

CC-7 : HISTORY OF INDIA(c.1206-1526)

II. SULTANATE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

(A-5). THE LODIS; CONQUEST OF B AHLUL AND SIKANDAR; IBRAHIM LODI AND THE BATTLE OF PANIPAT

The Lodis were the last ruling family of the Delhi Sultanate and the first to be headed by the Afghans who were ruling who were over Sirhind when the Syed dynasty was ruling in India. The Lodis ruled even longer than the Khiljis and achieved much more than the Tughlaqs and the Syeds.

The Lodi dynasty was founded by Bahlul Lodi in 1451 CE. Bahlul Lodi was the Governor of Lahore and Sirhind when the Sultan of Delhi was Alam Shah, the last of the Syed Sultans. With the help of the few nobles Bahlul Lodi took charge of the army of the Delhi Sultanate and consequently went on to become the Sultan of Delhi when Alam Shah transferred the powers of the Sultanate to his hand. Thus the rule of the Lodi dynasty began which continued up to 1526 CE.

Sultan Bahlul Lodi was a capable general and he realised that to establish his control over the Sultanate of Delhi he would require the support of the Afghan nobles. The Afghan nobles wanted to be treated as equals by the Sultan and therefore in order to honour this desire the Sultan publicly declared himself as one of the Afghan peers and not a king. Sultan Bahlul Lodi would not sit on the Throne and neither the Afghan nobles needed to stay standing in court of the Sultan. This earned him the respect and support of the nobles throughout his reign.

Bahlul Lodi was successful in suppressing the revolts in Mewat and Doab. The most successful war of Bahlul Lodi was the one against the Sultan of Jaunpur whom he defeated and captured Jaunpur. He also annexed the Sharqai dynasty in 1484 CE. He however failed to re-occupy Bengal, Gujarat, and the Deccan. Bahlul Lodi tried to restore the greatness of the Delhi Sultanate and hence conquered territories around Delhi. When he died in 1489 CE the Sultanate comprised the territories from Punjab to Varanasi. He was succeeded by his son Nizam Shah under the title of Sultan Sikandar Lodi in 1489 CE.

Sikandar Lodi was perhaps the most able and greatest of the three Lodi Sultans. Sikandar Lodi brought the whole of Gujarat under his control and defeated many rajput chiefs. He attacked Bengal and forced its ruler, Alauddin Hussain Shah to sign a treaty with him. His empire extended from Punjab to Bihar, including some parts of the kingdom of Gwalior and Nagor. Sultan Sikandar Lodi founded the city of Agra in 1505 CE and made it his Capital.

Sikandar Lodi was also a great administrator. He set up an efficient espionage system and introduced the system of auditing of accounts. All jagir holder had to submit a statement of accounts regularly to the Sultan. He took keen interest in improving agriculture. He introduced the Gaaz-i-Sikandar of 32 digits for measuring cultivated fields. Despite certain laudable qualities he became a bigot and showed little tolerance towards non-Muslims. He re-imposed the Jijiya on the non-Muslims. Sikandar Lodi was credited with laying and road and highways and also for providing irrigational facilities to the peasantry. He laid great emphasis on justice and all the highways of the empire were made safe from robbers.

Sikandar Lodi gave magnificent grants to scholars, philosophers and men of letter so that the cultured people from other countries and places including those of Arabia and Iran would come to his court. During his time a lot of Sanskrit works were translated onto Persian. He himself wrote verses in Persian under the penname of Gulrakhi. Sikandar Lodi died in 1517 CE.

After the death of Sikandar Lodi the nobles divided the empire between his two sons. Ibrahim Lodi was made the Sultan of Delhi and his brother Jalal Khan was given Jaunpur. Ibrahim Lodi was not satisfied with this arrangement imprisoned Jalal Khan and later executed him. All throughout his reign there was continuous struggle between the Sultan and the nobles and The Sultan portrayed a harsh attitude towards the nobles by either putting them in prison or putting them to death whenever they showed disagreement. It was during this time Rana Sangha of Mewar by finding opportunity made inroads into the Lodi territories and advanced as far as Bayana near Agra. The Sultan fought and defeated Rana Sangha of Mewar and captured Gwalior. The Governor of Bihar declared independence .

Daulat Khan Lodi, Governor of Lahore greatly displeased by the arrogance and the insulting attitude of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi invited Babur, the ruler of Kabul to invade India and ousted Ibrahim Lodi from the throne. Daulat Khan later

realised his folly but it was too late by then. By that time Babur had already planned his invasion in India by 1519 CE started to raid the regions of the frontier province. In 1525 CE he came marching towards Delhi. Ibrahim Lodi advanced to meet him and a sanguinary battle was fought between Babur and Ibrahim Lodi at the battle field of Panipat in 1526 CE. Although the army of Ibrahim Lodi was large and strong compared to the army of Babur yet it collapsed before the tactics of Babur. Ibrahim Lodi was defeated and killed.

This battle is known as the First **Battle of Panipat(1526 CE)** which resulted in the complete defeat of the Lodi dynasty in particular and in general also marked the end of the Delhi Sultanate. By winning this battle Babur occupied Delhi and Agra and laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India.

Babur's success in the First Battle of Panipat is mainly attributed to his army cohesion and mobility, his horse-mounted archers and superior artillery. Employing firearms, gun carts, movable artillery, superior cavalry tactics and highly regarded Mughal composite bow-Babur achieved a resounding victory. Ibrahim Lodi died in the Battle field, while Babur became the master of Delhi and Agra. The First Battle of Panipat therefore catapulted Babur to the position of the first Mughal emperor of India.
