INTRODUCTION

The origin of the word 'history' is 'istoria' in Greek, and 'historia' in Latin meaning 'learning by inquiry'. The root meaning of 'history' is 'first hand inquiry'. In Arabic history is called 'Tarikh' which has its root in w - r - Kh. The meaning of Tarikh would be "fixing of the month". The meaning can be interpreted as "fixing the period of an event, history" and "fixing of dates, era, chronology". (1)

From the antiquity man has always been interested in recalling the past, though not strictly in writing. History was merely presentation of truth. It was not meant to entertain the posterity or teach lessons to them. (2) Practical needs of preserving genealogies, chronicles and particular events of public and private life in comparatively more advanced stage of human civilization led to their recording. The idea of history has changed from time to time. There is vast gulf between the mythical history of early ages to the scientific seeking of truth, in the modern age. History is the presentation of past events in a manner appealing to men. History is not merely history of conquest and bloodshed but it is interpretation of society and culture of the people. (3) Until 18th century, history was essentially connected with texts. Fustel de colonges remarked that "where texts are lacking, there is no history, that the concept of history is indissolubly bound up with that

(2) Shotwell: Intro to His, PP. 9-11.
(3) Sarkar: His of His, P.1.
Ilm-al-Tarikh or Muslim historiography is certainly a part of Muslim culture. Though Muslim historiography began with the birth of Islam, history writing was one of the earliest disciplines cultivated by the Arabs. In Pre-Islamic days, Arabs were akin to recording events in their day to day life. These events included their internal tribal skirmishes, various legends and anecdotes 'such as breaking of the Ma'arib dam, the digging of the Zamzam well and the expedition of the 'owners of the elephant' (Koran 105). The tales of tribal wars, important events, genealogical tables of individuals and tribes were retained orally in the form of ballads and songs, which immediately after their composition spread like wild fire from end to end of the desert.

After the death of the Prophet, the interest of his followers in collecting his sayings (traditions) as well as in preserving family genealogies, the precedence of one tribe to another in embracing Islam for obtaining government grants, gave rise to another type of historical composition, complete with the chain of narrators, known as Hadith-writing. In the works which followed this form of presentation, "each event was related in the words of eye-witnesses or contemporaries and transmitted to the final narrator, the author through a chain of intermediary reporters".

According to Hitti, this principle

(3) Ibid.
of recording known as "Usul-i-Isnad" meet the most essential requirements of modern historiography." (1)

The early Arab historian had an impartial, independent approach. They were not dominated by Persian, Syrian or Roman histories. 'They were very rarely official historians who recorded 'his masters' voice'.....Generally speaking, the Arab historians wrote not as court chroniclers but as persons with noble tastes, for the instruction of their countrymen and though at times influenced by religious or patriotic bias, their general impartiality is a striking feature of their work." (2) Exactitude was the main criteria of such writing and dating to the month and day were insisted upon. Chronology is the backbone of history. Without chronological data history becomes vague narration of events having no relation with each other. Hence detailed and accurate chronology is essential for understanding history. Arabs had a greater sense of chronology than Europeans. As Buckle pointed out, while "the practice of dating events did not start in Europe even before 1597 A.D", the Arab historians marked their narrations with year, month and even the day. "The historical literature of the Muhammedans in all countries have been vast and varied and well-furnished with dates. We therein get a solid basis for historical study." (4) A large portion of the literary output of Islamic people consists of historical writing. Islamic historiography is "an expression of strong sense of tradition, (3)

(1) Hitti (Tr.). The origin of Islamic State, Intro, P.3.  
(2) Margoliouth as cited by Sarker: His of His, P.71.  
(3) Buckle as cited by Sarker: His of His, P.73.  
(4) Sarker: India through the ages, P.51, See also. Duff, The Chronology, PP.3-4 (Preface).
consciousness of past glories and awareness of the fundamental
unity and privileged position of the Islamic Community, analogous
to the medieval European conception of Christendom". (1) Muslim
writers nurtured a greater interest in history and their insistence
on precise chronology was the outcome of their origin in a reli-
gion which itself had a historical background. The holy Quran
itself is full of warnings and lessons from the past history.

With the rapid spread of Islam and extension of its
temporal power during the first few centuries, Arabic Language
came out of the confines of desert land of Arabia and held its sway
over the stately court of Persia. It overshadowed the Persian
language and became court language of Persia. Henceforth, Persian
literature suffered a setback in its home land itself, and all
contemporary literature including history writing began to be
produced in Arabic. Now Arab method of history writing was different
from Persian way of writing history. The Persian historian,
greatly overawed by Sassanian glory and splendour, recorded nothing
but the history of the court and camp. He observed history from the
footsteps of the throne, and arranged events according to the
successive reigns of the Kings. Arab historian unlike his Persian
counterpart, did not write history with the king projected as the
centre of all historical developments of the time. Arab historian’s
canvas was wide enough to depict history in all its social and
cultural aspects. His chronicle did not begin with the birth of
a ruler and passing through his accession, military achievements,
and territorial expansions terminated at his death. For him

history was a record of continuous developments and changes in all spheres of life. The spirit of history was the depiction of all trends in the social and cultural life of the people. So the account of an Arab historian was arranged in a year by year sequence. Tarikh-i-Tabari and Ibn-i-Athir are good examples of this type of historiography.

The vehicle of history writing by the Muslims was Arabic in the first few centuries of Islam. Even Persian writers used Arabic as their medium. Historiography in Persian on the pattern set by Arab historians was unknown till 963 A.D. when Balami completed his abridged translation of Tarikh-i-Tabari. Though Arabs conquered Persia politically but were themselves conquered by the Persians culturally. Al-Masudi (d 956 A.D) introduced a new method in history writing in Arabic. Instead of a year-wise arrangement of events, he grouped them under Kings, dynasties and gave them topics. (1) The revival of Persian as a literary medium began under the Tahirids in the 10th century A.D. Khudai-Namak (The book of Kings) served as a model and source book of Firdausi who based his Shahnamah on this. (2) With the Persian renaissance, Persian became the Court language and simultaneously a great change came into the field of historiography. A search was made into the ancient lore of Persian to find a new path. Subsequently, Arab method of writing 'history of the age' gave way to the 'history of kings'. As Muslim conquests extended to Anatolia in the

(2) Vide Sarkar! His of His, P.12.
West and India in the East, they carried the Persian language to their new homes. The rulers of the Turkish birth, in the following centuries contributed much to the progress of Persian, for they were quite ignorant of Arabic and had adapted Persian culture and language. From the 6th. century A.H. (12th. century A.D) Persian historiography took an expeditious turn, and books were written on wide range. The Mongol incursion, resulting in the sack of Baghdad, sounded a death-knell to Arabic, in the Perso-Turkish zone, where it had held the sway so long. A growing interest was shown towards Persian. Historical literature in Persian grew in bulk. In the beginning of the 13th. century A.D. we find histories began to be written in Persian in all countries from India to Asia Minor.

New developments in ideas of history and its objectivity were introduced in the 13th century, Rashiduddin Fazlullah (1247-1318 A.D), the author of the famous Jami-ut-Tawarikh had his own views on history and historiography. "The essential condition for a historian is that he should write the history of each people according to their own claims and should express no opinion of his own concerning them either in exaggeration or palliation whether they be true or false he must set them down exactly in accordance with the intention and claim of each people so that responsibility for exaggeration or palliation, for truth or falsehood, may rest upon their intentions and not upon the historian." (1)

Muslim rule in India served as a seminal age for history writing in Persian. Numerous works both in prose and poetry in different styles were produced. The Turko-Afghan rulers of India showed greater awareness to historical writing than the Hindu rulers of Pre-Muslim India. History-writing was unknown in Hindu India either as an art or as a science. The sanskrit word for 'history' is 'Itihasa' which really means 'This had happened', (Iti-Ha-asa). Yet, hardly any historical writing from ancient India has reached us. Apart from the grand legends of mythical kings in a golden era, there is no historical work in true sense of the term. In the mythological tales there is no drawing line between facts and legends, and they are completely devoid of chronological sense. The first historical work that we come across in India is Kalhana's Rajatarangini completed in A.D. 1148-9. Kashmir is the only part in India where historical writings flourished in Pre-Moghul times. The literature of Hindu India containing historical elements do not fulfil the requirements of histories proper. They may be regarded as quasi-historical or annalistic literature, but their value is immense from the social and cultural view point, as they provide greater details of social and cultural life of the times. They also work as supplement or check to political histories. There are also inscriptions and plates which may be called the raw materials of history.

It is a well-known fact that Muslims made a greater contribution to intellectual history of India by introducing history-writing on the lines of critical analysis of facts. Indeed, historiography was a novel gift to India from the Persianised Turko-Afghan rulers, 'The plethora of historical chronicles in medieval
India," writes Sarkar, "is in striking contrast to their paucity in the early period." (1) To quote Dodwell, "The advent of Islam begins a great series of Indian chronicles. Whereas Hindu history is a matter of archaeology, scrappy and almost incoherent, Muslim history possesses a wealth of documents which render it, if not complete at least intelligible..... The Muslim period is one of vivid living men whereas the Hindu period is one of shadows." (2) Indeed, Indian contribution to Persian literature both in form and context is too great to be ignored. From the very beginning of the Ghaznavid rule, the cultural gap between India and Persia was cemented by a strong binding force provided by Persian language. The influence of Persian culture was great on Indian civilization. After the Ghaznavids, under the liberal patronage of successive Muslim dynasties the cultural synthesis kept on developing. In expectations of finding better scope for their literary pursuits and threatened by Mongol in roads in their homeland, men of letters migrated in groups to India. The tremendous bulk of literary treasure produced in India during Muslim rule may be accounted for the Mongol scourge, subsequent upheavals in its make in West Asian Countries, migration of a large number of literary personnels to India, who were destined to play a great role in moulding the cultural pattern of Indo Muslim Society. Barani gives a long list of historians, poets, theologians, lawyers and learned men of the times under each ruler he deals with, in his Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi. Their writings were not restricted to mere historical

(1) His of His, P.10.
compositions. A person well-versed in one branch of learning was equally conversant in other arts. We find historian, poet, theologian all rolled in one person, for in those days people did not specialise in only one branch of learning. Their learning and writing was vast and encyclopaedic in nature. We have Minhaj-us-Siraj, Khusrau and Barani as examples.

The Turko-Afghan rulers of medieval India were much interested in history-writing. History writing was the outcome of practical needs of the rulers. For laying foundations of a new rule in an alien land and organising state-machinery, books were needed on state craft and chronicles. Medieval India was rich in historical literature on account of the liberal patronage of the rulers, who wanted their military achievements to be sung and eulogised. Barring one or two, most of them possessed fine literary taste and quite a few of them tried their hand in literary compositions. Firuz Shah Tughluq, for example, wrote the brochure known as Futuhat-i-Firuz Shahi and a few other works which are unfortunately extinct today. Fragments of Muhammed bin Tughluq's memoir have survived to this date. (1) The rulers' interests are the barometer of the cultural activities of the times. Hence, keen interest of the rulers in literature resulted in the downpour of literary works in almost all branches of learning. History writing could not escape this trend. We find greater number of historical works produced during Firuz Shah's reign compared to his predecessors.

The Sultanate period was a period of struggles and wars. There were constant uprisings of the native chiefs and Mussalman nobles as well. The king was engaged in suppressing the uprisings, and setting on expeditions quite often, for territorial expansions. These military activities had to be recorded by the Court historians who accompanied the rulers on expeditions. (1) The historians recorded the events, wrote fathnamahs, and congratulatory odes on coronations. "It will be a revelation to many to find", says Ghani, "that India of the Pre-Moghul era was at par with Persia, and many a Persian poet of repute came to India and learnt poetry in its Indian setting. Even the best poets of Persian took their cue from the poets that arose in Punjab, which remained for centuries the radiating centre of Persian culture in the east." (2)

Diverse types of historical compositions were produced in prose and poetry to form a distinctive historical literature. The works produced in the early sultanate period constituting the Indo-Muslim historiography have been grouped in six broad categories. (3)

(1) Artistic forms of History, As for example, Hasan Nizami's Taj-ul-Maathir, written in rhymed flowery prose, interspersed with Arabic and Persian pieces of poetry. It records the events of Md. Ghori's invasion of India, Sultan Qutubuddin and the early period of Iltutmish's reign.

(1) It may be remembered in this connection that Khusror was taken prisoner by Mongols in the battle between Khan Shahid, elder son of Balban and Mongols.
(2) Pre-Moghul Persian, Preface, P.XX.
(3) Sarkar: His of His, P.33, for details See, Phillips (ed), Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, PP.115-125.
2. Histories written in the form of geneological tables:
As for example Fakhr-i-Mudabbir's Tarikh-i-Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah. This is a universal history dealing with 137 geneological tables, praise of God, the Prophet, four Orthodox Caliphs, a short account of Qutubuddin Aibak, and various geographical, cosmological and ethnographical data.

3. General History of the Muslim world:
As for example Minhaj-us-Siraj's Tabaqat-i-Nasiri (on the pattern set by Al-Tabari, Al Dinawari and Al-Yaqubi). It deals with the early Muslim rulers of Central Asia, extension of their rule in India - from Md. Ghori to Sultan Nasiruddin of the slave dynasty.

4. Eulogistic History:
As for example:
(i) Amir Khusrau's Tarikh-i-Alai or Khazainul-Futuh. It deals with the campaigns of Malik Kafur, the Lieutenant of Alauddin Khalji in Southern India, narrated in very ornate prose.
(ii) Shams Siraj Afif's Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi. It deals with almost the entire period of Firuz Shah Tughluq, his benevolent rule works of public utility and general prosperity of the country.
(iii) Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi by an anonymous writer. It deals with Firuz Shah's expedition of Jajnagar, his contribution to arts and science and other works of public utility.
5. The Didactic type of History:-

6. Autobiographical Memoirs:-
As for example Futuhat-i-Firuz Shahi, engravings made on the walls of Kushak-i-Shikar, on the dome of Kushak-i-Nazal and minaret of the stone mansion at Firuzabad, at the dictates of Firuz Shah himself which were later collected in book form. It deals with his achievements, administrative and social reforms.

The present work is a review on the above-mentioned eight histories, written in Persian prose in India during the early period of Muslim rule (A.D. 1206 - 1388 ) from the foundation of Muslim rule in India to Firuz Shah of the Tughluq dynasty.
Each book has been dealt in a separate chapter constituting the life of the author, summary of contents, literary and historical criticism.

As the personal history of an author, e.g. his family background, education, official attachments, character, social status, attainments, and failures in life affect his outlook and nature of his performance to a great extent; every aspect of the personal life of each author under review has been discussed. It is of great help in understanding his ideology, attitude and approach to history. The life of the author is followed by the subject-matter of the work, the summary of each chapter and sub-chapter in a nutshell, a discussion on its language and style, and critical estimate of it, wherein the worth and the extent of its performance as a work of history has been evaluated.