

**MEDIEVAL INDIA: SOCIETY, CULTURE
AND RELIGION**

STUDY MATERIAL

V SEMESTER

CORE COURSE

B.A.HISTORY

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UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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MEDIEVAL INDIA: SOCIETY, CULTURE AND RELIGION

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UNIT	CONTENT	PAGE
I	NATURE OF STATE	05-27
II	ELEMENTS OF FEUDALISM IN NORTH INDIAN SOCIETY	28-55
III	ASPECT OF MUGHAL RULE	56-91
IV	STATE AND SOCIETY IN SOUTH INDIA	92-113

UNIT-I

NATURE OF STATE

The Medieval Period of Indian History comprises a long period, spanning from 6th century i.e after the fall of the Gupta Empire to the 18th century, i.e the beginning of colonial domination. Modern historians, for the convenience of studying the state and society of medieval India, usually divide the period into Early Medieval Period and Late Medieval Period. According to them the Early Medieval period refer to the phase of Indian history that stretches from the fall of the Gupta Empire to the beginning of the Sultanate period in the 13th century. The period that comprises mainly that of the reigns of the Sultanate and the Mughal period is generally considered as the late medieval period, of course with regional variations.

The nature of state in the early medieval period is marked by the presence of a large number of regional and local powers, in the absence of a paramount power in the country. However, this period witnessed the presence of formidable political entities, often characterized by certain historians as 'regional imperial kingdoms'. But in the late medieval period, especially in the Sultanate and Mughal reigns, high level of centralization of power is identifies, that too in the major parts of the Indian sub continent.

Nationalist historiography tried to view the entire medieval period as one and also tried to establish the existence of centralized empire, as a continuation of the ancient empires, thereby negating the elements of changes that took place in the nature of state during the period. They followed the 'tripartite' division of the colonial historians, with certain qualitative shifts. The Marxist historiography in general stressed on the traits of decentralized fragmented policy during the period under discussion, which itself pointed to certain structural changes in the political life of the country. The salient feature of the Marxist approach is to identify the institution of 'land-grants' as the principal agents of change bringing in parcellised sovereignty. In this perspective the early medieval period is equated with feudal polity. This explains the multiplicity of political powers in India, especially during the early medieval period.

The feudal model was largely constructed on the basis of Puranic and Epigraphic data pertaining mostly to North India and so it is criticized by another model. The 'Segmentary State' drawing information from a large body of South Indian Inscriptions. Although, feudal and segmentary models are mutually critical of each other, there is a commonality in their approaches. Both models emphasis' on the fragmented political authority and therefore argued for political crisis and ritual sovereignty.

Both the models of feudal polity and segmentary state have received critiques from 'non-aligned' historians who demonstrated the distinct element of 'integrative polity', which had facilitated the emergence of the state societies at local and supra-local levels. According to them the emergence of these state societies resulted from the developments from within at the local level itself and not because of any external stimulus.

Important Ruling Families

The history of Indian medieval period was started after the end of ancient age in 550 AD and it continued till 18th century when the Mughol Empire had broken. During this long time period different dynasties rose in power and took a commanding role in the Indian medieval history. The land of India was separated as various small kingdoms from north to south and east to west and those kingdoms were ruled by different independent kings.

Throughout the medieval history a number of dominant dynasties, namely, the Cholas (3rd century to 13th century) of southern India, the Mughuls (1526 AD to 1707 AD) of northern India, the Rajput of western India (the state of Rajasthan), the Pala dynasty of eastern India, the Chalukays, the Pallavas, the Delhi Sultans had control their own area. Some time they made a number of bloody battles for different reasons.

Chola dynasty

It was one of the longest ruling powers in south India. Initially they rose in power of the state of Tamil at the 2nd century BC in time of Indian ancient history and they were able to maintain their control until the 13th century. The early Cholas kept their real evidence in the Sangam literature. It reports the names of the kings and the princes of Chola dynasty till 300 BC. There had two types of Cholas existed in the Dynasty; Karikala Cholas and Kocengannan Cholas. They control their kingdom from two capital city; Urayur (now in Thiruchirapalli) and Kaveripattinam. A Chola king was known as Elara. After the Sangam age (after 300 BC) Cholas was beaten by the Pandyas and Pallavas and they captured the Tamil country. An unknown dynasty, Kalabhras, attacked the country and displaced the existing empires and ruled for around three centuries.

After 6th century the Pallavas and the Pandyas regained the century. But there was a little known of Cholas during the succeeding three centuries until the attainment of Vijayalaya in 850 AD. Around 850 AD, Vijayalaya rose in power and he rescued the Chola Dynasty from Pandyas and Pallavas and

captured the capital city Thanjavur and established the line of the medieval Cholas. After 9th century, Cholas became strongest dynasty of the southern India and they control a wide range of region in total southern India and the surroundings state. Under Rajaraja Chola I and Rajendra Chola I, the empire became powerful in the field of army, finance and culture in South Asia and South-east Asia. The Pandyas in south India rose to the position of a large power who expelled the Hoysala Dynasty who were partners of the Cholas from Tamil country and subsequently causing the end of the Cholas themselves in 1279 AD.

The Chalukya Dynasties

The Chalukya Dynasties were in power of Indian medieval history from the reign of 600 to 1200 AD in the state of Deccan. They ruled the kingdom from a number of capital city. Western Chalukyas ruled from Badami. The Chalukyas who ruled from Kalyani capital city were referred as Later Western Chalukyas and the Chalukyas ruled their kingdom from the Vengi capital city were known as the Eastern Chalukyas. The founder of the Western or Early Chalukya Dynasty was Pulakesin I who established the dynasty at the capital of Badami (now in Bijapur) after that his son Pulakesin II succeeded.

Pulakesin II was in power in the reign of 609 AD to 642 AD. The capital of Badami was destroyed by the Pallava Dynasty in the 7th century. The Eastern Chalukya dynasties were in power from the capital city of Vengi (now in East Andhra Pradesh) and the dynasty was lasted from 624 AD to 11th century. Western Chalukyas was lasted till 7th century from the capital city of Badami, after a long time period in 973 AD they had rescued their capital Badami and reestablished the dynasty in the Deccan and created a new capital at Kalyani. The Dynasty stayed in power till 1189 AD.

Pallava Dynasty

Pallavas were a powerful Dynasties of Andhra Pradesh in Indian medieval history in the end of 500 AD. They ruled from its capital placed at Pallavapuri, for disturbance of natural power they moved it to Kanchipuram and established a more strong empire by the founder of pallavas Dynasty Simha Vishnu. Simha Vishnu expanded the kingdom in Northern Orissa, Tanjore and Trichirapalli. After that his son Mahendravarman succeeded. He had a good sense of cultural activities. He established a cave temple at Mahabalipuram. In 620 AD, he was attacked by the Chalukya king Pulekisin II in a battle at Pullalur and loosed very badly. At least he died in 630 AD.

Mahendravarman was succeeded by his son Narasimhavarman in 630 AD. He was determined to payback the insult was done to his father by the Pulekisin II. With huge armies he had beaten Pulikesi II in the battle of Manimangalam and Pariyalam in the year of 632 AD. He entirely burnt the capital city of Pulakesi. He finished the cave temples of Mahabalipuram and built a number of temples. The dynasty was not at peak position under this king ever, but the successors controlled to safeguard the kingdom until Cholas took their charge in the 9th century.

Pala Dynasty

After death of the great king Shashanka, north India became a land of end. In the mean time at 750 AD king Gopala established the Pala Dynasty and rescued the state of north India, Bihar and West Bengal. The reign of Pala Dynasty was from 800 AD to 1200 AD. King Gopala died in 770 AD; he was succeeded by his son Dharmapala in reign of 770 AD to 781 AD. He established a powerful capital at Kanauj. But they were attacked by the Pratiharas of middle India and a foreign power, Rashtrakutas of the Deccan.

In the reign of 810 AD to 850 AD the king Devapala were able to recover their renown against both the Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas. After the king of Devapala's, a lots of successors rise in power but they were not so remarkable in Indian history. In reign of Pala Dynasty, the Mahayana Buddhism had established the famous Buddhism temples and universities of Nalanda and Vikramashila. The great Buddhism monk Atisha (981 AD to 1054 AD) improved Buddhism in Tibetan. He was the president of the Vikramashila monastery. After the middle of the 12th century the Pala Empire was destroyed.

The Rajputs

The Rajput period was an era of chivalry and feudalism. The Rajputs weakened each other by constant fighting. This allowed the foreigners (Turks) to embark on victorious campaigns using duplicity and deceit wherever military strength failed against Rajputs. Rajput or Rajputra is a regional word of Rajasthan; its mean Son of king. They were the descendants of the Kshatriyas or warriors of Vedic India. There were three major types of Rajputs descend in the medieval Indian history; the Suryavanshi who descended from lord Rama, the Chandravanshi who descended from Hindu god Krishna and the Agnikula or 'fire sprung' tribes descended from the gods in the anali kund or 'fountain of fire' on Mount Abu.

There were 21 small kingdoms in Rajasthan. Different Rajput clans ruled their own kingdom, among them the Sisodias Rajput had ruled in the state of Mewar (now in Udaipur), the Kachwahas Rajput had ruled in the state of Amber (now in Jaipur), the Rathors Rajput had ruled in the state of Marwar (now in Jodhpur and Bikaner), the Hadas Rajput had ruled in the state of Jhalwawar, the Bhattis Rajput had ruled in the state of Jaisalmer, the Shekhawats Rajput had ruled in the state of Shekhawati and the Chauhans Rajput had ruled in the state of Ajmer.

Vijaynagar

Vijaynagar city has a great historical value in India. Vijaynagar Empire was established by two brothers Harihara and Bukka in the middle of 13th century. It continued for three centuries and successfully prevented the influence of Muslim sultanates in the southern India. History of Vijaynagar Empire was an unbroken period of bloody battles with Bahamani and other Muslim sultanates. Krishnadeva Raya was the best ruler of Vijaynagar Empire; he was always unbeaten in the wars throughout his reign. He always treated with the beaten enemy as a friend. He finished the Muslim power of southern India and organized a great administration system. He preserved open relationship with Portuguese and granted some concessions to Governor Albuquerque. The ruins of Vijaynagar city can be seen today near Hampi in Karnataka. The battle of Talikota was one of the crucial battles in the history of India. It ruined the Hindu dominance in southern India till rise of Marathas in 17th century.

Delhi Sultanates

A number of Delhi Sultanates were in power from 1210 AD to 1526 AD. It was founded after Muhammad Ghori established the Delhi Sultanate by defeating Prithviraj (Rajput king) in the battle of 2nd Tarain in 1192 AD. After death of Ghori, in 1206, Qutb ud-Din became himself sultan of Delhi and created the Slave dynasty; it came to an end in 1290 AD. The sultanate of Delhi was in regular change as five dynasties rose and fell: Slave dynasty (1206 AD to 1290 AD), Khalji dynasty (1290 AD to 1320 AD), Tughluq dynasty (1320 AD to 1413 AD), Sayyid dynasty (1414 AD to 1451 AD) and Lodi dynasty (1451 AD to 1526 AD). Under the Khalji dynasty, the reign of Ala Ud-din Khalji brought Muslim power to its supreme position until the Mughul Empire. Muhammad Bin Tughluq, founder of the Tughluq dynasty was also a great ruler of Indian medieval history. After that Tughluq's successors began to disintegrate the Delhi kingdom into numerous small states.

The Mughals

Babur (reign - 1526 to 1530 AD), the founder of the Mughal Empire in India, was the descendant of a Chaghezi Khan. Ousted by his cousins, he came to India and defeated Ibrahim, the last Lodi Sultan in 1526 at the First Battle of Panipat. There was a brief interruption to Mughal rule when Babur's son Humayun (reign - 1530 to 1540 AD) was ousted from Delhi, by Sher Shah, an Afghan chieftain.

It was Babur's grandson Akbar (reign - 1556 to 1605), who consolidated political power and extended his empire over practically the whole of north India and parts of the south. Jahangir (reign - 1605 to 1627 AD) who succeeded Akbar was a pleasure loving man of refined taste. Shah Jahan (reign 1628 to 1658 AD) his son, ascended the throne next. Shah Jahan's fame rests on the majestic buildings he has left behind - the Taj Mahal, the Red Fort and the Jama Masjid. Aurangzeb (reign - 1658 to 1707 AD) was the last Great Mughal ruler.

The Marathas

The Marathas rose in power by demise of Muslim power in India. They were initially in the service of Bijapur sultans in the western Deccan which was under siege by the Mughals Empire. The founder of Maratha dominance, Shivaji Bhonsle (1627 AD to 1680 AD) is known as the "father of the Maratha nation. He had captured two forts and completed the charge of Pune at 1647 AD. He gradually captured forts in the region of Purandar, Rajgad and Torna. In 1659 he killed the general of Adilshahi, Afzal Khan. He used guerilla strategy to lead a series of successful attacks in 1660 AD against Mughals including the major port of Surat. After that in 1666 he was arrested by Aurangzeb's General Jai Singh. But he escaped and recovered his lost region and glory. By 1673, he expanded his domain throughout of western Maharashtra and established capital city at Raigad. He made an efficient government and a strong army. The people of his nation called him as Chhatrapati (means who provide shelter). He died in 1680 AD.

Chhatrapati Shivaji was succeeded by His son Sambhaji. Sambhaji was arrested and killed by Aurangzeb, in 1689 AD. Then Rajaram, the second son of Shivaji took the throne and he died in 1700 AD, the widow wife of Rajaram placed her little ten years son Shahu on the Maratha throne. Shahu continued the fight against Aurangzeb and captured Rajgad city, the earlier capital of the Marathas. The struggle against the Mughals Empire was ended with the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 AD.

The Chakravartin Concept

A chakravartin stands in the centre of the panel with his hands raised in anjali mudra (the gesture of worship). On either side are two attendants, three women and a man, clad in diaphanous dhotis, holding chowries (fly whisks) in their raised right hands.

The idea of a chakravartin is an ancient one in India. It was used to denote a universal monarch, whose realm and influence spread extensively – symbolically referred to through the chakra or wheel. The ways of representing such a figure were formalized at a very early date, by including, for example, attendant figures who carry a parasol over the monarch or stand beside him with a fly-whisk. Both these aspects are present in this relief. Sometimes the figure can be seen with a chakra as well. Artistically the concept is of importance as it was used as a model to fashion the gods as well, and early images of the Buddha are found with similar features. Interestingly, even the early texts refer to the Buddha as achakravartin whose spiritual realm spread universally. This relief carries an inscription in Brahmi script seen on a broad blank tablet over the main scene, which refers to both the maker and donor of the piece.

Chakravartin or “universal monarch or emperor” literally means “wheel turner” or “a wheel that travels everywhere without obstruction”. It refers to the Sun, the Discus of Vishnu and the transmission of the Doctrine for the Buddhists. The turning of the wheel symbolises both secular and religious authority: it denotes change, movement, conquest, the formation of a new ethical and moral order. The deliverance of the Buddhist teachings is known as “turning the wheel of dharma”. The concept of the Chakravartin probably arose from the Vaishnavite ideal of the “maha purusha” or “great man”. Such a being is destined to become a world leader and, like the Buddha, there can be only one chakravartin at any one time.

The birth of a chakravartin heralds the onset of seven wealths or abundance which arise in the realm; a wealth of faith, morality, honesty, modesty, learning, renunciation and wisdom. At the time of his birth his seven precious jewels or possessions also appears simultaneously: the precious wheel, jewel, queen, minister, elephant, horse and general. The seven possessions are “the property” of the chakravartin and karmically come into existence as his “mandala”. The wheel and jewel are both symbols of his temporal and spiritual majesty, and the miraculous means of its accomplishment. The horse and the elephant as symbols of speed and strength are his vehicles. The queen; minister and general are his trinity of love, wisdom, and power: their fidelity, his blessing.

An auxiliary or lesser group of seven jewels also accompanies the rule of the chakravartin. These are the sword, the naga skin, the throne, the robes, the boots, the palace and the palace gardens. These seven secondary jewels represent the material inheritance or attributes of the chakravartin.

A third group of seven auspicious royal jewels also occur as insignia or emblems of the chakravartin possessions. These comprise the rhinoceros horn, the square earrings of the minister, a branch of precious coral, the round earrings of the queen, the insignia of the general, a pair of elephants tusks, and a triple-eyed gem enclosed in a trefoil gold mount. These seven symbols represent the precious horse, minister, wheel, queen, general, elephant and jewel respectively. As a single or composite group these seven insignia are very commonly placed as offerings before the deities.

The chakravartin is, first and foremost, a righteous universal monarch who rules purely through compassion and wisdom. The divine human form realises its perfection in the non-dual identification of the chakravartin and bodhisattva ideals.

Salient Features of Administration

Bureaucracy

Since the decline of the Gupta Indian polity saw decentralized political fragmentation and rise of various regional states. The state was seen as a sort of administrative or bureaucratic polity suspended above the society. The most important activities of the state were revenue collection and warfare. The government never paid much attention to the welfare of the people in general. It was the activities of the King's court composed of dependents and retainers and attended by underlords and 'Vassals', which constituted the activities of the government. In fact, the activities of the court was the activities of the state.

The political stability and the practice of administration were mainly dependent upon the feudatories. The King had maintained a small band of army of his own, but the necessary army at the time of exigency was acquired from his feudatories. The practice of granting tax-free land was also given to the officials through royal proclamations. The King was assisted by a group of ministers and a band of officials in the day to day administration. Usually, the ministers were selected from noble families. In certain occasions, minister ship also had become hereditary.

The central administrative system was divided into separate departments like External affairs, revenue, treasury, army, justice, religious matters etc and was put under the supervision of separate ministers, the chief among the ministers was known as Prime Minister. All ministers were liable to lead army bands to the battle fields, except the priest who was in charge of religious affairs. Separate officials were appointed to look after the domestic affairs of the king. The “Madhuban Copper Plates” of the 7th century mention about the names of various officials like that of ‘Uparika’ or provincial governors. ‘Senapati’ or the army chief and ‘dutaka’ or the informer. The armed forces played a significant role in maintaining the internal security of the kingdom and its expansion. Huen-Tsang the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, who had visited north India during the 7th century had stated about the luxurious life styles of the high officials, priests, army chiefs, nobles etc.

The directly ruled territories of the king were administratively divided into ‘bhuktis,’ ‘mandalas’ or ‘vishayas’. The officials in charge of the bhukti were known as ‘uparika’ and of mandalas or vishayas as ‘mandalpatis’ or ‘vishayapatis’. The principal duties of these officials were to collect taxes and maintain law and order of their respective areas. At times, the administrative charge of a group of villages were given to an officer called ‘Bhogapati’. The smallest administrative unit of the kingdoms was the under the administration of the village head-man. He was in charge of the law and order situation of his village. It was his duty to collect taxes from the people and remit it to the royal treasury. The ‘grama-mahajana’ or the village council assisted the village head-man in the administration of the village. The village council was to look after the educational institutions, common water supply, temples and pathways in the villages. Separate committees were also formed in the urban centres for their administration, of course with the assistance of the guilds.

Apart from the territories under the direct administered by the feudatories called vassals or samantas. These vassals enjoyed great extent of independence in the administration of their respective territories. They were liable to give gifts, tribute and bands of army to the king, whose domination was accepted by them. At times, they married their daughters to their king to strengthen their relationship with the king. However the kings had to fight against their powerful feudatories, at times, when the latter tried to challenge the supremacy of the king.

Revenue System

Land revenue was the main source of income of the state during this period. A regular revenue department functioned for the proper survey and measurement of the extent of land as well as for the collections of land revenue. The land tax collected from the peasants normally varied from 1/6 to 1/4 of the total produce. Whenever the army marched through the villages, it was the responsibility of the villages to provide food and shelter to the army. The rulers used to impose forced labour known as 'vishti' upon the peasants, thereby the peasants were subjected to work in the fields of the ruler for several days, for no wages. In the post-Gupta period, it is assumed that the position of 'Shudras' in the society had come up to the status of peasants from their earlier position of servants and domestic slaves. Huen-Tsang, in his accounts characterises 'Shudras' as agriculturists.

The wide spread land-grant system during the post-Gupta period had created a separate group of landlords in the rural areas. From seventh century onwards the donee was given pastures, trees, water resources etc. in addition to agricultural land. The land lords collect regular and irregular taxes from the peasants. The regular taxes such as 'bhaga', 'bhoga' etc continued and in addition to these regular taxes, the landlords collected several other taxes from the peasants. The peasants were under obligation to pay all taxes imposed upon them. The landlords were free to evict the peasants at the will of the farmers and replace them with new peasants. The collection of irregular taxes strengthened the power and position of the landlords, while it deteriorated the position of the peasantry. 'Vishti' or forced labour became a common practice in north India during 8th and 9th centuries. Several of the land grants of this period ordered the peasants to carry out the orders of the landlords. Though agrarian expansion was on the positive move, the condition of the peasantry was on deterioration process.

A special type of revenue officials namely, 'desa-grama-kutas' are seen mentioned in some of the texts of this period. The growth of these special revenue officials in some parts of northern India minimized the position of the village committees. These 'desa-grama-kutas' became more powerful in the course of time and they acted as feudal lords in the rural areas.

War Technology

Early medieval Indian war technology was the continuation of the earlier stages. Basic changes in water technology came up only after the advent of the Turks and Afghans in 11th century. The entire military operations were centered around elephants. Cavalry and infantry or foot soldiers. The world's first recorded military application of war elephants in India. From India war elephants were taken to Persian empire. Though cavalry and infantry played significant roles in the warfare, elephants always occupied the lead-role. Great technology change occurred with the wide spread use of iron made arrows and other equipments. Chanakya had already chalked out various techniques and strategic relating war.

There were some improvements in the war technology in the medieval period, especially marked by the use of better weapons and construction of formidable forts. These weapons were mostly hand operated ones. Both elephants and horses were important arms of defence, in addition to infantry soldiers and chariots. The horse-drawn chariots played a significant role in the warfare during those days. An important element of warfare was construction of forts. Hundreds of forts were used for the construction of forts. The strong fort wall was surrounded by a moat, in tested with crocodiles. Hills with large area of land were usually preferred for the construction of forts. There had enough space for cultivating food items inside the fort area and granaries were also built for preservation of food grains. These were used during the period of seige of the fort by enemy.

The method of attacking the enemy from the fort was showering of spears from the ramparts and pouring of hot oil, when the enemy entered the gate. Each fort had a large wooden gate with metallic spears and nails fixed on it. The elephants were tasked to break open the gate, often with ramming rods used by foot soldiers. Battering rams were later invention. In most cases siege on the fort ended when the food stored inside the fort got exhausted.

In medieval period, horses of better breed were imported from central Asia at high prices. There were always Arab traders in every capital of Indian regional kingdoms. There are accounts of kings employing Abyssinian slaves such as security guards at palaces in harems and ports. They had also employed hundreds of strong South African soldiers to impart military training and also guard important palaces. By 8th century Indian society was mainly divided into two sections-warriors and non-warriors. The Indian army was not fully professionalized during this period and co-ordination between commanders and their troops was not maintained in its proper sense.

The Turko-Afghan attacks of the medieval period challenged the existing war technology of Indian army. Their military operations were spear headed by light cavalry and heavy cavalry against the Rajput army generally dominated by elephants. The light cavalry with mounted archers and armour piercing qualities of the cross bow were the significant advantages of the Afghans and Turks. Their cavalry force equipped with horse-shoe enjoyed an edge over the unshoed cavalry forces of the Rajputs.

Field entrenchment was yet another characteristic feature of the Turko-Afghan battle techniques. They used to construct elaborate trenches for their artillery batteries before the onset of the battle. The artillery and infantry were sheltered behind this barrier. However, the battle was ultimately decided by cavalry charges. Fire arms played only a subordinate role in this battles. Usually battle was started with the firing of canons which lasted for two or three hours and then the cavalry took the lead.

State under Delhi Sultanate

The rulers who ruled over North India between the period 1206-1526 are popularly known as the rulers of Delhi Sultanate. Delhi was the centre of power and authority during this period. **Qutab-ud-din Aibak (1206-1210)** was the first ruler of the Delhi Sultanate and the founder of the slave dynasty. He was succeeded by the Iltumish. He ascended the throne in 1210 and ruled Delhi Sultanate up to 1236. He was the greatest ruler of slave dynasty. He provided the country with a capital, an independent state, a monarchical form of the state and governing class. Iltumish was succeeded by **Sulthana Raziya (1236-1240)**. She was only female ruler of the Sultanate. She was endowed with all the qualities befitting a king, but she was not born of the right sex and so on in the estimation of orthodox nobles all these virtues were worthless. After the death of Ruziya the Turkish nobles placed Bahram (1240-1242) and Masud Shah (1242-46) on the throne. The factional struggle among the nobles led to the rise of Giyasuddin Balban to the power. Balban successfully conspired and captured the throne of the Delhi Sultanate.

Balban is considered as one of the greatest slave king. He was a great warrior, ruler and statesman who saved the infant Sultanate from extinction at a critical time. He checked power of nobles and threat of the Mongol invasion. Balban was the first ruler of Delhi Sultanate to expound clear views about kingship. He raised the prestige of the crown through elaborate court ceremonies. He was the fountain of all authority and enforced his commands and decrees with greatest rigour. He introduced new administrative system.

The ruler of slave dynasty came to an end in 1290 after the death of Balban. The second phase of the Delhi Sultanate began with the establishment of the Khilji dynasty in 1290. The Khilji revolution was fraught with far reaching consequence. It not only heralded the advent of a new dynasty. It ushered in an era of ceaseless conquest of a unique experiment in statecraft. Alauddin Khilji, "one of the best Sultans, a man of imperial designs, started territorial expansion of the Sultanate. He was the first ruler who tried to end corruption in administration which was the common feature of the times. Alauddin also enjoys the distinction of being the first sultan to have sent expedition to the south and amassed much wealth. He ruled over a vast empire.

Ghiyas uddin Tughlaque laid the foundation the Tughlaque dynasty (1316-1413). **Muhammad bin Tughlaque** (1325-1391) was the most famous ruler of the dynasty. He protected the frontiers of the Sultanates from the mongol invasion. He was succeeded by Firoz Shah Tughlaque. After the death of Firoz Tughlaque, Tughlaque dynasty came to an end and The Sayyids and Lodies ruled the Sultanates. In 1526 Lodi dynasty was overthrown by Babar, and Mughal Empire was established.

With the establishment of the Delhi sultanate a new ruling class emerged in India. When Qutubuddin Aibak established himself as an independent Sultan at Lahore, the available administrative apparatus was continued in the initial phase. The prevailing structure was not altered or disturbed and as long, as the local rulers recognised the supremacy of the Sultan in Delhi, they were allowed to collect taxes and send it to the central treasury as tribute. The central officials in these areas were mainly to help the local rulers in their administrative tasks. With the expansion and consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate, new administrative institutions also started emerging. The administrative structures and institutions introduced in India were influenced by the Mongols, Seljukids etc, brought by the new rulers. The existing administrative institutions in different parts of the country also contributed in giving shape to the new system.

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

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

The state set up by the Turks in North India gradually developed in to a powerful and highly state which for some times controlled almost the entire country extending as far as Madurai. The administrative system of the sultans had a powerful effect on Mughal administration which developed in sixteenth century. Although many of the Turkish Sultan in India declared themselves lieutenant of the faithful i.e. the Abbasid caliph at Baghdad and included his name in the Kutba, it did not mean that the Caliph became the legal ruler. The Caliph had only a moral position. By proclaiming his supreme position, the Sultans at Delhi were only proclaiming that they were a part of the Islamic world.

The Sultan of Delhi was declared an Islamic State by its Turko-Afghan rulers. They had brought with them a theocratic concept of state. The head of the state was regarded as the religious leader of his people. The millat and was believed or presumed to derive his position and authority from God. The Sultanate of Delhi was 'an Islamic State' whose monarchs, the dominant nobility and the higher administrative hierarchy belonged to the Muslim faith. Theoretically, the sultans were expected to enforce the Islamic law. They professed nominal allegiance to the caliph and felt pride in obtaining investiture from him. With the exception of Alauddin Khilji and Mubarak Shah Khilji all other sultans styled themselves as deputies of Caliph. In actual practice however, the sultans were sovereign rulers who did not derive their power from, nor depended upon any external force; They were independent rulers of their territory and did not owe their sovereignty to any worldly power, neither the caliph nor the millat, since the Turks were fewer in number than the indigenous population over whom they sought to govern they had to supplement the Islamic law by framing secular regulations.

There is no unanimity among scholars regarding the nature of the state during the sultanate period. Ishwari Prasad, R.P. Tripathi and others are of opinion that the sultanate in medieval India was theocracy. On the other hand Dr. I.H. Qureshi, Muhammad Habib etc deny its theocratic character. The contemporary historian Ziauddin Barani had differentiated between religious and secular states and had stated that some secular features were essential, due to the continental situation.

According to the traditional Islamic theory of state, the Sultans usually professed to administer the Islamic law though the political institutions set up by them did not always conform to the orthodox Islamic principles. These were deeply influenced by the Indian traditions and customs and incorporated many elements of Rajaput polity with or without modification some of the practices and policies of the sultanate were actually opposed to the spirit of the traditional Islamic law. The real strength or weakness of the sultanate depended on the personality and character of the sultan. His government was based on highly centralized despotic principles. Some of the sultans formally introduced the Islamic law with in their dominion. The word of the sultan was treated as law. Alauddin Kilji, backed by a strong army, would afford to defy the Islamic principles of government and administration, make the ulema subservient to him and declare that he was the state.

The founders of the sultanate did not belong to any ruling house or families of high social status. They started their career as slaves, not even as ordinary free citizens. Therefore they did not claim any notable pedigree or hereditary right to hold the crown. There was no fixed law of succession to the throne among them. Assumption of the crown depended on the dictum survival of the fittest and "might is right" The Sultanate of Delhi therefore was a military state whose strength or weakness depended exclusively on the military power and personality of the Sultan.

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

(i) The Sultan

The Sultan was the central figure in the administrative set up. He was the head of the civil administration and Supreme Commander of the army. He made all the appointments and promotions. He also had the right to remove anybody from the service. He had absolute power in his hand. He was also the head of the Judiciary. He used to confer titles and honours upon people. Theoretically the Sultan had an exalted position but in actual practice different Sultans enjoyed varying power. The position of the Sultan was always under pressure from the powerful group of nobility and Ulema. Sultans of Delhi, particularly the powerful Sultans, adopted various strategies to keep these groups under

control. Balban kept the nobles firmly under his control. Thus the personality of the Sultan played a significant role in the administrative structure of the Sultanate. Under the capable and strong Sultans, the administration and the administrative structure functioned well but under the inefficient and weak ruler the same was under pressure.

Central Administration

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

(i) Wizarat

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

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

(ii) Diwan-i-Arz

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

(iii) Diwan-i-Insha

This department looked after the state correspondence. It was headed by Dabir-i-Khas. He drafted and despatched royal orders and received reports from various officers. The Dabir was the formal channel of communication between the centre and other regions of the empire. He was also a sort of private secretary of the Sultan and was responsible for writing the Farmans. The Barid-i-Mumalik was the head of the state news gathering and dealt with intelligence. He had to keep information of all that was happening in the Sultanate. At local level there were barids who used to send regular news concerning the matters of the state to the central office. Apart from barids, another set of reporters also existed who were known as Munihiyan.

(iv) Diwan-i-Rasalat

This department dealt with the administration of Justice. It was headed by Sadr-us-Sadr who was also the qazi-i-mumalik. He was the highest religious officer and took care of ecclesiastical affairs. He also appointed the qazis (judges) and approved various charitable grants like waqf, wazifa, Idrar, etc. The Sultan was the highest court of appeal in both civil and criminal matters. Next to him was Qazi-i-mumalik. The Muhtasibs (Public Censors) assisted the judicial department. Their main task was to see that there was no public infringement of the tenets of Islam. He was also to supervise and enforce the public morals and conduct.

(v) Other Departments

Apart from these, there were a number of smaller departments at the centre which helped in the everyday administration of the empire. Wakil-i-dar looked after the royal household and managed the personal services of the Sultan. Amir-i-Hajib looked after the royal ceremonies. He used to act as an intermediary between the Sultan and subordinate officials and between Sultan and the public. Sar-i-Jandar looked after the royal body guards. Amir-i-Akhur looked after the establishment of horses and Shahnah-i-fil looked after the establishment of elephants. Amir-i-Majlis looked after the arrangement of meetings and special ceremonies. The Royal workshops (Karkhanas) played an important role in the administrative system of the Sultanate. The needs of the royal household were met through Karkhanas. The Karkhanas were of two types - (i) Manufactories (ii) Store House. Under Feroz Tughlaq, there were as many as 36 Karkhanas. Each Karkhana was supervised by a noble who had the rank of a Malik or a Khan. The Mutasarrif was responsible for the accounts and acted as immediate supervisors in various departments.

Provincial Administration

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

The provinces were placed under the charge of the Governors who were responsible for the overall administration of the area. This involved ensuring the collection of revenue, maintaining law and order and keeping rebellious elements under control. He was a deputy of the Sultan in his area. Since the officials were frequently transferred and not familiar with the areas, they were generally dependent on local officials to perform their duties. The collection of the revenue was not possible without the help of the local officials. Thus the

governor and the local power blocs worked in close association with each other. At times the combination created problems for the Sultan as the governors used to become powerful with the help provided by the local rulers and rise in rebellion against the Sultan. During the 14th century the provinces were partitioned into Shiqs for administrative convenience. The shiqs were administered by the Shiqdar. Subsequently the Shiqs got transformed into Sarkar during the Afghan period. Faujdar was another officer along with Shiqdar at the provincial level. Their duties are not clearly articulated, and often the role of the two seems to overlap. The Shiqdar assisted the governor in the maintenance of law and order and provided military assistance. He also supervised the functioning of the smaller administrative units. The duties of the Faujdar were similar to the Shiqdar. The Kotwals were placed under the Faujdar.

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

Local Administration

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

MARKET REFORMS OF ALAUDDIN KHALJI

The market reforms of Alauddin Khalji were oriented towards administrative and military necessities. Medieval rulers believed that necessities of life, especially food grains, should be available to the city folk at reasonable prices. But few rulers had been able to control the prices for any length of time. Alauddin Khalji was more or less the first ruler who looked at the problem of

price control, in a systematic manner and was able to maintain stable prices for a considerable period. It has been pointed out that Alauddin Khalji instituted the market control because after the mongol seige of Delhi, he wanted to recruit a large army. All his treasures would have soon exhausted if he was to spend huge resources on army. With low prices the sultan could recruit a large army with low expenses.

Whatever may be the reason for the market reforms, elaborate administrative arrangements were made to ensure that the market control was followed strictly. Alauddin fixed the prices of all commodities from grain to cloth, slaves, cattles etc. He also set up three markets at Delhi, the first for food grains, the second for cloth of all kinds and for expensive items such as sugar, ghee, oil, dry fruits etc. and the third for the horses, slaves and cattle. For controlling the food prices, Alauddin tried to control not only the supply of food grains from the villages, and its transportation to the city by the grain merchants, but also its proper distribution to the citizens. A number of measures were taken to see that prices laid down by the Sultan were strictly observed. An officer (Shehna) was in charge of the market to see that no one violates the royal orders. Barids (intelligence officers) and munhiyan (secret spies) were also appointed. Alauddin also tried to ensure that there were sufficient stocks of food-grains with the government so that the traders did not hike up prices by creating an artificial scarcity, or indulge in profiterring. Granaries were set up in Delhi and Chhain (Rajasthan).

The Banjaras or Karwaniyan who transported the food grains from the country side to the city were asked to form themselves in a body. They were to settle on the banks of Yamuna with their families. An official (Shehna) was appointed to oversee them. To ensure the regular supply of food grains to the Banjaras, a number of regulations were made. All the food grains were to be brought to the market (mandis) and sold only at official prices.

The second market for cloth, dry fruits, ghee etc. was called Sarai-i- adl. All the clothes brought from different parts of the country and also from outside were to be stored and sold only in this market at government rates. To ensure an adequate supply of all the commodities, all the merchants were registered and a deed taken from them that they would bring the specified quantities of commodities to the Sarai-i-adl every year. The Merchants who, brought commodities from long distances including foreign countries were given advance money on the condition that they would not sell to any intermediaries. In cases

of costly commodities an officer was to issue permits to amirs, maliks etc. for the purchase of these expensive commodities in accordance with their income. This was done to prevent any black marketing of these expensive products.

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

Knowledge Systems

As you know, the medieval period marks the coming of Muslims in India. By this time; the traditional indigenous classical learning had already received a setback. The pattern of education as prevalent in Arab countries was gradually adopted during this period. As a result, Maktabas and Madrasas came into existence. These institutions used to receive royal patronage. A chain of madrasas, opened at several places, followed a set curriculum.

The two brothers, Sheikh Abdullah and Sheikh Azizullah, who were specialists in rational science, headed the madrasas at Sambal and Agra. Apart from the talent available locally in the country, learned men from Arabia, Persia and Central Asia were also invited to take charge of education in madrasas.

Do you know that the Muslim rulers attempted to reform the curriculum of primary schools. Some important subjects like Arithmetic, Mensuration, Geometry, Astronomy, Accountancy, Public Administration and Agriculture were included in the courses of studies for primary education. Though special efforts were made by the ruler to carry out reforms in education, yet sciences did not make much headway. Efforts were made to seek a kind of synthesis between the Indian traditional scientific culture and the prevalent medieval approach to science in other countries. Let us now see what developments took place in various fields during this period.

Large workshops called karkhanas were maintained to supply provision, stores and equipments to royal household and government departments. The karkhanas not only worked as manufacturing agencies, but also served as centres for technical and vocational training to young people. The karkhanas trained and turned out artisans and craftspersons in different branches, who later on set up their own independent karkhanas.

Mathematics

Several works in the field of Mathematics were produced during this period. Narayana Pandit, son of Narsimha Daivajna was well known for his works in Mathematics –Ganitakaumudi and Bijaganitavatamsa. Gangadhara, in Gujarat, wrote Lilavati Karamdipika, Suddhantadipika, and Lilavati Vyakhya. These were famous treatises which gave rules for trigonometrical terms like sine, cosine tangent and cotangent. Nilakantha Somasutvan produced Tantra samgraha, which also contains rules of trigonometrical functions.

Ganesa Daivajna produced Buddhivilasini - a commentary on lilavati - containing a number of illustrations. Krishna of the Valhalla family brought out Navankura on the Bijaganit of Bhaskara-II and elaboration of the rules of indeterminate equations of the first and second orders. Nilakantha Jyotirvida compiled Tajik, introducing a large number of Persian technical terms. Faizi, at the behest of Akbar, translated Bhaskara's Bijaganit.

Akbar ordered to make Mathematics as a subject of study, among others in the education system. Naisiru'd-din-at-tusi, was another scholar of Mathematics.

Astronomy

Astronomy was another field that flourished during this period. In astronomy, a number of commentaries dealing with the already established astronomical notions appeared. Mehendra Suri, a court astronomer of Emperor Firoz Shah, developed an astronomical instrument 'Yantraja'. Paramesvara and Mahabhaskariya, both in Kerala, were famous families of astronomers and almanac-makers. Nilakantha Somasutvan produced commentary of Aryabhatiyaa. Kamalakar studied the Islamic astronomical ideas. He was an authority on Islamic knowledge. Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh-II of Jaipur was a patron of Astronomy. He set up the five astronomical observatories in Delhi, Ujjain, Varansasi, Mathura and Jaipur.

Medicine

The Ayurveda system of medicine did not progress as vigorously as it did in the ancient period because of lack of royal patronage. However, some important treatises on Ayurveda like the Sarangdhara Samhita and Chikitsasamgraha by Vangasena, the Yagaratbajara and the Bhavaprakasa of Bhavamisra were compiled. The Sarangdhara Samhita, written in the 13th century, includes use of opium in its material medica and urine examination for diagnostic purpose. The drugs mentioned include metallic preparation of the rasachikitsa system and even imported drugs.

The Rasachikitsa system, dealt principally with a host of mineral medicines, both mercurial and non-mercurial. The Siddha system mostly prevalent in Tamil Nadu was attributed to the reputed Siddhas, who were supposed to have evolved many life-prolonging compositions, rich in mineral medicines.

The Unani Tibb system of medicine flourished in India during the medieval period. Ali-binRabban summarized the whole system of Greek medicine as well as the Indian medical knowledge in the book, *Firdausu-Hikmat*. The Unani medicine system came to India along with the Muslims by about the eleventh century and soon found patronage for its growth. Hakim Diya Muhammad compiled a book, *Majiny-e-Diyae*, incorporating the Arabic, Persian and Ayurvedic medical knowledge. Firoz Shah Tughalaq wrote a book, *Tibbe Firozshahi*. The *Tibbi Aurangzebi*, dedicated to Aurangzeb, is based on Ayurvedic sources. The *Musalajati-Darshikohi* of Nuruddin Muhammad, dedicated to Darashikoh, deals with Greek medicine and contains, at the end, almost the whole of Ayurvedic material medica.

UNIT-II

ELEMENTS OF FEUDALISM IN NORTH INDIAN SOCIETY

The main exponent of the theory of feudalism in ancient India is Prof. R.S. Sharma, who uses the term feudalism to characterise the socioeconomic formation in the post-Gupta period. Feudalism appears in a predominantly agrarian economy, which is characterised by a class of landlords and a class of servile peasantry. In this system, the landlords extract surplus through social, religious or political methods, which are called extra-economic. This seems to be more or less the current Marxist view of feudalism which considers serfdom, 'scalar property' and sovereignty' as features of the West European version of feudalism.

R.S. Sharma says that obviously land was the primary means of production. In the same piece of land, the peasant held inferior rights and the landlord held superior rights. The land grants leave hardly any doubt that the landlords enjoyed a good measure of general control on the means of production. Hierarchical control over land was created by large-scale infatuation, especially from the eighth century onwards. This gave rise to graded types of landlords, different from actual tillers of the soil.

In a feudal system of production, the landlords shared the agricultural surplus, called rent, in labour and cash/kind, and this was coupled with a patron-client system of distribution, primarily between the peasant and the landlord. But in India, the problem is not directly connected with the rise of landed magnates or with the "decomposition of the slave mode of production", but with the decreasing control of the peasant over his unit of production, coupled with his restricted access to the communal agrarian resources.

It is thought that feudalism was identical with freedom, and there seems to be an assumption that freedom was the only potent method of exploiting the peasants. It may be very effective, but other than servitude imposed on the peasantry did prove inoperative and unproductive. But in the Indian case, surplus produce is extracted more through the general control exercised by the landed intermediaries than by employment as serfs.

He suggests that unlike capitalism, feudalism was not universal phenomenon, and in India, where land was very abundant and fertile, there was no scope for the rise of serfdom or forced labour. No doubt, on account of the practice of land grants, the landed aristocracy did emerge during the post-Gupta period, but along with the granted lands privately owned lands also existed, and the state often bought the private lands from individuals for donating it. Land was commonly assigned by the rulers, rights of varying degrees, to Brahmins and religious institutions, to vassals for military service, to members of the clan or family and even to officers. Thus there developed a great variety of interests and rights over land, claimed by the grades of intermediaries. "

The state was to be the owner of all lands as a general proposition, but individuals or groups that had lands in their possession were regarded as owners thereof, subject to the ability to pay land tax and the right of the state to vary with the increasing extent and the changing complexion of the King's right of ownership over land, the issue of the royal ownership of land became very complicated in actual practice owing to the increase in the claim of the ruling samanta hierarchy and the landed aristocracy in this respect. Some inscriptions (of the post-Gupta period) reveal that monarchs and overlords gave land grants in different territories and estates of their samantas. The rights enjoyed over land by the overlords and the samantas of different grades depended upon their actual power and prestige. There is also evidence of private individual ownership of land, in the law books and some inscriptions, by mostly the aristocracy. The *Rajatarangini*, etc. reveal a state of insecurity and violence which could not but have affected the land rights of peasants. There was considerable growth of dependent peasantry and collective rights over pastures.

The scholars who support the view of the emergence of the feudal system during the post-Gupta period mainly as a result of the increasing land grants, changes in the socio-economic structure, etc. present a totally different picture of the whole system, particularly of the land ownership pattern. Consequently, the subject of land ownership pattern in the post-Gupta period is a very vexed question. Contemporary sources make this picture more confusing. For instance, Medhatithi mentions at one place that the King was the 'Lord' of the soil, and elsewhere states that the field belonged to him who made it fit for cultivation by clearing it. Prof. Lallanji Gopal, interpreting the views of Medhatithi regarding the ownership of land, writes: "When Medhatithi speaks of the King as

the master of the soil and of the soil as belonging to the peasant, he does not mean to lay down the legal status of the King as the owner of all cultivable land in the state, but only points out the sovereignty of the King implying a general lordship of the King over all things in his kingdom."

Stray references in the literary works of the period also suggest individual ownership. Some inscriptions of this period, which record cases of land grants and land sales by private individuals, corroborate the testimony of the legal works. In some inscriptions, lands owned by private individuals are mentioned in connection with the demarcation of the boundaries of the donated land. Fields which were owned by cultivators themselves are generally described as *kautamba-kshetra*, owned by certain individuals as *sakta* and tilled by certain individuals as *prakrsta* or *krsta*. But with increasing land grants, the theoretical ownership of land, including the grass and pasture-land, reservoir of water, groves, dry land, etc. also went to the donees. Such increasing land grants may be interpreted as a general indication of an increasing claim of the King over the land. Under such conditions, sometimes the actual or existing cultivators of the land were also transferred to the donees.

With the growing practice of remunerating the officers of the state through land grants, the landed aristocracy gained importance in the period. Persons enjoying such land assignments also enjoyed some abiding claims of ownership. The practice of granting the villages to vassals and officials and religious grants to individuals (Brahmins) and institutions (temples or monasteries) went a long way in creating a new class of landlords. Such rights could be transferred and bought and sold like any other commodity. The growth of the claims of feudal chiefs naturally weakened the claims and rights of the cultivators. A number of restrictions were imposed on the claims of the peasant on the land. But the cultivators were not tied to the soil like European serfs. If they were oppressed, they had the freedom to migrate to other areas.

But in certain inscriptions of northern India of the period, Kings have been indicated as claiming some sort of ownership over the inhabitants of villages in their jurisdiction. In the Chandella grants, villages are described as carrying with them the rights over the artisans, cultivators, and merchants living therein. This situation was much similar to that of the manorial system. But this was not the uniform picture throughout northern India.

Development of Feudalism in North India

The political essence of feudalism lay in the organization of the whole administrative structure on the basis of land, its economic essence lay in the institution of serfdom in which peasants were attached to the soil held by land intermediaries placed between the king and the actual Tillers, who had to pay rent in land and labour to them. The system as R.S.Sharma observes “was based on a self sufficient economy in which things were mainly produced for the local use of the peasants and their lords and not for the market”. It is therefore in the light of certain broad features of feudalism in this sense that the origin and growth of feudalism in India have to be investigated.

The central factor ultimately transformed the ancient Indian society into the medieval society was the land grant system. From the post Mourya period and especially from the Gupta times the practice of making land grants to the Brahmins, monks and priests. But the practice of land grants came into being because of a serious crisis that affected the ancient social order. The Varna system was based on the producing activities of the peasants and labourers. The tax collected by the royal officers from the Vaishyas enable the king to pay salaries to these officials and soldiers. But in the 3rd, 4th centuries, a deep social crisis affected the system. The lower orders attempted to arrogate to themselves the status functions of the higher order. Varna barriers were attacked because the producing masses were oppressed with heavy taxes and impositions and were claimed protection by the Laings. Several measures were adopted to overcome the crisis but a more important step to meet the situations was to grant land to priests and officials in lieu of salaries and remuneration. Such a practice had the advantages throwing the burden of collecting taxes and maintaining law and order in the donated area on the beneficiaries. More over by implanting brahmanas in the conquered tribal areas, the tribal people could be taught the brahminical way of life and the need of obeying the king and paying taxes to him.

Previously the grants had been temporary but generally they became hereditary the earlier grants had only affected the right of land usage, but had most related to any rights of peasants. King granted certain privileges, the so called immunity right and these new owners enjoyed certain administrative right and functions over the land. They began to carry out legal functions. The king exempted from the previous obligation to admit royal functionaries to their

lands. The land granted to them could not be entered by royal troops, disturbed by government officers, or interfere with district police. Feudal landowners became entitled to administrator justice. They acted as local governors, gave parts of their land for service rendered without seeking sanctions of ruler.

Two significant features of such grants, which became more, frequent from the 5th century AD.were the transfer of all sources of revenue and surrender of Police and administrative functions. Some of the grants of the 4th and 5th centuries AD show that the Brahmins were granted right of enjoining the hidden treasurer and deposits of the villages.This meant the transfer of royal ownership over a mine which was an important sign of the king's sovernity.

The donars not only abandoned his revenue but also the right to govern the inhabitants of the villages that were granted.The Gupta period furnishes at least of a dozen instants of grants of apparently settled villages made to the Brahmins by the big feudatories in central India. In this grants the residents ruled by this respective rulers not only pay the customary tax to the donees but also to obey their commands.Two other land grants of post- Gupta period royal commands were issued to government official employed as sarvaddya and also to regular soldiers that they should not cause any disturbance to the Brahmins.

Thus the wide spread practice of making land grants in Gupta period paved the way for the rise of Brahmin feudatories who performed administrative functions not under the royal officers but almost independently the grants helped to create a powerful intermediaries wilding considerable economic and political power.Thus the number of the land owning Brahmans went of increasing same of them gradually shed their priestly function and turned their chief attention to the management of land, in their case secular functions became more important than religious functions.As a result of the land grants made to the Brahmans, the comprehensive competence based an centralized control, which was the hall mark of the Maurya state, gave way to decentralization in the post- Mourya and Gupta period

Comparison of Indian Feudalism and European Feudalism

The term feudalism in its India context does not satisfy the characteristic features of medieval European feudalism.The most important feature which contributed to the development of feudalism in India was the practice of land grants made to priests and temples.Foreign invasion did not play any appreciable part in the process of feudalism as was in case in Europe.

The villages granted the Brahmins had some resemblance to manor the scope of forced labour seem to have been very wide. But while a great part of the times and energy of European peasants was consumed by their work on their masters field, the peasantry in India gave most of there time to their on fields of the produces of which a considerable share went to the holders of the grants and other intermediaries. Further the process of sub infeudation was not extensive in India as in Europe. In medieval Europe land was granted to the feudal barons for services rendered to the state, but in India this practice was of a very limited character.

Some scholars argue that there was no feudal organization in India, comparable to feudal society of Europe.They say that if at all feudalism was there it was not in the political economic fields, but in the cast organization, hierarchy of India held no property oat all still was respected and granted as supreme in the social order.So the economic consequence of the land grants was not feudalization of feudal structure but fortification of caste structure based on the superiority of the Brahmins.The socio economic formation of the India society in the ancient and medieval period was the result of feudal-caste inters action. The difference in Indian feudalism is that, as a social organization it had to give way to more deep-rooted system which was in vogue from time immemorial Viz-the caste organization.The position and status for an individual was regarded according to the possession of the land.This ownership of vest area was considered as the criterion for deciding his status in social organization which we call European feudalism.The striking difference we see in the Indian system of feudalism is the pre-eminence of caste.

The landed Aristocracy functioned in India was not like the feudal aristocracy in Europe. As regards the warrior aristocracies like the Rajaputs. There is some similarly with European feudal aristocracy in the military aspects. But the Indian aristocracies were part of administrative machinery or the state systems, not of economic system.Similarly in one or more political and military aspects of European feudalism with Indian condition does not make the whole social economic structure of Indian feudalism.

Feudalism neither in its legal aspects as revealed in the contractual relationship between the land and vassal nor its field and memorial systems existed in India. The kind of society was basically unequal oppressive on account of the preponderance of caste untouchability and inapproachability.The

infrastructure of the early Indian society was constituted by the element of caste which created and maintained a pyramidal structure, very much like the feudal frame with the dominant minority of Brahmin at the apex and the vast majority of untouchable caste at the bottom.

Historiographical Trends

The early medieval period of Indian history, roughly covering the period between 5th and 13th century, has been identified by historians as a society predominantly dominated by elements of feudalism. It was a period which manifested transition, changes and developments in Indian society. The most significant aspect of change was the expansion of land grant system. From the early 1970s a group of historians started characterizing early medieval north Indian society as feudal in character. The usage of the term 'feudalism' to Indian society is related to the concept of medieval European origin. According to European feudalism the nobility held land from the king in exchange of military service. These nobles subinfeudated these lands to subordinate landlords, who in turn became the tenants of the nobles. The actual cultivators of the land, the peasants or serfs were obliged to live in their land lords land and gave him homage, labour and share of produce, notionally in exchange for protection. The usage of the term feudalism to characterize the early medieval north Indian society is an attempt to classify Indian history according to the European model.

Among the early protagonist of Indian feudalism, D.D. Kosambi's name stands in fore-front. Kosambi, in his 'Introduction to the study of Indian History', put forward the concept of 'feudalism from below'. According to him, 'feudalism from above', related to the early stage of medieval India, wherein the king levied tributes from his subordinates, in return for the recognition of their ownership rights in the territories under their control. He allowed them to do what they liked within their own territories as long as they paid tribute to the paramount ruler. These subordinates might even be tribal chiefs who once ruled the land on their own. 'Feudalism from below' marks the next stage wherein a class of landowners developed within the village, between the state and the actual peasants. This intermediary class was subject to military service to the king hence claim a direct relationship with the state power. Taxes were collected by small intermediaries, who passed on a fraction to their feudal lords or at times to the king himself.

Kosambi identified certain similar characteristics in European and Indian models of feudalism. They included low level of technology, in which the instruments of production are simple and generally inexpensive and the act of production largely individual in character. The production was mainly aimed at immediate need of a household or village community and not for a wider market, in both the systems. Political decentralization was also common to both the system in Europe as well as early Indian medieval period.

However, it was R.S. Sharma who made the maximum contribution in building the theory of Indian feudalism. He considered the period between 4th and 13th centuries as feudal period in Indian history. Sharma took less interest in Kosambi's classification of feudalism 'from above' and 'from below', especially not in feudalism to the practice of making land grants, especially to the Brahmins, temples and monasteries. In his work 'Indian Feudalism' he observes three distinct phases in the growth of feudalism. The first phase covers the period between 300-750 CE, in which the sudras were transformed into peasants and the landlords emerge as the dominant section to develop the 'Samanta' (vassal) system. The second phase covers the period between 750-1000, which witnessed the growth of feudal system. He argues that during this period proprietary rights were given to the donees, instead of the earlier usufructory rights. The third phase, covering the period between 1000-1200, marked the culmination in the growth of feudalism. He considers small scale peasant production and the absence of manors as the hall mark of Indian feudalism. Decline of foreign trade was also pointed out by him that contributed for the growth of feudalism.

In the early 1970s, Sharma proposed the theory of urban decay as another important cause for the growth of Indian feudalism. Urban decay resulted in decline of trade, collapse of artisan activity, disappearance of metallic money and the overall decline in every sphere of society, which reduced the power of the state. He continued his investigation on the origin of feudalism and reiterated that the land grants resulted in the emergence of a class of landlords, living on the produce of the peasants; and he characterized this as feudal formation. He stated that as a result of continuous land grants, features of feudalism became prominent in early medieval India. The presence of the basic classes of land lords and subject peasantry collection of rent and labour services by the landlords from the peasants on the basis of land charters, predominant agricultural economy etc, were considered as the basic characteristics of Indian feudalism by him.

In the meanwhile, in the 1990s Sharma came up with the 'Kali age crisis' to explain the cause of land grants and feudal formation in early medieval India. He stated that the Brahmanical System was threatened by the prosperity of vaishyas and shudras. The vaishyas and shudras challenged the Brahmana-Kshtriya superiority in the Varna based society and the varna system itself was questioned. This led to the kali age crisis which was also mentioned in the Puranas and other texts. To overcome the crisis, the rulers started granting lands to Brahmanas so that they can bring order in the society. Land grants resulted in dissemination of Brahmanical ideology and expansion of agriculture.

B.N. S. Yadava in his 'Society and Culture in North India in the 12th Century' made further analysis of Indian feudalism in the medieval period. He supplemented Sharma's theory of kali crisis to explain the transition from pre- feudal to feudal society in India. He further states that the Hun invasion of India shattered the Gupta empire and contributed to the rise of feudalism. He further stressed the growing dependence of peasantry on the landed intermediaries due to the grant of more and more rights to them by the state which curtailed peasant mobility and freedom.

Political Fragmentation

Political fragmentation is the political process anti- theoretical to centralized polity. It became wide spread in early medieval India, especially during the post-Gupta period. Essential characteristics of the state were vertical gradation, division of sovereignty, emergence of a category of semi independent rulers. It was not only to the king who was the symbol of political authority, but power was shared with rulers of various kinds such as Samantas, Mahasamantas, Mandaleswaras, and Mahamandaleswara. The semi-independent local chiefs were generally known as the Samantas or vassals. They were the feudatories of the central ruler or king.

Bana's Harshacharita details the obligations of Samantas to their king as paying annual tribute, paying homage to the royal authority by attending the court in person, rendering military aid to the king' perform administrative and judicial functions in their respective territories in times of peace and defeated Samantas had to give their sons and other minor princes to the king so that they could be groomed in the imperial tradition and make them to be more loyal to the king. The Samantas are often compared to the feudal vassals of medieval European kings. Like their European counterparts the Samantas were permitted to be virtually autonomous on the condition that they paid tribute and military service to the king. The king in turn, recognized their rights to continue as Samantas.

The Samantas acted as the useful subordinates to the king on the one hand, while they maintained a constant threat to the central authority on the other. The problems created by Samantas could not be solved by means of usual patrimonial arrangements. According to the prevailing royal ideology, the prestige of the king was also decided on the basis of the number of samantas, who paid tribute to him. The tributes from the Samantas had comprised a considerable part of the royal resources. The Samantas were always eager to regain their independence and if the king suffered a set back they would try to increase their autonomy and cut the tribute due to him. Contemporary texts usually describe Samantas as the political enemies of the king and their military bands as the weaker link in the defence sector of kings.

The success of a ruler largely depended on his abilities to curb the on-growing powers of the tributaries under him. In the entire medieval period few kings were successful in making their tributaries loyal to send permanent representatives of the royal court. Also only a few of the lesser tributaries were ready to receive a royal representative on a permanent basis at their court. It is reported that the Rashtrakuta king, Amoghavarsha tried an interesting method to solve the problem. He is said to have sent thousands of dancers and courtesans as spies to the courts of his Samantas. These ladies stayed in the courts of the tributaries and informed the royal authorities about the planning and programmes of the Samantas. These ladies stayed in the courts of the tributaries and informed the royal authorities about the planning and programmes of the Samantas, in secret. In another instance, King Ramapala of Eastern India had to make personal visits to all his tributaries at their courts, seeking their help to resist an external threat.

In the 12th century, instances have been pointed out, that certain kings have been successful in persuading their tributaries to keep certain number of troops at the provincial capitals for the use of the King. Some of the rulers assigned the areas to their Samantas in different territories of the kingdom in order to avoid any type of concentration or consolidations of regional powers. The Gahadavala king of the 12th century in northern India granted Brahmin ministers several villages in several districts.

Urban Decay

Decay of urban centres and settlements was a significant change that took place in the early medieval period of north India. The process of urban decay was closely related with the decline of external and long distance trade. The symptoms of urban decay were visible during the later stages of the Gupta rule.

Craft production and commercial activities have been on the decline. In most areas this trend paved way for the decline of urban centres and more and more people began to desert urban centres and move to rural areas. It was a period of agricultural expansion also in North India. The proliferation of land grants during the later phase of the Gupta period and post-Gupta period brought large tracts of uncultivated, virgin lands to cultivation. Even forests were being cleared and transformed into cultivable land by the grantees. Many numbers of people were in need for agricultural work and the deserted people of the urban centres turned on to agricultural activities in the rural areas.

The decline of long distance trade adversely affected the people lived in the urban centres. The fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century, virtually put an end to the trade between north India and Central and West Asia remained, was completely destroyed and wiped off by the Hun invasions of the 5th century. It is seen that there existed some trade between the coastal towns of India with South East Asia and China, but it was also on the decline and it could not become significant to bring any impact upon the economy and society in the Post-Gupta period. The long distance internal trade also suffered a set back due to the weakening of the links between coasted towns and interior urban centres and further between the urban centres and rural settlements. The status of traders and merchants were also on the decline.

The element of feudalization in the north Indian society during this period was gradually paving way for the almost self sufficient closed economy. These self sufficient village units were dominated by the landed gentry. The paucity of coins in the post-Gupta period demonstrates the decline in trading activities. Decline in trade turned out to be the symptom of urban decline. As a result of the decline in trade and commercial activities and retreat of urban people to rural areas, urban centres decayed and urban people became the part of village economy. The reference of Kali age crisis in the Puranas also points to depopulation of important urban centres. Hiuen Tsang had also pointed out the decline of commercial activities and decay of urban centres. Varahamihira of 5th century had earlier indicated the same point. Archaeological excavations have shown the decline of the earlier urban centres like Vaishali, Pataliputra, and Varanasi. By the 8th century important earlier urban centres like Ropar in Punjab, Athrajikhera and Bhita in Uttar Pradesh, Eran in Madhya Pradesh, Prabhas Patan in Gujarat, Maheswar and Paunar in Maharashtra and Kudavelli in Andhra Pradesh had faced decline and decay.

The decay of urban centres was coincided with the decline of crafts and commodity manufacture. R.S. Sharma, in his 'Urban Decay in India' argues that the decline in long distance trade was the main reason for urban decay in early medieval India. Several of the ancient towns in the Gangetic plain decayed due to the decline in the flourishing trade in spices and silk. Another reason attributed by him for the urban decay is the numerous landgrants by the kings.

System of Land Grants

During the Gupta period many changes took place in the agrarian structure of the society. The striking development of the Gupta period was the emergence of priestly landlords at the expense of local peasants. The practice of giving land grants to priests and officials became common during this period. The land grant system was originally started by satavahanas; it became a common activity during the Gupta period. The Brahmins priests were given tax-free land and given the right to collect rent from the peasants. The ownership of such land became hereditary. These state beneficiaries were virtual rulers of their grant land and could administrate law and award punishments with out any state interference. Many Brahmin became rich landlords who mostly oppressed the peasants. The local Tribal peasants were reduced to a lower status. In central and Western India the peasants were also subjected to forced labour. On the other hand a good deal of waste land was brought under cultivation and better knowledge of agriculture seems to have been introduced by the Brahmin beneficiaries in the Tribal areas of central India. On account of large inequalities some scholars opine that Gupta age may be called the Golden age as far as upper class are concerned. According to Romila Thapar, The description 'Golden age is true in so far as we speak of the upper classes'.

Growth of Regional Kingdoms

The decline of the Gupta Empire resulted in the emergence of numerous ruling dynasties in different parts of northern India. The prominent among them were the Pushyabhutis of Thanesar, Maukharis of Kanauj and the Maitrakas of Valabhi. The political scene in the Peninsular India was no different. The Chalukyas and the Pallavas emerged as strong regional powers in Deccan and northern Tamil Nadu respectively.

MAITRAKAS

The Maitrakas were tributary chiefs of the Guptas, who established an independent kingdom in western India. Dhruvasena II was the most important ruler of the Maitrakas. He was a contemporary of Harshavardhana and was married to his daughter. Hsuan Tsang tells us that Dhruvasena II attended Harsha's assembly at Prayaga (Allahabad).

Ruling over Saurashtra in Gujarat, the Maitrakas developed Valabhi as their capital. This city became an important center of learning. Being on the Arabian Sea, it was also a port town having flourishing trade and commerce. Maitrakas continued to rule until the middle of the 8th century when Arab attacks weakened their power.

MAUKHARIES

The Maukharies ruled over Kanauj, a city in western Uttar Pradesh, which gradually replaced Pataliputra as a political center of north India. Maukharies were also the subordinate rulers of the Guptas and used the title of samanta. Harshavardhana's sister Rajyashri was married to Grihavarman. Shashanka, the ruler of Bengal (Gaur), and Dev Gupta, the Later Gupta ruler jointly attacked Grihavarman and killed him. The kingdom of Kanauj was then merged with that of the Pushyabhutis and Harsha shifted his capital from Thanesar (Kurukshetra) to Kanauj.

PUSHYABHUTIS OF THANESAR

An important ruling family to gain prominence after the fall of the Gupta was that of the Pushyabhutis who had their capital at Thanesar (Thanesvara in Kurukshetra). The dynasty became influential with the accession of Prabhakarvardhana, who was able to defeat the Hunas and strengthen his position in the regions of Punjab and Haryana. After his death, his elder son Rajyavardhana came to the throne but he was treacherously killed by Shashanka, the king of Bengal and Bihar. Harshavardhana then ascended the throne in AD 606. He was only 16 years of age at that time. Still he proved himself to be a great warrior and an able administrator. We have two valuable sources that throw important light on the life and times of Harshavardhana (606–647). These are Harshacarita written by his court poet Banabhatta and Si-Yu-Ki, the travel account of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan Tsang, who visited India during AD 629–644.

After his accession Harshavardhana united his kingdom with that of his widowed sister Rajayashri and shifted his capital to Kanauj and is described as the lord of the north (sakalauttarapathanatha). He brought Punjab, Uttara Pradesh, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa under his control. Harsha wanted to extend his power in the Deccan. But he was defeated by Pulakesin II, the Chalukya ruler, on the banks of river Narmada. The river thus became the southern boundary of his kingdom.

The death of Harsha in AD 647 was followed by a political confusion that continued up to the 8th century when the Gurjara Pratiharas, the Rajput rulers, emerged as a big force in northern India.

Administration-Feudal Character.

Harsha governed his empire on the same line as the Guptas did except that his administration had become more feudal and decentralized. The result of the decentralization was the consolidation of the feudal relation in the society. Bana's Harsha Charita and the accounts of Hiuen Tsang mention that the stability of the empire and the administration was dependent upon the feudatories called Samanthas and Mahasamtas. It is stated that Harsha had maintained a large army. He could possess a large army only if he could mobilize the support of his feudatories at the time of war. Evidently every feudatory contributed his quota of force and this made imperial army vast in number. The king was assisted by a council of ministers in the day-to-day administration. Besides the ministry there were many other important officials of the state. Among the high officials Mahasandivigrahadhiko, Mahabaladhikrita, and Mahaprathihara were very important.

The empire was divided into Bhukties (provinces) and then further into vishayas (districts) for administrative convenience the village was the smallest unit of administration. The principal officer of a province was Uparika, that of a district Vishayapati, and that of village Gramika. Various other officers of the local administration bearing the title bhogapati, and Ayuktaka, and pratipalaka purushas are referred to in Harshacharita. Land grants continued to be made to priests for special services rendered to the state. In addition Harsha is credited with the grant of land to the officers by charters. These grants allowed the same concessions to priests as were allowed by earlier grants.

Hiuen Tsang the Chinese pilgrim informs that the Revenue of Harsha were divided into four parts. One part was embarked for the expenditure of the king, a second for scholars, a third for the endowment of officials and public servants and a fourth for religious purposes. He also tells that minister and high officers of the state were endowed with land. The feudal practice of rewarding and paying officer with grants of land seem to have begun under Harsha.

Hiuen Tsang testifies that the law and order system was good. But he himself was robbed on the street once. Robbery was considered to be a second treason for which the right hand of the robber was amputated.

Learning and Literature.

Harsha was a liberal patron of learning and literature. He was himself an author and is credited with three dramas Ratnavali, Priyadarsika, and Nagananda. His court poet Bana wrote his biography Harshacharita. Bana was a master of prose and he wrote Kadambari and the drama parvathi parinaya. Among the other men of letters who flourished in Harsha's court may be mentioned Dharmakirti, the famous logician, Kumaradasa and Matanga Divakara the literary figure. Learning was religious and was imparted through monasteries. Brahmi script was used Sanskrit was the language of the learned people.

Hiuen Tsang's & account.

The reign of Harsha is important on account of the visit of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang. He left China in 629 AD and traveled all the way to India. After a long stay in India, returned to China in 645 AD. He had come to study in the Buddhist University of Nalanda and to collect Buddhist scriptures and literature.

The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang's work 'Si Yu Ki' gives an accurate account of the political religious and social condition of India in the first half of the seventh century AD. He traveled extensively in India. He had clear knowledge of the geography of the country. He mentions the four castes and admired the brahmanas for their love of learning. The Brahmanas and Kshatriyas occupied a predominant position in the social hierarchy. The existence of untouchability is noticed by him. According to him they were forced to live outside the city. He narrates the religious condition of India in the 7th century AD. He devoted a major part of his writing to describe various aspects of Buddhism. He gives the

precise number of monasteries and the number of monks, etc. He pays high tribute to Ashoka and Harsha who were true lay devotees and actively worked for the welfare of the religion. He stayed in Nalanda for about 5 years and studied under Silabhadra. At that time the Sangharama of Nalanda was the largest which received the liberal patronage of the kings.

The pre-dominant religion of the land was of course Hinduism. Among the Hindu deities he makes mention of Surya, Siva and Vishnu, he does not forget to mention the lavish treatment meted out to him by kings other than Buddhist, who were tolerant of Buddhism and occasionally showered their sympathy of its well being. In short Hiuen Tsang's account Si-Yi-Ki enables us to reconstruct the history of Harsha and his administration as well as the history of India in the 7th century AD. It throws welcome light on various aspects of India culture.

After Harsha

The death of Harsha was followed by a period of anarchy and confusion in Northern India. A number of petty principalities and independent Kingdoms rose on the ruins of the empire of Harsha. In their bitter struggle for predominance, Yasodharan of Kanauj came out successful. But his tragic death at the hands of Lalithaditya, the King of Kashmir (about 750 A.D.) made the political confusion more confounded. Then Northern India like Western Europe entered 'the Middle or Feudal ages'.

The Rajputs.

The most important development in the history of Northern India between the death of Harsha and the Muslim conquest of Hindustan (650 – 1200) was the emergence of the Rajputs into political prominence. Almost all the Kingdom of Northern and Western India during this period were governed by Rajput families. Hence Dr. Smith described this period as the '*Rajput age*'.

Origin of Rajputs.

Scholars have expressed divergent views regarding the origin of the Rajputs. According to tradition the Rajputs were the descendants of the ancient Kshatriyas belonging to solar and lunar dynasties. C.V. Vidhya holds the view that the Rajputs were the successors of the Vedic Kshatriyas. Col. Todd the author of the famous *Annals of Rajasthan* says that the Rajputs were the descendants of the tribes of foreign Scythians and the Sakas who had come and settled in India. Dr. Smith holds the view that some of the Rajputs were the

descendants of foreign tribes while others belonged to the ancient Kshatriyas families. The modern view is that the Rajput clans descended from the Huns, the Gurjaras and other allied tribes who poured into India in the 4th and 6th centuries A.D. They gradually merged into the Hindu society adopting Indian religion and culture. The Rajput clans of different origin were united by constant intermarriages and by the adoption of common customs and practices. The word Rajputs has no reference to race. It is their martial spirit and heroic deeds that made them a unique community. Rajasthan's heroic battle fields, ravaged cities, ruined forts as well as its epic poetry, folk lore and literature help us a great deal in recapturing the important events, in the history of the community.

Rajput Polity.

The Rajput socio-political organization was in many respects similar to the feudal organization of medieval Europe. They had a monarchical system of government. The King's absolute power was based on the divine right and the hereditary principle. He was all in all. The King found more pleasure in war than in peace. He was assisted by ministers and high officers in administration. His autocratic powers were limited only by traditional and customary law, fear of divine punishment and threat of rebellion by feudatories. He conferred titles and favours in recognition of high literary and artistic talents.

For the purpose of administration, the Rajput Kingdom was divided into *Bhuktis or Prants* which were subdivided into *Vishyas* or districts. The *grama* or the village was the lowest unit of administration. The villages were more or less autonomous and the village headman looked after its affairs on the advice of the panchayats. The panchayats had judicial functions in addition to collection of revenue and maintenance of law and order. The King was the chief judge and below him there were officers to decide cases. The penal code was very severe and the punishments were exemplary. Women were not equal before law and Brahmins and Kshatriyas committing serious crimes were exempted from capital punishment.

Society – Feudalism.

The Rajputs had their own social organization. It resembled the feudal system of medieval Europe. They were divided into a number of clans. They showed great loyalty, and implicit obedience to their chieftains. The Rajput chieftains held land from the King on conditions of military service, financial aid

and personal loyalty. The main profession of the Rajput was fighting in defence of his clan and its chief. Their martial spirit and pugnacity led to frequent family feuds and internecine wars. They had their own code of honour. They showed respect to women and Chivalry to their foes. They practiced *Jouhar* to protect their honour in times of defeat in wars. Their brave women also took up arms to save their honour. Sati, child marriage and ban of widow remarriage were very common among the Rajputs. Caste system was rigid among them. Will Durant says "the military spirit enabled them to defend themselves against the Muslims with heroic valour, but it kept their little states so divided and weakened their bravery in the end".

"The Rajput chieftains" says Tod, "were imbued with all kindred virtues of western cavalier and far superior in mental attainments. No place on earth witnessed scenes of heroism, knightliness readiness to die as the land of Rajputs Treachery, falsehood and deceit were foreign to Rajput nature. The men did not hesitate to die for their women and women thought it only a matter of courtesy to accompany their husbands to the other world".

Religion.

The Rajputs were staunch and devout Hindus. They defended Hindu religion and culture even at the risk of their lives. They worshipped Siva, Vishnu and other Hindu deities. The Rajput period witnesses the construction of a number of magnificent temples. The puranas were religiously edited and enlarged by Rajput scholars. The Rajputs offered stubborn resistance to the Muslim invaders and made heroic efforts to preserve Hindu religion and culture. Their martial spirit and hatred of non-violence stood in the way of embracing Jainism and Buddhism.

Literature and Language.

The Rajput rulers were liberal patrons of language and literature. Some of them were the authors of famous literary compositions. Most of the Rajput courts were adorned by famous literary luminaries. The age produced eminent writers like Bhavabhuti, Rajasekhara and Jayadeva. Bhavabhuti who adorned the court of Yesovarman of Kanauj was the celebrated author of two Sanskrit works *Uttararamacharita* and *Malati Madhava*. Rajasekhara who enjoyed the patronage of the Pratihara emperors, wrote *Karpuramanjari* and *Bala Ramayana*, Jayadeva was the poet laureate of King Lakhsmana Sena of Bengal. His famous poem *Gita govinda* describing the romance of Krishna and

milkmaids was the most popular work of the period. Among the prose writers of the period, the names of Dandin, Dhanapal, Subandhu and Bana were remarkable. The famous collection of stories *Kathasaritsagara* was written by Somendra in the Rajput age. Another collection of stories *Hitopadesa* based on the ancient book *Panchatantra* was also a product of the age. Historical literature also made great progress during the Rajput age. Kalhana's famous work *Rajatarangani* threw light on the history of the Kings of Kashmir. Ballala wrote the *Bhoja-Prabandha*, a biography of the Paramara King Bhoja. Chand Bardoi the court poet of Prithviraj wrote *Prithviraja Raso*. The scholarly works of Bhatrihari enriched the field of grammar.

Bhaskaracharya, the author of *Siddharta Siromani* was the greatest astronomer of the period. Vagbhata who wrote *Astanga Samgraha* enriched the field of medicine. A famous treatise on Hindu law the *Mitakshara* was written by Vijnneswara. In the realm of music, *Sangh Ratnakar* was written by Saranga Deva. Regional languages like Hindi, Gujarati, Marati and Oriya also made great progress in the age of the Rajputs.

Architecture.

The Rajputs were prolific builders. They spent money lavishly on architectural activities. Their irrigation works, artificial lakes, victory towers and arched gateways testify to their skill in architecture. They also built a large number of majestic forts. The great forts of Chittor, Ratnambhor, Mandu, Gwalior etc. were conspicuous examples of their architectural skill. The Rajput period witnessed the perfection of temple architecture. The famous temples of Somanath in Saurashtra, Bhuvaneshwar, Konark and Puri in Orissa. Mount Abu in Rajasthan were finest specimens of their architectural eminence. The Konark Sun temple built on the model of a *Ratha* was a unique construction. The Marthand temple in Kashmir was another piece of architecture of the period.

Sculpture.

The art of sculpture also made great progress in the Rajput period. The images of deities and human figures executed by the sculptors depict historical and puranic themes. Women in various poses, ordinary scenes of daily life, army, dancers and drummers were the themes of their sculpture. The Rajput temples were rich in sculptural decorations.

Painting.

The art of painting also developed in the Rajputs age. Village life, social and religious customs etc. were the themes of the Rajput paintings. They had a touch of mysticism and spirituality.

Music.

Rajput rulers were patrons of music. The devotional songs of the *Bhakti* cult became popular during the period. Jayadeva, the author of *Gitagovindam* was a gifted poet and musician. The *Sangeeta Ratnakar* composed by Sarangadara was an encyclopedia on Indian music. Thus the Rajput period marked a great epoch in the history of art, architecture and literature in India.

Important Rajputs Kingdoms.

The Rajputs failed to establish an extensive empire in India. Their inter-tribal feud and constant wars stood in the way of building up an empire. Still, the Rajput period witnessed the rise of a number of small Kingdoms. Among them the Gurjara Pratiharas of Kanauj, the Chandelas of Bundelkhand, the Kalachuris of Chedi, the Paramars of Malwa and the Chauhans of Delhi and Ajmir are of great importance.

Gurjara Pratiharas of Kanauj.

The Gurjara-Pratiharas were a tribe of foreigners closely allied to the Huns. They entered India in the early years of the sixth century A.D. In Rajputra they established a Kingdom with its capital at *Bhimal* or *Bhilmal*. The founder of the dynasty was Nagabhata I (725-740). He successfully resisted the expansion of Arab power in the heart of India. Vatsaraji (775-800) was the fourth King of this dynasty. He defeated Dharmapala of Bengal. But he tasted a severe defeat at the hands of the Rastrakuta King Dhruva. His successor Nagabhata II defeated Dharmapala of Bengal and captured Kanauj. The rulers of Andhra, Vidarbha, Sind and Kalinga made friends with him. Mihira Bhoja (840-890) was the greatest ruler of this dynasty. He was not only a great conqueror but also a great patron of art and letters. The regions of Malwa and Rajputana came under his sway. The Arab traveller Sulaiman was well pleased with the great wealth and mighty army of Bhoja. The next ruler Mahendrapala I (890-908) further extended the limits of the Kingdom. The Gurjara-Pratihara power declined during the days of the weak successors of Bhoja. The Palas of Bengal recovered their lost territories while the Rastrakutas captured Kanauj. The final blow was dealt of Sultan Mohammed Ghazini who attacked and captured Kanauj in 1018 A.D.

The Palas of Bengal and Bihar.

According to tradition the founder of the Pala dynasty of Bengal was *Adisiva*, a Hindu raja. It was *Gopala* who established the Pala power firmly in trouble stricken states of Bengal and Bihar. He restored peace and order in the Kingdom. Since the names of the rulers ended with *Pala*, the dynasty came to be known as Pala dynasty which ruled for four centuries. The rulers of the dynasty were mostly Buddhists. It was under Dharmapala (768 – 816), that Palas embarked on a career of conquests. The whole of Bengal and Bihar came under his sway. The rulers of Kanauj, Punjab, Hariyana, Rajasthan and Madhya pradesh felt the might of his arms. He established monasteries at Vikramasila. The growing power of the Palas roused suspicion and fear to the Rastrakutas. *Dharmapala* was defeated by Nagabhata II, the Pratihara King at Monghyr. *Devapala* (816-855) the son and successor of Dharmapala was the greatest of the Pala rulers. He had a huge army and he conquered Assam and Kalinga. He built many Buddhist monasteries. The famous Mahabodhi temple of Buddha Gaya was built by him. He also built many beautiful towns with parks and tanks. After his death the Palas lost their power and the Senas stepped into their shoes.

The Senas of Bengal.

The Senas were originally the feudatories of the Palas, taking advantage of the weakness of the later Pala rulers; they occupied a major part of Bengal. It was *Vijayasena* who raised the power and glory of the dynasty. He conquered the neighbouring regions of Bihar, Assam and Orissa and established an extensive empire. His successor *Bellala Sena* was the greatest of the Sena rulers. He was an orthodox Hindu and he religiously-organized the caste system. The last ruler of the dynasty was *Lakshmana Sena* who was defeated by the Khiljis in 1199 A.D.

Government under Delhi Sultanate

Iqta System

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

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

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

Nobility

The nobles were the most important functionaries of the state and enjoyed high social status. In the initial stage they were those commanders who came with the victorious army. Over a period of time their descendants formed the main strength and some Indian groups also emerged. The position and power of the nobility varied from time to time as has been mentioned above. Nobles, particularly those who were based at Delhi, emerged as a very powerful group and at times even played a role in the selection of the sultan.

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

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

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

Ulemas

The religious intellectual group of Muslims was collectively referred as Ulema. People of this group managed religious matters and interpreted religious regulations for Sultan. They were also in charge of judicial matters and worked as Qazis at various levels. It was quite influential group and commanded respect of Sultan and nobility. They also had influence among Muslim masses. This group used to pressurize the sultan to run the Sultanate as per the religious laws of Islam. The Sultan and nobles generally tried to run the administrative affairs as per the need of state rather than religious laws. Sultan like Alauddin Khalji could ignore the opinions of Ulema on a number of issues but some followed their line.

Debate on Feudalism

The debate of the nature of early medieval India is going on for last couple of decades. Early medieval could be understood as the period between ancient and medieval. This era like its predecessor and successor has a personality of its own. It's not merely a time span between 4th-5th century and 12th century. The early medieval period shows transition, changes, and developments taking place in society, economy, polity, and agriculture. The most significant change that can only be seen in this period is the expansion of the land grants system. These land grants are seen by different historians differently.

The early medieval period was considered synonymous with Indian feudalism. Indian feudalism emerged as a separate school in 1970s. Its early proponents were Damodar Dharmananda Kosambi, Ram Sharan Sharma, and BNS Yadava. Later, Dwijendra Narayan Jha, RN Nandi, Suvira Jaiswal, Lallanji Gopal, and MGS Narayanan also contributed. It was Sharma who made the maximum contribution in building the theory of Indian feudalism. Kosambi explained his theory taking into account both "feudalism from above" and "feudalism from below". Whereas, Sharma was mainly interested in "feudalism from above". In 1965, Sharma proposed that decline of foreign trade is the cause of feudalism. This led to a great uproar in the Marxist circles. According to Marxism changes in a society comes from within not from outside. Changes in social, economic, and political structure originates from internal contradictions.

In early 1970s, Sharma proposed the theory of urban decay. Urban decay resulted in decline of trade, collapse of artisan activity, disappearance of metallic money, and an overall decline which reduced the power of the state. In 1966, Dineshchandra Sircar criticized the feudalism model. But there was a difference in the style of criticism before 1979 and after 1979. Between 1965 and 1979 scholars were criticizing the feudalism school by using its own terminology (such as "decline of trade", "urban decay", "loss of metallic money", and "collapse of cities"). The critics were fighting on a battlefield chosen and prepared by the Indian feudalism advocates. The intellectual scenario changed in 1980s and onwards.

If you want to defeat an old idea you have develop a new idea. In 1979, Harbans Mukhia wrote a paper titled, "Was There Feudalism in India?" He discussed that there was no manorial system in India like Europe. The climatic conditions were better in India than Europe. Indian soil was more fertile. Indian peasants owned their lands. In Europe, land and agricultural tools were given by the lord to the peasants. Peasants had to work on lord's land before tilling their own land.

In 1980s, Burton Stein proposed the segmentary state theory which was another blow to the Indian feudalism model. Stein talked about the Brahmana-peasant alliance in the Tamil Nadu region where the maximum number of land grant inscriptions was found.

To counter his critics Ram Sharan Sharma invented the kali age crisis theory to explain the cause land grants. He said that the Brahmanical system was threatened with the prosperity of Vaishyas and Shudras. They started challenging the Brahmana-Kshatriya superiority. The Brahmanical order and Varna system were questioned. This led to the kali age crisis which is also prophesied in the Puranas and other texts. To overcome the crisis rulers started granting lands to Brahmanas so that they can bring order in the society. Land grants resulted in dissemination of Brahmanical ideology and expansion of agriculture. According to feudalism scholars expansion of agriculture was the only positive feature of the early medieval times. Otherwise, there was broadening of different castes, hierarchization, social inequality, and peasant exploitation. Sharma's arguments are compiled in his book "Early Medieval India Society: A Study in Feudalization" (2001).

Another big blow to feudalism theory came from Hermann Kulke and Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya in 1980s and 1990s. Chattopadhyaya in his book "The Making of Early Medieval India" (1994) questions the very basis and thinking of feudalism school. He argues that in the period before 4th-5th century we see expansion of trade, development of new towns and cities, increase in metallic coins, expansion of artisan activity. It is not possible that suddenly after 4th-5th century the situation became totally opposite (as reconstructed by Sharma). Chattopadhyaya says that history is a process and everything is connected.

Land grants were given by the state to consolidate its power. Most of the lands were granted in virgin territories to bring agricultural activity in those areas. Yellava Subbarayalu who has worked for 40 years in Tamil Nadu says that at any time in history not more than 1/5 of the total land was given to Brahmanas as grants. Then how can we build a theory of crisis kali age crisis over whole of India based on 20% of the total land. There is remarkable data collected from the Kaveri delta of pre-10th century where hierarchy had come in the Brahmanical settlements but there was communal ownership in non-Brahmanical settlements.

Developments are not same everywhere. All areas do not change simultaneously. There is always a difference in time and expanse of growth. Social stratification and hierarchy have not been same in every village. There were no self-sufficient villages. People of different villages were interacting with each other through the use of temple, tank, and cremation ground. There were also caste marriages between different villages.

The integrative model gives us the opportunity to explore the early medieval India in a better way because it takes history as a process and focuses on the integrative nature of things. When two things integrate with each other they do not lose their identity, instead they form a new phenomenon which has elements of both. All in all, we should not restrict ourselves to rigid models but be open to new ideas, interpretations, theories, and connections while reconstructing the history.

Urban Centres under the Delhi Sultanate

The growth of Trade and urban centres are related each other. With the consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate the improvement of communication and the establishment of a sound currency system based on the silver tank and the copper, dirham. There was a definite growth of Trade in the country. This was marked by the growth of Towns and town life. Prof. Mohammad Habib, the historian has designated the radical and drastic changes that took place during the Sultanate as urban revolution.

Ibn Batuta calls Delhi the largest city in the eastern part of the Islamic world. He says that Daulatabad equaled Delhi in size an index of the growth of Trade between the north and south. The other important cities of the times were Lahore and Multan in the north-west, Kara and Lakhnauti in the east, and Anhilwara (patan) and Cambay to the west, Historians say that on the whole "the Sultanate presents the picture of a flourishing urban economy. Such an economy must have necessitated commerce on a large scale. Bengal and towns in Gujarat were famous for their fine quality fabrics; cloth of fine quality was produced in other towns as well. Company in Gujarat was famous for textiles and for gold and silver work. Sonargaon in Bengal was famous for raw silk and fine cotton cloth. There were many other handicrafts as well, such as leather work, metal work, carpet weaving etc. Some of the new crafts introduced by the Turks included the manufacture of paper.

The production of Textiles was also improved by the introduction of spinning wheel, cotton could be cleaned faster and better by the use of cotton carders bow. Indian textiles had already established there positive in the trade to countries on the red sea and the Persian Gulf. During the period, fine Indian textiles were introduced to China as well where it was valued more than silk. India imported high grade textiles from west Asia, glassware, and of course horse. From China if imported raw silk and porcelain.

India foreign trade both overland and overseas was truly an international enterprise. Although the Arabs were the dominant partners in the India Ocean trade, they had been by no means ousted the Indian traders, viz. the Tamils and Gujarat, both Hindu and Muslim. The coastal trade and trade between the coastal ports and north India was in the hands of Marwaris and Gujaratis, many of whom were Jains. The Muslim Bohra merchants also participated in this trade. The overland trade with Central and West Asia was in the hands of Multanis, who were mostly Hindus, and Khurasanis, who were Afghans, Iranians, etc. Many of these merchants had settled down in Delhi. The Gujarati and Marwari merchants were extremely wealthy and some of them, particularly the Jains, spent large sums for the construction of temples. Cambay was a great city in which many wealthy merchants lived. They had lofty houses built in fine stone and mortar, with tiled roofs. Their houses were surrounded by orchards and fruit-gardens which had many tanks. These wealthy merchants and the skilled craftsmen lived a luxurious life, and were accustomed to good food and clothing. The merchants, Hindu and Muslim, were attended by pages bearing swords with silver and gold work. In Delhi, the Hindu merchants rode horses with costly trappings, lived in fine houses, and celebrated their festivals with great pomp and sho. Barani tells us that the Multani merchants were so rich that gold and silver were to be found in abundance in their houses the nobles were so spend thrift that every time they wanted to hold feast or a celebration, they had to run to the houses of the Multanis in order to borrow money.

In those days, travel was always risky due to robbers and dacoits and various marauding tribes. However, the royal roads were kept in good shape and there were many sarais on the way for the comfort and safety of the travelers. In addition to the royal road from Peshawar to Sonargaon, Mahammad Tughlaq built a road to Daulatabad. There were arrangements for the post being carried quickly from one part of the country to another. This was done by relays of horses or even more efficiently and quickly by runners who were posted every few kilometers in towers which were built for the purpose. The runner

continually changed a bell as he ran so that the man on the next relay may be able to see him from the tower and get ready to take his burden. We are told that by means of these relays, fresh fruits were obtained for the Sultan from Khurasan. When Muhammad Tughlaq was at Daulatabad, which was 40 days' journey from Delhi, he regularly used to receive the Ganga water for drinking purposes by means of these relays.

Economic life was quickened in the period by the improvement of communications and the growth of trade both overland and by sea. The Turks introduced or popularized a number of new crafts and techniques. We have already referred to the use of the iron stirrup, and large-scale use of armour, both for the horse and the rider for heavy and light cavalry preferred by the new rulers. This led to the growth of the metallurgical industry, and metal crafts.

Another large section in the town consisted of slaves and domestic servants. Slavery had existed in India as well as in West Asia and Europe for a long time. The position of different types of slaves one born in the household, one purchased in the Hindu, Shastras, Slavery had been adopted by the Arabs and, by the Turks also. The most usual method of acquiring a slave was capture in war. Even the Mahabharata considered it normal to enslave a prisoner of war. The Turks practiced this on a large scale in their wars, in and outside India. Slave markets for men and women existed in West Asia as well as in India. The Turkish, Caucasian, Greek and Indian slaves were valued and were sought after. A small number of slaves were also imported from Africa, mainly Abyssinia. Slaves were generally brought for domestic service, for company, or for their special skills. Skilled slaves or comely boys and handsome girls sometimes fetched a high price. Skilled slaves were valued and some of them rose to high offices as in the case of the slaves of Qutbuddin Albak. Firuz Tughlaq also prized slaves and collected about 1, 80,000 of them. Many of them were employed in handicrafts, while others formed the Sultan's personal bodyguard. The largest number of slaves was, however, used for personal service. Such slaves were sometimes treated harshly. It can be argued that the condition of slave was better than that of a domestic servant because the master of the former was obliged to provide him food and shelter, while a free person may starve to death. Slaves were allowed to marry, and to own some personal property. However, it was widely accepted that slavery was degrading. Giving a slave his or her liberty was considered a meritorious act both among the Hindus and the Muslims.

UNIT-III

ASPECT OF MUGHAL RULE

Introduction to the Mughal Empire

The Mughal Empire ruled the South Asian region including current northern India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan from the early 16th century to the 19th century. As the name of the empire, Mughal, which means Mongol in Persian language indicates, the empire was built by a foreign tribe of Mongol origin. Babur, the progenitor of the Mughal Empire, is a direct descendant of Timur who descended from Genghis Khan.

The Mughal Empire was founded in 1526 when Babur defeated and superceded Delhi Sultanate. However, his son and successor Humayun was beaten by Sher Shah of Suri dynasty of Afghan origin and fled for Persia in 1540. In 1555, he retook Delhi and revived Mughal dynasty. The next period from the following emperor Akbar to Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb is considered as a golden age of The Mughal Empire. Akbar fired a flare of the golden age by achieving several great achievements. He largely expanded his empire by conquering Malwa Plateau (central part of India), Gujarat (western part of India), Bengal, Kashmir, Kandahar (southern part of Afghanistan), etc. Under his rule, The Mughal Empire established its centralization by organizing bureaucracy and administration. Moreover, with religiously tolerant policies such as giving government positions to Hindu, Akbar sought for solid integration within Mughal society. He announced Din-i-Ilahi, a syncretic religion which derives primarily from Islam and Hinduism, as the court religion although the religion could only get few adherents (including Abul Fazl) and disappeared. The Mughal Empire continued to flourish both economically and culturally under the next two successors Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Prosperity passed its peak and started to decline under Aurangzeb. He achieved the largest territory throughout the history of India by conquering southern India. However, different from Akbar, he was intolerant of other religious, destroying Hindu temples, bringing a poll tax for other religions back, and forcing conversion to Islam. His uncompromising religious policies and expansionist policies enlarged resistance among his subjects and consumed a great amount of expense, threatening the cornerstone of the empire. After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire continued to collapse. From the late 18th century, The Mughal Empire lost its effective control over India to the British. As the British East

India Company took power of the Mughal Empire in 1805, Mughal emperors existed for only nominal ruler used for colonial domination. In 1857, Sepoy Mutiny rose up and Indian soldiers crowned Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II as an emperor, but the mutiny was repressed in two years and the Mughal Empire went out of existence.

Economically, commerce and fabric industry developed and monetary economy was vitalized. The establishment of a system of a law and communication network contributed to the exuberance of the empire. Trade with foreign countries such as those in West Asia and Europe developed, developing domestic industry and introducing its goods in European market. However, economy gradually declined from the late 17th century because of the decreased agricultural productivity by acidification of land, corruption of administration, and expansionist policy.

The Mughal Empire also saw a cultural prosperity with its mixed culture. Although Islam was a dominating religion of the authority in the empire, tolerant policy in the early period led to Islamic culture fused with Hindu. In religion, Sikhism, a syncretistic religion integrating elements of Hinduism and Islam had emerged in the 15th century and gained followership under Mughal rule, especially in the Punjab. Art, Literature, Architecture, etc, showing a blend of Hindu, Turkic and Persian culture, thrived. Mughal emperors such as Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan showed a great interest in culture and supported it. For example, the Taj Mahal, built by Shah Jahan, has a lotus pattern derived from Hindu art and spires, a mosque, arabesque from Muslim art.

The dominant and official language of the empire was Farsi (Persian), but Hindi and Urdu, a language of the elite derived from Persian and heavily influenced by Arabic and Turkic, were also widely used. Science including astronomy and technology such as gunpowder continuously developed.

Historiography under the Mughals

The most dominant feature of the historiography of the Mughal period is the tradition of history writing by official chroniclers appointed by almost all Mughal emperors till the reign of Aurengzeb. These chroniclers were appointed by the emperors and all official records were provided to them for the purpose. Another salient feature of the period is the autobiographical accounts written by emperors themselves. Tuzuk-i Baburi (in Turkish and not Persian) by Babur and Tuzuk-i Jahangiri (in Persian) by Jahangir are important works in this

genre. Apart from the official works, which had obvious constraints, a number of independent works were written by independent scholars who provide a critical appraisal of the policies and events of the period. In this section we have discussed the historiography of the period during the reigns of individual emperors.

The Early Writings

Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, who invaded India and supplanted the Lodi rule by his own in 1526, was a prolific writer. He wrote both in his mother tongue Turkish and in Persian. His autobiography *Tuzuk-i Baburi*, written in Turkish is a literary masterpiece, containing the history of the decline and fall of the Timurid power in central Asia, his own biography, the description of life and culture in India and the diary of events that took place in the course of campaigns he led against his rivals in eastern India. Babur's account of central Asia and Khurasan is marked by objectivity. However, his account on his dealings with the ruling elite in India lacks objectivity. This is obvious because of the hostility towards those against whom he was waging war. Babur wrote in anger against the Indian ruling elite. He calls the Indian nobles untrustworthy, although he himself had deceived them. The Afghans had invited him to help them in their struggle against their own Sultan, Ibrahim Lodi thinking that he would go back after taking treasure. Babur is full of praise of India's resources and the availability of skilled craftsmen and artisans in the towns and cities. 'For any work or any employment', says he, 'there is always a set ready, to whom the same employment and trade have descended from father to son for ages'. Babur also mentions the list of sarkars (territorial units) with the annual revenue yields. Further, the description of towns and cities with their respective topography is interesting. The geographical details in his biography further enrich its importance. Moreover, the *Tuzuk-i Baburi* is not merely a political narration but is also considered as a naturalist's journal. His description of fauna and flora of the region he visited is graphic and insightful.

Babur's son and successor, Humayun (1530-1555) was also interested in history. He commissioned a renowned scholar, Khawandmir, to compose the history of his reign. In compliance with the royal order, Khwandmir prepared a brief account of Humayun's reign from his accession upto the year 1535 and named it *Qanun-i Humayuni*. It sheds interesting light on Humayun's state policy, particularly towards the Indian nobles and landed aristocracy. He refers to Humayun's efforts to win over Indian chiefs to his side.

Akbar's Reign: Official Histories

With the accession of Akbar (1556-1605) to the throne, important change took place in the concept of history writing and the class of history writers. Since the history of a dynasty served as a memorial to the dynasty, Akbar proposed to have a written history of the Muslim rulers from the death of the prophet upto his own time on the completion of the first millennium of Islam, i.e., a history of one thousand years, called *Tarikh-i Alfi*. For providing information about the lives and times of Babar and Humayun, all the officials, the nobles and relatives were asked to write their reminiscences in book form. At Akbar's instance, Gulbadan Begum, the daughter of Babur, Bayazid Biyat (an official of Humayun) and Jauhar Aftabchi (a personal attendant of Humayun) put down their reminiscences in book form. Gulbadan Begum's memoirs entitled *Humayunnama* is an important source as it sheds light on the lives and culture of the royal harem. . It is considered unique as it reflects a woman's perception of the events of the period. After Humayun's death, Bayazid Biyat served under Munim Khan Khan- i Khanan in Jaunpur and Bengal and was asked by Emperor Akbar to keep a watch on the governor and secretly inform the king about all developments. He has narrated the event of Humayun's life in Iran, Kabul and Later in India. Most of these he himself had witnessed. His work is entitled *Tazkirat-i Humayun wa Akbar*. Jauhar Aftabchi who had served Humayun also furnishes useful information about Humayun's life and times in his *Tazkirat-ul Waqiat*. Like collections of reminiscences of Gulbadan Begum and Bayazid Biyat, his work also does not distinguish between trivia and the historical facts. Nevertheless, all these works served as sources of information for the compilers of *Tarikh-i Alfi* and other histories of Akbar's reign including Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*.

Akbar constituted a board of seven scholars to compile *Taikh-i Alfi*. Each member of the board was assigned a period to write its history in chronological order. As per this scheme the events are described year by year. However, the accounts of certain Indian rulers have been compiled separately in different sections. This pattern has been followed in providing the history of Muhammad Tughluq, the Lodis, and 15th century regional kingdoms emerging after the decline of Sultanate, Sher Shah Sur, Islam Shah and Adil Shah Sur. Its concluding part is devoted to the reign of Akbar upto 1585. Not satisfied with the account of his reign in the *Tarikh-i Alfi*, in 1589-1590, Akbar ordered Abul

Fazl to compile the history of his reign, beginning with an account of Babur and Humayun. A bureau was established in which competent people were employed to assist Abul Fazl. The entire archival material was placed at the compiler's disposal. It may be stressed that Abul Fazl was selected for this task because he had identified himself with Akbar's views and religious inclination. He portrays Akbar's own view about his status and role in history as conceived by emperor himself. Akbar was led by his courtiers to think of himself as the perfect representation of the spiritual profile of his age. He wanted to be remembered in history as the *Insan-i Kamil* (perfect man), gifted by God with full knowledge of Divine Unity. Therefore, in compiling the *Akbarnama*, Abul Fazl was able to come up to his royal patron's expectations. He presents Akbar as cosmic man, entrusted by God with sway over outward form and inner meaning, the exoteric and esoteric. His mission is said to liberate people from *taqlid* (tradition), lead them to truth and create an atmosphere of concord, so that people following different sects could live in peace and harmony. He was shown as "a light emanating from God."

Despite flattery, Abul Fazl was able to produce a history of Akbar's reign that is considered an important contribution to Indo-Persian historiography. It was brought to completion after five revisions that involved strenuous labour of seven years, the completion of the work was indeed epoch making. Abul Fazl did not believe that Indian history should concern itself only with the achievements of the Muslim rulers in India, nor did he try to establish any relation with the past of Islam. In his treatment of Akbar's military expeditions against the Rajputs, he emphasises on the point that there was no justification for any chief, Hindu or Muslim not to join the imperial confederation in view of the reconciliatory policy of Akbar. He feels that Akbar's state policy was calculated to bring unity, stability and economic prosperity to the country. In fact, Abul Fazl's secular interpretation of history gained ground during the subsequent century.

The *Akbarnama* and the *Ain-i Akbari* provide exhaustive details of the events and policies introduced by Akbar till the year 1602. However, Abul Fazl fails to mention or raise any issue which cast any aspersion on Akbar. It is true that the *Ain-i Akbari* abounds in economic details, but these details do not tell us anything about the life and conditions of the mass of peasantry or working class. The *Ain-i Akbari* contains statistical details which are valuable source for the study of economic history with no parallel with any historical accounts prior

to it or till the 18th century. But artisans or peasants are completely absent. The Ain-i Akbari, the third part of the Akbarnama is a unique compilation of the system of administration and control through the departments of government. It also contains an account of the religious and philosophical systems of the Hindus. However, Abul Fazal's identification with Akbar's views and religious beliefs prevented him from presenting a picture in different hues, reflecting the currents and cross currents in society. Abul Fazl does not mention Shah Mansur or his successor Todarmal's contribution while dealing with revenue reforms and portrays Akbar as the genius who evolved key reforms including Ain-i Dahsala (ten years settlement) and revenue dasturs. The reader does not find the spirit of Akbar's age in Akbarnama that was successfully depicted by Abdul Qadir Badauni or even Nizamuddin Ahmad.

Akbar's Reign: Non-official Histories

Nizamuddin Ahmad and Abdul Qadir Badauni are two important historians of the period. Motivated by the popularity of the discipline of history, both the scholars have written history of the Muslim rule in India and have also recorded achievements of men of learning in different fields. Their works run into several volumes. Let us deal with each one separately.

Nizamuddin was the son of Khwaja Muqim Harawi, a noble of Babur and Humayun. A well-educated man, he was interested in the study of history and literature. When he looks up the project of writing history of India in three volumes, he employed men like Masum Bhakkari to assist him and provide information about different regions of the empire.

A man who had gained experience in the government after having served on important positions in the provinces and at court as well, he was able to make substantial contribution through his scholarly work. His first-volume deals with the history of the Muslim rulers of India upto the fall of the Lodi dynasty in 1526. The second volume contain the account of the Mughal rulers of India upto 1593. The third volume deals with the rise and fall of the regional kingdoms in India. It is to the credit of Nizamuddin Ahmad that he mentions all the important events that took place during Akbar's reign including the controversial Mahzar which is omitted by Abul Fazl. However, being the mirbakshi (the incharge of the department of army) of the empire, he does not provide any critical evaluation. Still, it helps us in filling the gap left by Abul Fazl not only on this issue but in several other areas. His work Tabaqat-i Akbari was regarded by all the later writers as an authentic work and they borrowed from it.

Abdul Qadir Badauni was also a keen student of history and literature. He tells us that from his student life, he spent hours in reading or writing history. He also learnt Sanskrit and classical Indian music along with Islamic theology. Akbar employed him to translate *Muhabharat* from Sanskrit into Persian. The first volume of his history entitled *Muntakhabut Tawarikh* is related to the history of the Sultanate of Delhi. The second covers Akbar's reign while in the third volume we find the biographical notes on the scholars, poets and Sufi saints of Akbar's reign. His account is very readable bringing out the important facts of the period. Brevity is the beauty of Badauni's style. The first volume contains information culled from miscellaneous sources, many of which are not extant today. Moreover, Badauni possessed an analytical independent mind with different views than the official line. In fact Badauni's objective was to present a frank account of his times. It is Badauni's second volume that needs to be studied along with Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama* to have a proper understanding of Akbar's reign. Badauni does not gloss over any uncomfortable question on Akbar's ability as an administrator. For example, Badauni records the failure of the *karori* experience and the disaster it caused. Badauni is corroborated in essentials by Nizamuddin Ahmad also. Unlike Abul Fazl and even Nizamuddin Ahmad, Badauni's account of the religious discussions held in Akbar's *Ibadat Khana*, the origin of Akbar's differences with the Muslim orthodoxy that led to religious controversies is vivid depicting the currents and cross currents of thought. It certainly has precedence on *Akbarnama*, in a number of areas especially the controversial issues. It gives an impression to the readers that it is free from the official constraints, catches the realities of the time and reflects the magnitude and intensity of conflicts of the period.

Histories during Jahangir's Reign

Akbar's son and successor Jahangir decided to write autobiographical history of his own reign in the traditions set by Babur. Besides, he persuaded other scholars also to write the history of his reign. He requested Shaikh Abdul Haque to add in his *Tarikh* the 30 account of his reign also. But the Shaikh was too old to take up the work, yet his son

Qazi Nurul Haque compiled the history, *Zubdatu't Tawarikh* and closed it with the account of Jahangir's reign. Like the *Tarikh* compiled by his father, Shaikh Abdul Haque, the *Zubdatu't Tawarikh* also narrates the history of the Muslim rulers of India. Another writer, who compiled the voluminous *History of the Afghan tribes and the Afghan rulers, the Lodis and the Surs* also

incorporated a chapter on early ten years of Jahangir's reign. This *Tarikh-i Khan-i Jahani* was compiled by Nemat Allah Harawi under the patronage of Khan-i Jahan Lodi, the noble of Jahangir. As regards Jahangir's own memoirs *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, it is a major source for his reign.

The emperor wrote the *Tuzuk* himself upto the 17th regnal year till his health permitted him. Later, he dictated it to his trusted officer, Mutamad Khan. It presents to a great extent the picture of Jahangir's reign. The principal events connected with rebellions, the role of the imperial officers, their promotions and punishments as well as diplomatic relations between India and the foreign powers are described in a lucid style. It contains a year-by-year narrative. Further, we find insights into the culture of the Mughal Empire as well as Jahangir's aesthetic taste, learning and his interest in nature.

Histories during Shahjahan's Reign

Mutamad Khan set to write the history *Iqbalnama-i Jahangiri* after Shahjahan's accession to the throne. His aim was to justify Shahjahan's rebellion against his father because Nur Jahan Begum wanted to harm him and clear the way for Shaharyar's accession to the throne. It is divided into three parts: the first part covers the history of Babur and Humayun, the second part contains the account of Akbar's reign while the third is devoted to Jahangir's reign. In the last part the first nineteen years are merely an abridgement of the *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*. The account of the last years of Jahangir's reign is almost an eye witness account.

Like Mutamad Khan, Khwaja Kamgar Husaini also came from a family associated with the Mughal court. He served under Jahangir and Shahjahan both. In the preparation of his *Maasir-i Jahangiri*, he also drew on *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*. His account from the 19th year of Jahangir's reign is his original work and is an important source for the events that took place during the last years of the reign. He started compiling his work in 1630. It may be pointed out that the compiler also supplemented information about certain events that took place before Jahangir's accession to the throne. For example, he furnishes details about the role played by prince Khusrau's supporters to secure the throne for him leaving Jahangir aside. No other historian supplies this information. He also portrays Jahangir as a naturalist, describing Jahangir's interest in fauna and flora, animal breeding, etc. In short, *Maasir-i Jahangiri* is one of the major histories on Jahangir's reign.

Impressed with Abul Fazl's style of prose writing and the richness of details in the Akbarnama, Shahjahan desired to have the history of his reign compiled by a master of Persian prose. First he tried Mohammed Amin Qazvini and suggested him to write Badshahnama, i.e. the history of his reign on the lines of Abul Fazl's Akbarnama. Like Abul Fazl, Amin Qazvini was provided with assistants and given permission to have access to the royal library and the state archives for the collection of material. In nine years Qazvini was able to complete the first volume covering the first ten years of Shah Jahan's reign. It seems that he had planned to compile a separate volume on every decade but he was stopped from working on the project. Although the volume was rich in details, his style was not liked by the emperor. According to Mohammed Saleh Kamboh, the author of the Amal-i Saleh (or Shahjahannama), Qazvini was transferred to the intelligence bureau. Abdul Hamid Lahori, another Scholar was appointed as the official historian in his place. Abdul Hamid was found competent enough to emulate Abdul Fazl's Persian prose-style. Saleh Kamboh says that Abdul Hamid was celebrated for the beauty of his style. Like Akbarnama, the Badshahnama is also full of outbursts of laboured rhetoric.

Abdul Hamid's Badshahnama contains an account of twenty years of history of Shahjahan's reign. It is divided into two parts, each covering ten years of the reign. The events have been arranged chronologically year-wise. It also contains separate sections on the Princes, Princesses and the nobles of the empire. The latter have been listed in accordance with the descending order of their mansabs from 9000 to 500 horses. Lastly the author devotes a section on the leading Sufi saints, scholars, physicians and poets of the reign of Shahjahan.

Owing to old age, Abdul Hamid Lahori was retired and his pupil Mohammad Waris was ordered by the emperor to continue the work. Waris's volume contains ten years account from the beginning of the twentieth year to the thirtieth year when Shahjahan had to abdicate the throne. Waris's Badshahnama bears resemblance to his teacher's Badshahnama both in style and details.

Two other writers who produced histories of Shahjahan during the early years of Aurangzeb's reign were Sadiq Khan and Muhammad Saleh Kamboh. The former's work is known as Badshahnama, while the latter history is popularly called Amal-i Saleh (or Shahjahanama). Both these works furnish important details about the war of succession between Shahjahan's sons and the last years of Shahjahan's life.

Histories during Aurangzeb's Reign

The emperor Aurangzeb also followed the tradition of Akbar and Shahjahan. He appointed Muhammad Kazim the son of Muhammad Amin Qazvini to write the history of his reign. An order was also issued to the officers in charge of the royal records to make over to the official historian all such state papers as were received from the news writers and other high functionaries pertaining to important events. On the completion of the account of first ten years of the reign, its writing was stopped. The volume produced was called *Alamgir Nama* (1568). This volume reads as a panegyric in prose, portraying the emperor as a special recipient of divine grace and endowed with super-natural powers. Disgusted with flattery and exaggeration, Aurangzeb banned history writing, saying that 'the cultivation of inward piety was preferable to the ostentatious display of his achievements'. The curtailment of state expenditure seems another reason for stopping the writing of chronicle.

Later on, Inayatullah Khan Kashmiri, a trusted noble of Aurangzeb's son and successor, Bahadur Shah persuaded Saqi Mustaid Khan to compile the history of Aurangzeb's reign. Hence the compilation of the *Maasir-i Alamgiri* was brought to completion in 1711. This fills a wide gap in the official history of Aurangzeb's reign.

Like *Akbarnama* of Abul Fazl and *Badshahnama* of Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Maasir-i Alamgiri* has been composed in the form of annals; each year has been marked off. Its style is free from literary conceits, but the work reads like a dry list of official postings, promotions, armies deputed for the conquest of forts, etc. However, the interesting bits of information are found at places where the compiler makes observation and reflection on events and particularly biographical sketches. It may be pointed out that the account of first ten years of Aurangzeb's reign in the *Maasir-i Alamgiri* is a concise summary of Kazim's *Alamgirnama* but the account from the eleventh year onwards is based on his personal knowledge and the state archives. It is, however, almost devoid of details about the social life and the deteriorating economic conditions in the Empire. This was the last official history of the Mughal Empire. Thereafter, Khafi Khan and other historians of the 18th century composed histories but their approach was partisan, each historian wrote according to his allegiance to certain group of nobles at court.

Apart from these historical works a number of other works like *Maasir-ul Umara*, by Shahnawaz Khana collection of biographies of nobles, treatise on Administration like *Diwan-i Pasand* of Rai Chhatar Mal; Amamullah Hussain's work *Ganj-I Badawurd* (on Agriculture) *Baharistan-i Ghaybi* of Mirzanathan (1623) are a few other important works of history for the Mughal period.

Bureaucracy

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

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) The Emperor

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

(ii) Wakil and Wazir

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

(iii) Diwan-i-Kul

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

(iv) Mir Bakshi

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

(v) Sadr-us Sudur

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

(vi) Mir Saman

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

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Mughal Empire was divided into twelve provinces or subas by Akbar. These were Allhabad, Agra, Awadh, Ajmer, Ahmedabad, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Malwa and Multan. Later on Ahmednagar, Bearar and Khandesh were added. With the expansion of Mughal empire the number of provinces increased to twenty. Each suba was placed under a Subedar or provincial governor who was directly appointed by the Emperor. The subedar was head of the province and responsible for maintenance of general law and order. He was to encourage agriculture, trade and commerce and take steps to enhance the revenue of the state. He was also to suppress rebellions and provide army for expeditions.

The head of the revenue department in the suba was the Diwan. He was appointed by the Emperor and was an independent officer. He was to supervise the revenue collection in the suba and maintain an account of all expenditures. He was also expected to increase the area under cultivation. In many cases advance loans (taqavi) were given to peasants through his office.

The Bakshi in the province performed the same functions as were performed by Mir Bakshi at the centre. He was appointed by the imperial court at the recommendations of the Mir Bakshi. He was responsible for checking and inspecting the horses and soldiers maintained by the mansabdars in the suba. He issued the paybills of both the mansabdars and the soldiers. Often his office was combined with Waqainiqar. In this capacity his duty was to inform the centre about the happenings in his province.

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

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

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The provinces or subas were divided into Sarkars. The Sarkars were divided into Parganas. The village was the smallest unit of administration. At the level of Sarkar, there were two important functionaries, the faujdar and the Amalguzar. The Faujdar was appointed by the imperial order. Sometimes within a Sarkar a number of Faujdars existed. At times, their jurisdiction spread over two Sarkars even if these belonged to two different subas. Faujdari was an administrative division whereas Sarkar was a territorial and revenue division. The primary duty of the faujdar was to safeguard the life and property of the residents of the areas under his Jurisdiction. He was to take care of law and order problem in his areas and assist in the timely collection of revenue whenever force was required.

The *amalguzar* or *amil* was the revenue collector. His duty was to assess and supervise the revenue collection. He was expected to increase the land under cultivation and induce the peasants to pay revenue willingly. He used to maintain all accounts and send the daily receipt and expenditure report to the provincial *Diwan*.

At the level of *Pragana*, the *Shiqdar* was the executive officer. He assisted the *amils* in the task of revenue collection. The *amils* looked after the revenue collection at the *Pargana* level. The *quanungo* kept all the records of land in the *pargana*. The *Kotwals* were appointed mainly in towns by the imperial government and were in charge of law and order. He was to maintain a register for keeping records of people coming and going out of the towns. The *Muqaddam* was the village head man and the *Patwari* looked after the village revenue records. The services of the *Zamindars* were utilized for the maintenance of law and order in their areas as well as in the collection of revenue. The forts were placed under an officer called *Qiladar*. He was in charge of the general administration of the fort and the areas assigned in *Jagir* to him.

The port administration was independent of the provincial authority. The governor of the port was called *Mutasaddi* who was directly appointed by the Emperor. The *Mutasaddi* collected taxes on merchandise and maintained a customhouse. He also supervised the mint house at the port.

Military System: Mansab and Jagirdari Systems

Mansabdari System

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

The word *mansab* means a place or position. The *mansab* awarded to an individual fixed both his status in the official hierarchy and also his salary. It also fixed the number of armed retainers the holders of *mansab* was to maintain. The system was formulated to streamline rank of the nobles, fix their salary and specify the number of cavalry to be maintained by them.

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

Jahangir introduced a new provision in the *Sawar* rank. According to it a part of *Sawar* rank was termed *du-aspa sih-aspa* in case of select mansabdars. For this part additional payment at the same rate 8,000 dams per *Sawar* was sanctioned. Thus if the *Sawar* rank was 4000 out of which 1000 was *du-aspa sih-aspa*, salary for this *Sawar* was calculated as $3,000 \times 8,000 + (1,000 \times 8,000 \times 2) = 40,000,000$ dams. Without *du-aspa sih-aspa*, salary for the 4,000 *Sawar* would have stood at $(4,000 \times 8,000) = 32,000,000$ dams. Thus the mansabdar was to maintain double number of *Sawars* for the *du-aspa sih-aspa* category and was paid for it. Jahangir probably introduced this provision to promote nobles of his confidence and strengthen them militarily.

By this provision he could increase the military strength of his nobles without effecting any change in their *Zat* rank. Any increase in their *Zat* rank would not only have led to jealousy among other nobles but also an additional burden on the treasury.

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

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

Jagirdari System

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

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

There were various types of Jagirs. Tankha Jagirs were given in lieu of salaries, Mashrut Jagirs were given on certain conditions, and Watan Jagirs were assigned to Zamindar or rajas in their local dominions. Altamgha Jagirs were given to Muslim nobles in their family towns or place of birth. Tankha Jagirs were transferable every three to four years. Watan Jagirs were hereditary and non transferable. When a Zamindar was made a mansabdar, he was given Tankha Jagir apart from his watan Jagir at another place, if the salary of his rank was more than the income from his watan Jagir.

The Jagirdars were allowed to collect only authorized revenue in accordance with the imperial regulations. The jagirdars employed their own officials like amil etc. The imperial office kept watch on the Jagirdars. The Diwan of the suba was supposed to prevent the oppression of the peasants by the Jagirdars. Amin was posted in each suba to see that Jagirdars were following imperial regulations. Faujdar used to help the Jagirdas if they faced any difficulty in the collection of revenue.

Trade and Urban Centres

Trade and commerce flourished during the Mughal period. Trading classes were well organized and highly professional local Trade, regional Trade, long distance Trade and overseas Trade were organized. These trading groups were called Seth, bohra or modi and beopai's or banik. There was a special class of Traders, the banjaras, who specialized carrying bulk goods. The banjaras used

to more long distance carrying food grains pulses, ghee salt etc. The more expensive goods such as textiles, silks, etc were laden on camat or in carts. Boat traffic on water ways and coastal trade along with sea shore was highly developed. Trade in food grain, and wide range of Textile products were most important components of inter regional trade during this period. Bengal exported sugar and rice, as well as a delicate Muslim and silk. Gujarat was the country point of foreign goods. It exported time textiles and silk to north India. It received food grain and silk from Bengal and also pepper from Malabar. Lahore was another centre of handicrafts production. It was also the distribution centre for the luxury products of Kashmir – Shawts, Carpets etc. The product of the Punjab and Sindh moved down the river Indere.

Trade and commerce was facilitated by the growth financial system, and currency. Akbar brought about changes in Mughal currency system. He issued coins of gold, silver and copper of different weights and denomination, and fixed their ratio with each other. All these coins were of standard weight and measures. The coins issued by Akbar were beautiful and fine shape. The highest denominator gold coin issued by Akbar was called Sahnsab as Sahansah. It must have used only in high business Transactions. But the most popular gold coin was Illahi which was equal to ten rupees in value. The total gold coin numbered 26. The rupees had its one half, one fourth one eights, one sixteen and one twentieth pieces. The copper coin was called Dan (paisa) which was 1/40 part of a rupee. The lowest copper coin was called Jital. The mint and currency system of Akbar has been regarded most remarkable. It provided a fine base for the currency system of the British. Jahangir inscribed his figures a certain coins and on certain other coins inscribed his name as well as the name of Nurjahan. In some other coins, his figures were inscribed with a cup of wins in hand. The system however, remained the same. Shahjahan also continued the some system.

Religion-Din-Illahi

The Mughal rulers except Aurangzeb adopted a tolerant religious policy. Practically all-religious communities existed in India during the Mughal period. The Hindus, the Muslim, the Christians, the Buddhist, Sikhs, the Parsis and the Jains were the prominent religious communities among them. The Hindu constituted majority among the population while **the ruling class** belonged to the Muslims. Shershah, the forerunners of Akbar adopted a policy to religious

toleration. Akbar was, however, the finest among the monarchs of medieval India who raised the policy of religious toleration to the Pinnacle of secularism. The socio political condition of the country was such that Akbar thought it advisable to adopt independent voices in religious matters. The non Muslim constituted the majority of his Indian subjects. Without winning their confidence and active support Akbar could not hope to establish and consolidate the Mughal Empire in India.

Akbar did not discriminate between his subjects on the basis of religion. He abolished pilgrim tax through out his dominions close upon its heels Akbar took the most revolutionary step in 1564, in granting religious freedom to the Hindu; it was the abolition of Jaziya. This was a poll tax charged from the Hindus in their capacity as Zammis. Being a youth of courage and conviction he wiped out the traditional religious disability from which the Hindu subjects of the Muslim rulers been suffering since long. Sheik Mubarak a liberal minded scholar of Sufi, His son Abul Faizi and Abul Fazl influence Akbar's religious policy greatly under their influence Akbar became all the more liberal and to grant towards people of diverse religious faith. He removed all restrictions on the construction and maintenance of Hindu temples, Churchus and other places of worship. In order to please the Hindu subjects Akbar adopted their social customs and practices, mixed freely with them and appreciated their cultural values. Akbar wanted to create a spirit of love and harmony among his people by eliminating all racial, religious and cultural barriers between. In order to achieve this objective he ordered in 1575 the construction of Ibadat Khana – The house of worship at Fatchpursikri to adorn the spiritual kingdom. He initiated the practice of holding religious discourses there with the learned men and the saints of the age, To begin with Akbar used to invite only the Muslims theologians and saints, including the ulama, sheikhs, sayyad etc to take part in these deliberations. But they failed to arrive at agreed opinion on many Islamic belief and practice and in the midst of deliberations on very sober and tough provoking aspects of divinity, displayed spirit of intolerance towards each other. The rival group of theologians drew their swords to settle the religious issues at stake. Akbar was shocked to witness the irresponsible behaviour of those self conceited greedy and intolerant Mullahs. In disgust he threw open the gates of the Ibadat Kaham to the priest and scholars of other religious faith including Hinduism, Jainism, Zorastrianism and Christianity.

As a result of the religious discourses held at the Ibadat Khance. Akbar belief in the orthodox Sunni Islam was shaken. In 1579 a proclamation called the Mahzar, was issued. It recognized Akbar in his capacity as the just monarch and amir ul momnin to be the Imam-i-Adil viz. The supreme interpreter or arbitrator of the Islamic law in all controversial issues pertaining to ecclesiastical or civil matters.

After the issue of Mahzar, religious discourse continued to be held at the Ibadat Khana. Akbar mixed freely with Muslim doves, Sufi saints Hindu, mystics, and sanyasis and Jain scholars. As a result of this Akbar came to the conclusion that if some tree knowledge was thus everywhere to be found, why should truth be confined to one religious or creed like Islam Akbar gradually turned away from Islam and set up a new religion which was compounded by many existing religions – Hinduism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism etc. However modern historians are not inclined to accept this view. The word used by Ahul Fazl for the so called new path was Tauhid-i-Ilahi which literally means Divine Monotheism. The word din or Faith was not applied to it till 8 years later. The Tauhid-i-Ilahi was really on order of the sufistic type. Those who were willing to join and those whom the emperor approved were allowed to become members. Sunday was fixed as the day for initialism.

Din Ilahi was not a new religion Akbar's real objects was to unite the people of his empire into an integrate national community by providing a common religious cum spiritual platform or the meeting ground. Din Ilahi was a socio-religious association of like-minded intellectuals and saints. Akbar becomes the spiritual guide of the nation. The members of the Din Ilahi abstained from meat as far as possible and do not dine with or use the utensils of the butchers, fishermen, did not marry old women or minor girls. The members were to greet each other with the words Allah-u- Akbar or God is great. The number of persons who actually joined the order was small, many of them consisting of personal favourites of Akbar. Thus the order was not expected to play an important political role. The Din Ilahi virtually dies with him.

Principles of Tawahid-i-Ilahi or Din-i-Ilahi aimed at achieving a synthesis of all religions, Akbar's Din-i-Ilahi's major principles include:

- (i). God is great (Allah-o-Akbar)
- (ii) Initiations would be performed on Sunday.

- (iii) The novice would place his head at the emperor's feet. The emperor would raise him up and give him the formula (Shast).
- (iv) The initiates would abstain from meat as far as possible and give a sumptuous feast and alms on their birthday.
- (v) There would be no sacred scriptures, place of worship or rituals (except initiation).
- (vi) Every adherent should take oath of doing well to everybody.
- (vii) Followers should show respect to all religions.

Akbar's efforts at social reform are also noteworthy. He raised and raised the age of marriage. He even tried to make education broad-based and secular. Jahangir and Shah Jahan pursued the same tolerant policy though at times there were aberrations. Aurangzeb was a staunch Sunni but he was intolerant of other faith! He reversed the policy of Akbar, and this partly led to the decline of Mughal power after his death.

Mughal Art

The Mughal emperors were great builders and they constructed many noble edifices and monuments. The Indo-Muslim style of architecture gained remarkable progress. Babar himself was a patron of art, even though he had a poor opinion of Indian artists and craftsmen. Agra was rebuilt and beautified and gardens were laid out. Humayun had little time to engage himself in artistic activities; but a mosque of his is still seen in Punjab decorated in Persian style.

In the reign of Akbar, Mughal architecture reached a high level of perfection. The emperor took keen interest in buildings. In the words of Abul Fazl, "He planned splendid edifices and dressed the works of his mind and heart in garments of stone and clay". He favoured both the Hindu and Persian styles of architecture. At the same time; he borrowed artistic ideas from a variety of sources and applied them in the construction of his edifices and monuments. It may also be noted that, unlike Shah Jahan who had an attraction for white marble for the construction of his buildings, Akbar preferred red sandstone.

The tomb of Humayun at Delhi is one of the earliest of Akbar's buildings. It was designed after Timur's tomb at Samarkand and represented a striking departure from the traditional Indian style. It was surrounded by a large geometrical garden and enclosed by a high wall. The Red Fort at Agra which

contained as many as 500 buildings of red sandstone was another outstanding achievement of Akbar in the field of architecture. The *Jahangiri Mahal* and *Akbari Mahal* located within the Agra Fort were designed and built by Indian craftsmen who were experts in the construction of Hindu temples and Buddhist *Viharas*.

The greatest achievement of Akbar as a builder was the city of Fatehpur Sikri. Sr. Smith has observed that “nothing like Fatehpur Sikri ever was created or can be created again”. He calls it a “romance in stone”, while Fergusson finds in it “the reflex of the mind of a great man”. The city of Fatehpur Sikri is a cluster of religious edifices and residential mansions built mainly of red sandstone. The *Jam-i-Masjid* built after the model of the mosque at Mecca is considered to be the glory of Fatehpur Sikri and is one of the largest mosques in India. The *Buland Darwaza* which is 176 ft. high is a landmark of the city. It is the highest gateway in India and one of the biggest of its kind in the world. The tomb of the Sufi saint Shaik Salim Chishti specially built of white marble is another star attraction at Fatehpur Sikri. It contains carvings noted for “the richness and delicacy of details”. The house of Birbal, a double-storeyed building which has been lavishly decorated, combines within itself the best features of the Hindu and Muslim style of architecture. The *Diwan-i-Khas* which accommodated Akbar’s household has an architectural beauty of its own. Its ornamental work is exceedingly delicate. The *Diwan-i-Am* is also a richly carved edifice. Akbar used to sit in its balcony whenever he held his *Durbar*. In addition to the buildings mentioned above, there are other important buildings also at Fatehpur Sikri, *viz., the, Panch Mahal*, the house of Mariam, Turkey Sultan’s building, Hathi Pole (the Elephant Gate), Hiran Minar, etc.

Jahangir who was more interested in fine arts and gardening did not take much interest in buildings. Still his reign is noted for two remarkable edifices, *viz., Akbar’s tomb at Sikandra and the tomb of Itimad-ud-daulah, the father of Nurjahan, at Agra.* The former building shows a combination of Hindu and Muslim styles while the latter is the first full edifice built entirely of white marble in the Mughal period.

The reign of Shah Jahan was the Golden Age of Mughal architecture. It may be noted at the outset that his architecture is different from that of Akbar in some of its features. He preferred white marble to red sandstone which was favoured by Akbar. Percy Brown even calls Shah Jahan’s reign “a reign of marble”. His buildings have some of the finest inlay work in the world. The

carvings are richer and more delicate. Though both Hindu and Muslim styles continued to influence the artist there is much less evidence of mixture of the two styles in the architectural works of Shah Jahan than in those of Akbar or Jahangir. One of the earliest architectural works of Shah Jahan was the Red Fort which he built in the new city of Shajahanabad near Delhi. It was modeled after the Agra Fort and contained 50 palaces, the most notable among them being the *Moti Mahal*, *Sheesh Mahal* and *Rang Mahal*. The *Juma Masjid* at Delhi and the *Moti Masjid* at Agra are massive structures noted for the architectural grandeur. The former was built by Shah Jahan for the ceremonial attendance of himself and the members of his court.

The *Moti Masjid* was built by the emperor in honour of his daughter Jahanara and is one of the most beautiful mosques in the world. Shah Jahan also built at Lahore certain buildings like the tombs of Jahangir, Nur Jahan, and Ali Mardan Khan and they are also typical examples of Mughal architecture.

The most outstanding of Shah Jahan's edifices is the world famous Taj Mahal built by him at Agra as a mausoleum for his wife Mumtaz Mahal. Built of pure white marble it has won praise from all quarters. It has been variously described by art critics as a "dream in marble designed by Titans and finished by jewelers", "a white gleaming tear drop on the brow of time" and "India's noblest tribute to the grace of Indian womanhood". The Taj is supposed to have been built at enormous cost spread over a period of 22 years. A unique feature of the building is that its colour changes in the course of the day and in moonlight. An admirer of the Taj even said of it that "it is Mumtaz Mahal herself, radiant in her youthful beauty, who lingers on the banks of the Jamuna in the early morn, in the glowing mid-day sun or in the silver moonlight". The Taj has survived to this day as the king of all buildings in India and the most splendid monument of conjugal love and fidelity in the world.

With the accession of Aurengzeb the Mughal style of architecture declined. The emperor, being economy-minded, built only very little. The best of his buildings was the Badshahi mosque at Lahore which was completed in 1764. Though not of much architectural value, it is noted for its great size and sound construction. Aurengzeb also built a mosque with lofty minarets on the site of the Viswanatha temple at Benares and another one at Mathura at the site of the Kesava Deva temple. His own tomb which he built at Aurangabad is also a notable specimen of Mughal architecture.

The Mughals were lovers of the art of painting. Humayun is said to have patronised two masterpainters, Abdus Samad and Mir Sayyid ALL They were ordered to paint the famous Dastan-i-Amir Hamzah. Akbar during his reign brought about the synthesis of Indian and Persian styles. Indian themes and landscapes, and colours gained importance. European style was introduced by Portuguese priests in Akbar's court. The most famous of painters were Basawan, Daswanath and Haribans, Abdus Samad and Farruk Beg. Jahangir was a connoisseur of art and a keen collector of historical paintings. Under his influence, Persian influence was eliminated and a new style developed which was purely Indian. Jahangir had a trained eye for the niceties of the art and he claimed that he could identify the hands of several artists in a composite picture. Portrait painting reached a climax in his period. In his time the most famous painters were Aga Raja, Muhammad Nadir and Muhammad Murad, Bishan Das, Manohar and Govardhan.

After his death the art of painting started declining. However, with the artists dispersing to various provincial capitals, development of various other schools of painting took place-the Rajasthani, the Pahari, etc. Besides the Mughal style there grew up in this age a distinct school of painting in Rajputana. The Rajput paintings were excellent masterpieces from Hindu mythology, village life and pastimes of the common people. Their pictures are remarkable for their brilliance and decorative effect as well as for their spiritual and emotional impact. Mughal painting had as its themes court scenes, battle scenes and hunting besides portraits.

Court Culture-Music, Dance

The Mughals appreciated music. Babur is said to have composed songs. Akbar was a lover of music. His court was adorned by famous musicians like Tansen of Gwalior and Baz Bahadur of Malwa. Shah Jahan was fond of vocal and instrumental music. The two great Hindu musicians of his time were Jagannath and Janardhan Bhatta. But Aurangzeb who was a puritan dismissed singing from his court. However, ironically, the largest number of books on classical music was written in his reign.

Dance

Kathak is recognized as one of the 8 classical dance styles of India. Kathak originated and is most popular in northern India. The name of this unique dance form comes from the word "katha" which literally means "story". Kathak

dancers were known as 'kathakars or storytellers who presented religious and moral instruction in narrative form. Music, mime, and dance became important features of their technique and when this mingled with the decorative dance styles introduced by the Moguls (14th-17th centuries) kathak became a complex movement form capable of dealing with the themes of Hindu myths as well as more contemporary subjects. Subsequently its narrative content became highly refined (that which remained dealing primarily with the stories of Radha and Krishna) and dancers focused on music and rhythm. Kathak performers are noted for their virtuosic fast turns and stamping footwork, whose rhythms, exaggerated by ankle bells, develop into highly complex metrical sequences.

The story of Kathak begins in ancient times with the performances of professional story-tellers called kathakars who recited or sang stories from epics and mythology with some elements of dance. The traditions of the kathakars were hereditary and passed in an oral tradition. There are literary references from the 3rd and 4th centuries BCE which refer to this kathakars.

By the 13th century a definite style had emerged and soon technical features like mnemonic syllables and bols developed. In the 15th-16th century at the time the Bhakti Movement, *Rasalilas* had a tremendous impact on Kathak. The form of dance even made its way to the *Kathavachakas* who performed in temples.

Bhakti Era

During the era of fervent worship of Radha and Krishna, Kathak was used to narrate tales from the lives of these figures. Popular performances included Sri Krishna's exploits in the holy land of Vrindavan, and tales of Krishna Leela (Krishna's childhood). It was in this time; the dance moved away from the spirituality of the temple and began to be influenced by folk elements.

Mughal Period

It was when the dance reached the Mughal court after the 16th century that Kathak began to acquire its distinctive shape and features. Here it encountered various forms of dance and music, especially dancers from Persia. Royal patronage soared as a social class of dancers and courtiers emerged in the royal palaces, where dance competitions were held frequently. The environment of the North Indian Mughal courts caused a shift in focus for Kathak - from a purely religious art form to courtly entertainment. Dancers imported from Central Asia spread their ideas to Kathak dancers, as they were inspired by Kathak technique as well. Kathak absorbed this new influence, adapting it until it became an integral part of its own vocabulary.

Kathak began to shift away from other traditional Indian dances, such as Bharatanatyam. The demi-plié stance of most other Indian dance forms gave way to straight legs taken from the Persian dancers. To emphasize the flamboyant and elaborate rhythmic footwork as many as 150 ankle bells on each leg were worn. It was also during this period that the signature 'chakkars' (spins) of Kathak were introduced, possibly influenced by the so-called whirling dervishes of the Sufi tradition. The straight-legged position gave a new vitality to the footwork, which wove percussive rhythms in its own right, whether together with or in complement to the tabla or pakhawaj. By this stage, the varied influences had introduced great flexibility into Kathak in terms of presentation and narrative dance.

As it moved away from the temple through folk dances to the court, Kathak repertoire expanded with themes on which the narrative dance could be explored, resulting in a broader variety of abhinaya items. It was during this time that Kathak's less dramatic and slightly informal presentation style which often incorporated improvisation and suggestions from the courtly audience was developed. The fusion of cultures (Islamic and Hindu) influenced Kathak in a unique manner. Although it was by now substantially different from the other Indian dance forms, the roots of the style remained the same and retained characteristic elements of classical Indian dance.

Literary Texts-Growth of Regional Languages

LITERATURE

The Mughal emperors were patrons of literature and they did much to remove the barriers between Hindus and Muslims to promote a happy fusion of two Cultures. In this connection, we may mention the name of 'Malik Muhammad Jayasi who in his Padmavat describes the story of Padmini, and Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan whose exquisite dohas are still read and admired all over northern India. It was Akbar's patronage that gave a vigorous stimulus to literary activity. The Persian literature of his reign comprised historical works, translations and poetry. The great historical works of his reign are the Akbarnamah and Ain-i-Akbari of Abul Fazal, the Muntkhab-ul-Twarikh by Badauni and Tabaqat-i-Akbari. by Nizam-ud-din Ahmed. Akbar was a keen student of Hindu culture and so by his orders many Sanskrit works were translated into Persian. Badauni translated Ramayana and Faizi the Lilavati. The Mahabharata was translated and renamed Razm-namah. The translator of the Atharva Veda was Hazi Ibrahim Sarhindi. Other works translated were

Rajatarangini and Panchatantra. Among the important poets of the period were Ghizali, Faizi and Muhammad Hussain Naziri. Jahangir also had a fine taste for literature and his memoirs are second only to that of Babur. During Shah Jahan's period many historical works were composed i.e. Padshahnamah by Abdul Hamid Lahori, Shah-Jahan-namah by Inayat Khan etc. Aurangzeb was a learned man but he disliked history and poetry. His taste was for Muslim theology and jurisprudence of which he was a critical writer. It was under him that the Fatwahi-Alamgiri was written. The most famous history of his reign, the Muntakhab-ul-Lubab of Khafi Khan, was prepared in secrecy.

This period has been described as the "Augustan Age of Hindustani Literature" as Akbar gave impetus to Hindi poetry. Persons like Birbal, Raja Man Singh, etc. were poets of no mean order. Among the most notable poet was Tulsidas who wrote the famous Ramcharitamanas. Surdas, the blind bard of Agra, wrote numerous verses in Brij Bhasa, the most important being Sur Sagar. The two famous poets of Shah Jahan's time were Sundar, the author of Sundar Srinagar, and Bihari Lal, the author of Satsai. In Bengal there developed in this period remarkable literature dealing with the life of Chaitanya Deva.

The Mughals did not have any systematic organisation for imparting education. Some sort of elementary education was imparted in makhtabs and pathsalas. Further it was mainly confined to the upper sections of society and the clergy. Most Mughal emperors were educated and so were their ladies. Gulbadan Begum was an accomplished lady. She wrote the Humayun namah. Nur Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal, Jahanara Begum and Zeb-un-Nisa were highly educated ladies.

Decline and Disintegration of Mughal Empire

Historians have held divergent views about the main causes for the downfall of the Mughal empire. **J.N. Sarkar** blames the rottenness at the core of Indian society to be the main cause of the disintegration. English Historian Irwin was convinced that military inefficiency was the root cause while another Historian **Sydney Owen** believed that the fall of the Mughal empire was due to the degeneracy of its sovereign. **Satish Chandra** opines that the roots of the disintegration of the Mughal empire may be found in the Medieval Indian economy. The main causes for the downfall of the Mughal empire are the following.

1. The Mughal system of government being despotic much depended on the personality of the emperor. Under a strong monarch all went well with the administration but after Aurangzeb all the Mughal rulers were weaklings and therefore unable to meet the challenges from within and without. Thus these imbecile emperors were unable to maintain the integrity of the empire.

2. In the later stages of the Mughal rule, the nobles discarded hard life of military adventure and took to luxuries living. The new nobility were at best courtiers and rivaled one another in the subtle art of flattery and finesse. Instead of 'Knights of romance'. The nobles had no spirit to fight and die for the empire because the later Mughal emperors ceased to be impartial judges. The decay in the ranks of the upper classes deprived the state of the services of energetic military leaders and capable administrators.

3. Towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign the influential nobles of the court were divided into several factions such as Persian, Turani and Indian Muslims who organized themselves into pressure groups. The Turani and the Persian group were together known as 'the Foreign party' were pitched against the Indian Muslim supported by Hindus which was termed as 'the Hindustani party'. Each group tried to win the emperor to its view-points and poison his ears against the other faction. These groups kept the country in a state of perpetual political unrest, did not forge a united front even in the face of foreign danger, and fought battles, upsetting the peace of the country and throwing administration to dogs.

4. The Mughal military system was defective. The army was organized on the feudal basis where the common soldier owed allegiance to the mansabdar rather than the emperor. During the last Mughal period, when the emperors grew weak, this defect assumed alarming proportions. Another defect of the Mughal army of eighteenth century was their composition. The soldiers were usually drawn from Central Asia who came to India to make fortunes, not to lose them. These soldiers changed sides without scruples and were constantly plotting either to betray or supplant their employers. Irwine points a series of faults such as indiscipline, want of cohesion, luxurious habits, inactivity, bad commissariat and cumbrous equipment among the degenerate Mughals except the personal courage they had. In fighting capacity the Mughal army was nothing more than an armed rabble. Bernier compares them to a herd of animals that fled at the first shock. The Mughal artillery proved ineffective against the guerilla tactics of the Marathas.

5. The Mughal government was essentially a police government and failed to effect a fusion between the Hindus and Muslims and create a composite nation. The Mughal government confined its attention mainly to the maintenance of internal and external affair and collection of revenue. The effort made by Akbar to weld the people into a nation was undone by the bigotry of Aurangzeb and his weak successors.

6. The absence of the law of primogeniture among the Mughals usually meant a war of succession which provided the country with the ablest son of the dying emperor as the ruler. Under the later Mughals a sinister factor entered in the law of succession which was 'the survival of the weakest'. The princes of the royal dynasty receded to the background while struggle was fought by leaders of rival factions using royal princes as nominal leaders. Powerful and influential nobles acted as 'king makers', making and unmaking emperors to suit their personal interests. This system weakened the body politic and crippled it financially and militarily.

7. Under the later Mughals the financial condition worsened much more quickly on one hand the outlying provinces asserted their independence one by one and ceased the payment of revenue to the centre, while the numerous war of successions and political convulsions coupled with the lavish living of the emperors emptied the royal treasury on the other hand. The crisis of the Jagirdari system heightened in this period. Aurangzeb's long wars in the Deccan besides emptying the royal treasury almost ruined the trade and Industry of the country. These conditions accentuated in the eighteenth century.

8. The most powerful external factor that brought about the downfall of the Mughal Empire was the rising power of the Marathas under the Peshwas. The Peshwas inaugurated the policy of Greater Maharashtra and popularized the ideal of 'Hindu-pad padshahi'. Though the Marathas were unable in laying the foundation of a stable empire in India, they played a major role in bringing about the decline of the Mughal Empire.

9. The invasions of Nadir shah gave deathblows to the shattered Mughal Empire. He deprived the Mughals of their wealth and exposed to the world the military weakness of the empire and its utter degeneration. The unsocial elements which were so far afraid of the prestige of the empire rose in rebellion and circumscribed the very authority of the empire.

10. The coming of the Europeans further added pace to the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. They outfitted Indian princes in every sphere whether it was war, diplomacy or trade and commerce. The Mughals did not keep up pace with the race of civilization and blew away by a dynamic and progressive west.

11. Although the expansion of the Mughal Empire reached its zenith during the reign of Aurangzeb, the disintegration of the empire also began simultaneously due to his policies. **Firstly**, Aurangzeb sought to restore the Islamic character of the state. His policy of religious bigotry proved counter productive and provoked Aurangzeb general discontent in the country. It resulted into the rebellions of Marathas, the Sikhs, the Bundelas and the Jats. The imperialistic designs and narrow religious policy of Aurangzeb turned the Rajputs, reliable supporters of the imperial dynasty, into enemies. The destruction of Hindu temples and the reimposition of 'Jizyah' led to the uprising of Santamis and others. **Secondly**, the policy of Aurangzeb inspired the Sikhs (in Punjab) and Marathas (in Maharashtra) to rise against the imperial empire, Maratha resistance to Mughal rule assumed Aurangzeb national character and the whole people participated in the struggle for the defence of their religion and liberties. They demoralized the Mughal Armies through guerrilla mode of warfare and broke their spirit of superiority. **Thirdly**, the aggressive policy of Aurangzeb towards the Shia Sultanates of Bijapur and Golkunda marked the beginning of acute difficulties. The conquest of these kingdoms removed the strongest local check on Maratha activities and left them free to organize resistance to the Mughal imperialism. **Lastly**, the Deccan policy of continuous warfare in the Deccan which continued for twenty seven years, drained the resources of the empire. These undue wars put up Aurangzeb great financial drain on the treasury. The cream of brave and courageous Mughal soldiers perished in the long drawn wars. The Deccan ulcer proved fatal to the Mughal empire and paved the way for hasty disintegration of the Mughal empire.

The Maratha State

The emergence and growth of the Maratha state during the 17th century was an important episode in the history of India. The Territory which include modern state of Bombay Konkan, Kandesh, Berar, part of Madhya Pradesh, and part of Hyderabad state was Maratha state. The history of the rise of the Marathas is the history of the rise of an organized group of people inhabiting the territory of Maharashtra.

Different factors contributed in the rise of Maratha nationalism and political power of the Marathas. The geographical condition of Maharashtra helped in the rise of the Marathas. Larger part of Maharashtra is plateau where man has to struggle hard for his existence. This made Marathas courageous and sturdy. The plateau provided every facility for defence including the construction of forts at every hill top-while it was difficult for Aurangzeb foreign invader to get supplies besides the difficulty of movement with larger armies in an unknown land. The plateau also provided good facility for guerilla-warfare to the Marathas. The rise of the Marathas was the result of the efforts of entire Maratha people who on the basis of unity of their languages, literature, community and homeland gave birth to Maratha nationalism and desired to create an independent state of their own. The Marathas developed the story spirit of nationalism which made them the most powerful group of people in India. The saints of Bhakti Movement in Maharashtra had spread the idea of equality which helped for the growth of unity among in people.

The Marathas had important positions in the administrative and military system of Deccan states. Although a number of influential Maratha families exercised local authority in some area, the Maratha did not have any large well-established state as Rajaputs had. The credit for setting up such a large state goes to Shahji Bhonsali and his son Shivaji.

Shivaji: Shivaji was born in 1627. He was the son of Shahji Bhonsle and Jija Bai. Shahji Bhonsle acted as the king maker in Ahammednagar. After its extinction, transferred his service to Bijapur. Shivaji spent his childhood under the protection of a Brahmin official called Dadaji Kondadev. While Jija bai built up the character of Shivaji, Kond Dev trained him in the art of fighting and administration. Shivaji aimed to create an independent kingdom of his own right from the beginning of his career. His primary aim was to carve out an independent kingdom for himself in Maharashtra. M.G. Ranade has cleared the aim of Shivaji by dividing events of his life into four parts. During the first six years of his political career, Shivaji simply desired to organize the neighbouring Maratha chiefs under him. He had to fight against Bijapur to active this purpose. During the course of next ten years he encouraged Maratha nationalism and attempted to extend the territory under his rule. He fought against the ablest nobles of Bijapur during this period and succeeded. He came in to conflict with the growing power of the Mughals Towards the Deccan. He succeeded against the Mughals as well. Between the period 1674-80 the legalized his kingdom, held his coronation and assumed the title of Chatrapathi.

Even during the period of Tutelage of Kunda Dev, Shivaji started capturing hill forts near Poona against his wishes. At the age of 20 years he started his adventures on a wider scale. Many courageous Maratha leader gathered round him. In 1643 Shivaji captured the fort of the singhgarh from Bijapur and then gradually the forts of Chaken, Purandar, Varanati, Torna, Supa, Tikona, Lohgarch, Rairi were taken over. Shivaji had won over many of his officers of Bijapur to his side by bringing them. The conquest of Javli made him in disputed master.

Shivaji came into conflict with the Mughals first in 1657. Aurangzeb had attacked Bijapur, which sought his help Shivaji could realize that it was in his interest also to check the power of the Mughals from penetrating in the Deccan. Therefore he helped Bijapur and attacked south west territory of the Mughals. He looted Junar and troubled the Mughals at several places. But when Bijapur made peace with the Mughals, he also stopped raids on Mughals territory.

With Aurangzeb away in the north, Shivaji resumed his career of conquest at the expense of Bijapur. He captured Konkan. Bijapur now decided to take stern action Afzalkhan who was a reputed commander of Bijapur was deputed for his task in 1659. With a large army, He tried to terrify Shivaji by wholesale destruction of temples, agriculture and populace with in his territories Afzalkhan assured Shivaji that if he would come to meet him in person and agreed to accept the suzerainty of Bijapur he would so given the additional territory as Jagir. Shivaji got scant of Afzalkhan and decided the pay him in the some coins. He agreed to meet Afzalkhan after a solemn promise of his personal safety. Convinced that this was a trap. Shivaji went prepared and murdered khan in cunning but daring manner, Shivaji put his leaderless army to rout captured all goods and equipment including his artillery. Flushed with victory, the Maratha troops overran the powerful fort of Panhala and poured in to south Konkan and Kolhapur districts making extensive conquest.

Shivaji's exploits made him a legendary figure. His name passed from house to house and was credited with magical powers. People flocked to him from the Maratha areas to join his army. Meanwhile, Aurangzeb was anxiously watching the rise of a Maratha power so near the Mughal frontier. Aurangzeb instructed the new Mughal governor of Deccan, Shiasta Khan to invade Shivaji dominion. At first the war went bodily for Shivaji Shaista Khan occupied Poona and made it his headquarter. He sent army to capture Konkan from Shivaji. The

Mughal secured their contest on north Konkan. Driven into a corner Shivaji made bold stroke. He infiltrated in to the camp of Shaista Khan at Poona and at night attacked Khan, killing his son, and one of his captains and wounding Khan. This daring attack put the Khan in to disgrace. In anger Aurangzeb transferred Shaista Khan to Bengal. Meanwhile Shivaji made another bold move. He attacked Surat and looted it in to his hearts content, returning home laden with Treasure.

After the failure of Shaista Khan Aurangzeb deputed Raja Jai Singh of Amber to deal with Shivaji. Full military and administrative authority was conferred on Jai Singh so that he was not in any way dependent on the Mughal victory in the Deccan, unlike his predecessors, Jai Singh did not underestimate the Marathas. He made careful diplomatic and military preparation. He appealed to all the rivals and opponents of Shivaji in order to isolate Shivaji. Marching to Poona, Jai Singh decided to strike at the heart of Shivaji territories fort Purandar where Shivaji had lodged his family and his treasure. Jai Singh closely besieged Purandar (1665) but acting off all the Maratha attempt to relieve it. With the fall of the fort at sight, Shivaji opened negotiation with Jai Singh. In 1665 the treaty of Purandar was signed between two. The following terms were agreed upon.

1. Shivaji surrendered 23 of his forts, and territory which yielded annual revenue of 4 lakhs of heen.
2. Shivaji was left with only 12 forts and territory which yielded annual revenue of one lakh him.
3. Shivaji accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals.
4. Shivaji agreed to support the Mughals against Bijapur.
5. Shivaji agreed to pay forty lakhs of him too the Mughals in 13 years.

This term of the treaty embittered the relation of Bijapur with Shivaji.

In 1666 Shivaji went to Agra to meet emperor Aurangzeb, Jai Singh tempted Shivaji that there was every possibility of getting governorship of Mughals territory in the Deccan if he would go to meet the emperor in person. He assured Shivaji of his personal safety. Shivaji visited Agra along with his son Shambhuji. He was presented before the emperor by Ram Singh, son of Jai Singh. The emperor neglected his presence and offered him a place to stand among the officers of the rank of 5,000 mansab. Shivaji felt humiliated and left

the court immediately Ram Singh kept Shivaji in the Jaipur Bhavan but virtually he was a prisoner there, since Shivaji had come to Agra on Jai Singh assurance, Aurangzeb wrote to Jai Singh for advice. Jai Singh strongly argued for a lenient treatment for Shivaji. But before any decision could be taken, Shivaji escaped from detention.

There is no doubt that Shivaji's visit to Agra proved to be turning point in Mughal relations with the Marathas. Aurangzeb attached little value to the alliance with Shivaji. For him Shivaji was just a petty bhumiya (land holders). In 1670 AD Shivaji again started fighting against the Mughals and succeeded in capturing many forts from among those which he had surrounded to by the treaty of Purandar. He conquered forts like Singhgarh, Purandar, Kalyan Mahuli etc. and successfully raided the territories of the Mughals in Deccan. He also plundered Surat in 1670 for the second time. Thus within a few years; Shivaji captured many forts and territories from the Mughals and Bijapur.

In 1674 Shivaji held his coronation, assumed the title Chatrapathi and made Raigarh his capital. In 1677-78 AD Shivaji attacked east Karnatak on the pretext of getting share of his father's jagir from his brother. He then conquered the forts of Jinji and Vellore and the territory between rivers Thungabhadra and Kaveri in Karnataka. The Karnatak expedition was the last major expedition of Shivaji. Shivaji died in 1680 shortly after his return the Karnatak expedition.

Shivaji's administration.

Shivaji had laid the foundation of a sound system of administration. His administrative system was largely borrowed from the administrative practices of the Deccan state. Like all other medieval rulers, Shivaji was a despot with all powers concentrated in his hands. He possessed all executive and legislative power. 'Shivaji' was a great organizer and constructive civilian administrator. The one of the novelty of Shivaji's administration was the introduction of Maratha language as the state language.

(i) Central Administration

The king was at the helm of the affairs. The administration was divided into eight departments headed by ministers who are some times called **Ashta pradhan**. The eight ministers were (1) Peshwa who looked after the finances and general administration. (2) Sari-Naubat who was the Senapati. (3) Majumdar looked after the accounts. (4) Waqai navis looked after the intelligence, post and

household affairs (5) Surnavis or Chitnis looked after official correspondence (6) Dabir looked after foreign affairs (7) Nyayadhish looked after justice and (8) Pandit Rao looked after ecclesiastical affairs.

The ashtapradhan was not a creation of Shivaji. Many of these officers like Peshwa, Majumdar, Waqai navis, Dabir and Surnavis had existed under the Deccani rulers also. All the members of the astha pradhan except Pandit Rao and Nyaydhish were asked to lead military campaigns. Under Shivaji these offices were neither hereditary nor permanent. They held the office at the pleasure of the king. They were also frequently transferred. Each of the ashta pradhan was assisted by eight assistants diwan, Majumdar, Fadnis, Sabnis; Karkhanis, Chitnis, Jamadar and Potnis. Chitnis dealt with all diplomatic correspondences and wrote all royal letters. The Fadnis used to respond to the letters of commanders of the forts. The potnis looked after the income and expenditure of the royal treasury.

(ii) Provincial and Local Administration

The provincial administration was also organized on the Deccani and Mughal system. All the provincial units already existed under the Deccani rulers. Shivaji reorganized and in certain cases renamed them. The provinces were known as Prants. The Prants were under the charge of subedar. Over a number of Subedar there were Sarsubedar to control and supervise the work of subedar. Smaller than prant were Tarfs which were headed by a havaldar. Then there were Mauzas or villages which were the lowest unit of administration. At the level of village, Kulkarni used to keep accounts and maintained records while Patil had legal and policing power. At the level of Pargana, Deshpande used to keep account and maintain records while Deshmukh had legal and policing powers. The Police officer in rural area was called Faujdar and in urban area was called Kotwal. The Maratha polity did not have unified civilian-cummilitary rank. Under the Marathas performance based Brahmin elites manned the central bureaucracy and the local administration. In this capacity they were called Kamvishdar who enjoyed wide powers of tax assessment and collection. They adjudicated cases, provided information about local conditions and kept records. Later on, the British District collector was modelled on this Maratha officer only.

Army.

Cavalry and infantry constituted the primary part of the army of Shivaji. The paga cavalrymen were called the bargirs. They were provided horses by the state while the silahdars purchased their armies and horses themselves. The paga cavalry was well organized. Twenty five horsemen formed a unit which was placed under a havildar. Shivaji preferred to give cash salaries to the regular soldiers, though some time the chief received revenue grants strict disciplines was maintained in the army. The plunder taken by each soldiers during campaign was strictly accounted for, forts and security occupied an important place in the army organization of Shivaji. Shivaji maintained a navy as well. Shivaji had 400 ships of different kind. The navy was divided in to two parts and each part was commanded by darive Nayak and mai Nayak respectively.

Finance and Revenue.

The revenue system seems to have been patterned on the system of Malik Ambar land revenue; Trade Tax etc. were the primary source of the fixed income of Shivaji. But income from these sources was not sufficient to meet the expenditure of the state. Therefore Shivaji collected the chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the territory which was either under his enemies or under his own influence. The chauth was 1/4 part of the income of the particular territory while the Sardeshmukhi was 1/10. Shivaji collected these taxes simply by force of his army. These taxes constituted primary source of the income of Shivaji and after wards helped in the extension of the power and territory of the Marathas. The revenue system of Shivaji was Rytowari in which the state kept direct contact with peasants. Shivaji mostly avoided the system of assigning Jagir to his officers and whenever he assigned Jagir to them, the right of collecting the revenue was kept with state officials.

UNIT-IV

STATE AND SOCIETY IN SOUTH INDIA

The post-Gupta period of Indian history is marked by the rise and growth of a number of regional powers throughout the country, to which South India was no exception. The regional powers that had emerged in South India during this period were the manifestation of the formation of regional cultures also. Some of the powers could not concretize into states in their real sense, but could control powers of the respective regional powers, but most of the time they had to accept the supremacy of the comparatively major powers. The Pallavas and Cholas were the two important political powers existed in South India during the period between 7th and 13th centuries.

Aspects of Historiography

Prof. Karashima rightly pays tributes to the pioneers in historical studies like Prof. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar and Prof. Nilakanta Sastri who "vigorously produced a great many of the foundational works" and characterises the period as "the first golden age of South Indian historical studies." Prof. Karashima's contribution to the historiography of the latter period is impressive and valuable as could be seen through the pages of these volumes. Thanks to his innovative approach involving the use of computerised techniques and statistical analysis he is able to present a fascinating perspective on the development of South Indian society during and after the Chola period which ushered in a new social formation under the Vijayanagar-Nayaka rule.

Prof. Karashima does not agree with the view that ancient and medieval South Indian society followed Asiatic mode of production. He also cautions against the "mechanical application of the concept of feudalism in the South Indian context as has been done by scholars like D.N. Jha. He points out the many fallacies in their argument and observes that the number of villages granted by rulers to Brahmins and temples was decisively in minority and also says "it seems too hasty to take royal grants of villages as an evidence for a prevalence of feudalism or serfdom, unless we study the conditions of the non-grant villages".

Generally South Indian historiography was a neglected area in the national level historiography as well as in historical works. South India was referred to by the earlier colonialist or nationalist historians only when its history was related with the contemporary historical events of north India. Therefore it was left to the South Indian historians themselves to reconstruct the earlier history of south India in the second half of the 19th century, they could not provide a comprehensive history of this part of India.

The credit goes to S.Krishna Swami Ayyankar, to consider as the true first historian of south India, who in the beginning of the 20th century produced certain historical works like 'The Beginnings of South Indian History', 'Contribution of South India to Indian Culture', 'Evolution of Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India', etc. He, along with Robert Sewell edited the 'Historical Inscriptions of South India' and started a commendable project on the sources of Vijayanagara history. Ayyankar's method of historical writing is neither argumentative nor interpretative, but recording of events based on a variety of sources. He did not try to make any value judgements, but presented history as it was. He unearthed a wide range of source materials on areas of art, society, culture and social and political institutions.

The technological framework to south Indian history provided by Ayyankar, though has been proved incorrect later, and has given a successive record for the study of early medieval south Indian history. He expressed a balance judgement on controversial issues. Ayyankar was responsible for the inauguration of a new kind of historical research based on painstaking search for source materials and diversification of historical writing in south India.

K.A. Nilakanta Sastri can be considered as the first historian to write a comprehensive history of south India. In fact, Sastri started the historical writing from where Ayyankar had earlier stopped. He used a large number of epigraphical sources for the reconstruction of the history of south India. His works include; 'The Cholas in 2 volumes, The Pandyan kingdom, Development of Religion in South India, History of South India, Life and Culture of Indian People and An Advanced History of India'. Though Sastri was primarily concerned with the political history of South India, he did not neglect its economics. He was able to reconstruct the history of South India from the earlier times to the modern, with a fairly reliable chronology of political developments. However, his significant contribution is in the reconstruction of the history of the Cholas. Drawing largely from inscriptions, he shed light upon hitherto unknown aspects of Chola history such as agriculture, land tenure, taxation, industry, trade and commerce, coinage etc. Some other scholars like Appadorai and Mahalingam followed the footsteps of Sastri and produced some works on the social and economic conditions of South India in the earlier period. Mahalingam's works, 'Inscriptions of Pallavas and Early Indian Paleography' are of considerable importance for the reconstruction of the history of the Pallavas.

South Indian historical writing was revolving around the solid foundations laid by Sastri upto the 1960s, when a group of American scholars doing

research on medieval South Indian history began to provide new interpretations, using modern methodology. Burton Stein, George Spencer, Kenneth Hall, Richard Kennedy and Southal were the scholars on medieval south India who made innovative studies and arrived at scintillating formulations. The most significant contributions came from Burton Stein. He, in his work, 'Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India' published in 1980, introduced a new theory of 'Segmentary' state system for medieval South Indian state and society.

Burton Stein questioned the very foundation of the concept of centralized monarchy of Nilakanta Sastri and others and argued that medieval South India had a loosely knit segmentary state system. In a segmentary state political sovereignty of the king is confined only to the central or core areas. In the medieval South Indian states political sovereignty remained in the core areas only and it was 'ritual Sovereignty' that had existed in the intermediary and peripheral areas of the state. In a segmentary state there existed several levels of subordinate foci, organized beyond the centre. These subordinate foci are united with the centre by the royal authority through ideology. Political control of the segments was in the hands of the local elites, who were brahmanas. These Brahmin elites had allied with the dominant peasants, which was a voluntary alliance based on mutual benefits.

Burton Stein has been criticized for introducing the vague concept of 'peasant economy' as substitution for the Marxian theory of mode of production. Richard Kennedy has questioned stratification within the peasantry. It is also argued that Stein appears to convey the same message as that of the old theory of stagnation of Indian society, earlier propogated by imperialist historians. Some of his translations of old inscriptions are not accepted by the indigeneous scholars. Is blamed for not providing convincing evidences to establish his theory of segmentary state. George spencer has argued that the Chola state thrived on large scale plunder instead of a periodic revenue collection. Kenneth Hall, in his book 'Trade and Statecraft in the Age of Cholas' criticized the concept of centralized state during the period of Cholas, as there was no powerful bureaucracy and military organization in South India during those days.

Professor Noboru Karashima, a Japanese historian on South Indian studies published the work "South Indian History and Society" in 1984, in which he rejects the segmentary theory of Burton Stein. He adopted fresh efforts, like the using of quantification method in the study of inscriptions, to formulate a healthy response to the segmentary theory. His argument is based on the broad

notion that in a predominantly agricultural society the control of land as the chief means of production is crucial to social formation and power structure. He rejects the assumption of Stein that there was no bureaucracy for the Cholas to operate in the country side and argue for a centralized power. Karashima regards the Chola period as 'one when the formation of a centralized state reached a certain degree of completion'. He argues that 'feudalism could have come into existence in South India only after the decline of the Chola rule'.

Brahmadeya-Temples

Land grants to religious institutions were called Brahmadeya, (i.e. donated to Brahmins) Devadana (donated to Gods) and Agrahara (Settlement – of priests) These lands donated to the temples and monasteries apart from being used as normal tenancy also carried a right vested with the temple authorities to call for unpaid labour (called Vishti) as a religious service to the temple from the tillers on the donated land.

Lands were given as brahmadeya either to a single Brahmana or to several Brahmana families which ranged from a few to several hundreds or even more than a thousand, as seen in the South Indian context. Brahmadeyas were invariably located near major irrigation works such as tanks or lakes. Often new irrigation sources were constructed when brahmadeyas were created, especially in areas dependent on rains and in arid and semi-arid regions. When located in areas of intensive agriculture in the river valleys, they served to integrate other settlements of a subsistence level production. Sometimes, two or more settlements were clubbed together to form a brahmadeya or an agrahara. The taxes from such villages were assigned to the Brahmana donees, who were also given the right to get the donated land cultivated. Boundaries of the donated land or village were very often carefully demarcated. The various types of land, wet, dry and garden land within the village were specified. Sometimes even specific crops and trees are mentioned. The land donations implied more than the transfer of land rights. For example, in many cases, along with the revenues and economic resources of the village, human resources such as peasants (cultivators), artisans and others were also transferred to donees. There is also growing evidence of the encroachment of the rights of villagers over community lands such as lakes and ponds. Thus, the Brahmanas became managers of agricultural and artisanal production in these settlements for which they organized themselves in to assemblies.

Pallavas

The Pallavas of the Kanchi were the most notable among the dynasties of the South India. The pallavas emerged in South India in the middle of the 6th century AD. At first they established power in the area called 'Tondaimandalam' in course of time they extended their authority over an extensive area covering more than Tamil Nadu and Southern Andhrapradesh. Kanchi was their capital. The history of Pallavas till the period of Simhavishnu – is shrouded in obscurity. They seem to have ruled for a period of 200 years before Simhavishnu came to the scene. Towards the end of the 6th century AD. With the accession of Simhavishnu, Pallavas attained great political and cultural achievement. He claims to have conquered the Cholas and Pandyas. He had put an end to the Kalabhras incursion in to the South India. Simhavishnu was succeeded by his son Mahendravarman. He was one of the greatest among the Pallava rulers.

Pallava-Chalukya conflict.

The political history of the South India from the period of 6th century to 8th century is marked by the struggle for supremacy between the Pallavas of Kanchi and Chalukyas of Badami. The struggle was for the occupation of the frontier land lying between Krishna and Tungabhadra. The Pallavas had conquered the neighbouring kingdom and marched up to the boundary of the Chalukyas. The first important event in this conflict took place in the reign of Mahendravarman I in the beginning of the 7th century. He was defeated by the Chalukya ruler Pulikesi II and was given the territory of Vengi; Narasimhavarman the next Pallava ruler defeated Pulikesi II and captured Vatapi in capital of the Chalukyas. Pulikesi II was killed and Narasimhavarman took the title Vatapi konda. The conflict between the two kingdoms was resumed in the first half of the 8th century AD. The Chalukya king Vikramaditya II said to have overrun Kanchi, the capital of Pallava. The Pallavas were completely defeated by the Chalukyas.

The Chalukyas.

The rule of Chalukyas of Badami constitutes a brilliant epoch in the history of South India. Pulikesi I was the first ruler who laid the foundation of the Chalukyas dynasty. He made himself the master of Vatapi and established a kingdom. Pulikesi II was the greatest of Chalukyas king. He checked the advance of Harsha and forced him to confine his kingdom in the North. According to Aihole inscription, Pulikesi II defeated several local powers like the western Gangas, Alupas, Malavas, Kadampas, and Gurjars.

Pallava Art and Architecture.

“Of all the great powers that together made the history of southern India” writes Percy Brown, “none had a more marked effect on the architecture of their region than the earliest of all, that of Pallavas, whose production provided the foundation of the Dravidian style”. The Pallava style which influenced the aesthetics of south Indian architecture and sculpture saw its genesis under Mahendravarman. He laid the foundation stone of Mahabalipuram’s grandeur and reputation by initiating the techniques excavating stone temples out of solid rocks, thus making it as the birth place of south Indian architecture and sculpture.

The Pallava kings constructed a number stone temples in the 7th and 8th centuries. The most famous of them are the seven ratha temples (seven pagoda) in Mahabalipuram. These were built in the 7th century by Narasimhavarman who founded the city of Mahabalipuram as Mamallapuram. This city is also famous for the shore temples, which was structural construction, put up independently, and not hewn out of any rock. The structural temple architecture of the Pallavas was patronized and favoured by Narasimhavarman II who substituted bricks and temples for stone. There were six temples belonging to this period. The most famous are the Kailasanatha and Vaikuntha perumal temples at Kanchi and the shore temple at Mahabalipuram.

The architecture of the shore temples confirms the Dharma Raja Ratha in principles. The Kailasanath temple or Rajasimhavarman temple is the largest among the Pallava temples. Its outstanding characteristic is the pyramidal tower, the flat roofed pillared hall, the Vestibule and the rampant lion pilaster. The Vaikuntha perumal temples are the most mature example of the Pallava temple complex.

THE CHOLAS

The Chola dynasty was one of the earliest dynasties that ruled in South India. During the Sangam period it maintained its power and prestige. But after that for several centuries it lost its positions. However the Cholas revived their glory in the middle of the 9th century and maintained its supremacy for about four centuries. There were 20 rulers of the dynasty. Vijayalaya (850-875) was the founder of the dynasty. The most important rulers of the Chola dynasty were Rajaraja Chola, Rajendra Chola and Rajadhiraja Chola. The period of the Cholas was not only remarkable for political integration of South India, but for the development in art, architecture, literature, trade and maritime activities. The Chola Empire included almost the whole of Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh, parts of Karnataka, Coorg, and northern part of Ceylon etc.

The Chola Empire reached its zenith during the reigns of **Rajaraja** (985-1014) and his son, **Rajendra I** (1014-1041)

Rajaraja's majore achievements were:-

1. conquering Madurai and capturing the Pandyan ruler
2. invading northern part of Sri Lanka and making it a Chola province
3. conquering Maldiv islands
4. emerging as a strong naval power by destroying the stongest naval power of the Chera kingdom.

Rajendra I's majore achievements were:-

1. Conquering several trans-Ganga kingdoms and assuming the title of Gangai Kondachola
2. founding a new capital called **Gangai Kondacholapuram**
3. conquering the whole of Ceylon or Sri Lanka
4. Indianisation of several lands of the south-East Asia
5. defeating the kings of Sumatra in a naval campaign and annexing a part of Sumarata kingdom to his kingdom

Kulottunga (1178-1210) was the last greatest Chola emperor. After him, the Chola Empire collapsed and its place was taken by the Pandyas and Hoysalas.

Chola administration

The Cholas established a strong systematized administration. Monarchy was the form of government and succession to the throne was based on the hereditary principle. In spite of many wars, the Chola rulers never neglected the welfare and happiness of the people. The king was advised by a council of ministers which include among others the commander in chief of the army, the treasury officer etc. The kingdom was divided into Mandalam or provinces, Valandus as districts and Kottams and Kurams. The crown princes were appointed to these provinces as viceroys. There were two classes of officials in the nadu. Those appointed by the king and hereditary chief who were expected to provide soldiers to the imperial army.

Local self government.

The most important feature of the Chola administration was the working of the local self government. Extensive arrangement of local self-government at different units of administration was made by the Cholas. The Chola records mention the existence of two types of villages. Ur (ordinary village) and Brahmadaya villages. Ur had its own local assembly called. It consisted of all members of the village extensively of the untouchables. It concerned itself with all matters confining their village. The assembly also dispensed justice.

The Brahmadaya villages are those Agraharas that were granted by the kings to brahmanas. They had their own assembly called Mahasabha, which was completely autonomous. The Uttaramerur inscriptions thrown light on the constitution and working of the village assemblies. These records make it clear that members of the Sabha were elected by lot system in the 30 families or wards into which the Brahmin settlement was divided. Each of the wards was to nominate for selection in persons with prescribed qualification. Ownership of more than one fourth veli (an acre and a half) of land, residence in a house built on one's own site, age between 35 and 70, and knowledge of one Veda and a Bhashya, were qualification for nomination. Among the disqualification were the continuous membership of a committee (varian) for a period of three years and failure to submit accounts in time. Those who found guilty of incest and other great sins and their relations were debarred from membership. Similarly, those who had stolen the property of others or associated themselves with low caste people, or eaten forbidden dishes were also disqualified, woman were eligible for election to the committees.

The Mahasabha was a democratic assembly which was completely autonomous. It possessed sole authority over the village land and was left free in the internal management of the villages. It was the assembly which collected land revenue and paid to the royal treasury. It attended to such matters as the reclamation of forest and waste lands, supervision of endowments, settlement of disputes, about land revenue, remission of taxes in case of emergency etc. The village officers detected criminals and the members of the judicial committee called Nyayattars settled disputes and pronounced judgment. The central government interfered only in case or conflict between two assemblies.

The Mahasabha resolved itself into a number of small committees each of which was in charge of some particular items of work. The members of Mahasabha was called perumakkal and of the committee variya perumakkal. The Mahasabha usually met in the temple premises or under a tree on the bank of the tank. The members of the committee were chosen by lot from among the members of the Mahasabha.

Development of Art and Architecture.

The Cholas continued and developed the art-tradition of the Pallavas. But in comparison with the productions of the last days of the Pallavas, those of the early Chola phase display a certain freshness of spirit which appears to herald a new movement. In fact under the Cholas, the *Dravida* style of temple architecture enters a brilliant and distinctive phase. The early Chola rulers appear to be great patrons of temple architecture. Among the innumerable Chola temples may be mentioned the Vijayalaya Cholisvara at Melamalai, Balasubramanya at Kannanur, Sundaesvara at Tirukkattala, Muvar Kovil at Kodumbalur, Nagesvarasvami at Kumbhakonam, Brahmapapurisvara at Pullamangai, Kuranganatha at Srinivasanallur, the twin temples of Agastyisvara and Cholisvara at Kiliyanur and the Shiva temple at Tiruvalisvaram.

The Vijayalaya Cholisvara temple at Melamalai, at a distance of ten miles from Pudukottai, is undoubtedly one of the finest examples of early Chola temples. Round the main temple in an open yard are seven small sub-shrines, all facing inwards and resembling the main temple in essential feature. By combining a superb sense of restraint and a discerning choice for embellishments noted in its superstructure, it clearly testifies to the aesthetic vision of its builders. In comparison with the Vijayalaya Cholisvara, the temples of Balasubramanya and Sundaesvara appear to be less refined. The most remarkable feature of Nagesvarasvami temple at Kumbakonam is the remarkable life-size figure sculptures, found on its outer walls. The early phase of Dravida temple is best illustrated in the Kuranganatha temple at Srinivasanallur (Trichinopoly district), built in the reign of Parantaka I. The entire temple is remarkable for proportionate distribution of parts and an overall restraint in embellishment. The twin temples of Agastyisvara and Cholisvara at Kiliyanur (south Arcot), the triple shrine of Muvar Kovil at Kodumbalur (Pudukottai district), are also remarkable for their individual treatment. The Shiva temple at Tiruvalisvaram (Tinnevely district) is almost unique for its fine workmanship and its wealth of iconographic sculpture.

The two great temples of Tanjore and Gangaikonda-cholapuram built respectively during the reigns of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I, constitute a landmark in the history of Indian architecture. The superb Shiva temple of Tanjore, called Rajarajesvara or Brihadisvara, is a fitting memorial to the material achievements of the Cholas. "Vast in concept, design, and form, and

remarkable in execution, this celebrated temple marks the greatest achievement of the Chola architects. Begun sometime in A.D. 1003, it was completed in A.D.1010. In dimension alone the temple at Tanjore is one of the most daring conceptions of Dravida architecture. It stands in a vast enclosure 167 metre by 84 metre with a *Gopuram* (gateway) in front on the east. The main structure covers a total length of 60 metre long, while the massive pyramidal *vimana* rises to a height of 63 metre, excelling even the Lingaraj (54 metres) temple of Bhubanesvar. Rightly observes Percy Brown: "Unquestionably the finest single creation of the Dravidian craftsmen, the Tanjore *Vimana* is a touchstone of Indian architecture as a whole. The whole temple is a magnificent example of solidity combined with proportion and grace of form.

The great temple at Gangaikonda-cholapuram, built in A.D. 1025 by Rajendra Chola is a replica of the Tanjore temple, but possessing a rich and voluptuous beauty of its own. This great temple has suffered much from modern predatory engineering. The temple itself forms a rectangle 114 metre long and 34 metre wide, composed of a *mandapa* measuring 58 metre by 32 metre, and the massive *Vimana*, 34 metre square, with a connecting vestibule. The pyramidal *Vimana* rises to a height of 54 metre, and has only eight tiers as against thirteen in Tanjore. 'This is perhaps the more beautiful edifice in its palatial architectural formation, and in its sculptural design, but it has not the magnitude of conceptualization found in his father's (Rajaraja) Temple'. Comparing the two architectural productions, Percy Brown observes: "Stately and formal as an epic may epitomize the Tanjore *Vimana* while the later example has all the sensuous passion of an eastern lyric, but it seems to government even deeper than that. Each is the final and absolute vision of its creator made manifest through the medium of structural form, the one symbolizing conscious might, the other subconscious grace, both dictated by that 'divinity which has seized the soul'".

During the period of the later Cholas, Dravida style loses much of its force and tends to become more and more ornate and florid. This is reflected in two temples, the Airavatesvara at Darasuram and Tribhuvaneshvara at Tribhuvanam, both in the Tanjore district. During this phase, emphasis is laid on the temple precincts than to the main temple and the *gopuram* comes to occupy a more prominent position in the temple scheme until with its soaring height it dwarfs the *Vimana* standing in the midst of the enclosure.

Sculpture

The Chola period is also remarkable for its sculptures, many of which are masterpieces. The three main classes of Chola sculpture are portraits, icons and decorative sculpture. There is a singular paucity of portraits in Chola sculpture. There are three well-preserved and nearly life-size portraits – two women and a man on the walls of the Kuranganatha temple at Srinivasanallur and several others in the Nagesvara temple at Kumbhakonam. The Shiva temple at Tiruvalisvaram (Tinnevely district) is a veritable museum of superb early Chola iconography. Other interesting early Chola sculptures are the reliefs of an eight-armed durga and a group of Vishnu and his two consorts from the ruined temple of Vishnu at Olagapurem, south Arcot. The walls of the Brihadisvara temples of Tanjore and Gangaikonda-cholapurem contain numerous icons of large size and forceful execution.

The Chola sculptures started bronze-casting sometime about the middle of the tenth century A.D. Of the numerous bronze images, the Nataraja image in its various forms holds the first place. The Nataraja image in the Nagesvara temple is one of the largest and finest images known. The conception of the Divine Dancer and its cosmic significance, and the excellence of the Chola sculptor's presentation of it have won unstinted praise from art critics including great modern sculptor Rodin. A group of three bronzes of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita from Tirukkadaiyur (Tanjore district) with Hanuman in an attitude of worship is one of the finest products of Chola bronze-casting of the age of Rajaraja I and Rajendra. Decorative sculpture takes many forms – architectural *motifs*, floral and vegetal patterns, friezes of animals, birds, dancing figures and legendary and Puranic stories.

Paintings

Remnants of Chola wall-paintings are to be found on the walls of the Vijayalaya Cholisvara temple in the old Pudukottai state and of the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjore. Large-scale painted figures of Mahakala, Devi and Shiva Nataraja are still visible on the walls of the Vijayalaya Cholisvara temple. The subject matter of paintings in Brihadisvara temple at Tanjore is Saiva and the scenes representing Shiva in his abode of Kailasa as Nataraja and Tripurantaka, are laid on the walls in large and forceful compositions.

Development of Trade and Mercantile Corporations

There existed a brisk internal trade in several articles carried on by the organized mercantile corporations in various parts of the country. The metal industries and the jewellers' art had reached a high degree of excellence. The Tanjore jewelers produced the most pleasing results by studying the colour effects of precious stones and pearls. The manufacture of sea-salt was carried on under government supervision and control. Trade was carried on by merchants organized in guilds and corporations. The guilds, described sometimes by the terms *nanadesis* were a powerful autonomous corporation of merchants which visited different countries in the course of their trade. They had their own mercenary army for the protection of their merchandise. There were also local organizations of merchants called *nagaram* in big centres of trade like Kanchipuram and Mamallapuram. The Cholas carried on extensive trade with the Malay Peninsula and the islands of the archipelago, Indo-China and China. The articles exported to China and other countries comprised pearls, elephants' tusks, coral, transparent glass, betel nuts, cardamoms, opaque glass, and cotton stuffs with coloured silk threads.

Theory of Centralised Monarchy and Segmentary State

It was K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, who made a pioneering attempt in weaving together the scattered data relating to medieval South Indian history, from diverse sources into a larger historical narrative. In his attempt to glorify the medieval Chola state to a greater extent, Sastri conceived the Chola state as highly centralized monarchy. According to him, the centralized monarchy of the Chola was ably supported by a superior executive with the strength of an efficient bureaucracy, a strong coercive army consisting of numerous regiments and a navy with a number of ships. The numerous regiments and a navy with a number of ships. The theory of centralized monarchy put forward by Sastri became the commonly accepted theory on medieval south India polity, manifested in the works of his successors like Mahalingam, Appadorai etc, until it was hard hit by the American Scholar on medieval South Indian history, Burton Stein in the 1970s.

Burton Stein introduced the theory of segmentary state for early medieval south Indian polity. He refused to consider it as a full developed state at all, not to speak of an empire. He argued that the political structure of South India was to be placed somewhere on a continuum between pre-state situations. To him, the earlier scholars on South Indian state had treated the Chola state as a

monolith without recognizing the changes that had taken place during five centuries of its existence. They did not relate the state to society and economy, especially to agrarian order. He pointed out that there was an inconsistency between the glorifications of Chola state as a strong, centralized bureaucratized monarchy. The fault did not lie in the understanding of economy, but in the characterization of the state.

Burton Stein stated that the south Indian kingship reflect a sacred kingship rather than bureaucratic or constitutional kingship. The effective power of kings and their control over people and resources were confined to the core around their political centres, outside which kings were basically ritual figures. The Chola state was the political embodiment of peasant agrarian and political relationships. It was accomplished partly through the development of a ruling ideology that accommodated the existing structure of peasant chiefly politics. The rulers successfully promoted a state ideology through a process of ritual sovereignty, which simultaneously strengthened chiefly authority and the overall ascendancy of the Chola kings. Stein denied the existence of a Chola standing army, arguing that military power was distributed among various groups including peasants, merchants and artisans etc.

The idea of segmentary state is based on the anthropological study of Aidan Southall on the Alur society of Africa, 'A study in Process and Types of Domination' in 1953. He has argued that the political system of the Alur Tribe combined lineage segmentation and political specialization. He made a fundamental distinction between a unitary and segmentary states, Unitary state is a political system in which there is a central monopoly of power exercised by a specialized administrative staff within defined territorial limits, whereas in a segmentary state specialized political power is exercised within a series of segments tied together at any one level. In such a state territorial sovereignty is recognized, but limited and relative. Political authority is strongest near the political centre and gets more diffused towards the periphery, often shading off into a ritual hegemony. There is a centralized government, but also several peripheral loci of administration with less central control. This concept was taken over by Stein to characterize the medieval Indian polity as segmentary state.

The introduction of segmentary theory paved way for a series of academic enquiries into the nature of medieval south Indian state. Noboru Karashima in the 1980s stated that there are problems both with the theories of centralized

monarchy and segmentary state. The Chola period did in fact see the formation of a centralized state. His argument is based on the broad notion that in a predominantly agricultural society, the control of the land as the chief means of production is crucial to state formation. He rejects the assumptions of Stein that there was no bureaucracy for the Chola power to operate in the countryside. He indicates that several titles in Chola inscriptions refer to administrative offices and the Chola kings had made certain attempts to centralize their administration. Karashima, thus regards the Chola period as 'one when the formation of centralized state reached a certain degree of completion'.

Heitzman's analysis of tax terms and functional titles in Chola inscriptions shows that although the early Chola state reveals few hints of an elaborate administrative system, for about 11th century hierarchy of royal land revenue officials began to reach out in a thorough and systematic fashion to villages throughout Cholamandalam. There was also an increase in the personal involvement of Chola kings in issuing orders aimed at directing and reorganizing land tax also. This is further confirmed by the recent study of Subbarayalu also. He states that Chola begins as a chiefly house, established as a prominent dynasty in the 9th century and grew from there to form within one century the most impressive empire. In another century however, centrifugal tendencies got the better of attempts at centralization and by the third quarter of the 13th century, Chola state succumbed.

Government of Vijayanagara State

The kingdom of Vijayanagara came into existence during the period of confusion which prevailed in the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. The foundation of the Vijayanagara kingdom was laid by two brothers Harihar and Bukka. They were the feudatories of the Kakatiyas of Warrangal. After the fall of the Kakatiyas, they joined service of Kampili. When Muhammad Tughlaq conquered Kampili, he imprisoned these two brothers, took them to Delhi and forced them to embrace Islam. It is said that they were sent back to Kampili to suppress the rebellion of the people. They failed in this attempt because of the resistance of the people of Kampili who were inspired by the spirit of independence. On saint Vidyaranya encouraged to accept Hinduism. Harihar and Bukka forsook their new master and the new faith. At the instance of their guru Vidyaranya they were readmitted to Hinduism and established their capital at Vijayanagar. The date of Harihar's coronation is placed at 1336. This very small state grew up as the mighty kingdom of Vijayanagara afterwards.

Harihara was a capable ruler but he had to struggle hard against his neighbours, the Hoysala ruler of Mysore and sultan of Madhurai. Sultan of Madurai defeated the Hoysala ruler and executed him. The end of the Hoysala kingdom enables Harihara and Bukka to expand their small principality. By 1346 the whole of the Hoysala kingdom had passed into the hands of the Vijayanagara ruler. Bukka succeeded his brother in 1350 and ruled till 1377. However the real rival of Vijayanagara was the Bahmani sultanate of Deccan. The Bahmani kingdom had come into existence in 1347. The interest of the Vijayanagara ruler of Bahmani sultans clashed in three separate and distinct areas in the Tungabhadra doab, in the Krishna Godavari, Delta and in the Marathawada country. The Tungabhadra doab was the region between Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers. On account of its wealth and economic resources, it had been the bone of contention between the western Chalukyas and Cholas in the earlier period and between the Yadavas, the Hoysalas later on. The Vijayanagara-Bahmani conflicts in the doab resulted in the great loss of life and property of the people in that area. They used to destroy cities, crops and kill civilians in war. After a series of such wars both forces agreed not to kill civilians in war. Though this agreement was occasionally violated by both. This agreement made the later south Indian wars more humanistic. The wars between the two continued intermittently. None was completely destroyed. Finally both sides were exhausted, and decided to conclude a treaty. This treaty restored the old position whereby the doab was shared between the two.

Krishnadevaraya (1509-29) is considered as the greatest and the most famous king of Vijayanagara empire. He belonged to the Tuluva dynasty. He was also a great soldier and general and waged a number of wars in which he was always successful. The empire reached at the zenith of its power and prosperity during his reign. By that time the Bahmani kingdom was divided into five independent kingdoms. Yet all these five states were determined enemies of the Vijayanagara empire. Therefore his main contest was against these Muslim states which were determined to destroy Vijayanagara. Sultan Muhammed Shah declared Jihad and attacked Vijayanagara in the very beginning of his reign. Krishnadevaraya however, not only defeated him but pursued him. Yusuf Adil Khan the ruler of Bijapur was killed in the battle and Krishnadevaraya captured Krishna Tungabhadra Doab, and the forts of Riachar and Bidar. However returned Bidar state to Muhammed Shah by which he desired to bring about a division among the Muslim states. Next he captured Warrangol, forts of

udayagiri and Kondavidu from Orissa. Golkonda and Bijapur also attacked Vijayanagara in turn. Both were defeated. The army of Bijapur was pursued and its capital Gulberga was captured by Krishnadevaraya. However he returned after placing on the throne the eldest son of Mohammad shah II. Thus Krishnadevaraya defeated all his enemies and recaptured all territory and forts of Vijayanagara Empire which were lost by its previous rulers. He remained undefeated in the battle. He was a capable administrator and patron of art and literature. He founded the city of Negallapur, built up many Gopuram and Mandapam and beautiful the capital city Vijayanagara. Telugu literature made tremendous progress during his reign. The Vijayanagara Empire reached its zenith in peace, order, power, prosperity and learning during his reign.

Krishnadevaraya was succeeded by his brother Achyuta Raya (1530 – 42 AD). He was a weak ruler. His successors Sadasiva Raya was also an incapable ruler and the real authority of the state passed into the hands of his minister, Rama Raya. Rama Raya was an able administrator but failed as a diplomat. He tried to create dissensions among five Muslim states which once formed the Bahmini kingdom. But ultimately this policy failed and all these states united themselves against Vijayanagara in the name of Islam. The combined army of Bijapur, Amamadanagar, Golkonda and Bidar attacked Vijayanagara and the famous battles by Talikotta took place on 23 January 1565. The army of Vijayanagara was completely defeated and the invaders completely destroyed the capital city of Vijayanagara. The battle of Talikotta sounded the death knell of the Vijayanagara empire and produced a state of chaos. The battle of Talikotta could not entirely destroy the empire. The brother Rama Raya transferred the capital from tirumala to Penugonda and maintained the existence of the empire. Tirumala dethroned Sadasiva Raya and captured the throne for himself. He thus laid the foundation of a new dynasty, the Aravede dynasty. Tirumala was succeeded by his son Ranga II who was a successful ruler. The last important ruler of this dynasty was Ranga III. He could not keep the provincial governors under his control and Vijayanagara Empire reached its end.

Administration.

The rulers of the Vijayanagara Empire followed the Tradition of Hindu polity in administration. The King was the head of the state and he was regarded as the Gods representative on the earth. Yet the kings of Vijayanagara were not tyrants but enlightened despots. The King was assisted by a council of ministers

in administration and its advice was binding on the king at times. The king was guided by the rules of Dharma and the rulers of Vijayanagara looked after the welfare of this subject as defined by Dharma. Besides the ministers, there were many other high officials in the state. The empire was divided into six provinces for the convenience of administration. The head of the province was called pranthapathi or Nayaka. Mostly relatives of the king were appointed to these high offices of the state and they enjoyed wide powers in relation to their respective provinces. A province was divided into Mandals and Mandals were further subdivided into smaller units called Nadu, Sthal, Kottan etc. village was the smallest unit of administration. Each village had an assembly consisting of hereditary officers known as Ayagars.

One of the distinguished features of the administration of Vijayanagara Empire was the existence of a particular type of feudalism. The king used to assign land called Amarama to his feudal chief who, in return, paid a fixed yearly amount to the king and also kept a fixed number of soldiers to assist him in wars. They were called Amara Nayakas. They were fairly independent in their internal administration, owed more responsibility in administering their territories as compared to provincial governors, and mostly became hereditary owners of their land as Jagirs.

Economic and Social Condition.

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people. The agriculturists were given all assistance by the state for carrying on cultivation. Remissions of taxes were made in times of famine and failure of crops. Trade, both inland and foreign, was vigorously carried on. The ports of the empire carried on brisk trade. The *Amuktamalyada* advises the king to encourage foreign merchants. Foreign trade was mainly in the hands of the Portuguese and the Arabs but Indian merchants also owned ships and traded with Ormuz, Sri Lanka, China, etc. Spices like pepper, ginger, cotton, precious metals, salt, betel leaves, etc., were the chief articles of trade.

There was considerable industrial activity in the empire. Industries were organized in guilds. Diamond mining flourished. There was a flourishing textile industry. Several industrial arts flourished in the city of Vijayanagar. Precious stones were sold in the bazaars of the city. There were also frequent fairs. Shipbuilding was also carried on. There were gold and silver coins in circulation. The chief gold coin was *Varaha*

The people of Vijayanagar led a contented life. Animal food was consumed on a large scale. Silk and cotton were mainly used for dress. Wool was seldom used. Perfumes, flowers and ornaments were also largely used. Dances and music were highly cultivated. Astrologers and snake-charmers were a familiar sight. There were many such amusements as wrestling, gambling, fencing and cock-fight. Polygamy prevailed and the kings had their large harems. Slavery and Sati were among the social evils that prevailed.

Art and Architecture.

The city of Vijayanagara, the capital of the empire was founded in about 1336 on the banks of the river Tungabhadra. It is one of the most important historical and architectural sites of the medieval period. The remains of the city show, the finest and most characteristic groups of buildings of the Vijayanagara architecture. It was an extensive city with numerous large scale buildings built of granite and dark green chlorite stone. The city had palaces, temples, extensive water works, elephant stables etc.

The Vijayanagara kings built numerous temples which are the best specimens of Hindu architecture. The temple of Vithala constructed by Krishnadevaraya, has been described as the finest buildings of its kind in southern India. A notable feature of the architecture of Vijayanagara empire was that the art of constructing tall and massive gopurams. Some of the rulers also constructed mandapas over the temples which had been regarded as a finest specimen of architecture.

Literature. Literature and fine arts progressed with in the Vijayanagara Empire. The rulers' encouraged Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada literature and languages. During its early period Sayana wrote commentaries of the Vedas. King Bukka I encouraged Telugu literature. He provided protection to a great Telugu poet Nachana Somana, king Devaraja II provided court patronage to thirty four poets. King Krishna deva Raya made free Telugu from the influence of Sanskrit language and this opened way for independent writings called Prabhandas. His court was graced eight famous poets called Ashtadiggajas including Pedanna, Besides Telugu he patronized scholars of Kannada and Tamil as well. Therefore the rule of Krishna deva Raya marked the zenith of the growth of various literatures. He himself was a scholar and patronized many scholars at his court. During the Vijayanagara period remarkable Texts on religion philosophy, grammar, drama, music etc, were produced. Fine arts like music, dance and painting made progress.

The Successor States

The battle of 1565 resulted in the disintegration of Vijayanagara kingdom and the subsequent rise of several independent regional territories. The earlier chief minister and a commander of Vijayanagara, Tirumala appointed himself as the regent, making Penukonda, a remote place as his headquarters. Though he crowned himself at Penukonda in 1569 as Tirumala Devaraya, he controlled only a small territory of the erstwhile Vijayanagara kingdom.

In the midst of the ensuing revolts and civil wars several provinces like Tuluva, Aravidu, Tanjavur, Ikkeri, Ramanadu, Gingee, Madurai etc became independent. Although these off shoots were politically and culturally closely related all of these states differed from one another, in politics and socio-ecological characteristics. While some of them were formed as a result of usurpation, others came from conquest or secession or rising up the imperial military ranks and attaining increasingly autonomous governorships or arose from local chiefs incorporated. While some of them encompassed densely populated riverine areas, others were situated in arid or upland areas.

The three important successor states of Vijayanagara were Gingee (Jingi), Tanjavur and Madurai in present day Tamil Nadu. It was during the first half of 16th century that the warrior chiefs from the Telugu region were posted as Nayakas at the strategic centres of Vijayanagara kingdom, Gingee, Tanjavur and Madurai. The Nayakas were appointed as provincial governors by the Vijayanagara king, who divided the Tamil regions into three and put them under these Nayakas. After the decline of Vijayanagara kingdoms all these three Nayakas declared independence. The Nayaka of Gingee was the first to declare independence and Tanjavur and Madurai followed. While these three Nayakas ruled independently during the period between 16th and 18th centuries, they were sometimes at war with each other also.

The Nayakas of Gingee ruled most parts of northern Tamil Nadu, while Tanjavur Nayakas dominated the fertile Kaveri delta and western Tamil Nadu was under the Madurai Nayakas. These Nayakas are credited with their massive restructuring work which provided a massive fillip to economic and agricultural growth and helping in restoring order leading to formation of many new towns and villages. They helped development in trade also. Artisans and merchants were drawn in the frame work of their rule and encouraged and protected them.

The significant aspect of the Nayaka administration was the 'Polygar system' or the 'Palayakkara system'. It was a quasi feudal organization by which the

country was divided into multiple 'palayams' or small provinces and each palayam was under the control of a Palayakkaran or a petty chief. Thus Polygar was the feudal title for a class of territorial administrators and military governors appointed by the Nayakas during the period between 16th and 18th centuries. Polygars were responsible for the immediate control of their territories. They paid fixed tributes to the Nayaka kings and maintained a quota of troops ready for immediate service.

The Polygars were instrumental in establishing administrative reforms by building irrigation projects, forts, and religious institutions. The Polygar system was established in the second half of the 16th century by Ariyanatha Mudaliyar, the Prime Minister of the first Nayaka ruler of Madurai to make the territorial administration more efficient. The Polygars administered their Palayams from their fortified centres. Their chief functions included collection of taxes, maintenance of law and order, and running local judiciary. They were to retain one-fourth of the revenue collected and the remaining paid to the royal treasury. At times they founded new villages, built dams, constructed tanks and built temples. Several new rain water tanks were erected in the semi-arid tracts of western and southern Tamil Nadu. They protected civilians from robbers and dacsits, rampant in those regions and from invading armies which often resorted to pillaging the villages. The Polygar system is assessed as an extended form of Amaranayaka system of Vijayanagara.

After the decline of the Nayakas, their territories became a part of the domination of the Carnatic Nawab. He entrusted the English East India Company to collect revenue from the Polygar areas. The Polygars went into war with the British. They were the first native rulers to wage wars against the British in India. The most important revolt was that of Veerapandya Katta Bomman, the poligar of panchalamkurichi of Tuticorin district. Though Veerapandya Katta Bomman fought heroically, he was finally captured by the British and hanged in 1799.

Syllabus

HY5B08 MEDIEVAL INDIA: SOCIETY, CULTURE AND RELIGION

No. of Credits: 4

No. of Contact Hours per week: 5

Aim of the Course: To make the students familiar with the aspects of society and culture of India from early medieval period to the period of Mughal rule.

The study of individual rulers and dynasties are avoided as they are taught in detail at school level.

UNIT I - Nature of State

- Important ruling families - The Chakravartin concept.
- Salient features of administration - Bureaucracy and Revenue system - War technology.
- State under Delhi Sultanate.
- Knowledge systems - Mathematics, Astronomy and Medicine.

UNIT II - Elements of Feudalism in North Indian Society

- Historiographical trends
- Political Fragmentation
- Urban decay - system of land grants
- Growth of regional kingdoms
- Government under Delhi Sultans - Iqta system - Nobility and Ulemas – debate on feudalism.
- Urban centres under the Delhi sultanate.

UNIT III - Aspect of Mughal rule

- Historiography
- Bureaucracy - Military System - Mansab and Jagirdari system.
- Trade and Urban Centres.
- Religion - Din-Ilahi
- Mughal Art - court culture - music – dance – literary texts - growth of regional languages.
- The Maratha State.

