UNIT 5: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN MEDIEVAL INDIA -II

UNIT STRUCTURE

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5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- explain the advent of Mughals.
- discuss about the Second Afghan Empire.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

The Mughals came to the power of Delhi after defeating Ibrahim Lodi of Lodi dynasty in the First Battle of Panipath in 1526 A.D. After the death of Babur, taking the chance of administrative weakness of Humayun, Sher Shah established the Second Afghan Empire in Delhi. In this unit we will discuss all the political development of medieval Indian history.

5.3 ADVENT OF THE MUGHALS

A political vacuum was created with the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate. The country was divided into a number of small kingdoms like Bengal, Gujarat, Malwa, Mewar, Jaunpur, Orissa, etc with a struggle for political supremacy amongst these kingdoms. No strong central government

was there that could keep the small kingdoms under control and present a united front to the enemy. As such, the political condition of the country on the eve of the advent of the Mughals was vulnerable to enemy attack. The advent of the Mughals on the Indian scene introduced a new epoch of Indian history. On April21, 1526 India witnessed the foundation of the Mughal rule on her soil. The Mughals, who came from Central Asia, defeated Ibrahim Lodi of the Lodi dynasty and established their rule in the country.

- **Babur :** His father, Umar Shaikh Mirza, was the ruler of that petty state. He was a descendant of Timur on his father's side and Chengiz Khan on his mother Utlugnigar Khanum's side. His family belonged to the Chaghtayid section of the Turkish race which was commonly known as 'Mughals'.

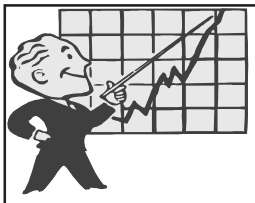
  Babur succeeded his father as the ruler of Farghana in June 1494. Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the ruler of Delhi, in the first battle of Panipath on April21, 1526. He occupied Delhi, thus laid the foundation of Mughal rule in India. Then in the battle of Khanwah in1527, he defeated Rana Sangram Singh or Rana Sanga of Mewar, the greatest Rajput ruler of that time. Next, Babur captured Chanderi from the Rajput chief Medini Rai. In the battle of Ghagra (1529), Babur defeated Mahmud Lodi and his ally Nusrat Shah of Bengal.

  After the battle of Ghagra, Babur attempted to consolidate his newly founded empire by providing an efficient system of administration. However, he failed to provide a sound administration as he died on December 26, 1530. He was buried at Kabul. An erudite scholar of Persian and Turki, Babur invented a new style of verse in Persian known as *Mubaiyan*. His memoirs *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* was written in Turki. He also wrote a *Vakai*or Turki history. Babur even excelled in music and other fine arts.

- **Humayun :** Nasiruddin Muhammad Humayun was the eldest son of Babur. On December 30, 1530 Humayun ascended the throne of Delhi. He had to face several difficulties right from the time of his accession. Following the Timurid legacy, Humayun divided the empire among his three half-brothers Kamran, Hindal and Askari. But they were dissatisfied

with their portions. Humayun also faced a potent threat from his three half-brothers, his brother-in-law Muhammad Zaman Mirza and some other Timurid princes and Afghan chiefs. Humayun followed a policy of generosity towards his brothers and kinsmen. But he adopted an aggressive policy towards the Afghans. In 1531 he led an expedition against King Prataprudra Dev of Kalinjar as he was supposed to be sympathetic towards king Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Humayun besieged Kalinjar, but failed to capture it as he had to turn his attention towards the Afghan attack under Mahmud Lodi and the capture of the fort of Chunar by Sher Khan Sur of South Bihar. However, Humayun secured some indemnity from King Prataprudra Dev.The Afghans under Mahmud Lodi attacked Jaunpur and captured it from the Mughals. But shortly afterwards, in July 1532, Humayun defeated the Afghans at the battle of Dadrah. Then from September to December 1532, he besieged the fort of Chunar held by Sher Khan Sur. Sher Khan submitted to Humayun and made a compromise with him. Next Humayun turned his attention towards king Bahadur Shah of Gujarat who by conquering Malwa, Raisin, Chanderi, Ranthambore, Ajmir, Nagaur and Chittor posed a threat to the Mughals. In 1535 he conquered Malwa and Gujarat from Bahadur Shah, but he failed to retain it for long.

In the meantime Sher Khan Sur consolidated his position at South Bihar. He proved to be the most formidable enemy of Humayun which the latter overlooked and had to pay the price for it. By 1538 Sher Khan Sur occupied Gaur. Then in 1539 at the battle of Chausa, Sher Khan defeated Humayun and declared himself as Sultan at Benaras with the title of 'Sher Shah'. Humayun somehow managed to reach Agra. A year later, again in April 1540, the armies of Humayun and Sher Shah met at the battle of Kanauj where the Mughal forces were completely routed. After this humiliating defeat Humayun became a fugitive and had to pass 15 years (1540-55) in exile. Sher Shah became the master of Delhi and the sovereignty of Hindustan once again passed into the Afghan hands.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

Q 1: Name the memoir of Babur.

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Q 2: Who was defeated in the first battle of Panipath?

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Q 3: Who succeeded Bubar to the Mughal throne?

.....

Q 4: Name the half-brothers of Humayun?

.....

5.4 FOUNDATION OF THE SECOND AFGHAN EMPIRE

The victory of Babur at Panipath and Ghagra did not result in complete submission of the Afghan chiefs. They were seething with discontent against the newly founded Mughal rule and needed only a strong leadership to unite their isolated efforts into an organized national resistance against it. This was provided by Sher Khan Sur who effected the revival of the Afghan power and established a glorious though short- lived regime in the form of Second Afghan empire in India by ousting the newly established Mughal authority.

- **Sher Shah Suri :** From an obscure Sur family of Rahori in Afghanistan, Sher Shah Suri rose to prominence by dint of his personal merit. His original name was Farid. With the administration of his father's *jagir* at Sasaram, Sher Shah began his career. For twenty one years(1497-1518) Sher Shah successfully managed the *jagir*, but was treacherously removed from his post by his step mother and half-brothers. Sher Shah left Bihar and entered into the services of Daulat Khan Lodi. Through his new master, Sher Shah requested Ibrahim Lodi to bestow on him the *jagir* of his father which was however rejected by the Sultan. But on the death of his father Hassan in 1520, Ibrahim Lodi conferred on Sher Shah the *jagir* of his father. Still, because of strong opposition of his half-brothers, Sher Shah could not take full possession of his father's

jagir. Sher Shah then entered into the services of Bahar Khan Lohani, the Afghan governor of South Bihar. After the defeat of Ibrahim Lodi at Panipath, Bahar Khan Lohani declared himself an independent ruler of South Bihar and made Sher Shah his deputy governor and the tutor of his minor son Jalal Khan. But as Bahar Khan Lohani was instigated against Sher Shah, the latter had to enter the Mughal services where he remained for a very short time, from April1527 to June1528. Sher Shah helped Babur in his campaign against Chanderi for which he got back his paternal *jagir* as reward from the Mughal emperor. Again Bahar Khan Lohani reappointed Sher Shah to his earlier position as the deputy governor and tutor of his minor son Jalal Khan. But in October, 1528 Bahar Khan Lohani died and his widow Dudu Bibi too followed him. Now Sher Shah became the guardian and regent of the minor Jalal Khan who remained only as the nominal ruler. Slowly Sher Shah started grabbing all the powers of the kingdom. He virtually became the independent ruler of South Bihar and styled himself as Hazrat-i-Ala.



LET US KNOW

Bahar Khan Lodhi gave the title of 'Sher Khan' to Sher Shah for killing a tiger single handedly.

The first great achievement of Sher Shah was the acquisition of the fort of Chunar as a consequence of his marriage with Lad Malika, widow of Taj Khan, governor of Chunar. Then in 1533, Sher Shah defeated the combined forces of the Lohani chiefs of Bihar and Mohammad Shah of Bengal at Surajgarh. By this victory he brought the whole of Bihar under his control. He defeated Mohammad Shah of Bengal thrice in 1536, 1537 and1538 securing large wealth of Bengal and even occupied the capital city of Gaud for a short period. All these victories enhanced the power and prestige of Sher Shah who tactfully kept Humayun busy in Gaud and cut off all the lines of communication between Bihar and Delhi. On the return journey of Humayun from Bengal to Agra, Sher Shah effectively blockaded his way

and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mughal army in the battle of Chausa on June 26, 1539. Humayun somehow managed to save his life.

Emboldened by this victory, Sher Shah retrieved his authority in Bengal and crowned himself at Gaud as Sher Shah Sultan-i-Adil. The very next year in 1540 Sher Shah again defeated Humayun in the battle of Kannauj or Bilgram and occupied the throne of Delhi. Sher Shah re-established the Afghan empire which he ruled for five years, from 1540-1545.

During this short period Sher Shah conquered Malwa and Punjab in 1542; Raisin, Multan and Sindh in 1543; Marwar and Mewar in 1544 and Kalinjar in 1545. But during the Kalinjar campaign he lost his life due to a grievous injury caused by a blast. Sher Shah provided an administrative framework. The whole empire was divided into forty seven units called *sarkars*. Each *sarkar* was sub-divided into several *parganas*. He introduced a fine revenue administrative system which served as a role model for future agrarian reform. Sher Shah was indeed a great soldier and a statesman.

- **Successors of Sher Shah Suri :** The Second Afghan empire or the Sur empire founded by Sher Shah Suri did not last long as his successors were inefficient. Sher Shah was succeeded by his second son Jalal Khan under the title of Islam Shah or Salim Shah. Islam Shah was very suspicious in nature and hastened the process of liquidation of the empire. After his death, his cousin Nizam ascended the throne under the title of Muhammad Adil Shah. Although Muhammad Adil Shah ruled for four years, he lost his throne of Delhi to a usurper named Ibrahim Khan Sur, a nephew of Sher Shah and had to rule from Chunar where he made his new headquarters. Another nephew of Sher Shah, Sikandar Shah occupied Punjab. An administrative chaos prevailed in the empire. Muhammad Adil Shah made Hemu his Chief Minister entrusting him with all the administrative responsibilities. This was resented by the Afghan nobles. A serious scramble for power started among the Afghan nobles with the prominent ones declaring themselves as independent.

A civil war also started among Muhammad Adil Shah, Ibrahim Khan Sur and Sikandar Shah. Taking advantage of this Humayun made an attempt to recapture his lost empire. He defeated the Afghan army under Sikandar Shah at Machhiwara on the bank of the river Sutlej. Punjab was occupied and Akbar, son of Humayun, was made its governor. Then a sanguinary conflict took place near Sirhind on June 22, 1555. He entered Delhi on July 23, 1555 and became the emperor of India once again after an interval of fifteen years. The Sur empire or the Second Afghan empire came to an end and the Mughal rule was restored. But Humayun did not live long. He died following an accident on January 26, 1556. He nominated his son Akbar as his successor before his death.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

Q 5: By defeating whom Sher Shah ascended the throne of Delhi?

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Q 6: What was the original name of Sher Shah?

.....

Q 7: Whom did Sher Shah marry?

.....

Q 8: Whom did Humayun nominate as his successor?

.....



5.5 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit, we have learnt about–

- the Mughal empire founded by Babur filled up the political vacuum which was created after the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate.

- Humayun was neither a capable general like Babur nor a good strategist like Sher Shah. He failed to understand the political strategies of Sher Shah and had to face two humiliating defeats at his hands. This resulted in the decline of the newly founded Mughal empire and re- establishment of the Afghan empire in the form of the Second Afghan empire or Sur empire.
- only for a short period of five years, Sher Shah could rule during which time he extended the territory of his empire and provided a good administrative system. But dynastic empires needed able successors.
- the successors of Sher Shah were inefficient and quarreled among themselves. Taking advantage of this Humayun defeated the successor of Sher Shah Suri and re-established the Mughal empire by overthrowing the Afghan rule. Thus the Second Afghan empire or Sur empire came to an end.



5.6 FURTHER READING

1) Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhuri, H.C., Datta, K. (1986). *An Advanced History of India.* New Delhi, Macmillan India Ltd.
2) Maiti, P.(2001): *Studies in Ancient India,* Kolkata, Shreedhar Prakashani
3) Raychaudhuri, H.C. (1972). *Political History of India.* Calcutta, University of Kolkata.
4) Sharma, L.P. (1981). *Ancient History of India (pre-historic Age to 1200 A.D.).* New Delhi, Vikas Publication House Pvt. Ltd.
5) Tripathi, Ramashankar (1999). *History of Ancient India.* Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.



5.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to the question no 1. *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*

Answer to the question no 2. Ibrahim Lodi

Answer to the question no 3. Humayun

Answer to the question no 4. Kamran, Hindal and Askari

Answer to the question no 5. Farid

Answer to the question no 6. Humayun

Answer to the question no 7. Lad Malika

Answer to the question no 8. Akbar



5.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question within 50 words)

Q.1: Who was the father of Babur?

Q.2: What do you mean by Jagir?

Q.3: Define Jiziya?.

Q.4: What did Sarkar mean in the Mughal Empire?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question within 150 words)

Q.1: Write a short note on Babur.

Q.2: Write a short note on Sher Shah.

Q.3: How did Sultan Balban wanted to increase the royal prestige of Sultan?

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in between 150-300 words)

Q.1: Evaluate Babur as an empire builder.

Q.2: Discuss the foundation of the Mughal rule in India.

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