CHAPTER-1-THROUGH THE EYES OF TRAVELLERS-PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIETY (C. TENTH TO SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

- Women and men have travelled in search of work, to escape from natural disasters
- deal with affairs of the court, while others are mainly focused on religious issues, or architectural features and monuments.
- most important descriptions of the city of Vijayanagara in the fifteenth century comes from Abdur Razzaq Samarqandi, a diplomat who came visiting from Herat.
- travellers did not go to distant lands-
- in the Mughal Empire, administrators sometimes travelled within the empire and recorded their observations.
- interested in looking at popular customs and the folklore and traditions of their own land.
- descriptions of social life provided by travellers who visited the subcontinent,
- focusing on the accounts of three men: Al-Biruni who came from Uzbekistan (eleventh century), Ibn Battuta who came from Morocco, in northwestern Africa (fourteenth century) and the Frenchman François Bernier (seventeenth century).

Al-Biruni and the Kitab-ul-Hind

- **Al-Biruni's objectives** a help to those who want to discuss religious questions with them (the Hindus), and as a repertory of information to those who want to associate with them.
- Al-Biruni was born in 973, in Khwarizm in present day Uzbekistan.
- well versed in several languages: Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew and Sanskrit
- familiar with the works of Plato and other Greek philosophers, having read them in Arabic translations,
- In 1017, when Sultan Mahmud invaded Khwarizm, he took several scholars and poets back to his capital, Ghazni;
- Al-Biruni was one of them, arrived in Ghazni as a hostage, but gradually developed a liking for the city, where he spent the rest of his life until his death at the age of 70,
- Sanskrit works on astronomy, mathematics and medicine had been translated into Arabic from the eighth century onwards,
- Punjab became a part of the Ghaznavid empire,
- Al-Biruni spent years in the company of Brahmana priests and scholars, learning Sanskrit, and studying religious and philosophical texts,
- he travelled widely in the Punjab and parts of northern India, translated several Sanskrit works, including Patanjali's work on grammar, into Arabic, translated the works of Euclid (a Greek mathematician) into Sanskrit.

Travel literature-

- an accepted part of Arabic literature by the time dealt with lands as far apart as the Sahara desert in the west to the River Volga in the north.

The Kitab-ul-Hind-

- Al Biruni's Kitab-ul-Hind, written in Arabic, is simple and lucid, voluminous text,
- divided into 80 chapters on subjects such as religion and philosophy, festivals, astronomy, alchemy, manners and customs, social life, weights and measures, iconography, laws and metrology,
- a description based on Sanskritic traditions, familiar with translations and adaptations of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit texts into Arabic.

Ibn Battuta's Rihla-

- Ibn Battuta's book of travels, called Rihla,written in Arabic,
- Was a Moroccan traveller
- born in Tangier into one of the most respectable and educated families known for their expertise in Islamic religious law or shari'a, considered experience gained through travels to be a more important source of knowledge than books.,
- made pilgrimage trips to Mecca, and had already travelled extensively in Syria, Iraq, Persia, Yemen, Oman and a few trading ports on the coast of East Africa. overland through Central Asia,
- Ibn Battuta reached Sind in 1333,
- Muhammad bin Tughlaq, the Sultan of Delhi, impressed by his scholarship, and appointed him the qazior judge of Delhi,
- restored to imperial service, and was ordered in 1342 to proceed to China as the Sultan's envoy to the Mongol ruler,
- Ibn Battuta proceeded to the Malabar coast through central India.
- From Malabar he went tothe Maldives, where he stayed for eighteen months as the qazi,but eventually decided to proceed to Sri Lanka, China, visited Bengal and Assam as well,
- took a ship to Sumatra, and from there another ship for the Chinese port town Zaytun (now known as Quanzhou,
- compared with that of Marco Polo, who visited China,
- terracotta sculpture-from a temple in Bengal,
- travelling through north Africa, West Asia and parts of Central Asia (he may even have visited Russia), the Indian subcontinent and China, before returning to his native land, Morocco.

Francois Bernier-

- Portuguese arrived in India in about 1500
- wrote detailed accounts regarding Indian social customs and religious practices, few of them, such as the Jesuit Roberto Nobili, even translated Indian texts into European languages,
- the best known of the Portuguese writers is Duarte Barbosa, who wrote a detailed account of trade and society in south India,
- most famous was the French jeweller Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, who travelled to India at least six times, Italian doctor Manucci, never returned to Europe, and settled down in India,
- Francois Bernier, a Frenchman, was a doctor, political philosopher and historian, came to the Mughal Empire in search of opportunities, associated with the Mughal court, as a physician to Prince Dara Shukoh,
- dedicated his major writing to Louis XIV, the king of France,
- many of his other works were written in the form of letters to influential officials and ministers, published in France in 1670-71 and translated into English, Dutch, German and Italian within the next five years,
- Between 1670 and 1725 his account was reprinted eight times in French, and by 1684 it had been reprinted three times in English. Making Sense of an Alien World Al-Biruni and the Sanskritic Tradition.

Overcoming barriers to understanding

Al-Biruni

- The first barrier amongst these was language.
- Sanskrit was so different from Arabic and Persian that ideas and concepts could not be easily translated from one language into another,

- The second barrier was the difference in religious beliefs and practices,
- The self-absorption and consequent insularity of the local population according to him, constituted the third barrier,
- Al-Biruni depended almost exclusively on the works of Brahmanas, often citing passages from the Vedas, the Puranas, the Bhagavad Gita, the works of Patanjali, the Manusmriti.

Al-Biruni's description of the caste system

- Noted in ancient Persia, four social categories were recognised:
- those of knights and princes; monks, fire-priests and lawyers; physicians, astronomers and other scientists; and finally, peasants and artisans.
- social divisions were not unique to India,
- Pointed out that within Islam all men were considered equal, differing only in their observance of piety,
- disapproved of the notion of pollution, remarked that everything which falls into a state of impurity strives and succeeds in regaining its original condition of purity.

The system of varnas-

- highest caste are the Brahmana of whom the books of the Hindus tell us that they were created from the head of Brahman.
- Brahman is only another name for the force called nature, and the head is the highest part of the body,
- the Brahmana are the choice part of the whole genus.
- the Hindus consider them as the very best of mankind.
- The next caste are the Kshatriya, who were created, as they say, from the shoulders and hands of Brahman. Their degree is not much below that of the Brahmana.
- the Vaishya, who were created from the thigh of Brahman.
- The Shudra, who were created from his feet,
- caste system was deeply influenced by his study of normative Sanskrit texts which laid down the rules governing the system from the point of view of the Brahmanas**.**

Ibn Battuta and the Excitement of the Unfamiliar

- arrived in Delhi in the fourteenth century,
- global network of communication that stretched from China in the east to north-west Africa and Europe in the west, visiting sacred shrines, spending time with learned men and rulers, often officiating as qazi, and
- enjoying the cosmopolitan culture of urban centres where people who spoke Arabic, Persian, Turkish and other languages,
- shared ideas, information and anecdotes
- The coconut and the paan-best examples of Ibn Battuta's strategies of representation are evident in the ways in which he described the coconut and the paan, two kinds of plant produce that were completely unfamiliar to his audience

Ibn Battuta and Indian cities-

- full of exciting opportunities for those who had the necessary drive, resources and skills,
- densely populated and prosperous, except for the occasional disruptions caused by wars and invasions, described Delhi as a vast city, with a great population, the largest in India.
- Daulatabad (in Maharashtra) was no less, and easily rivalled Delhi in size.

- bazaars-not only places of economic transactions, but also the hub of social and cultural activities.
- had a mosque and a temple, and
- in some of them at least, spaces were marked for public performances by dancers, musicians and singers-
- found Indian agriculture very productive because of the fertility of the soil, which allowed farmers to cultivate two crops a year.,
- well integrated with inter-Asian networks of trade and commerce, with Indian manufactures being in great demand in both West Asia and Southeast Asia,
- Indian textiles, particularly cotton cloth, fine muslins, silks, brocade and satin, were in great demand.
- fine muslin were so expensive that they could be worn only by the nobles and the very rich
- A unique system of communication-amazed by the efficiency of the postal system which allowed merchants to not only send information and remit credit across long distances, but also to dispatch goods required at short notice.
- postal system was so efficient that while it took fifty days to reach Delhi from Sind,
- the news reports of spies would reach the Sultan through the postal system in just five days.

How Ibn Battuta describes the postal system:

- In India the postal system is of two kinds. The horsepost, called uluq,is run by royal horses stationed at a distance of every four miles. The foot-post has three stations per mile; it is called dawa,that is one-third of a mile ... Now, at every third of a mile there is a well populated village, outside which are three pavilions in which sit men with girded loins ready to start. Each of them carries a rod, two cubits in length, with copper bells at the top. When the courier starts from the city he holds the letter in one hand and the rod with its bells on the other; and he runs as fast as he can. When the men in the pavilion hear the ringing of the bell they get ready. As soon as the courier reaches them, one of them takes the letter from his hand and runs at top speed shaking the rod all the while until he reaches the next dawa.And the same process continues till the letter reaches its destination. This foot-post is quicker than the horse-post; and often it is used to transport the fruits of Khurasan which are much desired in India.

Bernier and the "Degenerate" East-

- Bernier's Travels in the Mughal Empire is marked by detailed observations,
- critical insights and reflection, constantly compared Mughal India with contemporary Europe, generally emphasizing the superiority of the latter,
- works on the model of binary opposition, where India is presented as the inverse of Europe,
- ordered the perceived differences hierarchically, so that India appeared to be inferior to the Western world

The question of landownership-

- According to Bernier, one of the fundamental differences between Mughal India and Europe was the lack of private property in land in the former.
- firm believer in the virtues of private property, and saw crown ownership of land as being harmful for both the state and its people,
- in the Mughal Empire the emperor owned all the land and distributed it among his nobles, and that this had disastrous consequences for the economy and society,
- Owing to crown ownership of land, argued Bernier, landholders could not pass on their land to their children.
- So they were averse to any long-term investment in the sustenance and expansion of production.

- The absence of private property in land had, therefore, prevented the emergence of the class of "improving" landlords (as in Western Europe) with,
- This, then, is how Bernier saw the Mughal Empire – its king was the king of "beggars and barbarians";,
- was because of one reason: crown ownership of land,
- Abu'l Fazl, the sixteenth-century official chronicler of Akbar's reign, describes the land revenue as "remunerations of sovereignty",
- a claim made by the ruler on his subjects for the protection he provided rather than as rent on land that he owned,
- Bernier's descriptions influenced Western theorists from the eighteenth century onwards.
- The French philosopher Montesquieu, used this account to develop the idea of oriental despotism, according to which rulers in Asia enjoyed absolute authority over their subjects, who were kept in conditions of subjugation and poverty, arguing that all land belonged to the king and that private property was non-existent.
- According to this view, everybody, except the emperor and his nobles, barely managed to survive, was further developed as the concept of the Asiatic mode of production by Karl Marx in the nineteenth century.
- argued that in India (and other Asian countries), before colonialism, surplus was appropriated by the state,
- The imperial court presided over these village communities, respecting their autonomy as long as the flow of surplus was unimpeded. This was regarded as a stagnant system.
- A more complex social reality-Bernier's preoccupation with projecting the Mughal state as tyrannical is obvious, his descriptions occasionally hint at a more complex social reality.
- For instance, he felt that artisans had no incentive to improve the quality of their manufactures, since profits were appropriated by the state.
- Manufactures were, consequently, everywhere in decline.
- At the same time, he conceded that vast quantities of the world's precious metals flowed into India, as manufactures were exported in exchange for gold and silver.
- He also noticed the existence of a prosperous merchant community, engaged in long-distance exchange, during the seventeenth century about 15 per cent of the population lived in towns.
- This was, on average, higher than the proportion of urban population in Western Europe in the same period, Bernier is perhaps the only historian who provides a detailed account of the working of the imperial karkhanasor workshops:,
- Large halls are seen at many places, called karkhanasor workshops for the artisans, Bernier was drawing an oversimplified picture.
- There were all kinds of towns: manufacturing towns, trading towns, port-towns, sacred centres, pilgrimage towns, etc.
- Merchants often had strong community or kin ties, and were organised into their own caste-cumoccupational bodies. In western India these groups were called mahajans,and their chief, the sheth.
- In urban centres such as Ahmedabad the mahajans were collectively represented by the chief of the merchant community who was called the nagarsheth,
- Other urban groups included professional classes such as physicians (hakimor vaid), teachers (punditor mulla), lawyers (wakil), painters, architects, musicians, calligraphers, etc.
- While some depended on imperial patronage, many made their living by serving other patrons, while still others served ordinary people in crowded markets or bazaars.

Women Slaves, Sati and Labourers-

- Ibn Battuta reached Sind
- he purchased "horses, camels and slaves" as gifts for Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq.
- Multan, he presented the governor with, "a slave and horse together with raisins and almonds".
- female slaves in the service of the Sultan were experts in music and dance, and Ibn Battuta enjoyed their performance at the wedding of the Sultan's sister.
- Female slaves were also employed by the Sultan to keep a watch on his nobles,
- Slaves were generally used for domestic labour, and Ibn Battuta found their services particularly indispensable for carrying women and men on palanquins or dola.

CHAPTER-2-BHAKTI- SUFI TRADITIONS (CHANGES IN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND DEVOTIONAL TEXTS) (C. EIGHTH TO EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)

- twelfth-century bronze sculpture of Manikkavachakar, a devotee of Shiva who composed beautiful devotional songs in Tamil

A Mosaic of Religious Beliefs and Practices

- major deities – Vishnu, Shiva and the goddess – each of whom was visualised in a variety of forms

The integration of cults-

- two processes at work-One was a process of disseminating Brahmanical ideas exemplified by the composition, compilation and preservation of Puranic texts in simple Sanskrit verse, explicitly meant to be accessible to women and Shudras, who were generally excluded from Vedic learning
- second process at work – that of the Brahmanas accepting and reworking the beliefs and practices of these and other social categories
- most striking examples of this process is evident at Puri, Orissa, where the principal deity was identified, by the twelfth century, as Jagannatha (literally, the lord of the world), a form of Vishnua local deity, whose image was and continues to be made of wood by local tribal specialists, was recognised as a form of Vishnu.
- goddess cults-simply in the form of a stone smeared with ochre, was evidently widespread incorporated within the Puranic framework by providing them with an identity as a wife of the principal male deities
- sometimes they were equated with Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu, in other instances, with Parvati, the wife of Shiva

Difference and conflict

- goddess were forms of worship that were classified as Tantric
- widespread in several parts of the subcontinent –
- they were open to women and men, and practitioners often ignored differences of caste and class within the ritual context ideas
- influenced Shaivism as well as Buddhism, especially in the eastern, northern and southern parts of the subcontinent
- The principal deities of the Vedic pantheon, Agni, Indra and Soma, become marginal figures, rarely visible in textual or visual representations
- Vedas continued to be revered as authoritative those who valued the Vedic tradition
- often condemned practices that went beyond the closely regulated contact with the divine through the performance of sacrifices or precisely chanted mantrasin
- Tantric practices frequently ignored the authority of the Vedas.
- The singing and chanting of devotional compositions was often a part of such modes of worship.
- This was particularly true of the Vaishnava and Shaiva sects

Poems of Prayer Early Traditions of Bhakti -

- poet saints emerged as leaders around whom there developed a community of devotees-
- Brahmanas remained important intermediaries between gods and devotees in several forms of bhakti historians of
- religion often classify bhakti traditions into two broad categories: saguna (with attributes) and nirguna (without attributes).
- The former included traditions that focused on the worship of specific deities such as Shiva, Vishnu and his avatars (incarnations) and forms of the goddess or Devi, all often conceptualized in anthropomorphic forms.
- Nirguna bhakti on the other hand was worship of an abstract form of god

The Alvars and Nayanars of Tamil Nadu-

- earliest bhakti movements (c. sixth century) were led by the Alvars (literally, those who are "immersed" in devotion to Vishnu) and Nayanars (literally, leaders who were devotees of Shiva).
- travelled from place to place singing hymns in Tamil in praise of their gods

Attitudes towards caste-

- suggest that the Alvars and Nayanars initiated a movement of protest against the caste system and the dominance of Brahmanas or at least attempted to reform the system
- importance of the traditions of the Alvars and Nayanars was sometimes indicated by the claim that their compositions were as important as the Vedas-
- one of the major anthologies of compositions by the Alvars, the Nalayira Divyaprabandham,was frequently described as the Tamil Veda-
- the four Vedas in Sanskrit that were cherished by the Brahmanas

Women devotees-

- the compositions of Andal, a woman Alvar, were widely sung,
- Andal saw herself as the beloved of Vishnu;
- her verses express her love for the deity.
- Another woman, Karaikkal Ammaiyar, a devotee of Shiva, adopted the path of extreme asceticism in order to attain, compositions were preserved within the Nayanar tradition.

Relations with the state

- the second half of the first millennium there is evidence for states, including those of the Pallavas and Pandyas (c. sixth to ninth centuries CE).
- Buddhism and Jainism had been prevalent in this region for several centuries, drawing support from merchant and artisan communities,
- these religious traditions received occasional royal patronage.
- one of the major themes in Tamil bhakti hymns is the poets' opposition to Buddhism and Jainism,
- due to competition between members of other religious traditions for royal patronage.
- What is evident is that the powerful Chola rulers (ninth to thirteenth centuries) supported Brahmanical and bhakti traditions, making land grants and constructing temples for Vishnu and Shiva,
- most magnificent Shiva temples, including those at Chidambaram, Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram, were constructed under the patronage of Chola rulers
- Shiva in bronze sculpture were produced
- Nayanars and Alvars were revered by the Vellala
- peasants introduced the singing of Tamil Shaiva hymns in the temples under royal patronage,
- taking the initiative to collect and organise them into a text (Tevaram).
- the Chola ruler Parantaka I had consecrated metal images of Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar in a Shiva temple-

The Virashaiva Tradition in Karnataka-

- twelfth century witnessed the emergence of a new movement in Karnataka,

- led by a Brahmana named Basavanna (1106-68) who was initially a Jaina and a minister in the court of a Chalukya king
- followers were known as Virashaivas (heroes of Shiva) or Lingayats (wearers of the linga).
- worship Shiva in his manifestation as a linga, and men usually wear a small lingain a silver case on a loop strung over the left shoulder
- Lingayats believe that on death the devotee will be united with Shiva and will not return to this world
- do not practise funerary rites such as cremation, prescribed in the Dharmashastras.
- Instead, they ceremonially bury their dead challenged the idea of caste and the "pollution" attributed to certain groups by Brahmanas.
- encouraged certain practices disapproved in the Dharmashastras, such as post-puberty marriage and the remarriage of widows
- Virashaiva tradition is derived from vachanas(literally, sayings) composed in Kannada by women and men who joined the movement

Religious Ferment in North India

- north India deities such as Vishnu and Shiva were worshipped in temples, often built with the support of rulers
- have not found evidence of anything resembling the compositions of the Alvars and Nayanars till the fourteenth century period when several Rajput states emerged most of these states
- Brahmanas occupied positions of importance, performing a range of secular and ritual functions
- other religious leaders, who did not function within the orthodox Brahmanical framework, were gaining ground.
- These included the Naths, Jogis and Siddhas
- Many of them came from artisanal groups, including weavers, who were becoming increasingly important with the development of organised craft production.
- Qur'an-manuscript dating to the eighth or ninth century
- new element in this situation was the coming of the Turks which culminated in the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate (thirteenth century)
- The coming of the Sufis (Section 6) was a significant part of these developments.

New Strands in the Fabric Islamic Traditions

- Arab merchants, for instance, frequented ports along the western coast in the first millennium CE, while Central Asian peoples settled in the north-western parts of the subcontinent during the same period.
- From the seventh century, with the advent of Islam, these regions became part of what is often termed the Islamic world-

Faiths of rulers and subjects

- In 711 an Arab general named Muhammad Qasim conquered Sind, which became part of the Caliph's domain
- Later (c.thirteenth century) the Turks and Afghans established the Delhi Sultanate
- This was followed by the formation of Sultanates in the Deccan and other parts of the subcontinent;
- Islam was an acknowledged religion of rulers in several areas continued with the establishment of the Mughal Empire in the sixteenth century
- Muslim rulers were to be guided by the ulama, who were expected to ensure that they ruled according to the shari'a.
- the category of the zimmi, meaning protected (derived from the Arabic word zimma, protection) developed for peoples who followed revealed scriptures, such as the Jews and Christians, and lived under Muslim rulership.
- They paid a tax called jizya and gained the right to be protected by Muslims.

Shari'a

- the law governing the Muslim community.
- based on the Qur'an and the hadis,
- traditions of the Prophet including a record of his remembered words and deeds.
- With the expansion of Islamic rule outside Arabia, in areas where customs and traditions were different,
- qiyas(reasoning by analogy) and ijma (consensus of the community) were recognised as two other sources of legislation.
- the shari'a evolved from the Qur'an, hadis, qiyasand ijmarulers often adopted a fairly flexible policy towards their subjects.
- several rulers gave land endowments and granted tax exemptions to Hindu, Jaina, Zoroastrian, Christian and Jewish religious
- Institutions grants were made by several Mughal rulers, including Akbar and Aurangzeb

The popular practice of Islam

- Islam accepted, in principle, the five "pillars" of the faith: that there is one God, Allah, and Prophet Muhammad is his messenger (shahada);
- offering prayers five times a day (namaz/salat); giving alms (zakat); fasting during the month of Ramzan (sawm); and performing the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj)
- Khojahs, a branch of the Ismailis (a Shi'a sect), developed new modes of communication,
- disseminating ideas derived from the Qur'an through indigenous literary genres included the ginan(derived from the Sanskrit jnana, meaning "knowledge"),
- devotional poems in Punjabi, Multani, Sindhi, Kachchi, Hindi and Gujarati,
- sung in special ragas during daily prayer meetings.
- Arab Muslim traders who settled along the Malabar coast (Kerala) adopted the local language, Malayalam.
- They also adopted local customs such as matriliny (Chapter 3) and matri local residence

A Khojaki manuscript

- The ginan were transmitted orally before being recorded in the Khojaki script
- that was derived from the local landa("clipped" mercantile script) used by the linguistically diverse community of Khojahs in the Punjab, Sind and Gujarat.

Matrilocal residence

- is a practice where women after marriage remain in their natal home with their children and the husbands may come to stay with them.
- architectural featuresof mosques are universal – such as their orientation towards Mecca, evident in the placement of the mihrab (prayer niche) and the minbar (pulpit).

Names for communities

- Sanskrit texts and inscriptions dating between the eighth and fourteenth centuries point out that the term musalman or Muslim was virtually never used.
- people were occasionally identified in terms of the region from which they came.
- So, the Turkish rulers were designated as Turushka, Tajika were people from Tajikistan and Parashika were people from Persia
- Turks and Afghans were referred to as Shakas (Chapters 2 and 3) and Yavanas (a term used for Greeks).
- A more general term for these migrant communities was mlechchha, indicating that they did not observe the norms of caste society and spoke languages that were not derived from Sanskrit.
- The Shah Hamadan mosque in Srinagar, on the banks of the Jhelum, is often regarded as the "jewel in the crown" of all the existing mosques of Kashmir.
- Built in 1395, it is one of the best examples of Kashmiri wooden architecture. Notice the spire and the beautifully carved eaves.

- It is decorated with papier mache.

The Growth of Sufism

- the early centuries of Islam a group of religious minded people called sufis
- turned to asceticism and mysticism in protest against the growing materialism of the Caliphate as a religious and political institution
- were critical of the dogmatic definitions and scholastic methods of interpreting the Qur'an and sunna (traditions of the Prophet) adopted by theologians.
- they laid emphasis on seeking salvation through intense devotion and love for God by following
- Prophet Muhammad regarded as a perfect human being.
- sought an interpretation of the Qur'an on the basis of their personal experience.
- Sufism is an English word coined in the nineteenth century.
- The word used for Sufism in Islamic texts is tasawwuf.

Khanqahs and silsilas

- eleventh century Sufism evolved into a well developed movement with a body of literature on Quranic studies and sufi practices.
- sufis began to organise communities around the hospice or khanqah(Persian) controlled by a teaching master known as shaikh(in Arabic), piror murshid (in Persian).
- enrolled disciples (murids) and appointed a successor (khalifa)
- established rules for spiritual conduct and interaction between inmates as well as between laypersons and the master
- Sufi silsilas began to crystallise in different parts of the Islamic world around the twelfth century.
- The word silsila literally means a chain, signifying a continuous link between master and disciple,
- stretching as an unbroken spiritual genealogy to the Prophet Muhammad.
- When the sheikh died, his tomb-shrine (dargah, a Persian term meaning court) became the centre of devotion for his followers.
- encouraged the practice of pilgrimage or ziyaratto his grave, particularly on his death anniversary or urs(or marriage, signifying the union of his soul with God).
- people believed that in death saints were united with God, and were thus closer to Him than when living. People sought their blessings to attain material and spiritual benefits.
- evolved the cult of the sheikh revered as wali.

Outside the khanqah

- mystics initiated movements based on a radical interpretation of sufi ideals
- Many scorned the khanqa hand took to mendicancy and observed celibacy
- ignored rituals and observed extreme forms of asceticism.
- They were known by different names – Qalandars, Madaris, Malangs, Haidaris, etc.
- Because of their deliberate defiance of the shari'a they were often referred to as be-shari'a,
- in contrast to the ba-shari'a sufis who complied with it

The Chishtis in the Subcontinent

- sufis who migrated to India in the late twelfth century, the Chishtis were the most influential

Life in the Chishti khanqah-

- khanqah was the centre of social life
- We know about Shaikh Nizamuddin's hospice (c.fourteenth century) on the banks of the river Yamuna in Ghiyaspur,
- on the outskirts of what was then the city of Delhi.
- It comprised several small rooms and a big hall (jama'at khana) where the inmates and visitors lived and prayed.
- On one occasion, fearing a Mongol invasion, people from the neighbouring areas flocked into the khanqah to seek refuge

MAJOR TEACHERS OF THE CHISHTI SILSILA

- Shaikh Muinuddin Sijzi-1235-Ajmer (Rajasthan)
- Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki-1235-Delhi
- Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar-1265-Ajodhan (Pakistan)
- Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya-1325-Delhi
- Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dehli-1356-Delhi
- open kitchen (langar), run on futuh (unasked-for charity)
- visitors included poets such as Amir Hasan Sijzi and Amir Khusrau and the court historian Ziyauddin Barani,
- all of whom wrote about the Shaikh.
- Shaikh Nizamuddin appointed several spiritual successors and deputed them to set up hospices in various parts of the subcontinent.

Chishti devotionalism: ziyarat and qawwali Pilgrimage,

- called ziyarat,to tombs of sufi saints is prevalent all over the Muslim world.
- the sufi's spiritual grace (barakat).
- various creeds, classes and social backgrounds have expressed their devotion at the dargahs of the five great Chishti saints
- the most revered shrine is that of Khwaja Muinuddin, popularly known as "Gharib Nawaz" (comforter of the poor).
- The earliest textual references to Khwaja Muinuddin's dargah date to the fourteenth century.
- It was evidently popular because of the austerity and piety of its Shaikh,
- the greatness of his spiritual successors, and the patronage of royal visitors.
- Muhammad bin Tughlaq first Sultan to visit the shrine
- the earliest construction to house the tomb was funded in the late fifteenth century by Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khalji of Malwa.
- in fact it was the spirited singing of pilgrims bound for Ajmer that inspired Akbar to visit the tomb
- He went there fourteen times, sometimes two or three times a year, to seek blessings for new conquests, fulfilment of vows, and the birth of sons.
- He maintained this tradition until 1580.
- Each of these visits was celebrated by generous gifts, which were recorded in imperial documents.
- For example,in 1568 he offered a huge cauldron (degh) to facilitate cooking for pilgrims.
- He also had a mosque constructed within the compound of the dargah, part of ziyaratis
- the use of music and dance including mystical chants performed by specially trained musicians or qawwals to evoke divine ecstasy.
- The sufis remember God either by reciting the zikr (the Divine Names) or evoking
- His Presence through sama' (literally, "audition") or performance of mystical music.
- Sama' was integral to the Chishtis, and exemplified interaction with indigenous devotional traditions
- Amir Khusrau and the qaulAmir Khusrau (1253-1325), the great poet, musician and disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya,
- gave a unique form to the Chishti sama' by introducing the qaul (Arabic word meaning "saying"),
- a hymn sung at the opening or closing of qawwali.
- This was followed by sufi poetry in Persian, Hindavi or Urdu, and sometimes using words from all of these languages.

Languages and communication

- the Chishti silsila conversed in Hindavi, the language of the people
- Other sufis such as Baba Farid composed verses in the local language, which were incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib.

- the prem-akhyan (love story) Padmavat composed by Malik Muhammad Jayasi revolved around the romance of Padmini and Ratansen, the king of Chittor.
- A different genre of sufi poetry was composed in and around the town of Bijapur, Karnataka.
- were short poems in Dakhani (a variant of Urdu) attributed to Chishti sufis who lived in this region during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
- These poems were probably sung by women while performing household chores like grinding grain and spinning.
- Other compositions were in the form of lurinamaor lullabies and shadinamaor wedding songs.
- the sufis of this region were inspired by the pre-existing bhakti tradition of the Kannada vachanas of the Lingayats and the Marathi abhangs of the sants of Pandharpur.

Sufis and the state-

- major feature of the Chishti tradition was austerity, including maintaining a distance from worldly power sufis accepted unsolicited grants and donations from the political elites.
- The Sultans in turn set up charitable trusts (auqaf) as endowments for hospices and granted tax-free land (inam)
- The Chishtis accepted donations in cash and kind.
- Rather than accumulate donations, they preferred to use these fully on immediate requirements such as food, clothes, living quarters and ritual necessities (such as sama‘).
- All this enhanced the moral authority of the shaikhs, which in turn attracted people from all walks of life.
- Further, their piety and scholarship, and people’s belief in their miraculous powers made sufis popular among the masses, whose support kings wished to secure
- When the Turks set up the Delhi Sultanate, they resisted the insistence of the ulama on imposing shari‘a as state law because they anticipated opposition from their subjects,
- the majority of whom were non-Muslims.
- the auliya could intercede with God in order to improve the material and spiritual conditions of ordinary human beings.
- This explains why kings often wanted their tombs to be in the vicinity of sufi shrines and hospices
- the disciples of Nizamuddin Auliya addressed him as sultan-ul-mashaikh(literally, Sultan amongst shaikhs).

New Devotional Paths Dialogue and Dissent in Northern India

Weaving a divine fabric: Kabir

- one of the most outstanding examples of a poet-saint who emerged within this context
- The Kabir Bijak is preserved by the Kabirpanth (the path or sect of Kabir) in Varanasi and elsewhere in Uttar Pradesh;
- the Kabir Granthavali is associated with the Dadupanth in Rajasthan, and many of his compositions are found in the Adi Granth Sahib
- these manuscript compilations were made long after the death of Kabir.
- circulated in print in regions as far apart as Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra
- Kabir’s poems have survived in several languages and dialects;
- and some are composed in the special language of nirguna poets, the sant bhasha.
- Others, known as ulatbansi(upside-down sayings), are written in a form in which everyday meanings are inverted.
- expressions such as “the lotus which blooms without flower” or the “fire raging in the ocean” convey a sense of Kabir’s mystical experiences.
- the range of traditions Kabir drew on to describe the Ultimate Reality.
- These include Islam: he described the Ultimate Reality as Allah, Khuda, Hazrat and Pir. He also used terms drawn from Vedantic traditions, alakh (the unseen), nirakar (formless), Brahman, Atman, etc.

- Other terms with mystical connotations such as shabda (sound) or shunya (emptiness) were drawn from yogic traditions
- Some poems draw on Islamic ideas and use monotheism and iconoclasm to attack Hindu polytheism and idol worship;
- others use the sufi concept of zikrand ishq(love) to express the Hindu practice of nam-simaran(remembrance of God's name).
- Kabir's ideas probably crystallised through dialogue and debate (explicit or implicit) with the traditions of sufis and yogis in the region of Awadh (part of present-day Uttar Pradesh),
- Hagiographies within the Vaishnava tradition attempted to suggest that he was born a Hindu, Kabirdas (Kabir itself is an Arabic word meaning "great"),
- but was raised by a poor Muslim family belonging to the community of weavers or julahas, who were relatively recent converts to Islam.
- They also suggested that he was initiated into bhakti by a guru, perhaps Ramananda.

Baba Guru Nanak and the Sacred Word-Baba Guru Nanak (1469-1539)

- was born in a Hindu merchant family in a village called Nankana Sahib near the river Ravi in the predominantly Muslim Punjab.
- trained to be an accountant and studied Persian spent most of his time among sufis and bhaktas
- message of Baba Guru Nanak is spelt out in his hymns and teachings.
- he advocated a form of nirguna bhakti
- rejected sacrifices, ritual baths, image worship, austerities and the scriptures of both Hindus and Muslims
- For Baba Guru Nanak, the Absolute or "rab" had no gender or formproposed a simple way to connect to the Divine by remembering and repeating the Divine Name, expressing his ideas through hymns called "shabad" in Punjabi,
- the language of the region set up rules for congregational worship (sangat) involving collective recitationappointed one of his disciples,
- Angad, to succeed him as the preceptor (guru), and this practice was followed for nearly 200 years
- Baba Guru Nanak did not wish to establish a new religion, but after his death his followers consolidated their own practices and distinguished themselves from both Hindus and Muslims.
- The fifth preceptor, Guru Arjan, compiled Baba Guru Nanak's hymns along with those of his four successors and other religious poets like Baba Farid, Ravidas (also known as Raidas) and Kabir in the Adi Granth Sahib.
- These hymns, called "gurbani",are composed in various languages.
- late seventeenth century the tenth preceptor, Guru Gobind Singh, included the compositions of the ninth guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, and this scripture was called the Guru Granth Sahib.
- Guru Gobind Singh also laid the foundation of the Khalsa Panth (army of the pure) and defined its five symbols: uncut hair, a dagger, a pair of shorts, a comb and a steel bangle.

Mirabai, the devotee princess

- the best-known woman poet within the bhakti tradition
- she was a Rajput princess from Merta in Marwar who was married against her wishes to a prince of the Sisodia clan of Mewar, Rajasthan
- defied her husband and did not submit to the traditional role of wife and mother, instead recognising Krishna, the avatar of Vishnu, as her lover.
- her preceptor was Raidas, a leather workerrejecting the comforts of her husband's palace,
- she is supposed to have donned the white robes of a widow or the saffron robe of the renouncer songs continue to be sung by women and men, especially those who are poor and considered "low caste" in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Shankaradeva

- late fifteenth century,

- Shankaradeva emerged as one of the leading proponents of Vaishnavism in Assam teachings,
- often known as the Bhagavati dharma because they were based on the Bhagavad Gita and the Bhagavata Purana emphasised the need for naam kirtan, recitation of the names of the lord in sat sangaor congregations of pious devotees.
- The fourteenth-century Siyar-ul-Auliyaof Mir Khwurd Kirmani was the first sufi tazkira written in India
- It dealt principally with the Chishti saints.
- The most famous tazkira is the Akhbar-ul-Akhyar of Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dehlavi

CHAPTER-3-AN IMPERIAL CAPITAL VIJAYANAGARA

- "city of victory" both a city and an empire
- was founded in the fourteenth century
- it stretched from the river Krishna in the north to the extreme south of the peninsula.
- it fell into ruin in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries,
- it lived on in the memories of people living in the Krishna-Tungabhadra doab remembered it as Hampi, a name derived from that of the local mother goddess, Pampadevi.

The Discovery of Hampi'

- ruins at Hampi were brought to light in 1800 by an engineer and antiquarian named Colonel Colin Mackenzie.
- An employee of the English East India Company,
- he prepared the first survey map of the site. Much of the initial information he received was based on the memories of priests of the Virupaksha temple and the shrine of Pampadevi literature written in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Sanskrit Rayas, Nayakasand Sultans
- According to tradition and epigraphic evidence two brothers, Harihara and Bukka, founded the Vijayanagara Empire in 1336
- On their northern frontier, the Vijayanagara kings competed with contemporary rulers – including the Sultans of the Deccan and the Gajapati rulers of Orissa – for control of the fertile river valleys and the resources generated by lucrative overseas trade.
- the term Vijayanagara Empire, contemporaries described it as the karnataka samrajyamu Brihadishvara temple at Thanjavur Elephants, horses and men-Gajapati literally means lord of elephants.
- This was the name of a ruling lineage that was very powerful in Orissa in the fifteenth century.
- In the popular traditions of Vijayanagara the Deccan Sultans are termed as ashvapatior lord of horses and the rayasare called narapatior lord of men.
- witnessed the development of powerful states such as those of the Cholas in Tamil Nadu and the Hoysalas in Karnataka
- Chennakeshava temple at Belur.
- rulers of Vijayanagara, who called themselves rayas

Kings and traders

- the import of horses from Arabia and Central Asia was very important for rival kingdoms
- This trade was initially controlled by Arab traders.
- Local communities of merchants known as kudirai chettisor horse merchants also participated in these exchanges

- the Portuguese, who arrived on the west coast of the subcontinent and attempted to establish trading and military stations
- Their superior military technology, especially the use of muskets, enabled them to become important players in the tangled politics of the period.
- also noted for its markets dealing in spices, textiles and precious stones.
- Trade was often regarded as a status symbol for such cities, which boasted of a wealthy population that demanded high-value exotic goods, especially precious stones and jewellery

The apogee and decline of the empire

- first dynasty, known as the Sangama dynasty,
- exercised control till 1485.
- were supplanted by the Saluvas, military commanders, who remained in power till 1503 when they were replaced by the Tuluvas.
- Krishnadeva Raya belonged to the Tuluva dynasty, Krishnadeva Raya's rule was characterised by expansion and consolidation.
- was the time when the land between the Tungabhadra and Krishna rivers (the Raichur doab) was acquired (1512), the rulers of Orissa were subdued (1514) and severe defeats were inflicted on the Sultan of Bijapur (1520).
- Although the kingdom remained in a constant state of military preparedness, Krishnadeva Raya is credited with building some fine temples and adding impressive gopuramsto many important south Indian temples.
- founded a suburban township near Vijayanagara called Nagalapuram after his mother, Krishnadeva Raya's death in 1529,
- successors were troubled by rebellious nayakasor military chiefs, control at the centre had shifted to another ruling lineage, that of the Aravidu, which remained in power till the end of the seventeenth century,
- In 1565 Rama Raya, the chief minister of Vijayanagara, led the army into battle at Rakshasi-Tangadi (also known as Talikota), where his forces were routed by the combined armies of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Golcondathe armies of the Sultans were responsible for the destruction of the city of Vijayanagara,
- relations between the Sultans and the rayas were not always or inevitably hostile, in spite of religious differences, Krishnadeva Raya, for example, supported some claimants to power in the Sultanates and took pride in the title "establisher of the Yavana kingdom",
- Yavana is a Sanskrit word used for the Greeks and other peoples who entered the subcontinent from the north west.

The rayas and the nayakas

- exercised power in the empire were military chiefs who usually controlled forts and had armed supporterschiefs were known as nayakas and they usually spoke Telugu or Kannada.
- The amara-nayaka system was a major political innovation of the Vijayanagara Empire.
- many features of this system were derived from the iqtasystem of the Delhi Sultanate, amara-nayakaswere military commanders who were given territories to govern by the raya.
- They collected taxes and other dues from peasants, craftspersons and traders in the area.
- They retained part of the revenue for personal use and for maintaining a stipulated contingent of horses and elephants,
- amara-nayakassent tribute to the king annually and personally appeared in the royal court with gifts to express their loyalty.
- Amarais believed to be derived from the Sanskrit word samara, meaning battle or war.

- It also resembles the Persian term amir,meaning a high noble

Vijayanagara :The Capital and its Environs

- characterised by a distinctive physical layout and building style

Water resources-

- most striking feature about the location of Vijayanagara is the natural basin formed by the river Tungabhadra which flows in a north-easterly direction stunning granite hills that seem to form a girdle around the city,
- embankments were built along these streams to create reservoirs of varying sizes.
- one of the most arid zones of the peninsula, elaborate arrangements had to be made to store rainwater and conduct it to the city,
- most important such tank was built in the early years of the fifteenth century and is now called Kamalapuram tank.,
- most prominent waterworks to be seen among the ruins is the Hiriya canal. apparently built by kings of the Sangama dynasty.

Fortifications and roads

- Abdur Razzaq, an ambassador sent by the ruler of Persia to Calicut (present-day Kozhikode) in the fifteenth century, was greatly impressed by the fortifications, and mentioned seven lines of forts architecture introduced by the Turkish Sultans
- Art historians refer to this style as Indo-Islamic, as it grew continually through interaction with local building practices in different regions.

The urban core

- found fine Chinese porcelain in some areas, including in the north-eastern corner of the urban core and suggest that these areas may have been occupied by rich traders.
- This was also the Muslim residential quarter.
- Tombs and mosques located here have distinctive functions, yet their architecture resembles that of the mandapasfound in the temples of Hampithe sixteenth-century
- Portuguese traveller Barbosa described the houses of ordinary people, which have not survived
- "The other houses of the people are thatched, but nonetheless well built and arranged according to occupations, in long streets with many open places."
- the entire area was dotted with numerous shrines and small temples

The Royal Centre

- royal centre was located in the south-western part of the settlement.
- designated as a royal centre, it included over 60 templesAbout thirty building complexes have been identified as palaces.
- relatively large structures that do not seem to have been associatedwith ritual functions.
- One difference between these structures and temples is that the latter were constructed entirely of masonry,
- while the superstructure of the secular buildings was made of perishable materials.

The mahanavami dibba

- The "king's palace" is the largest of the enclosures but has not yielded definitive evidence of being a royal residence.
- It has two of the most impressive platforms, usually called the "audience hall" and the "mahanavami dibba".
- The audience hall is a high platform with slots for wooden pillars at close and regular intervals. one of the highest points in the city,

- the "mahanavami dibba"is a massive platform rising from a base of about 11,000 sq. ft to a height of 40 ft.
- supported a wooden structure.
- The base of the platform is covered with relief carvings, coincided with Mahanavami (literally, the great ninth day) of the ten-day Hindu festival during the autumn months of September and October, known variously as Dusehra (northern India), Durga Puja (in Bengal) and Navaratri or Mahanavami (in peninsular India).
- worship of the image, worship of the state horse, and the sacrifice of buffaloes and other animals.
- Dances, wrestling matches, and processions of caparisoned horses, elephants and chariots and soldiers, as well as ritual presentations before the king and his guests by the chief nayakas and subordinate kings marked the occasion

Other buildings in the royal centre

- most beautiful buildings in the royal centre is the Lotus Mahal, so named by British travellers in the nineteenth century-
- may have been a council chamber, a place where the king met his advisers, most spectacular of these is one known as the Hazara Rama temple.
- This was probably meant to be used only by the king and his family, from the Ramayana sculpted on the inner walls of the shrine.

The Sacred Centre

- rocky northern end of the city on the banks of the Tungabhadra-According to local tradition, these hills sheltered the monkey kingdom of Vali and Sugriva mentioned in the Ramayana.
- Other traditions suggest that Pampadevi, the local mother goddess, did penance in these hills in order to marry Virupaksha, the guardian deity of the kingdom, also recognised as a form of Shiva,
- marriage is celebrated annually in the Virupaksha temple, hills are found Jaina temples of the pre-Vijayanagara period,
- Temple building in the region had a long history, going back to dynasties such as the Pallavas, Chalukyas, Hoysalas and Cholas.
- All royal orders were signed "Shri Virupaksha", usually in the Kannada script, Rulers also indicated their close links with the gods by using the title "Hindu Suratrana"
- This was a Sanskritisation of the Arabic term Sultan, meaning king, so it literally meant Hindu Sultan

Gopurams and mandapas

- structures of immense scale that must have been a mark of imperial authority,
- best exemplified by the raya gopurams or royal gateways that often dwarfed the towers on the central shrines, and signalled the presence of the temple from a great,
- The hall in front of the main shrine was built by Krishnadeva Raya to mark his accessionalso credited with the construction of the eastern gopuram, the images of gods were placed to witness special programmes of music, dance, drama, etc.
- the Vitthala temple, is also interesting.
- Here, the principal deity was Vitthala, a form of Vishnu generally worshipped in Maharashtra.,
- A characteristic feature of the temple complexes is the chariot streets that extended from the temple gopuramin a straight line Plotting Palaces,

Temples and Bazaars-

- Through the twentieth century, the site was preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India and the Karnataka Department of Archaeology and Museums.
- In 1976, Hampi was recognised as a site of national importance

CHAPTER-4-PEASANTS, ZAMINDARS AND THE STATE AGRARIAN SOCIETY AND THE MUGHAL EMPIRE (C. SIXTEENTH-- - SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES)

- the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries about 85 per cent of the population of India lived in its villages
- peasants and landed elites were involved in agricultural production and claimed rights to a share of the produce.
- agencies from outside also entered into the rural world. Most important among these was the Mughal state, which derived the bulk of its income from agricultural production.

Peasants and Agricultural Production-

- tilling the soil, sowing seeds, harvesting the crop when it was ripe.
- Further, they contributed their labour to the production of agro-based goods such as sugar and oil

Looking for sources-

- major source for the agrarian history of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries are chronicles and documents from the Mughal court,
- the most important chronicles was the Ain-i Akbari(in short the Ain, see also Section 8) authored by Akbar's court historian Abu'l Fazl.
- This text meticulously recorded the arrangements made by the state to ensure cultivation, to enable the collection of revenue by the agencies of the state and to regulate the relationship between the state and rural magnates, the zamindars.
- The central purpose of the Ain was to present a vision of Akbar's empire where social harmony was provided by a strong ruling class.
- the account of the Aincan be supplemented by descriptions contained in sources emanating from regions away from the Mughal capital.
- These include detailed revenue records from Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Peasants and their lands-

- The term which Indo-Persian sources of the Mughal period most frequently used to denote a peasant was raiyat(plural, riaya) or muzarian. Sources of the seventeenth century refer to two kinds of peasants – khud-kashtaand pahi-kashta-
- The former were residents of the village in which they held their lands. The latter were non-resident cultivators who belonged to some other village, but cultivated lands elsewhere on a contractual basis.
- Seldom did the average peasant of north India possess more than a pair of bullocks and two ploughs; most possessed even less.
- In Gujarat peasants possessing about six acres of land were considered to be affluent;
- in Bengal, on the other hand, five acres was the upper limit of an average peasant farm; 10 acres would make one a rich asami.
- Cultivation was based on the principle of individual ownership. Peasant lands were bought and sold in the same way as the lands of other property owners.

Irrigation and technology

- The abundance of land, available labour and the mobility of peasants were three factors that accounted for the constant expansion of agriculture.
- in northern India the state undertook digging of new canals (nahr, nala) and also repaired old ones like the shahnahr in the Punjab during Shah Jahan's reign

- The spread of tobacco-arrived first in the Deccan, spread to northern India in the early years of the seventeenth century-Aindoes not mention tobacco in the lists of crops in northern India.
- Akbar and his nobles came across tobacco for the first time in 1604.
- At this time smoking tobacco (in hookahsor chillums) seems to have caught on in a big way.
- Jahangir was so concerned about its addiction that he banned it

An abundance of crops

- Agriculture was organised around two major seasonal cycles, the kharif(autumn) and the rabi (spring).
- the Ainthat the Mughal provinces of Agra produced 39 varieties of crops and Delhi produced 43 over the two seasons.
- Bengal produced 50 varieties of rice alone. the term jins-i kamil (literally, perfect crops) in our sources.
- encouraged peasants to cultivate such crops as they brought in more revenue.
- Crops such as cotton and sugarcane were jins-i kamil par excellence.
- Cotton was grown over a great swathe of territory spread over central India and the Deccan plateau, whereas Bengal was famous for its sugar.
- Such cash crops would also include various sorts of oilseeds (for example, mustard) and lentils. Maize (makka), for example, was introduced into India via Africa and Spain and by the seventeenth century it was being listed as one of the major crops of western India.
- Vegetables like tomatoes, potatoes and chillies were introduced from the New World at this time, as were fruits like the pineapple and the papaya,

Caste and the rural milieu-

- Muslim communities menials like the halal khoran(scavengers) were housed outside the boundaries of the village;
- similarly the mallahzadas (literally, sons of boatmen) in Bihar were comparable to slaves.
- from seventeenth century Marwar, Rajputs are mentioned as peasants,
- sharing the same space with Jats, who were accorded a lower status in the caste hierarchy.
- The Gauravas, who cultivated land around Vrindavan (Uttar Pradesh), sought Rajput status in the seventeenth century.
- Castes such as the Ahirs, Gujars and Malis rose in the hierarchy because of the profitability of cattle rearing and horticulture.
- In the eastern regions, intermediate pastoral and fishing castes like the Sadgops and Kaivartas acquired the status of peasants

Panchayats and headmen

- headed by a headman known as muqaddam or mandal-One important function of the panchayat was to ensure that caste boundaries among the various communities inhabiting the village were upheld-
- In Rajasthan jati Panchayats arbitrated civil disputes between members of different castes. Archival records from western India – notably Rajasthan and Maharashtra –
- contain petitions presented to the panchayat complaining about extortionate taxation or the demand for unpaid labour (begar)
- imposed by the "superior" castes or officials of the state

Village artisans

- Marathi documents and village surveys made in the early years of British rule have revealed the existence of substantial numbers of artisans,
- sometimes as high as 25 per cent of the total households in the villages,
- In Maharashtra such lands became the artisans' mirasor watan –their hereditary holding.
- eighteenth-century records tell us of zamindars in Bengal who remunerated blacksmiths, carpenters,
- even goldsmiths for their work by paying them "a small daily allowance and diet money".
- This later came to be described as the jajmani system, though the term was not in vogue in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Women in Agrarian Society

- Men tilled and ploughed, while women sowed, weeded, threshed and winnowed the harvest.
- Menstruating women, for instance, were not allowed to touch the plough or the potter's wheel in western India, or enter the groves where betel-leaves (paan) were grown in Bengal.
- Artisanal tasks such as spinning yarn, sifting and kneading clay for pottery, and embroidery were among the many aspects of production dependent on female labour.
- Women were considered an important resource in agrarian society also because they were child bearers in a society dependent on labour.
- At the same time, high mortality rates among women – owing to malnutrition,
- frequent pregnancies, death during childbirth – often meant a shortage of wives. Marriages in many rural communities required the payment of bride-price rather than dowry to the bride's family.
- Remarriage was considered legitimate both among divorced and widowed women, Documents from Western India – Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra –
- record petitions sent by women to the village panchayat, seeking redress and justice. Wives protested against the infidelity of their husbands or the neglect of the wife and children by the male head of the household, the grihasthi.
- While male infidelity was not always punished, the state and "superior" caste groups did intervene when it came to ensuring that the family was adequately provided for.
- the Punjab show that women, including widows, actively participated in the rural land market as sellers of property inherited by them.
- Hindu and Muslim women inherited zamindaris which they were free to sell or mortgage.
- Women zamindars were known in eighteenth-century Bengal. In fact, one of the biggest and most famous of the eighteenth-century zamindaris, that of Rajshahi, had a woman at the helm.

Forests and Tribes

- the intensively cultivated provinces in northern and north-western India,
- huge swathes of forests – dense forest (jangal) or scrubland (kharbandi) – existed all over eastern India, central India, northern India (including the Terai on the Indo-Nepal border), Jharkhand, and in peninsular India down the Western Ghats and the Deccan plateau.
- Babur who says that jungles provided a good defence "behind which the people of the pargana become stubbornly rebellious and pay no taxes".

Inroads into forests

- Parganawas an administrative subdivision of a Mughal province.
- Peshkash was a form of tribute collected by the Mughal state.
- Forest products – like honey, beeswax and gum lac – were in great demand.

- Some, such as gum lac, became major items of overseas export from India in the seventeenth century.
- tribes, like the Lohanis in the Punjab, were engaged in overland trade, between India and Afghanistan, and in the town-country trade in the Punjab itself.
- Tribes in the Sind region had armies comprising 6,000 cavalry and 7,000 infantry.
- In Assam, the Ahom kings had their paiks, people who were obliged to render military service in exchange for land.
- The capture of wild elephants was declared a royal monopoly by the Ahom kings.

The Zamindars

- the zamindars who were landed proprietors who also enjoyed certain social and economic privileges by virtue of their superior status in rural society.
- Caste was one factor that accounted for the elevated status of zamindars; another factor was that they performed certain services (khidmat) for the state.
- The zamindars held extensive personal lands termed milkiyat,meaning property.
- Milkiyat lands were cultivated for the private use of zamindars, often with the help of hired or servile labour.
- The zamindars could sell, bequeath or mortgage these lands at will.
- Most zamindars had fortresses (qilachas) as well as an armed contingent comprising units of cavalry, artillery and infantry.
- social relations in the Mughal countryside as a pyramid, zamindars clearly constituted its very narrow apex.
- Abu'l Fazl's account indicates that an "upper-caste", Brahmana-Rajput

Land Revenue System

- Revenue from the land was the economic mainstay of the Mughal Empire.
- included the office (daftar) of the diwan who was responsible for supervising the fiscal system of the empire,
- zamindari system was abolished in India after Independence,
- The Mughal state tried to first acquire specific information about the extent of the agricultural lands in the empire and what these lands produced before fixing the burden of taxes on people.
- The land revenue arrangements consisted of two stages – first, assessment and then actual collection.
- The jamawas the amount assessed, as opposed to hasil, the amount collected,
- in 1665, Aurangzeb expressly instructed his revenue officials to prepare annual records of the number of cultivators in each village,
- Polaj is land which is annually cultivated for each crop in succession and is never allowed to lie fallow.
- Parautiis land left out of cultivation for a time that it may recover its strength.
- Chacharis land that has lain fallow for three or four years.
- Banjaris land uncultivated for five years and more.

The mansabdari system-

- The Mughal administrative system had at its apex a military cum-bureaucratic apparatus (mansabdari) which was responsible for looking after the civil and military affairs of the state.
- Some mansabdars were paid in cash (naqdi),while the majority of them were paid through assignments of revenue (jagirs) in different regions of the empire.

The Flow of Silver

- Mughal Empire was among the large territorial empires in Asia-empires were the Ming (China), Safavid (Iran) and Ottoman (Turkey).
- vibrant networks of overland trade from China to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Voyages of discovery and the opening up of the New World resulted in a massive expansion of Asia's (particularly India's) trade with Europe.
- A silver rupya issued by Akbar An expanding trade brought in huge amounts of silver bullion into Asia to pay for goods procured from India,
- the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries was also marked by a remarkable stability in the availability of metal currency, particularly the silver rupyain India.
- A silver rupya issued by Aurangzeb, The testimony of an Italian traveller, Giovanni Careri, who passed through India c.1690,
- Provides a graphic account about the way silver travelled across the globe to reach India.
- The Ain-i Akbari of Abu'lFazl Allami-Ain-i Akbariwas the culmination of a large historical, administrative project of classification undertaken by Abu'l Fazl at the order of Emperor Akbar.
- The Ain was part of a larger project of history writing commissioned by Akbar.
- This history, known as the Akbar Nama,comprised three books.
- The first two provided a historical narrative.
- The Ain- i Akbari, the third book, was organized as a compendium of imperial regulations and a gazetteer of the empire.
- The Ain gives detailed accounts of the organisation of the court, administration and army, the sources of revenue and the physical layout of the provinces of Akbar's empire and the literary, cultural and religious traditions of the people,
- The Ainis made up of five books (daftars), of which the first three books describe the administration.
- The first book, called manzil-abadi, concerns the imperial household and its maintenance.
- The second book, sipah-abadi, covers the military and civil administration and the establishment of servants.
- This book includes notices and short biographical sketches of imperial officials (mansabdars), learned men, poets and artists.
- The third book, mulk-abadi, is the one which deals with the fiscal side of the empire and provides rich quantitative information on revenue rates, followed by the "Account of the Twelve Provinces".
- This section has detailed statistical information, which includes the geographic, topographic and economic profile of all subas and their administrative and fiscal divisions (sarkars, parganas and mahals), total measured area, and assessed revenue (jama).
- After setting out details at the subalevel, the Ain goes on to give a detailed picture of the sarkars below the suba.
- This it does in the form of tables, which have eight columns giving the following information: (1) parganat/mahal; (2) qila(forts); (3) arazi and zamin-i paimuda (measured area); (4) naqdi, revenue assessed in cash; (5)suyurghal, grants of revenue in charity; (6) zamindars; columns 7 and 8 contain details of the castes of these zamindars, and their troops including their horsemen (sawar), foot-soldiers (piyada) and elephants (fil).
- The mulk-abadi gives a fascinating, detailed and highly complex view of agrarian society in northern India.
- The fourth and fifth books (daftars) deal with the religious, literary and cultural traditions of the people of India and also contain a collection of Akbar's "auspicious sayings".

CHAPTER-5-KINGS AND CHRONICLES-THE MUGHAL COURTS (C. SIXTEENTH-- - SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES)

The Mughals and Their Empire

- referred to themselves as Timurids,
- as descendants of the Turkish ruler Timur on the paternal side. Babur, the first Mughal ruler,
- was related to Ghenghiz Khan from his mother's side.
- He spoke Turkish and referred derisively to the Mongols as barbaric hordes.
- The founder of the empire, Zahiruddin Babur, was driven from his Central Asian homeland, Farghana, by the warring Uzbeks.
- He first established himself at Kabul and then in 1526 pushed further into the Indian subcontinent in search of territories and resources to satisfy the needs of the members of his clan.
- His successor, Nasiruddin Humayun (1530-40, 1555-56) expanded the frontiers of the empire, but lost it to the Afghan leader Sher Shah Sur, who drove him into exile.
- Humayun took refuge in the court ofthe Safavid ruler of Iran. In 1555 Humayun defeated the Surs, but died a year later.
- Many consider Jalaluddin Akbar (1556-1605) the greatest of all the Mughal emperors, for he not only expanded but also consolidated his empire,
- making it the largest, strongest and richest kingdom of his time.
- Akbar succeeded in extending the frontiers of the empire to the Hindukush mountains, and checked the expansionist designs of the Uzbeks of Turan (Central Asia) and the Safavids of Iran.
- Akbar had three fairly able successors in Jahangir (1605-27), Shah Jahan (1628-58) and Aurangzeb(1658-1707), much as their characters varied.
- Under them the territorial expansion continued, though at a much reduced pace.
- The three rulers maintained and consolidated the various instruments of governance.
- political system devised by the Mughals was based on a combination of military power and conscious policy to accommodate the different traditions they encountered in the subcontinent.

The Production of Chronicles

- Chronicles commissioned by the Mughal emperorsare an important source for studying the empire andits court.
- written in order to project avision of an enlightened kingdom to all those who came under its umbrella,
- authors of Mughal chronicles were invariably courtiers,
- Their titles,such as the Akbar Nama, Shahjahan Nama, AlamgirNama, that is, the story of Akbar, Shah Jahan andAlamgir (a title of the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb)

From Turkish to Persian

- Mughal court chronicles were written in Persian.Under the Sultans of Delhi it flourished as a language of the court and of literary writings,
- alongside north Indian languages, especially Hindavi and its regional variants.
- the Mughals were Chaghtai Turks by origin, Turkish was their mother tongue.
- Their first ruler Babur wrote poetry and his memoirs in this language,
- Akbar who consciously set out to make Persian the leading language of the Mughal court, Cultural and intellectual contacts with Iran, as well as a regular stream of Iranian and Central Asian migrants seeking positions at the Mughal court,
- might have motivated the emperor to adopt the language.

- Persian was elevated to a language of empire, conferring power and prestige on those who had a command of it. It was spoken by the king, the royal household and the elite at court.
- became the language of administration at all levels so that accountants, clerks and other functionaries also learnt it,
- Persian was not directly used, its vocabulary and idiom heavily influenced the language of official records in Rajasthani and Marathi and even Tamil.
- Since the people using Persian in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came from many different regions of the subcontinent and spoke other Indian languages, Persian too became Indianised by absorbing local idioms.
- A new language, Urdu, sprang from the interaction of Persian with Hindavi.
- Mughal chronicles such as the Akbar Nama were written in Persian, others, like Babur's memoirs, were translated from the Turkish into the Persian Babur Nama.
- Translations of Sanskrit texts such asthe Mahabharataand theRamayanainto Persianwere commissioned by the Mughal emperors.
- The Mahabharata was translated as the Razmnama(Book of Wars).

The making of manuscripts

- All books in Mughal India were manuscripts, that is, they were handwritten.
- The centre of manuscript production was the imperial kitab khana.
- Although kitab khana can be translated as library, it was a scriptorium, that is, a place where the emperor's collection of manuscripts was kept and new manuscripts were produced.
- Calligraphy, the art of handwriting, was considered a skill of great importance. It was practised using different styles. Akbar's favourite was the nastaliq,
- afluid style with long horizontal strokes.
- It is written using a piece of trimmed reed with a tip of five to 10mm called qalam, dipped in carbon ink (siyahi). The nib of the qalam is usually split in the middle to facilitate the absorption of ink.

The Painted Image-

- paintings were miniatures, and could therefore be passed around for viewing and mounting on the pages of manuscripts.
- Paintings served not only to enhance the beauty of a book, but were believed to possess special powers of communicating ideas about the kingdom and the power of kings in ways that the written medium could not.
- The historian Abu'l Fazl described painting as a "magical art":
- in his view it had the power to make inanimate objects look as if they possessed life.
- The Safavid kings of Iran, for example, patronised the finest artists, who were trained in workshops set up at court.
- The names of painters –such as that of Bihzad – contributed to spreading the cultural fame of the Safavid court far and wide. Artists from Iran also made their way to Mughal India.
- Some were brought to the Mughal court, as in the case of Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad, who were made to accompany Emperor Humayun to Delhi.

The Akbar Nama and the Badshah Nama

- important illustrated Mughal chronicles the Akbar Nama and Badshah Nama(The Chronicle of a King) are the most well known manuscript contained an average of 150 full- or double-page paintings of battles, sieges, hunts,building construction, court scenes, etc.
- The author of the Akbar Nama, Abu'l Fazl grew upin the Mughal capital of Agra.

- widely read in Arabic, Persian, Greek philosophy and Sufism, Beginning in 1589, Abu'l Fazl worked on the Akbar Nama for thirteen years, repeatedly revising the draft.
- The chronicle is based on a range of sources, including actual records of events (waqai), official documents and oral testimonies of knowledgeable persons.
- The Akbar Nama is divided into three books of which the first two are chronicles. The third book is the Ain-i Akbari.
- The first volume contains the history of mankind from Adam to one celestial cycle of Akbar'slife (30 years).
- The second volume closes in the forty sixth regnal year (1601) of Akbar.
- The very next year Abu'l Fazl fell victim to a conspiracy hatched by Prince Salim, and was murdered by his accomplice, Bir Singh Bundela.
- The Akbar Nama was written to provide a detailed description of Akbar's reign in the traditional diachronic sense of recording politically significant events across time, as well as in the more novel sense of giving a synchronic picture of all aspects of Akbar'sempire – geographic, social, administrative and cultural – without reference to chronology.
- In the Ain-i Akbari the Mughal Empire is presented as having a diverse population consisting of Hindus, Jainas, Buddhists and Muslims and a composite culture.
- Abu'l Fazl wrote in a language that was ornate and which attached importance to diction and rhythm, as texts were often read aloud.
- Indo Persian style was patronised at court, and there were a large number of writers who wanted to write like Abu'l Fazl.A pupil of Abu'l Fazl, Abdul Hamid Lahori is known as the author of the Badshah Nama.
- Emperor Shah Jahan, hearing of his talents, commissionedhim to write a history of his reign modelled on the Akbar Nama. The Badshah Nama is this official history in three volumes (daftars) of ten lunar years each.
- Lahori wrote the first and second daftarscomprising the first two decades of the emperor's rule (1627-47); these volumes were later revised by Sadullah Khan, Shah Jahan's wazir.
- Infirmities of old age prevented Lahori from proceeding with thethird decade which was then chronicled by the historian Waris.

The Asiatic Society of Bengal,

- founded by Sir WilliamJones in 1784,
- undertook the editing, printing and translation of many Indian manuscripts.
- Edited versions of the Akbar Nama and Badshah Nama were first published by the Asiatic Society in the nineteenth century.
- In the early twentieth century the Akbar Nama was translated into English by Henry Beveridge after years of hard labour.
- Only excerpts of the Badshah Nama have been translated into English to date; the text in its entirety still awaits translation.

The Ideal Kingdom

- the power of the Mughal kings came directly from God
- One of the legends they narrated was that of the Mongol queen Alanqua, who was impregnated by a ray of sunshine while resting in her tent.
- The offspring she bore carried this Divine Light and passed it on from generation to generation,
- Abu'l Fazl placed Mughal kingship as the highest station in the hierarchy of objects receiving lightemanating from God (farr-i izadi).
- inspired by a famous Iranian sufi, Shihabuddin Suhrawardi (d. 1191) who first developed this idea.

- Mughal chronicles present the empire as comprising many different ethnic and religious communities –Hindus, Jainas, Zoroastrians and Muslims.
- Abu'l Fazl describes the ideal of sulh-i kul(absolute peace) as the cornerstone of enlightened rule.
- In sulh-i kulall religions and schools of thought had freedom of expression but on condition that they did not undermine the authority of the state or fight among themselves.
- The ideal of sulh-i kulwas implemented through state policies – the nobility under the Mughals was a composite one comprising Iranis, Turanis, Afghans,Rajputs, Deccanis,
- Akbar abolished the tax on pilgrimage in 1563 and jizya in 1564 as the two were based on religious discrimination.
- during the reign of the latter, the jizya was re imposed on non-Muslim subjects,
- A number of symbols were created for visual representation of the idea of justice which came to stand for the highest virtue of Mughal monarchy.
- One of the favourite symbols used by artists was the motif of the lion and the lamb (or goat) peacefully nestling next to each other.
- This was meant to signify a realm where both the strong and the weak could exist in harmony. Court scenes from the illustrated Badshah Nama place such motifs in a niche directly below the emperor's throne Capitals and Courts
- The heart of the Mughal Empire was its capital city, where the court assembled.
- The capital cities of the Mughals frequently shifted during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
- Babur took over the Lodi capital of Agra, though during the four years of his reign the court was frequently on the move.
- During the 1560s Akbar had the fort of Agra constructed with red sandstone quarried from the adjoining regions.
- In the 1570s he decided to build a new capital, Fatehpur Sikri.
- One of the reasons prompting this may have been that Sikri was located on the direct road to Ajmer, where the dargah of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti had become an important pilgrimage centre.
- The Mughal emperors entered into a close relationship with sufis of the Chishti silsila.
- Akbar commissioned the construction of a white marble tomb for Shaikh Salim Chishti next to the majestic Friday mosque at Sikri.
- The enormous arched gateway(Buland Darwaza) was meant tore mind visitors of the Mughal victory in Gujarat.
- In 1585 the capital was transferred to Lahore to bring the north-west under greater control and Akbar closely watched the frontier for thirteen years.
- In 1648 the court, army and household moved from Agra to the newly completed imperial capital,

Shahjahanabad.

- It was a new addition to the old residential city of Delhi, with the Red Fort, the Jama Masjid, a tree-lined esplanade with bazaars (Chandni Chowk) and spacious homes for the nobility.
- The Mughal court focused on the sovereign, mirrored his status as the heart of society.
- Centre piece was therefore the throne, the takht, which gave physical form to the function of the sovereign as axis mundi.
- The canopy, a symbol of kingship in India for a millennium, was believed to separate the radiance of the sun from that of the sovereign.
- Chahar taslimis a mode of salutation which begins with placing the back of the right hand on the ground, and raising it gently till the person stands erect, when he puts the palm of his hand upon the crown of his head.
- It is done four (chahar) times.

- Taslim literally means submission.
- Shab-i barat is the full moon night on the 14 Shaban,
- the eighth month of the hijri calendar, and is celebrated with prayers and fireworks in the subcontinent.
- It is the night when the destinies of the Muslims for the coming year are said to be determined and sins forgiven.
- Jharoka darshan was introduced by Akbar with the objective of broadening the acceptance of the imperial authority as part of popular faith,
- Shah Jahan's jewelled throne (takht-i murassa) in the hall of public audience in the Agra palace is described in the Badshah Nama:
- After spending an hour at the jharoka, the emperor walked to the public hall of audience (diwan-i am) to conduct the primary business of his government.
- State officials presented reports and made requests.
- Two hours later, the emperor was in the diwan-i khasto hold private audiences and discuss confidential matters.
- The Mughal kings celebrated three major festivals a year: the solar and lunar birthdays of the monarch and Nauroz, the Iranian New Year on the verna lequinox.

Titles and gifts

- Mughal coins carried the full title of the reigning emperor with regal protocol.
- The title Asaf Khan for one of the highest ministers originated with Asaf, the legendary minister of the prophet king Sulaiman (Solomon).
- The title Mirza Raja was accorded by Aurangzeb to his two highest-ranking nobles, Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh.
- Titles could be earned or paid for. Mir Khan offered Rs one lakh to Aurangzeb for the letter alif, that is A, to be added to his name to make it Amir Khan.
- Other awards included the robe of honour (khilat), agarment once worn by the emperor and imbued with his benediction.
- One gift, the sarapa("head to foot"), consisted of a tunic, a turban and a sash (patka).
- Jewelled ornaments were often given as gifts by the emperor.
- The lotus blossom set with jewels (padma murassa) was given only in exceptional circumstances

The Imperial Household

- The term "harem" is frequently used to refer to the domestic world of the Mughals.
- It originates in the Persian word haram, meaning a sacred place, In the Mughal household a distinction was maintained between wives who came from royal families (begams), and other wives (aghas) who were not of noble birth.
- The begams, married after receiving huge amounts of cash and valuables as dower (mahr), naturally received a higher status and greater attention from their husbands than did aghas.
- The concubines (aghachaor the lesser agha)occupied the lowest position in the hierarchy of females intimately related to royalty.
- They all received monthly allowances in cash, supplemented with gifts according to their status. The lineage based family structure was not entirely static.
- The agha and the aghacha could rise to the position of a begam depending on the husband's will, and provided that he did not already have four wives.
- Love and motherhood played important roles in elevating such women to the status of legally wedded wives.
- After Nur Jahan, Mughal queens and princesses began to control significant financial resources.

- ShahJahan's daughters Jahanara and Roshanara enjoyed an annual income often equal to that of high imperial mansabdars.
- Jahanara, in addition, received revenuesfrom the port city of Surat, which was a lucrative centre of overseas trade.
- The bazaar of Chandni Chowk,the throbbing centre of Shahjahanabad, was designed by Jahanara.
- An interesting book giving usa glimpse into the domestic world of the Mughals is the Humayun Nama written by Gulbadan Begum.
- Gulbadan was the daughter of Babur,Humayun's sister and Akbar's aunt.
- Gulbadan could write fluently in Turkish and Persian.
- When Akbar commissioned Abu'l Fazl to write a history of his reign, he requested his aunt to record her memoirs of earlier times under Babur and Humayun, for Abu'l Fazl to draw upon.

The Imperial Officials

- The nobility was recruited from diverse ethnic and religious groups.
- This ensured that no faction was large enough to challenge the authority of the state.
- The officer corps of the Mughals was described as abouquet of flowers (guldasta) held together by loyalty to the emperor.
- In Akbar's imperial service, Turani and Iranian nobles were present from the earliest phase of carving out a political dominion.
- Many had accompanied Humayun; others migrated later to the Mughal court.
- Two ruling groups of Indian origin entered the imperial service from 1560 onwards: the Rajputs and the Indian Muslims (Shaikhzadas).
- The first to join was a Rajput chief, Raja Bharmal Kachhwaha of Amber, to whose daughter Akbar got married.
- Members of Hindu castes inclined towards education and accountancy were also promoted, a famous example being Akbar's finance minister, Raja Todar Mal, who belonged to the Khatri caste.
- Iranians gained high offices under Jahangir, whose politically influential queen, Nur Jahan (d. 1645), was an Iranian.
- Aurangzeb appointed Rajputs to high positions, and under him the Marathas accounted for a sizeable number within the body of officers.
- The nobles participated in military campaigns with their armies and also served as officers of the empire in the provinces.
- Each military commander recruited, equipped and trained the main striking arm of the Mughal army, the cavalry.
- The troopers maintained superior horses branded on the flank bythe imperial mark (dagh). The emperor personally reviewed changes in rank, titles and official postings for all except the lowest-ranked officers.
- Akbar, who designed the mansab system, also established spiritual relationships with a select band of his nobility by treating them as his disciples (murid).
- If the applicant was found suitable a mansab was granted to him.
- The mirbakhshi (paymaster general) stood in open court on the right of the emperor and presented all candidates for appointment or promotion,
- while his office prepared orders bearing his seal and signature as well as those of the emperor.
- There were two other important ministers at the centre: the diwan-i ala(finance minister) and sadr-us sudur (minister of grants or madad-i maash, and in charge of appointinglocal judges or qazis).
- The three ministers occasionally came together as an advisory body,but were independent of each other.

- Akbar with these and other advisers shaped the administrative, fiscal and monetary institutions of the empire Information and empire
- The mirbakhshi supervised the corps of court writers (waqia nawis) who recorded all applications and documents presented to the court, and all imperial orders (farman)
- In addition, agents (wakil) of nobles and regional rulers recorded the entire proceedings of the court under the heading "News from the ExaltedCourt" (Akhbarat-i Darbar-i Mualla) with the date and time of the court session (pahar).
- The akhbar at contained all kinds of information such as attendance at the court, grant of offices and titles, diplomatic missions, presents received, or the enquiries made by the emperor about the health of an officer.
- Beyond the centre: provincial administration
- The division of functions established at the centre was replicated in the provinces (subas) where the ministers had their corresponding subordinates(diwan, bakhshiand sadr).
- The head of the provincial administration was the governor (subadar) who reported directly to the emperor.
- The sarkars, into which each suba was divided, often overlapped with the jurisdiction of faujdars (commandants) who were deployed with contingents of heavy cavalry and musketeers in districts.
- The local administration was looked after at the levelof the pargana(sub-district) by three semi-hereditary officers, the qanungo (keeper of revenue records),the chaudhuri(in charge of revenue collection) and the qazi.Beyond the Frontiers Writers of chronicles list many high-sounding titlesassumed by the Mughal emperors.
- These included general titles such as Shahen shah (King of Kings)or specific titles assumed by individual kings upon ascending the throne, such as Jahangir (World-Seizer), or Shah Jahan (King of the World)
- The Safavids and QandaharAll conquerors who sought to make their way into the Indian subcontinent had to cross the Hindukush to have access to north India Qandahar was a bone of contention between the Safavids and the Mughals.
- The fortress-town had initially been in the possession of Humayun, re conquered in 1595 by Akbar.
- While the Safavid court retained diplomatic relations with the Mughals, it continued to stake claims to Qandahar.
- In 1613 Jahangir sent a diplomatic envoy to the court of Shah Abbas to plead the Mughal case for retaining Qandahar, but the mission failed. In the winter of 1622a Persian army besieged Qandahar.
- Mughal garrison was defeated and had to surrender the fortress and the city to the Safavids.

The Ottomans: pilgrimage and trade

- The relationship between the Mughals and the Ottomans was marked by the concern to ensure free movement for merchants and pilgrims in the territories under Ottoman control.
- This was especially true for the Hijaz, that part of Ottoman Arabia where the important pilgrim centres of Mecca and Medina were located.
- The Mughal emperor usually combined religion and commerce by exporting valuable merchandise to Aden and Mokha, both Red Sea ports, and distributing the proceeds
- Aurangzeb discovered cases of misappropriation of funds sent to Arabia, he favoured their distribution in India which, he thought, "was as much a house of God as Mecca".
- Jesuits at the Mughal court Europe received knowledge of India through the accounts of Jesuit missionaries, travellers, merchants and diplomats.
- The Jesuit accounts are the earliest impressions of the Mughal court ever recorded by European writers.

- The Portuguese king was also interested in the propagation of Christianity with the help of the missionaries of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits).
- The Christian missions to India during the sixteenth century were part of this process of trade and empire building.
- Akbar was curious about Christianity and dispatched an embassy to Goa to invite Jesuit priests.
- The first Jesuit mission reached the Mughal court at Fatehpur Sikri in 1580 and stayed for about two years.
- The Jesuits spoke to Akbar about Christianity and debated its virtues with the ulama.
- Two more missions were sent to the Mughal court at Lahore, in 1591 and 1595.
- The Jesuit accounts are based on personal observation and shed light on the character andmind of the emperor.
- At public assemblies the Jesuits were assigned places in close proximity to Akbar's throne.
- They accompanied him on his campaigns, tutored his children, and were often companions of his leisure hours.
- The Jesuit accounts corroborate the information given in Persian chronicles about state officials and the general conditions of life in Mughal times.