

# **SOURCES OF MEDIEVAL INDIAN HISTORY (PART-1)**

**UG (HISTORY) SEM-4 PAPER MJC-7**

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# SOURCES

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With the advent of Muslims to India a new tradition of historical writing came in to existence. The Muslims like Christians, had a keener sense of history, and a more precise sense of chronology than the ancient Hindus, and it was in the wake of Muslim invasion of Hindustan that historiography as premeditated form of cultural expression was introduced in India. The Muslim love of History was continually reinforced from Arab, Turkish and Persian Sources. Medieval Muslim historical literature in India was in form, subject and spirit, little different from historical writing elsewhere in Muslim World.



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The beginning of Islam started a great series of Indian chronicles written by courtiers or officials on the orders of their rulers or in prospect of gaining their patronage. Some of them wrote general or universal history of the world until gradually a regional and domestic sense emerged, which was reinforced by the deliberate policy of the rulers in servicing relations with the outer Muslim world.

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The Ghurian conquest of north India towards the close of the twelfth century is an important event in Indian history. This is because an independent Sultanate, founded in its wake, opened India to foreign influences on the one hand and led to the unification of the country under a strong centre on the other. It also attracted emigrants from the neighbouring countries who represented different cultural traditions. One of the traditions introduced by them was that of history writing.

The historical literature produced by them in Persian language is of vast magnitude.

# SOURCES

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As a matter of fact, the study of history was considered by the Muslim elite as the third important source of knowledge after the religious scripture and the jurisprudence. With the coming of the Mughals in the 16th century the tradition of history writing achieved new heights.

The early writings in Persian on the history of Turks who came to India are traceable to 12th century.



# SOURCES

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As far as Delhi Sultanate is concerned we have a continuity of available texts in Persian till the end of the Sultanate (1526). Many of the authors were attached to the court as officials while a few were independent scholars not associated with any official position. In general, the available histories put forward the official version of events, rather than a critical evaluation of the policies and events. It is rare that one comes across any critical reference to the reigning Sultan.

# SOURCES

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Even the style is also generally eulogising or flattering to the Sultan under whose reign it is written. In most cases, the authors borrowed freely from the earlier works to trace the earlier period. Apart from historical texts a number of other Persian works are available for the period. Abdu'r Razzaq's *Matla'us Sa'dain* (travelogue), Tutsi's *Siyasatnama* (administration & polity), Fakhr-i Mudabbir's *Adabu'l-Harb wa'as-Shuja'at* (warfare), are a few important ones. A few Arabic works are also available for the period. Ibn Battuta (*Rihla*) and Shihab-al Din al-Umari (*Masalik al-absar Mamalik al-Ansar*) have provided excellent travel accounts.

(To be continued)