

Component-I (A) – Personal details:

The cover features the Pathshala logo (पाठशाला) and the MHRD logo. It includes the text: 'A Gateway to all Post Graduate Courses', 'An MHRD Project under its National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT)', 'Subject: INDIAN CULTURE', 'Production of Courseware', 'Content for Post Graduate Courses', 'Paper : Outlines of Indian History', and 'Module : Origin and Foundation of Mughal Empire : Babar, Humayun and Sher Shah Interregnum'. There is also a small image collage and the motto 'एतद् विद्यायां विद्यते'.

The Development Team section is framed with a decorative border. It lists the following roles and names:

Principal Investigator	Prof. P. Bhaskar Reddy Dept. of AIHC & A, S.V.University, Tirupati.
Paper Coordinator	Prof. P. Bhaskar Reddy Dept. of AIHC & A, S.V.University, Tirupati.
Content Writer	Dr. Mohammad Nazrul Bari Central University of Karnataka, Gulbarga.
Content Reviewer	Prof. P. Neerajakshulu Naidu Dept. of AIHC & A, S.V.University, Tirupati.

Component-I (B) – Description of module:

Subject Name	Indian Culture
Paper Name	Outlines of Indian History
Module Name/Title	Origin and Foundation of Mughal Empire: Babar, Humayun and Sher Shah Interregnum
Module Id	I C/ OIH / 25
Pre-requisites	Knowledge about the establishment of Mughal Empire with the problems faced by Humayun and achievements of Sher Shah
Objectives	To know the circumstances under which Babur invaded India; To describe the reasons for the success of the Mughals against Indian rulers; To list the challenges faced by Humayun after Babur's death; To describe the events leading to recapture of India by Humayun and To know the achievements of Sher Shah, the founder of Sur dynasty
Keywords	Babur,/ Mughal Empire/ Humayun/ Sher Shah/ Ibrahim Lodi / Battle of Panipat

E-text (Quadrant-I)**1. Introduction**

Between the 13th and 16th centuries, 33 different sultans ruled this divided territory from their seat in Delhi. In 1398, Timur the Lame destroyed Delhi. The city was so completely devastated that according to one witness, "for months, not a bird moved in the city." Delhi eventually was rebuilt. But it was not until the 16th century that a leader arose who would unify the empire.

In this lesson you will study about the conquest of India by a new ruling dynasty-the Mughals. The Mughal Empire ruled over India from the early 16th century to the 19th century and controlled most of the India and parts of Afghanistan. The Mughals were led by an able military commander and administrator from Central Asia named Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur. His successors were successful in establishing an all India empire gradually. We will study the details of this process of conquests and consolidation in this lesson. Let us begin with the advent of Babur in India.

2. Babur

Babur was born on 14 February 1483 in the town of Andijan in the Fergana Valley in Uzbekistan. He belonged to the Mongol tribe that also embraced Turkish and Persian. Babur is a Arabic word which means tiger, the nickname given to him because of his attitude shown in battles which he fought there before coming to India. His actual and full name was Zahiruddin Muhammad, yet he was commonly known as Babur. It is said that Babur born, extremely strong and physically fit. He was so powerful that he could allegedly carry two men, one on each of his shoulders, and then climb slopes on the run. According to the legend that Babur swam across every major river he encountered.

His father, Omar Sheik, was king of Ferghana, a district of what is now Russian Turkestan. Omar died in 1495, and Babur, though only twelve years of age, succeeded to the throne. An attempt made by his uncles to dislodge him proved unsuccessful, and no sooner was the young sovereign firmly settled than he began to meditate an extension of his own dominions. In 1497 he attacked and gained possession of Samarkand, but in 1501 his most formidable enemy, Shaibani (Sheibani) Khan, ruler of the Uzbeks, defeated him in a great engagement and drove him from Samarkand. For three years he wandered about trying in vain to recover his lost possessions and finally at last, in the year 1504, he gathered some troops, and crossed the snowy Hindu Kush mountain besieged and captured the strong city of Kabul. But due to the political uncertainties in Central Asia, Babur finally took decision to reassemble his army of 12,000 strong, with some pieces of artillery and marched towards India. Ibrahim, with 100,000 soldiers and numerous elephants, advanced against him. The great battle was fought at Panipat on the April 21, 1526, when Ibrahim was slain and his army routed. Babur at once took possession of Agra and established the Mughal dynasty in the year 1526 AD.

Babur the Mughal had many interests. He wrote his memoir *Tujuk I Babari* in Turkish language. His memoirs reflect that he had an interest in reading, society, hunting, nature, politics and economics. He had wonderful ideas about architecture, administration, and civilization. Babur was a great patron of cultural activities, and welcomed poets, authors and litterateurs at his court. He was adept in Arabic, Turkish and Persian. Although Babur ruled only four years in India, his love of nature led him to create gardens of great beauty which became an intrinsic part of every Mughal fort, palace and state buildings during the centuries that followed. While alive, Emperor Babur laid out the classical Mughal-style gardens located on a high point in west Kabul which comprised a series of beautiful landscaped hillside. He suffered from ill health during the last years of his life and died at the age of 47 on 26 December 1530. He was succeeded by his son, Humayun.

2.1 Achievements:

The achievements of Babur can be stated as follows:

- Babur established the Mughal dynasty in India by defeating Ibrahim Lodi, the last Delhi Sultan, bringing an end to the Delhi Sultanate, in the 1st Battle of Panipat in 1526 AD.
- In 1527 AD, Babur also defeated the Rajput confederacy which was formed by Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar along with a number of other Rajput kingdoms like Marwar, Gwalior, Ajmer, Ambar, etc. under the leadership of Mahmud Lodi, the brother of Ibrahim Lodi, in the Battle of Khanua.
- In 1529 AD, Babur defeated the Afghans i.e. of Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa, etc., who has formed a powerful alliance with Mahmud Lodi, in the Battle of Gogra. It temporarily weakened the anti-Babur strategies and saved the fledgling Mughal reign. Due to the conquests of Babur, the Mughal Empire extended from Kabul in the west to Gogra in the east, from the Himalayas in the north to Gwalior in the south.

2.1.1 The Battle of Panipat (21 April, 1526)

Babur marched upon Delhi via Sirhind and reached Panipat village near Delhi where the fate of India has been thrice decided. He took up a position which was strategically highly advantageous.

Sultan Ibrahim also reached Panipat at the head of a large army. Babur had an army of 12000 men while the forces of Ibrahim were immensely superior in number one lakh according to Babur's estimate. The two armies faced each other for eight days but neither side took the offensive. At last Babur's patience was tired out and he resolved on prompt action. During the night of the 20th April Babur sent out 4 to 5 thousand of his men to night attack on the Afghan camp which failed in its object but provoked Ibrahim Lodi. He ordered his army to advance for an attack. On approaching close to Babur's lines he found the enemy entrenched, showing no sign of movement. He suddenly grew nervous and ordered his army to halt; this created confusion in his ranks. Babur took advantage of the confusion and took up the offensive. The battle was thus joined on April 21st 1526. Ibrahim's soldiers fought valiantly but stood no chance of success in the face of Babur's artillery and superior war tactics. Within a few hours about 15 to 16 thousand soldiers lay dead along with their leader Ibrahim Lodi.

The first battle of Panipat occupies a place of great importance in the history of medieval India. The military power of the Lodi's was completely shattered. It led to the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India. As far as Babur was concerned, Panipat marks the end of the second stage of his project of the conquest of Northern India. Though after his victory he became king of Delhi and Agra yet his real work was to begin after Panipat. He had to

encounter a few formidable enemies before he could become king of Hindustan but Panipat gave him a valid claim to its sovereignty.

2.1.2 Causes of Babur's success

Causes of Babur's success in the battle are numerous. Babur was seasoned General whereas Ibrahim was a head strong, inexperienced youth. As Babur remarks he was 'an inexperienced man, careless in his movements, who marched without order, halted or retired without method and engaged without foresight. Babur was the master of a highly evolved system of warfare which was the result of a scientific synthesis of the tactics of the several Central Asian people. While Ibrahim fought according to the old system then in existence in the country. Babur had a park of artillery consisting of big guns and small muskets while Ibrahim's soldiers were absolutely innocent of its use. Ibrahim did not get the backing of his people which weakened his power. Moreover his army was organized on clannish basis. The troops lacked the qualities of trained and skillful soldiers. Babur was right when he recorded in his diary that the Indian soldiers knew how to die and not how to fight. On the other hand Babur's army was well trained and disciplined and shared the ambition of conquering rich Hindustan.

2.2 Post Panipat Problems

The victory at Panipat was quickly followed by Babur's occupation of Delhi and Agra. On 27th April 1526 Khutba was read in the name of Babur in Delhi and alms were distributed to the poor and the needy. Offerings were sent to the holy places in Mecca, Medina and Samarqand. But Babur's real task began after Panipat. Taking advantage of the confusion that followed Ibrahim's death many Afghan chiefs established them independent. Moreover as Babur proceeded towards Agra the people in the country side fled in fear and he could get provisions for his men and fodder for his animals with great difficulty. The soldiers and peasantry ran away in fear. Babur's main task was to restore confidence among the people. Some of his own followers began to desert him on account of the hot climate of country. Babur showed his usual patience and strength of character and made it clear to them that he was determined to stay in India. With the result that most of them decided to sink or swim with their leader. The determination of Babur to stay In India was bound to bring him into conflict with the greatest Rajput ruler Rana Sangha of Mewar.

2.2.1 Conflict with the Rajputs - The Battle of Khanwa (March 16, 1527)

The battle of Panipat had no doubt broken the back bone of the Afghan power in India yet a large number of the Turk Afghan nobles were still at large. Bihar had become the centre of their power. But nearer the capital Babur had to face another threat to his newly conquered kingdom. This threat was posed by the Rajputs under their leader Rana Sanga. He had once defeated the forces of Ibrahim Lodi and was desirous of establishing his rule in the country.

On the eve of the battle of Panipat he had sent greetings to Babur but Babur's decision to settle down in India dashed his hopes to ground and he began to prepare himself for a contest with the Mughals. Rana Sanga marched to Bayana. He was joined by some Muslim supporters of the Lodi dynasty. But all the Afghan chiefs could not combine under the Rajputs and this made Babur's task easy. Rana Sanga was certainly a more formidable enemy than Ibrahim Lodi. Babur as Lane-poole points out "was now to meet warriors of a higher type than any he had encountered. The Rajputs energetic, Chivalrous, fond of battle and bloodshed, animated by strong regional spirit were ready to meet face to face boldest veterans of the camp and were at all times prepared to lay down their lives for their honour. "Babur advanced to Sikri. The advance guard of Babur was defeated by the Rajputs and Babur's small army was struck with terror. But Babur was indomitable and he at once infused fresh courage and enthusiasm into the hearts of his soldiers. He broke his drinking cups, poured out all the liquor that he had with him on the ground and promised to give up wine for the rest of his life. He made a heroic appeal to them to fight together with faith in victory and god. This had its desired effect. All the officers swore by the Holy Quran to stand firm in this contest. The decisive battle was fought at Khanwa, a village near Agra on 16th March, 1527. Once again by the use of similar tactics as at Panipat, Babur won a decisive victory over the Rajputs. Rana escaped but died broken hearted after about two years.

Importance of the Battle of Khanwa

This battle supplemented Babur's work at Panipat and it was certainly more decisive in its results. The defeat of the Rajputs deprived them of the opportunity to regain political ascendancy in the country forever and facilitated Babur's task in India and made possible the foundation of the Mughal Rule. Rushbrook William is right when he says that before the battle of Khanwa "the occupation of Hindustan might have looked upon as mere episode in Babur's career of adventure; but from henceforth it becomes the keynote of his activities for the remainder of his life. His days of wandering in search of fortune are now passed away; the fortune is his and he has but to show himself worthy of it. And it is also significant of Babur's grasp of vital issues that from henceforth the centre of gravity of his power is shifted from Kabul to Hindustan," Thus within a year Babur had struck two decisive blows which shattered the powers of two great organised forces. The battle of Panipat had utterly ruined the Afghan power in India, the battle of Khanwa crushed the Rajputs. Medini Rai the Rajput chief of Chanderi and a close associate of Rana Sanga had escaped from Khanwa. He took shelter in the fort of Chanderi with a contingent of about 5 thousand Rajputs. Babur besieged the fort and conquered it in January 1528.

2.2.2 The Battle of Ghaghra, May 1529

We have already noted that Babur had hurried to meet the Rajputs and thus had left the task of thorough subjugation of the Afghans incomplete. Now he was free to settle his scores with

them, the Afghans of Bihar were led by Mahmud Lodi, the younger brother of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, Babur met the Afghans in the battle of Ghagra (near Patna) in May 1529 and it was an easy victory. Thus in these battles Babur had reduced Northern India to submission and became the ruler of a territory extending from Oxus to the Ghagra and from Himalayas to Gwalior. But he was not destined to enjoy his hard won empire for long. The strain of continuous warfare, administrative liabilities and excessive drinking till the battle of Khanwa had bad effect on his health. He passed away on 26th December, 1530 at the age of 47. His body was taken to Kabul and buried in one of his favorite gardens.

2.3 Contribution:

Art's and Architecture: Mughal Architecture influenced greatly in Babur's rule. Mughal architecture under Babur was a beginning of an imperial movement, impressed by local influences. Babur's elegant and stylish buildings evolved gradually because of the gifted artists in those provinces. Babur constructed many mosques around India. Three of the famous mosques are the Babri Mosque, the Panipat Mosque and the Jama Masjid.

Babri Mosque:

The Babri mosque was built in Ayodhya, a city in Faizabad. It was constructed in 1527 by the Governor of Babur, Mir Baqi. Babri Masjid was a large imposing structure with three domes, one central and two secondary. It is surrounded by two high walls, running parallel to each other and enclosing a large central courtyard with a deep well, which was known for its cold and sweet water. On the high entrance of the domed structure are fixed two stone tablets which bear two inscriptions in Persian declaring that this structure was built by one Mir Baqi on the orders of Babur. The walls of the Babri Mosque are made of coarse-grained whitish sandstone blocks, rectangular in shape, while the domes are made of thin and small burnt bricks. Both these structural ingredients are plastered with thick lime stone paste mixed with coarse.

Bagh-e-Babur:

The Gardens of Babur locally called Bagh- e-Babur is a historic park in Kabul, Afghanistan, and also the last resting-place of the first Mughal emperor Babur. The gardens are thought to have been developed around 1528. The site of Bagh e Babur is thought to be that of the "paradise." It is one of several gardens that Babur had laid out for recreation and pleasure during his life, while choosing this site as his last resting place.

Panipat Mosque:

The mosque that Babur himself provided is located in Panipat, presently laced in Karnal District of Haryana State. The mosque has a rectangular prayer chamber which is dominated by a large central dome. The northwest and the southwest corners of the mosque were

marked by octagonal towers crowned by domed pavilions, although only one survives. It was completed in 1528 by Babur.

3. Humayun's Early Life and Accession:

Nasiruddin Muhammad Humayun was the eldest son of Babur and he had three brothers – Kamran, Askari and Hindal. Humayun was born in Kabul in 1508. His father made best arrangements for his education and training in state-craft. He learnt Turkish, Arabic and Persian. As a boy he was associated by his father with civil and military administration. At the age of 20 he was appointed the governor of Badakhshan. Humayun took part in his father's campaigns and battles; both in the battle of Panipat and Khanwa he was among the chief commanders of the invading army. After the battle of Khanwa he was sent back to take charge of Badakhshan but he returned to India in 1529 without the permission of his father. Before his death in December 1530 Babur nominated Humayun as his successor. Humayun thus ascended the throne at Agra on December 30, 1530 four days after the death of Babur.

3.1 Challenges before Humayun

The throne inherited by Humayun was not a bed of roses. Along with the empire he inherited many difficulties which were further complicated as he was not a very gifted general nor he was an excellent statesman.

After the death of Babur, a war of succession started. Every prince asserted as independent after getting governorship of various provinces. The three brothers of Humayun also desired the throne. Babur had not left behind him a well organized and consolidated empire. During his four years in India he had been busy in conquests only. He had neither time nor inclination to establish a new system of administration. The Mughal army also was not a national one. It was a mixed body of adventures, viz Moguls, Persians, Afghans, Indians, Turks and Uzbeks. Such an army was not dependable. Humayun's court also was full of nobles who had plans for the possession of the throne. More dangerous than the nobles were the princes of the royal blood. His three brothers coveted the throne and added to the difficulties of Humayun. Besides them Humayun's cousin brothers Muhammed Zaman Mirza and Muhamad Sultan Mirza also considered their claim to the throne as good as those of the sons of Babur.

The newly founded Mughal state in India was threatened by numerous external enemies. The Afghans had been defeated in the battle of Panipat and in the battle of Ghagra but they were not completely crushed. They refused to submit to the Mughal domination and they proclaimed Mahmud Khan Lodi, brother of Ibrahim Lodi as their king. Sher Khan Sur (later known as Sher Shah Suri) was the most ambitious of the whole Afghan party. He had already entered upon a military career and was making an effort to organize the Afghan. He was soon to drive Humayun into exile and occupy the throne. The Mughal authority was also

threatened by the growing power of Gujarat under Bahadur Shah. He was a young and ambitious prince of an extremely rich kingdom. As he had plenty of resources at his command, he aimed at completely taking control of India.

Thus, when Humayun ascended the throne he was faced with a number of internal and external enemies. The need of the hour was a ruler possessed of military genius, political wisdom and diplomatic skill. Unfortunately Humayun lacked all these qualities. He lacked foresight and determination. He could not take quick decisions. He failed to command full control confidence of his subjects and soldiers.

3.2 Wars of Humayun (1530-1540)

From the beginning of his reign Humayun committed a series of mistakes one after another which ultimately cost him his throne and forced him into exile in 1540. Soon after his accession to the throne he divided his empire among his brothers. Kamran was given the governorship of Kabul and Kandahar and in addition was permitted to take the possession of the Punjab and North Western frontier of India. This was a mistake on his part because this created a barrier between him and the lands beyond the Afghan hills and he could not draw troops from central Asia. Askari was given Sambhal while Hindal was given Alwar. He also increased the jagir of every one of his armies. Babur had set a bad precedent by allocating vast tracts of land to his nobles as personal estates in return for the services rendered by them to the throne. Humayun failed to appreciate the fatal consequences of the policy of large scale distribution of territory among military officials. This later on caused him endless worry. Humayun instead of consolidating his position started with a policy of aggressive warfare.

Expedition to Kalinjar (1531)

Within six months of his accession Humayun undertook an expedition against Kalinjar in Bundelkhand, whose raja was suspected to be in sympathy with the Afghans. After a siege of about six months the raja submitted. Humayun made peace with him and accepted huge indemnity from him. The expedition exposed the weakness of the Mughal army as the raja could not be defeated.

First siege of Chunar (1532)

Meanwhile the Afghans of Bihar under Mahmud Lodi were marching on the Mughal province of Jaunpur. Humayun met the Afghan forces and defeated them in the battle of Daurah (or Dadrah) in August 1532. Then he besieged the fort of Chunar which was held by the Afghan chief Sher Khan. The siege lasted for four months and like Kalinjar this fort also could not be conquered by the Mughal army. Humayun abandoned the siege and accepted submission of Sher Khan. He lost a splendid opportunity of crushing the Afghan power for which he had to pay heavily later on.

Battles with Bahadur Shah of Gujarat (1535-1536)

By now Bahadur Shah of Gujarat had consolidated his position. He had already conquered Malwa (1531) and Raisen (1532) and had defeated the Sisodia chief of Chittor (1533). He had openly given shelter and help to many afghan refugees and enemies of Humayun. Humayun therefore decided to proceed against Bahadur Shah (end of 1534) who was at that time conducting a siege of Chittor.

He waited till Chittor fell to Bahadur Shah (March, 1535). After its fall Humayun started his operations against Bahadur shah who was besieged in his camp. His supplies ran short and he was faced with starvation. He fled and took shelter in, the fort of Mandu, Humayun besieged fort of Mandu and captured it in April, 1535. Humayun chased him from Mandu to Champaner and Ahmedabad and then to Combay till he was compelled to seek refuge in the Island of Diu (August 1535). The capture of Mandu and Champaner were great achievements on the part of Humayun. He appointed Askari as the governor of the newly conquered territories. Askari failed to restore law and order. He was too weak to retain Gujarat and internal dissensions broke out among the Mughals which enabled Bahadur Shah to recover his position. The local Gujarati Chiefs who were dis-satisfied with Mughal rule helped Bahadur shah. The result was that Gujarat was completely lost in 1536. Humayun found that it was impossible to retain Malwa as well so he left Mandu in May 1536. Thus the entire province of Malwa was also lost "One year had seen the rapid conquest of the two great provinces; the next saw them quickly lost," Humayun therefore failed to establish his authority in the west. Now he turned his attention to meet the organized strength of the Afghans under Sher Khan.

Contest with Sher Khan (1537-1540)

While Humayun was busy with Bahadur shah of Gujarat, Sher Khan had strengthened his position in Bihar and Bengal. He had already made himself the master of Bihar and had twice defeated the King of Bengal in 1534 and 1537. The repeated successes of the Afghan hero convinced Humayun who had been then spending his days at Agra without any activity after his return from Mandu in August 1536, of the Afghan danger in the east. He therefore decided to march against Sher Khan in 1537. He besieged the fort of Chunar for the second time in October 1537. A strong garrison left by Sher Khan at Chunar heroically defended the fort for six months though it was ultimately captured by Humayun in March, 1538. During this period Sher Khan was busy in reducing Gaur (Bengal). Sher Khan also captured the fortress of Rohtas (Bihar) and sent his family and wealth there. Humayun now turned his attention towards Bengal. For some time he was undecided for the move. Ultimately he made up his mind to conquer Bengal. The road to Gaur was locked by Jalal Khan, son of Sher Khan. There was fighting and Jalal Khan retired. Sher khan during this period tried to compensate his loss of Bengal by occupying the Mughal possessions in Bihar, Jaunpur and plundering

the country as far west as Kannauj and cut off the communication between Agra and Bengal. When Humayun realized the dangerous position in which he was placed he decided to return to Agra immediately. Sher Khan blocked the road to Agra and only a decisive victory could help Humayun to reach Agra.

Battle of Chausa (June 26,1539)

When Sher Shah heard of Humayun's retreat he collected his troops at Rohtas and decided to give him battle. Humayun was advised by his generals to move along the northern bank of river Ganges up to Jaunpur and then cross over to the other side and then contact Sher Khan but Humayun's pride came in the way and he transferred his entire army to the southern bank of Ganges in order to put pressure on Sher Khan, and to make use of a better route, the old grand trunk road to Agra. The road passed through a low lying area which used to be flooded during the rainy season. Humayun learnt about Sher Khan's approach when he was near Chausa. The two armies face each other for about three months and none of them started the fighting. The rainy season was approaching. When the rains started the Mughal camp was flooded. Sher Khan was waiting for the opportunity to strike. On 26th June, 1539 the battle of Chausa was fought. Thousands of Mughal soldiers died and many of them drowned in the flood waters of the Ganges. Humayun himself had narrow escape. His life was saved by a water carrier (Nizam) who offered him his *mashak* (the inflated skin) for swimming across the river. It is said that on reaching Agra Humayun rewarded the water carrier with the grant of kingship for half a day and permitted him to sit on the throne and distributed rich presents to his friends and relatives according to his desire.

The Battle of Kanauj (17 May,1540)

By the victory at Chausa, Sher Khan's ambition was immensely widened. The Afghan nobles pressed Sher Khan to assume full sovereignty. He assumed the title of Sher Shah and prepared to march upon Delhi and Agra. The battle of Chausa convinced Humayun of Sher Khan's formidable power. Humayun on reaching Agra in spite of his best efforts failed to secure the co-operation of his brothers. Somehow Humayun managed to raise an army to fight against Sher Khan. He could not delay his march much longer because Sher Khan was steadily advancing towards the capital. Humayun had to move towards Kanauj with his army in order to check the advance of his adversary. He set up his military camp at Bhojpur near Kanauj in April 1540 while Sher Shah brought his forces to halt on the southern bank of the Ganges. Humayun again committed the mistake of ordering his army to cross over to the southern bank of the river without taking into consideration the approaching monsoon. The two forces faced each other for over a month. During this period Humayun's army swelled up to about two lakhs although most of his men were poorly equipped and were not trained. On May 15, 1540 there was a very heavy shower of rain and the Mughal camp was flooded. As the Mughals were preparing to shift to a higher place Sher Shah ordered his troops to launch

the attack. Thus on 17 May, 1540 the battle of Kannauj was fought. The Mughal army was severely defeated by the Afghans. Most of the Mughal soldiers fled for their lives without fighting while a large number of them drowned in the Ganges. Sher Shah's victory was complete.

Exile in Persia

Narrowly escaping his brother's forces, Humayun reached Persia, where Shah Tahmasp offered him a hearty reception. Humayun had brought about his own downfall. First, he should never have divided his kingdom among his treacherous brothers. Second, he seems to have believed, until as late as the early months of 1539, that Sher Shah was a mere upstart and could easily be stopped. Third, on reaching Gaur, Humayun had wasted more than eight months during which Sher Shah occupied the country from Teliagarhi to Kanauj. Humayun had shown little determination in bringing down his greatest rival.

Eventually, Humayun would conquer his brothers. When Kamran was later arrested, Humayun had him blinded and exiled to Mecca. Kamran would die in Arabia in 1557. Humayun's other brother Askari would also be sent to Mecca, while an Afghan would kill Hindal. Thus, Humayun would finally be free of his dangerous rivals, who had been an important link in his expulsion from India.

During his exile in Persia, Humayun's great rival Sher Shah, who had established a vast and powerful empire supported by a wise system of administration, died in 1545. But Sher Shah's son, Islam Shah could not keep his Afghan nobles in check. When Islam Shah died in 1553, the Afghan Empire was well on its way to decay. Aware of this disintegration, Humayun was eager to return to India with newly recruited armies. Finally Shah Tahmasp of Persia offered him a force of 14,000 men to regain his lost territory. When Humayun crossed the Indus River, Bairam Khan, the most efficient and faithful of his officers, joined him. Many commanders from Qandahar came to help. While all around there was frequent strife, its governor maintained Qandahar as the undisputed base of Mughal operations. Thus with Persian help and Bairam Khan's support, Humayun was in a position to capture lost provinces. In February of 1554, he occupied the Punjab, including Lahore, without any serious opposition. At the news of the Mughal success, the Afghan leader Sikandar Shah sent detachments against the Mughals, but at every encounter the Afghans were beaten. According to Mughal historians, Sikander's armies were larger than the Mughals, but the superior Mughal tactics gave Bairam Khan a resounding victory on June 22, 1555. That same year, after an interval of 15 years, Humayun reconquered the Punjab, Delhi, and Agra, and reoccupied the throne of Delhi. He now appointed Akbar, his young son and heir apparent, governor of Punjab and assigned Akbar's private tutor, Bairam Khan, to assist him. This step was necessary in order to put down Sikandar Sur whose army had swelled and who was carrying on expeditions in the Punjab.

3.3 Restoration of Mughal Power

Humayun's second reign lasted only seven months. Still surrounded by Afghan enemies, the supporters of the Sur dynasty, he had recovered only part of his dominion. The most difficult task was that of establishing a firm system of administration and winning the sympathy of the people. There was now one advantage. With his brothers dead or banished, there was nowhere for the loyalty of his followers to swerve. He rewarded his friends and supporters. Bairam Khan was then created Khan-Khanan, the lord of lords.

During this time, Humayun selected sites for several observatories. With poetry almost the lingua franca of court life, discussions took place in the building called the Sher Mandal that was turned into a library. Here his valuable manuscripts were kept in safe custody; here Mir Sayyid Ali taught drawing to Akbar. In fact, both Humayun and Akbar took lessons in drawing. It was under two Persians, Khwaja Abdus Samad and Mir Sayyid Ali, that Indian artists undertook the Dastan-i-Amir-Hamzah, the first great series of paintings in what is now known as the Mughal School of art.

During Humayun's five-year absence, Sher Shah had greatly improved the system of provincial government and revenue collection. Humayun wanted to recreate the system, maintaining Sher Shah's village and district administration, while dividing the domain into provinces, each with its own capital. But, on January 24, 1556, in pious response to the sacred call of the *muazzin* for evening prayer, Humayun, while hurriedly descending from his library in Delhi, stumbled down the stairs. Two days later, in the words of historian Lane-Poole, he "tumbled out of life as he had tumbled through it." Since Humayun had not had time to introduce reforms, it was now left to his 13-year-old son Akbar to fulfil his intentions, building an enduring administrative edifice on Babur, Sher Shah, and Humayun's foundations.

Among the first six Great Mughals, the image of Humayun is that of the nonentity, the one obvious failure. He was impetuous as well as indecisive. With all his weaknesses and failings, Humayun deserves a significant place in Indian history. The restoration of Mughal power paved the way for the splendid imperialism of Akbar. The Indo-Persian contact, which Humayan stimulated and reinforced, was of far-reaching consequence in the history of Indian civilization. Humayun also added to the development of Mughal architecture. Aesthetically inclined, he undertook in the early years of his reign, the building of a new "asylum of the wise and intelligent persons." It was to consist of a magnificent palace of seven stories, surrounded by delightful gardens and orchards of such elegance and beauty that its fame might draw the people from the remotest parts of the world.

4. Sher Shah Suri

Sher Shah Suri, whose original name was Farid was the founder of the Suri dynasty. Son of a petty jagirdar, neglected by his father and ill treated by his step-mother, he very successfully challenged the authority of Mughal emperor Humayun, drove him out of India and occupied the throne of Delhi. All this clearly demonstrates his extra-ordinary qualities of his hand, head and heart. Once again Sher Shah established the Afghan Empire which had been taken over by Babur.

4.1 Sher Shah's early career:

The intrigues of his mother compelled the young Farid Khan to leave Sasaram (Bihar), the jagir of his father. He went to Jaunpur for studies. In his studies, he so distinguished himself that the subedar of Jaunpur was greatly impressed. He helped him to become the administrator of his father's jagir which prospered by his efforts. His step-mother's jealousy forced him to search for another employment and he took service under Bahar Khan, the ruler of South Bihar, who gave him the title of Sher Khan for his bravery in killing a tiger single-handed.

But the intrigues of his enemies compelled him to leave Bihar and join the camp of Babur in 1527. He rendered valuable help to Babur in the campaign against the Afghans in Bihar. In due course, Babur became suspicious of Sher Khan who soon slipped away. As his former master Bahar Khan, the ruler of South Bihar had died, he was made the guardian and regent of the minor son of the deceased. Slowly he started grabbing all the powers of the kingdom. Meanwhile the ruler of Chunar died and Sher Shah married his widow. This brought him the fort of Chunar and enormous wealth.

4.2 Military achievements of Sher Shah:

Military achievements of Sher Shah may be categorized under three heads namely:

- (i) Encounters with Humayun
- (ii) Other encounters
- (iii) Conquests after becoming emperor of Delhi.

1. Sher Shah's encounters with Humayun:

Following were the three encounters:

- (i) Encounter on the fort of Chunar and Sher Shah's diplomatic surrender.
- (ii) Battle of Chausa with Humayun and Sher Shah's victory.
- (iii) Battle of Kanauj and Sher Shah's decisive victory over Humayun. With the victory at Kanauj, Sher Shah became the ruler of Delhi. Agra, Sambhal and Gwalior etc., also came under his sway. This victory ended the rule of the Mughal dynasty for 15 years.

2. Sher Shah's other conquests:

(1) Battle at Surajgarh (1533):

Sher Shah defeated the combined forces of the Lohani chiefs of Bihar and Mohamud Shah of Bengal at Surajgarh. With this victory, whole of Bihar came under Sher Shah. Dr. Qanungo has described the importance of this victory in these words, "If Sher Shah had not been victorious at Surajgarh, he would have never figured in the political sphere of India and would not have got an opportunity to compete with Humayun... for the founding of an empire."

(2) Invasion of Bengal:

Sher Shah plundered Bengal several times and by capturing Gaur, the capital of Bengal, forced Mohammad Shah to seek refuge with Humayun.

3. Sher Shah's conquests after becoming the emperor of Delhi:

(i) Conquest of Punjab (1540-42):

Sher Shah immediately, after his accession to the throne conquered Punjab from Kamran, brother of Humayun.

(ii) Suppression of Khokhars (1542):

Sher Shah suppressed the turbulent Khokhars of the northern region of river Indus and Jhelum.

(iii) Conquest of Malwa (1542):

The ruler of Malwa had not helped Sher Shah in his struggle with Humayun. Therefore he attacked Malwa and annexed it to his empire.

(iv) Conquest of Raisin:

Sher Shah attacked Raisin – a Rajput principality and besieges it. Rajput ruler Purnamal entered into an agreement with Sher Shah that if he surrendered, his family would not be harmed. However Sher Shah did not honour this agreement. In the words of Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "Sher Shah behaved with him very cruelly."

(v) and (vi) conquest of Multan and Sind (1543) :

Sher Shah conquered and annexed these provinces into his empire.

(vii) Conquest of Marwar (1543-1545):

Sher Shah brought Marwar under his control by forged letters and sowing dissensions in the army of Maldev, the ruler of Mewar.

(viii) Conquest of Kalinjar (1545) and death of Sher Shah. Sher Shah launched a fierce attack. He won but lost his life when he was grievously injured by the blast.

4.3 Sher Shah Suri's key achievements:

Introduction of an Effective Monetary System

Sher Shah introduced the tri-metal coinage system which later came to characterize the Mughal coinage system. He also minted a coin of silver which was termed the Rupiya that weighed 178 grains and was the precursor of the modern rupee. The same name is still used for the national currency in Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Mauritius, Maldives, and Seychelles among other countries.

Development of Roadways

For military and trade movement, Sher Shah connected the important places of his kingdom by a network of excellent roads. The longest of these, called the Sadak-e-Azam or the "Badshahi Sadak" (renamed "Grand Trunk Road" by the British) survives till this day. This road is the longest highway of Asia and extends over 1500 Km from Sonargaon in Eastern Bengal to the Indus. All the roads were flanked by shade giving trees and there were sarayes (traveler's inns) all along the routes.

Administrative Subdivision of Empire

The Sur empire was divided into forty-seven separate units called *sarkars*(districts). Each sarkar was divided into small units called the *parganas* and each pargana was further subdivided into a number of villages. Like the *sarkars*, there were two chief officers called a *shiqdar* (military officer) and *Munsif* (civilian judge) who were assisted by other staff in the discharge-of their duties. Each *pargana* had its own administrative system with its own Amil, law keeper, treasurer and account keepers. Over the next higher administrative unit, the *sarkar*, were placed a *Shiqdar-I-Shiqdaran* and a *Munsif-I-Munsifan* to supervise the work of the *pargana* officers. To keep a tab on the performance of his officers, Sher shah had planned to rotate them across the empire every two or three years. Every branch of the administration was subject to Sher Shah's personal supervision.

Development of the First Postal System

The sarayes developed along the road network also served as post offices. Sher Shah Suri established the foundations of a mounted post or horse courier system, wherein conveyance of letters was also extended to traders. This is the first known record of the Postal system of a kingdom being used for non-State purposes, i.e. for trade and business communication.

Administration of Justice:-

Sher Shah was adorned with Jewel of justice and he often times remarks," Justice is the most excellent of religious right and it is approved both by the king of the infidels and the faithful". He did not spare even his near relatives if they resorted to any criminal deed. Like other medieval rulers Sher Shah sometimes decided cases in person. Village panchayat was

empowered to administer justice in the villages, in the parganas were the munsifs and in the sarkars were the chief munsifs. They administered civil and Revenue cases while the shiqdar and his chief in the sarkar dealt with the criminal cases. In addition there were courts of the Qezi and the mir-adl culminating in the highest courts of the chief Qazi. All higher officers and courts had full authority to hear appeals against the decisions arrived at by their junior counterparts. Above all was situated the king's court. The criminal law of the time was very hard and punishments were severe. The object of punishment was not to reform but to set an example so that the others may not do the same.

Land Revenue System of Sher Shah:

Before Sher Shah, the land rent was realized from the peasants on the basis of estimated produce from the land but this system did not seem to be faultless as the produce was not constantly the same. It increased or decreased year after year. Sher Shah introduced a number of reforms in the fields of revenue. These are as follows.

- Sher Shah was the first Muslim ruler who got the whole of the land measured and fixed the land-tax on it on just and fair principles.
- The land of each peasant was measured first in "bighas" and then half of it was fixed as the land tax. According to More land in certain portions of the empire such as Multan the land tax was however one-fourth of the total produce.
- The settlement made between the Govt. and the peasant in respect of the land revenue was always put in black and white. Every peasant was given as written document in which the share of the Govt. was clearly mentioned so that no unscrupulous officer might cheat the innocent peasant. This is known as 'Patta'.
- Each and every peasant was given the option to pay the land-tax either in cash or in kind. The subjects of Sher Shah used to Kabul (Promise) that they should pay taxes in lieu of Patta.
- The peasants were required to credit the land-tax direct into the Govt. treasury, to be on the safe side, so that the collecting officers might not charge them any extra money.
- Strict orders had been issued to the revenue authorities that leniency might be shown while fixing the land tax, but strictness in the collection thereof should be the inevitable rule.
- But suitable subsidy was granted to the farmers in the time of drought, famine or floods from the royal treasury.
- Special orders were issued to soldiers that they should not damage the standing crops in any way. According to Abbas Khan, the cars of those soldiers, who

disregarded these orders, were cut off. Even when Sher Shah led an expedition to the territory of his enemy, he was very particular about it that no harm shall come to the farmers in any way from the excesses of his soldiers.

- In case of damages compensation was granted to the former by the Govt. This arrangement of Sher Shah was as reasonable as was adopted not by Akbar only but was followed by the British Govt. also. The well-known 'Ryatwari System' which has been in vogue till now, was not founded by Akbar but by Sher Shah.

Other Major Works

- He also built several monuments including Rohtas Fort, Sher Shah Suri Masjid in Patna, and Qila-i-Kuhna mosque at Purana Qila, Delhi

Sher Shah remained a brave and ambitious warrior till the very end. He was succeeded by his son, Jalal Khan who took the title of Islam Shah Suri. His successors, however, proved to be weak rulers and the Mughals were able to re-establish their rule in India after a few years. Sher Shah Suri died from a gunpowder explosion during the siege of Kalinjar fort on May 22, 1545 fighting against the Chandel Rajputs. Had it not been for his untimely demise the Sur dynasty would not have declined and perished and the Mughal Empire may never have been re-established. After the death, the tomb was built in the memory of Emperor Sher Shah, which was planned by Sher Shah only. The Sher Shah Suri Tomb (122 ft high) stands in the middle of an artificial lake at Sasaram, a town that stands on the Grand Trunk Road, his lasting legacy. This tomb is known as the second Taj Mahal of India.