

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

SECOND YEAR

PAPER-II



BA

HISTORY OF INDIA UPTO 1526 AD



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HISTORY OF INDIA UPTO 1526 AD

BA

Second Year

Paper II



RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

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INTRODUCTION

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

Further, the small cities and territorial states were brought under the control of Chandragupta Maurya who laid the foundation of the Mauryan Empire. The decline of the Mauryan Empire led to the arrival and emergence of Indo-Greeks, Shungas, Kharavelas, Kushanas and Satvahanas. India was once again politically united in the Gupta Period. The Gupta Age is marked as an era of unprecedented progress in all aspects of polity, religion, art and literature. The disintegration of the Gupta Period led to the emergence of regional kingdoms. This was followed by the arrival of Arabs and Turks in India. Later, India was plundered and invaded repeatedly by foreign rulers such as Timur and Mahmud Ghazni. These invasions laid the foundation for the establishment of Muslim rule in India by Qutub-din-Aibak. He was the first ruler of the Delhi Sultanate and also the founder of the Slave dynasty. This dynasty was followed by the Sayyid and Lodhi dynasties. However, none of them could hold on to power for long and eventually Babur – the first Mughul emperor of India – defeated and conquered them.

This book, *History of India upto 1526 AD*, has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the *Introduction* followed by the *Unit Objectives* for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with '*Check Your Progress*' questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of *Questions and Exercises* is also provided at the end of each unit. The *Summary* and *Key Terms* further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

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UNIT 1 EARLY INDIA

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NOTES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Information about the past is based on several sources, each contributing a part in our attempt to visualize the complete picture. There are two primary source materials for studying ancient Indian history, namely literary and archaeological. For a comprehensive understanding of historical events, it is essential to analyse both literary and archaeological sources, wherever possible. These sources will help you analyse various facets of the Indus Valley Civilization. It is also called the Harappan civilization as Harappa was the first site to be excavated. The sources of evidence about this civilization are the artefacts, pottery, tools, ornaments and ruins of towns. Some tablets and seals of this civilization have certain symbols engraved on them. However, these symbols have not been deciphered till now. Therefore, the main evidences of this civilization are the archaeological excavations.

Vedic culture occupies the most prominent place in the Indian history. Its impact on modern India is widely prevalent. The religion, philosophy and social customs of the Hindus who constitute a majority of India have their principal source in Vedic culture. The contribution of Vedic culture to human progress has far exceeded that of the Indus Valley culture and this factor alone is sufficient to justify its superiority. The authors of this culture were the Indo-Aryans, an anglicized version of the original word Aryan.

The Aryans settled down in tribes, led a semi-nomadic life and fought among themselves and with other non-Aryan tribes for cows, sheep and green pastures. By the Later Vedic Age, the Aryans had moved further into the Ganga Valley, a process facilitated by the use of iron implements, which helped them to clear the thick forests with greater ease. Gradually, many of the Aryan groups further evolved into larger political entities by capturing more and more land. These came to be known as *Mahajanapadas*.

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During the second half of the 6th century BC, the Persian Emperor Cyrus became successful in capturing all the land between the Indus and Kabul rivers. One of his successors, Darius I, however, annexed Gandhara and the Indus Valley. The Indus Valley or 'India' as they called it paid a tribute of gold to the Persian Empire. During the rule of Mahapadma Nanda, India was invaded by the Greek conqueror Alexander. Alexander set out to conquer the world after having conquered Greece. Alexander defeated the Persian ruler. Next, he overran the Afghanistan and entered India through the Khyber Pass in 326 BC. At this time, north-west India was divided into small kingdoms. By destroying the small kingdoms of the north-west, Alexander paved the way for the establishment of Maurya dynasty's rule. Alexander's army was tired and reluctant to move further ahead and face the fierce army of Chandragupta Maurya. They turned back and headed for Babylon, where Alexander breathed his last in 323 BC. Chandragupta Maurya, thus, was able to lay the foundation of the empire that ultimately changed the course of ancient Indian history.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the characteristic features of the people of the Indus Valley Civilization
- Assess the settlement patterns and town planning of the people belonging to the civilization
- Describe the religious beliefs and practices of the Indus Valley Civilization
- Discuss the Early Vedic polity
- Analyse the technological and economic development prevalent during the Early Vedic times

1.2 SOURCES: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND LITERARY

There are many 'sources' through which we come to know about our past. They can be divided into:

- Archaeological evidence
- Literary evidence

Archaeological Evidence

Archaeologists and historians study the remains of past civilizations. Archaeology is the study of the remains of our past like monuments, tools, pottery, coins, weapons, paintings and other artefacts. Thus, archaeology provides us direct evidence from the past, which serves as clues to reconstruct the past.

Most of our information about pre-historic man, the Indus Valley people and other ancient civilizations is based upon archaeological findings.

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Archaeological findings usually have the following forms:

- Inscriptions
- Coins
- Monuments
- Artefacts

Inscriptions

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

Coins

The study of coins is called numismatics. Coins are made of metals like gold, silver and copper and are therefore not easily destroyed. They have the names and images of rulers stamped upon them. They give information such as the date of accession and death of the ruler. For example, Roman coins discovered in India gives us an idea about the existence of contacts with the Roman empire. The principal source of information of the Bactarian; Indo-Greeks and Indo-Parthian dynasty is numismatics. The coins of these dynasties throw light on the improvement in the coin artistry of India. Portraits and figures, Hellenistic art and dates on the coins of the western satraps of Saurashtra are remarkable sources for reconstructing the history of this period. The history of the Satavahanas is ascertained from the Jogalthambi hoard of coins. The circulation of coins in gold and silver during the Gupta empire provides a fair idea of the economic condition during the rule of the Guptas.

Monuments

Ancient buildings like temples, palaces and forts are known as monuments. They give us information about the life and times of the people. For example, the carvings on the panels of Qutub Minar tell us about the reign of the early Delhi Sultans, and the carved panels on the walls and railings of the Sanchi Stupa tell stories from the life of the Buddha.

Artefacts

An artefact is something made or given shape by man, such as a tool or a work of art, specially an object of archaeological interest. The ancient artefacts help historians form a picture of cultural and religious life of ancient societies. For example, the artefacts of Harappan civilization with motifs relating to asceticism and fertility rites suggest that these concepts entered Hinduism from the earlier civilization. The stone tools, pottery, buttons, jewellery and clothing found at various sites provide information about the life of early man.

Literary Evidence

It took humans a long time to develop the art of writing. Before paper was invented, people wrote on palm leaves and the bark of birch trees. These written records which include both religious and secular literature, are called manuscripts.

The Vedas, the oldest recorded text of the Aryans, and the Buddhist texts are written sources, which tell us about the past. But since these scripts are associated with rituals or religious practices of the past, these are called religious sources. Other examples are the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Gita* and the *Puranas*. However, there could be books written in the past, e.g., accounts of foreign travellers who came to India and wrote about Indian society. The literature not connected with the religion of the times is called 'secular'. For example, the *Arthashastra*, which was written by Kantilya.

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1.3 INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION: EXTENT, BASIC FEATURES AND DECLINE

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

Figure 1.1 shows us some of the important sites of the Indus Valley Civilization. It is estimated that the Indus Valley Civilization existed between 2500 and 1500BC almost at the same time as the Egyptian, Sumerian and Chinese civilizations.

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

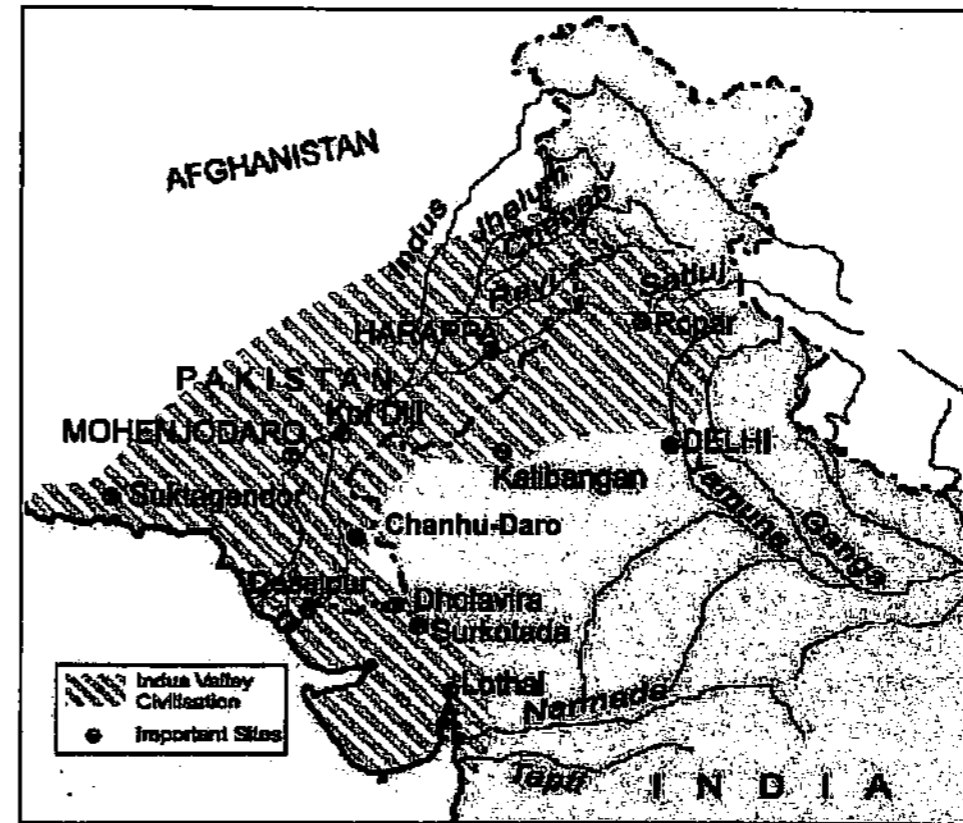


Fig. 1.1 Important Sites of the Indus Valley Civilization

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

1.3.1 Extent

According to the Australian archaeologist and Philologist Vere Gordon Childe, 'The geographical area of the Indus Civilization was much more expanded than the ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Persian Civilizations.'

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

- 1. Baluchistan:** This region was important from the perspective of trade and commerce. The main places that were extremely important include Sukagendor (at the origin of river Dashak), Sotakakoh (at the beginning of Shadi Kaur) and Balakot (in the east of Son Miyani at the origin of river Vindar).

Check Your Progress

1. What are the two main sources of ancient Indian history?
2. On what did people write before the invention of paper?

Self-Instructional Material

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Self-Instructional Material

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2. **North-Western Border:** Significant artifacts have been discovered from this area in the Gomal valley.
3. **Sindhu:** Several remains have been found in the Sindhu region, but many sites have been destroyed on the banks of this river. Several remains have been found at the sites of Mohenjo-daro, Chanhudaro, Judein-jo-daro, Amri, and so on.
4. **Western Punjab:** This area has the most important Harappan site which is located on the river Ravi.
5. **Eastern Punjab:** An important site of this area is Ropar. In recent excavations, remains have been found in Sanghol.
6. **Haryana:** In Hisar and Banawali, important remains of the Indus Civilization have been found.
7. **Doab of Ganga and Yamuna:** The remains of the Indus Valley Civilization are spread across from Meerut to Alamgirpur. Recently, remains have also been found at Hulas, in Saharanpur.
8. **Gujarat:** There are several Indus Valley Civilization sites at the peninsula of Kutch and Kathiawad and the mainlands of Gujarat. Important sites at these peninsula are Surkotada and Lothal, respectively.
9. **Other sites:** Important remains have also been found at the sites of Bahawalpur, Jammu and Northern Afghanistan.

1.3.2 Basic Features

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

Dress and Ornaments

The spindles found in the excavations reveal that the Indus Valley people knew the art of spinning and weaving. They were perhaps the first people to cultivate cotton to make clothes. Besides cotton, they wore woollen clothes. Men wore a piece of cloth round their waists and a shawl over their shoulders, while women wore a skirt and do not seem to have worn blouses. Archaeologists have unearthed an idol of a man covered with a shawl (see Figure 1.2). The shawl was tied under the right arm and went across the left shoulder, which left the right hand free. A cloth similar to the *dhoti* worn in rural India was worn at the bottom.

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

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Fig. 1.2 Man Covered with a Shawl

The ornaments of rich people were made of gold, silver and precious stones whereas the ornaments of poor people were made of bones, copper and baked clay. Sir John Hubert Marshall who was the Director General of Archaeology in India stated, 'seeing the shine and design of gold ornaments it seems that they are brought from an ornament shop of Bond Street (London) and not from a pre-historical house of five thousand years ago.' Figure 1.3 illustrates a bronze dancing girl.



Fig. 1.3 Bronze Idol of Dancing Girl

Farming and Cattle Rearing

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

According to Dr Basham, the people did not know how to cultivate rice but the remains of rice at Lothal and Rangpur have proved this conception wrong. Similarly Dr Lal has said that the cultivation of cotton was the specialty of Indus people. Grinding

machines of wheat, barley and crushing machines and storehouses reflect their proficiency in agriculture. Adequate irrigation facilities were developed for agriculture.

Domestication of animals

Agriculture being the chief occupation the Indus people used to domesticate buffaloes, cows, sheep, pigs, dogs, oxen, etc. The people also earned their living by domestication of animals, which were also helpful in agriculture.

Pottery and Trade

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

Trade, both by land and by sea, thrived in the Harappan society. A number of seals of Indus origin have been found at various sites in Mesopotamia (Sumer). This indicates that trade flourished between the two civilizations. In order to measure articles, they used a stick with markings on it. They also used various kinds of weights and measures. Figure 1.4 shows samples of the ornaments, pottery and seals prevalent during the Indus Valley Civilization.

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



Fig. 1.4 Indus Ornaments, Pottery and Seal

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

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Social Life in Indus Civilization

On the basis of things found during excavation, it can be said that social conditions during the Indus Valley civilization were excellent. The people of this civilization were resourceful and affluent. The following are certain characteristics of the people belonging to the Indus Valley Civilization:

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- 1. Social organization:** The social organization of the people was divided chiefly into four sections. The first section consisted of the intellectuals, brahmins, astrologers and doctors. The second section included warriors or soldiers. Industrialists, traders, sculptors and artists belonged to the third section. The fourth section comprised labourers, farmers, servants, etc. The society was matriarchal, and the people of this civilization led a comfortable and prosperous life.
- 2. Food:** The chief food items included wheat, barley, meat, rice, peas, milk, vegetables and fruits. People were vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian.
- 3. Cosmetics:** Both men and women had great interest in cosmetics. Women used to apply lipstick, perfumes, soot, powder, etc., and made different kinds of buns and plaits. Men preferred to keep their hair long and were clean shaven. Combs and dressing boxes were made of elephant's tusk and brass. The amount of goods and services common man used here seem to be better than the other places of the contemporary civilized world.
- 4. Sources of entertainment:** This civilization had developed several sources of entertainment. Chess was the favourite game of its citizens. Discovery of rattles, whistles, sound-creating elephant and clay toys points towards the presence of several varieties of toys. Hunting, cock fighting and music were the chief sources of entertainment. The citizens took special care in the physical development and entertainment of their children.
- 5. Scientific knowledge:** The citizens used a script, which was primarily pictorial. Unfortunately, it has not been deciphered. Stone weights were usually of hexagonal shape but the heavier ones were spherical and sharp. After examining the authenticity of weights and measures, it can be concluded that the citizens were familiar with algebra, the decimal system and geometry.
- 6. Medicine:** Indus people had a knowledge of medicinal plants and they used natural medicinal plants for treating human diseases. The evidences of surgery have also been found.
- 7. Tools of household:** Several earthen pots, knives, chisels, axes, pitchers, plates and glasses have been found from the excavation sites. Pots were beautified by ornamentation.
- 8. Last rites:** Evidences show that three techniques were used to perform the last rites for the dead. These are as follows:
 - (i) Absolute meditation:** As per this technique, the dead were buried in the earth.
 - (ii) Partial meditation:** As per this technique, the dead bodies were left in open so that they became food for birds and animals. The leftovers were then buried.
 - (iii) Cremation:** In this technique, the dead bodies were burnt and the ashes were collected in pots and buried.

Settlement Patterns and Town Planning

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

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Architecture in the Indus Valley Civilization

Evidence of town management of this time is found from the remains of Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Kalibanga, Lothal, etc. Towns were so well managed and organized that it is still a matter of wonder. The roads were very broad. The drainage system was very fine. Figure 1.5 illustrates the citadel, the Great Bath and the city of Mohenjodaro. The remains of Mohenjodaro are proof of the unparalleled art of the ancient cities, their cleanliness and construction. It is quite clear from studies that cleanliness was given a lot of importance.

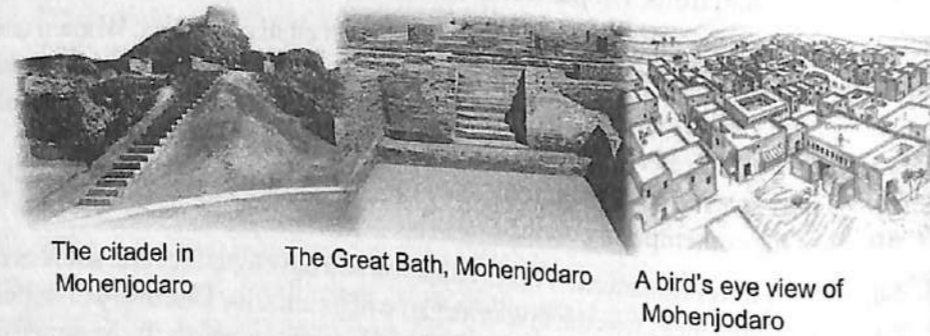


Fig. 1.5 Mohenjodaro

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

Art of Making Buildings

The houses, built of burnt bricks, were constructed on both sides of the roads. There were covered drains along the roads, in which sewage from the houses flowed. Some houses had only one or two rooms while others had several, indicating different living quarters for the rich and the poor. The Indus people were excellent constructors. There are other things related to architecture and idol making, which are living examples of their efficiency. The interiors of these buildings prove that the Indus people were definitely aesthetically inclined. Of all the remains of the Indus Civilization, the best is the Great Bath. Its walls are cemented. There are stairs on the corners. In order to keep the water safe and the foundations strong, the masons worked cleverly. The system of filling and emptying the water tank was no doubt extraordinary. There was also a system for hot water, which was probably used by the priests. The biggest proof of the durability of the bath is that it was constructed in 5000BC and is till today totally intact.

Town Planning

Excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro reveal that all these cities were similarly planned. They were divided into two parts—a raised area with large buildings called the citadel at the western end and a lower town. The roads ran at right angles, bringing out the grid pattern of the township. The citadel was built on a raised platform, constructed with bricks and stones, about 12 metre high and rectangular in shape, and surrounded by

a huge brick wall with watchtowers. This protected the buildings and the people from the recurrent flooding of the river Indus. The citadel was probably the seat of the government and overlooked the lower town. The ruler or the administrator lived here along with the nobles. It also had public buildings such as the granaries, the assembly or town hall and important workshops. At Mohenjodaro, which means 'mound of the dead' in Sindhi, the most remarkable feature was the Great Bath. It was situated within the citadel. It resembled a large swimming pool measuring 55 by 33 metres. A flight of steps led down to the pool at two ends. Broad corridors on four sides with a number of rooms surrounded the pool. It is the finest specimen of the engineering skill of the Harappan people.

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

Town hall

A huge structure almost 70 metres long and over 23 metres wide with walls about 1.5 metres thick has been excavated in Mohenjodaro. It has twenty pillars made of burnt bricks, arranged in four rows of five each. Archaeologists believe that this great hall may have been used as an assembly hall, a prayer hall or as a hall for cultural shows.

Residential area and houses

Below the citadel was the residential area of the town where the merchants, artisans and craftsmen lived. The whole area was divided into blocks by wide roads, which formed a grid. Sun-dried and baked bricks were used for construction of houses. They were single or double storeyed. All houses had a courtyard around which there were rooms. Every house had a well and a hearth for cooking. The main entrances opened onto the lanes or side alleys instead of the main street in order to keep out dust and to ensure privacy. Within the houses, the rooms were built around a central courtyard. Some houses also had wells to supply water. Several *pukka-kutchra* and big-small buildings have been found during the excavations of the remains. Houses were well ventilated. The roofs of the houses were flat and made of wood. Each house had its own bathroom with drains, which were connected to the drains in the street.

Streets

The streets and lanes ran straight from north to south and east to west, cutting each other at right angles. They were 4 to 10 metres wide. Roads were paved and suitable for movement of bullock carts. Ruins of lamp posts suggest that there were street lights. Dustbins were provided at regular intervals to keep the roads clean.

Drainage system

Another striking feature of the Indus towns was their drainage system. It was the best drainage system known to the world in ancient times. Drains were constructed on either side of the roads connected to a drain from each house. They were lined with bricks and

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were covered with slabs of stone, which could be removed in order to clean them. This shows that the dwellers had great concern for health and sanitation.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

No temples or shrines of the Harappan Civilization have been found. Our knowledge of the religious beliefs of the Harappans is based on the information derived from the seals and the terracotta and bronze figures. Seals engraved with the figures of animals like the humped bull, elephant and rhinoceros suggest that these animals were probably considered sacred. The image of a three-headed male God sitting cross-legged and surrounded by animals, like the lion, the rhinoceros, the buffalo and the elephant with two deer under his seat is found on many seals. There is evidence that the peepul tree and the serpent were also worshipped. The terracotta figure of a female deity has been identified as that of the Mother Goddess who represented fertility and prosperity. Some statues also bear soot marks at the base, indicating that incense was burnt as part of the ritual. These evidences show that Harappan people worshipped images.

Like their contemporaries—the Mesopotamian and Egyptian people—the people of the Indus Valley used a script, which consisted of picture-like signs called pictographs. Each sign stood for a specific sound or idea. Examples of this script are found on the seals, most of which bear an inscription. Figure 1.6 shows the idol of the Mother Goddess.



Fig. 1.6 Mother Goddess

Although, the Indus Valley Civilization has declined and disappeared, its influence on the Indian culture remains. The worship of the Mother Goddess in image form as the symbol of female power or *shakti* was introduced in the Later Vedic Age. The bullock carts still seen in Indian villages today are similar to the carts of the Harappan cities. The realistic carving of animals on the seals can also be seen on Ashoka's Lion Capital at Sarnath.

The religious knowledge of the people of the Indus is based on the findings of seals, inscriptions on copper plate, and the idols. We do not have any knowledge of their philosophy due to lack of clear and readable written material. According to most historians,

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the Mother Goddess and Lord Shiva were the most important deities. The primary features of their religion are as follows:

- **The worship of mother goddess:** Mother Goddess or Nature Goddess was the main religious deity of the time. In one of the idols, a plant is seen coming from a woman's abdomen and, in another, a woman is sitting with legs crossed. Sacrifices were also in vogue to please the Mother Goddess.
- **The worship of Lord Shiva:** The tradition of praying to Lord Shiva was also much prevalent. In one of the seals, a yogi is surrounded by animals and has three faces with a crown of two horns. This image is considered to be that of Lord Shiva. Historians accept Shaivism as the oldest religion after finding its origin in the Indus Valley Civilization.
- **The worship of the womb:** Along with the worship of Shiva, the worship of the *lingas* or the womb was also in practice. Several rings have been found during excavations, which were made of shell, stone, clay, etc. Structures in the shape of female organs of reproduction have been found from the Indus area as well as in Baluchistan.
- **The worship of trees or nature:** Coins reveal that worship of trees was also in practice. It had two forms—(i) worshipping trees in their natural form (ii) worshipping trees in the symbolic form, i.e., worshipping trees while considering them to be a place of residence of God. The Banyan tree was considered to be a sacred tree by the people of the Indus Valley Civilization.
- **The worship of animals:** Animal worship was a popular practice of the Indus people. They considered the ox, bull, snake, sheep, buffalo and lion as holy animals.
- **Other traditions:** There are evidences, which prove the worship of rivers and the sun. Idol worship was practised but historians have differences with regard to the existence of temples. Most probably prayers were offered at sites consisting of pillars and the sign of the swastik. From the discovery of an idol depicting a naked woman, it is assumed that the devadasi system was in practice.

The religious beliefs of the Indus civilization had a lot in common with modern Hinduism. This proves that the Hindu religion is very ancient and is till today practised with little changes. The Indus Valley Civilization is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. Its affinity to peace is till today the central character of our culture. The tradition of Indian culture which was started by the Indus Valley civilization is till today constantly flowing. Indian culture is indebted to the Indus Civilization especially in the field of religion and art.

1.3.3 Decline

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

Another opinion regarding the decline of the Indus Valley civilization is geographical in nature including scarcity of rainfall, change in the course of the river, drought and earthquake, which may have devastated this developed civilization. In the opinion of a

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few scholars, this civilization was devastated due to the attack of the Aryans. Religious books clarify that there is mention of forts and towns of non-Aryans in the Rigveda which were probably ravaged in these attacks. The use of horses and chariots made these attacks successful. However, it has not been completely clarified as to how this civilization met its end.

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

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

1.4 EARLY VEDIC CULTURES: POLITY, SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

The Aryans first settled in the area around the seven rivers, the Indus and her tributaries known as the *Sapta Sindhu* (seven rivers), between 1500BC and 1000BC.

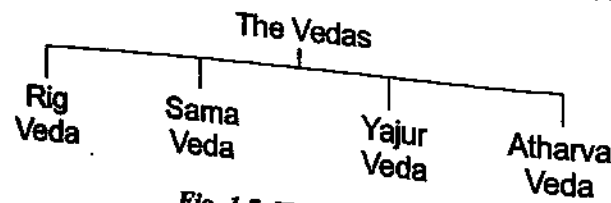


Fig. 1.7 The Four Vedas

They named this place as *Brahmavarta* or 'Land of the Vedic Period Gods'. As their number increased, they began to move eastward and settled in the Ganga-Yamuna plains which now came to be called *Aryavarta* or 'Land of the Aryans'. Gradually, they occupied the whole of northern and western India up to the Vindhya mountains. Our information about the early Aryans is based on the excavations at Bhagwanpura in Haryana and three other sites in Punjab, which have revealed many pottery pieces dating from 1500BC to 1000BC. However, our chief source of information is the Rig Veda, which was composed in 1500BC. The Vedas are the earliest literary records of the Aryans. Since, our main source of information about the Aryans is Vedic literature, this period is also called the Vedic Age. The Early Vedic period extends from 1500BC to 1000BC. There are four Vedas—Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda (Figure 1.7). The word 'veda' means knowledge. The Rig Veda is the oldest of the Vedic literature. It was composed in about 1500BC. It consists of 1,028 slokas, which are divided into ten books. At first it was transferred orally from one generation to the

other along with the other Vedas and is therefore called *Sruti* or 'that which is heard'. Many centuries later, it was written down. The Rig Veda gives us an insight into the political, social, economic and religious life of the Early Vedic period. The Early Vedic polity was structured as follows:

- **The King:** The highest officer of the nation was the king. The morality of the king was very high. Kingship was hereditary. The chief work of the king was to safeguard his nation and citizens. He had to be proficient in the management of soldiers and very just. There were many officers for assisting the king in his administrative work. He had many functionaries, including the *purohita* and *Senani*. The main job of *purohita* was to give advice to the king and practice spells and charms for success in war where as *senanis* fought for him in the war.
- **The ministers of the king:** The king appointed various ministers for running the administration efficiently. The foremost among them was the *Senani*, the supreme commander of the armed forces.
- **Warriors:** The chief warrior in the army was the second highest officer. He was appointed by the king himself. His work was to take care of the warriors' organization and to lead the army in the absence of the king. Apart from the warriors, the *Gramani* was also an important officer. He used to be the chief of villages. Apart from these office bearers, the diplomats and secret agents also played very important roles in the Early Vedic polity.
- **Organizations and committees:** Organizations and committees were very important in that age. They were created to check the despotism of the king and to discuss the problems of the nation. There were two bodies the 'sabha' and the 'samiti'. The Atharv Veda refers to them as the two daughters of *Prajapati* or Brahma. Earlier the *sabha* was responsible for performing only judicial functions. However, historians came to believe that it served as a centre for social gathering. Some considered it to be the village assembly while some considered this as a committee of selected seniors or elders. The *samiti* on the other hand was probably the bigger or central assembly.
- **Judiciary:** Only assumptions can be made regarding the judicial system due to non-availability of proof. The chief justice was the king himself.

The administrative system of the Vedic period continued with little changes. In the later Vedic period several strong monarchies evolved, which developed a feeling of imperialism. Slowly, the powers of the king increased and his post became hereditary. He even increased his officials and ministers.

The Aryans first settled in the region of Punjab. This is proved by the fact that the rivers Kuruman, Kabul and other western tributaries of the Indus are mentioned in the Rig Veda. The Indo-Aryans settled in the region of the waning Indus Valley Civilization, i.e., across the river Indus. Gradually they moved eastwards along the river Ganga. The Aryans brought with them horses and chariots. They subjugated the original inhabitants of the Ganga-Yamuna doab, and reduced them to the status of slaves or *dasyus* who performed all the menial jobs.

1.4.1 Technological and Economic Development

Agriculture and cattle rearing were the main occupations of the early Aryans. They grew barley, wheat, rice, fruits and vegetables. Agriculture was the basis of the economy in the Vedic age. The land where two crops could grow in a year was considered fertile and was coveted for.

Agriculture had developed greatly in the later Vedic period. By then, the Aryans had started using new tools, manure and seeds. Irrigation was done with the help of canals and the plough was also in use. They ploughed their fields with the help of wooden ploughs drawn by oxen. Agriculture being the chief occupation, rearing of animals was necessary. Oxen, horses, dogs, goats and sheep were mainly domesticated. The cow was considered to be pious and important. It was a source of valuation and exchange and it was regarded as a sign of prosperity.

The Aryans introduced the horse in India from Central Asia. They were used to draw chariots and to ride during battles as well as during peacetime by the *rajan* and the nobles and therefore, greatly valued. Hunting, pottery, spinning, weaving, carpentry, metallurgy (copper and bronze) and leatherwork were other important occupations. Shipping was limited to the navigation of rivers for the inland trade. Gold and oxen were used as money during trading. Figure 1.8 illustrates various artifacts of the Early Vedic period.

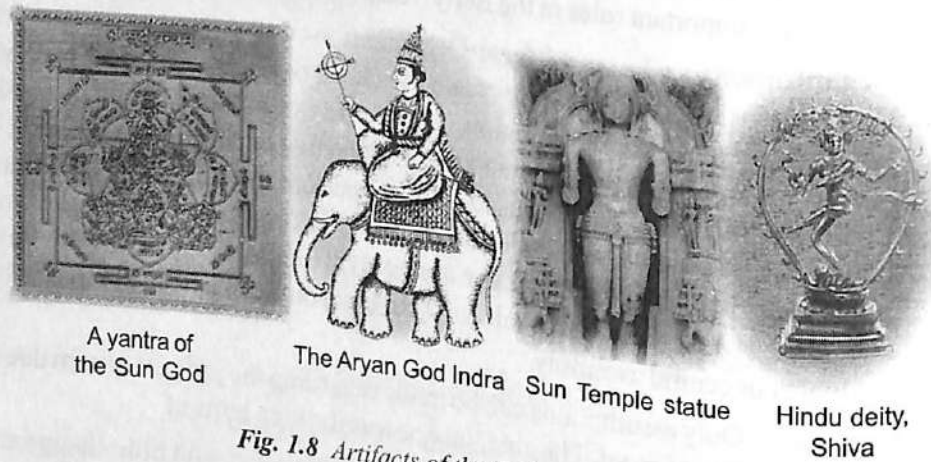


Fig. 1.8 Artifacts of the Early Vedic Period

The most important thing of Vedic period was that no profession was considered to be small except fishing and hair cutting, which were looked down upon.

In the later Vedic period carpentry, metallurgy, tanning, pottery, weaving, etc. started developing. They proficiently started using gold, iron, silver etc. after the spread of knowledge of metals, which made life more prosperous.

Both imports as well as exports were carried on during the Vedic period. The traders are known as '*Pani*'. Clothes, bed sheets, leather, etc., were mainly traded. Trading was done on bullock carts.

1.4.2 Political Relations

The Aryans gave up their nomadic life and settled down in the north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent in the form of different tribal settlements known as *janas* and the land where they settled was called *janapada*. These tribes were constantly involved in battle with one another, either to protect their cattle or their land. A village or *grama*

was the smallest unit of the *jana*. A *grama* would comprise a number of families. Each tribe had a chieftain called *rajan*, who was chosen for his wisdom and courage and he ruled each tribe. His chief function was to protect the tribe from the external attacks and maintain law and order. For his service, the people made voluntary contributions of gifts. A *rajan* could be removed from power if he was inefficient or cruel. He was helped by a number of officials in the work of administration. There is also a reference to two tribal assemblies – namely the *Sabha* and the *Samiti* (as mentioned in the previous section) which checked the power of the king and also advised him on all-important matters. The *senani* or commander-in-chief assisted him in warfare.

A *raj purohit* or high priest performed religious ceremonies and also acted as an adviser. The *gramani* or the village headman looked after the village. Figure 1.9 illustrates the political structure of the Early Vedic period.

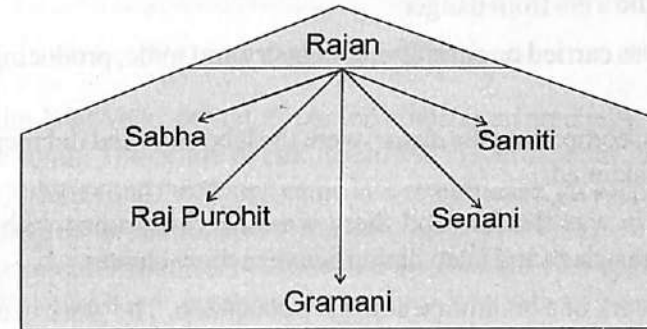


Fig. 1.9 Political Structure of the Early Vedic Period

The political life of the Vedic age was classified as follows:

- **Family:** The smallest unit of the administration was the family, which was headed by the oldest person in the home. The tradition was to have a joint family.
- **Village:** Several families made a village. The head of the village was called the '*Gramani*'. The root of the village administrative system was the *Gramani* but the Rig Veda is silent on the matter of its election system.
- **Vish:** Several villages made a *Vish*. The highest officer of the *Vish* was called *Vishpati*.
- **Jan:** Several *Vishs* made a *Jan*. The highest officer of the *Jan* was called *Gop*. Usually, the king himself would be a *Gop*.
- **Nation:** The highest political unit was the nation. A country was called nation or *rashtra* (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Political Life of the Vedic Age

Unit	Head
Rashtra	Rajan/Gopa/Samrat
Janas/Janapada	Jyeshtha
Vish	Vishpati
Gram	Gramani

1.4.3 Social Stratification and Emergence of the Caste System

The early Vedic society consisted of four *varnas*—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. There was no complication in the *varna* system. The basis of *varna* was perhaps work rather than birth. It is mentioned in the Rig Veda that, 'I am a sculptor, my father is a doctor and my mother grinds cereals in the house.' The early Aryans differentiated between themselves according to the occupations each followed. The word 'varna' was later used to refer to the social division, dividing society into the following four occupational groups:

- The brahmins or the priests performed religious ceremonies and prayers and imparted education.
- The kshatriyas or warrior class (to which the king also belonged) fought wars and protected the tribe from danger.
- The vaishyas carried on agriculture, industry and trade, producing goods for the society.
- The sudras, comprising the *dasas*, were the labourers and did menial jobs. They were dark-skinned.

This system was flexible and there were no restrictions with regard to the occupation, intermarriage and inter-dining between these classes.

Thus, the work of a brahmin was to give education. The work of a kshatriya was to save and defend. The work of a vaishya was to trade and the work of a shudra was to serve. But, till the later Vedic period, the *varna* system had become complex. By now, the basis of *varna* changed to birth from work or profession.

The Ashrama system was established keeping in mind the age of man to be 100 years. It was said that 100 years were required for all round development and to achieve the goal of religion, material pleasure and salvation in life. During the first twenty-five years, a student acquired knowledge with much hardship in the ashram of his guru. This was known as the *Brahmacharya* Ashram. From the age of twenty-five to fifty years (in adulthood) *Brahmacharya* he observed family life, which was called *Grihastha* Ashram. From fifty to seventy-five years of age, he observed *Vanprastha* Ashram while denouncing family life. From seventy-five to hundred years, he left all worldly pleasures and attained salvation in the devotion of god, which was called *Sanyas*.

1.5 LATER VEDIC CULTURES: POLITY, SOCIETY, ECONOMY AND RELIGION

The history of the later Vedic period is based mainly on the Vedic texts, which were compiled after the age of the Rig Veda. The collections of Vedic hymns or mantras are known as the Samhitas. The Rig Veda were set to tune, and this modified collection was known as the Samaveda. In the post Rig Vedic times, two other collections, the Yajurveda Samhita and the *Atharvaveda* Samhita were composed. We have to depend upon the Samhitas of the Yajurveda, Samaveda, *Atharvaveda*, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, and the Upanishads, all religious works for the later Vedic period which, roughly speaking, comes down to about 600BC. Figure 1.10 illustrates the later Vedic Civilization.

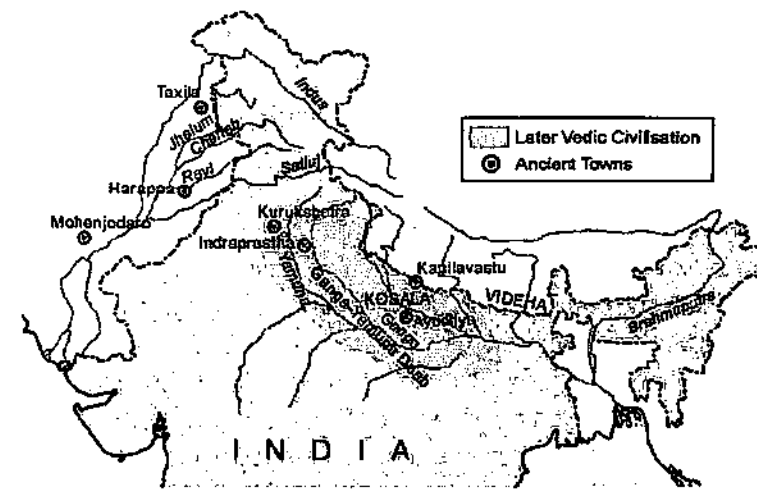


Fig. 1.10 Later Vedic Civilizations

During the later Vedic period, the Aryan civilization gradually extended towards the east and the south. The centre of culture shifted to Kurukshetra, and Madhyadesa. The land of the Yamuna and the Ganga came into prominence. Kosala, Kasi, Videha and Ayodhya rose as great urban centres in the east. Literature also mention the Andhras for the first time and other outcaste tribes like the Pundras of Bengal, the Sabaras of Orissa and the Pulindas of south western India. Thus, nearly the whole of northern India from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas and perhaps even beyond had come within the rule of the Aryans.

Settlement Patterns

As mentioned earlier, between 1000BC and 600BC, the Aryans had moved eastward from the land of the seven rivers into the Gangetic plain. Some crossed the Vindhya mountains into the southern region of India. The Aryans moved eastward probably because of an increase in population. Some of the chieftains carved out kingdoms for themselves and their tribes were called the *janapadas*. The Kurus occupied the region around Delhi and called it Kurukshetra. Hastinapur was their capital. The Kurus combined with the Panchalas (ruled over the region of Bareilly, Badaun and Farukhabad) to establish their authority over Delhi and the Doab region. The Kauravas and the Pandavas belonged to the Kuru tribe. The battle of Kurukshetra is believed to have been fought in about 950BC. Towards the end of 600 BC, the Aryans had spread further eastward. A number of *janapadas* combined to form large independent kingdoms called *mahajanapadas*. By the sixth century BC, sixteen *mahajanapadas* were established. These sixteen kingdoms were engaged in the war to capture each other's territory. Kosala, Vatsa, Avanti and Magadha were the four most important ones, which eventually remained and reigned. Finally, Magadha established its stronghold over the whole of the Gangetic plain from 500–300BC.

Technological and Economic Development

The Vedic Aryans were well known for their technology related to the tanning of leather, fermentation of grains and fruits, and dyed scale production of copper, iron and steel, brass, silver and gold and their alloys. Indian steel was believed to be of very high quality in the ancient world and it was exported in large quantities. Tin and mercury were imported from the 7th century. Alchemy was also referred to in literature. They made a special kind of polished grey pottery (known as P.G. ware). Radio-carbon dating dates it

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back to 1000–800BC. Other varieties of pottery, for example, red or *black-polished* pottery were also made by them.

Farming remained the most important occupation. Taxes were collected by the king, which earned him revenue. Wheat, rice, vegetables, cotton and oil seeds were grown. Besides agriculture, many crafts like weaving, leatherwork, pottery, jewellery designing and carpentry developed. Apart from gold, silver, copper, lead and tin, they had discovered the use of iron. Many agricultural implements and weapons of war were made of iron. Artisans and craftsmen produced goods of fine quality. They were organized into guilds which regulated the prices. These professions became hereditary with time and constituted subcastes or *jatis*. Many more towns started emerging during these times. Trade also flourished. Goods were sent as far as Taxila, Central Asia and European countries. The barter system was discontinued and money in the form of gold and silver was used. In other words, the economic activities became more complex. The earliest coins of India are commonly known as punch-marked coins. As the name suggests, these coins bear symbols of various types punched on pieces of silver of specific weight. The earliest Indian coins have no defined shapes and were mostly uniface. Secondly, these coins lack any inscriptions. Two well known numismatists, D.B. Spooner and D.R. Bhandarkar, independently concluded that the punching of various symbols representing animals, hills, trees and human figures followed a definite pattern and these coins were issued by the royal authority.

Both literary and archaeological evidences confirm that the Indians invented coinage somewhere between the 5th and the 6th centuries BC. A hoard of coins discovered at Chaman Huzuri in 1933 contained forty-three silver punch-marked coins (the earliest coins of India) with Athenian (coins minted by Athens, a city of Greece) and Achaemenian (Persian) coins. The Bhir (Taxila) hoard discovered in 1924 contained 1055 punch-marked coins in a very worn out condition and two minted coins of Alexander. This archaeological evidence clearly indicates that the coins were minted in India long before the fourth century BC, i.e., before the Greeks advanced towards India (Alexander's invasion of Persia and India). There is also a strong belief that silver as a metal, which was not available in Vedic India, became abundantly available by 500–600 BC. Most of the silver came from Afghanistan and Persia as a result of international trade.

Social Stratification

During the Later Vedic period, the earlier distinctions in society based on varna or occupation became rigid and hereditary. A person's birth became more important than his skill or merit. Each caste had its own code of laws and marriage outside the caste was forbidden. Brahmins occupied a very high position in society as they were learned. They alone could perform the rituals and sacrifices. Only the select few amongst them could advise the king. The common people held them in high esteem.

The position of women also began to deteriorate and they were thought to be inferior to men. They were not allowed to read Vedic literature. Their main duty was to look after the house.

The family shows the increasing power of the father who could even disinherit his son. Women were generally given a lower position. Although some women theologians took part in philosophical discussions and a few queens participated in rituals, women were considered to be inferior and subordinate to men.

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There is a mention of the *Ashramas* or the four stages of life—that of *brahmacharya* or bachelor student, *grihastha* or householder, *vanaprastha* or hermit and *sanyasi* or ascetic who completely renounces worldly life. Only the first three were clearly defined in the later Vedic texts; the last or the fourth stage was not well-established, though, ascetic life was not unknown.

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1.6 SUMMARY

- There are two primary types of sources of history: literary and archaeological.
- Literary sources refer to written accounts. Archaeological sources refer to concrete objects from the past which have survived over the years. These include ruins of buildings, bits of pottery, jewellery or pieces of stone.
- The Indus Valley Civilization also called Harappan Civilization, flourished from about 3,000BC to 1,500BC.
- Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Lothal and Ropar were some of the important sites of the Indus Valley Civilization.
- In 1921, two archaeologists, Dayaram Sahani and Rakhal Das Bannerjee carried out excavations at Mohenjodaro in Sind and Harappa, which revealed that a very advanced civilization far older and superior to the European had flourished in India.
- Maximum remains of the Indus Valley Civilization have been found in the valley of the river Indus, from where the civilization derives its name.
- The Harappan Civilization was spread across Punjab and Sindh, in the valleys of North-western frontiers mainly Kathiawad, Rajasthan and Doab.
- The spindles found in the excavations reveal that the Indus Valley people knew the art of spinning and weaving. They were perhaps the first people to cultivate cotton. They wore cotton and woollen clothes.
- Agriculture being the chief occupation, the Indus people used to domesticate buffaloes, cows, sheep, pigs, dogs, oxen, etc. The people also earned their living by domestication of animals, which were also helpful in agriculture.
- Next to agriculture, pottery seems to have been the most popular industry of the people. They were skilled in the use of the potter's wheel.
- The shape of the city was rectangular. The roads crossed each other at right angles and divided the city into large blocks. Within each block, there was a network of narrow lanes.
- At Mohenjodaro, which means 'mound of the dead' in Sindhi, the most remarkable feature was the Great Bath. It was situated within the citadel. It resembled a large swimming pool measuring 55 by 33 metres.
- Like their contemporaries, the Mesopotamian and Egyptian people, the people of the Indus Valley used a script, which consisted of picture-like signs called pictographs. Each sign stood for a specific sound or idea.
- Although the Indus Valley Civilization declined and disappeared, its influence on the Indian culture remains.
- The worship of the Mother Goddess in image form as the symbol of female power or *shakti* was introduced in the Later Vedic Age.

Check Your Progress

9. What is the history of the later Vedic period based upon?
10. What changes were seen in the position of women in the later Vedic period?

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- The Indus Valley Civilization flourished for about 1000 years with very few changes in lifestyle, customs and habits. Though this civilization began to decline by 1500BC, the exact causes of the decline are not known. The most commonly accepted theory is that natural calamities like earthquakes and floods or changes in the course of the river Indus may have destroyed the cities or led to mass migration.
- The information about the early Aryans is based on the excavations at Bhagwanpura in Haryana and three other sites in Punjab, which have revealed many pottery pieces dating from 1,500BC to 1,000BC.
- Since the main source of information about the Aryans is the Vedic literature, this period is also called the Vedic Age.
- The Early Vedic period extends from 1,500BC to 1,000BC.
- The Aryans first settled in the region of Punjab. This is proved by the fact that the rivers Kuruman, Kabul and the other western tributaries of the Indus are mentioned in the Rig Veda.
- The Indo-Aryans settled in the region of the waning Indus Valley Civilization, i.e., across the river Indus.
- The agriculture was the chief occupation of the Aryans. They also reared animals. Oxen, horses, dogs, goats and sheep were mainly domesticated. By them and they considered cow to be pious and important.
- The early Vedic society consisted of four varnas—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. There was no complication in the varna system. The basis of varna was occupation rather than birth in the beginning.
- The earliest evidence of iron covering a time span of 1300–1000BC is from southern Rajasthan, marking the advent of iron. This age was associated with specific culture traits, particularly painted grey ware, black and red ware and megalithic graves.
- During the Later Vedic period, the Aryan civilization gradually extended towards the east and the south. The centre of culture shifted to Kurukshetra, and Madhyadesa. The land of the Yamuna and the Ganga came into prominence.
- The Vedic Aryans were well known for their technology related to tanning of leather, fermentation of grains and fruits, and dyed scale production of copper, iron and steel, brass, silver and gold and their alloys.
- During this period most of the agricultural implements and weapons of war were made of iron. Artisans and craftsmen produced goods of fine quality. They were organized into guilds. The guilds regulated the prices. These professions became hereditary with time and constituted subcastes or *jatis*.

1.7 KEY TERMS

- **Citadel:** It is a raised part of a city surrounded by walls for protection
- **Seal:** It is an engraved piece of metal used as a stamp for identification
- **Pictograph:** It is a picture representing a word or phrase
- **Varna system:** It refers to the system of division of the society on the basis of occupation

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- **Janas:** They are different tribal settlements of the Indian subcontinent in the Vedic age
- **Gramas:** It is a village or the smallest unit of the *jana* comprising a number of families

1.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

- The two main sources of ancient Indian history are:
 - Archaeological evidences
 - Literary evidences
- Before paper was invented, people wrote on palm leaves and the bark of birch trees.
- The cities belonging to the Indus Valley Civilization were divided into a lower town area and the citadel.
- Agriculture was the chief occupation of the people of the Indus Valley.
- The most commonly accepted theory among historians as to the reason why the Indus Valley Civilization declined is that natural calamities like earthquakes and floods or changes in the course of the river Indus may have destroyed the cities or led to mass migration.
- Agriculture and cattle rearing were the main occupations of the early Aryans.
- The Aryans gave up their nomadic life and settled down in the north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent in the form of different tribal settlements known as *janas* and the land where they settled was called *Janapada*.
- A village or *grama* was the smallest unit of the *jana*. A *grama* would comprise a number of families. Each tribe had a chieftain called a *rajan*, whose chief function was to protect the tribe from external attacks and maintain law and order.
- The history of the later Vedic period is based mainly on the Vedic texts, which were compiled after the age of the Rig Veda.
- The position of women also began to deteriorate and they were thought to be inferior to men. They were not allowed to read Vedic literature. Their main duty was to look after the house. The family shows the increasing power of the father who could even disinherit his son. Women were generally given a lower position. Although some women theologians took part in philosophical discussions and a few queens participated in rituals, women were considered to be inferior and subordinate to men.

1.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

- Discuss the different sources of ancient Indian history.
- What was the geographical expanse of the Indus Valley Civilization?
- What are the varnas? How are they classified?
- How was the Vedic polity structured?
- What is the earliest source of information about the Aryans?

UNIT 2 SIXTH CENTURY BC AND RISE OF HETERODOX SECTS

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Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 Buddhism
- 2.3 Jainism
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Key Terms
- 2.6 Answers to 'Check your Progress'
- 2.7 Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Reading

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Great thinkers like Buddha, Mahavira, Heraclitus, Zoroaster, Confucius and Lao Tzu lived and preached their ideas in the sixth century BC. In India, the republican institutions were solidified in the 6th century BC.

Due to this the rise of heterodox sects emerged against the orthodox religion dominated by rites and rituals. Among them the most successful were Jainism and Buddhism whose impact on the Indian society was significant.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the rise of heterodox sects
- Understand the preaching of Jainism and Buddhism

2.2 BUDDHISM

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

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

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

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

Great renunciation

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

Enlightenment

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

Gautama practised continuous fasting until he was reduced to a mere skeleton. He then realized that mere suffering and sacrifice could not lead to truth. He thought that he had wasted six years. The five disciples also left him alone. At last, one day he sat under a Peepul tree (*Ashvattha*) on the banks of river Niranjana (the modern Phalgu) at Gaya and took a vow, 'I will not leave this place till I attain the peace of mind, which I have been trying for all these years.' Finally, Gautama attained supreme knowledge and insight. He found out the truth and the means of salvation from human sufferings. He got the highest knowledge or *bodhi*. Gautama thus became the Buddha, 'the enlightened one' or Tathagata.

The turning of the wheel of law

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

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

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

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

Four Noble Truths

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

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Eight-fold path

Buddha prescribed the noble eight-fold paths or the '*Astangamarga*', which every Buddhist is to follow in order to get deliverance from sufferings. These values included in the eight-fold path are as follows:

- (i) Right views
- (ii) Right aspirations
- (iii) Right speech
- (iv) Right action
- (v) Right living
- (vi) Right efforts
- (vii) Right mindfulness
- (viii) Right contemplation or meditation

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

Ahimsa

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

Law of Karma

Buddha however accepted the Hindu doctrine of *Karma*. He believed in the law of *Karma*, its working and transmigration of soul. He held that one of the key features of the universal law of *dharma* is 'as a man acts so shall he be', i.e., man gets the reward of its own action. The *Karma* doctrine implies that thoughts, actions and feelings of the past have determined our present and our present deeds will determine the future when we are reborn. No person can escape the consequences of his or her deeds. The deliverance from rebirth can be attained through good *Karma*, which again requires a strict moral life. According to his doctrine, not only man, but animals and supernatural spirits like angels, gods are subject to the great law of *Karma*.

Morality

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

Denounced Caste System

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

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

Religious texts

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

The Main Buddhist Sects

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

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Both lived together in the same Sanghas. However, there were differences in philosophy and principles among them.

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

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

Causes of the Rise of Buddhism

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fifth, Buddhism enjoyed the royal patronage of the kings like Ashoka and Kanishka and many royal families. Ashoka elevated the religion to occupy the position of state religion during his reign. He sent Buddhist missionaries to different parts of the world to spread the message of Buddha. Even he sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra to Ceylon with the message of Buddha. He engraved the teachings of Buddha in various pillars and rock inscriptions in different part of his empire. Powerful kings like Kanishka,

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Harsha, Bimbisara and Ajatasatru of Magadh, Prasnjit of Koshala and many other patronized Buddhism for which it spread in all directions during their reign.

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

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

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

Causes of the Fall of Buddhism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.3 JAINISM

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

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

- (a) Non-injury to life
- (b) Truthfulness
- (c) Non-stealing
- (d) Non-possession

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

Early life of Mahavira

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

Check Your Progress

1. State the values included in the eight-fold path.
2. What are the two major Buddhist sects?

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Life of Asceticism

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

During this period, he met an ascetic called Gosala Makkhaliputta at Nalanda. For six years, Makkhaliputta lived with Mahavira practising severe asceticism after which he separated himself from Mahavira and set up a new religious order called Ajivikas.

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

- Infinite knowledge
- Infinite power
- Infinite perception
- Infinite joy

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

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

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

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

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

The Jaina philosophy shows a close affinity to Hindu Samkhya Darshana (or Samkhya philosophy). They ignored the idea of God, accepted that the world is full of

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sorrows and believed in the theories of Karma (action) and transmigration of souls. According to Mahavira, salvation can be achieved by freeing the soul from earthly bondage. This can be achieved by means of right faith, right knowledge and right action. These are called *Ratnatreya* or three jewels of Jaina religion.

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

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

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

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

Mahavira did not believe in the supreme creator or God. He believed that no deity has created, maintains or destroys the world; however, it functions only according to universal law of development and decay. He advocated a holy ethical code, rigorous asceticism and extreme penance for the attainment of highest spiritual state. He regarded the highest state of the soul as God. He believed man is the architect of its own destiny and could attain salvation by leading a life of purity, virtue and renunciation.

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

Principle of non-injury

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

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

Jain sects

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

Religious texts

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

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

Causes of the Rise of Jainism

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

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

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

Spread of Jainism

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

Causes of the decline of Jainism

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

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

Third, the most important cause of its decline was the great revival of Hinduism. Under the Guptas, Cholas, Chalukyas and Rajput kings, Hinduism got much needed

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attention and patronization of the ruling class. Reforms came in Hinduism and it became the most popular religion in India. That was the main reason due to which Jainism was confined to some pockets of India.

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

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

2.4 SUMMARY

- Another great religious reformation movement of sixth century BC was Buddhism, which gave the biggest challenge to Brahmanism.
- The *Jatakas* contain the Buddhist traditions about the birth of Buddha. They tell us that Buddha's life did not begin with his birth in the Lumbini Garden. On the other hand, Buddha was the product of an infinitely long evolution through various form of life.
- Gautama decided to find out the cause of all suffering and wanted to know the truth. His hatred towards the world was intensified and he realized the hollowness of worldly pleasure.
- Gautama attained supreme knowledge and insight and after he found out the truth and the means of salvation from human sufferings. He got the highest knowledge or *bodhi*. Gautama thus became the Buddha, 'the enlightened one' or *Tathagata*.
- Buddha pointed out various paths by which one could attain *Nirvana* or salvation from the cycle of birth and death. He denied the authority of Vedas and denounced the method of sacrifice and hegemony of priestly class.
- After the demise of Buddha, Buddhism was sharply divided into two sects, namely Hinayana and Mahayana. The followers of Hinayana Buddhism believed in the original teachings of Gautama Buddha and did not want any relaxation. This sect was also known as the lesser vehicle; whereas, the beliefs of Mahayanism were different from the former.
- The 23rd Tirthankara was Parsavanath, who was a historical figure. Parsavanath probably lived in eight century BC, and probably died 250 years before the death of Mahavira.
- Parsava's teachings were not that rigid as that of his successor, Mahavira. He permitted his followers to lead a married life and allowed them to wear clothes to cover their body.
- The real founder of Jainism was its 24th Tirthankara, Vardhamana Mahavira. His childhood name was Vardhamana.
- After the death of his parents, he renounced the worldly life and became a monk at the age of 30. He left worldly life with the permission of his elder brother Nandivardhana and became an ascetic.

Check Your Progress

3. According to Jainism, who was the 23rd Tirthankara?
4. Which four infinities were possessed by Mahavira?

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- In the 13th year on the 10th *Vaisakh*, Mahavira acquired what Jains believe is the ultimate spiritual knowledge (*Kevalya*) under a sala tree on the bank of river Rijupalika near the village Jrimbikagrama, whose identification is uncertain.
- The religious texts written in Pali language do not recognize Mahavira as the originator of a new religion, but as a reformer. Mahavira accepted most of the religious doctrines of Parsavanath though he made some alterations and additions.
- Jainism never spread all over India or beyond its boundaries, yet it became a popular religion at that time, and still exists in many parts of the country.
- Jainism could not occupy the position of a main religion in India or outside India. However, it has contributed enormously in the field of art, architecture, literature and philosophy and has made valuable contributions to the Indian culture.

2.5 KEY TERMS

- **Stupa:** A mound-like structure containing Buddhist relics, typically the remains of Buddha.
- **Moamoria rebellion:** The 18th century conflict between the Morans, adherents of the Moamara Sattr, and the Ahom kings.
- **Borbarua:** One of the five patra mantris (councilors) in the Ahom kingdom, a position created by the Ahom king Pratap Singha.
- **Rebel:** A person who rises in armed resistance against an established government or ruler.

2.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The values included in the eight folded path are:
 - (i) Right views
 - (ii) Right aspirations
 - (iii) Right speech
 - (iv) Right action
 - (v) Right living
 - (vi) Right efforts
 - (vii) Right mindfulness
 - (viii) Right contemplation or meditation
2. After the demise of Buddha, Buddhism was sharply divided into two sects, namely Hinayana and Mahayana.
3. The 23rd Tirthankara was a historical figure known as Parsavanath.
4. Mahavira possessed four infinities, which were as follows:
 - Infinite knowledge
 - Infinite power
 - Infinite perception
 - Infinite joy

2.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. State the concept of the turning of the wheel law.
2. What do you understand by the principle of non-injury?

Long-Answer Questions

1. What were the main causes of the rise and the fall of Buddha Empire? Discuss.
2. Discuss the life and teachings of Mahavira.

2.8 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 EARLY STATES

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Early State Formation
 - 3.2.1 Rise of Mahajanapadas, Republics and Monarchies
- 3.3 The Mauryas: Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka
 - 3.3.1 Chandragupta Maurya
 - 3.3.2 Ashoka (269–232BC)
- 3.4 Decline of the Mauryan Empire
- 3.5 The Sungas, Indo-Greeks and the Kushanas
 - 3.5.1 Indo-Greeks
 - 3.5.2 Shunga and Kharavela
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 - 3.6.2 Samudragupta
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- 3.10 Answers to 'Check your Progress'
- 3.11 Questions and Exercises
- 3.12 Further Reading

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3.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss the rise and the achievements of the great Mauryan kings, Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka. The Mauryan Empire successfully conquered all the small, warring kingdoms and practically brought under its wake a huge portion of South Asia also. However, the foundation of the Empire was laid in a war-ridden north India, which was under constant threat of foreign attacks.

Around 326 BC, Alexander set out to conquer the world after having conquered Greece. Alexander defeated the Persian ruler. Next, he overran Afghanistan and entered India through the Khyber Pass. At this time, North-West India was divided into small kingdoms. By destroying the small kingdoms of the north-west, Alexander paved the way for the establishment of Mauryan dynasty's rule. Alexander's army was tired and reluctant to move further ahead and face the fierce army of Chandragupta Maurya. Chandragupta was not only a great conqueror but also a great administrator. They turned back and headed for Babylon, where Alexander breathed his last in 323 BC. Chandragupta Maurya, thus, was able to lay the foundation of the Empire that would ultimately change the course of the ancient Indian history.

Ashoka was another great king not only in the history of India but also across the whole world. A lot of information about him is available through his inscriptions and the Buddhist literature. He was the son of Bindusara and the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya. In his later life after he saw the bloodshed in the Kalinga war, he renounced violence and adopted Buddhism.

With the beginning of the Mauryan Empire in around 321 BC, Indian history entered a new era as for the first time India attained political unity and administrative uniformity. The Mauryan administration was the most well-organized and efficient in ancient India. This may be corroborated by the fact that even the Gupta Empire continued to follow their patterns in administration despite themselves being brilliant in all spheres of life. The Mauryan Empire had brought to the forefront amazing dexterity in managing the vast kingdom they had. For the first time in ancient India, a dynasty managed to subjugate and control a major portion of South Asia with much élan.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Examine the characteristic features of Mauryan Administration
- Discuss the various aspects of the rule of Chandragupta Maurya
- Discuss the various aspects of the rule of Ashoka, including his Dhamma and the Battle of Kalinga
- Evaluate the reasons that led to the downfall of the Mauryan Empire
- Analyse the emergence of Indo-Greeks
- Discuss the reign of Samudragupta
- Evaluate the reign of Chandragupta II Vikramaditya
- Analyse the development of art, architecture and sculpture during Gupta period
- Describe the administration, art and literature of the Pallava era
- Discuss the achievements of the Chalukya period

3.2 EARLY STATE FORMATION

By the Later Vedic Age, the Aryans had moved further into the Ganga Valley, a process facilitated by use of iron implements, which helped them to clear the thick forests with greater ease. In time, some of these *janas* (In ancient India, the groups of villages belonged to a clan or *vis*. Many clans made a community called *jana*) grew in size and power and came to be known as *janapadas* (literally meaning foothold of tribe). Gradually, many of these *janapadas* further evolved into larger political entities by capturing more and more land. These came to be known as *mahajanapadas* (from Sanskrit *maha* = great). By the 600BC, there were sixteen *mahajanapadas*. The kings or groups of *Kshatriyas*, the chiefs of which called themselves *rajas* or kings, ruled over *Janapadas* or *Mahajanapadas*.

3.2.1 Rise of Mahajanapadas, Republics and Monarchies

Ancient Buddhist texts make frequent reference to the sixteen great kingdoms (*mahajanapadas*) and republics which had evolved and flourished in the northern/north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent before the rise of Buddhism in India. Of the sixteen *mahajanapadas*, four were prominent monarchies—Kosala, Vatsa, Avanti and Magadha. They were constantly fighting with each other. Ultimately, Magadha emerged supreme.

Republics and monarchies

The *mahajanapadas* had two kinds of political systems. They were either republics or monarchies. A republican *mahajanapada* was ruled by a group of people elected by the people of that tribe. There was no hereditary ruler. Decisions were taken on the basis of majority consent. So, it was a kind of a democratic system where the people of the tribe had a say in their political system. The Sakya *mahajanapada*, for example, was an important republic.

Most of the *mahajanapadas* had a monarchical system. The king ruled according to his own wish. After his death, his son succeeded to the throne. Magadha, for example, was a monarchical *mahajanapada*.

The Aryans slowly and steadily expanded their civilization and culture. They expanded rapidly in northern India. Many strong Aryan centres were established till the 6th century BC and the states were being called on the basis of caste. None had full control over whole India, which divided into many smaller states. In order to expand the states, the *janapadas* were extended and changed into *mahajanapadas* later.

Emergence of Cities and Territorial States

Although there has not been enough evidence concerning *mahajanapadas*, important Buddhist and Jaina books provide the following information about the sixteen major *mahajanapadas*:

1. **Anga:** This was situated near modern Bhagalpur (located on the borders of modern Bihar and Bengal). Champa was its capital. Champa has been considered one of the six great cities in the sixth century BC. It was famous for its trade and commerce. Anga was an enemy of Magadha. It was defeated by Magadha by mid-sixth century BC.
2. **Magadha:** It was situated where modern Patna and Gaya districts of Bihar are located. Its capital was at Rajagriha. Rajagriha was an impenetrable place surrounded by five hills. The remains of the walls of Rajagriha provide the earliest evidence of fortification in the history of India. In the fifth century BC, the capital was shifted to Pataliputra, which was the seat of the early Magadha kings. Magadha rose to prominence because its fertile agricultural tracts were best suited for the cultivation of wet rice. Further, it had iron ore deposits of south Bihar (modern Jharkhand) were under its control. Last but not the least, the open social system of the Magadhan empire made it the most important monarchy in the years to come.
3. **Kashi:** Of the sixteen *mahajanapadas*, Kashi was the most powerful in the beginning. It was located in and around modern Varanasi. Its capital Varanasi was the foremost city of India situated on the confluence of the Ganges and the Gomati river and in the middle of the most fertile agricultural areas. It emerged as a leading centre of textile manufacture and horse trade in the time of the Buddha. However, by the time of the Buddha, the Kashi *mahajanapada* had been taken over by Kosala and this led to a war between Magadha and Kosala kingdoms.
4. **Kosala:** Kosala was bound on the west by the river Gomati, on the south by the Sarpika, on the east by the river Sadarvira (Gandak) and on the north by the Nepal hills. Kosala *mahajanapada* emerged out of an assimilation of many smaller principalities and lineages. Hiranyanabha, Mahakosala Prasenjita and Suddhodhana have been named as rulers of Kosala in the sixth century BC. Saketa, Shravasti

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(modern Sahet-Mahet) and Bahraich districts of Uttar Pradesh were three important Kosala cities. The capital of Kosala was Shravasti. King Prasenjita was a contemporary and friend of the Buddha. Later, Kosala emerged as one of the most powerful rivals to the emergent Magadha Empire.

5. **Vajji:** This was located in contemporary Bihar. This mahajanpada came into existence by the coming together of several castes. Its capital was Vaishali.
6. **Malla:** There were two branches of the Mallas, namely Kushinagar and Pava. This was a federal democracy.
7. **Vatsa:** Vatsa was one of the most powerful mahajanapadas with its capital at Kaushambi (near modern Allahabad) on the bank of the Yamuna. This means that the Vatsas were settled around modern Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. Bhasa, one of the greatest Sanskrit dramatists in ancient India, has immortalized Udayan, a Vatsa king, in his plays. These plays are based on the story of the love affair between Udayana and Vasavadatta, the Princess of Avanti. These plays also point to the conflict among the powerful kingdoms of Magadha, Vatsa and Avanti. Vatsa lost its significance in the ensuing struggle because the later texts do not refer to them with great importance.
8. **Chedi:** Contemporary Bundelkhand and its nearby landmass came under Chedi. Its capital was Shaktimati or Sandhivati.
9. **Kuru:** This mahajanpada covered the regions of Thaneshwar, Delhi and Meerut. Its capital was Indraprastha.
10. **Surasena:** This was located to the south of Matsya state. Its capital was Mathura.
11. **Panchal:** This was located in the territory between rivers Ganga and Yamuna. It also had two branches. The capital of northern Panchal was Ahichatrapur, while that of southern Panchal was Kampilya.
12. **Matsya (Maccha):** This was located in modern Jaipur, Alwar and Bharatpur regions of Rajasthan. Its capital was Viratnagara.
13. **Avanti:** Avanti was one of the most powerful mahajanapadas in the sixth century BC. The central area of this mahajanapada or kingdom roughly corresponds to Ujjain district of Madhya Pradesh. The kingdom was divided into two parts. Its southern capital was Mahasmati, while its northern capital was Ujjain. The latter was more important. The kingdom controlled the trade with the south. According to a legend, from an enemy he became father-in-law of Udayan who ruled over Vatsa kingdom.
14. **Ashmak:** This region was located in south India. Its capital was Paudanya (Potan).
15. **Gandhara:** The states of contemporary Taxila and Kashmir came under this region. It had two capitals, namely Pushkalavati and Taxila. Taxila was a famous centre of learning.
16. **Kamboj:** This janapada was located to the north of Gandhar at Pamir and Badakhshan. Its capital was Rajpur.

Republics

We get the knowledge about the republics of the sixth century BC from Buddhist books. These republics were as follows:

1. **Shakyas of Kapilvastu:** It was located on the border of Nepal on the foothills of the Himalayas. This republic was located in the western part of contemporary

Gorakhpur. Gautama Buddha was born in this state. Its capital was Kapilavastu. The people of this area considered themselves to be the descendants of Eshvak. This was a major site of learning.

2. **Bulis of Allakappa:** This area was located between the contemporary districts of Shahabad and Muzaffarpur. According to *Dhammapada*, this area was situated near the Veth Island.
3. **Kalamas of Kesputta:** The spiritual guru of Buddha, Aalar Kalam, belonged to this dynasty. This dynasty is related to the Panchal Keshis as described in *Shatapatha Brahman*.
4. **Bhaggas of Susamagiri:** According to *Sanyuttamkaya*, this area was situated in Bhargadisa. Contemporary Mirzapur was located near this area.
5. **Kolis of Ramgram:** This republic was situated in the east of Shakyas of Kapilavastu.
6. **Mallas of Pava:** This dynasty was ruled by the kshatriyas of the Vashistha gotra. The Mallas were settled in contemporary Padrauna in Uttar Pradesh.
7. **Mallas of Kushinagar:** They were the second branch of Mallas. Buddha attained *Parinirvana* here.
8. **Moris of Pippalivan:** According to *Mahavansh*, the Moris were earlier known as the Shakyas. However, later they shifted to a hilly region of the Himalayas due to the brutality of Vidudabh where they established the Pippalivan city. This city has always been famous for the sound of peacocks and, as a result, is referred to as 'Moris'.
9. **Videhas of Mithila:** Mithila was a renowned learning centre.
10. **Lichchavis of Vaishali:** The Lichchavis belonged to the Kshatriya clan.
11. **Naga of Vaishali:** The combination of the Videhas and the Lichchavis led to the establishment of the federation of Vajji. There was also a federation of Lichchavis and Nagas which was called Asthakul in which Videhas, Yangyik, Lichchavi and Vajji were included.

Thus, the powerful republics of this period included the Shakya, Lichchavi, Videha, Vajji and Malla. According to D.R. Bhandarkar, an authority on the ancient history of India from 650BC – 325BC, 'The meaning of republic and federation was a group of well decided and well organized men.' However, it seems that a unit of a federation was usually called a republic. Several republics made a federation. Thus, many *grihas* made a *kul* and a group of *kulas* formed a republic.

3.3 THE MAURYAS: CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA AND ASHOKA

In 322BC, Magadha, under the rule of Chandragupta Maurya, began to assert its power over neighbouring areas. Situated on rich alluvial soil and near mineral deposits, especially iron, Magadha was the centre of bustling commerce and trade. The primary source of our knowledge about the Mauryan empire is based on the *Arthashastra* by Chanakya or Kautiliya, which is a treatise on statecraft. It gives us a picture of the administration, society and the economy of the country. In the book, he explains how a strong and an efficient government should be organized and what the duties of a ruler are. Chanakya was Chandragupta's Chief Minister and mentor. The Sanskrit play *Mudrarakshasa* by

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Visakadatta is a political literature revealing the struggle undertaken by Chandragupta Maurya with the help of Chanakya to overthrow the Nandas. It is also an insight into Chandragupta's life. The *Jataka* tales of the Buddhist literature and the *Indica* written by Megasthenes, the Greek traveller to Chandragupta's court, gives an account of the Mauryan capital, its administrative system and social life. The Ceylonese chronicles, the *Dipavamsa* and the *Mahavamsa*, give the accounts of the conversion of Ceylon to Buddhism. They have also helped in reconstructing the history of Ashoka. The rock edicts of Ashoka provide information about the Mauryan rule. According to them, India constructed a new world on the basis of peace, brotherhood and cultural unity under the rule of the Mauryans.

The arrival of the Mauryans was an important incident in the Indian history. Considering the unfavourable conditions in which the foundations of this dynasty were laid down and became strong, it can be said that its place was really very high. The Mauryan empire marked a new epoch in the history of India. It was a period of unification of the territories, which were fragmented kingdoms under different rulers. Moreover, trade routes between Europe and India over land and sea paved the way for contact with the outside world. It was a period when politics, art, trade and commerce flourished.

3.3.1 Chandragupta Maurya

Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of the Mauryan empire. After establishing himself firmly on the throne of Magadha, Chandragupta set out to expand his empire. He conquered the whole of northern India up to the river Indus. Chandragupta had vast resources; hence he could maintain a huge army. In 305BC, he defeated Seleucus Nikator and north-western India was liberated from Greek control. Seleucus surrendered Afghanistan and Baluchistan and also gave his daughter Helen's hand in marriage to Chandragupta. In return, Chandragupta presented Seleucus with 500 war elephants. Seleucus sent Megasthenes as an ambassador to the court of Chandragupta.

Megasthenes stayed with Chandragupta for over five years, travelling through the Mauryan empire and wrote an account of his travels in the book *Indica*. Chandragupta, who ruled from 324 to 297BC, was the architect of the first Indian imperial power whose capital was Pataliputra, near modern-day Patna in Bihar. The rule of this remarkable king came to an end in 297BC. After ruling for twenty-four years, Chandragupta abdicated the throne in favour of his son, Bindusara, and became a Jain ascetic. According to a Jain text, he starved himself to death in order to attain *nirvana*. His son, Bindusara, extended the empire into central India and parts of southern India. Only the kingdom of Kalinga was unconquered at the time of his death. His son, Ashoka, succeeded him in 273BC.

Early Life of Chandragupta Maurya

Though much is not known about the earlier life of Chandragupta, inscriptions suggest that he was born in 345BC in a Kshatriya family residing between present Gorakhpur and the Terai in Nepal. A number of Indian historians are of the view that Chandragupta was the illegitimate son of a king from the Nanda dynasty of Magadha from a maid named 'Mura'. The dynasty was named after Chandragupta's mother. Chanakya, a teacher in the Takshasila University found him playing with his friends, where he pretended to be their king. The devout wisdom in the boy impressed Chanakya who was amazed at his leadership skills and decided to make him a disciple. Chanakya trained Chandragupta in warfare and statecraft. They conquered Magadha and established a new rule in Gandhara.

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Chandragupta was a great commander and an efficient warrior. The talent and ambitious attitude of Chandragupta combined with the shrewd politics of Chanakya were enough to face any opposition efficiently. Chandragupta fought many battles during his reign. He took over Magadha, fought against the Greeks, the Nanda dynasty of the east. By the time he was twenty years' old, his kingdom stretched from the Bay of Bengal in the east to River Indus in the west to the Arabian Sea in the south. Under Chandragupta Maurya, many kingdoms freed from barbaric administration on one hand and on the other hand also released from the clutches of foreign slavery. His political and soldierly achievements were great. He accepted Jainism and relinquished the throne for his son Bindusara in 320BC.

Economy under Chandragupta Maurya

Under the Mauryan empire, India was an agricultural country. According to Megasthenes, majority of the population consisted of agriculturists. They neither participated in warfare nor did they participate in the state affairs. They were not harmed during wars. The tillers of the soil carried on their work uninterrupted. The land was rich and fertile. The means of irrigation were simple. Therefore, people never saw disasters caused by famines. There were two seasonal rainfalls in India, and farmers reaped harvest twice a year. Besides, there were orchards of myriad kinds. Kautilya has given a description of ploughed, fallow and rocky lands. The land was tilled with the help of oxen. The state paid special attention towards the methods of irrigation. Many officials were appointed for inspecting the towns. According to the Junagarh inscription, Pushpagupta, an official of Chandragupta got Sudarshana Lake constructed for irrigation in Saurashtra.

The following were the means of irrigation as given in *Arthashastra*:

- Canals, tanks, wells, ponds and rivers bullocks
- Water was drawn from the wells with the help of buckets, and big leather bags
- Building dams over the river

Kautilya also refers to manure made of the mixtures of ghee, honey, fats, cow dung and powdered fish. It was used in order to increase the fertility of the soil. Wheat, sugar, maize, rice, barley, sugarcane, mustard, peanuts, cotton, tobacco, potatoes, watermelons, etc., were the main crops of the Mauryan times. Fruits like mangoes, grapes, lemons were aplenty.

Occupations

During the Mauryan times, the cloth industry had greatly developed. The main clothes centres were Kashi, Vatsa, Madura, Vanga, Apranta, etc. Spinning was done by the spinning wheels and big looms were used for weaving clothes. According to *Arthashastra* and Megasthenes, cotton was produced in great quantity the weavers of cotton clothes worked round the clock. Jute too, was utilized for weaving. Magadha and Kashi were well known towns for jute productions.

During those days clothes were prepared out of the leaves and bark of the trees and the fibres of many kinds. *Arthashastra* presents an elaborate description of woollen clothes and blankets. They were made in different ways. The woollen garments were made of wool of many colours and with strong threads. Nepal was the main centre of blanket trade. Megasthenes has pointed out that the Indians dressed in costly and beautiful attires. The people of Bengal had the chief occupation of producing muslin cloth, which was in great demand for making clothes. While cotton was grown in the country, silk clothes were imported from China.

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Metallurgy

According to Megasthenes, during the Mauryan age, there was an enormous quantity of gold and silver in India. Iron, copper and brass was also available in large quantities. Iron was used for manufacture of arms. Ordinarily, the work of mining was done by the state officials. The state representative who was in-charge of the mines was known as Akradhayaksha. During the Mauryan times, ornaments were worn by members of both the sexes. The wealthy section of the society wore ornaments made of ivory.

Diving and finding pearls, jewels, shells, diamonds from the sea was the most difficult task. Ornaments studded with pearls and beads were in much demand. The Mauryans wore clothes embroidered with golden threads. The utensils were made of metal; the process of making pots out of metal, its casting and softening is also given in the Arthashastra.

Forests, in this period, constituted the property of the state. There were efficient methods of cutting and loading the wood. Bamboo, leaves and bark was used for making a number of everyday things. Wood of an excellent quality was required for making ships. Arthashastra gives a description of skins of different animals used for manufacturing things. During the Mauryan Age, a brisk wine trade flourished too. There is a mention of six types of wine in Arthashastra. Wine trade was under the complete control of Suradhyabha.

The state paid avid attention to the progress of every trade and occupation and traders enjoyed the security of the state. People blinding or chopping off the hands of any sculptor or craftsman was given life sentence. Traders had the privilege of enjoying feasible profit but anyone who indulged in making graft money, cheating, gaining undue profit and adulterating everyday products was severely punished. Kautilya followed the middle path in state affairs and a mutual one in professional sphere.

The external and internal trade had developed sufficiently during the Mauryan period. The internal trade was carried through safe land routes. The roads going from Pataliputra to western India was 1,500 miles long. In southern India there were important busy land routes. According to Kautilya, the southern roads going through the mines were very significant. They involved less exertion and labour. Another road ran from Pataliputra to the east. Besides these major routes there existed many minor land routes that connected the small cities with the main roads. On the main roads there were milestones at a distance of every half kilometer.

Judges were appointed for the regular inspection and supervision of these roads. The internal trade was also carried through rivers. Small boats and vessels were used for this purpose. In the entire Kingdom every town was known for its particular products. Nepal was famous for woollen clothes, the Himalayan area for skin industries, Magadha for tree bark and clothes, Kashi for all types of clothes, Bengal for fine muslin, Kerala for pearls. The people of the professional class travelled to far off lands to sell their wares.

According to Arthashastra, during the Mauryan times active trade was carried on by sea routes in big ships known as Pravana. There were ports and harbours. The management of the ports was under a port official. The person in charge of the port had to rescue ships caught in the stormy waves of perilous seas. Pearls were imported from China. There were good commercial relations between Egypt and India. The existence of the chief port of Egypt and three land routes connected it with India. The existence of a special assembly for receiving the foreign ambassadors in the royal court of Mauryas indicates that there existed close relations between India and countries abroad. Thus during the Mauryan times, kings had to maintain foreign relations and formulate the appropriate external policies.

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Coinage

The following were the Mauryan coins:

- Gold coins known as *Sauvamik*
- Silver coins called *Kashaparna*
- Copper coins called *Mashaka*
- *Kakni* was also a copper coin which was less valuable to *Mashaka*

Kautilya has divided the Mauryan coinage into two parts. These are as follows:

1. **Legal tender:** In this category were the coins collected in the state treasury. They were used for state taxation and export and import or exchange.
2. **Token money:** This was a token currency used by the people or their daily transactions. Such coins were not deposited in the royal treasury. The coins were made by the state foundries. But anyone could cast the coins at his own cost. There was no paper currency. The chief of the foundry was called *Suvarnika* or *Lakshanadhyaksha*.

Chandragupta Maurya started his career from a very humble position and there are differences of opinion regarding his family. It is now the accepted view of a majority of scholars that Chandragupta belonged to the Kshatriya clan called the Moriyas originally ruling over Pippalivana, which probably lay in modern Uttar Pradesh.

After the death of her husband, the mother of Chandragupta shifted to Pataliputra for safety where she gave birth to her illustrious son. Chandragupta was first brought up by a cowherd and then by a hunter. Chanakya, his mentor marked out Chandragupta for the twin tasks of winning the entire India and killing Dhana Nand. It is now generally believed that Chanakya and Kautilya, the author of *Arthashastra*, were the names of the same person.

The classical writers have described that Chandragupta had visited Alexander who felt offended by his behaviour and gave orders to kill him. However, Chandragupta managed to escape. After the return of Alexander, he with the help of Chanakya, raised an army by recruiting soldiers mostly from the warlike people of the republican states of Punjab who had given fierce resistance to Alexander. He kept before the people the idea of turning the foreign Greek invaders out of the country and succeeded. He was supported by Parvataka—a hill-tribe chief who became his friend. Probably, Chandragupta started his war of liberation in the lower Indus Valley, before 321 or even before 323 BC and finally succeeded. By 317 BC, no Greek governor remained in India and Punjab and Sindh were occupied by Chandragupta. The desire of the Greek *Satrap* and their soldiers to go back to their own country, their mutual conflicts, the revolt of the Indian *Satrap*s and the assassination of Philippos of the Upper Indus Valley in 325 BC and the death of Alexander in 323 BC facilitated the work of Chandragupta of turning the Greeks out of the Indian Territory.

The next task of Chandragupta was to conquer Magadha. He failed to achieve this objective probably once or twice but ultimately grabbed the throne of Pataliputra and killed Dhana Nand. The incompetence of Dhana Nand, his unpopularity amongst his subjects, the astute diplomacy of Chanakya and the bravery and military skill of Chandragupta were mainly responsible for the downfall of the Nanda dynasty. Chandragupta also kept Pataliputra as his capital.

Extension of the Empire

When Chandragupta was busy in the extension and consolidation of his empire, Seleucus, one of the able generals of Alexander who had obtained possession of the Eastern Empire of his master, proceeded towards India to recover the lost possession of the late emperor. He reached India in around 305 BC where Chandragupta faced him in a battle. The Greek writers do not give the details of the conflict. It is also not certain whether a decisive battle took place between the two or not. But, in view of the terms of peace between the two, it is definite that Seleucus failed miserably in his expedition. He had not only to abandon the idea of re-conquering Punjab but had to surrender to Chandragupta a part of his territories in the East with its capital cities Herat, Kandahar and Kabul and also the territories of Baluchistan.

Thus, this settlement between the two extended the territories of Chandragupta in the North-West up to the borders of Persia and also secured his frontiers in that direction.

No written record is available of the other conquests of Chandragupta, yet it is certain that he ruled over a vast empire. Bindusara, his successor is not known to history as a conqueror while Ashoka conquered only Kalinga.

Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the empire of the Mauryas, (which is believed to have extended from the border of Persia in the North-West to Bengal in the East and from Kashmir in the North to Mysore in the South), was mostly built up by Chandragupta.

In his last days, Chandragupta went South with the Jain monk Bhadrabahu. The hill where he lived during the last days of his life is known as Chandragiri where a temple known as Chandragupta Basti was also erected by his grandson, Ashoka. It is in Mysore.

Chandragupta an an Administrator

Chandragupta was not only a great conqueror but also a capable administrator. The way he carried on the administration of his empire was pursued by his successors and no change was felt necessary except that Ashoka tried to liberalize it further and elaborated the public duties of the state officials. The basic principles of the administration of the Mauryas remained the same as established by Chandragupta till subsequently the weaker Mauryas lost their hold over it. Primarily, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and the description of Megasthenes give us a fair idea of the administration of Chandragupta.

The polity

By the time of the Mauryas, the office of the king had become hereditary and the divine origin of monarchy had attained maturity and had given the king wide powers. But, strictly speaking, as Hindu political theory vests sovereignty in the dharma or law in the widest sense of the term and the state is separated from the king who is a part of it, no king could be tyrannical or a wielder of absolute personal powers. Of course, the necessity of a strong king was stressed but it was equally emphasized that he had to rule according to the dharma and for the establishment of the dharma, which was conducive to the highest good.

The dharma actually upheld an ideal that elevated the soul to the loftiest heights and, therefore, the function of the state was to create those conditions of life which would help every citizen attain this goal. It also meant that the state would enjoy all the embracing powers. Therefore, its scope of activities was unlimited and no distinction

was made between the personal and the civic rights and duties, or between the moral principles and positive law. Everything that had any bearing upon the moral, spiritual or material condition of a citizen came within the scope of the state activities. The state had the right to regulate the family life of the citizens, to promote true religion and control all professions and occupations as well. Thus, the state held the ring for the interplay of social forces, intellectual influences, economic enterprises and above all the spiritual tradition. But in no case, the extensive activities of the state and the divine origin of the monarchy meant to support the divine right of the king. Therefore, the power of the king has increased but not without an increase in his corresponding duties. No wicked son of a king was allowed to become the successor and, consequently, the right of the people to rebel against a wicked and tyrannical king was also recognized. For the same purpose, special care was taken to impart sound education and moral training to the future king and if the prince failed to reach a requisite standard, he forfeited his right to the throne.

Regarding the inter-state relations, the *Arthashastra* states that the normal relations between the states can only be that of mutual hostility and material interests alone should guide the relations of one state with another. A ruler should adopt the policy which is calculated to increase the power and wealth of his state, irrespective of any legal justice or moral consideration and for this purpose; he should adopt any or all the four instruments, viz. *Sama* (conciliation), *Dama* (gift), *Danda* (aggressive action) and *Bheda* (sowing dimensions in a hostile state or among different enemy states).

The king

Sometimes, the king could be elected but hereditary kingship was the established practice. Females were not excluded from the right of kingship but in practice it was rarely to be found. The king was the supreme head of the state and performed military, judicial, executive and legislative functions. His permanent duty was to protect the people and seek their welfare. In *Arthashastra*, it is mentioned that the happiness of the king lies in the welfare and the ultimate good of his subjects. Therefore, the king was the busiest person in the kingdom. The twenty-four hours of each day and night were divided into eight parts and in each part he performed different duties punctually. Chandragupta could sleep hardly for six hours. Even when he was dressed and his hair being combed, he used to listen to the reports of his spies and assign them their duties. Besides, he was easily accessible to his subjects. The king was paid in the form of taxes by his subjects in return for his services to the kingdom. He lived in a large and comfortable palace, which was highly praised by Megasthenes. He was protected by lady bodyguards and every precaution was taken to protect his life from treachery and poisoning.

The council of ministers and the state council

According to Kautilya, there were two committees to assist the king in the administration. He says, 'Sovereignty is possible only with assistance.' It implied that these committees were not only necessary but also effective in administration as well. The council of ministers was a small body consisting of 3-12 members. Each of them was the head of one or a few of the administrative departments and sometimes, one of them could be appointed as the chief or prime minister. All of them were appointed by the king on merit and could also be dismissed by him. All the administrative measures were preceded by deliberations in the council of ministers. Each minister had free access to the king but in policy matters they advised the king as a body. The State Council was a large body and the number of its members varied between 12, 16 or 20 and, according to Kautilya, it could include as many members as the need of the state required. These councils played

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Mysore in the south, from Afghanistan in the northwest to the banks of the River Brahmaputra in the east. In the west his territory covered Saurashtra and Junagarh. Kalinga was one of the kingdoms, which remained unconquered and hostile when Ashoka succeeded to the throne. It was important to Ashoka from a geographical point of view, since the route to south India both by land and by sea passed through it. It would also bring added prosperity to the Mauryan Empire. It was for these reasons that Ashoka attacked Kalinga.

Battle of Kalinga

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

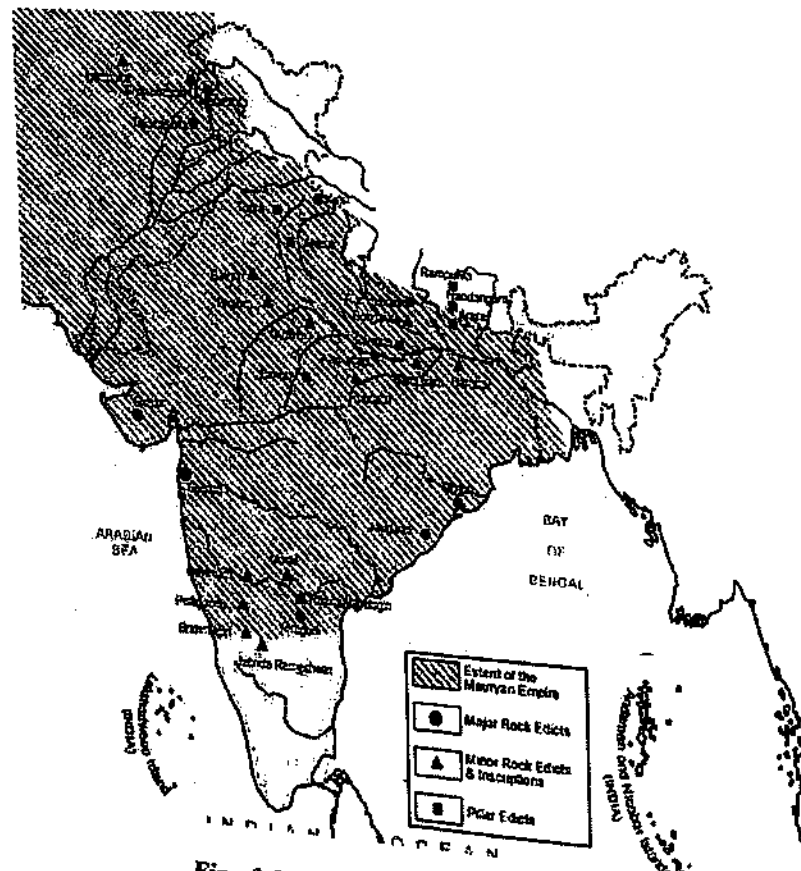


Fig. 3.1 Mauryan Empire under Ashoka

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

Ashoka's Dhamma

The word 'dhamma' was derived from the Sanskrit word 'dharma.' Ashoka followed the principles of Buddhism—that of truth, charity, kindness, purity and goodness. He

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

Ashoka was an able administrator, an intelligent human being and a devout Buddhist. He attempted to spread this religion to Syria, Egypt and Macedonia, and also sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra to Sri Lanka. The Buddhist *Sangha* of the time decided to send missionaries to many places, like modern day Burma and Sri Lanka.

Following are the important aspects of Dhamma through the study of the scripts:

- Earliest signals of Dhammalipi are seen in the Minor Rock Edict I and II (MREI and II).
- The core of Ashoka's Dhamma is enshrined in the first and the second Minor Rock Edict. Minor Rock Edicts (now onwards MREI and II) refer to following important points:
 - o Gujjarra version of MRE-I mentions that both rich and poor should be encouraged to practice Dhamma.
 - o Brahmagiri version of MRE-II has the following points. Beloved of the god (Ashoka) said that:
 - (a) Mother and father should be obeyed and likewise the elders.
 - (b) Steadfastness (in kindness) should be shown towards the living beings.
 - (c) The truth must be spoken.
 - (d) Teachers should be honoured by the pupil.
 - (e) Relatives should be respected.

These principles have been engraved just after the mention of Ashoka's Dhammayatra and form the core of his Dhamma.

- The concept of Dhamma was based upon the ancient values and customs. They have been repeated and stressed a number of times. There is a special stress on the following:
 - o Abstention from slaughter of life (lives) (*Arambho prananam*).
 - o Avoidance of injury to the creatures (*Avihisa Bhutanam*).
- In REIII the Government officials are asked to preach the following:
 - o Obedience to father and mother is an excellent thing.
 - o Liberty to friends, acquaintances and relatives and to Brahmins and Sramanas is an excellent thing.

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- o The abstention from slaughter of living creatures is an excellent thing.
- o Tendency towards spending little and storing little is an excellent thing.
- o RE IX and XI advocate a proper courtesy even towards the slaves and servants. RE VII speaks to show courtesy to miserable and wretched (*Kapanivalakesu*).

Now, dealing with the important part, let us understand the constituents of the Dhamma policy. Dhamma is clearly defined in PEII as consisting of the following:

- Freedom from sins (or few sins): *Apasinave*
- Many virtuous deeds: *Vahukayane*
- Compassion: *Daya*
- Liberality (or making gifts): *Dana*
- Truthfulness: *Satya*
- Purity (of mind): *Sochye*

PEVII adds gentleness (*Sadhve*) to the mentioned list.

According to PE VII, people of all sects should be obliged to have the following:

- Self control (*Sayame*)
- Mental purity (*Bhava shuddhi*)
- Gratefulness (*Kilanala*)
- Firm devotion (*Didhabhalila*)

PE III says that man should guard himself against those passions which lead to sin. These are as follows:

- Fierceness (*Chamdiye*)
- Cruelty (*Nilhuliye*)
- Anger (*Kodhe*)
- Pride (*Mane*)
- Jealously (*Irshiya*)

Though in the conduct of *Dhamma* (Law of Piety) the renouncement of killing, non violence, non-injury, self-control was a prominent part but that does not suggest that Ashoka totally renounced war.

Ashoka's *Dhammayatra* was initiated with Ashoka's visit to Sambodhi when he had been consecrated for ten years. He, in course of *Dhammayatas* or *Dharmayatra* visited *Brahmanas* and *Sramanas* and offered gifts. He visited elders and offered gifts of gold and made contact with the people of countryside and instructed them in *Dhamma*.

Nature of Dhamma

Scholars are not totally unanimous about the exact explanation of the nature of *Dhamma*. Rhys Davids understands it, as a whole, as the duty of laymen while Smith says that the character of Ashoka's teaching is purely human and severely practical. He also identifies the ethics in the edicts as Buddhist rather than Brahmanical. Dr. C. Sircar says that *Dhamma* was a code of morals preached by Ashoka. It was basically extracted from the teachings of Buddha. According to K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Ashoka's *Dhamma* embraced all the living beings as it was based upon the ethics of benevolence.

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In the light of this comparative analysis you may infer that the crux or core of Ashoka's *Dhamma* was to enhance the ethics and moral standards of people by preaching non-violence, respect for other sects, and respect for people in general, etc. What also seems pertinent to note here is that *Dhamma* was also driven by political and geographical compulsions. It was rather a political philosophy based upon the ancient customs to maintain peace, tranquillity and harmony in such a vast empire. This seems to be an important reason for creating an administrative machinery for the dissemination of the concept amongst the people.

Foreign Policy After Kalinga

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ashoka ruled for an estimated forty years. After his death, the Mauryan dynasty lasted just fifty more years. Ashoka had many wives and children, but many of their names are lost to time. Mahindra and Sanghamitra were twins born by his 2nd wife, Devi, in the city of Ujjain. He had entrusted to them the job of making his state religion, Buddhism,

more popular across the known and the unknown world. Mahindra and Sanghamitra went to Sri Lanka and converted the King, the Queen and their people to Buddhism. They were naturally not handling state affairs after him.

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

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

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

In 1992, Ashoka was ranked 53 on Michael H. Hart's list of the most influential figures in history. In 2001, a semi-fictionalized portrayal of Ashoka's life was produced as a motion picture under the title *Ashoka*. King Ashoka, the third monarch of the Indian Mauryan dynasty, has come to be regarded as one of the most exemplary rulers in world history. The British historian H.G. Wells has written: 'Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Ashoka shines, and shines, almost alone, a star.'

Buddhist Kingship

One of the more enduring legacies of Ashoka Maurya was the model that he provided for the relationship between Buddhism and the state. Throughout Theravada Southeastern Asia, the model of rulership embodied by Ashoka replaced the notion of divine kingship that had previously dominated (in the Angkor kingdom, for instance). Under this model of 'Buddhist kingship', the king sought to legitimize his rule not through descent from a divine source, but by supporting and earning the approval of the Buddhist *sangha*. Following Ashoka's example, kings established monasteries, funded the construction of stupas, and supported the ordination of monks in their kingdom. Many rulers also took an active role in resolving disputes over the status and regulation of the *sangha*, as Ashoka had in calling a conclave to settle a number of contentious issues during his reign. This development ultimately led to a close association in many Southeast Asian countries between the monarchy and the religious hierarchy, an association that can still be seen today in the state-supported Buddhism of Thailand and the traditional role of the Thai king as both a religious and secular leader. Ashoka also said that all his courtiers were true to their self and governed the people in a moral manner.

Ashoka Chakra

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

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

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

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3.4 DECLINE OF THE MAURYAN EMPIRE

In 184 BC, the last Mauryan king Brihadratha was killed by his commander Pushyamitra Shunga, who then established the Shunga dynasty in Magadha. Several reasons were responsible for the decline of the Mauryan empire. Some of them are discussed as follows:

- **Monarchical type of government:** Monarchical type of government in itself is a great weakness. A day is bound to come when strong kings will be followed by weak ones and the empire will inevitably decline. Dr J.N. Sarkar, a prominent historian, has pointed out, 'If we turn the pages of Indian history we shall not come across even a single dynasty which might have produced more than five powerful kings. So, a day is bound to come when strong kings will be followed by weak kings and the empire would decay.' Ashoka too was succeeded by weak kings who neither possessed the same personality nor the same prowess, so the empire followed the path of disintegration.
- **Ashoka's propagation of ahimsa:** Some writers ascribe the downfall of the Mauryas to Ashoka's policy of ahimsa. Ashoka, after the Kalinga war, did not wage war and instead of conquest of territories, he began with the conquest of dharma. As a result of which, the military strength of the Mauryan empire declined, the militant attitudes also began to be absent from the minds of the people. Ashoka's successors too followed the path of ahimsa which further rendered the empire militarily impotent. It was due to this reason that Mauryan empire could not survive long after Ashoka's death.
- **Oppressive attitude of the official:** In the outlying provinces of the Mauryan empire, the governors tyrannized and oppressed the people due to which revolts were a common occurrence. During the reign of Bindusara, the people of Takshashila rose into rebellion against the maladministration and the oppressive rule of the governors. Such revolts were there even during the reign of Ashoka. After the

Check Your Progress

1. What is the primary source of our knowledge on the Mauryan Empire?
2. What were the main centres of clothes under the Mauryan Empire?
3. List the various coins that were minted under the Mauryan Empire?

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death of Ashoka, Takshasila was the first province to declare its independence.

- **Wide extent of empire:** The Mauryan empire had become sufficiently vast which could only be controlled by a strong hand like Ashoka or Chandragupta Maurya. Ashoka's successors, as weak they were, could not control such a vast empire. Moreover, the lack of the means of transportation and communication also loosened the hold of central authority on far-off cities. The result was the disintegration of the entire empire.
- **Division of empire:** Ashoka's death was followed by the division of empire amongst his sons and grandsons. While Jalauka became the ruler of Kashmir, Virasena established his sway over Gandhara. The remaining empire was divided between Samprati and Dasharatha. This division sounded the death knell of the Mauryan empire.
- **Lack of law of succession:** There existed no definite law of succession in the Mauryan empire, as a result of which there followed a war of succession amongst the sons and grandsons of Ashoka. The palace had become a virtual centre of conspiracies. It is believed that as a result of such conspiracy, Kunala was blinded by his stepmother.
- **Disloyalty of the officials:** During the later Mauryan kings, the court and the palace had become centres of conspiracies and the officials had become disloyal. The example of Pushyamitra is a testimony to this belief.
- **Deterioration in financial conditions:** Now it is also believed that proper care was not taken to collect the revenues as a result of which the later Mauryan kings had to face a financial crisis. The internal rebellions too emptied the treasury. The administration also suffered and so the empire became weak.
- **Ambition of Pushyamitra:** Pushyamitra Sunga was the Commander-in-Chief of the last Mauryan king, Brihadratha. He was an ambitious man. He took full advantage of the weak position of the king and killed him, thereby becoming the ruler. He also laid the foundation of the Sunga empire in Magadha.

Shastri's theory of the Mauryan decline

In 1910, Haraprasad Shastri, a Bengali historiographer and academician, propounded this theory of the Mauryan decline according to which Brahminical reaction sapped the vitality of Mauryan authority and shattered its very foundations. Shastri has advanced the following arguments in support of his theory:

- The first and the foremost cause of the alienation of the Brahmins was Ashoka's edicts against the animal sacrifice. Shastri maintains that these edicts were directed against Brahmins as animal sacrifice formed an important part of Brahminical rituals. As a result of which, the Brahmin felt offended and revolted against the Mauryas.
- Having referred to the prohibition of animal sacrifices, Shastri goes on to say 'This was followed by another edict in which Ashoka boasted that those who were regarded as gods on earth have been reduced by him into false gods. If it means anything, it means that the Brahmin who were regarded as Bhudevas or gods on earth had been shown up by him.'
- The appointment of *Dharma-Mahamatras*, i.e., Superintendent of Morals was a direct invasion on the rights and privileges of Brahmins, which the Brahmins could not tolerate.

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- Another cause of the alienation of Brahmins was a passage where Ashoka insisted upon his officers strictly observing the principles of *Danda-Samata* and *Vyavahara-Samata*. Shastri takes his expressions to mean equality of punishment and equality in law-suits irrespective of caste, colour and creed, and adds that this order, was very offensive to the Brahmins who claimed many privileges including immunity from capital punishment.
- In conclusion, Pandit Shastri refers to the assassination of the last Maurya king Brihadratha by Pushyamitra Sunga. He says, 'We clearly see the hands of the Brahmins in the great revolution.' Pushyamitra killed Brihadratha because he was a Brahmin.

Raychaudhuri's objections

Dr Hem Chandra Raychaudhuri has not accepted the arguments advanced by Haraprasad Shastri in support of his theory. He has criticized all the arguments in the following manner:

- As regards the first point, Dr Raychaudhuri has pointed out that prohibition of animal sacrifices did not necessarily imply hostilities towards the Brahmins. Long before Ashoka, the *Sruti* literature contain references against sacrifices and in favour of ahimsa. In the *Chandogya Upanishad*, Ghora Angirasa lays great stress on Ahimsa and non-killing of animal. If Ashoka prohibited animal sacrifice, there was no question of the alienation of Brahmins.
- As regards the second argument advanced by Pandit Shastri, Raychaudhuri says that the former has not followed the correct interpretation. The meaning of the entire passage is 'during that time the men in India who had been unassociated with the gods became associated with them.' There is thus no question of 'showing up' anybody.
- The appointment of *Dharma-Mahamatras* was not a direct invasion upon the privilege of the Brahmins. First of all, they were not simply superintendents of morals, they also had other enormous duties. Moreover, there is nothing to show that the *Dharma-Mahamatras* were wholly recruited from non-Brahmins.
- By *Danda-Samata* or *Vyavahara Samata* (equality of treatment or punishment), Ashoka did not want to infringe the rights and privileges of the Brahmins; rather, he was desirous of introducing uniformity in judicial procedure in his empire. It is to be understood in connection with the general principles of decentralization. It did not necessarily infringe on the alleged immunity of the Brahmins from capital punishment.
- As regards the fifth argument advanced by Pandit Shastri, there is no denying the fact that the last Mauryan king Brihadratha was put to death by Pushyamitra who was a Brahmin, but we must not forget that Pushyamitra was also the Commander-in-chief of the forces of Mauryas, and he took advantage of his position. Such rebellions are numerous in history. Moreover, if the relations of the Mauryas and the Brahmins would not have been cordial, how could it be possible that a Brahmin might assume the office of the Commander-in-chief?

Check Your Progress

4. How does the division of empire led to the decline of the Mauryan Empire?
5. Write a note on the deterioration in financial conditions which resulted in Mauryan downfall.

3.5 THE SUNGAS, INDO-GREEKS AND THE KUSHANAS

The great Mauryan Empire did not last long after the death of Ashoka and ended in 185 BC. Weak successors of Ashoka and the unmanageability of a vast empire caused the rapid decline of the Mauryas. Pushyamitra Shunga, a Brahmin general, usurped the throne after slaying the last Maurya king and presided over a loosely federal polity. The post-Mauryan period saw the emergence of a number of kingdoms all over the Indian subcontinent. A number of foreigners came to India in successive waves of migrations between 200 BC and AD 100. These people settled down in different parts of India. They brought with them their own distinct cultural flavour, which, after mixing with the local cultures, enriched the cultural ethos of India.

3.5.1 Indo-Greeks

Following Alexander the Great, the Greek Seleukidan dynasty of Persia continued their hold on the trans-Indus region. In 303 BC, Chandragupta Maurya overpowered Seleukos Nikator and brought the trans-Indus region under his control.

In Iran, the Parthians became independent and were succeeded by the Sassanians in AD 226. Similarly, the Greeks of Bactria rose in revolt under the leadership of Diodotus. These Greeks were later known as the Indo-Greeks when they gained a foothold in the Indian subcontinent.

Bactria was a fertile area situated between the Hindu Kush and the Oxus. It had control over the trade routes from Gandhara to the West. The Greek settlements in Bactria took shape in the fifth century BC when Persian emperors allowed the Greek exiles to settle in that area. In history, Bactria finds mention due to Diodotus' revolt against the Seleukidan king Antiochus. However, the relationship was restored by the Seleukidans in 200 BC by offering a Seleukidan bride to Enthymemes, the grandson of Diodotus. Around the same time, King Subhagasena met with defeat at the hands of the Seleukidan king who crossed the Hindu Kush in 206 BC, taking advantage of the unguarded northwestern region of India.

From here begins the history of the Indo-Greek, which is primarily gathered from the coins of their time. The evidence is quite confusing in places because there were many kings with similar, even identical, names.

Demetrios, the son of Euthydemus, not only conquered what is present southern Afghanistan and Makran but also took over some portions of Punjab. Another Bactrian, Eukratides began ruling the homeland of the Bactrians around 175 BC. His son Demetrios-II went along the river Indus and deeper into Punjab till Kutch.

The name most well known in Indo-Greek history is that of Menander who is responsible for the work, *The Questions of King Milinda*, a Buddhist treatise on the discussion between Menander and Nagasena, the Buddhist philosopher. Menander continued his reign of Punjab from 160 to 140 BC.

Menander managed to stabilize his power and also expand his boundaries. His coins are found in the areas extending from Kabul to Mathura near Delhi. Although he tried to conquer the Ganga valley, he did not succeed and is said to have been defeated by the Sungas.

Strato is said to have succeeded Menander at a time when Bactria was under the reign of a different group of Bactrians. Probably Mithridates - I of Persia annexed Taxila during the third quarter of the second century BC.

Later, Antialkidas took over as the inscriptions of Besnagar and Bhhilsa. This inscription is said to have been ordered by Heliodoros, an envoy of Antialkidas in the court of Besnagar. Heliodoros ordered the construction of a monolithic column in the honour of Vasudeva. This laid the foundations of the Bhakti cult of Vasudeva.

Hippostratos and Hermaeus were the last of the Greek kings known about. While the former was overpowered by Kadphises, the latter met defeat at the hands of Moga, the first Saka king.

Indo-Greek impact began to wane when the Scythians, nomads from Central Asia, attacked Bactria.

Ancient Indian government, society, literature, art and religion was deeply influenced by the arrival of the Indo-Greeks and by the penetration of the Sakas, Pallavas and Kushanas. India was able to easily absorb these foreign influences because of the youthfulness of its civilization. Greek impact on India occurred following Alexander's invasion of the Greek settlements in the Bactrian areas. It is not right to hold Alexander alone responsible for bringing Greek heritage and influence. When Alexander and his soldiers proceeded towards the east, Greek culture was already on the wane. Even though Alexander and his men were not the actual torch bearers of Greek culture in the east, traces of Greek influence were definitely present in the Indian civilization.

Alexander's invasion did not affect the Indian civilization too much. Indian rulers continued practising their military tactics without adopting Alexander's tactics. Whatever little Greek influence that was there was felt beyond the Hindu Kush in the Mauryan period but not anywhere in interior India.

Greek influence is seen in the use of stone in buildings and sculptures during the Mauryan age. Constructions in Taxila definitely carry Greek influence in the columns.

Even before the power of the Indo-Greek rulers was established in India, the services of the Greeks were utilized. In fact, Ashoka had employed a Greek as a viceroy of his province; a Greek was looking after engineering work during the period of the Kushanas. Many Greeks are mentioned in the inscriptions of the Karle caves. Greek hair style and the practice of eating in a reclining posture became common. Indo-Greeks who settled in India became traders and wealthy merchants. Tamil literature mentions Greek ships arriving with cargo and the wealthy Greek settlements of Kaveripatnam. Some Tamil kings even employed Greeks as bodyguards.

The high level of knowledge possessed by Greek scientists is acknowledged by modern scientists also. According to the Gargi Samhita. Greeks were like gods in science. Varahmihira is known to have used several Greek terms in his works during the Gupta age. Even Charaka, it is said, was deeply influenced by Hippocrates, who is considered the 'father of medicine.' With no concrete proof, it is not easy to establish the extent to which the Greeks influenced scientific knowledge in India.

Influence on Art and Religion

Influence on Art

- The Indo-Greeks made significant contribution to the art of die cutting.
- They were skilled at making portraits of rulers.

- Greek kings promoted some indigenous methods of minting coins. Greek influence on Indian coins is very evident.
- The art of striking coins with two dies (obverse and reverse side) was a Greek technique adopted by Indians.
- Open air theatres found in India are also a Greek legacy.
- The term 'Yavanika' used for 'curtain' also shows Greek influence.
- The Gandhara art form of the Kushana period is the best example of Greek influence on sculpture. The Gandhara school began in the Kabul valley where Greek influence was said to be the maximum.
- Terracotta toys and plaques also reflected Greek influence.

Influence on Religion

Various inscriptions and studies reveal Greek influence in the field of religion in India. It changed Hindu iconography significantly. Several Iranian and Babylonian gods were incorporated in Hinduism. There were also many deities adopted by the Kushanas and the Parthians. However, it is difficult to specifically name the gods and goddesses that were adopted in the Indian pantheon of gods.

Greek influence gave a boost to Mahayana Buddhism and made the Bhakti aspect of religion (led by the Vasudeva cult) popular.

All said and done, art was greatly influenced by the Greeks.

The Hellenistic impact on Indian art and architecture was evident in the form of the Gandhara school of Art. This influence moved on from Taxila to Mathura and Sarnath. This art was mainly centred around Gandhara.

Emergence of schools of art

After Alexander's invasion of India in 326 BC, the Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Kushana kings ruled over its north-western territories. They promoted a distinct style of sculpture called the Graeco-Buddhist or Gandhara art or Hellenistic art. It combined Hellenistic, West Asiatic and native features. Modifications were made to Greek and Roman techniques to suit Indian requirements. This period lasted from the fourth century BC to 1st century AD.

The symbolic representation of Buddha gave way to the representation of Buddha in human form. Henceforth, the main element of sculpture was the image which later came to be worshipped by the Buddhists.

Mahayana Buddhism helped the growth of this art which was found predominantly in Gandhara. This province was the meeting ground for Indian, Chinese, Iranian and Graeco-Roman cultures. Therefore, the art of Gandhara was influenced by these foreign cultures, especially the Graeco-Roman culture. This art originated in Bactria and Parthia under Greek rulers. In this art, the statues and images of Lord Buddha were made according to the Greek technique. However, the idea, spirit and personalities were Indian. Hence, the name Graeco-Buddhist art or Indo-Greek art or Hellenistic art.

Main features

1. The statues of Buddha and Bodhisattvas were made to resemble Greek Gods.
2. The images were realistic with accurate anatomical features.
3. Refinement and polish were emphasized.
4. Grey stone and slate were commonly used.

5. Greek-style ornaments were highlighted.
6. Gandhara images seem to resemble the Greek god, Apollo. Most images show Buddha seated in a typical Yogic posture.

In addition to Gandhara, Mathura, another school of art also developed simultaneously during this period. Artists at Mathura chose red sand stone to sculpt their statues and images. The headless statue of Kanishka is an important creation of the Mathura school of art.

Art work belonging to the Gandhara school has been found at Bimaran, Hastanagar, Sakra, Dheri, Hadda and various parts of Taxila. Most specimens are placed in the museum of Peshawar. The images of Buddha are the most notable among these. This school also affected the art and sculpture of China and central Asia.

3.5.2 Shunga and Kharavela

The Mauryas were succeeded by the Sungas who ruled for 112 years from about 185–73 BC. Pushyamitra, the Mauryan Commander-in-Chief, killed the last Mauryan king, Brihadratha and ruled the kingdom for thirty-six years. Pushyamitra was successful in usurping the throne on account of a general feeling of dissatisfaction against the weak Mauryan rulers who had failed to protect the people against the Greek invaders. These invaders had succeeded in penetrating the kingdom up to Pataliputra.

Origin of Sungas

There are many theories with regard to the origin of the Sungas. The Sungas appear to have been Brahmins. The celebrated grammarian, Panini, connects them with the Bharadvaja family, and in the *Asvayana Srautasutra* the Sungas are known as teachers. They were Brahmins who occupied a high position in the theological world. Pushyamitra belonged to a family of the royal chaplain or *Purohita*. The later Mauryas were politically weak and Pushyamitra was forced to kill Brihadratha in the interest of the empire which was threatened by foreign invaders.

Pushyamitra Sunga

Pushyamitra (see Figure 3.2), according to historians, ruled for thirty-six years. There are references not only to his son, but also to his grandson taking part in the administration of the country.



Fig. 3.2 Pushyamitra Sunga

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War and Vidarbha

The first major event during Pushyamitra's reign was his conflict with Vidarbha. According to the *Malvikagnimitram* (a play in Sanskrit by Kalidasa), the kingdom had been newly established and its ruler Yajnasena, who was related to the minister of the fallen Maurya, is described as a 'natural enemy' of the Sungas. Perhaps, the former had made himself independent in Vidarbha in the confusion following Brihadratha's murder, and as soon as Pushyamitra felt his position secure on the throne he demanded Yajnasena's allegiance. The course of the tussle is obscure but it seems Agnimitra, who was Pushyamitra's son and responsible for the victory at Vidisa, carried on hostilities. He won over to his side Yajnasena's cousin, Madhavsena and when the struggle ended, Vidarbha was divided between the two cousins.

Yavana incursions

The throne which Pushyamitra ascended was not a bed of roses. He had to meet difficulties from various quarters. It is contended that there were two Yavana wars which Pushyamitra had to fight—one in the beginning of his reign and the other at the close of his reign. The invasion of the Yavanas—which is mentioned in the *Gargi Samhita*—was a formidable one wherein it is stated that after conquering Saketa, Panchala and Mathura, the Yavanas reached Kusumadhvaja or Pataliputra and retired without fighting. There is no mention in literature that Pushyamitra lost his capital to the foreign invaders. Demetrios, the leader of the foreign invaders who reached as far as Pataliputra is mentioned in the *Gargi Samhita*. Demetrios had to retire from India on account of troubles at home. Eukratides had revolted in Bactria and Demetrios had to go back to fight him.

There is a reference to the second conflict with the Yavanas in the *Malvikagnimitram* written by Kalidas. By this time, Pushyamitra had grown old. Vasumitra, the grandson of Pushyamitra fought against the Yavana invaders. The battle was fought on the river Sindhu, Menander, in which the Yavana leader was defeated. It is pointed out that Menander is credited to have conquered more nations than Alexander. He was also the person who came after Demetrios. Coins from this period show that his territory extended up to Mathura. Buddhist accounts maintain that Menander converted to Buddhism and his court at Sakala or Salkot became a refuge for Buddhist monks.

Asvamedha sacrifice

The performance of the *Asvamedha Yajna* was one of the notable events of Pushyamitra's reign. It is referred to in the *Malvikagnimitra*. In fact, Patanjali, the sage who is considered the father of Yoga officiated as priest in this sacrifice. The Ayodhya inscription further informs us that Pushyamitra performed not one, but two horse sacrifices.

Extents of the kingdom

Pushyamitra's jurisdiction extended to Jalandhar and Sakala in Punjab according to accepted testimony of the Tibetan historian Taranatha and the Buddhist text, *Divyavadana*. The latter also indicates that Pataliputra continued to be the royal residence. Pushyamitra's sway over Ayodhya is proved by an inscription found there. According to *Malvikagnimitra*, however, his dominion comprised Vidisha and the southern region as far as the Narmada. Pushyamitra appears to have virtually made a feudal division of his extensive territories, as one version of the *Vayu Puranas* states that all eight sons of Pushyamitra ruled simultaneously.

Pushyamitra's persecutions

According to the *Divyavadana*, Pushyamitra was a persecutor of Buddhists. He is said to have made the notorious declaration at Sakala setting a price of one hundred gold dinars on the head of every Buddhist monk. Taranath also affirms that Pushyamitra was the ally of non-believers and participated in burning monasteries and slaying monks.

Pushyamitra's successor

Pushyamitra passed away in about 148 BC and was succeeded by his son Agnimitra who was then the viceroy at Vidisa. He had ample experience of the methods of administration followed by his father. He ruled for a brief period of eight years and was followed by Sujyestha or Jethamitra (as mentioned in contemporary coins) who was perhaps his brother. Jethamitra was succeeded by Agnimitra's son Vasumitra. In his earlier days, he defeated the Yavanas who had tried to obstruct the progress of the Ashwamedha Yajna. The Sunga dynasty consisted of ten rulers but history has not condescended to record anything of note about the others.

Kharavela

Kharavela was the warrior king of Kalinga and was contemporary of the Sungas. The Kharavelas ruled from second century BC to seventh century BC. The Kalinga Kingdom was located in central-eastern India. Ashoka brought this kingdom under his control in middle of fourth century BC. In Post-Mauryan period this kingdom was ruled by Cheta or Chaitra dynasty. The Kharavelas belonged to the Chaitra dynasty. Kharavela became prince after completing his 15th year and obtained the King status as soon as he completed his 24th year.

Details about the Kharavelas are available in the Indian history only from the inscription found at Hathigumpha. Hathigumpha is a Jain cave contributed by Kharavela which contained the inscription about them in Prakrit Language. This has been dexterously prepared for publication by K.P. Jayaswal and R.D. Banerjee. This inscription gives an account of the history of Kharavela based on the years they ruled. However, it provides information only about thirteen regnal years.



Fig. 3.3 Hathigumpha, Jain cave on Udayagiri Hills, Bhubaneswar, Orissa

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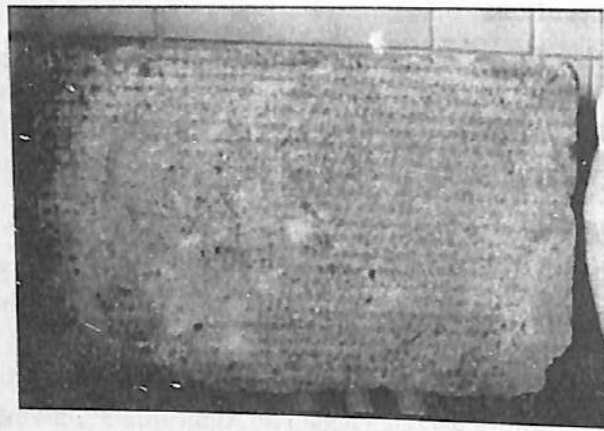


Fig. 3.4 Hathigumpha Inscription

Thirteen reginal years of Kharavela according to Hathigumpha Inscription are:

1. In his first regnal year, the capital city of Kalinga was restored and improved with reservoirs and given a face-lift with gardens.
2. In the second year, a massive army was sent to assist the Kasapa Kshatriyas. He overpowered Satakarni and capital of Mushika was taken over.
3. In the third year, of his reign, Kharavela, organized theatrical performances, dances and other shows through which he amuses the capital.
4. In the fourth year, he defeated the Rashtrikas and Bhoja kingdoms. He also revamped some sacred buildings.
5. In the fifth year, he mended and widened an old canal into the capital. This canal was primarily built by Nandas 300 years before.
6. In the sixth year, Kharavela granted some concessions to the Paura and Janapada corporations.
7. There are no records for the seventh year of rule. It seems that he got married in this year.
8. In the eighth regnal year, Kharavela assaulted Magadha. He brought the idols of Tirtankaras back, which were taken by Mahapadmananda from them before.
9. In the ninth regnal year, he gave expensive gifts to brahmins who were convinced to accept them. He built a Great Palace known as The Palace of Victory on the banks of the river Prachi (near Bhubaneswar) at the cost of 36 lakh silver coins.
10. In the tenth regnal year, Kharavela sent a giant army to northern India.
11. In the eleventh regnal year, he overpowered some Tamil Kingdoms. He also led in demonstration the wooden statue of Ketu-Bhadra who had prospered 1300 years before.
12. In his twelfth regional year, Kharavela invaded Magadha again and brought enormous wealth and used the same in constructing Jain Temples. One of the Basadi (a Jain shrine or temple, including residences of scholars attached to the shrine) built by him was found at Amaravati (Maha Megha Verma Basadi). In the same year he brought many precious things to Kalinga from the King of Pandyanas which include precious stones, rich articles and also horses, elephants, etc.

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13. In the thirteenth year he focused his attention to religious acts, he also carried forward many public welfare activities.

Ranigumpha was another cave near Hathigumpha contributed by Kharavela.

According to an inscription of Satakarni, Satakarni - II conquered Kalinga and consolidated the entire territory with his kingdom after Kharavela.

3.5.3 Kushanas

The Chinese historians tell us that the Kushanas were a section of the Yueh-chi race. The Yueh-chi were nomadic horde who inhabited the borders of modern China. In the middle of the second century BC, they came into conflict with a neighbouring barbarian tribe known as Hsiung-nu. The king of the Yueh-chi was defeated by the Hsiung-nu and killed in that battle. The latter made a drinking vessel of his skull. The Yueh-chi, under the leadership of the widow of the slain Yueh-chi king, refused to submit to the victors and decided to move westwards in search of fresh pasture grounds. The number of persons who migrated is estimated to be between six and ten lakhs. While they were moving, the Yueh-chi came into conflict with another smaller horde known as the Wu-sun, which occupied the basin of the Ili river and its tributaries. The Wu-sun were no match for the Yueh-chi and consequently they were defeated and their king was killed. At this time, the Yueh-chi was divided into two sections. Those Yueh-chi who settled on the border of Tibet came to be known as the Little Yueh-chi and those Yueh who continued the westward march, came to be known as the Great Yueh.

The Yueh-chi had to meet the Sakas next who were occupying the territories west of the Wu-sun and to the north of the Jaxartes. The Sakas tried to defend themselves but were defeated. They were forced to vacate their pasture-ground in favour of the Yueh-chi who occupied them. The Sakas had to migrate in search of new homes and they made their way into India through the northern passes.

For about 15 or 20 years, the Yueh-chi remained undisturbed in the territory occupied by them. However, they were defeated by the son of the chieftain (who had been killed by the Yueh-chi) with the help of the Wu-sun who had brought up the infant son under their care. The Yueh-chi were driven out from the lands which they had snatched from the Sakas and were forced to resume their march. They occupied the valley of the Oxus and reduced to subjection its peaceful inhabitants. It is possible that the domination of the Yueh-chi extended over Bactria to the south of the Oxus. In course of time, the Yueh-Chi lost their nomadic habits and settled down.

Fa Hien has given the following account of the Yueh-chi: 'In old days the Yueh-chi were vanquished by the Hsiung-Nu. They then went to Tahia and divided the kingdom among five Hsi-h (e) on or Yabgous, viz. those of Hsiumi, Shuangmi, Kuei-shuang, Hsitun and Tumi. More than hundred years after that, the Hsihou or Yabgou (Yavuga) of Kueishuang (Kushan) named K'iutsiu-k'io attacked and annihilated the four other His-hou and made himself king or lord (Wang), he invaded Nagad-si (the Arsakid territory, i.e. Parthia) and took possession of the territory of Kaofou (Kabul), overcome Pota and Ki-pin and became complete master of these kingdoms. K'iutsiu-k'io died at the age of more than eighty. His son Yen-kao-tchen succeeded him as king.' In turn, he conquered Tien-tchou (India, on the banks of a great river, apparently the kingdom of Taxila referred to by Philostratos), and established there a chief for governing it. From this time the Yueh-chi became extremely powerful. All the other countries designated them Kushan after their king, but the Han retained the old name and called them Ta-Yueh-chi.

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Kadphises I

The leader of the Kushans then was Kadphises I. He adopted the title of *Wang* or king. He also invaded and captured the kingdom of Parthia, Kabul and Kafistan. Kujala Kadphises or Kadphises I died at a mature age of 80. On the basis of contemporary sources it is also believed that he also embraced Buddhism at the end of his reign. He also issued a number of coins which were directly imitated from the coins of Augustus (27 BC-AD 14). Tiberius Kadphises, who died at the ripe old age of more than eighty, may be assigned roughly to the period AD 15-55.

Vima Kadphises or Kadphises II

Kadphises II (AD 78-120) extended his kingdom over a good portion of northern India and governed the Indian provinces through military deputies. He had trade relations with China and the Roman Empire. He issued both gold and silver coins on which life-like representation of the king was inscribed. From these coins it appears that he was the worshipper of Shiva.

Kanishka

After a brief interregnum Vima was succeeded by Kanishka, whose relationship with the two preceding kings is uncertain. The Kushana dynasty flourished under him. The date of his accession is a matter of inconclusive debate, but AD 78 seems to be the most probable of the dates suggested so far. This year marks the beginning of an era which came to be known as the Shaka Era. Under Kanishka the Kushana Empire reached the height of its power and became a mighty force in the world of its day. He was a capable administrator. He kept his vast empire intact during his lifetime. He himself ruled the territories around his capital Purushpura (Peshawar) while his *Kshatrapas* (governors) ruled over distant provinces under his directions. These provincial governors enjoyed vast powers in relation to their territories, yet there is no evidence of any revolt against the emperor.

Kanishka was undoubtedly the most striking figure from the Kushana dynasty. A great conqueror and a patron of Buddhism, he combined in himself the military abilities of Chandragupta Maurya and the religious zeal of Ashoka. However, there is no unanimity among scholars regarding the date of his accession to the throne even though most of them believe that Kanishka was the founder of the Saka era, which started in AD 78. He ascended to the throne in the same year.

Kanishka's public works

Like Ashoka, Kanishka was a great builder of Stupas and cities. He erected in his capital a monastery and a huge wooden tower in which he placed some relics of the Buddha. An important relic of this period is a statue of Kanishka with a missing head. Besides the Shah-ji-ki dheri at Peshawar, his important buildings and works of art are found in Peshawar, Mathura, Kanishkapura and Takshasila. Mathura became an important centre of art during the time of Kanishka. Kanishka beautified the city with a large number of monasteries, statues and sculptures.

Kanishka's religion

The question of Kanishka's religion is a controversial one. He helped in the spread of Buddhism, many old monasteries were repaired and many new ones were also built. Kanishka invited scholars for the fourth Buddhist Council, which was attended by five hundred monks. The truth is that before his conversion to Buddhism, he believed in

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many gods, which is clearly reflected in his earlier coins. However, he ultimately embraced Buddhism and promoted it as the state religion. Figure 3.5 shows the expanse of the Kushana Empire.

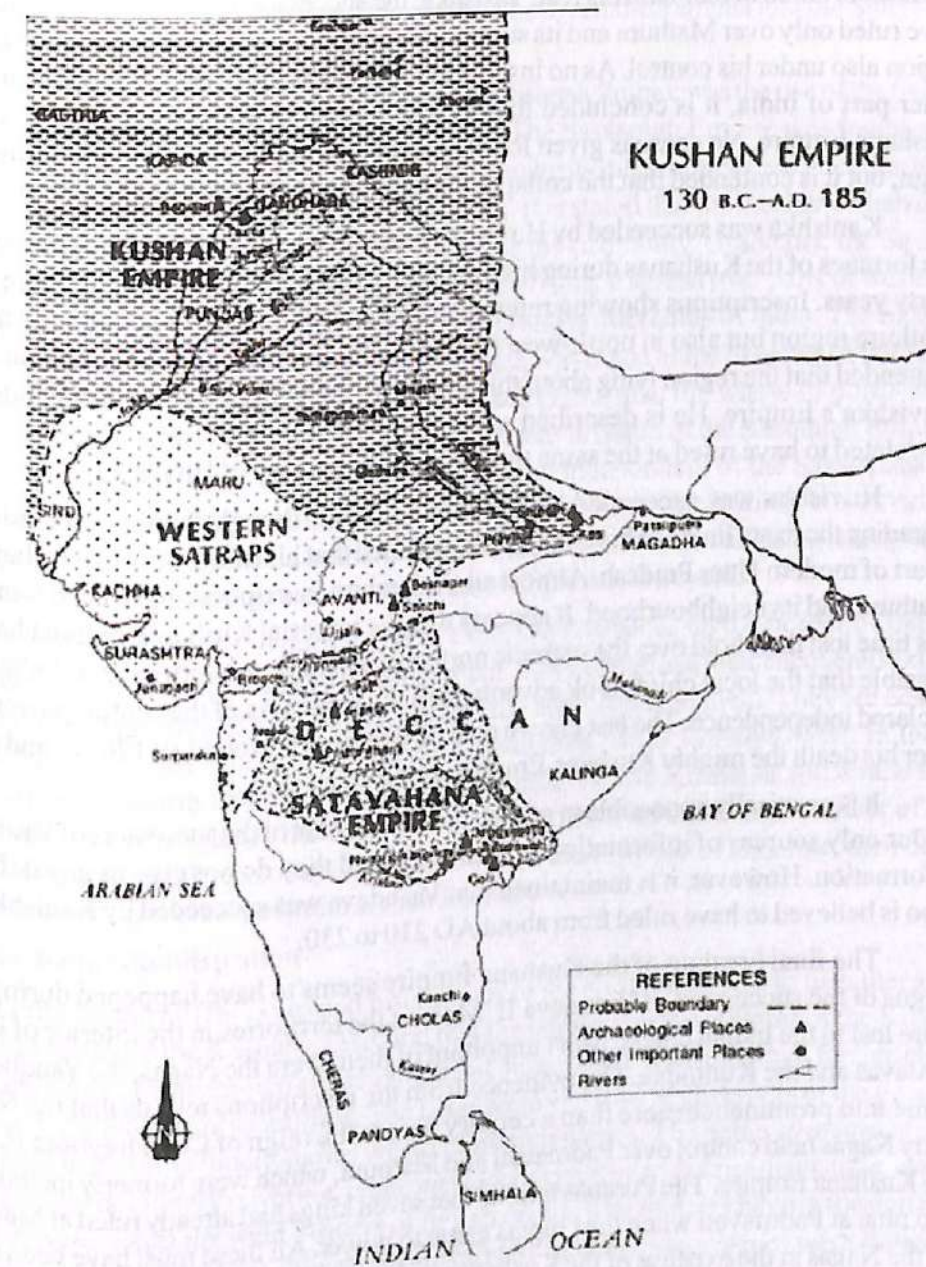


Fig. 3.5 Expanse of the Kushana Empire

Kanishka's estimate as a ruler

Kanishka was undoubtedly one of the greatest kings of ancient India. He was an excellent warrior, an efficient empire-builder and a brilliant patron of art and learning. No Indian ruled over such a vast empire as was done by Kanishka. He was the only Indo-Asiatic king whose territories extended beyond the Pamirs.

Kanishka occupied a unique position in Indian history. He was not only a great conqueror, but also a great administrator. It is worthy of note here that not a single revolt was reported during his reign.

Downfall of the Kushana Empire

The mighty Kushana Empire reached its zenith during the time of Kanishka I. Under him, the Kushanas were feared not only in India, but also in Central Asia. However, his successors failed to maintain his feat. Vasishka, the successor of Kanishka I, is stated to have ruled only over Mathura and its surrounding regions. Probably, he had the Sanchi region also under his control. As no inscription of Vasishka has been discovered in any other part of India, it is concluded that he lost control over the distant parts of the Kushana Empire. No cause is given for the collapse of the Kushana power during his reign, but it is contended that the collapse was merely a temporary one.

Kanishka was succeeded by Huvishka and the latter is stated to have recovered the fortunes of the Kushanas during his long and prosperous rule lasting for more than thirty years. Inscriptions showing references to Kanishka were found not only in the Mathura region but also in north-west frontier India and in eastern Afghanistan. It is contended that the region lying about thirty miles to the west of Kabul was included in Huvishka's Empire. He is described as *Maharajadhiraja* Huvishka. Kanishka II is also stated to have ruled at the same time as a contemporary of Huvishka.

Huvishka was succeeded by Vasudeva I. Even though there is no evidence regarding the exact limits of his empire, it is assumed that his rule did not extend beyond a part of modern Uttar Pradesh. Almost all the Brahmi inscriptions have been found in Mathura and its neighbourhood. It appears that the imperial Kushanas of India had by this time lost their hold over the extreme northern and north-western parts of India. It is possible that the local chiefs took advantage of the weakness of the central power and declared independence. The last known date of Vasudeva is around AD 176-77 and soon after his death the mighty Kushana Empire dissolved away.

It is practically impossible to give an orderly account of the successors of Vasudeva I. Our only sources of information are the coins and they do not give us any definite information. However, it is maintained that Vasudeva was succeeded by Kanishka III who is believed to have ruled from about AD 210 to 230.

The final breakup of the Kushana Empire seems to have happened during the reigns of the successors of Vasudeva II. Most of the territories in the interior of India were lost to the Indian chiefs. Most important of them were the Nagas, the Yaudheyas, Malavas and the Kunindas. The evidence from the inscriptions tells us that the Nagas came into prominence more than a century before the reign of Chandragupta II. The early Nagas held control over Padmavati and Mathura, which were formerly included in the Kushana Empire. The Puranas tell us that seven kings had already ruled at Mathura and nine at Padmavati when the Guptas came to power. All these must have been done by the Nagas at the expense of the Kushanas and that partly explains the disappearance of the Kushana Empire.

The Yaugheyas, a martial tribe, also had a significant role in the destruction of the Kushana Empire. Their rule over the areas on the banks of the Sutlej as far as the borders of Bahawalpur lasted for more than a century. The copper coins of the Yaudheyas are similar to those of Kushanas. It appears that the Yaudheyas made these coins after the Kushanas were overthrown.

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The Malavas and the Kunindas became independent after successfully revolting against the authority of the Kushanas. They divided between themselves the territories formerly held by the Kushanas. While the Malavas made Malvanagar in Rajputana their capital, the Kunindas occupied the territory between the Yamuna and the Sutlej as well as the upper courses of Beas and Sutlej.

Another cause of the downfall of the Kushana Empire was the rise of the Sassanian Satraps and the Satavahana power in Iran. The Sassanian Empire was founded in AD 225-26 by Ardashir I and from the very beginning its rulers turned their attention towards the east. Ardashir I came as far as Khorasan. It is stated that the Kushana Shah or ruler sent his envoy to Ardashir I to acknowledge his suzerainty. Gradually, the Sassanian power extended towards Seeistan. In course of time, it spread over parts of western and central India and the north-western regions and borderlands of India. The Sassanian expansion towards western and central India was made at the expense of the Western Satraps and the Satavahanas. Not only Bactria, but also the whole of north-western India became important provinces in the eastern division of the Sassanian Empire. An attempt was made by the Kushanas to become independent of the Sassanians in the time of Emperor Varhram II (AD 276-93) but this seems to have failed. It is obvious that the rising power of the Sassanians dealt a severe blow to the declining strength of the Kushanas in the northern and western parts of India and beyond.

It appears that in due course of time, the Kushanas on the border of India and also in Punjab intermingled with other tribes. They continued their chequered existence even up to the time of Samudra Gupta and the latter subdued them. They are described in the Allahabad Pillar inscription as *Daivaputra Shahi Shahamushahi*. In the later part of the fourth century and early fifth centuries, the Kushanas got a new title—*Kidara*. Their existence has been proved by the discovery of a large number of coins. However, it is difficult to say anything about the exact period of their rule, their order of succession and even the limits of their territory.

Kushana administration

A critical study of the coins and inscriptions of the Kushanas helps us to gather an idea of India under the Kushanas. We find that the administrative systems of the Kushanas were a mix of both foreign elements and Indian elements. The important foreign element was the government by *satraps*. The latter were viceroys or governors of the provinces. There were some functionaries who had foreign names. The name *strategos* stood for a general or military governor, while *meridach* represented district magistrate. *Amatyas* and *mahasenapatis* were officers of Indian origin. The officers having foreign names were stationed in the north-west, while officers having Indian names were stationed in the interiors.

Kingship was the prevailing type of polity, although there are references to republics also. The Kushana rulers took up such titles as *Mahisvara*, *Devaputra*, *Kaiser* and *Shahi-Sahamushabi*. There was a tendency to deify the ancestral kings. The Mathura inscription of Huvishka refers to a *devakula* or a shrine where the statue 'the grand father of Kanishka' was installed. A strange system of two kings ruling at the same time also prevailed during the Kushana period. It is also known that Kanishka II and Huvishka ruled jointly. It is possible that this institution was borrowed from the Indo-Greeks.

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The Kushana kings are said to have had unfettered powers. Although there is a reference to an advisory body to assist the king in Buddhist literature, it is not safe to assert that such a council existed in the Kushana period as there is no reference to such a body in the Kushana records.

The satraps in India were called *mahakshatrapas* and *kshatrapas*. Some of them are mentioned as *rajan mahakshatrapas*. These officials had powers to issue coins. The assumption of the title points its conferment by some overlord. The term *kshatrapas* in Sanskrit literature is used in the sense of dominion, rule and power, as exercised by gods and men. It is used in the sense of a ruler in the Rig Veda. Even before the Kushanas, there were *Kshatrapas* of Kapisa and Abhisara Prastha and of Mathura. The Kushana rulers followed the system of their predecessors. Kanishka's *kshatrapas* enjoyed a position different from that of the western *kshatrapas*. It is pointed out that if the *kshatrapas* had been independent, their names would have occurred in the inscriptions and not those of Kanishka or Huvishka alone.

The terms *dandamayaka* and *maha dandamayaka* formed a link in the Kushana administrative machinery. These terms occur for the first time in the Kushana records. The term *dandanakaya* has been translated as 'magistrate', 'the leader of the four forces of the army', a fortunate general, 'commander of force', a 'judge', 'administrator of punishment', 'criminal magistrate', 'the great leader of the forces', 'prefect of police' and 'Commissioner of Police'. It is maintained that *dandamayakas* were feudatory chiefs who were appointed by the king. They owed allegiance to the king and were required to render civil and military service. The civil aid was in the form of personal service for maintaining law and order. The Kushanas were the first to introduce this system which was later followed by the Guptas. The names of all the *kshatrapas*, *mahakshatrapas* and *mahadandamayakas* appear to be foreign and that explains the absence of Indian official heads at the higher level.

There are references to *gramikas* and *padrapalas*. The term *gramika* was used for the head of the village while *padrapala* was a local head. Some historians hold the view that the Kushana administration must have ensured safety as there are references to people coming to Mathura from Abhisar, Nagara, Odayana and even Wokhana or Badakshan. The administration was responsible for the safety and security of the common people that helped in the progress and prosperity of the country. This was evident from the life of people in general and a large number of welfare schemes that were initiated by the rulers of the state.

Wars and conquests of Kanishka

Kanishka was a doughty warrior and a great conqueror. Figure 3.6 shows an image of Kanishka embossed in a coin. He believed in the policy of aggression and aggrandizement and in this respect, he may be compared to Akbar and Samudragupta. He conquered many states in India as well as abroad and incorporated them into his empire. At the time of his accession Afghanistan, Bactria, Parthia, Sindh and Punjab were included in his empire. He extended his empire by the following wars:

- **Kashmir:** First of all Kanishka conquered Kashmir where he built many monuments. He laid the foundation of a town Kanispura. He too, like Jahangir, liked the Kashmir valley very much. The natural scenery of the valley was a great attraction for him. It is also said that he wished that after his death he should be buried in Kashmir. Kallhan the author of Rajatarangini writes that Kashmir was under Kanishka and he used to spend his summer there. It was Kashmir where he called the fourth Buddhist Council.

His other wars

- **Magadha:** Secondly, Kanishka invaded Magadha and conquered it. It is said that after the conquest he demanded from the Magadhan king the compensation for the war. The Magadhan ruler gave Ashvaghosh, a great scholar, as compensation and Kanishka brought Ashvaghosh with him.

Fig. 3.6 Image of Kanishka embossed on a Coin



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Kanishka and Buddhism

Kanishka was a great warrior and conqueror. There can be no two opinions about it; at the same time he was a great devotee and a patron of Buddhism.

Today, his fame rests upon his being a Buddhist. Like Ashoka the great he, too, took up the task of spreading Buddhism both in and outside the country. About this time two sects arose in the Buddhist religion, (1) Hinayans which wanted to retain the simple creed of Buddha, and (2) the Mahayans, which preferred to worship the image of Buddha and preached personal devotion to him.

Kanishka built a remarkable tower over the relics of Buddha. Its fourteen storeys carved timber surmounted by an iron column rose to a total height of 194 metres. Both Hiuen Tsang and Alberuni have stated that the great monastery of Peshawar was built by him and Peshawar became a great centre of Buddhist culture during his time. The fourth Buddhist council, which was not recognized by the followers of the Hinayana

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sect, was held during the age of the famous author Vasumitra either in Kashmir or in Gandhara or Jalandhara. Limited excavations at Peshawar have succeeded in providing a plan of the stupa, the location of the Vihara, a few examples of figurative sculptures in stone and the celebrated Kanishka reliquary.

Several Buddhist theologians are associated with Kanishka such as Ashvaghosha, Vasumitra, Parshva, Sangharaksha, Dharamatrata and Matricheta. But Kanishka's patronage of Buddhism seems to have been essentially political. Legends apart, there is little evidence to suggest that his conversion to Buddhism was a profound experience. Buddhist emblems appear on his coins but they are very few and are outnumbered by other types.

- **Building Activities:** Kanishka was a great builder. He got constructed many cities and beautiful buildings. He constructed a 600 ft. high citadel in his capital Purushpur. It had fourteen storeys. Its top was made of iron. All round the citadel many statues of Buddha were erected. After conquering Kashmir he constructed the city of Kanishkapura near Srinagar, which exists even today as a big village. He constructed many stupas, monastries and shrines in Mathura as well. Gandhara school of Art attained popularity mainly due to Kanishka's efforts. Kanishka was a great builder and a patron of art, who patronized architecture and sculpture.
- **A Patron of Learning:** Kanishka was a lover of knowledge. He patronized many scholars. Buddhist scholar Ashvaghosha was a great poet, play-wright and musician. Nagarjuna and Vasumitra were great Buddhist philosophers of the time of Kanishka. It not only caused the collection of Mahabhash but also of the Ayurvedic book *Charak Samhita*.

Causes for Kanishka being called the Second Ashoka

Similarities between Ashoka and Kanishka

- Kanishka was also like Ashoka in many of his qualities and personality.
- Like Ashoka, Kanishka had embraced Buddhism after his accession to the throne.
- Like Ashoka he not only caused the spread of Buddhism in the neighbouring areas of his vast empire but sent missionaries in some foreign countries also.
- Like Ashoka, Kanishka also desired the welfare of his people and he also carried many related activities.
- Like Ashoka, Kanishka also patronized literature, art and extended patronage to many scholars.
- Like Ashoka, Kanishka was blood thirsty before he came to throne, and like Ashoka he was touched by the bloodshed and suffering caused by wars.
- Ashoka called the Third Buddhist Council at Pataliputra whereas Kanishka called the Fourth Buddhist Council at Kashmir.
- Like Ashoka, Kanishka also built monastries, stupas and vihars.

Dissimilarities between Kanishka and Ashoka

- Kanishka propagated Buddha's faith through art forms mainly the images and status of Buddha whereas Ashoka built pillars and inscribed the main teachings of Buddha on these pillars and rocks.

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- Kanishka belonged to the Mahayana sect whereas Ashoka belonged to the Hinayana sect of Buddhism.
- Kanishka continued to wage wars against his neighbours even after his conversion to Buddhism whereas Ashoka gave up wars and embraced non-violence after his conversion.

Successors of Kanishka and the Fall of Kushan Empire

If we accept AD 78 as the year of accession, then Kanishka's rule ended about AD 101. He was succeeded by Vasishka, who possibly ruled jointly with Huvishka. Though the latter ruled from his capital Mathura, his rule still extended in the north-west over Afghanistan. The last great king of the line in India was Vasudeva (AD 145-76). By the time of his reign, the Kushans had probably lost their hold on the northwestern part of their kingdom. The Kushan empire lasted till about AD 220. It ended about the same time as the Satavahanas kingdom in Andhra disappeared. It suffered a loss of territory and influence as a consequence of various political factors operating in India and abroad.

Art and Architecture under Kushanas

Gandhara style of Buddhist art is a consequence of merger of Greek, Syrian, Persian and Indian art traditions. The development of this form of art started in Parthian Period (50BC-75AD) and achieved its peak during the Kushana period. Mathura School of art is regarded as a centre of Indian ancient art. The period of Mathura School of art coincided with the rule of the Kushanas and expanded further in the Gupta zenith of success during the reign of the Kushanas and expanded further in the Gupta period. The artists of Mathura school of Art created sculptures which are immortal in the history of art in India. Amaravati School of art and sculpture evolved during the Satavahana period. Amaravati School is credited with depicting Buddha in the human form for the first time.

1. Mathura School of Art

Mathura art form originated in the second century BC and within a short span of time, it had become one of the chief centres of art. The art pieces of this school became so popular that they were in demand even in far off places. Within four hundred years, this school prepared a variety of sculptures and many other pieces of art for the followers of Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism. Apart from producing sculptures related to various faiths, they also produced images of kings and other notable personalities. This indicates that Mathura artists had knowledge about a variety of art activities of that period. This helped them to cater to the needs of various social groups of Indian as well as non-Indian origin. The use of local red stone in making sculptures and art piece was a unique characteristic of Mathura school of art.

Another remarkable attribute of this school was the representation of various patterns of life on votive pillars. Many scenes were created on these pillars such as men and women collecting flowers from forests; women offering fruits to birds and women playing in gardens. The votive pillars from 'Kankali Tila' represent the feminine beauty in a remarkable manner. In fact, a wide variety of themes have been used by the artists of Mathura. For instance, in Sanchi and Bharhut, elements from nature have been used by the artist. The sculptures were carved out of red sandstone, which was easily accessible in the nearby areas. Thematic details of the sculpture belonging to the Mathura school are as follows.

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The Buddha idols

Many archaeologists believe that the idols of Bodhisattvas and Buddha were prepared at Mathura and were sent to other regions. The Samath image, established in the period of Kanishka-I, was made at Mathura. This idol of Bodhisattvas is in the standing posture. Mainly, Buddha images are found in two postures- one is sitting and the other is standing. The idol of Buddha found at Katra (in sitting posture) is among the oldest idols. In this idol, Buddha is sitting under a Bodhi tree, his right hand is in abhaya posture and he is holding Dharma chakra and tri-ratna in his palms and at the bottom of the feet.

Some of the unique features of the idols of Buddha are as follows (see Figure 3.7):

- They are carved out of red stone which has white spots on it.
- The idols are in round shape so that they are visible from every side.
- The face as well as head is shaven.
- The right hand is in abhaya posture.
- Forehead does not have any mark.
- They are wearing a tight-fitted dress.
- There is a frill on the left hand of the idol.



Fig. 3.7 Idol of Buddha

Jaina specimens

Mathura was as much a sacred centre for the Jains as it was for the followers of Buddhist and Brahmanical faiths. There are a number of inscriptions of Jainism in Mathura. For example, in the middle of the second century BC, a dedication by a Jaina Sravaka was named Uttaradasaka. Kankali Tila was the chief Jaina site at Mathura as there were a large number of monuments, ayaqapatas or stone slabs with Jaina figures in the centre. Jaina Stupas found in Mathura were objects of worship. A wide variety of architectural fragments like pillars, crossbars, capitals and railing - posts have also been found in Mathura.

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Fig. 3.8 Seated Tirthankar

The images of the Jainas or the Tirthankaras on the ayaqapatas (see Figure 3.8) existed even before the Kushana period but regular images of Jainas became common from Kushana period onward. Some of the Tirthankara images are quite difficult to identify. However, Parsvanatha is identifiable due to his canopy of snake hoods and Rishabhanatha due to hair falling on his shoulders.

Brahmanical images

Brahmanical images have also been found in Mathura.

Some of the representations are of Siva, Surya, Lakshmi and Sankarshana or Balarna. During Kushana period, Kartikeya, Kubera, Sarasvati, Vishnu, and some other gods, such as Naga images, were carved in sculpture. Images of this period have some of iconographical features that differentiate deities from one another. Figure 3.9 shows the Hindu Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.



Fig. 3.9 The Hindu Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh

For instance, Shiva represented in the 'linga' was carved in the form of Chaturmukha linga. The word 'Chaturmukha' means four faces, thus it denotes that the linga had four human faces of Shiva in all the four sides. Figure 3.10 shows the picture of a Shiva linga.

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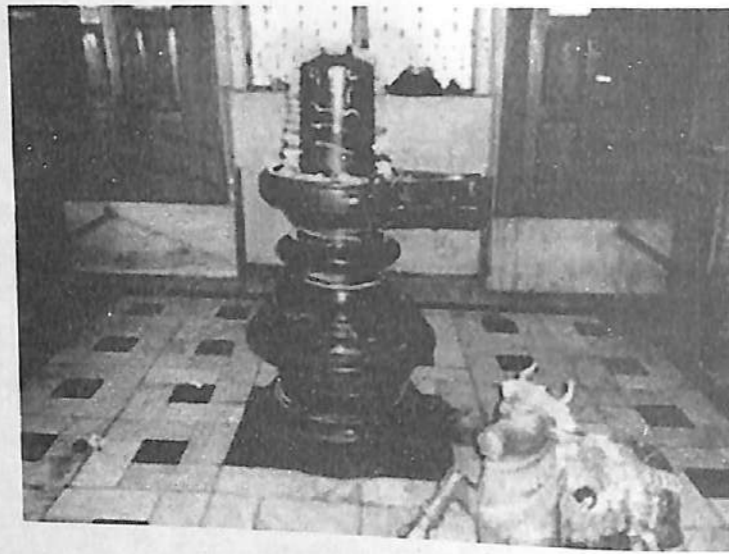


Fig. 3.10 Shiva Linga

The idol of surya in the Kushana period is shown riding a beautiful chariot, which is driven by two horses. In this idol, he is wearing a heavy coat on the upper body and a salwar-like dress in the lower half of the body. He has a lotus in one hand and a sword in the other. One of the images of Surya in Kushana period is shown in Figure 3.11.



Fig. 3.11 Surya Stone Sculpture from Mathura

The image of Balarama has a turban on the head

Saraswati is shown in a sitting posture with a heavy manuscript in her hands. She is not adorned with ornaments and there are two more figures along with the figure of Saraswati.

Durga is represented as the killer of buffalo demon. This form is also known as Mahisha-mardini form of Durga (see Figure 3.12). Images of Yakshas and Yakshinis have also been found in Mathura. Such images are associated with all the three religions popular in Mathura-Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism. The image of Kubera has also been found which is shown as a deity with bulging belly and is associated with wine. He looks like Bacchus and Dionysius who are Roman and Greek gods of wine respectively.

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Fig. 3.12 Durga Slaying the Buffalo

The images of rulers

Mat village in Mathura had large images of Kushana Kings (see Figure 3.13) and other notables like Kanishka and Chastana. Some of the historians believe that the idea of building structures for housing portrait-statues of rulers and other notables of the state came from Central Asia. It is because many of the dresses worn by dignitaries in these statues are of Central Asian origin. Large portrait-statutes of rulers were made to give them a divine status.



Fig. 3.13 A Kushana King

The fact that many heads of Scythian notables have been found at Mat shows that Mathura was the one of the most significant centres of Kushana Empire especially in the eastern part. They forcefully suggest contact between art forms of Gandhara and Mathura. In due course of time, Mathura art forms also contributed considerably to the growth of Gupta art forms.

2. Gandhara School of Art

Gandhara, which integrated the valley of Peshawar, Svata, Buner and Bajjora, is located in the north-west part of the Indian sub-continent and covers the area of both the banks of Indus river. As a result, this place has a mixed culture. Mainly, its art form was Buddhist but due to the mixed culture, it was highly influenced by Hellenistic art. Shakas and the Kushanas were the chief patrons of Gandhara art.

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Art pieces of Gandhara School have mainly been found from Jalalabad, Begram, Bamaran, Hadda and Taxila. Gandhara art may be categorized into two schools- early and later. The early school existed during first and second century AD and schist stone of blue-grey colour was used to make idols during this period. However, the later school used mud, lime, pilaster and stucco to make the idols. These idols show limbs and other organs of the body very clearly, thus, they are known to be realistic in nature. They depict features of human body with anatomical accuracy. In addition to the idols, reliefs and bas-reliefs have also been carved beautifully and these represent the life of Buddha and Bodhisattvas.

For example: At Shah-ji-kidheri, a bronze reliquary (see Figure 3.14) was found from the Stupa. It represents Buddha, flying geese and Kushana kings (all these are symbolic of wandering monks).



Fig. 3.14 A bronze Reliquary

The Gandhara art had many other attributes. For example, in Bamaran, a gold reliquary has been found which has a number of figures enclosed within an arcade. Figure 3.15 shows the Gandhara image of Buddha.



Fig. 3.15 Gandhara Image of Buddha

Check Your Progress

6. Where was Bactria situated?
7. State the dissimilarities between Kanishka and Ashoka.

3.6 THE GUPTAS

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

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

The orthodox and heterodox religions existed side by side everywhere, at all levels and even in the individual families. Freedom of belief and expression was valued and cherished. Thinkers and writers, debaters and preachers by their erudite postulation of dogmas and theories presented a feast of intellectuality and rationality to the interested. Conflict of views was assumed. Mutuality and harmony among the believers in the rival dogmas prevailed as a measure unknown anywhere in human civilization. It was accepted as part of the social order. The harmony of beliefs stimulated bhakti. It developed as the concomitant of people's religious belief. Religion was understood to be for the good of all. Preachers carried this message to the people beyond the heights of mountains and the expanses of the oceanic waters.

Education received full attention. The endowment of Agrahara villages made the local institutions financially independent. Scholars discussed the contributions of other people in learning. They looked out for new ideas, appreciated others' points of view and were completely free from 'self-complacency and narrowness of the outlook'. The intellectual urge of the age strengthened the rational attitude in matters that were ecclesiastical and temporal.

Sanskrit language was the vehicle of this great intellectual efflorescence. Immense literature was produced on numerous disciplines. This language was adopted as the

medium of expression in quarters where Prakrits had all along held the sway. It became the link language between India beyond the frontiers and the people here.

Art touched a high standard; *sundaram* and *roopam* characterized it. It was worshipped in order to deepen the consciousness of the soul and awaken it to a new sense of spiritual joy and nobility. Kalidasa, the supreme genius and poet of this age, has expressed this attitude of life devoted to beauty in a sentence addressed to *Parvati*, the goddess of personal charm, by her consort *Shiva*: 'O fair damsel, the popular saying that beauty does not lead to sin is full of unexceptional truth.' The path of virtue is the path of beauty—this appeared to be the guiding impulse of life in the Gupta age. 'To create lovely forms and harness them to the needs of higher life—this was the golden harmony that made Gupta art a thing of such perpetual and inexhaustible attraction.'

All over the country, there developed a peculiar uniformity of social pattern, domestic order and of individual role in a particular situation; of religious practices and social ethics; ritual and ceremony and of manners and behaviour. People acquired a spirit of oneness and a sense of belonging—the hallmark of heritage. They impressed this on everything they touched and carried it along wherever they went.

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

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

Sources of information

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

Literary sources: The Puranas, especially the *Vayu*, *Brahmanda*, *Matsya*, *Vishnu* and the *Bhagavata Purana* are a rich source of information. They indicate the extent of the domination of Chandragupta I, make a distinction between the territory that the Guptas had under their direct control and over which they exercised paramount control and provide information on the princes subordinate to them and on their contemporaries. The Puranas, in fact, received their touch during this period. The *Smritis* of Vyasa, Pitamaha, Pulastya and of Harita though assigned to this period are available

only in the quotations found in the Dharmasastras. Among the Dharmasastras, those of Katyayana, Narad and of Brihaspati belong to this period. They provide rich information on the social and religious conditions of the people.

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

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

Archaeological sources: Numerous archaeological source materials on the Gupta period are available. The numerous types of coins that the Guptas issued throw great light on their rise and fall and on the economic condition of the people. The coins both of the early and of the later Guptas have been listed in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*. In the book of Catalogue of the Coins of the Gupta Dynasty, you can see a systematic study of the coins.

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

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

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

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

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The Gupta Dynasty, famed as the 'Golden Age' of ancient India, has a special importance in the history of India. The Gupta rulers re-established the political unity that existed during the Mauryan period, and ruled over a large principality of northern India. The Gupta Age is marked as an era of unprecedented progress in all aspects of polity, religion, art and literature. Indian history is proud of the Gupta emperors who nurtured Indian culture and protected Indian nationalism.

In this section, you will learn about the rise of the Gupta Empire, the reign of Chandragupta I, Samudragupta, Chandragupta II, Vikramaditya, Skandagupta and the downfall of the Gupta Empire.

3.6.1 Chandragupta I

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

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

Chandragupta not only received Vaishali on account of his marriage but also expanded his kingdom. Maharauli pillar informs that he, having crossed Sindh, fought a severe battle with Bactria and conquered it. On one side its boundary touched Bengal while on the other side it touched Central India and Punjab. This victory over the Northwest and Balkh took Chandragupta from Indus to Saurashtra.

Chandragupta started a new era, known as Gupta Samvata. Although controversial, it is believed that Chandragupta began his accession to the throne by founding a samvata, the first year of which was AD 319–320.

3.6.2 Samudragupta

After Chandragupta I, his son Samudragupta (AD 325–375) became king of the Gupta dynasty. He established a vast kingdom by conquering different battles and strengthened the Gupta dynasty for centuries. On account of his immense talent, Chandragupta chose his successor in his own life. Samudragupta was an able emperor, skilled commander and a man of great personality. He was a great conqueror; hence, he is compared with Napoleon. It is popularly said that Ashoka is famous for his peace and non-violence, while Samudragupta is famous because of his victories.

Conquests of Samudragupta

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

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

- **Achyuta:** The first king Samudragupta defeated in Aryavarta was Achyuta. He was the king of Ahichchhatra. His kingdom was around modern Ram Nagar in Bareilly.
- **Nagasena:** It is known from the coins of Naga dynasty of Narwar, situated in Gwalior that he was the king of Naga dynasty and his capital was Padmavati. In Prayaga, Prashasti, the letter before 'ga' has been destroyed but the letter 'ga' is readable. Perhaps he might have been the ruler Ganapati Nagar.
- **Kotakulaja:** Samudragupta defeated this Kota king as well. However, several scholars have expressed their views regarding the first Aryavarta expedition. Some scholars consider that the first Aryavarta battle was not his expedition of victory, but a defensive battle.

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

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

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

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

South expedition

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

- **Mahendra of Kaushal:** Mahendra was the king of Kaushal. Modern districts of Raipur, Sambhalpur and Vilaspur were included in it.
- **Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara:** Vyaghraraja was the king of Mahakantara, which was the forest area of Orissa.

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

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

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

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

Conquest of foreign states

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

Extent of Samudragupta's kingdom

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

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Horse-sacrifice

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

Estimate of Samudragupta's reign

Samudragupta's name is lettered in golden ink in Indian history for his talent and conquests. He was an extraordinary warrior, victor of thousands of battles and emerged invincible during his time. He was a valiant and brave king; able politician and warrior; famous musician; and well-versed and a good-hearted poet. Although he inherited a very small kingdom from his father, he expanded the boundaries of his kingdom beyond India by his talent and valour. He is regarded as the first Indian king who defeated southern and foreign rulers by his prowess. He was considered as a unique emperor. The strength of his arms was his only companion in the different battles he ably fought. He was famous for his valour and his body was adorned with several wounds and was immensely beautiful.



Fig. 3.16 Samudragupta's Gold Coins

3.6.3 Chandragupta II

Ramagupta ascended to the throne after the death of Samudragupta but he could not hold on to his Empire. Therefore, Chandragupta II (AD 380-412) ascended to the Gupta throne in AD 380. Like his father he proved to be a brave, valiant, invincible and able emperor. He was adorned in his coins with the titles of Devashri Vikramanka, emperor. He was adorned in his coins with the titles of Devashri Vikramanka, emperor. He was adorned in his coins with the titles of Devashri Vikramanka, emperor. He was adorned in his coins with the titles of Devashri Vikramanka, emperor. Although Vikramaditya, Simha, Vikrama, Ajivikram, Simha-chandra Apratiratha, etc. Although there is no unanimity regarding the date of accession of Chandragupta II, his reign is considered from AD 380 to 412.

Matrimonial alliances

Chandragupta II adopted both the policies of matrimonial relationship as well as war for strengthening his empire. His contemporary Naga dynasty was very strong and had influence over several regions of North India. Establishment of matrimonial relationship with the Nagas helped him much in strengthening his sovereignty over the newly established empire. Matrimonial alliances with Vakatakas helped him a lot. Therefore, Chandragupta II gave his daughter Prabhavatigupta in marriage to Vakataka king Rudrasen II. Vakataka King had control over such geographical region wherefrom he could have assisted or opposed the Northern aggressor against the Shaka vassals of Saurashtra. This matrimonial alliance proved much important for him. It is evident from the Talgund inscription that the princess of Kuntal, King Kakustha Verma was married in the Gupta dynasty.

Conquests of Chandragupta II

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Like his father, Chandragupta II expanded his empire by conquering many states. The most important victory of Chandragupta II was over the Shaka. The kingdom of the Shakas was spread in Gujarat, Malwa and Saurashtra. Having defeated the great Shaka vassal Rudrasimha III, Chandragupta II took the title of Shakari. Chandragupta II's war minister has written in the Udayagiri cave inscription that he came to Eastern Malwa along with his master (Chandragupta II) who aspired to conquer the whole world. With this victory, he not only ousted the foreigners from India but also ensured its monopoly over western trade by extending his empire upto the western coastal ports.

There were several small republics such as Madra, Kharapatika, etc. He conquered them and ended their existence by annexing them into his empire. It is known from the Maharauli iron pillar that Chandragupta II conquered Vahlikas by crossing over five mouths of Indus: Bengal and other eastern states formed a confederation due to the inability of Ramagupta. Chandragupta II conquered this confederation.

Horse-sacrifice

Several evidences maintain that Chandragupta II performed horse-sacrifice. A stone-horse has been discovered from Varanasi on which the word Chandraguh (Chandragupta) is inscribed. Besides, Punadanapatra referred to the donation of several cows and thousands of coins (*aneka gau hiranya koti sahasra padah*) by Chandragupta II from which it seems that Chandragupta might have organized horse-sacrifice after his conquests.



Fig. 3.17 Chandragupta II on Horseback as Depicted on a Coin

Extent of Chandragupta II's empire

The empire of Chandragupta Vikramaditya was larger than that of Samudragupta. His empire expanded from the Himalaya in the north to river Narmada in the south, and from Bengal in the east to Arabian Sea in the west. Many famous trading cities and ports were included in his vast empire. Because of the expansion of his empire, he made Ujjain his second capital.

Estimate of Chandragupta II

Chandragupta II was one of the greatest rulers of India. Under him, the government, expansion of empire, art, economic or social aspects of life were at its zenith. 'Chandragupta tested the sharpness of his sword against the wicked and unrighteous Shakas and defeating them, he expanded his empire immensely and by conquering the unconquered states, he increased the extent of his empire more than the extent of his father's empire. He destroyed the Shakas and restored the glory of Hindu civilization and culture. The reign of Chandragupta II is also considered as the golden age of the Gupta period. Chandragupta II took his empire to a new era of maturity of political greatness and cultural revival. The governance of India had never been better than the rule of Chandragupta II Vikramaditya.

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3.6.4 Art and Architecture

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

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

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

Gupta Temples

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

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Fig. 3.18 First Brick Temple of Gupta Period at Pawaya

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

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

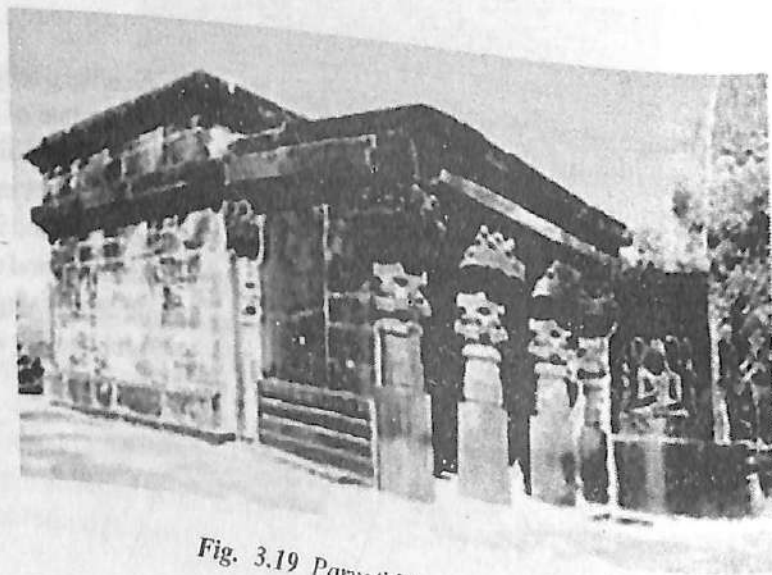


Fig. 3.19 Parvati Temple at Nachna

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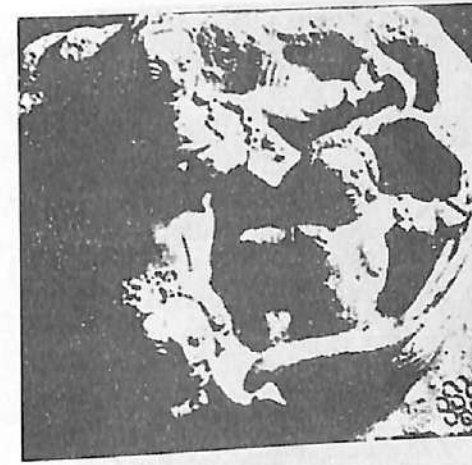


Fig. 3.20 Bhitargaon Temple of Gupta Period

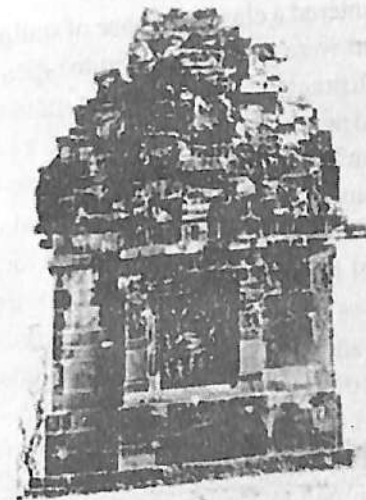


Fig. 3.21 Dasavatara Temple at Deogarh

Cave Architecture

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



Fig. 3.22 Cave-cut Architecture at Ellora in the Gupta Period

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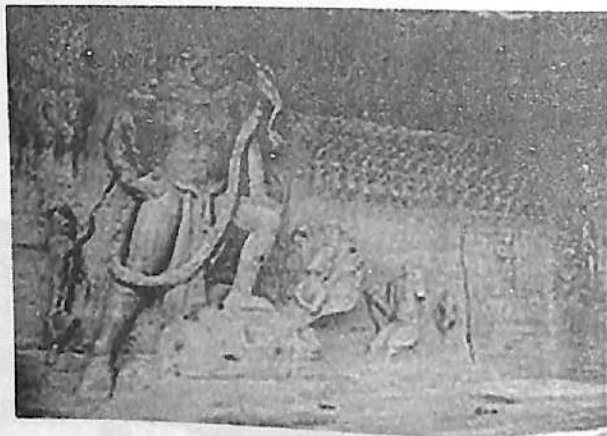


Fig. 3.23 Cave-cut Architecture at Udayagiri

Gupta Sculpture

With the Gupta period, India entered a classical phase of sculpture. By the efforts made over centuries, techniques of art were perfected, definite types were evolved, and ideals of beauty were formulated with precision. There was no more experimentation. A quick grasp of the true objectives and necessary principles of art, a vastly developed aesthetic sense and proficient execution by skilled hands made those outstanding images that were to be the perfect model and despair of the Indian artists of successive ages. The Gupta sculptures not only proved to be models of Indian art for the coming ages but they also provided a perfect model for the Indian colonies in the Far East. In the Gupta period, all inclinations and drives of the artistic searches of the scheduled phases reached their peak in a united plastic tradition of ultimate significance in Indian history. Gupta sculpture was the logical result of the early classical sculpture of Amravati and Mathura. Its gracefulness was received from that of Mathura and its elegance from that of Amravati. Yet a Gupta sculpture seemed to belong to an area that was completely different. The Gupta artist seemed to have been working for a higher ideal. A new synchronization between art and thought, between the outer forms and the inner intellectual and spiritual ideas of the people.



Fig. 3.24 Mathura Sculpture of Indra

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Fig. 3.25 Buddha Image of Gupta Period

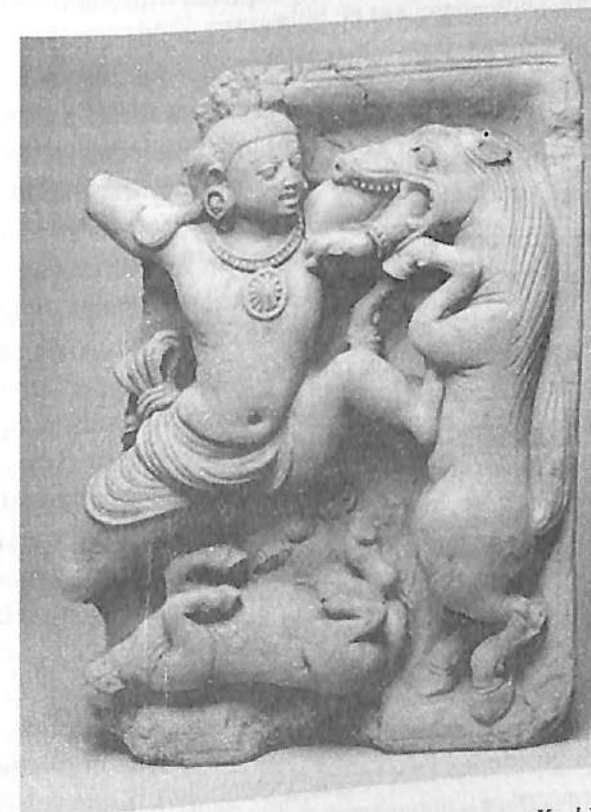


Fig. 3.26 Krishna killing the Horse Demon Keshi

Art of Bharhut, Amravati, Sanchi and Mathura came closer and closer, merging into one. In the composition, it was the female figure that now becomes the focus of attraction and nature recedes into the background, but in doing so it leaves behind its unending and undulating rhythm in the human form. The human figure, taken as the image, is the turn of Gupta sculpture. A new canon of beauty is evolved leading to the appearance of a new aesthetic ideal. This ideal is based upon an explicit understanding of the human body in its inherent softness and suppleness. The soft and flexible body of the Gupta sculpture with its smooth and shining texture facilitates free and easy movement, and though seemingly at rest the figure seems to be infused with an energy, which proceeds from within.

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This is true not only of the images of divine beings, Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jain but also of the ordinary men and women. It is the sensitiveness of the plastic surface that the artist seeks to emphasize and for this; all superfluities, etc. that tend to cover the body, are reduced to the minimum. So, the wet or transparent clinging drapery became the fashion of this era. But the sensuous effect of these draperies particularly in the case of female figures was restricted by a conscious moral sense, and nudity as a rule. It was eliminated from the Gupta sculpture. The great artistic creations of the period were invested with sweet and soft contours, restrained ornamentation and dignified repose. Under the patronage of the Guptas, the studies of Mathura and Sarnath produced several works of great merit. Though Hindu by faith, they were tolerant rulers.

The wonderful red sandstone image of the Buddha from Mathura is a remarkable example of Gupta workmanship datable to the fifth century AD. Buddha is revealed standing with his right hand in abhaya mudra, giving shelter and the left holding the edge of the garment. The smiling expression with unhappy eyes is robed in spiritual happiness. The robe covering both shoulders is dexterously depicted with carefully covered graphic folds and clings to the body. The head is covered with graphic spiral curls with a central bulge and the detailed halo adorned with bands of elegant decoration. The finished mastery in execution and the regal tranquility of expression of the image of Buddha came to be adopted and locally customized by Siam, Cambodia, Burma, Java, Central Asia, China and Japan, etc., when these countries accepted the Buddhist religion. The image of the standing Buddha is an outstanding example of Gupta art in its maturity from Sarnath. The softly moulded form has its right hand in the manner of reassuring protection. Unlike the delicately shaped drapery folds of the Mathura Buddha, only the edge of the almost transparent robe is here pointed out. The perfect execution of the figure compared by its serious spiritual appearance is truly praiseworthy of the inspirational being. Sarnath describes not only a gracefulness and improvement of form but also a calm approach by bending the body in the case of the standing figure, slightly on its own axis, thus conveying to it a certain suppleness and movement in comparison to the columnar inflexibility of analogous Mathura works. Also, in the case of the seated figure, the lean physiognomy expresses a feeling of movement, the body, closely following the modeling in all its delicate shades. The folds have been abandoned in general; a signal of the drapery only stays alive in the thin lines on the body signifying the periphery of the garment. The folds which fall separately are given, again, a definitely muslin-like texture. The body in its soft and shining plasticity comprises the main theme of the Sarnath artists. The conclusion of these features seen in this inspiring image of the Master embodied in the act of turning the Wheel of Law is one of the masterly creations of Gupta classical sculpture. The image has been carved in Chunar sandstone and has a surface texture of faultless softness. The Master is shown as seated in Vijraparyanka with the hands held near the breast in Dharmachakrapravartana Mudra (the sign of preaching). A fine order infuses the whole figure, both physically and mentally. It is obvious as much in the even and recurring treatment of the body as in the ethereal face reminiscent of a mind absorbed and in calm delight of spiritual ecstasy. A clean decorative backdrop is provided by the throne and a circular nimbus (*Prabha*) exquisitely carved with a broad foliated ornament within beaded borders. The decorative *prabhas* are characteristic of Mathura images.

During the Gupta period, the characteristic elements of the Indian temple emerged and the plastic forms began to be used admirably as an integral part of the general architectural scheme. The stone carving in the temples at Deogarh and those in temples of Udayagiri and Ajanta are perfect specimen of figure sculpture in their decorative setting. The large panel of *Sheshashayi* Vishnu from the Deogarh temple, representing

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the Supreme Being sleeping wakefully on the serpent Ananta, the symbol of eternity, in the interval between the disbanding of the universe and its new creation, is a magnificent example.

The four-armed Vishnu is reclining elegantly on the coils of the Adishesha, whose seven hoods form a cover over his crowned head. His companion Lakshmi is sitting by his right leg and many gods and celestials are lingering nearby. In the lower panel, the two demons Madhu and Kaitabha, in an aggressive manner, are confronted by the four personified weapons of Vishnu. The whole masterpiece styled with a masterly skill, breathes an atmosphere of peace and apprehension, making it an excellent piece of art.

A wonderful illustration of Vishnu belongs to the Gupta period and it comes from Mathura. The typical gown, the *vanamala*, the charming string of pearls coiled round the neck, the long and elegant *yagnopavita* are all features of early Gupta work.

Ganga and Yamuna, two life-sized terracotta images that were originally installed in places flanking the main steps leading to the upper terrace of the Shiva temple at Ahichhatra are from the Gupta period. In the image, the Ganga stands on her vehicle, the *makara* and Yamuna on the *cacchap*. Kalidas describes that the two river goddesses are attendants to Shiva and it is a regular feature of temple architecture from the Gupta period onwards. Clay figurines (Terracottas) have great value as sources of social and religious history. In India, the art of making figurines of baked clay is of great antiquity as you have already seen at Harappa and Mohenjodaro where terracottas have been discovered in huge numbers.

The Head of Shiva is a graceful example of Gupta terracottas, portrayed with matted locks, tied in a famous and graceful top knot. The look on the face is notable and both the figures, of Shiva as well as Parvati, are two of the most delightful specimens from Ahichhatra.

The Vakatakas were dominant in the Deccan, contemporary with the Guptas in the North. The high watermark of excellence in art attained in their region can be best seen in the later caves at Ajanta, the early ones at Ellora and those at Aurangabad.

Gupta Paintings

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

Ajanta paintings

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

- Buddha
- Bodhisattvas
- Incidents from the life of Buddha
- Jatakas

The paintings are accomplished on a ground of mud-plaster in the tempera technique. In the caves of Ajanta, the artists observed a specific technique for doing their work. The rock walls of the cave were covered with a mixture of clay, cow dung and smashed rock. On its top a thin coat of lime plaster is applied. It was then smoothed and kept damp. On the surface the outline of the design was first sketched in dark colours such as dark brown or black. After this was done it was filled in, using a variety

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of colours like white, red, blue, dull green and brown. The theme of these paintings was from the Jataka tales, which is a collection of stories about the life of the Buddha. The paintings describe Buddha in various stages of his past and present lives. According to art critics, the Gupta paintings possess delicacy of lines, brilliancy of colours and richness of expression.

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

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

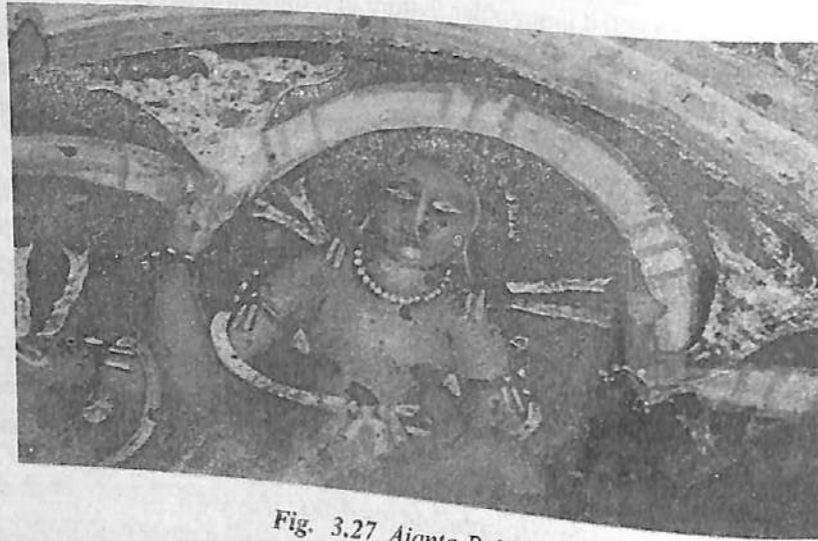


Fig. 3.27 Ajanta Painting

Bagh paintings

The Bagh caves are a group of nine rock-cut monuments. They are situated among the southern slopes of the Vindhya in Kukshi tehsil of Dhar district in Madhya Pradesh state of central India. These monuments are located at a distance of 97 km from the town of Dhar. They are renowned for mural paintings by master painters of ancient India. A cave is a bit of a misnomer as these are not natural, but instead are examples of Indian rock-cut architecture.

The Bagh caves, like those at Ajanta, were dug up by master craftsmen on perpendicular sandstone rock face of a hill on the far bank of a seasonal stream, the Baghani. Buddhist in inspiration, of the nine caves, only five have survived. All of them are *viharas* or monasteries having quadrangular plan.

Development of Music during Guptas

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

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

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

Natya Shastra

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

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

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

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

Brihaddeshi

Brihaddeshi authored by Sangit Acharya Matanga Muni (AD 500–700) is the most important work between *Natya Shastra* (2nd century BC) and *Sangita Makarand* (AD seventh - eighth century). *Brihaddeshi* is incomplete. Parts of it appear to be lost. It is the first major and available text for describing the ragas.

Sage Matanga's important contribution to musicology was his scholarly focus on the regional element in music.

3.7 THE PALLAVAS AND THE CHALUKYAS

There are different opinions regarding the origin of the Pallavas. The famous historian and author Dr V.A. Smith considers them to be Parthians while some other scholars accept them as Kadama or Pahlava. Historians, however, are anonymous in believing that they were Kshatriya by caste.

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Check Your Progress

8. Whom did Aryavarta defeat in his first expedition?
9. Which classical phase entered in India with the Gupta period?

Early kings of Pallava Dynasty

The first known king of the Pallava dynasty was Simhavarman. It is evident from an inscription, written in Prakrit, that it was Simhavarman who founded the Pallava dynasty. Simhavarman was succeeded by Skandhavarman who was perhaps his son. Initially, he was a yuvaraja (prince) and later took the title of Maharajadhiraja. He made Kanchi his capital and performed horse sacrifices, Agnistoma and Vajapeya Yajnas. His kingdom extended up to the River Krishna in the north and the Arabian Sea in the west. The name of Vishnugopa also comes up as the king of the Pallava dynasty. During his reign, Samudragupta attacked and defeated him. There is little knowledge about the history of the Pallava dynasty. The history of the Pallava dynasty after Vishnugopa is determined by the edicts of the Ganga kings who had mentioned the Pallavas as their contemporary. An account entitled *Lokavibhaga* helps in determining the chronology of the Pallava dynasty.

Simhavishnu

The first great king of the Pallava dynasty was Simhavishnu. He founded a new dynasty. The Pallava culture was at its zenith during his time. He expanded his power in south India and defeated the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Malawas. He was a follower of the Bhagavat religion. During his time, many temples of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma were built. He made every effort to disseminate the Sanskrit language and the Bhagavat culture. Bharavi, the writer of *Kiratarjuniya*, and Dandin were his court poets. Simvishnu was a worshipper of Lord Vishnu.

Mahendravarman

After the death of Simhavishnu, his son Mahendravarman became the king. The most memorable part of his rule was that he was the first king who developed the art of building temples by carving out hard rocks. Moreover, the epic *Kiratarjuniya* was written during his time. In his rule, people were happy and affluent and lived in peace. Although the Pallava-Chalukya and Pallava-Pandya wars began in his time, there was an immense development in the field of arts. Not only was he a contemporary of Harshavardhan and Pulakesin, he was also a liberal king, patron of art, culture and architecture. Mahendravarman established political unity by conquering all the small states in the south of the River Krishna. He took several titles like Mattavilasa, Gunabhara, Paramamaheshwar, Mahendravikrama and Cettakari.

Narasimhavarman

Narasimhavarman was the son of Mahendravarman. He became king in the second half of the 7th century and was brave and brilliant like his father. He defeated Pulakesin II and captured his capital, Vatapi. After this victory, he took the title of Vatapikonda. Following his father's footsteps, Narasimhavarman built several temples and promoted art and culture. He built temples at Chitranapalli by carving out rocks. He also founded a town named Mahabalipuram.

Parameshwarvarman

Parameshwarvarman was the son of Narasimhavarman. He was defeated by the Chalukya king Viramaditya. However, this victory is disputed as contemporary accounts fail to provide any definite detail on this. He ruled from AD660-680.

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Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha

Narasimhavarman II became king after Parmeshwarvarman. He built the Kailash temple, Shora temple (at Mahabalipuram), Airavateshwar temple (at Kanchi) and Panamalai temple. His rule was an era of literary activism.

Nandivarman Pallavamala

Narasimhavarman succeeded Nandivarman II Pallavamala. In his rule the war between the Chalukyas and the Pallavas was revived. Nandivarman's rule was a history of military activities, expeditions, attacks and counter-attacks. He built the Mukeshwar and Baikuntha temples at Kanchi and ruled for sixty-five years.

Dantivarman and his successor

Dantivarman was the son of Nandivarman. The Rashtrakutas attacked Kanchi during his reign and he was succeeded by Nandivarman III. He extended his empire by conquering the Pandyas and married a Rashtrakuta princess. Nripatungavarman, his son, succeeded him to the throne. He defeated the Pandya king Srimara. Aparajitavarman was the last king of the Pallava dynasty. The Chola king Aditya I defeated him and ended the Pallava dynasty.

Pallava administration

The Pallavas established a well-organized administrative system. The monarch was the head of the state and administration. There was a council of ministers, known as Rahasyakid to advise the king. Other pillars of administration were provincial governors and departmental ministers. R. Gopalan (well-known author) opines, 'The administration of the Pallavas reminds me of some aspects of the Maurya and some aspects of the Gupta administrations.'

The Pallava Empire was divided into *rastras* or *mandalas*. Its chief was known as *visayaka*. A *rastra* was subdivided into *kottam* and *nadu* (village), the rulers of which were known as *deshatika* and *vapitta*. There was also a village-assembly, which managed the village administration by sub-committees. A complete, written account of the land was also maintained. About eighteen different types of taxes were collected from the village.

Pallava literature

The Pallava kings were active patrons of literature and culture and they patronized several scholars. Due to this, literature grew immensely under the Pallavas. Kanchi, the capital of the Pallavas was a famous centre of Sanskrit learning since the ancient times. Bharavi, the writer of the *Kiratarjuniya* was the court-poet of Simhavishnu. King Mahendravarman himself wrote *Mattavilasaprahasana*. Renowned scholars like Bhasa, Shudraka and Dandin have contributed immensely to this period. Sanskrit was the state language.

The Pallava kings were tolerant towards other religions though they themselves followed Vedic rituals. They performed several sacrifices and patronized Sanskrit. The famous Chinese Buddhist monk and traveller, Hieun Tsang writes, 'There were about hundred Buddhist monasteries and over one thousand monks in Kanchi. They belonged to the Mahayana sect and studied the doctrines of the Sthavira sect.' Mahendravarman was the first Jain in the dynasty. While the famous Shaivites, Appara and Tirujnana Sambandara helped spread Shaivism in south India, Alwar saints spread Vaishnavism.

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Pallava art

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Pallava age gave birth to several arts. This age witnessed an immense growth in the arts. Rock-cut architecture was introduced in south India by the Pallavas. They were the first people to encourage the Kandara style or *dari* temple, an example of which is present in Trichinapalli or modern Tiruchirapalli. After this, *ratha* temples in Mahabalipuram were built. In the Pallava age, artists were skilled in several arts. Four art styles that were prevalent during the Pallava age were the following:

1. Mahendra style

The style of the temples at Dalavanapur, Pallavaram and Vallam were developed by Mahendrarvarman I. This new style was called the Mahendra style. In it, the pillars of the gateway are constructed in a row. The features of the temples are spherical phalluses, extraordinary doorways, arched gateways and triple-mouthed pillars.

2. Mammal style

Since this style was developed in Mammalapuram, it is called the Mammal style (Figure 3.28). In this style, pavilions or chariots were carved out in a rock-cut temple. Ten pavilions were built in this style. The ratio of decorations on the pillars are especially beautiful. The depiction of the descent of the Ganges, Vishnu lying on the serpent king, Varahavata, etc., in rock-cut hills are brilliant examples of this style. The chariots in the Mammal style is known as Saptapagoda. There are eight such chariots, named Draupadi ratha, Arjuna ratha, Bhima ratha, Dharmaraja ratha, Sahadeva ratha, Ganesh ratha, Pindari ratha and Valaiyana kuttai ratha. All these were perhaps Shaiva temples. The roofs of some of the rathas have been shaped like pyramids.

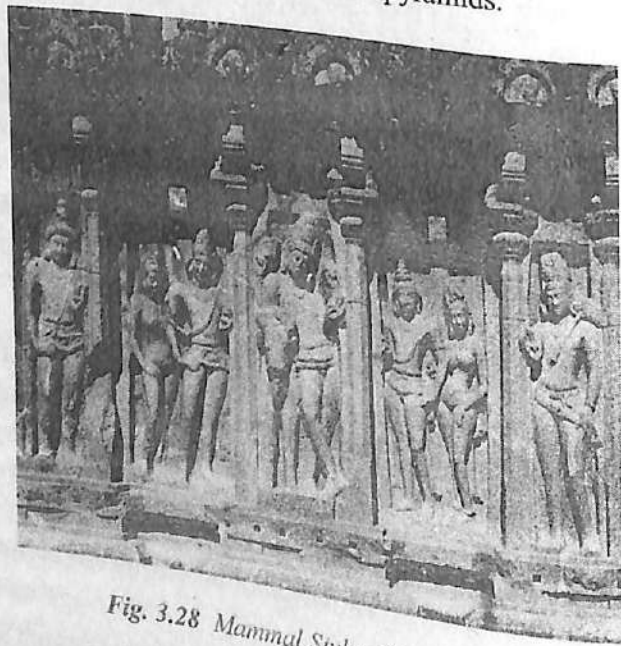


Fig. 3.28 Mammal Style of Architecture

3. Rajasimha style

In Rajasimha style, rock-cut temples were built. The shrines of these temples face the sea. There are six temples in this style; of them three are in Mammalpuram, one in Pamalai and the remaining two are in Kanchi. The Kailash temple of Kanchi and Saptapagoda, and Shor temple of Dala are examples of this style.

NOTES**4. Aparajita style**

The Aparajita style is named after the Pallava king Aparajitavarman. The Pallava culture had developed fully by this time. This style is more ornate, resembling the Chola architecture. A few temples built in this style are found at Dalavanur. The noteworthy feature of some shrines is that they are adorned by beautiful life-like images of Pallava kings and their queens. They are unique in the history of the temple architecture. The influence of the Paliava style can be clearly seen on the arts of the eastern islands like Java, Cambodia, etc. During this period, a tradition of cultural growth was seen in most parts of south India.

Chalukya Dynasty

Like the Satavahanas, Indian historians are divided on the origin of the Chalukyas. According to Indian legend, the Chalukyas were Kshatriyas from the north and originated from the water pot of Hariti. However, consensus has been reached to declare that the Chalukyas of Badami were residents of present Karnataka. The Chalukyas had three branches and you will learn about each of them in detail ahead.

1. Chalukyas of Badami

The first emperor of the Chalukya dynasty was Jayasimha who established an independent state after defeating the Kadambas and the Rashtrakutas. Jayasimha's son Ranaranga only defended his empire but Pulakesin I was the real king of this dynasty because he was an independent king. He extended his empire and proved his mettle by performing horse sacrifices. His capital was Badami. You will learn about the important Chalukyas of Badami ahead.

Kirtivarman

He was brave like his father, Pulakesin I and defeated the kings of Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Vantur, Magadha, Madraka, Keral, Ganga, Pandya, Damil, Chiliya, Aluka and Vijayanti. He ruled from AD 566-597.

Mangalesh

When Kirtivarman died, his son was still young. Therefore, his stepbrother Mangalesh ascended to the throne. His achievements were the conquests of Revati Island and Kalachuri. Vaishnavite Mangalesh built a grand cave Vishnu temple in Badami. It is one of the best specimens of contemporary art.

Pulakesin II

Pulakesin II (AD 620-642) was the most extraordinary ruler of his dynasty. He deposed his uncle and ascended the throne. Taking advantage of this civil-war, many subordinate states declared independence. At the same time, Mangalesh's sons also attacked in a bid to take over the kingdom from him. Pulakesin II had to face simultaneous foreign aggressions. In such a difficult situation, the young ruler displayed amazing patience, and made foreign aggressors his friends.

After strengthening his position, he started the campaign of conquests. He forced Navasis, the Gangas of Mysore, Alupas of Malabar, and Konkan Maurya of North to join him. He also crushed Lats of Gujarat, Malawa and Gurjars. The greatest achievement of Pulakesin II was his victory over Harshavardhana. His prestige increased immensely

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after he defeated Harsha. He made the Cholas, Keralas, and Pandyas his friends and defeated the Pallavas. However, the Chalukyas' power was on a decline during the last days of Pulakesin II. Narsimhavarman killed Pulakesin II in a war.

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Vikramaditya I

The Chalukya's seat of power, Badami, was under the possession of Pallavas for thirteen years but Vikramaditya, the son of Pulakesin II, re-established the Chalukya power. He was victorious like his father. After the death of Vikramaditya, his son Vijayaditya ruled from AD680–698. He was succeeded by Vikramaditya II who ruled from AD696–733.

Vikramaditya II

Vikramaditya II fought the Cholas, Pandyas, and Cheras. During his reign, the Arabs, after conquering Sindh in AD712, attacked south India but Vikramaditya defeated them. However, he could not destroy the Pallava power completely.

After Vikramaditya II, Kirtivarman II became the king. He was the last king of the Chalukya dynasty. In AD753, the Rashtrakuta king Dantidurga subjugated Kirtivarman II and destroyed his power. However, other branches of the Chalukyas kept their kingdoms intact.

2. Chalukyas of Vengi

The Chalukyas of Vengi ruled over a part of Andhra and Kalinga for five centuries. Pulakesin had made Vishnuvardhan, the ruler of Pistapur, his vassal, but his successors became independent. The most able kings of this dynasty were Vijayaditya II and Vijayaditya III who defeated Rastrakutas, Gangas and other contemporary powers. Rajaraja Chola weakened the power of this dynasty but its king Shaktivarman regained the lost glory and extended the boundaries of his empire. Shaktivarman's successor Vimaladitya was married to the Chola princess Kundava and improved his relations with them. Vimaladitya's son Rajaraja Vishnuvardhana married the daughter of Rajendra I. Rajendra Chola, born of this marriage ousted Vijayaditya VII from Vengi in AD1070 and thus the Cholas annexed the Chalukya kingdom.

3. Chalukyas of Kalyani

Tailap II established the Chalukya Empire of Kalyani by deposing the Rastrakuta king in AD 973 and made Kalyani his capital. He then defeated the Chola and Kalachuri kings and defeated king Munja of the Paramars. He ruled for almost twenty-five years. After the death of Tailap, his son Satyashraya ascended to the throne. Though the neighbouring Cholas created troubles in his kingdom, Satyashraya regained his power. After the death of Satyashraya, Vikramaditya ascended to the throne and ruled for ten years. He was succeeded by Jaisingh II. He defeated Paramara king Bhoja. After him, Someshwar I Ahavamalla ascended the throne. He defeated the Chola king Rajadhiraja Kanchi and annexed his empire to his kingdom. He also defeated Chediraj and the Kalachuris. He restrained the growing power of the Yadavs, Hoyasalas, Kadambas in south India. He was the most famous and efficient king of this branch of the Chalukyas. He made Kalyani his capital. It is said that he lost his life by submerging himself in water in a yogic posture of meditation.

After the death of Someshwar I, his son Someshwar II (AD1068–1076) ascended the throne. He was succeeded by Vikramaditya VI. He was not only a brilliant king, but also a patron of learned persons. Poet Bilhana was in his court. He wrote

Vikramadudevacharita. Vijnaneshwar, the writer of *Mitaksara* also lived in his court. There were several kings after Someshwar but none were as powerful. In 1190, this kingdom was annexed by Yadav King Bhillama of Devagiri.

Chalukya culture

In their reign of several centuries, the Chalukyan kings set new standards in the political and cultural fields. The Chalukya administration was feudal in nature. Sandhi-vigrahaka and cultural fields. The Chalukya administration was feudal in nature. Sandhi-vigrahaka was appointed as a contact official between the king and feudatories. Feudatories had certain privileges; they had their own army and had independence in internal matters. Though the king was the highest seat of power and justice, a council of ministers helped the king in the administration of the state.

When the Chalukya dynasty was founded, Brahminism occupied a predominant place. This gave impetus to the growth of Vedic religion. Several temples were constructed and Pulakesin II performed the horse-sacrifice and Vajapeya sacrifice. Jainism also flourished because of the religious tolerance of the Chalukya kings. Ravikirti, the writer of the Aihole inscription was a follower of Jainism, and he built a temple of Jinendra. Huen Tsang has written that there were more than hundred Buddhist monasteries in which over 5000 monks of both the Hinayana and Mahayana sects. There were five Ashoka Stupas inside and outside the capital. This provides evidence of the growth of Buddhism in the country.

There was immense development in the field of arts during the rule of the Chalukyas. Similar to the Buddhists and Jains, the building of cave-temples for Hindu deities was an important contribution of this age. Virupaksa is a famous temple of this period adorned with frescoes from the Ramayana. The policy of religious tolerance, liberalism, and love for learning of the Chalukya kings, and patronization of scholars provided opportunity for literary creation. Jain teachers of the period laid the foundation for literary creation in provincial languages like Marathi, Kannad and Telugu.

3.8 SUMMARY

- Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of the Mauryan Empire. The rulers of the Mauryan period organized the administration system, which resulted in the all-round development of India. India constructed a new world on the basis of peace, brotherhood and cultural unity under the rule of the Mauryas.
- Under the Mauryans, India was an agricultural country. According to Megasthenes, majority of the population consisted of the agriculturists. They neither participated in warfare nor did they participate in the state affairs. They were not harmed during wars. The tillers of the soil carried on their work uninterruptedly.
- Spinning was done by the spinning wheels and big looms were used for weaving clothes. According to *Arthashastra* and Megasthenes, cotton was produced in great quantity; the weavers of cotton clothes worked round the clock.
- Though Ashoka is known as the greatest king of India, historians learned about him only in the 19th century.
- In 1837, a British scholar named James Prinsep deciphered the inscriptions on the pillars and rocks that are found in many parts of India. The script was identified as Brahmi and it was concluded that Ashoka and the ruler named Devanampiya Priyadarsi were one and the same person. An inscription discovered by James

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Check Your Progress

10. Who was the first known king of the Pallava dynasty?
11. Which religion acquired a predominant place when the Chalukya dynasty was founded?

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- Prinsep used the name Ashoka along with the other name. These inscriptions gave historians valuable information about Ashoka's rule and the extent and condition of his empire.
- The land Ashoka ruled stretched from the Himalayas in Nepal and Kashmir to Mysore in the south, from Afghanistan in the northwest to the banks of the River Brahmaputra in the east. In the west his territory covered Saurashtra and Junagarh.
 - Kalinga was one of the kingdoms, which remained unconquered and hostile when Ashoka succeeded to the throne.
 - The word 'dhamma' was derived from the Sanskrit word 'dharma'.
 - Ashoka followed the principles of Buddhism—that of truth, charity, kindness, purity and goodness. He wanted his people to lead pure and virtuous lives, irrespective of their religion or culture. He considered all subjects his children. He explained his ideas in his edicts by engraving his principles on pillars throughout his kingdom. The edicts were written in Prakrit, which was the language of the common people, so that they could understand and follow them.
 - The causes for the downfall of Mauryan dynasty were many, among which the most important were the vastness of the empire; incapable successors; deteriorating financial position and disloyalty of the chief army officials.
 - Following Alexander the Great, the Greek Seleukidan dynasty of Persia continued their hold on the trans-Indus region. In 303 BC, Chandragupta Maurya overpowered Seleukos Nikator and brought the trans-Indus region under his control.
 - The Mauryas were succeeded by the Sungas who ruled for 112 years from about 185 – 73 BC. Pushyamitra, the Mauryan Commander-in-Chief, killed the last Mauryan king, Brihadratha and ruled the kingdom for thirty-six years.
 - The Chinese historians tell us that the Kushanas were a section of the Yueh-chi race. The Yueh-chi was nomadic hordes who inhabited the borders of modern China. In the middle of the second century BC, they came into conflict with a neighbouring barbarian tribe known as Hsiung-nu.
 - After Chandragupta I, his son Samudragupta became king of the Gupta dynasty. He established a vast kingdom by conquering different battles and strengthened the Gupta dynasty for centuries.
 - Ramagupta ascended to the throne after the death of Samudragupta but he could not hold to his empire. Therefore, Chandragupta II ascended to the Gupta throne in AD 380. He was also a brave, valiant, invincible and able emperor. He was adorned on his coins with the titles of Devashri Vikramanka, Vikramaditya, Simha Vikrama, Ajivikram, Simhachandra Apratiratha, etc.
 - The Gupta Period (AD fourth–seventh) is usually called as the golden age of art and architecture in India. This period saw a huge resurrection of Hinduism when it became the official religion of the Gupta Empire. The cave architecture also achieved a huge degree of refinement during the Gupta period.
 - In the Gupta period, all trends and tendencies of the artistic searches of the preceding phases reached their peak in a united plastic tradition of supreme importance in Indian history.
 - The wonderful red sandstone image of Buddha from Mathura is a remarkable example of Gupta workmanship datable to the fifth century AD.

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- There are different opinions regarding the origin of the Pallavas. Dr V.A. Smith considers them as Parthians while some other scholars accept them as Kadama or Pahlava. Historians, however, are anonymous in believing that they were Kshatriya by caste. The first known king was Simhavarman. Other important kings were Simhavishnu, Mahendravarman, Narasinhavarman, Parameshwarvarman and Narasimhavarman II.
- Indian historians are divided on the origins of the Chalukyas also. According to Indian legends, the Chalukyas were Kshatriyas from the north and originated from the water pot of Hariti. However, consensus has been reached to declare that the Chalukyas of Badami were residents of present Karnataka. The Chalukyas could be divided into three branches: (1) the Chalukyas of Badami, (2) the Chalukyas of Vengi, and (3) the Chalukyas of Kalyani.

3.9 KEY TERMS

- **Portrait:** A painting, photograph, sculpture, or other artistic representation of a person, in which the face and its expression is predominant.
- **Schist:** A type or quality of stone formed through layers.
- **Ivory:** Images or figures made from the bones, primarily of elephant
- **Conquest:** The subjugation and assumption of control of a place or people by the use of military force.
- **Sculpture:** A three-dimensional artwork created by shaping or combining hard materials (such as stone, glass and wood).

3.10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The primary source of our knowledge on the Mauryan Empire is based on the *Arthashastra* by Chanakya, which is a treatise on statecraft.
2. During the Mauryan times the cloth industry had greatly developed. The main clothes centres were Kashi, Vatsa, Madura, Vanga, Apranta, etc.
3. The following coins were minted under the Mauryan dynasty:
 - Gold coins known as *Sauvamik*
 - Silver coins called *Kashaparna*
 - Copper coins called *Mashaka*
 - *Kakni* was also a copper coin which was less valuable to *Mashaka*
4. Ashoka's death was followed by the division of empire amongst his sons and grandsons. While Jalauka became the ruler of Kashmir, Virasena established his sway over Gandhara. The remaining empire was divided between Samprati and Dasratha. This division sounded the death knell of the Mauryan Empire.
5. It is believed that proper care was not taken to collect the revenues as a result of which the later Mauryan kings had to face a financial crisis. The internal rebellions too emptied the treasury. The administration also suffered and so the empire became weak.

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6. Bactria was a fertile area situated between the Hindu Kush and the Oxus.
7. Dissimilarities between Kanishka and Ashoka were:
 - Kanishka propagated Buddha's faith through art forms mainly the images and status of Buddha, whereas, Ashoka built pillars and inscribed the main teachings of Buddha on these pillars and rocks.
 - Kanishka belonged to the Mahayana sect whereas, Ashoka belonged to the Hinayana sect of Buddhism.
 - Kanishka continued to wage wars against his neighbours even after his conversion to Buddhism whereas, Ashoka gave up wars and embraced non-violence after his conversion.
8. Achyuta was the first king defeated by Aryavarta in his first expedition.
9. With the Gupta period in India, entered a classical phase of Sculpture.
10. Simhavishnu was the first known king of the Pallava dynasty.
11. When the Chalukya dynasty was founded, Brahmanism occupied a predominant place.

3.11 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What effect did the Battle of Kalinga have on Ashoka?
2. What were the causes for the decline of the Mauryan Empire?
3. Write a short note on the Indo-Greeks.
4. Write short notes on (a) Shungas (b) Kharavela.
5. State the beauty of Gupta paintings in your own words.
6. How did art progress under the Pallavas?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write a descriptive note on the economic conditions of India during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya.
2. What are the basic principles of Ashoka's 'dhamma'?
3. Identify and discuss the unique features of Buddha idols in the Mathura school of art.
4. Explain the salient features of the Gandhara School of art.
5. Analyse the political conquests of Samudragupta.
6. Write a note on the three branches of Chalukyas.

3.12 FURTHER READING

- Sastri K.A.N. 1988. *Age of Nandas and Mauryas*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas.
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UNIT 4 DELHI SULTANATE

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Mamluks: Qutb-ud-Din Aibak, Iltutmish and Balban
 - 4.2.1 Qutb-ud-Din Aibak
 - 4.2.2 Iltutmish
 - 4.2.3 Balban
- 4.3 Khiljis: Alaudin Khilji
- 4.4 Tughlaqs: Muhammad-bin-tughlaq, Firoz Shah Tughlaq
 - 4.4.1 Muhammad Bin Tughlaq
 - 4.4.2 Firoz Shah Tughlaq
- 4.5 Society, Economy and Literature under the Sultanate
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Key Terms
- 4.8 Answers to 'Check your Progress'
- 4.9 Questions and Exercises
- 4.10 Further Reading

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4.0 INTRODUCTION

In the 10th and 11th centuries, small regional kingdoms emerged in North India. Beyond the north-west frontiers of India, in Central Asia, kingdoms and empires were rising to prominence under Islamic influence. During that process, two kingdoms emerged prominent around the two cities of Ghazna and Ghur. The situation in Central Asia brought the rulers of these two kingdoms to India which led to the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate being laid. In the 10th and 11th centuries, Turks and Afghans invaded parts of northern India and established the Delhi Sultanate in the beginning of the 13th century. The Slave Dynasty managed to conquer large areas of northern India. The concept of equality in Islam and Muslim traditions reached its climax in the history of South Asia when slaves were raised to the status of Sultans. The Slave Dynasty ruled the subcontinent for about eighty-four years. Qutb-ud-din Aibak, Shams-ud-din Iltutmish and Ghiyas-ud-din Balban, the three great Sultans of the era, were themselves sold and purchased during their early lives. The Slave Dynasty was the first Muslim dynasty that ruled India.

This unit will discuss the advent of the Delhi Sultanate in India, the reign of Qutb-ud-Din Aibak, and consolidation of power by Iltutmish, Balban, the economy and literature of the Sultanate period.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the advent of the Delhi sultanate
- Assess the reign of Qutb-ud-Din Aibak
- Evaluate the consolidation efforts made by Iltutmish and Balban
- Assess the character and achievements of Balban and his theory of kingship

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- Discuss the causes and consequences of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq's controversial policies
- Evaluate the various policies adopted by Firoz Shah Tughlaq
- Evaluate the condition of society and culture during the Sultanate period
- Explain the development of economy and literature during the Sultanate period

4.2 MAMLUKS: QUTB-UD-DIN AIBAK, ILTUTMISH AND BALBAN

Muhammad Ghori (who is also known as Muizzuddin Muhammad Bin Sam) was the younger brother of the ruler of Ghor, Ghiyas-ud-din. He was raised to the throne of Gazni in AD 1173. Still, he remained loyal to his brother and kept good terms with him. Though he ruled over Gazni virtually as an independent ruler till AD 1206, he got his brother's name inscribed on his coins and behaved towards him as a feudatory does towards his lord. He carried on many invasions of India only as his brother's associate and opened the way for the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. After his death, his Central Asian Empire was usurped by the Shah of Khwarezm. His military chiefs established the Muslim empire in India. After him, for about 50 years, the Mamluk Sultans remained busy in consolidating the Muslim empire in India. That empire progressed for about 150 years, though the royal dynasties changed.

4.2.1 Qutb-ud-Din Aibak

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

Problems before Qutb-ud-Din Aibak and his Efforts Towards their Solution

- Nasir ad-Din Qabacha (AD 1206):** After Muhammad Ghori's death, three of his main confidants enjoyed equal positions—the governor of Kirman, Tajuddin Yaldoz; governor of Multan and Uchh, Nasir ad-Din Qabacha; and governor of Delhi, Ajmer etc., Qutb-ud-Din Aibak himself. As a practical statesman, Qutb-ud-Din extended the hand of friendship towards Qabacha. On the one hand, he offered the hand of his daughter to Qabacha, to increase his prestige (since Aibak was a slave) and on the other, he asked Qabacha to accept his (Aibak's) sovereignty. Thus, Aibak's influence extended to Multan and Uchh.
- Ali Mardan Khilji and Bengal (AD 1206):** The second problem before Qutb-ud-Din Aibak was the Khilji chiefs of Bengal. Ali Mardan Khilji murdered

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Ikhtiyaruddin and tried to set himself up as the ruler of Bengal. The followers of Ikhtiyaruddin opposed him. He fled for refuge to Aibak. Aibak dispatched him along with an army to Bengal. Seeing that Ali Mardan was enjoying the support of Aibak, many chiefs ceased to oppose him. Ali Mardan started ruling Bengal as a representative of Aibak. Thus, Aibak solved the problem of the danger of Bengal by becoming independent.

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

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

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

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

Assessment of Aibak's Work

Aibak as a commander

Aibak was an expert horse rider, expert archer, able and courageous commander. As a commander, he served his master faithfully. He conquered many areas in the absence of Ghori. After Ghori's death, he impressed his military superiority by temporary conquest over Yalduj of Gazni, by diplomacy over Nasir ad-Din Qabacha, the ruler of Multan and

by giving military aid to Ali Mardan over the Khilji Chiefs of Bengal. He reconquered Badayun and Farukhabad. But he could not keep Gazni under permanent control and could not reconquer Kalinjar and Gwalior.

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Aibak as a ruler

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

Aibak as a person

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

Aibak as empire builder or founder of Delhi Sultanate

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

4.2.2 Iltutmish

After the sudden death of Qutb-ud-Din Aibak (AD 1210), disorder became rampant in the Delhi Sultanate. A few Amirs raised Aram Shah to the throne in Lahore. But the people of Delhi and the Turkish Amirs opposed him for many reasons. Probably they wanted the highest possible offices for themselves. Probably because of Aram Shah being a luxury loving and incapable ruler he was also opposed. There was controversy about whether Aram Shah was Aibak's son or not. Many Amirs declared themselves as independent rulers e.g. the Qubacha of Multan and Uchh and Ali Mardan of Bengal. The Turkish chiefs invited the Governor of Badayun, and Iltutmish to come to Delhi which he accepted readily. Aram Shah proceeded against him as the head of a big army from Lahore to Delhi but Iltutmish defeated him and Iltutmish became Sultan with the name of Shamsuddin.

Problems Facing Iltutmish

Iltutmish ruled for about 26 years (AD 1210–1236). From AD 1210–1220, he solved the internal problems and the years AD 1221–1227 were devoted to the solution of external problems. Among the internal problems of Iltutmish were the Qabacha of Multan and Uchh, those Hindu and Turkish chiefs who had ceased to pay tribute, Ali Mardan of Lakhnauti, and the rulers of Kalijar, Gwalior, Jalor and Ranthambhor etc. were there. The external problems included the acquisition of Mansur from the Caliph of Baghdad and the problems arising out of Mongol invasions. In the last eight years of his reign i.e.

AD 1228–1236. Iltutmish worked for personal and dynastic reorganization. Following measures were adopted by Iltutmish to solve his problems and consolidate the Sultanate.

(i) **War with Tajuddin Yalduj:** After the death of Qutb-ud-Din Aibak, Tajuddin Yalduj of Gazni who had been driven from there by the Shah of Khwarizam, in turn drove out Qabacha from Lahore to the Southern Punjab and proceeded towards Delhi. Iltutmish stopped him at the battle of Tarain in AD 1215–16 and defeated him. Probably, he was taken prisoner and later assassinated in Badayun.

This was a great victory for Iltutmish. Historian A.K. Nizami has written rightly that it was a double victory for Iltutmish. The last enemy to challenge his authority was done away with when the relations with Gazni were severed which made the independent existence of Delhi Sultanate definite.

(ii) **Nasir ad-Din Qabacha:** After Yalduj's death, Qabacha was appointed as Governor of Lahore but he was still heartily unwilling to stay in subordination to Iltutmish. On his showing a tendency to conquer Sirhind, Iltutmish in order to teach him a lesson, attacked him in AD 1217. Lahore came under Iltutmish's occupation. He appointed his son Nasir ad-Din as the Governor over there but Qabacha continued to still rule over Sind.

(iii) **External Problems: Fear of the Mongol invasions:** At this time, the Shah of Khwarizam had been defeated by the Mongols and had run away towards the Caspian Sea. His son Jalaluddin Magharai fearing the wrath of the famous Mongol leader, Chingiz Khan, went away to Punjab after crossing the Indus. He requested Iltutmish to help him against the Mongols. Iltutmish was foresighted enough to reject it. Main objections of his were --- first, not to incur the hostility of the Mongols and second, to safeguard his own position from being threatened by the claims of the Shah of Khwarizam. So, he gave no help to Jalaluddin Magbari and in AD 1226 Jalaluddin went back from India. The problem was solved itself and Iltutmish heaved a sigh of relief.

(iv) **Sind:** In order to completely crush the power of Qabacha, Iltutmish had to attack him again in AD 1227 because he could present a danger to the Sultanate at any time. He was defeated and the fort of Uchh came under the occupation of Iltutmish. He fled and hid in the fort of Bhakkar (Sind). Ultimately, Qabacha sent his son Masud Behram to sue for peace but he was arrested. Qabacha tried to save himself by swimming across the river Indus but he could not swim across; he was drowned. This ended another major problem of Iltutmish. His hold was established over Multan and Uchh. Thus, the frontier of the Delhi Sultanate once again reached till the river Indus. This conquest strengthened the frontier of the Delhi Sultanate in the west and Iltutmish could devote his attention elsewhere.

(v) **Khilji chiefs of Bengal and Bihar:** Immediately after the death of Qutb-ud-Din Aibak, the Khilji Chief of Bengal and Bihar Ali Mardan had proclaimed his independence and had issued coins in his own name. In AD 1211, however, he was assassinated and Musamuddin Aliwaz Khilji was seated on the throne there. He also declared his independence and assumed the title of Ghiyas-ud-din. He also extracted Kharaj from the areas of Jajnagar, Tirhut and Kamrup. Iltutmish could not tolerate the independence and assumed the title of Ghiyas-ud-din. He brought Bengal under the command of his son Nasarruddin Mahmud. In AD 1226–27, Aliwaz (Khilji) was defeated near Lakhnauti. Bengal and Bihar were brought under the control of Delhi once more. But it was not easy to maintain a hold over them permanently and they challenged Delhi again and again.

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- (vi) **War against Rajputs:** About this very time Iltutmish started making efforts for conquering Gwalior, Bayana, Ajmer and Nagore. In AD 1227 Ranthambhor and Mander came under Iltutmish's control.
- (vii) **Recognition by the Caliph:** On 18 Feb AD 1229, the representative of the Caliph of Baghdad came to Delhi and he accorded investiture to Iltutmish. The Caliph gave him the title of Sultan-i-Azam. Undoubtedly, this was a mere formality. But it increased Iltutmish's prestige and fulfilled his longstanding desire. For the Indian Muslims he again formally became the legal Sultan. Iltutmish has described himself as the representative of the Caliph in his coins.
- (viii) **Conquest of Jalor, Gwalior and Malwa:** In AD 1229, Iltutmish occupied Jalore followed by successful attacks on Bayana, Ajmer and Nagore. In AD 1231, he launched an attack on Mangaldev of Gwalior and after a long siege of eleven months brought it under his control. In AD 1234-1235, he attacked Malwa. Iltutmish acquired a lot of wealth from Bhilsa and Ujjain and forced the Rajput kings of Katehar, Doab and Oudh to give him tribute. Iltutmish died on 30th April AD 1236.

Achievements or Assessments of Iltutmish

- (i) **Iltutmish as a person:** Iltutmish had a very attractive personality. He was kind hearted, very efficient and capable. The greatest proof of his capability is that on his own merit, he achieved a constant progress and reached the post of the Sultan of Delhi. *Minhajus-Siraj* writes in his praise that a ruler as able, kind-hearted, wise and religious as Iltutmish had not sat on the throne. According to Wolsey Haig, Iltutmish was the greatest ruler of the Slave dynasty.
- (ii) **Iltutmish as a soldier and commander:** Iltutmish was a brave soldier and able commander. He forcibly suppressed the rebel chiefs in the vicinity of Delhi. He defeated Yalduz in AD 1215 in the battle of Tarain. In AD 1217, he drove away Qabacha from the Punjab and in AD 1227, forced him to jump into the river Indus in a bid to run away from Sind. He cleared Bengal of the Khilji Chiefs and conquered Malwa, Gwalior, Ranthambhore, Mandu and Ujjain. A review of Iltutmish's military achievements shows that he achieved commendable success in the given circumstances. He, by his conquests, reunited the disintegrating Delhi Sultanate. Though he did not attain quick victories but wherever he sent his armies he achieved victory.
- (iii) **Iltutmish as an empire builder:** He was a foresighted ruler. He consolidated and organized the newly formed Turkish Sultanate in Delhi. The Sultanate which was disintegrating after Aibak's death was not only reorganized by him but was extended as an administrative organization and was established in a better way than before. Though he came at the helm of affairs of the Sultanate after Aibak chronologically but he is considered the real founder of the Turkish Sultanate because (i) He was the first Sultan to shift the capital from Lahore to Delhi which remained the capital of the empire more or less continuously till Babar's invasion. He also brought to an end those powerful rivals of the Sultanate whom Aibak had been unsuccessful in completely subjugating. These rivals were Yalduz, Qabacha etc. He was the first one again to receive an investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad.
- He was the first one again to get the title of Nasir Amirul Mominin or assistant of Khalifa. Thus, he was the first Sultan to gain a formal and a legal

recognition as the Sultan of Delhi. To consolidate the Sultanate and to arrange for his security, he got trusted Turks settled in jungles or strategic areas. He encouraged the Turks to settle in Doab and Khokkar areas. (5) He was responsible for introducing new golden and silver Arabic type coins called the Tanka which increased the confidence of the people in the stability of the new regime. He organized the Forty, and introduced the Iqta system. This institution or the Forty remained very powerful before and after the death of Balban. Iqta system continued throughout the Sultanate period. Describing him as the real founder of the Delhi Sultanate, A.B.M. Habibulla says that he made the outline of the frontiers of the Sultanate and its sovereignty. Iltutmish was undoubtedly its first Sultan. Historians like Wolsey Haig who otherwise try to minimize the achievements of Iltutmish in comparison with Aibak, also maintain that the credit for the achievements of Aibak was also due to Muhammad Ghori but whatever Iltutmish achieved was on his own merit. The opinion of R.P. Tripathi appears to be correct that the beginning of Muslim sovereignty in India can be traced back to Iltutmish. He was the first one to emphasize that the ruler is sovereign in India. He achieved complete success in making the Amirs following him rather than himself following the Amirs.

- (iv) **Iltutmish as a ruler and administrator:** Iltutmish not only secured and extended the newly established Turkish empire but also gave to the people an able administration and thus showed himself to be an able ruler and administrator. Whatever time he got after his military campaigns was utilized by him in reforming the administrative system. In addition to introducing new coins, Iqta system, organization of Forty he also brought about reforms in judicial administration. Ibnbatutah who came to India during the time of Muhammad bin Tughlaq writes about his judicial system that the Sultan had got a bell tied in front of his palace so that the poor should not have any difficulty in reaching their request before him. He is considered one of the best rulers of Early Medieval India.
- (v) **Iltutmish as a patron of art and literature:** Iltutmish was a great lover of art. He completed the Qutub Minar begun by Qutb-ud-Din. This Minar is a 242 feet high grand specimen of the Turkish architectural style. He got a new mosque constructed at Ajmer. He got many roads constructed. In addition to being a patron of art, he was also a patron of scholars. He gave patronage to Minhaf-us-Siraj Ruhani who was the author of *Tabqai-I-Nasiri*, *Malik Tajuddin Rewaz*, etc.

4.2.3 Balban

Balban, like Iltutmish, was an Ilbari Turk. His grandfather was the head of about 10,000 families of Ilbari Turks. It shows that he was born in a high family. In his childhood only he fell into the hands of the Mongols who sold him at the hands of Khwaja Jamaluddin, a merchant of Basra. Jamaluddin gave him good education and in AD 1232, sold him to Iltutmish. He progressed on the basis of his merit and became first the personal servant of the Sultan and, later on, a member of the organization of Turkish nobles named the Forty. Impressed by his ability, Iltutmish married his daughter to Balban. Sultan Razia appointed him on the important post of Amir-i-Shinkar (Lord of the Hunt). Bahram Shah assigned to him the Jagirs of Rewari and Hansi. In the time of Sultan Masud Shah, Balban impressed everybody by his ability in driving out the Mongols. In collision with the other members of the Fort, Balban dismissed Masud and in AD 1246, seated Nasir ad-Din Mahmud on the throne. This Sultan appointed Balban to the post of Chief minister

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(Wakil or Naib-i-Mumlikat) in AD 1249 i.e. three years after his accession. Nasir ad-Din Mahmud gave all the powers to Balban but put two conditions on him:

- (i) He would not do any such act for which he would be unable to reply before god.
- (ii) He would not do such act which should imperil the prestige of the state.

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Balban's Policy of Blood and Iron

The rigid measures adopted by Balban as the Chief Minister and the Sultan to save the Sultanate and suppress his personal enemies and rivals are known in history as his policy of Blood and Iron. He used his sword to deal with his personal enemies, rebels of the Sultanate, thieves, dacoits and foreign invaders. He made their blood flow in every possible way or suppressed them completely. It can be said that with the exception of that one year (AD 1253-1254) when Rehan was made the Prime Minister in his place, from the time of Nasir ad-Din Mahmud (AD 1246-1266) to his own reign period (AD 1266-186) i.e. a time span of about 40 years, he almost followed this very policy and protected the Delhi Sultanate by this policy. To understand his policy of Blood and Iron, it is proper to study in detail the rebels and opponents whom he suppressed.

Balban as a chief minister

- (i) **Suppression of the Khokhars:** The Khokhars had caused terror in the hilly cities of Jhalandhar and Jhelum by their acts of loot and plunder. Balban proceeded against them as the head of a big army in AD 1246, defeated them and annexed the entire area in the Delhi Sultanate. Minhaj-us-Siraj writes in this context that he just overturned that hilly area on the basis of the strength of his sword. He massacred the rebels in such big numbers that they cannot be counted.
- (ii) **Rigid policy towards the insurgent Hindus of Doab and Rajasthan:** He followed a rigid policy towards the insurgent Hindu rulers and leaders in the Ganges-Yamuna Doab. After a fierce battle in the Tohsandah fort near Kanauj, they were conquered. The rebels of Kara and Kalijer were also suppressed likewise. The Rajputs of Mewat, Gwalior, Ranthambhore, Chanderi, Malwa etc. were also suppressed rigidly. He created a confidence among the people by suppressing the Mewat is inhabiting the vicinity of Delhi who had created terror, thereby plundering the area. The Sultan was very happy and honoured him with the title of 'Utlugh Khan'.
- (iii) **Suspension and re-employment of Balban and suppression of the rebels by him:** The increasing power of Balban was inimical to those Turkish chiefs who wanted to maintain their influence on the administration by taking advantage of the fact that Nasir ad-Din was young and inexperienced. They organized a plot under the leadership of Imadduddin Rehan (leader of the Hindu converts and the Indian Muslim faction) and made the Sultan agree to dismiss Balban from the post of the Chief Minister. In his place, Imadduddin Rehan was appointed. Balban left this post but quietly organized his supporters. Soon after he succeeded in winning over some of his supporters and the Sultan again gave him the post of Wakil-i-Mumlikat. Rehan was appointed the ruler of Badayun. Balban made efforts to keep these rebels farther and farther away from Delhi. Rehan was transferred from Badayun to Bahareech. Another rebel Turkish chief Kultugh Khan was sent to Oudh. He soon after raised the banner or revolt against the Sultan. Balban suppressed even this revolt very severely. Other rivals were also done away with through proper or improper means. In AD 1265 Sultan Mahmud died. Some

historians say that Balban prisoned and also murdered him. In AD 1260, he became Sultan under the name of Bahauddin Balban. With his accession started the period of a powerful central Government.

Balban as a sultan

Though Balban had exercised great power as the Prime Minister of the Delhi Sultanate and had completely dominated the administration, when he became Sultan he was welcomed by all classes of people. Still, he had to face many difficulties. Probably because he solved these problems with a severity, that could enable him to lay claim to being the best among the Ilbari Sultans of Delhi. He had to face the following problems:

- (i) **Problem of looseness of the Sultanate:** After Iltumish's death there was indiscipline and disorder everywhere because of the incapability of the Sultans, ambitions of the selfish nobles and the aspiration of more and more power by the 'Forty'. Thus, Balban had the problem of how to tackle this looseness of the empire.
- (ii) **Increasing the prestige of the office of the Sultan:** Balban had to somehow increase the glory and prestige of the office of the Sultan so that the Amirs considered him above them and behave accordingly.
- (iii) **Problem of empty treasury:** Because of recurrent rebellions in various parts of the empire, a large part of revenue was being spent on the army. Because of the independent attitude of the provincial officials of the far-flung parts of the empire and because of the Guerilla warfare by the Hindus of Mewat, Katechar and Doab, the revenue of the state was being increasingly diminished. So, one of the major problems before Balban was of an empty treasury.
- (iv) **Problem of the 'Forty':** Balban, though himself a member of the 'Forty', had witnessed in the last thirty years that this organization was doing less constructive and more destructive work for the Sultanate. Though as chief minister of Nasir ad-Din Mahmud, he had placed a check on the power of majority of the Amirs, they could still become a danger for him and the Sultanate by reorganizing themselves any time.
- (v) **Problem of Hindu chiefs and landlords:** Though Balban had suppressed many Hindu rebels in the vicinity of Delhi, still they had not forsaken their activities of plundering the royal treasure and many a time forcibly depriving the people of their jewellery etc. Delay in their suppression could present a serious danger to the safety of the Sultanate.
- (vi) **Problem of the Mongols:** Besides above mentioned internal problems, Balban had to face the problem of the Mongols as well. They had crossed the Indus and had appointed their deputies in parts of Sind and the Punjab. Balban had a major problem of dealing with the Mongols.

Balban as Problem Solver

Balban had a belief that the internal and foreign problems can be solved by enhancing the prestige and honour of the royal office and he constantly strived to achieve it through various means as follows:

- (i) He propagated the idea of Divine right in the Sultanate.
- (ii) To further strengthen his claim to the throne he gave out that he was the successor of the legendary Afrasiad.

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- (iii) He projected himself as the foremost among all nobles and permitted only the Amirs of a high lineage to see him.
- (iv) He did not let anybody share his power.
- (v) He gradually ended the power of the 'Forty' and poisoned one of the members of the group named Sher Khan. He rigidly enforced law and order and severely punished the rulers of Badayun and Oudh on the charge that they had ill-treated their slaves.
- (vi) He spread a net of spies and increased his control over them. The spy who failed to perform his duty was done to death.
- (vii) He made his life simple, disciplined. He used to appear in the royal court in the royal attire attended by his bodyguards. He neither joked with anybody in the court nor did he allow anybody else to do it.
- (viii) He decorated his court lavishly like that of the Shah of Iran.
- (ix) He started the practice of Sijda. All such efforts led to increase in the prestige of the Sultan and the looseness in the empire was almost ended.

Suppression of the rebels of Mewat, Oudh and Katehar

- (i) **Mewat:** First of all, Balban suppressed the rebels of Mewat. With a big army, he encircled their hold, a vast forest and making way through the forest, they were either murdered or sold as slaves. About a lakh Mewatis were murdered. Balban constructed a strong fort at Gopalgiri and appointed loyal soldiers there so that in the future, the Mewatis could be dealt with easily.
- (ii) **Oudh:** After dealing with the rebels of Mewat, he turned his attention towards Oudh. He divided it into many areas, assigned each area to a separate official, and ordered them that forests should be cleared and roads should be constructed to end the basis of the rebels. Following the policy of Blood and Iron, thousands were done to death. The posts of the Afghan soldiers were set up in Bhojpur, Patiali and Kampil. They had to help in the revenue collection and maintain peace and order.
- (iii) **Katehar:** There was a revolt in Katehar under the leadership of the Rajputs. Balban proceeded to suppress it. The colonies of the rebels were burnt. Women and children were imprisoned and all the males (above 9 years of age) were done to death. According to Barani, so many rebels were murdered in Katehar that their smell extended as far as the Ganges.

Balban and Turkish Amirs and Officials

- (i) **Sher Khan:** Balban summoned the Governor of the frontier province to the court because he was said to be hatching a conspiracy with the Mongols. When he dilly dawdled for 4 years, he was poisoned to death. He dismissed Tatar Khan of Bengal and in his place appointed Tughril Beg as the ruler of that place. It proved that in a distant province like Bengal also, Balban had a complete control.
- (ii) **Tughril Beg:** for many years, he ruled in Bengal peacefully but hearing of Balban's sudden illness in AD 1279 and also the news of his pre-occupation with the Mongols in the North-West frontier, Tughril Beg suddenly revolted. He declared himself the Sultan of Lakhnauti. Balban at first sent the ruler of Oudh, Amin Khan to suppress his revolt. He was unable to suppress the revolt so he was done to

death. Next, an army was sent under Tirmati who was likewise killed when he proved unable to conquer Tughril Beg. Then Balban himself proceeded to Bengal to deal with the rebel. Tughril Beg was so terrified that at the news of the approach of Sultan, he ran away to the jungles of East Bengal. After establishing his control over Lakhnauti, Sultan hunted Tughril Beg in the forests and got him beheaded. For two miles in the market town of Lakhnauti, Sultan got the hanging ropes swung and all the supporters of Tughril Beg were hanged. Historian Barani writes that this massacre continued for two-three days and even the on lookers were intensely terrified. Balban appointed his son Bugra Khan as the ruler of Bengal. Every Amir of the group of 'The Forth' was insulted before the public, so that his prestige should be finished completely.

Control over the Amirs and Jagirdars

To set the financial situation of the state right, Balban not only arranged to collect the revenues rigidly but also increased his control over the Amirs and Jagirdars. He put an end to the tradition of hereditary control over the Jagirs and the Jagirs in control of the old, the women or minors were taken under government possession. He issued orders that whichever Jagirdar or Iqtadar did not obey the instructions given to him, his Jagir would be confiscated.

Separation of religion and politics

Undoubtedly, Balban was a devotee Muslim and very religious. But he wanted to restrict the Ulemas only to the religious sphere. Therefore, he issued instructions to Ulemas that he would not tolerate their interference in the sphere of politics at all.

Solution of the problem of Mongols

The pressure of the Mongols was increasing during the time of Balban. He took many successful measures to withstand the invasion of Mongols. After poisoning the governor of the North-West Frontier Province to death, he gave the responsibility of the defence of the frontier to his sons- Muhammad and Tatar Khan. The fort of Lahore was strengthened, many forts were constructed at other necessary places and the old forests were repaired. He reorganized the army. A loyal official called Imadulmulk was appointed as the Diwan-I-Arz or chief military official. Probably Balban started the practices of branding the horses and writing the description (*Hulia*) of the soldiers. He got the forts of Bhatinda, Sunam and Sammana repaired and posted a powerful army over there so that the Mongols could be check mated at the other bank of river Viyas only. He sent his ambassador to Halaku and his ambassador at Delhi was accorded a grand welcome. In AD 1285 when the Mongols invaded India, Balban's son Muhammad frustrated their invasion successfully. But he died in the campaign. Probably Balban's own death in AD 1289 was caused largely due to the grief and shock of the death of his son.

Character and Achievements of Balban - An Assessment

Assessment of the achievements and failures of Balban as a ruler
Balban was a rigid and despotic ruler. He increased the glory and prestige of the office of the Sultan. He not only adopted a serious attitude befitting a king but also laid down rules for the Amirs visiting his court. He did not allow anybody to indulge in cutting jokes etc. in the court. He himself appeared in the court in a full royal dress. He organized a

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powerful army. He recruited young, able and experienced soldiers in the place of old, and incapable soldiers who were expelled from the army. He appointed his trusted official Imadulmulk as Diwan-I-Arz and kept him free of the control of the Wazir in religious matters. He took personal interest in the recruitment of soldiers. He thought it fit to give cash salary to military and civil officials both. Though he could not end the Iqta system he gave a special attention to the construction and repair to the forts. He was careful in the matter of weapons. As an able ruler, he suppressed all the rebels be they Hindu or Turk or non-Turkish Muslim. He distributed an equal justice to everybody. According to Barani 'Balban considered justice to be the highest responsibility of administration'. This was a characteristic of his despotic rule, which must have earned for him the sympathy, and praise of the common people.

He gave an appropriate punishment to the jagirdar of Badayun, Malik Baq for stripping his servant to death. Likewise, the governor of Oudh, Haibat Khan was so ordered to be killed on the charge of his having murdered one of his slaves. Though the Governor saved his life by paying 20,000 gold Mohar to the wife of the dead slave. These events prove the statement of Barani that Balban showed no favour to his relatives, colleagues or servants as far as justice was concerned. Like an able ruler, he organized an efficient spy system. If imbued by greed or fear, any spy who tried to hide anything he was killed. When the spy posted in Badayun did not convey to the Sultan the news of the Governor Malik Baq having killed one of his servants by stripping him, the spy was hanged at the entrance gate of Badaun city. Balban himself went to inspect the work of the officials of many places visiting them on the pretext of hunting.

Undoubtedly, he himself fully followed the policy of Blood and Iron as a ruler. He gave to the people justice, peace and order. But even he could not defend the Northern frontier of India completely from the onslaughts of the Mongols. Besides adopting a narrow outlook, if we accept the statement of Barani made in *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shah* about Balban that whenever he saw any men belonging to a mean birth his eyes burnt with anger, his hands reached his swords to kill him. We would have to agree that Balban's not appointing the non-Turks on high offices was followed by a policy of making the basis of administration narrow which led to a discontent among the people which became manifested in the revolts occurring after Balban's death. The increase in the prestige of royal authority brought about by Balban was based not on public welfare but on army, espionage system and terror.

Balban was not handsome. He was quite ugly. Undoubtedly, he was despotic and severe as a ruler but personally, he was liberal and kind. He loved his family very much. Like a foresighted father, he did not want to see a civil war amongst his children. Therefore, he declared his son Muhammad as his successor but when he died in AD 1285 fighting the Mongols, Balban also died the next year, grief-stricken. He wanted to make his second son Bugra Khan as his successor but when the latter returned to Bengal without taking any permission, Balban decided to make Kaikhsro, the son of Muhammad and his own grandson as his successor, who was engaged at that time in the task of defence of the frontier region.

He not only loved the people of his family but also loved the poor and needy. He gave an example of his kindness by giving all sorts of help to the refugees coming from Central Asia. He was a devout follower of religion. He followed the religious instructions as far as possible.

He offered Namaz regularly and observed Rozas in the days of Ramzan. He gave up wine and luxuries after becoming the Sultan. He never disrespected the Ulemas

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though he did not permit them to interfere in politics. He respected poet Amir Khusru who lived in his court. He also patronized the famous poet Amir Hassan. But his patronage was limited to the higher classes only. That is why he did not give any high posts to the majority of Indian Muslims and did not even consent to meet or exchange gifts with the lower classes.

Balban as a commander and conqueror

Balban was a great commander and a brave soldier. He earned fame in the army of Sultan Masud Shah. As a brave Commander, he defeated the famous Mongol leader, Mangu. While working as a Chief Minister under the Sultan nasiruddin Mahmud also, he suppressed many revolts. He suppressed the Hindu rebels of Doab Meus of Mewat and the Rajputs of Kanauj, Ranthambhore and Gwalior. The revolt of many Muslim officials was also suppressed e.g. Izuddin in Nagore (AD 125) Subedar of Oudh Kuttulugh Khan (AD 1255) and, later on the revolt of the Governor of Sind, kishlu Khan. In AD 1257, he foiled the invasion of the Mongols under Nuin Sari. After becoming the Sultan, he reorganized the army. He increased the pay of the army, gave them good ration, uniform and weapons. In order to bring the corruption in the army to an end, he started the practice of branding the horses and writing the descriptive rolls of the soldiers. He repaired the old forts and constructed new ones. He suppressed the dacoits, rebels and plunderers of Mewat.

The rebels of the Doab were suppressed mercilessly when they revolted the second time. He cleared the Mongols. He got the forts of the rebels broken, constructed police posts at many places and posted Afghan soldiers there. He suppressed the rebellion in Kampil, Patiali and Bhojpur, got the rebels of Katehar killed in large numbers so much so that according to Barani the smell reached as far as the Ganges. When he proceeded himself to suppress the Subedar of Bengal, Tughril Beg, he ran away before the approach of the Sultan. The Sultan reached him and killed him, though it took him about six years to suppress the revolt of Tughril Beg and had to recruit two lakh more untrained soldiers. Not only that, even as a commander he could not protect the western frontiers of the empire from the Mongols completely and also he was quite unsuccessful in conquering Ranthambore and Gwalior. It is said that the Bhatti Rajputs inhabiting Mewat succeeded in freeing Bayana from the Turkish hold. Actually, generally he believed more in consolidating the frontiers of the Sultanate rather than excluding their empire and it can be said undoubtedly that he was successful in most of his military expeditions.

Place of Balban in history

Balban was the best among the Ilbari Turks and the Slave Sultans though historians like Wolsey Haig have described Iltutmish as the real founder of the Muslim rule in India and the greatest sultan of the Slave dynasty. But their opinion seems to be partly correct and partly wrong. Undoubtedly, Iltutmish was the real founder of the Muslim rule in India.

He suppressed the rebels of the Sultanate and extended the Delhi Sultanate by conquering new areas. But he was not the greatest of the rulers of the Sultanate. Famous historian P.S. Sharma has rightly said that it could be agreed that Iltutmish was the founder of the Delhi Sultanate but it would be an exaggeration to consider him the greatest sultan of the Delhi Sultanate. This epithet should be reserved for Balban only. If one tries to sum up all Balban's achievements in one word, it can be said to be 'consolidation'. He did whatever he considered proper for its consolidation during his twenty years as the Sultan. Not only did he defend the frontier of the Sultanate and

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preserved its dignity but even after his lifetime he tried to maintain its glory and consideration. Dr. Ishwari Prasad has written correctly about Balban that as a great soldier, ruler and politician, Balban prevented the rising Muslims state from destruction. In fact, if a Sultan of determination, experience and talent was not there on the throne of Delhi, it was difficult that the existence of Delhi Sultanate would have been preserved. He considered it his primary duty to indulge in the public welfare activity. The basic principles of his *king ship* were peace and order. After his death, though his dynasty came to an early end but the Delhi Sultanate continued for years. On adopting and extending the policies of Balban, Allauddin became a successful and great ruler. In fact, the achievements of Khilji dynasty were possible only because of the system established by Balban. Balban was not only the ablest Sultan of his dynasty but also the forerunner of a great Sultan like Alauddin Khilji.

Balban's Theory of Kingship

Balban was probably the only Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate who expressed his ideas about kingship in detail. Whenever he got the opportunity, he said something or the other about the high office and responsibility of the ruler. This act by Balban is attributed to many causes:

- (i) Balban believed that the only way to face the internal or the external dangers was to increase the prestige and power of the Sultan.
- (ii) He repeated his ideas of kingship repeatedly and instructed his sons in order to establish the crown on a high level.
- (iii) He had seen how the members of the Forty and the Turkish Amirs were busy in mutual quarrels, opposition and intrigues during the period of Iltutmish's successors. In fact, he thought it essential to put an end to all the possibilities of opposition from and the conflict with the nobility.

Balban's chief principles of kingship

- (i) **Royal descent:** Because Balban knew very well that people believed at that time that it was only the prerogative of royal and ancient royal families to rule and exercise power, he declared that he was the descendant of the popular Turkish warrior Afrasiyab. The opinion of scholars like Habibulla was that since Balban was never free from slavery so he took this step to wash off this blemish. According to him, knowing that he lacked a hereditary claim on the throne, he proclaimed himself the descendant of the legendary Turkish warrior Afrasiyab in order to increase his prestige.
- (ii) **Divine theory of kingship:** To increase the prestige of kingship, Balban said that king was the representative of god on this earth (*Hiyabat-I-Khudai*). He repeatedly proclaimed it before his Maliks and the Amirs, majority of whom had been his colleagues, that kingship was a divine institution. Prof. Habib and Nizami say that he did this in order to wash on the blemish of being the murderer of the king from his head. According to Balban, king was the replica of God or *Zill-I-Allah* and his heart is a repository of a divine inspiration. He did this to make the Amirs believe that he had the crown or the kingship not through their mercy but through the mercy of God. He could guise his rigidity and despotism only by means of this religious proclamation of his.
- (iii) **Difference between descendants of noble lineage and commoners:** Balban always stressed the difference between the descendants of royal lineage and the

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commoners. Probably, that is why he accepted only the members of the high families on the offices of prestige in his reign. Historian Ziauddin Barani has said in his work *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* about Balban having said that whenever he saw a man of low birth, his eyes started burning with anger and his hands reached his sword to murder him. We should not repose much confidence on this opinion of Barani because we do not have any solid proof about it. Moreover, Barani himself was the supporter of the noble Turks and whatever else be the case, this saying definitely showed that Balban did not possess good attitude towards the non-Turks. It is said that because of this outlook, he dismissed all the officials not born in the noble families from the important posts.

- (iv) **A grand court essential for the prestige of kingship:** Balban also believed that it was necessary for the effect and prestige of the kingship that the royal court should be grand. He decorated his court on the Persian pattern. He enforced Persian etiquette and formality in his court. His personal attendants also never saw him without royal attire, socks or crown. Whenever he went out, his bodyguards went with him taking naked swords in their hands.
- (v) **Appearance of dignity and prestige was also essential for kingship:** Balban thought that the appearance of dignity and prestige was essential for increasing the prestige of the Sultanate. He prohibited dance, music, wine drinking, etc., in the social gathering. Even for the Amirs and the high officials, he made the practice of *Sizda* and *Pabos* compulsory (kneeling before the Sultan and kissing his feet). Though these practices and appearances were non-Islamic, yet Balban enforced them so that he could lessen the influence of the Turkish Sirdars. Mr. Satish Chandra is of the opinion that the people or the Amirs did not dare oppose it because when Balban was imposing these non-Islamic customs, at that time because of the invasion of Mongols, most of the Islamic states of central and Western Asia had come to an end and Balban and Delhi Sultanate had come to be looked upon as the leader of Islam.
- (vi) **Following Persian tradition:** It is said that Balban believed that the glory of kingship was not possible without the Persian traditions and he followed those traditions carefully in his personal and public life. Whereas, he had named his sons born before his accession as Muhammad after becoming the Sultan he named his grandsons after the Persian kings as *Qaiqubad* and *Kai Khusrau*.
- (vii) **Recognition of tripartite relationship:** Balban wanted to make as the basis of kingship the tripartite relation between God, ruler and the people. According to the description of Barani, it can be said that he had advised his sons Muhammad and Bugra Khan to do this and said that the Sultan should exercise his authority fearing God keeping the welfare of the public in mind. The Sultan should exercise his power at appropriate occasions. On one occasion when his son Muhammad had come after suppressing the revolt of Bengal, Balban told him that when he ascended the throne he should consider himself as a representative of God and keep his desires under control. The money of the treasury should be spent for public welfare only. Balban had followed these principles himself. He gave up drinking after the becoming the Sultan. He gave patronage and help to the scholars and the poor as far as possible.
- (viii) **Justice is the highest responsibility of the ruler:** According to Balban, impartial justice and severe punishment was the highest responsibility of the ruler. He gave practical shape to this principle and earned the *Iqtadars* of *Badayun* and

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Oudh. But he never cared about justice, honesty and Shariat in the case of a quarrel between the state and an individual.

- (ix) **Contact with the Caliph:** Another important principle of Balban's theory of kingship was that he stressed the formal recognition from the Caliph in his exercise of power. Even after knowing about the demise of the Caliph of Baghdad, he inscribed the name of dead Khalifa in his coins and read the Khutba in his name only. In brief, the theory of kingship of Balban was based upon power and justice. Balban not only restored the lost prestige of the Delhi Sultanate but also gave justice, strength and order to the people. His theory of kingship even though could not keep his dynasty safe but it consolidated the Delhi Sultanate which helped Allaudin Khilji to achieve many successes.

4.3 KHILJIS: ALAUDIN KHILJI

Allaudin Khilji's original name was Ali Gurshasp. After plotting to murder his uncle, he assumed the title of Abul Muzaffar Sultan Allaudin-duniya-va-din Muhammad Shah Khilji. Among the rulers of the Sultanate in early medieval India, Allaudin occupies an honourable place both as a conqueror and as an administrator. Allaudin's administrative policy and system is discussed in detail in Unit 4 of the book.

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

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

As a person, Allaudin was cruel and selfish. He was devoid of the instinct of love and observed no morality. His only aim in life was to achieve success and he was always prepared to adopt any means to achieve it. 'The end justifies the means' remained his principle. He murdered his benefactor and uncle Jalaluddin, imprisoned and blinded all his sons, and captured the throne. He kept all the *Jalali* nobles in good humour till they were useful to him, but as soon as their utility was over, he cruelly finished them all. He started the practice of killing the wives and children of those nobles who revolted against him. He constructed towers of skulls of the Mongols and either killed their wives and children or sold them as slaves. Jalaluddin killed thousands of 'new Muslims' merely on suspicion and gave their wives and daughters to the murderers of their husbands and fathers. Thus, his punishments against those who opposed him were barbaric. Allaudin neither loved his wives, nor his children whose education and care he always neglected. He possessed no virtue like generosity, kindness and tolerance. Whomsoever he disliked,

Check Your Progress

1. Whom did Ali Mardan Khilji murder to set himself up as the ruler of Bengal?
2. In which battle did Iltutmish defeat Yalduz?
3. Whom did Balban drive out during the reign of Sultan Masud Shah?

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he finished. He was jealous and never permitted anyone to enhance his power and respect. He never allowed anybody to influence him and nobody dared to give him frank advice, except perhaps his friend, Kotwal Ala-ud-Mulk. Allaudin believed that power and authority could be maintained only by maintaining strict discipline, creating awe and fear among all by pursuing a policy of bloodshed and severe punishments. That is why V. A. Smith has placed him among the crude and oppressive rulers. He wrote, 'In reality, he was a real savage tyrant with very little regard for justice and his reign, though marked by the conquest of Gujarat, and many successful raids, like the storming of the two great fortresses, was exceedingly disgraceful in many respects.'

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

Allaudin was an imperialist. Dr A.L. Srivastava has regarded him as the first Turkish empire-builder in India. Allaudin's conquest of the rest of India was a marvellous achievement particularly in view of the fact that the Mongols were constantly attacking India at that time with a view to capture its territory. The Mongols attacked India in 1298, 1299, 1305 and 1306, and all times were defeated by Allaudin's army. Allaudin extended the frontiers of his empire as much as could be possible and where he did not annex the territory, he forced the rulers to accept his suzerainty. Dr A.L. Srivastava writes, 'Allaudin successfully accomplished this two-fold task. This alone entitles this Khilji ruler to be placed higher than that occupied by any of his predecessors in the thirteenth century. He may, therefore, rightly be called the first Turkish emperor of India.' Allaudin conquered large parts of North India and except one, forced all the rulers of South India to accept his suzerainty. No Turkish Sultan of Delhi could achieve it and the Tughlaqs who followed them could achieve it only after a hard and continuous struggle. Thus, the conquest of India by Allaudin was his unique achievement.

Allaudin was an all-powerful monarch. Despotism reached its highest mark during his reign. He concentrated all powers of the State in his hands. His ministers, nobles, military commanders and administrative officers were all his subordinates. They simply

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obeyed his orders and carried out his wishes. Alauddin succeeded not only in suppressing all the revolts which were attempted during his reign and destroyed the power and influence of the nobility, but even sapped the resources of their power and influence. Neither the provincial governors nor his subjects dared to revolt against him. Some revolts were attempted only during the beginning of his reign. Afterwards, we find no trace of them. The commands of Alauddin were obeyed without murmur within the entire boundary of his empire. Besides, he succeeded in providing complete security and peace to his subjects. Firishta writes, 'Justice was executed with such rigour that robbery and theft, formerly so common, were not heard of in the land. The traveller slept secure on the highway and the merchants carried their commodities safely from the sea of Bengal to the mountains of Kabul and from Telingana to Kashmir.' Alauddin also did not allow the Muslim *Ulema* to interfere in the affairs of the State. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who did not allow religion to interfere in administrative and political affairs. Of course, his policy towards the Hindus was oppressive, but its primary cause was not religion but politics. He felt that the Hindus could not stop revolting against him unless their social and economic power was destroyed.

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

Alauddin was an ambitious ruler. However, he was a practical statesman as well. He realized the limitations of his ambitions. At one time, he dreamt to conquer the entire world and also to start a new religion. But he gave up these ideas because he could not realize their absurdity. Again, he did not annex the territories of the vanquished rulers of the South because he realized that it was difficult to keep under control the states of the South from such a distant place as Delhi. On the contrary, he honoured Ramchandra Deva of Devagiri and Veera Ballala of the Hoysala Kingdom so much so that they helped him in his conquest of the South. Alauddin was also good judge of circumstances and could calculate his course of action well. He could be diplomatic, shrewd or conspiring at one time, and chivalrous at other times. His aim was always to achieve his objective. Therefore, he changed his course of action according to circumstances and that was one primary cause of his success practically in all fields.

As an individual, Alauddin was a follower of Islam—he had faith in religion and respected religious people. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Mohammad Shamsuddin Turk were always respected by him. Although himself an illiterate, yet, he was a patron of learning and fine arts. Most of the known scholars of his age had assembled at his court. Amir Khusrav and Amir Hasan of Delhi were patronised by him. During his reign, Delhi

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became the rival of Cairo and the equal of Constantinople. He also constructed many good buildings including the Fort of Siri, Palace of one thousand pillars called *hazar situn* and many mosques, tanks and sarais (rest houses for travellers). His Alai Darwaza, which is an extension of the Qutbi mosque in Delhi, has been regarded as one of the best specimens of early Turkish architecture.

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

Therefore, with all these weaknesses, Alauddin Khilji occupies an important place among the rulers of medieval India. Most of the modern historians have given him a high place among rulers of Indian medieval history. Dr A. L. Srivastava concludes, 'A balanced view of Alauddin's work and achievement must give him a high place among the rulers of Delhi during the medieval age.' Dr S. Roy who stated that it was difficult to correctly assess the personality and character of Alauddin, however writes, 'Ala-ud-din was the first Muslim administrator of India. The history of the Muslim empire and Muslim administration in India really begins with him. Ala-ud-din, Sher Shah, and Akbar - each mark a distinctive step in the evolution of Indo-Muslim history.' E. B. Havell also has all praise for him. He has opined, 'Ala-ud-din was far advanced of his age.' In his reign of twenty years there are many parallels with the events of our own time.'

A Look at Alauddin's Successes and Policies

After he took over the throne after murdering his uncle, Alauddin's primary task was to consolidate his position on the throne. He lavishly distributed wealth among his subjects so that they soon forget his cruel deed of murdering his uncle, father-in-law and benefactor Jalaluddin Khalji. He also assigned important posts to his loyalists.

Early on in his reign, the Mongols invaded his kingdom in 1298 and 1299; but both the invasions were repulsed. Next Alauddin punished all those Jalali nobles who had joined him because of the temptation of wealth. Many of them were blinded or imprisoned and their wealth was confiscated. But nobles like Malik Qutb-ud-Din Aibak, Malik Nasruddin and Malik Amir Jalal Khilji were not punished because they had refused to take money while joining the side of Alauddin. Thus, Alauddin finished all claimants to the throne and those nobles who could prove disloyal to him at a later time.

Alauddin proved an ambitious and capable ruler. He formed ambitious schemes for administration and the extension of the empire. He was so much encouraged by his success and conquests that he assumed the title of Sikandar-e-saani, i.e., the second Alexander. He also had it recited in the khutba and superscribed it on his coins.

Alauddin conquered almost whole of north India and brought almost all rulers of south India under his suzerainty which was not even thought of by the earlier Mamluk

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Sultans. He also carried despotism to the extreme and established absolute monarchical rule in India for which Sultan Iltutmish had aspired, Raziya Sultana had failed in accomplishing and Sultan Balban had only partially succeeded. Alauddin succeeded in every field. The only limitation was that his success was limited only up to his lifetime and he failed in establishing an enduring empire of his dynasty.

Theory of Kingship

Alauddin Khilji was the first Sultan of Delhi who did not pursue Islamic principles in matters of the State. He acted as the ultimate and absolute monarch and with unlimited powers and believed that the Sultan was above all, and that all powers of the state emanate from him. Above all, he had all the capability to act as an absolute monarch. Dr K. S. Lal writes, 'in a word, like Louis XIV of France, Alauddin Khilji regarded himself to be all in all in the state. During his reign, there was centralisation of the administration and despotism touched its highest mark.'

Policy towards Hindus

Historians have different views regarding the policy of Alauddin Khilji towards Hindus. We understand that his treatment of Hindus mostly by his policy of taxation, particularly revenue, as it affected mostly Hindus. Dr U. N. Dey has said that the taxation policy of Alauddin was comparatively not severe, though of course it destroyed the prosperity of the Hindus and peasants. This aspect will be taken up in detail in Unit 4 of the book.

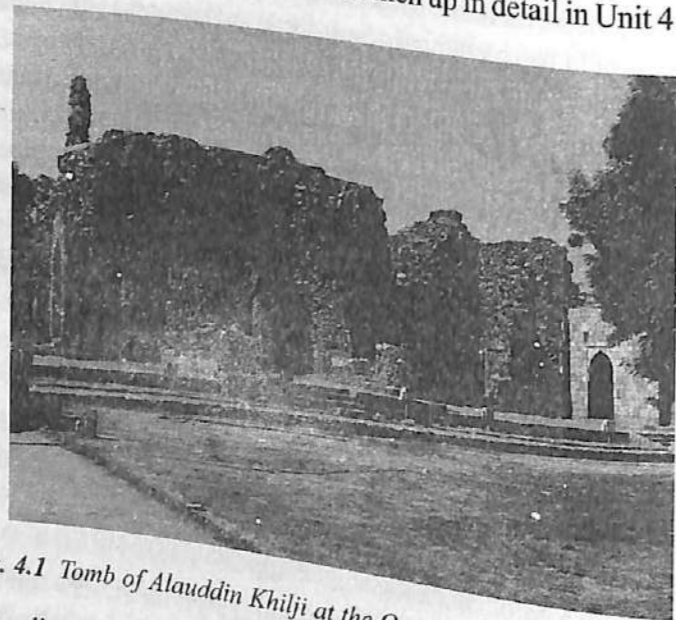


Fig. 4.1 Tomb of Alauddin Khilji at the Qutub Minar Complex in Delhi

Source: Wikipedia

Alauddin's assessment in points:

- He rose from a non-entity to one of the greatest rulers of medieval India.
- As a person, he was cruel and selfish and devoid of the instinct of love and observed absolutely no morality.
- However, he was a brave soldier, most capable military commander, a shrewd diplomat, a great conqueror, a successful administrator and a powerful and ambitious Sultan.
- The history of Muslim empire and Muslim administration really begins with the reign of Alauddin Khilji.

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- Historian E. B. Havell has opined that 'Alauddin was far more advanced of his time. In his reign of twenty years, there are many parallels with the events of our own time.'

4.4 TUGHLAQ: MUHAMMAD-BIN-TUGHLAQ, FIROZ SHAH TUGHLAQ

The Khilji Dynasty was replaced by the Tughlaq dynasty in 1321, when Ghazi Malik assumed the throne under the title of Ghiyath al-Din or Ghiyasuddin. The Tughlaqs were a Muslim family of Turkic origin. Their rule relied on their alliances with Turkic, Afghan and other Muslim warriors from outside South Asia. In this section, you will learn about the history of the Tughlaq dynasty, with special reference to Muhammad Bin Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq — the two illustrious rulers of the dynasty.

4.4.1 Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

Three days after the death of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, Prince Juna Khan (Ulugh Khan) declared himself the Sultan of Delhi under the title Muhammad Bin Tughlaq (Figure 4.2). After a period of 40 days, one morning he decided to celebrate his coronation in Delhi. According to medieval writer Isami, he assured the people that he would follow the footsteps of his father. He distributed gold and silver coins in the public and many titles among the *Amirs*. Muhammad Tughlaq's reign started and ended with many changes and revolts.



Fig. 4.2 Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

Many Invasions and Revolts

Important invasions and revolts during the reign of Bin Tughlaq are described as follows:

Revolt of Bahauddin Garshasp (AD 1326–1327)

The first revolt against Muhammad Tughlaq was planned by his cousin Bahauddin Garshasp, who was the Governor of Sagar. The Sultan ordered Khawaja Jahan to move from Gujarat as the head of his army and he himself proceeded towards Devgiri. Garshasp was defeated and sought refuge with the Hindu ruler of Kampilya. Probably, even the ruler of Kampilya was defeated and forced to hand over Bahauddin Garshasp to Khawaja Jahan. Bahauddin's skin was stuffed and he was taken for a round of the entire empire.

Check Your Progress

4. What was Alauddin Khilji's original name?
5. Who conquered Chittor?

Such a severe punishment was perhaps given by Muhammad Tughlaq keeping in view that it would deter the people from revolting in the future.

Invasion of Tarmashirin (AD 1326–1327)

Just after a few months of the accession of Muhammad Tughlaq, there was the invasion of Mongol leader Tarmashirin. According to medieval writer Farishta, the invasion occurred in AD 1326–1327, whereas another medieval writer Yahiya Bin-Ahmad Sirhindi describes it as having taken place in AD 1328. Probably, the Sultan defeated the Mongols and concurred Kalanaur and Peshawar.

Revolt of Kishlu Khan (AD 1328)

While in Devgiri (which Bin Tughlaq renamed Daulatabad and made his capital), the Sultan heard of the revolt by the Governor of Multan, Kishlu Khan. Ibn Battuta and Yahiya Bin Ahmad Sirhindi attributed two different reasons to this revolt. Moroccan traveller and writer Ibn Battuta says that when the stuffed corpse of Bahauddin Garshasp reached Multan, Kishlu Khan thought it un-Islamic and got him buried. The Sultan did not like this act and ordered him to present himself in his court. He revolted against this. Sirhindi says that Kishlu Khan did not construct a house in the new capital of Daulatabad for his residence there. The Sultan dispatched Ali Khatati to exhort him not to do so. But Kishlu Khan got him murdered. Then Kishlu Khan received summons from the Sultan to present himself before him (i.e., Sultan), and for the fear of punishment, Kishlu Khan revolted. As soon as the Sultan received the news of the revolt, heading a big army from Delhi, he advanced towards Multan. Kishlu Khan could not withstand the attack by the vast army of the Sultan. He was killed in battle and his supports were accorded severe punishments. The Sultan hung the severed head of Kishlu Khan at the gate of the palace where he himself was staying. According to Ibn Battuta, he saw the head still hanging at the gate when he visited India.

Revolt of Ghiyasuddin Bahadur (AD 1330)

Muhammad Tughlaq, after becoming the Sultan, had appointed Ghiyasuddin Bahadur as the ruler of East Bengal (Sonargavan) on the condition that on his coins, he would inscribe Sultan's name and would keep his son as a hostage with the Sultan. Ghiyasuddin Bahadur had been a prisoner at the time of Muhammad Tughlaq's father, Ghiyasuddin. Bahadur kept his other promises but did not send his son as hostage to Delhi on the pretext that his son refused to accept the command of his father. The Sultan sent his brother Bahram Khan, the ruler of Lakhnauti, against Ghiyasuddin Bahadur and dispatched an army to assist him. Ghiyasuddin Bahadur was defeated. The Sultan also got his skin stripped.

Revolt in Kamalpur (Sind) (AD 1332)

According to Ibn Battuta, other revolt in Muhammad Tughlaq's reign occurred because of the intrigues of the Qazi and Khatib of Kamalpur. The revolt was suppressed and the rebel's skin was extracted.

Revolt of Retain in Sehawan (AD 1333)

It is said that Ratan, in order to get some Muslim chiefs, assassinated raised a false alarm about thieves at night and when the Amirs came out, his soldiers killed these

Muslim chiefs. The Sultan sent the Governor of Sind Imadulmulk to seize him and he was subjected to the same treatment as the rebels before him.

Revolt in Mahabar (AD 1335)

Governor of Mahabar Hakim Sayyid Ahsan Shah had declared himself independent. According to another medieval writer Barani, the army which was dispatched from Delhi itself stayed in Mahabar. The historians refer from the statement that probably Ahsan bribed the army to join him. The Sultan then proceeded himself towards Mahabar. In Warrangal, the Sultan as well as his army fell a victim to cholera. Because of a famine in Delhi and Malwa and news of a revolt in Lahore, the Sultan marched back to Delhi. Mahabar became independent and its ruler Ahsan Shah founded an independent empire.

Revolt of Hashing

The Governor of Daulatabad Hashing revolted on hearing a rumour that Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq had died of cholera; however, when he came to know that Sultan was alive, he became very fearful and sought refuge with a Hindu chief who, however, handed him over to the Sultan. Because Hashings had revolted under a delusion, he was pardoned; however, he was relieved of his post of the governorship of Daulatabad and Qutlugh Khan was appointed as its new governor.

Revolt of Hulajun and Gulchandra in Lahore

When the Sultan was in Mahabar, he got the news of the revolt in Lahore. Hulajun Mengol and Gulchandra tried to assassinate the governor of Lahore and set themselves up as the rulers. But Governor of Sind Khwaja Jahan frustrated these attempts of theirs and accorded them death punishment.

Establishment of the Independent Kingdoms of Vijaynagar and Warrangal in the Deccan

It is said that in the region to the South of the Krishna River, two brothers Harihar and Bukka set up the independent kingdom of Vijaynagar when Muhammad Tughlaq marched against Mahabar. They guessed that it was not possible for the Sultan to keep Deccan under control. Probably, in the beginning, they did not call themselves as 'kings'; however, they gradually increased their power. Similarly, in Warrangal, Kanhayya drove away the governor appointed by the Sultan with the help of his supporters.

Revolt of Fakhruddin Mubarakshah in Bengal (AD 1337)

After the death of Ghiyasuddin Bahadur, the new governor of Sonargavn, Fakhruddin Mubarkshah revolted. The Governor of Lakhnauti, Kadir Khan, tried to suppress it but he was killed. The Sultan was busy in relief measures for the victims of famine in the famine stricken areas. As a result, Bengal became independent. Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq issued instructions to the Governor of Oudh, Ainul Mulk, to proceed to Daulatabad as the governor of the place that had revolted but he refused to abide by the orders. Muhammad Tughlaq suppressed this revolt of Oudh.

Figure 4.3 shows the extent of Delhi Sultanate under Muhammad Bin Tughlaq.

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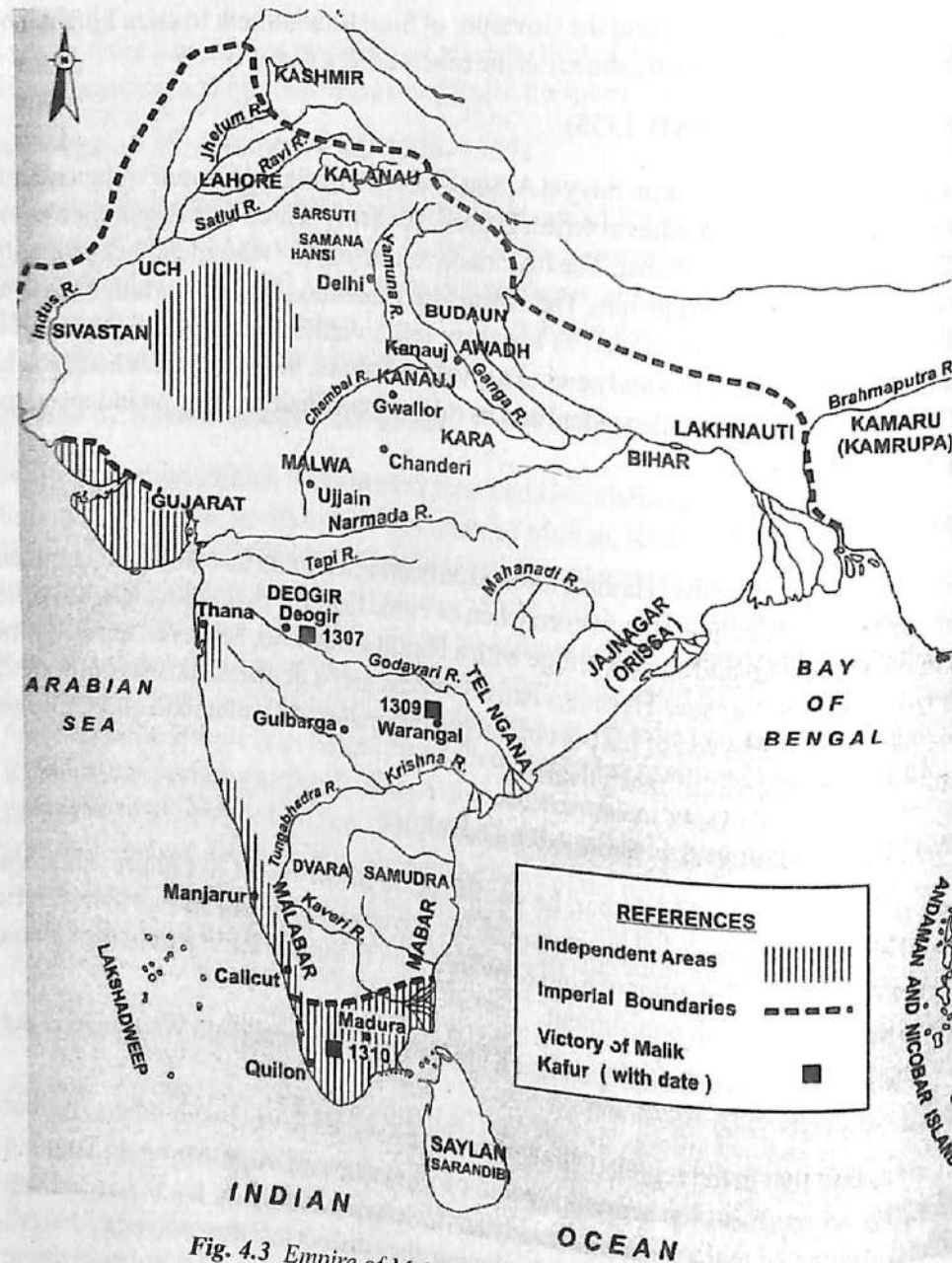


Fig. 4.3 Empire of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq in AD 1335

Revolt in Devgiri

When the Sultan was preoccupied with the rebellions in Northern India, some Muslim Amirs of foreign origin under Ismail Mukh and Hasan Gangu revolted and tried to set up the Bahamini kingdom (AD 1347). The Sultan tried to suppress them but at that very time he received the news of a revolt in Gujarat under Tagi. As soon as the Sultan went away Hasan Gangu became an independent ruler under the title of Allauddin Bahaman Shah (3 August, AD 1342). Thus, the Bahamian Kingdom was founded.

Suppression of Revolt in Gujarat and the Death of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

From Devgiri, the Sultan proceeded towards Gujarat. Tagi was badly defeated and he ran towards Sind for his life. Chasing him, the Sultan reached Thatta (Sind). There he contracted fever and died of it on the 20 March, AD 1351. According to another mediaeval historian Badayuni, 'Thus, the king was freed of his people, and they of their king.'

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Controversial Schemes of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

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

1. Transfer of Devgiri or the transfer of the capital

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

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

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

Nature of transfer of capital

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As with the causes and objectives of the transfer of capital, historians differ also as to the nature of the transfer of capital. Barani says that the Delhi city and its rest houses, neighbouring areas and villages up to 5 km of Delhi were all desolated and not even a cat or a dog in them could be seen alive. This statement of Barani seems to be exaggerated. The desolation of entire city is really unimaginable. In fact, even after the transfer of the capital, Delhi continued to be a densely populated city. The strongest proof of it is that even when Devgiri was made the capital, coins continued to be minted in Delhi and even in the subsequent period contact was maintained between Delhi and Daultabad. Thus, both Delhi and Devgiri continued to be major administrative centres.

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

Consequences

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

2. Use of token currency

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

Causes

- (i) According to Barani, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was very spendthrift. When he wanted to conquer many regions, he was forced to issue copper currency. Though this statement of Barani cannot be accepted in its entirety, it would have to be conceded that the Sultan planned to conquer Khurasan for it, he had collected a vast army and had given it advance salary for one year. This statement of Barani is devoid of any truth that the royal treasury had become absolutely empty because when the people cheated the government by manufacturing fake coins, the Sultan

had given them gold and silver coins from the royal treasury only in return for those fake coins.

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



Fig. 4.4 Coins of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

Under this scheme, Muhammad Tughlaq introduced certain reforms in the already prevalent currency and also issued some new coins (metallic and of certain value). Between AD 1329 and 1330, Muhammad Tughlaq issued copper coins. He also issued a gold coin weighing 201.6 grains, which Ibn Battuta called the Dinar. To make daily transaction easier, the Sultan also issued the Dokani or the Sultan's coin (Figure 4.4). The Sultan declared that the value of the Bronze-Copper mixed coin was equivalent to that of the silver coins and expected that people would accept them as such.

Consequences

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

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

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3. Expedition to Khurasan

According to Barani, 'Sultan Muhammad amassed a huge army of about 3,70,000 horsemen so as to dispatch it for the conquest of Khurashan. In the army, there were also some Rajput soldiers of Doab and some Mongols. The soldiers were given advance cash salary for one year and some of them were accorded Iqtas (land grants) as well. The officials were given huge sums to buy arms etc.' Historians suggest that the Sultan decided on the Khurasan expedition after his friendship with Tarmashirin, the ruler of Transoxiana. It is said that the triple entente lead an expedition against Abu Saiyyad of Khurasan but the expedition could not be dispatched due to a cause. There was a revolt against Tarmashirin and he was deposed. Neither Ibn Battuta nor any other historian mentions about the Khurasan expedition.

Consequences

The army prepared for the Khurashan expedition posed this problem before the Sultan as to what should be done about them. If he disbanded it all at once, it could have led to some problem about law and order. So, the Sultan sent an expedition to Karacheel and a part of the army was sent there. According to modern historians like Gardner Brown, Habib and Nizami, the area of Kulu in Central Himalayan Region in the Kangra district of Kumayun Garwal was called Karacheel. But this expedition of the Sultan was also a failure. An army trained for fighting in the plains could not face the problems of warfare in the hilly areas, including climbing, etc. The rainy season brought with it diseases. Local people attacked the army of Sultan. The rest of the army was disbanded. This led to spread of unemployment amongst the soldiers and the groups discontented with the Sultan. Like the Ulemas, Tughlaq cannot be held fully responsible for the failure of these expeditions but it will have to be considered that he had to face very grave consequences. The government not only suffered nancial loss, but also unpopularity with the people as well.

4. Increase of land revenue in the Doab

The major plans of Sultans mentioned by Barani include the increasing land revenue of the Doab. The Sultan increased the land revenue in the Doab to earn 50 per cent of the produce. Though increasing the revenue cannot be said to be a unique measure, the method used by the Sultan to affect them made the whole scheme ridiculous.

Causes

According to Ishwari Prasad, Muhammad Tughlaq increased the revenue due to two reasons.

- (i) The Sultan needed money to implement his fantastic schemes. The land of the Doab was fertile and the tenants could afford to pay increased revenue.
- (ii) The people of the Doab were rebellious and so the Sultan wanted to punish them.

Nature

Historians are not unanimous about the increase in the land revenue. According to Barani, the revenue was increased about 10 to 20 per cent in the Doab whereas Elliot while

translating the book, *Tarikh-I-Firoz Shahi*, of Barani has shown this increase to be 5 to 10 per cent. Dr. Ishwari Prashad is of the opinion that the taxes were increased more than all these proportions in Doab. The book *Tarikh-I-Mubarakshai* mentions the increases as 20 fold and it included Garhi (house tax) and Charhi (Pasture tax).

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Consequences

On the instructions of the Sultan, the land revenue officials collected the land revenue very rigidly. The poor peasants got frightened and the rich landlords refused to pay the revenue. At many places, the store houses were put on re. Zia-ud-din rightly mentions that the imposition ruined the peasants. Those who were rich, became rebellious; land was laid waste and the progress of agriculture was arrested. Grain became expensive, rain scarce and so famine became widespread. This continued for years and thousands of people died. The taxes were collected so rigidly that people became poor and beggars. This undoubtedly contributed to the unpopularity of the Sultan and discontentment against him increased.

4.4.2 Firoz Shah Tughlaq

Firoz Shah Tughlaq (Figure 4.5) was a cousin of Muhammad Tughlaq. He was born in AD 1300. His father was Sipahsalar Naib and mother was Bibi Naila (or Nayala). Firoz Shah Tughlaq was a polite natured, liberal and religious-minded person. He behaved very politely with his ministers, *Ulemas*, *Amirs*, etc. and honoured them greatly. He started many programmes and opened many departments for the poor people, old persons, slaves and orphans. Hearing the cries of weeping women and children, he became ready for talks with the rebels of Bengal. In fact, it was difficult for him to behave harshly with anyone. But he could resort to very harsh measure as well for the propagation of the Islam.



Fig. 4.5 Firoz Shah Tughlaq

Having no issue of his own, Muhammad Tughlaq loved Firoz dearly and that is why, after Muhammad's death at Thatta (Sind), the Amirs declared Firoz Tughlaq to be

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the Sultan of Delhi. He ascended the throne two days after Muhammad's death. At the time of his accession, circumstances were not favourable for him. Because of the strange plans of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, many regions had become independent e.g., whole of Deccan, Sind, Gujarat and Bengal and the administration of the rest of the country was in disorder. Because of many terrible famines in many areas, they had been desolated and misery and discontent was rife among the people. The Ulemas and Amirs were also discontented because of the hostile policies of Muhammad Tughlaq. To deal with these problems, it was imperative for Firoz Tughlaq that he should please the Ulemas and Amirs and try to win over those areas which, after being conquered, could easily be maintained as a part of the empire. So, he started his administrative campaigns in the two spheres of the internal reforms and the battlefield.

As a conqueror

Firoz was not a very able ruler or commander. He led two expeditions against Bengal but was unsuccessful both the times. Thus, Bengal became free of the hold of the Sultanate. Firoz led campaigns against the rulers of Jaznagar (Orissa) and Nagarkot (Kangra). He did not try to establish his control over these areas, though he destroyed the temples of these places and amassed enough wealth through loot and plunder. His longest expeditions were led in regard to the suppression of a rebellion in Sind. After two and a half years of labour, Sultan's army proved successful but the governor or Jam of Sind took advantage of the religious weakness of the Sultan and appealed for arbitration to the Su of Uchh-Sayyid Hussain. The clauses of agreement went in favour of the Jam to some extent. The administration of lower Sind was given to the son and brother of the Jam and in return they gave 4 lakh Tankas to him and promised to give more such gift even in future but the control of Tughlaq administration over Sind slowly disappeared.

As a religious man

Firoz was a rigid Sunni Muslim and follower of Shariat, the book of Muslim Law. He tried to win the support of the religious leaders by trying to proclaim himself as a true Muslim ruler and his empire as a truly Islamic empire. He was very kind towards the Muslims and did not want to shed their blood in vain. He offered namaz regularly five times a day and kept Rozas in the month of Ramzan. But his attitude was of a strict hostility towards the Hindus and Shia Muslims. He desecrated the temples and statues. His religious fanaticism proved very harmful for the Tughlaq dynasty and the Delhi Sultanate.

As a ruler

Firoz was a good but not a great ruler. He was good because he abolished all the unnecessary and unjust taxes, gave encouragement to agriculture, increased agricultural facilities, helped the unhappy, exempted the government loans from payment, tried to bring an end to unemployment, gave financial help to Muslim girls, widows and orphans, carried out many revisions in justice and penal code, extended patronage to literature and art. By his currency reform, he made transactions easy and also gave shelter to 1,80,000 slaves. His reign had peace and development. But he was not a great ruler; since, he followed a policy of intolerance to please the Hindus and the Shias. He did not try to bring about a political unity in the country by conquering the states of Deccan. He organized the army on the basis of feudalism, which was not good for the Sultanate. He appointed the army and other officials on the basis of their family background and heredity instead of merit and physical ability, which soon had a bad effect on the administrative

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system. He renewed the Jagir system. This resulted in nancial loss to the state and increased oppression on the peasants. To full his fancy of keeping a large number of slaves, he placed a big burden on the royal treasury. Later on these very slaves started interfering in politics and became a factor in the downfall of the Tughlaq dynasty. His policies led to corruption in the country, insubordination by the Amirs and laxness in the army. He did not solve the problem of succession and that is why when he died in AD 1380, grave political and administrative problems arose.

In essence, then, Firoz Shah Tughlaq was an able ruler but not a great leader. He tried to care for the welfare of the people as far as he could not follow such policy amongst all classes so that they remain satisfied and grateful to the state. He tried to make the Ulemas, Amirs, traders, soldiers, peasants, etc. happy. Because of his constructive activities, there were no famines in the country; however, he cannot be called a great ruler due to his policy of religious fanaticism.

Firoz Tughlaq's Military Campaigns and Foreign Policy

Firoz Tughlaq made a very weak effort to reconquer the areas lost under Muhammad Tughlaq. With this purpose, he carried out military in Bengal and Sind whereas no effort was made to regain Madura, Bahamani or Vijaynagar kingdoms. Inspired by his fanaticism and a wish to ease the Ulemas, he carried out military campaigns against Jajinagar (Orissa) and Nagarkot. Briefly, the foreign policy or the military campaigns of Firoz Tughlaq can be summed up as follows:

1. Two expeditions against Bengal (AD 1355-1359)

The first campaign against Haji Ilias of Bengal was undertaken by Firoz in AD 1353 because he had declared himself independent by taking advantage of the disorder after Muhammad Tughlaq's death. When Firoz reached Bengal, the ruler had taken refuge in the famous and strong fort of Iqdala. The siege was raised after many days and peace was concluded. The Sultan acknowledged Ilias as the ruler of Bengal because the latter accepted all the conditions laid down by the Sultan. The Sultan came back to Delhi in AD 1354. Some scholars say that the Sultan himself raised the siege hearing the cries of children and women who were inside the fort. This campaign did not provide Firoz enough political gains and he became content only with a nominal acceptance of his suzerainty by the ruler of Bengal. In fact, this weak policy of the Sultan increased the audacity of the ruler of Bengal.

In AD 1357, Hazi Ilias was followed by his son Sikandar as the ruler of Bengal. He proved to be a very rigid and cruel ruler, and hearing his criticism from Zafar Khan (who had saved himself from Sikandar by reaching Sind through sea route), Sikandar attacked Bengal again. Like his father, Sikandar too sought refuge in the fort of Iqdala. Firoz could not subjugate the fort this time. According to Af, the Sultan gave up his idea of the conquest of Bengal realizing that the campaign might result in thousands of Muslim women assaulted and insulted by the invaders. Though this campaign of Sultan's was not a success from military point of view, it had two significant results. These were Sultan's rule on the city of Jaunpur and his son, Fateh Khan, being declared as his successor and got his name inscribed along with that of the Sultan on the coins.

After the second campaign against Bengal, Firoz Shah, instead of returning to Delhi, proceeded against Jajinagar via Bihar and to please the Ulemas, inflicted a heavy loss on the temple of Jaga-math. According to some scholars, the royal army put to death a large number of people who had sought refuge in the island. The number described at

above one lakh might have been exaggerated, but it was true that he carried on a massacre there and also forced petty Hindu Rajas to acknowledge his sovereignty.

2. Invasions of Nagarkot or Kangra (1361)

Muhammad Tughlaq had conquered Kangra in AD 1331, but the new Rai of the Kingdom had stopped paying tribute to Firoz Tughlaq. Perhaps, Firoz invaded Nagarkot primarily to teach a lesson of loyalty to the new Rai. But according to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, he wanted to conquer the Jawalamukhi temple and that was the purpose behind his invasion of Nagarkot. It took him about six months to subjugate the fort after which the Rai was forced to acknowledge the Sultan's suzerainty and promised to pay an annual tribute to the Sultan. Probably, Firoz destroyed the Jawalamukhi temple of the place. According to Farishta, he broke the idols of the temples, mixed their pieces in the beef, put them in the bags and hung it along the necks of the Brahmins. The main idol was sent to Medina as a mark of victory. This campaign led to one good result from the cultural view point. Firoz Tughlaq came back to Delhi with about 300 old Sanskrit documents, which might have been translated into Persian leading to a useful cultural exchange.

3. Invasion of Thatta or Sind (AD 1362)

Sultan Firoz Tughlaq decided to go for a campaign against Thatta in AD 1362 due to many causes. Firstly, Muhammad Tughlaq had breathed his last trying to suppress a revolt at Thatta. After his death, the Sindhi Amirs had plundered the total camp. Firoz had been a witness to all this and he desired to take revenge from the Amirs of Sind. Secondly, the representatives of the Sultan in Sind, Ain-i-Mulk Maharu complained that the Jam of Sind was aiding the Mongols. Firoz Tughlaq decided to launch an attack on Sind. According to Af, this was the most ill-planned campaign in the entire history of Sultanate. The Jam of Sind inflicted heavy losses on the royal army. The Sultan had to retreat to Gujarat because of the effective defensive measures taken by the Sindhis and the spread of an epidemic in the royal army, which forced about 75 per cent cavalry to seek refuge in Gujarat. Unfortunately, his army lost the way and got caught in the Rann of Kucch from where it could emerge after many months. Another army was dispatched from Delhi against Sind and this time the Jam acknowledged the sovereignty of the Sultan and undertook to send an annual tribute. Firoz and his army returned to Delhi after a long absence of about two and a half years. The loyalty of his Wazir Khan-i-Jahan is commendable because he held out false promises to the Amirs that the Sultan was gaining one victory after another in Sind. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, 'The expedition against Sind is a very interesting event of the reign of Firoz Tughlaq — an example of folly and diplomatic ignorance of the Sultan.'

4. Suppression of the rebels of Itawa and Katehar (Rohilkhand) (AD 1370)

The Hindu Zamindars of Itawa rebelled against the fanatic policies of the Sultan but Firoz quelled it successfully and in AD 1380, a campaign was undertaken against Katehar because he had got the Governor of Badayun, Sayyid Muhammad, assassinated. Kharku ran away to Kumayun and could not be apprehended despite a chase. The Sultan appointed an Afghan Governor at Katehar. Briefly, the foreign policy of Firoz Tughlaq was successful in all the areas in Northern India except Bengal, but he made no effort to reconquer those regions in South which had become independent during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq. The Sind campaign was prolonged and militarily harmful.

Firoz Tughlaq's Administrative Reforms

Though Firoz Tughlaq could not prove to be a very capable general, his internal policy was very successful because of his able administration and reform measures. Peace prevailed in his reign and development took place. He brought about following reforms or changes in the administration:

Judicial organization

Firoz Tughlaq was opposed to severe punishments. He ended punishments like cutting off the limbs etc. for such petty crimes as theft and others. Praising his judicial system British historian V.A. Smith writes that this measure of bringing an end to corporal punishments was really worthy of praise. Firoz, in his autobiography *Futuh-i-Firozshahi*, has written that severe punishments prevailed before he became the Sultan. He added that in the time of his predecessors, criminals were put to many sufferings like cutting of limbs, extracting the eyes, putting melted glass in their throat, hammering the bones, burning alive, hammering nails in hands feet and chests, cutting arteries and veins, tearing the body in two equal halves, etc. By putting an end to these barbarities, the Sultan won for himself the sympathy of the people to a great extent. The Sultan tried to make the judicial system that was based on Shariat, accorded importance to the advice of the Ulemas and Qazis, established courts with the accorded advice of the Ulemas and Qazis, established courts at all important places of the empire, appointed Qazis and Muftis etc. to carry on the judicial activities and put an end to the death penalty for the Muslims in general. He issued the instruction that if any traveller died on the way, the feudal chiefs and Muqaddam of the area had to summon the Qazi and Mufti, examine the dead body of the deceased and only after the Qazi certified that there was no wound on the body of the dead should the burial take place.

Reform in revenue and taxation system

According to Barani, Firoz Tughlaq ordered that Khiraj (land tax) and Jaziya (ordinarily a tax imposed exclusively on Hindus) should be levied in accordance with the produce (Bar Hukme-Hasil). He brought an end to all the other taxes except Jaziya, Khiraj, Zakat and Khums only because these four were mentioned in Shariat. It undoubtedly would have relieved the common people. According to Islamic injunction, he distributed four-fifth of Khums to soldiers, keeping one-fifth for the state. This raised the morale of the army. According to Firoz's biography, he gave the responsibility for collecting the tax of an area to the persons making the highest bid. This auction encouraged the Izaredari system and had an adverse effect on the financial condition of the empire. According to Af, the income of the state was reconsidered. The task of determining the income of the state was given to Khawaja Husamuddin Junaid. He toured the entire area for six years and fixed the income of the state at 6,75,00,000 Tankas.

Agricultural system

In the sphere of agricultural system, Firoz carried out the following two major reforms:

- (i) The debts of peasants, taken by them during the famine at the time of Muhammad Tughlaq, were exempted.
- (ii) An efficient irrigation system was resorted to, which led to cultivation in quite a large part of the empire.

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According to *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* written by Shami-Siraj-Af, Firoz Shah Tughlaq got two canals dug from Sutluj and Jamuna Rivers. But another historian Yahiya bin-Ahmad Sirhindi mentions in his book *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* that Firoz Tughlaq got four canals dug—first from Sutluj to Ghaghra, about 96 miles long; second taking the water of Jamuna to Hissar (Punjab) 150 miles long; third from area in the vicinity of Mandavi to hills of Sirmour irrigating Hansi City and proceeding from there to Hissar as well; fourth canal dug from Ghaghra River and owing through the fort of Sirsuti, it went to Hirati Khada Gram. Besides, many wells were dug which promoted cultivation. Produce increased and no famine occurred. The areas irrigated through canals were subjected to one-tenth of water tax. Firoz tried to bring more and more land under the irrigation. The revenue official's salaries were enhanced so that they might not take bribes from the peasants. Barring the introduction of Jagir system, the agricultural reforms of Firoz are really commendable.

Encouragement to the Jagir system

According to Af, Firoz Tughlaq distributed all villages, parganas and cities for the payment of salaries to the military officials and the financial condition of the state was all right. The reintroduction of Jagir system by Firoz made big Amirs and chiefs very happy. One of his instructions was that all the officials involved in Sind campaign should have their Jagirs transferred to their sons unconditionally and permanently. Another instruction issued by him was that after the death of a Jagirdar, his Jagir or Iqta should pass to his son, failing which to his son-in-law, failing which to his slave. The revival of the Jagir system proved disadvantageous to the empire. Gradually, these Jagir holders became more and more powerful and later, became contributory to the fall of the Delhi Sultanate. They started taking the services of forced labour from the peasants and exploited them.

Army organization

Firoz introduced certain new measures to establish a powerful army. Instead of keeping the entire army under the direct control of the centre, he tried to reorganize the army on the basis of Jagirdari or feudal basis. The soldiers came to be paid generally in jagirs now. Only the irregulars received cash salary from the state. Another important change Firoz introduced was to make the military offices hereditary, which really was a very defective measure. Many soldiers sold their Jagirs to the professional auctioneers at two-thirds or half their value. This encouraged the farming system. The soldiers who did not fall into the clutches of these middlemen fell a prey to the royal officials who gave them only 50 per cent of the revenue, keeping the rest 50 per cent for themselves for public expenditure. Another defect in the system was that the soldiers who collected revenue themselves or through their sons, paid no attention to their military duties and remained busy with the collection of revenue only. Thus, during Firoz's time, the basis of revenue collection came to be the military power and after his death, when the military power of the soldiers ended, it became difficult for these military Iqtadars to collect revenue. Rendering the military post hereditary was also a defective measure. The central government lost its right to test the military merit of the soldiers. Military service became hereditary wherein there was no place for physical ability and merit. The state was left direct control only over a small cavalry. The loyalty of the soldier Iqtadars was primarily to their military overlords and not to the Sultan. In brief, the military system of Firoz led to the continuous weakness of the state army.

Firoz undertook many activities for the welfare and happiness of the public. He not only lighten the burden of the taxation, but also ended the severity of the penal code

and opened free hospitals for the treatment of the patients. He got about 1200 gardens planted in the vicinity of Delhi, which yielded a big annual income to the state. He got many canals, mosques, palaces, sarais, ponds, tombs and bathrooms constructed. He established the cities of Firozabad, Fatehabad, Hissar, Jaunpur, Firozpur, etc. He is said to have undertaken the repair work of Qutub Minar. For providing employment, he opened the employment bureau; for the marriage of poor Muslim girls, he opened for the marriage bureau; for providing social security to aged and poor people, he opened the Diwan-i-Istaikak.

Slave department and its organization

Firoz Tughlaq collected slaves in big number. He ordered his Subedars that whenever they invaded any area in connections with revenue collections, well bodied and good looking children should be selected and sent to the Sultan. He preferred to have slaves as presents from his governors. Gradually, the number of his slaves swelled to about 1,80,000. Historians are of the opinion that through these slaves, the Sultan wanted to prepare a community loyal to him and his successors. He gave salary and offices to all the slaves. For their maintenance, he opened a separate account and established a separate department. About 1200 slaves were trained in various crafts and worked in various ministerial departments, royal factories and army. Such a large number of slaves also became a factor in the political and economic decline of the Tughlaq Empire.

The currency system

Firoz Shah Tughlaq introduced many changes in the currency system as well. He issued coins (Figure 4.6) of a small denomination in very large numbers so that the common people and traders should not be put to difficulty in daily transactions. He issued coins of copper and silver mixed so that people might not copy them easily and the Sultanate might not be faced with those financial difficulties which it had to face during the time of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq.

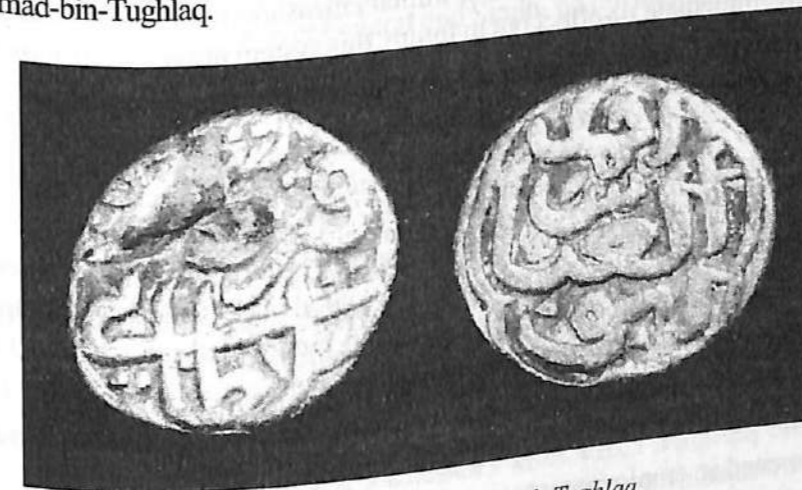


Fig. 4.6 Coins of Firoz Shah Tughlaq

Literature, Education and Art

Firoz Shah Tughlaq evinced special interest in literature. He opened many Madrasas. He patronized many scholars. Zia-ud-din Barani and Shams-i-Siraj A'îf were two famous historians of his time. They enjoyed state patronage. Firoz himself was an author of no mean order. He wrote his own biography which is known as *Fatuhah-i-Firozshahi*. He got 300 famous old Sanskrit books translated into Persian by the famous Persian scholar

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Azuddin Khalid. This translation work is famous as *Daliyal-i-Firozshahi*. During his reign, faculties of religious scriptures, law and Islamic education got encouragement. Firoz also encouraged architecture and gardening. He constructed many buildings and planted about 1200 gardens. Famous historian Woolsey Haig writes about his love of architecture correctly that 'he was fond of construction work and in that respect he equalled the Roman emperor Augustus, if not excelled him.'

Religious policy

Firoz Tughlaq provided grants to the Ulemas to please them. After the Jazanagar (Orissa) campaign, he distributed about 36,00,000 Tankas as a gift to the Sheikhs and Alims. To please the Ulemas again, he changed the taxation and judicial system so as to suit the requirement of the Shariat. During his reign, the Ulemas usually interfered in politics. He followed an intolerant policy towards the Hindus. He imposed Jaziya even on the Brahmins. He got all the paintings of the royal palace removed thinking them to be in opposition to Shariat. Inspired by a fanatic policy, he attacked the temples many a times and brought the idols down. His fanatic policy proved disadvantageous to the Sultanate.

Firoz Tughlaq's Military and Social Reforms

The various reform measures introduced by Firoz Tughlaq in the fields of society and military are discussed as follows:

Military reforms

Firoz Shah Tughlaq amended many of the military measures introduced by Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad Tughlaq. He did away with the practice of maintaining a standing army, cash payment of salary to the army, writing descriptive roles, branding the horses, periodical inspection of the army by the state; rather, he organized the army on a feudal basis. The whole responsibility of army organization was left to the feudal chiefs and they were given Iqtas, land grants. These military measures of Firoz Shah Tughlaq did not have any immediate ill-effect but in future, this system proved destructive for the Sultanate.

Social reforms

His social reforms can be summed up as follows:

- (i) Firoz Shah Tughlaq paid very serious attention to the eradication of illiteracy. He established about thirty Madarsas and gave good salary to the teachers appointed therein. According to Farishta, he got a library constructed at Jawalamukhi, which contained books of various Indian languages and were about 13,000 in number.
- (ii) To promote cultural synthesis between the Hindus and the Muslims, Firoz got many of the Sanskrit works translated into Persian.
- (iii) He opened an employment bureau to remove the unemployment of the Muslim populace and in order to help in marriage of Muslim poor girls.
- (iv) He constructed a charitable hospital in the empire to render free services to the patients.
- (v) He established a separate department to look after the slaves.

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Public welfare activities

He constructed canals and got new cities inhabited. He constructed four mosques, thirty palaces, five canals, two hundred sarais, five ponds, five hospitals, one hundred burial places, one hundred bridges and twelve hundred gardens.

Downfall of Tughlaq Empire

The major causes of the downfall of Tughlaq Empire were as follows:

- Annexation of the southern India
- Failures of Muhammad Tughlaq
- Fault of Firoz Tughlaq
- Incompetence of his successors

The Tughlaqs set up most widespread empire among all Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate. Ghiyasuddin took advantage of the occupation of the south and captured bigger part of it. Muhammad Bin Tughlaq added most towards the spread of the empire both as a prince and a Sultan. But the growth of disintegration started during his reign. The capture of the south, the failures of Muhammad Tughlaq, the flaws of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, the lack of skill among his successors, the incompetence and disheartenment of the politeness and the invasion of Timur were the additional factors responsible for the decline of this vast kingdom. Ghiyasuddin started the policy of capturing the conquered territories of the south. But this policy was against the permanent interest of the empire; pertinent to the lack of proper resources of transport, it was complicated for the rulers of the north to keep the south under his rule for long. Therefore, the south became free during the later period of Muhammad Tughlaq. The takeover of the south gave no benefits to the Tughlaqs. In contrast, it adversely affected the resources and the strength of the empire. Muhammad Tughlaq was utterly failed in his internal and foreign policies. In addition, as Bengal and the south got their independence and the authority of the Delhi Sultanate became fragile over Gujarat and Sindh, no notable terrain was held by the Empire permanently. All the ideas of Muhammad Tughlaq failed wretchedly and brought financial ruin to the Empire. In addition, his policies and unyielding measures led to extensive revolts at quite a few places which taxed further the running of the administrative business and resources of the empire were unmindfully exploited.

Firoz Tughlaq succeeded in restoring the economic affluence of the empire and did a lot of useful work for welfare of the public. But his reckless generosity, laxity in administration, slave system, policy of intolerance towards the Hindus, reestablishment of reputation and influence of the Ulema and the inattentiveness to military affairs of the empire led to the rapid decline of his power. Firoz failed to reinstate the prestige and authority of the Delhi Sultanate.

There were no educated successors after Firoz Tughlaq and no one be commendable enough to be the Sultan of Delhi. His third son Muhammad was religious and affectionate. He was devoid of his reign to the throne. Firoz nominated Tughlaq Shah, son of his late eldest son, as his heir. Prince Muhammad fought both against Tughlaq Shah and his descendant Abu Bakr. Though he succeeded, clashes between princes gave outlook to nobles at the court and the subedars of provinces to boost their powers and authorities at the cost of succeeding Sultans. Therefore, the later Tughlaqs proved inept and unproductive in the affairs of the state and Sultan Nasir ad-Din Mahmud, the last ruler of the empire, met a dishonourable death. Amirs and provincial governors

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of last Tughlaqs took advantage of the ineffective rulers. Those who were determined and capable established independent kingdoms out of the remains of the empire, and those who were inept, remained in the court engaging themselves in bribery and luxuries.

None of them was capable and whosoever was competent was disloyal to the Sultan and thus worked against the Delhi Sultanate. The final blow to the authority and prestige of the Tughlaq Empire came in the form of Timur's invasion. He destroyed both the Delhi Sultanate and the Tughlaq dynasty. Although the dynasty had lost its status proceeding to Timur's invasion, after the invasion, it was methodically destroyed forever. Thus, several factors brought about the downfall of the Tughlaq Empire. The process of breakdown began with the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq; Firoz Tughlaq, in his own way, added towards it and all through the period of the later Tughlaqs, it was completed.

4.5 SOCIETY, ECONOMY AND LITERATURE UNDER THE SULTANATE

Culture includes the society, the religious condition, literature and art and architecture of that period. The culture of the Muslims was for long either an exotic one or a class culture confined to a certain group that basked in the sunshine of the King's favour. The monotheism of Islam led to the birth of a similar movement among the Hindus. Certain aspects of Bhakti movement were coloured by the iconoclastic character of Islam. Kabir was the most representative figure. Muslim literature and painting had a certain originality which enriched the fabric of Indian culture. In the literary sphere, the development of Urdu language and the birth of historical writings are some of the colossal Muslim contributions to Indian culture. The dress, manners and food, especially among the aristocracy in Northern India, underwent a certain reorientation under the influence of the Muslims.

During the reign of the Delhi Sultanate, the society was divided into different sections. After the advent of the Muslims, the society constituted the foreign Muslims, the Indian Muslims and the Hindus. Among them, the foreign Muslims constituted the ruling class. The next section was that of the Indian Muslims who were either converted to Islam or were the descendants of the converted Muslims. The Hindus also formed a part of the society at that time and were divided among themselves on the basis of castes.

The foreign Muslims were respected and were the most privileged section of the society. All high offices of the state were kept reserved for them. They yielded great influence in society and administration. But the foreign Muslims were not united. They claimed different nationalities as the Persians, the Afghans, the Arabs, the Turks, and the Abyssinians, etc. The Turks claimed and maintained their superiority over all others up to the thirteenth century. Their position broke after the Khiljis captured the power of the state.

The foreign Muslims looked down upon the Indian Muslims because most of them were converted to Islam from among low-caste Hindus. The foreign Muslims regarded them neither of blue blood nor conquerors of this country. Therefore, Indian Muslims were not given equal status either in society or in administration. During the total period of the Sultanate only few Indian Muslims enjoyed high offices of the state. The caste-system of the Hindus affected the Muslims, especially the Indian Muslims. They continued to maintain divisions among themselves on the basis of their previous

Check Your Progress

6. Why did Muhammad Bin Tughlaq issue copper coins?
7. Which religion did Firoz Shah follow?

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castes. Thus, both the foreign and Indian Muslims were divided among themselves on the basis of their different nationalities and birth. The Muslims were also divided on the basis of religious sects, education and professions. *Sunnis* and the *Shias* differed from each other on the basis of sects while soldiers and scholars were divided among each other on the basis of their professions. There was another class, the Ulema, who constituted the religious community among the Muslims and claimed pre-eminence over all others.

The slave system was prevalent among the Muslims and the Hindus and slaves were sold and purchased in the open market. The slaves were treated well though their property and lives were the property of their masters. The slaves of the Muslims were better off as compared to the slaves of the Hindus. The Sultans and nobles kept slaves in huge numbers, provided education and gave them training and opportunity to rise in their lives and many of them rose to the position of prominence in the state. The women in the Hindu society enjoyed respect in the family and participated in the religious ceremonies. They received education and many of them had acquired scholarly fame. Yet, in general their status had deteriorated in the society and they suffered from many social evils. There was no widow remarriage, therefore, the widows either became *sati* at the pyre of their husbands or passed their lives as women-hermits.

The *Purdah* system and child marriages adversely affected the education and position of women in the society. *Devadasi* system was another social evil which was prevalent among the Hindus. Muslim women did not enjoy a respectable status in the society. Polygamy was extensively prevalent among the Muslims. Every Muslim had a right to keep at least four wives while the rich among them kept hundreds or thousands as wives or slaves. *Purdah* system was strictly observed among the Muslim women. They were devoid of education because of this social custom.

Generally, the Hindus were vegetarians and the Muslims were non-vegetarians. Among the Muslims, the Sufis, or the people who were under their influence avoided eating meat. Both the Hindus and the Muslims built good houses for themselves where all comforts of life were available. There was a marked progress in the use of clothing and ornaments. All sorts of clothes made of silk, cotton and wool were used by the people and there was improvement in them. Both the Hindus and the Muslims liked to use ornaments. All types of ornaments from head to toe were used by both males and females and were made not only of gold and silver but of pearls, diamonds and precious stones. The people engaged themselves in all sorts of entertainments. Different sports (hunting, duels among men, fighting among animals, horse-polo) were their usual entertainments and fairs and religious festivals were also common among both the Hindus and the Muslims.

Development of Language and Literature under the Delhi Sultanate

The growth of literature during the age of the Delhi Sultanate was not restricted to Sanskrit and Persian but evolved in other regional languages as well. The Sultans of Delhi and the ruler of provincial dynasties patronized various scholars.

Sanskrit literature

Development of new languages and growth of rich corpus literature took place in the medieval period. According to some historians, the patronage of the Sanskrit language declined during the Delhi Sultanate because the rulers of the sultanate emphasized the patronage of Persian language. However, historical records show that this period

witnessed the growth of rich amount of Sanskrit literature because poetical works called the *Kavya* and the texts that laid down laws called the Dhramashastras, were composed during this period.

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Various small political establishments in central and south India patronized Sanskrit during the first half of the medieval period. In western India, Hemachandra Suri was known to have composed works in Sanskrit. Many dramas were also written during this period. A new style of writing called the *champu*, which was a mixture of prose and poetry, also emerged during this period. Rajput kings patronized the works of their family histories like the *Prithvirajvijaya* and the *Hammirmahakavya* and these were written in Sanskrit. Udayaraja, a court poet of Sultan Mahmud Begarha of Gujarat, wrote Sultan's biography and this poetry was named Rajavinoda.

Kalhan's *Rajtarangini* is the history of the kings of Kashmir from Jayasimha to Sultan Zainul Abidin and it was written by Jonaraja in the 12th century AD.

The second *Rajtarangini* was also written by Jonaraja. Srivara wrote the history of the region till 1486. Some semi historical texts, such as *prabandhas*, were also written during the period.

The rulers of Vijayanagar, Nayakas of Tanjor and the chiefs of Travancore and Cochin patronized Sanskrit language after the 15th century. Many genres of Sanskrit literature like Slesh Kavyas, Mahakavyas, Champu Kavyas, the historical Kavyas and Natakas continued. Some of the important writers of this period were Govinda Dikshita (writer of *Sahitya Sudha* and *Sangitsudhanidhi*); Nilanatha Dikshita (a minister in the court of the Nayaka of Madurai); Appaya Dikshita (in the court of the Nayaka ruler of Vellore) and Chakrakavi (who was patronized by the rulers of Kozhikode).

The historical Kavyas depict the social perception of the writers as well as the exploits of various rulers. Some of the Mughals like Dara Shukoh were also mentioned in these Kavyas. The credit of composing a *prasasti* to honour Nrisimha Sarasvati of Benaras is also given to the Mughal prince. A few works were composed in the courts of the rulers of Bijapur and Golconda but by and large Sanskrit literature began to decline during this period.

Persian literature

With the establishment of the Delhi sultanate, a new literary style and language was introduced in the sub continent. Writings of Amir Khusrau contributed a lot to the development of Persian literature. He was born in a family of Turkish immigrants and he started writing poetry in the reign of Sultan Balban. He was a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya and his patrons were Jalaluddin Khalji, Alauddin Khalji and Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. According to historians, he composed ninety-nine works on various themes and wrote numerous verses of poetry. He used forms like lyric, epic, elegy and ode to write poetry. His writing style is the representative of the first Persian style, called *Sabaq-i-Hindi* (the Indian style), that was composed in the Indian background. Some of his important works include *Mutla-ul-Amwar*, *Laila Majnun*, *Shirin Khusrau* and *Ayina-I-Sikandari*. These works were dedicated to Alauddin Khalji. *Tuhfat-us-Sighar*, *Nihayat-ul-Kamal* and *Baqiya Naqiya* are some of his popular Diwans (Ghazals). He is also the writer of masnavis (narrative poems) like *Miftah-ul Futuh* (narrating the military success of Alauddin Khalji), *Tughlaq Nama* (giving an account of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq's rise to power) and *Khazain-ul Futuh* (describing Alauddin Khalji's conquest of the South). These masnavis are considered to have great historical and literary value. Shaikh Najmuddin Hasan was another important Persian poet in the court of Alauddin Khalji.

During the period of the Delhi Sultanate, the court chronicles were an important part of the literature. Some of the important court chronicles were *Futuh-us Salatin* by Isami, the *Tabaqat-I-Nasiri* by Minaj-us Siraj and the *Futuh-I Firozshahi* by Feroz Shah Tughlaq. Ziauddin Barani also contributed a lot to the Persian literature of this period. The *Fatwa-I Jahandari* and the *Tarikh-I Firozshah* were some of his important works.

A new form of Sufi literature developed during this period. It was known as the *malfuzat* and was written in the form of dialogue of the Sufi saints. *Fawaid-ul Fu'ad* written by Amir Hassan Sijzi that has the anecdotes of the Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and *Khair-ul-Majalis* with the anecdotes of Sheik Nasir ad-Din Mahmud were some of the important works written in this form. Many works were translated into Persian during this period. The first Persian translation of Sanskrit stories was the *Tuti Nama* (book of the parrot) by Zia Nakshabi. The *Rajtarangini* and the *Mahabharatha* were also translated into Persian during this period. A number of Sanskrit works were translated into Persian during the reigns of Feroz Tughlaq and Sikandar Lodi.

Persian continued to be the official language even in Mughal courts. The interesting fact about Mughal rulers and princes is that they also maintained a tradition of writing. Babur, the first Mughal emperor, wrote his memoirs in Turkish which was later translated into Persian by Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan. Humayun also wrote a Persian diwan. Prince Dara Shukoh wrote *Sakinatul Auliya* which was a biographical account of the Sufi saint Miya Mir and his disciples. He is also the writer of the *Majm'aul Bahrain* (Mingling of two Oceans). Writers like Faizi, Urfi, Ghani Kashmiri, Talib and Bedil – who wrote in the genre of *Sabaq-i-Hindi* (the Indian style) – were patronized by the Mughals. *Tabashir al Sabh* was one of the important works of Faizi. He also translated a number of Hindu religious books into Persian language. Abdur Rahim Khan Khana was considered a talented scholar and poet during the reign of Akbar and Jahangir. Abul Fazl, a great scholar historian, was patronized by Akbar. According to many historians, Akbar maintained a library which had more than four thousand books.

Abu Talib Kalim, author of the *Padshahnama*, and Ali Quli Salem were important poets during the reign of Shah Jahan. Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur patronized Persian literature in the south. Mulla Zuhuri and Malik Qummi were considered important Persian poets in the south. The Qutab Shahis of Golconda patronized Muhammad Hussain Tabrezi and many other poets. The development of Persian literature in the Mughal court influenced the development of regional literature to a great extent. Persian also influenced languages like Punjabi, Sindhi, Kashmiri and Pushtu.

Development of Regional Languages

Regional languages like Hindi, Assamese, Marathi, Bengali, Oriya and Gujarati developed during the medieval period. In the 14th century, Malayalam emerged as an independent language in the South. The growth of these regional languages led to the emergence of regional polities as well as to the decline of Sanskrit. Some of these regional languages started to be used as a medium in the administrative work. The propagation of Bhakti movement in regional languages also enabled the development of these languages.

Hindi and Urdu

Regional dialects like *Haryanvi* and *Braj bhasa* which are spoken in areas around Delhi and Punjab influenced the development of Urdu language. Urdu adopted the Persian script and its literary tradition. The word Urdu refers to an army or camp in Turkish.

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Due to this fact, it is believed that this language emerged from the dialect spoken in the Turkish camp. *Hindivi* is also considered to be the origin of Urdu and Hindi. The works of Amir Khusrau are believed to have laid the foundation of this language. The use of this language in the Deccan led to the development of a literary speech called the Dakhni. Gujarat, Golconda, Bijapur, Bidar and Aurangabad were the major centres of this language. Sayyid Banda Nawaz Gesudaraz, an important Sufi in the Bahamani kingdom, was the oldest writer of this tradition. Ibrahim Adil Shah II, the sultan of Bijapur, was a patron and author of a book on music in the Dakhni language. Hindi developed between the 7th – 8th centuries and the 14th century. It was described as Veergatha Kala (age of heroic poetry) or the Adi Kala (early Period). Many Rajput rulers patronized poems on the theme of glorified chivalry and bravery and these were written in the Rajasthani dialect of Hindi. Some of the important works in this dialect are the *Prithviraja Raso* of Chand Bardai, the *Visaldeva Raso* and *Hamir Raso*. The authenticity of many of these works has been doubted on various grounds. Many works of Buddhists and Jains belong to this period. Due to the increasing use of the language in expressing Bhakti traditions and ideas, the development of the language touched new heights during the 14th and the 15th centuries.

Bhakti saints like Tulsidas used the Awadhi dialect of Hindi others like Surdas used *Braj bhasha* and Mira Bai used the Marwari dialect of Rajasthan. The Sufi saints used new dialects to reach out to more people. Chishti saints continued using Hindi to compose and sing their devotional music.

Bengali

The earliest examples of the Bengali language are found in the folksongs called *Charyapads*, which were composed between the 10 and 12th centuries. The works of Srikanandi and Kavindra are considered important in Bengali language. The growth of the Bhakti movement and the composition of various hymns associated with Chaitanya in Bengali language spurred the development of this language. Brindabandas's *Chaitanya Bhagavata* or *Chaitanya Mangal* in Bengali gave an important account of the saint's death and also reflects the social condition of that time. Lochandas is said to have introduced a new style of folk songs known as Dhamali. The popularity of narrative poems called the Mangal Kavyas grew during this period. Puranas are the origins of this narrative form. These poems propagated the significance of local deities like Chandī and converted Puranic gods like Siva and Vishnu into household deities.

Assamese and Oriya

The 13th century works of Hara Gauri Samyada and Hema Sarasvati Prahladacharita are considered the first works in Assamese. The Bhakti movement led to the development of Assamese literature as well. The growth of Assamese poetry was stimulated with the introduction of Vaisnavism by Shankaradeva in Assam. Madhavadas, a disciple of Shankaradeva, wrote the *Bhakti-ratnavali*. It deals with various characteristics of Bhakti and the *Baragitas* that depicted Krishna's life in Vrindavan. The Puranas were translated in Assamese as well.

The works of Saraladasa are considered the first works of Oriya literature. Madhusudana, Sasasiva and Bhima composed a number of kavyas on Puranic themes. The *Rasa Kallol*, on the theme of love between Radha and Krishna, was also written during this period. Ushabhilasa of Sisu Sankara Dasa and the *Rukminibibha* of Kartik Dasa are other important works. The works of Upendra Bhanja (1670–1720) led to a new era of Oriya literature in the subsequent period.

Literature in South India

Villiputturar was considered an important literary figure in the south during this period. He is credited with the beginning of the tradition of using Sanskrit words and literary expressions. Commentaries written by Vaishnava scholars and Tolkappiyam and the Kural- commentaries on works of the sangam age are other important works in Tamil. A number of philosophical works and commentaries on the Puranas are also important parts of the Tamil literature. The *Sivadarumottaram* and the *Saiva Samayaneri* both written by Marainanarbandar and *Irusamayavilakkam* written by Haridasa in the medieval period were important works of Tamil literature. The *Cidambarapuranam* (1508) by Purana Tirumalainathan and the *Palanittalapuranam* by Balasubramanya Kavirayar were noteworthy works in the field of philosophy.

The Champu genre of literary writing (mixture of prose and poetry) were popularized by a famous Telugu poet- Errapragada. He was also popular for translating the *Bhagavata Purana* into Telugu. Krishnadeva Raya, a Vijayanagaram ruler, wrote the *Amuktamalyada* in Telugu. Nandi Timmaha, writer of the *Parijatapaharan*, and Allarani Peddana were the most famous poets of his court. Rama Raja Bhushan is known for the *Vasucaritra* and the *Hariscandra Nalopakhyanam*.

Jain writers dominated the literary compositions of the period in the Kannada speaking regions. The works of Basava and his followers form an important feature of Kannada literature. Hoysala rulers also patronized the literature of this language. The *Vadi Vidyananda* of Geroppa is a popular anthology of Kannada poets. The Jain scholar Salva wrote *Aparajiyasataka* (Philosophical work), the *Trilokararara* (work on cosmology) and the *Bharataesvaracarita* (the story of king Bharata).

4.6 SUMMARY

- After Muizzuddin Muhammad Ghori, his slave Qutb-ud-Din sat on the throne of Lahore on 25 June AD 1206 but from AD 1206 to 1208 he was only a Malik to the brother of Muhammad Ghori at Ghor.
- After the sudden death of Qutb-ud-Din Aibak (AD 1210), disorder became rampant in the Delhi Sultanate. A few Amirs raised Aram Shah to the throne in Lahore. But the people of Delhi and the Turkish Amirs opposed him for many reasons.
- Iltutmish ruled for about 26 years (AD 1210–1236). From AD 1210–1220, he solved the internal problems and the years AD 1221–1227 were devoted to the solution of external problems.
- Iltutmish was a brave soldier and able commander. He forcibly suppressed the rebel chiefs in the vicinity of Delhi.
- Iltutmish not only secured and extended the newly established Turkish empire but also gave to the people an able administration and thus showed himself to be an able ruler and administrator.
- Iltutmish was a great lover of art. He completed the Qutub Minar begun by Qutb-ud-Din. The Turks invaded India from North-West frontier side. The Rajputs had paid no attention towards the North Western frontier.
- Balban, like Iltutmish, was an Ilbari Turk. His grandfather was the head of about 10,000 families of Ilbari Turks.

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Check Your Progress

8. Name the major constituents of society after the advent of Muslims in India.
9. Which new style of writing emerged during the Sultanate period?

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- Nasir ad-Din Mahmud Sultan appointed Balban to the post of Chief Minister (Wakil or Naib-i-Mumlikat) in AD 1249 i.e. three years after his accession.
- The rigid measures adopted by Balban as the Chief Minister and the Sultan to save the Sultanate and suppress his personal enemies and rivals are known in history as the policy of Blood and Iron.
- Though Balban had exercised great power as the Prime Minister of the Delhi Sultanate and had completely dominated the administration and when he became Sultan he was welcomed by all classes of people, still he had to face many difficulties.
- Balban had this belief that the internal and foreign problems can be solved by enhancing the prestige and honour of the royal office and he constantly strived to achieve it through various means.
- Balban summoned the Governor of the frontier province to the court because he was said to be hatching a conspiracy with the Mongols. When he dilly dawdled for 4 years, he was poisoned to death.
- To set the financial situation of the state right, Balban not only arranged to collect the revenues rigidly but also increased his control over the Amirs and Jagirdars.
- The pressure of the Mongols was increasing during the time of Balban. He took many successful measures to withstand the invasion of the Mongols.
- Balban showed no favour to his relatives, colleagues or servants as far as justice was concerned. Like an able ruler, he organized an efficient spy system.
- Balban was a great commander and a brave soldier. He earned fame in the army of Sultan Masud Shah. As a brave commander he defeated the famous Mongol leader, Mangu.
- Balban was probably the only Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate who expressed his ideas about kingship in detail.
- Balban always stressed the difference between the descendants of royal lineage and the commoners. Probably, that is why he accepted only the members of the high families in the offices of prestige in his reign.
- Balban wanted to make as the basis of kingship the tripartite relation between God, ruler and the people.
- According to Balban, impartial justice and severe punishment was the highest responsibility of the ruler.
- Another important principle of Balban's theory of kingship was that he stressed the formal recognition from the Caliph in his exercise of power.
- Among the rulers of the Sultanate in early medieval India, Alauddin occupies an honourable place both as a conqueror and as an administrator.
- Alauddin occupies an important place among the rulers of medieval India. He became Sultan at the age of thirty and within a period of fifteen years, became the most powerful ruler of India.
- Alauddin was an imperialist. Dr A.L. Srivastava has regarded him as the first Turkish empire-builder in India.
- Alauddin was an all-powerful monarch. Despotism reached its highest mark during his reign. He concentrated all powers of the State in his hands. His ministers, nobles, military commanders and administrative officers were all his subordinates.

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- Alauddin suffered from certain weaknesses too. His biggest weakness was that his administration, rather the whole structure of the State, depended on power, and more than that, on fear of a single individual, i.e., the Sultan himself. Therefore, it lacked a stable foundation and was destroyed as soon as the Sultan died.
- Just after a few months of the accession of Muhammad Tughlaq, there was the invasion of Mongol leader Tarmashirin.
- When Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was preoccupied with the rebellions in Northern India, some Muslim Amirs of foreign origin under Ismail Mukh and Hasan Gangu revolted and tried to set up the Bahamini kingdom (AD 1347).
- According to Barani, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq made Devgiri his capital because it was situated comparatively in the middle of his empire.
- After the transfer of the capital, the second scheme of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was the introduction of token currency.
- According to Barani, Sultan Muhammad amassed a huge army of about 3,70,000 horsemen so as to dispatch it for the conquest of Khurashan.
- Firoz Shah Tughlaq was a polite natured, liberal and religious-minded person. He behaved very politely with his ministers, Ulemas and Amirs, etc. and honoured them greatly.
- Firoz Tughlaq made a very weak effort to reconquer the areas lost under Muhammad Tughlaq. With this purpose, he carried out military in Bengal and Sind whereas no effort was made to regain Madura, Bahamani or Vijaynagar kingdoms.
- Firoz Tughlaq was opposed to severe punishments. He ended punishments like cutting off the limbs etc. for such petty crimes as theft and others.
- Firoz Tughlaq distributed all villages, parganas and cities for the payment of salaries to the military officials and the financial condition of the state was all right.
- Firoz Shah Tughlaq did away with the practice of maintaining a standing army, cash payment of salary to the army, writing descriptive roles, branding the horses, periodical inspection of the army by the state; rather, he organized the army on a feudal basis.
- The major causes of the downfall of Tughlaq Empire were as follows:
 - Annexation of the southern India
 - Failures of Muhammad Tughlaq
 - Fault of Firoz Tughlaq
 - Incompetence of his successors
- During the reign of the Delhi Sultanate, the society was divided into different sections. After the advent of the Muslims, the society constituted the foreign Muslims, the Indian Muslims and the Hindus.
- The growth of literature during the age of the Delhi Sultanate was not restricted to Sanskrit and Persian but evolved in other regional languages as well.
- Various small political establishments in central and south India patronized Sanskrit during the first half of the medieval period. In western India, Hemachandra Suri was known to have composed works in Sanskrit.
- With the establishment of the Delhi sultanate, a new literary style and language was introduced in the sub-continent. Writings of Amir Khusrau contributed a lot to the development of Persian literature.

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- Persian continued to be the official language even in Mughal courts. The interesting fact about Mughal rulers and princes is that they also maintained a tradition of writing.
- The earliest examples of the Bengali language are found in the folksongs called *Charyapads*, which were composed between the 10 and 12th centuries. The works of Srikanandi and Kavindra are considered important in Bengali language.
- The 13th-century works of Hara Gauri Samyada and Hema Sarasvati *Prahladacharita* are considered the first works in Assamese. The Bhakti movement led to the development of Assamese literature as well.

4.7 KEY TERMS

- **Plunder:** It is the stealing of goods typically using force and in a time of war or civil disorder.
- **Consolidation:** It is the process of uniting.
- **Hostage:** It is a person who is captured and held prisoner by a person or group, and who may be injured or killed if people do not do what the person or group is asking.
- **Expedition:** It refers to an organized journey with a particular purpose, especially to find out about a place that is not well known.
- **Doab:** It is the area of fertile land between two rivers.
- **Autobiography:** It is the story of a person's life, written by that person.
- **Shariat or Sharia:** It is the system of religious laws that Muslims follow.
- **Sunni Muslims:** It is a section of Muslims who consider *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* to be entirely authentic and accurate *hadiths*.

4.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Ali Mardan Khilji murdered Ikhtiyaruddin and tried to set himself up as the ruler of Bengal.
2. Iltutmish defeated Yalduz in AD 1215 in the battle of Tarain.
3. During of reign of Sultan Masud Shah, Balban impressed everybody by driving out the Mongols.
4. Ali Gurshasp was the original name of Alauddin Khilji.
5. Alaud-din was the conqueror of Chittor.
6. According to some scholars, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq issued copper coins because the Mongol Emperors of China had issued paper currency in China in the 13th century.
7. Firoz Shah was a rigid Sunni Muslim.
8. After the advent of the Muslims, the society constituted the foreign Muslims, the Indian Muslims and the Hindus.
9. A new style of writing called the Champu, which was a mixture of prose and poetry, emerged during the Sultanate period.

4.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer questions

1. Evaluate in brief the consolidation efforts made by Iltutmish.
2. How did Balban solve internal and foreign problems during his kingship?
3. Write short notes on the following: (i) Alauddin's policy of Kingship; (ii) Alauddin's policy for Hindus.
4. List the invasions and revolts Muhammad Bin Tughlaq had to face.
5. What were the causes of the decline of the Tughlaq Empire?

Long-Answer questions

1. Assess the reign of Qutb-ud-Din Aibak.
2. Analyse the character and achievements of Balban.
3. Describe Alauddin Khilji as an administrator.
4. What were the results of the new coinage (token currency) started by Muhammad Bin Tughlaq?
5. How was society divided into sections during the Sultanate period?
6. How did Bhakti movement help in the development of regional languages?

4.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 DECLINE OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

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Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 Vijaynagar Kingdom: Krishnadeva Raya, Socio-Economic Condition, Administration and Art and Culture
- 5.3 Bahmani Kingdom: Administration and Decline
- 5.4 The Afghans: The Lodhis
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Key Terms
- 5.7 Answers to 'Check your Progress'
- 5.8 Questions and Exercises
- 5.9 Further Reading

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Vijaynagar kingdom was ruled by three successive dynasties between AD 1336 and AD 1565—Sangam Dynasty, (AD 1336–1485), Saluba Dynasty (AD 1485–1506) and Tuluva Dynasty (AD 1506–1565). The unit discusses the causes of the downfall of the Vijaynagar Empire. All the Muslim states decided to combine against Vijaynagar. Initially, the armies of the Muslim confederation were defeated but later on the Muslim artillery ruined the Vijaynagar army and its cavalry overpowered them. The period of glory of the Vijaynagar Empire is said to have ended after this war.

In this unit you will study about Vijaynagar kingdom, Bahamani Kingdom, their administration and other conditions of the society and the Afghans.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the foundation of the Vijaynagar kingdom
- Explain the three successive dynasties of the Vijaynagar Empire
- Understand the foundation, rise and extension of the Bahamani Empire
- Discuss the foundation of Lodhi Dynasty
- Analyse the life of Bahadur Lodhi

5.2 VIJAYNAGAR KINGDOM: KRISHNADEVA RAYA, SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION, ADMINISTRATION AND ART AND CULTURE

During the last years of Muhammad Tughlaq's reign (AD 1324–1351), when disorder spread in most of the areas of his empire because of the mistaken policies and many regions declared their independence, the Hindus of South India also did not deter from

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taking advantage of the situation. They founded the Vijaynagar empire in AD 1336 under the leadership of Harihar and Bukka, two of the five brothers namely Harihar, Kampa I, Bukka I, Marappa and Madhuappa. According to the inscriptions of the later kings, they were the sons of Chandervanshi Sangam of the Yadav family. Both these brothers were in the service of Pratap Rudra II of the Warrangal kingdom. When Gayasuddin Tughlaq conquered Warrangal in AD 1323, they came away to Kampili. In AD 1325, a cousin of Muhammad Tughlaq named Bahauddin Gurshasp revolted against him in Sagar and the Sultan himself suppressed the rebellion. Bahauddin sought refuge with the ruler of Kampili to his empire. Among the six officials whom Muhammad Tughlaq took as captives to Delhi were these two brothers also who either voluntarily or forcibly embraced Islam, and they became the favourites of the Sultan.

In AD 1327–1328, a chain of revolts started against Muhammad Tughlaq in Bidar, Daulatabad, Gulberga, Mabar, Telengana and Kampili. Muhammad Tughlaq dispatched Harihar and Bukka to Kampili in the South so that they should quell the rebellious Hindus and take over the reins of administration from the Governor of that place namely Malik Muhammad. What transpired in the South after the departure of these two brothers is not at all clear because of mutual contradictory accounts of Muslim historians and traditional stories of the Hindus. Still both sources agree on one point that soon after the two brothers gave up Islamic religion and founded the Vijaynagar empire. They had founded this kingdom in Kampili (modern Karnataka state).

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

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

Sangam Dynasty (1336–1485)

Let us analyse the various rulers of the Sangam dynasty.

(i) Harihar I (AD 1336–1353)

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

In the reign of Harihar I, the first struggle against the Bahmani empire (established in AD 1346) took place when he established his control over the fort of Raichur situated between the river Krishna and Tungabhadra. Harihar compensated to some extent the

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loss of Raichur fort by attacking the Kingdom of Ma'bar in AD 1356 and achieving success in acquiring certain areas from Ma'bar. Harihar I not only extended his kingdom but also prepared an outline of its administrative system. Following the Kakatiya ideal, he organized his kingdom into Sathals and Nadus and appointed Brahmin officials to run the administration. He also paid attention to the progress of agriculture.

(ii) Bakka I (AD 1353–1377)

According to some scholars, Bukka I had become joint ruler with his brother as early as AD 1346 and had his capital at Gutti but after his brother Harihar's death in AD 1353, he succeeded him as the sole heir and ruled till AD 1377. He sent his ambassador to establish diplomatic relations with China. He was mostly engaged in conflict with the Bahmani Sultans, Muhammad I and Mujahid which resulted in great ruin of Vijaynagar. During his time, there were three conflicts between Vijaynagar and the Bahmani empire (AD 1360, 1365 and 1367). The main cause of the conflict was the ambition of both the kingdoms to establish their control over Raichur Doab. Being situated in the midst of rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra, this area was very fertile. But Bukka was not successful in this campaign and he could not regain the Raichur Doab which was lost during the time of Harihar.

When Muhammad II ascended the throne of Gulbarga in AD 1378, the conflict between these two states came to a halt because the new Bahmani Sultan was peace loving. In the reign of Bukka I, his son Kampan achieved success in defeating the sultan of Ma'bar. He forced the northern and southern Arcot to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Vijaynagar empire. According to a Sanskrit poem named 'Madura Vijayam' written by Kaman's wife Ganga Devi, he achieved his success between AD 1365 and 1370. Bukka I died in AD 1377. He was a great warrior, statesman and a lover of knowledge. Following a tolerant and liberal policy, he established a feeling of unity between the followers of Jainism and Vaishnav sects. Undoubtedly, he could not recover the Raichur area from the Bahmani empire but they did not lose any area of their empire either.

He got many old temples repaired and with the help of many Hindu scholars got literary works composed on religion, philosophy and law chief amongst which is the commentary on the Vedas written by Sayanacharya. Praising the strength and prosperity of the Vijaynagar empire during his time, Farishta writes that the Bahmani rulers maintained their superiority on the basis of their bravery whereas the rulers of Vijaynagar far excelled them in strength, wealth and extent of the empire.

(iii) Harihar II (1377–1404)

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

The Bahmani ruler Firozshah defeated him. In 1399 a peace treaty was concluded in which the ruler of Vijaynagar had to pay a big indemnity. Harihar II died in August 1404 and his death was followed by a war for succession amongst his sons. In this struggle his third son Devrai I succeeded ultimately. During the period of struggle at first Virupaksha became the ruler from whom the throne was snatched by Bukka II after only a few months and he ruled for two years (AD 1405–1406). He was followed by Devrai I on the 5 November AD 1406.

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(iv) Devrai I (AD 1406-1422)

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

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

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

(v) Devrai II (AD 1426-1446)

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

According to Farishta, he recruited about 2,000 Muslims in his army and gave Jagirs to them. These Muslim soldiers trained the Hindus in the art of archery but some historians do not accept this statement of Farishta on the excuse that on the basis of historical sources, it is proved beyond doubt that there were about 10,000 Muslim soldiers in the army of Devrai. He also imported horses from Arab countries in very large number. Undauntedly, the efforts of Devrai II resulted in an improvement in the army but at the same time burdening the state economy though Devrai II extended his patronage to many literates and poets as well. Famous Telgu poets Shrinath was the court poet of Devrai II. It is said that he was showered with an immense quantity of gold coins. Devrai II was probably a liberal from the religious point of view. He gave full freedom to the Muslims to construct mosques in his kingdom. His reign saw the sojourn of the

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famous Persian poet Abdurrazaq to Vijaynagar. He had greatly praised Vijaynagar and Devrai II. This great ruler died about in mid of AD 1446.

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

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

(vii) Virupaksha II (AD 1465-1485)

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

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

Saluva dynasty (AD 1486-1505)

Let us analyse the various rulers of the Saluva dynasty.

(i) Saluva Narsingh

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

(ii) Regent Narsa Naik and Immadi Narsingh (AD 1493-1504)

Saluva Narsingh was followed on the throne by his eldest son, Immadi Narsingh. He was a minor, therefore, Commander Narsa Naik became his regent. Gradually, however,

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

Tuluva Dynasty (AD 1505–1565)

Let us analyse the various rulers of the Tuluva Dynasty

(i) Vir Narsingh (AD 1505)

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

(ii) Krishnadeva Raya (AD 1505–1529)

Krishnadeva Raya is supposed to be the real founder of the third dynasty of Vijaynagar. He ascended the throne on 8 August AD 1505. He had to face many problems at the time of his accession. But, gradually, he overcame all the difficulties and began an era of successes for Vijaynagar again. The rebellious feudal chieftain of Ummatur wanted to occupy a very large part of Karnataka. The Gajpati rulers of Orissa had under their control the northeastern districts of Vijaynagar empire and the ruler Prataprudra had assumed an attitude of open hostility and aggression. Though the Bahamani kingdom had been divided into five parts, yet there was a pressure from the side of the Bijapur state.

The Portuguese were fast assuming control over the Ocean trade. In spite of all these difficulties, Krishnadeva Raya achieved some important successes during the years of his reign which were as follows: (a) In AD 1509, he defeated the ruler of Bihar, Sultan Manmudshah, near Adoni. He had attacked Vijaynagar seeing Krishnadeva Raya surrounded by many difficulties; (b) In AD 1510, he suppressed the rebellious chieftain of Ummatur; (c) In AD 1512, Krishnadeva Raya started a campaign against Yusuf Adilshah of Bijapur and took away the Raichur Doab from him. Then he turned his attention towards Prataprudra Gajpatti of Orissa so that the eastern parts of the empire should be snatched from him. He organized a separate campaign to conquer each fort and arranged for the sending of confidential commanders to organize their administration after their conquests.

In AD 1514, he captured the fort of Udaigiri and imprisoned the uncle and aunt of the ruler of Orissa. His inscriptions speak of his achieving success in conquering many small forts like Achhanaki, Venukonda, Belankonda, and Nagarijunkonda etc. He also occupied the fort of Kondavidu. He remained in his capital from AD 1516–1519. The last victory of Krishnadeva Raya was against the ruler of Bijapur, Khan Ismile Adilshah.

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He tried to reconquer the area of Raichur Doab and dashed to the ground the famous fort of Gulburga and thus the influence of Vijaynagar became supreme over all the kingdoms of the South. But the results of these victories were that Krishnadev himself became very playful and placed inciting conditions before the rulers of the defeated kingdoms.

He detained the emissary of Adilshah for about a month in his own kingdom and sent a message that if Sultan Adilshah came and prostrated himself before Krishnadeva Raya and kissed his feet, only then would he return all his forts and other areas. The five Muslim kingdoms, which rose on the disintegration of the Bahamani kingdom, gradually realized the growing power of Vijaynagar and a feeling of combining against Vijaynagar gained ground amongst them. Krishnadeva Raya died in about AD 1529.

Vijaynagar became the supreme power of the Deccan by AD 1560. For about twenty months Ram Rai kept his control over the Muslim rulers. It would not be wrong to say that the military might of Vijaynagar kept under control the three Muslim kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Golkunda and Bidar and kept Bijapur at the mercy of Vijaynagar.

Decline of Vijaynagar Kingdom and the War of Rakshasi—Tangdi

The Muslim Kingdom of Deccan saw it clearly that Ram Rai was taking advantage of their mutual dissensions. All of them got scared of the growing power of Vijaynagar and decided to come together, forgetting their mutual differences. All the Muslim states decided to enter into a confederation against Vijaynagar. Vijaynagar had inflicted greatest harm on Ibrahim Qutubshah and Hussain Nizamshah. Therefore, they took the keenest interest into the formation of the confederation. Historians differ widely on the causes of the formation of this confederation and the background of the war of Rakshasi—Tangdi. Ferishta writes that the rulers of Vijaynagar had assaulted the Muslim women, desecrated the mosques and disrespected the Holy Quran. But no independent evidence corroborates this view. Hindu historians mention that the five Muslim Sultans were in opposition to Ram Rai but Muslim historians leave out the name of Berar from it. There is difference of opinion also on the question as to which Muslim Sultans took the lead in forming the great confederation against Vijaynagar.

According to Ferishta, this plan originated with Adilshah of Bijapur whereas Shirazi attributes it to Husain Nizamshah of Ahmadnagar. Whatever be the case, the actual cause of the formation of this confederation was that the power of Vijaynagar had increased greatly and all the Muslim Sultans of the Deccan felt jealous of it. They realized that they would not be able to rule peacefully unless and until the power of Vijaynagar was suppressed. The naughty behavior of Ram Rai of Vijaynagar can also be held responsible for this confederation and the ensuing war. Whatever be the causes of the war, there is doubt in the fact that Ibrahim Qutubshah of Golkunda took solid steps towards bringing together Ali Adilshah and Hussain Nizamshah who were engaged in mutual conflict for the control over Sholapur. Ibrahim Qutubshah made both the other rulers to give up their mutual hostility for the common cause of defeating Vijaynagar and consolidated their friendship by a matrimonial alliance. In accordance with this agreement Hussain Nizamshah married his daughter Chand Bibi to Ali Adilshah and gave Sholapur in dowry. The elder son of Hussain Nizamshah named Murtaza married the sister of Ali Adilshah.

In AD 1559, Ibrahim Qutubshah of Golkunda himself married the daughter of Hussain Nizamshah. Ali Bidarshah of Bidar also joined the confederation when the formation of the confederation was complete. He demanded of the ruler of Vijaynagar that he should return the forts of Raichur, Mudgal etc. Ram Rai did not heed the demand.

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Then the combined Muslim armies of the Deccan Sultans advanced towards Vijaynagar (28 December AD 1564) and encamped at Taliota. According to Ferishta, this battle was fought at Talikota but the actual field of the battle was between the two villages Rakshsi and Tangdi. Therefore, historians refer to it not as the battle of Talikota but as the battle of Rakshsi and Tangdi. Both the armies stood opposite each other for some time and the actual battle started on 25 January AD 1565.

Initially, the armies of Muslim confederation were defeated but later on the Muslim artillery spelled ruin in the Vijaynagar army and its cavalry disordered them. In the time of this crisis, the Muslim generals in the Vijaynagar army went over to the side of their co-religionists along with their armies and dealt a fatal blow in the midst of the battle. Ram Rai was encircled and Hussain Nizamshah immediately imprisoned and murdered him so that Ali Adilshah might not press for his release. The victors entered Vijaynagar and encamped there for five months and perpetrated massacre, plunder, desecration and destruction in such a manner that Vijaynagar whose beauty was praised by all the foreign travellers alike was ruined to such an extent that its reconstruction was rendered impossible. The period of the glory of the Vijaynagar empire is said to have ended after this war. Although the Vijaynagar empire continued to shrink and lost its political significance in South India, the next ruler Tirumal entered into a treaty with the Deccan Sultans and gave them back all the regions that Ram Rai had snatched from them. It is said that in AD 1568 Vincent II, the son of the actual ruler Tirumal Rai, who was ruling in the name of nominal ruler Sedative Rai had made Penougonda his new capital, and murdered the nominal ruler Sadashiv Rai. With this, the third dynasty of Vijaynagar came to an end and was founded the Aravidue dynasty.

Chief rulers of this dynasty were—Tirumal Rai (AD 1568-1572), Shir Ranga I (AD 1572-1585), Venkata Rai II (AD 1586-1614), Shir Ranga II (AD 1614-1617), Ramdev Rai (AD 1618-1630), Venkata III (AD 1630-1642) and Shir Ranga III (AD 1642-1649). In 1649, this kingdom had to surrender itself before Bijapur and Shri Ranga III stayed on in Mysore and died there only in AD 1672 dreaming of regaining his lost kingdom.

Causes of the Conflict between Vijaynagar and Bahamani Empires

Let us analyse the causes of the conflict between Vijaynagar and Bahamani Empire.

The region of Raichur Doab

The most important cause of the conflict between the two empires was the region of Raichur of Doab. Both the powers wanted to establish their hold over this fertile region, situated between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra. This remained the single most important cause of conflict in the reigns of Bukka Rai I, Harishar II etc.

Diamond mines

Some historians are of the opinion that there were diamond mines in the Golkunda region of Bahamani empire and the rulers of Vijaynagar wanted to make their empire prosperous by establishing their hold over them.

Imperialist Ambition

Some scholars are of opinion that the rulers of both the Vijaynagar and the Behan kingdoms were imperialist and ambitious. They wanted to extend their empire to include the entire Deccan and therefore, the conflict went on between the two in order to acquire the new regions and sometimes to regain their lost territory.

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Rewati Dwipa (Goa)

Some historians are of the opinion that the Kings of Vijaynagar wanted to occupy the Revati Dwipa to augment their foreign trade and to acquire horses of superior breed as this island was situated on the western coast of the Bahamani empire's boundary.

Growing Power of Vijaynagar

By AD 1560, Vijaynagar had come to occupy the highest position in the southern India. It had suppressed completely the power of the three Kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Golkunda and Bidar and the existence of Bijapur was on the mercy of Vijaynagar. This growing power of Vijaynagar terrorized the Muslim Sultanates of the Deccan and forgetting their mutual differences, they decided to form a confederation and launch a struggle against Vijaynagar.

Hurting the religious sentiments of the Muslims by Vijaynagar

According to some scholars, Vijaynagar perpetrated many atrocities in its struggle against Ahmadnagar (AD 1522). Many Muslim women had to suffer humiliation. The Vijaynagar armies not only desecrated the mosque but also insulted the Holy Quran. This led the Sultanates rising on the decline of Bahamani kingdom to come together in a fight against Vijaynagar.

Haughtiness of Ram Rai

According to some historians, the abandonment by Ram Rai of the old defensive policy following the Vijaynagar rulers and his adaptation of a new strategy of making the Muslim states fight against one another and his haughty behaviour towards the Deccan Sultanates after his numerous victories were the major factors that led to the ultimate fierce battle (Battle of Rakshsi Tangdi) between the five Muslim states rising due to the decline of the Bahamani Kingdom and the Vijaynagar empire.

Jealousy of the Power of Vijaynagar

In fact, Bahamani and Vijaynagar empires were the patrons of two different cultures viz. the Muslim and the Hindu. Both the empires followed expansionist policies. Each considered the other as a danger to its existence. When the Vijaynagar empire acquired a deal of power by AD 1560, the Muslim Sultans grew jealous of it. Because of the matrimonial alliances, they drew near to each other and now began to consider themselves powerful enough. Ali Adilshah then demanded the return of the forts of Raichur, Mudgal and other forts which were not heeded by Ram Rai. This led to the battle of Rakshsi - Tangdi.

5.3 BAHMANI KINGDOM: ADMINISTRATION AND DECLINE

An ambitious Afghan, Alauddin Hasan in AD 1347, founded Bahamani empire. He had gradually enhanced his power under a Brahmin named Gangu so he was called Hasan Gangu. The Brahmin had treated him kindly and had professed that he would be a Sultan one day. According to Ferishta, it was due to his gratefulness to the Brahmin that Hasan later on assumed the title Bahamani and his accession he assumed the title of Alauddin Hasan Bahmani Shah. But Ferishta's opinion is not accepted these days. It is said that

Check Your Progress

1. What was the ruling period of the Vijaynagar Empire?
2. Name the three successive dynasties of Vijaynagar Empire.

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he considered himself to be a descendant of a semi-mythical Persian warrior called Bahaman Shah. Whatever may be the reason behind the assumption of this title, it is certain that because of this title his empire came to be called the Bahamani empire. The rise of this empire is attributed to the following factors:

Mistaken policies of Muhammad Tughlaq

Because of the fantastic plans and defects of the character of Muhammad Tughlaq there was a wide spread feeling of revolt against him everywhere. Following his imperialist policies, he brought major parts of the Deccan under him and took many measures for the establishment of consolidated administration there. For every group of hundred villages, he appointed officials called *Amiran-i-Sadah*, who were also called 'Sadi'. They were responsible for the collection of revenue and kept the local troops under control. Because of these powers, these officials became very powerful and when revolts spread everywhere against Muhammad Tughlaq, these Sadi Amirs also raised the banner of revolt in the western and the southern India, taking advantage of the opportunity. The revolt of the Sadis originated in Gujarat and in order to suppress it Muhammad Tughlaq came to Bharoach and ordered the Governor of the Deccan Amir-ul-Mulk to send all the Sadis under Amiran-i-Sadah of Daulatabad to Bharoach. According to the historian Neelkanth Shastri, 'Muhammad Tughlaq had summoned all the Sadis of Daulatabad because he suspected their honesty.'

He writes further that many of the foreign officials of the revenue department of Daulatabad had been unsuccessful in recognizing the amount which was expected of them. According to the Sultan's orders, the Governor of Daulatabad sent these hundred Amirs to Bharoach under armed escorts. It is said that Muhammad Tughlaq had caused hundreds of Amirs of Malwa to be murdered mercilessly before this. When these Amirs learned this, they rose in revolt after the first day of their journey and came back to Daulatabad. They held a secret conference and within the next three days chose one Ismil Khan, the eldest among them as their leader. After defeating the Governor of Muhammad Tughlaq in Daulatabad, Ismile Khan declared himself as the emperor of Deccan under the title of Nasiruddin Shah.

He conferred the titles of Amir-Ur-Umra and Zafar Khan on Hasan, the chief of the confederacy of Amirs. On learning about this revolt, Muhammad Tughlaq himself came to Daulatabad from Bharoach at the head of a vast army and imprisoned the rebels in the Daulatabad fort. Some of the rebels, under the leadership of Hasan Gangu (Zafar Khan), including the brother of Ismile Khan ran away from the fort and reached Gulburga. Soon they encircled the Daulatabad fort where Amirani-Sadah and his army was imprisoned. But before he could free the fort of the Daulatabad of the rebels, he got the news of the revolts in the Gujarat and had to go back to suppress them.

Immediately Zafar Khan and his supporters, who had already occupied Gulburga and Sagar made an effort to free the fort of the Daulatabad of the remaining army of Muhammad-Bin-Tughlaq. He defeated the army of Muhammad Tughlaq very easily, murdered its commander and forced the army to run away to Malwa.

Popularity of Zafar Khan

Zafar Khan soon became very popular amongst the Amirs and the army because of his many achievements. Luck also favoured Zafar Khan. Ismile Shah abdicated power in the favour of Zafar Khan. The army and the people at Daulatabad had welcomed this decision of his. As a result, Hasan Gangu alias Zafar Khan declared himself the king on

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the 3rd August, AD 1347, with the title of Abul Muzaffar Allauddin Behmanshah and the empire established by him came to be called the Bahamani empire.

Rise and Extension of Bahamani Empire

Allauddin Hasaan Bahamani (3 August, AD 1347–11 February, AD 1358)

He ruled for eleven years. He proved himself to be a great conqueror and a powerful ruler. He adopted a policy of incessant conquests to extend his small kingdom. He built his capital at Gulburga and named it Ahsanabad and decorated it with beautiful buildings. When he died on 11 February, 1358, his empire extended to river Baniganga in the north, Krishna in the South, Daulatabad in the West to Bhorgir in the East. For purposes of administration, he divided his empire into four parts and appointed a Governor for each. Three of them were named after their famous cities as Galburga, Daulatabad, Bidar and the fourth one was called Berar. According to Ferishta, the cause of the success of the first Bahamani Sultan was his generosity.

He wrote that on being asked by someone as to the secret of his success, the Sultan said that it was possible because of his mercy for everyone be his friend or enemy and his policy of goodwill towards the poor. According to Isami, he was the first Muslim ruler of India who ordered that *Jaziya* should not be levied on the Hindus and allowed all agricultural produce to be imported in his kingdom without any duties. If the statement of Isami is true, it would have to be conceded that Hasan believed in a policy of secularism for which he needs to be praised.

Muhammad I (11 February, AD 1358 – 21 April, AD 1375)

After the death of Allauddin Hassan Bahmanshan, his son Muhammad I ascended the throne on 11 February, AD 1358. He was very industrious and in force an able administrator and the administrative system started by him not only continued to be in the Bahamani empire for a long time but it also influenced the administrative system of the kingdoms arising on the ruins of the Bahamani empire. He kept the entire Bahamani kingdom divided into four provinces (Tarafs) – Daulatabad, Bidar, Berar and Gulburga. He appointed four governors over them. But the title of each governor was different e.g., the governor of Daulatabad was called Masnad-I-Ali, that of Berar Majlis-I-Ali, that of Bidar Azam-I-Humayun and that of Gulburga Malik-I-Nayak. Out of the four governors, the governor of Gulburga was supposed to be the most important. He only wielded authority over Bijapur.

He established a council of eight ministers along with Vakil us Sultanate or Chief Peshwa and adopted the decentralization of the administration. The other ministers of his period were Wazir-I-Kul (Minister for Supervision), Amir-I-Jumla (Finance), Wazir-I-Ashraf (Foreign Affairs), Nazir (Deputy Finance Minister), Peshwa (Deputy Prime-Minister), Kotwal and Sadar IJahan (Justice). He reorganized the bodyguard force and divided them into four military departments. He took rigid measures to stop dacoits and thagi and murdered about two hundred dacoits. He started the use of gunpowder (first of all) which brought about a revolution in the military organization. Muhammad I was not only an able administrator but also was a great conqueror. He fought many battles against Vijaynagar and Teler gana. He acquired Golkunda after defeating Telengana but his wars against Vijaynagar failed to bring about any territorial gain for the Bahamani empire. He died in AD 1375 He got the world famous mosque of Gulburaga constructed.

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Allauddin Majahid (21 April, AD 1375–16 April, AD 1378)

After Muhammad I's death, his nineteen year old son Mujahid ascended the throne. He demanded from the Vijaynagar empire some areas of Raichur Doab, but as was expected the demand was refused and there upon he invaded Vijaynagar but was defeated. On 16 April 1378, his uncle Daud Khan murdered him and became the Sultan.

Daud Khan (16 April, AD 1378–21 May, AD 1378)

The Amirs helped the sister of Mujahid to hatch a plot against the murderer Daud Khan. He was murdered in Jama Masjid of Gulburga by a man named Bakka.

Muhammad Shah II (21 May, AD 1378–20 April, AD 1379)

Muhammad Shah II was peace loving. He took special interest in religion and literature. He invited poet Hafiz from Persia, who however could not reach because of a storm. During the time of famine, he liberally helped the people from the royal treasury but he died of a fever in April AD 1379.

Gayasuddin alias Tahamtan (4 April, AD 1379–14 June, AD 1397)

He became the Sultan at the age of seventeen. He appointed many Persians on important posts which was not liked by staunch Sunnis and one of them Tugalchin blinded and dethroned him. He placed on the throne his younger brother Shamsuddin Daud and himself became his regent.

Shamsuddin Daud II (14 June, AD 1397–11 November AD 1397)

The daughters of Sultan Mahmood II were married to Firoz and Ahmad, the Sultan had brought them up as his sons. Both the princesses inspired their husbands to avenge the death of their brother. After some initial reverses, their husbands succeeded in bringing Tugalchin and Malik Daud under their control in November 1397. Shamsuddin Daud II was forced to abdicate the throne. Now Firoz Tajuddin ascended the throne as Tajuddin Firoz Shah.

Tajuddin Firoz Shah (11 November, AD 1397–22 September, AD 1422)

Tajuddin was a very healthy and an intelligent Sultan. According to Ferishta, he was the blessed of the Sultans of Bahamani Kingdom. Initially, he was very liberal and possessed high character but gradually his character declined. It is said that he appointed the Brahmins on the high posts and earned his livelihood by selling the copies of Holy Quran. He waged wars against Warrangals (Telangana), king Kherla and Harihar II of Vijaynagar. He defeated the Vijaynagar as well in AD 1398 and AD 1406 but was himself defeated in AD 1420. He had to surrender the eastern and western forts of his empire to Vijaynagar. This defeat had a very adverse effect on him and he had to abdicate his throne in favour of his brother Ahmadshah.

Even though he suffered defeat ultimately in the battlefield, he patronized literature and art during his reign. He patronized many foreign scholars in his court and also took a keen interest in architecture and built a palace of Firozabad with four vast doorways on the bank of the river Bhima.

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Shihabuddin Admad II (22 September, AD 1422–14 July, AD 1436)

He is known in the Indian history as the first Sultan of the Bahamanis of Bidar because he shifted his capital from Gulburga to Bidar immediately after his accession (on 1 November, AD 1422). According to the historians, he affected the transfer because he wanted to get freedom from the intrigue ridden atmosphere of Gulburga where many royal murderers lived. According to another opinion, he shifted his capital because of the healthy climate and fertile soil of Bidar. According to a third opinion, Bidar was situated at the centre of the Bahamani empire that is why it was made the capital. He named Bidar as Muhammadabad.

He appointed Khalaf Hassan, who was instrumental in his acquisition of throne, as his Wakil-Sultanate or Prime Minister. He waged a war against Vijaynagar to avenge the defeat of his brother. He defeated the rule of Vijaynagar on the battle-field, acquired vast wealth and assassinated many people over there. In AD 1424, he attacked Telengana, occupied Warrangal and made it a part of the Bahamani empire. In AD 1425 he invaded Mahur and murdered its king along with 6,000 of his supporters. In AD 1429 he defeated the Sultan of Malwa named Hoshangshani but himself suffered a defeat at the hands of Ahmadshah Gujarati and was forced to sign a treaty. After his defeat at Gujarat, the chiefs of Telengana made an unsuccessful bid for freedom. During his reign jealousy increased between the two groups of Amirs viz., Deccanis and Afaquis (Iranis, Arab and Turkish Amirs) Sultans sympathy towards the Afaquis accelerated it all the more. He died in AD 1436.

Allauddin Ahmad II (14 July, AD 1436–4 March, AD 1458)

During his lifetime, the effect of the foreign Amirs increased. He sent his brother Muhammad to ask the ruler of Vijaynagar named Devrai II to give him the pending tribute before leading a military campaign against Vijaynagar. He was successful in this effort of his but he became very vain as a result of this success and claimed equal share with the Sultan in the Sultanate. But he was defeated. The Sultan however pardoned him and made him the governor of Raichur Doab. For the rest of his life he was loyal to his brother. In AD 1436 Allauddin Ahmad II led a campaign against the ruler of Sangameshwar. He was successful there also and the ruler of Sangameshwar had to marry his daughter to the Sultan. The Sultan of Kandesh carried out invasions against Allauddin and got help from the Sultan of Gujarat and the Rai of Gondwana.

The Bahamani Commander of Berar was imprisoned in the fort of Namala and Nasir Khan got his name inscribed on the main mosque of the province. During the time of this crisis the Afiqis or the foreign Amirs advised the Sultan to fight against Nasir Khan with full preparations. Their leader (Malik-ut-Tuzzar Khalaf Hassan Basari) was successful as well which led to an increase in the influence of foreign Amirs at the court and the decline of the Deccani nobles. Seeing the successes of the Bahamani empire, the Rai of Vijaynagar effected a reform in his army, recruited thousands of Muslims in his army and with their help conquered the fort of Mudgal in Raichur Doab and also plundered Nusartabad, Sagar and Bijapur. The Sultan once again carried out a successful campaign against Vijaynagar and captured the fort of Mudgal and also claimed the revenue due. Allauddin's character became worse as the age increased and he remained immersed in pleasures. The Deccanic nobles made a plan to effect an end to the foreign nobles. In AD 1446–1447, Konkan was attacked and an army of Afaquis was sent under the leadership of Khalaf Hassan.

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The ruler of Sangameshwar was also helping the Deccani nobles in this intrigue. In this war, the Afaquis were defeated and their leader Khalaf Hassan was killed along with his many associates. The remaining Amirs were charged with treachery and the Deccani nobles made the Sultan to murder them. It is said that about 22,000 Afaquis were murdered on the occasion of a royal feast. The Deccan established their control over their property but the Sultan repented heavily when he came to know the truth through Qasim Beg and some foreign nobles and he also gave death punishment to the Deccanis. He, again, started giving big offices to the Afaquis as against the Deccanis. The brother-in-law of the Sultan, Jalal Khan, revolted in Golkunda and declared himself the Sultan. To suppress this revolt, a foreign noble named Mahmud Gawan was appointed. He suppressed the revolt successfully but the Sultan pardoned the rebel Jalal Khan. The Sultan died due to a deep wound on 4 March, AD 1458.

Humayun Shah (4 March, AD 1458–11 September, AD 1461)

After the death of Allauddin Ahmad II his son Humayun, who, being the eldest son had already been appointed as heir apparent by his father, succeeded him on the throne. He was a very severe natured man. He removed his younger brother Hassan Khan and his supporters from his way before becoming the Sultan. He appointed Mahmud Gawan as his Prime Minister. Because of his ability the Sultan succeeded in suppressing three revolts against himself. He was assassinated by his own servants while he was drunk on 11 September, AD 1461. People were jubilant over his death because they were fed up with him because of his cruel nature.

Ahmad Hassan and his Regency (11 September, AD 1461–30 July, AD 1463)

Humayun was followed by his eight years old son on the throne. The administrative council formed during the reign of Humayun himself started running the administration. It consisted of three members including the queen mother Makdoom-i-Jaha-Nargis and Mahmud Gawan.

The queen mother had the decisive power. The Hindu kings of Telangana and Orissa and Mahmood I of Malwa launched an attack on the Bahamani Kingdom. The Bahamani kingdom defeated Telangana and Orissa, but was defeated by the armies of Malwa. Queen mother and her younger son Mahmud III were forced to take refuge in the fort of Firozabad. Mahraud Gawan appealed to Mahmud Bigar of Gujarat for help, which was accepted by him, and the army of Malwa was driven back. On the 30 July, AD 1463 Ahmad Hassan died and his younger brother Mahmud III ascended the throne.

Shahabuddin Mahmud III and the Regency (13 July, AD 1463–22 March, AD 1482)

After the death of Ahmad Hassan (alias Nizamuddin III) his younger brother Mahmud Khan ascended the throne assuming the title Muhammad III. He was only nine years old therefore the Regency continued to run the administration even in his time. One member of the Regency Khwaja Jahan revolted and for this treachery the queen mother punished him by getting him hanged. Mahmud Gawan, who was devoting great attention towards the education of Baby Sultan was given the title Amir-ul-Umra and he was ordered to stay in the capital itself. When the Sultan was fifteen years of age, the queen mother left the politics and the Sultan began to rule under the supervision of Mahmud Gawan. In the Prime Minister ship of Mahmud Gawan the Bahamani empire not only

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achieved cultural progress but also for the first time it was extended from the Koromandal Coast to the Arabian Sea Coast.

In the reign of Mahmud III in AD 1472 Bankapur was invaded, whose ruler Virkan surrendered. Next four-five years were spent in struggle with Orissa in AD 1474–1475 because of the misbehavior of the officials at Kondavidu. The people there had risen in revolt and had murdered the Governor. After a prolonged struggle the ruler Purushotam Gajpati was forced to surrender but, soon after, in AD 1480–1481, the army posted at Kondavidu revolted and went over to the side of Vijaynagar ruler Rai Narshingh. The Bahamani Sultan suppressed this revolt and invaded Vijaynagar to teach the kingdom a lesson. Vijaynagar was defeated and a major part to it was annexed to the Bahamani empire. This was the last and the most important achievement of Mahmud Gawan. The Deccanis plotted against him. To prove the charges framed by them, they got a plain paper stamped and on it a forged letter was drafted in the name of Raja Purushotan on the behalf of Mahmud Gawan. In it was written that the people were fed up with Sultan Muhammad because of his cruelty and drunkenness and that he should invade the Bechamani kingdom. When this letter was shown to the Bahamani Sultan became very angry.

Though Mahmud Gawan repeatedly asserted that he had no concern whatsoever with that letter but Sultan paid to heed to it and ordered his Abyssinian Slave Gulam Jouhar to slay the Wazir at that very spot. It was done (5 April, AD 1481). Thus was killed the only adviser of the Bahamani empire who was honest and able alike. After Mahmud Gawan's death when the Sultan came to know about the plot of the Deccani nobles against Gawan, he was deeply grieved and himself died within a year on 22 March, AD 1482.

The Successors of Mahmud III and the Decline of the Bahamani Empire (AD 1482–1527)

Mahmud III was followed by his younger son Mahmud Shah as Sultan. He was very incapable and pleasure loving. Since he was only twelve years of age, he made Nizamulmulk his Regent or Malik Naik. The struggle between the two sections of the Amirs increased because of their selfish interests. It is said that on the incitement by the Deccani nobles the Sultan issued the orders of the massacre of the Turks and about 4000 people were done to death. After the domination of the Deccani nobles for four years the Sultan made an unsuccessful attempt to get Nizamulmulk assassinated during the Telangana campaign so that he should be able to get out of their strangle hold. He became inclined towards the African Group. On the other hand, the Governor of Telangana revolted and there was revolt in Goa and Chakan as well which was assisted by Amir Yusuf Adil, staying at Bijapur at that time. He had left the port of Bidar in anger. Malik Hassan tried to capture the treasury for becoming the Sultan himself. The Sultan thereupon ordered the Governor of Bidar Dilpasanc Khan to assassinate him. In November 1487 the Deccani noble, in alliance with their African counterpart, tried unsuccessfully to slay the Sultans.

In AD 1490, Yusuf Adil Khan of Bijapur, and Fathulla Imadulmulk of Berar declared their independence in AD 1512. Qutubul Mulk of Golkunda and Barid-UI-Mulk of Bidar also declared themselves independent as also like the Nizamulmulk of Ahmednagar. Sultan Mahmud III and three of his immediate successors (who were only nominal Sultans) remained a puppet in the hands of Barid UI-Mulk of Bidar and after his death that of his son Amir Ali Brid. The last Bahamani Sultan was Kalimulla

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Shah. In AD 1527 with his death ended the Bahamani empire as well and on its ruins arose five independent kingdoms

(1) Baridshahi Kingdom of Bidar, (2) Adilshahi Kingdom of Bijapur, (3) Nizamshahi Kingdom of Ahmednagar, (4) Imadshahi Kingdom of Berar and (5) Qutubshahi Kingdom of Golkunda.

Causes of the downfall of Bahamani Kingdom

Many causes were responsible for the decline of the Bahamani Kingdom. Chief causes amongst which were:

- (i) **Internal intrigues and Civil Wars:** In its 175 years of reign the Bahamani Dynasty had in all seventeen Sultans; out of which five were assassinated, three deposed, two blinded and two died of excessive drinking. It can be said, therefore, that due to the lack of any definite rules of succession, incessant intrigue royal household as well as the highest officials caused monetary and physical damage to it and contributed to the growth of indiscipline. During the reign of Sultan Shahabuddin Mahmud, the Queen mother ordered Khan-i-Jahan to be hanged.
- (ii) **Partisanship of the Deccanis (original inhabitants) and the Afaqis (foreign settlers):** Some historians say that the Bahamani Kingdom was founded by those Amirs who had come and settled in India from Persia, Turkey etc. There was a deep enmity between them and the original inhabitants the Deccanis who had embarrassed Islata. They wanted to give the entire credit for every success to their party and put the blame for every failure on the opposite group. In this party rivalry an able man like Mahmud Gawan became a victim. He had served the Bahamani Kingdom for thirty-five years but the party politics led to his assassination and within a short time short his death, the Bahamani Kingdom disintegrated.
- (iii) **Religious fanaticism of some rulers:** Some of the Bahamani rulers were religious fanatics and they did not show real sympathy towards their Hindu subjects. The Bahamani Sultans considered it their God-given duty to propagate Islamic culture in the Deccan. Since Muslims numbered less than the Hindus, many a time they raised the slogan of Jihad (crusade) and the Muslim soldiers lost their lives in large numbers in the ensuing warfare. Fanatic Sultans tried to carry out a general massacre of the Hindus quite a number of times, which aroused the fanaticism of the Hindus as well, and thus the Bahamani empire grew weak progressively.
- (iv) **Defective Foreign Policy:** Bahamani Sultans followed a policy of warfare and enmity towards all their neighbouring states like Malwa, Khandesh, Gujarat, Telangana, Vijaynagar etc. Majority of the Sultans tried to win popularity by their military achievements; very few of them utilized their time for the public welfare activities. Their attitude weakened the Bahamani Kingdom.
- (v) **Excessive authority given to Provincial Governors:** Ever since the time of founders of the Bahamani empire, the Governors of four major provinces (who were called Tarafs) were given the right to collect revenue and maintain a big army. The centre had no great control over them. Mahmud Gawan tried to divide them into eight parts and tried to bring them under the greater control of the centre but the Sultans following him could not arrest their ambition and soon after his death, they started proclaiming themselves independent and the central Government could do nothing against it.

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- (vi) **Financial Disparity:** Some historians hold opinion that an important cause of the downfall of the Bahamani empire was financial disparity prevailing there. A Russian merchant Atansiuv Nikitn, who stayed in Bidar in AD 1470-1474 wrote that the population of the empire was too much but the condition of the common man was miserable, whereas the Amirs were very rich and lived a luxurious life. Briefly then, the party groupings in the Bahamani court, administrative defects and a protected struggle against Vijaynagar and other kingdoms contributed to its downfall.

5.4 THE AFGHANS: THE LODHIS

Bahlul founded the Lodi Dynasty after murdering the vizar Hamid Khan. The history of the seventy-five years of the Lodi Dynasty is that of bitter conflicts. For Lodi rulers, it was a fight on three fronts. First, they had to fight against equally powerful neighbouring rulers of the states of Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat and Mewar; either for the safety of their kingdom or to extend their power and influence. The rulers of each of these neighbouring states probably possessed better strength and resources than the Lodis, but none had the prestige and influence that was attached to the Sultanate of Delhi. Therefore, each of them desired to capture Delhi. This led to their constant conflict with the Lodis. The Lodis also had to wage wars against those nobles and jagirdars of the Delhi Sultanate who, taking advantage of the weakness of previous Sultans, had become virtually semi-independent and paid annual revenue only at the point of the sword. The weakness of the later Tughlaqs had encouraged tendencies of decentralization and independence among the powerful nobles, courtiers and provincial governors who, therefore, neither feared nor honoured any central authority. The Sayyids had completely failed to check these tendencies. Therefore, when the Lodis attempted for the centralization of administration and restoration of the prestige of the Sultan, they had to contend against all those who represented these tendencies against the interests of a centralised state. Third, the Lodis had to fight hard against their own Afghan nobles. Those very Afghan nobles who were the source of strength of the Lodi rulers proved to be their enemies. The Afghans possessed certain virtues, viz. spirit of independence, equality and chivalry. But then, these very virtues proved detrimental to the efforts of the Lodi Sultans for centralisation and the establishment of a strong monarchy at the centre. The worst problem of the Lodi Sultans was the tribal instinct of independence of their Afghan nobles and that was primarily responsible for their downfall. The Afghan nobles failed to recognise the need of a strong centralized state under one leader and therefore, failed to cooperate with their Sultans which, ultimately, gave a favourable opportunity to the Mughal ruler, Babur, to attack and conquer India.

Bahlul Lodi (1451-1489)

Sultan Bahlul Lodi, the founder of Lodi dynasty, had a humble beginning. He belonged to the Shahu Khel clan of the Lodis which formed an important branch of the Afghans. The members of this clan first settled themselves in India in the territory around Lamghan and Multan. They served the Turkish Sultan of Delhi. Later in 1341, Malik Shahu, the progenitor of the Lodi rulers in India killed the governor of Multan and occupied it. But it brought no fruitful result because Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq attacked and conquered Multan immediately after his successful adventure. The successors of Malik Shahu, therefore, contented themselves by carrying on trade with India. One among them, the grandson of Shahu, Malik Bahram settled himself in Multan early in Firuz Shah's reign

Check Your Progress

3. Who found the Bahamani Empire?
4. Where did Allauddin Hasaan Bahamani build his capital?

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and accepted service under its governor, Malik Mardan Daulat. Bahram's eldest son, Malik Sultan Shah Lodi served the first Sayyid ruler, Khiz Khan very well, and in return got the title of Islam Khan and the governorship of Sarhind. The father of Bahlul, Malik Kala was the brother of this Islam Khan. Malik Kala himself was a brave person and established himself as an independent chief. But he died before the birth of Bahlul. Islam Khan, Bahlul's uncle and governor of Sarhind, therefore, brought Bahlul up under his care. Islam Khan found Bahlul to be diligent and daring, thus he married his daughter with him, and nominated him his successor. Therefore, after the death of Islam Khan, Bahlul became the governor of Sarhind. He went on increasing his power and influence, and for the timely help which he gave to Sultan Muhammad Shah against the ruler of Malwa, was awarded the title of Khan-i-Jahan and also the possession over Punjab. Bahlul, afterwards, attempted twice to capture Delhi but failed. But when vazir Hamid Khan called him to Delhi, he saw an opportunity. Sultan Ala-ud-din Alam Shah had already left for Badayun while Hamid Khan was an imprudent man. Hamid Khan first did not trust Bahlul and did not permit the Afghans to enter the court. But Bahlul proved shrewder than him. He showed perfect courtesy and servility to Hamid Khan and made him believe that he had no more ambition than continuing to be the commander of the army. He asked his followers to behave as simpletons in the presence of the vazir. Hamid Khan, therefore, felt perfectly satisfied with them and allowed Bahlul and his Afghan followers to visit the audience hall daily. Bahlul, one day, went with his followers to pay the usual courtesy to the vazir and there Qutub Khan, a cousin of Bahlul, put a chain round the hands of Hamid Khan and told him that it was in the interest of the State that he should take rest for some time. Thus, Bahlul easily imprisoned Hamid Khan and got him killed afterwards. He invited Ala-ud-din Alam Shah to come to Delhi. The offer was refused. He, then, ascended the throne in Delhi on 19 April 1451 under the title of Sultan Abul Muzaffar Bahlul Shah Ghazi and had his name proclaimed in the Khutba.

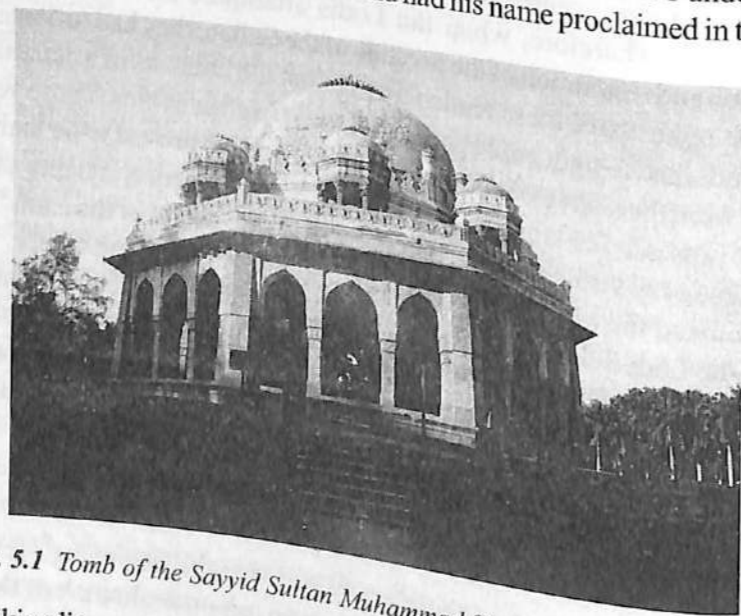


Fig. 5.1 Tomb of the Sayyid Sultan Muhammad Shah in Lodi Gardens, Delhi

Source: Wikipedia

Bahlul had to tackle many baffling problems. Bahlul Lodi's chief tasks were to re-establish the lost authority of the Sultan, to establish the pre-eminence of the Afghans in the kingdom, to suppress the rebellious nobles and jagirdars, to preserve his kingdom

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from jealous neighbours and to strengthen his gains. In fact, the occupation of Delhi by Bahlul had not increased his territorial possessions significantly, but had increased his responsibilities manifold. Bahlul faced all these problems boldly and tactfully. He tried to please his Afghan nobles who alone could help him in strengthening his position. He gave them extensive jagirs, respected them, called Afghans from outside India and gave them jagirs and high offices. He, however, was equally interested in restoring the authority of the Sultan. Therefore, he punished disobedient and rebellious nobles and jagirdars. He undertook a series of military expeditions to Mewar, Sambhal, Rapri, Bhogaon, Gwalior, etc., and forced their chiefs to offer submission and pay annual tribute. He also succeeded in exacting loyalty from his Afghan nobles. Bahlul, of course, could not pursue the ideal of an absolute monarchy and his policy of giving extensive jagirs to the Afghan nobles, certainly, contributed to the weakness of Lodi Sultans, yet there is no doubt that he succeeded in keeping under his control the spirit of independence of the Afghans and in exacting obedience from them. Bahlul gave no opportunity to his Afghan nobles to carve out independent states of their own.

One major success of Sultan Bahlul Lodi was the subjugation of the state of Jaunpur. Mahmud Shah Sharqi, the ruler of Jaunpur, had married a daughter of the Sayyid Sultan, Ala-ud-din Alam Shah. This lady constantly urged her husband to attack Delhi in order to avenge the disgrace of her father. Mahmud Shah, on his own part also, regarded himself as the rightful claimant to the throne of Delhi which earlier belonged to his father-in-law. He, therefore, attacked Delhi in the very first year of the reign of Bahlul. Bahlul, who had gone on an expedition towards Multan, returned quickly to his capital and then proceeded to face the enemy. Dariya Khan Lodi, the commander of the Sharqi army, left the side of his master before the battle which reduced the strength of the Sharqi army. Bahlul, therefore, succeeded in defeating Mahmud Shah at Narela in the vicinity of Delhi. Mahmud Shah did not forget this disgrace and attacked Etawah after some time. He again failed to gain any success and both parties agreed for peace. But no party fulfilled the terms of the treaty and dispute again broke out over the possession of Shamsabad. It also brought no result and peace was signed again. Sometime later, Bahlul attacked Jaunpur but without any result. In 1457, Mahmud Shah died. However, his son, Muhammad Shah continued to fight against Bahlul. But Muhammad Shah was soon killed by his brother Husain Shah, who now occupied the throne of Jaunpur. Husain Shah agreed for a treaty in the beginning of his reign and peace was maintained by the two rivals for four years. But Husain Shah was an ambitious and courageous ruler. He also pursued the policy of his predecessors and attacked Delhi. It led to continuous warfare between the two rival kingdoms, peace being transitory in between sometimes. Bahlul succeeded twice in capturing Malka-i-Jahan, the wife of Husain Shah, though sent her back to Jaunpur with honour both times. Husain Shah, however, was defeated in the end and forced to take refuge in Bihar. Bahlul annexed the kingdom of Jaunpur and appointed his son, Barbak Shah, as its ruler. The conquest of Jaunpur, which was more powerful and prosperous as compared to the kingdom of Delhi, was the greatest achievement of Bahlul. It proved his military talents, added to his resources and raised his prestige among other rulers. It enabled him to compel the Chiefs of Kalpi, Dholpur, Ban and Alipur to acknowledge his suzerainty.

Bahlul also attacked Gwalior during the last year of his reign. Raja Man Singh gave a present of eighty lakhs of tankas and Bahlul returned. On the way, he fell ill and died near Jalali in the middle of July 1489 AD.

Check Your Progress

- Who was the weakest ruler of the Sayyid dynasty?
- What was the worst problem for the Lodhi sultans?

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5.5 SUMMARY

- During the last years of Muhammad Tughlaq's reign (AD 1324–1351), when disorder spread in most of the areas of his empire, the Hindus of the South India also did not deter from taking advantage of the situation. They founded the Vijaynagar Empire in AD 1336.
- The Vijaynagar Empire was ruled by three successive dynasties between AD 1336 and AD 1565 viz. Sangam Dynasty, (AD 1336–1485), Saluba Dynasty (AD 1485–1506) and Tuluva Dynasty (AD 1506–1565).
- Harihar I, Bakka I, Harihar II, Devrai I, Devrai II, Mallikarjun and Virupaksha II were the rulers of Sangam Dynasty.
- Saluva Narsingh, and Regent Narsa Naik and Immadi Narsingh ruled over Saluva dynasty.
- Vir Narsingh and Krishnadev Rai ruled over Tuluva dynasty.
- All the Muslim states decided to enter into a confederation against Vijaynagar.
- The actual cause of the formation of this confederation was that the power of Vijaynagar had increased greatly and all the Muslim Sultans of the Deccan realized that they would not be able to rule peacefully unless and until the power of Vijaynagar was suppressed.
- In AD 1347, Alauddin Hasan, an ambitious Afghan, founded the Bahamani empire.
- For every group of hundred villages, Muhammad Tughlaq appointed officials called *Amiran-i-Sadah*, who were also called 'Sadi'.
- Hasan Gangu, alias Zafar Khan, declared himself the king on 3 August 1347, with the title of Abul Muzaffar Allauddin Behmanshah, and the empire established by him came to be called the Bahmani Empire.
- Gaysuddin became the Sultan at the age of seventeen. He appointed many Persians on important posts.
- The daughters of Sultan Mahmood II were married to Firoz and Ahmad, who the Sultan had brought up as sons.
- In Indian history, Shihabuddin Admad II is known as the first Sultan of the Bahamanis of Bidar because he shifted his capital from Gulburga to Bidar immediately after his accession.
- Mahmud III was followed by Mahmud Shah, his younger son and an incapable and pleasure-loving man, as the Sultan. Since he was only twelve years of age, he made Nizamulmulk his Regent or Malik Naik.
- The causes responsible for the decline of the Bahamani Kingdom included internal intrigues, civil wars, partisanship of the Decanis and Afaquis, religious fanaticism, defective foreign policy, excessive authority given to provincial governors and financial disparity.
- Bahlul founded the Lodi Dynasty after murdering the vizar Hamid Khan.
- Bahlul had to tackle many baffling problems. His primary tasks were to restore the lost authority of the Sultan, to establish the supremacy of the Afghans in the

kingdom, to suppress the rebellious nobles and jagirdars, to safeguard his kingdom from jealous neighbours and to consolidate his gains.

- Bahlul was diplomatic, possessed commonsense and understood his limitations and circumstances. He did not try to conquer any other kingdom except that of Jaunpur.

5.6 KEY TERMS

- **Confederation:** An organization which consists of a number of parties or groups united in an alliance or league
- **Alias:** Indicates that a named person is also known or more familiar under another specified name
- **Internal intrigues:** Making secret plans to do something illicit or detrimental within a state/kingdom
- **Jagir:** Income from the piece of land assigned to officers by the ruler

5.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The ruling period of the Vijaynagar Empire was between AD 1336 and AD 1565.
2. Three successive dynasties of the Vijaynagar Empire were Sangam Dynasty, Saluba Dynasty and Tuluva Dynasty.
3. In AD 1347, Alauddin Hasan founded the Bahamani Empire.
4. Allauddin Hasaan Bahamani built his capital at Gulburga and named it Ahsanabad and decorated it with beautiful buildings.
5. Muhammad Shah was the weakest ruler of the Sayyid dynasty.
6. The worst problem for the Lodi Sultans was the tribal instinct of independence of their Afghan nobles.

5.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the causes of the decline of Vijaynagar? Write in brief.
2. List the rulers of the Bahamani Empire.
3. Assess in brief the foundation of Lodhi dynasty.

Long-Answer questions

1. Discuss the relation between Muhammad Tughlaq and the foundation of Vijaynagar.
2. Explain the rise and fall of three successive dynasties that ruled over Vijaynagar.
3. How was the Bahamani kingdom formed? Discuss in detail.
4. Assess the causes for the downfall of the Bahamani kingdom.
5. Discuss the relations between Sultan Bahlul Lodi and his Afghan nobles.

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