

- History is all about changes.
- Though focus of medieval historians was on dynastic histories, nonetheless they were aware of changes from one dynasty over the other and they often discuss and remark about that – change of ideas, institutions, often relationships (among groups).

ARABIC & PERSIAN HISTORIC TRADITION

- Arabic was the language of the Islamic world so the earliest available historical writings of the period were written in Arabic.
- K.A. Nizami rightly puts it, that 'The Arab tradition cherished democratic ideals and treated history as a biography of nations.'
- Thus their narratives not just revolve around the story of the rulers, political happenings and camps; instead they speak of the life of the common man.
- Arabic historic tradition encompasses the socio-economic, cultural, religious, along with the political and military events thus was more democratic in approach.
- Arabic history tradition can truly be referred to as history of the 'age'.
- The 'chain of narrators' (isnad) was another important feature of the Arabic historiography.
- To pen down the Quran in its pristine form, the collected oral traditions required to be critically sifted to arrive at the 'most pious Truth'.
- The need for this validation & a deep desire to present the 'Truth, the tradition of isnad evolved and got invented.

ISNAD TRADITION

- It means the 'chain of narrators'
- In this context Al- Baladhuri (d. 892) Futuh-ul Buldan is classical .
- Baladhuri narrates every event 'with reference to the chain of narrators and every reliable sources' (Siddiqui 2014: 3)
- With Al-Masudi (d. 956-57) a new dimension of adding history with geography got introduced.
- Masudi, himself was a great traveller who even visited India and Sri Lanka
He penned down his own travel experiences and geographical knowledge on various regions
- Thus applying 'cause and effect' thus adding 'interpretation' which is an important component of scientific history
- In the eleventh century another dimension got added to Arabic historiography that officers and scholars associated with the court began writing the histories of their rulers, events.
- This drastically changed the tone and form of Arabic history writing; it added the component of personal

biases, jealousies, likes and dislikes of the ruling aristocracy and centre started tilting towards 'court' politics and elites than on common men which is clearly reflected in the writings of Al-Musabbihin (d. 1029; on history of Egypt) and Al-Qurtubi (d. 1076-77; history of Andalusia [Spain])

- Gradually with royal patronage, Arabic histories also became more and more tilted towards dynastic histories, eulogising their patrons' deeds paving way to another element, rhetoric.
- This is especially evident in the writings of Al-Utbi (d. 1035) in his Tarikh-i Yamini dealing with Subuktigin (Samanid Commander) and Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni.
- However, Al-Biruni, who was also associated with the court, nonetheless followed the old classic Arabic tradition of history writing.
- In the Arab context Ibn Khaldun's (d. 1404) Muqaddimah conceives dynamism of the human society, human associations (ijtima) with emphasis on causality.
- He attributes the spirit of solidarity (asbiya) of the clan as the chief factor behind the strength of the rulers/dynasties.
- Persian historiography narrowed down the scope of history and centered around political history and life of the rulers and nobility than a socio-religious history of the age.
- Thus, Persian histories were 'dynastic histories'; histories of the 'kings' and 'aristocracy'.
- Persian historians preferred to dedicate their work to the ruler considering necessary to 'enhance the value of their work'
- Minhaj-i Siraj Juzjani dedicated his Tabaqat-i Nasiri to Nasiruddin Mahmud,
- Ziauddin Barani dedicated his Tarikh-i Firuzshahi to Firuz Shah Tughlaq,
- Arif Qandahari dedicated Tarikh-i Alfi to Akbar.
- Similarly, Mu'tamad Khan dedicated his Iqbal Nama-i Jahangiri to Jahangir.
- Persian histories largely lack the discussions on literati, scholars and saints and their mention is made generally in the context of rulers.
- Minhaj's (1193–1260) period was vibrant in sufi activities of great Chishti and Suhrawardi saints (Muinuddin Chishti, Bakhtiyar Kaki, Hamiduddin Nagori) but, they are largely missing from his narrative.
- However, though Barani's history also fell largely in Persian historiographic tradition, in his writings a subtle change is evident
- He does mention scholars and sufis, though occasionally.

- In his description of court life he mentions musician-dancers Nusrat Bibi, Mihr Afroz; though he looked down upon low born, he mentions about them reaching the highest position – Ladha, gardener, Babu Nayak, the weaver, Manka, cook.
- Abul Fazl further radically modified and combined in his writings both the Arabic & Persian styles of history writings
- Later, generally all historians started including the narratives of scholars and literati & the sufis along with their political narratives.
- The Arabic historic tradition remained prominent till the tenth century; Persian renaissance under Firdausi & later under Sheikh Sa'di gradually took over the Arabic tradition of history writing.
- When Persian had taken over Arabic and became the vehicle of communication and those of the Sultans and the nobles and the literati.
- In India it was the Persian historic tradition that dominated the Persian writings.
- Chachnama that focuses on Muhammad bin Qasim's(AD711) India (particularly Sindh) was written in Arabic style.
- Hasan Nizami, when asked to compose in Persian (Taj-ul Ma'asir) felt disappointed for he considered Arabic as the only proper language to write.

CHRONICLES OF SULTANATE

- Largely, the Sultanate writings were penned down in Persian and were also in the Persian tradition.
- Among the earliest of such writings were Hasan Nizami's Taj-ul Ma'asir (The Crown of Exploits) & Fakhr-i Mudabbir's Adab-ul Harb wa Shuja'at.(The Manners of War & Bravery)
- Hasan Nizami's work can be called first official history.
- It covers the period from the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate (1191-92) upto 1229 CE.
- Minhaj-i Siraj Juzjani's Tabaqat-i Nasiri, dedicated to Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, is what Rosenthal categorises as 'dynastic' history.
- Minhaj begins his history from Adam to pious Caliphs.
- Afterwards each dynasty is dealt in a separate chapter (tabaqa).
- From Nasiruddin Mahmud's reign onwards it turns into an annual chronicle.
- Though Tabaqat is extremely exhaustive and detailed, its focus is largely on narration of political events.
- Amir Khusrau was a poet-historian.
- His Qiran-us Sadain(Meeting of Two Auspicious Stars) deals with the meeting of Sultan Kaiqubad and Bughra Khan and his march from Delhi to Awadh.
- It provides interesting insights to various building structures of Delhi, court life, convivial parties, etc
- Deval Rani Khizr Khan (Ashiq) is a tragic love story of Deval Rani & Alauddin's son Khizr Khan.

- Nuh Sipihr(9 Skies) deals primarily with Mubarak Khalji's Deccan campaigns.
- It is full of praise of India, its people, languages & dialects
- Amir Khusrau's Tughlaq Nama celebrates victories of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq.
- Isami's Futuh-us Salatin(Gifts of the Sultan) covers the account from Ghaznavid/Ghorids down to 1349
- Isami is poor in recording dates, at times dates are wrongly given.
- However, some information provided by Isami are exclusive
- Information on Balban poisoning Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud comes from Isami only.
- Shams Siraj Afif's Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi is an account of Firuz Shah Tughlaq's reign.
- It is divided into five qisms and 18 muqaddams. However, one qism and 4 muqaddams (15th muqaddam partially available) do not survive.
- The text is important to understand Firuz's expeditions to Lakhnauti, Jajnagar, Nagarkot and Thatta
- Afif attempts to analyse causes of the defeat of the Delhi Sultans at the hands of Timur in 1398.
- It also furnishes details of the working of administration under Firuz Shah Tughlaq, prevalence of corruption, etc.
- Afif's account of buildings, gardens and canals constructed by Firuz is useful.
- Afif also provides the first ever reference of the total revenues of the Sultanate under Firuz.
- Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi in his Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi begins his account from Muizuddin Ghor(1414) upto the reign of Syed ruler Muhammad Shah (1438).
- His is dynastic history in the sense that it deals with each reign individually

ZIAUDDIN BARANI

- Ziauddin Barani was a prolific writer. His works reflect his profound scholarship.
- His primary works are: Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi and Fatawa-i Jahandari (Edicts on World-Governance)(1335/1337) & Sahifa-i Nat-i Muhammadi.
- Barani's detail account on prices throws valuable light on Alauddin's price control measures.
- Barani also throws interesting light on the construction activities of Alauddin – fortification of Siri wall, Jami Mosque, several cities and towns, Hauz Khas, etc.
- Barani showed his clear dislike for Alauddin for showing disregard for Sharia in dealing with punishments.
- Though he praises in general the progress of the Sultanate under Alauddin and particularly that of Delhi, its bazaars, trade, craftsmen and artisans.
- Barani's account of Afghanpura tragedy is of importance where unlike the general blame that

Muhammad Tughlaq was responsible for his father's death; he conspired against him; he emphasizes upon his innocence and calls it an accidental death.

- He served as nadim (counsellor/courtier) for seventeen years under Muhammad bin Tughlaq is full of praise for his benefactor, calls him 'Sultan-i Sa'id' (pious ruler) & a shahid (martyr).
- Barani informs us that he attempted to combine both spiritual and temporal powers (Caliph of the Prophet & those of the Sultan).
- He praises him as a genius in military leadership, learning and generosity. Barani also emphasizes upon his great literary pursuits, his interest in the rational sciences (ilm-i m'aqul) and his fondness for philosophers and rationalists and he disregarded traditional sciences (manqul), particularly under the influence of Ubaid Sha'ir (poet) and S'ad Mantaqi (logician).
- Barani informs that Muhammad Tughlaq was a great supporter of reason. Thus he did not hesitate killing pious and religious minded/ orthodox Muslims, ulama, mashaikhs and Saiyyids, nonetheless he was a pious Muslim performing five times prayers.
- Barani's comment with regard to failure of his policies is also very important to understand the personality of Muhammad bin Tughlaq.
- He says that failures of his projects were not on account of his lack of faith in Islam instead because the people were not willing to cooperate for the implementation of his progressive policies.
- Barani rather portrays him an 'intellectual follower of Islam, anxious to lead his people on the path of progress through the new laws & regulations formulated by him' (Siddiqui 2014: 213).
- Ikhtisan, the dahir-i khas of the Sultan calls him Numan-i Sani (Abu Hanifa of the age) for his command over Islamic law.
- Barani's detailed account of the appointment of various low born to high offices is invaluable.
- Similarly, the details pertaining to the network of canals built by Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq is noteworthy, no other contemporary analysis on the theme is so insightful and detailed.
- He argues that it would be valuable for posterity and the over-all socio-economic development of the region.

MUGHAL CHRONICLES

- During the Mughal period beginning from Zain Khan's Tuzuk-i Baburi and Khwand Mir's Qanun-i Humayuni to Tarikh-i Shah Alam by Munna Lal huge amount of chroniclers' accounts were produced.
- During Akbar's period historical literature was produced at an amazingly large scale.
- Akbar commissioned Tarikh-i Alfi to commemorate the Islamic millennium.

- It covers the period from 632 down to Akbar's reign.
- The book was commissioned in 1582 and completed in 1592.
- Khwaja Nizamuddin Ahmad wrote Tabaqat-i Akbari. (1592-94.)
- The author died in October 1594.
- Author provides interesting information about the cities and qasbas of Akbar's empire.
- He mentions that Akbar's empire consisted of 3200 qasbas and 120 cities.
- Badauni penned down Muntakhab-ut Tawarikh(Selection of Histories) against 'heresies' and 'innovations' of Akbar's reign.
- He wrote the book secretly to present the so called 'true' version of the events.
- The book is written in three volumes. First covers from the age of Sabuktigin to Humayun and the Second deals with Akbar's reign.
- He laments the 'annihilation of Islam' in Akbar's reign.
- The third volume is in the form of a tazkira and provides biographical accounts of mashaikhs, ulama, poets and physicians of Akbar's period.
- Badauni furnishes firsthand information on Ibadatkhana proceedings.
- Badauni has provided the full draft of mahzar of Akbar which is otherwise not found in Abul Fazl.
- During Jahangir's reign Mu'tamad Khan compiled Iqbal Nama-i Jahangiri in three volumes.
- The first dealt with the history of Timurids upto the reign of Humayun; while the second deals with Akbar and the third discusses the reign of Jahangir upto the accession of Shahjahan which is (the third volume) popularly known as Iqbal Nama-i Jahangiri.
- First nineteen years' account of Jahangir's reign is largely an abridgement of the Tuzuk. (Autobiography/orders)
- In the last section he expresses bitterness towards Nur Jahan.
- The book also discusses Central Asian affairs which provide Indian perspective of Central Asian affairs.
- Similarly, his account on agricultural production and shawl industry of Kashmir is equally absorbing.
- Shahjahan attempted to pen down the official history of his reign in the style of Abul Fazl thus he first appointed Muhammad Amin Qazvini in his eighth regnal year to begin the task.
- Qazvini compiled the account for the first ten years of Shah Jahan's reign.
- Later Abdul Hamid Lahori was given the task of writing the history of the period (Padshahnama) which covers first twenty years (upto 1648) of Shah Jahan's reign.
- The first ten years account is largely based on Qazvini's account though it is comparatively more detailed and elaborate.

- The later ten years of Shah Jahan's reign (upto 1656) Muhammad Saleh Kamboh compiled history of Shah Jahans's reign, Amal-i Salih, in 1659-60.
- Salih's biographical details of scholars, poets, Sayyids, Shaikhs, nobles and their ranks are useful.
- His account of the construction of the fort of Shahjahanabad is detailed and absorbing
- During Aurangzeb's reign Muhammad Kazim compiled the history of first ten years (1658-1668)
- Alamgirnama provides useful details on Bengal, Mir Jumla's invasion of Kamarupa and Assam, conquest of Chittagong by Shaista Khan.
- Later Aurangzeb discontinued the project of writing of official history in his reign.
- Various other texts survive – Saqi Mustaid Khan's Maasir-i Alamgiri, Sujan Rai Bhandari's Khulasat-us Siyaq, (the essence of accounting) and Khafi Khan's Muntakhab-ul Lubab (the select of the select), while Bhimsen's Nuskha-i Dilkusha (A pleasing document) is a crucial account of Aurangzeb's Deccan years.
- Khulasat-us Siyaq was compiled in 1695 (40th regnal year of Aurangzeb).
- The text is important to understand the geography of Hindustan – detailed account of subas, their crops, chief towns, saints etc.
- Though Sujan Rai Bhandari has largely borrowed from the Ain – some provinces, particularly that of the Punjab, are exhaustive and detailed.
- Bhimsen provides a firsthand account of Aurangabad, its prosperity, rise of the Marathas, Maratha raids, prices of grains.
- He analyses that increase in the strength of the nobility led to the jagirdari crisis during Aurangzeb's reign.
- Bhimsen was also critical of imposition of jizya. He laments that hardly a fraction reached to the treasury.
- Inayatullah Khan Kashmiri, the last secretary of Aurangzeb (later wazir of Muhammad Shah) requested Saqi Mustaid Khan to write the history of Aurangzeb's reign
- He had the access to the entire royal archives.
- The book was completed by him in 1710. It provides interesting details on Satnami and Jat rebellions. Khafi Khan completed his Muntakhab-ul Lubab in 1722 – written in three volumes.
- However, author claims that his account of the last fifty three years (1669-1722) is based on his personal observations
- The text is valuable to understand the Mughal-Sikh relations. It particularly deals with Aurangzeb's conflict with Guru Gobind Singh and later Mughal clashes with Banda Bahadur.
- He joined Akbar's court in 1574, a year before Ibadat Khana was established.
- His chief fame rests upon his monumental work Akbarnama of which, initially, Ain-i Akbari, another seminal work on the statistical account of Akbar's empire, was its third volume.
- Akbarnama narrative comes to a close in the 46th regnal year of Akbar; in the 47th regnal year Abul Fazl got assassinated by Bir Singh Deo Bundela.
- Ain was completed in the 42nd regnal year, a section on Berar was added in the 43rd regnal year.
- Later Muhibb Ali Khan brings the Akbarnama narrative upto the end of Akbar's reign.
- However, the added portion was probably written during Shah Jahan's reign and appears to have been largely copied from Mu'tamad Khan's account.
- From Akbar's reign onwards the account becomes an annual chronicle.
- Ain is divided into five books
- First deals with the Imperial establishment; second discusses the army; third elaborates on various offices/duties, details of revenue rates, and sub-wise statistics; fourth covers Hindu philosophy, religion, medicine, customs and manners; while the fifth incorporated the sayings of Akbar.
- While Akbarnama is full of battles and events; Ain is written in the form of a gazetteer.
- Abu Fazl made fusion of "Arab Tradition & Persian tradition of historiography.
- As per K.A. Nizami, his intention of including 'people' was 'partial and limited': 'the people were admitted not as a matter of right, as the Arab historians had done, but as a necessity, because without them a discussion of Akbar's multifarious activities would have remained incomplete.
- Abul Fazl used new methodologies to present the political and administrative realities of Akbar's realm to the fore.
- His Ain provides exhaustive details of the genius of Akbar's empire.
- His details of administrative regulations and topography of the empire and the provinces enriches and widens the scope of history writing.
- Abul Fazl explained monarchy as light emanating from God (farr-i izadi) and sovereign should be a 'just' ruler and work for the welfare of people.
- For him Akbar was the 'ideal' monarch leading both the spiritual and temporal realms.
- By the declaration of mahzar Akbar reached to the level of a mujtahid 'a perfect man', imam-i Adil 'infallible leader'.
- He presented Akbar's reigns as that of peace, prosperity, stability, good governance and a period that of religious tolerance and freedom.

ABUL FAZL

- Abul Fazl, younger brother of Faizi and son of the great scholar Shaikh Mubarak Nagauri, was not just the 'secretary' of the empire but also was the close friend of Akbar, a rationalist and liberal thinker.

ABUL FAZL : LIMITATIONS

- In order to glorify Akbar's achievements he often tend to overlook his weaknesses and failed to use

his 'reason' in presenting the facts thus making at times the account 'partisan'.

- To overshadow Akbar's failures, certain of Akbar's experiments found no place in Abul Fazl's Akbarnama: there is no mention of failure of Akbar's experiment to convert the entire lands of the empire into khalisa, nor the 24th regnal year Akbar resumes the grant of jagirs.
- Thus Abul Fazl omitted many facts that did not fit into his scheme of presenting Akbar as an 'ideal' monarch or something that undermined Akbar's position.
- Thus Akbarnama is more a 'story of Akbar

MEMOIRS

- A historical account/biography that is largely written with personal memories falls into the category of a memoir.
- During the medieval period there are four major accounts which fall into this category – Firoz Shah's Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi for the Sultanate period & Babur's memoirs, Baburnama, Gulbadan Begum's Humayun Nama/Ahwal-i Humayun Padshah & Jahangir's Tuzuk written during the Mughal period.
- Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi was originally inscribed on the Jami Mosque of Firuzabad, perhaps inspired by inscription of the Ashokan pillar to communicate people through inscriptions.
- K.A. Nizami calls it 'essentially a religious inscription'
- Mention of mulhid (heretic) and ibahati (kafir) in Futuhat suggest that heretic trends emerged in prominence.
- It provides detailed account of the building activities of Firuz, even those within the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya, though, his secular constructions particularly network of canal, etc. are missing from the account.
- Firuz also records the general ban imposed by him on visits to the kunds and also ban inflicted upon women in particular visiting sufi shrines.
- Sultan also mentions about the building of a state hospital where free food and medicines were provided.
- It also informs us Firuz receiving a manshur (letter of investiture) from the Caliph
- Babur's memoirs (Tuzuk-i Baburi/Baburnama), written originally in Chagatai Turkish – the 'only true autobiography in Turkish literature'.
- It is an extremely open and frank account of the events.
- He has presented an absolutely truthful and unbiased account of the events of his period
- Though Babur died in 1530, his account abruptly ends on 7th September, 1529.

BABUR'S OBSERVATION OF INDIA

- He provides the political, military and socio-economic conditions of the region he governed right from his accession (1494).

- He mentioned about lack of political unification, centralised rule & solidarity among Indian rulers
- He also observes the fragile nature of Indian cities and hamlets
- If they have a mind to build a city, there is no necessity for digging irrigation canals or building dams... They simply make huts from the plentiful straw and innumerable trees and instantly a village or city is born
- However, he was impressed by the presence of innumerable artisans.
- He also comments on the hereditary nature of these professions
- His memoir points out Babur as a true naturalist.
- His keen interest in local environment and physical geography – flora, fauna, river systems, animal kingdom is extraordinary
- Description of the use of Persian wheel and charas.
- However, Babur could never think of India as his homeland.
- He always had a longing for 'garden palace' of Samarkand and muskmelons of his homeland.
- He comments: 'Many praise the mango so highly as to give it the preferences to every kind of fruit, the musk-melon excepted, but it does not appear to me to justify their praise'

HUMAYUN-NAMA BY GULBADAN BEGUM

- It throws light on Babur and Humayun and provides insights on the life in the Mughal harem – personal/social relationships of the royalty, internal conflicts/tensions, role of adab (rules/etiquettes/royal protocol/conduct).
- It suggests that royal women did enjoy distinct position in matters of marriage and social protocol.
- It also shows women often played the role of political intermediaries.
- Account also throws light on the position of purdah in the Mughal harem during the early period.
- It appears it was comparatively less strict. It shows that the lady of the harem was not the chief queen but was the queen mother who often acted as advisor to the king.
- Humayun's regular visits to Dildar Banu Begum testify to it.
- It is a portrayal of 'lived experiences and socio-political realities' of the period.
- It not just throws light on the domestic life of the Mughal household but also it suggests the boundaries of the public/ private spaces and gender relations vs. political power.

TUZUK-I-JAHANGIRI

- To pen down his memoirs he derived the inspiration from his great grandfather Babur.
- Written in two parts. First is an account of twelve years of his reign & the second covers the account up to the beginning of the nineteenth regnal year (1624)

- He wrote the account of first seventeen years with his own hands, later under his dictates Mu'tamad Khan penned it down.
- However, for the rest of the period of Jahangir's reign in the eighteenth century Muhammad Hadi Kanwar Khan added along with his introduction on the early life of Jahangir.
- It contains his twelve orders (dastur-ul amal), installation of his golden chain of justice and various administrative and financial measures, mansab and jagir assignments, Khusrau's rebellion, maintenance of forts, sarais, roads, etc.
- Jahangir provides vivid description of the founding of Fatehpur Sikri.
- He narrates his love to interact with Pandits and Hindu ascetics.
- At times he frankly admits his own weaknesses.
- It also throws light on Jahangir's liberal patronage to art and literature.
- It provides insights into his interests in public health and medicine.
- His fifth order speaks about the establishment of free hospitals and appointment of physicians in all the major cities of the empire.
- It also shows his keen interests in Botany and Zoology.
- It reflects upon Jahangir's extraordinary knowledge of natural history. Undoubtedly Tuzuk brings to light Jahangir's personality traits as an extremely liberal Muslim and a rationalist thinker.

INSHA TRADITION

- Insha literally means 'creation'. However, in the medieval period it denotes personal letters, state correspondences.
- They provide firsthand information on the working of administration & prevailing socio-cultural conditions and ideas during the medieval period.
- Insha collections of the Sultanate period that survive today are a few and the most prominent ones are Ijaz-i Khusrawi of Amir Khusrau & Insha-i Mahru of Ain-ul Mulk Abdullah bin Mahru.
- The best insha collections produced in the 15-16th century in the Deccan are Riyaz-ul Insha of Khwaja Jahan Mahmud Gawan and Insha-i Tahir of Shah Tahir Husaini.
- During the Sultanate period there existed a separate department of diwan-i insha, with katib, (writer), dabir (commonly used in the Sultanate period) and munshi (more commonly used by the Mughals).
- They were responsible for the drafting of the official letters.
- Insha writings were largely written in the context of diwani.
- Insha literature was directly connected with chancellery practices of the Delhi Sultans & later the Mughals.
- Interestingly, the surviving insha collections are of those who were not holding any post in the diwan-i insha office.
- Neither Ain-ul Mulk nor Amir Khusrau ever served in the department of diwan-i insha nonetheless their collections contain apart from state correspondences important private correspondences as well.
- There were thus two types of inshas, one, written for epistolography writings, thus they may not necessarily be real. Manazir-ul Insha of Khwaja Jahan Mahmud Gawan is the example of this type of Insha.
- In other types documents/letters/ correspondences are preserved – are of great historical significance.
- While Amir Khusrau's style of insha writing is highly ornate, Insha-i Mahru is comparatively written in simpler form.
- Ijaz-i Khusrawi was compiled around 1292 CE.
- Besides the prose specimen, it also contains documents of fatehnama, farman, parwana, arzdashts, etc.
- Amir Khusrau himself admits that he had also used his imagination in writing factitious letters.
- However, a few of his letters throw ample light on the contemporary history/society.
- Two such important letters mentioned by him are Alauddin's farman issued at his accession and farman of Balban issued by him after the conquest of Lakhnauti.
- Amir Khusrau's insha informs us of various literary and social figures of his period.
- It also throws valuable light on contemporary administration, socio-economic conditions, religious and literary traditions of the period.
- Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Mokatebat-i Rashidi, though written by a Hamadani a powerful wazir of Iran, is important to understand the Ilkhanid-Khilji relations.
- The letters were written during circa 1304-1307 when Fazlullah visited Ilkhanid ruler Uljaitu's (1304-1316) envoy.
- He received a warm welcome by Alauddin Khilji, even he is reported to have granted four villages to him as suyurghal (revenue-free grant)
- It contains a letter of Alauddin sent to Fazlullah suggests that in spite of Alauddin's anxieties pertaining to Mongols of Central Asia, he had cordial relations with the Ilkhanids.
- He specifically mentions Maulana Shamsuddin Hindi of Delhi as a distinguished mathematician of his time.
- Insha-i Mahru is a collection of Mahru's personal correspondences – his letters which he wrote as governor of Multan during Firuz Shah Tughlaq's reign – contains in all 134 documents dealing primarily with manshurs, misals, ahd-namas (oath

of loyalty), arzdashts, personal letters, and proclamations

- Insha also provides interesting information on the purpose of religious grants.
- It appears that grants were generally not given as personal favour, instead it aimed at personal charity, a fact also confirmed by Ibn Battuta.
- Mahru is also an important to understand the nature of the bestowal of religious grants.
- Interestingly grants were also given for blessing the souls of past Sultans & to teachers, muezzins, etc.
- Ahd-namas, which were oath of loyalty amirs had to take, suggests, as K.A. Nizami puts forth were 'a sign of weakness, rather than of strength'.
- Presence of such ahd-namas one does not find during Alauddin or Muhammad Tughlaq's periods.
- Some letters deal with issues relating to non-realisation of the taxes.
- One of the letters suggests the disapproval of forced labour.
- Mahru's letters also help us understand a number of revenue vocabulary, specially the nature of taxes – jizya, kharaj, khot, dangana, shiq, idrar, kharaji, etc.
- Mahru's letter explains why Firuz took such a stern step against the ibahati (marrying a woman before she was formally divorced).
- It suggests that such trend was on the rise and that's why Firuz took hard steps against such practices.
- The composition of the zamindar class is explained and conforms to proclamation of 1353 of Firuz that together the muqaddams and the mafrozian constituted the zamindar class.
- Insha collections of the Mughal period are too numerous, beginning from Badai- ul Insha of Hakim Yusufi (1533) to Nigarmana-i Munshi of Malikzada (1683).
- Among all insha collections Abul Fazl's name stands out – Mukatabat-i Allami (collected by his nephew Abdus Samad) and Riqqat-i Abul Fazl (collected by his another nephew Nuruddin Muhammad).
- Nuruddin Muhammad also compiled another insha collection of Abul Fazl's brother Faizi, Lataif-i Faizi.
- During Jahangir's reign Harkaran, son of Mathuradas Kamboh wrote Insha-i Harkaran.
- Aurangzeb's own Ruqaat, though brief, but valuable.
- There also survives huge collection of Aurangzeb's letters – Raqaim-i Karaim, Lalamat-i Tayyabat etc.
- Among other insha collections, Munshat-i Namkin of Mir Abdul Qasim Namkin (1598), Insha-i Baqir Khan of Baqir Khan Najm Sani (1637), Insha-i Munir of Munir Lahori (1644), and Munshat-i Brahman of Chandrabhan (1657) are important to understand the socio-economic and cultural milieu of the period.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

- It includes farmans (emperor's orders), nishans (orders issued by a prince), parwanas (instructions issued by a king to his subordinates), hasb-ul hukm (order issued by a minister at the instructions of an emperor), dastur-ul amal (administrative or fiscal regulations), etc.
- Dastur-ul amals are crucial sources of information to know the actual working of the administration.
- The earliest of such document available to is Dastur-ul Albab Hisab of Firuz Shah's period written by Abdul Hamid Muharrir Ghaznavi.
- He produced the work mainly to instruct his son in the art of ledger-keeping.
- It throws valuable light on various administrative procedures and norms as well as a number of technical terms used during the period.
- However, unlike the Sultanate period a whole plethora of such Mughal records survive, particularly that of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb's periods – Dastur-ul amal of Jawahar Nath Bekus, Dastur-ul amal-i Alamgiri, Dastur-ul amal-i Navisindgi, Zawabit-i Alamgiri, Khulasat-us Siyaq, Hidayat-ul Qawaid, Farhang-i Kardani, etc.

SUFI LITERATURE

- In the mystic accounts there are three types of literature – malfuzat, maktubat (letters) and biographical account of the Sufis.
- In the sufi literature malfuzat are of prime importance.
- Malfuzat are conversations of sufis/mystics.
- Though, these malfuzat primarily address the moral and religious aspects, it nonetheless throw valuable light on general life and conditions of common masses, which otherwise official historians and chroniclers of the time fail to address
- K.A. Nizami (1982) rightly puts that, 'In many cases the information found in mystic records acts as a corrective to the impressions created and perpetuated by the political chronicles'.
- The earliest of such malfuzat penned in India is that of Amir Hasan Sijzi's Fuad-ul Fuad (1307).
- It is the compilation of the conversations of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya
- Maktubat are letters/correspondences of sufi masters through which they used to train their disciples living far away.
- It focuses on problems of varied nature faced by their disciples.
- Among these maktubat, most important are those of Abdul Quddus Gangohi, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah and Khwaja Masoom.
- Another important source is biographies of the Sufis.
- They often contain exaggerated accounts, miracles, etc. in praise of their masters.
- For example, Amir Khurd's account of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar later gets wrapped up into

various miraculous stories and finally in Jawahir-i Faridi of Ali Asghar Chishti it becomes difficult to sift the historical truth.

- Thus while analysing mystical literature one needs a careful reading of the source and the background of the writer concerned.

FOREIGN TRAVELLERS ACCOUNT

- Indo-Arab relations got radical boost when Al-Mamun established bait-ul hikmah(House of Wisdom) at Baghdad and thus started the project of translating a number of Sanskrit texts into Arabic, resulting in the emergence of a series of scholars who knew Sanskrit and Arabic both which led to the emergence of interests in Indian scholarship, culture and history.
- One finds accounts on India in the works of Al-Masudi, Ibn Khurdadhbih (d. 911; Kitab-ul Masalik wal Mamalik), Sulaiman Tajir (Akhbar-us Sind wal Hind; 851), Al-Istakhri (visited India in 951
- Al-Masalik wal Mamalik contains valuable information on India, particularly about its geography and provides a map of contemporary Sindh as well
- Ibn Hauqal (Kitab Surat al-Arz [Kitab Masalik wal Mamalik]), 989; provides fascinating account of the cities of India along with a map of Sindh – which reaches its climax in the writings of Albiruni (973-1050) who accompanied Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni.
- In his Kitab-ul Hind he provides vivid account of India
- Al-Umari (d. 1348) though never visited India but provides details on India in his Masalik-ul Absar fi Mamalik il Amsar based on the works of travellers who visited India.
- Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq in contrast to Indian chroniclers, received extensive praises from Arabs for his unbounded generosity, vast erudition, intellectual achievements and administrative genius
- These accounts widen our understanding of the Sultanate with an Afro-Asian perspective.
- Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan traveller, looms touched Indian soil in 1333 and left India in 1344.
- He not only travelled extensively Indian territories but also held prominent position of Qazi of Delhi for long seven years under Muhammad bin Tughlaq.
- Ibn Battuta's Rihla throws valuable light on the judicial, political, military institutions, agricultural produce (particular mention is made of mango and betel-leaf), postal system, literati, court etiquettes, trade, weights and measures, customs and manners during Muhammad bin Tughlaq's period.
- Mughal period is dominated by European travellers' accounts — Father Monserrate, Pelsaert, Sir Thomas Roe, Bernier, Tavernier and Manucci.
- Father Antonio Monserrate (d.1600), a Jesuit missionary, accompanied Father Acquaviva along with the First Jesuit Mission (1580-82) to Emperor Akbar's court at Agra in 1580.
- There he served as Murad's tutor. He penned down his memoirs in 1590.
- Monserrate's commentary is a valuable source to know the details of the events of Akbar's campaigns against Mirza Hakim.
- It also throws valuable light on Akbar's religious encounters/discussions.
- Francisco Pelsaert was the native of Antwerp who began his eastward journey in 1618 and remained in Agra till 1627 as senior factor.
- Though focus of his Remonstrantie (c. 1626) was to record the Dutch commercial activities, his account throws valuable light on the socio-economic condition of the people.
- His narration on indigo production in Bayana(Raj), Sarkhej(Guj) and Mewat (Har)region and spice trade is valuable.
- Sir Thomas Roe (1615-1619), an Englishman, born in Essex, visited Jahangir's court in 1615.
- Roe provides useful insights on the polity of Jahangir's India.
- He is useful to understand the character of Jahangir, Asaf Khan, Khusrau and Khurram.
- His lengthy detailed descriptions of navroz celebrations and emperor's weighing ceremonies are insightful.
- Jean Baptiste Tavernier (1640-1667), a jeweller, a diamond merchant, made six voyages, first of which commenced in 1640.
- Tavernier's account is crucial to understand the commercial activities of the period, particularly tricks of money- lenders (shroff/sarrafi).
- Further his account on diamond mines of Golconda and other precious stones and pearls is extremely valuable and exhaustive.
- Francois Bernier was a French traveller – visited during Aurangzeb's reign (from 1658 to 1668). He joined the service of Danishmand Khan, a leading Mughal noble and served in Aurangzeb's court as physician for long twelve years.
- Bernier's account is rich in providing firsthand information on war of succession.
- He personally witnessed Dara being paraded on the streets of Delhi.
- His account of the battle of Dharmat as narrated by a gunner of Aurangzeb is absorbing.
- He provides descriptions of the cities of Delhi and Agra, customs and traditions of people, riches of the empire, working of the Mughal karkhanas, condition of peasantry and exploitation of the Omrahs, Mughal governors and jagirdars
- However, his observation with regard to the ownership of land, where he states that king was the owner of the land is not correct.
- Mughals exercised control over the produce of the land and the peasants enjoyed the ownership rights and could not be evicted so long as they were paying the revenue.

- Niccolao Manucci (1656-1712), a Venetian adventurer, was initially inducted into Dara Shikoh's army as an artilleryman.
 - Later he joined the service of Raja Jai Singh (1664) and met Shivaji in 1665.
 - He served as physician in 1670 at Lahore and later in 1678 became physician of Shah Alam's wife.
 - Manucci's *Storia do Mogor* provides Aurangzeb's relations and Mughal policy towards Deccan.
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- Details of Aurangzeb's movements during 1700-1707 are also crucial and exhaustive.
 - About him William Irvine has rightly commented: 'Credulous, superstitious, at times garrulous he may be, but he was a keen observer with unusual opportunities'.



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