

# Chapter 3 - *PRE-MODERN ACCOMMODATIONS OF DIFFERENCE*

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- In the seventh century (around the year 610), a man named Muhammad, who was a merchant in Mecca, had a powerful vision that led to the creation of a new world religion in the Arabian peninsula.
- Muhammad's wife, Khadija, was the first person to believe in his message as a prophetic revelation. This gave her a very important role in the growing community of believers.
- **The contribution of women in building the Islamic community is significant, but it has only recently started to receive more attention from scholars.**
- However, it's important to note that Islam and Muslims have sometimes been unfairly portrayed as violent and intolerant.
- **In the year 644, Arab forces tried to expand their political influence into northwestern India, specifically the Makran coast. This attempt, led by the Caliph Umar, was not successful.**
- There was a second raid **during the rule of Ali (656–61), but it also failed to establish control over Makran.**
- The Arab forces were finally able to subdue Makran **under the rule of the first Umayyad caliph, Muawiya (661–80).**
- **In 712, Muhammad bin Qasim successfully conquered Sind, marking the easternmost expansion of early Islam in India.**
- Arab traders settled along the western coast of India from the 8th century onwards, **but their main interest was making money, not converting people to Islam.**
- Between the 7th and 11th centuries, northern India was politically decentralized, and both high Brahmanic and Shramanic traditions coexisted, with the latter being more widespread.
- This period in Indian history, far from being a "dark age," witnessed the strengthening of regional kingdoms that oversaw new economic ventures and cultural achievements.
- Al-Beruni, when making his comment, was not just representing a Muslim perspective, but also echoing the views of the Hindu elite on monotheism and polytheism.
- **India became a central hub in the Indian Ocean for trade and cultural exchange by the 11th century.**
- Islam's growth in North India was gradual, especially in regions where Hindu influence was weaker and Buddhist traditions were stronger.
- In the 8th century, Sind had a shared sovereignty system with multiple layers of authority.
- **The chachnama, is a text from the 13th century and the primary source of how the muslim conquest of Sindh took place** - it is a contrast from the text by Kautilya "Arthashastra" which advises people on how to avoid the dilution of absolute power and centralized power - the chachnama sheds light on how the muslim conquers interacted with the people of Sindh
- **From around the 8th to 9th centuries, trade with India became really important for the Islamic world.**
- India was exporting a lot, which brought in a steady flow of valuable metal and made India a central part of a big trading network with West Asia and China.
- **Mahmud of Ghazni led a series of raids (997–1030) into northwestern India. He was interested in getting the wealth stored in the palaces and temples of northern India.**
- **One time, Mahmud looted and damaged an idol in the famous Somnath temple in Gujarat.**
- These raids were driven by both practical economic and political reasons, as well as a religious zeal to destroy religious symbols.
- **Mahmud needed funds to pursue his ambitions in Central Asia, so he targeted rich religious places in India.**
- **About a century and a half later, in 1192, Muhammad Ghauri, a Turk, invaded India. He defeated a Rajput leader named Prithviraj Chauhan in a crucial battle in northern India, which led to the establishment of the first Muslim sultanate in Delhi, ruled by Qutubuddin Aibak.**
- This Delhi Sultanate lasted from 1206 to 1526, and it went through **four major dynasties: the Mamluks, Khaljis, Tughlaqs, and Lodis.**
- These rulers mainly controlled northern India, but some, like **Alauddin Khalji (1296–1316) and Muhammad bin Tughlaq (1325–51)**, also ventured into the Deccan region in the south.
- The Turkish, Persian, and Afghan invasions of northern India starting in the 11th century brought elements of Turko-Persian culture into the emerging Indo-Islamic culture.
- Lahore was initially a major center of this Persianized Indo-Islamic culture before Delhi became the dominant political power and adopted characteristics similar to ancient Sassanid Persia.
- **The Delhi sultanate was also called the slave king dynasty as a lot of the rulers during this era were slaves of the kings**
- However, slavery started to decline in India in the 14th century, leading to a shift away from the Turkish slave aristocracy to a new aristocracy made up of Indian Muslims, Hindus, and high-status foreign immigrant Muslims.
- **While northern India adapted to the Turkish-Persian version of Islam, areas like the Malabar coast, coastal south India, and Sri Lanka retained a strong Arab influence.**
- **This resulted in two distinct versions of Indo-Islamic culture in the subcontinent: one connecting Turkey, Persia, northern India, and the Deccan, and the other linking the Arabian peninsula, coastal southern India, and extending to Southeast Asia.**
- **While the rulers upheld Islamic law (sharia), they didn't impose it on their mostly non-Muslim subjects, allowing them to follow their own customary and religious laws.**
- **The Delhi Sultanate earned its money mainly from the land, and the towns relied on the surplus from farming.**
- Some of the land revenue went directly to the government, but most went through **land-grant holders called iqtdars**
- **Iqtas were a way to ensure stable salaries in a changing economic environment.**
- Alauddin Khalji made significant changes to iqtas to reshape loyalty bonds between the center and the provinces.
- The Vijayanagara kingdom also made money from the land but was closely connected to the wider Indian Ocean economy and culture.
- The Vijayanagara center was wealthy, but power was divided and shared among different segments of the state.
- **Jaunpur and Malwa also became independent sultanates after Taimur's attack on Delhi in 1398.**
- **Society was divided into three main groups: the nobility, artisans, and peasants.**
- **The nobility mostly came from Turkish, Afghan, Persian, and Arab immigrants.**
- **Many Muslim artisans and peasants were converts from lower-caste Hindus who found Islam's equality appealing.**
- **Raziya Sultana, a ruler from the Mamluk dynasty, broke the norm and became the first Muslim woman ruler in the subcontinent.**
- Despite being a capable ruler, she was assassinated by male rivals.
- There was a split among Muslims into Sunni and Shia groups because they disagreed about who should lead after Muhammad.
- In India, most Muslims were Sunni, but in some areas like Sind and southern Punjab, Shias were influential.
- **Sufis were a significant group of Muslims in India who followed a mystical branch of Islam. They were very influential, especially the Chishti and Suhrawardy orders.**
- **Women played an important role in Sufism, with notable figures like Rabia, a mystic from the eighth century.**
- **The Sufis used feminine imagery in their poetry, drawing on Hindu traditions, to describe the soul's love for God.**
- **The bhakti movement in Hinduism and the Sufi strand of Islam had similarities. Both sought union with God through love and respected spiritual leaders.**
- **The Sufi influence boosted the bhakti movement in India and influenced the formation of new religious faiths like Sikhism, led by figures like Kabir and Guru Nanak.**
- **Kabir tried to find common ground between Hindu and Muslim beliefs about God, while Guru Nanak rejected specific Hindu and Muslim ideas to form Sikhism.**
- **Nanak's teachings were compiled in the Adi Granth and carried on by nine Gurus after his passing.**
- Leaders of the Bhakti Movement preferred using local languages like Bengali, Assamese, etc., emphasizing the importance of regional dialects and scripts.
- Notable figures like Mirabai and Lal Ded composed their devotional messages in regional languages like Rajasthani and Kashmiri respectively.
- During the 14th-15th centuries, regional languages gained prominence, even though Persian remained the court language....