

Maria Aiman

International Islamic University, Islamabad

Babur and His Indian Expeditions

Abstract:

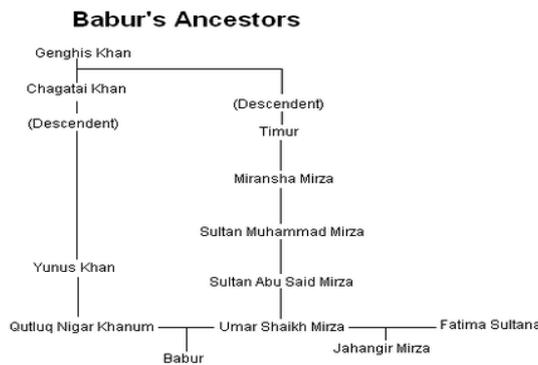
Babur, the great Mughal Emperor's sole purpose was to capture the lost Timurid dominion to expand and secure his Kingdom. There was a conflict between Mughals and Afghans since ancient times. They were strong opponents of each other, but they gave strong support to Babur for India invasion. It was a fact that Babur wanted to occupy Timurid dominion for collection of bootyas well as expansion purposes. But without the help and subjugation of Afghan tribes, it was impossible for Babur to conquer Indian Sub-Continent. The main goal of this paper is to see the causes and their relativity behind Babur's invasion in India, all of the causes are interconnected to each other.

Babur: Early Life and Background

Babur was the first Mughal Emperor who laid the foundation of Mughal Empire in the Indian sub-continent. He was born on 14 Feb, 1484 in Fergana. His full name was Zahirud Din Muhammad Babur. His father was Umer Sheikh Mirza, who was the ruler of Fergana at the time of his birth. He was a brave warrior, and courageous leader of medieval times. His mother played a great role in his early life.

Babur was Turk from father side and Mongol from mother (Qutlagh Nigar Khanum) side. He was the decedent of great conquerors Amir Timor and Genghis Khan. Babur was a great Mughal emperor and

leader of his time. He founded the Mughal Empire India in 1526. His conquests are mainly divided into three parts: Early Adventure, Babur as king of Kabul and Babur in India.¹He faced hardships after his father’s death to gain control in central Asia. He captured the area of Samarqand and Bukkara. In



1505, an Uzbek chief Shebani Khan gain control in area and defeated him. He also gained control of Kabul which was governed by one of his uncles, Ulugh Beg Mirza.²He was also a learned person. He knew Persian, Arabic and Turkish languages. He was also found of poetry and composed poems. He introduced a new style of poetry name ‘Mubiyān’.³He compiled Tuzk-i-babari in his native language Turkey but later it was translated into Persian. Tuzk-i- Baburi is considered more reliable source on life and times of Babur.⁴He died in 1530 due to the fatal fever.

1 Sharma, S.R. *Mughal Empire in India* (Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, 1940), 24.
2 Parsad, Ishwari. *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India* (Calcutta: Orient Longman Ltd, 1956), 272.
3 Babur,Zahir-ud-din.Tuzk-i-Baburi,Eng.tr., Annette S.Beveridge (Lahore: Sang-i-Meel Publication,1979), 449.
Mubin is a Turkish style of poetry.
4 Sharma, S.R. *Mughal Empire in India* (Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, 1940), 22-23.

Babur in Central Asia

After the death of his father Umer Sheikh Mirza, he became the ruler of Fergana. As mentioned in *Memories of Babur*; he was in the age of twelve when he ascended on the throne of Fergana. “*In the month of Ramzan of the year 899 (June 1494) and the twelfth year of my age, I become ruler in the country of Fergana*”⁵

Fergana was a big part of central Asian Empire at that time. His grandfather Abu-said rule the central Asian empire with its capital at Samarqand .Abu Said had twelve sons. When he died his whole empire was divided into his sons. Babur’s father wanted to become the ruler of Samarqand but unfortunately his brother Ahmed Mirza became the ruler of Samarqand. All of his life Babur’s father wanted to capture Samarqand but remained unsuccessful to fulfill his desire. After the death of his father, Babur became the ruler of Fergana. But he was not satisfied with the small kingdom of Fergana; he wanted to capture the other neighboring areas, especially the land of Samarqand to fulfill his late father’s desire. Samarqand was located at very strategic position and also was considered important, as it could be used as a gateway and Trade Centre between Central Asia and Indian sub-continent. It was a rich and fertile land and also remained the seat of government for a long time.⁶

When his uncle Ahmed Mirza died in 1494 AD, an Uzbekchief named Shebani Khan captured the throne of Samarqand. In 1496, Babur attacked on Samarqand but was defeated. Next year in 1497, he invaded once again and successfully occupied the area.⁷ He appointed one of his brothers named Jahangir as his representative at Fergana, as he stayed in Samarqand. Soon he had to run back to Fergana, as he heard the news of rebellion against Jahangir, Later on he unfortunately failed to win Fergana again, same while he had to lose Samarqand. In 1502, Babur lost all the

5 Zahir-ud-din Babur, *Tuzk-i-Baburi*, Eng. tr., Annette S.Beveridge (Lahore: Sang-i-Meel Publication, 1979), p.1. See, Parsad, Ishwari. *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India* (Calcutta: Orient Longman Ltd, 1956), 271. According to him he was in eleven year of his age at that time when he became the ruler.

Also see in, Sabar, Shafi. *History of N.W.F.P*”, *Zahirud din Muhammad Babur*,(Peshawar: 1986), 264.

6 Erskine, William. *A History of India Under Babur* (Masco: Arts Publishing House), 72.

See in, Sabar, Shafi. *History of N.W.F.P. ShafiSabar, History of N.W.F.P*”, *Zahirud din Muhammad Babur*, (Peshawar: 1986), 267.

7 Erskine, William. *A History of India Under Babur* (Masco: Arts Publishing House), 101-109.

captured areas that he had and become a wonderer.⁸In 1504, he captured Kabul and established an Empire where he strengthened his position too. In 1505, he first time tried to invade India not for the expansion purposes but only for the collection of booty. In 1511, Babur once again wanted to capture the land of Samarqand but was defeated again. There was conflict between Shebani khan and Persian king named Shah Ismail. Shebani khan was killed in a war. Babur was inspired by Shah Ismail and wanted to make alliances with him but his men's opposed his idea.⁹So, he did not make alliances with the Persian Empire. Babur once again tried his luck to found his empire, but was defeated constantly. Finally he decided to try his luck somewhere else.

According to Abul Fazal the writer of Ain-I-Akbari, Babur led five attacks on India including the attack of 1526, in which he defeated the last Delhi Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. The first attack was in 1505, the second was 1507 and the third one was in 1519. About the fourth attack no reliable information was available. In 1526, he made his final attack on Indian subcontinent, he defeated last Delhi Sultan and established Mughal rule in India. The first two to three attacks were only for the looting and plundering to finance their campaign in Central Asia whereas the last attack was purely for expansion purpose.

Situation of India at the time of Babur's Invasion:

He claimed Hindustan as his property, as the descendent of Timor lane and he wanted to capture the Indian land at any cost. He prepared a full-fledged plan to conquer the India. India had no strong government. When Babur invaded the Indian sub-continent, Delhi Sultans were very weak. At that time there was two strong opponents of Babur: Delhi Sultan and the Afghan Rivals.¹⁰ Delhi Sultanate was consisted from Delhi to Bihar.

8 Parsad, Ishwari. *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India* (Calcutta: Orient Longman Ltd, 1956), 272.
See Babur, Zahir-ud -din *Tuzk-i-Baburi*, Eng.tr., Annette S.Beveridge (Lahore:Sang-i-Meel Publication,1979)in which he describes his early life in detail, especially his struggles after his father's death.section-1, *Fargana*.
See Erskine, William.*A History of India Under Babur*, Life of Babur (Masco: Arts Publishing House).

9 Rizivi, S.A.A. *The Wonder that was India, vol-ii* (London: Sidgwick & Jaackson, 1987), 91-92.

10 Sabar, Shafi. *History of N.W.F.P*, Zahirud din Muhammad Babur, (Peshawar: 1986), 265.
Also see book Yaqubi, Himayatullah. *Mughal Afghan Conflict In South Asia: Origin and Development* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 2015).

A struggle to win the political supremacy in India was going on among different power groups. Babur, who had an ambition to rule India took advantage of the condition and decided to try his luck. In Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, the ruler of Delhi, lacked political power and strength. Different provinces started to become independent, many opponents raised arms against Delhi Sultan. He was not on friendly terms with several Afghan and Turk nobles. Afghan tribes had great influence on the bordering areas.¹¹ Daulat Khan Lodi (Son of Alam Khan), the governor of Punjab distrusted Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. He visited the court of Babur and invited him from Kabul to invade India. The province of Sind had become independent. The rule of the Delhi Sultanate became very weak. Rana Sanga (Sangram Singh) ruler of Mewar was sworn enemy of Sultan. He desired to capture the throne of Delhi. He also invited Babur to invade India. Babur gets advantage from large scale difference between the Lodi Sultan and his nobility. When he invited Babur to invade India, he believes that Babur followed the same policy of old Afghans of looting and sacking.¹²

Babur's Indian Expeditions and Relations with Afghans:

Babur captured Kabul in 1504, after strengthening his position in Kabul, he divert his attention towards India. Babur tried to make alliances and conquer the bordering tribes of India. At that time there were two major tribes Yousafzai and Gugyani (Dilazai), who influenced the areas of Peshawar, Mardan, Sawat and Bajour.¹³ Gugyani always visited Babur's court to Misportrayed the Yousafzai. Malik Ahmed was the Chief of Yousafzai's. The rivalry between Mughals and Afghans started from Kabul, before the arrival of Babur. Their conflict was not restricted to a limited scale. When Babur came into the power and started conquer the neighboring areas, this conflict also left impression on the Indian Territory especially Sawat and Peshawar. These tribes were independent in their socio-political structure. There was a strong centralized power in the

* It is also mention in *Babur Nama* that he led five attacks in India last time he attack in 1526 and capture the throne of Delhi.

11 ¹Yaqubi, Himayatullah. *Mughal Afghan Conflict in South Asia: Origin and Development* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 2015), 54.

12 Sharma, S.R. *Mughal Empire in India* (Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, 1940), 18.

13 Yaqubi, Himayatullah. *Mughal Afghan Conflict in South Asia: Origin and Development* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 2015), 55.

neighboring areas of Kabul before Babur’s invasion in India. Yousafzai’s tribe was very influential tribe and had strong hold on other tribes.¹⁴

When Babur attacked on India, Syed Ali khan (son of Ghazi khan) was the ruler of the Timurid dynasty, which included Behra, Khusab, Chenab and Chiniot. His far most task was to secure the bordering areas of Kabul to invade India, which was dominated by Afghan’s. Yousafzai’ and Gugyani’s were the two most influential tribes of afghan bordering area. Both the tribes were the great rivals to each other. Yousafzai were most powerful tribe of Indian boarder land. Babur first time invades on India in 1505, at that time Peshawar was inhabited by the Gugyani’s. Two tribe’s men of Gugyani serve him as guides in his campaign towards Kohat¹⁵. He crossed the areas of river Jhelum, Kohat, Adamkhel, Kotaland moved up to river Indus. Babur conquered all the territory on his way to Kabul¹⁶. When Babur reached at Hangu, the Bangush tribe who had the hold of the area, fought a fierce fight with the Afghans, whoever at the end the whole tribe submitted to Babur’s Army. They came along with grass stripes in their mouth, according to their tribal custom as a symbol of submission. They all were beheaded and a minrates of heads were erected on the order of Babur to spread the fear in the hearts of people¹⁷. After capturing Hangu Babur army moved towards Bannu, they faced little resistance over there. They looted and plundered them and snatched a large amount from merchants. In his first attack, he did not want to capture the Indian Territory to establish his rule. It was just for the sake of money and food gains. But when he attacked on India he changed his mind and decided to conquer India. India had been always famous for its wealth; Babur knew that India was full of men-power and that the region of Bengal and Deccan were full of mines filled with precious stones. The fertile Indian land having the capacity of production of almost all kinds of food was also a source of temptation for him.

14 Sabar, Shafi. *History of N.W.F.P*, Zahirud din Muhammad Babur, (Peshawar: 1986), 265-267.

15 Ibid, p.230.

16 Caroe, Olaf. *The Pathans: 550 B.C- A.D 1957* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1958), 165.

Also see Yaqubi, Himayatullah , *Mughal Afghan Conflict in South Asia: Origin and Development* Bi-Annual Pashto/ English Research Journal, vol-6 (Jan-June 2014):49.

17 Ibid, p.49.

Babur once again invaded India in 1519. The political situation of India supported him, especially the clashes between the Delhi sultans and nobles. Babur also introduced new weapon in war. He was the first person who used gun-powder and cannon in India. He issued orders of general massacre against Afghans especially in Bajour.¹⁸ Babur claimed in Babur Nama that the inhabitants of Bajour were the infidels. But actually they were true followers of Islam when Babur invaded India. The rulers of India did not play much influential role in the preaching of Islam, it was the Sufis and scholars of that time who tried to spread Islam in the Indian sub-continent. Hayder Ali was the ruler of Bajour. He did not want to handover the fort to Babur. Finally in a severe battle, the fort was captured with the help of artillery and gun-powder. He ordered to raise a minaret of skulls here as well in order to create a fear of his army in their hearts.¹⁹ In *Babur Nama*, he mentioned that he invaded Afghan tribes many times. Afghans always fought with bravery but majority of them were brutally murdered and Pillars of their heads were erected to spread the fear of Mughals in the hearts of Afghans.

In late 1519, he invaded the Yousafzai, later on he made matrimonial alliances with them. Yousafzai was the strong and influential tribe of Sawat valley. Babur wanted to get the support of Yousafzai's because without the help of Yousafzai's it was impossible to occupy other Afghan tribes. Yousafzai's had control of Swat, Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, Charsada up to river Indus. He was a great warrior and military leader. He spread fear and horror in the neighboring areas of Swat and avoided making direct attack on Yousafzai's.²⁰ He kept his watchful eyes on the activities of the Yousafzai's. Later on he tactfully entered into Swat valley. He became friend of Yousafzai's through his diplomacy. Different writers give a detailed account on the diplomacy of all the developments. He sent his spy to get information about Yousafzai's but at every step they face a strong barrier in the shape of Malik Ahmed Khan. He wanted to establish matrimonial alliance with the Yousafzai's. He sent his proposal for Bibi Mubarak daughter of Malik Mansur Shah, but firstly it was

18 Sabar, Shafi. *History of N.W.F.P*, Zahirud din Muhammad Babur, (Peshawar: 1986), 230.

19 Erskine, William. *A History of India Under Babur* (Masco: Arts Publishing House), 337.

20 Yaqubi, Himayatullah. *Mughal Afghan Conflict in South Asia: Origin and Development* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 2015), 61.

rejected by Malik Ahmed Khan. Later on, Malik Ahmed Khan accepted the Proposal of Babur on the suggestion of a tribal Malaks because it was matter of life of his tribesmen. This marriage was purely for the political and diplomatic purpose. One of Bibi Mubarak's brother serve in Babur's army participates in the war of Pani-pate. The alliance between Babur and Yousafzai's were not on permanent bases. Whenever they got opportunity they resist and wanted to get hold in area.²¹ The sole purpose of this alliance and invasion was to subdue Yousafzai's.

Babur Encounter with Ibrahim Lodi:

Like his previous attacks in 1526, Babur once again marched towards India, in which he defeated Ibrahim Lodi and founded Mughal Empire in India. At that time Daulat Khan was the ruler of Punjab and was a very powerful Rajput Ruler. He also offended the last Delhi sultan Ibrahim Lodi. He also sent his son Delawar Khan into court of Babur and invites him to India against Ibrahim Lodi.²² Babur was also in search of new land, he take full advantage of political situation of India. In *Babur Nama*, he says that “As it was always in my heart to possess Hindustan, and these several countries, Bhera, Khusab, Chenab and Chiniot had once been held by the Turk, I pictured them as my own and was resolved to get them into my hands weather peacefully or by force”.

He occupied the areas of Punjab, Lahore, Khusab, Chenab, Sultanpur, Jalhander and Dipalpur. Daulat Khan was defeated by the Delhi forces. Babur divided the occupied territory between his governors, but Daulat Khan was not satisfied with this division of area. Dipalpur and Sultanpur were given to Alam Khan and Dilawar Khan respectively. Babur preferred his son who was more reliable than him, so he started creating chaos in these areas.²³

Last time, Babur crossed Indian frontier areas in 1526, with largest army that he had ever had in Hindustan. The war was fought on April 21, 1526, popularly known as the battle of Pani-pate between Babur and last

21 Ibid, 62.

22 Babur, Zahirud din. *Tuzk-i-Baburi*, Eng. tr., Annette S. Beveridge (Lahore: Sang-i-Meel Publication, 1979), 451. See Lane-Poole, Stanly. *Mediaeval India: Under Muhammedan Rule (A.D. 712-1764)* (Lahore: R. Rinters, 1997), 201-202.

23 Ibid, 202-205.

Also see in Babur, Zahirud din *Tuzk-i-Baburi*, Eng. tr. Annette S. Beveridge (Lahore: Sang-i-Meel Publication, 1979), 456-470.

Delhi Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. Babur won the war, a large number of soldiers were killed in war, and Sultan of Delhi was also killed in war. There were different views about the number of soldiers, who were killed in the battle field of Pani-pat in both armies, were nearly 40,000 to 50,000.²⁴ When his body brought in front of Babur, he regretted and ordered to respectfully buried him. He sent his son Humayun moved towards Dehli. His armies surrounded the Indians, looted and plunder, brutally killed them. After sending Humayun to Delhi Babur, he moved towards Delhi. He visited the tombs of Sufi's and residences of late Delhi Sultans Sultan Balban and Alaud din Khiliji, on his way to Delhi.²⁵ When Babur won the war against Ibrahim Lodi, he led the foundation of Mughal Empire and adopted the title of Padshah. The Khutaba was read on his name and also issued coin of his name.²⁶ In Babur Nama he states “(May 10th) I entered Agra at the afternoon prayer of Thursday (Rajab 28th) and dismounted at the Mansion (Manzil) of Sl. Ibrahim”.²⁷

Babur also received Koh-i-Noor diamond from Humayun among after treasures. Babur gives precious gifts to those of his friends and his nobles, who were along with him during wars. He also distributed money among the people of Agra and Delhi to get their support to strengthen his rule. After establishing Mughals Empire in India, he crushed all his opponents one after another.

In 1527, he launched a campaign against the Rana Sangram Singh who was popularly known as the Rana Sanga of Mewar. He was an Indian Rajput ruler and wanted to rule India territory. He was the great rival of sultan Ibrahim Lodi. He invited Babur to invade India and promised to give him support against campaign to Ibrahim Lodi.²⁸ He thought that Babur unlike his fore-fathers will invade but would not stay in India. But when Babur occupied the Indian sub-continent, he led the foundation of Mughal dynasty. Hence Ranga Sanga's dream to rule India had to face threat. In 1527, a war was fought between Babur and Rana Sanga,

24 Ibid, 474.

25 Ibid, 475.

26 Ibid, 476.

27 Ibid, 478.

28 Sharma, S.R. *Mughal Empire in India* (Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, 1940), 40-47.

See Babur, Zahirud din *Tuzk-i-Baburi*, Eng.tr. Annette S. Beveridge (Lahore: Sang-i-Meel Publication, 1979). See Pardas, Ishwari. *A Short History of Mughals in India* (Calcutta: Orient Longman Ltd, 1956).

popularly known as the battle of Khanwa. Battle field of Khanwa was located near Sikri. Babur successfully overcomes him along with his army. He was injured in war and runaway from battle field. He used more or less the same tactics in war against Rana Sanga. Babur declared this war as a Jihad²⁹ because he was a Hindu ruler. Babur already fought many wars and his soldiers needed moral support. He needed to boom and boost the spirit of his men's. In this war he also swears, that if he remained successful in war, he would never drink wine for whole of his life.³⁰ According to Babur's memories, in this war some of the Muslim rulers like Hasan khan Mewati and Mehmud Lodi had joined Rana Sanga. Some of the Afghan nobles also joined Rana Sanga against Babur. They believed that this war was not only between the Muhammadans and Infidels, but actually it was against the common enemy of the country.³¹ Babur successfully subdued those entire apostates. As a result of this victory Mughal Empire in India firmly established.

After completing his mission against Rana Sanga, he sent his forces in all directions to conquer the rest of the Indian Territory. Babur launched another campaign in 1527, against another Hindu Rajput ruler named Medini Rao of Chanderi. Medini Rao along with his 4,000 or 5,000 followers shut the fort of Chanderi.³² Babur offered him to exchange Shamsabad with Chanderi but he refused. Meanwhile Afghan defeated the royal forces eventually they had to retreat to Kanuj. His army crushed Afghan revolt and successfully overcome them. Babur kept his vigilant eyes on all those developments. He besieges the fort of Chanderi and attacks the fort from all the sides and finally captured the fort. A lot of men, women and children were killed in this war³³. Babur fought another battle in 1528, popularly known as the battle of Gogra. The battle war fought between one of the brothers of Ibrahim Lodi and Babur. Brother of last Delhi Sultan named Mehmud Lodi, occupied the territory of Bihar and

29 Jihad is obligatory for every adult Muslim. There is no concept of "Holy War" in Islam. Quran always used the word "Qital-fi-sabilillah". In Islam there is no alternative term used for Jihad. The term of Holy War is used by some authors which is incorrect. The concept of Holy War comes from Crusades. There is nothing holy about Wars, wars only cause distractions and only wars to save oppressed people from cruelty is named Jihad. See Sura Tuba, also see Sura Ankabot.

30 Babur, Zahirud din. *Tuzk-i-Baburi*, Eng. tr., Annette S. Beveridge (Lahore: Sang-i-Meel Publication, 1979), 553.

31 Sharma, S.R. *Mughal Empire in India* (Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, 1940), 41.

32 Ibid, 48.

33 Ibid, 49.

large part of eastern side of country and claimed it for its self. Babur sent one of his sons named Askari Mirza for his subjugation. After sometime Babur also followed him, when Mehmud Lodi heard the news of Babur’s arrival. He rushed towards Bengal and take refuge³⁴.Afghan tribes also supported Babur when he moved towards Bengal; he defeated the supporters of Mehmood Lodhi (who were afghan as well) in the famous battle of Gogra (Bukxar). But Afghans remain a constant threat for Mughals Empire in India³⁵.

34 Ibid, 50.

See in Babur,Zahir-ud-din.*Tuzk-i-Baburi*,Eng.tr., Annette S.Beveridge (Lahore:Sang-i-Meel Publication,1979),
Also see in See Pardas, Ishwari.*A Short History of Mughals in India* (Calcutta: Orient Longman Ltd, 1956).

35 Sharma, S.R. *Mughal Empire in India* (Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, 1940),

Conclusion:

Babur was great a courageous leader and warrior of medieval times. He founded the Mughal Empire in Indian Sub-continent in 1526. He ascended on the throne of Fergana in 1494 after his father's death. When he became the ruler of Fergana, he had strong opponents: Afghan rivals and his uncles. They gave him very tough time. He struggled hard for establishing his kingdom in central Asia but failed. After his constant defeat in Central Asia, he turned his attention towards Indian Sub-continent, where he was successful in conquering major parts in few attempts.

The Major reasons of Babur's attack on India include; Legal claim due to Timur's invasion on India — Babur claimed himself as a descendant of Timur Lane. He considered his legal right to rule the Indian Territory. It was a most important cause of his invasion as he mentioned in his book *Babur Nama* that it was his foremost desire to rule the Timurid Dominion. India always remained famous for his wealth, so it was another important factor of attraction for Babur. Initially, he looted Indian wealth to finance his military campaigns in Central Asia, but later on his intention was changed, so he started to capture Indian Territory. Babur invaded India for securing his kingdom of Kabul and for expansion purposes as well. According to Babur, the people of Sub-continent were infidels so he had to attack India in order to implement Islamic Law although no historical facts support his claim. Law and Order situation of India also supported Babur to fulfill his desire. When Babur invaded India Delhi Sultans become very weak, different provinces started become independent. Afghan rivals were very powerful; Delhi Sultans and his nobility also had great differences with each other. Invitations were sent to Babur from Indian nobles and, rivals of Sultan to attack India. He got full advantage from the political instability of India and fulfilled his desire to rule Timurid Dominion. Mughal Afghan relations also played very important role in Invasion of India. They had strong differences with each other before Babur's accession to throne in Central Asia. He subdued Afghan rivals and made alliances with Afghan tribes. Some of Afghan Malaks participated in Babur's military campaigns. He adopted the

diplomatic policies towards afghan tribes, but whenever they got opportunity they rebel. They remain consistent threat for Mughals in India as well as in Central Asia.

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