

Unit I

The principal sources of Delhi Sultanate are primarily in Persian and Arabic languages. They are divided in to three categories: Chronicles, Travelogues and Malfuzat

a) Chronicles

Kitab-ul Hind by Abu Raihan Alberuni

It sheds valuable light on the society and culture of india during 11th century.

Chachnama by Ali Kufi

It is the Persian version of 8th century Arabic work. It deals primarily with the Arab conquest of Sind.

Adab-ul Harb wa Shujaat by Fakhr I Mudabir

Written by Ali Mansur popularly known as Fakhr I Mudabir, it deals with the art of warfare.

Tarikh-i-Jahankusha by Alauddin Ata Malik Juwani

It primarily deals with the Mongol's from the time of Chengiz Khan. It gives valuable account of Chengiz Khan's pursuit against Jalaluddin Mangbarani.

Siyasatnama by Nizamul Mulk Tusi

It gives the detailed account of the institution of slave household during the reign of early Turkish Sultans.

Tajul Maasir by Sadruddin Hasan Nizami

It is the first official account of Delhi Sultanate. It covers the period from 1191-1229 and deals with the campaigns of Muizddin Muhammad Sam, Qutbuddin Aibek and Iltumish.

Tabaqati Nasiri by Minhaj Siraj

Minhaj was khatib and qazi of Nasriya Madrassa. He starts from the period of Prophet PBUH and terminates at Nasiruddin Mahmud 1266. It provides detailed account of campaigns, Sultans, Maliks, Amirs and Ulema.

Miftah ul Futuh, Khazain ul Futuh, Qiran us Sadain, Dewal Rani Khizr Khan, Tughluq Nama by Amir Khusru

Amir Khusru was one of the greatest poet and writer of medieval India. His above works deal with different fields. Miftahul Futuh deals with Jallaluddin's military exploits.

Khazin ul Futuh deals with Deccan Campaigns. Qiran us Sadain deals with contemporary society.

Dewal Rani Khizr Khan besides a romantic adventure deals with Alauddin's exploits.

Tughluqnama deals with Tughluq's reign.

Tarikh-I Mubarak Shahi by Yahya Sirhindi

It deals with the study of nobles during the Saiyyid period (1415-). Further it gives the history from Ghori period.

Masalik Absar by Abu Fazlullah al Umari

It is an Arabic work which deals with the socio-economic conditions during Muhammad Tughluq's reign.

Futuh us Salatin by Isami

It is dedicated to Alauddin Bahman Shah of Bahman Empire and is highly critical of Muhammad Tughluq's Projects.

Tarikh-I Ferozshahi and Fatawa-i-Jahandari by Ziauddin Barani

The first work is highly critical of Khaliji and Tughluq periods. It starts from Isami and ends at Feroz Shah's period. Fatawa-i-Jahandari is a book on political philosophy. It deals with king, justice, army, intelligence etc.

Futuh-i-Feroz Shahi by Feroz Shah Tughluq

It is written by Feroz Shah himself and deals with his thoughts and beliefs

Tarikh Feroz Shahi by Shams Siraj Afif

The book was written after Timmur's invasion (1498AD) as such it praises the peace and prosperity during Feroz Tughluq's reign.

Zafarnama by sharaffudin Ali Yazdi

The book deals with the Timur's invasion of Delhi in 1498.

Miftah ul Fuzala by Muhammad Daud Shadiabadi

The book contains useful sketches which help in understanding the development of technology during the Sultanate Period.

b) Travelers account

Marco Polo

He was a Venetian Traveller and visited the court of Kublai Khan (mongol Chinese Emperor) in 1274 AD. On his return journey he moved through east and west coast of India. He refers to commercial and cultural activities of India during the period.

Ibn Battuta

He was an Arab traveler of Morocco. He stayed at the court of Muhammad Tughluq and held the post of qazi at his court. He wrote Rihla- which deals with king's personnel character, his projects, socio-economic conditions and geographical details of the area.

Abdul Razzak

He was a Persian scholar send as an ambassador to the Vijaynagar in 1442. He gives his account in Matlaus Sadain wa Majmaul Bahrain. He describes the life style of king and nobles and the socio-economic and cultural life of Deccan.

Nicolo Conti

He was a Venetian traveller and visited Malabar Coast in 1420. He provides useful information on the life at Vijaynagar court and its society and economy.

Domingo Peas

He was a Portuguese and visited India in 1500 AD. He describes life at Vijaynagar empire.

Daurte Barbosa

A Portuguese visited Vijanagar empire in 1516 AD. He provides great insights regarding Vijaynagar Empire.

Athanasius Nikitin

A Russian trader, who visited Deccan drring 1470AD, provides information about Bahman rule.

F. Nuniz

He was a Portuguese horse dealer stayed in Vijaynagar empire. He provides information about court intrigues and civil warin the empire.

Tome Pires

He was a European traveler, who visited India during the first decade of 16th century. He gives a graphic account of the port of Cambay and Malacca.

c) Malfuzat

Also known as mystic or sufi literature.

Fawaid ul Fuad by Amir Hassan Sijzi

It is the conversation of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya from 1307-1322AD. It provides information on religion, culture and literature of the period.

Khair ul Majalis by Hamid Qalandari

It contains the conversation of Shaikh Nasiruddin Chirag Dehlavi. This work provides information besides on mysticism to the market control policy of Alaudin Khaliji and impact of Mongol invasion.

Coming of the Turks: causes and consequences

The Arabs conquered Transoxiana (hometown of Turks) in the early eighth century. The Arabs Islamized and employed Turks as soldiers. The hardy steppe background made the Turk a better warrior. With training and discipline they could be made into a first rate machine.

With the weakening of the power of Abbasid Caliphs (750-1148AD) their control over Islamic world became nominal and limited just to issue farmans to confirm their authority. It gave way to the emergence of a number of small independent kingdoms during the 10th century the Jahirids, the Saffavids, the Buwaihids, Qara-Khanids and the Samanids.

Alaptgin, the Samanid governor and slave of the Turkish origin, established an independent kingdom at Ghazna. The Ghaznavid kingdom became prominent under Mahmud Ghamavi (A.D. 998-1030).

Mahmud's death was followed by the emergence of the mighty Seljuqs. They soon overran Iran, Syria and Transoxiana. These developments gave a great jolt to the power of the Ghaznavids which became confined to Ghazna and parts of Punjab only.

During the twelfth century, the Seljuq power was destroyed by a group of Turkish tribes. The vacuum created by the Seljuqs led to the rise of the Khwarizmian in Iran and the Ghorid power in north-west Afghanistan. To begin with, the Ghorids were vassals of Ghazna. On the other hand, the Khwarizmian ruler's started in a big way engulfing Ghazni and almost whole of Central Asia and Iran.

In such circumstances it was not possible for the Ghorids (Mohammad Ghor) to expand at the cost of the Khwarizmian power. The possible direction left was India. Secondly, the Indian's were considered infidels. An absolute faith in God and his will, gave them drive and a sense of mission.

Meanwhile, the break-up of the Gurjara-Pratihara Empire led to a phase of political uncertainty in north India, and a new phase of struggle for domination. As a result, little attention was paid to the emergence of aggressive, expansionist Turkish states on the northwestern border of India and in West.

The Ghorian armies as mentioned earlier were drawn from the warlike tribes inhabiting the difficult region lying between the Indus and the Oxus. They had gathered military powers and expertise fighting the Seljuques and other fierce tribes of Central Asia. On the other hand, the Indians were pacifist and not given to war. Moreover, they were divided into small states which hampered expansionist ambitions.

In India after the fall of the Gurjara-Pratihara empire, no single state took its place. Instead, there arose small independent powers like Gahadavalas in Kannauj, Parmaras in Malwa, Chalukyas in Gujarat, Chauhans in Ajmer, Tomars in Delhi, Chandellas in Bundelkhand, etc. Far from being united, they tended to operate within the confines of small territories and were in a state of perpetual internal conflicts. Lack of centralized power was an important factor in emasculating the strength and efficiency of the armed forces. Fakhr Mudabbir in his *Adab-ul Harb wa al-shuja't* mentions that Indian forces consisted of 'feudal levies'. Each military contingent was under the command of its immediate overlord/chief and not that of the king. Thus, the army lacked 'Unity of Command'. Besides, since only few castes and clans took military profession, the bulk of the population was excluded from military training. This made the general population of the country totally detached from the defence of the country; when the Turks came, we find the Indian masses hardly came to the rescue of their kings. The concept of physical pollution (Chhut) also hampered military efficiency since it made the division of labour impossible; the soldiers had to do all their work on their own, from fighting to the fetching of water.

Another important reason for the success of the Turks was their superior military technology and art of war. These nomads from the steppes could be credited with introducing the 'age of the horse'. The Turks used iron stirrup and horse-shoes that reinforced their striking power and the stamina of the cavalry, while horse-shoes provided greater mobility to the horse; stirrup gave the soldiers a distinct advantage.

Consequences:

The Turkish conquest of India brought about some far reaching changes in the political economic and social conditions of India.

The first major consequence was to replace the 'feudal', multi-centered, polity of the country by a centralised state, in which the king enjoyed practically unlimited powers.

In the economic field revenue was collected through the iqta system. The iqta was a transferable revenue assignment. Under this system, the officers of the king were assigned territories to realise revenue and maintain troops and maintain cavalry contingents. The holders of such assignments were known as muqti . Unlike the pre-Turkish system where the land grantees had acquired permanent rights of ownership, the iqta-holders were regularly transferred and their tenure in particular places or localities was normally for 3 to 4 years.

Taking the Delhi Sultanate as a whole, such a system made the assignee dependent on the central authority to a far greater extent than it was under the earlier Indian politics. While the rais, ranas and thakurs failed to unite the country, the Turks succeeded in establishing an "all-India administration by bringing the chief cities and the great routes under the control of the government of Delhi.

The Turkish conquest resulted in the growth of Urban centers. In the pre-Turkish period there was decay of towns and sluggish trade. Now as the ruling class came from different cultural milieu and need leisure and comforts of different types. They want Persian songs, dance, books, silk to wear and designed architecture. As such they encouraged immigration from Islamic cultural area. These immigrants were craftsman, artisans, singers, musicians, dancers, poets, physicians, astrologers etc. All these events resulted in urban expansion.

ADMINISTRATION: CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL

The state set up by the Turks towards the end of the twelfth century in northern India gradually developed into a powerful and highly centralized state which, for some time, controlled almost the entire country extending as far south as Madurai.

THE SULTAN

In the early Islamic world, there was no sanction for the position of the Sultan. As such the Turkish sultans in India declared themselves 'lieutenant of the faithful', i.e., of the Abbasid caliph at Baghdad, and included his name in the khutba in the Friday prayers, however, the caliph had only a moral position. By proclaiming his supreme position, the sultans at Delhi were only proclaiming that they were a part of the Islamic world.

The sultan's office was the most important in the Sultanat and supreme political, military, and even legal authority, was vested in him. He was responsible for the safety and security of the state. As such, he was responsible for administration and was also the commander-in-chief of the military forces. He was also responsible for the maintenance of law and justice. To discharge this function, he appointed judges but the sultan acted as a court of appeal from the judges. A direct appeal could be made to him against the highhandedness of any of his officials. The dispensation of justice was regarded as a very important function of any ruler.

Balban did not spare even his relatives or high officers of state. Muhammad Tughlaq applied this even to the religious classes (ulema) who had previously been exempted from harsh punishments.

There were many officials to look after the royal household. The wakil-i-dar looked after the entire household and disbursed salaries to the Sultan's personal staff. The amir-i-hajib functioned as the master of ceremonies at the court. All petitions to the Sultan were submitted through the latter. There were other minor officials also.

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

The sultan was assisted by a number of ministers who were chosen by him and remained in office at his pleasure. The number, powers and functions of the ministers varied from time to time. Given below is the jurisdiction of different ministers:-

The Wizarat (Finance)

The wazir, as the head of the diwan-i wizarar, was the most important figure in the central administration. Though he was one of the four important departmental heads, he exercised a

general supervisory authority over others. The wizarat organised the collection of revenue, exercised control over expenditure, kept accounts, disbursed salaries and allotted revenue assignments (iqta) at Sultan's order.

There were several officials who helped the wizarat such as the mushif-i mumalik or the accountant-general and the mustaufi-i mumalik or the auditor-general. During the reign of Alauddin Khalji, the diwan-i mustakhraj was made responsible for the collection of arrears of revenue.

The Diwan-i Arz

The diwan-i arz or military department was headed by the ariz-i mumalik. He was responsible for the administration of military affairs. He inspected the troops maintained by the iqta-holders. He also supervised the commissariat duties (supply and transport) of the Sultan's army. During the reign of Alauddin Khalji, some measures were introduced to maintain a check on recruitment and quality. He ordered a descriptive roll (huliyā) of every soldier to be kept and also ordered the branding (dagh) of horses to be done so that horses of poor quality were not brought by the amirs or iqta-holders to the muster. It seems that the branding of horses was strictly maintained till the reign of Muhammad Tughluq.

The army consisted of troops maintained by nobles as well as the standing army (hashm-i Qalb) of the Sultan. In the thirteenth century, the royal cavalry, in lieu of cash salary, was assigned the revenue of small villages in the vicinity of Delhi which Moreland calls "small iqta". Under Iltutmish, the number of such cavalry was about three thousand. Balban tried to do away with these assignments which led to much dissatisfaction. Alauddin Khalji was successful in doing so, and he started paying his soldiers in cash—a trooper was paid 238 tanka while one who brought an additional horse used to get 78 tanka more.

Feroz Tughluq gave up the practice of paying his royal soldiers in cash: instead, he gave them a paper called itlaq - a sort of draft on whose strength they could claim their salary from the Sultan's revenue officers of the khalisa ("Crown" or "reserve" land).

Diwan-i Insha

The diwan-i insha' looked after State correspondence. It was headed by dabir-i mumalik. This department dealt with all correspondence between the Sultan and other rulers, and between the Sultan and provincial governments. It issued farmans and received letters from subordinate officials.

The barid-i mumalik was the head of the State news-agency. He had to keep information of all that was happening in the Sultanate. The administrative sub- divisions had local barids who sent regular news --letters to the central office. The barids reported matters of state - wars, rebellions, local affairs, finances, the state of agriculture etc. Apart from the barids, another set of reporters existed who were known as munhiyan.

Diwan-i Risalat

The diwan-i risalat was headed by the sadr-us sudur. He was the highest religious officer. He took care of the ecclesiastical affairs and appointed qazis. He approved various grants like waqf for religious and educational institutions, wazifa and idrar to the learned and the poor.

The Sultan headed the judiciary and was the final court of appeal in both civil and criminal matters. Next to him was the qazi-ul mumalik (or qazi-ul quzzat), the chief judge of the Sultanate. Often, the offices of the sadr-us sudur and qazi-ul mumalik were held by the same person. The chief qazi headed the legal system and heard appeals from the lower courts.

The muhatsibs (public censors) assisted the judicial department. Their task was to set that there was no public infringement of the tenets of Islam.

Provincial and Local Administration

As the State became more settled and efforts were made for greater centralization, provincial administration also underwent a change. A separation between fiscal and military responsibilities started evolving. During the reign of Muhammad Tughluq fiscal responsibilities were partially withdrawn from the muqtis or walis and placed under central officers. According to Ibn Battuta, the iqta of Amroha was placed under two officers, one called amir (possibly in charge of the army and administration) and the other as wali-ul kharai (in charge of revenue collection). Muhammad Tughluq also ordered that the salary of the soldiers maintained by iqta holders be paid by the diwan-i wizarat to prevent fraud by the officers. Greater control also came to be

exercised over fiscal matters. The diwan's office, at the centre, received and examined detailed statements regarding income and expenditure in the provinces. It supervised the work of the revenue officials in the provinces. The provinces had a sahib-i diwan, whose office kept books of account and submitted information to the centre. It was assisted by officials like mutassarifs. The entire lower revenue staff was called karkun.

By the end of the thirteenth century contemporary sources refer to an administrative division, known as shiqq. We do not have adequate information about the exact nature of shiqq. However, by the time of Sher Shah (1540-1545 A.D.) shiqq had emerged as a well-defined administrative unit, known as sarkar. Administrative officials, mentioned with respect to shiqq, were shiqqdar and faujdar. The demarcation of their duties is not very clear.

According to Ibn Battuta, chauthuri was the head of hundred villages. This was the nucleus of the administrative unit later called pargana. The village was the smallest unit of administration. The functioning and administration of the village remained basically the same as it had existed in pre-Turkish times. The main village functionaries were khot, muqaddam (headman) and patwari. The judicial administration of the sub-division was patterned on that of the centre. Courts of the qazi and sadr functioned in the provinces. The kotwal maintained law and order. At the village level, the panchayat heard civil cases.

Architecture: Features

The most important source for the study of architecture is the surviving remains of buildings themselves. The characteristic features can be divided into three parts. These are:-

i) Arch and Dome :

The pre-Turkish forms of architecture (lintel and beam and corbelling), were replaced by true arches and vaults and the spired roofs (shikhar) by domes. The building of true arch requires stones or bricks to be laid as voussoirs in the shape of a curve and bound together firmly by a good binding material. This binding material was lime-mortar.

Arches are made in a variety of shapes, but in India the pointed form of the Islamic world was directly inherited. And sometime in second quarter of the 14th century, another variant of the

pointed form, the four-centred arch, was introduced by the Tughluqs in their buildings.'It remained in vogue till the end of the Sultanate.

ii) Building Material

In the masonry work, stone has been used abundantly. The foundations are mostly of rough and small rubble or, wherever it is available, of river boulders, while the superstructure is of dressed stone or roughly shaped coarsed stonework. However, in either case, the buildings were plastered all over. Percy Brown (Indian Architecture: Islamic Period, Bombay, 1968) has noted that in the buildings of the Khalji period a new method of stone masonry was used. This consisted of laying stones in two different courses that is headers and stretchers. This system was retained in subsequent buildings and became a characteristic of the building technique of the Mughals.

The material commonly used for plastering buildings was gypsum. Apparently lime-plaster was reserved for places that needed to be secured against the leakage of - water, such as roofs, indigo-vats, canals, drains, etc. In the later period, i.e. around 15th century, when highly finished stucco work became common, gypsum mortar was preferred for plaster work on the walls and the ceiling.

iii) Decoration

Decorative art in the Islamic buildings served the purpose of concealing the structure behind motifs rather than revealing it. Since the depiction of living beings was generally frowned upon, the elements of decoration were, in most cases, limited to:

a) calligraphy, b) geometry, and c) foliation.

Calligraphy is an important element of the decorative art in the buildings of this period. The Quranic sayings are inscribed on buildings in an angular, sober and monumental script, known as kufi. They may be found in any part of the building-frames of the doors, ceilings, wall panels, niches etc., and in variety of materials stone, stucco and painting.

Geometric shapes in abstract form are used in these buildings in a bewildering variety of combinations. The motifs indicate incorporation of visual principles: repetition, symmetry, and generation of continuous patterns. It has been suggested Dalu Jones (*Architecture of the Islamic World*, ed. George Michell, London, 1978) that the generating source of these geometric designs is the circle, which could be developed into a square, a triangle or a polygon. These forms are then elaborated by multiplication and subdivision, by rotation and by symmetrical arrangements

Of the foliations, the dominant form of decoration employed in Sultanate buildings, is the arabesque. It is characterised by a continuous stem which splits regularly, producing a series of leafy secondary stems which can in turn split again or reintegrate into the main stem. The repetition of this pattern produces a beautifully balanced design with a three dimensional effect.

The most magnificent building constructed by the Turks in the thirteenth century was the Qutab Minar. This tapering tower, originally 71.4 metre high, was begun by Aibak, and completed by Iltutmish. Although traditions of building towers are to be found both in India and West Asia, the Qutab Minar is unique in many ways. It derives its effect mainly from the skilful manner in which the balconies have been projected yet linked with the main tower, the use of red and white sandstone and marble in panels and in the top stages, and the ribbed effect.

The Khalji period saw a lot of building activity. Alauddin built his capital at Siri, a few kilometres away from the site around the Qutab. Unfortunately, hardly anything of this city survives now. Alauddin planned a tower twice the height of the Qutab, but did not live to complete it. But he added an entrance door to the Qutab. This door, which is called the Alai Darwaza, has arches of very pleasing proportions. It also contains a dome which, for the first time, was built on correct scientific lines. Thus, the art of building the arch and the dome on scientific lines had been mastered by the Indian craftsmen by this time.

There was great building activity in the Tughlaq period which marked the climax of the Delhi Sultanat as well as the beginning of its decline. Ghiyasuddin and Muhammad Tughlaq built the huge palace-fortress complex called Tughlaqabad. By blocking the passage of the Yamuna, a huge artificial lake was created around it. The tomb of Ghiyasuddin marks a new trend in architecture. To have a good skyline, the building was put upon a high platform. Its beauty was heightened by a marble dome.

A striking feature of the Tughlaq architecture was the sloping walls. This is called 'batter' and gives the effect of strength and solidity to the building. However, we do not find any 'batter' in the buildings of Firuz Tughlaq. A second feature of the Tughlaq architecture was the deliberate attempt to combine the principles of the arch, and the lintel and beam in their buildings. This is found in a marked manner in the buildings of Firuz Tughlaq. The Hauz Khas was a pleasure resort and had a huge lake around it. It also had a Madarsa. The same is to be found in some buildings of Firuz Shah's new fort which is now called the Kotla. The Tughlaqs did not generally use the costly red sandstone in their buildings but the cheaper and more easily available greystone. Since it was not easy to carve this type of stone, the Tughlaq buildings have a minimum of decoration. But the decorative device found in all the buildings of Firuz is the lotus.

Many grand mosques were also built in this period. It is not possible to describe all of them here. What is worth noting is that, by this time, an independent style of architecture had emerged in India, combining many of the new devices brought by the Turks with the indigenous forms. The Lodis developed this tradition further. Both the arch, and the lintel and beam are used in their buildings. Balconies, kiosks and eaves of the Rajasthani-Gujarati style are also used. Another device used by the Lodis was placing their buildings, especially tombs, on a high platform, thus giving the building a feeling of size as well as a better skyline. Some of the tombs were placed in the midst of gardens. The Lodi Garden in Delhi is a fine example of this. Some of the tombs were of an octagonal shape.