

Studying the Sultanate Period

Sources and Methods of History

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Author, *The Muslim 100* (2008),

The Muslim Heritage of Bengal (2013) and *The Muslim Heritage of the West* (early 2017)

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Main Sources

- **Early Sources**
- **Modern Sources**
- **Epigraphy/Coins**
- **Travel Accounts**
- **Oral Tradition**
- **Official Records**

Main Sources – 1

- **Early Sources** – Primary and Secondary
- **Modern Sources** – Muslim & non-Muslim
- **Epigraphy/Coins** – Arabic & Persian

Main Sources – 2

- **Travel Accounts** – Early and Modern
- **Oral Tradition** – Unrecorded Stories, Tales, Folklore, etc.
- **Official Records** – National & International

Essential References

- Minhaj al-Siraj al-Juzjani author of Tabaqat-i-Nasiri (1260) dedicated to Sultan Nasir al-Din Mahmud of Delhi.
- Ghulam Husayn Salim author of Riyazu-s-Salatin (Gardens of Kings, 1786-88).
- Bhattasali N.K., Coins and Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal (1922).
- Maulvi Shamsuddin Ahmed author of Inscriptions of Bengal (1960).
- Ahmad Hasan Dani author of Muslim Architecture in Bengal (1961).

Essential References

- Abdul Karim author of Banglar Itihas: Sultani Amal (1977), Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal (1992) and Social History of the Muslims of Bengal (1959).
- Momtazur Rahman Tarafdar author of Husain Shahi Bengal 1494-1538: a socio-political history (1965).
- Muhammad Mohar Ali author of History of the Muslims of Bengal (1985) vol. 1.

Accessing the Sources

- **Language Skills** – Bengali (essential), Arabic (Highly recommended), Persian (recommended), Urdu (preferable) and Sanskrit and/or Hindi (useful).
- **PG Training** – Research Methodology and Techniques or Academic/Scholarly supervision.
- **Numismatic** – Some training on deciphering Epigraphy and Coins.

Accessing the Sources

- **Libraries** Eg, British Library (IOR), Dhaka Uni Library, Asiatic Society BD Library, IF Library, Bangla Academy Library, National Library Dhaka, RAS Library, SOAS Library, Senate House, Cambridge Uni Library and Calcutta Uni Library, among others.
- **Research Institutes** Eg, RAS, Oriental Institute Oxford, Nazrul Institute Dhaka, Itihas Parishad Dhaka, IBS Rajshahi, ASB Calcutta, etc.

Accessing the Sources

- **Archives.org** (old, out of print books and articles) as PDF.
- **Journals** – RAS journal, ASB journal, South Asian Cultural Studies, Islami Ghabishana Patrika (Rajshahi), Itihas Parishad Patrika (Dhaka), Journal of ASB, IF Patrika, Journal of IMM Affairs, etc.
- **BMRI websites** – www.bmri.org.uk and www.muslimheritageofbengal.com

Main Sources

**Any Question, Comments, Queries or
Clarification on the Sources**

Historical Context

Six Key Issues

- **Defining Bengal**
- **Pala and Sena rule**
- **Early Arab traders**
- **Muslim missionaries**
- **711CE**
- **Social Origins of Muslims of Bengal**

Historical Context

Defining Bengal

- Geographical
- Political
- Cultural
- Religious
- Linguistic

Historical Context

Pre-Muslim Bengal -1

- Pala Dynasty
- Sena Rule
- Early Arab Contact with Bengal

Historical Context

Pre-Muslim Bengal -2

- Early Muslim Traders/Merchants
- Role of the Sufi Missionaries
- Establishment of Indigenous Muslim communities
- Mosques, Maktabas, Khanqahs, etc

Historical Context

Arrival of Political Islam in Subcontinent

- 711CE
- Muslim Rule of Northern India
- Role of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna
- The Delhi Sultanate

Historical Context

Theories: Social Origins of Bengal's Muslims

- Majority Arab, Turkish & Persian origin
- Majority Low-caste Hindu Converts
- Question of Mass Migration/Conversion
- Mix Origin and Background

Historical Context

**Any Question, Comments,
Queries or Clarification on the
Historical Context**

Muslim Rule in Bengal

Classification of Timeline

- Formative
- Sultanate
- Afghan
- Mughal
- Independent Nawabs/Rulers?

Sultanate Period in Bengal

Formative Period

- Role of early Muslim trader/preachers
- 1203CE: Emergence of Political Islam
- Who was Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji?
- Muslim Conquest of Bengal
- M B Khalji's successors

Sultanate Period in Bengal

Consolidation and Latter Periods

- Balbani rulers (1282-1352)
- Ilyas Shahi rule (1339-1414)
- Raja Kans interlude (1414-1437)
- Later Ilyas Shahi rule (1437-1487)
- Arab dynasty-1&2 (1487-1547)
- Afghan rule ((1537-1576)

Mughal Rule in Bengal

Mughal Period and After

- Beginning (1576)
- Consolidation
- Beginning of the End (1716)
- Independent rule? (1717)
- End of Muslim rule (1757)

Muslim Rule in Bengal

Any Question, Comments, Queries or
Clarification on Sultanate Rule in Bengal

Observations

- Rich and Diverse History
- Diversity of Interpretation
- Need for Critical Engagement and Better Understanding
- Great Legacy for New Generations in the West

Acknowledgement

**Thank you
&
Q & A session**