

## Medieval India

The period from the 8th to 12th century in political life in India is particularly dominated by the presence of large number of states. The bigger ones tried to establish their supremacy in northern India and the Deccan. The main contenders in this struggle for supremacy were the Pratiharas, the Palas and the Rashtrakutas. In the south the most powerful kingdom to emerge during this period was that of the Cholas. The Cholas brought about the political unification of large parts of the country but the general political picture was that of fragmentation particularly in northern India. It was in this period that India's contact with the new religion of Islam began. The contacts began late in the 7th century through the Arab traders.

Later in the early 8th century the Arabs conquered Sind. In the 10th century the Turks emerged as a powerful force in Central and West Asia and carved out kingdoms for themselves. They conquered Persia but their lives were richly influenced by Persian culture and tradition. The Turks first invaded India during the late 10th and early 11th century and Punjab came under Turkish rule. Another series of Turkish invasions in the late 12th and early 13th century led to the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi. Within a few centuries after the rise of Islam in Arabia it became the second most popular religion in India with followers in every part of the country.

The establishment of the Sultanate marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of medieval India. Politically it led to the unification of northern India and parts of the Deccan for almost a century. Its rulers almost from the time of the establishment of the Sultanate succeeded in separating it from the country from which they had originally come. The sultanate disintegrated towards the end of the 14th century leading to the emergence of a number of kingdoms in different parts of the country. Some of these like Bahmani and Vijaynagar kingdoms became very powerful. In society new social groups -the Turks, the Persians, the Mongols and the Afghans besides the Arabs who had settled in India. There were important changes in economic life also. Trade and crafts received a stimulus and many new towns arose as centres of administration, trade and crafts. New elements of technology were also introduced during this period.

## Feudalism in Early Medieval India



- Administration
- Society
- Economy

Feudalism became an important feature of the political system of North India between 750 and 1200 AD. This was because the authority of the rulers had been limited in many ways. The ministers were appointed on the hereditary

basis and became all powerful. There were numerous feudal chiefs who had ties with ruling class. In the local and central govt these feudal chiefs had special privileges and powers which no ruler could ignore. This also led to the limited authority of the kings. The rulers were under the obligation to rule according to holy Sastras and Smirtis could not enact or amend the laws at will. Thus rulers of this period were basically feudal lords with limited overall power.

The basis of the sovereignty during this period was a mixture of Divine Right theory and contract theory. On the one hand the authors of treaties on polity regarded the ruler as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. On the other hand they also held that it the people who conferred sovereignty on the ruler. So the natural duty of the ruler was to rule in the interests of the people while the duty of the people was to be loyal to him.

A king was usually succeeded by his elder son. If a king dies without an heir the kingdom passed to the head of next in king to the ruling dynasty. There was little scope for disputed succession in this period. The powers of the king were limited in practice due to privileges and prerogatives of the feudal lords. Since he had the theoretical ownership of all the lands, the feudal lords needed his recognition but then this prerogative of the kings was limited as the feudal lords had hereditary rights.

The king was helped in the administration by a council of ministers besides crown prince. The chief priest and the court astrologer were recruited from Brahmin while all over posts were held by feudal lords. They usually belonged to Kshatriya caste. Sudras or lower caste had no place in the political set up of the king.



## Administration

The kingdom was divided into a central region directly ruled by the king and many areas or fiefs were governed by feudal lords. The central region was

divided into bhuktis or rashtras which were under viceroys, vishayas under vishayapatis and finally villages under grama patis. The village self-government weakened during this period due to the domination of the feudal chiefs while at the same time it was best under the Cholas in the south India.

The army consisted of royal retainers or the personal army of the king and the contingents supplied by feudal lords. This was the main reason for the lack of unity in the armies of the rulers of this period. The military service became the monopoly of Rajputs. Taxation during this period was heavier compared to earlier times. This was mainly due to heavy expenditure over the royal household and the court. There was also fighting all around for suzerainty. The burden was laid on the general public.

There was no clear instructions for maintain justice. In the Bhuktis there was a dandanayaka who was in charge of justice, police and prison. There is no mention of any other officer. It is likely that most of the cases were settled by caste and village panchayats. Some feudal chiefs were government officers who were increasingly paid not in cash but by assigning to them revenue-bearing villages. Others were defeated kings and their supporters who continued to enjoy the revenues of limited areas. Some were tribal chiefs. Some of them were village chiefs who had dominated the entire region. There was a definite hierarchy among these chiefs. They constantly fought against each other for supremacy.



## Society

The caste system formed the basis of the society as in earlier periods but now the kshatriyas and the Brahmins were given more privileges while more and more social and religious disabilities were placed on the sudras and other lower castes. A large number of sub castes such as potters, weavers, goldsmiths, musicians etc proliferated. They were classified as jatis now. Most of the workers were classified as untouchables. Women continued to be denied the right to education. The age of marriage for girls was further lowered. They were kept in seclusion and their lives were regulated by the male relations –fathers, brothers and husbands. The practice of sati seems to have spread widely and

was made even obligatory at some places. The custom of sati was widespread in the higher castes.

The attitude of higher classes became very rigid. They tended to isolate themselves from all scientific thought. Buddhism almost disappeared from the land of its origin. There was a marked revival and expansion of Hinduism. There was a growing popularity of Shiva and Vishnu cults. A number of popular movements arose around the worship of these gods. In the eastern India, a new form of worship arose. This was the worship of Sakti or female creator of the universe.

## Economy

A very important development of the period was the rise of a self-sufficient village economy where production was according to the local requirements with little attempts at producing a surplus to be used for trade or exchange. This existing system led to accepting the standard of minimum production since the incentive to improve production was absent. As a result pressure on peasantry was increased and production stayed at a subsistence level only.

The subsistence economy of the village led to decline in trade. Trade was further hampered by the emergence of wide range of local weights and measures making long distance trade more difficult. The unstable political conditions and internal fighting in India only helped this process of decline in trade.

This decline in trade affected the growth of towns. In coastal areas and Bengal towns however prospered because they continued to trade with West Asia and South East Asia. The only prosperous class in north India during this period was feudal lords. But the surplus wealth was not invested in trade or craft production. It was on the other hand used for conspicuous consumption. The huge amounts were given to temples also thus attracting outsiders.



## Delhi Sultanate

The real founder of the Muslim Empire in India was Shihabuddin Muhammad Ghori or Muhammad of Ghur. It is true that Muhammad Bin Qasim was the first Muslim invader of India but he failed to carve out a Muslim empire in India on account of his premature death. Mahmud of Ghazni also failed to set up a Muslim Empire in India and the only permanent effect of his invasion was the annexation of the Punjab. It was left to Muhammad Ghori to build up a Muslim empire in India on a secure footing.

After battle of Tarain Ghori returned to Ghazni leaving the affairs of India in the hands of his trusted slave Qutubuddin Aibak. In order to strengthen his own position Qutub-uddin Aibak entered into matrimonial alliances with important personalities. He himself married the daughter of Tajuddin Yildoz. He married his sister to Nasiruddin Qabacha. To Iltutmish he married his daughter. During his governorship Aibak had to face a serious rebellion in Rajasthan that was suppressed. In 1197 AD he punished Bhinder of Gujarat, plundered his capital and came back to Delhi by way of Hansi. He also conquered Badaun, Benares and Chandawar and consolidated the conquest of Kannauj. In 1202 AD he besieged the fortress of Kalinga in Bundelkhand and captured the same. He marched to the city of Mahoba and took possession of it.

Thus before his accession to the throne in 1206 AD Qutub-uddin Aibak was already in possession of almost whole of Northern India as a lieutenant of his master and his representative in India. The dynasty that ruled Delhi between the periods 1206-1290 is popularly known as Slave dynasty, the Ibari dynasty, the Mameluq. It is wrong to call the dynasty as slave because out of the nine rulers of this dynasty only three Qutubuddin Aibak, Iltutmish and Balban had governed long before assuming sovereign powers. The term Mameluq signifies a slave born of free parents but the connotation of slavery, nevertheless persists. They all belonged to except Qutubuddin Aibak belonged to the Ibari tribe of Turks.

The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate marked a new phase in the cultural development of the country. When the Turks came to India they not only had a well-defined faith in Islam to which they were deeply attached, they also had definite ideas of government, art, architecture etc. The interaction of the Turks with the Indians who had strong religious beliefs, well-defined ideas of arts, architecture and literature resulted in the long run in a rich development. The Turks eschewed representation of human and animal figures in the buildings. Instead they used geometrical and floral designs combining them with panels of inscriptions containing verses from the Quran. Thus the Arabic script itself became a work of art. The combination of these decorative devices was called Arabesque. They also freely borrowed Hindu motifs etc. The skills of the Indian stonecutters were fully used. They also added color to their buildings by using red sand stone, yellow sand stone and marble. The most notable Persian writer of the period was Amir Khusrau. He took pride in being an Indian. He wrote a

large number of poetical works including historical romances. He experimented with all the poetical forms and created a new style of Persian that came to be called Sabaq-i-Hind or style of India. He praised the Indian languages including Hindi.

Apart from the poetry a strong school of history writing in Persian developed in India during this period. The most famous historians of the period were Zia-uddin Barani, Shams-i-Shiraz Afif and Isami. Zia Nakshabi was the first to translate Sanskrit works into Persian. His book Tuti Namah written on the time of Muhammad Tughluq was a Persian translation of Sanskrit stories that were related by a parrot to a woman whose husband had gone on a journey. Sultan Zain-ul- Abidin of Kashmir had the famous historical work Rajatarangini and the Mahabharata translated into Persian.

- The Slave Dynasty
- Khalji Dynasty
- Tughlaq Dynasty
- The Saiyyid Dynasty
- Lodhi Dynasty
- Administration of the Sultanate

## The Slave Dynasty

When Muhammad Ghori died in 1206 AD he had left no male heir to succeed him. Taj-uddin Yildoz Governor of Kirman ascended the throne of Ghazni. Nasir-uddin-Qabacha held Uchch and Qutubuddin became the governor of the Indian provinces of Ghori. He functioned as an independent ruler. Qutubuddin not only helped Muhammad in all his Indian campaigns but also consolidated and extended his conquests in his absence,



Qutubuddin began his reign with the modest title Malik and Siphasalar that had been conferred upon him by Muhammad Ghori. The rise of Qutubuddin roused jealousy of Yildoz of Ghazni. Aibak charged him with exercising undue influence on Mahmud of Feroz Khoh and marched against him. In 1208 he even occupied Ghazni and also won over Sultan Mahmud to his own side.

During his brief reign of 4 years he did not make any fresh conquests because his entire attention was devoted to the establishment of law and order and strengthening of his army of occupation. Aibak died in 1210 AD. He earned the title of Lakh Baksh.

Iltutmish was the greatest of the slave kings. He was the real founder of the Sultanate. At the time of Qutubuddin's death he was the governor of Badaun. He made Delhi the capital of his empire. He devoted the first 10 years of his reign to securing his throne from rivals. He defeated other nobles in 1216-17 AD and thus made his position secure. The reign of Iltutmish saw the decline of Lahore and the rise of Delhi. Delhi gradually became the greatest centre of learning and culture in India. The Delhi Sultanate owes the outlines of its administrative system to Iltutmish. He organized the Revenue and Finance depts. He got completed the famous Qutub Minar near Mehrauli in Delhi in the year 1231-32. A magnificent mosque was also built by the orders of the Sultan. Although Iltutmish had many sons but all of them were incompetent. He appointed his daughter Raziya as his successor.

Raziya is the first and the last woman ruler of medieval India. She assumed the title of sultan and did her best to play the part of a man. Her reign lasted for 3 years and six months. She aimed at removing the uncalled for interference and influence of Turkish chiefs on administration. She discarded Purdah and began to adorn the attire of the male. Raziya tried to concentrate power in her own hands and succeeded. This provoked serious opposition that took the shape of a protest against her.



Alauddin Masud Shah also met the same fate of Bahram Shah who succeeded Raziya's successor. Bahram Shah was weak and incompetent ruler and was overthrown by the nobles after a brief reign of 2 years. In 1246 Nasiruddin Mahmud the grandson of Iltutmish ascended the throne. He owed his throne to the Turkish aristocracy and the latter was bound to have tremendous influence in the administration. He placed all his powers in the hands of Prime Minister Balban. In 1266 Nasiruddin Mahmud died.

Balban sat on the throne of Delhi in 1266 AD and adopted the name of Ghiyasuddin Balban. With his accession the line of rulers of the family of

Iltutmish ended. He started the era of strong centralized government. He increased the power and position of sultan. He introduced Persian ceremonies and etiquettes in his court and allowed no manner of levity here. Balban did not try to extend his empire although he had a strong army. He instead concentrated on consolidating the territory already in possession. He suppressed the revolts in the Doab and Oudh and tracked down elements in Rohilkhand. The Mongols invaded again in 1279 and 1285 but were defeated and driven away. In 1286 the Mongols reappeared and this time Prince Muhammad was killed. Balban could not recover from this tragedy and died in 1286 AD.

He was succeeded by his grandson Kaikubad. He was inefficient and incapable. Jalaluddin Khilji placed himself at the head of a powerful faction and routed the Turkish amirs. He eventually murdered Kaikubad and seized the throne.

## **Khalji Dynasty**

Jalaluddin Khalji was the founder of the Khalji Dynasty. He came to power after the overthrow of the slave dynasty. Thus the coming of the Khaljis to power was more than a dynastic change. Their ascendancy is known as the Khalji imperialism because with the accession of Jalaluddin Khalji on the throne of Delhi the supremacy of the Turks ended in India. Jalaluddin ascended the throne at the age of 70 years and the weakness of the old age affected his attitude and activities. He was lenient in his treatment of rebels. He even adopted a conciliatory policy towards the Mongols. He allowed some of the Mongols to settle in India.

Jalaluddin's ambitious nephew Alauddin who succeeded Malik Chajju at Kara began to establish an independent kingdom for himself. In 1292 AD he attacked Bhilsa and Malwa. On his return he was made the governor of Avadh in addition to that of Kara. In 1294 AD he defeated Ram Chandra Deva the ruler of Devagiri. He invited Jalaluddin to Kara where he was murdered by Alauddin Khalji. In 1296 AD Alauddin was proclaimed sultan in his camp. He marched to Delhi from Kara and assumed power at Delhi. His first task after assuming power at Delhi was the elimination of the surviving members of the former sultan's family including his son Arkhali Khan. He also exterminated the old Balbani and Jalali nobles.

The reign of Alauddin Khalji marks the zenith of the power of the Delhi Sultanate. Since the death of Iltutmish no serious attempts had been made to annex new territories to the Sultanate. He broke this tradition and inaugurated a whirlwind period of conquests. He believed that defense, expansion and consolidation could all go together. By the end of 1305 AD the whole of northern India fell into the hands of Alauddin and he directed his energies to the conquest of Deccan. Between 1307 and 1312 he began the southward expansion of his empire. He invaded Devagiri in 1306-07. The immediate causes for this was unduly long delay in sending the annual tribute. In 1309 the Kaktiya kingdom was attacked. The next expedition was against Vira

Ballala III the Hoysala ruler in 1311. Alauddin had to face more than dozen invasions. These invasions started from the end of 1296 AD and continued up to 1308 AD. The Mongols threatened Punjab, Multan and Sindh but also the Ganga Yamuna Doab. This grave crisis compelled him to take strong measures for the protection of the northwest frontier. The twenty years rule of Alauddin came to an end with his death in 1316 AD.



On the death of Alauddin Khalji his general Malik Kafur set aside the claims of the heir apparent Khizr Khan and crowned the infant son of late sultan Shihabuddin Umar and himself became his regent. Soon another son of the sultan murdered Kafur and ascended the throne as Qutubuddin Mubarak Shah Khalji. He tried to win the goodwill of the people after ascending the throne. He repealed Alauddin's economic regulations. The lands that were confiscated were given back to their legitimate owners. Taxes were lowered. He was murdered by his Wazir Khusro. Khusro ascended the throne in 1320 and took the title of Nasiruddin Khusro Shah. Thus Khalji dynasty came to an end.

## Tughlaq Dynasty

Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq laid the foundation of the Tughlaq dynasty. The Tughlaq was the personal name of the Ghiyasuddin. According to some scholars the Tughlaqs belonged to the race of Qarauna Turks. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq had to face numerous problems as the sultan. There were riots in various parts of the empire and the royal treasury was empty. He pursued a policy of reconciliation with the nobles and the people who were severely restricted under Alauddin. He liberalized administration in certain respects. He attempted to improve the finances of the state and pursued a policy to encourage agriculture.

He put down revolts of Hindus in the Doab and in the neighborhood of Delhi while those who had offered opposition to Khusru were taken in the state service and granted jagirs. In 1321 he dispatched crowned prince Jauna Khan to reestablish Sultan's authority in the south. In 1325 when Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq was returning after concluding his military campaign in Bengal, Prince Jauna Khan raised a wooden pavilion at Afghanpur village near Delhi

to welcome the Sultan. The pavilion, under which the sultan was received, collapsed suddenly crushing the sultan under its debris.

Jauna Khan ascended the throne in 1325 with the title of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. He ruled up to 1351. He was the most remarkable sultans of Delhi. He was a profound scholar of Persian, a critic, a litterateur of repute and master of rhetoric. He preferred to depend on his own intellect rather than on traditional interpretation of the Ullema. Thus he offended the orthodox Muslim ullema by curbing their political influence. Different Scholars have divergent estimates of his character. During Muhammad Bin Tughlaq reign rebellions, famines and epidemics followed in such intermittent succession as they conformed to a predetermined plan to subject him to trial and ultimate failure. To promote public welfare he sought to introduce many reforms. But some of them were so novel and revolutionary in character that the people failed to realize their significance so that instead of helping them to make them success they offered a determined opposition.

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq had to face a number of revolts. The first rebellion took place in 1326 and by 1351 when the Sultan died in pursuit of a rebel he had to deal with as many as 34 rebellions, 27 of them in the south alone. The areas affected ranged from Multan in the northwest to Bengal in the east and Malabar in the south. While going to Thatta in Sindh to punish Taghi the rebel, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq died in 1351.

Firoz Tughlaq succeeded Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. He lacked the temperament and courage of a successful ruler. He failed to recover the areas that had been lost to the sultanate. He started his reign with liberal ideas. He tried to please the nobles and set to ameliorate the distress caused to the people during the long and troubled reign of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. He led two campaigns into Bengal but was unsuccessful in both. Bengal was thus lost to the Sultanate. He also led a campaign against the ruler of Jajnapur in Orissa. He also dealt with rebellions in Gujarat and Thatta. Although the rebellions were crushed the army suffered great hardship due to losing its way in the Rann of Kutch. But his reign was a period of peace and quiet development. When Firoz Tughlaq died in 1388 a civil war broke out among his successors. His grandson took up the title of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq II succeeding Firoz Tughlaq. Within a year he fell victim to intrigue and beheaded in 1389. For next five years 3 sultans ruled. "Abu Bakr, Muhammad Shah and Alauddin Sikander ruled. In 1390 Nasir-uddin entered Delhi and enthroned himself. He was the last sultan of the dynasty and ruled from 1390 to 1412. During his reign Timur the great Mongol leader of Central Asia invaded India. Timur's invasion dealt a fatal blow to the Tughlaq dynasty and the Sultanate of Delhi. Nasiruddin died in 1412.

1. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq
2. Mohammad Bin Tughlaq
3. Firoz Tughlaq
4. Later Tughlaqs
5. Rulers of the Tughlaq Dynasty

## Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq

Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq laid the foundation of the Tughlaq Dynasty. The word Tughlaq was not the name of any tribe or clan but was the personal name of Ghiyasuddin. He had to face enormous problems as a Sultan. There were riots in various parts of the empire and the royal treasury was empty. He pursued a policy of reconciliation with the nobles and the people who were severely restricted under Alauddin. He liberalized administration in certain respects. He gave up the practice of physical torture in case of economic offences and recovery of debts. He also discarded Alauddin's system of measurement of land for the assessment of land revenue. He attempted to improve the finances of the state and pursued a policy to encourage agriculture. His twin object was to increase land under cultivation and improve economic condition of the cultivators. He took keen interest in the construction of canal for irrigation and formulated famine policy to provide relief to peasants in time of drought. The state demand of revenue was fixed between 1/5th and 1/3rd of the produce. He further instructed that the land revenue should not be enhanced more than 1/11th of the estimated produce.

He continued the system of Dagh and Chehra instituted by Alauddin. He built the fortified city of Tughlaqabad and gave a new touch to the architecture of the Sultanate period. In 1321 he dispatched the crown prince Jauna Khan to re-establish Sultan's authority in the south. He annexed Warangal, Madurai and Bengal.



## Mohammad Bin Tughlaq

Jauna Khan ascended the throne in 1325 AD with the title of Mohammad Bin Tughlaq. He ruled up to 1351. He was a profound scholar of Persian, a penetrating critic, a litterateur of repute. He was a great scholar of Persian and Arabic. He faced many revolts and rebellions. The first of these revolts included his attempt to consolidate his empire by curbing the rebellions of 1327 by his

cousin Bahauddin Garsharp in the Deccan and other of Kishulu Khan the governor of Multan and Sind in 1328. One of the much condemned experiments of the Sultan was the transfer of capital from Delhi to Devagiri (1327). The transfer was attempted primarily due to two reasons -for its central location and secondly its close proximity to the south which was a newly conquered region. The transfer of capital involved the shifting of the army, officials, servants, tradesmen, court and shift of population. There was a widespread resentment against the Sultan who decided to retransfer the capital to Delhi. The order of going back to the old capital caused much distress to the people. Another of his novel and daring experiments was the introduction of the token currency of bronze coins in place of silver tanka in 1329-30. The value of the token coins was deemed to be equal to a silver coin. The main reason for this measure was the scarcity of silver. This measure proved useful in the beginning but later on it caused serious problems. People soon began to manufacture counterfeits of bronze in large numbers. There was a surfeit of coins in circulation. This naturally led to its depreciation and most people began to prefer copper tankas for payments and silver or gold issues for receipts. The Sultan was compelled to withdraw the token currency. He offered to exchange all the token coins for the silver coins resulting in huge losses to the treasury. He planned an expedition for the conquest of Khurasan and Iraq.

He raised an army of 3,70,000 soldiers and gave it a whole year's salary in advance. But the army did not leave for the expedition and was disbanded. The scheme was abandoned when the Sultan learnt that the conditions in Iraq had improved and was not conducive to an expedition. Towards the end of his reign the sultan increased the land revenue in the doab. He decided to enhance the land tax in the doab because of richness of its soil. Doab was facing total famine which was followed by plague. The Sultan raised the tax from 5 to 10%. Therefore the peasants instead of paying the taxes abandoned their lands and adopted highway robbery. The tax collectors continued to collect taxes by oppression. It resulted in extensive revolts. Mohammad Bin Tughlaq died in 1351. The whole of south India became independent during his life time and three major independent states- the empire of Vijaynagar, the Brahmani kingdom and the Sultanate of Madura were founded in the territories of the sultanate of the south.

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## Later Tughlaqs

Firoz Tughlaq was succeeded by his grandson who took up the title of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq Shah II. Within a year of his accession he fell victim to intrigue and was beheaded in early 1389. For the next five years Sultans- Abu Bakr, Muhammad Shah and Alauddin Sikandar Shah ruled.

In 1390 Nasiruddin entered Delhi and enthroned himself. He was the last sultan of the dynasty and ruled from 1390-1412. During his reign Timur the Mongol leader of Central Asia invaded India. After plundering Delhi he returned to Samarkand. On his way back he plundered Firozabad, Kangra, Meerut and Jammu. Khizr Khan was appointed governor of Multan, Lahore and Divalpur. Timur's invasion dealt a fatal blow to the Tughlaq dynasty and the Sultanate of Delhi. In 15th century the Sultanate completely disintegrated and numerous provincial kingdoms emerged in various parts of the country.

## Rulers of the Tughlaq Dynasty

Rulers of the Tughlaq Dynasty	AD
1. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq Shah	1320-1325
2. Mohammad Bin Tughlaq	1325-1351
3. Firuz Tughlaq	1351-1388
4. Later Tughlaq	1388-1414

## The Saiyyid Dynasty

Khizr Khan was not only the founder of the Saiyyid Dynasty but also its ablest ruler. Khizr Khan did not rule as a sovereign ruler but professed to rule as the deputy of Timur's son and successor. He assumed the title of Shah and got the Khutba read in his name.

□ Rulers of the Saiyyid Dynasty

In 1412 he conquered Gujarat, Gwalior and Jaunpur. In 1416 he defeated Bayana and in 1421 he attacked Mewat. Due to the illness he

died in the year 1421. He was succeeded by his son Mubarak Shah in 1421 who ruled till 1434. He was succeeded by his son Muhammad Shah in 1434 who ruled till 1445 AD. He remained in his capital sunk in indolence and pleasure. He was succeeded by his son Alauddin Alam Shah 1445-51. He was the weakest ruler of the Saiyyid Dynasty. He was deposed by Bahlol Lodhi, the powerful governor of Lahore and Sirhind who founded the Lodhi dynasty.

## Rulers of the Saiyyid Dynasty

Rulers of the Saiyyid Dynasty	AD
1. Khizr Khan	1414-1421
2. Mubarak Shah	1421-1434
3. Muhammad Shah	1434-1445
4. Alauddin Alam Shah	1445-1450

He was ablest of three Lodhi rulers. In 1504 he established the city of Agra. He conquered south Bihar in 1494-95 and concluded a treaty of friendship with Alauddin Husain Shah the ruler of Bengal. He introduced the measurement of land and started a measurement known as Sikandar Gaz. He tried to propagate Islam and crush Hinduism. He died at Agra in 1517. The last Lodhi ruler was Ibrahim Lodhi. In 1526 Ibrahim Lodhi fought with Babur the battle of Panipat. In this fierce battle Ibrahim Lodhi was defeated. The Sultanate came to an end and a new power Mughals came to rule India.

- Rulers of the Lodhi Dynasty

Jalaluddin's ambitious nephew Alauddin who succeeded Malik Chajju at Kara began to establish an independent kingdom for himself. In 1292 AD he attacked Bhilsa and Malwa. On his return he was made the governor of Avadh in addition to that of Kara. In 1294 AD he defeated Ram Chandra Deva the ruler of Devagiri. He invited Jalaluddin to Kara where he was murdered by Alauddin Khalji. In 1296 AD Alauddin was proclaimed sultan in his camp. He marched to Delhi from Kara and assumed power at Delhi. His first task after

assuming power at Delhi was the elimination of the surviving members of the former sultan's family including his son Arkhali Khan. He also exterminated the old Balbani and Jalali nobles.

The reign of Alauddin Khalji marks the zenith of the power of the Delhi Sultanate. Since the death of Iltutmish no serious attempts had been made to annex new territories to the Sultanate. He broke this tradition and inaugurated a whirlwind period of conquests. He believed that defense, expansion and consolidation could all go together. By the end of 1305 AD the whole of northern India fell into the hands of Alauddin and he directed his energies to the conquest of Deccan. Between 1307 and 1312 he began the southward expansion of his empire. He invaded Devagiri in 1306-07. The immediate causes for this was unduly long delay in sending the annual tribute. In 1309 the Kaktiya kingdom was attacked. The next expedition was against Vira Ballala III the Hoysala ruler in 1311. Alauddin had to face more than dozen invasions. These invasions started from the end of 1296 AD and continued up to 1308 AD. The Mongols threatened Punjab, Multan and Sindh but also the Ganga Yamuna Doab. This grave crisis compelled him to take strong measures for the protection of the northwest frontier. The twenty years rule of Alauddin came to an end with his death in 1316 AD.

On the death of Alauddin Khalji his general Malik Kafur set aside the claims of the heir apparent Khizr Khan and crowned the infant son of late sultan Shihabuddin Umar and himself became his regent. Soon another son of the sultan murdered Kafur and ascended the throne as Qutubuddin Mubarak Shah Khalji. He tried to win the goodwill of the people after ascending the throne. He repealed Alauddin's economic regulations. The lands that were confiscated were given back to their legitimate owners. Taxes were lowered. He was murdered by his Wazir Khusro. Khusro ascended the throne in 1320 and took the title of Nasiruddin Khusro Shah. Thus Khalji dynasty came to an end.



## Lodhi Dynasty

Bahlol Lodhi was the founder of Lodhi dynasty. He ruled for 39 years. His links were with a famous Afghan clan known as Shahurbel. He established his

suzerainty by defeating and capturing the jagirdar of Mewat, Sambha, Koel, Khari, Bhogaon, Etawah and Gwalior. He annexed the Jaunpur kingdom in his empire. In the last years of his life he invaded Gwalior and obtained 80 lakh tankas from the ruler. He was succeeded by his son Nizam Shah who ascended the throne with the title of Sikandar Shah.

He was ablest of three Lodhi rulers. In 1504 he established the city of Agra. He conquered south Bihar in 1494-95 and concluded a treaty of friendship with Alauddin Husain Shah the ruler of Bengal. He introduced the measurement of land and started a measurement known as Sikandar Gaz. He tried to propagate Islam and crush Hinduism. He died at Agra in 1517. The last Lodhi ruler was Ibrahim Lodhi. In 1526 Ibrahim Lodhi fought with Babur the battle of Panipat. In this fierce battle Ibrahim Lodhi was defeated. The Sultanate came to an end and a new power Mughals came to rule India.

- Rulers of the Lodhi Dynasty

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## Administration of the Sultanate

The government established by the Turks was a compromise between Islamic political ideas and institutions on the one hand and the existing Rajput system of government on the other. Consequently many elements of the Rajput political system with or without changes became part and parcel of the Turkish administration in India. Most of the Sultans kept up the pretence of regarding the caliph as the legal sovereign while they themselves were the caliph's representatives.

Most of them included the name of the caliph in the Khutba and the Sikka and adopted titles indicative of their subordination to the caliph. Three rulers emphasised their own importance. Balban used to say that after the Prophet the most important office was that of the sovereign and called himself the Shadow of God. Muhammad bin Tughlaq assumed this style during the early years of his reign and although Balban had retained the name of the caliph in the Khutba and Sikka, he made no mention of caliph anywhere. Despite all this neither of them had the power to call himself the caliph. The only person who had done this was Qutubuddin Mubarak Khalji. Only three Sultans sought and secured a mansur or letter of investiture from the caliph. The first among them was Iltutmish. Next Muhammad bin Tughlaq tried to pacify the ulema by securing an investiture from the Abbasid Caliph in Egypt.

After him Firoz also sought and secured it twice. According to Islamic ideals essential attributes of a sovereign required that he should be a male adult suffering from no physical disability, a freeborn Muslim having faith in Islam and acquainted with its doctrines and he should be elected by the people. There

were several violations of the prescribed criteria as Raziya was raised to throne despite her being a woman. Minority proved no bar in the case of Mohammad bin Tughluq. Alauddin Khalji admitted his ignorance of the Sharia but nobody questioned him. In the framing of new rules and regulations the authority of the Sultan was circumscribed and every ruler could not govern the kingdom in complete disregard of the advice of the ulema or theologians as Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq had been able to do. The power of the nobility also blunted their authority to some extent. When there was a weak ruler on the throne the nobles and the ulema particularly dominated him but during the reign of Balban, Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq these checks proved ineffective. The sultans were not powerful enough to rule the land in complete disregard of the sentiments of the Hindus.

## Literature in Medieval Period

In the early medieval period in northern India, Sanskrit continued to be the language of literature. This is the period of the works of two writers in Kashmir-Somadeva's Katha-sarit-sagar and Kalhana's Rajataringini. Rajataringini is a work of great importance as this is first historical work in India. Another famous work of this period is Gitagovinda by Jayadeva. It is one of the finest poems in Sanskrit literature.

One of the earliest works in an early form of Hindi was Prithviraj Raso by Chandbardai. It is a work on heroic deeds of Prithviraj Chauhan.

Another important Sanskrit work of this period is Bilhana's Vikramankadeva-Charita a biography of the Chalukya king Vikramaditya VI.



This period also saw development in Dravidian languages. Nripatunga wrote a great work of poetry in Kannada called the Kavirajamarga. Pampa wrote the Adipurana and Vikramarjuna-Vijaya with the former dealing with the life of the first Jain tirthankara and latter based on the Mahabharata. Ponna wrote

the Shantipurana, a legendary history of the 16th tirthankara. Another great Kannada writer was Ranna a contemporary of Pampa and Ponna.

Two of the famous works are the Ajitapurana and Gadayuddha. Kamban wrote the Rama a contemporary of Pampa and Ponna. Two of the famous works are the Ajitapurana and Gadayuddha. Kamban wrote the Ramayanam in Tamil. This was the period of the composition of the great hymns of the Alvars and the Nayanars. The hymns of the Alvars are collected into the Nalayira-Divyanam in Tamil. This was the period of the composition of the great hymns of the Alvars and the Nayanars. The hymns of the Alvars are collected into the Nalayira- Divya Prabandham. Some of the Nayanar works are the Thiruvagasam, the Thirumanairam and Thirutondattogai.

The Delhi Sultanate saw great advancement in the growth of Indian languages and literature. Braj Bhasha and Khari Boli began to be used in literary compositions. The famous Rajasthani ballad Alha Udal and the Vishaldeo Raso belong to this period. Mulla Daud wrote the oldest poem in Awadhi language called Chandayana.

Persian was the court language of the Sultanate. A very notable contribution of the Turks was in the field of historical literature in Persian. There were many historians in this period. Ziauddin Barani wrote the Tarikh-i- Firozshahi which gives a detailed account of Khaljis and Tughlaqs. He also wrote a work on political theory called the Fatawa-i- Jahandari.

The most outstanding literary figure in this period was Amir Khusrau. He was a poet, historian, mystic and composer of music. He was also a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya. He wrote the Ashiq, the Nuh Siphir, the Qiran, the Sadayan, the Khazain-ul- Futuh and several works of poetry.



The regional kingdoms provided a great stimulus to regional languages and literature. There were two main forms of Hindi in this period- Bhojpuri and Awadhi. Kabir wrote in Bhojpuri and his dohas or couplets have become a part of the folklore. Malik Muhammad Jayasi wrote the Padmavat in Awadhi. The famous Ramacharitmanas by Tulsidas was also written in Awadhi in this period. Qutban a disciple of the sufi saint Shaikh Burhan wrote the Mrigavati.

In Bengali the Ramayana by Krittivasa and the hundreds of lyrics by the famous poet Chandidas were written under the patronage of the rulers. With Chaitanya the tradition of writing devotional songs began. Narasi Mehta wrote devotional songs in Gujarati and Namdev and Eknath in Marathi. Under king Krishnadeva Raya, Telugu literature reached new heights. He was Telugu and Sanskrit writer. He wrote the Vishnuchittiya. The other famous poets in his court were Allasani Peddana who wrote the Manucharita. Dhurjati wrote the Kalahasti Mahatmya. In Mughal India, Babbar was one of the pioneers of Turkish poetry and also author of biography in Turkish Babar nama. Gulbadan Begum sister of Humayun wrote the Humayun Nama. Jahangir wrote his autobiography the Tuzuk-i- Jahangiri. Aurangzeb also was a prolific writer and the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was a notable Urdu poet.

## **Importance of Sher Shah Suri and Sur Dynasty**

Surs had founded the Second Afghan Empire in India. They introduced a new concept of sovereignty and effected a reorientation of a political institution. But the importance of Surs lies principally in having produced Sher Shah who by virtue of his conquests and administrative reforms earned for himself a place of honor among the rulers and empire-builders of India. His administrative machinery with slight modifications was adopted by Akbar and his successors as the basis of their government. Shershah was the first Muslim sovereign who placed before himself the ideal of promoting public welfare without distinction of caste or creed. Secondly he sought to organize the Afghans in such a manner that their defects might gradually wear off and their sovereignty might acquire permanence. He wanted to strengthen the defence of the frontiers so effectively that the restoration of the Mughals by invasion from without or by rebellion within should become possible.

Sher Shah's government was as autocratic as that of Balban or Alauddin but he got it approved by the Afghan assembly itself. Thus his despotism rested on a democratic foundation. Besides his versatile genius and indefatigable industry enabled him not only to lay down the general policy of all departments but also to superintend and control its execution in detail in day to day administration. He seems to have begun with the last rung of the administrative ladder the village and had worked up to the pargana and the sarkar level but failed to find time for touching up the provincial and central government. But he could not make much headway in provincial or central government.

Sher Shah's land revenue policy protected the interests both of the peasant and the landlord. He tried to prevent exploitation of the peasant but at the same time he did not completely abolish the traditional rights of the muqaddams and the assignees. He seems to have been conscious of the evils of the jagirdari system and yet he could not dispense with it everywhere lest it might cause discontent among the Afghan leaders. Merits of Sher Shah lies in introducing a permanent schedule of rates defining the mutual rights and obligations of the peasant and the state through patta and qabuliyat adopting

measurement as the normal method of assessment and in harmonious adjustment of the interests of all parties concerned.

To improve means of communication in the Empire, old roads were repaired and new ones laid out. At intervals of four miles sarais were built which soon became the nuclei of new market towns. Sher Shah made separate provision for supplying food and water to Hindu and Muslim wayfarers. Sher Shah planned these roads to connect the capital with the various provinces of the empire so that in case of necessity troops might be rapidly rushed to the affected region. The sarais served as convenient camping grounds for the military forces especially when a market town grew up around it. The sarais was used as dak-chaukis where harkaras and mounted news carriers were posted for carrying news to the next sarais both up and down the road. The Afghans dominated politics from 1451 to 1555 and during this period they did a number of remarkable things. They put an end to the anarchy which had come in the wake of the weak rule of the later Tughlaqs and the Sayyads and strove to build up a strong centralised government. Independent kingdoms of Malwa, Jaunpur and Bengal had ended and nobles of the central region were made amenable to discipline and obedience. The Afghans introduced a new ideal of government and instead of autocratic domination of the nobles they tried to govern in collaboration with them. In cooperation with the Hindus they tried to found a government based on national solidarity. They were patrons of men of learning and piety. They made administration of justice more efficient and improved the lot of the peasantry. In establishing internal peace and security they made the people shoulder a part of the responsibility which made them self-reliant and imparted stability to the government.



## Composite culture in Medieval India

Culturally medieval period marks the beginning of new stage in the growth of India's composite culture. It saw the introduction of new features in art and architecture of India and their diffusion to all parts of the country. The architecture that developed during this period was the result of the synthesis of the traditions of Central Asia and Persia with the pre-existing Indian styles.

During the 15th and 16th centuries distinctive styles of art and architecture also developed in the regional kingdoms which had emerged with the disintegration of the Sultanate.

During this time notable advances were made in the development of languages and literature. Two new languages-Arabic and Persian became a part of India's linguistic heritage. Historical writings for the first time became an important component of Indian literature. Under the influence of Persian, new forms of literature such as the ghazal were introduced. The period saw two great religious movements. The Bhakti movement spread throughout the country.

It disapproved religious narrow-mindedness, superstitions and observance of formal rituals. The Bhakti saints condemned caste inequalities and laid stress on human brotherhood. The other was Sufi movement. The Sufis or the Muslim mystics preached the message of love and human brotherhood. These two movements played a leading role in combating religious exclusiveness and narrow-mindedness and in bringing the people of all communities together. Sikhism began to emerge as a new religion based on the teachings of Guru Nanak and other saints. The growth of a composite culture reached its highest point under the Great Mughals in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Mughals built an empire which once again brought about the political unification of a large part of the country.

Akbar the greatest Mughal Emperor followed the policy of Sulhkul (peace with all). Some of the finest specimen of Indian architecture and literature belong to this period. A new significant art form was painting which flourished under the patronage of the Mughal court. Influenced by the Persian traditions the Mughal painting developed into a distinct Indian style. It later spread to other parts of the country in various regional styles. Another significant development was the emergence of a new language Urdu which became the lingua franca of the people of the towns in many parts of the country.

## **Art and Architectural in Medieval India**

The coming of the Turks inaugurated a new era in the history of Indian architecture, the Turks brought with them architectural ideas developed in Persia, Arabia and Central Asia. They came into contact with the traditions that had already been developed in India. The interaction of these two traditions resulted in a new synthesis of architectural styles. The rulers of the Sultanate were great patrons of architecture and under them the process of synthesis started. It continued with many regional variations in the different kingdoms. During the Mughal period the flowering of this synthesis took place and some of the greatest monuments of India were built. Based on the interaction of the two traditions a unique Indian style of architecture was developed in this period.

## **Main features of Islamic architecture**

The Mosque consisted of a large rectangular open courtyard surrounded by arcades on all four sides. The mehrab which faces Mecca indicates the direction to the prayer. The call to the worship was made from a tall tower or minaret. In some mosques there were many minarets. Another characteristic feature was the arch in the gateway and other places. The dome was another prominent feature of the mosque and the mausoleum. The chief decorative element was sculpturing the building with geometrical designs and lettering in calligraphic style. Some of these features were new to Indian architecture. The ancient Indian buildings were decorated with beautiful carving and sculpture while the Muslim buildings were marked by simplicity and lack of adornment. When the new buildings began to be erected the two styles were gradually synthesized into a new and unique style.

## Architecture under the Sultanate

The Turkish rulers utilized the services of the local designers and craftsmen who were among the most skilful in the world. The new fusion that started to take place avoided the extreme simplicity of the Islamic architecture and the lavish decoration of the earlier Indian architecture. Among the first buildings to be erected were the mosques at Delhi and Ajmer by Qutbuddin Aibak. The mosque built in Delhi was called the Quwwatul Islam mosque. It measured about 70x30 meters. The central arch of this mosque which is decorated with beautiful sculptured calligraphy still stands and is about 17 meters high and about 7 metres wide. The successor of Qutbuddin Iltutmish was a great builder. He further extended the mosque. He also completed the building of the Qutb Minar which had been started by Qutbuddin and now stood in the extended courtyard of the mosque.



This is a tower rising to a height of about 70 meters and is one of the most renowned monuments of India. The next important buildings belong to the reign of Alauddin Khalji. He enlarged the Quwwatul Islam mosque still further and built a gateway to the enclosure of the mosque, the Alai Darwaza. Decorative element was introduced to beautify the building. He also started building a minar which was designed to be double the height of Qutb Minar but the project remained unfulfilled. The Tughlaqs concentrated on the

building of new cities in Delhi like Tughlaqabad, Jahanpanah and Ferozabad. A number of buildings was erected which differed in their style from the earlier buildings. Massive and strong structures like the tomb of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq and the walls of Tughlaqabad were built. The buildings of the Tughlaq period were significant from the point of view of the development of architecture. They were not beautiful but massive and very impressive.

- **Mughal Architecture**
- **Mughal Painting**
- **Music in Medieval India**

## Mughal Architecture

The process of synthesis was completed under the Mughals and the new architecture which had started taking shape with the establishment of the Sultanate reached the pinnacle of glory. Babar and Humayun the first two Mughal kings erected a number of buildings with the help of Persian architects and these now in ruins are not very impressive. Humayun had to flee the country in the face of the rising power of the Afghan ruler Sher Shah Suri. There was a short Afghan rule before Humayun recovered the Indian territories for the Mughals. The most important buildings is the mausoleum of Sher Shah at Sasaram. It is well-proportioned building and stands in the middle of a tank.

The Mughal architecture began in the reign of Akbar. The first important building of Akbar's reign is Humayun's tomb at Delhi. In this magnificent tomb the Persian influence is very strong particularly in the construction of the dome. Indian builders used stone and marble. The two significant features of the Mughal architecture are the large gateways and the placement of the building in the midst of the large park. The tomb provided many architectural ideas for the building of the Taj Mahal later. Akbar also built the forts of Agra and Lahore. He built his palace within the Agra fort. Many new buildings were constructed in the fort and old ones altered by his successors. For the first time living beings -elephants, lions, peacocks and other birds were sculptured in the brackets. The crowning achievement of the reign of Akbar was the building of his new capital at Fatehpur Sikri about 40 kms from Agra. The buildings at Fatehpur Sikri have been built in a variety of styles making it one of the most magnificent capitals in the world. It had a circumference of over 10 kms. The arch of the Buland Darwaza is about 41 meters high and is perhaps the most important gateway in the world. The tomb of Salim Chishti built in white marble is exquisite in its beauty. Another notable building is the Ibadat Khana or the House of Worship where learned people belonging to various religions gathered together and discussed questions of philosophy and theology in the presence of Emperor. Then there is the Panch Mahal a five storeyed building modelled on the Buddhist viharas.

During the reign of Jahangir the mausoleum of Akbar was constructed at Sikandara. This is a magnificent monument as after a long time minar became architecturally significant. It has beautiful arches and domes.

But the whole structure is inspired by the Buddhist viharas. Jahangir also extended the palace buildings in the Agra fort and built the beautiful tomb of Itmad-ud-daula the father of NurJahan. The tomb was built in marble and is notable for its beautiful coloured inlay work. NurJahan built a beautiful mausoleum for her husband at Shahdara near Lahore.

## Mughal Paintings

The great era of in the art of painting was ushered by the Mughals. the great painter Behzad. They came into contact with their counterparts in India and under Akbar the synthesis of two styles was encouraged. He gathered together a number of painters from Persia, Kashmir and Gujarat. The Ain-i-Akhbari mentions a number of artists-Abdus Samad, Mir Saiyid Ali, Miskin, Daswant, Basawan, Mukand and many others. They illustrated manuscripts like the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza and Babarnama. Individual pieces were also painted. By the end of Akbar's reign an independent Mughal style of painting had been developed. Jahangir was a poet and patron of painting. Under him the Mughal School of painting was fully developed and made remarkable progress.



The painting was no longer confined to book illumination. Portrait painting and depiction of subjects drawn from life and nature became popular. Some of the finest painters in this period were Nadir, Murad, Bishan Das, Manohar, Goverdhan, Mansur and Farrukh Beg. The competence and skill of the Indian artists are evident from the incident which Sir Thomas Roe who came to the court of Jahangir mentions. The artists of Jahangir's court made several copies of a painting which Roe had presented to the emperor on the same day. The copies were so perfect that Roe found it difficult to spot the original.

In the course of few decades fine works of paintings were created. The development continued under Shah Jahan. Dara Shikoh son of Shah Jahan was a great patron of paintings. With Aurangzeb the art declined in the Mughal courts. With the withdrawal of court patronage many artists went to different parts of the country and influenced the development of new schools of painting. Two of the most important schools of painting that emerged were the Rajasthani and the Pahari schools. The subjects of the paintings of these schools were drawn from the epics, myths and legends and love themes.

## Music in Medieval India

The medieval period witnessed development in Music in India. Music was not a part of the original Islamic tradition but it developed under the influence of the Sufis and became a part of court life. Many new forms and instruments were developed. Mir Khusrau who had contributed to literature and historical writings is believed to have invented some of these musical instruments. He developed the early form of the popular musical style known as Qawwali. Khayal one of the important forms of Indian classical music is also believed to be his contribution. The legendary figures of Baz Bahadur, the ruler of Malwa and his queen Rupmati were accomplished musicians and also introduced many new ragas. The most notable figure in music in Medieval India as Tansen the court musician of Akbar. His attainments in music have become a legend.

The patronage of music continued at the courts of rulers in the 18th century and the traditions evolved through the centuries were kept alive. The contributions of the Bhakti and Sufi saints in the development and promotion of music is very important. The growth of Indian classical music has been a major force of India's cultural unity. Apart from Hindu elements some of the greatest masters of music have been Muslims. The Kitab-i- Nauras a collection of songs in praise of Hindu deities and Muslim saints was written by a 17th century ruler Ibrahim Adil Shah II. Both in vocal and instrumental music two main classical styles evolved -Hindustani and Carnatic. Some of the greatest figures in Carnatic music were Purandaradasa, Thyagraja, Muthuswami, Dikshitar and Syamasastri.

## The Marathas

During the second half of the 17th century the Marathas had become powerful. Shivaji contributed towards the rise and growth of Maratha power in India. The history of the Marathas can be divided into two well marked phases – early phase from the latter half of the 17th century till the death of Aurangzeb the period of Shivaji,Sambhaji,Rajaram and Tarabai and the latter Mughal phase

when the Peshwas became the rulers and the Maratha empire turned into a loose confederacy of the Maratha chiefs under the leadership of Peshwas.

- Chatrapati Shivaji and Maratha Polity
- Shivaji's Administration and Economic Policies
- Sambhaji ( 1680-89)
- Peshwas

## Chatrapati Shivaji and Maratha Polity

Shivaji was born in February 1630. He was the second son of Shahji Bhonsle and Jijabai. He was born in the hill fort of Shivneri in the northern part of the Pune district. Shivaji's early childhood years were ones of constant warfare and famine in Maharashtra, particularly the Pune region. Shahji, his father, was a rebel from brief Mughal service, and a Mughal army pursued him through the Ghats and down to the Konkan. Shahji's forces, reinforced by Bijapur, were generally unsuccessful against the Mughals and Shivaji and his mother moved from fort to fort. It was not until 1636, when Shahji was forced to go into service with Bijapur, that Shivaji and his mother were able to settle in Pune. Shahji was succeeded in getting a grant in the Pune region confirmed by the Bijapur government, the administration of which was bestowed on Dadaji Kondev. The core of the rights was the hereditary patil rights (village headman) to three villages, and the deshmukh rights of Indapur, some seventy miles southeast of Pune. Beyond these hereditary rights, Shivaji's father also held the mokasa of the Pune region. This mokasa grant was a triangle bordered by the Nira River on the south, the Bhima River on the northeast, and a portion of the Ghats on the west. It ran almost a hundred miles north to south and the same east to west. Very little is confirmable about Shivaji's early years.



The Pune region was largely devastated by two decades of warfare and the famine of 1630. Dadaji Kondev set about repopulating and developing the jagir. There is every indication that this was not a peaceful process. In 1644, Shivaji was involved in a factional dispute that resulted in his arrest and the sequestering of his estates. The Bijapur government instructed two nearby chiefs, the Khopde and Jedhe deshmukhs to seize the estates, but apparently

the order was withdrawn before being implemented. During this time, Shivaji explored the hills surrounding his jagir and took the hill fort of Sinhagad. In 1647, Dadaji Kondev, the steward of Shivaji's jagir, died, and Shivaji took over the administration. One of his first acts directly challenged the Bijapuri government. Shivaji, through stratagem took the fort of Torna, and seized the large treasure he found there. In the next two years, Shivaji took another important fort near Pune, Chakan, which guarded the northern road into the city. Meanwhile, he used the money found at Torna to build a new fort five miles east of Torna, on the crest of a hill. He named it Raigad, and it served as his capital for over a decade. All challenges were possible because the Bijapuri government was in crisis due to the illness of the reigning king. Shivaji in these same early years also struck against rival Maratha families in his area. Shivaji continued his consolidation of his father's jagir. He won over the fort commanders of Baramati and Indapur, and more importantly, took the fort of Purandar.

Between 1650 and 1655, Shivaji recruited deshmukhs and soldiers and successfully crushed opposition to his control of the Pune region.

He build another fort, which he named Pratapgad, near Raigad by defeating More family. He controlled eight important passes that traversed the Ghats from the Desh to the Konkan coast.

From 1657 to 1660 Shivaji repeatedly attacked and plundered the Adilshahi territories. A huge army was collected in Bijapur and Afzal Khan was to bring back the rebel dead or alive. When Afzal Khan reached the field of operations he found that fighting in the mountainous territory was extremely difficult. He proposed an interview with Shivaji ,promising him pardon and grant of territory. Shivaji and Afzal Khan met at the appointed place when Afzal Khan attached him with a dagger the latter promptly killed him with the tiger claws. After this Afzal Khan's troops were massacred. Another army was sent by Bijapur but also met with the same fate. Ultimately Bijapur entered into negotiations with Shivaji and was recognized as the ruler of the territories in his possession.

From the More lands that were on the top of the Ghats, he raided down into the northern Konkan and captured the towns of Kalyan and Bhiwandi and the large fort of Mahuli. The raids on the coastal plain were highly successful and first brought Shivaji to the attention of the maritime powers on the west coast of India. By the end of 1659, Shivaji was, therefore, in control of the Pune area, the northern Satara district and about half of the Kolaba and Thana districts. He controlled forty forts, large and small, led a cavalry of 7,000 regular horse, and infantry of approximately 10,000, and 3,000 independent troopers.

For three years from 1660-1663 Shivaji was hunted from all directions .Shaista Khan the Mughal governor had occupied Poona and made it his headquarters. Shivaji had attacked Shaista Khan ,killing his son and wounding him in 1663. Aurangzeb deputed Raja Jai Singh of Amber to deal with Shivaji after he had looted Surat and Ahmadnagar. Raja Jai Singh made careful diplomatic and

military preparations and opened the campaign with the siege of Purandhar. Driven to desperation after months of resistance, Shivaji opened negotiations with Jai Singh and treaty was concluded at Purandar in 1665. By this treaty ,Shivaji was allowed to retain twelve of its forts including Raigarh.He had to surrender 23 forts with surrounding territories which yielded a revenue of four lacs every year to the Mughals.



## Chatrapati Shivaji and Maratha Polity

Shivaji was born in February 1630. He was the second son of Shahji Bhonsle and Jijabai. He was born in the hill fort of Shivneri in the northern part of the Pune district. Shivaji's early childhood years were ones of constant warfare and famine in Maharashtra, particularly the Pune region. Shahji, his father, was a rebel from brief Mughal service, and a Mughal army pursued him through the Ghats and down to the Konkan. Shahji's forces, reinforced by Bijapur, were generally unsuccessful against the Mughals and Shivaji and his mother moved from fort to fort. It was not until 1636, when Shahji was forced to go into service with Bijapur, that Shivaji and his mother were able to settle in Pune. Shahji was succeeded in getting a grant in the Pune region confirmed by the Bijapur government, the administration of which was bestowed on Dadaji Kondev. The core of the rights was the hereditary patil rights (village headman) to three villages, and the deshmukh rights of Indapur, some seventy miles southeast of Pune. Beyond these hereditary rights, Shivaji's father also held the mokasa of the Pune region. This mokasa grant was a triangle bordered by the Nira River on the south, the Bhima River on the northeast, and a portion of the Ghats on the west. It ran almost a hundred miles north to south and the same east to west. Very little is confirmable about Shivaji's early years.

The Pune region was largely devastated by two decades of warfare and the famine of 1630. Dadaji Kondev set about repopulating and developing the jagir. There is every indication that this was not a peaceful process. In 1644, Shivaji was involved in a factional dispute that resulted in his arrest and the sequestering of his estates. The Bijapur government instructed two nearby chiefs, the Khopde and Jedhe deshmukhs to seize the estates, but apparently the order was withdrawn before being implemented. During this time, Shivaji

explored the hills surrounding his jagir and took the hill fort of Sinhagad. In 1647, Dadaji Kondev, the steward of Shivaji's jagir, died, and Shivaji took over the administration. One of his first acts directly challenged the Bijapuri government. Shivaji, through stratagem took the fort of Torna, and seized the large treasure he found there. In the next two years, Shivaji took another important fort near Pune, Chakan, which guarded the northern road into the city. Meanwhile, he used the money found at Torna to build a new fort five miles east of Torna, on the crest of a hill. He named it Raigad, and it served as his capital for over a decade. All challenges were possible because the Bijapuri government was in crisis due to the illness of the reigning king. Shivaji in these same early years also struck against rival Maratha families in his area. Shivaji continued his consolidation of his father's jagir. He won over the fort commanders of Baramati and Indapur, and more importantly, took the fort of Purandar.

Between 1650 and 1655, Shivaji recruited deshmukhs and soldiers and successfully crushed opposition to his control of the Pune region.



He build another fort, which he named Pratapgad, near Raigad by defeating More family. He controlled eight important passes that traversed the Ghats from the Desh to the Konkan coast.

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## **Sambhaji ( 1680-89)**

After the death of Shivaji in 1680, Sambhaji, his eldest son ascended the throne. In 1680-81 when Aurangzeb was engaged in the Rajput war, Sambhaji renewed war with the Mughals, raided Burhanpur and even attempted an attack on Ahmadnagar. In 1685-86, Aurangzeb captured Bijapur and Golconda and he turned his attention on Marathas. Many of their forts were captured and Sambhaji moved to Sangameshwar. In 1689 Muqarrab Khan, the Mughal general made a surprise attack and captured Sambhaji. He was executed later.

### **Rajaram ( 1689-1700)**

In 1689 Rajaram stepbrother of Sambhaji was proclaimed king by the Maratha council of ministers and was crowned at Raigarh. Rajaram left Raigarh and reached Jinji and it remained the center of Maratha activity against the Mughals. The Mughals under Zulfikar Khan captured Jinji. All members of Sambhaji's family were captured and his son Sahu was made a prisoner who remained in Mughal captivity till the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. The Maratha leaders and commanders organized the resistance to the Mughals in the Deccan. Before Jinji's capture by Mughals, Rajaram escaped to Satara where he organized a new state army and brought all the Marathas generals under his banner. He also levied Chauth and Sardheshmukhi from Kandesh, Berar and Baglana. In 1699 Satara was attacked by Aurangzeb and captured after the death of Rajaram in 1700.

### **Tarabai ( 1700-1707)**

After the death of Rajaram, Tarabai, Rajaram's widow put Shivaji II her son on the throne and became regent. She took keen interest in the state's affairs. Mughals annexed the fort of Pali, Pankala, Konndana and Khelna. In 1703 the Marathas attacked Berar and 1706 Gujarat. Sambhaji's son Sahu was released in 1707 by Aurangzeb's son Bahadur Shah I. He was recognized as the rightful

ruler of Marathas and his right to the Maratha swaraj and to Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the Deccani states of the Mughals was also recognized. This period saw a struggle between the two groups of the Marathas. Tarabai declared Sahu as an imposter and attacked him. As a result a civil war broke out between the forces of Tarabai and Sahu that lasted up to 1708. Tarabai retired to Kolhapur with her son Shivaji II. When Shivaji II died his step-brother Sambhaji II was put on the throne of Kolhapur. The relations between Sahu and Sambhaji were not cordial. However in 1731 the treaty of Warna was signed between Sahu and Sambhaji that provided that Sambhaji would rule over southern part of the Maratha kingdom with Kolhapur as its capital and northern part with the capital at Satara should be given to Sahu. The treaty of 1731 resolved the differences between Satara and Kolhapur .



## Peshwas

During the struggle between Sahu and Sambhaji, loyal, reliable and capable Balaji Vishwanath aided Sahu. After his coronation in 1708, Sahu conferred upon him the title of Sena- Karte and eventually elevated him to the post of Peshwa in 1713.

**Balaji Vishwanath (1714-20)**

Balaji Vishwanath laid the foundation of the future Maratha Confederacy. He enabled Sahu in consolidating his power. After him the office of Peshwa became hereditary and Balaji and his successors became the rulers of the Maratha kingdom. Balaji has been credited with a mastery of finance .He laid the foundations for a well-organized revenue system in the swaraj territory that was under direct royal administration.

**Peshwa Baji Rao I (1720-40)**

After the death of Balaji Vishwanath, Sahu appointed his eldest son Baji Rao the Peshwa. Under him the Maratha power reached its zenith. He reorganized the armies of the state and started his campaigns in 1731. In 1732, Baji Rao over ran the province of Malwa and conquered Bundelkhand. He was aware of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire and wanted to take full advantage of the situation. In 1739 the Portuguese were defeated and the island of Bassein

was taken from them. Thus Baji Rao was successful in his policies. He made Pune the center of his activities and came to be known as seat of Peshwas. During this period regional dynasties emerged. Ranoji Sindhia founded the Sindhia dynasty of Malwa; Malhar Rao Holkar was given a part of Malwa who later on laid the foundations of Holkar house of Indore. The Gaikwads established themselves in Gujarat with head quarters at Baroda. Instead of checking these feudatories, Baji Rao entrusted large powers on chiefs like Sindhia and Holkar. Baji Rao founded the Maratha Empire through his conquests. .

### **Balaji Baji Rao (1740-61)**

Balaji Baji Rao became the next Peshwa on the death of his father. He was a commander like his father. During his tenure the Third Battle of Panipat was fought between the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1761. The Marathas lost and the huge damages were done.

### **Peshwa Madhava Rao (1761-1772)**

Balaji Baji Rao was succeeded by his son Madhava Rao I. His uncle Raghunatha Rao wanted to assist Madhava Rao in his work. But serious differences broke out between the Peshwa and his uncle leading to a war between the two in 1762 in which the Peshwa's army was defeated. The differences erupted again in 1765. Raghunath Rao demanded the partition of the Maratha state between himself and the Peshwa. Nizam Ali marched towards Poona but was defeated after a struggle of two years and was forced to surrender. Bhonsle of Nagpur was also subjugated. Rajput were brought under Maratha suzerainty and the Jats were forced to accept Maratha over lordship. Madhav Rao died in 1772. After him the Maratha dominion faced a deep crisis and its fortunes declined under his successors.

### **Peshwa Baji Rao II (1795-1816)**

During his Peshwaship the subsidiary Treaty of Bassein (1802) was signed by the Peshwa with the British. It led to the second Anglo- Maratha War in 1803-05. The Third Anglo- Maratha was brought an end to the Maratha power. The Peshwaship was abolished and he was pensioned off to Bithur near Kanpur

### **Decline of Maratha Power**

Marathas were brave but internal jealousies and treachery marked the course of their empire. The economy of the Maratha state was not on a sound basis. Agriculture was the main source of income but it depended on rainfall. No industry or trade routes were set up. The Marathas tried to preserve religion at the sacrifice of science. They avoided handling modern equipment for fear that they would lose their religion. They failed to develop artillery as the main support of defense. The Marathas recruited foreigners as soldiers to defend their country. They also failed to develop strong navy. In the absence of strong leadership the morale of the army was low and the soldiers often fled from the battlefield.