bay.
- The death of Samundragupta was tantamount to the removing of the cornerstone of the edifice.
- The later Guptas present a spectacle of short reigns and quick successions. The reigning heads must have been unable to consolidate their position and make their authority felt.
- None among the later Guptas had the ability to check the rot that the system had developed from within.
- The Guptas, unlike the Mauryas neglected the defense of the north-western region.
- After the decline of the Gupta Empire, the political unity of India was once again disintegrated. Anarchy prevailed everywhere in the country.
- After the death of his brother Rajyavardhana, Harshavardhana (AD 606–647) ascended the throne at the age of sixteen in AD 606.
- *Harshacharita*, written by Banabhatta, mentions that Harsha marched with a powerful army to take his revenge against Shashanka.

- Harsha's empire was very vast. Pannikar, an Indian Historian associated with the Marxist school of historiography, mentions that Harsha was the undisputed master of North India.
- The first example of the cultural achievements of Harsha was organizing the Kannauj Assembly.
- Harsha's administrative system was well managed and organized like the Guptas. According to Huen-Tsang, 'Harsha was hard-working and used to forget to take even his food and sleep.'

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7.6 KEY WORDS

- **Factionalism:** Factionalism refers to arguments or disputes between two or more small groups from within a larger group.
- **Chaitya:** A *chaitya*, chaitya hall, chaitya-griha, or caitya refers to a shrine, sanctuary, temple or prayer hall in Indian religions.
- **Stupa:** A stupa is a mound-like or hemispherical structure containing relics that is used as a place of meditation.

7.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What led to the decline of the Gupta Empire?
2. List the factors responsible for the rise of Harshavardhana.
3. Write a short note on Harsha's conquests.
4. What was the literary interest of Harsha?
5. What was Harsha's religious belief?

Long-Answer Question

1. Discuss the social reasons for the fall of the Gupta Empire.
2. Explain the relation of Harsha with China.
3. Discuss the cultural achievements of Harsha.
4. Describe the Harsha's administrative system.
5. Harsha's characteristic had the mixture of the qualities of Ashoka and Samudragupta. Elaborate.

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7.8 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - IV
THE FOREIGN INVASION AND ESTIMATE OF
DELHI SULTANATE

*Foreign Invasions and the
Delhi Sultanate*

NOTES

UNIT 8 FOREIGN INVASIONS AND
THE DELHI SULTANATE

Structure

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Arab Conquest of Sindh
 - 8.2.1 Mahmud of Ghazni
 - 8.2.2 Mahmud's Invasion
 - 8.2.3 Causes of the Downfall of the Ghaznavid Empire
- 8.3 Muhammad Ghori
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- 8.4 Qutubuddin Aibak and the Establishment of the Delhi Sultanate
- 8.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
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- 8.9 Further Readings

8.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about the various causes that led to the downfall of the Gupta Empire. In this unit you will study about the foreign invasions and the Delhi sultanate.

Though trade relations existed between Arabia and India from very ancient times and a lot of mutual give and take was there, after the rise of Islam in Arabia the Arabs tried to conquer India through Sind after their conquest of Iran. It is said that the first unsuccessful attempt in this direction was made by the Arabs at the time of Caliph Umar in AD 636, however, it was successful. The first successful attack was carried out in AD 712.

In this unit, you will also learn about the rulers like Muhammad Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori, and describe Aibak as an empire builder or founder of Delhi Sultanate.

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8.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the political, social, religious and economic condition of India at the time of the Arab invasion
- Identify the causes of the downfall of the Ghaznavid Empire
- Explain the social condition of India at the time of Ghori's attack
- Discuss Aibak as an empire builder or founder of Delhi Sultanate

8.2 ARAB CONQUEST OF SINDH

The political, social, religious and economic condition in India during the Arab invasion can be described as follows:

- (i) **Political Conditions:** The political condition of India was very miserable at the time of the Arab invasion. There was no strong central government in the country. After the death of Harshvardhan, the country had become divided into many small kingdoms. These states carried out constant warfare for supremacy, a policy that was followed by the major kingdoms of the time.
- (a) **Kannauj:** This kingdom was ruled by Yasovarman who constantly quarrelled with his neighbouring states for the expansion of his empire. He was eventually defeated and killed by Lalitaditya of Kashmir. He was a contemporary of king Dahir of Sind.
- (b) **Kashmir:** At the time of the Arab invasion (AD 712), Kashmir was ruled by the Karkot dynasty. The ruler was Chandrapida. His successor was Lalitaditya who defeated Yasovarman. But in the later ninth century, around AD 855, Avantivarman of the Ulpala dynasty seized power from the Karkotas.
- (c) **Sind:** It was ruled by a Brahmin named Dahirat during the time of the Arab invasion. It is said that a majority of the population was the follower of Buddhist religion. It was this ruler who had to face the Arab invasion under the leadership of Muhammad-bin-Qasim.
- (d) **Afghanistan:** It was called Gandhar at the time. At the time of Hiuen-Tsang's visit, the kingdom was being ruled by a Kshatriya dynasty which ruled over it till the end of the ninth century. It is said that the last ruler of this dynasty, Trilochanapala was dethroned by a Brahmin minister of his who seized power.
- (e) **Nepal:** Just before the Arab invasion of Sind, Nepal became independent of the ruler of Kannauj through the cooperation of Tibet. It was then under the control of Tibet. Though Nepal had close cultural and religious contacts with India it took no interest in the Indian politics at the time of the Arab invasion.

- (f) **Assam:** Bhaskarvarman proclaimed Assam as an independent kingdom during the reign of Harshavardhan. But soon after, he was dethroned by a tribal leader Sitstambh. Since Assam was situated very far it had no influence on the general policy of India.
- (g) **Bengal:** After the death of Shashank it was first conquered by Bhaskarvarman and later on by Yasovarman of Kannauj. After his death, disorder was unleashed and taking advantage of the situation their feudal lords proclaimed one of them, Gopal, as the king. He is supposed to be the founder of the Pala dynasty. It ruled in Bengal till the 12th century. It is clear that the condition of this kingdom was not stable when the Arabs invaded India.
- (h) **Malwa:** The Pratihara dynasty was ruling over this kingdom at this time. Its capital was Kannauj. The Rastrakuta ruler Dantidurga is said to have defeated the ruling Pratihara prince. Pratihara rulers came into conflict with the Arabs many times between AD 725 to 740 but the Pratihara ruler Nagabhata defeated them.
- (i) **Vakataka dynasty:** The Vakatakas had been ruling over the Deccan from the fourth century AD onwards. Their power had declined at the time of the Arab invasion.
- (j) **Pallavas:** The Pallavas ruled over southern and lower Deccan. Their capital was Kanchi. At the time of the Arab invasion of Sind, the Pallava ruler was Narsimhavarman II (AD 695-722). He was probably more interested in literature and art and did not evince any interest in the politics of Northern India.
- (k) **Pandayas:** The Pandaya kingdom included modern Trichinopoly, Tinnevely and Madurai. They were in constant conflict with the other kingdoms of south India.
- (l) **Chola Kingdom:** They ruled over the eastern part of Madras and most of Mysore. They were continuously fighting against the Pandayas and the Cheras.
- (m) **Chera kingdom:** They ruled over most of modern Kerala. They kept on fighting against the Pandayas.

In brief, India was divided into many kingdoms. The country lacked political unity and a powerful central government. As a result, Muhammad bin Qasim was able to invade and conquer Sindh in 711. This marked the arrival of Islam in the subcontinent.

8.2.1 Mahmud of Ghazni

Towards the end of the ninth century, feudal lords of Persian origin ruled over Transoxiana, Khorasan and some parts of Iran. They had to engage constantly in a fight against the Turkish tribes on their northern and eastern frontiers. This conflict led to the emergence of a new type of soldier known as Gazi. The Turks were

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mostly worshippers of natural forces and so were Kafirs in the eyes of the Muslims. Therefore, the Gazi soldiers fought against them for political and religious causes. With the passage of time, many Turks became Muslims and started propagating and protecting Islam. They came into conflict with the non-Muslim Turkish tribes. A Turkish slave of the Samanid dynasty named Alaptigin who was the governor of Khurasan supported the opposing faction in the struggle for succession in Bokhara. Fearing punishment, he proceeded towards Ghazni and subsequently consolidated his position there. He occupied certain parts in Central Asia and laid the foundation of an independent dynasty at Ghazni and started ruling from Ghazni as his capital.

On the other side, the Samanid dynasty fell and the Gaznavids undertook the task of protecting the Islamic regions against the non-Islamic tribes of central Asia. After Alaptigin, his son Abu Izhak and then slaves such as Baltagin, Pirai and Subuktugin became his successors. Subuktugin was the only one who was successful. Subuktigin (977–999) turned his attention towards India. Around AD 980, he dispatched a Turkish army against Jaipal in which Jaipal's army had to suffer a heavy loss and he was forced to surrender for peace. He is said to have occupied the whole of Balkh Khurasan, Afghanistan and in addition, the north-western frontier of India before his death. He was succeeded by his son Mahmud (999–1030) to the throne of Ghazni. With his accession, a new chapter started in the history of Islam. He defeated the ruler of Seitain, Khalif-bin-Ahmad and obtained the title of Sultan. Though his empire and his title enjoyed the sanction of the Khalifa, but the basis of his power was conquest. Medieval Indian historians consider Mahmud of Ghazni as a soldier of Islam because of his struggle against the tribal invaders of Central Asia.

Many scholars consider him as the first Sultan-i-Azam. This title is not found inscribed on his coins where he is simply referred to as Amir Mahmud and also, this title was not given to him by the Khalifa.

Historians do not agree on the motives inspiring Mahmud of Ghazni for his Indian invasions. Some historians describe him as a soldier in the cause of Islam and say that he exhibited his religious fanaticism by breaking the idols of Hindu Gods and forcibly converting the people to Islam. But now-a-days this opinion is not accepted. Actually, his main ambition was to acquire wealth even though he was a breaker of idols. He had no wish to squander away this wealth in India itself. He wanted to utilize it for establishing a vast central Asian empire. This is accepted without any controversy that he had no wish to establish a permanent empire in India because he always returned to Ghazni. He made no arrangements regarding his conquered areas nor did he annex the conquered areas to his empire. Only Punjab and Multan were made an integral part of his Gaznavid Empire.

8.2.2 Mahmud's Invasion

Mahmud Ghazni carried out 17 invasions in India between AD 1000 and 1028. A brief description of which is as follows:

Invasion of the frontier regions

Mahmud Ghazni established his control over some cities of the north-western frontier and a few forts in the vicinity of Peshawar for the first time in AD 1000. After making administrative arrangement for them, he went back to Ghazni.

Attack on Peshawar

In AD1001 Mahmud invaded Peshawar, an important part of Jaipal's dominions. Jaipal sent a big army of 12000 horses, 30000 infantry and 300 elephants to face 15000 horses of Mahmud, but Jaipal was defeated and imprisoned along with a few of his soldiers. He concluded a treaty with Mahmud by which he promised 25 elephants and 25000 Dinars to Mahmud. Due to a feeling of severe humiliation, Jaipal could not survive for long and he committed suicide after giving over the kingdom to his son, Anandpal.

Attack on Mera and Bhatinda

In AD1004 Mahmud attacked Mera and Bhatinda. The ruler Biji Raj defended the fort bravely for 3 days, but had to surrender the fourth day. He had to hand over to Mahmud 280 elephants and enormous wealth. Like Jaipal, he also ended his own life.

Attack on Multan

In AD1005-6, Mahmud attacked the ruler of Multan – Abul Fath Daud (who was a follower of the Ismaili sect which Mahmud considered a rival sect). Abu Fath was defeated and gave 20000 gold Dirhams to Mahmud. Mahmud handed over the administration of Multan to the grandson of Jaipal called Sevakpala or Sukhpala who embraced Islam and got the name of Naushashah.

Attack on Naushashah of Multan

Naushashah gave up Islam after Mahmud went back and declared himself as an independent ruler with the name of Sukhpala. So Mahmud had to invade Multan again. Sukhapla paid him 40000 Dirhams but Mahmud kept him as a prisoner throughout his (Sukhapala's) life.

Attack on Anandpala

In AD1008, Mahmud attacked the ruler of Lahore, Anandpala. At the latter's behest the rulers of Gwalior, Kalinjar, Kanauj, Ujjain, Delhi and Ajmer formed a military confederacy. About 30,000 Khokhars of Multan also joined them. According to historian Farishta, a severe battle took place and within a short time the Khokhars murdered about 5,000 Muslims. However, an arrow hit the eye of Anandpal's elephants and he ran away from the battlefield carrying Anandpala with him. With the defeat in this battle, the joint efforts of the Hindushahis failed, Indian people and the rulers were now terrified by Mahmud.

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Attack on Nagarkot

In AD 1009, Mahmud launched an attack on Nagarkot (Kangra). He plundered enormous wealth from its temples.

Attack on Daud, the ruler of Multan

In AD 1011, Mahmud Ghazni again attacked Daud because he had declared himself independent. He was defeated and imprisoned by Mahmud.

Attack on Thaneswar

In AD 1014, Mahmud attacked Thaneswar, plundered its temples and broke its idols. He brought the fort under his control.

Attack on Trilochanpala

In AD 1013, Mahmud attacked Nandan, the Capital of Anandpala and his successor, Trilochanpala (near the salt mines of Khakda on Jhelums). He was defeated and his kingdom was annexed to Mahmud's empire.

Attack on Kashmir

In AD 1015, Mahmud proceeded against Bhimpala, the son of Anandpala, in Kashmir. Kashmir was plundered and thousands of persons were taken away as slaves.

Attack on Mathura and Kanauj

In AD 1018, Mahmud attacked Mathura. At that time it was the most thickly populated and prosperous city of northern India. Mahmud ransacked the city and after despoiling the temples and idols proceeded to Kanauj. The King of Kanauj, Rajpala fled from the city upon hearing about the arrival of Mahmud here also. Mahmud exhibited his barbarism. He took away from this city 2 crore Dirhams, 53000 prisoners and 350 elephants.

Attack on Kalinjar and Gwalior

In protest against the cowardice exhibited by the ruler of Kanauj, king of Kalinjar and his son Vidyadhar entered into a treaty with the king of Gwalior and attacked Kanauj. When Mahmud heard of this development, he attacked Kalinjar and Gwalior and established his control over them.

Attack on the Punjab and its incorporation into the Gaznavid empire

In AD 1021, he attacked those areas of the Punjab which were free till that time. Many people were robbed, murdered or forced to embrace Islam. After this, Punjab was fully annexed to the Gaznavid empire.

Attack on Kalinjar

In AD 1022, Mahmud again attacked Kalinjar with the object of acquiring wealth. Laden with enormous wealth he again went back to Ghazni.

Attack on Somnath

Among the invasions of Mahmud Ghaznavi, his invasion of Somnath (Kathiawad) is the most famous. He proceeded from Ghazni at the lead of a big army on 17 October, 1024. In January 1025, he reached Anilwara, the capital of Gujarat, from where he proceeded towards the famous Shiva temple of Somnath. Famous historians have described the glory of Somnath on the basis of contemporary accounts saying that more than 1 lakh pilgrims used to assemble every day, one thousand priests used to perform the worship ceremony, thousands of devdasis performed dances and songs. Various kings of India had granted about 1000 villages to the temple. The temple had about fourteen beautiful golden minarets. It is said that Bhimdev, the king of Gujarat ran away without resisting Mahmud. The common people gave resistance for three days. After fierce bloodshed, Mahmud entered the temple. The priests repeatedly sent requests to Mahmud to take away as much wealth as he liked but to spare the Sivalinga but Mahmud paid no heed to this and broke the idol of Siva into pieces. The loot of the temple yielded wealth worth more than 20 lac Dinars. But on the way back he faced resistance by the Jats. He reached his Capital Ghazni in 1026.

His last attack against the Jats

In AD1027, Mahmud attacked the Jats inhabiting the area between the Indus River and Multan with the help of a navy. Jats fought bravely, but were defeated. After loot and plunders, Mahmud reached Ghazni. He died there in AD 1030. At that time, he was 59 years of age.

Motive behind Mahmud's invasions

- (i) **Acquisition of wealth:** Most historians are of the opinion that the major aim of Mahmud's Indian invasions was the acquisition of wealth with which to establish an empire in Central Asia. That was the reason behind his making the temples and idols the target of his attack. The temples were the repositories of gold, silver, diamonds and cash money. Famous historians Habib and Zafar are the propagators and supporters of this view. According to Prof. Habib it was not strange that like the Catholic Church of Europe, the Hindu temples also attracted powerful and cruel invaders to do some unholy act. To call Mahmud's invasions 'Jihad' would be a big mistake. It would be more appropriate to say that he carried out terrible raids on the temples in order to seek their wealth. This fact can be corroborated by the fact that during peacetime no raids on temples were carried out. It was only at the time of the war that the temples were deserted in order to win the sympathy and support of the Muslims and Mahmud took away enormous wealth. Similarly, historian Zafar writes that Mahmud was more a conqueror than a religious propagator. To say that he carried out repeated attacks on India in order to spread Islamic religion would be wrong both historically and psychologically.

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Lanepoole also expressed similar views and wrote that if Mahmud could hope to acquire wealth by looting Baghdad, he would have attacked and plundered that famous seat of Caliphate in the same cruel manner as he attacked and looted the Hindu temple of Somnath. Now the most important object of Mahmud's attacks is considered to be his ambition to acquire wealth.

- (ii) **Religious motive:** According to contemporary Muslim historians, the object of Mahmud's Indian invasions was the propagation of Islam. According to them, Mahmud had vowed at the beginning of his reign that he would carry out an annual invasion on India to propagate his religion. The court historian of Mahmud, Utbi, has written that Mahmud at first wanted to attack Seistan, but later on thought it proper to carry on a Jihad against India. Many historians agree with this and hold that because of this motive, Mahmud carried out seventeen invasions of India, attacked the temples and broke the idols. He forced many non-Muslim people to embrace Islam. It is said that the contemporary Muslim world praised these efforts of Mahmud. The Caliph held a special Durbar to felicitate him. But modern historians Muhammad Habib, Khalik Ahmad Nizami and Zafar have disproved this theory by citing many examples. Prof. Habib writes that the barbaric acts of Mahmud did not help in the propagation of Islam but downgraded it in the eyes of the world. Habib and Nizami, at other places, said that there is no principle in Islamic law which supports or encourages temple destruction. Mahmud attacked India thinking that it would prove his faith towards Islam and he would acquire prestige in the Muslim world. Still, the basic motives behind his invasions were the acquisition of wealth and political motives.
- (iii) **To gain elephants:** Some historians consider that the acquisition of elephants from India was an additional cause behind his Indian invasions. They say that in all his invasions of India after AD 1000, Mahmud made use of elephants. Therefore, it can be surmised that Mahmud attacked India to in order acquire elephants for his army. From India he got both the elephants and the 'Mohave's'.
- (iv) **Ambition for prestige:** Another point of view is that Mahmud carried out repeated attacks on India inspired by his desire to acquire prestige. He had come to know of the weakness of Indian rulers during the lifetime of his father. He had full hope of success in India. Many Muslim travellers had been to India before the Indian invasions of Mahmud. From them he had acquired the necessary geographical information which was helpful to him in carrying out his Indian invasions. Like many other conquerors, Mahmud also was desirous of extending his empire and acquiring prestige. He had annexed many parts of western Punjab to his empire with this explicit purpose only.

- (v) **Acquisition of artisans:** Some scholars held that one object of Mahmud's invasions was the acquisition of skilled artisans. He was very fond of constructing beautiful buildings. With this aim he had carried with him many skilled artisans.
- (vi) **Political motives:** Many historians hold that the basic and real motive of Mahmud's invasions was political. Their contention is that his Indian invasions were a mere instrument for the acquisition of wealth. The ultimate objective was the establishment of a Turk-Persian empire in Central Asia. This has been proved undoubtedly that Mahmud's aim was definitely not the establishment of a permanent empire in India. He used to return to Ghazni after every successful invasion. In fact, Mahmud considered it impossible to rule over two empires – that of Ghazni and India. Even a fertile land like the Punjab was annexed by him to his Gaznavid Empire as late as AD 1021–1022.

In essence, it can be said that the nature of Mahmud Gaznavi's Indian invasion was not religious. His purpose was to amass wealth from India to gain assistance for the establishment of a vast and permanent Gaznavid empire in Ghazni. He did not try to establish an empire in India. He made no permanent administrative arrangement for his conquered territory. In his reign of 27 years, he carried out 17 invasions of India. Thus, he could not literally fulfil his ambition of an annual invasion of India because many a times he got entangled in the wars in Central Asia. From every Indian invasion he got enormous wealth. He invaded areas from Kashmir in the north to Kalinjar in the south and Kanauj in the east to Somnath in the west. He was most vigorously opposed by the Shahi ruler Jaipal. His invasions of Nagarkot, Mathura, Kanauj and Somnath yielded him enormous wealth.

Historical importance or the effects of Mahmud's invasions

It would not be correct to label Mahmud as a mere plunderer and ignore his role. His invasions had many effects chief amongst which are the following:

- (i) **Political effects:** Though the Muslim empire in India was not founded in the wake of Mahmud's Indian invasions yet it would not be improper to say that his invasions opened the way for it. The political condition of India underwent a change with the conquest of the Punjab and Multan by Mahmud Gaznavi. These areas came to be under direct control of the Turks and they could invade the Ganges plain any time after crossing the hills protecting the north western frontier of India. Though for the next 150 years the Turks could not bring this area under their control, it would have to be accepted that Mahmud Gaznavi's invasions made the task of Muhammad Ghori easier.
- (ii) **Acquisition of wealth:** The effect of Mahmud's invasions on Indian cities and temples was not favourable. Almost every time he left laden with gold, silver, diamonds, etc., and that helped him to maintain a powerful and large standing army. It protected his empire from the Central Arabic powers and

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helped him to expand it. From Punjab and Multan he got a vast sum of money every year as tax.

- (iii) **Effect on Islam:** Mahmud's invasions definitely led to the spread of Islam in the Punjab, Multan and a few other areas of India. Equally, his atrocities also inspired hatred towards Islam. But, later on, this religion was spread gradually by the saints and missionaries who had come with Mahmud. In fact, because of these invasions the Turks came to be the propagators of Islam. Later on, this religion affected Indian policies and society. Zafar writes that the Muslim invaders were accompanied by the Muslim saints as well those who worked for spreading Islam in India.
- (iv) **Destruction of art pieces in India:** Because of the 17 invasions of Mahmud, many beautiful temples, idols and artistic pieces were destroyed. He destroyed prosperous cities like that of Nagarkot, Mathura, Kanauj and Somnath. Many skilled artisans were either done to death or were carried away by him as slaves. This adversely affected the progress of these artistic pieces.
- (v) **Adverse psychological effect on the Rajputs:** Some historians are of the opinion that the morale of the Rajput rulers was weakened because of their continuous defeat at the hand of Mahmud Ghazni and they made no effort to gain back the Punjab and Multan. But this view does not seem to be very correct because for the next 150 years the Turks could not establish their empire in India and in the first battle of Tarain in 1191, Muhammad Ghori was defeated by Prithviraj Chauhan. However, there is no doubt that the Rajputs of the period did not give up their traditional rivalries and jealousies and did not try to save the Punjab from the clutches of the invaders.
- (vi) **Spread of Indian art in central Asia:** Mahmud took with him many artisans. Through their creations, they not only gave prestige to Mahmud but also enriched Central Asia by contributing Indian culture.
- (vii) **Description of Alberuni:** With Mahmud of Ghazni also came Muhammad bin-Ahmad who is generally known as Alberuni. His work *Kitab-ul-Hind (Tehkikat-e-Hind)* is a valuable source of information about India. In it, Alberuni had given a critique of Indian social, religious and political condition, Indian philosophy, mathematics, geography and astronomy.
- (viii) **Spread of Persian culture:** After Mahmud's invasion, Lahore gradually became the centre of Persian culture. From the Punjab many Persian scholars, missionaries, traders, etc., began to travel to other parts of India. In course of time, Indo-Persian administrative institutions developed in India.
- (ix) **Appointment of Indians to military posts:** Some historians hold that Mahmud and his successor Mansur gave livelihood to many Hindus in the army. It is said that Mansud's army comprised 50 per cent Indians. Some of them like Tilak and Sewand Ram were appointed even at the higher posts.

- (x) **Effect on royal houses:** Mahmud Gaznavi's invasions had a very adverse effect on the royal houses. Many of them were so weakened that they could not retain their hold for long and some were extinguished totally.

8.2.3 Causes of the Downfall of the Ghaznavid Empire

There are many causes of the downfall of the Ghaznavid Empire as follows:

(i) Lack of Foresightedness on the part of Mahmud Gaznavi

One significant cause of the downfall of the Gaznavid Empire was that Mahmud had paid no attention towards the consolidation of administration alongside conquest. British orientalist and archaeologist Stanley Lane-Poole has written rightly that Mahmud did not have a creative mind. One does not hear of any institution which Mahmud initiated. He only tried to maintain external security in his empire and never made any plans for organizing and consolidating his empire. That is why he left behind him only an uncoordinated and disorderly empire. As soon as he breathed his last, the empire started disintegrating.

(ii) Absence of any law of succession

There was no definite law of succession in the Gaznavid Empire. Therefore, after his death, there was constant warfare and intrigues in the reign of his successors. This dealt a blow to the prestige and stability of the empire.

(iii) Incompetent successors

Mahmud Ghazni had established a rigid military dictatorship. This sort of regime can go on only till one capable and powerful ruler succeeds another. Mahmud's successors were all incapable sovereigns. All of them were lazy and addicted to luxury. Therefore, they could not stop the advance of the Seljuk Turks and their increasing influence.

(iv) Increasing power of the Seljuk Turks

Mahmud's death was followed by the rise of another powerful empire, that of the Seljuks. This empire namely included Syria, Iran and Trans-Oxiana. This empire came into conflict with the Gaznavids for control over Khurasan. In a famous battle Gaznavid Maudud was badly defeated and fled for refuge to Lahore. Next Ghazni Sultan Bahram became a puppet in the hands of the Seljuks. Actually, it was because of the Seljuks that the Gaznavid influence became confined only to Ghazni and Punjab.

(v) Rise of the kingdom of Ghor

Ghor was situated between Ghazni and Herat. This small kingdom presented a big danger to the declining empire of Gaznavi. In 1155, its ruler Alauddin Hussain invaded Ghazni, plundered it and burnt it to ashes. After the shrinking of the Gaznavid Empire to Ghazni and Punjab only, Ghor became all the more powerful.

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Muhammad Ghori who had been appointed by his brother as the ruler of Ghazni gradually conquered Punjab and in AD 1192, imprisoned and murdered the Gaznavid Sultan Khusru Malik.

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Check Your Progress

1. What was the major aim behind Mahmud's Indian invasions?
2. Who destroyed the temple of Somnath?
3. State one significant cause of the downfall of the Gaznavid Empire.

8.3 MUHAMMAD GHORI

Muhammad Ghori (who is also known as Muizzuddin Muhammad bin Sam) was the younger brother of the ruler of Ghor, Ghiyas-ud-din. He was raised to the throne of Ghazni in AD 1173. Still, he remained loyal to his brother and kept good terms with him. Though he ruled over Ghazni virtually as an independent ruler till AD 1206, he got his brother's name inscribed on his coins and behaved towards him as a feudatory does towards his lord. He carried on many invasions of India only as his brother's associate and opened the way for the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate.

India on the Eve of Invasion of Muhammad Ghori

Shihabuddin Muhammad Ghori was appointed as ruler of Ghazni by his brother Ghiyas-ud-din in AD 1173. Between AD 1175 and 1205, Muhammad Ghori carried out a number of invasions to deal with the enemies of the Ghor kingdom viz., Ghaznavids of Lahore and the rulers of Khwarizam. The political condition of India was as unstable at that time as it had been at the time of the last invasion by Mahmud Ghazni in AD 1027 (about 148 years before). The dominance of Gurjar Pratiharas had come to an end and there was no defector or demure monarch in India. The whole country was divided into many small kingdoms which were engaged in mutual jealousy and conflict. For the sake of convenience of study, we can divide the states of the time into three parts viz.

- (a) Muslim kingdoms
- (b) Rajput kingdoms and other states
- (c) States of southern India

(a) Muslim states of the north

- (i) **Gaznavid kingdom of Ghazni:** In the north the Gaznavids were ruling over the Punjab and their capital was at Lahore. Their hold extended from Peshawar in the northwest to Jammu in the northeast. The Southern boundary of the kingdom was unstable. They had snatched the regions of Hansi and Bhatinda from the Chauhans of Delhi. At the time of Ghori's invasion the

rein of this kingdom was in the hands of an incapable and luxury loving ruler Khusru Malik.

- (ii) **Multan:** The chief city of the southern part of the Indus Valley was Multan ruled at that time by Ismailia Shias. At the time of the invasion of Ghori, Carmethian dynasty ruled over his part.
- (iii) **Sind:** The kingdom of Sind was under a local dynasty, the Sumras. They were also Shia Muslims. Any Muslim invader was not likely to experience much trouble in invading and conquering the above mentioned kingdoms because not only were their resources limited but also they lacked popular cooperation. The rulers of these kingdoms were all incapable and luxury loving and for the other people of these areas the success of any Muslim conqueror merely meant the replacement of one Muslim state by the other.

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(b) Rajput and the other kingdoms of the north

Apart from the three Muslim kingdoms, there were many small Rajput kingdoms in the east and north of India. The following four were more prosperous of the states of North India and there were some others as well.

- (i) **Chauhans of Delhi and Ajmer:** At the time of Muhammad Ghori's Indian invasions, Delhi and Ajmer were being ruled by the Chauhan ruler Prithviraj III. He was also famous as Rai Pithora. The account of Prithviraj's conquest available in Chand Bardai's *Prithviraj Raso* is not to be wholly believed; still it appears that he had impressed upon his neighbouring kingdoms his bravery and courage. He defeated and humiliated the Chalukya kings of southern India, seized Mahoba from its Chandel ruler Paramdev. The frontier forts of this kingdom were Hansi, Pakpottan and Bhatinda. Prithviraj III had forcibly carried away from the swayamvar, Sanyogita, the daughter of his neighbour king, Jaichand of Kanauj and so Jaichand harboured intense hostility towards him.
- (ii) **Chalukyas of Gujarat and Kathiawad:** The most important kingdom was those of the Chalukyas in western India. Anhilwara (Paatan) was their capital. The most famous king of this dynasty was Jai Singh Siddharaj (AD 1102–1143). He defeated the Paramaras of Malwa and Guhilots of Chittor. After that, the kingdom disintegrated and only Gujarat and Kathiawad were left to it. At the time of Muhammad Ghori's Indian invasions, the ruler was Kanauj II.
- (iii) **Gahadwalas or Rathors of Kanauj:** The kingdom of Kanauj comprised Kashi, Benaras, Allahabad, Kanauj, Oudh etc. Jaichand was its ruler when Muhammad Ghori invaded India. He had intense enmity with the ruler of Delhi and Ajmer, Prithviraj Chauhan.
- (iv) **Chandelas of Bundelkhand:** In the Chandela kingdom were included Mahoba, Kalinjar, Khajuraho, Jhansi, Ajaygarh, etc. In the last quarter of the 12th century, its ruler was Parmardidev. Prithviraj Chauhan of Ajmer

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had defeated him and annexed quickly a large part of his kingdom. Apart from the above mentioned four Rajput States, Pala and Sena kingdoms were other States of northern India which deserve to be mentioned.

- (v) ***Pala kingdom of North Bengal (Modern Bihar):*** At one time the Palas ruled over entire Bengal and Bihar but their power declined in the 12th century. Later, kings of this dynasty like Kumarpala (1126–1130), Madavpala (1130–1150) were all very weak. Many parts of the kingdom became independent. At the time of Muhammad Ghori's attack, the dominance of the Palas was limited to some parts of Bihar only.
- (vi) ***Senas of Bengal:*** The Senas are said to have come from South India and settled in Bengal. Originally they were feudatories of the Palas. In the 11th century they declared themselves independent in eastern Bengal. When Muhammad Ghori attacked India, Lakshman Sena (1170–1206) was ruling over eastern Bengal.

(c) Kingdoms of South India

At the time of Muhammad Ghori's invasions, the Yadavas were ruling over Devgiri, the Kakatiyas in Warrangal and the Hoysalas in Dowrasamudra. In the far south, the Cheras were ruling in Kerala and the Pandyas in Madura. All the kingdoms of the south were mutually jealous of each other. They had no interest in the politics of North India and therefore no influence as well. In brief, then, at the time of Muhammad Ghori's invasion India was divided into many states. Every kingdom was busy extending its area and influence. Despite invasion by the foreign Turks, they did not apply the common sense of putting an end to mutual quarrels in which case they might have sent their spies to read the internal situation in the Turkish kingdom. The Rajputs did not do this. The outlook of the ruling Rajputs was so narrow at the time that even at the time of external danger staring at their faces, they felt happiness at defeating their neighbouring king with the help given by the invader. This foolishness of theirs became a cause of their downfall.

Social condition of India

The social condition of India was very defective at the time of Ghori's attack. Though in this period, a brave Caste was born in the form of the Rajputs, but they were often luxury-loving and fond of dance and wine. They were excessively proud by temperament. Exhibiting cunningness in war, according to them, was a very wrong thing. They never wanted to deviate from their self-imposed ideals. Indian society was ridden with untouchability, caste system, sati custom, etc. Brahmins still enjoyed a privileged position. Unity and mutual cooperation were totally lacking in the Indian society.

8.3.1 Indian Invasions of Muhammad Ghori

Muhammad Ghori launched his first attack on India in AD 1175. Passing through the Gomal Pass, he came as far as Multan and Uchh and brought these two areas under his control.

Unsuccessful attempt to reduce Gujarat

In AD 1178, he invaded India a second time through the Rajputana desert in Gujarat. But the ruler of Gujarat (Mulraj II or Bhimdeva I) defeated him badly near mount Abu and he fled for his life. After this, the defeated Ghori came to the conclusion that it was essential to have Punjab as the base for the conquest of India.

Conquest of Peshawar, Lahore, Deval and Sialkot

In AD 1179, Muhammad Ghori began his efforts to end the dominance of the Gaznavids in Punjab. At that time, the Gaznavid ruler of the Punjab was Malik Khusru. Muhammad defeated the luxury loving and incapable ruler very easily and in AD 1179–1180 established his control over Peshawar. Now, his target was Lahore. After a number of military campaigns, he finally occupied Lahore and Sialkot as well. By AD 1190, the whole of Punjab had been made a part of the Ghor Empire and Ghori began to make preparations for attacking Delhi and the Doab.

First battle of Tarain (AD 1191)

After his conquest of Punjab the frontiers of Ghori's empire had reached up to Delhi and Ajmer ruled by Prithviraj Chauhan or Prithviraj III. Like Muhammad Ghori, Prithviraj was also an expansionist. He had brought under his control not only the smaller states of the Rajputana, but also the Chandela king of Mahoba. The first battles between the two adversaries was fought for the ownership of Tabarhind or Bhatinda. Prithviraj was supported by many Rajputs, but Jaichand kept aloof. Muhammad Ghori's army suffered a defeat in the battle of Tarain near Thanesar. Muhammad Ghori's life was saved by a Khilji horseman. Prithviraj next advanced towards Bhatinda and after a siege of about 13 months brought it under his control.

Prithviraj became rather contented with this conquest and did not make any further efforts to drive out the Gaznavids from the Punjab completely. Shahabuddin ascribes this defeat of his to the carelessness of his Afghan, Khilji and Khurasani leaders. He humiliated many of them and imprisoned them. It is said that for one whole year Muhammad Ghori made preparations to wipe out the blot caused by his defeat in the first battle of Tarain.

Second battle of Tarain

Muhammad Ghori launched another attack on Prithviraj Chauhan in AD 1192 to avenge his defeat in the first battle of Tarain. This time he is said to have with him about 120,000 soldiers most of were armed cavalymen and 10,000 were horsemen carrying bows and arrows with them. Prithviraj Chauhan sent an appeal for help to all Rajput kings. This time all the other Rajput kings also joined Prithviraj with the exception of Jaichand. Prithviraj's army is said to have comprised about 30,000 soldiers and 300 elephants, soldiers comprising horse-men as well. The

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Turkish army this time was much more organized. Muhammad Ghori divided his army into 5 parts, four flanks to attack the Rajputs and one kept in reserve. Minhaj-us-Siraj wrote, ‘Sultan stationed his army according to a well laid out plan. This strategy led to the defeat of the Kafirs. Allah made us victorious and enemy forces ran away.’ Many Indian soldiers were killed in this battle. The Turkish army occupied the forts of Hansi, Sursuti and Samana and also conquered Ajmer. Prithviraj Chauhan was captured near Sursuti or Sirsa and was murdered either immediately or sometime after.

Effects or consequences of the wars

The Second Battle of Tarain is very significant historically because it gave a new turn to Indian history. Delhi and Rajasthan came under the occupation of the Turks after this battle. This conquest made the determination of Ghori to establish his empire in India almost definite. The power of the Chauhans having been broken, the predominance of the Turks increased rapidly. Because of this victory, the military phase of the Turkish conquest ended and the way was now opened for the administrative organization of the Delhi Sultanate. Muhammad Ghori went back after this victory leaving the Indian possession in charge of his faithful slave Qutubuddin Aibak. Subsequently, a central organization was established which went on till a long time. Between AD 1192 to 1206, the Gangetic – Jumna Doab was occupied by the Turks and, soon after, they conquered Bengal and Bihar as well. After establishing their hold in the Doab, the Turks had first to deal with the king of Kannauj, Jaichand. Within the next two years Qutubuddin Aibak conquered Meerut, Baran and Koil (Aligarh) as well. Subsequently, the Turks consolidated their southern frontiers by conquering Bayana and Gwalior. Then Aibak took away from the Chandelas their territories of Kalinjar, Mahoba and Khajuraho. He also defeated Bhim-II-the ruler of Gujarat and Anhilwara and plundered many cities. At the time when Aibak was busy effecting the conquest of Central India, another general of Ghori Khliyasruddin Bakhtiyar Khilji (AD 1197) conquered Chunar and attacked Uddandpur, the Capital of Bihar. The ruler Indravarman surrendered and accepted his sovereignty without giving any fight. Aibak ordered Khilji to carry on the administration of the area. Then Khilji conquered Bengal from Lakshman Sen. Muhammad Ghori inherited the empire. Ghori, after the death of his brother (AD 1202), attacked the Shah of Khwarizam, but he had to face defeat (AD 1203). Hearing the news of Ghori’s defeat, the Khokhars of Punjab revolted against him but the rebellion was suppressed by him with the help of Qutubuddin Aibak.

From here, Ghori proceeded to Lahore and after establishing the administrative arrangement in Punjab sent Aibak for Delhi region and himself proceeded towards Ghazni. On his way to Ghazni, when he was offering his evening prayer on the bank of Indus at a place called Damyak, Ghori was suddenly attacked by a few persons and killed. These people included the Khokhars and the Shias among them. Thus, on 10 March 1206, Muhammad Ghori’s life ended. After his death, his Central Asian Empire was usurped by the Shah of Khwarizam. His military chiefs established the Muslim empire in India. After him, for about 50 years the Mamluk Sultans remained

busy in consolidating the Muslim empire in India. That empire progressed for about 150 years, though the royal dynasties changed.

Check Your Progress

4. Who was Muhammad Ghori?
5. When did Muhammad Ghori launch his first attack on India?

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8.4 QUTUBUDDIN AIBAK AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

After Muizuddin Muhammad Ghori, his slave Qutubuddin sat on the throne of Lahore on 25 June AD 1206. However, from AD 1206 to 1208 he was only a Malik to the brother of Muhammad Ghori at Ghor. At that time the areas of India under Turkish hold were Multan, Uchh, Naherwala, Pursaur, Sialkot, Lahore, Tarain, and Ajmer, Hansi, Kuhram, Meerut, Delhi, Badayun, Gwalior, Banaras, Kanauj, Kalingar, Oudh, Ranthambhore, Malwa, Bihar and Lachnauti. In the conquest of these, Qutubuddin had been associated as a military commander. After the second battle of Tarain (AD 1192), he had suppressed the revolts in Ajmer and Meerut. He had conquered the areas of Hansi, Delhi, Ranthambhore, etc., in the absence of Muhammad Ghori. When Muhammad Ghori had come to India in AD 1194 to attack Jaichand of Kanauj, then also Aibak had helped him. In AD 1197, he had defeated Bhimdev II of Anhilwara and thus avenged the defeat of his master. After Ghori's death Aibak declared himself as the ruler of the Indian possession and protected and extended the Delhi Sultanate by the former's finding solutions to many problems facing it.

Problems before Qutubuddin Aibak and his Efforts towards their Solution

- (i) **Nasiruddin Qabacha (AD 1206):** After Muhammad Ghori's death, three of his main confidants enjoyed equal positions – the governor of Kirman, Tajuddin Yaldouz; governor of Multan and Uchh, Nasiruddin Qabacha; and governor of Delhi, Ajmer, etc., Qutubuddin Aibak himself. As a practical statesman Qutubuddin extended the hand of friendship towards Qabacha. On the one hand he offered the hand of his daughter to Qabacha, to increase his prestige (since Aibak was a slave) and on the other he asked Qabacha to accept his (Aibak's) sovereignty. Thus Aibak's influence extended to Multan and Uchh.
- (ii) **Alimardan Khilji and Bengal (AD 1206):** The second problem before Qutubuddin Aibak was the Khilji chiefs of Bengal. Alimardan Khilji murdered Ikhtiyaruddin and tried to set himself up as the ruler of Bengal. The followers of Ikhtiyaruddin opposed him. He fled for refuge to Aibak. Aibak dispatched

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him along with an army to Bengal. Seeing that Alimardan was enjoying the support of Aibak, many chiefs ceased to oppose him. Alimardan started ruling Bengal as a representative of Aibak. Thus, Aibak solved the problem of the danger of Bengal by becoming independent.

- (iii) **Tajuddin Yalduj and the security of north-west frontier:** Another problem facing Qutubuddin was Tajuddin Yalduj. Before Ghorī's death he was the Governor of Kirman. After his death he became ruler of Ghazni as well. Because of his being the ruler of Ghazni, he considered the Indian possession of Ghorī's empire as parts of his empire and Aibak as his subordinate. Aibak along with his son-in-law Qabacha attacked Yalduj, defeated him and occupied Ghazni. It is said that Aibak indulged in so much luxury at Ghazni that the people revolted and insisted Yalduj to be their ruler again. In actual fact, the cause of revolt was that the people of Ghazni were not ready to accept Aibak, who was a subordinate of Ghazni, as their ruler. Aibak could rule over only for 40 days. Judging from the consequences of his attack on Ghazni or its immediate result Aibak was unsuccessful in Ghazni, but it proved advantageous for the Delhi Sultanate for two reasons – first, Yalduj came to know the power of Aibak and so he never in future attacked him. Aibak was free of fear from the side of Yalduj; secondly, Delhi Sultanate's relations were severed from Ghazni from this time onwards. This proved advantageous for India and the Delhi Sultanate because it was saved from being involved in the politics of Central Asia and the Delhi Sultanate got an opportunity of developing independently without having to depend on any foreign country.

- (iv) **Seeking acknowledgement from Ghiyas-ud-din:** Minhaj-us-Siraj mentioned that Aibak had started minting coins in his own name and inscribing his own name in the Khutba. But this statement of his is not corroborated by the archaeological facts because in AD 1208, one does not come across coins bearing Aibak's name.

Habibulla's opinion seems to be correct that Minhaj-us-Siraj only followed prevalent traditions when he wrote his description. In reality, Aibak issued his coins only after formally getting the Charter from Ghiyas-ud-din about his independence. This Charter improved his position and helped to consolidate the Sultanate.

- (v) **More conquests in India and contribution towards the extension of the Sultanate:** Aibak had to face many Rajput and Hindu revolts as well. Immediately after Ghorī's death, Chandela king Trailokya Sharma had re-established his control over Kalinjar. The Pariharas had liberated Gwalior from the Turkish hold. The successor of Jaichand, Harish Chandra had driven out the Turks from Badayun and Farukhabad. Though Aibak reconquered Badayun and Farukhabad, he could not reconquer Kalinjar and Gwalior because he died in 1201 due to a fall from his horse while playing polo, leaving his work unfinished.

Assessment of Aibak's Work

*Foreign Invasions and the
Delhi Sultanate*

Aibak as a commander

Aibak was an expert horse rider, expert archer, able and courageous commander. As a commander, he served his master faithfully. He conquered many areas in the absence of Ghori. After Ghori's death, he impressed his military superiority by temporary conquest over Yalduj of Ghazni, by diplomacy over Nasiruddin Qabacha, the ruler of Multan and by giving military aid to Alimardan over the Khilji Chiefs of Bengal. He re-conquered Badayun and Farukhabad. But he could not keep Ghazni under permanent control and could not re-conquer Kalinjar and Gwalior.

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Aibak as a ruler

He got only a limited period of four years to rule. He was a just ruler. Hasan-un-Nizami, the author of the work *Tajul Masir*, wrote that Aibak dispensed justice impartially and helped to bring about peace and prosperity in his empire. Immediately after the warlike situation was over, he turned his attention towards bringing about the prosperity and welfare of his people.

Aibak as a person

He was brave, faithful and generous. Because of his generosity he was known as 'Lakh Baksh.' According to the famous historian Habibullah, he combined in himself the courage of the Turkish and refinement of the Persians.

Aibak as empire builder or founder of Delhi Sultanate

Famous historian Haig and many other scholars consider Aibak as the real founder of the Muslim rule in India. According to Prof. A.B.M. Habibulla, though Muizuddin had given the inspiration yet it was Aibak who organized every aspect of Delhi Sultanate according to a well laid out plan. While implementing the plans of Muizuddin, Aibak must have brought the changes according to the requirement of the situation and, therefore, if the credit for his successes is given to him it would not be improper. But due to the lack of time and adverse circumstances Aibak could not make the Sultanate permanent and stable yet it would have to be conceded that he opened the way to success for Iltutmish and rendered the task of consolidation easier for him.

Check Your Progress

6. Who was the first sultanate of Delhi?
7. Who was known as 'Lakh Baksh.'?

8.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. The major aim of Mahmud's Indian invasions was the acquisition of wealth with which to establish an empire in Central Asia.
2. Mahmud Ghazni destroyed the temple of Somnath.
3. One significant cause of the downfall of the Gaznavid Empire was that Mahmud had paid no attention towards the consolidation of administration alongside conquest.
4. Muhammad Ghori (who is also known as Muizuddin Muhammad bin Sam) was the younger brother of the ruler of Ghor, Ghiyas-ud-din. He was raised to the throne of Ghazni in AD 1173.
5. Muhammad Ghori launched his first attack on India in AD 1175.
6. Qutb al-Din Aibak, a former Turkic Mamluk slave of Muhammad Ghori, was the first sultan of Delhi.
7. Aibak was brave, faithful and generous. Because of his generosity he was known as 'Lakh Baksh.'

8.6 SUMMARY

- Though trade relations existed between Arabia and India from very ancient times and a lot of mutual give and take was there, after the rise of Islam in Arabia the Arabs tried to conquer India through Sind after their conquest of Iran.
- The political condition of India was very miserable at the time of the Arab invasion.
- Towards the end of the ninth century, feudal lords of Persian origin ruled over Transoxiana, Khorasan and some parts of Iran.
- Many scholars consider him as the first Sultan-i-Azam. This title is not found inscribed on his coins where he is simply referred to as Amir Mahmud and also, this title was not given to him by the Khalifa.
- Historians do not agree on the motives inspiring Mahmud of Ghazni for his Indian invasions. Some historians describe him as a soldier in the cause of Islam and say that he exhibited his religious fanaticism by breaking the idols of Hindu Gods and forcibly converting the people to Islam.
- Mahmud Ghazni established his control over some cities of the north-western frontier and a few forts in the vicinity of Peshawar for the first time in AD 1000.

- In AD1027, Mahmud attacked the Jats inhabiting the area between the Indus River and Multan with the help of a navy.
- Most historians are of the opinion that the major aim of Mahmud's Indian invasions was the acquisition of wealth with which to establish an empire in Central Asia.
- Though the Muslim empire in India was not founded in the wake of Mahmud's Indian invasions yet it would not be improper to say that his invasions opened the way for it.
- Maudud died in AD 1049. From then to about AD 1186, twelve different Sultans of the Gaznavid dynasty ruled over their empire.
- Muhammad Ghori (who is also known as Muizuddin Muhammad bin Sam) was the younger brother of the ruler of Ghor, Ghiyas-ud-din.
- Muhammad Ghori launched his first attack on India in AD 1175. Passing through the Gomal Pass, he came as far as Multan and Uchh and brought these two areas under his control.
- In AD 1179, Muhammad Ghori began his efforts to end the dominance of the Gaznavids in Punjab. At that time, the Gaznavid ruler of the Punjab was Malik Khusru.
- After Muizuddin Muhammad Ghori, his slave Qutubuddin sat on the throne of Lahore on 25 June AD 1206. However, from AD 1206 to 1208 he was only a Malik to the brother of Muhammad Ghori at Ghor.
- Aibak was an expert horse rider, expert archer, able and courageous commander. As a commander, he served his master faithfully. He conquered many areas in the absence of Ghori.

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8.7 KEY WORDS

- **Untouchability:** Untouchability was the practice of ostracising a group by segregating them from the mainstream by social custom or legal mandate.
- **Sati:** Sati is an obsolete funeral custom where a widow immolates herself on her husband's pyre or takes her own life in another fashion shortly after her husband's death.
- **Sultan:** Sultan is a position with several historical meanings. Originally, it was an Arabic abstract noun meaning 'strength', 'authority', 'rulership', derived from the verbal noun *sulmah*, meaning 'authority' or 'power'.

8.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short-Answer Questions

1. What were the causes of the downfall of the Ghaznavid Empire?
2. What was the social condition of India at the time of Ghori's attack?
3. Write a short note on the first battle of Tarain (AD 1191).
4. Discuss Aibak as a ruler.

Long-Answer Question

1. Describe the political, social, religious and economic condition of India at the time of the Arab invasion.
2. Discuss the importance of the second battle of Tarain.
3. Describe Aibak as an empire builder or founder of Delhi Sultanate.
4. Explain the problems before Qutubuddin Aibak and his efforts towards their solutions.

8.9 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 9 KHILJI, TUGLAQ AND LODI

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Structure

- 9.0 Introduction
- 9.1 Objectives
- 9.2 Alauddin Khilji
- 9.3 Muhammad Bin Tughlaq
- 9.4 Ibrahim Lodi
- 9.5 Administration and Economic Conditions Under the Delhi Sultanate
 - 9.5.1 Downfall of the Delhi Sultanate
- 9.6 Bhakti Movement
- 9.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 9.8 Summary
- 9.9 Key Words
- 9.10 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 9.11 Further Readings

9.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about the rulers like Muhammad Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori, and described Aibak as an empire builder or founder of Delhi Sultanate.

In this unit, you will learn about the rulers like Khilji, Tuglaq and Lodi. You will be able to describe their administrative systems. This unit will also explain the economic conditions under the Delhi sultanate. You will also identify the main principle of the Bhakti movement.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain Khilji's administrative system
- Discuss the important schemes and reforms of Muhammad Tughluq
- Describe Lodi's administrative system
- Discuss the various factors that led to the fragmentation of the Delhi Sultanate
- Identify the main principles of the Bhakti movement

9.2 ALAUDDIN KHILJI

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Alauddin Khilji's original name was Ali Gurshasp. After plotting to murder his uncle, he assumed the title of Abul Muzaffar Sultan Alauddin-duniya-va-din Muhammad Shah Khilji. Among the rulers of the Sultanate in early medieval India, Alauddin occupies an honourable place both as a conqueror and as an administrator.

Alauddin was the son of Shihabuddin Masud, the brother of Jalaluddin Khilji. Nothing is known about his education, but he was an expert in fighting. Alauddin was married to one of the daughters of Jalaluddin, thus, Jalaluddin was also his father-in-law along with being his uncle. Alauddin had to face many challenges when he became the Sultan. He was unpopular among his subjects as he had treacherously killed his uncle to become the Sultan. However, Alauddin proved equal to the task and overcame all difficulties. He destroyed all claimants to the throne, suppressed all conspiring or revolting nobles, brought distant provinces under his hold, established a strong administration, restored order and peace within the boundaries of the empire, saved his empire from foreign invasions, extended its territories, looted and brought under his influence entire South India and thus brought Khilji dynasty's imperialism and despotism to its zenith.

Alauddin occupies an important place among the rulers of medieval India. He became Sultan at the age of thirty and within a period of fifteen years, became the most powerful ruler of India. The success which he achieved during his lifetime was unique both in regard to the expansion of the empire and its administration. Dr K. S. Lal writes, 'From a non-entity, he rose to be one of the greatest rulers of medieval India.'

As a person, Alauddin was cruel and selfish. He was devoid of the instinct of love and observed no morality. His only aim in life was to achieve success and he was always prepared to adopt any means to achieve it. 'The end justifies the means' remained his principle. He murdered his benefactor and uncle Jalaluddin, imprisoned and blinded all his sons, and captured the throne. He kept all the *Jalali* nobles in good humour till they were useful to him, but as soon as their utility was over, he cruelly finished them all. He started the practice of killing the wives and children of those nobles who revolted against him. He constructed towers of skulls of the Mongols and either killed their wives and children or sold them as slaves. Jalaluddin killed thousands of 'new Muslims' merely on suspicion and gave their wives and daughters to the murderers of their husbands and fathers. Thus, his punishments against those who opposed him were barbaric. Ala-ud-din neither loved his wives, nor his children whose education and care he always neglected. He possessed no virtue like generosity, kindness and tolerance. Whomsoever he disliked, he finished. He was jealous and never permitted anyone to enhance his power and respect. He never allowed anybody to influence him and nobody dared to give him frank advice, except perhaps his friend, Kotwal Ala-ud-Mulk. Alauddin

believed that power and authority could be maintained only by maintaining strict discipline, creating awe and fear among all by pursuing a policy of bloodshed and severe punishments. That is why V. A. Smith has placed him among the crude and oppressive rulers. He wrote, 'In reality, he was a real savage tyrant with very little regard for justice and his reign, though marked by the conquest of Gujarat, and many successful raids, like the storming of the two great fortresses, was exceedingly disgraceful in many respects.'

However, Alauddin was a brave soldier, a most capable military commander, a shrewd diplomat, a great conqueror, a successful administrator and a powerful and ambitious Sultan. His primary objective was to gain success and he achieved it in practically all fields throughout his life. Elphinstone writes, 'His reign was glorious and in spite of many absurd and oppressive measures, he was, on the whole, a successful monarch and showed a just exercise of his powers.' Alauddin proved himself a brave soldier and a capable commander even during the reign of his uncle, Jalaluddin, by his successful campaigns of Bhilsa and Devagiri. His campaign of Devagiri in particular has been regarded as a unique achievement in the history of military campaigns. It would be wrong to say that the success of military campaigns during his reign was due to his capable commanders like Zafar Khan, Nusrat Khan, Alp Khan, Ulugh Khan and Malik Kafur. Of course, each of them was a capable commander, but Alauddin was superior to them all. All of them accepted him as their leader and obeyed his command and where they failed, he succeeded. All important campaigns in Rajasthan were led by Ala-ud-din. When Nusrat Khan and Ulugh Khan failed to conquer Ranthambhor, Alauddin himself went there and captured it. Similarly, Chittor was also conquered by Alauddin himself. In 1299, when the Mongols reached Delhi with a firm determination to fight the Sultan, Alauddin decided to meet their challenge even against the advice of his friend Ala-ul-Mulk and, if the success in the battle of Kili was because of the chivalry of Zafar Khan, it was also due to the determination and capable commandship of the Sultan. Thus, Alauddin can be considered to be one of the most capable and successful commanders of his age.

Alauddin was an all-powerful monarch. Despotism reached its highest mark during his reign. He concentrated all powers of the state in his hands. His ministers, nobles, military commanders and administrative officers were all his subordinates. They simply obeyed his orders and carried out his wishes. Alauddin succeeded not only in suppressing all the revolts which were attempted during his reign and destroyed the power and influence of the nobility, but even sapped the resources of their power and influence. Neither the provincial governors nor his subjects dared to revolt against him. Some revolts were attempted only during the beginning of his reign. Afterwards, we find no trace of them. The commands of Alauddin were obeyed without murmur within the entire boundary of his empire. Besides, he succeeded in providing complete security and peace to his subjects. Firishta writes, 'Justice was executed with such rigour that robbery and theft, formerly so common, were not heard of in the land. The traveller slept secure on the highway

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and the merchants carried their commodities safely from the sea of Bengal to the mountains of Kabul and from Telingana to Kashmir.' Alauddin also did not allow the Muslim *Ulema* to interfere in the affairs of the State. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who did not allow religion to interfere in administrative and political affairs. Of course, his policy towards the Hindus was oppressive, but its primary cause was not religion but politics. He felt that the Hindus could not stop revolting against him unless their social and economic power was destroyed.

Alauddin was a great administrator. He made certain innovations in administration. He was not advised by anybody in these administrative reforms, whether civil or military. Of course, he used to consult his nobles from time to time, but nobody was responsible for his administrative innovations. His friend, Ala-ul-Mulk, was the only individual who could advise him frankly, but he had died by the time Alauddin took up his new administrative measures. He organised a large and powerful army. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who kept a large standing army permanently at the centre, started the practice of branding the horses and that of keeping *huliya* of the soldiers. He was again the first Sultan who introduced a system of measurement of land as a preliminary step for fixing the State demand of the produce, got the revenue collected by government servants and abolished the privileges of hereditary revenue officers like the *Chaudhries*, the *Muqaddams*, etc. As regards his market-system, it was a novelty which had no parallel before or after him throughout the medieval period of Indian history. Besides, Alauddin centralised the entire administration and yet brought about efficiency and perfection in it. Reviewing the success of his administration, Dr K.S. Lal has concluded, 'Alauddin stands head and shoulder above his predecessors or successors in the Sultanate.'

Alauddin suffered from certain weaknesses too. His biggest weakness was that his administration, rather the whole structure of the State, depended on power, and more than that, on fear of a single individual, i.e., the Sultan himself. Therefore, it lacked a stable foundation and was destroyed as soon as the Sultan died. After the death of Alauddin; his standing army, his revenue system and his market-system remained no more. Not only this, his dynasty lost the throne very soon after him. Yet, it is accepted that if Alauddin was responsible for the failure of his system and the rule of his dynasty, then his successors were equally responsible for all of this. The successors of Alauddin proved themselves to be incompetent and during the medieval age, no person could safely remain on the throne without showing competence of his own. Therefore, the dynasty of Alauddin also lost its right to rule. However, it was creditable for Alauddin that his many principles of administration remained intact even after his death. Many rulers of medieval age after him pursued many of his administrative principles, both civil and military.

Therefore, with all these weaknesses, Alauddin Khilji occupies an important place among the rulers of medieval India. Most of the modern historians have given him a high place among rulers of Indian medieval history. Dr A. L. Srivastava concludes, 'A balanced view of Alauddin's work and achievement must give him

a high place among the rulers of Delhi during the medieval age.’ Dr S. Roy who stated that it was difficult to correctly assess the personality and character of Alauddin, however writes, ‘Ala-ud-din was the first Muslim administrator of India. The history of the Muslim empire and Muslim administration in India really begins with him. Ala-ud-din, Sher Shah, and Akbar - each mark a distinctive step in the evolution of Indo-Muslim history.’ E. B. Havell also has all praise for him. He has opined, ‘Ala-ud-din was far advanced of his age. In his reign of twenty years there are many parallels with the events of our own time.’

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Check Your Progress

1. What was Alauddin Khilji’s original name?
2. Who was the first Sultan of Delhi who kept a large standing army permanently at the centre?

9.3 MUHAMMAD BIN TUGHLAQ

Three days after the death of Gayasuddin Tughlaq, Prince Juna Khan (Ulugh Khan) declared himself the Sultan of Delhi under the title Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. After a period of 40 days, one morning he decided to celebrate his coronation in Delhi. According to medieval writer Imami, he assured the people that he would follow the footsteps of his father. He distributed gold and silver coins in the public and many titles among the *Amirs*. Muhammad Tughlaq’s reign started and ended with many changes and revolts.

Controversial Schemes of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

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

1. Transfer of Devgiri or the transfer of capital

One of the most misunderstood of the schemes of the Sultan was his transfer of the capital. Muhammad Tughlaq wanted to make Devgiri, which he renamed Daulatabad, his capital in place of Delhi. The objects of this scheme are said to be the following:

- (i) According to Barani, the Sultan made Devgiri his capital because it was situated comparatively in the middle of his empire. It had equal distance

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from Delhi, Gujarat, Lakhnauti, Sonargavn, Telangana, Mabar, Dwarasmudra and Kampila. Barani wants to say that from Devgiri, the Sultan could keep a more effective control over the whole of Deccan.

- (ii) According to Ibn Battuta, the people of Adelhi (Delhi) wrote contemptuous letters to Muhammad Sultan. The Sultan, in order to punish them, ordered them to march to a distance of about 700 miles to Devgiri. But the historians do not agree with this statement of Ibn Battuta because they say that at the time of transfer of the capital, Ibn Battuta had not even reached Delhi. Secondly, even if for the mischief of a few persons, it does not seem logical that he would have punished the entire population of Delhi.
- (iii) According to Isami, the Sultan was ever suspicious of and annoyed with the people of Delhi and it was to completely suppress their power that he had decided to drive them towards the South. The historians are of the opinion that Isami constantly tried to show that in all his schemes, the Sultan was inspired by a feeling of hostility towards his people. A dispassionate look at the history does not prove this assertion because the Sultan did take many steps for the welfare of the people as well.
- (iv) According to Gardner Brown, the Sultan made Devgiri instead of Delhi as his capital because of the constant invasions by the Mongols. But this argument does not carry much weight because by the time of Muhammad Tughlaq and his accession, the invasions of the Mongols had almost stopped and, moreover, this policy of escapism would have further encouraged the Mongols.
- (v) In the opinion of some scholars, the Sultan decided to transfer his capital to Deccan after the revolt of Bahauddin Gurshasp so that a strong administration could be established in the Deccan and adverse circumstances could be met with.
- (vi) Another view is that poets like Khusru had bundled in the heart of the Sultan a love for the beauty of Devgiri. That is why the Sultan made it his capital.
- (vii) According to Mehdi Hassan, the Sultan made Devgiri in Deccan another major administrative centre so that the Muslim population there could be increased.

So, it can be maintained that Muhammad Tughlaq made Devgiri his capital so that a central effect could be established over a vast empire and the rebellion in the South could be suppressed easily.

Nature of transfer of capital

As with the causes and objectives of the transfer of capital, historians differ also as to the nature of the transfer of capital. Barani says that the Delhi city and its rest houses, neighbouring areas and villages up to 5 km of Delhi were all desolated and not even a cat or a dog in them could be seen alive. This statement of Barani

seems to be exaggerated. The desolation of entire city is really unimaginable. In fact, even after the transfer of the capital, Delhi continued to be a densely populated city. The strongest proof of it is that even when Devgiri was made the capital, coins continued to be minted in Delhi and even in the subsequent period contact was maintained between Delhi and Daultabad. Thus, both Delhi and Devgiri continued to be major administrative centres.

As against Barani, Yahya Sirhind in fact writes that on his way from Delhi to Daulatabad, the Sultan constructed rest houses at the distance of every two kilometres and the whole desolated area buzzed with activity. The Sultan, Yahya writes, gave agricultural land to the people inhabiting these areas and planted trees on both the sides of the road. According to him, first the royal household and treasury, Amirs, soldiers went to Devgiri followed by the Ulemas and the scholars. But according to Barani, the transfer of the capital was effected in summer with the result that due to the tiredness of a long journey, scarcity of water etc., a large number of people died and were ordered to go back. But now a days, the historians hold that the Sultan ordered them to return to Delhi because the Amirs and Ulemas who had gone to Daulatabad from Delhi had not completely forgotten the charm of Delhi and became increasingly more discontented and kept on urging the Sultan to go back to Delhi. The Sultan understood their sentiments and after a few years, allowed them to go back to Delhi.

Consequences

The immediate effect of the measure went against the Sultan. The people who were forced to go away from Delhi became annoyed with the Sultan. They contributed towards increasing the discontentment against the Sultan. The transfer would had led to a waste of money, time and human lives because being effected in summer people were really put to great hardship. But the long-term effects of the transfer were advantageous. Because of there being two administrative centres in the empire, new roads were constructed. The obstacles to the contacts between North India and South were removed, which led to the migration of many Sufi saints, Ulemas and other scholars to the South. This resulted in the spread of Muslim culture in the Sultan, and after some time the powerful Bahmini Empire rose there. It led to a cultural integration of the country.

2. Use of token currency

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

Causes

- (i) According to Barani, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was very spendthrift. When he wanted to conquer many regions, he was forced to issue copper currency. Though this statement of Barani cannot be accepted in it's entirety, it would have to be conceded that the Sultan planned to conquer Khurasan for it, he had collected a vast army and had given it advance salary for one year. This

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statement of Barani is devoid of any truth that the royal treasury had become absolutely empty because when the people cheated the government by manufacturing fake coins, the Sultan had given them gold and silver coins from the royal treasury only in return for those fake coins.

- (ii) According to Nissen, the Sultan planned to issue a token currency because of a scarcity of silver throughout the world, including India. So, silver could neither be procured from the foreign countries, nor from the mines of Bengal. That is why the Sultan issued copper coins.
- (iii) According to some scholars, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq issued copper coins because the Mongol Emperors of China had issued paper currency in China in the 13th century and the Persian Emperor Gaikhadu had made a similar experiment in AD 1294. Muhammad Tughlaq also wanted to demonstrate his originality by issuing such currency.

Under this scheme, Muhammad Tughlaq introduced certain reforms in the already prevalent currency and also issued some new coins (metallic and of certain value). Between AD 1329 and 1330, Muhammad Tughlaq issued copper coins. He also issued a gold coin weighing 201.6 grains, which Ibn Battuta called the Dinar. To make daily transaction easier, the Sultan also issued the Dokani or the Sultan's coin. The Sultan declared that the value of the Bronze-Copper mixed coin was equivalent to that of the silver coins and expected that people would accept them as such.

Consequences

- (i) According to Barani, this scheme of Muhammad Tughlaq also proved very disadvantageous to the empire. Because of the prevalence of the token currency, the house of the Hindus virtually became a minting agency. The inhabitants minted in a very large number of those copper coins. They paid the revenue with these very coins and also bought things like beautiful clothes, arms and other beautiful things. If the statement of Barani is correct, it would just be proper to look into the cause of it. According to Edward Thomas, 'It was due to the fact that the officials in the royal mint used those very instruments which were used by the ordinary craftsmen and used a metal which could easily be available everywhere.'
- (ii) According to Prof. Habib, 'The experiment of the Sultan in issuing token currency failed because the people did not co-operate with him.' They not only minted fake coins, but also hoarded the silver coins and tried to give token currency for buying any item with the result that the silver coins went out of circulation.
- (iii) According to Prof. Habib, 'The token currency had an adverse effect even on the foreign trade and the foreign merchants stopped bringing their merchandize in India.'

- (iv) This plan also adversely affected the royal treasury. The Sultan had to exchange these fake coins with real silver and gold coins because of which the royal treasury reached a deplorable state of affairs.

Khilji, Tuglaq and Lodi

9.4 IBRAHIM LODI

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When Sikandar Lodi died, all his sons and important nobles were present in the capital and it was unanimously decided by all that while the eldest son of the Sultan, Ibrahim would be the ruler at Delhi, his younger brother Jalal Khan would be the ruler at Jaunpur. Therefore, Ibrahim ascended the throne of Delhi after his father and assumed the title of Shah. Ibrahim Lodi remained the last ruler of the Lodi dynasty. His reign began with the conflict against his brother Jalal Khan; the conquest of Gwalior remained the only significant conquest of his reign; and, his conflict with the state of Mewar weakened and lowered his prestige.

However, the most notable feature of his reign was his conflict against the Afghan nobility. Of course, it is certain that Babur who defeated him and destroyed the rule of the Lodi dynasty was a more capable commander. He possessed better military resources and therefore, the fate of the Afghans could not be otherwise than what happened in the First battle of Panipat. But it is also a fact that the conflict of Sultan Ibrahim with his nobility was also one of the primary causes of the downfall of the Lodi dynasty.

Ibrahim Lodi: An Assessment

Ibrahim was a capable, laborious, just and well-meaning Sultan. He sincerely desired the welfare of his subjects and succeeded in it. His subjects remained prosperous and contented under his rule. Thus, as a ruler, he proved himself equal to his father and grandfather. He was a courageous, dauntless soldier and a fairly successful commander. In 1525, when Daulat Khan Lodi and Alam Khan Lodi attacked Delhi, they succeeded in destroying the main army of the Sultan, yet, Ibrahim stayed back in the field only with his body-guards and when, in the morning, he found the enemy soldiers busy in plunder, he attacked them and forced them to flee. It was a rare daring act on the part of the Sultan. Similarly, Ibrahim Lodi did not withdraw from the battle of Panipat and died fighting. Firishta writes, '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 battle-field.' Thus, Ibrahim was unique in chivalry, courage and determination.

But Ibrahim Lodi was also a rash Sultan. He failed to understand the character and sentiments of his own race. He decided to crush the power of his nobility and remained adamant about it till the end. He could not understand that his Afghan nobles could compromise their self-respect and spirit of independence only gradually. They were already learning to respect the Sultan because of the tactful policy of his father. He only needed to pursue the same policy further. On the contrary, Ibrahim provoked their rebellious nature by directly attacking their self-

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respect and position of power. 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 better weaponry, strategy and generalship, yet, it is certain that had he faced the united Afghan empire extending from Punjab to Bihar, his task would have been difficult. Sultan Ibrahim had reduced his military strength, his territory and his resources in fighting against his own Afghan nobles.

Check Your Progress

3. Who was Muhammad Bin Tughlaq?
4. Who remained the last ruler of the Lodi dynasty?

9.5 ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE

We will begin our study of the administration of the Delhi Sultanate by looking at the practices at the Delhi court.

The Central Government

I. The Sultan

In the Delhi Sultanate, the head of the state was the Sultan who enjoyed unlimited powers in every sphere of state activity. There was no law of succession during the period of the Sultanate. It was not necessary that the eldest son or the daughter of the Sultan should succeed the father. However, tradition developed from the reign of Sultan Iltutmish that the throne belonged to the eldest son or the daughter of the Sultan. Besides, the Sultan also had the right to nominate anyone as his successor to the throne.

The Sultan, according to his strength, behaved as an all-powerful despot. The Sultan was the absolute master of the State and all legislative, executive and judicial powers vested in him. He was also the highest commander of the army. All ministers, nobles and other officers of the State were appointed, promoted and dismissed by him. His order was the law in his State. But, these were his legal powers. Their effectiveness, in practice, depended on his military strength. The nobility also wielded influence, particularly if the Sultan was weak. The Ulema, being interpreter of Islamic laws, also influenced the policy of the Sultan. Only Alauddin Khilji and Mubarak Khilji refused to accept the interference of the Ulema in matters of the State. Apart from the maintenance of law and order within the empire, its protection from foreign invasions, another important duty of the Sultan was to extend its territories.

II. Ministers and Other Officers

Khilji, Tuglaq and Lodi

Different ministers and other officials assisted the Sultan in administering the state. They were as follows:

- (i) **The Naib (Naib-i-Mamlkata):** This post was created during the reign of Sultan Bahram Shah after the fall of Sultan Raziyya. The nobles had chosen one among themselves as the Naib who, in fact, enjoyed all powers of the State. However, this post was effective only during the reigns of weak rulers. In such cases, the post of Naib was next only to the Sultan and was above the Vazir. The powerful Sultans either abolished this post altogether or gave it to a noble simply to honour him, as was done by Alauddin Khilji. In that case, Naib enjoyed no special powers in administration.
- (ii) **The Vazir:** The Prime Minister was called the Vazir. He was primarily the head of the finance department called the Dewan-i-Vizarat and was empowered not only to supervise the income and expenditure of the state, but of all other departments as well. Whenever there was no post of Naib, the position of the Vazir was next to the Sultan. He, therefore, supervised the entire administration and looked after State matters whenever the Sultan fell ill or was out of the capital. He appointed officers for the different posts and performed various other duties. He was assisted by many officers and subordinates, most important among them being the Naib-Vazir and the Mushrif-i-Mamalik (auditor-general).
- (iii) **Ariz-i-mumalik:** He was the head of the department of Diwan-i-Arz, and in that capacity, was the controller-general of the military department. He recruited soldiers, fixed their salaries, arranged for their supplies and inspection and maintained the descriptive rolls of horses and men. He was, however, not the commander of the army, though the Sultan assigned him this responsibility on certain occasions.
- (iv) **Dabir-i-Khas (Amir-Munshi):** He was the head of the department of Diwan-i-Insha. All formal or confidential correspondence between the Sultan and the rulers of other states or subordinate chiefs, governors and officials was carried out by his department. He was assisted by a large number of Dabirs (writers) in his work.
- (v) **Diwan-i-Risalat:** He was the minister of foreign affairs and looked after the diplomatic relations with foreign states and the welfare of foreign diplomats and ambassadors.
- (vi) **Sadr-us-Sudur:** He was the head of the religious department. The propagation of Islam, the observance of its principles and protection of privileges of Muslims, constituted his primary duties. He controlled the funds of the tax called zakat, which was a religious tax on the Muslims. He provided financial assistance to mosques, Maqtabas (educational institutions for the Muslims), and Muslim scholars and religious saints. He also looked after the distribution of charity by the state.

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- (vii) **Qazi-ul-quzat:** He was the highest judicial officer in the state after the Sultan. He had both original and appellate jurisdiction. Mostly, the offices of Sadrus-sudur and Qazi-ul-quzat were combined in one person.
- (viii) **Barid-i-Mamalika:** He was the head of the intelligence and postal department. He was responsible for the espionage system, collection of news and their quick dispatch and disposal.

The Administration of Provinces

The Delhi Sultanate was divided into provinces for the convenience of administration. They were called Iqtas. The number of Iqtas was not fixed and there was no uniformity in their administration. The head of the Iqta was called by different names, i.e., Naib Sultan, Nazim, Muqti or Wali. During the reign of Alauddin Khilji, Iqtas were divided into two categories. First, the Iqtas which were under the Delhi Sultanate from the beginning and the second, the Iqtas which were brought under the control of the Delhi Sultanate during the rule of Alauddin Khilji. The Muqtis or the Wali of the second category of Iqta were given a little more extensive powers so that the newly added territory could be brought about under the effective control of the Sultanate. Besides, these were tributary states of South India. The Hindu rulers of the South who had accepted the suzerainty of the Sultanate were independent in matters of internal administration, but paid yearly tribute to the Sultan. The Walis or the Muqtis enjoyed the same powers in relation to their Iqtas as the Sultan enjoyed in the empire. However, they were under the supervision of the Central Government and carried on orders of the Sultan in their administration. They sent yearly reports of their income and expenditure to the centre and deposited the balance in the central treasury. They maintained large armies and were required to come to the support of the Sultan whenever needed. They could not engage themselves in wars for extension of territory without the prior permission of the Sultan and when they did it, they were required to pay part of the booty to the Sultan. The elephants and the members of the royal family captured during wars were the monopoly of the Sultan. No Muqti was allowed to assume the title of the Sultan, to hold his own court or use as a canopy or the royal emblem. They were not allowed to mint coins in their names and Khutba could not be read in their names. Yet, during the rule of a weak Sultan, the Muqtis enjoyed extensive powers. During the period of Lodi Sultans, they even kept elephants, which was the exclusive right of the Sultan. In general, the Muqtis enjoyed wide powers during the period of the Sultanate. That was one reason of occasional revolts and frequent dynastic changes during this period. Besides the Muqti, there were other officers of the central government in every Iqta. There was a Vazir, an Ariz and a Qazi in each Iqta. The revenue officers, the news reporters and similar officers were also appointed in Iqtas by the Central Government. The efficiency of administration of an Iqta depended on the power of the Sultan on the one hand and on the capability of Muqti on the other.

There was no smaller administrative unit than the Iqta till the end of the thirteenth century. After that, Iqtas were divided into smaller units called Shiqqs

which were put under Shiqqdar. When the empire decayed, the Shiqqs emerged as a Sarkar and the officer in charge of a Sarkar was called the Shiqqdar-i-Shiqq-Daran or the chief Shiqqdar. The Shiqqs were further divided into parganas. The important officials of a pargana were the Amil, the Mushrif, also known as Amin or Munsif the treasurer, the Qanungo and two Karkun (clerks). The pargana was an important administrative unit because it was there that the government came into direct contact with the peasant. The smallest unit of administration was the village which was administered by local hereditary officers and the panchayat of the village. The Chaudhri, the Patwari, the Khut, the Muqaddam and the Chaukidar were the hereditary officers of the village who helped the government in collection of the revenue and enjoyed certain privileges, except during the reign of Alauddin Khilji. The Panchayat of the village looked after education, sanitation, etc., and acted as a judicial body.

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Finance Administration

The Sultan mainly collected five categories of taxes besides certain others. Those taxes were as follows:

- (i) **Ushr:** It was a land tax which was collected from Muslim peasants. It was 10 per cent of the produce on the land watered by natural resources and 5 per cent on the land which enjoyed man-made irrigation facilities.
- (ii) **Kharaj:** It was a land tax charged from non-Muslims and ranged from 1/3 to 1/2 of the produce.
- (iii) **Khams:** It was 1/5 of the booty captured in the war and 1/5 of the produce of mines or buried treasure that was found. Four-fifth of it went to the army which fought the war or to the person who found the treasure. But, except Firuz Tughluq, all Sultans collected 4/5 instead of 1/5, while Sikandar Lodi took nothing of the treasure that was found.
- (iv) **Jizya:** It was a religious tax on non-Muslims. According to Islam, a Zimmi (non-Muslim) had no right to live in the kingdom of a Muslim Sultan. But this concession was permitted after the payment of the tax called Jizya. The non-Muslims were divided into three categories for the purpose of payment of this tax. The first category paid at the rate of 48 dirhams, the second at 24 dirhams and the third at 12 dirhams. Women, children, beggars, cripples, blind, old men, monks, priests, Brahmins (except during the period of Firuz Tughluq) and all those who had no source of income were exempted from this tax. All Sultans collected this tax on principle but, as a practical measure, nobody collected it with severity. Dr Banarsi Prasad Saxena has expressed another view about Jizya. He has opined that Jizya was a non-agricultural tax. Barani, Amir Khusrav and Nizam-ud-din Auliya have said that the word Jizya was used for all taxes except land revenue.
- (v) **Zakat:** This was a religious tax which was imposed only on rich Muslims and consisted of 2 per cent of their income. Besides the above taxes, 2 per cent was charged from the Muslims and 5 per cent from the Hindus as

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trade tax. There was 5 per cent tax on the sale and purchase of horses. Alauddin Khilji imposed house-tax and grazing-tax as well, while Firuz Tughluq charged 10 per cent of the produce as irrigation tax from the land which enjoyed irrigation facilities provided by the State. All property which had no heirs also passed to the State. Another important source of income was presents offered to the Sultan by the people, nobles, provincial governors and feudatory chiefs.

The main items of expenditure were expenses on the army, salaries of civil officers and the personal expenditure of the Sultan and his palace.

9.5.1 Downfall of the Delhi Sultanate

The period between AD 1206 and AD 1526 is known as the Sultanate period in the history of India. During this period lasting 320 years, five ruling dynasties ruled successively. They were Slave dynasty (AD 1206–1290), Khilji dynasty (AD 1290–1320), Tughlaq dynasty (AD 1320–1414), Sayyid dynasty (AD 1415–1451) and Lodhi dynasty (AD 1451–1526). The average ruling period of each dynasty was about seventy years. During these years, the Delhi Sultanate went through many ups and downs. Since its beginning, the major threat to the Sultanate came in the form of Mongol invasions. From 13th century onwards, they repeatedly attacked the Delhi Sultanate. Many other factors weakened the Delhi Sultanate.

Let us discuss various factors that led to the fragmentation of the Delhi Sultanate:

Autocracy of the Sultans

The Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate were autocratic and despotic. They had all the powers of the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary. There was no control of any cabinet or representative assembly over them.

Invasions of Mongols

From the time of Iltutmish to the time of Muhammad Tughlaq, there were many Mongol invasions. From 13th century onwards, they repeatedly attacked the Delhi Sultanate. The Sultans as a policy appeased them and at times confronted them. Balban and Allauddin Khalji confronted them with full military might.

Islamic concept of the Sultanate

During the time of the Delhi Sultanate, very often, the Sultans tried to give Islamic concept to the State. They exacted Jizya from the non-Islamic people. A majority of sultans adopted a rigid policy towards the Hindus. They desecrated the temples and built mosques on them, and hurt the sentiments of the Hindus by breaking the idols. Some historians think that during the time of Muhammad Tughlaq, Harishar and Bukka founded the Vijaynagar Empire so that the Hindus could be protected.

Weakness in the Sultanate army

The rulers of the Delhi Sultanate did not modernize their army. They did not pay attention towards new war techniques and did not focus on building up artillery. Gradually, they stopped paying adequate attention to the defense of the North West Frontiers..

Lack of a definite law of Succession

An important cause of the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate was the lack of a definite law of succession. If we see the history of the Delhi Sultanate, we would find that the struggle for the throne started right from the time of the Slave dynasty. Qutubuddin Aibak had to struggle against Yalduz and Qabacha. To save the Sultanate from a civil war, Iltutmish declared his eldest child Razia as the Sultan but the Amirs did not comply with the ruling and Razia had to wage a war to seize the throne from her brother Ruknuddin Firozshah. The last of the Slave Sultans was assassinated by his general.

Alauddin Khilji acquired the throne by assassinating his uncle and father-in-law. Gyasuddin Tughlaq had also acquired the throne forcibly by assassinating the last Sultan of the Khilji dynasty. It is said that Juna Khan had plotted very cleverly to kill Giasuddin in which he succeeded. Briefly, it can be said that there were no clear and definite laws of succession in the Delhi Sultanate and the succession was decided on the basis of sword and intrigues. Because of these constant struggles and intrigues, Delhi Sultanate had to suffer tremendous loss of men and money which weakened the Sultanate and accelerated its downfall.

Responsibility of the rulers of Sayyid dynasty

After the Tughlaq dynasty, the power in the Sultanate passed into the hands of Sayyids. Like the successors of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, all the rulers of this dynasty were incapable. Since none of them paid attention to the administrative reforms or the extension of the empire, disorder spread everywhere and the country became poorer. During the period of this dynasty, Doab, Katehar, Sirhind, Gwalior became centres of revolts. The Sultans remained incapable of suppressing them. The last Sultan of this dynasty, Sultan Allauddin Shah, went to Badyun leaving his capital so that he could lead a comfortable life there. The power passed to the hands of Bahlolodhi.

Weaknesses and mistake of the rulers of the Lodhi dynasty

There were three Sultans in the Lodhi dynasty – Bahlolodhi, Sikandar Lodhi and Ibrahim Lodhi. Out of these three, Sikandar Lodhi was the only capable ruler. He tried to re-establish the prestige of the Delhi Sultanate but he could not achieve much success. He did not follow a liberal policy towards the majority of the Hindus. He broke many temples and idols. Because of his hot-tempered nature and obstinacy, he antagonized all his Amirs and Governors and also the Sultanate. As a result, the disintegration of the Sultanate was accelerated.

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In short, there were many causes for the fragmentation of the Sultanate. We cannot hold any one Sultan or dynasty responsible for it. There were some problems in the Sultanate right from the beginning, such as the feudal nature of the Sultanate, adoption of a religious fanatic policy by majority of rulers, military power being the basis of the Sultanate, and provincial and geographical problems, etc. Many of the Sultans tried to solve only some of these problems but they could not find a standing solution. The people did not understand the significance of a powerful central government. The Sultans of the Sultanate Period were not able to bring about the basic changes in the society. That is why the economic and administrative conditions of the Sultanate deteriorated day by day. Afghans replaced the Turks with the ascension of Bahlol Lodi. As a result, a number of provincial Afghan and Turkish kingdoms emerged.

Check Your Progress

5. Who was the head of the state in the Delhi Sultanate?
6. Who was called as the Vazir?

9.6 BHAKTI MOVEMENT

Religious conditions under the Delhi Sultanate transformed radically with the decline of few religions. As opposed to this, Sufism and the Bhakti movement were gaining more acceptance.

Sufism, an old religious sect, had entered India prior to the advent of the Delhi Sultanate. Once the Muslims settled in India, Sufism gained importance. A large number of Sufi saints came into India and settled themselves in various parts of the country. Sufism was based on religious views customary among the Indians such as love towards God, non-violence, and practice of self-discipline. These values were common among the Hindus, Buddhist and Jains in India. Many Sufi saints became quite popular during the period of the Delhi Sultanate, the most important of them being Shaikh Muin-ud-din Chisti, Baba Farid-ud-din, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, Nizam-ud-din Auliya, Khwaja Shaikh Taki-ud-din and Malik Muhammad Jaysi.

Another noteworthy feature during the period of Delhi Sultanate was the Bhakti movement. Bhakti was seen as a way to attain salvation. The Bhakti movement arose among the Hindus in the Medieval period as a challenge to Islam. The saints of the Bhakti movement believed in an all-powerful God who could be called by different names such as lord Rama, lord Krishna, lord Shiva or Allah. They were not in the favour of the caste system nor did they believe in idol worship. According to them, to attain salvation, one must concentrate only on Bhakti. The

Bhakti saints believed that a devotee needed a Guru who could help and guide him to attain salvation, though that could be achieved only by the grace of God while the grace of God itself could be achieved only by one's own effort.

The Bhakti saints spread their ideas to their followers through their teachings in simple languages, poems and prayers. However, the personal example of their lives, and their devotion, had the greatest impact on their followers. The saints propagated their ideas in Indian regional languages rather than in Sanskrit. The pioneers of the Bhakti movement were Ramanuja, Nimbakara and Madhavacharya. Bhakti movement rose to popularity through Ramananda who flourished in the fourteenth century. Other Bhakti saints like Kabir, Guru Nanak and Chaitnya contributed a lot in the expansion and popularity of Bhakti movement.

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Check Your Progress

7. What was Sufism based on?
8. Mention some of the pioneers of the Bhakti movement.

9.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Alauddin Khilji's original name was Ali Gurshasp.
2. Alauddin Khilji was the first Sultan of Delhi who kept a large standing army permanently at the centre.
3. Muhammad bin Tughluq was the Sultan of Delhi from 1325 to 1351. He was the eldest son of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq, the Turko-Indian founder of the Tughluq dynasty.
4. Ibrahim Lodi remained the last ruler of the Lodi dynasty.
5. In the Delhi Sultanate, the head of the state was the Sultan who enjoyed unlimited powers in every sphere of state activity.
6. The Prime Minister was called the Vazir. He was primarily the head of the finance department called the Dewan-i-Vizarat and was empowered not only to supervise the income and expenditure of the state, but of all other departments as well.
7. Sufism was based on religious views customary among the Indians, such as love towards God, non-violence, and practice of self-discipline.
8. The pioneers of the Bhakti movement were Ramanuja, Nimbakara and Madhavacharya.

9.8 SUMMARY

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- Alauddin Khilji's original name was Ali Gurshasp. After plotting to murder his uncle, he assumed the title of Abul Muzaffar Sultan Alauddin-duniya-vadin Muhammad Shah Khilji.
- Alauddin was the son of Shihabuddin Masud, the brother of Jalaluddin Khilji. Nothing is known about his education, but he was an expert in fighting.
- Alauddin occupies an important place among the rulers of medieval India. He became Sultan at the age of thirty and within a period of fifteen years, became the most powerful ruler of India.
- Alauddin was an all-powerful monarch. Despotism reached its highest mark during his reign. He concentrated all powers of the state in his hands.
- Three days after the death of Gayasuddin Tughlaq, Prince Juna Khan (Ulugh Khan) declared himself the Sultan of Delhi under the title Muhammad Bin Tughlaq.
- Muhammad Tughlaq was by far the most educated, able, intelligent, experienced and capable commander and a great conqueror among the Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate.
- According to Barani, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was very spendthrift. When he wanted to conquer many regions, he was forced to issue copper currency.
- The major plans of Sultans mentioned by Barani include the increasing land revenue of the Doab. The Sultan increased the land revenue in the Doab to earn 50 per cent of the produce.
- Ibrahim was a capable, laborious, just and well-meaning Sultan. He sincerely desired the welfare of his subjects and succeeded in it. His subjects remained prosperous and contented under his rule.
- In the Delhi Sultanate, the head of the state was the Sultan who enjoyed unlimited powers in every sphere of state activity.
- The power of the Sultan depended on the army. During the entire period of the Delhi Sultanate, power conflict remained between the Muslims and the Hindus.
- Since its beginning, the major threat to the Sultanate came in the form of Mongol invasions. From 13th century onwards, they repeatedly attacked the Delhi Sultanate.
- The Bhakti saints spread their ideas to their followers through their teachings in simple languages, poems and prayers.
- Bhakti movement rose to popularity through Ramananda who flourished in the fourteenth century.

9.9 KEY WORDS

- **Monarch:** Monarch is known as a sovereign head of state, especially a king, queen, or emperor.
- **Iqta:** Iqta was an Islamic practice of tax farming that became common in Muslim Asia during the Buyid dynasty.
- **Ushr:** It was a land tax which was collected from Muslim peasants. It was 10 per cent of the produce on the land watered by natural resources and 5 per cent on the land which enjoyed man-made irrigation facilities.
- **Khams:** It was 1/5 of the booty captured in the war and 1/5 of the produce of mines or buried treasure that was found.
- **Jizya:** It was a religious tax on non-Muslims. According to Islam, a Zimmi (non-Muslim) had no right to live in the kingdom of a Muslim Sultan.
- **Zakat:** This was a religious tax which was imposed only on rich Muslims and consisted of 2 per cent of their income.

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9.10 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Identify the demerits of Khilji's administrative system.
2. Why did Muhammad bin Tughluq change capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, and what was the impact of this change?
3. Why Muhammad Bin Tughlaq called an intelligent fool?
4. What were the five categories of taxes that the Sultan mainly collected?
5. What was the main principle of the Bhakti movement?
6. Write a short note on the concept of Sufism.

Long-Answer Question

1. Explain Khilji's administrative system.
2. Describe Khilji as a monarch.
3. Discuss the important schemes and reforms of Muhammad Tughluq.
4. 'Ibrahim Lodi was also a rash Sultan.' Discuss.
5. Explain the different ministers and other officials assisted the Sultan in administering the state.
6. Discuss the various factors that led to the fragmentation of the Delhi Sultanate.

9.11 FURTHER READINGS

NOTES

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BLOCK - V
ORIGIN OF VIJAYANAGAR - MUGHAL EMPIRE AND
MARATHA RULERS

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UNIT 10 VIJAYNAGAR EMPIRE

Structure

- 10.0 Introduction
- 10.1 Objectives
- 10.2 Origin of Vijaynagar Kingdom
 - 10.2.1 Decline of Vijaynagar Kingdom and the Battle of Talikota
 - 10.2.2 Causes of the Conflict between Vijaynagar and Bahamani Empires
- 10.3 Administration of Vijaynagar Empire
- 10.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 10.5 Summary
- 10.6 Key Words
- 10.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 10.8 Further Readings

10.0 INTRODUCTION

During the last years of Muhammad Tughlaq's reign (AD 1324–1351), when disorder spread in most of the areas of his empire because of the mistaken policies and many regions declared their independence, the Hindus of South India also did not deter from taking advantage of the situation. They founded the Vijaynagar Empire in AD 1336 under the leadership of Harihar and Bukka, two of the five brothers viz., Harihar, Kampa I, Bukka I, Marappa and Madhuappa. According to the inscriptions of the later kings, they were the sons of Chandervanshi Sangam of the Yadav family. Both these brothers were in the service of Pratap Rudra II, of the Warrangal kingdom. When Gayasuddin Tughlaq conquered Warrangal in AD 1323, they came away to Kampli. In AD 1325, a cousin of Muhammad Tughlaq named Bahauddin Gurshasp revolted against him in Sagar and the Sultan himself suppressed the rebellion. Bahauddin sought refuge with the ruler of Kampili to his empire. Among the six officials whom Muhammad Tughlaq took as captives to Delhi were these two brothers also who either voluntarily or forcibly embraced Islam, and they became the favourites of the Sultan. In this unit, you will study about the Vijaynagar Empire, its architecture and socio-economic condition.

10.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the administrative structure of the Vijaynagar Empire
- Discuss the factors responsible for the downfall of the Vijaynagar Empire

- Explain the various causes of the conflict between Vijaynagar and Bahamani Empires
- Discuss the socio-economic condition of the Vijaynagar Empire

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10.2 ORIGIN OF VIJAYNAGAR KINGDOM

In AD 327–1328, a chain of revolts started against Muhammad Tughlaq in Bidar, Daulatabad, Gulberga, Mabar, Telengana and Kampili. Muhammad Tughlaq dispatched Harihar and Bukka to Kampili in the South so that they should quell the rebellious Hindus and take over the reins of administration from the Governor of that place viz. Malik Muhammad. What transpired in the South after the departure of these two brothers is not at all clear because of mutual contradictory accounts of Muslim historians and traditional stories of the Hindus. Still both sources agree on one point that soon after the two brothers gave up Islamic religion and founded the Vijaynagar Empire. They had founded this kingdom in Kampili (modern Karnataka state).

Under the influence of a saint, Vidyaranya, to immortalize their father's memory and declared themselves independent of the control of Muhammad Tughlaq. This empire was ruled by three successive dynasties between AD 1336 and AD 1565 viz., Sangam Dynasty, (AD 1336–1485), Saluba Dynasty (AD 1485–1506) and Tuluva Dynasty (AD 1506–1565). Out of these three, the first two dynasties were contemporaneous with the united Bahmani Kingdom and the third was the contemporary of the five Muslim kingdoms viz., Bidar, Berar, Bijapur, Ahmednagar and Golkunda that arose on the decline of the Bahamani Empire.

Following is a brief account of the rise and fall of the Vijaynagar Empire or a brief political description of its rulers:

Sangam Dynasty (1336–1485)

(i) Harihar I (AD 1336–1353)

After laying the foundation of the Vijaynagar Empire in collaboration with his brother Bukka, Harihar first of all forced the area of Gutti and neighbourhood to acknowledge his suzerainty on the southern bank of the river Tungabhadra at a place called Anegandi. They established the city of Vijaynagar. On 18 April, 1336 Harihar accomplished his coronation ceremony according to Hindu rites. With the help of his brother Bukka, Harihar started extension of his empire rapidly. In AD 1346 Ballal, the last Hoysala king was killed in a campaign against the Kingdom of Ma'bar. Taking advantage of this situation, Harihar annexed the Hoysala kingdom to the Vijaynagar Empire. Before his death, Harihar extended his kingdom along the sea coast east to west in the areas, in the north to river Krishna and the river Kaveri in the South.

(ii) Bakka I (AD 1353–1377)

According to some scholars, Bukka I had become joint ruler with his brother as early as AD 1346 and had his capital at Gutti but after his brother Harihar's death

in AD 1353, he succeeded him as the sole heir and ruled till AD 1377. He sent his ambassador to establish diplomatic relations with China. He was mostly engaged in conflict with the Bahmani Sultans, Muhammad I and Mujahid which resulted in great ruin of Vijaynagar. During his time, there were three conflicts between Vijaynagar and the Bahmani Empire (AD 1360, 1365 and 1367). The main cause of the conflict was the ambition of both the kingdoms to establish their control over Raichur Doab. Being situated in the midst of rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra, this area was very fertile. But Bukka was not successful in this campaign and he could not regain the Raichur Doab which was lost during the time of Harihar.

(iii) Harihar II (1377–1404)

After Bukka I, his son Harihar II ascended the throne and he ruled for twenty-seven years (AD 1377–1404) and consolidated the power of Vijaynagar Empire in the whole of South India. He assumed the titles of Maharajadhiraj and Rajpameshwar. He was a great warrior and conqueror. He established his control over the areas of Canara, Mysore, Kanchi, Trichnapalli and Chingliput. In AD 1398, his son Bukka Rai II invaded the Bahamani kingdom for establishing his control over the Raichur Doab.

(iv) Devrai I (AD 1406–1422)

During his reign Devrai I came into conflict with the Bahamani Sultan Firozshah. Two causes are attributed to this conflict. According to one description, it was caused by the firm ambition of Firozshah to carry on a Jihad (religious war) against Vijaynagar whereas according to Farishta the blind love of Devrai for a beautiful daughter of a farmer of Mudgal was the cause of this conflict. Whatever be the case, Firoz initially suffered a defeat in the ensuing conflict but later on Devrai was defeated and according to the terms of the treaty, he had to marry his daughter to Firozshah and surrender the fort of Bankapur.

On the other hand, the Reddis of Kondavidu invaded Vijaynagar and took away Udaigiri which Vijaynagar kings could only reconquer in AD 1413. During peacetime, Devrai gave attention to the construction works. He constructed a dam on the river Tungabhadra and diverted canals from there to get away with the water scarcity in the city. The canals were used to irrigate the neighbouring fields as well. He also built a dam on the river Haridra. For irrigation purposes, these canals added about 3½ lacs to the royal revenue. It was during the time of this ruler that the Italian traveler Nicolo Conti came to Vijaynagar and he has given a vivid description of the city.

During Devrai's reign, ample grants were given to the temples and the priests. After the death of Devrai (AD 1422) for a few months, his son Ramchandra ascended the throne followed by his second son Vir Vijay Rai. Various guesses are made about the reign period of this ruler. According to Nilkantha Shastri, his reign period roughly covered the period between AD 1422–1426. Probably he suffered defeat at the hands of the Bahmani ruler Ahmadshah and had to give an enormous sum as the war indemnity.

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(v) Devrai II (AD 1426–1446)

Vijay Rai was followed by his son Devrai II on the throne in AD 1426. In AD 1428, he conquered and annexed the Kingdom of Kondavidu. Then he launched an attack on the Gajapati kingdom of Orissa because after the integration of Knodavidu kingdom with Vijaynagar, a struggle ensued amongst their feudatories but the struggle between Vijaynagar and Orissa was not prolonged because of the intervention of Allaureddi of Rajmundri and a compromise was reached. Later on, Devrai defended the Reddi kingdom from the Kalinga invading army. Devrai invaded and annexed the Kerala Kingdom to the Vijaynagar Empire. Devrai II was not only a great conqueror but was also a great organizer, and a patron of art and literature. To recognize his army he not only recruited the Muslims in it but also added to the number of horses in it and arranged for training in archery.

(vi) Mallikarjun or Devrai the elder (AD 1446–1466)

After the death of Devrai II, at first Vijayrai II ascended the throne, followed soon in May 1447 by his own son in AD 1447, Mallikarjun who is also called Devrai the elder. During his reign period, the decline of Vijaynagar Empire started. He was unable to check the invasions of the Gajpatis of Orissa and the Bahamani Sultans and had to sign on humiliating treaties. Dissensions and disorder became rampant everywhere in the kingdom. Probably, he died in July AD 1465 and Virupaksha II became his successor. Howsoever incapable Devrai the elder might have been from military point of view, he maintained the love of his predecessors towards the Hindu culture. He gave grants to the Brahmins and the temples.

(vii) Virupaksha II (AD 1465–1485)

He is said to be the last ruler of the Sangam Dynasty. He was a very luxury-loving ruler and used to drink excessively. During his time, both the internal revolts as well as foreign invasions were accelerated. A great part of the empire along with the regions of Goa, Damol and Chaol went over to the Bahmani Empire. The greatest blow to his power was dealt at the Eastern coast where his authority was reduced to being only a nominal. But the powerful chieftain of Chandgiri named Narsinga Saluva also rendered some valuable services to the Vijaynagar Empire.

He started a campaign against the Gajpatis of Orissa, occupied Udaipur, suppressed the Kapileshwar. He drove out the Orissians from the eastern Coast and himself occupied the Godavari regions. In AD 1485, the eldest son of Virupaksha II assassinated his father but seated his younger brother Pachha Rao on the throne instead of ascending himself. He, in turn, assassinated his elder brother and himself got immersed in luxury. In such a situation, Saluva Narsingh of Chandgiri attacked Vijaynagar, conquered it and began the reign of the Saluva dynasty in Vijaynagar.

Saluva dynasty (AD 1486–1505)**(i) Saluva Narsingh**

He founded the second ruling dynasty of Vijaynagar in AD 1486. He ruled for six years. He had to spend his time and energy in fighting against many feudatories and bringing them under control. He achieved success against his integral enemies, but was defeated and captured by Gajpati Purshottam of Orissa. He had to give over to Purshottam the fort of Udaigiri and the neighbouring region only then he was released from the prison but he achieved victory over Tulu region and the port areas of Honavar, Battakul, Baknur and Mongolore so that he could resume the horse trade with the Arab countries. He died in AD 1491. The greatest contribution of Saluva Narsingh is that he saved Vijaynagar from an imminent ruin and reconquered the entire area, lost his preceding rulers of Vijaynagar.

NOTES**(ii) Regent Narsa Naik and Immadi Narsingh (AD 1493–1504)**

Saluva Narsingh was followed on the throne by his eldest son, Immadi Narsingh. He was a minor, therefore, Commander Narsa Naik became his regent. Gradually, however, he usurped the entire power. When the prime came of age there was a difference of opinion between the two where upon the commander imprisoned him in the fort of Penukonda. For the next twelve to thirteen years Narsa Naik was the real ruler of Vijaynagar. In April AD 1493, he snatched many forts of Raichur Doab from Kasim of Bidar. But due to the lack of discipline in the army, the victory soon turned into defeat. Raichur and Mukdala were again lost. He, however, waged a successful campaign against the rulers of Bijapur, Bidar, Ma'bar, Shrirangapattam, etc. From the inscriptions of his successors, it is proved that he forced the Chera, Chola and Gajpati rulers to accept the suzerainty of the Vijaynagar Empire. In AD 1503 continued regent, Narsa Naik died and was followed by his son Vir Narsingh who was also a regent.

Tuluva dynasty (AD 1505–1565)**(i) Vir Narsingh (AD 1505)**

According to some historians, Vir Narsingh founded the Tuluva dynasty in AD 1505. During his time there were revolts everywhere. He suspected his stepbrother Krishna of harbouring rebellious tendencies and ordered his Prime Minister Saluva Tikka to take out his eyes who, however, freed Krishna, taking mercy on his tender age and befooled Vir Narsingh by showing him the eyes of a goat. Probably, in AD 1505, Vir Narsingh died and his cousin brother Krishnaria became the ruler of Vijaynagar thus founding the third ruling dynasty of Vijaynagar in real sense.

(ii) Krishnadev Rai (AD 1505–1529)

Krishnadev Rai is supposed to be the real founder of the third dynasty of Vijaynagar. He ascended the throne on 8 August AD 1505. He had to face many problems at the time of his accession. But, gradually, he overcame all the difficulties and began

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an era of successes for Vijaynagar again. The rebellious feudal chieftain of Ummutur wanted to occupy a very large part of Karnataka. The Gajpati rulers of Orissa had under their control the north-eastern districts of Vijaynagar Empire and the ruler Prataprudra had assumed an attitude of open hostility and aggression. Though the Bahamani kingdom had been divided into five parts, yet there was a pressure from the side of the Bijapur state.

The Portuguese were fast assuming control over the Ocean trade. In spite of all these difficulties, Krishnadev Rai achieved some important successes during the years of his reign which were as follows: (a) In AD 1509, he defeated the ruler of Bihar, Sultan Manmudshah, near Adoni. He had attacked Vijaynagar seeing Krishnadev Rai surrounded by many difficulties; (b) In AD 1510, he suppressed the rebellious chieftain of Ummutur; (c) In AD 1512, Krishnadev Rai started a campaign against Yusuf Adilshah of Bijapur and took away the Raichur Doab from him. Then he turned his attention towards Prataprudra Gajpatti of Orissa so that the eastern parts of the empire should be snatched from him. He organized a separate campaign to conquer each fort and arranged for the sending of confidential commanders to organize their administration after their conquests.

In AD 1514, he captured the fort of Udaigiri and imprisoned the uncle and aunt of the ruler of Orissa. His inscriptions speak of his achieving success in conquering many small forts like Achhanaki, Venukonda, Belankonda, and Nagarijunkonda, etc. He also occupied the fort of Kondavidu. He remained in his capital from AD 1516–1519. The last victory of Krishnadev Rai was against the ruler of Bijapur, Khan Ismile Adilshah. He tried to reconquer the area of Raichur Doab and dashed to the ground the famous fort of Gulburga and thus the influence of Vijaynagar became supreme over all the kingdoms of the South. But the results of these victories were that Krishnadev himself became very playful and placed inciting conditions before the rulers of the defeated kingdoms.

He detained the emissary of Adilshah for about a month in his own kingdom and sent a message that if Sultan Adilshah came and prostrated himself before Krishnadev Rai and kissed his feet, only then would he return all his forts and other areas. The five Muslim kingdoms, which rose on the disintegration of the Bahamani kingdom, gradually realized the growing power of Vijaynagar and a feeling of combining against Vijaynagar gained ground amongst them. Krishnadev Rai died in about AD 1529.

Vijaynagar became the supreme power of the Deccan by AD 1560. For about twenty months Ram Rai kept his control over the Muslim rulers. It would not be wrong to say that the military might of Vijaynagar kept under control the three Muslim kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Golkunda and Bidar and kept Bijapur at the mercy of Vijaynagar.

10.2.1 Decline of Vijaynagar Kingdom and the Battle of Talikota

The Muslim Kingdom of Deccan saw it clearly that Ram Rai was taking advantage of their mutual dissensions. All of them got scared of the growing power of

Vijaynagar and decided to come together, forgetting their mutual differences. All the Muslim states decided to enter into a confederation against Vijaynagar. Vijaynagar had inflicted greatest harm on Ibrahim Qutubshah and Hussain Nizamshah. Therefore, they took the keenest interest into the formation of the confederation. Historians differ widely on the causes of the formation of this confederation and the background of the era of Rakshasi – Tangdi. Ferishta writes that the rulers of Vijaynagar had assaulted the Muslim women, desecrated the mosques and disrespected the Holy Quran. But no independent evidence corroborates this view. Hindu historians mention that the five Muslim Sultans were in opposition to Ram Rai but Muslim historians leave out the name of Berar from it. There is difference of opinion also on the question as to which Muslim Sultans took the lead in forming the great confederation against Vijaynagar.

According to Ferishta, this plan originated with Adilshah of Bijapur whereas Shirazi attributes it to Husain Nizamshah of Ahmadnagar. Whatever be the case, the actual cause of the formation of this confederation was that the power of Vijaynagar had increased greatly and all the Muslim Sultans of the Deccan felt jealous of it. They realized that they would not be able to rule peacefully unless and until the power of Vijaynagar was suppressed

In AD 1559, Ibrahim Qutubshah of Golkunda himself married the daughter of Hussain Nizamshah. Ali Bidarshah of Bidar also joined the confederation when the formation of the confederation was complete. He demanded of the ruler of Vijaynagar that he should return the forts of Raichur, Mudgal, etc. Ram Rai did not heed the demand. Then the combined Muslim armies of the Deccan Sultans advanced towards Vijaynagar (28 December AD 1564) and encamped at Taliota. According to Ferishta, this battle was fought at Talikota but the actual field of the battle was between the two villages Rakshsi and Tangdi. Therefore, historians refer to it not as the battle of Talikota but as the battle of Rakshsi and Tangdi. Both the armies stood opposite each other for some time and the actual battle started on 25 January AD 1565.

Initially, the armies of Muslim confederation were defeated, but later on the Muslim artillery spelled ruin in the Vijaynagar army and its cavalry disordered them. In the time of this crisis, the Muslim generals in the Vijaynagar army went over to the side of their co-religionists along with their armies and dealt a fatal blow in the midst of the battle. Ram Rai was encircled and Hussain Nizamshah immediately imprisoned and murdered him so that Ali Adilshah might not press for his release. The victors entered Vijaynagar and encamped there for five months and perpetrated massacre, plunder, desecration and destruction in such a manner that Vijaynagar whose beauty was praised by all the foreign travellers alike was ruined to such an extent that its reconstruction was rendered impossible. The period of the glory of the Vijaynagar Empire is said to have ended after this war. Although the Vijaynagar Empire continued to shrink and lost its political significance in South India, the next ruler Tirumal entered into a treaty with the Deccan Sultans and gave them back all the regions that Ram Rai had snatched from them. It is said

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that in AD 1568 Vincent II, the son of the actual ruler Tirumal Rai, who was ruling in the name of nominal ruler Sedative Rai had made Penougonda his new capital, and murdered the nominal ruler Sadashiv Rai. With this, the third dynasty of Vijaynagar came to an end and was founded the Aravidue dynasty.

Chief rulers of this dynasty were—Tirumal Rai (AD 1568-1572), Shir Ranga I (AD 1572–1585), Venkata Rai Ii (AD 1586–1614), Shir Ranga Ii (AD 1614–1617), Ramdev Rai (AD 1618–1630), Venkata III (AD 1630–1642) and Shir Ranga III (AD 1642–1649). In 1649, this kingdom had to surrender itself before Bijapur and Shri Ranga III stayed on in Mysore and died there only in AD 1672 dreaming of regaining his lost kingdom.

10.2.2 Causes of the Conflict between Vijaynagar and Bahamani Empires

The most important cause of the conflict between the two empires was the region of Raichur of Doab. Both the powers wanted to establish their hold over this fertile region, situated between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra. This remained the single most important cause of conflict in the reigns of Bukka Ria 1, Harishar II, etc.

Diamond mines

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

Imperialist Ambition

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

Rewati Dwipa (Goa)

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

Growing Power of Vijaynagar

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

Hurting the religious sentiments of the Muslims by Vijaynagar

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

Haughtiness of Ram Rai

According to some historians, the abandonment by Ram Rai of the old defensive policy following the Vijaynagar rulers and his adaptation of a new strategy of making the Muslim states fight against one another and his haughty behaviour towards the Deccan Sultanates after his numerous victories were the major factors that led to the ultimate fierce battle (Battle of Rakshsi Tangdi) between the five Muslim states rising due to the decline of the Bahamani Kingdom and the Vijaynagar Empire.

Jealousy of the Power of Vijaynagar

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

Check Your Progress

1. Who established the Vijaynagar Empire?
2. Who founded the Tuluva dynasty?
3. What was the most important cause of the conflict between Vijaynagar and Bahamani Empires?

10.3 ADMINISTRATION OF VIJAYNAGAR EMPIRE

The Vijayanagar administration system was centralized and elaborated. The history of Vijayanagar Empire is primarily a history of constant wars and conflicts. It was natural that the administration of such a state would essentially be guided by military purposes and systems. Surprisingly the rulers of Vijayanagar Empire could not only keep the administration free from this military impact but, also made it a liberal, perfect, tolerant and benevolent one.

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The central administrative system of Vijayanagar Kingdom is described below:

- **Powers of the king:** The king of Vijayanagar kingdom was at the top of the administration. He had unlimited power. He was in charge for the overall administration of the state. He was the commander-in-chief of the army, the highest administrator and the chief justice.
- **Focus on welfare of subjects:** The aim of the Vijayanagar administration was to do the welfare of his subjects. Krishnadevaraya (also Krishna Deva Raya) was the most important king of Vijayanagar Empire. He believed in the principle that a crowned king should always rule with an eye towards dharma.
- **Council of ministers:** To assist the king in the affairs of administration of Vijayanagar Empire, there was a council of ministers which consisted of possibly six or eight ministers. They were appointed by the king who could dismiss them also and they held office during the pleasure of the king. The ministers were chosen from all the three castes of the society, that is, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vishayas.

Along with this centralized system, the Vijayanagar Empire also had a system of provincial administration. The entire Empire was divided into six provinces under a governor who was either a member of the royal family or an influential noble. The governor exercised civil, military and judicial powers. He had absolute power in the province although he was under the authority of the kings of Vijayanagar Empire and controlled by the latter. The lowest unit of administration of Vijayanagar Empire was the villages. Each of these villages was self-sufficient. There was a village assembly in every village which practically functioned like the modern village panchayats.

Art and Architecture

The architectural style prevalent in the Vijayanagar Empire is another notable contribution to the history of India. The empire built temples, monuments, palaces and other structures across South India, with a largest concentration in its capital. The monuments in and around Hampi, in the Vijayanagara principality, are listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In addition to building new temples, the empire added new structures and made modifications to hundreds of temples across South India.

The architecture of the empire can be broadly classified into religious, courtly and civic architecture, as can the associated sculptures and paintings. The Vijayanagara style is a combination of the Chalukya, Hoysala, Pandya and Chola styles which evolved earlier in the centuries when these empires ruled and is characterised by a return to the simplistic and serene art of the past. Temple architecture received a new impetus and reached to new heights under the patronage of the Vijayanagar rulers.

Socio-Economic Condition

The period of the Vijayanagara Empire is considered an age of prosperity in South India in the 14th century CE. Travellers who visited the Empire in its prime have paid tribute to its splendour and riches. According to the Persian chronicler Abdur Razzaq, ‘The country is so well populated that it is impossible in a reasonable space to convey an idea of it. In the king’s treasury there are chambers with excavations for them, filled with molten gold forming one mass. All the inhabitants of the country, whether high or low, even down to the artificers of the Bazar, wore jewels and gift ornaments in their ears and around their necks, arms, wrists and fingers.’ The wealth of the Empire was due to the growth of agriculture, industries, trade and commerce. The Empire traded with the islands in the Indian Ocean, the Malaya Archipelago, Burma, China, Arabia, Persia, South Africa, Abyssinia and Portugal. The exports from the Vijayanagar Empire were cloth, rice, iron, salt, petrel, sugar and spices. The imports were horses, elephants, pearls, copper, coral, mercury, China silk and velvet.

Along with this, like all medieval kingdoms, the main revenue of the Empire was through the land. There was a separate land revenue department. To assess the proper revenue entire land was classified into four parts: the wet land, the dry land, the orchards and the woods. The kings of Vijaynagar charged a little more than one sixth of the revenue. This was because the king had to maintain a huge army to protect the Vijaynagar Empire as well as to fight their permanent enemy, the Bahmani Sultanate. Apart from this land tax, the government also levied other taxes like the grazing tax, the marriage tax, and the customs duty, tax on gardening and taxes on manufacture of various articles.

Check Your Progress

4. Define the Vijayanagar administration system.
5. What was the main aim of the Vijayanagar administration?

10.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The Vijaynagar Empire was established in 1336 by Harihara I and his brother Bukka Raya I of Sangama Dynasty.
2. According to some historians, Vir Narsingh founded the Tuluva dynasty in AD 1505.
3. The most important cause of the conflict between the two empires was the region of Raichur of Doab. Both the powers wanted to establish their hold over this fertile region, situated between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra.

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4. The Vijayanagar administration system was centralized and elaborated.
5. The main aim of the Vijayanagar administration was to do the welfare of his subjects.

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10.5 SUMMARY

- After laying the foundation of the Vijayanagar Empire in collaboration with his brother Bukka, Harihar first of all forced the area of Gutti and neighbourhood to acknowledge his suzerainty on the southern bank of the river Tungabhadra at a place called Anegandi.
- During Devrai's reign, ample grants were given to the temples and the priests. After the death of Devrai (AD 1422) for a few months, his son Ramchandra ascended the throne followed by his second son Vir Vijay Rai.
- After the death of Devrai II, at first Vijayrai II ascended the throne, followed soon in May 1447 by his own son in AD 1447, Mallikarjun who is also called Devrai the elder. During his reign period, the decline of Vijayanagar Empire started.
- Saluva Narsingh was followed on the throne by his eldest son, Immadi Narsingh. He was a minor, therefore, Commander Narsa Naik became his regent.
- The Muslim Kingdom of Deccan saw it clearly that Ram Rai was taking advantage of their mutual dissensions.
- The most important cause of the conflict between the two empires was the region of Raichur of Doab. Both the powers wanted to establish their hold over this fertile region, situated between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra.
- The Vijayanagar administration system was centralized and elaborated. The history of Vijayanagar Empire is primarily a history of constant wars and conflicts.
- The architectural style prevalent in the Vijayanagar Empire is another notable contribution to the history of India.
- The Hindu caste system was prevalent in Vijayanagar Empire. Caste regulations were taken care of by the elders of each community.

10.6 KEY WORDS

- **Mosque:** Mosque is a building for Islamic religious activities and worship.
- **Imperialism:** Imperialism is a policy that involves a nation extending its power by the acquisition of lands by purchase, diplomacy or military force.
- **Expansionism:** In general, expansionism consists of policies of governments and states that involve territorial, military or economic expansion.

10.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What led to the decline of the Vijaynagar Empire?
2. Write a short note on cultural contribution of the Vijaynagar Empire.
3. Why the period of the Vijayanagara Empire is considered an age of prosperity in South India in the 14th century CE?

Long-Answer Question

1. Discuss the factors responsible for the downfall of the Vijaynagar Empire.
2. Explain the various causes of the conflict between Vijaynagar and Bahamani Empires.
3. Describe the administrative structure of the Vijaynagar Empire.
4. Discuss the socio-economic condition of the Vijaynagar Empire.

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UNIT 11 BEGINNING OF THE MUGHAL RULE

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- 11.0 Introduction
- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Establishment of the Mughal Rule
- 11.3 Babur
 - 11.3.1 Babur as an Empire Builder
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11.0 INTRODUCTION

Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur was the son of Umar Sheikh Mirza, a descendent of the famous invader Timur Lane. His mother Qutulug Nigar Khanam belonged to the family of Genghis Khan, the great Mongol invader. When Babur was born in AD 1483, his father was the ruler of a small principality of Farghana in Turkistan. In AD 1494 Babur inherited the petty Kingdom of Fargana from his father. He was then only eleven years and four months old. At such a tender age, he had to shoulder the responsibility of ruling the state. As the famous historian Dr Ishwari Prasad points out, Babur who very young was surrounded by enemies from all sides. His near relatives and Uzbek chief Shahbani Khan wanted to snatch away the principality of Farghana. Oblivious of the Uzbek danger, the Timurid princes were busy fighting with each another. Babur, too, made a bid to conquer Samarkand from his uncle. He won the city twice but on both the occasions, lost it in no time. The second time, the Uzbek Chief Shaibani Khan Shaibani defeated Babur and conquered Samarkand. Soon, he overran the rest of the Timurid kingdoms in the area. Babur wrote in his autobiography, *Tuzuk-i-baburi*, 'I had lost Samarkand for recovering Fargana but now I feel that I have lost even the first one without having possessed the second.' Having lost both Farghana and Samarkand, Babur was forced to move towards Kabul, which he conquered in AD 1504. For the next fourteen years, Babur kept biding his time to capture back his homeland (Farghana and Samarkand) from the Uzbeks. When he was completely unsuccessful against the Uzbeks, he diverted his attention from the West (Central Asia) to the East (India). In this unit, you will describe the political conditions of India on the eve of Babur's invasion. You will also explain Babur as an empire builder. This unit will also describe the various features of Mughal architecture.

11.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the political conditions of India on the eve of Babur's invasion
- Discuss the effects of the first battle of Panipat
- Explain Babur as an empire builder

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11.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MUGHAL RULE

The first half of the 15th century witnessed political instability with the disintegration of the Tughlaq Dynasty. Both the Saiyyad (1414–1451) and the Lodi (1451–1526) rulers failed to cope with 'the disruptive forces'. The nobles resented and rebelled at the earliest opportunity. The political chaos in the north-west provinces of the country had weakened the centre. Let us examine what was happening in the other parts of India during that time.

In Central India, there were three kingdoms: Gujarat, Malwa and Mewar. The power of Sultan Mahmud Khalji II of Malwa was, however, on the decline. Gujarat was ruled by Muzaffar Shah II, while Mewar under the leadership of Sisodia ruler Rana Sanga was the most powerful kingdom. The rulers of Malwa were under constant pressure of the Lodis, Mewar and Gujarat. This was because it was not only the most fertile region and an important source for elephant supply, but it also provided an important trade route to Gujarat sea ports. Hence, it was an important region for the Lodis. Besides, for both Gujarat and Mewar, it could serve as a buffer against the Lodis. The Sultan of Malwa was an incompetent ruler, and his prime minister, Medini Rai, could hardly hold the kingdom intact for long in the wake of internal disputes.

Finally, Rana Sanga succeeded in extending his influence over Malwa and Gujarat. By the end of the 15th century, Rana Sanga's sway over Rajputana became almost complete with the occupation of Ranthambhor and Chanderi. Further south, there were the powerful Vijayanagar and Bahmani kingdoms.

In the east, Nusrat Shah ruled Bengal. Towards the end of Ibrahim Lodi's reign, Afghan chieftains Nasir Khan Lohani and Ma'ruf Farmuli succeeded in carving out a separate kingdom of Jaunpur under Sultan Muhammad Shah. Besides these major powers, there were numerous Afghan chieftaincies around Agra—the most powerful ones being those of Hasan Khan in Mewat, Nizam Khan in Bayana, Muhammad Zaitun in Dholpur, Tatar Khan Sarang Khani in Gwalior, Husain Khan Lohani in Rapri, Qutub Khan in Etawa, Alam Khan in Kalpi, and Qasim Sambhali in Sambhal, among others. While analysing the political setup on the eve of Babur's invasion, it is generally said that there was a confederacy of Rajput principalities which was ready to seize control of Hindustan. It is held that had Babur not intervened, the Rajputs led by their illustrious leader Rana Sanga would have

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captured power in northern India. It is argued that the political division of the regional states was religious in nature and that the Rajput confederacy under Rana Sanga fueled by religious zeal wanted to establish a Hindu empire. This assumption is based on the famous passage in *Baburnama* where Babur says that Hindustan was governed by ‘five Musalman rulers’: the Lodis (at the centre), Gujarat, Malwa, Bahmani, and Bengal, and two ‘pagans’ (Rana Sanga of Mewar and Vijaynagar). Besides, the *fathnama* (prayer for victory) issued after the battle of Khanwa suggests that the Rajput confederacy under Rana was inspired by religious zeal and organized with the intention to overthrow the ‘Islamic power’.

However, such observations have been questioned by historians. Babur has nowhere suggested that these powers were antagonistic on religious grounds. Instead, Babur himself admits that many Rais and Ranas were obedient to Islam. Moreover, if one looks at the composition of the confederacy, there were many Muslim chieftains like Hasan Khan Mewati and Mahumud Khan Lodi, who sided with Rana Sanga against Babur. Though the power of Rana was unquestionable, Babur was in reality more worried of Afghan menace.

Factors that Prompted Babur to Conquer India

The various factors that prompted Babur to conquer India are discussed as follows:

1. Babur’s ambition

Like other contemporary rulers, Babur was very ambitious. He stated ‘I had never ceased to think of the conquest of Hindustan. But I had never found a suitable opportunity for undertaking it. Hindered as I was sometimes by the apprehensions of my Begg, sometimes by the disagreement between my brothers and myself.’ He was involved incessantly in the struggle for the conquest of Samarkand (which Babur loved dearly). When he was finally unsuccessful there, he tried to fulfil his ambition by conquering India.

2. Miserable political conditions of India

The political situation in north-west India was suitable for Babur’s entry into India. Sikandar Lodi had died in AD 1517, and Ibrahim Lodi had succeeded him. His efforts to create a large centralized empire had alarmed the Afghan chiefs as well as the Rajputs. Amongst the most powerful of the Afghan chiefs was Daulat Khan Lodi, the governor of Punjab, who was almost an independent ruler. Daulat Khan attempted to conciliate Ibrahim Lodi by sending his son to his court in order to pay homage. At the same time, he was trying to capture neighbouring states. He wanted to strengthen his position by annexing the frontier tracts of Bihar etc., which Babur had captured in AD 1518–1519, but all hopes of Daulat Khan Lodi were shattered. Babur put a demand through his ambassador that Daulat Khan Lodi and Ibrahim Lodi surrender all those places to Babur which were at one time under the Turks. Daulat Khan Lodi very cleverly influenced Babur’s ambassador to stay at Lahore, thus preventing him from meeting Ibrahim Lodi. When Babur returned from Bhira, Daulat Khan Lodi took away Bhira from Babur’s representative. The following

year, Babur again attacked Bhira and captured it along with Sialkot. This victory opened a gateway of India for Babur. One thing was made clear by these preliminary invasions of Babur—India lacked the feeling of political unity. Babur knew that India was divided into several petty principalities and that the rulers of these states could never unite together. Babur also knew that they often fought amongst themselves. Thus, he considered this anarchical situation as the appropriate opportunity to invade India.

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3. Immense riches of India and legal right to occupy some area

Like countless earlier invaders from Central Asia, Babur was drawn to India by the lure of its fabulous wealth. India was famous as the land of gold and riches. Babur's ancestor Timur had not only carried away a vast treasure and many skilful artisans who helped him to consolidate his Asian empire and beautify his capital, but had also annexed some areas in the Punjab. These areas remained in the possession of Timur's successors for many years. When Babur conquered Kabul, he felt that he had a legitimate right to these areas. Moreover, India was very near to Kabul where Babur was ruling.

4. Meagre income from Kabul

Another reason for Babur's invasion of India was the meagre income of Kabul. The historian Abul Fazal remarks, 'He (Babur) ruled over Badakhshan, Kandhar and Kabul which did not yield sufficient income for the requirement of the army, in fact, in some of the border territories the expense on controlling the armies and administration was greater than the income.' Thus, the meagre income of Kabul also prompted Babur to invade India. Babur knew very well that after capturing the fertile province of Punjab, he would have no financial problems and he could strengthen his position very easily.

5. Fear of the Uzbeks

Babur was apprehensive of an Uzbek attack on Kabul and considered India to be a good place of refuge, and a suitable base for operations against the Uzbeks.

6. Invitations extended by Daulat Khan Lodi, Alam Khan and Rana Sanga

Some the historians hold the opinion that Babur had been invited to attack the Delhi Sultanate by Daulat Khan Lodi and Rana Sanga. According to them, in AD 1524, Babur had received an embassy from Daulat Khan Lodi, led by his son Dilawar Khan. They invited Babur to invade India and suggested that he should displace Ibrahim Lodi since he was a tyrant and enjoyed no support from his courtiers and nobles. According to some historians, it was probable that a messenger from Rana Sangram Singh (the ruler of Mewar and popularly known as Rana Sanga) arrived at the same time, inviting Babur to invade India. These embassies convinced Babur that the time was ripe for his conquest of the whole of the Punjab, if not of India itself.

In brief, we can say that many factors inspired Babur to invade India. His ambitions, immense wealth of India, weak political conditions and some invitations extended by the enemies of Ibrahim Lodi, were some of the factors.

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Check Your Progress

1. List some of the factors that prompted Babur to conquer India.
2. Who was Rana Sanga?

11.3 BABUR

Babur, who laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India in AD 1526, belonged to the family of Chaghatai Turks. Born on 14 February 1483, his great grandfather was Timur who was widely regarded as the most powerful king of Central Asia. Babur's successful invasion of India in AD 1526 saw the end of the Lodi Dynasty and the beginning of a new power—the Mughal Dynasty. The history of India since the Battle of Panipat till AD 1857 is interspersed with conflicts and rivalries between Mughal rulers and the Rajput princes. The Hindu Rajputs, who had enjoyed dominance in Rajputana (present-day Gujarat, Rajasthan and parts of Haryana), were displaced from power following the invasion of the Mughals.

Babur led two important and decisive battles—the Battle of Panipat and the Battle of Khanwah—that speak volumes about his personality. At the First Battle of Panipat in AD 1526, Babur, with only 12,000 soldiers with him, subdued Ibrahim Lodi's much larger force. The very next year, Babur displaced the Rajputs from power who had enjoyed the stronghold of Rajputana for a long time. Similar to the First Battle of Panipat, Babur with a much smaller army conquered the enemy by applying novel ways of warfare.

These great victories achieved over the main powers of northern India were the base for Babur's kingdom, from which he could consolidate his rule in northern India. Unlike his predecessor, Timur, Babur did not return to Kabul after plundering and looting the wealth of India. Instead, Babur decided to stay back and strengthen his hold over the wealthy cities. The Battle of Ghaghara was the last battle of Babur in India. By then, he had succeeded in establishing the Mughal Empire in India and there was none to challenge his power in northern India.

Babur's character has been praised by all historians—both modern and contemporary. He was numberless man of many virtues and excellences. He was kind, generous, courageous, and a cultured man. He was a good judge of human nature and circumstances. He was fond of music and gardening and constructed many buildings in India. Babur was a Sunni Muslim and had faith in God. He was a scholarly king. Babur did not get time to receive proper education as he engaged himself in fighting, from as early as the age of eleven. Yet, the knowledge he acquired and the command he had over Turkish language has assigned him a place in the

world of scholars. He possessed good knowledge of Arabic and Persian while he was also a scholar of Turkish. Babur was a gifted poet and his prose memoir—the *Baburnamah*—is much acclaimed.

Babur was a determined soldier and an experienced general. After becoming a successful commander, he never lost courage or determination to rise. He learnt from his defeats. He learned *tulghuma* warfare from the Uzbeks, ambuscade from the Mongols and the Afghans, use of fire-arm and artillery from the Persians, and the effective use of mobile cavalry from the Turks. Besides, he made a clever synthesis of all these tactics of warfare. That made him a successful commander and, therefore, he won every battle in India. Also, Babur could inspire his followers, get their loyalty and command obedience from them. He never feared fighting against larger armies than that he commanded.

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The First Battle of Panipat

In November, AD1525, Babur attacked India with 12,000 soldiers. When he reached Peshawar, he got the news that Dhaulat Khan Lodi had changed sides. He had collected a huge army and ousted the Amirs of Babur from Sialkot and reached up to Lahore. At Babur's approach, however, the army of Dhaulat Khan melted away. Dhaulat Khan laid down his arms and was pardoned. Thus, within three weeks of crossing the Indus, Babur became the ruler of Punjab. On 20 April, 1526, Babur reached the famous historical field of Panipat along with his army to conquer India. Ibrahim Lodi met Babur at Panipat with a force estimated to comprise 100,000 men and 10,000 elephants. Some historians are of the view that since the Indian armies generally contained large hordes of servants, the fighting men on Ibrahim Lodi's side must have been far less than this figure. Babur had crossed the Indus with a force of 12,000, but he had the support of a large number of Hindustani nobles and soldiers who joined him in the Punjab. Even then Babur's army was numerically inferior. On the morning of 21 April 1526, they fought a pitched battle. Babur, with the tactical use of *tulugama* warfare, encircled Ibrahim Lodi's army, and his artillery rained a hail of fire and shots on it. The Lodi army was completely overwhelmed. Babur himself wrote, 'By the grace and mercy of Almighty (God), the mighty army of Delhi was laid in the dust in the course of half a day.'

Effects of the First Battle of Panipat

- **End of the rule of Lodi Dynasty:** The Battle of Panipat is regarded as one of the decisive battles in Indian history. It broke the back of Lodi power, and brought under Babur's control the entire area up to Delhi and Agra. As Babur's predecessor Timur had brought to an end the rule of the Tughlaqs, similarly Babur's success led to the end of the Lodi rule.
- **Foundation of the Mughal Empire:** Babur's victory at Panipat led to the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India. Soon after the victory, Babur occupied Delhi and Agra, seated himself on the throne of the Lodis and laid

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the foundation of the Mughal rule in India. Of course, the empire founded by Babur was soon lost by his son, Humayun and it was Akbar who actually recreated the Mughal Empire. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the actual foundation of the empire was laid with the victory in the Battle of Panipat. This empire continued for more than two centuries.

- **End of Babur's bad days:** The treasures that were stored up by Ibrahim Lodi in Agra relieved Babur from his financial difficulties. The rich territory up to Jaunpur also lay open to Babur. Rush Brooke Williams writes, 'After being successful in this battle, the bad days of Babur came to an end. Now he need not bother about his personal safety or his throne.'
- **Re-established the prestige of Crown:** After the Battle of Panipat, Babur laid the foundation of a new dynasty and called himself the monarch. Unlike the Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate period, he never called himself the deputy of the Caliph but referred to himself as the Emperor. Thus, he revived the sovereignty of the monarch as it used to be in ancient times in India and thus established the prestige of the Crown.
- **Use of artillery in India:** The Battle of Panipat led to the initiation of artillery in India. Until now, Indians were not familiar with gunpowder. For the first time, it was used in a battle on the Indian plains, and paved the way for its use in many other battles.
- **Birth of new struggles:** However, Babur had to wage three more hard-fought battles, one against Rana Sanga of Mewar, another against Medini Rao at Chanderi, and the third against the eastern Afghans, before he could consolidate his hold on this area (Delhi, Agra, etc.). Viewed from his angle, the Battle of Panipat was not as decisive in the political field as has been made out. According to R.B. Williams, 'The victory at Panipat was excellent, which was actually a part of the beginning.' Renowned historian Dr Satish Chandra, says about the battle, 'Its real importance lies in the fact that it opened a new face in the struggle for domination in north India.'
- **Tulugama became popular in India:** One of the important causes of Babur's victory in the First Battle of Panipat was the adoption of a scientific war strategy called tulugama (an Ottoman or Rumi device). Gradually, Indian rulers also adopted this very system, which involved the policy of keeping a reserve army. Indian rulers were greatly impressed by the swiftness and immovability of horses and gradually elephants were replaced by horses in battles.
- **A shift in the political interest:** After the Battle of Panipat, the centre of Babur's political activities and ambitions was shifted from Kabul and Central Asia to Agra and India. No doubt the difficulties of Babur after his victory at Panipat were manifold. Many of his Begs (chieftains) were not prepared for a long campaign in India. With the onset of the hot weather, their misgivings had increased. They were far away from their homes in a strange and hostile

land. Babur writes in his memoirs that the people of India displayed remarkable hostility by abandoning their villages at the approach of the Mughal armies. Obviously, the memories of Timur's sacking and plundering of the towns and villages were still fresh in their minds. Babur knew that the resources in India alone would enable him to build a strong empire and satisfy his Beggars. He, thus, took a firm stand, proclaiming his intention to stay on in India, and granting leave to a number of his Beggars, who wanted to go back to Kabul. This immediately cleared the air. However, this also invited the hostility of Rana Sanga who began his preparations for a showdown with Babur.

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Battle of Khanwah

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

Causes

- **Ambitions of Rana Sanga:** Rana Sanga was an ambitious ruler. He had been conflicting with Ibrahim Lodi for dominating eastern Rajasthan and Malwa. After defeating Mahmood Khilji of Malwa, the influence of Rana had gradually extended up to Piliya Khar, a small river in the neighbourhood of Agra. The establishment of an empire in the Indo-Gangetic Valley by Babur was a threat to Rana Sanga. Sanga set preparations to take out Babur at any rate and to confine him to the Punjab.
- **Rana being accused of treachery by Babur:** Babur accused Rana Sanga of breach of agreement. He said that Sanga had invited him to India and had promised to join him against Ibrahim Lodi, but made no move while he (Babur) conquered Delhi and Agra. The exact terms and conditions of the agreement between Babur and Rana Sanga are vague, but it is certain that after the First Battle of Panipat, Babur had captured only Delhi and Agra. He had not become the emperor of India. He was also brave and ambitious like Rana Sanga. It was not possible for him to become the emperor of India without breaking the power of the Rajputs.
- **Charges of Rana Sanga against Babur:** Rana Sanga, on the other hand, had claim on Kalpi, Dhaulpur and Agra and he blamed Babur for not fulfilling his promise. Sanga probably hoped that like Timur, Babur would withdraw after ransacking Delhi and weakening the Lodis. Babur's decision to stay on in India completely changed the situation. This made a war between Babur and Rana Sanga inevitable.
- **Inciting of Rana Sanga by the Afghans:** Many Afghans including Mahmud Lodi, a younger brother of Ibrahim Lodi, rallied to Rana Sanga in the hope of regaining the throne of Delhi in case Sanga won. Hassan Khan Mewati, the ruler of Mewar, also joined hands with Sanga.

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11.3.1 Babur as an Empire Builder

With Babur's conquest of Hindustan began the long reign of the Mughal Empire in India. Babur brought with him Mughal architecture. Even though Mughal architecture in India was in its nascent stage during the reign of Babur, many important monuments were erected during his time.

The types of structures that evolved during Babur's regime were neither representative of any particular region, nor did they have any regional manifestations. Rather, Mughal architecture under Babur was just a beginning of an imperial movement, impressed only by local influences, as it displayed similar uniformity in its architectural character as well as in its structural principles in whichever part of the empire it was established. These elegant styles evolved gradually due to the presence of exceedingly skilled local artisans in those provinces possessing potential indigenous cultures. Mughal architecture in India thus began flourishing in the true sense during the 16th century, in the regime of the first Mughal Emperor, Babur.

Mughal architecture during Babur was indeed that redefined phase, which saw the most able chiselling of gardens, fondly referred to as *Baghs* in Urdu. Many Hindu temples during the time of Babur underwent transformation. To the pre-existing Hindu particulars, Babur amalgamated Muslim styles and designs borrowed from Persian and Turk culture.

Even though he was in awe of Indian architecture and craftsmanship, he insisted that the dominant style of structures erected upon during his time be modelled upon *Khurasani*, that is, Timurid illustrations. It is assumed by historians that the Hasht Behisht garden at Agra was such a confluence of these many styles.

Textual records from the period throw light on the style of the garden, which seems to have had a large *Pishtaq* on each of four sides, connecting galleries and four small interior chambers.

Besides gardens, during his reign, Babur erected numerous monuments, fine tombs and *madrassas*. He converted many of the dilapidated Hindu temples into mosques. The Jama Masjid at Sambhal and Babri Masjid in Ayodhya are testimonies of Mughal architecture. It can be said here that the architectural styles developed during the reign of Babur formed the founding base of the confluence of Persian style with Hindu styles, which was to become the norm in later years.

A few structures erected during Babur's time withstood the vagaries of nature and time. These include the Jama Masjid at Sambhal and Kabuli Bagh Mosque at Panipat.

11.3.2 Achievements of Babur from AD 1526–1530

The great grandson of Timur and Genghis Khan, Babur was the first Mughal emperor in India. He confronted and defeated Lodi in AD 1526 at the First Battle of Panipat, and so came to establish the Mughal Empire in India. Babur ruled until AD 1530, and was succeeded by his son Humayun. During Babur's reign, India became united under one rule and had very prosperous cultural and political years.

Babur was not only a brilliant general, but also had qualities of a great leader. Like his contemporaries of the Renaissance period in Europe, Babur too had varied interests. He was well-read and could write in Turkish as well as in Persian. He wrote the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*. It provides information on his character, achievements and life during those times. He loved nature, laid down a number of gardens in Kabul and India, and planted fruit trees. He also loved music and enjoyed polo. He was also a superb horseman.

The memoirs of Babur trace his rise to power starting from his accession to the throne of his father. The description of Babur is clear, impressive and quite close to the truth. Babur wrote his autobiography titled *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* (titled *Baburnama* in Persian) in his mother tongue, Turkish. The autobiography is the best source of information on his life, even though there is hardly any information about the periods between AD1508–1519, AD1520–1525 and AD1529–1530.

A fairly good idea about his knowledge, his virtues and vices, his pleasures and sufferings, political circumstances which he faced, the climate, flora and fauna of the countries which he visited, his tastes and desires and the description of those people with whom he came in contact during his rule can be obtained from his writings. Besides, the description of Babur's friends and foes, his emotional reaction to individuals and circumstances, natural beauty of mountains, rivers, forests and towers are very much absorbing which credits his biography as a beautiful piece of literature. Babur gave a description of India as well in his biography. He wrote of the climate, the people, and their economic and social conditions and about the kings and political events in India. About India he wrote that Hindustan was a country of few charms, where people have no good looks or manners. Describing the political condition of India, he wrote that the capital of India is Delhi and also described something about the kingdoms of Malwa, Gujarat, Bahmani kingdom, Mewar and Vijayanagara.

The description of Hindustan by Babur is neither complete nor entirely correct. He made no mention of the states of Orissa, Khandesh, Sindh and Kashmir in his memoirs. Besides, as he got very little time to assess the Indian conditions and remained busy mostly in conducting wars, his description cannot be regarded accurate as well. If Babur would have got more time and would have got the opportunity to come in contact with the cultured people of India, he probably would have revised his opinion about the Indian people. Also, Babur viewed Indian people from the eyes of a conqueror. If he had remained alive for a few years more, his opinion would have been certainly different.

The achievements of Babur can be summarized as follows:

- Babur fought and defeated Sultan Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat in AD1526. The outcome of the battle saw the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India and the end of the Delhi Sultanate.

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- In AD 1527, Babur defeated the combined forces of the Rajputana under the command of Rana Sanga of Mewar and Mahmud Lodi in the Battle of Khanwah. The result of the battle saw the end of the dominance of the Rajput kingdoms, including Marwar, Gwalior, Ajmeer, and Ambar.
- In AD 1529, Babur engaged the Afghans who were powerful in eastern India, Bengal, Bihar, Assam, and Orissa, in the Battle of Ghagra. These forces led by Mahmud Lodi were defeated and scattered.
- Thus, after these initial conquests in India, Babur's territory extended from Kabul in the west to Gogra in the east, from the Himalayas in the north to Gwalior in the south.
- Being a patron of arts Babur welcomed many artists to his court from across the world. He was well-versed in Arabic, Turkish and Persian, and also penned his autobiography, the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*, in Turkish.
- Babur ruled over his empire only for a short duration of four years, a good part of which was spent in widening his empire. Hence, he was unable to bring about any transformation in administrative, judicial and financial fields.

Check Your Progress

3. When was Babur born?
4. What is the significance of the first battle of Panipat?

11.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Some of the factors that prompted Babur to conquer India are as follows:
 - Babur's ambition
 - Miserable political conditions of India
 - Immense riches of India and legal right to occupy some area
 - Meagre income from Kabul
2. Maharana Sangram Singh commonly known as Rana Sanga, was an Indian ruler of Mewar and head of a powerful Hindu Rajput confederacy in Rajputana during the 16th century.
3. Babur was born on 14 February 1483.
4. The importance of the first battle of Panipat lies in the fact that it made the beginning of the Mughal rule in India.

11.5 SUMMARY

- Like other contemporary rulers, Babur was very ambitious.
- The political situation in north-west India was suitable for Babur's entry into India. Sikandar Lodi had died in AD 1517, and Ibrahim Lodi had succeeded him.
- Like countless earlier invaders from Central Asia, Babur was drawn to India by the lure of its fabulous wealth. India was famous as the land of gold and riches.
- Another reason for Babur's invasion of India was the meagre income of Kabul.
- Babur was apprehensive of an Uzbek attack on Kabul and considered India to be a good place of refuge, and a suitable base for operations against the Uzbeks.
- Some the historians hold the opinion that Babur had been invited to attack the Delhi Sultanate by Daulat Khan Lodi and Rana Sanga.
- Babur, who laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India in AD 1526, belonged to the family of Chaghatai Turks.
- Babur led two important and decisive battles—the Battle of Panipat and the Battle of Khanwah—that speak volumes about his personality.
- Babur's character has been praised by all historians—both modern and contemporary. He was numberless man of many virtues and excellences. He was kind, generous, courageous, and a cultured man.
- Babur was a determined soldier and an experienced general. After becoming a successful commander, he never lost courage or determination to rise.
- The Battle of Panipat is regarded as one of the decisive battles in Indian history.
- The Battle of Panipat led to the initiation of artillery in India.
- The Battle of Khanwah was fought between Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar (popularly known as Rana Sanga) and the founder of Mughal dynasty, Babur, in AD 1527 at Khanwah, about forty kilometers away from Agra.
- Babur ruled over his empire only for a short duration of four years, a good part of which was spent in widening his empire.

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11.6 KEY WORDS

- **Bagh:** Bagh is a large garden or orchard in Urdu.
- **Pishtaq:** Pishtaq, in Islamic architecture, is a rectangular frame around an arched opening, usually associated with an iwan.

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- **Madrassa:** Madrassa is the Arabic word for any type of educational institution, whether secular or religious, and whether a school, college, or university.
- **Tuzuk-i-Baburi:** *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* is the autobiography of Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, the founder of the Mughal empire in India.

11.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the various factors that prompted Babur to conquer India?
2. Write a short note on the battle of Khanwah.
3. Who invited Babur to come to India and why?
4. What happened in the first battle of Panipat?

Long-Answer Question

1. Describe the political conditions of India on the eve of Babur's invasion.
2. Discuss the effects of the first battle of Panipat?
3. Write a detailed note on the achievements of Babur from AD 1526–1530.

11.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 12 SHER SHAH SURI, AKBAR, SHAH JAHAN AND AURANGZEB

*Sher Shah Suri, Akbar,
Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb*

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Structure

- 12.0 Introduction
- 12.1 Objectives
- 12.2 Sher Shah Suri
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- 12.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
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- 12.11 Further Readings

12.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about the establishment of the Mughal rule. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur was the son of Umar Sheikh Mirza, a descendent of the famous invader Timur Lane. His mother Qutulug Nigar Khanam belonged to the family of Genghis Khan, the great Mongol invader. When Babur was born in AD 1483, his father was the ruler of a small principality of Farghana in Turkistan. In AD 1494 Babur inherited the petty Kingdom of Fargana from his father. He was then only eleven years and four months old. At such a tender age, he had to shoulder the responsibility of ruling the state. Babur laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India in AD 1526. In this unit, you will learn about the other great rulers of the Mughal Empire. This unit will discuss Sher Shah Suri as a commander, soldier and conqueror. This unit will also discuss some remarkable achievements of Akbar, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

12.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- List the various achievements of Sher Shah Suri
- Explain the problems before Akbar and his efforts towards their solutions

- Mention some remarkable achievements of Shah Jahan Aurangzeb
- Describe the *Mansabdari* system

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12.2 SHER SHAH SURI

Sher Shah Suri is one of those great men in history who achieved greatness from a very ordinary position. The dynasty founded by him is known as the Sur dynasty. He was born in AD 1472. He was one of the eight sons of Mian Hassan Khan Sur, an employee of the governor of Punjab, Jamal Khan. In the reign of Sikandar Lodi, Jamal Khan was appointed the governor of Jaunpur. Hassan and his son Farid accompanied their master. Jamal Khan gave the *Jagirs* of Khawaspur, Sahasram and Tanda to Hassan. Farid's childhood was spent in Sahasram. Later, he came over to Jaunpur being fed up with the misbehaviour of his stepmother and his father. He was twenty-two years old at that time. He impressed Jamal Khan with his scholarly nature and ability, and Jamal Khan pressurized Hassan to appoint Farid as the manager of the *Jagirs* of Sahasram and Khawaspur.

Farid earned enough administrative experience by managing these *Jagirs*. But soon he had to leave the place because of the machinations of his stepbrother and one powerful Afghan chief, Muhammad Khan who wanted that the *Jagirs* should be divided between the two. Farid, then, entered into the military service of the Governor of South Bihar—Bahar Khan Lohani. It is said that one day he slew a tiger with the help of a sword and impressed by his bravery, Bahar Khan gave him the title of Sher Khan and from then onwards, Farid became famous as Sher Khan. It is said that he entered Babur's service in AD 1527. The historians hold that his motive in entering this service was to acquire knowledge of the system of Mughal warfare and its effects. Babur became suspicious of his activities and asked his prime minister to keep a strict watch on Sher Khan and described him as a very clever person. Sher Khan is said to have quietly slipped away from there and again entered the services of Bahar Khan Lohani. He was appointed the tutor and guardian of Jalal Khan, the minor son of the ruler.

After sometime, Bahar Khan Lohani died and his widow appointed Sher Khan as the regent of the minor prince. In fact, Sher Khan became the de facto ruler of Bihar. He invited the younger brother of Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi, Mahmud Lodhi and made a plan of a military campaign against Babur. But Babur defeated him in the battle of Ghagra (AD 1529). Sher Khan and Jalal Khan surrendered before the Mughals and got back their *Jagirs* on the condition of paying an annual tribute to Babur. Gradually, Sher Khan began to add to the number of his supporters.

Meanwhile the ruler of Chunar, Taj Khan died in AD 1530. Sher Khan married his widow Lad Malika. This brought him the fort of Chunar and enormous wealth along with it.

Sher Shah was a daring soldier, a successful conqueror and an able administrator. He was a lover of knowledge, patron of scholars and a very good

ruler. He was the forerunner of Akbar in many fields, though he was not equal to Akbar in greatness. Famous historian Dr Qanungo is right when he says, 'It is doubtful whether he would have done such deeds as Akbar if he had lived for 50 years more because Sher Shah had the drawbacks from which Aurangzeb suffered.'

As a commander, soldier and conqueror

Sher Shah was an able commander, a great soldier and conqueror. He is said to have lived like a common soldier in the battlefield. He was an experienced soldier. He had boundless bravery and patience. He attacked a weak army like a tiger; but faced with a powerful enemy he achieved victory through deceitful tactics of a fox. He was a great conqueror who annexed Bihar, Bengal, Punjab, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajputana and Sind, etc. His empire was very vast. The frontiers of his empire extended from Punjab to Malwa and from Bengal to Sind.

As a ruler and administrator

Founder of Law and Order: Sher Shah had many achievements as an administrator. He re-established law and order throughout his empire. He dealt very strictly with those *Zamindars*, thieves and dacoits who broke the social order or refused to pay the land revenue. As an administrator, Sher Shah Suri had a great impact on his *Zamindars*, officials and chiefs. Abbas Sherwani writes, 'The *Zamindars* were so frightened of him that nobody liked to raise the boundary of revolt against him nor any of them dared to harass the travellers passing through his territory.' Though he did not bring about any change in the administrative units of the Sultanate period, he made such changes that nobody could be autocratic and harass people. He was a first ruler of later Medieval India who thought it his duty to give a life of peace and comfort to his subjects, forgetting the difference between the Hindus and Muslims. He established democratic autocratism. In his central administration, he did not make any one minister more important than the others and thus minimized the possibilities of mutual jealousy and plotting against the emperor.

He organized his empire at the level of provinces, *sarkars*, *paraganas* and villages. He issued certain instructions for provincial rulers so that they did not minimize the importance of central administration. He divided very big provinces into smaller units and appointed separate officials there. He did not make the administration of all the provinces uniform because he thought that the administration of every province should be according to its special local needs. He appointed two separate officials of equal level in the provinces, *sarkars* and *paraganas*, so that one was responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the other for the financial resources. He left the work of local defense and peace to the local officials and thus not only lessened the work of central administration but tried to involve a greater number of people in the administration. He gave an evidence of his administrative ability by delegating the responsibility of arresting thieves, dacoits and murderers to the village headmen and government officials. During his time,

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the arrangements of the life and property of the subject was more satisfactory than ever before.

Able land administrator: He gave special attention to land revenue system, army and judicial system. He fixed the land revenue on the basis of proper measurement of land, its productivity, actual produce and local prices, and prepared detailed lists of the amount of the revenue to be paid. He gave an option to the cultivators to pay the revenue in cash or in kind. He started the practice of *Kabuliat* and *Patta* and gave priority to the *Rayatwari* system as compared to the *Zamindari* and *Jagirdari* practices prevalent at that time.

A great army administrator and organizer: As a ruler, he devoted attention to the army administration and organization. He created a vast standing and efficient army, brought an end to the system of supplying a fixed number of soldiers to the centre by tribal leaders and began direct recruitment of soldiers. He started the practices of 'Huliya' and 'Dag'. He constructed cantonments among various parts of the empire, and placed a strong contingent army in each of these cantonments. His army consisted of 15000 infantry, 25000 cavalry armed with bows and arrows, 5000 elephants, and an arsenal.

A just ruler: Sher Shah Suri made justice a priority. He paid special attention towards the judicial system. He used to say that 'dispensing justice was the highest religious duty which should be discharged equally by Kafirs and Muslim Kings'. Sher Shah gave justice to everyone. He had assumed the title of *Sultan-i-Adil* or a just ruler. Sher Shah Suri had established law courts at various places which were called *Dar-ul-Adalat*. He never pardoned any criminal whether he was a big chief, his own caste person or a near relative.

For the establishment of law and order, *Qazis* were appointed at various places but like earlier times village level *Panchayats* and *Zamindars* also heard civil and criminal cases. In his time, criminal law was very strict and educative for others. He was very successful as a just ruler and appreciating his judicial system Nizamuddin has written that so much was the fear of Sher Shah and his justice that in his time even dacoits and thieves guarded the properties of the travellers.

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

Dr Qanungo writes, 'Sher Shah's attitude towards the Hindus was not one of the hateful tolerance but that of respect.' He was the first Muslim emperor having a national outlook that established a secular state and looked to the welfare of all his subjects in an impartial manner. In his time religious tolerance like that of Akbar could not be established. Dr Qanungo writes correctly that during Sher Shah's time, he had to struggle against religious and political orthodoxy as also against well-established traditions of communal Sultanate of the last 300 years. Therefore, he did not have the congenial atmosphere which was inherited by his successors.

Cultural achievements (as patron of knowledge and art): Sher Shah had many achievements in the cultural field, because he was a great patron of knowledge, literature and art. He made good arrangements for the education of his subjects. Financial grants were given to many Hindu schools. For his Muslim subjects he opened many *Makhtabs* of Arabic and Persian and also established *Madrassas* for higher education. To encourage the pursuit of knowledge, he made arrangements for scholarships and arranged for the maintenance of the poor students by the state. Sher Shah showed interest in the field of architecture as well.

He constructed many mosques, forts, *sarais*, etc. Some scholars hold the opinion that he constructed the Purana Qila desecrating the Dinapanah city of Humayun. In it he constructed the Qila-i-Kuhana mosque which is counted amongst his famous buildings in north India. Persian influence is discernible in the small minarets around the entrance gate and its artisanship. The other parts of the building are constructed on an Indian pattern. The mosque in Bihar constructed in the midst of a lake in Sahasram is a clear example of the Indo-Muslim architecture so far as its grandeur, beauty and proportionate structure are concerned. The outer structure is of Muslim style but the inside of the structure is decorated by the *Toranas* and pillars of the Hindu style. Its dome, shining in blue sky, appears beautiful. There is a stunning harmony of blue, red and yellow colours. In every corner there is the pillared pavilion on the top of the second storey.

The construction of a lotus on the top has added to its decoration. Sher Shah constructed a new city on the banks of river Jamuna as well. Sher Shah patronized the scholars as well. Some of the best works of Hindu literature like *Padmawat* of Malik Muhammad Jayasi were written during his time. Sher Shah was not a religious fanatic. His social and economic policies are an evidence of this fact. In brief, Sher Shah Suri was the first great national ruler. After him, his dynasty did not last even for ten years, but his sword and diplomacy had founded such an empire that its policies (especially currency system, land revenue system, judicial and military departments) continued for a very long time, extended and progressed. The masters of the empire changed (first the Mughals and then the British) but the institutions of Sher Shah continued. Erskine says rightly, 'No Government, not even the British, had showed as much wisdom as was evidenced by this Afghan.'

Sher Shah's Conquests after Becoming the Emperor

Conquests of Punjab (AD 1540–1542)

Immediately after his accession on the throne at Delhi, Sher Shah snatched Punjab from Humayun's brother, Kamran. Alongside he also suppressed the turbulent Khokhars of the northern region of the rivers Indus and Jhelum. About 16 kilometers north of the river Jhelum, he constructed the fort of Rohtasgarh at the cost of about '8 crore for the security of the north-western Frontier of India.

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Conquest of Malwa (AD 1542)

The ruler of Malwa was known as Mallu Khan 'Qadirshah'. At the time of war with Humayun, he had not helped Sher Shah. So, Sher Shah attacked Malwa. Qadirshah did not fight but ran away to Gujarat instead. Sher Shah made Malwa an integral part of his empire. When Qadirshah asked his pardon, Sher Shah excused him, treated him kindly and appointed him the governor of Lakhnauti.

Conquest of Raisin

Raisin was a Rajput principality in Central India ruled by the Rajput ruler Puranmal Chauhan. He had occupied Chanderi from the Mughal Chiefs. When Sher Shah came to know of it he attacked Raisin. According to Dr Quanungo, 'the motive behind the attack over Raisin was political not religious; Sher Shah wanted to make the Rajput principality of Raisin an integral part of the Delhi empire.' The fort of Raisin was besieged. After a prolonged siege negotiations for peace started.

Puranmal was prepared to surrender on the condition that no harm would come on the members of his family and his associates. Sher Shah promised to see to their security and Puranmal surrendered. But Puranmal and his followers were attacked without any prior information. One of his daughters and three of his nephews were caught alive and the others were murdered. In the words of Dr Ishwari Prasad, 'Sher Shah behaved with very inhuman cruelty towards his enemy who had reposed trust in him at the time of his bad condition.'

Conquest of Multan and Sindh

Sher Shah's general, at the behest of Sher Shah attacked Multan and Sindh in AD 1543. Both of these provinces were conquered and annexed to the empire of Sher Shah.

Conquest of Marwar (AD 1543–1545)

In AD 1543, Sher Shah attacked Maldev of Marwar. In AD 1544, the Rajputs and the Afghan armies fought each other at Semal, between Ajmer and Jodhpur. Sher Shah advanced very carefully in Rajasthan. He did not think it wise to indulge in a straight fight against Maldev and resorted to diplomacy. He caused some such letters to be dropped near Maldev which led Maldev to suspect that some of his chiefs had deserted him. Maldev was deeply grieved and decided to retreat. But his army launched a more fierce attack against Sher Shah's army.

They fought very bravely, but ultimately Sher Shah was victorious. The battle was so fierce and the victory so difficult that Sher Shah proclaimed that he had almost lost the empire of India for a handful of grains. In AD 1544, Sher Shah brought Marwar under his occupation but soon after his death, Maldev reoccupied the lost regions in July 1555.

Conquest of Chittor and Ajmer

*Sher Shah Suri, Akbar,
Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb*

The ruler of Mewar, Rana Udaisingh was a minor at the time of Sher Shah. When the Rajputs came to know of Sher Shah's invasion they thought it better to accept his sovereignty rather than fight with him. Now the whole of Rajasthan except Jaisalmer was under Sher Shah. But Sher Shah left the Rajput kingdom with the Rajput chiefs themselves. After establishing his control over some important forts (Ajmer, Jodhpur, Abu and Chittor) he posted the Afghan army in large numbers there. Along with this he kept a strict control over the routes of communications.

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Conquest of Kalinjar and the death of Sher Shah

After these conquests, Sher Shah planned an invasion of Kalinjar because its ruler Kirat Singh had given shelter to the ruler of Riva, Virbhan against the wishes of the Afghan ruler and then had refused to return him to the Afghans against Sher Shah's wishes. Because of all these causes, Sher Shah besieged the fort in AD 1544. But he could not achieve much success. On 22 May 1545, Sher Shah launched a fierce attack. Sher Shah was inspecting the arsenal when he was grievously injured by a bomb blast. He ordered to continue the invasion and by evening the fort was under his control, but Sher Shah was not fated to enjoy this conquest as he died of the injuries on the same day.

Check Your Progress

1. When was Sher Shah Suri born?
2. Who was the founder of the Suri Empire?

12.3 AKBAR

On 19 February 1556, Akbar was declared the Emperor at Kalanaur when he had just turned thirteen. At that time, he was virtually a ruler without a kingdom. Vincent Smith wrote aptly that before Akbar could claim to be an emperor in reality rather than just in name, he had to prove himself more capable than his other rivals for the throne, and at least had to recapture the lost kingdom of his father.

Initial difficulties

At the time of his accession, Akbar was confronted with the following difficulties:

- **A small kingdom:** In fact, Akbar was in possession of only a small part of the Punjab. Though in theory Kabul, Kandhar and Badakshan were also the parts of the Mughal Empire, he had no hope of any help from there because Kabul was under his stepbrother, Mirza Hakim. He immediately declared himself independent. The Governor was in Bairam Khan's *jagir* but was in danger of the Iranian invasion. The Governor of Badakshan,

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Mirza Suleman had become independent and he wanted to establish his control over Akbar as well as the ruler of Kabul, Mirza Hakim.

- **Akbar a minor:** Akbar was very young and he had to follow the instructions and work under the guidance of Bairam Khan till he attained maturity.
- **Sikandar Suri:** Though the ruler of Punjab had been defeated, his power had not as yet been crushed completely and he could become a danger for Akbar at any time. Adil Shah was in control of the region from Bihar to Chunar and his able minister Hemu was making preparations for war against the Mughals.
- **Ibrahim Suri:** Ibrahim Suri was occupying the Doab and Sambhal and he considered himself to be a claimant for the throne of Delhi.
- **Other Afghan chiefs:** Malwa, Gujarat, etc., were still in the hands of Afghan chiefs. They could at any time become a problem for Akbar.
- **Rajputs:** The Rajput chiefs of Marwar, Mewar, Jaisalmer, Ranthambhore, and Ajmer were continuously organizing their strength.
- **Abdul Muwali:** The famous Mughal Amir, Abdul Muwali had revolted and he did not attend the coronation ceremony of Akbar. Though Bairam Khan had captured and imprisoned him in the fort of Lahore, he posed a threat for the Mughals at any time.
- **Tardi Beg:** He tried to fix the land revenue in accordance with Tardi Beg, the governor of Delhi who had also turned a rebel and Hemu, the minister of Adil.
- **The kingdoms of Kashmir, Sind, Multan and Himalayan region:** All these kingdoms were independent and Akbar planned to bring them under the Mughal Empire.
- **Bad financial condition:** The Mughal treasury was empty. A terrible famine was raging in Delhi and Agra. To arrange financial resources was a problem confronting Akbar. In the Deccan there were, besides the Vijayanagar Empire, five Shia states viz. Khandesh, Bidar, Berar, Ahmednagar and Golkunda. The country could be united politically only after bringing them under the Mughal fold.
- **Anarchy and confusion:** Everywhere in the country there was indiscipline, disorder and anarchy. One of the problems before Akbar was to end them and give to the people a capable administration, peace and order.

Solving the Problems

Akbar gradually overcame all these difficulties in this conquest, where on one hand, he was aided by his own good fortune and on the other hand, credit should go to the loyalty and ability of Bairam Khan. He called a conference of the Mughals in Sirhind and gave a death punishment to the governor of Delhi, Tardi Beg who had not been able to defend Delhi against Hemu. Bairam Khan defeated Hemu in

the Second Battle of Panipat and seated Akbar on the throne. But four years of power turned Bairam Khan into a vain person. In AD 1560, Akbar very deftly defeated him after he indulged in rebellion but pardoned him keeping in view his past services. At a place called Patan, Bairam Khan was murdered by some rebel Afghans. Because of the treacherous activities of Akbar's foster mother and Adham Khan, Akbar was forced to give death punishment to Adham Khan in AD 1561 and his mother Maham Anga died of the shock and grief. In AD 1565, the rebellious Uzbek chiefs Sardar Khan, Abdulla Khan and Zaman Khan were also punished. In fact, Zaman Khan died fighting and his brother Bahadur was accorded death punishment. Abdulla Khan died (after some time Akbar got all the supporters of his step brother, Hakim Mirza of Kabul, murdered and forced him to flee from Kabul). With the help of Bairam Khan, Akbar conquered (besides Agra and Delhi), the regions of Jaunpur, Ranthambhore and Malwa. After the acceptance of the sovereignty of the Mughals by Bihari Mal, the ruler of Ajmer and marrying his daughter, Akbar extended the sphere of his power till Ajmer. After that, he had to wage wars against Garkatanga (Gondwana), Gujarat, Bengal, Chittor, Kalinjar, etc. After Bengal, Kabul and Kandhar were brought under occupation. Khandesh accepted his suzerainty. After a prolonged struggle, Ahmednagar was conquered in AD 1600 and after the revolt of the new governor of Khandesh, Miran Bahadur Shah of Asirgarh was conquered militarily on 6 January, 1601. Briefly then, it can be said that Akbar had to struggle to overcome the various problems which confronted him.

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The Second Battle of Panipat

The Second Battle of Panipat was a battle between Hemu and Akbar in which Akbar won to re-establish the Mughal Empire. The Second Battle of Panipat occurred in November 1556. Emperor Akbar, who was crowned in the same year after his father's death defeated Muhammad Adil Shah Suri of Pashtun Suri Dynasty and his Prime Minister Hemu (Hemchandra). This defeat of Adil Shah and Hemu initiated Akbar's reign.

Humayun, the second Mughal Emperor died suddenly on 24 January 1556 as he slipped from the steps of his library. That time his son Akbar was only thirteen years old. Akbar was busy in a campaign in Punjab with the Chief Minister Bairam Khan at the time of his father's death. That time Mughal reign was confined to Kabul, Kandahar and parts of Punjab and Delhi. Akbar was enthroned as the emperor on 14 February 1556 in a garden at Kalanaur in Punjab. Hemu or Hemchandra was the military chief of Afghan Sultan Muhammad Adil Shah. Adil Shah was the ruler of Chunar and was seeking an opportunity to expel the Mughals from India. They got the advantage of Humayun's death. Hemu occupied Agra and Delhi without much difficulty in October and became the ruler under the title 'Raja Vikramaditya'. It was a short-lived victory for Adil Shah and Hemu.

Bairam Khan, the Chief Minister and the guardian of Akbar proceeded towards Delhi with a large army. On 5 November both the armies met at Panipat.

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Hemu had a large army including 1500 war elephants. He got the initial success but unfortunately a stray arrow struck his eye and he became unconscious. His troops thought that they have lost their leader and panic spread among them and they retreated. The Mughals won the battle. Shah Quli Khan captured the Hawai elephant of Hemu and presented it directly to Akbar. Hemu was brought in unconscious condition to Akbar and Bairam Khan. Akbar then severed the head of unconscious Hemu and took his cavalry sword.

Some historians claim that Akbar did not kill Hemu by himself; he just touched his head with his sword and his followers killed Hemu. Hemu's cut off head was sent to Kabul to the ladies of Humayun's harem in order to celebrate the victory. Hemu's torso was sent to Delhi for a display on a gibbet. Iskandar Khan from Akbar's side chased Hemu's army and captured as many as 1500 elephants and a large portion of the army. Hemu's wife escaped from Delhi with the treasure she could have with her. Pir Mohammad Khan chased her caravan with a troop but his effort was not successful.. The Second Battle of Panipat changed the course of Indian History as it initiated the re-establishment of Mughal Dynasty in India.

Character and Personality of Akbar

Akbar was the greatest among the Mughal emperors who ascended the throne at a very early age, after the death of his father Humayun. During his reign, the Mughal Empire was at its peak. Akbar, who took charge of an empire that was besieged with many problems, both internal as well as external at a young age, made the Mughal Empire not only the strongest state in India, but also one of the best administered state of his times. He also implemented innovative policies which proved liberal, farsighted and successful which added a new chapter in Indian medieval history and established the Mughal Empire firmly in India. Therefore, he has been justly described as 'the Great' among the Mughal emperors of India.

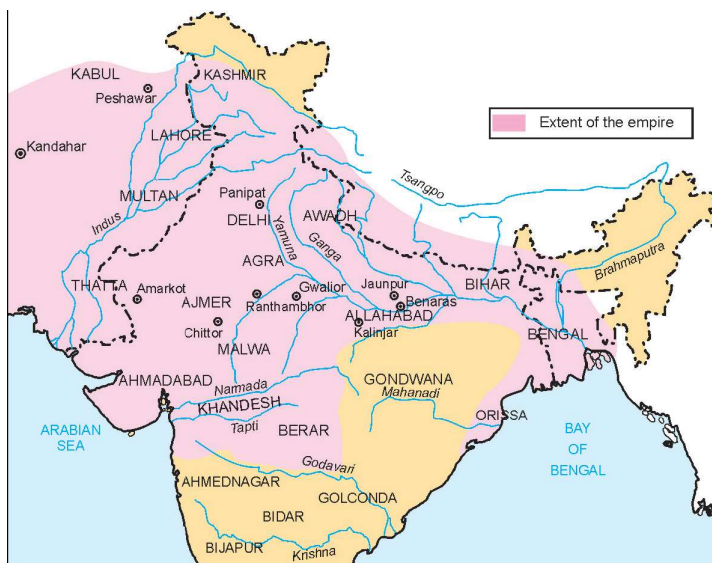


Fig. 12.1 Extent of Akbar's Empire

Check Your Progress

3. When was Akbar declared as the Emperor?
4. Who won the second battle of Panipat?

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12.4 SHAH JAHAN

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

Reign of Shah Jahan

The reign of Shah Jahan was marked as the golden age of the Mughal dynasty. Shah Jahan was well educated and cultured, and was known to have provided protection to scholars. Persian and Sanskrit literature flourished during his reign. He also patronized fine arts, appreciated music, painting and structural design. He had several wives; nonetheless, he was devoted to them. He constructed the Taj Mahal to commemorate his love for Mumtaz Mahal. He loved his children and gave them all necessary training and comforts. He was a hard fighter and an accomplished commander. He participated in all important campaigns not only during his life time, but also had led most of the conquests for his father Jahangir. Soon after he occupied the throne, he started his military campaigns and busied himself with extending the boundaries of the Mughal Empire. During his reign, Ahmednagar was completely annexed to the Mughal dominion, and Bijapur and Golconda were enforced to accept the suzerainty of the royal leader. He even attempted to conquer Central Asia and recover Kandahar.

Shah Jahan was a just sovereign and solemnly desired the welfare of his subjects. Trade, industry and agriculture flourished and the state as well as the subjects enjoyed prosperity during the entire period of his reign. He worked hard and personally supervised the administration of the Empire. He brought about enhancement in the *mansabdari* system. He helped his subjects generously in times of famines and natural calamities. With regard to religious affairs, he was unquestionably orthodox when compared with Jahangir and Akbar; yet he did not get in the way of the daily life of the Hindus and the Christians. He participated in fairs and festivals of the Hindus and he continued the practices of *Jharokha Darshan* and *Tula Dan* as before. He continued the policy of his father and grandfather towards the Rajputs and commanded their respect and loyalty. Trade

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activities flourished between Delhi, Agra, Lahore, and Ahmedabad during the reign of Shah Jahan as a result of improved network of roads and waterways.

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

Achievements of Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan pursued the same guiding principles of his ancestors Akbar and Jahangir regarding the extension of the Empire's boundaries towards south India. Moreover, the fact that the states of south India sheltered the rebels in opposition to the Mughals did not sit well with Shah Jahan and hence, he desired to get the better of these states. In AD 1633 Ahmednagar was annexed to the Mughal Empire. The ruling family of Golconda was *Shia* and its rule had refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Mughals. Shah Jahan desired to conquer Golconda. He was able to manage this when Abdullah Qutub Shah ascended the throne, and he agreed to the terms and conditions of the Mughal Emperor. In AD 1636, Shah Jahan attacked Daulatabad. Bijapur was weak at that time due to rebellious attempts of its nobles. Consequently, Muhammad Adil Shah voluntarily agreed for peace and an agreement was signed between the two parties. The Deccan guiding principle of the Mughals proved fairly triumphant for the duration of the period of influence of Shah Jahan. Since the annexation of Ahmednagar, both Bijapur and Golconda also accepted the suzerainty of the royal leader. The rulers of these kingdoms were obligatory to pay the annual acknowledgment from time to time and parts of their territories for the Mughals to establish their forts and watch stations. Some other minor invasions also occurred during Shah Jahan's rule. These conquests include the following:

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

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

War of Succession

Chaos and bloodshed related to wars of succession for the throne had become the order of Mughal Era. All the four sons of Shah Jahan – Dara Shikoh, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad, started fighting among themselves during the last

years of Shah Jahan's rule. Shah Jahan personally chose Dara as the would-be-heir. But the Muslim nobles disliked the popular Dara for his liberal mindset. Ultimately, Aurangzeb cleansed all obstructions through coercion and bloodshed. He imprisoned Shah Jahan, and murdered Murad and Dara, while the helpless Shah Shuja ran away from India. Shah Jahan died on 22 January 1666, in Agra.

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Deccan Policy of Shah Jahan

The Deccan guiding principle of the Mughals for the duration of the period of influence of Shah Jahan remained quite successful. Shah Jahan attempted either to annex the kingdoms of the Deccan or force them to accept the suzerainty of the royal leader. He was a capable commandant and understood the politics of the Deccan well. The death of Malik Ambar, the *wazir* of Ahmednagar, endowed with him a good opportunity to instill anxiety on Ahmednagar.

During the time of Shah Jahan, Ahmednagar was ruled by Hussain Shah. He opened negotiations with the Mughals and simultaneously tried to befriend Bijapur. His unscrupulous international relations resulted in the loss of many trustworthy nobles like Shahji Bhonsle. Hussain Shah was incarcerated in the fort of Gwalior and Ahmednagar was annexed to the Mughal kingdom. It meant the end of the state of Ahmednagar despite the fact that Shahji Bhonsle continued to fight in opposition to the Mughals on behalf of another child of the ruler of Ahmednagar, named Murtaza III. Later in AD1636 he surrendered the child to the Mughals and accepted the service of Bijapur. In AD1626 Qutub Shah, the ruler of Golconda died. He was succeeded by a child of eleven years named Abdullah Qutub Shah. In AD1636, Golconda was forced to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Mughals. Aurangzeb, when appointed as the administrator of the Deccan for the subsequent time in AD1652, again pressurized Golconda because it had failed to pay the annual tribute to the Mughals. Aurangzeb waited for an opportunity and he got it when Mir Jumla, one of the most well-known nobles of the Sultan, quarrelled with him and sought fortification from Aurangzeb.

Aurangzeb incarcerated Hyderabad and besieged the fort of Golconda. But earlier than he could incarcerate it he received orders of Shah Jahan to elevate the blockade. Consequently, a treaty was signed between the two parties. The ruler of Golconda established the suzerainty of Shah Jahan, and got married one of his daughters to Prince Muhammad, son of Aurangzeb, gave '10 lac as grant and nonetheless an additional '17 lac as war-indemnity to the Mughals.

Consequently, despite the fact that Golconda was weakened, it continued its existence. Sultan Ibrahim Shah was succeeded by Muhammad Adil Shah I in Bijapur. Adil Shah had no predetermined preparation to oppose the onslaughts of the Mughals at the same time as his landed gentries were divided amongst themselves. In AD1631 the attempt of the Mughals to subdue Bijapur, on the other hand, failed. The Mughals once more attacked it in AD1636 and enforced Bijapur to recognize its suzerainty. In AD1656, Adil Shah died. It was believed that he had no son but his wife, Bari Sahiba declared one child as his son and

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succeeded in putting him on the throne, after naming him Adil Shah II. Shah Jahan tried to take advantage of it. He charged the ruler of Bijapur for unusual acts and ordered Aurangzeb to attack it. Aurangzeb besieged the fort of Bijapur, but even before he could capture it, Shah Jahan ordered him to prolong the siege. An agreement was consequently signed among the two by which Bijapur accepted the suzerainty of the Mughal Emperor and agreed to pay rupees one-and-a half crores to the Mughals. The forts of Bidar and Kalyani also remained with the Mughals.

Thus, it can be summarized that the Deccan policy of Shah Jahan resulted in the complete annexation of the state of Ahmednagar to the Mughal kingdom. The states of Bijapur and Golconda were forced to recognize the suzerainty of the royal leader, lay down their arms and surrender parts of their territories and a few imperative forts and pay an annual acknowledgment and war-indemnity. In all probability, even Bijapur and Golconda could have been annexed to the Mughal Empire if Shah Jahan himself had not prevented Aurangzeb from attempting to do so. Shah Jahan probably prevented the annexation of these two states as he felt that the annexation of these two states would cause difficulties for the Mughals.

Check Your Progress

5. When was Shah Jahan born?
6. Who built the Taj Mahal?

12.5 AURANGZEB

Aurangzeb was the son of Shah Jahan and he ascended the throne as the sixth Mughal Emperor in AD1658. Even though he was an extremely able administrator, it was his religious intolerance and fanaticism which created unrest among his subjects and led to the gradual undoing of the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb was the third son of Shah Jahan and among the last Mughal Emperors to rule over India. He was born in AD 1618 at Dohad near Ujjain.

Aurangzeb was a hardworking and thorough man who had proved himself as an able administrator in the years that he spent in the Deccan as well as other regions of the Empire. He learnt all the tactics of diplomacy due to his expertise as a skilled soldier and general. All this came handy when he waged the war of succession with his father and his brothers. The end of the conflict was marked by Aurangzeb succeeding his father to the throne. On taking authority as the supreme ruler of the mighty dynasty, he assumed the title of Alamgir (conqueror of the world), followed by Badshah (Emperor) and then Ghazi (Holy Warrior) to propound the essence of the roles he would play. During the reign of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Dynasty was at its pinnacle with more regions of India becoming part of the Empire. From the time he was young, Aurangzeb had occupied various

important positions during his father's reign. Thus, when he usurped the power of his father and ascended the throne, he had the rich experience as the governor of Gujarat, Multan and Sind to aid him in his day-to-day affairs. Aurangzeb was a staunch Sunni Muslim and followed the principles of Islam. He led a disciplined life and abstained from drinking alcohol. He led a very simple life and spent little on his attire and food.

Administration of Aurangzeb

Having succeeded Shah Jahan to the throne, Aurangzeb had the dominion over the largest area under him as a Mughal Emperor, compared to both his predecessors and successors. He proved himself as a capable ruler and ruled with an iron fist and keen intellect. His empire extended from Ghazni in the west to Bengal in the east and from Kashmir in the north to the Deccan in the south. In fact, one of the reasons cited by prominent historians for the downfall of the Empire was the over-extended empire that Aurangzeb ruled. Since his youth, Aurangzeb, being a staunch Sunni Muslim, was deeply devoted to Islam. Soon after occupying the throne, he felt the need to rule the country as much as was possible along Islamic injunctions. Aurangzeb felt that he had become superior not only to administer the empire in a better way, but also to protect and strengthen Islam, particularly its Sunni faith.

Aurangzeb believed that all Mughal rulers who ruled prior to him committed one blunder—they did not try to establish the supremacy of Islam in India. He therefore tried to reverse this trend during his reign because he believed that it was the foremost duty of a Muslim king. This duty of Aurangzeb limited his vision, narrowed his concept of kingship and made him intolerant towards the majority of his subjects. As the first step towards establishing the Muslim supremacy in his empire, he introduced various policies, most of which were a simple reverse of the policies that were introduced by his forefathers. Thus, his administration saw the birth of a new class of people whose responsibility was to cleanse the society of various non-Islamic practices such as gambling, alcohol consumption and prostitution. Besides banning the cultivation and production of narcotic substances, he did away with many of the taxes which found no mention in the Islamic law. Besides all this, he also banned *Sati*, a Hindu practice which was common in his time. Most of these steps when implemented found favour among his people. But with the passing of time, and in his attempt to realize his bigger objective of fulfilling his religious vows, he adopted more puritanistic ways. Some of these factors that made him unpopular among his subjects included banning music at the court which led to a number of state musicians losing their jobs, festivities on the Emperor's birthday and giving of gifts to the emperor.

His religious intolerance was reflected in a number of ways. He stopped celebrating the Hindu festivals like Holi and Diwali at the court. He also framed certain laws to be observed by the Muslims as their religious duty. That is why even liberal *Shias* and *Sufis* were punished during the reign of Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb became quite intolerant towards the Hindus and ordered the provincial governors to demolish the schools and temples of the Hindus. In April AD1679,

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Jaziyawas imposed on the Hindus. Pilgrimage tax on the Hindus was also revived and while the Muslim traders remained free from tax, their Hindu counterparts were asked to pay one part of the value of their commodities as tax.

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While he went about with the demolition of schools and temples of Hindus, much resource were spent from the treasury for the construction of many masjids and the upkeep of the existing mosques and other Mughal buildings. Some popular and exquisite buildings that were erected during his time include the Moti Masjid in the Red Fort, which is a jewel in white marble, and the magnificent Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, with its imposing domes towering over the red sandstone walls.

Achievements of Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb had made some remarkable achievements, both before and during his reign. His constant aim during the entire duration of his reign was to expand the boundaries of the Mughal Empire. One of his greatest achievements was the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda, which were Maratha strongholds, to the Mughal Empire.

Since the beginning of his reign right up till his death he was engaged in almost constant warfare in order to try and increase the boundary of the Mughal Empire. He had managed to build up a huge army and started a programme of military expansion along all the boundaries of his empire. In keeping with this policy of expansion, he pushed northwest into Punjab and what is now Afghanistan and in the south towards Bijapur and Golconda.



Fig. 12.2 Extent of Mughal Empire during Aurangzeb's Reign

Conquests of Aurangzeb in the East

*Sher Shah Suri, Akbar,
Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb*

The earliest conquests of Aurangzeb were in the eastern parts of the Empire. During the time when Aurangzeb was still fighting with his brothers, the Ghinud rulers of Cooch Behar and Assam had taken advantage of the troubled conditions and invaded certain imperial dominions. In AD 1660, on Aurangzeb's orders, Mir Jumla marched to Dhaka and occupied Cooch Behar within a few weeks. They then left for Assam and on 17 March 1662 the Ahom Kingdom was annexed and the Raja was forced to sign a humiliating treaty. The Mughals got an immense tribute and also conquered some forts and towns near the frontier of Bengal. Another major addition to the kingdom that came during this time was the Chittagong, which was a stronghold of the Arakan pirates who had made the entire area unsafe.

Chittagong was later renamed as Islamabad and proved to be a valuable addition to the kingdom.

The conquest of the region known as East Pakistan too was an achievement particularly of Aurangzeb's reign. The area that lies east of the Brahmaputra River had remained isolated from the rest of the subcontinent for a long time mainly due to its geographical situation, climate, terrain, and the ethnic origin of the population. The isolation of this region was broken during the reign of Aurangzeb and it became a part of the Mughal Empire.

Conquests of Aurangzeb in the Northwest

As soon as the eastern region was dealt with, trouble started in the north-west frontier regions of the empire. Bhaku, a Yusufzai leader, rebelled in AD 1667. Aurangzeb succeeded in suppressing this rebellion for some time. Later in AD 1672, trouble broke out again when large numbers of people from different tribes formed groups and revolted against the authorities. Though the governor of Kabul tried to take on the rebels he was defeated and Aurangzeb himself intervened in the situation. He directed the operations in the troubled area for a year and finally with the use of force and diplomacy was able to restore peace in the area. Despite all this trouble, Aurangzeb's reign saw a transformation of the Mughal–Afghan relations and order was established along the frontier regions.

Check Your Progress

7. Who was the last Mughal Emperor to rule over India?
8. Mention some popular and exquisite buildings that were erected during Aurangzeb time.

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12.6 MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION

The early death of Sher Shah (AD 1545), and later, the Second Battle of Panipat (AD 1557), assured Mughal dominance. Their administration, known as the

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mansbadri system, was in essence a military one because every official was expected to enrol in the army. Each officer held a *mansab*—an office of rank as well as of profit—and was obliged to supply the Emperor with a number of troops. He was also required to maintain a given quota of horses, elephants and carriages. He was paid either in cash or gifted with a *jagir*—a tract of land which he did not own, but collected tax on it equivalent to his salary. The *jagir* was transferable from one *Mansabdar* to another; the office itself was not hereditary. The *Mansabdars* were directly recruited by the Emperor and were subject to his rule. The Emperor himself was an absolute ruler. Under him, there were several departments of the administration headed by the appointed officials such as the Imperial Household (*Khan-i-Saman*), the Exchequer (*Diwan*), Military Pay and Accounts (*Mir Bakshi*), the Judiciary (*Qazi*), Religious Endowments (*Sadr-us-Sudur*), and Censorship of Public Morals (*Muhtasib*). The village administration remained as it was traditionally under the headman and his subordinate watchman. In the cities, the police duties were given to the *Kotwals*, and at the district level there was the *Faujdar*. The judges followed the Quranic precepts, its previous interpretations (*fatwa*), and the ordinances of the Emperor (*qanun*). Justice was speedy and impartial, as it was meted out equally to all, including the officials.

Salient Features

- (i) **Import of foreign element in administration:** The Mughals imported certain foreign elements into their administrative system. They came to India from the Central Asia where they had their own system of administration. In India, they modified the same according to the Indian traditions and setting. Thus, the Mughal administration presented a combination of India and extra-India elements. More correctly, it was a Perso-Arabic system in the Indian setting.
- (ii) **Administration based on the military system:** In its formal configuration, the Mughal government was based on the military system. For instance, it was mandatory for government officers to enrol in the army. He was given a *mansab* as the nominal commander of a certain number of horsemen, and that determined his status and pay. They were also paid by the *bakshis* or the military paymasters.
- (iii) **Despotic:** Being military in nature, the Mughal administrative system was based on centralized despotism. The king had unlimited powers and his word was the law.
- (iv) **Mixture of religion and politics:** A strong blend of religion and politics existed in the system. The king was expected to rule according to the Islamic traditions and obey the commands of the *Ulemas*. Resultantly, as Jadunath Sarkar observes, ‘a difference existed in the attitude of the emperor towards his Muslim and Hindu subjects. For the Muslims, he undertook socialistic functions but towards his non-Muslim subjects, he followed the policy of minimum interference and thus confined himself to discharging the police and revenue functions’.

- (v) **Paper government:** The Mughal government, except, in the actual conduct of campaigns, was a *kagazi raj*, i.e., paper government. Because of the large territory, slow means of transport and communications and no political initiative left to the people, there was a multiplication of the official correspondence and the growth of massive records.
- (vi) **Police duties and revenue collection as the major function:** As regards the aims of the state, it contented itself with police duties and revenue collection. The state did not take any initiative in social progress or the economic welfare of the common man. Areas like education, health and promotion of art were largely left to a private initiative. Except for Akbar, the policy of benevolent intervention and paternal guidance was not pursued by the Mughal emperors.
- (vii) **State as an entrepreneur:** The concept of the state as an entrepreneur and the system of public corporations were firmly entrenched. The state maintained many *karkhanas* (factories) of its own in the principal cities of the Empire and produced several commodities.
- (viii) **Administration of justice and maintenance of peace:** A striking feature characterized the Mughal administration's attitude towards law and order. While the administration of justice and maintenance of peace are considered as essential functions of the modern state, during the Mughal era, however, it was left to the initiative of the local administration. Policing in the vast rural areas was done by the local *chaukidars* who were maintained by the villagers themselves. No doubt, the *faujdar* acted as the agent of the government, but the area under him was so large that he could not supervise all the villages.
- (ix) **'Parochial' self-government:** Though the administration was decentralized into the provincial and the local administrations, it would be more correct to say that the villages and small towns of the Mughal Empire enjoyed 'parochial' self-government rather than local autonomy. They had no political freedom as such and were more payers of taxes.

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The Emperor

In the Mughal system of governance, the emperor enjoyed real sovereignty which was indivisible and inalienable. Within this realm, he stood supreme as the symbol of unity and preserver of peace. He actively performed all the major functions of the government. He was the head of the civil and military administrations, responsible for the appointment and removal of all high officials. No *farmans* could be issued without his seal. The exchequer was also not outside the royal authority and the king determined the expenditure and sources of revenue. He was in no formal way responsible or accountable to the people. But, it may be said to the credit of the most Mughal emperors that they did not abuse the powers vested in them. Actually, they covered their despotism with a thick veil of paternalistic benevolence. There

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are accounts of the king touring the country extensively to keep a finger on the pulse of the administration. Consequently, the idea of a fixed capital did not possess much attraction for them. They carried their capital with them. It is wrong to think of the emperor's life as one of 'elysian ease'. Akbar, for instance, dealt with all the administrative work in an open *darbar* called *Diwan-i-Aam*.

The King's Council

Although the emperors had a few important officers to assist them, they, in no way, bore any resemblance to the modern-day council of ministers. These officials invariably included the *Wazir* and the *Diwan*, and the rest of the strength of the officials was determined exclusively by the emperor. These officials were mere delegates of the royal polity. Their primary function was to advise the sovereign but this advice was not binding. He heard them but did not always act according to them. They provided no checks on the royal will and, in no sense, were they his colleagues. Sarkar observes that they deserved to be called 'secretaries rather than ministers.'

They could never influence his policy except by gentle persuasion and veiled warning. Little wonder, they never resigned if he rejected their counsels.

Central Ministers and their Duties

1. *Wakil* or Prime Minister

The literal meaning of the term *Wakil* is representative. He was the representative of the state. The minister is called *Wakil* who could enjoy all the rights of the emperor on his behalf. This office continued in vogue in Akbar's, Jahangir's and Shah Jahan's reign. During their time, the Prime Minister was called *Wakil* or (*Wakil-i-Mutalak*). Some later emperors reviewed the office of *Wakil*, e.g., Jahandar Shah appointed Asad Khan as the *Wakil-i-Mutalak* and appointed his very son Zulfiqar Khan as *Wazir*.

2. The *Wazir* or *Diwan*

The *Wazir* or *Diwan* was the head of the revenue department. In case of non-appointment or the absence of *wakil*, all his works used to be performed by the *wazir*. The office of the *wazir* got revenue papers, and returned despatches from the provinces and the armies in the field. On many ceremonial occasions, he acted as the representative of the emperor. All orders of payments had to be signed by him and all the payments were made only through his department. Under the directions of the emperor, he himself passed orders. All questions concerning the revenue were settled by him and he consulted the emperor only in important cases. He had two assistants known as the *Diwan-i-Aam* or the *Diwan* of salaries and the *Diwan-i-Khas* or the *Diwan* of the crown land. After the death of Aurangzeb, the *wazir* became virtually the ruler of the state.

3. *Mir Bakshi*

The *mir bakshi* was the chief military adviser. He worked as the inspector general of the *mansabdars* inculcating a high standard of military strength. When the review was complete, he issued a certificate which enabled the *mansabdars* serving in the various capacities at the capital or outside, their ranks, the salaries including special awards, the way in which they drew their salaries, a complete record of their services as well as the result of the annual reviews of their troops and horses. He assigned the *mansabdars* present at the imperial camp of the capital to guard duty, though the list so prepared had to be sent to the *diwan* for the final sanction. As the chief of the state, he drew up the plans of campaigns of the various armies in consultation with the commanders and also with the emperor. He took part in all military expeditions and advised the emperor regarding reinforcements or when the smouldering jealousies of the rival commanders in an expedition rendered the recall or transfer of one of them necessary.

4. *Khan-i-Saman* or High Steward

The *khan-i-saman* was a very important officer of the Mughal time, as he was the head of the emperor's household department, and accompanied him during all his journeys and campaigns. All the personal servants of the emperor were under his control. He also supervised the emperor's daily expenditure, food, tents, stories, etc. He enjoyed a great power and influence, and there are examples of the *wazirs* being appointed from among the *khan-i-samans*. He used to keep a list of the requirements of the emperor and the harems. He was to meet the requirements, and in order to do so, procured things from places where they were available. Most of the ordinary requirements were met by the imperial factories or *karkhanas*. The *khan-i-saman* was in charge of all the state-owned factories and state industries. He was to see that the court was properly furnished and decorated according to the tastes and instructions of the emperor.

5. *Sadr-us-Sudur*

The *sadr-us-sudur* was the chief *sadar* of the Empire. He was also called by the names of the *sadr-i-khul* and *sadr-i-jahan*. *sadr-us-sudur* was the connecting link between the emperor and the people. He was the guardian of the Islamic Law and the spokesman of the *Ulema*. According to Ibn Hasan, the function of the chief *sadar* seems 'to have been limited to the use of his power for the award of the state of stipends and *jagirs* to the *Ulema* and the needy'. It was his duty to look into and decide the cases related to grants. He was the Almoner of the Emperor. He distributed the money for charitable purposes. There was a *sadar* in every province. While sending the provincial *sadars* to their charges, the chief *sadar* acquainted them with the names of those who held rent-free lands. Each *sadar* was to obey the chief *sadar* and carry out his orders.

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6. *Muhatashib*

The *muhatashib* was appointed by the emperor to inspect the moral of the people. He used to perform both the religious and the secular duties. As a secular official, he ensured that the traders and grocers charged the right price for their commodities. Beside these roles, he also had to oversee the general cleanliness of the city. Thus, he inspected the markets and other places regularly. Moreover, he ensured that the people followed the principles of Islam as propounded by the Prophet. It was his duty to mete out punishments to those Muslims who had given up *namaz* and *roza*. During Aurangzeb's reign he had to oversee the desecration and demolition of newly built temples.

7. *Qazi-ul-Quzat*

The *qazi-ul-quzat* was the highest judicial officer next to the emperor. He was responsible for the proper and an efficient administration of justice. The provincial *qazis* were appointed by him. In every province, district and city, there were *qazis* who decided the outcome of the cases. The duty of the chief *qazi* was to hear appeals from their courts and supervise their conduct.

Chief Departments of Administration

The chief departments of the Mughal administration were as follows:

- (i) **Exchequer and revenue:** The revenue department was headed by the *Diwan* or *Wazir*.
- (ii) **Imperial household:** The Department of Imperial Household was headed by the *Khan-i-Sama*. All the personal servants of the emperor were under this officer's control and he also supervised the emperor's daily expenditure, food, stores, etc. He enjoyed the trust of the emperor and there are examples of *wazirs* being appointed from among the *Khan-i-Samas*.
- (iii) **Military pay and accounts office:** The military pay and accounts office were under the *Mir Bakshi*. He was the paymaster of the central government. Since all the civil officers were part of the military, their salary also was released by the *Mir Bakshi*. He assisted the king in the appointment of *mansabdars*. His other duties included the recruitment of the army, the maintenance of the troops, determining the strength of troops, assisting the king in the conduct of foreign relations, leading the army or a section of it and accompanying the king on tours.
- (iv) **Canon law, both civil and criminal:** The department of law had the *Qazi* as its head. He was responsible for the administration of law in the land and, besides, was the chief judge in criminal suits which he tried according to the Muslim law.
- (v) **Religious endowments and charity:** The *Sadar* was the head of the department of religious affairs. He was the guardian of the Islamic law and

the spokesman of the *Ulema*. He made religious grants and it was his duty to see that such grants were applied to the right purpose. He was also a judge in some types of civil cases.

*Sher Shah Suri, Akbar,
Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb*

(vi) **Censorship of public morals:** The Department of Censorship of Public Morals, under the *Muhtasib*, was the censor of public morals. It regulated the behaviour of the people, curbed immortality and punished those who indulged in anti-religious acts.

(vii) **The artillery:** It was headed by the *Mir Atish* or *Daroga-i-Topkhana*.

(viii) **Intelligence and posts:** It was headed by the *Daroga* of *Dak Chouki*.

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12.6.1 *Mansabdari* System

The *Mansabdari* system during the Mughal administration is discussed under the following heads.

Merits of the *Mansabdari* System

- **End of the main defects of the *Jagirdari* system**

The *mansabdari* system brought to an end many of the defects of the *Jagirdari* system. The *mansabdars* had to come to the emperor every month for their pay. The emperor could maintain direct contact with the *mansabdars* every month.

- **Increased military efficiency**

The *mansabdari* system was an improvement over the military establishment of the medieval period. It was a sort of a compromise between the tribal chieftainship and the feudal system of giving troops. It combined the advantages of both the systems. Moreover, it was designed to tap every source of fighting strength in the country. Various units were particularly suited to certain special kinds of military duties. For example, certain Rajput *mansabdars* were diplomatically used against certain Rajput chiefs with whom they were at feud.

- **No more loss to royal treasury**

Under the *jagirdari* system, the *jagirdars* were assigned *jagirs* that covered huge areas of land, which resulted in a great loss to the royal treasury. In the *mansabdari* system, all the land became the state land. All the *mansabdars* were paid in cash on a fixed salary basis. This prevented extra revenues from going to the *jagirdars*, and the state treasury, thus, was enriched.

- **End of corruption**

According to some historians, the *mansabdari* system raised the moral standard of the military officials because after the death of a *mansabdar*, all

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his property used to be confiscated, and therefore, they did not indulge in dishonesty or show greed for hoarding more and more money.

- **Merit as the basis of selection**

All the ranks in this system were given keeping in view the ability of the officers. Moreover, incompetent officers were promptly removed from their positions. The son of a *mansabdar* did not inherit the *mansab* after the death of his father. With the appointment of efficient and able officials on different posts, all parts of the administrative machinery functioned smoothly.

- **Caste feeling and discrimination weakened**

People from different castes and religions formed the military group of *mansabdars*. This helped to weaken the feeling of caste and discrimination between the Hindus and the Muslims. Thus, this system helped to create an atmosphere of emotional integration in the country.

Demerits of *Mansabdari* System

- (i) Very expensive system: The fat salaries paid to the *mansabdars* made the whole army system of the Mughals very expensive, and later on, in Aurangzeb's time, this proved to be one of the factors which brought the downfall of the Mughal Empire.
- (ii) Within a *mansabdar*'s division, there was no classification of the troops into regiments. All the troops were immediately under him and every soldier had personal relations with him. Nor was the numerical strength of each army regulated or fixed in a *mansabdar*'s contingent.
- (iii) Each system was a great defect of the whole system. Hawkins, Bernier and Peter Monty have referred to this in their accounts. Whenever a particular *mansabdar* died, his property was confiscated by the state. This made the nobles and the *mansabdars* lead a luxurious life, for they thought and very rightly too, that their savings could not be inherited by their children. therefore, they spent whatever they possessed. This led to many corrupt practices in their private life. This generation of the nobility later on proved to be a potent cause of the downfall of the Mughal Empire.
- (iv) Corruption in some form or the other was unavoidable in a system which left the duties of the recruitment and the administration of the army to the *mansabdars*, i.e., the commanding officers themselves.
- (v) Moral degradation – Dishonest officials and dishonest *mansabdars* used to tally together, and during inspection, used to borrow horses from the other *mansabdars* and used to maintain their full quota only on paper.
- (vi) The *mansabdars* drew the money from the king and paid the troops their salaries with the result that the troops were more loyal to the *mansabdars* than to the king.

Check Your Progress

9. Define the term Wakil.
10. Mention some of the chief departments of the Mughal administration.

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12.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Sher Shah Suri was born in AD 1472.
2. Sher Shah Suri was the founder of the Suri Empire.
3. On 19 February 1556, Akbar was declared the Emperor at Kalanaur when he had just turned thirteen.
4. The Second Battle of Panipat was a battle between Hemu and Akbar in which Akbar won to re-establish the Mughal Empire.
5. Shah Jahan was born on 5 January 1592.
6. Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal.
7. Aurangzeb was the third son of Shah Jahan and among the last Mughal Emperors to rule over India.
8. Some popular and exquisite buildings that were erected during Aurangzeb time include the Moti Masjid in the Red Fort, which is a jewel in white marble, and the magnificent Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, with its imposing domes towering over the red sandstone walls.
9. The literal meaning of the term Wakil is representative. He was the representative of the state.
10. The chief departments of the Mughal administration were as follows:
 - Exchequer and revenue
 - Imperial household
 - Military pay and accounts office

12.8 SUMMARY

- Sher Shah Suri is one of those great men in history who achieved greatness from a very ordinary position.
- The dynasty founded by him is known as the Sur dynasty. He was born in AD 1472.

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- Sher Shah was a daring soldier, a successful conqueror and an able administrator. He was a lover of knowledge, patron of scholars and a very good ruler.
- Sher Shah Suri was farsighted, a lover of knowledge, dutiful, disciplined, industrious and a progressive thinker.
- On 19 February 1556, Akbar was declared the Emperor at Kalanaur when he had just turned thirteen.
- Akbar was very young and he had to follow the instructions and work under the guidance of Bairam Khan till he attained maturity.
- Akbar gradually overcame all these difficulties in this conquest, where on one hand, he was aided by his own good fortune and on the other hand, credit should go to the loyalty and ability of Bairam Khan.
- Shah Jahan ruled the Mughal Empire from AD 1628–1658.
- The son of the royal leader Jahangir and his Rajput Queen, popularly called Jodhabai, Shah Jahan was born on 5 January 1592.
- The reign of Shah Jahan was marked as the golden age of the Mughal dynasty. Shah Jahan was well educated and cultured, and was known to have provided protection to scholars.
- Shah Jahan pursued the same guiding principles of his ancestors Akbar and Jahangir regarding the extension of the Empire's boundaries towards south India.
- Aurangzeb was the son of Shah Jahan and he ascended the throne as the sixth Mughal Emperor in AD 1658.
- Aurangzeb had made some remarkable achievements, both before and during his reign. His constant aim during the entire duration of his reign was to expand the boundaries of the Mughal Empire.
- The early death of Sher Shah (AD 1545), and later, the Second Battle of Panipat (AD 1557), assured Mughal dominance.
- The *mansabdari* system brought to an end many of the defects of the *Jagirdari* system. The *mansabdars* had to come to the emperor every month for their pay.
- The *mansabdari* system was an improvement over the military establishment of the medieval period.

12.9 KEY WORDS

- **Zamindar:** A zamindar in the Indian subcontinent was an aristocrat. The term means land owner in Persian.

- **Qazi:** *Qazi* is the magistrate or judge of a Shari'a court, who also exercises extrajudicial functions, such as mediation, guardianship over orphans and minors, and supervision and auditing of public works.
- **Diwan-i-Aam:** The *Diwan-i-Aam*, or Hall of Audience, is a room in the Red Fort of Delhi where the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and his successors received members of the general public and heard their grievances.
- **Farman:** Farman was a royal order bearing the seal of the emperor during the Mughal period of Indian history.
- **Mir bakshi:** The *mir bakshi* was the chief military adviser in the Mughal time.

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12.10 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. List the various achievements of Sher Shah Suri.
2. Write a short note on Akbar as an emperor.
3. Mention some remarkable achievements of Aurangzeb.
4. What are the salient features of Mughal administration?
5. What are the merits and demerits of the *Mansabdari* system?

Long-Answer Question

1. Discuss Sher Shah Suri as a commander, soldier and conqueror.
2. Explain the cultural achievements of Sher Shah Suri.
3. Explain the problems before Akbar and his efforts towards their solutions.
4. The reign of Shah Jahan was marked as the golden age of the Mughal dynasty. Discuss.
5. Describe Aurangzeb's administrative system.

12.11 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 13 SOCIETY UNDER THE MUGHALS

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Structure

- 13.0 Introduction
- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Religious Policy of the Mughals
 - 13.2.1 Rajput and the Religious Policy of Akbar
 - 13.2.2 Religious Policy of Aurangzeb
- 13.3 Art and Literature Under the Mughals
 - 13.3.1 Social and Economic Condition During the Mughals
- 13.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 13.5 Summary
- 13.6 Key Words
- 13.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 13.8 Further Readings

13.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about the great rulers of the Mughal era, such as Sher Shah Suri, Akbar, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. This unit will deal with the society under the Mughals. This unit will discuss the religious policy of the Mughals. This unit will also explain the cultural development during the Mughal era, and the social and economic condition of India during the Mughals.

13.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the religious policy of the Mughals
- Explain the cultural development during the Mughal era
- Describe the impact of Mughal Empire on Indian culture
- Identify the social and economic condition of India during the Mughals

13.2 RELIGIOUS POLICY OF THE MUGHALS

Let us study the religious policy of Akbar and Aurangzeb.

13.2.1 Religious Policy of Akbar

Akbar's policy towards the non-Muslims was one of toleration. He soon abandoned the rigid, cruel and hostile policy followed by the Delhi Sultans and the

early Mughal Emperors towards the Hindus. He was the first national ruler who aspired to lay the foundations of his empire on the goodwill of both the Hindu and the Muslim communities. His religious policy heralded a new era of peace, prosperity and unity in the country. He founded the so called order or religion *Din-i-Ilahi* to give a common platform to the Hindus and the Muslims.

Factors that led to Akbar's Adoption of Liberal Policy

Many factors inspired Akbar to follow a liberal policy towards the non-Muslims. Chief amongst them were as follows:

- **Personal life and personality:** Akbar was liberal and tolerant by nature.
- **Political necessity:** Akbar wanted to extend and consolidate his empire. He knew that the Hindus were the majority in India. He also realized that without the cooperation and sympathy of the Hindus, the defence extensions, peace stability and order in Mughal empire was impossible.
- **Influence of many factors and personalities:** Before Akbar, many rulers in various parts of the country in the fifteenth century had turned non-communal and got the religious literature translated into Persian, had extended patronage to regional languages, had followed a tolerant religious policy and had accorded high posts to the Hindus in their army. Consequently, these policies had created an atmosphere of mutual understanding between the two communities.

Characteristics of Akbar's Religious Policy

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

- He issued a firman prohibiting the war prisoners to be forcibly converted to Islam.
- In AD 1563, he brought to an end the pilgrimage tax of bathing in places of pilgrimage like Prayag and Banaras.
- In AD 1564, he abolished *Jizya*. According to Islamic injunctions, non-Muslims of the Islamic states had to pay this tax. Though it was not a very oppressive tax financially, yet it was not liked.
- Though he had opened the avenues for the appointment of non-Muslims in the royal service in AD 1562, yet he appointed Todarmal only on a high post the revenue department in AD 1563. In AD 1574, he was made the Diwan (Wazir or Finance Minister). Soon after, Rama Das was appointed as the Naib Diwan in the state. The ruler of Amer Bharmal was given a high office, his son Bhagwan Das got a *mansab* of 5000 and his son Man Singh got a *mansab* of 7000. Another person worth mentioning is a Brahmin called Mahesh Das, who was given the title of Raja Birbal. He placed Birbal amongst the nine jewels of his court. Birbal always stayed with Akbar.

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- Akbar entered into matrimonial relations with many Hindu Rajas and high families, for example, he married Mani Bai, the younger daughter of Bharmal. The rulers of Jaisalmer and Bikaner also established matrimonial relations with Akbar.
- He treated his common Hindu subjects and Muslims equally. Hindus were given full freedom of construction of new temples or repair of old temples. They could celebrate their festivals freely.
- He had given his Hindu wives full freedom to worship as they liked in his harem.
- He honoured the scholars of every religion equally. In AD 1575, he established an *Ibadatkhana* in his new capital of Fatehpur Sikri. Here he invited religious preachers and scholars of every religion. The discussion could continue till only AD 1582.
- To give a uniform religion to the Hindus and Muslims, he propagated a new religion called *Tauhi Illahi*. Though this religion could not become very popular and came to an end with the death of Akbar, still the effort of Akbar is worthy of praise.
- He also tried to remove the evils prevailing in the Hindu religion. He opposed the customs of Sati and supported widow re-marriage.
- Along with the Hindus, he behaved equally and liberally with the Shias, Sufis, Jains, Christians and others.

Consequences and Effects of Akbar's New Religious Policy

The results of Akbar's new religious policy were as follows:

- **Advantage to the empire:** The most important consequence of Akbar's new religious policy was that a majority of the Hindus and the Muslims became the supporters of the Mughal Empire. They gave up the attitude of mutual hostility and gave their services and cooperation to the Mughal Emperor. The cooperation of these people helped Akbar in an extension of his empire achieving conquests and suppressing the revolts.
- **An atmosphere of goodwill in the country:** Akbar's religious policy encouraged the establishment of peace, cooperation and goodwill in the country which helped the growth of trade and commerce.
- **Social reforms:** Akbar's religious policy aided in social reforms. Inhuman practices like Sati prevalent amongst the Hindus were discouraged. Widows were given the right to remarry. Akbar tried to restrict the sale of liquor. By giving up meat-eating himself, he tried to encourage eating fruits and vegetables and discourage eating non-vegetarian food.
- **Cultural unity:** Akbar's religious policy encouraged the cultural integration in the country by bringing the Hindus and Muslims closer. He established a

Translation Bureau so that Sanskrit, Arabic and Greek works could be translated into Persian. He encouraged music, sculpture and Hindu architectural style. The state could become secular because of his religious policy and cultural unity was encouraged.

A new religion Din-i-Ilahi was born though soon after him, it came to an end.

Din-i-Ilahi

Contacts with the leaders of various religions, reading of their learned works, meeting with the Sufi saints and yogis gradually convinced Akbar that while there were differences of sect and creed, all religions had a number of good points which were obscured in the heat of controversy. He felt that if the good points of various religions were emphasized, an atmosphere of harmony and amenity would prevail which would be for the good of the country.

Further, he felt that behind all the multiplicity of names and forms, there was but one God. As Badauni observed, as a result of all the influences which were brought to bear on His Majesty, 'There grew gradually as the outline of stone, the conviction in his heart that there were some sensible men in all religions. If some true knowledge was thus everywhere to be found, why should truth be confined to one religion.' Hence, he brought a solution of the problem, that is, of having a religion that has the excellent points of the existing creeds and the defects of none. So, he consulted the foremost leaders of the various religious communities and unfolded to them his scheme of having a religion which should be the combination of the merits of all the faiths and the defects of none. He said, 'We ought, therefore to bring them all into one but in such fashion that there should be both one, and all, with the great advantage of not losing what is good in any one religion, while gaining whatever is better in another. In that way, honour would be rendered to God, peace would be given to the people and security to the empire.' So, having put together the general principles of all religions, he established a synthesis of various creeds and called them Din-i-Ilahi.

13.2.2 Religious Policy of Aurangzeb

Most historians hold that a great blow was given to the stability of the Mughal Empire by the religious orthodoxy and opposition to the non-Muslims followed by Aurangzeb. During the time of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the Mughal empire was basically a secular state. All those great emperors had opened the doors of the highest military and civil offices for the Muslims and the non-Muslims equally. During their reign *Jizya* was not imposed. Within a few years of his accession, however, Aurangzeb ended that secular nature of the empire by re-imposing *Jizya*, desecrating temples and statues and imposing pilgrimage tax upon the Hindus. Due to this fanatic religious policy, the Hindus drifted away from the Mughals. The Mughal Empire started disintegrating as the people of higher classes and high officials drifted away from each other on the basis of religion. Though Aurangzeb's

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successors tried to consolidate the Mughal Empire by abandoning his orthodox policy, they did not succeed in reviving it.

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Check Your Progress

1. Mention some of the factors that inspired Akbar to follow a liberal policy towards the non-Muslims.
2. What was the most important consequence of Akbar's new religious policy?

13.3 ART AND LITERATURE UNDER THE MUGHALS

Mughal art and structural design refers to the Indo-Islamic-Persian approach that flourished during the reign of the Mughals who ruled India between AD 1526 and AD 1857. The characteristic feature of the Mughal architecture is the symmetry and designs in their building/monuments and tombs. Prior to the Mughal dynasty which started with Babur, the Delhi Sultanate (AD 1192–1398) laid down the foundation of Mughal art in India. The Qutub Minar which was erected by Qutubuddin-Aibak in AD 1193 remains a prominent characteristic of Delhi's skyline.

The earliest Islamic monuments in India were time and again built over the Jain and Hindu monuments which were plundered and destroyed by the Muslim invaders. The Adhai-Din-Ka Jhopra of Ajmer and the Qutab Minar, both dating back to the twelfth century were built over the ruins of a Jain monastery/temple. The Adhai-Din-Ka Jhompra of Ajmer was a centre of Sanskrit learning patronized by the rulers of the Chauhan period.

Later, with the passage of time, the Mughal architecture was introduced in Bengal too. The Sultans who were predecessors to the Mughals had constructed several mosques in the regions of the old capitals of Pandua and Gaur during the period between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Adina Mosque of Pandua and the Eklahi mosque were also built on the vandalized remains of Hindu temples, apparent from the intricate carvings on their structures. The art work on the Adina Mosque shares a striking resemblance with the Kakatiya ruins of Warangal in Andhra Pradesh.

In the central Gangetic Plain, the Sharqis who ruled from Jaunpur during the fourteenth and the fifteenth century patronized the construction of mosques with fine *jaali* work which influenced the monuments built by Sher Shah Suri. In Gujarat too, the mosques rested on fine intricate carvings of ancient Jain and Hindu temples, evident from the display of Hindu motifs like the Chakra, the Kalpa-Lata or Kalpa-Vriksha, the Purna Kalash, the lotus symbol and the lamp of acquaintance on their mosques.

Works of Mughal structural design have been seen in Chanderi, Hissar and Hansi as well.

It was Akbar who initiated the erection of monuments on the Indian soil, with a burial chamber in honour of his father Humayun in AD 1560. Built under the supervision of Persian originator Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, this wonderful structure with an elaborate arrangement of octagonal chambers flanked by cupolas, kiosks and minarets amidst rectangular shaped lawns remains a landmark gravestone in Delhi.

After Akbar consolidated his kingdom, he established his capital at Agra. This led to the construction of many imposing buildings that used red sandstone as the principal building material and white sandstone was used for the inlay work on the exteriors. The interiors were lavishly adorned with paintings.

In AD 1573, Akbar moved his capital to Fatehpur Sikri to commemorate the birth of his son, Jahangir and to honour Sheikh Salim of the Chisti order, where he built a new capital city which showcased typical Mughal architecture.

The reign of Jahangir saw the transition from sandstone to marble in the construction of the few monuments that he had built. Later, his son Shah Jahan used white marble extensively in his monuments, especially the Taj Mahal.

Development of Architecture under the Mughals

Babur is credited with not only establishing the Mughal Empire in India, but also heralding in an era that saw the introduction and development of a plethora of architectural styles in India. Though much of the time during his short period of reign (five years) in India was spent in annexing kingdoms, Babur left behind him some of the most marvelous Mughal structures in India. These include the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, Kabuli Bagh at Panipat and Jami Masjid at Sambhal, near Delhi. Even though most of them were destroyed over the centuries, some of them such as the Babri Masjid have withstood the vagaries of nature and time.

The history of Mughal architecture actually begins with Akbar. It is a blend of Persian and Hindu styles. Most of Akbar's buildings are made in red sandstone and one of the earliest buildings built by him was the tomb of Humayun in Delhi. In AD 1565, Akbar started the construction of the massive Agra Fort, but his most magnificent construction was the new capital at Fatehpur Sikri. Built in AD 1571, it took fifteen years to complete a ceremonial capital including elaborate palaces, formal courtyards, reflecting pools, tombs and a mosque. Unfortunately, this massive city had to be abandoned because besides other reasons, it lacked adequate water supply. It consisted of a number of fine buildings like the Jami Mosque, the Tomb of Salim Chisti (its chambers are surrounded by a corridor with a lacework marble screen) and the Buland Darwaza, constructed to commemorate his Gujarat conquest. Jodha Bai's Palace and the Panch Mahal are also unique. The construction of Akbar's tomb at Sikandra, near Agra, was started by Akbar but completed by his son Jahangir.

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Jahangir constructed the tomb of Itmadud- Daulah (father of Nur Jahan) in white marble. He was fond of gardens and laid two beautiful gardens in Kashmir—the Nishat and the Shalimar Bagh.

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The reign of Shah Jahan is known in history as the Golden Era of Mughal architecture. As peace and prosperity prevailed throughout the empire, he devoted himself to architecture.

Mughal art reached its nadir during the reign of Shah Jahan, who is known for his passion for architecture. He almost re-built the Agra Fort, adding marble to the existing sandstone structure, and went on to build his new capital in Shahjahanabad or the Red Fort, the Pearl Mosque and the Taj Mahal among numerous other monuments. Lapidary and fine pietra dura were new trends set by Shah Jahan.

He built the Taj Mahal at Agra as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. Shah Jahan also constructed the Moti Masjid in Agra Fort and the Jama Masjid in Delhi. After the death of his beloved wife Mumtaz, Shah Jahan shifted the capital to Delhi and started the construction of a new city called Shahjahanabad. He built the Jami Masjid at Agra in honour of his daughter Jahanara. He also built the Red Fort, which has many beautiful buildings like the Diwan-i-Khas, Diwan-i-Aam, and the celebrated Peacock Throne, which was made of gold and studded with precious stones. This throne was carried away by Nadir Shah, a Persian invader, in AD 1739. Shah Jahan also gave liberal aid to artists. He also built a number of palaces and gardens in places like Lahore, Kashmir and Kabul.

Jahanara, daughter of Shah Jahan, was also a generous patron of structural design and showed an eclectic taste in building spacious gardens, mosques, madrasas and serais. At Delhi, she built the prominent Begum Ka Bagh and Begum Serai. She also built her own tomb near the shrine of the dargah of Hazrat Nizauddin.

Aurangzeb's contributions to architecture are few in comparison to his predecessors. He constructed the Moti Masjid in the Red Fort at Delhi and a tomb for his queen at Aurangabad.

The Mughal Empire reached the zenith of its glory during this period. It has often been described as the Age of Magnificence. There was peace and prosperity throughout the empire. Rulers devoted themselves to the construction of majestic buildings, using marble and red sandstone. There was great pomp and show and the splendour of the court dazzled European travellers like Francis Bernier.

Aurangzeb's daughters Zeb-un-nissa and Zinat-unnisa Begum also contributed in a small way in carrying forward the Mughal legacy of patronizing art and architecture. Zinat-unnisa Begum built the Zinat-ul-Masjid at Daryaganj in Old Delhi in AD 1711, while Zeb-un-nissa built her own garden and tomb at Nawankot near Lahore. Qudsiya Begum, the wife of a later Mughal ruler, Ahmad Shah, built the Sunheri Masjid in AD 1751 opposite the west gate of the Red Fort. The last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar's favourite wife Zinat Mahal built the *Zinat Mahal* in the Lal Kuan bazaar in Delhi. The only monument worth

mentioning built in the post-Aurangzeb time in Delhi was the Safdar Jung's Tomb built by Mirza Mansoor Khan in AD 1753.

Mughal architecture during Aurangzeb stood apart from that of both his predecessors and successors in that the empire had the largest area under the Mughal reign, which extended to every part of south India. Moreover, Aurangzeb ruled over India for a considerable period of time, the first twenty years of which he devoted to expanding the empire. During the second part of his reign, he adopted the policy of Islamization, which saw the transformation of many of the Hindu and Jain structures of his period.

Contemplating on his contribution in the field of architecture, one becomes aware that except a few monuments, especially tombs, there were hardly any buildings that were constructed by Aurangzeb. But, he went about his Islamization policy, whereby he partially or completely destroyed the Hindu and Jain temples and built mosques over the ruins.

Historians mention elaborately about the repair works undertaken by Aurangzeb; some even credit him with repairing the most number of mosques of not only the Mughal period, but also those mosques built by the Tughlaq, Lodi and Deccani Sultans as well.

Aurangzeb projected a weak mirror image of his predecessors. Early during Aurangzeb's reign, stucco and other less-expensive materials emulating the marble and inlaid stone of earlier periods cover built surfaces. Immediately after Aurangzeb's accession, the use of forms and motifs such as the baluster column and the bangala canopy, earlier reserved for the ruler alone, are found on non-imperially patronaged monuments.

Shortly after his accession, Aurangzeb is known to have ordered a small marble chapel, today acknowledged as the Moti or Pearl Masjid, to be constructed inside the Shahjahanabad fort (the present-day Red Fort). Shah Jahan had built no mosque inside this fort, using instead the large Jami Masjid nearby for congregational prayers.

Aurangzeb, however, wanted a mosque close to his private quarters. Five years under construction, his exquisite mosque was completed in AD 1662–63, at considerable personal expense. It is enclosed by red sandstone walls, which vary in thickness to compensate for the mosque's angle, necessary to orient the building toward Mecca, and at the same time, to align it with the other palace buildings. Entered on the east, the compound of the Moti Masjid consists of a courtyard with a deep-set pool and the mosque building itself.

Paintings

The Mughal period also saw development in the field of painting. The art of miniature painting continued. As the use of paper became common, painters started illustrating books with pictures. Portrait painting became popular as painters started making portraits of kings and members of the royal family and the nobility.

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The Mughal rulers were great patrons of painting. One of Akbar's most significant contributions was the creation of the Mughal School of painting. He set up a group of about 100 artists, mostly Hindu, who worked under the guidance of the two Persian masters brought to India by Humayun. At the time of Akbar's death in AD 1605, his library contained some 24,000 illustrated manuscripts. Two of the greatest Persian painters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad, flourished during the rule of Humayun. When Humayun was forced to exile in Persia at the court of Shah Tahmasp Sajavi, he was impressed by the art of miniature painting and resolved to take Persian artists back to India. This is how the two Persian masters Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad were brought to India and became founders of the new school of Mughal miniature painting. Another renowned painter was Daswant. Some of the finest paintings are found in the *Akbarnama*. Portraits, buildings, birds and animals, landscapes are vivid and life-like. Mansur was a painter of renown at his court. Jahangir was himself a good painter and a connoisseur of painting who could recognize the work of different artists at a glance. Under him painting received great impetus. However, under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb painting began to decline. Artists migrated to other regions. Rajasthan, Kangra and the Deccan became the centres of art. The Rajput style of miniature painting got its inspiration from the miniature style painting of the Persians. These paintings made beautiful covers for books. Portraits of kings were also painted. Scenes from the court, Hindu mythology, life of Lord Krishna, birds and animals were the themes of the paintings.

Paintings during Jahangir's Time

Jahangir was an immense patron of painting and showed a keen interest while he was still young. He patronized numerous great painters of the time; some of the painters who were appreciated by him included Mansoor, Abul Hasan, Daswant and Basawan. He congratulated himself about the keen eye he had for paintings and was of the impression that he could identify the works of all great painters of his time. He also stated that if there was a picture containing numerous portraits drawn by artists from poles apart, he was able to recognize the artists from the stroke of the brushes. Once, British ambassador Thomas Roe arrived in the court of Jahangir and the royal leader asked him to recognize the original European painting placed alongside five copies of it prepared by Indian artists. This completely foxed the ambassador much to the delight of the royal leader highlighting the artistic merit of the Indian painters. Mughal or miniature paintings may perhaps be described as a variety of Islamic paintings practised in India during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

Development of Music under the Mughals

The Mughals cherished music. Babur is said to have composed songs. Akbar was a lover of music. His court was decorated with well-known musicians like Tansen of Gwalior and Baz Bahadur of Malwa. Shah Jahan had a liking for vocal and instrumental music. The two great Hindu musicians of his time were Jagannath and

Janardhan Bhatta. Nevertheless, Aurangzeb who was a puritan dismissed singing from his court. On the other hand, ironically, the largest numbers of books on classical music were written in his period of influence.

The form of music that was predominant in India during the Mughal period was the Dhrupad music. Dhrupad music was the result of an extended interaction between two cultures — the Hindu Indian and the Muslim Perso-Turkish cultures — over a long period of time. In the pre-medieval era, India was an essentially Hindu region with a religion and culture codified most completely in the extremely sophisticated Sanskrit language. Music was an important part of a cultural network that included dance and drama as well, but because there was no notation of actual musical performances — only of the theoretical melodic and rhythmic structures called ragas and talas — we have no idea of what the music actually was. We do know, however, that music was integral to temple life and ritual, and that professional singers and dancers were usually involved in some sort of devotional activity related to the Hindu deities. Music was also a part of courtly life as well, but since in this context — as in most traditional societies — there was no distinction to be made between the sacred and the secular, and music was simply one part of a unified cultural-social-religious continuum.

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Literature

Literature during the Mughal period witnessed tremendous development as there was a return of a stable and prosperous empire. Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu languages saw tremendous creative activity as did many vernacular languages. The emperors extended their patronage profusely to this activity. During the Mughal period, Urdu developed more in the Deccan than in Hindustan where its expansion began only during the reign of Aurangzeb. The social content of the literature was inadequate. Themes are over and over again taken from outside India. This kind of literature was a necessary outcome of the medieval feudalism and aristocratic life. Major art works of the era point to the huge influence of the Muslims in the growth and development of the historical writing and prose narration.

Literature in the Mughal period developed during Akbar's reign. Different branches of literature such as translations, histories, letters and verse developed during the Mughal era especially during Akbar's reign. The return of a stable government also helped in the development of literature. Since Persian was the language of the Mughal court, most works of art were born in Persian language. The literature of the Mughal period has a special place in world history as they are the main source of information about the life and times of the people of that era. Besides Akbar, Shah Jahan was also a great patron of arts.

The most accomplished writer was Abul Fazl. He was a poet, an essayist, a critic and a historian. Abul Fazl wrote the *Akbarnamah* which is in three volumes and talks in detail about the Mughal emperors and their reign.

Poetry was at its zenith during the Mughal period. Babur and Humayun were poets and this tradition was continued by Akbar. Abul Fazl, Abdur Rahim,

Abdul Fateh, Ghizali, Mohammad Husain Naziri and Sayyid Jamaluddin Urfi of Shiraj were the prominent poets of the Mughal period.

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Jahangir possessed an excellent literary taste. His autobiography is second only to that of Babur as far as content and style is concerned. His court was adorned by literary gems like Ghiyas Beg, Naqib Khan, Mutamid Khan, Niamatullah and Abdul Haqq Dihlawi. Some historical works like the *Ma'asir-i-Jahangiri*, *Padshah-namah* by Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Shah-jahannamah* by Inayat Khan and *Amal-i-Salih* by Muhammad Salih Shah were composed during this period. Two distinct schools of writers had come into existence during this period, the Indo-Persian school and the purely Persian discipline. Abul Fazl was an exceptional representative of the Indo-Persian discipline. Abdul Hamid Lahauri, Md. Waris, Chandra Bhan and Md. Salih were the representatives of this school. This school absorbed Indian ideas. The poets wrote ghazals, qasida, masnavi and poems of adulation. Gilani, Kalim, Qudsi, Rafi, Munir, Haziq, Khiyali and Mahir were some of the colossal poets. There were prose writings of other types for dictionaries, medicinal books, astronomy, mathematics and translations from Sanskrit.

Records from the pages of history say that Aurangzeb in the earlier days of his reign wrote many poems and other works of art. But he gave up this amusement in accordance with Islamic injunctions. Works of art during Aurangzeb's reign were composed in secret and kept away from the public. Some of the famous works from this period were *Alamgirnamah* by Mirza Muhammad Kazim, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* of Khafi Khan, *Khulasat-ut-Tawa-rikh* of Sujjan Rai Khatri and *Fatuhah-i-Alamgiri* of Ishwar Das.

Provincial languages developed swiftly during the Mughal period. This age may be called the classical age of Hindustani literature. Hindi owed its development to a number of saints and poets. This period saw some of the greatest Hindi and Persian writers such as Tulsidas, Kabir, Surdas, Sundar Das, Chintamani, Kavindra Acharya, Keshava Das, Matiram, Bhushan, Bihari, Deva, Padmakar, Alam, and Ghananand among others. Religion, heroism, human love and praise of the king were some of the themes touched by these writers.

13.3.1 Social and Economic Condition During the Mughals

During the Mughal Period, people in India were divided into numerous social classes and there were huge disparities in their standards of living. Still, the socio-economic condition that prevailed during that period was better than that which existed during the Pre as well as post-Mughal periods. The people were divided into three classes—the rich, the middle-class and the poor. There were wide differences among all these three classes. The rich class was at the top of the socio-economic ladder. This class had all the advantages and lived in exceptional luxury with access to plentiful resources. The middle class was moderately a new development that eventually became a vital force in Mughal India. The ruling class

of Mughal India lived a life of sumptuous homes, festivity and grand banquets. Both indoor as well as outdoor games were popular as they had time and resources to indulge in them. The Mughal kingdom was highly successful and flourishing.

The middle class, more often than not, comprised merchants, businessmen and other professionals. They led a contented and sensible life all despite the fact they were not able to afford the lavishness of the higher rich class. On the other hand, some of the middle class families were quite well off and indulged in an assortment of types of luxuries. Next to the middle class was the class of poor people. They were often well off, despite the fact that they were the least cared for among all the classes of the society. There were huge differences between these two previous classes as far as their standard of living was concerned. They did not have sufficient food and garments and they were engaged in low paying jobs. In such jobs, they were probable to give long hours. Because of their poor conditions, they were sometimes referred to as intentional slaves. Regrettably, the socio-economic environment of the peasants declined continuously and more than ever towards the end of the Mughal rule.

The Mughals gave due importance to education. Hence, the period saw the establishment of various institutions that cared to people from all walks of life. Records of historians show that education was imparted to both male and female students. The Mughal emperors were well educated and proficient in many languages, especially Persian and Turkish.

As part of the social upliftment of their subjects, Mughal rulers strived to abolish many of the communal practices prevalent during the time. Some of these included *sati*, child marriage and the dowry system. On the other hand, Mughal royal leaders like Akbar also made attempts to reform the society.

According to historians, one of the most notable shortcomings of the Mughal rulers was that they did not do enough to change the social conditions of the agrarian community. Not only did they fail to take any steps to increase the total area under cultivation; no innovative methods were introduced to increase the productivity of the cultivable land. Hence, the Mughal Era was plagued by periods of famines some of which were the worst in the history of India. The famines had a detrimental effect on the economy. Economy in the Mughal epoch started to deteriorate subsequent to Aurangzeb's death.

During the Mughal period, education was given special emphasis, especially by Akbar. Akbar, himself a scholar in Turkish and Persian, emphasized the need to right education.

Some of the prominent centres of learning during the Mughal Era were Delhi, Lahore, Allahabad, Ahmedabad, Multan, Sialkot, Lucknow, Ajmer and Murshdabad. Scholars from Central Asia, and the East served in these institutions. While the students received free education, the scholars were well rewarded from the treasury.

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Economy of Mughal Empire

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The economy during the Mughal rule was largely supported by agriculture. Apart from agriculture, handicrafts, silk weaving and trade also formed an integral part of the economy in the Mughal kingdom. According to historians, agriculture formed the main source of economy, because, since time immemorial agriculture has always been the backbone of the economy of the country. Consequently, in the Mughal Era also, agriculture was the biggest source of income. Additionally, it was also one of the main sources of livelihood of the people in the country. The major crops that were cultivated during the extent of the Mughal period included millets, oilseeds, cereals, hemp, chilli, sugarcane, cotton, indigo, betel and other cash crops. Indigo cultivation was popular at that time in various places like Agra and Gujarat. On the other hand, Ajmer was well known for the production of the best quality sugarcane. Improved transport and communication facilities also helped the development of economy during the reign of Mughal royal leaders. There was tremendous demand for cash crops like silk and cotton as because the textile industry was flourishing during the Mughal period.

Further, during the reign of Mughal emperor Jahangir, Portuguese introduced the cultivation of tobacco and potato in India. Mughal emperor Babur had also introduced the cultivation of several other central Asian fruits in the country. Moreover, for during the period of Akbar Firoz Shah's Yamuna canal was repaired for irrigation purposes. The Mughal leaders preferred to settle in cities and towns. The artistic lifestyle of the Mughal rulers also encouraged art and architecture, handicrafts and trade in the country. During that era, the merchants and traders were powerful classes. Trade—both inside the country and outside—grew tremendously. One of the main reasons cited by historians for such development is the economic and political merger of India. Further, constitution of law and order over broad areas also created favourable environs for trade and commerce. Rapid development of trade and commerce was also supported by the improved transport and communications systems. The Mughal rulers also encouraged the monetization of the economy. Another factor that helped in the tremendous growth of business in that period was the arrival of European traders and growth of huge European trade. Fatehpur Sikri, Lahore and Agra were the chief centres of silk weaving whereas Cambay, Broach and Surat in Gujarat were the major ports for foreign trade and business. By the time of the Mughals, cities had grown in importance. Urbanization and fixed markets also helped in expanding the economy in Mughal Empire. Initially, the weekly market concept was popular. Eventually, several trade centres were formed in prosperous cities with the growth of the economy. Besides the metalled highways, river transport system was also considered significant for navigation throughout the year. Such initiatives by the rulers were vital contributing factors in the development of economy during the Mughal Era.

Agriculture in Mughal India

Agriculture in Mughal India contributed significantly to the economy. Majority of the people earned their livelihood through agriculture. Different types of food and cash crops were cultivated. Agriculture in Mughal India remained the most important source of economy. Agriculture and allied activities formed the most vital part of the economy. A large number of crops including both food as well as cash crops were cultivated by applying different advanced techniques. During the Mughal period, irrigation system was not properly developed; however, some of the areas did have access to canals. Some portions of lands, previously in the hands of local chiefs, were seized and brought under the government administration. Agriculture formed the most important earning source of livelihood of the people during the Mughal era.

The Mughal realm was largely divided into different zones for the cultivation of different types of crops such as rice, wheat and millet. Rice dominated the eastern region and the southwest coast. Besides Gujarat, cultivation of rice with the aid of irrigation had also spread to the provinces of Punjab and Sindh. The second most prominent crop that was cultivated in Mughal India was wheat. Wheat was cultivated mostly in the northern and central regions of India. Further, millets were also cultivated in wheat dominant areas and other drier districts. Apart from the food crops, the development of a number of cash crops also formed an integral part of agriculture. Some of the most important cash crops included sugarcane, indigo, cotton and opium. Tobacco cultivation after being introduced by the Portuguese also spread rapidly all the way through the country. Different agricultural patterns were followed. Like for instance, some portion of the land was 'single-cropped', that was being sown either for *rabi* or *khariif* harvest. On the other hand, some portion of land was 'double-cropped' being sown with crops of both harvests in sequence. In particular cropping pattern, land remained sophisticated for near about half of the year and cultivation of the same crop can be repeated. Development of different types of spices particularly black pepper was popular in Malabar Coast. Cultivation of Tea was started in the hills of Assam. Agriculture for the duration of the Mughal period also included vegetables and fruits. They were mostly cultivated in the cities. During the Mughal rule, Indian economy was considered as the second largest in the world. In the 16th century, the net domestic production of India was estimated to be around 24.5 per cent of the total world economy. Some forests and waste lands were retreated for making them appropriate for ploughing. Consequently, the total retreated area defines the net area under agriculture and it was also an index for the population growth in different regions of the country.

Trade in Mughal India

Trade in Mughal India was diversified and moderately developed. The vast assortment and volume of products that were man-made in industries catered to both large domestic as well as worldwide demands. Trade in Mughal India was

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moderately large and diversified and involved huge numbers of people. Long distances trade was supported by improved conditions of the transportation systems. One of the most noteworthy industries of the Mughal epoch was that of cotton cloth making industry. Throughout the country various cotton manufacturing units were formed that successfully catered to the massive demands, both domestic and worldwide. Moreover, the prefecture of Bengal was well known for the fine quality cotton and silk cloth. It was also believed that the amount of cloth manufactured in the province of Bengal was more than that from several sovereignties of the country and Europe when put together. Along with the growth of the cloth industry the dyeing industry was slowly but surely doing well. Carpet and shawl weaving were other vital industries that received the patronage during Akbar's reign. Another major industry of that era was ship building industry. However, India ceased to be no longer a principal maritime country. For the duration of the Mughal reign, currency also started to develop. Mughal India had prospering trade relations with several other countries of the world. Foreign trade was a significant part of the economy of India during the Mughal period. Some of the major Indian imports of that time were gold, ivory, raw silks, perfumes, horses and precious stones. Major Indian exports at that time were spices, opium, textiles and indigo. Land transportation was not considered very safe and reliable. Thus, the more popular choices were sea and river transport. The customs duties were low and it was near about 3.5 per cent on all exports and imports.

Pepper was the major commodity of trade and commerce along the western coast. In different parts of the country, different communities dominated trade. Like for instance, Punjabi and Multani merchants handled business in the northern area, while the Bhats managed the trade in the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Due to the coordinated system set up by the government, internal trade flourished in the country. Exports in India far exceeded its imports, both in terms of items and volume. Active trade existed on and along the Ganga River and Yamuna River up to the city of Agra. This city mostly imported raw silk and sugar from the province of Bengal and Patna, besides obtaining butter, rice and wheat from eastern provinces. Salt was carried down by means of rivers to Bengal. Again from Agra, wheat, sugar and Bengal silk were carried down to Gujarat. Above and beyond the developed means of transport, trade in Mughal India was also influenced by other factors. Like for instance, it is said that in the Indian trade for the duration of the Mughal epoch, European traders also played a significant role. Many of them also established warehouses as well as allocation points in Mughal India. However, historians say that nearly every one of the European commodities was afforded only by the rich people.

These included scented oils, perfumes, dry fruits, expensive stones, wines, corals and velvets.

Thus, it is clear that the Mughal period witnessed the underpinning of unwavering trade centres apart from homogeneous unsophisticated government. The Mughal period was considered as the age of relative peace and in this period

trade and business flourished enormously. The growing foreign trade led towards the establishment of marketplaces in towns and also in villages. Handicrafts were produced in greater amounts than before for meeting the trade demands. During the Mughal Era, the major urban centres were Agra, Delhi, Thatta, Lahore, Multan and Srinagar in northern region. In the western part, significant trade cities were Ahmedabad, Khambat, Surat and Ujjain. The booming trade centres in the eastern region were Patna, Chitgaon, Dhaka, Hoogli and Murshidabad.

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Check Your Progress

3. What is the characteristic feature of the Mughal architecture?
4. Who was the most accomplished writer during the Mughal era?

13.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Some of the factors that inspired Akbar to follow a liberal policy towards the non-Muslims were as follows:
 - Personal life and personality
 - Political necessity
 - Influence of many factors and personalities
2. The most important consequence of Akbar's new religious policy was that a majority of the Hindus and the Muslims became the supporters of the Mughal Empire.
3. The characteristic feature of the Mughal architecture is the symmetry and designs in their building/monuments and tombs.
4. The most accomplished writer during the Mughal era was Abul Fazl.

13.5 SUMMARY

- Akbar's policy towards the non-Muslims was one of toleration.
- He was the first national ruler who aspired to lay the foundations of his empire on the goodwill of both the Hindu and the Muslim communities.
- Akbar was liberal and tolerant by nature. The circumstances of his birth, his upbringing and the teaching of his preceptor Sheikh Abdul Latif played an important role in making him tolerant.
- The most important consequence of Akbar's new religious policy was that a majority of the Hindus and the Muslims became the supporters of the Mughal Empire.

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- The process of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire had begun at the time of Aurangzeb itself. Aurangzeb was very despotic and harsh because of his suspicious nature.
- Mughal art and structural design refers to the Indo-Islamic-Persian approach that flourished during the reign of the Mughals who ruled India between AD 1526 and AD 1857.
- The earliest Islamic monuments in India were time and again built over the Jain and Hindu monuments which were plundered and destroyed by the Muslim invaders.
- The Mughal Empire reached the zenith of its glory during this period. It has often been described as the Age of Magnificence.
- The Mughal period also saw development in the field of painting. The art of miniature painting continued.
- The Mughal rulers were great patrons of painting. One of Akbar's most significant contributions was the creation of the Mughal School of painting.
- Literature during the Mughal period witnessed tremendous development as there was a return of a stable and prosperous empire.
- Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu languages saw tremendous creative activity as did many vernacular languages.
- Literature in the Mughal period developed during Akbar's reign. Different branches of literature such as translations, histories, letters and verse developed during the Mughal era especially during Akbar's reign.
- During the Mughal Period, people in India were divided into numerous social classes and there were huge disparities in their standards of living.
- The economy during the Mughal rule was largely supported by agriculture. Apart from agriculture, handicrafts, silk weaving and trade also formed an integral part of the economy in the Mughal kingdom.

13.6 KEY WORDS

- **Jizia:** *Jizya* is a per capita yearly tax historically levied on non-Muslim subjects, called the *dhimma*, permanently residing in Muslim lands governed by Islamic law.
- **Dîn-i Ilâhî:** The *Dîn-i Ilâhî* was a syncretic religion propounded by the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1582 CE, intending to merge the best elements of the religions of his empire, and thereby reconcile the differences that divided his subjects.
- **Maktab:** *Maktab* refers to only elementary schools in Arabic.

13.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What were the consequences and effects of Akbar's new religious policy?
2. Write a short note on the religious policy of Aurangzeb.
3. What are the main features of the Mughal paintings in India?

Long-Answer Question

1. Discuss the various characteristics of Akbar's religious policy.
2. Explain the cultural development during the Mughal era.
3. Describe the impact of Mughal Empire on Indian culture.
4. Write a detail note on the social and economic condition of India during the Mughals.

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UNIT 14 FALL OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

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Structure

- 14.0 Introduction
- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 Downfall of the Mughal Empire
- 14.3 Shivaji and the Marathas
- 14.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 14.5 Summary
- 14.6 Key Words
- 14.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 14.8 Further Readings

14.0 INTRODUCTION

The great Mughal Empire was so much extensive and strong as compared to other empires of its time that they could easily be jealous of it. It was founded by Babur, consolidated by Akbar, prospered under Jahangir and Shah Jahan and attained its zenith at the time of Aurangzeb. But immediately after Aurangzeb's death, began that process of disintegration and decline which led to its being limited to areas in the vicinity of Delhi by AD 1750. In this unit, you will learn about the downfall of the Mughal Empire, and the administrative system of Shivaji.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the factors responsible for the downfall of the great Mughal Empire
- Explain the administrative system of Shivaji
- Describe the military administration of Shivaji

14.2 DOWNFALL OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

In AD 1803, the English army occupied Delhi and the great Mughal Empire became a mere pensioner of the English East India Company. The factors responsible for its disintegration and decline were as follows:

- (i) **Lack of a definite law of succession:** The Mughal Emperors never made any attempt to fix any definite law of succession. Therefore, generally the Mughal Emperor had to deal with the revolt of the rebel princes even during their own life time. Humayun had to witness the hostility of his brothers, Akbar the revolt of Salim, Jahangir had to face the revolts of his sons. Similarly, after Aurangzeb's death, his sons fought the battle for succession. Struggles like this encouraged indiscipline among the Mughal Empire and its prestige suffered.
- (ii) **Incapable successors of Aurangzeb:** After Aurangzeb's death, his son Bahadur Shah ascended the throne at the age of sixty-five. Soon after he had to face stiff opposition because of his Rajput policy but he realized the mistake of following an anti-Rajput policy and entered into an agreement with them. But this agreement was not a liberal one. He did not give any high *mansab* to the Rajputs. Towards the Maratha Chief also he adopted a policy of superficial friendship only. He gave them the right of *sardeshmukhi* in the Deccan but did not give them the right of *chauth*. Therefore, he could not satisfy them completely. He did not recognize Sahu as the rightful leader. The civil war in the Maratha continued and disorder continued in the Deccan. He committed another serious mistake by adopting a harsh policy towards the Sikhs leader, Banda Bahadur, after the death of Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikhs continued their struggle against the Mughals which led to Mughal Empire suffering a heavy loss.
- (iii) **Moral decline of the amirs, cliques and selfishness:** Selfish and degraded nobles also contributed towards the decline of the Mughal Empire. After Aurangzeb the character of the nobles continued to decline. They became pleasure loving, luxury loving and spend-thrifts. Their selfishness and lack of loyalty towards the Empire led to corruption in the administration and mutual dissensions.
- (iv) **Crisis of jagirs:** One of the causes of the decline of Mughal Empire was the increasing number of *amirs*. Increases in their expenditure lead to a scarcity of the *jagirs* and a fall in the income from the *jagirs*. The nobles started making efforts to earn maximum income from their *jagirs*, which increased the burden over the peasants. This affected the popularity of the Mughal Empire.
- (v) **A bad financial situation in the royal treasury:** One of the causes of the downfall of the Mughal Empire was its worsening financial position. It worsened as a result of many factors. Bahadur Shah distributed *jagirs* blindly, promoted officials without any reason, abolished the *jaziya*, pilgrimage taxes, gave right of *sardeshmukhi* to the Marathas, Jahandarshah and his successors gave costly gifts and *jagirs* to please the *mansabdars* and *amirs*

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and gave to the Marathas the right of extracting the *chauth*. This was further worsened because of the invasions of Nadir Shah and loose administrative control.

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- (vi) **Military weakness:** After Aurangzeb, there was a continuous indiscipline in the Mughal army and a fall in their fighting morale. Because of the paucity of money, it became impossible to keep a big standing army. The Mughal emperors were unable to give salaries to their army and army officials for months on end.

Foreign Invaders

The final blow to the Mughal Empire was given by the continuous foreign invasions. In AD 1739, the Persian Emperor, Nadir Shah severely defeated the Mughal army in Karnal. Massacre went on in Delhi, wealth was plundered and women were molested. The Mughal Emperor and his army could not stop him. After him in AD 1761 Ahmad Shah Abadali defeated the guardian of the Mughal Empire viz., the Marathas badly in the Third Battle of Panipat. Because of these foreign invasions the Mughal Empire was made destitute. Trade and industries also came to a standstill in northern India. The Mughal Empire which was already breathing its last was dealt another blow in AD 1764 by the Battle of Buxur in the time of Shah Alam. Gradually, the sphere of the Mughal Empire shrank and that of the East India Company increased.

In AD 1803 Delhi came under the English occupation and the Mughal Emperor was rendered a mere prisoner and they continued to be like that till AD 1857. The last of the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar had to die as a mere prisoner in Rangoon in AD 1862 as a British prisoner.

Aurangzeb and the Decline of Mughal Empire

The process of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire had begun in the time of Aurangzeb itself. Aurangzeb was very despotic and harsh because of his suspicious nature. The stability and unity of the Mughal Empire suffered a blow because of his rigid and despotic rule. In the words of famous historian Irwin, it was imperative for the Mughal Empire, which was based on military strength, to disintegrate ultimately. Aurangzeb wanted to keep more and more power in his hands. Because he had ill-treated his father and killed all his brothers so he was always suspicious that his sons might behave with him in the same manner. He never trusted any of his state officials. Not even his sons. His suspicious nature always kept his sons away from the administrative and the military experience. His suspicion increased with the advance of his age. None of his sons could become a capable administrator during his lifetime, so they could not arrest the disintegration that had set in the Empire. His many mistakes and wrong policies resulted in the decline of this powerful and prestigious empire.

Check Your Progress

1. State some of the factors responsible for the downfall of the great Mughal Empire.
2. Who was the last of the Mughal Emperor?

NOTES**14.3 SHIVAJI AND THE MARATHAS**

The Bhonsle family of Pune district acquired military and political prominence in the Ahmadnagar kingdom at the close of the 16th century. Shahji Bhonsle was the major ruler of this clan and he was married to Jijabai. He sought his fortune under the Sultan of Bijapur and had his *jagir* at Pune.

Shivaji was the son of Shahji Bhonsle. Shivaji was born in AD 1630 as the second son of Shahji and Jijabai. The early life of Shivaji was led in great simplicity and austerity, influenced by his mother's beliefs. Dadaji Kondadev was entrusted with the responsibility of being a guardian to Shivaji. He showed rather early signs of rebellion in opposition to the Muslim rule as he was highly resentful of the inequality that existed between the Mughal rulers and the Hindu subjects.

Shivaji showed his mettle at the young age of eighteen, when he overran a number of hill forts near Pune—Rajgarh, Kondana and Torana in the years, AD 1645–1647. Shivaji began his real career of conquest in AD 1656, when he conquered Javli from the Maratha chief, Chandra Rao More. The Mughal invasion of Bijapur in AD 1657 saved Shivaji from Bijapuri reprisal. In AD 1659, Bijapur, free from the Mughal menace, sent in the army against Shivaji under Afzal Khan, whom he murdered treacherously. In AD 1660, the combined Mughal–Bijapuri campaign started against Shivaji. In AD 1663, Shivaji made a surprise night attack on Pune, wounded Shaista Khan (maternal uncle of Aurangzeb) and killed one of his sons. In AD 1665, the Purandhar Fort, at the centre of Shivaji's territory was besieged by Jai Singh and a treaty was signed between the two. Shivaji's visit to Agra and his escape from detention in AD 1666, proved to be the turning point of the Mughal relations with the Marathas.

The Treaty of Purandhar was signed in AD 1665, according to which Shivaji agreed to help the Mughals against Bijapur. Shivaji ceded twenty-three forts to the Mughals and agreed to visit the royal court of Aurangzeb. Shivaji reached Agra in AD 1666, and was admitted in the Hall of Public Audience. The Emperor gave him a cold reception by making him stand among the *mansabdars*. A humiliated and angry Shivaji, walked out of the court. He was put under house arrest, along with his son. However, they tricked their guards and managed to escape in a

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basket of sweets which was to be sent as a gift to the Brahmins. Shivaji reached Maharashtra in September, AD1666. After consolidating his position and reorganizing his administration, Shivaji renewed his war with the Mughals and gradually recovered many of his forts. Shivaji declared himself the independent ruler of the Maratha kingdom and was crowned Chattrapati in AD1674. Politically speaking, two factors contributed to the rise of Maratha power under Shivaji. These were as follows:

- (i) The comparatively advantageous position of the Marathas under the Deccan Sultanates.
- (ii) The threat to Bijapur and Golkonda from the annexationist policy of the Mughal Empire.

The poets and writers of Maharashtra played a significant role in provoking and sustaining the national spirit of the Marathas. Among the poets, special mention should be made of the following:

- Jnaneswar and Namdev (13th and 14th centuries)
- Eknath and Tukaram (15th and 16th centuries)
- Ramdas (17th century)

Apart from the above reasons, the Mughals' control over the Deccan had weakened. Also, the Marathas had worked out a revenue system by which they attained large revenue and could maintain strong armies.

Shivaji's coronation symbolized the rise of people to challenge the might of the Mughals. By coronating himself king under the title *Haindava Dharmodharak* of the new and independent state *Hindavi Swarajya*, Shivaji proclaimed to the world that he was not just a rebel son of a *sardar* in Bijapur court, but equal to any other ruler in India. Only a coronation could give Shivaji the legitimate right to collect revenue from the land and levy tax on the people. This source of income was necessary to sustain the treasury of the new kingdom.

Administration of Shivaji

Shivaji is famous in Indian history not only as a brave and daring person, a successful general and the founder of an empire, but also as a great administrator and a ruler who had the well wishes of his subjects at heart. He laid the foundation of a strong administrative system. To some extent his administration was based on those of the Deccan administration system, but it had some original features of its own. A study of the various levels of his administration and the administration of its various departments can be made under the following heads.

Central Administration

Fall of the Mughal Empire

1. **The King:** Shivaji was a despotic and an autocratic ruler who enjoyed all sovereignty. All the powers of the state were vested in him. He was the supreme judge, administrative head, law giver and the General. In spite of being autocratic, he never used his power for meeting his selfish ends. He used to run his administration with the help of a council of ministers called the *Ashtapradhan*. It consisted of eight ministers who were responsible to Shivaji. Their continuation in office depended upon the wishes of Shivaji.
2. **Ashtapradhan:** To help Shivaji with the work of administration, there was a Council of eight ministers called the *Ashtapradhan*. The ministers were as follows:
 - (a) *Peshwa or Mukhya pradhan:* The Prime Minister was known as the Peshwa or Mukhya pradhan. His main task was to look after the efficiency of administration.
 - (b) *Sare-Naubat or Senapati:* He was responsible for the organization and supervision of the army, he used to command the army in the battlefield.
 - (c) *Amatya or Finance Minister:* He was in charge of the income and expenditure of the state. He was not only the finance minister, but also had to perform active military service at the time of war. He had to acknowledge the orders of the 'Chhatrapati' in all the acts performed by him.
 - (d) *Sumant or Foreign Minister:* He used to perform all the functions connected with the foreign affairs. He used to look after the foreign ambassadors and deputies and acquired a knowledge about the political activities of the other states through the spies.
 - (e) *Sachiv or Shurunvish:* He was a sort of superintendent in the central ministry. His main duties were the arrangement for the official posts and to set the language and style of royal letters right.
 - (f) *Wakianavis or Mantri:* He kept an account of the daily activities of the king and the important events at the court.
 - (g) *Panditrao or Danadhyaksha:* Panditrao or Danadhyaksha was in charge of religious activities. His main function was the hospitality of the Brahmins on behalf of the king, to give them donation and prizes and to fix dates for religious activities, to arrange for the punishments for anti-religious or other perverse activities, to make the regulations for religious ceremonies, etc., and to give his decisions on the religious questions.

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(h) *Nyayadhisha*: He was the highest official of judicial department. He heard both the civil and the criminal cases. He also decided about the land-right and chefship, etc. It was also his duty to implement the decisions of the Gram Panchayat.

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Provincial and Local Administration

Shivaji had divided his whole empire into four provinces:

1. **Northern provinces:** This part included Balaghat, Kori region, Southern Surat, Northern Konkan, Northern Bombay and Poona. It was under Peshwa Maro Trimbak Pingle.
2. **Southern provinces:** This part included Southern Bombay, Southern Konkan, Coastal regions, Samantvari regions, etc. This province was under Annaji Pant.
3. **South eastern province:** This province included the regions of Satara, Koljpur, Belgaon and Dharwad and Kopal. Its Sar-Karkun was Dattaju Trimbak.
4. **Four southern provinces:** These included districts from Kopal to Vellure like Zinzi, Velari, Chennai, Chittore and Arcot. This province was under the military officials.

These provinces were known as *Swarajya*. Every provincial ruler respected the wish of the king. Like at the centre, there was a committee of eight ministers in every province.

In order to maintain central hold over the Sar-i-Karkun or the Prantpati and the provincial ministers, Shivaji did not make their offices hereditary and to some extent kept central hold on their appointments under the Prantpati or the Sar-i-Karkun and the Subedars. Perhaps, Karkun was responsible for the maintenance of the empire and Subedars was in charge of the land yielding about ₹ 1 Lakh annual revenue. According to one estimate, Shivaji got the income of ₹ 3.5 crores annually barring the income from the *chauth*. On the basis of this account it can be maintained that there were about 350 subedars in his empire. The office of Subedar was generally given to the Brahmins. In the local administration of Shivaji, forts played an important part. The responsibility for the defense of the neighbouring area of the fort was of the Havaladar. He made arrangements for all administration of the fort. Shivaji's empire included about 240 forts. Thus, he had appointed about 240 Havaldars. The post of the Havaladar was generally given to a Maratha. He managed the entire administration of the fort.

Military Administration/Army Organization

The organization and discipline of Shivaji's army was worth emulating. He paid cash salaries to his soldiers. He adopted the practice of branding the horses and

writing the descriptive rolls of the soldiers. Soldiers of his army did not carry their wives with them. Shivaji ordered his soldiers to carry a minimum burden or luggage so that the mobility of the army should be efficiently maintained. His army had the four branches of cavalry, infantry, artillery and navy.

Cavalry consisted of two parts. The horsemen who were provided horses and weapons on behalf of the state were called the *Bargirs* and the horsemen who arranged for their own horses and weapons were called *Siledars*. All cavalry was under *Sar-i-Naubat*. Infantrymen were good archers. Shivaji recruited the Mawalis in big numbers in his army. His army had 700 Pathan soldiers as well. Shivaji's artillery consisted of only the mortar guns. It was managed by the Portuguese. Shivaji got gunpowder, etc., from the French of Bombay. The main purpose behind organizing the navy was to arrest the plunder of the Abyssinians.

The army remained in the cantonment only for the period of four months of rainy season. During the remaining eight months, it went out either to conquer fresh territory or to collect supplies from the enemy-land. Every article of every soldier was accounted before he left the cantonment and when he returned to it, so that no soldier will possibly hide his booty. Shivaji formed elaborate rules and regulations to maintain discipline in the army and all of them were rigorously enforced. Consequently, he succeeded in organizing a well-disciplined, strong and highly mobile army for the period of his own life-time. The forts and their security occupied an important place in the army organization of Shivaji. Shivaji had as many as 250 forts which were important for him both for purposes of defence and offence. Consequently, he took all necessary measures for the security of his forts. There were three important officers, viz., a *havaladar*, a *sabnis* and a *sar-i-naubat* in every fort. All the three were jointly responsible for the safety of their fort. The *sar-i-naubat* and the *havaladar* were Marathas at the same time as the *sabnis* was a Brahmana by caste.

Land Revenue Administration

Shivaji organized his land revenue administration most probably after the pattern of that of Malik Amber, the minister of Ahmednagar. Four main sources of revenue in his kingdom were the land revenue, custom, *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. He brought the *jagir* system under control to some extent to make his land revenue system effective and successful. In AD 1679, Annaji Datta made a revenue survey of the cultivable land and fixed the land revenue according to the productivity of the soil. Initially, he fixed it 30 per cent of the produce but later on it was increased to 40 per cent. To protect the peasants, Shivaji exempted the revenue demands at the time of natural calamities and gave them Takvi loans to purchase seeds, etc. Takavi loans were taken back in easy instalments.

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Judicial System

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Shivaji did not establish organized courts like the modern courts nor did he establish any Law Code. His judicial administration was based on the traditional ways only. At the centre, the eight ministers of the *Ashtapradhan*, viz. *Nyayadhish* decided both the civil and the criminal cases according to the Hindu Scriptures only. In the provinces same function was performed by the provincial judges only. In the villages judicial work was performed by the Panchayats. Justice was impartial and the penal code was strict.

In brief, Shivaji was an able administrator and he laid the foundations of a powerful empire. Undoubtedly his kingdom was a regional kingdom, but it was based on popular will. Shivaji adopted a secular policy in his empire. In the words of Dr Ishwari Prasad, he organized an administrative system which in many respects was better than even that of the Mughals.

Coronation of Shivaji

Shivaji had conquered a large tract of land. He also started behaving like an independent ruler. Yet, the Sultan of Bijapur considered him no more than a rebel Jagirdar. The Mughal Emperor considered him as just a petty *Zamindar*. Many Maratha families looked upon him only as a *Nayab Amir* or *Zamindar* whose ancestors were just ordinary peasants. To prove his superiority among other Maratha families also Shivaji thought it advantageous to get his coronation done in a formal manner. On 15 June, AD 1674, Shivaji held his coronation with great pomp and show. On the auspicious occasion, Pandit Gang Bhatt who presided over the function proclaimed Shivaji to be a high ranking *Kshatriya*. To improve his social standing, Shivaji entered into matrimonial relations with traditional Maratha families like Mohite and Shirke. The coronation greatly enhanced Shivaji's political position. Now he could enter into the independent treaty relationship with the Sultans of the Deccan or the Mughal Emperor unlike previously when he was treated like a powerful dacoit or a rebel *Jagirdar*.

Conquests after Coronation and Death of Shivaji

In AD 1675, Shivaji again started encounters with the Mughals and acquired a lot of booty by defeating the Mughal commander Bahadur Khan. In AD 1676, he took an important step. With the help of the two brothers Madanna and Akhanna in Hyderabad he decided to attack Bijapuri Karnataka. Seeing the growing power and influence of Shivaji, Abul Hassan Qutubshah of Golkunda accorded a grand welcome to Shivaji in his capital and a peace treaty was signed between the two. Abul Hassan Qutubshah promised to pay Shivaji one lakh Huns annually and permitted him to reside at his court. Shivaji took upon himself the responsibility of defending Golkunda from the foreign invasions. Shivaji and the Golkunda ruler

also decided to divide among themselves the wealth of Karnataka and its conquered areas. Abu Hassan Qutubshah gave to Shivaji his artillery and adequate money for the military expenditure. This treaty proved to be very advantageous for Shivaji. He seized Vellore and Zinji from the Bijapuri commanders and got enough money from the region of Karnataka. When Shivaji returned after the conquest, the ruler of Golkunda asked for his share. But Shivaji gave him neither territory nor money. This made Abul Hassan Qutubshah angry and he entered into an agreement with Bijapur to lessen Shivaji's power, but at that very time Mughal army under Diler Khan attacked Bijapur and the ruler of Bijapur instead of fighting against Shivaji requested his help against the Mughals. Shivaji rendered him help immediately. Shivaji made Bijapur agree to many favourable terms in favour of Velari. It is said that Adil Shah not only gave him the areas of Kopal and Belldibut, but also abandoned his claim over Tanjore and the Gagir of Shahaji Bhonsle. Shivaji also established his hold over many areas of his stepbrother Ekoji. Karnataka expedition was the last of Shivaji's important campaigns.

After establishing administrative arrangements in Karnataka, Shivaji came back to Maharashtra. In AD 1678, he and his stepbrother Ekoji entered into an agreement with each other and Shivaji returned him all his areas which he had conquered. But that very year his eldest son Sambhaji started behaving like an independent young man and he first went over to the Mughals and later to Bijapur. Though he came back to Shivaji after remaining rebellious for about a year, yet Shivaji was very unhappy with his conduct and behaviour.

With this very worry and after an illness of just twelve days he died on 12 April AD 1680, at the age of fifty-three.

Check Your Progress

3. When was Shivaji born?
4. What were the two factors that contributed to the rise of Maratha power under Shivaji?

14.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Some of the factors responsible for the downfall of the great Mughal Empire are as follows:
 - Lack of a definite law of succession
 - Incapable successors of Aurangzeb

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- Crisis of *jagirs*
 - A bad financial situation in the royal treasury
2. Bahadur Shah Zafar was the last of the Mughal Emperor.
 3. Shivaji was born in AD 1630.
 4. The two factors contributed to the rise of Maratha power under Shivaji. These were as follows:
 - (i) The comparatively advantageous position of the Marathas under the Deccan Sultanates.
 - (ii) The threat to Bijapur and Golkonda from the annexationist policy of the Mughal Empire.

14.5 SUMMARY

- In AD 1803, the English army occupied Delhi and the great Mughal Empire became a mere pensioner of the English East India Company.
- The Mughal Emperors never made any attempt to fix any definite law of succession.
- After Aurangzeb's death, his son Bahadur Shah ascended the throne at the age of sixty-five.
- Selfish and degraded nobles also contributed towards the decline of the Mughal Empire. After Aurangzeb the character of the nobles continued to decline.
- One of the causes of the decline of Mughal Empire was the increasing number of amirs.
- In AD 1803 Delhi came under the English occupation and the Mughal Emperor was rendered a mere prisoner and they continued to be like that till AD 1857.
- The process of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire had begun in the time of Aurangzeb itself. Aurangzeb was very despotic and harsh because of his suspicious nature.
- Shivaji was the son of Shahji Bhonsle. Shivaji was born in AD 1630 as the second son of Shahji and Jijabai.
- Shivaji showed his mettle at the young age of eighteen, when he overran a number of hill forts near Pune–Rajgarh, Kondana and Torana in the years, AD 1645–1647.

- Shivaji's coronation symbolized the rise of people to challenge the might of the Mughals.
- Shivaji is famous in Indian history not only as a brave and daring person, a successful general and the founder of an empire, but also as a great administrator and a ruler who had the well wishes of his subjects at heart.
- The organization and discipline of Shivaji's army was worth emulating. He paid cash salaries to his soldiers.

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14.6 KEY WORDS

- **Ashtapradhan:** The Ashtapradhan was a council of eight ministers that administered the Maratha Empire.
- **Peshwa:** A *Peshwa* was the equivalent of a modern Prime Minister in the Maratha Empire.
- **Bargis:** Bargis were a group of Maratha soldiers who indulged in large scale plundering of the countryside of western part of Bengal for about ten years during the Maratha expeditions in Bengal.

14.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on Aurangzeb and the decline of Mughal Empire.
2. Define the concept of *Ashtapradhan*.
3. Mention the main principles of Shivaji's judicial system.
4. What are the salient features of Shivaji's land revenue system?

Long-Answer Question

1. Discuss the factors responsible for the downfall of the great Mughal Empire.
2. Explain the administrative system of Shivaji.
3. Describe the military administration of Shivaji.
4. Shivaji had divided his whole empire into four provinces. Discuss these four provinces.

14.8 FURTHER READINGS

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