

14. Delhi Sultanate, Vijayanagar and Bahamani Kingdom

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The transition of ancient period to mediaeval period is reflected in various sectors. This transition took place in all fields including political, social, economic, religious and cultural.

Do you Know?

An era ends at a particular date and the new era begins from the next date, is not what happens in reality. Some traditions of the earlier era continue to exist while new traditions are being formed. Accordingly the historic period was roughly divided into various periods, such as : Early, Mediaeval and Modern.

It is difficult to draw a line between two eras as the contexts of the beginning and the end of two eras may differ from place to place and time to time.

14.1 Political conditions in India

Some of the royal dynasties of ancient period continued to rule during the mediaeval period while new dynasties arose. The Chola kingdom in South India had expanded into an empire during the mediaeval period. King Vijayalaya defeated the rulers like Pandyas,

Pallavas etc.; thus Chola empire expanded its boundaries. After the decline of Harshavardhan's empire many big and small kingdoms came into being in North India. There was constant struggle for power among these kingdoms. There was no power, who could have control over the rulers of these kingdoms. The Turkish invaders took advantage of this political instability of India in 13th century. During this period many petty rulers existed such as Chauhans of Rajasthan, Pratiharas and Gadhwal (Rathod) of Kanauj, Chandellas of Bundelkhand, Parmars of Malwa, Kalachuris of Gorakhpur, Kalachuris of Tripuri (Madhya Pradesh), Chalukyas (Solanki) of Gujarat, Palas of Bengal etc. They did resist the invasions of the Turks individually but they did not unite for it.

14.2 Arab and Turkish invasions

Muhammad bin Qasim of Ummayyad dynasty attacked Sindh in the year 712 C.E. He conquered the entire region from Sindh to Multan. After Muhammad bin Qasim, the Arabs rule in India grew instable.

In India, the Islamic rule was established by the Turks. They attacked India several times. None of the rulers in India could successfully resist them. The Turks looted enormous wealth from India. Many kingdoms were destroyed and Islamic rule was established.

In the 11th century, Sultan Sabuktigin of Ghazni in Afghanistan attacked King Jaipal of Punjab. His kingdom was spread from Hindukush mountains to the river Chenab. After the death of Sabuktgin, his son Mahmud became the Sultan of Ghazni. He invaded India for seventeen times (1001 to 1018 CE) with the aim of looting and spreading Islam.



Khyber Pass

For Additional Information : One needs to cross Hindukush to enter Pakistan from Afghanistan. This route goes across Khyber Pass. This pass has proved to be very important in Indian history. During ancient period, the trade between India and Central Asia was carried via this pass. After the Persian Emperor Darius, Alexander came, to India, via this pass. During mediaeval

period Mahmud Ghazni, Babur, Nadir Shah, and Ahmed Shah Abdali also came to India via this pass. In the 20th century the British built a railway line with its last destination at a place called 'Jamrud' near Peshawar in Pakistan. Jamrud is the doorway of Khyber pass. This railway track runs about 52 kilometers. There are 34 tunnels and 92 small and big bridges on it.

After Mahmud of Ghazni, the series of invasions of Muhammad Ghuri on India began. He was very ambitious. Along with looting India, his main intention was to establish his rule in India. The Rajput king Prithviraj Chauhan opposed him. Two wars were fought between the two rulers. They are known as 'Battles of Tarain'. Prithviraj Chauhan was defeated in the Second battle of Tarain. After this defeat there was no such powerful king who could hold the Rajputs together. Muhammad Ghuri succeeded in establishing the Turkish Empire from

Sindh to Bengal. The Indian rulers could be defeated easily by the Turkish invaders because of internal dissent, lack of centralised power, lack of unity, lack of a standing army in addition to the cruel and aggressive war strategies of the invaders.

Muhammed Ghuri appointed one of his slaves, Qutubuddin Aibak to administer the province of Delhi and surrounding regions. After the death of Muhammad Ghuri, Qutubuddin Aibak became the first Sultan of Delhi. He is the founder of the 'Slave Dynasty'.

14.3 Alauddin Khalji and Yadavas of Devgiri

After Qutubuddin Aibak, Iltutmish came on the throne of Delhi. After his death, his daughter Razia became the Sultan of Delhi. Since childhood Razia was trained in state affairs by Iltutmish. She was a capable ruler and concerned with the welfare of her people. She also lead some military campaigns. She was the first and the only woman to ascend the throne of Delhi. After Razia, Balban was an important Sultan who ruled Delhi.

After the end of the slave dynasty, the Khalji dynasty came to power. Alauddin Khalji attacked Yadavas of Devgiri and collected enormous wealth.

Devgiri was a prosperous city in the South. King Ramadevarai Yadava was ruling over Devgiri. Alauddin attacked Devgiri in 1296 C.E. In face of the sudden attack Ramadevarai took shelter in the fort of Devgiri (Daulatabad). Alauddin seized the fort. He plundered the city. There was an acute shortage of food in the fort. Finally Ramadevarai had to sign a treaty with him. Alauddin conquered nearby provinces of Devgiri as well and collected a large booty as part of the treaty.

During 1312 C.E., Alauddin once again turned his attention towards south as Ramdevrai, the ruler of Devgiri had stopped paying the tribute to Alauddin for some time. Alauddin sent his Commander, Malik Kafur, to South. There were political and economic reasons behind this campaign. The most important reason was to subdue the Yadavas and to collect tribute from them. Alauddin had increased his army in size. He was the first Sultan to set up a permanent standing army on a large scale. He devised some new economic reforms for controlling the market prices. These new measures created a heavy strain over the state treasury. It was also

necessary to keep the newly increased army and its officers busy by planning new campaigns. All these factors were responsible for his campaign in the South.

After the Khalji dynasty, the Tughluq dynasty ruled Delhi. In this dynasty, the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq proved to be important. The shifting of the capital to Devgiri and changes in the coinage system proved to be the major reasons for his failure. He was the first Sultan to issue copper coins. As a policy matter, perhaps Muhammad-bin-Tughluq was right in his decisions. However, when it came to the implementation of those policies he overlooked the ground realities such as transport and communication, adverse effect on the trade and resultant unrest among the subjects, this decision became unsuccessful and he again shifted the capital back to Delhi. The prestige of the Sultan and the kingdom declined due to his erroneous decision.

Taimur was the Mongol* ruler in Central Asia. He invaded India during the period of Naseeruddin Mahmood and brought an end to the Tughluq dynasty. During Muhammad-bin-Tughluq's absence in Delhi, the Mughals captured Punjab and they reached up to Delhi.

** The Mughal rulers in India claimed to be the descendants of the Mongols in Central Asia.*

During this period an important incidence took place in the South. Muhammad Tughluq did succeed in building his Empire in South. But during the same period, two other kingdoms arose in the south, namely the Vijaynagar kingdom and the Bahamani kingdom. The establishment of Vijaynagar posed a strong challenge to the Sultanate.

After the Tughluques, the Sayyed dynasty ruled over Delhi. After Sayyed, the Lodi dynasty was established. Ibrahim Lodi proved

to be the last Sultan. He had earned many enemies because of his nature. His Afghan Sardars also went against him. Daulat Khan, the Subhedar of Punjab, approached Babur, the ruler of Kandahar and Kabul, for help against Ibrahim Lodi. In 1526 C.E., Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat and the Sultanate period came to an end. It was the beginning of the Mughal period.

14.4 Trade and Commerce

Agriculture was the main occupation of majority of people during the Sultanate period. Agricultural production and its revenue were the main sources of revenue. Along with it, textile industry also flourished on large scale. Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Multan, Banaras, Patna, Khambayat, Burhanpur, Devgiri were the main centres of textile industry during this period. The cotton cloth was exported on a large scale from Bengal to Gujarat. The textile exports included muslin, linen cloth, satin and jari cloth.

During this period, the textile dyeing industry gained importance. Golconda, Ahmedabad, Dhaka, etc. were the centres of this industry. During this period various other industries also flourished such as metal industry, sugar industry, leather works etc. The manufacturing of paper began during this period. Paper was made out of rags and tree barks. Paper manufacturing was carried out in the regions of Kashmir, Siyalkot, Delhi, Gaya, Bihar, Bengal and Gujarat.

During the Sultanate rule, there was an increase in the internal trade of India. The local markets operated through weekly markets (*Bazaar*) and market places (*Mandi / Mandai*). There was rise of new trade centres (*Peth*) due to continuously expanding transactions of trading. The Indian as well as foreign traders picked up their goods from the trading centres at Delhi, Multan, Jaunpur, Banaras, Agra, Patna etc.

The goods were further transported to various ports via land or river ways. From there it was sent by sea route to countries like Iran, Arabia, China etc. The goods mainly included cotton cloth, muslin, dyed cloth, scented oils, indigo, sugar, cotton, dry ginger etc. Horses were imported to India from Iraq, Turkey and Iran. Semi precious stones, mercury, lead, alum, saffron, metals like gold and silver were imported from Mecca and Aden.

You would like to know : Amir Khusrow was a well-known poet and scholar who composed poetry in the Persian language. He spent his life in the court of Sultan Balban in Delhi. While describing the muslin of Dhaka, he says, "... Muslin is so fine that even if hundred yards are tied around the head, one could still see the hair." He says further, "Hundred yards of muslin can pass through the hole of a needle, but the same needle cannot make a hole in the cloth." This shows the finesse of craftsmanship of those days.

During the Sultanate period there were major changes in coinage system. Instead of images of deities on the coins, the names of the Khalifa and the Sultan were inscribed on the coins. Details regarding the year of issue, place of minting etc. were inscribed on it in the Arabic script. 'Tola' came to be considered as a standard unit for the weight of the coin.



Coins of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq

By the Way : Some of the Sultans carried out some experiments in the economic sector. Alauddin Khalji attempted to bring the markets under royal control. The prices of grains, vegetables, fruits, day to day commodities as well as slaves, horses were standardised by the central administration. The traders were obliged to sell their goods at a standard price. During famines the government provided essential commodities at regulated prices in the market. The farmers and traders were asked to set aside the grains for house consumption and to sell the rest to the government at a low price. In this process, the farmers were the ones who suffered the most.

14.5 Urbanisation

The rise and fall of the cities depend on its political and cultural graph of events. The process of urbanisation is associated mainly with political and economic development. The rulers play an important role in the settling and development of a city. According to the Arab historian, Ibn Khaldun, trade gains momentum as a result of conducive policies of the ruler. Some cities gain importance as administrative centres while others gain importance as industrial centres.

During the Sultanate period, the process of urbanisation received momentum. At the end of the 13th century Delhi developed as the capital of the Sultans. Alauddin Khalji of the Khalji dynasty built the city of 'Siri'. The Sultan of Tughluq dynasty set up three cities namely, Tughluqabad, Jahanpanha, and Firozabad. The Sultans of Sayyid and Lodi dynasty made the city of Agra as their capital. During this period many small and big kingdoms existed and the nature of their capitals was similar to small and big cities. Trade and sources of transport and communication increased considerably. The cities developed because of it.

14.6 Art, architecture, literature, social life

The Sultanate period left its impact on the religious and cultural life as well as it did in the political life. Some new facets were added to the field of Indian art. For example, Razia Sultan encouraged the musicians and singers by honouring them with awards. Balban himself was a musician. He created new Ragas by continuing the Iranian music with Indian music. Amir Khusrow, Amir Khas and many other poets and musicians were honoured members of the royal court of Balban.

The Sufi saints have greatly contributed to the development of Indian music. The followers of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti used to present 'Qawwali' every evening in the court of Delhi. It became a popular form of vocal music. Hussain Shah Sharukhi developed the Khayal style of vocal music.

The Islamic rulers built huge mosques, dargahs, and tombs. It presents a beautiful blend of Iranian and Indian architecture. Qutubuddin Aibak was the first ruler to have started building monuments in this style, which is known as Indo-Islamic architecture. He built 'Quwwat-i-Islam' mosque at Delhi. Qutub Minar at Mehrauli is a well-known example of Islamic architecture. The construction of Qutub Minar began during the reign of Qutubuddin Aibak and completed during the period of Iltutmish. Later, many buildings were built in the precincts of Kutub Minar. Among them are the 'Alai Darwaza' and Jamalkhan mosque built by Alauddin Khalji. Firoz Shah Tughlaq built Fatehabad and Hisaf-i-Firuz. He built many forts, bridges, dharamshalas and canals. The buildings built by the Sultans of Tughlaq dynasty were huge but simple.

The Sultans of Delhi encouraged literary activities as well. During the Arab period and the reign of Sultans, many important Sanskrit texts were translated in Persian language. Al-Beruni, who came to India



Qutub Minar

during the period of Mahmud Ghazni, studied Sanskrit language and translated many Sanskrit texts in Arabic language. Many writers and poets found patronage in the court of the Sultans. Many scholars from countries like Syria, Arabia, Iran, etc. used to travel to India during this period. Tuli translated the text of 'Koshashastra'. During the Sultanate period many historians rose to fame. Among them some names were Hasan Nizami, Ziauddin Barani, Afif Yahya etc. During this period the Persian, Arabic and Turkish language gave rise to a new language called Urdu in South India.

During the Sultanate period, the Muslim society in India comprised people of various origin like Turks, Ulemas, Mughals, Arabs, and the Indian Muslims. Most of the Sultans were Turks or Pathans. An independent class of Amirs and Umravs (nobility) came into existence. During this period, many Maktabas (primary school) and Madarasas were established.

14.7 Vijaynagar Empire

At the end of 13th century, Alauddin Khalji's invasions, the coffers of local rulers in South India were emptied to a great extent. This was the time when Harihara and Bukka established new kingdom of 'Vijaynagar' in



Krishnadevaraya

1336 C.E. During the rule of king Krishnadevaraya the kingdom expanded into an empire spreading from South Konkan in the west to Vishakhapatnam in the East and Krishna river in the north to Kanyakumari in the south. Krishnadevaraya wrote a text entitled, 'Amuktamalyada' which is about the State and Policy.

The Italian traveller Nicolo Conti and Persian traveller Abdul Razzaq had visited Vijayanagar. Their travel reports give fair account of the history of Vijayanagar.

14.8 Bahamani Kingdom

In 1347 C.E. some of the Sardars in south revolted against Sultan Muhammad Tughluq under the leadership of Hasan Gangu. They captured the fort of Daulatabad. Hasan Gangu took up the title, 'Alauddin Bahamatshah' and established the Bahamani kingdom.

Hasan Gangu established his capital at Gulbarga in Karnataka. He focused on the expansion of his kingdom. During the period of Bahamani rule, the Prime Minister (Vazir) Mahmud Gawan strengthened the kingdom. He paid the soldiers with fixed salary instead of Jahagirs (land grants). The land revenue was fixed based on land measurement.

Gawan was interested in mathematics



and medicine. He had a large personal collection of books, and established Madarasa at Bidar, because of which he stands apart from his contemporaries.

After the death of Mahmud Gawan, the Bahamani court was divided into different factions. The conflict among them affected the kingdom adversely. The conflict with the Vijayanagar kingdom had also taken a toll on the political strength of the Bahamani kingdom. The provincial Governors began to operate more independently. This led to the disintegration of the Bahamani kingdom into five small ruling houses - Imadshahi of Varhad, Baridshahi of Bidar, Adilshahi of Bijapur, Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar and

Qutubshahi of Golconda.

In 1565 C.E., in the battle of Talikota, these five ruling houses came together under the Bahamani leadership and defeated the emperor of Vijayanagar and the Vijayanagar Empire came to an end.

The Sultanate period had far reaching effects on political and social life of India. A new culture developed as the effect of synthesis between Islamic and local Indian traditions. After the end of the Sultanates, the Mughal Empire was established in the north. We are going to study about it in the next lesson.

Exercise

Q.1 (A) Choose the correct alternative and write the complete sentences.

- (1) The royal poet in the court of Balban was
 (a) Al-Beruni (b) Tuli

- (c) Amir Khusrow
 (d) Husen Shah Sharukhi
- (2) The first ruler who built the buildings in Indo-Islamic style of architecture was

- (a) Ferozshah Tughluq
- (b) Qutubuddin Aibak
- (c) Alauddin Khalji
- (d) Akbar

(B) Find the incorrect pair from set B and write the correct ones.

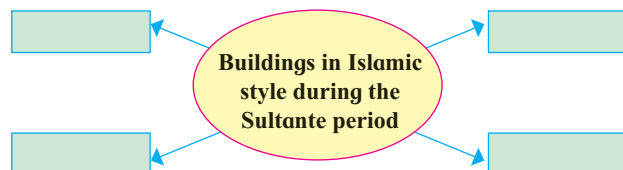
Set 'A'

- (1) Rajasthan
- (2) Kanauj
- (3) Bundelkhand
- (4) Tripuri

Set 'B'

- Chauhans
- Patiharas
- Chandelas
- Paramars

Q.2 Complete the following concept map.



Q.3 Explain the statements with reasons.

- (1) The Arab rule did not expand in India

- (2) The Rajput rulers had to accept defeat in front of the Turkish invaders.

Q.4 State your opinion.

The textile industry flourished during the Sultanate rule.

Q.5 Write short notes -

- (1) Khyber Pass
- (2) Coins during Sultanate period

Q.6 Answer the following question with the help of given points.

Write down the information about the invasion of Alauddin Khalji on Yadavas of Devgiri with the help of points given below.

- (a) Reasons of invasion
- (b) Invasion and events
- (c) Effects of invasion

Activity

Collect information about the Hindi movie Razia Sultan and critically evaluate it from Historical point of view.

