CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION
"The utter and precipitate prostration of such a vast and ancient land endowed with resources far superior and greater to those of her invaders, can be the result mainly of internal decay and not merely of external attacks, which were its effects rather than cause."¹ We have already presented the national scenography in all its perspective in the first chapter of this work and we recollect that many an empires "like waves of the sea rose to the highest point only to break down"² and in the embroils of internecine warfare, they got burnt and destroyed.³ Numerous, retaliatory battles turned many a Naidula and Jalora "into a bed of reeds" and "a city of flames."⁴ Incessant wars with their neighbours wore out the military strength of illustrious princes and a large number of mighty kings Muñjas and Bhojas met with tragic and ignominous doom. Consequently the marauding bands of foreign soldiers feasted on their rich and flourishing kingdoms.⁵

The history of the period after Harsa was a pathetic and rather "a drab story of endemic warfare between rival dynasties."¹¹ into which India was "hopelessly" divided. "The feudal organisation of the Indians with its divided allegiance, clannish spirit and love of local independence, left them helpless before

¹. Majumdar, R.C., The Struggle for Empire, p. 128, also
³. The Age of Imperial Kanauj, p. 40
⁴. Ganguly, History of the Parmara Dynasty, p. 233
⁵. Sharma, Dashrath, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p. 58
⁶. Ganguly, p. 117
⁷. Basham, A.L., The Wonder that was India, pp. 69-73
an enemy to whom feudalism and clannish feelings were, alike unknown."\(^7\) When the enemies were knocking at the doors of Northern India, "The Chauhāns, the Chaulukyas and the Gahadvālas were so evenly balanced that none of them could secure a temporary advantage over the others, the digvijya of the old type described in the Raghuvamsa and later works or of any type in fact meant not merely wastage of energy but the ruin of the country. The digvijayins' turned their kingdom against one another, when a common front was needed, and allowed themselves to be destroyed piecemeal by the muslims."\(^8\) "The result was defeat, disgrace, disaster. Temple after temple was plundered; the centres of Indian civilisation were ruined and neither the wisdom of the brāhmaṇ, nor the heroism of Kshatriyas, nor the pious adoration of silent millions could prevent their idols of gold and silver from being melted into Ghaznavide coins."\(^9\)

It may be remembered, however, that constant mutual bickerings and clash of arms were no exception to India, and were a peculiar feature of the age. It was as a result of court intrigues that the promising career of Young Muhammad Kāsim was cut short; \(^10\) General Mūsa to whom goes the credit of conquering Northern Africa and Spain, died with a begging bowl in hand; \(^11\) Mahmūd could snatch the scimitar of power only after putting his

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8. Rājasthān Through the Ages (edited) Dashrath Sharma, p. 538
9. Mūḥammad Habib, p. 79
11. Hitti, Philip, K, The Arabs, p. 73
contending brother to the sword. As noted earlier he had to rush home from Multān in 1006 A.D. to contest his throne with Ilāk Khan. In 1151 A.D. Ghazni was consumed by the flames for seven days and seven nights; and having established themselves in India "The Turkish officers struck both at the crown and the people, and were themselves divided into bitter factions." Nevertheless, the consequences of disunity in India were so conspicuous and glaring that amongst other causes we hold this as the major reason for the ruin and devastation of the ancient land and a major contributory factor which led the country to wear the yoke of slavery for centuries to come.

The history of the nation would have been entirely different had the Chaulukyas and Gāhādvālas girded up their loins to retrieve the fortunes of Sapādalakāśa after she had been humbled in the second battle of Tarain (1192 A.D.). Dr. Dāshrath Śharma echoes the national feelings on the subject admirably: "It was the just-hand of Nemesis which struck down Jayachandra in 1194 A.D. and humiliated Chaulukyas two years later. Prithvirāja III, Kalhāna of Nadol, Jayachandra of Varanasi and Kanauj, all fell before the relentless foe, because they forgot the axiomatic truth that united we stand, divided we fall." 

12. Muhammad Habib, p. 17
13. Šāhāki, Tarikhān Subuktīgin, Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p. 32
14. Tabakat-i-Nasiri, Elliot & Dowson (Susil Gupta), p. 34
16. Rajasthan Through the Ages, pp. 538-39
Besides the ideal of digvijaya, the other cause that cut at the root of national unity was the complete absence of the sense of national unity, national honour and patriotism.\textsuperscript{17} What existed was the provincial sentiment of nationality and it was too strong to allow the different principalities to combine into one state.\textsuperscript{18} The occasional combinations of the type referred to by Ferishta against the Ghaznavides were, if it is true that they came about, simply "unusual and even unnatural."\textsuperscript{19}

Although charges of Indian princes joining hands with foreigners have been occasionally levelled,\textsuperscript{20} however their existence, not even in one case, is above doubt.\textsuperscript{21} What cannot be doubted is and what becomes "painfully evident, that the people lacked a true conception of India and Hindu nationality, as we understand the term; that the policy of Indian rulers was not guided by the common concern of India as a whole; nor even by the enlightened self-interest and true statesmanship which would correctly visualise the remote as opposed to the immediate gain or loss."\textsuperscript{22} This in no way means that the people were altogether devoid of the will to resist the enemy and were politically apathetic. It is heartening to note the prolonged

\textsuperscript{17} Sardar K.M. Panikkar, A Survey of Indian History, Ch. XII, quoted by U.N. Ghoshal, p. 501
\textsuperscript{18} Vaidya, C.V., History of Medieval Hindu India, Vol. II, p. 227
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 226; Mishra, Yongendra, The Hindu Shahis of Afghanistan and Punjab, p. 110
\textsuperscript{20} Cambridge History of India, Vol. III, p. 39, 42; Ramji Upadhyay, Prachin Bharatva Sahitya ki Sanskritic Bhumika, (Hindi), p. 649
\textsuperscript{21} Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, p. 333
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
resistance offered to the invaders and the repeated attempts made by the Indian princes to retrieve their lost territories or at least to keep them in constant turmoil so that the more powerful of the foreign rulers had to begin their task of reconquest afresh." This speaks of the existence of an undercurrent of patriotism and national honour, however weak that might be.

To make the matters worse, combined with the national disunity and internecine struggle, was the lack of political foresight whereby they failed to exploit the weaknesses of the frail and wailing later-Ghaznavides. In a fit of national awakening they did join hands to free Nagarkot and Thanesar from the clutches of the Turks, but being an unusual and wholly unnatural phenomenon, it withered as quickly as it had come about.

To the lack of political foresight we may also ascribe the absence of a sound frontier-policy. The North-West approaches to India were generally left unguarded, unfortified and no answer was found for checkmating the designs of the enemy who constantly kept brandishing its sword in that direction and kept ravaging the country with virtual immunity.

Failing to respond to the challenge of Islam which was

"so different, so unsassimilable, so contemptuous at times of

23. Ghoshal, U.N., Studies in Indian History and Culture, p. 509
24. Shrivastava, A.L., The Sultanate of Delhi, p. 64; Majumdar, p. 332
the Hindu way of life."\(^\text{26}\) That there emerged a system of strict and inflexible caste-rules, which although successful in the beginning, had disastrous consequences in the end. The barriers that came to separate man from man, sapped the very source of "national strength and vitality," and left the country an easy prey to the ferocious invaders. The defences raised to protect the country became bars of the prison" protecting the inmates from outside intrusion but denying them at the same time that free atmosphere of thought and action without which no culture can progress. Hinduism presents a picture of arrested growth, the castle of caste system was its asylum as well as prison."\(^\text{28}\)

One of the major military consequences of the hiatus of caste was the confining of fighting-duties only to the Rajputs who were but few in numbers. As a result, the defeat of the ruling princes was taken to be the defeat of the entire nation. The common people did not deem it their duty to raise the standard of rebellion against foreign usurpations. Although, the profession of arms was not strictly restricted to Kshatriya cadres yet generally speaking, the Brāhmaṇs would fight only in defence of their temples and deities. The trading-classes made firsts in coming to terms with the invaders, and the depressed classes were little interested in the preservation of the order which surrounded them with a sea of duties and not a drop of water to provide succour in the shape of social or political

\(^{26}\) Sharma, Dashrath, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 253
\(^{27}\) Ghoshal, U.N., p. 508
\(^{28}\) Sharma, Dashrath, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 253
As brought out in Chapter I, the rigidity of the caste resulted in the narrowness of outlook and haughty national aloofness. The prohibition, of living in a country "in which the grass which he wears on the ring-finger does not grow, nor the black-haired gazelles graze," stopped foreign travel and international intercourse. As a result, the Hindus came to "believe that there is no country but theirs, no religion like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid. They are by nature niggerdly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste, among their own people, still much more, of course, from any foreigner. According to their belief, there is not other country on the earth but theirs, no other race of man but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge or science whatsoever. This haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan and Persis, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar..." To make the matters worse the age did not produce a statesman of the calibre of Kautilya to integrate the scattered political and moral force and sanely guide the destiny of the nation.

This grossly self-conceited outlook and aloofness from other nations played havoc with the development of science and

29. Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 536
30. Sachau, Alberuni's India, pp. 134-35
31. Nizami, K.A., Studies in Mediaeval Indian History and Culture, p. 1
32. Sachau, pp. 22-23
more so, the military science in the country. And Ghoshal is right when he exclaims that "neither high ideals nor brilliant courage could make up for that deficiency." 33 The Indian solidiery were in no way inferior in courage, valour and fearlessness in battle than their adversaries, yet they caved in when face to face the interpid and mobile Turks, only because of their backwardness in military tactics in which their rivals were far superior.

It is testified at all hands that as a martial race the Raja was born fighter 35 and second to none in the world. War was his "ruling passion, and indeed his only congenial occupation." 37 The Raja was a Vira and a 'Sura, 38 whose natural duty (Sva Dharma) was Vira Dharma. 39 He was a defender of the country by his very birth. 40 Initiated into knighthood on reaching puberty and fed on stories of the heroes of the epics, he spent his time "hunting, hawking or in feats of arms..... Haughty and punctilious, he seized upon the most trivial slight as an offence to be wiped out in blood." 41 Unlike the Byzantines of 7th/8th centuries who were as chivalrous and possessed of impetuous valour but always valuing skill higher than force, 42 the Raja knew well how to die fearlessly and

33. Studies in Indian History and Culture, p. 506
34. Ibid.
35. Elphinstone, History of India (7th edition), p. 36
36. LanePoole, Stanley, Mediaeval India Under Mohammedan Rule, p. 50
37. Rawlinson, H.C., India : A Short Cultural History, p. 201
38. Awasthi, A.B.L., Rajput Polity, p. 56
39. Prithvirajavilaya : X,32; Awasthi, p. 56
40. Ibid.
41. Rawlinson, p. 201
42. Montgomery, p. 143
not how to win victory. 43

Comparing the Rājpūts with their Turk rivals, Habibullah writes: "To both, the sword was the means of achieving glory; philosophical speculation held no attraction for either of them; clannishness and a blind loyalty characterised the two peoples. A kind of feudalism featured both political systems. But the Rājpūt excelled the Turk in reckless bravery and a chivalrous sense of honour that led him to commit self destruction rather than suffer defeat or go down in his own estimation." 44 No wonder then, that Field Marshal Montgomery terms the Rājpūt as "tremendously brave—but equally stupid." 45 He was the Indian version of the Scottish Highlander and Elphinstone compares him with Homer's heroes. 46 His loyalty to his clan and its leader, intense and unshakable; being proud, he will not do a menial work but engaged himself in quarrelling with and raiding the territory of his neighbour. 47

It was his acute thirst for military glory that "proved his nemesis" and led not only to unending wars and consequent disunity 48 but also his disinclination to be trained for obeying a leader other than his own. No wonder that the country at war with itself offered a tempting prize to the land hungry Turk 49 whose power in the Muslim world is well illustrated by a story.

43. Ghoshal, U.N., p. 512
44. The Foundations of Muslim Rule in India, p. 33
45. A History of Warfare, p. 405
46. History of India, p. 362
47. Rewlinson, p. 201
48. Habibullah, pp. 33-34
49. Ibid.
from al-Fakhri Ibn Tiqtaqā "The courtiers of Mūtazz summoned the astrologers and asked them how long his caliphate would endure. A wit present in the gathering said: "So long as the Turks please; and every one present laughed."  

Taught not to attack and molest the fallen foe and the supplicant seeking asylum and strictly forbidden to strike a foul blow, 51 the Rajputs in fits of ideal and misplaced magnanimity committed acts of serious political foolhardiness. Imagine the stupidity of Anandpāla's readiness to help Mahmūd against the revolting Turks 52 and not bothering to help his own son Sukhpāla when the latter was attacked by Mahmūd! 53 What could be a better opportunity than the one presented to Anandpāla? He could have easily secured the gateway to India against future Ghaznavide incursion by recovering Peshāwar. Even if he brushed aside the principles of statesmanship and sentiments of patriotism, the pathetic burning alive of his father and the insults and indignities that he himself had met at the hands of Mahmūd, should have been enough to goad him to take recourse to war under those circumstances. 54 But alas! the golden opportunity was lost and that too with tragic consequences!

Similarly, Prithvīrāja III had no business to indolently sit quite and pursue not the fleeing and crushed hordes of

50. The Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XVI-1, 1940, p. 51
51. Rawlinson, p. 201
52. Sachau, Alberuni's India, Vol. II, pp. 13-14
53. Mishra, Yogendra, The Hindu Shahis of Punjab and Afghanistan, p. 139
54. Majumdar, R.C., D.V. Potdar Commemorative Volume, Poona, 1950, p. 349
Muhammad Ghori after the first battle of Tarain. Though this had the full approval of the Hindu Śāstras yet the concept was completely "out-of-date and altogether unwarranted by the cannons of prudence and warfare as understood now and as understood then........ It was indeed the second nail in the coffin of Hindu independence for which we have to hold Prthvīrāja responsible."

Temperamentally the Rājpūts were given to the show of individual prowess and not to collective obedience they "prided themselves on their swordsmanship and looked upon a battle as a tournament in which to display their skill, bravery and chivalry." And when opposed by the Turks who prized victory over scruples of fair-play, the truthfulness of the Rajputs was out done by the craft and deceit of the Turks.

Combined with the temperamental independence of thought and love of free action was the luxury and revelry which sapped the vitality and fighting potential of the Rājpūt army. "The luxurious and the voluptuous are easily defeated by their enemies in battle." Centuries of comparative peace and prosperity had made the camp-life of the Rājpūts "Too luxurious to be consistent with military efficiency." The loss of

55. Sharma, D Ashrath, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p. 84
56. Ghoshal, U.N., p. 511
57. Shrīvastava, A.L., The Sultanate of Delhi, p. 85
58. Ibid.
59. Garuda Purāṇa (Hindi Tr) by M.N. Dutt Sastri, p. 330
60. Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 364
fortune at the second battle of Tarain was, besides other reasons, occasioned by the laxity and revelry of the previous night.

Harirāja, brother of Prithvīrāja III was easily reduced to submission only because he kept himself drowned in the arms of dancing girls presented to him by the ruler of Gujarāt. Similar was the tragic fate of Hammīra of Ranthambhor who allowed his state-policy to be influenced by Dhārā, his Court-dancer. The examples of voluptuousness and indolence are not wanting in the literature of the time. Reference to the presence of princesses and courtesans in the camp has already been made in an earlier chapter. In contrast to this laxity of character and womenising, when Mohammad Ghori was beaten at the First battle-of-Tarain he neither shared his wife's bed nor did he change his clothes, and spent the year in mourning and gloom till he avenged his defeat. The Arabs too, who once issueing forth from their desert homeland had conquered the world, lost all their martial vigour and hardihood only because they had been infected by the virulence of riches and luxuries brought in the wake of spoils of the conquered, and had settled down with well-filled harems and had begun to live sumptuously at ease.

61. Ibid., p. 301
62. Sharma, Dashrath, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p. 324
63. Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 537
64. Sir William Muir, The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall, p. 436
The failure of the Indian army has been ascribed and very justly, to the poor and unenergizing leadership. With scorn for death and all the will to die for and in the presence of the leader, the Rājpūts could have beaten any troops on the earth only if they were well-led. "Even the Gods stand in dread of him who is possessed of energy, daring, fortitude, strength, valour and intelligence." To be successful, a general has to have high moral and physical courage, gallantry, firmness, justness and the ability to esteem merit in others. There is no doubt that Arnorāja, and Prithvīrāja III, were all noted leaders, but they failed to measure up to the qualities of leadership of their adversaries. It is not at all possible to agree with Dashrath Sharma when he says that the leaders just named were "in no way inferior to their Muslim adversaries, the Yaminis of Ghazna and Muhammed of Ghor," and what Prithvirāja III's tactics might have been had he not been duped by the appeasing tone and "promise of truce, is beyond any historians' power to tell." The learned author provides the answer himself later on in a work edited by him where he squarely terms and rates, Prithvirāja III as no more than a 'novice' and a "common reveller." Thus: "Instead of remaining on the lookout for some treacherous move on the part of the enemy, he passed the night in revelry and was fast asleep, when the Muslim forces

65. Ghoshal, p. 511
66. Rawlinson, p. 201
67. Garud Purāṇa (Hindi Tr) by M.N. Dutt Sastrī, p. 330
68. Hitle, Jomini's Art of War, p. 61
69. Sharma, Dashrath, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p. 322
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
reached his tent. Such conduct on the eve of an important engagement must be regarded as inexcusable. "The earth is to be enjoyed by the heroic and ever wakeful"...."and the king's behaviour just before the second battle of Tarain was neither that of a hero nor of a great general, awake to all the possibilities of warfare, but that of a novice in the art of finesse and of a common reveller."72

It may be submitted here that more than the physical fitness, it is the intellectual make and qualities of head and heart that go to make a great commander "Mahmūd was no pahlawan; feats of personal prowess were beyond his strength.....he did not subject himself to more discomforts on his campaigns than was absolutely necessary. ...He was too good a general to endanger his personal safety by needless heroism... His unquestioned supremacy over his fellow-men was due to the qualities of mind the acuteness with which he unravelled a complicated situation and read the character of those around him, the restless activity of a man determined to be great combined with the instinctive behaviour of one born to command".73

It was due to the dearth of good leaders in the 11th and 12th centuries that Indians failed to learn and adopt Turkish tactics of warfare.74 Hemchandra Ray is right when he says that "The Indians were not less brave; but they failed

72. Rajasthan Through the Ages, pp. 300-301
73. Mohammad Habib, Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin, pp. 19-20
74. Ghoshal, U.N., p. 511
to produce a Mahmūd or a Muizz-ud-din". 75 The same sentiments have been echoed by Chakravarty, "Moreover, in craft and resourcefulness, in tactics and strategy, Ānandpāla and Prithvīrāja were no better match for Sultān Mahmūd and Muhammad Ghori than Porus was for Alexander". 76 The Indians failed to have leaders who, besides being able administrators, could also be great commanders like their opponents. "India needed a Titan but she found only pygmies". 77

One aspect of leadership generally ignored by the historians is that with the mobile cavalry attaining predominance in the field of battle "The days of personal control of all the force, (by the kings) was gone and much more reliance had to be placed on the subordinates and the discipline of the soldiers". 78 There appear to have no efforts been made to develop junior leaders to the degree required and training them for assuming responsibilities commensurate with the changing fortunes of the battle and yet fitting into the overall plan of operations. No wonder then, all was over with the fall or desertion of the highest commander, usually the king.

An other very important inherent cause of the weakness of the Indian armies lay in their very composition. Although big kingdoms could and did maintain large standing armies as brought out in Chapter II, yet in most cases they only served as the nucleus of the huge armies which came to be raised in

75. The Dynastic History of India, p. 1218
76. The Art of War in Ancient India, p. 14
77. Ghoshal, p. 510
78. Rajendra Singh, Brigadier, History of Indian Army, p. 43
cases of national emergencies. They, of course, were most efficient and naturally most reliable but they were not the only type of troops in the pay roll of the kings. There were the irregulars and also corporation troops. With no fighting traditions whatsoever the irregulars were often a source of danger and were well used to making the confusion of the battlefield worse confounded when under pressure. Because they were composed of all types of people including bandits and marauders. The corporation troops, too, were not only of limited utility but were also a source of constant headache to their employer. Used to mutual jealousies and resultant fighting, they fell easy prey to enemy propaganda. The fourth and sufficiently dominating category of soldiers was the levies furnished by feudatory chiefs and owning allegiance to them. We know that Prithviraja III had as many as one hundred and fifty Sāmantas or feudal Lords who fought with him in the second battle of Tarain. Hurriedly raised and lacking training in the art of fighting they proved to be of very limited use. To make matters worse, owning allegiance to their respective lords, they were neither used to nor trained for combined operations under the Lord paramount and fought under different commanders.

79. Watters, p. 171
81. *Rājatarangini*, VIII 1384
82. *Arthasastra*, Bk. VII, Ch. II
84. Sharma, Dashrath, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 326
85. Singh, R.B., p. 230
86. Sharma, Dashrath, p.326; also Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 533
The Samantas were often jealous of each other,87 threw off allegiance of the overlord whenever he or his family were gripped by bad fortune and the kings had to fight with troops "mostly composed of the retainers of their subordinate chiefs", who "lacked that uniformity of organisation and unity-of-control and command which is one of the essential requisites of success in war".89 Thus the heterogeneous and heterogeneous army with divided loyalty, command and control and not welded into an efficient fighting machine, could scarcely be expected to stand up as a bulwark of a nation's defence — the nation which had her identity not as a nation but as a group of mutually hostile sub-nations, against an enemy ruthlessly despotic but a militant theocracy,90 with united purpose and will to fight in the name and cause of Allah.

The incidents of the armies taking to heels at the death or flight of the kings clearly indicate that there was no graded system of military command or leadership. Otherwise there was no reason for the second-in-Command not to take charge and keep fighting whenever the king or the C-IN-C fell or fled accidently or designedly.91 And, further, since armies fought under their respective kings, "it was impossible for any co-ordination to be effected except to the extent to which it was planned before the battle. ...In short there was no single army under a single general but a number of armies under their

87. Payne, C.H., Tod's Annals of Rajastan, p. 8
88. Ibid.
89. Chakravarty, p. 191
90. Ghoshal, p. 510
91. Yogendra Mishra, p. 161
respective generals creating a rabble crowd moving in different
directions the moment the enemy manoeuvred an action which the
confederal forces had not anticipated.”

Thus the army that was knit so loosely, heavy and huge bodied, was “slow and ponderous.” Large masses of soldiers from numerous walks of life, of varied antecedents and dubious loyalties, formed the “enormous armies,” which were neither trained nor capable of cooperation. The best of them could not go beyond 11 miles = 17 kms approximately (2 Yojanas) a day while the poorest of them could just cover 5 5/44 miles and then encamped to catch up breadth. And no wonder “slow Indian mares and mountain-like elephants” proved no match for the swift and extremely mobile Turkish cavalry. Such a force whose predominant portion was formed of feudal levies which were “quick to muster, quick at times also to strike but incapable of sustained and concerted action for any long period,” were unfit for the gigantic task of stemming the tide of ferocious and hungry Turk wolves roving salivatingly at the riches of the Indian temples and soul satisfying greenery of the fertile and alluvial plains of Hindusthan.

Discipline, which is the key to the efficiency and effectiveness has been justly regarded as the backbone of the

92. The Theory of Force and Organisation of Defence in Indian Constitutional History from Earliest Times to 1847, pp.125, 127,128; quoted by Yogendra Mishra, pp. 161-62
93. Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 364; also Dashrath Sharma, Early Chauban Dynasties, p. 216
94. Basham, A.L., p. 135
95. Ibid., p. 73
96. Ibid.
97. Arthasastra, Bk. X, Ch.II
98. Shrivastava, A.L., The Sultanate of Delhi, p. 37
99. Dashrath Sharma, p. 215
armies. It is the lack of discipline which leads to panic in battle and destroying order it exposes troops to the vandalism of the enemy attacks. "An army seized with panic is in a state of demoralization because when disorder is once introduced all concerted action on the part of individuals becomes impossible, the voice of the officers can no longer be heard, no manoeuvre for resuming the battle can be executed, and there is no course except ignominous flight." 100

If discipline was so important, it was woefully lacking in huge and imposing Indian armies of our period. The army's march through even own territories meant spoliation and wanton destruction of the standing crops, and the properties of hapless peasantry. 101 In battle, it was the discipline which was the first casualty. Even when the decision to commence battle had already been taken and time for launching an attack already fixed, the lax discipline could cause the action to commence accidently, 102 and ruin the complete prospects of the battle. On the contrary, the Ghaznavide army, although cosmopolitan in composition, had been strongly knit into a sharp fighting weapon through strict discipline and of course "Years of comradeship in arms, the memories of past victories and hopes of future spoliation and plunder." 103 No mercy or compassion could save an erring and indisplined soldier. The story of Mahmud cutting off the head of an officer who was found sleeping with the wife of a villager, 104 is too well known

100. Hitle, Jomini's Art of War, p. 65
101. Dashrath Sharma, p. 215
102. Rājatarangini, VII, 168-73
103. Mohammad Ha'bid, Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin, p. 80
104. Elphinstone, p. 346
to be recounted.

Strict disciplinary action was ordained to be taken against the defaulters who commenced the battle without orders or before the zero-hour, the one who malingered, was found asleep on a post or a picquet, gave shelter to the enemy or was an enemy-informer, conveyed false messages or misled the patrols.105 In contrast, we find the armies running away for fear of rain and cold and more so, the commanders being carried on shoulders leading their troops in glory to full flight.

Another military factor which accounted for the defeat and the ruin of Indian armies was their excessive addiction to the defensive,106 which "developed into fortress mentality."107 It may be noted that the defence is decidedly a sound operation of war. Its purpose "is to break the strength of the attacker, to parry his blows, to weaken him and to bleed him white,"108 with the ultimate aim of attacking him when he has become weak.109 Thus, the defence must always help the defender to gain time to prepare for the attack110 or more specifically to attain "a shift in favour of the defender in the balance of power."111 The defender by appropriate selection of the ground, protects himself from the fire of enemy weapons (in our case archery).112

105. Fakhr-i-Mudhib : S.A.A.Rizvi, pp. 271-72
106. The Struggle for Empire, General Editor, R.C.Majumdar, p. 113
107. Rajendra Singh, Brigadier, History of Indian Army, p. 44
108. Field Marshal, General Ritter Von Leeb, Defence, First Tr 1943 by Dr. Stefan, T. Poissony at Daniel Vilfroy, p. viii (Foreward)
109. Ibid.
110. Hittle, Jomini's Art of War, p. 103
111. Von Leeb, Defence, p. viii
112. Ibid., p. 2
Nevertheless, the defence is a forced waiting and is dependent upon the direction, timing and the type of the enemy attack. "It springs from a feeling of weakness, of moral and numerical inferiority." However in distress, it provides the requisite succour, and its aim is to hold rather than to win, because "it is easier to hold than to win." But what is to be remembered is that it is to be adopted only as a temporary phase in battle and should be abandoned immediately one is in a position to launch the offensive. This is so, because a decision in battle through the defensive is mainly fortuitous and one can hope to win only when the attacker renounces his plans out of sheer exhaustion, which can be a rare and accidental happening as for as valorous nations are concerned. It is the offensive which alone can save one's territory from the ravages and devastations of war, the expense of the enemy, the ardour and morale of own solidarity is boosted and that of the adversary depressed.

The Indians lacked aggressive spirit when compared with the Turks. Excepting Jayapāla Shāhi, who twice advanced to measure his swords with the Turks across the waters of the Indus, no other Indian prince even showed the pluck and daring of this brave but unfortunate sentinel of the North-Western gates of India. A long row of princes on whose shoulders fell the burden of defending national independence struck to their

113. Ibid.
114. Ibid.
115. Clausewitz, quoted Von Leeb, Ibid.
116. Hittle, Jomini's Art of War, p. 46
age-old concept of *vyūhas* and the "Cult of positions." On the approach of the enemy, they, without a single honourable exception, immediately formed up in the *vyūhas* or hid themselves in the forts and left the enemy free to rove around them like hungry wolf and dislodge them at his own convenience. It may, however be mentioned to the credit of Indians that their deployment for the defensive in the field was simply superb and no enemy efforts could easily make dents into their defensive arrays. It had been demonstrated at Jayapāla’s second encounter with the Turks and numerous other occasions but there is no better example than the second battle of Tarain, where inspite of the surprise and impetuous attack, Ghori’s forces failed to make any serious impression on the well-deployed Rājpūts.

However, the Muslims, in the Parthian style knew the answer to handle this sort of tactical situation. They would feign flight, draw their rivals out of their defended-localities, turn back and put them to the sword. Māhmūd did it in 1010 A.D. and Aibak adopted the same tactics in 1197 A.D. Thus, it is apparent that having formed up in the *vyūha*, the Indians seemed not to know what to do further with it. The enemy was too shrewed to attack them in such defensive entrenchments without first breaking their formations and the Rājpūts were too devoid of tactical finesse to draw the enemy attack upon them, when so deployed, parry his punch and then to smash him down when he had

117. Chakravarty, p. 195
118. Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p. 23
119. Sarkar, Sir J.N., p. 35
120. Briggs, Ferishta, V.I,p.29
121. Ṭajū-l-Ma-Asir (Elliot & Dowson), Vol.II, p. 85
spent his force. Mahmud had effected such a brilliant manoeuvre at the battle of Peshawar, when he drew the wild Ghakkars to attack his entrenchments and to launch the counter attack moment they had exhausted their fury. 122

Rating defence better than offence and the shield superior than the sword, 123 the only thoughts that cluttered the minds of Indian princes were that of a passive defence. It was resorted to not as a temporary or an interim tactical measure but as a sacred axiom to be sacrificed only when cut asunder by the enemy. They always forgot that passive defence could bring no favourable decision, that it was the offensive alone which was a great morale booster, "the forward rush, the excitement, a moral uplift wholly lacking in the defender, who is always looking to right and left, anxious lest his flanks be turned and communications severed. The assailant, especially against a passive defence, has freedom of action and power of manoeuvre, and can accordingly concentrate superior forces against any selected point of his adversary's line, or where the front is not continuous against his flanks and rear." 124 Passive defence had not only infected and destroyed fighting efficiency of the Indian armies but had equally ruined before them the once grand and impressive Roman armies. This always happens "when the offensive spirit is allowed to die and gives way to

122. Elliot & Dowson, Vol. p. 447
123. Chakravarty, p. 195
a 'Maginot' complex...."  
Consequently, virus of passivity, the long and tiring wait for the virile Turks, imbued with powerful enthusiasm, "a sentiment, derived as much from the prospect of plunder or the colossal treasures stored in the Indian temples and palaces as from zeal for their newly acquired religion."  
Although not the least borne by historical evidence, yet the Indian expeditions of Mahmūd were given the garb of holy wars or Jihāda and they served as powerful stimulent to induce the 'ghāzīs' (volunteers for service in India) to swell the ranks of fighters with the reward of martyrdom as a great motivating force. Thus, the greed of booty, religious zeal, and barbaric instinctive pleasure and thrill of rapine, massacre and incendiaryism, strengthened by unprecedented victories over their rivals, all combined to raise their morale sky-high. On the contrary, passive and defensive attitude, coupled with unbroken series of defeats, the absence of any burning zeal for a philosophy of life or religions, creed, fatalism superstitions, weak and incompetent leadership and social and moral degredation all combined to lower the morale of Indian troops to the depths, un-fathomable.

125. Montgomery, p. 109
126. Ghoshal, p. 512
127. Al-ubti, Tarikh Yamini (Elliot & Dowson), Vol. II, p. 24; also S.M. Jaffar, Mediaeval India under Muslim Kings, (Footnote) to pp. 99-100
128. Hodivala, Studies in Indo Muslim History, p. 164; S.M. Jaffar, p. 91
130. Shrivastava, A.L., The Sultanate of Delhi, p. 86
131. Dashrath Sharma, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p. 325
132. Shrivastava, p. 41
133. Ibid., p. 39
The situation was further worsened when the priests began meddling with military affairs. Kalhana quotes numerous instances where the temple purhitas performed solemn fasts demanding removal of commanders or forcing the kings to grant marching allowances to the troops as a kind of expiatory oblations.

Military-ly devastating effects of religious notions demonstrated by the policy of Gurjar-Pratiharas in declining to take Multān for fear of destruction of the sun-idol of the place at Muslim hands, are too well known to be recalled here. The desertion of Laxmana Sena of Bengal by his subjects particularly the Pandas and Purhitas, traders, knights and the feudal-Lords on hearing the news of Bakhtiyar Khalji's approach who had been declared to be a certain victor by the astrologers, may be in the pay-roll of the Khalji, further goes to show the degradations caused by the priestly class.

Where as religion fired the Muslims with unprecedented zeal to conquer, their affects on the Hindus of our period were perhaps just the opposite. Believing in the supernatural powers of the Gods and Goddesses, they learnt to sit with folded hands for their deities to come and destory the Turuśkas. Yet the stone idols neither came to life to wreck the invaders nor did they shed tears in anguish over the plight and carrage of their devotees. Even nectar, when mixed with poison causes death.

134. Rajatarangini, VII 15; VIII 811- etc
135. Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 534
136. Dwivedi, Harihar Niwas, Dilli ke Tomar (Hindi), p. 312
137. Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 534
no wonder then, that interference of all pervasive religious
dogmas, astrologers and all powerful religious priests with
the political and military matters brought down clouds of doom
in the land of Bharata. The demoralization of Indian princes
became so complete that one often reads of their running away
from their capitals to dense forests and unassailable hill-tops
immediately on receipt of the news of the enemy's advance.
The Turk leaders were compared with Prāsurāma out to kill
Kshatriyas, 139 and all became "uneasy at heart even at the
mention of Turuška king." 140

The one military cause which has been held at all hands
to be responsible for the debacle of Indian armies, was their
undue and over reliance on the once celebrated elephantry.
We would beg to point out that the learned authorities have
hastily been led to this belief. The condemnation of the mighty
and ferocious animal, veteran of thousand battles, appears to be
unrealistic and unjust. It was not the battle worthiness of the
hero of a countless wars, but as detailed in chapter XI of this
study, his faulty, and traditional deployment in the front rank
in complete violation of the tactical cannons of the age. The
positioning of elephants in the front rank and followed by
infantry aimed at smashing the enemy front-line by trampling and
crushing, was alright if successful, but was equally ruinous in

138. Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, pp. 28, 45, 49 and etc
139. Ibid., p. 48
141. Sharma, Dushrath, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p. 216;
Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 364; Chakravarty, p. 193;
Rawlinson, H.G., p. 212; A.L. Shrivastava, p. 37 etc
case the charge failed and powerful beasts rendered unmanageable by the unfailing shooting of enemy archers, rolled back powdering like dust own luckless troops. The guilty and reprobated knights amongst the war-animals of 11-12th century India, condemned as refractory, obstinate and perverse, worked wonders in the skilful hands during the same period. Mahmūd, by lining them up in his assault formation with nothing at their back, overcame all the dangers to which own forces could be exposed to, in case of their becoming unruly and unmanageable while terrified and in pusill-animous retreat. And one finds them tossing-up the enemy standard-bearers in full view of and right under the nose of their valiant masters, breaking their ranks and crushing like ants all those who opposed their onward rush. Their irresistible strength and valour could also be exploited very advantageously, only if they could be arrayed in the rear as reserve and pushed into charge at the most opportune moment.

It, then, appears a strange and unsustainable piece of logic to accuse the servant of the follies and failings of his incompetent master in whose hands and employ, he was but a dumb and mute tool. Firstly, the poor creature was positioned at the wrong place and was exposed to merciless beating and slashing of the hardy foe and in agony and torment when he fell back and his worthy master knowing all his characteristic weaknesses even did not care to keep his exit clear, he was held guilty of over-running those who came in his way. Right of self-defence is allowed to all and sundry, and yet no such privilege was deemed

143. Ibid.
144. Ibid.
to be this decorated warrior's due. For the crimes and failings of his master, who in serious dereliction of his duty failed to use his brain and learn from own and other's experiences, this loyal war-vetern was sent to the gallows. This is simply unjust and uncorroborated by the available historical evidence. Now, it is a fact of common knowledge that in those days the fall or flight of the commander decided the outcome of the battle. Still in their fool-hardiness the commanders chose to mount an elephant which provided a raised seat and a vantage point from where the entire battle field could be surveyed, but at the same time they forgot that this also made known to the enemy exact location of the leader and hence he offered an easy target for enemy naptha balls and burning arrows. It is too much to expect the poor elephant to withstand the onslaughts of thousand of marksmen and consequently, we find that the fate of action came to be decided when even a single war-beast, with the king or commander seated on its back decided to quit his post, or the commander himself was dispatched to the other world. The fault, then, lay with the bankrupt leadership and not with the particular class of war-beasts and other war machines.

Next to elephantry the weakness of the Indian armies lay in their poor cavalry forces. No doubt that the Indian princes, as brought out in chapter III maintained and commanded vast cavalry forces, Yet the native breed was far inferior to the

145. Ibid., p. 27
146. Tajul-Waisir, (Elliot & Dowson), Vol. II, p. 223
147. Watters, p. 343; Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p. 25
one possessed by the Turks and they spent huge sums on importing
the thorough-breds of central Asia.\textsuperscript{148} "The Turks were so famous
for the speed and vigour of their cavalry charges that in the
Asiatic world the phrase 'Turk-Sawār' (Turkish horseman) became
a general name for the richly accoutred, superbly mounted
dashing cavalry of any race.\textsuperscript{149} Subsisting on coarsest wild food
they could traverse a distance of 40 to 50  kōs a day."\textsuperscript{150} In
speed and endurance, therefore, the Indian cavalry seemed to be
a poor match when compared with their rivals. Therefore,
Chakravarty is right in concluding that "as in the 4th century
B.C., so in the 11th and 12th century A.D. the superiority of
foreign horsemen once again decided the fate of India."\textsuperscript{151}

Not only the quality of the mount as well as the train-
ing of the cavalier was of inferior order, the Hindus failed to
develop mounted-archery\textsuperscript{152} the swiftest and the most effective
war machine of the age. It denied the Indian forces, all the
speed and manœuvrability possessed by their adversaries.
Hence, their precipitate collapse and failure to defend their
hearth and homes from the wanton attacks of the rapacious
Turks. Denied of the mobility and requisite speed, they were
to slow to conduct out-flanking moves or effect envelopment of
the far-flung and fast moving enemy forces.

\textsuperscript{148} Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, Vol.I, 1834, p. 231
\textsuperscript{149} Sarkar, Sir, J.N., Military History of India, p. 27
\textsuperscript{150} Abdul Hamid's Padishahnama, Vol. II, p.619
\textsuperscript{151} Art of War in Ancient India, p. 36
\textsuperscript{152} Montgomery, p. 400
\textsuperscript{153} Chakravarty, p. 40
Not only the employment of elephantry and development of cavalry left much to be desired, but even in the field of grand tactics, the Indians were no better. Enemy-information which is so very vital for all tactical planning, nay without which no operation can be successfully conducted, was rarely ever obtained. Although employed successfully as far as their Indian rivals were concerned as brought out in Chapter VIII, on national level no spy-system seems to have worked which could keep the Indian Lords posted with the designs and political happenings of the neighbouring muslim countries. On the contrary, the Turks had full-fledged system of espionage and knew minutest details about Indian politics and geography, including differences between kings and their royal consorts, and left no stones unturned to exploit them fully to their advantage through force or stratagem.

In the field, the most handy device to keep a watch on the intentions and movements of the enemy is the reconnaissance made by the employment of patrolling parties. No such thing was known to have been done by the Indian force commanders, otherwise we find no reason for Dāhir not to attack Muhammad Kāsim when his troops lay paralysed by sickness for almost two months on the banks of Indus, and Prithvīrāja III was caught sleeping during the second battle of Tarain while the enemy had

154. Shrivastava, p. 40
155. Nazin, Muhammad, pp. 144-46
156. Cambridge History of India, Vol. III, p. 38
157. Shrivastava, A.L., p. 40
affected an approach march during the fateful night. Vigorous patrolling would have saved a number of Indian rulers from being surprised and killed and they would have lived yet another day to lead and bleed when it could have been most advantageous to do so. Geography dictates strategy and tactics to a large degree but our leaders seem to have not been aware of this dictum. Where as, their adversaries made full use of the ground and the knowledge about their forces never have the Indians been known to have done so through preliminary reconnaissance.

As a result of this neglect, the Indian princes failed to make sound appreciation of situation as it presented action after action and their tactics remained bookish and thoroughly unadapted to the needs of the day.

One is appalled to see the Indian troops playing into the enemy hands with utter lack of knowledge of even the basic rules of field-craft and tactical know-how. Against all canons of military theory ancient and prevalent, they did not care to earmark troops as reserve to be thrown into battle when enemy resistance was beginning to show cracks. The Turks had done it on numerous occasions but the haughty and arrogant Indian knight, contemptuous of all that was foreign would refuse to learn all that was new and all that was being done by the Mlechhas.

158. Sarkar, Sir J.N., p. 35
159. Shrivastava, A.L., p. 36
160. Ghoshal, U.N., Studies in Indian History and Culture, p. 512
161. Ibid.
The operations at night (Chapter XI) were known, yet no reliable system of 'navigation' seems to have been developed and the troops lost their way without even reaching the enemy positions. With all their advantages the technique of night-attacks particularly when operations were to take place in home country, could have been perfected and exploited fully against the Turks.

Equally sordid is the tale when we consider the opposed-river-crossing operation (Chapter XI). With all the experience of centuries of warfare, the Hindus found no answer to block enemy crossings successfully. They could neither contest fiercely the enemy passage while he waded through the knee-deep water, or swam across, or used boats or inflated-skins, nor could they themselves use those devices. Consequently, we find skins bursting under them, bridges sinking and the troops drowning miserably even while crossing the fords, at wrong places and at wrong timings!

'Simply miserable' or 'poor' are the expressions that we could use for the Indians' competency in siege-craft. While they could not humble a fortress like Tabrindah in 13 months; their adversaries could capture the same in a few days. Therefore, they were weak in both defence as well as attack of the forts, the pinnacle of their strength, on whom they pinned all their hopes and where they fled for ready-shelter whenever the

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163. Rajatarangini, VIII 1129
164. Ibid., IV 531-44
165. Shrivastava, A.L., p. 75
fortunes of war ran against them.

If we take the panormic view of the entire military system during our period what strikes a serious observer straightway is the absence of any well established institution for the discussion and evolvement of strategical and tactical concepts best suited to the age in the light of experiences gained from the battles against the Turus̄kas. It, no way means that the need and importance of proper training was not realized. Kautilya enjoined that, all arms of the army shall be put through regular training in the techniques of war at sunrise "on all days but those of conjunction (of planets)" and the king was responsible to be physically present to supervise the said training. Because it was by regular practice that one became expert in fighting from the back of elephants, chariots, horses and in the naval-warfare. The training was to be conducted even when the army was in the war-camp, but the training area was to be cleared of shrubs, stones, water, and earthern mounds. Sukra goes a step further and says, "The untrained, inefficient and raw recruits are all like bales of cotton. The wise should appoint them to other tasks besides warfare." Although the detailed programme of training as laid down by Kautilya has already been referred to at the appropriate place in this dissertation, yet in the absence of evidence, epigraphic literary or otherwise, it is too much to

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166. Arthaśāstra, Bk. V, Ch. III
167. Kāmandak, XVI, 50, also Nītivakrāmrita pp. 121-23; Chakravarty, p. 85
168. Ibid., 16, 18-19
169. Sukranitisara, Ch. IV, Sec. vii, 11, 32-33; Chakravarty, p. 85
believe that such extreme care and thought were devoted to the training of troops in our period. The Ashramas of Vedic and epic period which served as centres of higher learning particularly in military science, are simply conspicuous by their absence. And that is the reason why one finds no counter measures having been evolved against the new tactics and techniques of field-craft introduced by the Turks inspite of their having repeatedly used familiar tactics and defeated the Indian armies, more than once from the times of Jaipāla Shāhī to the second battle of Tarain. No experiences were accumulated, no crops of wisdom reaped and consequently battles were lost at the hands of the enemy deft in exploiting old, gimmicks.

Infantry, the most numerous arm was allowed to rot as a secondary and inferior force. With its ready availability and comparatively cheaper cost of maintenance, it could have easily been developed as the kernel of armies like those of the legendary phalanx and the legion of the Romans, and would have, thereby, reduced all the pressure on the elephantry and the cavalry. The idea was not altogether missing when we find stray references to the colligation in fighting (Chapter XI), but the Indians failed to grasp the true significance of the idea and refused to be effected and rejuvenated by the winds of change.

Slave of traditions the Indians appear to have neither understood nor appreciated the strands and more so the new principles of war. Over-confident, arrogant and ostentatious they allowed themselves to be surprised and inspite of

169A. Saxena, K.S., Political History of Kashmir, pp. 294-95
170. Shrivastava, A.L., p. 85
of enemy being close at hand "fell into a holiday mood and
passed the night in merry making." The enemy appeared, more
than once, so suddenly that the Capital towns had to be
abandoned without even a show of resistance. Steeped in the
slumber of passivity never did they wrest initiative from the
hands of the enemy and allowed destruction and devastation of
the land with immunity. With huge armies, they did not know
how to deliver a strong punch upon decisive points and at the
most critical and opportune moment (Chapter XI - Concentration
of Effort). With the traditions of fighting joint-operations
dating back to the remote antiquity, they failed to imbibe the
simplest of axioms of warfare i.e. co-operation, and squandered
their energies by fighting more of individual but simultaneous
battles on the same battle-field with the semblance of combined
operations and least of co-ordinated and co-operative action.
They would throw into battle all the troops under their command
at one and the same time, without holding Reserves for decisively
influencing the outcome of battles by the use of "Economy of
force," as the one major principle of war. Time and again the
enemy would harass them, and annihilate them by fielding fresh
troops when they were fully weary and exhausted. The Indian
armies of our age being ponderous and slow could neither match
the mobility of Turkish forces and flexibility of their plans.

171. Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 298
173. Elphinstone, p. 331, Tarikh Yamini (Elliot & Dowson),
    Vol. II, pp. 25-26
174. Rjistanarangini, VII 49-59
175. Elliot & Dowson, Vol.II, p.23; Sarkar, pp. 36-37
176. Mohammad Habib, Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin, p. 71
nor did they take care to secure their movements and allowed themselves to be destroyed by the wanton attacks of their sturdy and impetuous adversaries. The instances are not altogether lacking when the kings had been defeated before their senior and outstanding commanders could even arrive on the scene of battle.

With no inferior weaponry of war, crores of people lakhs of men in arms, all the mighty elephants and adequate number of war-animals, hundreds of conqueror's of the quarters and scores of Prithvinath, Bhunathas and Narnathas, the "smiling plains, the dune covered arid plateaus, the populous cities with fabulous riches" were allowed to be attacked dozens of time and the "whole land was laid waist, the temples demolished, the idols smashed or carried away into an alien land, the cities sacked and burnt." The Indian princes that fought and lost came to grief primarily due to causes that were socio-political in setting but essentially military in nature and effect.

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177. Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p.49
179. Chakravarty, p. 193
180. Dwivedi, Hariharn Nivas, Dilli ke Tomar (Hindi), p. 304