

CONFLICT AND CONCORDANCE: A CASE STUDY OF LODIS OF DELHI AND SHARQIS OF JAUNPUR

Md. Asfaque Julfikar

Junior Research Fellow, CAS, Department of History,
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, U.P., India

ABSTRACT

In history of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526 AD), the invasion of Timur at Delhi in 1398 AD was a high watershed for the disintegration of the Tughlaq authority and the emergence of regional powers in north India. When Timur left India for Samarqand, he appointed Khizr Khan as his deputy in north-western region of India and later he established Sayyid dynasty in 1414 AD at Delhi. But the Sayyid Sultans were politically proved weak and unable to prevent the emergence and consolidation of the provincial dynasties especially the Sharqis of Jaunpur who aspired for the imperial throne of Delhi. After the assassination of Mubarak Shah Sayyid in 1434 AD the Sayyid power became feeble and in desperate need for military support to defend Delhi against the ambitions of Khaljis of Malwa and Sharqis of Jaunpur. In this chaotic historical background of Delhi, Bahlul Lodi, muqta of Sirhind, emerged as a defender of titular Sayyid Sultan Muhammad Shah and saved Delhi against the attack of Khalji of Malwa in 1440 AD. After this successful defence of the imperial city, confidence of Bahlul Lodi was increased which led him to aspire for the sovereignty and he also invaded Delhi thrice and ultimately successful to establish the first Afghan Empire in India in 1451 AD. But his journey as Sultan of Delhi was neither smooth nor accepted by other aspirants for sovereignty particularly the mighty Sharqis of Jaunpur. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore how Bahlul Lodi, with limited economic resources and military strength not only successfully defended his infant kingdom but also dissolved the overpowering ambitions of Sharqis and annexed Jaunpur after more than three decades of Conflict and Concordance. The paper also attempts to highlight the various factors responsible for the Lodi's success apart from diplomacy, tactics and military efficiency of the Afghan army.

Keywords: Delhi, Sayyid, Lodi, Sharqi, Jaunpur, Khalji, Afghan.

INTRODUCTION

The history of 15th century north India is very important as well as interesting in medieval India's transition from the Delhi Sultanate to the Mughal Empire. At the close of the 14th century Timur's invasion of Delhi paralyzed the central structure of the Tughlaq dynasty and paved the way for the emergence of regional kingdoms in different parts of northern India. In the heartland of Ganga-Jamuna doab two major power came into existence by the middle of 15th century; the Lodi kingdom of Delhi (1451-1526) and the Sharqi kingdom of Jaunpur (1394-1484) who primarily fought for the supremacy over Delhi and secondarily for north India. The Lodis and the Sharqis were incompatible enemy because of a number of historical, geo-political and personal reasons. From the time of the Later Tughlaqs, the Sharqis had been trying to make themselves the masters of Delhi and had pressing forward in that direction. The Sayyids (1414-51) had first tried to roll them back and then conciliated them by matrimonial alliances. The Sharqis now claimed the Sultanate of Delhi on behalf of Sayyid princess Bibi Raji and Bibi Khonza whom they espoused. These ladies were determined to see the Lodis driven out of territories that once belong to their forefathers. Then the two kingdoms lay in close proximity to each other without any well-defined frontier. Border disputes often developed into full-scale campaigns. The titanic struggle between these two powers for the supremacy of Delhi and north India during the second half of 15th century are often highlighted by modern historians.¹ But another very important aspect of this struggle which seldom highlighted by modern historians was the military and diplomatic factors of the Lodi army i.e. Bahlul Lodi whom with very limited resources and military strength in comparison to the Sharqis, defeated Husain Sharqi and annexed Jaunpur to the Lodi Empire.

In this paper the primary focus of the author is to discuss the various factors rather than detail descriptions of campaigns and battles which ultimately led to the extinction of the powerful Sharqi kingdom and expansion of the Lodi power up to Bihar. The present author will also emphasis on diplomacy and tactics apart from military efficiency of the Lodis which played very crucial role in this life and death struggle which lasted for more than three decades. The proposed paper will also give emphasis to add rich contents to the historiography by exploring many events and activities which remain unexplored.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF LODI-SHARQI CONFLICT

The Sharqi kingdom of Jaunpur was founded by Malik Sarwar, a eunuch (*Khwaja Sera*) in the service of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq.² Muhammad Shah Tughlaq conferred upon him the title of *Khwaja-i-Jahan* and appointed him *Wazir*³ in 1389. He also entrusted the eastern districts to Malik Sarwar, conferred the title of *Sultan-us-Sharq* on him and left Prince Humayun under his tutorship.⁴ When Humayun Khan ascended the throne under the title of Sultan Alauddin

Sikandar Shah (22 Jan. 1394), he recognized the ability of Malik Sarwar and entrusted to him the affairs of Hindustan from Kanauj to Bihar.⁵ Soon afterwards Jaunpur and the adjoining region showed the signs of rebellion and Sultan Mahmud Tughlaq appointed Malik Sarwar for setting right the affairs of eastern districts. He was appointed governor of Jaunpur in May, 1394.⁶ Later Timur's invasion of Delhi in 1398 paralyzed the authority of Mahmud Tughlaq and he fled from Delhi to find shelter with Zafar Khan of Gujarat.⁷ This gave an opportunity to Malik Sarwar to declare independence in Jaunpur, struck his coins and recited the *khutba* in his own name. Taking advantage of the disturb condition of the country, Malik Sarwar started extending his territory over Awadh and parts of doab as far as Aligarh. He also brought Tirhut and Bihar under his control. Had circumstances favored, the Sharqis would have established their hold over Delhi also.⁸ But the sudden death of Malik Sarwar in Nov. 1399 put a pause to their territorial ambitions for a while. So from the very beginning of the foundation of Sharqi kingdom their rulers were ambitious to conquer the imperial city of Delhi and Ganga-Jamuna doab, when Lodis were nowhere in this struggle for supremacy.

After the death of Malik Sarwar, his adopted son Malik Mubarak Shah ascended the throne of Jaunpur and successfully resisted the efforts of Sultan Mahmud Tughlaq's *wazir* Mallu Iqbal Khan to reconquer Jaunpur in 1400.⁹ Ibrahim Shah Sharqi was the first ruler who not only successfully defended Jaunpur from Delhi Sultans attacks but also adopted an aggressive policy and tried to acquire Delhi and its dependencies in Oct. 1407. He also fought against Sultan Mahmud Tughlaq and was able to advance as far as Sambhal but before he could make further progress, Khizr Khan occupied Delhi and founded the Sayyid dynasty. Ibrahim Sharqi did not molest him and devoted his attention to consolidation of his territory and cultural enrichment of Jaunpur. But with the accession of Mubarak Shah Sayyid, the struggle for supremacy of Delhi began afresh after three decades of peace. After Mubarak Shah's death, the Sayyid power began to decline rapidly and the Sharqis got the upper hand. In 1437 Ibrahim Sharqi marched against Muhammad Shah Sayyid, laid siege to the imperial city of Delhi and captured some parganas in the neighborhood. Sultan Muhammad found his position weak and sued for peace.¹⁰ A matrimonial alliance was arranged to please Ibrahim Sharqi. His son Mahmud Khan, married to Sultan Muhammad Shah's daughter Bibi Raji.¹¹

Mahmud Sharqi was keenly interested in Delhi politics, Alauddin Alam Shah (1445-51) last Sayyid ruler was his brother-in-law¹². He hoped to succeed at Delhi sooner or later due to the titular position of Alauddin Alam Shah, but before this hope could be realized Bahlul Lodi set aside the last Sayyid ruler and established his own dynasty in 1451. This action of Bahlul was naturally resented by the Sharqis who thought that, the Sultanate of Delhi legitimately belong to them and they made every possible efforts to displace the Lodis from Delhi for more than three decades, whom they considered as usurpers. So from the above sketch of events we can say that,

the Sharqi rulers from the very inception of their dynasty were ambitious to make themselves the master of Delhi and Ganga-Jamuna Doab. This process was started by Malik Sarwar during the turbulent and weak rule of Later Tughluqs, and continued by his successor up to the period of the Sayyid Sultans. But their ambition of expansion since five decades was suddenly got struck due to the foundation of the Lodi hegemony in Delhi and the Punjab region by Bahlul Lodi. So, Sultan Bahlul was a natural successor of the centripetal aspirations of the Delhi Sultans and automatically became an arch enemy of Centrifugal tendencies of the Sharqis.

CONFLICT AND CONCORDANCE FOR THE SUPREMACY OF DELHI

Bahlul Lodi was busy in consolidating his infant kingdom when he was forced to turn all his energy and resources to deal with the territorial ambitions of the Sharqis. In fact, throughout his long reign the Sharqi menace constitute one of the most difficult problem for him. Bahlul had to fight against three Sharqi rulers viz. Mahmud, Muhammad and Husain Shah. Of these the last was the most powerful and formidable enemy of the Lodis. But Mahmud Shah was also in a stronger position as compare to Bahlul. He waged battles from 1452 to 1459¹³ against the Lodis for the supremacy of the imperial city of Delhi.

The first encounter between Bahlul and Mahmud Sharqi took place in 1452 AD. Contemporary historians Nizamuddin and Niamtullah says that, few important nobles of the last Sayyid Sultan Alauddin, who were hostile to Bahlul Lodi invited the Sharqi ruler.¹⁴ Another very important factor in this policy of aggression towards Delhi was Bibi Raji, chief queen of Mahmud Sharqi and daughter of abdicated Sultan Alauddin and used to incite her husband to take vigorous action against usurper Bahlul. Mahmud marched against Delhi with 100,000 well-equipped cavalry, infantry and 1000 war elephants to besiege the city.¹⁵ At that time Bahlul was away from the capital on the way to Multan,¹⁶ on receiving the news about this attack he turned back to deal with the invader from Dipalpur. The Lodi forces stationed at Delhi tried to meet the situation as best as they could. Bibi Masto, the widow of Islam Khan and mother-in-law of Bahlul, dressed up many women in male attire and posted them as guards all along the ramparts of the fort in order to deceive the enemy about the numerical strength of the Lodi garrison.¹⁷ The number of Afghan soldiers left inside the fort rained arrows on the Sharqis. Sikandar Sarwani, son-in-law of Khan-i-Jahan Lodi, was an excellent archer shot an arrow from the rampart in such a way that his arrow pierced both the water bag carried by an ox and was transfixed into the ground. This excellence in archery of the Lodi soldiers made the Sharqi forces rather hesitant in approaching the walls of the fort.¹⁸ Mahmud Sharqi, however restored to a new device and threw ignite material (*hafta-i-atish*) into the fort. So that it became impossible for the people even to move in the courtyard of their house.¹⁹ The prolonged siege and numerical superiority of the Sharqi forces

was thus forced the Lodi garrison to negotiate terms of peace and surrender despite skillful trick and desperate valour.

Sayyid Shamsuddin came out to settle the terms with Dariya Khan Lodi, and in a secret interview appealed to Dariya's Afghan racial sentiment and shrewdly won him over his side.²⁰ Dariya manipulated the situation in favor of the Lodis and diverted the attention of the Sharqi forces from Delhi to the army of Bahlul, which was quickly returning to Delhi to relieve the pressure of the Sharqi invasion. Mahmud Sharqi sent Fath Khan Harvi and Dariya Khan Lodi at the head of an army consisting of 30,000 soldiers and 40 war elephants²¹ to intercept Bahlul west of Panipat. The two armies met at Narela, some 28 kilometers from Delhi. Bahlul's army was less than half of the Sharqi army as it comprised 14,000 cavalry²² only but he split his army into three divisions and led the attack. Here Qutb Khan Lodi employed the same tactics which Sayyid Shamsuddin had earlier employed with great success. He appealed to the Afghan sentiments of Dariya Khan in these words: "your mother and sisters are besieged in the fort and what sort of man are you that you fight for the cause of a stranger, without any regard for your own honor?" This words had the desired effect and its secured the defection of Dariya Khan, who wheeled off the field when a promise was given that he would not be chased.²³ After the departure of Dariya Khan from the battle field Fath Khan had to bear the pressure of the Lodi attack. Qutb Khan Lodi was a distinguished archer wounded the ferocious elephants of Sharqi vanguard and disabled the elephant which was leading the attack with Fath Khan, the commander in chief mounted on it. Fath Khan was defeated and taken prisoner by the Lodi forces.²⁴ At this turn of the event in the battle field of Narela, Mahmud Sharqi unable to bear this calamity and hastily returned to Jaunpur. Sultan Bahlul acquired firm footing in an around Delhi and Punjab region and consolidated his territory. He not only successfully defended his capital but also saved his nascent kingdom against the first powerful Sharqi invasion and greatly enhance his prestige as military general and Sultan.

Bahlul Lodi's eastward march and conquest of Etawah whose governor was a Sharqi vassal precipitated a fresh conflict between the Lodi and Sharqi forces. Mahmud Sharqi on hearing about Bahlul's annexation of Etawah, rapidly marched to challenge him in Etawah. In 1455 after an indecisive battle on the first day peace was concluded between both the parties on the second day through the mediation of Qutb Khan Lodi, a great diplomat and Rai Pratap. The terms of treaty as follows- i) whatever territory was in the hands of Sultan Mubarak Sayyid should belong to Bahlul Lodi and whatever territory was in the possession of Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi should belong to Mahmud Sharqi; ii) Bahlul should send back the seven war elephants he had captured during the previous battle; iii) Shamsabad was to be surrender to a vassal of Sultan Bahlul.²⁵ However difficulties arouse at the time of implanting the terms of the treaty. Bahlul sent Rai Karan to take possession of Shamsabad, which was under Jauna Khan, a vassal of Mahmud

Sharqi. Jauna Khan refused to deliver the fort to Lodi authority. Thereupon Bahlul marched to Shamsabad expelled Jauna Khan and installed Rai Karan there. Mahmud Sharqi set out to challenge the Lodi Sultan by breaking the terms of treaty. The two armies came face to face near Shamsabad. Qutb Khan Lodi and Darya Khan made a night attack and would have succeeded in it, but accidentally Qutb Khan fell from his horse and was immediately taken prisoner by the Sharqi forces. He lived as a Sharqi prisoner for seven months²⁶ under the protection of Bibi Raji.

On Mahmud Sharqi's death²⁷ (1459) hostilities between Delhi and Jaunpur were suspended for few years and treaty was made on the basis of the status quo.²⁸ Muhammad Sharqi went to Jaunpur and Sultan Bahlul returned to Delhi. When he came to the vicinity of Delhi, Shams Khatun, sister of Qutb Khan Lodi and first wife of Bahlul sent a message to the effect that as long as Qutb Khan should remain in Muhammad Sharqi's custody, rest and repose should be unlawful for the Sultan.²⁹ Bahlul took the message seriously and turned back to accomplish his unfinished task. He was encouraged in this course of action by the general atmosphere of Jaunpur court at this time. The new Sharqi ruler Muhammad Shah³⁰ had not been able to consolidate his position and there were powerful nobles hostile to him. When Sharqi king heard about the movement of the Lodi forces, he advanced from Jaunpur in order to encounter Bahlul. He drove out Rai Karan from Shamsabad and placed Jauna Khan in charge of it. Rai Pratap was so overawed by the strength of Muhammad that he deserted Bahlul and joined him. The two armies came face to face in Rapri near Sarsuti. What had considerably enhanced the resources and strength of the Sharqis at this crucial time of struggle Raja Pratap, Mubraiz Khan and Qutb Khan, governor of Rapri, had joined Muhammad Sharqi. But Muhammad failed to take full advantage of this situation by planning retaliatory action against his own brothers, so he weakened his position and lose support of influential nobles of Jaunpur and was ultimately killed by Malik Mubarak Ganj and Malik Ali Gujarati by the order of Bibi Raji.³¹

An accident facilitated a temporary truce and session of hostilities between the two forces. Prince Jalal Khan, a younger brother of Husain Sharqi who was succeeded on the throne of Jaunpur, had hurriedly marched at night to join his brother and mistaken Bahlul's army for Husain's camp. He had been immediately arrested and this arrest provided the basis for the exchange of prisoners including Qutb Khan Lodi. Husain Sharqi summoned Qutb Khan from Jaunpur and send him to Bahlul with great honour. Bahlul returned Jalal Khan to the Sharqi ruler with customary ceremonial. After that Husain Sharqi made peace with Sultan Bahlul and they entered into an agreement that for four years both of them should be contended with their own dominions.³²

TURN OF THE TIDE: FROM CONCORDANCE TO BATTLES FOR THE SUPREMACY OF DELHI AND JAUNPUR

The tussle between Bahlul Lodi and Husain Sharqi was a protracted one. It lasted during the whole life of Husain Sharqi and for three decades the politics of Delhi revolved around the problems posed by the ever recurring invasion of the Sharqi ruler. Even when Husain was ousted from Jaunpur and the Sharqi kingdom was to all extent and purpose extinguished but Husain continued the fight until very last of his life during the reign of Sikandar Lodi from Bihar and Bengal. During these four years of truce, few developments took place which precipitated a new crisis. Bahlul had not reconciled himself to the loss of a strategical place like Shamsabad. He wrested it from the Sharqi vassal Jauna Khan and placed its charge to Rai Karan. Husain challenged Bahlul's eastward expansion and two armies meet at Chandwar. After seven days of indecisive battle, a three year truce was arranged by the prominent nobles of both sides. Both the rulers then returned to their respective territories.³³

During these three years of peace, however, the political power and military strength of Husain Sharqi was greatly increased. He reorganized Sharqi army and set his internal affairs in order. On the other hand the position of Bahlul was very critical because his vassals were beginning to show lack of faith in his capacity to hold the imperial capital of Delhi. Some important vassals and nobles of Lodis like Ahmed Khan Mewati (governor of Etawah), Rustam Khan (governor of Koil), Ahmed Khan Jilwani (governor of Bayana) not only joined Husain Sharqi but also accept his suzerainty by reading *khutba* in his name at Bayana mosque publically. Only one prominent noble Tatar Khan Lodi joined Sultan Bahlul.³⁴

This act of powerful nobles emboldened Husain Sharqi's dream of conquering Delhi and before the expiry of three year truce, he violated the peace treaty and marched against Bahlul at the head of an army of 100,000 cavalry and 1000 elephants.³⁵ It was a moment of grave concern and alarming condition for Bahlul. In sheer despair, he send Shaikh Muhammad Farmuli and Kapur Chand to sought alliance and support of Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa, for his help in the crisis and agreed to offer the fort of Bayana with its dependencies to him in return if he extended his support. Mahmud Khalji promised to help him but before the terms of this agreement could be realized, Mahmud Khalji died (3 May 1469)³⁶ and Bahlul left his capital to face Husain on his own military strength at Bhatwara. Khan-i-Jahan mediated and Bahlul consented to surrender to the most humiliating terms. Except the city of Delhi and an area within a radius of 18 krohs from it, all territory of the Lodi kingdom was to be the Sharqi kingdom and Bahlul was remain at Delhi virtually as a Sharqi vassal.³⁷ But Husain in his overconfidence and vanity rejected even this offer for submission. Now Bahlul was desperate and prepared his mind to defend himself with whatever resources and army he had in his disposal. Husain's impolitic decision to send his troops to plunder the neighbouring regions provided Bahlul an unexpected opportunity of making a surprise attack with 18,000 rapid cavalry on Sharqi camp³⁸, which was on the other side of Jamuna. Bahlul struck hard at the remaining Sharqi forces and inflicted a crushing defeat

on them. Husain Sharqi fled in utter confusion and Bahlul by his patience, daring and presence of mind had snatched a great victory out of the jaws of defeat. In course of pursuit, Bahlul captured a large booty and numerous prisoners, the most distinguished was Bibi Khonza, chief queen and advisor of Husain Sharqi. He treated her with great respect and send her to husband with due ceremony. But the proud lady considered it as Bahlul's weakness and incite Husain to make a fresh battle against the Lodis. Thus hostilities were continued in the coming years but without any success for the Sharqis.

In 1478 Husain's mother Bibi Raji died at Etawah,³⁹ Bahlul send his condolences to him through Qutb Khan Lodi and Kalyan Mal.⁴⁰ In the same year Husain visited Badaun to offer condolences on the death of last Sayyid Sultan Alauddin.⁴¹ He surprisingly sieged the fort of Badaun from his brothers-in-law, occupied Sambhal and then at the head of a large army marched against Delhi in February-March 1479.⁴² Bahlul was upset by this sudden invasion. In anguish and distress he went to the tomb of Qutbuddin Bhaktiyar Kaki and prayed there throughout the whole night. In the morning he felt as if somebody was giving him a staff and asking him to drive away the cattle which had stayed there.⁴³ It was a happy omen and Bahlul was convinced that he would emerge victorious in the battle. Next day Bahlul made a desperate attack and caused a severe blow to the Sharqis. Husain's attempt to storm the Lodi fort was having failed, an atmosphere was created for negotiations of peace treaty. Qutb Khan Lodi, a distinguished diplomat of Bahlul's reign mediated and acted as a well-wisher of the Sharqi ruler on account of his late mother's kindness to him. He advised Husain Sharqi to return back to his capital by concluding peace with Sultan Bahlul. The territory east of Ganges should be Sharqi kingdom and that on the west should belong to Lodi kingdom.⁴⁴ This agreement formed the basis of a treaty and hostilities were suspended for a while. Putting his trust in this treaty Husain returned to Jaunpur and left considerable equipment and baggage train to follow him. Bahlul went back to his promised word for the first time; as soon as Husain left, he started plundering Sharqi baggage. He even pursued the Sharqi forces and captured *Malika-i-Jahan* Bibi Khonza along with a number of important nobles, including the *wazir*, Qutlugh Khan.⁴⁵ Shamsabad, Kampil, Patiali, Koil, Sakit and Jalali were annexed to the Lodi kingdom. Husain turned back and challenged the Lodi army near Rapri but he was defeated. Under these circumstances he had no alternative but to recognized Bahlul's authority over the areas he had occupied after the violation of peace treaty.

Husain could not reconcile himself to the loss of these important *parganas* and he marched again in 1479. In the battle of Sonhar, Bahlul defeated him again. Husain retreated to Rapri but he was chased by Bahlul and another defeat was inflicted upon him. While crossing the Jamuna, he suffered great losses in terms of lives⁴⁶ and resources. Since the Jamuna prevented both the armies from coming into direct conflict, skirmishes went on for few days. The help of Rai Tilok Chand of Baksar⁴⁷ (in the pargana Daundia Khera, Tirwa Tehsil, Unao district) facilitated

Bahlul's task, by showing him a ford by which Lodi army cross the river and made a surprise attack on the Sharqi forces. Husain was defeated and his army was scattered and fled in different directions. Bahlul pursued him up to Jaunpur, from where he escaped to Kanauj. Bahlul's repeated victories in battles emboldened him and he made up his mind to liquidate and annex the Sharqi kingdom⁴⁸ in 1483-84. Husain had to seek shelter in Bihar, but he never accept any defeat as final and continued his struggle up to the very last of his life to recover Jaunpur. Bahlul appointed Barbek Shah in charge of Jaunpur and he fully garrisoned and fortified Jaunpur. By 1486 Bahlul captured all the Sharqi territory except Bihar and appointed able and trustworthy Afghan officers to govern them.

FACTORS BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF THE LODIS

The struggle primarily for the imperial city of Delhi and secondarily for Ganga-Jamuna doab between two most powerful kingdoms of north India in the second-half of 15th century which often highlighted by modern historians but only A.B. Pandey tried to analysis the causes of the Sharqi defeat. Various reasons have been advanced to explain the phenomenal success of the Lodi army by A.B. Pandey⁴⁹ but most of his hypothesis represent individual fads and far from being rational explanation of the Lodi success in this protracted life and death struggle. If we compare political power, economic resources and military strength of the Sharqi kingdom with the Lodi kingdom; then the Sharqis were more stable and superior in every respect. Its rulers Mahmud, Muhammad and Husain Sharqi were neither deficient in personal valour nor in administrative ability. Then why did they fail in a conflict against a newly founded Afghan dynasty still in their infancy and struggling for stability and consolidation? The factors were not easy to explain but we will try to explore the underlying factors which led to the annexation of Jaunpur to the Lodi Empire.

Firstly, the Sharqis who claimed the Sultanate of Delhi on behalf matrimonial alliance with the Sayyid Sultans, had failed to exploit the loyalist sentiments of the old nobles as well as general subjects of Delhi in their favour. In 1452 first attack of imperial capital against Lodis, Mahmud Sharqi who was invited by the ex-nobles of Sayyids to invade Delhi but he had done nothing to appear as an ally and successor of the disposed Sultan Alauddin Alam Shah. Again in 1478 when Sultan Alauddin died at Badaun, Husain Sharqi went there to pay his condolences but suddenly ordered his soldiers to capture Badaun from his brothers-in-law despite their resistance. Thus the battle assumed the form of a dynastic struggle between the Lodis and Sharqis for the supremacy of Delhi; which was started by Ibrahim Sharqi during the reign of Mahmud Tughlaq and Husain was just trying to fulfill his ancestors dream. But his unwise and impolitic behavior towards Sayyid relatives exposed his original plan and weakened his popularity as a master of Delhi and it indirectly helped Bahlul in securing confidence of old nobles and his subjects.

Secondly, as A.B. Pandey argued that, the Turks and the Sayyids in the Lodi camp were generally loyal but the Afghans in the Sharqi camp were far less dependable⁵⁰ is not supported by reading contemporary Persian sources. In contrast when we analyze the whole Lodi-Sharqi conflict and concordance, we noticed that shifting of loyalties was a common feature of nobles either he was an Afghan, Turkish or Hindustani according to their self-interest. As we already mentioned important vassals and nobles of Bahlul like Ahmed Khan Mewati, Rustam Khan and Ahmed Khan Jilwani joined the Sharqi camp in very critical time of struggle. Further Pandey stated that, the less dependable nature of the Afghans was clearly illustrated by the conduct of Darya Khan Lodi in siege of Delhi and battle of Narela. But we must remember that, Darya Khan Lodi earlier a supporter of Bahlul, later he shifted his loyalty to the Sharqis. So we did not ascribe the Sharqi defeat in the battle of Narela, only an outcome of Darya's treachery but rather it was a victory of Lodi diplomacy by Sayyid Shamsuddin and Qutb Khan Lodi in crucial moments.

Thirdly, the Sharqis were definitely and decisively failed in the art of diplomacy. They were never able to press their advantage in this conflict and concordance, on the contrary they gave opportunity to Bahlul to save himself from vulnerable situation. In 1455 Mahmud Sharqi patch up a peace treaty after the second successful invasion of Delhi on Qutb Khan Lodi's intervention. Husain many times persuaded to retire after a successful battle with the intervention of shrewd Lodi diplomats like Khan-i-Jahan and Qutb Khan Lodi. In 1469 Husain suddenly attacked Delhi by breaking three year truce, Bahlul was in very dangerous situation and militarily not in position to fight. He agreed to a very humiliating terms and ready to surrender the whole Lodi kingdom except Delhi and 18 *krohs* radius area around it; in addition he also agreed to become a Sharqi vassal. But Husain in his deficient knowledge in diplomacy and vanity refused to accept even this offer of Bahlul and lost a great opportunity of becoming the sovereign power of north India. After that Bahlul had no alternative but fight and defend his kingdom with small army he had and by a brilliant surprise attack he won unexpected and great victory against the huge Sharqi forces. In 1478 a peace treaty was concluded between the two Sultans on the basis of status quo. Husain firstly trusted Qutb Khan Lodi's diplomatic and emotional words by invoking his late mother's greatness and then believed an enemy of more than two decades easily and left his baggage train and *harem* without adequate protection. This time Bahlul broke his promise and fully exploited the situation in his favour. After this crucial victory he never gave an opportunity to the Sharqis to stabilize their position.

Fourthly, the composition of the Lodi army was superior despite its numerical strength. In every key position Bahlul appointed trustworthy and able generals in all his clashes against Sharqis. The important ranks were mainly held by various Afghan nobles who in their personal valour and tactics of battle were superior to their enemy. In 1452 when Mahmud Sharqi laid siege in the

Lodi fort at Delhi, Sikandar Sarwani was an excellent archer, shot an arrow in such way which frightened the Sharqi forces and hesitant in approaching the walls of the fort. In the battle of Narela, Qutb Khan Lodi wounded the Sharqi elephants by archery and created chaos in Fath Khan's camp. The Sharqis were heavily depended on elephants and infantry while the Lodis were dependent on swift cavalry and effective archery. They used instruments like night attack, ambush and archery in crucial moments of campaigns and battles which is really helpful. The offensive was generally taken by the Sharqis until 1478, this gave them initial advantage but the Lodi army stuck in right time and place which succeed in long run battles.

Fifthly, the Sharqi rulers were always over prouded, confident and estimated the Lodis in very low esteem; especially Husain Sharqi. On the other hand Bahlul Lodi was always cautious, shrewd, diplomatic and an intelligent military general. Another advantage of the Lodis was that they fight this whole life and death struggle under the leadership and generalship of Bahlul, on the other hand in the Sharqi kingdom twice there was a serious succession problem in crucial moments which was a serious disadvantage and handicap.

CONCLUSION

The struggle primarily for the supremacy imperial city of Delhi and secondarily for Gang-Jamuna doab between the Lodis and Sharqis, two most powerful kingdoms of north India in the second-half of 15th century was the most important political event and developed into a titanic conflict for more than three decades. It is hardly realized by the modern historians that, this conflict and concordance between the two rival kingdoms was an epoch making episode in the history of medieval India. It not merely extended the political boundary of the Lodi Empire but also solved a conflict of centripetal aspirations of the Delhi Sultans started in Mahmud Tughlaq's reign by his *wazir* Mallu Iqbal Khan in 1400. But with the accession of Ibrahim Sharqi, a champion of centrifugal aspirations of the Sharqis, the policy was changed from defense to aggression towards Delhi and he tried to acquire Delhi in 1407 and this process was continued by his able successors Mahmud Sharqi and Husain Sharqi for next fifty years. So in this context the struggle between the Lodis and Sharqis for the supremacy of Delhi a century long conflict and concordance started during the weak rule of the Later Tughlaqs. This unsolved struggle for decades was solved by a genius and efficient military commander Bahlul Lodi; who entreated in this struggle in the second half of 15th century. Whenever we talk about military genius, efficiency and tactician in the history of the Delhi Sultanate, we only emphasis on Sultan Alauddin Khalji's brilliant success against the Mongols. And in the history of the Mughal Empire we only highlighted Babur and his splendid victory in the first battle of Panipat. The present author tried to emphasis that, in the history of medieval north India between Alauddin Khalji and Zahiruddin Babur, there was another genius military commander Bahlul Lodi, whom

with very limited resources and military strength destroyed the overpowering might of the Sharqis and annexed Jaunpur to Lodi Empire. So in the final analysis we can surely state that, Sultan Bahlul Lodi was the most genius, efficient and successful military commander and statesman in the history of 15th century medieval north India.

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