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# NCERT Class 7<sup>th</sup> History Summary

## Chapter 1

# Tracing Changes Through a Thousand Years

The period from the second half of the 8th century up to first half of the 18th century is known as the “medieval period” of Indian history.

The maps by Arab geographer Al-Idrisi (1154) and French cartographer (1720) give a large sketch of the Indian subcontinent as known as earlier times.

Science of cartography, however, was different in two time periods.

### **New and Old Terminologies**

- Historical records exist in a variety of languages.
- The term Hindustan was coined by Minhaj-i-Siraj, a chronicler who wrote in Persian for areas around Punjab, Haryana,
- and the lands between the Ganga and the Yamuna.
- Babur used Hindustan to describe the flora and fauna and the culture of the inhabitants of the subcontinent.
- Fourteenth-century poet Amir Khusrau used the word, Hind.
- In Hindi, the term ‘pardesi’ was used to describe an alien. In Persian, it was called ‘ajnabi’.

### **Historians and their Sources**

- The information about the medieval period is derived from two sources: Archaeological and Literary.
- Archaeological sources available to us include monuments, temples, coins, tombs, ornaments and paintings.
- Since paper became available in good quantum, a lot of written accounts in the form of chronicles, autobiographies,
- farmaans and accounts of foreign travellers are available from this period in Persian and Arabic.

### **New Social and Political Group**

- The study of the thousand years between 700 and 1750 is a huge challenge to historian largely because of the scale and variety of developments that occurred over the period.
- It was a period of great mobility. One such group of people was Rajputs. Other groups of warriors were Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Ahoms and Kayasthas.
- Throughout the period there was a gradual clearing of forests and the extension of agriculture. Challenges in their habitat forced many forest-dwellers to migrate.

- As society became more differentiated people were grouped into jatis or sub castes and ranked on the basis of their backgrounds and their occupations.
- Ranks were not fixed permanently and varied according to the power, influence and resources controlled by the members of the jati.
- A major development of this period was the emergence of the idea of bhakti.
- The teachings of the Holy Quran was also brought to India in the seventh century.
- Followers of Islam were divided into two sub sects—'Shias' and 'Sunnis'.
- At different moments in this period, new technologies made their appearance, like Persian wheel in irrigation, the spinning wheel in weaving and firearms in combat. New foods and beverages also arrived in the subcontinent in this period.

## Regions and Empires

- Large states like those of the Cholas, the Tughlaqs, or the Mughals encompassed many regions.
- A Sanskrit prashsti that praises Delhi Sultan Balban tells that he was the ruler of a vast empire that stretched from Bengal in the east to Ghazni in Afghanistan in the west and included all of South India (Dravida).
- There were considerable conflicts between various states.
- When the Mughal Empire declined in the 18th century, it led to the re-emergence of regional states.

## Old and New Religions

- Religion was often closely associated with the social and economic organization of local communities.
- It was during the period that important changes occurred in religion. It included the worship of new deities, construction of temples by royalty and the growing importance of Brahmanas in the Hindu religion.
- Knowledge of Sanskrit helped Brahmins to earn respect.
- Islam was patronized by many rulers.

## Historical Periods

- The British historians divided the history of India into three periods: Hindu, Muslim and British.
- Most historians look to economic and social factors to characterize the major elements of different moments of the past.
- The life of hunter-gatherers, early farmers and early empires were called early societies.
- The growth of imperial state formations, development of Hinduism and Islam as major religions and the arrival of
- European trading companies were called the medieval period.
- The last era was called the modern period which carried a sense of material progress and intellectual development.
- Prosperity during this period brought European trading companies to India.

Maps are the sources through which we can trace out the historical changes and contexts.

Cartographers were the skilled artists who recorded these chronological effects in Maps.

The mode of presentation and the contexts vary through time. The maps of 1154 CE are not the same as the maps of the 1720s, e.g. one can see the maps given in NCERT Textbook on pages 1 and 2. Both the maps show the same location but with a lot of variations. Even the names of the places are spelt differently.

Historical records are available in different languages. Differences are also traced in the use of grammar and vocabulary, change in meaning also occurred over time, e.g., the term Hindustan is now 'India'.

The term Hindustan was first used by Minhaj-i Siraj, a Persian chronicler, in the 13th century.

Minhaj-i Siraj's Hindustan constituted the areas of Punjab, Haryana and the lands between the Ganga and Yamuna. The term was used in a political sense for lands forming the parts of the dominions of the Delhi Sultan. South India was not included in this map.

Babur, in the early 16th century, used the term Hindustan in order to describe the geography, the fauna and the culture of the inhabitants of the subcontinent. Amir Khusrau used the term Hind in a similar sense in the 14th century.

With the change of time, we observe that the idea of a geographical and cultural entity like 'India' did exist but the term Hindustan did not carry the political and national meanings which we associate with it today.

We trace out many changes in the use of words with the change of time. For example, the word 'foreigner' is used in the sense of one who is not an Indian, whereas it was, in the medieval period, used in the sense of one who was a part of the same village but not a part of a particular society or culture. The synonymous words for 'foreigner' in Hindi and Persian are 'pardesi and 'ajnabi' respectively.

Historians use different sources to study the past depending upon the period of their investigation. Coins, inscriptions, architecture and textual records are still the basic sources.

During the period of 700 to 1750, we trace out a dramatic increase in the variety of textual records. Its basic reason was that paper gradually became cheaper and more widely available. It was extensively used in writing the holy texts, chronicles of rulers, letters and teachings of saints, petitions and judicial records, and for registers of accounts and taxes.

Manuscripts collected from wealthy people, rulers, monasteries and temples were placed in libraries and archives. These manuscripts and documents helped the historians with several detailed information though it is difficult to use them.

As there was no printing press in those days scribes used to copy down manuscripts by hand. Hence they were somewhere not very legible. Some changes in words and sentences were also made, in fact not knowingly, in the manuscripts while copying. This brought the same

manuscripts copied presented differently by different scribes. It poses a serious problem to determine which the original one was.

The authors used to revise their chronicles from time to time. Ziyauddin Barani, a 14th century author revised his chronicle for the first time in 1356 followed by another version two years later. In fact, the two versions differed from each other but as the original one was traceless, nobody could claim for the difference.

The period between 700 and 1750 was a phase of transition as a lot of developments took place. The Persian wheel in irrigation, the spinning wheel in weaving and firearms in combat were some of the examples of developments.

The subcontinent saw new food like potatoes, corn, chillies, tea and coffee.

The new technologies and crops came along with the migrants who also brought other ideas with them.

It was a period of economic, political, social and cultural changes and also of great mobility.

People travelled to far off lands to make their fortune.

Rajputs, i.e. Rajputs, one of the prominent communities were the group of warriors between the eighth and fourteenth centuries. They were the 'kshatriyas' by caste status. They included the rulers, chieftains, soldiers and commanders serving in the armies of the different monarchs all over the subcontinent. Extreme valour and a great sense of loyalty were the prominent qualities of this community.

Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Ahoms and Kayasthas (a caste of scribes and secretaries) were the other prominent classes of people.

This period witnessed a gradual clearing of forests and the extension of agriculture. It caused changes in people's 'habitat' which forced many of the forest-dwellers to migrate.

Some others adopted tilling the land and became peasants and soon became part of large complex societies. They were also put under tax cover as per their status which gave rise to many jatis i.e. sub-castes.

The divisions of sub-castes were made on the basis of their backgrounds and occupations. Ranks were variable as per the change in power, influence and resources controlled by members of the jati. This status of the same jati varied from area to area.

Jatis had their own system of ruling. They framed rules and regulations in order to manage their own people. An assembly of elders called Jati Panchayat was responsible for enforcing the regulations.

Jatis were bound to follow the rules of their villages. Villages constituted only one small unit of a state and were governed by a chieftain.

The subcontinent was divided into several regions which were ruled by empires of different dynasties. By 700 several regions developed their distinct geographical dimensions and their own cultural characteristics.

During the period of 700 and 1750 (the thousand years of history that we are exploring here) there were significant developments in religious traditions.

The changes were seen in people's beliefs. Hinduism saw a great many changes which included the worship of new deities the construction of temples by royalty and growing dominance of Brahmanas and the priests.

For their knowledge of Sanskrit texts Brahmanas earned great respect in society. The new rulers were their patrons.

The most significant development of the period was the rise of the idea of bhakti which also paved the rise of many new religions in the subcontinent.

The teachings of the holy Quran was brought to India in the seventh century by the migrants.

Quran is the most prominent holy book of the Muslims which delineates the idea of one God, Allah and His love, bounty and mercy for those who believe in Him.

Islam and the Ulema—the learned theologians and jurists were patronized by many rulers.

Like Hinduism, Islam was also interpreted in many ways and the followers of Islam were divided in two sub-sects—Shias and Sunnis.

For historians, time reflects changes in social and economic organization, in the persistence and transformation of ideas and beliefs. Hence for the historians, it becomes convenient to study time by dividing it into segments—periods—that possess shared characteristics.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the history of India was divided into three periods — Hindu, Muslim, and British. It was done so because there was no significant historical development other than religion.

This periodisation is followed by some of the historians even today.

**Cartographer:** The artist who is skilled in drawing or making maps. .

**Chronicler:** One who writes history or pens down the events of the time from the historical point of view.

**Archives:** A collection of historical documents or records of the government, a family, a place or an organization; the place where these records are stored.

**Manuscripts:** The original script written by the Author in his/her own handwriting.

**Habitat:** The living condition of specie.

**Patron:** A person with influence and affluence who provides support with money and mental boost up to an artist, a craftsman, a learned man, or a noble, or some other persons of such categories.

**Jati:** The sub-caste which was defined or identified on the basis of one's profession, status and influence.

**Region:** The particular area designated or occupied by a certain group or empire.

**Periodisation:** Division of time into different segments for the purpose of study from the historical point of view. It was done on the basis of dominant factors of the time. In the middle of the nineteenth century, British historians divided the history of India into three periods—Hindu, Muslim, and British.

**Seventh century AD** – The teachings of the holy Quran brought to India.

**1154** – Map of the Indian Subcontinent made by al-Idrisi.

**1266-1287** – Reign of the Delhi Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban.

**1356** – Ziyauddin Barani wrote his first chronicle. He wrote another version two years later.

# Chapter 2

## New Kings and Kingdoms

Several major ruling dynasties emerged in different parts of the subcontinent between the seventh and twelfth centuries.

### The Emergence of New Dynasties

- By the 7th century, there were big landlords or warrior chiefs in different regions of the subcontinent.
- Existing kings often acknowledged them as their samantas or subordinates.
- They were expected to bring gifts for their kings or overlords and provide them with military support.
- The main ruling dynasties were Gurjara-Pratiharas, Palas, Rashtrakutas and Chahamanas in North India and the Chola, Pandyas and Chalukyas in South India.

### Administration in the Kingdoms

- The kings at apex adopted big titles like Maharaja-adhiraja.
- The kings shared power with their samantas, and with an association of peasants, traders and Brahmanas.
- Resources were obtained from the producers who were persuaded to surrender part of what they produced.
- These resources were used to finance the king's establishment and construct temples and forts.
- Functionaries for collecting revenue were recruited from influential families.

### Prashastis and Land Grants

- Prashastis tells us how rulers wanted to depict themselves as valiant and victorious warriors.
- The kings often rewarded Brahmanas by grants of land. These were recorded on copper plates, which were given to those who received the land.

### Warfare for Wealth

- For centuries Gurjara-Pratihara, Rashtrakuta and Pala's dynasties fought for control over Kannauj.
- The long drawn conflict is known as a tripartite struggle as three parties were involved in it.
- Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni raided the subcontinent seventeen times between AD 1000—AD 1025. His sole purpose was to plunder the wealth of India. He looted temples like Somnath, Gujarat, Mahmud entrusted a scholar named al-Biruni to write an account of the subcontinent.



- Other kings engaged in warfare were Chauhan, who ruled over the region around Delhi and Ajmer.
- Chauhans were engaged in conflict with Chalukyas of Gujarat and the Gahadavalas of western UR  
Prithviraj III was a popular Chauhan ruler who defeated Afghan ruler Ghoris in 1191 but lost to him in 1192.

## The Cholas

- Cholas were from a small family of Uraiyur. The successors of Vijayalaya conquered neighbouring regions and the kingdom grew in size and power.
- Rajaraja I was considered the most powerful Chola ruler and expanded control over most of these areas.
- His son Rajendra I, conquered Sri Lanka and countries of Southeast Asia.
- Cholas were big temple builders. Two famous temples were in Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram.
- Agriculture was well developed along with various methods of irrigation.
- Settlements of peasants called or became prosperous with the spread of irrigation in agriculture. The village council and the Nadu performed several administrative functions
- Association of traders known as nagarams also performed administrative functions in the town.
- Inscriptions also mention about sabha. The Sabha had separate committees to look after irrigation works, gardens, temples, etc.

During the period of seventh and twelfth centuries, many new dynasties emerged in different parts of the subcontinent.

The new rulers were previously the big landlords or warriors working under the existing kings as subordinates or samantas. They gradually gained power and wealth and thereafter declared themselves to be maha-Samanta, maha-mandaleswar (the great lord of the circle or region). They were now independent lords.

Dantidurga, a Rashtrakuta chief, overthrew his Chalukya overlord and performed a ritual known as hiranya-garbha (literally, the golden womb). It was done in order to transform one's identity as kshatriya, even if one was not one by birth.

Some other lords like Kadamba Mayurashrman and Gurjara-Pratihara Harichandra, brahmanas by birth, used their military skills to establish their kingdoms in Karnataka and Rajasthan.

Many of these new kings adopted high-sounding titles like maharaja-adhiraja (great king, overlord of kings), tribhuvana-chakravartin (lord of the three worlds), though they shared power with their samantas as well as with associations of peasants, traders and Brahmanas.

The producers—the peasants, cattle-keepers, artisans—were the main feeders to these states. The land was owned by the lords and so the producers were compelled to pay rent to the owners whereas traders were to pay revenue to the lords.

These resources were used to finance the establishment of the king, construction of temples and forts, and also for fighting wars which were also done to expand resources through plundering, acquiring land and finding trade routes.

The revenue functionaries were recruited from influential families, and positions were often hereditary. Similar was the case with army positions. In most cases, such posts were held by the close relatives of the king.

Prashastis were composed by learned Brahmanas in praise of the rulers. It used to depict the rulers as valiant, victorious warriors.

Brahmanas were also rewarded by grants of land.

Kalhana's long poem in Sanskrit recorded the history of kings who ruled over Kashmir. He usually used a variety of sources, including, inscriptions, documents, eyewitness accounts, and earlier histories, in order to present his accounts.

Ruling Dynasties were based in a particular region.

Kanauj was a prized area in the Ganga valley. There was a tripartite struggle among Gurjara-Pratihara, Rashtrakuta and Pala dynasties over Kanauj.

Rulers used to build large temples in order to demonstrate their power and resources. So temples were the first target of when one ruler attacked over the other. One prominent reason for this was that the temples were often very rich.

Sultan Mahmud Ghazni of Afghanistan (997—1030) extended his control over parts of Central Asia, Iran and the north-western part of the subcontinent. During his attacks he targeted wealthy temples, of which the temple of Somnath in Gujarat was the most prominent.

Al-Baruni's Kitab al-Hind, an Arabic work written on the request of Sultan, is an important source for historians. al-Baruni also consulted the Sanskrit scholars while preparing this book.

Some other notable kings engaged in war were Chahamanas, later known as Chauhans, ruled over the region around Delhi and Ajmer and made efforts to expand their control to the west and the east. They were opposed by the Chalukyas of Gujarat and Gahadavalas of Uttar Pradesh.

Prithviraja III (1168-1192), who defeated an Afghan ruler Sultan Muhammad Ghor in 1191, but lost to him the very next year, in 1192, was the most popular of the Chahamanas.

Muttaraiyar, the subordinates to the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram, held power in the Kaveri

Vijayalaya, a member of the ancient chiefly family of the Cholas from Urair, captured the delta from the Muttaraiyar in the middle of the ninth century. The town of Thanjavur and a temple for goddess Nishumbhasudini there were some of his major creations.

Vijayalaya's successors expanded their kingdom in size and power adding the Pandyan and the Pallava territories to the south and north to their kingdom.

Rajraja I was the most famous and powerful Chola ruler who became king in 985 and thereafter expanded control over most of these areas. He was known also for his reorganization of the administration of his empire. His son Rajendra I also added to the glory of his father.

The big temples of Thanjavur and Gangaikonda-cholapuram, built by Rajaraja and Rajendra, are architectural marvels.

The temples of Cholas were the nuclei of settlements that grew around them. They were also centres of craft production and were also endowed with land by rulers as well as others.

The produce of the land were spared to maintain the specialists working at the temple and usually lived near it. They were the priests, garland makers, cooks, sweepers, musicians, dancers etc.

Temples were not only the place of worship but they were the hub of economic, social and cultural life as well.

The making of bronze images of the deities was the most distinctive of the crafts associated with the temples. Chola bronze images are still considered the best in the world.

The development of agriculture contributed much to the achievements of the Cholas.

Although agriculture had developed earlier in other parts of Tamil Nadu, it was only from the fifth or sixth century that this area was opened up for large scale cultivation.

Forests had to be cleared in some areas while land had to be levelled in some other regions.

Embankments were built to prevent flood and canals were constructed to carry water to the fields. In many areas two crops were grown in a year.

A variety of methods like digging of wells, placing huge tanks were used for irrigation.

Most of the new rulers, as well as people living in villages, were actively involved in these activities.

The administration of the empires was also well organized. Ur, the settlement of peasants grew prosperous with the spread of irrigation agriculture. Groups of such villages formed larger units called nadu performed several administrative functions including dispensing justice and collecting taxes.

Rich peasants of the Vellala caste controlled over the affairs of the nadu under the supervision of the central Chola government. Some rich landowners were honoured with the titles like Vendavelan (a velan or peasant serving three kings) Araiayar (chief) etc. and they were also entrusted with important offices of the state at the centre.

As Brahmanas often received land grants or brahmadeya, a large number of Brahmana settlements emerged in the Kaveri valley as in other parts of south India. Each brahmadeya was looked after by an assembly or sabha of prominent Brahmana landholders which worked efficiently. Their decisions were recorded in detail in inscriptions on the stone of walls of temples.

Associations of traders known as nagarams also occasionally performed administrative functions in towns.

Inscriptions from Uttaramerur in Chingleput district, Tamil Nadu, tell us the way in which the sabha was organised. There were separate committees to look after different works like that of irrigation, temples, etc. The allocation of work was decided through a lottery system.

**Samantas:** The subordinates of kings or overlords who used to bring gifts for their kings or overlords.

**Maha-Samanta or Maha-mandaleshwara:** The Samantas who gained power and wealth declared themselves Maha-Mahabaleshwar or Maha-samantas i.e. the great lord of a circle or region.

**Maharaja-adhiraja:** A high sounding title used for great king, overlord.

**Tribhuvan-chakravartin:** Lord of the three worlds.

**Rent:** The part of the product that the producers—the peasants, cattle-keepers, artisans- were compelled to pay to the lords.

**Revenue:** The tax traders had to pay to their lords.

**Prashastis:** A literary composition often in verse written in praise of the ruler depicting him as a valiant, victorious warrior. It was mainly done by the Brahmanas who were often rewarded by grants of land for such jobs. This reward was recorded on copper plates and given to those who received the land.

**Sultan:** An Arabic term used for the ruler.

**Ur:** Settlements of peasants.

**Nadu:** Group of Urs i.e. villages formed a large unit called Nadu.

**Brahmadeya:** The land given to the Brahmanas as a grant.

**Vellanvagai:** The land of non Brahmana peasant proprietors.

**Shalabhoga:** The land for the maintenance of a school.

**Devadana/Tirunamattukkani:** The land gifted to temples.

**Pallichchhandam:** The land donated to Jaina institutions.

**Nagarams:** Associations of traders.

**Sabha:** The assembly of Brahmanas.

**7th century** – Rise of the new dynasties.

**Mid-eighth century** – Rise of Rashtrakuta chief as Kshatriya.

**1168-1192** – Prithviraja III ruled over the regions around Delhi.

**1191** – Prithviraja III defeated Muhammad Ghori.

**1192** – Prithviraja III lost a battle and was finished by Muhammad Ghori.

**985** – Rajaraja I became a great Chola ruler.

**5th/6th century** – The area of Tamil Nadu was opened up for large scale cultivation.

# Chapter 3

## The Delhi Sultans

Delhi first became the capital of a kingdom under the Tomara Rajputs, who were defeated by Chauhan (also called Chahamanas) of Ajmer.

The transformation of Delhi into a capital that controlled a vast area of the subcontinent started with the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate at the beginning of the 13th century.

### Rulers of Delhi

**Tomars:** Early 12th century 1165.

**Chauhans:** 1165-1192 Prithviraj Chauhan: 1175-1192  
Under the Tomaras and Chauhans, Delhi became an important commercial centre.

**Slave Dynasty:** 1206-1290

In 1236, Razia, the daughter of Sultan Iltutmish, became the Sultan of Delhi. She was removed from the throne in 1240.

**Khilji Dynasty:** 1290-1320

External frontier was the next phase of expansion which started with Alauddin Khilji in southern India. Alauddin Khilji, the most important ruler of Khilji dynasty, introduced the system of market control and administrative measures in order to maintain a large standing army.

**Tughlaq Dynasty:** 1320-1414

External frontier culminated with Muhammad-bin-Tughluq and he introduced three projects Shifting of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, the introduction of token currency, raising the land tax in the Doab region to fifty per cent all of which failed and weakened his position.

**Sayyid Dynasty:** 1414-1451 (It was the only Shia dynasty)

**Lodi Dynasty:** 1451-1526

### Finding out about the Delhi Sultans

- Inscriptions, coins and architecture provide a lot of information.
- Further valuable sources are 'histories', Tarikh (singular)/tawarikh (plural), written in Persian, the language of administration under the Delhi Sultans.
- The authors of tawarikh were learned men; secretaries administrators, poets and courtiers who both recounted events and advised rulers on governance, emphasizing the importance of the just rule.

## From Garrison Town to Empire

- In the early 13th century the control of the Delhi Sultans rarely went beyond heavily fortified towns occupied by garrisons.
- Delhi's authority was challenged by Mongols and by governors who rebelled at any sign of the Sultan's weakness.
- The expansion of Delhi Sultanate took place under the reign of Balban, Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad- Bin-Tughlaq.

## Administration and Consolidation

- To have reliable governors the early Delhi Sultans, especially Iltutmish' favoured their special slaves purchased for military service called 'Bandage' in Persian.
- The Khiljis and Tughluqs continued to use Bandage and also raised people of humble birth, who were their clients, to high positions like governors and generals.
- The Khiljis and Tughluqs appointed military commanders as governors of territories of varying sizes.
- These lands were called iqta and their holder was called muqti or iqtadar. The duty of muqtis was to lead military campaigns and maintain law and order in their iqtas.
- In return, muqtis collected the revenues of their assignments as salary. They also paid their soldiers from this revenue.
- Under Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad, Tughluq accountants were appointed to check the amount collected by the muqtis.
- As Delhi Sultans brought the hinterland of the cities under their control, they forced the samants and the rich landlords to accept their authority.
- The attack of Mongols under Genghis Khan forced Khiljis and Tughluqs to mobilise a large standing army in Delhi.

## The Sultanate in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

- The Tughluq, the Sayyid and Lodi dynasties ruled from Delhi and Agra until 1526.
- By then Jaunpur, Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajasthan and entire South India had Independent rulers who had established flourishing states and prosperous capitals.
- New ruling dynasties like the Afghans and Rajputs also arose during the period.
- In 1526, Mughals established their empire.
- Sher Shah Suri challenged and defeated the Mughal emperor Humayun. He captured Delhi and established his own dynasty. Although, he ruled for only fourteen years (1540-1555) but his administration became the model followed by the great Mughal emperor Akbar (1556-1605), when he consolidated the Mughal Empire.

Delhi became the capital of a kingdom under the Tomara Rajputs.

It was only under the rule of the Tomars and Chauhans that Delhi flourished as an important commercial centre.

The city was inhabited by many Jaina merchants who also constructed a number of temples.

Delhi Sultanate played the most vital role in the transformation of Delhi into a capital which controlled vast areas of the subcontinent.

Inscriptions, coins and architecture provide a lot of information but especially significant are “histories”, Tarikh (singular)/tawarikh (plural), written in Persian, the language of administration under Delhi Sultan.

Tawarikh were written by learned men, secretaries, administrators, poets, and courtiers who lived in cities (mainly Delhi). They were written for the Sultans with anticipation of rich rewards. They also advised rulers on governance, emphasizing the importance of just rule based on birthright and gender distinctions, not shared by everyone.

Raziyya, the daughter of Sultan Iltutmish, became the Sultan of Delhi in 1236 but she was dethroned only in 1240 only for being a woman and was unacceptable to the nobles. Even a famous chronicler of the age, Minhaj-i Siraj, recognized her as more able than all her brothers but was not comfortable with her, only for her being a lady.

In the early thirteenth century, there was no significant expansion of Delhi beyond heavily fortified town occupied by garrisons, it was only during the reigns of Ghiyasuddin Balban, Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq that Delhi saw expansion for the first time.

The expansion was initiated with the internal frontier. Forests were cleared in the Ganga-Yamuna doab and hunter-gatherers and pastoralists expelled from their habitats and these lands were given to the peasants in order to promote agriculture. Regional trades were also promoted.

External frontier was the next phase of expansion which started with Alauddin Khalji in southern India and culminated with Muhammad Tughluq.

The armies of Delhi Sultanate had marched across a large part of the subcontinent till the reign of Muhammad Tughluq. They defeated rivals, seized cities. The Sultanate collected taxes from the peasantry.

The early Delhi Sultans favoured the appointment of their slaves purchased for military service as governors to control the administration of the vast empire. These slaves were totally dependent upon their master and so they were more reliable and trustworthy. They were called bandagan in Persian.

The Khaljis and Tughluqs continued the use of bandagan and also raised people of humble birth, usually their clients, to high positions and appointed them as generals and governors. However, this also gave rise to political instability as there was often a conflict for succession.

This system was criticised by the elites and authors of tawarikh, because for them the new high class people were in fact ‘low and base-born’.



Khalji and Tughluq monarchs, like their predecessors, appointed military commanders as governors of territories of varying sizes. These territories were called iqta and their holders were called iqtadar or muqti.

Muqtis were responsible for leading their military campaigns and maintaining their iqtas.

Accountants were appointed by the state to check the amount of revenue collected by muqtis who were not allowed to collect revenue more than that prescribed by the state nor were they allowed to keep soldiers more than the number prescribed by the state.

Delhi Sultans had complete control over the hinterland of the cities, and so the samanta aristocrats were forced to accept their authority. During Alauddin Khalji's regime the state brought the assessment and collection of land revenue under its control.

There were three types of taxes : (1) on cultivation called kharaj and amounting to about 50 per cent of the peasant's produce; (2) on cattle; and (3) on houses.

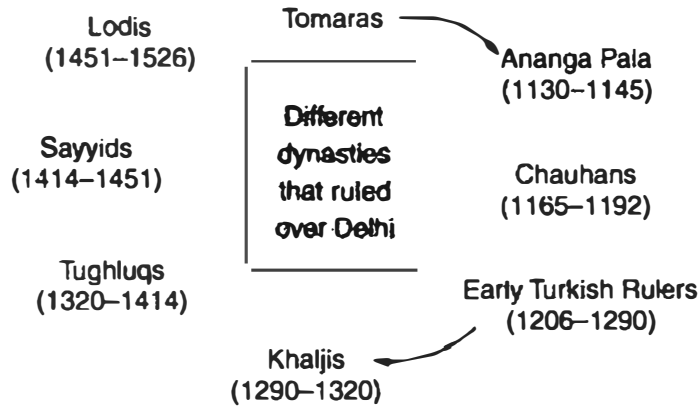
As the large part of the subcontinent was outside the control of Delhi Sultan, it was difficult to control distant provinces like Bengal from Delhi. Hence, soon after annexation of southern India, the entire region became independent. The local chieftains established their rule in these regions.

The Mongols led by Genghis Khan invaded Transoxiana in north-east Iran in 1219. Such attacks frequented during the reign of Alauddin Khalji and in the early days of Muhammad Tughluq's rule. This forced the two rulers to mobilize a large standing army in Delhi. It posed a huge administrative challenge.

After Tughluqs the Sayyid and Lodi dynasties ruled from Delhi and Agra until 1526. By that time Jaunpur, Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajasthan and entire south India had independent rulers who established flourishing states and prosperous capitals. It was during this period that some new ruling groups like the Afghans and the Rajputs emerged.

Some small but powerful and extremely well-administered states also emerged. Sher Shah Sur (1540—1545) was the most powerful of them all. He even challenged the Mughal emperor Humayun and captured Delhi. In a very short period of fifteen years (1540-1555), he introduced many reforms and a lot of welfare works. His administration became the model followed by the great emperor Akbar (1556—1605) when he consolidated the Mughal Empire.

## The Rulers of Delhi



**Dhaliwal:** The place where coins were minted.

**Tarikh:** History.

**Tawarikh:** Plural of Tarikh.

**Birthright:** It refers to the privileges claimed on account of the birth.

**Gender distinctions:** Social and biological differences between men and women.

**Hinterland:** It refers to the land adjacent to a city or port that supply it with goods and services.

**Garrison town:** It refers to a town which is fortified with soldiers.

**Mosque:** It is called a masjid in Arabic, and literarily means a place where a Muslim prostrates in reverence to Allah.

**Namaz:** It refers to the prayer offered by a Muslim.

**Imam:** The spiritual leader of the Muslims.

**Khutba:** Sermon.

**Client:** Someone who is under the protection of another, a dependent or hanger-on.

**Iqta:** The territories under the military commanders were known as iqta.

**Kharaj:** The tax on cultivation was known as Kharaj.

**Bandagan:** The early Delhi Sultans especially Iltutmish favoured their slaves purchased for military service. These slaves were known as bandagan in Persian.

**Early twelfth century – 1165:** Reign of Tomara Rajputs.

**1175-1192:** Reign of Prithviraj Chauhan.

**1206-1210:** Reign of Qutbuddin Aybak.

**1236:** Raziyya became Sultan.

**1240:** Raziyya was dethroned.

**1296-1316:** Reign of Alauddin Khalji.

**1324-1351:** Reign of Muhammad Tughluq.

**1351-1388:** Reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq.

**1414-1421:** Reign of Khizr Khan belonging to Sayyid dynasty.

**1451-1489:** Reign of Bahlul Lodi.

**1540-1555:** Sher Shah ruled over Delhi.

# Chapter 4

## The Mughal Empire

Babur (1526-1530) was the first Mughal emperor, who became the ruler of old Delhi by defeating Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat in 1526. From the latter half of the 16th century, the Mughals expanded their kingdom from Agra and Delhi, until in the 17th century they controlled nearly all of the subcontinent. The legacy left by them stands unparalleled.

### Who were the Mughals?

The Mughals were descendants of two great lineages of rulers. From their mother's side, they were descendants of Genghis Khan and from the father's side, they were the descendants of Timur.

### Mughal Military Campaigns

- Babur, the first Mughal emperor, captured Delhi in 1526 by defeating Ibrahim Lodi in the Battle of Panipat.
- Humayun captured Delhi back in 1555.
- Akbar captured Chittor (1568), Ranthambor (1569), Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal, Kashmir, Berar Khandesh, etc. (1585-1605).
- Jahangir took campaign against Sikhs and Ahoms.
- Shah Jahan captured Ahmadnagar and Bijapur.
- Aurangzeb waged a long battle in the Deccan.

### Mughal Traditions of Succession

- The Mughals did not believe in the rule of primogeniture, where the eldest son inherited his father's estate.
- They followed the custom of coparcenary inheritance or a division of the inheritance amongst all the sons.

### Mughal Relationships with other Rulers

- The Mughal rulers campaigned constantly against rulers who refused to accept their authority.
- But as the Mughals became powerful many other rulers also joined them voluntarily. The Rajputs served the Mughals voluntarily.
- Mughals gave mansab and jagirs which helped them to expand their territories.
- The main source of income available to Mughal rulers was tax on the produce of the peasantry.

### Akbar's Policies

- Akbar's works are found in the book Akbarnama written by Abul Fazal.
- Akbar divided his kingdom into provinces called subas governed by a Subedar.

- Akbar's nobles commanded large armies and had access to large amounts of revenue.
- While Akbar was at Fatehpur Sikri, he started a discussion on religion with the ulemas, Brahmanas, Jesuit priests who were Roman Catholics and Zoroastrians.
- The discussions took place in the ibadat khana.
- It led Akbar to the idea of Sulh-i-kul or universal peace.
- Shah Jahan and Jahangir also followed this principle.
- Akbar realized those religious scholars emphasized rituals and dogmas were often bigots.
- Abul Fazl, one of the Akbar's friends and courtiers wrote a three-volume history of Akbar's reign, titled Akbar-nama.

### **The Mughals Empire in the 17th Century and After**

- The administrative and military efficiency of the Mughal Empire led to great economic and commercial prosperity.
- The Mughal emperors and their mansabdars spent a great deal of their income on salaries and goods.
- Mansabdars received their salaries as revenue assignments called jagirs.
- The main source of income to Mughal rule was the tax received on the produce of the peasantry.
- The wealthier peasantry and artisanal groups, the merchants and bankers profited in this economic world.
- Primary producers, however, lived in poverty.
- By the end of the 17th century, the authority of the Mughal Empire declined which gave rise to many independent provinces like Hyderabad and Awadh.

The Mughals were great rulers. They created a huge empire. From the latter half of the 16th century, they expanded their kingdom from Agra and Delhi, until in the 17th century they controlled nearly all the subcontinent.

The Mughals were descendants of two great lineages of rulers. From their mother's side they were descendants of Genghis Khan, ruler of the Mongol tribes, China and Central Asia. From their father's side they were the successors of Jimur, the ruler of Iran, Iraq and modern day Turkey. However, the Mughals were proud of their Jimurid ancestry.

Babur was the first Mughal emperor, He became the ruler of Delhi by defeating Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat in 1526. He also established his control over Agra. But he could not rule for a long time. After his death in 1530, his son Humayun became the second Mughal emperor.

Sherkhan defeated Humayun at Chausa in 1539 and Kanauj in 1540 forcing him to flee to Iran. He recaptured Delhi in 1555 with the help of Safarid Shah but died soon afterwards.

Akbar became the emperor of Delhi at the age of 13. He was very competent and soon began to handle the entire empire successfully. In 1568 he seized the Sisodiya capital of Chittor and in 1569 Ranthambhor. During the period 1570-1585 he started military campaign in Gujarat which was followed by campaigns in the east in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. During the period 1585-1605 to Akbar expanded his empire.

Jahangir became the emperor in 1605. He continued the military campaigns started by Akbar.

After Jahangir Shah Jahan took the control of the Mughal Empire. He continued Mughal campaigns in the Deccan.

Aurangzeb's reign ranges from 1658 to 1707. His campaign against Maratha Chieftain Shivaji was very important. Initially, Aurangzeb got success. But soon Shivaji declared himself an independent king after being insulted by Aurangzeb. He also resumed his campaigns against the Mughals.

From 1698 Aurangzeb personally managed campaigns in the Deccan against the Marathas who started guerrilla warfare. Aurangzeb also faced the rebellion in north India of the Sikhs, Jats and Satnamis.

The Mughals followed the Mughal and Timurid custom of Loparcenary inheritance or a division of the inheritance amongst all the sons.

One of the major policies of the Mughals was to campaign constantly against rulers who refused to accept Mughal authority. However, several rulers joined them voluntarily. Many Rajputs married their daughters into Mughal families to gain high positions. But at the same time there were many Rajputs such as the Sisodiya Rajputs, who resisted the Mughal authority.

The Mughal Empire was expanding to different regions. Hence, the Mughals recruited diverse bodies of people. Those who joined Mughal service were enrolled as mansabdars. These mansabdars held a mansab, meaning a position or rank. Rank and salary of the mansabdars were determined by a numerical value called zat.

Mansabdars received their salaries as revenue assignments called jagirs.

In Akbar's reign these jagirs were carefully assessed so that their revenues were roughly equal to the salary of the mansabdar. By Aurangzeb's reign this was no longer the case. The actual revenue collected was often less than the granted sum.

The main source of income available to Mughal rule was tax on the produce of the peasantry.

Akbar's revenue minister was Todar Mai. He carried out a carefully survey of crop yields, prices and areas cultivated for a 10-year period, i.e. 1570-1580. On the basis of this data, tax was fixed on each crop in cash. Each province, was divided into revenue circles with its own schedule of revenue rates for individual crop. This revenue system was known as zabt.

Abul Fazl, one of the Akbar's friends and courtiers wrote a three-volume history of Akbar's reign, titled Akbar Nama.

Abul Fazl explained that the empire was divided into provinces called subas, governed by a subadar.

The subadar carried out both political and military functions. Each province also had a financial officer or diwan.

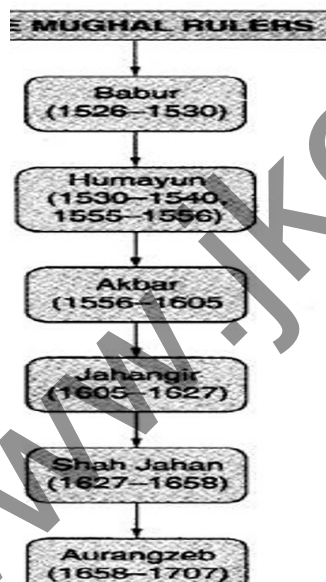
Akbar's nobles commanded large armies and had access to large amounts of revenue. By the end of the 17th century these nobles became independent..

During the 1570 Akbar started discussions on religion at Fatehpur Sikri with the ulama, Brahmanas, Jesuit priests who were Roman catholics and Zoroastrians. These religious discussions led Akbar to the idea of Sulh-i Kul or 'universal peace '

Akbar's son Jahangir followed his father's policy of Sulh-i kul.

Mehrnuiza married the Emperor Jahangir in 1611 and received the title Nur Jahan. She was very supportive to the monarch.

The Mughal Empire exercised a great deal of influence and power. But by the end of the 17th century the authority of the Mughal Empire declined which gave rise to many independent provinces like Hyderabad and Awadh.



**Genealogy:** History of generations of one's family in sequence. '

**Mansabdar:** An individual who holds a mansab meaning a position or rank.

**Zat:** Ranks and salary were determined by a numerical value called Zat.

**Jagir:** Mansabdars received their salaries as revenue assignments called Jagirs. Zamindars. The headmen or the local chieftain.

**Zabt:** Each province during Mughals was divided into revenue circles with its own schedule of revenue rates for individual crops. This revenue system was called as Zabt. Suba and Subadar. The empire was divided into provinces called Subas which were governed by a Subadar who carried both political and military functions.

**Diwan:** The financial officer of a Suba was called as Diwan.

**1237:** Genghis Khan died.

**1404:** Jimur died.

**1526-1530:** Reign of Babur. He captured Delhi in 1526 by defeating Ibrahim Lodi and laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire.

**1539:** Sher Shah defeated Humayun at Chausa.

**1540:** Sher Shah again defeated Humayun, this time at Kanauj.

**1555:** Humayun recaptured Delhi

**1556:** Akbar became the Mughal Emperor at the age of 13.

**1568:** Akbar seized Sisodiya capital of Chittor

**1569:** Akbar seized Ranthambhore

**1605-1627:** Jahangir ruled over Delhi as the Mughal emperor

**1627-1658:** Shah Jahan reigned over Delhi.

**1632:** Ahmadnagar was annexed by Shah Jahan

**1658-1707:** Aurangzeb reigned over Delhi.

**1685:** Aurangzeb annexed Bijapur

**1687:** Aurangzeb annexed Golconda

**1698:** Aurangzeb campaigned in the Deccan against the Marathas.



# Chapter 5

## Rulers and Buildings

In medieval period rulers built private and public buildings like forts, palaces, tombs, temples, mosques, tanks, etc

### Engineering Skills and Construction

- Monuments provide an insight into the technologies used for construction.
- Between the seventh and tenth centuries, architects started adding more rooms, doors and windows to buildings.
- Roofs, doors and windows were made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns, a style of architecture called 'trabeate' or 'corbelled'.
- Two technological and stylistic developments from the twelfth century are 'arcuate architectural' form and use of limestone mixed with stone chips that led to faster construction.
- Assimilation of Indian style with Persian style of architecture was prominent.

### Buildings, Temples, Mosques and Tanks

- Temples and mosques were beautifully constructed because they were places of worship and meant to demonstrate the power, wealth and devotion of the patron.
- The largest temples were all constructed by kings. The other, lesser deities in the temples were gods and goddesses of the allies and subordinates of the ruler.
- Muslim Sultans and Padshahs did not claim to be incarnations of God but Persian court chronicles described the Sultan as the 'Shadow of God'.
- As each new dynasty came to power, kings wanted to emphasise their moral right to be rulers.
- It was widely believed that the rule of a just king would be an age of plenty when the heavens would not withhold rain.

### Why Were Temples Destroyed?

- Since kings built temples to demonstrate their devotion to God and their power and wealth, they attacked and targeted these buildings when they attacked one another's kingdoms.
- In the early 11th century, when the Chola king Rajendra I built a Shiva temple in his capital he filled it with prized statues seized from defeated rulers.

### Gardens, Tombs and Forts

- Under the Mughals, architecture became more complex. Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan were personally interested in literature, art and architecture.
- Babur got gardens called Chahar Bagh (four gardens) built in Kabul. They were further constructed in Kashmir, Agra and Delhi by Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jahan.

- Under Shah Jahan, Mughal architecture was fused together in a grand harmonious synthesis.
- The ceremonial halls of the public and private audience (diwan-i-Khas; diwan-i-am) were carefully planned.
- Shah Jahan adapted the Chahar Bagh technique in the layout of the Taj Mahal, the grandest architectural accomplishment of his reign.

## Region and Empire

- As construction activity increased between the eighth and eighteenth centuries, there was also a considerable sharing of ideas across regions.
- In Vijayanagar, for example, the elephant stables of the rulers were strongly influenced by the style of architecture found in the adjoining Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda.
- In Vrindavan, near Mathura, temples were constructed in architectural styles that were very similar to the Mughal palaces in Fatehpur Sikri.
- The creation of large empires that brought different regions under their rule helped in this cross-fertilisation of artistic forms and architectural styles.
- The Mughals adopted the 'Bangla dome' in their architecture.

Between the eighth and the eighteenth centuries kings and their officers built two kinds of structures—the first were forts, palaces, garden residences and tombs and the second was structures meant for public activity including temples, mosques, tanks, bazaars, etc.

Merchants and others also carried out construction activity. They built temples, mosques and wells.

The technologies used in the monuments are unique. It requires sophisticated skills in making a large room with an elaborate superstructure.

Between the seventh and tenth centuries, architects started adding more rooms, doors and windows to building.

Between the eighth and thirteenth centuries, the trabeate style (a style of architecture in which roofs, doors and window were made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns) was used in building temples, mosques, etc.

The early eleventh century temples were decorated with elaborately carved sculptures. The temples had shikhara too.

From the twelfth century, two technological and stylistic developments came to be noticed—firstly, the weight of the superstructure above the doors and window was sometimes carried by arches. This architectural form was known as 'arcuate', secondly, limestone cement was increasingly used in construction.

Temples and mosques were built to demonstrate the power, wealth and devotion of the patron.

According to an inscription the Rajarajeshvara temple was built by King Rajarajadeva for the worship of his god, Rajarajeshvaram. Here, it is worth mentioning that the name of the ruler and the god are very similar. The king took the god's name because it was auspicious and he wanted to appear like a god.

But Muslim Sultans and Padshahs did not claim to be incarnations of god. However, Persian court chronicles described the Sultan as the 'Shadow of God'.

Rulers offered patronage to the learned and pious people.

Rulers also built tanks and reservoirs and got praise. Sultan Iltutmish won universal respect for constructing a large reservoir just outside Delhi-i Kuhna. It was called the Hanzi Sultani or the king's Reservoir.

Kings built temples but they often looted them while attacking one another's kingdoms.

In the early 11th century when the Chola King Rajendra I built a Shiva temple in his capital he filled it with prized statues seized from defeated rulers.

Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni attacked the temples of defeated kings and looted their wealth and idols.

Under the Mughal rulers, gardens, tombs and forts were built.

Babur was interested in planning and laying out formal gardens, placed within rectangular walled enclosures and divided into four quarters by artificial channels. These gardens were called Chahar Bagh, four gardens, because of their symmetrical division into quarters.

During Akbar's reign tomb architecture became important. His architects turned to the tombs of his central Asian ancestors, Timur. The central towering dome and the tall gateway (pishtaq) were important aspects of Mughal architecture, first visible in Humayun's tomb.

During Shah Jahan's reign, huge construction activity was carried on in Agra and Delhi.

Shah Jahan's audience halls were specially constructed to resemble a mosque.

He adapted the river-front garden in the layout of the Taj Mahal. Here, the white marble mausoleum was placed on a terrace by the edge of the river and the garden was to its south. Shah Jahan developed this architectural form as a means to control the access that nobles had to the river.

In the new city of Shahjahanabad that he constructed in Delhi, the imperial palace commanded the river-front. Only especially favoured nobles were given access to the river.

The Mughal rulers were particularly skilled in adapting regional architectural styles in the construction of their own buildings.

In Bengal, the local rulers had developed a roof that was designed to resemble a thatched hut. The Mughals liked this 'Bangla dome'.

In Akbar's capital at Fatehpur Sikri, many of the buildings show the influence of the architectural styles of Gujarat and Malwa.

**Superstructure:** It refers to the part of a building above the ground floor.

**Baolis:** They were large stepped-wells.

**Shikhara:** The top-most point of the temple.

**Arcuate:** An architectural form in which the weight of the superstructure above the doors and windows was sometimes carried by arches.

**Chahar Bagh:** Four gardens.

**Pishtaq:** The tall gateway.

**Pietra dura:** Coloured, hard stones placed in depressions carved into marble or sandstone creating beautiful ornate patterns.

**Diwan-i Khas or am:** The ceremonial halls of public and private audience.

**Hasht bihisht or Eight paradises:** A central hall surrounded by eight rooms.

# Chapter 6

## Towns, Traders and Craftpersons

One of the most interesting aspects of the medieval period in the 17th century was the growth of urbanization. In medieval India, there were three types of towns—a temple town, an administrative town and a commercial town or a port town.

The Arabs, Turkish and Afghans settled in many parts of the country leading to the evolution of towns and cities.

### Sources of Knowing about the History of this Period

- The sources of history are travellers' accounts.
- Monerrate, Fitch, Thomas Roe, Domingo Paes, Nicolo Conti and Abdul Razzaq Samarqandi wrote about the life of this period.

### Court Towns

- Some of the important court towns were Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Delhi.
- Fatehpur Sikri was the new capital founded by Akbar.
- Delhi was known as Shahjahanabad and was built by Shah Jahan in 1639.

### Port and Trading Towns

- Some towns developed as ports due to their proximity to the seashore.
- Some major ports were Cambay, Surat, Broach, Masulipatanam, Nagapattinam, etc.

### Administrative Towns

- Some towns were capital cities. They were centres of administration.
- Thanjavur and Uraiyur were important centres.

### Temple Towns and Pilgrimage Centres

- Temple towns were important centres of urbanization and led to the development of cities, economy and society.
- Pilgrims gave huge donations to temples. This wealth was used by temple authorities to finance their trade and banking.
- Important temple towns were Bhillasvamin in Madhya Pradesh, Somnath in Gujarat, Kanchipuram and Madurai

### How Important was Bronze

- Bronze is an alloy compound of copper and tin.

- Chola rulers used this metal to make statues through the 'lost wax' technique.

## The Emergence of Small Towns

- From the 8th century onwards, small towns emerged in India. They emerged from large villages. They had a 'mandapika' where villagers sold their produce.
- Likewise, there were market streets, called 'hatta', full of shops.
- Many villagers came to buy local articles and sell products like horses, camphor, saffron, betel nut, spices, salt, etc.
- Normally a Samanta was appointed who fortified the palaces and gave the right to collect taxes from traders, artisans, etc.

## Name of Traders

- Many kinds of traders existed.
- Trader travelled in caravans by forming guilds.
- Trade was done on a regular basis within the peninsula and with South-east Asia and China.
- Some other important traders were the Chettiars, Marwari, Banjaras, Baniyas, Muslim Bohras, etc.

## Crafts in Towns

- Craftwork was famous by the name of Bidri in the region.
- The goldsmith, bronzesmith, blacksmith, masons and carpenters were together called as the 'Panchalas' or 'Vishwakarma'.
- Some other crafts were cotton cleaning, spinning and dying.
- Surat in Gujarat was a cosmopolitan city. The textiles of Surat were famous for their gold lace borders known as zari and had a market in West Asia, Africa and Europe.

There were three types of medieval towns—a temple town, an administrative centre, and a commercial town or a port town.

Thanjavur, the capital of the Cholas a thousand years ago, emerged as an administrative centre as well as a temple town.

The perennial river Kaveri flows near this beautiful town. The famous Rajarajeshvara temple built by King Rajaraja Chola lies here.

As Thanjavur was an administrative centre, Kings held courts in the mandapas, which were parts of palaces, issuing orders to their subordinates.

Temple towns represent a very important pattern of urbanisation, the process by which cities develop. – ‘

Rulers built temples to demonstrate their devotion to various deities.

Important temple towns were Bhilassvamin in Madhya Pradesh, Somnath in Gujarat, Kanchipuram and Madurai in Tamil Nadu and Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh.

Pilgrimage centres also developed into townships. Examples—Vrindvan in Uttar Pradesh and Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu.

Small towns emerged from large villages. They usually had a mandapika or mandi of later times to which nearby villages brought their produce to sell. They also had market streets called hatta or heat of later times lined with shops.

Different kinds of artisans such as potters, oil pressers, sugar makers, toddy makers, smiths, etc. also lived in these towns.

There were many kinds of traders. They usually travelled in caravans and formed guilds to protect their interests.

There were also communities like the Chettiars and the Marwari Oswal. Gujarati traders traded extensively with the ports of the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, East Africa, South-east Asia and China.

Indian spices such as pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, etc. became very popular in European homes. Indian cotton cloth was also in great demand. This eventually drew European traders to India.

The craftspersons of Bidar were very famous. Their inlay work in copper and silver came to be known as Bidri.

The Panchalas or Vishwakarma community, consisting of goldsmiths, bronzesmiths, blacksmiths, masons and carpenters contributed a lot in the building of temples.

The weavers such as the Saliyar or Kaikkolars also donated to temples.

Hampi was the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire. The architecture of Hampi was distinctive. It bustled with commercial and cultural activities during the 15-16th centuries.

Moors, Chettis and agents of European traders thronged the markets of Hampi.

Temples were the hub of cultural activities.

Hampi fell into ruin following the defeat of Vijayanagara in 1565 by the Deccani Sultans.

Surat in Gujarat was a cosmopolitan city. People of all castes and creeds lived there.

The textiles of Surat were famous for their gold lace borders known as zari and had a market in west Asia, Africa and Europe.

The Kathiawad seths or mahajans had huge banking houses at Surat. The Surat hundis were honoured in the far-off markets of Cairo in Egypt, Basra in Iraq and Antwerp in Belgium.

Surat began to decline towards the end of the 17th century.

The town of Masulipatnam was a centre of intense activity in the 17th century. As it became the most important port on the Andhra coast both the Dutch and English East India Companies attempted to control it.

The Qutb Shahi rulers of Golconda decided to prevent the attempts of the various East India Companies. As a result fierce competition among various trading groups made the city populous and prosperous. However, Golconda was annexed by Aurangzeb in 1686-1687.

This caused the European Companies to look for the alternatives. The Company traders moved to Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. This caused the decline of Masulipatnam in the 18th century.

The English emerged as the most successful commercial and political power in the subcontinent.

Indian textiles were in great demand in Europe and west Asia. More and more people began to engage themselves in the crafts of spinning, weaving, bleaching, dyeing, etc. But the craftspersons were no more independent. They now began to work on a system of advances which meant that they had to weave cloth which was already promised to European agents.

Bombay, Calcutta and Madras became important cities in the 18th century.

The Europeans established Black Towns in these new cities and merchants and artisans were made to move there.

The 'white' rulers occupied the superior residences of Fort St George in Madras or Fort St William in Calcutta.

**Administrative town:** A town from where the administration is carried on.

**Temple town:** A town with a number of famous temples.

**Commercial town:** A town which is the centre of sale and purchase of commodities.

**Emporium:** A place where goods from diverse production centres are bought and sold.



**Hundi:** It is not recording a deposit made by a person. The amount deposited can be claimed in another place by presenting the record of the deposit.

**Factor:** It referred to an official merchant of the East India Company.

**Sthapatis:** Sculptors who made beautiful bronze idols and tall, ornamental bell metal lamps.

**Pilgrimage Centres:** Religious places where people go for pilgrimage.

**1336:** Vijayanagara Empire was founded.

**1565:** Vijayanagara Empire was defeated.

**1704:** Murshidabad became the capital of Bengal.

**At the end of the 17th Century:** Surat began to decline.

**In the 17th Century:** The town of Masalipatnam was a centre of intense activity.

**The 18th century:** Rise of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta.

# Chapter 7

## Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities

During the Medieval Age, several social, economic and political development took place.

The Indian society was divided on the basis varnas. During the medieval period, gap between the rich and poor increased.

There were, however, several communities which did not follow rules laid down by the Brahmins. These included the tribes, nomads and settled communities.

### Tribal Societies

- Tribes are people who do not follow norms laid down by society.
- Most of the tribes were dependant on agriculture. Others were herders or hunter-gatherers.
- Tribes were even nomadic and moved from one place to another.
- Many tribes lived in forests, hills, deserts and other places which were difficult to reach. They preserved their culture and heritage through oral tradition.
- There were even clashes between tribes and powerful caste-based societies.
- Contemporary historians and travellers from medieval India hardly give any information about the tribes.
- Many of the tribes emerged as politically powerful groups through their areas of influence and activities varied.
- Some of the powerful tribes were Khokhar tribe in Punjab; Langahs and Arghuns in Multan; Gaddis in the Himalayas;
- Kolis and Berads of Gujarat; Gonds of Chhattisgarh, Bhil tribe in Central India, etc.
- The tribal societies underwent a change as a result of interaction with the Hindu and Islamic societies.

### Pastoral Nomads

- The pastoral nomads moved from one place to another with their herd of animals.
- They survived on milk products and exchanged ghee, wool, etc. with farmers for grains, cloth, utensils, etc.
- The most important trader nomads were Banjaras. Their caravan was called 'tanda'. Sultan Alauddin Khilji used Banjaras to move grain to the city markets.
- Pastoral tribes thus basically reared and sold animals like horses and cattle to the prosperous people.

### Changes in Caste Structure of India

- In the fields of trade and agriculture, there emerged a multi-caste population in many villages on account of the spread of Islam.

- Sufi and Bhakti movement preached equality between different castes and religious groups.
- Inter-caste marriages started between Rajputs and Muslim nobles.
- With the growth of the economy, new jatis and varnas emerged.
- Many tribes became part of rule changes.

### **The Gonds**

- Gonds were sometimes referred to by their tribal dialect, Gondi. They practised shifting cultivation.
- The Gonds rose when Delhi Sultanate declined.
- The Gond kingdom Gondwana in southeastern Madhya Pradesh was founded in the 15th century.

### **Ahoms**

- The Ahom tribe is traced to some tribes living in south-east Asia who had travelled overland through the forests of Assam.
- The religion and culture of Assam is a fusion of the local traditions and of migrant tribes.
- The Ahoms belonged to a warrior class and built roads and irrigation system even before establishing their rule.
- The Ahoms formed the new kingdom by suppressing the older political system of Bhuiyans.

Tribal societies were absolutely different from those which existed in big cities.

Tribal societies did not follow the social rules and rituals, prescribed by the Brahmanas, because they divided societies into numerous unequal classes. These societies were known as tribes.

There was a unique bond of kinship among the members of each tribe.

Their main source of livelihood was agriculture. However, hunter-gatherers or herders were also there.

Some tribes were nomadic and kept on moving from one place to another.

A tribal group controlled land and pastures jointly and divided these amongst households as per its own rules.

Many large tribes lived in forests, hills, deserts and places difficult to reach.

Tribal people did not keep written records. But they preserved rich customs and oral traditions which help historians to collect knowledge about them.

Tribal people were spread in almost every region of the subcontinent. Some powerful tribes controlled large territories.

In Punjab, the Khokhar tribe was very influential during the 13th and 14th centuries. Later, the Gakkhars became more important.

In Multan and Sind, the Languages and Arghuns dominated extensive regions.

The Balochis were found in the north-west.

The Shepherd tribe of Gaddis lived in the western Himalayas.

The north-eastern part of the subcontinent was dominated by the Nagas, Ahoms and many others.

The Mundas and Santals were important tribes found in Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and Bengal.

The Kolis were found in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat.

The Bhils were spread across western and central India.

The Gonds lived in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Nomadic pastoralists lived on milk and other pastoral products. The Banjaras were the most important trader-nomads.

Smaller castes or jatis emerged with the growth of society. Smiths, carpenters and masons were recognised as separate jatis.

Among the Kshatriyas, new Rajput clans became powerful by the 11th and 12th centuries. They belonged to different lineages such as Hunas, Chandelas, Chalukyas, etc. Some of these had been tribes earlier. Many of these clans came to be regarded as Rajputs.

The rise of Rajput clans to the position of rulers set an example for the tribal people to follow.

The Gonds lived in a vast forested region known as Gondwana. They practised shifting cultivation. The large Gond tribe was further divided into many smaller clans. Each clan had its own raja or rai. About the time that the power of the Delhi Sultans was declining, a few large Gond kingdoms were beginning to dominate the smaller Gond chiefs. The Akbar Nama mentions the Gond kingdom of Garha Katanga.

Garha Katanga was a rich state. However, it was defeated by the Mughals. Despite that, the Gond kingdoms survived for some time.

The Ahoms migrated to the Brahmaputra valley from present-day Myanmar in the 13th century. They created a new state by suppressing the older political system of the bhuiyans (landlords).

During the 16th century, they annexed the kingdoms of the Chhutiyas and of Koch-Hajo and subjugated many other tribes. Thus, they built a large state. However, they faced many invasions from the south-west and finally, they were defeated by the Mughals.

Ahom society was divided into clans or Khels. The society was very sophisticated.

The Ahoms worshipped their own tribal gods. However, in the reign of Sib Singh Hinduism became the predominant religion. But the Ahom kings did not completely give up their traditional beliefs.

**Clan:** A clan is a group of families or households claiming descent from a common ancestor. The tribal organisation is often based on kinship or clan loyalties.

**Nomads:** People who keep on moving from one place to another.

**Nomadic pastoralists:** People who move over long distances with their animals.

**Tanda:** The caravan of the Banjaras was called tanda.

**Itinerant Group:** This group consists of craftspersons, peddlers and entertainers who travel from place to place practising their different occupations.

**Shifting Cultivation:** Trees and bushes in a forest area are first cut and burnt. The crop is then sown in the ashes. After some time when this land loses its fertility, another patch of land is cleared and planted in the same manner.

**1591** – Cheros were defeated.

**1523** – The Ahoms annexed the kingdoms of the Chaityas.

**1581** – The Ahoms annexed the kingdoms of Koch-Hajo.

**1662** – The Mughals under Mir Jumla attacked the Ahomri kingdom.

**1714-1744** – Sib Singh reigned in the Ahom kingdom.

# Chapter 8

## Devotional Paths to the Divine

In the eighth century, two new religious movements Sufism and Bhakti emerged.

Devotion to God without discrimination on the basis of caste was taught by the Bhakti and Sufi saints.

Both Sufism and Bhakti movements had several common traits and spread as popular movements at about the same time.

### The Idea of a Supreme God

- Before large kingdoms emerged, different groups of people worshipped their own Gods and Goddesses. As people were brought together through the growth of towns, trade and empires, new ideas began to develop.
- The idea that all human beings are not equal at birth gained ground during this period.
- The idea of a Supreme God who could deliver humans from bondage through devotion or bhakti emerged.
- Gods and goddesses worshipped in different areas came to be identified with Shiva, Vishnu or Durga.

### A New Kind of Bhakti in South India – Nayanars and Alvars

- The seventh to ninth centuries saw the emergence of a new religious movement, led by Nayanars (saints devoted to Shiva) and Alvars (saints devoted to Vishnu).
- They were sharply critical of the Buddhists and Jainas and preached ardent love of Shiva or Vishnu as the path to salvation.
- The Nayanars and Alvars went from place to place composing exquisite poems of praise of the deities enshrined in the village they visited and set them to music.
- The Chola and Pandya kings built elaborate temples around many of the shrines.

### Philosophy and Bhakti

- Shankara, a philosopher, of Kerala advocated Advaita or the doctrine of the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme God which is the ultimate reality.
- Ramanuja of Tamil Nadu advocated that the best means of attaining salvation was through intense devotion to Vishnu.

### Basavanna's Virashaivism

- Virashaivism movement was initiated by Basavanna and his companions Allama Prabhu and Akkamahadevi in Karnataka in the mid-12 century.
- They argued strongly for equality of all human beings, opposed Brahmanical ideas on caste and treatment of women.

## **The Saints of Maharashtra**

- Jnaneshwar, Namdev, Eknath, Tukaram, Sakkubai and the family of Chokhamela focused on the bhakti of Vitthala (a form of Vishnu).
- Some of these belonged to lower castes. They rejected all forms of ritualism, outward display of piety and social differences based on birth.

## **Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis**

- A number of religious groups that emerged during this period criticized the ritual and other aspects of conventional religion and the social order, using simple, logical arguments.
- Among them were the Nathpanthis, Siddhacharas and Yogis.

## **Islam and Sufism**

- Islam propagated monotheism or submission to one God.
- It also rejected idol worship. Muslim scholars developed a holy law called Shariat.
- The Sufis rejected the elaborate codes of behaviour demanded by Muslim religious scholars.
- The sought union with God, as a lover seeks his beloved with a disregard for the world.
- Among the great Sufis of Central Asia were Ghazzali, Rumi and Sadi.
- Sufism introduced many popular orders or silsilas of which the most widespread was the Shariat and Chisti Silsilas.
- The Chisti silsila was among the most influential orders. A long line of teachers included Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti of Ajmer, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki of Delhi, Baba Farid of Punjab, Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi and Bandanawaz Gisudaraz of Gulbarga.

## **New Religious Developments in North India**

- The period after the 13th century saw a new wave of bhakti movement in North India.
- This wave was led by scholars like Tulsidas, Surdas, Kabir and Baba Guru Nanak
- This tradition also included saints like Dadu Dayal, Ravidas and Mirabai. Mirabai was devoted to Lord Krishna.
- A unique feature of most of these saints is that their works were composed in regional languages and could be sung.
- Kabir ridiculed idol worship and believed in one formless Supreme God with devotion as the path of salvation.
- Guru Nanak emphasized on the importance of one God and nam-japna, kirti-kama and vand- chhakna. The number of
- Baba Guru Nanak's followers increased through the 16th century under his successors.
- Shankara was an advocate of Advaita or the doctrine of the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme God.

Various kinds of Bhakti and Sufi movements evolved since the eighth century.

Before the emergence of large kingdoms, different groups of people worshipped their own gods and goddesses.

Several people also showed their interest in the teachings of the Buddha or the Jainas.

Others felt attracted to the idea of a Supreme God. Such people sought the path of Bhakti to approach this Supreme God. As a result, Shiva, Vishnu and Durga came to be recognised as supreme deities. People began to worship them through elaborate rituals.

The seventh to ninth centuries saw the emergence of new religious movements, led by the Nayanars (saints devoted to Shiva) and Alvars (saints devoted to Vishnu) who came from all castes including untouchables.

They criticised the Buddhists and Jainas and preached ardent love of Shiva or Vishnu as the path of salvation.

Elaborate temples were built by the Chola and Pandya kings between the tenth and twelfth centuries. Thus, the Bhakti tradition got strongly linked with temple worship.

Shankara, a Bhakti saint, was an advocate of Advaita or the doctrine of the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme God which is the Ultimate Reality. He preached renunciation of the world and adoption of the path of knowledge.

Ramanuja, another Bhakti saint, was deeply influenced by the Alvars. According to him the best means of attaining salvation was through intense devotion to Vishnu.

Virashaiva movement was initiated by Basavanna and his companions. This movement began in Karnataka in the mid-twelfth century. The Virashaivas were against all forms of ritual and idol worship.

The saint-poets of Maharashtra such as Janeshwar, Namdev, Eknath and Tukaram inspired people through their songs in simple Marathi. These saints rejected all forms of ritualism, outward display of piety and social differences based on birth. They also rejected the idea of renunciation and preferred to live with their families.

Several other religious groups such as Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis also criticised the ritual and other aspects of conventional religion and the social order. They advocated renunciation of the world. They inspired people to lay in meditation on the formless Ultimate Reality and the realisation of oneness with it. They gave importance to yogasanas.

Sufis were Muslim mystics. They rejected outward religiosity and emphasized love and devotion to God and comparison towards all fellow human beings.

Islam propagated monotheism i.e. submission to one God. It rejected idol worship,



Muslim scholars developed a holy law called Shariat. The Sufis rejected the elaborate rituals and codes of behaviour demanded by Muslim religious scholars.

The Sufis too composed poems like the saint-poets. Some of the great Sufis were Ghazzali, Rumi and Sadi.

The Sufi saints developed elaborate methods of training using *zikr* (chanting of a name or sacred formula), contemplation, *sama* (singing), *rags* (dancing), discussion of parables, breath control etc. under the guidance of a master or *pir*. Thus, emerged the *silsilas*, a genealogy of Sufi teachers. The Chishti *silsila* is worth-mentioning in this regard.

The Sufi teachers held their assemblies in their *Khanqahs* or hospices (houses of rest for travellers). Here, they discussed spiritual matters.

Sufi shrines are visited by devotees of all backgrounds.

A new wave of Bhakti movement began in north India after the 13th century. This was an age when Islam, Brahmanical Hinduism, Sufism, various strands of Bhakti and the Nathpanths, Siddhas and Yogis influenced one another.

Kabir and Baba Guru Nanak rejected all orthodox religions. Others like Tulsidas and Surdas accepted existing beliefs and practices but wanted to make these accessible to all. Tulsidas's composition, the *Ramcharitmanas*, written in Awadhi, is important both as an expression of his devotion and as a literary work.

Surdas was an ardent devotee of Krishna.

Dadu Dayal, Ravidas and Mirabai were some other important saints of this tradition.

The works of these saints were composed in regional languages and therefore they became very popular.

We come to know about Kabir through his *sakhis* and *padis*, Kabir's teachings were based on complete rejection of the major religious traditions. He believed in a formless Supreme God and preached that the only path to salvation was through Bhakti or devotion.

Guru Nanak emphasised the importance of the worship of one God. He insisted that caste, creed or gender was irrelevant for attaining liberation. He used the terms *nam*, *dan* and *isnan* for the essence of his teachings which actually meant right worship, welfare of others and purity of conduct.

Words that Matter

**Virashaivism:** It was popular in Karnataka during the mid-twelfth century. Its followers argued strongly for the equality of all human beings and against Brahmanical ideas about caste and the treatment of women.

**Hagiography:** Writing of saint's lives.

**Vilthala:** A form of Vishnu.

**Hospice:** House of rest for travellers, especially one kept by a religious order.

**Khanqah:** It literally means hospice.

**Dargah:** It is a tomb of a religious saint in Muslim community recognised as a pilgrimage.

**Langer:** A common kitchen where people of all backgrounds eat together.

**Dharamsala:** A sacred space created by Baba Guru Nanak.

**Khanda Panth:** The community of the Sikhs.

**Bhakti:** It means devotion to God.

**Sufi:** He was a Muslim mystic.

**Silsila:** A genealogy of Sufi teachers.

**Salvation:** Getting freedom from the cycle of birth and death.

**Shariat:** Holy law made by Muslim Scholars.

**Gurmukhi:** A new script introduced by Guru Nanak.

**1469-1539** – The period of Baba Guru Nanak.

**1539** – Baba Guru Nanak died.

**1604** – Guru Arjan compiled all the compositions written by the three successors of Guru Angad.

**1606** – Guru Arjan was executed.

**1699** – The Khalsa was instituted by Guru Gobind Singh.

# Chapter 9

## The Making of Regional Cultures

The medieval period saw the emergence of several regional languages and the associated literature. It is quite common for us to identify a region with its language.

Every region is identified with a certain distinct type of food, clothing, poetry, dance, painting and music.

The Chera empire of Mahodayapuram, which was established in 9th century in the southwestern part of Kerala introduced the Malayalam language.

### **Rulers and Religious Traditions: The Jagannatha Cult**

- In several regions, regional cultures developed around religious traditions.
- The local people made a wooden image of the deity which, originally a local God, came to be identified with Vishnu.
- Temple became the centre of pilgrimage.

### **The Rajputs and Traditions of Heroism**

- In the 19th century, the Rajasthan of today was called Rajputana by the British.
- There are many groups who call themselves Rajputs in Northern and Central India.
- Prithviraj Chauhan was one such ruler.
- Women had been given a heroic image since they committed sati or self-immolation.

### **Beyond Regional Frontiers: The Story of Kathak**

- The heroic traditions of various regions also helped in the evolution of dance in several regions.
- One such dance was Kathak, which was evolved in Northern India. The Kathaks initially were a caste of story-tellers in North Indian temples.
- The legends of Radha-Krishna were enacted in folk plays known as rasalila.
- It integrated folk dance with the basic gestures of the kathak story-tellers.
- Music also developed into various forms like qawwali and khayal and new instruments like Sitar were invented.

### **Paintings for Patrons: The Traditions of Miniatures**

- During this period, one more tradition which deserves our attention is the miniature painting. Miniatures are small sized paintings done in watercolour on cloth or paper.
- Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan hired highly skilled painters to illustrate their manuscripts in the Kitab Khana containing their accounts and poetry.
- When the Mughal empire started declining, new artistic tastes developed in the

- One bold style of miniature painting was called Basohli.
- One of the most popular paintings of the Himalayas region was Bhanudatta's Rasamanjari.
- The Kangra artists by mid-18th century infused a new life into miniature painting.

### **The Growth of a Regional Language: Bengal**

- Regional language is the language which a person speaks in a region.
- It is generally assumed that the Bengali language is spoken by people of Bengal.
- Bengali originated from Sanskrit but later on developed its own identity and literature.
- Early Bengali literature may be divided into two categories—The first includes translations from Sanskrit epics and the
- the second includes Nath literature.

### **Pirs and Temples**

- From the 16th century, people migrated in large numbers from less fertile western Bengal to the forested and marshy of south-eastern Bengal.
- With Mughal control over Bengal, the capital shifted to Dhaka. Officials received land grants. Mosques were set up.
- The early settlers got help from teachers called Pirs. They included saints or Sufis and prominent religious personalities.

Regional cultures today are often the product of complex processes of intermixing of local traditions with ideas from other parts of the subcontinent.

The Chera Kingdom of Mahodayapuram was established in the ninth century in the south-western part of the peninsula, part of present-day Kerala. The rulers introduced the Malayalam language and script in their inscriptions.

The Cheras also drew upon Sanskrit traditions. The temple theatre of Kerala borrowed stories from the Sanskrit epics.

In other regions, regional cultures grew around religious traditions. The best example of this process is the cult of Jagannath at Puri, Orissa. The word Jagannath literally means the lord of the world, a name for Vishnu.

Anantavarman, the ruler of the Ganga dynasty in the 12th century, built a temple for Purushottama Jagannatha at Puri.

The Rajputs contributed a lot to the distinctive culture of Rajasthan. From about the eighth century, most of the present-day state of Rajasthan was ruled by various Rajput families. Prithviraj was one such ruler.

Rajput rulers cherished the ideal of the hero who fought valiantly, often choosing death on the battlefield rather than face defeat.

Stories about Rajput heroes were recorded in poems and songs. Women were also focused on these stories. They are depicted as following their heroic husbands in both life and death. They often chose to become sati on the funeral pyre of their husbands.

Not only heroic traditions are found in different regions in different forms, but dance too. Just take the history of one dance form, Kathak.

The term kathak is derived from Katha, a word used in Sanskrit and other languages for a story.

The Kathaks was originally a caste of story-tellers in temples of north India, who beautified their performances with gestures and songs.

Kathak began evolving into a distinct mode of dance in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Under the Mughals, it developed in two traditions or gharanas—one in the courts of Rajasthan (Jaipur) and the other in Lucknow. Slowly and steadily it took root in Punjab, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir etc.

Kathak was recognised as one of six classical forms of dance in the country after independence. Other classical dances are—Bharatnatyam (Tamil Nadu), Kathakali (Kerala), Odissi (Orissa), Kuchipudi (Andhra Pradesh) and Manipuri (Manipur).

The tradition of miniature painting is also noteworthy. Miniatures are small-sized paintings, generally done in watercolour on cloth or paper. The earliest miniatures were on palm leaves or wood.

The Mughal emperors patronised highly skilled painters.

With the decline of the Mughal Empire, many painters moved out to the courts of the emerging regional states.

By the late 17th century a bold and intense style of miniature painting called Basohli got developed in the Himalayan foothills around the modern-day state of Himachal Pradesh. Here, the Mughal artists founded the Kangra school of painting.

Soft colours, including cool blues and greens, and lyrical treatment of themes distinguished Kangra painting.

Now we will see how Bengali, a regional language, grew in the course of time.

From the eighth century, Bengal became the centre of a regional kingdom under the Palas. Between the 14th and 16th centuries, Bengal was ruled by Sultans. In 1586, Akbar conquered Bengal while Persian was the language of administration, Bengali developed as a regional

Although Bengali is derived from Sanskrit, it passed through several stages of evolution.

Early Bengali literature may be divided into two categories. The first includes translations of the Sanskrit epics, the Mangala Kavyas and Bhakti literature such as biographies of Chaitanyadeva, the second includes Nath literature such as songs of Maynamati and Gopichand, stories concerning the worship of Dharma Thakur and fairy tales, folk tales and ballads.

The cult of pir (a spiritual guide) became popular in Bengal and their shrines can be found there.

A number of temples got constructed in Bengal. Now local deities began to be worshipped in temples.

Bengal, being in a riverine plain, produces abundant rice and fish. These two items are important foods of the Bengalis. The Bengal Brahmanas too eat fish.

Fishing has been a major occupation of the Bengalis.

Bengali literature contains several references to fish.

**Lilatilakam:** A fourteenth-century text of Sanskrit that deals with grammar and poetics.

**Rajputana:** The region that constitutes most of present-day Rajasthan was called Rajputana by the British during the 19th century.

**Sati:** The immolation of widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands.

**Kathak:** The term is derived from Katha, a word used in Sanskrit and other languages for the story.

**Rasa Lila:** The legends of Radha-Krishna were enacted in folk plays known as rasa Lila.

**Gharana:** Tradition of classical dance, music.

**Classical:** Old and memorable having permanent value.

**Miniature:** It is small-sized painting, usually done in watercolour on cloth or paper.

**Basohli:** It refers to the bold and intense style of miniature painting.

**Per:** It is a Persian word that means a spiritual guide.

**Animism:** Attribution of living soul to plants, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena.

**Kolu:** Oil pressures.

**Kansari:** Bell metal workers.

**Dochala:** Double-roofed structure.

**About 12th Century** – First Literary works in Malayalam.

**14th Century Lilatilakam** – a text dealing with grammar and poetics combining two languages Sanskrit and regional languages was published.

**12th Century** – Anantavarman, a ruler of Ganga dynasty decided to erect a temple for Purushottam Jagannatha at Puri.

**1230 AD** – King Anangabhima III dedicated his kingdom to the deity and proclaimed himself as the ‘deputy’ of the God.

**19th Century** – The region of Rajputana constituted by the British.

**3rd quarter of the 19th Century** – ‘Kathak’ was firmly entrenched as a dance form in many regions.

**1739 AD** – Nadar Shah invaded and conquered Delhi.

**Mid-18th Century** – Kangra artists developed a style of miniature painting for their survival.

# Chapter 10

## Eighteenth-Century Political Formations

By 1765, the British had captured major chunks of Indian territory in eastern India.

After Aurangzeb's death, the Mughal Empire started to decline because of weak and inefficient rulers.

States like Hyderabad, Awadh, Bengal and states under the control of Sikhs and Marathas declared independence.

The declining power of the Mughals also gave rise to the regional powers like the Jats, Sikhs and Marathas.

### The Crisis of the Empire and the Later Mughals

- After reaching its zenith, Mughal empire started declining under Emperor Aurangzeb. This was because of Aurangzeb's military and religious policy which depleted the financial resources of the Mughals.
- Under his succession, the efficiency of the imperial administration broke down. It became difficult to check governors and mansabdars.
- In the midst of this crisis, Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739 and invasions of Afghan ruler Ahmed Shah Abdali between 1748-1761, weakened the Mughal empire.
- The nobility was divided into two major groups Iranis and Turanis. For a long time, the later Mughal emperors were puppets in the hands of either one or the other of these two powerful groups.

### The emergence of New States

- With the decline of Mughal authority, the governors consolidated their authority.
- Broadly speaking, the states were divided into three overlapping groups; old Mughal provinces like Awadh, Bengal and
- The Hyderabad States which enjoyed consideration independence like Watan Jagirs and several Rajput principalities and the last group included states like Marathas, Sikhs and the Jats.

### The Old Mughal Provinces

- These included the states of Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad.
- Hyderabad state was founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah. The state was constantly engaged in a struggle against the Marathas.
- Awadh was founded by Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat Khan in 1722.
- The rich alluvial plains allowed the development of the region.
- Bengal was founded by Murshid Quli Khan. He commanded revenue administration of the state. Under Alivardi Khan the state became prosperous.



## **The Watan Jagirs of the Rajputs**

- Many Rajput Kings, particularly those belonging to Amber and Jodhpur had served under the Mughals with distinction.
- They got considerable autonomy and thus were called Watan jagir.
- Maratha expansion after the 1740s put a restriction on the growth of Rajput expansion.

## **Seizing Independence**

### **The Sikhs**

- The Sikh arose as a power under Guru Gobind Singh who inspired the Khalsa with the belief that their destiny was to rule.
- Maharaja Ranjit Singh reunited the Sikhs as a powerful group and established his capital at Lahore in 1799.

### **The Marathas**

- The Maratha kingdom rose under Shivaji. After Shivaji's death, Peshwa led the Maratha empire to its zenith.
- Marathas collected huge revenue from taxes of chauth and Sardsh mukhi in the entire kingdom.
- Maratha chiefs included Peshwa, Sindhia, Gaekwad and Bhonsle. Their territory touched near Delhi in its peak stages.

### **The Jats**

- Jats were powerful in areas near Delhi under the leadership of Churaman.
- They were prosperous agriculturalists.
- Under Suraj Mai, the kingdom of Bharatpur emerged as a strong state.
- Jats even built a garden palace at Dig.

With the decline of the Mughal Empire, new political groups began to emerge in the sub-continent during the first half of the 18th century.

The Mughal Empire lost its glory and started facing a variety of crises towards the closing years of the 17th century.

Emperor Aurangzeb is held responsible for this. He had depleted the military and financial resources of his empire by fighting a long war in the Deccan.

Under his successors, the efficiency of the imperial administration broke down. Nobles appointed as governors became more powerful. They began to control the offices of revenue and military administration. This created a political and economic crisis.

The attack of Nadir Shah the ruler of Iran, on Delhi in 1739 aggravated the crisis. He plundered the city of Delhi and took away immense amounts of wealth.

Soon Ahmad Shah Abdali became active. He invaded north India five times between 1748 and 1761.

The competition amongst different groups of nobles further weakened the empire. These were two major groups or factions—the Iranis and Taranis (nobles of Turkish descent). For a long time, the later Mughal emperors were puppets in the hands of either one or the other of these two powerful groups.

Through the 18th century, the Mughal Empire gradually fragmented into a number of independent, regional states.

The states of the 18th century can be divided into three overlapping groups.

States that were old Mughal provinces such as Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad.

States that had enjoyed considerable independence under the Mughal as Watan jagirs,

States under the control of Marathas, Sikhs and others like the Jats.

Hyderabad state (1724-1748) was founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah. He was one of the most powerful members at the court of the Mughal Emperor Farrukh Siyar. He was given the charge of the Deccan. Soon he became powerful there and declared himself the actual ruler of that region. Although he was still a servant of the Mughal emperor, he ruled independently.

The state of Awadh was founded by Burhan-ul-Mulk Sa'adat Khan in the year 1722. He did not like the Mughal influence in the Awadh region and therefore reduced the number of officeholders or jagirdars appointed by the Mughals. He also reduced the size of jagirs and appointed his own loyal servants to vacant positions.

Murshid Quli Khan took control of Bengal and began to command the revenue administration of the state. He transferred all Mughal jagirdars to Orissa in order to reduce the Mughal influence in Bengal. He ordered a major reassessment of the revenues of Bengal. Revenue was collected in cash with great strictness from all zamindars.

The Rajput Kings, of Amber and Jodhpur, were given permission by the Mughals, to enjoy considerable autonomy in their water jagirs. Soon, these rulers began to extend their control over adjacent regions.

Raja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur held the governorship of Gujarat and Sawai Raja Jai Singh of Amber was governor of Malwa. They also tried to extend their territories by seizing portions

of imperial territories neighbouring their watan. Nagpur was conquered and annexed to the house of Jodhpur while Amber seized large portions of Bundi.

In the 18th century, the Sikhs organised themselves into a number of bands called jathas and later on mils. Their combined forces were known as the grand army (dal Khalsa).

Guru Gobind Singh had inspired the Khalsa with the belief that their destiny was to rule. Their well-knit organisation enabled them to put up a successful resistance to the Mughal governors first and then to Ahmad Shah Abdali who had seized the rich province of the Punjab and the Sirhind from the Mughals. The Khalsa declared their sovereign rule by striking in 1765.

The Sikh territories extended from the Indus to the Jamuna in the late 18th century but they were divided under different rulers such as Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Shivaji carried out the Maratha Kingdom. He built a powerful Maratha army and challenged the Mughals in the peninsula.

After the death of Shivaji, Peshwas took control of the Maratha Kingdom. Poona became its capital.

Between 1720 and 1761, the Maratha empire expanded and gradually chipped away at the authority of the Mughal Empire. Malwa and Gujarat were seized from the Mughals by the 1720s. By the 1730s the Maratha King was recognised as the overlord of the entire Deccan peninsula.

After raiding Delhi in 1737, the frontiers of Maratha domination expanded rapidly into Rajasthan and Punjab in the north, into Bengal and Orissa in the east and into Karnataka and the Tamil and Telugu countries in the south.

The jats consolidated their power during the late 17th and 18th centuries. Under their leader, Churaman, they acquired control over territories situated to the west of the city of Delhi, and by the 1680s they had begun dominating the region between the two imperial cities of Delhi and Agra.

**Subadar:** Government of a province or state.

**Diwani:** The offices of revenue.

Faujdari: Military administration.

**The Iranis and Taranis:** Nobles of Turkish descent.

**Coffers:** Treasury.

**Nayaks:** Telugu warrior chiefs.

**Jagirdari:** Land ownership.

**Ijaradars:** Revenue farmers.

**Watan Jagirs:** States that had enjoyed considerable independence under the Mughals. Jathas. Bands

**Misls:** Small political groups of Sikh warriors.

**Peshwa:** Principal minister.

**Chauth:** 25% of the land revenue claimed by zamindars.

**Sardishmukhi:** 9-10% of the land revenue paid to the head revenue collector in the Deccan. Subahdar Governorship of a province or state.

**Later Mughals:** The Mughal emperors who succeeded after Aurangzeb.

**Kunbis:** Maratha peasant-warriors.

1707 – Aurangzeb died.

1739 – Nadir Shah invaded Delhi.

1713-1719 – Farrukh Siyar reigned the Mughal Empire.

1754-1759 – Alamgir II reigned the Mughal Empire.

1724-1748 – Asaf Jah remained the Nizam of Hyderabad.

1722 – Burhan-ul-Mulk Sa'adat Khan was appointed Subadar of Awadh.

1699 – The year in which Khalsa was instituted.

1708 – Guru Gobind Singh died.

1715 – Banda Bahadur was captured

1716 – Banda Bahadur was executed.

1799 – Maharaja Ranjit Singh established his capital at Lahore.

1627-1680 – The period of Shivaji.

1761 – Third battle of Panipat.

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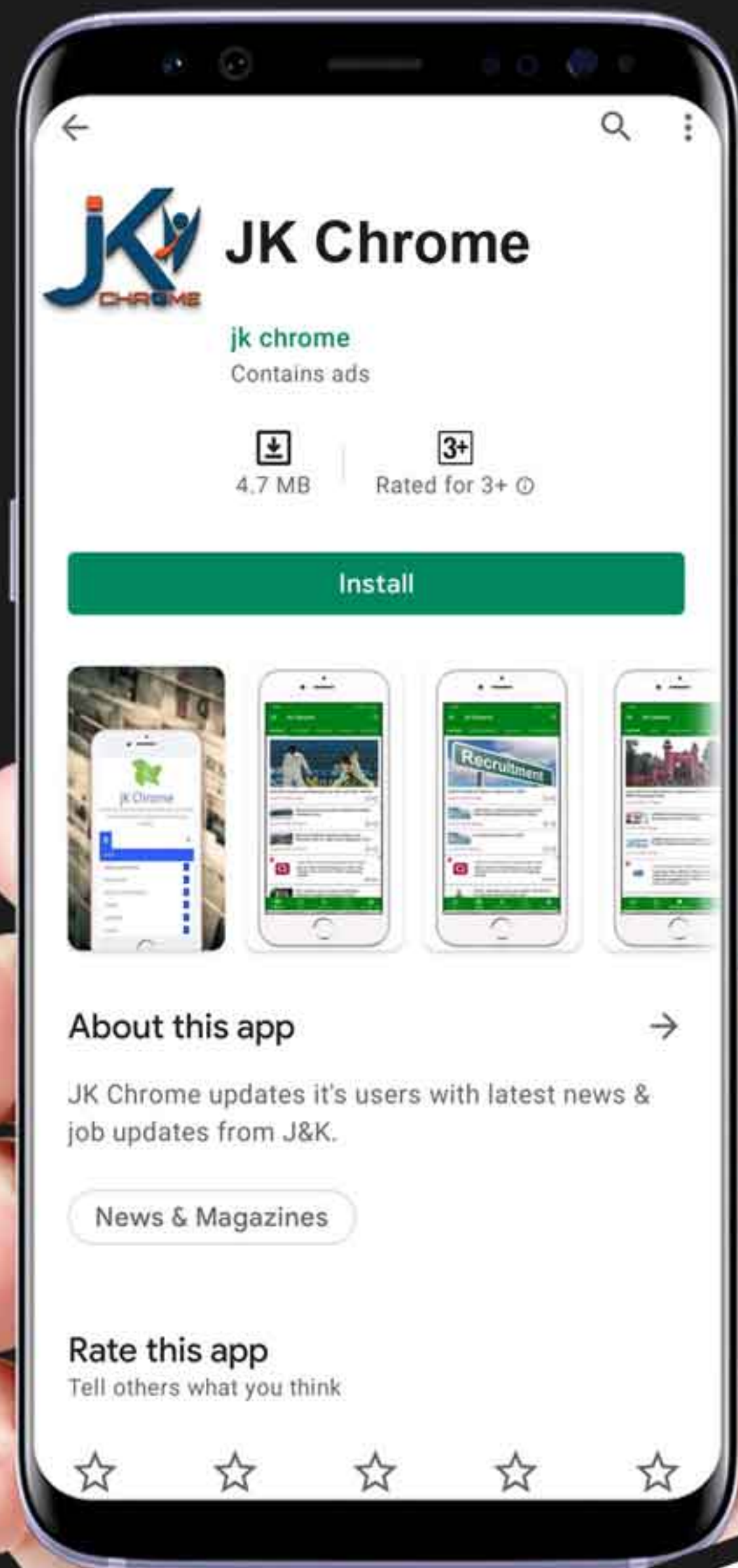
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