

Pre-Historic Period

- The idea of pre-history is barely 200 years old. And so is the word pre-history; it was first used by M. Tournal in 1833.
- Dr. Primrose rediscovered Indian pre-history by discovering prehistoric implements (stone knives and arrow heads) in 1842 at a place called Lingsugur in Karnataka.
- Robert Bruce was another person who enriched our knowledge about Indian prehistory when he discovered a large number of prehistoric sites in South India and collected Stone Age artifacts.
- These early efforts could not place India on the prehistoric map of the world.
- Sir Mortimer Wheeler's efforts in 1921, resulted in our knowledge of the entire pre historic culture sequence of India, putting India firmly on the world map of prehistory.
- As regards the early man; no fossils of early man have been found in the entire subcontinent, but their presence is indicated by stone tools dated around 250,000 BC. Earliest traces of human activity in India go back to the second Inter-Glacial period between 400,000 and 200,000 B.C.
- From their first appearance to around 3000 B.C. humans used only stone tools for different purposes. Based on the tool mining traditions, this period is therefore known as the Stone Age and the entire Stone Age culture has been divided into 3 main stages i.e. Palaeolithic (early or Old Stone Age), Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) and Neolithic (New Stone Age).

Palaeolithic Age (500,000 B.C.- 8000 B.C.)

- The Palaeolithic Age commenced from the time when the earliest man learnt the art of making stone tools. The greatest achievement of the earliest man could be traced to his learning as to how to make a first hatchet, the spear and the fire.
- In India, the Palaeolithic Age developed in the Pleistocene period or the Ice Age and was spread in practically all parts of India except the alluvial parts of Ganga and Indus.
- Food gathering and hunting were the main occupations of the people of this phase and Palaeolithic men learnt to use animal skins for wrapping their dead bodies.
- Man during this period used tools of unpolished, undressed rough stones and lived in caves and rock shelters. They had no knowledge of agriculture, fire or pottery of any material and mainly used hand axes, cleavers, choppers, blades, scrapers and burins. Their tools were made of a hard rock called 'quartzite' and hence Palaeolithic men are also called 'Quartzite Men'.
- Homo sapiens first appeared in the last of this phase and the Palaeolithic man belonged to the Negrito race.

- Sir Robert Bruce Foot discovered the first Palaeolithic stone tool in the Indian sub-continent near Madras in 1863 A.D. The discovery of Indian Pre-history got a boost after the Yale-Cambridge expedition in 1935 under De Terra and Patterson.
- The Paleolithic stage has been divided into Lower Palaeolithic (250,000-100,000 B.C.), Middle Palaeolithic (100,000-40,000 B.C.) and Upper Paleolithic stage (40,000-10,000 B.C.) primarily based on tool typology and technology and also according to the nature of change in the climate.
- The tools of the lower Paleolithic stage are mainly hand axes, cleavers, choppers and chopping tools and covered the greater part of the Ice Age. In this period the climate became less humid.
- The middle Paleolithic age tools are mainly based on flake industries.
- The upper Paleolithic stage is characterized by burins and scrapers and a warm and less humid climate.
- Age-wise the lower Paleolithic extended upto 100,000 years ago, middle Paleolithic extended upto 40,000 years ago and upper Paleolithic up to 10,000 BC.
- The Son and the adjacent Belan valley (Mirzapur, UP) provide a sequence of artifacts from lower Paleolithic to Neolithic.
- Situated around Bhimbetka hill, in central India near Hoshangabad on the Narmada River, the caves and rock shelters have yielded evidence of Paleolithic habitation.
- At Bhimbetka near the Narmada, a series of rockshelters have been excavated from caves. This site lacks in Chopper and Abbevillian hand axes.
- During middle palaeolithic age, Pithecanthropus or Homo erectus evolved. But this cultural stage was dominated by Neanderthal Man.
- The upper Palaeolithic culture belongs to the last phase of the Ice Age. This culture is marked by the appearance of new flint industries and the evolution of Homo sapiens or the modern man.
- At Chopani-Mando in the Belan valley of the Vindhyas and the middle part of the Narmada valley, a sequence of occupation from all the three stages of the Paleolithic to Neolithic stage have been found in sequence. Chopani Mando is an important site where fossil animal bones have been found.

Mesolithic Era (8000 B.C.–6000 B.C.)

- Although major changes began to appear around 10,000 B.C. the Mesolithic era seems to have started around 9000 B.C. and 8000 B.C. with the folding up of the Ice Age and continued at certain places till 4000 B.C.
- In this age, climate changes brought about changes in the fauna and flora and made it possible for
- human beings to move to new areas. Since then there haven't been major changes in the climate.

- The Mesolithic era is characterized by the reduction in the size of well established tool types from the archaeological point of view with a decrease in size of some artifacts and the presence of a higher proportion of 'geometric' microliths.
- Microliths, first discovered from the Vindhyan rock shelters by C.L. Carlyle in 1867; are the characteristic tools of the era comprising of pointed, crescentic blades, scrapers, etc. all made of stone. These are very small in size with their length varying from 1-8 cm. Blackened blade, core, point, triangle, lunate and trapeze are the main Mesolithic tools. However some tools used earlier like choppers, burins and scrapers continue.
- The hunting implements are spears with multiple barbs apparently obtained easily by attaching microliths. The crude material is chert, agate, carnelian and quartz.
- Bagor, a Mesolithic site in Rajasthan on the river Kothari is the largest Mesolithic site in India also from where systematic burials of skeletons have been found.
- Tapti, Narmada, Mahi and Sabarmati river basins in Gujarat have yielded many Mesolithic sites.
- Langhnaj in Gujarat is the first discovered site in the arid zone to demonstrate the development of a Mesolithic culture.
- The site of Chopani Mando in Allahabad provides a continuous sequence from late upper Palaeolithic to late Mesolithic stage with crude handmade pottery. Here round hut floors were found.
- In Peninsular India the Mesolithic industry is based on milky quartz. A new feature in the tool industry is the appearance of 'D' shaped, transverse arrowhead.
- A large number of animal bones were found in the rock-shelters of Adamgarh in Madhya Pradesh which indicate domestication of animals only, not a pastoral economy.

Lifestyle

- The age represents the hunting-gathering nomadic pastoral stages of human social evolution as the people lived on hunting, fishing and food gathering. At a later stage, they also domesticated animals.
- The people of this age achieved their special adaptation as early as 8000 B.C. which coincides with the same in both Europe and Africa.
- The last phase of this age saw the beginning of plant cultivation.
- The Palaeolithic age does not yield any information about the religious practices of the people but with the Mesolithic age the first archaeological information about them becomes available. The burials and rock paintings give us ideas about the development of religious practices.
- Some Mesolithic sites like Bhimbetka, Adamgarh, Pratapgarh and Mirzapur are famous for their rich art and paintings. Animals are the most frequent subjects of all these paintings with the most frequently represented ones being deer or antelope whereas paintings of tigers and monkeys are rare.

- Animal headed human figures also appear.
- This is also the period when we find evidence of carefully burying the dead, which shows the beginning of belief in life after death.

Neolithic Era (6000 B.C.–1000 B.C.)

- In the world context, the Neolithic age began around 9000 B.C. but in the Indian context it began in 7000 B.C. Mehrgarh in Baluchistan is the only site belonging to that period.
- Regular Neolithic attributes have been found from around 5000 B.C. and in South Indian context Neolithic settlements appeared around 2500 B.C.
- The principal features of Neolithic culture are crop cultivation, animal husbandry and settled life. The last two coming into existence in the last phase of Mesolithic culture.
- During this period people depended on stone implements but used stones other than quartzite for making tools which were more lethal, more finished and more polished. The phase is known for grinding and polishing of tools.
- The stone tools can be studied under two groups: (a) Ground and polished stone implements and (b) small and chipped stone tools.
- Ground and polished stone implements are associated with the Neolithic culture because of their links with food-producing stage and domestication of animals.
- Small and chipped stone tools had been continuing from earlier Mesolithic levels which are generally termed as microliths.
- The Neolithic people at certain point of time started making potteries. On this basis Neolithic culture has been divided into aceramic Neolithic and ceramic Neolithic ages.
- At certain Neolithic levels we get the evidence of use of metal (copper being the earliest metal). Such levels are termed as Chalcolithic level.
- Important sites of this age are Burzahom and Gufkral in J&K (famous for pit dwelling, stone tools and graveyards in houses), Maski, Brahmagiri, Tekkalakota in Karnataka, Paiyampatti in Tamil Nadu, Piklihal and Hallur in Andhra Pradesh, Garo hills in Meghalaya, Chirand and Senuwar in Bihar (known for remarkable bone tools), Amri, Kot diji, etc.
- In Baluchistan, sites of Neolithic age include Kili Ghul Muhammad, Rana Ghundai, Anjira, Siahdamb and Mundigak.
- In the Indus system the most Neolithic site is at Mehrgarh in the Kacchi Plain regarded as the 'bread basket' of Baluchistan. The Neolithic stratum at Mehrgarh seems to have emerged from a locally established Mesolithic substratum.

Lifestyle

- In the northern Himalayas, the best known Neolithic site is Burzahom in Kashmir where the earliest occupation was characterized by pit dwellings with conical roofs. The site also gives evidence of a rectangular chopper of a kind not known in India.
- In Burzahom sometimes dogs and wolves were found buried with their owners.
- Later on, there comes evidence of mud brick houses, copper arrow heads and a number of burials and graves with goods. This phase also yielded a stray painted pot showing a typical early Indus buffalo deity.
- Gufkral, literally 'the cave of the potter' is another important Neolithic site in Kashmir where the earliest site yielded pit dwellings without pottery. However in subsequent phases coarse grey pottery was used and a large number of bone tools occur.
- People domesticated sheep, goats and oxen and animal remains of early periods corroborate it.
- Cultivation of wheat, barley, fruits, corn like ragi and horsegram and lentils have been reported from the beginning and between 6000 B.C. and 5000 B.C. there was a pattern of subsistence based on wheat, barley, sheep, goats and cattle.
- The remains of charred grains of paddy husk and wheat are quite visible at Chirand in Bihar, the hand-made pots as well.
- The people of Kachar Hills of Assam lived in mudwalled houses and their hand-made pots were decorated with basket impressions.
- Koldhiwa and Mahagara lying south of Allahabad have thrown evidence of many strata of circular huts along with a crude handmade pottery. The most interesting find is evidence of rice suggested around 5440 and 4530 B.C. which is the oldest evidence of rice not only in India but also anywhere in the world.
- Instances of earlier cave dwelling have also been discovered with walls decorated with scenes of hunting and dancing.
- Neolithic man also knew the art of making boats and could weave cotton and wool to make cloth.
- In the later phase of the Neolithic stage people led a more settled life and lived in circular and rectangular houses made of mud and reed.

Chalcolithic Period

- The end of the Neolithic period saw the use of metals of which copper was the first. A culture based on the use of stone and copper arrived called the Chalcolithic phase meaning the stone-copper phase.
- The first full-fledged village communities evolved in the Chalcolithic phase which was chronologically antecedent to Harappan people. Rafiqe Mughal of Pakistan named these settlements as Early Harappan culture.

- Though some Chalcolithic cultures are contemporary of Harappan and some of pre-Harappan cultures but most Chalcolithic cultures are post-Harappan.
- Though Chalcolithic cultures mostly used stone and copper implements, the Harappans used bronze (an alloy of copper and tin) on such a scale that Harappan culture is known as a Bronze Age Culture.
- Apart from stone tools, hand axes and other objects made from copperware were also used.
- The evidences of relationship with Afghanistan, Iran and probably Central India and visible at Mehargarh.
- The Chalcolithic culture at many places continued till 700 B.C. and sometime around 1200 B.C. the use of iron seems to have begun in the Chalcolithic level itself. The use of iron subsequently revolutionized the culture making progress and by 800 B.C. a distinct Iron Age came into existence.
- The Chalcolithic people used different types of pottery of which black and red pottery was most popular. It was wheel made and painted with white line design.
- The Chalcolithic people were not acquainted with burnt bricks and generally lived in thatched houses. It was a village economy.
- They venerated the mother goddess and worshipped the bull.

Sites

- Important sites of this stage are spread in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, etc.
- The Chalcolithic culture in Rajasthan is known as Banas culture after the river of the same name and is also known as Ahar culture after the typesite.
- In the Malwa region the important Chalcolithic sites are Nagda, Kayatha, Navdatoli, and Eran. Mud-plastered floors are a prominent feature of Kayatha.
- The Kayatha culture is characterized by a sturdy red-slipped ware painted with designs in chocolate colour, a red painted buff ware and a combed ware bearing incised patterns.
- The Ahar people made a distinctive black-and-red ware decorated with white designs.
- The Malwa ware is rather coarse in fabric, but has a thick buff surface over which designs are made either in red or black.
- The Prabhas and Rangpur wares are both derived from the Harappan, but have a glossy surface due to which they are also called Lustrous Red Ware.
- Jorwe ware too is painted black-on-red but has a matt surface treated with a wash.
- The settlements of Kayatha culture are only a few in number, mostly located on the Chambal and its tributaries. They are relatively small in size and the biggest may be not over two hectares.

- In contrast to small Kayatha culture settlements those of Ahar cultures are big. At least three of them namely Ahar, Balathal and Gilund are of several hectares.
- Stone, mud bricks and mud were used for the construction of houses and other structures.
- Excavations reveal that Balathal was a wellfortified settlement.
- The people of Malwa culture settled mostly on the Narmada and its tributaries. Navdatoli, Eran and Nagada are the three best known settlements of Malwa culture. Navdatoli measures almost 10 hectares and is one of the largest Chalcolithic settlements.
- It has been seen that some of these sites were fortified and Nagada had even a bastion of mudbricks. Eran similarly had a fortification wall with a moat.
- The Rangpur culture sites are located mostly on Ghelo and Kalubhar rivers in Gujarat.
- The Jorwe settlement is comparatively larger in number.
- Prakash, Daimabad and Inamgaon are some of the best known settlements of this culture. The largest of these is Daimabad which measured 20 hectares.
- From Mesolithic culture onwards, all the culture types coexisted and interacted with each other.

Lifestyle

- The Chalcolithic people built rectangular and circular houses of mud wattled-and-daub. The circular houses were mostly in clusters. These houses and huts had roofs of straw supported on bamboo and wooden rafters. Floors were made of rammed clay and huts were used for storage also.
- People raised cattle as well as cultivated both Kharif and Rabi crops in rotation. Wheat and barley were grown in the area of Malwa. Rice is reported to have been found from Inamgaon and Ahar. These people also cultivated jowar and bajra and so also kulthi ragi, green peas, lentil and green and black grams.
- Religion was an important aspect which interlinked all Chalcolithic cultures. The worship of mother goddess and the bull was in vogue. The bull cult seems to have been predominant in Malwa during the Ahar period.
- A large number of these both naturalistic as well as stylised lingas have been found from most of the sites of Chalcolithic settlements. The naturalistic ones may have served as votive offerings, but the small stylised ones may have been hung around the neck as the Lingayats do today.
- The Mother Goddess is depicted on a huge storage jar of Malwa culture in an applique design. She is flanked by a woman on the right and a crocodile on the left, by the side of which is represented the shrine.
- Likewise the fiddle-shaped figurines probably resembling Srivatsa, the symbol of Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth in historical period represent a mother Goddess.
- In a painted design on a pot, a deity is shown with dishevelled hair, recalling Rudra.

- A painting on a jar found from Daimabad shows a deity surrounded by animals and birds such as tigers and peacocks. Some scholars compare it with the 'Shiva Pashupati' depicted on a seal from Mohenjodaro.
- Two figurines from Inamgaon, belonging to late Jorwe culture, are identified as proto-Ganesh, who is worshipped for success.
- Several headless figurines found at Inamgaon have been compared with Goddess Visira of the Mahabharata.
- Fire-worship seems to have been a very widespread phenomenon among the Chalcolithic people of Pre-historic India as fire-altars have been found from a large number of Chalcolithic sites during the course of excavations.
- The occurrence of pots and other funerary objects found along with burials of the Malwa and Jorwe people indicate that people had a belief in life after death.
- The Chalcolithic farmers had made considerable progress in ceramic as well as metal technology. The painted pottery was well made and well fired in kiln, it was fired at a temperature between 500- 700°C.
- In metal tools we find axes, chisels, bangles, beads, etc. mostly made of copper. The copper was obtained, perhaps, from the Khetri mines of Rajasthan.
- Gold ornaments were extremely rare and have been found only in the Jorwe culture.
- An ear ornament has been found from Prabhas in the Godavari valley also.
- The find of crucibles and pairs of tongs of copper at Inamgaon in Maharashtra shows the working of goldsmiths.
- Chalcedony drills were used for perforating beads of semi-precious stones.
- Lime was prepared out of Kankar and used for various purposes like painting houses and lining the storage bins, etc.

Religious Movements

Since the dawn of history, India has been the cradle of religious movements. In the previous chapters we have discussed the vedic and Later Vedic (i.e. Upanishadic) ideas to the emergence of Bhagavatism and other Brahmanic sects, such as Shaivism, Saktism etc. In the early medieval period two parallel movements, in Hinduism and Islam, respectively representing the Bhakti and Sufi movements emerged in India, which reached their fullest development in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Both these religious developments have hardly anything to do with the coming of Islam or with the so-called 'Muslim rule in India'. The seeds and the Bhakti movements are to be found in the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavata Purana, etc. The various Sufi saints had come to settle down in India in the eleventh-twelfth centuries, the earliest and the most well known being Sheikh Muinuddin Chisti, who made Ajmer his home when Prithviraj Chauhan (III) was still ruling over there. The greatest merit of both these parallel religious movements is that they freed the Indian society from the dogmatic beliefs, ritualism, caste and communal hatred and so on. It was in the true spirit of Indian history and culture that both these movements prospered without even the least ill-will or conflict. On the contrary, both contributed to each other's religious ideas and practices. Both these movements were democratic movements, which preached simple religion in the language of the masses and neither craved for political patronage nor bothered for the political developments around them.

At any rate, one can easily find many common points in the Bhakti and Sufi Movements. In both, the elements of intellectuality went hand in hand with that of devotion and in both ritualism and ceremonialism were not as important as the search of and love for one Supreme Reality. Love and liberalism were the keynotes of the Sufi and Bhakti movements. Mystic discipline in both was canalised towards the moral advancement of the individual and society by making them rise above the barriers of colour, creed, wealth, power and position.

The Indo-Muslim strands gave woven into the texture of India's national existence a new design of 'composite culture' by intertwining the threads of the Bhakti Marg with the Islamic Sufi (mystic) traditions, the Indian social customs with the values of man and social ethics reflected a new ethos. It is not surprising, therefore, to realize that the composite culture in India originated in an environment of reconciliation rather than refutation, cooperation rather than confrontation, co-existence rather than mutual annihilation.

SUFISM

Origin

In the medieval Indian environment Sufism was the most interesting aspect of Islam. It came to India before the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi but after the foundation of the Turkish rule, a large group of Sufis from different Islamic countries migrated to India and established themselves in many parts of Hindustan. The early Sufis traced their ideas to some verses of the Quran and traditions (Hadith) of the Prophet. To these, however, they gave a mystic interpretation. Regarding the origin of the word "Sufi", numerous explanations have been offered. According to one view, the Sufi saints wore garments of coarse wool (suf) as a badge of poverty and from the word "suf" the name of term Sufi has been derived.

Generally, scholars trace its origin by the word *safa*. They say that those who were pious people were called Sufis. Abu Nasral Sarraj, the author of an Arabic treatise on Sufism, derived from *suf* (wool). Some scholars have traced its origin to the Greek word *sophia* (knowledge).

It appears that the first writer to use the word Sufi is Jahiz of Basar (A.D. 869). According to Jami, the use of the word *sufi* was first applied to Abu Hashim of Dufa before A.D. 800.

According to Aul-kusheri this word was introduced in A.D. 811. Within fifty years it denoted all the mystics of Iraq, and two centuries later *sufya* was applied to the whole body of Muslim mystics.

The Sufi Thought

Sufism is a common term given to Islamic mysticism. But it was not organised in a single sect and its religious doctrines were also not common; instead they were organised into various *silsilaha* of religious doctrines of orders. They accepted the Prophethood of Mohammad and the authority of the Quran, but in course of time they absorbed a variety of ideas and practices from different sources, such as Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Hindu Philosophical systems (Vedanta and Yoga). Sufism in its advanced stage was like a "stream which gathers volumes by joining the tributaries from many lands". For instance, the concept of a relationship between God and the Soul as one between the beloved and the lover was adopted by the Sufis in India. Pacifism and non-violence, which were imbibed by the Indian Sufi saints, are also peculiar to Christianity and Hinduism. Some of the ascetic practices, involving the starving and torturing of the body, and ceremonies were also of Indian origin.

The Muslim mystics or the Sufies of the first two centuries of the Hejira era were ascetics, men of deep religious feelings, who laid great stress on the principles of *tauba* (repentance) and *tawakkul* (trust in God). These early mystics of Islam were fundamentally inspired by the Quranic conception of a transcendent God. Their contemplation remained confined within the limits of the Quran and the practice of the prophet.

Sufi mysticism sprang from the doctrine of *Wahadutual wujud* of the unity of Being, which identified the *Haq* (the creator) and *khalq* (the created). This doctrine means that God is the unity behind all plurality and the Reality behind all phenomenal appearances. The Sufis were so absorbed in this idea that a moment's diversion from the thought of the Absolute was unbearable to them. In their journey of *cahive* union with the Absolute, they had to pass through ten stages which were: *tauba* (repentance), *wara* (abstinence), *Qahd* (piety), *fagr* (poverty), *sabr* (patience), *shukr* (gratitude), *Khuf* (fear), *raja* (hope), *tawakkul* (contentment) and *riza* (submission to the divine will). In passing through these stages of spiritual development, the Sufi felt excessive love and yearning for God. This Sufi had a two-fold objective view, namely, their own spiritual development and the service of humanity, Union of the Human soul with God, through loving devotion was the essence of the Sufi faith, The Sufis, by their examples, by words and conduct, set an ethical standard, They attempted to bridge the gulf between orthodoxy and religion of faith and devotions. They spoke the language of the masses and gave impetus to linguistic assimilation and to a cultural synthesis. They played a silent but important part in the propagation of their faith more by their example and service, than through any efforts at importunate persuasion. They imparted Some of the Sufis were scholars and men of vast erudition and acted as teachers. They won the hearts of the people by their love and liberalism, sincerity of purpose, charity, piety and social service, They exercised considerable influence on kings, officials and nobles for the good of the people. They shunned wealth and power and kept themselves aloof from the din and bustle of worldly life. Through generally liberal and broadminded in outlook, some of the Sufi saints, who were

noted for their piety and learning, were puritanical in attitude and uncompromising on questions of strict adherence to the shariat.

Sufism was not to be made a means of livelihood. They stressed the importance of earning. Religious literature tells us about many saintly people who earned their livelihood by their professional pursuits and recognised the dignity of labour. Shaikh Ainuddin Qassab (butcher), a disciple of Hazrat Hamiduddin Nagori, was a saintly man, he sold meat in Delhi, Shaikh Abdul Ishaq Gazrioni was a weaver. We are told that many saintly personages were farmers and cultivated fields. Shaikh Qasim Juzri was an agriculturist. Some saints choose to beg in order to crush their ego. It gave them peace of mind, which helped them to concentrate on God. It also made them realize that everything belonged to God and people were the custodians. The Sufis did not encourage celibacy and complete renunciation of the world for attainment of spiritual personality. Their moral precepts and ideal love of God did not mean complete abandonment of family life. Their moral precepts and ideal love of God did not mean complete abandonment of family life, Excepting a few outstanding saints, the Sufis were all married and did not shun the life of a householder. The typical materialistic approach was discouraged, but the necessities of life had to be provided for. One was not to sit idle after putting on a loin cloth; but at the same time, one should not devote all the time for earning one's bread. The Sufis were broad-minded people, who recognised the truth in other faiths. In extending their help to others they made no distinction on the basis of caste or creed. The Sufi saints showed great interest in learning Yoga; and the Hindu yogis and siddhas frequently visited the hermitages of the Sufi saints.

The Sufis in India, particularly of the Chisti and of the Suhrawardi orders, adopted Sama and Raqs (audition and dancing) as a mode of invocation to God. They did not sanction any kind of music. Majlis-iSama, which they sanctioned, was totally different from MajlisiTarab of musical entertainment. To the Sufis music was a means to an end. Sama exhilarated their spiritual spirit and lifted the veil between them and God, and helped them in attaining the supreme stage of ecstatic swoon.

The practice of spiritual preceptorship, known as piri muridi, was also prevalent in Sufism. Those who entered into a particular fraternity of Sufi saints were called murids (disciple). The murid had to pledge absolute submission and devotion to his spiritual guide called pir.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Lahore and Multan attracted many well-known Sufis from other countries. The greatest figure in the history of Sufism in India was Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti who arrived at Lahore from Ghazni in 1161 and settled down at Ajmer where he died in 1235-36. He was the founder of the Chisti order of Sufis in India. To this order belonged Shakh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar (1175- 1265) who is known in the Sikh tradition as Baba Farid. His mantle fell upon Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (1238-1325). In the thirteenth century the Suhrawardi order was established in India by Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya. The Suhrawardis thought that living in luxury and activities participation on political affairs were not hindrances to spiritual progress. During the fifteenth century two new Sufi orders- the Shuttaris and the Qadiris- were founded in India by Shaikh Abdullag Shattri and Sayyid Ghau Wala Pir, respectively. Thus the Sufis were divided in silsilahs or orders named after the founder of each sect and they lived in and maintained the dhanqahs or hermitages which were vast complexes.

The Sufi Orders (of Silsilas)

The Sufis were organised into orders of silsilahs named after the name or surname of the founder of the particular order, such as Chisti, Suhrawardi, Naqshbandi etc. Each Sufi order had a dhangah or hermitage, where people thronged for spiritual solace and guidance from the Sufi saints. In the sixteenth century there were as many as fourteen Sufi orders in India, as mentioned by Abul Fazl. Of the various orders,

largely founded outside India, only two—the Suhrawardis and the Chistis—were the first to succeed in establishing themselves firmly on Indian soil. Two sub-orders, the Firdausi and the Shuttari offshoots of the Suhrawardi order, were active in Bihar and Bengal. Sindh and Multan had become the centres of the spiritual activities of the saints of the Suhrawardi order. The chief centres of the Chisti silsilah, the most popular order, were Ajmer, Narnaul, Sarwal, Nagaur, Hansi, Ayodhya, Badaun and other towns of U.P. The Chisti order was very popular and it achieved extraordinary success due to the liberal and catholic outlook of many of its saints of outstanding personality and long period of their spiritual activity in India. Many of their practices were akin to those of the Hindus and they, more than the members of other silsilahs, adapted themselves to the non-Muslim environment. It is one of the eternal glories of the Chisti order that it produced great spiritual luminaries like Khawaja Muiniddin Chisti, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Khwaja Fariduddin Masud Ganji-Shakar, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Dehlvi, Shaikh Alauk Haq, Shaikh Adhi Seraj and Nur Qutb Alam of Pandua, Saidh Husamuddin Mnikpuri, Burhanuddin Gharib and Hazrat Gesu Baraz of the Deccan.

The Sufis, especially of the Chisti and Firdausi orders, identified themselves with the common masses, their weal and woe, their grinding poverty and distress. It was a part of their discipline to serve the needy and the oppressed. The saints of the Chisti order regarded money as carrion. They subsisted on Futeh and Nazur (unasked for money and presents). Very often they had to starve. Once, when the wife of Baba Farid reported that their son was about to die of starvation, he replied that he was helpless. God has so decreed and he was dying, Baba Farid wore worn-out and patched garments. When he died, there was nothing in this house was demolished to provide unbaked bricks for his grave. In the sixteenth century the most notable Chisti saint was Shaikh Salim Chisti of Fatehpur Sikri who was a contemporary of Akbar, and the emperor greatly venerated him.

Although Abul-Fazl in Ain-i-Abbasi mentions 14 Sufi silsilas as active in India by the 16th century, the fact remains that in terms of their following and better-organisation, only six silsilas should be recognised as active and influential. Of these, the Chistiyay, founded in India by Khwaja Muin-un-din Chisti (popularly known as Khwaja Ajmeri) (though begun by Khwaja Abdul Chisti-d. 966 - in Iran) attracted the largest of devotees, both Muslims and Hindus, and also made a profound impact on the course of the new Bhakti movement among the Hindus that, gained momentum in the 14th century, and spread out to many parts of the country in the next three hundred years.

Prominent Sufi Saints

The only other silsila active in the Sultanate period (1206-1526) was the Suhrawardiya, with its headquarter in Multan and later extending to Sindh, which was established in India by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria (d. 1192). Then came the Firdausi silsila, mainly restricted to Bihar, that was spread by the prolific writer of mystic literature Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahua Muniri around the 13th century, followed by the Qadiriya and the Shuttaria silsila in the middle of the 15th century.

Yet he had a great fondness for Amir Dhusrau, the mystically inclined aristocrat and a versatile genius, who used to spend his days with the sultans and nights of devotion at the Khanqah of Nizamuddin Aulia. It is in his poems and odes, sung over the centuries by the quwwals (religious singers), that saint Nizamuddin figures prominently.

Shaikh Nizamuddin's liberal and tolerant outlook, offended the orthodox clergy but helped the spread of his message throughout the country and gained for him the popular title, Mahboodi-Illahi (the beloved of the God). His tomb in Delhi, built by Sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlak, (despite the saint's wish: "I want no monument over my grave: Let me rest in board and open plain") This remains even after six and a half

centuries an constant place of Pilgrimage, and massive congregation of people of all castes and creeds, Hindus and Muslims.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia's successor spread through the country, one to Hansi, another to Gulbarga, a third in Bengal, and two remained in Delhi, of whom Shaikh Nasiruddin Muhamud (d.1356), who was later known as Chirag-i-Delhi (the lamp of Delhi) was a charismatic saint, whose 100 'conversations' (as reported in Dhairul Majalis) reflected melancholy at the state of affairs in social and economic life, caused by political upheavals, bad administration, price rise and general anarchy

With the death of Chirag-i-Delhi, the first phase of Chisti silsila ends. One of his successor was syed muhammad Gesu Daraz was a prolific writer of over thirty books on Tasawwuf (mysticism). His love for the poor and the needy and his defence of the rights of man earned him the title of Bandanawaz (benefactor of God's creatures).

He was one of the early poets and writers in the Urdu language- a new language that had grown as a synthesis of Persian, Turkish and Arabic on the one hand and of the Indian dialects Khari Boli Braj and Punjabi on the other, with its base in Sanskrit syntax and etymology drawn from many sources. His famous couplet, that reflected the credo of the mysticism and bhakti, was one of the first specimens of Urdu Poetry, His one of the famous couplets is: "infidelity is welcome to the infidels and Islam to the Shaikh. But to us lovers, love and the content and harmony of our hearts is enough."

The Qadriya silsila was established in India by Shaba Nayamatullag Qadiri, and the Shattaria silsila by Shah Abdullag Shuttari (d.1458). The former spread mainly in Madhya Pradesh and Gujrat regions. In the reign of Akbar (1556-1605), the last of six major silsilas, the Naqshbandiah was established by Khwaja Baqi Ballah (1563-1603) and its most famous saint was Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi (d.1625) Known as Mujaddid Alif Sani (The Reformer of the 10th century).

Prince Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan, became the follower of the Qadiri order and visited Mian Mir (1550-1635) at Lahore, When Mian Mir died, Dara became a disciple of his successor named Mullah Shah Badakhshi. Shaikh Ahmed Sarihindi, a contemporary of Akbar and Jahangir, was a great Sufi saint of the Naqshbandi order. He attacked the Mystic Philosophy of the Unity of Being (wahadat-ulwujud) and rejected it. In its place he expounded the philosophy of Apparentism (Wahadat-ulshud). He said that the relationship between man and God is that of a slave and the master, and not that of a lover and the beloved, as the Sufis generally believed. In short, Shaikh Ahmad's object was to harmonise the doctrine of mysticism with the teachings of orthodox Islam, and that is why he is known as Mujaddid, i.e. the renovator of Islam.

Medieval Indian traditions remember Prince Dara Shikoh not so much as a Mughal Prince, but as a mystic philosopher. In his Persian work, Majmaul Bahrian, there are interesting discussions on the Sufi and Hindu cosmologies. The great dream of his life was the brotherhood of all faiths and unity of mankind. One of his great devotees was Sarfraz Khan, who was executed during the reign of Aurangzeb for the liberalness of his religious views.

In the 17th Century Sufism shattered the chains of sectarian beliefs and preached the unity of mankind. Such Sufi saints were known as Yari Saheb, who flourished about A.D. 1668-1725, were free from all sectarianism. He says that the eyes should be painted with the dust of the guru's feet as with collyrium. His poems, in which the name of Allah is mentioned along with that of Rama and Hari, are full of abstruse metaphysical truths. He says, 'This creation is a painting of the Creator on the canvas of void with the brush of love. He who has not experienced this joy through love will never know it through reasoning. Men and women are, as bubbles in the ocean of divine life'.

Sufi Saints of Sindh: Sindh was also a great Centre of neo-sufism and a number of Sufi saints flourished there. Any account of the mystics of Sind must begin with Shah Karim, who lived about A.D. 1600. He received his first religious inspiration from a Vaishnava saint near Ahmedabad, who initiated him into the mysteries of Om. This symbol served as a beaconlight to him.

The next mystic worthy of mention is Shah Inayat, a universally respected figure. When the Hindus of Sind, under the oppression of the Kalhora kings, were fleeing in number to save their life and faith, it was he who sheltered many such fugitive families in his own hermitage. His faith, that God is not the property of any particular sect finally led to his execution.

But it is Shah Latif who holds the highest place among the mystics of Sindh. He was the greatest poet and singer of the province, and his songs are sung by people even now. His shrine at Bhit was a weekly meeting- place for both Hindus and Muslims, for spiritual communion.

It was not unusual to find in Sindh a Hindu as the guru of the Muslims, or a Muslim as the guru of the Hindus. The songs of the Sufi mystic poets Dedil and Bekas are still widely sung by Sindhi men and women. The real name of Bedas was Mohammed Husain, he died at the age of twenty-two, but has left a deep impression on the religious life of Sind. The poets Rohal and Qutub also belong to the same fraternity, and have left behind them songs, that are as sweet as they are profound. At their shrines both Hindus and Muslim used to congregate and keep all night vigils, singing religious songs.

Bulle Shah: No account on neo-Sufism would be complete without a reference to Bulle Shah.

Bulle Shah was probably born in A.D. 1703, in a Sayyuid family in the city of Constantinople (Istanbul), and at a very young age he walked all the way to Punjab hankering for spiritual truth. In the Indian mode of religious practice, he found precisely what he was seeking, and settled down to a life of meditation and worship at Kasur. He was a fierce critic of the Quran and all other scriptures, and neither the Hindu nor the Muslim theologians could excel him in debates. He was buried also at Kasur, and the place attracts numerous pilgrims and holy men.

Bulle Shah says: 'You will find God neither in the mosque nor in the Ka'aba, neither in the Quran and other holy books nor in formal prayers. Bulla, you will not find salvation either in Mecca or in the Ganga; you will find it only when you lay down your ego'.

'I found the highest peace and joy when I discovered Allah within my own heart: through death I have reached the life eternal; I am ever journeying forward.'

'O Bulla, intoxicate thyself with the wine of divine love, Men will slander you and call you by a hundred names; when they abuse you with the name of kafir, say, "yes, friend, you are right".'

The Hindu Impact on Sufism

According to Alberuni, the Sufi theories of the soul are similar to those in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra. Like the Yoga Sutra, Sufi works also stated that 'the bodies are the source of the souls for the purpose for acquiring recompense'. Alberuni also identifies the Sufi doctrine of divine loves as self-annihilation with parallel passages from the Bhagavad Gita.

By the thirteenth century, the Indian Sufis were confronted with the Kanphata (splintered) yogis or the Nath followers of Gorakhnath. Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya's description of the human body into regions

of Siva and Sakti. The area from the head to the navel, associated with Siva, was spiritual; the area below the navel, associated with Sakti, was profane. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was also impressed with the yogic theory that a child's moral character was determined by the day of the month on which he was conceived.

The Hatha yogic treatise *Amritakunda*, which had been translated into Arabic and Persian in the thirteenth century, had a lasting effect on Sufism. Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Dehlvi observed that controlled breathing is the essence of Sufism. Controlled breathing is initially a deliberate action but later becomes automatic. He urged practising articulated breathing like the perfect yogis, known as *siddhas*. Yogic postures and breath control become an integral part of Chishtiya Sufic practice, and controlled breathing was incorporated finally as a vital aspect in all the Sufi orders except the Indian *Naqshbandiyyas*.

The Sufi theory of *wahadat-ul-wujud* and Sufi analogies for it were remarkably similar to those of the yogis. Sheikh Hamiduddin Nagori's Hindi verses reflect that yogic influence. The Nath doctrines had far-reaching influence on the Chishtiya Sheikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi (d.1537). His *Rushadnama* contains Hindi verses composed by him and his spiritual guides are designed to support the truth of the *wahadat-ul-wujud* doctrine. The imperceptible Lord (*Alakh Niranjana*), he says, is invisible, but those who are able to perceive Him, are lost to themselves. In another verse, the shaikh identifies *Alakh Niranjana* with God (*Khuda*). References to the yogi saint *Gorakhanath* in the *Rushadnama* equate him with Ultimate Reality of Absolute Truth. Some references to those names imply 'perfect man' or 'perfect *siddha*'. The union of *sakti*-the sun- and *Siva*-the moonis, according to the Shaikh, symbolised by prayers performed hanging upside down with the legs suspended from a roof or the branch of a tree, Here we find very clear evidence of the practices of Hindu tantra influencing Sufi beliefs.

The cross-fertilisation of Sufi beliefs with those expressed by the Kashmiri Shaivite woman yogi *Lalla of Lal Ded* (*Lal Yogesveri*) is reflected in the *Fishi* movement of Shaikh Nuruddin Rishi (d. 1439) of Kashmir. The Shaikh's teachings are embodied in his Kashmiri verses, some of which are almost identical with those composed by *Lal*. Through them the shaikh emerges as an ardent devotee of God trying to reach the Unknowable in the world by lighting the lamp of love. Nuruddin and his disciples preferred to call themselves *rishis*, using the well known term for the Hindu sages. Their main theme was universal love. They served the people without considering caste and tried to turn Kashmir into a heaven for the neglected sections of society. Shaikh Nuruddin believed that, although eating meat was permitted by the shariat, it entailed cruelty to animals, and he exhorted people to become a vegetarian.

The Nath ideas found great popularity in fifteenth-century Bengal. The *Amritakunda*, a text on Hatha yoga, was first translated into Arabic in Bengal in the early thirteenth century. Sayyid Murataza (d.1662) later wrote the *Yoga-Qalandar*, identifying the *Qalandriyya* discipline of Abu Ali Qalandar with yoga practices. Sayyid Sulatan (d. 1668) of Chittagong also composed a number of Bengali works on Muslim themes of union with God, with Hindu and yogic overtones. The *Haqiq-i-Hindi* by Abul Wahik (d. 1608) of Bilgram (near Lucknow) was intended to crush orthodox opposition to the use of Vaishnavite themes in Hindi poetry recited by the Chishtiyya Sufies to arouse ecstasy. To Gesu Daraz, Hindi poetry was more subtle and elegant and transported the Sufies to higher planes of mystical ecstasy than Persian verses did.

The sixteenth century saw a tremendous increase in the volume of Hindi poetry. Naturally its recitation at Sufi gatherings required some defence. Mir Abul Wahid sought to justify this practice by giving Islamic equivalents for features of the *Drishna* legend such as *Drishna*, *Radha*, *Gopi*, *Braj*, *Goku*, *Yamuna*, *Gang*, *Mathura*, and the flute in his *Haqiq-i-Hindi*. He pleads that this identification renders unobjectionable the transport of Sufi into ecstasy on hearing Hindu Vaishnavite poetry. The translation of Sanskrit works into

Persian at Akbar's court had made Muslims aware of the Vedanta School of Hindu philosophy. Jahangir identified the highest form of Sufism with vedanta.

The Sufi saints preached in the language of the masses and made immense contribution to the development of Hindi and provincial languages including Bengali, punjabi, Kashmiri, etc. The Sufis, despite their strict adherence to the laws of the shariat and practices of orthodoxy, instead of criticising the religion, mythology and folklore of the Hindus, were broad-minded enough to study them in their Hindi verses. Some went to the extent of quoting verses from Hindi poems while delivering religious sermons from the pulpits. Badauni tells us that Makhdum Shaikh Taquiuddin Waiz Rabbani used to read occasionally verses from Chandian of Mulla Daud relating to the love of Lorik, and Chanda, Once when a certain person asked the Shaikh the reason of choosing to recite Hindi verses in his religious sermons, the saint replied that the whole thing is full of divine and pleasing subject, Malik Muhammad jayasi, though an orthodox Muslim, was also a good Sufi and that has mentioned Hindu gods and goddesses and has shown his familiarity with Vedanta, Yoga and Nath cults. The Muslim author of the Mrigavati and Madhumalati, of Manasat, and other Hindi poems had already paved the way for Jayasi, The Sufi poet Qutban not only write in the language of the people of the locality, but was also fully conversant with Hindu mythology, He had neither contempt nor prejudice for the Hindu Scriptures and mythology.

BHAKTI MOVEMENT

The Bhakti movement is much older than the Sufi movements. Its philosophical concept had been fully enunciated in the Upanishads and subsequently, the Bhagavad Gita emphasized love and devotion as pathways to God. In the sixth century A.D. The Bhagavata purana placed the concept of bhakti on a very high pedestal. During the post-Bhagavata phase passionate love and devotion to one personal god became a characteristic feature of the Indian religious thought.

But the concept of bhakti was placed on a firmer ground in South India, when Shankaracharya revived the philosophy of Advaita or Vedanta. After Shankara, twelve Tamil Vaishnava saints collectively known as Alvars made the concept of bhakti more popular. The Alvars were followed by the Vaishnavaacharyas who gave the Bhakti cult a metaphysical foundation. According to this school of thought the 'Supreme Being' is not 'attributeless' but saguna, possessing qualities of goodness and beauty to an infinite degree, The early leaders of the Bhakti movement to North India and is rightly regarded as a bridge between the bhakti movement of South and North India.

Features of Bhakti movement

The concept of Bhakti means singleminded devotion to one God. The object of the devotee's adoration is to secure the grace of God for the sake of salvation.

The Bhakti cult discarded the rituals and sacrifices as modes of worship and instead emphasized the purity of heart and mind, humanism and devotion as the simple way to realisation of God.

The Bhakti movement was essentially monotheistic and the devotees worshipped one personal God, who could either have form (saguna) or be formless (nirguna). The followers of the former, known as

vaishnavas, were further subdivided into of Krishna – both incarnations of Vishnu - as their personal God, respectively. The followers of Nirguna Bhakti discarded idol worship. They said that, God is omnipresent and resides within the heart of man.

On the philosophical side, the Saguna and Nirguna both believed in the Upanishadic philosophy of advaita, with minor variation suggested by various Bhakti saints.

The Bhakti saints of North as well as South India regarded knowledge (jñāna) as a constituent of bhakti. Since, that knowledge could be gained through a teacher of guru, the Bhakti movement greatly emphasised securing true knowledge from a guru.

The Bhakti movement was an egalitarian movement, which completely discarded the discriminations based on caste or creed. The saints of the Bhakti movement were staunch supporters of social unity and purity of mind, character and soul. The doors of Bhakti were opened for the lowest classes and even untouchables. Many of the saints of the Bhakti movement were from the lower classes.

The Bhakti movement also discarded the priestly domination as well as rituals. According to the Bhakti saints, the individual could realise God through devotion and personal effort. Therefore, there was no place for sacrifices and daily rituals in the Bhakti movement.

The Bhakti saints preached in the simple language of the masses and, therefore, immensely contributed to the development of modern Indian languages, such as Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and Gujarati.

It can thus be seen that the Bhakti cult was a widespread movement that embraced the whole of the subcontinent of India for several centuries. It was a movement of the people and aroused intense interest among them. Perhaps after the decline of Buddhism there had never been a more widespread and popular movement in our country than the Bhakti movement. Although its basic principles of love and devotion to a personal God were purely Hindu and the principles of unity of Godhead on which its teaching rested were also mainly Hindu. The movement was profoundly influenced by Islamic belief and practices. The Bhakti movement had two main objects in view. One was to reform the Hindu religion so as to enable it to withstand the onslaught of Islamic propaganda and proselytism. Its second object was to bring about a compromise between Hinduism and Islam and to foster friendly relations between Hindu and Muslim communities. It succeeded in realising, to a great extent, the first object of bringing about the simplification of worship and liberalising the traditional caste rules. "The high and the low among the Hindu public forgot many of their prejudices and believed in the message of the reformers of the Bhakti cult, that all people were equal in the eyes of God and that birth was no bar to religious salvation".

Bhakti Saints and Reformers

The cult of bhakti was followed by a host of saints of northern India. The moving spirit were Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and others. The leaders of the Bhakti movement of the early period were mostly of southern extractions. The Bhakti movement associated with the southern group was more scholastic than popular, which was not the case with the northern group. The bhaktas of the latter group did not ponder over the subtle questions of metaphysics. They were essentially eclectic, broadminded and latitudinarian in their views and outlook. Caste was not a factor in the new Bhakti movement. Many of the Bhakti poets rose from lower castes. Their message was both for the rich and the poor, the high caste and the low, the educated and the illiterate.

Ramanuja (twelfth century): The earliest exponent of the Bhakti movement was the great Vaishnava teacher Ramanuja who flourished in the early years of the twelfth century in the South. His ideas laid the foundation of a vigorous popular movement for the uplift of the people. The next leader of the Bhakti movement was Nimarbaka, a contemporary of Ramanuja. He believed in the philosophy of Vishistadvaita and laid emphasis on surrender to God.

Ramananda (fifteenth century): Ramananda, who flourished in the first half of the fifteenth century, was the first great Bhakti saint of North India. He opened the door of bhakti to all without any distinction of birth, caste, creed or sex. He was a worshipper of Rama and believed in two great principles, namely, (a) perfect love for God and (b) human brotherhood. Ramananda adopted Hindi as the medium of his discourses and his message directly reached the common people. In his teachings the caste rigours were greatly softened and even Shudras were considered equal in the eyes of God. Ramananda did away with the insular social behaviours of the Hindus by throwing his spiritual door wide open for members of all castes. Religion now became a question of faith, emotion and devotion. As a result of his teaching, a member of the despised classes could reach his God without an intermediary.

His unique contribution to Indian spiritual life was the spirit of synthesis observed in his teaching. He accepted all that was true and of permanent value in our spiritual heritage- the philosophy of meditation (yoga and knowledge from the North and the absolute surrender (prapatti) of the Bhakti cult from the South – and rejected all that was untrue, ephemeral, or rigidly sectarian. There is a popular verse to this effect:

'Bhakti arose first in the Dravida land; Ramananda brought it to the North; and Kabir spread it to the seven continents and nine divisions of the world.'

Ramananda borrowed ideas from various religious schools, vitalized them with the love and devotion of his heart, and founded a new path of spiritual realization. We do not come across many of his sayings, but the radiant personality of his disciples- the men he created constituted his living message. His one song is incorporated in the Granth Sahib.

Though Ramananda used the popular name of Rama, his God was the one God of love and mercy, without any imperfection-not the eternal Brahman of the Vedanta, but the beloved, the friend, and the lord of one's heart. When Ramananda perceived that there is only one God who is the origin of all, all the distinctions of caste and creed vanished for him, and he saw humanity as one large family, and all men as brothers. One man is higher than another, not through his birth, but only through his love and sympathy. So he started preaching to all without any reserve, and his fundamental teaching was the gospel of love and devotion. He also gave up the use of Sanskrit and started preaching in the language of the people, thus laying the foundation of modern vernacular literatures.

It is said that his first twelve followers were:

Ravidasa the cobbler, Kabir the weaver, Bhanna the jat peasant, Sena the barber, Pipa the Rajput, bhvananda, Sudhanda, Surasurananda, Parmananda, Mahananda, and Sri Ananda. But some of them were not personally initiated by him; they were drawn to his ideas long after his demise.

Ravidasa (Raidas): (Fifteenth Century) He was one of the most famous disciples of Ramananda. He was a cobbler by birth, but his religious life was as exalted and pure as it was deep. There are over thirty hymns of Ravidasa collected in the Granth Sahib of the Sikha. Kabir also has expressed more than once

his deep reverence for him. Ravidasa was the worshipper of the one infinite God, who is above and beyond all religious sects and without beginning or end. He preached that the Lord resides within the hearts of his devotees, and cannot be accessed through the performance of any rites and ceremonies. Only one who has felt the pangs of divine love will find Him, and the highest expression of religion in life is the service of man

Kabir (1440-1510): Kabir, the most radical disciple of Ramananda, gave a positive shape to the social philosophy of his illustrious teacher, in his trenchant arguments against the barrier of castes. Ramananda prepared the way for Kabir. The latter made a sincere attempt at a religious and national synthesis out of conflicting creeds. Kabir was neither a theologian nor a philosopher. He appears before us as a teacher. He had the courage to condemn what he considered to be sham and counterfeit in both Hinduism and Islam.

The central theme of Kabir's teaching is bhakti "Kabir refused to acknowledge caste distinction or to recognise the authority of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, or the four divisions of life prescribed by the Brahmins. He held that religion without bhakti was no religion at all. and that asceticism, fasting and almsgiving had no value if unaccompanied by bhajan (devotional worship)". By means of ramaini, sakhas and sakhis he imparted religious instruction to Hindus and Muslims alike. He had no preference for either religion. He thought aloud and never made it his object merely to please his hearers. He thoroughly scrutinised the bases of ritualism. He incessantly fought to remove the ritualistic superstitions like visiting places of pilgrimage.

Kabir was a great satirist and ridiculed all the institutions of his time. He opposed the popular belief in the institution of sati. He was equally against the veiling of women. Kabir refused to recognise the superiority of Brahmins as a class. He refused to believe that birth in a particular caste was due to the deeds in a previous life. He advocated perfect equality of Shudras and Brahmins. Both Shudras and Brahmins were born in the same way, he said.

Kabir provides us with a code of ethics. He condemned pride and selfishness and advocated the cultivation of the quality of humility. Kabir was a spokesman for the poor and downtrodden section of society. He condemned the sense of humility and simplicity of the poor as well as the vanity and pride of the rich; By such condemnations; Kabir preached the common brotherhood of man and sought to remove the distinction between Hindus and the Muslims.

Though he led a religious life, Kabir married, and it is said that the name of his wife was Loi. His son Kamal was both a thinker and a devotee. When, after his father's name, he answered, "My father had striven throughout his life against all forms of sectarianism; how can I, his son, destroy his ideal and thereby commit his spiritual murder?" This remark estranged many of Kabir's disciples from Kamal.

After Kabir's death, his Muslim disciples organized themselves in Maghar, where they founded a monastery; Hindu disciples were organized into an order by Surat Gopala, with their centre in Varanasi.

The chief scripture of this sect is the well-known Bijak a compilation of Kabir's couplets. In course of time, this centre leaned more and more towards Vedantic doctrines.

Kabir believed in a simple and natural life. He himself wove cloth and sold it in the market like any ordinary weaver. He did not interpret religious life as a life of idleness; he held that all should toil and earn and help each other, but none should hoard money. There is no fear of corruption from wealth, if it is kept constantly in circulation in the service of humanity.

Kabir tried to express simple thoughts of a simple hearts in the common language of the people. He said, 'O Kabir, Sahskrit is the water in a well. the language of the people is the flowing stream'. His simple words had infinite power.

Malukdasa (1574-1682): One of the many followers of Kabir, he was born towards the end of the sixteenth century in the District of Allahabad. He was kind and compassionate, and, though religious man, he lived the life of a house holder. The monasteries of his sect are found all over North India and even beyond, from Bihar to Kabul. he too preached against the worship of images and other external forms of religion, and his followers rely entirely on the grace of God for their salvation. He was against mortification of the flesh, and taught that the true path of spirituality lay in the simple devotion of the heart.

Dadu (1544-1603) : The most famous of the followers of Kabir's ideals was Dadu, he was born of Brahmana parents in Ahmedabad in A.D. 1544 and died in 1603 in the village of Narana of Narayana in Rajasthan, where his followers (Dadu-panthis) have now their chief centre. The great dream of his life was to unite all the divergent faiths in one bond of love and comradeship, and he founded the Brahmasampradaya or Parabrahma Parabrahmasampradaya to give effect to this great ideal. His sayings possess great depth and liberality and show clear traces of the influence of Kabir.

Dadu believed not in the authority of scriptures, but in the value of self-realization. To attain this realization, we must divest ourselves of all sense of the ego and surrender our lives entirely to God. All men and women are as brothers and sister in the presence of God. He resides within the hearts of men, and it is there that we must meditate on Him. Union with God is possible only through love and devotion, and it is deepened not by prayers, but by joining our service to His service of the universe. We are united with God when, shedding all sins and impurities, we sincerely surrender ourselves to the divine will.

Dadu taught : 'Be humble and free from egotism; be compassionate and devoted in service; be a hero, fearless and energetic; free your mind from sectarianism, and from all the meaningless forgiving by nature and firm in your faith. The path of realization becomes easier, if you can find a true teacher.'

He himself was very simple by nature and firm in your faith, and his prayers were full of depth and sweetness. he was a householder, and he believed that, the natural life of a householder was best suited for spiritual realization.

At the request of Dadu, his disciples made a collection of the devotional writings of all the different sects, calculated to help men in their striving towards god, such an anthology of the religious literature of different sects was perhaps the first of its kind in the world, for the Granth Sahib was first compiled in A.D. 1604, while this anthology was completed some years befor A.D. 1600. This collection includes many sayings of Muslim saints like Kazi Kadam, Shaikh Farid, Kazi Mohommed, Shaikh Bahawad, and Bakhna.

Among the many disciples of Dadu, Sundaradasa (A.D. 1597-1689), Rajjab, and other were distinguished personalities. Dadu persuaded his disciples to render into simple Hindu from Sanskrit the abstruse philosophical truths. He also made it a practice among them the writer in Hindi, prose and verse, Dadu admitted both Hindus and Muslims to his discipleship, and there have been many gurus in his sect who came form the Muslim families. Even today, in Rajjab's branch of Dadu's sect, andy one who attains to the height of spiritual realization is accepted as the head of the order, whether he be a Hindu or a Muslim. The songs and prayers of Rajjab are universal in appeal and superb for their spirit of devotion.

Rajjab says: 'There are as many sects as there are men; thus has come into being the diversity of spiritual endeavour. The sacred stream of the Ganga rises from the blessed feet of Narayana, but the feet of the

Lord are in the hearts of the devotees. Thus, from the heart of every devotee flows a Ganga of thoughts. If I can unite all the streams of thoughts in this world, such a confluence would indeed be the holiest of places.' He Further said: ' This universe is the veda, the creation is the Qur'an.'

Guru Nanak (1469-1538): The Bhakti movement in northern India, which had been gathering strength ever since the time of Ramana, got another ardent bhakta in Guru Nanak. He was preceded by an evolution of ideas and he followed the path blazed by his illustrious predecessors. He founded a new religion which has survived as a permanent element in the Indian society.

Guru Nanak, sharing to the full the eclectic spirit of his time, sought for a creed capable of expressing Hindus and Muslim devotion alike. He use both Hindu and Muslim nomenclatures for God, rama, Govinda, Hari, Murari, bad and Rahim. He wanted to demolish the wall that stood in the way of the two communities and unite them.

The social teaching of Guru Nanak were basically a reaffirmation of the ethical ideas common to the medieval monotheistic religious doctrine of human equality. He held that it was sheer folly to think in terms of caste, A man was to be honoured for his devotion to God and not for his social position. he says. "God knows man's virtues and inquires not his caste; in the next world there is no caste." Guru Nanak started free community kitchens called Guru ka langar. His followers. Guru Nanak did not believe in the doctrine of chhut (theological contamination) which had compartmentalised society.

He conceived of God as nirakara (formless). He discarded the worship of images and repudiated idolatry. Being a man of deep and strong conviction. he defined explicitly the ethics, norms and usages of public life, he resented the survival of superstition which seemed to be a mark of cultural backwardness. He educated people to distinguish superstitions from religious values. The superstitions and formalism of both Hindustan and Islam were condemned.

Unlike Kabir, Nanak was a well-educated man. He had studied Persian and Hindi, besides his mother-tongue Punjabi. he travelled all over India and also to some countries of Central Asia including Arabia, and come in contact with men of diverse professions, pursuits and creeds. He wrote inspiring poems and songs which were collected in a book form subsequently published as the Adi Grantha. He was recognised as a Guru, and died at Kartarpur in 1538.

Nanak was a revolutionary religious reformer, he proclaimed that there is no distinction between man and man, all were born equal in the eyes of God. He felt that the real cause of the misery of the people was their disunity born of diversity of belief. He considered education essential for the attainment of true and complete life, True education helps the soul to unfold itself like a lotus of countless petals.

The universalism of his message and reasonableness of his precepts brought about a moral renaissance in India. He preached to the high and the high and the low without any distinction of caste, creed or colour.

Guru Nanak was a monist and his monotheism, unlike that of some other bhaktas. was undiluted. He did not believe in the incarnation of God. he regarded himself as the prophet of God who had come for the divine Court. He taught that there is one God in the world and the no other and that Nanak, the caliph (son) of God, speaks truth. Nanak looks upon God as one Lord and the commander of all. The universe is His domain and from His brilliance everything is brilliant. All is illumined by the light of His appearance.

Nanak says that devotion cannot exist without virtue. Truth is no doubt great but greater is truthful living. The qualities which one should cultivate assiduously are humility, charity, forgiveness and sweet words. Remembrance of god is the primary duty of a seeder of truth remember the name of God and give up

everything else, Simran is the practice of devotion to God. He (God) is high and worthy of worship. God is not outside but within every individual. He that pervades the universe also dwells in the body. Speak the truth, then you would realise God within you. Nanak believed in God as the omnipotent reality, but maintained that the separate individuality of the human soul could attain union with him through love and devotion.

Nanak's mission was to reform the Hindu religion on the basis of unity of the Godhead and to bring about friendly relation between the Hindus and Muslims.

Chaitanya (1486-1533): Perhaps the greatest saint if not the greatest leader, of the Bhakti movement was Chaitanya. There had been Vaishnavism in Bengal long before his birth. But the activities of Chaitanya who is the founder of modern Vaishnavism in Bengal gave a great impetus to Vaishnavism and made it popular all over Bengal and Orissa. Chaitanya's original name was Vishwambhar and he was born at Navadwip in February 1486. The boy was given the name of Nimai. His father Jagannath Mishra was a religious and scholarly man and his mother Shachi too was deeply religious and pious. Vishwambhar was sent to a private school to learn and afterwards entrusted to a well-known Pandit, Ganga Das, for higher studies. He was an exceptionally brilliant student and is said to have mastered the Sanskrit language and literature, grammar and logic, at the early age of fifteen. Shortly after he completed his education, he was given the title of Vidyasagar (the ocean ; of learning). While he was a student, his father died. He was married to a girl named Lakshmi but she died of snake-bite. He married again and this lady survived her husband's sanyas and death. He was not yet 22 when he received diksha (initiation) from a saintly man, named Ishwar Prui, whom he met at Gaya during a pilgrimage. The motive which influenced him to adopt asceticism was probably diverse and complex; at best, it is left obscure. Chaitanya settled permanently at puri where he died.

After sanyas he felt himself free from all worldly bounds and his heightened emotions and ecstasies become marked. He said, "I shall wander from house to house giving the holy name of God to all. The Chandals, lowest caste, women and children all will stand with wonder and love to hear his name. Even boys and girls will sing his praise." Chaitanya loved God as no man before or after him ever loved. he preached the religion of intense faith in one Supreme Being whom he called Drishna or Hari. He was free from ritualism, and his worship consisted in love and devotion, song and dance, so intense and full of emotion that devotees felt God's Presence in a state of ecstasy.

He was a great exponent of Krishnite form of Vaishnavism. He adored Krishna and Radha and attempted to spiritualise their lives in Vrindaban, he preached to all irrespective of caste and creed. His influence was so profound and lasting that he is considered by his followers as an incarnation of Krishna of Vishnu.

Chaitanya accepted that Krishna alone is the most perfect God. Vaishnavism, as preached by Chaitanya, created an unprecedented sensation and enthusiasm in Bengal and its neighbouring regions. like Orissa and Assam. Although Chaitanya had many followers, he did not seem to have directly organised them into a sect of cult. It was his followers and devoted disciples, who after the master's death, systematised his teachings and organised themselves into a sect called Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

Mirabai (1498-1546): Mirabai was one of the greatest saints of sixteenth century India. She was the only child of Ratna Singh Rathor of Merta. She was born at the village of Kudvi in Merta district in or about A.D. 1498 and was married to Rana Singa's eldest son and heir-apparent Bhoraj in 1516. She was highly religious from her childhood, and like her father and grandfather, was a follower of the Krishna cult of Vaishnavism. After her husband's death she devoted herself entirely to religious pursuits. Her fame as a sincere devotee of Krishna and a patron of men of religion spread far and wide and drew hermits of both sexes from distant places to Chittor. Owing to the strained relations with the rulers of Mewar, she went to reside with her uncle Biram Deva who was the chief of Merta. And there too she continued her daily

routine. She remained engrossed in spiritual meditation and in religious music and dance. She also continued having kirtan in the company of other religious men and women. In this way she spend years at Merta; but when that city was invaded and captured by Maldeva of Jodhpur; she decided to undertake pilgrimage to Dwarka. There she lived the life of a devotee and died in 1546.

Mira is said to have composed numerous poems, all of them being devotional songs. Her lyrics, however, are her chief title to fame. They are written in Brijbhasha and partly in Rajasthani, and some of her verses are in Gujarati. These lyrics are saturated with super abundant feeling of love and devotion and are so melodious that they instantaneously arouse the tenderest human feelings and pangs of love and devotion. Mira addressed her lyrics to Krishna whose presence she felt in every act of her daily life. The lyrics are full of passion and spiritual ecstasy.

Vallabhacharya (1479-1531) : Vallabhacharya was the next great saint of the Krishna cult of Vaishnavism. He was born at varanasi in 1479. His father lakshman Bhatt from Telenganga was on a pilgrimage along with his family to Kashi, where his second son Vallabhacharya saw the light of day. He travelled much and he took his residence in Varindaban where he started preaching the Krishna cult. He worshipped Lord Krishna under the title of Srinath ji. Like kabir and Nanak, he did not consider married life a hindrance to spiritual progress. He was the author of a number of scholarly works in Sanskrit and Brijbhasha.

Vallabhacharya's philosophy centres round the conception of one personal and loving God. He believed in the marga (path) of pushti (grace) and bhakti (devotion). He looked upon Sri Krishna as the highest Brahma, purushotama and parmanand (the highest bliss).

According to Vallabhacharya, God can be realised only by the one. he chooses and for this choice one has to practise bhakti. In the expression of pushtimarga, the word marga means path or way and the word pushti means grace of God Mukti or salvation can be attained by it and in no other way. Devotion or bhakti must be without any object in view and without any desire of fruit. It should be accompanied by love and service.

Surdas (sixteenth-seventeenth century): No account of the Bhakti movement can be complete without describing the two great Hindu poets, Surdas and Tulsidas. Both were saints of a high order, but not preachers and reformers in the formal sense, and neither of them founded a sect or cult. We have not much information about the principal events of Surdas's life, not even the dates of his birth and death.

Surdas was the devotee of Lord Krishna and Radha. He believed that salvation can be achieved only through the devotion of Krishna who is Saguna God. Three of his works are very popular. They are Sur Sarawali, Sahitya Ratna and Sur Sagar. The Sur sagar, which is said to contain 1,25,000 verses, is not only saturated with love and devotion, but is also notable for depiction Krishna as a child. Surdas has displayed a masterly knowledge of child psychology and also expressed his sincere devotion to the Almighty. Surdas's works and his stray poems have produced a tremendous impact on the Indian Masses.

Tulsidas (1532-1623): Tulsidas is considered by modern scholars as greater than Surdas, both as a poet and as a devotee. He was born in a Saryuparian Brahmin family in of about 1532 in Varanasi.

His father's name was Atmaram Dubey and his mother was Hulsī. On account of his wife Ratnavali's taunt, he took to the life of a religious hermit. It is presumed that he began writing his Ram Charit Manas in 1574, when he was 42 years of age. Besides this, he wrote several other books. such as Gitwali, Kaviawali, Vinay Patrika, etc. The Ram Charit Manas is an exposition of religious devotion of the highest category. Tulsidas was the worshipper of Rama and he was drawn as ideal picture of his nation of God and believed that man could reach him only through bhakti.

Tulsidas died at the age of 91, in 1623. "He is considered even now as a great Vaishnava bhakta and acharya who lived in the hearts of millions of men and women, through his immortal Vinaya Patrika and Rom Charit Manas".

MINOR SECTS AND SAINTS

Sankardev (1449-1568): He was the greatest religious reformer of medieval Assam. His message centred around absolute devotion to Vishnu of his incarnation Krishna. Its essence was monotheism, and it came to be known as Eka-Sarana-dharma (religion of seeding refuge in one). he did not recognise a female associate of the Supreme Deity (Lakshmi, radha, Sita, etc.). He insisted upon Niskama Bhakti. He recognized the sanctity of the Bhagavat Purana A comp of it was placed on the alter-like the Gramtha Sahib in the Sidh Guradwaras. He preached the rejection of ritualism including idol worship.

Sankardva denounced the caste system and preached his ideas to the masses through their mother tongue. His creed, generally known as Mahapurshiya dharma, exercised widespread and far-reaching influence on all aspects of life in Assam.

Narsi (Narsimha) Mehta (Fifteenth Century): Narasi or Narasimah Mehta was a well-known saint of Gujarat, who flourished in the second half of the fifteenth century. He wrote songs in Gujarati depicting the live of Radha and Drishna, which are included in the Suratasangrama. He was the author of Mahatam Gandhi's favourite Bhajan Vishnava jana To Teno Kahiye.

Jagjivan (Seventeenth Century): He was the founder of a sect known as Satnami (of Satyanami). He taught that spiritual realization was possible only through the grace of God, and he insisted on purity as the essence of a religious life. This aspiration was to unite the two streams of Hindu and Muslim religious life through live.

There were some other sects known by the same name of Satnami, both before and after Jagjivan's time. One of these was founded by Ghasidasa of the Cobbler caste. The followers of this faith do not touch animal food or wine, do not believe in imageworship and though considered 'untouchables', do not acknowledge the superiority of the Brahma and other castes. According to them, superiority consists in purity of character and conduct and devotion to God.

Lalgir of Lalbeg (Seventeenth Century): Another religious man of the same caste was Lalgir of Lalbeg, who founded a sect known as Aladhanmi or Aladhgir, which has a great following in Bikaner. The followers of this sect do not worship images, but meditate upon the invisible. One who cannot be perceived by the senses. The primary requirements of a religious life, according to them, are nonviolence, catholicity, charity, and purity. 'Do not be anxious about the next world,' this way, 'you will attain the highest bliss in this. Heaven and hell are within you.' They greet each other with the words 'Aladh Kaho' (take the name of God who is invisible).

The Aladhanmi sect also does not acknowledge the superiority of the higher castes. They are not sorry that they are debarred from entering the temples, for they regard these as low places, where one is diverted from the truth. The monks of this sect are note for their gentle and restrained behaviour. They do not mind if they are refused alms.

Dariya Saheb (Seventeenth Century): He belonged to a well-known Kshatriya family of Ujjain. Dariya Saheb was deeply influenced in his religious life by the teachings of Kabir. His followers pray like the Muslims in a standing posture called *Kornis*, while their prayers in the sitting posture are known as *sazda*. They do not believe in scriptures, rites and observances, pilgrimages, vows, vestments, or mantras. The worship of images or incarnations, caste distinction, the partaking of meat or wine, and all forms of violence are strictly forbidden in this sect.

There was another Dariya Saheb who was born in A.D. 1676 in Marwar, in a Muslim family of cotton traders. On account of a strong similarity of Kabir's and Dadu's teachings, he is believed by some to be an incarnation of Dadu. He has many followers in Rajasthan, where the monasteries of his sect are scattered in different places. He worshipped God under the name of Rama and Parabrahman. The section entitled *brahma-parichaya* in his collected poems deals with the mysteries of yoga. His sect includes both householders and ascetics among its members, and his songs are very popular with both Hindus and Muslims.

Shivanarayan (Early 18th Century): he was born in a Rajput family in the Ballia District of Uttar Pradesh about A.D. 1710. He was a pure monist, and was completely against image worship. He believed God to be without form and attributes. Any use of animal food or intoxicants is strictly forbidden in his sect, and the path laid down is one of single-minded devotion, purity of life, self-restraint, and love for humanity. This sect was open to members of all creeds and castes, and the union of all forms of faith in one universal religion was the dream of Shivanarayan's life. Shivanarayan was inspired, though not directly, by the ideas of Dara Shikoh, and his philosophy contains elements from both the Hindu and the Islamic religious tradition. It is said that the later Mughal Emperor Mohammed Shah (A.D. 1719-48) was converted to his faith, and the poets *wali Allah*, *Abur*, and *Nazi* also have a deep reverence for his spiritual life and teachings.

THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN MAHARASHTRA (MAHARASHTRA DHARMA)

The liberal religion preached by the saint poets of Maharashtra is popularly known as Maharashtra Dharma, which was a stream of the medieval Bhakti movement, but socially it was more profound, unitary and far more liberal in the field of social reforms. The Bhakti cult in Maharashtra centred around the shrine of Vithoba or Vitthal the presiding deity of Pandharpur, who was regarded as a manifestation of Krishna. This movement is also known as the Pandharpur movement led to the development of Marathi literature, modification of caste exclusiveness, sanctification of family life, elevation of the status of women, spread of the spirit of humaneness and toleration, subordination of ritual to love and faith, and limitation of the excesses of polytheism.

The Bhakti movement in Maharashtra is broadly divided into two sects. The first school of mystics is known as *Varakaris*, of the mild devotees of God Vitthal of Pandharpur, and the second as *Dhakararis*, or the heroic followers of the cult of Ramadasa, the devotee of God Rama. The former are more rational, practical, and concrete in their thoughts. The difference between the two schools is, however, only apparent and not real, realization of God as the highest end of human life being common to both. The three great teachers of the Vithoba cult were *Jnaneswar*, *Jnandev* or *Namdev* and *Tukaram*.

The dates of birth and of other important events in the lives of all Maharashtra saints except Ramadasa are only approximately known. It is, however, historical fact that Nivrattinatha and Jnanaswar are the founders of the mystical school in Maharashtra, which later developed in assumed different forms at the hands of Namadeva Ekanatha, and Tukarama.

Bhakti Saints of Maharashtra

Jnanaswar of Jnanadeva: One of the earliest Bhakti Saints of Maharashtra Jnanaswar flourished in the 13th century. He wrote the Marathi commentary on the Gita known as Jnanaswari, which deserves to be reckoned among the world's best mystical compositions. His other works are Amratanubhava and changadeva Prasasti.

Namadeva: Namadeva was born in a tailor's family. We are told that as a child he was very wild and in his youth he took to a vagabond life, but certain sudden incidents moved him to the path of spirituality, transforming him to a great saint and a gifted poet. His Marathi poems have genuine marks of simplicity, devotion and melody, he was suddenly converted to the spiritual life, when he heard the piteous cries and curses of the helpless wife of one of his victims.

He passed the major part of his life at Pandharpur, and was mainly responsible for building up the glorious tradition of the school of thought known as Varakarisampradaya. He was initiated into mystic life by Visoba Khechara, who convinced Namadeva of the all-pervading nature of God. He travelled with his younger cotemporary, Jnanaswar. Some of his lyrical verses are included in the Granth Sahib. The dominant note of his thoughts is earnest and whole-hearted devotion to God. Purification of the heart is possible only through suffering, and God can be realized through pure love. He wrote a number of abhangas to show people the path to God through repetition of His name.

Ekanatha: He was born at Paithan (Aurangabad). His life was an object-lesson in the reconciliation of practical and spiritual life, He observed no distinction of caste and creed, and once gave to the pariahs the food prepared as an offering to his forefathers. His sympathies knew no limits; he poured the holy waters of the Godavari (brought from a long distance at the risk of life for the worship of the Lord) into the throat of an ass that was dying of thirst. He published for the first time a reliable edition of the Jnanaswari. He was a voluminous writer, and his commentary on four verses of the Bhagavata is famous. It was his custom to sing Kertana (devotional composition) every day, and he observed it till the last day of his life. His mystic experiences are expressed most explicitly in this abhangas. He popularized the Vedanta philosophy and the mystic teachings of earlier saints. He passed away in A.D. 1598.

Tukaram : Tukaram was born in the family of a farmer. He had some cattle and landed property, but lost them all in great famine, together with his parents, one of his two wives, and a son. He became a bankrupt and got disgusted with his life. His other wife was a shrew, who abused his companion-devotees. Trouble both at home and outside, Tukarama took to the study of the works of Jnanaswar, Namadeva, and Ekanatha, and began to meditate on God in solitary places on the hills of Bhamhanatha and Bhandara.

He wrote several abhangas, which embody his teachings and are widely recited in Maharashtra. He was contemporary of Shivaji and refused to accept the offer of rich presents made by him.

Ramadasa: He was born in 1608. He wandered throughout India for twelve years and finally settled at Chaphal on the banks of the Krishna where he built a temple. He was the spiritual guide of Shivaji. Ramadasa was born in a period of political upheaval, and could not but be partly affected by it. But he regarded the realization of God as primary, and political as only of secondary importance in life. He was

a saint of practical temperament and systematically organized his order. He established his monasteries throughout Maharashtra to serve as centres of spiritual and practical activities. In his monumental work.

The Guptas

Dasabodha, he combined his vast knowledge of various sciences and arts with the synthesizing principle of spiritual life. He also wrote many abhangas and some minor works, all of which inspire a deep love for the life of God-realisation.

The greatest contribution of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra was in uniting the people of Maharashtra into a nation, which greatly helped in the rise of the Maratha movement under Shivaji.

The Mahanubhava Panth: Another religious cult founded in Maharashtra around this time was Mahanubhava Panth. The cult fell into disrepute and incurred unpopularity among the Maharashtrians, perhaps because of its alleged disbelief in the caste system, disregard of the teachings of the Vedas, and non-adherence to the asrama system. The leaders and followers of the cult had to carry on their spiritual propaganda and activities under great restraints enforced by the State. All their holy works were, therefore, written in symbolic script, a key to decipher which was supplied for the first time by V.K. Rajavade, Govinda Prabhu, a great mystic, was the founder of this cult, and Chakradhara its first apostle. Nagadeva organized the cult on a systematic basis. Bhaskara, Kesavaraja Suri, Damodara Pandita, Visvantha, and narayana pandita were, amongst others, the most learned and important followers of the cult. Of the women follower Mahadamba was an advanced mystic and a poetess of no mean order. The Mahanubhavas were, in reality, the followers of the Bhagvata, and the Sutraphatha (a collection of aphorisms of Chakradhara) as the standard and classical religious works. Sri Krishna and Dattatreya were their prominent deities. Devotion to Krishna is, in their opinion, the only way to the realization of God. This was, therefore, primarily a cult of Sri Krishna. But later they accepted Dattatreya - a trinity in unity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, representing the principles of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe, with emphasis on Vishnu, of Vishnu as Krishna. Thus the Mahanubhava cult seems to combine the cult of Krishna, represented by the Nathas of Maharashtra, with that of Dattatreya, represented by Narasimha Saraswati and Janardana Svamin.

- After the breakup of Mauryan empire, the Satavahana and Kushana emerged as two large Political Powers.
- The Satavahana acted as a stabilizing factor in the Deccan and south to which they gave political unity and prosperity.
- The Kushanas performed the same role in the north.
- Both these empires came to an end in the middle of the 3rd century A.D.
- Kushana power in North India came to an end in about 230 A.D. and after that, a good part of central India fell to Murundas who continued to rule till 250 A.D.
- The Guptas finally overthrew Kushanas in about 275 A.D.
- On the ruins of the Kushana empire arose a new empire which established its way over a good part of the former dominions of both the Kushanas and the Satavahanas.
- This was the empire of the Guptas who may have been of vaishya origin.
- Little is known of the early Guptas; first known ruler was 'Sri Gupta' probably ruling over a small portion of north Bengal and South Bihar.
- He was succeeded by his son Ghatotkacha. Both adopted the title of Maharaja.
- He married a Lichchavi princess Kumara Devi and had her portrait engraved on his coins.

Chandragupta I (319-335 A.D.)

- Chandragupta was the first Gupta king who minted silver coins after defeating Saka satraps of Ujjain and also in the name of his queen and the Lichchhavi nation.
- Chandragupta I seems to have been a ruler of considerable importance because he started Gupta Era in A.D. 319-20 which marked the date of his accession.
- He emphasized his power and prestige by marrying Kumara Devi, Princess of the Lichchhavi nation of Nepal.
- He acquired the title of Maharajadhiraj.

Samudragupta (335-375 A.D.)

- Samudragupta (335-380 A.D.), called the 'Napoleon of India' by Vincent Smith, enlarged the Gupta Kingdom enormously.
- The Allahabad pillar inscription composed by Harisena, his court poet enumerates the people and countries that were conquered by Samudragupta, which had been divided into 5 groups.
- 12 Kings were defeated in course of Samudragupta's dakshinapath campaign, who reached as far as Kanchi and Pallava ruler Vishnugupta was compelled to recognise his suzerainty. But he reinstated all the 12 kingdoms as tributary states.
- Virasen was the army commander in the famous Southern campaign of Samudragupta. In Allahabad inscription Samudragupta describes him as the hero of hundred battles.
- In one of his coins he called himself 'Lichchhavi duhitra' (daughter's son of the Lichchhavis).
- He performed Asvamedha Yajna to claim imperial title and struck gold coins of yupa type to commemorate the occasion.
- He maintained the tradition of religious toleration, granted permission to Buddhist king of Ceylon, Meghavarmā to build a monastery at Bodhi Gaya; so, he was called 'Anukampavav'.
- He was a great patron of art, adopted the title of 'Kaviraja'. Poets like Harisena and Vasubandhu adorned his court; on some gold coins he was shown playing the Veena.
- On one of the coins Samudragupta is represented as playing fl ute. He also patronized the Buddhist scholar Vasubandhu and studied Buddhism under him.
- Though a follower of the Brahmanical religion and follower of Vasudeva, he was tolerant towards other faiths. He received a missionary from the ruler Meghavarmā of Sri Lanka, seeking his permission to build a Buddhist temple at Gaya, which he granted.

Chandragupta II (380-413 A.D.)

- Samudragupta was succeeded by Ramgupta but Chandragupta II killed him and married his queen Dhruvadevi.
- Chandragupta II was also a great conqueror like his father and his reign saw the high water mark of the Gupta empire. Mehrauli Iron pillar inscription claims his authority over North- Western India and a good portion of Bengal.
- Chandragupta II's daughter Prabhavati was married to the Vakataka King, Rudrasena II who died very soon.
- The sea-borne trade with Europe brought Chandragupta II in close contact with Europe .through Egypt.
- Chandragupta is represented as killing a lion on his coins unlike his father who is shown killing a tiger.

- Though Fa-hien (the Chinese pilgrim) travelled extensively in Chandragupta's empire and records the prosperity during this time, it is interesting to note that the Chinese pilgrim never recorded the name of the king because he was totally preoccupied with the study of Buddhism.
- Chandragupta II Vikramaditya was the first among the Gupta kings to issue gold coins.
- These coins were modelled on the silver coins issued by the Sakas of western and central India.
- Virasena's Udyagiri cave inscription refers to his conquest of the whole world.
- He defeated the last of the Saka ruler Rudra Simha III and annexed the territories of western Malwa and Gujarat. He was also called 'Vikramaditya'. He also took the title of Simhavikrama.
- Chandragupta II made Ujjain the second capital of the empire.
- He strengthened the empire by matrimonial alliance, married his daughter Prabhavati to a Vakataka Prince Rudrasena II, he himself married a Naga prince 'Kuber Naga'.
- He was also a man of art and culture, his court at Ujjain was adorned by 'Navratna', including Kalidasa, Amarsinha, Fa-hien, Acharya Dhananaga, etc.
- Virasena was the Court Poet and Minister of Chandragupta II.
- Fa-hien, the Chinese traveller, came during the time of Chandragupta II.

Kumaragupta I (413-455 A.D.)

- He assumed the title of Mahendraditya.
- Founded the Nalanda University.
- He was a worshipper of Lord Kartikeya (son of Lord Shiva).
- Kumargupta I introduced a new type of coins of gold. One of them figures the God Kartikeya riding on his peacock on the reverse, and the king feeding a peacock on the obverse.
- The first Huna attack took place during Kumargupta I. He was very old that time. The aged Kumargupta died when the crown prince was still in the field in A.D. 454 or 455.
- Kumargupta performed Asvamedha sacrifices, but we do not know of his any military success, though he maintained the vast empire intact.
- Towards the close of his reign, the empire was attacked by the Pushyamitra tribe.
- By 485 A.D. the Hunas occupied eastern Malwa and a good portion of Central India.
- Although the Huna power was soon overthrown by Yasodharman of Malwa, the Malwa prince successfully challenged the authority of the Guptas and set up pillars of victory commemorating his conquest of almost the whole of Northern India.

Skandagupta (455-467 A.D.)

- One of the gold coins of the king Skandagupta depicts the king as standing with a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other with a Garuda standard in front of him. To his right is Goddess Laxmi facing the king with a lotus in her hand.
- He restored the Sudarshana Lake.
- Skandagupta repulsed the ferocious Hunas twice, this heroic feat entitled him to assume the title of Vikramaditya.
- Skandagupta's successors proved to be weak and could not resist the Huna invaders, who excelled in horsemanship and possibly used stirrups made of metal.

Fall of the Gupta Empire

- The weak successors of Skandagupta could not check the growing Huna power and feudatories rose in Bihar, Bengal, M.P., Vallabhi, etc.
- Mihirkula was the most famous Huna King. Hieun Tsang mentions him as a fierce persecutor of Buddhism. He was defeated by Yashodharman, one of the feudatories of the Guptas in Malwa
- Later Guptas of Magadha established their power in Bihar, alongside them the Maukharis rose to power in Bihar and U.P. with their capital at Kannauj, the Maitrakas of Vallabhi established their authority in Gujarat and Western Malwa.
- In North India the Pushyabhutis of Thaneshwar established their power in Haryana and they gradually moved to Kannauj.
- The Gupta state may have found it difficult to maintain a large professional army on account of the growing practice of land grants for religious and other purposes, which was bound to reduce their revenues.
- Their income may have further been affected by the decline of foreign trade.
- Loss of Western India deprived the Guptas of rich revenues from trade and commerce and crippled them economically.
- The migration of a guild of silk weavers from Gujarat to Malwa in A.D. 473 and their adoption of non-productive professions show that there was not much demand for silk.
- Decline of trade led to decay of towns, the post-Gupta period witnessed the ruin of many old commercial cities.
- The later Guptas, though they ruled in Magadha till about the eight-century, were not genealogically connected to the Imperial Guptas.

Trade and Economy

- Kalidasa gives good description of the market towns.
- The volume of trade with China greatly increased during Gupta period and the Chinese silk was called 'Chinansuka' in India.
- Indian muslin was said to have created a great demand in the city of Rome.
- At Kaveripattinam, the Yavana section of the city overflowed with prosperity.
- At Arikamedu, a sizeable Roman settlement and a Roman factory was discovered (it was known for Muslin).
- Barygaza or Broach was the largest port on the western coast.
- Glass production started in the Gupta period.
- Indian embassies visited the Roman Empire in the reigns of Aurelian, Constantine, Julian, and Justinian, and Alexandria became an important meeting place for the inhabitants and traders of India and Rome.
- Varahmihira paid tribute to Greek astronomers by saying that they deserve as much respect as our own rishis.
- Indians were the first in the world to advocate the internal use of mercury. It is mentioned by Varahmihira along with iron. The Indian surgeon performed lithotomy and could remove the external matter accidentally introduced into the body e.g. iron, stones, etc.
- Gold coins were called Dinars and silver coins were called Rupyakas.

Political Organization

- In contrast to the Mauryas, the Gupta kings adopted pompous titles such as 'Parmeshwar' 'Maharajadhiraja' and 'Param-bhattaraka' which signify that they ruled over lesser kings in their empire.
- Element of divinity in kingship; kings compared with different gods and were looked upon as Vishnu, the protector and preserver.
- Kingship was hereditary, but royal power was limited by the absence of a firm practice of primogeniture.
- Council of ministers existed; evidence of one man holding several posts like Harisena and posts becoming hereditary.

- The most important officers were Kumaramatyas.
- The empire was divided into 'Bhukti' placed under the charge of an 'Uparika'.
- Bhuktis were divided into districts placed under the charge of 'Vishayapati'.
- The sub-districts were called 'Peth' and the villages were under 'Gramika' or 'Mahattar'.
- The Guptas did not maintain a vast bureaucracy like that of the Mauryas.
- 'Kumaramatyas' were the most important officers who were appointed by the king in the home provinces.
- Chariots receded into the background and cavalry came to the forefront.
- In judicial system, for the first time civil and criminal laws were clearly defined and demarcated.
- The most salient feature of the Gupta rule is personal liberty. The people were left largely to follow their own ideas and pursue their own intentions.
- The Vakataka empire in the Deccan was more centralized and united than the Satavahanas, though the Vakatakas continued the same administrative system and practices as it was during the Satavahanas.
- In the Gupta period land taxes increased in number, and also those on trade and commerce.
- A large part of the empire was administered by feudatories, many of whom had been subjected by Samudragupta.
- The second important feudal development in administration was the grant of fiscal and administrative concessions to priests and administrators. Salary was not paid in cash.
- Religious functionaries were granted land called 'Agarhara', free of taxes for ever, and they were authorised to collect from peasants all taxes, which could have otherwise gone to the emperor.
- Land revenue was about 1/7 of the produce payable either in cash or kind.

Social Organization

- The Aryan pattern of society based on 'Varnashram Dharma' made its final assertion. Land grants to Brahmanas suggest Brahman supremacy.
- Caste proliferated into numerous sub-castes, firstly, as a result of assimilation of a large number of foreigners into Indian society, and secondly due to absorption of many tribal people in Brahmanical society through process of land grants.
- Though women were idealized in literature, mother goddesses were worshipped, but in reality they were accorded lower position viz. pre-puberty marriage, denial of education, treated as an item of property, etc. Though they were allowed to listen to the Epics and the Puranas, like the Shudras.

- The position of the Shudra somewhat improved but number of untouchables and the practice of untouchability increased.
- The first example of Sati came from Eran of 510 A.D. Sati system was very rare in the Gupta period, almost the only recorded instance in the age being that of the Goparaja's wife in A.D. 510. came to light from Eran (M.P.).
- The Vakataka period (roughly from about A.D. 250-250) coincided with the most creative period of Mahayana Buddhism.
- Nagarjuna established the Shunyavada philosophy, he infused a new life into Buddhism and helped the eventual development of the Advaita school in the Hindu Vedanta.
- It is very likely that Kaildasa lived for some time in the Vakataka court, as a part of the 'Meghadduta' must have been composed there.
- Patanjali tells us that the maidservant and the shudra women were meant for satisfying the pleasure of upper classes.

Religion

- Many legal text books were written during this period such as the Bhagwad Gita, Yajnavalkya Smriti, Narada Smriti, Brihaspati Smriti, etc.
- Hinduism acquired its present shape, Brahma, Vishnu & Mahesh emerged as the supreme deity.
- Devotional Hinduism got perfection and Bhagvatism became more popular, centred round the worship of Vishnu or Bhagvat. History was presented as a cycle of 10 incarnations of Vishnu.
- Theory of Karma and idea of Bhakti and Ahimsa became the foundation of Bhagvatism.
- Idol worship in the temples became a common feature.
- Concept of incarnations or Avatara of Vishnu preached.
- Various female deities such as Durga, Amba, Kali, Chandi, etc. came to be regarded as mother goddesses.
- Four ends of life were enumerated-Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, first three collectively called 'Triverga'
- Six schools of philosophy were perfected.
- Buddhism no longer received royal patronage in the Gupta period.
- Fa-hien has given the impression that this religion was in flourishing state.
- But really it was not so important in the Gupta period as it was in the days of Ashoka and Kanishka.

Science and Technology

- Gupta period is unparalleled for its achievements in the field of mathematics and astronomy.
- Brahmagupta in 7th century developed rules for operating with zero and negative quantities, he began to apply algebra to astronomical problems. He wrote Brahmasphuta Siddhanta in which he hinted at the law of gravitation.
- Prominent astronomers were Aryabhatta and Varahamihira. Aryabhatta was the first astronomer who wrote Arya-bhattyam, found the causes of lunar and solar eclipses, calculated the circumference of the earth in Suryasiddhanta, which is still almost correct.
- Aryabhatta described the value of first nine numbers and the use of zero in Aryabhattiyam. He also calculated the value of pi and invented Algebra.
- He was first to reveal that the Sun is stationary and the earth revolves round it.
- Varahamihira's well-known work was 'Brihatsamhita', it stated that the Moon rotates round the Earth and the Earth rotates round the Sun.
- He also wrote 'Panch Siddhantika' which gives the summary of five astronomical books current in his time.
- Romaka Siddhanta, a book on astronomy was also compiled and was perhaps influenced by Greek ideas.
- Vagbhatta was the most distinguished physician of the ayurvedic system of medicine.
- Palakapya wrote Hastiyagurved, a treatise on the diseases of elephants.
- Dhanvantri was famous for Ayurveda knowledge.

Literature

- Sanskrit language and literature made much headway during this period. This was the language of scholars.
- From this time onward we find greater emphasis on verses than prose.
- Although we get a good deal of Brahmanical religious literature, the period also produced some of the earliest pieces of secular literature.
- The greatest Sanskrit poet and dramatist of the Gupta age was Kalidasa, his important works were-Meghdutam, Abhijana Shakuntalam, Kumarsambhava, Raghuvamsa, Ritusamhara, Malvikagnimitra, etc.
- Vishakhadatta produced the 'Mudrarakshasa' and the 'Devichandraguptam'.

- Apart from Kalidasa others were Sudraka who authored Mrichchakatikam, Bharavi wrote Kiratarjunia, Dandin's Kavyadarshana and Dasakumaracharita. To this period belong the 13 plays written by Bhasa. Most famous was Charudatta.
- Vishnu Sharma wrote Panchatantra and Hitopadesh.
- All the literary works of this period were comedies and character of higher and lower classes did not speak the same language: women and shudra featuring in these plays used Prakrit.
- Both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata along with various Puranas and Smritis were finally compiled.
- Amarsimha wrote 'Amarkosha'.

Art and Architecture

- The Gupta craftsmen distinguished themselves by their work in iron and bronze. Several bronze images of the Buddha were produced.
- In the case of iron objects, the best example is the famous Iron pillar found at Mehrauli. It has withstood rain and weather for centuries without rusting.
- This period marks the beginning of temple architecture.
- Dasavatara temple at Deogarh in Jhansi is the finest square temple with a low and squat shikhara (tower) above.
- The temple at Bhitargaon near Kanpur is made of brick.
- Phenomenal development in sculptural representation of divinities at its best. Best example is provided by the stone sculpture of Naranarayan from Dasvatara temple, Deogarh.
- Metal sculpture of a high degree is testified by the over two metre high bronze image of Buddha recovered from Sultanganj near Bhagalpur.
- Gupta stone sculptural art was related to the Mathura school.
- Painting reached its zenith with regard to aesthetic and technical standard as is furnished by the Ajanta Painting.
- Their themes were borrowed from Jataka stories i.e. previous incarnations of Buddha and from other secular source— 'dying princes', 'Mother and Child etc.
- Buddha sitting in Dharma Chakra mudra belongs to Sarnath and the Buddha images of Bamiyan, Afghanistan belong to the Gupta period.
- Images of Vishnu, Shiva and some other Hindu gods featured for the first time in this period.
- The Ajanta painters excelled in the depiction of human and animal figures.

The Marathas

The emergence and growth of the Maratha state during the 17th century was an important episode in the history of India. The Territory which include modern state of Bombay Konkan, Kandesh, Berar, part of Madhya Pradesh, and part of Hyderabad state was Maratha state. The history of the rise of the Marathas is the history of the rise of an organized group of people inhabiting the territory of Maharashtra. Different factors contributed in the rise of Maratha nationalism and political power of the Marathas. The geographical condition of Maharashtra helped in the rise of the Marathas. Larger part of Maharashtra is plateau where man has to struggle hard for his existence. This made Marathas courageous and sturdy. The plateau provided every facility for defence including the construction of forts at every hill top-while it was difficult for Aurangzeb foreign invader to get supplies besides the difficulty of movement with larger armies in an unknown land. The plateau also provided good facility for guerilla-warfare to the Marathas. The rise of the Marathas was the result of the efforts of entire Maratha people who on the basis of unity of their languages, literature, community and homeland gave birth to Maratha nationalism and desired to create an independent state of their own. The Marathas developed the story spirit of nationalism which made them the most powerful group of people in India. The saints of Bhakti Movement in Maharashtra had spread the idea of equality which helped for the growth of unity among in people.

The Marathas had important positions in the administrative and military system of Deccan states. Although a number of influential Maratha families exercised local authority in some area, the Maratha did not have any large well established state as Rajaputs had. The credit for setting up such a large state goes to Shahji Bhonsali and his son Shivaji.

Shivaji: Shivaji was born in 1627. He was the son of Shahji Bhonsle and Jija Bai. Shahji Bhonsle acted as the king maker in Ahammednagar. After its extinction, transferred his service to Bijapur. Shivaji spent his childhood under the protection of a Brahmin official called Dadaji Kondadev. While Jija bai built up the character of Shivaji, Kond Dev trained him in the art of fighting and administration. Shivaji aimed to create an independent kingdom of his own right from the beginning of his career. His primary aim was to carve out an independent kingdom for himself in Maharashtra. M.G. Ranade has cleared the aim of Shivaji by dividing events of his life into four parts. During the first six years of his political career, Shivaji simply desired to organize the neighbouring Maratha chiefs under him. He had to fight against Bijapur to active this purpose. During the course of next ten years he encouraged Maratha nationalism and attempted to extend the territory under his rule. He fought against the ablest nobles of Bijapur during this period and succeeded. He came in to conflict with the growing power of the Mughals Towards the Deccan. He succeeded against the Mughals as well. Between the period 1674-80 he legalized his kingdom, held his coronation and assumed the title of Chatrapathi. Even during the period of Tutelage of Kunda Dev, Shivaji started capturing hill forts near Poona against his wishes. At the age of 20 years he started his adventures on a wider scale. Many courageous Maratha leader gathered round him. In 1643 Shivaji captured the fort of the singhgarh from Bijapur and then gradually the forts of Chaken, Purandar, Varanati, Torna, Supa, Tikona, Lohgarch, Rairi were taken over. Shivaji had won over many of his officers of Bijapur to his side by bringing them. The conquest of Javli made him in disputed master.

Shivaji came into conflict with the Mughals first in 1657. Aurangzeb had attacked Bijapur, which sought his help Shivaji could realize that it was in his interest also to check the power of the Mughals from penetrating in the Deccan. Therefore he helped Bijapur and attacked south west territory of the Mughals.

He looted Junar and troubled the Mughals at several places. But when Bijapur made peace with the Mughals, he also stopped raids on Mughals territory. With Aurangzeb away in the north, Shivaji resumed his career of conquest at the expense of Bijapur. He captured Konkan. Bijapur now decided to take stern action Afzalkhan who was a reputed commander of Bijapur was deputed for his task in 1659. With a large army, He tried to terrify Shivaji by wholesale destruction of temples, agriculture and populace with in his territories Afzalkhan assured Shivaji that if he would come to meet him in person and agreed to accept the suzerainty of Bijapur he would so given the additional territory as Jagir. Shivaji got scant of Afzalkhan and decided the pay him in the some coins. He agreed to meet Afzalkhan after a solemn promise of his personal safety. Convinced that this was a trap. Shivaji went prepared and murdered khan in cunning but daring manner, Shivaji put his leaderless army to rout captured all goods and equipment including his artillery. Flushed with victory, the Maratha troops overran the powerful fort of Panhala and poured in to south Konkan and Kolhapur districts making extensive conquest.

Shivaji's exploits made him a legendary figure. His name passed from house to house and was credited with magical powers. People flocked to him from the Maratha areas to join his army. Meanwhile, Aurangzeb was anxiously watching the rise of a Maratha power so near the Mughal frontier. Aurangzeb instructed the new Mughal governor of Deccan, Shaista Khan to invade Shivaji dominion. At first the war went badly for Shivaji Shaista Khan occupied Poona and made it his headquarter. He sent army to capture Konkan from Shivaji. The Mughal secured their contest on north Konkan. Driven into a corner Shivaji made bold stroke. He infiltrated in to the camp of Shaista Khan at Poona and at night attacked Khan, killing his son, and one of his captains and wounding khan. This daring attack put the Khan in to disgrace. In anger Aurangzeb transferred Shaista Khan to Bengal. Meanwhile Shivaji made another bold move. He attacked Surat and looted it in to his hearts content, returning home laden with Treasure.

After the failure of Shaista Khan Aurangzeb deputed Raja Jai Singh of Amber to deal with Shivaji. Full military and administrative authority was conferred on Jai Singh so that he was not in any way dependent on the Mughal victory in the Deccan, unlike his predecessors, Jai Singh did not underestimate the Marathas. He made careful diplomatic and military preparation. He appealed to all the rivals and opponents of Shivaji in order to isolate Shivaji. Marching to Poona, Jai Singh decided to strike at the heart of Shivaji territories fort Purandar where Shivaji had lodged his family and his treasure. Jai Singh closely besieged Purandar (1665) by acting off all the Maratha attempt to relieve it. With the fall of the fort at sight, Shivaji opened negotiation with Jai Singh. In 1665 the treaty of Purandar was signed between two. The following terms were agreed upon.

- Shivaji surrendered 23 of his forts, and territory which yielded annual revenue of 4 lakhs of heen.
- Shivaji was left with only 12 forts and territory which yielded annual revenue of one lakh him.
- Shivaji accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals.
- Shivaji agreed to support the Mughals against Bijapur.
- Shivaji agreed to pay forty lakhs of him too the Mughals in 13 years.

This term of the treaty embittered the relation of Bijapur with Shivaji. In 1666 Shivaji went to Agra to meet emperor Aurangzeb, Jai Singh tempted Shivaji that there was every possibility of getting governorship of Mughals territory in the Deccan if he would go to meet the emperor in person. He assured Shivaji of his personal safety. Shivaji visited Agra along with his son Shambhuji. He was

presented before the emperor by Ram Singh, son of Jai Singh. The emperor neglected his presence and offered him a place to stand among the officers of the rank of 5,000 mansab. Shivaji felt humiliated and left the court immediately. Ram Singh kept Shivaji in the Jaipur Bhavan but virtually he was a prisoner there, since Shivaji had come to Agra on Jai Singh's assurance, Aurangzeb wrote to Jai Singh for advice. Jai Singh strongly argued for a lenient treatment for Shivaji. But before any decision could be taken, Shivaji escaped from detention.

There is no doubt that Shivaji's visit to Agra proved to be a turning point in Mughal relations with the Marathas. Aurangzeb attached little value to the alliance with Shivaji. For him Shivaji was just a petty *bhumia* (land holders). In 1670 AD Shivaji again started fighting against the Mughals and succeeded in capturing many forts from among those which he had surrounded by the treaty of Purandar. He conquered forts like Singhgarh, Purandar, Kalyan Mahuli etc. and successfully raided the territories of the Mughals in Deccan. He also plundered Surat in 1670 for the second time. Thus within a few years; Shivaji captured many forts and territories from the Mughals and Bijapur.

In 1674 Shivaji held his coronation, assumed the title *Chatrapathi* and made Raigarh his capital. In 1677-78 AD Shivaji attacked east Karnataka on the pretext of getting share of his father's jagir from his brother. He then conquered the forts of Jinji and Vellore and the territory between rivers Thungabhadra and Kaveri in Karnataka. The Karnataka expedition was the last major expedition of Shivaji. Shivaji died in 1680 shortly after his return from the Karnataka expedition.

SHIVAJI'S ADMINISTRATION

Shivaji had laid the foundation of a sound system of administration. His administrative system was largely borrowed from the administrative practices of the Deccan state. Like all other medieval rulers, Shivaji was a despot with all powers concentrated in his hands. He possessed all executive and legislative power. Shivaji was a great organizer and constructive civilian administrator. The novelty of Shivaji's administration was the introduction of Maratha language as the state language.

i. Central Administration

The king was at the helm of the affairs. The administration was divided into eight departments headed by ministers who are sometimes called **Ashta Pradhan**. The eight ministers were (1) Peshwa who looked after the finances and general administration. (2) *Sari-Naubat* who was the *Senapati*. (3) *Majumdar* looked after the accounts. (4) *Waqai Navis* looked after the intelligence, post and household affairs (5) *Surnavis* or *Chitnis* looked after official correspondence (6) *Dabir* looked after foreign affairs (7) *Nyayadhish* looked after justice and (8) *Pandit Rao* looked after ecclesiastical affairs.

The *Ashta Pradhan* was not a creation of Shivaji. Many of these officers like Peshwa, *Majumdar*, *Waqai Navis*, *Dabir* and *Surnavis* had existed under the Deccani rulers also. All the members of the *Ashta Pradhan* except *Pandit Rao* and *Nyayadhish* were asked to lead military campaigns. Under Shivaji these offices were neither hereditary nor permanent. They held the office at the pleasure of the king. They were also frequently transferred. Each of the *Ashta Pradhan* was assisted by eight assistants: *diwan*, *Majumdar*, *Fadnis*, *Sabnis*; *Karkhanis*, *Chitnis*, *Jamadar* and *Potnis*. *Chitnis* dealt with all diplomatic correspondences and wrote all royal letters. The *Fadnis* used to respond to the letters of commanders of the forts. The *Potnis* looked after the income and expenditure of the royal treasury.

ii. Provincial and Local Administration

The provincial administration was also organized on the Deccani and Mughal system. All the provincial units already existed under the Deccani rulers. Shivaji reorganized and in certain cases renamed them. The provinces were known as Prants. The Prants were under the charge of subedar. Over a number of Subedar there were Sarsubedar to control and supervise the work of subedar. Smaller than prant were Tarfs which were headed by a havaldar. Then there were Mauzas or villages which were the lowest unit of administration. At the level of village, Kulkarni used to keep accounts and maintained records while Patil had legal and policing power. At the level of Pargana, Deshpande used to keep account and maintain records while Deshmukh had legal and policing powers. The Police officer in rural area was called Faujdar and in urban area was called Kotwal. The Maratha polity did not have unified civilian-cummilitary rank. Under the Marathas performance based Brahmin elites manned the central bureaucracy and the local administration. In this capacity they were called Kamvishtar who enjoyed wide powers of tax assessment and collection. They adjudicated cases, provided information about local conditions and kept records. Later on, the British District collector was modelled on this Maratha officer only.

ARMY

Cavalry and infantry constituted the primary part of the army of Shivaji. The paga cavalymen were called the bargirs. They were provided horses by the state while the silahdars purchased their armies and horses themselves. The paga cavalry was well organized. Twenty five horsemen formed a unit which was placed under a havildar. Shivaji preferred to give cash salaries to the regular soldiers, though some time the chief received revenue grants strict disciplines was maintained in the army. The plunder taken by each soldiers during campaign was strictly accounted for, farts and security occupied an important place in the army organization of Shivaji. Shivaji maintained a navy as well. Shivaji had 400 ships of different kind. The navy was divided in to two parts and each part was commanded by darive Nayak and mai Nayak respectively.

FINANCE AND REVENUE

The revenue system seems to have been patterned on the system of Malik Ambar land revenue; Trade Tax etc. were the primary source of the fixed income of Shivaji. But income from these sources was not sufficient to meet the expenditure of the state. Therefore Shivaji collected the chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the territory which was either under his enemies or under his own influence. The chauth was $\frac{1}{4}$ part of the income of the particular territory while the Sardeshmukhi was $\frac{1}{10}$. Shivaji collected these taxes simply by force of his army. These taxes constituted primary source of the income of Shivaji and afterwards helped in the extension of the power and territory of the Marathas. The revenue system of Shivaji was Rytowari in which the state kept direct contact with peasants. Shivaji mostly avoided the system of assigning Jagir to his officers and whenever he assigned Jagir to them, the right of collecting the revenue was kept with state officials.

SUCCESSORS

Sambhaji (1680-89). The war of succession between Sambhaji, the elder son, and Rajaram, the younger son, of Sivaji, resulted in the victory of the former and imprisonment of the later. Sambhaji provided protection and support to Akbar, the rebellious son of Aurangzeb. But Akbar failed against his father and departed to Persia. Sambhaji was also captured at Sangamesvar by a Mughal noble and executed.

Rajaram (1689-1700) : Rajaram was released and succeeded to the throne with the help of the ministers at Raigarh. He fled from Raigarh to Jinji in 1689 (Jinji remained his base till 1698) due to a Mughal invasion in which Raigarh was captured along with Sambhaji's wife and son (Shahu) by the Mughals. Jinji fell to the Mughal (1698) and Rajaram escaped to Visalgarh (Maharashtra). Rajaram died at Satara, which had become the capital after the fall of Jinji. Rajaram's administrative changes included the creation of the new post of Pratimdhi, thus taking the total number of ministers to nine.

Sivaji II and Tarabai (1700-1707) : Rajaram was succeeded by his minor son Sivaji II under the guardianship of his mother Tarabai. He attacked Berar (1703), Baroda (1706) and Aurangabad.

Shah (1707-1749) : Shahu was released by the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah and this was the beginning of civil war (1707-14) between him and Tarabai. Tarabai's army was defeated by Shahu at the battle of Khed (1700) and Shahu occupied Satara. The final defeat and imprisonment of Tarabai by Shahu came in 1714. But the southern part of the Maratha kingdom with its capital at Kolhapur continued to be under the control of the descendants of Rajaram (Sivaji II and later Sambhaji II).

Shahu's reign saw the rise of Peshwaship and transformation of the Maratha kingdom into an empire based on the principle of confederacy.

The Mauryas

Rise of the Mauryans

- Closeness to the source of natural resources like iron ores enabled the Magadhan princes to equip themselves with weapons.
- Agricultural tools of iron, which increased production and added to royal taxation alongwith the alluvial soil of Gangatic plains and sufficient rainfall which were very conducive for agricultural practices.
- Rise of towns and use of metallic money boosted trade and commerce, which increased royal revenue.
- Use of elephants on a large scale in its war supplied by the eastern part of the country added to the military power.
- The unorthodox character of the Magadhan Society as a result of racial admixture.

Historical Sources

- The history of Mauryas, unlike that of the earlier ruling houses, is rendered reliable by a variety of evidences drawn from such sources as the Buddhist and the Jain traditions; the Kalpasuta of Jains and the Jatakas, Dighanikaya, Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa of Buddhists respectively.
- The Arthashastra of Kautilya, the Greek accounts, the first decipherable inscription of Ashoka (deciphered by James Prinsep in 1837) and the archaeological remains.
- The Puranas and Mudrarakshasa of Vishakhadutta though belong to a later date, throw light on the history of the Mauryans alongwith Patanjali's Mahabhashya.

Chandragupta Maurya

- Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of Mauryan dynasty. Also known as Sandrocottus (kind towards friends) by Greek scholars.
- Brahmanical sources (Mudrarakshasa) say that the name Maurya was derived from Mura; a Shudra woman in the court of Nandas, and Chandragupta was son or grandson of the woman.
- Vishnu Purana also mentions him of low origin i.e. a Shudra. But the Buddhist and Jain sources ascribed him a Kshatriya status.

- His early career is shrouded in mystery. According to Justin, a Greek writer, he overthrew Nandas between 325-322 B.C. According to Plutarch, he met Alexander in Punjab and implicitly invited him to attack Nandas but offended him by his boldness of speech.
- Chandragupta occupied Magadhan throne in 321 B.C. with the help of Chanakya (Kautilya).
- He had allied with a Himalayan chief Parvataka.
- He defeated Seleucus Nicator, then Alexander's governor in 305 B.C. who ceded to Chandragupta the three rich provinces of Kabul, Kandahar and Heart in return for 500 elephants.
- Seleucus probably gave one of his daughters to Chandragupta and sent his ambassador, Megasthenes to the Mauryan Court, who wrote an account (Indica) not only of the administration of the city of Pataliputra but also of the entire Mauryan Empire.
- The Greek writer Justin calls Chandragupta's army as a "Dacoits gang".
- According to the Jain work Parishista-parvan, Chandragupta converted to Jainism in the end years of his life and went to south near Sravanbelgola with his Guru Bhadrabahu. It is said that he starved himself to death here.
- According to the same text, Chanakya made Chandragupta enter into an alliance with Paravartaka (king of Himvatakuta) and the allied armies besieged Pataliputra.
- Vishakhadatta wrote a drama Mudrarakshasa (describing Chandragupta's enemy) and Debi Chandraguptam in 6th century A.D.

Bindusara

- Bindusara was the son of Chandragupta and was known as Amitraghata (slayer of foes), besides the master of the land between the two seas—Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. Succeeded Chandragupta in 297 B.C.
- He continued friendly links with Syrian king Antiochus I and is stated to have requested him for a present of figs and wine together with a sophist to which Antiochus sent figs and wine but replied that Greek philosophers were not for export.
- He also received a Greek ambassador Daimachos from Antiochus I.
- Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt also sent an envoy Dionysius to Bindusara's court.
- History credits him with the suppression of a revolt and further for the redressal of grievances against the misrule of wicked bureaucrats (dustanatyas).
- According to Tibetan Lama Taranath and Jain legends, Chanakya was the minister of Bindusara.
- There was a council of ministers of 500 members in the court of Bindusara, which was headed by Khallatak.
- Bindusara did not make any territorial conquest and towards the time of his death he joined the Ajivika sect.

Ashoka

- Ashoka (273-232 B.C.) had served as governor of Taxila and Ujjain previously.
- Ashoka is called 'Buddhashakya and Ashok' in Maski edict and 'Dharmasoka' in Sarnath inscription. He was also known as 'Devampriya' i.e. beloved of the Gods and 'Piyadasi' i.e. of pleasing appearance.
- His empire covered the whole territory from Hindukush to Bengal and extended over to Afghanistan, Baluchistan and the whole of India with the exception of a small area in the farthest south comprising of Kerala. Kashmir and Valleys of Nepal were also included and was the first empire to do so. Assam was not included in his dominion.
- The Kalinga War fought in 261 B.C. and mentioned in XIII Rock Edict changed his attitude towards life and he became a Buddhist.
- He inaugurated his Dharmayatrias from the 11th year of his reign by visiting Bodhgaya.
- In the 14th year of his reign he started the institution of Dhamma Mahamatras (the officers of righteousness) to spread the message of Dhamma.
- During his reign the policy of Bherighosha (physical conquest) was replaced by that of Dhammaghosha (cultural conquest).
- In course of his second tour in the 21st year of his reign he visited Lumbini, the birth place of Buddha and exempted the village from Bali (tribute) and the Bhaga (the royal share of the produce) which were reduced to one eighth.
- He organized a network of missionaries to preach the doctrine of Buddhism both in his kingdom and beyond. He sent them to Ceylon, Burma (sent his son Mahindra and daughter Sangamitra to Ceylon) and other South-east Asian regions notably Thailand.
- Ashoka's Hellenistic contemporaries were Antiochus II of Syria, Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt, Magas of Cyrene, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia and Alexander of Epirus. These are mentioned in his thirteenth Rock Edict.
- Ashoka was the first Indian king to speak directly to the people through his inscriptions, which seem to be the earliest specimens of Prakrit language in India.
- They are mostly engraved on rocks and found not only in Indian subcontinent but also in Afghanistan. These inscriptions communicate royal orders. These inscriptions were composed in Prakrit and were written in Brahmi script throughout the greater part of the empire. But in the north-western part they appear in Aramaic and Kharoshthi script.
- In his inscriptions following languages have been used: Brahmi, Kharoshthi, Aramaic, Greek, etc.
- The Ashokan inscriptions were generally placed on ancient highways and threw light on the career of Ashok's policies and the extent of his empire.
- Tarai pillars show Ashoka's respect for Buddhism.
- Ashoka in his fifth rock edict mentions that he had several brothers and sisters. Two of these brothers are named in Divyavadana as Susima and Vuigatasoka, whom the Sinhalese chronicles,

name as Sumana and Tishya. The former was step-brother of Ashoka. Ashoka's mother was Subhadrangi.

- Ashoka died in 232 B.C. and with him departed the glory of Mauryan Empire.

Ashokan Edicts

- **Major Rock Edicts**

These are related to administration and ethics.

1st Rock Edict: It puts prohibition on animal sacrifices in festive gatherings. Interestingly, only three animals (2 peacocks and 1 deer) could be used for the royal kitchen as well instead of hundreds of them used earlier.

2nd Rock Edict: It mentions about the medical missions sent everywhere for both men and animals by Ashoka. It mentions Chola, Chera, Pandaya and Satyaputra and has also a list of herbs and trees to be planted in different areas.

3rd Rock Edict: In the 12th year of Ashoka's inauguration the edict enjoins a quinquennial humiliation.

4th Rock Edict: In the 12th year of Ashoka's reign compares the past condition of the kingdom with that of the present.

5th Rock Edict: It, for the first time, mentions about the appointment of the Dhamma-mahamatras to look after propagation of Dhamma. They were appointed in the 13th year of Ashoka's consecration.

6th Rock Edict: It shows his concern for the people's grievances for round the clock consultations or any type of appeal and that the mahamatras should communicate to him all the matters concerning public business even if he is in his harem. It announces the appointment of pativedakas, custodies morum and criminal magistrates.

7th Rock Edict: It contains the king's desire to obliterate diversities of religious opinions and tells us that Ashoka, after ten years since his consecration, visited Bodhi tree, ended all pleasure tours and instead, concentrated on the Dhamma tours.

8th Rock Edict: It contrasts the carnal enjoyments of former rajas with the harmless enjoyments of the king – visits to holy places, almsgiving, respect to elders, etc.

9th Rock Edict: It shows the uselessness of all other ceremonies except the Dhamma as it includes ethical concepts within its fold. It basically continues the Dhamma discourse.

10th Rock Edict: In this edict, Ashoka shows the lack of any worldly desire except the desire to propagate Dhamma and to see people following it.

11th Rock Edict: It suggests to people that the gift of Dhamma is the best gift or the chiefest of charitable donations as it brings gain in this world and merit in the next. It is at Dhauri and Girnar.

12th Rock Edict: It expresses Ashoka's concern for the well-being of all other sects. In this he prefers to advance the essence of all the doctrines. He also requests all the officers to internalize this basic philosophy behind propagation of Dhamma.

13th Rock Edict: In this edict, Ashoka shows his remorse for the devastation caused by his Kalinga War. The killing of so many families made Ashoka take resort to cultural conquest (Dhammavijaya) rather than even think in the future about any war and aggrandizement. It is incomplete.

14th Rock Edict: It states that this inscription of Dhamma was engraved at the command of the beloved of the Gods, the king Piyadassi. It exists in abridged, medium length and extended versions for each class. It has not been engraved everywhere. It summarises the preceding and is complete in itself.

- **Separate Edicts**

First Separate Edict (Dhauili and Jaugada): Addressed to officers of Tosali and Samapa. One royal officer will tour every five years to see that men are never imprisoned or tortured without good reason. The prince of Ujjain shall send out a similar group of officers, but at intervals not exceeding three years, similarly at Taxila.

Second Separate Edict: Addressed to the prince at Tosali and the officials at Samapa, it states that the officers shall at all times attend to the conciliation of the people of the frontiers and to promoting Dhamma among them.

- **Minor Inscriptions**

Queen's Edict: On the Allahabad pillar, the gift of the second queen, the mother of Tivara, Karuvaki for dispensing charity or any other donation.

Barabar Cave Inscription:

- In 12th year the Banyan cave given to Ajivikas.
- In 12th year cave in Khalitika mountain given to Ajivikas.
- The king Piyadassi, consecrated since nineteen years.

Kandhar Bilingual Rock Inscription: Greek version - king refrains from eating meat and his hunters and fishermen have stopped hunting. Aramic version - very few animals were killed by Ashoka. Fishing prohibited.

Bhabru Inscription: The king of Magadha, Piyadassi shows deep respect for the faith in Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. This edict confirms Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism.

Rummindei Pillar Inscription: In 20th year Piyadassi visited Lumbini and here exempted people from land tribute (udbalike) and fixed contribution at 1/8 (atthabhagiya).

Nigalisagar Pillar Inscription: On 14th year the stupa of Buddha Kanakamuni was enlarged to double in size.

Schism Edict: At Kaushambi (Allahabad pillar), Sanchi and Sarnath. All dissenting monks and nuns to be expelled and made to wear robes and the laymen and officials are to enforce this order on confession (upostha) days addressed to officials of Kausambi and Pataliputra.

● Pillar Edicts

1st: On 27th regional year. His principle is to protect thorough Dhamma to administer according to Dhamma, to please the people with Dhamma to guard the empire with Dhamma.

2nd: Dhamma is good and what is Dhamma? It is having few faults and many good deeds: mercy, charity, truthfulness and purity.

3rd: One only notices one's good deeds, does not notice one's wicked deeds, one should notice this and think. Cruelty, harshness, anger, pride and many are indeed productive of sin.

4th: In the 26th year, appointment of Rajukas over hundreds and thousands, with independent authority over judgement, there should be uniformity in judicial procedure and punishment. Men who are imprisoned or sentenced to death are to be given three days respite.

5th: In the 26th year, prohibition of killing specific animals and burning forest; cattle and horses are not to be branded. Twenty five releases of prisoners have been made.

6th: Mention of major rock edicts, which have been issued in 12th year, to honour all sects.

7th: Only in the Delhi-Topara pillar, Rajuka, Ajivikas and Nirgrantha (Jainas) were mentioned in this edict. Dhamma is better advanced by persuasion than by legislation.

The Mauryan Empire after Ashoka

- Vishnu Purana gives the names of his seven successors but with no details, probably the empire was divided into two eastern and western parts.
- The western being ruled by Kunal and later for sometime by Samprati where Indo-Greeks began to make early inroads, and until 180 B.C. had virtually supplanted the later Mauryas.
- The eastern part being ruled by Brihadratha from Pataliputra. He was the seventh king in succession from Ashoka.
- He was killed by his commander in chief Pushyamitra Sunga, who ascended the throne in 187 B.C. The royal dynasty founded by him is known as Sunga Dynasty.

Mauryan Administration

- A vast and highly centralized bureaucratic rule with the king as fountain head of all powers. The king claimed no divine rule, rather it was paternal despotism. Kautilya called the king Dharmapravartaka or promulgator of social order.
- The highest functionaries at the centre called tirthas and were paid fabulously. They were Mantri, Purohita, Senapati and Yuvaraja. Besides the two chief officers at the Centre were Sannidhata (treasurer) and Samaharta (tax collector).
- Kautilya again and again emphasized the importance of Mantriparishad.

- Kautilya mentions 27 superintendents (adhyakshas) mostly to regulate economic activities. The famous were as follows.
 - **Sitadhyaksha:** Super-intendent of crown land.
 - **Panyadhyaksha:** Super-intendent of Commerce.
 - **Pautavadhyaksha:** Super-intendent of weight and measures.
 - **Sulkadhyasha:** Superintendent of tolls.
 - **Samsthadhyaksha:** Super-intendent of market.
 - **Akaradhyaksha :** Super-intendent of mines.
 - **Rajuka :** Superintendent to look after Justice.
- Except the capital Pataliputra, the whole empire was divided into four provinces controlled by a viceroy either a prince or a member of the royal family. Provinces were sub-divided into districts and had three main officers.
- Pradesika responsible for the overall administration of the district. Rajuka was responsible for revenue administration and later judicial particularly in rural areas and was under Pradesika.
- Sub-district consisted of a group of villages numbering 5 to 10 and was administered by 'Gopa' (accountant) and 'Sthanika' (tax collector). The villages were administered by the village head man who was responsible to the Gopas and Sthanikas.
- The administration of capital Pataliputra has been described by six boards consisting of five members each being entrusted with matters relating to industrial arts, care of foreigners, registration of births and deaths, regulation of weights and measures, public sale of manufactured goods and the last with collecting toll on the articles sold, this being one tenth of the purchase price.
- Mauryans had a big army and there is no evidence of its reduction even by peace loving Ashoka.
- According to Pliny, Chandragupta maintained 600,000 foot soldiers, 30,000 cavalry and 900 elephants.
- According to Megasthenese, the army was administered by six committees consisting of five members each taken from a board of 30 members. The six committees or the wings of army were: the army, the cavalry, the elephants, the chariots, the navy and the transport.
- Spies operated in the guise of sanyasis, wanderers, beggars, etc. and were of two types 'Sanstha' and 'Sanchari'. The former worked by remaining stationed at a public place and later by moving from place to place. These spies were integral to the Mauryan administration. They collected intelligence about foreign enemies and kept an eye on numerous officers. The 'prativedikas' were the special reporters of the king.
- Land revenue was the main source of income of the state. Peasants paid $\frac{1}{4}$ of the produce as Bhaga and extra tax Bali tribute. According to Arthashastra, the land belonged to the king, irrigation tax was also levied by the government.

Ancient Medieval and Indian History

- Besides other taxes like Pindakara (assessed on group of villages), 'Kara' (levied on fruits and flower gardens), Hiranya (paid only in cash) were also collected.
- Industrial arts and crafts proliferated as a result of swift communication through a network of good and long roads and incentives given by the government.
- A striking social development was the employment of slaves in agricultural operation on a large scale.
- The sale of merchandise was supervised.
- No banking system but usury prevailed. It seems that the punch-marked silver coins, which carry the symbols of peacock and hill and regent formed the imperial currency of the Mauryas.
- Megasthenes noticed the absence of slavery. But it is contradicted by Indian sources.
- Kautilya recommends the recruitment of Vaishyas and Shudras in the army, but their actual enrolment is extremely doubtful.
- In addition to the four regular castes, he refers not less than five mixed castes by the general name Antyavasayin who lived beyond the pale of Aryan society.
- In the Mauryan period, stone culture emerged as the principal medium of Indian arts.
- Tamralipti was one of the most important maritime trading centres during the Mauryan times. It was situated on the Eastern coast.
- The animals, which are carved on the Mauryan pillars, are: Bull, Lion, Elephant.
- According to Arthashastra, a man could be slave either by birth, by voluntarily selling oneself, by being captured in war or as a result of judicial punishment. Megasthenese did not find slaves in India.
- Puranas have called Kautilya as 'dvijarshabh' i.e. superior brahmana. Chanakya spent last days of his life doing meditation in the forests near Magadha.
- 'Sishtas' were learned men during Mauryan times.
- The trade links between India and Egypt were so developed that Ptolemy had established a port named Bennis on the Red sea. India exported turtle skin, pearls, precious and semi-precious stones, cotton and costly wood to Egypt.

The Mughals

BABUR

Babur ascended the throne at Farghana, a small principality in Transoxiana, in 1494 at the age of twelve after the death of his father. The situation in Central Asia was not stable and Babur had to face a lot of resistance from the nobility itself. Although he was able to capture Samarqand but very soon he had to retreat because of desertion of some of his nobles. He also lost Farghana to the Uzbeks.

Thus, the early years of Babur's rule in central Asia were tough. During this whole period he had plans of moving towards Hindustan. And finally from 1517 onwards he made decisive moves towards India. A few developments in India at that time also helped him to act on plans of invading India.

Timurids

Babur traced his lineage from Timur the great conqueror of Central Asia and to Chengiz Khan the distinguished conqueror. From mother's side he was a descendant of Mongols and from father's side the great commander Timur. Because of the lineage of Timur the Mughals are also referred as Timurids.

The unstable political situation in India after Sikandar Lodi's death convinced him of political discontentment and disorder in the Lodi Empire. Meanwhile there was conflict between some Afghan chiefs with Ibrahim Lodi. Prominent among them was Daulat Khan Lodi, the Governor of a large part of Punjab. The Rajput king of Mewar Rana Sanga was also asserting his authority against Ibrahim Lodi and was trying to increase his area of influence in north India. Both of them sent word to Babur to invade India. Invitations from Rana Sanga and Daulat Khan Lodi might have encouraged Babur's ambitions.

Babur was successful in capturing Bhira (1519-1520), Sialkot (1520) and Lahore (1524) in Punjab. Finally, Ibrahim Lodi and Babur's forces met at Panipat in 1526. Babur's Soldiers were less in number but the organization of his army was superior. Ibrahim Lodi was defeated in the battle of Panipat. Success at the Battle of Panipat was a great achievement of Babur's military tactics. Babur had an active army of only 12000 soldiers while Ibrahim's army had an estimated strength of 100,000 soldiers. When face to face in the battle field Babur's tactics were unique. He effectively applied the Rumi (Ottoman) method of warfare. He encircled Ibrahim's army from two flanks. In the centre his cavalry mounted attack with arrows and gun fires by expert ottoman gunners. The trenches and barricades provided adequate defence against march of the enemy. The Afghan army of Ibrahim Lodi suffered heavy casualties. Ibrahim Lodi died in the battle field. Babur was thus able to take control of Delhi and Agra and got the rich treasure of Lodis. This money was distributed among Babur's commanders and soldiers. Victory at Panipat provided Babur a firm ground to consolidate his conquests. But now he was faced with a few problems:

- i. His nobles and commanders were eager to return to Central Asia because they did not like the climate of India. Culturally also, they felt very alienated.
- ii. Rajputs were rallying around under the leadership of Rana Sanga the king of Mewar and wanted to expel the Mughal forces

- iii. The Afghans, though defeated at Panipat, were still a formidable force in eastern parts of UP, Bihar and Bengal. They were re-grouping to reclaim their lost powers. To begin with Babur convinced his companions and nobles to stay back and help in consolidating the conquered territories. After succeeding in this difficult task, he sent his son Humayun to face the eastern Afghans. Rana Sanga of Mewar succeeded to muster support of a large number of Rajput chiefs. Prominent among these were Jalor, Sirohi, Dungarpur, Amber, Merta etc. Medini Rai of Chanderi, Hasan Khan of Mewar and Mahmud Lodi younger son of Sikander Lodi also joined Rana with their forces. Possibly, Rana Sanga expected Babur to return to Kabul. Babur's decision to stay back must have given a big jolt to Rana Sanga's ambitions. Babur was also fully aware of the fact that it would be impossible for him to consolidate his position in India unless he shattered Rana's power. The forces of Babur and Rana Sanga met at Khanwa, a place near Fatehpur Sikri. Rana Sanga was defeated in 1527 and once again the superior military tactics of Babur succeeded. With the defeat of Rana the biggest challenge in north India was shattered. Though the Mewar Rajputs received great shock at Khanwa, Medini Rai at Malwa was still threatening to challenge the authority of Babur. In spite of great valour with which the Rajputs fought in Chanderi (1528), Babur faced little difficulty in overcoming Medini Rai. With his defeat, resistance across Rajputana was completely shattered.

But Babur had to tackle the Afghans. The Afghans had surrendered Delhi, but they were still powerful in the east (Bihar and parts of Jaunpur). The success against the Afghans and Rajputs at Panipat and Khanwa was very significant but the resistance was still present. However, these victories were a step forward in the direction of the establishment of Mughal empire. Babur died in 1530. Still the rulers of Gujarat, Malwa and Bengal enjoyed substantial military power and were not suppressed. It was left to Humayun to face these regional powers.

HUMAYUN'S RETREAT AND AFGHAN REVIVAL (1530-1540)

After the death of Babur in 1530, his son Humayun succeeded him. The situation under Humayun was quite desperate. The main problems faced by Humayun were:

- i. The newly conquered territories and administration was not consolidated.
- ii. Unlike Babur, Humayun did not command the respect and esteem of Mughal nobility.
- iii. The Chaghatai nobles were not favourably inclined towards him and the Indian nobles, who had joined Babur's service, deserted the Mughals at Humayun's accession.
- iv. He also confronted the hostility of the Afghans mainly Sher Khan in Bihar on the one hand and Bahadurshah, the ruler of Gujarat, on the other.
- v. As per the Timurid tradition Humayun had to share power with his brothers. The newly established Mughal empire had two centres of power – Humayun was in control of Delhi, Agra and Central India, while his brother Kamran had Afghanistan and Punjab under him.

Humayun felt that the Afghans were a bigger threat. He wanted to avoid a combined opposition of Afghans from east and the west. At that time Bahadur Shah had occupied Bhilsa, Raisen, Ujjain and Gagrion and was consolidating his power. While Humayun was besieging Chunar in the east, Bahadur

Shah had started expanding towards Malwa and Rajputana. In such a situation Humayun was forced to rush back to Agra (1532-33).

Continuing his expansionist policy, Bahadur Shah attacked Chittor in 1534. Chittor had strategic advantage as it could provide a strong base. It would have helped his expansion in Rajasthan particularly towards Ajmer, Nagor and Ranthambhor. Humayun captured Mandu and camped there because he thought that from here he can block Bahadur Shah's return to Gujarat. Humayun's long absence from Agra resulted in rebellions in Doab and Agra and he had to rush back. Mandu was now left under the charge of Mirza Askari, the brother of Humayun. During the period when Humayun was busy in Gujarat to check Bahadurshah, Sher Shah started consolidating himself in Bihar and Bengal. Sher Shah wished to establish himself as the undisputed Afghan leader. He invaded the Bengal army and defeated them in the battle of Surajgarh. Sher Shah could extract quite a wealth from Bengal which helped him to raise a bigger army. Now he started attacking Mughal territories of Banaras and beyond. Humayun was quite suspicious of Sher Shah's ambitions but failed to estimate his capabilities. He asked his governor of Jaunpur, Hindu Beg to check the movements of Sher Shah. Meanwhile Sher Shah captured Gaur (1538) the capital of Bengal. While Humayun was moving towards Bengal Sher Shah took control of route to Agra making communication difficult for Humayun. On the other hand, Hindal Mirza, brother of Humayun, who was supposed to provide supplies for his army, declared his independence. Now, Humayun decided to return to Chunar. When he reached Chausa (1539), he encamped on the western side of the river Karmnasa. Sher Shah attacked Humayun at the bank of the river and defeated him. Sher Shah declared himself as an independent king. Humayun could escape but most of his army was destroyed. With difficulty he could reach Agra. His brother Kamran moved out of Agra towards Lahore leaving Humayun with small force. Sher Shah now moved towards Agra. Humayun also came forward with his army and the armies of the two clashed at Kannauj. Humayun was defeated badly in the battle of Kannauj (1540).

Second Afghan Empire (1540-1555)

After a gap of 14 years Sher Shah succeeded in establishing the Afghan rule again in India in 1540. Sher Shah and his successors ruled for 15 years. This period is known as the period of second Afghan Empire.

The founder of this Afghan rule Sher Khan was a great tactician and able military commander. We have already discussed his conflict with Humayun. After defeating Humayun he became sovereign ruler in the year 1540 and assumed the title of Sher Shah.

Sher Shah followed Humayun on his flight till Sindh in the North West. After expelling Humayun he started consolidating his position in Northern and Eastern India. He defeated and conquered Malwa in 1542 which was followed by Chanderi. In Rajasthan he led campaigns against Marwar, Ranthambhore, Nagor, Ajmer, Merta Jodhpur and Bikaner. He defeated rebellious Afghans in Bengal. By 1545 he had established himself as the supreme ruler from Sindh and Punjab to whole of Rajputana in the West and Bengal in the East. Now he turned towards Bundel Khand. Here while besieging the fort of Kalinjar he died in 1545 in an accidental blast of gun powder. During his brief rule Sher Shah introduced very important changes in administration and revenue system.

The most important ones were:

Central Administration

While displaying due deference to the Afghan socio-customs, Sher Shah had the foresight to realize that the Afghans must gradually be weaned away from a tribal and parochial outlook and trained to think in terms of an empire.

He however, disfavoured the Mughal concept of delegating undue initiative and authority to the Wazirs. His ideal was to establish an undiluted despotism, where all power flowed from the monarch.

The Wazirs were substituted by a band of secretaries, who merely implemented the king's orders. The important secretaries were modeled after the system of the Delhi Sultans.

Diwani-i-Wizarat was headed by a Wazir who acted as the financial secretary. He looked after the departments of revenue, audits and account. Since Sher Shah possessed adequate knowledge of revenue affairs, he took special interest in this departments.

Diwani-i-Ariz was looked after by Ariz-i- Mamalik. As the military secretary, he implemented emperor's military policy, particularly the framing of rues and the assignments of salaries. There was also Mir-i Atish in charge of artillery, who in rank was equivalent to the secretaries.

Diwan-i-Insha looked after the correct drafting of the imperial orders and the records of the government.

Diwan-i-Qaza or the Chief Qazi constituted the highest criminal court in the realm.

Diwan-i-Rasalat or Muhatsib was incharge of the public trusts.

Barid-i-Mamalik was the head of the intelligence department and was obliged to report every important incident to the king. Under him, there were a number of news-writers and spies who were posted in all the towns and markets, including the series and every important locality, who fed the Sultan with the daily happenings of the empire.

Provincial Administration

There was no clear demarcation of either the provinces or the duties of the governor. Similarly, there is no mention of Subas. Considering that there were provinces before and after Sher Shah's reign on the basis of historical continuity, there must have been provinces or Subas under Sher Shah.

The only exception was Bengal, where the constant turmoil, convinced with of the futility of placing the province under the one individual. He, therefore, divided it into a number of divisions, under respective Jagirdars.

No definite information, however, is available of Sher Shah's deliberate organization of the Provincial administration, though in a vast empire, Sher Shah with his flair for administration could not have overlooked the important of a well organized provincial administration as a link between the central and the local government.

Administration At District Level And Below

A province comprised a number of Sarkars, which were further sub divided into Parganas. Here, Sher Shah seems to have retained the existing size of the Shiqas and the Parganas. The word Shiq came to be used under the Tughlaqs and denoted a sub-division of province.

There were two chief officers of the Sarkars as Chief Shiqdar or Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran and Chief Munsif or Munsif-i-Munsiftan.

The Chief Shiqdar enjoyed tremendous prestige and power and the Faujdar of Akbar's reign was modelled on him. His chief duty was to maintain law and order in the district and he was given a respectable force to command. While he had no direct responsibility to collect the land revenue, he was obliged to render assistance in securing the collection by using coercion, if necessary. Besides, he also supervised the work of the various Shiqdars in the Parganas.

The Munsif-Munsifan's primary function was to supervise the assessment and collection of revenue. He also supervised the work of the subordinate Munsifs. To prevent corruption and nepotism, they were transferred every year or two.

Apart from these two officers, the chronicles do not mention any other officers. An administrative hierarchy of the clerks and accountants, however, must have existed to render help.

Each Sarkar comprised of a number of Parganas. The Shiqdar or Amil was in charge of the Pargana. But his chief function was to collect the land-revenue. Besides, there was a Munsif or Amin, who supervised the measurement of the land and settled disputes regarding the size of the holdings. The interests of cultivators, their customs and practices, were protected by a semi-official Qanungo, the Pargana record keeper, whose office was usually hereditary. The Shiqdar was assisted by two clerks known as Karkuns who kept the records in Hindi and Persian. The treasure and cash were kept by Khazanadar or Fotadar.

In each village, there was the hereditary office of the Muqaddam, Mukhiya or the head man, who acted as the chief link between the government and the village. He was responsible for the collection of the land-revenue from the villages and was also allowed a percentage of the collection. He was helped by a Patwari, an official, who was not appointed by the government but was maintained by the villagers. He was also the village record-keeper.

Military Organisation

Sher Shah initiated the practice of paying the soldiers fixed salaries from the treasury. In a bid to bring the soldiers in direct touch with himself, Sher Shah as their commander-in-chief and the pay master general, recruited soldiers himself and fixed their salaries after personally inspecting them.

Sher Shah strictly enforced the Khilji policy of branding of horses (Dagh) and preparing descriptive rolls (Huliya) of the soldiers. He thus attempted to eliminate corruption by preventing the practice of proxy at the time of military review.

The central army consisted of 1,50,000 cavalry, 50,000 infantry and an elephant force of 5,000. Sher Shah's military set-up did not have a regular artillery. The army was posted in cantonments spread all over the country, of which Rohtas and Delhi were the most important.

There is no contemporary mention of the details of the army divisions though one division (Fauj), was placed under Faujdar. Besides, these, additional troops were supplied by the provincial governors in times of emergencies.

Judicial System

From the comparative silence of the contemporary chronicles it may be inferred that Sher Shah did not introduce any innovations in judicial department. Nevertheless, his severe but just rule resulted in treating all, including his kith and kin, as equals before law.

He held that, "justice is the most excellent of religious rites and it is approved both by the kings of the infidels and the faithful" and consisted in giving fair and honest deal to all men. He made no difference between the high and the low or rich and the poor and imparted justice to all with equal vigour. Sher Shah himself acted as the highest court and personally decided the cases of nobles and high officials.

The civil cases of the Muslims were decided, as in the past, by the Kazi, Another officer, Mir Adl, is mentioned but his functions are not specified. The Criminal law was uniform and rigorously imposed. Robbers, thieves as also the oppressors of the cultivators were severely punished. Flogging, amputation of limbs and executions were freely imparted.

Police System

As for the police, there was no separate department. Sher Shah largely acted on the axiom of local responsibility for maintaining peace.

The largest responsibility rested with the Muqaddams and Chowdharies, who were severely punished, in case they failed to detect the crimes.

Sher Shah thus attempted to involve the people at large in the maintenance of law and order in their regions.

Land Revenue System

Sher Shah's most striking contribution was made in the field of revenue.

The Turko-Afghan Sultans, with the exception of Tughlaqs, had formulated no deliberate principles of land revenue. Generally unconcerned with the production yield, standardisation of crops and welfare schemes for the peasants, the Sultans has confined their attention to a strict collection of the landrevenue.

The incidence of the land-revenue varied from Sultan to Sultan with the maximum ceiling at fifty per cent under Ala-ud-di Khilji. While the lack of a scientific method of assessment handicapped the peasants vis-a-vis the collectors, the system of granting Jagirs and assignments of revenue, further failed to promote any direct relations between the state and the peasant. The absence of any royal inclination towards the

revenue affairs, only encouraged the hereditary class of revenue collectors, namely, the Muqaddams and Chowdharies, who were in sole possession of the revenue secrets, to misuse their power and practice corruption and atrocities on the peasants.

Sher Shah, therefore, inherited the intricate problems of conciliating and structing the peasantry relations with the state and fixing a rational demand based on a correct assessment of the produce. Sher Shah, however, as the only sovereign who is known to have gained a practical experience in managing a small body of peasants before rising to the throne came with his scheme of revenue settlement ready made and successfully tested by experiment. It was but an extension of the system introduced by him at Sasaram.

As a monarch, he unilaterally decided that the best system of assessment must be based on actual measurement. According, the empire was surveyed. In order to ensure the accuracy of measurement and honesty of collection he fixed the wages of the measurers and the collectors.

The uniform system of measurement in spite of strong opposition from some quarters, was enforced all over the empire, with the exception of Multan where political turmoil could endanger the security of the State. But there too, a record was kept of the settlement made between the government and the cultivator, and the latter was given a title deed (Patta) in which conditions of the settlement were specifically stated.

According to the schedule of Sher Shah's assessment rates the revenue on perishable articles was fixed in cash rates, but for all the principal staple crops, the land was classified into three classes-good, middling and bad. After the average produce of the three was added, onethird of the total was taken as the average produce of each bigha for revenue purposes. Of this, one-third was demanded as the share of the government. It could be paid in cash or in kind though the former mode was preferred. In case of cash payments, the state demand was fixed according to the prices prevalent in the near markets and a schedule of crop of crop rates was preserved indicating the method and the rates of assessment.

The state gave a patta to each cultivator, which specified the state demand. He was also obliged to sign a qabuliat (deed of agreement) promising to honour the revenue due from him. Both the documents contained information on the size of the plot.

Sher Shah's revenue settlement has been unanimously acclaimed. And it has been contended hat it provided the basis for Todar Mal's bandobust in Akbar's reign, as also for the Ryotwari system in British India. Notwithstanding its obvious strengths it would be unrealistic to describe his revenue settlement as a master-piece; for the system was not without defects.

Sher Shah was the first ruler who considered the welfare of the people as essential for the interests of the state. He was benign in times of drought and famine. The state, under such circumstances, would lend money and material to the cultivators. Besides, his standing instruction to the army not to damage any crops and in any damage, to adequately compensate.

Currency Reforms

He removed the currency which had debased under the later Turko-Afghan regimes and instead issued well executed coins of gold, Silver and Copper of a uniform standard. His silver rupee which weighed 180 grams and contained 175 grains of silver was retained throughout the Mughal period as also by the British East India Company, till 1885. Besides the coins of smaller fractions of a rupee, the copper coins too had fractions of half quarter, eighth and sixteenth.

Promotion Of Trade And Commerce

Sher Shah gave every possible encouragement to the trade and commerce and took a number of measures for this purpose. He did away with all the internal custom duties with the exception of the two. These two duties were charged at the time of entry of the goods in the kingdom and at the time of the actual sale. Foreign goods were permitted to enter Bengal duty free. Sher Shah paid special attention to the safety and convenience of the merchants and had issued specific instructions to his officers in this regard.

Promotion Of Education

Sher Shah not only took necessary measures to ameliorate the condition of the people but also paid attention to the promotion of education. He gave liberal grants to both the Hindu and Muslim educational institutions. The Hindus were free to regulate their educational institutions and Sher Shah did not interfere in their working. Similarly, the Muslim educational institutions were mainly attached with mosques and imparted elementary education to the children. They taught Persian and Arabic. Sher Shah also established Madrasas for higher education. To help the poor and brilliant students he awarded liberal scholarships. Sher Shah also made liberal provisions for the support of blind, the old, the weak, widows etc.

Religious Policy

Generally Sher Shah tried to keep religion and politics separate and did not follow any systematic policy of prosecution as was done by the rulers of Delhi before him. On the whole his policy towards the Hindus was very tolerant. Sher Shah pursued a liberal policy towards the Hindus without offending his Muslim subjects.

Sher Shah believed that Islam should be given its due position of supremacy but this should not be done at the cost of regarding Hinduism. In those days, this attitude and policy was more useful and appropriate, according to which he (Sher Shah) could openly favour the Hindus without displeasing the Muslims as well.

Public Works

The building of a fresh network of the roads and serais all over the empire galvanized trade and tradesmen into action. Of his four great roads: (I) One ran from Sonargaon in Bengal through Agra, Delhi and Lahore to the Indus; (ii) from Agra to Mandu; (iii) from Lahore to Multan. Primarily planned for military purposes, they proved equally effective for the growth of trade and commerce. Along both sides of these roads, Sher Shah ordered the planting of fruit trees and the sinking of fresh wells.

Another important feature of the public works comprised the building of the Serais, which hitherto were neither so well planned nor well spread. The Serais were fully furnished, with well equipped kitchens and cooks for both the Hindus and the Muslims. Sher Shah also repaired about 1,700 Caravan Serais for the efficiency of the royal posts. Soon, the Serais functioned as post offices and marketing centres and Sher Shah posted news-readers in the various Serais to keep abreast of the local gossip.

CAUSES OF THE DOWNFALL OF SUR EMPIRE

The Sur empire founded by Sher Shah fell due to many causes. First, his successors were thoroughly incompetent and unfit to carry on his work of reconstruction. Islam Shah was responsible for the destruction of many of those nobles who had a lot under Sher Shah. Muhammad Adil was worse than his predecessor. He added to the discontentment prevailing among the Afghan chiefs. The rise of Hemu made them jealous.

Thirdly, Sher Shah worked with the ideal of bringing about regeneration among the Afghans and did all that he could to bring them on a common platform. There was no such feeling among the Afghans chiefs or his successors. They all struggled for personal gain.

Fourthly, the character of the Afghan deteriorated. They lost all sense of self-respect. They did not honour their sword. They did not attach importance to the sanctity of their word. Such a character can not create or maintain empire.

Fifthly, the successors of Sher Shah ignored the lot of the peasantry. Nothing was done to protect them. The nobles became tyrants and crushed the people.

Sixthly, the example of Sher Shah was forgotten. The forts which he built in various parts of the country for purposes of defence, became centres of mischief and sedition. A lot of money was wasted on punitive expeditions and bootless skirmishes. There was no proper collection of revenues. The officers kept the same to themselves.

Seventhly, the Afghans did not bother to give justice to the people. The latter were ruled in an arbitrary manner. All kinds of punishments were inflicted on them. There was no regard for life or property. There was no bureaucracy devoted to the task of the state and no military class to die for its defence. There was absolutely no discipline anywhere.

AKBAR

Akbar was one of the greatest monarchs of India. He succeeded the throne after his father Humayun's death. But his position was dangerous because Delhi was seized by the Afghans. Their commander-in-Chief, Hemu, was in charge of it. In the second Battle of Panipat in 1556, Hemu was almost on the point of victory. But an arrow pierced his eye and he became unconscious. His army fled and the fortune favoured Akbar. The Mughal victory was decisive.

During the first five years of Akbar's reign, Bairam Khan acted as his regent. He consolidated the Mughal empire. After five years he was removed by Akbar due to court intrigues and sent to Mecca. But on his way Bairam was killed by an Afghan.

Akbar's military conquests were extensive. He conquered northern India from Agra to Gujarat and then from Agra to Bengal. He strengthened the northwest frontier. Later, he went to the Deccan.

Relations with Rajputs

The Rajput policy of Akbar was notable. He married the Rajput princess, the daughter of Raja Bharamal. It was a turning point in the history of Mughals. Rajputs served the Mughals for four generations. Many of them rose to the positions of military generals. Raja Bhagawan Das and Raja Man Singh were given senior positions in the administration by Akbar. One by one, all Rajput states submitted to Akbar.

But the Ranas of Mewar continued to defy despite several defeats. In the Battle of Haldighati, Rana Pratap Singh was severely defeated by the Mughal army led by Man Singh in 1576. Following the defeat of Mewar, most of the leading Rajput rulers had accepted Akbar's suzerainty. Akbar's Rajput policy was combined with a broad religious toleration. He abolished the pilgrim tax and later the jiziya. The Rajput policy of Akbar proved to be beneficial to the Mughal state as well as to the Rajputs. The alliance secured to the Mughals the services of the bravest warriors. On the other hand it ensured peace in Rajasthan and a number of Rajputs who joined the Mughal service rose to important positions.

Religious Policy

Akbar rose to fame in the pages of history due to his religious policy. Various factors were responsible for his religious ideas. The most important among them were his early contacts with the sufi saints, the teachings of his tutor Abdul Latif, his marriage with Rajput women, his association with intellectual giants like Shaikh Mubarak and his two illustrious sons - Abul Faizi and Abul Fazl - and his ambition to establish an empire in Hindustan.

In the beginning of his life, Akbar was a pious Muslim. He abolished the pilgrim tax and in 1562, he abolished jiziya. He allowed his Hindu wives to worship their own gods. Later, he became a skeptical Muslim. In 1575, he ordered for the construction of Ibadat Khana (House of worship) at his new capital Fatepur Sikri. Akbar invited learned scholars from all religions like Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism. He disliked the interference of the Muslim Ulemas in political matters. In 1579, he issued the "Infallibility Decree" by which he asserted his religious powers.

In 1582, he promulgated a new religion called Din Ilahi or Divine Faith. It believes in one God. It contained good points of all religions. Its basis was rational. It upholds no dogma. It was aimed at bridging the gulf that separated different religions. However, his new faith proved to be a failure. It fizzled out after his death. Even during his life time, it had only fifteen followers including Birbal. Akbar did not compel anyone to his new faith.

Land Revenue Administration

Akbar made some experiments in the land revenue administration with the help of Raja Todar Mal. The land revenue system of Akbar was called Zabti or Bandobast system. It was further improved by Raja

Todar Mal. It was known as Dahsala System which was completed in 1580. By this system, Todar Mal introduced a uniform system of land measurement. The revenue was fixed on the average yield of land assessed on the basis of past ten years. The land was also divided into four categories – Polaj (cultivated every year), Parauti (once in two years), Chachar (once in three or four years) and Banjar (once in five or more years). Payment of revenue was made generally in cash.

Mansabdari System Akbar introduced the Mansabdari system in his administration. Under this system every officer was assigned a rank (mansab). The lowest rank was 10 and the highest was 5000 for the nobles. Princes of royal blood received even higher ranks. The ranks were divided into two - zat and sawar. Zat means personal and it fixed the personal status of a person. Sawar rank indicated the number of cavalymen of a person who was required to maintain. Every sawar had to maintain at least two horses. The mansab rank was not hereditary. All appointments and promotions as well as dismissals were directly made by the emperor.

JAHANGIR (1605-1627)

When Akbar died, prince Salim succeeded with the title Jahangir (Conqueror of World) in 1605. Jahangir's rule witnessed a spate of rebellions. His son Khusrau revolted but was defeated and imprisoned. One of his supporters, Guru Arjun, the fifth Sikh Guru, was beheaded.

Nur Jahan

In 1611, Jahangir married Mehrunnisa who was known as Nur Jahan (Light of World). Her father Itimaduddaula was a respectable person. He was given the post of chief diwan. Other members of her family also benefited from this alliance. Nur Jahan's elder brother Asaf Khan was appointed as Khan-i-Saman, a post reserved for the nobles. In 1612, Asaf Khan's daughter, Arjumand Banu Begum (later known as Mumtaz), married Jahangir's third son, prince Khurram (later Shah Jahan). It was believed by some historians that Nur Jahan formed a group of "junta" and this led to two factions in the Mughal court.

This drove Shah Jahan into rebellion against his father in 1622, since he felt that Jahangir was completely under Nur Jahan's influence. However, this view is not accepted by some other historians. Till Jahangir became weak due to ill health, he only took important political decisions. It is revealed from his autobiography. However, it is clear that Nur Jahan dominated the royal household and set new fashions based on Persian traditions. She encouraged Persian art and culture in the court. She was a constant companion of Jahangir and even joined him in his hunting.

The rise of Shah Jahan was due to his personal ambitions. He rose in revolt against his father who ordered him to go to Kandahar. This rebellion distracted the activities of the empire for four years. After Jahangir's death in 1627, Shah Jahan reached Agra with the support of the nobles and the army. Nur Jahan was given a pension and lived a retired life till her death eighteen years later.

SHAH JAHAN (1627-1658)

Shah Jahan launched a prolonged campaign in the northwest frontier to recover Kandahar and other ancestral lands. The Mughal army lost more than five thousand lives during the successive invasions between 1639 and 1647. Then Shah Jahan realized the futility of his ambition and stopped fighting.

His Deccan policy was more successful. He defeated the forces of Ahmadnagar and annexed it. Both Bijapur and Golkonda signed a treaty with the emperor. Shah Jahan carved four Mughal provinces in the Deccan - Khandesh, Berar, Telungana and Daulatabad. They were put under the control of his son Aurangzeb.

War of Succession

The last years of Shah Jahan's reign were clouded by a bitter war of succession among his four sons - Dara Shikoh (crown prince), Shuja (governor of Bengal), Aurangzeb (governor of Deccan) and Murad Baksh (governor of Malwa and Gujarat). Towards the end of 1657, Shah Jahan fell ill at Delhi for some time but later recovered. But the princes started fighting for the Mughal throne.

Aurangzeb emerged victorious in this struggle. He entered the Agra fort after defeating Dara. He forced Shah Jahan to surrender. Shah Jahan was confined to the female apartments in the Agra fort and strictly put under vigil. But he was not ill-treated. Shah Jahan lived for eight long years lovingly nursed by his daughter Jahanara. He died in 1666 and buried beside his wife's grave in the Taj Mahal.

AURANGAZEB (1658-1707)

Aurangzeb was one of the ablest of the Mughal kings. He assumed the title Alamgir, World Conqueror. His military campaigns in his first ten years of reign were a great success. He suppressed the minor revolts. But he faced serious difficulties in the latter part of his reign.

The Jats and Satnamis and also the Sikhs revolted against him. These revolts were induced by his harsh religious policy.

Deccan Policy

The Deccan policy of the Mughals started from the reign of Akbar, who conquered Khandesh and Berar. Jahangir fought against Malik Amber of Ahmadnagar. During the Shah Jahan's reign, Aurangzeb, as governor of Deccan, followed an aggressive Deccan policy. When he became the Mughal emperor, for the first twenty five years, he concentrated on the northwest frontier. At that time, the Maratha ruler, Sivaji carved out an independent Maratha kingdom in the territories of north and south Konkan. To contain the spread of the Marathas, Aurangzeb decided to invade Bijapur and Golkonda. He defeated Sikandar Shah of Bijapur and annexed his kingdom. Then, he proceeded against Golkonda and eliminated the Kutb Shahi dynasty. It was also annexed by him. In fact, the destruction of the Deccan kingdoms was a political blunder on the part of Aurangzeb. The barrier between the Mughals and the Marathas was removed and there ensued a direct confrontation between them. Also, his Deccan campaigns exhausted the Mughal treasury. According to J.N. Sarkar, the Deccan ulcer ruined Aurangzeb.

Religious Policy

Aurangzeb was a staunch and orthodox Muslim in his personal life. His ideal was to transform India into an Islamic state. He created a separate department to enforce moral codes under a high-powered officer called Muhtasib. Drinking was prohibited. Cultivation and use of bhang and other drugs were banned. Aurangzeb forbade music in the Mughal court. He discontinued the practice of Jarokhadarshan. He also discontinued the celebration of Dasarah and royal astronomers and astrologers were also dismissed from service.

Initially Aurangzeb banned the construction of new Hindu temples and repair of old temples. Then he began a policy of destroying Hindu temples. The celebrated temples at Mathura and Benares were reduced to ruins. In 1679, he reimposed jiziya and pilgrim tax. He was also not tolerant of other Muslim sects. The celebration of Muharram was stopped. He was also against the Sikhs and he executed the ninth Sikh Guru Tej Bahadur. This had resulted in the transformation of Sikhs into a warring community.

His religious policy was responsible for turning the Rajputs, the Marathas and Sikhs into the enemies of Mughal empire. It had also resulted in the rebellions of the Jats of Mathura and the Satnamis of Mewar. Therefore, Aurangzeb was held responsible for the decline of the Mughal empire.

The Revolts Against Aurangzeb

The generally upheld view is that Aurangzeb's religious persecution of the Hindus alienated the various sections of the Hindu community who retaliated by resorting to arms. However, it would be a misnomer to group all the non-Muslim communities of Marathas, Rajputs, Bundelas, Sikhs and Satnamis under the same banner and term their uprisings as a Hindu reaction to Aurangzeb's policy of religious persecution. Firstly they had no common political aspirations that could bind them together. In fact, the marathas including Shivaji, hwn raiding the countryside proved equally ruthless towards the Hindus and the Muslims of Surat, Carnatic and Konkan. Of the Rajputs too, there is enough evidence to corroborate that Rani Hadi, at one stage was pliable to the imperial proposal of destroying the temples in the Jodhpur principality as the price for securing imperial support for Ajit Singh's candidature to the Jodhpur throne. Similarly, Raja Ram Singh, son of Jai Singh, did help the Mughals in destroying the temples. Religion undoubtedly was a contributory factor in alienating the Rajputs, as also the other Hindu communities. Primarily, however, it was Aurangzeb's failure to correctly appraise Shivaji's ability and inability to feel the deep sensitivity of the Rajput traditions that alienated these communities. Similarly, for the other communities, besides his anti-Hindu measures, there were political, social and economic factors of equal intensity that drove them into rebellion. As for Aurangzeb's operations within the narrow orthodox framework, it led him to interpret these uprisings as Hindu rebellions against the Muslim State and therefore, deserving of utmost ruthless punishment which in turn could refrain the other Hindu and Muslim subjects from indulging in similar activities as also impress the orthodox Muslims of the Emperor's sincerity towards Islam.

Revolt of the Jats

Bold, brave and ferocious with a deep sense of loyalty towards their tribal organisation, the Jat peasantry was more akin to any martial community. They were notorious for cattle-lifting who frequently, raided the traders between Agra and Delhi. Confined to the not so fertile regions of west of Agra, they constituted the marginal sections of peasantry. Consequently, they always felt the economic pressure of the stringent Mughal measures for than their counterparts in the fertile regions of Punjab. Under Jahangir and Shahjahan too, they had deployed arms in order to express their economic discontentment. The situation worsened under Aurangzeb when Abdur Nabi, the Faujdar of mathura, through extreme stringency, successfully collected a sum of over thirteen lakhs for the state treasury. He also hurt their religious sentiments by building a mosque on the ruins of a Hindu temple. In 1669 A.D. the Jats under their leader Gokul, revolted. They killed the Faujdar and plundered the Pargana of Sadabad. The rebellion soon spread to other districts. Aurangzeb, furious, was determined to ruthlessly suppress the rebellion. Gokul and his limbs were publicly displayed. The Jats, however, remained defiant and in 1686 A.D. once again rose in revolt, under Rajaram. He too, was slain but his nephew, Churaman, continued the Jat resistance till Aurangzeb's death.

Revolt of the Satnamis

They were a peasant religious brotherhood who resided in Narnol. Its other members belonged to the low professions. Firmly united and militant, they never hesitated to use arms to aid the harassed members. Thus when a Satnami cultivator was killed by a Muslim soldier, the whole tribe arose to seek to seek revenge and broke into rebellion. When, of the Mughal efforts, they could not be quelled, the Mughals resorted to ruthless warfare. Over a thousand Satnamis were slain before peace was secured in the region. The Jats and the Satnamis revolts only convinced Aurangzeb of the disloyalty of the Hindus to the Mughals state who therefore needed to be ruthlessly suppressed. Moreover, it also convinced him that only the emergence of an Islamic state would reduce the Hindus to their proper place in State.

The Revolt of the Sikhs

The Sikh organisation was founded by Guru Nanak, a devout social reformer, as a peaceful universal brotherhood which was free from the shackles of caste and community. Under the next three Gurus too, the community remained peaceful and enjoyed amicable relation with Akbar who granted Guru Ram Das a piece of land which became renowned as Amritsar. The fifth Guru, Arjan Singh, proved a more dynamic and zealous organiser. He wielded the community into one compact whole. He also the first Guru who actively participated in politics. Consequently, the Mughal-Sikh conflict can be traced to Jahangir's reign. He ordered Arjan Singh's execution. This was done on purely grounds for sheltering the fugitive Khusrav and in no way was it accompanied by the religious persecution of the Sikhs. Nevertheless, the act deeply embittered the Sikhs against the Mughals. Under their next leader, Har Gobind, the character of the Sikh movement, for the first time, became more militant, while its democratic social set up attracted the Jat peasantry in large numbers. Henceforth, any harshness towards the peasantry was regarded as an oppression by the Mughal state towards the Sikhs. The military character was further developed under Guru Teg Bahadur who in order to strengthen the Sikh interests encouraged the creation of a state within the state.

In the earlier years of Aurangzeb's reign, there was no conflict between Teg Bahadur and Aurangzeb. However once the Guru publicly condemned Aurangzeb's anti-Hindu measures as is clearly evident from the support that he rendered to the Hindu population of Kashmir, Aurangzeb became suspicious of the Guru's motives.

Their relation rapidly deteriorated and ultimately resulted in the gruesome murder of Teg Bahadur in 1675 A.D. According to the legendary sources, when his head was struck off, a paper was found containing the words *Sir dia sar na dia* (he gave his head but not his secret). While Guru Teg Bahadur's persecution was not accompanied by the annihilation of the sons; (Ram Rai continued to live at the Mughal court and his sons were granted mansabs). Nevertheless, his execution did horrify the country. The last Guru, Gobind Singh, was determined to militarily strengthen his community. To unite them, he formed the brotherhood of Khalsa which free of caste and creed, advocated equality of mankind. To this end, he initiated the practice of drinking water, conserved by a sword or dagger (Amrit chakna). To distinguish the member from other communities, they were asked to wear five things-Kanghi (comb), Kachha (underwear), Kara (iron bangle), Kesh and Kirpan (sword). Henceforth, the Guru lived like a regal monarch, holding court, building forts with the help of his followers who were as zealously dedicated to the cause of Sikhism as the soldiers of Islam. Their expansionist activities inevitably led to a clash of arms with the Mughals. The Sikhs were defeated, his two sons were executed while the Guru ultimately escaped and settled at Anandpur. Aurangzeb, himself, fast approaching his end, felt remorseful. With no cause for further altercation, he promised the Guru an honourable reception. While the Guru, en route, received news of the Emperor's demise.

Guru Govind Singh himself was murdered by an Afghan in 1708 A.D. The news of his murder once again created an explosive atmosphere in Punjab, a land which was hitherto calm. It also accentuated the anti-Muslim sentiments in the country and affected the peasants' loyalty towards the Mughal empire. Guru Gobind's aspirations of founding a Sikh state were completed by Banda, who the Guru had nominated as his military successor.

Personality and Character of Aurangzeb

In his private life, Aurangzeb was industrious and disciplined. He was very simple in food and dress. He earned money for his personal expenses by copying Quran and selling those copies. He did not consume wine. He was learned and proficient in Arabic and Persian languages. He was a lover of books. He was devoted to his religion and conducted prayers five times a day. He strictly observed the Ramzan fasting.

In the political field, Aurangzeb committed serious mistakes. He misunderstood the true nature of the Maratha movement and antagonized them. Also, he failed to solve the Maratha problem and left an open sore. His policy towards Shia Deccan Sultanates also proved to be a wrong policy.

His religious policy was also not successful. Aurangzeb was an orthodox Sunni Muslim. But his move to apply his religious thought rigidly in a non-Muslim society was a failure. His antagonistic policies towards non-Muslims did not help him to rally the Muslims to his side. On the other hand it had strengthened political enemies of the Mughal Empire. Deccan sultanates were partly due to his hatred of the Shia faith.

Vedic Civilisation and Later vedic

- We know about the Aryans in India from the various Vedic texts, especially the Rig Veda, which is the earliest specimen of the Indo-European language and the chief source of information on the history of this period.
- Many historians have given various theories regarding the original place of the Aryans. However, the Central Asian Theory given by Max Muller, is the most accepted one. It states that the Aryans were semi-nomadic pastoral people around the Caspian Sea in Central Asia.
- They entered India probably through the Khyber Pass (in the Hindukush Mountains) around 1500 B.C.
- The holy book of Iran 'Zend Avesta' indicates entry of Aryans to India via Iran.
- The early Aryans did not have to look routes to Indian sub-continent; for the Harappans had crossed the high passes of the Hindukush and reached the middle course of the Amu Darya where they had set up a trading post at Shortughai.
- In the Rigvedic period, the nobles were advised to eat from the same vessel as the *vis* for success.
- Metal came to be known as Ayas and Iron as Krishanayas (Black Metal).
- The Vedic texts may be divided into two broad chronological strata: the Early Vedic (1500-1000 B.C.) when most of the hymns of the Rig Veda were composed and the Later Vedic (1000-600 B.C.) when the remaining three Vedas and their branches were composed.

Early Vedic or Rigvedic Period (1500-1000 B.C.)

- The Rig Veda is a collection of prayers offered to Agni, Indra, Varuna and other gods by various families of poets and sages.
- From Rigveda, we come to know that there were 33 gods that time who were divided into three categories viz., heavenly gods, atmospheric god, and earthly gods. Varuna, Surya, Aditi, Savitri were heavenly gods. Indra, Rudra, Maruts etc. were atmospheric gods. Agni, Soma, and Prithvi were earthly gods.
- Four rivers of Afghanistan are clearly described in the Rigveda. These are: Kubha, Krumu, Gomati (Gomal), Suvastu (swat).
- It consists of ten Mandala or books of which Book II to VII is the easiest portion. Book I and X seem to have been the latest additions.

- In the Rigvedic period, the dead man's soul is said to depart to the waters of the plants.
- Since the Aryans came through the mountains, which were considered the dwelling places of their gods, these are repeatedly mentioned in the Rigveda. Meru, a mountain beyond the Himalayas, is a happy divine abode in the Mahabharata and the Puranas.
- The Rig Veda has many things in common with the Avesta, which is the oldest text in the Iranian language. The two texts use the same names for several Gods and even for social classes.
- The history of the later Vedic period is based mainly on the Vedic texts which were compiled after the age of the Rig Veda. These include the three Vedas – Samveda, Yajurveda, Atharvaveda and the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, the Upanishads and the Sutras.
- The collection of the Vedic hymns or mantras were known as Samhitas.
- For purposes of singing, the prayers of the Rigveda were set to tune and this modified collection was known as the Samveda Samhita.
- The Yajurveda contains not only the hymns but also the rituals which have to accompany their recitation.
- The Atharvaveda is completely different from the other three Vedas. It contains charms and spells to ward off evils and diseases. Its contents throw light on the beliefs and practices of the non-Aryans. Atharvaveda is the most valuable of the Vedas after the Rig Veda for the history and sociology.
- All the Vedic literature is together called the Shruti and they include apart from the four Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads.
- The Brahmanas are a series of texts that followed the Vedic samhitas. Each Veda has several Brahmanas attached to it. These are ritual texts.
- Brahmanas attached to the Rigveda are Aitareya, Kaushitaki (composed by Hotri priest). Brahmanas attached to Samveda are Jamini, Tandiyamasha, Panchavis, Chhandogya (composed by Udgatri priest). Brahmanas attached to Yajurveda are Satpatha Brahmana (composed by Adhvaryu priest). Brahmanas attached to Atharvaveda are Gopatha Brahmana.
- The Brahmanas throw light on the socio-political life of the Aryans and form a sort of explanation of their religion, especially sacrifice. They also contain ritualistic formulae for the respective Vedas and its priests.
- The Aranyakas are forest books that are treatises on mysticism and philosophy and are concluding portion of the Brahmanas. They explain the metaphysics and symbolism of sacrifice. They lay emphasis not on sacrifice but on meditation. They are in fact opposed to sacrifice and many of the ritualistic practices. Their stress is on moral virtues. They form a bridge between the way of the works (karma-marga, advocated by the Brahmanas) and the way of knowledge (gyan-marga, advocated by the Upanishads). Some important Aranyakas are Aitareya Aranyaka, Kaushitaki Aranyaka and Taittiriya Aranyaka.
- The Upanishads contain philosophical speculations. They are generally called Vedanta which means the end of the Vedas. One reason is that they came at the end of the Vedic period or that they were taught
- at the end of the Vedic instruction. These texts were compiled around 600 B.C. and criticized the rituals and laid stress on the values of right belief and knowledge. They emphasized that the

knowledge of the self and the atma should be acquired and the relation of atma with Brahma should be properly understood.

- The ten Upanishads are: Ishopanishat, Kenopanishat, Kathopanishat, Parshnopanishat, Mandukopanishat, Koushikopanishat, Thaittiriyanopanishat, Chandogyanopanishat and Brihadaranyanopanishat. These are commentaries appended to the Aranyakas and deal mainly with philosophy and religion.
- The Smritis are the auxiliary treatises of the Vedas or their supplements. It refers to that literature that has been passed on from one generation to the other. Manusmriti written by Manu is the oldest of all the Smritis.
- The Puranas are 18 in number, of which the Bhagawat Purana and Vishnu Purana are the most important.

Geographical Spread

The early Aryans settled in eastern Afghanistan, modern Pakistan, Punjab and parts of western U.P. The whole region in which the Aryans first settled in India is called the Land of Seven Rivers or Sapta Sindhava (the Indus and the five tributaries and the Saraswati).

Political Organization

- The political organization was of monarchical form. The tribe was known as Jan and its king as Rajan. He was the leader in battle and protector of the tribe. His office was not hereditary and was selected among the clan's men. The Rajan was not an absolute monarch, for the government of the tribe was in part the responsibility of the tribal councils like sabhas, samitis, gana and vidhata. Even women attended gana and vidhata only.
- Many clans (Vish) formed a tribe. The basic social unit was the Kula or the family and the Kulapa was the head of the family.
- The king was assisted by a number of officers of which Purohita was the most important. Next important functionary was the Senani (leader of the army) even though there was no regular or standing army. The military technique of the Aryans was much advanced. The Aryans succeeded everywhere because they possessed chariots driven by horses.
- There was no regular revenue system and the kingdom was maintained by voluntary tribute (Bali) of his subjects and booty won in battle.

Social Life

- The term Varna was used for colour, the Aryans being fair and the Dasas dark.
- Family was the basic unit of society and was patriarchal in nature. But women enjoyed equal power with men. Marriage was usually monogamous and indissoluble, but there are a few instances of polyandry, levirate and widow marriage. There are no examples of child-marriage. The marriageable age seems to have been 16 to 17.

- Both dowry and bride price were recognized during the Early Vedic period.
- The word 'Arya' came to refer to any person who was respected.
- Aryans were fond of soma, sura, food and dresses. Soma was drunk at sacrifices and its use was sanctified by religion. Sura was purely secular and more potent and was disapproved by the priestly poets.
- Throughout the Vedic period, education was imparted orally. Unlike the Harappans, the Aryans do not seem to have a system of writing.
- The Aryans loved music and played the flute, lute and harp. There are references to singing and dancing girls. People also delighted in gambling.
- They enjoyed chariot racing. Both men and women wore ornaments.

Economy

- Their bronze smiths were highly skilled and produced tools and weapons much superior to those of Harappa culture. There were artisans like carpenters, weavers, cobblers, potters, etc.
- Aryans followed a mixed economy – pastoral and agricultural – in which cattle played a predominant part. Most of their wars were fought for cow (most important form of wealth). Cattle were in fact a sort of currency and values were reckoned in heads of cattle (man's life was equivalent to that of 100 cows), but they were not held sacred at the time. The horse was almost as important as the cow.
- Standard unit of exchange was the cow. At the same time coins were also there (gold coins like Nishka, Krishnal and Satmana). Gavyuti was used as a measure of distance and Godhuli as a measure of time.
- Reference to money lending first occurs in Shatapatha Brahmana, which describes a usurer as Kusidin.
- Lived in fortified mud settlements.
- Physicians were then called 'Bhishakas'.
- The staple crop was 'yava' which meant barley.

Religion

- The Aryans personified the natural forces and looked upon them as living beings.
- The most important divinity was Indra who played the role of warlord (breaker of forts – Purandar and was also associated with storms and thunder).

- The second position was held by Agni (fire-god). He is considered an intermediary between gods and men.
- Varuna occupied the third position. He personified water and was supposed to uphold the natural order (Rta). He was ethically the highest of all Rigvedic gods.
- Soma was considered to be the god of plants. Maruts personified the storms.
- Some female deities are also mentioned like Aditi and Usha, who represented the appearance of dawn.
- Didn't believe in erecting temples or idol worship. Worshipped in open air through yajnas.
- Aryans didn't worship animals – only gods in man's form.
- The Asvamedha sacrifice concluded with the sacrifice of 21 sterile cows.
- From Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we get the first exposition of the doctrine of transmigration of soul.

Later Vedic Period/Painted Grey Ware Phase (1000-600 B.C.)

Geographical Spread

- They reveal that the Aryans expanded from Punjab over the whole of western U.P. covered by the Ganga-Yamuna doab.
- In the beginning, they cleared the land by burning; later with the use of iron tools which became common by 1000-800 B.C.
- In Later Vedic period, many great cities like Videha, Kaushambhi, Kasi, Ayodhya, Hastinapur and Indraprastha etc. had sprung up.

Political Organization

- Tiny tribal settlements were replaced by strong kingdoms.
- The earliest legend on the origin of kingship occurs in the Aitareya Brahmana, one of the Later Vedic texts, perhaps of the 8th or 7th century B.C.
- During the Rigvedic period the Aryans had built only small kingdoms, as they were always busy fighting the non-Aryans. But now they had crushed the resistance of the non-Aryans and had established such powerful kingdoms as Kuru, Panchala, Kosala, Magadha, Kasi and Anga.

- Powers of the king who was called the Samrat increased. Importance of assemblies declined. Women were no longer permitted to attend assemblies and the term 'Rashtra' indicating territory first appeared in this period.
- The establishment of vast empires led to the growth of the royal power.
- The Sabha and the Samiti were now not powerful enough to check the power of the kings. The office of the monarch had now become more or less hereditary.
- A regular army was maintained for the protection of the kingdom.
- In the Rigvedic period we hear of three main assistants of the king, i.e., the Purohita, the Senani and the Gramini. But now in addition to these officials many new assistants of the king were present. References of Priest (Purohita), Commander in chief (Senapati), Charioteer (Suta), Treasurer (Sangrihita), Tax collector (Bhagdugha), Chief queen (Mahisi) and the Great companion (Aksavapa).
- The centre of gravity was the king and not the priest. If there was any difference between the ruler and the priest, it was the priest who yielded.
- Kings of various grades are mentioned in the Vedic hymns. For example, the Rajaka was inferior to a Raja who in turn was inferior to a Samrat.
- Political affairs, religious and social matters were discussed by the speakers in the local assemblies. These speakers sought the help of spells and magic herbs to stimulate their eloquence in debate (Pras) and overcome their rival debaters (Pratiprasita).

Social Life

- The four fold division of society became clear initially based on occupation which later became hereditary; Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (agriculturists, cattle-rearers, traders) and Shudras (servers of the upper three).
- Women enjoyed freedom and respect but their status deteriorated compared to earlier time.
- The institution of gotra appeared in this age first time. Gotra signified descent from common ancestors.
- In this age also Chariot racing was the main sport and gambling the main pastime.
- The excavations at Hastinapur in Meerut, dating back to about 900 B.C.-500 B.C. have revealed settlements and faint beginning of town life. It may be called a proto-urban site.
- Later Vedic period, especially from around 800 B.C.- 500 B.C., is also the Sutra period. Sutra means formula. Grihasutra contained social rituals including sixteen sanskaras through which individual had to pass from conception to cremation.
- Woman was now gradually losing her position of importance in the religious and social sphere. The king and the nobility had now begun to marry more than one wife and the birth of a daughter was now regarded as source of misery.

- Higher education was, however, imparted to women. The re-marriage of a widow was prevalent and the practices of sati, child-marriage, purdah and child infanticide were not heard of.
- Now in place of four main varnas many new castes were born, leading to the complexities of the caste system.
- The life of an ordinary man was now, however, divided into four stages popularly known as the four Ashramas.

Types of marriages

- **Brahma:** Marriage of a duly dowered girl to a man of the same class.
- **Daiva:** Marriage in which the father gave his daughter to a sacrificial priest as part of his fees.
- **Arsa:** Marriage in which a token bride price of a cow and a bull was paid to the daughter's father.
- **Prajapatya:** Marriage in which the father gave the girl without any dowry and without demanding bride price.
- **Gandharva:** Marriage often clandestine, by the consent of the two parties.
- **Asura:** Marriage by purchase.
- **Rakshasa:** Marriage by capture.
- **Paishacha:** Marriage involving the seduction of a girl while sleeping, etc.
- **Anuloma marriage:** was the marriage of higher varna man with a lower varna woman.
- **Pratiloma marriage:** was the marriage of a lower varna man with a higher varna woman.

Important Vedic Rituals

- **Asvamedha:** A king performed this sacrifice which meant control over the area in which the royal horse ran uninterrupted. The ceremony lasted for three days at the end of which the horse sacrificed was performed. The Asvamedha sacrifice concluded with the sacrifice of 21 sterile cows.
- **Vajapeva:** A chariot race was performed in which the king must win the race (it was fixed). It was meant to re-establish the supremacy of the king over his people.
- **Rajasuya:** A sacrifice ceremony which conferred supreme power on the king.
- **Ratnahavimsi:** A part of Rajasuya ceremony where different royal officials (ratnins) invoked different gods and goddesses.
- **Upanayana:** An initiation ceremony to confer dvija status to boys of the higher varnas in their eighth year.

- **Pumsayam:** A ceremony to procure a male child.
- **Garbhadhana:** A ceremony to promote conception in women.
- **Culakarma:** A ceremony, also known tonsure performed for boys in their third year.
- **Semontannayam:** A ceremony to ensure the safety of the child in the womb.
- **Jatkarma:** A birth ceremony performed before the cutting of the umbilical cord.

Pottery

- Though the Later Vedic phase has been identified with the Painted Grey Ware pottery culture, but the fact is that this type of pottery constitutes only about 3-15% of the total pottery found.
- The later vedic people used four types of pottery: black and red ware, black-slipped ware, painted grey ware and red ware.
- Red ware for commoners was most popular and has been found almost all over western U.P. However, the most distinctive pottery of the period is known as Painted Grey Ware which comprised bowls and dishes, used either for rituals or for eating by upper classes.

Economy

- During Later Vedic period, Krishnala berry was unit of weight and this probably led to the use of coinage. The Nishka replaced cow as a unit of value. The Satamana mentioned in the Brahmanas was a piece of gold weighing a hundred Krishnalas.
- Rigveda mentions only gold and copper or bronze but Later Vedic texts mention tin, lead, silver and iron.
- In addition to the cultivation of barley, wheat and rice, many new grains such as sesame (Tila) and beans began to be cultivated during this period and great progress was doubtlessly made in the methods of cultivation

Religion

- Rituals and formulae became prominent in the cult of sacrifice.
- According to the scheme of four stages, life did not begin with one's physical birth, but with the second birth which was after the investiture ceremony or Upanayana. The age of Upanayana was 8 years for Brahmanas, 11 years for Kshatriyas, and 12 years for Vaishyas.
- Shatpatha Brahmana says that east, west, north, south; all should be given to priests as fee.

- Indra, Varuna, Surya and Agni lost their importance. Prajapati (the creator) became supreme. Vishnu came to be conceived as the preserver and protector of the people.
- Some of the special orders came to have their own deities e.g. Pushan responsible for well being of the cattle, became the God of the Shudras.
- Towards the end of the period, began a strong reaction against the sacrificial cults and rituals with the composition of the Upanishads which valued right belief and knowledge more than anything else.

The Vedic Literature

The Vedas

- The word 'veda' comes from the root 'vidi' signifying knowledge.
- Vedas are also known as 'Shruti' (to hear) as they were passed from generation through verbal transmission.
- Harappa is known in Vedas as 'Haryupriva'.
- They are four in all – Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharveda.
- The first three Vedas are known as 'Tiry' or 'trio'. Each veda is further subdivided into Samhitas.
- The phrase 'Arya' and 'Shudra' appearing in the Vedic literature perhaps meant only to distinguish those who were theoretically qualified for the fruit from those who were not.

Rig veda

- Oldest religious text in the world. Must have been composed around 1700 B.C.
- A collection of hymns. Were recited at the time of sacrificial rites and other rituals with utmost devotion.
- Contains 1028 hymns (1017+11 valakhilyas) and is divided into 10 mandalas.
- II to VII are the earliest mandalas, each of which is ascribed to a particular family of seers (rishis) – Gritsamada, Visvamitra, Vamadeva, Atri, Bhardwaj and Vashistha. VII Mandala is ascribed to the Kanvas and Angiras. IX is the compilation of Soma hymns. I and X are considered the later additions.
- The X Mandala contains the famous Purushsukta which explains that the four varnas (Brahmans, Ksatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) were born from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the creator, Brahma.
- Words in Rig Veda: Om (1028 times), Jan (275 times), etc. 250 hymns are dedicated to Indra while 200 are dedicated to Agni.

- The third Mandala contains the Gayatri Mantra (addressed to the sun/Savitri – goddess associated with Surya).
- Saraswati is the deity river in Rig Veda and is referred to 8 times while the Sindhu/Indus is referred to 18 times.
- There is a reference to prison (urva) in the Rigveda and also to fetters of iron. Ordeal of the red-hot axe is mentioned only once in the Chhandogya Upanishad as part of criminal procedure.

Samveda

- Derived from the root 'Saman' i.e. 'melody'. It is a collection of melodies.
- It has 1603 verses but except 99 all the rest have been borrowed from Rig Veda.
- Contains 'Dhrupada Raga' which is the oldest of the ragas.

Yajurveda

- Deals with the procedure for the performance of sacrifices.
- There are two main texts of Yajurveda: White Yajurveda (or Shukla Yajurveda) and Black Yajurveda (or Krishna Yajurveda). The former contains mantras and the latter has commentary in prose.

Atharvaveda

- Entirely different from three other Vedas.
- Divided into 20 kandas (books) and has 711 hymns– mostly dealing with magic (along with personal problems of people).
- Atharvaveda refers to king as protector of Brahmanas and eater of people.
- From the point of view of Vedic rituals, Atharvaveda is the most important.

The Brahmans

- They explain the hymns of the Vedas in an orthodox manner.
- Each Veda has several Brahmans attached to it.
- The most important is 'Satpatha Brahmana' attached to Yajurveda which is the most exhaustive and important of all. It recommends 'One Hundred Sacred Paths'.

The Aranyakas

- Called 'forest books', written mainly by the hermits living in the jungles for their pupils.
- These are the concluding part of the Brahmanas.
- Deals with mysticism and philosophy. Opposed to sacrifice and emphasized meditation.
- Form a bridge between 'Way of Work' (Karma Marg) which was the sole concern of the Upanishads and the 'Way of Knowledge' (Gyan Marg) which the Brahmanas advocated.

The Upanishads

- The word means 'to sit down near someone' and denotes a student sitting near his guru to learn.
- Called Vedanta (the end of the Vedas) firstly because they denote the last phase of the vedic period and secondly because they reveal the final aim of the Vedas.
- They are the main source of Indian philosophy.
- There are 108 Upanishads.
- They also condemn the ceremonies and the sacrifices.
- They discuss the various theories of creation of the universe and define the doctrine of action (karma).
- Mandukyu Upanishad is the source of 'Satya Mevya Jayate'.

Smritis

- Explains rules and regulations in the vedic life.
- Main are Manusmriti, Naradsmriti, Yagyavalkyasmriti and Parasharsmriti.
- Dharmasutras contain social laws popularly known as 'Smriti'. Earliest Dharmasutra is the Manusmriti which is also called Manav Darshan.

Vedangas

- Six Vedangas are Shiksha which deals with pronunciation, Kalpa which deals with rituals, Vyakarana which deals with grammar, Nirukta which deals with etymology or phonetics, Chhanda which deals with meter and Jyotisha which deals with astronomy.

Epics

- The period that lies between the Rigvedic period and the rise of Buddhism in India i.e., 2000 to 700 B.C. has been designated by some as the Later Vedic Period and by some as Epic Age.
- Though the two epics – the Mahabharata and the Ramayana were compiled later, they reflect the state of affairs of the later Vedic Period.
- The Mahabharata, attributed to Vyasa is considered older than the Ramayana and describes the period about 1400 B.C.; compiled from the tenth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. It is also called Jaisamhita and Satasahasri Samhita and has one lakh verses and is divided into eighteen books with the Harivansa attached to it at the end.
- The Ramayana attributed to Valmiki has 24,000 verses. Its composition started in the fifth century B.C. and passes through five stages; the fifth stage ending in the 12th century A.D.