

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF INDIA FROM 1206 TO 1947 A.D.

UNIT I Social Condition under the Sultanate period.

The Delhi Sultanate was an Islamic empire based in Delhi that stretched over large parts of the Indian Subcontinent for 320 years (1206-1526) five dynasties ruled over the Delhi Sultanate sequentially. The Mamluk Slave dynasty (1206-1290) It covered parts of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and some parts of southern Nepal.

As a successor to the Ghurid Sultanate, the Delhi Sultanate was originally one among a number of principalities ruled by Turkic slave generals of Muhammad Chori, who had conquered large parts of northern India including Yildiz, Aibek and Qubacha that had inherited and divided the Ghurid territories amongst themselves. After a long period of infighting the Mamluks were overthrown in the Khalji revolution which marked the transfer of power from the Turks to a heterogeneous Indo-Muslim nobility. Both of the resulting Khalji and Tughlaq dynasties respectively saw a new wave of rapid.

The Delhi Sultanate continued the governmental conventions of the previous Hindu polities, claiming paramountcy rather than exclusive supreme control. Accordingly it did not interfere with the autonomy and military of conquered Hindu rulers and freely included Hindu vassal and officials.

The Sultanate enforced Islamic religious prohibitions of anthropomorphic representations in art.

The army of the Delhi sultans initially consisted of nomadic Turkic Mamluk military slaves belonging to Muhammad of Ghor.

Many historians argue that the Delhi Sultanate was responsible for making India more multicultural and cosmopolitan. The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in India has been compared to the expansion of the Mongol Empire and called "part of a larger" trend occurring throughout much of Eurasia in which nomadic people migrated from the steppes of Inner Asia and became politically dominant.

② Literature under the Sultanate

The Delhi Sultanate literature began with the rise of Persian. People to the throne of the Sultanate of Delhi naturally resulted in the spread of the Persian language in India. It was the official language and soon literary works in the language began to appear. Initially Persian literature talked about topics which were familiar to those from Persia. Sanskrit continued to remain an important language of the time and despite the increasing influence of Persian it was able to hold its ground. Many preferred Sanskrit poets as they were more established and experienced than those that worked in the new languages. A centre for Sanskrit learning opened at Mithila, north Bihar. It preserved the tradition of classical Sanskrit literature and kept it alive. Sanskrit was however beginning to lose its popularity as an intellectual language and the Brahmins struggled to find patrons to keep it alive.

There was also a significant amount of work taking place in regional languages. Both Sanskrit and Persian were languages that the average person did not understand. Various regional languages flourished and soon literary work in these languages began to take place.

③ Social and Cultural life under the Bahmani Kingdom:

Rulers of the dynasty believed that they descended from Bahman, the mythological figure of Greater Iranian legend and lore. The Bahmani Sultans were patrons of the Persian language, culture and literature and some members of the dynasty became well-versed in the language and composed its literature in that language.

The first Sultan Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah is noted to have captured 1,000 singing and dancing girls from Hindu temples after he battled the northern Carnatic chieftains. The later Bahmans also enslaved civilian women and children in wars, many of them were converted to Islam in captivity. The craftspersons of Bidar were so famed for their inlay work on copper and silver that it came to be known as Bidri.

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The Bahmani rulers built beautiful tombs and mosques in Bidar and Gulbarga. They also built many Forts at Daulatabad, Golconda and Raichur. The architecture was highly influenced by Persian archite. They invited architects from Persia, Turkey and Arabia. Some of the magnificent structures built by the Bahmanis were Jamimashjid at Gulbarga Chand Minar and Mahmud Gawan Madrasa at Bidar. The Gol Gumbaz in Bijapur is a beautiful specimen of Bahmani architecture. It is the tomb or mausoleum of Muhammad Adil Shah II who ruled the Sultanate of Bijapur. The dome of Gol Gumbaz is circular in shape as is supported by the eight intersecting arcs. The acoustics here are so good that even a whisper echoes.

(4) Literature, Society and religion under the Vijayanagar rule:

Literature the Sanskrit language and literature were promoted during this period of Indian history with Sanskrit acting as a kind of lingua franca that united the different regions. However this did not replace regional language. Regional languages such as Telugu, Kannada, and Tamil were also used in literature. Literature flourished during the empire as original works were produced and translations of others into regional languages were made, making literature more accessible.

Religion the Vijayanagar Empire saw a resurgence or renaissance of Hindu religion which would dominate throughout the empire's existence. However, a hallmark of this empire, and something to note is that it was tolerant of other religious practices and did not impose their religious beliefs on others. They did create a protective barrier between the Vijayanagar Empire and the Mughal Empire. Mughals often used coercion, Islamic law heavy taxes, and aggression to convert the conquered to their faith and those Hindu kingdoms that they had subdued had suffered greatly.

Reference Book

- 1) P.N. Chopra :- Society and culture during the Mughal Age
- 2) A.B.M. Habibullah :- The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India.