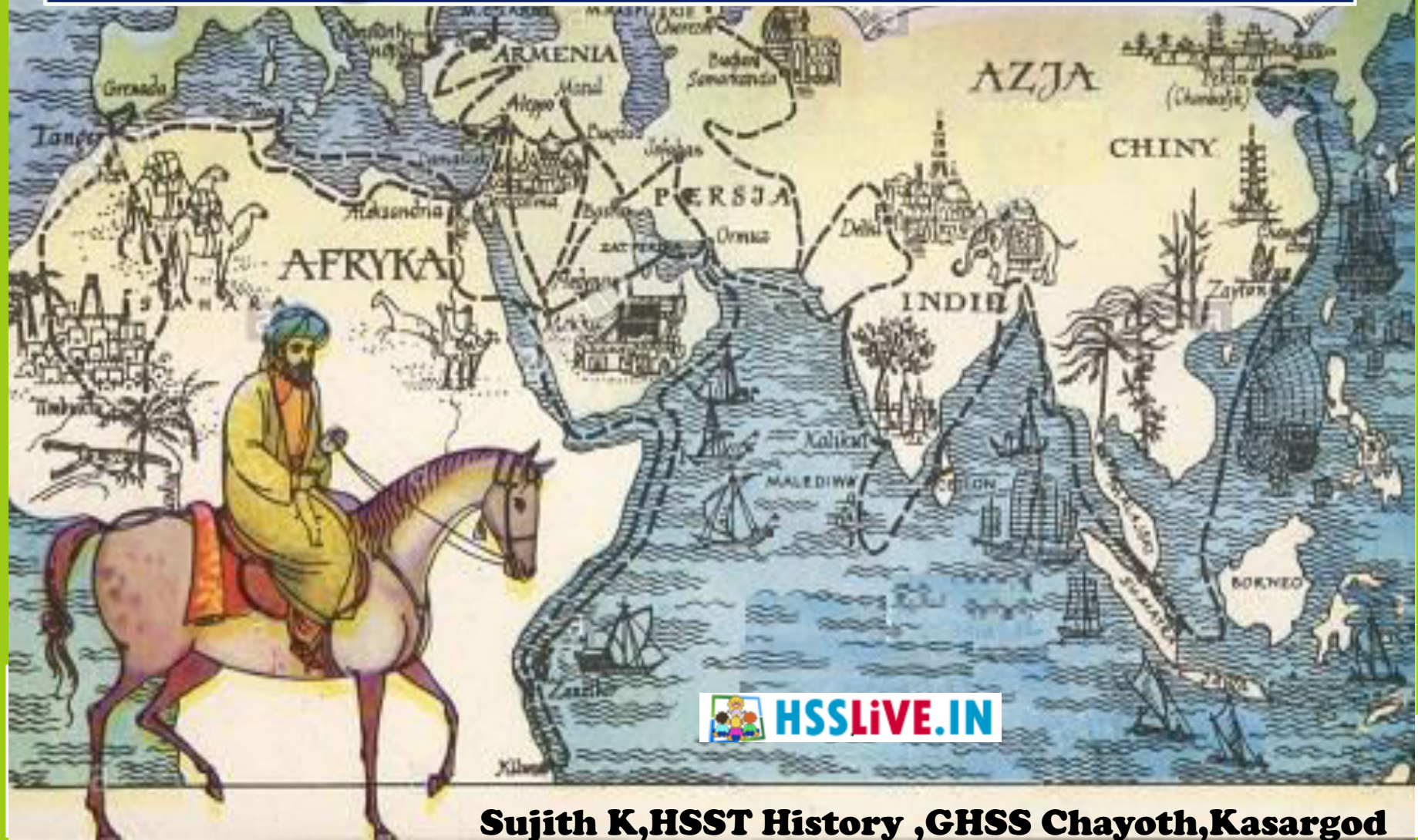


Through the Eyes of Travellers



Sujith K, HSST History , GHSS Chayoth, Kasargod

Three travellers who came India (10th -17th century)



Three travellers who came India (10th -17th century)

Alberuni

- Uzbekistan
- 11th Century

Battuta

- Morocco
- 14th Century

Bernier

- France
- 17th Century

Al -Biruni

- * **Born in 973 in (Khwarizm) present day uzbekistan.**
- * **well versed in various languages.**
- * **Mahamud of Gazni invaded Khwarizm(1017)**
- * **He brought Alberuni to Gazni.**
- * **Alberuni died there at the age 70.**

**Why and when
did Al-Biruni
came to India?**

- * **When the Punjab became a part of the Ghaznavid Empire Al-Biruni came to India.**
- * **He spent years in the company of Brahmana priests and scholars, learning Sanskrit, and studying religious and philosophical texts.**

**What was Al-Biruni's
objective to come
India?**

- * (1) To help those who wanted to discuss religious questions.**
- * (2) As a repertory of information to those who wanted to associate.**

Main features of Kitab -Ul-Hind.



- * **1. It is written in Arabic.**
- * **2. Its language is simple and lucid.**
- * **3. It is written on the subject such as regional, philosophy, astronomy, social life, laws etc.**
- * **4. It is divided into 80 chapters.**
- * **5. Each chapter begins with a question and then description have been given based on Sanskrit traditions.**
- * **6. It describe about the Varna system also.**

Overcoming Barriers to Understanding

**Problems
faced by
Al Biruni in
writing an
account of
India**

- Alberuni was aware of the problems in understanding an alien world
- He discussed several barriers that obstructed the understanding of Indian society.

**Alberuni depended
mainly on the works of
Brahmanas.**

**The vedas, the Puranas,
the Bhagavat Gita, the
works of Patanjali, the
Manusmriti, etc**

Barriers

Sanskrit Language

**Differences in
religious beliefs and
Practices**

**Self-absorption and
consequent insularity
of local population**

**Al-Beruni's
description
of caste
system**

- * **Al-Biruni tried to explain the caste system by looking for parallels in other societies**
- * **He noted that in ancient Persia, four social categories were recognized.**

Four social categories in Persia.

- 1. Knights and Princes**
- 2. Monks, Fire-priests and Lawyers**
- 3. Physicians, Astronomers and other scientists**
- 4. Peasants and Artisans.**



**All men were considered equal
in Islam.**

**Social divisions were not unique
in India.**

**Al-Beruni's
description
of caste
system**



**Al-Beruni's
description
of caste
system**

**Accepted the Brahmanical
description of the caste system.**

**Disapproved the notion of
pollution**

Al-Biruni'S views on caste system in India

He remarked that everything which falls into a state of impurity strives and succeeds in regaining its original condition of purity.



- ❖ **The sun cleanses the air.**
- ❖ **The salt in the sea prevents the water from becoming polluted.**
- ❖ **He says that the notion of social pollution was against the laws of nature.**

Al-Biruni'S views on caste system in India



- * **Al-Beruni's description of the caste system was deeply influenced by his study of Sanskrit texts.**
- * **These texts laid down the rules governing the caste system from the point of view of the Brahmanas.**
- * **In real life the caste system was not rigid.**
- * **Categories like antyaja (born outside the system) were expected to provide labour to peasants and zamindars. They were subjected to social oppression and included in economic activities**

Ibn Battuta

An Early Globe-trotter

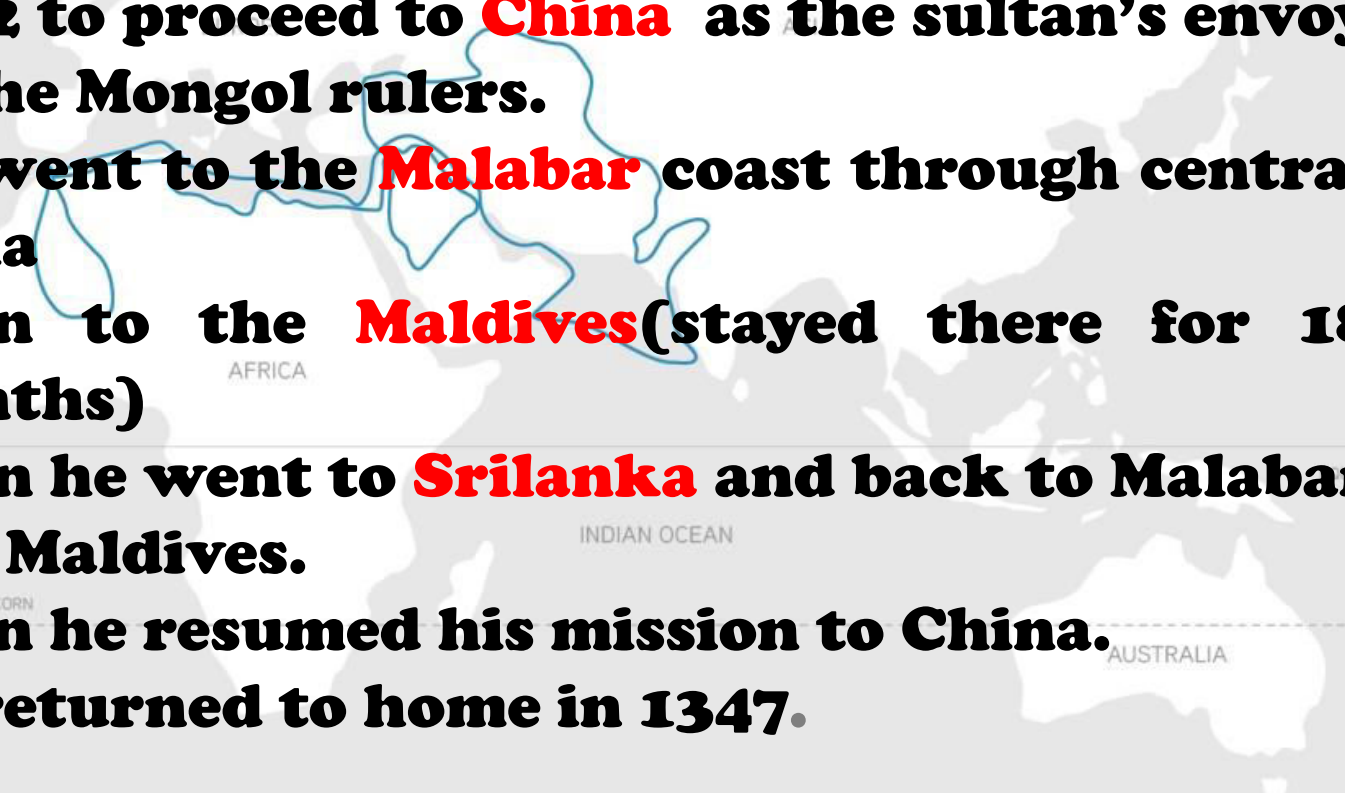


- * **Origin : Morocco born in Tangier,**
- * **Educated in sharia**
- * **Reached sind in 1333**
- * **Sultan Muammed bin Tuglaq appointed him as qazi (judge) at Delhi**
- * **Due to misunderstanding he was imprisoned.**
- * **Once the misunderstanding was cleared he was restored to imperial service**



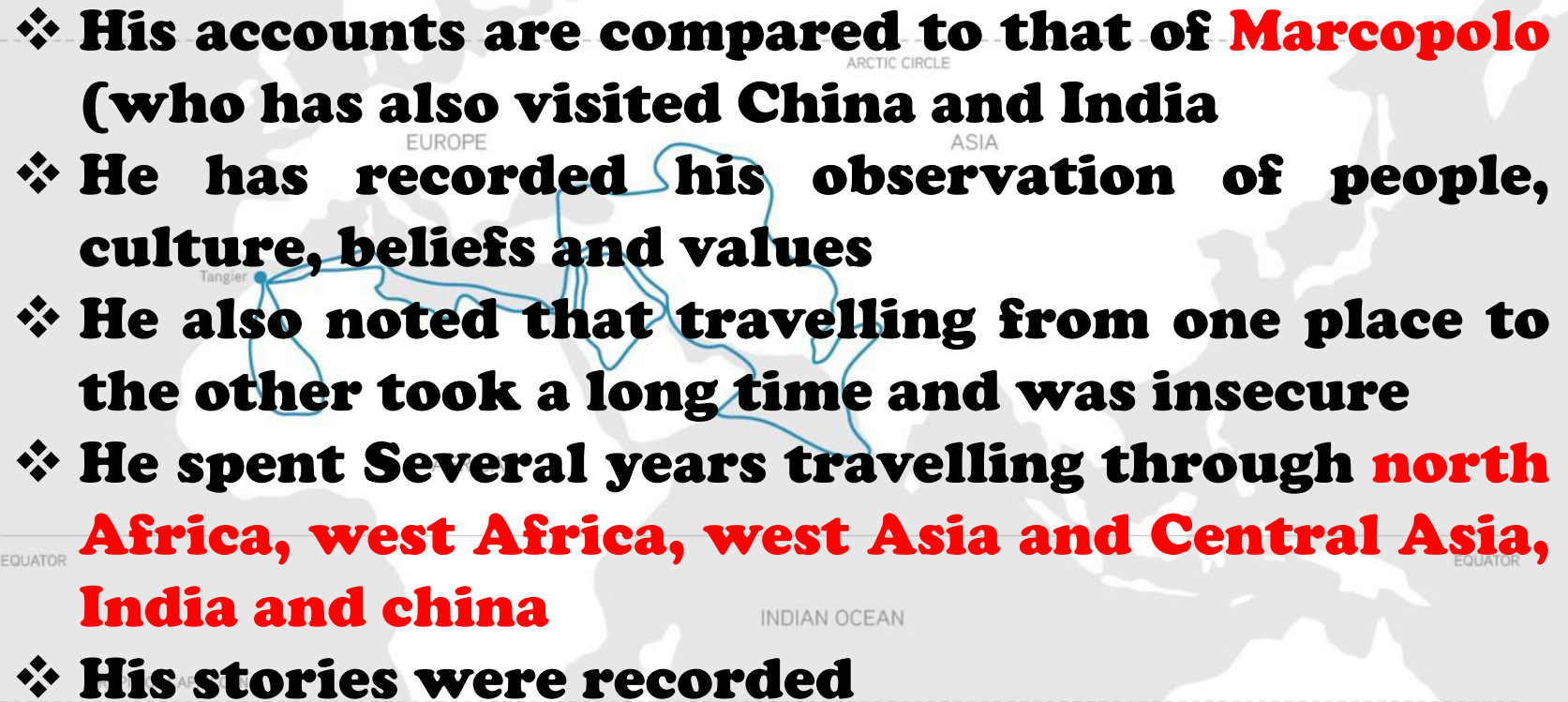
THE TRAVELS OF IBN BATTUTA

1325 TO 1354

- 
- ❖ He was ordered by Muhammed bin Tughalq in 1342 to proceed to **China** as the sultan's envoy to the Mongol rulers.
 - ❖ He went to the **Malabar** coast through central India
 - ❖ Then to the **Maldives** (stayed there for 18 months)
 - ❖ Then he went to **Srilanka** and back to Malabar and Maldives.
 - ❖ Then he resumed his mission to China.
 - ❖ He returned to home in 1347.

THE TRAVELS OF IBN BATTUTA

1325 TO 1354

- 
- ❖ His accounts are compared to that of **Marcopolo** (who has also visited China and India)
 - ❖ He has recorded his observation of people, culture, beliefs and values
 - ❖ He also noted that travelling from one place to the other took a long time and was insecure
 - ❖ He spent Several years travelling through **north Africa, west Africa, west Asia and Central Asia, India and china**
 - ❖ His stories were recorded



IBN BATTUTA
AND THE
EXCITEMENT OF
THE
UNFAMILIAR.



**Plants found in India
which amazed Ibn-
Battuta.**



Coconut – He wrote that the nuts of coconut resemble a man's head.



Paan – He wrote about Paan that the betel has no fruit and is grown only for the sake of its leaves...

Ibn Battuta's description on life in Indian cities

Ibn Battuta and Indian Cities.

Cities full of exciting opportunities.

Densely populated and prosperous.

Crowded streets with bright and colourful markets.

Bazaars- hub of social and cultural activities. Had mosque and temples. Public Performances.

He found Indian agriculture very productive.
India- well integrated with Inter Asian networks of trade and commerce.
Rich in textiles, silk, muslin, satin and were in demand.

Postal System

- ❑ State evidently took measures to encourage merchants.
- ❑ Trade routes supplied with inns and guest houses.
- ❑ Amazed by the efficiency of postal system.
- ❑ Allowed merchants to send information and also remit credit across long distance.
- ❑ Allowed to dispatch goods required at short notice.
- ❑ Took only 50 days to reach Delhi from Sind.
- ❑ the news reports of spies would reach the sultan through postal system in just five days.

Uluq-

The horse Post



Dawa-

The foot post



Francois Bernier

A Doctor with a Difference



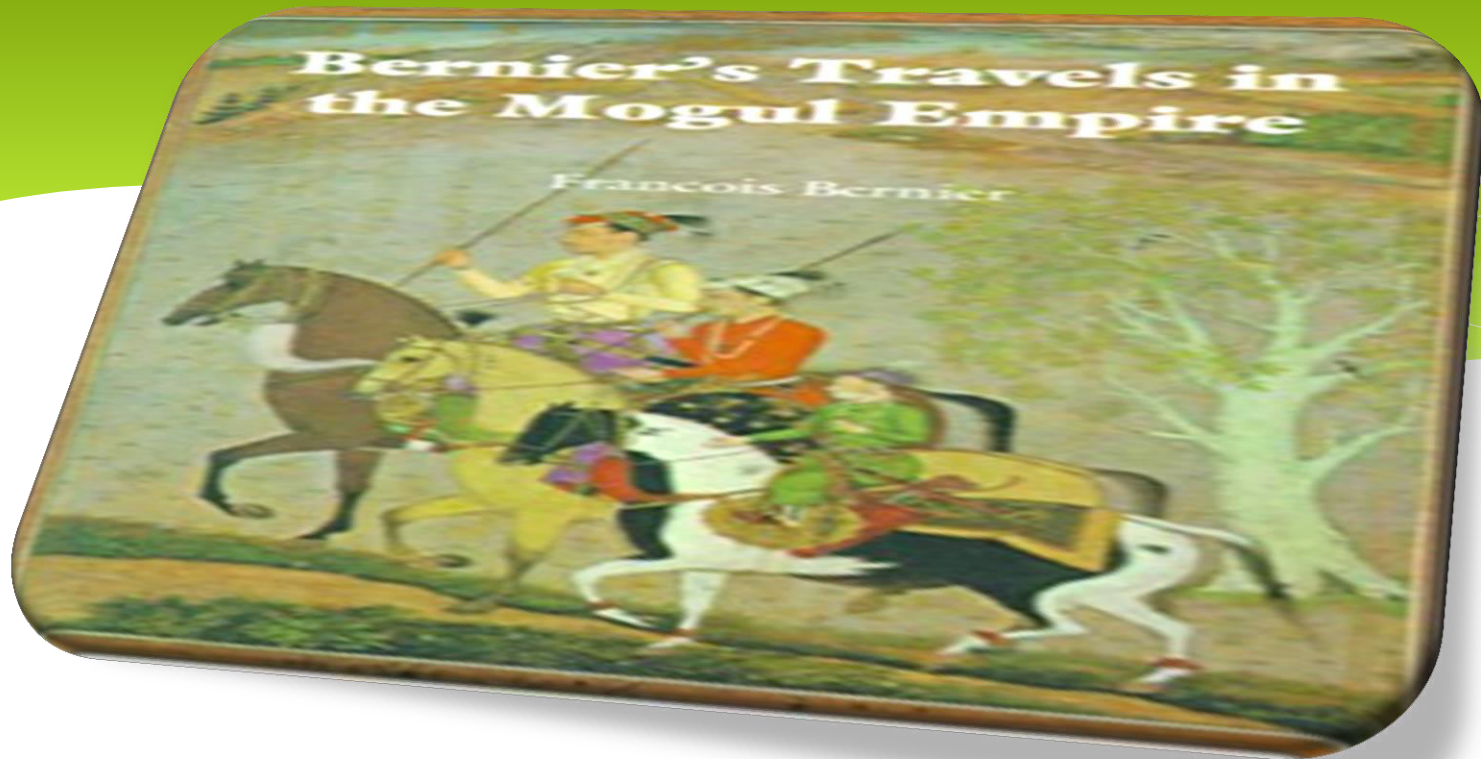
Who was
Francois
Bernier?

- ❖ **A Frenchman, was a doctor, political philosopher and historian.**
- ❖ **He came to the Mughal Empire in search of opportunities.**
- ❖ **He was in India for twelve years, from 1656 to 1668.**
- ❖ **He was physician to Prince Dara Shukoh ,eldest son of Shah Jahan**
- ❖ **He dedicated his works to Louis XIV, the king of France**

BERNIER AND THE “DEGENERATE” EAST.

- Francois Bernier belonged to a different *intellectual tradition*.
- Preoccupied *with comparing and contrasting* what he saw in India in particular to that of Europe.
- His aim was to *influence* the policy-makers to ensure that they made the right decisions.





- * **Marked by detailed observations, critical insights and reflection**
- * **Trying to place the history of the Mughals within a universal framework**

Bernier's Travels in the Mughal Empire

Compared Mughal India to that of Europe

*Representation
of India based
on the model of
binary
opposition*

*India
presented as
the universe
of Europe*

*India
appeared to
be inferior to
western
world*

Bernier's description on land ownership in Mughal India

Fundamental difference between Mughal India and Europe-

➤ **lack of private property in land in Mughal India**

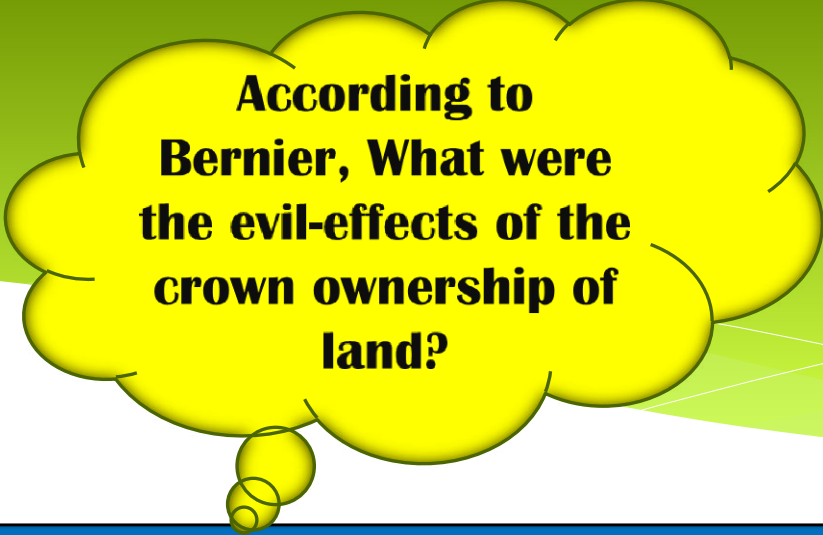
Firm believer in the virtues of private property

crown ownership of land -harmful for both the state and its people

Mughal Empire the emperor owned all the land and distributed it among his nobles, and nobles to the peasants.

Due to crown ownership of land , landholders could not pass on their land to their children

So they were averse to any long-term investment in the sustenance and expansion of production.



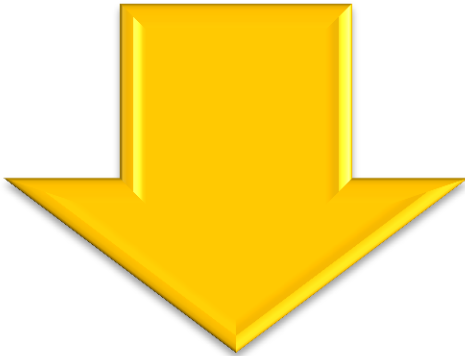
**According to
Bernier, What were
the evil-effects of the
crown ownership of
land?**

- * (1) Absence of ownership of land, landholders could not pass on their land to their children.**
- * Thus they didn't take any interest in increasing production.**
- * (2) It prevented the emergence of the "improving" landlords.**
- * (3) It led to the ruination of agriculture.**
- * (4) It brought a continuous decline in the living standard of all sections of society.**
- * (5) It led to the excessive oppression of the peasantry.**

Indian society



Rich ruling class

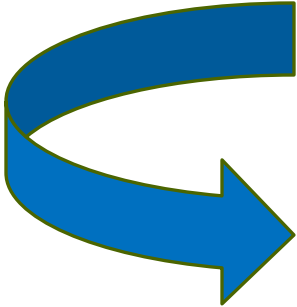


Poor people



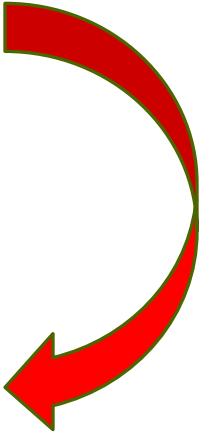
No Middle class

Bernier's description on land ownership in Mughal India



None of the Mughal official documents state that the king was the sole owner of the land

Abul Fazl has stated that land revenue demand was imposed not as rent but as payment for the protection the king provided to his subjects (remunerations of sovereignty)



Bernier described Mughal Empire as

king

**king of
“beggars
and
barbarians”**

Fields

**“overspread
with bushes”
and full of
“pestilential
marshes”**

Cities

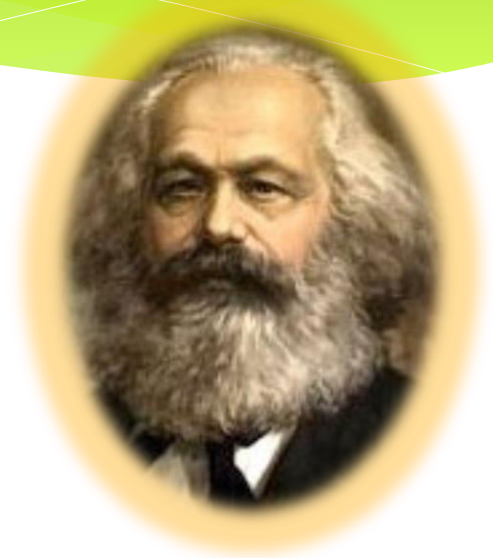
**ruined and
contaminated
with “ill air”**

Bernier's description influenced western theorists from the 18th century

**Bernier's
description of
landownership**



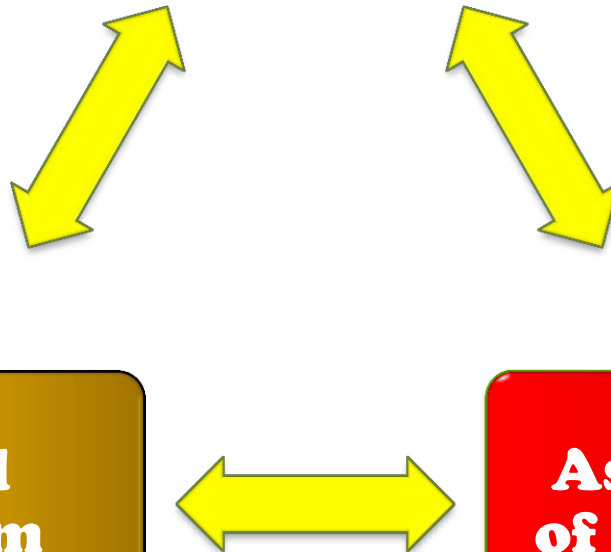
Montesquieu



Karl Marx

**Oriental
Despotism**

**Asiatic Mode
of Production**



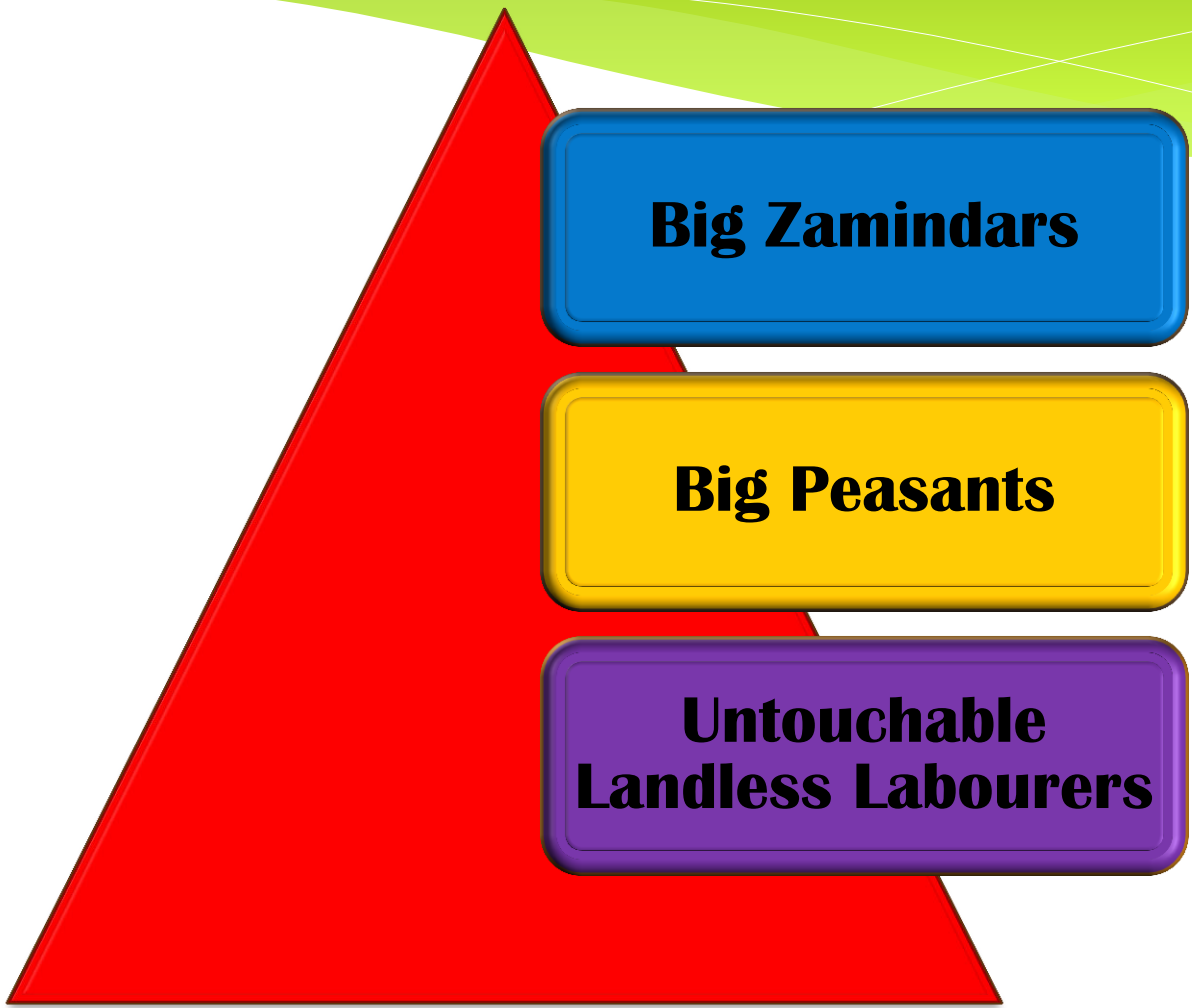
Oriental Despotism

- ❖ **French philosopher Montesquieu used Bernier's account and developed the idea of Oriental despotism.**
- ❖ **In Asia (the Orient or the East) the kings enjoyed absolute authority over his subjects and owned all lands.**
- ❖ **There was no private property.**
- ❖ **All people except King and nobles struggled for survival**

Asiatic mode of Production

- ❖ **Karl Marx further developed the idea of Oriental despotism as Asiatic mode of production.**
- ❖ **Before colonialism , surplus production was appropriated by the state.**
- ❖ **This led to the emergence of a society that was composed of a large number of autonomous and egalitarian village communities.**
- ❖ **The imperial court respected these villages as long as the flow of surplus was continued.**
- ❖ **Marx regarded this as a stagnant system**

SPECTRUM-RURAL SOCIETY



Big Zamindars

Big Peasants

**Untouchable
Landless Labourers**

**What was the more
complex social reality
which Bernier notice in
the Mughal
Empire ?**

**Artisans had no incentive to improve
the quality of their manufacturers.
profits were appropriated by the state.
production was on the verge of decline.**

**Vast quantities of the world's
precious metals (gold & silver)
flowed into India in exporting
manufactures**

Mughal Cities

15 percent of the population lived in towns

Bernier described Mughal cities as “camp towns”

All kinds of towns: manufacturing towns, trading towns, port-towns, sacred centres, pilgrimage towns etc.

Their existence indicates the prosperity of merchant communities

Merchants- strong community organized into caste -cum- occupational groups.

Urban professional classes

Physicians (hakim
or vaid)

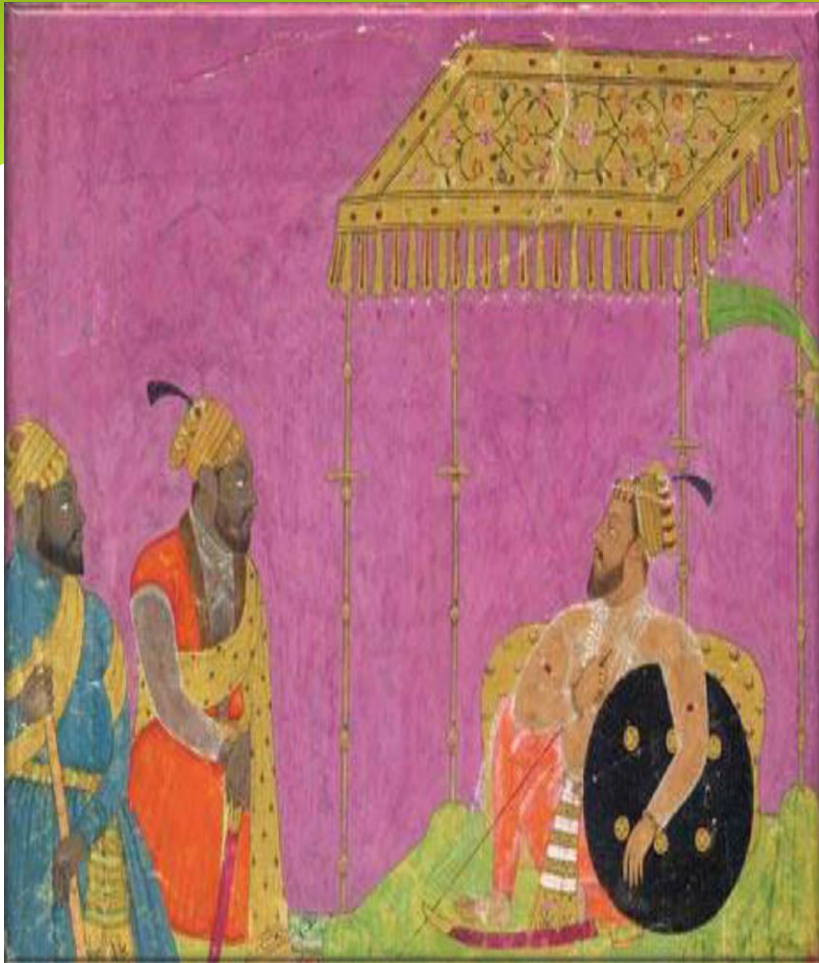
Teachers(pundit or
mulla)

Lawyers(wakil)

Painters, architects.

Calligraphers.

Evidence for slavery provided by Ibn-Battuta



- * **1. Slaves like any other commodity, were openly sold in the markets.**
- * **2. They were also regularly exchanged as gifts.**
- * **3. When Ibn-Battuta reached Sindh, he purchased horses, camels and slaves. He wanted to offer them as gifts to sultan Muhammad Bin Tuglaq.**
- * **4. When he reached to Multan, he presented slaves and horses with almonds and raisins to the Governor of Multan.**
- * **5. Ibna-batuta says that Muhammad bin Tughlaq was so happy with the sermon of a preacher named Nasiruddin that he gave him” a hundred thousand tankas and two hundred slaves.**

Evidence for slavery provided by Ibn-Battuta



- * **6. The sultan employed female slaves in his service and also to keep a watch on his nobles.**
- * **7. The slaves were also engaged for domestic work. But they were given low wages.**
- * **8. Ibn-Battuta found their services particularly indispensable for carrying women and men on palanquins or dola.**

Differentiation among slaves.

SLAVES

- Female slaves in service of sultans.
- Experts in dance and music.

SLAVES

- Slaves also employed as spies to keep watch on the nobles.
- Ibn battuta found their service indispensable for carrying men or woman on Dola's.

SLAVES

- Price of slaves especially women for domestic labor were very low.
- Affordable by most families.

The Practice of Sati



- * **Bernier has provided a detailed description of sati in his account.**
- * **He mentioned that while some women seemed to embrace death cheerfully, others were forced to death.**
- * **He also noticed the child satin which a twelve year old young widow sacrificed**

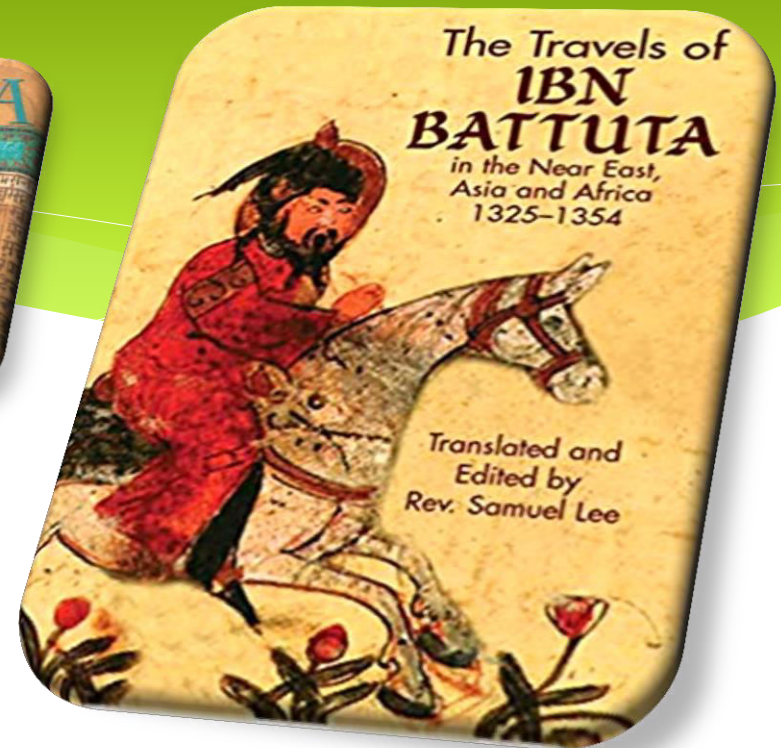
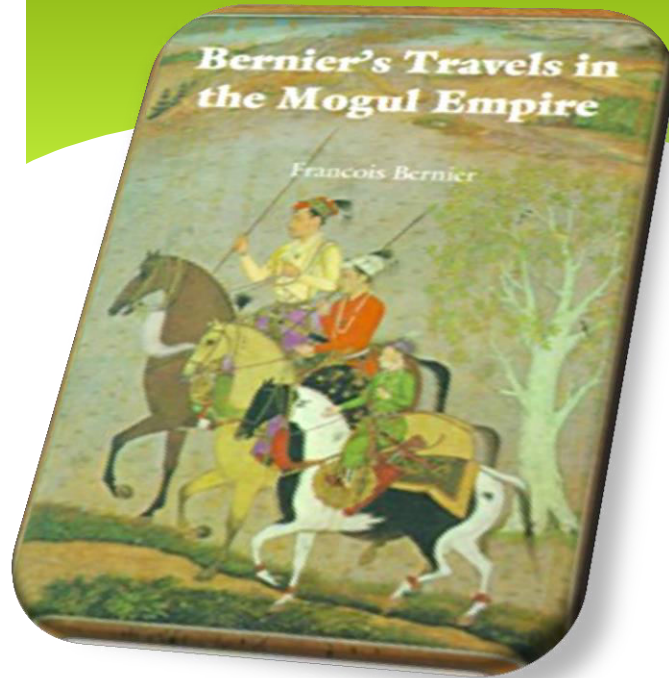
Sati



Women Labourers



- * **Women labour was crucial in both agricultural and non-agricultural production.**
- * **Women from merchant families participated in commercial activities.**
- * **Therefore it seems unlikely that women were confined to the private spaces of their homes**



**Thank
You...**

**SUJITH .K
CHISS CHAYOTH
KASARGOD**



HSSLIVE.IN