
UNIT 7 SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACTS: ARAB AND TURKISH INVASIONS¹

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will know about:

- the background for understanding the Arab and Turkish Invasions;
- new perspectives on the arrival of Islam in India; and
- social, cultural and technological impact of both the Arab and the Turkish invasions.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we had read about the invasions in India by the Muslim invaders from the Arab and Central Asian regions in early Medieval and Medieval periods. These attacks have been seen in a monochromatic light as only attacks without any meaningful results. This unit will try to analyze the impacts of these attacks, if any. These have been largely categorized into social, cultural and technological impact or results.

7.2 SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACT OF ARAB INVASIONS OF SINDH

The Arab conquest of Sindh has been seen as “a triumph without results” by scholars like Stanley Lane Poole, Elphinstone, etc. because there was no major victory for either the Muslim Arabs or the Indian rulers. They opine that the victory

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of the Arabs was without any impact or result on the history of Indian subcontinent. Such an understanding arose from the fact that their victory could not affect the political or military conditions in the rest of India. The Arab rule got confined to the Sindh region and the Indian rulers ruled their states without fearing or ousting the Arabs from their frontiers. The influence of the Arabs was restricted to only a small part of the subcontinent. They could not get a foothold inside the Indian subcontinent, unlike the Turks who had established a full-fledged state a few centuries later (i.e., the Delhi Sultanate from 12th century onwards).

However, some other scholars refute this viewpoint, and they hold that indeed there were multifarious effects on the life and times of the region. They have given varied arguments in support of this view. It is believed that even though their conquest did not have any substantial effect on the political geography of India it had considerable impact in other fields.

Cultural Impact of Arab Invasions

Chachnama, the Persian text written by Ali Kufi in 1226 CE is a major historical text on the history of Sindh. It has good information on its government, politics, etc. However, the details given on the advent of Islam in the Indian subcontinent had been over-emphasized in the colonial and national understandings to an extent that *Chachnama* has only been seen as a text on the conquest of Sindh and the advent of Islam in the subcontinent. This has led to a skewed understanding of this medieval source in general. Nevertheless, scholars like Yohanan Friedmann, Manan Ahmed Asif, etc. who have read and analyzed it contend that apart from the details on Sindh conquest, it is also a repository of other sorts of information on the history of Sindh. A nuanced reading of this and other texts from the Arab peninsula show that the Arab conquest of Sindh had led to overarching social and cultural impacts on both the Indian and Arab worlds. In this regard, Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui holds that —

“...the regions of Sindh and south Punjab (Multan territory) conquered by the Arabs in the beginning of the eighth century AD (812-13), under the command of Muhammad bin Qasim al-Saqafi underwent rapid socio-economic and demographic changes, owing to the imposition of a different system of governance, the introduction of a new legal system that ensured impartial justice irrespective of caste and creed and the addition of foreign settlers’ colonies to the old caste towns. The settlers included, besides officers and army men, merchants who were engaged in overland and overseas trade between different countries as far as China in the east and regions of Africa in the west. The foreign trade thus not only gave a boost to trade and commerce in the region but also led to the modification of indigenous crafts and the introduction of new ones.”

As *Chachnama* shows, Muhammad bin Qasim had not interfered with the caste system. Yohanan Friedmann, a scholar who has read and analysed the *Chachnama* in depth holds that ‘Qasim gave his unqualified blessing to the characteristic feature of the (traditional) society which he encountered and sanctioned both the privileges of the high-caste and the degradation of the lower ones.’ He upheld the Indian social tradition of privileging the brahmins. He used to call the brahmins as “good and faithful people”, and after the siege of Brahmanabad, they were reappointed to the same positions as they had held under the Hindu dynasty. Furthermore,

these positions were also made hereditary by him. The notables were given the title of Rana. The common people were also left free to worship as per their wish, provided they paid the Arabs the same taxes as they had paid to raja Dahar. He allowed them to build temples, celebrate their festivals and ceremonies, and to treat the Brahmanas with kindness as before. Similarly, the treatment of the Jats was as bad as under the Hindu rulers of Sindh. As Friedmann says —

“They were obliged to wear coarse clothing and to move around barefoot. If they were apprehended wearing fine clothes, they were fined. They were supposed to take their dogs with them when they went out. This was to be done so that they were recognized. They were burnt alive with their family when they were caught stealing. They were not allowed to ride horse; and if they did, they rode without saddle and reins. They were infamous for committing highway robberies. Due to such reasons, Muhammad Qasim considered them as wicked people, and continued with their low status in society.”

In short, he did not meddle with the social systems of Sindh, and agreed to maintain peace in many regions. Such a policy was followed by Qasim under the instructions of Hajjaj, the governor of Iraq who believed in granting religious freedom to people. Therefore, as one understands from the *Chachnama*, Qasim had left Brahmanabad in an orderly and peaceful condition to proceed northward towards Alor. Such a policy of flexibility and tolerance was a characteristic of Islam during its initial period of conquest.

It is important to reiterate this policy of tolerance of Arab conquerors by examining the phenomenon of Islamic proselytization. As known from the sources, religious conversion had brought about social change among the people of Sindh. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui says in this regard

“The reference to *Maula-i-Islam*, a term used to refer to a person of high status who had converted to Islam, tends to reveal that not only did the downtrodden people take to the new faith for freedom from caste restrictions but some local chiefs also entered the fold of Islam.”

Siddiqui mentions that due to religious tension between the brahmanas and Buddhists, many of the Buddhists living in Sindh had converted to Islam when they had come in contact with the Arabs. In fact, they had befriended the Arabs even before or during the Sindh conquest. Here, Muhammad Illafi, the lieutenant of Muhammad bin Qasim who had led to a liaison between the Buddhist chiefs and the Arab governor is especially important. Due to his agility, many Buddhist chiefs had acknowledged the suzerainty of the Caliph. This was mainly because of the brahmana ruling elite who used to oppress the Buddhists in general. As Siddiqui says, such an atmosphere of goodwill and friendship later helped in the consolidation of Muslim rule in the conquered territories, and was not alone due to Islamic proselytization alone. Such peaceful interface between the Arabs and the Indians in Sindh region led to cultural exchange between India and the Islamic world. He further says that the urban ethos represented by the Arab settlers in their colonies, led to the old towns playing an important role in the process of acculturation in the entire region of Sindh and Multan. The egalitarian atmosphere of Islamic faith fascinated the low caste people in Hindu society. It led to their conversion to a new faith that maintained equality among all its followers. The

communities of these local converts and Arabs comingled with each other to boost the urban culture of the region.

However, the influence of Islam could not penetrate into the countryside, and rather remained confined to the urban areas. On the other hand, the population in the countryside kept following their ancestral religion. It was only in the tenth century that Muslim missionaries entered this region, and worked amongst the urban and rural people to win their trust for converting them to a new faith. Even though the conversion of the people was partial, the converts ruled their region till its annexation by the Ghaznavid Sultanate in 1025 CE.

Apart from the socio-religious impact of the Arab invasion, there were considerable intellectual influences as well. At a larger level, the cultural intermingling between the Indian and Arab cultures encouraged the intellectual cultures of both the regions. This is to say that it showed its effects in various fields like literature, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, etc. Such contacts at an intellectual level led to the mutual growth and development of both the cultures. The earliest recorded Indo-Arab intellectual contact happened in 771 CE when a Hindu astronomer and mathematician reached Baghdad with a Sanskrit work called *Brahma Siddhanta* of Brahmagupta. This text was translated into Arabic with the help of an Arab mathematician, and was named as *Sind hind*. It had the greatest influence on the development of Arab astronomy even though three other works on mathematics were also translated to Arabic. In mathematics, the most important contribution of the Indian culture to Arab learning was the Arabic numerals.

Similarly, even greater attention was given to Indian medicine by the Arabs. At least fifteen Sanskrit works were translated, including those of Charaka and Sushruta. The Indian doctors were given great prestige and honour at Baghdad, and so they were found in good numbers there. Manka was one such doctor who had earned prestige and money by curing the ailing Caliph Harun-al-Rashid.

Further, astrology and palmistry also gained Arab attention, and many books from these fields were translated into Arabic. They too have been preserved in the Arab historiographies. Other translations were from the fields of statecraft, art of war, logic, ethics, magic, etc. Also, the famous *Panchatantra* was translated and known as the story of Kalila and Dimna in many Arabic and Persian traditions. The Indian games of *chausar* and chess were transmitted to the Arab and other regions of the world.

Sindh also contributed towards the popularization of Sufism. The great, early sufi named Bayazid of Bistam had a Sindhi as his spiritual teacher. He used to say – “I learned the lessons of science or *ilm-i-fana* or annihilation and *tauhid* or unity from Abu Ali of Sindh and Abu Ali learned the lessons of Islamic unity from me.” The link between Sufism and Sindh is well known.

Indian music had a considerable influence on Arabic music even if no translated works have been found. The work of an Arab author named Jahiz reveals the appreciation got by the Indian music at Baghdad. He called the music of the people of Indian subcontinent as pleasing. Another such reference on Indian music was from an Arab author who talks about an Indian book on tunes and melodies. It has been suggested by some scholars that many of the technical terms for Arab music were borrowed from Persia and India. Likewise, even Indian music incorporated many Perso-Arab airs like *Yeman Hiji* and *Jangla*.

There is a paucity of sources connecting the history of Sindh and Multan after the recall of Muhammad bin Qasim. However, the works of Arab travelers and geographers provide some information. Travelers like Masudi and Ibn Haukul who visited western Pakistan in the first quarter of tenth century agree to the presence of Arab colonies at Mansura, Multan, Daybul, Nirun, etc. The non-Muslims were said to be in good numbers in Daybul and Alor, and they were at good terms with the Arabs. Unlike the historians of Delhi Sultanate, the Arab travelers called the non-Muslims as *zimmis* and not *kafirs* or infidels. It is known from the sources that after the conquest of Sindh and Multan, cow slaughter was banned. The reasons behind it was the aim to preserve cattle wealth, or even to show regard for Hindu sentiments. Some Hindu chiefs even showed interest in Islam. For example, in 886 CE, a Hindu king commissioned an Arab linguist from Mansura to translate the *Quran* in local language.

As far as the adoption of local cultures is concerned, it can be said that the Arab rulers adopted local practices to a greater extent than the Ghaznavids did at Lahore or the Turks and Afghans at Delhi later. Similar to the Hindu rulers of Sindh, the Arab ruler of Mansura used to maintain war elephants, and ride in elephant driven chariots. The dresses of the Arabs of Mansura were like that of the people of Iraq; but those were quite similar to that of Hindu *rajās* as well. They also wore similar earrings and long hair.

Further, after Muhammad Qasim, there were no large-scale Arab immigrations, and any Arab or mutual influences gradually faded away. However, Sindh and Multan remained in touch with the Arab world, especially by way of long-distance trade and Islam. There was vibrant trade between Sindh and other parts of the Muslim world, with caravans going to Khurasan, especially via the Kabul and Bamiyan route. Sindhi Hindus were excellent traders and had good share in this trade. Alor in Sindh is mentioned as a great commercial center. As a part of the Muslim region, Sindh and Multan contributed almost five times to the Abbasid exchequer than Kabul. Further, the active trade relations of the Arabs were much more extensive and far reaching. After the rise of Islam, there were many colonies of the Muslim Arab traders in the major ports of Cambay, Chaul and Honawar on the west coast of India. Hajjaj, the governor of Baghdad who had led the Sindh expedition was indirectly responsible for maintaining a large colony of Muslim traders in south India. After assuming the governorship of Baghdad, many of his political enemies had settled down on the southern coast of the Indian subcontinent, in order to seek refuge from him. The Nawayat community settled on the Konkan coast of Mumbai, and Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu is one such community. Other Muslim groups which settled on the Bay of Bengal can trace their roots to the eighth century.

The largest Arab settlement on Indian coast was in Malabar region; its presence in the same region is seen even till today. The conspicuous presence of the Muslim Arab population was the result of the conversion of a local ruler. All such Muslim colonies on various coasts were important for providing the base from which traders, sailors and missionaries went to the Far East thereby spreading Islam in the Southeast Asian regions like Malay Peninsula and Indonesia. The eastward movement from the Middle Eastern or South Asian regions was popular since ancient times, and was linked to both spice trade and religion. This is how Indian

religions like Brahmanism or Buddhism gained ground here. Similarly, the rise of Islam through Arab trade can be easily linked to this trend that saw the displacement of both Brahmanism and Buddhism since eighth century. Bali remains Hindu till today, and Malaysia and Indonesia are mostly Muslim, and owe their present religious and literary tradition mainly to the influences emanating from the Muslim colonies on the coastline of the subcontinent. The Muslim emigrants such as traders, sailors and religious leaders/men from Arabia, Persia, coastal regions of Gujarat, Malabar, Coromandel and Bengal are specifically important in this development.

Technological impact

Another impact of the arrival of the Arabs was in the field of technology. Since they came as invaders, their technological know-how can be seen mainly in the field of weaponry and warfare. As has been seen in the earlier Units, the technology of the Indian forces was not as good as those of the invaders, and this became a major reason behind the former's defeat.

Two different weapons came with the Arabs in their invasion in 712 CE. The first one was *Naphtha* or Greek fire which was obtained by distillation from crude petroleum. They had seen its use in their unsuccessful attacks on Constantinople in 671-78 CE. Subsequently, they had learnt to use it. As the *Chachnama* says about Sindh attack, there were nine hundred naphtha throwers or *naft-andazan* in the Arab army. They used to set alight the naphtha-tipped arrows to attack the Sindh troops.

Manjaniq or mangonel/trebuchet was another such weapon. *Chachnama* mentions its usage in the description of the attack on the port of Daybul in Sindh. *Manjaniq* was used to throw stones at the temple pinnacle. It consisted of a wooden beam pivoted on a wooden stand, and the short arm of the beam had a counterweight put on it. The long arm had a sling suspended at its far end which carried the missile, usually a round and large piece of stone. The long arm, pulled down manually, would raise the weighed short arm. If the rope was released after this, the short arm would have fallen, making the long arm ascend fast, shooting the missile out of the swinging sling. This weapon known by the Arabs from the Constantinople war was simpler in version. It was modified for a better and more efficient use. It was also used by the Chinese and Mongols. A modified version of the same weapon using lesser manpower was also used by the Delhi Sultanate in the fourteenth century. The different types of mangonels used by them were called *manjaniq*, *maghribi* and *arrada*.

Such weapons were one of the main reasons behind the Sindh victory by the Arabs. The inferior tactics and technology of weapons and warfare used by Indians helped the Arab army all the more.

As against the availability of such information from the Arab works on the vibrant relations between the Indian and Arabic cultures, it will be unreasonable to call the Arab conquest of Sindh as a triumph without results. In other words, it would be incorrect to give leverage to the political consequences alone and negate the socio-cultural or other impacts or results.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Social, Cultural and
Technological Impacts:
Arab and Turkish Invasions

- 1) Was there any social impact of the Arab invasion of Sindh?

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- 2) Discuss the cultural effects of Arab presence in Sindh after the invasion.

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7.3 THE COMING OF THE TURKS

The Arab inroads into India in the eight century was followed by Turkish penetration by 1192 CE. The early medieval period from 10th to 12th centuries is an important period in Indian history as it served as a preparatory phase for the final establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in 1206.

The encounter between the Turkish and Indian cultures happened in two phases.

The first was in the form of invading raids by Mahmud Ghazni in early eleventh century. These invasions in a short period of time were in the form of plunder and loot of the Somnatha temple on the Gujarat coast. This loot was mainly aimed at enriching Ghazni, the home of Mahmud Ghazni in Afghanistan. The invasions led to immense damage to the temple, however, these raids were devoid of any intentions of spreading Islam or establishing a full-fledged Muslim state in India. The historical sources of this period do not specify any such intentions.

These Ghaznavid invasions were of a brief span, but their impacts were tremendous. As argued by Satish Chandra, the constant Ghaznavid invasions in the north-western region of India acted as a torchbearer for the later Turkish invaders like Muhammad Ghouri in invading India. Secondly, it helped in opening overland commerce between India and Central as well as West Asia. This accelerated the growth of towns in India, especially after the establishment of the Muslim state in India by Ghouri.

The impacts of the Turkish invasions in India were manifold, but these were not highlighted. The primary reason behind it was the divisive narrative and intent of colonial interpreters of Indian History. The British scholars or administrators like James Mill interpreted Indian History with the purpose of prolonging British rule over India. This was easily done by creating a rift between the Hindu and Muslims. Alongside, they even tried to depict that the British had come to India with the only intention of civilizing its people. Hence, to validate both the arguments, Indian history was categorized into three phases, namely Ancient, Medieval and Modern. They named the Ancient as Hindu, Medieval as Muslim and Modern was termed as British. The Medieval period was shown as a Dark Age, when the Muslim invaders penetrated India only to spread Islam; They led to the destruction of

Hindu temples, conversion of Hindu population, rape and murder of its women and children and so on and so forth. This was done to create a dichotomy between the two religions and their followers. Keeping in line with this communal interpretation, they showed the Arabs or Turks as only invaders with the crusading zeal of conversion and destruction.

However, scholars like Satish Chandra understood the scheme of polarization of Indian population by way of historical narratives. The new research carried out by contemporary historians like B. D. Chattopadhyaya, Richard Eaton, Finbar Barry Flood, etc. tried to study the varied impacts of the Turkish invasion in India. The next section of the unit focuses on such impacts.

7.4 SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE TURKISH INVASIONS

In the words of Richard Eaton, one sees the evidence of a “creative conflict” when Muslim Turks encountered the non-Muslim peoples of Punjab and the Gangetic plains. It is to be understood that above expeditions not always led to the plunder and loot of wealth, massacre of masses, conversion of people, desecration of worshipping places etc., it also provided enough background and opportunities that led to different kind of impacts. Rather than seeing it as confrontation, it would be more fruitful to see the level of exchanges happening in different spheres. According to Satish Chandra, the processes of interaction between “Islam” and “Hinduism” can be posited at three different levels:

- 1) At the political level, including state formation.
- 2) At the level of the masses, involving religious movements and economic developments.
- 3) At the intellectual and cultural level, involving the middle sections and professionals.

Here an attempt will be made to study different kinds of impact at different levels.

Cultural Impact

Invasions can also be seen as a process of encounter between two different cultures. This process is always in two ways; One of confrontation and the other of healthy contact. In the context of Ghaznavid invasion of Punjab, Satish Chandra states that this conquest led to a setting of two distinct patterns of relations between the Muslims and the Hindus. One was the lure for plunder and other in the form of trade. The caravan routes between Khurasan and India were reopened as soon as military operations were over. Muslim traders augmented India's trade with the Central and West Asian countries which led to the development of towns in north India. The resultant outcome of this process was the coming of religious preachers called Sufis to the region of Punjab. The preaching was mainly directed towards the Muslim settlers, but in the process, they also influenced some Hindus, paving the way for the opening of a channel of interaction between Islam and Hindu religion and society.

Due to such interactions, Lahore too emerged as an influential centre for the development of Arabic and Persian languages and literature. The Persian language

was later adopted as the court language during the Ghaznavid period, and it continued to hold the same position throughout Muslim rule.

Further, religious sentiments posed no bar for the Ghaznavids in many areas. This was seen in the recruiting of non-Muslim soldiers in the Ghaznavid armies. In fact, in its military recruitment many Hindu soldiers were recruited, and it was commanded by several Hindu generals such as Tilak who was a barber by caste. He became a *confidante* of khwaja Ahmed Hasan Maimandi, the influential *wazir* of Sultan Mahmud.

During the 11th and 12th centuries the Muslim rulers of Lahore continued to issue the coins of their predecessors from the Hindu Shahi dynasty. These coins included Siva's bull called Nandi on one side, and Muhammad Ghouri's name in Devanagari script prefaced with the Sanskrit phrase *sri samanta deva* on the reverse side. According to Richard Eaton, such measures showed that the Ghourid rulers wanted to establish cultural and monetary continuity with north Indian kingdoms. Thus, the circulation of coins through many hands bearing the words and images, some kind of political ideology was communicated to their subjects. Secondly, another reason behind continuing the old coins was that the new rulers did not want any disruptions in commerce. Since coins were linked to trade and commerce, these new rulers from a different faith continued with the existing trade patterns.

Yet further, the cultural assimilation between the Hindu and Turkish cultures led to significant contribution in literary field. Mahmud Ghazni with his great military capabilities and political achievements had turned the small state of Ghazna into a vast and wealthy empire comprising of most parts of modern-day Afghanistan, eastern Iran and north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent. As an able ruler, he had transformed Ghazni into a center of Persian learning. He was inspired by the cultural centers of Samanid Bukhara and Khurasan. He invited poets and writers like Firdausi, Alberuni, Uzari, Unsuri, etc to Ghazni. Such display of pomp and show by Mahmud Ghazni was made possible with India's help. In other words, the grandeur maintained in his state of Ghazni was mostly due to the wealth amassed from Mahmud's plundering raids in India. India became one of the benefactors because the period between the Samanids and the Ghaznavids is seen as one of Persianization of kingship and administration, i.e. one of divine and monarchical kingship, centralization of power, bureaucratization and professionalization of army, etc. The successors of Mahmud initiated the diffusion of Persian culture into north India. In the words of Richard Eaton, "The entire gamut of Persianate institutions and practices which the Ghaznavids inherited from the Samanid rulers of Bukhara were brought to the area of Punjab which included the elaboration of a ranked and salaried bureaucracy tied to the state's land revenue and military systems; the institution of elite, or military, slavery; an elaboration of the office of 'sultan'; the courtly patronage of Persian arts, crafts and literature; and a tradition of spiritually powerful holy men, or Sufis, whose relations with royal power were ambivalent."

The occupation of the Punjab by the Ghaznavids allowed the Indo-Islamic culture of Lahore to receive the Persian influence which it has retained. The successors of the Ghaznavids made concerted efforts to connect their dynastic history not just with Islamic religious tradition but also with the Persian pre-Islamic past as argued

by Andre Wink. Even the Ghourid leaders shed their provincial identity and adopted a more cosmopolitan posture, embracing both the substance and the trappings of the Persianate bureaucratic and centralized state. This included proclaiming their sovereignty at the Friday prayer and using the imperial umbrella (*chahtr*) and kettledrums (*naubat*), both of them Persianate symbols of political authority. They also discarded the modest title of *malik al-jabal*, 'king of the mountains.' Muhammad Ghouri styled himself as 'the great sultan' (*sultan al-mu'azzam*). Thus, the theme of Perso-Islamic tradition of Kingship and Persianate traditions which attained a mature phase during the Sultanate period permeated due to the invasions carried out first by Mahmud Ghazni and later by Muhammad Ghouri.

Intellectual Impact

Due to Mahmud Ghazni's invasions, we have information of India's social, political, economic and religious conditions during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Writers like Firdausi, Alberuni etc. have written extensively about India's prevailing conditions during this era. Abu Raihan Mohammad bin Ahmad popularly known as Alberuni was a famous personality, a renowned philosopher, mathematician and a historian who accompanied Mahmud Ghazni during his invasions in India. His association with the ruler was less, but his accounts on Indian customs and traditions, as well as his remarks on the Islamic conquest are remarkable. Out of his many works like *Qanum-i-Masudi*, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, the most important is *Kitab-ul-Hind* which throws light on the religion, sciences, social customs, culture, art, astrology etc. of the Hindus. Simultaneously, his account also mentions the attitude and behavior of the Hindus, especially the brahmanas. It also provides ample information about the destructive effects of Mahmud's Indian invasion.

Another effect of the Turkish invasion can be seen in the compilation of oldest surviving *Veda* manuscript in Nepal in 1040 CE. It shows that Nepal emerged as an important destination for the migration of brahmanas after the dislocation of Indian ruling groups due to Turkish invasions.

Social Impact

The available evidence on the Turkish invasion in the last decade of thirteenth century provides minimal or negligible information on the social impact of the invasion. Nonetheless, the picture that emerges provides a fragmentary view that hints at important developments.

The effect of the Muslim invasion on various Indian religions is highly debatable. The colonial interpretation focuses more on temple destruction, idol desecration and conversion of the native population. However, such a viewpoint has been negated by scholars like Mohammad Habib and others. He argues that Mahmudi agenda never involved conversion because there is no evidence to show that people were forced to follow a new faith altogether. He believes that reason for conversion was more economic than religious. Similarly, Richard Eaton states that no single reason can be attributed to explain conversion. It was rather a gradual, socializing process stretched over a long period of time. As it had happened in the sixth century BCE, the low castes were soothed by the equality followed by the new religion. Therefore, they took to conversion to get some respect from their brethren of the new faith.

Another important impact of Turkish invasion can be seen in the virtual disappearance of Buddhism by the twelfth century from the land of its origin. As R.S. Sharma says, during the 11th and 12th centuries, some Buddhist centres and monasteries known for their riches came to be attacked by the Turks. Also, a large number of Buddhist monks in Bihar were killed by the Turks especially by Bhaktiyar Khalji during his invasion of Bengal.

Further, as far as the caste system is concerned, it stayed intact in society. However, Alberuni's account shows that the power and position of the brahmanas associated with the ruling houses declined. This was because with the coming of the Turks many powerful ruling houses were dismantled. Their sovereign power was subjugated, and their position was made subordinate. So, the power and position of the brahmanas associated with these courts also declined. Nonetheless, as Alberuni mentions, the position of the priest employed in the religious institutions remained the same, and it was not affected.

As mentioned earlier, Mahmud Ghazni and Muhammad Ghouri brought with them the Persianate traditions to India. Iqta system was one of the integral political institutions of this tradition. Under this system, the empire was divided into several large and small tracts of land that were assigned to soldiers, officers, nobles, etc. This system was also seen during the times of the Delhi Sultanate. It was given in lieu of salary, but over a period of time it became hereditary in nature, as seen under Firoz Shah Tughlaq. It encouraged peasants to grow cash crops which led to the emergence of artisans and craftsmen in towns. The result was the flourishing state of trade and commerce. The regular flow of commodity led to the rise of merchant groups like *banjaras*, *caravanis*, brokers etc. With the coming of the Turks, the horse emerged as one of the important animals. It was used in fighting battles. Therefore, many jobs associated with horse came into prominence which basically dealt with making of saddles, horse shoe, etc.

Technological Impact

The Turks brought a lot of technological innovations with them. But their usage could be more proficiently seen from thirteenth century onwards. For example, craft production which includes spinning wheel and needle work, knowledge of sericulture, carpet weaving, discovery of paper, distillation methods, the building materials and techniques, military technology etc. came with the arrival of the Turks.

The establishment of Turkish rule led to the immigration of people from the regions of Iran, Iraq, Turkistan, Khurasan, etc. who brought with them not only rituals, customs and religion, but also their skills and dresses. Before the arrival of Turks, the art of stitched clothes was unfamiliar which can be verified from the account of Marco Polo wherein he reported that 'in all this Province of Malabar there is never a tailor, to cut a coat or stitch'. The coming of the Turks popularized the use of *Salwar Kameez* etc. in India. Moti Chandra concluded that 'jackets, tunics and trousers' became more common in the twelfth century owing to greater contact with the Arabs and Persians. Also, the discovery of Spinning Wheel (*charkha*) was a revolutionary step in the field of textile industry. The use of this mechanical device is known from the account of Isami's *Futuhu-s Salatin*. During the Sultanate period this device had played an important role in the expansion of cotton cloth production.

Under the head of military technology, mention could be made of horse-shoe (*nal*) of iron and steel which are mentioned in the verses of the Ghaznavid poet Mas'ud Sa'd Salman and the Persian poet Nizami Ganjawi.

In the field of architecture important technological innovations were the use of lime and mortar as cementing material and the use of arch and dome. The practice of constructing minarets to commemorate military victories was known at the Ghaznavid court. Also, during the time of Ghurid *sultans* one of the preeminent architectural monument was high minaret at Jam which is situated in central Afghanistan. Jam Minaret is believed to be a precursor of Qutb Minar in Delhi. The inspiration of the Minar came from the Ghorian minaret of Khwaja Siyah Posh in Sistan. It served as a memorial of victory and a mazinah to call the faithful to prayer.

As found in the case of Arab invasion, even the Turkish invasions had far reaching social, cultural and technological impacts. One of the significant differences between the two was the establishment of a full-fledged state by the latter in 13th century.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) How far do you agree with the view that Turkish invasions led to confrontation and conflict?

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- 2) Discuss the impact of Turkish invasions on the Indian Territory?

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7.5 SUMMARY

To conclude it can be said that the rhetoric of medieval Muslim invaders and rulers as iconoclastic and mere plunderer and looter is not correct and justified. In fact, any invasion has elements of both confrontation and interaction. Highlighting one and ignoring the other is uncalled for. In this context, it can be suggested that the annexation of Sindh had far-reaching commercial results. Similarly, the Turkish invasions resulted in the establishment of a long-standing state in India called the Delhi Sultanate.

7.6 KEY WORDS

Nomad : Groups of people who do not have settled habitation

Eurasian Steppes : A Geographic region on the borders of Europe and Asia

Shahnama	: A tenth century poetic work written by Firdausi in Persian
Persian wheel	: a water-lifting device used to lift water from some depth
Spinning wheel	: Device for spinning the cotton. This was moved with the help of crank-handle and had six spindles.
Iconoclast	: A destroyer of images used in religious worship
Inroads	: A hostile attack; a raid
Mamluk	: slave

7.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) See Section 7.2
- 2) See Section 7.2

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) See Section 7.4
- 2) See Section 7.4

7.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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