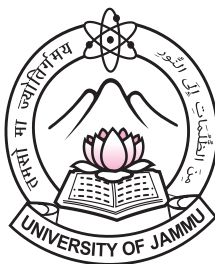


CENTRE FOR DISTANCE & ONLINE EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU
JAMMU



SELF LEARNING MATERIAL
SESSION 2026 ONWARDS
M. A. HISTORY

SEMESTER –I

Unit-I, II, III, IV
Lesson Nos 1-20
Credit : 6

COURSE NO. HIST 102

DR. HINA ABROL
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<http://www.distanceeducationju.in>
Printed and Published on behalf of the Centre for Distance & Online Education,
University of Jammu, Jammu by the Director, CDOE, University of Jammu, Jammu

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We duly acknowledge the reference books/web/interest sources from where the material has been taken for the academic benefit of the learner.

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**SYLLABUS FOR THE EXAMINATION TO BE HELD IN THE
YEARS DECEMBER 2026, DECEMBER 2027 AND DECEMBER 2028.**

DETAILED SYLLABUS

COURSE NO.HIST102 SEMESTER: FIRST

COURSE TITLE: HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIA (1526-1605).

Credit : 06

Maximum Marks:100

- (a) Major-Test Examination:70
- (b) Minor-I:10
- (c) Minor-II:10
- (d) IAA= 10

Duration of Examination :3.00 Hours.

Objective: To acquaint the students with the history of establishment of Mughal rule in India, its polity, administrative system & regional power

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Unit-I | Sources: Babur's Baburnama, Gulbadan Begum's Humayunnama, Abul Fazal's Akbarnama, Badauni's Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh. |
| Unit-II | Babur in Central Asia, Establishment of Mughal rule in India; Babur's relations with Afghans & Rajputs, Humayun's relations with Sher Khan, Humayun's relations with Gujarat and Rajput states . |
| Unit-III | Foundation of Second Afghan Empire, Conquest of Sher Shah Sur, Sher Shah Sur's public welfare measures, Sarkar, Pargana & Military Administration under Sher Shah Sur, Islam Shah Sur & Decline of Second Afghan Empire |
| Unit-IV | Akbar's accession, Bairam Khan's Regency period, Akbar's conquests of Malwa, Gujarat & Kashmir, Akbar's relations with Rajput states of Amber & Mewar, Akbar's Deccan Policy, Akbar's Sulh-i-Khul Policy. |

SYLLABUS FOR THE EXAMINATION TO BE HELD IN THE YEARS
DECEMBER 2026, 2027 & 2028.

DETAILED SYLLABUS COURSE NO. HIST102

SEMESTER: FIRST

COURSE TITLE : HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIA (1526-1605).

NOTE FOR PAPER SETTING FOR MAJOR TEST

- The question paper will be divided into two sections i.e. Section-A and Section-B. It will contain short and long answer type questions.
- **Section-A**, This section will contain four short answer type questions (100 words per question) and will be compulsory. These short answer type questions will be from all the units. Each short answer type question will carry 2.5 marks. **2.5x4=10 marks**
- **Section-B**, There will be a total of eight long answer type questions (two questions from each unit with internal choice.) and the candidates will be required to answer one question from each unit. Each long answer type question will carry 15 marks. **4x15=60 marks.**

The students shall be continuously evaluated during the conduct of each course on the basis of their performance as follows:-

Theory	Syllabus to be covered in the examination	Time allotted for the examination	Weightage of marks
Minor Test-I	Unit-I and Unit-II	Sixty Minutes	10 marks
Minor Test-II	Unit-III and Unit-IV	Sixty Minutes	10 marks
IAA	Home assignment		10 marks (two questions of 5 marks each)
Major Test	Unit I-IV	Three hours	70 marks

PRESCRIBED READING:

1. Babur: Baburnama, English trans. A.S. Beveridge
2. Gulbadan Begum: Humayunama, Eng. Trans. A. S. Beveridge
3. Abul Fazl: Akbarnama, Eng. Trans. H. Beveridge

4. Badauni: Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Eng. Trans.
5. R.P. Trirathi: Rise and fall of the Mughal Empire
6. Mohibul Hasan: Babur, The founder of Mughal Empire
7. Rushbrook Williams: An empire builder of 16th century.
8. Ishwari Prasad: Life and times of Humayun.
9. A.B. Pandey: Later Medieval Period.
10. K.R.Qanungo: Shershah and his times.
11. Satish Chandra: Medieval India, from Sultanate to Mughals, Mughal Empire (1526-1748).
12. A.L.Srivastava: Akbar, the Great.
13. Shri Ram Sharma: The Religious Policy of The Mughals

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HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIA (1526-1605)

SOURCES

Semester-I	Unit-I
Course No. HIST 102	Lesson 1

BABUR'S *BABURNAMA*

STRUCTURE

- 1.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Babur's Life before India and the *Baburnama* as Autobiography
- 1.4 The *Baburnama* as Military and Political History
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- 1.9 Glossary
- 1.10 Examination Oriented Questions
- 1.11 Lesson End Exercise
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- 1.13 Suggested Readings

1.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to :

- Explain the historical context of Babur's early life and his military campaigns that led to the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India.

- Describe the content, structure, and distinctive characteristics of the *Baburnama* as a primary historical source.
- Analyse Babur's personal observations about Indian geography, society, culture, and climate, and assess their historical accuracy and significance.

Learning Outcomes

After going through the lesson, you will have a clear understanding of :

- The *Baburnama* as evidence of Mughal imperial ideology and as a window into early Mughal court culture.
- The long-term significance of the *Baburnama* for understanding Mughal governance, military strategy, and cultural policies.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, the *Baburnama*, written by Zahir ud-Din Muhammad Babur (1483-1530), the founder of the Mughal Empire, represents one of the most important primary sources for understanding early modern South Asian history and the establishment of Mughal rule in India. Unlike many historical accounts written by court chroniclers or administrators distant from events, the *Baburnama* is an autobiographical work written by Babur himself, providing his personal observations, reflections, and accounts of his life, military campaigns, and experiences in India. The work offers not merely a narrative of political and military events but also intimate glimpses into Babur's personality, his intellectual interests, his aesthetic sensibilities, and his complex reactions to the Indian subcontinent that he had conquered.

The *Baburnama* is valuable as a historical source for multiple reasons. First, it provides firsthand accounts of the military campaigns through which Babur conquered northern India and established the Mughal Empire. Second, it documents Babur's observations of Indian geography, climate, flora, fauna, and society from the perspective of an outsider encountering these phenomena for the first time. Third, it reveals Babur's intellectual world and his engagement with Central Asian and Persian literary and philosophical traditions. Fourth, it provides evidence of early Mughal imperial ideology and of the cultural and administrative policies that would characterize Mughal rule.

This lesson explores the *Baburnama* as a historical source, examining its content and structure, analyzing Babur's observations and accounts, and evaluating the work's significance for understanding the foundation of the Mughal Empire and the early development of Mughal governance.

1.2 BABUR'S LIFE BEFORE INDIA AND THE BABURNAMA AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Babur's early life in Central Asia (1483-1504)

Zahir ud-Din Muhammad Babur was born in 1483 in Andijan, a city in the Ferghana Valley in Central Asia

(present-day Uzbekistan). He was a member of the Timurid dynasty, a royal house descended from the Mongol conqueror Timur (Tamerlane), and he inherited claims to rulership in various Central Asian territories. However, Babur's early years were characterized by struggle for political power rather than by stable rule. He lost and regained his inheritance multiple times, faced rivalries with relatives and with other Central Asian rulers, and conducted military campaigns throughout Central Asia and Afghanistan in pursuit of power and territory.

Babur's experiences in Central Asia shaped his personality and his approach to governance. Through decades of military struggle, Babur developed considerable military skill and strategic acumen. He also cultivated refinement in literature, philosophy, and aesthetics, becoming a patron of arts and letters and developing his own intellectual and literary interests. The combination of military competence and cultural sophistication would characterize Babur's rule and would influence the cultural foundations of the Mughal Empire.

The movement toward India and the conquest of Delhi (1504-1526)

After years of struggle in Central Asia, Babur gradually turned his attention toward India. In 1504, he captured Kabul in Afghanistan, which became his first major stable base of power. Over the following two decades, Babur conducted military campaigns in various directions, expanding his control and establishing himself as a significant regional power. However, his ambitions extended beyond Central Asia and Afghanistan toward the wealthy sultanates and kingdoms of India.

The opportunity for Babur to invade India came in 1526, when he received an invitation from a faction within the Delhi sultanate seeking external military assistance in an internal political conflict. Babur seized this opportunity to invade India with a relatively small army of perhaps 12,000 to 15,000 men. Despite his numerical inferiority relative to Indian armies, Babur's forces possessed superior military technology (particularly firearms and artillery), superior military organization, and Babur's own military genius. In the Battle of Panipat in 1526, Babur's forces defeated the Delhi sultanate's army and established Mughal control over northern India.

The composition and characteristics of the *Baburnama*

The *Baburnama* (literally "the book of Babur") was written by Babur himself during the final years of his life, though scholars debate the exact dates of composition. The work is written in Chaghatai Turkish, the language of the Central Asian courts where Babur was educated, rather than in Persian, which was the conventional language of court chronicles. This linguistic choice reflects Babur's cultural and personal identity as a Central Asian ruler rather than as primarily an Indian emperor.

The *Baburnama* is not organized as a conventional chronological narrative but rather is structured thematically, with different sections devoted to different aspects of Babur's life and observations. The work begins with accounts of Babur's genealogy and early life, continues with narratives of his military campaigns and political struggles, and includes extensive passages devoted to Babur's observations of India—its geography, climate, flora, fauna, and society. The work concludes with reflections on Babur's religious faith and his hopes for his successors.

What distinguishes the *Baburnama* from conventional court histories is its highly personal character. The work

includes anecdotes, personal observations, descriptions of Babur's emotional states, and reflections on his successes and failures. Babur discusses his use of wine and hashish, his aesthetic appreciation of nature and poetry, his affection for individuals in his retinue, and his anxieties about his mortality. This personal character provides readers with intimate access to Babur's inner life in ways that conventional chronicles do not offer.

The reliability and limitations of the *Baburnama* as a historical source

Like all historical sources, the *Baburnama* has both strengths and limitations as evidence. The *Baburnama*'s strengths include its firsthand character, its personal detail, and its vivid descriptions. The work provides accounts of events from someone who directly witnessed them, rather than from secondary sources. The personal observations and emotional candor make the work valuable for understanding Babur's personality and worldview.

However, the *Baburnama* also has limitations. It is necessarily selective—Babur chose which events to describe and which to omit, and these choices reflected his interests and concerns. The work is written from Babur's perspective and reflects his biases and preoccupations. Additionally, Babur's descriptions, particularly of India and Indian society, were written from the perspective of an outsider encountering unfamiliar phenomena for the first time, and his observations, while valuable, were sometimes based on incomplete understanding or on prejudices. Historians must therefore read the *Baburnama* carefully, using other sources to corroborate accounts and remaining aware of the work's limitations and biases.

1.3 THE *BABURNAMA* AS MILITARY AND POLITICAL HISTORY

Accounts of military campaigns and the conquest of India

A substantial portion of the *Baburnama* is devoted to accounts of Babur's military campaigns, both in Central Asia and in India. Babur's descriptions of these campaigns provide valuable information about military tactics, weaponry, logistics, and strategy during the late medieval and early modern periods. His accounts of the Battle of Panipat, for instance, provide insights into the disposition of forces, the use of artillery and firearms, and the psychological dimensions of battle.

Babur's military accounts reveal his strategic thinking and his understanding of military principles. He demonstrates awareness of terrain, of the importance of supply lines, of the psychological impact of military victories and defeats, and of the advantages and disadvantages of different military tactics and technologies. His descriptions suggest a military commander who thought carefully about warfare and who adapted his strategies to specific circumstances rather than following rigid doctrinal principles.

The *Baburnama*'s military accounts also provide information about the Indian armies and military forces that Babur encountered. Babur's descriptions of Indian military organization, weaponry, and tactics provide comparative perspective on military developments in different regions and time periods. His observations suggest that Indian armies, while numerically superior and possessing considerable military experience, were in some respects less technologically advanced than Central Asian and Persian forces, particularly regarding the use of artillery and firearms.

Babur's conquest of northern India and the establishment of the Mughal Empire

The *Baburnama* provides detailed accounts of the military campaigns through which Babur conquered northern India and established Mughal control. After the initial victory at Panipat, Babur faced the challenge of consolidating his control over the conquered territories and of defending against challenges from other Indian powers and from former allies who sought to limit Mughal power. The *Baburnama* describes Babur's military campaigns against various opponents, his strategic decisions regarding the disposition of forces, and his management of the conquered territories.

Babur's description of the consolidation of Mughal power reveals his understanding that military conquest alone was insufficient to establish stable rule. He implemented administrative policies designed to establish orderly governance, to collect taxes systematically, and to maintain control over the conquered territories. He relocated populations, appointed administrators, and established military garrisons in strategic locations. These policies, described in the *Baburnama*, would establish patterns that subsequent Mughal emperors would elaborate and refine.

Babur's relationship with his soldiers and commanders

The *Baburnama* provides valuable insights into Babur's relationships with his military subordinates and soldiers. Babur frequently names individual soldiers and commanders, describes their personal characteristics, and recounts anecdotes illustrating their capabilities or their personal relationships with Babur. These descriptions suggest that Babur cultivated personal relationships with his military subordinates, rewarded loyalty, and maintained a sense of personal connection to his soldiers despite his status as emperor.

Babur's descriptions of his soldiers provide information about the social composition of Mughal forces and about the motivations that led soldiers to serve Babur. His soldiers included Central Asian warriors accustomed to military campaigns in harsh terrain, Turkish and Persian soldiers, Indian converts to Islam, and various opportunists seeking advancement through military service. The *Baburnama* suggests that Babur's forces were bound together through a combination of personal loyalty to Babur, shared experiences of warfare and conquest, and the expectation of material rewards.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- I

A. Fill in the blank:

1. Babur captured _____ in 1504, which became his first major stable base of power.
2. The Battle of _____ in 1526 established Mughal control over northern India.

B. True/False:

1. The *Baburnama* is written entirely as an impersonal court chronicle in Persian.
2. Babur's military accounts reveal concern with terrain, supply lines, and tactical adaptation.

C. Short question:

Q1. Mention two military advantages Babur's forces possessed during the invasion of India.

Q2. Why does the *Baburnama* remain important for understanding Mughal military history?

1.4 BABUR'S OBSERVATIONS OF INDIA

The geography and climate of India

A distinctive feature of the *Baburnama* is Babur's extensive observations of India's geography and climate. Coming from Central Asia, where high mountain ranges, stark deserts, and extreme seasonal variations characterized the landscape, Babur approached India as a land of marvels worthy of careful observation. He describes the physical features of the Indian landscape, including mountain ranges, rivers, valleys, and plains. He observes the climate, noting the heat of Indian summers, the patterns of monsoon rains, and the differences between Indian seasons and Central Asian seasons.

Babur's observations of Indian geography and climate are often infused with a sense of wonder at phenomena unfamiliar to him. He is astonished by the heat and humidity, by the abundance of water and vegetation in certain regions, and by features of the landscape that he compares to phenomena in Central Asia. His descriptions are vivid and detailed, suggesting that he approached India with keen observational abilities and with interest in understanding the new land he had conquered.

However, Babur's observations of Indian geography and climate are also colored by his perspective as an outsider and by his comparison of India to Central Asia, which he clearly preferred. He frequently expresses complaints about the heat, the prevalence of insects and diseases unfamiliar to him, and other aspects of the Indian environment that he finds inhospitable. These complaints reveal not merely Babur's personal preferences but also the genuine difficulties that Central Asian warriors faced in adapting to the Indian environment.

Babur's observations of Indian flora and fauna

The *Baburnama* includes detailed descriptions of Indian plants and animals, many of which were unfamiliar to Babur and which he had not encountered in Central Asia. He describes various fruits and vegetables, noting differences in taste and characteristics compared to Central Asian varieties. He describes exotic animals, including wild elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, and other species that fascinated him. His descriptions suggest careful observation and genuine interest in understanding the natural world of his conquered territories.

Babur's observations of Indian animals frequently have military significance. He notes the use of elephants in Indian armies, describes their strengths and limitations in warfare, and recounts anecdotes illustrating these military applications. His observations of tigers, rhinoceroses, and other dangerous animals reflect both naturalistic interest and concern with the practical challenges these animals posed for his forces. His descriptions of animals thus blend naturalistic observation with military and practical considerations.

Babur's observations of Indian society and culture

The *Baburnama* includes observations of Indian society and culture, though these observations are often more limited and more colored by Babur's biases than his observations of geography and natural phenomena. Babur expresses skepticism about Indian intellectual and cultural achievements, disparaging Indian architecture, art, and literature by comparison with Central Asian and Persian standards. He describes Indian religious practices, including Hindu and Muslim customs, frequently from the perspective of an outsider unfamiliar with these traditions.

Babur's observations of Indian society and culture reveal the perspective of a Central Asian ruler encountering Indian civilization for the first time. He notes differences in costume, in food, in social customs, and in religious practices. He expresses surprise at certain aspects of Indian life, sometimes with evident disapproval. For instance, he expresses disdain for the Indian practice of sati (widow self-immolation), which he considered a barbarous custom contrary to Islamic principles. His observations thus reflect both genuine observation and the prejudices and cultural assumptions that Babur brought to his encounter with India.

The significance and reliability of Babur's observations

Babur's observations of India are historically valuable as descriptions of the Indian subcontinent as perceived by an outsider in the early sixteenth century. His descriptions of flora, fauna, and physical geography provide information about the natural world of India. His observations of social customs, religious practices, and urban characteristics provide perspectives on Indian society. These observations are valuable even when they reflect Babur's biases or limitations, because they reveal how a sixteenth-century Central Asian ruler understood and interpreted Indian civilization.

However, historians must exercise caution in using Babur's observations as straightforward descriptions of Indian reality. Babur's observations were filtered through his preconceptions, his cultural assumptions, and his limited time in India. His descriptions of Indian society and culture were often based on superficial observation and were influenced by prejudices. Additionally, Babur's observations were not comprehensive—he focused on phenomena that interested him and ignored others, so his account provides a selective rather than complete picture of Indian society and culture.

1.5 THE *BABURNAMA* AND MUGHAL IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY

Babur's presentation of his own reign and the establishment of Mughal legitimacy

The *Baburnama* functions partly as a justification and legitimation of Babur's rule and of Mughal claims to imperial authority in India. Babur presents his conquest of India as the fulfillment of his destiny as a member of the Timurid dynasty and as a rightful assertion of Islamic authority over the Indian subcontinent. The work emphasizes Babur's military victories, his strategic acumen, and his right to rule based on his superior military capabilities and his Islamic faith.

Babur's presentation of his own reign reveals aspects of the imperial ideology that would characterize Mughal rule. He emphasizes the importance of justice, of fair taxation, of orderly administration, and of respect for Islamic law. He portrays himself as a ruler concerned with the welfare of his subjects and as someone seeking to establish stable, predictable governance. These assertions about governance reflect the ideological foundations that Babur sought to establish for Mughal rule and that would be elaborated by his successors.

Babur's religious faith and Islamic governance

Throughout the *Baburnama*, Babur emphasizes his Islamic faith and his commitment to Islamic principles of governance. He describes his religious practices, including prayer and fasting, and expresses devotion to Islamic law. He denounces practices that he considers contrary to Islamic principles, such as the Indian practice of sati. He justifies his conquest of India partly on religious grounds, presenting it as the assertion of Islamic rule over territories that had been ruled by non-Muslims.

However, Babur's religious convictions were not rigid or dogmatic. The *Baburnama* reveals that Babur engaged with wine and hashish, pursuits that orthodox Islamic teaching would consider sinful. He maintained cordial relationships with Hindu merchants and administrators despite his Islamic faith. He displayed interest in Indian intellectual and cultural traditions even while expressing skepticism about their value. These complexities suggest that Babur's approach to Islam was sophisticated and somewhat flexible, and that his Islamic convictions coexisted with pragmatism regarding governance in a religiously diverse society.

Babur's vision for Mughal governance and the transmission of power

The *Baburnama* concludes with reflections on Babur's hopes for his successors and his vision for the continuation of the Mughal Empire. Babur expresses concern for the moral and religious character of his successors, hoping that they would maintain Islamic principles and just governance. He provides advice for his son Humayun regarding governance and the maintenance of power. These concluding reflections reveal Babur's concerns about succession and his hopes that the Mughal Empire would endure beyond his own lifetime.

Babur's vision for Mughal governance emphasizes stability, orderly administration, and the integration of Islamic principles with pragmatic recognition of the need to accommodate India's diverse populations. While Babur himself maintained certain cultural assumptions about Central Asian superiority and expressed skepticism about Indian civilization, he recognized that successful Mughal rule in India would require adaptation to Indian conditions

and accommodation with existing populations. This pragmatic approach to governance would become characteristic of Mughal rule and would enable the Mughal Empire to achieve remarkable longevity despite ruling over religiously and culturally diverse populations.

1.6 THE *BABURNAMA*'S SIGNIFICANCE AND LEGACY

The *Baburnama* as a window into early Mughal court culture

The *Baburnama* provides valuable insights into the culture, intellectual interests, and aesthetic sensibilities of early Mughal court life. Through Babur's descriptions, we gain access to the intellectual world of a Central Asian ruler educated in Persian and Islamic intellectual traditions. We encounter Babur's interest in poetry, his aesthetic appreciation of natural beauty, his engagement with philosophical and theological questions, and his cultivation of refined taste in various domains.

The *Baburnama* reveals that early Mughal court culture was sophisticated and cosmopolitan, drawing on Central Asian, Persian, and Islamic traditions. Babur was not merely a military conqueror but also a man of letters and aesthetic refinement. His court included poets, scholars, musicians, and artists, and he took interest in intellectual and cultural pursuits. These aspects of Babur's personality and his court culture would shape the development of Mughal civilization, which would eventually become renowned for its artistic and intellectual achievements.

The *Baburnama*'s influence on subsequent Mughal historiography and literature

The *Baburnama* established a model for Mughal historiography and court literature that would influence subsequent historical and literary production. The work demonstrated the value of autobiographical and personal perspectives on historical events and established a precedent for Mughal rulers and their successors commissioning accounts of their reigns and achievements. Babur's successors, particularly his grandson Akbar, would commission court histories that built upon the precedent established by the *Baburnama*.

Additionally, the *Baburnama* influenced literary traditions through its stylistic qualities and through the precedent it established for the use of vernacular language (Chaghatai Turkish) for significant literary works. While Persian remained the dominant literary and administrative language of the Mughal court, Babur's choice to write the *Baburnama* in Chaghatai Turkish established a precedent for the use of other languages in significant literary and historical works. This precedent would eventually contribute to the development of distinctive regional literatures in Mughal territories.

The *Baburnama* as evidence for understanding Mughal military superiority

The *Baburnama* provides important evidence for understanding the military superiority that enabled Mughal forces, despite their numerical inferiority, to defeat Indian armies repeatedly. Babur's descriptions of military organization, tactics, weaponry, and strategy reveal the sophistication of Central Asian military systems and the technological and organizational advantages that Mughal forces possessed. His descriptions of artillery and firearms, of military discipline, and of tactical flexibility provide insights into the sources of Mughal military success.

Historians have used the *Baburnama* as evidence to argue that Mughal military superiority derived not from

inherent superiority of Central Asian warriors but from superior military technology (particularly firearms and artillery), superior military organization and discipline, and superior strategic thinking. These sources of advantage were not permanent—over time, Indian powers developed and adopted similar technologies and organizational forms. However, during the early period of Mughal conquest and consolidation, these advantages proved decisive in enabling the Mughals to establish their rule over northern India.

The *Baburnama*'s continuing significance for understanding early modern South Asia

The *Baburnama* remains significant as a primary source for understanding early modern South Asia and the encounter between Central Asian and Indian civilizations. The work provides vivid descriptions of sixteenth-century India, offers insight into the perspectives and concerns of early Mughal rulers, and documents the process through which a Central Asian dynasty established itself as rulers of the Indian subcontinent. The *Baburnama* continues to be studied by historians, literary scholars, and others seeking to understand this crucial period of South Asian history.

The *Baburnama* is also significant as a literary work of considerable quality. Babur's writing is vivid, detailed, and engaging, and his personal observations and reflections provide readers with access to the intellectual and emotional world of a sixteenth-century ruler. The work exemplifies how significant historical documents can also be valuable literary achievements, and how historical sources can provide both factual information and aesthetic pleasure. The *Baburnama* thus occupies a significant position in both historical scholarship and literary traditions.

Check Your Progress(CYP)- II

A. Fill in the blank:

1. The *Baburnama* was written in _____ Turkish rather than Persian.
2. Babur presented his conquest of India partly as the fulfillment of his destiny as a member of the _____ dynasty.

B. True/False:

1. Babur's observations of India should always be treated as complete and unbiased descriptions.
2. The *Baburnama* is valuable both as a historical source and as a literary work.

C. Short question:

- Q1. Why do historians treat Babur's observations of India with caution?

Q2. Mention any two ways in which the *Baburnama* is important for understanding early Mughal history.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

The *Baburnama*, written by Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, represents one of the most important primary sources for understanding early modern South Asian history. The work is an autobiographical account combining narratives of Babur's military campaigns and political struggles with extended observations of India's geography, climate, flora, fauna, and society. The *Baburnama* is valuable as a historical source for multiple reasons: it provides firsthand accounts of the military conquest that led to the establishment of Mughal rule; it documents Babur's observations of India from the perspective of an outsider; it reveals aspects of early Mughal imperial ideology and governance; and it provides insights into early Mughal court culture and intellectual traditions.

The *Baburnama*'s accounts of Babur's military campaigns reveal his strategic thinking and military acumen and provide information about the sources of Mughal military superiority, particularly the effective use of firearms and artillery, military discipline, and superior tactical thinking. Babur's observations of India reveal both genuine curiosity and interest in understanding the new land he had conquered and also the biases and cultural assumptions of a Central Asian ruler encountering unfamiliar phenomena. His observations are historically valuable but must be read carefully, recognizing both their strengths and their limitations.

The *Baburnama* also reveals aspects of Babur's personality and worldview. The work portrays Babur as a complex figure—simultaneously a ruthless military conqueror and a man of cultural refinement and aesthetic sensibility. He was committed to Islamic principles of governance but pragmatic regarding accommodation with India's diverse populations. He expressed skepticism about Indian civilization but recognized the necessity of adapting to Indian conditions to establish stable, long-term rule.

The *Baburnama* established precedents for subsequent Mughal historical and literary production and continues to be valued as both a historical document and a literary work of considerable quality. The work remains central to scholarly efforts to understand the establishment of Mughal rule in India and the encounter between Central Asian and Indian civilizations that would shape South Asian history for the following centuries.

1.8 GLOSSARY

Timurid dynasty: Royal house descended from the Mongol conqueror Timur; Babur was a member of this dynasty and inherited claims to rulership in Central Asian territories.

Ferghana Valley: Region in Central Asia (present-day Uzbekistan) where Babur was born; characterized by conflicts and competitions among various regional powers.

Battle of Panipat: Military engagement in 1526 in which Babur's forces defeated the Delhi sultanate's army and established Mughal control over northern India.

Chaghatai Turkish: Language of Central Asian courts; Babur chose to write the *Baburnama* in this language rather than in Persian.

Imperial ideology: Beliefs and principles regarding the nature of imperial authority and governance; the *Baburnama* reveals aspects of early Mughal imperial ideology.

- **Sati:** Hindu practice of widow self-immolation; Babur expressed disapproval of this practice in the *Baburnama*.
- **Historiography:** Writing of history and historical accounts; the *Baburnama* influenced subsequent Mughal historiographical traditions.
- **Autobiography:** Written account of an individual's own life; the *Baburnama* is among the most important autobiographical works from the early modern period.

1.9 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS:

- Q1. Explain Babur's early life in Central Asia and describe the factors that led him to invade India and establish the Mughal Empire.
- Q2. Describe the content and structure of the *Baburnama* and explain how it differs from conventional court chronicles written by other authors.
- Q3. Analyse Babur's accounts of his military campaigns and assess what they reveal about Mughal military organization, tactics, and technology.
- Q4. Evaluate Babur's observations of India, including his descriptions of geography, climate, flora, fauna, and society, considering both their historical value and their limitations.
- Q5. Analyse what the *Baburnama* reveals about Babur's personality, aesthetic sensibilities, and intellectual interests.

1.10 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1. Write a detailed essay analyzing the *Baburnama* as both a historical document and a literary work, examining how its qualities as literature relate to its value as historical evidence.
- Q2. Compare Babur's observations of India with observations from other contemporary sources (European travelers, Indian chronicles) to assess the accuracy and reliability of Babur's accounts.
- Q3. Prepare a detailed analysis of Babur's descriptions of military campaigns and tactics, examining what they reveal about sources of Mughal military superiority
- Q4. Create a comprehensive analysis of Babur's observations of Indian flora and fauna, considering what his

descriptions reveal about the natural world of sixteenth-century India and about Babur's observational abilities.

1.11 ANSWER KEY

CYP-I

- A. 1. Kabul
 2. Panipat
- B. 1. False
 2. True
- C. 1. See Section 1.3
 2. See Section 1.3

CYP-II

- A. 1. Chaghatai
 2. Timurid
- B. 1. False
 2. True
- C. 1. See Section 1.4
 2. See Section 1.6

1.12. SUGGESTED READINGS

- Babur. *Baburnama* (translated by Annette Susannah Beveridge, 1921 or later editions).
- Babur. *Babur-Nama* (translated by Stanly Lane-Poole or Wheeler Thackston).
- Gascoigne, Bamber. *The Great Mughals*.
- Richards, John F. *The Mughal Empire*.
- Habib, Irfan. *The Agrarian System of the Mughal Empire*.

BABUR'S DESCRIPTION OF HINDUSTAN

STRUCTURE

- 2.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 2.1 Introduction**
- 2.2 Context and Initial Impressions of Hindustan**
- 2.3 Geography, Climate, and Natural Environment**
- 2.4 Flora and Fauna**
- 2.5 Society, Religion, and Culture**
- 2.6 Economic Life, Politics, and Comparisons**
- 2.7 Extended Discussion**
- 2.8 Let us sum up**
- 2.9 Glossary**
- 2.10 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 2.11 Lesson End Exercises**
- 2.12 Answer Key**
- 2.13 Suggested Readings**

2.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to:

- Explain the context in which Babur wrote his descriptions of Hindustan.
- Analyze Babur's observations about Indian geography, climate, flora, fauna, and natural environment.
- Describe Babur's comments on Indian society, religion, culture, and political organization.

- examine Babur’s economic observations about agriculture, trade, urban life, and wealth.
- evaluate the significance of Babur’s descriptions for understanding early Mughal perceptions of India.

Learning Outcomes

After going through the lesson, you will have a clear understanding of:

- Babur as the author of the Baburnama and as an early eyewitness observer of India.
- The main geographical regions, climatic features, and environmental conditions described by Babur.
- Babur’s observations on Indian flora, fauna, and agricultural productivity.
- The social, religious, and cultural features of Hindustan noted by Babur.
- The historical importance of Babur’s account for Mughal history and Indo-Central Asian encounters.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, Muhammad Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire, left one of the most remarkable eyewitness accounts of early sixteenth-century India in his autobiography, the *Baburnama*. Babur’s descriptions of Hindustan reveal a brilliant military commander and cultured aristocrat confronting an unfamiliar land that would become the foundation of his dynasty. Written in elegant Chagatai Turkish between 1526 and 1530, these passages capture Babur’s initial impressions of India’s geography, climate, flora, fauna, society, religion, economy, and political organization.

Babur’s account is particularly valuable because it represents the perspective of a Central Asian conqueror encountering India at the moment of transition from the Delhi Sultanate’s decline to Mughal imperial foundation. Unlike later Mughal chroniclers who wrote within established imperial structures, Babur wrote as an outsider struggling to comprehend a vast and diverse subcontinent. His descriptions blend aesthetic appreciation, scientific curiosity, cultural critique, and pragmatic political analysis, providing unparalleled insight into how the Mughals initially perceived the land they would rule for three centuries.

2.2 CONTEXT AND INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF HINDUSTAN

Babur first encountered Hindustan during his invasion of 1526, when he defeated Ibrahim Lodi at the First Battle of Panipat and established Mughal rule in northern India. Having spent years in Afghanistan after losing his Central Asian kingdom of Ferghana, Babur approached India strategically rather than enthusiastically. His descriptions in the *Baburnama* were composed between 1526 and 1530, primarily during winter seasons when military campaigning ceased and time was available for reflection.

Babur’s observations focused mainly on the Doab region between the Ganges and Yamuna rivers, Punjab, and parts of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh territories which he actively campaigned in and governed. His account reflects both the conqueror’s perspective and the naturalist’s curiosity, frequently comparing Indian conditions to those of his native Ferghana, Kabul, and Persian cultural standards. These comparisons reveal both admiration

for India's wealth and disdain for its climate and social customs.

Babur's descriptions reveal profound ambivalence toward Hindustan. He praised its agricultural fertility, population density, and wealth, noting that Hindustan was a large country with lots of gold and money. Yet he found the climate insufferably hot and humid, declaring that men of his stock had no mind for Hindustan because of its enervating summers. This tension between economic opportunity and environmental discomfort shaped Mughal attitudes toward India throughout the dynasty.

2.3 GEOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Babur marveled at Hindustan's river systems and irrigation networks, recognizing their centrality to agricultural productivity. He praised the Ganges-Yamuna Doab as a very happy region, where wheat comes three times a year, and noted extensive canal systems predating Mughal rule. His descriptions document sophisticated Persian wheels and earthen dams that enabled double- and triple-cropping in many areas.

Babur's most famous critique targets Hindustan's climate. He described it as a country of few pleasures, emphasizing the progression from tolerable winters to scorching summers and then to monsoon deluges that transformed the land into seas of mud. He noted that in summer the air is so hot that it burns the face and that people cover their faces with cloth. These observations influenced Mughal military strategy, encouraging winter campaigns and urban planning in fortified hill retreats.

The climate also shaped Babur's medical and philosophical reflections. His comments on heat, helplessness, and bodily discomfort echo Galenic humoral theory, but he also displayed practical adaptation by adjusting to local environmental conditions. His climate descriptions are therefore both literary and empirical, combining inherited theory with direct observation.

2.4 FLORA AND FAUNA

Babur catalogued Indian flora with botanical precision. He distinguished staple crops such as rice, wheat, millets, sugarcane, cotton, and indigo from orchard fruits such as mangoes, oranges, bananas, and coconuts. He praised the diversity of sugarcane and noted the ubiquity of cotton, observing that cloth is cheap because cotton grows everywhere. His fruit descriptions are vivid and comparative, often judging Indian produce against Central Asian standards.

He was particularly struck by the abundance and diversity of Indian fauna. His descriptions include water buffaloes, zebu, goats, sheep, and poultry in the domestic sphere; elephants, rhinoceroses, wild boars, tigers, deer, and blackbuck among wild animals; and peafowl, parrots, cranes, waterfowl, pythons, crocodiles, mosquitoes, scorpions, and centipedes among birds, reptiles, and insects. Babur's wildlife descriptions reveal both wonder and scientific curiosity, especially in his detailed notes on animal behavior, habitat, and species differences.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- I

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. Babur first entered Hindustan during the invasion of _____.
2. The fertile tract between the Ganges and Yamuna is called the _____.
3. _____ was one of the crops Babur noted as growing widely in India.

B. True or False:

1. Babur praised the Indian climate as mild and pleasant. _____
2. Babur observed that cotton grew almost everywhere in India. _____

C. Short Questions:

- Q1. Name any two crops mentioned by Babur.

- Q2. Why did Babur admire the Doab region?

2.5 SOCIETY, RELIGION, AND CULTURE

Babur's descriptions of Indian society are among the most revealing and controversial parts of the *Baburnama*. He noted the dense population of Hindustan, the large number of towns and villages, and the absence of wastelands in many settled areas. He praised Delhi for its extent and Agra for its markets, though he criticized the narrow, dirty streets. He was also impressed by the large number of craftsmen, including armourers, bowyers, and swordsmiths.

Babur observed caste diversity with surprise, mentioning Brahmans, Rajputs, Jats, and Gujars as distinct occupational and social groups. He also described joint households, widow remarriage taboos among higher castes, purdah among Hindu women, and festivals such as **Holi**. His cultural comments often reveal both curiosity and discomfort, especially where customs differed sharply from Timurid and Islamic norms.

His religious descriptions blend curiosity and critique. Babur admired the architectural aspects of Hindu temples but strongly disapproved of idol worship, ascetic practices, widow immolation, and vegetarian customs. He was more tolerant of Muslim communities such as Sayyids, Shaikhs, and Mughals, though he also criticized social customs such as betel-chewing and certain food habits. These remarks must be read as the product of both observation and the cultural lenses of a Muslim Central Asian ruler.

2.6 ECONOMIC LIFE, POLITICS, AND COMPARISONS

Babur was highly attentive to India's economic wealth. He praised the abundance of agriculture, irrigation, trade, and taxation, noting that Indian revenue was enormous and that the country could support large armies. He described markets that sold spices, jewels, and textiles, and he noticed that cloth, indigo, and sugar were important export goods while horses and luxury goods were imported.

His political observations were equally sharp. Babur saw the Delhi Sultanate as fragmented, with petty rajahs everywhere and no central authority. He admired Rajput bravery but criticized their lack of organization. He also noted that Afghan forces were numerous but poorly led. These comparisons reinforced his view that Indian political disunity had made conquest possible.

Babur repeatedly compared Hindustan with Central Asia and Persia. He found India materially rich but culturally inferior by Timurid standards. He admired Persian refinement, gardens, and manners while judging India as lacking in poetry, music, and urban elegance. These comparisons shaped Mughal imperial ideology, making India the economic base of empire and Persian-Timurid culture the civilizational ideal.

2.7 EXTENDED DISCUSSION

Babur's account may also be read as a meeting point between autobiography, geography, and empire. He was not writing a detached administrative report, nor a purely literary travel account; instead, he blended experience, judgment, and memory in ways that made the *Baburnama* both personal and historical. This is one reason the text remains so rich for modern readers. It contains immediate impressions of landscapes and cities, but it also preserves the values and assumptions of a ruler formed in the Timurid world.

The importance of Babur's descriptions lies partly in their precision. He does not generalize in a vague manner; rather, he frequently names regions, seasons, crops, animals, and social groups. Such specificity gives historians evidence about sixteenth-century ecology and economy, while also revealing the mental world of an elite outsider. Babur's habit of comparison is especially important, since he constantly measures India against Ferghana, Kabul, and Persia. Through these comparisons, we can see not only what he observed, but also the standards by which he judged what he saw.

Another useful aspect of the *Baburnama* is the tension between admiration and criticism. Babur praised India's wealth, settlement density, and agricultural abundance, yet he repeatedly complained about heat, humidity, and customs that he found unfamiliar. This tension is not a weakness in the text; it is one of its greatest strengths. It allows the historian to study not just India as Babur saw it, but also the emotional and cultural reactions of a

conqueror facing a new world. In this sense, the *Baburnama* is both a source for Indian history and a source for the history of intercultural encounter.

Babur's environmental observations are also historically significant because they show an early form of empirical attention. He noted seasonal change, irrigation methods, crop cycles, and the relationship between water and fertility. He was interested in how the land functioned, not merely how it appeared. That practical attentiveness later resonated with Mughal statecraft, especially in the areas of land revenue, canal building, garden design, and urban planning. Babur's successors inherited not only territory but also a way of thinking about Indian space as something to be measured, ordered, and improved.

The social and religious sections of the *Baburnama* deserve careful reading as well. Babur wrote from a Muslim Central Asian perspective, and his judgments were shaped by his own moral and aesthetic world. He often viewed Hindu customs through a critical lens, especially where he associated them with idolatry or ritual excess. Yet even when his language is judgmental, it is still revealing. It shows how early Mughal rulers encountered difference and how they interpreted it within the intellectual frameworks available to them. His account therefore helps historians trace both bias and observation in early modern writing.

For students, Babur's descriptions are useful because they combine narrative clarity with concrete detail. The chapter opens a window onto sixteenth-century India in a way few other contemporary sources can. It shows a land of enormous wealth and ecological diversity, but also of political fragmentation and cultural plurality. It is one of the earliest texts to present India in such a layered manner, and for that reason it continues to be central to the study of Mughal history.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- II

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. Babur wrote his descriptions in the _____ language.
2. The First Battle of Panipat was fought in _____.
3. Babur considered _____ as one of the major export goods of India.

B. True or False:

1. Babur believed India was culturally superior to Persia. _____
2. Babur found Indian villages sparse and scattered. _____

C. Short Questions:

- Q1. Mention two social groups named by Babur.

Q2. Why are Babur's descriptions important to historians?

2.8 LET US SUM UP

Babur's descriptions of Hindustan in the *Baburnama* constitute one of the most important eyewitness accounts of sixteenth-century India. They combine empirical observation, aesthetic judgment, and cultural critique. His climate complaints contrast with his praise of agricultural fertility and wealth, revealing the ambivalence of a conqueror who both admired and disliked the land he ruled.

Babur's account is invaluable for reconstructing pre-Mughal India, especially its environment, agriculture, fauna, society, and political fragmentation. It also illuminates early Mughal mentalities and the formation of imperial attitudes toward India. For these reasons, the *Baburnama* remains a foundational text for South Asian history.

2.9 GLOSSARY

Baburnama: Babur's autobiography written in Chagatai Turkish.

Hindustan: Babur's term for northern India, especially the Doab and adjoining regions.

Doab: The fertile alluvial tract between the Ganges and Yamuna rivers.

Chagatai Turkish: The literary language used by Babur.

Persian wheel: A water-lifting device used for irrigation.

Purdah: The practice of veiling or seclusion of women.

Rajput: A warrior caste or clan group in North India.

Holi: A spring festival marked by the throwing of colored powder.

1. Examination Oriented Questions

Q1. Explain the context in which Babur composed his descriptions of Hindustan.

Q2. Analyze Babur's observations on Indian climate and discuss their influence on Mughal policy.

Q3. Describe Babur's account of Indian flora and fauna.

- Q4. Examine Babur's remarks on Indian society and religion.
- Q5. Evaluate the historical significance of Babur's descriptions as a source for sixteenth-century India.

2.11 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1. Explain Babur's view of Hindustan as both a land of wealth and discomfort.
- Q2. Discuss Babur's observations on agriculture, trade, and taxation in India.
- Q3. Compare Babur's descriptions of Hindustan with his experiences in Central Asia.
- Q4. What do Babur's remarks reveal about Mughal attitudes toward Indian society and culture?
- Q5. How useful is the *Baburnama* for reconstructing the history of early Mughal India?

2.12 ANSWER KEY

CYPI

- A. 1. 1526
2. Doab
3. Cotton
- B. 1. False
2. True
- C. 1. See Section 2.4
2. See Section 2.3

CYPII

- A. 1. Chagatai Turkish
2. 1526
3. Cloth / indigo / sugar
- B. 1. False
2. False
- C. 1. See Section 2.5
2. See Section 2.7

2.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Babur, *Baburnama*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston.
- Babur, *The Baburnama, Agrarian System of Mughal India*.

GULBADAN BEGUM'S *HUMAYUNNAMA*

STRUCTURE

- 3.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 3.1 Introduction**
- 3.2 Gulbadan Begum: Life and Background**
- 3.3 *The Humayunnama*: Content and Composition**
- 3.4 Gulbadan Begum as a Historian**
- 3.5 Women, Court Life, and Imperial Household**
- 3.6 Political Events and Succession Struggles**
- 3.7 Family, Exile, and Refuge in Persia**
- 3.8 Religious Life and Cultural Practices**
- 3.9 Significance of *the Humayunnama***
- 3.10 Let us sum up**
- 3.11 Glossary**
- 3.12 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 3.13 Lesson End Exercises**
- 3.14 Answer Key**
- 3.15 Suggested Readings**

3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to :

- Explain the historical context of Gulbadan Begum's life and her relationship to the Mughal Imperial

family, particularly his position as Babur's daughter and Humayun's sister.

- Describe the content, structure, and distinctive characteristics of the *Humayunnama* as a primary historical source written from a woman's perspective.
- Assess the long-term significance of the *Humayunnama* for understanding Mughal political history, gender dynamics in the Mughal Empire and the literary contributions of noble women.

Learning Outcomes

After going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding of :

- The historical context, content, and significance of Gulbadan Begum's *Humayunnama*.
- You will also be able to explain her perspective on Mughal court life, imperial politics, family relations, and women's roles in the early Mughal world.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, the *Humayunnama*, written by Gulbadan Begum (c.1523-1603), represent one of the most significant and distinctive primary sources for understanding mid-sixteenth-century Mughal history and the role of noblewomen in imperial governance. Gulbadan Begum occupies a unique place in Mughal historiography as one of the earliest women to write about the imperial family from personal experience. Gulbadan Begum, daughter of Babur and sister of Humayun, possessed unique access to court politics, military campaigns, and the intimate domestic world of Mughal imperial family life. Writing in Persian during the reign of her nephew Akbar, Gulbadan Begum composed a detailed narrative account of her brother Humayun's reign (1530 - 1556), providing perspectives that male courtiers and chroniclers rarely recorded.

The *Humayunnama* is valuable as a historical source for multiple reasons. First, it provides eyewitness accounts of the major political and military events during Humayun's turbulent reign. Second, it offers unique perspectives on women's historical agency in Mughal political life. Third, it reveals the intimate dynamics of the imperial household family relationships and succession struggles. Fourth, it demonstrates women's literary and intellectual capabilities during a period when formal education was restricted.

3.2 GULBADAN BEGUM: LIFE AND BACKGROUND

Gulbadan Begum was the daughter of Babur and the sister of Humayun was born around 1523. Born into the Timurid-Mughal imperial family, she grew up amid political instability, courtly movement, and the changing fortunes of the dynasty. Her position gave her direct access to the inner life of the Mughal household and to the experiences of women in the royal family. As the daughter of Mughal Empire's founder, Gulbadan Begum occupied a privileged position within the imperial hierarchy, yet her status was complicated by her gender and by the succession politics that characterized Mughal Imperial life. After Babur's death in 1530 Gulbadan Begum became an important figure in her brother Humayun's household. She apparently enjoyed considerable access to court proceedings and political discussions, though the precise nature and extent of her political involvement remain subjects of

historical debate. The *Humayunnama* reveals her anxieties about her brother's political challenges, her concerns for imperial stability, and her active engagement in efforts to support Humayun during his periods of exile and military defeat.

3.3 THE HUMAYUNNAMA: CONTENT AND COMPOSITION

The *Humayunnama* was written during the reign of Akbar (1556-1605), likely in 1580s- 1590s. Writing in elegant Persian, the language of Mughal court culture and Islamic learning. Gulbadan Begum composed her account decades after the events she describes, drawing on memory, family traditions, and available documentary sources. The *Humayunnama* is organized thematically rather than strictly chronologically, with sections devoted to Humayun's military campaigns, his exiles and refugees, family relationships, religious devotions, and the succession of Akbar. The work begins with genealogical information establishing Gulbadan Begum family position, continues with narratives of Humayun's struggles against rebellious nobles and the Afghan Sur dynasty, documents the family's flight and exile in Persia, and concludes with Akbar's establishment of stable Mughal rule. The work differs from many court chronicles because it records domestic events, emotional experiences, and the roles of women alongside political developments.

The *Humayunnama* has both strengths and limitations as historical evidence. Its strengths include its first hand perspective, its emotional authenticity, and its unique access to the dimensions of court life rarely documented. The personal anecdotes and family stories provide vivid illustrations of historical processes. However, the *Humayunnama* also has significant limitations. It was composed decades after the events it describes, raising questions about accuracy and the reliability of memory. Gulbadan Begum narrative is necessarily selective, reflecting her interests, anxieties, and preoccupations. Her observations, while valuable, reflect her particular position and perspective—she did not witness all major political events and may have misunderstood some developments.

3.4 GULBADAN BEGUM AS A HISTORIAN

Gulbadan Begum's historical writing is shaped by her close relationship with the Mughal family and by her own experience of exile, travel, and imperial life. Her account is valuable because it preserves details that male chroniclers often ignored. At the same time, her narrative reflects her personal perspective and the limits of memory. Comparing the *Humayunnama* with male-authored chronicles of Humayun's reign reveals how different perspectives produce different historical understandings. Male chroniclers portrayed Humayun as a weak ruler whose personal failings led to political disaster. Gulbadan Begum's narrative provides more nuanced understanding, acknowledging Humayun's limitations but also revealing the structural difficulties he faced and the impact of political instability on the imperial household and family members.

3.5 WOMEN, COURT LIFE, AND IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD

The *Humayunnama* provides important evidence regarding gender dynamics in Mughal governance and women's sphere of authority and influence. It sheds light on the administrative and domestic responsibilities of elite women in the Mughal household. While Mughal political institutions were formally dominated by men, women wielded

significant informal influence through their control of household resources, their roles in marriage politics, and their spiritual authority. It shows how women managed resources, maintained family unity, influenced marriages, and supported the political fortunes of the dynasty. Their authority was often informal, yet it was substantial within the imperial household. Gulbadan Begum's description of household management demonstrates the sophistication and complexity of managing the imperial domestic economy. Imperial women supervised servants and slave workers, made decisions about resource allocation, and ensured that court ceremonies and celebrations proceeded smoothly. These administrative tasks, while invisible in official political chronicles, were essential to the functioning of imperial power. The *Humayunnama* reveals tensions between women's formal lack of political authority and their actual influence in court politics. Women could not formally command armies or issue government decrees, yet they influenced decisions regarding military campaigns, succession, and marriage alliances. This gap between formal authority and actual influence characterized women's position in the Mughal Empire and reveals the complexity of gender dynamics in imperial governance.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (CYP)– I

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. Gulbadan Begum was the sister of _____.
2. The *Humayunnama* was written in _____.
3. Elite Mughal women exercised influence through the imperial _____.

B. True or False:

1. The *Humayunnama* is only about military campaigns. _____
2. Gulbadan Begum belonged to the Mughal imperial family. _____
3. Women had no role in the imperial household. _____

C. Short Questions:

- Q1. Why is Gulbadan Begum important in Mughal historiography?

- Q2. What kind of information does the *Humayunnama* preserve?

3.6 POLITICAL EVENTS AND SUCCESSION STRUGGLES

The Humayunnama also describes the political instability that marked Humayun's reign. It refers to conflicts with nobles, the loss of control over territories, and the difficult process of restoring Mughal authority. These passages help the reader understand the fragile nature of early Mughal rule. Gulbadan Begum describes her brother's conflicts with rebellious nobles, particularly Bairam Khan and other Turkish amirs who resisted centralized authority. She documents Humayun's military defeats, his loss of territories to the Afghan Sur dynasty under Sher Shah, and the humiliating exile that forced the Mughal court to flee India. The *Humayunnama* provides firsthand accounts of the political and military crises that nearly destroyed Mughal power during Humayun's reign. Gulbadan Begum's descriptions reveals the political fragmentation that characterized Humayun's reign. Despite inheriting an empire established by his father Babur, Humayun proved unable to consolidate Mughal power or command unquestioned loyalty from the Turkish military aristocracy that formed the backbone of Mughal forces.

The *Humayunnama* concludes with accounts of Humayun's death in 1556 and the succession of his young son Akbar, who would eventually transform Mughal rule into a stable, centralized empire. Gulbadan Begum's observations of Akbar's early reign, though limited, suggest her recognition that her nephew possessed the capabilities her brother Humayun had lacked. The chronicle portrays Gulbadan Begum as hopeful that Akbar would restore Mughal power and establish the stable governance that had eluded Humayun.

3.7 FAMILY, EXILE, AND REFUGE IN PERSIA

A substantial portion of the *Humayunnama* is devoted to accounts of the imperial family's exile and flight from India following Humayun's military defeats. When Mughal power collapsed in the 1540s Humayun his family and his retinue were forced to flee India, seeking refuge in Persia. A major part of the narrative deals with the exile of the Mughal family and their journey to Persia. Gulbadan Begum describes the hardships of travel, uncertainty, and displacement. Her account offers an emotional and human picture of political exile and family survival. She describes the family's reception in Persia, their interactions with the Persian Safavid court, and the religious and cultural adjustments required of them as guest in a foreign land.

3.8 RELIGIOUS LIFE AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

The Humayunnama reflects the importance of religious observance, courtly etiquette, and cultural refinement in Mughal life. Gulbadan Begum presents imperial women as participating in religious education, household devotion, and moral guidance. These details broaden our understanding of Mughal culture beyond warfare and administration.

The chronicle reveals religious tensions within the court—differences of opinion regarding theological matters and regarding the proper role of Islamic law in governance. The *Humayunnama* reveals women’s significant roles in religious practice and the conferral of spiritual authority. Women’s roles in transmitting Islamic learning to children, in supervising household religious practices, and in maintaining religious traditions gave them authority within the domestic sphere.

3.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF *THE HUMAYUNNAMA*

The Humayunnama is significant because it provides a women’s perspective on Mughal history. It challenges the idea that political and historical writing belonged only to men. The text is also valuable for understanding domestic life, emotional experience, and the informal channels through which power operated in the Mughal world. The *Humayunnama* also remains significant as a primary source for understanding mid-sixteenth century Mughal history. The work continues to be studied by historians interested in gender and political history.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (CYP)– II

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. *The Humayunnama* gives a _____ perspective on Mughal history.
2. The narrative includes information about exile in _____.
3. Gulbadan Begum wrote about the Mughal _____ and household life.

B. True or False:

1. *The Humayunnama* ignores women’s experiences. _____
2. The work is useful for gender history. _____
3. Gulbadan Begum’s account is based on direct observation and memory. _____

C. Short Questions:

- Q1. What makes *the Humayunnama* different from many other Mughal chronicles?

- Q2. Explain the historical significance of Gulbadan Begum’s narrative.

3.10 LET US SUM UP

Gulbadan Begum's *Humayunnama* is a rare and important historical source. It combines memory, observation, and family history to present a distinctive view of Humayun's reign and Mughal court life. The work is valuable not only for political history but also for gender history and the study of imperial culture. The *Humayunnama* influenced subsequent Mughal historical and literary production. The work established a precedent for women's participation in historical writing and demonstrated that women's perspectives on historical events were valuable and worth recording. The *Humayunnama* also influenced later historians' understanding of Mughal history and particularly of Humayun's reign. While earlier chroniclers had portrayed Humayun as largely unsuccessful, Gulbadan Begum's account suggested a more complex understanding of his reign's significance within the longer trajectory of Mughal history. Her portrayal of Akbar's eventual triumph suggested that Humayun's struggles, while personally difficult and politically unsuccessful, had prepared the way for the establishment of stronger, more stable Mughal governance.

3.11 GLOSSARY

Bairam Khan : Powerful Turkish Amir, played an important role in Humayun's reign; subject of Gulbadan Begum's criticism.

Sur Dynasty: Afghan dynasty that temporarily displaced Mughal rule during Humayun's reign under Sher Shah.

Safavid Court : Persian royal court that provided refuge to Mughal family during their exile from India.

Timurid : Descended from Timur ; cultural and political heritage shared by Babur and his descendants.

3.12 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS:

- Q1. Explain Gulbadan Begum's family position and her early life experiences, and assess how these factors shaped her perspective as a chronicler.
- Q2. Describe the content and structure of the *Humayunnama* and explain how it differs from male-authored court chronicles.
- Q3. Evaluate the *Humayunnama*'s historical value and limitations as a source for understanding mid sixteenth century Mughal history and gender dynamics.

3.13 LESSON END EXERCISE:

- Q1. Analyze Gulbadan Begum's personal observations and emotional responses to historical events, discussing how the inclusion of personal dimension enriches historical understanding.
- Q2. Prepare a comprehensive analysis of Gulbadan Begum's descriptions of women's roles in imperial

household management, succession politics, and religious practice assessing women's sources of authority and influence.

Q3. Analyze the historiographical significance of *Humayunnama*.

3.14 ANSWER KEY

CYP–I

- A. 1. Humayun
 2. Persian
 3. household
- B. 1. False
 2. True
 3. False
- C. 1. See Section 3.2
 2. See Section 3.3

CYP–II

- A. 1. women's / personal
 2. Persia
 3. court
- B. 1. False
 2. True
 3. True
- C. 1. See Section 3.9
 2. See Section 3.9

3.15 SUGGESTED READINGS

- S. Nurul Hasan, *Studies on Mughal history and sources*.
- John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*.
- Susan S. M. *Studies on women and Mughal society*.
- Translated editions and scholarly introductions to the *Humayunnama*.

ABUL FAZAL'S AKBARNAMA

STRUCTURE

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 - 4.7.1 Documentation of Court Culture and Intellectual Life
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4.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to :

- Explain the historical context of Abul Fazl's life, his intellectual formation, and his role as Akbar's trusted advisor and court historian.
- Describe the content, structure, and distinctive characteristics of the *Akbarnama* as a primary historical source and instrument of state ideology.
- Analyze Abul Fazl's accounts of Akbar's military campaigns, administrative reforms, and religious policies, assessing their historical accuracy and ideological significance.

- Evaluate the *Akbarnama* as evidence of Mughal imperial ideology, religious pluralism, and the intellectual foundations of Akbar's governance.
- Assess the long-term significance of the *Akbarnama* for understanding Mughal history, the development of early modern Islamic political theory, and the literary achievements of the Mughal court.

Learning Outcomes

After going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- The life and intellectual development of Abul Fazl and his unique relationship with Emperor Akbar.
- The content, structure, and ideological functions of the *Akbarnama* as both historical narrative and state propaganda.
- Akbar's military campaigns, administrative reforms, and the consolidation of centralized Mughal governance.
- The sophisticated religious policies and philosophical innovations that characterized Akbar's reign.
- The intellectual and cultural achievements of the Mughal court during the *Akbarnama* age.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, the *Akbarnama*, written by Abul Fazl (1551-1602), represents one of the most important and influential primary sources for understanding Mughal history and the reign of Akbar (1556-1605), the greatest Mughal emperor. Abul Fazl, a brilliant Persian-educated intellectual, philosopher, and court official, spent most of his adult life in close association with Akbar, serving as his chief advisor, religious counselor, and official historian. Writing with the emperor's full support and participation, Abul Fazl composed the *Akbarnama* an extensive, multi-volume chronicle documenting Akbar's life, reign, military campaigns, administrative policies, and religious innovations.

Unlike earlier Mughal chronicles written by historians distant from power or commissioned retrospectively, the *Akbarnama* was composed during Akbar's reign by an author enjoying intimate access to the emperor and his court. Abul Fazl witnessed major events directly, participated in important discussions, and had access to official records and documents. The *Akbarnama* thus represents an insider's perspective on Mughal governance, military strategy, and court life during the reign of the emperor who transformed Mughal rule from a regional power into a sophisticated, centralized empire controlling most of the Indian subcontinent.

The *Akbarnama* is valuable as a historical source for multiple reasons. First, it provides detailed accounts of Akbar's military campaigns and the consolidation of Mughal power. Second, it documents Akbar's administrative reforms and the establishment of centralized governance structures. Third, it reveals Akbar's approach to religious pluralism and his efforts to establish religious harmony among India's diverse populations. Fourth, it demonstrates the intellectual sophistication of the Mughal court and the development of early modern Islamic political theory. Fifth, it exemplifies how historical writing served as an instrument of state ideology and imperial legitimation.

This lesson explores the *Akbarnama* as a historical source and ideological document, examining its content and structure, analyzing Abul Fazl's accounts of Akbar's achievements, evaluating the work's historical reliability and ideological functions, and assessing its significance for understanding the height of Mughal civilization and the development of early modern imperial governance.

4.2 SOURCES

4.2.1 Literary Sources

The study of Akbar's reign and the significance of Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama* is enriched by multiple categories of literary sources that provide complementary perspectives on Mughal history and court culture.

4.2.1.1 The *Akbarnama*

The *Akbarnama* itself stands as the most comprehensive and authoritative contemporary account of Akbar's reign. Written by Abul Fazl between approximately 1590 and 1602, this multi-volume chronicle represents an insider's perspective with unparalleled access to the emperor and court records. The work combines historical narrative with philosophical discourse, documenting military campaigns, administrative innovations, religious policies, and court culture in elegant Persian prose. Its value lies not only in factual content but also in revealing the ideological frameworks through which Akbar's rule was legitimized and celebrated.

4.2.1.2 The *Ain-i-Akbari*

The *Ain-i-Akbari*, also composed by Abul Fazl, serves as a companion volume to the *Akbarnama* and provides systematic documentation of Akbar's administrative organization, revenue systems, military structure, and imperial household. This work functions as an administrative handbook and statistical compendium, offering detailed information about the mansabdari system, provincial organization, taxation procedures, and cultural institutions. Together with the *Akbarnama*, it provides comprehensive documentation of Mughal governance at its height.

4.2.1.3 Contemporary Persian Chronicles

Several other contemporary Persian chronicles supplement and sometimes challenge the *Akbarnama*'s account. These include works by Badauni, who wrote the *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* with a more critical perspective on Akbar's religious innovations; the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* by Nizam al-Din Ahmad, which provides an alternative court perspective; and various memoirs and correspondence by court officials and nobles. These sources enable historians to cross-reference claims in the *Akbarnama* and assess its accuracy and biases.

4.3 ABUL FAZL'S LIFE, INTELLECTUAL FORMATION, AND THE *AKBARNAMA*'S COMPOSITION

4.3.1 Abul Fazl's Early Life and Intellectual Development

Abu'l-Fazl ibn Mubarak (1551-1602), known as Abul Fazl, was born into a family of Persian-educated scholars and administrators. His father, Shaikh Mubarak, was a respected theologian and philosopher known for heterodox religious views and considerable influence at court. Abul Fazl's early education was exceptional, providing him

with mastery of Persian, Arabic, and local Indian languages alongside Islamic theology, philosophy, mathematics, and rhetoric. This comprehensive intellectual formation equipped him to engage with the most sophisticated intellectual currents of his age.

Abul Fazl's intellectual development was profoundly shaped by his exposure to diverse philosophical and religious traditions. His father's heterodox theology, which emphasized rational interpretation of Islamic principles over rigid orthodoxy, influenced Abul Fazl's own religious thinking. During his youth, Abul Fazl encountered various intellectual movements within Islamic civilization—Sufi mysticism, philosophical rationalism, and theological innovation. These diverse influences produced an intellectually sophisticated, philosophically ambitious thinker capable of articulating sophisticated arguments about religious pluralism, statecraft, and the nature of justice.

4.3.2 Abul Fazl's Rise to Power and Relationship with Akbar

Abul Fazl's association with Akbar began around 1575, when he joined the emperor's court as a trusted advisor. Akbar, who had recently consolidated Mughal power after defeating rebellious nobles and establishing effective military organization, was engaged in developing administrative structures and articulating the ideological foundations of his rule. Akbar immediately recognized Abul Fazl's intellectual capabilities and granted him rapidly increasing influence.

By the 1580s, Abul Fazl had become Akbar's most influential advisor, wielding power over religious policy, diplomatic relations, and cultural patronage. Akbar's trust in Abul Fazl was remarkable and consequential—the emperor reportedly consulted Abul Fazl on major decisions and valued his counsel on matters both practical and philosophical. This extraordinary relationship between emperor and intellectual advisor enabled Abul Fazl to help shape Mughal policies and to articulate the religious and political ideology that would characterize Akbar's reign.

4.3.3 The Composition and Structure of the *Akbarnama*

Abul Fazl began composing the *Akbarnama* around 1590, after Akbar had consolidated military power and established stable governance. The work was composed over a period of years, likely continuing until near Abul Fazl's death in 1602, though the complete text was never finished. The *Akbarnama* exists in multiple volumes, with the first volume devoted to Akbar's genealogy and early life, subsequent volumes chronicling his reign year by year, and additional material on administrative organization and court culture.

The *Akbarnama* is written in elegant Persian, the language of Mughal court culture and Islamic learning. Abul Fazl's prose style is sophisticated and rhetorically elaborate, employing poetic conventions and philosophical language to convey meaning and establish authority. The work combines narrative of historical events with digressive passages on philosophy, religion, culture, and governance. This stylistic complexity makes the *Akbarnama* challenging reading but also demonstrates the intellectual ambitions of Abul Fazl's historical project.

The *Akbarnama*'s structure reflects both chronological progression through Akbar's reign and thematic organization emphasizing particular achievements or policies. The work incorporates anecdotes, dialogues between Akbar and advisors, descriptions of court ceremonies, and observations about military technology, administrative

procedures, and religious practice. This varied structure allows Abul Fazl to develop complex arguments about state craft and religious policy while simultaneously narrating historical events.

4.3.4 The *Akbarnama* as Propaganda and State Ideology

The *Akbarnama* functioned partly as propaganda designed to legitimize and celebrate Akbar's rule. Abul Fazl composed the work with Akbar's active encouragement and input, and the emperor apparently reviewed and approved significant portions of the text. This official character distinguishes the *Akbarnama* from earlier Mughal chronicles written by historians with greater independence from imperial authority. The *Akbarnama* was designed to present Akbar in the most favorable light possible, to justify his policies, and to demonstrate the superiority of his governance.

Despite its propagandistic dimensions, the *Akbarnama* is not merely fabrication or pure ideology. Abul Fazl possessed intellectual integrity and genuine commitment to truthfulness, and the work incorporates substantial factual information about military campaigns, administrative structures, and court life. The *Akbarnama*'s ideological character consists not primarily in falsehood but rather in selective emphasis, interpretive framing, and the elevation of certain themes and achievements while downplaying others. Historians using the *Akbarnama* must recognize this ideological dimension while also recognizing the work's substantial factual content and historical value.

4.4 MILITARY CAMPAIGNS AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF MUGHAL POWER

4.4.1 Akbar's Military Campaigns and Territorial Expansion

The *Akbarnama* provides detailed accounts of Akbar's military campaigns through which he transformed Mughal rule from a regional power into an empire controlling most of the Indian sub continent. Abul Fazl documents campaigns against regional powers in Bengal, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and the Deccan. These accounts describe military tactics, the disposition of forces, the employment of artillery and firearms, and the strategic thinking that guided Akbar's military operations.

Akbar's military success derived from several factors that Abul Fazl's accounts help illuminate. First, Akbar inherited and further developed the military technologies and tactics developed by earlier Mughal rulers, particularly the effective use of artillery and fire arms. Second, Akbar reorganized the Mughal military, creating a more disciplined and centrally controlled army. Third, Akbar employed diplomacy alongside military force, frequently offering favorable terms to defeated enemies to encourage their cooperation rather than their continued resistance. Fourth, Akbar exploited divisions among regional powers, preventing unified resistance to Mughal expansion.

Abul Fazl's military descriptions reveal Akbar's strategic sophistication. The emperor understood terrain, supply lines, the psychological dimensions of warfare, and the importance of combining military victory with political accommodation. The *Akbarnama* presents military success not as inevitable result of Mughal superiority but rather as product of intelligent strategy and careful planning—a portrayal that enhances Akbar's reputation as a skilled military commander.

4.4.2 The Subjugation of Regional Powers and the Consolidation of Imperial Authority

The *Akbarnama* chronicles the progressive subjugation of regional powers and the establishment of centralized Mughal authority. Important subjects include the conquest of Gujarat, the conflict with the Rajput kingdoms, and the eventual establishment of Mughal control over most of northern and central India. Abul Fazl describes how Akbar transformed independent regional rulers into subordinate officials within the Mughal administrative hierarchy.

Central to Akbar's strategy was the co-optation of regional elites. Rather than destroying defeated opponents, Akbar frequently incorporated them into the Mughal service, offering high rank, wealth, and prestige in exchange for loyalty. This policy, documented in the *Akbarnama*, proved remarkably effective in establishing stable Mughal rule. It transformed potential enemies into interested parties in the continuation of Mughal power and created a diverse nobility unified by participation in Akbar's service.

4.4.3 Military Technology and the Organization of Mughal Forces

Abul Fazl's accounts reveal the military technology and organizational structures that gave Mughal forces significant advantages over regional competitors. The *Akbarnama* documents the use of artillery, gunpowder weapons, and sophisticated military organization. These descriptions demonstrate that Mughal military superiority derived not from inherent qualities of Mughal warriors but from superior technology, organization, and strategy.

Particularly significant are Abul Fazl's observations regarding the organization of Mughal forces. Akbar established a centralized military command structure, regular pay for soldiers, disciplined recruitment and training procedures, and systematic record-keeping regarding military strength and deployments. These organizational innovations, more than individual warrior prowess, explain Mughal military success.

4.4.4 The *Akbarnama*'s Portrayal of Military Achievement and Imperial Legitimation

The *Akbarnama* presents military success as evidence of Akbar's fitness to rule and of divine favor for the Mughal dynasty. Abul Fazl employs religious and philosophical language to frame military victories as manifestations of divine will and evidence that Akbar possessed qualities necessary for just and effective governance. This ideological framing served to legitimize Mughal rule and to present Akbar's military achievements as morally significant, not merely as results of superior force.

4.5 ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

4.5.1 Akbar's Administrative Innovations and Centralization of Governance

A distinctive feature of the *Akbarnama* is its detailed documentation of Akbar's administrative reforms and the establishment of centralized governance structures. Abul Fazl describes Akbar's reorganization of the tax system, the creation of new administrative ranks and positions, the establishment of regular procedures for government business, and the development of a centralized bureaucracy. These reforms transformed Mughal governance from the personal rule of earlier emperors into a more institutionalized system of administration.

Akbar's tax reforms were particularly significant. The emperor established a systematic assessment of land revenue, created regular procedures for tax collection, and developed methods for managing state finances. Abul

Fazl's descriptions reveal the sophistication of these administrative procedures and the intellectual effort required to create effective governance systems for a vast, diverse empire. These reforms proved durable, establishing patterns that would persist throughout the Mughal period.

4.5.2 The Mansabdari System and the Organization of the Nobility

The *Akbarnama* provides detailed descriptions of the mansabdari system, Akbar's innovative system for organizing the nobility and military. Under this system, nobles received ranks (mansabs) determining their military obligations and salaries. The system created a clear hierarchy, tied rewards to service and loyalty, and provided flexibility for reorganizing the nobility as circumstances changed. Abul Fazl's detailed description of this system demonstrates its sophistication and reveals how it enabled Akbar to maintain central control over the nobility while distributing power and resources.

4.5.3 The Integration of Diverse Populations and the Development of Inclusive Governance

A central theme of the *Akbarnama* is Akbar's effort to develop governance structures and policies that could accommodate India's diverse religious, ethnic, and linguistic populations. Abul Fazl describes Akbar's incorporation of Hindu Rajput warriors into high military ranks, his appointment of Hindu administrators to important positions, and his development of policies designed to respect diverse religious practices. These policies, while serving Akbar's practical interest in maintaining stable rule over a diverse population, also reflected philosophical commitments to justice and fairness.

Abul Fazl portrays these inclusive policies as emanating from Akbar's wisdom and justice. He emphasizes that Akbar appointed officials based on merit rather than religious affiliation and that the emperor recognized the capabilities of Hindu and other non-Muslim subjects. This portrayal of meritocratic governance and religious tolerance served Akbar's ideological purposes—it demonstrated his fitness to rule a diverse population and his commitment to justice.

4.5.4 The Documentation and Communication of Administrative Procedures

The *Akbarnama* reveals the importance of systematic documentation and clear communication of administrative procedures in enabling centralized governance. Akbar established written records of administrative decisions, created formal procedures for government business, and ensured that administrative practices were consistent across the empire. Abul Fazl's descriptions of these procedures demonstrate that effective empire-wide governance required not merely personal authority but also systematic administrative structures.

Check Your Progress (CYP)-I

A. Fill in the Blanks

1. Abul Fazl was born in the year _____.
2. The *Akbarnama* was written in _____ language.
3. Abul Fazl joined Akbar's court around the year _____.

4. The _____ system was Akbar's innovative method for organizing the nobility and military.
5. Akbar abolished the discriminatory tax on non-Muslims called _____.
6. The companion volume to the *Akbarnama* that documented administrative organization was called _____.
7. Abul Fazl's father, _____, was a respected theologian and philosopher.
8. Akbar's reign lasted from _____ to _____.

B. State True or False

1. The *Akbarnama* was completed during Abul Fazl's lifetime. _____
2. Akbar incorporated defeated regional elites into Mughal service. _____
3. The *Akbarnama* was written with complete independence from imperial authority. _____
4. Akbar's military success was primarily due to superior technology and organization. _____
5. Abul Fazl was critical of Akbar's religious innovations. _____
6. The mansabdari system tied rewards to service and loyalty. _____
7. Akbar appointed officials solely based on religious affiliation. _____
8. The *Akbarnama* combines historical narrative with philosophical discourse. _____

4.6 RELIGIOUS POLICY, RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND AKBAR'S DIN-I ILAHI

4.6.1 Akbar's Approach to Religious Pluralism and the Accommodation of Diverse Faiths

The *Akbarnama* documents Akbar's distinctive approach to religion and his efforts to establish a framework of religious coexistence within his empire. Akbar, while personally devoted to Islam, recognized that effective governance over India's religiously diverse population required respect for non-Muslim beliefs and practices. Abul Fazl portrays Akbar as a wise ruler who understood that religious persecution created resistance and disloyalty, whereas religious tolerance enabled peaceful coexistence and unified service to the emperor.

The *Akbarnama* describes Akbar's religious policies, including the abolition of discriminatory taxes on non-Muslims (*jizya*), the respect shown to Hindu sacred sites and practices, the appointment of Hindu officials and warriors to high positions, and the emperor's engagement with Hindu religious leaders and philosophical traditions. Abul Fazl presents these policies as evidence of Akbar's wisdom and justice rather than as compromises with Islamic principle. He argues that true Islam requires just governance and respect for the rights of subjects, even when those subjects practiced different religions.

4.6.2 Akbar's Philosophical and Theological Innovations

The *Akbarnama* reveals Akbar's engagement with philosophical and theological questions and his efforts to develop religious frameworks that could accommodate diverse beliefs. Akbar, influenced by Abul Fazl and other court intellectuals, developed heterodox religious views that emphasized rational interpretation of Islamic tradition and openness to insights from other religious traditions. The emperor conducted philosophical discussions with theologians, mystics, philosophers, and representatives of various religions, seeking wisdom from diverse sources.

These religious discussions, documented in the *Akbarnama*, reveal the intellectual sophistication of Akbar's court. The emperor was not merely a military conqueror but a thoughtful ruler engaged with the intellectual currents of his age. His willingness to engage with diverse religious perspectives and to question conventional orthodoxy demonstrates intellectual openness and confidence in his own judgment.

4.6.3 The Din-i Ilahi (Divine Faith) and Akbar's Religious Experiment

The *Akbarnama* documents one of Akbar's most controversial and debated policies—the development of the Din-i Ilahi (Divine Faith), a religious framework that incorporated elements from multiple religious traditions while maintaining loyalty to the emperor as supreme spiritual authority. Abul Fazl was instrumental in developing the Din-i Ilahi and describing it in the *Akbarnama*. The work presents the Din-i Ilahi not as a new religion distinct from Islam but rather as a spiritual path compatible with Islamic faith and reflecting Islamic principles of justice and divine guidance.

The Din-i Ilahi is one of the most debated and misunderstood aspects of Akbar's reign. Some scholars view it as evidence of Akbar's genuine commitment to religious pluralism and philosophical innovation. Others argue that it was a tool of imperial power designed to create religious loyalty to the emperor. Abul Fazl's descriptions in the *Akbarnama* favor the former interpretation, but historians must recognize the work's ideological character and its interest in presenting Akbar's religious policies in favorable light.

4.6.4 Religious Policy as State Ideology and Imperial Legitimation

The *Akbarnama* presents Akbar's religious policies as manifestations of his wisdom, justice, and fitness to rule. Abul Fazl employs religious and philosophical language to frame religious tolerance and pluralism as virtues flowing from Akbar's character and understanding. This ideological framing served to legitimize Akbar's policies and to preempt criticism from orthodox Islamic leaders who might question his heterodox religious views and his treatment of Hindu subjects and practices.

4.7 COURT CULTURE, INTELLECTUAL ACHIEVEMENTS, AND THE AKBARNAMA'S HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

4.7.1 The *Akbarnama* as Documentation of Court Culture and Intellectual Life

The *Akbarnama* provides valuable documentation of the culture, intellectual life, and aesthetic achievements of Akbar's court. Abul Fazl describes court ceremonies, celebrations, artistic patronage, and intellectual discussions.

These descriptions reveal the Mughal court as a center of cultural sophistication, bringing together scholars, artists, musicians, and intellectuals from diverse backgrounds and traditions.

Akbar was a remarkable patron of the arts and learning. He maintained a vast library, sponsored manuscript production, supported calligraphers and painters, and created conditions enabling intellectual achievement. The *Akbarnama* documents this cultural patronage and presents it as evidence of Akbar's sophistication and his fitness to rule. A just and wise ruler, Abul Fazl argues, necessarily patronizes learning and the arts, creating conditions for cultural flourishing.

4.7.2 Religious Scholars, Philosophers, and Intellectual Debates at Court

The *Akbarnama* documents the presence of religious scholars, philosophers, and intellectuals at Akbar's court and their engagement in philosophical and theological debates. Abul Fazl describes discussions between Hindu scholars and Muslim theologians, between Sufimystics and rational philosophers, and between representatives of various religious traditions. These descriptions reveal the Mughal court as a space where diverse intellectual and religious perspectives encountered each other and engaged in dialogue.

These intellectual exchanges were not merely entertaining diversions for the emperor but served important functions in developing religious policy and statecraft. Akbar used these discussions to test ideas, to understand different perspectives, and to develop frame works that could accommodate diverse beliefs. Abul Fazl's documentation of these discussions serves ideological purposes—it demonstrates Akbar's openness to diverse perspectives and his intellectual sophistication.

4.7.3 Artistic and Literary Patronage and the Development of Mughal Culture

The *Akbarnama* reveals Akbar's extensive patronage of painting, calligraphy, literature, and other arts. Akbar maintained ateliers of painters and calligraphers, commissioned illustrated manuscripts, sponsored poets and scholars, and created an environment where artistic achievement flourished. This cultural patronage produced the distinctive style of Mughal painting that blended Persian, Central Asian, and Indian artistic traditions.

Abul Fazl's descriptions of artistic patronage present culture as a dimension of imperial power and magnificence. A great emperor necessarily supports the arts and enables cultural achievement. This ideological framing links cultural patronage to political power and suggests that Akbar's cultural achievements were evidence of his greatness as a ruler.

4.7.4 The *Akbarnama* as Literary Achievement and Monument to Mughal Civilization

The *Akbarnama* itself represents a significant literary achievement and stands as a monument to the intellectual and cultural sophistication of Mughal civilization at its height. Abul Fazl's elegant Persian prose, his sophisticated argumentation, and his ambitious attempt to create a comprehensive historical and ideological account of Akbar's reign demonstrate the capabilities of Mughal court intellectuals.

4.7.5 The *Akbarnama*'s Continuing Historical Significance

The *Akbarnama* influenced subsequent Mughal historical and literary production and established patterns for the interpretation of Akbar's reign that would persist for centuries. Even when historians questioned specific claims in the *Akbarnama*, they built their arguments partly in response to Abul Fazl's work. The *Akbarnama* thus served not merely to document history but to shape how subsequent generations understood and interpreted Mughal history.

The *Akbarnama* remains central to scholarly efforts to understand Mughal history, Akbar's reign, the development of early modern Islamic political theory, and the intellectual achievements of the Mughal court. Historians continue to debate specific claims in the *Akbarnama* and to assess its reliability and accuracy. However, no serious study of Akbar or of sixteenth-century Mughal history can ignore the *Akbarnama* or fail to engage with Abul Fazl's account.

The *Akbarnama* is also valued as evidence of how historical writing served political and ideological purposes in early modern Islamic empires. The work exemplifies the use of history as an instrument of state ideology and imperial legitimation. Understanding the *Akbarnama* requires recognizing its ideological character while also appreciating its substantial factual content and its witness to important historical developments.

Check Your Progress (CYP)-II

A. Fill in the Blanks

1. The Din-i Ilahi means _____ in English.
2. Akbar conducted philosophical discussions with representatives of various religions in a specially designated space called _____.
3. The distinctive style of Mughal painting blended _____, _____, and Indian artistic traditions.
4. Abul Fazl's companion volume to the *Akbarnama*, which documented administrative organization, was the _____.

B. State True or False

1. The Din-i Ilahi was widely accepted throughout the Mughal Empire. _____
2. Akbar's court served as a center for intellectual and religious dialogue. _____
3. The *Akbarnama* presents religious tolerance as evidence of wise governance. _____

4.8 LET US SUM UP

The *Akbarnama*, written by Abul Fazl, represents one of the most important historical sources for understanding Mughal history and the reign of Akbar (1556-1605), the greatest Mughal emperor. Composed during Akbar's reign by an author enjoying intimate access to the emperor and his court, the *Akbarnama* combines detailed

narrative of military campaigns and administrative reforms with philosophical and ideological argument. The work documents Akbar's military consolidation of Mughal power, his administrative innovations establishing centralized governance, and his religious policies promoting pluralism and tolerance.

The *Akbarnama* reveals Akbar as a sophisticated ruler engaged with intellectual, philosophical, and religious questions. Abul Fazl portrays the emperor as intellectually curious, philosophically innovative, and committed to justice and wise governance. The work demonstrates Akbar's military skill, his administrative acumen, his capacity to govern a diverse population effectively, and his patronage of culture and learning.

The *Akbarnama*'s accounts of Akbar's reign must be read with awareness of the work's ideological character and its function in legitimizing Akbar's rule and policies. Abul Fazl composed the work with the emperor's active encouragement and approval, and the chronicle was designed to present Akbar in the most favorable light possible. However, the *Akbarnama* also contains substantial factual information and represents the testimony of an author with genuine access to major events and close association with the emperor.

The *Akbarnama* stands as a monument to the intellectual and cultural sophistication of Mughal civilization at its height. Abul Fazl's elegant prose, sophisticated argumentation, and ambitious attempt to create a comprehensive historical and ideological account demonstrate the capabilities of Mughal court intellectuals. The work continues to be valued as a primary source for understanding Mughal history, the development of early modern Islamic political theory, and the literary achievements of the Mughal court.

4.9 GLOSSARY

Persian language: Language of Mughal court culture, administration, and learning; medium of *Akbarnama* composition.

Administrative reforms: Reorganization of governance structures, tax system, and bureaucracy implemented by Akbar and documented in *Akbarnama*.

Mansabdari system: Akbar's system for organizing nobility and military, assigning ranks determining military obligations and salaries.

Mansab: Rank in mansabdari system; determined military obligations and salaries of nobles.

Religious pluralism: Akbar's approach to accommodating diverse religious beliefs and practices within his empire.

Din-i Ilahi: "Divine Faith"; religious framework developed under Akbar's direction; incorporated elements from multiple traditions.

Jizya: Discriminatory tax historically imposed on non-Muslims in Islamic states; abolished by Akbar.

Court culture: Customs, ceremonies, intellectual life, and artistic patronage characterizing imperial court.

Ideological framing: Presentation of events and policies in ways designed to support particular political or religious arguments.

State ideology: System of beliefs, values, and arguments used to legitimize and justify political authority and policies.

4.10 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1. Explain Abul Fazl's intellectual formation and his relationship with Akbar, assessing how these factors shaped his historical writing.
- Q2. Describe the content and structure of the *Akbarnama* and explain how it functions both as historical narrative and as state ideology.
- Q3. Analyze Abul Fazl's accounts of Akbar's military campaigns, assessing what they reveal about the sources of Mughal military success.
- Q4. Evaluate Abul Fazl's descriptions of Akbar's administrative reforms and assess their significance for understanding centralized governance in early modern empires.
- Q5. Describe Akbar's approach to religious pluralism as portrayed in the *Akbarnama* and explain how Abul Fazl presents religious tolerance as evidence of wise governance.

4.11 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1. Write a detailed essay analyzing the *Akbarnama* as both historical narrative and ideological document, examining how these dimensions interact in Abul Fazl's account.
- Q2. Create a detailed examination of the *Akbarnama*'s treatment of Akbar's religious policies, analyzing how Abul Fazl presents religious pluralism and the Din-i Ilahi.
- Q3. Compare Abul Fazl's account of specific military campaigns with accounts in other contemporary sources, assessing the *Akbarnama*'s accuracy and reliability.
- Q4. Write an essay evaluating the mansabdari system as described in the *Akbarnama*, explaining its significance for understanding centralized governance and administration.
- Q5. Analyze how Abul Fazl's philosophical and theological views shape his historical interpretation in the *Akbarnama*.

4.12 ANSWER KEY

CYP-I

A. Fill in the Blanks

- 1. 1551
- 2. Persian

3. 1575
4. Mansabdari
5. Jizya
6. Ain-i-Akbari
7. Shaikh Mubarak
8. 1556- 1605

B. True or False

1. False (The Akbarnama was never completely finished)
2. True
3. False (It was composed with Akbar's encouragement and approval)
4. True
5. False
6. True
7. False
8. True

CYP-II

A. Fill in the Blanks

1. Divine Faith
2. Ibadat Khana (House of Worship)
3. Persian, Central Asian
4. Ain-i-Akbari

B. True or False

1. False (It had limited acceptance)
2. True
3. True

4.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Abul Fazl. *The Akbar Nama* of Abul-Fazl (translated by Henry Beveridge, 1907 or later editions).
- Abul Fazl. *The Akbarnama* (translated by Wheeler Thackston or other translators).
- Beveridge, Henry (translator and editor). *The Akbar-Nama: A History of Akbar, Founded on Official Records and Other Contemporary Documents*. Scholarly edition with extensive notes and commentary.
- Gascoigne, Bamber. *The Great Mughals*.
- Richards, John F. *The Mughal Empire*.
- Sharma, Suresh. *Mughal Government and Administration*.
- Habib, Irfan. *Agrarian System of Mughal India*.

Badauni's *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh*

STRUCTURE

- 5.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 Badauni's Life , intellectual Formation, and the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh*'s Composition**
- 5.3 Badauni's Accounts of Akbar's Reign and Military Campaigns**
- 5.4 Badauni's Critique of Akbar's Religious Policies and Heterodoxy**
- 5.5 Badauni's Personal Observations and Court Culture**
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5.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to :

- Explain the historical context of Badauni's life, his intellectual formation, and his role as court historian during Akbar's reign.
- Describe the content, structure, and distinctive characteristics of the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* as a primary historical source offering alternative perspectives to official court ideology.

- Analyze Badauni's accounts of Akbar's reign, military campaigns, and religious policies, assessing his criticisms and evaluating his reliability as a historical witness.

Learning Outcomes

After going through the lesson, you will have a clear understanding of:

- The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* as evidence of religious dissent, orthodox Islamic critique of Akbar's heterodoxy, and tensions within the Mughal court.
- The long-term significance of the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* for understanding Mughal history, religious diversity within the court, and the contested nature of historical interpretation.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* (Selected Histories), written by Abdur Qadir Badauni (1540-1615), represents one of the most significant yet controversial primary source for understanding Mughal history and Akbar's reign (1556-1605). Badauni, a Persian-educated historian, theologian, and court official who served the Mughal court for decades, composed a detailed historical chronicle that documented major events during Akbar's rule while simultaneously offering sharp critique of the emperor's policies, particularly his religious innovations and alleged abandonment of Islamic orthodoxy.

Unlike Abul Fazl's celebratory Akbarnama, which presented Akbar as a wise, philosophically innovative ruler committed to religious pluralism and justice, Badauni's *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* portrays Akbar with far greater ambivalence and critique. Badauni admired Akbar's military accomplishments and administrative acumen but condemned what he regarded as the emperor's religious heterodoxy, his abandonment of Islamic law, and his promotion of practices and beliefs contrary to orthodox Islamic teaching. Badauni's account reveals deep religious tensions within Akbar's court and demonstrates that consensus about the emperor's reign did not exist among contemporary observers.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* is valuable as a historical source precisely because it offers perspectives different from official court ideology. Where Abul Fazl emphasized Akbar's wisdom and philosophical innovation, Badauni emphasized the emperor's spiritual corruption and deviation from Islamic principle. Where Abul Fazl presented religious pluralism as enlightened governance, Badauni condemned it as betrayal of Islamic faith. These contrasting interpretations reveal the contested nature of Akbar's policies and remind historians that contemporaries understood events differently depending on their perspectives, values, and positions within the imperial hierarchy.

This lesson explores the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* as a historical source and as evidence of religious critique and dissent within the Mughal court, examining its content and structure, analyzing Badauni's criticisms of Akbar, evaluating the work's historical reliability, and assessing its significance for understanding the religious and intellectual tensions that characterized Akbar's reign.

5.2 BADAUNI'S LIFE, INTELLECTUAL FORMATION, AND THE *MUNTAKHAB UT-TAWARIKH*'S COMPOSITION

Abdur Qadir Badauni was born in 1540 in Badaun (or Bada'un), a town in northern India, though he spent formative years in Gujarat before eventually joining the Mughal court. Unlike Abul Fazl, who received education within the imperial court environment and was groomed for power and influence, Badauni received traditional Islamic education from scholars and theologians based in towns and cities outside the direct imperial sphere. This provincial, traditionally Islamic educational background profoundly shaped Badauni's perspective and his later critiques of court culture and imperial policies.

Badauni's early education emphasized Islamic theology, jurisprudence (fiqh), Islamic law (Sharia), and the Islamic religious sciences. He studied Arabic and Persian, the languages of Islamic learning and court culture. Unlike Abul Fazl, who encountered diverse philosophical traditions and heterodox religious ideas within the cosmopolitan court environment, Badauni was educated within more traditional Islamic frameworks emphasizing adherence to established religious principles and orthodox interpretation of Islamic law. This educational background created fundamental differences between Badauni and Abul Fazl in their approaches to religion and their judgments regarding Akbar's policies.

Badauni eventually joined Akbar's court and served in various capacities as a court official and administrator. Unlike Abul Fazl, who enjoyed the emperor's special favor and wielded considerable political influence, Badauni occupied a more subordinate and ambiguous position. The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* suggests that Badauni was respected for his learning and historical knowledge but lacked the political power and personal intimacy with the emperor that characterized Abul Fazl's position.

This difference in position at court profoundly influenced Badauni's historical perspective. Abul Fazl, as Akbar's chief advisor and confidant, understood imperial policies from the inside and shared in their formulation. Badauni, occupying a more marginal position, observed court policies from a degree of distance and maintained greater independence of judgment. This distance enabled Badauni to offer critiques that Abul Fazl, invested in defending the emperor's decisions, could not voice. Historians must recognize that Badauni's critiques, while valuable as alternative perspectives, partly reflected his different position and status within the court hierarchy.

Badauni's understanding of his historical role and his critiques of Akbar's reign flowed from deeply held religious convictions. Badauni was a devout Muslim who accepted Islamic law and Islamic theology as fundamental principles of proper governance and personal conduct. He regarded innovations in religious practice, departures from established Islamic law, and syncretistic religious experiments as spiritually dangerous deviations from truth. These religious convictions were not merely personal piety but constituted the framework within which Badauni understood historical events and imperial policies.

Badauni's religious orthodoxy stood in stark contrast to the religious heterodoxy and philosophical innovation that characterized Akbar's court, particularly under Abul Fazl's influence. While Abul Fazl viewed Akbar's religious innovations as evidence of philosophical sophistication and spiritual wisdom, Badauni regarded them as religious corruption. This fundamental disagreement regarding the proper relationship between religion and

governance underlies much of Badauni's critique of Akbar's reign.

Badauni composed the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* over many years, likely beginning composition in the 1580s and continuing into the early seventeenth century, after both Akbar and Abul Fazl had died. The work is written in elegant Persian, the language of Mughal court culture, following conventions of historical composition established by earlier chroniclers. The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* is organized thematically rather than strictly chronologically, with sections devoted to different rulers and periods, allowing Badauni to reflect on historical patterns and to develop arguments regarding the nature of Islamic governance.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* covers a substantial chronological range, extending from early Islamic history through Akbar's reign, though Badauni's most detailed accounts focus on the Mughal period and particularly on Akbar's reign. This extended historical scope enabled Badauni to present Akbar's policies within the context of broader Islamic history, comparing Akbar's approach to governance with that of earlier Islamic rulers and with principles established in Islamic law and tradition.

The work combines narrative of historical events with explicit commentary and judgment. Badauni does not merely describe events but frequently pauses to moralize, to criticize, or to praise, making his judgments explicit to the reader. This openly judgmental tone distinguishes the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* from more ostensibly neutral historical accounts and reveals Badauni's conviction that the historian's role includes moral and religious assessment of events and policies.

Like all historical sources, the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* has both strengths and limitations as evidence. Its strengths include Badauni's firsthand knowledge of court events (though from a more marginal position than Abul Fazl), his access to court information and official records, his learning and sophistication as a historian, and the often vivid quality of his descriptions. The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* provides information unavailable in other sources and offers perspectives on court events and policies that official court chronicles omit or minimize.

However, the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* also has significant limitations. Badauni's account is explicitly judgmental and tendentious—he was not attempting to provide objective, neutral description but rather to present events from the perspective of orthodox Islamic faith and to criticize what he regarded as Akbar's religious errors. Badauni's descriptions of Akbar's character and motives sometimes seem colored by his disapproval and may not reflect Akbar's own understanding of his actions. Additionally, Badauni's composition of the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* occurred decades after many events he describes, raising questions about the reliability of memory and the possibility of retrospective reinterpretation. Historians must use the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* carefully, recognizing both its value as an alternative perspective and its limitations as a source shaped by Badauni's particular viewpoint and values.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- I

A. Fill in the blanks.

- 1 Badauni was born in _____.

2. The Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh is written in _____.
3. Abul Fazl's celebrated chronicle is called the _____.

B. State true or false.

1. Badauni received his education in the imperial court.
2. The Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh was composed over many years.

C. Short questions.

- Q1. Mention one strength of the Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh as a historical source.

- Q2. Why did Badauni differ from Abul Fazl in his view of Akbar's policies?

5.3 BADAUNI'S ACCOUNTS OF AKBAR'S REIGN AND MILITARY CAMPAIGNS

Badauni, despite his religious critiques of Akbar, acknowledges the emperor's military skill and his success in consolidating and expanding Mughal power. The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* provides detailed accounts of Akbar's military campaigns against regional powers, his subjugation of rebellious nobles, and his establishment of Mughal control over most of the Indian subcontinent. These military accounts are generally consistent with Abul Fazl's descriptions in the Akbarnama, suggesting that basic facts regarding military campaigns were not seriously disputed between the two chroniclers.

Badauni's acknowledgment of Akbar's military success complicates his overall critique. He cannot simply dismiss Akbar as an ineffective or foolish ruler—the emperor's military achievements were too evident to deny. Instead, Badauni must reconcile his admiration for Akbar's military accomplishments with his condemnation of the emperor's religious innovations. This tension reveals the complexity of Badauni's position: he could not deny Akbar's abilities as a military commander and ruler while maintaining credibility as a historian, yet his religious convictions led him to condemn fundamental aspects of the emperor's policies.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* provides accounts of Akbar's administrative reforms and the organization of Mughal governance. Badauni documents the mansabdari system and the organization of the nobility, the tax system and revenue collection procedures, and the administrative apparatus through which Akbar governed the empire. These administrative descriptions, like the military accounts, are generally consistent with information in the *Akbarnama*, and Badauni does not seriously dispute the effectiveness of Akbar's administrative innovations.

Badauni's willingness to acknowledge Akbar's administrative accomplishments while criticizing his religious policies reveals an important distinction. Badauni recognizes that Akbar was an effective temporal ruler—a skilled military commander and administrator capable of governing a vast, diverse empire. The problem, from Badauni's perspective, was not that Akbar lacked abilities as a ruler but that the emperor used these abilities for purposes Badauni regarded as illegitimate or dangerous. Akbar's military and administrative successes, in other words, did not redeem his religious heterodoxy but rather made his influence more troubling because his power enabled him to promote practices Badauni regarded as spiritually corrupt.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* provides narrative accounts of major political events during Akbar's reign, including succession disputes, rebellions, diplomatic negotiations, and court intrigues. These accounts offer sometimes different perspectives from Abul Fazl's version of events, and historians have used Badauni's alternative descriptions to assess the accuracy of both chroniclers and to reconstruct events more comprehensively than either source alone permits.

Of particular interest are Badauni's accounts of Akbar's succession by his son Jahangir and the transition of power following Akbar's death. These accounts suggest tensions within the imperial family and court factions, including tensions related to religious policy and the influence of Abul Fazl and his opponents. Badauni's descriptions of succession politics reveal that support for or opposition to Akbar's religious policies did not depend solely on theological conviction but also involved political interests and courtly factionalism.

5.4 BADAUNI'S CRITIQUE OF AKBAR'S RELIGIOUS POLICIES AND HETERODOXY

Badauni's most sustained and vehement critiques focus on Akbar's religious policies and particularly on the **Din-i Ilahi** (Divine Faith), the religious framework that Abul Fazl and Akbar promoted as compatible with Islamic faith while incorporating elements from other traditions. From Badauni's perspective, the **Din-i Ilahi** represented a fundamental betrayal of Islamic principle. The elevation of the emperor to quasi-divine status, the incorporation of elements from Hindu, Zoroastrian, and other non-Islamic traditions, and the establishment of religious authority centered on the emperor rather than on Islamic law and Islamic scholars—all of these practices struck Badauni as incompatible with Islamic monotheism and Islamic ethics.

Badauni's descriptions of the **Din-i Ilahi** emphasize what he regarded as its absurdity and spiritual danger. He describes rituals and practices associated with the **Din-i Ilahi** in ways designed to emphasize their departure from Islamic norms and to highlight the degradation of those who participated. His tone is often sarcastic, suggesting that the **Din-i Ilahi** was a foolish innovation promoted by Akbar and his advisors for reasons of power and

prestige rather than genuine religious conviction.

Badauni's critiques of Akbar's religious policies are inseparable from his criticism of Abul Fazl and other court intellectuals whom he regarded as the architects of the emperor's heterodoxy. Badauni portrays Abul Fazl as a sophist and deceiver who used clever arguments and philosophical language to lead Akbar astray from Islamic principle. The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* suggests that Abul Fazl deliberately promoted heterodox doctrines and persuaded Akbar to adopt policies designed to undermine orthodox Islam and empower the court against traditional Islamic scholars.

This portrayal of Abul Fazl contrasts sharply with the reverence evident in the *Akbarnama* and in the assessments of other court figures who praised Abul Fazl's wisdom and intellectual achievements. Badauni's harsh judgement raises important questions for historians: Was Abul Fazl a genuine philosopher and intellectual innovator, as his supporters portrayed him? Or was he a courtier promoting the emperor's interests through sophisticated arguments, as Badauni suggests? The answer likely involves elements of both interpretations—Abul Fazl was both a serious intellectual thinker and a court ideologue seeking to justify and advance the emperor's power and policies.

Beyond his critique of the **Din-i Ilahi**, Badauni condemns Akbar's broader policies toward non-Muslim subjects. The abolition of the **jizya** (tax on non-Muslims), the appointment of Hindu officials to high positions, the respect shown to Hindu religious practices, and the emperor's engagement with Hindu intellectual and philosophical traditions—all of these practices, from Badauni's perspective, represented unjustified concessions to non-Islamic elements within the empire and a betrayal of the empire's Islamic character.

Badauni's objections to these policies flow from his understanding that a properly Islamic state must recognize Islamic superiority and maintain Islamic law and Islamic authority. While recognizing that non-Muslims might live within an Islamic state and contribute to governance, Badauni regarded the level of accommodation Akbar granted to Hindu practices and Hindu officials as excessive and contrary to Islamic principle. From Badauni's perspective, Akbar's religious pluralism represented not enlightened governance but rather spiritual weakness and a failure to maintain proper Islamic order.

In criticizing Akbar's heterodoxy, Badauni simultaneously defends Islamic orthodoxy and the authority of traditional Islamic scholars and jurisprudence. Badauni presents himself as a defender of Islamic truth against heterodox innovations and as a representative of the learned Islamic tradition (**ilm**) that had preserved true Islamic knowledge across centuries. This self-presentation gives moral authority to Badauni's critiques and positions him as a guardian of Islamic faith against the spiritual dangers represented by Akbar's policies.

Badauni's defense of Islamic orthodoxy should not be understood as mere conservatism or intellectual rigidity. Rather, Badauni represents a significant intellectual and religious tradition emphasizing strict adherence to Islamic law and Islamic principles as essential to individual salvation and proper governance. From this perspective, Akbar's innovations represented not progress or enlightenment but rather dangerous departures from revealed truth and established Islamic principles.

Check Your Progress(CYP)- II

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Din-i Ilahi was promoted during the reign of _____.
2. Badauni regarded Akbar's religious innovations as _____.
3. The tax abolished on non-Muslims was called the _____.

B. State true or false.

1. Badauni praised all of Akbar's religious policies.
2. Badauni saw himself as a defender of Islamic orthodoxy.

C. Short questions.

- Q1. Why did Badauni criticize the Din-i Ilahi?

- Q2. How did Badauni view Akbar's treatment of non-Muslims?

5.5 BADAUNI'S PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND COURT CULTURE :

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* provides vivid descriptions of court life, imperial ceremonies, courtly culture, and the daily activities of the imperial court. These descriptions, while sometimes colored by Badauni's disapproval of court culture and religious practices, provide valuable information about the functioning of the imperial household, the organization of court rituals, and the social dynamics of the imperial elite.

Badauni's descriptions of court ceremonies often emphasize what he regards as luxurious excess or religious impropriety. Where Abul Fazl presents court magnificence as evidence of imperial power and sophistication, Badauni sometimes suggests that court luxury represents spiritual corruption and departures from Islamic simplicity. These differing interpretations of identical phenomena reveal how perspective and values shape historical interpretation. The same court celebration might be interpreted by one observer as evidence of imperial magnificence

and by another as evidence of worldly corruption.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* reveals Badauni's personal relationships with various court figures, his emotional responses to historical events, and his sense of his own role as a historian and witness to important developments. Badauni expresses affection and respect for some court figures, disapproval of others, and anxiety about the spiritual consequences of Akbar's policies. These personal observations and emotional responses make the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* vivid and engaging, though they also demonstrate how Badauni's judgements were shaped by his personal relationships and emotional reactions.

Particularly interesting are Badauni's expressions of his own anxieties and concerns regarding the religious state of the empire. He worries that Akbar's innovations will lead to the spiritual corruption of the empire and the neglect of Islamic principles. He expresses fear that his own efforts to maintain Islamic orthodoxy may prove ineffective against the powerful influence of the emperor and his court ideologues. These expressions reveal the emotional stakes involved in the religious conflicts that characterized Akbar's reign.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* documents intellectual life at Akbar's court, including philosophical discussions, theological debates, and the engagement of court intellectuals with various knowledge traditions. Badauni's descriptions of these intellectual exchanges differ from Abul Fazl's portrayal in the *Akbarnama*. Where Abul Fazl presents court discussions as evidence of Akbar's openness to diverse perspectives and philosophical sophistication, Badauni sometimes suggests that these discussions involved deceptive sophistry and attempts to undermine Islamic faith.

Badauni's criticism of court intellectuals and their arguments should not be dismissed as mere opposition to learning or philosophical thought. Rather, Badauni represents a tradition within Islam that values learning and intellectual achievement but insists that these be subordinate to and consistent with Islamic principles and Islamic law. From this perspective, court intellectuals like Abul Fazl engaged in subtle spiritual corruption—the use of philosophical arguments and clever reasoning to lead the emperor and others away from Islamic truth.

5.6 THE MUNTAKHAB UT-TAWARIKH'S HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND RELIGIOUS CRITIQUE

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* is historically significant partly because it reveals the existence of religious dissent and diversity of opinion within Akbar's court. The conventional picture of Akbar's court, based primarily on Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*, presents a unified vision of religious innovation and philosophical progress. The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* complicates this picture by demonstrating that important court figures harbored deep reservations about Akbar's religious policies and that orthodox Islamic critique of the emperor's heterodoxy found articulate expression within the court itself.

This evidence of internal dissent raises important historical questions. How did Akbar maintain control and authority despite the religious criticisms of figures like Badauni? Did the emperor's confidence in his own judgement, his military power, and his administrative control enable him to tolerate religious dissent? Or did Badauni moderate his criticisms during Akbar's lifetime, reserving full expression of his views for the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh*,

composed after the emperor's death? These questions point to the complex political and religious dynamics that characterized Akbar's reign.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* provides historians with an alternative perspective to the official court ideology represented in Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*. Where Abul Fazl celebrates Akbar's innovations and presents religious pluralism as evidence of wisdom, Badauni criticizes these same policies and interprets them as spiritual corruption. Neither source is simply 'true' or 'false'—rather, both represent particular interpretations of events shaped by the authors' values, positions, and purposes.

The availability of these contrasting sources enables historians to understand that Akbar's reign was contested and that reasonable, intelligent observers understood the emperor's policies differently depending on their religious convictions and intellectual frameworks. For religious conservatives like Badauni, Akbar's heterodoxy represented a fundamental problem. For court ideologues like Abul Fazl, the same policies represented enlightened governance and spiritual wisdom. Understanding Akbar's reign adequately requires attending to both perspectives and recognizing the tensions between them.

Badauni represents an important strand within Islamic civilization—the tradition of Islamic orthodoxy and rigorous adherence to Islamic law and principles. This tradition produced great scholars, jurists, theologians, and historians across Islamic history. Badauni's representation of this tradition lends authority to his critiques and prevents their dismissal as mere conservative opposition to innovation or progress. Badauni's learning, his intellectual sophistication, and his genuine piety give weight to his judgements, even when one disagrees with his conclusions.

Historians must recognize that Badauni's religious orthodoxy was not irrational or anti-intellectual. Rather, it represented a coherent theological and ethical position based on carefully reasoned arguments regarding the proper relationship between Islamic law, Islamic authority, and temporal governance. Badauni's criticisms of Akbar's religious policies deserve serious consideration, even though modern historians may ultimately conclude that Akbar's approach to religious pluralism was more historically productive and ethically defensible.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* exemplifies how religious conviction shapes historical interpretation and judgment. Badauni's account of Akbar's reign is shaped throughout by his Islamic orthodoxy and his conviction that religious truth and proper governance are inseparable. Events that might be interpreted neutrally by a secular historian receive explicitly religious interpretation from Badauni, who views them through the lens of Islamic principles and their implications for salvation and damnation.

This intimate connection between religious conviction and historical interpretation raises important methodological questions for historians. How can we understand past events and actors fairly while recognizing that contemporaries interpreted them through frameworks—religious, philosophical, political—different from our own? The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* suggests that fair historical understanding requires attending to how historical actors themselves understood events, which means taking seriously the religious frameworks within which Badauni and others interpreted their world.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* remains significant as a primary source for understanding Mughal history, Akbar's reign, and the religious tensions that characterized the emperor's policies. Historians continue to debate specific claims in the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* and to assess Badauni's criticisms of Akbar. However, all serious scholars of Akbar's reign must reckon with Badauni's account and its implications for understanding the contested nature of Akbar's legacy.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* is also significant as evidence of how historical writing can serve as a medium for expressing dissent from official ideology and for articulating alternative values and interpretations. In composing his chronicle, Badauni engaged in a form of resistance to court ideology—not through rebellion or direct opposition but through the careful construction of an alternative historical narrative that implicitly and explicitly criticized Akbar's policies. This model of using historical writing for ideological critique remains relevant for understanding how historians can maintain independence and integrity even when working within or for powerful institutions.

Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh, written by Badauni, represents one of the most important alternative perspectives on Mughal history and Akbar's reign. Where Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama* celebrates Akbar's military achievements, administrative reforms, and religious innovations, Badauni's *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* offers sharp critique of the emperor's heterodoxy, his departure from Islamic principles, and his promotion of practices incompatible with orthodox Islam. These contrasting accounts reveal the contested nature of Akbar's legacy and demonstrate that contemporaries understood the emperor's policies very differently depending on their religious convictions and intellectual frameworks.

Badauni, educated in traditional Islamic learning and devoted to Islamic orthodoxy, could not accept Akbar's religious innovations, the **Din-i Ilahi**, or the emperor's policies toward non-Muslim subjects. From Badauni's perspective, Akbar's military and administrative accomplishments did not redeem his spiritual corruption but rather made his influence more troubling. Badauni represents the voice of Islamic orthodoxy within the court—not rejecting learning or intellectual achievement but insisting that these serve Islamic principles and Islamic law.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* provides historians with valuable evidence of religious dissent within Akbar's court and of the diversity of opinion among intelligent, learned observers regarding the emperor's policies. The work complicates the triumphalist narrative of Akbar's reign and reminds historians that historical progress is contested and that past actors evaluated policies and events through frameworks different from our own. Understanding Akbar adequately requires attending to both Abul Fazl's celebration of the emperor's innovations and Badauni's criticism of his heterodoxy.

The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* also exemplifies how historical writing can serve as a medium for expressing religious conviction and for articulating alternative values and interpretations. In composing his chronicle, Badauni engaged in a form of intellectual resistance to court ideology while maintaining scholarly integrity and respect for factual accuracy. The *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* demonstrates that historians need not merely repeat official ideology or accept dominant interpretations but can construct alternative narratives while remaining grounded in careful observation and learning.

5.7 LET US SUM UP

The Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh, written by Badauni, represents one of the most important alternative perspectives on Mughal history and Akbar's reign. Where Abul Fazl's Akbarnama celebrates Akbar's military achievements, administrative reforms, and religious innovations, Badauni's Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh offers sharp critique of the emperor's heterodoxy, his departure from Islamic principles, and his promotion of practices incompatible with orthodox Islam. These contrasting accounts reveal the contested nature of Akbar's legacy and demonstrate that contemporaries understood the emperor's policies very differently depending on their religious convictions and intellectual frameworks.

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5.8 GLOSSARY

Din-i-Ilahi : Akbar's religious innovation.

Heterodoxy : Beliefs and practices that differs from accepted religious doctrine.

Orthodoxy : Strict adherence to accepted religious beliefs and law.

Fiqh : Islamic jurisprudence, the study and interpretation of Islamic law.

Jizya : Tax historically levied on non-Muslims in some Islamic states.

5.9 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1. Discuss Badauni's life education, and court position and explain how these influenced his historical writing.
- Q2. Analyze the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* as a primary source for Mughal history.
- Q3. Evaluate Badauni's criticisms of Akbar's religious policies and discuss whether they make him an unreliable historian.
- Q4. Compare and contrast Badauni's and Abul Fazl's portrayals of Akbar.

1. Lesson End Exercises

- Q1. Explain how the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* helps historians understand religious diversity and conflicts in Akbar's court.
- Q2. Assess the historical significance of the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* for studying Mughal historiography.
- Q3. "Badauni was not anti- learning, but a defender of orthodox Islam". Discuss.
- Q4. Discuss the importance of perspective in historical interpretation using Badauni's chronicle as an example.

5.11 ANSWER KEY

CYP-I

- A. 1. Badaun.
2. Persian.
3. Akbarnama.
- B. 1. False.
2. True.
- C. 1. See Section 5.2
2. See Section 5.2

CYP-II

- A. 1. Akbar.
2. religious corruption / dangerous deviations.
3. jizya.
- B. 1. False.
2. True.

- C. 1. See Section 5.4
 2. See Section 5.4

5.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Badauni, A.Q. (1898), *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh* (W.H Langer, Trans.)
- Gascoigne, B. *The Great Mughals*
- Richards, J.F (2002), *The Mughal Empire*
- Alam M. *The Languages of Political Islam : India 1200-1800*

BABUR IN CENTRAL ASIA

STRUCTURE

- 6.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 6.1 Introduction**
- 6.2 Political conditions on the eve of Babur's accession to the throne and his early life.**
- 6.3 Babur and Samarqand**
 - 6.3.1 First siege**
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- 6.4 Babur's conquest of Kabul and his attempts to the conquest of Samarqand.**
- 6.5 Let us sum up**
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- 6.7 Examination Oriented Questions**
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6.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives:

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to

- Explain the political formations in Central Asia after the disintegration of Timurid Empire.
- Analyse the early difficulties of Babur and how he overcame them.
- Discuss the circumstances which forced Babur to move towards Kabul.

Learning Outcomes

After going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about

- The political conditions of Central Asia.
- The early difficulties and how Babur resolved these difficulties.
- The circumstances which shaped Babur's political career

6.1 INTRODUCTION:

Dear learners, in the whole course of Medieval history there is no period which shocks our modern sense of political decorum so violently as the 15th century. The 14th century in east and west had been a period of promising developments. There was growth of centralized strong monarchies. The political units which had seemed so stable proved to be lacking in all the essentials of unity. So, the centralized monarchies which had seemed so strong fall apart into a helpless congeries of jarring fragments. In east and west, the 15th century is a time of unparallel confusion. The events and developments in Central Asia always had an impact on the political landscape of India. For example, the developments in Central Asia during 10th and 12th century led to invasions of Ghaznavids and Ghurids in India. In the same way, 15th and 16th century, Central Asia underwent to some development which ultimately led to invasion of India by Babur.

The rapid rise and fall of Mongols, created the climate for the emergence of a new central Asian empire during the 14th century. The founder of this empire was Timur, belonged to Barlas clan of Turks who had been owners of land in transoxiana, and had freely intermarried with the Mongols. Even Timur claimed descent from Chingez by virtue of his marrying a daughter of the Mongol Khan, Qazan Khan, who was a descendant of Chingez's son, Chagatai. Timur launched a career of conquests which lasted almost a quarter of a century till his death in 1404-05. He overran Khurasan, Iran, Iraq and the Ottoman empire in Syria and Anatolia (Turkey). He also led a series of campaigns against the Mongol called the golden Horde, which controlled southern Russia and parts of modern Sikiang and Siberia. However he made no attempt to incorporate them in his empire. He sacked Delhi and laid a vague claim over the Punjab. He was planning an invasion of China at the time of his death. Timur did not leave any lasting institutions and his empire disintegrated rapidly after his death. However, the state he created and the new cultural values and norms it generated influenced not only the mughals but also other states which arose in the area. In the later half of 15th century, Timurid empire disintegrated leading to the emergence of three powerful empire viz. Uzbek empire, Safavid empire and Ottoman empire. The empire of Uzbeks dominated Transoxiana, the Safavid empire comprised Iran and the Ottoman empire was comprised of Anatolia and Syria. These all powers clashed with one another. Transoxiana was bone of contention for all and it was then divided into number of Timurid princelings. Moreover, Uzbeks were the main rival of Timurids. Transoxiana was the bone of contention because of Samarkand which obviously had great prestige as because it was capital for 140 years. So, this was the actual backdrop against which Babur was born.

6.2 POLITICAL CONDITIONS ON THE EVE HIS ACCESSION TO THE THRONE AND HIS EARLY LIFE

Babur was born on 14 Feb 1483. Babur's father was Umar Sheikh Mirza, who was ruler of Fargana and his mother's name was Qutluq Nigar Khanum. Babur traced his descent from two great empire builders i.e Genghis Khan and Timur. From his father side, he was fifth in male succession from Timur and from his mother side, he was descendant of Genghis Khan. Babur's father Umar Sheikh Mirza, was the ruler of small principality of Fargana. Fargana, now is in Uzbekistan. In the fifteenth century it was a well fortified place. However the resources of Fargana were not very considerable as it did not offer much encouragement to a ruler who designed to set his foot on the path of conquests. Nonetheless Babur's father was a man of little caution and less scruple, was constantly on the watch for an opportunity to interfere to his own advantage in the affairs of his neighbours. His elder brother Sultan Ahmad Mirza was very hostile to Babur's father as latter coveted the possessions of his most fortunate brother and was constantly intriguing against him. Sultan Ahmed Mirza, of course, replied by menacing the borders of Fargana with a powerful force and also attempted, more than once to add Fargana to his own dominions. Umar Shaikh Mirza was well aware of the inferiority of his resources, was afraid of his brother, as well as envious of him. There was also bone of contention between the two in the shape of border provinces of Tashkent and Shahrukha, to which each laid claim. The conquest was very unequal, on account of the immense superiority in material resources possessed by the elder brother and that what made possible for Umar Shaikh Mirza to continue the struggle, was the constant support of his father in law, Babur's maternal grandfather, Yunus Khan. Yunus Khan was descended in the twelfth degree from the Genghis Khan and the eldest son of that of Wais who held rule as grand khan of the Mongols. He was a man of singularly upright and lovable character and had made great impressions upon his contemporaries. He possessed a commanding personality and great charm of character. He had a particular affection for Umar Shaikh and time and again save his favourite from the consequences of his unwisdom. As long as Yunus Khan lived, his influence was always exerted to mitigate the strife of his son in law but when he died in 1486-87, their struggle broke out again. Umar Shaikh Mirza died in 1494 because of an accident. At first sight, nothing could have seemed more disastrous for the kingdom. Two powerful armies were already within the borders, and Babur, Umar Shaikh Mirza's eldest son, was only 11 years old. Fargana was coveted by both Sultan Ahmed Mirza as well as by Mahmud Khan.

Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur was born on Friday 14th, 1483. He was just eleven years and four months old when his father's sudden death seated him on the throne. His two half brothers, Jahangir Mirza and Nasir Mirza were respectively two years and four years younger. Of his early boyhood, we know very little, probably because it was spent in the company of his masters from whom he learned much. He was extremely well educated and also skilled in martial arts.

Even before he has called upon to fill his father's place, he had given evidence that he has possessed no common qualities as a leader, he was chosen to govern the capital during his father's absence at Akhsi. When the news of his father's death reached him, he acted with great decision. Ahmed Mirza was invading the country in force. The situation was very critical. Babur, however, was able to come out of the situation with the help of his loyal

servants. In the meantime, Sultan Ahmed Mirza died in the middle of July, 1494, who had been in poor health. He left no sons, so his begs, after consultations offered the throne to his younger brother Sultan Mahmud Mirza, who ruled over Badakshan and the province between Asfera Mountains and the Hindu Kush. Sultan Mahmud accepted the offer and came to Samarqand. He seated himself on the throne without any opposition. He was a stern ruler and an able administrator.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (CYP)-I

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:-

Q 1. Write down the political conditions of Central Asia after Timur's death.

Q 2. Throw light on the early difficulties of Babur on the eve of his accession to the throne.

II. FILL IN THE BLANKS

a) Babur's father's name was

b) Babur succeeded to the throne of Fargana at the age of.....

6.3 BABUR AND SAMARKAND

As discussed earlier, Sultan Mahmud Mirza succeeded the throne and he quickly reduced his new provinces to order. The Nobles of Samarqand found to their dismay as they were not happy with the strict administration of Sultan Mahmud Mirza. He executed two of his Kinsmen, he imprisoned three others. He revised the revenue assessment and insisted on the payment of dues and import by those who had formerly been excused on the ground of their sanctity. This raised a howl of wrath from the clergy. But his authority was too strong to be shaken. Soon he began to cast his eyes in search of further acquisitions and it occurred to him that Fargana was a desirable addition. In the meantime, Babur's **Beg** Hasan-i-Yakub conspired to dethrone Babur and to supplant him by the young Jahangir he had certain following among the dissatisfied **Begs** although the majority remained true to Babur.

Anyhow, the plan of Hasan-i-Yakub got foiled and he at once set off to Samarkand presumably to invite the active cooperation of Sultan Mahmud Mirza. But before he could reach there, he was killed. However, at the critical moment fortune once more favoured Babur, Sultan Mahmud Mirza died suddenly in January 1495. He left five sons, of whom the second son, Baisanghar succeeded to the throne. But Baisanghar had scarcely taken his seat on the throne of Samarkand, when fresh trouble began. A discontented party headed by Junaid Barlas and others invited the intervention of Mahmud, the elder Khan. A strong Mongol force invaded the country but Baisanghar inflicted a crushing defeat.

Babur was watching the affairs to Samarkand with great interest. Like his father, his earliest dreams had been connected with that city, indissolubly so associated with the glory and greatness of Timur. But before he could turn his attention to Samarkand, there were other matters which must be settled e.g. Khojend had slipped from Fargana, Auratipa had undergone a similar fate. Finally, one of the tribes which dwelt between Kashgar and Fargana was making difficulties about the payment of tribute. In the meantime, the new Sultan of Samarkand won over a Mongol chief named Ibrahim Saru who had formerly been in the service of Umar Shaikh. Ibrahim Saru seized Asfera, a fortress near the Southern border of Fargana for Baisanghar. Babur attacked Asfera in May 1495 and Ibrahim Saru returned to his allegiance and was admitted to favour once more. Flushed with this success Babur attacked Khojend and the commander probably despairing of assistance from Baisanghar, who was engaged with the Mongols, surrendered the place at once. Babur also decided to meet, Mahmud, the elder Khan, who just happened to be in the neighbouring province of Shahrukha. The interview between uncle and nephew was formal enough but apparently satisfactory so far as it went. Babur returned to the capital, on the whole well satisfied. He had put down rebellion, he had exacted his tribute, he had recovered an important possession. The Kingdom of Samarkand having beaten off the Mongol army of Mahmud, found itself confronted by a new and most formidable adversary, Sultan Husain Baiqara, the ruler of Khorasan and most powerful of all the Timurid princes. He was highly educated, a liberal and discriminating patron of arts & letters. But he was ambitious and always ready to extend his dominion at the expense of his neighbours. Taking advantage of the trouble of the Kingdom of Samarkand, he advanced against Hisar. He went into winter quarters at Tirmiz, where he was observed from across the river by Sultan Masud Mirza, the elder brother of Baisanghar. Sultan Husain Baiqara crossed the river after spending most of the winter at Tirmiz, and compelled his adversary to fall back to Hisar. At the same time, he sent two detachments, one against Qunduz and another against Khutlan. Meanwhile, Sultan Masud, fled to bear the bad news to Baisanghar in Samarkand. Many Uzbek soldiers who had been in the service of Samarkand rulers thought that all is over and came to offer their swords to Babur.

The forces of Sultan Husain Baiqara were repulsed but a formidable conspiracy broke out in Samarkand on the part of local begs who complained that their Sultan showed too much favour to the men of Hisar, the companions of his boyhood. So it was agreed to depose him with his younger brother Sultan Ali. Baisanghar was kidnapped and there was civil war in Samarkand.

6.3.1 First siege

Babur was observing the situation in Samarkand and he determined to strike a blow for himself and to seat himself on the throne of his ancestor Timur. He spent the winter of 1496-97 in making careful preparation. He left for Samarkand in May 1497, leaving Arzun Hasan and Ali Dost Taghai in the charge of the capital. Baisanghar was well aware that his brother, Sultan Ali, was about to renew the attack but he was surprised by the approach of Babur, so he decided to retire and just escaped in time. Thereafter Babur advanced on Samarkand along with Sultan Ali. Shiraz fell to invaders, more and more of Baisanghar's men came over and took service with them. Baisanghar grew desperate and as a last resort appealed to Shaibani Khan, governor of Turkistan.

Shaibani Khan came up with hot foot hoping to surprise the besiegers but he found them too strong and to be attacked, so he decided to retreat and withdrew his forces. The siege had lasted for 7 months and the city could not hold out much longer. Finally Baisanghar with 200 or 300 followers slipped out of the town at night and went to Qunduz to seek shelter with Khosru Shah. So, by the end of 1497, Babur realized his dream of his life. But his throne was no easy resting place. It was impossible to satisfy at the same time his new subjects & his old soldiers. The troops resented the prohibition of plundering. It was impossible to raise any money from half-starved city. So Babur's men began to desert in crowds, making their way to Andijan. Meanwhile, the one of the high beg of Babur, Sultan Ahmad Tambol, demanded that Andijan and Akshi should be handed over to Jahangir Mirza. When their proposal was refused the conspirators raised a body of troops and laid siege to the citadel of Andijan. The loyal garrison under Ali Dost Taghai, sent messages to Samarkand. Babur was recovering from the illness and an attempt to transact business in his weak health brought on relapse. In a few days, Babur was able to set out for Andijan but it was too late as capital was in the hands of his enemies. As soon as he left Samarkand, it was also slipped away from his hand. Babur had now only Khojend as his base, but it was a poor place and could not accommodate Babur court. He tried to advance on Samarkand but failed. He attempted to occupy Andijan but also failed.

6.3.2 Second Siege

Babur was struggling with internal problems, meanwhile Shaibani Khan was invited by the mother of Timurid sultan who was a Uzbek, to occupy Samarkand. It was indeed a golden opportunity for Shaibani Khan. Shaibani Khan also captured Bukhara and became virtual master of Samarkand.

Babur decided to stop Shaibani Khan from consolidating his position and started his advance towards Samarkand with a small force. With the help of Samarkandis, Babur captured it in 1501. Babur wrote in his autobiography that Uzbeks were very unpopular and Samarkandis killed them like dogs with stones and sticks. Babur communicated with other Timurids against Uzbeks as the support of only Samarkandis was of little avail. But Babur's plea to Timurids fell on deaf ears. However, Babur's maternal uncle sent some help but that was too small. But His position was very weak and he had very little chance to succeed against the Uzbeks who were rallying around an experienced and able person like Shaibani Khan. Shaibani Khan attacked from Bukhara which he captured earlier. Babur boldly came to face the opponent but Shaibani Khan inflicted a crushing defeat on Babur at Sar-i-pul in 1502. Shaibani Khan applied **Tulughma** or wheeling tactics in this battle against Babur

which later used in his battle of Panipat against Ibrahim Lodi many years later. After his defeat in the battle of **Sar-i-pul**, Babur retreated into Samarkand but without any help from outside, Babur decided to make peace with Shaibani Khan and one of the terms of the peace treaty was the marriage of Khanzada Begum (elder sister of Babur) with Shaibani Khan. But this matrimonial alliance hardly changed anything between Babur and Shaibani Khan. Now Babur was again without any kingdom. He suffered a lot which was depicted in his autobiography where he says, “*great poverty and humiliation*”. Mongol Khan now realized the danger posed by the Uzbeks. Hence, they marched with large army to counter Shaibani Khan. Mongol Khan also hoped that Timurids would help them against Uzbeks. Shaibani Khan, moreover, marched quickly to forestall any possible combination with 30,000 horses and inflicted a crushing defeat on Mongol Khans in 1503 near Archian. Afterwards, Mongol Khans were taken as captives but Shaibani Khan played very wisely and spared the lives of the Mongol Khans. He also entered into matrimonial alliance with them. Moreover, he admitted 30,000 Mongols into his army. Now Uzbeks supremacy was established because of Shaibani Khan’s victories against Timurids and Mongols in **Sar-i-pul** and Archian.

6.4 BABUR’S CONQUEST OF KABUL AND HIS ATTEMPTS TO THE CONQUEST OF SAMARQAND.

At this point, Babur realised that his position in the region was now impossible. So, he crossed Hindukush Mountains and conquered Kabul in 1504. Kabul gave Babur respite from Uzbek attacks. Kabul had belonged to Babur’s paternal uncle Ulugh Beg Mirza, who had ruled it first as a prince and later, after the death of his father, as an independent king. Ulugh Beg died in 1501, leaving an infant son, Abdur Razzak Mirza. The power was first seized by Zikr Beg but soon he was assassinated. There after Muqim Khan, son of Zunun Beg (ruler of Garmsir) took advantage of the situation and invaded Kabul. Moreover he also married the daughter of the late ruler to legitimize his position. Babur had no intention of allowing Kabul to slip away from the control of his house. His resources, however, were limited, but he was able to force Muqim Beg surrender to him. Babur in his memoir wrote about the occupation of Kabul in the following words. He wrote , “*It was in the last ten days of the second Rabi (Oct. 1504) that without a fight , without an effort , by almighty God’s bounty and mercy , I obtained and made subject to me Kabul and Ghazni and their dependent districts.*” According to Rushbrook Williams, master of that country (he) could turn his eyes west to Samarkand, or east to Hindustan. Babur in his autobiography says Kabul is the intermediate point between Hindustan and Khurasan. In 1506, Sultan Husain Baiqara (Babur’s uncle) invited Babur for a joint expedition against the Uzbeks who occupied Khawarazm which was Sultan Husain Baiqara’s possession. Babur started for Herat but in the meantime, Sultan Husain Baiqara died and his sons were not serious in fighting the Uzbeks, so Babur returned back to Kabul.

Shaibani Khan soon overran Herat and his intention was to extinguish the last Timurid kingdom. Now, Babur was afraid of an Uzbek attack on Kabul. Moreover, Babur decided in 1506 that his followers should call him “**Padshah**”. He wanted to demonstrate that the Timurid dynasty was not dead yet. But according to Satish Chandra, “*this was not such an innovative step as it has been made out to be.*” Babur in his memoir wrote that on many occasions, his followers called him **Padshah**.

During this time the Uzbeks suffered serious reverses. Safavids became conscious of the fact that Uzbek conquest of Khurasan would definitely pose a serious threat to Safavids in Iran. In 1510, Shah Ismail Safavi marched against Shaibani Khan, the Uzbeks forces were completely routed near Merv. Shaibani Khan also died in this battle. Once Shaibani Khan insulted Persian Sultan by calling him a begging mendicant (**dervish**), who revenged himself by making Shaibani Khan skull into drinking cup. Babur was tempted by the debacle of the Uzbeks and decided to try his luck again at Samarkand. Babur defeated Uzbeks at **Amu-Darya** in a sharp encounter. But as Babur was not strong enough to expel Uzbeks from Transoxiana, therefore, he sent an ambassador to Persian Sultan who had already displayed his good will by escorting Babur's sister, Khanzad Begum with honour. Persian Sultan already entered into agreement with the Uzbeks by which river Oxus was fixed as the boundary between Safavids and Uzbeks, but Sultan had no reservation in assisting Timurids against Uzbeks because he also wanted to remove Uzbek threat. So, as a price of his assistance, Sultan demanded from Babur to substitute Shah's name in the **Khutba**, to stamp coins in his name and also to propagate Shiaism in his dominion. These conditions were to applied only in the areas which Babur conquered with the help of Persians. Moreover, Babur was permitted to issue coins in his name in Kabul and his hereditary dominions. Anyhow, Babur agreed to these conditions and conquered Bukhara and Samarkand with the help of Persian army. Babur was warmly welcomed by Samarkandis. Afterwards Babur sent back Persian army but Safavid Sultan wanted to treat Babur as a subordinate. Moreover, Babur was not happy at the Persian agent's intervention in day to day affairs. On the other hand, Persians were doubtful about Babur that he would repudiate the **Khutba** and **Sikka** demanded by Persian Sultan whenever he found suitable opportunity, and would declare himself independent. But Babur was conscious of the Uzbek and tried to maintain his friendship with the Shah of Persia even by wearing the Persian dress of the Kizilbash. However, Babur refused to allow the persecution of the Sunnis for their beliefs. Muhammad Jan Ishaq, who was Iranian agent at Samarkand, informed the Shah of Persia that Babur was intending a rebellion.

On this, Shah became furious and sent an army to punish Babur but before the Persian army could reach Samarkand, Uzbeks captured Bukhara and defeated Babur who was then left with no other option but to abandon Samarkand. Thereafter Uzbeks encountered Persian army and defeated them. Thereafter Babur withdrew from Transoxiana and returned to Kabul after almost three years. Babur again tried his luck in Central Asia which hardly gives him any credit. He overestimated his own strength and ability to retain Samarkand and even the rest of Transoxiana even without aid of Persian armies. The only positive outcome was that Babur was finally forced to turn his attention towards India. Moreover, it also laid the foundation of Timurid-Safavid cooperation even against Uzbeks even disregarding their sectarian differences.

Check Your Progress (CYP) - II

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:-

Q 1. Discuss Babur's conquest of Samarqand.

Q 2. Throw light on Babur's conquest of Kabul.

II. Fill in the blanks

- a) Babur seized Samarqand firstly in
- b) Babur made and.....as incharge of the capital of Fargana.
- c) Shaibani Khan defeated Babur in the battle of

6.5 LET US SUM UP

In this lesson, you have studied the political conditions of central Asia after the death of Timur, which led to the disintegration of Timurid empire. However the state he created influenced not only the Mughals but the Uzbeks, the Safavids and the Ottomans. Moreover, there were constant conflicts among Uzbeks, Safavids, Ottomans and Timurid Princes. So, this was the background against which Babur was born and grew. He succeeded to the throne of Fargana at a very young age. He spent his life in establishing and maintaining control over his ancestral dominion. Moreover, in doing so, he faced numerous challenges from his powerful enemies. His career in central Asia was of continuous challenges, struggles, fights, reverses and ambitions. But despite of his strong will power, bravery and remarkable military skill, he was not able to secure stable empire in central Asia. So, he was forced by the circumstances to move towards Kabul and conquered it without much difficulty. But, at this point also he was not able to forgot his central Asian dream and he tried again and again to regain control over his lost territories. Ultimately because of the insufficient resources at his disposal, his frequent defeats and betrayal, he was forced to give up his central Asian dream.

6.6 GLOSSARY

Beg	-	Noble
Farman	-	A royal order
Ghazi	-	A hero, a soldier fighting against infidels
Hakim	-	A Governor or Commander

Jagir	-	Income from a piece of land assigned to officers by the ruler
Jihad	-	Holy war
Kafir	-	Non-Muslim
Khanazad	-	One born in the house/Old Turkish employees
Mahawara-un-Nahar-		Transoxiana
Naib	-	Deputy
Yassa	-	Regulation or code book of Chingez
Wajh	-	Money, salary
Wajhdar	-	A salaried officer

6.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1. Critically examine political conditions in Central Asia on the eve of Babur's accession to the throne of Farghana.
- Q2. Discuss Babur's first and second conquest of Samarqand.
- Q3. Critically examine Babur's career in Central Asia.

6.8 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1. Elaborate the political condition of Central Asia during 15th and 16th Centuries
- Q2. Throw light on the early life of Babur.
- Q3. Examine Babur's conquests in Central Asia.
- Q4. Critically analyse the circumstance which forced Babur to move towards Kabul.

6.9 ANSWER KEY

CYP - I

- Q1** See Section 6.1
- Q2** See Section 6.2

Fill in the blanks

- a)** Umar Shaikh Mirza.
- b)** 11 years and four months old.

CYP - II

Q1 See Section 6.3

Q2 See Section 6.4

Fill in the blanks

- a) 1497
- b) Arzun Hasan , Ali Dost Taghai.
- c) Sar – I - Phul

6.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Babur's Baburnama, eng.translation by A.S.Beveridge
- Gulbadan Begam's Humayunnama, eng. Translation by A.S.Beveridge Satish Cahndra, Medieval India, Vol-II
- Rushbrook Williams, An Empire builder of the 16th Century

ESTABLISHMENT OF MUGHAL RULE IN INDIA

STRUCTURE

- 7.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 7.1 Introduction**
- 7.2 Babur's advances towards India; Capture of Bhira and Bajaur**
- 7.3 Political conditions of North India on the eve of Babur's invasion**
- 7.4 Battle of Panipat**
- 7.5 Let us sum up**
- 7.6 Glossary**
- 7.7 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 7.8 Lesson End Exercises**
- 7.9 Answer Key**
- 7.10 Suggested Readings**

7.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives:

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to:-

- Analyse the circumstances under which Babur invaded India
- Access the political conditions of India on the eve of Babur's invasion
- Evaluate Babur's early raids
- Illustrate Babur's capture of Bhira & Bajaur
- Examine the cause of his success against Lodis

Learning Outcomes:

After going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about :

- The factors which led to the foundation of Mughal rule in India
- The significance of battle of Panipat that shaped the political history of India
- The factors which helped Babur to defeat Lodis.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, we have already discussed Babur's career in Central Asia and his subsequent defeats at the hands of Uzbeks which forced him to move towards Kabul where the conditions were more favourable for him. The ruler of Kabul Ulugh Beg, who was Babur's paternal uncle, died in 1501 leaving behind an infant son Abur Razzak Mirza. Muqim Khan, son of Zunun Beg (ruler of Garmsir) took advantage of the situation and occupied it. He also married the daughter of the late king of the Kabul. Babur occupied Kabul in 1504 but he could not completely leave the dream to rule over Central Asia. As according to Rushbrook Williams, "*he could turn his eyes either west, to Samarqand or to the east i.e towards Hindustan*". Anyhow, he was able to conquer Samarkand in 1511 with the help of Persians but with the resurgence of the Uzbeks, he was left with no other option but to return to Kabul and consolidated his position in Kabul. Babur spent a few years in consolidating his position in Kabul. Babur being an ambitious man was not satisfied only with Kabul, so he diverted his attention towards India.

7.2 BABUR'S ADVANCES TOWARDS INDIA; CAPTURE OF BHIRA AND BAJAUR

The dream of conquering India had never been far from Babur's mind. While he was wandering in Transoxiana without a kingdom, his imagination had been fired by the tales of Timur's invasion of India. Therefore he decided to recover the areas in the Punjab ceded to Timur and held by his descendants for a very long time. Babur in his autobiography wrote that from the time he conquered Kabul in 1504, he never ceased to think of the conquest of Hindustan. According to Babur, "*as it was in my heart to possess Hindustan and as these centuries... had once been held by the Turks, I pictured them as my own and was resolved to get them into my hands, whether peacefully or by force.*" Babur writes in Baburnama that immediately after his conquest of Kabul, he made a move on Hindustan by reaching Ningnahr and next year also made another expedition. However, as Babur claimed these expeditions as his moves toward the conquest of India but we have seen even till his expedition to Samarkand in 1511, Babur was concerned merely with Central Asia than India. His moves towards Punjab and India, after his failure to capture Samarqand, were also prompted by many factors like the changes in the political situations in India, the revival of Uzbek's power and most importantly because of the financial difficulties of Babur. So, it means his expedition soon after his capture of Kabul towards India was a kind of raids to extract revenue from Afghan tribes. The income from Kabul was not sufficient for Babur's **begs** and kinsmen. Moreover, most of the countryside was ruined and the only way was to carry out plundering raids to get anything

from them. After Babur's expulsion from Central Asia many people crossed over and joined Babur. He could not afford to turn them away, because in 1514, at the battle at Chaldiran, Shah Ismail Safavi had suffered disastrous defeat from Ottoman ruler. This had emboldened the Uzbeks to renew their raids into Khurasan. Babur was afraid of the Uzbek threat to Kabul, so he decided to conquer Qandhar which he ultimately got after repeated attempts. Moreover he also succeeded in establishing his control over Badakhshan. Babur's resources were not sufficient in order to maintain a large army. According to Abul Fazl (author of Akbarnama), *"He ruled over Badakhshan, Qandhar and Kabul which did not yield sufficient income for the requirement of the army; in fact in some of the border territories the expense of controlling the armies and administration was greater than the income"*

Babur's first invasion took place in 1519, he marched from Kabul in Dec. 1518 and on 6th Jan, 1519, he invested the fort of Bajaur. From Bajaur, Babur set out with his men towards Bhira, which formed the boundary between the Kabul and Hindustan. Babur claims these areas as his own because they had been the part of Timur's empire. Babur ordered that there should be no over-running and plundering of the countryside. However it was only applied to those areas which did not resist. Because earlier in Bajaur, Babur ordered general massacre and their women and children were made captive because the Afghan tribesmen there had resisted. This expedition marks the beginning of Babur's ambition to conquer Punjab or Hindustan. According to Babur, *"From this time to 925H (1526), I was always concerned in the affairs of Hindustan. I went there in person at the head of an army, five times in the course of seven or eight years."* Although Babur asserted his claim that he always wanted to conquer India, but his ambition, as it seemed, expanded gradually. In the beginning he only wanted to conquer the parts of Punjab which were part of Timur's empire. However there were little chances of accepting such a proposal of Babur by Ibrahim Lodi. Moreover, Daulat Khan Lodi, Governor of Lahore, whose jurisdiction included Bhira and Bajaur, detained the envoy of Babur at Lahore and did not allow the envoy to move towards Delhi. Moreover as soon as Babur returned towards Kabul, Daulat Khan proceeded to expel Mughal officers who were appointed by Babur over the areas which latter claimed as his own. Afterwards Babur made several raids into the tribal areas of the north-west and also Punjab. In 1520 Babur recovered Bhira and moved to Sialkot but due to urgency at Kabul, he returned back. Thereafter he captured Qandhar and Badakhshan as discussed earlier. Afterwards, Babur spent some time in Kabul consolidating his position. He had consolidated his position firmly in Afghanistan by 1524. He was now ready for the mastery of Punjab even it meant a fight with the ruler of Delhi i.e. Ibrahim Lodi.

Check Your Progress (CYP) - I

- I. On the basis of your understanding of your previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1 Under what circumstances Babur thought of moving towards India?

Q2 What led Babur to invade Bhira and Bajaur?

Q3 How did Babur's conquest of Bhira and Bajaur contributeds to the establishment of Mughal rule?

II. Fill in the blanks:

- a) Babur conquered Kabul in**
- b) Ottoman ruler defeated Shah Ismail in the battle of.....**
- c) Babur invested the fort of Bajaur in.....**

7.3 POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF NORTH INDIA ON THE EVE OF BABUR'S INVASION

The 16th century in North India witnessed political turmoil and instability. There were frequent changes of dynasties and emergence of different ruling groups. Bahlul Lodi established Lodi dynasty by the end of 15th century and was succeeded in bringing north India under his effective control. He was succeeded by Sikandar Lodi who was very efficient ruler and under him north India Lodi empire reached its zenith.

Sikandar Lodi died in 1517 and was succeeded by Ibrahim Lodi who had to face the hostility of the Afghan noble soon after his succession. The old Afghan nobles proposed the partition of the empire between him and his younger brother, Jalal. Jalal was given the eastern part consisting of Jaunpur. As Ibrahim Lodi unwillingly agreed to the partition, he soon took steps to undo the partition. Jalal was captured and thereafter killed. These events created a suspicion between Ibrahim Lodi and the older Afghan nobility. Moreover, there were number of rebellions in eastern UP and Bihar. Darya Khan Nuhani (Governor of Bihar) proclaimed himself King.

On the eve of Babur's invasion, Punjab was under Daulat Khan Lodi (son of Tatar Khan). Daulat Khan Lodi

was managing the affairs of Punjab for past 20 years when Ibrahim Lodi ascended the throne in 1517. Although Ibrahim Lodi wanted to win over the loyalty of Daulat Khan Lodi but latter sent his son Dillawar Khan to pay homage to Ibrahim Lodi instead of going paying obeisance personally.

Rana Sanga of Mewar had established his control over eastern Malwa. He had been in competition with Lodis over the control of eastern Rajasthan and the rest of Malwa. There were number of Afghan Sardars who had crossed over to the side of Rana Sanga.

There was another claimant to the throne of Delhi Sultanate, Alam Khan Lodi (son of Bahlul Lodi) who was being supported by the ruler of Gujarat. He was proclaimed as King by some Afghan nobles under the title Alauddin. Ibrahim Lodi was very young and energetic although he lacks tact in dealing with old nobility. Any how he was able to establish his control over the Afghan nobles and also overcame the Afghan tendency of considering himself as junior partner rather than a servant of the ruler. However, with the appearance of Babur in the political scene of India, a drastic change came. In 1519, Babur was able to capture Bhira and Bajaur, the former being located on the bank of river Jhelum. Babur claimed that the area which once belonged to Timur should be surrendered to him and for that he even dispatched an envoy to Ibrahim Lodi as stated earlier. Daulat Khan Lodi was the Governor of Lahore, an old noble whose family had dominated Punjab for almost 25 years. Babur's envoy was treated with contempt by Daulat Khan who neither met him nor allowed him to proceed to Agra. In 1519-20, Babur recovered Bhira and advanced to Sialkot which was considered as one of the gates of India. However, before he could advance further, he returned to Kabul on receiving the news of an invasion of his territories by the ruler of Qandahar. But Babur's appearance at Sialkot was seen as his declaration of his intention of expanding his empire over entire Punjab which led to flurry of diplomatic activity. Daulat Khan Lodi sent his son Dillawar Khan Lodi to Babur at Kabul in 1521-22 inviting him to invade India as Daulat Khan Lodi was arrears in settling the accounts of his charge with Ibrahim Lodi and was obviously apprehensive of Ibrahim Lodi's action against him. Daulat Khan Lodi invited Babur to invade India as according to him Ibrahim Lodi was a tyrant ruler and even mistreated the nobles of Sikandar Lodi and even killed 25 nobles. Moreover, Daulat Khan Lodi also asserted that he had been sent by many noble who were ready to obey and waiting for Babur very anxiously. Alam Khan Lodi, claimant to the throne of Delhi, and despairing of success against Ibrahim Lodi, also visited Kabul. It is said that Babur also received the envoy of Rana Sanga of Mewar who proposed that while Babur attacked Delhi, he (Rana Sanga) would attack Agra. However Babur needed no invitation to attack India but the arrival of these envoys convinced Babur that the situation was ripe for the conquest of India. The motive of various persons like Daulat Khan Lodi, Alam Khan and Rana Sanga who invited Babur to invade India can only be guessed at. They all expected probably expected that Babur would withdraw after the conquest like Timur did in the past, after installing a titular ruler at Delhi who would depend upon them. They also hoped that this would enable them to rule as they were doing before. Daulat Khan Lodi's main motive was to maintain his control over the Punjab by ceding to Babur some areas which Babur claimed as his own. But it seems Daulat Khan Lodi to be totally lacking in realism. We have seen that Babur expanded his ambition and claims as his position became stronger and moreover he was no longer contented with the part of Punjab but wanted whole of it.

Daulat Khan Lodi, who had invited Babur, could not see the logic of the situation nor he could see that, he could only be sacrificial goat in this struggle. But the sons of Daulat Khan Lodi realized the situation and chose their sides; Dillawar Khan joined Babur while Ghazi Khan opposed Babur. On the other hand, Daulat Khan Lodi kept oscillating between opposition and support to Babur and came to bad end.

7.4 BATTLE OF PANIPAT

Ibrahim Lodi, learning of the conspiracies of some of the Afghan nobles at Kabul, sent an army towards the Punjab under Bahar Khan Lodi to reduce Daulat Khan and his sons to obedience and to repel any foreign invasion. The force sent by Ibrahim Lodi drove away Daulat Khan Lodi from Lahore and occupied it. But before they could consolidate their position, Babur appeared before Lahore in early 1524.

The imperial forces gave a good fight to Babur but were completely routed. Babur retaliated by burning the city for two days and thereafter marched to Dipalpur and at Dipalpur, he received Alam Khan and Daulat Khan Lodi. Babur posted his own men at Sialkot, Lahore, and Kalanaur by ignoring the claims of Daulat Khan for Lahore and returned to Kabul. Babur assigned Dipalpur to Alam Khan but soon he was ousted by Ibrahim Lodi from Dipalpur. Alam Khan fled to Kabul and asked Babur for further help which was promised to him. It was agreed that while Alam Khan should take Ibrahim's place on the throne of Delhi, Babur would hold Lahore and all the areas west to it in full suzerainty. Alam Khan was furnished with a body of troops and Mughal begs at Lahore were ordered to assist him through a royal order. When Alam Khan reached Lahore, he found that Mughal **begs** were reluctant to support him. Moreover, he was also approached by Daulat Khan Lodi and hence he withdrew from the alliance with Babur. Daulat Khan Lodi and Alam Khan collected a force of 30,000 to 40,000 men and besieged Delhi but Imperial forces defeated them and forces dispersed.

Now the circumstances were clear and the fight between Ibrahim Lodi and Babur was inevitable and inescapable. Ibrahim Lodi was not willing to leave Punjab to Babur as it would enable Babur to prepare a base for further advance to the Gangetic valley. Babur also challenged the position of Ibrahim Lodi by espousing the cause of a rival claimant, Alam Khan. However, Babur's success was by no means assured if Daulat Khan Lodi had supported Ibrahim Lodi even at this stage and Babur's position would have become very difficult.

Babur, finally consolidated his position in Kabul by capturing Balkh from the Uzbeks. Earlier, he had also captured Qandahar. In Nov 1525, Babur marched from Kabul for the conquest of Hindustan. There was some delay because of Humayun's tardiness in coming from Badakhshan. The river Indus was crossed in the middle of December. Babur in his autobiography wrote that the strength of his army including great and small, good and bad, retainer and non-retainer was 12,000. Babur by marching by way of Sialkot reached Lahore without much opposition. Lahore was besieged by Daulat Khan Lodi and his son Ghazi Khan.

According to Babur, Daulat Khan Lodi had girt two swords to his waist to fight both Babur as well as Ibrahim Lodi. Daulat Khan Lodi had collected 30,000 to 40,000 men but his army melted away at the Babur's approach. Ghazi Khan fled while Daulat Khan surrendered to Babur, who imprisoned him and sent him to Bhira, but Daulat Khan died on the way.

Babur conquered Punjab in a span of three weeks after crossing the Indus. Afterwards, Babur moved slowly towards Delhi. He also sent reconnoitering parties in every direction to learn the movements of Ibrahim Lodi. However, even at this stage Delhi Sultan made no move to contest Babur's position in Punjab. The first skirmish took place between Humayun and Hamid Khan, the **Shiqdar** of Hisar-Firuz, who had moved towards Babur with a small army. Humayun defeated him brought with him as many as 100 prisoners and also 5 to 7 elephants. A little later, Babur received the information that Ibrahim Lodi was advancing leisurely by marching two to four miles and stopping at each camp for two to three days.

Both the sides came face to face near Panipat. Babur was conscious of the fact that Ibrahim Lodi had much larger army than his, so he chose the ground carefully in order to avoid being surrounded by it. Babur protected his right side by resting it on the city of Panipat and on the left, he dug a ditch with branches of felled trees so that enemy's cavalry could not cross. He put together 700 carts in front. These carts were joined together by ropes of raw hide, and between every two carts, short breastworks were put up behind which matchlockmen could stand and fire. Babur calls this method of stringing carts together the Ottoman (Rumi) device. This method had been used by the Ottoman Sultan in the famous battle with Shah Ismail of Iran at Chaldiran in 1514. Babur's arrangement was a very strong defensive as well as offensive as the battle proved to be triumph of generalship over number as Babur's army was smaller in number as compared to that of the army of Ibrahim Lodi.

According to Babur, Ibrahim Lodi's army was 100,000 and 1,000 elephants. However, this probably included the large numbers of servants and other non-combatants who accompanied Indian armies. The effective strength of Ibrahim Lodi as per Afghan sources was only 50,000 which obviously was larger than Babur's army. It seems, Ibrahim Lodi had not studied Babur's defensive-offensive formation carefully. However, both the armies stood face to face for almost a week and daily skirmishes went on.

When Ibrahim Lodi came out to fight, he found Babur's front was narrow, he hesitated and while trying to adjust his imperial armies according to Babur's front, this opportunity was seized by Babur and he sent two flanking parties to wheel around and attack Ibrahim's army from the side and rear. Babur's cavalymen shot off arrows from the front and his matchlock men fired deadly on Afghans. Babur's Ottoman gunners, which he hired earlier, performed very well. Babur in his memoir wrote that Ustad Ali and Mustafa made good discharge of field cannons from the centre. Since Ibrahim Lodi was surrounded from all the sides but he fought on bravery along with a group of 5000-6000 people who all died fighting with him. Babur paid tribute to his bravery by burying him on the spot with honour. The battle of Panipat was one of the decisive battle of Indian history. It crushed the power of the Lodies and entire territory up to Jaunpur came under Babur's control. Moreover the rich treasury of the Lodies relieved Babur of his financial difficulties.

Check Your Progress (CYP) – II

I. On the basis of your understanding of your previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1 Write down in your own word political conditions of India on the eve of Babur’s invasion of India.

Q2 Analyse the main reasons which helped Babur in his success in the first battle of Panipat.

Q3 Access the results of the first battle of Panipat.

II. Fill in the blanks:

a) Sikander Lodi died in.....

b) The Ottoman device of stringing carts together was used of Ottoman Sultan in the battle of Chaldiran in.....

c) Babur hired Ottoman gunners.....and.....

7.5 LET US SUM UP

Learners, in this lesson you have studied about the circumstances under which Babur thought of advancing towards India. It was basically was the result of the ambition of Babur to have a stable kingdom because he failed to regain his ancestral dominion. At one point he was without any kingdom but he was able to occupy Kabul. Further, he took advantage of political conditions of Delhi sultanate where there were lots of conflicts among

nobility. So Babur slowly moved towards north – west and captured Bhira and Bajaur. Finally his campaigns ultimately led to the first battle of Panipat in which Babur inflicted a crushing defeat on Lodis. This battle of Panipat helped Babur to have control over Agra and Delhi and obviously laid the foundation of Mughal rule in India.

7.6 GLOSSARY

Tulughuma	-	Flanking technique
Begs	-	Nobles
Sharia	-	Muslim religious law
Shahrukhi	-	A silver coin
Khutba	-	Friday prayers
Sikka	-	Coin
Amu Darya	-	River Oxus
Kizilbash	-	Shia
Ghazi	-	A hero ,a soldiers fighting against infidels

7.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1** Critically analyse the circumstances under which Babur moved towards north-west India.
- Q2** Discuss the political conditions of India on the eve of Babur’s invasion of India.
- Q3** Discuss the significance of the battle of Panipat.
- Q4** Critically examine the role of Babur to the foundation of Mughal empire in India.

7.8 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q 1** Throw light on the conquest of Bhira and Bajaur by Babur.
- Q 2** Discuss the situation under which Babur decided to invade India
- Q3** Analyse the military strategy of Babur in the battle of Panipat.
- Q4** Write about the causes and consequences of the first battle of Panipat.

7.9 ANSWER KEY

CYP - I

Q1 See Section 7.1 and 7.2

Q2 See Section 7.2

Q3 See Section 7.2

Fill in the blanks

a) 1504

b) Chaldiran

c) 1519

CYP - II

Q1 See Section 7.3

Q2 See Section 7.4

Q3 See Section 7.4

Fill in the blanks

a) 1517

b) 1514

c) Ustad Ali , Mustafa

7.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Babur's Baburnama, eng. Translation by A.S.Beveridge
- Gulbadan Begam's Humayunnama, eng translation by A.S.Beveridge
- Satish Chandra, Medieval India vol 2
- Rushbrook William, Empire builder of 16th century
- R.P.Tripathi, Rise and Fall of Mughal empire
- A.L.Srivastava, The Mughal Empire.

BABUR'S RELATIONS WITH AFGHANS AND RAJPUTS

STRUCTURE

- 8.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 8.1 Introduction**
- 8.2 Battle of Panipat: Aftermath**
- 8.3 Babur's relations with the Rajputs and Battle of Khanwa**
- 8.4 Babur and the problem of Eastern areas.**
- 8.5 Let us sum up**
- 8.6 Glossary**
- 8.7 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 8.8 Lesson End Exercises**
- 8.9 Answer Key**
- 8.10 Suggested Readings**

8.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives:

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to:

- Analyse the early difficulties of Babur in establishing Mughal rule.
- Explain political situation in India on the eve of Babur's invasion.
- Examine the conquests and conflicts of the Mughals with the local ruling powers like Rajputs and Afghans.

Learning Outcomes:

After going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- Babur's conflict with Afghan nobles and also will be able to describe the nature of Afghan population.
- Babur's relations with the Rajputs and the role of Rana Sanga of Mewar in resisting Mughals.
- Babur's political strategies which helped him in establishing Mughal rule.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, the first half of the 16th century in north India was a period of political turmoil and instability. This period witnessed frequent changes of ruling dynasties and emergence of diverse ruling groups. The most significant event was the Mughal's conquest of India. This influenced, in a major way the Indian polity, economy and society for the coming 200 years. The Afghans had surrendered Delhi, but they were still powerful in the east (Bihar and the parts of Jaunpur). Since the days of Delhi Sultanate, Afghans played very important role. They constitute the ruling class during the time Lodi dynasty which ruled from 1451 to 1526. The political ascendancy of the Afghans began during the time of Sayyid dynasty (1414-1451) when they strengthen their positions in the strategically important areas which finally paved their way to capture the throne of Delhi Sultanate under the able leadership of Bahlul Lodi in 1451. So this means, they formed a large segment among the Muslims of India. There were large number of Afghan settlements in northern India on the eve of Babur's arrival to India and every settlement was a centre of resistance to Babur.

8.2 BATTLE OF PANIPAT: AFTERMATH

Afghans were spread over not only in the towns but also in the countryside in different regions. They had strong hold in the eastern part of U.P and Bihar. Although Afghans had surrendered Delhi but they were still very powerful in the east. These Afghans had wide base of support although, they were defeated by Babur in the first battle of Panipat but they had not reconciled themselves to the Mughal rule nor they prepared to give up the idea of Afghan suzerainty. So, basically after the battle of panipat, Babur was face to face with the problem dealing with the powerful body of Afghans in the country. Moreover Babur had another internal problem to deal rightly after the battle of Panipat was his own begs and armymen. Many of his begs and armymen wanted to return home. According to Babur they found little in India to attract them and there was remarkable dislike and hostility towards them. Moreover, every fortified town strengthen their defences and the areas from Etawah and Sambhal to Bayana, Mewat, Dholpur, Gwalior etc came under the control of local commanders. Babur therefore took stern actions to quell the discontent among his own **begs**, and he called a council and declared that they had not endured the hardships for years to abandon without cause. He refused to return to Kabul which according to Babur was the spot of harsh poverty. Thus he cleared the air and took steps to bring the area upto Jaunpur under his control. Individual **Begs** were assigned with unconquered areas and were asked to bring them under effective imperial control.

There were two biggest dangers which of Babur faced, first was from the Rana Sanga of Mewar and second was from the Afghans of eastern UP and Bihar. In a council, it was decided that Afghans are more threatening so Humayun was sent with an army to deal with Afghans of Eastern U.P and himself remained at Agra. Meanwhile Rana Sanga captured the fort of Kandhar near Ranthambore. Babur was forced to revise his plans due to the

activities of Rana Sanga, who was consolidating his position and was preparing to challenge the Mughals.

8.3 BABUR'S RELATIONS WITH THE RAJPUTS AND BATTLE OF KHANWA

Rana Sanga was very ambitious and powerful ruler. Earlier, he had been in conflict with Ibrahim Lodi for the control of Malwa and eastern Rajasthan. It was probably because of this conflict that Rana Sanga open negotiations with Babur for the collusion against Ibrahim Lodi. However, Babur accuses Rana Sanga for the breach of agreement as the latter invited him to attack Ibrahim Lodi and proposed, according to Babur, *"If the honoured Padshah will come to near Delhi from that side, I from this side will move on Agra."* Babur Accordingly, Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi and took Delhi but Rana Sanga made no move. However, it is not clear that whether Rana Sanga proposed a joint expedition or the partitioning of Lodi empire between the two. Without any concrete information there is only speculation regarding Rana Sanga's actual intentions. But rightly after the Battle of Panipat, Rana Sanga realised Babur was even bigger danger than Ibrahim Lodi. Hence, soon after the battle of Panipat Rana Sanga started preparation to challenge Babur and to compel him to leave India or confine him to Punjab only.

Rana Sanga's preparations were mostly completed by early 1527 and the reports of his advance towards Agra also reached the ears of Babur. So, Babur hurriedly recalled Humayun from east. Babur sent armies for the conquest of Dholpur, Bayana and Gwalior because these powerful forts formed the outer bastion of Agra and also guarded the routes to Malwa and Eastern Rajasthan. These forts were under the control of Independent Muslim commanders who when offered generous terms surrendered the fort to Babur. Babur sent a detachment to Bayana in order to forestall Rana Sanga's movement but Rana Sanga's forces defeated Babur's forces. There was already demoralization among Babur's army because of valour of Rajputs and also hearing the news that Rana had collected formidable force. Moreover, the set back at Bayana further disheartened them. The Rana Sanga was joined by almost all the leading Rajput Rajas of Rajasthan like Haraoti, Jalor, Sirohi, and Dungarpur from the south and west Rajasthan, Dhundhar and Amber from the east. The Rao of Marwar did not himself joined but sent an contingent. Medini Rao of Chanderi also joined. Hasan Khan Mewati also joined with force of 12,000. Mahmud Lodi, the younger son of Sikandar Lodi (whom the Afghans proclaimed as their Sultan) also joined with a force of 10,000. Thus we can say that Rana Sanga represented a Rajput-Afghan alliance. Babur denounced the Afghans who were against him as **kafirs** and **Mulhid**. Hence, the battle of Khanwa which was fought on 16 March, 1527, can hardly be seen as a religious conflict between Hindus and Muslims, it was Babur, who gave a religious fervour to it. As stated earlier, Babur's soldiers were in low spirits since their defeat near Bayana, so in order to raise their spirit declared the war against Rana as **jihad** or Holy war. The **Begs** and soldiers were made to swear on the Quran that they would not turn away from the battle but to fight the last. Babur also renounced wine by breaking the flasks of wine in order to emphasize that he was a good muslim. Moreover, he also promised to remit the **tangha** (toll tax) on all the Muslims if he gained a victory over the Rana. He also declared that whoever wanted to return to Kabul would be permitted after the war. In this way, Babur was able to infuse new spirit into his men. It was only logical that after the battle, Babur assumed the title of **Ghazi**.

Babur carefully inspected the site before the battle. He strengthened his front by getting constructed carts which were fastened by iron chains in the ottoman fashion. These were meant to provide shelter to the artillery and the horses. Gaps were kept between carts for the horses to charge at opportune moment. Ropes of raw hides were stretched on wheeled tripod of wood to lengthen the line. Behind, this tripod, matchlockmen could fire and advance. Ditches were dug to protect the sides. Along with the usual array of forces, contingent were set apart on the left and front for the flanking (**tulghuma**) tactics. In this way, Babur prepared a strong defensive-offensive strategy. Rana Sanga was very proud of his elephants and swordsmen and He delivered a furious attack on Babur's right. He would have broken through but because of the timely reinforcement, he was not able to do so. Once the advancement of Rana Sanga and his allies had been contained, Babur's wheeling parties came into play, the carts and matchlockmen were also ordered to advance. Despite the gallant resistance, Rana Sanga suffered a crushing defeat. Moreover, it was once again demonstrated that mere bravery was not sufficient to counter superior generalship and organization. After the defeat, Rana Sanga escaped to Chittor and the alliance collapsed as quickly as it had been built. After Khanwa Babur, thought of marching to Chittor but gave up the idea on account of heat and lack of water on the way. Babur, then marched on Mewat whose ruler, Hasan Khan Mewati sided with Rana Sanga in the battle of Khanwa. Earlier, Babur thought of not disturbing Hasan Khan whose family had ruled over Mewat for almost a hundred years. As a punishment, most of the country, including its two capitals, Tijara and Alwar were annexed but some of its **parganas** were bestowed upon Nahar Khan (son of Hasan Khan). The battle of Khanwa completed the battle of Panipat and Babur's position in the Gangetic doab was now made largely secure. Babur, as a successor of Lodis, soon began to think about the conquest of Malwa. Moreover, he also wanted to isolate Rana Sanga who was reported to have began preparations to renew his struggle against Babur. Babur left Agra in Dec 1527, and reached Chanderi whose ruler, Medini Rao supported Rana Sanga. Babur offered him Shamsabad in exchange of Chanderi but Medini Rao preferred to die fighting. After Chanderi, Babur wanted to campaign against Raisen, Bhilsa and Sarangpur. Moreover he also wanted to march against Rana Sanga not knowing that Rana had died earlier on 30 January 1528, apparently poisoned by his own sardars who considered his plans to renew struggle with Babur would be suicidal. Meanwhile, Babur got the news about the activities of the Afghans in east U.P. So, he gave up his plans for further campaign in Malwa and Rajasthan and started his return journey in Feb. 1528.

Check Your Progress (CYP) – I

- I. On the basis of your understanding of your previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:
- Q1. Throw light on the internal problems faced by Babur regarding his own "begs" and army after the Battle of Panipat?

Q2. Analyse the nature of relations between Babur and Rajputs.

Q3. Examine the role of Rana Sanga in resisting Babur.

II. Fill in the blanks

- a) The two biggest danger which Babur faced was..... andof eastern UP and Bihar.
- b) Babur declared the war against Rana Sanga as.....
- c) Hasan Khan Mewati joined Rana Sanga in the battle of Khanwa with a force of.....

8.4 BABUR AND THE PROBLEM OF EASTERN AREAS

As mentioned earlier, Afghans had been defeated, they had neither reconciled themselves to mughal rule nor they were prepared to give up the idea of Afghan suzerainty. They formed a large segment among the muslims of India and they were very strong and numerous in the eastern parts of modern U.P and Bihar. They had close contact with the people including the local rajas gave them a wide base of support but their mutual differences were source of their weakness. Soon after the battle of Panipat Babur have problem of dealing with Afghans in the country who had stronghold in Eastern UP and Bihar.

There were four aspects which needs to be kept in mind in order to understand Baburs policy towards Afghans. Firstly, there were Afghan commanders of forts, towns and the countryside who assumed full control of their respective areas after the fall of Lodi Empire.

Babur adopted the policy of force and conciliation and military forces were dispatched to oust them from the fort, especially those located in the doab or the neighbourhood of Agra. These included areas such as Etawah, Rapri, Kalpi etc and also forts of Bayana, Gwalior and Dholpur. In the same way, terms were offered to them to vacate

the places they held. Moreover, in order to win over some of the leading Afghan nobles, efforts were made. Those who joined Mughals were given land grants and also titles. Ibrahim Lodi's mother was given Pargana worth seven and a place to live in order to demonstrate that Babur had no ill-will against Ibrahim Lodi's family. However, she tried to poison him which increased Babur's distrust of the Afghan nobles. Moreover, some Afghans who joined Mughal defected. Some of the Afghans such as Ahmed Khan Niazi stuck to Babur even though the general opinion was hostile towards the Mughals. It has been noted that, the tract comprising one fourth of the total Jama of the empire in India were assigned by Babur to Afghan nobles.

Second, were the Afghans of eastern UP who had been in rebellion during Ibrahim Lodi's reign. They were in the possession of the country upto Kanauj, and the areas beyond it two to three marches away from Agra. After the battle of Panipat, Babur considered that he had inherited the Lodi empire, he was not prepared to give any quarter to these rebels. That is why, soon after the battle, Babur sent Humayun against the eastern Afghans who defeated them quickly and occupied the area upto Jaunpur but before the Afghans could be completely defeated, Humayun was called back in order to deal with Rana Sanga of Mewar. Thereafter, Afghan rebels quickly reoccupied the area upto Kanauj. The third aspect was Bihar and fourth Bengal. Bihar had for long been a kind of a no-man's land between the Kingdom of Bengal and the Jaunpur. After the fall of Kingdom of Jaunpur, the position become even more uncertain. Darya Khan Nuhani, the Governor of Bihar, initially fought against the Afghans of East UP but later he also turned a rebel His son, Bahadur Khan Nuhani declared himself independent under the title Sultan Muhammad and had the Khutba read in his own name and issued coins. After the battle of Khanwa, Mahmud Lodi (the younger son of Sikandar Lodi) went to Bihar and was accepted as king by all the Afghans including Biban and Bayazid of eastern UP. Bengal's ruler, Nusrat Shah also keen to extend his rule over Bihar and he even extended his dominion from Tirhut to Ballia and placed it under two of his brothers-in-law, Alauddin and Makhdum-i-Alam. Nusrat Shah maintained good relations with Biban, Bayazid and Maruf Farmuli, the leaders of Afghans of east UP as they were a shield between him and the Mughals. These Afghan rebels though based mainly on Jaunpur looked upto Bihar as a sanctuary into which they could retreat in case of Mughal pressure.

This was the situation, when Babur was in Malwa and he quickly returned and marched straight on Kanauj He built a bridge on the Ganga using his cannons, mortars despite the opposition of the Afghans. He Crossed the river & he occupied the area upto Jaunpur. Babur was not inclined to stay in the area any longer so he put it under the charge of Askari and returned to Agra. Moreover, he was reassured by Nusrat Shah of Bengal of his neutrality.

Next year i.e in 1529, Babur decided to completely crush the power of the Afghans of eastern UP once for all. Marching by way of Prayag and Benaras, he reached Chunar and Buxar which were the gateways to Bihar. On reaching the elbow formed by the junction of the Ghaghara with the Ganga, Babur was surprised to find a joint force of Afghan rebels and the Bengal King. They tried their best to stop Babur from crossing the river. Despite this, Babur crossed the river while Askari also crossed upstream with a force of 20,000. The battle of Ghagra was fought on 5 May 1529, Mughals emerged victorious and large number of Afghans surrendered to Babur including seven to eight thousand Nuhanis. Maruf Farmuli also surrendered but Biban & Bayazid escaped along with Mahmud Lodi and besieged Lucknow.

Meanwhile, Babur made a settlement in Bihar. He restored it to Nuhanis withdrawing Khan-i-Zaman who had earlier been appointed as Governor of Bihar. Babur also made an agreement with Nusrat Shah of Bengal although we do not have details but it seems his position in Bihar was left intact.

After making all these arrangements, Babur returned back. He ousted Biban and Bayazid from Lucknow and they fled to Mahoba in Kalinjar. Babur was aware of the fact that the Afghan problem had been solved fully yet. Moreover, bearing in mind the nature of Afghan social set up and their military potential, the solution of the Afghan problem needed considerable time and effort. He also seems to understand that the problems of Bihar and Bengal needed to be tackled together. Thus by all accounts, the agreement made by Babur in Bihar and Bengal were the best under the circumstances.

Check Your Progress(CYP) – II

I. On the basis of your understanding of your previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. Explain the causes of Afghans' opposition to Babur in Eastern U.P. and Bihar.

Q2. Discuss the significance of the battle of Ghagra in the consolidation of Mughal rule.

Q3. Explain Babur's policy towards defeated Afghan nobles.

II. Fill in the blanks:

- a) Darya Khan Nuhani was the Governor of.....
- b)of Bengal assured Babur of his neutrality.
- c) Babur defeated Afghans of eastern U P in the battle of

8.5 LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, in this lesson you have studied about Babur's relations with Afghans and Rajputs. As you have analysed that this relationship was primarily shaped by the political ambition of Babur to establish Mughal Empire in India. He faced continuous resistance from the Afghans who formed the ruling class before the advent of Mughals in India. Although they were defeated but they had neither reconciled themselves to the Mughal rule nor they were prepared to give up the idea of Afghan suzerainty. They formed a large segment among the Muslims of India and were spread not only in the towns but the countryside in different regions. However they were very strong in the eastern parts of UP and Bihar. Although some Afghan nobles submitted but soon they defected from the Mughal's side and rebelled and their activities created instability for Mughals. Thus, Babur's relations with them remained largely hostile as Babur wanted to secure his position in Eastern part of UP and Bihar.

However, as far as Babur's relationship with Rajput is concerned, it was also very hostile. Rana Sanga organized a powerful confederacy of Rajputs and challenged Babur in the battle of Khanwa. Rana Sanga also had support of Afghans like Mahmud Lodi and also Hasan Khan Mewati. Thus Rana Sanga represented the Rajput – Afghan alliance whose objective was to expel Babur from India and to restore Lodi empire. Anyhow, Babur defeated Rajput Afghan alliance and it demonstrated that mere bravery was not sufficient to counter and confront superior generalship and organization. Overall it can be concluded that Babur's relationship with the Afghans and Rajputs were primarily of conflict rather than cooperation. So, Babur's successes against both against Afghans and Rajputs i.e battle of Ghaghra and Khanwa respectively helped Babur in the establishment of Mughal rule in India.

8.6 GLOSSARY

Begs	-	Nobles
Ghazi	-	A soldier fighting against infidels
Khutba	-	Friday Prayers
Sikka	-	Coin
Shahrukhi	-	Silver coin
Hamams	-	Public baths
Tamgha	-	Toll tax on Muslims
Jihad	-	Holy war

Tulughuma	-	Flanking tactics
Pargana	-	Administrative division
Inam	-	Gift
Iqta	-	Land revenue assignment assign to nobles, officers and soldiers in lieu of cash salaries.
Iqtadar	-	Holder of an Iqta
Jama	-	Total land revenue

8.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1. Why did Babur declare the war against Rana Sanga of Mewar a “Jihad” and what promises did he make to inspire his soldiers?
- Q2. Describe the “Ottoman fashion” defensive-offensive strategy Babur used to strengthen his front line before the battle.
- Q3. How the battle of Khanwa represented Rajput – Afghans alliance against Babur.
- Q4. Critically evaluate how did “superior generalship and organization” prove more important than “mere bravery”?

8.8 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1 Analyze the problems faced by Babur after the battle of panipat.
- Q2 Throw light on the steps taken by Babur against the Afghans of east UP and Bihar.
- Q3 Explain the causes and course of the battle of Khanwa.
- Q4 Write in your own words the relevance of battle of Panipat and Khanwa in the history of India.

8.9 ANSWER KEY

CYP - I

- Q1 See Section 8.2
- Q2 See Section 8.3
- Q3 See Section 8.3

Fill in the blanks

- a) Rana Sanga, Afghans.
- b) Jihad
- c) 12000

CYP - II

- Q1 See Section 8.4
- Q2 See Section 8.4
- Q3 See Section 8.4

Fill in the blanks

- a) Bihar
- b) Nusrat Shah
- c) Ghaghra

8.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Baburnama of Babur
- Gulbadan Begam's Humayunnama
- Satish Chandra, Medieval India , Vol 2
- A.L.Srivastava, History of India
- R.P.Tripathi, Rise and Fall of Mughal empire

HUMAYUN'S RELATIONS WITH SHER KHAN

STRUCTURE

- 9.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 9.1 Introduction**
- 9.2 Humayun's Early Difficulties**
- 9.3 Humayun and Sher Khan**
- 9.4 Battle of Chausa and Kannauj**
- 9.5 Humayun's exile**
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- 9.11 Suggested Readings**

9.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives:

The learning objective of this lesson is to enable you to :

- Analyse the difficulties faced by Humayun after his accession.
- Explain the rise of Sher Khan and his ambitions.
- Analyse the conflict between Sher Khan and Humayun.
- Examine the relevance of battles of Chausa and Kannauj and also the circumstances which led the defeat of Humayun.

- examine the consequences of the conflict between Humayun and Sher Khan.

Learning Outcomes:

After going through this lesson, you will have clear understanding about:

- The problems faced by Humayun on the eve of his accession.
- The events and factors that shaped the relations between Humayun and Sher Khan.
- The military and leadership skills of Sher Khan.
- the conflict between Humayun and Sher Khan that led to the downfall of the Mughal Empire.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, Humayun was born at Kabul on 6 March 1508. His mother Maham Begam married to Babur in 1506. Babur arranged good education for Humayun. At a very young age, he was associated by his father with civil and military administration and was given the responsibility to govern Badakshan at the age of 20. He also participated in the first battle of Panipat and was sent to encounter one of the Afghan advance party under Hamid Khan. Hamid Khan was defeated near Hisar Firuza. Even after the battle of Panipat and even Khanwa, he had number of encounters with Afghans. After the battle of Khanwa, he was sent to Badakshan and two years later, he came back in 1529. Babur died on 30 December, 1530 and Humayun succeeded to the throne at the age of 23. On coming to the throne, he had to struggle with a number of problems, some of which had arisen after the death of Babur and some were left behind by Babur.

9.2 HUMAYUN'S EARLY DIFFICULTIES

A major problem was the unsettled state of affairs and the ambitious begs who wanted to assert themselves. The power of the Afghans had been weakened but not completely crushed and they still nurturing the ambition of setting up Independent Afghan Kingdom. Humayun's younger brothers viz. Kamran, Askari and Hindal, and many Timurids who found shelter under Babur were also looking for an opportunity to carve out their own fortune. Moreover, there was ruler of Gujarat, Bahadur Shah who had brought Malwa under his control and wanted to dominate Rajasthan as well, thereby posing a threat to the budding Mughal Empire.

The desire of begs to reassert themselves is hinted by a strange type of conspiracy have taken place towards ends of Babur's reign. Babur's **wakil** Khalifa Nizamuddin, who was great favourite of Babur wanted to set aside Humayun and his brother and put on the throne Mehdi Khwaja who was married to Babur's elder sister, Khanzadah Begum. However the plan was not materialized as Mehdi Khwaja was not a Timurid and moreover there was little chance of the begs accepting non-Timurid.

However, the more serious problem was the desire of some of Babur's brothers and Timurid princes to re-assert in India the Central Asian Timurid tradition of partitioning of the empire. Even Babur had faced this problem when after his conquests of Samarkand, his begs assigned Fargana to his half brother, Jahangir Mirza. When Babur

died in 1530, Humayun's younger brother, Kamran, was in charge of Kabul and Qandahar. It was only natural that Kamran should remain in charge of these areas. When Humayun succeeded at Agra, Kamran was not satisfied with Kabul and Qandahar, and advanced on Lahore and established his control over Punjab upto the river Sutlej. Thereafter, he sent an embassy to Humayun, praying to be confirmed in the territories he had seized. Humayun was already in a very difficult position because the Afghans of eastern U.P. had already become active and Bahadur Shah of Gujarat was also posing serious problems. Hence, Humayun confirmed Kamran's possession in Punjab and also granted him Hissar-Firuzabad in **Jagir**. Kamran, on his part, observed outer forms and allowed the **Khutba** and **Sikka** to remain in Humayun's name. Abul Fazl ascribed Humayun's action to his spirit of benevolence and keenness to observe Babur's advice to be kind to his brothers. Despite all these considerations, the fact remains that Kamran's action amounted to the de facto partition of the empire. Moreover Humayun's response was seen to be based on weakness rather than generosity and lack of boldness and self confidence. This encouraged the expectation that Humayun's other two brothers, Askari and Hindal, who had been allotted Sambhal and Mewat in **Jagir** could also justifiably stake claims for suzerainty whenever an occasion arose. It also encouraged some of the other Timurids who had joined Babur after their expulsion by the Uzbeks to defy Humayun and press their own claims for dominion. Along with these internal difficulties, the most serious external problem Humayun faced was that of the Afghans of the east U.P. and Bihar and that of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.

There is a sharp difference of opinion among the scholars regarding the manner in which Humayun tried to overcome the difficulties. The part of the difficulty arises from the fact that there is no reliable chronology about the events that took place. There are periods when he appears to be inactive and unresponsive to the demand of the time which led some of the historians to dub Humayun as being an opium addict who remained in an opium induced state for long periods. However a critical analysis of the chronology of events shows that the so called period of inactivity was much shorter than has been visualized. Six months after his accession, he besieged the fort of Kalinjar in Bundelkhand. The Chandela ruler was reputed for his bravery but he was forced to surrender. The Chandela ruler was, however, allowed to keep the fort in return for accepting Humayun's suzerainty and giving 12 **mans** of gold. This enhanced the prestige of Humayun. Moreover the conquest of Kalinjar, may also have been meant to counter the growing influence of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat who had captured Mandu at this time.

9.3 HUMAYUN AND SHER KHAN

The problems facing Humayun at that time were posed by the Afghans of East U.P. and Bihar. The fort of Chunar was considered the gateway to Bihar and earlier been in the possession of the Lodis. Sher Khan captured the fort of Chunar and invested it. However, when Humayun learnt of this, he moved from Kalinjar, Sher Khan slipped away and left the fort under the charge of his son, Jalal Khan. After some time, negotiations began and Sher Khan offered to serve the Emperor with a contingent of 500 troops under his son, Qutb Khan. Sher Khan also offered to pay three **mans** of gold as **Peshkash** and promised to remain loyal to the Mughal Emperor. Humayun accepted the offer because at this moment he did not contemplate attack on Bihar and moreover he did not consider Sher Khan as dangerous to him. Another reason for Humayun to accept the agreement was that Sher Khan did not side with Biban and Bayazid who were regaining their position in eastern U.P.

According to Satish Chandra, *“Humayun’s willingness to compromise both when Kamran conquered Lahore and Sher Shah’s activities in the east, gave impression of lack of grit and determination on his part.”*

After Chunar, Humayun spent almost a year at Agra organising the government and court society. He divided court society broadly into administrative, ecclesiastical and cultural sections. He also planned some building and also approved new inventions. Meanwhile Biban and Bayazid re-established themselves at Jaunpur expelling Mughal Governor. Humayun crossed the Ganga and met at Afghans at Dadrah on the river Gomati and inflicted a crushing defeat on them. Sheikh Bayazid was killed and some of the Afghan sardars fled to the court of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat i.e. in 1532. Afterwards Humayun spent some time in consolidating his position and now was free to deal with the problem of Malwa, eastern Rajasthan and Gujarat. He marched out of Agra in 1535 to deal with Gujarat’s Bahadur Shah and the campaign was successfully concluded.

Humayun was uncertain about his future course of action after his return from Gujarat. According to Abul Fazl, Humayun resolved to undertake another campaign against Gujarat and while arrangement of the Gujarat campaign were under way, he heard of the growing assertiveness of Sher Khan and his activities in the east. Humayun decided to subdue Bengal and also to put down the activities of Sher Khan. The primary aim of Humayun’s eastern campaign was the conquest of Bengal and not the Sher Khan.

Humayun left Agra in July 1537 and marched leisurely till he arrived at the outskirts of Chunar. After staying for some time at Banaras, Humayun decided to conquer the fort of Chunar which was very powerful fort to be left in hostile hands. Despite the best efforts of Humayun’s master-gunner, Rumi Khan, the capture of fort took much longer time than expected. Meanwhile, Sher Khan had captured the capital of Bengal. Humayun offered to grant Sher Khan any **Jagir** he desired, in Chunar, Jaunpur or elsewhere if he submitted to him and gave up his resolve to capture Bengal, and surrendered the royal umbrella and other royal symbols which he had captured from the ruler of Bengal. Humayun was still considering Sher Khan, merely a Afghan sardar even after latter’s conquest of Bengal who could be pleased or appeased by the grant of an appropriate **Jagir**. This shows how little Humayun understood the nature of the Afghan challenge facing him. But as per Afghan Historian, Sher Shah had already resolved to expel the Mughals from India.

It seems that it was not Chunar or Bihar but Bengal was the bone of contention between Sher Khan and Humayun. Moreover, it is understandable that Sher Khan wanted to conquer Bengal as there was constant clash between Bihar and the rulers of Bengal. The ruler of Bengal, Nusrat Shah, dominated Bihar and even the some parts of eastern UP before Babur intervened. Sher Khan had to face many Bengali invasion of Bihar after he established his virtual domination over Bihar. After the death Nusrat Shah, Sher Khan planned to increase his power and wealth without incurring direct Mughal hostility. That’s why Humayun demand for Bengal from Sher Khan surprised latter who replied that he had not spent his blood and sweat to give up now. In fact he offered to leave Bihar to Humayun and to pay him an annual **Peshkash** of ten lakh rupees out of Bengal if his possession of Bengal was confirmed. From the tone of negotiations, it became clear that Sher Khan no longer consider himself to be a subordinate of Humayun but an independent ruler. However, following his victory at Surajgarh in 1534 against Nusrat Shah, Sher Khan had began to be called as **“Hazrat – I – Ala”**. Sher Khan was not in a subordinate

relationship with Humayun because his son, Qutb Khan, who had been deputed to serve Humayun with 500 horsemen had left Humayun when latter undertook the Gujarat campaign. Evidently, Sher Khan considered that the agreement he had made with Humayun at Chunar earlier had lapsed.

It seems that Humayun had accepted Sher Khan's offer of Bihar but when Mahmud Shah of Bengal appeared before Humayun and appealed to him to continue his Bengal campaign. Thus the clash between Humayun was inevitable as it was the clash of two highly ambitious individuals. Humayun started his march for the conquest of Bengal but he was detained by Sher Khan at Sikrigali at the entrance of Bengal. Meanwhile Sher Khan transferred the bulk of Bengal treasure to the fort of Rohtas. Thereafter, Humayun was allowed a passage to Gaur. Humayun stayed in Bengal for some time to stabilize the administration of Bengal. Historians differ as to the time Humayun spent in Bengal, some say that he stayed in Bengal for three months while some say that he spent 9 months or even a year in Bengal. He reached Bengal after the rainy season i.e. in September 1538 and left early next year.

After making necessary arrangements in Bengal, Humayun started his return journey under adverse circumstances as many of his horses had died in the climate of Bengal. While Humayun was in Bengal Banaras was captured by Sher Khan and he even besieged Chunar and Jaunpur. Latter also devastated the Mughal possessions upto Kannauj and Sambhal. He also had captured Mongyr because of which the communication between Humayun and Agra disrupted. Moreover, Humayun's absence brought to surface the internal rivalries between Humayun and his brothers, Askari & Hindal who had served Humayun with loyalty so far. Humayun had asked Hindal who had been given Tirhut and Purnia in Jagir, to go there and bring provisions for the army even before Humayun entered Bengal. In response, Hindal, without permission went to Agra. At the same time many Mughal nobles also left Bengal and joined Hindal at Agra. Hindal declared himself Independent and had the **Khutba** read in his name. He even marched to Delhi but the commander of the fort refused his entry forcing him to return to Agra. On hearing about the rebellion of Hindal, Kamran proceeded from Lahore and persuaded Hindal to give up his dream of independence.

Check Your Progress (CYP) – I

- I. On the basis of your understanding of your previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1 Describe the early difficulties of Humayun on the eve his accession to the throne.

Q2 Explain the causes of the conflict between Humayun and Sher Khan.

Q3 Throw light on the Humayun's conquest of Bengal.

II. Fill in the blanks

- a) Humayun defeatednear Hisar- Firuza.
- b) Sher Khan invested the fort of..... in 1531.
- c) Sher Khan defeated Nusrat Shah of Bengal in the battle of..... in 1534.

9.4 BATTLE OF CHAUSA AND KANNAUJ

Meanwhile, Humayun reached Chausa (boundary of Bihar and U.P) with great difficulty due to harassing Afghan attacks. Despite Afghans attacks he was able to bring his army almost intact and it was a great achievement of Humayun. It is clear from all the accounts that the Bengal campaign of Humayun was totally ill- conceived. He should have adhered to the the Babur's earlier settlement of the east and should not have gone beyond Chunar or Bihar because the Mughals were not yet cohesive enough and their nobility was not still ready to administer areas far from Delhi. Mughals had not struck their roots in the country and therefore neither concerned nor able to get local support. The best thing they could have done to allow distant regions to be ruled by local rulers who accepted broad mughal suzerainty. It seemed that Humayun was so much obsessed with mughal superiority and underestimated his opponents. Any how, the armies of Humayun and Sher Shah met at Chausa on 26 June 1539. Humayun followed a wrong strategy by placing river Karmanasa at his back which made his retreat difficult. Moreover, he placed his soldiers very badly, which all gave Sher Shah an opportunity to take him unaware. Humayun was defeated in the battle of Chausa and after his defeat he went to Agra. Although Kamran had 10,000 well trained troops but he refused to place them under Humayun's command as latter had lost confidence in Humayun's military capacities. Earlier, Kamran had ignored Humayun's urgent message asking for reinforcement at Chausa because of his own considerations.

Afterwards, Kamran withdrew from Agra to Lahore on the pretext of illness. This preordained the efforts of Humayun against Sher Khan. The battle of Kanauj fought on 17 May 1540 in which Humayun was defeated very badly. Sher Khan was now in a position to expel Mughals from India. From above, it is clear that Humayun never fully understood the nature of Afghan challenge and underestimated Sher Khan. Afghans had large number population in north India and they could always unite under efficient leader and pose a serious threat. On the hand Mughal nobility was fractious and they were not willing to serve the areas that were far from Agra Delhi region. So, these were the most important factors which contributed to the failure of Humayun in Gujarat as well as against Sher Khan. It seems that the opposition of Humayun's brothers and his character have been generally over emphasized for the failure against Sher Khan.

Moreover, despite the difference, Humayun was loyally served by his brothers till his Bengal expedition. So, it was only his defeat at Chausa that his brothers lost faith in him. Despite period of slothfulness or laziness, Humayun tried to prove him to be virtuous and competent general till he faced Sher Khan, who was better tactician and skillful general. After Humayun and his brother's retreat from Agra to Lahore, they were unable to decide upon a strategy of how to deal with Sher Khan. Kamran was reconciled to the loss of Punjab to Sher Khan but was determined to hold Kabul.

9.5 HUMAYUN'S EXILE

Humayun decided to go to Sindh and try to conquer Gujarat in a hope to renew his fight with Sher Shah Khan. He wandered in Sindh for about two and half year but neither the ruler of Sindh and nor the ruler of Marwar were prepared to help Humayun. Although, the ruler of Marwar invited him, but when he saw the small number of followers with Humayun, he set his face against him. So he traced his steps back to Sindh suffering unspeakable sufferings and hardships. On one occasion his men had to march for three days without water and when they reached a well, drank so much water that many of his men and horses died. Thereafter he took shelter with the Rana of Amarkot in 22 august 1542, who offered him hospitality and help with money and men to conquer the south eastern part of the Sindh. The Rana of Amarkot allowed the Mughal ladies to stay in his palace. In October, Humayun proceeded to conquer Sindh with the help of Rana but all went in vain. It was in Amarkot that Akbar was born. So, Humayun now decided to quit India, But Kamran who was ruling as an independent king with Askari as governor of Qandhar, sent a force to obstruct his path and to arrest him. Humayun had narrow escape and was obliged to leave behind his infant son, then aged about one year, in a hurry of his flight. Avoiding Qandhar, he reached Persia, where he was cordially received by Shah Tahmasp. Thereafter, Humayun took shelter at the Court of Iranian King, Shah Tahmasp after many adventures. At last in 1544, the Shah assisted him with an army on the condition that Humayun should become Shia and encourage shiaism in his territories. Humayun marched towards Qandhar, defeated Askari and captured the fort.

In November 1544 Kabul was occupied by Humayun. Kamran fled to Ghazni and then to Sindh. The occupation of Kabul and Qandhar gave Humayun a footing in Afghanistan, but his days of trouble were not over yet. Kamran took advantage of the illness of Humayun and took possession of Kabul in 1546 and many of Humayun's men deserted him and joined Kamran fearing that latter would massacre their families in Kabul.

Soon, after recovering from the illness, Humayun besieged Kabul. It is said that Kamran exposed the infant Akbar to the fire of Humayun's guns. But the siege was pressed with vigour and Kabul was reoccupied in 1547. Kamran fled to escape the punishment but again returned and fought Humayun, but again was defeated and submitted. Kamran was forgiven and was appointed as the governor of the territories north of the river Oxus. In 1549, he again played false to his brother and reoccupied Kabul by severely wounding his brother. But finally, Kamran was captured and surrendered to Humayun, who, in spite of the advices of his nobles to put him to death, forgave him but ordered him to be blinded. In the meantime Askari was also taken prisoner and sent to Mecca from where he never returned. Thus Humayun was free from his rivals who had been an important cause of his expulsion and misery. During his exile, Sher Shah, who expelled him from India, established a vast and powerful empire strengthened by good administration, had died in 1545. He was succeeded by Islam Sur, who maintained Sher Shah's policy of cherishing the well being of the people but he could not able to keep his nobles in check. When he died in October 1553, the Afghan empire was on the way to decay. In the meantime, Humayun defeated Afghans in the battle of Macchiwara which enable him to occupy Punjab. There after he advanced to Delhi and reached there on July 20, 1555 and reoccupied the throne of Delhi.

Check Your Progress (CYP) – II

I. On the basis of your understanding of your previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1 Explain how did battle of Chausa impacted Humayun's reign?

Q2 Write in your own words that how Humayun was responsible for his defeats against Sher Khan.

Q3 Describe the key events of the exile of Humayun.

II. Fill in the blanks

- a) Sher Khan defeated Humayun in the battle of.....in
- b) Kamran had Well trained soldiers, but he refused to place them under Humayun's command.
- c) Akbar was born in
- d) Humayun defeated Afghans in the battle of

9.6 LET US SUM UP:

Dear learners, in this lesson, you have studied that the early reign of Mughal Emperor Humayun was marked by difficulties. Humayun inherited an unstable Empire after Babur's death. He faced numerous problems like weak financial resources, rivalry from his brothers and even constant threat from Afghans, who were defeated but not fully curbed. Moreover, Humayun's relations with Sher Khan turned hostile, who strengthened his position in Bihar and Bengal owing to the engagement of Humayun in campaign against Gujarat. However, it seemed that Humayun underestimated the power and ambition of Sher Khan. Sher Khan defeated Humayun in the battle of Chausa which became major turning point but the defeat of Humayun in the battle of Kannauj sealed the fate of Humayun, who was forced to flee towards Persia in exile for several years.

9.7 GLOSSARY :

Wajh	-	Money, Salary
Beg	-	Noble
Khutba	-	Friday Prayers
Sikka	-	Coin
Man	-	About of 16 sers
Tabl-i-Adl	-	Drum of justice
Din Panah	-	Capital made by Humayun
Rakhi	-	A bracelet
Peshkash	-	Tribute from subordinate to the ruler
Jagir	-	A piece of land given to a person for his/her services to the state
Kharaj	-	A Tax
Farman	-	A royal order

9.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS:

- Q1 Critically evaluate the early difficulties of Humayun.
- Q2 What were the causes of the conflict between Humayun and Sher Khan?
- Q3 Throw light on the events and course of the battle of Chausa and Kanauj.
- Q4 Examine the circumstances leading to Humayun's exile.

9.9 LESSON END EXERCISES:

- Q1 Describe how Humayun dealt with his early difficulties.
- Q2 Explain the impacts of the battles of Chausa and Kanauj on the political landscape of India.
- Q3 Discuss the impact and significance of Humayun's stay in Persia.
- Q4 Critically examine the challenges faced by Humayun during his exile.

9.10 ANSWER KEY

CYP - I

- Q1 See Section 9.2
- Q2 See Section 9.3
- Q3 See Section 9.3

Fill in the blanks

- a) Hamid Khan
- b) Chunar
- c) Surajgarh

CYP- II

- Q1 See Section 9.4
- Q2 See Section 9.5
- Q3 See Section 9.5

Fill in the blanks

- a) Chausa, 26 January 1539
- b) 10,000
- c) Amarkot
- d) Macchiwara

9.11 SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Gulbadan Begam's Humayunnama, eng. Translation by A.S.Beveridge.
- Abbas khan Sarwani, Tarikh- I- Ser Sahi, eng. Translation by Brahmadeva Prasad Ambashthya.
- Satish Chandra, Medieval India , Vol 2
- A.L.Srivastava, History of India
- R.P.Tripathi, Rise and Fall of Mughal empire
- Kalikaranjan Qanungo, Sher Shah

HUMAYUN'S RELATION WITH GUJARAT & RAJPUT STATES

STRUCTRE:

- 10.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 10.1 Introduction**
- 10.2 Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and Humayun**
 - 10.2.1 Shah's siege of Chittor**
- 10.3 Gujarat campaign of Humayun**
- 10.4 Let us sum up**
- 10.5 Glossary**
- 10.6 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 10.7 Lesson End Exercises**
- 10.8 Answer Key**
- 10.9 Suggested Readings**

10.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives:

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to –

- Examine the reign of Humayun and his early difficulties.
- Analyse the factors behind the conflict between Humayun and Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.
- Analyse the ambition of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.
- Access the factors which led to the success of Humayun against Bahadur Shah.

Learning Outcomes:

After going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- the factors behind the conflict between Humayun and Bahadur Shah.
- the ambitions of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat
- the problem which arose after Mughal conquest of Gujarat.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, the relationship between Humayun and Bahadur Shah of Gujarat were of political rivalry and confrontation of two most ambitious persons. The relationship represented a contrast due to the circumstances. In the beginning, Bahadur Shah assured Humayun of friendship and loyalty but at the same time he also attempted to expand his area of influence closer to the mughal frontiers. Moreover, there were also some Afghans, who being defeated by Humayun at Dadrah, fled to court of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat in 1532. In July 1534, Muhammad Zaman Mirza and Muhammad Sultan Mirza rebelled against Humayun and when defeated, took shelter with Bahadur Shah. Humayun asked Bahadur Shah to hand over the rebel to him, which the latter refused. Bahadur Shah was ambitious ruler who had already annexed Malwa in 1531, captured the fort of Raisin in 1532 and even besieged and defeated the ruler of Chittor in 1533. He also started making alliances with Humayun's rivals in the east i.e. Sher Khan in Bihar and Nusrat Shah of Bengal. It is said that Nusrat Shah has sent an embassy under Khawajasara Malik which was well received by Bahadur Shah. Moreover, many disgruntled Afghans of the north and the east also joined him in a bid to expel Mughals from India and to regain their lost pride. So, Humayun spent some time consolidating his position and then gave attention to the problem of Malwa, eastern Rajasthan and Gujarat where Bahadur Shah was emerging as a serious threat to the Mughals.

10.2 BAHADUR SHAH OF GUJARAT AND HUMAYUN

Bahadur Shah was the son of Muzaffar Shah II of Gujarat and was of almost the same age as Humayun. He ascended the throne of Malwa in 1526 after wandering for a couple of years during which he had approached Ibrahim Lodi and even Babur. In the meantime, his father died in Ahmadabad followed by the assassination of his successor, Sikandar, threw the affairs of Gujarat into confusion and leading group of nobles invited Bahadur Shah to take the reins of state into his hands. He soon showed himself to be ruthless but capable and ambitious ruler. He killed all his six surviving brothers except one, who took shelter in Malwa. Bahadur Shah got excuse to invade Malwa. Ahmadnagar was also conquered by him forcing the Nizamshahi ruler to accept his suzerainty and to read **Khutba** in his name. He had witnessed Babur's success at Panipat and Khanwa and thought of avoiding any conflict with Mughals at any cost. But his views changed after the death of Babur, partly because of his own successes and partly because of Afghans and Timurids who had taken shelter at his court, who convinced him that Mughals were not the same force as they had been under Babur. Moreover, he had taken into service two Ottoman gunners, Amir Mustafa or Rumi Khan and Khwaja Safar. He also gathered powerful park of artillery. The Ottoman master gunners also taught him Ottoman method of defence. Bahadur Shah was convinced that with the help of his Afghans and Timurid allies and with the help of Ottoman devices, he would definitely be able to defeat Humayun. Bahadur Shah considered Humayun as inexperienced and inefficient. Moreover, the conflict between the Mughals and any power based in western India was inevitable. The entire experience of

Delhi sultanate showed that a power which had been able to consolidate its position in the Indo- Gangetic plains was bound to try to bring under its control the rich and fertile areas of Malwa and the flourishing sea ports and treasures of Gujarat. Moreover Rajasthan was the essential link between Malwa and Gujarat, and the rich alluvial plains of north India. Even under Lodis, conflict for the control of Malwa and eastern Rajasthan had started once they consolidated their power in Gangetic valley.

10.2.1 Siege of Chittor by Bahadur Shah

Initially, Humayun was not interested in the conflict with Bahadur Shah but it was latter who actually forced Humayun into doing so. The first provoking action of Bahadur shah was his siege of Chittor in 1532. Humayun was well aware that control of eastern Rajasthan would pose a serious threat to the Mughal empire. Therefore Humayun, as a warning moved to Gwalior in early 1533. As per a mid-17th century Rajasthani account, it was Rani Karnavati (Rana's mother) who sent a bracelet as **rakhi** to Humayun who responded and helped Rani by moving to Gwalior. But no contemporary source mentioned about this, so little credit can be given to this story. However, Humayun's presence at Gwalior made Bahadur Shah very nervous and he hurriedly patched a treaty with Rana of Mewar. According to the agreement, Rana was forced to cede the portion of Malwa which had received earlier from Bahadur Shah as a price of Rana's support to him in his campaign against Malwa. Moreover, Rana had to pay a heavy war indemnity including the jewelled crown and also a belt which Rana Sanga captured from the Khalji ruler of Gujarat. This treaty increased the power and prestige of Bahadur Shah.

Humayun, it seems, was satisfied with Bahadur Shah's failure to capture Chittor. Hence, Humayun returned to Delhi, spent a year there and constructed a new capital called **Din Panah** on the banks of Yamuna. Bahadur Shah congratulated Humayun for the completion of Din Panah. Humayun also reciprocated and only requested that no shelter should be given to refugees from Delhi in view of the friendly relations between the two. However this was in reference to the Afghan refugees. From the correspondence and the exchange of letters, it seems that Humayun was prepared to approve all the conquests of Bahadur Shah provided he expel the rebels who had taken shelter in Gujarat. Bahadur Shah interpreted Humayun's willingness for a compromise as a sign of his weakness. He, however, took some measures which made conflict with the Mughals unavoidable. He marched on Chittor again towards the end of 1534. Moreover, he also assigned **jagir** to Timurid prince Muhammad Zaman Mirza, who was favourite of Babur but intrigued against Humayun, when failed fled to Gujarat. He also tried to prop up Sher Khan against the Mughals by sending him large sum of money. At last, Bahadur Shah decided to launch three pronged attack on the Mughals. Bahadur Khan gave Tatar Khan (son of Alam Khan) 20 crores to recruit a strong army. He was to attack Agra, while other two forces were to attack Kalinjar in Bundelkhand and move against Delhi respectively. Tatar Khan collected a force of 40,000 and captured Bayana but Afghan forces melted away with the advance of Mughal forces under Mirza Askari and Hindal. Tatar Khan fought with bravery with a small force but was defeated & killed. The other two attacks also proved ineffective. It was now not possible for Bahadur Shah to repudiate all these hostile actions.

Check Your Progress (CYP) - I

I. On the basis of your understanding of your previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1 Explain the early activities of Humayun soon after his accession.

Q2 Write a note on the siege of Chittor by Bahadur Shah.

Q3 Analyse the causes of the conflict between Humayun and Bahadur Shah.

II. Fill in the blanks:

1 Bahadur Shah of Gujarat captured the fort of Mandu in

2 was the master gunner of Bahadur Shah.

3 The Chandela ruler gavemans of gold in Peshkash to Humayun.

10.3 GUJARAT CAMPAIGN OF HUMAYUN

Humayun, after making necessary preparations, marched from Agra in early 1535. He instead of marching on Chittor which was besieged by Bahadur Shah, marched via Raisen and Sarangpur to Ujjain. Thereafter, he brought eastern Malwa under his control and placed himself in a strategically advantageous position. His movement created nervousness in Bahadur Shah's camp, but his Ottoman gunner, Rumi Khan, was very confident of his guns that he would be able to force the commander of the fort of Chittor to surrender soon. But Rajputs gave stout resistance against the invaders which prolonged Rumi Khan's operations than he had expected. The fort fell

after two months i.e. in March 1534, thereafter, Bahadur Shah advanced and faced Humayun army at Mandasor, 80 miles north of Ujjain. Some of his nobles suggested him to attack Humayun immediately since his soldiers had high were in high spirit with their success at Chittor, but Rumi Khan, argued that it was of no use to resort to swords and spears when he was in possession of cannons. So, on his advice, Bahadur Shah adopted the ottoman device of guarding his front and flank with the help of carts and ditches. There was large lake on the other side. The strategy adopted by Bahadur Shah was kind of similar to that of Babur at Panipat, But Rumi Khan forgot that he was fighting with Humayun and not Afghans. Humayun's forces suffered initially, he then ordered his forces not to venture near it but to cut off all the supplies to Bahadur Shah's camp within two weeks, the horses in Bahadur Shah's camp began to die and there was shortage of food. Hence, Rumi Khan's strategy was turned against itself.

In distress, Bahadur Shah left secretly for Mandu and his camp fell into the hands of the Mughals and most of his soldiers also dispersed in April 1535. Some of the nobles of Bahadur Shah like Khudawand Khan joined Humayun and Rumi Khan also joined Mughal service. Rumi Khan was a mercenary and was prepared to join anyone who offered him better terms. Moreover, he was disappointed with Bahadur Shah for not appointing him to the command of Chittor after its capture and charge that Bahadur Shah's failure was due to Rumi Khan's treachery. After reaching Mandu, Bahadur Shah opened negotiations with Humayun offering Malwa if he was allowed to keep Gujarat and Chittor. According to Ishwari Prasad the proposal was tentatively accepted by Humayun but no regular engagement was entered into.

However, the garrison relaxed its vigilance, the Mughal troops took advantage of it and scaled the wall of the city and opened the gate from inside. Thereafter, Bahadur Shah was left with no other option but to escape with some attendants to Champaner. Mughal troops sacked Mandu for three days and then started their march for Champaner. Champaner was very strong fort as it was surrounded by a jungle. Bahadur Shah could have withstood Humayun for a long time but he had no heart left for fighting Humayun. So, he sent his family and some treasure in the fort of Diu and left the fort under the command of his trusted men. Bahadur Shah left for Diu which was dominated by Portuguese. Thus, Humayun completed the task of expelling Bahadur Shah from Gujarat. Humayun returned to Champanir and started strict investment of the fort and after some time mughals discovered a secret path through which the supplies were reaching the fort. Humayun along with his soldiers scaled the walls of the fort and entered it. The capture of the fort of Champanir, yielded immense riches, so much so that every soldier was given a tray filled with gold and jewels. The conquest of Champanir completed Mughal conquest of South Gujarat. However, North Gujarat (including Ahmadabad & Patan) remained under the control of Bahadur Shah's men. Humayun spent some time in Champanir during the monsoon season and turned his attention toward North Gujarat. Mughals were not even bothered about the collection of land revenue from Gujarat. In the meantime Bahadur Shah deputed Imad ul-Mulk to collect revenue from Gujarat as Mughals had not even bothered to collect it. With the help of money collected through revenue, Imad-ul-Mulk was able to collect a band of 10,000 men which soon swelled to 30,000. This force clashed with the Mughal forces led by Humayun himself at Mahmudabad near Ahmedabad. Mughal forces emerged victorious and Ahmedabad was also occupied by the Mughals by Oct. 1535.

Humayun, within ten month of his leaving the capital, had successfully overran both Malwa and Gujarat and he displayed great determination and courage. However, He had to decide what to do with Gujarat as his nobles were not united on this. The most of the nobles had shifted from Afghanistan to Delhi-Agra region after the battle of Panipat and they had their families there and moreover they did not want to shift again if they were asked to stay in Gujarat. Hindu Beg and some leading nobles suggested Humayun that after paying the soldiers advance salary of one or two years and keeping the treasure the kingdom should be returned to Bahadur Shah. According to Jauhar, Humayun became very angry at this suggestion. Humayun was of the opinion that the kingdom should be properly organized and arrangements made for its administration under the control of Delhi. Humayun made Askari, in charge of Gujarat. Hindu Beg was appointed to assist Askari with 5,000 men. The rest of Gujarat was divided into five divisions and each division was placed under prominent noble. The arrangement made by Humayun in Gujarat was on the model of Babur's arrangement in the doab where large areas were given to **begs** who were responsible for the law and order and also for the collection of land revenue. After making these arrangements, he then moved to Mandu and fixed it as his headquarter. There were two reasons for making Mandu as headquarter, first was the climate and second, it was centrally located from where Humayun can watch both Gujarat as well as Delhi. However, within few months of his leaving Gujarat, his arrangement made in Gujarat collapsed. Askari was not able to establish coordination with other nobles who were in charge of various divisions but the real reason was the nobles who were not willing to stay in Gujarat which according to them was a foreign land and they were perceived as foreigners. Moreover, there was reassertion of the spirit of regional independence in Gujarat. In desperation, Hindu Beg suggested Askari to declare himself independent so that he could rally the nobles & soldiers and get some local support. It seems Askari rejected the suggestion. Moreover, no move was made by Humayun to solve the problem. Meanwhile, Bahadur Shah recovered Cambay and Broach and advanced once on Ahmedabad. There was no co-ordination between Hindu Beg and Askari, so, latter decided to retreat to Champanir. It seems that if Mughals had remained united, Champanir could have been used as a base for counter-attack. But, Tardi Beg, the commandant of Champanir, after doubting the intentions of Askari, refused him permission to enter the fort or give him any financial assistance unless he received order from Humayun. Hence, Askari moved towards Agra and other most of the nobles who were posted in Gujarat also withdrew from there. Humayun, afraid that Askari planned to declare himself independent at Agra, also moved hurriedly. The two brothers met at Chittor and reconciled but meanwhile Malwa was also lost by Feb 1537.

However, despite this set back, which affected Humayun's prestige, the Gujarat expedition cannot be regarded as being a total waste. This campaign, moreover showed Humayun as a vigorous leader and intrepid commander but this campaign also removed the threat from the side of Bahadur Shah who was also killed shortly afterwards in his conflict with the Portuguese.

Check Your Progress(CYP) – II

I. On the basis of your understanding of your previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1 Analyse Humayun's campaigns in Gujarat.

Q2 Describe the outcomes of Humayun's Gujarat campaigns.

Q3 Discuss the the attitude of Mughal nobility after Gujarat's conquest.

II. Fill in the blanks:

1 Humayun marched from Agra in.....via Raisen and Sarangpur.

2 Bahadur Shah, after his defeat, went to

3 Humayun made as incharge of Gujarat.

10.4 LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, in this lesson, you have studied about the early activities of Humayun after his accession to the throne. It is also seen that Gujarat's ruler Bahadur Shah, who was very ambitious, tried to avoid any direct conflict with the Mughals as he had seen Babur's success in the battle of Panipat. But later, his views changed, partly because of his some own successes and partly because of Afghan rebels and Timurid princes who had taken shelter in Gujarat. They assured him that Mughals are no longer formidable as they were earlier. Thereafter, Bahadur launched attack on mughals which was repulsed, but Humayun decided to undertake Gujarat campaign

and to conquer Gujarat. Gujarat was captured by the Mughals but they were not able to retain it due to lack of coordination. Despite this, the Gujarat campaign cannot be regarded as a total waste as this campaign showed Humayun not only a great leader and able commander but it also destroyed the threat of Bahadur Shah to the Mughals.

10.5 GLOSSARY:

Man	-	A man in those day was about 16 sers
Peshkash	-	A tribute from subordinate ruler
Tabl-i-adl	-	A drum of justice
Khutba	-	Friday Prayers
Rakhi	-	Bracelet
Jagir	-	A piece of land given for his/her services to the state
Jihad	-	A holy war
Kafir	-	Non Muslim
Iqta	-	Land assignment assign to officers in lieu of salary.
Khalsa	-	Crown land
Harem	-	meaning ‘sanctuary’ basically it was a place where female relatives of emperor reside
Beg	-	Noble

10.6 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS:

- Q1 Critically evaluate the causes of the conflict between Humayun and Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.
- Q2 Discuss the significance of the conquest of Gujarat under Humayun.
- Q3 Explain the causes of Humayun’s success in Gujarat campaign.

10.7 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1 What were the circumstances that led Humayun to undertake Gujarat campaign.
- Q2 Evaluate Humayun’s Gujarat campaign was a failure or success. Give reasons.
- Q3 Critically examine the course of the Gujarat campaign by Humayun.

10.8 ANSWER KEY

CYP - I

- Q1 See Section 10.1
Q2 See Section 10.2.1
Q3 See Section 10.2

Fill in the blanks

- a) 1531
b) Rumi Khan.
c) 12 *mans*

CYP - II

- Q1 See Section 10.3
Q2 See Section 10.3
Q3 See Section 10.3

Fill in the blanks

- a) 1535
b) Mandu
c) Askari

10.9 SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Gulbadan Begam's Humayunnama. Eng. Translation by A.S.Beveridge.
- Abul Fazl, Akbarnama. Eng. Translation by H.Beveridge.
- Satish Chandra, Medieval India , Vol 2
- A.L.Srivastava, History of India
- R.P.Tripathi,Rise and Fall of Mughal empire

FOUNDATION OF SECOND AFGHAN EMPIRE

STRUCTURE

- 11.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 11.1 Introduction**
- 11.2 Early life of Sher Shah Sur**
- 11.3 Social and Political background of East U.P and Bihar**
- 11.4 Rise of Sher Shah**
- 11.5 Foundation of Sur Empire**
- 11.6 Let us sum up**
- 11.7 Glossary**
- 11.8 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 11.9 Lesson End Exercises**
- 11.10 Answer Key**
- 11.11 Suggested Readings**

11.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to –

- Examine the political conditions of India during the early Mughal rule.
- Analyse the social and political background of Eastern U.P and Bihar.
- Explain the spectacular rise of Sher Shah and his struggle.
- Examine the battle of Chausa and Kannauj which changed destiny of Mughal Empire.

Learning Outcomes

After going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about –

- The political conditions of India during the reign of Humayun.
- The social and political conditions in Eastern U.P. and Bihar which helped Sher Shah to rise and strengthen.
- The role played by Sher Shah Sur to the foundation of Second Afghan Empire.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, the rise of Sher Shah from a petty leader to the ruler of the biggest empire is a saga of courage and determination. However, the process of empire building was started with the conquest of Jaunpur by Sikandar Lodi, which was further carried on by Babur and Humayun. When Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat and Rana Sanga in the battle of Khanua, and similarly through Humayun's campaigns in Gujarat and Malwa, and Sher Shah's defeat of the ruler of Bengal, these all campaigns shattered the old balance of power.

Finally, it was Sher Shah who unified the whole of North India with the exception of Gujarat. So, the unification of North India by Sher Shah should be seen as a part of an historic process. Moreover, the rise of Sher Shah calls attention to social and political conditions in North India when brave, bold and unscrupulous men could rise to the highest position.

11.2 EARLY LIFE OF SHER SHAH SUR

Sher Shah's grandfather, Ibrahim Sur, was a small horse trader from Afghanistan who came to India towards the end of Bahlol Lodi's reign. Jamal Khan Sarangkhani was the early patron of Ibrahim Sur, who assigned him a few villages in Hissar-Firuza (in modern Haryana) for the upkeep of 40 troopers.

Over the period of time, Ibrahim Sur and his son Hasan Sur emerged as leaders of Afghan free-booters. After the death of Ibrahim Sur, Hasan Sur was made in charge of the Pargana of Narnaul. Though we have no idea of the number of sawar at his command, they must be larger than the rank of 40 sawar held by him.

Jamal Khan Sarangkhani was appointed as Governor of Jaunpur by Sikandar Lodi after latter conquered it. After the death of Jamal Khan Sarangkhani, his son Khan-i-Azam Ahmad Khan succeeded with the rank of 20,000 **sawar** who in order to strengthen his position in a region where Jaunpuri nobles were still very strong, appointed Hasan Sur to the iqta of Sahsaram and Khawaspur-Tanda with a rank of 500 **sawar** in 1510. By this, Hasan Sur's status rose to a small noble with a flag.

As far as the birth of Sher Shah is concerned, we do not have any specific information as to when and where Farid he was born. It is said that he was born in Narnaul in 1486. We know little about him except that he got angry at his father's neglect of his mother in preference to his another wife. He came to Jaunpur and studied religious works, history, Arabic etc. at one of the well-known **madrasa**. Thereafter, he was reconciled with his

father who gave him two **parganas** to govern in 1515–16. Sher Shah administered these two **parganas** very efficiently for 3–4 years but due to the conspiracies of his stepmother, he was displaced from his **parganas**. After some time, he joined the service of Taj Khan Sarangkхани (Commander of Chunar) and then served Nasir Khan Nuhani (the Muqti of Ghazipur).

A little later, he entered the service of Darya Khan at Agra. Meanwhile, he submitted a petition to Ibrahim Lodi to dismiss his father from his **Jagir** of Sahasram on the ground that he was too old and was under the influence of India slave girl. His petition was turned down by the Sultan, censuring him for making a petition against his own father. Ibrahim Lodi relented when Hasan Sur died in 1524. Sher Shah, armed with the farman of Ibrahim Lodi, came to Sahasram and ousted his stepbrothers who went to Muhammad Khan Sur, the Jagirdar of Chaund. Latter offered to mediate between Sher Shah and his stepbrothers. Sher Shah, on the other hand, sought the help of Bahar Khan (son of Daulat Khan Nuhani), governor of Bihar. There arose a issue that whether the **Jagir** be divided between the sons as per the Afghan tradition but Sher Shah completely rejected the idea by arguing that tradition of Roh could not be continued in Hindustan and the **Jagir** of Sahasram should go to whoever the Sultan desired.

Meanwhile, Ibrahim Lodi was defeated in the battle of Panipat by Babur. Bahar Khan, son of Daulat Khan declared himself king of Bihar under the title Sultan Muhammad Shah. The Afghans who were close to him were given favours and Sher Shah was one of them. Thus it seems, by 1526, when Babur established himself in India, Sher Khan had risen as an important figure in the politics of Bihar.

11.3 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF EAST U.P AND BIHAR

Social and political background of east UP and Bihar played very important role in the conflict between the Mughals and Afghans and in the rise of Sher Shah. Nuhani wanted to attempt and establish a separate kingdom in Bihar in opposition to the Mughals in one hand and the Bengals on the other hand. In the same way, Sarwanis and Farmulis wanted to restore the old kingdom of Jaunpur and they had very strong position in East UP.

Moreover, there was conflict in almost every Afghan household regarding the division or transfer of **Iqta** (later **Jagir**). The advantage of this situation was taken by Babur by winning over to his side some of the leading Afghan nobles. Another important factor which helped in the rise of Sher Shah was the position enjoyed by the women in the Afghan society which was perhaps a continuation of freedom women generally enjoyed in tribal societies as compared to feudalised ones. When the ruler of Bihar died (shortly after the battle of Panipat) leaving a minor son, Jalal, power passed into the hands of Dudu (widow of Muhammad Shah). Dudu appointed Sher Shah as guardian and left the state affairs in his hands.

There is another such case, when Taj Khan Sarangkхани, commandant of the fort of Chunar died, his power and possessions passed into the hand of his wife Lad Malika, although she also had step-sons. So, in order to

safeguard herself, Lad Malika proposed marriage to Sher Shah and presented him 150 pieces of rare jewels, seven **mans** of pearls and 150 **mans** of gold, acc. to Abbas Khan Sarwani. Thus, Sher Shah, by this marriage got not only money but also a powerful fort. Sher Shah also got another such opportunity when childless widowed wife of Nasir Khan Nuhani, Gauhar Gosain proposed marriage to him and brought him about 300 mans of gold.

A little later, daughter of Mian Muhammad Kalapahar Farmuli, Bibi Fath Malika, came into great wealth and with her wealth supported her husband's brother, Maruf Farmuli against the Mughals. After his death, she planned to retreat into Bhata in Bundelkhand in order to save her property. But Sher Shah persuaded to come to him and promised her protection and non-interference with her wealth and freedom of action. But it is said that Sher Shah took 300 mans of gold leaving her with a small amount of gold and some villages for her maintenance."

Check Your Progress (CYP) – I

I. On the basis of your understanding of your previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1 Throw light on Sher Shah's early experiences which shaped his ambitions?

Q2. Analyse Sher Shah Suri early life and education.

Q3. Examine the social and political background of East UP and Bihar which helped to the rise of Sher Shah.

II. Fill in the blanks

a) Farid was given two parganas to govern by his father, Hasan Sur in the years.....

- b) Hasan Sur died in
- c) Gauhar Gosain was the wife of

11.4 RISE OF SHER SHAH

Sher Shah supported Afghans in the battle of Ghagra (1529) and also Biban and Bayazid at Dadrah (1532) but he was compelled to support the Afghan rebels against his wishes. He was not very enthusiastic about the Afghan kingdom of Jaunpur as it would affect his position in Sahsaram. Moreover, he has his own ambition in Bihar. Moreover, although he considered Biban and Bayazid to be brave warriors but had very poor opinion regarding their organizing capacities and political sagacity.

It was actually Babur who gave Sher Shah the opening which he exploited. When Sultan Muhammad of Bihar died, his wife (Dudu) joined Sultan Nusrat Shah of Bengal, who had already extended his control from Tirhut to Ballia. So, in order to counter the influence of Nusrat Shah, Babur restored the Nuhani Kingdom to Jalal (minor son of Sultan Muhammad). Since Dudu was unable to manage the affairs herself, she appointed Sher Shah as naib and guardian to her minor son, Jalal. This made Sher Shah the virtual ruler of Bihar, and he devoted himself to improving the administration of Bihar. Further, he centralized power in his hands which led to the jealousy of Nuhani chiefs who began to intrigue against him.

Thereafter was conflict between Bihar and Bengal, and Babur was reluctant to be drawn into it, which gave Sher Shah an opportunity in Bihar. Jalal Khan of Bihar, after the death of his mother Dudu, became afraid of the growing power of Sher Shah and decided to seek help from Nusrat Shah of Bengal. Nusrat Shah found an opportunity to invade Bihar and also to crush the power of Sher Shah. But the invasion failed which only added to the power and wealth of Sher Shah. Nusrat Shah of Bengal died and was succeeded by Sultan Mahmud, who continued the attempt to conquer Bihar. He launched two successive campaigns. The first campaign was against Makhdum-i-Alam, the Bengali Governor of North Bihar, who was accused of not having in the earlier campaigns against Bihar. Although, the expedition was failed but Makhdum-i-Alam was killed and all his property came into the hands of Sher Shah Sur.

Second attempt was made by Sultan Mahmud in 1534 when he sent a large force against Bihar which was joined by the Nuhani. Sher Shah defeated the combined force at Surajgarh in 1534 which ended the Bengali threat to Bihar but he was not ready to take any chances. So, next year, he invaded Bengal and forced the ruler of Bengal to cede territory upto Sikrigali and also to pay indemnity. Thereupon Sultan Mahmud tried to seek help from Portuguese, so to counter this Jalal Khan, son of Sher Shah invaded and captured Gaur. Hence, the fluid position in east UP and Bihar which lasted for a considerable period of time, the socio-political position prevail in east UP and Bihar, the conflict between Bihar and Bengal played very important role in the rise of Sher Shah.

11.5 FOUNDATION OF SUR EMPIRE

Dear learners, as you have seen in the previous lesson that Sher Shah defeated Humayun in the battle of Chausa (1539) and Kannauj (1540). After his victory at Kannauj, he formally crowned himself. The first task before him

to expel the Mughals from India and even to ensure that they would not be able to return. He was succeeded in doing so without much difficulty because of the division in the Mughal camp. Kamran was not prepared to fight Sher Shah and also not to allow Humayun to take over Kabul which forced Humayun to later move towards Sindh. When Sher Shah moved to Lahore, Mirza Kamran retreated to Kabul and Mirza Haider moved to Kashmir and conquered it. Thereafter, Sher Shah marched up to Khyber Pass, and when he was at Khushab, many Afghans joined him. Sher Shah decided not to incorporate the area of Afghans in the area into Sur Empire. That is why his empire did not extend beyond the river Indus. However as a precautionary measure, he subdued the Ghakkars who lived in the Salt Range and built a new powerful fort at Rohtas to control them. He did so to interpose a check on the possible incursion of the Mughals into India.

Afterwards, he sent an army to Multan and spent some time there. This was done to put pressure on the ruler of Sindh to not to support Humayun. So, Multan was brought under Sher Shah's control but no effort was made to enter Upper Sindh. The Mughal forces were dispersed and Humayun was no longer a threat to Sher Shah, hence latter did not pursue him. In 1543, Sher Shah organized a campaign in order to liberate Multan from Baloch tribe. The campaign was launched under the commandship of Haibat Khan Niazi and the main motive behind this campaign was to safeguard India's trade with Central Asia and West Asia in which Multan was a principal mark. Sher Shah also constructed a road from Lahore to Multan. Haibat Khan performed well and Multan as well as upper Sindh including Sehwan and Bhakkar were annexed to the Sur Empire. Sher Shah, after securing his position in Punjab and North India, focused on the administration of his empire. He nipped in the bud the rebellion in Bengal where the local Governor had married a daughter of late Sultan and even started sitting on a raised platform like the former rulers of the Bengal. His campaign, thereafter, were confined only to Malwa, Rajasthan, Multan and Sindh. He also asserted his suzerainty over Bundelkhand. Sher Shah invaded Malwa and conquered it 1542. Next year he also conquered Chanderi. The conquest of Malwa and Chanderi was a prelude to the conquest of Marwar where ruler Raja Maldeo conquered many areas till it comprised almost the whole of western and eastern Rajasthan. It is said that his armies been seen in the outskirts of Agra. He fortified the old forts of Ajmer, Merta and Jodhpur, and even build some new forts. He also conquered Bikaner where ruler died fighting and two of his sons ahead escaped and took shelter at the court of Sher Shah. Maldeo, in his policy of expansion came into a conflict not only with the hereditary fief holders (**watan-dars**), his kinsmen, but also with the Rana of Mewar, Kachhwahas, the Shekhawats chiefs etc. Sher Shah occupied conquered Malwa in 1542, he even occupied Ranthambhor and Kachhwaha country of eastern Rajasthan. His next step was to capture Shekhawati including Nagor. Sher Shah thereafter sent a message to Maldeo agreeing to recognize his conquest of Bikaner if he would capture or expel Humayun. This averted Sher Shah's threatened invasion of Marwar as Maldeo did not provide any help to Humayun. However, a power based on Agra-Delhi would not tolerate any power in Rajasthan which could threaten it. So, in 1543, Sher Shah moved from Agra with 80,000 horses and strong artillery, and camped near Jaitaran which was mid way between Ajmer and Jodhpur. Sher Shah had dug trenches and earthwork around his camp. Both armies faced each other for about one month and it seemed that Maldeo wanted to retreat to Jodhpur and Swana to prepare a better defence. But his Sardars did not like the idea of retreat, which was according to them was dishonourable. There arose

difference of opinion which led to disunity in the Rajput camp of which Sher Shah took advantage. Maldeo retreated with his army and former defeated a small band of Rajput without much difficulty. Thereafter, Maldeo took shelter in the fort of Siwana and in the meantime Jodhpur and Ajmer was conquered by the Afghans and afterwards Sher Shah returned to turned to Mewar. The Rana of Mewar purchased peace by the surrender of Chittor. In this way, Sher Shah became master of all Rajasthan. After Rajasthan, he turned to the conquest of Bhata (Rewa) in Bundelkhand and while besieging its fort, Kalinjar, Sher Shah died in May 1545 from burns when a rocket rebounded from the wall and set fire to a bundle of rockets where he was standing.

Sher Shah was succeeded by his son, Jalal Khan, who took the title of Islam Shah. Though, Sher Shah ruled only for about five years but he has many contributions to his credit. He played a very crucial role in the establishment of second Afghan empire by defeating the mighty Mughals and even expelling them from India.

Check Your Progress (CYP) – II

I. On the basis of your understanding of your previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1 Write about the rise of Sher Khan in the politics of Bihar.

Q2 Throw light on the conquests of Sher Shah Sur.

Q3 Evaluate the role Sher Shah Sur in the foundation of second Afghan empire.

II. Fill in the blanks:

- a) Jalal Khan of Bihar was afraid of the growing power of Sher Shah, So he sought help from..... of Bengal.
- b) Nusrat Shah was succeeded by
- c) In 1543, Sher Shah organized a campaign to liberate Multan from
- d) Sher Shah died in 1545 while campaigning in.....

11.6 LET US SUM UP:

In this lesson, you have studied about the early life and struggles of Sher Shah Sur. His rise from the very modest beginning, to the highest position of a ruler of the Sur empire, was due to his determination, brilliant commandership and great administrative skills. He challenged the authorities of the Mughals and defeated Humayun in the battle of Chausa and Kanauj in 1539 and 1540 respectively. However, it has been observed that his success against his rivals was not only due to his military skills but also his ability to exploit the weaknesses of his rivals and exploiting the political instability which existed during that time. He successfully united the Afghans who had lost their power after the decline of Delhi sultanate under Lodis and provided them a renewed sense of identity and power. Lastly it can be concluded that the foundation of the second Afghan empire by Sher Shah was became possible because of the combination of various factors like strategic warfare, strong determination, political acumen and administrative skills.

11.7 GLOSSARY:

Peshkash	-	A tribute from subordinate ruler
Khutba	-	Friday Prayers
Jagir	-	A piece of land given for his/her services to the state
Kafir	-	Non Muslim
Iqta	-	Land assignment assign to officers in lieu of salary.
Khalsa	-	Crown land
Harem	-	meaning 'sanctuary' basically it was a place where female relatives of emperor reside
Sawar	-	Horseman
Watandars	-	Hereditary fief holders

11.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1 Critically examine Sher Shah's early life and his struggles.
- Q2 Discuss social and political conditions of eastern U P and Bihar.
- Q3 Evaluate the military conquests of Sher Shah Sur.
- Q4 Critically analyse the circumstances which helped Sher Shah against the mughals.

11.9 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1 Elaborate Sher Shah's early life and the various challenges he faced .
- Q2 Explain the various struggles Sher Shah experienced while establishing himself in Bihar.
- Q3 Critically evaluate the contribution of Sher Shah Sur in the foundation of second Afghan empire.

11.10 ANSWER KEY

CYP - I

- Q1 See Section 11.2
- Q2 See Section 11.2
- Q3 See Section 11.3

Fill in the blanks

- a) 1515- 16
- b) 1524
- c) Nasir Khan Nuhani

CYP- II

- Q1 See Section 11.4
- Q2 See Section 11.5
- Q3 See Section 11.5

Fill in the blanks

- a) Nusrat Shah
- b) Sultan Mahmud
- c) Baloch tribe
- d) Kalinjar

11.11 SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Gulbadan Begam's Humayunnama, eng. Translation by A.S.Beveridge.
- Abbas khan Sarwani, Tarikh- I- Ser Sahi, eng. Translation by Brahmadeva Prasad Ambashthya.
- Abul Fazl, Akbarnama. Eng translation by H.Beveridge.
- Satish Chandra, Medieval India , Vol 2
- A.L.Srivastava, History of India
- R.P.Tripathi, Rise and Fall of Mughal empire
- Kalikaranjan Qanungo, Sher Shah

CONQUEST OF SHER SHAH SUR

STRUCTURE

12.0. Learning Objectives and Outcomes

12.1. Introduction

12.2. Early Life of Sher Shah Suri

12.3. Conquests of Sher Shah Suri

12.3.1. Factors Responsible for Sher Shah's Military Achievements

12.4. Let us sum up

12.5. Glossary

12.6. Examination Oriented Questions

12.7. Lesson End Exercises

12.8. Answer Key

12.9. Suggested Readings

12.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Dear learners, the objective of this lesson is to enable you to:

- Explain the major stages of Sher Shah Suri's rise to power.
- Describe the key battles that enabled Sher Shah Suri to overthrow the Mughals and become the ruler of North India.
- Analyse the reasons behind Sher Shah's military victories.

Learning Outcomes

Dear learners, after going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- The rise and expansion of Sher Shah Suri.

- The circumstances that led to his conflict with Humayun.
- The extent of Sher Shah's empire after his victories.
- The military strategies and leadership qualities that led to his success.
- The significance of his victories in weakening Mughal power temporarily.

12.1. INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, Sher Shah Suri (1540-45) was a shrewd and ambitious Afghan leader who rose from modest origins in Bihar to become a formidable ruler of North India. Renowned for his **strategic mind, courage, and governance skills**, he first served under Afghan chiefs and briefly under the Mughals before carving out his own empire. Through decisive victories in key battles, including Chausa (1539) and Kannauj (1540), he defeated Humayun and established the Suri Empire. It was for the last time that an Afghan dynasty sat on the throne of Delhi and ruled over most parts of northern India. Students, this lesson will apprise you how Sher Shah Suri from humble beginnings rose to glory and power through hard work, courage, skill, and the strength of his sword.

12.2. EARLY LIFE OF SHER SHAH SURI

Dear learners, the founder of the Sur dynasty was Sher Shah Suri of Afghan origin. His surname 'Suri' was taken from his Pashtun Sur tribe. His original name was Farid. In search of employment, Farid's grandfather Ibrahim Suri and father Hasan Khan migrated from the mountainous region of Roh near Peshawar in Afghanistan to India and joined services in Panjab under the Lodhi dynasty. They served several Afghan nobles at the courts of Bahlul and Sikandar Lodhi. Hasan Khan had four wives and eight sons. Farid is said to have been born to his first Afghan wife in 1472 in Bajwara (Hoshiarpur, Punjab). Hasan Khan left Bajwara for Bihar to work under Jamal Khan, the Governor of Jaunpur. At the request of Jamal Khan, the then Delhi Sultan, Sikander Lodhi awarded a **jagir** of Sasaram, Khwaspur and Tanda to Hasan in Bihar. In lieu of the **jagir**, Hasan Khan was expected to maintain 500 cavaliers for the Lodhi emperor. It was at Sasaram that Farid spent the early years of his life. Hasan was under the influence of his fourth wife and therefore, neglected his first wife and Farid. Farid could not get the care and affection of his father and grew up in a turbulent family environment. In 1494, the intrigues and ill-treatment by his step mother, compelled young Farid to leave Sasaram for Jaunpur, which was an important centre of Islamic learning and culture and was considered as 'Shiraz of India'. Farid through his own efforts, studied there for three years and acquired **education in Arabic and Persian languages and learning**. He had such a sharp memory that he had orally mastered many Arabic and Persian books, prominent being *Sikandar Nama*, *Gulistan* and *Bostan*. Being pleased with the intelligence of Farid, Jamal Khan brought a reconciliation between Farid and his father, and persuaded Hasan to allow Farid to manage his **jagir** of Sasaram.

Farid's career began with the administration of his father's **jagir** at Sasaram in south Bihar. He very efficiently administered his father's **jagir** for twenty one years from 1497 to 1518. This was the period of Farid's training in administration. After taking the charge he tried hard to eliminate the prevalent corruption and disorder at the

jagir. His aim was to administer justice to all. Accordingly, he ordered a detailed measurement of the land and classified it on the basis of its productivity, which helped in fixing a fair and systematic revenue demand. He redressed the grievances of the peasants, punished the cruel and corrupt officials and Zamindars, improved land revenue collection, ensured justice, maintained strict discipline, and brought stability to the region, which enhanced his reputation among the Afghan nobles and laid the foundation for his rise in Bihar's politics. His success once again aroused the jealousy of his step-mother. Once again in 1518, Farid was compelled to leave his home. Soon after the death of Hasan, Ibrahim Lodhi on Farid's request, conferred on him the **jagir** of Sasaram, Khwaspur and Tanda. With royal Farman, Farid returned to south Bihar and settled down at Sasaram from 1520-21. Fed up with the intrigue of his half-brother Sulaiman (son of Hasan's favourite youngest wife), Farid sought service at the court of Sultan Muhammad Bahar Khan Lohani, the Afghan ruler of Bihar. Once during a hunting expedition with Bahar Khan, he saved his life by killing a tiger single-handedly. Pleased with the bravery of Farid, Bahar Khan gave him the title of Sher Khan. Due to his intelligence, Sher Khan was also appointed as tutor of Jalal Khan, the son of Bahar Khan. Gradually, he rose in political influence and became the Governor of south Bihar. Sher Khan's rapid rise excited the jealousy of the Lohani nobles, who incited Sultan against him, and eventually got him removed from his post.

In 1527, Sher Khan went to Agra and joined Babur's army, who had established the Mughal empire in northern India after defeating and killing Ibrahim Lodhi in the first battle of Panipat in 1526. He studied the Mughal military organization minutely, identified its inherent defects, and became convinced that it was not impossible for the Afghans to regain their lost dominions. He caught the attention of Babur who told one of his ministers, "Keep an eye on Sher Khan, he is a clever man and the marks of royalty are visible on his forehead." Babur had begun to suspect Sher Khan, and while the emperor was still considering his arrest, Sher Khan quietly slipped away from the Mughal camp at Chanderi in 1528 with the conviction that the Mughals were not invincible and that his future lay in an independent career in eastern India.

Sher Khan returned back to Bihar, where he was re-appointed as tutor and guardian of Jalal Khan. About this time in 1528, Bahar Khan died and Sher Khan was appointed as the deputy governor of Bahar Khan's minor son, Jalal Khan, by his regent mother Dudu Bibi. This position gave him real authority, and he soon became the *de facto* ruler of Bihar. He gathered a large number of loyal Afghan followers, mostly of the Sur clan, who admired his leadership and were willing to risk their lives for him in any situation. This helped strengthen his power and influence.

After **Ibrahim Lodhi** was defeated by **Babur** in the First Battle of Panipat (1526), some Afghan nobles refused to accept Mughal rule. In 1529, they placed **Mahmud Lodhi**, a younger brother of Ibrahim Lodhi, as their ruler in **Bengal** and **Bihar**, in an attempt to revive the Lodhi dynasty. However, he lacked the political strength and military resources to unite the divided Afghan factions. Babur launched campaigns to subdue these Afghan rebels and establish Mughal authority. Sher Khan did **not** openly join Mahmud Lodhi's rebellion. Instead, he used the conflict between Babur and Mahmud Lodhi to strengthen his own position in Bihar. Mahmud Lodhi *failed to withstand the Mughal attack, abandoned the battlefield and withdrew. South Bihar was returned to Jalal*

*Khan on the condition that he would acknowledge Mughal authority and pay an annual tribute. After Jalal Khan's mother died, Jalal was still a minor and titular ruler, so Sher Khan was once again made Deputy Governor of Bihar. He, thus, became the *de facto* ruler of south Bihar. It was an important victory for Sher Khan on his path to becoming the king of Delhi.*

Check Your Progress (CYP) -I

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. What was the original name of Sher Shah Suri?

Q2. How did Sher Shah Suri gain his early administrative experience?

Q3. Which Afghan chief did Sher Shah Suri initially serve under?

Q4. Who gave Farid the title of 'Sher Khan'?

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Sher Shah Suri belonged to the _____ Afghan tribe.
- b. Sher Shah Suri began his career under _____, the ruler of Bihar.
- c. Farid received his early education in _____.
- d. In 1527, Sher Khan went to Agra and joined _____ army.

12.3. CONQUESTS OF SHER SHAH SURI

Dear learners, while Humayun was busy fighting against Bhadur Shah of Gujrat, Sher Khan consolidated his position in Bihar. In 1530, Sher Khan occupied the fort of Chunar, which was under the custody of Lad Malika, the childless widow of Taj Khan. This fort was considered the gateway to Bihar. Lad Malika, troubled by the harassment of her relatives and step-sons, sought Sher Khan's protection and in return for his support, she offered him vast wealth—gems, pearls, and gold. Their alliance soon culminated in marriage in 1530. This matrimonial alliance was a calculated political move and benefited him in two significant ways: first, he secured the fortified base that controlled riverine trade routes and served as bulwark against western incursions from Mughal territories, and second, he obtained the immense treasure buried there. The occupation of Chunar marked his first significant expansion beyond Bihar. Together, these gains strengthened his financial and military position and helped him in consolidating his power.

Battle of Surajgarh: The rapid growth of Sher Khan's power excited the jealousy of the Afghan nobles of Bihar. They made common cause against him along with the support of Mahmud Shah, the king of Bengal and Jalal Khan, to dislodge Sher Khan. But Sher Khan inflicted a crushing defeat on the combined Lohani-Bengal armies at Surajgarh in 1534. This victory marked a turning point in his career and made him the undisputed master of Bihar. His ambition rose high and henceforth he began to mature plans for expelling the Mughals out of India and re-establish the Afghan Supremacy in India. He moved cautiously for the realization of his aims.

Emboldened by his win, in 1537, Sher Khan again made incursions into Bengal on the plea that Mahmud Shah had failed to pay the annual tribute to him. Mahmud Shah was defeated and killed by Sher Khan. This expansion alarmed Humayun, who proceeded towards the east to subdue Sher Khan and reclaim Bengal. Humayun was not prepared to leave Bengal to Sher Khan as it was the land of gold, rich in manufactures, and a centre for foreign trade. On his way to Bengal, Humayun first laid the siege of Chunar in 1537. The fort was under Sher Khan and was well defended by his son Jalal Khan. Humayun wasted six months to capture the fort. After six months of siege, Humayun decided to withdraw in order to pay his attention towards Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Therefore, he made peace with Sher Khan and allowed him to retain south Bihar and Chunar in return for acceptance of the suzerainty of the Mughals. Meanwhile Sher Khan occupied Gaur, the capital of Bengal and Rohtasgarh. As Humayun advanced to capture Gaur, Sher Khan hurriedly transferred all his treasure from Gaur to Rohtasgarh. Seeing Humayun's army proceeding towards him, Sher Khan strategically withdrew to avoid any decisive battle and returned to Bihar. After taking Gaur, instead of

consolidating his gains or pursuing Sher Shah, Humayun remained in the city for approximately eight months. It allowed Sher Shah Suri to capture Kara, Banaras, Sambhal and other strategic towns and cut Humayun's lines of communication with Agra. After some months, news of the activities of Sher Khan and also that of his brother Hindal who declared himself emperor at Agra were received by Humayun.

Battle of Chausa, 1539: Humayun marched east to crush Sher Shah, but owing to heavy and ongoing rains, weak discipline, and false sense of superiority, the Mughal camp grew increasingly careless. Sher Shah launched a sudden night attack near Chausa, located on the bank of river Ganges in present day Bihar, and badly defeated the army of Humayun. Thousands of Mughal soldiers were put to death by the Afghans and no less than 8,000 of them were drowned in the flood waters of the Ganges while making an attempt to cross the river. Humayun barely escaped with his life from the battlefield, swimming across the river with the help of Nizam, a water carrier, who offered him his inflated skin for swimming across the river. On reaching his capital (Agra), Humayun allowed Nizam who had saved his life to sit on the throne for half a day, and permitted him to reward his own relatives during that

time with princely presents. This defeat in battle of Chausa in 1539 greatly weakened his position. After this battle, Sher Khan assumed the title of Sher Shah, Sultan-i-Adil with the consent of all his present Afghan nobles.

Battle of Bilgram/Kannauj, 17 May 1540: Humayun returned to Agra and forgave Hindal for his outright betrayal. Humayun tried to regain his lost empire and prestige but his army was divided and poorly coordinated. In 1540, Sher Shah's forces, better positioned and disciplined, again defeated Humayun at the battle of Kannauj (also known as Bilgram), 250 kilometres east of Agra, Uttar Pradesh. Humayun fled India and Sher Shah occupied Agra, and advanced to Delhi, which fell without significant resistance in mid 1540. Upon seizing Delhi, Sher Shah proclaimed himself emperor and shifted the imperial capital there, thereby ending Mughal control over northern India for the next 15 years. Agra, Sambhal, Gwalior, Lahore and all the territory of the Mughals also came under his sway. He, thus, established the second Afghan empire in India.

Conquests of Bengal and Rohtasgarh: Following his triumphs at the Battles of Chausa and Kannauj, Sher Shah redirected his efforts to secure Bengal permanently. From 1540-41, he conducted operations to suppress rebellions by disloyal Afghan nobles and local chieftains who had exploited the power vacuum. He ensured that there remained no military governor in Bengal commanding a large military force and, thereby, none capable of revolt against the Sultan.

In 1541, Sher Shah immediately, after his accession to the throne conquered Punjab from Kamran, brother of Humayun. Kamran fled to Kabul on the approach of the Afghan armies; thus all of the Mughal territories right up to the Khyber pass fell into the hands of Sher Shah.

Conquest of Khokhars or Gokhars, 1541: To check the infiltration of the Mughals into India through the Bolan and Khyber Passes, Sher Shah launched vigorous campaigns against the Khokhars or Gakkhars tribe living in the north-west. They were loyal to the Mughals and occupied strategic territory in this region, thus posing

a major challenge. Sher Shah ravaged their lands and broke their aggressive power, but he could not bring them fully into submission.

Conquest of Malwa 1542: Qadir Khan, the ruler of Malwa did not extend help to Sher Shah in his struggle with Humayun. He refused to accept the suzerainty of Sher Shah when he became the Sultan of Delhi. Sher Shah apprehended that, probably, Malwa would be captured by Maldev of Marwar or Humayun. Therefore, he attacked Malwa and annexed it to his empire. Sher Shah appointed Sujaat Khan as his governor in Malwa. While returning from Malwa, Sher Shah forced the governor of the fort of Ranthambhor to surrender to him.

Conquest of Raisen, 1543: with Malwa under control, Sher Shah turned attention to the Rajput strongholds in the vicinity, particularly Raisen in central India held by Puran Mal on the pretext of punishing him for enslaving many Muslim women of Chanderi. In 1543, Sher Shah besieged Raisen fort, a formidable hilltop fortress. The Rajputs resisted him successfully for six months. Sher Shah, sworn on the Quran and promised to safeguard the lives, property and honour of Puran Mal and his followers if they would surrender the fort to him. Being assured thus, Puran Mal handed over the fort to Sher Shah. The Rajputs came out of the fort and encamped near Sher Shah. However, he broke his promise in the most shameless manner and massacred all the Rajputs including Puran Mal and his relatives. This victory eliminated a potential Rajput threat in central India, allowing Sher Shah to consolidate authority before pursuing campaigns in Rajasthan.

Conquest of Multan and Sind: Sher Shah extended his empire westward into Punjab by launching campaigns to secure the north-western frontiers. Accordingly, Haibat Khan, the new governor of Punjab succeeded in capturing Multan and Sindh in 1543. These conquests aimed to consolidate control over strategic routes and suppress local Afghan and tribal resistances that threatened his rule.

Conquest of Marwar, 1544: Sher Shah to curb the rise of a Rajput power by his side, initiated a major invasion of Marwar. In 1544, he brought Marwar under his control by forged letters and sowing dissensions in the army of Maldev, the ruler of Mewar. Maldev grew suspicious of his nobles and decided to retreat. Sher Shah achieved his aim without any serious fighting. Sher Shah's plan, no doubt proved successful but the Rajput cavalry made such a desperate attack on his army that he narrowly escaped. Impressed by the Rajput valour he exclaimed, "I had nearly lost the empire of Hindustan for a handful of bajra (millet)". Sher Shah left Khawas Khan and Isa Khan Niyazi to reduce Marwar to order and himself proceeded towards Mewar.

Conquest of Mewar, 1544: After the defeat and death of Rana Sanga, Mewar had grown politically weak. An usurper, Balbir, seized the throne by killing Vikramaditya, though the latter's infant son was saved by the loyal nurse Panna.. That very child, Uday Singh, became the ruler of Mewar in 1542, but was not in a strong position by that time. When Sher Shah attacked Mewar, he offered submission without resistance. Sher Shah afterwards got the submission of the Raja of Ranthambhor and certain other Rajput chiefs as well. Thus, Sher Shah reduced Rajasthan to submission. But except Marwar and Raisen, he did not annex the territories of Rajput rulers. He permitted them to govern their own territories after they acknowledged his authority. However, he kept them apart, seized their important forts, and stationed Afghan troops there to ensure they

remained under his control. This brought about the desired result. His Rajput policy has been regarded as successful.

Conquest of Kalinjar, 1545: Sher Shah's last expedition was against the Rajput fort of Kalinjar in Bundelkhand. This fort, along with Bayana, Gwalior and Dholpur, formed the chain of forts protecting Agra from the south. Its ruler Kirat Singh had been loyal to Humayun. Nearly seven months passed but the fort could not be captured. When all methods of occupying the fort failed, Sher Shah ordered the walls of the fort to be blown up by the gunpowder. One of the rockets, when fired against the gate of the fort, rebounded and fell into the heap of ammunition lying near the place where Sher Shah was standing. It led to an explosion in which Sher Shah was seriously burnt. He won but lost his life on 22 May 1545.

Extent of Empire: Thus, within a short period of five years, Sher Shah Suri was able to bring under his control a substantial part of northern India except Kashmir, Assam, Gujrat and some petty states. The frontiers of his empire extended from Punjab to Malwa and from Bengal to Sind. He dislodged the Mughal emperor Humayun and founded the Suri dynasty. With large areas under his control, he was able to provide a sort of uniformity to the administrative system of India. However, soon after Sher Shah's death in 1545, most of the Rajput States once again reasserted their independence and became powerful to be won by Akbar.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- II

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. When and between whom was the Battle of Chausa fought?

Q2. When and between whom was the Battle of Bilgram fought?

Q3. Who was Hindal?

Q4 How and where did Sher Shah Suri die?

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Sher Shah annexed _____ after defeating its ruler, Maldev.
- b. The famous fort of _____ in Rajasthan was captured by Sher Shah through clever strategy.
- c. Through his marriage with Lad Malika, Sher Shah gained control of the fort of _____.
- d. The Battle of Chausa was fought in the year _____.

12.3.1 Factors Responsible for Sher Shah's Military Achievements

Dear learners, following factors were responsible for the military achievements of Sher Shah Suri:

- **Strong and Determined Leadership:** Sher Shah was an ambitious and decisive ruler. His personal courage, swift decision-making, presence on the battlefield inspired confidence among his troops and ability to act firmly in crises helped him suppress rebellions and expand the empire.
- **Superior Military Organization:** To strengthen his army, Sher Shah ensured regular payment to soldiers. The soldiers were paid in cash whereas most of the officers were given the *jagirs*. Like Ala-ud-din Khalji, he re-organized his army by introducing descriptive rolls (Chehra) to record the personal details of each soldier and the branding (Dagh) of horses. These measures helped curb corruption and stopped nobles from claiming pay for non-existent soldiers and unregistered horses. This reduced corruption and made the army more efficient and reliable.
- **Service in Babur's army:** His short association with Babur helped him understand Mughal military strengths and weaknesses, which later proved useful in his successful campaigns against Humayun.

- **Efficient Intelligence System:** Sher Shah organized an extensive network of spies who reported directly to him. They kept him informed about enemy movements, internal rebellions, and important political developments. This enabled him to detect conspiracies, control nobles, and take timely action.
- **Use of Strategic Forts and Defensive Measures:** He built and repaired forts at key locations, using them as bases for defence and expansion. Forts like Rohtasgarh became strategically important.
- **Mobility and Use of Cavalry:** Sher Shah emphasized a fast-moving cavalry force. His soldiers were trained for quick attacks, which helped him defeat even larger Mughal armies.
- **Ability to Unite Afghan Nobles:** He tactfully handled rival Afghan clans, bringing them under his command. This unity strengthened his forces against the Mughals.
- **Knowledge of Terrain and Guerrilla Tactics:** Having risen from a *Jagirdar* to a king, he understood local geography deeply. He used guerrilla tactics, surprise attacks, and strategic retreats effectively.
- **Efficient Revenue System:** He increased land revenue, improved measurement, and prevented corruption among revenue officials. A strong treasury allowed him to fund continuous military campaigns.
- **Experience of Early Struggles:** Sher Shah Suri's early life was marked by several hardships— managing his father's *jagir*, conflicts with Nuhani nobles, and service under Afghan rulers, and Mughal Emperor Babur — gave him practical experience in administration, politics, and warfare. These experiences shaped his character and helped him rise as a powerful ruler.
- **Strong Economic and Administrative Base:** His revenue reforms proper land measurement, classification, and cash revenue strengthened the state treasury, allowing him to maintain a large and well-equipped army.
- Sher Shah was superior to Humayun in preparing and planning battles and in fighting the enemy. Sher Shah had more experience, more knowledge of strategies, and more organizing capacity.
- **Political Diplomacy:** He used diplomacy to weaken his enemies before confronting them. His agreements and alliances with local chiefs allowed him to avoid unnecessary wars. He knew fully well where to make a tactical retreat, where to strike at the enemy, how to sow dissension in the army camp, how to make friendship with the enemy of the enemy, how to pretend to retreat. In fact, he knew how to win. Following are some of the main instances of Sher Shah's political diplomacy:
 - a. Sher Shah's diplomatic surrender to Humayun at Chunar fort.
 - b. Sher's false pretense of withdrawing but a sudden attack at Humayun in the battle of Kannauj.
 - c. Sowing dissension in Maldev's army by forged letters.
 - d. Raising the cry of Jihad to infuse enthusiasm among his soldiers.
 - e. Going back from his promise with Rajput ruler Puranmal Chauhan and sudden attack by Sher Shan on him.

- f. Exploitation of Humayun's administrative weaknesses including opium dependence and factional rivalries among nobles.

Check Your Progress (CYP) -III

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. Give two reasons responsible for the military achievements of Sher Shah Suri.

Q2. Give two reasons for the Humayun's defeat at the hands of Sher Shah Suri.

Q3. How did Sher Shah's personal qualities enhance his military achievements?

Q4. How did Sher Shah's intelligence and espionage system strengthen his army?

12.4 LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, in this lesson we learnt how Sher Shah Suri rose from humble beginnings to become one of India's most remarkable rulers. The hardships he faced—poverty, family neglect, unstable jobs, political rivalry, and

constant displacement—taught him discipline and resilience. His determination, diplomacy, military skills, clever planning, good timing, and strategic alliances, helped him rise quickly and strengthen his power. His successors carried forward these policies, which helped in the expansion of Afghan control and helped consolidate the administrative and political power of the Sur Empire.

12.5 GLOSSARY

Jagir: *Jagirs* were an important part of the **medieval Indian administrative and revenue system**, helping the ruler maintain control and reward loyalty. A **jagir** was land given by a ruler to a noble or officer in return for service. The *Jagirdar* could **collect revenue** from it but did not own it.

Guerilla Tactics: Guerrilla tactics are a style of irregular warfare in which small, mobile groups use surprise attacks, raids, and hit-and-run methods against a larger, less flexible enemy. These tactics rely on speed, knowledge of the terrain, and stealth rather than direct, open battle.

12.6 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1. Give a detailed account of the early life and conquests of Sher Shah Suri.
- Q2. Give a detailed account of Sher Shah Suri rise to power.
- Q3. Give a brief sketch of the early career of Sher Shah Suri. Explain his military exploits. What was the impact of his military exploits?

12.7 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1. State the main events leading to Sher Shah's accession to the throne of Delhi.
- Q2. Briefly describe the expansion of Afghan power under Sher Shah Suri.
- Q3. Discuss the factors responsible for Sher Shah Suri's military achievements.

12.4. ANSWER KEY

CYP1

- Q1. See Section: 12.2
- Q2. See Section: 12.2
- Q3. See Section: 12.2
- Q4. See Section: 12.2

Fill in the blanks

- a. Sur
- b. Bahar Khan Lohani

- c. Jaunpur
- d. Babur's

CYP II

- Q1. See Section: 12.3
- Q2. See Section: 12.3
- Q3. See Section: 12.3
- Q4. See Section: 12.3

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Marwar
- b. Raisen
- c. Chunar
- d. 1539

CYP III

- Q1. See Sub Section: 12.3.1
- Q2. See Sub Section: 12.3.1
- Q3. See Sub Section: 12.3.1
- Q4. See Sub Section: 12.3.1

12.5. SUGGESTED READING

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- K.R. Qanungo, *Sher Shah Suri and His Times*, **Calcutta**: S.C. Sarkar & Sons, 1965.
- Satish Chandra, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1997.
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SHER SHAH SUR'S PUBLIC WELFARE MEASURES

STRUCTURE

- 13.0. Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 13.1. Introduction**
- 13.2. Sher Shah Suri's Public Welfare Measures: Land Revenue Reforms**
- 13.3. Sher Shah Suri's Other Reforms**
- 13.4. Let us sum up**
- 13.5. Glossary**
- 13.6. Examination Oriented Questions**
- 13.7. Lesson End Exercises**
- 13.8. Answer Key**
- 13.9. Suggested Readings**

13.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Dear learners, the objective of this lesson is to enable you to:

- Identify the major public works carried out under Sher Shah Suri, such as roads, bridges, wells, *sarais*, and irrigation facilities.
- Understand how public works undertaken by Sher Shah Suri helped in strengthening trade, communication, and administrative efficiency.
- Understand the overall impact of these welfare measures on the stability and prosperity of the empire.

Learning Outcomes

Dear learners, after going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- The concept of public welfare under Sher Shah Suri.

- How Sher Shah Suri's public welfare activities reflected his policy of good governance, inclusiveness, and concern for people's well-being.
- How Sher Shah Suri's public works contributed to the welfare of his subjects and promoted economic stability in the empire.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, Sher Shah Suri believed that the strength of an empire lay in the welfare of its people. Guided by this vision, he undertook numerous public works to improve the daily lives of his subjects and strengthen the administration of the empire. A good network of roads, *sarais*, *dak chowkies*, agrarian reforms, strict law and order were developed to promote trade, ensure safety, support agriculture, and enhance communication across his vast kingdom. These public works reflect Sher Shah Suri's commitment to good governance, economic prosperity, and the overall well-being of the people. So, Students, in this lesson we will examine the major public works undertaken by him during his short span of rule. Although his reign lasted only a few years, the public works he undertook were remarkable in vision and execution. They left a rich and lasting legacy that continued to benefit the people long after his death and played an important role in shaping the administrative and economic foundation of medieval India.

13.2 SHER SHAH SURI'S PUBLIC WELFARE MEASURES: LAND REVENUE REFORMS

Dear learners, Sher Shah had acquired sufficient experience or first-hand knowledge of survey, assessment, settlement of land revenue, problems of cultivators while administering his father's Jagir at Sasaram (Bihar) for twenty-one years from 1497 to 1518. On his accession to the throne, the most notable contribution of Sher Shah was his reform of the revenue system. Sher Shah had the belief that "If I oppress the cultivators they will abandon their villages, and the country will be ruined and deserted, and it will be a long time before it again becomes prosperous". Satish Chandra rightly observes, "Since there was plenty of land available for cultivation in those days, the desertion of the villages by the peasants in case of oppression was a real threat and it helped in putting a limit on the exploitation of peasants by the rulers". Therefore, he introduced certain improvements in the method of collection and assessment of land revenue, keeping in mind the interests of the cultivators. On his accession to the throne of Delhi, he introduced land reforms with three main objectives in his mind: to improve the conditions of the cultivators, to increase agricultural production, and to increase the revenue of the state.

Before Sher Shah's reign, the land revenue was generally collected from peasants on the basis of rough estimation or through the following crop-sharing arrangements:

- i. **Ghalla Bakshi/Bhaoii/Batai:** Ghalla Bakhshi was an older, simpler method of revenue assessment through crop division. Under this system, the government officials collected the government share from the farmers at the time of harvest in kind. Under this method, the peasants and the state shared the risk of weather equally. This was done in the presence of both the parties in accordance with agreement. The

main drawbacks of this system were that under this system, government income could not be ascertained and corruption could not be checked. Batai was of three kinds:

- a. **Khet Batai:** The share was decided when the crop was still standing in the fields, and the field would be physically marked to indicate the different shares.
 - b. **Lang Batai:** where the crop was divided between the peasant and the landlord without grain being separated from the husk.
 - c. **Rasi Batai:** means dividing the grain after it has been separated from the husk.
- ii. **Kankut/Danabandi:** ‘Kan’ means grain and ‘Kut’ means estimate. Land was measured, but revenue was fixed as a share (often 1/3) of the estimated yield *on the basis of actual inspection and past experience*.

But Sher Shah aimed to replace the old system of rough estimation with a more accurate method in which land revenue was collected on the basis of careful measurement of land. The method of collecting land revenue after the careful measurement of land came to be known as the *zabti* system, which laid the foundation for later Mughal revenue reforms. Under this system, Sher Shah ordered his revenue officials to carry out a systematic survey and measurement of cultivable land across the empire known as *Zabti-i-Har-Sal* (assessment every year). Land was systematically measured using the *Gaz-i-Sikandar* (Sikandar Lodi’s yard) with a hempen rope (*tanab*) as the standard instrument. This scientific measurement eliminated guesswork and reduced corruption. It is important to note here that it was not Sher Shah Suri who first got the land measured. It was Ala ud-din Khilji who first devised the scheme of measurement of lands and tried to improve the system of assessment prevalent in the country, but it was neither as comprehensive nor as well-intentioned as that of Sher Shah. The system introduced by the Sher Shah primarily aimed at the welfare of the peasants and the expansion of cultivation.

To make the assessment more accurate, all cultivable land based on fertility was divided into three classes – good, middle and bad. Different revenue rates were fixed for each category. The average produce of the three categories was calculated to determine the per-Bigha yield (*rai*). One third of the total produce was fixed as the state’s share. The government revenue could be paid either in cash or in kind, but payment in cash was preferred by the state. The system aimed for a direct relationship between the state and the cultivators, reducing the role of intermediaries like *zamindars*. Revenue officials were ordered to maintain a proper account of total land holdings of farmers as well as cultivable land. Each cultivator received from the state a *patta* (title deed) specifying their land area and the state demand that is the revenue that he was required to pay. In return, he was to sign a *qabuliyat* (deed of agreement) accepting these terms. No official was allowed to charge anything extra. Each cultivator had to pay two more charges: *jaribana* (surveyor’s fee) and *mahasilana* (tax collector’s fee) ranging from 2.5 to 5 percent of revenue paid by each cultivator. In addition to this, every cultivator was also required to pay an additional cess, like an insurance fund, amounting to 2.5% of the total revenue due from him in kind. The grain, thus collected, was stored in state granaries and sold at cheap prices at the time of famine or natural calamity to support the peasants in times of need. Sher Shah gave clear instructions to his revenue officers to be lenient at the time of assessment, but show no mercy at the time of collection of revenue.

The most significant feature of his land revenue system was that he did away with the authority of the middlemen and established a direct relation with the cultivators who were encouraged to pay their dues direct to the government treasury. That is why his land revenue system has been called the *ryotwari* system or system of cultivators or *ryots*. Nor should the village headmen and *zamindars* be allowed to pass their burden on to the shoulders of the weaker sections. He also passed orders that while the army was on the move, it was not to destroy the crops of the peasants. In cases where crops were damaged due to marching of soldiers, drought, or natural calamities, advances or loans were given to the peasants to compensate for the loss.

Though Sher Shah Suri tried to establish a uniform method of assessment throughout his dominions, but states like Multan and Rajasthan were excluded from measurement on account of special circumstances and the old system of *batai* (crop sharing) discussed above continued there, with the state share being only one-fourth.

The Defects of the Revenue System are as follows:

Dear learners, the main defect of the system was that the share of the government was fixed at one-third of the average produce of the three kinds of land, i.e., good, middle and bad. The result was that the good land was undercharged while the bad land was overcharged. Secondly, the state demand of one-third of the produce together with fees of surveyors and collectors and the additional cess of 2.5%, overburdened the peasants. Thirdly, the system required careful measurement of land, detailed record-keeping, trained officers, and constant supervision, making it more complex and expensive. Fourthly, faulty survey work and corrupt officials often led to incorrect assessments and increased the chances of bribery. Lastly, he showed concern only for peasants and *zamindars* who remained fully loyal, obeyed the imperial regulations, and paid their dues without any protest. If somebody disobeyed the state's orders, his property was seized, and his animals, women and children were enslaved.

Thus, it can be said that Sher Shah Suri land revenue system, based on measurement, classification (although a system of measurement of the sown area was very old, but had apparently fallen into disuse in north India), and standardized assessment, laid the foundation of future agrarian systems in the country. It ensured both state **prosperity** and **peasant welfare**. This efficient system of revenue settlement, based on the actual measurement of land under cultivation, was subsequently developed by Akbar and it survived in British India under the name of Rayatwari settlement.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- I

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. What was ***zabt* system** under Sher Shah Suri?

Q2. What is meant by the *ghalla bakshi* system?.

Q3. What was the purpose of Sher Shah Suri in issuing *patta* and *qabuliat* to each cultivator?

Q4. Write two defects of the Sher Shah Suri's revenue system?

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Under Sher Shah Suri the state's share of the produce was generally _____ of the total produce.
- b. Under _____ system, land was systematically measured using the Gaz-i-Sikandar with a hempen rope as the standard instrument.
- c. *Ghalla Bakshi* was a method of _____ collection.
- d. Sher Shah Suri system of revenue settlement, based on the _____ under cultivation

13.3 SHER SHAH SURI'S OTHER REFORMS

Dear learners, let us now study other reforms of Sher Shah Suri:

Equal Justice to All: Sher Shah Suri was inspired by high ideals of justice. Chief *qazi* was the head of the department of justice. There was a *qazi* in each district and city. Qazis tried the criminal cases, while the chief *munsifs* in *sarkar* and *munsifs* and *amins* in Pargana decided the civil cases. There was another judicial dignitary called *mir adl* (judges). In villages, ***muqaddam*** (*lambardar/chaudhari*), the village headman was held responsible for all crimes committed within the village's jurisdiction. If the *muqaddam* of the village, where the crime was committed, failed to capture the culprit, he was liable to severe punishment. All higher officers and courts had full authority to hear appeals against the decisions arrived at by their junior counterparts. Sher Shah himself was the highest court of appeal and the cases of high nobles and officials were always decided by him personally. His decision was final and could not be challenged anywhere in the empire. The criminal law of the time was very hard and punishments were severe. He showed no preferences even for his near relatives in matters of administering justice. The object of punishment was not to reform, but to set an example so that others may not do the same. He ensured that the law was applied equally to the rich and the poor, without discrimination of rank or religion. Officials were held strictly accountable for maintaining law and order, and they were punished if they failed in their duties. Roads were made safe for travellers and merchants, and if local officials could not catch a criminal, they were required to compensate the victim for the loss. Nizamudin Ahmed, author of *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, wrote in the last quarter of the sixteenth century that during the reign of Sher Shah a merchant could travel and sleep in the desert, without fear of being robbed of his merchandise. Such was the fear of punishment and respect for his justice that even robbers and thieves guarded the goods of merchants. Sher Shah's firm yet fair administration earned him a reputation as a ruler who placed justice above personal or political considerations. His reputation as a just king survived long after his death and the downfall of the dynasty.

Roads: Sher Shah is remembered as one of the greatest architects of roads in medieval India. He understood that a good network of roads and effective means of communication were essential for sound administration, trade and commerce, imperial defence or rapid movement of troops. His road-building programme unified his empire and boosted economic growth by making markets more accessible. To connect the important places of his kingdom he built four national highways:

- Sher Shah repaired, extended, and reorganised the ancient Uttarapath and named it *Sadak-e-Azam*, which might be identified with the modern day Grand Trunk Road. It ran from Sonargaon in East Bengal through Agra, Delhi and Lahore to river Indus in the west. It was 1500 *kos* in length. It became one of the most important arteries of communication in India. This road was later used and further improved by the Mughals and British.
- From Agra to Burhanpur, connecting it with the roads leading to the sea-ports of Gujrat.
- From Agra to Jodhpur and Chittor, connected it to the roads leading to the sea-ports of Gujrat.
- From Lahore to Multan, which was the starting point for caravans to west and Central Asia.

These roads were lined with trees, wells and *sarais* (rest houses) to provide comfort to the travellers. He placed milestones at regular intervals to mark distances. These roads connected the empire from east to west and north to south.

Sarais: For the convenience of the travellers, along the highways were constructed not less than 1700 *sarais* (*kos minars*) at a distance of every 4 miles. The *sarais* provided warehouses, stables for horses, cooking facilities and drinking water for the travellers. A custodian (Shahna) was appointed in each Sarai to safeguard the goods of the traders. To meet the expenses of the custodian, rent-free land was granted in the surrounding area. He also ordered markets to be set up in every Sarai, turning them into centres of trade. Many of the *sarais* gradually turned into **Mandis**, where peasants came to sell their agricultural produce. Over time, these *sarais* became the nuclei of growing towns in which trade and handicrafts flourished. Each Sarai had a well and a mosque with an Imam and Muazzin. He ensured that every Sarai along his roads had separate accommodation for Hindu and Muslim travellers. To respect their food customs, Brahmin cooks prepared meals for Hindus, while Muslim cooks were appointed to cook for Muslim travellers. This arrangement made the *sarais* comfortable, safe, and culturally welcoming for all. This shows Sher Shah's concern for the convenience and cultural needs of people using the roads. A police official, known as the *shiqdar*, was appointed in every Sarai to keep peace and prevent crime. His roads and *sarais* have rightly been called 'the Arteries of the Empire'.

Postal Arrangements: Sher Shah Suri developed a well-organized and efficient **postal (*dak*) system**, to maintain effective control over his vast empire. For collection of news and postal services, the *dak chowkis* were set up at regular intervals of **2 kos (about 6–7 km)** along all major roads. These were often located near or inside the *sarais*. At each *dak chowki* two horsemen were kept ready to carry the royal mail in the up and down direction. By relays of horses messages were passed swiftly from one *chowki* to the next, and by this means, news from a distance of 300 *kos* could reach in a day. Foot messengers were also employed. This allowed Sher Shah to keep close control over distant provinces. The entire postal system was under strict state supervision. It was mainly used for official correspondence, intelligence reports, military orders and administration. The system was not new to this country but it was revived and improved by Sher Shah Suri.

Reformed Currency: With regards to the coinage, in place of the debased coins of mixed metals of earlier times, Sher Shah introduced the tri-metalism (gold, silver and copper) coins of fixed standards, which came to characterize the Mughal coinage system. The gold coin was called **Mohur**. The silver coin weighing 178 grains equivalent to 11.5 grams was named *rupia*. His silver *rupia* became the standard coin and laid the foundation of the modern Indian rupee. The ruler was also responsible for the introduction of the copper coins which were known as *Dam*. The silver rupee and the copper *dam* had their subdivisions of halves, quarters, eighths and sixteenths. The ratio between the silver coins and various gold coins were fixed. Coins were of uniform weight, purity, and design throughout the empire. The same coins were accepted in all regions, reducing confusion and fraud. Coin mints were placed under **strict government supervision**. This prevented debasement and ensured public confidence in currency. Akbar later adopted Sher Shah's currency system with minor modifications.

Encouragement to Trade: Sher Shah Suri took several comprehensive measures to encourage trade and commerce, recognising that economic prosperity strengthened imperial administration. Roads were repaired and extended to link important towns and markets, thereby facilitating the movement of goods within the empire. Sarais were built and maintained to provide safe lodging, storage, and markets for merchants. Sher Shah ensured the safety of traders and their goods by enforcing strict law and order and holding local officials like *muqaddams* (headmen of villages) and *zamindars* responsible for thefts on roads in areas under their jurisdiction. If the local officials failed to apprehend the culprit then they were made liable to compensate the victim for the loss incurred. Sher Shah also urged the local and other officials not to harass travellers or merchants and prohibited the confiscation of a merchant's property in cases of accidental death without heirs.. This policy created fear among criminals and a sense of responsibility among officials, resulting in peace, security, and confidence among traders and common people. By introducing a standardised currency system and enforcing uniform weights and measures, he effectively reduced fraud and ensured fairness in trade. He laid down that only at two points custom duties should be levied- one when the mercantile commodities entered the frontier of his kingdom and second custom duty was to be paid at the place of their sale. All other internal custom houses were abolished, thus, encouraging the free movement of goods within the empire. These measures together led to the expansion of trade, urban growth, and economic prosperity.

Intelligence System: Sher Shah Suri in order to ensure effective administration and strict law and order revived the *dak chawkies* and spy system of Ala-ud-din Khilji. Darogha-i-Dak Chowki was appointed as the head of this department. Hosts of news writers, news runners and spies (*barids*) were posted in towns, markets, and even in the households of nobles. They were appointed at various levels of the administration and often worked in disguise as traders, travellers, or religious persons. They sent regular and confidential reports directly to the Sultan, keeping him informed about the conduct of officials, the condition of the provinces, prices of goods and public grievances. The spy system was closely linked with the postal system, which ensured quick transmission of information. Through this constant surveillance, Sher Shah Suri kept a tight check on corruption, conspiracies, price violations, and rebellions, enabling him to enforce his policies firmly and maintain strong central authority throughout his empire.

Police Arrangements: There was no separate department of police in the time of Sher Shah Suri. The army was required to protect the country from foreign invasions, internal disturbances and maintain peace. The chief *shiqdar* in *sarkar* and *shiqdar* in *pargana* were required to keep a watch on thieves, robbers, and other crimes and punish them. So far the villages were concerned, Sher Shah strictly enforced the principle of local responsibility, which made village headmen directly accountable for local crimes. This system, combined with a clear administrative hierarchy and severe punishments, significantly reduced crime rates and ensured safety for travellers and common man. During his reign, such strict law and order prevailed that even if an old white-haired woman walked along the road with a basket full of gold ornaments on her head, out of fear of Sher Khan no thief or robber would dare come near her. Such was the fear inspired by Sher Khan's strict administration, as recorded by Abbas Khan Sarwani.

Tolerance and Equality: Though in his personal life, Sher Shah was an orthodox Sunni Muslim, but his general

policy towards the Hindus, who formed the majority of his subjects, was one of toleration and good will. He was wise enough to understand that without the support and cooperation of the Hindus, his Empire could not remain stable. Accordingly, he allowed the Hindus to follow their religious practices without any interference of the government. Many Hindus were appointed to important administrative posts both in civil and military departments on the basis of merit owing to political and administrative necessity. A large part of his infantry consisted of the Hindus and one of his best and trusted generals was Barmazid Gaur whom he sent to pursue Humayun after the battles of Chausa and Bilgram. In the *sarais* built along the roads, separate accommodation was provided for Hindu and Muslim travellers, with Brahmins cooking food for Hindus and Muslim cooks for Muslims, showing respect for religious customs.

However, it will not be correct to say that Sher Shah was altogether free from religious bias. On more than one occasion he successfully exploited the religious feelings of his Muslim followers by declaring a holy war or Jihad against Rajput kings like Puran Mal of Raisin, Maldev of Jodhpur and during the siege of Kalinjar. However, leaving aside these acts of intolerance during his campaigns against the Hindu kings, no attempt was made throughout his reign to break idols of Hindu Gods, or to demolish temples or to carry on organized propaganda against the Hindus. He believed that the Hindus must be conciliated by a policy of justice and toleration.

Charitable endowments and grants: Sher Shah mitigated the harshness of his strict rule with acts of generosity and charity. He ordered his high officials to maintain records of all the disabled, and handicapped persons in his empire. Arrangements were made for providing them with the means of subsistence. He maintained *langar khana* at his capital for the poor and the needy people, on which 500 *tolas* of gold were spent every day.

Through these acts of charity and public welfare, Sher Shah aimed to promote compassion, harmony, and social justice throughout his empire.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- I

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. Name four roads built by Sher Shah Suri.

Q2. What role did **Dak-Chowkis** play in Sher Shah Suri's administration?

Q3. What was the importance of *sarais* built by Sher Shah Suri?

Q4. How did Sher Shah Suri promote trade and commerce through public works?

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Sher Shah Suri's Sadak-e-Azam connected Bengal to _____.
- b. Postal stations were known as _____.
- c. Sher Shah introduced a standard silver coin called the _____.
- d. Sher Shah constructed rest houses known as _____ along the highways.

13.4. LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, in this lesson we noted that though Sher Shah ruled only for five years, but his public welfare measures such as improved infrastructure, security, economic stability, justice, fair revenue, and religious tolerance—made his short rule one of the most effective in medieval Indian history and left a lasting impact on India. He believed that the king must govern for the benefits of his subjects. His policies were guided by justice and public welfare rather than religious bias, which helped him maintain peace and harmony in his empire, and this collectively improved the quality of life for his subjects. It is also important to note that he was more a reformer than an innovator except in certain features of his land revenue system. He infused new energy into the old institutions borrowed from his predecessors, improved them wherever necessary, and closely monitored their work to make the state serve the people effectively. His policies laid the foundation for Mughal administration and earned him a lasting place in Indian history.

13.5. GLOSSARY

Sarais : Rest houses.

Barid : official reporters or spies.

Jihad : holy war against non-Muslims or infidels.

Langar Khana : free kitchen for poor and destitute people.

Zamindars *zamindars* were local landholders who collected land revenue from peasants on behalf of the ruler. They acted as intermediaries between the state and the cultivators and kept a portion of the revenue as their share. They also helped maintain law and order in their regions.

Ryot: cultivator or peasant.

Patta: *patta* was a legal document issued by Sher Shah Suri to the cultivator. It contained details of the land held by the farmer, the area of the land, and the amount of revenue to be paid to the state.

Qabuliyat: *qabuliyat* was a written agreement given by the cultivator to the state. In this document, the farmer accepted (*qabul*) the terms mentioned in the *patta* and agreed to pay the fixed land revenue.

13.3. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1. Critically examine the land-revenue reforms of Sher Shah Suri.
- Q2. Why are Sher Shah Suri's land revenue reforms regarded as a precursor to Akbar's system?
- Q3. Examine the nature and significance of Sher Shah Suri's public works. How did they contribute to administrative efficiency and public welfare?
- Q4. Describe the public reforms of Sher Shah Suri.

13.4. LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1. Analyse the role of Sher Shah Suri's public works in strengthening internal trade and commerce.
- Q2. "Sher Shah Suri's public works were inspired by a genuine concern for the welfare of the people." Comment.

13.5. ANSWER KEY

CYPI

Q1. See Section: 13.2.

Q2. See Section: 13.2.

Q3. See Section: 13.2.

Q4. See Section: 13.2.

Fill in the Blanks

- a. one-third
- b. Zabti
- c. Revenue
- d. actual measurement of land

CYP II

Q1. See Section: 13.3.

Q2. See Section: 13.3.

Q3. See Section: 13.3.

Q4. See Section: 13.3.

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Panjab
- b. Dak Chowkis
- c. Rupiya
- d. sarais

13.6. SUGGESTED READINGS

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ADMINISTRATION UNDER SHER SHAH: SARKAR, PARGANA AND MILITARY

STRUCTURE

- 14.0. Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 14.1. Introduction**
- 14.2. Administration Under Sher Shah Suri: Sarkar**
- 14.3. Administration Under Sher Shah Suri: Pargana**
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- 14.7. Examination Oriented Questions**
- 14.8. Lesson End Exercises**
- 14.9. Answer Key**
- 14.10. Suggested Readings**

14.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Dear learners, the objective of this lesson is to enable you to:

- Explain the main features of Sher Shah Suri's administrative system.
- Identify the key administrative divisions and officials under Sher Shah Suri.
- Evaluate Sher Shah Suri's contribution to efficient governance in medieval India.

Learning Outcomes

Dear learners, after going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- The division of the empire into provinces called **Sarkars** and their importance in governance.

- The role of Parganas as smaller administrative units and their significance in local administration.
- The organization and efficiency of Sher Shah's military system.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, no ruler, however powerful, could administer the state alone. Therefore, from the very start of their reign, every ruler had to establish a well-organized administrative system with a structured chain of officials heading different departments. These officers did not limit or challenge the Sultan's power; instead, they functioned as his agents, faithfully executing his commands and policies. Therefore, Sher Shah also in order to administer his vast empire in north India laid the foundations of a strong and efficient administrative system that even the Mughals, particularly **Akbar**, continued and refined. His administrative system was a combination of traditional practices and innovative reforms. Like all rulers of the Sultanate of Delhi, Sher Shah was a despot and was at the top of the central administration. His administration aimed at strengthening the central authority while protecting the interests of peasants, traders, and common people. He personally supervised the administration with great diligence to make the machinery of the state serve public welfare. Abul Fazl, the court historian of Emperor Akbar, wrote admiringly of Sher Shah's administrative abilities despite being loyal to the Mughals. Students, in this lesson we will study the highly efficient administration of Sher Shah, featuring a well-organized system of *sarkars* (modern day districts) and sub-districts called *parganas* (modern day *tehsil*), and an efficient military system.

14.2 ADMINISTRATION UNDER SHER SHAH SURI: SARKAR

Dear learners, right from his youth, Sher Shah devoted himself to the pursuit of learning and to the study of the art of government. He found an opportunity to put his knowledge into practice when his father entrusted him with the administration of *jagir* at Sasaram in south Bihar. He very efficiently administered his father's *jagir* for long twenty one years from 1497 to 1518. There, he devoted the whole of his time to the affairs of the state, and by the time he attained supreme authority, he had become thoroughly acquainted with every detail of civil administration, as no other Indian ruler, before or since, has been.

Like all rulers of India, Sher Shah was also assisted by a group of officials who helped him in carrying out the day to day administration of the state. He was a despot and was at the top of the central administration. But unlike his predecessors, he was a benevolent and an enlightened king, exercising power for the benefit of the people. Despite his benevolence, all administrative powers, policy decisions and civil and military powers were concentrated in his hands. He himself took all the decisions and his ministers and nobles had to simply carry them out. He was assisted by four important ministers:

- **Diwan-i-Wazarat (Finance department):** it was headed by *wazir* (finance minister). It looked after the revenue and financial administration. It supervised revenue collection, expenditure, accounts, salary disbursement, and allotted revenue assignments (*iqta*) as directed by the Sultan. Besides, he exercised a general supervisory authority over other ministers.
- The **Diwan-i-Ariz** (military department): It was headed by Ariz-i-Mamalik. He was not the commander-

in-chief of the army, but was in charge of its recruitment, organization and discipline. He had to make arrangements for payment of salaries of the troops and officers and looked after all sort of supplies to the army on the field of battle.

- The third ministry was the **Diwan-i-Risalat**. The incharge of this department worked as foreign minister of the state. He maintained close relations with ambassadors and envoys to and from foreign states, and managed diplomatic correspondence. Sometimes the charity and endowment department too, was placed under him.
- The fourth ministry was known as **Diwan-i-Insha (department of correspondence)**: It was headed by Dabir-i-Mumalik. It was responsible for managing diplomatic and administrative correspondence between the Sultan and other rulers, and other local executive officers. It issued royal *farmans* and received letters from subordinate officials. Government records, too, were in his charge.

Besides them there were several minor officers, whose heads were not ministers but enjoyed equal consideration from the king. The one was Diwan-i-Qaza headed by chief *qazi*. He was the head of the administration of justice only next to the king. Besides this, he also decided cases, whether in the first instance, or appeals from the courts of provincial *qazis*. The others were like Diwan-i-Saman, who looked after the royal household and personal safety of the emperor, Barid-i-Mamalik was the head of the Intelligence department, and it was his duty to report every important incident to the king. He had a host of news-writers and spies who were posted in towns, markets and in every important locality. The Sultan kept himself informed of the movements of the people through spies. He also made arrangements for the posting of news-carriers at various places to carry the royal Dak.

Sher Shah Suri's empire was divided into 47 *sarkars* (districts). Each Sarkar had two chief officials :

a. **Chief Shiqdar:** Each district was under the charge of a i also known as Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran. They were appointed by the king and were accountable only to him. He was not given unlimited powers and was regularly directed through royal *farman* to implement new rules and regulations. He was assisted by a contingent of police force varying from 2,000 to 5,000 depending on the character of peasantry and the geographical location of the *sarkar*. It helped him in maintaining law and order and to undertake expeditions against the rebellious *zamindars*. He was also to supervise the work of the *shiqdar* of parganas in his district.

b. **Chief Munsif:** also called Munsif-i-Munsifan. The chief *munsif* was primarily a judge and had to decide civil cases. He was also responsible for the assessment of land revenue and settling the boundary disputes between the Parganas. He also supervised the work of the *munsifs* and *amins* in the *parganas*.

Both these officers were undoubtedly assisted by numerous junior officers and subordinates in the discharge of their duties. The spies informed the king about the conduct of the officers. Anyone who was found failing in his work was punished.

According to Qanungo, under Sher Shah Sur there was no larger administrative unit than the *sarkar*, the *iqtas* or *subhas* was the creation of Akbar.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- I

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. What was meant by *sarkar* in Sher Shah Suri's administrative system?

Q2. How did the *sarkar* function as a link between the central government and the *parganas*?

Q3. Name the main officers appointed in a *sarkar*.

Q4. What were the duties of the *Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran*?

Q5. What functions were performed by the *Munsif-i-Munsifan*?

Fill in the Blanks

- a. The Munsif-i-Munsifan supervised _____ collection in the *sarkar*.
- b. Sher Shah Suri's empire was divided into _____ *sarkars*.
- c. The department of Diwan-i-Insha was headed by _____.
- d. Each Sarkar under the charge of a Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran was appointed by the _____.

14.3 ADMINISTRATION UNDER SHER SHAH SURI: PARGANA

Dear learners, *sarkars* were further divided into *parganas* (sub-districts).

- a. **Shiqdar:** Pargana was under the charge of *shiqdar* (military officer). He looked after law and order, general administration and collected revenues. After realizing the revenues from the *muqaddams*, he sent it to the higher officials of the Sarkar who presented it to the king and personally explained accounts to him. He was also responsible for punishing the rebellious people. He was directly appointed by the king and was frequently transferred under Sher Shah.
- b. **Munsif or Amin:** He was appointed by the government to measure the boundaries of the village, the area under cultivation and to make arrangements for the settlement of land revenue. He also tried civil and revenue cases and enjoyed the same status as the *shiqdar*. Sher Shah himself observed that there was no job so profitable as of *amins* and therefore, it was his policy to change Amins every year or two so that the profits might go to a larger number of the officials.
- c. **Fotedar or Khazanadar (treasurer):** The treasurer was the next important officer. All collections were deposited with him and he maintained an account of the income and expenditure of the Pargana.
- d. **Karkuns (writers):** he appointed two *karkuns* in every *pargana*. Persian was the language of the court therefore one *karkun* maintained all records in Persian while the majority of the people had no knowledge of Persian therefore, the other *karkun* maintained duplicate records in Hindi.
- e. **Qanungo:** He was a semi-government official and kept a record of the past and present condition of agriculture and the cultivators. He also possessed detailed knowledge about the revenue affairs of the government.

Each *pargana* comprised a number of villages. A village was the lowest unit of administration. He accepted the time honoured custom of recognizing the autonomy of the villages which were governed by their own *panchayats* consisting of elders of the village. The *panchayats* were responsible for maintaining law and order, providing elementary education, ensuring sanitation and irrigation, safeguarding the interests of the people, settling disputes and administering justice. He maintained touch with the villages through the village officials, namely *muqaddam*

(village-head who was responsible for collecting revenues from the people living within his jurisdiction and handing it over to the state officials. For this service he got- a given percentage of the revenue allowed to him by the government), *patwari* (kept a record of cultivators and their holdings.) and *chowkidar* (village watchman). They were not employee of the state but of the village community. He initiated the policy of making the people of the locality responsible for maintaining peace and security within their respective area. If the *muqaddam* of the village, where the crime was committed, failed to capture the culprit, he was liable to severe punishment. In order to check and prevent corruption, he followed the policy of periodically transferring officers of the *sarkars* and *parganas* from one place to another every two or three years.

So, it can be said that Sher Shah Sur not only restored the empire of Hindustan to its natural boundaries, the Indus on the west and hills of Assam on the east, the Himalayas on the north and Satpura ranges on the south but also consolidated it by efficient administrative system on bureaucratic lines quite unknown to his predecessors.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- II

II. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. What was a *pargana* in Sher Shah Suri's administration?

Q2. Who was the *shiqdar*?

Q3. Name the main officers of a *pargana*.

Q4. What was the relationship between *sarkar* and *pargana*?

Q5. What role did the *patwari* play in the *pargana*?

Fill in the Blanks:

- a. A *pargana* was a subdivision of a _____.
- b. The officer responsible for maintaining law and order in a *pargana* was known as the _____.
- c. The record keeper of a *pargana* was called the _____.
- d. The village headman in a *pargana* was known as the _____.

14.4 ADMINISTRATION UNDER SHER SHAH SURI: MILITARY

Dear learners, Sher Shah maintained a permanent large and well equipped standing army at the centre like Ala-ud-din Khalji. Although the Afghans held a predominant position, other Muslims as well as Hindus were also recruited into the army. He took personal interest in the recruitment, training, promotion, discipline, disbursement of salary and supply of arms, and clothes, to his soldiers. He established close contacts with the troops. The newly recruited soldiers were transformed into good soldiers within a year or so of their enlistment. In the words of Qanungo, “There was such strict discipline among soldiers of Sher Shah which was sufficient to make a raw soldier into an experienced soldier.” The soldiers were paid in cash while the officers were assigned *jagirs*. He started the novel practice of paying his troops individually and not through commanding officers or nobles. This removed their dependence on Jagirdars and prevented their exploitation.

He principally organized his army under four heads: cavalry, infantry, artillery and elephants. His military strength consisted of 1,50,000 cavalry, 25,000 infantry, 5000 elephants and a part of artillery. His artillery, probably, was the weakest part of his military strength while the cavalry was the most important section of the army consisting only of the Afghans. The infantry (foot soldiers) was armed with muskets. Most of his soldiers were also fine archers. Soldiers were kept in all forts and military cantonments spreading all over the territory of the empire to ensure security and effective control. He possessed a large park of artillery consisting of various types

of guns and cannon in the capital. He divided his army into many divisions and each division was put under the charge of a commander. Transport and commissariat arrangements were made by soldiers themselves. Provisions were supplied to the troops by the Banjaras who moved along with the army.

In addition to the Sultan's central army, provincial governors, nobles, and subordinate rulers were also allowed to maintain their own troops, which they were obligated to supply to the king in times of need. He revived the Alauddin Khilji's practice of *dag* under which each cavalry horse was branded to ensure that soldiers maintained the correct number and quality of horses. This practice of branding horses helped to prevent corruption in the cavalry. He also maintained the descriptive roll of troopers called the *chehra* system under which detailed descriptions of soldiers (name, appearance, parentage) were recorded, so that no one could send a proxy at the time of military review or battle. As a result, corruption was checked to a great extent and the army became a powerful instrument of force. He maintained strong discipline in the army and inflicted harsh punishments on those who violated the rules of conduct. Promotion of the troops depended on their merit and the actual service performed and was not left to the discretion of the commanding officer, though his recommendation was taken by the king. Besides this there were contingents of troops posted at 47 important strategic places all over the kingdom.

In Sher Shah Suri's military camps, the **qazis** acted as judicial and moral authorities. Their main roles were to administer justice among soldiers and officers, to settle disputes and decide cases according to Islamic law, to maintain discipline and moral conduct in the camp and to prevent crimes, corruption, and misuse of power. Thus, *qazis* helped ensure that the army remained **disciplined, lawful, and orderly**, which strengthened Sher Shah's military administration.

Sher Shah, certainly, succeeded in maintaining a large, disciplined and effective fighting force during his time. By providing fair pay, justice in military camps through *qazis*, and equal treatment, Sher Shah won the confidence and loyalty of his soldiers. It was with the help of his well-organized and efficient army that he was able to defeat Humayun and gradually subdue the whole of northern India.

Check Your Progress (CYP) -III

III. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. What was the main aim of Sher Shah Suri's military reforms?

Q2. How did the ***dagh*** and ***chehra*** system improve discipline in the army?

Q3. Why were horses branded under Sher Shah's rule?

Q4. How were soldiers paid during Sher Shah's reign?

Q5. What was the role of the *qazis* in the military camps?

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Sher Shah introduced the system of branding horses known as _____.
- b. The descriptive roll of soldiers was called _____.
- c. Regular payment of salaries helped maintain discipline and prevent _____ in the army.
- d. The _____ was considered the most important part of the army.

14.5 LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, in this lesson we learnt about how Sher Shah established an efficient and powerful administrative system, which ensured smooth and effective functioning of his empire. Like all rulers of the Sultanate of Delhi, Sher Shah was a despot and was at the top of the central administration. But unlike his predecessors, he was a benevolent despot, exercising power for the benefit of the people. He worked very hard, attending to minute details, promoted efficiency in the machinery of the State and was one of the greatest and most capable administrators of medieval India. He was more a reformer than an innovator. He did not create any new ministry; his administrative divisions and sub-divisions were taken from the past but his guidance and efforts made them more functional and powerful. His effective administrative measures not only strengthened his empire but also laid a lasting foundation that was later adopted by the Mughals, especially Akbar. Thus, Sher Shah Suri is remembered as one of the **most capable administrators** in Indian history.

14.6 GLOSSARY

Sarkar: Territorial division consisting of a number of *parganas*.

Pargana: An administrative unit comprising of a number of villages.

Amin: Revenue assessor

Muqaddam: Village headman

Patwari: village accountant

Banjara: They were a community of nomadic traders and transporters in medieval India who specialized in carrying goods, especially food grains, from one place to another using large caravans of bullocks.

14.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1. Give an account of the administration of Sher Shah Suri.
- Q2. Describe the Pargana administration under Sher Shah Suri. Explain the duties of its main officers.
- Q3. Examine the Sarkar administration of Sher Shah Suri. How did it act as a link between the centre and the Parganas?
- Q4. "Sher Shah Suri laid the foundation of a strong and efficient administrative system in India." Discuss this statement with reference to Pargana and Sarkar administration.
- Q5. Explain the military reforms of Sher Shah Suri. How did they strengthen his empire?
- Q6. "Sher Shah Suri was a fore-runner of Akbar in ability and statesmanship." Comment.
- Q7. "It was Sher Shah and not Babur who laid the foundation over which Akbar raised his superstructure". Comment.

Q8. Why is Sher Shah's Sarkar administration considered systematic and well-organized?

Q9. In what ways did the Sarkar administration strengthen central control over provinces?

14.8 LESSON END EXERCISES

Q1. "Sher Shah Suri was not only a great conqueror but also a great administrator." Justify this statement with special reference to his administrative and military reforms.

Q2. Analyse how Sher Shah Suri's military reforms ensured discipline, loyalty, and efficiency in the army.

Q3. Show how Sher Shah Suri's administrative system became a model for the Mughal administration, especially in Pargana, Sarkar, and military organization

14.9 ANSWER KEY

CYP I

Q1. See Section: 14.2.

Q2. See Section: 14.2.

Q3. See Section: 14.2.

Q4. See Section: 14.2.

Q5. See Section: 14.2.

Fill in the Blanks

a. Revenue

b. 47

c. Dabir-i-Mumalik

d. King

CYP II

Q1. See Section: 14.3.

Q2. See Section: 14.3.

Q3. See Section: 14.3.

Q4. See Section: 14.3.

Q5. See Section: 14.3.

Fill in the Blanks

- a. *sarkar*
- b. *shiqdar*
- c. *qanungo*
- d. *muqaddam*

CYP III

- Q1. See Section: 14.4.
- Q2. See Section: 14.3.
- Q3. See Section: 14.3.
- Q4. See Section: 14.3.
- Q5. See Section: 14.3.

Fill in the Blanks

- a. *dagh*
- b. *chehra*
- c. Corruption
- d. Cavalry

14.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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ISLAM SHAH SUR AND DECLINE OF SECOND AFGHAN EMPIRE

STRUCTURE

- 15.0. Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 15.1. Introduction**
- 15.2. Islam Shah Sur and Decline of the Second Afghan Empire**
- 15.3. Let us sum up**
- 15.4. Glossary**
- 15.5. Examination Oriented Questions**
- 15.6. Lesson End Exercises**
- 15.7. Answer Key**
- 15.8. Suggested Readings**

15.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Dear learners, the objective of this lesson is to enable you to:

- Analyze the factors that led to the decline of the Sur dynasty after Sher Shah Suri.
- Explain how succession disputes and weak leadership contributed to the collapse of the empire.
- Recognize the role of the Mughal resurgence under Humayun in ending the Sur dynasty.

Learning Outcomes

Dear learners, after going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- The rule and administrative policies of Islam Shah Sur.
- How Islam Shah's rigid policies created fear and resentment among Afghan nobles
- The opportunities created for the return of Humayun and the re-establishment of Mughal rule in India.
- The overall causes and consequences of the decline of the Afghan power in North India.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, the Afghan Empire built by Sher Shah did not long survive his death. It collapsed within ten years of Sher Shah's death. He was succeeded by his second son, Islam Shah, who ruled till 1553. While he was a formidable military leader and administrator who managed to keep the empire intact after the death of his legendary father, Sher Shah Suri, his reign ironically sowed the seeds for the Second Afghan Empire's rapid collapse. The absence of strong central authority, combined with a chain of ineffective rulers, revived factional jealousies among the Afghan nobility and led the state into political anarchy and thus paved the way for the restoration of the Mughals.

15.2 ISLAM SHAH SUR AND DECLINE OF THE SECOND AFGHAN EMPIRE

Dear learners, the sudden death of Sher Shah while laying a siege at Kalinjar in 1545, led to the emergence of rival factions within the Afghan nobility, each supporting different claimants. Sher Shah's elder son, Adil Khan, was the rightful heir but Islam Shah was chosen over his elder brother, Adil Khan, due to his proven military capability. Adil Khan was perceived as weak and liberal. Therefore, his second son, Jalal Khan, who was then at Rewah, was proclaimed king under the title of Sultan Islam Shah.

During 1540 and 1556, the Sur Empire controlled from eastern Balochistan in the west to current Bangladesh in the east, the Sur administration governed practically all Mughal regions. However, under Islam Shah (reigned 1545–1554), pressure from two fronts—internal factional rivalries and external Mughal resurgence—created a situation where the Sur Empire could no longer hold itself together, leading to its rapid fragmentation and eventual collapse.

Under Sher Shah Suri, the Afghan polity was relatively strong and united. He treated them as partners in governance, respected their status, and maintained a balance between central authority and noble autonomy. This created unity, loyalty, and stability within the empire. Afghan nobles functioned as “first among equals,” meaning they had significant influence but still remained broadly loyal to the central authority. His rule focused on expansion, administrative consolidation, and strengthening the empire's control over newly conquered territories, which helped create stability across north India. The Punjab region, in particular, acted as a stable frontier zone and a defensive shield against external threats, especially from the Mughals. However, his son Islam Shah adopted a different approach. Though Islam Shah was brilliant and militarily capable, but under Islam Shah this unity began to break down as he was deeply suspicious of the powerful nobles who had served his father. His nine-year reign was a focused effort to replace Afghan “tribal democracy” with a strict autocracy. He didn't just want to be the “Chief of the Afghans”; he wanted to be their absolute king. His rule became more autocratic and less inclusive, as he relied heavily on personal loyalty rather than collective Afghan consensus. Therefore, his reign was defined by a systematic attempt to crush the very Afghan nobles who had put his father on the throne. Instead of maintaining the earlier system of cooperation among Afghan elites, he began arresting, blinding, or executing top old commanders. This led to internal conflicts and growing resentment among powerful Afghan

nobles, which weakened the unity of the state. Instead of focusing on external expansion, the regime became preoccupied with internal suppression of dissent. This immediately put him at odds with the Niazi clan, one of the most powerful factions in the Suri military because they were unhappy with his strict and centralised policies. The friction turned into an all-out civil war primarily under Azam Humayun Niazi, the governor of the Punjab. As a result, Punjab, which had earlier been a stable defensive frontier, turned into a politically unstable and war-torn region, becoming a battleground for competing Afghan factions and weakening the overall structure of the Sur Empire.

Islam Shah feared that Azam Humayun Niazi was becoming too powerful and was potentially supporting Islam Shah's rival brother, Adil Khan's, claim to the throne. Niazis wanted to restore the traditional Afghan system where nobles had greater autonomy. When Islam Shah summoned the Niazi chiefs to court, they sensed a trap. Fearing execution or imprisonment—the Niazis openly revolted. The conflict turned into a prolonged and brutal struggle, lasting several years. It was not a single battle but a series of military confrontations, as the Niazis tried to resist the authority of the central government while Islam Shah attempted to crush the rebellion and reassert control. The rebels used their local support and knowledge of the terrain to continue resistance, making it difficult for the royal forces to subdue them quickly. The turning point came with the **Battle of Ambala in 1547**, which proved to be the decisive encounter. Despite being outnumbered, Islam Shah's disciplined artillery and central forces crushed the Niazi rebels. After their defeat at Ambala, the Niazis fled to the Dhanni country (modern-day Pakistan), and later took refuge with the Gakkhars, a warlike tribe in the Salt Range, which provided a safer and more remote refuge. Islam Shah didn't just want to defeat them; he wanted to break the Niazi spirit. He pursued them into the mountains of the northwest, leading to prolonged and violent clashes over many years that drained the Suri treasury and exhausted the army. By focusing all his military energy on hunting down the Niazis in the west, Islam Shah left the empire open to attack by the Mughals. The brutal treatment of the Niazis (including the execution of their women and children in some accounts) horrified other Afghan tribes. The "Afghan Brotherhood" that Sher Shah built was replaced by fear of punishment and growing resentment against the ruler. Although Islam Shah succeeded in suppressing the revolt, the conflict had lasting consequences. It deepened mistrust between the ruler and Afghan nobles. Islam Shah began to rely more on non-Afghans and lower-ranking officials, setting the stage for the rise of Hemu under his successor.

Islam Shah, to counter the old Afghan elites, began promoting lower-ranking officials and non-Afghans. This created a bitter rivalry between the "Old Guard" (traditional Afghan chiefs) and the "New Men" (loyalists to Islam Shah). To weaken their power, he introduced several major changes that went much further than his father's policies. Islam Shah moved his capital from Delhi to Gwalior, primarily because he did not trust the Afghan nobles in Delhi and wanted a more secure and centrally controlled base. He abolished the *jagirdari* system (land grants) for many and tried to pay soldiers in cash directly from the royal treasury to ensure their loyalty was to the Crown alone. This stripped the nobles of their local power bases, leading to silent but deep-seated resentment. To assert his authority and humble the proud Afghan chiefs, he introduced a practice where the king's slippers were placed on a throne in provincial capitals. The nobles had to bow to the slippers as if the king himself was present. He set up a wide system of spies across his empire. These informants were placed in different

regions, courts, and among the nobility to secretly gather information about the activities of officials, governors, and Afghan chiefs. Their main job was to report any signs of disloyalty, rebellion, or conspiracy directly to the ruler. This system helped Islam Shah keep strict control over his empire and prevent uprisings. However, it also created an atmosphere of fear and suspicion, as nobles never felt secure and were constantly being watched. It was said that “even the walls had ears”. This created an atmosphere where no two Afghan generals trusted each other, as any conversation could be reported as treason. He added a third building to his father’s *serais* (rest houses)—one for Muslims, one for Hindus, and a third specifically for the postal runners, ensuring news reached his capital in Gwalior with incredible speed. By executing or alienating all the talented Afghan generals, Islam Shah had left no one capable of stopping the return of the Mughals.

Islam Shah held the empire together through sheer force of personality and fear. When he died in 1554 from a painful bladder infection, the Afghan nobles reportedly felt a sense of relief—but that relief turned into ruin. The vacuum he left was filled by even more violent factionalism. Adil Shah Suri, a man of “pleasure” who lacked the grit to manage the unruly Afghan tribes usurped the Afghan throne after killing Islam Shah’s 12-year-old son, Firoz Shah. He delegated nearly all civil and military authority to Hemu. Hemu controlled the treasury and the distribution of Jagirs (land grants). He rewarded loyalty to the crown rather than tribal seniority. Hemu was given the title of Vikramaditya, a traditional Hindu imperial title. A Hindu merchant from Rewari rising to become the de facto ruler of the Sur Empire was a direct insult to the proud Afghan nobles (the *amirs*), who believed that the Lodi and Suri dynasties existed solely by their swords. For the Afghan elite, seeing a Hindu revive ancient Vedic titles while commanding an “Islamic” army was the ultimate sign that the Sur Empire had lost its way. Hemu’s promotion wasn’t just a political change—it was also seen as a religious and social insult. “The Afghan nobles would rather see the empire burn than be led to victory by a non-Afghan.” This sentiment defined the final years of the Suri dynasty. By 1555, the Sur Empire had effectively disintegrated and no longer functioned as a unified state. Instead, it had broken into a number of small, competing power centers that behaved like independent city-states, often in conflict with one another. Afghan governors chose to secede rather than serve a central government run by Hemu. By 1554–1555, the territory was divided among four main Suri claimants:

- **Adil Shah Suri:** Held the area around Chunar, Bihar, and Gwalior. He was the nominal ruler but lacked effective control over the western regions.
- **Ibrahim Shah Suri:** Controlled Delhi and Agra for a brief period before being ousted.
- **Sikandar Shah Suri:** Ruled the Punjab and the foothills of the Himalayas. It was Sikandar who was eventually defeated by Humayun’s forces at the Battle of Sirhind in 1555.
- **Muhammad Shah Suri:** Established himself as the independent ruler of Bengal.

This fragmentation created the perfect opportunity for the exiled Mughal emperor Humayun to reclaim his throne. During the decline of the Sur Empire, Panjab in the north-west became a contested zone as Punjab was the gateway to northern India and therefore strategically crucial. Therefore, various local commanders and Afghan factions struggled for control. When Humayun returned from exile in Persia, he carefully re-entered north India,

targeting key strategic regions like Punjab as it was the key to re-establishing Mughal authority in India. In 1555, Humayun defeated Sikandar Shah Suri at the Battle of Sirhind, which enabled him to regain control over Punjab. Humayun's victory over Sikandar Shah Suri marked the beginning of the Mughal restoration, and Punjab soon became the launching point for further expansion into the Gangetic plains.

After securing Punjab, Humayun advanced towards the conquest of Delhi and Agra, which were the main centres of political authority in northern India. Humayun captured Delhi and Agra in 1555; re-establishing Mughal rule in northern India. However, this stability was short-lived. Following Humayun's sudden death in 1556, Hemu defeated the Mughal forces and captured Delhi, declaring himself ruler. This brought the Mughals into direct conflict with Hemu and resulted in the **Second Battle of Panipat (1556)**. Since Humayun had already passed away, it was his son, **Akbar**, along with his regent Bairam Khan, who faced Hemu. Many Afghan commanders were hesitant to give him their full support. When Hemu was struck by an arrow in the eye during the battle, the Afghan contingent—lacking a sense of tribal loyalty to their leader—panicked and fled, leading to the final restoration of the Mughal Empire.

This battle resulted in the loss of the Delhi–Agra corridor, which was the political and administrative heart of north India, thereby weakening the Sur Empire. This region was not only symbolically important as the seat of imperial authority, but also strategically vital because this corridor lay on important trade routes including the Grand Trunk Road. Losing Delhi–Agra meant loss of markets, artisans, disrupted trade and reduced customs duties and commercial taxes. This weakened the economic foundation of the Sur Empire and the Sur rulers could not effectively pay soldiers or maintain a strong army. It accelerated its decline, while strengthening the Mughals.

The loss of the Delhi–Agra corridor not only weakened the Sur Empire politically and economically but also **broke its territorial unity**. Once this central zone was lost, the remaining Sur strongholds in Bihar and Bengal became geographically isolated and politically vulnerable. Cut off from the core regions of power, these outposts could not coordinate effectively or resist sustained Mughal pressure. Over time, they were gradually conquered and absorbed, especially under Akbar's early expansion campaigns, which systematically brought these eastern regions back under imperial control.

As the power of the Sur rulers weakened, they could no longer maintain effective control over distant western regions, which included **Baluchistan and the Indus areas**, where local chiefs and Afghan nobles started asserting their independence and ruled according to their own interests. These areas were far from the centre of power, and with the decline of strong leadership, the Sur rulers could no longer maintain effective control over them.

Similarly, the Rajput chieftains of Malwa and Bundelkhand grabbed this opportunity to break free from Sur control, who had their own military strength and local support. These areas had always maintained a degree of semi-autonomy, but with the weakening of central power, they stopped paying tribute altogether. Local chiefs began governing their territories independently, collecting revenues for themselves and strengthening their local armies.

Overall, the breakdown of Sur authority led to political fragmentation across India, with different regions responding in different ways—some falling into chaos, some asserting independence, and some becoming key battlegrounds

for the return of Mughal power. Thus, the once vast territory that had stretched across much of North India under Sher Shah Suri had shrunk significantly, leaving only scattered pockets of control held by rival Afghan factions and local commanders.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- I

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

- Q1. Who was Islam Shah Suri?
- Q2. What policy did Islam Shah adopt to control the Afghan nobility?
- Q3. Which system was strengthened by Sher Shah Suri but weakened later under his successors?
- Q4. What was the main cause of factional conflict after Sher Shah's death?
- Q5. How did Islam Shah's policies affect the power of the nobles?
- Q6. Name two reasons for the decline of the Sur Empire.

II. Fill in the blanks:

- a. Islam Shah Suri was the son of _____
- b. After the death of Sher Shah Suri, one faction of nobles supported Islam Shah, while another supported _____.
- c. The Sur Empire faced pressure from both the Mughals and _____.
- d. The Niazi faction was one of the groups that contributed to the weakening of _____ authority.

15.3 LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, in this lesson we discussed about Islam Shah who came to the throne in 1545 after the death of his father Sher Shah Suri and the factors which led to the decline of the Second Afghan Empire. Though he did not inherit the qualities of his father, yet he kept his heritage intact for 8 years. After his death in October, 1553, the Sur dynasty began to disintegrate. The Afghan empire was partitioned and was ruled by three independent nobles namely Ibrahim Khan Sur in Delhi and Agra, Muhammad Adil Shah in the East and the Punjab under Sikander Shah. The various provinces of Malwa, Rajputana, Bengal and Bundelkhand proclaimed independence. This political chaos provided Humayun with the needful opportunity to stage a comeback in India. Humayun defeated Sikander Sur, who succeeded Ibrahim Sur, in a battle near Sirhind in 1555 and occupied Delhi and Agra. The Second Afghan Empire like the first one once again fell to the tribal concepts and political intrigues of the Afghan nobility. The field was left to the Mughals and Akbar used every opportunity to retrieve the Mughal prestige and power.

15.4 GLOSSARY

Jagir: A **jagir** was a type of land assignment given during medieval India. The *jagirdar* did not own the land; instead, he collected taxes from the peasants and used this revenue to maintain troops and run his administrative responsibilities on behalf of the empire. In return, he served the emperor and could be transferred from one jagir to another at any time.

Serais: rest houses.

15.5 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1. Explain the accession of Islam Shah Suri and the factional conflicts that emerged after the death of Sher Shah Suri. How did these conflicts affect the stability of the Sur Empire?
- Q2. Evaluate the role of Islam Shah Suri in maintaining or weakening the legacy of Sher Shah Suri. Was he able to sustain the empire built by his father?

15.6 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1. Examine the major causes of the decline of the Sur Dynasty after Islam Shah Suri. In your answer, consider both internal weaknesses and external pressures from the Mughals.
- Q2. Explain how internal factionalism and succession disputes after Islam Shah Suri's death led to the rapid collapse of the Sur Empire.

15.7 ANSWER KEY

CYPI

- Q1. See Section 15.2.
- Q2. See Section 15.2.
- Q3. See Section 15.2.
- Q4. See Section 15.2.
- Q5. See Section 15.2.
- Q6. See Section 15.2.

Fill in the Blanks

Sher Shah Suri

- i. Adil Shah Suri
- ii. internal rivalries.
- iii. Sur

15.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Satish Chandra, *Medieval India: From Sultanat to the Mughals: Volume 2*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1997.
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- Abraham Eraly, *Emperors of the Peacock Throne: The Saga of the Great Mughals*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 2000.
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AKBAR'S ACCESSION AND BAIRAM KHAN'S REGENCY PERIOD

STRUCTURE

- 16.0. Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 16.1. Introduction**
- 16.2. Akbar's Accession**
- 16.3. Bairam Khan's Regency Period**
- 16.4. Let us sum up**
- 16.5. Glossary**
- 16.6. Examination Oriented Questions**
- 16.7. Lesson End Exercises**
- 16.8. Answer Key**
- 16.9. Suggested Readings**

16.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Dear learners, the objective of this lesson is to enable you to :

- Clearly narrate the events leading to Akbar's accession to the throne.
- Understand the political situation of India at the time of Akbar's accession.
- Describe the role and importance of Bairam Khan as Regent of Akbar.
- Analyse the significance of the Second Battle of Panipat (1556).
- Assess how Bairam Khan's regency helped in stabilizing and strengthening the Mughal Empire.

Learning Outcomes

Dear learners, after going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- The circumstances leading to the accession of Akbar after the death of Humayun in 1556.
- The administrative and military contributions of Bairam Khan in stabilizing the empire.
- The reasons for the decline of Bairam Khan's influence and his eventual dismissal by Akbar.
- The steps taken by Akbar to establish his independent rule after the regency period.

16.1. INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, when Akbar was crowned at the age of 13 in 1556 at Kalanaur, Punjab, his Empire was little more than a title. He inherited a chaotic legacy, a bankrupt treasury, and a series of localized wars, where every provincial governor was a potential traitor and every frontier was a battleground, making his accession a period of great political uncertainty. At this critical time, Bairam Khan, Humayun's trusted general and Akbar's guardian, played a decisive role in securing the empire for young Akbar. So, students, in this lesson we will learn how Akbar's accession and Bairam Khan's regency period laid the foundation of a strong and stable Mughal Empire. While Akbar was the nominal ruler, Bairam Khan's leadership safeguarded the throne and created conditions that later enabled Akbar to emerge as one of the greatest emperors in Indian history.

16.2. AKBAR'S ACCESSION

Dear learners, after losing the Mughal throne to Sher Shah Suri Humayun was wandering from place to place in search of support and protection. During this difficult times, Humayun was given shelter by the local Rajput ruler of Amarkot in Sindh and it was here that Akbar was born on 15 October 1542 to Humayun and Hamida Banu Begum. Akbar spent his childhood moving from place to place amid political instability and danger. In 1543, as Humayun was fleeing toward Persia to escape the advancing forces of his brother, Askari Mirza, the weather became so severe and the pursuit of enemies so close that the infant Akbar (not even a year old) had to be left behind in the camp. Askari Mirza captured the camp and took the young prince to Kandahar. He grew up under the care of his paternal uncle Askari Mirza. Despite the personal kindness shown to him, Akbar was essentially a political hostage. In 1545, as Humayun returned from Persia with a Safavid army to reclaim his territory, Askari Mirza sent infant Akbar to Kabul to be under the custody of his another paternal uncle, Kamran Mirza, so as to prevent Humayun from recovering his territories. The separation finally ended in November 1545, after Humayun successfully captured Kabul. When Akbar was brought before his parents, he was three years old. Growing up in the camps of his father's enemies likely contributed to Akbar's early maturity. Bairam Khan, a highly dependable and faithful military commander of Humayun was entrusted with the guardianship of the young prince.

Akbar is often believed to have had learning difficulties similar to dyslexia, as he was unable to read and write. Despite this, Akbar had an extraordinary memory, intelligence, and understanding. Bairam Khan appointed a learned scholar Abdul Latif to educate the young Akbar and helped him develop the habit of listening and interacting with intellectuals from various religions and backgrounds, questioning ideas, and thinking critically. Although Akbar did not develop the ability to read and write, Abdul Latif, encouraged Akbar to use reason and independent judgment rather than blindly following tradition. He taught Akbar that reason (*aql*) was superior to

blind tradition (*taqlid*). Under his guidance, Akbar formulated the doctrine of Sulh-i-Kul, which stood for universal peace, religious harmony, and equal treatment of all people, irrespective of their faith. This policy became the main foundation of his administration and helped maintain unity in his diverse empire. It's almost like, Bairam Khan secured the empire for Akbar through military strength and political guidance, while Abdul Latif shaped his intellectual outlook, instilling in him the values of tolerance, independent thinking, and respect for diversity. This balance of power and vision enabled Akbar not only to retain the empire but also to govern it wisely, ensuring unity and stability in a diverse society. Therefore, Akbar didn't become a rigid Shia or a rigid Sunni; he became a religious pluralist. Akbar encouraged translations of important works into Persian and surrounded himself with learned men in his court. The Sunni nobility felt Bairam Khan was trying to "convert" the court towards Shia influence and alienate Akbar from the orthodox Sunni establishment. This early exposure to diverse religious and intellectual influences helped him develop an open mind, and become a wise and effective ruler.

From an early age, Akbar was also trained in warfare, horse riding, archery, and administration. These experiences made him brave, disciplined, and capable. His difficult childhood made him strong and prepared him to become one of the greatest rulers in Indian history.

After the sudden death of Humayun in 1556, thirteen years old, Akbar was crowned at Kalanaur in Punjab. Since he was a minor, the real authority of the state was exercised by Bairam Khan, who was appointed as ***Wakil-i-Sultanat*** (Regent). Bairam Khan ruled in Akbar's name and took charge of administration, military organization, and policy making. His regency marked a period of strong centralized control and firm action against enemies.

The early years of Akbar's reign were full of challenges and instability. Here are the primary problems he faced upon his accession:

- The constant wars between the Mughals and the Afghans often resulted in the devastation of crops, displacement of peasants, heavy taxation to maintain the army and disrupted trade, which in some regions contributed to famine and economic distress. A severe famine gripped the Delhi-Agra region in 1555–56, causing widespread suffering.
- Humayun spent many years in exile after being defeated by Sher Shah Suri, so the empire lost its income. Continuous wars and struggles to regain the throne used up most of the resources. The administration had become weak, so proper tax collection was not taking place. As a result, Akbar faced difficulty in paying soldiers, running the government, and maintaining control over the empire in the beginning.
- Akbar was unsure about the loyalty of many nobles in his court. Many Mughal nobles particularly the Uzbeks, Chaghtai, Turanis and Iranis officers who had served Humayun were more concerned about their own power and benefits than the welfare of the empire. They were not fully loyal to the emperor and often acted for their own advantage. They often rebelled and acted like independent kings in their assigned areas. Simultaneously, ambitious regional chiefs—including the Rajput kings of Mewar and Amber, and the local Afghan chieftains in Bengal and Malwa—saw the transition of power as the perfect opportunity to refuse paying regular taxes or payments to the Mughal emperor and tried to reassert their independence.

- At the time when Akbar came to the throne, the Indian subcontinent was divided into many small regional kingdoms and states. There was no strong central authority, and different rulers governed their own territories. In the north-west, his own half-brother, Mirza Hakim, independently ruled Kabul and often challenged Akbar's authority. States like Rajput kingdoms, Gujarat, Malwa, Bengal, Kashmir, Sind, Multan, Orissa, Gondwana in the modern Central Provinces, and the Deccan Sultanates of Khandesh, Berar, Bidar, Ahmednagar and Golconda also ruled independently and did not accept Mughal control. These states often fought among themselves and refused to obey the Mughal emperor, making the task of consolidation before Akbar both difficult and challenging. The conflict became very strong during the rule of Chand Bibi, the courageous queen-regent of Ahmadnagar, who resisted the Mughal army of Akbar. Even though the Mughals managed to take control of some parts of Ahmadnagar, the Deccan region continued to resist for many years. The Portuguese had established their influence on the western coast by the possession of Goa and Diu. For Akbar, the Afghan threat was one of the most persistent challenges to his authority. Though Sher Shah Suri was dead, his relatives were still fighting to reclaim the throne and were still in occupation of the greater portion of the Sher Shah's dominion, for instance:
- **Sikandar Shah Suri:** Sikandar Suri controlled Punjab and the Shivalik hills and was perhaps the most direct threat to Akbar during the coronation.
- **Ibrahim Shah Suri:** Another contender wandering in the Doab and Sambhal regions (near modern-day Uttar Pradesh).
- **Adil Shah Suri:** held control over Bihar and the Eastern regions.

Second Battle of Panipat, 1556: Though Adil Shah retired to east but his most capable general and minister, Hemu, at Delhi posed the most serious threat to Akbar, as he tried to prevent him taking the charge of his father's dominions, which resulted into Second Battle of Panipat. Hemu first occupied Agra and Delhi by defeating Tardi Beg, the Mughal governor of Delhi and then declared himself ruler with the title *Vikramaditya*. Hemu's occupation of these important cities directly challenged Mughal authority and made war unavoidable. Hemu possessed a large and well organized army including 1,500 war elephants. He himself fought bravely and was leading his troops from the front. Akbar and his regent, Bairam Khan, held only a small portion of Punjab at that time and had only limited resources. However, as regent, Bairam Khan was determined to protect Akbar's throne and re-establish Mughal prestige. Initially, the Hemu's army was at advantage as they pushed back the Mughal forces. It seemed that the Mughals might lose the battle. However, at a crucial moment, a chance arrow struck Hemu in the eye, rendering him unconscious. Hemu's sudden injury created panic among his army and was captured by the Mughal forces. On Bairam Khan's advice, Hemu was executed, marking the end of major Afghan resistance, who had nearly re-established Hindu-Afghan rule in north India. While small Afghan revolts continued for decades, under leaders like Sikandar Sur, Muhammad Adil Shah, and Ibrahim Sur, but they were fragmented and lacked unity and therefore, failed to pose a serious challenge to the firmly established rule of Akbar. Mughal control was restored over Delhi and Agra. This victory was crucial because a defeat at Panipat would have ended the Mughal line in India before it even truly began. This victory restored Mughal authority in northern India and secured the

throne for Akbar, who had only recently become emperor and was still consolidating power. This gave Akbar the resources and tax base needed to build a vast and powerful empire in the future. This victory brought political stability after a long period of uncertainty following the fall of the Sur dynasty. The success boosted the morale of the Mughal soldiers and restored faith in the leadership of the young emperor and his regent.

Thus, it can be said that the Second Battle of Panipat was not just a military victory but a foundation stone for Akbar's future empire. It saved the Mughal dynasty from early collapse and restored its authority through military victory, ensured administrative stability, and laid the foundation for a strong, united, and long-lasting Mughal rule in India.

Check Your Progress (CYP) -I

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. Why was the Mughal Empire politically weak in 1556?

Q2. Who posed the biggest threat to Akbar immediately after his accession?

Q3. Why was the Second Battle of Panipat important for Akbar?

Q4. Name one internal court rivalry during Akbar's early years.

Fill in the blanks:

- a. Akbar was born in _____ in 1542.
- b. Akbar spent part of his childhood under the care of his uncle _____.
- c. The decisive battle that secured Akbar's throne was the _____.
- d. During his minority, the regent who looked after the administration was _____.
- e. The biggest early challenge to Akbar's rule came from _____, who was defeated in 1556.
- f. Akbar was crowned at _____ in Punjab.

16.3. BAIRAM KHAN'S REGENCY PERIOD

Dear learners, Bairam Khan (1501-1561) was born in the region of Badakhshan in Central Asia. Originally known as Bairam Beg was honoured with the title of Khan by Shah Tahmasp, the ruler of Iran. Bairam belonged to a Persian Turk background and followed the Shia branch of Islam. He entered Babur's service at the young age of 16. After the death of Babur, he entered the service of Humayun and soon rose to become one of his most trusted and influential nobles. In 1540, during the Battle of Kannauj, Bairam Khan was captured by the forces of Sher Shah Suri, but he bravely escaped from captivity and later reunited with Humayun in Sindh in July 1543. He accompanied Humayun during his exile in Persia (1540-1555) and helped Humayun secure support from Shah Tahmasp I of the Safavid Empire to conquer Kandahar, which was then under the control of his brother Askari Mirza. Humayun's conquest of Kandahar (1545) was the turning point of his life. After the victory, Bairam Khan served as the governor of Kandahar for nine years. The capture of Kandahar (gateway to India) provided Humayun with the strong base he needed to rebuild his Empire in India after years of wandering in exile following his defeat at the hands of Sher Shah Suri. It allowed Humayun to march towards his next target, Kabul, which was held by his other brother, Kamran Mirza. After winning Kabul, Humayun proceeded to Lahore and Delhi, eventually leading to the restoration of Mughal rule in northern India. In 1556, Bairam Khan served as a trusted advisor and a leading commander in Humayun's reconquest of Hindustan. Humayun, on his accession to the Mughal throne, entrusted Bairam Khan with the position of **muhardar** (keeper of the seals), a position which only intimates were entrusted with. It is one of history's most striking ironies that Humayun who after spending 15 years in exile re-established the Mughal empire in 1555, could only enjoy it for roughly six months. Humayun died in **1556** after he accidentally fell down the staircase of his library, the Sher Mandal, located in the Purana Qila at Delhi. At that time, the Mughal Empire was still fragile, and his 13 years old son Akbar was away from Panjab fighting against the remaining forces of the Sur dynasty and any sudden news of the emperor's death could have led to a civil war, confusion, or unrest. Therefore, to maintain political stability in the court, Bairam deliberately kept the death news of Humayun a secret for a short period till Akbar was securely enthroned. For

this, Bairam created an illusion that the emperor was still alive and recovering by having a loyal cleric **Mullah Bekasi** (who closely resembled Humayun), dressed in imperial robes and appear at the *jharokha* (royal balcony) to give the customary daily public appearance, until Akbar was safely crowned at Kalanaur in 1556. This careful management ensured a smooth transition of power; nevertheless, Mughal authority over Hindustan remained fragile and far from firmly established.

On his accession to the throne Akbar was only 13 years old, therefore, he needed a capable guardian to manage both administration and military affairs. Bairam, who had been a long-time and trusted supporter of Humayun, remaining loyal even during his years of exile, his military expertise, and administrative skills made him the most suitable and natural choice for 13 years old Akbar's regency. Therefore, Bairam was appointed as **ataliq** (tutor and guardian) and **Wakil-i-Sultanat** (Regent) to the young Akbar. He guided the affairs of the state for four years between 1556 to 1560 when Akbar was still a minor. At the time of Akbar's accession in 1556, the Mughal Empire faced enemies and challenges from all directions: in the north-west, Afghan nobles continued to pose a serious challenge under the leadership of Sikandar Shah Suri who held the Shivalik hills and was a constant threat to Punjab; in east, Adil Shah created instability in Bengal, Bihar, and surrounding regions; in the north and central India, Hemu, the Hindu general of the Adil Shah Suri, emerged as a strong rival, who had captured Agra and Delhi and declared himself Emperor with the title Vikramaditya. Many powerful Rajput rulers in Rajasthan, particularly Mewar, did not accept Mughal authority. In addition, rebellious nobles and powerful local chiefs also kept challenging its authority. Thus, Akbar inherited not a consolidated empire, but a politically unstable and militarily threatened kingdom that required immediate consolidation, strong leadership, military skill, and political wisdom to firmly establish his authority. Bairam Khan, as a Regent, took complete responsibility for administration and military affairs to safeguard the Mughal throne and strengthen the empire. His first and most important achievement was the Second Battle of Panipat (1556) against Hemu. Hemu was close to securing victory in the battle. He had a big army and 1,500 war elephants that were crushing the Mughal forces, when an arrow shot by a Mughal archer hit him in the eye. Seeing Hemu collapse, his massive force panicked, lost confidence and fled in disorder. Hemu was captured. Bairam Khan urged the 13-year-old Akbar to strike Hemu to earn the title of **ghazi** (Holy Warrior). Accounts vary on whether Akbar executed Hemu himself or if Bairam Khan struck the final blow, but Hemu was executed. This battle destroyed Afghan power and restored Mughal supremacy in north India. Without this victory, Akbar's position on the throne could not have been secured.

After Panipat, Bairam Khan suppressed revolts by Afghan chiefs and strengthened Mughal control over important territories. Each territorial acquisition was followed by efforts to integrate local elites into Mughal administrative framework- a strategy that Akbar would later perfect. He appointed loyal officers to key positions. Having secured the core territories through military means, Bairam Khan turned his attention to administrative matters. Bairam Khan strengthened the Mughal army by ensuring that the soldiers were regularly paid, strictly disciplined, and maintained under close supervision to prevent corruption and rebellion. His primary focus was military discipline and loyalty to the Mughal throne, not religious conversion. He led an army composed of Sunnis, Shias, and Hindus. This strengthened military structure, allowed Akbar to expand his empire effectively. His strict policies helped stabilize the Mughal Empire after years of political uncertainty. Akbar honoured him by granting him the

title *Khan-i-Khanan*, which means “King of Kings” and *Sipahsalaar Itizad-i-Daulat Qahira* (commander-in-chief of the army).

What set Bairam Khan apart was his holistic approach to governance. While maintaining his identity as a Shia Muslim in a predominantly Sunni court, he managed the Mughal court with a balanced and tolerant approach. By focusing on loyalty and merit rather than religion, he strengthened the authority of Akbar during his early reign and helped stabilize the empire at a critical time. Akbar learned valuable lessons of leadership, statecraft, and military strategy under the guardianship of Bairam Khan. These early experiences shaped Akbar to become a wise, powerful, independent, and visionary ruler.

During the early reign of Akbar, members of the royal household, including Akbar’s foster mother Maham Anga and other influential courtiers, became jealous of the influence and authority of Bairam Khan. To weaken the hold of Bairam Khan, they accused Bairam Khan of being a ‘heretic’. Bairam Khan was a Shia Muslim in a court where the emperor’s household and most of the nobility—mainly Turani nobles from Central Asia—were Sunnis. His preference for appointing fellow Shia officials on high positions created resentment among many of the predominantly Sunni nobles at the Mughal court. For instance, he appointed Shaikh Gadai, a Shia, to the high office of Sadr-us-Sadr (head of religious and judicial affairs), which upset the Sunni nobles in the Mughal court, since such posts were usually reserved for Sunnis. He granted the *panjhazari* (5,000) *mansab* to no less than 25 of his own favourites and ignored the just claims of others. He executed high-ranking officials like Tardi Beg, who had failed to defend Delhi against Hemu. His authoritative nature, rigid temperament, execution of influential nobles and his preference for Shia/Irani officers over the Sunni Turani nobles created dissatisfaction among sections of the Mughal court. Most historians argue that the ‘Shia vs. Sunni’ tension during the time of Bairam Khan was driven more by political rivalry and struggles for power than by genuine religious differences. They used his Shia faith as a convenient political tool to gradually turn the young emperor against him. By 1560, Akbar who started to understand state affairs better also wanted to take direct and full control of the administration. Therefore, he dismissed Bairam Khan from the regency, and ordered him to proceed on pilgrimage to Mecca, effectively ending his political control and marking the beginning of Akbar’s personal rule. On his way to Mecca, he was killed by an Afghan named Mubarak Khan Lohani at Patan in Gujarat, in revenge for the death of his father during earlier conflicts. In later years, Bairam Khan’s widow married Akbar and Bairam’s son, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, became one of the Nav-ratans (nine gems) of Akbar’s court.

In conclusion, it can be said that Bairam Khan’s regency was short but highly significant. “Bairam Khan laid the foundation of Akbar’s greatness” is a true and justified statement because it was under his guidance and leadership that the Mughal Empire was saved from collapse and firmly re-established after Humayun’s death. He not only protected Akbar’s throne but also restored Mughal prestige, and laid a strong foundation for the future expansion and glory of the Mughal Empire.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- II

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. Who was Bairam Khan?

Q2. What title was given to Bairam Khan during the regency?

Q3. When did Akbar end the regency of Bairam Khan?

Q4. How did Bairam Khan die?

Fill in the Blanks:

- a. Bairam Khan acted as the _____ of Akbar during his minority.
- b. Bairam Khan's regency lasted from _____ to _____.
- c. In 1560, Akbar dismissed _____ and assumed full control of the administration.

- d. Court factions during this period were mainly divided into _____ and _____ groups.
- e. Bairam Khan was assassinated by an Afghan named _____.

16.4. LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, in this lesson we learnt how Akbar's accession marked the beginning of a new era in Mughal history, under Bairam Khan's able regency. Between 1556 and 1560, he transitioned from Humayun's most loyal general to the absolute "Wakil-i-Sultanat" (Prime Minister) who held the fate of the young Akbar in his hands. By defeating Hemu and suppressing rebellions, Bairam Khan secured the throne for Akbar and stabilized the empire. Bairam Khan wasn't just a regent; he was the architect of the Mughal restoration. Bairam Khan acted as the real administrator of the empire during Akbar's minority and was given the title of ***Khan-i-Khanan***. Under Bairam Khan's guidance, Akbar observed how to manage nobles, command armies, and maintain political stability in a turbulent period. These formative experiences shaped his administrative abilities and prepared him to rule independently with confidence and vision. His regency ensured that when Akbar took power into his own hands, he inherited a strong and secure empire, which he later expanded into a vast and glorious kingdom. His regency was marked by firmness, military efficiency, and political wisdom.

16.5. GLOSSARY

Wakil-i-Sultanat: Regent

Muhardar: keeper of the seals

Ataliq: tutor and guardian

Ghazi: Holy Warrior

Khan-i-Khanan: King of Kings

Sipahsalaar Itizad-i-Daulat Qahira: commander-in-chief of the army.

Sadr-us-Sadr: head of religious and judicial affairs.

Aql: refers to the human capacity to think.

Taqlid: Blindly following tradition or authority.

16.6 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1. Describe the circumstances under which Akbar ascended the Mughal throne. What difficulties did the empire face at that time?
- Q2. Discuss the role of Bairam Khan as the Regent of the Mughal Empire. How did he safeguard Akbar's throne during his minority?

- Q3. Give a detailed account of the Second Battle of Panipat (1556). Why was it a turning point in Mughal history?
- Q4. Examine the military and administrative achievements of Bairam Khan during the regency period.
- Q5. “Bairam Khan laid the foundation of Akbar’s greatness.” Explain this statement with suitable examples.

16.7 LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1. Analyse the political importance of Akbar’s accession in the restoration of Mughal authority in India.
- Q2. Evaluate the significance of Bairam Khan’s policies in strengthening the Mughal Empire.
- Q3. How did Bairam Khan deal with internal and external challenges faced by the Mughal Empire after Akbar’s accession?
- Q4. Write an essay on the importance of the regency period in shaping the future administration and success of Akbar’s reign.

16.6. ANSWER KEY

CYPI

- Q1. See Section: 16.2
- Q2. See Section: 16.2
- Q3. See Section: 16.2
- Q4. See Section: 16.2

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Amarkot
- b. Askari Mirza
- c. Second Battle of Panipat
- d. Bairam Khan
- e. Hemu
- f. Kalanaur

CYPII

- Q1. See Section: 16.3
- Q2. See Section: 16.3

Q3. See Section: 16.3

Q4. See Section: 16.3

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Regent
- b. 1556 to 1560
- c. Bairam Khan
- d. Irani (Shia) and Turani (Sunni)
- e. Mubarak Khan Lohani

16.7. SUGGESTED READINGS

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AKBAR'S CONQUESTS: MALWA, GUJARAT & KASHMIR

STRUCTURE

17.0. Learning Objectives and Outcomes

17.1. Introduction

17.2. Akbar's Conquest of Malwa

17.3. Akbar's Conquest of Gujarat

17.4. Akbar's Conquest of Kashmir

17.5. Let us sum up

17.6. Glossary

17.7. Examination Oriented Questions

17.8. Lesson End Exercises

17.9. Answer Key

17.10. Suggested Readings

17.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Dear learners, the objective of this lesson is to enable you to:

- Describe the major campaigns undertaken by Akbar in Malwa, Gujarat and Kashmir.
- You will be able to explain how the fall of Malwa provided the Mughals with a vast revenue base and a strategic launching pad for further southern expansion.
- Examine the strategic and political importance of the conquest of Kashmir.
- Understand the need to secure the empire against threats from Central Asia and the North-West Frontier.

Learning Outcomes

Dear learners, after going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- The expansion policy of Akbar and his aim to consolidate the Mughal Empire.
- Develop a broader understanding of the process of Mughal imperial expansion in the 16th century.
- The administrative measures taken by Akbar after these conquests to integrate these regions into the empire.
- The overall impact of these conquests on the territorial expansion and stability of the Mughal Empire.

17.1. INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, Akbar, after overcoming the initial challenges and securing the throne of Mughal Empire, started the policy of extending Mughal territories across India through both diplomacy and military campaigns. Among his significant territorial expansions were the conquests of Malwa, Gujarat, and Kashmir, each of which held strategic, economic, and political importance. Malwa, located in central India, was a prosperous region controlling important trade routes; Gujarat, with its thriving ports and rich resources, was key to maritime trade; while Kashmir, in the north, was valued for its strategic position and natural wealth. Akbar's campaigns in these regions not only extended the Mughal Empire but also showcased his military strategy, administrative foresight, and policy of integrating diverse regions into a centralized imperial system. For Akbar, conquest was not merely about territorial expansion but also about securing the empire's frontiers, controlling important trade routes, and integrating diverse regions under a stable administrative system. This belief motivated many of his campaigns in regions such as Malwa, Gujarat, Bengal, and Kashmir, which gradually transformed the Mughal state into a vast and powerful empire.

17.2. AKBAR'S CONQUEST OF MALWA

Dear learners, Akbar felt the need to expand his kingdom as a means of consolidating and strengthening the imperial control over strategically important regions of the Indian subcontinent. Territorial expansion was essential not only for enhancing imperial prestige but also for securing strategic frontiers, maintaining military strength, suppressing potential rivals and imperial stability. The conquest of Malwa (1561–1562) by Akbar marked his first major military expedition after consolidating his power in Delhi and Agra and freeing himself from the regency of Bairam Khan. To expand his empire further south, Akbar needed a secure base in the middle of the subcontinent. Because of its central location, Malwa acted as a gateway to the south and Gujarat, thereby providing the perfect staging ground for his armies. Holding Malwa also meant control over a rich source of revenue as it controlled the lucrative trade routes connecting the fertile Indo-Gangetic plains to the wealthy ports of Gujarat in the west and the Deccan plateau in the south. Malwa was well known for its fertile black cotton soil, which produced abundant crops such as grain and cotton, and supported the production of fine textiles including Muslin. The agricultural prosperity of the region made it an economically valuable territory. Malwa also provided a steady supply of war elephants, saving the central government from having to transport them from the far-off eastern jungles of Bengal, Assam or Odisha. This availability of elephants added to the military and strategic value of Malwa for the Mughal Empire under Akbar. Apart from the military and economic importance of Malwa, the region frequently became a safe haven for Afghan rebels and disgruntled Mughal nobles who challenged Mughal authority, making its

conquest necessary for securing the stability of the empire.

At that time Malwa was ruled by Baz Bahadur, who was more renowned for his deep love of music and his romantic association with the singer-poetess Rani Roopmati (a shepherdess who later became his queen), rather than for his achievements on the battlefield, or fortifying his borders. He was a gifted musician himself and is credited with developing several **ragas**. Under his rule, Mandu (his capital) became a centre of musical and cultural activities, but his neglect of military preparedness and administration made the kingdom politically weak and vulnerable to external attack, particularly during the expansionist campaigns of Akbar.

In 1561, Akbar sent an army led by Adham Khan (the son of his foster mother Maham Anga) and Pir Muhammad Khan which resulted in the Battle of Sarangpur. Baz Bahadur's forces were no match for the disciplined Mughal cavalry. He was badly defeated and fled the battlefield, leaving behind his treasures, his harem, and his kingdom. Adham Khan was eager to obtain possession of Roopmati, but she took poison in order to save her honour. The tragic death of Rani Roopmati transformed the Mughal conquest of Malwa into a powerful local legend of sacrifice and martyrdom and created a negative impression of the conduct of the Mughal forces.

Both Adham Khan and Pir Muhammad inflicted untold misery on the people of the province. They executed prisoners of war, including women and children. Adham Khan kept most of the spoils of war including elephants, and women for himself, sending only a small fraction of what he had seized at Sarangpur to Akbar. Hearing reports of Adham Khan's atrocities, misuse of his authority and not sending the proper share of war booty to the imperial treasury enraged Akbar beyond measure. He personally rushed to Malwa without prior notice. This bold step asserted Akbar's authority and showed that he would not tolerate indiscipline or corruption among his nobles. Akbar's unexpected arrival shocked Adham Khan. Frightened by Akbar's sudden arrival, Adham Khan without resistance surrendered the hidden loot. Akbar eventually recalled Adham Khan and realized that he couldn't trust his "foster relatives" (the Atka Khail) blindly. He replaced him with Pir Muhammad as the new Mughal governor of the province.

Pir Muhammad proved to be an incompetent administrator. With the support of the rulers of Khandesh and Berar, Baz Bahadur briefly regained control of Malwa. Pir Muhammad pursued Baz Bahadur aggressively but died while attempting to cross the Narmada during his retreat. Akbar sent a second, more disciplined force under Abdullah Khan Uzbek. This time, the Mughals decisively crushed the resistance. Baz Bahadur fled again, eventually wandering as a refugee for nearly eight years before finally surrendering to Akbar in 1570. Akbar, being a great admirer of talent, made Baz Bahadur, his former enemy, his court musician and a **mansabdar** (noble) of 1,000 and was subsequently promoted to the rank of 2,000. As a result, Malwa's rich musical and architectural traditions began to influence the Mughal court. The Mughal Empire now shared borders with the Rajput states and the Deccan Sultanates.

For Akbar, the conquest of Malwa not only strengthened Mughal authority in central India but also facilitated further expansion towards the Deccan region. Malwa became one of the **subahs** (provinces) of the Mughal Empire.

Check Your Progress (CYP) -I

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. Name the ruler of Malwa defeated by Akbar.

Q2. In which year was Malwa conquered by Akbar?

Q3. Why was Adham Khan punished by Akbar?

Q4. Which region did the conquest of Malwa strengthen Mughal control over?

Fill in the Blanks:

- i. In 1561, the Mughal emperor Akbar sent his generals _____ and _____ to conquer Malwa.
- ii. At that time, Malwa was ruled by _____, who was more interested in music than warfare.
- iii. Akbar removed Adham Khan and appointed _____ as the new governor of Malwa.

iv. **Rani Roopmati**, famous for her talent in singing and poetry was the queen of _____.

17.3 AKBAR'S CONQUEST OF GUJARAT

Dear learners, Akbar after consolidating his position in central India and Rajputana, resolved to lead an expedition to Gujrat in 1572, situated to the south-west of the Mughal province of Malwa. Akbar had several reasons to conquer Gujrat:

- Gujrat by 1572 was no longer a unified kingdom and was in a state of total anarchy under the weak and incompetent Sultan Muzaffar Shah III. Gujrat was parcelled out to seven provinces or principalities, each ruled by a Muslim noble, who were anxious to establish their own independent power. These seven chiefs were always fighting with each other for supreme power, creating alliances of convenience to attack weak neighbours, alliances that were broken immediately after the temporary raid had been completed. The Muslim nobles were alien to the majority Hindu population and ruled through the perpetuation of systemic oppression. Muzaffar Shah had no control over his vassals who were in constant conflict with one another. The whole country was in a state of complete disorder.
- The immediate reason for Akbar's conquest of Gujrat were the Mirzas, who were Akbar's rebellious cousins, and had fled to south Gujarat and were using it as a base to plot against him.
- Gujrat, apart from being a prosperous fertile region, had a number of busiest seaports in India like Broach, Cambay and Surat, which carried on lucrative trade with countries of Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe since the earliest times. These are frequently mentioned in ancient literature of Hindus as centres of sea-borne trade and it was for this reason that ever since the days of Mahmud Ghazni the Muslim rulers of Hindustan sought the conquest of Gujrat. The conquest of Gujarat not merely aimed at expanding borders but also aimed at gaining access to the Arabian sea coast, and at securing control over the prosperous trade routes and commercial wealth of the province. *Thereby strengthening imperial revenues and overseas trade under Akbar.* Control of Gujarat also meant control over the sea routes for the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Apart from these reasons, Humayun occupied Gujrat in 1536, and held it as a province for barely a year due to his inability to consolidate Mughal authority in the region. Akbar naturally felt desirous of recovering the lost province of his father's empire.

Akbar was invited by one of the nobles Itimad Khan to attack Gujrat. Akbar grabbed this opportunity. The conquest of Gujarat was one of Akbar's most brilliant military and diplomatic achievements. Akbar himself led the army, marching via Ajmer. Seeing the advancing army of Akbar, Muzaffar Shah III fled for life and was found hiding in the cornfields. He surrendered without a fight. He was captured and pensioned off after he had submitted to the Emperor.

As soon as Akbar returned to his capital (Fatehpur Sikri), the Mirza's led by Mohammad Husain Mirza, revolted against the authority of Akbar. Mirzas besieged the Mughal governor in Ahmedabad. On hearing the news of the

revolt, Akbar made a remarkably rapid march from Fatehpur Sikri to Gujarat in just about eleven days to suppress it. This march of Akbar is considered as one of the greatest military marches in history as Akbar covered the 600 miles with a small but handpicked force of 3,000 in just about eleven days, while a normal army would take 2 to 3 months to reach Ahmedabad from Agra due to his superior and fast cavalry tactics. His sudden arrival surprised the rebel leaders, who thought it was impossible for the Emperor to be there so soon. Akbar personally led the Mughal forces and marched rapidly to deal with the rebels. It resulted in the Battle of Sarnal (1573) against the Mirzas. *Although greatly outnumbered, the weary yet inspired 3,000 soldiers of Akbar bravely charged the rebel army of 20,000 and won a decisive victory due to superior, fast-moving cavalry tactics.* This restored imperial authority in the province.

After receiving the submission of the chiefs of Gujrat and putting its capital under his foster brother, Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka, Akbar moved to secure the wealthy port of Surat, which was under the control of the Mirzas. The fort of Surat was well-defended, therefore, the siege of Surat fort by Mughals lasted for one month and seventeen days. The Mirzas, Akbar's own distant relatives, who had headed so many rebellions against the Emperor, were finally crushed in 1573. The victory was total; the leaders were captured or killed, and Gujarat was firmly annexed. This victory essentially ended the internal dynastic threat to his throne, proving that he would not tolerate rivals, even from his own bloodline. It gave the Mughals free access to the Arabian Sea, which boosted its trade and revenues.

After its fall, Akbar saw the ocean for the first time at Cambay and enjoyed a short sail on the ocean. He also made acquaintance with the Portuguese merchants dominating trade in the Arabian Sea, marking the beginning of his interest in European powers.

Before embarking on the Gujarat campaign, Akbar had started the construction of a new township at Sikri, outside Agra. On returning in triumph in June, he renamed the township Fatehpur Sikri (City of Victory in Sikri), and to commemorate this big victory, Akbar built the massive "Gate of Victory" (Buland Darwaza) at Fatehpur Sikri, the majestic gateway to the Jama Masjid. The conquest of Gujrat prepared the way for further conquests. *The conquest of Gujarat became an important strategic base from where Akbar could plan and launch campaigns towards the southern kingdoms of India. The conquest of Gujarat strengthened the Mughal Empire economically, strategically, and politically, making it one of the most significant achievements of Akbar's reign.* Gujarat became a *subah* (Province) of the Mughal Empire in 1573 following Akbar's conquest.

Check Your Progress (CYP) -II

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. Why was Gujrat important for the Mughal Empire?

Q2. Which monument was built to commemorate the conquest of Gujrat?

Q3. When and between whom was the battle of Sarnal fought?

Q4. Which ports of Gujrat came under Mughal control?

Q5. In which year Gujrat was annexed by Akbar?

Fill in the Blanks

- a. The ruler of Gujarat at the time of Akbar's invasion was _____.
- b. The conquest of Gujarat gave the Mughal Empire access to the _____ Sea.
- c. After conquering Gujarat, Akbar appointed _____ to administer the province.

d. During Akbar's conquest of Gujarat, the _____ dominated trade in the Arabian Sea.

17.4 AKBAR'S CONQUEST OF KASHMIR

Dear learners, by the 1580s, Akbar had consolidated much of northern India and focused on securing the north-west frontier. Attempts at conquest of Kashmir were being made since the time of Babur and Humayun but the final annexation happened only under Akbar after a series of military expeditions in Kashmir. Akbar for a long time had his eyes set on Kashmir mainly due to the following reasons:

- Akbar wanted to secure his northern borders. By controlling Kashmir, he could prevent Central Asian invaders or restless frontier tribes from using the valley as a staging ground to attack the Punjab.
- Akbar, originally of Central Asian descent, craved the cooler climate of the valley.
- Control over the mountain passes meant control over the lucrative trade in Pashmina wool, saffron, and dried fruits moving between India, Tibet, and Central Asia.
- It was a fertile and prosperous region.
- The ruling Chak dynasty under Yusuf Shah Chak were Shias, while many of the powerful landed nobles and the majority of the population were Sunnis. The religious strife between Sunni and Shia factions led to constant civil unrest, making the kingdom vulnerable.

Frustrated Kashmiri nobles actually reached out to Akbar, asking him to intervene. This afforded a favourable opportunity to Akbar to interfere with the independence of that kingdom. Unlike the humid plains of Bengal or the rocky terrain of Gujarat, Kashmir presented a unique challenge of geographical isolation protected by the massive Himalayan passes.

In late 1585, Akbar sent an army of 5,000 men led by Raja Bhagwan Das and Shah Quli Mahram. The Mughal army struggled with the freezing climate, the narrow, treacherous mountain passes blocked with snow. The Kashmiri King, Yusuf Shah Chak, put up a strong defense at the Pass of Buliyas. Despite the difficulties Raja Bhagwan Das compelled Yusuf to submit. Yusuf's son Yaqub Shah Chak escaped from custody. Yusuf met Raja Bhagwan Das and agreed to acknowledge Akbar's suzerainty, read Khutba and issue coins in the Emperor's name. He also consented to the appointment of imperial officers to take charge of the mint, saffron cultivation, manufacture of Shawls and regulate political affairs in Kashmir. When Yusuf Shah was brought to the Mughal court, Akbar rejected this treaty; he wanted total annexation and kept Yusuf Shah as a prisoner.

Furious that the Mughals had imprisoned their King, the Kashmiris rallied under Yusuf's son, Yaqub Shah Chak. Akbar sent a second, more powerful expedition under Qasim Khan. Many Kashmiri nobles, tired of the chaotic rule of Yaqub Shah Chak, secretly defected to the Mughals. Despite the difficult terrain, Qasim Khan's forces entered Srinagar in 1586. Kashmir was formally annexed in 1586. Yaqub Shah fled to the hills and fought a guerrilla war for nearly two years. He finally surrendered in 1589 when Akbar personally visited the valley and entrusted its administration to efficient officers of ability and experience. Both Yusuf and his son Yaqub were enlisted as Mansabdars and Kashmir was made a **sarkar** (district) of **suba** (province) of Kabul. Akbar was

enchanted by the landscape. He began the tradition of Mughal royalty spending summers in the valley, leading to the creation of the famous Mughal Gardens (like Nasim Bagh).

The fall of the Chak dynasty ended the period of independent Kashmiri sultanates. This annexation marked the first time Kashmir was ruled by a power based in the Indian heartland since the time of the Karkota Empire. Its conquest provided a natural “fortress” against Central Asian invaders. Introduced Persian administrative styles and Mughal architecture to the valley.

Check Your Progress (CYP) -III

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. In which year was Kashmir annexed by Akbar?

Ans. _____

Q2. Which dynasty ruled Kashmir before the Mughals?

Ans. _____

Q3. What was Akbar’s first approach towards Kashmir – diplomacy or war?

Ans. _____

Q4. Why was the conquest of Kashmir strategically important?

Ans. _____

Fill in the Blanks:

- a. After the detention of Yusuf Shah Chak, resistance against the Mughals was led by _____.
- b. Akbar personally visited Kashmir in the year _____.
- c. After the conquest, Kashmir was made a *sarkar* (district) of *suba* (province) of _____.
- d. The annexation of Kashmir strengthened Mughal control in the _____ region.

17.3. LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, Akbar's conquests of Malwa, Gujarat and Kashmir played a crucial role in strengthening and expanding the Mughal Empire. The conquest of Malwa secured Central India and removed a major obstacle to Mughal expansion. Gujarat brought immense economic benefits, rich revenues, and access to the Arabian Sea, boosting trade and imperial prosperity. The annexation of Kashmir extended Mughal control to the north-west and enhanced the empire's strategic security. Together, these conquests not only enlarged Akbar's territory but also consolidated his political authority, improved administrative unity, and laid a strong foundation for a stable and powerful Mughal Empire.

17.4. GLOSSARY

Mansabdar: The *mansabdari* system was the administrative and military ranking system introduced by Akbar in the Mughal Empire. Under this system, officials called *mansabdars* were assigned ranks (*mansabs*) that determined their status, salary, and the number of cavalry they had to maintain for the emperor.

Suba: During Akbar's reign, the Mughal Empire was divided into several *subas* or provinces for better administration. Each *suba* was headed by a *subedar* (Governor), who was responsible for law and order, revenue collection, and military security in the province.

17.5. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. Give a detailed account of Akbar's conquest of Malwa?
2. Give an account of Akbar's conquest of Gujarat. Why was Gujarat economically and strategically important for the Mughals?
3. Explain the circumstances that led to the Mughal conquest of Kashmir. How was Kashmir finally annexed to the Mughal Empire?
4. "Akbar's conquests were not merely military victories but steps towards imperial consolidation." Explain this statement with reference to Malwa, Gujarat and Kashmir.

17.6. LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1. Describe in detail the conquest of Malwa by Akbar. Discuss the role of Adham Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan and explain the importance of this conquest for the Mughal Empire.
- Q2. Discuss the significance of the conquest of Kashmir for the Mughal Empire.
- Q3. How did the conquest of Gujarat strengthen Mughal trade and economic power?
- Q4. Examine the political and strategic importance of Malwa in Akbar's expansion policy.
- Q5. Write a note on the overall impact of Akbar's conquests of Malwa, Gujarat and Kashmir on the growth and stability of the Mughal Empire.

17.7. ANSWER KEY

CYPI

- Q1. See Section: 17.2
- Q2. See Section: 17.2
- Q3. See Section: 17.2
- Q4. See Section: 17.2

Fill in the Blanks

- a. *Adham Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan*
- b. *Baz Bahadur*
- c. *Pir Muhammad Khan*
- d. *Baz Bahadur*

CYP II

- Q1. See Section: 17.3
- Q2. See Section: 17.3
- Q3. See Section: 17.3
- Q4. See Section: 17.3

Fill in the Blanks

- a. *Muzaffar Shah III*
- b. *Arabian Sea*

- c. Mirza Aziz Koka
- d. Portuguese

CYP III

- Q1. See Section: 17.4
- Q2. See Section: 17.4
- Q3. See Section: 17.4
- Q4. See Section: 17.4

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Yaqub Shah Chak
- b. 1589
- c. Kabul
- d. North-western/Himalayan

17.8. SUGGESTED READINGS

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AKBAR'S RELATIONS WITH RAJPUT STATES OF AMBER AND MEWAR
STRUCTURE

- 18.0. Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 18.1. Introduction**
- 18.2. Akbar's Relations with Rajput States of Amber**
- 18.3. Akbar's Relations with Rajput States of Mewar**
- 18.4. Let us sum up**
- 18.5. Glossary**
- 18.6. Examination Oriented Questions**
- 18.7. Lesson End Exercises**
- 18.8. Answer Key**
- 18.9. Suggested Readings**

18.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Dear learners, the objective of this lesson is to enable you to :

- Understand the political and strategic importance of Rajput states like Amber and Mewar during Akbar's reign.
- Examine Akbar's policies and approach towards the Rajputs, including diplomacy, alliances, and military strategies.
- Compare the different responses of Rajput states, particularly Amber's cooperation and Mewar's resistance.

Learning Outcomes

Dear learners, after going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- The differences between the policies of cooperation (Amber) and resistance (Mewar).

- The reasons behind the resistance of Mewar against Mughal authority.
- The significance of the Battle of Haldighati.
- The impact of Akbar's Rajput policy on the expansion and stability of the Mughal Empire.

18.1. INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, Akbar recognized the military prowess and political importance of the Rajputs and adopted a policy of integration rather than outright subjugation. This involved a strategic mix of warfare, diplomacy, and marriage alliances, ultimately leading to a significant number of Rajputs entering the Mughal service and contributing to the empire's stability and expansion. This policy was not uniform, and varied responses from different Rajput states shaped the nature of their relationship with the Mughal empire. Learners, in this lesson we will study Akbar's Rajput policy towards Amber and Mewar, highlighting their contrasting responses. With Amber, Akbar established friendly relations through marriage alliances, and incorporating Rajput nobles into his administration and army, creating a model of cooperation. In contrast, relations with Mewar, under the valorous Rana Pratap, were marked by resistance and conflict, as Mewar fiercely defended its independence. The Rajput states of Amber (later Jaipur) and Mewar held significant political and military influence in north-western India, making them key players in Akbar's expansion plans. Over time, Akbar's policy of combining diplomacy with force helped bring many Rajput states into the Mughal fold, while maintaining their local autonomy and honour.

18.2. AKBAR'S RELATIONS WITH RAJPUT STATES OF AMBER

Dear learners, At the time of Akbar's accession, two powerful military forces posed a serious challenge to Mughal authority i.e., the Afghans and the Rajputs. As a young ruler, Akbar wanted to balance rival powers and strengthen the foundations of the Mughal Empire. Akbar also realized that in order to consolidate and sustain his empire it is necessary to create a local chiefs support system. It is evident from *Ain-i-Akbari*, Rajputs kept large forces of 2,62,000 cavalry and 12,25,000 infantry soldiers under their command, which was much larger than the forces maintained by any other local chiefs. The Rajputs were known for their martial valour, discipline, and unwavering loyalty once in service. Shaikh Farid Bhakkari in his book *Zakhirat-ul Khawanin* records a popular seventeenth-century saying that the Shah of Iran advised emperor Humayun when the later was in Iran, to rely on Rajputs instead of Afghans. He also highlighted the military worth of Rajputs over Afghans and Mughals by stating that "a Mughal noble was worth ten Afghans and one Rajput was worth ten Mughals". Akbar realized that the inclusion of Rajputs in the administration and the establishment of matrimonial alliances with them would help secure their loyalty, strengthen the Mughal state, and ensure political stability. Therefore, Akbar chose to conciliate the Rajputs and integrate them into the Mughal administrative and military system. On the other hand, Akbar consciously worked to curb political and military power of their strongest political rivals in India who had earlier ruled Delhi, expelled Humayun to Iran and continued to challenge Mughal authority through frequent rebellions, i.e., the Afghans, by excluding them from power and suppressing their revolts. Thus, by integrating the Rajputs into the Mughal system while marginalizing the Afghans, Akbar successfully neutralized his strongest rivals and laid a firm foundation for a centralized and stable Mughal empire.

Recognizing the military strength and regional influence of Rajputs, Akbar on his accession to the throne made deliberate attempt to win Rajputs to his side and enlist their support in expansion and consolidation of Mughal rule in India. He adopted a pragmatic approach based on conciliation, trust, and partnership, which ultimately helped in winning Rajputs to the Mughal side. During the reign of Akbar, the kingdom of Amber was facing internal succession disputes and external threats from the governor of Mewar, Mirza Muhammad Sharif-ud-din Hussain, who supported a rival claimant, Suja, and attacked Amber in 1558. Baharmal, the Kachhwaha ruler of Amber, primarily to secure his existence, gain military protection, and achieve political, economic, and social stability accepted the supremacy of the Mughal. In 1562, Amber became the first Rajput state to establish friendly relations with Akbar.

This alliance was based on mutual advantage, cooperation, and political wisdom, becoming a model for Akbar's broader Rajput policy. For the Mughals, by securing Amber, the Mughals gained the support of the Kachchwaha Rajputs, whose military strength and loyalty greatly contributed to the stability and expansion of the Mughal Empire. Moreover, Amber's strategic location helped secure routes to north-west India as Amber was situated on the main route connecting Delhi and Agra with Ajmer and Gujarat, which made it crucial for controlling trade routes as well as the movement of Mughal armies towards western India. Its proximity to Mewar, a strong and often hostile Rajput state, gave the Mughals a strategic base to keep a check on Rajput resistance. This alliance allowed the Kachwahas to maintain their autonomy, manage their ancestral lands (*watan jagirs*), religious freedom, received high ranks (*mansabs*) and held prominent positions in the Mughal army and administration. The alliance also provided the Kachhwahas with protection against rival Rajput clans and allowed them to expand their territory, using Mughal military and political support. Further, it is held that Bharmal earned the confidence of the Mughal Emperor to the extent that whenever Akbar left his capital, he used to place its safety in the charge of Raja Bharmal of Amber, reflecting Akbar's trust and respect for him.

As soon as Bharmal joined Akbar's service, Bharmal of Amber was granted one of the highest ranks in the Akbar court, and was made the commander (*mansabdar*) of 5000 troops. To further solidify this alliance, in 1562, Bharmal arranged the marriage of his daughter, Harkhabai, to Akbar. The marriage was performed with full Hindu rites, showing Akbar's policy of conciliation and respect for Rajput traditions. This marriage is historically significant as it represented the merging of Rajput and Mughal lineages. Harkhabai, known by the title Maryam-uz-Zamani, became the mother of Jahangir, who later ascended the Mughal throne. Following the marriage, Bharmal, accompanied by an entourage that included his sons, Bhagwant Das and Jagannath, and twelve-year-old grandson, Man Singh, proceeded to the Imperial court at Agra. Bharmal and obtained ranks of considerable importance in the Imperial army. played a crucial role in suppressing the Mirza rebellion in Sarnal (Gujarat), a significant uprising against Akbar's rule. In recognition of his loyalty and military prowess, Akbar awarded Bhagwant Das with Nagada (a ceremonial drum) and a flag, symbols of honour and royal favour. Thus, this cementing of an alliance between Akbar and the ruler of Amber (Dhoondhar) in 1562 marked the beginning of an important phase, both for the Mughal Empire and for the diverse states of the present-day Rajasthan region. The association would remain mutually beneficial over the next several generations too, with Kachchwaha arms, administrative skills and loyalty proving an asset to the mighty Mughal Empire, just as was the recognition, high

honours, territorial stability and economic prosperity that followed in its wake for the kingdom of Amber.

Encouraged by the security, honour, and high positions granted to the rulers of Amber, several other Rajput states like by 1570, Ranthambore, Bundi, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Dungarpur and Banswara, also accepted the supremacy of the Mughals and those who opposed Mughal's authority faced the Mughal military might like Chittor, the capital of Mewar, which fell to Akbar in 1568. These alliances strengthened Mughal authority in Rajasthan while allowing the Rajput rulers to retain their territories and internal autonomy, making the policy beneficial for both sides. Thus, simultaneous with a vigorous expansion of Imperial frontiers, evolved Akbar's 'Rajput Policy' of friendship and matrimonial alliances.

Bharmal's successor, Bhagwant Das (r.1574-1589), abilities as an administrator, warrior, and diplomat were duly recognized at the Imperial court and was given the *mansab* rank of 5,000. In recognition of his distinguished services in several imperial military campaigns and expeditions across Rajasthan, Gujarat, Kashmir, and Punjab (including the conquest of Ranthambore in 1569, and the battle of Sarnal in 1572) he was conferred the prestigious title of 'Amir-ul-Umra, by Akbar. Following his father's footsteps, he further solidified the alliance between the Kachwaha Rajputs and the Mughal dynasty by marrying his daughter, Princess Man Bai (also known as Sultan-un-Nisa), with Akbar's eldest son, the Mughal Prince Salim (later Emperor Jahangir) in 1585. He served as the Subedar of the Punjab for seven years from 1583 till his death in 1589 at Lahore.

Bhagwant Das was succeeded by his eldest son, Man Singh (r. 1589-1614). At the age of 12, when his grandfather Raja Bharmal Kachhwaha became a vassal state of Mughal Empire and married his daughter Harkha bai to Akbar, Man Singh alongside Harkha bai, Bhagwant Das was also sent to Mughal court. He became leading general in the Mughal Empire under Emperor Akbar, whom he served loyally as one of the Navaratnas or nine jewels of the court. In the course of his career, first as a royal prince and then the ruler of Amber, Man Singh took part in as many as sixty-seven important military campaigns and battles from Kabul, Balkh and Bukhara in the north-west to Bengal in the east, besides the southern and central part of the subcontinent. This includes his decisive role played in Akbar's conquest of Chittor (1568), siege of Ranthambore (1569), the Battle of Haldighati fought in 1576 between the Mughal forces and Maharana Pratap of Mewar and the conquest of Surat (26 February, 1573). He is also known for reestablishment of Jagannath Temple of Puri, Orissa.

In August 1605, Akbar in recognition of his services and loyalty, honoured Man Singh at the Imperial court of Agra by raising his *mansab* from 5000 *zat* to 7,000 *zat* and 6,000 *sawar* — an honour which till then had been bestowed exclusively on Mughal princes of the royal blood. Man Singh was also bestowed with several prestigious titles that highlighted his importance in the Mughal court and his contributions to the empire. For instance, Emperor Akbar, bestowed the title of 'Farzand' (son) upon Man Singh prior to the march against Maharana Pratap of Mewar, 'Mirza Raja' and '*sapt-hazaari mansab*'.

Man Singh supported Prince Khusrau's claim over Jahangir, as the next Mughal emperor. However, all plans of Man Singh of seeing Prince Khusrau on the throne did not materialize. Before his death, Akbar recognized Jahangir as his successor, who later became the Mughal emperor. Despite initial friction with Jahangir over succession, recognizing Man Singh's wisdom, bravery, Jahangir retained Man Singh in his services. It was while

serving in the Deccan that the long and distinguished career of Man Singh came to an end, as, following a short illness, the Amber ruler died a natural death at Elichpur on July 6, 1614.

Unlike some Rajput states, Amber chose a cooperative approach, which Akbar skillfully nurtured through diplomacy and alliances. This, along with his notions of sound governance, award of high *mansabs* to Rajput princes and kings, and absence of religious bigotry brought the rulers of Rajputana into the service of the Mughal Empire and served to consolidate its foundations for the ensuing generations.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- I

On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. Did Amber ever resist Akbar's authority? Why or why not?

Q2. Why was Amber strategically important for the Mughal Empire?

Q3. How did the marriage alliance with Amber help Akbar politically?

Q4. Name the rulers of Amber during Akbar's reign?

Fill in the Blanks:

- a. The first Rajput state to establish friendly relations with Akbar was _____.
- b. The ruler of Amber who accepted Akbar's suzerainty was Raja _____.
- c. Raja Bharmal gave his daughter in marriage to Mughal Emperor _____.
- d. Raja Man Singh led the Mughal army in the Battle of _____ against Maharana Pratap.

18.3 AKBAR'S RELATIONS WITH RAJPUT STATES OF MEWAR

Dear learners, unlike Amber, the Rajput state of **Mewar** was known for its fierce independence and resistance to Mughal authority. Akbar was able to resolve his relations with almost all the states of Rajasthan with the exception of Mewar. Because of its size and its heavily wooded, hilly terrain, Mewar was ideally situated to stand out for independence, unlike the other Rajput states. Strategically, subjugation of *Mewar* was necessary for Akbar as Mewar was located on one of the traditional trade and campaign routes that connected Delhi and Agra with Gujarat and parts of Malwa.

Mughal-Rajput relations begins with the battle of Panipat. Rana Sanga (1508-1528) of Sisodia dynasty to establish political relations with Babur is known to have sent his son Bagh as envoy to him at Kabul proposing joining hands against their common enemy Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. In contrast, the traditional Rajput version holds that it was not Sanga — already powerful enough and mainly successful against various enemy states — who had sent an envoy to Babur at Kabul, proposing an alliance against their common foe, Ibrahim Lodi, but rather, it was Babur who sought an ally of undoubted ability and strength for his proposed expedition against the Lodi Sultan. Thus, some hold that Rana Sanga agreed to Babur's proposal. Rana Sanga wrongly presumed that, like earlier invaders such as Timur, Babur would merely plunder Delhi and Agra and then return to Kabul. This misconception led Rana Sanga to believe that the political vacuum left behind would enable him to establish his own supremacy over northern India. However, to Rana Sanga's dismay, after defeating Ibrahim Lodhi in the First Battle of Panipat (1526), Babur chose not to withdraw but instead aimed to consolidate and establish Mughal authority in India. This soon brought Babur into conflict with Mewar's Rana Sanga, and in March 1527 the two led their forces against each other at the battlefield of Khanua, about forty kilometers away from Delhi. Immediate cause of conflict between the two was control over the fort of Bayana, which was an important outpost for controlling the Delhi-Agra region. The major cause of Babur's success in the battles of Panipat and Khanua was the better war technology. Babur had artillery force which played significant role in these successes. Meanwhile, following Babur's victory at Khanua, which had strengthened his position in the Agra-Delhi area, Babur continued to further consolidate his position.

Though the battle of Khanua weakened the power of the kingdom of Mewar and lowered its general prestige, it did not destroy the grip of the Sisodias over their kingdom, nor did it affect the social and economic conditions of life in the state.

Babur died in 1530. He was succeeded by Humayun. Humayun remained busy with the challenges of his brothers

and Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and Sher Shah Suri. He is known to have received Rakhi from the widow Rani Karmawati, the wife of late Rana Ratan Singh with a hope to get help from her Rakhi brother (Humayun) against her internal foes and the external invaders Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and Sultan Baz Bahadur of Malwa. But Humayun who was already under pressure of his own challenges could not respond to the call of the Rani.

During the reign of Rana Udai Singh, Akbar laid a long siege to Chittor, traditional capital of Mewar, between October 1567 and February 1568. In spite of a gritty and heroic defence, the fort of Chittor finally fell to the Mughal emperor Akbar in February 1568. Chittor was declared a Sarkar (province) of the Mughal Empire, and placed under the charge of Asaf Khan. After the fall of Chittor, Ranthambhor, the chiefs of Bundi, Dungarpur and Banswara had also accepted the Mughal suzerainty. Mewar was effectively surrounded to its north, east and west by Mughal territory, or territories that had accepted Mughal supremacy. Only on its southern and south-eastern borders was Mewar free of the Mughal sphere of influence.

After the death of Rana Udai Singh in 1572, Rana Pratap (1572-1597 AD) succeeded to the Gaddi of Mewar. Akbar, after the occupation of Gujarat in 1572-73 and Bengal in 1574, decided to move against the strategically located kingdom of Mewar. Akbar's policy for this region at the time was apparently aimed at a blockade of Mewar, in order to isolate it politically and militarily and compel its submission. This was resented by Pratap.

Records tell us that Akbar tried to extract peaceful submission from Pratap on at least three occasions. For this, between 1573 and 1575, three successive emissaries were sent from the Emperor to Maharana Pratap. They were Prince Man Singh of Amber (r. 1589-1614), Raja Bhagwant Das of Amber (r. 1574-1589), and Raja Todar Mal. Man Singh was received by the Rana in his characteristic courteous manner. Man Singh's visit did not yield any diplomatic result, the next visit by Raja Bhagwant Das had greater success. The Rana put on the robe sent by Akbar, and the Rana's son, Amar Singh, accompanied Bhagwant Das to the Mughal capital. However, no agreement could be arrived at because the Rana refused Akbar's insistence on his personal submission. A final visit by Todar Mal also failed to resolve the issues. War between Mewar and the Mughals was inescapable. To defeat Rana Pratap, Akbar appointed Man Singh, the Kachchwaha prince of Amber, as the commander-in-chief of the imperial army in recognition of his bravery and farsightedness. By entrusting a Rajput noble with such a high command, Akbar demonstrated his policy of incorporating Rajputs into the Mughal administrative and military system.

R.P. Tripathi in his book entitled *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* emphasize that as far as Akbar's policy towards the Rajput states of India was concerned, he only aimed at conciliation and integration of Rajput states into the Mughal imperial system, rather than their total conquest or suppression or any interference in their social, economic and religious life. Akbar sought the loyalty of Rajput kingdoms within the new imperial confederation, which implied four things: firstly, the rulers were expected to pay a contribution to the Mughal Empire in the form of tribute; secondly, they had to surrender their 'foreign' policies and their right to settle their disputes through mutual warfare; thirdly, they had to send a fixed number of troops for imperial service, whenever required; and fourthly, they were expected to consider themselves an integral part of the empire, and not merely individual units.

Akbar's policy of respecting Rajput rulers autonomy, honour, religious beliefs, and fostering religious tolerance throughout his empire, along with appointment of the Rajput rulers and their kinsmen to high imperial offices, and treating them on par with the highest among Mughal courtiers, helped strengthening the Mughal-Rajput relations. Through matrimonial alliances with Rajput princesses from several Rajput states, the emperor and his sons forged a strong and lasting bond with the Rajputs. Because of these ties, Pratap did not get clear support from most other Rajput rulers and chiefs in his struggle against Akbar.

Rana Pratap was reluctant to accept Mughal suzerainty. Therefore, Akbar adopted stern attitude and dispatched a large and powerful contingent under the command of Kunwar Man Singh and many other powerful nobles in 1576. Ultimately, it led to a battle between the Mughals and the forces of Rana Pratap at Haldighati in **1576**. The battle was mainly fought in the traditional manner between cavalymen and elephants, since the Mughals found it difficult to transport any artillery, except light artillery over the rough terrain. The Rana, it seems, had no firearms. In the traditional fight, the Rajputs were at an advantage. Thus, the battle failed to break the existing stalemate. This was the last time the Rana engaged in a pitched battle with the Mughals. Henceforth, he resorted to methods of guerrilla warfare.

Akbar followed up the battle of Haldighati by coming back to Ajmer, and personally leading the campaign against Rana Pratap. In the process, Goganda, Udaipur and Kumbhalgarh were occupied, forcing the Rana deeper into the mountainous tract of south Mewar. The Mughals overran the states of Dungarpur, Banswara and Sirohi who were the allies of Mewar. Akbar concluded separate treaties with each of them, thus further isolating Mewar. Despite heavy losses and Mughal pressure, Mewar managed to retain a significant degree of autonomy and never fully accepted Mughal suzerainty during Rana Pratap's lifetime. Under the leadership of Rana Pratap, Mewar became a symbol of Rajput courage and determination to defend their sovereignty.

Over the next few years, Maharana Pratap avoided pitched battles but continued guerrilla warfare against the Mughals on every available occasion. There was no comparison between the military power of the Mughals and the Ranas of Mewar but the latter derived their power from the natural geographical situation of the Mewar kingdom, which had densely forested and inaccessible valleys and hills in Aravalli ranges and ravines provided both the offensive and defensive power to the Ranas' forces. The Mughal forces were not acclimatized and trained to fight in the hill tracts like the Aravalli ranges. The indigenous Bhils of the less accessible areas — skilled in the use of the bow and arrow, and knowledgeable about local mountainous paths and passes — proved to be his invaluable allies. 'Scorched earth policy' was adopted by the Mewaris, with crops destroyed and wells filled with earth and rubble, to deter the Mughal occupying forces, alongside constant attempts to sever the Imperial supply lines. Between 1585 and up to his death in January 1597, despite his best efforts, Pratap was never able to fulfil his ambition of recovering his ancestral capital, Chittor, even though he managed to restore Mewar's control over some of the area around Chittor.

Despite limited resources, his determination and bravery allowed him to resist Mughal control and maintain the spirit of independence in Mewar, earning him a lasting reputation as a symbol of Rajput courage and resilience.

Rana Pratap was succeeded by his son, Amar Singh (1597-1620). A series of expeditions were sent by Akbar

against Rana Amar Singh between 1598 and 1605. Prince Salim was sent against the Rana in 1599, but achieved little.

Mewar's resistance highlighted the limits of Mughal power and the importance of diplomacy alongside military campaigns. The state became an enduring symbol of Rajput pride and valor in Indian history.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- II

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. When and between whom was the Battle of Khanua fought?

Q2. Who was the ruler of Mewar during Akbar's reign?

Q3. Which battle symbolized Mewar's resistance to the Mughals?

Q4. Why was Mewar important for Akbar strategically?

Q5. When and between whom was the Battle of Haldighati fought?

Fill in the Blanks:

- a. The capital of Mewar was _____ before it was shifted to Udaipur.
- b. Akbar attacked and captured the fort of Chittor/Chittorgarh in the year _____.
- c. After Udai Singh's death, his son _____ became the ruler of Mewar.
- d. Akbar's policy towards Mewar was different from his policy of _____ with other Rajput states.

18.3. LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, in conclusion we can say that Akbar's policy towards the Rajputs combined diplomacy, strategic alliances, and military action, reflecting his broader approach of consolidating the Mughal Empire through integration rather than mere conquest. While he successfully secured the cooperation of Amber through matrimonial alliances and integration of Rajput nobles and princes in to administration, Mewar under Rana Pratap remained a symbol of valour and resistance. Akbar's relations with the Rajput state of Mewar were characterized by intense, prolonged conflict, standing in contrast to his generally conciliatory policy toward other Rajput states. Unlike others who accepted Mughal suzerainty, Mewar, under Udai Singh and later Maharana Pratap, fiercely resisted Akbar, refusing to enter into matrimonial alliances or accept vassalage. After years of conflict, Mewar eventually accepted a treaty with the Mughals under Rana Pratap's successors, but it was on terms that preserved the dignity and autonomy of the state. Overall, Akbar's Rajput policy helped consolidate the Mughal Empire, ensured political stability, and set a precedent for cooperative governance with regional powers.

18.4. GLOSSARY

Mansab: ***mansab*** was a rank or position given to Mughal nobles which fixed their status, salary, and military responsibilities.

Zat: ***zat*** indicated the **personal rank and status** of the ***mansabdar*** and decided his salary.

Swar: ***swar*** indicated the **number of cavalrymen** the ***mansabdar*** had to maintain for the emperor.

18.5. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- 1. Explain Akbar's Rajput policy. Why is it described as a policy of conciliation and cooperation rather than conquest?

2. Discuss Akbar's policy towards the Rajput states. How did he maintain friendly relations with Amber while dealing with Mewar?
3. Examine the role of marriage alliances in Akbar's relations with the Rajputs, particularly with Amber. How did these alliances strengthen the Mughal Empire?
4. Analyze the conflict between Akbar and Rana Pratap of Mewar. What were the main reasons for Mewar's resistance, and how did it affect Mughal-Rajput relations?
5. Explain how Akbar integrated Rajput nobles into his administration and army. How did this policy help in consolidating the Mughal Empire?
6. Discuss the significance of Akbar's Rajput policy in the expansion and consolidation of the Mughal Empire.
7. Describe the causes, course, and consequences of the Battle of Haldighati.

18.6. LESSON END EXERCISES

1. Compare and contrast Akbar's approach towards the Rajput states of Amber and Mewar. What does this reveal about his overall imperial strategy?
2. Akbar's relations with the Rajputs combined diplomacy with military strategy." Explain this statement with suitable examples from Amber and Mewar.

18.7. ANSWER KEY

CYP 1

- Q1. See Section 18.2.
- Q2. See Section 18.2.
- Q3. See Section 18.2.
- Q4. See Section 18.2.

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Amber
- b. Bharmal
- c. Akbar
- d. Haldighati

CYP 2

- Q1. See Section 18.3.

Q2. See Section 18.3.

Q3. See Section 18.3.

Q4. See Section 18.3.

Q5. See Section 18.3.

Fill in the Blanks

a. Chittor/Chittorgarh

b. 1568

c. Maharana Pratap

d. conciliation

18.8. SUGGESTED READINGS

- Gopi Nath Sharma, *Mewar and Mughal Emperors (1526-1707 A.D.)*, Agra: Shiv Lal Agarwala & Co. Ltd, 1954.
- Rima Hooja, *A History of Rajasthan*, New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 2006.

AKBAR'S DECCAN POLICY

STRUCTURE

19.0 Learning Objectives and Outcomes

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19.7.2 Strategic and Administrative Achievements

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19.12 Answer Key

19.13 Suggested Readings

19.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to :

- Explain the historical and geographical context of the Deccan during Akbar's reign and the political fragmentation that characterized the region.
- Describe Akbar's strategic objectives in the Deccan and analyze how his policies evolved over time in response to regional challenges.
- Assess the military campaigns and diplomatic strategies Akbar employed to extend Mughal control southward and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Analyze the relationship between Akbar's Deccan policy and his broader imperial vision, including considerations of religious tolerance and administrative integration.

- Evaluate the long-term consequences of Akbar's Deccan initiatives for Mughal state consolidation, regional stability, and the trajectory of Mughal expansion.
- Compare different historical interpretations of Akbar's Deccan policy and assess the extent to which his southern expansion succeeded or failed.

Learning Outcomes

After going through the lesson, you will have a clear understanding of :

- The Deccan's geographical setting and political complexity before major Mughal intervention;
- The strategic, economic, and ideological motives behind Akbar's southern policy;
- The main military and diplomatic methods adopted by the Mughal empire in the Deccan;
- The administrative measures used to integrate conquered territories into the imperial system; and
- The achievements, limitations, and historical significance of Akbar's Deccan policy.

19.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear Learner, Akbar's reign (1556-1605) witnessed unprecedented expansion of Mughal power and territorial consolidation, but the Deccan region—the vast plateau comprising the interior and southern portions of the Indian subcontinent—presented persistent challenges to imperial ambitions. The Deccan, home to established sultanates, regional powers, and Hindu kingdoms, remained incompletely incorporated into the Mughal empire throughout Akbar's lifetime despite repeated military campaigns and diplomatic initiatives.

Understanding Akbar's Deccan policy requires examining the region's political complexity, the strategic calculations that motivated imperial intervention, the methods through which Akbar sought to establish control, and the ultimate limitations of these efforts. The Deccan differed significantly from northern India, where Akbar had achieved near-complete dominance through military conquest and administrative reorganization.

19.2 THE DECCAN CONTEXT AND PRE-MUGHAL POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

19.2.1 Geographical and Strategic Significance of the Deccan

The Deccan plateau comprises approximately one-half of the Indian subcontinent, encompassing present-day Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and portions of other regions. Its geography—characterized by elevated terrain, the Vindhya and Satpura ranges forming its northern boundary, and rivers including the Godavari, Krishna, and Tungabhadra—created a distinct regional identity and made communication with northern India challenging.

Strategically, the Deccan occupied a crucial position in Indian geopolitics. Control of the Deccan would grant

Akbar access to the southern coast, facilitate trade networks extending toward the Indian Ocean and beyond, and complete the territorial consolidation necessary for comprehensive imperial dominance. The region's wealth—including diamond mines, agricultural productivity, and trade revenues—made political control economically valuable.

19.2.2 The Bahmani Sultanate and its Fragmentation

Understanding Akbar's Deccan policy requires appreciation of the Bahmani sultanate, which had dominated the Deccan for more than two centuries before fragmenting in the late fifteenth century. The Bahmani sultanate, established in 1347, had created a centralized state controlling much of the Deccan and challenging Hindu kingdoms to the south. However, by the early sixteenth century, internal conflicts, succession disputes, and administrative fragmentation led to its dissolution into successor states.

By Akbar's era, the Bahmani sultanate had fractured into five principal states: the Nizamshahi state of Ahmadnagar, the Adilshahi kingdom of Bijapur, the Qutbshahi state of Golconda, the Baridshahi state of Bidar, and the Imadshahi state of Berar. This fragmentation destroyed Bahmani unity but simultaneously created opportunities for external powers like the Mughal empire to exploit divisions and extend influence southward.

19.2.3 The Nizamshahi State of Ahmadnagar and Malik Ambar

Among the Deccan sultanates, the Nizamshahi state of Ahmadnagar emerged as the most significant rival to Mughal expansion and the most consistent impediment to Akbar's Deccan policy. Centered in the central-southern Deccan, Ahmadnagar maintained substantial military resources and strategic autonomy. The state was governed by the Nizam Shahi dynasty, which pursued policies alternating between accommodation and resistance toward Mughal pressure.

Of particular historical importance was Malik Ambar (1548-1626), who rose to prominence as military administrator and de facto governor of Ahmadnagar in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Originally of Ethiopian origin, he reorganized the Nizamshahi military, introduced tactical innovations, and became a formidable adversary to Mughal expansion. His significance for understanding Akbar's Deccan policy lies partly in the temporal dimension—Malik Ambar's greatest power emerged after Akbar's death—but his role anticipates the continued Nizamshahi resistance that would characterize Deccan politics into the early seventeenth century.

19.2.4 The Adilshahi Kingdom of Bijapur and the Qutbshahi State of Golconda

The Adilshahi kingdom of Bijapur, centered in the western-central Deccan, and the Qutbshahi state of Golconda, centered in the southeastern Deccan, represented additional centers of political power and military capability. The Adilshahi state maintained particularly significant military resources and pursued ambitious territorial policies. Its capital, Bijapur, developed into an important cultural and economic center.

The Qutbshahi state, governing from Golconda, similarly maintained substantial power, particularly through control of important trade routes and diamond production. The Qutbshahi dynasty, of Persian origin, supported the development of Persian culture, Islamic learning, and architectural sophistication within their domains. Like the

Adilshahi and Nizamshahi rulers, the Qutbshahi dynasty pursued policies balancing resistance to Mughal expansion with concern regarding Hindu kingdoms to the south.

19.2.5 Hindu Kingdoms and Vijayanagara

Complicating Akbar's relationship with the Deccan was the continued existence of substantial Hindu political power in the form of the Vijayanagara empire. Centered in the far southern Deccan and extending into the Carnatic, Vijayanagara represented a major Hindu kingdom that had successfully resisted Islamic expansion southward. The empire maintained sophisticated military organization, substantial wealth derived from trade and territorial resources, and considerable cultural and religious significance as a center of Hindu political power and Sanskrit learning.

The relationship between Vijayanagara and the Deccan sultanates was characterized by persistent conflict. These conflicts created diplomatic opportunities and constraints for Akbar: he could potentially ally with Hindu powers against Islamic sultanates or, conversely, emphasize Islamic unity against Hindu kingdoms, depending on strategic circumstances.

19.3 AKBAR'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND EARLY DECCAN INITIATIVES

19.3.1 Imperial Consolidation and Territorial Ambitions

Akbar's Deccan policy flowed from broader imperial vision and strategic priorities. Having achieved substantial control over northern and central India, Akbar pursued territorial consolidation that would bring the entire subcontinent under Mughal authority. Complete control of the Deccan would complete Akbar's imperial project and establish the Mughal empire as genuinely pan-Indian in scope.

This ambition was not merely military or territorial but ideological. Akbar evidently conceived his role as emperor in terms encompassing the whole of India, requiring incorporation of the Deccan into the imperial system. Additionally, Akbar's interest in the Deccan reflected pragmatic strategic considerations. The Deccan sultanates, if left independent and potentially allied with hostile powers, could threaten Mughal security. Conversely, territorial expansion would increase imperial resources, extend trade networks, and enhance Akbar's prestige and power.

19.3.2 Early Campaigns and Initial Difficulties

Akbar's earliest initiatives in the Deccan date to the 1580s-1590s, though these early efforts met with limited success. Mughal commanders launched military campaigns against the Nizamshahi state of Ahmadnagar and other sultanates, seeking to extend Mughal control southward. However, the campaigns faced significant obstacles. The Deccan sultanates, despite internal divisions, possessed substantial military capability and could field considerable armies. The terrain was unfamiliar to Mughal forces trained primarily in northern campaigns, and supply lines extended over difficult country, increasing logistical challenges.

Furthermore, the Deccan sultanates recognized the Mughal threat and formed coalitions to resist expansion. Rather than fighting in isolation, the sultanates—despite their mutual rivalries—understood that coordinated

resistance offered better prospects than individual defense against Mughal power. These alliances complicated Akbar's strategic calculations and demonstrated that the Deccan was not simply an area waiting for incorporation into the Mughal system but a region where established powers would resist subordination to northern authority.

19.3.3 Check Your Progress (CYP)-I

A. Fill in the blanks

1. The Deccan plateau formed a distinct regional world partly because communication with _____ India was difficult.
2. The Bahmani sultanate fragmented into _____ principal successor states.
3. Among the Deccan sultanates, _____ emerged as the most significant rival to Mughal expansion.

B. True or False

1. Akbar's early Deccan campaigns achieved effortless and complete success.
2. The Deccan sultanates always fought Mughal power separately and never coordinated resistance.
3. Economic and strategic motives both influenced Akbar's southern policy.

C. Short questions

- Q1. Why was the Deccan strategically important for the Mughal empire?

- Q2. How did the fragmentation of the Bahmani sultanate create opportunities for Mughal intervention?

- Q3. What early difficulties did Mughal forces face in the Deccan?

19.4 MAJOR MILITARY CAMPAIGNS AND TERRITORIAL EXPANSION

19.4.1 The Conquest of Ahmadnagar and the Struggle with Nizamshahi Power

The most significant Mughal military operations in the Deccan focused on the Nizamshahi state of Ahmadnagar. In the 1590s, Akbar launched sustained military campaigns against Ahmadnagar, seeking to extend Mughal authority over the state or at minimum to establish firm tributary relationships. These campaigns, led by Mughal generals and supervised by Akbar's representatives, involved substantial military forces and represented serious

imperial commitment to Deccan expansion.

The campaigns against Ahmadnagar revealed both Mughal military capability and the resilience of Nizamshahi resistance. Mughal forces achieved significant victories, captured territories, and extended imperial control, but Ahmadnagar maintained substantial independence and military capability. The contests between Mughal and Nizamshahi forces continued across the 1590s and into the early seventeenth century, with neither side achieving complete victory or defeat. The frontier between Mughal and Nizamshahi territories remained contested and militarized.

19.4.2 The Role of Vassal Relationships and Indirect Control

Recognizing that complete conquest of the Deccan would require enormous resources and prolonged military commitment, Akbar pursued alternative strategies including the establishment of vassal relationships. Rather than directly administering all Deccan territories, Akbar sought to establish relationships where Deccan rulers would acknowledge Mughal suzerainty, provide tribute, and align with Mughal interests while maintaining local autonomy.

This approach offered advantages: it required less direct military occupation, allowed continued collection of revenue through tribute, and incorporated Deccan rulers into the Mughal hierarchy without necessarily displacing established power structures. However, vassal relationships also had limitations. They required continuous demonstration of Mughal power to maintain authority, depended on the willingness of Deccan rulers to accept subordination, and could break down if circumstances changed or if vassal rulers perceived weakness in Mughal authority.

19.4.3 Relations with Bijapur and Golconda

Akbar's relationship with the Adilshahi kingdom of Bijapur and the Qutbshahi state of Golconda differed from his approach to Ahmadnagar. While Akbar sought to control or decisively subordinate Ahmadnagar, his relationship with Bijapur and Golconda evolved more toward diplomatic accommodation and tributary arrangements. These states, geographically more distant from Mughal power centers and more capable of resisting direct conquest, were managed through a combination of military pressure and diplomatic negotiation.

Akbar pursued policies designed to divide the Deccan sultanates and prevent unified resistance. He encouraged conflicts between Bijapur and Golconda, supported one state against another depending on strategic circumstances, and used both military pressure and diplomatic incentives to encourage tributary relationships. These strategies reflected recognition that the Deccan's political complexity might be manipulated to Mughal advantage.

19.4.4 The Conquest of Berar and Administrative Integration

Among Akbar's Deccan achievements was the conquest of Berar, the Imadshahi state in the eastern-central Deccan. Mughal forces captured Berar, incorporated the territory into the Mughal administrative system, and annexed it as a formal province. The conquest of Berar demonstrated Mughal military capability and showed that complete territorial incorporation—not merely tributary arrangements—was achievable in some circumstances.

The integration of Berar into the Mughal administrative system followed the imperial model established in northern territories. Mughal administrators reorganized the province according to the mansabdari system, appointed Mughal officials to govern, and incorporated Berar's resources and military forces into the broader Mughal system. The successful integration of Berar suggested that conquered Deccan territories could be effectively administered and made to contribute to imperial resources.

19.4.5 Limits of Conquest and the Challenge of Extended Frontiers

Despite Akbar's military efforts and substantial resource commitment, Mughal conquest of the Deccan remained incomplete by his death in 1605. Ahmadnagar maintained significant independence and military capability, Bijapur and Golconda preserved autonomy, and the far southern regions remained outside Mughal control. The extended frontier between Mughal and independent Deccan powers remained militarized and contested.

This incomplete conquest reflected the real limits of sixteenth-century imperial power and the challenges of projecting authority over vast distances and difficult terrain. The incompleteness of Akbar's Deccan conquest had important implications. It meant that Akbar's successors would inherit the Deccan problem in substantially the form Akbar had confronted it. The final conquest of the Deccan sultanates would occur under Akbar's successors, particularly during Aurangzeb's reign in the late seventeenth century, demonstrating that the Deccan integration project extended across generations.

19.5 DIPLOMATIC STRATEGIES AND NON-MILITARY APPROACHES

19.5.1 Marriage Alliances and Dynastic Connections

Akbar pursued diplomatic strategies complementing military campaigns. Marriage alliances connecting Mughal imperial family members with Deccan ruling families created kinship relationships and mutual interests. These alliances, while not eliminating conflict, created networks of obligation and shared interest that could moderate antagonism and facilitate accommodation.

Dynastic connections could also create opportunities for Mughal influence within Deccan states, as married members of the imperial family maintained connections to their natal families. Such marriages were double-edged: they offered opportunities for imperial influence while simultaneously suggesting that Akbar accepted Deccan rulers as status-equivalent marriage partners rather than subordinate subjects.

19.5.2 Tribute and Tributary Relationships

Akbar pursued the establishment of tributary relationships where Deccan rulers would acknowledge Mughal suzerainty, provide regular tribute payments, and align with Mughal foreign policy objectives. These relationships allowed expansion of Mughal authority and resource extraction without requiring complete conquest and direct administration.

For tributary rulers, such arrangements offered security—Mughal military power could be invoked against competitors—and preserved local autonomy in internal governance. The tributary system demonstrated flexibility in imperial administration. Not all territories required direct conquest and incorporation into the imperial

bureaucracy. Instead, Akbar could expand imperial authority through hierarchical relationships where tributary rulers maintained local power while acknowledging Mughal supremacy.

19.5.3 Exploitation of Internal Divisions and Factional Conflict

Akbar and his commanders demonstrated sophistication in exploiting the internal divisions and factional conflicts that characterized Deccan politics. The Deccan sultanates, despite their common interest in resisting Mughal expansion, maintained deep internal conflicts related to succession disputes, administrative rivalries, and competing visions of state policy.

Mughal diplomacy sought to activate these divisions, supporting one faction against another, encouraging succession disputes, and destabilizing potential unified resistance. This strategy of exploiting internal division reflected recognition that the Deccan's political complexity might be manipulated to imperial advantage. By supporting Nizamshahi factions against one another, encouraging conflicts between Bijapur and Golconda, and taking advantage of succession disputes, Mughal diplomacy sought to prevent the emergence of united Deccan opposition.

19.6 INTEGRATION INTO THE MUGHAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

19.6.1 Provincial Administration and the Mansabdari System

Territories conquered or effectively subordinated in the Deccan were integrated into the Mughal administrative system following the imperial model. The mansabdari system—the hierarchical ranking of nobility and officials based on military service and state position—was extended into Deccan territories. Nobles and military commanders received ranks, salary allocations, and territorial assignments based on their position in the imperial hierarchy.

This system allowed incorporation of existing Deccan elites into the Mughal structure, though it simultaneously subordinated them to imperial authority and systems. The integration of Deccan territories into the mansabdari system represented substantial reorganization of local administration. Existing power structures were not simply preserved but were often reformed according to Mughal principles.

19.6.2 Revenue Extraction and Fiscal Integration

Integration into the Mughal system also included incorporation of Deccan territories into the imperial fiscal system. Mughal administrators assessed taxes and revenue obligations, established collection procedures, and redirected resources toward imperial priorities. The revenue extracted from Deccan territories contributed substantially to imperial finances and reflected Akbar's broader project of resource consolidation.

Revenue extraction created both opportunities and challenges. For the imperial treasury, revenues from Deccan territories, particularly from more productive areas, could be substantial. However, the collection process sometimes encountered resistance, and the costs of military administration and securing supply lines could significantly reduce net revenues. Additionally, revenue extraction, if perceived as excessive, could generate resentment and provoke resistance, making long-term stability difficult to achieve.

19.6.3 Military Organization and Frontier Defense

The integration of Deccan territories into the Mughal system included reorganization of military structures and preparation for frontier defense. Mughal forces were stationed in Deccan territories to maintain control, suppress resistance, and guard against threats from independent sultanates or Hindu kingdoms. These military establishments represented substantial ongoing commitment of imperial resources.

The frontier between Mughal and independent Deccan territories remained militarized and contested throughout Akbar's reign and beyond. Mughal commanders organized frontier defense, conducted military operations to extend imperial territory, and attempted to maintain security of Mughal-controlled areas. The militarized frontier reflected both the incompleteness of Mughal conquest and the ongoing challenge of consolidating territorial control in the face of determined rivals.

19.6.4 Incorporation of Deccan Elites into Imperial Service

As Deccan territories came under Mughal control, local elites were incorporated into imperial service. Deccan nobles, military commanders, administrators, and scholars could enter Mughal service, receive positions appropriate to their abilities and status, and benefit from participation in the imperial system. This incorporation offered Deccan elites opportunities for advancement and access to imperial resources, creating incentives for cooperation with Mughal authority.

The incorporation of Deccan elites also created cultural and intellectual exchange. Deccan scholars, artists, and administrators brought distinct traditions and capabilities into the imperial court. This exchange enriched Mughal culture and administration while simultaneously extending imperial influence in the Deccan through the integration of local elites into the imperial hierarchy and court culture.

19.6.5 The Role of Religious Accommodation and Administrative Tolerance

Akbar's policies toward the Deccan reflected, at least in part, his broader approach to religious tolerance and administrative pragmatism. Rather than demanding religious conversion or subordination as preconditions for incorporation into the Mughal system, Akbar accepted that Deccan rulers and populations would maintain their religious beliefs and practices while acknowledging Mughal political supremacy.

This tolerance facilitated incorporation of populations with different religious commitments and allowed coexistence of Islamic and Hindu rulers within the Mughal imperial framework. By permitting religious and cultural diversity, Akbar made Mughal subordination more acceptable to Deccan elites and populations, facilitating the incorporation of conquered territories. Conversely, this tolerance also meant that Mughal expansion in the Deccan did not fundamentally transform the religious or cultural character of the region.

19.7 THE LIMITS OF AKBAR'S DECCAN POLICY AND LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE

19.7.1 Incomplete Conquest and Continued Independence of Sultanates

By Akbar's death in 1605, the Deccan had not been completely incorporated into the Mughal empire. The Nizamshahi state of Ahmadnagar, despite Mughal pressure, maintained substantial independence and military capability. The Adilshahi kingdom of Bijapur and the Qutbshahi state of Golconda, though pressed by Mughal expansion and acknowledging tributary obligations, preserved autonomy and remained independent in significant respects. The far southern regions and Vijayanagara remained outside Mughal control.

This incomplete conquest reflected the real limits of sixteenth-century imperial power. The Deccan, characterized by political fragmentation, multiple centers of power, and substantial geographic distance from Mughal power centers, presented challenges qualitatively different from those Akbar faced in the north.

19.7.2 Strategic and Administrative Achievements

Rather than accepting Deccan independence, Akbar pursued ambitious policies combining military conquest, diplomatic negotiation, and administrative integration designed to bring the Deccan under Mughal authority. Despite sustained military campaigns and substantial resource commitment, Akbar's Deccan policy achieved only partial success. Territories were conquered and incorporated into the Mughal administrative system, some rulers were subordinated to tributary relationships, and imperial authority was extended southward.

These achievements were not inconsiderable. They demonstrated imperial capability for expansion and resource commitment, and they linked Akbar's Deccan initiatives to his broader vision of pan-Indian sovereignty. Yet they did not produce the complete success that characterized many of his northern campaigns.

19.7.3 Historical Assessment and Legacy

Historical assessment of Akbar's Deccan policy reflects tension between accomplishment and limitation. By conventional military and territorial measures, Akbar achieved substantial results: he extended Mughal authority southward, conquered significant territory, and subordinated some Deccan rulers to tributary relationships. However, measured against Akbar's apparent goals—complete incorporation of the Deccan into the Mughal empire and achievement of pan-Indian dominance—his Deccan policy fell short.

The continued independence of major sultanates, the militarized frontier that remained contested, and the incomplete nature of imperial consolidation all suggest that Akbar's Deccan initiative, while substantial, did not achieve the complete success that characterized his northern campaigns. Understanding Akbar's Deccan policy adequately requires appreciating both these accomplishments and these limitations, recognizing that imperial expansion had real constraints and that even a powerful ruler like Akbar could not achieve all his ambitious objectives.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- II

A. Fill in the blanks

1. Akbar annexed _____ as a formal Mughal province.
2. The Mughal administrative ranking system extended into the Deccan was known as the _____ system.

3. By the time of Akbar's death in 1605, Mughal conquest of the Deccan remained _____.

B. True or False

1. Tributary arrangements allowed Mughal influence without direct administration in every case.
2. Berar was incorporated into the Mughal administrative structure after conquest.
3. Akbar's Deccan policy fully eliminated the independence of Bijapur and Golconda during his lifetime.

C. Short questions

Q1. What were the main limits of Akbar's Deccan policy?

Q2. How did tributary relations differ from direct annexation?

Q3. In what ways did Akbar's Deccan policy influence later Mughal history?

19.8 LET US SUM UP

Akbar's Deccan policy represented a significant extension of Mughal authority southward and an attempt to incorporate the Deccan's sultanates into the empire. The Deccan, characterized by political fragmentation, multiple centers of power, and substantial geographic distance from Mughal power centers, presented challenges qualitatively different from those Akbar faced in the north.

Rather than accepting Deccan independence, Akbar pursued ambitious policies combining military conquest, diplomatic negotiation, and administrative integration designed to bring the Deccan under Mughal authority. Despite sustained military campaigns and substantial resource commitment, Akbar's Deccan policy achieved only partial success. Territories were conquered and incorporated into the Mughal administrative system, some rulers were subordinated to tributary relationships, and imperial authority was extended southward.

However, major sultanates like Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golconda maintained significant independence despite Mughal pressure, and the Deccan remained incompletely conquered at Akbar's death. The Deccan problem thus passed to Akbar's successors, shaping the course of seventeenth-century Mughal expansion.

19.9 GLOSSARY

Deccan: The plateau region of peninsular India that became central to Mughal southern expansion.

Mansabdari: Mughal system of ranking nobles and officials based on service and position.

Nizamshahi: The ruling dynasty of Ahmadnagar.

Qutbshahi : The ruling dynasty of Golconda.

Suzerainty: Over lordship in which a superior power controls foreign relations while allowing local autonomy.

Tributary relationship: Political arrangement in which a ruler acknowledges superior authority and pays tribute while retaining internal control.

Vijayanagara: Powerful Hindu kingdom of south India relevant to Deccan politics.

19.10 Examination Oriented Questions

Q1. Describe the geographical and political context of the Deccan during Akbar's reign and explain by the Deccan presented different challenges from North India.

Q2. Evaluate Akbar's Deccan policy as both accomplishment and failure, explaining what he achieved and what remained incomplete by his death.

19.11 Lesson End Exercises

Q1. Explain the geographical and political conditions that made the Deccan difficult for Mughal conquest.

Q2. Discuss Akbar's major strategic objectives in the Deccan.

Q3. Examine the Mughal struggle with Ahmadnagar and its wider significance.

Q4. Analyze the role of diplomacy in Akbar's Deccan policy.

Q5. Explain how conquered Deccan territories were integrated into the Mughal administrative system.

Q6. Assess the achievements and limitations of Akbar's Deccan policy.

19.12 Answer Key

CYPI

A. Fill in the blanks

1. Northern

2. Five

3. Ahmadnagar

B. True or False

1. False
2. False
3. True

C. Short questions

1. See sub section 19.2.1
2. See sub-section 19.2.2
3. See sub- section 19.3.2

CYP II

A. Fill in the blanks

1. Berar
2. mansabdari
3. incomplete

B. True or False

1. True
2. True
3. False

C. Short questions

1. See Section 19.7
2. See sub- section 19.7.2
3. See sub- section 19.7.3

19.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*
- Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*.
- K. A. Nizami (ed.), *Akbar and His Age*.
- B. Gascoigne, *The Great Mughals*.
- J. F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*

AKBAR'S SULH-I-KUL POLICY

STRUCTURE

- 20.0. Learning Objectives and Outcomes**
- 20.1. Introduction**
- 20.2. Akbar's Sulh-i-Kul Policy**
- 20.3. Factors which led Akbar adopt the policy of Sulh-i-Kul**
 - 20.3.1. Ibadat Khana (1575)**
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 - 20.3.3. Din-I-Ilahi/Tauhid-I-Ilahi/Divine Monotheism (1581)**
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20.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Dear learners, the objective of this lesson is to enable you to:

- Understand the meaning and philosophical basis of *Sulh-i-Kul* (universal peace and tolerance).
- Examine the role of *Sulh-i-Kul* in promoting equality among different religious communities.

- Understand its impact on Mughal policies like abolition of *jizya*, inclusion of nobles from different faiths, and freedom of worship.
- Study Akbar's vision of religious harmony and social integration.

Learning Outcomes

Dear learners, after going through this lesson, you will have a clear understanding about:

- How Akbar encouraged respect for all religions—Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Christians, and others—reducing religious conflicts and fostering peaceful coexistence.
- By treating all communities equally, Akbar created unity among diverse groups in his empire, helping learners understand the importance of inclusivity in nation-building.
- How Akbar promoted broader thinking, curiosity, and respect for different viewpoints through discussions among scholars of different religions in the **Ibadat Khana**.
- Sulh-i-Kul was not just a political policy but a value-based approach that promoted unity in diversity, making it highly relevant even in today's world.
- *Sulh-i-Kul* as an early model of secular and tolerant governance in India.

20.1. INTRODUCTION

Dear learners, under Akbar, the Mughal Empire recovered almost all of India. Its wealth and power were incalculable. But Akbar's real fame rests on his attempts to synthesise Muslims and Hindu civilization. The importance of this is to be seen in the context of the then contemporary world in which religious bigotry and religious intolerance characterized the policy of many of the European states in the sixteenth century. Sulh-i-Kul, meaning 'peace with all' or 'universal tolerance', was the guiding principle of Akbar's religious policy. It was based on the idea that the state should treat all religions and communities equally, without discrimination. Akbar believed that harmony among different faiths was essential for the stability and unity of his vast empire. Sulh-i-Kul reflected his broad-minded outlook and his aim to create a society based on justice, tolerance, and mutual respect. Students, in this lesson we will discuss why Akbar adopted the policy of *Sulh-i-Kul* (universal tolerance) and how it shaped his religious and political outlook.

20.2. AKBAR'S SULH-I-KUL POLICY

Dear learners, Babur and Humayun did not have time to formulate any clear and definite policy. Akbar, however, tried to project himself as the universal monarch and put forth the idea of liberal and tolerant outlook. The first Mughal emperor who claimed to be the spiritual head of the people was Akbar. The religious discussions in the Ibadat Khana revolutionized Akbar's thought. The 'core' of his religious world-view was Sulh-i-Kul. Sulh-i-Kul is an Arabic term meaning absolute peace with all or universal peace. This policy was devised by Abul Fazl and implemented by Akbar during his reign. Akbar wanted to emphasize the social dimension of his religious thought

through this principle, which encouraged unity and harmony among people of different religions and reduced religious conflicts. Akbar saw religious strife as the fundamental source of human suffering and division. Thus, proposed Sulh-i-Kul as the way to promote unity and harmony. Akbar's concept of Sulh-i-Kul exemplified his religious policy, which was founded on four pillars mentioned below:

- **Pillar of Amity:** Fostering friendly relations and understanding between different religious groups.
- **Pillar of Equity:** emphasising on religious tolerance and equality.
- **Pillar of Kindness:** encouraging empathy, mutual respect, and harmony among people from diverse backgrounds.
- **Pillar of Tolerance:** giving religious freedom and respecting the right of individuals to practice and express their own beliefs.

It was Akbar's guiding principle of religious tolerance, introduced to maintain harmony in his diverse empire, which had Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Christians, and others. The policy emphasized non-discrimination based on religion and aimed at creating a just, inclusive state.

Check Your Progress (CYP) -I

On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. What does Sulh-i-Kul mean?

Q2. Which Mughal emperor introduced the policy of Sulh-i-Kul?

Q3. Why did Akbar adopt the policy of Sulh-i-Kul?

Q4. Name one philosopher or religious thinker who influenced Akbar's Sulh-i-Kul policy.

I. Fill in the Blanks

- a. The term **Sulh-i-Kul** literally means _____ with all.
- b. Sulh-i-Kul was a policy followed by Mughal Emperor _____.
- c. Sulh-i-Kul emphasized equality among people of different _____.
- d. The policy of Sulh-i-Kul promoted _____ tolerance.
- e. The idea of Sulh-i-Kul was explained and supported by his court poet _____.

20.3. FACTORS WHICH LED AKBAR ADOPT THE POLICY OF SULH-I-KUL

Dear learners, the Sulh-i-Kul Policy of Akbar was guided by a series of principles that sought to unite and respect the diverse population of his empire. Akbar, when his father Humayun was fugitive and in distress condition, was born in Amarkot, a Sodha Rajput chiefdom in the Thar desert of Sind. He was brought up in the Hindustani culture. His grandfather's unorthodoxy, father's mysticism, and mother Hamida Begum's liberal attitude, who was a Shia and a Persian scholar, played an important role in shaping Akbar's liberal and tolerant attitude towards non-Muslims. Furthermore, his regent Bairam Khan, his tutors, Mir Abdul Latif and Munim Khan, his contacts with philosophers and scholars like Shaikh Mubarak and his sons Abul Fazl and Faizi, who were free of sectarian biases, assisted him in promoting religious tolerance. Akbar was also deeply influenced by the Sufi doctrine of **wahdat-ul-wujud**, which means the *Unity of Existence*. According to this belief, God is present in everything and all creation is a reflection of the same divine reality. Therefore, no religion or community is inferior, as all paths ultimately lead to the same truth. Teachings of Bhakti reformers like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ji, Sant Kabir Das ji, and Guru Nanak Dev ji also had influenced Akbar and he felt the need for religious toleration and reform. Thus, Akbar's liberal attitude toward non-Muslims, was the result of intellectual influences he encountered in his formative years.

A policy of tolerance was necessary to rule a multi-religious society peacefully. Therefore, Akbar abolished the

two discriminatory taxes: pilgrim tax in 1563 on bathing at holy places such as Prayag and Banaras and in 1564 abolished the *jizya* tax or poll tax, which the non-Muslims had to pay in a Muslim state. He forbade the enslavement of wives and children of defeated enemies. He also married Rajput princesses without converting them to Islam, and even allowed them to continue their own religious worship within the palaces. Although Akbar was under the influence of the orthodox *ulama* at the time, his state policy was a clear recognition of the need to conciliate and win over the Hindus.

It is also important to note that in his private conduct, between the period 1556-1572, Akbar remained a devout Muslim- prayed five times a day, kept fast in holy month of Ramzan, honoured the *ulemas* of Islam, and even cleaned the mosque with his own hands. He also sent delegations to *haj*, a sum of six lakh rupees was dispatched to assist the needy and destitute in *hijaz*. Nevertheless, Akbar's tolerant approach eased religious tensions and lowered the risk of rebellions.

20.3.1 Ibadat Khana (1575)

Dear learners, Ibadat Khana helped Akbar move towards a liberal, inclusive, and tolerant religious policy. With the help of Shaikh Mubarak and his sons Abul Fazl and Faizi, Akbar collected a large number of books on history, religion, philosophy and sciences. These books were read out and explained by Faizi. As a result, Akbar became well-versed in diverse fields of knowledge, developed a broad and enlightened outlook. In 1575, Akbar for a better understanding of religion, built the famous house of Worship (Ibadat Khana) at Fatehpur Sikri and started organizing regular religious discourses at his court. Initially, in these discourses only the Muslim Ulama were invited. Gradually, Akbar felt dissatisfied with the narrowness of their vision, their bigoted outlook and with the strict interpretations of Islamic Law by Ulama. He, therefore, started inviting learned men of all faiths to understand the beliefs of each other like Muslim divines, Hindu sages (Devi, Purushottama, Birbal) and Jain teachers (**Acharya Hiravijaya Suri**, Vijayasena Suri), Zoroastrian Parsi priests (Dastur Meherji Rana), Jesuit missionaries (Hakim Yaqub or Jacob) and even atheists like Charvakas. The leaders of these religions were treated with tremendous consideration by Akbar whose own outlook became more liberal, tolerant and all embracing. Through these discussions, Akbar reached the conclusion that all religions lead to the same goal. Unconverted to any of these specific creeds, but strongly impressed by all of them, he finally took the bold step of introducing his own blended religion, the Din-i-Ilahi, combining elements of different religions to promote morality, tolerance, and unity. However, in 1582, Akbar chose to close the Ibadat Khana due to growing controversies and disagreements among different religious scholars causing bitterness.

20.3.2 Proclamation of Mahzar in 1579

Dear learners, to assert his authority in religious matters and to reduce the growing influence of the orthodox *ulemas*, in 1579, Akbar made the seven leading *ulemas* sign Mahzar (declaration) including Shaikh Abdun Nabi, Abdullah Sultanpur, Shaikh Mubarak. The Mahzar declared that:

- a. that Akbar was the *khalifa* of the age;
- b. that the rank of the *khalifa* is higher than that of a *mujtahids*.
- c. that in case of a difference of opinion among the *mujtahids*, Akbar will have the right to select any one opinion for the welfare of mankind and proper functioning of the administrative affairs of the world; and
- d. Akbar himself may issue decrees which do not go against the **Quran and the principles of Islamic law (*shariat*)** and is calculated to benefit humanity at large.

It also declared that Akbar was “the Sultan of Islam, the asylum of mankind, the commander of the faithful, the shadow of God over worlds.” The real significance of the Mahzar, it seems, was that Akbar’s policy of **Sulh-i-Kul** (universal tolerance) was often formalized through **Mahzars**, official written documents that recorded his decrees promoting religious harmony. These Mahzars ensured that his tolerant policies were **recognized**, enforced, and binding throughout the empire, giving Sulh-i-Kul both moral and legal authority. In short: Sulh-i-Kul was the principle, and Mahzar was the official record that gave it force.

20.3.3 Din-i-Ilahi or Tauhid-i-Ilahi or Divine Monotheism (1581)

Dear learners, in 1581, Akbar developed Din-i-Ilahi, a syncretic faith promoting moral principles over rituals. Din-i-Ilahi was designed more to foster *Sulh-i-Kul* (universal peace) among his subjects, and to promote religious tolerance by unifying various religions under one rather than to establish a new organized faith. It was not a new religion and neither force nor any money was used to enlist new members in to it. It was entirely a personal matter. Abul Fazl did not use the word Din-i-Ilahi but Tauhid-i-Ilahi or divine monotheism, while Badauni used both the terms. There are two tendencies among men, one class of those who turn to religion (*din*), and other class to worldly thoughts (*duniya*). It was necessary to find a common ground between them by taking into account the all-encompassing nature of God.

The sect had no holy scripture or written scripture, no rituals or beliefs, no established hierarchy of priests or clergy, and did not recognize Prophet in the traditional religious sense. Sunday was fixed as the day of initiation, and disciples were enrolled in batches of twelve. The disciple, holding his turban in his hand, bowed and placed his head at the Emperor’s feet. This act symbolized that he had given up pride and selfishness. The Emperor then lifted him up and gave him the Shast, on which the name of God was engraved with Akbar’s favourite motto: ‘Allah-o-Akbar’ or ‘God is Great’.

The main principles of **Din-i-Ilahi** were:

- Belief in one Supreme God.
- Akbar is His representative.

- Every disciple of his faith should be willing to give away life, property, religion and honour to the Emperor.
- The followers had to greet one another by saying 'Allah-u-Akbar' (God is Great) and in reply the other one should say 'Jalla-Jalaluhu' (God is beautiful and merciful).
- Emphasis on moral and ethical living rather than rituals.
- Tolerance and respect for all religions.
- Rejection of blind faith and superstition.
- Loyalty and devotion to the Emperor.
- Promotion of peace, harmony, and brotherhood.
- As far as possible the disciples should abstain from eating meat.
- Members were required to give a sumptuous feast and distribute alms to the poor on their birthday, as a sign of gratitude to God and service to humanity.
- Stress on good conduct, honesty, and kindness.

Akbar did not impose it on anyone; it was completely voluntary, and therefore it had only a few (18-20 people) including Raja Birbal (only Hindu to join), Abul Fazl, Faizi, and Prince Salim (Jahangir), who formally joined this spiritual order. The very fact that his close associates like Bhagwan Das and Man Singh did not join the fold of Din-i-Ilahi and even then they continued to enjoy the Akbar's favours and trust.

This shows that Din-i-Ilahi was more a spiritual and ethical order than an organized religion, reflecting Akbar's idea of **Sulh-i-Kul (universal tolerance)**. In simple words, Din-i-Ilahi aimed to unite people through ethical values, tolerance, and spiritual harmony rather than strict religious rules. The Sulh-i-Kul survived for some time after Akbar; however, it did not gain much popularity, and not many people joined this movement. Shah Jahan's eldest son Dara Shikoh attempted to revive this principle in the 17th century. However, his efforts were halted by his brother Aurangzeb, who later executed him.

Akbar's policy of not discriminating against the non-Muslims and of deliberately laying down detailed rules of governance and administration without any reference to *shariat*, invited the hostility of a section of orthodox Muslims like Abdul Qadir Badauni, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi strongly condemned Akbar's policy of Sulh-i-kul, and of associating Hindus in the task of government and showed great relief when Akbar died.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- II

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous sections, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. When, where and who built the Ibadat Khana?

Q2. How did the Ibadat Khana influence Akbar's religious policy?

Q3. Name one Hindu, one Jain, and one Zoroastrian scholar who participated in the debates held at Akbar's Ibadat Khana.

Q4. In which year did Akbar issue the Mahzar?

Q5. When and who founded the Din-i-Ilahi?

Q6. What was the main purpose of the Mahzar?

Q7. What was the main purpose of Din-i-Ilahi?

Q8. Name two principles or teachings of Din-i-Ilahi?

Q9. Did Din-i-Ilahi gain many followers? Why or why not?

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Ibadat Khana was a place for religious _____ and discussions.
- b. The Mahzar declared the Emperor as the supreme authority in _____ matters.
- c. Din-i-Ilahi means “Divine _____.”
- d. Only Hindu to accept Din-i-Ilahi was _____.

- e. Din-i-Ilahi is also known as _____ -i-Ilahi.
- f. The term Tauhid means belief in one _____.g. Din-i-Ilahi was not a new religion but a spiritual _____.
- h. The Mahzar is also known as the _____ Decree.
- i. The Mahzar aimed at ensuring unity and religious _____ in the empire.
- j. Initially, only _____ scholars were allowed to attend the meetings in Ibadat Khana.
- k. The discussions in the Ibadat Khana led Akbar to adopt the policy of _____.

20.4. IMPACT OF AKBAR'S POLICY OF SULH-I-KUL

Dear learners, Akbar's policy of Sulh-i-Kul had a far reaching consequences. It totally changed the character of Muslim rule in India. Though Akbar's policy of Sulh-i-Kul, meaning 'peace with all' appeared as a religious policy, in reality it was also a political necessity for the stability and expansion of the Mughal Empire. In the 16th century, India was a land rich in different religions, cultures, and social traditions. A rigid religious policy would have created religious conflicts, which could easily turn into political rebellions, division, anarchy, and instability in the empire, thereby, weakening imperial authority. By ensuring freedom of worship and equal treatment, Akbar minimized chances of unrest and created a sense of unity among his subjects. Sulh-i-Kul, thus, helped maintain internal peace in a vast and diverse empire.

Politically, Akbar in order to expand and consolidate the Mughal Empire without internal resistance needed the cooperation of the majority Hindu population and powerful regional elites, especially the Rajputs. By adopting Sulh-i-Kul, he won the loyalty of Rajput rulers like Raja Bhagwan Das and Raja Man Singh, who were given high positions in the Mughal administration and military. Their support strengthened Mughal power and ensured stability in regions like Rajasthan.

Sulh-i-Kul was also reflected in Akbar's policy of appointing officials on the basis of merit, irrespective of religion, caste, or colour. Highest ranks were thrown open to the Hindus. For example, Todar Mal, a Hindu, became one of Akbar's most trusted finance ministers and introduced important revenue reforms. In 8 out of the 12 provinces, Hindus were appointed as Diwans, highlighting Akbar's policy of religious tolerance and equal opportunity. Such inclusiveness not only improved administrative efficiency, and strengthened the empire but also helped Akbar in winning the loyalty of a large section of the Hindus and made them accept the legitimacy of the Mughal rule.

Akbar established a translation department to promote cultural exchange. The great classics of Indian philosophy and religion were translated into Persian, particularly the Atharvaveda, Harivamsa, Mahabharata and the Ramayana by Abdul Qadir Badayuni of his court. Selections of the Upanishads were also translated into Persian; so were other literary and scientific works of Sanskrit. Thus, by patronizing and getting old Hindu religious texts translated, Akbar helped reduce the long-standing cultural differences between Hindus and Muslims.

The abolition of the pilgrim tax in 1563 and *jizya* tax in 1564 were political measures inspired by Sulh-i-Kul. By removing such discriminatory taxes from non-Muslims, Akbar gained the trust, loyalty, and support of his non-Muslim subjects, which strengthened the Mughal rule in India.

Akbar's respect for different religions through dialogues in the Ibadat Khana at Fatehpur Sikri was another political strategy. These discussions helped him understand various belief systems and promoted mutual respect, reducing religious hostility. Jahangir mentions, 'in his father's empire the Sunnis and Shias prayed in one mosque'. Abul Fazl even argued that Akbar was moving further from Sulh-i-Kul to Muhabbat-i-Kul (love with all). Muslims, Hindus, Zoroastrians, Christians and believers of other religions could pray to God according to his own religion and Law. For him religion was an instrument to unite and not a pretext for conflict.

As a symbol of his respect for all religions, Akbar ordered that the festivals of the different religious communities be observed at the court. Akbar banned the slaughter of animals during specific days, most notably during the Jain festival of Paryushana. Akbar recognized the sentiments of the majority Hindu population and imposed restrictions on cow slaughter. Akbar granted *madad-i-ma'ash*, which was a system of revenue-free land grants or cash allowances given to religious scholars, saints, learned men, and institutions for their maintenance and welfare, irrespective of their religious affiliation. His efforts also brought some social reforms as he condemned the practice of Sati, prohibited female infanticide, child marriage, and the enslavement of war captives. Discouraged religious persecution and promoted justice without bias toward any faith. It also projected him as a just and impartial ruler, enhancing his legitimacy.

Check Your Progress (CYP)- III

I. On the basis of your understanding of the previous section, answer the following questions in your own words:

Q1. How did Sulh-i-Kul promote religious harmony in Akbar's empire?

Q2. In what way did Sulh-i-Kul help Akbar maintain political stability?

Q3. How did Sulh-i-Kul reduce the risk of rebellions in the Mughal Empire?

Q4. Name two discriminatory taxes abolished by Akbar?

20.5. GLOSSARY

Ibadat Khana: In 1575 Akbar established Ibadat Khana, originally established for the purpose of religious discussion with Muslim theologians. However, later its doors were opened for the scholars of all religions

Mujtahids: **Mujtahids** were **Islamic scholars** who were **qualified to interpret sharia (Islamic law)** independently and **issue legal opinions (fatwas)** based on reasoned judgment (*ijtihad*).

Shariat: Islamic law

Ulama: Muslim theologians

Khalifa: *kalipha/Calipha* means **the religious and political successor or representative of the Prophet Muhammad.**

20.6. LET US SUM UP

Students, **Sulh-i-Kul** was the cornerstone of Akbar's religious and political policy. It stood for universal peace, tolerance, and harmony among all communities. By treating all religions equally, Akbar strengthened unity, stability, and loyalty within his empire. Sulh-i-Kul not only reduced religious conflicts but also laid the foundation of a strong, inclusive, and well-integrated Mughal state. The policy of **Sulh-i-Kul** found practical expression in several measures adopted by Akbar. It led him to establish the **Ibadat Khana**, which helped him to promote tolerance among people; enter into matrimonial alliances with Rajput rulers, which helped him to promote political integration and harmony; introduced **Din-i-Ilahi** as an ethical order based on tolerance and loyalty; and issued the Mahzar, which asserted the emperor's authority in religious matters to ensure justice and unity in the empire. He started

celebrated festivals of all religions at the royal court, creating a culture of mutual respect. *Sulh-i-Kul* was not merely an idealistic or moral policy. It was a practical political tool that helped Akbar consolidate his empire, secure loyalty from different communities, strengthen administration, and maintain peace and stability. It combined ethical vision with political wisdom, making it a cornerstone of Mughal governance.

20.7. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- Q1. Evaluate Akbar's role as a tolerant and broad-minded ruler.
- Q2. Discuss the role of the *Ibadat Khana* in the development of Akbar's policy of *Sulh-i-Kul*.
- Q3. Explain the concept and significance of *Sulh-i-Kul* in Akbar's religious policy.
- Q4. Explain the concept of *Sulh-i-Kul*. Discuss its philosophical foundations and analyze its importance in shaping Akbar's religious and political policy.
- Q5. "*Sulh-i-Kul was the cornerstone of Akbar's administration.*" Examine this statement by showing how it influenced Mughal governance and imperial unity.
- Q6. Describe the main features of *Sulh-i-Kul*. How did it promote harmony among different religious communities in medieval India?
- Q7. "*Din-i-Ilahi was not a religion but a moral and ethical order.*" Discuss.
- Q8. Analyze the role of *Sulh-i-Kul* in strengthening the Mughal Empire. How did it help Akbar in consolidating his power?
- Q9. "*Sulh-i-Kul was more a political necessity than a religious ideal.*" Discuss this statement in the light of its consequences.
- Q10. Examine the administrative and social measures taken by Akbar to implement *Sulh-i-Kul* in practice.
- Q11. Explain the circumstances that led to the issue of the Mahzar (1579). Discuss its main provisions and significance in Akbar's religious policy.

20.8. LESSON END EXERCISES

- Q1. Evaluate *Din-i-Ilahi* as an expression of Akbar's policy of *Sulh-i-Kul*.
- Q2. Compare *Sulh-i-Kul* with modern concepts of secularism and religious tolerance. In what ways was Akbar ahead of his time?

- Q3. Critically analyze the success and limitations of *Sulh-i-Kul* as a policy of universal peace.
- Q4. “*Sulh-i-Kul was not merely a religious policy but a political necessity.*” Discuss with suitable examples.
- Q5. “*The Ibadat Khana marked a turning point in Akbar’s attitude towards religion.*” Discuss.
- Q6. Discuss how *Sulh-i-Kul* helped in creating a sense of national unity in a culturally and religiously diverse India.
- Q7. Evaluate the significance of *Sulh-i-Kul* in Indian history. Why is it considered a landmark in the development of tolerant governance?
- Q8. Analyze the Mahzar as an instrument of Akbar’s policy of *Sulh-i-Kul*.

20.9. ANSWER KEY

CYPI

- Q1. See Section: 20.2.
- Q2. See Section: 20.2.
- Q3. See Section: 20.2.
- Q4. See Section: 20.2.

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Peace
- b. Akbar
- c. religions/faiths
- d. religious
- e. Abul Fazl

CYP II

- Q1. See sub section: 20.3.1.
- Q2. See sub section: 20.3.1.
- Q3. See sub section: 20.3.1.
- Q4. See sub section: 20.3.2.
- Q5. See sub section: 20.3.3.
- Q6. See sub section: 20.3.2.

Q7. See sub section: 20.3.3.

Q8. See sub section: 20.3.3.

Q9. See sub section: 20.3.3.

Fill in the Blanks

- a. Debates
- b. Religious
- c. Faith
- d. Birbal
- e. Tauhid
- f. God
- g. order/movement
- h. Infallibility
- i. harmony/tolerance
- j. Muslim
- k. Sulh-i-Kul

CYP III

Q1. See Section: 20.4.

Q2. See Section: 20.4.

Q3. See Section: 20.4.

Q4. See Section: 20.4.

20.10. SUGGESTED READINGS

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