

**B.A. (Hons.) Part — III**  
**History Paper - V**

Sl.No.	Title	L.No.	Page
1.	Historiography of Medieval India	1	02-11
2.	Source of Medieval Indian history	2	12-26
3.	Establishment of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-90)	3	27-37
4.	Expansion of Delhi Sultanate (1290-1320)	4	38-42
5.	Tughlaq dynasty : Muhammad-Bin-Tughlaq and Firoz Tughlaq	5	43-50
6.	Rise of the Vijya nagar empire and the Bahmanis	6	51-65
7.	Lodi Dynasty : Decline of the Delhi Sultanate	7	66-71
8.	Central Administration Under Delhi Sultanate	8	72-77
9.	Society and Economy During Sultanate period	9	78-87
10.	Establishment of the Mughal empire	10	88-102
11.	Sher Shah : His rise and Administrative achievements	11	103-110
12.	Akbar : Expansion of the Mughal empire, Relation with the Rajputs, Religious policy, Akbar as a National Monarch	12	111-125
13.	Mughal Empire under Jahangir and Shahjahan : with special reference to Central Asian and Deccan policy	13	126-138
14.	Aurangzeb : Relations with the Rajputs and the Marathas Religious policy revolts in the empire	14	139-154
15.	Decline of the Mughal empire, Rise of Marathas under Peshwas and Sikhs	15	155-164
16.	Mughal Administration : Mansabdari System	16	165-175
17.	Social and Cultural developments under the Mughals	17	176-184

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## Lesson - 1 **Historiography of Mediaeval India**

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### Lesson Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objective
- 1.2
  - (i) Historical Texts of the Sultanate Period Kitabul Hind or Tahquique Hind.
  - 1.2.1 (ii) The Tabaqat-e-Nasiri of Minhaj-e-Shiraj
  - 1.2.1 (iii) Ziauddin Barni-Tawarikh-e-Firoze Shahi, Fatwa-i-Jahandari
  - 1.2.1 (iv) Isami's Futuhasaltin.
  - 1.2.1 (v) Hasan Nizami's Tajul Maasir
  - 1.2.1 (vi) Amir Khusro's Mifta-ul-Futuh Tawarikh-i-Alai, Tughlaqnama.
  - 1.2.1 (vii) Sultan Firoze Shah's Futuhat-i-Firoz Shahi.
  - 1.2.1 (viii) Samas Siraj Afif's Tawarikh-i-Firoz Shahi
  - 1.2.1 (ix) Ibubatuta's Rehla
  - 1.2.2 (i) Historical writings of the Mughal period :
  - 1.2.2 (ii) Abul Fazal's Ain-i-Akbari, Mutmid Khan's Iqbalanama's Jahangiri Md. Kazim's Alamgirnama.
  - 1.2.2 (iii) Multakhabul - Jawarickh of Badayuni and Tabaqat-i-Akbari of Nizamuddin.
  - 1.2.2 (iv) Babarnama by Babar, Hamayunnama by Gulbadan Begum, Jehangir's Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri
  - 1.2.2 (v) The Mirat-e-Ahmadi of Ali Mohammad Khan, Towarikh-e-Sindh by Mirza Masum Bhakkari
  - 1.2.3 Modern historical writings on Mediaeval India
  - 1.2.3 (i) Coronial writings aimed at promoting partition of the country
  - 1.2.3 (ii) Nationalist outlook of Indian historians
  - 1.2.3 (iii) Communal writings
  - 1.2.3 (iv) Objective and impartial writing on Mughal history
- 1.3 Summary
- 1.4 Key Words
- 1.5 Questions for Exercise
- 1.6 Answers to Questions of Exercise
  - 1.6.1 Short Answer Questions
  - 1.6.2 Long Answer Questions
- 1.7 Suggested Readings

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## 1.0 Introduction

The tradition of history writing or historiography was not well developed in India upto early medieval times but medieval India historiography developed on a fast pace with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. The credit for it goes to the Muslim historians. The Muslims had developed sense of history-writing even before they came and settled in India. The Turko-Afghans and the Mughals after establishing their rule in India, got written several historical texts which are valuable source of contemporary history. Although, judging from the modern standards of historiography all texts written during this long period may not be termed as "true historical", nevertheless their importance cannot be minimised. In modern times also several books were written on medieval Indian history from different point of view. We have attempted an analysis of these texts in this unit. For convenience, this unit has been split into two parts : historiography of the Sultanate period and the Mughal historiography.

### 1.1 Objective

The main objective of this unit is to familiarise you with important historical texts written during the Sultanate and the Mughal times as well as to make a critical appreciation of those writings. The historians like Minhaj, Barani Afif, Abul Fazal produced several outstanding historical works. Some rulers wrote their biographies too. The period under review is also full of semi-historical works of Amir Khusro and several other writers. The modern history have also written hudeeds of works dealing with. The recent historical researches have greatly modified old perceptions about mediaeval history. We shall try to acquaint you with all these aspects in this unit.

#### **1.2(i) Historical Texts of the Sultanate Period**

We have already drawn your attention towards the fact that the history writing developed amongst the Muslims with the very beginning of the rise and expansion of Islam. This tradition fruitified under the Sultans of Delhi and the Mughal emperors. The historiography of this period was greatly influenced by the Arabic and Persian traditions. The finest and foremost important historical texts of mediaeval India is the **Kitab-ul-Hind** or **Tahquique Hind** of Al-biruni, an original inhabitant of Khwarizm in Central Asia. He was taken to Ghazani as a prisoner of war by Mahmud Ghazani. Later on, Al-biruni, came to India with Mahmud during his Indian raids. Al-biruni wrote this text in 1030 AD Al-biruni does not discuss in detail the exploits of Mahmud but rather concentrates on Indian social-cultural life, religion, sciences and other aspects which prevailed in the 11th century India. Despite several inconsistencies and short-comings in Al-biruni's account, its significance for the study of 11th century Indian society can not be minimised.

##### **1.2.1(ii) The Tabaqat-e-Nasiri of Minhaj-e-Shiraj :**

written in the 13th century occupies an important place in the early writings of the Sultanate period. Minhaj came to India from central Asia during the rule of Iltutmish and lived for some time in his court at Delhi. He was, therefore, an eye witness to important events of the time of Sultan Iltutmish and his successors. Therefore, this text becomes an important source material for the time of Iltutmish

and his immediate successors. However, Minhaj's book does not deal exclusively and fully with the history of India. The **Tabaqat-e-Nasiri** is a general book on the Islamic world. It is divided into 23 chapters. It contains information about the pre-Islamic prophets and the early Sultans of Delhi. The greatest weakness of this text is lack of chronological sequence. It also suffers from repetitive tendency. Despite these shortcomings, it is the only authentic contemporary source about the Turkish invasion of India, establishment of the Sultanate and its early history. In fact, the objective of Minhaj to put stress on the establishment of the Islamic power. He, therefore, said special emphasis on this aspect.

### 1.2.1(iii) Ziauddin Barni-Twarikh-e-Firoze Shahi, Fatwa-i-Jahandari :

Ziauddin Barni occupies first rank amongst the celebrated historians of the Sultanate. He was a great scholar of Persian. He wrote two important books which throw light on the history of Delhi Sultanate, beginning from the rule of Balban up to the early years of Firozshah Tughlaq. His first book is known as the **Twarikh-e-Firozeshahi**. It was written in 1357-58 AD. It describes important events which took place between 1265-1357. The description of Balban's reign is based on available contemporary sources. He was himself an eye-witness to the events of the reigns of Alauddin Khilji, Muhammad bin-Tughlaq and Firoz Tughlaq. As Barani and his family members were associated with the royal court, he gives correct information to a great extent about the above mentioned Sultans.

The second book of Barni is known as the **Fatwa-i-Jahandari**. Strictly speaking it is not a historical text; rather a compendium of Barni's views on different subjects. According to a critic this text does not represent true picture of political ideas of the Sultanate period. It rather suggests what should be the political ideas in view of Barni. Barni considers Mahmud Ghazani as an ideal Sultan. However, this is the only text written on the Islamic political system in the Sultanate period. Barni describes in detail qualities of the Sultan, treasury, army, control of market and other allied subjects in this book.

Barni is a controversial historian and writer. He had two objectives in mind while writing history. He wanted to become a path-finder for the later historians. Moreover, he wanted to win over Sultan Firozshah Tughlaq in order to regain his lost post, prestige and wealth. Therefore, several discrepancies are to be noticed in Barni's writings. He wrote history mainly for the elites of the Muslim class. His writings are full of prejudices. His political outlook and personal likes and dislikes are quite manifest in his writings. Description of several important events are highly influenced by his personal considerations. He also exhibits a narrow religious outlook. Barni is not careful about chronological sequence too. Despite all these shortcomings in his writings, Barni's writings are quite valuable for the study of medieval Indian history. Later historians like Ferishta, Badayuni, have drawn extensively from Barni.

### 1.2.1(iv) Isami's Futuhasalatin

Another important historical work of the 13th century is Isami's **Futuhasalatin**. This text was written in 1350 AD in the court of Bahamanshah, the founder of the Bahamani dynasty. Although this text incorporates basic features of historiography but it is written in epic style. It narrates the story of

the rise of Ghazani state, the advent of Turks in India, establishment and disintegration of their rule. The **Futuhasalatin** is a very important source book for the controversial regime of **Muhammad-in-Tughlaq**. In fact, the writings of Barani and Isami are complimentary to each other. Isami has narrated events in such a simple and clear way that it nowhere makes any obstacle in chronological sequence. Unfortunately, Isami's writing is also not above contemporary religious prejudices.

#### 1.2.1(v) Hasan Nizami's Tajul Maasir :

Another celebrated historian of the Sultanate period was Hasan Nizami, the author of **Tajul-Maasir**, regarded as the first royal history of the period. Nizami has concentrated his attention not only on political aspects but cultural aspects also. While describing political events Nizami refers to Muhammad Ghori's Indian campaigns of 1191, the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan and grant of Mausura to Iltutmish by the Abbasid caliphate. Besides, it also discusses it also outlines initial opposition to the Turkish rule, social life, military organisation and other such topics. However, Nizami's writings clearly reflect his narrow, intolerant religious outlook. Therefore, it represents only the Islamic outlook of the contemporary situation. Though the text is written in the Persian, Arabic words have been used profusely in it.

#### 1.2.1(vi) Amir Khusro's Mifta-ul-Futuh Tawarikh-i-Alai, Tughlaquenama :

Amir Khusro is like a shining star amongst the Sultanate scholars. He was a noted literature as well as a musician. Although Khusro is not regarded as a true and professional historian still his writings are full of historical narrations. Khusro, who penned numerous texts, puts stress on facts and keeps himself above religious fanaticism. For example, in the **Kairanusdain**, there is a touching description of the meeting between Bugora Khan, the governor of Bengal and his son Kaikubad, the Sultan of Delhi. Similarly, details of military campaigns of Alauddin Khilji and other political events are described in the **Mifta-ul-Futuh** of Khusro. However, from historical point of view, Khusro's **Khajain-ul-Futuh** or **Twarikh-i-Alai** and **Tughlaquenama** stand out prominently in all the writings of Amir Khusro. In the first text we find an account of important events and military campaigns during first fifteen years of Alauddin Khilji's reign. It also describes the administrative reforms of Alauddin Khilji. Despite being a literary work its historical importance entrances as it is the only contemporary text of Alauddin's time. It gives support to Barani's description of Alauddin's time. It gives support to Barani's description of Alauddin Khilji's reforms. The **Tughlaquenama**, on the other hand, portrays the struggle between Khusroshah and Giasuddin Tughlaque. The narration of circumstances leading to the suppression of Khusro Khan and establishment of the power of Giasuddin Tughlaque are of great political significance. Moreover, in his **Ashique** Amir Khusro describes the conquest of Gujrat and Malawa by Alauddin Khilji. The **Nuhsipihar** gives an interesting account of Mubarak Khilji as well as varied aspects of contemporary social life. Comparatively speaking, Khusro's historical texts contain more reliable chronology than Barani. Khusro also sees historical events in totality, a rare achievement in contemporary situation.

### 1.2.1(vii) Sultan Firoz Shah's Futuhat-i-Firozeshahi

The only text written in biographical style in the Sultanate period is the **Futuhat-i-Firozeshahi** of Sultan Firozeshah. Strictly speaking, it is not in the form of literary text but rather in the form of a long inscription inscribed on the walls of a mosque. The inscription sought to explain in true perspective the political, religious beliefs and ambitions of Firoze Tughlaque and represented him as an ideal "Sunni Sultan". The **Firozeshahi** casually take notes of contemporary social life, religious atmosphere, Sultan's religious policy royal decrees, state of justice and punishment, architecture, painting also but awfully neglects chronological sequence. It is the greatest shortcoming of Firozeshahi.

### 1.2.1 (viii) Samas Siraj Afif's Tawarikh-i-Ferozeshahi :

The Twarikh-i-Firozeshahi of Samas Siraj Afif gives a detailed account of the reign of Sultan Firozeshah Tughlaque. He has described political events, social, economic and cultural activities, administrative posts, institutions, functioning of the government, architecture, painting communications and other contemporary aspects. Similarly, the **Twarikh-i-Mubarakshahi** or Yahiabin-Ahmad Sirhindi, is the only contemporary source dealing with the rule of the successors of Firozeshah Tughlaque and the Saiyyad Sultans of Delhi, Sirhindi gives due weightage to chronology. He neither eulogises the Sultans nor gives any hint of religious fanaticism. Infact, Sirhindi's book represent a true and reliable historical text dealing with political ideals and central government.

### 1.2.1(ix) Ibbatuta's Rehla

Some foreign travellers came to India during the Sultanate period and wrote their accounts. Of all such travellers, the most important was the Abyssinian (African) Ibbatuta who visited India during the rule of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaque. He stayed in India for nearly 14 years. His account is known as the **Rehala**. He viewed India as a foreigner and gave its account in comparison to other Asian countries. He has described events beginning from the Turkish conquest of India upto the reign of Muhamad-bin-Tughlaque. The **Rehala** also contains details of Indian geography, its climate, standard of living of the people, status of agriculture, trade, administration, the Indian Sultan and the Sufi Saints. Each and every narration of Ibbatuta cannot be taken to be entirely reliable as much of the description was based on hear-say and not on personal observation. Still, the **Rehala** is an important source for the study of 14th century Indian history.

### 1.2.2(i) : Historical writings of the Mughal period :

Historical writings were more developed, organised and diversified in the Mughal period than in the Sultanate period. The Mughal historiography has been classified into four categories, based on the nature and content of these writings. These are (i) court writings (ii) personal writings (iii) biographies of rulers and (iv) local historical writings.

**1.2.2.(ii) :** Several important historical texts were written between the great Mughal emperors Akbar and Aurangzeb. The notable amongst such writings are the **Akbaranama** and **Ain-i-Akbari** of

Abulfazal, **Iqbalanama-i-Jahangiri** of Mutmid Khan the **Padashahanama** of Abdul Hamid Lahori and the incomplete text of **Alamgiranama** written by Mohammad Kazim. All these texts are regarded as highly authentic. The events, their dates and the sources of information of those events are taken to be very much reliable. This class of writing is devoid of religious biogotory and influence of the Ulemas. Therefore, the picture of the Hindus portrayed in these texts appear to be convincing and reliable. Another significant feature of this class of writing is the facts that the narration of the past events have been made with Indian point of view. This trend in Mughal historiography appears from the time of Akbar itself. The writers of this class, contrary to the historians of the Sultanate period have kept themselves free of Islamic influence and tried to reflect their Indian identity. However, as these historians received court patronage. It is only but natural that they have given an exaggerated account of the achievements and qualities of their patron kings. It has also led to the tendency of either ignoring completely or taking too lightly unpleasant events of the reigns of their patron rulers in their writings.

**1.2.2(iii)** : The class of personal writings are mainly related to Akbar, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb in this context, mention many be mode of the **Muntakhabul-Tawarikh** of **Badayuni** and the **Tabaqat-i-Akbari** of Nizamuddin. Both the texts belong to Akbar's times. Badayuni's writing is highly coloured by religious fanaticism. Contrary to Abulfazal, Badayuni is highly critical of Akbar in general and his non-Islamic policies in particular. Badayuni was greatly prejudiced against Akbar as far as the emperors religious policies were concerned. However, Badayuni has specially mentioned about eminent scholars of Akbar's time as well as contemporary metaphysical activities. Abulfazal's writings are devoid of this important information. Nizamuddin wrote history of Akbar's time in an impartial manner. He described important events without any reservation or prejudice. Some important texts were written during regimes of Jahangir and Shahjahan also. The court historians continued the work of history writing on personal level. In the time of Jahangir Mohamad Khan wrote the **Iqbalanama-i-Jahangir** while the **Padashahnama** was written by Abdul Hamid Lodoi during the reign of Shahjahan. It was also during the time of Shahjahan that Mohammad Shah and Sujanarayan wrote the **Amalesaleh** and **Khulasatut-Twarikh** respectively. Another important historical work of this time is the **Muntakhab-ul-lubob** of Khafi Khan. It throws significant light on the events of Aurangzeb's rule. Similarly, the **Twarikh-i-Shershahi** of Abbas Khan Sherwani. Although this class of historical writings from valuable source material for the study of Mughal history but as they were written under court patronage their reliability becomes doubtful.

**1.2.2(iv)** : Some Mughal emperors wrote autobiographies also. The first and foremost text of this category is the **Tuzuk-i-babari** or the **Babarnama** written by Babar. Originally written in the Turkish language it was later on translated into Persian. The **Babarnama** informs us about the life and achievements of the founder of the Mughal rule in India. It also sheds light on contemporary India. Similarly, Babar's daughter and sister of Humayun, **Gulabadan Begam** wrote the **Humayunnama**, a biography of Humayun. Jahangir wrote his autobiography known as the **Tuzuk-i-Jahngiri**. The text helps us in knowing about important events of Jahangir's reign as well as, making an appraisal of Jahngir's personality. The descriptions of these texts are taken to be more or less reliable.

**1.2.2(v)** : Several writings, portraying contemporary conditions, appeared on regional history in the Mughal period. The **Mirat-e-Ahmadi** of Ali Mohammad Khan is such an important text. While writing this text Mohammad Khan took inspiration from the **Akbaranama**. The **Mirat-e-Ahmadi** throws significant light on the history of Gujarat. Similarly, Mirza Masum Bhakkari wrote the **Twarikh-e-Sindh** or **Twarikh-i-Masumi**. He has discussed in this text the history of Sindh right from its conquest by the Arabs up to the Mughal times. The book is regarded as highly authentic. Another text, the **Riazus-Salatin** of Gulam Hussain describes the history of eastern India including Bengal. He also highlights commercial activities of English trading company (East India company). Haider mirza, in his **Twarikh-e-Kashmir** has narrated the history of Kashmir from the establishment of the Muslim rule in Kashmir upto the Mughal rule. Similarly, Rafiuddin Shiraji's **Tajakiratulamuluk** discuss the history of Bijapur Kingdom. The **Khayat** written in the Rajasthane, describes the history of Rajaputana. The **Bakhar** and **Sakawali** of Maharashtra and **Burunji** of Assam reflect current historiographical trend. Although such writings are highly influenced by regional learnings, still they form important source material for the study of contemporary history and culture.

### **1.2.3 Modern historical writings on Mediaeval India :**

Indian and foreign writers and historians of 18-20th centuries produced a voluminous literature on mediaeval India. However, each writing was influenced by a set ideology. Broadly speaking, modern historiography may be closed under following headings : (i) Colonial historiography (ii) nationalist historiography (iii) Communal historiography (iv) Secular or impartial historiography and (v) the Marxist historiography. We shall discuss here features and trends of these historical writings.

**1.2.3(i)** : Modern historiography on mediaeval India began with the English and European historians. Their interest in mediaeval India was the result of their colonial and economic interests. The main thrust of their writings was to represent the British Raj as an ideal state and the Muslim rule as barbaric and fanatic. They also put emphasis on the point that the Hindus and Muslims in India have also remained as two separate and warring communities and they always lacked sense of unity. However, the colonial writers made a significant contribution to the mediaeval Indian historiography. It were they who for the first time took up the arduous task of translating important Persian and Arabic texts into English and bring them to the notice of educated world. As a result texts like **Twarikh-e-Ferishta**, **Ain-i-Akbari**, **Babarnama** appeared in English and other European languages. Later on, English historians like V.A. Smith, Lanepool and others, forcefully harped on the oft-repeated tune that the mediaeval times repents "dark age" of Indian history. They emphasised the barbaric acts of Muslim rulers in their writings. This trend becomes the basic feature of colonial historiography. Such writings widened gulf between the Hindus and Muslims and indirectly prepared background for the partition of country.

However, an important contribution to mediaeval historiography during the period under in English, reviewed in the **History of India As Told by It's Own Historian** compiled by Elliot and Dowson. It contains select pieces from historical texts in Persian. The book becomes immensely valuable, though some critics have raised their eye-brows on the manner in which selection has been made, for those scholars who do not know Persian or to whom original Persian texts are not accessible.



**1.2.3(ii) :** Man like colonial and imperialist historians, Indian scholars, on the other hand, took recourse to nationalist outlook. Their main objective in writing historical texts was to inculcate feeling of unity amongst Indians so that they could fight unitedly against the British Raj and carry forward the freedom struggle. They put emphasis on the fact that whenever the Hindus and Muslims remained united, the nation prospered but their disunity and conflicts weakened and enslaved the nation. Undoubtedly, the nationalist historians wrote with high ideals, but unfortunately, like imperialist historians, the nationalists also made religion as the base of their historical analysis. Some of the nationalist historians portrayed ancient period of Indian history as "Golden or Classical Age" while the mediaeval age in their perception, represented the "Dark Age" of Indian history. For example, the noted historian, Prof. R.C. Majumdar, viewed the Muslim rule as "a long, terrible, dark night". The nationalists represented Rana Pratap and Shivaji as national heroes because they waged long-drawn war against the Mughal emperors. The Mughals were regarded as aliens and those Hindus who opposed their rule were regarded as great warriors. However, Sher Shah and Chand Bibi, two Muslims, who fought against the Mughals, were denied glorification. The concept of foreign rule is an off repeated theme in their writings. Though they made deep study of relevant sources but their findings are one-sided.

**1.2.3(iii) :** Several historians have studied mediaeval Indian history from a communal angle and nationalist writings. Such historians have regarded the Muslim rule as a foreign rule and the Muslim rulers as foreigners. They emphasised the point that Muslim rulers were autocrats, fanatics, indulged in barbaric acts, destroyed temples and encouraged forced conversions. They also regarded liberal policies of Muslim rulers as un-Islamic. Tilak, Majumdar, Jadunath Sarkar, I.H. Qureshi and host of other writers followed this line of analysis. However, their writings could never form the main stream of historical writings and their influence remained limited.

**1.2.3(iv) :** A significant feature of mediaeval Indian historical writings is that many scholars viewed historical events and assessed rulers and their achievements with broad open and impartial outlook. In this connection, mention may be made of two outstanding publications of Prof. R. P. Tripathi. These were, the **Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire** and **Some Aspects of the Mughal Administration**. Similarly, Prof. S. H. Askari, in his writings on Sufism, Amir Khusro and Pataliputra has adopted an objective and impartial line. Similar attempts were made by Qyamuddin Ahmad in his **Wahabi Movement**. Prominent among the historians of this group are Y. Hussain, Ibn Hassan, J. L. Mehta, R.C. Jauhari and others.

**1.2.3(v) :** In subsequent times, the Marxist ideology made a deep an everlasting impact on mediaeval Indian historical writings. The Marxist historians. in order to make history as a useful social study, made an elaborate analysis of historical facts. They ignored the impact of religious struggle and put stress on class struggle which shaped historical events. They also tried to review policies of rulers in contemporary background. In their studies the historians focussed attention on the condition of common people and their role in economic activities that on dynastic narration. It led **not only** to the diversification of historical subjects matters but the scientific analysis of sources also. The **noted historians** of this school are Muhammad Habib, Nizami, Nurul Hassan, Satish Chandra and Irfan Habib.

Muhammad Habib, for example, produced facts in a new way in the book **Sultan of Ghazni**. Nurul Hassan in his two outstanding books **Sufism** and the **Agrarian Relations in Mughal India** analysed cultural and economic aspects in Marxist framework. Satish Chandra in his **Party, Politics in the Mughal Court** has emphasised the role of vested interests than religion. Athar Ali regards the Mansabadari crisis as the main weakness of the Mughal administration in his book. **The Nobility under Aurangzeb**. He has also studied the ratio of Hindus and Muslims in the Mansabadari system. Ali's Studies made it difficult to accept that Aurangzeb was a fanatic ruler. Irfan Habib's **The Agrarian System in Mughal India** further strengthens this conclusion. Several other mediaevalists like A.R. Khan, Shirin Musavi, I.H. Siddiqui, Mehandi Hussain have also adopted Marxist frame work for their writings.

### 1.3 Summary

In this unit we have outlined the major trends of mediaeval Indian history writing. You must have known by now that many historical texts were written in the Sultanate and Mughal periods. The important texts of the Sultanate period include the **Quitab-ul-Hind, Tabqat-e-Nasiri, Twarikh-e-Firozeshahi, Fatwa-e-Jahandari, Futuhasalatin, Tughlaquanama, Twarikh-e-Mubarakashi** and Rehaia Albiruni, Minhaj, Barani, Isami, Nizami, Amir Khusro and Afif were prominent scholars and historians of this period. These early writings, with few exceptions, try to establish the superiority of Islamic rule. The chronological sequence in these writings is arbitrary and faulty. Still the historians of Sultanate period began that tradition of history writing which fully developed under the Mughals. Under the Mughals, apart from court-writings historical texts appeared in regional languages as well. Some Mughal emperors even wrote autobiographies. The outstanding texts of the Mughal period include the **Akbarnama, Ain-i-Akbari, Muntakhab-ul-Twarikh, Babarnama, Humayunnama, Tujuk-e-Jahangir, Padshahnama, Mirate Ahmadi and Twarikh-e-Masumi**. Abul Fazal, Badayuni, Abdul Hamid Lahori, Khafikhan are prominent historians and scholars of Mughal times. The Mughal historiography is more advanced than that of the Sultanate period. In modern times mediaeval Indian history was written mainly from colonial, communal and Marxist point of view.

### 1.4 Key Words

The Sultanate Period	:	Rule of the Sultans of Delhi between 1206-1526 AD.
The Mughal Period	:	Rule of the Mughals between 1556-1757.
Persian	:	Iranian
Khwarizm	:	Khiva in Central Asia
Tabqat	:	Text dealing with general history
Twarikh	:	History

Fatwah	:	Direction on religious or judicial matters according to Muslim law.
Rehla	:	Travel account of Ibnbatuta
Abyssinia	:	A country in Africa

### **1.5 Questions for Exercise**

#### **1.5(i) Short Answer questions :**

1. What do you know about Albirunti ?
2. Make an estimate of Barani as a historian.
3. Write a note on Amir Khusro.
4. Give a brief introduction of Ibnbatula.
5. Discuss the main trends of colonial historiography.
6. What do you know about nationalist history writing ?
7. Discuss the features of Marxist historiography.

#### **1.5(ii) Long Answer Questions**

1. Discuss historical writings of the Sultanate period.
2. Analyse main trends of the Mughal historiography.
3. Make an estimate of modern history writings on mediaeval India.

### **1.6 Answers to Questions of Exercise**

#### **1.6(i) Short Answer Questions :**

1. See. 1.2.1 (i)
2. See, 1.2.1 (iii)
3. See, 1.2.1 (vi)
4. See, 1.2.1 (ix)
5. See, 1.2.2 (v)
6. See, 1.2.3 (i)
7. See, 1.2.3 (ii)

8. See, 1.2.3 (v)

**1.6 (ii) Long Answer Questions**

1. See, 1.2.1(i-ix)  
 2. See, 1.2.2 (i-v)  
 3. See, 1.2.3 (i-v)

**1.7 Suggested Readings**

- |                    |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| 1. Satish Chandra  | : | Madhyakalin Bharat Mein Itihasa Lekhan, Dharma aur Rajya ka Swaroop (in Hindi) |
| 2. Mediaeval India |   |  |
| 3. Imtiaz Ahmad    | : | Madhyakalin Bharat - Ek Sarvekshan (in Hindi)                                  |
| 4. F. Rosenthal    | : | History of Muslim Historiography   |
| 5. Peter Hardy     | : | Historians of Mediaeval India  |
| 6. G. P. Gooch     | : | History and Historians of 19th Century.  |



**1.4 Key Words**

The Sultanate Period  
 The Muslim Period  
 Sultan

Rule of the Sultans of Delhi between 1206 AD  
 The Mughals between 1556-1857  
 See 1.2.1 (v)  
 See 1.2.2 (i-v)  
 See 1.2.3 (i-v)

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## Lesson - 2 **Source of Medieval Indian History**

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### **Lesson Structure**

- 2.0 Introduction**
- 2.1 Objective**
- 2.2 Sources of the Sultanate Period–Detailed list of the Texts.**
- 2.3 Sources including texts and biographics for the study of Mughal Period (1526-1707)**
- 2.4 Account of the European Travellers**
- 2.5 Summary**
- 2.6 Key Words**
- 2.7 Questions for Exercise**
- 2.8 Suggested Readings**

### **2.0 Introduction**

Muslim have always had a great sense of history. Works began to be composed on the lives of the Prophet, the Caliphs, Sultans and noble, from the earliest days of Islam. These were at first exclusively written in Arabic, the language of the Quran and of the intellectual classes. But from the second half of the 10th century, with the revival of Persian naturalism of the adoption of Persian language and culture by the Turkish dynasties historical works began to be written in Persian also. When the Muslims came to India, they brought without them the Persian tradition of history writing and it was kept up by the immigrants from Persia and Central Asia. From the 10th to 11th centuries, a large mass of historical literature, consisting of general dynastic and regional histories biographies and memories, was produced.

It is these historical writings in Persian which have served as the main source of information for Medieval Indian History.

The period of the Sultanate of Delhi and the local dynasties is extremely rich in historical writings. But to use these properly it is necessary to have a clear understandings of the mentality of the men who wrote them. They wrote for different reasons, for fame for reward, for pleasing their

patrons, for the edification of their contemporaries and the future generations and for preserving the memory of the achievements of Muslim rulers.

Most of the medieval historians were connected with the court. They were not able to write what they felt to be true. They also indulged in panegyrics of their patrons. Besides, many of them like Minhaj-us-Siraj, Hasan Nizami, Amir Khusru and Beruni were of aristocratic origin which led them to write about kings and nobles ignoring the life and conditions of the common people. Furthermore, they were orthodox Muslims and lived in an age when men's mind were dominated by religion. They tried to depict medieval rulers as champions of Islam and so indulged in gross exaggerations and rhetoric. Their statements should not, therefore, be taken too literally. It is necessary to go beneath the surface of their verbose and hyperbolic language to get at the truth. They furnish 'writes Peter Hardy, 'the raw' material of history, but it has to be processed and refined before being turned into the finished product.'

The medieval historians lacked an understanding of the social and economic forces that bring about vital changes in societies and fall of kingdoms. But it could not be correct to say that they treated history as a sequence of events, often isolated and without obvious relationships. The historical writings of the period reveal that the medieval historians, including the Mughal historians, were conscious of the change and of relationships between idea, events and institutions of one reign with those of another. That many of them were not content to write merely the history of a single reign, but wrote accounts of dynasties to show that they were aware of the social, political and religious developments and relationships between events.

## 2.1 Objective

The objective of this lesson is to throw light on the sources for the study of the sultanate period as well as the history of the Mughal India. These sources include both the primary and the secondary sources. The Muslims were conscious about history writing and therefore, we have sufficient literatures for the study of history.

## 2.2 Sources of Sultanate Period

The following primary sources are very helpful in constructing the history of the Sultanate period.

- (1) **Adabul Harb Wash Shujaat** by Fakher-i-Mudabbir, edited by Ahmad Suhaili, Tehran, 1946 A.H. This work, dedicated to Iltutmish, deals with the art of warfare during the medieval period but the introductory chapter are elevated to the essential qualifications and characteristic of the king and his duty to selected fit officers of the state.
- (2) **Afsana-i-Shahein** by Muhammad Kabir bin Shyikh Ismail. It gives 140 interesting anecdotes and stories regarding the Lodi and Sur Sultans of Delhi. The author was the grandson (daughter's son) of Saikh Khalilullah Haqqani, an Afghan saint of Rajgir, who died in the Punjab in Akbar's time.

- (3) **Dasturut Albab-i-limil Hisab** by Haji Abdul Hamid Muharrir Ghaznavi. The author completed this work in 1358 A.D. It contains invaluable information on the registers maintained in the revenue department, qualifications and functions of officers connected with the ministry of revenue and explains revenue terms.
- (4) **Diwan-i-Badr-i-Chach**, (Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow) It contains some very interesting Qasidahs (Persian verses in praise of some dignitary) in praise of Muhammad bin Tughluq and is helpful in constructing the chronology of some important event of his reign.
- (5) **Fatawa-i-Jahandari** by Ziqat-ud-din Barami. This is really the continuation of the author's famous work 'Tarikh-i-Firozshahi.' It deals with such topics as the safety of the king, justice, army, intelligence officers, prince control etc. It interprets both religion and politics in terms of aristocratic privileges.
- (6) **Fawaid-i-Firuzshahi** by Sharaf Muhammad Atai. This work is dedicated to Firuz Shah and it gives interesting information about the folklore and the life of the Muslims in Medieval India.
- (7) **Fawaid-ul-Faud**, conversation of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya, compiled Amir Hasan Ala Sizzi. This collection of the conversations of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya from 1307 to 1322 A.D. gives his glimpse into the Khanqah-life of Medieval India from the time of Alauddin Khilji to the days to Ghiyasuddin Tughluq.
- (8) **Fatuhat-i-Firuzshahi** It is a short autobiographical memoir written by Firuz Tughluq himself. It contains a partial exposition of the policies and attitudes of Firuz Tughluq.
- (9) **Futuh-us-Salatin** by Isami. It is a versified account to the rulers of India from the Ghazanavids to the Bahmavids. The author point Muhammad bin Tughluq colours and extols the achievements of the Bahmanids. This is the only available work which gives an account of the closing years of Waziruddin Mahmudis reign.
- (10) **Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi**, general called Tarikh-i-Firishta by Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Atribadi, Surnamed Farishta. The work is also styled 'Naurao Nama'. It is a general history of India from the earliest times to 1606 A.D. It is certainly one of the most important chronicles relating to the medieval period of Indian History. It forms the main source of the later works on the general histories. It is remarkable for its impartially and Sir Henry Elliot rightly observes that the author does not flatter even the prince in whose region he lived. The whole work has been translated into English by General J. Briggs, in his 'History of the Rise of the Muhamadan power in India.' (4 Vols. London, 1829).
- (11) **Ijaz-i-Khusravi** by Amir Khusrau. This is a collection of letters, 'fatahnamas' (letter of message of victory), petitions etc. drafted by Amir Khusrau. Some of the documents e.g. the Fatahnama of Lakhnauti, are of great historical importance. It is invaluable for the study of the cultural and intellectual trends of the periods.

- (12) **Insha-i-Mahim**, by Ainul Mulk Mahru. This is a collection of 133 private letters and official documents drafted by Ainul Mahru. It is a veritable source of information for the administrative and cultural history of the Tughluq period.
- (13) **Jawaniul Hikayat wa Lawamiur Riwayat**, by S. Muhammed Awfi. It contains some anecdotes which throw light on the cultural atmosphere of the early Turkish period.
- (14) **Khairul Majalish**, by Hamid Qalandar. It supplies interesting details about the market control of Alauddin Khilji and the impact of Mongol invasions on Delh.
- (15) **Khazainul Futuh**, by Amir Khusru. The author's account of the campaigns of Alauddin Khilji in the Deccan of the Mongol invasions is based on first hand knowledge and is extremely valuable.
- (16) **Kitabul Hind**, by Abu Raihank Alberuni. Translated into English by Edwards E.C. Sanchan. It gives valuable information about the life and conditions of the Indian people during the 11th century.
- (17) **Maiktubat-i-Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahya** : There are several collection of the letters of Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahya 'Maneri'. These letters throw light on the religious and cultural conditions during the Tughluq period and are helpful in understanding the policy of the Tughluq Sultan with reference to religious sects and movements.
- (18) **Masalikul Absar fi mumalikul Amsar**, by Ibn Fazlullah al-Umri. This is an encyclopedic work running into several volumes. It contains interesting information about Muhammad bin Tughluq and the social and economic condition prevailing in the country at that time.
- (19) **Miftahul Futuh**, by Amir Khusru, It contains an accounts of the campaigns of Jalaluddin Khilji.
- (20) **Nirh Sipihr**, by Amir Khusrau, It contains an account of the campaigns and activities of Mubarak Shah Khilji. One of its sections dealing with India and her contribution to literature and culture is of special interest.
- (21) **Qirain-us-Sadani**, by Amir Khusru. It describes incidents relating to Bughra Khan's meeting with his son, Kaiqubad of the period.
- (22) **Pehla of Ibn Batuta** : It supplies interesting details about the personal life of Mohammad bin Tughluq. his various projects and the general social and economic conditions prevailing in India in the 14th century.
- (23) **Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi** : The name of its author is not exactly known. The work was compiled in 13770 A.D. at the instance of Firuz Tughluq. It contains a short history of the earlier part of Firuz Shah's reign, with a details account of his virtues and minificence and works of public utility etc.



- (24) **Tabaqat-Akbari**, by Nizamudin Ahmad. This is a general history of Indian from the time of Subuktagin, 977 A.D. to the 38th year of Akbar's reign; i.e. 1593 A.D. It forms the basis of all the subsequent works written on the same subject and is held in high estimation as a standard authority. Firshta frequently borrows from this work.
- (25) **Tabaqat-Nasiri**, by Minhaj-us-Siraj, It was written mainly in 1259-60. The author had close contact with the Ghurids and had held posts of Qazi Khatib (person, delivering a religious sermon) and Sadr-i-Jahan (officer incharge of religious and charitable endowments). It is an invaluable, source of information for the history of the early Turkish Sultans and their malik's and amir (i.e. high officers of the State).
- (26) **Taj-ul-Daudi** : According to Elliot, its author was one Abol Ullah'. It is a history of the Lodi and Sur dynasties from the time of Bahlol Lodi to the death of Daud Shah (i.e. 1575 A.D.).
- (28) **Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi**, by Ziauddin Barami. This work was completed in 1357 A.D. When the author was 74 years of age. It comprises the history of the nine successive kings of Delhi from the succession of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban (1266 A.D.) to the 6th year of Firuzshah's reign (1357 A.D.) The Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi may be said to be a continuation of Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, composed by Minhaj-us-Siraj, Barami begins with the history of India just where Minhaj leaves it. It is the most valuable work of the Sultanate period and is the principal source form which materials for the Tabaqat-i-akbari and Tarikh-i-Firishta have been drawn.
- (29) **Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi**, by Shams-i-Siraj Afif. It is devoted exclusively to the life and reign of Firuzshah, covering the period the 1351-1388 A.D. written after Timur's invasion, it looks back at the age of Firuzshah as a period of peace and prosperity.
- (30) **Tarikh-i-Khan Jahani wa Makhzani Afghani**, by Khawaja Nimatullah Harawt. This work was completed in 1613 A.D. It gives an account of the Afghans particularly the Lodies and the Surs.
- (31) **Tarikh-i-Mubariakshahi**, by Yahya Sirhindi. It is a general history of the Sultans of Delhi from Shihabuddin Ghur to Muizzuddin Abul Fath Mubarak Shah of the Sayiyyid dynasty. In many aspects, it corrects and supplements Minhaj, Barami and Afif.
- (32) **Tarikh-i-Salatin Afghana**, by Ahmad Yadgar. This is also known as Tarikh-i-Shahi. It was written in 1601 A.D. and gives an interesting account of the Lodis.
- (33) **Tughluq Nama**, by Amir Khusrau, It is a valuable source of information for the history of the Tughluq dynasty, particularly the circumstances in which Ghiyasuddin Tughluq overthrew Khusrau Khan and established his power.
- (34) **Waqiat-i-Mahtaqi**, by Rizqullah Mushtaqi. It contains interesting historical anecdotes relating to the Lodis and their successors.

- (35) **Tarikh-i-Muhammadi**, by Muhammad Bihamid Khani. It is a general history from the time of the Prophet to 1438-39 A.D. The account of the Khilji and the Tughluq Sultan, though based mainly on Kusrun authorities contains bits of information which are new and interesting.
- (36) **Zafar Nama**, by Sharifuddin All Yazdi. It was completed in 1224-25 A.D. It contains a detailed account of Timur's campaigns.

#### Provincial Histories :

The histories of the various provincial dynasties also serve a very useful purpose. They are as follows :—

- (a) **Bazatanangiri** by Kalhan. "This is the only available political account of Kashmir upto 1148. Its Study is indispensable for a back-ground to the history of medieval Kashmir.
- (b) **Tarikh-i-Rashidi**, by Mirza Hyder Dughial. It gives an eye witness account of the history and culture of Kashmir. It is indispensable for the study of the history of Kashmir from 1420 to 1540 A.D.
- (c) **Burhin-i-Maasir**, by Ali bin Azizullah Tabatabai. This is a history of the Bahmanids of Gulbarga, the Bahmanids of Bidar and the Nizam state of Ahmadnagar to the year 1596.
- (d) **Tazkirat-ul-Maluk**, by Rafiuddin Shirazi. This work completed in 1611, gives an account of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur.
- (e) **Tabaqat-i-Mahnid Chau**, by Abdul Karim. It is a universal history of Islam from the down of creation to 1499-1500. It contains information about the Deccan Gujarat and Khandesh.
- (f) **Mirat-i-Sikandari**, by Sikandar bin Muhammad allas Manjhu. It is a dynastic History of the Muzaffarids till the death of the Zaffar III in 1591.
- (g) **Tarikh-i-Sind**, by Muhammad Masum Nami. It is a history of Sind from the Arab conquest to its annexation by Akbar.
- (h) **Tarikh-i-Tahiri**, by Tahir Muhammad Nisyami. It is a history of Thatta (Sid) from the earliest times to 1609. It was completed in 1620.

The accounts of the foreign travellers who visited India during this period, also from a very useful mass of materials. Abdin Razzaq the Persian envoy who visited Vijaynagar (1442-1443). Nicolo Crote, the Italian traveller who paid a visit to Vijaynagar in 1420, Domingos Paes, a Portuguese who has recorded a detailed description of Vijaynagar about 1522 and Edoardo Barbosa who was present in India in 1516 all throw sufficient light on the political, social, economic and religious life of the 16th century (1503-08) and Mauhan who visited Bengal in 1406 have highly praised the excellence of Bengal goods. Athanasies Nikiten, the Persian traveller who travelled in the Bahmani Kingdom during the years 1470-74, in the reign of Muhammad Shah III, throws light on the condition of the common

people. Marco Polo, the great Venetian traveller, who visited South India in the 13th century, speaks of the fertility of the soil and the great wealth of the country.

### **2.3 Mughal Period (1526-1707)**

(1)(i) **Adab-i-Alamgiri** – Edited by Rabil Khan. Besides letters of Prince Akbar, it contains 608 letters of Aurangzeb, about half of which were written in Shah Jahan's reign. They throw a flood of light on the period. They form valuable means of estimating Aurangzeb's Character and throw light on vexed questions.

(2)(ii) **Alkain-i-Alamgiri** – by Enayat Ullah. It contains probably the only reference in contemporary Persian works to Guru Govind Singh's struggle against Aurangzeb's officers and measures taken in the seize of Chan Kaur. The lives of the Jizya. Aurangzeb's relations with the Europeans rather troubles, his order forbidding the appointment of Hindus as subehdars and Faujdars all find place here.

(3)(iii) **Ain-i-Akbri** – by Abul Fazi. It was completed as an appendix to the Akbar Nama. It is partly history of Akbar and partly a minute records of revenue, rare household necessary, military regulations and other important matters, with a gazetteer of India and a collection of His Majesty's sayings and teachings, it gives us not only an account of the political institutions but popular beliefs as well.

(4)(iv) **Akbar Nama** – by Abul Fazal. It is the first official history of the Mughals. The Akbar Nama and the Ain-i-Akbri together constitute a single book. The first part of the Akbar Nama contains an account of Akbar's ancestors, including that of his father Humayun. The second part gives the complete account of Akbar's reign upto the 46th year, in a chronological order. The work was undertaken in 1595 and was completed in 1602. Besides its statistical utility, Akbar Nama serves as an admirable treatise of reference on numerous branches of Brahmanical science of and on the manners, beliefs and traditions, and indigeneous lore.

(5)(v) **Akhabarat** – on 'Minutes of the proceedings of the Mughal Emperor in court.' They formed a very important part of Mughal system of maintaining official records. These documents served the inner working of the court. They were usually supplied to the royal historiographers in original or in copies.

(6)(vi) **Akhabar-ul-Akhyan** – by Shaikh Abdul Haq. It was completed in 1590. It is a collection of biographies of saints, scholars of holy men of India.

(7)(vii) **Alamgir Nama** – by Munshi Muhammad Kazim. It is an account of the first 10 years of Aurangzeb's reign.

(8)(viii) **Amal-i-Shalih** – by Muhammad Shalih Kambhir. It is a detailed history of Shah Jahan's reign together with an account of his ancestors, complete in two separate volumes. The second volume contains biographical notes of eminent men of Shah Jahan's time.

**(9)(ix) Asar-i-Shahjahani** – by Muhammad Sadiq of Delhi, a detailed history of Shah Jahan. It traces the history of Mughal from the foundation of their dynasty in India. This history of Shah Jahan and his ancestors relates numerous anecdotes about eminent persons and saints.

**(10)(x) Buhar-i-Sukhan** – by Muhammad Shalih Kambher, author of Amnal-i-Shalih. It contains letter of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb to the rulers of Basra, Bulkh, Turan, Persia, Herat and Governors of Qandhar. It is invaluable for the study of the Mughal foreign policy.

**(11)(xi) Chahar Gulshan** – by Rai Chatarman. It is a general history of India from the earliest to 1759 A.D., containing notes on Hindu and Muslim saints of various localities. It includes a topographical account of the Deccan.

**(12)(xii) Dabistan-Mazahib** – by anonymous Parsi author who a contemporary of Akbar and Jahangir. It gives an insight into the religious practices of the period as seen by a student of comparative religion.

**(13)(xiii) Dastur-i-Jahan Kusha** – by Khair Ullah, who was for 15 years in the services of Shah Jahan. The work concerns itself with all that relates to. It discusses organization marching, encamping tactics, manouvering, supplies equipment, relations between the leader and the soldiers etc.

**(14)(xiv) Iqbal nama-i-Jahangiri** – by Mutamid Khan, who was attached the Court of Jahangir. He completed this work in 1619. It is divided into 3 volumes, the first two which, contain the history of Babur, Humayun and Akbar, the third being devoted the history of Jahangir. Though avoidly a summary of the contemporary account ..... probably on contempory knowledge.

**(15)(xv) Fatuhah-i-Alamgiri** – by Ishar Dass. It gives us a contemporary account of Aurangzeb's reigns till his 34th year.

**(16)(xvi) Kalimat-i-Aurangzeb** – completed by 'Inayat Ullah. It contains notes of Aurangzeb, addressed to 31 persons mostly about public affairs. This letter book is a mine of information. It contains a letter of Aurangzeb to Prince Akbar blaming him for trusting the Rajputs. Another letter contains an order for the general arrest and execution of the Sikhs, A series of letters elucidates the much vexed questions of Aurangzeb's relations with European merchants in his.

**(17)(xvii) Khulasat up-Tawarikth Empire** – by Sujan Rai of Batala, completed in 1615. This is a general history of India coming down to the death of Shah Jahan and especially valuable for its description of India during Aurangzeb. It gives an economic designation of the country besides making mention of contemporary saints, scholars and teachers. The author's references to the Sikhs form a very valuable part of the work.

**(18)(xviii) Half Aqalim** – by Amim Ahmad Razi written in 1592-94. It is a gazetteer of the world including India. Besides geographical descriptions, it includes biographical one on rules, prince, saints and scholars of various localities mentioned.

(19)(xix) **Half Aquali** – by Aqil Khan Razi. It is a contemporary account of Aurangzeb which terminates in the 5th year of his reign. It is the standard history of the war of succession among the sons of Shah Jahan.

(20)(xx) **Humayunnama** – by Gulbadan Begum, daughter of Babur. She wrote her memories of the reign of Babur and Humayun at the request of Akbar in order to supply Abul-Fazl materials for the first part of Akbar Nama, dealing with Babur and Humayun.

(21)(xxi) **Humayun Nama** – by Knwband Mir written in 1535. It supplies us with some information about the reign of Humayun, particularly the political institution of the period.

(22)(xxii) **Lataif-ul-Akbar of Badi-uz-Zaman** – It is an account of the Mughal expedition to Qandhar under Dara Shikoh by an eye witness.

(23)(xxiii) **Maasir-Alamgiri** – by Mustaid Khan. It was compiled in 1710 A.D. after the death of Aurangzeb. This is the standard history of the last 40 years of Aurangzeb reign (i.e., from 1667 A.D. to 1707 A.D.).

(24)(xxiv) **Maasir-i-Jahangiri** – by Kamgar Husayni. It is a history of the early life and the reign of emperor Jahangir. This work was completed in the 3rd year of Shah Jahan's reign, i.e. in 1630 A.D. It is useful for the reign of Akbar as well.

(25)(xxv) **Maasir-i-Rahimi** – by Muhammad Abdul Baqi, written in 1616. It is a biography of Abdur Rahim Khan with a background of a short history of the Muslim rule in India. It includes accounts of various men of letters with whom 'Abdur Rahim used to surround himself.'

(26)(xxvi) **Maasir-ul-Umari** – is a well known biographical dictionary of the Mughal public servants written in 1742-1747 by Khan Zawaz Aurangabad. It based on contemporary writings accordingly a very useful work of reference.

(27)(xxvii) **Muntakhab-ul-Lubab** – by Khafi Khan. It is high esteemed history, commencing with the invasion of Babur and ending with the 14th year of Md. Shah's reign. This is a very valuable work which contains an account of the entire reign of Aurangzeb. The author's impartiality is bosomed out by his accesional flings at Aurangzeb and his policy.

(28)(xxviii) **Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh** – of Abdual Qadir Badayauni. The work has gained a wide popularity on account of the outspoken tone in which he criticises the religious views of Akbar as well as of others who departed from his own orthodox faith in the doctrines of Islam. Though based on some earlier works, it contains much original matter and gives very interesting and valuable biographies of renowned saints physicians scholars and poets of Akbar's time.

(29)(xxix) **Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh** – by Yahya Bin Abdul Latif. It gives an account of the reigns of Babur, Humayun and Akbar. It was written towards the end of Akbar's reign.

- (30)(xxx) **Nuskha-i-Dillusha** – by Bhim Sen. It contains a contemporary account of the affairs during Aurangzeb's reign. It throws light on Shivaji's career Aurangzeb's relations with the Rajputs and Marathas by conquest of Bijapur and Golkunda and temple demolition by Aurangzeb, and its consequences.
- (31)(xxxi) **Padshan Nama** – by Mirza Aminimal Qazvini. It comprises history of the early life of Shah Jahan and the first 10 years of his reign.
- (32) **Padshah Nama** – by Abdul Hamid Lahori. As Shah Jahan wanted historiographer to come up to the level of Abul Fazl in his literary style, he asked Abdul Hamid to write the account of the first ten years afresh. Thus the Padshah Nama of Abdul Hamid is the final official history of the period. It comprises the history of the first two decades of Shah Jahan's reign (1627-1647).
- (33) **Padshahnama** – by Muhammad Waris. This royal historiographer wrote the account of the years 21 to 30 of Shah Jahan's reign (1617-1657 A.D.)
- (34) **Ruqaat-i-Alamgiri, or letters of Aurangzeb** – In it we find the Mughal practices in their actual working revealed. The princes or commanders and governors the relation between officials and news writers, regulations about the assessment and collection of land revenue, the position of Hindu at the Court, are all found reflected here.
- (35) **Safinal-ul-Auliya** – by prince Dara Shikoh. It is a collective biography of saints, including those of the Mughal period. Dara recounts his own experiences when on pilgrimage to the toms of these saints as well.
- (36) **Swanah-i-Akbari** – by Amir Haider Herayniwasti Bilgrami. It is a valuable and somewhat rare history of Akbar from his birth to the end of the 24th year of reign. This work was probably written towards the close of the 18th century. According to Blochmann it is perhaps the only critical historical work. written by a native.
- (37) **Tabaqat-i-Akbari** – by Nizamuddin Ahmad (See under Sultanate period).
- (38) **Tarikh-i-Alamgiri** – by Ahmad Quli Safavi, news writer of Bengal. This is a rare contemporary account of Aurangzeb's reign. The manuscripts is preserved in the library of the Muslim University, Aligarh.
- (39) **Tarik-i-Alfi** – It is a history of the millennium, commencing with the death of the prophet to the days to Akbar. It was ordered to be compiled by a company of distinguished scholars, singled out by Akbar himself. This work was based on the best available sources. Its concluding portions comprise the first official history of Akbar's reign, compiled under the emperor's own supervision. Nizamuddin Ahmad has based his account of Hymayun's reign mainly on the Tarikh-i-Alfi and has extensively drawn upon it for an account of Akbar's reign.

**(40) Tawarikh-i-Shah Jahan** – by Muhammad Sadiq, who was a Waqia-Nawis (news-writer) under Shah Jahan. This is a complete history of Shah Jahan's reign, written from the author's perennial knowledge.

**(41) Tarikh-i-Muhammad Shahi, Nadus-ul-Zamani** – by Khushal Chand, written in 1741-42. It contains a useful account of Aurangzeb's progeny and high officers of the state besides an account of scholars from the reign of Akbar to Aurangzeb.

**(42) Tazkirat-ul-Salatin-i-Chughta** – by Muhammad Hadi Quamar Khan. It is a history of the Mughal emperors upto the 6th year of Muhammad Shah's reign (i.e. 1723 A.D.). It comprises an account of Timur and his descendants and of Akbar down to the 22nd year of his reign. It was completed in the time of Akbar but the name of the author is not known.

**(43) Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuriya** – It comprises an account of Timur and his descendants and of Akbar down to the 22nd year of his reign. It was completed in the time of Akbar but the name of the author is not known.

**(44) Tarikh-ul-Waqilai** – by Humayun's ever-bearer Jajhar Aftabji. As the author remained in constant attendance upon his royal master he was an eye witness to all the events. He commenced this work in 1587, i.e. 32 years after Humayun's death. The work was translated into English by C. Steward in 1832.

**(45) Tarikh-i-Shershahi** – by Abbas Sherwani, a Pathan of high standing under Sher Shah. He was asked by Akbar to compile his account of Sher Shah is based less on his perennial knowledge and more on what he could gather from various sources. It is an indispensable source material on the history of Sher Shah.

**(46) Tuzak-i-Bhuri** – popularly known as Babur Nama or Memoirs of Babur originally written by Babur in Turki, it was translated into Persian by Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan under instructions from Akbar. Leyon and Erskine translated it into English from the Persian version in 1826 while Mrs. A. S. Beveridge translated it from the original Turki in 1921. This autobiography of Babur ranks among the most precious treasures of Indian historical literature, it gives details about the political and cultural conditions prevailing in India at the beginning of the 16th century. In it, Babur has given frankly his faults, failings and vices as well as virtues. Besides describing political and military events, Babur has given a detailed description of the physical features and the nature of the country, its animals and birds flowers and trees. This book is a first-rate authority on the history of the age.

**(47) Tuzak-i-Jahangiri** – It is an autobiography of Jahangir, also known as Jahangir Nama. It covers the period from his accession on to the 17th years of his reign. It was continued under his supervision by Mutamid Khan to the beginning of the 19th year. It reveals the daily life of Jahangir with frankness except for a few incidents such as his revolt against his father, the circumstances leading to his marriage with Nur Jahan and those of prince Khusran's death, which were glossed over.

**(48) Zabd-ut-Tawarikh** – by Nur-ul-Haq. It was written in the reign of Jahangir and contains a general history of India as well as an account of various dynasties.

## **2.4 Account of European Travellers**

A large number of European travellers visited India during the Mughal. They have left their accounts of the country which contribute to our knowledge of this period. Being foreigners, they had their inborn and in some cases acquired prejudices and pre-possessions as well. So, while studying these travellers accounts, we must be very careful. For Humanyun, we have Sidi Ali Rais's trend. For Akbar, the account of Rajph Titch (1583-91) and John Linscheten, the Dutch traveller who spent five years in Goa (1583-88) from a very important source of information. De Lael's Account of India is a contemporary version of Indian events which is very useful for the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir.

Monserrate's commentry is partly a journal of hit governly when he accompanied Akbar. On his expedition to Kabul Palsaert's Account of India translated into English from the Dutch by Mereland as Jahangir's India, is of considerable help to us.

Among the better known accounts of India and narrators of its history by European travellers in the reign of Jahangir we have Travel Account of Peter Della Vella (1623-24), the Account of the Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe (1615-19). Jordan's Journal a Voyage in the East India's Hawkin's Voyages (1608-13) and Terry's A Voyage to East India (1616-19). Roe, Terry and Hawkins represented England at the Mughal Court. Roe describes at length the customs and festives of the court, the fashions in vague and the political intrigues of the time. He tells us about Jahangir's personal character and state of Fine Arts.

Terry's accoutn contains a description of the country and the condition of the people. Hawkin's account is mainly confined to the description of personal character of Jahangir and his daily routine.

Peter Mundy's Travels (1628-34), Manriqae's Account of his Mission of Travels (1629-43) and Middeton's Voyage are some of the valuable accounts of Shah Hanhan's Voyage to Surat (1689), Beruner's Travels in the Mughal Empire (1656-68). Tavellier's Travels Marshall's John Marshal in India (1668-72). Thevenot's, Accounts of Mogol India, Mandelslo's Voyages and Travels into the India (1669) and Thomas Burney's. A Geographical Account of the countries round the Bay of Bengal (1669-79), are very useful.

Accounts of Jesuit Missioneries. The Jesuit Missionaries from Portuguese India who came to Mughal Court during Akbar's rule in Vtatur and remained there for sometimes, have supplied us with a good deal of useful material. Dur Jarric's Akbar and the Jesuits, and Guerrerio's Jahangir and the Jesuits tell us about the relation of Akbar and Jahangir with the Jesuits.

The foreigner travellers, English ambassadors and Portuguese missionaries present mostly the dark side of picture.



The Factory Records of the various companies trading in the East form a very useful source of information. These records preserve not only the political history of contemporary India but authentic stories of unpleasant happenings as well which were not likely to find favour with Persian chronicles. They tell us a good deal about economic conditions, commercial costs and the operations of the Indian markets as well. No student of Indian history can afford to neglect these interesting documents.

Archaeological sources of the inscriptions are the most important. They found in Persian Arabic, Sanskrit, Hindi and other languages of the period. They are very useful for reconstructing the history of the Mughal periods. Many buildings of the period are dated and some contained inscriptions of historical interest. Temples and mosques usually bear dedicatory epistles, telling is not only of their builders but also about their ancestors as well as contemporary rulers. Various forts have similar commemorative inscriptions which tells us not only about the builders and their exploits but also of their ancestor's. Mughal buildings and coins have their own tale to tell.

## 2.5 Summary

This unit has sought to describe the important and reliable sources both literary and archaeological for the study of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal period as well. For the convenience of study the unit has been divided into two parts, namely the Sultanate period and the Mughal period. The fact which remains noteworthy is that with the advent of mediaeval period there is a sudden spurt in the writing of the Mughal period as compared to the ancient and early mediaeval period and the number of inscriptions is less. Similarly the number of memorial buildings and monuments registers an increasing trend. The accounts of the foreign travellers like Al-Biruni etc. constitute very important source for the period under study. Different types of books and literature were written during the period Tabqat-e-Nasvi, Tawaikh-e-Firoz Shahi, Shahnama-Tarikh-e-Alai, Tugalaq Nama and Rehala etc. deserve special mention among the sources Marco-Polo and Ibnbatuta were important among foreign travellers to record their views. While Qutub Minar and Firoz Shah Kotla are among monuments of the Sultanate period, Red Fort and Taj Mahal are outstanding monuments of the Mughal period.

## 2.6 Key Words

- |    |             |   |  |
|----|-------------|---|--|
| 1. | Pavequiries | : | Texts which are in praise of individual.               |
| 2. | Amir        | : | High official associated with administration.          |
| 3. | Fatwa       | : | Edict according to Islamic rules on religious matters. |
| 4. | Tawarikh    | : | History  |

5.	Shariat	:	Islamic law
6.	Managib, Fazayal	:	Mediaeval Panegyrics
7.	Maqtubat	:	Collection of the thoughts of Sufi Saints
8.	Futuhāt	:	Autobiography official rules.
9.	Ain	:	Official rules.
10.	Tabqat	:	Texts written by historians during Mughal period.
11.	Khyat	:	History of Rajputana in the Rajasthani language
12.	Sakavali	:	Historical texts in Marathi language.
13.	Dastur-e-Amal	:	Text related to the Mughal administration.
14.	Insha	:	Official letter of the Mughal period.

## **2.7 Questions for Exercise**

### **2.7.1 Short Answer questions :**

1. What do you know about Minhaj Shiraj ?
2. Give an assessment of the Historian Burni.
3. Show your acquaintance with writing of Amir Khusro.
4. Write a short note on the foreign travellers coming to India during Sultanate period.
5. What do you know about the archaeological sources for the study of Sultanate history ?
6. Give an account of the court historians of the Mughal period.
7. Mention the names of books written on the regional history.
8. Write a brief note on the foreign travellers who came to India during Mughal period.

### **2.7.2 Long Answer Questions**

1. Give an account of the literacy sources for the study of sultanate history.
2. Examine the sources for the study of the Mughal history.
3. Write an essay on the sources for the study of mediaeval Indian history.

## 2.8 Suggested Readings

1. Satish Chandra : Mediaeval India
2. Imtiaz Ahmad : Madhyakalin Bharat - Ek - Sarvekshana
3. Awadh Bihari Pandey : Uttara Madhya, Kalin Bharat
4. Hanishchandra Verma : (Editor) Madhyakalin Bharat
5. K.A.Nizami : Mediaeval Indian History & Culture
6. Habib and Nizami : The Delhi Sultanate
7. Irfan Habib (Ed) : Madhyakalin Bharat
8. Kameshwar Prasad : Teach yourself : History of India (1206-1526) in Hindi.



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## Lesson - 3 **Establishment of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1290) with Special Reference to Iltutmish and Balban**

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### Lesson Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objective
- 3.2 Qutubuddin Aibak
- 3.3 Iltutmish
- 3.4 Estimation of Giasuddin Balban
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Key Words
- 3.7 Questions for Exercise
- 3.8 Suggested Readings

### 3.0 Introduction

The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate is final result of the campaigns started by Turkish invaders for acquiring sovereignty over India. The Mahmud of Ghazni did not aim at establishing his permanent rule because his invasion was in the nature of loot intended at taking away the fabulous wealth of this country. During the period from 1206 onwards Northern India was a part of Ghoviride kingdom, extending from Central Asia to the borders of Bengal. Md. Ghori's interests were more in Central Asia, although he continued to come to India during the period. After the assassination of Md. of Ghaznavi 1206 the position became politically more confused because he had not named a successor. He had many slaves all of whom considered themselves having equal status and equal claim to the his successor.

### 3.1 Objective

This lesson is intended to acquaint the students with the process of the establishment of Turkish rule in India, Besides, our effort will be to show as to what important changes did take place in Indian polity after the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. During the period they not only fought

with their Indian contemporaries rather they also struggled with other political rivals and finally laid the foundation of Sultanate rule. The Khalzis and the Tughlaqs later on consolidated and expanded the foundation of Muslim rule in India. In this chapter we shall make intensive study of the achievements of Iltutmish and Balban.

## **3.2 Qutubuddin Aibak**

Qutubuddin Aibak (1206-10) is considered to be the founder of the Delhi Sultanate. He was most competent among the slaves of Md. Ghori and, therefore, he was appointed to various key posts including Amir-e-Akhur Quhram. He demonstrated his military capability. He had accompanied Md. Ghori in his campaigns against Ghazni and Terain the fact he started his rule as a representative of Md. Ghori in 1192-1206. During this period he expanded the Turkish rule in India. After the death of Md. Ghori he became the ruler of Turkey occupied territory. He established the Turkish rule in India and with the permission of the Sultan of Ghori, he was formally consecrated as the king. In the year 1208, he was liberated from slavery and formally granted diplomatic recognition as the Sultan of Delhi by the Sultan of Ghor Gayasuddin Muhammad. The dynasty founded by Aibak is known as the "Mamluk Dynasty".

Qutubuddin Aibak had to face many challenges after his coronation as the Sultan. Although the territory extending from Punjab to Bengal formed part of the Aibak's Kingdom but the control was not firm. He had to face the opposition of Khilji's of Bihar and Bengal and Rajputs from Rajputana. The most serious opposition Aibak had to face was from Tazuddin Yaloz and Nasiruddin Qubacha who considered themselves to be the successor of Sultan Md Ghori and wanted to capture his throne. But Aibak faced the threat valiantly and defeated Yaloz in 1208 resulting into his complete central over Ghazni and Yaloz was expelled. Now Panjab and Delhi region was under firm control of Aibak. He played the diplomacy of marriage to win the friendship of Qubacha and married his daughter with him. He extended his influence over Bengal by subjugating Ali Mardan. Further he tightened his control over rebellion Rajput states. Through his deeds, he saved the newly founded Turkish Kingdom and strengthened the foundation. He could not give adequate attention to governance because of his premature death in 1210 A.D.

### **3.3.1 Military achievements of Iltutmish.**

### **3.3.2 Administrative arrangement of Iltutmish.**

## **3.3 Iltutmish**

The actual history of Delhi sultanate begins from the reign of Iltutmish, although he was not the first sultan. A proper assessment of his contribution can be made only when we estimate the position of the Delhi Sultanate during the period from 1206 onwards. During this period Northern India was a part of Ghoriride kingdom, extending from Central Asia to the borders of Bengal. Md. Ghori's interests were more in Central Asia, although he continued to come to India during the period. After his assassination in 1206, the position became politically more confused because he had not named

a successor. He had a number of slaves, all of whom considered themselves of having equal status and an equal claim to be his successor. Among them Yaldoj, qubacha, Aibak and Bakhtiyar Khilji were the main contenders. Bakhtiyar Khilji was also assassinated of about the same time in Lakhaute and the struggle for succession was fought between the remaining three. Although Aibak succeeded in this succession war, he could not solve the basic problem of succession. It was only Iltutmish who succeeded in separating Delhi from Central Asian politics and giving it an independent political status.

### 3.3.1 Military Achievements of Iltutmish :

The reign of Iltutmish can be studied by dividing into three broad periods :- From 1210 to 1220, when he was busy in consolidating his position against political rivals; from 1221 to 1224, when he freed from the problem of Mongol invasion and the Third from 1228 to 1236, when he worked out the administrative scheme of the sultanate and established monarchy.

His main difficulties were countering the rival claims of Yaldoz and Qubacha and the re-establishment of control over some areas of Rajputana and central India. The invasion of Changez Khan the establishment of control over Lakhaute and the evolution of Iqta system on the basis of which Delhi Sultanate was organised, were equally important problems before Iltutmish.

So long as Yldoz was outside India, his claim for political superiority was not a serious problem. But in 1216, he was pressed by the ruler of Khawarism and he came into Punjab. There he displaced Qubacha, Yaldoz, in the Punjab, was an immediate threat to Iltutmish defeated him in the battle of Tarain in the same year. It was an important battle in the sense that it cut off India from central Asian affairs. Iltutmish did not occupy Punjab himself and handed it over to Qubacha under a political agreement. But subsequently Qubacha also became hostile and was removed from Punjab. It was finally defeated after the return of Changez Khan.

The Mongol invasion of India was a side result of the rise and expansion of the Mongol power in Central Asia. In the first quarter of 13th century the Mongols were a nomadic tribe over Central Asia, who were very good catlers and horse bribers. They were organized into a strong force by their leader Tamuchin whose title was Changez Khan. Changez was elected as the Khan in 1203 and established an empire from China to Central Asia by 1210. His relation with the ruler Khawarism were good in the beginning but got strained later over the murder of some Mongol merchants in his kingdom. Changez Khan invaded his territory and in the pursuit of the heir apparent, the Mongols came to the border of North Western India.

The Punjab and Sindh area became a cockpit of a complex power struggled between the Mongols, the Khwarisms and Qubacha. Iltutmish's political sagacity lies in the fact that he adopted a policy of deliberate inactivity. He politely ignored the pressure of Changez Khan and allowed Qubacha to be weakened so that he could defeat him finally at a later stage. This attitude saved Delhi Sultanate from certain ambitions.

The position of the Rajput kingdoms and their relations with the Delhi Sultanate were constantly changing and we find that some of the capital towns such as Badayun, Kanacy and others are as in central India, which had been conquered, had become independent again. Iltutmish had to conduct a series of campaigns against some of the Rajput kingdoms such as Ranthambhor, Gwalior, Kalinagar etc. from 1220 onwards. In 1234, he led an expedition in the Malwa region and attacked Ujjain and Bhilsa areas. Thus Iltutmish consolidated his political position by defeating his political rivals and reestablished the sovereignty of Delhi over the eastern border areas as Lakhnaute.

From the very beginning Lakhnaute was a source of political disability to Delhi because of the difficulties and effective control over a long distance. Iltutmish led two expeditions against Lakhnaute and tried to organize Bihar; as a separate province where he appointed his eldest son Nasuriddin Mahmood a governor to keep an eye on the affairs of Lakhnaute. But the success did not last long and during the period after his death the Turkish Amris of Lakhnaute declared themselves independent and extended their control over southern Bihar and the kingdoms of Mithila.

The final achievements of Iltutmish in the field of political consolidation was the receipt of recognition from the Abbasid, Calipha of Baghdad. This gave a legal status to the Delhi Sultanate and established it as an independent political entity.

### 3.3.2 Administrative Arrangement of Iltutmish

Although Iltutmish succeeded in creating a separate kingdom in India, the administrative system of that kingdom was naturally influenced by the existing model of Ghazni. The Islamic polity had developed by this time and several works on polity and administration had been written. In India itself the famous work on administration Adabul Mulak had been written. Naturally, Iltutmish was influenced by the ideas expressed in these works and in operation in the Islamic countries. The two main contributions of Iltutmish in the field of administration were the introduction of Iqtadari system and the formation of a military and civil bureaucracy to run the administration. The Iqtadari system had a long antecedent among the Turks and briefly it meant the assignment of a particular area to a military commander who collected the revenue of that area and maintained a certain number of soldiers and sent a certain amount of the collection to the central government. The system is sometimes referred to by the term feudalism, but it is different from European feudalism. The system was suitable for the political conditions of the period because it facilitated the collection on revenue by different means without much direct effort by the central government. Its main weakness was that all local commanders or Iqtadars would try to become local rulers by taking advantage of a big central government.

For the permanency and regular running of any government bureaucracy is essential and Iltutmish developed a military cum civil bureaucracy consisting of two groups—one of the slave officers who later developed into a so called party and the second of the free officers of central Asia origin who had migrated to India in the wake of the Mongol disturbance. He was able to maintain a balance between these two groups. The slave officers, however, became quite notorious after his death.

In regard to the army organization the interest of Iltutmish is evident from the fact that the work Adabat Mulak was dedicated to Iltutmish. Briefly speaking Iltutmish organized what is called a kings army.

In the field of coin age the reign of Iltutmish marks the beginning of a new system. He introduced a new system of coin age with two main silver and copper coins — the Tanka and the Zital respectively.

Regarding Judicial administration steps were taken for the appointment of Qazis in the principal towns for the hearing of cases. The cases of the Hindus were normally decided by the traditional panchayats.

Finally, we have to consider the fact that under Iltutmish Delhi was not only a political capital but also an important cultural centre. It was one of the very few principal cities in the Islamic world which had survived the Mongol storm and many eminent Muslim scholars from the Islamic world took shelter in Delhi.

Some of principal and earliest monuments of the sultanate period such as Qutubminar.

Mosques were constructed in Delhi. Iltutmish contributed a great deal to their construction. For the First time a Madarsa and Mousoleum were also constructed by Iltutmish.

To sum up, we find that whether in the matter of political consolidation, administrative organizations of cultural developments, the reign of Iltutmish was a formative period and he is rightly regarded as the founder of the Delhi Sultanate. Though he was not liberal in his religious attitude, it was in keeping with the age while assessing him, Dr. Habibullah has rightly remarked that though it will not be wise to describe Iltutmish as great he was undoubtedly the most successful among the slave kings.

### **3.4 Estimation of Balban**

A great Warrior king and statesman, who, in fact, saved the Muslim state from extinction at a critical time, Balban will ever remain a great figure in Medieval Indian history. He was undoubtedly one of the main architect of the Sultanate of Delhi. Particularly of first form of government and institutions. By asserting the power or the monarchy, Balban strengthened the Sultanate, Balban, the slave water carrier, huntsman, general, stateman and Sultan is really one on the striking medieval personalities among many notable Sultan of Delhi.

By birth, Balban was a Turkish slave and was purchased by Iltutmish. At first he was appointed a personal attendant of the Sultan. But his real career began when he was appointed Naib-in-Mumlikat by Nasir-ud-din Mahimud in 1249. During 20 years of his tenure as Naib Sultan. Balban the guiding spirit of the Muslim rule had exercised full legal power. He suppressed the rebellions and put down the Hindu revolts. Some parts of Rajasthan were also incorporated into Sultanate due to his efforts

After the death of Nusiruddin, Balban ascended the throne in 1266 and ruled till his death in 1287. Balban's occupation of imperial throne makes an epoch in the political history of Muslim India. For about 20 years, Balban served the Sultanate with great zeal. The task of Balban was not easy. The prestige of the Sultan had become accustomed to enjoying independent power Balban, as a ruler



is remembered in history more due to his achievements in the field of administration and consolidation of the empire than for his conquests. He was one of the greatest consolidators and his achievements from this angle, later on, paved the way for the rise of Khilji imperialism under the great Khilji ruler Alauddin.

To solve his external and internal problems Balban followed the policy of "Blood and ruin." He was anxious to suppress the intrigues of forty slaves. The members of this organization had become much in disciplined and highly ambitious and were creating great problems for the ruling Sultan. So, Balban decided first to get rid of those slaves. He crushed the members of 40 slave by physical extinction and by snatching away their power. To balance them, Balban created a new nobility, members of which were placed on high military and administrative posts. Balban firmly believed in the racial superiority of the Turks and hence only the Turks were appointed on high military and civil posts.

Besides crushing the 40 slaves, Balban also suppressed the ambition and power of other Turk nobles, who were not loyal to him. In those days Shamsi nobles had become very powerful and ambitious under the leadership of Sher Khan. Sher Khan, though being a relative of Sultan had dared to disobey him. Most probably he was pardoned by Balban. Now, Tatar Khan of Bengal was made the Governor of frontier provinces as post was vacant because of Sher Khan's death Tatar Khan was replaced by Tughril Beg in Bengal. Bengal due to its distance and geographical position, had always been creating troubles for the Sultans of Delhi.

Balban showed much ruthlessness against the nobles, who ever tried to go against him and kept the local officials under perfect control; for the Sultan had nicely organized his espionage system and spies were ordered to send true and prompt record of important events in their locality. Balban never spared a guilty man, how so ever powerful he might have been. He ordered Malik Baq Baq, the Governor of Badaun, to be hanged for killing his servant. Added to these severe punishments he even threatened to confiscate the land of the nobles.

Due to the strong measures of Sultan, none of the nobles or officials could dare to oppose him, except Tughri of Bengal. The Sultan became sick in 1279, which gave an opportunity to Tughri to rebel against him. Balban sent Amin Khan, the Governor of Oudh and Tirmiti to Crush the rebellion. As both of them cut a sorry figure, Balban ordered for half of my kingdom", said Balban. "and I will not return to Delhi, nor even name it till the blood of the rebels and his followers poured out." This shows the mighty Sultan of Delhi and ultimately he was successful in crushing the rebellion of Tughri. After executing the rebels, Balban gibbeted their heads in market and showed them to Balban Khan, as a warning before appointing him a new Governor of Bengal. In works of Baroni, "He had learnt from aged people that such punishments had never been heard of in India."

Finally, as a Sultan, Balban suppressed the Hindu revolts. The Mewatis in particular had become the dangerous foe of Sultanate and had made even the roads to Delhi unsafe. Balban personally marched against the Mewatis and ruthlessly suppressed the nobles. The blood of riotiers ran into

screams, heaps of the slain were to be seen near every village and stink of dead reached as far as the Ganges. Now was the turn of the Hindu rebels of Doab area. Balban suppressed them and thousands were killed. In 1265, the Katehar revolt was quelled. Similarly, law and order was also restored in Punjab. Dr. Iswari Prasad is right when he says, "But for Balban's vigour and energy, the kingdom of Delhi would have hardly survived the shock of internal revolts and external invasions." By these barbarous methods, Balban struck terror into the hearts of people and depopulated the entire regions where the rebels had stronghold.

Towards Mongols Balban continued the policy of garrisoning the force at Samana and Dipalpur. New forts were constructed and competent generals were made in charge of the troops. Apart from these preventive measures, his sons Prince Muhammad and Bhugra Khan were able to drive back the Mongols. In 1285, a resounding victory was won against Mongol, but Prince Mahmud was killed. Though the Mongol policy of Balban was not a complete success it worked as model for the future.

Balban also realised the imperative need of fighting and toning up the military organisation. Immad-ul-Mulk, who enjoyed the confidence of the Sultan was appointed Ariz-i-Mumalik (Chief of the military staff). He made the army an efficient institution by various measures. The system of branding horses was introduced. The salary and allowances of soldiers and generals were increased. But at the same time strict discipline was maintained and emphasis was put on their training. Now the soldiers were equipped with the latest weapons.

Certain significant changes were also introduced in the field of judiciary and measures were adopted for economic uplift of the Sultanate.

Apart from these concrete achievements Balban also strove to raise the authority of Sultan. He believed in the Divine Right Theory of Kingship. In his own words, "the heart of King is special repository of God's favour and thus he had no equal among mankind," Balban, according to his theory of kingship, brought considerable improvement in the existing state of affairs. He followed certain methods and a principles which raised the power and position of Sultan in the eyes of his subjects. Baroni writes, "He never joked with any one, nor did he allow any one to joke in his presence. He also never laughed nor did he permit any one to laugh." He maintained great pomp and splendour and behaved with kingly dignity.

An analysis of the above account of Balban makes us conclude that he was one of the greatest consolidators of the medieval era. Not only did Balban put down all sorts of rebellions, but also strove to elevate the dignity of Sultan. His cruel acts are also justified when we keep in view the exigency of the day as also the age itself. No doubt, there were certain defects and drawbacks in his policy, for example, his intolerance towards the Hindus and his attempt to expand the empire, still we must say that he was one of the greatest among the slave rulers. Balban was the most remarkable ruler who saved the infant Muslim State from Mongol peril and by establishing social order, paved the way for military and administrative reforms of Ala-ud-din Khilji. He was still greater in patronising the learned

people of central Asia and paved the way for the development of education, literature, art and architecture in the empire.

### 3.5 Summary

In this unit you have seen how the Delhi Sultanate was established and further extended. The founder of this Dynasty was Qutubuddin Aibak who claimed to belong to the slave Dynasty or Mamluk Dynasty. The rulers of this dynasty were free from slavery. Although he succeeded in establishing the slave dynasty, he could not give a solid foundation. The work of consolidating the Turkish empire was completed by Iltutmish. In fact Iltutmish laid the real foundation of the Delhi Sultanate by his military campaigns he consolidated his rule and his administrative reforms were intended to concentrate powers in the hands of Sultan.

### 3.6 Key Words

- |     |                      |   |  |
|-----|----------------------|---|--|
| 1.  | Mamluk               | – | Free from slavery                              |
| 2.  | Amir-e-Akhur         | – | Officer of the royal place for horses.         |
| 3.  | Nasir-amir-ulmominin | – | Head of the Musalmans and assistant to Caliph  |
| 4.  | Caliph               | – | Temporal Chief of the Islamic World            |
| 5.  | Chargan              | – | Group of the Turkish Amers forced by Iltutmish |
| 6.  | Iqta                 | – | An administrative unit                         |
| 7.  | Qazi                 | – | Judge  |
| 8.  | Jank                 | – | Gold and Silver, coins issued by Iltutmish     |
| 9.  | Tital                | – | Copper coins issued by Iltutmish               |
| 10. | Ulema                | – | Islamic religious preacher                     |
| 11. | Niyawate Khudai      | – | Representative of the God on earth.            |
| 12. | Subedar              | – | Chief Officer of the province                  |
| 13. | Nayab                | – | Prime Minister                                 |

### 3.7 Questions for Exercise

#### Short Answer Questions :

1. "Through it will not be wise to describe Iltutmish as great, he was undoubtedly the most successful among the slave kings." Discuss.