



**EIILM UNIVERSITY**  
S I K K I M

**INDIA FROM 16TH CENTURY TO  
MID 18TH CENTURY**

**SYLLABUS**

**India in the 16th Century**

The Trading World of Asia and the Coming of the Portuguese, Polity and Economy in Deccan and South India, Polity and Economy in North India, Political Formations in Central and West Asia

**Mughal Empire: Polity and Regional Powers**

Relations with Central Asia and Persia, Expansion and Consolidation: 1556-1707, Growth of Mughal Empire: 1526-1556, The Deccan States and the Mughals, Rise of the Marathas in the 17th Century, Rajput States, Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golkonda

**Political Ideas and Institutions**

Mughal Administration: Mansab and Jagir, Mughal Administration: Central, Provincial and Local, Mughal Ruling Class, Mughal Theory of Sovereignty

**State and Economy**

Mughal Land Revenue System, Agrarian Relations: Mughal India, Land Revenue System: Maratha, Deccan and South India, Agrarian Relations: Deccan and South India, Fiscal and Monetary System, Prices

**Production and Trade**

The European Trading Companies, Personnel of Trade and Commercial Practices, Inland and Foreign Trade Non-Agricultural Production, Agricultural Production

**Society and Culture**

Population in Mughal India, Rural Classes and Life-style, Urbanization, Urban Classes and Life-style Religious Ideas and Movements, State and Religion, Painting and Fine Arts, Architecture, Science and Technology, Indian Languages and Literature

**India at the Mid 18th Century**

Potentialities of Economic Growth: An Overview, Rise of Regional Powers, Decline of the Mughal Empire

**Suggested Readings**

1. Thomas George Percival Spear, Romila Thapar, A History of India: Volume 2: From the 16th Century to the 20th Century, Penguin Books
2. Peter James Marshall, Bengal, The British Bridgehead: Eastern India 1740-1828, Cambridge University Press
3. Velcheru Narayana Rao, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, David Dean Shulman, Textures of Time: Writing History in South India 1600-1800, Other Press

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INDIA IN THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

### **STRUCTURE**

- Learning objectives
- The trading world of Asia and the coming of the Portuguese
- Polity and economy in Deccan and south India
- Polity and economy in north India
- Political formations in central and west Asia
- Review questions

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After reading this chapter, you will be able to know that:

- The opening of the sea-route flanked by Europe and Asia marked a period of great importance,
- Monopoly in excess of sea-borne trade was introduced through the Portuguese throughout this period,
- The system of trade and commerce introduced through the Portuguese showed the method to other European powers for trade,
- Geographical powers on polity and economy of Deccan and South India,
- Political formation and its nature in Deccan and South India,
- Nature of political authority exercised through Sikandar Lodi,
- Troubles faced through Ibrahim Lodi,
- Early difficulties of Babur in establishing Mughal rule,
- Circumstances in which Humayun was defeated through Sher Shah,
- Administrative set up under the Lodi Sultans as well as the process of urbanization,
- Understand the appearance of the Mughals on Indian borders and to learn in relation to their origin and antecedents, and
- Demarcate the geographical boundary of the two powerful neighboring states of the Mughal Empire.

### **THE TRADING WORLD OF ASIA AND THE COMING OF THE PORTUGUESE**

## **Factories, Fortresses And Commercial Arrangements**

The Italian merchants had recognized warehouses (factories) in Cairo and Alexandria to carry on trade and commerce. Following this instance the Portuguese, too, founded factories on the coastal regions of India and certain other places in Asia. Factory could be defined as a commercial organization having an autonomous subsistence set up within the country with which another country had commercial relations. Each factory had an officer called factor who was assisted through a number of persons appointed through the Portuguese king. He was the agent of the Crown to promote economic, financial, and administrative activities of all sorts. In all situations Portuguese national interests were paramount thoughts. Factories also required protection from hostile elements. So, to consolidate and strengthen their power the Portuguese also attempted to fortify their factories. A chain of factories and fortresses came into subsistence for the support of the maritime trade mannered through the Portuguese. These fortified centers were expected to serve the Portuguese to check the movements of vessels owned through the others and to function as areas for the reserve of military and naval forces. The system of factories had a great role to play in the commercial arrangements in the period beginning with the sixteenth century till the mid-eighteenth century. Let us briefly discuss the factories recognized through the Portuguese in dissimilar regions.

### ***Western India***

In the Malabar region the Portuguese recognized their first factory in 1500 at Calicut. Though, it had a short-existed subsistence. The Zamorins also did not allow the Portuguese to fortify their factories there. In 1525, finally, the Portuguese abandoned their construction at Calicut. Though, in the other regions, of Malabar coast, factories were recognized at Cochin (1501), Cannanore (1503), Quilon (1503), Chaliyam (1531), Rachol (1535), Crangannore (1536), Mangalore and Honaver (1568) and Bhatkal through the Portuguese. All of these factories were fortified in due course. Nizam- ul Mulk of Ahmednagar also permitted the Portuguese to have a factor at Chaul in the second decade of the 16th Century.

In the north-west, Cambay (Khambayat) was the main port of call on the route from Malacca connecting Calicut, the ports of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf with the ports of the Mediterranean. Besides Cambay, the Portuguese also recognized their factories at Diu (1509, 1535), Bassin (1534), Surat, Daman (1599) and Bhavnagar. Therefore approximately the whole coastal belt of Malabar, Konkan, and north-west India was brought under the Portuguese power.

### ***Eastern India***

Direct contacts began to be recognized with the Eastern coast of India in the wake of the capture of Malacca and the beginning of the Portuguese settlement there. The Portuguese navigators came crossways many merchants from the Eastern coast of India who had trade relations with Malacca and other South East Asian centers. The Portuguese composed textiles and other commodities from several port towns of the Coromandel Coast like Masulipatnam, Pulicat, San Thome, Pondicherry, Cuddalore, Porto Novo, Nagapatnam, etc. The latter was a significant port for the Portuguese in their trade with Porto Novo, Malacca, Manila, and other region of the east. Meiliapore recognized as San Thome to the north of Nagapatnam, had also a Portuguese settlement which was bounded through walls. The Portuguese also recognized a fortress at Manar in 1518 on the western coast of Ceylon. This fortress, though not on the main land of India, could control the movement of vessels to the East from the western side of the subcontinent.

The Portuguese also tried to establish commercial contacts with Bengal from A.D. 1517. The first effort in this direction was made at Chittagong, the chief port of Bengal throughout this period. After much maneuvering, they at last obtained permission from Mahmud Shah, the king of Bengal, to erect factories at Chittagong and Satgaon in 1536. The second settlement at Hugli was granted to the Portuguese through Akbar in 1579-80. The third one was recognized at Bandel through a Farman of Shahjahan in 1633. Yet, on the eastern coast throughout the 16th Century there were no fortresses as on the western coast. Still the settlements, with a few artillery, were able to oversee the movement of vessels carrying commodities.

### ***South-East Asia***

With a view to having an exclusive domination in excess of the trade in the Indian Ocean regions, the Portuguese found it necessary to bring under their control the significant trade centres in South East Asia. The well-recognized maritime centre of Malacca was their target which they acquired in 1511. They recognized a few fortresses at Colombo, Batticola, Jafnapatam, etc,—all in Ceylon. Subsequently, contacts with Java, Siam, Moluccas, Martaban, and Pegu were recognized. From 1518, the Portuguese started a settlement in China on the island of Sancheu. It was here that St. Francis Xavier, a Christian missionary, died in 1552. The starting of factories in several parts of the subcontinent of India and neighboring Asiatic kingdoms provided an environment appropriate for long aloofness trade to the Portuguese.

## **Commodities Of Export And Import**

The chief aim of the Portuguese in discovering the sea-route connecting the East with Portugal was to collect spices directly from the places of production rather than from the hands of the intermediaries like the Italian or the Muslim traders. Pepper became a necessary ingredient in European food. The demand for pepper went on rising, especially for the sake of preserving meat. Besides, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, mace, nutmeg, and many exotic herbs from the east had a market in Europe. A special diversity of textiles like Muslin, chintz, etc. and few animals like elephants, too, found their method to Portugal. The Portuguese did not have enough commodities to exchange for those accessible in the East. Their commodities had a limited market in the middle of the eastern nobility. Hence valuable metals, especially silver, minted or in bullion; were brought to the East from the West for buying goods.

### ***Malabar and Konkan Coasts***

Pepper occupied the first place in the middle of the commodities traded from Malabar and the Konkan coasts. In the initial stage pepper from Malabar was measured to be distant better in excellence than that from Malacca, Java, and Canara. Towards the second half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, pepper from Canara began to be exported in larger quantity than before. It is estimated that the Portuguese exported from Malabar in relation to the 25, 000 to 30,000 quintals of spices of all sorts annually to Lisbon in the first decade of the sixteenth century. Through the end of the century, the contractors were given a targeted export of 30,000 quintals of pepper from the Malabar Coast to Lisbon. The records of the first half of the sixteenth century illustrate that 36,664 quintals of pepper was sent to Portugal from the Malabar and Konkan coasts in 1546.

Ginger constituted another bulk item of trade from the Malabar Coast. It was accessible as conserve, too, for export. Cinnamon was another commodity exported from Malabar, though its excellence was not as good as that from Ceylon. White and red sandalwood also found their method to Portugal from the Malabar Coast. Besides these Myrobalans of all sorts were composed from Malabar, Dabul, Vijaynagar and Deccan in general for export to Portugal. Likewise sealing wax, indigo, spikenard, tamarind, arecanut, textiles, ivory and turmeric were other items that were exported in varying quantity to Portugal from the Malabar and Konkan coasts. Slaves, too, became a commercial commodity for export. The request made through the Zamorin of Calicut in 1498 to Vasco da Gama provides a clue to the commodities that were imported into the Malabar and Konkan coasts. He had asked for gold, silver, coral and scarlet. Afonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese governor of

Goa, gave a list of commodities to the king of Portugal in 1513 that could be marketed in India. This incorporated items like coral, copper, quicksilver, vermilion, brocades, velvet, carpets, safron, rose-water and cloths of several types. All these items were not from Portugal, but the Portuguese started procuring them from several places, like Flanders, Germany, England and other European countries. For instance, damask, lead, cinnabar, gold from Soffala, French and English linen clothes, alums tone, tin, opium, steel, Genwa velvet, scarlet from Florence, red cloth from London, cloths from Holland, raw and worked corals, etc. were brought to India. Minted coins of several denominations were incorporated in this list. All these were brought to Cochin which was the commercial headquarter of the Portuguese in India. From there they were later sent to several parts of India. When the Portuguese headquarter was shifted to Goa, most of the significant articles like gold, silver and cash were taken there and sharing was done from there.

### ***North-Western India***

Indigo, textiles of several types, silk and curious items like handicrafts made of tortoise shells, etc. were composed from the North-western India for export to Portugal. Taffeta was one of the expensive export diversities. Satin, chintz, malmal, striped cotton cloths, cambric-muslin, silk scarf, Golkonda muslins and several other diversities of silk products accessible in Chaul, Dabhol and the ports of Gujarat were exported to Portugal. In the middle of these items silks were produced in places like Burhanpur and Balaghat, chintz in Cambay, calico in the vicinity of Daman and Guingao in Cambay and Balaghat. The volume of textile products increased in the seventeenth century. Copper, broadcloths and cash in several denominations were sent to the North-western coast. In addition to this, a few products such as pepper and other spices from the South were also taken to north-western India for the purchase of textiles.

### ***Eastern Coast***

Textiles of several types constituted the chief export from the eastern coast of India. Sandalwood from the Coromandel was a significant item of export to Portugal. Spikenard was cultivated in Bengal and this was brought to Cochin to be exported to Portugal. The most expensive item of export from this region was pearl, chiefly composed from the pearl fishery coast. Cotton and silk textiles and embroideries from Bengal were exported through the Portuguese. Ginger in conserve, myrobalans, butter, oil, wax and rice were the other commodities that were composed from Bengal. The Portuguese brought to Bengal brocades, damasks, satins, taffetas, cloves, nutmegs, mace, camphor, cinnamon, pepper, chests, writing desks, valuable pearls and jewels. Most of these were from Malacca, China, Borneo, Ceylon and Malabar Coast. Sea

shells or cowries from Maldives, white and red sandalwood from Solor and Timor were also taken to Bengal through the Portuguese.

### ***South-East Asia***

Several types of spices were composed from Ceylon and other South-East Asian regions; for instance, Malacca and Java furnished pepper for export. Moluccas produced good diversity of cloves. The best sort of cinnamon was furnished through Ceylon for export to Lisbon. Timor and Tennaserim produced good diversity of sandalwood which was accepted through the Portuguese to Lisbon. Sumatra provided sealing wax for Portuguese consumption. Borneo, Sumatra, Pacem and China furnished good diversity of camphor for export to Lisbon. Benzoin from Pegu was also taken through the Portuguese to Portugal. Rhubarb was accepted through the Portuguese from China and musk from Pegu. In return, the Portuguese took cash, silver, gold and textiles to South-East Asian regions. Most of these textile goods were manufactured in India.

### **Finances Of The Portuguese Trade**

Taking into account the details of the Portuguese enterprise on the Malabar Coast in the period flanked by 1500 and 1506, an Italian estimated in 1506 that the total investment needed for conducting trade with the East was 170,000 ducats every year. The king of Portugal provided only one-fourth of this amount and the rest was raised through the merchants and financiers who collaborated with the Portuguese king. In 1500 he issued an order permitting native as well as foreign merchants to fit out their own vessels to the East. Revenues composed in the form of booty, tributes and taxes levied on ships of the private merchants also provided funds for the conduct of trade with India.

### ***European Merchant-Financiers***

Italians, especially the Florentines, occupied a significant position in the middle of the financiers in the sixteenth century. Most of the Italian financiers concluded contracts with the Portuguese king. They supplied cash or materials to the king at Lisbon. The king used them to purchase pepper and other commodities from India. These commodities were given to these financiers at Lisbon in view of the contracts signed. Though, some of the financiers also sent their own factors to India. Cash or commodities were always sent under the supervision of the Portuguese authorities to the East.

Indian commodities also attracted the German financiers and merchants.

The Portuguese king welcomed them with open arms for he himself was finding it hard to finance the Oriental enterprise on his own. Since copper was given in part payment for Indian commodities, especially pepper and other spices, large quantity of copper was needed for transactions. Some of the German merchant financiers like the Fuggers had a monopoly in excess of the production of copper in Europe. This turned out to be of great use for trade with India. The German financiers could fit out their vessels, entrust cash and commodities to the India House in Lisbon to be taken to India under the Portuguese flag and buy the commodities from Lisbon according to the conditions and circumstances of the contracts signed.

Throughout the second half of the sixteenth century both the Welsers and Fuggers joined the consortium beside with Giraldo Paris and Juan Battista Rovalesco for the purchase of 30,000 quintals of pepper directly from India and agreed to send an amount of 170,000 crusades to India annually. Therefore, the firms of Welsers and Fugger sustained to be closely associated with the trade of India. Separately from the Fuggers, other firms like those of Herwarts and Imhof were interested in trading several sorts of valuable stones and diamonds from Vijaynagar.

There were a few Portuguese merchants who in their private capability participated in the trade with India throughout the sixteenth century. State officials posted in India were also allowed to participate in the India trade. According to their position in the hierarchy, they had some rights to take certain quantity of commodities to Portugal, in lieu of remuneration in cash. The details of their entitlements were spelt out in their appointment orders and this shaped part of their emoluments.

### ***Indian Merchants and Rulers***

Many Indian merchants supplied commodities to the Portuguese on credit when the latter did not have cash or commodities to furnish in exchange. The merchants of Cochin, especially the Marakkars, were of great help to the Portuguese in this respect and their services were gratefully remembered through the Portuguese officials. Sometimes, the Portuguese king was persuaded to grant some privileges to such merchants. Some of the local rulers stood surety for the Portuguese when they did not have money to pay to the merchants for the commodities bought through them. For instance, the king of Cochin came forward to help the Portuguese many times creation the required volume of commodities accessible to them on credit.

The Portuguese had armed vessels plying in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian sea. Ships carrying commodities which were not given passes (cartaz) through the Portuguese officials were confiscated through them. The booty

therefore obtained acquiesce a sizeable source of income which was again invested in trade. Defeated rulers were compelled to pay tributes to the Portuguese, either in cash or type. This source was also exploited through them many times for investment. The persons interested in sending their ships to other parts of India or to Asian countries were required to take passes (cartaz) from the Portuguese for which a fee was charged. Though this was quite negligible in itself, such ships were obliged to visit any of the ports in India where the Portuguese had customs houses, and to pay taxes. This was another source of income for the Portuguese. Therefore, in a diversity of methods, the Portuguese organized funds for the running of their trade.

### **Nature Of The Portuguese Trade With India**

Right from the time Portuguese arrived at Calicut they had demanded that other merchants, Indian as well as foreign, should be ousted and a complete monopoly in excess of trade be granted to them. Portuguese ships equipped with arms and ammunitions threatened other merchants and confiscated their merchandise and vessels. Through 1501 the Portuguese king assumed a grandiloquent title evincing his proprietary right in excess of the Indian Ocean regions. The title proclaimed him Lord of Navigation, Conquest and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India. In 1502, the Portuguese demanded an exclusive right in excess of trade at Calicut to which the Zamorin, the king of Calicut, did not yield. The Vasco da Gama declared war on all ships plying in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. He introduced an expedient under which those ships which accepted a cartaz duly signed through the Portuguese authorities, namely the royal factor, were not to be attacked. This certificate was first issued in 1502.

Indian merchants, rulers and all those occupied in maritime trade, had to take cartaz from the Portuguese. While issuing such passes, it was specifically mentioned that certain items like pepper, horses, ginger, coir, ship pitch, sulphur, lead, saltpeter, cinnamon, etc. were not to be loaded on their ships. All these were monopoly items of the Portuguese. Routes and destinations of such ships were also sought to be controlled. Rulers like Akbar, and his successors, Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar, Adil Shah of Bijapur, kings of Cochin, the Zamorins of Calicut and the rulers of Cannanore purchased passes from the Portuguese to send their ships to several places.

### ***Monopoly Trade***

Till the end of the fifteenth century, merchants from several quarters of the world were found on the coastal regions of India occupied in trade and commerce. As Vasco da Gama reported in 1498, there were merchants from

Mecca, Tenasseri, Pegu, Ceylon, Turkey, Egypt, Persia, Ethiopia, Tunis and several parts of India at the port of Calicut. It is well-recognized that Chinese merchants as well as merchants from the Red Sea areas used to frequent the Indian ports. There is no record of any group of merchants demanding exclusive right of trade in general, nor of any effort made to declare a few or all commodities set separately for any body. But, with the arrival of the Portuguese, this state of affairs underwent considerable change. Kings were pressurised to forbid other merchants from trading with their ports. Likewise, certain commodities were declared forbidden to be traded through others. In other words, the Portuguese demanded monopoly of trade. The treaties concluded with the Indian rulers specifically mentioned this. The setting up of Portuguese fortresses at strategic places, surveillance through their patrolling vessels, and the insistence on passes for other ships were the attempts made to establish monopoly of trade in Asian waters.

### ***Trade of the Indian Rulers and Merchants***

The Portuguese attempts at establishing total monopoly did not bring in relation to a situation in which trade mannered through the Indian rulers and merchants was totally uprooted. The king of Cannanore, for instance, used to collect passes from the Portuguese to send his vessels laden with commodities to Cambay and Hormuz. He imported horses from the above mentioned places though this was recognized through the Portuguese a monopoly item. Sometimes such vessels ran the risk of being confiscated through the Portuguese. The same was the case with the kings of Tanur, Challe and Calicut on the Malabar coast. The nobles of Gujarat sustained their trade despite the Portuguese monopoly. Malik Gopi, Malik Ayaz, Khwaja Sofar and others interested in trade plied their ships with or without passes from the Portuguese.

Besides, the local and foreign merchants settled in India accepted on their trade with or without cartaz. It was estimated that out of the 60,000 quintals of pepper produced annually in the area flanked by Calicut and Cape Comorin, only 15,000 quintals were delivered to the Portuguese factories and the remaining three-fourths were taken to other ports. This was termed illegal through the Portuguese. The Portuguese were not willing to enhance the price of pepper agreed upon in 1503 even after many decades. Hence, the producers of pepper did not have any alternative other than supplying it to the merchants who might buy it and send it to other centres of trade without the knowledge of the Portuguese. Moreover, many Portuguese officials mannered their own private trade in several commodities without the knowledge of their government. In fact, Portuguese monopoly was never effective in the Red Sea zone.

### ***Trade and Production***

Overseas trade mannered in the sixteenth century in Asia in general and India in scrupulous was, through and large, of long-aloofness in nature involving the Asiatic ports on the one side and the Atlantic ports on the other. The commodities exported from India reached several parts of Europe. There were a number of elements in the pattern of this trade, as explained earlier, which distinguished it from just "peddling" trade. In view of the greater demand for pepper, the cultivators strove to augment the production. It is calculated that the production of pepper in the Malabar area went up through 200 to 275 per cent in the period flanked by 1515 and 1607. As there is no reliable account of the volume of production before the arrival of the Portuguese, it is rather hard to create a comparison and assert with certainty the exact percentage of augment in production. At any rate, it is reasonable to

conclude that the production of pepper in India increased after the Portuguese advent. But it necessity be borne in mind that the internal demand for pepper from the Mughal Empire and the external one from the Safavi Empire also might have contributed to the augment in pepper production in India.

## **POLITY AND ECONOMY IN DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIA**

### **Geographical Setting**

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

### ***Deccan***

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

The central Deccan (from the Ajanta ranges to the Nilgiri hills and Palaghat gap) possesses black soil which is good for cotton farming. The Khandesh and Berar tracts of Maharashtra lying beside the banks of the Tapti and the Wardha and Painganga rivers were recognized for fertility. This led to frequent encounters flanked by the Malwa and Bahmani rulers for the occupation of Kherla and Mahur.

Flanked by the Krishna and Godavari lies the flat plain which is also well-known for its rich 'cotton' soil. The rivers, too, are not perennial; as a result, tank irrigation became significant. Beside the Krishna valley lies the Kurnool rocks where the well-known Golkonda mines were located. The southern Deccan plateau (parts lying in modern Karnataka) is also rich in mineral possessions (copper, lead, zinc, iron, gold, manganese etc.).

The region south of the Krishna Tungabhadra doab shaped South India. The coastal belt in the east is recognized as Coromandel while the western tract from south of Kanara (from the river Netravati down to Cape Comorin) is recognized as Malabar which is bounded through the Western Ghats in the east. We have already discussed how throughout the Chola period the focus of activity was confined mainly approximately the Kaveri tract which, throughout the Vijaynagar period, shifted further north-east towards Tungabhadra-Krishna doab (the Rayalseema tract) where the capital of Vijaynagar was situated. Throughout the 13-16th century, this tract remained the centre of thrust about: first, flanked by Vijaynagar and Bahmani, and later flanked by Vijaynagar and its successor Nayak states and the Bijapur rulers. The Qutb Shahi rulers also joined the disagreement regularly.

Another characteristic that influenced the 16th century South Indian polity, economy and society was the migration of the Telugu population from the northern tracts (of South India) which started from the mid-15th century and sustained throughout the 16th century. Interestingly, this movement was from the coastal and deltaic wet land areas, which were greatly fertile, well-cultivated and well-irrigated. There might have been numerous causes for these migrations like, the Bahmani pressure; deliberate attempts on the part of the Vijaynagar rulers to extend their dominion further south; natural process, that is, movement from more densely populated areas; the soil was well suited to the migrants since it was excellent for dry farming, etc. At any rate, it had deep socio-economic impact. For instance, the development of dry farming led to the rise of tank irrigation which became the crucial part of the 16th century South Indian economy. Secondly, its comparatively low productivity acquiesce low surplus which helped in the rise of what the modern scholars call "portfolio capitalists" in this tract.

### **Political Formations In The Deccan**

The decline of the Bahmani power gave method to the rise of five kingdoms in the Deccan. The death of Mahmud Gawan, an Afaqi noble, virtually sealed the fate of the Bahmani power in the Deccan and, finally, the death of Mahmud Shah (1482-1518) of the Bahmani rule. The crucial factor in the decline was the long-drawn disagreement flanked by the Afaqis and the

Deccanis. Both of these factions were dissatisfied. For instance, the Deccanis blamed the Sultan for showing extra favour to the Afaqis while the Afaqis felt their position was no more secure and stable.

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

Out of the five states that appeared after the decline of the Bahmani kingdoms, the founders of the three—Bijapur, Bidar and Golkonda—were Afaqi nobles. Ahmednagar and Berar were under the Deccani nobles. But the Afaqi-Deccani factor hardly dominated their relationships. Instead, it was based more on what suited their interest, circumstances and exigencies of the time. Accordingly, even an Afaqi state could join hands with a Deccani power against another Afaqi and vice-versa. The history of the 16th century Deccani states cannot be studied in isolation. Each wanted to extend its dominion at the cost of the other. As a result, alliances and counter-alliances were a regular characteristic. As repeatedly pointed out geography played a crucial role in the Deccan politics.

The geographic location of Ahmednagar (in the north), Golkonda (in the east) and Bijapur (in the south) was such that it provided them enough room for extension towards further north and south. Therefore, these kingdoms had the natural advantage to gain strength. Bidar and Berar (situated in the central Deccan) sandwiched as they were flanked by the power blocks, remained as mere pawns in the hands of one or the other Deccani power. Perhaps, shifting loyalties was the only strategy for their subsistence. Bijapur (bounded through Ahmednagar in the north, Bidar in the east and Vijaynagar and its successor Nayak states in the south) coveted the fertile plains of the Krishna-Tungabhadra doab. This clashed with the interests of the South Indian states and also with those of Bidar and Golkonda. Again, its interests in Sholapur and Naldurg were the chief factor behind the disagreement with Ahmednagar. For Golkonda (bounded through Berar in the north, Bidar in the west and the Vijaynagar and successor Nayak kingdoms in the south), the subsistence of Bidar and Berar was very significant to serve as a buffer flanked by Golkonda

and Bijapur and Ahmednagar and Golkonda. The latter preferred the help of Ahmednagar for its ambitious plans in the Mughal and Raichur doab. On the other hand, Ahmednagar, too, needed the help of Golkonda against the aggressive designs of Bijapur in excess of Naldurg, Sholapur and Gulbaiga. Berar was in constant disagreement with Ahmednagar in the west and Golkonda in the south. The only state left to ally with was Bijapur. So, Bijapur-Berar alliance was more lasting throughout the first half of the 16th century. But throughout the second half of the century, the situation slowly changed. This was because Bijapur's interests lay more in gaining the favour of Ahmednagar and Bidar in its disagreement against Golkonda and Vijaynagar. Bijapur helped Murtaza Nizam Shah to occupy Berar in 1574. Bijapur annexed Bidar in 1619. Though, the scene in the Deccan changed drastically with the rise of the Mughals who invaded Ahmednagar in 1595. This invasion compelled the Deccani kingdoms to seek for new compromises and balances.

### **Political Formations In South India**

Through 1500, the whole South India shaped part of the Vijaynagar empire with the exclusion of Malabar (the south-western coast) and Tirunelveli. Later, even Tirunelveli, too, was annexed (in 1540) through the Vijaynagar empire. At the onset of our period under study, there were four independent kingdoms in the Malabar region: Kolathunad (Cannanore), ruled through the Kolathiris, Kozhikode (Calicut) under the Samudri raja, Venad under the hegemony of the Tiruvadis and, the upcoming Cochin state. Throughout the course of the 16th century, within the Vijaynagar empire, we see the emergence of the Nayak kingdoms of Ikkeri, Senji (Gingee), Odeyar Mysore, Madurai and Tanjore which sustained to remain notionally subordinate to Vijaynagar.

#### ***Rise of The Nayak Kingdoms***

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

#### ***Senji***

The kingdom of Senji (beside eastern coast from Palar in the north to Coleroon in the south) under a nayak seems to have originated throughout

Krishnadevaraya's feigned. Its first nayak was Vaiappa (1526-1544). Till 1592, all the nayaks of Senji remained loyal to Vijaynagar. Though, the Vijaynagar ruler, Venkata I shifted his capital after 1592 from Penukonda to Chandragiri in order to strengthen Vijaynagar's hold in excess of the nayaks. This gave rise to resentment in the middle of the nayaks as they expected Vijaynagar's interference in their internal affairs. (This was the main cause for frequent evasion of payment of tribute through the nayaks to Vijaynagar which ultimately led to civil war after Venkata I's death in 1614.) One instance of such interference was that the nayak of Vellore, who was subordinate to Senji Nayak, was encouraged through Venkata I to disregard the latter's authority. Venkata I followed the policy of 'divide and rule' to weaken the nayaks of several tracts within the Empire. All this led the nayaks of Vellore and Senji to rebel (sometime after 1600). Later, Vellore and Senji were taken in excess of through Venkata I (1600-1608).

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

### *Madura*

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

### *Ikkeri*

The nayaks of Ikkeri (north Karnataka) also arose throughout Krishnadevaraya's reign. The first nayak was Keladi Nayaka Chaudappa who served Achyutaraya and Ramaraja. Sadasiva Nayak (1540-65), the successor and son of Chaudappa, was behind Bijapur's defeat at the hands of Ramaraya and, as a reward received the title of 'Raya'; later, his military exploits won him the title of 'Raja' from Ramaraya.

Tulu nayaks of Ikkeri remained loyal to Vijaynagar throughout the 16th century, but in the early years of the 17th century they became practically independent under Venkatappa Nayaka I (1586-1629). The nayaks of Ikkeri always remained under heavy pressure from Bijapur, but they were able to repel the latter's attacks. Besides, they also met hostility from the Odeyar nayaks of Mysore. The Ikkeri nayaks also cast greedy eyes in excess of Gersoppa, the richest tract for pepper in north Canara. This led to regular campaigns to subdue the queen Bhairavadevi of Gersoppa.

### *Odeyar Mysore*

The history of the Odeyar chiefs goes back to 1399 when they settled in

this region. But it was under Chamaraja III (1513-53) and his son Timmaraja (1553-72) that the Odeyars came into prominence. Vijaynagar's hold in excess of this territory was never complete. We discover that the most powerful of the Vijaynagar ruler Krishnadevaraya found it hard to curb these Ummattur chiefs. Odeyar nayaks sustained to defy the Vijaynagar might till the Raja finally succeeded in 1610 in ousting the Vijaynagar viceroy of Seringapatam and made it his capital.

### *States in Malabar*

Through the turn of the 15th century, there were three prominent kingdoms in Malabar:

- Kolathunad or Cannanore (north of Calicut, from Netravati river in the north to Korappuzha in the south, ruled through Kolathiris);
- Kozhikode or Calicut (flanked by the Kolathiri kingdom in the north to the Tiruvadi kingdom in the south, ruled through the Zamorin) and,
- Venad or Travancore (from Quilon in the north to Cape Comorin in the south).

Besides, Cochin was the emerging state. The main characteristic of the 16th century Malabar polity was perpetual warfare flanked by Kolathunad and Kozhikode; and flanked by the latter and Cochin (Nayar) rajas. Both, Kolathunad and Cochin (Kshatriya) rajas claimed superior lineage. Besides these four major rulers, there existed a number of small chiefs/rajas at Tanur, Mangat, Idappalli, VedakkumkUr, Procaud, Kayamkulam and Quilon. The rajas of Cranganore, Idappalli and Vedakkumkur were subordinated to Calicut. Idappalli was significant for Calicut for it provided a base for their operations against Cochin, the socio-political structure of Kerala was such that often the rajas held a right and property in each other's territory. Therefore, in the Malabar political structure there was enough room for extra-territorial claims. For instance, Calicut had several rights in excess of the temples of Cochin and Travancore. Likewise, there were several rajas that were not subordinate to Calicut but they exercised authority in excess of several temples in the Zamorin's territory. Throughout the 16th century, Calicut had certain separate advantages in excess of other Malabar kingdoms; first, it was the great centre of Western trade; secondly, it had strong naval power and; thirdly, it had the support of Arab traders who provided arms and horses.

The 16th century history of Malabar coincides with the early history of the Portuguese in India. The Arab merchants of Calicut were apprehensive of the Portuguese designs from the very beginning. The Zamorins supported them against the Europeans. On the other hand, Calicut's rivalry with Canmanore and Cochin forced them to cultivate friendship with the Portuguese. Every Zamorin used to depose the then Cochin raja at his accession. Besides, they

forced Cochin to sell all its products through Calicut. To retaliate this was an apt opportunity for Cochin. Its ruler allowed the Europeans to establish a factory in Cochin. The Portuguese exploited the situation to their advantage. They realized that Calicut was the major hindrance to control the Malabar trade. Hence, throughout the 16th century, the Portuguese accepted on armed clashes against Calicut. With a view to drive out the Portuguese, the Zamorins at times allied with Bijapur, Gujarat, Ahmednagar and Egypt.

Though, the efforts were without success. At any rate, the Zamorins sustained to harass the Portuguese on lands. Even on the seas the Portuguese found it hard to destroy Calicut's naval power which was organized under the celebrated Marakkhar family of admirals. From 1528 to 1598, the portuguese-Amorim clashes were mainly confined to the seas. It was only in 1599 that the Portuguese succeeded in creation a breakthrough against the Marakkars. The Portuguese control was effective at only those places where they had built their fortresses—Cannanore, Cochin, Procaud and Quilon. But their highhandedness and cruelty compelled even these allies to part with them in spite of their traditional rivalries with Calicut. For instance, the Cannanore rulers, who supported the Portuguese against Calicut in the early years, later supported the Zamorin in 1558-60 against the Portuguese. Likewise the raja of Tanur, who had become a Christian and supported the Portuguese against Calicut, turned his back to the Europeans. In fact, it were only Cochin, Procaud and Quilon with whom Portuguese succeeded in maintaining a lasting friendship.

### **Nature Of Polity: Dissimilar Approaches**

The nature of the political formations of the Deccani kingdoms was somewhat dissimilar from that of the South India. Though, according to a recent study (Sanjay Subrahmanyam), there exists 'little variation flanked by the states north and south of Pennar', i.e. flanked by the Deccan and Vijaynagar and successor Nayak states. Sanjay Subrahmanyam says that everywhere one discovers 'tributary chieftains' (nayaks and Palaiyakkarars etc.), and attendance of revenue farming.

The Deccani states borrowed extensively from the system of their predecessor i.e. the Bahmanis. That is why Turko-Persian elements were dominant. This provided the crucial background for the newly recognized states. M.A. Nayeem characterises the Bijapur state as 'feudal'. For him, the system was based on 'contractual relations' i.e., in lieu of protection the nobles promised 'allegiance and service' to the ruler. But all the Deccani states were 'centralized' monarchies where Sultan's power was approximately absolute. Besides, there also existed fiscal linkage flanked by the margin and

the core. There was no notion of shared sovereignty in contrast to Vijaynagar. Whatever power the Velama, Reddi or Maratha chiefs might have enjoyed under the Deccani rulers, they were under direct central control. Though, when the Deccani states started expanding towards further south they satisfied themselves with tributes only, as it was practically hard for them to directly administer those distant regions.

J.F. Richards defines Golkonda as a 'conquest state'. No doubt, the 16th century Deccan polities as such, are marked through constant warfare. Nevertheless, we cannot describe them a 'conquest state' on the lines of Vijaynagar. The nature of expansion of Vijaynagar differs entirely from that of the Deccani kingdoms: in the former the 'Telugu nayaks' were instrumental in the expansion, whereas in the latter the monarchy or the centralized state was directly involved in the expansion process. As for the nature of South Indian states, some historians have termed the Vijaynagar state as 'feudal;' some call it a 'war state' others have highlighted its 'segmentary' character.

In the 'feudal' model, the chiefs were required to render military service to their overlords, but they were free to administer their territories. In the 'segmentary' state, the peripheral chiefs recognized the ritual sovereignty of the Centre, but the agrarian surplus did not flow from the segment to the core. Though, Sanjay Subrahmanyam does emphasize that (even as late as 17th century) revenue flow from Madurai, Senji and Tanjavur regions was substantial. In any case, throughout the 16th century, the 'segmentary' character slowly changed towards centralization. For Burton Stein, who is the major propounded of the 'segmentary' state theory, the process began as early as Krishnadevaraya's reign. The change occurred mainly because of the widespread unrest in the middle of the Karnataka (Ummattur) and Tamil chiefs that led Krishnadevaraya to think of more comprehensive strategies. These incorporated: monopoly of force under royal control; posting trusted Brahman commanders at the forts and recruitment of local force from the forest people (poligars), etc. We have also seen how Venkata I, especially after his shift of capital from Penukonda to Chandragiri, attempted to gain firm control in excess of the rising might of the nayaks.

But that resulted in the nayaks' revolts throughout the early 17th century. Yet we see that the process that began throughout the 16th century was completed throughout the 18th century in the formation of the strong centralized state of Mysore under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. Throughout the 16th century, especially from Rama Raya's reign onwards, another characteristic developed in the South Indian polity that is what Burton Stein describes as the rise of 'partrimonialism'. Rama Raya replaced the Brahman commanders of the forts (who had no kinship affinities with their overlords) through his own kinsmen and granted more autonomy to the Telugu chiefs (especially in Kamataka-Andhra region). He even placed the army in the

charge of his two brothers Tirumala and Venkatadri. Therefore began the 'patrimonial' polity. This filtered further. The nayaks attempted to expand their powers and power on the basis of 'patrimony' specially the chiefs of Marawar who, later in the 17th century', succeeded in establishing an independent kingdom at Ramnad and those of Kallars in Pudukkottai (Rayalseema). Through their clan caste connections, the Maravai chiefs extended their power in excess of Ramesvaram, Madurai and Ramnad (their homeland). The Kallar chiefs extended their authority in excess of approximately the whole of Pudukkottai through their kinship ties.

They got the land in the form of warrants (pattas) issued through the Kallar Tondaiman raja. Likewise, the Lapakshi nayaks attempted to make 'patrimony' approximately Lapakshi. Virapannyga Nayaka controlled Penukonda rajyam, while his other two brothers held offices in fortress of Chitradurga (under Achyutadevaraya). These nayaks sustained to follow the same rituals and practices that were due to the Vijaynagar kings. Madurai Nayaks followed same coronation rituals which were followed through Krishnadevaraya. Vishvanatha Nayaka of Madurai also initiated royal practice of communal dining with his kinsmen and close supporters. Madurai nayaks even revived the old Kakatiya practice of associating chieftains with fortress and hence for the kingdom as a whole. Visvanatha Nayaka started the system of 'military encampment' under palaiyakkarar—each was the protector of a fort and, therefore, they became members of the Madurai's ruling elite, kumaravarukkam. The Malabar kingdoms were organised more on 'feudal' lines. The Nayar chiefs enjoyed autonomous powers in their territories for which they performed compulsory military service to their overlords. Though, these feudal' chiefs were hereditary owners of land.

### **The Ruling Elite**

The ruling elite of the 16th century Deccan and South India enjoyed approximately autonomous status in their territories. In spite of the fact that the character of the nobility as such was similar everywhere, there also existed differences in the middle of them as distant as the composition and powers were concerned.

### ***Deccan***

The composition of the Ahmednagar and Bijapur nobility was much the same but the nature of Golkonda nobility differed. The majority of the inhabitants in the 16th century Golkonda comprised mainly the Telugu speaking Hindus while the nobility and the sovereigns were Muslims. Besides, as we have already discussed, the centre of activity shifted from the wet-area

(Rajahmundry) to the less fertile tracts of the interior Telangana that led to the use of dry farming based on tank irrigation. This gave rise to the Telugu Reddi and Velama nayak cultivators from the Bahmani period onwards. The problem of the Qutb Shahi rulers was how to counteract these powerful local elite. These Telugu nayaks got frequent support from their Telugu counterparts i.e. the Vijaynagar rulers (this problem could only be totally solved after the defeat of the Vijaynagar ruler in the battle of Talikota, 1565).

Though, the shrewd policy of Ibrahim Qutb Shah (1530-80) of patronizing Tamil culture projected himself more as an indigenous ruler rather than an invader. He knew Telugu and had a Telugu wife. Moreover, he distributed revenue free land to both the Brahmans and ulema. Unlike Bijapur, he did not impose jiziya. The result was that when the Golkonda rulers faced the threat of the Vijaynagar might under Aliya Ramaraya flanked by 1542-65, his Telugu nayaks remained loyal while his own kinsmen of the Tungabhadra doab supported the Vijaynagar rulers. Though, these Telugu nayaks enjoyed little autonomy compared to their South Indian counterparts: we discover them placed under some Muslim control. The more strategically significant places were under Muslim commanders. But the revenue offices were approximately entirely dominated through the Brahmans in the whole Deccan and South India. In the rest of the Deccani states, nobility was recruited mostly from a select band of the Muslim elite. The latter had to maintain a fixed quota of troops for which they received moqasas (see Sec. 3.7). They could hold the office till they enjoyed Sultan's favour and remained loyal to him. Their holdings were liable to transfer, but it happened rarely. They were left free in their areas where they enjoyed approximately complete autonomy. When the Bijapur rulers expanded further south, they found it hard to administer the tract directly. As a result, the Sultans followed the policy of 'condominiums' and satisfied themselves with an annual tributes only.

### ***South India***

The nayaks were the ruling elite in South India. The details in relation to the nayaks and their privileges and duties, etc. As for the composition of the palaiyakkarars, it was made of Telugu, Kannidigas, Kaladi, Kallars, Morasu Vokkaligas, Tamils, Mulbagal, etc. Throughout the 16th century, the palaiyakkarars tried to replace the Tamil peasant elite through granting lands to the temples and through 'controlling the regal function of temple protection'. On the other hand, temple lands were often transferred to warrior chiefs. Such transfer of lands led to the decline of the temple economy—especially they lost their monopoly of record-keeping. The nayaks centralized record-keeping with the help of the Marathas and Kannadigas who had no local base. Therefore, 'the nayaks created the circumstances necessary for the emergence to inchoate centralized polities.

The destruction of the local power-base and the abridgement of the institutional economy of temples were the first steps towards the emergence of absolutist state formations'. Though, the transfer of agrarian power into the hands of the warrior chiefs did not wholly replace the peasants. In a kudiningadevadana, for instance, the peasants acquired a permanent share in the produce of the land and hence they could not be evicted. The warrior chiefs reclaimed large quantities of land and developed them into towns recognized as palaiyams its head was recognized as palaiyakkarar. Their control was approximately complete in excess of these palaiyams. They used to impose several taxes on peasants, artisans and merchants. The burden of taxation under these chieftains was very heavy which often led to tensions and unrest, especially in the middle of the peasants.

On the other hand, the nayaks at Madurai attempted to bring palaiyakkarar/poligar (subordinate warrior-chief) into the fold of the ruling elite itself. They were made incharge of forts/military encampments and became members of the ruling estate when they were called kumaravarukkam. Though, this was not the case with other nayak kingdoms where the relationship was more of confrontation and disagreement than of cooperation. At Tanjavur and Senji there existed no palaiyakkarars. Instead, the Brahmans and Vellala chiefs were dominant with no proper military control in excess of them. The nayaka of Ikkeri and Mysore constantly clashed with their subordinate chiefs. Ikkeri nayak Sadasiva (1540-1565) dealt severely with the poligars of Andige, Muppina, Velur, Mabasale, Kanave and Sirvanti. Likewise, chiefs of Danivara, Kumbesi, Yalavandur, Hebbe Mandagadde, Karabura, Morabadi and Salanda raised their heads throughout Venkatappa I's reign (1586-1629), though all were successfully repulsed. The ruling elite of the Malabar was drawn approximately entirely from the Nayars. They were called Nambiars, Kaimals, Mannadiars, Kartavus and Kurups. They controlled the local power and in return were supposed to render compulsory military service. They had their own military organization—kalaris. Sometimes they owed allegiance to more than one raja. They held absolute power in excess of the lands under their control. Interestingly, the Malabar law hardly provided any privilege to the sovereign to either depose or confiscate the property in case of rebellion of any hereditary chief.

## **Economy**

Here we will take up these characteristics very briefly. Economy of all the South Indian and Deccani states was primarily based on agriculture. The coasts were well irrigated through rain water. For other areas, a well-developed system of tank irrigation was in operation, especially in the Andhra

tract. Towards the west, canal irrigation was also significant, especially in Ahmednagar.

For Karashima, Subbarayalu and Heitzm peasants were the proprietors in South India. Though, Burton Stein and Sanjay Subramanyam cast some doubts. Since the peasants/tenants had the right to sell shows the subsistence of proprietorship. But throughout this period a distinction was made flanked by the proprietorship on 'land' and proprietorship in excess of the 'privileges' (fiscal rights). It was latter that was assured. There also existed communal holdings. Land tax was the major source of states' income. In South India, the old system of the Vijaynagar sustained. Revenue demand varied from 1/6th to 1/4th. In Golkonda, though, it was 1/2 of the produce. The states preferred to realize the revenue in cash. Though, the Malabar states were exceptions where no land tax existed. The Malabar rulers depended more on customs dues, janman holdings, etc. But some historians emphasize that the land tax did exist. Though, most of the land was held through the Namputhiri Brahmans which was revenue-free. Since rent payment to temples was comparatively less than the payment to the state the peasants preferred the former.

Primarily there existed three types of lands: i) the crown land which in South India was recognized as bhandaravada; in Bijapur muamala or qalah and in Golkonda khalisa the land granted to the nobles, subordinates, etc. recognized as amara (in the South) and moqasa (in the Deccan). These nobles paid a fixed sum annually to the ruler revenue-free grants—*manya* (in south) and *inam* (in Deccan). The prevalent form of revenue realization was revenue farming; i.e., right to collect revenue was given to the highest bidders who used to pay to the state/ nobles a fixed sum annually and they were usually left free to collect from the peasants as much as they could.

The Deccani rulers retained the local revenue collection machinery. Revenue officials of dissimilar ranks worked at dissimilar stages. For instance, the tax official for crown land was called *havaldar* while, at *pargana* stage, there were *desai* and *deshmukh*. Accountants were recognized as *deshkulkami* and *deshpande*. The village headmen, accountants etc. were named *muqaddam*, *patel* and *kulkami*. All of them received monetary share in the revenue for their work which varied from state to state. In the coastal belt, separate governors (*sar-samatu*) were appointed who paid a fixed sum annually, similar to the revenue farmers. Though *amils* were appointed to serve as check on their powers, the states' interest lay more in getting regular payment instead of the welfare of the peasants.

Besides land tax, the state derived revenue from other sources as well—tributes, booty from war and plunder and, above all, from the customs. Bijapur rulers also derived considerable income from *jiziya*; licence fee for private minting of coins was also a good source of income. The Golkonda rulers

acquired handsome income from diamond mines. The right to collect taxes other than land revenue was held through the trade guilds that used to pay a fixed sum annually and appoint their own officials (like the revenue farmers). Mostly, they were from the Telugu mercantile castes.

A significant characteristic of the 16th-17th century was the rise of 'portfolio capitalists'. Some scholars thought that the trading activity in India was in the hands of merchants who held no political or military power. Though, recently (Sanjay Subrahmanyam) this is being argued, especially in the case of Coromandel, that the revenue farmers (mostly the palaiyakkarars), played constructive role in the development of economy. Besides their role as revenue collectors, they also indulged in agricultural trading, development of irrigation, shipping, banking, etc.

We get evidence of diverse sorts of merchants in this period: the Armenians, Portuguese, Telugu Balija Naiyudus, Chettis, Komatis, Arabs, Gujaratis, etc. The internal trade was largely in the hands of the Muslim Mapillas. On the Kanara Coast the chief beneficiaries were the Hindu and Jaina chiefs, while Coromandel coast was controlled mainly through the Arabs, Marakkarar converts, the Mapillas. Some Scholars hold that the economy in South India did not deteriorate in the 16th century as thought through others. They emphasize that the nayaks stimulated economic activity through establishing market-places, towns, etc. The argument of constant warfare after 1565 is countered on the ground through them that it was a general characteristic that existed even throughout the early centuries.

## **POLITY AND ECONOMY IN NORTH INDIA**

### **The Lodi Empire**

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

#### ***Sikandar Lodi***

In the sixteenth century the Lodi Empire, under Sultan Sikandar Lodi, in North India reached its zenith. In 1496, Sultan Husain Sharqi, the ex-ruler of Jaunpur was driven absent from south Bihar and the Rajput chieftains in alliance with him were either forced into submission, or uprooted. Their zamindaris were brought under the control of the Sultan or reduced to the status of vassal principalities. Likewise, the power of those Afghan and non-Afghan nobles, reluctant to acquiesce to the Sultan's authority, was eliminated

in the area approximately Delhi. In the first decade of the sixteenth century, the annexation of Dholpur paved the method for the expansion of the Afghan rule in the regions of Rajputana and Malwa. The forts of Narwar and Chanderi were annexed while the Khanzada of Nagaur acknowledged the suzerainty of the Lodi Sultan in 1510-11. In short, the whole of North India, from Punjab in the north-west to Saran and Champaran in north Bihar in the east, and Chanderi to the south of Delhi were brought under the Lodi rule.

### ***Ibrahim Lodi***

Unlike his father, Sultan Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526) had to face the hostility of the Afghan nobility soon after his accession to the throne in 1517. He found himself bounded through powerful nobles bent upon weakening the centre to gain an upper hand for themselves. His father had to fight against his brothers and relatives and was supported through the nobles who wanted to replace the princes in the resourceful provinces. Upon the death of Sultan Sikandar, the nobles decided to divide the Empire flanked by Sultan Ibrahim Lodi and his younger brother Prince Jalal Khan Lodi, the governor of Kalpi.

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

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

This was done so because Prince Jalal Khan had taken shelter there. From Gwalior, Jalal Khan fled towards Malwa but was captured through the Gonds and sent as prisoner to the Sultan in Agra. Though, his escape from Gwalior made the Sultan suspicious of the loyalty of the old nobles to him. Azam Humayun was recalled and thrown into prison. The Raja of Gwalior surrendered to the nobles and agreed to join the service of the Sultan. He was given the territory of Shamsabad (Farrukhabad district) in iqta. It was in

relation to this time that the celebrated wazir Mian Bhua also lost royal confidence and was put under arrest. The imprisonment of the old nobles sparked off wide-spread rebellion in the eastern region.

The Sultan raised his favorites to key positions at the court and sent others to the provinces as governors. As a result, the old nobles became apprehensive of their future and began to build up their power in the provinces. Darya Khan Nuhani, a powerful governor of Bihar, became a rallying point for the dissatisfied nobles in the east. In relation to the same time, Babur occupied the sarkar of Bhera and Daulat Khan

Lodi, the supreme governor of the trans-Sultej Punjab, failed to liberate it. When summoned to the court, Daulat Khan did not come and revolted against the Sultan in Lahore. He also invited the uncle of Sultan Ibrahim, 'Alam Khan Lodi (son of Bahlul Lodi), and declared him as the new Sultan under the title of Sultan Alauddin. Both shaped an alliance with Babur, the ruler of Kabul, against Sultan Ibrahim. Rana Sangram Singh and Babur also seems to have reached to an understanding against Ibrahim Lodi.

### **Establishment Of The Mughal Power**

Babur, who had invaded with some success the border areas of the north-west boundary, launched a well planned attack with the help of his political allies in India. In 1526, Babur and his Indian allies fought against Sultan Ibrahim at Panipat. The artillery used through Babur for the first time in north India helped him achieve easy victory. Ibrahim Lodi was killed in the battle and the road to Delhi and Agra was cleared for Babur.

When Babur supplanted the Lodi rule through his own his Indian allies were disappointed. The dissatisfied Afghan and non-Afghan nobles accepted Prince Mahmud Lodi as their Sultan and decided to carry an armed thrash about against the Mughals. The fifteen years of combined rule of Babur and Humayun rule is to be treated as an interregnum flanked by the fall of the Lodis and the foundation of Sher Shah Sur's Empire. Babur (d. 1530) and Humayun adopted the same state system in India that they found existing under the Lodi Sultans. For instance, the policy they followed towards the zamindars was the age-old tradition set through the Delhi Sultans. Babur mentions that the rais and rajas were found on all sides and quarters of Hindustan, obedient as well as disobedient to the Muslim ruler. In fact, he was satisfied when the rajas paid nominal allegiance to him as they did in the past. The Baburnama clearly shows that Babur assigned the charge of territories to the nobles, granting them the right to collect land revenue and carry on the government there on his behalf as was the prevalent system. The shiqqdars

were posted in the parganas under khalisa. In short, Babur or Humayun do not seem to have made any significant change in the political system in North India.

The Afghan and non-Afghan nobles who fought against Babur and Humayun under the nominal leadership of Sultan Mahmud Lodi, failed to achieve success. This was primarily due to rivalry and dissensions in the middle of themselves. Their defeat in 1531 through Humayun finally sealed the fate of the old Afghan nobility. Thereafter, the leadership of the anti-Mughal Afghans was taken in excess of through Sher Khan Sur who, through now, had recognized his control in excess of the fort of Chunar and the region of south Bihar. The old Afghan nobles fled to Gujarat. This they did to join the service of Sultan Bahadur Shah who wanted to capture Delhi.

Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat was financially as well as militarily the most powerful of the Indian rulers. Some of the coastal towns in Gujarat had already appeared as emporium of international trade. These port towns were visited through merchants from dissimilar foreign countries. Therefore, this trade acquiesced vast revenue to the state exchequer through customs dues. He also possessed strong artillery.

In 1531, Sultan Bahadur Shah started on an expansionist career. He conquered Malwa and annexed it to his Sultanate. In 1533, he laid siege to Chittor and conquered it. Thereafter, he decided to march to Gwalior against the Mughals. In relation to this time, Rumi Khan, the commander of the Gujarat artillery, secretly entered into alliance with Humayun and assured him of his help. The Gujarat army was totally demoralized through the treachery of Rumi Khan. Finally, Bahadur Shah took shelter in the island of Diu and the whole of Malwa and Gujarat was occupied through Humayun. But this Mughal conquest was short-lived. Soon after his victory in Gujarat, Humayun received the alarming news of the rebellion of Sher Khan Sur who had declared himself as Sher Shah Sur. He seized vast land from the Sultan of Bengal and raided the eastern territories held through the Mughals. Humayun left his brother Askari beside with other Mughal nobles in Gujarat and retreated to Agra. On Humayun's departure, Gujarat rose in revolt against the Mughals. Bahadur Shah came back from Diu and chased the Mughals out from Gujarat and Malwa.

Meanwhile, Humayun made war preparation in a haste and started towards Chunar, a stronghold of Sher Shah. In relation to this time Sher Shah took the impregnable fort of Rohtas from its Raja. Humayun conquered the Chunar fort, and entered Bengal without meeting any serious resistance put through the Afghans. In Gaur (Bengal) there was a period of inactivity on the part of Humayun. Sher Shah took full advantage of the situation. He closed the line of communication flanked by Agra and Gaur and attacked the Mughal forces in

the eastern territories upto Benaras. Informed in relation to the deteriorating circumstances, Humayun started on the journey back to Agra. He met the Afghan army close to Chausa in 1539 and was defeated with heavy losses. In 1540 Humayun met the Afghan forces under Sher Shah at the battle of Qannauj. He was defeated and fled to Kabul.

### **The Second Afghan Empire**

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

In 1545 he died in a mine blast. His son and successor Islam Shah (1545-1553) not only retained his system but also took steps towards its improvement whenever necessary 'Indeed, theirs was a personal government that derived its strength and glory from their personal vigor.

### **Administrative Structure**

A number of new administrative events were taken throughout this period. This change can well be seen in the formulation of approximately all administrative policies.

### ***Nature of Kingship***

The kingship under the Turkish Sultans was highly centralized. The Sultan's powers were absolute. Though, with the rise of the Afghan power, there also followed separate changes in the monarchy. Afghan monarchy was primarily "tribal" in nature. For them, king was 'first in the middle of equals'. In fact, political expediency also played its own role. Bahlul, being Afghan, could not look towards Turks for support. He had to virtually accept the conditions of his fellow Afghans. The Afghan noble's necessity have enjoyed complete local autonomy.

The only bond flanked by them and the Sultan was to render military service when the need arose or required to do so. Such was the position under Bahlul that he neither ever sat on the throne in front of his fellow Afghan

nobles, nor did he organised an open darbar. He used to call his Afghan nobles *masnad i ali*. Though, a separate change came with Sultan Sikandar Lodi who clearly saw the dangers of an unrestrained nobility. He is credited with having introduced such significant changes into the political system of the Empire that transformed it into a highly centralized political entity.

Sultan Bahlul Lodi (his father), Sultan Sikandar Lodi demanded obedience from nobles. His military success made the nobility totally loyal and subservient to him. It also suppressed its sentiments of excellence with the Sultan. He is reported to have sat on the throne regularly in an open darbar where the nobles were required to stand, showing due respect to the Sultan like servants. Even in his absence, his farmans were received through high nobles with respect. The noble to whom the farman was sent had to come forward six miles to receive it. A terrace was prepared upon which the courier stood and placed the farman on the head of the noble who had to stand below. Then all those concerned had to listen to it standing. The nobles who failed to retain the confidence of the Sultan fell into disgrace. According to a modern writer, "any one who turned from the path of obedience, he (the Sultan) either got his head severed off the body or banished him from the Empire."

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

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

The process of centralization accelerated under Ibrahim. He whispered that "kingship knows no kinship". Under him, the prestige of the Sultan went so high that even the royal tent was measured worthy of respect. Though, Ibrahim's policy had severe consequences and proved ruinous to the interests of the Afghan kingdom. The Afghan nobles were not prepared for the master-servant relationship. This led to dissatisfaction and rebellions to the extent that some of them even collaborated with Babur to depose the Sultan, (see supra).

When the second Afghan Empire was recognized in India (Surs), they had learnt the lesson well for they never attempted to establish tribal monarchy. Instead, Sher Shah Sur succeeded in establishing a highly centralized autocratic monarchy. With the coming of the Mughals on the scene, one discovers the opening up of another chapter — the Mughals who were influenced through both, the Turkish and the Mongol traditions.

### ***General Administration***

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

Interested in the well-being of the general public, the Sultan had charity houses opened in the capital as well as in the provinces for the benefit of destitute and handicapped people. The deserving persons got financial aid from these charity houses. Scholars and poets were patronized and educational institutions were granted financial aid throughout the Empire. He imposed a ban on the use of any language other than Persian in the government offices. This led several Hindus to learn Persian and they acquired proficiency in Persian within a short time. Consequently, they began to look after and supervise the revenue administration. When Babur came to India, he was astonished to see that the revenue department was totally manned through the Hindus.

Likewise, the serious interest taken through Sultan Sikandar Lodi in ensuring impartial justice to all and sundry in his Empire brought peace and prosperity. Sher Shah seems to have been inspired through the history of Sultan Alauddin Khalji's (1296-1316) reign. He adopted most of the rules and regulations introduced through the Khalji Sultan. Though, like Khalji he was not harsh in their implementation. In the doab region, the sarkar (the successor of shiqq under the Khaljis) was the administrative cum fiscal unit; while wilayat, comprising a number of sarkars in the outlying regions, such as Bengal, Malwa, Rajputana and Sind and Multan were retained for the convenience of defense. The sarkar comprised a number of parganas, each pargana consisting of a number of villages.

The noble posted as incharge of sarkar or wilayat was not given unlimited powers. He was regularly directed through royal farman to implement new rules and regulations. The spies informed the king in relation to the conduct of the officers. Anyone who was found failing in his work was punished, Khizr Turk, the governor of Bengal, was dismissed and thrown into prison because he married the daughter of the ex-Sultan of Bengal without Sher Shah's permission and acted independently. Likewise, Sher Shah's policy with regard to the planting of Afghan colonies in the territories recognized for recalcitrant inhabitants also demonstrates the nature of kingship under him, for instance, Gwalior was one of the places colonized through the Afghans throughout Sher Shah's reign. In short, Sher Shah was an absolute monarch for all practical purposes.

In organizing his nobility, Sher Shah took people belonging to dissimilar ethnic groups in such a method that his dynastic interest could be safeguarded. No group was strong enough to assume the form of a pressure group. We discover the non-Afghan nobles, Khawwas Khan, Haji Khan and Habib Khan Sultani holding the charge of significant provinces with large iqtas. This shows that the establishment of a pure Afghan nobility was never a consideration with Sher Shah. On Sher Shah's death, his second son Prince Jalal Khan ascended the throne under the title of Islam Shah. He overpowered and eliminated several senior and experienced nobles who supported his elder brother Adil Khan. After their elimination, Islam Shah was free to translate his political ideas into practice. He shifted his capital from Agra to Gwalior and also brought his father's treasures from Chunar. Therefore Gwalior became the centre of Indo-Muslim Delhi culture.

It is also worth mentioning that Islam Shah went a step further from Sher Shah in centralizing the polity of the Empire. He took absent the iqtas of the nobles and brought the whole Empire under khalisa. The officers were paid in cash instead of iqtas. The nobility and army were reorganized into new grades. Officers were appointed from in the middle of them to look after and inspect the proper maintenance of soldiers and necessary army equipment through the nobles. The nobles were also denied the possession of war elephants: if was a king's prerogative. Islam Shah was very harsh in dealing with the nobility but he was benevolent towards the public. He provided people with the security of life and property through holding the officer in charge of a territorial unit responsible for the loss of property and life in his jurisdiction. Consequently, the officer in whose territory any crime was committed went out of his method to arrest the culprit. Like his father, Islam Shah also ensured the administration of impartial justice in the Empire.

## **Economy**

The modern and close to modern writers praise the affluence and low prices of the essential commodities throughout Sikandar's reign. According to Shaikh Rizqullah Mushtaqi (the author of the *Waqiat-i Mushtaqi*), food granules, cloth, horses, sheep, gold and silver which, people needed for comfortable living were accessible in plenty and at low rates. In order to understand the economy in totality we shall discuss its basic components in detail.

### ***Agrarian Structure***

The political system depended on the state's share in the surplus of agricultural produce. Sultan Sikandar Lodi formulated a definite agricultural development-oriented policy. This he did because his was a landlocked Empire in which only the reclamation of land for farming could augment his financial possessions. There was abundance of arable land which could be brought under plough only if the peasants expected to enjoy the fruits of their toil. In an effort to encourage the peasants to extend farming, the Sultan introduced significant changes in the administrative system. He prohibited the system of *begar* (forced labor) that the peasants had to render to the landlords and the government officers. The peasants were also encouraged to bring new lands under the plough through other concessions.

Rizqullah Mushtaqi states that even an inch of land was not left lying uncultivated. The state share in the agricultural produce was one-third and it was composed with the assistance of the village officials the *patwari*, (hereditary village officials) *khot* and *muqaddam* (village headman). The *zakat* tax (Sales and transit tax) was abolished. The Sultan also allowed the peasants in the Empire to accept freely any one of the three manners of assessment prevalent in those days. The three manners of revenue assessment were crop-sharing (*batai*) measurement (called *zabt* system) and the *kankut* (appraisal). The first two methods were common in north India. The third one also seems to have sustained throughout the Lodi period. Sultan Sikandar was scrupulous in relation to a standard measurement system for its merits. He is said to have introduced the *gaz-i Sikandari* of thirty-two digits for the convenience of the *amin* and *patwari*. It was used at the time of harvest. The *patwaris* were charged with the duty of maintaining the accounts of per *bigha* yields and the measured area of the Sher Shah and Islam Shah also introduced significant changes in the agrarian system. They overhauled the revenue administration of the Lodi period, Separately from appointing new revenue officials at the *pargana* and *sarkar* stage, Sher Shah curtailed the powers and privileges of the land assignees (i.e. *wajahdars* and *muqtas*). The unruly *zamindars*, who often took to robbery and withheld the payment of land revenue due to the king,

were forced into submission. They were also made accountable for every crime committed within the boundaries of their zamindari.

The governors (for the muqtas) in the provinces, sarkar and wilayats) were denied a free hand in adopting any of the recognized methods of revenue assessment at the time of harvest. The methods of crop-sharing and revenue farming were abolished and that of zabt (measurement) was enforced everywhere. The extra taxes called jaribana and muhassilana (fee for measuring the land and revenue collection) were also abolished. The offenders in the middle of the officials were punished. Sher Shah ordered the land under farming to be measured every year at the harvest time. The state's share in the produce was determined according to the royal regulation. This system was prevalent throughout the Empire except for the combined provinces of Multan and Sind. The territory of Multan had been ruined through the oppressive Biloch rule. So, Sher Shah directed its governor to develop the region and realize from the cultivators only one-fourth of the produce in accordance with the crop-sharing method. This system had prevailed under the early local rulers i.e. the precursors of the Biloch chiefs. The state revenue-demand in other provinces was one-third of the agricultural produce.

Abul Fazl tells us that Sher Shah on the basis of fertility of soil divided the lands into three categories, the good, middling and bad. An average produce of these three types of soil was taken as standard yield per bigha. One third of this standard yield was fixed as state share. A rai (schedule of crop rates) was prepared for the convenience and guidance of the revenue collectors. The state share now could be easily converted into cash rates, according to the market prices. Abul Fazl testifies to Sher Shah's achievements in this regard. According to Abul Fazl, "The revenue demand levied through Sher Khan (Sher Shah), which at the present day is represented in all provinces as the lowest rate of measurement usually obtained, and for the convenience of the cultivators and the soldiery, the value taken in cash money." Therefore, it is clear that the state's share was fixed in type per bigha but composed in cash after it had been commuted according to the prevailing prices in the area.

On the death of Islam Shah in 1553, the Empire suffered from chaos and anarchy caused through a mad race that the cousins and relatives of Islam Shah started for the throne. Lasting for two years it took heavy toll of human life. The peasants fled to distant places in order to save themselves from starvation. This provided Humayun with an opportunity to reconquer North India and lay down the foundation of the Mughal Empire a new.

### ***Iqta System***

The whole empire was divided into khalisa and iqta. The khalisa was

administered through the state directly through, diwan-i wizarat i.e. the Revenue Ministry. The revenue composed from the khalisa went directly to the state treasury. Throughout the Lodi period, certain sarkars and parganas were reserved for khalisa where the shiqqdar accepted on the military as well as revenue administration as the Sultan's representative. He was paid his salary and allowances in cash up to twenty per cent of the revenue composed under his charge. Unlike him, the high nobles, to whom the Sultan assigned the revenue of an administrative unit (parganas or an whole sarkar) had to maintain a larger army contingent than the shiqqdar. The assignee was usually a khan, holding the rank of 5,000 to 10,000 sawars (horsemen). Such an assignee was called either muqta or wajahdar made through the state to the men of learning or other deserving persons. The iqta also differed in size. An iqta might comprise a pargana, less than a pargana, or even the whole sarkar. If the revenue composed in the iqta exceeded the amount due to the assignee, the surplus (fawazil) was transmitted to the state exchequer.

Since the iqtas were seldom transferred in practice throughout the Lodi period, the assignee took keen interest in the economic development of his iqta. The powerful nobles also developed friendly relations with the zamindars of their iqta and were therefore able to enjoy the local support against the centre. Such a situation arose after the death of Sultan Sikandar Lodi when disagreement of interests took place flanked by the nobility and Sultan Ibrahim Lodi (son and successor of Sikandar Lodi). To avoid such a situation iqta was made transferable under Sher Shah. Any iqta could be transferred from one to the other noble. For instance, Shujaat Khan Sur, one of the senior nobles was transferred four times from Bihar to Malwa to Hardiya sarkar and then to Malwa again.

### ***Urbanization***

It is also worth recalling that economic growth was associated with the growth of urbanization throughout this period. As the reign of Bahlul Lodi ushered in an era of peace, new towns were founded in the Panjab and other regions. The process of urbanization accelerated throughout Sikandar Lodi's reign. The brief references accessible in the sources to the cities and towns founded throughout the period suggest that an effort was made in all seriousness through the Sultan and his nobles in this regard. The significant towns founded were Sultanpur (in Jallundhar district), Sikandarabad (Bulandshahar district) and Sikandara Rao (in Aligarh district). A number of villages were founded approximately the village of Pilakhna in the pargana of Jalali (also in Aligarh district) with the result that Pilakhna developed into a township. Construction activities got a boost throughout this period. The lofty gate of the Pilakhana's Jamat. mosque is suggestive of the feature characteristics of the Lodi style of architecture.

The most significant city founded through Sultan Sikandar Lodi was the metropolis of Agra. It was built through the architects deputed through the Sultan on a raised ground flanked by the village of Poya and Basih through the bank of the river Jamuna at some aloofness from the old fortified town of Agra. For the rapid development of the new city, the Sultan made it the headquarters of a newly carved out sarkar as well as the seat of his government in place of Delhi. The Sultan and his nobles owned karkhanas in Agra. These attracted skilled artisans from dissimilar cities and towns in the country. Likewise, the court-generated trade attracted merchant caravans even from foreign countries, and in due course, Agra became a trading centre of international importance.

## **POLITICAL FORMATIONS IN CENTRAL AND WEST ASIA**

### **Geographical Delimitation Of Turan And Iran**

The inner Asian region called Turan acquired the name Mawaraunnahr (literally meaning flanked by the two rivers) from its Arab conquerors as the region was situated flanked by the two rivers Syr and Amu. The above region was bounded through Aral sea, river Syr and Turkestan in the North; Iran, river Amu and Afghanistan in the South; Tienshan and Hindukush mountains in the East up to the Karakorum deserts, and the Caspian sea in the West with its diverse geographical characteristics (arid and semi-arid lands, steppes, deserts, mountains, valleys and oases). Therefore, the region was a chequer board of varied patterns of life-style ranging from nomadism, pastoralism to a settled mode of living. This region is also a land of inland drainage with enclosed basins absent from the sea and is isolated from Atlantic and Pacific circulations.

Separately from agriculture, cattle breeding was a popular profession. The region was well-known for its horses which were exported in large numbers to India. Samarqandi paper and fruits (both fresh and dry) were other items of export. The eastern ridges of Elburz mountains separated Iranian plateau from Turkestan (Iran). In conditions of physical geography, Iran or Persia consists of extensive mountain ranges extending from Asia Minor and Caucasus to the plains of Punjab called Iranian Plateau. A chain of mountains surrounds the sandy saline deserts of the central plateau therefore converting it into a closed basin. Iran had four major divisions, namely:

- The zagros system comprising khuzistan and small outer plains,
- The northern highlands of iran (i.e., elburz and talish system) and the caspian plain,

- Eastern and south-eastern upland rim and the interior region.

In conditions of economic life, considerable variation is noticed such as pastoralism (mainly in the higher regions), agricultural settlements (in low lying areas) and nomadism (towards the West in the middle of Kurdish shepherds) all existing simultaneously. The north-western section of Zagros linked ancient east-west trade routes, and the Iranian wool, leather, carpets and silk found commercial outlets from many places.

### **The Antecedents Of Uzbegs And The Safavis**

The Uzbegs of Turan or Transoxiana were the descendants of Chingiz's eldest son, Juci. They derived their name from Uzbeg Khan (1312-40) of the Golden Horde and hailed from Juci's appanage—the Dasht-i-Qipchaq. The Uzbegs spoke Chaghatai Turkish and followed Turco-Mongol traditions. They were orthodox Sunni and followed the Hanafite Law. Numerous Turco-Mongol tribes such as the Naiman, Qushji, Durman, Qunghrat and others supported the Uzbeg state. The hostile tribes which eroded their power through constant invasions were the Mongols, Qazaqs and Qirghiz.

#### ***The Safavis***

The Safavis were of the native Iranian stock (from Kurdistan), professed Shii'sm and followed Perso-Islamic traditions of the land they were called upon to govern. They spoke Azari Turkish and also Persian. Being of a humble sufi origin, they later constructed an impressive genealogy. The mainstay of the Safavi power was the constellation of the Turcoman tribes though the Iranian element was equally strong in the administrative bureaucracy. To the two groups were added the Georgians and Circassians later on. The four elements (particularly the Turcoman groups) were as much a source of strength in external political relations as they were a cause of perpetual intrigues internally.

### **Historical Perspective On The Eve Of The Political Formations In**

#### **Central Asia**

Throughout the civil wars (which were a common occurrence in the Timurid Transoxiana), the Timurid princes of Transoxiana (like Abu Said, Muhammad Juci, Sultan Husain Baiqra and Manuchihr Mirza) often approached the Uzbeg ruler Abul Khair of Dast-i-Qipchaq for assistance against their respective rivals. The latter successfully intervened in Tund

politics and assisted Abu Said (1451), Muhammad Jugi (1455) and others to gain the throne. After the disintegration of the Empire of Abulkhair (1428-68) in the Dasht, his grandson Shaibani took shelter with the Timurids of Central Asia. At this juncture, there were five states in Transoxiana.

The three sons of Sultan Abu Said (1451-69) namely, Sultan Mahmud Mirza, Sultan Ahmad Mirza (1469-94) and Umar Shaikh Mirza ruled in excess of the three states comprising Samarqand and Bukhara, Tirmiz, Hisar, Qunduz and Badakhshan, and Farghana and its vicinity respectively. The fourth Timurid state of Balkh and Khurasan was held through Sultan Husain Baiqra. Again, there was the mongol Khanate of Tashkand and Moghulistan where the mongol rulers Yunus Khan (1462-87) and his two sons, Mahmud Khan and Ahmad Khan, reigned. Yunus Khan's three daughters were married to the three above mentioned sons of Abu Said. The mutual rivalries and jealousies existing in the middle of the five states often resulted in bitter wars. In one such disagreement when Sultan Ahmad was involved in the battle of Syr against his rival Sultan Mahmud, the former hired Shaibani beside with his retinue hoping that he could be a good match to the Mongols in the art of fighting. Although Shaibani appeared in this battle as an ally of Sultan Ahmad Mirza, he served the cause of Mahmud Khan as secret negotiations had already taken place. This led to an unexpected victory for Mahmud Khan. For this timely assistance, Shaibani received the reward in the form of governorship of Otrar—a town in Khwarazmia—which provided him with the long awaited and much desired base in Transoxiana. Thereafter, Shaibani took full advantage of the prevailing anarchy in the several remaining Khanates, and slowly eliminated them with his political acumen and stratagem.

### **Establishment Of Uzbek Power In Transoxiana**

After the death of Umar Shaikh and Sultan Ahmad Mirza, Sultan Mahmud Mirza was also assassinated. His two sons, Sultan Ali and Baisundhur Mirza, now became rivals for the throne of Samarqand and Hisar. Throughout the anarchy which prevailed in the Timurid empire, the Tarkhan nobles became powerful. They not only usurped the whole revenue but made opportunistic alliances and used one prince as a counterpoise against the other. Taking advantage, Shaibani wrested Bukhara from its Timurid governor Baqar Tarkhan in 1499, and then besieged Samarqand. Since the queen mother Zuhra Begi was an Uzbek lady, she promised to surrender Samarqand if Shaibani gave the governorship of the choicest province to her son, Sultan Ali. Therefore, Shaibani occupied Samarqand in 1500 without a war though Sultan Ali passed absent soon after. The Uzbeks, were, though, soon overthrown as the Samarqandis led through Khwaja Abul Mukarram invited Babur. In the battle of Saripul (1501), Babur was defeated and, since no

assistance was forthcoming, he left Samarqand and went to his uncle Mahmud Khan. In early 1503 Shaibani inflicted a crushing defeat upon the joint forces of Babur and his maternal uncles Mahmud and Ahmad Khan, both of whom were made captives. Babur's noble Tambal invited Shaibani to occupy Farghana. Shaibani conquered Farghana and Qunduz (1504) and overran Balkh, Memna and Faryab in 1505. Although Shaibani released the Mongol Khans, Mahmud and Ahmad (the latter died shortly afterwards) due to their past kindness, he ultimately put Mahmud Khan and his five children to death (1508) as their subsistence would have been a danger to his Empire.

A galaxy of Timurid princes including Babur, Badiuzzaman and Muzaffar Hussain led through Sultan Hussain Baiqra planned to face the Uzbegs unitedly. Before the joint venture could materialize, Sultan Hussain died in 1506. Herat was plunged into a war of succession. The chaos persisted even after the dual rule of Badiuzzaman and Muzaffar Husain was recognized. The conquest of the last Timurid principality was, so, a foregone conclusion. Soon after, Shaibani undertook a campaign against the Qazaqs of Moghulistan in 1508. Now the whole Transoxiana lay at the feet of Shaibani. The dynasty which was recognized through Shaibani came to be recognized as the Shaibanid. The immediate causes for this transfer of power from the Timurids to the Uzbegs were:

- The personal incompetence of the later timurid rulers;
- Their mutual rivalry;
- The absence of any settled rule for succession, and
- The lack of strong administration.

### ***The Tripartite Disagreement of the Uzbegs, Persians and Timurids***

The conquest of Khurasan had brought the border of Shaibanid empire closer to the Safavi one. Since, Shaibani was ambitious, he demanded allegiance from the Shah which eventually led to a war in 1510, in which Shaibani was defeated and killed. Shah Ismail not only occupied Khurasan but also assisted Babur thereafter to re occupy Transoxiana from the Uzbegs. Babur received a very warm welcome from the Samarqandis, but the latter disapproved his association with 'heretic' Shia' Shah Ismail. The subsequent reprisal perpetrated upon the subjects through Babur's greedy followers further provoked the Central Asians to long for the Uzbek rule.

### ***Recovery and Resurgence of the Uzbek Power***

After their expulsion from Central Asia (1510-11), the Uzbegs had clustered in Turkestan having no courage to face the combined forces of Babur and the Shah. The only aspiring Uzbek prince was Ubaidullah, a nephew of

Shaibani. Though his possessions were limited, he conquered Transoxiana after defeating Babur. Thereafter, the Uzbeks slowly recovered Bukhara, Samarqand and other territories in 1512-1513.

In 1514, the Ottoman Sultan Salim (1512-20) invited Ubaidullah to join him against Ismail. Although Ubaidullah failed to oblige Salim, the latter supervised to inflict a crushing defeat upon the Shah through strategic maneuvers which were later on applied through Babur in his battle of Panipat in 1526. The most significant rulers of the Shaibanid Empire were Ubaidullah and Abdullah Khan—the latter being a modern of Akbar. Both Ubaidullah and Abdullah Khan (whose span of ruler ship was from 1513-1540 and 1565-1598 respectively) waged many wars against Persia.

The Astrakhanids: After the death of Abdullah Khan (1598) and the assassination of his only son and successor Abdul Momin six months later, the dynasty came to be recognized as Astarakhanids. The Uzbek Empire lasted until the Russian conquest. The Empire disintegrated approximately at the same time when other Asian states collapsed in the face of colonialism.

### ***The Uzbek Empire***

The revenue collections of the Uzbek Transoxiana depended mainly upon booty, city taxes and commercial possessions. With artificial irrigation and limited agriculture, even a high tax on land (amounting to more than a half) fetched a negligible amount. Situated on the crossroads of caravans (en route the Silk Road), Transoxiana sustained to be in a flourishing state in early middle ages. Due to diversion of trade routes under certain Mongol Khans and after the discovery of the sea route to Asia from Europe in 1498, a decline in trade is noticed through the travelers and chroniclers. The administrative structure of the Timurids underwent a slight change under the Uzbeks as the Turco-Mongol traditions were further strengthened. The socio-religious atmosphere was now characterized through a wave of fanaticism and sectarian bigotry. At the same time, the domination of the Naqshbandi saints in excess of the political arena was a new phenomenon introduced under the Uzbeks.

### **Origin Of The Safavis: Historical Perspective**

The Safavi Empire sprang up approximately in the same geographical area where the Ilkhanid state had once flourished. Hulaku's Empire re-appeared in a diminutive form (the Jalayrid Empire)—extending in excess of Mesopotamia, Azerbaijan and later on covering the region of Shirvan also. The remaining portions of the Ilkhanid territory were lost to the two Turcoman confederations, namely Aq Quyunlu (the white sheep) and Qara Quyunlu (the

black sheep). Aq Quyunlu extended their sway in excess of Diyar-i Bakr with their centre at Amid. Qara Quyunlus had their centre at Arjish (on the eastern shore of lake Van) spreading in the north to Erze Rum and in the south to Mosul. The heterogeneous population of the two regions comprised the Arabs, Armenians, Kurds and others.

### *The Aq Quyunlus and Qara Quyunlus*

Under the enterprising Jahanshah, Qara Quyunlu dynasty expanded from Van to the deserts flanked by Persia and Khurasan and from the Caspian sea to the Persian Gulf. They had become independent of the Timurids. Jahanshah was widely recognized as a progenitor of the Shias while the Aq Quyunlus were Sunnis. The most well-known Aq Quyunlu ruler was Uzun Hasan (1453-78) who defeated Jahanshah and recognized his suzerainty approximately in excess of the whole Persia. Hence, the borders of his Empire came closer to that of the Timurids. The Ottoman ruler Muhammad II always looked upon him as a mighty prince enjoying the possessions of Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Azerbaijan and Persia. Though, Uzun Hasan was defeated through the Ottomans (in 1473) whose artillery was superior to the former's army. At the time of Uzun Hasan's death (in 1478), his Turcoman Empire extended from upper reaches of Euphrates to the Great Salt Desert and the province of Kirman in South Persia, and from Uzun Hasan's sister Khadija Begam was married to a very enterprising and influential shaikh, named Junaid (1447-60). He was the leader of the most popular sufi order called the Safaviya with its Centre at Aradabil. Shaikh Junaid was a successor of Shaikh Safiuddin Ishaq (1252-1334), a disciple and son-in-law of Shaikh Zahid (1218-1301). Safiuddin Ishaq (from whom the Safavi dynasty derived its name) not only inherited the sufi order of Shaikh Zahid but also founded his own order as Safaviya in Ardabil in 1301. Due to their popularity, Shaikh Safiuddin and his successors always aroused the jealousy of the Qara Quyunlu Sultans.

Shaikh Junaid was the first spiritual guide of the Safaviya order. He composed an army of 10,000 to fight the Qara Quyunlu ruler. He imparted militancy to the order replacing the sufis through the ghazis (warriors of faith). After his death in 1455, his son and successor Haider married the daughter of his maternal uncle Amir Hasan Beg who put Jahanshah to death and became the ruler of Azerbaijan and the two Iraqs. Out of this union, three sons were born, namely, Sultan Ali, Ibrahim and Ismail. The youngest Ismail (b. 1487) became founder of the Safavi Empire. Sultan Haider had prepared a scarlet cap of twelve gores (with reference to the twelve Imams), and ordered all his followers to create their headgear after this fashion, hence came the title Qizilbash (redheads).

Haider marched against the tribal elements of Cherkas and Daghestan. On the method, he lost his life in a battle with the forces of the Shirvan ruler Farrukh Yassar, the son-in-law of Yaqub Mirza in 1488. Although Yaqub spared the life of the three sons of Haider for the sake of his own sister Halima Begi Agha, he imprisoned them in the fort of Istakhara. When a civil war broke out flanked by the deceased Yaqub Mirza's sons Baisunghar and Rustam Mirza, the latter sought help from Sultan Ali. As soon as Rustam Mirza achieved success, he put Sultan Ali to death out of jealousy. Sultan Ali had already sensed the imminent danger and had nominated Ismail as his successor (1494). Ismail had to face much difficulty until the death of Rustam Mirza in July 1497 after which Aradabil was engulfed in a civil war. Ismail seized this opportunity and sent his men to collect his scattered followers. Reinforced through the military assistance received from Qaracha Iliyas and strengthened through 7000 of his followers from Turcoman tribes, he subdued Georgia and acquired much booty in 1500. At the age of fourteen, he had an encounter with Farrukh Yassar of Shirvan at Gulistan fort and having killed the ruler invaded Baku. It was in the year 1501 that Ismail won a victory in excess of Aq Qyunlu, entered the Turcoman capital at Tabriz and ascended the throne with the title Shah.

### ***The Turcomans and the Safavids***

The power of Safavids (the new dynasty which lasted in Persia till 1736), was based on the support given through the Turcoman tribes, namely Shamlu, Rumlu, Takkalu, Zulqadar, Afshar, Qachar, Ustajlu and Warsaq. The Turcoman adherents of Aradabil order were the basis of this new ruling class though the Safavids themselves were not pure Turcomans. The Turcomans were attracted towards the Persian Shah owing to religious affinity and also for social and political causes. The Turcoman tribes of Asia Minor or Central Asia could not integrate themselves with the Ottomans or the Uzbek Empire due to their racial and religious differences. On the other hand the Ottoman or the Uzbek rule also had no better prospects to offer them. The Turcomans enjoyed an extraordinary position in the Persian Empire. Initially, approximately all the significant civil, military and administrative posts were held through them. The traditions of governance and administration were borrowed through the Safavids from the rulers of Tabriz. The tribal loyalties of these Turcomans sustained Shah Ismail well. The Shah not only accepted the traditions of the god king (combining in himself the spiritual and temporal powers) but also legitimized his rule in the name of his relationship with his grandfather Uzun Hasan. Shah Ismail's kinship with Aq Qyunlu was significant for him. Undoubtedly, the Qara Qyunlu and Aq Qyunlu had previously created certain pre-circumstances for the establishment of a new dynasty with older political and cultural traditions of Persia.

### *Shiism and the Safavis*

The new dynasty had created a somewhat changed military and political structure with the Shia creed as state religion and Italicization of Persian Islam — sprouting into a new cultural entity, i.e., the evolution of a 'Persian People'. The Safavi state originated from a religious cum political nucleus. Therefore , the inter twinning of religion and politics which is noticed at the outset, seems to match the sectarian attitude of the Sunni Ottoman and the Uzbek states. Shah Ismail received full support from Kashan and Qum which were mainly inhabited through the Shias. Elsewhere (as in the Sunni Baghdad or Herat), the population resisted his advance and he faced reprisals.

### **The Safavis And The Uzbek—Ottoman Confrontation**

The rising power of the Shia ‘Safavis’ (new contenders of supremacy in the Muslim world) checked the Ottomans from incorporating Persia into their domain. In fact, the Perso-Uzbek and Perso-Ottoman wars were a continuous characteristic of the sixteenth century. Although Shah Ismail (1502-1524) did not fight any war after his debacle at Chaldiran in 1514 at the hands of the Ottoman ruler Salim (1512-1520), his son and successor Shah Tahmasp (1524-76) had to face both the Uzbeks and the Ottomans approximately incessantly. The five major invasions of the Uzbeks on Khurasan (1524-38) and four full-level Ottoman invasions on Azerbaijan (1534-35, 1548, 1553) failed to overwhelm Shah Tahmasp, though he signed a peace at Amasya (29 May 1555) with the Ottomans. Besides these external dangers there also appeared some internal troubles. For instance, the two dissimilar racial and linguistic groups of the Turcomans and Iranians (each of whom had dissimilar origins, culture, and customs) were joined through new constituents—the Georgians and the Circassians, This led to increased court intrigues.

While the Safavis had pragmatic relations with the Mughals of India, they also maintained good relations, though occasionally, with the Russians and the Portuguese. Separately from Shah Tahmasp, Shah Abbas I (1588-1629, whose reign is said to be the zenith of the Safavi power) Shah Abbas II (1642-66) and Shah Safi were other significant Safavi rulers. With Shah Abbas I, the Safavi state slowly developed from its theocratic base and military structure into a full-bloomed Empire of the Orient. He introduced several administrative and military reforms. A new group of loyalists (the Ghulams) was created who occupied several new posts. The army was organised on the pattern suggested through Robert Sherley who was appointed as ‘Master General against the Turks’. A centrally paid strong army was organised, and a regiment of artillery with 500 guns was recognized.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- Throughout the 16-18th century, in the context of trade and commerce, what does the word factory denote? What was its role?
- Discuss the role of foreign investments in the Portuguese trade of India.
- When did the Nayak kingdoms emerge?
- Discuss the nature of Nayak-Vijaynagar relations throughout the 16th century.
- Throughout the 16th century South Indian states illustrate the signs of centralization. Comment.
- Discuss the nature and composition of the Golkonda nobility.
- Discuss the extent of Sikandar Lodi's Empire.
- Under what circumstances Babur invaded India?
- In what method did the Afghan polity differ from the Turkish polity?
- Look at in brief Sikandar Lodi's economic events.
- Describe the significance of the study of Central Asian history in relation to the Mughals.
- Discuss the antecedents of the Uzbeks and the Safavis.
- Discuss the causes for the downfall of the Timurids.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **MUGHAL EMPIRE: POLITY**

#### **STRUCTURE**

- Learning objectives
- Relations with central Asia and Persia
- Expansion and consolidation: 1556-1707
- Growth of Mughal empire: 1526-1556
- Review questions

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The study of this chapter will enable you to understand the:

- Geo-political significance of North-Western boundary; the global and regional perspective which shaped and determined tripartite relations;
- Main stages in the Mughal-Uzbek relations;
- Main stages of the Mughal-Safavi relations;

- How Bairam Khan's regency came to an end and Akbar took control of the affairs of the state;
- The territorial expansion of Mughal Empire under Akbar and his successors;
- The relationship flanked by the Mughals and autonomous chiefs and appreciate how did it help in the expansion and consolidation of the Empire;
- Babur's successful campaigns against the Lodis;
- The conquests and conflicts of the Mughals with the local ruling powers, specially their clashes with the Afghans and the Rajputs,
- The circumstances and factors that led to the revival of Mughals in India under Humayun.

## **RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL ASIA AND PERSIA**

### **Global And Regional Perspectives**

In the first decade of the sixteenth century, as the Timurid and the Turkoman states fell separately, two new states came into subsistence in West Asia and Central Asia. The borders of the two states (the Uzbeks and the Safavis) were contiguous except that the river Amu separated the two. Mutual rivalry and constant warfare flanked by the two were, so, inevitable. This was because their imperialistic adventures could only succeed at the expense of each other's territorial possessions. Although these new states once shaped the provinces of a larger Empire and shared several common characteristics, they fell and sprouted into two separate and separate entities in early sixteenth century. They now differed from each other in their racial, lingual, sectarian, and to a great extent, even in their sociocultural formations and traditions. The upsurge of the Safavi 'warriors of faith' who organised their co-religionists as a political force, recognized a Persian state as an inadvertent rival to the Empire of the Ottomans and the Uzbeks. Large level migrations (voluntary or forced) resulted in the reshuffling of population — the sunni Muslims trickling from Shia Persia of the Safavis to the sunni Transoxiana of the Uzbeks and vice versa.

The three states in the region, namely, Central Asia (Transoxiana), Ottoman Turkey and the Mughals, were sunni Muslims and as such had no bone of contention to embitter their relations on religious basis. While the Uzbek Empire could, so, rely upon its other modern counterparts like the Ottomans, the Safavi Empire had no such reliable and permanent allies bound to them through the ties of much trumpeted 'common faith'. Separately from "sectarian differences" (so extensively exploited in the 16th century for political ends) Persia had many other points of discord with the above-

mentioned states. Due to geographical proximity, the extension of the Uzbek Empire could be possible only at the expense of Persia which was geopolitically significant, commercially prosperous and fertile. As the Ottoman Empire was keen to hold all the maritime trade routes, its interest in the flourishing Hormuz port, Red sea and Indian ocean was sure to bring it into disagreement not only with the Persian but also at times with the Portuguese and the Russians. The Portuguese, particularly in the Indian Ocean, were a constant threat to the Ottomans who wanted to eliminate them. The occasional Portuguese-Persian friendship, so, was not surprising.

The commercial and strategic significance of Persia, and, its carpet and silk industries and the fertility of its soil always excited the cupidity of its neighbors. Therefore , Persia had to face alternately and approximately continually the ambitious and expansionist ventures of the Ottomans and the Uzbeks. Since the Czars of Russia had an eye on Transoxiana, they not only instigated the Qazaqs to invade Uzbek Khans but also invoked friendly relations with the Shi'ite Persia. Therefore , Persia could get temporary support of the Portuguese, Russians and later on the English. This was because each of them had had their own vested interests and wanted to use Persia only as a counterpoise for their respective rivals.

With India, the Persians had a bone of contention — the territory of Qandahar—which led to a situation ranging from hostility to an occasional armed thrash about. In spite of this, the Persians approximately always responded to every call of help from the Mughals. For instance, Shah Ismail had assisted Babur against the Uzbeks and Tahmasp also ensured the restoration of the lost Empire of Humayun. Shah Abbas maintained friendly relations with Akbar and Jahangir and keenly responded to the calls of help from the Deccan states of Golconda, Bijapur and even pleaded their case with Akbar.

### **Relations With The Uzbeks**

Babur was expelled from Central Asia and after much hardship in Kabul, he supervised to conquer India in 1526. In the following Sub-sections we will discuss the Mughal relations with the Uzbeks.

#### ***Babur and Humayun***

With the expulsion of Babur from Central Asia, the traditional hostility flanked by the Mughals and the Uzbeks was suspended for a while almost certainly due to the fact that there was nothing to quarrel for as in the case of Persians in excess of the issue of Qandahar. As embassy had been sent through

Kuchum and other Uzbek Sultans in 1528 to India to congratulate Babur upon his conquest. Notwithstanding this amicable gesture on the part of the Uzbeks, the Mughals never forgot the loss of their 'ancestral' kingdom. Despite a persistent desire of the Mughals to conquer Transoxiana, it was almost certainly apparent to them that the ambition itself was an unimaginative proposition. While the defense of the North-Western boundary had become a constant problem and even the conquest of Qandahar was still a dream, how could they plan to conquer Transoxiana and exercise an effective control in excess of these remote "ancestral lands"? Nevertheless, Babur's exhortations to Humayun to reconquer some parts of Transoxiana and letter's unsuccessful or temporarily successful attempts sustained. Though, these were without any lasting effects as Mughal territorial possessions in India were yet to be consolidated and extended. In subsequent years, both the Uzbeks and the Mughals were faced with numerous internal troubles and could not venture to expand. A new chapter begins in the history of mughal-Uzbek relations with the emergence of Abdullah Khan (1560-98) who tried to establish vital contacts with Akbar.

### ***Akbar***

The mughal-Uzbek relations under Akbar can be discussed in three stages 1572-1577, (2) 1583-1589 and (3) 1589-1598.

#### *First Stage (1572-1577)*

It was neither the expectation of some military assistance from Akbar nor a question of exploring the possibility of creation an alliance against the Persian Empire which prompted Abdullah to send two embassies in 1572 and 1577. With his designs on territories like Badakhshan and Qandahar, it was only natural that Abdullah should strive to develop friendly relations with Akbar and thereby ward off the danger from this side. These two embassies were therefore probing and appeasing missions sent for the following purposes.

- To ascertain Akbar's attitude towards Persia and Qandahar;
- To discover out his general policy in relation to Badakhshan and, if possible,
- To mislead Akbar in relation to his own designs on Badakhshan.

The dangers threatening Akbar at his North-Western frontiers e.g., rebellious attitude of Mirza Hakim (ruler of Kabul) and the latter's friendship with Shah Ismail II of Persia, the possibility of triple alliance flanked by Abdullah, Mirza Hakim and Ismail II and Akbar's own inability to become involved in external affairs necessitated a friendly attitude towards Abdullah Khan. Hence, an embassy was sent in 1578 to Akbar. Akbar rejected the

proposal for a joint attack on Persia. It seems that the reaction of Abdullah to this letter was not quite favorable since no further embassies were sent to Akbar for in relation to the decade. From 1577 onwards, a shift is noticeable in the respective positions of Abdullah Khan and Akbar which also brought in relation to the change in their policies towards each other. Through 1583, Abdullah had conquered all of Transoxiana, and had also eliminated all his kinsmen. When his father died in 1583, he became the Khaqan also and could now compete with his other counterparts in the Muslim world. Abdullah conquered Badakhshan in 1584 and the two Mirzas (Mirza Shah Rukh and Mirza Hakim) had to leave the territory. While Abdullah had improved his position and was now adopting a bolder and demanding attitude towards Akbar, the attitude of Akbar himself had become more conciliatory.

Through this time the difficulties of Akbar had increased further. There were troubles in Kashmir and Gujarat, and also tribal commotions in Kabul, Sawad and Bajaur. The frontiers of Akbar had become even more insecure after the death of Mirza Hakim (1585). The Persian Empire had also become weak now under the unsuccessful reign of the incompetent and half-blind ruler Khudabanda from 1577 to 1588 and the Empire had been totally shattered through the invasions of the Ottomans as well as through internal intrigues of the nobles.

#### *Second Stage (1583-1589)*

After a lapse of many years, Abdullah sent another embassy to Akbar in 1586. Akbar responded through sending Hakim Humeim in 1586 as his envoy. It is hard to explain why Abdullah chose to send two separate letters simultaneously. Nevertheless, neither of the two letters can be discarded as spurious since Akbar's reply contains answers to the questions raised separately in both the letters. It is clear from the contents of both the written and verbal messages from Abdullah that the purpose of this embassy was not to seek the cooperation of Akbar for an attack on Persia but to prevent him from sending any assistance to the Persian ruler. Abdullah explained that he had discontinued all correspondence with Akbar from 1578-1585 due to the reports that "Akbar had adopted the religion of metempsychosis and the behavior of Jogis and had deviated from the religion of the Prophet". In his reply sent through Hakim Humeim Akbar called it "fabrications and accusations of certain disaffected persons".

#### *Third Stage (1589-1598)*

The despatch of Ahmad Ali Ataliq from Abdullah's court marks the beginning of the third stage in the Uzbek-Mughal relations. Through the letter sent with this envoy, Abdullah sought friendship and sent counsel for "exerting

ourselves to strengthen the foundations of concord and create this Hindukush the boundary flanked by us". Nevertheless, the formal acceptance of this offer of peace was confirmed through Akbar only in 1596 after the conquest of Qandahar. There were certain plausible causes for this conciliatory attitude of Abdullah towards Akbar:

- Mirza Shah Rukh grandson of the ruler of Badakhshan and sons of Mirza Hakim came to India and Akbar himself remained at Kabul;

- The situation in Persia started showing signs of improvement from 1589 onwards. Shah Abbas concluded a humiliating treaty with the Ottomans so as to be able to deal with the Uzbeks and sent a letter to Akbar seeking his assistance against the Uzbek ruler.
- The strained relations with the Qazaqs had acquired new dimensions as the diplomatic relations of the Qazaqs with Russian Czars which began under the Timurids in the 15th century were very actively pursued flanked by 1550-1599. Notwithstanding twenty-five embassies sent through Uzbek rulers and six return embassies (including Jenkinson's) to Khanates and Qazaqs, the relations were no better than what could be termed a diplomatic-economic offensive. After the conquest of Kazan, Astarakhan and Siberia through Russia, the main intermediary commercial centres and brisk trade flanked by the two states recognized earlier through Timur had been destroyed. Likewise, the rivalry in excess of the Qazaq region flanked by the Czar and the Khan turned the balance in favour of the Qazaqs whose ruler Tawakkul sent his envoy Muhammad to Russia in 1594, who not only brought troops with fire-arms but also the assurance of full diplomatic protection.
- The rebellion of his own son Abdul Momin had further aggravated the troubles of Abdullah Khan. In 1592, he sent nishans to Din Muhammad (nephew of Abdullah Khan), advising him to provide up the thought of conquering Qandahar since an understanding had been reached with Akbar that the Hindukush and Qandahar should form the boundary flanked by the two kingdoms.

In the changed circumstances, Akbar was feeling emboldened and was also aware of the aggressive designs of Abdullah Khan due to which he had personally come to Punjab and was planning to occupy Qandahar as well from 1589 onwards. Akbar entertained designs upon Qandahar and was finally successful in persuading the Mirzas to come to India. After the conquest of Qandahar, Akbar felt the need of reviving his contacts with Abdullah Khan. Since after the occupation of Qandahar, the Mughal forces had occupied themselves in an armed disagreement with the Uzbeks in excess of the possessions of Garmsir and Zamindawar, it had become all the more necessary to pacify Abdullah Khan. Moreover, in 1594, the Ottoman Sultan Murad III had sent a letter to Abdullah proposing a joint attack on the Persian territory. The fear of the Ottoman-Uzbek friendship might have also alarmed Akbar. No military alliance could take place at this time, as the Uzbek envoy was still on his method to the Ottoman court when Sultan Murad died in 1595.

The fear of the Uzbeks sustained, particularly, in view of the fact that Abdullah Khan had opened correspondence with the new Ottoman ruler Mohammad and had even proposed a joint attack of Persia. After the occupation of Qandahar, Akbar realized the urgency of sending an embassy to Abdullah through Khwaja Ashraj Naqshbandi and showed his willingness to

accept the Hindukush as the boundary flanked by the two kingdoms. The envoy carrying these messages received audience with Abdullah in September 1597 at Qarshi. For the return embassy, Abdullah sent Mir Quresh with the Mughal envoy, but before they could reach India, the Uzbek ruler died in 1598. The Indian ambassadors returned, though Mir Quresh was not able to accompany them.

### ***Jahangir***

Jahangir's relations with Turan were predominantly determined through his relations with Persia. Although his love for Turan is visible in his autobiography, the conquest of Turan was not incorporated in his plans. His relationship with the Uzbeks is best assessed in his own answer to an English traveler Thomas Coryat's request for a letter of recommendation in 1616 that:

- There were no great amity betwixt the Tartarian princes and him and his recommendations would not help the traveler at Samarqand.

In the first decade of his rule, Jahangir maintained no active political relations with the Uzbeks except for attempting to forestall any probable expansionist design on his frontiers. The early indifference of Jahangir towards the Uzbeks was expediently changed as soon as the question of Qandahar was raised through the Shah through his envoy Zainul Beg. In February 1621, Mir Baraka was sent on a "highly confidential mission" to Imam Quli, the Uzbek ruler who in turn sent an embassy to Nur Jahan Begam. Imam Quli's confidential message received through Jahangir with much enthusiasm as it contained criticism of the Persians and sought an alliance with the Mughals against Persians. Jahangir had been invited to join the holy war which was obligatory on Imam Quli not only to avenge the death of his own father but also to clear the road to Mecca which was under Persian control. Although Jahangir had himself ignored friendly overtures of the Ottoman Sultan of Turkey, the news of a possible Uzbek-Ottoman alliance was quite disturbing for him. After the capture of Baghdad in 1624, Sultan Murad had sent a favorable reply to Imam Quli's call for an alliance against Persia and had even exhorted him to take absent Iran from the control of the Persians. The Ottoman Sultan had sent a similar letter to Jahangir aiming at a triple alliance against Persia. Although many letters were exchanged throughout 1625-26, no plans could materialize as Jahangir died in 1627.

### ***Shah Jahan***

With the accession of Shah Jahan, the Uzbek-Mughal relations took a new turn. The underlying objective of Shah Jahan's foreign policy was three fold:

- The recovery of Qandahar;

- The recon quest of the “ancestral land”; and
- The hegemony in excess of Deccan.

For this purpose, he wanted to ensure friendship of both the modern powers of Persia and Transoxiana alternatively when Qandahar and Transoxiana were invaded. Out of sheer diplomacy, Shah Jahan ignored the invasion of Nazr Muhammad on Kabul and sent an embassy to Imam Quli at Bukhara. Through this exchange of embassies, solidarity against Persia was accentuated. Shah Jahan’s embassy led through Safdar Khan arrived in April 1633. This visit was followed through another envoy, Mir Husain, in May 1637. Unlike Jahangir, Shah Jahan even wrote a letter to Murad IV in 1636 expressing his desire to reconquer Qandahar and proposing a tripartite alliance of Mughals, Uzbeks and Ottomans against the Persians. Shah Jahan, though, supervised to conquer Qandahar even without the assistance of any of these rulers.

After the capture of Qandahar in 1638, Shah Jahan’s sole aim was to conquer his ‘ancestral land’ of Transoxiana. A large level Uzbek invasion of Maruchaq beside Persian frontiers provided the much sought after Persian-Mughal entente in April-May 1640. A joint invasion of Balkh was proposed. Though, the task was left unfulfilled. The correspondence flanked by the Persians and the Mughals at this juncture shows that the latter succeeded in persuading the Persians to cooperate with them only to a limited extent as the letters from the Persian side smacked of their fear and circumspection. Equally apprehensive were the half-hearted allies — the Uzbeks — as they could sense the expansionist ambitions of Shah Jahan. An opportunity soon appeared in this regard for the Mughals.

The Uzbek Empire was passing through a stage of anarchy. Imam Quli, the popular ruler of the Uzbeks, lost his eyesight and abdicated in favour of his brother Nazr Muhammad in November 1641. The despotism and stubborn autocracy of Nazr Muhammad provoked opposition of the nobility which now started supporting his son Abdul Aziz. In desperation, Nazr Muhammad sought the assistance of Shah Jahan who immediately seized this opportunity to conquer Balkh on the pretext of saving it from the rebels. The Mughal forces successfully entered Balkh in early 1646. Nazr Muhammad was forced to seek shelter in Persia. So, Shah Jahan sent two letters — one to Nazr Muhammad informing him in relation to the conquest of Balkh without any apologies or explanations and another to Shah Abbas II of Persia giving him the news of occupation of Balkh which was a prelude to the conquest of Samarqand and Bukhara through the Mughals. The conquest was justified on grounds of extending necessary protection to the Saiyids of Balkh. It was also conveyed through this letter that Nazr Muhammad should be sent to Mecca and should not be allowed to return to Turan. The Persians themselves

hesitated to support the cause of Nazr Muhammad as they were doubtful in relation to his success. In fact, Shah Jahan had dispatched three successive envoys to Persia for ensuring Persian neutrality in the Turanian affairs. Though, this was not the only factor which determined the Persian attitude towards Nazr Muhammad. They were somewhat reluctant to help him not only because of his sullen temperament but also because of the traditional Uzbek-Persian hostility. The absence of capable leadership in Persia further thwarted such designs. Before the envoys reached Persia Nazr Muhammad had already left for Turan.

The conquest of Balkh and other territories proved easier for Shah Jahan than their occupation. The conquest at the same time was hazardous, too, due to a diversity of factors. These incorporated lack of adequate means of communication, severity of climate, staggering cost in men, money and material and the hostility of the local population. The evacuation was also hard for the Mughals and was equally unpleasant for the Persians. Hence, an agreement had to be reached with Nazr Muhammad in October 1647.

In 1650, Shah Jahan sent an embassy to Abdul Aziz, the Uzbek ruler of Turan. But the political realignments taking place in Turan recently had made the situation hard for Abdul Aziz. His brother Subhan Quli was being supported through his father-in-law Abul Ghazi — the then ruler of Khwarazm and a satellite of Persia. Shah Jahan often persuaded Abdul Aziz to invade Kabul. Shah Jahan's effort to form an alliance with the Ottoman rulers Murad III and Muhammad IV had failed. The tenor of the letters sent through the Ottomans to Shah Jahan was distasteful to the latter and not very conducive to mutual understanding. The Mughal occupation of Balkh was also not liked through the Ottomans. Therefore, the Mughal-Ottoman relations could not prosper.

### **Relations With Persia**

After having familiarized you with the Mughal-Uzbek relations, we effort to tell you in relation to the nature of Mughal relations with Persia.

### ***Babur and Humayun***

After the death of Shah Ismail (1524) and the accession of his son Shah Tahmasp (1524-76), Babur set a condolence cum congratulatory embassy to the new Shah under Khwajagi Asad who returned with a Persian emissary Sulaiman Aqa. In the meantime, two Persian embassies under Hasan Chelebi and his younger brother successively reached the Mughal court. Babur also sent a return embassy though the purport of the letters and verbal messages

exchanged are nowhere recorded.

After Babur's death (1530), Kamran, Humayun's brother, held his principality of Kabul, Qandahar and the territories extending up to Lahore firmly against the Persians. In 1534-35, the Persian prince Sam Mirza and his ambitious noble Aghziwar Khan were involved in a feud with Kamran and Khwaja Kalan (governor of Qandahar). Though, Aghziwar Khan was killed in the encounter and Sam Mirza returned to Herat. This made Shah Tahmasp lead an expedition with a force of seven to eight thousands in 1537 against the Mughals. A modern historian blames the governor Khwaja Kalan for inept handling of the situation because it was he who surrendered the fort of Qandahar to the Shah leading to the fall of nearby territories. When Shah Tahmasp was beset through turmoil in Azerbaijan and the tensions were mounting on his western frontiers Kamran easily reconquered Qandahar in 1537-38.

Humayun did not maintain an active contact with Persia upto 1543. It was only after his expulsion from India in mid 1543 that Humayun wrote a letter to Shah in January. The letters exchanged flanked by Humayun and Tahmasp and his officials are accessible and throw light on the dissimilar stages of Indo-Persian relations. Ahmad Sultan Shamlur, the Persian governor of Siestan, invited the royal fugitive and Humayun took shelter with fifty of his ill-equipped loyalists in Persia. He did so mainly at the advice of Bairam Khan. Tahmasp had himself suffered at the hands of his rebellious brothers. Hence, he appreciated Humayun's difficulties.

Humayun seized Qandahar from its Persian commander Budagh Khan in September. Although some misunderstanding had temporarily soured the relation flanked by the two potentates leading to speculations that the demand for conversion to shi'ism was the cause of rupture, the cordiality was through and large maintained on the two sides. Shah Tahmasp sent a congratulatory embassy under Walad Beg Takkalur in 1546 for Humayun's victory in excess of Kabul. In his letter sent through the returning envoy, Humayun sent invitation to Khwaja Abdus Samad, the well-known Persian painter, and certain other talented men to join his service. Humayun recalled his envoy Khwaja Jalaluddin Mahmud (sent in 1548). Another envoy Qazi Shaikh Ali was sent in 1549 to condole the death of Bahram Mirza and to relate the rebellion of Kamran Mirza against Humayun. Shah Tahmasp's envoy Kamaluddin Ulugh Beg brought his message. Humayun was advised to refrain from showing clemency to Kamran and military assistance, if and when required, was offered. The last recorded embassy from Tahmasp came in early summer of 1553 after which Humayun was once again preoccupied with recovery and consolidation of Indian domains.

## *Akbar*

Humayun's death in 1556 reopened the issue of Qandahar. The seizure of Qandahar through the Shah had strained Persian relations. It was because of this that Tahmasp's embassy in 1562 under Said Beg Safavi to Akbar (to condole Humayun's death and to congratulate him on his accession) remained unanswered. Subsequently, Shah Tahmasp's two letters recommending Sultan Mahmud Bhakkari's candidature for entering the ranks of nobility were also ignored because, as recorded through Abul Fazl, merit and not recommendation determined the state appointments. Silence was maintained even in 1572 when Khudabanda (contender for Persian throne) sent Yar Ali Beg to Akbar with an eye on his support throughout the imminent war of succession. After the death of Tahmasp (May 1576), Shah Ismail II ascended the throne. He maintained friendly relations with Mirza Hakim. With the accession of Khudabanda in November 1577, Persia was plunged in turmoil. In 1583, Prince Abbas sent Murshid Tabrizi to Akbar to ensure consolidation of his position in his province of Khurasan. Akbar was unhappy with the Persians in excess of the loss of Qandahar. He ignored, says Abul Fazl, "the petition of a rebel son against his father". In 1591, Shah Abbas again sent an embassy under Yadgar Rumlu as he faced a major threat from the Uzbeks. In November 1594, another envoy Ziauddin arrived, nevertheless, the silence suggestive of a cold and stiff relationship sustained till March 1594-1595 when the Mughal forces finally entered Qandahar and conquered Zamindawar and Qarmsir.

In 1596, Akbar sent his first embassy to Shah Abbas through Khwaja Ashraf Naqshbandi. In the letter, he justified his conquest of Qandahar in view of the suspected loyalty of the Mirzas towards the Shah and explained absent his complete silence owing to his inability to offer timely help to Shah because of the Uzbek embassies. In 1598, Shah Abbas sent an envoy Manuchihr Beg with the returning Indian envoy. Another envoy Mirza Ali Beg informed Akbar in relation to the conquest of all the forts except Qandahar expecting that Akbar would return it. Relying upon his secure frontiers due to the death of Abdullah Khan in 1598, Akbar returned from Punjab to Agra. In 1602, Manuchihr Beg was dismissed through Akbar and Mughal envoy Masum Bhakkari was sent to the Shah. The Shah sent two letters one each to Akbar and Hameeda Banu begam. The last years of Akbar were clouded through Salim's (Jahangir) revolt. The commanders of Farah, Khurasan and Zamindawar seized the opportunity and captured Bust despite stiff resistance from Shah Beg, the Mughal governor of Qandahar. Prince Salim had maintained independent friendly relations with Shah Abbas exchanging gifts and filial pleasantries so long as Akbar was alive. Nevertheless, an organised Persian invasion on Qandahar region in the last days of Akbar's reign (22 October, 1605) followed through the advance of Persian forces in February 1606 for the conquest of Qandahar was the beginning of hostilities flanked by

the two rulers. Despite Khusrau's rebellion, the Persian invasion proved to be a 'fiasco'.

### ***Jahangir***

The first Persian congratulatory and condolatory mission reached the Mughal court in March 1611. This mission returned in August 1613 accompanied through a Mughal envoy Khan Alam. Shah Abbas dispatched many major and minor embassies. A number of 'purchasing missions' were also exchanged and 'toy trade' (of manuscripts, paintings, astrolabes and other such curiosities) sustained. Sometime, the Shah took the trouble of supplying certain articles to Jahangir through ordering them from Venice and other parts of Europe. A mission under Sherley brothers arrived in June 1615. Though preceded and followed through a number of other embassies, the only embassy which openly dealt with the reopening of the Qandahar issue was led through Zainul Beg. Though, Jahangir's consultations with his counselors resulted in the rejection of the thought of surrender of Qandahar as it could have been treated as a sure sign of weakness. Through winning in excess of the trust of Jahangir and therefore taking the small Mughal detachment unawares, Shah Abbas occupied Qandahar on 11 June 1622.

## **EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION: 1556-1707**

### **Power Politics And Regency Of Bairam Khan: 1556-1560**

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

Politically, the first stage was insecure. It saw not only Humayun's death but also a challenge to the Empire through the Afghan forces under Hemu. The events especially cast a gloom since Akbar was a minor. The only alternative to save the situation was to appoint a regent. But the fear was that

the exercise of de facto sovereignty through one of the nobles as regent would disrupt the mutual relations of the nobles and threaten the administration. Despite these fears, Bairam Khan was appointed wakil. Surprisingly, there was no opposition to the appointment even through those nobles who could claim wikalat either on the basis of long service, blood relationship or past association with Akbar. These incorporated even the most severe critics of Bairam Khan.

While accepting Bairam Khan as the regent, it appears that these nobles wanted to share power and power with Bairam Khan. Bairam Khan, on the other hand, was determined to exercise power rigidly. On the assumption of the office as wakil-us Sultanat, he expected factional disagreement and tussle for power. He, so, began the process of eliminating all those nobles who would challenge him. He dismissed and imprisoned Shah Abul Ma'ali, his ardent critic. This did not arouse much opposition since Ma'ali was usually unpopular in the middle of the nobles. Subsequently, all such nobles who posed a challenge to Bairam Khan were sent to Kabul. Bairam Khan, though, attempted to win the support of Mun'im Khan, the governor of Kabul and Ali Quli Khan Uzbek, the commander of the Mughal forces in Awadh. Bairam Khan did not trust Mun'im Khan. He wanted to confine him to Kabul and aloofness him from the court. The opportunity came in May 1556 when Mirza Sulaiman attacked Kabul. Mun'im Khan's contacts were delinked with the court for the after that four months and Bairam Khan used this period to strengthen his power at the court.

Tensions were developing in the nobility and it was on the verge of crisis through the second battle of Panipat. The imperial forces led through Tardi Beg failed to defend themselves against the Afghan forces at the battle of Tughlaqabad. At this juncture, trying to assert himself, Bairam Khan, without the sanction of the emperor, ordered the execution of Tardi Beg on charges of treachery. This aroused dissensions in the nobility. But the victory at Panipat revived Bairam Khan's power. He further strengthened his position through distributing titles and jagirs in the Doab and granting promotions and rewards to his loyalists. He also gave significant positions to his favorites. Pir Muhammad Khan was appointed his personal wakil, Khwaja Aminuddin as bakshi and Shaikh Gadai as sadr. Bairam Khan was virtually in complete control of the affairs within six months of Tardi Beg's execution. To vest considerable power in himself, he prevented access to the king especially that of his possible rivals. Mun'im Khan and Khwaja Jalaluddin Mahmud were sent absent to Kabul and were not allowed to come to the court. The strengthening of Bairam Khan's power and the exercise of de facto authority through him was resented through the nobility.

The first apparent decline in Bairam Khan's power was when Akbar was married to the daughter of Mirza Abdullah Mughal, a son-in-law of Mun'im

Khan despite Bairam Khan's resistance. Bairam Khan's position was also affected after the arrival of Hamida Banu Begum from Kabul in April 1557. She was accompanied through Maham Anaga who had earlier supported Bairam Khan in the event of Tardi Beg's execution. Bairam Khan was compelled to compromise on the functioning of the Central government, i.e., he had to share power with leading nobles. Bairam Khan as wakil could not place any proposal before the king without the consent of leading nobles. This compromise diminished his power and through 1558 even his personal wakil, Pir Muhammad, turned against him.

To regain his power, he attempted a coup in 1559. He replaced Pir Muhammad through Muhammad Khan Sistani as his personal wakil. Shaikh Gadai was given additional charge separately from being a sadr. Several small ranking officials were also given promotions. But Bairam Khan remained isolated from the large section of the nobility and the king. He aroused their resentment through his authoritarianism. Scholars like R.P. Tripathi, have accused Bairam Khan of granting favors to the shias to the disadvantage of the sunnis and therefore annoying them. But I. A. Khan argues that although Bairam Khan was a shia, there is no historical evidence to prove that he granted favors on religious grounds. In fact, Bairam Khan's favorite Shaikh Gadai, the sadr was a Sunni and not a Shia.

Bairam Khan had underestimated the shrewdness of Akbar. He had made no effort to win the confidence of the king and when the king announced his dismissal in March 1560, all the loyalists of Bairam Khan either supported the king or declared their neutrality. The study of the period of Bairam Khan's regency designates that actually the political power was vested in the nobility. The nobles accepted the authority of Bairam Khan in a limited sense. They were not willing to accept his de facto sovereign power.

Bairam Khan tried to curb the motility but he failed to acquire absolute power. To maintain his position, he had to depend on one or the other section of the nobility. Therefore he failed to acquire a stable independent following. In fact, he alienated large sections of the nobility through giving high ranks and promotions to junior officers and creating inefficient amirs. At the end of his career, Bairam Khan realized that even his favorites opposed him. The tussle flanked by Bairam Khan and the nobility was in fact a disagreement flanked by the central authority represented through the regent and the nobility. The king throughout this period was a mere figurehead who often became a tool in the hands of Bairam Khan's opponents. Bairam Khan had tried to weld jointly the two main groups of the Mughal nobility, i.e., the Chaghatai and Khurasani. But most of the nobles regarded this as an effort through the regent to curb their power and independence. Even the loyalists of Bairam Khan realized that they could not accept the central authority as represented through Bairam Khan.

Bairam Khan's regency was a period of dilemma for him. While he wanted to curtail the independence of the nobility, he needed their support for his power. This created contradictions in his position throughout this period. It was not possible for him to counterbalance this opposition through introducing a new group. The Afghans could not be recruited because they were the main contenders to the throne. The only alternatives were, so, the Rajput chiefs, the zamindars or other local chiefs. But, inducting them would have been a long process. Therefore, whenever, Bairam Khan tried to recover his position, he was opposed through the court nobility. Consequently, he often found himself isolated and was ultimately overthrown.

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

### **Territorial Expansion**

After overcoming initial troubles and consolidating his hold on the throne, Akbar started a policy of extending Mughal territories. Any policy of expansion meant disagreement with several political powers spread in dissimilar parts of the country. A few of these political powers were well organised, the Rajputs, though spread throughout the country as autonomous chiefs and kings, had major concentration in Rajputana. The Afghans held political control mainly in Gujarat, Bihar and Bengal. In Deccan and South India, the major states were Khandesh, Ahmednagar, Bijapur, Golkonda and other southern kingdoms. In the North-west some tribes held their sway. Kabul and Qandahar, though held through Mughal factions, were opposed to Akbar. Akbar through a systematic policy started the task of expanding his Empire. It necessarily be noted that the major expansion of Mughal Empire took place throughout the reign of Akbar. Throughout the reigns of his successors (Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb), very little was added in conditions of territory. The main additions in the later period were made throughout

Aurangzeb's reign in South India and North-East (Assam).

### ***North and Central India***

The first expedition was sent to capture Gawaliar and Jaunpur in 1559-60. After a brief war, Ram Shah surrendered the Gawaliar fort. Khan Zaman was sent to Jaunpur ruled through Afghans who were defeated easily and it was annexed to the Mughal Empire. Malwa in central India was ruled through Baz Bahadur. Adham Khan and others led the expedition against Malwa. Baz Bahadur was defeated and fled towards Burhanpur. After that, Garh Katanga or Gondwana, an independent state in central India ruled through Rani Durgawati, widow of Dalpat Shah, was conquered in 1564. Later, in 1567, Akbar handed in excess of the kingdom to Chandra Shah, the brother of Dalpat Shah. Throughout this period Akbar had to face a series of revolts in central India. Abdullah Khan Uzbeg was the leader of the revolt. He was joined through a number of Uzbegs. Khan Zaman and Asaf Khan also rebelled. Akbar with the help of Munim Khan succeeded in suppressing them and consolidated his position. A long disagreement with nobility, which had started after the dismissal of Bairam Khan (1560), now came to an end. Akbar through his diplomatic skills, organizational capabilities and the help of some trusted friends tackled this serious crisis.

### ***Western India***

#### ***Conquest of Rajputana***

Akbar realized that to have a stable Empire, he necessity subjugate the large tracts under Rajput kings in the neighboring region of Rajputana. A calculated policy was devised not only to conquer these areas but turn their rulers into allies. Here we will not go into the details of Akbar's policy towards the Rajput kings. Akbar with the exception of Chittor's Rana Pratap, supervised to secure the allegiance of all the Rajput kingdoms. A large number of them were absorbed in Mughal nobility and helped Akbar in expanding and consolidating the Mughal Empire. Raja Surjan Hada surrendering the Keys of Ranthambhor fort to Akbar.

#### ***Conquest of Gujarat***

Having consolidated his position in Central India and Rajputana, Akbar turned towards Gujarat in 1572. After Humayun's withdrawal, Gujarat was no longer a unified kingdom. There were several warring principalities. Gujarat, separately from being a fertile region, had a number of busy ports and thriving commercial centres. Sultan Muzaffer Shah III was the nominal king claiming

overlordship in excess of 7 warring principalities. One of the princes, I'timad Khan, had invited Akbar to come and conquer it. Akbar himself marched to Ahmedabad. The town was captured without any serious resistance. Surat with a strong fortress offered some resistance but was also captured. In a short time most of the principalities of Gujarat were subdued.

Akbar organised Gujarat into a province and placed it under Mirza Aziz Koka and returned to capital. Within six months several rebellious groups came jointly and revolted against the Mughal rule. The leaders of rebellion were Ikhtiyarul Mulk and Mohammad Husain Mirza. The Mughal governor had to cede a number of territories. On getting the news of rebellion in Agra, Akbar started for Ahmedabad. This march is measured as one of the most outstanding feats of Akbar. Travelling at a speed of 50 miles a day Akbar beside with a small force reached Gujarat within 10 days and suppressed the rebellion. For approximately a decade there was peace in Gujarat. Meanwhile, Muzaffar III escaped from captivity and took refuge in Junagadh. After 1583 he tried to organize a few rebellions.

### ***Eastern India***

Ever since the defeat of Humayun at the hands of Sher Shah, Bengal and Bihar were governed through Afghans. In 1564, Sulaiman Karrani the governor of Bihar, brought Bengal also under his rule. Sulaiman realizing the rising strength of Akbar had acknowledged the overlordship of the Mughals. He used to send presents to Akbar. After his death in 1572, followed through some infighting, his younger son Daud came to occupy his throne. Daud refused to acknowledge Mughal suzerainty and got occupied in disagreement with the Mughal governor of Jaunpur. In 1574, Akbar beside with Mun'im Khan Khan-i Khanan marched towards Bihar. In a short-time, Hajipur and Patna were captured and Daud fled towards Garhi. After a brief stay Akbar returned. Mun'im Khan and Raja Todar Mal sustained to chase Daud who later submitted to the Mughals. After a short time, he again rebelled and was finally killed through the Mughal forces under Khan-i Jahan and Gaur (Bengal) was taken. This ended the independent rule of Bengal in 1576 which had lasted with few Akbar's success against Bengal: Daud Shah is taken Prisoner interruptions, for approximately two centuries. Parts of Orissa were still under some Afghan Chiefs. Approximately 1592, Mansingh brought the whole of Orissa under the Mughal rule.

### ***Rebellions of 1581***

According to V. A. Smith, "The year 1581 may be regarded as the most critical time in the reign of Akbar, if his early thrash about to consolidate his power be not taken into account." After the disagreement of nobility which

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

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

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

### *Conquests in the North-West*

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

### *Suppression of the Roshanais*

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

- **Conquest of Kashmir:** Akbar for a long time had his eyes set on conquering Kashmir. While camping in Atak, he decided to despatch an army for the conquest of Kashmir under Raja Bhagwan Das and Shah Quli Mahram. Yusuf Khan, the king of Kashmir, was defeated and he accepted suzerainty of Mughals. Akbar was not very pleased with the treaty as he wanted to annex Kashmir. Yusuf's son Yaqub beside with a few amirs also decided to oppose the Mughals and waged war. But some dozens of soldiers set in the Kashmiri forces. Finally, the Mughals appeared victorious and Kashmir was annexed to the Mughal Empire in 1586.
- **Conquest of Thatta:** Another region in the North-West which was still independent was Thatta in Sindh. Akbar appointed Khan-i-Khanan as governor of Multan and asked him to conquer Sindh and subdue Bilochis in 1590. Thatta was annexed and placed under the governor of Multan as a sarkar in that suba. The Mughal forces sustained the suppression of Bilochis in the adjoining regions. Finally, through the year 1595, the complete supremacy of Mughals in excess of North-West region was recognized.

### ***Deccan and South***

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

In 1591, Akbar sent a few missions to the Deccan states asking them to accept Mughal sovereignty. Faizi was sent to Asir and Burhanpur (Khandesh), Khwaja Aminuddin to Ahmednagar, Mir Mohammad Amin Mashadi to Bijapur, and Mirza Ma'sud to Golkonda 1593 all the missions returned without any success. It was reported that only Raja Ali Khan, the ruler of Khandesh, was favorably inclined towards the Mughals. Now Akbar decided to follow a militant policy. Here we will not go into the details of the Deccan policy. We will give only a brief account of Mughal expansion there.

The trust expedition was dispatched to Ahmednagar under the command of Prince Murad and Abdul Rahim Khan Khanan. In 1595, the Mughal forces sieged Ahmednagar. Its ruler Chand Bibi at the head of a large army faced the Mughals. She approached Ibrahim Ali Shah of Bijapur and Qutub Shah of Golkonda for help but with no success. Chand Bibi gave a very serious resistance to the Mughal Army. After heavy losses on both sides, a treaty was formulated. According to this treaty Chand Bibi ceded Berar. After some time Chand Bibi attacked Berar to take it back. This time Nizamshahi, Qutabshahi and Adilshahi troops presented a joint front. The Mughals suffered heavy losses but could manage to hold the field. Meanwhile, serious differences flanked by Murad and Khan Khanan weakened Mughal position. Akbar so dispatched Abul Fazl to Deccan and recalled Khan Khanan. After Prince Murad's death in 1598, Prince Daniyal and Khan Khanan were sent to Deccan. Akbar, too, joined them. First, Ahmednagar was captured. Meanwhile, Chand Bibi died. After that, Asirgarh and adjoining regions were conquered through the Mughals (A.D. 1600). Adil Shah of Bijapur also expressed allegiance and offered his daughter in marriage to Prince Daniyal. Now Mughal territories in the Deccan incorporated Asirgarh, Burhanpur, Ahmednagar and Berar.

### **Administrative Reorganization**

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

### ***Formation of Subas***

In 1580, Akbar divided the whole territory under the Mughals into 12 provinces which were called subas. These were Allahabad, Agra, Awadh, Ajmer, Admedabad (Gujarat), Bihar, Bengal (including Orissa), Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan and Malwa. After the Deccan conquest, three new subas were added creation them to 15. These were Berar, Khandesh and Ahmednagar. These provinces were governed through a definite set of rules and a body of officers.

**Military Administration:** Akbar gave a new form to the military administration also. He combined the earlier practices and new events for organising army and tried to evolve a centralized military structure. He gave mansabs to both military and civil officers on the basis of their merit or service to the state. Mansab literally means an office or rank and mansabdar means holder of a rank. Akbar created 66 grades in his mansabari system, i.e., from the command of ten (dehbashi) to the commander of Ten Thousand (dahhazari). All mansabdars were paid in cash or in the form of a jagir. The military administration evolved under Akbar underwent several changes throughout the rule of his successors.

### **Territorial Expansion Under The Successors Of Akbar**

The territorial expansion under Akbar gave a definite form to the Mughal Empire. Very little progress was made throughout the reigns of his successors, viz., Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. After Aurangzeb we discover that the process of disintegration of the Empire began. In this section we will trace the expansion of the Empire throughout the reigns of Akbar's successors. Throughout the seventeenth century the main areas of activity were the North-West boundary, South India, North-East and some isolated regions.

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

Mewar was the only region in Rajputana which had not come under the Mughals throughout Akbar's time. Jahangir followed a persistent policy to capture it. After a series of conflicts, Rana Amar Singh finally agreed to accept Mughal suzerainty. All the territories taken from Mewar including the fort of Chittor were returned to Rana Amar Singh and a substantial jagir was

granted to his son Karan Singh. Throughout the reigns of the successors of Akbar, the Rajputs usually sustained to be friendly with the Mughals and held very high mansabs.

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

Annexation of Assam: The major success of the Mughals in the north-east was ' annexation of Assam. In 1661 Mir Jumla, the governor of Bengal invaded the Ahom kingdom. Mir Jumla had 12,000 cavalry, 30000 soldiers and a fleet of boats with guns under his command. The Ahom resistance was very feeble. Mir Jumla succeeded in capturing Kamrup the capital of Ahom kingdom. The king fled from the kingdom. In early 1663, the Swargdeo (heavenly king) surrendered and peace was recognized. Assam was annexed and Mughal officers were appointed. Mir Jumla died in 1663. Another notable achievement in north-east was capture of Chatgaon in 1664 under Shaista Khan the new governor of Bengal.

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

## **Policies Towards Autonomous Chieftains**

In his efforts to consolidate the Mughal Empire, Akbar concentrated his attention on chieftains also. Chieftains is a term which is usually used (and has got wide acceptance in the middle of historians) for the ruling dynasties spread throughout the country. These rulers enjoyed a dissimilar sort of relationship with the Mughals. On the one hand they were free to carry out administration within their territories. On the other hand they held subordinate position vis-à-vis the Mughal Emperor. Akbar's success lies in the fact that he could enlist the support of this group for the stability of his Empire. The subsequent Mughal Emperors also followed more or less the similar path.

### ***Nature of the Powers of Chieftains***

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

The first major study on chieftains was made through Ahsan Raza Khan. He recognized that they were not confined to peripheral areas of the Empire but were also found in the core regions in the subas of Delhi, Agra, Awadh and Allahabad. The largest number of these chieftains were Rajputs but they belonged to all castes including Muslims. The chieftains were a powerful group possessing large infantry, cavalry and hundreds of miles of land area yielding vast amount of revenue.

### ***Mughal Encounters with Chieftains***

After the defeat of the Lodis, the central power in India, Babur had to face joint rebellions of Afghans and chieftains. Humayun also had to face their hostility. Akbar's initial contacts with the chieftains were through skirmishes and wars. In several cases the chieftains joined hands with Afghan and Mughal rebels. In the process of the conquests and consolidation of Mughal power, Akbar got the support and submission of chieftains. There was no formal declared policy of Akbar towards them. On the basis of references in the modern sources, we get an thought in relation to the relations flanked by chiefs and the Mughals. These may be summarized as follows:

- After the conquest of or submission they were usually left free to administer their territories. They also had authority to collect revenue, impose taxes, levies and transit tax etc. In the collection of revenue the chieftains usually followed local practices rather than the Mughal regulations.
- These autonomous chieftains were taken into military service of the Mughals. They were given jagirs and mansabs. A.R. Khan estimates that approximately 61 chiefs were given mansab throughout Akbar's reign. The same trend sustained throughout the reigns of successive Mughal Emperors.
- In several cases where chieftains were not directly absorbed as mansabdars, they are found helping the Mughal army in their operation against enemy territories or suppression of rebellions. They throughout the Mughal rule helped in conquering extensive areas, at times even against their own clansmen.
- Separately from providing military help, they were given significant administrative positions like subadar (governors), diwan, bakhshi etc.
- Often they were assigned their own territories as jagir called as watan jagir which was hereditary and non transferable.
- A motivating feature of their relations was that the Mughal Emperor retained the right to recognize the chieftain as the ruler in case of disputes within the family. At the same time, those who had accepted the Mughal suzerainty were extended military protection.
- The chieftains were supposed to pay a regular tribute to the Mughal Emperor called peshkash. It is hard to ascertain the exact nature of this peshkash. This was at times in cash and at others in diamonds, gold, elephants or other rarities.
- Separately from being a source of revenue, the payment of peshkash was a symbol of submission to the Mughals.
- A number of matrimonial alliances were also recognized flanked by Mughal roy family and the chieftains.

### ***Rebellions of Chieftains***

We come crossways numerous instances of rebellions through chieftains. The causes for such rebellions are often stated as non-payment of revenue or tribute. In case of rebellions, the Mughal policy was not to dispossess the chieftains from their territories. Some one from the same family was left in control of the territory. In some instances when a chieftain was dispossessed, it was for a short period often as a reprimand. Later, he or one of his family members was reinstated. The Mughal policy towards chieftains initiated under Akbar sustained throughout the reigns of subsequent Mughal Emperors. The policy of absorbing them into Mughal nobility paid rich dividends to the Empire. The Mughal Emperor succeeded in getting the support of chieftains

and their armies for new conquests. As part of Mughal nobility, their help was also accessible for administering a large Empire. In addition, a friendly relationship with them ensured peace for the Empire.

At the same time, the chieftains also benefited. Now they could retain their territories and administer them as they wished. In addition, they received jagir and mansab. Often they got territories in jagir bigger than their kingdoms. It also provided them security against enemies and rebellions.

## **GROWTH OF MUGHAL EMPIRE: 1526-1556**

### **Political Scenario On The Eve Of Babur's Invasion**

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

In Central India there were three kingdoms: Gujarat, Malwa and Mewar. The power of Sultan Mahmud Khalji II of Malwa was, though, on the decline. Gujarat was ruled through Muzaffar Shah II, while Mewar under the leadership of Sisodia ruler Rana Sanga was the most powerful kingdom. Rulers of Malwa were under constant pressure of the Lodis, Mewar and Gujarat. This was because it was not only the most fertile region and a significant source for elephant supply but it also provided a significant trade route to Gujarat sea-ports. Hence, it was a significant region for the Lodis. Besides, for both Gujarat and Mewar it could serve as a buffer against the Lodis. The Sultan of Malwa was an incompetent ruler, and his prime minister Medini Rai could hardly hold the kingdom intact for long in the wake of internal strifes. Finally, Rana Sanga, succeeded in extending his power in excess of Malwa and Gujarat.

Through the close of the 15th century, Rana Sanga's sway in excess of Rajputana became approximately complete with the occupation of Ranthambhor and Chanderi. Further south, there were powerful Vijaynagar and Bahmani kingdoms. Towards the east, Nusrat Shah ruled Bengal. Towards the closing years of Ibrahim Lodi's reign, Afghan chieftains Nasir Khan Lohani, Ma'ruf Farmuli, etc. succeeded in carving out separate kingdom of Jaunpur under Sultan Muhammad Shah. Besides these major powers, there were numerous Afghan chieftaincies approximately Agra — the most powerful ones being those of Hasan Khan in Mewar, Nizam Khan in Bayana, Muhammad Zaitun in Dholpur, Tatar Khan Sarang Khani in Gwalior, Husain

Khan Lohani in Rapri. Qutub Khan in Etawa, Alam Khan in Kalpi, and Qasim Sambhali in Sambhal, etc.

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

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

### **Central Asia And Babur**

Through the close of the 15th century, the power of the Timurids was on the decline. Through this time the Uzbeks succeeded in establishing strong footholds in Transoxiana under Shaibani Khan. Approximately the same time, the Safavis rose into prominence under Shah Ismail in Iran; while further west the Ottoman Turks dominated the scene. We have already discussed how Shaibani Khan overran approximately whole of Transoxiana and Khorasan. Though, finally in 1510 Shah Ismail of Iran defeated Shaibani Khan. In a short while (1512) the Ottoman Sultan defeated Shah Ismail, therefore leaving the stage again to the Uzbeks to become the master of the whole Transoxiana.

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

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

### **Foundation Of Mughal Rule In India**

Much before the final showdown at the battle of Panipat (1526), Babur had invaded India four times. These skirmishes were trials of strength of Mughal arms and Lodi forces. The first to fall was Bhira (1519-1520), the gateway of Hindustan, followed through Sialkot (1520) and Lahore (1524). Finally, Ibrahim Lodi and Babur's forces met at the historic battlefield: of Panipat. The battle lasted for just few hours in favour of Babur. The battle shows Babur's ability in the art of warfare. His soldiers were less in number but the organization was superior. Ibrahim's forces though several times greater in number (almost 1,00,000 soldiers and 1000-500 elephants as compared to Babur's 12,000 horseman) faired badly. Babur successfully applied the Rumi (Ottoman) method of warfare.

As the Afghans advanced to attack the right flank; Babur ordered his reserve forces under Abdul Aziz to move. The Afghans, greater in number, were unable to move forward nor backward. They were attacked from both sides. This created total confusion in the middle of the Afghan forces. Babur took full advantage of the situation and his right and left wings soon attacked the Afghan forces from the rear side. This was followed with the opening up of fire shots. This totally paralyzed the Afghan army. Afghan casualties reported through Babur were almost 20,000 including the Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. In the battle it was not Babur's artillery but his 'superb tactics' and the 'mounted archers' played the decisive role, a fact which Babur himself acknowledged. The battle of Panipat, though, formally recognized the Mughal rule in India, it was first in the middle of the series of battles in the years to come. For instance, to secure this triumph, it was equally significant to overcome Rana Sanga of Mewar and the chieftains in and approximately Delhi and Agra. Another significant opponent in the eastern India was the Afghans. To add to this, troubles were mounting within his own nobility.

### ***Babur and the Rajput Kingdoms***

We have already discussed that Rana Sanga of Mewar was a power to reckon with. Babur, in his Memoirs, has blamed Rana Sanga for breaking his promise through not siding with him in the battle of Panipat against Ibrahim Lodi. Leaving separately the controversy whether it was Rana or Babur who asked for help, the fact remains that there was some understanding on both sides to join hands against Ibrahim Lodi in which the Rana faltered. Rana expected Babur to return to Kabul and leave him free to establish his hegemony, if not in excess of whole of Hindustan, at least in excess of Rajputana. Babur's decision to stay back necessity have given a big jolt to Rana's ambitions. Babur was also fully aware of the fact that it would be impossible for him to consolidate his position in India unless he shattered the Rana's power. Rana Sanga this time succeeded in establishing the confederacy against Babur with the help of Afghan nobles. Hasan Khan Mewati not only joined the Rana but also played a crucial role in forming the confederacy. This time (1527) Hasan Khan of Bari and Husain Khan Gurg-andaz joined the Rana. Husain Khan Nuhani occupied Rapri, Rustam Khan prevailed in excess of Koil, while Qutub Khan captured Chandawar. Pressure of eastern Afghans was so much that Sultan Muhammad Duldai had to leave Qannauj and join Babur. To add to this, the defeat of Babur's commander Abdul Aziz and Muhibb Ali at Biana and their praise of the valor of the Rajput army totally demoralized.

Ferishta and Badauni (Akbar's modern) comment that "the sense of defeatism was so strong that it was proposed through a majority at a council of

war that the Padshah should withdraw to Punjab and wait for developments unseen events". The Baburnama does not say anything in relation to the proposal, but this shows the general feeling of "despair and frustration". Though, Babur prevailed in excess of the situation with his fiery speech touching the religious sentiments of his men. Babur fortified his position close to Sikri at the village Khanwa. Here also he planned and organised his army on the 'Ottoman' lines. This time he took the support of a tank on his left, front side again was defended through carts but ropes were replaced through iron chains. Though, this time he used the strong wooden tripods linked with each other through ropes. They offered not only protection and rest to the guns but also they could move them forward and backward on the wheels. It took approximately 20-25 days to complete the strategy under Ustad Mustafa and Ustad Ali. In the battle (17th March, 1527) Babur made use of his artillery well. Rana Sanga got severely wounded and was accepted to Baswa close to Amber. In the middle of his other associates, Mahmud Khan Lodi escaped but Hasan Khan Mewati was killed. The Rajputs suffered a big loss. In fact, there was hardly any contingent whose commander was not killed. Shyamal Das (Vir Vinod) attributes treachery of Silhadi of Raisen as the major factor behind the defeat of Rana. But, in fact, it was irrational for Rana to remain inactive for in excess of three weeks. This provided an opportunity to Babur to strengthen himself and prepare for war. Babur's disciplined army, mobile cavalry and his artillery played most decisive role in the battle.

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

### ***Babur and the Afghan Chieftains***

The Afghans had surrendered Delhi, but they were still powerful in the east (Bihar and parts of Jaunpur) where the Nuhani Afghans were dominant led through Sultan Muhammad Nuhani. The Afghans of Chunar, Jaunpur and Awadh were not ready to cooperate with the Nuhanis in a bid to provide a united opposition against the Mughals. Instead, they surrendered meekly to Humayun (1527). In the meantime Sultan Muhammad Nuhani died (1528) and left the Nuhanis disjointed as his son Jalal Khan was still a minor. But the vacuum was soon filled through the appearance of Prince Mahmud Lodi, son of Sikandar Lodi and brother of Ibrahim. The Afghans, including the non-Nuhanis, who were a little hesitant earlier to side with the Nuhanis, now

readily accepted Mahmud's leadership. Besides, even the Nuhani Afghans like Babban, Bayazid and Fath Khan Sarwani, etc. who felt leaderless with the desertion of Jalal to Bengal, welcomed Mahmud, Nusrat Shah of Bengal also, though 'apparently advocated friendship with Babur, secretly adopted hostile events against him. He measured the subsistence of the Nuhani kingdom in Bihar as buffer flanked by the Mughals and his own possessions in parts of Bihar.

Babur could hardly afford to ignore these developments. He mobilized his forces at Ghagra and inflicted a crushing defeat upon Nusrat Shah's army (1529). Therefore ended the Afghan-Nusrat coalition and Nusrat Shah had to surrender large number of Afghan rebels who had taken asylum in his territory. The Afghans were now totally demoralized. Though Babban and Bayazid did effort to resist at Awadh, but when pressurized (1529) they fled to Mahmud. Therefore, within four years Babur succeeded in crushing the hostile powers and now could think of consolidating himself at Delhi. But he could hardly get the opportunity to rule as he died soon after (29 December, 1530).

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

### **Humayun: 1530-1540**

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

### ***Bahadur Shah and Humayun***

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

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

New developments resulted in the invasion of Gujarat through Humayun in 1535. In Jan. 1534 Bahadur Shah gave shelter to Muhammad Zaman Mirza and also attacked Chittor, Chittor was significant for Bahadur Shah for it could give him a strong base. It could have also facilitated expansion towards Ajmer,

Nagor and Ranthambhor. But Humayun at this point made no effort to stop Bahadur Shah from conquering Chittor. His move from Agra to Kalpi was too slow. Likewise, he took a longer route to reach Chittor. It seems that Humayun was not very keen to stop Bahadur Shah from occupying Chittor. Bahadur Shah was anxious to reach Mandu before Humayun could intercept. But the latter reached there much before. Mandu was the only route to retreat from Chittor to Gujarat and that was already occupied through Humayun. He blocked Bahadur Shah's camp from all directions therefore cutting the supplies. Within a month, with no hope left, Gujarati army themselves destroyed their best artillery to stop the Mughals to use it against them. Bahadur Shah fled from Mandu to Champaner, Ahmedabad, and Cambay and crossed Kathiawar and reached Diu. Mughals chased him. But, again, they hardly showed any eagerness for either arresting or killing Bahadur Shah. It seems that the real aim of Humayun was just to destroy the power of Gujarat. At Champaner, when Bahadur Shah was recognized through Mughal officers, they did not arrest him. Soon Humayun had to leave Mandu and rush to Agra because his long absence from there had resulted in rebellions in Doab and Agra. Mandu was now left under the charge of Mirza Askari. The handling of local population through the Mughals had caused widespread indignation. People were looted and slaughtered. As a result, as soon as Humayun left Mandu people rejoiced Bahadur Shah's return from Diu. Bahadur Shah took advantage of the opportunity and defeated the Mughals at Ahmedabad. In the meantime, to check the Portuguese advance, Bahadur Shah had to return to Diu. But this time the Portuguese succeeded and Bahadur Shah was treacherously murdered (17 Feb. 1537). This created confusion everywhere. The Afghans, left with no alternative, now turned towards Sher Shah for leadership.

### ***Eastern Afghans and Humayun***

The Afghans' defeat at the hands of Humayun (siege of Chunar November, 1531) resulted in the flight of Afghan nobles to Gujarat. This created a political vacuum in the east, providing an opportunity to Sher Khan to consolidate his power. The period flanked by 1530-35 proved crucial for Sher Shah. To consolidate his position in the east, he had to tackle with Bengal and Afghan nobles who got shelter under the Bengal ruler. On the other hand, he was hardly in a position to face the Mughals in case of any direct clash. Fortunately circumstances took a favourable turn for Sher Shah. Considering Bahadur Shah of Gujarat a serious threat, Humayun decided to tackle him first. Throughout this period Sher Shah was left free to consolidate himself.

Sher Shah had to face two invasions of Bengal rulers. The first attack took place under Qutub Khan, the muqti' of Munger in 1532-33 throughout Sultan Nusrat Shah's reign, and, the second under Ibrahim Khan throughout Sultan

Mahmud Shah's reign (1534). Though, Bengal armies were defeated on both the occasions. These successes totally exposed the weakness of the Bengal army. This raised the prestige of Sher Khan. The eastern Afghans who had earlier deserted him now rushed to serve under his banner. Besides, the destruction and death of Bahadur Shah through Humayun left the Afghans with no alternative but to join him against the Mughals.

Now Sher Shah wanted to establish himself as the undisputed Afghan leader. This time (1535) he took the offensive and defeated the Bengal army in the battle of Surajgarh. In a peace settlement after the battle, Sultan Mahmud Shah of Bengal agreed to supply war elephants and financial help to Sher Shah whenever required. This grand success against Bengal, followed through his attacks on the Mughal territories in the east (from Gorakhpur to Banaras), alarmed Humayun. Humayun now deputed Hindu Beg as governor (hakim) of Jaunpur to keep an eye on the developments in the eastern region. But, Sher Shah, acting cautiously on the one hand assured Hindu Beg of his loyalty, while on the other utilized the time for strengthening his army for his after that onslaught on Mughals. As soon his preparations were in excess of, he wrote a threatening letter to Hindu Beg. At the same time he launched his second attack on Bengal (1537). Hindu Beg, annoyed with Sher Shah's behavior, reported his hostile intentions to Humayun. The Afghan nobles suggested Humayun to stop Sher Shah from occupying Bengal, while the Mughal nobles advised him to occupy Chunar first to use it as a base for his operations in the east. The latter option was significant for maintaining the line of communications with Agra. But it took too long for Rumi Khan to capture Chunar (6 months). Historians consider it a great 'mistake' that cost Humayun his 'empire'. Though leaving Chunar in the hands of the Afghans could have been unwise, leaving Sher Shah free and unchecked in Bengal was 'equally wrong'. Sher Shah utilized the time and captured Gaur (April, 1538), the capital of Bengal.

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

He had to stay there for four months until he finally settled the prevailing chaos. In the meantime Sher Shah succeeded in controlling the routes to Agra therefore creation communication hard for Humayun, To add to Humayun's worries, Hindal Mirza, who was sent to gather supplies for his army, assumed sovereign power. Humayun hurried back to Chunar and reached Chausa (March 1539). He encamped on the western side of the river Karmnasa. At this stage Humayun was still in control of the situation. On the front side he

was guarded through the river, while to his rear was Chunar, which was still in the hands of his men. Sher Shah, too, showed willingness to accept truce. But at this stage Humayun unnecessarily exposed himself to danger through crossing the river. Sher Shah knowing fully well the paucity of Humayun's provisions, equipment and transport wasted no time in exploiting the situation. He, while pretending to fulfil the conditions of the truce, attacked the Mughal army. Panic spread in the Mughal camp. Large number of Mughal forces were killed. Humayun and Askari Mirza supervised to flee. Humayun reached Agra through method of Kara Manikpur and Kalpi (July 1539). Raja Virbhan, the ruler of Gahora, helped greatly in rescuing them. Kamran Mirza welcomed Humayun on his return to Agra with his army totally destroyed; while Sher Shah, elated through his victory, proclaimed himself an independent king. Under these circumstances, the final clash was inevitable. Humayun was defeated badly in the battle of Qannauj the banks of Ganga (1540). This paved the method for the establishment of the second Afghan empire in India. A number of factors had contributed in Humayun's debacle against Sher Shah. These contain:

- He faced hostility of his brothers. On several occasions he dealt with them too kindly.
- Sometime he reacted lethargically when the situation demanded swift action.
- This can be seen well in his Gujarat and Bengal campaigns.
- He was also victim of an 'inexorable fate'. For instance Mahmud Shah of Bengal kept him unnecessarily involved in Bengal politics. This provided an opportunity to Sher Shah to gain strength.
- Humayun also lacked financial possessions for continuous warfare. This weakness became very much apparent when in Bengal he got stranded and lacked money and supplies (1539).
- Besides, Sher Shah had the courage, experience and organising abilities; he was also skilled in exploiting political opportunities. Humayun could not match his capabilities.

### ***Humayun and His Brothers***

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

Though, Hindal Mirza through and large remained loyal to Humayun and even died fighting for him (1551).

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

## **Establishment Of Second Afghan Empire In India: 1540-1555**

After defeating the Mughal Emperor, Sher Shah declared himself as the sovereign ruler and started building the Second Afghan Empire. The fifteen years (1540-1555) of Afghan rule form an interlude in the history of Mughal Empire. This period, nevertheless, was important for the administrative innovations and reorganization. Throughout his short reign (1540-1545), he was busy in fighting for keeping his new Empire intact. Here we will provide a very brief account of Sher Shah's conflicts throughout this period.

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

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

Sher Shah's son and successor Islam Shah (1545-1553), though kept the legacy of his father intact, failed to consolidate it any further. He was most of the time busy in suppressing the intrigues within his own camp which appeared under the leadership of his brother Adil Shah beside with Azam Humayun and Khawwas Khan. Besides, his humiliating treatment towards the Niyazi Afghans specifically and the Afghans in general generated more resentment rather than gaining any support. The ill effects of which had to be borne through his son and successor. One discovers that in spite of all efforts of Islam Shah to clear the road for the smooth succession of his son after his

death (1553) internal strifes marred the infant Afghan kingdom to the advantage of Humayun. Soon after Islam Shah's death, Mubariz Khan murdered Islam's son Feroz and ascended the throne with the title of Adil Shah. Seditious and rebellions marred the whole country and the Empire broke into 'five' kingdoms (Ahmad Khan Sur in Punjab; Ibrahim Shah in Sambhal and Doab; Adil Shah in Chunar and Bihar; Malwa under Baz Bahadur, and Sikandar Shah controlled Delhi and Agra). This provided an ideal climate for Humayun to strike.

### **Revival Of Mughal Rule In India**

After Humayun's defeat at Qannauj, when Askari Mirza and Kamran withdrew to the North-West; Hindal and Yadgar Nasir Mirza decided to be with Humayun. The latter now decided to try his luck in Sind. But, here, Hindal Mirza also deserted him and at the invitation of Kamran marched towards Qandahar. The ruler of Sind, Shah Husain Arghun, also succeeded in winning in excess of Yadgar Nasir Mirza through giving his daughter in marriage. Humayun himself could not succeed in his bid to occupy Sihwan. Frustrated through all these developments, Humayun alone tried his luck in Rajputana. He was invited through Raja Maldeo, the ruler of Marwar (July 1542). But, at this juncture, Sher Shah asked Maldeo to hand in excess of Humayun. The latter fled in fear (August 1542). He was well received through Rana Birsal. With the help of the Rana Humayun tried his luck in Sind once more but failed. Now he marched towards Persia via Ghazni (December 1543) where he was well-received through Shah Tahmasp (1544). The latter promised him in regaining Qandahar, Kabul and Ghazni provided he promised to surrender Qandahar to the Shah. It was agreed upon and Qandahar, then under Askari Mirza, was occupied and handed in excess of to the Shah. But misunderstandings crept up, for the Persians showed no eagerness to help Humayun to occupy Kabul and Ghazni. This compelled Humayun to wrest Qandahar from the Persians (1545). Humayun's success at Qandahar won in excess of several nobles — specially Hindal and Yadgar Nasir Mirza to change sides. These developments totally demoralized Kamran and he fled from Kabul to Ghazna and thence to Sind and therefore facilitated Humayun's entry in Kabul (November 1545). From 1545 to 1553, Humayun spent his energies mainly in dealing with his brother Kamran who kept Humayun on his toes. In this disagreement Hindal Mirza lost his life on the battlefield (1551). This forced Humayun to have a final showdown. Kamran, tried to get help from Islam Shah but was cold shouldered. While fleeing from place to place, the Ghakkar chieftain Sultan Adam captured Kamran and handed him in excess of to Humayun. Finally, Kamran was blinded and permitted to proceed to Mecca (where he died in 1557).

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

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- What was the global situation which influenced the Mughal policy towards Central Asia and Persia?
- What were the salient characteristics of the Mughal-Uzbek relations in the third stage (1589-98)?
- What were the objectives of Shah Jahan's policy towards the Uzbeks?
- How distant do you agree with the view that Mughal relations with Persia revolved round the issue of Qandahar?
- How did Bairam Khan deal with the Initial challenges to his power?
- Explain the revival of Bairam Khan's power after the second battle of Panipat.
- How was Gujarat brought under the Mughal rule?
- How the Mughal policy towards chieftains was of mutual benefit?
- Discuss the political condition of India on the eve of Babur's invasion.
- Discuss the significance of the battle of Khanwa.
- Discuss the factors responsible for Humayun's debacle against Sher Shah.
- Discuss the circumstances which facilitated Humayun to regain his power in India.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **REGIONAL POWERS AND THE MUGHALS**

#### **STRUCTURE**

- Learning objectives
- The Deccan states and the Mughals
- Rise of the Marathas in the 17th century
- Rajput states
- Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golkonda
- Review questions

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- The policy pursued through dissimilar Mughal Emperors towards the Deccan states;
- The factors that determined the Deccan policy of the Mughals;
- Factors responsible for the rise of the Marathas;
- Political framework of the rise of the Maratha power;
- Mughal-Maratha disagreement;

- Understand the policy Babar and Humayun adopted towards the Rajputs;
- Analyze the nature of Mughal-Rajput relations in the 17th Century; and
- Political developments in the kingdoms of Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golkonda.

## **THE DECCAN STATES AND THE MUGHALS**

### **Akbar And The Deccan States**

Akbar wanted the Deccan rulers to accept his over lordship. It was throughout the campaigns in Gujarat throughout 1572-73 that Akbar, after being fully secured in the North, made up his mind for the conquest of the Deccan states because the rebels, driven out of Gujarat, used to take refuge in Khandesh, Ahmednagar and Bijapur. Moreover, with the conquest of Gujarat, Akbar wished to assume the rights which the previous rulers of Gujarat had enjoyed in relation to the Deccan states, i.e., the rights of over lordship. Since 1417, the Deccan states had acknowledged the supremacy' of the Sultans of Gujarat, had read khutba in their names and had paid them annual tribute. Internal disagreement in the middle of the Deccan states also motivated the Mughal ruler to intervene in their affairs. Akbar's desire to protect the trade route towards the Gujarat sea-ports and to establish his domination there was one of the significant factors that guided his Deccan policy. Besides, the Portuguese had recognized themselves very well on the Western coast of India and had appeared as a force to reckon with. Akbar wanted to assert Mughal suzerainty in excess of the Deccan states in order to drive the Portuguese absent from the western coast of India.

The first contact flanked by Akbar and the Deccan states was recognized after 1561 when Akbar, after the conquest of Malwa, ordered its governor Pir Muhammad to subdue Asirgarh and Burhappur where the former ruler of Malwa, Baz Bahadur, had taken refuge. After capturing Bijagarh, he advanced towards Asirgarh where the ruler of Khandesh, Miran Mubarak Shah II and Baz Bahadur of Malwa, were preparing to resist the Mughals. Mubarak Shah appealed to Tufal Khan of Berar for help who joined him. The allies marched against Pir Muhammad and defeated the Mughals at Bijagarh. Akbar himself marched to Mandu to control the situation. This alarmed Miran Mubarak Shah who sent envoys to Akbar and apologized for his conduct. He married one of his daughters to the Emperor, acknowledged Akbar's over lordship, read khutba in his name and gave Bijagarh and Handia in dowry to his daughter.

Throughout the ten years following the annexation of Malwa through Akbar in 1562, the struggles that took place in the Deccan attracted Akbar's

attention. In 1574, Murtaza Nizam Shah I invaded Berar. Tufal Khan fled to Burhanpur and sought Akbar's help offering Berar to him and requested him to send his officers to take charge of administration. But as Miran Mubarak Shah did not want to annoy Murtaza Nizam Shah I, he did not want Tufal Khan to stay in Burhanpur for a long period. Tufal fled to Berar. Akbar sent an envoy to Murtaza and asked him to desist from annexing Berar, but no attention was paid to the message and Berar was taken through Murtaza.

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

In 1591, Akbar sent four diplomatic missions to the four rulers of the Deccan in order to discover out the real state of affairs there and also to see whether they were willing to acknowledge his suzerainty. Only Raja Ali Khan reaffirmed the acknowledgement of Akbar's supremacy and sent his daughter with choice gifts for Prince Salim, The reports in relation to the other rulers were not favorable. Approximately all the chroniclers' say that Akbar decided to launch the military offensive at this juncture when his diplomatic mission failed.

Burhan Nizam Shah was succeeded through his eldest son Ibrahim in 1595, but the latter was killed the same year in a battle against Bijapur. His death led to chaos in the state of Ahmednagar. There were four parties each having its own candidate for the Nizam Shahi throne. The peshwa of Ibrahim Nizam Shah and leader of the Dakhni group of nobles in the court, namely Miyan Manjhu, declared one Ahmed of dubious lineage as the new King. Ikhlas Khan who was the leader of the Abyssinian group declared one Moti Shah as member of the Nizam Shahi family and proclaimed him new Nizam Shah. Chand Bibi, the sister of Burhan II, espoused the cause of Bahadur, the infant son of Ibrahim Nizam Shah. Aohang Khan Habashi—another leader of the Abyssinian group—supported—the claim of Ali, the son of Burhan Nizam Shah-I. Ikhlas Khan mastered a large army and forced Miyan Manjhu to take shelter in the fort of Ahmednagar. The latter appealed to Prince Murad, the Mughal Governor of Gujarat, for help. As Khandesh could serve as a base of operations, so the Mughals won Raja Ali Khan through ceding to him the district of Nandurbar in Gujarat. Moreover, the attendance of Mughal forces close to Khandesh forced him to join the Mughals. The Mughals besieged Ahmednagar fort in 1595. Miyan Manjhu later repented his invitation to

Prince Murad and proceeded to Ausa to seek help from Bijapur and Golkonda. In his absence, Chand Bibi succeeded in securing the defense of Ahmednagar fort in her own hands, proclaimed Bahadur as the new King and got the Khutba read in his name.

Ikhlas Khan and Abhang Khan tried to help Chand Bibi but were defeated through the Mughals and they fled to Bijapur. But the siege prolonged due to mutual dissensions in the middle of the Mughal commanders. As Bijapur had sent reinforcements to Ahmednagar and the Mughal forces had become worried of the siege, they opened negotiations with the besieged. A treaty was signed flanked by the Mughals and Chand Bibi. The conditions were: Berar would be ceded to the Mughals; Bahadur would be recognized as new Nizam Shah and a vassal of the Mughal Emperor. The treaty though failed to bring peace and the Mughal attack against Ahmednagar sustained. In 1600, Chand Bibi ultimately decided to surrender the fort and retire to Junnar with Bahadur.

Bahadur Shah of Khandesh was not happy with the Mughals. Akbar arrived at Burhanpur in 1600; Bahadur instead of getting the emperor retired to Asirgarh. Akbar had ordered Abul Fazl to contact Bahadur and offer him pardon for his sins of commissions. But Abul Fazl could not succeed in this exercise. Akbar besieged the fort and conquered it in 1601. Bahadur surrendered to Akbar and Khandesh became a Mughal province.

The fall of Ahmednagar and Asirgarh frightened the other Deccani rulers. The rulers of Bijapur, Golkonda and Bidar sent envoys to Akbar who were graciously received through him. Akbar also sent his envoys to them. Akbar deputed Khan Khana, one of his close confidants, to look after the Deccan affairs. Once Akbar left the Deccan for Agra in 1601, the Nizam Shahi nobles rallied approximately Malik Ambar. Malik Ambar, after the fall of Ahmednagar, had enthroned Murtaza, the grandson of Burhan Nizam Shah-I, and became his peshwa. He made Khirki the new capital of the state and adopted guerilla tactics to attack the Mughal forces. The challenge posed through Malik Ambar and Raju Deccani, mutual bickerings and rivalries in the middle of the Mughal generals as well as the prevailing situation in the North persuaded Akbar to adopt diplomatic maneuvers rather than military might to consolidate Mughal authority in the Deccan.

### **Jahangir And The Deccan States**

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

- He could not whole heartedly devote himself to this task;

- The court intrigues and jealousies of the mughal nobles found Deccan a place for a free play of their emotions, and
- Superior generalship malik ambar.

The successful conclusion of the Mewar campaign gave an element of strength to Jahangir and he became relatively more free to deal with the Deccan. But all the attempts at Mughal advancement into the Deccan miserably failed. Khan Khanan was again sent to the Deccan in 1612. Through this time, Khan Khanan's rivals had either been transferred from the Deccan or had died. On the other hand, Malik Ambar's camp had become faction-ridden and Khan Khanan exploiting such a situation won in excess of a number of Deccani and Maratha nobles. On Malik Ambar's request, Bijapur and Golkonda rulers sent contingents to help him. But Malik Ambar was badly defeated; the Mughals went up to Khirki and burnt it in 1616.

This Mughal victory was not only superfluous but shortlived also. The Mughals had not captured even an inch of the territory. Moreover, Malik Ambar reappeared and reoccupied Khirki. Jahangir recalled prince Parvez from the Deccan and appointed Khurram there in 1616. The Emperor himself moved from Ajmer to Mandu to be closer to the scene of action. Khurram sent envoys to Bijapur and Golkonda rulers who were very well received through them. Bijapur's relations with Nizam Shah were strained because the latter had attempted to capture Bijapur territory. Qutb Shah was too weak to oppose the Mughals. The Nizam Shahis were also exhausted and were unable to resist the enemy.

Adil Shah assured Khurram that he would return the imperial territory and would pay the tribute. He sent his envoy to Malik Ambar and induced him to accept the imperial conditions. Malik Ambar surrendered Balaghat and the fort of Ahmednagar to the Mughals. Khurram was impressed through Adil Shah and on his recommendation Jahangir conferred the title of Farzand (son) on Adil Shah. After creation administrative arrangements in the Deccan, Khurram went to Mandhu in 1617, the Emperor raised Khurram's rank from 20,000 zat and 10,000 sawar to 30,000 zat and sawar and conferred the title of Shah Jahan on him. Jahangir admired Khurram's success considerably. But such an admiration of Khurram and rejoicings at the Mughal Court were meaningless. Khurram had not extended Mughal territory in the Deccan and had not brought in relation to any permanent peace in the Deccan. He had simply retrieved Mughal position temporarily.

Malik Ambar, a better diplomat than Jahangir, obtained time to strengthen his position. The peace lasted only for three years. Malik Ambar, throughout this period, through his appeals to Adil Shah and Qutab Shah for help and through creation matrimonial alliances with them, succeeded in forming a confederacy with them. Jahangir and Shah Jahan went to Kashmir in 1619 and

then got involved in the conquest of Kangra. This opportunity was utilized through Malik Ambar and he captured large portions of Khandesh, Berar, Ahmednagar and even besieged Mandu. Jahangir sent Shah Jahan again to the Deccan in 1620. Shah Jahan defeated Malik Ambar on several occasions and destroyed Khriki. Malik Ambar sued for peace which was granted. A treaty was signed according to which in addition to the imperial territory captured through the Deccanis after 1618, the Deccanis had to surrender 14 kos of the adjoining territory to the Mughals, Qutb Shah, Adil Shah and Nizam Shah were to pay war indemnity of rupees 20.18 and 12 lakhs respectively. When the Mughal noble Mahabat Khan was sent to the Deccan to suppress the revolt of Shah Jahan, he allied with Adil Shah against Malik Ambar but the latter defeated the allies at Bhatvadi in 1625. Then Malik Ambar made an effort to capture Ahmednagar; but failing there, he wrested Sholapur from Adil Shah and in alliance with Shah Jahan tried to capture Burhanpur but failed. The submission of Shah Jahan to Jahangir soon after led Malik Ambar to stop hostilities. He died in 1626 and was succeeded through his son Fath Khan as Wakil and peshwa of the kingdom.

But his arrogance made the cleavage flanked by the Dakhnis and Habashis wide, resulting in the nobles joining the Mughal service in large numbers. Throughout the reign of Jahangir there was no addition to the Mughal territory in the Deccan. The Mughal court politics, the mutual dissensions of the Mughal nobles posted in the Deccan, their acceptance of bribe offered through the Deccani rulers weakened the Mughal authority in the Deccan states. In the case of the Deccan states, in excess of ambition of Malik Ambar belied the hopes of a joint front of the Deccan states.

### **Shah Jahan And The Deccan States**

Throughout the period flanked by the death of Jahangir and the accession of Shah Jahan, the Mughal governor of the Deccan, Khan Jahan Lodi, with the intention of securing help in times of necessity, gave absent Balaghat to the Nizam Shah. Shah Jahan, after ascending the throne, ordered Khan Jahan Lodi to recover it but as the latter failed, Shah Jahan recalled him to the court. Khan Jahan fled to the Deccan and took shelter with Nizam Shah. His rebellion and the shelter given to him through the aggressive policy of the Nizam Shahis and the loss of Balaghat, made Shah Jahan very angry with Nizam Shah and it resulted in the Shah Jahan's adoption of an aggressive policy towards the Deccan states. Meanwhile, Nizam Shahi peshwa Hamid Khan's wife advised Burhan III to release her brother Fath Khan.

The king released him but after some time the latter killed him, enthroned his son Husain in 1632, and then read the khutba and structure coins in Shah

Jahan's name. Shah Jahan suppressed Khan Jahan Lodi's rebellion, recovered Balaghat and Berar, re-recognized Mughal supremacy in excess of the Deccan and then returned to the North. The Bijapur noble Randaula Khan persuaded Fath Khan to oppose the Mughals which he accepted out. It led Mahabat Khan to wrest Daulatabad fort from the Nizam Shah. Nizam Shah was imprisoned in the Gwalior fort and Fath Khan was assigned a jagir. Shahji Bhosle, a Nizam Shahi noble, came forward to save the state. Conquering a number of forts, he enthroned a prince of the royal family with the title of Murtaza Nizam Shah III. His activities brought Shah Jahan to the Deccan in 1636 and a new stage of warfare started. Shahji was defeated and the Mughals occupied a number of forts. Then they devastated and occupied large tracts of land in Bijapur. Muhammad Adil Shah sued for peace. A settlement was made in 1636 according to which the Nizam Shahi state came to an end. It was divided flanked by the Mughals and Bijapur; the territory lying in the north of the Bhima river went to the Mughals while the area lying in the south to Adil Shah.

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

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

Therefore , Bijapur became a subordinate ally of the Mughal Empire, though it retained its independence. As the Bijapur ruler, due to the 1636 settlement, thought himself safe from the Mughals, he extended his territory in the South. But, according to the Dutch records, it was on Shah Jahan's

instructions that Adil Shah and Qutb Shah conquered Karnataka. The 1636 settlement altered the whole course of the Mughal—Bijapur relations. Till 1636, the Mughals were trying to conciliate Adil Shahi rulers because Bijapur was the strongest of the Deccan states. The Mughals always tried to alienate Bijapur from other Deccan kingdoms to prevent their coalition against the Mughal and therefore to facilitate the conquest of the Deccan kingdoms one after the other. The extinction of Ahmednagar brought the Mughals to the borders of Bijapur and paved the method for the Mughal conquest of Bijapur.

For twenty years (1636-56), the Mughal—Bijapur relations remained peaceful and cordial except on two occasions when the Emperor was displeased with Adil Shah. In 1642-43, Adil Shah imprisoned his noble Mustafa Khan who was a sympathizer of the Mughal cause. On Shah Jahan's intervention, Adil Shah reinstated him. Adil Shah had adopted some audacious practices. Shah Jahan did not like this haughtiness and ordered him to discontinue them. Adil Shah complied with his order. He sustained to send peshkash (tribute) also to the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan conferred the title of "Shah" on Muhammad Adil Shah in 1648.

Muhammed Adil Shah died in 1656 and after this there was an important change in the Mughal attitude towards Bijapur. Prince Aurangzeb measured this to be a golden opportunity for invading Bijapur. He wrote to the Emperor that the successor of Muhammad Adil Shah, namely Ali Adil Shah II was not the real son of the deceased ruler but a boy of obscure parentage. Aurangzeb also won in excess of a number of Bijapur nobles. It is said that financial constraints of the Mughal Empire also motivated Shah Jahan to change his policy towards the Deccan states. Shah Jahan ordered Aurangzeb to conquer the whole of Bijapur if possible; otherwise to annex that portion of the old Ahmednagar kingdom which had been ceded to Bijapur through the Treaty of 1636 and to spare the state on the payment of indemnity and acceptance of Mughal suzerainty. Therefore, Shah Jahan broke the Treaty of 1636. The Emperor had no lawful right to confirm or question the succession at Bijapur. Bidar and Kalyani were captured through Aurangzeb. The road to Bijapur was clear. But suddenly Shah Jahan, on Dara Shukoh's advice, ordered Aurangzeb to end operations. The Bijapur ruler agreed to cede Bidar, Kalyani and also to pay one Kror (10 million) rupees as war indemnity, but realizing the weakness of the Mughals at that time, Adil Shah did not pay the amount.

The relations of Golkonda with the Mughal Empire till the accession of Shah Jahan were confined mainly to diplomatic exchanges with the Mughal court; military and financial help to the Nizam Shahi and Adil Shahi states and to the Marathas against the Mughals. We have studied the 1636 Mughal settlement with Adil Shah. The same year a deed of submission and a covenant was signed through Abdullah Qutb Shah. Their main conditions were the following:

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

The settlement with the Mughals made Qutb Shah a vassal of the Mughal Emperor. After this settlement, Abdullah Qutb Shah felt safe from the Mughals and conquered large areas of Karnataka. Abdullah ordered his noble Muhammad Said Mir Jumla to conquer Karnataka. Mir Jumla amassed great amount of wealth from these conquests. He traded in diamonds also which made him tremendously rich. Besides the royal army, he maintained his personal army also. He governed this territory from Gandikota just like an imperial ruler. All this made him as well as the members of his family very proud. His son Muhammad Amin even entered the palace in a drunken state and vomitted on the carpet. Abdullah ordered Mir Jumla to come to the Court but instead he accepted on correspondence with Prince Aurangzeb.

Abdullah imprisoned Amin in the Kovilkonda fort and confiscated his property. Very soon Shah Jahan granted the rank of 5000 zat to Mir Jumla and 2000 zat to his son. In 1656, Shah Jahan picked up quarrel with Abdullah on the issue of (a) arrears of peshkash (tribute); (b) the variation in the exchange rate flanked by the Golkonda hun and the Mughal rupees. At the time of the 1636 Settlement, one Golkonda hun was equivalent to four Mughal rupees. Now in 1656, it was equivalent to five rupees. Shah Jahan demanded the arrears to be paid according to the new exchange rate while Qutb Shah insisted on the old rate; and (c) Shah Jahan's winning in excess of the defiant Mir Jumla to his side.

Relations flanked by the Mughals and Abdullah became so strained that the Mughals besieged the Golkonda fort. But after sometime, on the advice of Prince Dara, the Emperor ordered Aurangzeb to raise the siege. A hasty treaty was signed flanked by Aurangzeb and Abdullah according to which, besides other conditions, Ramgir was ceded to the Mughals. Though there is no definite answer to this question still it is maintained through some historians that financial crisis of the Empire, crisis in the jagir system and the desire to

establish Mughal control in excess of commercial potential of the Coromondal coast compelled Shah Jahan to dishonor the settlement of 1636 and to intervene in Golkonda and Bijapur in 1656-57. Whatever may be the cause, the fact is that the change in Mughal policy in 1656-57 did not bring any positive benefit to the Mughal Empire, rather it created suspicion in the middle of Deccan states against the Mughal empire. Distant from solving the Deccan problem, Shah Jahan's policy ultimately complicated the Deccan situation.

### **Aurangzeb And The Deccan States**

Aurangzeb, an advocate of direct conquest of the Deccan states, immediately after his accession faced a very complicated situation in the Deccan. The rising power of the Marathas and the suspicious attitude of the Deccan states towards the Mughals made Aurangzeb much more careful to adopt aggressive policy in the Deccan. Aurangzeb's initial concern was to compel Bijapur and Golkonda to abide through the treaty of 1657 and to surrender those territories which they agreed to cede to the Mughals in 1657. But Jai Singh, the Mughal noble, wanted to pursue the forward policy in the Deccan and to get support of the Marathas. In this mission he made the Treaty of Purandar (1664) with Shivaji. Then Jai Singh made two abortive attempts to conquer Bijapur. The death of Ali Adil Shah, the accession of Sikander Adil Shah, a minor, in 1672 and the court intrigues in Bijapur provided a favorable ground for Aurangzeb's intervention in Bijapur. Aurangzeb appointed a very energetic general Bahadur Khan as the governor of the Deccan. Bahadur started through winning in excess of the Bijapur nobles. Khawas Khan was one of such nobles who suggested a Mughal-Bijapur alliance against Shivaji. But before it could materialize, he was overthrown. Having failed in this effort, the Mughals opened hostilities in 1676 through championing the cause of Bijapur's Dakhni party against Bahlol Khan—the leader of the Afghan nobles in Bijapur. But after Bahlol Khan had repeatedly defeated Bahadur Khan, the latter made a demonstration of high military preparedness which unnerved Bahlol Khan. Bahlol Khan allied with Bahadur Khan and connived at the Mughal conquest of Naldurg and Guibarga in 1677. After that, he joined hands with the Mughal commander Diler Khan and they wrote to Aurangzeb against Bahadur Khan accusing him of hindering Mughal interests in the Deccan. Aurangzeb recalled Bahadur Khan and appointed Diler Khan to officiate as the subedar of the Deccan.

At Guibarga, the Regent of Bijapur Siddi Masud made a pact with the Mughals with the provisions that (1) Siddi Masud was to be the wazir of Bijapur but he necessity obey the orders of Aurangzeb. (2) He should not create any alliance with Shivaji and should help the Mughals against him. (3) Adil Shah's sister was to be married to one of Aurangzeb's sons. But on his

return to Bijapur, Siddi Masud did not fulfill any of the conditions of the pact. He tried to ally with Shivaji. Diler Khan made unsuccessful attempts to persuade Siddi Masud to fulfill the conditions of the pact. Aurangzeb ordered an attack on Bijapur because Bahlol Khan had died, the Afghan soldiers had dispersed and the faction—fighting at Bijapur court had intensified. Diler Khan bribed troopers to serve under the Mughals. But Masud played dual diplomacy through allying with Shivaji against the Mughals and allying with Diler Khan against Shivaji. A Mughal contingent was invited to Bijapur, royalty welcomed and then sent with the Bijapuri auxiliaries against the Marathas. Meanwhile, Diler Khan destroyed and occupied a number of Shivaji's possessions. Siddi Masud's position became very weak because a large number of his troopers joined Diler Khan's camp. So, in 1679, Adil Shah's sister was sent to the Mughal Court to be married to Prince Azam in 1679. The enmity flanked by the Mughal governor of the Deccan, Shah Alam and Diler Khan led the former to create peace with Bijapur in the beginning of 1680. In Bijapur the Khutba was read and coins struck in Aurangzeb's name.

This was the greatest achievement of Shah Alam as the Viceroy of the Deccan. He succeeded in establishing Mughal suzerainty in excess of Bijapur through peaceful diplomacy which Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb had failed to achieve even through military strategy. Adil Shah accepted Mughal suzerainty because he was weak, his administration was slack due to factionalism at his court and his nobles had deserted to the Mughal camp. This good relationship flanked by the Mughals and Bijapur got ruptured because the Mughals sought help from Bijapur against Sambhaji, but instead of helping the Mughals, Bijapur secretly assisted the Marathas. Throughout 1682-83, the Mughals ravaged Bijapur territory and tried to capture Bijapur itself but failed. In 1684, Aurangzeb put the following demands before Adil Shah: (i) to supply provisions to the Mughal Army; (ii) to keep open the roads for the Mughal army to march against Sambhaji; (iii) to send five or six thousand cavalry to help the Mughals against the Marathas; (iv) not to conspire with Sambhaji and (v) to expel the noble Sharza Khan from Bijapur. But Adil Shah, instead of complying with the demands, made the following counter demands; (i) to remit the amount taken through Diler Khan; (ii) to restore the jagir of Sharza Khan occupied through the Mughals and (iii) to restore Bijapur territory so distant occupied through the Mughals. He refused to expel Sharza Khan with the plea that if he did so, the latter would join the Marathas.

Such a situation further widened the gap flanked by the Mughals and Bijapur. On the Emperor's orders, the Mughals opened the campaign in 1685 and Sikandar Adil Shah surrendered to them in 1686. He was made a captive and the Bijapur state became a part of the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb was not happy in excess of the developments in Golkonda, particularly with the role of Madanna and Akanna who were whispered to have joined hands with the Marathas against the Mughals. He learnt that Abdullah Qutb Shah had been

financially helping Shivaji's son Sambhaji. Abdullah's promise of large military help to Sikandar Adil Shah throughout the Mughal invasion of 1685 also came to the Emperor's knowledge. He ordered Prince Muazzam to invade the Qutb Shahi territory. In the second battle of Malkher in 1686, Qutb Shahi forces were routed. It led to the defection of the Qutb Shahi nobles to the Mughals which forced Abdullah to leave Hyderabad, and shut himself in Golkonda fort. The Emperor reached very close to Golkonda fort in 1687 and besieged it. After eight months siege, Abdullah surrendered to the Mughals. He was imprisoned in Daulatabad fort and Golkonda became a part of the Mughal empire.

### **An Assessment Of The Mughal Policy In The Deccan**

The above survey creates one thing clear that personal whims or religious thoughts of the Mughals did not dictate their policy towards the Deccan states. We have seen in the preceding sections that starting from Akbar, there were changes in relations flanked by the Mughals and the Deccan states. It is better to look at these changes keeping in view the overall socio-economic and administrative situation of the Mughal empire. Akbar's basic concern in the Deccan was to establish Mughal authority there and to protect the 'Surat hinterland'. He was aware that it was not possible to achieve this objective through military conquest only, so he took recourse to diplomatic maneuvers also. Jahangir was in favour of maintaining the position that Akbar achieved through the treaty of 1600 in the Deccan and Jahangir's reading of the situation in the Deccan and the internal troubles of the Empire influenced him to adopt this policy. Violation of the Treaty of 1600 through Ahmednagar compelled Shah Jahan to take an aggressive posture against Ahmednagar and the Treaty of 1636 settled the Deccan problem at least for the after that 20 years. Again, the rising expansion of Bijapur and Golkonda in the Kamatak region and the financial crisis of the Empire persuaded Shah Jahan to change his policy. Even Aurangzeb who, before his accession, was a staunch advocate of forward policy in the Deccan was not in favour of outright conquest of Bijapur and Golkonda. The rising power of the Marathas, threat of an alliance flanked by the Marathas and Bijapur-Golkonda as well as the internal crisis of the Empire compelled Aurangzeb to conquer Bijapur and Golkonda in the 1680s. All these point to the fact that the Deccan policy of the Mughals was determined through the needs of the modern situation rather than through mere personal desire of the rulers.

There is a trend in the middle of some historians to criticize the Mughal policy in the Deccan as wrongly devised and the Mughal empire ultimately had to pay for it. Passing such judgment would be historically incorrect. In view of the prevailing situation in the Deccan, specifically the rise of the Marathas on the one hand and the existing enmity and distrust in the middle of

the Deccan states on the other, made the Mughal intervention in the Deccan inevitable. If we look closely at dissimilar stages of the Mughal policy in Deccan, it seems clear that the Mughal rulers certainly measured the modern situation before taking any step towards the Deccan states. As we have seen, dissimilar factors guided their attitude towards the Deccan states. Their occasional failure in the Deccan was not only because of their lack of understanding the Deccan problem but the factional fighting's of the Mughal nobles as well as their questionable loyalty was equally responsible for the debacle in the Deccan affairs. So one should look at the Deccan policy of the Mughals from a broader perspective, instead of narrowing down on any single factor.

## **RISE OF THE MARATHAS IN THE 17TH CENTURY**

The Maratha Empire or the Maratha Confederacy was an Indian imperial power that existed from 1674 to 1818. At its peak, the empire sheltered much of India, encompassing a territory of in excess of 2.8 million km<sup>2</sup>. The Marathas are credited with ending the Mughal rule in India.

The Marathas were a yeoman warrior group from the western Deccan that rose to prominence throughout the rule of the Adil Shahi dynasty and Ahmadnagar Sultanate. The empire was founded through Shivaji Bhosle, who formally crowned himself *Chhatrapati* ("Emperor") with Raigad as his capital in 1674, and successfully fought against the Mughal Empire. The Maratha Empire waged war for 27 years with the Mughals from 1681 to 1707, which became the longest war in the history of India. Shivaji, pioneered "Shiva sutra" or *Ganimi Kava* (guerrilla tactics), which leveraged strategic factors like demographics, speed, surprise and focused attack to defeat his bigger and more powerful enemies. Venkoji, the younger half-brother of Shivaji, founded the Thanjavur Maratha kingdom.

Shahu, a grandson of Shivaji, was released through the Mughals after the death of Aurangzeb. Following a brief thrash about with his aunt Tarabai, Shahu became ruler. Throughout this period, he appointed Balaji Vishwanath Bhat and later his descendants as the Peshwas or the prime ministers of the Maratha Empire. After the death of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, the empire expanded greatly under the rule of the Peshwas. The empire at its peak stretched from Tamil Nadu in the south, to Peshawar (modern-day Pakistan) on the Afghanistan border in the north, and Bengal and Andaman Islands in east. In 1761, the Maratha army lost the Third Battle of Panipat to Abdali's Afghan Durrani Empire, which halted their imperial expansion. Ten years after Panipat, young Madhavrao Peshwa reinstated the Maratha authority in excess of North India.

In a bid to effectively manage the large empire, he gave semi-autonomy to the strongest of the knights, which created a confederacy of Maratha states. They became recognized as Gaekwads of Baroda, the Holkars of Indore and Malwa, the Scindias of Gwalior and Ujjain, Bhonsales of Nagpur. In 1775, the

British East India Company intervened in a succession thrash about in Pune, which became the First Anglo-Maratha War. Marathas remained the preeminent power in India until their defeat in the Second and Third Anglo-Maratha wars (1805–1818), which left the British East India Company in control of most of India.

A large portion of the Maratha empire was coastline, which had been secured through a potent navy under commanders such as Kānhōjī Āngre. He was very successful at keeping foreign naval ships, particularly of the Portuguese and British, at bay. Securing the coastal areas and building land-based fortifications were crucial characteristics of the Maratha's suspicious strategy and regional military history.

### **Brief History**

After a lifetime of guerrilla warfare with the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur and Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, Shivaji formally recognized an independent Hindu Maratha kingdom when he crowned himself Chhatrapati in 1674 with Raigad as its capital. Shivaji died in 1680, leaving behind a large kingdom. Soon after Shivaji's death, the Mughals invaded, fighting an unsuccessful War of 27 years from 1681 to 1707.

Shahu, a grandson of Shivaji, ruled as emperor until 1749. Throughout his reign, Shahu appointed the first Peshwa as head of the government, under certain circumstances. After the death of Shahu, the Peshwas became the *de facto* leaders of the Maratha Empire from 1749 to 1761, while Shivaji's successors sustained as nominal rulers from their base in Satara. Covering a large part of the subcontinent, the Maratha Empire kept the British forces at bay throughout the 18th century, until the Third Battle of Panipat following which Marathas never fought as a single unit.

The Maratha Empire was at its height in the 18th century under Shahu and the Peshwa Baji Rao I. Losses at the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 suspended further expansion of the empire in the North-west and reduced the power of the Peshwas. In 1761, after severe losses in the Panipat war, the Peshwas slowly started losing the control of the state. Several military chiefs of the Maratha Empire like Shinde, Holkar, Gaikwad, Pant Pratinidhi, Bhosale of Nagpur, and Pandit of Bhor, Patwardhan started to work towards their ambition of becoming independent rulers in their respective regions. Though, under Madhavrao Peshwa, Maratha authority in North India was restored, 10 years after the battle of Panipat. After the death of Madhavrao, the empire gave method to a loose Confederacy, with political power resting in a 'pentarchy' of five mostly Maratha dynasties: the Peshwas of Pune; the Sindhias (originally "Shinde") of Malwa and Gwalior; the Holkars of Indore; the Bhonsles of Nagpur; and the Gaekwads of Baroda. A rivalry flanked by the Sindhia and Holkar dominated the confederation's affairs into the early 19th century, as did the clashes with the British and the British East India

Company in the three Anglo-Maratha Wars. In the Third Anglo-Maratha War, the last Peshwa, Baji Rao II, was defeated through the British in 1818. Most of the former Maratha Empire was absorbed through British India, though some of the Maratha states remained as vassals of the British until India became independent in 1947.

### **The Bhosle Era (1674–1749)**

#### ***Shivaji Maharaj***

Shivaji was a Maratha aristocrat of the Bhosle clan who founded the Maratha empire. Shivaji led a resistance to free the Maratha people from the Sultanate of Bijapur, and re-establish *Hindavi Swarajya* ("self-rule of Hindu people"). He created an independent Maratha kingdom with Vedant Raigad as its capital, and successfully fought against the Mughals to defend his kingdom. He was crowned as *Chhatrapati* ("sovereign") of the Maratha empire in 1674.

#### ***Sambhaji***

Shivaji had two sons: Sambhaji and Rajaram. Sambhaji, the elder son, was very popular in the middle of the courtiers. In 1681, Sambhaji had himself crowned and resumed his father's expansionist policies. Sambhaji had earlier defeated the Portuguese and Chikka Deva Raya of Mysore. To nullify any Rajput-Maratha alliance, as well as the Deccan Sultanates, the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb himself headed south in 1681. With his whole imperial court, administration, and an army of in relation to the 500,000 troops he proceeded to conquer the whole Maratha Empire beside with the sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda. Throughout the eight years that followed, Sambhaji led the Marathas, never losing a battle or a fort to Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb had approximately lost the campaign but for an event in early 1689. Sambhaji called his commanders for a strategic meeting at Sangameshwar to decide on the final onslaught on the Mughal forces. In a meticulously planned operation, Ganoji Shirke and Aurangzeb's commander, Mukarrab Khan attacked Sangameshwar when Sambhaji was accompanied through a few men. Sambhaji was ambushed and captured through Mughal troops on 1 February 1689. He and his advisor, Kavi Kalash were taken to Bahadurgad. Sambhaji and Kavi Kalash were executed for rebellion against the (Mughal) Empire on 11 March 1689.

#### ***Rajaram and Tarabai***

Upon Sambhaji's death, Rajaram, his half-brother, assumed the throne. He had to endure Mughal army siege to Raigad, his seat of Government. Though, Rajaram was able to flee to Vishalgad and then to Ginge for safety. From there the Marathas raided the Mughal territory and several forts were recaptured

through Maratha commanders such as Santaji Ghorpade, Dhanaji Jadhav, Parshuram Pant Pratinidhi, Shankaraji Narayan Sacheev, and Melgiri Pandit. In 1697, Rajaram offered a truce but this was rejected through Aurangzeb. Rajaram died in 1700 at Sinhagad. His widow, Tarabai, assumed control in the name of her son Ramaraja (Shivaji II). Then Tarabai heroically led the Marathas against the Mughals; through 1705, they had crossed the Narmada River and entered Malwa, then in Mughal possession.

Malwa was a decisive battle for the Maratha Empire. The Mughals lost their eminent position on the Indian subcontinent forever and the subsequent Mughal emperors became titular rulers. The Marathas appeared victorious after a long drawn-out and fiercely fought battle. The soldiers and commanders who participated in this war achieved the real expansion of the Maratha Empire. The victory also set the foundations for the imperial conquests achieved later, under the Peshwas.

Ramchandra Pant Amatya Bawdekar was a court administrator who rose from the ranks of a local Kulkarni to the ranks of Ashtapradhan under guidance and support of Shivaji. When Rajaram fled to Jinji in 1689 leaving Maratha Empire, he gave a "Hukumat Panha" (King Status) to Pant before leaving. Ramchandra Pant supervised the whole state under several challenges like influx of Mughals, betrayal from Vatandars (local satraps under the Maratha state) and social challenges like scarcity of food. With the help of Pantpratinidhi, Sachiv, he kept the economic condition of Maratha Empire in an appropriate state. He wrote *Adnyapatra* in which he has explained dissimilar techniques of war, maintenance of forts and administration etc.

### ***Shahu***

After Aurangzeb's death in 1707, Shahuji, son of Sambhaji (and grandson of Shivaji), was released through Bahadur Shah I, the new Mughal emperor. The circumstances laid through the Mughals for his release rendered him a vassal of the Mughal emperor and kept his mother a hostage of the Mughals in order to ensure that Shahuji adhered to the release circumstances. Upon release, Shahu immediately claimed the Maratha throne and challenged his aunt Tarabai and her son. This promptly turned the now-spluttering Mughal-Maratha war into a three-cornered affair. The states of Satara and Kolhapur came into being in 1707, because of the succession dispute in excess of the Maratha kingship. Through 1710, two separate principalities had become an recognized fact, eventually confirmed through the Treaty of Warna in 1731.

In 1713, Furrukhsiyar declared himself Mughal emperor. His bid for power depended heavily on two brothers, recognized as the Saiyids, one of whom was the governor of Allahabad and the other the governor of Patna. Though, the brothers had a falling-out with the emperor. Negotiations flanked by the Saiyids and Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath, a civilian representative of Shahu, drew the Marathas into the vendetta against the Mughal emperor.

In 1714, an army of Marathas commanded through Parsoji Bhosale

marched up to Delhi unopposed and supervised to depose the Mughal emperor. In return for this help, Balaji Vishwanath supervised to negotiate a substantial treaty. Shahuji would have to accept Mughal rule in the Deccan, furnish forces for the imperial army, and pay an annual tribute. But in return, he received a farman, or imperial directive, guaranteeing him Swaraj, or independence, in the Maratha homeland, plus rights to chauth and sardeshmukh (amounting to 35 percent of the total revenue) throughout Gujarat, Malwa, and the now six provinces of the Mughal Deccan. This treaty also released Yesubai, Shahuji's mother, from Mughal captivity.

Throughout regime of Shahu, Raghuji Bhosale expanded the empire in East reaching present-day Bangladesh. Senapati Dabhade expanded in West. Peshwa Bajirao and his three chiefs Pawar (Dhar), Holkar (Indore) and Scindia (Gwalior) expanded in North. These all houses became hereditary, thereby undermining king's authority in due course of time.

### **The Peshwa Era (1749 to 1761)**

Throughout this era, Peshwas belonging to the Bhat family controlled the Maratha army and later became the hereditary rulers of the Maratha Empire from 1749 to 1818. Throughout their rein, the Maratha empire reached its zenith ruling most of the Indian Subcontinent. Prior to 1700, one Peshwa received the status of imperial regent for eight or nine years. They oversaw the greatest expansion of the Maratha Empire approximately 1760 with the help of *Sardars* like Holkar, Scindia, Bhosale, and Gaekwad(Dhane). Other Generals such as Pantpratinidhi, Panse, Vinchurkar, Pethe, Raste, Phadke, Patwardhan, Pawar, Pandit, Purandare and Mehendale also played significant part in the expansion. The areas controlled through the peshwa were annexed through the British East India Company in 1818.

### ***Baji Rao I***

After Balaji Vishwanath's death in April 1720, his son, Baji Rao I was appointed as Peshwa through Chhatrapati Shahu. Shahu possessed a strong capability for recognizing talent, and actually caused a social revolution through bringing capable people into power irrespective of their social status. This was an indication of a great social mobility within the Maratha Empire, enabling its rapid expansion.

Baji Rao Vishwanath Bhatt (18 August 1700 – 25 April 1740), also recognized as Baji Rao I, was a noted general who served as Peshwa (Prime Minister) to the fourth Maratha Chhatrapati (Emperor) Shahu flanked by 1720 until death. Throughout his lifetime, he never lost a battle. He is credited with expanding the Maratha Empire especially in north that reached its zenith twenty years after his death. Peshwa Bajirao fought in excess of 41 battles and is reputed to have never lost one. Battle of Palkhed was a land battle that took place on 28 February 1728 at the village of Palkhed, close to the city of

Nashik, Maharashtra, India flanked by Baji Rao I and the Nizam-ul-Mulk of Hyderabad. The Marathas defeated the Nizam. The battle is measured an instance of brilliant execution of military strategy. The Battle of Vasai was fought flanked by the Marathas and the Portuguese rulers of Vasai, a village lying close to Bombay in the present-day state of Maharashtra, India. The Marathas were led through Chimaji Appa, a brother of Peshwa Baji Rao I. Maratha victory in this war was a major achievement of Baji Rao I reign.

### ***Balaji Baji Rao***

Baji Rao's son, Balaji Bajirao (Nanasaheb), was appointed as a Peshwa through Shahuji. The period flanked by 1741 and 1745 was one of comparative calm in the Deccan. Shahuji died in 1749 bequeathing power to peshwa with condition that the dignity of house of shivaji will be maintained and also welfare of subjects will be looked after.

In 1740, the Maratha forces came down upon Arcot and defeated the Nawab of Arcot, Dost Ali in the pass of Damalcherry. In the war that followed, Dost Ali, one of his sons Hasan Ali, and a number of prominent persons lost their lives. This initial success at once enhanced Maratha prestige in the south. From Damalcherry the Marathas proceeded to Arcot. It surrendered to them without much resistance. Then, Raghuji invaded Trichinopoly in December 1740. Unable to resist, Chanda Saheb delivered the fort to Raghuji on 14 March 1741, on the day of Ram Navami. Chanda Saheb and his son were arrested and sent to Nagpur.

After the successful campaign of Karnatak and Battle of Trichinopoly, Raghuji returned from Karnatak. He undertook six expeditions in Bengal from 1741–1748. Raghuji was able to annex Odisha to his kingdom permanently as he successfully exploited the chaotic circumstances prevailing in Bengal, Bihar and Odisha after the death of their Governor Murshid Quli Khan in 1727. Constantly harassed through the Bhonsles, Odisha or Cuttack, Bengal and parts of Bihar were economically ruined. Alivardi Khan, Nawab of Bengal made peace with Raghuji in 1751 ceding in perpetuity Cuttack up to the river Subarnarekha, and agreeing to pay Rs.1.2 million annually in lieu of the Chauth of Bengal and Bihar. The smaller States of Raipur, Ratanpur, Bilaspur and Sambalpur belonging to Chhattisgad territory were conquered through Bhaskar Ram, and were placed in charge of Mohansingh, an illegitimate son of Raghuji. Towards the end of his career, Raghuji had conquered the whole of Berar; the Gond kingdoms of Devgad including Nagpur, Gadha-Mandla and Chandrapur; the Suba of Cuttack; and the smaller states spreading flanked by Nagpur and Cuttack. Nanasaheb encouraged agriculture, protected the villagers, and brought in relation to thea marked improvement in the state of the territory. Sustained expansion saw Raghunath Rao, the brother of Nanasaheb, pushing into in the wake of the Afghan withdrawal after Ahmed Shah Abdali's plunder of Delhi in 1756. Delhi was captured through Maratha army under Raghunath Rao in August 1757 defeating Afghan garrison in the

Battle of Delhi. This laid the foundation for the Maratha conquest of North-west India. In Lahore, as in Delhi, the Marathas were now major players.

Raghoba's letter to Peshwa Balaji Bajirao, 4 May 1758:

- Lahore, Multan, Kashmir and other subhas on this side of Attock are under our rule for the most part, and places which have not come under our rule we shall soon bring under us. Ahmad Shah Durrani's son Timur Shah Durrani and Jahan Khan have been pursued through our troops, and their troops totally looted. Both of them have now reached Peshawar with a few broken troops. So Ahmad Shah Durrani has returned to Kandahar with some 12–14 thousand broken troops. Therefore all have risen against Ahmad who has lost control in excess of the region. We have decided to extend our rule up to Kandahar.

On 8 May 1758, the Marathas captured Peshawar, defeating the Afghan troops in the Battle of Peshawar. In 1759, The Marathas under Sadashivrao Bhau (referred to as the Bhau or Bhao in sources) responded to the news of the Afghans' return to North India through sending a big army to North. Bhau's force was bolstered through some Maratha forces under Holkar, Scindia, Gaikwad and Govind Pant Bundele. The combined army of in excess of 100,000 regular troops had re-captured the former Mughal capital, Delhi, from an Afghan garrison in August 1760. Delhi had been reduced to ashes several times due to previous invasions, and in addition there being acute shortage of supplies in the Maratha camp. Bhau ordered the sacking of the already depopulated city. He is said to have planned to place his nephew and the Peshwa's son, Vishwasrao, on the Mughal throne. Through 1760, with defeat of the Nizam in the Deccan, Maratha power had reached its zenith with a territory of in excess of 2,800,000 km<sup>2</sup> acres.

Ahmad Shah Durrani, then called Rohillas and Nawab of Oudh to assist him in driving out 'infidel' Marathas from Delhi. Vast armies of Muslim forces and Marathas collided with each other on 14 January 1761 in the Third Battle of Panipat. The Maratha army lost the battle which halted imperial expansion. The Jats and Rajputs did not support the Marathas. Their withdrawal from the ensuing battle played a crucial role in its result.

The Marathas had antagonised the Jats and Rajputs through taxing them heavily, punishing them after defeating the Mughals and interfering in their internal affairs. The Marathas were abandoned through Raja Suraj Mal of Bharatpur and the Rajputs who quit the Maratha alliance at Agra before the start of the great battle and withdrew their troops, as Maratha general Sadashivrao Bhau did not heed the advice to leave soldier's families (women and children) and pilgrims at Agra and not take them to the battle field with the soldiers, rejected their cooperation. Their supply chains (earlier assured through Raja Suraj Mal and Rajputs) did not exist.

## **The Confederacy era (1761–1818)**

Throughout this period several chiefs and statesman became *de facto* rulers. The Peshwa was relegated to secondary position. He also became ceremonial king especially after death of Peshwa Madhavrao I.

After 1761, young Madhavrao Peshwa tried his best to rebuild the empire in spite of his frail health and reinstated the Maratha authority in excess of North India, 10 years after the battle of Panipat. In a bid to effectively manage the large empire, semi-autonomy was given to strongest of the knights. Therefore, the semi-autonomous Maratha states came into being in distant flung regions of the empire:

- Peshwas of Pune
- Gaekwads of Baroda
- Puars (or Pawars) of Dewas & Dhar
- Holkars of Indore and Malwa
- Scindias of Gwalior and Ujjain
- Bhonsales of Nagpur (no blood relation with Shivaji's or Tarabai's family)
- Even in the Maharashtra itself several knights were given semi-autonomous charges of small districts, which led to princely states like Sangli, Aundh, Bor, Bawda, Phaltan, Miraj etc. Pawars of Udgir were also part of confederacy.

Mahadaji Shinde was the Maratha ruler of the state of Gwalior in central India. Mahadaji was instrumental in resurrecting Maratha power after the debacle of the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761, and rose to become a trusted lieutenant of the Peshwa, leader of the Maratha Empire, as well as the Mughal king Shah Alam II.

He took full advantage of the system of neutrality pursued through the British to resurrect Maratha power in excess of Northern India. In this he was assisted through Benoît de Boigne who increased Sindhia's regular forces to three brigades. With these troops Sindhia became a power in northern India.

After the growth in power of feudal lords like Malwa sardars, landlords of Bundelkhand and Rajput kingdoms of Rajasthan, they refused to pay tribute to Mahadji. So he sent his army conquer the states such as Bhopal, Datiya, Chanderi (1782), Narwar, Salbai and Gohad. He launched an expedition against the Raja of Jaipur, but withdrew after the inconclusive Battle of Lalsot in 1787.

The strong fort of Gwalior was then in the hands of Chhatar Singh, the Jat ruler of Gohad. In 1783, Mahadji besieged the fort of Gwalior and conquered it. He delegated the administration of Gwalior to Khanderao Hari Bhalerao. After celebrating the conquest of Gwalior, Mahadji Shinde turned his attention to Delhi.

In early 1771, ten years after the collapse of Maratha supremacy in North India following the Third Battle of Panipat, Mahadji recaptured Delhi and

installed Shah Alam II as the puppet ruler on the Mughal throne. getting in return the title of deputy *Vakil-ul-Mutlak* or vice-regent of the Empire and that of *Vakil-ul-Mutlak* being at his request conferred on the Peshwa. The Mughals also gave him the title of *Amir-ul-Amara*(head of the amirs). Mahadji ruled the Punjab as it used to be a Mughal territory and Sikh sardars and other Rajas of the cis-Sutlej region paid tributes to him.

The Battle of Gajendragad was fought flanked by the Marathas under the command of Tukojirao Holkar (the adopted son of Malharrao Holkar) and Tipu Sultan from March 1786 to March 1787 in which Tipu Sultan was defeated through the Marathas. Through the victory in this battle, the border of the Maratha territory extended till Tungabhadra river.

In 1788 Mahadji's armies defeated Ismail Beg, a Mughal noble who resisted the Marathas. The Rohilla chief Ghulam Kadir, Ismail Beg's ally, took in excess of Delhi, capital of the Mughal dynasty, and deposed and blinded the king Shah Alam II, placing a puppet on the Delhi throne. Mahadji intervened, taking possession of Delhi on 2 October, restoring Shah Alam II to the throne and acting as his protector. Mahadji sent Benoît de Boigne to crush the forces of Jaipur at Patan (20 June 1790) and the armies of Marwar at Merta on 10 September 1790.

Another achievement of Mahadji was his victory in excess of the Nizam of Hyderabad's army in a battle. The Nizam ceased be a factor in the north Indian politics after this battle and it usually confined itself in the Deccan afterwards. After the peace made with Tipu Sultan of Mysore in 1792, Mahadji successfully exerted his power to prevent the completion of a treaty flanked by the British, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the Peshwa, directed against Tipu.

### ***Maharaja Yashwantrao Holkar***

After the Battle of Poona, the flight of Peshwa left the government of Maratha state in the hands of Yashwantrao Holkar. He appointed Amrutrao as the Peshwa and went to Indore on 13 March 1803. All except Gaikwad chief of Baroda, who had already accepted British protection through a separate treaty on 26 July 1802, supported the new regime. He made a treaty with the British in 1805 that fulfilled his demands. Also, Yashwant-Rao successfully resolved the disputes with Scindia and the Peshwa. His battles were the most extra ordinary in the military history of India and the title given to him through the Mughal Emperor gave him a prominent position amongst the rulers of India.

He tried to unite the Maratha Confederacy. He was as clever organizer as he was skilful in war. The several branches of the army were organised on a sound military basis. As a military strategist he ranks in the middle of the foremost generals who have ever trod on Indian soil. His heroic achievements shed a noble lustre on his military genius, political sagacity and indefatigable industry. He was undoubtedly the greatest and most romantic figure on the stage of Indian history. Yashwant Rao Holkar rose to power from initial

nothingness entirely through dint of his personal valour and spirit of adventure. So great was his personality that even in those troublesome times, no state or power could venture to commit aggression on his territory; and this power kept the Holkar State secure even after his death for some years.

### ***British Intervention***

In 1775, the British East India Company, from its base in Bombay, intervened in a succession thrash about in Pune, on behalf of Raghunathrao (also called Raghobadada), which became the First Anglo-Maratha War. That ended in 1782 with a restoration of the pre-war status quo. Marathas under Tukoji Rao Holkar and Mahadaji Shinde had defeated British in the battle of Vadgaon. In 1802 the British intervened in Baroda to support the heir to the throne against rival claimants, and they signed a treaty with the new Maharaja recognizing his independence from the Maratha Empire in return for his acknowledgement of British paramountcy. In the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–1805), the Peshwa Baji Rao II signed a similar treaty.

In 1799, Yashwantrao Holkar was crowned King, he captured Ujjain. He started campaigning towards the north to expand his empire in that region. Yashwant Rao rebelled against the policies of the Peshwa Baji Rao II. On May 1802, he marched towards Pune the seat of the Peshwa. This gave rise to the Battle of Poona in which the Peshwa was defeated. After the Battle of Poona, the flight of Peshwa left the government of Maratha state in the hands of Yashwantrao Holkar. He appointed Amrutrao as the Peshwa and went to Indore on 13 March 1803. All except Gaikwad chief of Baroda, who had already accepted British protection through a separate treaty on 26 July 1802, supported the new regime. He made a treaty with the British in 1805 that fulfilled his demands. Also, Yashwant-Rao successfully resolved the disputes with Scindia and the Peshwa. He tried to unite the Maratha Confederacy but to no avail.

Ultimately the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818), a last-ditch effort to regain sovereignty, resulted in the loss of Maratha independence: it left the British in control of most of India. The Peshwa was exiled to Bithoor (Marathnear Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh) as a pensioner of the British. The Maratha heartland of Desh, including Pune, came under direct British rule, with the exception of the states of Kolhapur and Satara, which retained local Maratha rulers. The Maratha-ruled states of Gwalior, Indore, and Nagpur all lost territory, and came under subordinate alliance with the British Raj as princely states that retained internal sovereignty under British 'paramountcy'. Other small princely states of Maratha knights were retained under the British Raj as well.

At the end of the war, all of the Maratha powers had surrendered to the British, which resulted in the Treaty of Gwalior on 5 November 1817. Under this treaty, Shinde surrendered Rajasthan to the British and agreed to help

them fight the Pindaris. Holkar was defeated on 21 December 1817 and signed the Treaty of Mandeswar on 6 January 1818. Under this treaty the Holkar state became subsidiary to the British. The young Malhar Rao was raised to the throne. Bhonsle was defeated on 26 November 1817 and was captured but he escaped to live out his life in Jodhpur. The Peshwa surrendered on 3 June 1818 and was sent off to Bithur close to Kanpur under the conditions of the treaty signed on 3 June 1818. Of the Pindari leaders, Karim Khan surrendered to Malcolm in February 1818; Wasim Mohammad surrendered to Shinde and eventually poisoned himself; and Setu was killed through a tiger. }

The war left the British, under the auspices of the British East India Company, in control of virtually all of present-day India south of the Sutlej River. The famed Nassak Diamond was acquired through the Company as part of the spoils of the war. The British acquired large chunks of territory from the Maratha Empire and in effect put an end to their most dynamic opposition. The conditions of surrender Malcolm offered to the Peshwa were controversial amongst the British for being too liberal: The Peshwa was offered a luxurious life close to Kanpur and given a pension of in relation to the 80,000 pounds. A comparison was drawn with Napoleon, who was confined to a small rock in the south Atlantic and given a small sum for his maintenance. Trimbakji Dengale was captured after the war and was sent to the fortress of Chunar in Bengal where he spent the rest of his life. With all active resistance in excess of, John Malcolm played a prominent part in capturing and pacifying the remaining fugitives.

## **Administration**

The organization of Marathas' administration was composed of many ministers (*pradhanaas*):

- *Peshwa: Mukhya* (main) *Pradhan*, Prime Minister to the Emperor, for supervising and governing in his absence. The Emperor's orders bore the Peshwa's seal.
- *Mutalik*: Deputy to the *Peshwa*, Deputy Prime Minister to the Emperor
- *Rajadnya*: Deputy to the Crown
- *Sardar Senapati* or *Sarnaubat*: To manage military forces and administer lands (e.g., *Sarsenapati* Ghorpade)
- *Sardar*: To manage military forces and administer lands
- *Mazumdar*: An auditor to manage receipts and expenditures, keep the Crown informed of finances and sign district-stage accounts
- *Amatya*: Chief *Mazumdar* (Chief Revenue Minister) (e.g., Ramchandra Pant Amatya)
- *Navis* or *Waqia Mantri*: to record daily activities of the royal family and to serve as the master of ceremonies

- *Sur Navis* or *Sacheev*: Imperial Secretary, to oversee the Crown's correspondence to ensure letter and style adherence (e.g., Shankaraji Narayan Sacheev)
- *Sumant* or *Dabir*: Foreign Minister, to manage foreign affairs and receive ambassadors
- *Pandit*: to adjudicate internal religious disputes and promote formal education and spiritual practice (e.g., Melgiri Pandit)
- *Nyayadhisht*: the highest judicial authority (Chief Justice).

Peshwa was the titular equivalent of a modern Prime Minister. Emperor Shivaji created the Peshwa designation in order to more effectively delegate administrative duties throughout the growth of the Maratha Empire. Prior to 1749, Peshwas held office for 8–9 years and controlled the Maratha army. They later became the *de facto* hereditary administrators of the Maratha Empire from 1749 till its end in 1818.

Under Peshwa administration and with the support of many key generals and diplomats, the Maratha Empire reached its zenith, ruling most of the Indian subcontinent landmass. It was also under the Peshwas that the Maratha Empire came to its end through its formal annexation into the British Empire through the British East India Company in 1818.

The Marathas used secular policy of administration and allowed complete freedom of religion. There were several notable Muslims in the military and administration of Marathas like Ibrahim Khan Gardi, Haider Ali Kohari, Daulat Khan, Siddi Ibrahim, Jiva Mahal etc.

Shivaji was an able administrator who recognized a government that incorporated modern concepts such as cabinet, foreign affairs and internal intelligence. He recognized an effective civil and military administration. He whispered that there was a close bond flanked by the state and the citizens. He is remembered as a just and welfare-minded king. Cosme da Guarda says in relation to the Shivaji in 'Life of the Celebrated Sevaji':

- Such was the good treatment Shivaji accorded to people and such was the honesty with which he observed the capitulations that none looked upon him without a feeling of love and confidence. Through his people he was exceedingly loved. Both in matters of reward and punishment he was so impartial that while he existed he made no exception for any person; no merit was left unrewarded, no offence went unpunished; and this he did with so much care and attention that he specially charged his governors to inform him in writing of the conduct of his soldiers, mentioning in scrupulous those who had distinguished themselves, and he would at once order their promotion, either in rank or in pay, according to their merit. He was naturally loved through all men of valor and good conduct.

Though, the later Marathas are remembered more for their military campaigns, not for their administration. Hindu historians have criticized the treatment of Marathas with Jats and Rajputs. Historian K Roy writes:

- “The treatment of Marathas with their co-religionist fellows – Jats and Rajputs was definitely unfair, and ultimately they had to pay its price in Panipat where Muslim forces had united in the name of religion.”

## **Geography**

Maratha Empire, at its peak, ruled in excess of much of the Indian Subcontinent (modern-day Republic of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as bordering Nepal and Afghanistan). Separately from capturing several regions, the Marathas maintained a large number of tributaries who were bounded through agreement to pay a certain amount of regular tax, recognized as "*Chauth*". Separately from capturing the whole Mughal Empire, the Maratha Empire defeated Sultanate of Mysore under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, Nawab of Oudh, Nawab of Bengal, Nizam of Hyderabad and Nawab of Arcot as well as the Polygar kingdoms of South India. They extracted *chauth* from Delhi, Oudh, Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Punjab, Hyderabad, Mysore, Uttar Pradesh and Rajput states.

In 1758, the Marathas started their north-west conquest and expanded their boundary till Afghanistan. They defeated Afghan forces in what is now Pakistan as well as Kashmir. The Afghans were numbered approximately 25,000–30,000 and were led through Timur Shah, the son of Ahmad Shah Durrani. The Marathas massacred and looted thousands of Afghan soldiers and captured Lahore, Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Attock, Peshawar in the Punjab region and Kashmir. The Marathas were requested through Safdarjung, the Nawab of Oudh, in 1752 to help him defeat Afghani Rohilla. The Maratha force left Poona and defeated Afghan Rohilla in 1752, capturing the whole of Rohilkhand.

Marathas recognized naval bases in the Andaman Islands and are credited with attaching the islands to India. Throughout the confederacy era, Mahadji Sindhia resurrected the Maratha domination on much of North India, which was lost after the Third battle of Panipat including the cis-Sutlej states(south of Sutlej) like Kaithal, Patiala, Jind, Thanesar, Maler Kotla, and Faridkot, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh were under the suzerainty of the Scindhia dynasty of the Maratha Empire, following the Second Anglo-Maratha War of 1803–1805, Marathas lost these territories to the British East India Company.

## **Legacy**

### ***Maratha Navy***

The Maratha Empire is credited with laying the foundation of the Indian Navy and bringing in relation to the considerable changes in naval warfare through introducing a blue-water navy. The Maratha Empire is also credited for developing several significant cities like Pune, Baroda, and Indore. From

its inception in 1674, the Marathas recognized a Naval force, consisting of cannons mounted on ships.

The dominance of the Maratha Navy started with the ascent of Kanhoji Angre as the *Darya-Saranga* through the Maratha chief of Satara. Under that authority, he was admiral of the Western coast of India from Bombay to Vingoria (now Vengurla) in the present day state of Maharashtra, except for Janjira which was affiliated with the Mughal Empire.

Marathas recognized watch posts on the Andaman Islands and is credited with attaching those islands to India. He attacked English, Dutch and Portuguese ships which were moving to and from East Indies. Until his death in 1729, he repeatedly attacked the colonial powers of Britain and Portugal, capturing numerous vessels of the British East India Company and extracting ransom for their return.

On 29 November 1721, a joint effort through the Portuguese Viceroy Francisco José de Sampaio e Castro and the British General Robert Cowan to humble Kanhoji failed miserably. Their combined fleet consisted of 6,000 soldiers in no less than four Men-of-war besides other ships led through Captain Thomas Mathews of the Bombay Marine failed miserably. Aided through Maratha naval commanders Mendhaji Bhatkar and Mainak Bhandari, Kanhoji sustained to harass and plunder the European ships until his death in 1729. The 'Pal' was a three masted Maratha man-of-war with guns peeping on the broadsides.

### ***Accounts through Afghans and Europeans***

The Maratha army especially its infantry was praised through approximately all the enemies of Maratha Empire, ranging from Duke of Wellington to Ahmad Shah Abdali. After the Third Battle of Panipat, Abdali was relieved as Maratha army in the initial stages were approximately in the position of destroying the Afghan armies and their Indian Allies Nawab of Oudh and Rohillas. The grand wazir of Durrani Empire, Shah Wali Khan was shocked when Maratha commander-in-chief Sadashivrao Bhau launched a fierce assault on the centre of Afghan Army, in excess of 3,000 Durrani soldiers were killed alongside Haji Atai Khan, one of the chief commander of Afghan army and nephew of wazir Shah Wali Khan. Such was the fierce assault of Maratha infantry in hand-to-hand combat that Afghan armies started to flee and the wazir in desperation and rage shouted "Comrades Whither do you fly, our country is distant off". Post battle Ahmad Shah Abdali in a letter to one Indian ruler claimed that Afghans were able to defeat the Marathas only because of the blessings of almighty and any other army would have been destroyed through the Maratha army on that scrupulous day even though Maratha army was numerically inferior to Afghan army and its Indian allies. The letter is kept in the National Archives of India.

Likewise Duke of Wellington after defeating Marathas noted that Marathas though were poorly led through their Generals but their regular

infantry and artillery matches the stage of Europeans, he also warned other British officers from underestimating Marathas in battlefield. He cautioned one British general that: "You necessity never allow Maratha infantry to attack head on or in close hand to hand combat, as in that your army will cover itself with utter disgrace". Even when Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington became Prime Minister of Britain he held Maratha infantry in utmost respect, claiming it to be one of the best in world at the same time though he noticed the poor leadership of Maratha Generals, who were often responsible for their defeats. Most British Authors agree that Maratha infantry was equal to that of British infantry after the Third Anglo-Maratha war in 1818, Maratha agreed to serve British Empire, and Britain listed Maratha as one of the Martial race.

### **Maratha Notable Generals and Administrators**

#### ***Ramchandra Pant Amatya Bawdekar***

Ramchandra Pant Amatya Bawdekar was a court administrator who rose from the ranks of a local Kulkarni to the ranks of Ashtapradhan under guidance and support of Shivaji. He was one of the prominent Peshwas from the time of Shivaji, prior to the rise of the later Peshwas who controlled the empire after Shahuji.

When Chhatrapati Rajaram fled to Jinji in 1689 leaving Maratha Empire, he gave a "Hukumat Panha" (King Status) to Pant before leaving. Ramchandra Pant supervised the whole state under several challenges like influx of Mughals, betrayal from Vatandars (local satraps under the Maratha state) and social challenges like scarcity of food. With the help of Pantpratinidhi, Sachiv, he kept the economic condition of Maratha Empire in an appropriate state.

He received military help from the Maratha commanders – Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav. On several occasions he himself participated in battles against Mughals.

In 1698, he stepped down from the post of "Hukumat Panha" when Rajaram offered this post to his wife, Tarabai. Tarabai gave an significant position to Pant in the middle of senior administrators of Maratha State. He wrote "Adnyapatra" in which he has explained dissimilar techniques of war, maintenance of forts and administration etc. But owing to his loyalty to Tarabai against Shahuji (who was supported through more local satraps), he was sidelined after arrival of Shahuji in 1707.

### **RAJPUT STATES**

## **Background: Babur, Humayun And The Rajputs**

With the decline of Jaunpur and the weakening of Malwa towards the end of the 15th century, a new situation developed in North India. There was the contest flanked by Rana Sanga of Mewar and the Lodis for domination in excess of eastern Rajasthan and Malwa. Sanga feared the strengthening of Lodi power and so opened negotiations with Babur against the Lodis. As Babur progressed in accordance with the agreement, Sanga retraced his steps. He had not envisaged Babur's arrival in the Gangetic valley. His plan was to detain Babur in the Punjab while he confronted the Lodis in the Gangetic valley. The ascendancy of Babur in the Gangetic valley took Sanga through surprise. These developments led to the formation of an alliance flanked by the Afghans, Rana Sanga and a host of other Rajput princes. The aim was to hold back the advance of Babur towards Delhi and the nearby areas. So distant no Rajput ruler had been successful in mustering support of such disparate groups as Rajputs and Afghans. The disagreement flanked by Sanga's coalition and Babur at Khanwa was not a contest flanked by Hindus and Muslims. This is amply borne out through the very nature of the composition of Sanga's coalition. Babur condemned the Afghan chieftains who collaborated with Sanga as kafirs infidels and mulhids and also proclaimed the contest against Sanga as jihad. These actions do not suggest religious zeal but reflect the effort to meet the challenge through appealing to the religious sentiments of his soldiers. Later on, Babur concentrated more on countering the Afghan danger than fighting the Rajputs. He tried to secure his control in excess of the region adjoining Delhi-Agra zone. Outposts such as Bayana, Dholpur, Gwalior were firmly brought under control. Mewar and Chanderi in Malwa were taken. The death of Rana Sanga settled the problem as distant as Rajasthan was concerned.

Babur wished to follow a forward policy in Mewar and Malwa but his practical understanding prevented him from taking up this policy till the Afghan problem in the east had been solved. Throughout Babur's time, the relations flanked by the Mughals and Rajputs did not develop beside definite and positive lines, rather it was in consonance with the political needs. When Humayun ascended the throne, the political scene in Malwa and Rajasthan had changed considerably. Bahadur Shah, the ruler of Gujarat, had captured Malwa after defeating its ruler Mahmud Khalji II. Rana Ratan Singh of Mewar had sided with Bahadur Shah against Malwa for which he was generously rewarded. This was an act of political expediency. Though, a rupture flanked by Rana Vikramjit of Mewar and Bahadur Shah led to siege of Chittor through the later. Though Humayun was aware of the threat posed through the augmentation of the power of Bahadur Shah in Malwa and Rajasthan, he was hesitant to get involved in the disagreement with Bahadur Shah till the Afghan threat had been sorted out. Humayun's stance as regards Rajasthan was

essentially defence oriented: an offensive policy was postponed for a later date. He also realized that due to internecine warfare in Mewar its power was waning. So, for Humayun, its military importance as an ally was inadequate.

Humayun who joined the thrash about on Chittor's side had not anticipated the power of Gujarat artillery and had overestimated the military strength of Chittor in the wake of the siege. Bahadur Shah, on the other hand, had not expected Humayun to counter him in a contest against a Hindu ruler. Chittor was devastated but Bahadur Shah's success was short-lived. Babur and Humayun's relations with Rajputs should be viewed in the Afghan problem which deterred them from creation friendly overtures to the Rajput rulers.

### **Akbar's Relations With The Rajputs**

We can perceive three stages in the shaping of Akbar's Rajput policy. Throughout the first stage, which ended in 1569-70, Akbar sustained with the policy followed through the Delhi Sultans; in the second stage, Akbar tried to develop and extend the alliance with Rajputs but certain components of the earlier policy were retained; the third and last stage is marked through Akbar's break with Muslim orthodoxy.

#### ***The First Stage***

There has been a lot of debate on Akbar's relations with the Rajputs. Some argue that his policy initiated a system in which there would be no discrimination on the basis of religion in public appointments. Others hold that it was a deliberate effort to exploit the martial attributes of the Rajputs for the expansion of the Empire and also to play them against each other thereby ensuring that they would not united pose a threat to the Empire. It is also stated that Akbar's Rajput policy was a part of a broad policy of wooing the zamindars and martial classes which incorporated the Rajputs and Afghans. Majority of the zamindars were Hindus and specially Rajputs.

It is pointed out that the policy was aimed at using the Rajputs to counter the power of the Uzbegs and other disaffected nobles. Faithfulness of Rajputs was legendary. They could serve as significant buttresses both within the court and outside. Rajputs had made an impression on Akbar's mind method back in 1557 when a Rajput contingent under Bhara Mal, the ruler of Amber, had demonstrated its loyalty to Akbar. This led to a matrimonial alliance flanked by Bhara Mal's daughter and Akbar in 1562. But this matrimonial alliance was not unique and such alliances were a common characteristic before Akbar's time also. These marriages were in the nature of political compromise and did not imply conversion to Islam and break with Hindu traditions. Bhara

Mal had submitted to Akbar through personally paying homage to him in 1562. Through encouraging this practice, Akbar was trying to establish intimate relations with those chieftains who submitted to him personally. A personal relationship, it was felt, would best ensure political allegiance. Akbar's period therefore ushered in an era of personal fidelity. Matrimonial alliances did not lead to any type of special bond flanked by Rajputs and Mughals. Nor were these alliances with Rajputs planned to be aimed at countering recalcitrant elements or using the Rajputs for military gains. The fact that Rajputs did participate in Mughal wars against their compatriots was not unprecedented. The liberal events such as abolition of jiziya, remission of pilgrim taxes, etc. which Akbar introduced flanked by 1562-64, strengthened people's faith in Akbar as a liberal ruler. But these events did not make an atmosphere of total peace flanked by the Mughals and Rajputs. The war with Chittor, is an apt instance. The Rajputs offered firm resistance despite the attendance of Bhagwant Singh with Akbar. Akbar on the other hand proclaimed the disagreement as jihad and martyrs as ghazis giving the whole affair a religious colour. He ascribed his victory to God's will, thereby emphasizing the religious dimension of the disagreement.

In the first stage, Akbar's attitude towards Rajputs softened and Rao Dalpat Rai, the governor (hakim) of Ranthambhor, was accepted in the imperial service and given jagir. Akbar married Bhagwant Singh's (Kachhawaha prince) sister. That Bhara Mal became a close confidant of Akbar is apparent from the fact that when Akbar proceeded on the Gujarat campaign, Agra was placed under his charge a gesture shown for the first time to a Hindu Prince. Though, Akbar's religious views his public policies and attitude towards Rajputs developed beside separate lines and coincided only at a later stage.

### *The Second Stage*

Towards the end of 1570, the relations with Rajputs were further recognized. Rai Kalyan Mal of Bikanar submitted to Akbar through paying homage personally beside with his son. Rawal Har Rai of Jaiselmer and Kalyan Mai's daughters were married to Akbar. Both rajas were firmly entrenched in their principalities and enrolled in the Imperial service. The Gujarat expedition of Akbar was an significant landmark in the evolution of Mughal-Rajput relations. The Rajputs were enlisted as soldiers systematically and their salaries were fixed for the first time. Therefore , the Rajputs were deployed outside Rajasthan for the first time and were given important assignments and posts. Throughout the Gujarat insurrection of the Mirzas, Akbar depended largely on Rajputs—(Kachawahas) Man Singh and Bhagwant Singh. Akbar also had to deal with the Mewar problem. The Rana of Mewar did not. agree to personal submission and wanted to regain Chittor. Akbar

remained firm on the principle of personal homage. In the meantime Marwar was subdued through Akbar.

The battle of Haldighati flanked by the Rana of Mewar and Akbar was not a thrash about flanked by Hindus and Muslims. As significant groups from in the middle of the Rajputs sided with the Mughals, this thrash about cannot be termed as a thrash about for independence from foreign rule. It can to some extent be characterized as the pronouncement of the ideal of regional independence. In the 16th century India, the feelings of local and regional loyalty were very powerful which could be further strengthened through emphasis on conventions and traditions. Though, this catchword could not be very helpful in the long run since there was no supreme regional power amongst the Rajput states. They were vulnerable to internecine warfare and its disastrous consequences. The states located beside the borders of Mewar submitted to Akbar and entered into matrimonial alliances. These states had close relations with Mewar but had always pursued a practical policy of allying with whosoever was the dominant power in the area. The ruler of Bundi and Marwar, who were in league with the Rana, were subdued. Therefore, the Rana's power suffered a severe jolt and Rajputs were transformed from mere collaborators into allies of the Mughals.

Till the end of the second stage, Akbar's Rajput policy had not acquired a form which would be disapproved through the Muslim orthodox religious elements or which would be a threat to the Muslim character of the state. Or else why an orthodox person like Badauni commended the Mewar campaign?

### ***The Third Stage***

The reimposition of jiziya through Akbar in 1575, which was a step in preparation for war with Mewar, shows that Akbar had to rely on religion for serving political ends. The fall from power of the chief sadr Abdun Nabi and the proclamation of the mahzar are significant events which constitute the starting point of Akbar's break with orthodoxy.

Throughout the invasion on Punjab through Akbar's brother Mirza Hakim (the ruler of Kabul) in 1580, Akbar relied upon Rajputs such as Man Singh and Bhagwant Singh who displayed considerable valour throughout the siege and successfully resisted it. Akbar rewarded them through creation Bhagwant Das the governor of Lahore and Man Singh the commander of the Indus region. An significant consequence of Mirza Hakim's invasion was that from now onwards the Rajputs became the sword-arm of the Empire and became actively involved in Mughal administration.

A group in the middle of the nobility displayed fear in excess of the

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

These marriages reveal Akbar's desire to compel his successor to the throne to carry on the policy of maintaining close relationship with the Rajputs. In 1583-84, Akbar initiated a new policy of selecting loyal Muslim and Hindu nobles for performing administrative tasks. Therefore, the son of Bhara Mal and Rai Lonkaran Shekhawat were look: after armour and roads; household management was placed under Raisal Darbari (Kachhawaha); Raja Askaran Kachhawaha of Narwan was assigned the task of supervising the property of minors; Jagmal Panwar, associated with Raja Bhagwant Das and Man Singh, was incharge of the department of jewels and other minerals; Rai Durga Sisodia of Rampura and Raja Todar Mal were assigned administrative tasks in the revenue department and Rai Surjan Hada was to bring matters relating to religion and faith to Prince Daniyal. Raja Birbal was a close associate of Akbar and was responsible for justice. It cannot be said with certainty to what extent this policy of deploying Rajputs for carrying out administrative tasks was successful. Abul Fazl provides the impression that it was not properly implemented.

The year 1585-86 marks an significant landmark in the administrative sphere when the subas were given an administrative form. Each suba was to have two amirs or sipahsalaras as well as a diwan and a bakhshi. The Kachhawahas got the largest share of appointments in the middle of Rajputs. Lahore, was given to Raja Bhagwant Das and Rai Singh of Bikaner, Kabul to Man Singh, Agra to Raja Askaran Shekhawat, Ajmer to Jagannath (son of Bhara Mal). The Rathors and Sisodias were also employed in the administrative set up but not on a very large level.

Through 1585-86, Akbar's Rajput policy had become fully developed. The alliance with Rajputs had become steady and stable. The Rajputs were now not only allies but were partners in the Empire. Disagreement with the Rana of Mewar did not lead to bitterness in relations with other Rajput states of Rajasthan. Finally, the dispute with the Rana was settled and he spent the rest of his life in Chawand in South Mewar (his capital). For analysing the relations with Rajputs in Akbar's reign, the year 1585-86 can be taken as a convenient point. In the middle of the Rajputs enlisted in the Imperial Service, the Kachhawahas reigned supreme. In the mansabdari(ranking system) which

was developed through Akbar the Kachhawahas held a dominant position. In the list of mansabdars, as given in the Ain-i Akbari of the 24 Rajputs 13 were Kachhawahas. In the middle of Kachhawahas only members of Bhara Mal's family held ranks of 1500 zat or above. The only non-Kachhawaha Rajput who held a high rank and significant posts was Rai Singh of Bikaner.

A study of the state structure of the Rajputs is significant for understanding their relations with the Mughals. On the eve of the Mughal conquests, the administrative structure was based on what is called bhaibant system. It was a sort of a loose confederation in which a region was held through a clan or khap through one or more family which had close kinship ties with the clan. A member of the leading family was called rao/rai—rana. There was no definite law of succession both primogeniture and the will of the ruler prevailed. But the deciding factors were the support of Rajput sardars (chieftains) and military might. A clan held a region relying on the support of Rajput warriors. The leading family of a clan held only a few parganas or mahals under direct control in a region and the rest were assigned in patta to individual members of the family who erected their own fortresses or places of residence called basi or kothri. Holders of these fortresses were called dhani or thakur. These holdings were hereditary. In these circumstances the Rana tried to extend the holding at the expense of the thikanedars (clan brothers) whereas the clan attempted to gain at the cost of neighbouring clans.

When a Rajput raja was enrolled in the Imperial service, he was given jagir against his mansab which consisted of mahals or tappas where the clan members existed. The mahals were a part of one or more parganas with a fort or garhi where the raja resided with his family. This region was the real watan of the raja though, occasionally, the term was extended to mean the whole tract held through the raja and his clansmen. Jahangir refers to this as riyasat. The term watan jagir came into vogue only at the end of Akbar's reign. Jagirs in close proximity to watan were measured a part of the watan and were not transferable except in case of rebellion, etc. These watan jagirs were granted for life within Rajasthan. Outside Rajasthan, jagirs were transferable. The term watan jagir is not referred to through Abul Fazl and other modern historians. The first reference to this is contained in a farman of Akbar to Raja Rai Singh of Bikaner. The Rajput chronicles, for instance, Nainsi has a word utan which could be a corruption of watan.

The change in the state structure of Rajasthan and the evolution of the concept of watan jagir which replaced bhaibant is an motivating phenomena. Through Jahangir's time the concept of watan jagir was firmly entrenched. Areas held through clan members and other clans were brought under the control of the raja. Watan jagirs allowed the rajas to consolidate their position vis-à-vis the pattayats which was a step towards the evolution of a stable and centralized state structure. Watan and riyasat at times overlapped.

When a raja died all the parganas controlled through him as watan jagir were not inevitably inherited through his successor. His successor was given a few parganas according to his mansab which was lower than that of his predecessor. Therefore, jagir rights in a pargana were partitioned. This was a means of exercising control in excess of the Rajput rajas. Dispute in the middle of the Rajputs for control of certain territories was a problem in which Akbar also got entangled. For instance, Pokharan was claimed through the Bhatias of Jaisalmer and rulers of Bikaner and Jodhpur. Akbar had assigned it to Mota Raja and later to Suraj Singh, but the Bhatias sustained to resist and dispute could not be settled in Akbar's time.

The Mughals did not try to make dissensions in the middle of the Rajputs but they were aware of dissensions in the middle of the Rajputs on the basis of clan and personal holdings and took advantage of these differences for their own ends. For instance, they transferred disputed parganas from one to another. The Mughal control in excess of an autonomous raja was determined through the Mughal concept of paramountcy, attitudes of traditional ruling elites and political expediency. In Akbar's time Chittor and Ranthambhor forts were under Mughal appointees. The rajas assessed and composed land revenue according to their custom and norms, but imposition of certain taxes was disallowed. Though, there was no machinery to enforce these prohibitions which were often ignored through small rajas. Marwar was under direct Mughal rule from 1563 to 1583. Parts of Mewar were directly controlled through the Mughals from 1568 to the early years of Jahangir's reign.'

The Rajput rajas were granted jagirs outside their watan in neighbouring subas or in subas where they served. The jagirs were situated either in productive areas or in zortalab (rebellious) areas. The proportion of jagirs granted in Rajasthan and outside differed from case to case. Additional income from jagirs outside traditional holdings was significant. Jagirs in Rajasthan were a more attractive proposition for the Rajputs as they accepted a lot of prestige and enabled them to maintain their links with the clan which was the foundation of their power.

The establishment of a sort of Pax Mughalica (Mughal peace) was significant if the Rajput rajas were to serve in dissimilar parts of the Empire without being bothered in relation to their homelands. This meant regulation of inter-state disputes and disputes in the middle of the Rajput rajas and sardars. The Mughal policy of conferring honor on anyone was a part of the process of weakening the aristocracy through instigating the middle and lower strata to assert their independence from aristocracy. So, the Mughals enlisted in the Imperial service several minor feudatories of the Rajput rajas themselves.

The issue of succession had invariably caused fratricidal civil wars in Rajput states. The concept of Mughal Paramountcy implied controlling succession to the throne in these states. This was not an easy task: it depended on the strength of the Mughal ruler. Akbar had pronounced that the grant of tika was the prerogative of the Mughal Emperor and could not be claimed as a matter of right. The fact that the Mughal Emperor could provide tika to sons of the deceased raja or his brother or brother's son could lead to conflicts. But, at least, the issue could be settled without a civil war due to Mughal intervention.

As the mansab system developed, Akbar tried to encourage nobles to maintain mixed contingents consisting of ethnic groups like the Mughals, Rajputs etc. Though this was not acceptable to several and exclusive contingents of Rajputs and Mughals were still maintained. The Rajput soldier was paid a salary lower than his Mughal counterpart but how distant this encouraged nobles to employ Rajputs is not recognized. Akbar tried to promote heterogeneous contingents to cut crossways the ethnic-religious distinctions. But we discover that under Akbar and his successor's ethnic-religious ties could not be weakened. Several nobles disliked the importance given to the Rajputs in the Imperial service. The Rajputs, too, found it hard at first to adjust to the discipline in the Mughal service.

Akbar's alliance with the Rajputs began as a political coalition but later, it developed into an instrument of closer relations flanked by Hindus and Muslims which shaped the basis for a broad liberal tolerant policy towards all, irrespective of faith. Approximately this time, the concept of justice also became extensive. It was stressed that justice should be dispensed to all irrespective of religion, faith, caste and race. Therefore Mughal-Rajput relations were seen as the beginning of a secular, non-sectarian state in which all sections of people would have some interest in its continuation. But this was not in accordance with the social and political reality. The Rajputs were usually orthodox in their social and religious outlook. They refused to enroll themselves in Akbar's tauhid Ilahi and also did not support Akbar in opposing sati.

Like the Rajputs, the Mughal elite was also usually orthodox. The Mughal elite and ulema feared that a broad liberal policy would be detrimental to their dominant position. Their opposition could be put down only through furthering the Mughal-Rajput alliance supported through powerful non-sectarian movements stressing common points flanked by followers of the two religions. These movements were limited in their power and the Mughal-Rajput alliance having no powerful bulwark became strained and collapsed.

## **The Rajput States (Rajasthan)**

Amber, Mewar, Marwar, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Bundi and Kota were some of the significant Rajput states in Rajasthan. We will briefly discuss their emergence as powerful Rajput states and their political relations with the Mughals.

### ***Amber (Jaipur)***

Amber is recognized with the present day Jaipur. Located in eastern Rajasthan, it was ruled through the Kachhawahas. Throughout the early years of Akbar's reign, the ruler of Amber was Raja Bharmal. We have already discussed Akbar's relations with Amber. At the time of Akbar's death, the relationship of Raja Man Singh with Prince Salim became estranged. Raja Man Singh in league with Aziz Koka, (a Mughal noble) favoured the candidature of Prince Khusrau against Salim for the Mughal throne.

Khusrau was the nephew (sister's son) of Man Singh and the son-in-law of Aziz Koka. This issue also divided the Kachhawahas. Ram Das and Raisal Darbari sided with Salim. At that time, both were incharge of the Khazana-i-amira (imperial treasury). Man Singh and Aziz Koka wanted to gain control in excess of the treasury but those incharge of the treasury resisted and succeeded in safeguarding the treasury. Eventually when Jahangir became the Emperor, he was hostile to Man Singh and others who had opposed him. Man Singh was sent absent to Bengal, and none of the Kachhawa has nobles were given the charge of any office throughout Jahangir's reign Ram Das and Raisal Darbari were favoured and were raised to the rank of 5000 zat.

Though Jahangir was unhappy with Man Singh, political exigency did not allow him to sever his relations with the powerful Kachhawachieftain. So, in 1608, he married the daughter of Man Singh's deceased eldest son Jagat Singh. Raja Man Singh held the rank of 7000 zat and 7000 sawar till his death in 1614-15. In 1614, Jahangir, instead of granting the gaddi of Amber to Maha Singh, gave tika to Bhao Singh who was also given the title of Mirza Raja and a rank of 4000 zat which was raised to 5000 zat. According to the law of primogeniture prevailing in the middle of the Kachhawaha clan, the gaddi should have gone to Maha Singh who was the son of Jagat Singh, the deceased eldest son of Man Singh. Throughout Prince Khurram's rebellion, the Kachhawaha chieftain Mirza Raja Jai Singh was careful and showed his indifference to the whole affair. His neutrality earned him the goodwill of Prince Khurram. When the latter became the Emperor, Jai Singh was given promotions and assigned some offices. Mirza Raja Jai Singh, who held the mansab of 4000 zat and 2,500 sawar at the time of Shah Jahan's accession, sustained to earn promotions throughout the course of military service in the

Deccan. Through 1637 he had acquired the status of 7000 zat and 7000 sawar. He served as a commander throughout Aurangzeb's' expeditions against Balkh and Qandahar. Besides the Mirza, several other KachhaWaha nobles also held ranks of several degrees. Several offices such as faujdar and quila' dar were assigned to them. In c. 1650, Mirza Raja Jai Singh became the faujdar of Delhi and, in the same year, his son Kirat Singh became the faujdar of Mewat. Earlier, Mirza Raja Jai Singh Was appointed subadar of Agra and faujdar of Mathura.

In the war of succession flanked by Princes Dara Shukoh and Aurangzeb, Mirza Raja Jai Singh favoured the imperial cause and earned promotions. Jaswant Singh superseded Jai Singh in the hierarchy due to Dara's support who was favoured through Shah Jahan. Jai Singh's nephew's daughter was married to Dara's son. Through distinguishing himself against Prince Shuja in the eastern part of India, Mirza Raja Jai Singh had acquired the mansab of 7000 zat and 7000 sawar (5000 du aspa sih aspa). After the battle of Samugarh when Aurangzeb's position had become strong, the Raja and his son Ram Singh defected to Aurangzeb's side. Aurangzeb rewarded him with the jagir of one kror dams. He became a close confidant of Aurganzeb. The Raja sustained to render military service to Aurganzeb. He remained in the Deccan and fought against the Marathas, Bijapur and Golconda. After Shivaji's escape from Agra, he was removed from the viceroyalty of Deccan. Shivaji was in his son's custody and Aurangzeb blamed him for the flight. After him, the Amber state was governed through his son Ram Singh and great-grandson Bishan Singh. Throughout the period of Sawai Jai Singh, (1609-1743), the Ambar state became powerful. In 1707, after Aurangzeb's death, there ensued the succession problem. Sawai Jai Singh became entangled in the succession strife. He was disliked through the new emperor Bahadur Shah who first installed Jai Singh's brother Bijay Singh as the chieftain of Ambar and subsequently the Emperor brought Amber state under imperial control. But, in the subsequent period, Sawai Jai Singh got possession of Amber. Taking advantage of internecine conflicts and party politics at the royal court, he expanded his power and prestige through enlarging the boundaries of the Amber state. He founded a new city, Jainagar, presently recognized as Jaipur. At the time of accession, he possessed a small territory approximately Amber, but he sought revenue assignments of several parganas approximately Amber region, and also took revenue contracts (ijara) of several parganas. In this method, he succeeded in establishing the powerful Jaipur state.

### ***Marwar (Jodhpur)***

The Rathor chieftains of Jodhpur came from Qannauj region and recognized a monarchy. Rao Jodha (1446-53) founded the city of Jodhpur and it became the seat of power. Slowly, the Rathors extended their control in

excess of the large desert tract of north-west Rajasthan. Several Rathor states, namely Merta, Bikaner, Kishangarh and Nagaur came into subsistence, and the ruling families of these states had lineage links with the Rathor family of Jodhpur. In 1563-64, Jodhpur under Chandrasen was subdued through Akbar. It was conferred upon Mota Raja in 1583. Matrimonial alliances were recognized with the ruler of Marwar and mansabs were granted to him and his sons.

Throughout Jahangir's reign, after meritorious services in the Deccan and the Chittor expedition, Suraj Singh had earned the position of 5000 zat. After his death in 1619, his son Gaj Singh was granted the gaddi of Jodhpur and the mansab of 3000 zat and 2000 sawar. Gaj Singh served in Deccan and rose to the rank of 5000 zat and 5000 sawar. He did not participate actively against Shah Jahan who had rebelled -against Jahangir. When Shah Jahan became the Emperor, Gaj Singh was confirmed in his previous rank. He was deputed against the rebel Mughal noble Khan Jahan Lodi and thereafter against Adil Shah of Bijapur.

After his death in 1638, according to his will, the gaddi of Jodhpur was conferred on his younger son Jaswant Singh instead of the eldest son Amar Singh. Jaswant Singh was also given the title of Raja and the mansab of 4000 zat/ 4000 sawar. Shah Jahan also gratified Amar Singh (who was in Kabul), through augmenting his status to 3000 zat and 3000 sawar with the title of rao. He was also favoured with the grant of a new watan jagir in Nagaur. Shah Jahan's generosity was on account of Jaswant and Amar Singh's blood relationship with the Emperor's mother Jagat Gosain.

Raja Jaswant Singh rendered service in Qandahar first under the command of Prince Dara Shukoh and thereafter under Prince Aurangzeb. Earlier he was the acting governor of Agra. The Raja had now acquired the status of 6000 zat and 6000 sawar (5000 du aspa sih aspa). His status was further raised through grant of the title of Maharaja and he fought on the imperial side against Aurangzeb in the battles of Dharmat and Samugarh which he lost. On the eve of this thrash about, Jaswant Singh's mansab was raised to 7000 zat and 7000 sawar (6000 du aspa sih aspa). Jaswant Singh's sympathy with Shah Jahan and Dara Shukoh and his frequent defections had vexed: Aurangzeb and the latter confiscated his gaddi of Jodhpur and conferred it on his nephew Rao Rai Singh, the son of Amar Singh of Nagaur. The Rajputs had no special sympathy for Dara nor Aurangzeb had any reservations concerning the Rajputs. But when eventually Aurangzeb appeared successful in the war of succession he reinstated Jaswant Singh on his gaddi as well as to his mansab. He was also appointed governor of Gujarat. It was not advisable for the Mughal Emperor to annoy the powerful Rajput chieftain who commanded a large following. Aurangzeb followed the policy of winning over the Rajputs. Thereafter, Jaswant Singh rendered services in Deccan and Afghanistan.

Though, his negligent conduct throughout and after Shivaji's surprise attack on Shaista Khan's camp in 1662 was a source of worry to Aurangzeb. Jaswant Singh was charged with sympathising with Shivaji but Aurangzeb sustained to favour him. His last assignment was as thanedar of Jamrud in Afghanistan. This was a low post and amounted to demotion and virtual banishment to distant-off places absent from the Mughal court. After his death, the Rajputs were not involved in Aurangzeb's Deccan campaigns which signaled the revival of a forward policy in the Deccan after 1676. This shaped the background of Aurangzeb's breach with Mewar and Marwar.

Although Aurangzeb was orthodox in his religious views in the early years of his reign, the Rajputs became partners in the Empire. Slowly, though, relations flanked by the two became strained. The acts of territorial aggrandizement, and, matrimonial alliances contracted through the Rajput Rajas without the Mughal Emperor's consent were resented through Aurangzeb. A major crisis which occurred approximately this time is popularly recognized as the Rathor Rebellion. Jaswant Singh had a son Prithvi Singh who had died throughout his lifetime.

At the time of his death, his two wives were pregnant but there was no certainty of the birth of a male child. It was also not possible to keep the Jodhpur gaddi vacant for a long time. The gaddi could also not be conferred on Rani Hadi (the chief queen) according to the Rajput tradition. The rule of primogeniture did not prevail in the middle of the Rathors and the son whose mother was the favorite of the father was nominated to the gaddi. In case the successor was a minor, the state was administered through an Imperial nominee. In Marwar there were two claimants to the gaddi—Rao Anup Singh of Bikaner (the son of a daughter of Amar Singh) and Indra Singh of Nagaur (his grandfather was Amar Singh whose claims to the throne of Marwar had been set aside when his younger brother Jawant Singh was given the gaddi of Marwar). Both offered a vast amount of peshkash (tribute) and Anup Singh also volunteered to escheat Jaswant Singh's property to realize the dues he owed to the government, but Aurangzeb issued orders that the state of Marwar including Jodhpur should be taken into khalisa. It was a part of the Mughal Empire though autonomous in internal matters. Disputed succession was one of the causes for a state being taken into khalisa, something which was not unprecedented. Another cause was that several zamindars who had been subordinate to the Maharaja withheld revenues and created trouble. Jaswant Singh had given most of his villages in patta to sardars and was unable to recover the dues from them. He was so in debt to the state. Some of his parganas were claimed through the neighbouring states.

The inclusion of Jodhpur into khalisa was accompanied through the grant of parganas of Sojat and Jaitaran for the maintenance of Jaswant Singh's family. Though, Rani Hadi was not prepared to surrender Jodhpur although

she had no objection to the rest of Mewar being taken into khalisa. She wanted to postpone the issue and awaited the birth of Jaswant Singh's child hoping that it would be a male child. Rani Hadi was supported through the Rathors and Rana Raj Singh of Mewar. Aurangzeb offered to transform the pattas of Jaswant Singh's followers into Imperial pattas in order to reduce their anxiety that they would be dislodged if Jodhpur was brought under khalisa. Rani Hadi refused to surrender Jodhpur. Aurangzeb decided to strike a blow.

## **AHMEDNAGAR, BIJAPUR AND GOLKONDA**

### **Ahmednagar**

The Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmednagar was founded through Malik Ahmed Nizamul Mulk Bahri in 1490. He was the son of Malik Hasan—the Prime Minister of the Bahmani kingdom. Malik Hasan started carving out this principality from Konkan and at the time of his death in 1510, the kingdom extended from Bir to Chaul and Ravedanda on the sea-coast and from the frontiers of Khandesh in the north to Poona, Chakan and Sholapur in the south. It incorporated the Daulatabad fort also. This kingdom sustained till 1636 when it was annexed through the Mughals.

Throughout this period, the Ahmednagar rulers struggled to protect the territories under their possession from external aggression. At the same time, efforts were made to annex new areas. The biggest success in this direction came when Berar was annexed. The first set-back to Ahmednagar came in 1511 when she lost Sholapur to Bijapur. Another set-back for Husain Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar came when Golkonda, Bijapur and Vijaynagar joined hands to inflict a humiliating defeat on him, but he supervised to secure the kingdom. Soon Husain Nizam Shah married his daughter Chand Bibi to Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur. A little later (1565), Bijapur, Golkonda, Ahmednagar and Bidar attacked Vijaynagar. Its ruler Ramaraja was defeated and killed.

Husain died in 1565 and was succeeded through his eldest son Murtaza who ruled till 1588. Throughout the first six years, Murtaza's mother Khunza Humayun controlled the affairs of the kingdom but her repeated military failures against her neighbours led the Nizam Shahi nobility to help Murtaza take reins of administration in his own hands. He retrieved the situation and recovered Udgir from Bijapur. In 1574, Murtaza annexed Berar to his kingdom; in 1588, he was killed through his son Hussain. But the latter was also killed in 1589.

In 1595, Chand Bibi enthroned Bahadur and took the reins in her own hands. She faced the mighty Mughal power, forcing her to cede Berar to the Mughals. The rising Mughal pressure led Chand Bibi to decide to surrender

the Ahmednagar fort. But this resulted in her murder through the nobles and the capture of Ahmednagar fort through the Mughals in 1600. Bahadur Nizam Shah was sent to the Gwalior fort as captive. Malik Ambar, a Nizam Shahi noble, tried to revive the kingdom through enthroning a member of the royal family as Murtaza Nizam Shah II. He sustained to defy the Mughals. In 1610, he killed the intriguing Murtaza and enthroned his son as Burhan Nizam Shah III. Throughout his reign, skirmishes took place flanked by the Nizam Shahi forces and the Portuguese. The Mughal pressure on the Nizam Shahi forces compelled Burhan to conclude peace with the Portuguese. In 1616, the Mughal commander Shah Nawaz Khan ravaged the new Nizam Shahi capital Khirki, but Malik Ambar rehabilitated it and resumed offensive against the Mughals. Later, Prince Khurram forced Malik Ambar to surrender the Ahmednagar fort and the districts of Balaghat. Though throughout 1619-1620, Malik Ambar recovered the lost territories.

Malik Ambar was not only a successful military commander but a very able administrator. He is credited with a number of effective events concerning revenue and general administration. With his death in 1626, Ahmednagar seems to have lost all hopes. Now Marathas tried to help Ahmednagar against the Mughals under Shahjahan. Shahji Bhonsle enthroned a member of the royal family as Murtaza Nizam Shah III. Defying the Mughals, he occupied a number of forts. But Shahjahan forced Muhammad Adil Shah to accept defeat in 1636. A settlement was made, according to which, the Nizam Shahi kingdom came to an end. It was divided flanked by the Mughals and Bijapur kingdom. It was settled that the forts of Pareda and Sholapur with their adjoining districts, the province of Kalyani and the Nizam Shahi territory between the Bhima and Nira rivers would be taken through Adil Shah of Bijapur and, in return, he would assist the Mughals to bring Shahji to submission. Abdullah Qutb Shah of Golkonda also signed a treaty with the Mughals. Prince Aurangzeb was appointed the governor of the Mughal Deccan. He conquered the Nizam Shahi forts of Udgir and Ausa which completed the extinction of Ahmednagar kingdom. Shahji surrendered Murtaza Nizam Shah III to the Mughals and himself fled to Bijapur. Murtaza was imprisoned in the Gwalior fort and, therefore, the Nizam Shahi kingdom came to an end.

## **Bijapur**

The independent state of Bijapur was also carved out from the Bahmani kingdom in 1490. Bijapur remained independent till 1686 when it was annexed through the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Throughout this period of approximately 200 years, it was ruled through Adil Shahi kings. Its founder, Yusuf Adil Khan, of Persian descent, was the tarafdar (governor) of Bijapur

province of the Bahmani kingdom. He declared his independence in 1490. He enlarged his small territory through capturing Raichur, Goa, Dabhol, Gulbarga and Kalyani. But he lost Goa to the Portuguese in 1510. Throughout the period of his successors, efforts were made to retain and keep adding new territories. Ismail Shah tried to capture Sholapur from Ahmednagar but failed. The major success of Ismail Shah was the capture of Bidar. Amir Barid of Bidar had always been intriguing against Bijapur. So, Ismail marched and captured him alive. Amir Barid had to cede Bidar to Bijapur and was enrolled in the Bijapuri nobility.

In 1530, Ismail in alliance with Alauddin Imad Shah recovered Raichur Doab and Mudgal from the Vijaynagar Empire. As a reward, Ismail gave back Bidar to Amir Barid in return for Qandahar and Kalyani. But after his return to Bidar, Amir Barid allied himself with Burhan and refused to provide Qandahar and Kalyani. Finally, Ismail attacked and defeated him. In 1534, Ismail made an abortive effort to take Kovilkonda and Golkonda from Sultan Quli Qutbul Mulk. After his return to Bijapur, he died the same year. He was succeeded through the elder prince Mallu Adil Khan but, due to his licentious behavior, he was blinded and imprisoned through his grandmother Punji Khatun in 1535. He died in captivity in 1535. He was succeeded through his younger brother Ibrahim. Ibrahim was forced to provide absent the ports of Salsette and Bardez to the Portuguese because the latter had already occupied them in 1535 as a price to keep the rebel prince Abdullah in check who had taken shelter in Goa.

Ali Adil Shah I (1556-1580), the after that Sultan, captured the Vijaynagar forts of Adoni, Torgal, Dharwar and Bankapur and made an unsuccessful effort to capture Penukonda, the Vijaynagar's new capital. Ali Adil Shah I was assassinated in 1580. After him, his minor nephew Ibrahim ascended to the throne; his aunt, Chand Bibi, took charge of him as his guardian. The court politics led to the overthrow of three regents within a period of ten years. The biggest success of Ibrahim Adil Shah was the annexation of the kingdom of Bidar in 1619. Ibrahim was succeeded through Muhammad Adil Shah (1627-1656). He conquered Tivy, Barder, Sarzora and culture from the Portuguese. Throughout his reign the kingdom reached the zenith of its glory. At the time of his death in 1656, the boundaries of the kingdom extended from the Arabian sea to the Bay of Bengal and the tributes from the subdued nayaks compensated for the loss incurred through payments to the Mughals. After Mohammed Adil Shah's death, his son Ali Shah II (1656-1672) succeeded him. Throughout this period, the Mughal and Maratha invasions weakened the kingdom. After his death, his four year old son Sikandar was declared the Sultan (1672-1686). Throughout this period, factional fights, interference through Golkonda and the Marathas and Mughal invasions shattered the kingdom. Finally, in 1686, the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb defeated the Adil Shahi forces and annexed the kingdom to the Mughal Empire.

## **Golkonda**

The founder of the Qutb Shahi dynasty was Sultan Quli who belonged to the Turkman tribe of Qara-Quyunlu. He started to gain power throughout the reign of the Bahmani Sultan, Shihabuddin Mahmud (1482-1518). He became the governor of the Telingana province with Golkonda as its capital. He never declared his independence but the weakness of the Bahmani Sultan gave him an opportunity to rule independently. He sustained hanpura in the west. The Golkonda boundary now touched those of Vijaynagar and Bijapur. He wrested some territory from Orissa and extended his dominion to the Godavari-Krishna doab as distant as Ellcre and Rajahmundri. The Godavari river was fixed as the boundary flanked by the two states.

He captured Kondavidu from the Vijaynagar empire. He frustrated the intentions of Bijapur and Bidar to occupy his territory. He died in 1543. He was succeeded through his son Jamshed Quli Khan whose great achievement was to raise his prestige in the middle of the Deccani Sultans through mediating flanked by Ahmednagar and Bijapuri rulers and also through restoring Ali Barid of Bidar to his throne. He died in 1550.

Ibrahim (1550-1580) was the first Qutb Shahi Sultan who formally ruled as an independent king and struck coins in his name. He was succeeded through Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah (1580-1611). He founded his capital in Hyderabad in 1591. Throughout his reign a number of European factories were recognized in Golkonda. He died in 1621 and was succeeded through his nephew Muhammad Qutb Shah. The new ruler favoured consolidation rather than expansion. He died in 1626 and was succeeded through his eldest son Abdullah Qutb Shah. One can say that the downward trend of the Qutb Shahi kingdom started from the latter's reign when the Mughal pressure on Golkonda increased. In 1636, he had to sign a "deed of submission" to the Mughals and a covenant through which Golkonda became a vassal to the Mughal empire. Later, he annexed some territories of Karnataka. After his death in 1672, his son-in-law Abdul Hasan (1672-1687) ascended the throne. Finally, the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb annexed Golkonda to the Mughal Empire in 1687.

## **External Relations**

Throughout the period of their subsistence, these Deccan kingdoms interacted with each other in several methods. They also came into contact with other south India states, the Mughals, Marathas and European

settlements.

### ***Relations with Each Other***

The nature of interaction flanked by the three major states kept changing according to their individual interests. The major conflicts were for territories. At times two would join hands to oppose the third. On some occasions, some would join hands with the other two smaller kingdoms of Berar and Bidar. Alliances were made even with outside powers to counter each other. Ahmednagar had its first skirmish against Bijapur for the occupation of Sholapur and lost. Throughout Burhan's rule in Bijapur, Gujarat with the support of Khandesh and Baglana, attacked him. In 1530 Ahmednagar and Bijapur entered into alliance according to which the former annexed Berar and the latter Telangana.

Ismail of Bijapur made alliance with Burhan Nizam Shah I of Ahmednagar. He married his sister Mariam to Burhan and promised Sholapur as dowry. But as he did not provide Sholapur to Burhan, relations flanked by them deteriorated. Burhan, in alliance with Alauddin Imad Shah of Berar, tried to snatch absent Sholapur through force but was defeated. Henceforth, Sholapur became a bone of contention flanked by the two. In 1526, Burhan, in alliance with Amir Barid, again tried to capture Sholapur but was defeated.

Bijapur's relations with Ahmednagar had worsened because of Sholapur; Burhan's adoption of Shia creed, Ibrahim's profession of Sunni creed and also because Ibrahim had conspired with the rulers of Gujarat and Khandesh for the division of Ahmednagar kingdom. Burhan, in alliance with Amir Barid, invaded Bijapur and recaptured Sholapur in 1542. But Ibrahim, with the help of the ruler of Berar, Darya Imad Shah, forced him to retreat. Amir Barid's death in 1543 led Burhan to sue for peace and to return Sholapur to Ibrahim.

In 1543, Ahmednagar, Golkonda, Bidar, Berar and Vijaynagar all joined against Bijapur. But soon this alliance broke up and Golkonda, Vijaynagar and Bijapur started opposing Ahmednagar. Finally, Husain Shah of Bijapur concluded a peace with Ramaraj of Vijaynagar. The conditions were: i) cessation of Kalyani through Husain to Bijapur; ii) Husain should put Jahangir Khan—the Imad Shahi general—to death as he had been very active in war, and iii) Husain should pay a visit to Vijaynagar to receive a pan (betal-leaf) from Ramaraja's hands. Soon after, this alliance came to an end. In 1619, Ibrahim Adil Shah annexed the kingdom of Bidar. Ahmednagar and Bijapur again went through a series of conflicts. Finally, Ahmednagar succeeded in capturing Sholapur in 1625.

The fighting flanked by several factions of the Bijapuri nobles and the

invasions of Shivaji and the Mughals put the Bijapur state in perpetual danger of annihilation. Moreover, the treasury also was empty. On the request of the Bijapur ruler, Qutb Shah gave loan to Bijapur but appointed Akanna, the brother of Qutb Shah Peshwa Madanna, as advisor at the Bijapur court. This marked the peak of the Qutb Shahi power in Bijapur. Towards the close of the 16th century, Bijapur, Golkonda and Ahmednagar joined hands against the Mughals in the battle of Sonepat in 1597 but were defeated.

### ***Relations with Vijaynagar***

The Deccan states and Vijaynagar had hostile relations. But at times one state would take the help of Vijaynagar against the other. Bijapur was the first state to come in clash with Vijaynagar. The civil strife in Bijapur, the instigation through the Portuguese and also through Amir Barid of Bidar, led Krishnadeva Raya of Vijaynagar to capture Raichur doab from Bijapur in 1512. In 1520, Ismail tried to recover Raichur doab but was routed. In 1543, the Deccan states with Vijaynagar forged an alliance against Bijapur. The Vijaynagar took back Raichur doab and Ahmednagar took Sholapur. A little later, Vijaynagar, Bijapur and Golkonda joined hands against Ahmednagar. They besieged Ahmednagar and defeated her. Mutual bickerings and warfare in the middle of the Deccan Sultans made Ramaraj of Vijaynagar very strong and he adopted a dictatorial attitude towards the former. This led them to form a confederacy against him.

Negotiations for unity took place. Husain Nizam Shah married his daughter Chand Bibi to Ali Adil Shah I and gave the fort of Sholapur as dowry. Ali Adil Shah I married his sister to Murtaza, son of Husain Nizam Shah. His another daughter was married to Ibrahim Qutb Shah. Then they made preparations for war against Vijaynagar empire. To discover a pretext for war, Ali Adil Shah I sent an envoy to Ramaraj to demand the return of the forts of Yadgir, Bagalkot, Raichur and Mudgal which the latter had occupied throughout the last few years. Ramaraja refused to comply and turned out the Adil Shahi envoy from the court. This led the allies, i.e., Husain Nizam Shah, Ibrahim Qutb Shah, Ali Adil Shah and Ali Barid to move towards Vijaynagar. A battle took place on 23rd January 1565 at Bannihatti or Talikota (a place flanked by two villages named Rakshasa and Tangandi). The Vijaynagar army was routed and Ramaraja was killed. After this, the Vijaynagar empire lost its power and glory.

### ***Relations with Marathas***

In the middle of the three Deccan states under study, Ahmednagar never had disagreement of any significance with the Marathas. But Bijapur and Golkonda came forward as contenders. Here we will trace briefly their

conflicts and clashes. From 1650 onwards, Shivaji started his military offensive inside Bijapur territory. Flanked by 1650 and 1656, he captured Purandar, Kalyani, Bhiwandi, Mahuli, Javli, Shrinagarpur and Rairi. Therefore he became master of practically the whole of north- western corner of Adil Shahi kingdom except the Konkan ports.

In 1659, Shivaji murdered the Bijapur noble Afzal Khan, captured Panhala and other fortresses on the western coast and, in 1660, captured Dabhol. Kolhapur also fell to him but he lost Panhala to Bijapur the same year. Then peace was restored flanked by Adil Shah and Shivaji resulting in the confirmation of all his conquests in the north- western part of Bijapur kingdom; Shivaji on his part agreed not to invade Bijapur. But Shivaji did not keep his promise.

In 1665, the Mughals under the command of Jai Singh made an abortive effort to conquer Bijapur. Meanwhile, through the treaty of Purandar flanked by Shivaji and the Mughals, the former was permitted to create incursions into Bijapur. When Ali Adil Shah II saw that the Mughals were behind Shivaji, he thought that it was not possible to continue the thrash about. Accordingly, a treaty was made through which Sholapur with its adjoining territory was given to the Mughals. Therefore Shivaji's incursions stopped.

After the death of Ali Adil Shah II in 1672, his four years old son Sikandar ascended the throne. Shivaji took full advantage of the disturbed circumstances in Bijapur. In 1673, he occupied Panhala, Parli, Satara, and raided and plundered Hubli. Due to the strife flanked by the Afghan and Dakhani nobles of Bijapur, Shivaji was able to raid Bijapur territory. He captured Phonda, Sunda, Karwar, Ankola and Kadra in 1675. After that, Shivaji made an alliance with Qutb Shah who agreed to pay to Shivaji a monthly subsidy of Rupees 4.5 lakh till the end of military expedition against Bijapur. He also agreed to help him with a contingent of 5000 troopers. Shivaji promised to divide his proposed conquests which did not constitute his father's jagir. Shivaji then took Jinji and Vellore, captured the territory up to the north of Coleroon river and then returned to Belgaum.

At the same time, Shivaji made inroads in Golkonda also. He visited Abul Hasan Qutb Shah in 1677 and they signed a treaty according to which (i) Qutb Shah was to pay a subsidy of 3000 huns per day as long as the campaign to take possession of his father's jagirs lasted; (ii) Shivaji, after the end of the campaign, was to hand in excess of to Qutb Shah those parts of Karnataka which did not belong to Shivaji's father.

### ***Relations with Europeans***

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to come into contact with Deccan states. They were followed through the Dutch and English.

Soon after the formation of Ahmednagar, its Sultan Nizam Shah had to face the Portuguese threat. He tried to expel the Portuguese from the western coast. Two battles took place against them. The naval forces of Egypt and Gujarat, with the permission of Nizam Shah, came to Chaul and defeated them in 1508. But after that year the Portuguese defeated the combined fleet of Egypt and Gujarat. A peace treaty was signed flanked by the Portuguese and Nizam Shah on the following conditions: (a) Nizam Shah should pay 30,000 crusades as war indemnity; (b) he should promise the payment of 10,000 crusades as annual subsidy. But Nizam Shah paid only 2,000 crusades. His successor Burhan Shah also tried to keep good relations with the Portuguese. In order to checkmate the Gujarat and Khandesh rulers, he entered into an alliance with the Portuguese and permitted them to construct forts at Ravedanda and Chaul.

The rulers of Bijapur, Ahmednagar and the Zamorin of Calicut allied themselves against the Portuguese and tried to drive them absent from the western coast but failed. In 1571, Bijapur and Ahmednagar signed a treaty with the Portuguese. But, after some time, Ahmednagar again clashed with the Portuguese. The provocation was that the Portuguese attacked on the ships bringing pilgrims from Mecca. Bijapur was also hostile towards the Portuguese and was looking for an opportunity.

Throughout the reign of Muhammad Adil Shah, the Dutch appeared on the western coast of India for trade and the Bijapur ruler, in order to win them in excess of against the Portuguese, allied himself with them. He granted them some trade concessions and permitted them to build their factory at Vengurla. He conquered the Portuguese possessions of Tivy, Bardes, Sarzora and Cultuly. But the Portuguese reinforcement led Bijapur to withdraw from there. Golkonda also came into contact with the Europeans. The Dutch, the English and the French had also started their mercantile activities in India. Golkonda allowed the Dutch to establish their factories at Masulipatam and Nizamapatam, followed through the Pulicat factory in 1610. The English East India Company recognized its factories at Masulipatam and Nagapatam in 1611 and at Pulicat in 1621.

### **Administrative Structure**

As we have already discussed, all the Deccan states were part of the erstwhile Bahmani state. So, they bore Bahmani power in their administrative

set up. A number of Bahmani institutions and practices sustained with some changes. All the three states had more or less uniform system of administration. Though, we will indicate the differences wherever needed. Let us begin with the ruling classes of these states.

### ***Ruling Classes***

The ruling classes in the Deccan states consisted of groups of nobles who came from several backgrounds. There were two broad categories which were continuing from the Bahmani empire. These were the Dakhanis and Afaqis or Pardesis. The Dakhanis were also originally from outside but had settled in Deccan long back and incorporated Hindu converts also. The prominent examples of the latter are Fathullah imad Shah, the founder of the Imad Shahi dynasty in Berar and Ahmed Nizam Shah who recognized the sultanate of Ahmednagar. Both of these were Brahmin converts.

Afaqis or Pardesis were new arrivals. They sustained to come to these states throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. Yusuf Adil Shah, the founder of Adil Shahi state of Bijapur, was also an Afaqi. Most of the Afaqis were shia while most of the Dakhanis were sunni. Within these two broad categories were a number of subgroups. The significant ones were Persians, Turks, Arabs, Abyssinians (Habashis), Egyptians, and Indian converts.

Some Marathas were also taken into service that became a part of the nobility. All the administrative responsibilities for military, police and revenue functions were performed through these ruling classes. The nobles at the centre or districts enjoyed powers as long as the Sultan wished. The Sultan, so, demanded personal loyalty. All the positions were subject to demotion, transfer and supervision through the Sultan or the "prime minister". The nobles were paid through assignment of jagirs for themselves and for their troops.

This heterogeneous group of nobles; because of several pulls and pressures, was in disagreement with each other and at times with the Sultan too. Whenever they got an opportunity, they tried to push up the candidates of their choice for the post of Sultan. A few examples would be enough to illustrate this. At the time of accession of Burhan Shah in 1510 the disagreement surfaced. After him his son Burhan who was a minor succeeded him. Mukammal Khan, who belonged to the Dakhani faction of the nobility and was the wakil and peshwa throughout Ahmad's reign, sustained in that office. As Burhan was a child, Mukammal Khan exercised full authority. This led the faction of the Afaqis (mainly Persian and Turkish) to create an effort to overthrow Nizam Shah I and enthrone his brother Rajaji.

Burhan, on the persuasion of Shah Tahir (a newly arrived shia theologian from Persia) not only himself became shia but also declared shiaism as state religion. The sunni nobles made an effort to overthrow Burhan and enthrone his sunni son Abdul Qadir. The neighbouring rulers also invaded Ahmednagar but failed to secure anything. Though, in 1589, a group of nobles succeeded in raising the man of their choice to the throne. The new ruler Ismail, son of Burhan and the grandson of Husain Nizam Shah I, was enthroned mainly through the Afaqis. But then the leader of the Dakhanis Jamal Khan, who was a Mahdavi, revolted and acquired supremacy in excess of the former. He also declared Mahdavia faith as state religion. Again, after the death of Ibrahim Nizam Shah (1595), the factional fight flanked by the Dakhanis and Habashis (Abyssinians) at Ahmednagar court became very intense.

Miyan Manjhu, the peshwa and leader of the Dakhani group, enthroned one Ahmad of doubtful lineage. Ikhlas Khan, the leader of the Habashis championed the cause of one Moti Shah—a child whom he had picked up from the market. Abhang Khan, another leader sponsored the cause of Ali, the son of Burhan Nizam Shah, while Chand Bibi—the daughter of Husain Nizam Shah I and the widow of Ali Adil Shah- I supported Bahadur's claim who was the infant son of Ibrahim Nizam Shah. Miyan Manjhu invited Prince Murad and Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan—the Mughal governor of Gujarat and Malwa respectively—to help him. They were already prepared for this. Raja Ali Khan also on Akbar's instructions joined them. But through the time the Mughal army could reach Ahmednagar, Manjhu had gained victory against the Abyssinians. Now he repented for his folly of inviting the Mughals, patched up with his rivals including Chand Bibi, invited Bijapur and Golkonda rulers to join him against the Mughals and then went towards Bijapur and Golkonda to expedite the despatch of their force. In his absence, Chand Bibi enthroned Bahadur and governed the state well.

After the death of Malik Amber, the nobles clashed again. His son Fath Khan succeeded him as wakil and peshwa, but his haughtily and vindictive nature intensified jealousy amongst the Dakhanis and Habashis which led them to join the Mughals in large numbers. Similar was the situation in Bijapur after the death of Sultan Yusuf Adil Khan (1510). As his son and successor Ismail was a child, Kamal Khan became his regent. He encouraged the Dakhanis, suppressed the Afaqis and disbanded them totally, abolished shia'ism as state religion and proclaimed the sunni creed in its place. Then he tried to usurp the crown himself but was killed due to a palace intrigue hatched through the mother and aunt of the young Ismail.

After him, the domination of the Dakhanis in the Bijapur nobility came to an end. The Afaqis were recalled from Gujarat where they had taken shelter and shia'ism again became the state religion. In Bijapur, Sultan Ibrahim Shah tried to suppress his nobles. He adopted sunni creed as official religion and

dismissed a large number of Afaqis who went in excess of to Ahmednagar and Vijaynagar. After Ibrahim's death, his son reversed his policy. Ali succeeded Ibrahim Adil Shah in 1558, declared shia'ism and favoured Afaqis in his service. To recover Kalyani and Sholapur, he shaped an alliance with Vijaynagar against Ahmednagar, and, for that purpose even went to Vijaynagar. Throughout the reign of Muhammad Adil Shah, who had succeeded Ibrahim, the Dakhani faction of the nobility became powerful because it was instrumental in enthroning the new ruler.

### *Central Administration*

All the power and authority of the state were in the hands of the Sultan. In all the Deccan kingdoms, the Sultan was measured the supreme commander of the army and the chief executive of the state. The position of Sultan was hereditary in actual practice. Even in cases where direct descendant was not accessible, the succession would go to a person of the same family. In cases where the successors were minor, the states were ruled in their names through a Regent exercising royal powers. Since all power rested with the Sultan, the administration was highly centralised. There were a number of departments of the state to run the administration. The states had two types of administrative set up: i) the Central Administration and Provincial and local administration. Here we will briefly discuss the main administrative organs of the Deccan states.

### *The Council*

The nobles, ulema (religious men), some officials and friends of Sultan shaped sort of an advisory body or council of the Sultan. In Bijapur and Golkonda this body seems to have a more formal status. In the former it was called Majlis Khalwat and in the latter Majlis Diwan Dari or Majlis Khas. The council lacked any formal structure. Prominent persons, as long as they enjoyed the favour of the Sultan, were invited to it. Sultan would take the advice of the council on all significant matters.

### *Central Ministers*

For administrative purposes, there were several departments to look after dissimilar functions. Each big department was headed through a minister. The number of departments and ministers was not fixed and kept changing. Usually, all ministers, except the Qazi (head of the judiciary), accepted military ranks. Policy decisions were usually taken through the Sultan while the ministers were supposed to carry them out.

### *Peshwa and Wakil al Sultanat*

The highest, ministerial office in the Deccan states was recognized through any of above two designations; sometimes the two titles were combined in one. More commonly used title was wakil al sultanat in Bijapur. There the title of peshwa was used only once when Afzal Khan was appointed peshwa through Ibrahim Adil Shah. While in Golkonda and Ahmednagar peshwa was used, in Ahmednagar usually Peshwa and Wakil was the same person who was measured highest officer. In Golkonda the term Wakil was rarely used. These were the highest offices after Sultan and commanded lot of powers. All the matters of state were routed through them. In Bijapur as several as six Sultans were minor and wakil-al Sultanat worked as the regent. In Ahmednagar also the Wakil worked as regent in case of a minor Sultan. They were in charge of general administration, framed rules and regulations and at times controlled revenue and military affairs.

Mir Jumla or Jumlatul Mutt: In Bijapur and Golkonda, Mir Jumla was measured an significant minister after that to Wakil. In Bijapur at times the same person held the post of Wakil and Mir Jumla (e.g., Asad Khan throughout the rule of Ibrahim Adil Shah; Mustafa Khan and Afzal Khan throughout Adil Shah I's rule and Ikhlas Khan and Dilawar Khan throughout Ibrahim II's rule). The holder of this office was to look after financial and revenue matters. In Bijapur, another officer with the title of Mustaufi al mulk was to assist Mir Jumla in revenue matters. A large number of subordinate staff was to help them, most of whom were Hindus. In Ahmednagar financial and revenue matters were taken care of through wazir who was assisted through diwan (for rules and regulations) and nazirs (revenue superintendent for collection).

### *Intelligence Department*

Its functions were to collect information and submit them to the Sultan. In times of war, information in relation to the enemy movements was also composed.

### *Military Administration*

As described earlier, the ruler was the supreme commander of the army. The department was looked after through Wakil or Pashwa. Recruitment, training, supervision and supply of arms and ammunitions to the army was its main function. An army was maintained directly through the state. While, as mentioned in sub-section 8.6.1, the nobles or jagirdars or provincial officials also maintained troops. At the time of war, were specially recruited but were relieved after war. Such soldiers were of two types: bargis were those who

were paid and given horses and other equipments through the state, and silahdar were those who had their own horses and equipments and were brought through their group leaders. They were paid in lump sum.

The main branches were cavalry, infantry, artillery and also navy to take care of coastline. But the last one was very small and was not much of a fighting force. Significant forts were placed under sar naik. The troops maintained through jagirdars were subjected to inspection through the military department. The soldiers consisted of several ethnic, background such as Persians, Turks, Afghans, Abyssinians, and Indians (both Hindus and Muslims).

### *Law and Justice*

There was a separate department to administer religious endowments, grants, law and justice. It was headed through a senior qazi. Usually, separate civil laws were applied to persons of several religious groups. The Sultan also decided cases. In criminal matters a mix of Islamic, local and state laws were in practice.

### *Other Significant Functionaries*

In Golkonda, the Peshwa's office was an elaborate one with a central office under dabir or secretary. Besides, the office had two main secretaries: i) Munshi ul-Mumalik or chief secretary. He also worked as majmuahtar or Accountant general and ii) dabir or Farman-i Hindawi whose job was to correspond in local languages. The post was held through a Hindu officer. There was a department which looked after the relations with other states. Exchange of envoys flanked by the states was a common practice. Correspondence with other states and deputation of envoys fell within the jurisdiction of this department.

### *Provincial and Local Administration*

We have discussed how the provinces of the Bahmani kingdom appeared as independent Deccan states. Under the Bahmanis, these provinces were called tarf and their governors as tarfdar. But administration at this stage was not well-structured, nor the sub-divisions were clearly standardized. Tieffenthaler (17th century) mentions eleven divisions in Bijapur: Bijapur, Denghi, Ossa, Sholapur, Dhar, Sikhar, Lakmis, Gadak, Bahor, Badam, Konkan, (8 parganas). After the annexation of Bidar the number moved to 15. Only Goa's Ainal Mulk was measured as provincial governor. According to D.C. Verma (History of Bijapur), there were three types of provincial

administration in Bijapur: i) crown lands under officers who were placed under Mir Jumla; ii) Jagirs given to Jagirdars who were to maintain troops, collect revenue and maintain law & order, and iii) tributary chiefs who were autonomous for administering but paid a fixed tribute and supplied soldiers at the time of war.

In crown lands, officers were liable to be transferred. They exercised civil, military and judicial powers. There were four types of officers in each sarkar: i) Sarhavaladar or subedar was the chief administrator; ii) officials to collect revenue; iii) to maintain accounts; and iv) Qazi. Sarkars were further divided into parganas. In the latter, the collection of revenue was done through deshmuks while desai maintained accounts. Usually the officers in sarkars and parganas were referred to as huddidar, adhikari, amaldar or amil. The smallest unit was village. Here, the patel was the headman who composed revenue and was also chief police and judicial officer. Kulkarni was the office of the accountant.

Both were paid through inam (gift) lands. The village watchman was called mahar. Every village had a number of artisans called Balutedar or Barabahite. For instance, potter, mang (menial work), qurov (incharge of temple or village deity), goldsmith, carpenter, and blacksmith. The number in each category varied according to the needs of the village. They were to give services to the village folk and were paid through Baluta or share of grain at harvest time. In Ahmednagar it is hard to ascertain the exact number of provinces. The main divisions were Bir, Berar, Junnar, and Chaul. Each was placed under a provincial governor or noble on the lines of tarfs of the Bahmani state. These nobles were the executive and judicial heads, they maintained troops and looked after law and order. Each province was divided into sarkars, parganas and villages. In each sarkar there were faujdars, qazis and kotwals, treasurer and revenue collectors. Likewise, each sarkar was divided into parganas, or mahals or kuryat. Each pargana consisted of a number of villages. The village stage administration was done with the help of panchayat. Revenue collection was done through an officer called deshpande.

In Golkonda also well defined provinces are absent. The divisions of the state were called through a new term simt and the chief administrator was called sarsimt. According to H.K. Sharwani (History of the Qutbshahi Dynasty), simt was more of a district than a province. Another officer was called hawaladar who was responsible for the collection of local taxes. In their territories, the jagirdars were responsible for collection of revenue, law and order and maintenance of troops.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- Write the factors that motivated Akbar to intervene in the Deccan.

- Explain Jahangir's approach towards the Deccan states.
- Why did Aurangzeb ultimately occupy Bijapur and Golkonda?
- Write a short note on the rise of Maratha power under Bijapur rulers.
- Discuss Maratha-Portuguese relations.
- Analyze the nature of Shivaji's administration.
- What were the basic characteristics of Babur and Humayun's policy towards the Rajputs?
- Distinguish the three stages in Akbar's Rajput policy.
- Provide a brief account of the rise of Ahmednagar as an independent kingdom.
- Provide a brief account of the extent of Golkonda kingdom.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **POLITICAL IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS**

#### **STRUCTURE**

- Learning objectives
- Mughal administration: mansab and jagir
- Mughal administration: central, provincial and local
- Mughal ruling class
- Mughal theory of sovereignty
- Review questions

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After reading this chapter you will be able to know the:

- Basic characteristics of mansab system under Akbar;
- Changes introduced in madabdari throughout the 17th century;
- The several types of jagirs;
- In relation to the evolution of the Mughal administrative structure;
- In relation to the major administrative departments at the central stage;
- In relation to the administrative setup at the local stage and its linkage with the central authority;
- Understand the racial composition of the ruling class;
- Some thought in relation to the share of the ding class in the revenue possessions of the Mughal empire;
- The concept of sovereignty and the nature of political structure in the ancestral kingdom of the Mughals; and
- The Mughal concept of divine theory of kingship and several remnants of Turco- Mongol administration.

## **MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION: MANSAB AND JAGIR**

### **Mansabdari system**

The Mughal state had no division of its civil and military functions, and a Mughal sepoy defended the international borders, manned the forts, and fought battles, but had also to perform a policeman's duties in times of peace.

Government officials too were required to perform civil and military duties simultaneously. Akbar wanted to evolve a unique system of regulating these imperial services, and the result was the promulgation of the Mansabdari System in 1570. All the gazetted imperial officers of the state were styled as mansabdars. Initially, they were classified into sixty-six grades, from the mansab of ten to ten-thousand, although, in practice, only thirty- three grades were constituted.

The word 'mansab' is derived from the Arabic term mansib meaning a post, an office, rank or status; hence mansabdar means the holder of a rank, or an officer. Some modern historian's theories that Akbar was not the originator of the system because the practice of grading the military personnel through the grant of mansabs had already been in vogue in several Muslim countries.

Akbar took it from the system introduced through Khalifa Abba Said and accepted through Chenghiz Khan and Timur. The rulers of the Delhi Sultanate too had adopted it to a certain extent. Balban's army was organized on this system while Sher Shah and Islam Shah practised it in a much better form. The mansabdari system was therefore not new to India; to Akbar, though, goes the credit of perfecting it. He alone organized the mansabs of his imperial officers, both civil and military, in a systematic form and so regulated the whole structure of the services round the pivot of mansab that it became associated with his name.

Under the mansabdari system, dissimilar numbers which could be divided through ten were used for ranking officers. They were also meant for fixing the salaries and allowances of officers. W. Irvine in *The Army of the Indian Mughals* observes that the system determined the rank, pay-level and the position of the imperial officer in the royal court in respect of other government officers.

Throughout Akbar's reign, initially, the lowest rank was that of number ten and the highest that of ten thousand. Mansabs above 5000 and later on that of 7000 were given only to princes; the highest rank of ten thousand was given exclusively to Salim, the crown prince. At a later stage, though, Akbar raised the highest rank to twelve thousand.

(Throughout Jahangir and Shah Jahan's reign, mansabs of only 8000 were given to officers, while princes were given mansabs upto 40,000; the later Mughals gave mansabs upto the number of 50,000.) All officers below the rank of the mansab of 500 were called mansabdars, the officers enjoying the mansab from 500 to 2,500 were called amirs, and those ranked in excess of

2,500 were called amir-i-azam. The officer called khan-i-jahan was still higher in rank while the highest rank in the army was that of khan-i-khana.

Although the mansabdari system had made military service the basic consideration for the classification of all the imperial officers, it was understood that all the mansabdars were not equally good military generals nor were they expected to recruit and hold under their charge the number of soldiers as indicated through their mansab. or rank.

For instance, a mansabdar of one thousand was not always a commander of one thousand men. If employed in the revenue or judicial establishment, he might not have had even a single soldier under him.

The mansabdars of each category were subdivided further into three grades on the basis of the actual number of soldiers commanded through them. Abul Fazl writes: "An officer whose contingent comes up to his mansab is put into the first class of his rank; if his contingent is one-half and upwards of the fixed number, he is put into the second class; the third class contains those whose contingents are still less."

A mansabdar of one hundred belonged to the first class if he actually furnished 100 soldiers; he was a second class mansabdar if the number of soldiers under his charge was fifty or more but less than 100; he was graded as a third class mansabdar if the number of soldiers manned through him was less than 50.

## **Jagir**

The term 'jagir' commonly found in official papers of the seventeenth century to describe revenue assignment is not seen in any work compiled before Akbar. It apparently gained currency with the transition from the semi-permanent territorial assignments of the Lodi period to the revenue assignments of the Mughal empire.

Through the end of the sixteenth century, the term came to be accepted as the official term for a revenue assignment, having been derived from the Persian jaygir, meaning possessing, occupying a place, fixing a habitation creation a settlement. It seems petty officials used it as a jargon in the early years of Akbar, and it found its method in official papers only slowly. Abul Fazl and Badauni tended to spell it as 'jaygir' and in the third volume of Akbarnama, Abul Fazal substituted it for the expression 'iqta' presumably showing his disinclination to use a term of somewhat vulgar origin.

It seems the varying frequency of the term jagir resulted due to the changing nomenclature for dissimilar types of assignments in the original documents referred to through the chroniclers. Assuming that the conditions used through the chroniclers reflect the changing administrative jargon of official papers, the inference drawn through Irfan Habib that initially the term was meant to designate the petty assignees of revenue (and not the commanders or nobles holding large charges) is validated.

The year 1561 appears to mark a watershed in the evolution of the jagir system, because this was when a few important and distant-reaching changes were introduced. In fact, these changes were the precursors of the events introduced through Akbar in 1574-5. The first of these changes, brought in relation to them in 1561, concerned the manner in which the jagirs were assigned.

From this time on, as a conscious policy, the jagirs of great nobles came to be assigned in fragments scattered in excess of a number of parganas located at considerable distances from each other. Synchronized with this change was the beginning of a new concept of assignment, which could be regarded as pre-sanctioned income determined in accordance with the status and obligations of the assignee.

A consequence of the process of fragmentation of jagirs was that it separated the jagirs from administrative jurisdiction, which, in turn, slowed down the regional concentration of the jagirs of the nobles. Nonetheless, there was also a definite policy of not allowing the clans to remain concentrated in scrupulous regions.

Summing up, so, it may be said that the arrangement of jagirs throughout the first twenty years of Akbar's reign was an evolving process and the emerging system was a dissimilar type of arrangement from the military-cum-revenue assignments of Babar. It is also in order to suggest that the origin of the Mughal assignment system lay in the administrative policy of the Sur dynasty, though the findings so distant in this regard are not quite conclusive.

According to Abul Fazl, the division of the Mughal empire at the time of Humayun's death into a number of military zones under the charge of senior nobles was as per a scheme thought of through Humayun in 1555, sometime before his demise. Professor Nurul Hassan called it a plan for the decentralization of authority through delegating powers to the nobles administering the military zones. Though, the assignments sanctioned throughout the first four years of Akbar's reign seem to indicate that the military command which Humayun passed on to him was superimposed on a revenue system under the close control of the central government.

The system in use after 1575 was conditioned through a new method of revenue assessment and collection as also through the introduction of an extensive military hierarchy and its obligations.

Theoretically, the emperor was the sole claimant of the land-revenue and other taxes, though, through using a system of temporary alienations of the claim in specific areas, the jagirs, a small ruling elite was permitted to share the revenue in the middle of themselves. The ruling elite consisted of persons who were granted mansabs or ranks through the emperor.

The mansabs were numerically expressed ranks which entitled the holder or mansabdar to a scrupulous amount of pay or talab. Normally, this could be given in cash from the exchequer of the state, but more often it was the practice to assign an area which was officially estimated to yield an equivalent amount of revenue.

In order to ensure exactness in assigning jagirs, the standing estimates of the average annual income from revenues, recognized as jamas or jamadanis were prepared for every administrative division's right down to the villages. Khalisa or the land not assigned in jagirs was the main source of income of the king's treasury, and the king's officers were responsible for its collection. The size of the khalisa was not constant.

Under Akbar, it amounted to 25 per cent of the total jama in at least three of the provinces throughout the later years of his reign. (In Jahangir's times, it's proportion went down to one- twentieth, while Shahjahan raised it to one-seventh.) The rest of the country, comprising of the vast bulk of the territories were in the jagirs.

This practice of assigning overwhelmingly large portion of land in jagirs meant that a small number of people were in effect controlling almost all the agricultural surplus in the form of revenue of the country. In other words, much of the GNP of the country was in the hands of these small number of people. In the middle of them, yet another small portion belonged to the class of the zamindars, for instance, the Rajput, Baluch and Ghakkar chiefs. The majority of the jagirdars were immigrants, such as Turanis, Iranis, Afghans, etc., while a small number was from the local intelligentsia or petty bureaucrats like shaikhzadas, khattris and so on.

The ranks or mansabs they held were usually not inheritable. Though, normally such ranks were conferred on sons and relations of nobles or higher mansab holders, thereby creating approximately a dynasty of khanzfids who made their living out of mansabs from generation to generation.

Although the power and the possessions enjoyed through the ruling classes were considerable, the mansabdar's dependence on the emperor's will was quite important. This control in excess of the mansabdar was further increased through giving the jagirs a purely temporary character.

A mansabdar no doubt was entitled to a jagir; but not a specified piece of land in jagir. and definitely not the same land in perpetuity, year after year. This principle was introduced deliberately, as mentioned earlier, and was an unavoidable consequence of the working of the mansabdari system.

Promotions and demotions from time to time required revisions of the mansabs and each such alteration in mansab required a change in the mansabdar's jagir. Though, this was not possible without changing the other mansab holder's assignments. Likewise, officials were transferred from one province to another, when in such instance, a place had to be allocated for the jagir of the official in the new province. This again required adjustments of jagirs.

"The result was that no one could be sure of how long he would remain in possession of a scrupulous area. The average period of term would be manifestly impossible to work out; but the fact that Sehwan in Sindh, for instance, was transferred no less than 17 times in a period of 43 years (1591-1634), lends point to general statements such as that jagirs were transferred yearly or half yearly, or every two or three years".

The jagirdar's assignment was therefore not permanent and his remuneration was limited to the authorized land-revenue and taxes. It was necessary for him to keep a copy of every revenue paper with the permanent state official or qanungo, from whose record he had to draw his revenue assignments.

He was not empowered with any judicial powers; the qazi appointed through the emperor dispensed justice. He had no police force either; the faujdar, again an appointee of the emperor, was the one who maintained such forces. The faujdar was also a person of some consequence.

These were, though, of theoretical importance; in practice, the jagirdar's powers were not that limited. Especially if he was a big jagirdar enjoying faujdari or police jurisdiction as well. Actually, the larger portions of the country's territories lay within the jagirs of such satraps.

It has been figured out that in 1646, 36.6 per cent of the total jama was under the control of 68 princes and nobles, while the after that category comprising of 587 officials held 25 per cent of the territories. The still lower rank of mansabdars numbering 7555 shared in the middle of themselves flanked by twenty-five to thirty-three per cent of the revenues.

Even after taking into account the fact that some of them got their salaries in cash, these proportions would still indicate the high concentration of jagir holdings in a few hands. The bigger jagirdars had large establishments for administrative purposes (sarkar) to collect revenues in their places of assignment. They maintained a large military force, and, due to their power and prestige, they were somewhat immune to complaints made against them in the imperial court.

The jagirdars were quite well-known for their enormous clout and there was a saying that the hakim (jagirdar) for a day could remove a zamindar of five hundred years tradition, installing there a destitute since birth. It was within his authority to detain his peasants and to bring them back if they ran absent. Consequently, it was widely whispered that the jagirdars were all inclined to treat their peasants with severe oppression.

There was also a cause for this unusual severity. As they were not quite sure of the time they would continue in the jagirs, they tried to extract as much money as possible within the shortest period regardless of its baneful effects on long term revenue collection. No doubt, the Mughal administration tried to put a curb on the excesses committed through the jagirdars, but such efforts did not appear to be particularly successful.

Incidentally, there was a small but quite vocal section enjoying some small share of the empire's revenue possessions. They were the people who were granted madad-i-muash, also recognized as sayurghal, through the emperor. These awards entitled them to collect revenues from specified lands, usually for life. When the awardee died, the award was usually confirmed upon his successor under certain circumstances.

These people belonged usually to Muslim scholarly and theological classes and incorporated retired government officials, widows and women of families

of some social eminence. Though, the revenue given absent through such awards was not very large.

In 1595, the revenue so distributed amounted to four per cent in Agra suba and to five per cent in Allahabad suba. As their assignments were more or less permanent, the assignees tried to acquire zamindari rights in the assigned areas and elsewhere. In this manner, some of them transformed themselves into small zamindars. Separately from this, they had no effect on the agrarian economy of the country.

## **MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION: CENTRAL, PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL**

### **Administration Under Sher Shah**

In the process of evolution of Mughal administrative machinery, the Afghan interlude (1540-1555) was important. Under Sher Shah Suri the experiment in the formation of a bureaucracy under a centralised despotism had taken place. Akbar gave it a definite form. Therefore, we can say that Sher Shah anticipated Akbar. Let us first study the administrative events of Sher Shah.

We get very little information in relation to the working of central administration under Sher Shah. But he was an autocrat and kept everything under his direct control and supervision. So, things went well so long as he was alive: his successors were no match to him. The village was the smallest unit of administration. A group of villages constituted a pargana and a few parganas a shiqq which was equivalent to Mughal sarkar. Though, in few areas, such as Punjab, Bengal, Malwa, etc. many shiqqs were placed under an officer whom we can equate with the Mughal subadar. The village-head was recognized as muqaddam who worked as the sole link flanked by the government and the village. Though he was not the government servant, nonetheless he was responsible for maintaining order in his village. After that comes the patwari, a village record-keeper. He was also not an employee of the state but of the village community.

The shiqqdar was incharge of the pargana. His chief function was to collect the revenue at pargana stage. He was regularly transferred under Sher Shah. He was assisted through two karkuns (clerks) who kept the records both in Hindi and Persian. The munsif was responsible for measuring the land, etc. Both (shiqqdar and munsif) were directly appointed through the government. The qanungo maintained the records at pargana stage. He was a hereditary semi-official. The fotadar was entrusted with the treasury of the pargana. A

number of parganas shaped a sarkar (shiqq), headed through shiqqdar-i shiqqdaran. He was the supervisor and executive officer in excess of the shiqqdars of all the parganas in a sarkar (shiqq). The munsif-i munsifan performed the duties of amin (created later through the Mughals) at sarkar (shiqq) stage. There were 66 sarkars (shiqqs) in Sher Shah's Empire.

Sher Shah attached great importance to the administration of justice. Civil cases of the Muslims were taken care of through the qazi, while the criminal cases were tried through the shiqqdar. The largest responsibility for detecting crimes rested upon muqaddams. If the muqaddam of the village, where the crime was committed, failed to capture the culprit, he was liable to severe punishment.

### **Central Administration: Its Evolution**

The Mughal Empire had pan-Indian character. Babur and Humayun for causes of their brief reign and that of being busy in military matters could not concentrate on establishing a definite system or pattern in administration. Through the end of Akbar's reign, we discover establishment of elaborate offices with assigned functions to the heads of offices. The rules and regulations guiding both their public and private conduct had all been fixed so that the officers were converted into' what can be termed the Tools of the Empire.

### ***The Emperor***

The ancient Indian traditions had always supported a strong ruler. The Muslim jurists and writers also held the same view. Therefore, the concept of divine origin of monarchy could easily discover credence in the middle of the Indian people. It is not surprising that the Mughals publicised their jharokha darshan with great deal of pomp and illustrate in which the Irrigation. Emperor appeared at an appointed hour before the general public, the myth being that a mere look of his majesty would redress their grievances. With such popular perception of the ruler, it is obvious that all officers in Mughal administration owed their position and power to the Emperor. Their appointment, promotion, demotion, and termination were subject to the ruler's personal preference and whims.

### ***Wakil and Wazir***

The institution of wizarat (or wikalat since both were used interchangeably), according to some accounts, can be traced back to the

Abbasi Caliphs. Under the Delhi Sultans, the wazir enjoyed both civil and military powers. But under Balban his powers were reduced when the Sultan bifurcated the military powers under diwan'arz. As for Sher Shah, this office remained approximately in abeyance under the Afghans. The position of the wazir revived under the early Mughals. Babur's wazir Nizamuddin Muhammad Khalifa enjoyed both the civil and military powers. Humayun's wazir Hindu Beg also virtually enjoyed great powers.

The period of Bairam Khan's regency (1556-60) saw the rise of the wakil-wazir with unlimited powers under Bairam Khan. In the 8th regnal year (1564-65), Akbar took absent the financial powers of the wakil and entrusted it into the hands of the diwan kul (Finance Minister). Separation of finance gave a jolt to the wakil's power. Though, the wakil sustained to enjoy the highest place in the Mughal bureaucratic hierarchy despite reduction in his powers.

### ***Diwani Kul***

We have already seen how Akbar strengthened the office of the diwan through entrusting the revenue powers to the diwan. The chief diwan (diwani kul) was made responsible for revenue and finances. His primary duty was to supervise the imperial treasury and check all accounts. He personally inspected all transactions and payments in all departments. He maintained direct contact with the provincial diwans and their functioning was put under his vigil. His seal and signatures were necessary for the validation of all official papers involving revenue. The whole revenue collection and expenditure machinery of the Empire was under his charge. No fresh order of appointment or promotion could be affected without his seal. To check the diwan's power, the Mughal Emperor asked the diwan to submit the report on state finances daily.

The central revenue ministry was divided into many departments to look after the specific needs of the Empire. For instance: diwani khalisa, diwani tan (for cash salary), diwani jagir, diwani buyutat (royal household), etc. Each branch was further subdivided into many sections manned through a secretary, superintendents and clerks. The mustaufi was the auditor, and the mushrif was the chief accountant. The khazanadar looked after the Imperial treasury.

### ***Mir Bakhshi***

The mir'arz of Delhi Sultante changed its nomenclature to mir bakhshi under the Mughals. All orders of appointments of mansabdars and their salary papers were endorsed and passed through him. He personally supervised the branding of the horses (dagh) and checked the muster-roll (chehra) of the soldiers. On the basis of his verification, the amount of the salary was

certified. Only then the diwan made entry in his records and placed it before the king. Mir bakhshi placed all matters pertaining to the military department before the Emperor. The new entrants, seeking service, were presented before the Emperor through the mir bakhshi. He dealt directly with provincial bakhshis and waqainavis. He accompanied the Emperor on tours, pleasure trips, hunting expeditions, battlefield, etc. His duty was to check whether proper places were allotted to the mansabdars according to their rank at the court. His darbar duties considerably added to his prestige and power. -

The mir bakhshi was assisted through other bakhshis at central stage. The first three were recognized as 1st, 2nd and 3rd bak-hshi. Besides, there were separate bakhshis for the ahadis (special imperial troopers) and domestic servants of the royal household (bakhshi-i shagird pesh).

### ***Mir Saman***

The mir saman was the officer incharge of the royal karkhanas. He was also recognized as khan saman. He was the chief executive officer responsible for the purchase of all types of articles and their storage for the royal household. Another significant duty was to supervise the manufacture of dissimilar articles, be it weapons of war or articles of luxury. He was directly under the Emperor but for sanction of money and auditing of accounts he was to contact the diwan. Under the mir saman there were many officers, including the diwani buyutat and tahvildar (cash keeper).

### ***Sadr-us Sudur***

The sadr-us sudur was the head of the ecclesiastical department. His chief duty was to protect the laws of the shari' at. He was also linked with the sharing of charities — both cash (wazifa) and land grants (suyurghal, in'am, madad-i ma'ash). Initially as the head of the judicial department, he supervised the appointment of qazis and muftis. Before Shah Jahan's reign, the posts of the chief qazi and sadr-us sudur were combined and the same person held the charge of both the departments. Though, under Aurangzeb, the post of the chief qazi (qazi-ul quzzat) and the sadr-us sudur got separated. It led to sharp curtailment of sadr's power. Now in the capability of sadr, he supervised assignment of allowances and looked after the charitable grants. He also looked into whether the grants were given to the right persons and utilized properly. He scrutinized applications for all such grants, both fresh and renewals, and presented before the Emperor for sanction. Alms were also distributed through him.

### ***Qazi-ul Quzzat***

The chief qazi was recognized as qazi-ul quzzat. He was the head of the judiciary. His principal duty was to administer the shariat law both in civil and criminal cases. In the capability of the chief qazi, he looked into the appointment of the qazis in the suba, sarkar, pargana and town stages. There was a separate qazi for army also. Besides the qazi-ul quzzat, another significant judicial officer was mir 'adl. Abul Fazl , accentuated the need to have a mir 'adl in addition to qazi, for the qazi was to hear and decide the cases while mir 'adl was to execute the orders of the court. The muhtasibs (censor of public' morals) was to ensure the general observance of the rules of morality. His job was to keep in check the forbidden practices — wine drinking, use of bhang and other intoxicants, gambling, etc. In addition, he also performed some secular duties — examining weights and events, enforcing fair prices, etc.

### **Provincial Administration**

In 1580, Akbar divided the Empire into twelve subas. Each suba was divided into a number of sarkars and these were further divided into parganas and mahals. Throughout Shah Jahan's reign, another administrative unit called *chabdar* came into subsistence. It was a cluster of a number of parganas.

### ***Provincial Governor***

The governor of a suba (subadar) was directly appointed through the Emperor. Usually the tenure of a subadar was approximately three years. In the middle of the duties of the subadar, the most significant one was to look after the welfare of the people and the army. He was responsible for the general law and order problem in the suba. A successful subadar was one who would encourage agriculture, trade and commerce. He was supposed to take up welfare activities like construction of sarais, gardens, wells, water reservoirs, etc. He was to take steps to enhance the revenue of the state.

### ***Diwan***

The provincial diwan was appointed through the Emperor. He was an independent officer answerable to the Centre. He was the head of the revenue department in the suba. The provincial diwan supervised the revenue collection in the suba and maintained accounts of all expenditure incurred in the form of salaries of the officials and subordinates in the suba. The diwan was also to take steps to augment the area under farming. In several cases

advance loans (taqavi) were given to the peasants through his office. A roznamcha (daily register) was maintained through the diwan which accepted entries of amount that was deposited in the royal treasury through the revenue officials and zamindars. A large number of clerks worked under him. Therefore, through creation of the diwan independent of the subadar and through putting financial matters under the former, the Mughals were successful in checking the subadar from becoming independent.

### ***Bakhshi***

The bakhshi was appointed through the imperial court at the recommendation of the mir bakhshi. He performed exactly the same military functions as were performed through his counterpart at the Centre. He was responsible for checking and inspecting the horses and soldiers maintained through the mansabdars in the suba. He issued the paybills of both the mansabdars and the soldiers. It was his duty to prepare a list of deceased mansabdars, but often news reporters (waqai navis) of the parganas directly sent information to the provincial diwan. Often his office was combined with waqa'inigar. In this capability his duty was to inform the Centre the happenings in his province. To facilitate his work, he posted his mediators in the parganas and several significant offices.

### ***Darogha-i Dak and the Secret Services***

Developing a communication network was very essential to govern a vast Empire. A separate department was assigned this significant task. The imperial postal system was recognized for sending instructions to the distant-flung areas of the Empire. The same channel was used for getting information. At every suba headquarters, darogha-i dak was appointed for this purpose. His duty was to pass on letters through the postal runners (mewras) to the court. For this purpose, a number of dak chowkis were maintained throughout the Empire where runners were stationed who accepted the post to the after that chowk. Horses and boats were also used to help in speedy delivery.

At the provincial stage, waq'ai navis and waqai nigars were appointed to supply the reports directly to the Emperor. Besides, there were also sawanih nigar to give confidential reports to the Emperor. Several reports of these secret service mediators are accessible to us. They are very significant sources of the history of the period. Therefore, the Mughals kept a watch in excess of their officials in the provinces through offices and institutions independent of each other. Besides, the Mughal Emperors' frequent visits to every suba and the system of frequent transfers of the officials after a period of three years on average, helped the Mughals in checking the officials. But the possibility of rebellion always existed and, so, constant vigil through an organised system of

intelligence network was recognized.

## **Local Administration**

### *Sarkars*

At the sarkar stage, there were two significant functionaries, the faujdar and the amalguzar.

### *Faujdar*

He was the executive head of the sarkar. But his area of power seems more intricate. He was not only appointed at the sarkar stage, but sometimes within a sarkar a number of faujdars existed. At times their jurisdiction spread in excess of two full sarkars. We hear dissimilar faujdars appointed to chaklas as well. It seems his duty was mainly to take care of rebellions, and law and order troubles. His jurisdiction was decided according to the needs of the region. His primary duty was to safeguard the life and property of the residents of the area under his jurisdiction. He was to ensure safe passage to traders within his jurisdiction. As the chief executive of the region, the faujdar was to keep vigil in excess of the recalcitrant zamindars. In special circumstances, he was to help the amalguzar in matters of revenue collection.

### *Amalguzar*

The most significant revenue collector was the amil or amalguzar. His primary duty was to assess and supervise the revenue collection through other subordinate officials. A good amil was supposed to augment the land under farming and induce the peasants to pay revenue willingly without coercion. All accounts were to be maintained through him. Daily receipts and expenditure reports were sent through him to the provincial diwan.

### *Thanedar.*

The thana was a place where army was stationed for the preservation of law and order. They were to arrange provisions for the army as well. These thanas were recognized specifically in disturbed areas and approximately the cities. Its head was designated as thanedar. He was appointed at the recommendation of the subadar and diwan. He was usually placed under the faujdar of the area.

### ***Pargana Administration***

The parganas were the administrative units below the sarkar. The shiqqdar was the executive officer of the pargana and assisted the amils in revenue collection. The amil looked after the revenue collection at the pargana stage also. His duties were similar to those of the amalguzar at the sarkar stage. The qanungos kept all the records pertaining to the land in his area. He was to take note of dissimilar crops in the pargana. The village was the lowest administrative unit. The muqaddam was the village-headman while the patwari took care of the village revenue records. Under the Mughals, the pattern of village administration remained approximately on the same lines as it was under Sher Shah.

## **Town, Fort And Port Administration**

To administer the cities and ports, the Mughals maintained separate administrative machinery.

### ***Kotwal***

For urban centres, the imperial court appointed kotwals whose primary duty was to safeguard the life and property of townsmen. He may be compared to the present day police officer in the towns and cities. The kotwal was also to maintain a register for keeping records of people coming and going out of the town. Every outsider had to take a permit from him before entering or leaving the town. The kotwal was to ensure that no illicit liquor was manufactured in his area. He also acted as superintendent of weights and events used through the merchants and shopkeepers.

### ***Qil'adar***

The Mughal Empire had a large number of qilas (forts) situated in several parts of the country. Several of these were located at strategically significant places. Each fortress was like a mini township with a large garrison. Each fort was placed under an officer called qil'adar. A cursory survey of the persons appointed as qiladars reveals that mansabdars with high ranks, usually were appointed. He was incharge of the general administration of fort and the areas assigned in jagir to the qiladar. Sometimes, the qiladari were asked to perform the duties of the faujdar in that region.

### ***Port Administration***

The Mughals were aware of the economic importance of the sea-ports as these were the centres of brisk commercial activities. The port administration was independent of the provincial authority. The governor of the ports was called mutasaddi, who was directly appointed through the Emperor. Sometimes the office of the mutasaddi was auctioned and given to the highest bidder. The mutasaddi composed taxes on merchandise and maintained a custom-house. He also supervised the minthouse at the port. The shahbandar was his subordinate who was mainly concerned with the custom-house.

## **Nature Of Mughal Administration**

Some historians hold that Mughal administrative structure was highly centralised. This centralization is manifested in the efficient working of land revenue system, mansab and jagir, uniform coinage, etc. But Stephen P. Blake and J.F. Richards, while they accept the centralising tendencies, point out that the Mughal Empire was 'patrimonial bureaucratic'. For them, everything centered approximately the imperial household and the vast bureaucracy. Few Streusand, despite being centralised, the Mughal structure was less centralised at its margin. Chetan Singh supports this view. He is of the opinion that even in the 17th century the Mughal Empire was not very centralised. For him, the centralised structure controlled through the efficient working of jagirdari seems to hold little ground. According to him, jagir transfers were not as frequent as they appear, and the local elements at the margin were quite successful in influencing the policies at the centre.

The extent to which the Mughal Empire was centralised in practice can be a matter of debate. Though, theoretically the Mughal administrative structure seems to be highly 'centralised and bureaucratic' in nature. The Emperor was the fountainhead of all powers, and bureaucracy was mere banda-i dargah (slaves of the court). In spite of the vast range of powers enjoyed through the central ministers, they were not allowed to usurp and interfere in each others' jurisdiction nor to assume autocratic powers. The Mughals through a system of checks and balances prevented any minister or officer from gaining unlimited powers.

## **MUGHAL RULING CLASS**

### **The Ruling Class Under Babur And Humayun**

The ruling class which accompanied Babur to Hindustan largely comprised Turanis (Central Asian 'Begs') and a few Iranis. After the battle of Panipat (1526). some Afghan and Indian nobles of Sikandar Lodi's camp were admitted in his higher bureaucracy. They were soon taken into confidence and given significant assignments. Several local chieftains also accepted Babur's suzerainty and became his allies in subsequent battles. Therefore after the battle of Panipat, the ruling class under Babur no longer remained purely Turani. It appears from the Baburnama that out of a total of 116 nobles. 31 were Indians including Afghans and Shaikhzadas.

### **Composition Of The Mughal Ruling Class**

After its first stage of development throughout the reign of Babur and

Humayun and the early years of Akbar, the Mughal ruling class came to consist of certain well-recognized racial groups. The significant ones were Turanis, Iranis, Afghans, Shaikhzadas, Rajputs and also the Deccanis (Bijapuris, Haiderabadis and Marathas). Therefore, it was an 'International' ruling class; for recruitment 'nationality' was no bar. Though, mere fulfillment of certain criteria of merit and competence was not the sole requirement to gain entry into it: clan or family links were the most significant thoughts for recruitment and ordinary people, with whatever merit to their credit, were normally not admitted to this aristocratic class of the society.

The khanazads (the house-born ones), who were the sons and descendants of those officers (mansabdars) who were already in the Mughal service, were the best and foremost claimants. They constituted approximately half of the ruling class throughout the Mughal period and the remaining half of the ruling class comprised of diversity of persons not belonging to the families already in service. The zamindars or the chieftains were one of them. Though they had been in the state service ever since the time of Delhi Sultans, they attained great importance under Akbar who granted them high mansabs and jagirs in several parts of the Empire. These jagirs were in addition to their ancestral domains which were now treated as their watan jagir.

Nobles and high officers of other states were also taken into the Mughal ruling class on account of their experience, status and power. Leading commandos of the enemy state, in scrupulous, were offered tempting ranks to create them desert their masters. A very small portion of the Mughal ruling class consisted of persons belonging to the accountant castes, that is, Khattris, Kayasthas, etc. They were usually appointed in the financial departments on low ranks, but they could rise to higher ones. Todar Mal under Akbar and Raja Raghunath under Aurangzeb belonged to this category. They served as diwan and received high ranks. Scholars, saints/sufis and theologians, etc. also received ranks and offices in the Mughal service. Abul Fazl under Akbar, Sadullah Khan and Danishmand Khan throughout Shah Jahan's reign, and Hakim Abul Mulk Tuni Fazil Khan in Aurangzeb's period are some of the noteworthy examples of this class.

### ***Racial and Religious Groups***

As mentioned earlier, there were certain well-recognised racial groups — Turanis, Iranis, Afghans, Shaikhzadas, Rajputs and Marathas — who provided new recruits for the Mughal ruling class. These elements were taken into the Mughal service largely as a result of historical circumstances, but partly (as for instance the Rajputs) as a result of planned imperial policy of integrating all these elements into a single imperial service. For that purpose, very often, officers of several groups were assigned to serve under one superior officer.

Akbar's policy of *sulh kul* was also partly motivated through a desire to employ persons of diverse religious beliefs — Sunnis (Turanis and Shaikhzadas), Shia's (including several Iranis) and Hindus (Rajputs) — and to prevent sectarian differences in the middle of them from interfering with the loyalty to the throne.

### ***The Foreign Elements — Turanis and Iranis***

The foreign elements in the Mughal ruling class comprised largely the Turanis (or the Central Asians) and Iranis (also called Khurasanis and Iraqis). According to the *Ai'n-i Akbari*, in relation to the 70 per cent of Akbar's nobles were foreigners through origin. This high proportion of foreigners sustained under Akbar's successors and in the middle of them Iranis enjoyed the most dominant position. In the early years of Jahangir's reign, Mirza Aziz Koka had alleged that the Emperor was giving undue favours to Iranis and Shaikhzadas while the Turanis and Rajputs were neglected. Though Shah Jahan tried hard to emphasize the Central Asian affiliations of the Mughal dynasty, it had no adverse effect on the position of Iranis under him. The greater part of Aurangzeb's nobility, according to Bernier, consisted of Persians who, according to Tarvemier, occupied the highest posts in the Mughal Empire.

Athar Ali discovers a declining trend in the number of nobles directly coming from foreign countries ever since the time of Akbar. This decline of foreigners, according to him, further sharpened throughout the long reign of Aurangzeb. The fall of the Uzbek and Safavi kingdoms and the concentration of Aurangzeb's attention in the Deccan affairs for a long period, and, his not following a forward or militaristic policy in the North-West, have been suggested as some significant causes for the decline of direct foreign recruitments. The Iranis, though, could maintain their dominant position in the nobility because of the continuous influx of Iranis from the Deccan Sultanates. Muqarrab Khan, Qizilbash Khan and Mir Jumla (under Shah Jahan); Ali Mardan Khan Haiderabadi, Abdur Razzaq Lari and Mahabat Khan Haiderabadi (under Aurangzeb) are some of the significant examples of Irani nobles from the Deccan; The Sunni orthodoxy of the Emperor also did not affect the position of Iranis.

### ***The Afghans***

The Afghans had been distrusted through the Mughals, especially suspected after the Mughal restoration under Humayun. Most of them were kept at a aloofness through Akbar. They, 'though, improved their position under Jahangir who assigned a high position to Khan Jahan Lodi. Throughout Shah Jahan's reign, the Afghans again lost the imperial trust and suffered a setback after Khan Jahan Lodi's rebellion. Throughout the later years of

Aurangzeb's reign, though, the number of the Afghan nobles considerably increased. This was mainly because of the influx from the Bijapur kingdom.

### ***Indian Muslims***

The Indian Muslims, better recognized as Shaikhzadas, comprised mainly the Saiyids of Barha and the Kambus and certain other significant clans. The Saiyids of Barha and the Kambus who had enjoyed a leading position since Akbar's time, were no longer equally prominent throughout Aurangzeb's reign. More particularly, the Saiyids of Barha, who, on account of their martial qualities, once enjoyed the honor of constituting the vanguard of the Mughal armies, were distrusted through Aurangzeb. It was perhaps because they had been loyal supporters of Dara Shukoh in the war of succession. Some of the Kashmiris also got prominence throughout the later years of Aurangzeb's reign: Inayatullah Kashmiri was one of the favourite nobles of the Emperor.

### **Organization Of The Ruling Class**

The Mughal ruling class was organised within the framework of the mansab system, one of the two significant institutions (the other being the Jagir system) which sustained the Mughal Empire for in relation to the 200 years. The mansab system was based on the principle of direct command, i.e., all mansabdars, whatever be their rank, were directly subordinate to the Mughal Emperor. Mansab System: Technically, mansab means office, position or rank. Under the Mughals the functions of mansab were threefold: it determined the status of its holder (the mansabdar) in the official hierarchy; it fixed the pay of the mansabdar accordingly, and it also laid upon him the obligation of maintaining a definite number of contingent with horses and equipment. Each officer was assigned a dual rank (a pair of numbers) designated zat and sawar. Zat was a personal rank which determined the status of the mansabdar in the official hierarchy and also indicated his personal pay. The sawar rank was a military rank which determined the number of contingents the mansabdar was required to maintain and also fixed the payment for the maintenance of the required contingent.

The Mughal mansabdar received his pay as determined through their zat and sawar ranks either in cash (naqd) or in the form of territorial assignments (Jagirs). For recruitment as mansabdar nationality was no bar. The Khanazads (or sons and descendants of mansabdars already in service) had the first claim to the appointment. The second source of recruitment were the immigrants from Iran and Central Asia. The third channel of recruitment was recommendation (tajwiz). Another category from which recruitment was made were the leading commanders of the enemy camp who were often tempted to

desert their masters. The Central ministers, princes of royal blood, provincial governors and significant military commanders used to recommend persons for appointment and promotions.

### **Sharing Of Revenue Possessions In The Middle Of The Ruling Class**

Shireen Moosvi have shown that 82% of the total revenue possessions of the Empire was appropriated through 1,671 mansabdars. While the top 12 mansabdars controlled as much as 18.52% of the total income of the Empire, the remaining 1,149 mansabdars controlled only 30% of the revenue. Therefore, there was an immense concentration of revenue possessions in the hands of a few persons throughout the time of Akbar. This concentration sustained under his successors. A. Jan Qaisar has calculated that 445 mansabdars under Shah Jahan claimed 61.5% of the revenue. And the top 25 mansabdars controlled 24.5% of the revenue. The nobles, through and large, drew their income from the land revenue. There was immense concentration of wealth in the hands of a very small number of persons comprising the core of the Mughal ruling class. They did not spend the whole amount on their troopers which they claimed against their sawar ranks. This led to further concentration of wealth in the hands of the nobles.

### **Life Style Of The Ruling Class**

With vast amounts of money at their disposal the ruling class led a life of great pomp and illustrate. They maintained large establishment of wives, servants, camels and horses. The household of which the harem was the main part necessity have absorbed a reasonably large sum. And, yet, they were left with substantial wealth that could be spent on the construction of stately houses and works of public utility. Here we would like to provide you a brief thought in relation to the nobles building activities.

From Shaikh Farid Bhakkari's biographical work *Zakhirat-ul Khawanin* (1642), it appears that Mughal officers and nobles were fond of contracting attractive and imposing houses for their residence. Murtaza Khan Shaikh Farid Bukhari was a great builder of Akbar's time. In Ahmedabad he built a sarai, mosque and other buildings. Throughout Jahangir's reign, Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan, Azam Khan, Khwaja Jahan Kabuli, etc. were great builders. So distant as the works of public utility are concerned, our source mentions a large number of sarais, hammams (public baths), wells, step-wells (baolis), water tanks, markets, roads, and gardens built through the nobles throughout the Empire. Throughout the reign of Akbar, Murtaza Khan Shaikh Farid Bukhari built mosques, sarais, khanqahs and the tanks at Lahore, Agra etc.

The wives and staff of nobles also took equal interest in constructing works of public utility. We get many references in relation to the religious and educational buildings such as mosques, madrasas, khanqahs, tombs and temples (devrah) built through Mughal nobles. Some of the Hindu nobles and officers also built mosques. Construction of tombs throughout one's own life time and for the deceased persons of one's family was a popular trend in the Mughal period. Beautiful gardens were laid out approximately these imposing structures. In constructing these tombs, the nobles sometimes vied with each other. Tombs were also built for sufis through their disciples.

Mughal nobles and officers constructed public welfare buildings outside India. A number of Irani nobles at the Mughal court are reported to have funded the construction of mosques, sarais, etc. in Iran. Several nobles and officers also founded cities, towns and villages in their native places or in the territories under their jurisdiction. Sometimes the old existing towns were renovated and beautified with gardens, trees, roads and structures of public utility. Whenever a new city or town was built it was provided with all the necessities of civil life and amenities of an urban settlement with the purpose of encouraging the people to settle down there. Laying out of gardens was a part of the nobles' cultural activities. A. Jan Qaisar has shown a linkage flanked by social values and building activity of the Mughal elite. He says that these values were a continuation of the long recognized Indian traditions. Why the building activity was undertaken on such a level? It seems that prestige factor was significant. It nourished competitive spirit for cultural exercises with a view of scoring in excess of their compatriots. The desire was to perpetuate one's name for indefinite period. The aspiration unfolded itself in both the shapes of their activities, private and public. Religious sanction, too, spurred the elite to construct charitable works, particularly mosques. Role model/expectation also motivated the elite to perform charitable acts. Masses looked to affluent sections to give public utilities which were culturally identifiable, for instance, hospitals, mosques, sarais, etc.

Masses expected that materially prosperous persons should alienate a part of their wealth in their favour. This role was played pretty well through the Mughal nobles. It also resulted in the sharing of material possessions—of whatever magnitude—of the society in the middle of masses. The nobles maintained their own karkhanas to manufacture luxury items for their own consumption. Carpets, gold embroidered silks and high excellence jewellery were the main items produced. Besides, they imported large number of luxury articles from dissimilar countries. The British and Dutch records provide innumerable references to the demands made through the ruling class for which they, used to pay handsomely.

# **MUGHAL THEORY OF SOVEREIGNTY**

## **The Background**

The Mughal rulers of India were not new to the art of governance: they possessed an experience of approximately two centuries of dynastic rule in Central Asia. They brought with them a well-trying and recognized principles of administration. The need to adapt in a new land had made them flexible enough to absorb the tradition of their surroundings. The general administrative structure and the policies of the Mughals in India, so, appear to be a conglomeration of Indo-Islamic trends. The rich Central Asian heritage and Turco-Mongol legacy in the form of practices, institutions, loan words and conditions do appear occasionally. The remnants of the Chingizi and Timuri polity are often noticed in the Mughal structure in India.

Babur took pride in calling himself a 'Turk' though he was a Turco-Mongol. Babur was related to Chingiz (on mother's side) and Timur (on father's side). Notwithstanding Babur's occasional outbursts against the Mongols, he held Chingiz Khan and his family in high esteem. Akbar's attitude towards his "ancestors" is appropriately reflected in the comments of Abul Fazl who called Chingiz a "great man". Through therefore elevating and glorifying the Mongols, the Mughals in India were adding prestige to their own dynasty. Extending their hereditary claims in excess of the Indian territories through virtue of having the blood of Chingiz and Timur in their veins was, so, logical and expedient Babur's dynasty in India was variously called 'Chaghatai', 'Mughal' and 'Qarawanah', disregarding the genealogical differences and their relationship to Chingiz through females. The significance of this relationship was not only fully realized but was equally utilized and accentuated through the Mughal rulers and their court chronicles in biographies, historical accounts, royal letters and other documents. This emphasis on kinship flanked by the families of Chingiz and Timur brings to the surface the undercurrents of Mughal anxiety to claim a close relationship and excellence with the ruling family of Chingiz Khan on the basis of their genealogy, whether real or fictitious. To a great extent they preserved their rich legacy even while ruling in excess of in India — an alien and somewhat dissimilar region, There are a number of conditions and institutions which are similar in nomenclature though dissimilar in connotation. A thorough version of Central Asian conditions and institutions in accordance with the needs or circumstances and the surroundings is also noticed.

### **Nature Of Central Asian Polity: Turco-Mongol Impact**

As we have already read, the Central Asian polity was adopted through the Mughals in several methods, bearing Turkish and Mongol traits. But controversy exists in relation to the magnitude of Turkish and Mongol powers. Some scholar's hold that Mongol traditions were predominant, while others suggest that Turkish power was so strong that the Mongol system had really

been converted into what can only, be designated as Turco-Mongol.

When Chingiz came to Central Asia, his army mainly comprised Turks, albeit with only a nucleus of Mongol. It is supported through many sources that the prescribed norms and Mughal customs and practices were often being followed “in the fashion of Chingiz Khan”. The Empire of Timur was also a “unique combination of Turco-Mongolian political and military system”. The Barlas tribe to which Timur himself belonged was actually a Turco-Mongol tribe.

### ***Power of Turah***

Besides having Turkish traditions, the Central Asian administration was considerably influenced through the turah, that is the laws formulated through Chingiz after his ascendancy (other conditions were yasa, yusun, yasaq). The turah did not contain any religious element and dealt mainly with political principles and the organization of government and civil and military administration. The turah was measured to be an immutable code. Akbar was proud of Central Asian connections and traditions. A fine blend of Central Asian and Indian traditions with a veneer of perse-Islamic principles is, so, noticed in several spheres of Mughal politics and administration under Akbar. The turah figures in Jahangir’s autobiography and flickers through some of his events. The references to turah, though, start fading and dwindle slowly in the reign of Shah Jahan and is finally engulfed through the “religious revivalism” throughout the reign of Aurangzeb. Nevertheless, the principles of turah and the Chaghatai traditions had limited utility in Indian context. A survey of the Mughal sources shows that the emphasis on turah was motivated through a real politic of the Mughal Emperors who wanted to highlight their links with the two former conquerors of India and to the great

Empire builders namely Chingiz and Timur. It may, though, be pointed out that the turah was preserved and at best its traditions sustained to linger in the Mughal Empire mainly in the sphere of the laws of ceremonies and etiquettes. Nevertheless, the occasional references to the ‘Chaghatai traditions’ found in early Mughal sources are conspicuously missing in the later period.

### ***Turco-Mongol Concept of Sovereignty***

Although it is said that Chingiz had borrowed his divine theory of sovereignty from the Uighlurs, the Mongols themselves seem to consider in absolute power of the Khan which is apparent from the following words of a Mongol Khan: “In the sky there can only be one sun or one moon; how can there be two masters on earth”. Nonetheless, division of the Empire in the middle of the ruler’s sons for facilitating administration with all its rigors and

satiating the desires of governance in the middle of princes was the cardinal principle of Mongol concept of sovereignty. But Timur followed the concept of absolute sovereignty who pronounced that "the whole expanse of the inhabited part of the world is not worthy of two kings: since God is one, so, the vicegerent of God on earth should also be one." Babur also confirms that "partnership in rule is a thing unheard of".

Despite these assertions, a controversy has existed in the middle of the historians in relation to the tradition of absolute monarchy entertained through Timur who had accepted the nominal over lordship of a descendant of Chingiz Khan. Timur himself never used any title higher than amir. Though Timur's successor Shahrukh assumed the title Padshah and Sultan-ul Azam, the thought of the nominal over lordship of the Khan remained alive down to the time of Abu Saeed Mirza. Though, the subsistence of puppet Khans was a political necessity for Timur. Timur did not belong to the royal family of Chingiz and in the given situation "only men of the tribe of Chingiz could claim the title Khan". Therefore, Timur's right to accession was likely to be challenged through the Mongols.

These Khans were kept confined to a scrupulous locality and the only royal prerogative enjoyed through them was the manshurs (orders) and certain coins of Timur accepted the names of these "prisoners". Nevertheless, Timur sustained to maintain his supremacy in excess of the Khans. No sooner had he acquired necessary power and secured enough support from the Chaghatai nobles than he proclaimed himself sovereign in 1370 with the title of sahib-i qiran (a title given to a ruler who had ruled for forty years). The coronation ceremony was held with all royal grandeur for Timur alone. Timur never "rendered honors to the Khans in the attendance of the troops and in solemn surroundings. Honors due to the monarch were always personally received through Timur", Being a firm believer in absolutism, Timur never attached undue importance to the consultative assembly (qurultai). Besides, he measured himself to be the temporal as well as spiritual leader. Concept of sovereignty was stretched through him to its logical end. He announced that he "received direct revelations from the Almighty", therefore giving divine sanctions to his enterprise. Therefore, the practice of installing puppet Khans was merely a political game which had been played through Timur and his successors to rally the support of Mongol forces and to use them finally to establish their own power and to legitimize their rule in excess of a territory which was actually usurped through them from the Mongols. At any rate, after the death of Mahmud in A.D, 1402, Timur did not care to appoint any other Khan.

### ***Nature of Political Structure***

Was the political structure of the Timuri rulers of Central Asia oriented towards centralization? Some scholars hold that there were trends towards greater centralization. But this view has been contended through others. The latter argue that the tribal character of the Mongol polity did not permit the rise of an absolutism comparable to Turkish monarchy. Chingiz Khan's Empire belonged not to the ruler but to the ruling family. But others point out that even when the Timuri state declined and disintegrated, the traditions of despotic and absolute monarchy sustained. It is fair to conclude, then, that Timuri polity was one of absolutism and that minor deviations or exceptions cannot fundamentally modify this basic fact.

### ***Custom of Succession***

While Chingiz Khan had nominated his own successor, he had, though, accentuated that anyone from amongst the sons and grandsons of the kings could succeed him provided that such a person was worthy of this office. This system of nomination through the Khan on the basis of merit seems to have sustained upto the Timuris. The nomination of the Khan was not always respected, but the worth of a person always enabled him to contrive his own enthronement. As 'worth' happened to be the main criterion for accession, aspirations of several energetic and enterprising princes were excited. Consequently, civil wars, fratricide and rebellions became a regular phenomenon in Central Asia and in Mughal India as well. In accordance with the Old Turco-Mongol tradition, kingship was not reserved for the sons of the king only. With the extension of this opportunity to the grandsons and uncles of the king (Khan), the number of aspirants became very large. Either worth or even popular support could decide the issue of succession. In all three situations (i.e. nomination, contrivance and selection), the question of succession had to be formally ratified through a qurultai (assembly of princes and nobles) which symbolized an assurance of submission through all the notables.

### ***Centre-State Relationship***

The king was the pivot of administration. The khutba was read and the coins were struck in 'the name of the king throughout the Empire. The provincial rulers were appointed through the king. They were required to act in accordance with the regulations and orders of the king and owed their status to the sweet will of the ruler. The provincial ruler ship and the land grants served as sources of income to the members of the royal family. Nevertheless, the final authority rested with the king. The provincial rulers were not permitted to interfere in the collection of the king's share of revenue. For these

and for other administrative purposes, special deputies were appointed through the Khan in each khanate. The failure of a provincial ruler (Sultan) to comply with the orders of the Khan or to fulfill his military or financial obligation at a certain time would have disastrous consequences for him. While they were allowed to have diplomatic relations with external powers, certain major decisions like the waging of war or the signing of treaty were taken through the king personally. The king was authorized to intervene in interstate feuds and even to transfer or depose an unruly Sultan. It seems that division was necessary to facilitate the administration of a vast Empire and also to satisfy the ambitions of ruler ship amongst the princes. From all this, it can hardly be deduced that the king in the Chingizi or Timuri Empire was simply one from amongst the other Sultans.

### *The Nobility*

The nobility being the creation of the king himself was supposed to be the main source of his strength. At the time of the accession of a new Khan, the nobility had to take an oath for remaining loyal and subservient to the king. The examples of a number of vicious and unscrupulous nobles of the later Timuris (in the last quarter of the Timuri rule in Central Asia) present a somewhat shocking picture of the Timuri nobles. These should not lead one to conclude that there were certain inherent weaknesses in the system itself which encouraged this attitude amongst the nobles and ultimately hampered the development of Central authority. The Turco-Mongol political structure had been built in such a method that nobles remained subservient to the Khan, notwithstanding their conditional privileges. Nevertheless, some scholars are of the view that the prevalence of hereditary privileges in the middle of a large section of the nobility discouraged the growth of absolutism in the Mongol Empire. Although it cannot be denied that several rulers of Transoxiana from time to time assigned special status to their favourite amirs, and, some of these privileges were even hereditary, it is also a fact that such privileges were being enjoyed through the nobles only on a reciprocal basis. In case of any defiance, these privileges could always be withdrawn. Each new king could renew or withhold all types of privileges granted through his precursors. The very fact that Chingiz had prescribed a clause in his code whereby the nobles enjoying special status could be forgiven only for nine offences itself shows that the king could exercise his absolute power in excess of the nobles. There are number of examples where the nobles had a high standing and were enjoying hereditary privileges also but were dismissed, executed, punished, fined or banished.

## **The Mughal Theory Of State: Its Development**

We will be dealing with the development of the Mughal concept of sovereignty under Babur and Humayun and how later under Akbar it reached at its climax.

### ***Babur and Humayun***

Some historians argue that the Timuri polity was influenced through the Turco-Mongol polity and it was absolutist in nature and essentially oriented towards highly centralised state structure. They consider it superior to the structure of the Afghan power which had reduced the Sultanate to a confederacy of tribe's holdings dissimilar regions. But for others, it was only in the beginning that the Mongol power was great; later, the Mongol polity started losing its centralizing and absolutist character. Now let us look at the nature of Mughal polity.

As for absolutist nature of Mughal polity, it is argued that the Timuri rulers down to Babur despite pressing circumstances did not think it appropriate to assume the title of khaqaan suggests that they conceded special status to the Khans. But it seems an oversimplification of a complicated problem. As stated above, division of the Empire in the middle of the sons of the ruler was the cardinal principle of Mongol theory of kingship. But Babur never approved this concept: when after the death of Husain Mirza, his two sons shared sovereign powers, he showed his surprise. Likewise he also rejected any thought of sharing sovereignty with his begs (nobles). But the Mughals at early stages do not seem to have totally alienated themselves from Mongol powers. The Mongol principle of the division of the Empire was put to test soon after the death of Babur. Humayun divided his Empire in the middle of his brothers but failed. In 1556 at the battle of Ushtargram, Akbar and one of the daughters of Kamran were put on the throne, but it was a short existed emergency measure. Nonetheless, Babur assumed the title of 'Padshah' — a Turkish title. Humayun's decision to shift sovereignty to a water carrier for a day, which had saved his life, shows that the Mughals measured sovereignty as personal property of the 'Padshah'. Even the so-called hereditary privileges of the nobles got the sanction of the ruler. Such privileges had to be renewed through the new ruler. So, it is not quite correct to infer that the prevalence of hereditary privileges in the middle of a large section of nobility discouraged the growth of absolutism in the early Turco-Mongol polity. Later, both Babur and Humayun are recognized to have respected the Chaghatai code of laws (turah) which was allergic to the concept of more than one ruler at one time.

## *Akbar*

Abul Fazl says: “No dignity is higher in the eyes of God than royalty. Royalty is a remedy for the spirit of rebellion....” Even the meaning of the word Padshah shows this for pad signifies stability and possession and shah means origin. Lord. A king is, so, the “origin of stability and possession”. He adds: “Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun.... Modern language calls this light farri izidi (the divine light) and the tongue of antiquity called it kiyan khwarah (the sublime halo). It is communicated through God to kings without the intermediate assistance of anyone. Again several excellent qualities flow from the possession of this light, e.g., a paternal love towards the subjects, a large heart, trust in God, prayer and devotion, etc. At another place, Abul Fazl repeats that “The shamsa of the arch of royalty is a divine light, which God directly transfers to kings, without the assistance of men....”

The king was so deemed to be divinely appointed, divinely guided and divinely protected. The theory of sovereignty propounded through Abul Fazl on behalf of Akbar and reflected in his mahzar and “*Ai'n-i rahnamuni*” seems to be as close to the Central Asian and perse-Islamic concepts as to the Chingizi traditions of sovereignty. It is important that the absolute traditions of sovereignty and conjunction of spiritual and temporal ruler ship was developed at several courts as a defence mechanism against undue encroachment upon king's authority through lesser mortal. The philosophy and the spirit of the concepts of farri izidi, kiyan khwarah, etc. were the same, that is, the intention was to guard against any direct or indirect share in king's authority. Alauddin Khalji had tried to abide through the “law of expediency”, Akbar went ahead of him. Through the mahzar (drafted through Shaikh Mubarak and his two sons), the Emperor was certified to be a just ruler (Imam Adil) and was as such assigned the rank of mujtahid, i.e. an “infallible authority”; nay, the position of Imam Adil was declared superior to that of a mujtahid. The “intellect of the just king” therefore became the valuable source of legislation.

Abul Fazl elucidates that “when the time of reflection comes, and men shake off the prejudices of their education, the thread of the web of religious blindness break and the eye sees the glory of harmoniousness... although some are enlightened several would observe silence from fear of fanatics who lust for blood, but look like men.... The people will naturally look to their king and expect him to be their spiritual leader as well, for a king possesses, independent of men, the ray of Divine wisdom, which banishes from his heart everything that is conflicting. A king will, so, sometimes observe the element of harmony in a multitude of things.... Now this is the case with the monarch of the present age. He now is the spiritual guide of the nation.”

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- What do you understand through system of escheat?
- What is jagir system?
- What were the shiqqs? Discuss its chief functionaries
- Discuss the position of the wakil under the Mughals.
- Discuss the physical sub-divisions of the Mughal administrative setup.
- Trace the evolution of Mughal ruling class spanning Babur, Humayun and Akbar's reigns.
- Enumerate the several groups which comprised the Mughal ruling class. What was their position in the Mughal nobility?
- Discuss the Turco-Mongol Concept of sovereignty.
- Comment on the theory of sovereignty propounded through Abul Fazl.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **STATE AND ECONOMY**

#### **STRUCTURE**

- Learning objectives
- Mughal land revenue system
- Agrarian relations: Mughal India
- Land revenue system: Marathas, Deccan and South India
- Agrarian relations: Deccan and south India
- Fiscal and monetary system, prices
- Review questions

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After going through this chapter, you should be able to know the following:

- The magnitude of land revenue demand;
- The several classes who appropriated a share in the produce of the land;
- The zamindars and their rights;
- Several categories of peasants and the village community;
- The system of revenue assessment of the Deccan and South India;
- The revenue possessions of the Deccan and South Indian States other than land tax;
- The feature characteristics of the medieval Deccan village;

- The categories of land rights which existed there;
- The agrarian structure of South India;
- Main taxes other than land revenue imposed through the Mughals; and
- Prices and their movement throughout the Mughal Rule.

## **MUGHAL LAND REVENUE SYSTEM**

Land revenue system in Mughal era was one of the central characteristics of the agrarian system of that period. It witnessed many changes in Mughal period. Usually the transfer from the peasant of his surplus produce that is the produce above what was required for the family's survival was largely through method of exaction of land revenue. According to historians, the equation of land revenue with surplus produce is no part of the official doctrine as expressed in the administrative documents. In Mughal India, the revenue imposed did not usually go beyond the surplus produce; this was only because such a course, leading to a wholesale extinction of the revenue-payers would have reduced the total revenues in the longer run and therefore defeated its own purpose.

There are though, no concrete means of knowing what the average size of surplus produce as a portion of the total produce was in Mughal India. Owing to the differences in the production of the soil and also in climatic and social circumstances that decided the minimum stages of survival, the size varied from one tract to another. The share that used to be taken out of the peasant's produce without destroying his survival chances have been recognized through experience in each locality. It was also assumed that the land revenue did not normally exceed the surplus produce and its rates were so formulated as either to approximate to these recognized local rates or to remain below them. Numerous statements have been found in surveys that describe the land revenue system in Mughal era as amounting to a scrupulous portion of the total produce. Though, these records did not prove any direct relationship flanked by the magnitude of the land-revenue demand and the actual harvest.

Archaeological surveys also showed some troubles associated with the several systems of revenue assessment and collection in Mughal era. Crop rates at the beginning of Mughal Emperor Akbar's reign had been fixed arbitrarily. They became more realistic afterwards, varying with localities, and ultimately came to be framed on the basis of the average yield worked out separately for each locality. Land revenue was later fixed in cash, not type. Quite unlikely the prices forming the basis for changing the demand into cash were identical with those at which the peasant parted with his crop at the time of the harvest, when there was a glut in the market. Outside these provinces circumstances varied considerably throughout the reign of Mughal Emperors.

Throughout the Mughal rule, except under simple crop-sharing the collection of land revenues and its assessments were totally dissimilar operations. Like for instance, in crop-sharing the state's share of the grain was directly taken

from the field or the threshing floor at the time of division, so that assessment was wholly distributed with, while in other systems, assessment used to take place flanked by the time of sowing and harvesting, but collection, whether through the medium of payment was cash or other mode, usually took place at the time of the harvest. The rabi harvest was all gathered within a very short period. The revenue was paid into the treasury usually through the revenue collector, though Akbar's administration sought to encourage the peasants to pay direct. The peasants, or their representatives were entitled to obtain proper receipts for their payments; the treasurer, on the other hand, was also asked to get the patwari's endorsement in his register to establish the amount of payment. These regulations were largely in the nature of cautions that the administration took as a measure of protection from frauds. Further, revenue concessions were the principal instrument devised through the Mughal administration in order to encourage development.

## **AGRARIAN RELATIONS: MUGHAL INDIA**

### **Revenue Assignees And Grantees**

The state adopted two methods to realize the land revenue from the peasants. First, the Jagirdars were assigned certain areas with rights to collect revenue and utilize the same for their salary and to meet their military obligations. Secondly, it composed revenue through imperial revenue officers from the khalisa. The jagirdar had no permanent rights in excess of the areas so assigned due to frequent transfers. His claims were confined to the authorized land revenue and other taxes.

While the jagirdars were given revenue assignments in lieu of cash salary, there was another category of people which was given revenue grants for their survival. This was the class of religious men who were patronized through the state. These grants were recognized as suyurghal or madad-i maash (aid for survival). A separate department under the charge of the sadr us sudur looked after these grants.

If the aid was given in cash, it was recognized as wazifa. There were certain categories of people who were qualified to receive madad-i maash. These grants did not invest the grantee with any right in excess of land but were entitled to the prescribed revenue from its produce. Akbar put the ceiling of such grants of land to 100 bighas per person. The policy of Akbar was to grant half cultivable and half waste land to improve agriculture.

The grant was for the lifetime of the grantee and the heirs could apply for a renewal. Usually only a part of the grant was allowed to heirs. Jahangir

confirmed all the grants made through Akbar while Shah Jahan began to look at all grants given throughout the previous reigns. He allowed 30 bighas to be inherited, Aurangzeb reduced it to 20 bighas. In the 30th year of his reign, he allowed the grant to be entirely hereditary, through calling such grants as loan ('ariyat') and not property. In the latter part of his reign as well as after his death, the grantees started enjoying the right to sell or transfer the land, which, then, acquired the features of a zamindari.

In Akbar's period, it was found that the revenue of such grants would not be in excess of 5.84% of the total jama. The mapping of these grants shows that most of these were concentrated in the upper Gangetic provinces (highest in Delhi and Allahabad). It appears that no change had taken place in the proportion of the revenue alienated through the grants till the early years of Muhammad Shah. The mapping, also illustrate that these grants were mainly in the urban areas. We discover that in excess of 70% of the suyurghal lay in the parganas which were under the control of the non-Muslim zamindars.

Another type of grant (waqf) was given to institutions, etc. Revenues of certain lands were permanently assigned for the maintenance of religious tombs, shrines, madrasas, etc. Such grants could be given through the jagirdars also, and lasted till the term of the jagirdar in that area. The madad-i maash grants were planned to make pockets of power and to develop waste lands. Usually, these were given to Shaikhs and Sayyids and other men of learning. In emergency they joined the government forces to curb local disturbances. The total revenue alienated in such grants was not large. There was a tendency on the part of the grantees to acquire zamindari rights in their area and elsewhere. Therefore, some of them transformed themselves into small zamindars. Through the first half of the 18th century, these grants were treated as zamindari land in all transactions.

## **The Zamindars**

The zamindars were present in practically every part of the Mughal Empire and held the most important position in the agrarian structure of Mughal India. The word zamindar is derived from two Persian words—zamin (land) and dar (holder). Throughout the pre-Mughal period, the word zamindar has been used in the sense of the chief of a territory. The fact that a chief had acknowledged the supremacy of a superior sovereign power made no variation to his position within his own domain, so long as he was allowed to retain it. From Akbar's time onwards, this term was officially used for any person with any hereditary claim to a direct share in the peasant's produce. The early local conditions such as khot and muqaddam in the Doab, satarahi and biswi in Awadh, bhoml in Rajasthan and banth or vanth in Gujarat were replaced

through the term zamindar. Though, several of these conditions sustained to be used interchangeably with zamindars in modern accounts. The areas without zamindars were termed raiyati (peasant held).

Nurul Haran divides the zamindars into three categories.

- Primary zamindars who had some proprietary rights in excess of the land;
- Secondary zamindars who held the intermediary rights and helped the state in collecting land revenue; and
- Autonomous chiefs—had autonomous rights in their territories and paid a fixed amount to the Mughal State.

### ***Zamindari Rights***

Zamindari did not signify a proprietary right in land. It was a claim on the produce of the soil, co-existing in a subordinate capability, with the land revenue demand of the state. Yet, like any article of private property, it could, and was, freely bought and sold. It was also inheritable and divisible, that is, the heirs of a zamindar could divide the fiscal claims and perquisites of their inherited zamindari, in accordance with the law of the land. The zamindar acquired his rights through virtue of the historical tradition of control he and his kinsmen exercised in excess of the inhabitants of scrupulous villages. At some time, the zamindars had settled villages and distributed its land in the middle of the peasantry. In eastern Rajasthan, wasidar (a category of peasants) were settled through the bhomia (zamindar as recognized there) in the village to undertake sometimes the farming of his personal lands. The zamindari rights, so, were not created through the ruling classes, but preceded them. The king, though, could make zamindari in villages where none existed. He could also dislodge a zamindar, but this was a right he exercised only in case of sedition or non-payment of revenue.

The medieval rulers recognised the rights of the zamindars, but were equally insistent on treating them as mediators of the government for revenue collection. When the zamindari took this form, that is, it came to assist the government in the collection of revenue, for the service (khldmat) so rendered, the zamindar was entitled to a percentage of the total revenue composed. This percentage in official documents is stated to be 10% and is described as nankar (“allowance”). When the administration decided to collect the revenue through its own mediators, through-passing the zamindar, the latter was entitled to a share in the collection of revenues called malikana (proprietary right), and like nankar, was fixed at 10% of the total revenue composed. In Gujarat, this claim of the zamindar was described as banth or vanth, but unlike malikana in Northern India, it was considerably higher. Like malikana, it was paid in the form of cash. In the Deccan, it was called chauth (lit. “one fourth”),

and as the name suggests, stood at one-fourth of the revenues composed. Sardeshmukhi, another fiscal claim of the zamindar in the Deccan, was equivalent to 10% of the revenues. Under the Marathas, the cesses of chauth and sardeshmukhi came to be realized not through a legal claim based on actual zamindari right, but through the sheer use of force. Under Shivaji, while the claim of the king comprised one-fourth of the chauth and the whole of surdeshmukhi, the other three-fourths of the chauth was to be retained through the Maratha feudatory barons.

Besides their principal fiscal claim, the zamindars also exacted a number of petty perquisites from the peasantry. Some of the well-recognized cesses so realized were (dastar shumari) (turban tax), house tax (khana shumari), cesses on marriage and birth, etc. The zamindars used to collect taxes from weekly markets also in their areas. At times, they are found collecting toll tax on merchandise passing through their territories. The amount that the zamindars realized through these petty perquisites is quite hard to estimate; in all probability, in relation to their principal fiscal claim, it was not quite considerable.

We have so far been discussing in relation to the primary and intermediary zamindars, that is, those who resided in the directly administered territories, and of whom the administration was anxious that they be reduced to the status of mere 'rent-gatherers'. Separately from them, there were chiefs or chieftains—the rajas, raos, ranas and rawatas—who were more or less autonomous in their estates, governing them without any interference from the imperial administration. Their obligation to the king did not go beyond paying him a fixed amount as tribute (peshkash). Their share in the surplus produce of the peasant, so, amounted to the variation flanked by what they composed from the peasants and what they paid to the king as peshkash. The Imperial administration recognised their semi-autonomous status, and exercised no control in excess of their internal administration once they had paid the usual peshkash. According to Irfan Habib, the variation flanked by the zamindars and autonomous chiefs "lay most clearly in the relationship with the imperial power which allowed autonomy to the chiefs, but made ordinary zamindar mere propertied subjects of the Emperor".

### ***Military Strength of Zamindars***

The zamindars employed their footmen and cavalry. These troops helped them in the realization of land revenue and subjugation of peasantry. Approximately all zamindars had their own small or big qilachas/garhi or forts. According to the Ain-i Akbari, the troops of the zamindars in the whole Mughal Empire exceeded forty four lakhs. In Bengal they possessed thousands of boats.

### ***Chaudhuris***

As mentioned earlier, the zamindar played a prominent role in the collection of land revenue. Some of these zamindars were designated as chaudhuri for the purpose of collection of revenue. One of the prominent zamindars of a pargana was appointed chaudhuri, usually one in each pargana. The chaudhuri was supposed to collect the revenue from other zamindars of the pargana. Separately from their customary nankar, these chaudhuris were entitled to another share in the land revenue composed through them. This was termed chaudhurai which amounted to two and a half per cent of the revenue composed. Unlike the zamindar, the chaudhuri was appointed through the state and could be removed for improper functioning.

### ***Other Intermediaries***

Each village had a number of hereditary officials. The most significant of them was the village headman (muqaddam in Northern India and patel in the Deccan). He was the person responsible for the collection of land revenue and maintenance of law and order in the villages. For the services so rendered, he was granted a part of the village land revenue-free, though, in some cases, he was also remunerated in cash at a percentage of total land revenue realized. In addition, he was also entitled to receive some amount of produce from peasants. In the task of the collection of land revenue the muqaddam was assisted through the village accountant (patwari in Northern India and kulkarni in the Deccan). The patwari's task was to maintain a record (bahi) of the revenue composed from the individual peasants and its payment to the state authorities. His records, so, were of immense help to the administration in assessing the revenue-paying capability of the peasants and in fixing the total land revenue claim on the village. Like the muqaddam he was also remunerated through the grant of revenue-free land or through a fixed commission in the total revenue composed. Though, being an employee of the village organization, his allowance was much smaller than that of the village headman. The office and the accompanying privileges of both the muqaddam and patwari were hereditary.

### **Peasantry**

We studied in relation to the classes who enjoyed superior rights over the produce of the land. We will discuss the main producing classes. The main agrarian class, directly involved with the agricultural production, was the peasantry. Though the class had a number of strata within it, for the

convenience of study we are including all of them under one nomenclature.

The peasants constituted the primary class in rural society and the revenue composed from them sustained the whole state tools.

### ***Land Rights of Peasantry***

There has been a long debate in the middle of historians concerning the rights of the peasantry in excess of land. Peasant's claim to land was not disregarded through the state, yet he was never allowed the right to free alienation. It appears that peasants had all the rights in excess of land as long as he cultivated it. The zamindars or state had no right to evict the peasant as long as he cultivated the land and paid the revenue. It seems that proprietary rights in land were not quite developed throughout the Mughal period. Though, the most significant aspect of the period is the varying claims in excess of the produce of the land.

In modern accounts we come crossways a number of references to the flight of the peasantry from villages because of oppression or other troubles. A number of instances are accessible in relation to the peasants settling individually or in groups in several regions. The mobility of the peasant was an recognized practice in Mughal India. This mobility was more pronounced in cases of their oppression in one region or natural calamities like floods and famines.

### ***Stratification of Peasantry***

The peasantry was not a homogenous class. The stratification was due to inequalities in wealth and social status. Peasants with large possessions cultivated bigger plots of land, and even employed laborers on his fields. They could acquire head-ship of a village (muqaddam or patel) and enjoy a superior share in the produce of other peasants. The divisions were so well-recognized that they are differently designated even in official accounts and records. Richer peasants are referred to as Khudkasht (self-cultivated) in Northern India, gharuhalas in Rajasthan and mirasdars in Maharashtra. The poor peasants are referred to as reza ria'ya (small peasant) in Northern India, paltis in Rajasthan and kunbts in Maharashtra. '

The major cause for this can be found in the wide prevalence of cash-nexus. Since land revenue in the larger part of India had to be paid in cash, peasants and cultivators were forced to carry their produce to the markets or sell it to merchants or moneylenders on the eve of harvest. In such a situation, those peasants who could cultivate cash crops would be placed in a better position, because of the higher prices they fetched in the market than those

who, owing to their scarce possessions, could only cultivate food crops for which the prices were comparatively low. Not all peasants could shift to cash crop farming since it involved much expenses (good seeds, better fertilizers, irrigation or facilities, and also more productive soil). The requirement of the payment of land revenue in cash would therefore cause a widening gulf flanked by the relatively better-off peasants whose possessions allowed them to shift to cash crop farming and the poor peasants who found even the farming of food crops an arduous and expensive business. The regressive nature of land revenue demand was another major factor that caused and intensified divisions within the peasantry. The incidence of land revenue demand being uniform for both the rich and the poor peasants, in actual fact it fell more heavily on the latter than on the former. The village organization, or what has often loosely been described as the “village community”, further perpetuated these divisions through levying lower revenue rates on the khudkasht peasants, and calling upon the reza ri’aya to meet the deficit therefore arising in the total revenue claim.

Economic inequalities were not the only basis of divisions within the peasantry. They were also divided flanked by the permanent residents of the village (Khudkasht Northern India, mirasdar in Maharashtra and thalvaik or thalkar in Deccan) and the temporary residents (pai ‘kasht in Northern India; upari in Maharashtra). Caste associations and kinship ties (bhaichara), even as they served as linkages that afforded supra-local affinities were also at the same time sources of divisiveness. Below the class of peasants existed in rural India a large population of menial workers. Their number or their proportion to caste peasantry is approximately impossible to estimate, yet, in all probability, they did constitute an important portion of the rural population of India. They are described in the modern literature as chamars, balahars, thoris and dhanuks, etc. They were a cheap source of Labor for the peasants and zamindars to work on their fields throughout the sowing and harvest seasons. It was, so, in the interest of both of them (i.e., the peasants and zamindars) to suppress and exploit them. The creation of a vast reserve of Labor force for agricultural production reduced the cost of production, which enhanced the “surplus” produce of the peasant, and therefore allowed a greater exploitation of land revenue through the ruling power. In the suppression of the menial workers, the state, the zamindars and the peasants were equal collaborators.

### ***Village Community***

Usually the peasants of a village had a majority of the same caste. Such villages were recognized historically through one clan or family. Separately from the peasants of the dominant caste of a village, there were menial workers who came from lower castes. From the modern accounts it appears that in several activities these villages functioned as a community. It should

not be taken to mean that there were any communal land holdings. The fields were definitely held through individual peasants. The revenue officials found it convenient to treat village as a unit for revenue assessment and collection. The description of the patwari as a village official supports this. It is reported that the patwari was supposed to keep the account of individual peasant's production and revenue liability. The payment to state was made through the village as a unit. The revenue from the individual peasants was put in a pool whose incharge was the patwari. From this pool, land revenue, fees and perquisites of certain officials and sundry common expenses of the village were paid. Even the loan taken from the moneylenders was paid back out of the village pool.

The dominant group of people in a village constituted the village panchayat. The latter used to decide village affairs concerning dispute in excess of land rights, disposal of waste land, etc. It was also responsible to the state for arresting criminals, compensating for the value of goods stolen or tracing them. These panchayats were not above the state. The latter allowed it to discharge its traditional role in the village society only if its activities were not hampering the basic interests of the state. Some social groups in the village were not directly involved in the agrarian production, but they played some role' in the agrarian activities. The mahajans acted as middlemen flanked by the state and peasants and had considerable control in excess of the rural society and economy. They would advance loans to individual peasants and village collectively for buying seeds and equipments or pay revenue or for social needs.

The village had artisans attached to it to give their services and were paid at the harvest. The system was very well organised in Deccan and Maharashtra. These were called balutedars. The system of village community, panchayats or balutedars was not uniformly applicable to all the villages of the Mughal Empire. There were dissimilar types of structures in dissimilar regions. Most villages had some sort of community structure, though varying in degrees of control on their members.

### **Relations Flanked By Agrarian Classes**

We studied in relation to the various agrarian classes. We noticed that a number of groups appropriated a share in the surplus of the produce, i.e., jagirdars, religious grantees, zamindars and several intermediaries at the village stage. We have also studied in relation to the producing class or peasantry.

Both the zamindars and the jagirdars fed upon the surplus produce of the

peasant, and so, insofar as the exploitation of the peasantry was concerned, both acted as each other's collaborators. Yet, the zamindar, being permanently based would not allow exploitation that went beyond the alienation of surplus produce, for that would lead to exodus of the peasantry and desertion of agricultural operations which would in turn affect his own fiscal claims throughout the following year. The jagirdars, attitude is best reflected in Bernier's account who visited India in the mid-17th century. He writes that, because of the frequent transfers of jagirs the jagirdars, governors and revenue contractors were not bothered in relation to the deplorable state of peasantry. They so were interested in exploiting the peasantry to the maximum even at the cost of their desertion and fields lying unattended.

Jawahar Mal Bekas, an 18th century writer observes that the hakim (jagirdar) of a day can in a moment remove a zamindar of five hundred years, and put in his stead a man who has been without a place for a life-time. Irfan Habib further elaborates his powers and writes that "as for peasants, the jagirdars claimed powers to detain them on the land, like serfs, and bring them back, if they ran absent." In the second half of the 17th century due to the uncertainty of holding a jagir for a stipulated period, the jagirdars oppressed peasants. They had no regard for their welfare. According to Irfan Habib, "While undoubtedly the Mughal administration sought to take events to regulate and moderate the jagirdars' exactions, it is not certain that these could reduce the pressure for short-term maximization of revenue through individual jagirdars. Such pressure not only inhibited extension of farming, but also involved the Mughal ruling class in a deepening disagreement with the two major agrarian classes, the zamindars and the peasantry".

The divisions within the peasantry, as also the deep contractions that existed flanked by the peasants and agricultural workers, acted as severe constraints and weakened the capabilities of this class. Disjointed and truncated, this class was quite incapable of confronting the medieval despotic states. It did, though, revolt for two causes: one, when the revenue demand appropriated more than the surplus produce of the peasants, thereby threatening their very survival. Peasant revolts in these circumstances never went beyond asking for a reduction in revenue demand.

Peasants also revolted as followers of a zamindar who was leading a revolt against the state or jagirdar (mostly on the question of his claim to the produce of the soil), either in the hope that the end of revolt would lead to better circumstances of living for them or simply as rendering a service to their overlord. Peasant revolts of this nature were actually zamindari revolts: the zamindars led them and the peasants served the purposes of the zamindars alone.

## **LAND REVENUE SYSTEM: MARATHAS, DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIA**

### **Revenue System: Marathas And The Deccan States**

The land revenue system of the Deccan states owes much to Malik Ambar—the Nizam Shahi Prime Minister. It was he who for the first time adopted the most scientific methodology to assess and collect the revenue. He, in turn, was influenced through Todar Mal's regulations. All the Deccan states (Bijapur, Golkunda and Ahmednagar), including the Marathas, copied his regulations with minor modifications.

#### ***Mode of Assessment***

Under Malik Ambar, it was based on the assessment of actual area under farming and the cash value of the crop produced. But he actually did not order for the survey of the land and the assessment was done not through actual measurement but through observation. Assessment was done with the help of hereditary village officials—deshmukhs and patils. But Shivaji paid foremost attention to the measurement of land. Seeing the inaccuracy of rope (which was liable to variations in dissimilar seasons), Shivaji substituted it through a kathi (a measuring rod). Twenty kathis constituted a bigha and 120 bighas a chavar. But local variations in the bigha size existed.

Annaji Datto was entrusted the task of systematic assessment in 1678. Annaji also took the help of pargana and village officials for this survey work. But he did not rely wholly on those officials. To counteract and check their assessment, he himself did the spot assessment of one hilly, one marshy and one black soil area within a tapa. In several cases he made 25 to 100 per cent enhancements in excess of the assessments of local officials. Besides, the villagers were also consulted concerning the assessment of their holdings.

Malik Ambar classified the land broadly into two categories: baghayat (garden land) and zirayat (cultivated land). The latter was further divided into four categories. In Shivaji's time this member increased to twelve. Waste land was usually excluded from the assessment. But, when the pressure on land increased, more and more cultivable waste land was brought under farming. Malik Ambar followed the system of progressive assessment for the assessment of these new reclaimed lands. In the Nizam Shahi dominions when such land was reclaimed, no revenue was imposed for the first two years, but from the third year onwards, the state started claiming small share in the produce. In the 8th year revenue was claimed at the full rate. Though, under

the Marathas land tax was imposed from the very first year. Every year its rate was slowly enhanced and finally through the 8th year, it was assessed at full rate. Under the Marathas, sometimes these lands were assessed through the number of ploughs (hai) and not through the bigha. Sometimes, even 6-7 bighas were assessed as one bigha for revenue purpose. Revenue assessment also varied on the basis of the fertility of the soil. It was also assessed at several rates on the basis of the nature of the crops sown, e.g., sugarcane, pulses, cotton, etc. Even when the second crop was sown (other than the principal one), it was assessed at a lower rate. According to the fertility of the soil and the estimated produce, the demand was fixed once for all. Assessment was done on individual peasants separately, but for the realization purpose the whole village was treated as a single unit.

Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur also seem to have followed the same methods of assessment as those of Malik Ambar. Here we get reference to the use of tanab or measuring chain. In relation to the Golkunda we are not sure whether the assessment was done India on the basis of actual measurement or observation.

### ***Incidence of Revenue Demand***

Malik Ambar claimed 2/5th of the produce as state share in type which, when converted into cash demand amounted to 1/3 of the total value of the crop. The same amount was claimed through the Marathas, too. Though, when Shivaji abolished other cesses, a consolidated share of 40 per cent was claimed through the state.

In some Maratha tracts—Paumaval (1676) and Rohidkhore (1616)—batai was the prevalent form of assessment. Here, the state's claim amounted to 1/2 of the produce. Malik Ambar's system of assessment through observation was also followed in the Maratha tracts for the assessment of land of inferior quality.

In the kingdoms of Golkunda and Bijapur revenue demand was one half of the produce which seems to be quite high. Revenue demand as well as realization was usually made both in cash and in type. For garden lands revenue was always imposed in cash. In Golkunda revenue was usually composed in cash.

### ***Revenue Farming***

Malik Ambar's system did not give scope for revenue farmers. He tried to establish direct contact, through the hereditary village officials, with the peasants. Shivaji also followed Malik Ambar and not only totally did absent with the practice of farming out land but he also curtailed greatly the powers

of the local hereditary revenue officials (deshmukhs, patils etc). Though, later under the Peshwas land was farmed out to the kamavisdars in lieu of advance payment. But the farming out of land for the purpose of revenue collection was a fairly common characteristic of all the Deccan Sultanates. Instead of state collecting the revenue directly through its officials, the right to collect revenue was usually given to the highest bidders who promised to pay a lump sum to the state treasury. These revenue farmers used to sub-assign their rights and the latter in turn further sub-assigned their rights. This practice of farming out land and its further sub-assignments necessarily have loosened states' direct control in excess of peasants.

The coastal governors of Golkunda to the north of the river Krishna held their posts on farming conditions as did the havaldars in other parts of the kingdom. They, too, behaved like speculators and sub-assigned their rights further as was the case in other parts of the Deccan states. The central government exercised authority through the amils, but they too were interested more in regular payments rather than the welfare of the peasants. In Bijapur also some form of revenue farming existed as early as Yusuf Adil Shah's reign.

### ***Tributary Chiefs***

In Golkunda, the trans-Godavari tract and the districts of Khammamett and Mustafanagar were held through the tributary chiefs/rajas that used to pay regular tribute to the Qutab Shahi rulers, but they were free from the state control in internal matters. After the fall of Vijaynagar, several chieftains shaped part of Adil Shahi state. Adil Shahi rulers were also satisfied with tributes only; they hardly interfered in the territories of these chieftains/subdued rajas. Adil Shah received in relation to the Rs. 30 millions as annual tribute from the Hindu chiefs. But these tributes were not, though, regular. There was a tendency on the part of the chieftains to evade payment at the earliest opportunity.

### ***State and the Peasant***

Shivaji attempted to take special events to protect the peasants from the oppressive revenue officials. We have already read how he tried to curtail the power of the dehmukhi, deshpandes, patels, etc. He also abolished all the cesses (abwabs) to the advantage of the peasants. He appointed even his own state officials who used to visit personally and supervise the collection. Officials were asked to refrain from claiming more than the due share. Sometimes, to encourage the cultivators to return and settle down, the revenue officials were asked not to claim their previous arrears. To reclaim the arrears, the cultivator's tools and implements were not to be confiscated.

Revenue was to be composed in proper season and not at the time of sowing or sloughing or while the crops were still standing. In times of famine, drought and damage of crops, special concessions were given to the peasants. Taqavia in the form of cash, seeds and ploughs were distributed in the middle of peasants in times of need to be repaid on easy installments.

But Shivaji's system soon fell into abuse. The rising powers of the kamavtsdan, who approximately acted as revenue farmers through advancing razed to the Peshwas, destroyed all the advantages of Shivaji's events. With his new revenue experiment, Malik Ambar succeeded in protecting the interests of the peasants, promoting agriculture and eliminating the intermediaries as distant as possible. But his system accepted certain flaws as well. His assessment was not based on actual survey of land (this flaw was later corrected through Shivaji). The practice of estimation through observation was very defective because it was neither based on actual yields nor on correct assessment.

The Bijapur and Golkunda rulers whispered in farming out the whole revenue which necessity have provided added powers to the revenue officials. All these revenue officials were usually oppressive and their tendency was to extract as much as they could. The state and its appointed officials were satisfied so long as they were getting regular supply of their due share, without bothering for the welfare of the peasants. Let us remind you that Mughals imposed their own system of revenue administration in the Deccan states after the establishment of their suzerainty in these areas.

Mughals occupied Ahmednagar in 1636 and Bijapur and Golkunda states in 1686 and 1687 respectively. Curiously, when the Mughals tried to impose their own system there, there already existed desh mukhs and desh pandes who had deep-rooted landed interests. When the Mughals tried to impose an alien class, those of the saranjams, there appeared conflicting clash of interests. Each trying to grab the maximum benefits to the disadvantage of the peasants. Emergence of such peculiar characteristics created tension at the village stage.

### **Taxes Other Than Land Revenue**

Besides land revenue a number of illegal cesses and abwabs were paid through peasants. Under the Marathas and the Bijapur kingdom number of such cesses was approximately 50. Besides, forced Labor also prevailed. Shivaji seems to have abolished all illegal cesses.

Custom dues shaped an significant source of income. But the dues levied on import and export were fairly low. Favours were granted to the European

companies. In the Golkunda (Kumool) and Bijapur (Raichur Doab) kingdoms diamond mining shaped significant source of state's income. Besides, several taxes were imposed on salt, tobacco, vegetables, tari (fermented juice of date palm), etc. jiziya, too, was a source of Adil Shahi income. Income from minting and peshluuh (tributes) and war booty, etc. also shaped significant sources of states' income.

### ***Chauth and Sardeshmukhi***

These two shaped the major sources of income for the Marathas. Some have termed it sheer plunder and loot. Sardeshmukhi was an exaction of 10 percent imposed upon the revenues of the whole Maratha kingdom. Shivaji claimed it as the supreme head of the country (sar deshmulth, i.e., head of the desh mukhs). The Marathas claimed chauth (i.e. 1/4th of the total revenue) from the neighbouring chieftains whose territories did not form part of their homeland/swarajya.

### **Land Revenue System: South India**

Through the close of 16th century, there appeared five powerful Nayak states—Ikkeri, Mysore, Senji, Tanjavur and Madurai. The debacle of the Vijaynagar rulers at the hands of combined forces of the Deccan states in 1565 at the battle of Talikota, provided opportunity to the Bijapur and Golkunda rulers to encroach upon the Vijaynagar territories. The Mughal pressure also pressed the Deccan Sultanates to expand southwards. As for Malabar, there were no large kingdoms. In this region Cannanore, Calicut and Cochin were most significant. With this background, let us analyze the land revenue system of these South Indian states.

### ***Nayak Kingdoms***

Before proceeding further, let us remind you that since the Nayak states were the offshoots of the Vijaynagar polity, the basic land structure under the Nayak kingdoms also remained the same. The king was at the helm of affairs; then there were nayaks, below them were the poligars holding command in excess of the palaiyams. The lowest unit was the village. Though in the late 16th and early 17th century, the kings' power had become weak, yet a part of revenue did flow to the centre. Senji and Madurai nayaks used to send some amount as late as the early 17th century. Though, the Odeyars and the Ikkari nayaks totally stopped paying the tribute. Raja Odeyar of Mysore finally (1610) acquired Srirangapattanam from the local Vijayagar viceroy and therefore totally snapped his relations with the Vijaynagar rulers and acted

independently. We do not get enough details of the working of the land revenue system under the Nayaks. Though, land revenue was the chief source of state's income under them.

The Madura Nayaks are reported to have claimed 1/2 of the produce as state's share. The state appears to collect the revenue in cash. The whole land was not given to the poligars. The crown land (bhandaravada), though smaller in comparison to palaiyams, was the best land reserved for the government for the maintenance of the crown land. The Madura Nayaks maintained vast revenue machinery for assessment and collection. But the poligars used to pay in the form of tribute (a lump sum) which amounted to 1/3 of the produce. But, sometimes, the poligars received total remission of tribute as rewards for public services. Likewise, under weak Nayaks the poligars tended to refrain from full payment. Besides, how through the 16th century 'patrimonialism' was on the rise. These poligars held land in those areas which had patrilineal proximity (specially the Maravaras expanded fast on this basis). In such areas, the poligars became independent those poligars even set up their own military and administrative structure. Divided their territories in the middle of their kinsmen and other subsidiary chieftains called servaikkarars, who owed military allegiance and tribute and demanded the same from village headman.

With such long chain of intermediaries involved in the collection process, hardly any substantial amount reached the Nayaks. For C. Hayavadana Rao, the state's share in South India was 1/4 of the produce, and that of the proprietor (if separate from the cultivator) a further quarter. Newly cultivated land was exempted from revenue in the first year (in the Godavari delta), and in the second, 1/4th was taken.

In Mysore, the Odeyar ruler Chikkadevaraja Odeyar (1673-1704) is reported to have organised the land tax. The salary of the state officials was half in cash and half in type. He ordered that no official should spend more than his income. Through a careful revenue policy, he accumulated 9 karors of pagodas in his treasury and was acclaimed through his subjects as Navakoti Narayana. The revenue income from a village was estimated and the items of expenditure laid down. Relief in taxation was also given in case of flood, etc. But evasion of tax was severely dealt with. At the village stage the parupatyagara was responsible to collect all local taxes. He was also the trustee of the land grants made through the king. The Gandike was responsible for the realization of revenue. We also hear in relation to the accountants (karanika) and the treasury officers—bhandara, parapategara, senabova and nadadhikhari—appointed in some significant cities and villages. Before Shivappa Nayaka (1645-60), the land revenue system was underdeveloped. It was he who regularised the revenue system. His system of land tenure and assessment orders was called Sivappa Nayak Sist. He classified the land, ascertained the fertility of the soil and fixed the rent on the basis of average

produce. Land was classified into five categories:

- Uttamam: consisting of black sand;
- Madhyamam: of red and mixed soils;
- Kamoshtam: consisting of mixed black soil with a little water;
- Adhama: soil without moisture—hard soil, and
- Adhamadhamam consisting of hot sandy dry soil unfit for farming (barren land).

For twelve successive years, one plot of each of these categories was cultivated for the king. An accurate record of the seeds sown and the value of the produce was maintained. Total produce for five years and its market value were calculated. Then the average per year was struck. One-third of the average was demanded as the state's share. Further the maximum and the minimum rates of assessment were fixed.

With regard to the garden of areca-nut, he fixed 1000 areca-nut trees as a unit. Every tree necessity not be less than 18 feet in height for the purpose of assessment. As for the nature of land tax in South India throughout the 17th century, it can be termed as oppressive in the same manner as it was in the Deccan states. The Nayaks hardly seem to have attempted to alter the traditional system of revenue collection (as it was prevalent under the Vijaynagar rulers). They hardly took interest in controlling the intermediaries (poligars) who took absent much revenue for themselves. R. Sathyanatha Aiyar is highly critical of the oppression of peasants under the Madurai Nayaks. For him, it is hard to consider that a kingdom based on the worst form of tyranny and injustice, was able to hold its own against its enemies even for a short time, and that it was able to create any contribution to the progress of the country'. Though, Sanjay Subrahmanyam stresses that these poligars (whom he has termed 'portfolio capitalists') helped greatly in the development of trade and commerce, market towns and generating irrigation facilities to the advantage of the peasants etc. So, according to him, there was hardly any decline in the South Indian economy. He has criticized those who argued that after the battle of Talikota, constant warfare was the chief characteristic of the South Indian polity which ultimately led to the decline in economy as well.

### ***Malabar States***

The Malabar states were an exception where no land tax existed. (Though some historians have raised doubt in excess of this assumption). Here the chief sources of the states' income were: from custom dues; personal participation of the chiefs/rajās in trade, and income from their demesne directly controlled through the king/rajās. In fact, owner-cultivators regularly made in excess of their holdings to temples and agreed to cultivate as tenants. In return, they paid 1/8th to 1/6th of the produce to the temples. The peasants' preference to pay to

the temples was obvious for it was comparatively less than the state demand. Besides, since all the temple lands were revenue-free, the state hardly derived income from the land tax. Such concentration of possessions in the hands of the temples often resulted in disagreement flanked by the rulers and the temples.

### ***Taxes Other than Land Revenue***

Custom dues (recognized as chimkan in Malabar) shaped single most significant source of revenue. In the Malabar states, succession fees (purushantaram) was also levied at the time of the transfer of ancestral property of the deceased. This tax was not levied on agriculturists, but merchants were asked to pay it. Several types of fines (pizha) also shaped part of the nadus' income. A form of 'escheat system' was also prevalent. The properties of those nobles who died without legitimate heir were liable to confiscation. The plunder from the cargo ships also shaped part of the chiefs' income. Charges for adopting a child to continue a family line also shaped a source of income. The pearl and shank fisheries were significant source of the Madurai Nayak's revenue. But they always clashed with the Marava kings who also put a claim to the proceeds from fishing. The Dutch also grabbed a big share through buying the pearls at nominal prices. Inscriptions also mention taxes on looms and weavers, imports and exports, land and water communications and octroi duties, etc. The Ikkeri Nayaks also levied extra cess on garden farming (birada), presents for festivals (hebbakanike), on fishermen (bestagarake), on forest produce (banada soge), on washermen (madihadike), for maintaining the village accountants (senabovana vartane), perquisites paid to village or town servants for their services (vartane), tax on laborers, on market towns (mulavisa) and patti to be paid as chauth to the Marathas.' Fairs, marriages, procession and temple festivals were also taxed.

## **AGRARIAN RELATIONS: DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIA**

### **Medieval Deccan Village: Characteristics**

Before analysing the several land rights, we will provide a brief description of the medieval Deccan village where these agricultural lands were situated. We will also deal with a more intricate problem concerning the ownership of land in medieval Deccan and the village community. The village is referred to as gaon or uru in the local language of the Deccan. It is also called mauje (a corrupt form of Arabic mauza), and deh (persian). A bigger village that incorporated a market place (bazar) was called kasbe (Arabic qasbah). The word gaon is derived from Sanskrit grama. The vast expanse of

village fields was called gaon shiwan. It consisted of cultivated (kali) and non cultivated or waste lands. Cultivable land was divided into plots. Fields belonging to one family were called thal (Sanskrit Sthala). It consisted of 20-40 blocks. Each block consisted of area called shet or kshetra (Sanskrit) or jamin (Persian zamin). Each area jointly with the surname of the original family proprietor was registered in the village records lists called thalazadas. The records containing the extent of land actually cultivated, and the amount of revenue assessed, were incorporated in a ledger called Kul ghadni.

The boundaries of the village were well demarcated and any encroachment upon it was unwelcome. The cultivable area of a village was called kali (indigenous term originally meaning black soil fit for farming) and the residential site of a village was recognized as gaon sthan or pandhari (indigenous term, originally meaning white soil unfit for farming). The pandhari was bounded and protected through a wall called gaon Kunsu. It was divided into house sites called ghar, thikane or gharthana. Each family built a house (ghar or vada) on its allotted site. The house site and the house left through a family (gatkul) which had either left the village or had become extinct were called gatkul, gharthana and gatkul vada respectively. These lands were either taken in excess of through the village community or acquired through a new family, but the name of the original proprietor was not changed in the thalazadas. The original family in possession of thal or estate was called jatha. The jatha family was synonymous with thalkari or thalwahi, and the list of divisions in consonance with family names was recognized as zaminzada jathawar. One such division was munda. The villages varied in size according to the fertility of the soil, produce and population.

## **Land Ownership**

The question of ownership of land has been and continues to be a subject of scholarly debate. The Manu Smriti held that land belonged to the person (or family) who reclaimed it from the forest or brought it under farming. A modern juridical work Parashurampratap compiled through Sabaji Pratap Raja, a protege of Burham Nizam Shah I, throws light on the issue of the ownership of land. It reinforces the claim of the king to the wealth of the soil only, thereby conceding the proprietary rights of the cultivators. In the Nizam Shahi kingdom, Malik Ambar revived the ancient co-parcenary village institutions through recognizing the hereditary proprietary rights of the Thakari called mirasi. The Marathas looked to the ancient traditions laid down in the Smritis as regards the problem of land ownership. The village co-parcenary and gota institutions existed in the Maratha realm in the 17th-18th century. There is evidence of a sale-deed which refers to the sale of land, transferring the mirasi rights to the Peshwa. In another instance, land was

granted through the village community to the Peshwa for a sum of money assuring him against the claims of the former proprietors. The author of the treatise Vyavaharmayukha (a 17th work) points out that state is not the owner of all lands but can only realize taxes from landholders.

The several rights of the king in the soil have been mentioned in the grants of the Marathas. The Vyavaharmayukha regards vrittis or watans (consisting of land and houses) as private property. It also refers to the right of partition, sale, mortgage and inheritance which further corroborates the function and subsistence of gota majlis (village assembly). In the Muslim ruled states, the question of land rights and ownership of land acquired a new dimension due to several causes. The Muslim legal theories concerning the rights of the conquered races or tributaries give the basis for resolving the problem of land ownership. In accordance with these theories, an significant duty of a Muslim ruler was to wage wars against the land occupied through the non-Muslims (bar ui harb). The people of the areas conquered in this process were extended protection on payment of tribute. These people were called zimmi. The author of the traditional Islamic fiqh Hidayah states concerning the conquered territories that either they should be divided in the middle of the soldiers in conventionality with the method suggested through the Prophet, or they should be restored to the original inhabitants on payment of jiziyah and kharaj (land tax). In the latter case, property rights were vested with the original inhabitants. The amount the zimmi had to pay as land tax was one half of the produce, whereas the Muslims were required to pay a tenth of the produce called ushr. The Muslim\* theorists regard cultivators as tenants referred to in documents as r'ayats. Their right to property in the soil and in that sense ownership of land was not recognized formally through the Muslim rulers except Malik Ambar who accepted mirasi rights.

Modern theories concerning the ownership of land in medieval Deccan also deserve attention. The first theory advocated through B.H. Baden-Powell in his work, *The Indian Village Community* (1896)', regards approximately all agricultural land (except inam and watan in which case individual or institutional ownership was prevalent) to have been owned through the state. According to him: "Ownership was only acknowledged in land granted revenue free through the state and apparently in lands held on the privileged tenure of watan" (land held in virtue of office in a village or district). A.S. Altekar counters the above through propounding a theory of peasant ownership of all agricultural land. In his work '*A History of Village Communities in Western India* (1927)', he neither accepts communal ownership of land (as advocated through Marx and H.J.S. Maine) nor state ownership but enunciates peasant proprietor ownership. He goes to the extent of denying the inamdars any proprietary rights in the soil and recognizes inamdars as having only one right, i.e., to collect the revenue. S.N. Sen in his *Administrative System of the Marathas* (1923) categorizes three types of land

viz., inam, miras and state's land and two classes of peasants—mirasdars and uparis. The mirasdars possessed permanent proprietary rights in their land and could not be evicted as long as they paid rent. The land held through the mirasdars was hereditary and saleable, and, even when they were evicted for non-payment of tax, they had the right to recover their ancestral lands. The uparis were tenants-at-will holding government land under the supervision of mamlatdars. These theories are based on the reports of the early British administrators and concede two significant points:

- There were two classes of peasants, and
- The miras land belonged to the individual mirasdars on which tax was levied.

The reports though disagree on the question of rights in the land of extinct families and wastelands. They do not specify watan and inam tenures and maintain ambiguity as regards government lands.

### **Categories Of Land Rights**

The rights and privileges enjoyed through the cultivating families comprising the village community were determined in accordance with the degree of superiority of proprietary rights in land held through them. The cultivated area of a village was divided into:

- Miras lands
- Inam lands
- State lands and
- Lands of extinct families.

The several rights in these lands would throw light on the agrarian system of the period under review.

### ***Inam Lands***

Inam is an Arabic word originally meaning gift or reward. In its broadest sense, it suggests either simply inam, inam villages or inam lands. Mere inam implied grant of a specific amount of revenue of a village to a person. The inam village was assigned on a hereditary basis to persons or officials. Here we will focus only on the nature of inam as a category of land tenure. The inam lands were either totally exempt from tax, or subject to a low tax called inam patti. It was a privileged category of land right. Inam was assigned to dissimilar categories: hereditary village officials, state officials, temples and balutedars (priests). The holders were designated inamdars. There were both resident and absentee inamdars. There is enough evidence to prove that these land assignments were hereditary.

Rights in the inam land held through a watandar (hereditary village office holder) were saleable and transferable jointly with the office or watan. Though it cannot be said with certainty whether the inam lands and the watan could be sold or transferred separately. It has not been recognized whether the inam lands held through institutions such as temples, monasteries, etc. could be sold without any constraints.

### ***State Land (Crown Land)***

Land held through the government as a corporate body or through the Peshwa/ruler could be treated as state land, although there might have been some type of variation flanked by the two. State lands existed in several villages of the Deccan supervised through the local bureau crates. They could be sold through them after taking approval from the central government. These lands were granted in inam or could be developed into house sites.

### ***Waste Lands or Lands of Extinct Families***

The mirasi rights and inam rights were unambiguous; though, the rights in the land of extinct families or wastelands contained a large degree of vagueness. These lands could be sold through either the village headman or village assembly or state. The lands of the families which had become extinct were called gatkul zamin. Lands which were left uncultivated for long periods were called pad zamin. Even the miras lands contained pad zamin. We will discuss those lands which had become, barren due to the extinction of the proprietors. Both gatkul zamin and pad zamin meant wastelands. The term khalisa pad zamin referred to state wastelands.

The wastelands could be appropriated and disposed off through the village headman, local village assembly and government. The lands expropriated through the village headman were regarded as miras lands on which land revenue was levied. The houses and house sites of extinct families could be acquired through the village headman after taking the approval of the local village assembly. Though, usually this was not a lucrative proposition. The lands therefore appropriated were cultivated through the uparis on a share-cropping basis and were subject to a high and fixed land revenue demand which could be relaxed only in the event of crop failure. Though such an undertaking added to the headman's social prestige, on the whole it was not worthwhile. Above all, the headman did not have the authority to dispose off the land according to his wishes.

Wastelands were disposed off through the local assembly either as miras or as inam lands. The purchaser (inamdar) of wastelands in the form of inam

was not required to pay land tax on the lands. Though, the village as a group had to pay land tax to the government on large inam lands therefore sold. Wastelands sold as miras lands were subject to a heavy land tax which had to be paid through the new incumbent. The government at the request of the headman gave absent wastelands to mirasdars as compensation for taking in excess of their miras lands located close to the inhabited area of a village for converting them into house sites. The grant of wastelands to local bureaucrats and hereditary officers was a means of encouraging farming. Wastelands were also granted as inam to individuals and institutions. The king or Peshwa also received wastelands in the form of grants. Wastelands which were neither appropriated through the village headman nor through the local assembly were resumed through the government. The government granted these lands as inam to priests, state officials, temples, mosques, hereditary officers, etc. In this manner, the government aimed at curtailing state expenditure and also securing the allegiance of the grantees to the state.

### **Village Community**

The village community was based on the principle of hereditary rights in land. This principle was derived from ancient Hindu system of joint property. The village headman, accountant, artisans, landholders, etc. constituted the village community. A few autonomous village units combined to form larger territorial units called naikwadi or sthal (Pre-Muslim Hindu period) under an officer called naik whose tasks incorporated assisting the village headman for collecting revenue and heading the local militia. In relation to the 84 or more villages combined, to form an administrative division called paragana or desh headed through a deshmukh. These larger territorial units acted as links flanked by the villages and the ruler. The Sardesais and Sardesbpandes (above the deshmukhs and desais) were other components in the chain flanked by villages and the ruler. A village consisting of a trading centre was called qasba. The corporate body of the village and desh was called gota derived from Sanskrit gotra which means family. Therefore the villages and parganas as territorial units which were constituted according to the ancient customs of village communities remained unaffected through political changes.

### ***Theories***

The socio-economic writings of the 19th century project two broad theories on the nature of the Indian village community. The first theory as advocated through Karl Marx (based on two books written through British administrators, e.g., Sir C.T. Metcalfe, the acting Governor-General of India who considers the Indian village community as stagnant) regards the village community as 'self-sufficing' and unchangeable based on 'division of Labor'. The individuals such as priest, barber, headman, etc. are referred to as rural

servants through Baden Powell and others. According to Karl Marx, these servants were maintained at the expense of the whole community. Relying on Baden- Powell's work *Indian Village Community* (1896). Max Weber pointed out that the village servants were provided a share in land or harvest or money in return for the service they performed for the village community. This Max Weber conditions as 'demiurgical Labor'. Marx and Weber attribute the 'unchangeableness' of Indian society to 'economic self sufficiency' and 'Caste system combined with magical traditionalism.

The view of the historians like S.N. Sen and A.S. Altekar are in conventionality with the theory propounded through Marx and Weber. Both agree that the village servants were employed through the village as a whole. S.N. Sen clearly points to the hereditary nature of occupation of the village servants. Refuting the demiurgic theory, sociologists and anthropologists writing on rural India and the little communities enunciate the jajmani theory. It was first propounded through W.H. Wiser, an American Christian missionary. According to him, rural servants were occupied on a hereditary basis through certain families (patrons) belonging to the dominant castes on a trans-village stage. T.O. Beidelman defines the jajmani system as a feudal system consisting of hereditary obligations of payment and service flanked by two or more families of dissimilar castes in the same area. M.N. Srinivas, an eminent sociologist, does not accept the jajmani concept. He cites instances to disprove the element of hereditary service and also the opinion concerning the relation flanked by specific families.

### ***Peasants***

The reports of the British administrators as well as the indigenous Marathi records throw valuable light on the categories of peasants and the land tenures which existed in the Deccan. Several conditions are used for the peasants in the records such as raiyat, loka, praja, kula or kunbi. The village land was held through the peasants or cultivators. They can be divided into two broad categories:

- Mirasdars and
- Uparis.

The mirasdar (mirasi or thalkari) was usually a landed proprietor cultivator (free holder). The upari was a tenant-at-will. He was a stranger in the village where he cultivated the land either of the mirasdar or government (after the second half of the 18th century). These lands were held through the upari on the ukti tenure. This was a land-lease comprising a verbal agreement for a year in which the rent rates were not fixed. The tenant cultivators also held land on Qaul (agreement)-Istava (land) tenure. It was a contractual agreement (lease for 5, 7 or 9 years) planned to encourage cultivators to bring wasteland under

farming. The deshmukh who issued the Qavl- Istawa was allowed commission on the wasteland therefore reclaimed. Large inam lands were cultivated through the uparis on a share cropping (batai) basis. Occasionally, the mirasdars could also be tenants holding Inam lands. The absentee inamdar got his share of rent in cash either through his agent in the village or village headman whom he deputed for the task. The resident inamdar was paid rent in type. The amount was usually half of the gross produce.

Individual peasants and hereditary village officers were holders of miras lands on which land tax was levied. The obligation to pay the final land tax to the government even in the case of poor harvest or crop failure induced the mirasdars and village headman to leave the village. The uparis were the tenants of the mirasdars who cultivated the miras land on sharecropping conditions. They paid the rent to the government if their landlord was absconding. It was usually 2/3rd of the total produce. An significant change which occurred in the second half of the 18th century was that the mirasdars became cultivators of lands and the uparis were encouraged through the government to cultivate state and wastelands. It is clear that tenancy was not prevalent on a large level in the Deccan, sale of land was infrequent and that the uparis soon acquired occupancy rights in land.

### ***Got Sabha or Majlis***

Gota Sabha was an independent body which held jurisdiction in excess of the administrative, fiscal and judicial affairs of the village or pargana. The administrative body of the village consisting of the local officials of the pargana was called diwan. The two—got and diwan—performed the role of arbiter in disputes brought to them through the village community. The watandars and baiutedars-watandars participated in the meeting of the got sabha. The Muslim rule in the Deccan promoted the development of the majlis system, the qazi serving as the link flanked by gota and diwan. The traditional system of naming the judgement according to the nature of transaction was discontinued. The verdict was attested through the members of the majlis before it became a legal document (mahzar).

### **Watan System**

Watan is an Arabic term and watan system owes its origin in the Deccan to the establishment of the Muslim rule. Broadly speaking, it refers to a hereditary grant made through the government to an office-holder in a village, in lieu of services rendered through him to the village community. The hereditary village officers were permanent residents of the village (desaks) and were granted land through the state jointly with rights and immunities in lieu

of administrative tasks performed through them in the village. The desaks were called watandars (deshmukh, desai, deshpande, kulkarni, etc). They were exempted from payment of land revenue to the government. The Smritis refer to vrittis which was the indigenous variant of watan, and the emolument received through the holders of vrittis were termed as nibandhas. The rent-free land held through the watandar was called inam.

The chief hereditary officer of the village was the patel, also called gava patel or mokaddam patel in the modern Marathi records. The main responsibility of the patel was to collect land revenue and remit the government share to the state treasury. As the village headman, he performed many administrative duties in the village. In return, he received certain privileges (haq) and perquisites (lazims) which were mentioned in his watan-deed. Haq was granted to him as a matter of right (legal grants). It consisted of a share of the total revenue collection in cash or type which was fixed through the state. Lazim was voluntary payment such as phaski (a handful of any corn) pasodi (a garment), etc; free services from mahars and artisans; seniority rights (man pan) which enabled him to preside in excess of the village festivities. Besides the patel, other officers such as kulkarni, and chaugula (patel's assistant) also enjoyed perquisites and rights in return for their services.

The hereditary officers of a paragana were deshmukh and deshpande. The deshmukh was the head patel. For his services he was paid in type from land and also received services and goods from the village servants, merchants, etc. Besides, he also held land in the village. The desh-kulkarni supervised the work of the kulkarnis in his paragana. He was though subordinate to the deshpande. The desh-kulkarni received remuneration in the form of rent-free land as well as payment in cash and type which was usually half the amount the deshmukh received.

Seth and Mahajan were hereditary officials of the qasba or peth (market village). They received emoluments in cash or type and land. A taraf or karyat consisted of a few villages. This territorial unit was smaller than a paragana. The hereditary officer of this unit was the naik. His task was to collect taxes from the cultivators. Later in the Muslim-ruled states, this officer was replaced through the havaladar. The deshmukhs and deshpandes were the zamindars (haqqadars) who did not possess proprietary rights in excess of all the lands under their jurisdiction. They sold their lands only under desperation, but the rights and privileged attached to their office could not be sold separately. Their position remained unaffected even in times of political upheavals.

There was a sharp distinction flanked by the mirasi and watani rights. Mirasi was a hereditary proprietorship right in the land, whereas the watani right flowed from the office held and services offered through the watandar which was transferable. A mirasdar could also be a watandar, but a watandar

need not necessarily be a mirasdar. A watandar, though, held inam lands on a hereditary basis.

### ***Balutedars***

The rural servants in Mahrasthrian villages are referred to as twelve balutes (bare balute) or alutas. The scholars differ concerning the composition of the balutedars. Though, the following were invariably incorporated in the list: carpenter, blacksmith, potter, leather-worker, rope maker, barber, washerman, astrologer, Hindu priest and mahar. The term (referred to through Grant Duff, etc) twelve alutas was almost certainly an extension of the word balutas and had the same connotation. The alutas are not mentioned in the 18th century Marathi documents and, therefore, it appears that they were found only occasionally in villages. There were two categories' of the balutedars watan holding balutas and stranger(upari) balutas. The first category possessed hereditary monopoly in excess of their services. They were employed through the village as a whole and served the individual villagers. The balutedars were paid through the peasants in three methods:

- In type or cash called baluta;
- In the form of perquisites, rights and privileges in cash or type, and
- In the form of revenue-free inam lands.

It is not clear whether the perquisites were enjoyed through the upari-balutas also. Concerning the inam lands, it can be safely said that only watan-holding balutas were entitled to hold these lands. The baluta-watan could be transferred divided or sold without the consent of the village as a whole, but such a transaction required the sanction of the village assembly. The division of the baluta-watan did not imply division of service duties, but of emoluments. The amount of emoluments did not augment; so, such a practice was not discouraged. The balutas remained the servants of the whole village and not of any family.

The balutas usually belonged to dissimilar occupational castes. The priest and the accountant were Brahmins. The priests did not hold any watan. Their function was confined to certain castes or families because of the peculiar nature of Hindu rites and ceremonies. These families (jajman) were either temporary or permanent clients of the priests. Therefore, the jajmani principle is applicable to priests, but not to the twelve balutas. In the final analysis, it can be stated that the watandars and balutedars were maintained and controlled through the village as a body.

## ***Feudalism***

The pargana and the village community represented a vertically stratified structure, whereas jati was structurally horizontal and had a trans-village character. The latter constituted an significant component of a village and paragana. It also had a tribal structure which imparted to it a mobile and militant character. Therefore the community structure of the local society in medieval Deccan was pluralistic, but stratified either horizontally or vertically. From this we can infer that the Indian village community was not self-sustained and isolated but had linkages with neighbouring villages. The factor which regulated the functioning of the community structure was the watan system which represented division of Labor flanked by peasants and artisans in the village community. The augment in productivity in the local society led to the accumulation of surplus which got converted into perquisites of the community leaders. In a society where land was accessible in plenty a system based on landed property could not have evolved. Instead, the peasant proprietors turned community leaders were metamorphosed into the rural ruling class which acquired the attributes of exploiters through the end of the 16th century. Approximately this time, the watan tended to become the private property of the grantees. It was sold separately and freely in this period. The perquisites of the rural ruling class absorbed into the political structure of the state were transformed into rights of exaction. This tendency is seen through historians like Fukazawa as feudalization from below. Though, we discover that class relations flanked by peasants and rural ruling classes were not lord-serf relations as in medieval Europe, but they can be termed as communal-based agrarian relations. In the context of medieval Deccan, the peasants were the direct producers who possessed the means of production accepted on through a nuclear peasant family. The community leaders who became the exploiting class of the local society did not become landlords or feudal lords because landownership in a society where land was abundant was not an significant criteria for appropriating the surplus produced through the peasants and artisans. In such a society it was the community which was supreme, and the rural ruling groups could not monopolise the judicial rights in excess of the peasants. The grant of jagirs and saranjam (mokasa) to state officials for realizing revenue from the paraganas and villages has been termed as feudalization from above. But these conditions should be used with caution considering the peculiarities of the situation in medieval Deccan.

## **South India: Agrarian Structure**

In the 17th and 18th centuries, reports were prepared through the British administrators on the land-tenure in South India Stone inscriptions and local village documents (kaiflyat), resolutions adopted at the village stage written on palm leaves and contained in Mackenzie collections, Christian missionary

documents, foreign travellers accounts are the several sources which throw light on the land system of South India. The reports of the British officers refer to communal holding of land in South Indian villages. In the pre-modern period, land holding and farming were the basis of production. There were two types of villages in South India: brahmadeya and non- brahmadeya. The Brahmins were granted villages through the rulers called Brahmadeya. In these villages the Brahmins recognized a communal self-governing body called sabha. These villages were mostly recognized throughout the Pallava and Chola times. Non- brahmadeya villages were more ancient and numerically more than the brahmadeya ones. From a study of inscriptions of the same locality and of the same period the following point emerges: 1) individual (big landlords held several villages) landholding prevalent in brahmadeya and communal landholding in the middle of urar (peasants) in non- brahmadeya villages. Ur was the assembly in non-brahmadeya villages. In the Vijaynagar period, the village was the major unit in which land rights were vested. There was a shift in focus from nadu (locality) called nattar and okkul (in Karnataka) throughout the Chola period to village as the prime unit in the Vijaynagar kingdom. The autonomous bodies like sabha Ur, and nattar declined and later disappeared in the Vijaynagar period giving place to nayak or independent chieftain.

The village servants (ayagars) were given manya or tax-free land, or subject to quit rent. Land tenures for Brahmins and temples were called Ekobhogam and devadana respectively. Private right (income shares) accruing from increased productivity due to investment in agriculture was called dasavanda or katku-kodage in Karnataka. An significant change in the landholding system and agrarian structure occurred in the 16th century. The warrior chieftains (nayaks) of Vijaynagar penetrated into the local kinbased peasant societies in the Tamil country. Temples in the Tamil region had functioned as autonomous landholders and corporate institutions for a long period. The Vijaynagar chieftains took in excess of the management of temples. The agrarian economy underwent a drastic change since the temple lands were transformed into contractual tenures. Through acquiring control in excess of these tenures, the chieftains got metamorphosed into agrarian magnates.

### **Nature Of Land Rights**

The several categories of agrarian rights (kaniyatchi) that existed in the rural society will throw valuable light on the interaction flanked by the nayaks and the peasants. The agrarian surplus produced through the peasantry and successfully extracted through the Telegu nayaks was the basis of the power of the Vijaynagar state. The dry plains of the Tamil country were settled through

migrant Telegu warrior clans like Thottian, Panta Reddi, Naidu and Kambalattar. The traditional Tamil peasant elites and their groups like nattavar (villages) and uravar (peasant settlements) were displaced through Telegu-speaking groups who transformed this area into a peripheral zone.

The warrior-chieftains promoted agricultural development through bringing hitherto populated (kongu) region under rigorous farming. Tank irrigation was introduced in the black soil belt of kongu, and farming of cash crops like sugarcane was encouraged. The later 15th century witnessed the conversion of temple lands (devadana) into semiprivate landed estates (kaniparru) of the warrior chieftains. There is an inscription of A.D. 1511 which refers to conversion of a peasant settlement with a temple tenure (tirunamathukkani) into a kaniparru of a warrior chieftain. The right to cultivate as well as levy taxes was transferred to the grantee. Several land and fiscal rights were contained in these land transactions of the 16th century. The traditional peasant elites, viz., uravar and nattar and the peasant assemblies such as were replaced through the dynamic and expanding nayak created agrarian political structure.

Several towns or fortified settlements were recognized in this period through the nayaks. They served as both political and economic centres. They were conspicuous through their absence in the Kaveri delta. Palaiyan was reclaimed land held through the warrior chieftains where peasants, artisans, and merchants were integrated into the political and economic network recognized through the nayak chief. They extracted kudanaï (local dues) and sittayam from the peasants and artisans respectively. The land tenure of the nayaks is referred to as kaniparru. It almost certainly refers to rights in lands, i.e., to buy and sell without the absolute right of ownership. It also refers to a diversity of taxes. An inscription dated A.D. 1522 testifies to the transfer of temple land and the rights associated with land to the nayak. The rights were as follows:

- To collect dues from the peasants;
- To cultivate the land and settle people; and
- To receive *prasadam* (sacred food) from the temple.

Though, the transfer of land to the nayak did not imply transfer of the right of ownership. The nayak could use the land and collect taxes, but the temples reserved the right of ownership to themselves.

Kaniparru was a conditional and contractual tenure or a lease flanked by the warrior chieftains and temples. The temples retained the right of ownership and imposed obligations on the nayaks to pay the temples a certain amount in cash or type. The process of transfer of land did not lead to eviction of peasants. They retained their share (*karat*) of land. In case of transfer of temple lands to the peasants, the peasant leaders (*mudalis*) took in excess of the farming of the land. They paid *vadavalhi* (tribute) to the temple. This type of

peasant land-tenure was called kudiningadevadanam. The peasants in such villages had a permanent share in land and could not be displaced.

The rate of taxation was high. Besides, peasants were pressed to maintain irrigation facilities. Agrarian stress was building up but was held back due to the availability of land in the kongu area. Later, in the 17th century, when this area ('the boundary') was closed, peasant discontent increased. This was an outcome of the agrarian policies of the Vijaynagar nayaks. Taxes imposed through the central and local governments on the land leased out through the temples were paid to the temple authorities through the leaseholders. Land leased out through temples were not totally exempt from taxes. The taxes received from the leaseholders were remitted through the temple authorities to the state while retaining certain other taxes like kadamal for themselves. The leaseholders were given the right of farming and reclamation and colonization of land. Usually, leaseholders did not cultivate themselves; they got it done through others. They paid taxes to the temple treasury in cash or type. Cultivators also got a share of the produce. The leaseholders were approximately the owners of the leased land.

The mirasi right was an significant component of the land system in South India. The mirasdars held tax-free land called manlyam. They were entitled to a share of the produce (kuppattam) from these lands.

In certain cases, many mirasdars held village land jointly. The cultivators were called payakari who were divided into two groups-Likud's and parakudis. The former stayed in the village. Their rights were not transferable and could not be infringed upon. The parakudis were tenants-at-will whose right of farming was contractual. Taxes paid through the mirasdar or the government were referred to as pannu, irai, vari, etc. There were two categories of the mirasdars—resident and non-resident. Slave Labor was also employed through the mirasdars to cultivate land. The mirasdars acted as intermediaries flanked by the government and villagers. Therefore, mirasi right though hereditary was not uniform. Its nature varied from place to place. It could be transferred through sale, mortgage or gift.

## **FISCAL AND MONETARY SYSTEM, PRICES**

### **Fiscal System**

It is very hard to ascertain the exact share of taxes other than land revenue in the total income of the Empire. Shirin Moosvi has calculated them to be approximately 18% and 15% for the subas (provinces) of Gujarat and Agra, while in rest of the subas it was less than 5% (The Economy of the Mughal

Empire c. 1600). Here, we will not go into the details of several taxes. We will confine ourselves to what these taxes were and what was the mechanism to collect them.

### ***Taxes other than Land Revenue***

The main sources were tolls and levies on craft production, market levies, customs and *rahdari* (road tax) both on inland and overseas trade, and also mint charges. Separately from these, the state treasury received vast amounts through method of war booty, tributes and gifts from several quarters. Approximately everything sold on the market was taxable. The main articles taxed were clothes, leather, foodgrains, cattle, etc. Every time the merchandise was sold, a certain tax was to be paid. We do not have enough data to calculate the exact rate of taxation. The general accounts suggest that these taxes were quite harsh. Peter Mundy (1632) complains that the governor at Patna was harsh in realizing taxes, and even women bringing milk for sale were not exempted. Another modern writer says that every trader—from the rose-vender down to clay vender, from the weaver of fine linen to that of coarse cloth had to pay tax.

Separately from merchants, all the artisans also paid taxes on their products. *Katraparcha* was a tax levied on all sorts of cotton, silk and wool cloth. Indigo, saltpetre and salt were other significant commodities subjected to taxation. In some cases as in Panjab, the tax on salt throughout Akbar's time was more than double the prime cost.

### ***Customs and Transit dues***

When the goods were taken from one place to another, a tax was levied. We have some information on the rate of custom levies. All merchandise brought through the ports was taxable. Abul Fazl says that throughout Akbar's time the duties did not exceed 2.5 per cent. One early seventeenth century account suggests that at Surat the charges were 2.5 per cent on goods, 3 per cent on provisions and 2 per cent on money (gold & silver). Towards the close of the 17th century, the customs ranged from 4 to 5 per cent. Aurangzeb levied separate transit taxes for separate groups. The rate fixed was 2.5% from Muslims 5% from Hindus and 3.5% from foreigners. These rates were applicable throughout the Empire.

The articles valued at less than 52 rupees were exempted. For some time, Aurangzeb exempted the Muslims from all custom dues but after a short period the levy of 2.5% was reimposed. In spite of the Emperor's instructions, the merchants were often charged more than the prescribed customs. We discover the foreign merchants complaining in relation to the custom dues.

The English in 1615 complained that three separate duties were composed on goods brought from Ahmedabad into Surat. Time and again the English and the Dutch obtained farmans for the exemption of customs, but they were made to pay duties at the custom-houses. Separately from the Mughal territory, the autonomous chieftains also levied customs and duties on goods passing through their territories. Moreland says that it is not possible to describe the burden on commerce in quantitative conditions, since any one might claim a tax of any amount, even if goods had paid taxes in an adjoining jurisdiction.

Separately from customs, another tax called rahdari or transit tax was composed. This was a road-toll composed on goods passing through several territories. Though the amount at each place was small, the cumulative charge became heavy. Even the zamindars used to collect tolls on goods passing through their territories. According to one modern account of the 17th century (Khafi Khan), rahdari was measured illegal but large amounts were composed from merchants and traders. This tax was composed on river routes also.

### ***Income from Mints***

The tax generated at mints was another source of income for the Empire. The state mint-fee was called mahsu-i-darul zarb. The charges were approximately 5% of the value of the money minted. Besides, two other charges were also composed. These were rusum- i ahlikaran (perquisites of officials) and ujrati-i karigaran (wages of artisans).

### ***Mechanism of Collection***

Like land revenue there was a well organised machinery for collection of these taxes. The effort of the state was to keep separate accounts for the income from land revenue and other taxes. For this purpose, the taxes were classified into two mal o Jihat and sair Jihat. The former related to land revenue and the latter to taxes charged on merchandise and trading. For the convenience of assessment and collection, separate fiscal divisions called mahalat I sair or sair mahals were created in big cities and towns. The mahal was a purely fiscal division and was dissimilar from the pargana which was both a revenue and territorial division.

The Ain-i Akbari provides separate revenue figures for towns and sair mahals for places like Ahmedabad, Lahore, Multan and Broach, etc. In case of Bengal, these market dues are separately mentioned in the A'in. The sair mahal figures for each town are given separately. For instance: the list given for Surat contains revenue mahals such as mahal farza, mahal khushki, mahal namakzar, mahal chabutra-i kotwali, mahal dallali, jauhari wa manhari, mahal darul zarb, mahal ghalla mandi and mahal jahazat. These revenue districts

were either given in jagir or their collections were sent to the state treasury. Except custom houses and mints, most of the officers responsible for the collection of taxes accepted the same designations as land revenue officials (amin, karori, qanungo, chaudhari).

Ports had a separate set of officers, The mutasaddi was the chief official or superintendent of port. He was directly appointed through the Emperor and was responsible for the collection of taxes. The rates of commodities in the market were fixed according to the prices settled through merchants at the custom-house. The Mutasaddi had a number of officials working under him who assisted him in valuation and realization of custom dues and maintaining accounts. Some of them were the mushrif, tahwildar, and darogha-i Khazana. These also were directly appointed through the court. A large number of peons and porters were also attached to custom-houses. In the absence of relevant data it is hard to calculate the net amount composed. It has been estimated through Shireen Moosvi that the share of these taxes was approximately 10% of the total income of the state.

## **Currency System**

Under the Mughals, the currency system was very well organised. A high stage of purity of metals was also achieved.

### ***The Coinage***

The Mughal currency system may be termed as bimetallic. Coins were of three metals, viz, copper, silver and gold. Though, the silver coin was the base of the currency. The silver coin has a long pre Mughal history. It was used throughout Delhi Sultanate for long as tanka. Sher Shah for the first time standardized the silver coin. It was called rupaya and had a weight of 178 granules (troy) (troy weight is a British system of weights used for gold, silver and jewels in which 1 pound = 12 ounces = 5760 granules). For minting purposes, an alloy was added which was kept below 4 percent of the weight of the coin. Akbar sustained the rupaya as the basic currency with more or less the same weight. Under Aurangzeb the weight of the rupaya was increased to 180 granules (troy). The silver rupaya was the main coin used for business and revenue transactions.

The Mughals issued a gold coin called ashrafi or muhr. It weighed 169 granules (troy). This coin was not commonly used in commercial transactions. It was mainly used for hoarding purposes and also for giving in gift. The most common coin used for small transactions was the copper dam which weighed approximately 323 granules. The weight of the copper dam was reduced

through one third throughout Aurangzeb's reign presumably because of the shortage of copper. Further, for very petty transactions kauris (see-shells) were used in coastal areas. These were brought mainly from the Maldive islands. Approximately 2500 kauris equalled a rupaya.

Separately from the silver rupaya other types of coins were also used. The most significant of these were mahmudis, a long standing silver coin of Gujarat. Even after the establishment of the Mughal rule in Gujarat it sustained to be minted and used in Gujarat for commercial transaction. In the Vijaynagar Empire, a gold coin called hun or pagoda was used. After the disintegration of Vijaynagar, its circulation sustained in the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golkunda. In several Deccan kingdoms, an alloy of copper and silver called tanka was in use. After the expansion of the Mughals in Deccan a number of mints were recognized in that region to produce Mughal silver coins.

### ***Exchange Value of Coins***

The exchange value of gold, silver and copper coins kept fluctuating depending on the supply of these metals in the market. The silver value of gold kept fluctuating throughout the Mughal period, ranging from 10 to 14 rupaya for one gold coin. As for copper coin, taking 1595 as the base year, Irfan Habib shows that through the early 1660s it rose to 2.5 times, but through 1700 it came down to the double and again through 1750 it reached the stage of the 1660s. For transaction purposes throughout Akbar's period, 40 copper dams were measured equal to one rupaya. After his death, as the rate of copper appreciated sharply, this ratio could not be maintained. Since all the land revenue assessment and calculations were done in dams, it became necessary to use it as notional fractional units of rupaya. Silver coins of small fractions called ana were also used. It was one-sixteenth of a rupee.

In the above account, we have not gone into the details of the complexities and the debates in the middle of historians in relation to the Mughal currency system. We have only tried to present before you in a simplified manner the basic characteristics of Mughal coinage.

### ***The Minting System***

The Mughals had a free coinage system. One could take bullion to the mint and get it coined. The state had the sole authority to issue coins and no other person could issue them. A very strict standardization was followed to maintain the purity of coins. A large number of mints were recognized throughout the Empire. Attempts were made to have these mints in big towns and ports so that the imported bullion could be taken to mints easily. Every

coin accepted the name of the issuing mint, and the year of minting and ruler's name. The newly minted coin in the current or previous year was called *taza* (newly minted). The coins issued and in circulation in the reign of an emperor were called *chalani* (current). While the coins minted in the earlier reigns were called *khazana*. Except for the *taza* all other coins were subjected to reduction in value.

A certain amount was deducted on the value of the coin for successive years from the year of issue. If a coin was for more than one year in circulation approximately 3 per cent was deducted; if it was for more than 2 years then 5 per cent was to be reduced. Separately from the factor of age, a deduction in the value was made on account of the loss of weight of coin. Abul Fazl says that if the loss of the weight was less than one *rati* it was to be overlooked and the coin was treated as standard. If the loss of weight was flanked by 1 and 2 *ratis*, a deduction of two and a half per cent was made; and if it exceeded 2 *ratis* the coin was treated as *bullion*. The above stated deductions were decided through state, but in actual practice arbitrary deductions were decided through *sarafs* (money changers) depending on the market.

### ***Working of Mints***

Any person desirous of getting money minted was to carry *bullion* or old currency for reminting to a mint. The excellence and purity of the metal was scrutinized. The currency was minted and delivered to the concerned person. A specific sum was charged as minting charges. This amounted to approximately 5.6% of the *bullion* minted. In the process of minting a large number of personnel and craftsmen were involved. A mint was headed through an officer called *darogha* *darul zarb*. The duties of this officer were to supervise the overall working of the mint. He was assisted through a number of officials, skilled artisans and workmen. The *sarraf* was employed through the mint as assessor. He was to judge the purity, weight and age of the coin and fix deductions on their value. The *mushrif* was to maintain accounts. The *tahwildar* kept accounts of daily profit and kept coins and *bullion* in safe custody. The *muhr kan* (engraver) was a person who engraved and made dies. The *Wazan kash* (weight man) weighed the coins. There were several artisans like the *zarrab* (coin maker), *sikkachi* (stamper), etc.

It is hard to estimate the output of mints because it depended on the size of the mint and the commercial activities of the area where the mint operated. Through the close of the 17th century, the output of Surat mint was estimated approximately 30,000 *rupaya* per day. Aziza Hasan studied the pattern of the issue of coins in 16th & 17th century. According to her estimates in 1639 the total *rupees* in circulation were three times than that of 1591. After 1639 there is a decline and through 1684 the total was double of 1591. After 1684 there is

an ascent again and through 1700 the total coins in circulation were three times than those of 1591.

### ***Location of Mints***

Abul Fazl provides a list of mints in the *Ain-i Akbari*. According to him, copper coins were issued through forty-two mints, silver coins through fourteen and gold coins through four mints. The number of mints issuing silver coins increased through the end of the 17th century to forty. M.P. Singh has compiled a detailed list of mints on the basis of a large number of numismatic sources. According to him, a large number of mints which figure on coins do not discover a mention in either the *A'in* or other literary sources. We reproduce below the list prepared through him. At times, mints accompanied the Imperial camps also that issued coins en route.

### **Prices**

The prices for a large number of commodities are listed in the *Ain-i Akbari*. These prices usually relate to the Agra region approximately the end of the 16th century. For the subsequent period, there are no systematic records of prices for comparison purposes. For the seventeenth century, the prices accessible pertain to dissimilar areas of the Empire in dissimilar years. In such a situation, it becomes hard to trace a definite trend in the movement of prices of dissimilar commodities throughout the Mughal period. Irfan Habib has studied the movement of prices in 16th and 17th centuries (*Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol. I*). We provide below a brief account of price movements as provided through Irfan Habib. Approximately 1580s, the value of gold to silver was 1: 9, through 1670s, after several fluctuations, it reached 1: 16, but it came down again to 1: 14 through 1750. The silver price of copper coins also increased from the end of the 16th century to 1660s through 2.5 times; through 1700 it came down to double of the 16th century. Again through 1750 it rose to the stage of 1660s.

### ***Agricultural Produce***

The main problem in analysing the prices of food granules is that they had a lot of fluctuations and variations. The prices depended on the farming of the specific food granules in a scrupulous region. Again, the prices varied due to the stage of production in a scrupulous year. There could be large variations in the prices of the same commodity at two places at the same time, depending on how distant it was accepted from the place where it was grown.

### ***Wages***

The wages of a large category of workers. In the absence of any such data for the 17th century, it is hard to discover any definite wage trend in excess of a period of time. The scattered figures for the 17th century do illustrate that through 1637 an augment of 67 to 100 per cent takes place; but these are not enough to draw broad conclusions.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- Discuss the pattern of revenue demand in Mughal India.
- What do you understand through revenue assignments?
- What were land grants? Who received these grants?
- Critically analyze the role of the revenue farmers.
- What were the main characteristics of Medieval Deccan Village?
- Discuss briefly the modern theories concerning ownership of land in the Deccan.
- What do you understand through the term 'Watan System'? What were its chief features?
- How the rahdari and custom tax were composed?
- Comment briefly on the relative movement of prices in the 17th century.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **PRODUCTION AND TRADE**

#### **STRUCTURE**

- Learning objectives
- The European trading companies
- Personnel of trade and commercial practices
- Inland and foreign trade
- Non-agricultural production
- Agricultural production
- Review questions

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After reading this chapter, you will learn about:

- The growth and expansion of the European trading companies in India;
- The European factories and the pattern of their internal organization;
- The nature of state control in excess of the European trading companies;

- The main rulers' response and attitude towards these trading companies;
- Know in relation to the major merchant groups involved in trading activities;
- Know in relation to the bills of exchange, commercial lending, rate of interest and partnership in business;
- Know the pattern of local, regional and inter-regional trade;
- Have an thought in relation to the pattern of India's foreign trade, both in excess of land and sea-borne;
- Know the several types of articles manufactured in India;
- Have an thought in relation to the minerals found in several parts of the country;
- Have some thought in relation to the organization of production in certain crafts;
- Know in relation to the means and methods of farming and irrigation; and
- Have some thought in relation to the status of livestock and cattle breeding.

## **THE EUROPEAN TRADING COMPANIES**

### **European Trading Companies In India: 1600-1750**

We will trace the advent of the European trading companies in India and their growth.

#### ***The Dutch East India Company***

The Dutch East India Company was shaped in 1602 through a charter. The Dutch were primarily interested in spice trade. So, they paid more attention to the Distant East. India was just a trading depot for them. They recognized their first factory at Petapuli in North Coromandal in 1606, followed through another at Masulipatam in the same year. Slowly, they realized that Indian textiles could be the best commodity for exchange with the spice islands (Indonesian Archipelago). This necessitated expansion of their network in India. They recognized their factories at Pulicat (1610), Cambay (1620), Surat and Agra (1621), Hariharpur (1633), Patna (1638). Dacca (1650), Udaiganj (1651), Chinsura (1653), Qasimbazar, Baranagore, Balasore and Negapatam (1659-60).

They had two factories in the interior of the Golkunda territories—one at Nagalavanha and another at Golkunda. The former was recognized in 1670,

but owing to political unrest the Dutch withdrew from there in the 1680s. In Golkunda they recognized their factory in 1662. Once again, owing to the political disturbances (Mughal-Golkunda clashes, 1684-87) they withdrew from Golkunda also in 1684. Through 1675 Hugli rose into prominence. It undermined the importance of the Dutch factory at Pipli (on the Orissa coast), and finally they abandoned it in 1675. Likewise, in 1658 the Dutch factories at Dacca and Udaiganj were also abandoned owing to armed attacks of the local raja. In the Bengal region two more factories were recognized through the Dutch in 1669 (Khanakul) and 1676 (Malda) but both had to close down soon.

The rising power of the Dutch was looked upon as a threat through the English to their own vested interests. When the English recognized a factory at Masulipatam and opened trade at Petapuli, the Dutch interest lay in not allowing English to have a share in the Pulicat trade. This disagreement of interests sustained. Though, in 1619 the Dutch supervised to have a truce with the English and both agreed to become copartners in Indian trade. The English Company was allowed to share the Pulicat trade provided they bore half the maintenance cost of the Dutch fort and garrison there. But it did not last long. In 1623 and again in 1653-54, the Dutch attacked the English ships. Flanked by 1672-74 the Dutch again tried to obstruct English settlements at Surat and Bombay and captured an English vessel in the Bay of Bengal. The English realized the supremacy of the Dutch in excess of the Eastern Islands. They decided to drive them absent from their Indian possessions. To fulfill their designs, the English joined hands with the Portuguese in India. Finally, they succeeded in defeating them at Bedara (1759) which weakened the Dutch opposition in India greatly. Since then the Dutch confined themselves to "country trade" in India. Whatever small possessions they had at Nagore and Negapatam were surrendered in 1773. Through 1795, the English succeeded in expelling the Dutch totally from their Indian possessions. Even their hold on the Cape of Good Hope loosened in favour of the British.

### ***The English East India Company***

In 1599 the 'English Association of the Merchant Adventurers' was shaped to trade with the East. This company (popularly recognized as the East India Company) got a Royal Charter with her trade monopoly in the East through Queen Elizabeth on December 1600. In 1608 the English merchants decided to open their 'first' factory at Surat. Through 1619, they succeed in establishing factories at Agra, Ahmedabad and Broach.

Circumstances were more favourable to establish a factory in the South as there was no strong Indian state in that part. Vijaynagar had faded absent ever since their defeat in 1565. In the South, the English opened their first factory at Masulipatam in 1611. In 1626, another factory was opened at Aramgaon. In

1639, they got Madras on lease from the local Raja. Soon, they fortified it which came to be recognized as Fort St. George. They acquired the island of Bombay in 1668 and fortified it soon after. It was soon to supercede Surat (through 1687) as the headquarters of the Company on the west coast. The English penetration in the East was comparatively late. They recognized their first factory in Orissa at Hariharpur and Balasore in 1633. In 1651, they got permission to trade at Hugli. Soon they also opened their factories at Patna (Bihar) and Qasimbazar (Bengal). In 1690, an English factory was opened at Sutanati which was later (1696) fortified. In 1698, the English acquired the zamindari of Sutanati, Kalikata and Govindpur, where they built the Fort William. Soon it grew into a big city and came to be recognized as Calcutta.

### ***The French East India Company***

The French were late comers to the Eastern trade. The French East India Company was founded in 1664. The first French factory was established at Surat in 1668. This was the place of prime importance to the English. But the Mughal-English armed clash at Hugli caused a serious setback to the English possessions and trade in India. It also provided an opportunity to the French to strike roots in India.

In 1669, the French recognized their second factory at Masulipatam. In 1673, they got Pondicherry, and in 1674 the Nawab of Bengal granted them a site close to Calcutta where in 1690-92 they built the town of Chandranagore. The French, had to face the Dutch and English rivalry very soon. The Dutch merchants influenced the ruler of Golkunda in relation to the aggressive designs of the French. Therefore, Golkunda in coordination with the Dutch power, decided to expel the French from St. Thome (1674). Finally, the French had to surrender St. Thome. Later, in the early 1690s. when the war broke out flanked by France and the Netherlands, their Indian counterparts also raised their arms against each other. In 1693 the Dutch captured Pondicherry from them. The Dutch blocked the French commercial activities at Hugli. Through 1720, the French control in excess of Bantam, Surat and Musulipatam got loosened: "even it started selling its licences to others." But a revival came in relation to them 1721. A new Company was reconstructed soon (1725) at Mahe (on the Malabar coast). In 1739, they opened their factory at Karikal.

There was fierce rivalry flanked by the English and the French. Clashes in India began with the war flanked by the two countries (France and Britain) in Europe in 1742 leading to the three 'Camatac wars' (1746-48; 1749-54; 1758-63). The decisive battle was fought at Wandiwash (January, 1766). The French were defeated and lost approximately all their possession in India. Now the

English supremacy in excess of other European Companies was complete. The Portuguese had to be content with Goa, Daman and Diu, while the French were confined to Pondicherry, Karikal, and Mahe. The scene was now left open for English aggrandizement.

### ***Other European Trading Companies***

The Danes entered as traders in 1616 but with no ambition to establish an Empire. They supervised to secure the Trancquebar port from the Nayak of Tanjore in 1620 and built a fort there. Though, their success was limited, and ultimately they sold off their factories to the English and finally quit India in 1845. The Swedish East India Company was shaped in 1731, but its activities were directed exclusively towards China rather than India. The Flanders merchants recognized the Ostend Company in 1722 but their activities were also limited in India.

### **Factories And Their Organization**

These factories were not manufacturing depots: they were warehouses. They were often fortified.

### ***The Dutch***

The Dutch East India Company's chief administrative centre was at Batavia. This establishment was headed through the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies and a Council. It controlled all the Dutch factories in Asia. The Council was responsible to the Central Board of Directors recognized as "Gentlemen XVII" who met for six years in succession at the Chamber of Amsterdam followed through two years at the Chamber of Zeeland. A 'factor' was appointed at each station (factory). These factors used to send regular reports to Batavia concerning trading activities of the region, the list of ships, commodities exported and imported, etc.

The Dutch factories at Coromandal were administered through a Directorate headed through a Director (designated as governor in 1615) at Pulicat. Prior to 1655 the Dutch factories in Bengal were controlled and administered through the Coromandal 'factor'. Though, in 1655 a separate 'Directorate' independent of the 'government' at Pulicat was shaped at Hugli. This gave great impetus to the Dutch trade in Bengal. In the 1690s, the seat of the Dutch administrative machinery in Coromandal also shifted from Pulicat to Negapatnam. In India each factory was administered through a Council consisting of the director, a senior factor, the incharge of the Company's trade books, a law enforcement officer, the incharge of the warehouses, the incharge of the loading and unloading of the ships and six junior factors, one of whom acted as secretary to the Council. Their salaries were not very lucrative.

### ***The English***

As for the internal management of the English Company it was administered through a 'Court of Committees' whose nomenclature later was changed to 'Court of Directors' in 1709. It consisted of a governor, a deputy governor, and 24 members to be elected annually through a general body of the merchants forming the Company. Besides, there was a secretary and a treasurer. Its members were recognized as Directors. The Company's superior body 'Court of Directors' was based in London while its subordinate body was in Asia. The directors were to be annually elected through the shareholders of the Company meeting in a 'Court of Proprietors'. Each shareholder, irrespective of the value of the share, had only one vote. The membership of the Company was not confined to shareholders only. But it could be secured through inheritance or presentation through paying an entrance fee through apprenticeship, services, etc.

The Company enjoyed extensive powers to issue orders and to create laws in accordance with the laws and customs of the realm. The Company also possessed judicial powers to punish its servants for their offences through imprisonment or fine. In India, each factory was administered through a Governor in Council. The governor was the President of the 'Council' with no extra privileges. Everything was decided in the 'Council' through majority votes. The members of the 'Council' consisted of senior merchants of the Company. While the 'Court of Directors' was the supreme authority in framing policies for the Company, the rights of its presidencies in Asia were limited. Usually, several day-to-day matters were directly referred to the sub-committees unless the matter was for the consideration of the Court. The Presidents and the members of the Council in Asia could communicate directly with the 'Court' or the Secretary of the Company at home (London). But this freedom and privilege were rarely given to the factories under the authority of the presidencies. As measure of check, the Court at London encouraged the senior officials to report separately on several subjects. Therefore, information usually got duplicated and discrepancies could be checked.

The maintenance and implementation of the policies of the Company obviously rested upon the Company's President and Council in India. The administration of the English factories of the Eastern coast was governed from Fort St. George (Madras) having their President and Council stationed there. The Council advised the governor in administrative matters. In 1700, English factories in Bengal were placed under the separate control of a President and Council located at Calcutta.

### ***The French***

The French East India Company's headquarters in India was at Surat

which was later shifted to Pondicherry. The supreme body was recognized as 'Superior Council of the Indies' and headed through a Director-General. He was the overall incharge of the French affairs in India. The Supreme Council composed of five members was presided in excess of through the governor. The whole administration was in his hands. Though laws were enacted in the name of the French king, the governor and the counsellors could be removed without any reference to the French king. All the colonial officers were subordinate to the Council.

One notable characteristic of the French East India Company was the constant quarrels and jealousies of the French officials in India which ultimately affected the smooth development of French interests in India. In the 1670s, Caron got envious of the extra ordinary success of his fellow Frenchman Marcara. Though, ultimately Marcara succeeded in convincing the French government in relation to the blamelessness of the charges, the seeds of conflicts and clashes therefore sown from the very inception of the French, factories in India proved harmful. Likewise, in 1726, Dupleix was suspended from his office and it was only in 1730 that the suspension order was withdrawn and he was appointed 'Intendant' or Director of Chandranagore.

## **Parental Contact And Control**

### ***The Dutch***

The Dutch East India Company was recognized through a charter granted through the Dutch Government (States General). The Company was to be governed through 17 Directors commonly recognized as 'Gentlemen XVII'. Dutch East India Company had a unique characteristic in that its shareholders did not have any control in excess of the managing body. Though States General was the final controlling power the Gentlemen XVII enjoyed real powers and worked as a state within the state. In 1644 Gentlemen XVII told the States General: "the places and strong holds which had been captured in the East should not be regarded as national conquests, but as the property of private individuals".

Batavian governor-General Council enjoyed approximately sovereign authority in so distant as the Dutch East Indian trade was concerned. The Council at Batavia was an efficient administrative body. Each factor in the East was asked to send regular reports. Periodic inspection through senior officers was also done. It was hard for the Gentlemen XVII to interfere and check Council's activities on account of the long distances and absence of speedy means of communications. Gentlemen empowered Batavian Governor General in Council to enter into treaties with the rulers in the region to the east of Cape of Good Hope, to build fortresses and garrisons and appoint governors, etc. But all the treaties were concluded in the name of the Dutch state. The Dutch East India Company at home did not favour promotion of

trade through showing the strength of arms. They often instructed the Governor General in Council to avoid armed clashes as distant as possible. But, its factors realized that trade in India was impossible without indulging in war and illustrate of armed strength. The Directors of the Company at home were heavily dependent for information upon Batavian Council which in turn composed information's through factors stationed at several places in India and other eastern countries. At times Governor General at Batavia and factors in India often tried to twist certain orders. In 1616, when the Dutch Director at home issued an order that "the subjugation of Amboina and Banda islands were of prime importance and all foreign nations should be barred from this trade"; Governor General of Batavia in the wake of Anglo-Dutch clashes decided not to use force against the English. Director General Coen, on the other hand, interpreted the instructions as a mandate—to use force against English to drive them out from the Spice Islands. As a result, Batavian Council decided not to endorse Coen's actions. But, through August 1616, Coen succeeded in getting the sanction from Gentlemen XVII. That resulted in Governor General's (Raynet Reael) resignation and Coen's taking in excess of the control.

Often rivalries existed within the factories. When Coen appointed Ravesteyn as administrative head in Western India, Goeree simply refused to accept his authority. The crisis could be solved only when in 1620 Coen sent Pieter van den Broecke to Surat with the responsibility for supervising the activities of the Dutch factories in Western India and Persia. Pieter Van den Broecke rejected the directives from Batavia which advocated the capture of indigenous merchant vessel. Jan Van Hasel sustained to deny the borrowing of money from local lenders for commodity purchases despite the directives from Batavia and Gentlemen XVII who ordered to use only Company's capital for such purchases. Therefore despite Company's attempts to rationalize its administrative procedures the Company's de facto control in excess of factors and factories was impeded due to the unreliability of communications.

### ***The English***

In the early 17th century, the English East India Company was the single largest Company of England. It strictly adhered to monopoly with regard to Eastern trade vis-à-vis other English merchants, So, from the very beginning it attempted to oust rival mercantile interests from the Eastern Seas and to secure exclusive privileges. No non-member was allowed to trade with the East. This naturally created dissatisfaction in the middle of those English merchants who were denied their share in the vast profits from the Eastern trade. These merchants tried to power political leaders but the Company somehow (through bribes, etc.) supervised to retain its privileges upto Charles II's reign. In spite of all opposition these merchants, recognized as 'interlopers' sustained to defy

the monopoly of the Company through indulging in the East Indian trade on their own. Through 1688 the situation turned favourable when in British Parliament they became supreme. These “Free Merchants” tried to press their demands in public as well as in parliament. In 1694, the Parliament passed the resolution that all the citizens of England had equal right to trade in the East. This resulted in the formation of ‘New Company’. But the ‘Old Company’ refused to surrender their privileges. Finally, after long drawn conflicts, both the Companies agreed to join hands and a new company, “The Limited Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies”, was shaped in 1708.

There existed close relationship flanked by the Company and the Crown. Queen Elizabeth herself was one of the shareholders of the Company. After Queen Elizabeth’s death (1603), James I renewed the charter (1609) though it could be revoked at any time at three years’ notice. In 1615, the Company got the power to enforce law to maintain discipline on long voyages. The charter of 1623 further enhanced the Company’s powers of controlling and punishing its servants.

Though, the Company had to face tough time under Charles I. In 1635, Charles I permitted Sir William Courten to set up a new trading body to trade with the East Indies under the Courten’s Association, named the ‘Assada Company’. But the latter could hardly put up any strong competition to the East India Company.

The situation again changed under Oliver Cromwell who supported the interests of the Company. In 1657, he granted a new charter that resulted in the union of Courten’s ‘Association’ and the ‘Old Company’. This charter was significant for it changed the very character of the Company. Earlier, its shareholders used to contribute as per voyage converted into one single joint-stock company with continuous flow of stock. Now anyone could become a member of the Company through an entrance fee of £5 and through a subscription of £100 to the Company’s stock. To have the right to vote, one had to be a shareholder of £500, and to be elected a member of the committee his shares should be worth £1000. The term of governor and deputy-governor was reduced to two years.

Another charter was granted to the Company in 1661 through Charles II. Through this charter, the Company was empowered to appoint governors and subordinate officers for administration. Their judicial powers to punish were enhanced. The Company also got the right to empower the governor and the Council of its each factory to supervise the persons employed under them according to the English law. The charter of 1668 was the major step in the transition of the Company from a mere trading body to a territorial power. As we have mentioned earlier, in 1669 the Company procured territorial rights in

excess of Bombay. Now the Company could freely create laws and issue ordinances for governing the island. The Company even secured the right to mint money at Bombay in 1676. The charter of 1683 further granted the Company to raise military forces within a prescribed limit, and to declare war on or create peace with America, Africa and Asia. In 1687, the Company was permitted to establish a municipality and a Mayor's court at Madras.

The Glorious Revolution (1688), though, gave a great jolt to the rising power of the Company. Through the charter of 1693, one could subscribe shares of more than £10,000. Likewise, the minimum limit to qualify for vote also extended from £500 to \$1000 and instead of one vote, now a single member could have a maximum number of 10 votes. In 1694, the principle of rotation of officers was made compulsory. Out of 24 members, 8 were to retire every year. The qualification for the right to vote once again was reduced from £1000 to £500; now each member could enjoy the right to 5 votes instead of earlier 10. This charter was followed through a number of charters in 1709, 1711, 1726, 1734, 1744, 1754, 1757 through which the Company succeeded in ensuring more and more military and administrative powers for the Company in lieu of vast loans granted through the Company to the Crown and the Parliament.

### ***The French***

The French East India Company was a state controlled organization and therefore differed from the Chartered Companies of England and the Netherlands. The French East India Company was highly dependent on the French government for its grants, subsidies, loans, etc. After 1723, it was approximately wholly controlled through the French government with Directors as its representative. Its shareholders were mostly nobles and renters and not merchants. They were more interested in short term dividends. With an autocratic, corrupt and decadent French government, such stage of control was obviously harmful for the French East India Company.

For all practical purposes, the Directors had no power. Even the shareholders seldom met, and when they did they had no say in the attendance of royal officials or the king. The 'Assemble Generale' also could hardly think of rejecting any proposal of the Syndics or Directors which had the ministerial approval. The French East India Company was bankrupt approximately from the beginning. To reorganize the Company, general assemblies were called in 1684. The Directors nominated through the king were supposed to hold the post for life. After the death of a director, another one could be chosen through election through the surviving directors and other stockholders with at least 20,000 livres. Administration was entirely in the hands of 12 directors who were to receive 3000 livres annually.

In 1688, eight new directorships were created. These directors were to pay 60,000 livres each as appointment 'fee'. In 1697, the ordinary stockholders unsuccessfully demanded their own representatives in the Company's administration. In 1721-23, attempts were made again to reconstitute the Company. The Company, after 1730, became a national East India Company. The 12 directors were hardly more than 'clerks' under a state appointed 'Council des Indes' consisting of royal councilors, naval officers, and prominent merchants. The provision to select 6 syndics or directors through the shareholders to represent shareholders remained in the abeyance till 1745 when the shareholders were permitted to nominate 12 persons out of whom the king chose 6. After 1730, the Council transmitted its orders through one Royal Commissioner. The successive controversy-general and navy ministers were actually controlling the Company. The lion's share of the capital remained in the hands of the directors.

The Company's headquarter was in Paris. But it had equally large staff at Lorient under the charge of a resident director. The French Company owned its own fleet. But the wastage in the French East India Company was higher than in the other two large East India Companies. From 1769-1785, and again after the French Revolution (1789), the French East India trade was thrown open to individuals.

### **The Indian Rulers And The European Companies**

The Mughals and the Indian rulers were interested in the development of India's overseas trade. They wanted it as it would have increased their revenue possessions. So, in spite of all odds, the Mughal Emperors and the local Indian rulers, in general, welcomed foreign merchants. Though, the Mughals and other Indian rulers were weak on the seas. To ensure smooth sailing of the Indian ships it was necessary for them to align with one or the other powerful European power who were masters of the seas. You will notice so long as the Mughals were strong, the European merchants followed the policy of seeking concessions through petitions and presents. The Companies also combined trade and diplomacy with war and control of the territory where their factories were situated. With the weakening of the Mughal power, the European Companies started imposing their will on the Indian rulers to get monopolies and concessions. They also took full advantage of the internal conflicts.

#### ***The Dutch***

The Dutch got favourable response from the rulers of Golkunda. They granted them concessions to trade on payment of 4 per cent customs duty on their exports and imports. The Company was also given exemption from duty on cloth (which amounted to in relation to the 12 per cent). In 1612, the duty of 4 per cent was commuted into a fixed payment of 3000 pagodas annually.

The chief characteristic of the Company's relation with the Indian rulers was that in spite of getting concessions from the Indian rulers, the local officials constantly used their power to evade the orders and imposed duties on Company's trade. It regularly resulted in clashes with the local officials. In June 1616, the Dutch had to close down their factory at Petapuli owing to the exorbitant demands of the local havaladar. In 1619 also the Dutch were virtually on the brink of closing down their factory at Masulipatam owing to the local havaklar's oppression, but the Golkunda ruler acted promptly and replaced Mir Qasim, the local havaladar. In 1636, the Dutch had to abandon their factory at Hugli owing to harassment through the local officials and rivalries of local merchants, etc. (the factory was later reopened in 1645-50). They were also exempted from the custom dues at Masulipatam on payment of 3000 pagodas. In 1657 they got from the Golkunda king the right to mint coin in the Pulicat mint. They composed the mint duty of 5.38 per cent. Through the farman of 1676, the Golkunda ruler granted the Dutch complete freedom from tariffs in Golkunda.

In the 1680s, the Dutch had to resort to arms owing to their disagreement with the Golkunda minister Akanna. In 1686, they occupied the port of Masulipatam. The siege sustained for two months. Ultimately Golkunda had to come to conditions, and the king agreed to restore all previous privileges. In 1690, the Nayak of Tanjore allowed the Dutch to pay only half of the toll in all parts of his kingdom. They also got the right to keep other Europeans out from the ports of Tanjore. They also received the right to mint coins at Nagapatam. The Bijapur ruler also confirmed all the privileges granted to them through the Nayak of Jinji in 1651.

For trade beside the west coast, the Dutch succeeded in getting farman from the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. They were exempted from tolls from Burhanpur to Cambay and Ahmedabad. Shah Jahan also issued two farmans granting them permission to trade in Bengal (1635) and at Surat. In 1638, the Company got another farman from Shah Jahan to trade in saltpetre as well. In 1642, Shah Jahan exempted the Dutch from the payment of transit duties beside the Pipli-Agra route. In 1662 Aurangzeb confirmed all the privileges granted through Shah Jahan to the Dutch in Bengal. This was followed through another farman in 1689 through which Aurangzeb permitted all the concessions enjoyed through the Dutch in Golkunda which was shortly occupied through the Mughals. Shah Alam (1709) even reduced customs duty from 3.5 per cent to 2.5 per cent at Surat and Hugli. He also granted total exemption to the Company from paying transit dues throughout the Mughal Empire. But, owing to the hindrances posed through the local officials, the Dutch factors sometimes could not avail of the radar exemptions. Likewise, to oblige the local officials, they had to spend a handsome sum. But the Company often misused their privilege of carrying duty-free goods.

Instead of carrying their own goods, the Company often helped Indian merchants in evading customs at Hugli. In 1712, Jahandar Shah confirmed all the privileges granted through Aurangzeb in Coromandal. Though, the local authorities were not ready to surrender the privileges granted through Jahandar Shah. A major disagreement broke out at Palakottu and Drakshavaram in 1725-30, and the Dutch factory was attacked and plundered (1728).

### ***The English***

It was throughout Jahangir's reign that the first English envoy reached the Mughal court and received a royal farman in 1607. In 1608, when the English recognized their first factory at Surat, Captain Hawkins was sent to Jahangir's court for securing trading concessions. Jahangir, initially, welcomed the English envoy and a mansab of 400 zat was bestowed on him through the Emperor. Though in 1611 Hawkins got permission to open trade at Surat, later, under the Portuguese power, he was expelled from Agra. The English realized that if they wanted any concessions from the Mughal court, they had to counter the Portuguese power. It resulted in armed disagreement flanked by the two at Swally close to Surat (1612, 1614). It bore fruits. The Mughals wanted to counter the Portuguese naval might through joining hands with the English.

Besides, they also wanted benefits for Indian merchants who could aspire to gain better profits in case of competition flanked by the foreign merchants. Soon, Captain Best succeeded in getting a royal farman (January, 1613) to open factories in the west coast—Surat, Cambay, Ahmedabad and Goga. In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe was sent to Jahangir's court. He tried to take advantage of the naval weakness of Indian rulers. They harassed the Indian traders and ships. These pressures resulted in the issue of another farman through which the English merchants got the right to open factories in all parts of the Mughal Empire. The English success led to an English-Portuguese disagreement from 1620 to 1630 to the advantage of the English. After that, the Portuguese slowly lost approximately all of their Indian possessions except Goa, Daman and Diu. In 1662, they gave the island of Bombay to king Charles II of England in dowry.

Throughout the closing years of Jahangir's reign when the English Company tried to fortify their factory at Surat, they were imprisoned through the Mughal officers. When the Company's rival group of English merchants attacked Mughal ships, the President of the Company at Surat was imprisoned through the Mughals and could only be released on payment of £1,80,00. In 1651, the English East India Company got a nishan from Sultan Shuja, the son of Shah Jahan, the then governor of Bengal. Through this nishan they received trading privileges in return for a fixed annual payment of Rs. 3000. Through

another nishan in 1656 the English Company was exempted from custom dues. Though, after Shuja's withdrawal from Bengal his successors ignored his orders for the obvious cause that it affected the treasury. But later Shaista Khan (1672) and Emperor Aurangzeb's farman finally ensured a custom-free English trade.

Throughout Aurangzeb's reign, we notice some changes in the Mughal-English Company's relations. Through this time the English Company with fortified settlements at Madras and Bombay felt more strong. Aurangzeb himself was busy in his Deccan campaigns. Now they could well think of abandoning their role as humble petitioners. Through the use of force they could now dictate prices and acquire a free hand in trade. They were planning to establish trade monopoly through slowly driving out all other European powers from competition. In 1686, the English declared war against the Mughal Emperor and sacked Hugli. Though, they were highly mistaken in assessing the Mughal might. Unlike their counterparts in South India, the Mughals were more than a match to a small trading Company. It resulted in the latter's humiliation. They had to lose all their possessions in Bengal. Their factories at Surat, Masulipatam and Vishakhapatam were seized and their fort at Bombay was besieged.

Realizing the Mughal might they again went back to their old policy of "petition and diplomacy". They again turned humble petitioners and agreed to trade under the protection of the Indian rulers. Soon, the Mughals pardoned them considering the advantage of rising foreign trade. Aurangzeb granted them permission to trade on payment of Rs. 1,50,000 as compensation. In 1691, the English Company succeeded in getting exemption from the grant of custom duties in Bengal on an annual payment of Rs. 3000. In 1698, the English king sent a special envoy Sir William Norris to Aurangzeb's court to secure the formal grant of the trading concessions and the right to exercise full English jurisdiction in excess of the English settlements. In 1714-17 another mission was sent under Surman who was able to procure three farmans from Farrukh Siyar that exempted them from paying custom dues in Gujarat and Deccan as well. In Bengal so long as Murshid Quli Khan and Ali Vardi Khan remained on the scene, they strictly checked the corruption of any of the privileges granted to the Company. But immediately after their departure (1750s), the Company got an opportunity to intrigue and soon succeeded in defeating the Nawab of Bengal in 1757 at the battle of Plassey. The rulers of Golkunda also maintained friendly relations with the English Company. In 1632, the ruler of Golkunda issued a farman through which they were allowed to trade freely in the ports belonging to Golkunda on payment of 500 pagodas irrespective of the volume of trade. This certainly gave a great boost to English trade in the Coromandal region.

## ***The French***

The French had to face the wrath of the Marathas (Shivaji) as early as 1677. French commander (later Director General of French affairs in India) Martin readily acknowledged the authority of Shivaji and agreed to pay him an amount in lieu of a license to trade in his dominions. Shivaji accepted the French request on the condition that they would not participate in military operations against him. In 1689, the French got the permission to fortify Pondicherry (from/Sambhaji). The French also succeeded in getting a farman from Aurangzeb as early as 1667 to open their factory at Surat. In 1688 the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb ceded Chandranagore village to the French. The French maintained close ties with Dost-Ali the Nawab of Carnatic. On the basis of a strong recommendation through him the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah issued a farman granting permission to the French to mint and issue gold and silver currency bearing the stamp of the Mughal Emperor and the name of the place of minting.

A change in the political situation in South provided the French with an opportunity to interfere in the internal affairs of Indian rulers. In 1738 civil war broke out at Tanjore following the death of Venkaji's grandson Baba Sahib. Sahuji, another claimant to the throne, approached the French governor M. Duman for help. In return the French got Karikal and Kirkangarhi. Sahuji's reluctance to cede the promised territory provided the opportunity to Chanda Sahib, (son-in-law of Dost-Ali, Nawab of Carnatic) to act promptly and he promised the French Karikal and Kirkangarhi if they allowed him to occupy parts of Tanjaur. But soon Chanda Sahib had to face the wrath of the Marathas which compelled him to seek the French help. Muhammad Shah on hearing in relation to the successful French resistance to Marathas granted M. Dumas the title of Nawab and bestowed upon him a mansabs of 4500/2000. The French involvement in the affairs of the principalities of South India ultimately resulted in Carnatic wars and the defeat of the French.

## **PERSONNEL OF TRADE AND COMMERCIAL PRACTICES**

### **Personnel Of Trade**

We will discuss the merchants, sarrafs, moneylenders and brokers operating in Indian markets. Rising commercial activities attracted a large number of people to these professions. Though, the above trading groups were not necessarily divided into watertight compartments. At times the same person did two or more tasks at the same time. Here we will study them in separate groups according to the roles performed through them in trade and commerce of the period.

### ***Merchants***

Theoretically, vaisyas were supposed to indulge in commercial activities, but in actual practice people from a wide range of background could and did participate in it. Throughout the period of our study we notice that certain groups and castes dominated in scrupulous regions.

### ***Banjaras***

In our sources we get innumerable references to the banjaras as a trading group who accepted on trade flanked by villages and flanked by villages and towns in a region and even at inter-regional stage. They were an significant link for rural-urban trade. The Bdaras confined their trading activities to some limited commodities like grain, pulses, sugar, salt, etc. They procured a number of animals (mainly oxen to carry the load) and moved from place to place buying and selling goods. Jahangir in his Tuzuk-i Jahangiri records: "In this country the Banjaras are a fixed class of people, who possess a thousand oxen, or more or less, varying in numbers. They bring grain from the villages to the towns, and also accompany armies". The Banjaras usually moved with their families and household in groups. These groups moving jointly were called a Tanda. Each Tanda had its chief called Nayaka. At times a Tanda could have upto 600-700 persons (including women and children), each family having their oxen. The Baqjaras were both Hindus and Muslims. Some scholars divide them into four groups on the basis of commodities they traded in: grain, pulses, sugar, salt, and wood and timber. The Banjaras operated in several parts of North India, but there were other similar traders recognized through dissimilar names. The Nahmardis was one such group of traders operating in Sindh. Another such itinerant traders were the Bhotiyas operating flanked by the Himalayas and plains.

### ***Merchants in Dissimilar Regions***

An significant vaisya subcaste, that is, the Baniyas were the leading merchants in North India and Deccan. They belonged to the Hindu and Jain (mainly in Gujarat and Rajasthan) communities. Their counterparts were the Khatri in Punjab and Kornatis in Golkunda. The word Baniya is derived from a Sanskrit word vanik meaning merchant. Several of the Baniyas came surnames pointing to the place of their origin. The Agarwals came from Agroha (in present Haryana) and the Oswals from Osi in Marwar. Marwar gave almost certainly the highest number of traders who are usually referred to as Marwaris. They were to be found in all parts of India and were the most eminent merchant group throughout the period of our study. There was a close caste bond flanked by these merchants. They had their councils (mahajan).

Modern European travelers marveled at the skills of the Baniyas as merchants and had all praise for their accounting and book-keeping. The Baniyas unlike Banjaras were involved in all sorts of trading activities. At the village stage, they traded in grain and other agricultural produce. They also acted as moneylenders, giving loans to peasants and other people including state officials and nobles. In towns they dealt in grain, textiles, gold, silver, jewels, spices and sundry other commodities. Some of them possessed assets of millions of rupees. They owned ships also. The community as a whole was recognized for simplicity and frugality.

In the region of Punjab, the Khatri were a major trading community. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, was also a Khatri. Several of them were converted to Islam. This community had in its fold Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The Multanis were an significant trading community of Delhi, parts of Punjab and Sindh in the 13-17th centuries. We get occasional references to them in the period of our study also.

### ***South India***

In the southern part of the sub-continent, several merchant groups played prominent roles. The Chetti was one such group. This term is derived from Sanskrit Shreshthi (Seth). Perhaps the Chetti were very wealthy merchants. The merchants beside the Coromandal coast up to Orissa were recognized as Kling. The Komatis were the merchants belonging to a trading caste. They mainly worked as brokers for ,textiles and were suppliers of several products from hinterland to the port towns on southern coast. They were mainly Telugu speaking.

Like the Chetties another merchant group called Chuh were also divided into four sub-groups. Of these, the Marakkayar were the wealthiest merchants dealing in the coastal and South East Asian trade. This was a very mobile group and several had settled in Ceylon, the Maldives, Malacca, Johore, Javanese coast, Siarn and Burma. In India, they were most active in South Coromandal, Madura, Cuddalore, Porto Nova, Nagole, Nagapatnam, Koyalpatnam etc. They mainly dealt in textiles, arecanuts, spices, grain, dehydrated fish, salt, pearls and valuable metals.

### ***Foreign Merchants***

We get a large number of references to the attendance of foreign merchants in approximately all commercial centres of the period. In the middle of other foreign merchants, the Armenians were the most prominent. They dealt in all sorts of commodities from textiles to tobacco. They were settled in Bengal, Bihar and Gujarat. The Khorasanis, Arabs and Iraqis also

frequented Indian markets.

### ***Moneylenders and Sarrafs***

In large parts of Northern India, the traditional merchants played a dual role as traders as well as moneylenders. In villages we hear of traditional Baniya lending money to individual peasants to pay land revenue. In towns and bigger places also merchants acted as moneylenders.

Another category in the middle of the personnel of trade which played an important role was that of the sarrafs. They performed three separate functions:

- As money-changers;
- As bankers, and
- As traders of gold, silver and jewellery.

The first two functions need some elaboration. As money-changers, they were measured as experts in judging the metallic purity of coins as well as their weight. They also determined their current exchange rate. According to Tavernier, "In India, a village necessity be very small indeed if it has not a money changer called "Cherab" [Sarra], who acts as banker to create remittances of money and issue letters of exchange".

### ***Brokers***

Dallals or brokers as specialised mercantile professional trading group seem to have been active in the wake of the Turkish conquest of North India. They worked as middlemen in several commercial activities and transactions. With rising inter-regional and foreign trade they became crucial. Merchants from foreign lands and distant regions heavily depended on them. According to A. Jan Qaisar, the foreign merchants, who were unacquainted with the centres of production, pattern of marketing and language had to depend on the native brokers for their trading transactions. The need for brokers in India was mainly due to:

- Centres of production for the same commodities were scattered all in excess of the country;
- Individual output of these centres was small (some centres specialised in scrupulous commodities only), and
- Large number of buyers competing for the same commodities in the same markets.

We get innumerable references to the transactions done through broker. The English East India Company records refer to brokers being employed at

their dissimilar factories. Fryer (late 17th Century) says that "without brokers neither the natives nor the foreigners did any business". Ovington (1690) also commented that "For buying and selling company's goods brokers are appointed who are of the bania caste and are skilled in the rate and value of all the commodities". We hear from Manrique (1640) that there were approximately 600 brokers and middlemen at Patna. Their number might have been much larger in bigger commercial centres like, Surat, Ahmedabad, Agra and other coastal towns.

## **Commercial Practices**

### ***Bills of Exchange (Hundi)***

Throughout this period hundis or bills of exchange became an significant form of money transaction. Hundi was a paper document promising payment of money after a period of time at a certain place. To begin with, the practice started because of the troubles involved in carrying large amounts of cash for commercial transactions. The merchants interested in carrying cash to a scrupulous place would deposit it with a sarraf who would issue a hundi to the merchant. The merchant was to present it to the agent of the sarraf at his destination and encash it. This started as a safe and convenient method of transferring money. In due course, hundi itself became an instrument of transaction. It could be presented against a transaction. It could also be freely bought or sold in the market after endorsement.

According to Irfan Habib "the negotiability of hundi led to a situation in which large number of hundis were simply drawn and honoured against other hundis without the intermediation of actual cash payments". In this process, it became a medium of payment. The use of hundi was so widespread that even the imperial treasury and state were using it. In 1599, the state treasury sent Rs. 3,00,000 to the army in Deccan through a hundi. Tributes paid through Golkunda (Rs. 10,00,000) and Ghakkar Chief (Rs. 50,000) to the Mughal Emperor were also transferred through hundis.

We get quite a few references where provincial officials were instructed to transfer the revenue through hundis. Even the senior nobles would take the help of the sarrafs to transfer their personal wealth. Muqarrab Khan, the governor of Bihar, when transferred to Agra, gave Rs. 3,00,000 to the sarraf at Patna to be delivered at Agra. Several big merchants also issued hundi. Such merchants and sarrafs had their mediators at significant commercial centres. At times, members of one family (father, son, brother, nephew) worked as mediators for each other. Big firms had their mediators even outside the

country.

A commission was charged through the sarrafs on each hundi. The rate of exchange depended on the rate of interest prevalent and the period for which it was drawn. The period was calculated from the date of issue to its presentation for redemption. The rate fluctuated as it also depended on the availability of money at the time of issue and maturity. If money supply was good, the rate would drop. In case of scarcity, the rates rise. According to Irfan Habib, "a sudden spurt of payment in any direction might make pressure upon the sarrafs for cash at one place, while leaving more in their hands at another, a situation that they could rectify through discouraging remittances from the former to the latter and encouraging reverse remittance through modifying the exchange rate". To provide you a rough thought a few rates are provided. In normal times 1.5 per cent was charged for hundis from Patna to Agra and 7-8 per cent from Patna to Surat. For the hundi drawn at Ahmedabad for Burhanpur 74 per cent was charged in 1622.

### ***Banking***

The sarrafs, separately from issuing bills of exchange, also received money for safe deposit. This was returned to depositor on demand. The depositor was paid some interest on his deposits. The rate of interest payable to depositors kept changing. The rates accessible for Agra, for 1645 and Surat for 1630 works out approximately nine and half per cent per annum. The bankers in turn would provide money on loan to the needy on a higher rate of interest. We get a number of references where state officers gave money from treasury to these bankers and kept the interest with them. Tapan Roy Chaudhuri writing in relation to the Jagat Seth of Bengal says that "their rise to financial eminence was partly due to the access they had to the Bengal treasury as a source of credit". Sujan Rai (1694) says that the sarrafs who accepted deposits were honest in dealings. Even strangers could deposit thousands for safe keeping and demand it any time.

### ***Usury and Rate of Interest***

Money lending for personal needs and commercial purposes was an recognized practise. Much of trading was mannered through the money taken on interest. Usually the sarrafs and merchants both indulged in money lending. Sometimes the moneylenders were called Sah, a separate category. The loans were taken for several purposes. The money was taken on loan through peasants for paying revenue and repaid at harvest. Nobles and zamindars would take it for their day-to-day expenses and repay it at the time of revenue collection. Money lending for business purposes was also very common.

The rate of interest for smaller loans is hard to ascertain. It depended mainly on the individual's need, his credit in the market and his bargaining power. Tapan Roy Chaudhuri shows that peasants took loans at a high rate of 150 per cent per annum in Bengal in the eighteenth century. For commercial loans, the rate of interest differed from one region to another. Our sources usually refer to interest rates per month. Irfan Habib says that the rate of interest expressed for the month suggests that the loans were usually for short periods.

The rate of interest for Patna in 1620-21 is given as 9 per cent per annum, while approximately 1680 it seems more than 15 per cent. At Qasimbazar (Bengal) the rate of interest in 1679 is given as high as 15 per cent per annum while the rates for the corresponding period for Madras (8 per cent per annum) and Surat (9 per cent per annum) were much less. The English factory kept a vigilant eye on the interest rates and would supply money to their factories in several regions after taking loans from the places where interest was lowest. The rates at Agra and Surat throughout the 17th century ranged from 6 and 12 per cent per annum. On the Coromandal coast much higher rates (18 to 36 per cent) seem to have prevailed.

### ***Partnership***

In partnership, the merchants pooled their possessions to carry on trade. Some persons shaped joint ventures for overseas trade. We hear of two nobles, Nawab Qutbuddin Khan and Nawab Qilich Khan having built a ship and taken to trading jointly throughout Akbar's reign. Banarsidas described his partner's trade in jewels throughout 1611-16. Even brokers at times accepted their joint ventures. In 1662, two brokers Chhota Thakur and Somiji of Surat, bought a ship (Mayflower) in partnership and fitted her for a voyage.

### ***Insurance (Inland and Marine)***

Another significant commercial practice prevalent in India on a limited level was that of insurance or bima. In several cases, the sarrafs used to take responsibility for the safe delivery of goods. The English factory records also refer to the insurance of goods, both inland and overseas. At sea, both the ship and the goods aboard were insured. The rates for insurance are also quoted in factory records. Through the 18th century, the practice was well-recognized and widely practised. The rates are also accessible for dissimilar goods for dissimilar destinations. The rates for sea voyages were higher than goods going through land.

## **Merchants, Trading Organizations And The State**

The merchants were also charged customs and toll taxes on movements of goods. Though, the income from these sources was very small as compared to land revenue.

Since towns were the centres of commercial activities, the administrative officers there looked after the smooth conduct of trade. The maintenance of law and order and providing peace and security were significant for better business environment. This was the responsibility of the kotwal and his staff in the towns. The rules and laws governing the day-to-day business were usually framed through the business community itself. Merchants had their own guilds and organizations which framed rules. We get references to such organizations in our sources. In Gujarat, these were called mahajan. In the first quarter of the 18th century, we get evidence of 53 mahajans at Ahmedabad. The mahajan was the organization of traders dealing in a specific commodity in a scrupulous area irrespective of their castes. The term mahajan was at times used for big merchants also almost certainly because they were the heads of their organization. There were separate caste based organizations also.

The most influential and wealthy merchant of the town was called nagar seth. Sometimes it was treated as hereditary title, Nagar seth was a link flanked by the state and the trading community. If there were certain disputes in the middle of the merchants, the mahajans resolved them. Usually their decisions were respected through all. The Mughal administration also recognised these mahajans and took their help in matters of conflicts and disputes or to seek support for administrative policies. The merchant organizations were strong and fought against high-handedness or repressive events of the officers of town and ports. We get a number of references where trader's organizations gave calls for hartal (closing business establishments and shops) against administrative events. The vast loss of revenue made administrators respond to the protest. One such serious disagreement arose in Surat in 1669. Here a large number of businessmen beside with their families (a total of 8000 people) left Surat to protest against the tyranny of the new governor. They settled at Broach and sent petitions to Emperor Aurangzeb. The trading activities in the town came to a halt. The Emperor quickly intervened and the problem was resolved. In 1639, Shah Jahan invited Virji Vohra, one of the biggest merchants of Surat, to enquire into the grievances of merchants against the governor of Surat. Throughout the war of succession in the middle of Shah Jahan's sons, Murad raised Rs. 5,50,000 through Shantidas, the nagar seth of Ahmedabad. After Murad's death, Aurangzeb owned the responsibility for paying it.

The merchants in spite of vast possessions (Virji Vohra is said to have left an estate of Rs. 80,00,000 at his death) did not take much interest in politics. While merchants kept absent from court politics, the nobles did venture into trading. Several big nobles used their official position to corner the profits from trade. Shaista Khan tried to monopolise a number of commodities, especially saltpetre. Mir Jumla, another prominent noble, was a diamond merchant. A number of subordinate officers at local stage also indulged in business activities using coercive methods.

## **INLAND AND FOREIGN TRADE**

### **Inland Trade**

As referred to above, we will discuss the inland trade at local, regional and inter-regional stages.

#### ***Local and Regional Trade***

Land revenue was realized in cash. This meant that the surplus agricultural produce was to be sold. Bulk of this was sold in the village itself. Most of this purchase was made through banjaras—the traditional grain merchants. They, in turn, accepted it to other towns and markets. Tavemier, a French traveller who came to India in the second half of the 17th century, says that in approximately every village could be bought rice, flour, butter, milk, vegetables, sugar and other sweets. In some villages even sheep, goat, fowl, etc. were accessible. According to him, every big village would have even a sarraf or money-changer. In addition, every locality had markets in the nearby towns where people from the nearby areas would come to buy and sell things. Separately from these regular markets, there were hat and penth where people from the villages could exchange or buy things of their daily need. These hats or penths were periodic markets which were held on fixed days in a week. Sometimes there were hats for specific goods.

In these local markets, foodgrains, salt, simple tools and equipments of wood and iron for agriculture and domestic needs and coarse cotton textiles were accessible. These markets existed in all small townships and bigger villages. Banarsi Das writing in relation to the Jaunpur approximately the middle of the 17th century noted that it had 52 parganas, 52 markets and 52 wholesale markets or mandis. This may suggest that approximately every pargana had a market and a wholesale market. It seems that a network of small and big markets viz., hats, penths, mandis, and the merchants in their individual capacities took care of the commercial activities in several localities. According to Tapan Raychaudhuri, individual village was almost

certainly part of a narrow circuit of exchange which encompassed the mandis mediating the sharing of commodities.

These local trading centres were connected to bigger commercial centres in a region. If we take Mughal provinces as regions, we notice that each of them had bigger commercial centres serving as nodal centres for all the commodities produced in several parts of the suba. Usually, these big towns also served as administrative headquarters of the suba. Patna, Ahmedabad, Surat, Dacca, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Multan, Ajmer, Thatta, Burhampur, Masuliputnam, Bijapur, Hyderabad, Calicut, etc. are a few examples of such trading centres. Our sources refer to these places as big commercial centres not only for the products of their respective regions, but also for serving as emporia for inter-regional and foreign trade. Each had a number of markets. Ahmedabad alone had as several as 19 mandis in and approximately it. If income accruing to a town from commercial taxes levied in its market is any index of the size of the market, we may note that the income of Ahmedabad in the second half of the 17th century from commercial taxes was estimated at approximately 42,86,000 dams per annum. Likewise cities like Delhi, Agra, Dacca & Lahore had separate markets for specific commodities. It is said that a noble's son in Delhi could spend one lakh of rupees in a day without creating much ado. J. Linschoten writing in relation to Goa approximately the end of the 16th century says auctions were held every day in the principal street of the city. He further adds that there is one street that is full of shops selling all types of silks, velvet, satin, works of porcelain from China, Linen and all sorts of cloth. These cities had large number of merchants, brokers and sarrafs. There were a large number of sarais (rest-houses) in these cities for the convenience of merchants and travellers.

The products from nearby towns, suburbs and villages found their method to these centres. Patna, for instance, had silk from Baikantpur, cotton clothes from Nandanpur and Salimpur; fruits vegetables, opium and sugar from dissimilar other parts of the suba. There were some towns that specialised in the trading of specific commodities: for instance, Burhampur (cotton mandi), Ahmedabad (cotton textiles), Cambay (gems market), Surat-Sarkhej (indigo), Agra for Bayana indigo, etc. All these commercial centres had mints which struck silver, copper and at some places gold coins.

### ***Inter-Regional Trade***

Throughout the period of our study, trade flanked by dissimilar regions of India was quite developed. Considering the time consuming and expensive mode of transport, such large level inter-regional trade was phenomenally high in volume. Goods produced at one place were accepted to long aloofness of hundreds and in some cases thousands of miles for purposes of trade. The

main commodities of large level interregional trade were food granules and several sorts of textiles. Luxury items, metals and weapons also occupied a prominent place in the long aloofness trade. It would not be possible for us to list the details of this trade in several types' of commodities. Here we will provide only a brief thought in relation to some significant commodities.

In the east, Bengal had well developed trade relations with all parts of India. The significant trading centres of Bengal were Hugli, Dacca, Murshidabad, Malda, Satgaon, Tanda, Hijili, Sripur, and Sonargaon. Of these Hugli was one of the most prominent centres of trade. Here products from Bihar, Orissa and some parts of Bengal were brought. Bengal supplied food granules to all parts of the country. Rice and sugar from Patna also was brought to the market of Bengal. Textiles of all sorts from Bihar, Benaras and Jaunpur could be bought in Bengal. Textiles produced in Lakhawar, a small town close to Patna, were bought through merchants coming from all parts of India and even abroad. The Bengal textiles were accessible at Patna and as distant as Ahmedabad in Gujarat. The large-scale silk manufacture in Gujarat and Bihar was totally dependent on the raw silk from Bengal. The silk cloth produced from this raw silk found its method to all parts of India and abroad. Saffron from Kashmir was freely accessible in the markets of Bengal and Bihar. Bengal procured certain diversities of cotton chintz from as distant a place as Burhanpur. Bengal also had trade links with Agra, Benaras and several other towns in the north.

In the west, Ahmedabad and Surat, the biggest commercial centres of the period, attracted textiles from south, north and the eastern parts of India. Here they were bleached and dyed for onwards sale. The silk manufactured in Gujarat from the raw silk of Bengal was again taken to the markets in the north. Gujarat received all its supply of pepper and spices from Malabar coast. Textiles were taken from Gujarat to Multan and Lahore. Gujarat received lac from Bengal; the Sarkhej indigo, well-known for its quality, was also taken from Gujarat to all parts of India. Large level trade accepted on flanked by the towns of Gujarat, Konkan and Malabar. In the north, Agra received large quantities of silk from Bengal. Carpets and textiles from the Awadh region were taken to Gujarat, Bengal, Patna, Lahore and Multan. The saffron, wood products, fruits and woollen shawls, etc. from Kashmir found their method to the markets of north, west and east India. Kashmir supplied ice to Lahore, Multan, Agra and Delhi. Paper from Shahzadpur (close to Allahabad) was taken to all parts of India. The well-known indigo from Bayana (close to Agra) was taken to Lahore, Multan and southern parts. The well-known marble from Rajasthan was taken to all parts of the country, especially to Agra and Delhi. Foodgrains from north were taken to Gujarat.

Most of the trade from south was beside the coast. Large quantities of Bengal indigo were sold in Masulipatan. Pepper and spices of the Malabar

coast were taken to Bijapur, Coromandel, the Konkan coast, and the Gujarat tobacco from Masulipatam was taken to Bengal. Diamonds from Golkunda mines were taken to all parts of India. Minerals and metals which were produced at select places only were taken to all parts of Mughal India. Salt produced mainly in Rajasthan and Punjab was taken to all parts of north and south India. The coastal areas though produced it from sea water through evaporation. The main sources of iron were Gwalior in central India, Rajasthan, Punjab and Sindh. Good excellence steel was made in Cutch in Gujarat, some places in Deccan and South India. The bulk of copper was produced in Rajasthan. Bihar, Sind, Rajasthan and parts of north India were significant places to procure saltpetre.

### *Coastal Trade*

Because of long distances and slow moving transport system interregional trade was also mannered through the sea route involving large number of coastal areas. This coastal trade was most prominent on the western coast. The eastern coast also had substantial trading operations. The trading operations on the two coasts were organised in dissimilar methods. Piracy on the western coast was rampant. As a result most of the traffic here was mannered through convoys. While on the eastern coast small boats plied throughout the year.

On the western coast flanked by May and September the merchant boats in convoys under protection plied two or three times flanked by Goa and Cochin and Goa and Cambay. The Cambay convoy would have approximately 200-300 boats and ships of several sizes. They accepted stuffs like wheat, oil, pulses, sugar, textiles and miscellaneous other items. The convoy flanked by Cochin and Goa were not so large but accepted a big range of commodities. Ships coming from Malacca and the east were usually joined somewhere off Ceylon through coasting boats from Bengal and the Coromandal coast, and the whole fleet was convoyed under protection to Cochin. Boats ladden with copper, zinc, tin, tobacco, spices and chintz came from Coromandal coast to the coastal towns of Bengal. Coromandal coast in turn received copper, mercury, cinnanbar, pepper etc., from Gujarat, and spices from Malabar. The coastal towns of Orissa also had links with Coromandal and Malabar coasts. Cloth, foodstuffs, iron, steel and other metals brought from Vijaynagar and Golkunda reached Bengal via Coromandal. Rice, textiles and several other items from several towns from coast of Bengal reached to the western coast. The movement of coastal trade was most prominent flanked by Sind-Cambay; Gujarat-Malabar; Bengal-Coromandal; and Malabar-Coromandal.

## **Foreign Trade**

For centuries India had maintained trading relations with other countries. The pattern of trade and commodities underwent changes in excess of the period. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries also India had a flourishing trade with a large number of foreign countries. The important aspect of foreign trade throughout this period is the coming of the Europeans. This increased India's foreign trade manifold. Most of this trade was in the form of exports of Indian goods. The imports were very small.

### ***Exports***

Textiles, saltpetre and indigo shaped the major share of Indian exports. Other significant items were sugar, opium spices and other sundry commodities.

### ***Textiles***

The rising exports contributed to the augment in production. Before the coming of the Europeans, the main purchasers of Indian cotton textiles were the Mughals, Khorasanis, Iraqis and Armenians who accepted them to Central Asia, Persia and Turkey. These goods purchased from all parts of India were taken through land route via Lahore. It is hard to have an thought in relation to the total volume of this trade. The Dutch and English concentrated on Indian textiles from the 17th century onwards. The main diversities of cotton fabrics were baftas, Samanis, Calico, Khairabadi and Dariabadi, Amberty and Qaimkhani and muslin and other cotton cloths. Later on, several diversities of cotton textiles from Eastern coast were also procured. Chintz or printed cotton textiles were the most favourite items of export. Carpets from Gujarat, Jaunpur and Bengal were also bought.

Silk cloth from Gujarat and Bengal also occupied a prominent place. Beside woven cloth, there was a demand for cotton and silk yam also. Moreland estimates that the demand of the English Company alone was 200,000 pieces in 1625; 1,50,000 pieces in 1628 and approximately 1,20,000 pieces in 1630. The famines of Gujarat in the 1630s affected the supply, but throughout 1638-41 the shipment from Surat accepted more than pieces per year. After 1650, the east coast was also explored and the supply from Madras was approximately a lakh pieces or more per year. The Dutch demand war, also more than 50,000 pieces a year. An account of 1661 estimates that the Armenians bought cotton textiles worth 10 lakh rupees to be sent to Persia. The above figures provide only rough estimates for the exports; nevertheless, they give an thought in relation to the large level textile exports.

### ***Saltpetre***

Saltpetre, one of the significant ingredients for creation gunpowder was much in demand in Europe. There are no references to its export in the 16th century. In the 17th century, the Dutch started exporting it from Coromandal. Soon the English also followed. Throughout the first half of 17th century, the Dutch and the English were exporting moderate quantities from Coromandal, Gujarat and Agra. In the second half of the 17th century, its trade from Bihar via Orissa and Bengal ports started. Soon Bihar became the most significant supplier.

After 1658, the English were procuring more than 25,000 maunds of saltpetre per year from Bengal ports. The quantity increased after 1680. The Dutch demand was much higher (approximately four times). The English demand for this commodity sustained throughout the 18th century.

### ***Indigo***

Indigo for blue dye was produced in most of northern India — Punjab, Sind and Gujarat. The indigo from Sarkhej (Gujarat) and Bayana (close to Agra) was much in demand for exports. Prior to its supply to Europe, large quantities of this commodity were exported to the Persian Gulf from Gujarat, and to Aleppo markets from Lahore.

The Portuguese started its export approximately the last quarter of the 16th century. Europe's demand was very large for dyeing woollen cloths. The Dutch and English started exporting it in the 17th century. Besides, merchants from Persia purchased it for Asiatic markets and Eastern Europe. The Armenians were also buying substantial quantities. In the 17th century, the Dutch, English, Persians, Mughals, and Armenians competed to procure the commodity. Approximately the middle of the 17th century, the Dutch and English were procuring approximately 25,000 or 30,000 maunds per annum. The demand sustained to augment throughout the following years.

### ***Other Commodities***

Separately from the commodities listed above, a large number of other commodities were exported from India. Opium was bought through the French, the Dutch and the English Companies. The main sources of supply were Bihar and Malwa. The Bengal sugar was also taken in bulk through the Dutch and English Companies. Ginger was exported to Europe through the Dutch. Turmeric, ginger and aniseed (saunf) were exported through the

Armenians. Large level trading operations were mannered flanked by the ports of Gujarat and Indonesian archipelago. From here cotton textiles were taken in bulk to Indonesia and spices were brought in return. Brightly coloured cotton cloth and chintz from India were in great demand. A large part of this trade was later on taken through Coromandal from where textiles were exported to Indonesian islands and spices were imported from there.

### ***Imports***

As compared to exports from India, the imports were limited to only a few select commodities. Silver was the main item of import as it was brought to finance the purchases of European Companies and other merchants from dissimilar parts of Europe and Asia. Copper, too, was imported in some quantity. Lead and mercury were other significant commodities brought to India. Silk and porcelain from China were imported into India through the English. Good excellence wine, carpets and perfumes were brought from Persia. Some items like cut glass, watches, silver utensils, woollen cloths and small weapons from Europe were in demand through the aristocracy in India. Horses from Central Asia were imported in large number for military uses. The state was the main purchaser. Besides, India had trade relations with its immediate neighbors in the hill kingdoms. Musk was brought from Nepal and Bhutan to India where it was bought through the Europeans. Borax was also imported from Tibet and Nepal. Iron and food granules were supplied in return to these hill regions.

### **Trade Routes And Means Of Transport**

To meet the demands of the large volume of interregional and foreign trade, there was a need for a network of routes and a developed transport system.

#### ***Trade Routes***

In this sub-section we will discuss inland and overseas trade routes. It is to the credit of Mughal Emperors that we discover an elaborate network of trade routes linking all the commercial centres of the Empire through the beginning of the 17th century. Usually, the roads were looked after through the state or chieftains through whose territory they passed. In certain regions, these roads were obstructed through a large number of rivers which were crossed through fords or sometimes bridges had to be built. The fords and bridges were also built and maintained through state or nobles. Though, the condition of these roads throughout the rains was a bad commentary since long stretches became

unusable throughout the monsoons. We have records from travellers lamenting the bad muddy condition of Surat-Burhanpur route throughout the rains. To mark the alignment of roads as also to indicate the aloofness traveled, the state provided towers recognized as kosminans. Though, our sources tell us that only those routes which were traversed more regularly had kosminars.

All the prominent routes had sarais at short intervals. These sarais were used through the merchants and travellers as halting places. Separately from residential quarters, big sarais also provided to the itinerant traveller space for storage of goods. To provide you an thought of some significant trade routes we have listed them below:

- Agra-Delhi — Kabul Route: Agra-Faridabad-Delhi-Sonepat-Panipat-Kamal-Ambala-Ludhiana-Fatehpur-Lahore-Rohtasfort-Rawalpindi-Shamsabad-Peshawar-Fatehabad-Kabul.
- Agra-Burhanpur—Surat Route: Agra-Dholpur-Gwalior-Narwar-Sironj-Handiya-Burhanpur-Talner-Nandurbar-Kirka-Surat.
- Surat-Ahmedabad-Agra: Surat-Broach-Baroda-Ahmedabad-Palampur-Jalore-Merta-Ludana-Hinduan- Fatehpur Sikri-Agra.
- Agra-Patna-Bengal Route: Agra-Firozabad-Etawa-Sarai Shahzada-Allahabad-Banaras-Sahasram-Daud Nagar- Patna-MungerTBhagalpur-Rajmahal-Dampur-Dacca. The river route from Agra to Bengal ran approximately parallel to the land route.
- Routes for Foreign Trade: Foreign and Indian merchants traded through, both, the overland and overseas routes.

### ***Overland Route***

The most frequented overland route throughout the medieval period was the one linked with the ‘great silk route’. The ‘great silk route’ beginning from Beijing passed through Central Asia via Kashighar, Samarqand and Balkh and Kabul. Indian hinterlands were linked with this great route at Lahore. It passed through Multan, Qandahar (and then entered Persia via Yezd, and Isfahan), Baghdad, and after crossing the Euphrates it reached Aleppo. From there, the commodities were taken to Europe abroad ships.

### ***Overseas Route***

The sea routes on both the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal were well frequented. Before the discovery of the sea route via the Cape of Good Hope, the most frequented sea routes in the north were;

- From Cambay, Surat, Thatta to the Persian Gulf and Red Sea;
- From other parts like Dabhor, Cochin and Calicut to Aden and Mocha. At Mocha certain commodities were accepted via Red sea and then

through overland route to Alexandria via Cairo. Alexandria was another point of sharing of Commodities into European countries. With the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope, the European countries got new openings. Now they no more depended on Alexandria or Aleppo. Instead, they dealt directly with India and South Asian countries.

As for Eastern seas, since long the Indian merchants were having seaborne trade with China and the Indonesia Archipelago. From Hugli, Masulipatnam and Pulicat, commodities were sent directly to Achin, Batavia and Malacca. Through the Malacca straits, merchants used to go as distant as Macao and Canton in China.

### ***Means of Transport***

We will confine our discussion to the means of transport in use for commercial purposes only.

#### ***Land Transport***

Oxen played a major role. They were used as pack animals for carrying load on their backs. We get references to grain merchants traveling with 10000-20000 pack animals in one caravan called tanda. Separately from the banjaras, other merchants also used them for transporting goods. Oxen-drawn carts were also used to transport goods. An ox could carry four maunds and a cart 40 maunds. The oxen which drew carts could travel 20 or 30 days without break, covering on an average 20-25 miles per day. Camels were commonly used in the western part of the country for carrying goods. They accepted goods through land to Persia and Central Asia. On high mountain regions, mules and hill ponies were used to carry heavy loads. Here human Labor was also employed.

#### ***River transport***

Large number of rivers provided a network of river routes. The most frequent use of boats was in Bengal and Sindh. There was regular traffic of goods flanked by Agra and Bengal through boats. The boats carrying goods from Agra via Yamuna joined Ganga at Allahabad and went to Bengal. Modern sources refer to the plying of hundreds of boats flanked by Agra and Bengal. Manrique noticed approximately 2000 boats in anchor at Rajmahal. Our sources refer to approximately forty thousand boats in Sindh. Each 'patella' (a type of flat boat) plying flanked by Patna and Hugli had a carrying capability of approximately 130 to 200 tons of load. The other goods carrying boats had a capability of 1000 to 2000 maunds each.

While moving in the direction of the flow of the river, it was much faster. Usually it took less than half the time than through road. At the same time, river transport was cheaper also. For instance: from Multan to Thatta the goods through river would cost Rs. 3/4 per maund, while for a shorter aloofness through land it would cost approximately Rs. 2 per maund.

### **Administration And Trade**

The Mughal Emperors took keen interest in the trading activities. Their policy was to encourage trade and offer concessions to merchants from time to time.

#### ***Customs and Road Tax***

We would like you to note that the policy concerning these taxes changed periodically. For instance Jahangir abolished customs on the trade with Kabul and Qandahar. Throughout the famine of Gujarat, tax on a number of commodities were remitted. Aurangzeb at his accession in 1659, abolished tolls and taxes on food stuffs.

We come crossways a number of royal orders and decrees abolishing taxes and customs on certain items. Approximately all the European companies—the British, Dutch and French—procured royal orders for carrying merchandise without paying transit dues. Aurangzeb at one stage abolished all road tolls. According to the decrees of the Emperors, the state policy towards trade appears to be liberal but in actual practice these was dissimilar.

#### ***Attitude of the Administration***

The provincial governors, subordinate officers of the markets and customs officers were most of the time reluctant to enforce liberal policies. They were always looking for methods to fleece the merchants. The dues composed were often appropriated through officials themselves. The problem was further aggravated when the officials themselves indulged in trade. Nobles and high officials regularly tried to establish monopolies on certain articles of trade. Prince Shuja, the son of Shah Jahan had wide ranging trade interests. Mir Jumla, a high noble, tried to establish his monopoly in Bengal. The English first tried to resist it but finally surrendered agreeing to procure all saltpetre supply through him. Shaista Khan, another prominent noble, also forced the English to sell all their goods and silver to him in return of which they were assured free supply of saltpetre. Shaista Khan's daily income was estimated

approximately Rs. two lakh. His son, Buzurg Umed Khan, also had extensive overseas trade.

Separately from these high placed nobles, subordinate officers also indulged in trade. Legally, the officers and nobles were not debarred from undertaking business activities. The problem was that competition was replaced through coercion and exploitation through those in power. We come crossways a number of petitions and requests through foreign Companies, merchants and individuals complaining against official high-handedness. There are innumerable royal orders and decrees granting relief. Because of the poor means of communication and long distances the relief was delayed or at times not implemented at all. The thrash about sustained throughout the period. In spite of these hurdles, trade kept rising, attracting merchants from several countries.

## **NON-AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

### **Agro-Based Production**

It should be noted that the term agro-based industries in the present time is used altogether for a dissimilar type of industries. We are using it here simply to indicate the crafts where raw material came from agricultural produce. The most wide-spread production of commodities throughout the period of our study was in a sector where the basic raw material was obtained from agricultural produce. India had a high stage of production of cash crops like cotton, sugarcane, indigo, tobacco, etc. It was, so, natural that crafts related to these would flourish. Let us first discuss the textile production.

### ***Textiles***

*Under the textiles we will mainly study the manufacture of cotton, silk and wool cloth. Cotton*

Cotton textiles were manufactured practically all in excess of the country since with the exception of sub-Himalayan region, cotton could be grown approximately everywhere. Abul Fazl provides a list of significant centres of production of cotton textiles. Gujarat emerges as one of the significant region of textile manufacture. Here the main centres were Ahmedabad, Broach, Baroda, Cambay, Surat, etc. In Rajasthan we could mention Ajmer, Sironj and several small towns. In U.P., Lucknow and a number of small towns approximately it, Banaras, Agra, Allahabad, etc. were prominent centres. Other areas in the north like Delhi, Sirhind, Samana, Lahore, Sialkot, Multan

and Thatta produced textiles of good quality. In Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Sonargaon and Dacca. Rajmahal. Qasimbazar and a number of towns, Balasore, Patna and a number of small towns approximately it were well-known textile centres.

In Deccan. Burhanpur and Aurangabad produced cotton cloth of a fine diversity. On the western coast of Maharashtra Chaul and Bhivandi had a flourishing weaving industry. The Qutab Shahi kingdom was also well-known for its textiles. Masulipatnam and Coromandal also produced cotton textiles. In the South, Coimbatore and Malabar were also recognized for producing good excellence cotton. Several centres specialised in producing only yam which was taken to weaving centres and even exported. Spinning of yam therefore became a specialised occupation. In and approximately all the major centres of textile production, several peasants and women took it up as an additional source of earning and supplied yam to weavers.

Women in large number spun yam in Mysore, Vizagapatam and Ganjam. Broach, Qasimbazar and Balasore were prominent markets for selling yarn. Gujarat supplied yam to Bengal in the second half of the seventeenth century. The fine yam required for Dacca muslin was spun through young women with the help of takli or spindle. There was a considerable variation in quality. Hameeda Naqvi has listed forty-nine diversities of clothes, produced in five major production centres of the Mughal Empire. The European accounts mention more than one hundred names. It is very hard to list all the diversities of cotton textiles produced in the country. Every region had their own specialties.

A few significant diversities may be explained here. Bafta is described in the Ain-i Akbari as a type of high excellence calico normally white or of a single colour. The word calico was commonly used through Europeans for all types of cotton cloth. It also meant white cloth of a thick diversity. Tafta was a silk cloth some times inter-woven with cotton yam. Zartari was a cloth which was inter-woven with gold or silver thread. Muslin was a very fine excellence of thin cloth. Chintz (Chheent) was cotton cloth with floral or other patterns printed or painted. Khasa was a type of muslin. It was expensive cloth of a fine quality. Some clothes were named after the place of production, such as Dariabadi and Khairabadi, Samianas (Samana), Lakhowries (Lakhowar close to Patna), etc. Some regions specialised in a scrupulous diversity, Bafta from Gujarat and muslin from Sonargaon and thereafter from Dacca in Bengal are examples of this specialization. In the seventeenth century, important changes were noticed due to the intensified activities of the European trading companies whose numbers now increased with the arrival of the English, Dutch and French East India Companies, etc.

Though, the most common cotton cloth much in demand was superior

excellence white calico cloth called through dissimilar names such as Ambartees (in Bihar, Bengal etc.), Bafta in Gujarat, etc. Other well-known diversities were fine muslin of Bengal called Khasa, Chintz, a printed cloth and fabric made with mixing silk yarn. Ahmedabad acquired fame for its printed cloth recognized as chintz (Chheent). The manufacture of cotton textiles involved a number of steps. The first was ginning, that is, separating seeds from cotton. Later, the carder (dhuniya) cleaned cotton with the bowstring. After that, yarn was spun on the spinning wheel. The yam was used on looms through the weavers. The most common loom was horizontal, the pit-loom with foot treadles.

The cloth therefore woven was as yet in a raw state. The after that step was to get it bleached or dyed before being used. These functions were performed through a separate group of people. Though these processes were performed everywhere, some centres became prominent. Broach in Gujarat was supposed to be the best bleaching place because of the special excellence of its water. The English East India Company sent baftas purchased in Agra, Lahore, etc. to Broach and Nausari (Gujarat) for bleaching before exporting them. Ahmedabad, Surat, Patna, Sonargaon, Dacca, Masulipatam, etc., were other towns where textiles were bleached in large quantities. Bleaching involved soaking of cloth (as in fine fabrics) or boiling it in a special solution. After this it was washed and dehydrated. Indigo was used for bleaching (whitening). Dyeing and printing also became specialized profession. Rangrez (dyers) had specialised in it and were measured a separate caste. Vegetable dyes were usually used. Red dye was produced through chay or lac and blue through using indigo.

### *Silk*

Silk was another significant item for the manufacture of textiles. Abul Fazl mentions Kashmir where abundant silk textile was produced. Patna and Ahmedabad were recognized for silk fabrics. Banaras was equally well-known. In the seventeenth century, Bengal produced the largest amount of raw silk which was exported abroad as well as to other parts of India. In Bengal silk fabrics were manufactured at Qasimbazar and Murshidabad. Approximately the middle of the 17th century, the total annual production was estimated approximately 2.5 million pounds. Approximately 75 million pounds were accepted absent in raw form through the Dutch alone. In 1681, the London silk weavers petitioned to the British Parliament to ban its import through the English East India Company. The import of Bengal silk fabrics was stopped in 1701. Nevertheless, Bengal remained the premier centre in India for producing silk textiles and raw silk.

## *Wool*

Wool was another significant material used for manufacturing textiles. The most well-known was the Kashmiri shawl, exported all in excess of the world. The fine wool used in these shawls was imported from Tibet. Akbar promoted its manufacture at Lahore but it could not match the excellence of Kashmiri shawls. Finer diversities of woollen textiles were usually brought in through the Europeans for the upper classes. Blankets were made from wool approximately all in excess of North India.

Other textile items incorporated cotton durries, carpets (of silk and wool), tents and quilts, etc. Carpet weaving was yet another branch of textile production. Bihar (Daudnagar, Obra, etc.), Delhi, Agra, Lahore and Mirzapur were well-known centres in the north. Warangal in the south was also well-known for carpet weaving. The carpet weaving was also done in Masulipatam beside the Caromandal coast. The output of carpet weaving was not very large and Persian carpets sustained to be in use. Akbar took special interest in developing the manufacture of silk carpets in the royal Karkhana after the Persian diversity.

The tents used mostly through royal establishment and nobles were also manufactured. Abul Fazl mentions eleven types of tents. Their size varied a great deal. Embroidery on all types of textiles with cotton, silk or silver and gold thread was also an allied craft. Large number of craftsmen were involved in it.

## *Indigo*

The demand for it in the country and for export was very high. The farming of indigo was widespread. Except for the hilly regions, indigo was accessible in all parts of the country. The best diversity was secured from Bayana, close to Agra. The after that best diversity was from Sarkhej close to Ahmedabad. Being a basic dye (blue), it was in great demand in India as well as abroad. In Gujarat, other centres where indigo dye could be had were Jambussar, Broach, Baroda, etc. In North India, Agra and Lahore were two other cities where indigo dye could be purchased in vast quantities. On the Coromandal coast, Masulipatam was another significant mart for this dye.

The process of extracting was simple. The stalks of plants were put in water. After the dye was dissolved, the water was taken to another vat where the dye was allowed to settle at the bottom. It was strained and dehydrated in the form of cakes. The process was done mostly in the villages through peasants.

### ***Sugar, Oil, etc.***

Since sugarcane was cultivated widely, sugar was also manufactured all in excess of the country. Usually, we get references to three types of sugarcane products; the gur or jaggery; the powder sugar and the finer excellence granules called candy. The jaggery was made in all sugarcane producing areas and was mainly consumed locally. The other two qualities were manufactured mainly in Bengal, Orissa, Ahmedabad, Lahore, Multan and parts of Northern India. Writing in relation to the Deccan in the 17th Century, Thevenot remarks that every peasant who grew sugarcane had his own furnace. Abul Fazl records the price of powder sugar approximately 128 dams for one man, while that of the candy 220 dams.

The method of extracting sugarcane juice involved the cane-press which was operated manually or with animal power. The jaggery or finer excellence was obtained through boiling it in excess of in pans or open furnace. It was throughout the process of boiling that dissimilar qualities were obtained. Bengal sugar was measured the best and was in great demand for export to Europe and Persia. Extraction of oil was also mostly a village-based industry. The oilseeds were put to a simple oil-press operated manually or through animal power. The specialised caste involved in extracting the oil was called tells. The residual product was used for animal feed.

### **Minerals, Mining And Metals**

Deep mining was not accepted out in the 16th and 17th centuries in India, but surface mining for a large number of minerals and metal was practiced.

#### ***Mineral Production***

The salt was the essential commodity in which India seems to have been self-enough. The sources of salt were the Sambhar lake in Rajputana, the Punjab rock-salt mines and sea water. Sea salt was made mainly in Sind, the Rann of Cutch, other coasts of Gujarat, Malabar, Mysore and Bengal, etc. Since salt was not accessible in all parts of the country, it was one of the major articles of trade at regional and inter-regional stage.

Saltpetre was one of the most significant mineral products. It was in great demand through the Europeans. It was primarily used as an ingredient for gun powder. Initially, saltpetre was extracted at Ahmedabad, Baroda, etc. But since the supply could not meet the demand, it started to be made even in the Delhi-Agra region. Though, through the second half of the seventeenth century, Patna in Bihar became an significant centre for procuring saltpetre.

Saltpetre, composed from the nearby places of Patna was then sent through boats down the Ganges to Hugli and sent to Europe. The method of obtaining saltpetre from salt earth was a simple one. Shallow reservoirs were made on the ground and salt earth was mixed in water. The salt dissolved in water and earth settled down. This salt water was then boiled in large pans, the water evaporated and saltpetre was obtained. Indian artisans used earthen pans for boiling. The Europeans used iron or copper pans for boiling. Tavernier (17th century) found that Dutch were using boilers imported from Holland. According to one source, the total production in a year (1688) was approximately more than two lakhs mans of raw saltpetre from Bihar alone. Other minerals such as alum and mica were produced on small level.

### ***Metals***

India did not have gold and silver mines in the proper sense. The well-known gold mines of Kolar were not explored. Though, small quantities of gold were obtained from river beds, but the cost of procurement was more than its value. Fitch (1584) has described the method of washing the river sand and finding gold dust in Bihar. Likewise, gold was found in river beds in some other regions. Most of the silver necessities were met through imports. Gold and silver were used for minting of coins. A large amount was used for creation ornaments and for hoarding purposes as valuable metal. Rajasthan was the main centre for copper production where copper mines existed (at Khetri). The bulk of the copper was used for minting copper coins. Small and big household objects were also manufactured.

Iron was the most commonly found metal. Iron mines were widely distributed in the north, east, west, central and southern parts of the country. Abul Fazl records Bengal, Allahabad, Agra, Bihar, Gujarat, Delhi and Kashmir as iron producing regions. Chhotanagpur in Bihar and adjoining regions of Orissa also produced large quantities. The iron found in the south was converted into steel. Iron was used for creation ploughs, axes, nails, screws, swords, daggers. The steel made in the south, especially in Golconda, was used for the manufacture of Damascus swords, admired all in excess of the world. Some other metals, though in small amount, were also produced. Lead was found in north and western India.

### ***Diamond Mining***

Diamond mining was accepted out in some parts of India, but the diamond miners of Golconda were most well-known. Other places incorporated Biragarh in Berar, Panna in Madhya Pradesh, Khokhra or Chhotanagpur in Bihar.

## **Wood-Based Crafts**

Wood provided the basis for a large number of crafts. The means of surface transport made of wood incorporated palanquins and bullock-drawn carts. Both were made in a wide diversity of styles and the ones used through rich were carved and decorated. Large number of boats and sea-going ships were always needed since India has a long coast line and north India is criss-crossed through a large number of navigable rivers.

The boats were built in several sizes: from small one for pleasure trips to large ones for transporting hundreds of kilograms of goods in excess of long aloofness. The ports on the Arabian sea as well as the Bay of Bengal, such as Thattah Surat, Bassein, Goa, Cragnore, Cochin, Masulipatam and the neighbouring, Narasapur, Hariharapur, Satgaon and Chittagong were significant ship-building centres. When the Europeans intensified their activities, they got their ships repaired at these places. They found Indian ships better suited for eastern waters and, hence, they purchased ships built in India. Therefore ship-building industry received a considerable boost because of the rising European demand throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Other uses of wood were to create doors, windows, and a large number of household furniture such as boxes, bedstead etc. The rich had their furniture made from high excellence wood.

## **Miscellaneous Crafts**

Each and every region had its highly specialised crafts. Here it would not be possible to go into the details of all these crafts. We will describe some significant crafts only. Stone-cutting was an significant craft as stones were widely used in the construction of houses, palaces, forts, temples, etc. Indian stone-masons were recognized for their ability. Other items of non-agricultural production were leather goods such as shoes, saddles, book covers, etc., manufactured all in excess of the country.

## ***Paper***

Paper was manufactured throughout the period under review in a number of centres, such as Ahmedabad, Daulatabad, Lahore, Sialkot, Biharsharif close to Patna, etc. Ahmedabad paper was of many diversities and was exported to Arabia, Turkey and Persia. The paper from Kashmir was also well-known. In a number of places in north India, paper was made which was used for local needs. The manufacture in South India was limited. Most of the paper was hand made and of a coarse diversity.

### ***Pottery***

The modern records refer to the use of earthenwares through people for cooking, storing water and granules, etc. Besides, most of the houses had earthen tiled (khaprail) roof. The demand for earthenware necessity have been great. Every large village in India had its potter and pottery for every day use was made all in excess of the country. Separately from the above coarse pottery, fine crockery was also made. Manucci (1663) mentions the manufacture of earthen crockery which was finer than glass and lighter than paper. Marshal (1670) also noticed fine crockery. Glass manufacturing was also undertaken in many parts of the country.

Other miscellaneous items produced through Indian craftsmen incorporated soap, objects of ivory and shell, articles of horn, etc. Many crafts were forest-based. In the middle of them, lac was used for the manufacture of bangles, varnishing doors and windows and toys and for preparing a red dye. It was extracted from forests in Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa, Malwa, Gujarat, Malabar, etc. Bengal lac was measured to be the best. In Surat, bangles and toys were made of lac. It was also used for sealings. Several modern authorities refer to pearl fisheries being practiced in the sea waters beside the southern coast.

### **Organization Of Production**

All shapes of production from independent artisan stage to the karkhanas existed in India throughout the period of our study. The organization of production varied in dissimilar crafts and industries in accordance with the needs and necessities of that craft.

### ***Village Artisans***

The artisans in rural areas, who produced articles of daily use, shaped a regular part of the village establishment called jajmani system. The most crucial services were those of the blacksmiths, carpenters, potters and shoemakers. Usually, they were paid in type for providing the basic tools, agricultural implements and their maintenance needs. The system was much more organised in Deccan and Maharashtra where village artisans and servants were called balutedars. There was one more group of workers in Deccan called alutedars which were also incorporated in some regions.

With the money economy penetrating into the rural areas and also the

rising demand, the situation in this survival-oriented system started changing. According to Tapan Ray Chaudhuri, “Through the seventeenth century, if not much earlier, exchange had made important inroads into the survival-oriented system of manufacture through collectively maintained artisans. Payments in cash and type for additional work, or entirely on a piece-work basis, co-existed with the more widespread practice of allocating fixed shares of the rural produce and/or land to the artisan families”. Tapan Ray Chaudhuri adds that almost certainly through the mid-eighteenth century the whole production for the long and medium aloofness trade was dependent on artisans who were fully weaned from the jajmani system. With the augment in demand, it seems the rural artisan catered to urban markets also. The village artisan seems to be quite mobile and would move from one village to production for the market was mainly done at the independent artisan-stage production. Approximately every craft had specialised artisans manufacturing articles for sale. Pelsaert, a Dutch traveller (1623) mentions that approximately 100 specialized categories of artisans work in dissimilar crafts. The high stage of specialization is most apparent in the textile manufacture. Approximately every operation was performed through a dissimilar group of workmen like carding, spinning of yam, winding silk thread, weaving of cloth, bleaching, dyeing, printing and painting of cloth, etc. Peasants in villages played a important role through taking up several manufacturing activities. In approximately all the AGCO-based crafts like indigo, sugar and others like spinning of silk and cotton yarn, manufacture of salt and saltpetre, they were at the core of manufacturing activity.

The localization of manufacture was a important characteristic. The European traders tell us that they had to go from place to place to procure the desired commodities. Masulipatam and Benaras each are said to have approximately 7000 weavers. Likewise, Qasimbazar had approximately 2500 silk weavers.

At the individual artisan-stage production, the artisan himself procured the raw material and tools, performed the manufacture and also retailed the products. The working place was invariably the house of the craftsman or artisan. The artisans had little capital to work with. So, the individual output was small and merchants had to create great efforts to procure it. The excellence also differed.

### ***Dadni***

These troubles gave rise to a revised form of production called dadni or a sort of putting-out system. In dadni the money was advanced to artisans through the merchants and the artisans promised to deliver the goods at a given time. Here the merchant was in a position to dictate his specifications.

The practice in textiles sector became so widespread that it was hard to obtain cloth without creation advance payment to the artisans. In the seventeenth century, the weaving industry in Deccan was found to be dominated through merchants. In South India, according to Alaev., “The subjection of crafts to merchant capital was widespread. Practically all the artisan settlements beside the Coromandal coast were under the control of one trader or another. In the 17th century, the biggest of them (merchant) was Kasi Viranna, who had in his hands all the coasts from Madras to Armagaon except Pulicat. Weaver settlements of this region were recognized as ‘the Viranna villages’.”

The system of dadni empowered the buyer to dictate the excellence and quantity of the goods produced. The artisan got the much needed money to buy raw material with the guarantee of the sale of the goods made, but he lost his control in excess of sale.

### ***Manufactories***

In 1620-21, the English factory at Patna recognized almost certainly the first such unit for winding silk yam and employed approximately 100 workmen. The Dutch at Qasimbazar employed 700-800 weavers in their silk factory. But such instances are just sporadic. Another specialised area where large number of workmen were assembled to work at one place were ship-building and building construction. Approximately all the ship-building centres in Deccan and South India had large number of artisans working on each ship under one single supervision. Building activity also like ship-building required large number of artisans working under one single supervision.

There were two other production sectors where large number of workmen (though not very skilled artisans) were employed. One, the diamond mines of Golconda and Deccan had approximately 30,000 to 60,000 people working at periodical season of mining. Here, the plots of land were taken on rent from the ruler through the prospectors. Each of them used to employ 200 to 300 miners to work on their plots. The miners were paid wages per day. Likewise, in Bihar approximately 8000 men used to come to diamond mines in the season of mining (December-January). These people were usually peasants and workers who came to work here after sowing their fields.

The second case of assemblage of large workers was in the production of saltpetre. In this case also large number of people worked under one master in small groups. In Bihar they were called nooneas. With the rising demand, the Dutch and English recognized their own units for refining saltpetre. The workmen in their refineries were to work with the equipment provided through these European companies.

## ***Karkhanas***

A unique characteristic of production in the period of our study was the karkhanas. These karkhanas were in operation even in 14th- 15th centuries. These karkhanas were part of the royal establishment and also of the nobles. These produced things for the consumption of the royal household and the court. Several high nobles also had their own karkhanas. Usually expensive and luxury items were produced here. Skilled artisans were employed to work under one roof to manufacture things needed. They were supervised through state officials. The need for such karkhanas arose because the artisans on their own were not in a position to invest vast amounts required for royal needs. Because of valuable raw material, the state also did not want to provide these to artisans to work at their own places. We will not go here into details of the functioning of these karkhanas as their production was not for the market but for personal consumption of the king and nobles.

We notice that the process of production was undergoing a change throughout the period of our study. As summed up through Tapan Ray Chaudhari, "The organization of manufacture in Mughal India did not remain unchanged. A lot was happening, but on a limited level, and the sum total of new developments did not amount to a break with the past. Stability was still the dominant feature. Yet the changes in organization were more basic than those in technique".

## **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

### **Extent Of Farming**

In the absence of relevant data, it is hard to discover out the exact area under the plough. Nevertheless, the accessible data helps us to have an thought in relation to the cultivable land throughout Mughal period. Abul Fazl in his *Ain-i Akbari* gives area figures for all the Mughal provinces in North India except Bengal, Thatta and Kashmir. In the case of most of the provinces, like Delhi, Agra, Awadh, Lahore, Multan, Allahabad and Ajmer, separate figures are provided for each pargana (with a few exceptions).

The figures of the *Ain-i Akbari* belong to the year c. 1595. The area figures for the 17th century for several regions are accessible in an accountancy manual of A.D. 1686. The same figures have been reproduced in a historical work *Chahar Gulshan* (1739-40). This manual gives measured area figures for each province; total number of villages in each province and a break-up of measured and unmeasured villages. As stated earlier, the *Ain*

gives area figures in most cases for each pargana but it is hard to say to what extent the pargana was actually measured. The set of figures accessible from Aurangzeb's reign give a better picture. These illustrate that approximately fifty per cent of the villages were not measured till A.D. 1686.

The figures for Aurangzeb's reign illustrate that the measured area increased compared to the Ain (1595). But it is hard to say that the total augment in the measured area was due to extension of farming. This may as well have been due to the inclusion of some of the earlier unmeasured area under measurement. There is a debate in the middle of historians as to what these measurement figures actually represent. The questions raised are: whether these figures are for the area actually under crop, or cultivable land or the total measured area? W.H. Moreland was of the view that these figures represent the total cropped area.

Irfan Habib holds that it would have incorporated cultivable area which was not sown and also area under habitation, lakes, tanks, parts of forests, etc. Shireen Moosvi agrees with Irfan Habib and has calculated this cultivable waste as ten per cent of the measured area. But she feels that even after deducting this ten per cent, the remaining area cannot be taken as net cropped area because large tracts of cultivated areas were not measured. She also thinks that several a times the land under kharif and rabi crops was measured separately and, after adding the two, it was recorded as measured area. In such a situation, measurement figures of Mughal period alone are not of much help to ascertain the extent of farming. Irfan Habib and Shireen Moosvi have taken the help of other accessible data such as detailed figures of some areas accessible in some revenue papers, jama figures and dastur rates. These have been compared with the figures of actually cultivated area in the beginning of 20th century. According to their estimates the cultivated area flanked by the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 20th century approximately doubled. The augment in Bihar, Awadh, and parts of Bengal is ascribed to the clearance of forest. In Punjab and Sind the spread of canal network also contributed to the extension in farming.

## **Means Of Farming And Irrigation**

The Indian peasant used a diversity of implements and techniques for farming, depending on the nature of soil and need of the crops. Likewise, irrigation was done through several means in dissimilar regions.

### ***Means and Methods of Farming***

Tillage was performed through harnessing a pair of oxen to the plough.

The latter was made of wood with an iron ploughshare. Unlike in Europe neither horse nor bullock-drawn wheeled plough nor mould board were ever used in India. Regional variations, in a sprawling country like India, in the size and weight of ploughs must be expected—from a light plough that could be accepted through the tiller upon his shoulders, to the heavy one meant for harder soil. Again, for soft soil, the iron ploughshare or coulter could have been dispensed with, more so as the price of iron was high. Several modern European travellers noted with surprise that Indian plough just turned the soil and that deep digging was not done, it seems that this suited to Indian circumstances because deep digging would result in the loss of moisture in the soil. Moreover, it was only the upper layer which was more fertile.

A separate device was used for breaking the clods or lumps of earth. This was done with the help of wooden boards called patella in parts of north India. Like plough this flat board was also harnessed to a pair of oxen. Usually a man would stand on the board to give weight. The patella was dragged on the field through oxen. The sowing of seeds was usually done through scattering through hand. In 16th century Barbosa also refers to the use of a sort of seed drill in the coastal region for sowing. Efforts were made to augment the fertility of the soil through artificial means. In South India flocks of goat and sheep were widely used. Usually flocks of these cattle were made to spend a few nights in the agricultural field for their droppings were measured good manure. It was assumed that if a flock of 1000 spend five or six nights in one kani of land (1.32 acres) it was enough to keep land fertile for 6 to 7 years. The same practice was commonly used in Northern India also. Fish manure also seems to have been used in coastal areas.

Rotation of crops was used for the optimum utilization of land throughout the year. It was also measured good to maintain the productivity of the soil. Peasants through the experience of generations had acquired some knowledge of using rotation of crops for the good of the soil. They would decide which crop to be replaced through another in a scrupulous field for a better yield. A semi circular sickle was used for cutting the crop. The harvested crop was spread on the ground for threshing. Our sources refer to two methods: in the first method the crop was beaten with sticks; in the second method the animals were made to move on the spread out crop. The weight and movement of the animals treaded the grain. The threshed out matter was put in open baskets and the contents were thrown outside the basket at a controlled speed. The chaff got scattered through the wind and the grain fell on the ground.

### ***Means of Irrigation***

Indian agriculture was heavily dependent on rains for irrigation needs. The major criterion for selecting the crops for sowing was availability of rain water

in a scrupulous region. Separately from rain water, a number of devices were used for artificial irrigation. Well-irrigation was the most common method employed throughout the length and breadth of the country. A number of methods were used to lift water from wells depending on the water table and technology accessible.

Here we will provide only a brief description of water lifting devices. In the Northern plains both masonry and non-masonry wells were dug. The non-masonry wells were not durable and some digging was required every year. The masonry wells were durable and were appropriate for fixing better water lifting devices. The masonry wells had raised walls and enclosures or platforms. Both bricks and stones were used to construct wells. These wells were usually set inside with terracotta rings. These are also recognized as ring wells. A number of devices were used for lifting water from the wells.

- The most simple method was to draw water with rope and bucket through hand without any mechanical aid. Due to its limited capability this device could not have been used for irrigating large fields.
- The second method was the employment of pulleys in excess of the wells. The same rope and bucket was used in excess of the pulley to lift the water. With the help of pulley larger amounts of water could be drawn with less effort than our first method.
- Both the above devices were used for the supply of water in domestic use or for irrigating small plots.
- In the third method the rope-pulley was used with the addition of the employment of a pair of oxen. The use of animal power in this method helped in irrigating larger areas.
- The fourth device worked on a lever principle. In this method a long rope is lashed to the fork of an upright beam or trunk of a tree to put it in a swinging position. The bucket was fastened to rope tied on one end of the pole. The pole's other end accepted a weight heavier than filled bucket. One person is required to operate it.
- The fifth method required the use of a wheel. In its earlier form the pots were attached to rims of the wheels which was to rotate with the help of animal power.
- It was used to lift water from shallow surface and was of no use for wells.

The use of wheel for lifting water from well was also made. In this form a garland of pots was used with 3 wheels, a gear mechanism and animal power. With the help of this device regular supply of large amounts of water could be ensured for irrigating large fields. This was also helpful for lifting water from deep wells. The intricate machine and animal power would have made the device expensive. It so would have been accessible to the peasants with substantial means.

Lakes, tanks and reservoirs of water were also used uniformly in all parts of the country. In South India, this was the most prevalent method used for irrigation. Here the dams were made in excess of the rivers. Construction of such reservoirs was beyond individual means. It was so the responsibility of state, local chiefs and temple management to make such facilities. The huge Madag lake built through Vijaynagar rulers is a marvel of civil engineering of the time. It was built on the Tungabhadra with three earth embankments to bridge the gaps in the hills. When full, this lake was 10-15 miles long. Each of the three embankments had sluices built of vast slabs of hewn stones.

Rajasthan is another region where large reservoirs for storing water abound. The Dhebar lake in Mewar, according to the Ain-i Akbari, has a circumference of 36 miles. The Udaisagar is said to have a circumference of 12 miles; Rajsamand and Jaisamand were other significant lakes built in Mewar in the 17th century. Similar reservoirs created with the help of dams in Marwar and Amber regions were Balsan and Mansagar respectively.

Approximately every cluster of villages had smaller reservoirs and lakes where rain water was stored. Our sources inform us that in the 1650s, Mughal administration proposed to advance Rs. 40,000 to 50,000 to the cultivators in Khandesh and Berar for erecting dams for irrigation. It is motivating to note that a wide network of such small dams in Khandesh is still in use, and they cover the basins of the five major rivers in this region, viz., Mosam, Girna, Ken, Panjbra, and Shivan.

In Northern plains, canals figure prominently as a means of irrigation. The trend seems to have sustained under the Mughals. The Nahr Faiz built throughout Shah Jahan's reign was approximately 150 miles in length. It accepted the water from the Yamuna to a large area. Another canal, approximately 100 miles long, was cut from the river Ravi close to Lahore. Remnants of a number of canals are accessible in the whole Indus delta. Irfan Habib is of the opinion that the main deficiency of Mughal canals was that they did not often run above the nearby plain, and so the water that could be obtained from them for irrigation was limited to what could be lifted from them. The network of canals in the region kept on rising. Canals are not reported from South India.

### **Agricultural Produce**

India with extensive land area, dissimilar types of soils and varying climatic circumstances, could boast of a large diversity of agricultural products. For the convenience of study, we will discuss agricultural produce

under three heads—food crops, cash crops and fruits, vegetables and spices.

### ***Food Crops***

The majority of seasonal crops in North India were grown in two major crop seasons kharif (autumn) and rabi (spring). In some areas the peasants tended to grow even three crops through producing some short-term crops in flanked by. Rice was the main kharif crop and wheat was rabi. In South India, these separate crop-seasons with dissimilar crops were absent. Here, on wet lands one paddy (rice) crop was in the fields from June/July to December/January and another from January/February to April/May. In North Arcot, dry crops (kumbu, red gram, horse gram, castor) were sown from May to September/October and harvested from August to December/January on the wet lands, in August/September the ragi and cholam and in February/March the paddy crop, were harvested.

Rice and wheat were the two major food crops throughout the country. The regions with high rainfall (40" to 50") accounted for the bulk of rice production. The whole of Northeast, Eastern India (Bihar, Bengal, Orissa with parts of Eastern U.P.), southern coast of Gujarat and South India, were rice producing areas. As indicated above, in South India there were two main seasons of rice farming kuddapah-kar and samba-peshanam. They were named after the diversity of rice cultivated throughout the summer and winter seasons.

Rice farming is also reported from irrigated areas of Punjab and Deccan. Every region had its own diversity of coarse to ordinary to fine excellence of rice. Regions of Bengal and Bihar produced the finest excellence of rice. Like rice, wheat also had specific regions. Punjab, Sind, Western Uttar Pradesh and other regions with little rainfall produced wheat. References to its production in Bihar, Gujarat, Deccan and even some parts of Bengal are also accessible.

Separately from these two major crops, barley was grown extensively in the Central plains. The Ain-i Akbari refers to barley production in Allahabad, Awadh, Agra, Ajmer, Delhi, Lahore and Multan, etc. Millet is reported with some exceptions mainly from wheat producing zones. Jowar and bajra were the two main millets. Pulses are reported from dissimilar regions. Significant ones are gram, arhar, moong, moth, urd and khisari (the latter was grown extensively in Bihar and the regions of present Madhya Pradesh). Though, Abul Fazl says that its consumption was injurious to health. The same is confirmed through modern researches. It was whispered for long that maize (makai or makka) was not recognized in India throughout 17th century. Some recent works establish beyond doubt that it was grown definitely in Rajasthan and Maharashtra and perhaps other regions also throughout the second half of

the 17th century.

### ***Cash Crops***

Crops grown mainly for the market are commonly termed as cash crops. These are referred in Persian records as *jinsi kamil* or *jinsi ala* (superior grade crops). Unlike seasonal food crops, these occupied the fields approximately the whole year. The major cash crops in 16th-17th centuries were sugarcane, cotton, indigo and opium. All these crops were recognized in India from historical times. Though, in the 17th century their demand increased due to enhanced manufacturing and commercial activities. Throughout this period, a large foreign market also opened for these commodities. The Indian peasant, quick to follow the market demand, increased the farming of these crops.

Sugarcane was the most widely grown cash crop of the period. The *Ain-i Akbari* records it in most of the *dastur circles* of Agra, Awadh, Lahore, Multan and Allahabad. Sugar from Bengal was measured to be the best in quality. Multan, Malwa, Sind, Khandesh, Berar and regions of South India all testify to the attendance of sugarcane in the 17th century. Another cash crop grown throughout the country was cotton. The region with large level farming were parts of the present day Maharashtra, Gujarat and Bengal. Modern sources refer to its farming in Ajmer, Allahabad, Awadh, Bihar, Multan, Thatta (Sind), Lahore and Delhi. Indigo was another cash crop widely cultivated under the Mughals. The plant acquiesced a blue dye (*neel*) which was much in demand in India and European markets. Its attendance is recorded in the *dastur circles* of Awadh, Allahabad, Ajmer, Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Multan and Sind. Its farming is referred in Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal, Malwa and Coromandal in South India and Deccan.

The diversities high in demand were those of Bayana and Sarkhej. Bayana, a place close to Agra, was measured as producing the best excellence of indigo and fetched high price. Sarkhej, close to Ahmedabad, was measured second in excellence and also fetched a high price. Other notable places for excellence indigo were regions approximately Khurja and Aligarh (in U.P.), Sehwan (in Sind) and Telingana (in Deccan). Farming of opium is reported from a number of places in India. The Mughal provinces of Bihar and Malwa seem to have produced good opium. It was also cultivated in Awadh, Bihar, Delhi, Agra, Multan, Lahore, Bengal, Gujarat, Marwar, and Mewar in Rajasthan. Farming of tobacco seems to have spread in India in a short time. The *Ain-i Akbari* does not mention it as a crop in any of the *dastur circles* or other regions. It seems to have been introduced in India throughout the 16th century through the Portuguese. Its farming was noticed in approximately all parts of the country (specially in Surat and Bihar).

Farming of coffee seems to have started throughout the second half of the 17th century while tea does not figure throughout the period of our study as a common beverage. San or sunn-hemp, a fibre yielding plant, was cultivated in all the core provinces of the Mughal empire (Awadh, Allahabad, Agra, Lahore, Ajmer, etc.). Sericult are (rearing of silkworms on a mulberry plant) was accepted on in Bengal, Assam, Kashmir and western coast. Though, Bengal was the main region of production. The plants whose seeds were used for extracting oil come under the category of food as well as cash crops. The main oil yielding crops listed are rape seed, castor, linseed. Rape seed is reported in all provinces from Allahabad to Multan as also in Bengal. Farming of other oilseed plants was relatively less widespread.

### *Fruits, Vegetables and Spices*

Horticulture seems to have reached new heights throughout the Mughal period. The Mughal Emperors and the nobles planted lavish orchards. Approximately every noble of consequence had his gardens on the outskirts of the towns where they resided. Orchards and groves were laid down with careful planning. A number of fruits accessible today were introduced in India throughout 16th and 17th centuries. Pineapple (anannas) is one such fruit which was brought from Latin America and introduced in India through the Portuguese. In a short period of time it became popular and was extensively cultivated all in excess of the country.

Papaya and cashew-nuts were also introduced through the same agency, but their spread was a bit slow. Leechi and guava seem to have been introduced later. Cherries were brought from Kabul and grown in Kashmir through grafting. The practice of grafting was in order to improve the excellence of a number of fruits. Excellence of oranges other types of citrus fruits, apricots, mangoes and a host of other fruits was greatly improved through grafting. Coconut was grown not only beside the coastal region but also inland.

Seeds of dissimilar diversity of melons and grapes were brought from Kabul and successfully grown in the gardens of Emperors and nobles. Ordinary melons were grown everywhere on riverbeds through the peasants. A large diversity of vegetables were grown all in excess of the country. The Ain-i Akbari gives a long list of vegetables in use at that time. Potato and Tomato seem to have been introduced in the 17th century and after. For centuries India was recognized for its spices. The Southern coast of India witnessed large level spice export to several regions in Asia and Europe. Pepper, clove, cardamom were plentiful. Ginger and Turmeric were grown extensively. The Dutch and English purchased large quantities for export. Saffron grown in Kashmir was celebrated for its colour and flavor. Pan (betel leaf) was

produced in several areas.

The Maghi Pan of Bihar and several other diversities from Bengal were well-known. Betel-nut was also produced in coastal regions. Large forest tracts supplied a number of commercially significant products. Lignum used for medicinal purpose and lakh were exported in large quantities.

### ***Productivity and Yields***

Shireen Moosvi has worked out the productivity of crops and per bigha yields for Mughal India. We will be providing information based mainly on her researches. The Ain-i Akbari gives schedules of crop yield and revenue rates for zabti provinces (Lahore, Multan, Agra, Allahabad, Awadh and Delhi). For each crop yields are provided separately for high, middling and low categories. An average yield can be worked out on the basis of these. Though, Abul Fazl does not inform us what the basis of the three categories was. It seems that the low yields are those of non-irrigated land while the rest two are for irrigated fields.

Shireen Moosvi has worked out the agricultural productivity on the basis of several data accessible from the 16th century records. According to her estimates the yields (average of high, middling and low yields) for some major crops were as follows: Shireen Moosvi has also compared the yields of the Ain-i Akbari with yields approximately the close of the 19th century. She discovers that on the whole there is no major change in the productivity of food crops flanked by the two periods. Though, in case of cash crops a definite augment in the productivity in the 19th century can be noticed.

### **Cattle And Livestock**

The cattle played a very significant role in agricultural production of our period. They were employed in significant agricultural activities like ploughing and irrigation, and their dung was used for maturing. Besides, dairy products contributed considerably to the agriculture-related production. The peasants in general beside with some specialised castes were involved in the rearing of cattle.

Large level involvement of cattle in agricultural operations suggests the attendance of large cattle population. With high land man ratio, grazing fields would have been accessible in abundance. Modern European travellers refer to large numbers of cattle in Indian fields. Irfan Habib suggests that the per capita cattle population in Mughal India compares favorably with modern statistics. Abundance of butter or ghee is said to be the diet of the common

people; this also suggests a large cattle population. Oxen were used for transporting goods as pack animals or for bullock carts. The banjaras (migrant trading community) are said to have maintained flocks of a few hundred to thousand animals. Flocks of thousands of sheep and goats were also reared.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- What was Gentlemen XVII?
- Describe the functioning of the 'Court of Committees'.
- Who were 'interlopers'? Describe their clash with the English East India Company.
- In what method French East India Company differed from its counterpart English East India Company?
- Describe the role of Banjaras in inland trade.
- Who were brokers?
- Describe the role played through hats and penths in the local trade.
- Describe the inter-regional trade from other parts of country to Gujarat.
- Describe the sea-route from Indian ports to Europe.
- Which were the main indigo diversities produced in India?
- Briefly describe the jajmani system.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **SOCIETY AND CULTURE**

#### **STRUCTURE**

- Learning objectives
- Population in Mughal India
- Rural classes and life-style
- Urbanization, urban classes and life-style
- Religious ideas and movements
- State and religion
- Painting and fine arts
- Architecture
- Science and technology
- Indian languages and literature
- Review questions

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This chapter will enable you to know:

- The several estimates of population of Mughal India in 1601;
- The size of population in Mughal India;
- The groups of population residing in rural areas in the 16th-18th century;
- The customs and social institutions prevalent in rural areas;
- Have an thought of urbanization in medieval India beside with some of the most talked in relation to the theories on urbanization;
- The several characteristics of medieval urban life in India;
- The ideology of the Bhakti movement;
- Islamic mysticism, Sufi philosophy and the major sufi-Silsilas;
- The nature of revivalist movements in the 18th century;
- Nature of the modern writings on religion;
- Attitude of the Mughal Emperors towards religion;
- The development of painting' throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries;
- The development of fine arts viz., music, dance and theatrical arts in the courts of the Mughals and other regional kingdoms;
- Understand the structure shapes and techniques in Mughal architecture;
- Elements of decadence in Mughal architecture towards the close of the period;
- Read in relation to the main developments in the several sectors of science and technology throughout the Mughal period, and learn the nature of response of the Indians to European science and technology; and
- The diversity and richness of literature produced.

## **POPULATION IN MUGHAL INDIA**

### **Estimates Of Population Of Mughal India**

It was, though, hard to rest content with an admission that a definitive demographic history of India from c. 1601 to 1872 is impossible. No stage of economic history can be studied without allowing for demographic factor. For pre-modern societies, population growth is often measured as a major index of economic growth. It is, so, legitimate to effort estimating the Indian population on the basis of quantitative data of diverse type that are accessible to us.

### ***On the Basis of the Extent of Cultivated Area***

Moreland made the first effort to estimate the population with the help of the data of the A'in-i Akbari. This work provides figures for arazi which he took to represent the gross cropped area. Comparing the arazi with the gross farming at the beginning of this century and assuming a constant correspondence flanked by the extent of farming and the size of the population right through the intervening period, he concluded that from "Multan to Monghyr" there were 30 to 40 million people at the end of the 16th century.

### ***Applying Civilian: Soldier Ratio***

For the Deccan and South India, Moreland took as the basis of his calculations the military strength of the Vijaynagar Empire and Deccan Sultanates. Taking a rather arbitrary ratio of 1:30 flanked by the soldiers and civilian population, he estimated the population of the reign at 30 millions. Allowing for other territories lying within the pre-1947 limits of India but not sheltered through his two basic assumptions, he put the population of Akbar's Empire in 1600 at 60 millions, and of India as a whole at 100 millions. These estimates received wide acceptance. Nevertheless, Moreland's basic assumptions are questionable. For estimating the population of Northern India he creates the assumptions that:

- Measurement was made of the cultivated land only; and
- It was accepted out through the Mughal administration to completion in all localities for which any figures are offered.

It has been shown on the basis of textual as well as statistical evidence that the arazi of the A'in was area measured for revenue purposes which incorporated, besides the cultivated area current, fallows and some cultivable and uncultivable waste. Moreover, measurement through no means was completed everywhere. Therefore, Moreland's estimate of the population of Northern India loses much of its credibility. It is weaker still for Deccan and South India. The army: civilian ratio is not only arbitrary but undependable; the comparison with the pre-World War I France and Germany seems, in scrupulous to be quite inept, since the military: civilian ratios maintainable in modern states and economies are so variable. Any of these can through no stretch of the imagination be used to set limits for the range of military: civilian ratios in pre-modern regimes in the tropical zones. This is separately from the fact that Moreland's count of the number of troops in the Deccan kingdoms was based on very general statements through European travellers.

Though, Moreland has given inadequate weight to the areas outside the two regions. To create an appropriate allowance for these regions, Kingsley Davis raised Moreland's estimate for the whole of India to 125 millions in his

book *Population of India and Pakistan*. This modification, reasonable insofar as it goes, does not, of course, remove the more substantial objections to Moreland's method indicated above. In spite of the several objections to the estimates of Moreland, it still remains legitimate to use the extent of farming to create an estimate of population. The *arazi* figures of the *A'in* can give the means of working out the extent of farming in 1601.

Creation allowance for cultivable and uncultivable waste incorporated in the *arazi* and establishing the extent of measurement in several parts of the Mughal Empire, Shireen Moosvi in her book *Economy of the Mughal Empire* has concluded that the area under farming in Mughal Empire in 1601 was in relation to the 55 per cent of the cultivated area in the corresponding region in 1909-10. This estimate receives further reinforcement from the extent of farming worked out through Irfan Habib from a detailed analysis and comparison of the number and size of villages in several regions of the Empire in the 17th century and in 1881. Irfan Habib suggests that the area under plough in the 17th century was more than one-half but less than two-thirds of the ploughed area in 1900. On the basis of the above mentioned analysis, Shireen Moosvi creates the following three assumptions:

- The total farming in 1601 was 50 to 55 per cent of what it was throughout the first decade of the present century.
- The urban population was 15 per cent of the total and, therefore, the rural population was 85 per cent of the total population.
- The average agricultural holding in 1601 was 107 per cent larger than in 1901.
- She provides the estimate of the population of India in the 17th century as flanked by 140 and 150 millions.

### ***Using Total and Per Capita Land Revenue***

Another important effort to estimate population, through using dissimilar types of data was made through Ashok V. Desai. This required rather intricate assumptions. Desai compared the purchasing power of the lowest urban wages on the basis first of prices and wages given in the *A'in* and, then, of all-India average prices and wages of the early 1960s. The yields and crop rates given through Abul Fazl give him with a means of measuring the total food consumption in Akbar's time which was 1/5th of what it was in the 1960s. He found that the productivity per unit of the area should have been 25 to 30 per cent higher in 1595 than in 1961. This in turn enables him to estimate the productivity per worker in agriculture at a stage twice as high in 1595 as in 1961.

Basing himself on the statistics of consumption in the 1960s, Desai extrapolated the stage of consumption in 1595 and found that the consumption

stage was somewhere flanked by 1.4 and 1.8 times the modern stage. He then proceeds to breakdown the average consumption at the end of the 16th century for each major agricultural item. With these figures at hand and taking into account other relevant modern data, Desai worked out the area under the several crops per capita which he then multiplied through the revenue rates, to estimate per capita land revenue.

Dividing the total jama through this estimated per capita revenue, the population of the Empire works out at in relation to the 65 millions which confirms Moreland's estimate. Desai's assumptions and method have been criticized through Alan Heston and Shireen Moosvi. Heston's main objection is that the yields for 1595 have been overestimated. While Shireen Moosvi creates some more serious objections, namely, he used modern all-India statistics to compare with 16th century data. Since the prices and wages in the A'in are those of the imperial camp and, so, apply to Agra, it is surely inappropriate to compare these with modern all-India average.

In the same method, the A'in's standard crop rates applied either to the immediate vicinity of Sher Shah's capital, Delhi, or at the most to the region where the later dastur-ul amals were in force, i.e., mainly Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab. These are therefore not comparable to all-India yields. Moreover, Desai divided the total jama of the Empire through the hypothetical land-tax per capita without creation any distinction flanked by the zabt provinces and the other regions where the tax incidence might have been at a dissimilar stage altogether. Another assumption of his which requires correction is that the jama was equal to the total land revenue whereas, given the purpose for which it was fixed, it could have only been an estimate of the net income from tax-realization through the jagirdars to whom the revenue were assigned. Moreover, the pattern of consumption in Akbar's India was not comparable to that of 1960s because the Mughal Empire was mainly confined to wheat-eating region, and oil seeds consumption could not perhaps be as high in 1595 as in the 1960s.

Shireen Moosvi creates use of the basic method suggested through Desai but modifies his assumption for 1870s to meet the objections raised. She uses the data accessible for 1860-70 for purposes of comparison and extrapolations; first, working out the population for five provinces of Akbar's India that were under zabt and then assuming that the population ratio of these provinces to that of the Empire, and of the latter to the whole of India, have remained constant since 1601, estimates the population of Akbar's Empire at 100 millions and that of India at 145 millions.

## **Average Rate Of Population Growth**

Taking the population of India to be approximately 145 millions in 1601 and 225 millions in 1871—this being the total counted through the first census of 1872, the compound annual rate of growth of the country's population for the period 1601 to 1872 comes to 0.21% per annum. Adopting this rate and given the two population figures for 1601 and 1872, one gets for 1801 a population of some 210 millions. This offers a welcome corroboration of our estimates: the most acceptable estimates for 1801 based on quite dissimilar arguments and calculations range from 198 millions to 207 millions.

The rate of population growth throughout the last three decades of the 19th century was 0.37 per cent per annum—a rate higher than the one we have deduced for the long period of 1601-1801, but not in itself a very high rate of growth.

### ***Comparison with Modern Europe***

The accompanying Table provides population growth rates calculated from estimates of European countries drawn from a well-recognized text book of European economic history 1600-1700

• Spain and Portugal	0.12
• Italy	0.00
• France	0.08
• British Isles	0.31
• Germany	0.00
• Switzerland	0.18
• Russia	0.12
• Total	0.10

These estimates illustrate that compared to the European demographic experience, the Mughal Empire was through no means exceptionally sluggish in raising its population. The rate of 0.21 per cent on the contrary suggests an economy in which there was some room for 'national savings' and net augment in food production, although the growth, on balance, was slow. The slowness necessity have come from natural calamities like famines as well as man-made factors. If one had data for estimating populations of some intermediate points, such as the year 1650 and 1700, one could perhaps have worked out the rate of population growth for shorter periods and obtain a closer view of the efficiency of Mughal economy within those periods. Such estimates would have been helpful, too, in indicating whether the rate of population growth in the 18th century signified any dissimilar movement in the economy than the one for the 17th century.

### ***Implications of the Rate of Growth***

An overall annual rate of growth of 0.2 per cent for the period 1601-1801 suggests some motivating inferences in relation to the Mughal Indian economy. If population growth is regarded as an index of the efficiency of a pre-capitalist economy, the Mughal economy could not be deemed to have been absolutely static or stagnant for the population tended to grow flanked by 36 and 44% in two hundred years.

### **Composition Of The Population: Rural And Urban**

There is again no direct data in relation to the proportion of urban population. Ifran Habib has made an effort to estimate urban population on the basis of the pattern of consumption of agricultural produce. The Mughal ruling class tended to lay claim on one half of the total agricultural produce, but all of it was not taken absent from the rural sector. Assuming that in relation to the quarter of the total agricultural produce was reaching towns, and, creation allowance for the higher ratio of raw material in the agricultural produce consumed in the towns, he assumes the urban population to be in excess of 15 per cent of the total population.

### ***Estimated Population in Several Towns***

Nizamuddin Ahmad in his *Tabaqat-i Akbari* records that in Akbar's Empire there were 120 big towns and 3,200 townships. Taking the total population of Akbar's Empire to be almost 100 millions and the urban population as 15 per cent of it, the average size of these 3,200 towns' works out at in relation to the 5000 each. Though, in the Mughal Empire there were quite a few big towns. The European travellers give estimated population of some major cities as follows:

<b>Town</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
Agra	1609	500,000
Delhi	1659-66	500,000
Lahore	1581	400,000
Thatta	1631-35	225,000
Ahmedabad	1663	100,000-200,000
Surat	1663	200,000
Patna	1631	200,000
Dacca	1630	200,000
Masulipatam	1672	200,000

## **RURAL CLASSES AND LIFE-STYLE**

### **Structure Of Rural Society**

The basic unit of rural society in India, as observed above, was the village. A village had two principal physical characteristics:

- It consisted of a group of families and a collection of dwellings and cultivated land also.

If we say that the primary inhabitants of the village were the peasants, we shall be creating an obvious statement. Peasants were one unit of rural population on whose productive efforts rested the survival of all other rural classes. But they were divided through the inequalities of wealth and social status. There were rich (viz. khwudkasht, gharuhala, and mirasdar) and poor peasants (viz. rezariaya, malti and kunbi). There were permanent and the temporary residents. Caste associations and kinship ties were also sources of divisiveness in the middle of the peasantry.

Alongside the peasants, a large population of craft and service communities also resided in the villages. This important part of the rural population of India consisted of groups like weavers, potters, blacksmiths, carpenters, barbers and washermen. These communities rendered valuable services. They also acted as a cheap source of labor for agricultural work. Above the peasants there existed a category of rural population which can be described as intermediate proprietors, uniformly recognized as zamindars. They claimed a share in the agricultural produce and exercised control in excess of the village through virtue of a historical tradition. Here it will suffice to note that the zamindars as a constituent unit of rural population were recognized through medieval rulers as they assisted the government in the task of collecting revenue from the peasants. For the service so rendered, they were entitled to a percentage of the total revenue composed. As a social group, the zamindars were considerably fragmented on the lines of caste associations and social ties.

### **Standard Of Living**

The rural society in medieval India was highly segmented. Therefore, one would expect considerable inequalities within the same village. The references in our sources do not highlight these inequalities, and the rural population is usually treated as a monolithic block.

## *Clothing*

The quantity of clothing is an index of the poverty of rural classes. Menfolk in rural areas have been described through Babur as wearing only a short cloth in relation to the loins. The travellers testify this description, but add that throughout the winter men wear cotton gowns and caps, both made of quilt. Women have been described as usually wearing cotton saris. There was, though, regional variation in their use of the blouse. The Malabari women wore nothing above their waist. In eastern India, too, blouse was not common. But in other regions blouse recognized as choli or angiya was worn through rural women. In parts of the western and central India, women wore lahangas in place of sari, with a blouse above.

Wearing of shoes in the middle of rural folk was not quite common. Perhaps shoes were used through the richer section in the villages. Satish Chandra uses the works of the Hindi poets, like Surdas and Tulsidas, to mention panahi and upanaha as the two words in vogue for shoes.

## *Housing*

A major segment of the rural population existed in houses made of mud with thatched roofs. They were usually single-room dwellings. Pelsaert, who visited India throughout Jahangir's time, has given a graphic description of the rural housing. We reproduce his account below:

- “Their houses are built of mud with thatched roofs. Furniture there is little or none, except some earthenware pots to hold water and for cooking, and two beds, one for the man, the other for his wife: Their bedclothes are scanty, merely a sheet, or perhaps two, serving both as under and in excess of-sheet; this is enough in the hot weather, but the bitter cold nights are miserable indeed, and they try to keep warm in excess of little cow dung fires which are lit outside the doors, because the houses have no fires places or chimneys...”

There was, though, considerable variation in these houses due to the availability of local material. Therefore, the huts in Bengal were made through roping bamboos upon a mud plinth. In Assam, the material used was wood, bamboo and straw. Huts in Kashmir were made of wood, and in north and central India the principal building material was mud thatched with straw. In the South the huts were sheltered with Cajan leaves. While the poor sometimes shared their dwellings with their cattle, the rich in the rural areas had houses having many rooms, space for storing food granules and an enclosed courtyard. The house of the ordinary peasant was deprived of any furniture save a few cots and bamboo mats. It also did not have any metal utensils barring iron pan used for creation breads. The commonly used pots,

even for cooking purpose, were made of earth.

### ***Food***

The diet of the common people in most parts of India consisted mainly of rice, millets and pulses. Pelsaert says, "They know little of the taste of meat." In regions where rice was the major crop, viz., Bengal, Orissa, Sindh, Kashmir and parts of south India, it was the staple diet of the rural masses. Likewise, in Rajasthan and Gujarat millets such as juwar and bajra were the main food. According to Satish Chandra, wheat was not apparently a part of the diet of the common people, even, in the wheat-producing Agra-Delhi region.

In addition to food granules, the rural people used beans and vegetables. Fish was popular in the coastal regions of Bengal and Orissa, but was not eaten regularly or in large quantity. There was, though, a taboo on beef. The very poor in the middle of the rural population had to remain satisfied with boiled rice, millet and grass-roots only. There was only one major meal for most of the people in rural areas. It was taken at midday or earlier. At sunset, only a lighter meal was served. Interestingly ghi was apparently a staple part of the diet in Northern India, Bengal and Western India. Bengali poet Mukundarama mentions a few delicacies made of curd, milk and jaggery (gur), which the poor could afford only on occasions of marriage and festival. Though, gur seems to have been commonly consumed in the villages.

### **Social Life**

Social life in rural India is sparsely documented. Though, a reconstruction may be attempted on the basis of scattered information gleaned from modern literature as also from stray references in the chronicles of the period

### ***Family Life***

You are aware of the fact that in India joint family has traditionally been the most significant institution of domestic life. For the peasants, the availability of additional lands in a family contributing to the agricultural production had an added economic significance. Some of the broad characteristics of family system may be listed as below:

- In most parts of India, the family system was mainly patriarchal in character,
- The senior male member was the head of the family.
- There was no individual property within the family. Members enjoyed only a right of maintenance from the property.

- Women members were usually subject to the dictates of the males of the family.
- Families gave separate preference to male in excess of female. Therefore a son was preferred to a daughter, and in the middle of the sons, preference was given to the first-born.

On the whole, the family system developed the feeling of mutual dependence and joint relationship and therefore the consciousness that without each other's help life would be hard.

### *Social Institutions and Customs*

Marriage was the most notable social institution in rural India. The responsibility of marrying sons and daughters vested primarily with the parents. Though there did not exist any fixed limit for the age of marriage, the common practice was in favour of an early marriage. We know on the authority of Abul Fazl that Akbar attempted to fix a minimum age for marriage—sixteen years for males and fourteen years for females. But we are not certain in relation to the execution of this order. If references to marriage in modern literature are any index, this effort of Akbar remained confined on paper only. Dissimilar customs of marriage were followed in the middle of the Muslim and non-Muslim segments of rural population. For instance, marriage in the middle of the Hindus was a sacrament as against a contract in the middle of the Muslims. Though, girls in both cases were unable to exercise their own choice. Likewise, dowry was a bane common to both the segments.

### *Festivals and Amusements*

In the middle of the rural folk, a diversity of festivals and amusements were popular. Although based on dissimilar religions affiliations dissimilar type of festivals were celebrated through the Muslim and non-Muslim population, there is no cause to consider that these two segments of rural population did not participate in each other's festivities.

Most of the festivals of the non-Muslims coincided with scrupulous seasons. Their timing was such that the peasantry was in a state of comparative leisure, and therefore in a mood for enjoyment. The most popular of these festivals were Basant Panchami, Holi, Deepavali and- Shivratri. Basant was the time of spring and was celebrated through singing and dancing. Holi, a more significant festival, was celebrated just before the onset of harvesting season. Vast bonfires, popular songs and scattering of red powder, were the conspicuous characteristics of this festival. Deepavali was a festival of lights and was celebrated soon after the harvesting of the kharif crops. Shivratri was more of a religious festival observed in night-long

prayers. The Muslim festivals, too, through this time, had become influenced through the Indian environment. 'Id, Shabbarat and Muharram were the most popular festivals in the middle of the Muslims in the rural areas. Shabbarat, in the opinion of K.M. Ashraf was one festival almost certainly copied from the Shivratri. "The distinguishing characteristics of popular celebration", says he, "were the extensive use of fireworks and the illumination of homes and mosques".

As compared with Shabbarat and 'Id, Muharram was observed with modesty. The first ten days of Muharram were spent in reading the account of the martyrdom of Imam Husain. Later, the tazias (imitation of their mausoleums) were taken out in procession and buried in local graveyards. Dancing and singing were the most popular shapes of amusement in the middle of the rural masses. Occasions like the festivals of Holi called for gatherings at common places in the villages where popular ballads were sung and folk dances performed.

## **URBANIZATION, URBAN CLASSES AND LIFE-STYLE**

### **Approaches**

Urbanization has been seen through scholars both in conditions of the physical growth of a town as well as a scrupulous method of life. Of late, much work beside both these lines of enquiry has been done in the West. Unlike this, though, the study of urban history in India is still in the developing stage. We offer a brief account of the main theoretical development and the major lines of enquiry followed to date.

The town, in contrast to a village, is now, through consensus, seem to posses two basic characteristics: dense concentration of population within a defined and also limited space, and a predominantly non-cultivating character of this population. A town therefore has a definite man-space ratio and an essentially heterogenous occupational pattern.

For the emergence of towns, in medieval India, many explanations have been put forward. The causative factors inherent in these explanations postulate the emergence of mainly four types of urban centres:

- Administrative
- Religious
- Military/strategic
- Market

The administrative towns obviously functioned primarily as seats of governance. For the Mughal Empire, towns like Delhi and Lahore, come under

this category. The religious centres were pre-eminent pilgrim attractions, e.g., Varanasi and Mathura. The military or strategic towns developed essentially as military cantonment, and, in due course of time attracted civilian population also. The towns like Attock and Asirgarh fit this description. Finally, there were urban centres as the focus of large level commercial activities or were predominantly production centres. Sometimes both these activities jointly characterised an urban centre. We have, for the Mughal Empire, towns like Patna and Ahmedabad falling under this category.

Here two things should be noted. An average town in the Mughal Empire was in fact an extension of the village in the sense of social unities and attitudes. This rural-urban continuum is therefore a notable characteristic of urbanization throughout the Mughal period. Moreover, given the diversity of urban economies in the Mughal Empire, the stereo type of an Indian town would be a misnomer. Therefore, the other significant thing to note is that the character of two apparently similar cities would often be dissimilar. The emergence of an urban centre, so, was dependent on a diversity of factors relating to its geographical location and historical situation.

## **Urban Landscape**

### ***Physical Configuration***

Most of the towns had some sort of a fortification wall with one or more gates. The main population of the city existed within these walls. With the expansion of towns at times the cities outgrew their walls. The instance of a typical Mughal town can be found in the description of Agra through John Jourdain at the beginning of the 17th century: "The citie is 12 courses long through the river side, which is above 16 miles; and at the narrowest place it is three miles broad. It is walled, but the suburbs are joined to the walls, that were it not for the gates you could not know when you were within the walls or without". Usually, the nobles or princes would build their mansions or gardens outside the gates of the town. Therefore, in several cities like Delhi, Agra, Patna, Ahmedabad and Allahabad these settlements developed as suburbs.

In planned towns markets were properly laid. In others shops could be found on both sides of the main roads. With shopkeepers living behind these shops or on the first floor of the shops. Most of the towns could boast of a number of markets. Several of these markets specialised in a scrupulous commodity. Names of several areas suggest their speciality for instance in Agra—Loha Gali, cheenitole, ghallamandi, dal mandi, sabunkatra nil para in Delhi Jauhri bazar, sabzimandi, churiwala, etc. Paharganj was a wholesale market for grain. The residential areas of towns called mohalla were often recognized through the professional groups that resided there. A few names

like mahalla kunjrah, mochiwara, mahalla zargarana kucha rangrezan are notable instances. Such caste or professional names for dissimilar wards of the Mughal towns can be found in approximately all the towns. In some cases these mohallas or wards were recognized through the names of influential men who resided there.

Another significant characteristic of the town was the attendance of sarais which were halting places for merchants or travellers. Even the smallest towns had one. The larger towns like, Delhi, Agra, Patna, Lahore or Ahmedabad had sarais through the dozens. Usually, nobles, royal ladies, big merchants or the state itself took up the job of constructing these sarais. The travellers were provided with amenities including storage space to stock merchandise. These were supervised through the families of bhatiyaras who specialised as keepers of sarais. The foreigners visiting the towns were supposed to inform the city administration in relation to their arrival and departure. On the whole, most of the towns lacked any detailed town planning. Except the major street, other lanes and bylanes were congested and muddy. The city had its own administrative machinery and regulations to run the day-to-day administration.

### ***Composition of Population***

The urban population was not a homogenous one. In our sources we come across several categories of people residing in towns. These can be classified into four broad groups:

- Nobles and their retainers, officials of the state and troops;
- Persons occupied in mercantile activities (merchants, sarrafs, brokers, etc.);
- People involved with religious establishments, musicians, painters, poets, physicians, etc., and
- Artisans, menials and workmen of sundry sorts.

The composition of dissimilar categories of people in dissimilar towns depended on the nature of towns, i.e., administrative centres, or commercial centres. In case of imperial headquarters, perhaps the biggest group was that of the retainers and troops of the king and nobles. Bernier (1658) estimated the total strength of Shah Jahan's great camp approximately 3-4 lakh. The situation in other administrative headquarters was also the same. The provincial governors, high nobles and other administrative officers all had their contingents, official hangers-on, servants, slaves and their families.

As most of the big towns were commercial centres of importance, the mercantile community of the towns was quite significant. At Ahmedabad it was estimated that there were approximately 84 castes and subcastes of Hindu merchants alone. In 1640 there were 600 brokers in Patna. Our sources mention that in big towns all the roads were lined with shops for miles. The

number of grocers in Patna, a moderate town, was approximately 200. In a comparatively smaller town Jodhpur more than 600 shops were owned through Mahajans. Another significant group in town comprised of people associated with the professions of medicine, learning, literature, art and music. Usually, the religious and charitable grants were given in the vicinity of towns. Besides, a large number of poets, musicians, physicians also made their abode in towns because here money could be earned or patronage of the king and nobles was accessible.

Artisans, workmen and laborers shaped one of the biggest groups in towns having large commercial activities. The people working as artisans in several crafts may be divided in several groups:

- The individual artisans working at their own places and selling their wares;
- Artisans working in the karkhanas of the kings and nobles, and in large level building construction undertaken through the kings and nobles. There was a large workforce of semi-skilled and unskilled workmen who would assist artisans or work in such large level enterprises as shipbuilding, diamond-mining, saltpeter and salt creation. A number of workmen were employed as domestic help and daily wage laborers.

### ***Urban Demography***

The Tabqat-i Akbari says that throughout Akbar's period there were approximately 120 big cities and 3200 qasbas. In the 17th century, with the rising trade and commerce this number would have grown further. In the absence of records, it is not possible to discover out the population of dissimilar urban centres. Irfan Habib estimates that approximately 15 per cent of the total population in Mughal India existed in towns.

As for the size of the individual towns is concerned, scattered references are provided through some European travellers. Sometimes an estimate is provided while at other places the size of Indian towns is compared with European towns. But these figures are accessible for only a few towns.

Towns	Year of estimate	Population
Agra	1609	5,00,000
	1629-43	6,66,000
	1666	8,00,000
Delhi	1659-66	5,00,000
Lahore	1581 and 1615	4,00,000
		7,00,000
Ahmedabad	1613	1,00,000
		2,00,000
Surat	1663	1,00,000
	1600	2,00,000
Patna	1631	2,00,000
Dacca	c1630	2,00,000

The above estimates illustrate that the big towns in India would have compared favorably with the towns of modern Europe.

### **Urban Life**

It is an motivating fact that our sources for the study of the Mughal Empire abound with descriptions of urban life.

### ***Standard of Living***

Standard of living in a Medieval city shows striking contrast. While the upper strata led a life-style akin to the royalty, the urban poor found it hard to achieve the bare survival stage. Commenting on the life-style of the common populace at Goa, Linschoten says that they “are so miserable that for a penny they would endure to be whipped and they eat so little that it seemeth they live through the air; they are likewise most of them small and weak of limbs.” Similar observation was made through De Laet as well. He comments that “the condition of the common people in those regions is exceedingly miserable; wages are low; workmen get one regular meal a day; the houses are wretched and practically unfurnished, and people have not enough covering to keep warm in winter

The Ain-i Akbari and other modern European travellers’ (Pelsaert, Pietro della Valle, etc.) accounts illustrate that an average monthly wage of the urban workers ranged flanked by Rs. 3 to 4. Shireen Moosvi has shown that the purchasing power of an unskilled worker was significantly higher in 1595 than in 1867-1871-2. An unskilled worker throughout Akbar’s reign was able to purchase much more wheat, inferior food granules, ghi, sugar, etc. than his

successors did in 1867. Therefore, he could have afforded better food stuff than his counterparts did in the latter half of the 19th century. Though, his purchasing power was poor in conditions of clothing. The fall in the purchasing power of skilled workers in conditions of food granules seems even more marked than it was in the case of unskilled wages in the later half of the 19th century. Therefore, the urban wages were much higher in c 1600 than in 1867.

Middle classes, specially the petty revenue officials, lower rank mansabdars and the physicians appear to be fairly prosperous. Though, intellectuals were, in general, poor and depended for their livelihood solely upon their patrons. The nobles and other upper classes in Mughal India led a luxurious life-style. We are told that an amir's son spent 1 lakh rupees in a day in Chandni Chowk to buy the necessities. Moreland comments that "spending not hoarding was the dominant characteristic of the time". Shireen Moosvi has analyzed the pattern of consumption of the 'Royalty' and the nobles which clearly reflects the nature of the life-style the 'Royalty' and the Mughal nobles enjoyed:

Head or expenditure	Imperial Household (in per cent)	Noble (in per cent)
Harem	18.68	14.25
Kitchen	7.28	7.04
Wardrobe	8.93	7.32
Building	8.01	6.57
Encampment material	5.53	4.54
Utensils	7.97	6.54
Trappings of animals	1.41	1.16
Books and Paintings	3.60	2.96
Ornaments and Gems	23.65	19.40
Hunting animals and pets	6.94	5.69
Miscellaneous	1.33	1.09
Cash Grants	6.67	-
Foot Retainers	-	8.43
Arsenal and arm our	-	9.67
Beasts of Burden	-	2.65
Display animals	—	2.69

This clearly shows that a Mughal noble spent approximately 75 per cent on luxury and comforts. The luxurious life-style of the Mughal nobles resulted in their impoverishment. Bernier states that "... Omrahs: on the contrary most of them are deeply in debt; they are ruined through the costly presents made to the king and through their large establishment. "This, in turn, pressed them to extract more from the peasants than the required dues" Though, nobles appear to help, the development of craft production. Shireen Moosvi has calculated that 63.26 per cent of the nobles' salaries were spent to support 37.38 per cent

of the jama. Therefore , the investments on craft production was rather large. But, this was more for personal consumption than for the market. So, in spite of large investments it failed to generate a “home-market”.

### *Clothing*

The style of clothing of the middle and upper strata was through and large similar. Both could be distinguished on the basis of the excellence of cloth they worn. Men wore drawers and breeches, and a shirt. In the winter they also wore arcabick and a long loose fitting coat (qaba). Besides, they put a shawl on shoulders and a patka round the waist and a turban. Humayun is reported to have introduced a new design of overcoat which was cut at the waist and was open in front. He used to wear it in excess of the qaba. This coat was also presented as khi'lat to the nobles. Women wore a long chadar and a bodice. In the doab area, lahanga and choli and a long scarf was quite popular. The Muslim ladies usually wore loose drawers, a shirt and long scarf jointly with their usual veil. The cloth used was mostly cotton, plain and printed, and silk, plain and striped.

Akbar paid special attention to his clothing. Abul Fazl mentions that every year 1000 suits were made for him. Akbar is reported to distribute his whole wardrobe in the middle of his servants. Bernier, though, comments that rich merchants had a tendency to look indignant for “lest that they should be used as fill'd sponges.” But Barbosa applauds the rich dress style of Muslim merchants of Calicut. Likewise, Della Valle commented on the splendour of Surat merchants. The Hindu nobles followed the Muslim counterparts in their dresses. The Brahmans put tilaka on their forehead and Rajput wore earrings. Lower strata for most part were scantily clothed. Salbanke comments in relation to the common populace flanked by Agra and Lahore that “the Plebeian sort is so poor that the greatest part of them go naked.” Similar observations are given through the European travellers for the South. Barbosa remarks in relation to the common masses of the Vijaynagar Empire that they “go quite naked with the exception of a piece of cloth in relation to their middle”. Linschoten mentions that common people of Goa, “live very poorly; go naked” Babur remarks that “peasants and people of low standing go in relation to naked. They tie lunguta, a decency cloth, which hangs two spans below the navel... another cloth is passed flanked by the thighs and made fast behind”. Women also tie on a cloth (lung), one half of which goes approximately the waist, the other is thrown in excess of the head. In winter men wear quilted gowns of cotton... and quilted caps”. In the South most of the people went barefoot.

## *Social Life*

Joint family system was common. Woman was subordinate to man. The higher class women observed purdah. Barbosa comments that in Khambayat, though, women observed purdah, they regularly visited their friends. There was ample freedom of social intercourse within the limits of the purdah. The custom of jauhar was approximately entirely confined totally in the middle of the Rajputs. Their women, in time of despair, seeing the imminent defeat, to save their pride, used to set themselves afire. Babur provides a vivid description of the jauhar performed through Medini Rai's ladies at Chanderi. In the middle of the upper caste Hindus, the practice of sati or self-immolation was quite common. Akbar took a serious view when the daughter of Mota Raja of Marwar was compelled to burn herself against her wishes. Akbar appointed observers in every town and district to ensure that while those who on their own impulse wished to commit sati might be allowed to do so, they should prohibit and prevent any forcible sati. Akbar also took steps of permitting widows to remarry (1587). Both Hindus and Muslims favoured an early marriage age for boys and girls. Akbar criticised child marriage. He raised the minimum age limit for boys to 16 and for girls to 14 years. Birth ceremony was of great importance. In the middle of the Muslims, the rite of aqiqah was performed. The Hindu child was placed in the charge of a guru at the age of five while, as per Muslim traditions, a child was put in a school after the completion of four years, four months and four days. The ceremony was recognized as bismillah Khwani. Usually in the 7th year, the Muslim child was circumcised and the occasion was celebrated with great rejoicing. Akbar prohibited circumcising before the age of 12 and even then left it to the option of the grown up boy.

The Hindus performed upanayana samsakara, i.e., tying of the tripple sacred thread at the completion of the 9th year. Marriage ceremonies hardly differed from the present day celebrations. A Hindu marriage began with tilak or mangni, then a marriage date was fixed. Songs were sung. Marriage was performed with elaborate rites. Elaborate ceremonies were performed at the time of death also. Priests chanted mantras, distributed aims, etc., put sacred Ganga water followed through shraddha ceremony after a year. The practice of burning dead was quite common in the middle of the Hindus. Muslims performed siyum ceremony on the 3rd day of death. Nobles and rich merchant spent vast amount of money on marriages. Khemchand, a rich merchant, planned to spend 15 lakhs rupees on the marriage of his daughter, but he was robbed on the method. Thirty two lakhs rupees were reported to have been spent on the marriage of Prince Dara Shukoh. A 17th century traveller to Sindh, Boccario, reports that even an ordinary Hindu spent 4000-5000 rupees on a marriage. On a marriage in his family, Raja Bhagwan Das provided a number of houses, one hundred elephants and boys and girls of Abyssinia, India and Caucassia, and all sorts of jewell studded golden vessels and

utensils, etc.

### ***Education***

In general, education was beyond the reach of a common woman. But women of elite class got opportunity to study. Princesses were taught to read and write. Akbar was greatly interested in female education. Badauni comments that he recommended a new syllabus. He recognized a school for girls at Fatehpur Sikri. Some royal ladies were also interested in promoting education. Bega Begum, Humayun's consort, founded a "college" close to the mausoleum of Humayun. Maham Anaga, the foster mother of Akbar, recognized a school at Delhi. Gulbadan Begum was well versed in Persian and Turki and wrote the Humayunama. She had a library of her own. Likewise, Nur Jahan, Jahan Ara and Zaibunnisa were literary figures of their age. Aurangzeb educated all his daughters well. But dance and music were frowned upon. Nur Jahan and Jahan Ara played an active role in Mughal politics. The mansabdars were usually well versed in Persian. Some also studied mathematics, knew little bit of medicine and practised calligraphy. In Mughal India, the nobles maintained their personal libraries. Abdul Rahim Khan Khana had a vast library manned through 95 calligraphers, guilders, bookbinders, painters, cutters, illuminators, etc.

Babur himself was a great scholar of Turkish. His autobiography, the Baburnama, is still measured one of the masterpieces of Turkish prose. He also knew Persian and was also a skilled calligrapher. Humayun and all other later Mughal Emperors knew good Persian. Though circumstances did not allow Akbar to have formal education, he patronised poets, philosophers, painters, physicians, etc.

### ***Entertainment and Festivities***

Gambling, elephant fights, chaupar, chandal-mandal, chess, cards, polo, etc., were the sports greatly indulged in through the higher strata. Chaupar playing was very popular in the middle of the Hindus, specially the Rajputs. Akbar later substituted human figures for the pieces of chaupar and turned it into the amusing game of chandal-mandal. Cards appears to have been first introduced in India through Babur. It became quite popular throughout Akbar's reign. Gambling was common. Pigeon-flying and cock-fighting were common. Akbar used to feed his own birds and call the game through the romantic term ishqbaazi. Hunting was the most popular pastime of the royalty. The Mughals organised qamargah hunts. This was large level manoeuvre organised in one of the imperial hunting preserves. Sometimes approximately 50,000 cavalymen and others encircled the hunting preserve and they slowly came closer to a point when the animals were confined into a sort of ring. The Emperor and other big nobles then entered the ring and hunted the animals.

Deer, goats, elephants, etc., were also domesticated for the sake of hunting. Cheetahs were trained for hunting deer. etc. In several parts of Northern and Central India, imperial hunting preserves had been recognized. Hunting tigers, lions and elephants was royal prerogative. Usually, ladies of harem did not participate in outdoor games. But some played chaugan (polo). Nur Jahan is the lone instance who shot tigers and lions. But pigeon flying, and blind man's buff were common pastimes.

### ***Festivals and Fairs***

Religious festivals and pilgrimages to holy shrines were popular means of amusement. Vast celebration were organised at the tomb of the sufis. At Delhi such celebrations were held at the tombs of Bakhtiyar Kaki and Nizamuddin Auliya. At the tomb of Hazrat Nasiruddin Chiragh Delhi, (Nizamuddin Auliya's successor) on every Sunday, both Hindus and Muslims gathered, specially throughout the month of Dipawali. 'Id-ul fitr, 'id-ul zuha, nauroz, shabbarat, holi, dasehra, dipawali, rakshabandhan, basant panchami, etc. were also celebrated with great pomp and illustrate. Fairs were also organised. The well-known Garh Mukteswar fair, still celebrated in the traditional style, can be traced back to the Medieval times. Dasehra was popular in the middle of the kshatriyas and all agricultural classes. The Kumbha fairs on the Ganga was most well-known of all the fairs. On the occasion of Muharram, taziya (imitation mausoleums of the martyrs of karbala) processions were taken out through the streets of the town.

### ***Music***

Big amirs arranged "mushairas" in their mansions where poets recited their compositions. Singers and musicians performed their recital in the harem every day. Shah Jahan's favorites were Kavindra, Chitra Khan, Lal Khan and Sriman. Shah Jahan's amir Shah Nawaz Khan had a large number of musicians and singers. Muhammad Shah was also fond of music. Boli Khan, Jallah, Chamani and Kamal Bai were the most celebrated ones throughout his reign. Nia'mat Khan was the bin player and an expert in the khayal form of singing. Panna Bai, his disciple, possessed good voice. Taj Khan Qawali and Muinuddin, experts in Qawali, were other well-known singers of Muhammad Shah's reign. Eunuchs performed dances in public. Miyan Haiga used to dance in the square of the Urdu Bazar, in front of the Shahjahanabad fort. A vast crowd assembled to watch him. Asa Pura, a Hindu dancing girl was also a great name.

Alhakhand and the stories of Nala-Damayanti were recited through the balladeers. Sravana songs were quite popular. Garabha, the Gujarati dance, was popular on the west coast. Puppet shows, antics of the monkeys, snake-

charmer shows, tight-rope walker, etc. were eye-catchers. Indoor entertainment parties were organised which were accompanied with dance and banquet. Humayun introduced the system of river picnics on the Jamuna. He also started the practice of Mina Bazar for royal ladies which flourished and developed greatly under his successors. Drinking was common. Akbar whispered that moderate drinking was good for health. Opium eating was also quite common. Bhang was another favourite drug. Prostitution was prevalent. Throughout the 16th century, tobacco smoking was unknown. When in the early 17th century tobacco was introduced, its use became widespread.

## **RELIGIOUS IDEAS AND MOVEMENTS**

### **Bhakti Movement**

In spite of the pantheistic philosophy of Shankaracharya, at the time of the arrival of the Muslims in India, the Hindu society, comprised the followers of Saivism, vaishnavism and the cult of Shakti. But there were intellectuals who had no faith in the prescribed path of action, but who regarded the path of knowledge to be the appropriate method for attaining salvation. The disputes flanked by the upholders of these views totally ignored the actual ethical behavior of man, improvement of his status in life and fulfilment of his destiny on earth. Brahmanism with all its philosophical and ritualistic progress, had therefore become an essentially intellectual doctrine. It ignored the personal religious aspirations of the people. The fundamental principles which it taught were impersonal and speculative. The people who were always in need of an ethical and emotional cult in which it was possible to discover both satisfaction of the heart and moral guidance, understood nothing of it. It was in these circumstances that the path of Bhakti, devotion blended with love of God, found a favourable atmosphere.

### ***Ideology***

The chief mark of this trend of thought is the relation of the soul with the Supreme Being. The word Bhakti in the Pali literature takes its origin back to the 8th century B.C. The Bhagavadgita, pre-Buddhist texts and Chhandogya Upanishad, contain some references which underline the emergence of devotion to a single personal God. This reaction of the heart against rigid intellectualism is Bhakti. So, it is slightly harsh to gulp the suggestion of some scholars like Weber who argue that Bhakti was a foreign thought which reached India through Christianity. Scholars like Barth and Senart also maintain that Bhakti, in the sense understood in India and the tradition through which it is inspired, belongs to Indian thought. Though, this does not mean

that in the process of evolution, Bhakti did not accept any external powers especially after the arrival of Islam in India. The religious point of view of the Hindus, though always based upon old foundation, became considerably customized. From the time of the Bhagavadgita to the 13th century, the concept of Bhakti evolved with a process of compromise flanked by the traditional classical philosophy of the Upanishads and the urge for a personal God. The object of the authors of the Bhagavadgita was not to contribute a definite philosophy but only to establish a compromise flanked by the dissimilar schools of Hindu philosophy. Monotheism and pantheism were clubbed jointly with the warmth of Bhakti in the Bhagavadgita. Therefore, up to the 13th century, the period when Islam penetrated into the interior of India, Bhakti to a greater extent remained within the folds of Vedic intellectualism. This is apparent from the fact that caste division is recognized in the Bhagavadgita.

### ***Major Schools***

The concept of Bhakti was defined and analyzed in dissimilar methods and under several shades of opinion at several stages. Shankara, a South Indian Shaivite Brahman, gave the doctrine of Advaita (allowing no second, i.e., monism) and assiduously preached Upanishad doctrine of salvation through Knowledge. Ramanuja, another South Indian Brahman, though a monist did not accept that God may be exempt from form and qualities. Salvation could be attained through devotion and Bhakti. Yoga was the best mystical training. Mutual relationship flanked by the devotee and God was that of a fragment of the totality. Prapti was the second means of salvation. Ramanuja's God was a personal Being. He argued that as people need God. God too needs people. The individual soul created through God out of his own essence, returns to its maker and lives with Him forever, but it is always separate. It was one with God, and yet separate. This system of Ramanuja is called visistadvaita.

The translation of the Bhagavata Puran from Sanskrit into Indian regional languages made the Bhakti concept predominant in Hinduism. The most significant movement in the religious history of Medieval India was the creation of a new sect through Ramananda, a disciple of Ramanuja. He had a better thought of the progress of Islam in North India under the Tughlaqs. Through travelling all in excess of India, he gathered ideas and made careful observations. He renounced the rigidity of the Hindu ritual and his disciples took the name of Advadhuta and regarded themselves free from all sorts of religious and social customs. But he was not prepared to go very distant from the past. That is why in his Anand Bhashya he did not recognize the right of a Sudra to read the Vedas. One, so, should not expect social excellence from Ramananda. Yet, Raidas and Kabir were in the middle of his disciples. Ramananda's teachings produced two separate schools of thought in the

middle of the Hindus:

- Saguna and Nirguna to the first belonged the noted Tulsidas who gave literary form to the religious Bhakti. In worshipping Rama as the personal incarnation of the Supreme God, this school raised the popularity of Rama, besides preserving the authority of the Vedas.

Another school was represented through Kabir who preached a religious system strictly monotheistic advocating abolition of Varnaashrama, and casting doubt on the authority of the Vedas and other sacred books. The school of Kabir sought to understand Islam and was sufficiently broad minded to incorporate some of its basic principles. That is why his references are accessible in the Sufi literature as well. In a 17th century account, the Mirat ul asar, he is called a Firdausiya sufi. The Dabistan-i Mazahib places Kabir against the background of the Vaishnavite vairagis. Abul Fazl -called Kabir a muwahhid.

On the authority of the Bijak, the authoritative account of Kabir's philosophy, it may be said that he never thought of founding a religion as happened after his death. He simply wished to provide an effect of fullness to the reconciling trend introduced through method of Bhakti and welcomed all who were willing to join him. Belief in a Supreme Being is the foundation of his preaching. He whispered that salvation is possible not through knowledge or action but through devotion. He neither favoured Hindus nor Muslims, but admired all that was good in them.

### *Sikhism*

The teachings and philosophy of Guru Nanak constitute an significant component of Indian philosophy and thought. His philosophy comprised three basic elements: a leading charismatic personality, ideology and organization. Nanak evaluated and criticised the prevailing religious beliefs and attempted to establish a true religion Which could lead to salvation. He repudiated idol worship and did not favour pilgrimage nor accepted the theory of incarnation. He condemned formalism and ritualism. He whispered in the unity of God and laid emphasis on having a true Guru for revelation. He advised people to follow the principles of conduct and worship: sach, halal, Khair, niyat and service of the lord. Nanak denounced the caste system and the in excellence which it perpetrated. He said that caste and honor should be judged through the acts or deeds of the individuals. He whispered in Universal brotherhood of man and excellence of men and women. He championed the cause of women's emancipation and condemned the sati pratha. Nanak did not propound celibacy or vegetarianism. He laid stress on concepts like justice, righteousness and liberty. Nanak's verses mainly consist of two basic concepts:. Sabad, Guru and Hukam form the basis of divine self-expression.

He laid emphasis on kirtan and satsang. He introduced community lunch. Tarachand regards the power of sufis upon the religious thought of Nanak of fundamental importance. The parallel of thought in the verses of Nanak and Baba Farid consisted of the following: the sincere devotion and surrender before one God. But at the same time Nanak did not hesitate in criticising the sufis for leading a luxurious life. Nanak made an effort to unify the Hindus and Muslims and certainly succeeded in synthesizing within his own teachings the essential concepts of Hinduism and Islam. The religious book of the Sikhs the Guru Granth Sahib was compiled through Guru Arjan. After the death of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh the divine spirit did not pass on to another Guru but remained in the Granth and the community of the Guru's followers.

The Gurus mostly belonged to the Khatri mercantile caste whereas their followers were mostly rural Jats. It was Guru Gobind Singh who inaugurated the Khalsa in the middle of the Sikhs. The Khatri and Aroras as well as Jats constituted significant groups within the Sikh community. The artisan castes recognized as Ramgarhia Sikhs and converts to Sikhism from scheduled castes represented other groups within the Sikh panth. Caste consciousness did exist in the Sikh panth but was not so prominent. Dadu was also inspired through Kabir's doctrine. In his Bani, a collection of his hymns and poems, he regards Allah, Ram and Govind as his spiritual teachers. Dadu's cosmology and the stages of the soul's pilgrimage carry sufi power. In the 18th century, with the decline of the Mughal Empire, the Dadu Panth got transformed into Nagas or professional fighters.

### ***Maratha Vaishnavism***

The Maratha school of Vaishnavism or the Bhagavata Dharma has a long history. Through the close of the 13th century, steady enrichment and vigour was imparted to the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra through a number of poet-saints. The most outstanding of these was Gyaneshwara a Brahmin who is measured to be the greatest exponent of the Maratha Vaishnavism. He wrote a Marathi commentary on the Bhagavadgita called Bhavartha Dipika or Jnanesvari. The main centre of the movement started through him was Pandarpur. The shrine of Vithoba of Pandarpur later became the mainstay of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra. The Krishna Bhakti movement of Pandarpur was intimately connected to a temple and a deity, but it was not idolatrous in nature. Vithoba was more than a simple deity: its importance lay in its symbolism.

The main characteristics of the Vaishnava religious devotion—anti-ritualism and anti-casteism in Maharashtra—were similar to those of other non-conformist movements in the North. The poet-saints tried to bring religion to the lowest strata of the society. Through interpreting the Bhagavatgita in

melodious Marathi tunes, Gyaneshwar laid the basis of the Bhagavata Dharma in Maharashtra through giving a fillip to the Varkari sect which had initiated and instituted regular popular pilgrimage to the shrine of Vithoba (the form of the great God Vishnu) at Pandarpur. Vithoba was the god of the Varkari sect. Its followers were householders who performed pilgrimage twice a year to the temple. Its membership cut crossways caste boundaries. The movement in Maharashtra witnessed mass participation through dissimilar social groups such as sudras, Atisudras, Kumbhera mali, mahar and Alute balutedars. Some of the saints belonging to lower strata of society were Harijan Saint Choka, Gora Kumbhar, Narahari Sonara, Banka Mahara, etc.

In the post-Gyaneshwar period, Namdeva, Tukaram, and Ramdas, were significant Marathi saints. Eknath furthered the tradition laid down through Gyaneshwar. Tukaram and Ramdas also raised anti-caste and anti-ritual slogans. Eknath's teachings were in vernacular Marathi. He shifted the emphasis of Marathi literature from spiritual text to narrative compositions. Tukaram's teachings are in the form of Advances or verses which constitute the Gatha. It is an significant source for the study of the Maratha Vaishnavism. The Varkari Maratha saints developed a new method of religious instruction, i.e. Kirtan and the Nirupana. The Maratha movement contributed to the flowering of Marathi literature. These saints used popular dialect which paved the method for transformation of Marathi into a literary language. The literature of the Varkari school provides us some thought in relation to the plebeian character of the movement. It addressed itself to the troubles of the Kunbis, Vanis and the artisans, etc. M.G. Ranade points out that this movement led to the development of vernacular literature and upliftment of lower castes, etc.

### ***Gaudia Vaishnavism***

The Gaudia Vaishnav movement and the Chaitanya movement which derived its inspiration from the life and teachings of Chaitanya had a tremendous impact on the social, religious and cultural life of the people of Assam, Bengal and Orissa. The people were not only influenced through his message but began to regard him as an incarnation of God. Let us survey the social and religious circumstances in the pre-Chaitanya Bengal and Orissa. The social structure was based on Varnashrama. The Sudras and the lower castes suffered from several disabilities. In the middle of the religious systems the Sakta-tantric creed predominated. The medieval Bhakti in Bengal was influenced through two streams—Vaishnav and non-Vaishnava. Jayadeva's Gita Govinda written throughout the time of the Palas provided an erotic-mysticism to the love of Radha and Krishna. Buddhism was also on the decline and this decadent form of Buddhism influenced Vaishnavism which in turn affected the Bengali Bhakti movement. The emphasis was on eroticism,

female form and sensuousness. In the pre-Chaitanya Bengal and Orissa, oppression of lower castes through the Brahmins was rampant. Moral decadence was the order of the day. Chandidas, a Bhakti poet, was influenced through Gita Govinda and Sahajiya doctrines. It was in the midst of social and religious conservatism and moral decadence that the Chaitanya movement dawned and brought distant-reaching changes. Chaitanya, the founder of the movement, himself remained free from all sorts of social and religious conservatism. It was basically not a social reform movement, though it rejected caste barriers. Although a Brahmin, Chaitanya had no respect for the thought of the superiority of Brahmins. He openly violated caste rules and used to mix up with the members of the low occupational castes. Vrindavan Das the author of the Chaitanya Bhagavat mentions how he socialised with the lower castes. He discarded the symbols of Brahminism. The Neo-Vaishnavite movement found its adherents in such disparate social groups—untouchables to scholars.

The power of Bhakti doctrine made Mira a distinguished poet and a symbol of love and attachment to Lord Krishna. In her poem called Padavali, she speaks of herself as a Virgin and her fervent devotion to Lord Krishna seems to have made her totally indifferent to wordly life. Mira advocates image-worship and the observance of special fasts.

### ***Impact of the Bhakti Movement***

The doctrine of Bhakti helped the uplift of the modern society in several methods. The Indo-Aryan dialects such as Bhojpuri, Magadhi and Maithili of modern Bihar, Avadhi of Avadh region, Braj Bhasha of Mathura region and Rajasthani, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi and Gujarati, also assumed new shapes and meaning through Bhakti poetry. Notable progress in Tamil and Marathi literature throughout medieval times, was made through the writings of well-known saints of the Bhakti order. The hymns, ballads, legends and dramas centring approximately Chaitanya's interpretation of Krishna, made valuable contribution to the Bengali literature. Besides literature, the Bhakti doctrine and its practice through the saints of this order, had an impact upon socio-religious concepts which prepared the ground for improved social circumstances in medieval times. It is true that the Bhakti Cult was essentially indigenous, but it received a great impetus from the attendance of Muslims in this country. It not only prepared a meeting ground for the devout men of both creeds, it also preached human excellence and openly condemned ritualism and casteism. It was radically new, basically dissimilar from the old traditions and ideas of religious authorities. It sought to refashion the communal life on a new basis. It cherished the dream of a society based on justice and excellence in which men of all creeds would be able to develop their full moral and spiritual stature.

## **Mysticism**

Mysticism is an offshoot of religion. All Islamic religious movements arose out of controversies in relation to the God's attributes and decrees and their impact on the universe. Religious and spiritual movements in Islam contain an element of political implication. Several founders of religious movements, so, sought state support to strengthen their ideologies. There had been from the very early days a close combat flanked by the upholders of *Ilm ul-kalam* (the science of defending orthodoxy through rational arguments) and the philosophers, who absorbed a lot from the Greek philosophy and laid more emphasis upon the identification of the Being. The orthodox theologians in spite of all their efforts neither could stop studies in philosophy nor could persuade the rulers to abstain from extending patronage to the philosophers. Sufi doctrine was the third element which presented yet another viewpoint of Islamic philosophy.

### ***Sufi Philosophy***

Unlike the philosophers who were trying to rationalize the nature of the Necessary Being, and the scholars of *Kalam* who were mainly concerned with the defence of the divine transcendence (i.e., God is above His creation and not one with it), Sufism sought to achieve the inner realization of divine unity through arousing intuitive and spiritual faculties. Rejecting rational arguments, the Sufis advocated contemplation and meditation. According to the analysis of Shah Waliullah, an eighteenth century scholar of India, Sufism discovers justification in the esoteric characteristics of Islam, which involves the purification of the heart through ethical regeneration. This aspect is defined in the Islamic doctrine: that Allah should be worshipped with the certainty that the worshipper is watching Allah or He is watching the worshipper. Sufism is divided into four stages. The first began with the Prophet Muhammad and his companions and extended to the time of Junaid of Baghdad. The Sufis throughout this period exclusively devoted themselves to prayer, fasting and invoking God's names (*zikr*). Throughout Junaid's time, the Sufis existed in a state of sustained meditation and contemplation. This resulted in extensive spiritual experiences which could be explained only symbolically or in unusual phrases. Emotional effect of *sama* upon the Sufis increased throughout this stage. The practice of self-mortification was started through the Sufis in order to save themselves from material desires. Several existed in mountains and jungles distant absent from the shadow of the devil whispered to be resting within the folds of worldly settlements.

With Shaikh Abu Said bin Abul Khair began the third stage. Now the

emphasis was laid upon the state of ecstasy which led to spiritual telepathy. In contemplating the union of temporal and eternal, their individuality dissolved and the Sufis even ignored their regular prayers and fasting, etc. In the fourth stage, the Sufis discovered the theory of the five stages of the descent from Necessary Being. It is from here that the problem of Wahdat- ul-wujud began. The man who played an significant and decisive role in the history of Sufism was an Irani, Bayazid Bustani. He evolved the concept of fana. It implies that human attributes are annihilated through union with God, a state in which the mystic discovers eternal life (baga). Bayazid's line of thought was further developed through Husain Ibn Mansur Al-Hallaj, a disciple of Junaid. His mystical formula ana-al Haq became an significant factor in the evolution of the mystical ideas in Persia and then in India. Several silsilas were formulated and the practice of deputing disciples to distant lands began. This tendency increased in the Third stage and some eminent Sufis also moved to India. Shaikh Safiuddin Gaziruni and Abul Hasan Ali bin Usmani-al-Hujwari were in the middle of the noted immigrants.

### ***Doctrinal Texts***

The Sufi doctrines in India are based upon some well recognized works such as the Kashf-ul-Mahjub of Hujwiri, which provides biographical details and other characteristics of their thought from the days of Prophet. Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi's Awarif-ul Maarif is the second such work. Both of them accepted the superiority of the Shariat. They argued that Sufis necessity obey the Sharia. To them Sharia, Marifat and Haqiqat were interdependent.

### ***Major Silsilas***

Through the 13th century, the division of the Sufis into fourteen orders had already crystallized. Some disciples of Shaikh Shihabuddin migrated to India, but Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria was the real founder of the Suhrawardi order in India. He associated himself with the court and in 1228 Iltutmish appointed him the Shaikh-ul Islam. The saints of the Suhrawardi order hereafter remained in touch with the establishment and actively participated in political activities. Shaikh Ruknuddin was another saint of this order greatly venerated through the Sultans of Delhi. According to him, a Sufi should possess three attributes. Property (to satisfy the Qalandar's physical demand), knowledge (to discuss scholarly questions with the Ulema) and Hal to impress other Sufis. After his death, the Suhrawardi order made progress in provinces other than Multan and spread from Uch to Gujarat, Punjab, Kashmir and even Delhi. Under Firoz Shah Tughlaq, this order was revitalized through Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari. He was a very staunch and puritan Muslim and objected to the rising Hindu power on the Muslim social and religious practices. Other saints of this order like Qutab-Alam and Shah-Alam, exercised tremendous power upon the

political personalities of their time. Side through side in the 14th century, there developed another order called Firdausiya. Shaikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yahya was the leading saint of this time. He was an ardent believer in Wahdat-ul Wujud.

The order which retained its popularity in the middle of the people and contributed in strengthening the cause of Sufism in India, was the Chishti Silsilah. Founded through Khwaja Chishti it was introduced into India through Khwaja Muinuddin, the disciple of Khwaja Usman Haruni. Unfortunately, we have no authentic record of his life and career. Whatever has reached us is based upon legends compiled as a token of devotion to the saint. Born in Seistan in 1143, he reached India a little before the invasion of Muhammad Ghori. On the advice of his guide, he reached India in 1190 and consequently settled at Ajmer. He is said to have died in 1234. The sayings of Muinuddin illustrate that his life's mission was to inculcate piety, humility and devotion to God. According to him, those who know God avoid mixing with other people and keep silent on matters relating to divine knowledge. After his death, the silsilah made notable progress under his able disciples.

The Chishti mystics whispered in the spiritual value of music. The disciple of Muinuddin, Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki died in a state of ecstasy under the spell of music. He stayed at Delhi and exercised tremendous power upon the people. Khwaja Fariduddin Masud was the Khalifa of Qutubuddin. He kept himself distant absent from political personalities and avoided contact with rich and powerful people. He advised his disciple Syedi Maula: "Do not create friends with kings and nobles. Consider their visits to your home as fatal. Every darwesh who creates friends with kings and nobles, will end badly." Approximately the same was his message to his Chief disciple Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya i.e., he emphasized dissociation with kings. Baba Farid died at the age of 93 in 1265.

Shaikh Nizamuddin was his Chief disciple. Though he saw the reigns of seven Sultans of Delhi, he never visited the court of any one of them. The liberal outlook of the Shaikh as well as his delight in music caused him to be denounced through the orthodox Ulema. Even after his death in 1325, the Shaikh commanded tremendous respect, and even now he is regarded to be a great spiritual force. He inspired men with the love of God and helped them to get rid of their attachment to worldly affairs. Stress on the motive of love which leads to the realization of God, was the main characteristic of his teachings. He preached that without the love of humanity, love of God will be partial. He stated that social justice and benevolence are parts of Islam.

The message of love imparted through Shaikh Nizamuddin was accepted to dissimilar parts of the country through his disciples. Shaikh Sirajuddin Usmani took the message to Bengal. He was succeeded through Shaikh-

Alaudin Ala-ul Haq who sustained the work of his master in the eastern parts of India. Shaikh Burhanuddin, another disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin, settled at Daultabad and his message was preached there through his disciple, Shaikh Zainuddin. In Gujarat Shaikh Syed Hussain, Shaikh Husamuddin and Shah Brakatullah, spread the message of excellence and humanitarianism. They were exponents of the doctrine of the inner light and the theology of the heart.

It is to be noted that the Muslim mystics, in spite of their speculative leanings, did not lose touch with the realities of life. They were not prepared to provide up the socio-moral characteristics of life in the interest of spiritual exaltation and ecstasy. That is why they demanded justice and benevolence. In the Quranic teachings also, prayer is correlated with charity towards fellow men, the implication being that without the latter the former would be partial and ineffective. Whenever there was any deviation from this injunction, some of them boldly criticized the authorities. That is one of the causes why they were not keen to be the beneficiaries of the state as it would have compromised their independence of mind and action. The Music party (sama) of the Sufis was justified through pointing out that a Sufi is a lover of God and, as such he stands in a dissimilar relation to God from others who are merely 'abd' or slaves. As music inflames the fire of love and helps in creating the supreme state of ecstasy, it was permissible.

After the death of Baba Farid, the Chishti order was divided into two main subdivisions—Nezamia and Sabina. The latter was founded through Makhdum Alauddin Ali Sabri who isolated himself from the world and existed the life of a recluse. Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi was a mystic of the Sabiria order. He was an exponent of the doctrine of the "Unity of Being", a concept which had become very popular in India in the middle of the masses as well as the intelligentsia. Now we turn to the contribution of other significant Silsilahs like the Qadiri and Naqshbandi. The founder of the Qadiri order was Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad. This order played a significant role in the spread of Islam. Western Africa and Central Asia. In India, it was introduced through Shah Niamatullah and Makhdum Mohammad Jilani towards the middle of the 15th century. Shaikh Musa, a member of this family, had joined Akbar's service but his brother Shaikh Abdul Qadir did not associate himself with the government.

The Qadiri order found a great devotee in Prince Dara Shukoh who visited a saint of this order, Miyan Mir, at Lahore beside with Shah Jahan and was much impressed through his saintly personality. After the Shaikh's death, Dara became the disciple of his successor, Mulla Shah Badakhshi. The power of the Wahdat-ul Wujud concept is apparent in the mystic works of the prince, namely the Safinat-ul Auliya, Sakinat-ul Auliya, Risala-l-Haq Numa, Majma-ul Bahrain, etc. Throughout Akbar's period the Chishti order again rose to prominence, precisely due to the Emperor's devotion to Salim Chishti of

Fatehpur. Bairam Khan, a prominent figure of this time, kept Aziz Chishti in high esteem.

In the 18th century, Shaikh Kalimullah of Delhi and his disciple Shaikh Nizamuddin Chishti appeared as prominent personalities of the time. The Naqshbandi order was introduced into India through Khwaja Baqi Billah, the seventh in succession to Khawaja Bahauddin Naqshbandi, the founder of this order. From the beginning, the mystics of this order laid stress upon observance of the law and had emphatically denounced all biddat which had spoiled the purity of Islam. Therefore, it may be regarded as a reaction to the challenging ideas of the upholders of Wahdat-ul Wujud. This doctrine was furiously attacked through Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, the chief disciple of Khwaja Baqi Billah. He wrote and circulated that God who created the world could not be recognized with his creatures. Rejecting, Wahdat-ul Wujud, he expounded the doctrine of Wahdat-ul Shuhud to serve as a corrective to the prevailing tendency. According to him, the "unity of Being" is not an objective but subjective experience. It appears to the mystic that he is recognized with God, but in reality it is not so. In his rapturous ecstasy he gets lost in the object of his love and adoration and begins to feel as if his self was totally annihilated. But this is a temporary feeling and the mystic comes back to the stage of Abdiyati. The Shaikh maintained that the relation flanked by man and God is that of slave and master or that of a worshipper and the worshipped. It is not the relation of lover and beloved as the Sufis usually hold. He accentuated the individual's unique relation of faith and responsibility to God as his Creator. It is the obedience to the Divine will which establishes the right relation flanked by the human will in its fitness and the World Order ruled through God. Only through the Shariat one can realize the mystery of the Divine Subsistence. Therefore Shaikh Ahmad tried to harmonize the doctrines of mysticism with the teachings of Orthodox Islam. That is why he is called Mujaddid of Islam. Aurangzeb was the disciple of Khwaja Mohammad Masum, the son of the Mujaddid.

Shah Waliullah was a noted scholar and a saint of the Naqshbandi order. He tried to reconcile the two doctrines of Wahdat-ul Wujud and Wahdat-ul Shuhud, his contention being that there is no fundamental variation flanked by the two theories. He pointed out that in both these views the real subsistence belongs to God and that he alone has actual independent subsistence. The subsistence of the world is not real, and yet it can not be called imaginary either. To maintain that there is one reality which manifests itself in an infinity of shapes and pluralities is the same as to hold that contingent beings are the reflection of the names and attributes of the necessary being. If at all there is any variation flanked by the two positions, it is insignificant. Khwaja Mir Dard, the well-known Urdu poet, was another mystic of the Naqshbandi order and a modern of Shah Waliullah. He also criticised Wahdat-ul Wujud in the light of his inner experience. According to him, this doctrine was expounded

through the Sufis in a state of ecstatic intoxication. So to provide expression to such thoughts was highly injudicious. He condemned the believers in Wahdat-ul Wujud as those who have no knowledge of Reality. He was of the view that only through slavery to God one can attain closeness to Him. In approximately all parts of India, the Sufis had recognized their centres where spiritual discussions were held under the supervision of the mystic preceptor (Pir), which deterioration set in but even in the 18th century some of these Khanqahs were the centres of spiritual culture. Khwaja Mir Dard's Khanqah was one such significant centre, which was often visited through Emperor Shah Alam.

### ***Mahdavi Movement***

The hope of the advent of a deliverer goes back to the traditions of Prophet Muhammad or his companions. The first person to lay claim to being a deliverer—in the history of Islam was Muhammad al Harafia, a son of Ali. Several Mahdis came after him who were mainly concerned with the economic and political movements. Syed Mohammad of Jaunpur was the only Mahdi who did not crave political power but was mainly interested in spiritualism and purifying Islam. He proclaimed himself Mahdi at Mecca. On returning to India, he was heckled through the ulema who were antagonistic towards him. Though, he did manage to win a few converts some of whom belonged to the ulema group. The Mahdis enjoined worship of God according to the strict laws of Shariat: God, His Prophet and His Book were the only guides. The Mahdavis existed in Daeras where they practised the laws of the Shariat. For the Mahdavis the ordinance of the Quran was divided into two groups: commandments explained through the last of the Prophets associated with the Shariat and commandments of the last of the walis, i.e., Mahdi. The latter comprised the following:

- Renunciation of the world, company of the truthful, seclusion from mankind, resignation to the Divine will, quest of the vision of God, sharing of one tenth of the income, constant Zikr and migration. The Mahdavis abjured politics. After the death of Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur, many Daeras sprang up to disseminate the teachings of Mahdi. The preachers in these Daeras were called Khalifas. They used local dialect for preaching. The Daeras attracted the masses because of the piety and simplicity of the Mahdavis. They were recognized in the North as well as South i.e. Gujarat. Chandigarh, Ahmednagar, Bayana, etc.

## **Islamic Revivalist Movement In The Eighteenth Century**

The Mughal Empire declined rapidly after the death of Aurangzeb. The Hindu groups such as the Marathas, Jats and Sikhs posed a serious threat to the Muslim power. Against this background, Islamic revivalist movement which was religion-political in nature developed and found expression in the writings of Shah Waliullah. He was basically a theologian who laid stress on fundamentalism and rejected innovations in Islam. The Shah measured himself a reformer of the Muslim society. He aimed to revert back to the Prophetic traditions. His religious and political thought influenced a group of religious reformers called Mujahidin. In the MOST-MUTINY era his religious thought influenced the several schools of Islamic.

## **STATE AND RELIGION**

### **Historical Perspective**

How the modern and modern historiographers view this delicate question of State and religion is also dealt with.

### ***Modern Scenario***

One characteristic of the period under study was the firm belief of the majority of the people in religion. Every educated person was expected to be well-versed in religious studies. Consequently, chronicles, etc. written throughout the period either through Hindus or Muslims were couched in religious idiom. A careless handling of this material, so, could blur our judgement of facts, leading to unwarranted interpretation.

Secondly, recognising the importance of religion in public life, the temporal heads freely used it in their personal and political interest. The rulers like Mahmud of Ghazni often gave the slogan of 'jihad' against their enemies, even though none of them really fought for the faith. "We can hardly discover an instance of a war," remarks P. Saran, "which was fought through Muslim rulers purely on a religious basis and for a religious cause".

Thirdly, the 'ulema' were held in high esteem. They wanted the rulers to follow Islamic code in their administration and treat the non-Muslims accordingly. But as P. Saran writes, "The philosophy of the treatment of non-Muslims, chiefly idolators, through Muslims as developed through Muslim theologians, was nothing dissimilar in its nature from the philosophy of the Brahmanic theologians which allowed them, in the sacred name of religion, to

treat with all manner of contempt, humiliation and disgrace, a very large section of their countrymen whom they condemned as untouchables...”

On the other hand, some Muslim rulers in India often disagreed with the orthodox ulema on certain occasions relating to administrative matters. In most cases, they did not accept the verdict of the religious groups if it did not suit their policies. For instance, 14th century chronicler Ziauddin Barani describes at length the attitude of Alauddin Khalji therefore:

- “He came to the conclusion that polity and government are one thing and the rules and decrees of Law are another. Royal commands belong to the king, legal decrees rest upon the judgement of qazis and muftis. In accordance with this opinion whatever affair of state came before him, he only looked to the public good, without considering whether his mode of dealing with it was lawful or unlawful.”

The qazi of the Sultan, Mughisuddin of Bayana, suggested a very harsh and humiliating attitude towards the non-Muslim subjects; but Alauddin rejected the advice and told the qazi, that the interest of his government and his people were of prime importance. He, so, issued orders and formulated policies approximately disregarding the orthodox opinion. Alauddin’s attitude towards religious orthodoxy and political affairs, in fact, became a precedent: administrative necessities and political needs were usually given priority in excess of religious laws through the medieval rulers. A policy of appeasement of the ulema, though, sustained simultaneously. The rulers at times gave several monetary benefits and other concessions to pacify this group and also to achieve certain political ends. A further point worth stating here is that since religion was the basic component of the modern idiom, the rulers usually explained their policies and actions in religious conditions.

### ***Modern Historiography***

According to the system of education, a medieval Muslim historian, too, had his training in the religious atmosphere of the madrasas (medieval centres of learnings). This profoundly affected his style of writing. For the army of his patron he would use the term *lashkar-i Islam* and for that of the enemy *Lashkar-i Kufr*. Likewise, he justified the casualties in the ranks of his patron as *shahadat*, and lost no time in sending the dead ones of the opposite side to hell. The application of such a style in Indian environment where the majority

The ruled belonged to a religion dissimilar from that of the ruler, was bound to make confusion. A careless interpreter of these expressions may readily conclude that the nature of thrash about in Medieval India was basically religious, and that it was a tussle primarily flanked by Islam and *kufrs*. But this would not be a mature method of analyzing the facts, because

these should in no method be confused with the modern state policies. The fact that it was basically a matter of style, can be borne out through any number of examples from the same stock of material. Mohammad Salih (the author of the *Amal-i Salih*), a historian of Shah Jahan's reign, while describing the uprising of the Afghans, condemns the rebels under their leader Kamaluddin Rohila as *dushman-i din*. In 1630, when Khwaja Abul Hasan resumed his Nasik expedition, Abdul Hameed Lahori, (the court historian of Shah Jahan), used the term *mujahidan-i din* (warriors in the defence of the Faith) for the Mughal forces inspite of the fact that the opponents comprised more Muslims than non-muslims, and several non-Muslims were in the Mughal forces. It is also motivating that the same historian conditions the Mughal soldiers *mujahidan-i Islam* (warriors in the defence of Islam) when they faced the Nizam Shahi army which overwhelmingly consisted of Muslims. Similar conditions were used through historians when expeditions were sent against a non-Muslim chieftain or noble or official. The army sent to crush the uprising of Jujhar Singh Bundela was also termed as *lashkar-i Islam*, although there was a sizeable number of non-Muslims on the Mughal side. The use of religious conditions like *mujahid*, *shahadat*, etc. throughout the Balkh and Badakhshan expeditions under Shah Jahan, where the Mughals were fighting exclusively against their co-religionists, shows literary trend and academic style rather than purely religious nature of these conditions. One should, so, be very wary while handling such material.

### ***Modern Historiography***

The trend of exploring this theme was started long back through Elliot and Dowson, who launched a big project of translating Persian sources of medieval period into English. They picked up such portions from the text which either referred to the 'religious bigotry' of the ruling classes (which was predominantly Muslim through faith), or the suppression of the local Indian masses (who were predominantly Hindu through faith) through a handful of the Muslim rulers.

Unfortunately, the communal spirit breathed through the British for obvious political causes, was inhaled through a number of Indian scholars like Jadunath Sarkar, A.L. Srivastava and Sri Ram Sharma, etc. The point is that the term "Religious Policy" is applied to the actions and reactions of the rulers and the ruled only when the two had dissimilar religions. If the rulers tackled their own religious community favourably or unfavorably, it ceases to be a matter of "Religious Policy"! That is why the published curses poured upon Aurangzeb's head for his "anti-Hindu" events are accessible in abundance, but there is a virtual dearth of criticism for his suppressive attitude towards the leading Muslim scholars, philosophers and saints. Sarmad, Shah Mohammad Badakhshi, Mohammad Tahir and Syed Qutbuddin Ahmedabadi were

executed on Aurangzeb's orders.

To set the matter straight, religion was often used through the rulers as a weapon to serve a diversity of interests. Sometimes the rulers extended religious concessions to the local chieftains, on other occasions they preferred to suppress them through force. It would be injustice to history if the actions and reactions of the upper and lower ruling groups are viewed in religious conditions only, disregarding the political and economic factors if they are clearly and really perceived to be operative.

Finally, there is yet another approach to this theme which is tremendously significant but, unfortunately, rarely adopted through historians. We are referring to the role of each ruler's exclusively individual beliefs, whims and their perceptions of the troubles of their respective period and also methods to tackle them. This approach would lead us to the psycho-analytical exercise relating to the individual rulers and the high ranking personalities of the period.

### **Attitude Of The Mughals Towards Religion**

We shall be examining the attitude of Mughal rulers towards religion and religious communities.

#### ***Akbar***

Akbar's attitude towards religion and religious communities is usually evaluated on the basis of the events which he took flanked by 1560-65 and which primarily affected the non-Muslim population of the Empire. Throughout this period the Emperor recognized matrimonial relations with the Rajputs, abolished the pilgrimage tax, prohibited the conversion of prisoners of war to Islam and abolished jiziya. These events seem to have given Akbar the image of a "secular" emperor. In his personal beliefs, though, Akbar was a devout muslim. The works like *Gulzar-i Abrar* and *Nafais-ul Maasir*, suggest that the emperor showed deep respect to the ulema and bestowed upon this group abundant favours. Encouraged through emperor's bounty some of them persecuted even the non-Sunni sects of the Muslims. The suppressive events taken against the Mahdavis and the Shias pass approximately unnoticed in the chronicles of this period.

Akbar's "liberalism" has been explained in many methods. It is suggested that his upbringing and several intellectual powers molded his personal beliefs. Likewise there is another view which discovers Akbar having forsaken Islam and being hypocritical in his tolerant attitude. The current opinion,

though, favours the view that these events were political concessions. In the absence of any reliable Muslim support Akbar had little alternative but to seek alliance with the Rajputs and Indian Muslims. These events were in fact concessions given to the non-Muslims to win their support. A change though appears in his attitude after 1565. There is "a marked retrogression in his attitude in matters pertaining to religion". A document signed through his wakil Munim Khan refers to the order concerning the collection of jiziya in the vicinity of Agra. In 1568, Akbar issued the well-known Fathnama of Chittor (preserved in the Munshat-i Namkin) which is full of conditions and idioms that can be compared with any other prejudiced and bigoted declaration. He declares his war against the Rajputs as jihad, takes pride in destroying temples and in killing the kafirs. Then we have Sharaif-i Usmani which tells that the Emperor ordered Qazi Abdul Samad of Bilgram to check the Hindus from practicing idol-worship there. To crown all this, in 1575, according to Badauni, Akbar reimposed Jiziya though it did not work. Another motivating aspect of this stage was that despite "an atmosphere of religious intolerance" most of the Rajput chieftains joined his service throughout the years 1566-79.

Religion, therefore, was not the main concern of the Mughal Emperor. The important issue before Akbar was to subdue the local chieftains. Religion was used only as a tool to attain political goals. When this strategy did not yield substantial gains, Akbar dropped it. Another motivating aspect deserving consideration is the establishment of the Ibadat khana. It was recognized with the aim to have free discussion on several characteristics of Islamic theology. But the Emperor got disillusioned the method Muslim jurists used to quarrel in excess of questions of jurisprudence. In the beginning only the Sunnis were permitted to take part in the discussions. But, from September 1578, the Emperor opened the gates of Ibadat khana to the sufis, shi'as, Brahmins, Jains, Christians, Jews, Parsis, etc. The discussions at Ibadat Khana proved to be a turning point as they influenced Akbar that the essence of faith lay in "internal conviction" based on 'cause'. Akbar made an effort through proclaiming himself mujtahid and declaring himself as Imam-Adil, to claim the right to interpret all legal questions on which there existed a variation of opinion in the middle of the ulema. This led to violent protests from a section of the Mughal society, but Akbar succeeded ultimately in curbing the predominance of the orthodox elements.

Akbar's Tauhid-i Ilahi (mistakenly called Din-i Ilahi) is another important measure of this reign. R.P. Tripathi had examined this theme in detail. It is appropriate to cite him at length: "Shrewd as Akbar was, he necessarily felt that it was neither possible to melt all religions down into one, nor to launch a new religion which would have added one more to others. But he felt himself called upon to propagate his ideas in the middle of those who cared to listen to them... The sect had no sacred book or scripture, no priestly hierarchy, no

sacred place of worship and no rituals or ceremonies except that of initiation... a member had to provide a written promise of having... accepted the four grades of whole devotion, viz., sacrifice of property, life, honour and religion... [(it)] was not a religion and Akbar never planned to establish a church... neither force nor money was employed to enlist disciples... It was entirely a personal matter, not flanked by the Emperor and the subjects, but flanked by Akbar and those who chose to regard him as their pir or guru.”

What seems to us is that Akbar wanted to build up a devoted band of people approximately him, acting as their spiritual guide. Therefore tauhid-i Ilahi had nothing to do with Akbar's religious or political policy. In conclusion we may say that Akbar, in the interest of political consolidation, did not usually resort to religious discrimination. Yet he never hesitated in taking strong events against those who threatened his position or exceeded the limits of social or ideological values regardless of their faith or creed. It should also be noted that stern actions were taken against individuals, and not against the religious groups as such.

### ***Jahangir***

Jahangir on the whole made no departure from his father's liberal attitude. R.P. Tripathi says that Jahangir “was more orthodox than his father and less than his son Khurram”. It is alleged that he took harsh steps against the Sikhs, Jains and Sunnis. Here it may be noted that the victims of his wrath were only individual's viz. Guru Arjan Singh, Man Singh Suri and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi not the religious group perse. On the other hand, Jahangir visited Jadrup Gosain three times and discussed with him Hindu philosophy.

We discover that Jahangir sometimes got provoked through the sectarian opinions of other persons. This trait had led him to imprison the Sunni religious leader Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi mujaddid alif sani for three years in the Gwalior fort. The Shaikh had claimed that once in his “dream” he came closer to God than the Caliphs in the past. Jahangir abhorred this statement. Several other Muslims, namely, Kaukab, Abdul Lateef and Sharif were imprisoned for expressing some opinion disliked through the Emperor. It is noteworthy that the percentage of the Hindu mansabdars did not decrease throughout Jahangir's reign. He never launched a policy of the destruction of Hindu places of worship. He also did not re-impose jiziya, nor whispered in forcible conversion to Islam.

### ***Shah Jahan***

Through the time Shah Jahan ascended the throne in 1627 a change in the climate of tolerance and liberalism seemed to have set in. Islamic precepts

now began to exercise some control in excess of the affairs of the state as was apparent from a change in the practice of paying salute to the emperor. Akbar had introduced in his court the practice of sijda or prostration, but Shah Jahan abolished it since this form of veneration was deemed fit for the Almighty. Shah Jahan substituted chahar taslim for sijda. Moreover the author of Amal Salih informs us that seventy six temples in the region of Banaras were demolished at the order of the Emperor. The argument was that “new idol houses” could not be constructed. Though, the old ones built before Shah Jahan’s accession were left untouched.

Significantly the Muslim orthodoxy could not exercise its power on the Emperor in regard to the patronage given to Music and painting. Dhrupad was the Emperor’s favourite form of vocal music. The best Hindu Musician Jaganath was much encouraged through the Emperor, to whom the latter gave the title of Maha Kavi Rai. The art of painting also developed throughout Shah Jahan’s reign. Patronage to music and painting was a state policy since Akbar’s time. His grandson, too, followed this tradition. What is extra ordinary , though, is the fact that in spite of deviation in some compliments from the norms laid down through Akbar and followed through Jahangir Shah Jahan did not impose jiziya on the non-Muslims. Nor did the number of the Hindu mansabdars fall below the number under his precursors.

### *Aurangzeb*

Aurangzeb’s reign is shrouded in controversy. The opinion of scholars is sharply divided especially on matters pertaining to religion. There are essentially three main categories of scholars:

- Jadunath Sarkar, S.R. Sharma and A.L. Srivastava, discover Aurangzeb guilty of religious bigotry and persecution.
- Shibli Nomani, Zahiruddin Faruki and Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi justify most of Aurangzeb’s actions as political expedients.
- Satish Chandra and M. Athar Ali, effort a “neutral” analysis of Aurangzeb’s acts without getting embroiled into the “for”, or “against” controversy.

We have the advantage of having details of the records cited through the scholars writing on Aurangzeb. We have therefore divided Aurangzeb’s events in two parts:

- Minor inconsequential ordinances, and
- Major ones that could be measured as part of the” policy.

We shall discuss these events in a sequence and on their basis create an overall assessment of Aurangzeb with regard to his religious affairs. As for the first, the following may be taken note of:

- Aurangzeb forbade the kalima from being stamped on his coins lest the holy words might be desecrated under foot or defiled through the non-believers.
- Nauroz (the New Year's Day of the Zoroastrian calendar) celebrations going on since his predecessor's times were abolished.
- Old mosques, etc, neglected earlier, were ordered to be repaired, and imams and muezzins, etc. were appointed on a regular salary.
- A Censor of Morals was appointed "to enforce the Prophet's Laws and put down the practices forbidden through Him" (such as drinking spirits, use of bhang, gambling and commercial sex).
- The ceremony of weighing the Emperor against gold and silver on his two birthdays (i.e. according to the lunar and solar calendars) was stopped.
- In 1665, the Emperor instructed the governor of Gujarat that diwali and holi should be celebrated outside the bazars of the city of Ahmedabad and its parganas. The cause given for the partial ban of holi was that Hindus "open their mouths in obscene speech and kindle the holi bonfire in chaklas and bazar, throwing into fire the faggot of all people that they can seize through force and theft".
- The practice of jharokha darshan was discontinued after the eleventh year of his reign. The Emperor took it to be unislamic because the groups of the darshanas regarded their sovereign as their earthly divinity (and so they did not eat anything before they had the darshan of the Emperor).
- Aurangzeb forbade the court musicians to perform before him "as he had no liking for pleasure, and his application to business left him no time for amusement. Slowly music was totally forbidden at court". Though, the musicians were given pension. On the other hand, naubat was retained.

Now, the first five events reflect Aurangzeb's Islamic concern and his zeal for social reforms as well. None of these could be called "anti-Hindu". The same is true for the seventh and eighth. Only the sixth measure touches the Hindus directly. Jadunath Sarkar comments that "It was really a police regulation as regards holi, and act of bigotry in connection with diwali". This is a well-measured verdict though Sarkar overlooks the point that there was no general ban on diwali or holi in the Empire. This should be juxtaposed with Aurangzeb's order for "putting a stop to Muharram processions... in all the provinces, after a deadly fight flanked by rival processions had taken place at Burhanpur" in January, 1669. This ban, too, was a "police regulation" but in contrast with diwali and holi, it was not confined to any scrupulous province.

The seventh measure, concerning jharokha darshan, had nothing to do with the Hindu community as such. It was prompted through the Emperor's

personal perception of Islamic tenets. The eighth order stopping musical parties at the court could through no stretch of imagination be perceived to have been aimed against the Hindus. In all likelihood the Muslim musicians at the court such as Khushhal Khan and Bisram Khan were the ones who were affected. Moreover, the nobles did not stop listening to music.

Let us now take up the major ordinances which could be measured to have been issued to hit the Hindus directly as a matter of “state” policy throughout the Mughal Empire. The first is the demolition of Hindu temples which were newly constructed. You may recall that Shah Jahan used the same argument i.e., newly constructed. But his events seem to have been confined to the Banaras region only. On the other hand, Aurangzeb’s orders were operative in whole of the Empire. He also instructed that old temples were not to be repaired;

In 1670, a farman was issued that all temples constructed in Orissa “throughout the last 10 or 12 years, whether with brick or clay, should be demolished without delay” Some of the significant temples destroyed throughout Aurangzeb’s reign were the Vishwanath temple of Banaras, the Keshav Rai temple of Mathura and the “second temple of Somnath”. In 1644, when he was the viceroy of Gujarat, he had desecrated the recently built temple of Chintaman at Ahmedabad through killing a cow in it and then turned this building into a mosque”. Killing of cows in other temples, too, was deliberate. The case of Mathura temple is motivating. This temple was built through Bir Singh Bundela who had gained Jahangir’s favour for slaying Abul Fazl (1602). Jahangir had let this temple, built at the cost of thirty three lakh rupees, remain undisturbed. But Aurangzeb converted it into a large mosque and the name of Mathura was changed to Islamabad.

The after that major measure was the re-imposition of jiziya in 1679 which was abolished through Akbar long ago. This act of Aurangzeb has puzzled several modern scholars. Some like Jadunath Sarkar see it as a clear case of bigotry in tune with the temple destruction. But Satish Chandra links it up with the Deccan problem (Golkunda, Bijapur and Marathas) and says that the Emperor was in a deep political crisis which led him to do something spectacular in order to win the unflinching support of the Muslims, especially the orthodox group. It is also thought that the imposition of jiziya might have been due to the financial crisis. But this is untenable because the income from jiziya was insignificant.

Another act related to the issue of orders asking the Hindus to pay 5% custom duty on goods, as against 2 and 1/2% through the Muslim merchants. Another farman was issued in 1671 to the effect that the revenue collectors of the khalisa land necessitybe Muslims. Later on, he unwillingly allowed the Hindus to be employed in certain departments only, provided their number

was kept at half of that of the Muslims. Aurangzeb, though, seems to be an enigmatic personality. In contrast with his acts of intolerance, we discover him inducting a large number of non-muslim officers in the state bureaucracy. Aurangzeb did not reduce the percentage of Hindus in the mansab system; rather it was higher compared to his precursors. Several Hindus held high posts, and, two were appointed governors. It is also an very important point that the same emperor who demolished so several places of worship, simultaneously issued grants in many instances for the maintenance of the temples and priests.

A psychosomatic explanation for these acts of Aurangzeb suggests that he had developed an intense consciousness of guilt. He was the person who had killed his brothers and imprisoned his old father—something that had never happened in the Mughal history from Babur to Shah Jahan. The last act even violated the turah-i Chaghatai through ascending the throne while his reigning father was alive. Such a person was, sooner or later, bound to be overtaken through unprecedented remorse, penitence and contrite. His actions, perhaps, emanated from this feeling, and he took shelter in the Islamic shell. In this respect all his acts were ultimately the consequence of his individual decision.

## **PAINTING AND FINE ARTS**

### **Antecedents**

We will discuss the development of painting in the pre-Mughal period.

### ***Painting in the Fifteenth Century***

Until recently it was whispered that the art of painting did not flourish throughout the rule of the Delhi Sultans and that the illuminated manuscripts of the Mughals were, in fact, a revival of painting after a lapse of many centuries from the end of the tenth. Lately, though, enough evidence has come to light suggesting the subsistence of:

- A lively tradition of murals and painted cloth throughout the 13th and 14th centuries;
- A simultaneous tradition of the qur'anic calligraphy, lasting upto the end of the 14th' century, and
- A tradition of illustrated Persian and Awadhi manuscripts, originating almost certainly at the beginning of the 15th century.

Of this last tradition, a notable number of illustrated manuscripts from the period flanked by the 15th and 16th century have become recognized. Some of these works were commissioned through independent patrons in the Sultanate

located outside the court From the former category mention may be made of:

- The Bostan of S'adi, illustrated through the artist Hajji Mahmud, and
- Ni'mat Nama
- Miftah al Fuzala through Muhammed Shadiabadi

These manuscripts were illustrated at Mandu throughout the second half of the fifteenth century. A fine instance of the latter category is the illustrated manuscript of Laur Chanda executed for a patron seemingly not related with the court

It is, therefore , apparent that at the time of the advent of the Mughals in India, there did exist a live tradition of painting focused mainly on illuminating manuscripts, made possible through the use of paper as the new material.

### ***Painting Under Early Mughals***

Babur, the founder of Mughal rule in India, ruled for four years only. He was not able to contribute anything to the growth of painting. His successor Humayun was mostly occupied in containing his rivals till he was forced out of India through Sher Shah in 1540. It was, though, throughout his refuge at the court of Shah Tahmasp of Persia that Humayun acquired love of the art of painting. Humayun was so influenced through the art practiced there that he commissioned Mir Syed Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad, two Persian masters, to illustrate manuscripts for him. These two painters joined Humayun's entourage on his triumphant return to India.

Humayun's contribution to the evolution of Mughal painting is very significant There are many significant characteristics of the Mughal school which seem to have originated in the paintings done throughout Humayun's period. An significant painting from Humayun's period is titled 'Princes of the House of Timur' and dated c. 1550. It has been executed on cloth, quite large in size, measuring almost 1.15m. square. Such a large format is unusual even for paintings in Persia, and it has been suggested that it almost certainly relates to the Mongol tradition of having paintings in their tents.

### **Evolution Of Mughal School Under Akbar**

The emergence of the Mughal School of painting as separate from all other styles was mainly due to the deep interest Akbar took in the promotion of this art.

### *Akbar's views on The Art of Painting*

Drawing the likeness of anything is called *tasvir*. His majesty, from his earliest youth, has shown a great predilection for this art, and provides it every encouragement, as he looks upon it as a means, both of study and amusement. Hence the art flourishes, and several painters have obtained great reputation. The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty through the *Daroghas* and the clerks; he then confers rewards according to excellence of workmanship, or increases the monthly salaries. Much progress was made in the commodities required for painters, and the correct prices of such articles were cautiously ascertained. The mixture of colours has especially been improved. The pictures therefore received a hitherto unknown finish. Most excellent painters are now to be found and masterpieces, worthy of a *Bihzad*, may be placed at the side of the wonderful works of the European painters who have attained world-wide fame. The minuteness in detail, the general finish, the boldness of execution, etc., now observed in pictures, are incomparable; even inanimate objects look as if they had life. More than a hundred painters have become well-known masters of the art, whilst the number of those who approach perfection, or of those who are middling, is very large. This is especially true of the Hindus; their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few, indeed in the whole world are found equal to them.—*Ain Akbari*

### *Establishment of Royal Atelier*

The first major project undertaken throughout Akbar's regime was that of illustrating the *Hamza Nama*. It began in 1562 for which many artists were employed at the court. The place where the painters worked was recognized as *Tasvir Khana*. Although *Abul Fazal* enumerates the names of only seventeen artists, we now know that the number was very large. *S.P. Verma* has prepared a list of 225 artists who worked at Akbar's atelier. These artists belonged to dissimilar places, but in the middle of them the majority were Hindus. Interestingly, many low caste people, due primarily to their artistic ability, were also raised to the status of royal artist. The case of *Daswant*, who was the son of a *Kahar*, may be especially cited. The painters were assisted through a set of *gilders*, *line-drawers* and *pagars*. The artists were salaried employees. *S.P. Verma* opines that the lowest paid worker in the atelier received an amount flanked by 600 to 1200 *dams*..

There are paintings which bear the names of two artists. Sometimes even three artists worked on a single painting. On one painting from *Akbamama* four artists have worked. The painting was therefore a collaborative team work. The sketching of figures and colouring were done through a team of two dissimilar artists. In cases where three artists have worked the outlining was done through one artist, the other artist coloured the faces and a third one

coloured the remaining figure. It is though not recognized to us as to how was such a intricate arrangement worked out Almost certainly in such a team work the sketching and colouring were done through separate artists.

As has been noted above, the atelier was supervised through daroghas with the assistance of clerks. They were responsible for creation materials of painting easily accessible to the artists and to oversee the progress of their work. They also arranged for periodical presentation of the artists' works before the Emperor.

### *Style and Technique*

The illustration done at Akbar's court are measured as representative works of the Mughal art. Notably, though, in these paintings, there is apparent a gradual evolution in the style and technique. The illustrations of the early stage are clearly influenced through the Persian tradition, the identifying characteristics of which are listed below:

- Symmetrical compositions;
- Restricted movement of figures;
- Fineness of the lines of drawings;
- Flat depiction of architectural columns; and
- Profuse embellishment of buildings in the manner of jewels.

Later, the paintings acquired a distinctive character of their own. They assumed a more eclectic character composed mainly of the Persian and Indian traditions with touches of European power. The Mughal style became recognizable within a span of fifteen years since the setting up of royal atelier under Akbar. In the after that decade or so, i.e. through in relation to the 1590 it acquired a distinctive form which was marked through:

- Naturalism & rhythm
- Clothing objects of daily use assuming Indian shapes
- Picture space having subsidiary scenes set in background
- Extraordinary vigor of action and violent movement
- Luxuriant depiction of foliage & brilliant blossoms

It should be accentuated here that the identity of the Mughal paintings under Akbar was as much made of an original style as a fusion of the Persian and Indian traditions. Specific mention may be made here of the depiction of action and movement which is not to be found in either the pre-Mughal art of India or the art of Persia. Painting under Akbar's period distinguishes itself as a tradition from Persian painting as well as from Indian styles particularly through the attendance of historical subject matter. The two most commonly used themes are:

- Daily events of the court, and

- Portraits of leading personalities

While portrait painting was recognized in Persia, painting as a chronicle of actual events was certainly a new emphasis. Painters used familiar formulas for hunting or battle scenes regardless of the fact that the literary reference for the scene was historical or purely imaginary. Moreover specific events illustrated are regularly reworking of scenes 'recording' quite dissimilar events in the earliest recognized historical manuscript of this period, the Timur Nama of in relation to the 1580 A.D. Perhaps, painters conceived scenes according to a repertoire of types e.g. the seize of a fortress, crossing a river, an audience or battle scene. In the working of whole volumes such as the Akbar Nama, the artists seem to have reworked or adapted these compositional types. Painters usually created new compositions only when no prototypes existed, and only a few artists were capable of such invention.

### **Developments Under Jahangir And Shahjahan**

Throughout Jahangir and Shahjahan, Mughal painting achieved its zenith. Jahangir took a deep interest in painting even as a prince. He maintained his own studio separately from Akbar's large atelier. Jahangir's preference was for paintings of hunting scenes, birds and flowers. He also sustained the tradition of portraiture. Under Shahjahan the colours of the paintings became more decorative and gold was more regularly used for embellishment. We shall study the introduction of new styles and thematic variations in Mughal paintings throughout Jahangir & Shahjahan's reign.

#### ***Introduction of New Styles***

In the period of Jahangir's rule, manuscripts became less significant than individual pictures. Milo Cleveland Beach is of the opinion that Jahangir, with his personal involvement, may have functioned effectively as the head of the royal studio. So, artistic decisions were made through the Emperor himself consequent introducing his own stylistic preferences in the paintings. Two significant new elements in the style of Mughal painting throughout the first half of the seventeenth century have been recognized as below:

- Jahangir's paintings seem to accentuate a formalist style, i.e., creation the work realistic and preferring the precise recording of modern reality.

The paintings of this period have broad margins which are gorgeously decorated with the depiction of flora and faces of human figures, etc. designs from plant motifs.

### ***Thematic Variations***

Jahangir was a keen naturalist. Whenever he came across a strange animal or bird, his artists painted the same immediately. We have paintings of birds and animals in the most realistic fashion.

Shah Jahan was a great patron of architecture, but he did not neglect the painting. Under him, the previous tradition of doing portraits, preparing albums, and, illustrating books, was sustained. Additionally we discover the paintings depicting charming love scenes and portraits of female members. Another significant theme chosen for painting was the super imposition of animals and the scenes of performing acrobats.

### **European Impact On Mughal Painting**

In its later stages, especially throughout the Seventeenth Century, the Mughal painting was influenced through the European art. Some of the themes of European art were incorporated through Mughal painters and they also adopted a few of the techniques of European artists. According to A.J. Qaisar a large number of European paintings were either copied or adapted or even reinterpreted, sometimes, through Mughal painters. At the same time several original prints from Europe were composed and preserved in the albums of Jahangir and Dara Shikoh and many Mughal nobles.

The contact Mughal court painters had with European paintings prompted them initially to create exact copies in their own hands. Such imitations, as noted through modern European travellers, were impeccably done. But Mughal painters also made experiments through creation new paintings on the subjects chosen from European paintings. One significant characteristic that becomes noticeable in some Mughal paintings is the effort to create them three dimensional. Clearly it speaks of the impact of European technique. Another European convention acceptable to Mughal painters was the effect of light and shade, mostly utilized in tight scenes. The depiction of motifs like 'hals', winged angles and roaring clouds in Mughal paintings was again under the power of European paintings. One significant technique that of oil painting from Europe, somewhat did not attract the Mughals. There is no work from this period that was executed in oil.

### **Painting In The Deccan**

A separate style of painting appeared in the kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda in the Deccan in the late 15th century and predates the Mughal painting. But the greatest patronage to painting in these kingdoms was

given in the sixteenth century and the Deccani style reached its zenith in the seventeenth century under the impact of the Mughal tradition. Here we shall trace the developments in the Deccan painting throughout the 16th-17th centuries.

### *Court Patronage*

The successor states of the Bahmani Kingdom actively patronised painting. The earliest recognized painting from these states is dated 1565-69. It is an illustrated manuscript of Ta'rif-i Husain Shahi composed and illustrated at Ahmadnagar. In relation to the 1570, a second Deccani manuscript was composed and illustrated, this time at Bijapur. This was the Nujum-ul-Ulum. In all probability this work was commissioned through Ali Adil Shah who had many painters working at his court, But the greatest of the Bijapur line, and perhaps of all the rulers of the successor states, was Ibrahim Adil Shah who was an accomplished painter and a calligraphist. Towards the close of the 16th century, there had appeared a new tradition of painting in Ahmadnagar and Bijapur, recognized as the Ragamala painting. Under Ibrahim's patronage this tradition reached the highest point of its growth.

There is another category of paintings in the Deccan style which depict the pomp and grandeur of the royal processions. Many paintings of this type have come down to us from the reign of Abdulla Qutb Shah of Golkonda. In the 18th Century patronage of painting in the Deccan passed to the Asaf Jahi dynasty of Hyderabad. The painting of Azam Shah returning from bird-shooting and approaching his pleasure garden at the foot of the Golconda fort, and the album of Himmatyar Khan, a noble of the Nizam's court, are some of significant surviving examples of the Deccani painting from Hyderabad. Numerous powers seem to have affected the formation of the Deccani tradition. Several of the rulers of Deccan kingdoms were connoisseurs of Persian painting and built up good collections of miniatures and manuscripts. The power of the Persian tradition is therefore apparent in the paintings done at their courts. It should, though, be noted that this assimilation is not precise and disciplined. Consequently, several of the characteristics have been taken in excess of without the refinement of the Persian paintings. Another important power on the Deccan paintings is that of the Mughal school. Contacts flanked by Deccani and Mughal traditions developed in several methods. There were exchanges of artists flanked by the two court as also gifts of paintings.

But the Deccan paintings cannot be analyzed primarily on the basis of several derivative powers. The best specimens of Deccan paintings creatively reshape extraneous suggestions and become aesthetically original. Therefore the characteristics typical of Deccan paintings are:

- Hierarchical scaling, i.e., the principal figure being bigger than the subordinate figures;
- Richness of the palette, in which white and gold are used as they are in no other Indian miniatures;
- Typical jewelry, e.g., plaque of the necklace;
- Exaggerated swirl of the girdle and stole, especially in the case of feminine figures, and intersection of diagonals so as to form an arch approximately the principal figures.

## **Rajasthani Painting**

The Rajasthani paintings have a separate aesthetic quality. The emergence of this style, in the opinion of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, from the earlier pre-Turkish traditions reached its consummation approximately 1600. In its early stage, it showed a great vigour, though it absorbed Mughal power later. After the collapse of the Mughal power, it reemerged and flourished under the patronage of dissimilar Rajput kingdoms.

### ***Style and Themes***

Rajasthani painting, since its beginning, adopted nature as the main theme. The illustrations are approximately like landscape paintings where human figures seem to play only subordinate roles. Some of the main elements of nature depicted in these paintings are:

- A diversity of tree shapes;
- A dense foliage;
- Singing birds and frolicking animals;
- Rivers full of lotus blossoms; and
- Drops of rain falling from deep blue clouds.

The Rajasthani miniatures are also recognized for the intensity of colours used. Deep blue for clouds, streaks of gold showing flashes of lightening, and emerald green for foliage are some of the most prominently used colours. The major themes selected through painters of this genre are:

- Hunting scenes;
- Portraits, and
- Musical seasons.

Another feature of the Rajasthani paintings, particularly of the 17th century, is the use of compartmental pictures in which space is divided into bays and rectangles and used as frames for figures and groups.

### ***Main Centres***

- **Mewar School:** The house of Nisar Din (1606) stands out as the earliest recognized group of Rajasthani painters. Subsequently the same tradition was accepted further through Sahib Din, who worked from 1627 to 1648. This stage represents the Mewar School at its height. The illustrated series ran into hundreds covering a very wide range of life, including mythology. Under the patronage of Jagat Sing I, a long series of illustrations called *Nayakabheda* was executed through a number of painters in a poetic and sentimental style. Though, in the subsequent half a century period, the power of the Mughal style slowly weakened the vitality of the Mewar school, and it slowly became more and more subdued.
- **Bundi School:** It has an approximately parallel history, except that there seem to have been two significant periods in it, viz., 1620-35 and 1680-1700. Throughout the 18th century, the Bundi school took a new turn. While retaining its originality of expression, it followed the Mughal school in subject-matter and technical details. The main emphasis now was on the display of feminine grace in which it seemed to excel.
- **Kishangarh School:** The Kishangarh style was lyrical and sometimes sensuous. It was encouraged through Maharaja Sawant Singh, popularly recognized as Nagari Das at the turn of the 18th century. Although Mughal secular power in painting affected every court in Rajasthan, in Kishangarh deep Hindu devotionism seems to have survived. Under Sawant Singh's patronage, there was a spurt in the art of painting based on the love lore of Radha and Krishna. The Kishangarh paintings are mostly the work of the talented artist Nihal Chand. The elegant shapes of the Kishangarh females, with their sharp noses, almond eyes and arched mouths, set up a new tradition in Rajasthani painting.

### **Fine Arts**

Fine arts throughout the 16th-18th century seem to have developed more in the regional kingdoms than in the Mughal state. Though, historical information on the development of fine arts is scanty, and the following narrative is based on piecemeal records.

### ***Music***

Centres of musical study and practice, as stated above, were located in regional kingdoms. In the South, a system of parent and derivative manners,

i.e., Janaka and Janya ragas, existed approximately the middle of the 16th century. The earliest treatise which deals with this system is titled Swaramela Kalanidhi. It was written through Ramamatya of Kondavidu in 1550. It describes 20 janak and 64 janya ragas. Later, in 1609, one Somanatha wrote Ragavibodha in which he incorporated some concepts of the North Indian style. It was sometimes in the middle of the 17th century that a well-known treatise on music, called Caturdandi-prakasika was composed through Venkatamakhin in Thanjavur. The system propounded in the text has come to form the bedrock of the Carnatic system of music.

The development of music in North India was largely inspired and sustained through the bhakti movement. The compositions of the 16th and 17th century saint poets were invariably set to music. In Vrindavan, Swami Haridas promoted music in a big method. He is also measured to be the teacher of the well-known Tansen of Akbar's court. Tansen himself is measured one of the great exponents of North Indian system of music. He is given credit for introducing some well-known ragas viz., Miyan ki Malhar, Miyan ki Todi and Darbari. Raja Mansingh of Gwalior played a distinguished part in the growth and perfection of Dhrupad, a variant style of the North Indian music.

In the 18th century, music in North Indian style received great encouragement at the court of the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah. Sadaranga and Adaranga were two great composers of Khayal gayaki at his court. Many new shapes of music such as Tarana, Dadra and Ghazal also came into subsistence at this time. Moreover, some folk shapes of music were also incorporated in the courtly music. In this category mention may be made of Thumri, employing folk levels, and to Tappa developed from the songs of camel drivers of Punjab.

In passing, it should be noted that while in the South the texts of music enforced a stricter science, in the North the absence of texts permitted greater liberty. There were therefore many experiments in mixing the ragas accepted out in the North. A loose code of North Indian style of music is a characteristic that has sustained to the present day.

### ***Dance and Drama***

Evidence on dance and drama in the medieval period is scattered. The more significant sources are the texts on music, dance and drama, and the creative works of literature in the dissimilar languages of India. The textual material is mainly from Orissa, South India and from the court of the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah. Abhinaya Chandrika through Mahesvara Mahapatra and Sangit Damodara through Raghunatha are the two 17th century

texts on dance and drama from Orissa. From South India we have Adi Bharatam, Bharatarnava, Tulajaraja's Natyavedagama and Balaravarman's Balaramabharatam. There is the Sangita Malika treatise on dance and music from the court of Muhammad Shah.

## **ARCHITECTURE**

### **Beginning Of Mughal Architecture**

The history of architecture throughout the 16th-18th centuries is in fact an account of the building activities of Mughal Emperors, except for a brief interregnum of a decade and a half when Surs ruled in Delhi. It is true that the Mughal style of architecture took a concrete form throughout the reign of Akbar, yet the basic principles of Mughal architecture were provided through Babur and Humayun, the two precursors of Akbar.

#### ***Buildings of Babur***

Babur had a short reign of five years, most of which was spent in fighting battles for the consolidation of the newly born Mughal state. He is, though, recognized to have taken considerable interest in building secular works. It is unfortunate that very little of this work is extant today. The only standing structures of Babur's reign are two mosques, built in 1526, at Panipat and Sambhal. But both these structures are common place, and possess no architectural merit.

Babur's secular works mainly comprise the laying of gardens and pavilions. In one of the miniatures, he has been depicted inspecting the layout plan of a garden of Dholpur. Today, only the exhumed ruins of this garden are visible. Two more gardens, Ram Bagh and Zahra Bagh at Agra, are also attributed to him. But the present layout of these gardens seems to have undergone several alterations. None of Babur's pavilions have been noticed as surviving today.

#### ***Buildings of Humayun***

The surviving buildings of Humayun's reign have the same inconsequential character as that of Babur. The Mughal domination in excess of India was too unsettled for the production of any great work of architecture. Moreover, Humayun had to spend fifteen long years of his life in exile in Persia throughout the ascendancy of the Sur dynasty in Delhi. Though, two

mosques from in the middle of many other buildings erected throughout the first stage of his reign survive. One of these lies in ruinous condition at Agra. The other is at Fatehabad. But both these structures are devoid of any architectural distinctiveness much in the same manner as the mosques of Babur.

Humayun's return to Delhi in 1555 was shortlived. There are in fact no notable buildings of this time. Mention may, though, be made of Humayun's tomb as a structure which was inspired through the Persian culture imbibed through Humayun throughout his exile. This building is in fact a landmark in the development of the Mughal style of architecture. The construction began in 1564 after Humayun's death under the patronage of his widow, Hamida Bano Begum. The architect of the building was Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, a native of Persia. He brought several Persian craftsmen to Delhi to work on the structure and their skills and techniques were liberally employed. The tomb has therefore become representative of an Indian rendition of a Persian concept. It may be noted that Humayun's tomb, strictly speaking, is a building of Akbar's reign. But because of peculiar characteristics, it has been treated separately.

Humayun's tomb is one of the earliest specimens of the garden enclosure and is raised high on an arcaded sandstone platform. The tomb is octagonal in plan and is crowned through a high dome, which is actually a double dome. It has two shells, with an appreciable space in flanked by. The inner shell shapes the vaulted ceiling to the inner chambers, and the outer shell rises like a bulb in a proportion with the elevation of the main building. To the centre of each side of the tomb is a porch with a pointed arch providing entrance to the main chamber. The interior of this building is a group of compartments, the largest in the centre containing the grave of the Emperor. The smaller ones in each angle were meant to house the graves of his family member. Each room is octagonal in plan and they are linked through diagonal passages.

A double-dome is built of two layers. There is one layer inside which gives ceiling to the interior of the building. The other layer is the outer one which crowns the building. The devices of double dome enables the ceiling inside to be placed lower and in better relation to the interior space it covers. This is done without disturbing the proportions and the effect of elevation of the exterior. The method of creation double dome was practised in Western Asia for quite sometime before it was imported into India.

### **Interregnum: The Sur Architecture**

The Mughal rule in India was interrupted through Slier Shah Sur in 1540.

For the after that fifteen years the Empire came under the sway of the Surs who embarked on profound architectural projects. Their buildings, in fact, laid the ground work on which the Mughals built. The architectural heritage produced under diverse circumstances and in two separate localities of the Surs may be divided into two separate and separate periods. The first stage appeared at Sasaram under Slier Shall flanked by 1530 and 1540. Here a group of tombs was built illustrating the final fulfilment of the Lodi-style through which it has been inspired. The second stage lasted from 1540 to 1545 when Sher Shall had wrested control of the Empire from Humayun. Under his patronage, many architectural innovations were adopted which got reflected in mature form in the consequent Mughal style.

The first stage is represented through a group of tombs, three belonging to the ruling family and one to Aliwal Khan who was the architect of these tombs. "The buildings reflect the ambition of Sher Shah to make monuments grander than anything found in Delhi. The first project of this scheme was the construction of the tomb of Hasan Khan, Sher Shah's father, in 1525. But this was a conventional exercise in Lodi design. The major representative of this group was the tomb of Sher Shall, an architectural masterpiece. Here the architect considerably enlarged the normal proportions of the earlier building and set it in a beautiful tank approached through a causeway. In addition to this, he increased the number of stories therefore producing a beautiful pyramidal structure in five separate stages. This monument was constructed of the finest Chunar sandstone.

Sher Shah's tomb stands on a stepped square plinth on a terrace appreciated through a gateway via a bridge placed crossways the tank. There is an error in orienting the lower platform of the tomb on the main axis. But it is corrected through skewing the axis of the superstructure built in excess of the lower platform. The main building comprises an octagonal chamber bounded through an arcade. There are domed canopies in each corner of the platform. The proportions of diminishing stages and the harmonious transition from square to octagon and to sphere are elements which speak highly of the capabilities of the Indian architect.

The second stage of development took place in Delhi. Sher Shall built the Purana Qila planned to be the sixth city of Delhi. Today, only two isolated gateways survive. Distant more significant, though, was the Qilai Kuhna Masjid, built in relation to the 1542 inside the Purana Qila citadel. In the architectural scheme of this mosque, the facade of the prayer hall is divided into five arched bays, the central one larger than the others, each with an open archway recessed within it. The facade is richly carved in black and white marble and red sandstone, and the central arch is flanked through narrow, fluted pilasters. The rear carriers of the mosque have five stair turrets with rich windows accepted on brackets.

One notable characteristic in this building is the form of the arches — there is a slight drop, or flatness, in the curve towards the crown. It is indicative of the last stage before the development of the four-centered ‘Tudor’ arch of the Mughals.

## **Architecture Under Akbar**

Akbar’s reign can be taken as the formative period of Mughal architecture. It represents the finest instance of the fusion of Indo-Islamic architecture.

### ***Structural Form***

The architecture of the reign of Akbar represents encouragement of the indigenous techniques and a selective use of the experiences of other countries. The chief elements of the style of architecture that evolved under Akbar’s patronage can be listed therefore:

- The buildings mainly used red sandstone as the building material;
- A widespread use of the trabeated construction;
- The arches used mainly in decorative form rather than in structural form;
- The dome was of the ‘lodi’ type, sometimes built hollow but never technically of the true double order;
- The shafts of the pillars were multifaceted and the capitals of these pillars invariably took the form of bracket supports; and
- The decoration comprised of boldly carved or inlaid patterns complemented through brightly coloured patterns on the interiors.

### ***Building Projects***

Akbar’s building projects can be divided into two main groups, each on behalf of a dissimilar stage. The first group comprised buildings of forts and a few palaces mainly at Agra, Allahabad and Lahore. The second group related basically to the construction of his new capital at Fatli-pur Sikri.

#### ***The First Stage***

One of the earliest building projects of Akbar’s reign was the construction of a fort at Agra, conceived actually as a fortress-palace. Its huge walls and battlements convey an effect of great power. Inside the fort, Akbar had built several structures in the styles of Bengal and Gujarat. Except the Jahangiri

Mahal, though, all the other structures were demolished through Shah Jahan as part of a later stage of remodelling. Today the Delhi Gate of the fort and Jahangiri Mahal are the only representative buildings of Akbar's reign.

The Delhi Gate of Agra Fort almost certainly represents Akbar's earliest architectural effort. It formed the principal entrance to the fort. The architecture of the gate shows an originality signifying the start of a new era in the building art of India. The gate follows a simple plan; the dissimilar components are:

- A front consisting of two broad octagonal towers through the sides of a central archway;
- A back having arcaded terraces topped through kiosks and pinnacles; and
- An ornamentation consisting of patterns in white marble inlaid against the red sandstone background.

The Jahangiri Mahal was built through Akbar and is conceived as a robust building in red sandstone. It is the only surviving instance in the fort of the domestic necessities of the ruler and is a fine specimen of the fusion of the Hindu and Islamic building designs. It is planned in the form of an asymmetrical range of apartments. The facade on the eastern side has an entrance gateway leading to a domed hall with elaborately carved ceiling. As one crosses this hall one reaches a central open courtyard. On the north side of this courtyard is a pillared hall with a roof supported on piers and cross-beams with serpentine brackets. The southern side, too, has a similar hall. This symmetry is, though, broken on the east side through a set of chambers that lead to a portico facing the river Yamuna. The whole construction is mainly in red sandstone with the combination of beam and bracket forming its principal structural system.

The same style is manifested in the other palace-fortresses at Lahore and Allahabad. Only the fort at Ajmer represents a dissimilar class. Since it spearheaded the advancing boundary of the Empire, the walls of the fort were thickly doubled.

### *The Second Stage*

The second stage of Akbar's architectural scheme coincides with the conception and creation of a ceremonial capital for the Empire at Sikri, almost forty kilometres west of Agra. The new capital was named Fathpur. It is one of the most extraordinary monuments in India. In its design and layout Fathpur Sikri is a city where the public areas like the courtyards, Diwan-i Am and Jami Masjid form a coherent, group approximately the private palace apartments. The city was built in a very short span of time and as such does not follow any

conscious overall plan. The buildings were sited to relate to each other and to their surroundings. An asymmetry seem to have been deliberately incorporated into the setting-out and design of the intricate. All the buildings are in feature rich red sandstone, using traditional trabeate construction. The pillars, lintels, brackets, tiles and posts were cut from local rocks and assembled without the use of mortar.

The buildings in Fathpur Sikri may be resolved into two categories: religious and secular character. The religious buildings comprise the; Buland Darwaza; and the tomb of Shaikh Salim Chishti. The buildings of secular nature are more varied and therefore numerous. These can be grouped under administrative buildings; and structures of miscellaneous order. It is a curious fact that the religious buildings are invariably built in the arcuate style while in secular buildings dominates the trabeate order.

The Jami Masjid uses the typical plan of a mosque — a central courtyard, arcades on three sides and domed skyline. The western side has the prayer hall with three separate enclosed sanctuaries, each surmounted through a dome and connected through arcades. The usual entrance to the masjid is from the east where stands the structure of a big gateway projected in the form of a half hexagonal porch. In 1596, the southern gateway was replaced through Akbar with a victory gate, the Buland Darwaza. It is constructed in red and yellow sandstone with white marble inlay outlining the span of the arches. The loftiness of die structure is enhanced through a flight of steps on the outside. The entrance has been shaped through a piercing vast central arch which is crowned through an array of domed kiosks. The Buland-Darwaza was built to commemorate Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in 1573.

The tomb of Salim Chishti stands in the courtyard of the Jami Masjid in the north-western quarter. It is an architectural masterpiece as it exhibits one of the finest specimens of marble work in India. The structure was completed in 1581 and was originally faced only partly in marble. The serpentine brackets supporting the eaves and the carved lattice screens are extra ordinary characteristics of this structure. The palace intricate in Fathpur Sikri comprises a number of apartments and chambers. The largest of these buildings is recognized as the Jodh Bai palace. The palace is huge and austere in character. The wall outside is plain with principal buildings attached to inner side, all facing an interior courtyard. On the north side is an arcaded passage and a balcony.

There are rooms in the upper storey in the north and south wings. They have ribbed roofs sheltered with bright blue glazed tiles from Multan. A unique building of the palace intricate is the Panch Mahal, a five storeys structure, located south-east of the Diwani Khas. The size of the five storeys successively diminishes as one goes upwards. At the top is a small domed

kiosk. Some of the sides in this building were originally enclosed through screens of red sandstone. But none remain intact now. An motivating characteristic is that the columns on which the five storeys have been raised are all dissimilar in design. Of the administrative buildings, undoubtedly the most distinctive is the Diwani Khas. The plan of this building is in the form of a rectangle and is in two stories from outside. It has flat terraced roof with pillared domed kiosks rising above each corner. Inside, there is a magnificent carved column in the centre, having a vast bracket capital supporting a circular stone platform. From this platform radiate four railed 'bridges' beside each diagonal of the hall to connect the galleries nearby the upper portion of the hall. The main architectural object in this interior is the central column. The shaft is variously patterned and branches out, at the top, into a series of closely set voluted and pendulous brackets which support the central platform.

Another notable building of the same category is the Diwani Am. It is a spacious rectangular courtyard bounded through colonnades. The Emperor's platform is towards the western end. It is a projecting structure with a pitched stone roof having five equal openings. The platform is in three parts, the centre almost certainly used through the Emperor and separated from the other two sides through fine stone screens pierced with geometric patterns. Buildings of miscellaneous character are- scattered all in excess of the city intricate:

- Two caravanserais, one located inside the Agra Gate, immediately to the right; and the other, the larger structure, is outside the Hathi Pol on the left side;
- Karkhana building located flanked by the Diwani Am and Naubat Khana, having a series of brick domes of radiating rather than horizontal courses; and
- The water works, opposite the caravanserai close to Hathi Pol, comprising a single deep baoli flanked through two chambers in which a device was used to raise the water for sharing in the city.

### **Architecture Under Jahangir And Shah Jahan**

Akbar's death in 1605 did in no method hamper the development of a distinctive Mughal architecture under his successors. A secure Empire and enormous wealth in legacy in fact permitted both Jahangir and Shah Jahan to pursue interest in the visual arts.

#### ***New Characteristics***

In the sphere of the building art, Jahangir and Shah Jahan's reigns were an age of marble. The place of red sandstones was soon taken in excess of

through marble in its most refined form. This dictated important stylistic changes which have been listed below:

- The arch adopted a distinctive form with foliated curves, usually with nine cusps;
- Marble arcades of engrailed arches became a common characteristic;
- The dome developed a bulbous form with stifled neck. Double domes became very common;
- Inlaid patterns in coloured stones became the dominant decorative form; and
- In the buildings, from the latter half of the Jahangir's reign, a new device of inlay decoration called *pietra dura* was adopted. In this method, semi-valuable stones such as lapis lazuli, onyx, jasper, topaz and cornelian were embedded in the marble in graceful foliations.

### ***Major Buildings***

The account of the major buildings of this period begins with a extra ordinary structure, mat is, the tomb of Akbar, located at Sikandra, eight kilometers from the Agra on Delhi road. It was intended through Akbar himself and begun in his own lifetime but remained partial at the time of his death. Subsequently, it was completed through Jahangir with modifications in the original design. As it stands today, the whole intricate is a curious mix of the architectural schemes of both Akbar and Jahangir.

The scheme of this intricate envisages the location of tomb in the midst of an enclosed garden with gateway in the centre of each side of the enclosing wall. The tomb building in the centre is a square structure built up in three stories. The first storey is in fact an arcaded platform creation the basement. Within the platform, vaulted cells bounded the mortuary chamber and a narrow inclined corridor in the south leads to the grave. The middle portion is in three tiers of red sandstone pavilions trabeated throughout The to storey, of white marble in contrast to the red sandstone elsewhere, has an open court bounded through colonnades with screens. The tomb is connected through causeways and canals to the gateways in the enclosure wall. But it is the one in the south which gives the only entrance, the other three being false gateways added for symmetry.

The southern gateway is a two-storey structure with circular minarets of white marble rising above the comers. The whole structure of the gateway is ornamented with painted stucco-coloured stone and marble inlay. Interestingly, the decorative motifs contain, besides the traditional floral designs, arabesques and calligraphy, gaja hamsa padma, swastika and chakra. The architectural importance of Akbar's tomb at Sikandra can be gauged from the fact that many mausoleums built subsequently reflect the power of this

structure to varying degree. Scrupulous mention may be made of the tomb of Jahangir at Shaliadara close to Lahore and of Nur Jahan's father Mirza Ghiyas Beg at Agra.

The tomb of Itimadud Daula, built in 1622-8 through Nur Jahan on the grave of her father Mirza Ghiyas Beg marks a change in architectural style from Akbar to Jahangir and Shall Jahan. The transition from the robustness of Akbar's buildings to a more sensuous architecture of the later period is apparent in the conception of this structure. The tomb is a square structure raised on a low platform. There are four octagonal minarets, at each corner, with domed roofs. The central chamber is bounded through a verandah enclosed with beautiful marble tracery. The main tomb is built in white marble and is embellished with mosaics and pietra dura. The central chamber contains the yellow marble tomb of Itimadud Daula and his wife. The side rooms are decorated with painted floral motifs. Four red sandstone gateways enclosing a square garden, give a splendid foil for the white marble tomb at its centre.

It should be noted here that Jahangir was a much greater patron of the art of painting. His love of flowers and animals as reflected in the miniature painting of his period, made him a great lover of the art of laying out gardens rather than building vast monuments. Some of the well-known Mughal gardens of Kashmir such as the Shalimar Bagh and the Nishat Bagh stand as testimony to Jahangir's passion. In contrast to Jahangir, his son and successor Shah Jahan, was a prolific builder. His reign was marked through a extensive architectural works in his favourite building material, the marble. Some of these were:

- The palace-forts, e.g, the Lal Qila at Delhi;
- The mosques, e.g. The Moti Masjid in the Agra Fort and the Jami Masjid at Delhi; and
- The garden-tombs, e.g., the Taj Mahal.

We shall describe here only the more significant and representative buildings of Shah Jahan's reign. The Lal Qila is a regular rectangle with the north wall following the old course of the Yamuna river. There are two gate-methods — the Delhi and Lahore Gates, and huge round bastions at regular intervals beside the wall. The gates are flanked through octagonal towers with blind arcades and topped through cupolas. A moat runs all beside the fort wall except the river side. Inside, there are many notable buildings of which scrupulous mention may be of Diwani Am, Diwani Khas and Kang Mahal. The Diwani Am and Rang Mahal are arcaded pavilions with sandstone columns in pairs, plastered with powdered marble. In the eastern wall of the Diwani Am is built the throne platform for the Emperor having curved corniced roof in the style of the Bengal architecture. Behind this structure on the eastern side is located the Rang Mahal fronted through an open courtyard. Further north, in alignment with the Rang Mahal is the Diwani Khas. All of

these buildings have floral decorations on the walls, columns and piers.

In the Moti Masjid in the Agra Fort, Shah Jahan made experiment with an alternative scheme—an open arcaded prayer hall. Moreover, in this mosque the designer has also dispensed with the minarets. In their place, chhatris have been used on all four comers of the prayer hall. There are three bulbous domes rising in excess of a cusped arcades. The whole building has been built in white marble with black marble calligraphy, heightening the elegance of the structure. Jami Masjid at Delhi is an extended and larger version of the Jami Masjid at Fatehpur Sikri and therefore becomes the largest building of its type in India. It is built on a raised platform bounded through arcades that have been left open on both sides. The main entrance is on the eastern side with an ascending flight of steps rising the effect of loftiness. There are two smaller gateways in the middle of the northern and southern wings. Within, the mosque follows a plan similar to the Jami Masjid at Fathpur Sikri—colonnades running beside the three sides and sanctuary on the fourth side. Three bulbous domes in white marble rise above the sanctuary. The building material used here is red sandstone with white marble for revetments and for inlaying the frames of panels.

The Taj Mahal is undoubtedly Shah Jahan's grandest and most well recognized project. The construction work began in 1632, and most of it was completed through the year 1643. The plan of the intricate is rectangle with high enclosure wall and a lofty entrance gateway in the middle of the southern side. There are octagonal pavilions, six in all, at the comers and one each in the eastern and western sides. The main building of the Taj stands on a high marble platform at the northern end of the enclosure. To the west of this structure is a mosque with a replica on the east side retaining the effect of symmetry.

The Taj Mahal is a square building with deep alcoved recesses in each side and its four comers beveled to form an octagon. Above this structure rises a beautiful bulbous dome topped with an inverted lotus finial and a metallic pinnacle. At the four comers of the platform rise four circular minarets capped with pillared cupolas. The interior resolves itself into a central hall with subsidiary chambers in the angles, all linked through radiating passages. The ceiling of the main hall is a semi-circular vault forming the inner shell of the double dome. The decorative characteristics of the building consist of calligraphy and inlay work in the exterior and pietra dura in the interior. Marble, the main building material, is of the finest excellence brought from Makrana quarries close to Jodhpur. The garden in front of the main structure is divided into four quadrants with two canals running crossways, forming the quadrants. The cenotaph in the main hall was enclosed originally with a screen in golden tracery. But it was later replaced through Aurangzeb with a marble screen.

## **The Final Stage**

### ***Buildings of Aurangzeb***

Aurangzeb had none of his father's passion for architecture. Under him, the generous encouragement given through his precursors to the arts was approximately withdrawn. The architectural works throughout the reign of Aurangzeb were less numerous and of a lower standard than those executed under any previous Mughal ruler. In Delhi itself, the capital city of the Empire, very few buildings are associated with his name. The major buildings contain the mausoleum of his wife Rabia ud Dauran in Aurangabad, the Badshahi Masjid in Lahore and the Moti Masjid at Lal Qila, Delhi. The Badshahi Masjid is comparable to the Delhi one in size and architectural composition. It has a vast court, a free standing prayer hall and minarets at each corner of the hall. There are four smaller minarets at each angle of the sanctuary. The cloisters run on the both sides with arched entrances at regular intervals. There is only one portal. The building material is red sandstone with the use of white marble as a relief to the red sandstone. Atop the prayer hall, three bulbous domes in white marble rise beautifully.

The other significant building of this period is the Moti Masjid in the Lal Qila, Delhi. The marble used in its construction is of a very fine quality. The plan is similar to the Moti Masjid built through Shah Jahan in Agra fort; only the curves are more prominent. The three bulbous domes cover the prayer hall which is intended in the form of three cupolas in the same alignment. The mausoleum of his wife at Aurangabad, is an effort at emulating the Taj Mahal. But a serious miscalculation on the part of Aurangzeb's architects in providing the corners of the mausoleum, too, with minarets upsets the harmony of the whole building. These minarets, which are superfluous in the overall scheme of the building, are the only major deviation in copy from the original scheme of the Taj Mahal.

### ***The Safdar Jang's Tomb***

After Aurangzeb's death in 1707, the collapse of the Empire was only a matter of time. The few buildings that were built throughout the first half of the eighteenth century amply testify the decadent circumstances that ensued. The Safdar Jang's tomb at Delhi is the most significant building of this period. It is located amidst a large garden and copies the plan of the Taj Mahal in the

same manner as was done in the Rabia ud Dauran's tomb. One major change in the design, though, is that the minarets rise as an adjunct to the main building and not as independent structures. The main building stands on an arcaded platform. It is double storied and is sheltered through a large and approximately spherical dome. The minarets rise as turrets and are topped through domed kiosks. The building is in red sandstone with marble panelling. The cusps of the arches are less curved, but synchronies well with the overall dimensions of the building.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **Science**

No breakthrough was made in scientific studies concerning physics, astronomy, chemistry medicine, geography and mathematics. The traditional knowledge sustained to be taught, discussed and re-written in the form of commentaries without adding anything worthwhile. The Indian and the Greco-Arabic views on scientific issues held sway. A French traveller, Careri, observes in relation to the Muslim scholars in India:

- “As for sciences they can create no progress in them for want of Books; for they have none but some small manuscript works of Aristotle and Avicenne in Arabick.”

But we should not deny the fact that there were some very learned and able scientists throughout the period of our study. One of them was Mir Fathullah Shirazi who joined Akbar's court at Agra in 1583. Abdul Fazl opines that “If the old books of wisdom had disappeared, he could have laid a new foundation [of knowledge] and would not have wished for what had gone’. Akbar mourned his death in these words: ‘ Had he fallen in the hands of the Franks [Europeans], and they had demanded all my treasures in exchange for him, I should gladly have entered upon such profitable traffic and bought that valuable jewel cheap.” He is credited with having invented some mechanical devices and also the introduction of a ‘true’ solar calendar at Akbar's order in 1584. But he did not propound any new scientific theory or formula separate from the traditional ones in India at that time.

Indians were exposed to European learning. Abul Fazl was aware of the discovery of America through Europeans: he provides the Persian term *alam nau* for the ‘ ‘New World’’. But this knowledge does not appear to have become a normal part, of the teaching of geography in India. Galileo's discovery (in contrast to Ptolemy's world- view) that it is the Earth that moves round the Sun did not reach the Indian scientists. Likewise, Newton's three Laws of Motion as well as his Law of Gravity were unknown in India at this time. Bernier, a French physician, who came to India throughout the second

half of the seventeenth century, claims to have been in the company of a Mughal noble Agha Danishmand Khan for five or six years, to whom he used to explain the new discoveries of Harvey and Pecquet concerning circulation of the blood. Bernier held a very poor opinion of the Indians' knowledge of anatomy. Our hakims and vaidas did not illustrate any interest in Harvey's discovery.

### **Agricultural Technology**

We do not discover any radical change throughout the Mughal period insofar as the plough, iron ploughshare, irrigational devices, methods of sowing, harvesting, threshing and winnowing are concerned. Though, for sowing, separately from broadcasting and seed-drill, we get evidence for dibbling also. This method was employed especially for cotton farming; a whole was made into the ground with a pointed leg, the seed was put into it and sheltered with earth. As for threshing, besides using oxen, com ears were also beaten with stocks.

One extraordinary development throughout this period was the introduction of some new crops, plants and fruits. Several of these were brought through Europeans, especially the Portuguese. The Mughal elite had started rising Central Asian fruits in India from the days of Babur. Tobacco, pineapple, cashew-nuts and potato were the most significant crops and fruits that came from America. Tobacco led to huqqa-smoking. Besides, tomato, guava and red chillies were also brought from outside. Maize is not listed in Abul Fazl's *Ain-i Akbari*. It seems that this, too, was introduced through Europeans from Latin America.

The seeds of numerous diversities of melons and grapes grown approximately Agra were brought from Central Asia. Cherries were introduced in Kashmir throughout Akbar's reign. Fruits of better excellence were grown through seed propagation. It is doubtful whether the art of grafting in horticulture was extensively practised throughout the Delhi Sultanate. P.K. Gode thinks that grafting became prevalent in India only after A.D. 1550. This ability was well recognized in Persia and Central Asia. Though, mangoes of the best excellence were exclusively produced in Goa through grafting through the Portuguese. Some European travellers to India paid glowing tributes to the delicious mangoes of Goa called Alfonso, Our Lady, Joani Perreira, etc. Alfonso is still a celebrated diversity in India. In the middle of the Mughal Emperors, Shah Jahan alone takes the credit for getting two canals dug.

## **Textile Technology**

The section took note of numerous processes, e.g., ginning, carding, spinning, weaving, dyeing, painting and printing. You also know now that spinning-wheel was brought to India through the Turks. In fact, no radical addition or improvement seems to have been made throughout the seventeenth century. Though, two developments necessitybe highlighted; first, carpet-weaving under Akbar's patronage at Lahore, Agra and Fathpur-Sikri; and second, production of silk and silk fabrics on a large level. The Europeans did not bring their own textile techniques to India, at any rate throughout the first half of the seventeenth century. Actually, they did not possess any superior technology in this area throughout this period, except perhaps to the English Company to send silk dyers, throwsters and weavers to Qasimbazar in Bengal. Italian silk filatures were introduced into India in the 1770s.

## **Military Technology**

Fire-arms were used sporadically for the first time throughout the second half of the 15th century in some regions of India like Gujarat, Malwa and Deccan. But fire-arms on a regular basis developed through the agency of the Portuguese from A.D. 1498 in South India, and through Babur in the North in A.D. 1526. Babur used guns and cannons in battles against the Rajputs and Afghans.

These guns were actually matchlocks. Europe knew of two more devices to fire a gun: wheel-lock and flint-lock in which match cord was dispensed with. Abul Fazl claims the manufacture of handguns without match cord in Akbar's arsenal, but he is silent on the alternative mechanism. This could be a flint-lock because wheel-lock even in Europe was employed for pistols. At any rate, these handguns were produced on a limited level, most almost certainly for Akbar's personal use only because we are told that Indians in North India were scarcely familiar with this technique throughout the early decades of the seventeenth century. In fact, Mughal paintings regularly depict matchlocks down to Aurangzeb's times.

European pistols were accessible at Burhanpur for sale as early as A.D. 1609. Sometimes Europeans gave pistols in gifts to Indians. But the Indians did not learn the art of wheel-lock. Cannons of several sizes were manufactured in India for the Indian rulers. We need not go into details in relation to the numerous traditional weapon — offensive and suspicious — like swords, spears, daggers, bows and arrows, shields and amours, etc. It is motivating to know that the Indians in general preferred curved swords, in contrast to the European's straight double-edged rapiers. The Marathas,

though, late in the seventeenth century took a liking to European swords. For cleaning gun-barrels, Abul Fazl writes:

- “Formerly a strong man had to work a long time with iron instruments in order to clean matchlocks. His Majesty [Akbar], from his practical knowledge, has invented a wheel, through the motion of which sixteen barrels may be cleaned in a very short time. The wheel is turned through a bullock.”

At another place, once again, Abul Fazl credits Akbar with the invention of a mechanism through which seventeen guns were joined in such a manner as to be able to fire them simultaneously with one match cord.

## **Shipbuilding**

The whole vessel in medieval times everywhere was constructed of wood. Several methods were employed to join the planks. One of these was rebating which was widely practised in India. This was basically on the tongue and groove principle: the ‘tongue’ of one plank was fitted into the ‘groove’ of another. The after that step was to smear the planks with indigenous pitch or tar, and lime with the double purpose of stopping up any fissures and preserving the timber from sea worms. Fish oil was also used for doubling the planks. The Indians did not adopt the European method of caulking — a technique for creation joints or seams of the planks tight or leak proof through forcing oakum (made of loose fibre or untwisted old ropes, etc. mixed with melted pitch) flanked by parts that did not fit tightly. The cause was caulking did not have any technical superiority in excess of the indigenous method for performing the same task. Moreover, caulking was more expensive than the Indian practice.

Prior to the European advent, the planks of ships and boats were joined jointly through stitching or sewing them with ropes made of coir, or sometimes with wooden nails. The Europeans were using iron nails and clamps which made their vessels stronger and durable. The Indians lost no time in adopting the new technique. Approximately A.D. 1510, Varthema noticed “an immense quantity of iron nails” in Indian ships at Calicut. Abul Fazl informs us that for a ship of Akbar 468 mans of iron were used. Some Mughal paintings establish the attendance of iron nails, strips and clamps for constructing vessels. Similar positive response to European iron anchors is evidenced throughout the seventeenth century. Earlier, anchors were made of big stones.

The Indians used buckets to bail out the leaked water in the ships. Though, the European iron chain-pumps started to be used in India, though not widely,

throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. But these were not manufactured in India: they were purchased or borrowed from Europeans.

## **Metallurgy**

We provide below the main characteristics of metallurgical practices in India:

- The fuel for smelting consisted of wood charcoal. Therefore, smelting was usually accepted out at places which were close to the source of wood supply.
- The smelters used small furnaces which perhaps did not have refractory or heat-resistant clay.
- The bellows were ribless and small which did allow efficient air-blast to generate very high temperature in the furnaces to reduce the ore to a totally liquified state.

In case of iron and bronze, the metal was melted in diverse small furnaces where from the molten material went to the mould. Since the excellence of the molten metal in each furnace was not necessarily the same, the fabricated object could not have always been of high quality. Abul Fazl describes the technique of creation iron cannons and handgun barrels at Akbar's arsenal. Perhaps these techniques were newly invented. We do not know whether improvements were made throughout the subsequent period. Cannons were made of bronze, brass and iron. Zinc metallurgy seems to have started in India somewhere approximately twelfth century A.D. Abul Fazl mentions Jawar in Rajasthan where zinc was procurable. Archaeological studies close to Zawar have revealed the attendance of sealed clay retorts for zinc distillation.

Copper mines were located at Khetri in Rajasthan. Tin was not a natural product of a country: it was imported from other Asian regions. Bronze was in use right from the days of the Indus valley culture. Alloys like brass were fabricated in India. One necessity mention here the production of the true "wootz" iron in India from c. 400 B.C., especially in Andhra Pradesh. Almost certainly "wootz" is a corruption of the Telugu word "ukku". It was exported to centres of sword creation like Damascus in Syria.

## **Glass Technology**

Glass is a intricate artificial industrial substance. We should not confuse it with crystal, quartz, obsidian glass, glaze and faience. That glass was not scarce in India has been ably shown through M.G. Dikshit, but he admits that Indian glass objects ' 'did not range or go beyond the manufacture of tit-bits

like beads and bangles' With the arrival of Muslims, pharmaceutical phials, jars and vessels of glass came to India from the Islamic countries, but there is no evidence to illustrate that Indians had started fabricating these objects in imitation.

Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, a diversity of glass articles were brought to India through the Europeans. All these were new for us: for instance, looking-glasses. We know how to create mirrors of metals but not of glass. Another object was spectacles made of glass lenses. The Europeans gave these things to Indians as gift and, sometimes, they also sold them (but the market was very limited). Therefore, the Indians started using European glass articles without manufacturing them throughout the period under study.

It seems that the technique of fabricating sand or hour-glass was recognized in India throughout the 15th century, but the Mughal paintings exhibit European-made sand-glasses only, which were brought to India through the Europeans. Though, the positive evidence for its manufacture in India comes from the second half of the seventeenth century. Separately from these, we got from Europe drinking-glasses, magnifying or burring glasses and prospective glasses. Since the latter were made of glass lenses like the spectacles, there was no question of their indigenous manufacture throughout the seventeenth century.

### **Printing Press**

It is amazing that the Chinese knowledge of wooden-block printing did not evoke even a ripple of response in India in spite of frequent communication flanked by the two countries in the past European movable metal types were brought to Goa approximately A.D. 1550 through the Portuguese. The latter started printing books on Christian saints, sermons, grammars and vocabularies in the Marathi and Konkani languages and dialects, but in Roman script rather than in the Devanagari script. Emperor Jahangir is once reported to have expressed doubt in relation to the types being cast in Persian or Arabic scripts throughout a discussion with the Jesuits, whereupon the latter promptly showed him a copy of the Arabic version of the gospel, almost certainly printed at Vatican in A.D. 1591. This topic was not brought up again through Jahangir.

In A.D. 1670s, Bhimji Parak, the chief broker of the English Company at Surat, took a keen interest in this technology. A printer was sent to India in A.D. 1674 at Bhimji's request, beside with a press at the latter's expense. Bhimji planned to contrive types in 'banian characters after our English manner', but it could not be feasible since the English printer did not know

type-cutting and founding. No type cutter was sent from England to assist Bhimji. Nevertheless, Bhimji persisted in this endeavour to realize his dream of a printing-press with Devanagari fonts. He employed his own men, obviously Indians, to do the job. The English factors at Surat testify that, ‘we have seen some paper printed in the banian character through the persons employed through Bhimji which look very well and legible and shows the work feasible’. But then, at that crucial moment, Bhimji lost heart and abandoned the project midway.

### **Time-Reckoning Devices**

The history of horology unfolds a diversity of devices adopted through mankind in dissimilar countries. In the middle of them, gnomons, sundials, clepsydras, sand-glasses, mechanical clocks and watches stand out as the most important contrivances for time-reckoning with varying degrees of accuracy.

In India, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, clepsydras of the sinking-bowl diversity appear to have been the most commonly used device for measuring time, at any rate, in urban centres. The Persian term for the bowl was *tas*, while *tas gharial* — denoted the whole mechanism. The Indian word *gharial* is derived from the gong that was struck with a mallet to announce the time indicated through the sinking-bowl. Water-clock is mentioned throughout the Delhi Sultanate in Afifs *Tarikh-i Feroze Shahi* which related the installation of a *tas gharial* through Sultan Feroze Shah Tughlaq at Ferozabad throughout the second half of the fourteenth century. Babur also describes the mechanism in the *Baburnama*. Abul Fazl, too, takes note of the details.

Much before the Mughals, the Europeans had invented the two most essential characteristics of an ordinary mechanical clock — the weight-drive and escapement. Europeans’ clocks and watches were often given in gift to Indians, especially the elite groups (Jahangir was presented a watch through Sir Thomas Roe, but the Emperor’s memoirs does not mention this fact). The Jesuit church at Agra had a public clock-face with a bell whose “sound was heard in every part of the city”. Notwithstanding the exposure of a substantial cross-section of Indians to European mechanical clocks and watches for a long time, there is no evidence to indicate its acceptance in the middle of any social group of Indian society for general use. These were mere toys, and novelties for the Indians who received them “diplomatic” or ordinary gifts. The one significant cause for non-acceptance was the incompatibility of the Indian time-reckoning system with that of Europe at that time.

Further, each *pahr* was divided into *gharis* of 24 minutes each. Therefore ,

the Indian system had 60 ‘hours’ to the full day, and the European consisted of 24 hours of 60 minutes each.

### Miscellaneous

- True Arch, dome and lime-mortar were already introduced into India through the Turks. No important development took place in building technology throughout the seventeenth century. Though, we may take note of one practice, that is, preparation of a sort of ‘blue print’ of the building to be constructed. This was called tarh in Persian which consisted of drawing on a thick sheet of paper through employing “grid of squares” for indicating proportions. We may also mention that Indian buildings did not have window-panes and chimneys which Europeans used back home.
- The Indians did not employ metallic boilers to refine saltpetre like the Europeans; the former sustained with earthen pots to do the job.
- Oxen-drawn carts were in common use, especially for transporting commercial goods. Horse-drawn carriages were very unusual: they were meant only for passengers. Sir Thomas Roe presented to Jahangir an English coach drawn through four horses. The Emperor enjoyed a ride in it. The sovereign, and some nobles got such coaches built through Indian carpenters for their use. But this interest was short-lived; it did not catch on throughout the seventeenth century.

One chemical discovery was made in the early years of Jahangir’s reign. It was the rose-scent. The Emperor records in his Memoirs:

- This ‘itr is a discovery which was made throughout my reign through the efforts of the mother of Nur Jahan Begum. When she was creating rose-water, a scum shaped on the surface of the dishes into which the hot rose-water was poured from the jugs. She composed this scum little through little; when much rose-water was obtained a sensible portion of the scum was composed. There is no other scent of equal excellence to it. In reward for that invention, I presented a string of pearls to the inventress Salima Sultan Begum... gave this oil the name of ‘itr Jahangiri.

Another chemical discovery was the use of saltpetre for cooling water. Abul Fazl comments that saltpetre, which in gunpowder produces the explosive heat, is used as a means for cooling water. He also provides the details of how to do so. Emperor Akbar is reported to have invented an oxen-drawn cart which, when used for traveling or for carrying loads, could grind corn also. For the latter purpose, though, watermill was scarcely used in India under the Mughal rule. One Mughal painting depicts an undershot watermill to

illustrate a story set outside India proper. Even windmill for grinding com was very unusual; one was erected at Ahmedabad in the seventeenth century whose partial remnants could be seen there. Ordinarily, handmills made of two stones were used for this purpose. It was a very old practice.

## **INDIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE**

### **Arabic And Persian**

Arabic works under the Mughals were largely confined to religious subjects, though a few poets composed verses in Arabic poetry. Persian was the official language of the Mughal court. Babur, the first Mughal ruler, was an accomplished poet and he wrote his memoirs in Turki which was later translated into Persian through Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan. Babur also wrote a didactic work recognized as Mathnavi. His chief contribution to the development of Persian literature in India lies in having brought with him a number of Persian poets. The major influx of Persian writers into India started with the return of Humayun from his exile in Iran. It was at Shah Tahmasp's court in Iran that he met a number of poets and artists, some of whom he persuaded to accompany him to India. When he later set up his own court, he was able to coordinate the works of the indigenous poets and writers with those of the talented immigrants.

The stream of Persian poets who visited India throughout the 16th and 17th centuries created a rich synthesis in a new genre of Persian literature recognized as. The patronage given to the exponents of this scrupulous school sustained from Akbar to Shah Jahan, which incorporated notable Indian and Persian writers like Faizi, Urfi, Naziri, Talib Amuli, Kalim, Ghani Kashmiri, Saib and Bedil. The Mughal Emperors and princes often themselves composed poetry in Persian; for instance, Humayun composed a Persian diwan. Abul Fazl writes that thousands of poets resided at Akbar's court. Separately from Faizi, there was Ghazali Mashnadi who was recognized to have been an very talented man. He wrote several mathnavis. Faizi succeeded Ghazali Mashhadi. His principal work incorporated a diwan named Tabashir al Subh, which consisted of Qasidas, Ghazals, Elegies, Qit'as and Ruba is. He had planned to write a Khamsah according to the literary fashion of the time, but could complete only a few; for instance,

Nal Daman. Faizi's prose works incorporated a Persian version of Lilavati, his epistles and Persian translations of Hindu religious books. According to some critics Faizi enjoyed great prestige in Turkey and it was his power which accepted the Indo-Persian poetry beyond the borders of India. Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan, an accomplished scholar and talented poet, existed throughout Akbar and Jahangir's reigns. His fame chiefly rests on maintaining a library

that contained more than four thousand books. He was recognized for his patronage extended to numerous writers like Naziri Nishapuri, Urfi Shirazi and Mulla Abdul Baqi Nihawandi. Shah Jahan has been acclaimed as one of the greatest patrons, who according to the modern Persian poet Ali Quli Salem, enabled the full flowering of Persian poetry in India. Abu Talib Kalim of Hamadan succeeded Qudsi as Shah Jahan's court poet and completed, beside his own diwan, an epic poem entitled Padshahnama describing Shah Jahan's achievements. The greatest Persian poet of this period was Mirza Muhammad Ali Saib of Tabriz, who was recognized to have created a new style in Persian poetry. On his return to Isfahan, he recorded his indebtedness to India through calling her as a second paradise. Therefore, the patronage of the Mughal ruling class not only created a new genre of Persian literature, it also increased the excellence in prose writings.

In the South, Persian literature received generous patronage from the Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur. The court of Ibrahim Adil Shah II attracted a large number of poets and writers both from North India as well as Central Asia. Malik Qummi was one of the best recognized poets patronised through the Adil Shahi dynasty. His modern Mulla Zuhuri was decidedly the greatest of the Persian poets who flourished in the Deccan. Recognized to possess a separate style in both poetry and prose, he wrote a book called Saginama based on the model of the Gulistan of Sadi. The Qutab Shahis of Golconda were also recognized as great patrons of Persian scholarship and literature under whose patronage varied works were executed in Persian. In 1651, Muhammad Hussain Tabrezi's Persian dictionary Burhan Qati was compiled under the patronage of Abdulla Qutab Shah. Bustami's Hadiqal Salatin — a collection of the lives of eminent Persian poets — was completed in 1681.

Four historical chronicles of the Qutub Shahi dynasty were rendered into verse throughout the reign of Muhammad Quli Qutab Shah. Aft encyclopedic work of considerable merit in six volumes testifies to the interest in and contact with Persian culture that was maintained through the warm hospitality that the Qutub Shahi rulers offered to the Persian scholars visiting their kingdom. As a result, Persian as the regional court language at Bijapur and Golconda gained a niche in the South. Another category of literary works mostly written in Persian is mystical or sufi literature. Under this category come: the treatises written through the sufis on mysticism; collection of letters written through sufis; malfuzat; biographies of sufis and collection of sufi poetry. Sakinatul Uliya written through Prince Dara Shukoh is a biographical account of the sufi Miya Mir and his disciples. The Majm'aul Bahrain is his other work related to sufism. In this work he has compared the Islamic sufi concepts with Hindu philosophical outlook.

Throughout this period, Persian literature was enriched through the Mughal Emperors through getting classical Indian texts translated into Persian.

Throughout Akbar's period Singhasan Batisi, Ramayana and Rajtaringni of Kalhan were also translated. Badauni was associated with all these translations. The Persian literature produced at the Mughal court exercised a tremendous power in the formation of regional literature, especially those cultivated through the Muslims, the greatest innovation being the evolution of a literary Urdu language. Other languages modelled on Persian tradition are Punjabi, Pushtu, Sindhi, Baluchi and Kashmiri. All these share a written script with Persian.

## **Sanskrit**

Throughout this period, Sanskrit ceased to flourish as the main language of the Imperial court. Though Mughal Emperors and princes like Dara patronized Sanskrit scholars, it never again gained the same importance in Northern India. On the other hand, it was in the South, particularly due to the inspiring attendance of Madhavacarya and Sayanacarya, that Sanskrit literature sustained to enjoy the patronage of the kings of Vijayanagar. After 1565, the rulers of Tuluva and Aravidu dynasties, the Nayakas of Tanjore and the chiefs of Travancore and Cochin kept alive the custom of patronizing Sanskrit.

The several genres of Sanskrit literature — Mahakavyas, Slesh Kavyas, Champu Kavyas, Natakas and particularly historical Kavyas sustained. In the field of Mahakavyas mention should be made of Raghunatha Nayaka, a ruler of Tanjore and his court poets. In the middle of his several works the biography of his father Achyutaraya should be specially mentioned. Srinivasa Dikshit a minister of the Nayakas of Gingee was a prolific writer: he had composed eighteen dramas and sixty kavyas. Another literary figure who flourished at the Nayak Court of Tanjore was Govinda Dikshita. His great works are Sahitya Sudha and Sangitsudhanidhi. Another prominent Sanskrit Scholar Appaya Dikshita was patronised through the Nayak chiefs of Vellore. He wrote more than one hundred books on several branches of Sanskrit learning.

Nilanatha Dikshit was a minister of Tirumalanayaka of Madura. He wrote a number of Mahakavyas in the middle of which two dealing with Siva-leela and the penance of Bhagirath were rated very high through scholars. Other notable Sanskrit poets of this period were Chakrakavi, the author of Janaki Parinaya and Narayana or Narayana Bhattatire who was a friend of Manadeva Zamouri, the king of Kozhikode. The latter's contribution to Sanskrit literature is profuse and varied covering the fields of Kavya, Mimamsa, grammar, etc. Though, he excelled most in Mahakavyas and is measured as one of the greatest poets of Kerala. It is the historical 'Kavyas' and 'Natakas' written throughout this period that provide us a glimpse into the social perception of

these Sanskrit writers who still adhered to the classical formula.' Interestingly, the first of these historical kavyas was composed through a woman — Tirumalamba— who is described in the inscription as 'the reader'. Her work Varadgumbika parinaya deals with the marriage of Achutadevaraya. Separately from the historical value which is considerable, this kavya is measured as one of the most beautiful 'Champus' of the later period.

Of the several works based on the heroic exploits of Raghumalla Nayaka of Tanjore two are worthy of notice, Sahityasudha composed through Govinda Dikshita and Raghunathabhyudaya of Ramabhadramba. These contain references to several historical events. An significant source for Maratha history are a number of Mahakavyas based on the life of Shivaji and his son. The most significant work in this context is the Kavya recognized as Anubharata or Sivabharata. The work was begun through Kavindra Paramananda a modern of Shivaji, sustained through his son Devadatta and grandson Govinda who now incorporated the life of Shambhuji in their narrative. Interestingly, some Muslim rulers also came to be incorporated in a historical Kavya as heroes through their court poets like Pandita Jagannath who wrote Jagadabh in praise of Dara Shukoh, and Asaf Vilasa addressing Asaf Khan. Dara Shukoh himself composed a prasasti in honour of Nrisimha Sarasvati of Benaras. The most popular manual on logic written in South India was Tarkasongraha. Its author Annambhatta came from the district of Chittoor. He also contributed a number of commentaries on several philosophical works. Significant contributions to Dwaita philosophy were made through Viyasraya and his pupil Viyayindra (1576). The former wrote Bhadojjivana, Tatparyacandrika and Nyayamitra. Vijayendra authored Upasamharavijaya and Madhava-Tantramukhabhushana. Dalpati, a high officer at the Nizam Shahi court of Ahmednagar, wrote Nririmhaprarada which is an extensive work on religious and civil laws.

In spite of the examples mentioned above, Sanskrit literature was on the decline. Writers were obsessed with writing numerous commentaries rather than composing original works, and though scientific texts, works on music and philosophy sustained they were few and distant flanked by. The bulk of the works were on technicalities of form and commentaries on existing texts or grammar. One of the major causes of decline of Sanskrit poetry is ascribed to the rise of vernacular literature in this period. The Bhakti movement which swept the country earlier inspired the regional poets who now composed elegant lyrics, in a language which was closer to the spoken words. The popularity of these literary works lay in the instant response which they drew from the common people as well as the aristocracy.

## **North India**

In North-India the major languages in which literature was being produced were Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi.

### ***Hindi***

Hindi language as recognized to-day developed in excess of a long period of time. A number of dialects spoken in several regions of northern India contributed to its development. The main dialects from which Hindi appeared are Brajbhasa, Awadhi, Rajasthani, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Malwi, etc. Khari Boli, a mixed form of Hindi, also came into subsistence in the 15th-16th centuries. The origins of Hindi date back to 7th and 10th centuries. It was throughout this period that Hindi was evolving out of Apabhramsha. The early period of Hindi poetry is called Virgatha kala. Throughout this period, the exploits of Rajput kings and chieftains were narrated in poetic form. Some of the well-known poems are Prithiviraja Raso, Hamir Raso, etc.

The form of poetry which developed throughout the subsequent period was devotional. Kabir was the most well-known exponent of this form. The same tradition sustained throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. Derived from a broken form of Sanskrit recognized as "Maghadi-Prakrit", the Hindi literary language bloomed under the pervasive power of the Bhakti movement. The new poetry found its best creative expression in the writings of Goswami Tulsidas. The poet born in eastern U.P. approximately 1523 became a mendicant and began to write his masterpiece Ramcharita-Mansa in 1574. The popularity of this work rested on its language which closely resembled Tulsidas' native Awadhi dialect. Tulsidas took up the life of Rama as that of an ideal man and built approximately it his philosophy of 'Bhakti'. His observations touched the lives of common men. In the middle of the several works that Tulsidas wrote Vinaya-Patrika or a prayer book brings out his philosophy best. Though he preached pure devotion to an almighty God, in his personal life he clung to a single deity investing him with all the necessary attributes of a cult figure. Tulsidas inspired a number of other writers — like Agradas and Nabhajidas — who composed the Bhakta — a well-recognized account of the Vaisnava saints dating back to the ancient period. Devotion to Krishna rather than Rama as the highest incarnation of the Supreme Being was propagated through another set of poets who were recognized as Ashtachapa. These eight men were all disciples of Vallabhacharya in the middle of whom Surdas who wrote flanked by 1503-1563 was measured the best. The exceptional personality who brought a new appeal to the Krishna hymns was Mirabai. A Rajput princess turned into a mendicant, Mira herself became the heroine of several romantic legends. Her songs addressed Krishna as a lover and portrayed the final subjugation of a 'bhakta' to the Supreme Being. These

songs originally composed in the Marwari dialect of Rajasthan were altered through usage of Brajabhasha which was popular mainly in Gujarat and parts of Northern India.

The Awadhi dialect of Hindi was enriched through a number of Sufi poets who used popular tales to explain their mystic messages. Mostly these dealt with themes of love. In the middle of the writers in this genre were Maulana Daud the author of Chandayan, and Kutaban the composer of Mrigavati. The greatest was, though, Malik Muhammad Jayasi whose well-known work Padmavati was composed flanked by A.D. 1520-1540. It is a detailed mystic analysis of the popular legend of queen Padmini of Chittor and Alauddin Khilji. The work, though better recognized for its theme, should also be acclaimed for the excellence of the Awadhi language in which it was composed. Some Muslim poets belonging to the 17th and 18th centuries are Osman Shaikh Nabi, Kasim and Mir Muhammad. Literature in Brajabhasha flourished under the patronage of Akbar and was enriched through poets and musicians and his court including Tansen and Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan who composed lyrics on the 'leela' of Krishna.

### *Urdu*

The word derived from the Turki 'Urdu' meaning a military camp came into subsistence as a dialect in the middle of Muslims who ruled in the Deccan and South India from the 14th century onwards. The literary speech arising out of it was recognized as 'Dakken' and can be traced to the 15th century. This language though retaining traces of pre-Muslim dialects developed mainly through drawing its form and themes from the current Persian literature. This sustained till the end of the 17th century even as the script sustained to be Perso-Arabic. The major centres of Dakhni literature were Gujarat, Bijapur, Golconda, Aurangabad and Bidar. The oldest writer in this Muslim Hindi tradition was the well-known Sufi poet Sayyid Banda Nawaz Gesudoraz (author of the Me'raj ul Ashiqi) who played a significant role in the politics of the Bahmani kingdom in 1422.

Two significant poets of this literary dialect flourished in Gujarat, Shah Ali Mohammad Jan and Sheikh Khub Muhammad. The major patrons of Dakhni literature were the Qutab Shahi Sultans of Golconda. In the middle of them Muhammad Quli Qutab Shah was both a poet and the romantic hero of a love poem through his court poet Mulla Wajhi. In the middle of the notable poets residing in Golconda mention should be made of Ghawasi, Ibni Nishati and Tabi. Ibrahim Adil Shah II the Sultan of Bijapur, was a great patron and himself an author of a book on music in Dakhni. Local events often featured in the works of the Dakhni poets as seen in the work of Hasan Shawqi who wrote a poem commemorating the battle of Talikota (1565) in which the Muslim

Sultans of the Deccan won a victory in excess of the Hindu kingdom of Vijaynagar. Though most poets were Muslim like Rustumi and Malik Khusnud, the most significant poet was a Hindu Brahmin who wrote under the pen-name of Nusrati. His major works were a long poem Alinama eulogising his patron Ali Qdil Shah II, and Gulshani Ishq — a romance of a Hindu called Manohar and his love for Mardhumalati.

The significant works of Rusthmi incorporated Khavar Nama. Another significant poet was Wajhi, the author of Qutbo Mushtari, a masnavi and Sab Ras. Through distant the most significant Urdu writer of the period was Wali Dakkani. His great contribution to Urdu poetry is that he brought Urdu ghazal in line with Persian traditions. Wali had perception, intensity of feeling and a flexible and varied style. One of his modern Urdu poet Mirza Daud also contributed to the literature of the period. Through 1750, Urdu became well recognized in the Delhi region and Dakkani declined after the conquest of the Deccan through Aurangzeb.

### *Punjabi*

The Punjabi language evolved from a broken form of Sanskrit recognized as Sauraseni Prakrit or more aptly Sauraseni Apabhhransa. Beside with Brajabhasa and Rajasthani, Punjabi has the same grammatical base. Yet, prior to Guru Nanak, there is no written record of Punjabi literature. The earliest text is the 'Adi Granth' whose compilation was completed through Guru Arjun Dev in 1604. Since it was a sin to add or delete even a single word from the original text, it has come down to us in its pristine form. It, so, serves as the best model for medieval literature. Since the Gurus discuss largely the nature and attributes of the creator, the form of the text is composed as hymns set to specific Ragas. The expressions of Guru Nanak are particularly aphoristic as they illustrate the process of deep reflection which are combined with certain intuitive principles of self-realization. Besides the composition of the Gurus, important poetical work propagating the Sikh faith was done through Bhai Gurdas who displays a mastery of metres. His work is followed through devotional poetry enriching the Punjabi or the Gurumukhi language.

Separately from poetry, a number of prose writings, mainly biographies called Janam Sakhis and expositions of the principles and tenets of the Sikh faith, appeared. In the secular field, a number of romances derived mainly from Muslim writers called 'Qissa' came to prevail. The most popular in the middle of these were the romance of Hir and Ranjha, and Mirza and Sahiban. The best exponent of the Hir and Ranjha story is Waris Shah. The latter was a gifted poet with a good command in excess of writing dialogues with tragic traits. This discovers special appeal in his rendition of the sequel where the hero and heroine both die.

The best version of Mirza-Sahiban romance is to be found in the writing of Peelu, who brings out the psychological disagreement of the heroine Sahiban, caught as she was flanked by loyalty to her family and her love for Mirza. A Hindu poet Aggara composed the saga or Var of Haqiqat Rai, a Sikh Hindu youth martyred at Lahore throughout the reign of Shah Jahan for his faith. The contribution of Sufi poets to the development of Punjabi literature is considerable. The best recognized in the middle of these are Sultan Bahu, a dervish who belonged to the Jhang region and expressed himself through intense poetry on renunciation and spiritual devotion. Shah Husain was a mendicant, who roamed the countryside. He was greatly loved through the people. He wrote passionate lyrics set to music. This genre is recognized as Kafi and accepted through most of the Sufi poets, serving both as a musical measure as well as a lyric. The best recognized of the Sufi poets was Bulhe Shah who wrote in relation to theecstasy, love and renunciation of material things. His works specially emphasize the spiritual characteristics of life, but his metaphors are derived mainly from the rural life of Punjab. Bulhe Shah's works have passed into folklore and form a rich part of Punjab's literary tradition.

## **Western India**

### ***Gujarati***

The beginning of the 16th century marks the onset of a new stage in the history of Gujarati literature. This stage, properly called the second stage, lasts for approximately two centuries before being taken in excess of through modern Gujarati. Like many other languages, the major strain in the literature of this period is religion and mysticism. At the beginning of the 16th century Vaishnava Bhakti movement had become the dominant social theme in Gujarat. So most of the literature of this period relates to the Bhakti tradition. The major poets of this period in Gujarat are:

- Bhalana
- Narsimha Mehta
- Akho

Of these, Narsimha Mehta exercised great power on later poets. On account of the richness of his imagination and the diversity of his creative activity, he is measured the father of Gujarati poetry. Bhalana was more of a classical poet. His poetry is rich in content and expression, and he is rated as the first artist in Gujarati verse. Akho banked more on his innate genius and keen spiritual and social insight. He was no scholar but sang with fervour to bring in relation to the spiritual and social reform. After the end of the 17th

century, decadence set in the literature of Gujarati. There was, though, a great diversity in the literary works created at this time — we have devotional, didactic, quasi-metaphysical and secular shapes of literature.

### ***Marathi***

The Marathi literature of 16th and 17th centuries is characterized through two main trends — religious and secular. The landmarks in the religious poetry of the period are:

- Khavista-Purana of Father Thomas Stephens, written in the vein of Gyaneshwar poetic narratives of Muktesvara, echoing the events of his age through the episodes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharat.
- Abhanga of Tukaram, creation direct appeal to the people through the intensity of its physical quality.

The secular literature of this period has the poetry of Ramdasa, the great saint-preceptor of Shivaji and the works of Vaman Pandit. Ramdasa combines the spirit of liberation and national reconstruction with devotional and religious fervour. The approach of Vaman was academic and literary. So, his works are in an ornate Sanskritized style. His well-known work is a commentary on Gita where he advocated the path of knowledge as against the path of devotion.

Another type of secular poetry of this period found expression in the Povadas and the Lavnis of the Senvis. The Povadas were a type of ballad brisk in movement and vivid in diction. The Lavnis were romantic in character with a deep colouring of the sensuous sentiment.

### **Eastern Region**

Bengali, Assamese and Oriya were the major languages in which literature was produced in eastern India.

### ***Bengali***

In the East, Bengali language and literature flourished after the advent of Sri Chaitanya. The Vaisnava poets, inspired through the saint's mystic preachings, composed a number of lyrics in a new literary language with a blend of Maithili and Sanskrit. This is recognized as Brajaboli and the lyrics — Padavali. A new genre of Vaisnava biographies came into being. Though the earliest biography of Sri Chaitanya was written in Sanskrit through Murari Gupta, this was followed quickly through the modern accounts of

Brindabandas in Bengali. Brindabandas's Chaitanya Bhagavata or Chaitanya Mangal was almost certainly composed within a decade of the saints' death and is measured to be the most authentic account of the social circumstances of his time.

The after that significant account is the Chaitanya-Charitamrita through Krishnadas Kavita. Though shrouded in controversy concerning its date of composition, the work serves as the first philosophical treatise which elevated Sri Chaitanya into an incarnation of Sri Krishna and laid the philosophical foundation of Gaudiya Vaisnavism. In the middle of a large number of biographies of Sri Chaitanya which followed, Gouranga Vijay through Chudamanidas, two works both named Chaitanya Mangal through Jayananda and Lochandas deserve to be mentioned. The latter is though best recognized for introducing a new style of folk songs called Dhamali, dealing exclusively with the love affairs of Krishna.

The lyrics recognized as Padavali constitute another significant branch of Vaistiava literature. Here, the several moods of amour termed Rasa' in Sanskrit literature was incorporated as the main norm for the construction of the 'Padas'. The romance of Radha and Krishna shaped the major theme, though all major works began with an eulogy to Sri Chaitanya who was hailed as the united manifestation of both Radha and Krishna. A large number of narrative poems were written on the legends of Krishna, particularly the portion immortalised in the Bhagavat dasam skandha as the Vrindaban leela. While Vaisnava literature began to be patronised through Hindu zamindars and Muslim governors, another group of narrative poems recognized as 'Mangal kavyas' became popular. The themes propagated the importance of the local cult deities like Chandi, Manasa Dharma and transformed the Puranic gods like Siva and Visnu into household deities where they assume the garb of the Bengali peasant or artisan. The narrative form of the Mangal Kavyas were derived from the Puranas. The narration of certain myths upholding the manifest powers of a single cult-deity was repeated even in the local versions of the Bengali Mangal Kavyas. But as the Bengali poets observed the effect of the Puranic writers, they inculcated into the narratives their own experience: hence, the fearsome Bhairava Siva, the killer of demons in the Puranas, has his trident recast into agricultural implements and assumes the appearance of an absent-minded rural yogi. A syncretic characteristic developed through the Dharma-mangal Kavyas where the Buddhist Dharma is merged with the Puranic Narayana and the Muslim Pir comes to be recognized as Satyapir or Satyanarayana.

A number of Muslim writers wrote in Bengali. The first notable writer Daulat Qazi was from Arakan. This was due to the close association that existed flanked by Bengal and Arakan ever since Arakan had been freed from Burma. The Maga ruler of Arakan had been forced to take shelter in Bengal

where he existed for 26 years. It was mainly due to this event that Bengali had virtually become the court language of Arakan. Daulat Qazi rendered into Bengali a number of popular romances prevalent in the Gujarat-Rajasthan area such as Laur-Chandrani or Mayna Sati. It is said that Laur Chandrani was completed after his death through a poet who was even more talented — Alaol. Alaol, the son of a Muslim governor of lower Bengal, was captured through the Portuguese pirate and sold as a soldier for Arakan army. His talents as a musician and poet endeared him to Sulaiman, a minister at the Arakan court and also the king's foster nephew Magan Thakur. These well-placed friends at the court freed Alaol from his bondage. He rendered into Bengali Malik Mohammad Jayasi's Padma vat, the Persian romance Saifulmulkbadijjamal, and also two works of Nizami. Alaol through his translations of Persian poetry and other romances into Bengali instilled a secular theme in Bengali literature.

A number of Muslim writers flourished in Bengal from 16th century onwards and though they wrote mainly on secular theme (Sabire wrote a version of the Vidya Sundar), they also wrote on the tragedy at Karbala. A mixed theme often overlapping the frontiers of the two religions were to be found in such works as Sayid Sultan's Resularjay which incorporated some Hindu gods, or it was found in the works like Yuga Sambad or Satya Kali Vivadsambad written through his disciples.

### *Assamese*

As in Bengal, Assamese literature also developed in response to the Bhakti movement. It was Sankaradeva who ushered in Vaisnavism and, being a good poet, he also introduced into Assamese a rich crop of poetry. He was followed through his disciple Madhavadas whose principal works were mainly the Bhakti-ratnavali dealing with dissimilar characteristics of bhakti, a handbook consisting of a large number of hymns, the Baragitas depicting the life of Krishna in Vrindavan and another work also dealing with the childhood of Krishna. The scrupulous features of Vaisnava poetry in Assam that sets it separately from those of Bengal and Gujarat is the lack of eroticism usually found in the themes of Radha and Krishna. In the Vaisnava poetry of Assam, the amorous love play of Krishna is avoided, the emphasis being laid only on his childhood.

Translations from the epics and Puranas also shaped a part of the literary projects of the Assamese writers. While Rama Rarasvati translated parts of the Mahabharata for his patron the king of Cooch Bihar; likewise, Gopal Chandra Dvija wrote the story of Krishna as told in the Bhagavata and Vishnu Purana. Assamese prose developed mainly through the compilation of historical chronicles recognized as Buranjis. These were written at the command of the

Ahom kings who overran Assam and sustained to rule the country fighting off the Mughals when necessary. The Sino-Tibetan dialect of the Ahoms is recognized to have greatly influenced Assamese prose just as it gave a cultural identity to the people.

### *Oriya*

Oriya literature in this period was still under the spell of Sanskrit. A number of Kavyas were composed on Puranic themes through Madhusudana, Bhima, Dhivara, and Sisu Isvaradasa. Romances on non-Puranic themes were composed through Dhananjay Bharya. An motivating poetical experiment is seen in the work *Rasa Kallol* which deals with the love of Radha and Krishna, where every line begins with the letter "E". In the middle of other notable works of this genre are *Ushabhilasa* of Sisu Sankara Dasa, the *Rahasyamanjari* of Deva-Durlava-Das and the *Rukminibibha* of Kartik Dasa. It was in the 17th century when Ramachandra Pattanayaka wrote his *Haravali* (in which the hero is an ordinary man and the heroine is the daughter of a farmer) that Oriya literature developed a popular base. Though these illustrate an motivating innovation, Oriya poetry in general followed the main stream of derivations from Sanskrit literature. Vaisnava works like *Prema-Panchamrita* through Bhupati Pandita opened the path of theology through poetry imbued with religious devotion. His richness of language has often been compared to Jayadeva. Though the Oriya poets usually wrote in the conventional language derived from Sanskrit, an artificial style came to be recognized in the 18th century marked through an overt eroticism expressed through verbal jugglery. The greatest exponent of this new style was the poet Upendra Bhanja who ushered in a new era in Oriya literature that sustained till the 19th century.

### **South Indian Languages**

The significant South Indian languages in which literature was being written were Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

### *Tamil*

In Tamil literature of the period we discover a number of philosophical works, commentaries, literary texts and Puranas. A large number of works are related to Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Haridasa, a Vaishnava poet, wrote *Irusamaya-vilakkam* (an exposition of Saivism and Vaishnavism). Another Tamil work of significance was *Sivadarumottaram* (1553) written through Marainanarbandar. The book having 1200 verses deals with chronology, temples and their constitution and theology. Saiva-Samayaneri through the

same author is a work on daily religious observance of Saivas. Kamalai Nanaprakaras wrote a Purana on Tirumaluvadi and a number of manuals on Saiva worship. Niramba Alagiya Desikar and his disciples also enriched the Purana literature. Desikar wrote Setu-puranam and Puranas on Tirupparangiri and Tiruvaiyaru. One of his disciples composed Tiruvalturpuranam (1592).

### ***Telugu***

Telugu as a language has affinities with Tamil and Kannada, but literary idioms depended on Sanskrit. Throughout the period of our study, the most glorious stage of Telugu literature was throughout the reign of Krishnadeva Raya of Vijaynagar. He himself was an acclaimed scholar. His Amuktamalyada is measured one of the great Kavyas in Telugu literature. The most celebrated poet at his court was Allarrani Peddana. He was given the title of Andhrakavi Tepitamha, Svarocisha Sambhava or Manucarita is his most recognized work. Nandi Timmaha, another poet at Krishnadeva Raya's court, wrote Parijatapaharana in verse which is an episode of Sri Krishna's life.

Bhattumurti, better recognized as Rama Raja Bhushan, is recognized for his vasucaritra (a work of poetry based on one episode of Mahabharata). Another work Hariscandra — Nalopakhyanam is a poem in which each verse has two meanings: it tells the story of Nala as well as Raja Harishchandra. Pingali Suranna wrote Raghava-Pandaviya, capturing the stories of both Ramayana and Mahabharata. Kumara Dhirjati wrote his well-known work Krishnadevaraya Vijaya approximately the end of 16th century in a poetic form narrating the victories of the well-known king. The most popular figure of Telugu literature is Tenali Ramakrishna. He is remembered as a willing and humorous man. His Panduranga Mahatmya is one of the great works of Telugu poetry. Molla, a poetess, who is said to have belonged to low caste, wrote the popular Telugu version of the Ramayana.

### ***Kannada***

Most of the early Kannada works were written through the Jainas; their contribution to the Kannada literature sustained throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. Vadi Vidyananda of Geroppa compiled Kavyarasa in 1533 which is an anthology of prominent Kannada poets. Another Jaina scholar Salva wrote a Jaina version of the Bharata Ratnakaravarhi and produced a number of significant works in the second half of 16th century like Trilokararara, Aparajitasataka and Bharataesvaracarita (the story of the well-known King Bharata). Several of his songs are still sung through the Jains and are recognized as Annagalapada. The significant work of Lingayat literature is Cenna Basava purana. Its hero, Cenna Basava, is measured an incarnation of Siva. The work contains a number of stories of saints. Prandharayacarita of

Adrisya is another significant Lingayat work. Some significant Saiva works of the period are Sidhesvara-purana of Virakta Pantadarva and Viveka-cintamani. Siva yoga pradipika of Nijagunna-siva-yogi, Bhava cintaratna and Virasaivamrita or Mallanarya Guibbi, and Sarvainapadagalu of Servainamurti.

### ***Malayalam***

Malayalam originated as a dialect of Tamil in the Odeyar region. Through the fourteenth century, it acquired an independent status. A certain tradition of poets from the 15th century onwards contributed greatly in developing Malayalam style of poetry. Rama Panikkar was one of the significant poets of this tradition. Some of his prominent works are Bharata Gatha, Savitri Mahatmyam, Brahmandepuranam and Bhagavatam. Cherruseri Nambudiri, a great poet of 16th century, is credited for developing modern Malayalam literature. His well-known work Krishnagatha is a beautiful poetic narration of Krishna's life. The sixteenth century Malayalam literature produced a number of popular songs and ballads like Anju's Tampuren pattu and Eravikuttipilla pattu. Tuncat Ramanujam Eluttaccan's works sheltered Hindu mythology, religion and philosophy. His well-known works are Adhyatma Ramayanam Kilipattu, Bharatam Killipattu and Harinamakirtanam. A popular form of dance-drama literature called Attakatha or Kathakali also seems to have originated throughout 16th century. Raman Attam is one of the earliest Attakatha. A large number of new Kathas enriched Malayalam literature.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- Discuss the objections raised against Moreland's methodology of the estimation of population of the Mughal Empire.
- Discuss the pattern of urban population in Mughal India.
- Analyze the structure of rural society in Medieval India.
- Provide an assessment of the standard of living prevalent at the rural stage in Medieval India.
- Discuss the factors that led to the emergence of medieval towns.
- Discuss the clothing pattern of the urban poor throughout the Mughal period.
- Discuss briefly the ideology of the Bhakti movement.
- What was the impact of the Bhakti movement on modern society and literature?
- Discuss the nature of Islamic revivalist movement in the 18th century.
- How distant can modern writings be held responsible for confusing the state policies with that of religion? Comment.
- Analyze Akbar's attitude towards religion and religious communities up to 1565.
- How did the concept of teamwork operate in the Royal Atelier?

- What significant thematic variations became noticeable in Mughal painting in the seventeenth Century?
- Write a note on the architecture of the Taj Mahal.
- Discuss the new crops and fruits introduced in India throughout the 16th-17th centuries.
- Discuss the mechanical devices used in guns throughout the 16-17th centuries.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **INDIA AT THE MID-18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY [CH]**

#### **STRUCTURE**

- Learning objectives
- Potentialities of capitalistic development
- Rise of regional powers
- Decline of the Mughal empire
- Review questions

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

In this chapter you will be introduced to:

- The developments preceding the formation of regional polities;
- The functioning and failure of the regional powers;
- Information on the dissimilar views expressed through scholars on the problem of the decline of the Mughal Empire, and
- A comparative assessment of the evidence garnered in support of these varying views.

#### **POTENTIALITIES OF CAPITALISTIC DEVELOPMENT**

Through now you necessarily have become intimately familiar with the several facets of Medieval India throughout the 16th- 18th centuries. Here we do not intend to provide a resume of the subject-matter of the foregoing Blocks. Instead, we will raise an significant question and try to respond to it. We have dispensed with the formal mode of structuring in this chapter so that you read the whole argument in a flow. The question we are going to address here relates to the economic structure of Medieval India.

It has often been asked why India failed to industrialize and evolve a capitalistic economy before the British conquest. In other words, was there any potentiality of emergence of capitalism in Mughal India beside the lines of what happened in Europe? This query was casually probed through W.H. Moreland and Brij Narain. Though, since 1960s, there has been a regular debate on this question beginning with Morris D. Morris and Toni Matsui and followed through Bipan Chandra and Tapan Raychaudhuri. But their views largely dwell on the 19th century India. It will, though, be more fruitful to us if we focus attention on the status of the Mughal economy. A pioneering enquiry on these lines was mannered through Irfan Habib in 'Potentialities of Capitalistic development in the Economy of Mughal India'. This was followed through A. I. Chicherov's *India: Economic Development in the 16th-18th centuries*, Moscow, 1971.

Significantly Europe did not possess capitalist economy in the 17th century. Capitalism started emerging, for instance in England, from the second half of the 18th century only. It was, through and large, merchant capitalism that prevailed in England at this time, not industrial capitalism. To begin with, we necessarily be clear in relation to the what do we understand through the term capitalism. Thereafter we may begin to investigate the attendance or absence of its characteristics in Mughal economy. Let us list the most significant characteristics of early capitalism:

- Control of capital in excess of production-processes;
- Money or market relations;
- "Immense accumulation of commodities" (Karl Marx); and
- Breakthrough in production-technology.

That the merchants of Medieval India possessed considerable capital cannot be questioned. Estimates of their wealth come from European records. We are told that in 1663 some merchants of Surat owned more than 5 or 6 million rupees. Mulla Abdul Ghafur of Surat had assets worth 8 million rupees. He also owned twenty ships (flanked by 300 and 800 tons each). The English factors testify that the volume of his trading transactions was no less than that of their company. Another Surat merchant Viji Vora is reported to have held an "estate" of the value of 8 million rupees: Manrique (1630) was amazed through the immense wealth of the merchants of Agra; he saw money piled up in some merchants' houses that "looked like grain heaps".

Besides, the merchants put their money into commercial circulation. The wealth of the non-mercantile groups too was invested in trading ventures. This incorporated the Mughal Emperors, royal ladies, princes and nobles—several of whom had their own ships. True, their investment was less than that of the merchants, but the significant point here is that their involvement increased the size of "money-market" in its own method. The system of credit and banking in Mughal India was well developed. You have already read in relation to the

role and functions of the sarraf who acted as a banker remitting money and issuing bills of exchange called hundi.

The sarraf also discounted the hundis of merchants therefore enlarging the volume of money for commerce. Another well-developed financial practice related to the insurance of goods in transit (both inland and marine). Moreover, institutions of money lending (and interest), for commercial purposes including bottomry and respondent, were also prevalent. Clearly then the basic financial and economic institutions were in operation in good measure throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. This may have put the Medieval economy on to the road to capitalism. Again, commodity production was taking place on a vast level, especially of textiles, saltpetre, indigo, etc. Procurement of these commodities was made easier both for the Indian and foreign merchants through the institution of brokery. Means of transport, too were fairly well-recognized keeping in view the constraints of Medieval times. True capitalist relations may develop only when capital would control and control large areas of production process. This is the principal variation flanked by industrial and merchant capital. The latter is not directly involved with manufacture. In other words, production was not controlled through merchants: it was accepted out through independent artisans who owned the tools, invested their money in buying raw material, worked at their respective homes (Domestic Craft System), owned the finished goods and sold the latter at the market. Capitalism destroys all these characteristics, turning the independent artisans into wage-workers. As an upshot, industrial capital takes in excess of slowly the means of production and controls the whole system.

But the changeover from merchant to industrial capitalism was not abrupt or sudden. There was a transitory stage that arose within merchant capitalism itself. It is called putting-out system. So, it is pertinent to look at the nature and extent of this transitory stage in Medieval India, that is, the progressive control of Labor and production through capital. The penetration of merchant capital into the existing artisan-stage mode of production could occur through the putting-out system (dadni) which seems to have been quite an recognized practice, though on a small level, even prior to the 17th century. The broken come into the picture because the advances to the primary producers through the merchants were made through them. Let us first set out the economic structure of the putting-out system, The Indian economy throughout the 17th century was a sellers' (i.e., producers') market. There was tremendous demand and the large number of competitive buyers flooding the market. Therefore , from the merchants' point of view, especially of those occupied in foreign trade, the putting- out system excluded his rivals and secured him timely delivery of stipulated quantity of commodity in accordance with his specifications at previously agreed rates. On the other hand, the primary producer accepted advances since he had to cope with extensive orders for which he may not have adequate money to buy raw materials. Therefore , the

putting- out system rendered economic services to both the merchant and the artisan. In this context, the degree of penetration of merchant capital into the production-process through the putting-out system could be assessed through examining whether the merchant advanced cash or raw materials (or both) and the tools of production to the artisan. Taking the textile industry, we have adequate evidence for advance being given in cash to infer that it was an recognized practice. But evidence for raw material is quite insufficient to illustrate its wide use, while that for instruments of production is approximately negligible.

Here it necessarily be pointed out that the need for giving raw material (yarn) to the weavers arose from the consideration that the yarn obtained through weavers themselves was often of inferior quality, even when granted cash advance. It appears that some profit ,accrued to the weaver when he himself purchased yarn or raw silk of a excellence questionable from the merchants' point of view. Therefore it may be reasonably assumed that the weaver did not always welcome the supply of raw material from the merchant as this perhaps wiped off the little "cut" they could otherwise get.

This partly explains the scarcity of data on this scrupulous practice, that is, the advance being made in raw material. That the predominant form of the putting-out system was cash-advance is apparent from what Streynsham Master says in relation to the Bengal in the later decades of the 17th century;

- "The- most proper season for giving out moneys for cusses; Mulmullas etc., made in and in relation to the Dacca is the month of January.
- Dellolls or Broackers..... take four monethes time for its delivery, and within sic monethes or thereabouts doe. usually bring in the same browne (unbleached, as it comes from the weavers.
- The said Broackers, having tooke money, deliver it to the Picars (Paikar) who carry it from Towne to towne, and deliver it to weavers  
”

Here Master does not mention at all the practice of giving yarn to the weavers. Other accounts also point to the same conclusion. We discover only one reference in the English factory records to this practice, but that is in connection with raw silk. The cause assigned was that the weavers, out of poverty, could not buy raw silk of the requisite quality. The same could be said in relation to the Gujarat with the variation that almost certainly this practice was adopted on a comparatively large level than in Bengal. But there is no evidence to convince us that it ever acquired a very dominant form of the putting- out system there. Even Chicherov, despite his strong advocacy of the development of capitalistic relations, is struck through the scarcity of data on the advancing of raw material, that is, yarn, to the weavers. He himself explains that "the supply of raw materials never posed a problem" in the rural areas because "cotton-rising, which was extraordinarily extensive and in some

areas approximately universal, was a typical economic-geographical characteristic of India; cotton could be grown on every farm or bought on the adjacent market". He adds, "spinning, widespread not only in the so weavers' home but also in ordinary peasant families, created a constant and vast source of raw materials for the weaving trade". Therefore, it may safely be concluded that the most distinguishing characteristic of the putting-out system throughout the 17th century was the practice of cash-advance.

From this point we can pass on to the part played through the practice of cash-advance in transforming the relations of production. Considering the prime motive of giving cash-advances to the artisan, we do not notice any separate tendency on the part of the merchants to intervene deliberately in the production process in such a manner as to bring in relation to the radical change in the relations of production. True, the producer was "tied" to the merchant in the sense that now he was under an obligation to fulfill his commitment, that is, to give the merchant with the commodity produced through him in accordance with the merchant's specifications within a limited time and at an agreed price. But the artisan still retained the ownership of the tools of production and in this case raw materials, too. What really happened was that he had merely sold off his produce in return for advance payment out of his free will. There does not appear to exist any extraordinary economic compulsion (except poverty) for him to accept such orders from the merchant; nor does the latter appear to have employed non economic coercion to compel him to enter into such a deal. Instead, the merchant had to induce the producer to accept the advance payment in his own interest. For instance, in 1665 the English factors wrote from Surat:

- "Calicoes are bought up through the Dutch etc. that we are forced to pray and pay for what we have and take it as a *courtesy* (italics ours) that the weavers will vouchsafe to receive out money 8 and 10 months beforehand, which is the only thing that types them to us."

Here, the merchants felt obliged to the weavers for their acceptance of the advance money. But even this "tie-up" was very slender. In 1647 the English factors at Thatta wrote to Surat:

- "Besides, those weavers are a company of base rogues, for, notwithstanding we provide them money afore hand part of the year, and that in the time of there greatest want, yet if any peddling cloth merchant comes to buy, they leave us and work for him, though he provides now money afore hand; being the ordinary, base create is more facial and easy to weave then ours, with which they necessity take some pains. "

Again, in 1622, they wrote from Broach: "wee necessity provide out our money beforehand, and receive the proceeded of the weavers and brokers

pleasure". Therefore , it is indeed incongruous and Chicherov talks of "economic bondage", "economic dependence", "physical coercion" and "merchant monopoly" with regard to the relations flanked by the merchant and the producer throughout the 17th century. The artisan had merely turned into a "contract-producer" from an "independent" one. True he was no longer the owner of his produce, but he was not yet alienated from the ownership of raw material and tools of production.

As long as the artisan worked within the domestic system of craft-production, real capitalistic relations of production could not be generated. That the putting-out system did not deprive the producer of his tools and often raw material clearly designates that the control of Labor through merchant capital was indeed very weak. Until this alienation took place, commodity-production manufactory or, in other words, assemblage of large number of workers at one place at the same time for the production of the same commodity under a superior capitalist direction could not emerge. But at this stage the putting-out system itself, beside with the brokers, would ultimately disappear, yielding place to new relations of production.

Nor do we discover any evidence for the creation of surplus value, say, through "depression of wages", throughout the 17th century so that a part of the Labor time could remain unpaid for. Quite obviously in the absence of the exercise of no economic coercion through the merchants, this was not possible so long as the tools of production were retained through the artisan, working within the domestic system. Since the tools were simple and cheap to be made or purchased and no technological breakthrough was achieved rendering them costlier, beyond the means of an average artisan, the latter was not alienated from them. Here we may recall the observation of Marx:

- "The process, so, that clears the method for the capitalist system, can be none other than the process which takes absent from the laborer the possession of his means of production; a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social means of survival and of production into capital; on the other, the immediate producers into wage-laborers."

Though, we do not propose to hold that merchant capital did not exercise any power on the organization of production. The putting-out system through which it operated did encroach on the "independent" status of the primary producer, transforming him into a "contract-worker". It also cut him off from the market—a process which was inherent in the system itself. Again, the sporadic examples of karkhanas maintained and the dyeing and refining "houses" erected through the foreign merchants in Gujarat and Bengal do indicate the direction of change throughout the latter half of the 17th century. Yet these changes were not fundamental nor so widespread as to compel us to discover in them elements which could promote real capitalistic relations. After all these were changes within the existing mode of production, wherein

merchant capital had a very feeble hold in excess of the production process. So, it will be incorrect to say that merchant capital “broke through the traditional bonds of production” in 17th century India: it had only nibbled a small part of it, of not much consequence.

It is pertinent to ask why merchant capital, operating through the putting-out system did, fail to exercise any worthwhile control in excess of Labor? That the failure did not spring from a lack of its development has been examined through Irfan Habib. We have already suggested that the enlargement of demand- and the flooding of the market with a large number of competitive buyers had put the primary producer in a favourable situation; the absence of any extraordinary economic compulsion or noneconomic coercion left the artisan free to strike a deal with whomsoever he measured best. Another significant cause was the coexistence of the independent artisan-stage production with the putting-out system (which turned the artisan into a contract laborer) almost certainly on a level larger than the latter or at least on equal footing. Besides, territorial and occupational mobility of the artisan was yet another factor which often may have rescued him from falling into “economic bondage” or “dependence” as a result of his poverty, on which Chicherov lays so much stress. Finally, as we have shown above, the interests of the broker and merchant did not always coincide. The former tried to seize upon an opportunity to get some irregular income through underhand mechanism: his victims were both the producer and the merchant. Therefore he did not always act in a manner which could promote the interest of merchant capital; rather he worked sometimes in collusion with the artisan.

All this actuality strengthens the opinion of Marx:

- “The independent and predominant development of capital as merchant’s capital is tantamount to the non-subjection of production to capital, and hence to capital developing on the basis of an alien social mode of production which is also independent of it. The independent development of merchant’s capital, so, stands in inverse proportion, to the general economic development of society.”

Perhaps it would not have been hard for some merchants, especially for “broker- contactors” (middlemen merchants) who were in close proximity with the production-process, to evolve into manufacturing entrepreneurs: the examples of karkhanas maintained through the Mughal emperors, nobles and occasionally through the foreign companies should have served as models. But a mere change in the organization of production unaccompanied through basic changes in technology could not cut much ice.

## **RISE OF REGIONAL POWERS**

## **Historical Perspective Of The Emergence Of Regional Polities**

In our discussion on the Mughal administrative system, we have explained the mechanism of the provincial administration under the Mughals. In the context of the development of independent regional polities, what is significant to understand is the dynamics of the Mughal provincial polity throughout 18th century. This would help us identify the trend and process of the emergence of regional powers. The Mughal administration was centralised in character. Its success was heavily dependent on the power and skill of the Emperor to subdue the nobles, zamindars, jagirdars and provincial officials. In fact, there was balance and coordination of interests and aspirations flanked by the Emperor (who was always in a dominant position) and others. This position started changing, it is said, with the death of Aurangzeb. For several causes, the authority of the Mughal Emperor got emasculated.

The diwan (head of the revenue administration) and the nazim (the executive head) were the two most significant functionaries. Both of them were directly appointed through the Emperor and through them the imperial control in excess of the provinces was retained. Besides, there were other officials like amils, faujdars, kotwals, etc. who were also appointed through the Emperor. The provincial governors also depended on the goodwill of the Emperor to continue in their job. Therefore, through the control in excess of appointment, the Emperor indirectly controlled the provincial administration. Unfortunately, the central administration was crippled through financial crisis and factional rivalry in the middle of the nobles. The Emperor was not in a position to prevent the crisis. It failed to give the required protection to the provincial governors.

As a result, the provincial governors occupied themselves at the beginning of the 18th century to develop an independent base of power. Some of its indications were that the local appointments were made through them without the prior permission from the Emperor, and attempts were made to establish dynastic rule in the provinces. What happened throughout this period was that, except the theoretical allegiance to the Mughal Emperor in the form of sending tributes, the provincial governors, virtually recognized their independent authority in excess of the provinces. Even the autonomous states in Deccan, Rajputana, etc. who were not directly under the Mughals but acknowledged the authority of the Mughals also cut off their ties with the Empire. The trend of creation independent authority is clearly visible in dissimilar regions whether directly under the Mughals or not in the first half of the 18th century. The states that appeared throughout this period can be classified into three broad categories:

- The states which broke apart from the Mughal Empire;
- The new states set up through the rebels against the Mughals; and

- The independent states.

### **Successor States**

Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad fall in the category of successor states. All these three provinces were directly under the control of the Mughal administration. Though the sovereignty of the Mughal Emperor was not challenged, the establishment of practically independent and hereditary authority through the governors and subordination of all offices within the region to the governors showed the emergence of autonomous polity in these regions. A new political order came into subsistence within the broader Mughal institutional framework.

#### ***Awadh***

Sa'adat Khan became the subadar of Awadh in 1722. His aspiration was to play a significant role in the imperial politics. Having failed in that design, he devoted himself to the task of creating Awadh an independent centre of power. The Mughal decline provided him the desired opportunity to establish his own authority in the region. The major challenge that he faced after becoming the subadar was the rebellion of local chieftains and rajas of Awadh. In order to consolidate his position he adopted the following events:

- Suppression of rebellious local zamindars and chieftains;
- Curtailment of the authority of the madad-i-maash grantees;
- Systematizing, revenue collection; and negotiation with some local zamindars.

In appointing local officials, he measured only their personal loyalty to him. His motive became more clear when he nominated his son-in-law, Safdar Jang, as deputy governor of the province without the prior consent of the Emperor. After Sa'adat Khan, Safdar Jang pursued the same path so that the working of provincial administration no longer depended on the will of the Emperor. Even sending of revenues to Delhi became irregular. Semblance of allegiance to the Mughal Emperor was still maintained, but flanked by the years 1739 and 1764 Awadh appeared virtually as an autonomous state. Safdar Jang extended his control in excess of the Gangetic plains and appropriated the forts of Rohtas, Chunar and also the subadari of Allahabad. The office of the imperial diwan was abolished. His successor Shujaudaula also tried to consolidate the basis of autonomous political system in Awadh. In the process of establishment of autonomous state, the most extraordinary development was the promotion and prosperity of a new group of gentry who owed their allegiance to the Awadh ruler and not to the Mughal Emperor.

## ***Bengal***

In Bengal the process of autonomy was started through Murshid Quli Khan. He was first appointed as diwan but, later on, his success in revenue administration, and the uncertainty after the death of Aurangzeb, paved his method for the subadari of Bengal. Murshid Quli abolished the separate offices of the diwan and the nazim and combined them into one. His initial concern was revenue administration and, in order to streamline it, he took the following events:

- Elimination of small intermediary zamindars;
- Expelling rebellious zamindars and jagirdars to the boundary regions of Orissa;
- Encouraging big zamindars who assumed the responsibilities of revenue collection and payment; and
- Enlarging the scope and extent of the khalisa lands.

Through his events, Murshid Quli encouraged the zamindars to emerge as a powerful political force in the province. Likewise, moneyed and commercial classes got encouragement from the Nawab and recognized their importance in local polity. All these were clear indications of Murshid Quli's desire to establish Bengal as his domain. He also nominated his daughter's son Sarfaraz as his successor. This set the tradition of a dynastic rule in Bengal. Sarfaraz was overthrown through his father Shujauddin Muhammad Khan. Shujauddin followed the system developed through Murshid Quli and tried to maintain ties of loyalty with dissimilar local power groups.

His link with Delhi was basically confined to the sending of tributes. The after that ruler Alivardi Khan assumed power through coup and killed Sarfaraz Khan. Alivardi's reign showed further development towards autonomy. Major appointments at the provincial stage were made through him without any reference to the Mughal ruler. He appointed his own loyalists as deputy Nawabs at Patna, Cuttack and Dhaka. He recruited a large number of Hindus in revenue administration and organised a strong military force. The flow of tribute to Delhi became irregular. Therefore, through Alivardi's time, an administrative system developed in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa which reduced ties with the imperial court in Delhi, and for all practical purposes an independent state appeared in Eastern India.

## ***Hyderabad***

As in Awadh and Bengal, so in Hyderabad also the weakening of the imperial rule provided the opportunity to the subadar of Deccan to lay the

basis for an autonomous state. Nizamulmulk recognized his control in excess of Hyderabad through removing the officials appointed through the Mughals and installed his own men. He assumed the right of creation treaties, wars, granting mansabs, titles, etc. The Mughal authority was reduced to a symbolic reading of khutba. Reform of the revenue system, subduing of zamindars and tolerance towards Hindus were some of his significant events. A network of intermediary interests on land was allowed to flourish in Hyderabad and this had strong bearing on the state polity. Bankers, moneylenders and military commanders had significant role to play in maintaining political balance because they provided the essential financial and military service. Nizamulmulk's reign therefore showed the emergence of an independent state in Hyderabad with nominal allegiance to the emperor. His successors faced tough challenges from the Marathas and the European Companies, and failed to maintain the autonomy of the state for long.

### **The New States**

The second group of regional states were the 'new states' which came into subsistence as a protest against the Mughals.

### ***The Marathas***

In the middle of the several provincial states that appeared throughout this period, the most prominent was the Maratha state. The rise of the Marathas was both a regional reaction against Mughal centralization as well as a manifestation of the upward mobility of certain classes and castes. The Mughals never had proper control in excess of the heartland of the Marathas. Throughout the period of Peshwa Baiaji Vishwanath the office of the Peshwa became very powerful and the Maratha state system attained the status of a dominant expansionist state. Starting from Baiaji Vishwanath to the reign of Baiaji Rao, the Maratha power reached its zenith and the Marathas spread in every directions South, East, North and Central India. The Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 flanked by the Afghans and the Marathas was major setback for the Marathas and their victory march was halted through the success of the Afghans in this battle. So distant as the administration is concerned, there were non-regulation and regulation areas. In non regulated areas, the existing zamindars and chieftains were allowed to run the administration, but they had to pay tribute regularly to the Peshwa. In regulation areas direct control of the Marathas was recognized. In these areas a system of revenue assessment and management was developed of which the most significant was the watan system. The watan-dars were holders of hereditary rights in land, whose rights vested not in an individual incumbent but in a brotherhood of patrilineal relatives. The Marathas adopted some parts of the Mughal administrative

system, but their major thrust was on extraction of surplus. In the absence of well-defined provincial authority, they failed to consolidate their power.

### ***Punjab***

The development in Punjab was dissimilar from other regions. Zakaria Khan, the governor of Lahore, had tried to establish an independent political system in Punjab. But he failed mainly because of the thrash about of the Sikhs for independent political authority. The Sikh movement, which was started through Guru Nanak to reform the religious beliefs and strengthen the Sikh brotherhood, changed into a political movement throughout the 18th century. The Sikhs organised themselves into numerous small and highly mobile jathas and posed serious challenge to the Mughal imperial authority. The foreign invasion (Persian and Afghan), the Maratha incursion and internal rivalry in the provincial administration created a very fluid situation in Punjab which helped the Sikhs to consolidate their base. In the second half of the 18th century, the dissimilar Sikh groups had regrouped themselves into 12 larger regional confederacies or misls under the leadership of several local chieftains. The process towards the establishment of an autonomous state became complete only under Ranjit Singh at the beginning of the 19th century.

### ***The Jat State***

The Jats were an agriculturist caste inhabiting the Delhi-Agra region. In the middle of the dissimilar agrarian revolts that the Mughal Empire faced in the second half of the 17th century, the revolt of the Jats was an important one. Following the modern trend, the Jats also tried to establish an autonomous zone of their control. Churaman and Badan Singh took the initiative but it was Suraj Mal who consolidated the Jat state at Bharatpur throughout 1756-1763. The state was expanded in the east upto the boundaries of the Ganga, in the south the Chambal, in the north Delhi and in the west Agra. The state was feudal through nature and it was the zamindars who were in control of both administrative and revenue powers. The state did not continue for long after the death of Suraj Mal.

### **Independent Kingdoms**

The third category of states were independent kingdoms. These states appeared primarily taking the advantage of the destabilization of imperial control in excess of the provinces.

### ***Mysore***

The kingdom of Mysore was located to the south of Hyderabad. Unlike Hyderabad, Mysore was not under direct control of the Mughals. Mysore was transformed from a viceroyalty of the Vijaynagar Empire into an autonomous state through the Wodeyar dynasty. The Wodeyar rulers were overthrown to strengthen the autonomy of the state through Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan throughout the 18th century. The major threat before Mysore initially came from the Marathas on the one hand and that of Hyderabad and Karnatak on the other, while the English were waiting to take advantage of the situation. Starting his career as a junior officer in the Mysore army, Haidar Ali became its brilliant commander. He rightly realized the importance of modern army and accordingly tried to modernize the Mysore army after the European manner. With the help of the French, he tried to strengthen organizational discipline in the army. Through 1761, he was able to overthrow the real power behind the Mysore throne, the minister Nunjaraj. He extended the boundaries of the Mysore state and incurred the hostilities of the Marathas, Hyderabad and the English. In 1769, the British forces were defeated through Haidar Ali. But the disagreement sustained. After his death in 1782, his son Tipu Sultan accepted on the task of his father till the end of the 18th century.

### ***The Rajputs***

The Rajput rulers also tried to establish independent political authority. They pursued the policy of expansion through grabbing the territory of their neighbours. The principal Rajput states like Mewar, Marwar and Amber shaped a league against the Mughals. But the internal rivalry in the middle of the Rajputs for power weakened their authority. Most prominent in the middle of the Rajput rulers were Ajit Singh of Jodhpur and Jai Singh of Jaipur.

### ***Kerala***

Kerala was divided into small principalities under the control of local chieftains and rajas at the beginning of the 18th century. Mughal control was not visible in this area. But through the second half of the 18th century, all small principalities had been subdued through the significant states of Kerala, Cochin, Travancore and Calicut. The expansion of Mysore under Haidar Ali put Kerala in a very hard situation. Haidar Ali in fact annexed Malabar and Calicut. Travancore, which escaped from Haidar Ali's invasion, was the most prominent one. It was king Martanda Varma who extended the boundaries of Travancore from Kanya Kumari to Cochin. He tried to organize the army beside Western Model, and took several administrative events to develop the state.

## **Nature Of Regional Polities**

There were differences in the method the autonomous political system developed in dissimilar regions. In some areas, the Mughal governors recognized their independent authority in the regions under their control (as it happened in Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad), The formation of the Maratha, Sikh and Jat states was the outcome of their thrash about against the Mughal imperial control. Whereas Mysore, Rajputana and Kerala were already semi-independent. But the link that they had maintained with the Mughal Empire was broken in the wake of the decline of the Mughal Empire.

In whatever manner they appeared, each state tried to develop its own administrative mechanism. Take for instance Hyderabad and Mysore. Both were situated in the South, but Hyderabad was directly under the Mughals and Mysore was under the control of the Wodeyar rulers. In both the states a new autonomous administrative system developed, but their functioning was dissimilar. In Mysore, emphasis was given to strengthen the army organization and to augment the financial possessions of the state curbing the power and power of the local chieftains. But, in Hyderabad, the local chieftains were allowed to remain intact. There were also differences in army reorganization and in mobilizing revenue for the state. Likewise, other regional powers developed their own institutional framework and several local linkages to run the administration. Though, in spite of these differences one discovers some common features in the functioning of regional powers in the 18th century.

The independent political system that appeared in the provinces sustained to maintain ties with the Mughal imperial authority. Though the Mughal Emperor lost its earlier control in excess of the provincial administration, its importance as an umbrella in excess of the provincial authority still remained. The newly appeared regional powers acknowledged this importance. Even rebel chieftains of the Marathas and Sikhs sometimes recognised the Emperor as the supreme authority. Each state no doubt reorganized its administrative set up and army according to its necessities, but the Mughal administrative system was often adapted through these states. In the states like Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad, where the Mughal governors had recognized their independent authority, it was quite natural to follow the Mughal tradition. Even states like that of the Marathas adopted Mughal pattern of administration. Though, it should be noted in this context that though there was stability of some Mughal institutions, the Mughal political system did not survive. The polity that appeared in the early 18th century was regional in character. There are no indications that these regional polities were dissimilar from the Mughal one in so distant as the basic features are concerned.

The regional polity that appeared in the 18th century worked with the

collaborative support of the dissimilar local groups like the zamindars, merchants, local nobles, and chieftains. With the weakening of the imperial authority and the finances in the 18th century, the merchants played a crucial role in the emergence and functioning of the regional polity. They provided the necessary financial support to the nobles and rulers and naturally had significant say in the administration. Take for instance the Agarwal bankers of Banaras who controlled the revenue matters. Likewise, the house of the Jagat Seths in Bengal played a decisive role in the local power politics. Like the merchants, the zamindars and local chieftains in the absence of central security appeared as protectors of the local people. In their respective areas of control, the zamindars ruled in excess of both revenue as well as judicial administration. The common people had to depend on the mercy and benevolence of these zamindars. Naturally in the newly-shaped regional polity these zamindars had strong local clout. The provincial rulers had to take care of these several local interests in order to maintain themselves. There were exceptions, too. For instance, the Mysore rulers did not recognize the local chieftains; through their effective control in excess of army and revenue administration they totally sidelined them. But, usually in the 18th century regional polity these local groups often played a decisive role in administration. This can be regarded as one of the weaknesses of the regional polity. This, shows that the provincial rulers failed to develop a system based on sound financial administrative and military organization. So they had to depend on the cooperation and collaboration of the local groups. This was a major administrative flaw in the provincial polity and to some extent this was one cause for the failure of developing a stable polity. Another drawback was the constant warfare in the middle of the dissimilar neighbouring regional powers. Particularly the Marathas and the Southern states were constantly in the race for expanding their territorial boundaries. This generated tensions in the middle of the regional powers and none could ultimately control in excess of the other. Disunity in the middle of the regional powers paved the method for the external forces to establish their dominance in excess of India.

## **DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE**

The Mughal Empire which gave Indian History an era of resplendent accomplishments and paramount power disintegrated into dust with the irreparable mistakes of emperors like Aurangzeb.

Aurangzeb inherited a large empire, and instead of consolidating what he already had, he embarked on a myopic policy of annexation. His passion to stretch the empire to the farthest geographical limits made it impossible to implement a centralized government. His disagreement with the Rajputs acquiesced serious consequences. Akbar had the sagacity to analyze that enmity with the Rajputs will be a thorn in the bed of roses that he is manufacturing for himself. But, Aurangzeb, blinded through religious discriminations withdrew himself from Rajput-loyalty and challenged their

sovereignty. He lost a pillar of strength which had defended the Mughal Empire against enemies for years. The Deccan invasion through the Mughals depleted the financial possessions. His bid to suppress the Marathas` claim for autonomy backfired at him. The peace and order of his state was shattered at the very nerve-centre through the political uprisings of discontenting groups, namely ,the Jats, the Satnamis and the Sikhs. Aurangzeb`s religious orthodoxy severely invoked the wrath of the Hindus and the Shiah Muslims. Jeziya-payment was scorned through allnon-Muslims. A split in the Mughal social fabric was inevitable. The nobility was turned into warring factions. Administrative system became unstable. Wealth squandered absent through luxury-loving princes like Jahangir, or Shah Jahan had hit the royal treasury. The Mughal nobility and aristocracy throughout the last years of the empire were over brimming with corruption. Thirst for power and acquisition of lucrative "jagirs" or grants drowned these vitiated nobility into nothingness. The military force of the empire were robbed of energy after long wars. Again the disloyal mansabs also did not maintain properly their quota of soldiers, military contingents. The peasants ,reeling in poverty faced oppression in the hands of the nobility , demanding excess amount of tax. The peasant-class lost their trust on the empire. The empire went through dire straits in the weak rules of the later Mughals, like Bahadur Shah, Jalandhar Shah or Farrukh Siyar. A final blow to the shaken constitution of the empire was given through the foreign invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah. The treasury looted, the trade and industry was ruined and the military power erased. Finally the colonial conquest through the British swallowed the skeleton of an once glorious empire, piece through piece.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- Analyze the pattern of the emergence of autonomous kingdoms throughout the early 18th century.
- Critically look at the nature of regional politics in the early 18th century.
- What is the core argument in jagirdari crisis as the cause of Mughal decline?
- What explanation does Muzaffar Alam offer for the decline of the Mughal Empire?
- What impact did the economy of Punjab receive as a result of the silting of Indus towards the close of the 17th century?

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**EIILM UNIVERSITY**  
S I K K I M

Jorethang, District Namchi, Sikkim- 737121, India  
[www.eilmuniversity.ac.in](http://www.eilmuniversity.ac.in)