

History of India C.300 to 1206

DEHIS122

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LOVELY
PROFESSIONAL
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Unit 01: The Rise & Growth of the Guptas I

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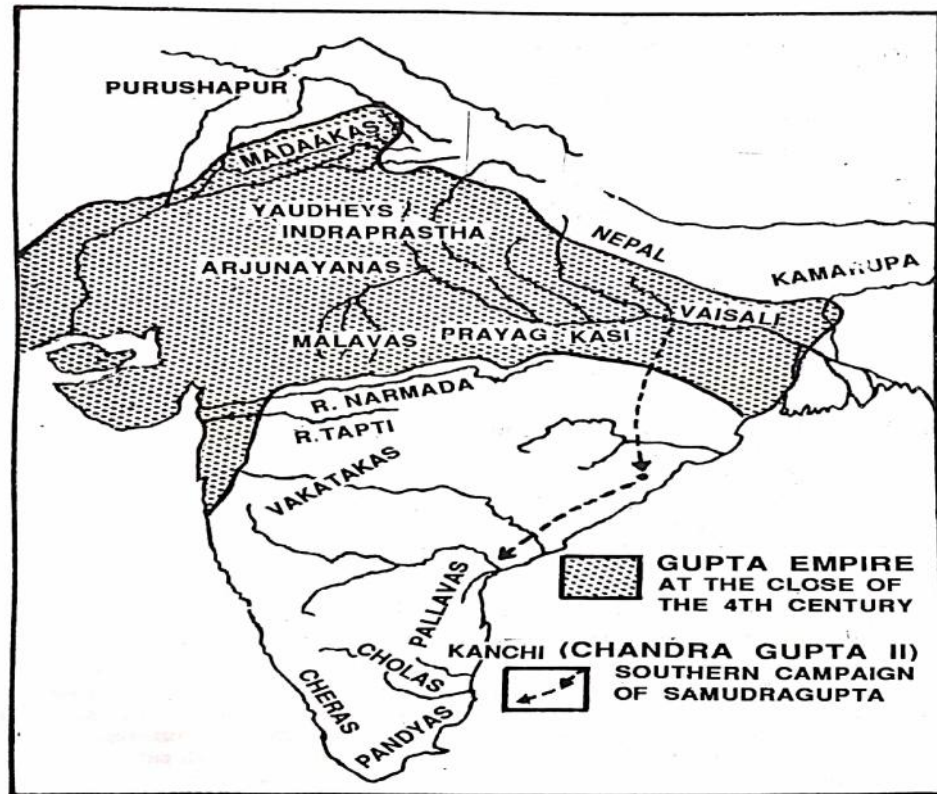
Objectives

Gupta empire was one of the greatest empires in ancient India. This unit deals with various developments in society, economy and administration. After going through this unit, you shall be able to:

- To know the salient features of the Gupta administration
- To understand developments in the society under Gupta reign.
- To critically evaluate cultural developments during this period
- To Know the salient features of Gupta economy.
- To examine the Tread during Gupta Era.

Introduction

After the decline of Kushana Dynasty in northern India, there was no centralized Power in India about the period of 120 years (200 A.D. to 320 A.D.) This paved the way for the rise several minor kingdoms in various parts of India. There was always internal strife among themselves. In 275 AD. Srigupta laid the founding stone of Gupta Empire in Magadha. With this, all internal conflict, disorder came to an end. Under the Gupta rulers' people of India enjoyed the political sovereignty and unification. The Dynasty ruled for about two centuries and under them the country made so much Social, economic, cultural and scientific developments that historians have characterized this period as classical age or Golden age.



Map 1. Map of Gupta Dynasty

1.1 Gupta Administration

The rulers of Gupta dynasty like Samudra Gupta, Chandra Gupta II and Skand Gupta were great rulers. They conquered many new territories and extended the Gupta empire. They were not only the warriors and conquerors, but also efficient administrators. The Gupta Empire extended from the Himalayas in the north to Vindhya mountain in the South from the Bay of Bengal in the east to Saurashtra in the west. The capital of this vast Empire was Pataliputra. The nature of Gupta administration was decentralized. It means that power was distributed to feudatories i.e., local Kings, and smaller rulers ruled a large part of their empire. These smaller rulers ornamented their names with raja and maharaja titles. Uniformity was the main characteristic of Gupta administration.



The administrative system of Gupta rulers can be divided into two parts:

- I. Republic states.
- II. Monarchical form of Government.

Republic states: During the Gupta reign monarchy was the most popular system of government, but there were also republic states like Punjab and Rajasthan. These republics were free in their internal affairs and the Gupta rulers did not interfere with the autonomy of the republics. For the administrative convenience, there was central assembly in each republic which consisted of the members belonging to the aristocratic families. The central assembly had the right to elect the members of the central executive body of each republic. Gradually the head of the republics came to adopt the title of *Maharaja*, or *Raja*. The chiefs of the republics during the Gupta period were **Malwa, Arjunayan, Sanakarika, Yaudhaya, Madra, Prarjuna, Kunida, Kaka, Kharaparika and Abhira.**

Monarchical Government: Monarchy was the most popular system of the administration which was prevailing in India at that time. Gupta monarchical form of government we can discuss in following parts.

(A) **The King-** The king was head at the central administration. He was Considered as representative of God. In contrast to Mauryan kings, the Gupta rulers believed in the Divine right theory of kingship. The Gupta kings enjoyed a range of powers like powers the political, military, administrative, and judicial. Most of the time, they commanded their armies, like Samudragupta, Chandragupta II and Skandgupta.

(B) **The Ministers-** The kings were assisted by a council of ministers in the administrative affairs. The ministers were known as '*Mantris or Sachives*'. The Inscription and the literature of that age also support the view the Gupta rulers had appointed certain able ministers. The ministers were responsible for their respective portfolios. Although there was no definite number of ministers the central government generally had ministers as follows:

- (i) *Bhandagaradhikrita*-Chief of the government treasury
- (ii) *Dandopashika*- Head of the police department
- (iii) *Mahasenapati*- Chief of the Military services
- (iv) *Mahadandanayaka*- The chief Justice.
- (v) *Mahabaladhikarana*-Head of Military Department
- (vi) *Mahakshapatalika* - Record Keeper
- (vii) *Mahapratihara*-Door Keeper of Places

(viii) Rana-bhandagar-adhikarana-In- charge of Military treasury

Besides the above, there were also many other officials like the **Pratiharas, Rajanyas, Kanchuks** etc. with the help of these ministers and officials, the central administration was carried on efficiently.

1.2 Provincial Administration

The Guptas organized provincial and local administration in a systematic manner. They divided the empire into divisions called 'Bhukth' and over each Bhukti, the king appointed Uparika for a period of five years. The provincial governors used to be either the prince or person belonging to the royal family. Sometimes, able or and efficient persons were also appointed to this post. They worked for public welfare, and spared no efforts to maintain peace and order.

The Bhuktis in turn were divided into districts which were called Vishayas. Each Vishaya was put under the charge of a Vishayapati. In most cases, the Vishayapatis belonged to the royal family. A council of representatives assisted them in day to day administration. These officers were also appointed for the five years. For the easy conduct of administration there was an advisory board each Vishaya consisting about Thirty members. This board was called Vishayamahattara. These members were nominated by Vishayapati.

Local Administration: Vithi, bhumi, pathaka and peta formed a group of administrative units below the district. We get references in the inscriptions to officials such as ayuktakas and vithi-mahattaras. Gramika and gramadhyaksha were chosen by the villagers to function in the villages. The Damodarpur copper plate, issued by king Budhagupta talks about an ashtakula-adhikarana. This was a board consisting of around eight members. Mahattara usually was the head of this board. There were various meanings of the term Mahattara. It might have meant an elder, a headman at village level or a head of a family or community. Again, an inscription found at Sanchi refers to panchmandali, which may have been a corporate body. This inscription was during the reign of Chandragupta II.

Judicial System: Inscriptions of the period are usually silent about the judicial system of Gupta period. However, the contemporary smritis of Narmada and *Brihaspati* tell us that the judicial system during this period developed. Village assembly or trade guild at the village level worked as a judicial institute. In order to settle the disputes between the parties that appear before them, councils were appointed. The highest court of appeal was the King. Some judges, ministers and sometimes priests assisted the king in this matter. Judgements of the court were usually based on the legal texts, the social customs which prevailed during this time or sometimes upon the decision of the King. Most of the time punishments that were given were mild in nature.

Revenue system: Land tax was the main source of government's revenue. It is known as *Bhagakara*. The farmers paid this tax which was generally 1/6 of the produce of the land. The tax was paid both in cash and kind. Beside this, taxes were also imposed on the articles manufactured in the country and those which were imported from outside. Waste lands, forests, mines, were considered as the property of the state and thus the government received a lot of money by letting them out or selling their produce. Punishment was awarded to criminals in the form of fine and its was also a source of income of the government. The government officials felt no difficulty in collecting the taxes. List of some of the taxes are given below:

Type of Taxes	Description of Taxes
Bali	an additional oppressive tax on people
Bhatta	Police Tax

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Bhoga	General Tribute
Bhog	King's share of produce
Chat	Security Tax
Charasana	Grazing Tax
Halivakar/ Halidanda	Tax on Ploughing
Hiranya	Tax on special produce taken in cash
Kalpita/ Upkilpta	Sales Tax and Purchase Tax
Rajju	Tax for measurement of land
Udakabhag	Water Tax
Uparikar	Tax collected from all subjects
Taradaya	Tax on navigation
Sarvarisht	Forced Tax

Military System: Gupta army appears to be an organized one although not as systematic as in Mauryan times. They seem to have depended more on their feudatories. For elephants and horses, they depended on their samantas. Mahabaladhikrta was mentioned as a commander-in-chief who controlled the entire army. Guptas in the beginning paid their army in cash. Almost all the historians have praised the administration during Gupta reign. They patronized art, literature and learning. they adopted the some major for the work of the public welfare and thus, tried their best to make their subjects happy and prosperous. The military system was elaborate and highly organized due to which the Gupta rulers could be successful in facing foreign invasion.

Economic System of the Guptas: The stability and prosperity in the economy and trade resulted in the progress in all other areas. Although agriculture continued as an important economic activity, industry and trade also flourished during Gupta period. We will discuss Economic aspects of Guptas in the following sub-headings.

Agriculture: Agriculture formed the chief economic activity. Therefore, the Guptas paid special attention to increase agricultural production. Inscriptions of the period talk about various types of lands. Kshetra was the land under cultivation, Khila, Aprahata were the lands which were not under cultivation. There were always efforts to bring uncultivable land under cultivation. In different regions, different land measures were followed. Nivartana was a land measure in some areas whereas in Bengal regions terms like Kulyavapa and Dronavapa were used. All major categories of crops were cultivated which included cereals like barley, wheat and paddy, all varieties of pulses, vegetables, grams. Cotton and sugarcane which are cash crops continued to be grown. However, potatoes and tomatoes were not known during this period.

1.3 Irrigation System

Since agriculture was one of the main sources of revenue in the Gupta Period, one of the main tasks of the rulers was to focus on the irrigation.

- **Reservoir:** The Sudersana reservoir of Saurashtra was repaired from time to time. Various rulers took care of this during various period of time considering its importance for irrigation.

- **Wells:** This was another method of irrigation. In that system water was drawn from the wells and supplied to the fields through well prepared channels.

- **Ghati-Yantra:** In this method of irrigation, a number of pots shall be to a chain and when the chain with the pots reach down to the water of the hull, the chain and the pots rotate filling the pots with water and emptying them. This system of irrigation was called as Araghatta. Harshacharitra of Banabhatta gives evidence of fields being irrigated with araghatta.

There were references to the sale of land in the inscriptions. The land purchased from the district officials were gifted to the Vedic Brahmins, Jain or Buddhist monasteries. Not only that service in the kingdom was also paid through land assignments. People who received land and who did not cultivate themselves started increasing in this period. These kinds of people enjoyed superior rights in the land. Gramikas, Kutumbis and Mahattaras were different categories of people who lived in the villages. The condition of ordinary peasants in the villages was bad. Krishibala, Karshaka or Kinass were some of the ordinary peasants who had low income and social status in the rural society. State imposed lot of taxes on the people. The practice of forced labour vishti also existed during this period.

1.4 Trade and Commerce

Trade becomes necessary as all goods are not available at one place. Therefore, trade continued as it flourished under Mauryas. Trade routes lining various parts of the country were also developing. Gupta rulers minted varieties of coins including silver, copper, led and gold coins. These coins were used as exchange in trade during this period. Merchants enjoyed high position in this time. Nagarasreshi and Sarthavaha were the two trading community representatives who were involved in the administration at the district level. That merchants constituted an important section of urban society is borne by the fact that seals of merchants were found in cities like Vaishali, Pataliputra and Ujjain. Merchants formed like guilds or Srenis which facilitated trade.

People following different crafts formed different jati or caste. Dharmasastras of this period assign lower status to all craftsmen than Brahman, Kshatriya or Vaishya. Suvarnakaras or gold smiths and Kumbhakarars or potters formed different jatis or castes during this period. Some sources suggest trade and crafts production started declining from Gupta period onwards. This, in turn, led to the decline of cities and towns. Therefore, society had to depend more on agricultural production.

1.5 Revenue Administration

Among others, land revenue formed the main source of income to the state.

- **Vog Kara or Chungi Kara:** The state collected this tax to pay village and town employees. This was levied on goods in some times.

- **Excise Duty or Bhootpratya :** This was levied on goods produced within the empire. Besides, taxes were levied on protected cities, ports and ferries.

The state claimed one-sixth of agricultural produce as its share. A regular department supervised survey and measurement of land and collection of revenue from the land. Gopasramin was an officer who looked after accounts registers, checked revenue fraud, collected royal dues. Transactions were recorded by an officer known as pustapala (record keeper). Uparikara was levied on oil and cloth which were transported from one city to another. Traders had to pay sulka in order to trade as a license fee. The kings had absolute right over mines, treasure troves etc.

1.6 Society

Society during Gupta period was as conceived by Brahmanas was of four-fold in nature, i.e, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras. However, apart from this scheme, numerous castes seem to be emerging in this period. Varna order was an ideal order and numerous groups that were emerging in society whose identity could not be determined. Castes were also not confined to the professions the tradition assigned to them. As kings started granting lands to brahmanas which

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were known as Brahmadityas or Agraharas, the idea of varna based society also spreading in new areas.

They, therefore, tried to give fictitious explanations of origins of some castes. So, some castes originated through varna-samkara or inter-marriages between various varnas. In the same way, various foreign ruling dynasties like the Greek, Sicythians were given semi-kshatriya status as they were not considered pure kshatriyas. Similarly, many tribal groups that had to be absorbed into Brahmanical society were given fictitious origins.

Apadharma, Dharmasastras say, or conduct to be followed during period of distress. This means that various varnas could take up professions not assigned to them. Therefore, the real society was different from the ideal one. Brahmanas continued to be recognized as high as they were learners of Sanskrit and doing Vedic activities. No matter what religion the rulers followed like Buddhism, Jainism, they patronized Brahmanas. Some castes were kept out of varna order which were known as antyajas or untouchables. The Chandalas, the Charmakaras and some other castes were considered impure and outcastes. The position of women except some royal women was low. Women were expected to be ideal wives and mothers. Some Brahman texts give women the place they gave to Shudras.

Keywords

1. **Hundi**- a financial instrument that developed in medieval India for use in trade and credit transactions.
2. **Agrahara**- it was a grant of land and royal income from it, typically by a king or a noble family in India (for religious purpose).
3. **Sulka**- a commercial tax, taken from the traders when transported from one cite to another.
4. **Pethaka**- a group or collection of villages.

Summary

After the study of various aspects of Gupta administration, economy and society, we conclude that some fundamental changes took place in this period. Various smaller kings continued to rule if they accepted the sovereignty of the Guptas. Agricultural productions were given importance as it was the main source of income. Various irrigations facilities have been provided. Land grants to Brahmanas as gifts became common. There was difference of condition between rich and poor farmers. Trade was in progress although craft production gradually declined. Varna continued to the norm but various groups were kept of it. Many foreign ruling dynasties were absorbed into varna. But the position of women during this period declined considerably.

Self Assessment

(1) The founder of the Gupta Empire was:

- A. Sri Gupta
- B. Ghatotkach
- C. Chandragupta
- D. Samudragupta

(2) Which one of the following was a land measure in Gupta period?

- A. Dharaka
- B. Karsha
- C. Nivartana
- D. Vimsopaka

(3) The word Vishti means

- A. Forced labour
- B. Irrigation tax
- C. Rights of slaves
- D. Property of women

(4) The ministers were known as

- A. Pradvivaka
- B. Sachive
- C. Amatya
- D. Sumantra

(5) During budhagupta's reign, Damodarpur copper plate mentions about

- A. Bhandagaradhikrita
- B. Mahapratihara
- C. Ashtakula-adhikarana
- D. D)Sarvadhyaksha

(6) Bhagakara is related to

- A. Police tax
- B. Security tax
- C. Bhog
- D. Land tax

(7) What made the Gupta period economy prosperous and advanced

- A. Ownership of land
- B. Reservoir
- C. Trade and commerce
- D. Agriculture and trade

(8) Sudersana reservoir of _____ was repaired by Skandagupta

- A. Vindhya
- B. Saurashtra
- C. Pataliputra
- D. Ujjain

(9) Which land was called as forest land

- A. Aprahita
- B. Vasti
- C. Kshetra
- D. Gapata Sarah

(10)Emperor that first issued silver coins in Gupta Dynasty

- A. Skandgupta

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B. Chandragupta II

C. Srigupta

D. Chandragupta

(11) Most important industry during Gupta period was

A. Pottery

B. Textile

C. Commerce

D. Ivory work

(12) Brihat Samhita mentions about how many types of jewellery

A. 18

B. 22

C. 21

D. 25

(13) Main crop during this period was

A. Maize

B. Cotton

C. Ragi

D. Sugarcane

(14) Who stated, "only those who cultivated state land had to part a share of the grain".

A. Hiuen-Tsang

B. Fa-Hien

C. Xuanzang

D. Yuan-Chwang

(15) Untouchables were also known as

A. Antyajas

B. Rajju

C. Udakabhag

D. Sarvarisht

Answers for Self Assessment

1. A 2. C 3. A 4. B 5. C

6. D 7. D 8. B 9. A 10. D

11. A 12. B 13. D 14. B 15. A

Review Questions

- (1) Describe in detail the administrative organization of Gupta Rulers.
- (2) Critically examine the Republics states during Gupta Era.
- (3) Give a brief account on Gupta Provincial administration.
- (4) Discuss the salient features of Gupta Local administration.
- (5) Give a detailed account of the Social conditions of the people during Gupta Period.
- (6) Throw light on Economic conditions of India during Gupta reign.
- (7) Write a brief note on Military System under the Gupta reign.



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Unit 02: The Rise and Growth of Guptas

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Objectives

Gupta empire was one of the greatest empires in ancient India. This unit deals with various developments in arts, literature, religion science and technology. After going through this unit, you shall be able to know:

- Different developments which took place in religious sphere;
- Whether we can call Gupta period as “Golden Age” for lot of developments in culture;
- What Gupta emperors did to develop art, language and literature;
- the significant developments in architecture, painting and sculpture areas; and
- vibrant literary activity and high benchmarks set by literature in this period

Introduction

In ancient Indian history, the Gupta period has often been characterized as golden age. This was because of the significant achievements which were achieved by the Gupta rulers in art, language and literature. Guptas period marks a departure in terms of great achievements particularly in cultural area. The Guptas mostly were the devotees of Hindu Gods and goddesses. They patronized sanskrits scholars on a large scale and gave lot of gifts to the artists. Although earlier rulers patronized arts, it was under Guptas that they reached new heights. From highest kings down to nobles, rich merchants had enough surplus to support artists. The Gupta rulers patronized cultural pursuits on massive scale which can be known from artifacts etc. of the period.

2.1 Development of Arts

This period is described as the resurgence of Brahmanism. Because the Gupta were very much eager to build temples and placing the idols of Gods and Goddesses. The importance of image worship during this period along with Bhakti ideology led to the construction of huge temples. They usually installed the idols of deities in Garbhagriha (sanctum sanatorium) were placed. We can see a large number of temples. The temples were built with stone or brick. In the beginning temples were small structures sometimes some temples had central shrines with roofs with the provision for water drainage. The temple near the *chaitya*-hall at Sanchi is a well-known temple of this period. It was a well- designed with an enclosure in the form of a square chamber and verandah or portico in the front side. This formed the basic plan for all temples built in this period and later.

In fact, temple-building activity during this period is evolved from rock-cut shrines of earlier tradition. But it reached its high level during this period. This phase was so important that it continued to influence temple building up to medieval times. In fact, it laid foundation for the Indian character of temple architecture. The temples of Gupta period reflect beauty and aesthetics. These following temples which survived tells us about this character. Temple building activity was not confined not only in the regions Guptas ruled but also to far flung areas like Assam. Many of these temples are adorned with very beautiful relief sculptures which complement architectural schemes of the temples. The Deogarh temple, which was dedicated primarily to Vishnu, attracts us because of the conception of ornate sculptural reliefs in this temple such as the the *Gajendramoksha* relief, *Nara-Naranaya* relief, "Vishnu on Shesha" relief etc.

Cave architecture was also in practice along with building temples. The beautiful paintings at the caves of Ajanta are best known examples of the period. Again, the caves temple at Udayagiri, in M.P was also constructed in this period. It was in Chandragupta 11 reign that twenty rock-cut chambers were carved inside the cave. These are the first kind of arts of Hindu tradition. These tells us that many Hindu iconographic ideas were already emerging by early 5th century A.D.

Although architectural activity primarily reflects Brahmanical ideas yet there were lot of magnificent structural remains of Stupas, *Chaityas* and *Viharas* of in this period. The Dhamekh *stupa* at Sarnath has remarkable geometric patterns and artistic designs. Kumara Gupta I founded the earliest brick structure of the Buddhist University in Nalanda. Another famous architectural exhibit of this time is 300 feet tall Buddha temple again at Nalanda. Buddhist *chaityas*, cave structures in western Maharashtra, monasteries at Kanheri, Bhaja, Bedsa, Junnar, and Mahar in Maharashtra were supported both by kings and as well as rich guilds, merchants and others. In the same way, many *Stupas* and *Viharas* built in Andhra Pradesh.

2.2 Painting

In the Gupta era painting developed like it was never before. The glory and splendor the painting achieved during this period is unmatched in ancient Indian history. Ajanta frescoes and cave paintings at Bagh in Madhya Pradesh and Badami/Vatapi in Karnataka stand out as best examples. Even the selection of the site of Ajanta was done with a lot of vision. Ajanta caves are, in fact, located in a long horse-shaped hill overlooking a deep valley. These are numbered around 29. Out of these Cave no. 1, 2, 16, 17 and 19 have survived which give us way to understand excellence of painting in the Gupta phase. Most of them belong to the Gupta period.

The subject-matter of Ajanta frescoes may be divided into different heads such as a) Figures of the Buddha and *Bodhisattvas*; b) Scenes and incidents from the Buddha's life; c) Narratives from the *stories* of previous births of the Buddha (*Jatakas*); d) Representations from nature, such as flowers, trees and animals; e) Mythological figures such as *Yakshas*, *Apsaraas*, *Gandharvas* etc.

The murals during this period are replete with depictions of both religious as well as secular life.,

Almost all aspects of secular domain, social and natural life were painted, although the central theme is religious. Flora and fauna have also been painted freely in a masterly fashion. Opulent mountains, lush vegetation, forests and gardens, blooming flowers, luxuriant creepers, flowering trees, flowing streams, soaring birds, fighting or springing animals, roaming predators, monkeys jumping from branch to branch, naïve beings like deer and elephants have been painted. This shows how closely the painter might have observed, grasped, perceived and understood nature and the world around him. We can observe not only the lives of rich people, but also the scenes from the lives of the poor and beggars.

The various ideas and imaginations of artists of the time can be known from the representations of meditative Buddha, *Bodhisattvas*, kings and queens, princes and princesses, nobles, warriors, sages, hunters, butchers, beautiful and graceful women as *apsaraas*, *naayikas*, scenes from home, court and palace life, toilet and sports, processions and festivities and many more. Both sculptures and paintings of beautiful women tell us their sense of fashion, ways of arranging hair, variety and designs of ornaments worn by them during this time. The literary descriptions of feminine beauty of the time most often correspond to the representations of women in paintings at Ajanta caves.



Ajanta caves are a fine example of art during Gupta period



Painting on the walls of Ajanta Caves

Decorations on ceilings, pedestals, columns, facades, doorways and window- frames stand as testimony to the painters' extraordinary ability of conception and technique. One is forced to think that the artists did everything in turning the caves into the masterpieces of their marvelous skill and craft. Even after fifteen hundred years, the brilliance of their colors has not faded. These paintings in a way set a standard and a norm for all contemporary painting of Gupta's times. Mention may be made about the depiction in Cave 1 of the Bodhisattva declaring his renunciation, lord Indra and his entourage flying to greet the Buddha in Tushita heaven in cave no.17 are definitely a sight to appreciate. In the same way the paintings in Bagh cave, too, are spectacular because of their vigorous execution and variety of decorative designs such as scrolls and patters.



Dashavtar Temple

2.3 Growth and Development of Literature

Eager patronage Gupta kings extended to Sanskrit led to an all-encompassing expansion of Sanskrit literature. This period witnessed an efflorescence of religious literature. During this period the intelligentsia presented, explained and wrote precepts and doctrines of “neo-Hinduism”, philosophical thoughts, ethics etc. such as Puranas and Epics. The rulebooks/law-books (Sashtras) were compiled as authored for education, edification and culture of the common people. Many digests on moral and social conduct such as *Vishnu Smriti*, *Narada Smriti*, *Yajnavalkya Smriti*, *Katyayana Smriti* and *Brihaspati Smriti* were composed during Gupta times.

Initially, the *Puranas* belonged to the bardic literature. Later, in Gupta and post-Gupta periods they came in the hands of Brahmin authors. They made some additions to the histories of royal dynasties the portions glorifying, praising and venerating the *Trideva* (Trinity): Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. During this age only, the most important of the 18 *Maha- Puranas* were given their final shape. They were: *Markandeya Purana*, *Brahmanda Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Bhagavata Purana* and *Matsya Purana*.



Epics Like Mahabharata and Ramayana are considered to be written in this period

It is believed that the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were redrafted around 4th-5th century CE. The *Mahabharata*, of Vyasa was expanded from the original 24,000 verses to 100,000 verses. It came to acquire the status of *Pancha-Veda* (fifth Veda). We can see that there is much common material in this

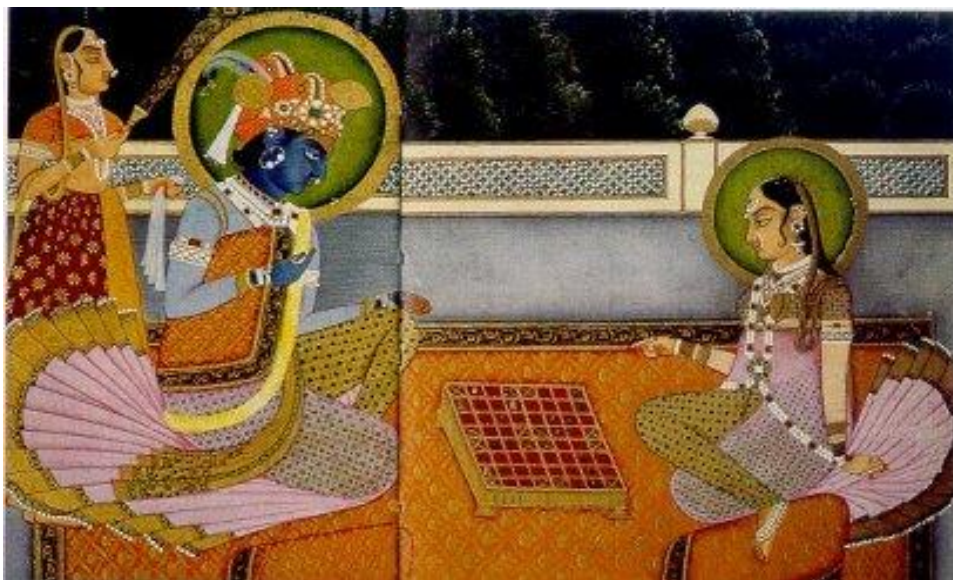
Unit 02: The Rise and Growth of Guptas

Epic and other *shastras*. Some portions of the *Manusmriti*, for example, appear identically in the *Shantiparva* of the *Mahabharata*.

Kalidasa, the greatest Sanskrit poet of the time wrote dramas like *Abhijnana-Shakuntalam*, *Malavikagnimitram*, *Vikramorvasiyam* and poetic works such as *Raghuvamsham*, *Ritusamhaara*, *Kumarasambhavam* and *Meghadutam*. These show the unsurpassed and unrivalled literary standards achieved during this time. There was no match in their verbal and metrical perfection. Kalidasa was supposed to have acquainted with the various branches of Brahmanical learning. He acquired knowledge of the entire Vedic corpus, philosophical systems like *Yoga* and *Sankhya* along with fine arts like drawing, painting and music.

In his story of Shakuntala and her ultimate reunion with her lover – king Dushyanta – is his best creation that remains the supreme achievement of ancient Indian literature and stagecraft. His second work *Meghadutam* (Cloud Messenger) came to be reckoned as the most fascinating poetry that was ever written in Sanskrit. The *Abhijnana-Shakuntalam* has been treated as one of the best 100 literary compositions of the world. In addition to *Bhagavadgita*, it was another Indian literary piece to be translated into European languages. *Bhagavadgita* which is a part of the *Mahabharata* was also redrafted in the Gupta period.

Lyrical, the *Meghadutam* was composed in over 100 stanzas. In this literary piece the exiled Yaksha conveys thorough the cloud his love, conjugal devotion and pain of separation from his beloved wife. It reflects human sentiments and striking figures of speech. The similes which the author uses appeal to the reader/ listener on the merit of their variety and appropriateness and imagination. In describing feeling, passion and emotion he stands unmatched. In *Raghuvamsham* he extols the all-round victories of Rama and is said to be indirectly pinpointing some Gupta conquests too. The *Kumarasambhavam* is a tale about the courtship of Shiva and Parvati and the birth of their son Skanda. The *Ritusamhaara* illustrates six seasons and this piece is full of the elements of *shringaara* (decoration and ornamentation). His *Malavikagnimitram*, among others, gives a complete definition of *naatya* and the attributes which a proficient dancer should possess.



Another author of this period, Bhasa wrote 13 plays. Yet another great poet Bhairavi also belonged to this period. He wrote *Kiratarjuniyam*. Vishakhadatta is known for his *Mudrarakshasa* whose plot revolves around the tactfulness and schemes of the canny Chanakya. Vatsyayana wrote *Kamasutra*: a treatise on pleasure (*kama*). Shudraka, composed the *Mrichchhakatika* (the Little Clay Cart) in this period. Its theme is the love affair between the poor Brahmin Charudatta a beautiful, cultured, accomplished and wealthy courtesan Vasantasena. The life of the royal court is amply reflected in these Sanskrit poems and plays, with the only possible exception of the *Mrichchhakatika*.

This period also witnessed development and refinement of Sanskrit grammar on the foundation prepared by Panini (c. 6th-4th century BCE) and Patanjali (c. 2nd century BCE). The lexicographer

Amarsimha – another pride of Chandragupta Vikramaditya's court – penned the most popular Sanskrit dictionary *Amarakosha* (also called the *Namalinganushasana*). It has remained an indispensable lexicon of Sanskrit till our times. It is memorized by students and scholars to this day in learning Sanskrit.

Indians of the Gupta age, in addition to intellectual taste also possessed scientific spirit of enquiry and pursued scientific subjects. Great push was given to scientific studies. "Zero" and the subsequent evolution of the decimal system are credited to be the path-breaking discoveries of this period. Brahmagupta, Aryabhatta and Varahamihira were, in truest sense, the earliest and foremost mathematicians and astronomers of the world. Varahamihira wrote *Brihat Samhitaa* that deals with astronomy, astrology, botany, natural history and physical geography. His *Panchasiddhantika* throws light on five astronomical theories (*siddhanta*), two of which bear thorough familiarity and close resemblance with Greek astronomical practice. The two creations by him on horoscopy – *Laghu-Jataka* and *Brihaj-Jataka* – were widely consulted from the Gupta period onwards.

Aryabhatta composed *Aryabhattachiyam*: a famous work on geometry, algebra, arithmetic and trigonometry. He belonged to Pataliputra. He was an expert in various kinds of calculations. He carefully studied and scanned the methods and works of Greek astronomers as well as his Indian predecessors in the field. But, he did not follow them blindly. He evolved his own concepts and established his own facts. In his words, "I dived deep in the ocean of astronomical theories, true and false, and rescued the precious sunken jewel of true knowledge by means of the boat of my own intellect". In his *Surya Siddhanta* he has analysed and explained the causes of solar and lunar eclipses. He calculated the size of the Earth nearly accurately. Contrary to the existing beliefs, he was the first to find out and declare that the Earth revolves round the Sun and rotates on its axis. He also threw considerable light on the variations in planetary motions and relevant information on the Sun, the Moon etc. He was also the first to evolve "sine" functions and utilize them in calculations. His pioneering efforts resulted in the making of astronomy as a separate discipline. Earlier it was a part of mathematics. He was also the first to use the decimal place-value theory the notable creations on medicine include *Charaka Samhitaa* and *Sushruta Samhitaa*. An all-round progress in literature and knowledge-production was manifest during this time. The *Hasthyayurveda* composed by Maharshi Palakapya is the first systematic and meticulous exposition on veterinary science.



Literature during Gupta age

This period actually became a milestone in the evolution of philosophical ideas. The continuing philosophical debate was now centered on the following six schools/ systems of thought: *Nyaaya* (analysis), *Vaisheshika* (individual characteristics), *Sankhya* (enumeration), *Yoga* (application), *Mimamsa* (enquiry) and *Vedanta* (last portion of the *Vedas*).

And even the Jaina preachers of this age, Bhadrabahu II being the most prominent among them, also began authoring commentaries on their sacred texts such as *Niryuktis* and *Churnis*.

2.4 Sculpture

Sculpture during this period demonstrates very fine execution and high degree of skill. Perfect images of both Brahmanical and Buddhist in nature were developed. Very intelligent and good understanding of the fundamental principles of sculpture seem to have developed during this period.

A number of sculptures of Brahmanical deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, Ganesha, Surya and Buddhist and Jaina figures like the Buddha, *Bodhisattva*, *Tirthankara* are famous during this period. Incidents of Rama and Krishna from their lives were found effective success in the temple sculptures. Hari-Hara (a union of Vishnu and Shiva) statue was found in excavations in Madhya Pradesh. Krishna Lifting Mount Govardhana icon was discovered from Arra in Uttar Pradesh. Boar incarnation of Vishnu (varaha) was found here. It consists of boar head and human body. This was an artistic representation of story from Puranas.

Phallic worship was popular in Shiva cult and *Ekamuhki Shivalinga* was found in the temples at placed like Khoh and Udayagiri. However, we do find several images of Shaivite deities like Skanda, a Shaivite deity was found in Vidisha and Udayagiri. Goddesses Lakshmi, Durga and Parvati images are also found. Worship of sun was also practiced during this period.

Buddhist art too flourished during Gupta rule. Both Buddhist and Jaina rich devotees installed inspiring and marvelous images of the Buddha, *Bodhisattvas* and Jaina *tirthankaras*. These images express perfect combination of inner spirit and outer form of spirituality. Some new elements were introduced in fashioning the Buddha images. These innovations became the hallmarks of this period. Curly hair as opposed to the shaven head of Kushana Buddha statue, various postures *mudras* such hand-poses are some of the examples.

The Gupta sculptor is restrained by a conscious sense of morality. Drapery in the Kushana art was deployed to reveal the charm of the flesh. But, drapery in Gupta art was made to conceal the flesh. Nudity of any sort is completely eliminated. More spiritual calmness is noticed in the Buddha statue of the Gupta phase than that made under the Gandhara and Mathura schools of art of the preceding centuries. The Hellenistic influence made visible in the Gandhara style was altogether abandoned in this period.

Among Buddha images which were recovered from Sarnath the most extraordinary is that of the compassionate Buddha rested on a diamond seat in preaching (*dharmachakra pravarttana*) mode, giving his first sermon. It is noteworthy for its calm smile and serene contemplative attitude. Sarnath style reached up to eastern and western India as well as Deccan. Standing Buddha from Mathura is another image worth mentioning.

Around six feet high Buddha image of bronze was found at Sultan Ganj near Bhagalpur (Bihar). It weighs over a tonne. Fa-Hsien mentions an over 82 feet high gigantic Buddha statue made of copper which has not been found. The Gupta artisans made images in iron, copper and bronze that shows their expertise in metallurgy and knowledge of advanced metal technology. There is adequate proof of widespread casting of images in bronze during this period. The best example of brilliance achieved in iron technology is the Mehrauli Iron Pillar (near Qutub Minar, Delhi). It is a solid shaft of pure iron, weighing around six tonnes. Dated around 4th century CE, it has remained rust-proof and corrosion-free even after 1500 years despite being exposed to sun, rain and storm. How it was produced is a mystery even today. It amply exhibits the exemplary standards of technological development under the Guptas. A pillar of this particular trait was not manufactured in any iron foundry in the West till about a century ago. These fine specimens reveal the marvels of the impressive metallurgical skill of the workmen during this period.



Sculptural Art was prominent during Golden Age of Guptas

Three Jaina sculptures from Durjanpura near Vidisha are particularly noteworthy. The best preserved of them shows a central figure with hands in *dhyana-mudra*. The body type shows semblance to the previous Kushana ideal, but the ornamentation of the halo behind the head indicates the transition to the Gupta model. All three of them are securely dated on the basis of their inscriptions to the time of Gupta king Ramagupta and therefore, besides their artistic value they are also an important document of the Gupta history.

The Ajanta caves are renowned all over the world for their beautiful paintings. However, there are also sculptures in these caves which are equally vocal about the magnificence of Gupta art. For example, the image in Cave 9 of Naagaraja seated with his queen.



The unusual, larger-than-life size horse sculpture from Khairigarh (UP) is believed to represent a sacrificial horse used by Samudragupta for one of his *Ashvamedha* rituals on the basis of the extremely withered inscription accompanying it. The *Ashvamedha* ritual is also depicted in his coins. The sculpture is made of beige sandstone. The Khairigarh region was important in the context of the early Gupta-Lichchhavi alliance.

Summary

Thus we can see that the rule of Gupta rulers is characterized by a high watermark of glory and splendor in the cultural sphere. Under them India entered a new epoch of culture and civilization. Indian intellect blossomed best and was at full display. This is reflected in the unprecedented growth of art, language and literature which gives a fair idea of the multifaceted cultural accomplishments of this time. The ideas and faculties of human mind operated freely and it led to the creation of innumerable literary and artistic masterpieces which have learnt in this unit.

Architecture particularly temple architecture began and traditions of image-making evolved systematically. Definite types and styles were developed, techniques were perfected and ideals of beauty were laid down with precision. Gupta sculpture reached a new level that shows expertise of combining depth of insight with greatest skill. The Buddhist and Brahmanical images of beauty, charm, grace and refinement clearly showcase rhythmic quality and mastery over depicting human expressions. Foreign influence visible in the Gandhara school of art was completely shaken off and the sculpture acquired true "Indian" character. The Ajanta frescoes show unique refinement of beauty and taste, harmony of form in the context of postures and attitudes of human figures, and excellent reproduction of various scenes from both religious and secular life. The Ajanta painters have left evidence of consummate skill in delineating animal as well as human figures. A panorama of the lives of a range of categories of people comes to light by looking at these paintings. The use of Pali and Prakrit was discouraged and discarded in favor of Sanskrit. With the rise of the Gupta rulers to power, Sanskrit got a favourable ambience to grow and develop. They were ardent admirers and patrons of Sanskrit and the intellectual urge that characterized this age can be seen in the authoring of myriad fictional and non-fictional accounts in this language. Progress in scientific disciplines is evidenced from the writings of Varahamihira and Aryabhata. In the same way, Kalidasa is also an acknowledged poet of this period.

Keywords

Ajanta frescoes- kind of wall or ceiling painting that were painted even before the plaster got dry.

Bardic Literature- the work of profession poet and guilds of medieval period.

Bhakti Ideology- a manoeuvre that throws light upon mutual devotion, love, emotion attachment of a devotee towards a personal god.

Bodhisattva- a person who is able to reach nirvana, basically Mahayana buddhism, where a person trying to acquire the stage of Buddha.

Chaitya- a place of worship.

Dharma chakra- wheel of law. The most important symbol of buddhism.

Garbhagriha- a temple's inner chamber where the main deity is said to be placed.

Gajendra-moksha- it says that the materialistic desires, sins originate a never-ending chain of karma in this entire world. Basically, humans are engaged in this cycle of birth and death until one day they realize and look beyond everything and submit themselves to the supreme authority.

Hellenistic style- it is something relating to greeks, their language, culture, tradition.

Neo- Hinduism – a sort of revivalism where Hinduism inspired new religious movement.

Vihara- dwelling place of the monks.

Self Assessment

1. Nalanda University was built by which king

- A. Kumaragupta
- B. Chandragupta II
- C. Samudragupta
- D. Skandagupta

2. Who is the author of Brihat Samhita

- A. Kalidasa
- B. Varahamihira
- C. Vagabhata
- D. Aryabhata

3. Who is the author of Abhigyan Shakuntalam

- A. Varahamihira
- B. Vagabhata
- C. Kalidasa
- D. Aryabhata

4. Harisena was the court poet of which ruler

- A. Samudragupta
- B. Skandagupta
- C. Kumaragupta
- D. None of the above

5. Who is the author of Panchatantra

- A. Vishnu Sharma
- B. Narayan Pandit

- C. Aryabhatta
- D. Bhamah

6. Who is the author of Mudrarakshasha

- A. Bhasa
- B. Kalidasa
- C. Vishakhadatta
- D. Harisena

7. In which of the following are Samudragupta's achievements mentioned?

- A. Allahabad pillar inscription.
- B. Junagard rock inscription.
- C. Mehrauli iron pillar inscription.
- D. Hathi gumpah edict.

8. Where is the famous Khandariya Mahadeva Temple located?

- A. Amaravati.
- B. Haridwar.
- C. Khajuraho.
- D. Nasik.

9. Who among the followings is credited with algebra?

- A. Aryabhatta.
- B. Bhaskara.
- C. Apastamba.
- D. Medhatithi.

10. Which one of the following one was not a characteristic feature of the architecture during the Gupta age?

- A. It saw the complete decline of the rock cut architecture.
- B. It saw the beginning of the structural procedure in architecture.
- C. It saw the employment of sized and dressed stone on a large scale.
- D. It saw the beginning of Panchayatana concept in temple architecture

11. The Sultanganj Buddha, currently located in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery of England is made of which of the following metal?

- A. Gold
- B. Copper
- C. Iron
- D. Silver

12. The caves of Ajanta are in

- A. Andhra Pradesh
- B. Madhya Pradesh
- C. Maharashtra
- D. Rajasthan

13. Gupta Period "The Golden Age of India" due to which of the following

- A. development in the field of science
- B. peace and prosperity
- C. religious tolerance
- D. all of above

14. Who anticipated Newton by saying that Earth attracts all things?

- A. Brahmagupta
- B. Aryabhatta
- C. Raghuvansa
- D. Vishakhadatta

15. Nalanda Mahavira was famous for the study of

- A. Hinduism
- B. Buddhism
- C. Jainism
- D. Persian

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. B | 3. C | 4. A | 5. A |
| 6. C | 7. A | 8. C | 9. A | 10. A |
| 11. B. | 12. C | 13. D | 14. A | 15. B |

Review Questions

1. Sanskrit literature is said to have a good domination during this period. Explain its characteristics
2. Give a detail account about the temple architecture or temple building of Gupta era.
3. It is said, "great push is given to the scientific study." Comment.
4. Explain why Gupta period is said to achieve heights in art, religion and philosophy.
5. What is the salient feature of the Buddhist art during the Gupta's.
6. Paintings are said to depict both religious and moral lifestyle. Explain in detail.



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Unit 03: Harsha & His Times

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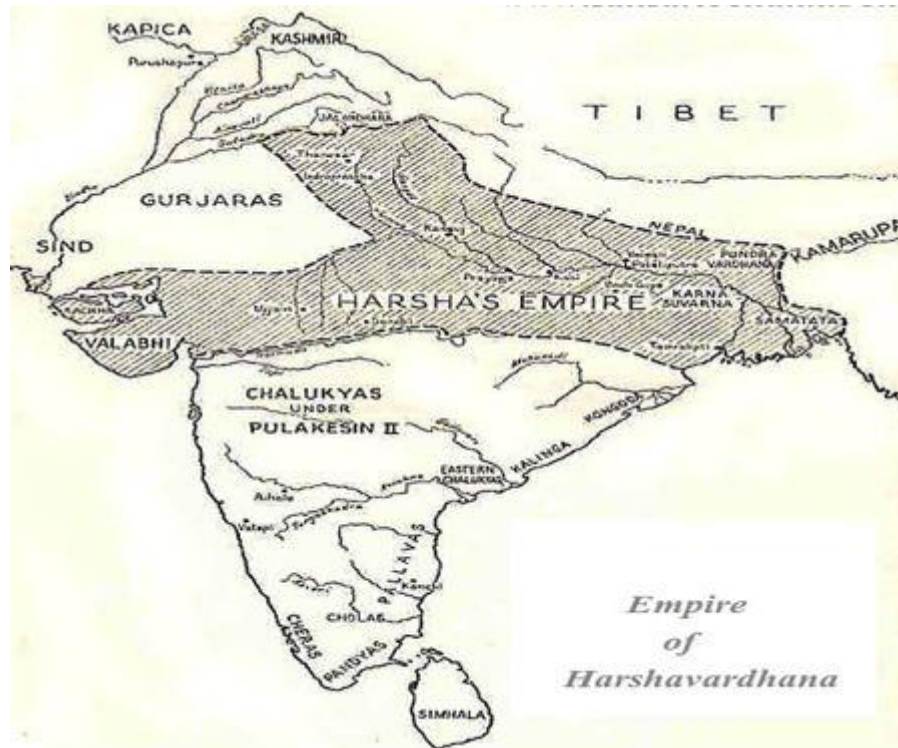
Objectives

Harsh Vardhan was one of the remarkable rulers of Ancient India. Many developments took place in his time. Buddhism flourished during his reign. After going through this unit, you shall be able to know:

- Why Harsha was known as great ruler after Gupta's;
- What developments took place in the administration during his reign; and
- What changes were taking place in society, religion and culture

Introduction

Harsha Vardhan was one of the remarkable rulers of ancient India. Both Bana and Hiuen Tsang give us information about his reign. Bana writes that the kingdom was founded by Pushpabhuti. The names of the kings- Maharaja Nara-varadhana, Maharaja Rajya-varadhana, Maharaja adityavardhana and Paramabhataraka Maharajadhiraj Prabhakar-varadhan can be gleaned from royal seals and inscriptions of the time. Prabhakar Vardhan was married to Yashomati Devi, and had three sons and one daughter named- Rajya-varadhan, Harsha-varadhan, Krishna and Rajyasri. In ancient India, Harsha is called the last great Hindu emperor of India, but he was neither a staunch Hindu nor the ruler of the whole country. But as we can see from the sources, his authority was limited to north India excluding Kashmir. Rajasthan, Punjab, UP, Bihar and Orissa were under his direct control, but his sphere of influence spread over a much wider.



3.1 Harsha's Kingdom

The predecessors of Harsha ruled over the kingdom of Sthanvisvara, modern Thanesar in Haryana. However, the origin of this kingdom is shrouded in obscurity. Our knowledge about the reign of Harsha is "far more precise than what we possess respecting any other early Indian ruler." Before Harsha, the Guptas, basing their power in UP and Bihar, ruled over north and western India until the mid-sixth century. The Hunas established their supremacy over Kashmir, Punjab and western India from about AD 500 onwards. North and western India came under the control of about half a dozen feudatories. Later, gradually one of these dynasties ruling at Thanesar in Haryana extended its authority over all other feudatories. The ruler who made this possible was Harshavardhana (AD 606-47).

3.2 Prabhakar-Vardhan

According to Baijnath Sharma, Prabhakarvardhan was the first ruler in the dynasty of the Pushpabhutis. He can be treated as the real founder of Pushpabhuti hegemony with complete independence. Bana eulogizes Prabhakarvardhan a "a lion to the Huna deer, a burning fever to the king of Sindhu, a troubler of the sheep of Gurjara king, a bilious fever to that scent elephant, the Lord of Gandhara, destroyer of the skills of the Latas, and axe to the creeper which is the goddess of fortune of Malava." With many conquests and others, he is said to have laid the foundation on which Harsha built his great kingdom.

3.3 Rajyavardhana and Harshavardhana

Both of them were sent in an expedition against the Hunas. However, during the course of this expedition, the news of Prabhakarvardhan getting seriously ill reached. Therefore, Rajyavardhan rushed back to Thaneshvara. But by the time he reached, his father had already died and his mother had burnt herself on the bank of the Saraswati river. Rajyavardhana was struck with so much grief that he declined the throne in favour of his younger brother Harsha. But Harsha refused to accept the throne, so ultimately rajyavardhan had to ascend it in 605 AD. No sooner did rajyavardhan ascend the throne, the information that Grahavarman, husband of Rajyasri was killed by Devagupta and Rajyasri was imprisoned reached him. Rajyavardhan at once marched against Devagupta, leaving his younger brother Harsha in the capital. Rajyavardhan defeated the Malava army easily but king Gauda allured him to confidence and killed him. Young Harsha was only 16 years old when death of Rajyavardhan occurred. Harsha was not in mood to take up the throne. However, some wise men and councillors to the state impressed upon him the need to take the responsibility. Thus, Harsha became the king of Thaneshvara in 606 AD and he rescued Rajyasri later.

We can reconstruct the early history of Harsha's reign from Banabhatta's Harshacharitra. Banabhatta was his court poet and noted down events of the kingdom. Another account of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited India in the seventh century and stayed in the country for about fifteen years also supplements other sources. Inscriptions which were issued during Harsha's time too spoke of various types of taxes and officials who were involved at various levels.

Soon, Harsha made Kannauj his centre of power, and from there he extended his rule to all directions. By the seventh century Pataliputra declined gradually and kannauj came to prominence. There is reason why this happened. Pataliputra became important and strong because trade and commerce, and the widespread use of money. But, once trade declined, money became scarce, and officers and soldiers were paid through land grants and the city of Pataliputra lost its importance. Gradually, power shifted to military camps(skandhavaras), and places of strategic importance which dominated long stretches of land now belonged to kannauj. Some historians say that emergence of Kannauj coincides with the feudal age in north India. Located right at the centre of the doab, Kannauj was well fortified as it is situated on an elevated area.

3.4 Military Conquests of Harsha

War With Pulakesin II

The Aihole inscription, authored by Ravikirti, of 634 AD, 'Harsha to whom "hosts of feudatories" offered their homage "through Pulakesin had his joy(Harsha) melted away by fear, with his rows of lordly elephants fallen in battle", says that'. The Aihole inscription further tells us that somewhere the battle was fought between Vindhya and Narmada. War between Harsha and Pulakesin II is of great importance as Hiuen Tsang also mentions clearly that Harsha was the only one who marched at the head of his troops to defeat Pulakesin II and before the march began he gathered troops from five Indies and collected the best leaders; warriors across the world. But Harsha was unable to defeat him. After defeating Harsha, Pulakesin II secured the title of 'Parmeshwar'," by defeating Harsha-wardhan, the war-like load of all the regions of the north. V.A Smith is of view that Pulakesin II, "guarded the passes on the Narmada so effectually that Harsha was constrained to retire discomfited, and to accept that river as his frontier."

Sasanka

Manjusri-Mulakalpa states that "Harsha marched against Pundra, the capital of Sasanka, defeated him and forbade him to move out of his country." Sasanka, the king of Gauda, was a contemporary of Harsha and an ally of Devagupta who killed Grahavarman. Therefore, it was no wonder that Sasanka who killed Rajya Vardhan became the target of Harsha. Banabhatta in his work Harshacharitra states that the, " Digvijaya of Harsha started with elaborate preparations for war against the Gauda king who is described as 'the vilest of Gaudas' and 'the vile Gauda serpent'." But Hiuen Tsang writes that Sasanka was a persecutor of Buddhism, who destroyed Buddhist monasteries between Kushinagar and Varanasi, cut down Bodhi tree at gaya and replaced the image of buddha by that of shiva. Later in 637 AD when Sasanka visited Bodhi tree, he was found dead.

Nepal and Kashmir

R.K. Mookerji remarks that "The life tells of an episode...which shows that Kashmir in a way acknowledged the suzerainty of Harsha: the episode of Harsha compelling the king of Kashmir to part with a relic of buddha. Bana refers to the inaccessible land of snowy mountains subdued by Harsha himself; and these phrases might signify Kashmir also." Another author Sylvain Levi states, that "Nepal at that time was a dependency of Tibet, which, after the Harsha's death, helped Nepal in supporting the Chinese envoy Wang-hiuen-tse in his expedition against the usurper of Harsha's throne." According to him, Nepal was not a dependency of Harsha.

Orissa

According to contemporary sources, Orissa became a part of Harsha's empire through conquest. An expedition was led by Harsha to Ganjam which fixed his camps in Orissa and after his conquest a conference named Mahayana was held there and various Buddhist scholars were invited. After the conference got over, Harsha offered Jayasena, the buddhist scholar, revenues of eight large towns of Orissa", by Harsha.

Kannauj Assembly

A meeting of Kannauj Assembly was called which lasted twenty three days and the basic motive of the meeting was to discuss Mahayanism. Harsha called an assembly at kannauj in around, 643 AD and the objective was to chair Hiuen Tsang and spread the teachings of buddha in the country. Nearly 3000 Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhist monks were present there, along with them 3000 Brahmans and Nigrodhas and 1000 buddhist scholars from Nalanda attended this meeting. Harsha proposed Hiuen Tsang to chair and asked him to discuss Mahayanism. There was some resentment because of partiality shown to Hiuen Tsang. Then Harsha came to know that Hiuen Tsang's life was in danger, he proclaimed that," if anyone should touch or hurt the master of law, he shall be forthwith executed and whoever speaks against him, his tongue shall be cut out; but all those who desire to profit by his instructions, relying on my good will, need not fear this manifesto." In the end, no one entered into the discussion forum.

Prayaga Assembly

Moksha-Parishad, another assembly was arranged by Harsha at Prayaga, in the very same year as of Kannauj Assembly which lasted for 75 days. This great assembly met on the sand of rivers Ganga and Yamuna meet and royal companions of Harsha and Hiuen Tsang were invited in the assembly. It is estimated that more than half a million of people were present at the occasion. On first day buddha's image was placed in one of the temporary building on the sands and huge amount of valuable articles and clothing were distributed to the people. Second and third day the images of Surya and Shiva were honoured. On fourth day ten thousand buddhist monks were given gifts. All who came for the meeting were provided with flowers, perfumes, food and drinks. Brahmans were given gifts for next twenty days. We are told that he assembly lasted for nearly 75 days. To quote Hiuen Tsang,"by this time the accumulation of five years was exhausted. Except the horses, elephants, and military accoutrements, which were necessary for maintaining order and protecting the royal estate, nothing remained. In addition, the king freely gave away his gems and goods, his clothing and necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets, chaplets, neck-jewel and bright head-jewels. When nothing was left, Harsha begged from his sister an ordinary second-hand garment, after wearing it, he paid worship to the buddhas of the ten regions, and rejoiced that his treasure had been bestowed in the field of religious merit."

3.5 Coins and Seals

Hoernle found a gold coin which was attributed to Harsha. This coin depicts the "legend Harshadeva with the figure of a horseman. Silver coins were founded by Sir Richard Burn, out of which 9 were of Sri Pratapashila, 284 of Siladitya and 1 of Harsha. Silver coins of Harsha are also known as Drachma. Two seals of Harsha were found later on, the first one, Sonpat copper seal which has a figure of a bull at the top while second was Nalanda seal that has a mutilated inscription in which Harsha is referred as Maharajadhiraja.



Hiuen Tsang

Another Buddhist scholar monk, Chinese traveller and a translator also came to India during the reign of Harshavardhan, through silk route. He was none other than, Xuanzang and the Prince of Pilgrims and he wrote his famous book "Si-Yu-Ki Buddhist which records the western world", It also gives details about the administrative, economic, social, political conditions of India found during that time. He spent five years at Nalanda and studied under the supervision of Acharya Shilabhadra.

Thus we can see that Harsha was an ideal ruler and a great conqueror and that can be seen by the vast territory brought by him under his control. H.G. Rawlinson remarks that "Harsha was a remarkable man and stands beside Ashoka and Akbar among the greatest ruler that India has produced. Soldiers and administrator, unwearied in his efforts for the good of his subjects, pious and merciful, a patron of literature and himself a poet and dramatist of distinction, he stands forth on the page of history a bright and fascinating figure." -

3.6 Harsha's Administration

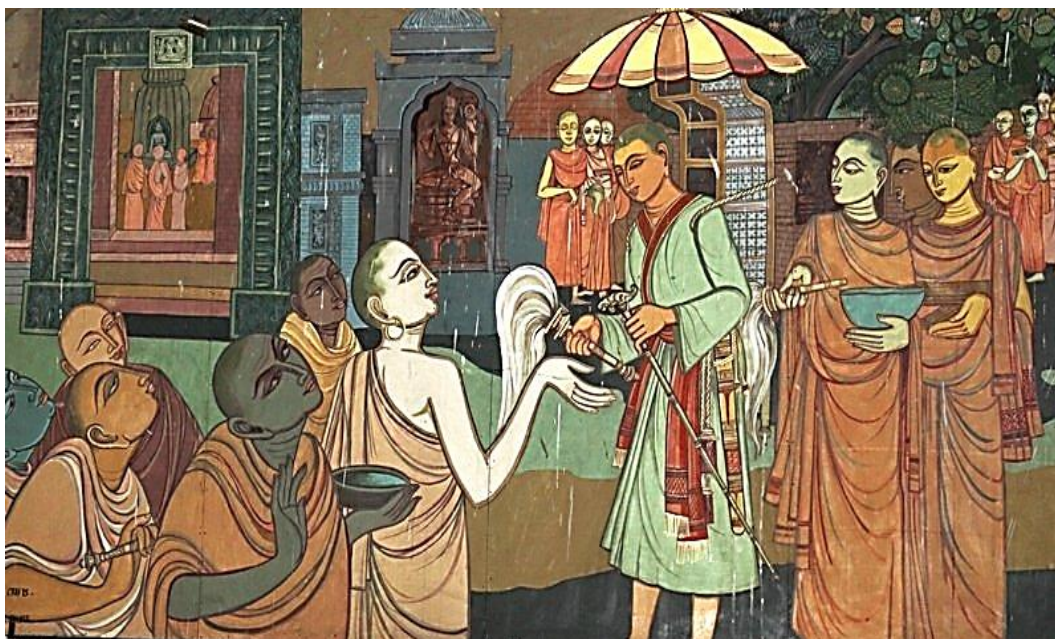
- Council of Ministers
- Secretariat
- Army
- Divisions of Empire
- Taxes
- Penal System

King Harsha was the pinnacle of administration. He thought that the king must constantly exert himself in order to keep administrative efficiency. Even Hiuen Tsang informs us that Harsha was indefatigable. It is to be noted that the reign of Harshavardhana marks the transition from ancient to medieval times. Harsha governed his empire on the same lines as did the Guptas, but his administration had become feudal and decentralized. Harsha practiced physical inspection through tours. When any irregularity was reported in the manners of the people of the cities, he went to find out that. This is not to say that his inspection tours were confined to urban areas only. He equally visited rural areas. It is true that theoretically the government of Harsha was a monarchy. However, a large amount of self-government was allowed to the people in their different spheres. Most of the governance was left in the hands of village communities. There was considerable co-operation between the Central Government and the popular bodies of the village communities. Many observe that the Government of Harsha on the whole was a mixture or synthesis of autocratic and egalitarian elements.

Council of Ministers

A council of ministers assisted the king. The council tried to exert its influence on whenever there was vacancy to the throne. The council of ministers had a say not only in terms of the succession of the king, but also influenced foreign policy. Some historians believe that it was on the advice of council of ministers that Rajya-vardhana took the fatal step of accepting the invitation of the enemy and subsequently got killed. Bea remarks that "owing to the fault of his ministers, he was led to subject his person to the hand of his enemy."

Secretariat



Evidences suggest that there might have been a wellorganised secretariat at the capital. The author of *Harshacharita*, Bana considers Avanti as Minister of Foreign, relations and war. He writes that Simhanandawas the Commander-in-Chief of Harsh. Again according to him Kurntala was a chief cavalry officer. Chief commandant of the elephant force was Skandagupta. Copper Plate inscription of Madhuvana refers Skandagupta as Mahapramatara Mahasamanta. It again talks about Samanta Maharaja- Isvagupta as keeper of records. Bhanu is referred to as the Keeper of Records in the Banskhera copper plate inscription. The chief officers of the state were Mahasamanta, Maharaja, Daussadha-sadhanika, Paramatara, Rajasthaniya, Kumaramatya, Uparika, Vishayapati, etc. It is to be mentioned that the superior civil service was under the control of Kumaramatya. Many believe that the administration of Harsha was a forerunner of the feudal system of the country.

Army

Hiuen Tsang informs us that Harsha had 5,000 elephants, 2,000 cavalry and 5,000-foot soldiers. After enlarging his territory, Harsha increased his forces. Then he came to have 60,000 elephants and 1,00,000 cavalry. The horses were imported from Sindh, Persia and Kamboja. The infantry must have been several lakhs strong although its exact strength is not known. Chatas and Bhatas were the ordinary soldiers. Cavalry officers were known as Brihadasvavara. Infantry officers were called as Baladhikritas and Mahabaladhikritas. The Commander-in-Chief was Mahasenapati.

Divisions of Empire

The kingdom of Harsha was divided into provinces, divisions, districts, etc. Bana mentions various lokapalas in Harshacharita. Sources of the period tell us that provinces were divided into bhuktis. In the Madhuvana Ana Banskhera plates of Harsha, there is a mention of Bhuktis of Ahichhatra. It probably comprised of modern Rohilkhand. However, the administration of the village was in the hands of the headman called Gramakshapatilika. He, in turn, was assisted by a number of clerks known as Karanikas.

Taxes

There are references to three kind of taxes in the sources, i.e. Bhaga, Hiranya, and Bali. Bhaga was the land tax which was paid in kind. Hiranya refers to those taxes which were paid in cash whether by farmers or by merchants. It is difficult to say which particular taxes were comprised by the term Bali. It appears that ferry tax was in vogue. Taxes on merchandise were governed by the weights and measures. The share of the state from agriculture produce was one-sixth. Forced labour was in practice. According to Hiuen Tsang taxation was very light. He goes on to say that the crown lands were divided into four parts. The first part was for carrying out the affairs for the state. The second part was meant for paying the ministers and officers of the crown. The third part was meant for rewarding men of genius. The last part was meant for giving donations to religious communities.

Penal System

According to Hiuen Tsang, there were very few criminals and rebels. Offenders were severely punished when the laws were broken. But it seems that there was no infliction of corporal punishment. The criminals were simply left to live and die and were not counted among men. Nose or ears of the offenders were cut off for some offences' criminals were excommunicated and they had to live in jungles for the rest of his life. For some offences a small fine was imposed. The system of trial by ordeal was also in vogue. Hiuen Tsang informs us that the government was generous and official requirements were few.

Altekar remarks that the administration of Harsha was not so efficient as in time of the Mauryas or the Guptas. Although Hiuen Tsang has paid a tribute to the efficiency of administration of Harsha, yet the Chinese traveler was not justified in making general statement. Later Hiuen Tsang himself was captured by robbers not very far from the capital. It was only through sheer luck that his life was saved. On the whole we might say that administration under Harsha was neither as efficient as Gupta administration nor as many-sided in its activities as the Mauryan on.

3.7 Buddhism and Nalanda

Buddhism

Hiuen Tsang's accounts Harshacharita reveal that Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Jainism were the principal religions in Harsha's empire. The monastic establishments, whose very existence depended upon the support and charity of the laity, became the centers of Buddhist life and activity. Out of two sects of Buddhism, Mahayana and Hinayana, the former seems to have considerably become popular. He also tells us about eighteen schools, which differed widely in their practices and claimed intellectual superiority over one another.

During the travel of Chinese pilgrim, the buddhists were divided into eighteen sects in India. It was said that Harsha followed a tolerant religious policy. Basically a shaivite in his early years, he gradually became a great patron of buddhism. In accordance with his belief in buddhism he convened a grand assembly at Kannauj to widely publicise the doctrines of Mahayana. The assembly was attended not only by Hiuen Tsang and the kamarupa ruler Bhaskaravarman, but the kings of twenty states and by several thousand priests belonging to different sects. Two thatched halls were built to accommodate 1000 person each. However, the most important construction was a huge towering the middle of which a golden statue of the Buddha, as tall as the king himself, was placed. Harsha worshipped the image and gave a public dinner. Hien Tsang initiated the discussion in the conference who dilated on the virtues of Mahayana Buddhism and challenged the audience to refute his arguments, if they could. However, nobody came forward for five days, and then his theological rivals conspired to end his life. Hearing of this plot, Harsha threatened to behead anybody causing, Hiuen Tsang the slightest harm. Suddenly the great tower caught fire and there was an attempt to assassinate Harsha. Harsha then arrested 500 brahmanas. He banished most of them and also executed a few. After Kanauj, he held at Prayag a great assembly which was attended by all the tributary princes, ministers, nobles, etc. On this occasion an image of the



Buddha was worshipped, the discourses were given by Hiuen Tsang. In the end, Harsha made a huge donation, and according to a tradition, he gave away everything except his personal clothing. King Harsha, previously the worshipper of shiva and surya, later became a Mahayana Buddhist and stopped the killing of animals in the country.

The major schools developed under Buddhism were-

- Hinayana Buddhism: In this sect, the ultimate aim is nirvana, which is tried to attain through meditation and self-discipline. It basically referred as the “lesser vehicle”. The followers of this did not believe in idol worship or image worship of buddha. The scholars used Pali language to interact with other people. Hinayana sect is said to be patronized by Emperor Ashoka.
- Mahayana Buddhism: In this sect, the ultimate aim is spiritual upliftment as they believe in universal liberation. Mahayana means the “greater vehicle”. They believed in the image worship of buddha and the concept of bodhisattva resulted into Mahayana Buddhism. Some of the important Mahayana texts were – Lotus Sutra, Mahavamsa. It is widely believed that Kanishka founded Mahayana sect.
- Theravada Buddhism: Under this school, the aim is “cessation of the Kleshas” , attain sublime state of nirvana. It is the school of elder monks. It is said to be the successor of Hinayana School. They believe in the concept of teaching of analysis. Pali is considered to be the language used in Theravada.

- Vajrayana Buddhism: Scholars say that vajrayana school is the result of royal courts sponsoring both Shaivism and Buddhism. The main deity over here is Tara, a lady. It is also known as tantric Buddhism and they believed in tantra's, mantras and yantras.

Nalanda

Nalanda was the most famous centre, primarily a Buddhist Vihara, which maintained a great Buddhist university meant for Buddhist monks. It was set up with the view to propagate the teachings of Buddha. It is said to have had as many as 10,000 students, all monks, studying Buddhism day and night. To those persons Nalanda was the temple of God. They were taught the Buddhist philosophy of the Mahayana school. The subjects of study at Nalanda were all four Vedas, Hetu Vidya or logic, said Vidya or grammar, Chikista Vidya or medicine, Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya and the Buddhist works of the different schools. Although all the mounds of Nalanda have not been dug, excavations have exposed a very impressive complex of buildings. These were raised and renovated over a period of 700 years from the fifth century onwards. In AD 670, another Chinese pilgrim,

I-Tsing, visited Nalanda and he mentions that only 3000 monks lived here. This is reasonable because, even if the remaining mounds are excavated, the buildings cannot have been sufficiently spacious to have accommodated 10,000 monks. According to Hiuen Tsang, the monastery at Nalanda was supported from the revenues of 100 villages. I-Tsing, raises this number to 200. Nalanda thus had a huge monastic establishment during the reign of the Harshvardhan. The Nalanda stood for the ideal of freedom in learning. It welcomed knowledge from all quarters, from all sects and creeds. It was a genuine university and not a mere sectarian and denominational school.

The Nalanda University was the Oxford of Mahayanism and a rival of Kashi. What Cluny and Clairvaux were to France in the middle ages, Nalanda was to India. It was founded in the fifth century AD by one of the later Gupta emperors. Nalanda had not only a magnificent building, but all other kinds of facilities were also provided to students for their studies. There were three great libraries called Ratnasagar (sea of gems), Ratnadadhi (ocean of gems) and Ratnaranjak (collection of gems). The presence of Huih-Nieh, a Korean scholar is attested to by the fact that I-tsing discovered on a manuscript the statement, "while dwelling under the tooth-brush tree, the Korean priest Huih-Nieh wrote this record."

Not only persons came to Nalanda from outside, the Nalanda scholars went to various parts of the world and were responsible for the spread of Buddhism. The teachers and students in Nalanda were the exponents and followers of different sects or school of thought. To quote Hiuen Tsang, "learned men from different cities who desire quickly to acquire a renown in discussion come here in multitudes."

A lot of property was given or donated to Nalanda, for its maintenance. The university had its own paddy fields and agricultural and dairy farms for the supply of rice and milk. It functioned as a corporate body and the same was the case with the affiliated colleges or Viharas. Many seals from Nalanda have an inscription on them: "Sri-Nalanda-Mahavihara-Arya-Bhikshu-Sanghasya" (of the governing body of the august university of Nalanda). Most of the seals have the figures of Dharmachakra.

The university of Nalanda continued to flourish for five centuries even after the visit of I-tsing. The history of the end of the Nalanda University is in a way the history of the extinction of Buddhism from India.

Summary

According to Dr. R.K. Mookerji, "Harsha combines in himself some of the attributes and characteristics of both Samudra Gupta and Ashoka." Panikkar compared Harsha to Ashoka because he felt that they both had a super kind behaviour towards most of the things, also they were great patrons of Buddhism. Harsha indeed has proved to be a great conqueror by maintaining a good control over major portion of the territories. He was an educated man, who was an ideal ruler too. Hiuen Tsang mentions, "he was indefatigable and forgot sleep and food in his devotion to good works." Because of his generosity, most of the times he has been referred as Indian Hatim. He has worked in huge ways towards the welfare of the people and society.

Keywords

Shrouded in obscurity- to remain static or to stay in same place.

Theravada- it refers to meditation and concentration as the most important elements to attain enlightenment. Also states that one's own effort can lead one to attain self-liberation.

Mahayanism- religious beliefs and teachings of the Mahayana Buddhism.

Doab- a land or area of land between two rivers where they meet.

Autocratic and egalitarian- a mixture of rule where there is one system or ruler at the peak who rules but follows the principle that everyone should have equal rights and should be considered as equals.

Cavalry officers- army that previously fought on horses but now has heavily protected vehicles.

Kleshas- a sort of mental state that clouds the mind with noxious thoughts such as fear, anxiety, desires, jealous, depression, etc. whereas cessation is said to pause these thoughts or control them through one's own effort and attain self-liberation.

Self Assessment

1. In the Madhuvana Copper Plate, Skandagupta is described as
 - A. Dirghadhvagas
 - B. Mahapramatara Mahasamanta
 - C. Mahasenapati
 - D. Daussadha-sadhanika

2. Which school is said to be the school of elder monks
 - A. Mahayana Buddhism
 - B. Vajrayana Buddhism
 - C. Theravada Buddhism
 - D. Hinayana Buddhism

2. Hiuen Tsang wrote a book named
 - A. Rihla
 - B. Si-Yu-Ki
 - C. Indica
 - D. Kitab-ul-hind

4. Who is described as the keeper of records in Banskhera copper plate inscription
 - A. Bhanu
 - B. Avanti
 - C. Kumaramatya
 - D. Simhananda

5. The Nalanda seal has a mutilated inscription in which Harsha is describes as
 - A. Maharaja
 - B. Mahabaladhikritas

- C. Mahasamanta
- D. Maharajadhiraja

6. Harsha became the king of Thaneshara in

- A. 603 A.D.
- B. 609 A.D.
- C. 605 A.D.
- D. 606 A.D.

7. Who killed Rajya-vardhan

- A. Devagupta
- B. Sasanka
- C. Pulakesin II
- D. Jayasena

8. Prabhakar-vardhan is also described as

- A. Maharaja
- B. Kumaramatya
- C. Paramatara
- D. Paramabhataraka

9. What was the capital of Harshavardhan reign

- A. Pataliputra
- B. Purushapura
- C. Amaravati
- D. Kannauj

10. Both Kannauj and Prayaga Assembly took place in A.D.

- A. 647 A.D.
- B. 634 A.D. and 643 A.D.
- C. 643 A.D.
- D. 653 A.D.

11. Silver coins of Harsha were called as

- A. Pana
- B. Daric
- C. Drachma
- D. Stater

12. Hiranya tax was paid in

- A. Cash
- B. Kind

- C. Cash and Kind
- D. None of the above

13. Who was offered to look after, “revenues of eight large towns of Orissa”

- A. Jayadeva
- B. Jayasena
- C. Haridatta
- D. Hiuen Tsang

14. Who wrote Harshacharita

- A. Harshvardhan
- B. Bana
- C. Prabhakar-varadhan
- D. Rajyasri

15. The great library of Nalanda, Ratnaranjak is

- A. Ocean of gems
- B. Collection of gems
- C. Sea of gems
- D. Loch of gem

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. C | 3. B | 4. A | 5. B |
| 6. D | 7. B | 8. D | 9. D | 10. C |
| 11. C | 12. A | 13. B | 14. B | 15. B |

Review Questions

1. Comment on Harsha’s kingdom. Also give a detail visit of Huien-Tsang.
2. What were the main attributes of Harsha’s administration?
3. Describe the military conquests of Harshvardhan.
4. How is Nalanda described during the Harsha’s reign? Explain.
5. Explain the changes that took place in the society and culture of Harsha’s time.



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Unit 04: South India 1

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Objectives

Various kingdoms emerged in southern India. They had established different political institutions. The Economy also flourished during this period in southern India. After going through this unit, you shall be able to know:

- Ñ different kingdoms that arose in southern India
- Ñ Political relations between these kingdoms
- Ñ Fight for supremacy among these states
- Ñ Different aspects of the economy, agriculture, trade etc.

Introduction

The various political developments which took place in the Deccan and south India in the Mauryan and post-Mauryan period have been covered earlier. While the Deccan was included in the Mauryan empire, the major chiefdoms of south India i.e. those of the Cholas, Pandyas, Cheras and Satiyaputras were on friendly terms with Mauryas. However, in the post- Mauryan period, initially minor chiefs assuming the title of *raja* (King) appeared in the Deccan and the Deccan was politically integrated by the Satavahanas. In the south too, the chiefdoms were going through important changes paving way for the emergence of state systems in the subsequent period.

4.1 The tradition of Three Sangams

There was the tradition of three Sangams which tell us that these were successive and not contemporary. The traditional accounts of Iraiyanar Ahapporul mention that there were three Sangams (I, II and III) held, which flourished for 9990 years at frequent intervals. These were attended by 8598 scholars. Sage Agastyar was the founding father. The Ahapporul commentary also mentions about their successive order and the deluges occurring during the intervals between them. These Sangams or academies were patronized by 197 Pandyan kings. According to the tradition, of the three successive Sangams the first two belong to prehistory. All the three were held in the capital of the Pandyas. As the capital was shifted from time to time, old Madurai was the

headquarters of the first Sangam, and the second academy was held at Kapatapuram. Both these centres were washed away by the sea during successive deluges. The third Sangam was located in modern Madurai.

The date of the third Sangam can be established with more probability than the other Sangams. This date is taken to be the first two centuries of the Christian era and probably the century immediately preceding the Christian era. The age of Tolkappiar is believed to be in the second Sangam era and the third Sangam era coincides with the Indo-Roman trade with the contemporary Imperial Rome. This dating is based on the evidence available in the accounts of the Greek writers of the time. There are several references to the overseas trading activities between the Mediterranean world and Tamil region. The same is also attested by the Sangam literature. Thus, the third Sangam witnessed the production of numerous extant works. The Sangams can be compared to the French Academy in Europe in modern times, which aimed at maintaining the purity of the language and literary standards. In the beginning, admission to the Sangam was by co-option, but later it was by means of miraculous contrivance by the Lord Siva, who was the permanent president of this august body.

4.2 Sources for the construction of Sangam Period

1. **Inscriptions** Hathigumpha Inscription of King Karavela of Kalinga, Pugalur (near Karur) Inscription, Ashokan Edicts II and XIII, and inscriptions found at Mangulam, Alagarmalai and Kilavalavu (all near Madurai)
2. **Copper Plates** Velvikudi and Chinnamanur copper plates
3. **Coins** Issued by the Cheras, Cholas, Pandyas and the chieftains of Sangam Age as well as the Roman coins
4. **Megalithic Monuments** Burials and Hero stones
5. **Excavated Materials from** Adichanallur, Arikamedu, Kodumanal, Puhar, Korkai, Alagankulam, Uraiyyur
6. **Literary Sources** Tholkappiyam, Ettuthogai (eight anthologies), Pathupattu (ten idylls), PathinanKeezhkanakku (a collection of eighteen poetic works), Pattinapalai and Maduraikanji. Epics Silappathikaram and Manimegalai.
7. **Foreign Notices** The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, Pliny's Natural History, Ptolemy's Geography, Megasthenes's Indica, Rajavali, Mahavamsa and Dipavamsa

Tholkappiyam is a work on Tamil grammar. It represents the quality of Tamil language and the culture of Tamil people of the Sangam Age.

Time Span: 3rd century BC (BCE) to c. 3rd century AD (CE)

Tamizhagam: Vengadam (Tirupathi hill) in the north to Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) in the south, Bounded by sea on the east and the west.

Age: Iron Age

Culture: Megalithic

Polity: Kingship

Dynasties ruled: The Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas

4.3 Cheras

The Cheras ruled over parts of modern Kerala. Their capital was Vanji and their important seaports were Tondi and Musiri. They had the palmyra flowers as their garland. The Pugalur inscription of the first century A.D refers to three generations of Chera rulers. Padirrupattu also provides information on Chera kings. PerumSorrUdhiyanCheralathan, mayavarambanNedumCheralathan and Chera Senguttuvan were the famous rulers of this dynasty. Chera Senguttuvan belonged to 2nd century A.D. His younger brother was ElangoAdigal, the author of Silappathigaram. Among his military achievements, his expedition to the Himalayas was remarkable. He defeated many north Indian monarchs. Senguttuvan introduced the Pattini cult or the worship of Kannagi as the

ideal wife in Tamil Nadu. The stone for making the idol of Kannagi was brought by him after his Himalayan expedition. The consecration ceremony was attended by many princes including Gajabhagu II from Sri Lanka.

Cholas

The Chola kingdom of the Sangam period extended from modern Tiruchi district to southern Andhra Pradesh. Their capital was first located at Uraiyur and then shifted to Puhar. Karikala was a famous king of the Sangam Cholas. Pattinappalai portrays his early life and his military conquests. In the Battle of Venni he defeated the mighty confederacy consisting of the Cheras, Pandyas and eleven minor chieftains. This event is mentioned in many Sangam poems. Vahaipparandalai was another important battle fought by him in which nine enemy chieftains submitted before him. Karikala's military achievements made him the overlord of the whole Tamil country. Trade and commerce flourished during his reign period. He was responsible for the reclamation of forest lands and brought them under cultivation thus adding prosperity to the people. He also built Kallanai across the river Kaveri and also constructed many irrigation tanks.

Pandyas

The Pandyas ruled over the present day southern Tamil Nadu. Their capital was Madurai. The earliest kings of the Pandyan dynasty were Nediyan, Palyagasalai Mudukudumi Peruvaludhi and Mudathirumaran. There were two Nedunchelians. The first one was known as AryappadaiKadanthaNedunchelian (one who won victories over the Aryan forces). He was responsible for the execution of Kovalan for which Kannagi burnt Madurai. The other was TalaiyalanganattuCheruvenra (He who won the battle at Talaiyalanganam) Nedunchelian. He was praised by Nakkirar and MangudiMaruthanar. He wore this title after defeating his enemies at the Battle of Talaiyalanganam, which is located in the Tanjore district. By this victory Nedunchelian gained control over the entire Tamil Nadu. Maduraikkanji written by MangudiMaruthanar describes the socio-economic condition of the Pandya country including the flourishing seaport of Korkai. The last famous Pandyan king was Uggira Peruvaludhi. The Pandyan rule during the Sangam Age began to decline due to the invasion of the Kalabhras.

Minor Chieftains

The minor chieftains played a significant role in the Sangam period. Among them Pari, Kari, Ori, Nalli, Pegan, Ay and Adiyaman were popular for their philanthropy and patronage of Tamil poets. Therefore, they were known as KadaiYeluVallalgal. Although they were subordinate to the Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers, they were powerful and popular in their respective regions.

Sangam Polity

Of the three muventars (three crowned monarch) the Cholas controlled the fully irrigated fertile Cauvery (Kaveri) basin with their capital at Uraiyur, the Pandyas ruled over the pastoral and littoral parts with the capital at Madurai, and the Cheras had their sway over the hilly country in the west with Vanji (Karur) as the capital. The Sangam works mention the names of so many kings that ascertaining both their genealogy and chronology are highly problematical. However, the genealogy of the Chola kings Uruvaphrer Ilanjetchenni, his son Karikala and his two sons, Nalankilli and Nedunkilli have been confirmed to a great extent by the scholars. The kings of other two dynasties include Muthukudumi Peruvaludi, Ariyapadaikadantha Nedunjelian, Verriverchelian and TalayalankanathuCheruvenraNedunjelian among the Pandyas and ImayararambanNedumceralatan, CheranSenguttuvan and MantaramCherallrumporai among the Cheras.

Monarchy was the prevalent form of government. The "king" was called ventan. He was the head of the society and government. As the head of the society, he took the lead in every event of social importance like the festival of Indra, inaugurations of dance performances, etc. The "king" assumed important titles at the time of coronation. He was equated with gods so as to provide divine sanctity. The ancient Tamils considered the drum, the sceptre and the white umbrella as the three great insignia of his office.

According to the Sangam classics, kingship descended by heredity from father to son. The king was responsible for maintaining the law and order in the state. He also looked after the welfare of his subjects, worked hard for their good and frequently toured the country to put things in order. The king also had recourse to advisers during his administration. The literature frequently mentions them as *surram* which literally means the men who always surrounded the king giving him advice whenever needed.

Kingship

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Chieftains

This was not only a period of great kings but also of great chieftains who were subordinate to the kings. They are divided into two – *velir* and *non-velir*. Some of them were great patrons of letters. Some of the great chieftains of the period included Palayan Maran of Mohur (near modern Madurai), Nannan Venman and Villavan Kothai (both of the West Coast of the Peninsula), Nalliyakodan of Oimanadu (in modern South Arcot), Tithyan (Tinnevely region) and the whole band of *Velir* chieftains like Pari of Parambanad, Vel Pegan of the Palni region, Vel Evvi of Pudukottai region, Vel Avi and Irukkuvel of Kodumbalur and others. The later Sangam period witnessed greater consolidation of monarchical power with the reduction of the traditional chieftains to the position of royal officers. However, in the post-Sangam period the royal officers grew stronger and the centre became weak gradually.

Administration

Now, let us discuss the administrative machinery as described by the Sangam texts. The policies of the king were controlled by a system of checks and balances in the councils. *Silappadikaram* refers to the two types of councils – *Aimperunkulu* and *Enperayam*. The *aimperunkulu* or the council of five members was the council of the ministers. The *enperayam* or the great assembly (*perayam*) consisted of 8 members (government officers). This worked as an administrative machinery of the state. These two assemblies that of the Five and that of the Eight functioned as administrative bodies, though their function was generally advisory in character. However, their advice was rarely rejected by the king. Their important function was judicial though the *aimperunkulu* seems to have been solely in charge of it as described by *Maduraikkanji*. It is important to note that in spite of all

the glory attached to the ancient king, the ethos of Indian administration has been in the direction of limited or popular monarchy. This can be observed in South India from very early times even more than in the north and each followed its own model of administration. Every local unit, however small and in whatever corner it was situated, was administered by a local assembly. The *avai* and the *manram* are the terms used for this unit in Sangam works. Such assembly is commonly referred to as *arankuravaiyam*, which were known for its just decision. These can be taken to be the forerunner of our modern *panchayat*.

Defence

Major ruling dynasties and chieftains maintained large standing army. The wars were frequent and were fought not only for defense but also with a desire to extend one's territories or to save suffering people of neighboring kingdoms from tyranny or misrule. Sometimes the wars occurred for matrimonial alliances. Such was the mental state of the people that almost everyone trained himself for war and besides the army maintained by the kings potential soldiers were all over the country to join the royal force in times of need. Even kings trained themselves in such activities.

The king maintained all the four kinds of armies mentioned in Sangam literature – the chariot, the elephant, the cavalry and the infantry. There are references to the navy of the Chera that guarded the sea-port so well that other ships could not enter the region. The Sangam texts also mention about the army camp on the battle field. The king's camp was well made and even in camp he slept under his white umbrella and many soldiers slept around him mostly without sword. The camps of ordinary soldiers were generally built with the sugarcane leaves on the sides and cut paddy crop on the top with paddy hanging from it. Generals and officers of high rank were accompanied by their wives on the campaign and stayed in the special camps built for the officers. The king frequently visited the camp of soldiers and officers to enquire about their welfare. He did so even in the night and in pouring rain.

Tamil people had a great respect for the warrior and particularly the hero who died in the battle field. Suffering a back-wound was considered as highly disreputable as there are instances of kings who died fasting because they had suffered such a wound in battle. The herostones were erected to commemorate heroes who died in war. There was the provision for the prison which indicate the coercive machinery of the state.

Sangam polity was influenced by the North Indian political ideas and institutions in many aspects. Many rulers sought their origin and association with deities like Siva, Vishnu and ancient sages. Many kings are said to have participated in the Mahabharata war like their North Indian counterparts. The rulers of Sangam age were also the patrons of art, literature and performed *yajnas* (sacrifices).

4.4 Economy

Land Revenue

Land revenue was the main source of state's income. Land tax was usually collected in kind. Permanent (land) revenue/revenue settlement was known as *siddhayaw* which varied from 1/6th to 1/7th of the gross produce (Coelho, 1950: 196). Land was measured in *kambas* which varied from place to place. However, besides land revenue the list of the burden of taxes upon the commoners appears to be endless: *Sunkawa* was imposed upon individual assessee at each settlement; *Kumara* and *Kumara-ganika* was levied for the Crown Prince; *Nibandha* was tax for payment of royalties and pensions granted by the *rajaSri-karanawa* was levied for the maintenance of the *nad* (district) treasury staff.

A number of taxes were imposed to maintain kings' troopers and beasts of burdens – war tax (*vira-sese*); separate fodder charges (*khana-nibandha*) and horse contribution (*kudureya-sese*) for king's horses during the campaigns were taken. Similarly, *aneya-sese* was imposed for the upkeep of royal elephants.

Peasants had to provide paddy for the king's troops, for that *bhatta* was levied. *Kataka-sese* was the contribution for the camp. People had to pay for the supply of cows and bullocks to the king during campaigns (*nallavu-nallettu*). Besides enumerable one time taxes were imposed at the time of coronation (*pattabaddha*), *putrotsaha* for the birth of a son. Fines were also one of the regular

sources of state's income. Anyaya was levied for law breaking. Besides these, state taxes, a number of fines and taxes were levied by nad assemblies and nadheggade and the landlords with royal sanctions. The list is endless: marriage tax (maduve), loom tax (tari irai), oil-press tax (gana-dere), dyer tax (bannige), concubine tax (tottu-dere), and so on.

Agrahara villages were granted to Brahmanas for their upkeep. We get as many as approximately 104 references of agrahara villages in the Hoyasala inscriptions. However, we do get instances of resistance for converting non-agrahara landholdings into agraharas. When one of the gauda's (rich landlord) land was converted into an agrahara they resisted and it resulted into a fight between the gaudas and the Brahmanas in which Brahmanas successfully defended their claims. For the repairs and upkeep of temples lands were granted. These lands were liberally granted to all religions and secTrade, Merchants and the State Trade and commerce was also an important source of income of the Hoyasala state. Tax on merchandise was usually collected in cash. State was largely dependent on merchants for the supply of arms, elephants, horses and precious and luxury items that developed a greater interdependence between the two.

Some wealthy merchants were even granted high-sounding titles like Rajasresthigal (royal merchants) and regarded as pillar of the towns (puramulastambha). Merchants of Karnataka (like AyyavoleAinnuruvar) had contacts with Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Kashmira, Singhala and Chakragotta. Merchants were even appointed at various administrative posts within the nadas, towns and at various other administrative posts and even they appeared to take part in the campaigns. The 1145 CE Ballaru inscription records the death of dannayakaNagrasetti in the battle of Sige. A number of merchants of Gujarat (Lata), Kerala (Maleyala), Tamilnadu (Tigula) and Andhra (Tellugu) settled down in the Hoyasala territory and played an important role as administrators. Kudalaru inscription (1177-78 CE) mentions of Marisetti of Ayyavole, a bangle merchant, who settled down in the Hoyasala country. He was addressed as mahaprabhu (great officer) and his great grandson Perumadideva became the mahapradhan (great minister) and tantrapala (foreign minister) under Ballala II. Inscriptional evidence suggests that these merchants even rose to the position of pattanasvami/ pattanasetti. They were also appointed in the minting of coins. The 1188 CE Banavara inscription records mahavaddavhari as Kammata (mint) Chattisetti.

These merchants provided liberal patronage to temples and involved in the construction and repairs of temples. Sravanbelgola inscription of 1117 CE records that the mothers of royal merchants Poysalasetti and Nemisetti built a Jaina temple. Similarly, Dyampura inscription records that in 1188 CE the Bammeshvara temple was built by Bammisetti's son Vankagavuda. Merchantsts (Shaiva, Vaishnava, Jainas) irrespective of king's religious leanings. were also actively involved in reclamation of land, digging wells, building tanks and other irrigation projects. Marasanahalli inscription of 1027 CE refers to an excavation of Arapamma tank at Sirivur and a sluice by Sakayya son of Palagesetti. It appears that in comparison to 11th century, merchants' participation increased in the 12th-13th centuries in building temples in the Hoyasala state, suggestive of the increased participation and administrative power of the merchants (Nayaka, 2003).

Agriculture

Agriculture was the chief occupation of the people in the Sangam period. It was one of the most significant reasons as to why the Sangam economy flourished during that time and how the expansion of trade in the Sangam economy took place only due to the presence of developing agriculture. Following the Madurai Kanji, trade and agriculture were the major driving forces of the economic development in the dynasty.

Rightfully, the Poems from the Sangam dynasty also gave certain signs of how agriculture was prospering and how people attached so much of importance to the practice of cattle rearing and cultivation of the crops. The protection of the cattles was considered one of the most important tasks for the kings of the kingdom. Apart from that, the texts of Silappadikaram also interpreted the happiness and satisfaction people affixed to the occupation of agriculture.

Weaving and spinning were the most important crafts of the Sangam period. Uraiur and Madurai were the main centers for the manufacture of cotton fabrics. The weavers produced and exported fine cotton clothes. The word Kalingam refers to very nice garments. The Sangam literature refers to clothes, which were thinner than steam. Silk clothes were also produced in the Tamil country. Other craftsmen like the carpenter, blacksmith, goldsmith and potter had practiced their respective occupations. Fishing and hunting had also remained as important occupation during this period.

Industry

The period of Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas substantiated a vast amount of industrial activities in the economy. The poems that are derived from the Sangams held at various places provided details on various occupations like a potter, goldsmith, the sculptor, the blacksmith, the weaver and the painter. These occupations were hereditary and passed on to the son from his family or the ancestors. Thus, each of them was skilled and superfluous in their art of particular occupations they did.

Paripadal and Silappadikaram brought out that there was even a museum for the paintings to be sold to the people. Apart from that, not only the paintings, people had great demand and interest in painting all the things of their day to day usage, keeping them colourful. The cloth that was exported to the people around the world was made not only from the basic essentiality of cotton, wool or silk but also from the colored yarn and rat's hair. These clothes had a huge demand from the Roman merchants, who were in great admiration of these skills.

Trade

There was an enlarged exchange relation between the people of the Sangam era and the people of the Mediterranean world that included countries like China, Egypt, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Clothes produced by the Sangam industries had a huge demand from the Roman merchants, who were in great admiration of these skills. These are depicted from the literary texts who have referred to trade relations of the people of the Sangam period with the Greeks and Romans.

Amidst all this the port city of Puhar became a major centre for the foreign trade and the trade of various expensive and important artefacts of the time. If we talk about the inclusions in the trade, the major exports of the Sangam Age were cotton fabrics and spices and the imports in the area included horses, sweet wine, and gold coins that were issued by the great Roman emperors of those times. The currency system of barter was one of the most important, where people bought commodities in exchange of commodities only.

Generally, the Tamil society had enjoyed an affluent economy during the Sangam Age. Agriculture, industry, trade and commerce made the Sangam Tamils almost self-sufficient. Exports were also made to the other parts of the world.

In the beginning of the Sangam Age, the barter system of trade was followed. Generally, the people exchanged their commodities with their neighbors. For example, the people of Kurinji region exchanged honey with the people of Neydal region for getting fish and salt. Likewise, the Mullai people gave their milk products to Marudham people to get rice from them.

Later, when they began to use coins, trade picked up rapidly. Local markets came up and they were known as Angadis. Both Day Market (Nalangadi) and Evening Bazaar (Allangadi) existed in port towns. The Pattinappalai refers to their existence at Puhar. Goods from distant places were brought to these markets. The expansion of trade led to the growth of towns. Moreover, export of goods to other countries had increased. (It will be described in the next chapter).

The Sangam economy was simple and mostly self-sufficient. Agriculture was the main occupation and the chief crops were rice, cotton, ragi, sugarcane pepper, ginger, turmeric, cardamom, cinnamon etc. Weaving, ship-building, metal working, carpentry, rope-making, ornament-making, making of ivory products, tanning etc were some of the handicrafts, which were widely practiced.

The market place was known as avanam. This period also witnessed the emergence of various towns like Puhar, Uraiyur, Vanji, Tondi, Muzuris, Madurai, Kanchi, etc. Industry and crafts was given a fillip by a rising demand in the foreign markets.

Trade, both inland and foreign, was well organised and briskly carried out throughout the period. Internal trade was brisk, caravans of merchants with carts and pack-animals carried their merchandise from place to place, Barter played a large part in all transactions and salt was an important commodity of trade. The Sangam period witnessed the rise of maritime activity.

External trade was carried on between South India and Hellenistic kingdom of Egypt and Arabia as well as the Malay Archipelago. The author of the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea (75 A.D.) gives the most valuable information about the trade between India and the Roman Empire. He mentions the port of Naura (Cannanore) Tyndis (Tondi), Muzuris (Musiri, Cranganore), and Nelcynda as the leading ones on the west coast.

Other ports of South India were Balita (Varkalai), Comari, Colchi, Puhar (Khabaris of Ptolemy), Saliyur, Poduca (Arikamedu) and Sopatma (Markanam). A landmark in the development of communications was the discovery of the monsoon winds by the Greek sailor Hippalus in around A.D. 46-47.

This led to increase in volume of trade. Large vessels made up of single logs called Sangara and very large vessels, called Colondia made voyages. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, written by an anonymous Greek navigator, gives details of Indian exports to the Roman Empire. The main exports were: pepper, pearls, ivory, silk, spike-nard, malabathrum, diamonds, saffron, precious stone and tortoise shell.

It also mentions Argaru (Uraiyur) as the place to which were sent all the pearls gathered on the coast and from which were exported muslins called agraritic. Silk, which was supplied by Indian merchants to the Roman Empire, was considered so important that the Roman emperor Aurelian declared it to be worth its weight in gold.

The Roman need for spices could not be met entirely by local supply; this brought Indian traders into contact with south-east Asia. In return for her exports, India imported from the Roman empire such commodities as topaz, tin cloth, linen, antimony, crude glass, copper, tin, lead, wine, orpiment and wheat. The Romans also exported to India wine amphorae and red glazed Arretine ware which have been found at Arikamedu near Pondicherry. They also sent to India a large number of gold and silver coins.

Connected with the phenomenon of trade was the growth of money economy in the early centuries. The imported coins were mostly used as bullions. The large quantities of gold and silver coins struck by all the Roman emperors beginning from the reign of Augustus (and that of Tiberius) down to Nero (54-58 A. D.) found in the interior of Tamil land, testify to the extent of the trade and the presence of Roman settlers in the Tamil country.

Social Composition

Anthropological studies have shown that the earliest social element consisted of Negroid and Australoid groups with mixture of another racial stock which migrated from the earliest Mediterranean region. In its early phase these societies had small population and social classes were unknown. As a result there existed great unity among the people of each region, who moved freely among themselves and their ruler. The only classification Tamil society knew at this time was that of the arivar, ulavar, etc. based on their occupation such as the soldiers, hunters, shepherds, ploughmen, fishermen, etc.

The existence of numerous tribes and chieftains was seen in the latter half of the Sangam age. The four Vedic varnas were distinctly of a later period. But it is interesting to note that though the varna system was brought in by the immigrating Brahmanas (1st c.A.D), it did not include Khastriyas as in the north. Only the brahmins were the dvijas (twice born) who qualified for the sacred thread. There are references to the slaves known as adimai (one who lived at feet of another). The prisoners of war were reduced to slavery. There existed slave markets.

Women

The women like men, enjoyed certain freedom and went around the town freely, played on the seashore and river beds and joined in temple festivals as depicted in Sangam poems such as Kalittogai. However, the status of women was one of subordination to men, which was an aspect of the general philosophy of the contemporary period. This is well reflected in Kuruntogai which mentions that the wife was not expected to love the husband after evaluating his qualities but because of the fact of his being her husband. In other words, it was not possible for a wife to estimate her husband. Though there are references to women being educated and some of them becoming poetesses, this cannot be applied to the general mass. They had no property rights but were treated with considerations. Women remained a widow or performed sati, which was considered almost divine. Marriage was a sacrament and not a contract. Tolkappiyam mentions eight forms of marriage of which the most common was the Brahma marriage. However, there are references to wooing or even elopements, which were followed by conventional marriage.

Prostitution was a recognized institution. However, the prostitutes were taken to be the intruders in peaceful family life. But they figure so prominently in the poems and enjoy such a social standing that there could be no doubt that the harlots of the Sangam age were not the degraded prostitutes

of the modern times. Though texts like Kuruntogai refer to the harlots challenging wives and their relations, seducing men, the harlots gave their companions more of a cultural enjoyment than anything else.

Dress, Ornaments and Fashion

The upper strata of society used dress of fine muslin and silk. Except for nobles and kings, men were satisfied with just two pieces of cloth – one below the waist and another adorning the head like a turban. Women used cloth only to cover below the waist. The tribal population was not in a position to do that even. The tribal women used leaves and barks to cover themselves.

The men and women of Sangam age were fond of using oil, aromatic scents, colored powders and paints, while the sandal paste was heavily applied on their chests. According to Silappadikaram women had pictures drawn on their bodies in colored patterns and had their eyelids painted with a black pigment. The ornaments were worn round the neck and on arms and legs by both, the men and women. The chiefs and nobles wore heavy armlets and anklets while the ordinary women wore various other kinds of jewels. Valuable ornaments of gold and precious stones were used for decoration by men and women of upper strata whereas the poor class used bracelets made of conch-shell and necklaces made of colored beads. Silappadikaram refers to a ceremonial hot bath in water heated with five kinds of seeds, ten kinds of astringents and thirty two kinds of scented plants, the drying of the hair over smoke of akhil and the parting of it into five parts for dressing. Men also grew long hair and wore the tuft tied together with a knot which was sometimes surrounded by a string of beads. Tamils were very much fond of flowers and women used to decorate their hair with flowers, especially water lily as described by Kuruntogai.

People lived in two kinds of houses – those built of mud and the others built of bricks. According to the Sangam texts the second category of houses were built of suduman, which literally means burnt mud. The poor lived in thatched houses covered with grass or leaves of the coconut or palmyra. Windows were generally small and made like the deer's eye. The literary works describe the well-built storeyed houses of the rich people, which had gopurams for the entrance and iron gates with red paint to prevent from rusting. Silappadikaram mentions that these houses were lighted with beautiful artistic lamps often from Greece and Rome. They were burned with oil extracted from fish.

Food and Drinks

Non-vegetarianism was the main food habit though Brahmin ascetics preferred vegetarian food. The food was very plain and consisted of rice, milk, butter, ghee and honey. Meat and liquor were freely used. Curd was in popular use. Kuruntogai mentions various kinds of sweets made with curd, jaggery, puffed rice, milk and ghee. Spicing of curry and rice is also referred to in the Sangam texts. On the whole the upper class consumed high quality of rice, the choicest meat, imported wine, etc. The Brahmins preferred vegetarian food and avoided alcoholic drinks. In urban area, the public distribution of food was made by the charitable institutions.

Feasts were organized for collective entertainment. The custom of feeding guests was a common custom and eating without a guest to partake of the food was considered unsatisfying. Poets and learned were always considered as honored guests and red rice fried in ghee was given to them as a mark of love and respect.

Entertainments

There were numerous amusements and plays in which people participated for entertainment. The sources of entertainment included dances, musical programs, religious festivals, bull-fights, cock-fights, marble-game, hunting, dice, wrestling, boxing, acrobatics, etc. Women amused themselves with the religious dances, playing the dice and varippanthu or cloth ball. Playing in swings made of palmryafibres was common among girls. Narrinai refers to the games played with decorated dolls. Kuruntogai mentions about children playing with toy-cart and with the sand houses made by them on the seashore.

Dance and music were other popular sources of entertainment. The Sangam poems mention various kinds of dances. Silappadikaram mentions eleven kinds of dances, which are divided into seven groups. It also gives minute details about music. There are further references to the different

kinds of musical instruments such as the drums, flute and yal sold in shops at Puhar and Madurai. The performing arts also included the art of drama. The dramas were mostly religious in character but sometimes these were enacted to commemorate great event or persons. Bardism and the system of wandering minstrels going from place to place with their musical instruments singing the glory of either a person or a great event commanded great popularity in the Sangam age. Initially, the bard (porunar) began as an individual to whip up the martial spirit of the soldiers engaged in war and to sing of their victory when the battle was won. However, their activities were not confined to encourage the soldiers in the battle-field alone but also to carry messages from there to the people at home. They had high respect in society and were even honored by the kings. Besides the porunar were the panar who performed for the common people.

4.5 Religious Beliefs and Rituals

The literary evidence presents a picture of elaborate religious development in the Sangam age. The faiths like Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism coexisted in the Tamil region during this period. Buddhism and Jainism entered the region in the first centuries of the Christian era. The sects of Brahmanism such as Saivism and Vaishnavism were also well-known religions during the period.

The advent of Vedic people and the interaction of their faith with that of the Tamils are well reflected by the Sangam works. Silappadikaram mentions about the “triple sacred fire” the “twice born nature” the “six duties” and other ideas associated with the Brahmanas. Tolkappiyam also refers to the six Brahmanic duties. Brahmanical rites and ceremonies were very much in practice. For example, the Pandyan king is described as “having various sacrificial halls” in many Sangam poems.

The four important deities as mentioned by Tolkappiyam were –Murugan, Tirumal, Vendan (Indra) and Varunan. Indra was worshipped as the rain god and a festival in his honor was celebrated every year. In Pattinappalai worship of Muruga is mentioned. Muruga is the son of Siva. Besides these deities, Lakshmi (the goddess of prosperity), Mayon (later Vishnu) as guardian of the forest region, Baladeva, Kaman (the god of love), the moon-god, sea-god and other divinities were also worshipped.

The people of Sangam age also believed in ghosts and spirits. There is the mention of the “bhuta” in Silappadikaram. Many believed in demons residing on tress, battle-fields and burning ghats “drinking blood and combing their hair with hands soaked in blood.” The same text also refers to minor deities like guardian deities of Madura and Puhar. They also believed in the village gods, totemic symbols and bloody sacrifices to appease ferocious deities. Animism is clearly reflected in their tradition of worshipping the deities believed to be residing in trees, streams and on hill tops. The dead heroes, satis and other martyrs were also defied.

The advent of Buddhism and Jainism in the first centuries of the Christian era influenced the philosophical thoughts of the Tamils in the Sangam age. These ideologies placed knowledge before matter. The Buddhists and Jains called on people to look to the world beyond matter. Many scholars have expressed their views that the two great epics of the period, Silappadikaram was Jain and Manimekalai was Buddhist.

Saivism and Vaishnavism were also important faiths. The term Saivism is mentioned only in Manimekalai. Though Siva as a deity is not mentioned in other texts, he is referred to by his attributes like - “the ancient first Lord”, “the Lord with the blue beautiful throat” and “the god under the banyan tree”. So, in early times both Saivism and Vaishnavism seem to have existed in the Tamil region only in principle and not by name. Though Tolkappiyam refers to the god Muruga (son of Siva) and Mayon (earlier name of Vishnu), there is no clear reference to Saivism and Vaishnavism. Probably, the transition of these cults to these two different sects was taking place during the Sangam age.

The Sangam age people also believed in dreams and influence of planets on human life. Certain ominous signs were popularly observed. For example, the cawing of the crow was considered as an omen of the coming guest, who was eagerly awaited. Kuruntogai mentions that the crow was considered a good harbinger and was fed with rice and ghee. Sneezing was held inauspicious.

The sophisticated aspect of the Sangam religion was the worship of gods and goddesses in temples. Temple dedicated to Siva, Muruga, Baladeva, Vishnu, Kaman and moon-god are clearly mentioned in various Sangam texts. Manimekalai refers to a very big brick called

Cakravahakottam. However, in many cases, as till today, the deities were often set up under trees. The method of worship generally consisted of dancing and offering flowers, rice and meat to the gods. Silappadikaram mentions about the stone images of gods. This is also attested by the archaeological discovery in the form of the lingam dating to the centuries B.C by T.A. Gopinatha Rao.

The Tamils of Sangam age believed in the ritual uncleanliness on occasions of birth and death. Dead were disposed either by cremation, burial or by being left in open to vultures or jackals. Burning grounds are mentioned in Manimekalai where dwelled different kinds of spirits.

Summary

In conclusion, the Sangam dynasty was inhabited by the three most magnanimous regimes of Indian History, Cheras, Pandyas, and Cholas. The period of the Sangam dynasty went on from 300 BCE to 300 AD in the areas of South India which lie to the south of rivers Tungabhadra and Krishna. The literary works from the Sangams provide a very elaborated and defining economic development in the Sangam Period. The Sangam period had a flourishing and developing economy during the times of Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras. The people of the Sangam period engaged in all kinds of economic activities like exports, imports, hunting, draining out and trade balances in the economy.

Keywords

- Chola
- Chera
- Pandyas
- Quality
- Political History

Self Assessment

1. The Chola empire of the south emerged in?
 - A. 9th century BC
 - B. 19th century AD
 - C. 9th century AD
 - D. 17th century AD

2. The Chola dynasty was founded by which of the following rulers?
 - A. Rajaraja Chola
 - B. Vijayalaya Chola
 - C. Aditya I
 - D. Rajendra Chola I

3. Dynasties in Sangam poems that referred to 'Muvendar' were?
 - A. Cholas, cheras and Pandyas
 - B. Cholas, Palas and Pandyas

- C. Cheras, rashtrakutas and Pandyas
 - D. Cheras, palas and Rastrakutas
4. Cholas ultimate capital was ?
- A. Puhar
 - B. Kannauj
 - C. Vanji
 - D. Tondi
5. What sources are not used for the construction of the sangam period?
- A. Literary sources
 - B. Scientific treaties
 - C. Inscriptions
 - D. Copper plates
6. Which inscription refers to the three generations of Cheras?
- A. Pugalur inscription
 - B. Junagadh rock inscription
 - C. Edicts of Ashoka
 - D. Nasik inscription
7. During the chola period the traders were known as?
- A. Sabha
 - B. Nagaram
 - C. Graman
 - D. Shrines
8. Cholas collected land-revenue through?
- A. Treasurer
 - B. Feudal lord
 - C. Gram- Sabha
 - D. Government official

9. During chola period the group of villages were known as
- A. Kottam
 - B. Kudavolai
 - C. Variam
 - D. Tan kurram
10. In sangam age, Tolkappiyam is the greatest work of which literature?
- A. Telegu
 - B. Tamil
 - C. Kannad
 - D. Sanskrit
11. A dynasty that was not in the power during the sangam age?
- A. Cheras
 - B. Cholas
 - C. Pallavas
 - D. Pandyas
12. Sangam assemblies were held in which of the following cities?
- A. Thiruvarur
 - B. Madurai
 - C. Tiruvallur
 - D. Nagapattinam
13. During the sangam period the “amaichar” were?
- A. Military commanders
 - B. Ministers
 - C. Sepoys
 - D. Envoys

14. Sangam literature is related to which of the ancient and medieval India?

- A. North-east India
- B. West india
- C. South India
- D. North India

15. The empire that was founded by sangam princes Harihara and Bukka

- A. Vijayanagar
- B. Malwa
- C. Bengal
- D. Vengi

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 2. B | 3. A | 4. A | 5. B |
| 6. A | 7. B | 8. C | 9. B | 10. B |
| 11. C | 12. B | 13. B | 14. C | 15. A |

Review Questions

1. What are the different types of literature which throw light on Sangam Age?
2. What was the polity during different dynasties of Sangam Period?
3. Describe the administration of Sangam Age?
4. Elucidate features of the society of Sangam Period?
5. Describe economic conditions of the Sangam Period?
6. Throw light on religious conditions of Sangam Age?



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Unit 05: South India II: Society and Culture

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Summary

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Objective

After reading this Unit, you will be able to understand:

- About the Sangam literature in south India
- The significance of Sangam literature
- To develop the understanding about society and culture of Sangam period
- To learn about political condition of south India in early period

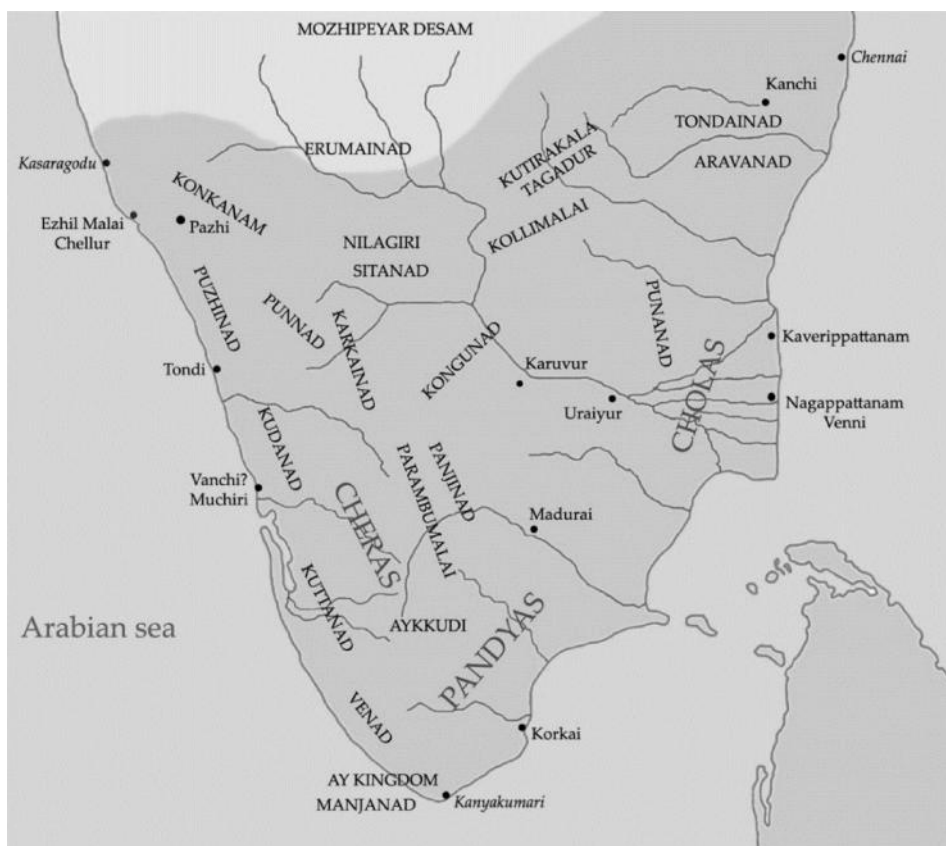
Introduction

In this unit we will study the Early Historic period in the Tamil country that witnessed significant developments in a number of areas. One of the important contributions of this period was the composition of the early Tamil texts, collectively known as the Sangam literature. The other important characteristics of this period include the Indo-Roman trade, which became active from the first century A.D. onwards, introduction of Tamil Brahmi script, beginning of urbanization, and the continuing tradition of megaliths. The Early Historic period, which is also called the Sangam Age, is generally placed between fifth century B.C. and fifth century A.D. We are particularly concerned with the cult of hero worship in the context of the regions and their cultures. Geographically, the ancient Tamil country was bounded by Venkatam (Tirupathi Hills in Andhra Pradesh) in the north, Kumari (Kanyakumari or Cape Comarin) in the south and the seas

(the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea) on the east and the west. Thus, the ancient Tamil country covered the modern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Historians and Ideologists regard the Sangam period as the 'classical age' of the Tamils analogous to the age of the classics in Greece and Rome and to that of the Renaissance of later period in Europe. Some even consider the Sangam age as the 'Golden age' of the Tamils, which marked a unique epoch in the history of the *Tamilakam*. The archaeological sources found from different explored or excavated sites throw light on the various aspects of the political, social, economic, religious and cultural life of the Sangam age people. However, the precious literary finds of this period discovered from various places in South India provide us with the significant information in this regard. In other words, the Sangam literature is the major source for the study of the Sangam age.

'SANGAM': The term 'Sangam' literally means 'confluence'. However, in the context of early South Indian history this term can be rendered into English as an assembly, a college or an academy of learned people, held under the patronage of the Pandyan kings, who were great lovers of literature and the fine arts. The Sangam was a voluntary organization of poets. It was similar to a Round Table Conference, which allowed sitting room only to an authentic poet. This academy or assembly of learned people including the Sangam poets produced literary works of high quality.



5.1 Sources

Here we will familiarize you with various sources of studying the early Tamil society. Sangam Literature

The Sangam literature forms the main source of information for the Early Historic period. The literature derives its name from Sangam, where it is believed to have been composed or compiled. According to Tamil tradition, there were three Sangam Ages, each extending over a period of thousands of years and these Sangams were patronized by the Pandya rulers. The Sangam perhaps functioned as an academy or assembly, where a number of poets were present. The extant works, which are attributed to the third Sangam Age, were compiled in the early medieval period. All the Tamil works that were produced in the first two Sangams are said to have been lost. However, there is very little historical or linguistic evidence to prove the authenticity of this legend. It has also been stated that the term 'Sangam' is of very late origin. The Sangam literature is the oral bardic literature

of the ancient Tamils. Most of the works were composed by the bards and poets who praised the kings and received their patronage in return. They are also the emotional outpourings of the poets. The literature offers vital information for reconstructing the socio, economic and political history of the Early Historic Tamil country. Though the situations in the poems were described according to the poetic conventions, the poets have taken real life situations and the happenings in the society for similes, metaphors and other codes and symbols. The symbols and codes have hidden meanings, which are not obvious. A careful analysis of these symbols and codes can offer valuable information. These works are preserved mainly due to the efforts of scholars including U.V. Swaminathalyer, who collected the manuscripts and published them in the modern period. The major works produced during this era are grouped into Pathinenmelkanakku (eighteen major works - narrative) and Pathinenkilkanakku (eighteen minor works - didactic). Pathinenmelkanakku is divided into Ettutokai and Paththupattu. Besides these works, there is Tolkappiyam, an ancient Tamil grammatical treatise.

There are five major Tamil epics, Silappadikaram, Manimekalai, Sivakacintamani, Valaiyapati and Kundalakesi, which postdate the Sangam Age. Among these, Silappadikaram and Manimekalai are the famous works. There are also five minor epics, Yasodhara-kaviyam, Chulamani, Perunkathai, Nagakumara-kaviyam and Nilakesi, written by Jain authors.

Tolkappiyam - Grammatical Work

Tolkappiyam, the ancient extant Tamil grammar work, was written by Tolkappiyar, who was believed to be a disciple of the mythical sage Agasthya. The Tolkappiyam lays down the rules and regulations for Tamil literature. The Tolkappiyam is divided into three components:

Eluttatikaram (Orthography)

Collatikaram (etymology and syntax) and

Porulatikaram (deals with akam [the inner life] and puram [outer life] and prosody).

Chronology of Tolkappiyam is debatable. Some scholars date it to around the beginning of the Christian era, while others place it in fifth century A.D.

Pathinenmelkanakku (the Eighteen Major Works)

Pathinenmelkanakku comprises Ettutokai (eight anthologies) and Paththupattu (ten Idylls), which are the earliest Sangam works.

Ettutokai (the eight anthologies)

The Ettutokai is a collection of eight long and short poems. The Ettutokai works are:

- 1) **Narrinai:** The general theme of Narrinai is love and it consists of 400 stanzas, composed by 175 poets.
- 2) **Kuruntokai:** It is a 'short anthology', consisting of 402 love poems.
- 3) **Ainkurunuru:** This 'short five hundreds' deals with love songs of fivefold landscape.
- 4) **Pattirrupattu:** The 'ten tens' consists of ten long poems divided into ten sections. It is a *puram* work praising the valour of the Chera kings. The work is valuable for reconstructing the history of the early Chera rulers.
- 5) **Paripatal:** It is a composition of devotional songs dedicated to deities such as Vishnu and Karthikeya.
- 6) **Kalitokai:** It consists of 150 stanzas with most of the songs dealing with love theme and a few songs on moral values.
- 7) **Akananuru:** It contains 401 stanzas of poems composed by nearly 145 poets. All the songs deal with love theme.
- 8) **Purananuru:** It comprises of 400 heroic poems, composed by 157 poets.

5.2 Paththupattu (Ten Idylls)

The *Paththupattu* is a collection of ten long poems. Out of them, five belong to the *arrupatai* class in which a bard directs another to a person/king for the acquisition of wealth. They are:

- 1) *Tirumurukarruppatai*: A bard directs another to the abode of Lord Muruga, to acquire spiritual wealth. All the important shrines of Lord Muruga are described in this work. It was composed by Nakkirar.
- 2) *Porunararruppatai*: It praises the valour of the Chola king Karikala. It was composed by Muttatamakanniyar.
- 3) *Ciruppanarruppatai*: In this work, the bard directs the minstrel to the court of Nalliyakotan, a chieftain. While describing his kingdom, the work also portrays the capital cities of three major kingdoms, namely, the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas. It was written by Nattattanar.
- 4) *Perumpanarruppatai*: This *arrupatai* is in praise of the ruler of Kanchi, written by the poet Uruttirakkannanar. Administration of the city of Kanchi and its trading activities are widely described in this work.
- 5) *Mullai pattu*: The shortest of ten idylls, containing 103 lines was composed by Naputtanar. This work deals with the *akam* concept.
- 6) *Maturai kanci*: The longest of ten poems, contains 782 lines. Mankuti Marutanar praises the valour of the Pandya king Netunceliyan and describes in detail the trade, commerce and administrative aspects of the Pandya Kingdom.
- 7) *Netunelvatai*: This *puram* work was written by Nakkirar in praise of Netunceliyan, the Pandya ruler.
- 8) *Kurincipattu*: Kapilar's work deals with *akam* concept.
- 9) *Pattinapalai*: In praise of the Chola ruler Karikala, this work was composed by Uruttirankannanar. This work deals with the trade relations between ancient Tamil country and foreign countries.
- 10) *Malaipatukatam*: Composed by Perumkaucikanar, the work is an *arrupatai*, directing the fellow bard to the kingdom of Nannan. *Pathinenkilkanakku* (Eighteen Minor Works)

The eighteen minor (*Kilkanakku*) works which are didactic in nature are later than the *Melkanakku* works. They show more influence of Prakrit and Sanskrit cultural traditions than the *Melkanakku* works. The impact of Jainism and Buddhism is also seen in these works, which mostly contain codes of conduct for kings and people. The *Kilkanakku* literature was composed in fourth-fifth centuries A.D., when the Tamil country was under the Kalabhra rule. The most famous among these works is *Muppalor Tirukural*, written by Tiruvalluvar. It deals with philosophy and maxims.

5.3 Foreign Accounts

The Periplus Maris Erythraei (The Periplus of Erythrean Sea), compiled in first century A.D., serves as an important source of Indo-Roman Trade. The anonymous author of this work was a Greek merchant or sailor from Egypt. This work mentions about the major ports and towns in India during the Early Historic period and also the items of Indo-Roman trade. Accounts of the Roman Writer, Pliny the Elder (23-79 A.D.) are also useful for investigating the Indo-Roman trade. Pliny speaks about the draining of wealth of the Roman Empire due to the demand for spices, especially pepper, in Rome. These accounts are quite useful in knowing about the Indo-Roman Trade. Claudius Ptolemy's *Geographies* another important source for Indo-Roman Trade. He was a Greek. He lived in Alexandria, the Roman capital of Egypt and was the head of the renowned library at Alexandria from 127 to 150 A.D. Certain important information is also available in the Buddhist chronicles of Sri Lanka, namely, *Mahavamsa* and *Deepavamsa*.

5.4 Archaeological Materials

The archaeological evidence includes megalithic burials or monuments, coins and excavated sites, especially urban centers. Megaliths are a class of burial or memorial monuments, erected as a part of ancestral worship. The term 'Megalith' means 'large stone'. Since the monuments were made of large stones, they are called megaliths. The megaliths are found all over the Tamil country. The

dead were buried with grave goods like iron objects, black-and-red warepottery and beads and other materials, and monuments were erected. Sometimesprecious materials were also placed along with the remains of dead as offerings. Ironobjects, especially, weapons of offence are found in large numbers in the burials.The burial types are: Cairn circle, Urn burials, Dolmens, *Topikals* and *Kodaikkals*. Numerous megalithic sites have been excavated in Tamil country. Sanur, Kunnathur, Amirthamangalam, Kodumanal, Porkalam and Mangadu are a few of them.

5.5 Excavated Habitation Sites

Apart from the megalithic burials, many habitation sites, especially urban centers ofthe Early Historic period have been excavated in Tamil Nadu. These sites offer a lotof information about the Early Historic period. Vasavasamudram near the mouth ofthe Palar, Kanchipuram on the bank of the Palar, Arikamedu near Pondichery, Kaveripattinam near the mouth of the Kaveri, Uraiyur on the bank of the Kaveri, Alagankulam near the mouth of the Vaigai and Korkai near the mouth of the Tambrabarani River are the important excavated Early Historic habitation sites in Tamil Nadu. They give valuable evidence for the Indo-Roman trade, and towns ofthe Sangam Age. Brick structures, pottery with Tamil Brahmi inscriptions and importedpottery from Rome (e.g. Amphora) have been found at these sites. The excavatedsites are also indirectly useful in determining the chronology of the Sangam literature.

5.6 Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions

Another category of evidence is the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions found on the rockshelters carved with stone beds for the residence of Jain monks and on pottery. Theyserve as corroborative evidence for dating the literature. They have been found atseveral sites near Madurai and Karur. The inscriptions at Pugalur near Karur giveinformation about the genealogy of the Chera rulers.

5.7 Coins – Indian and Roman

Coins of Early Historic period have been found at many sites in Tamil Nadu. Theyinclude coins of the Sangam Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas. Besides these local coins, gold, silver and copper Roman coins have also been found in large numbers fromseveral sites. Most of the Roman coin hoards are concentrated in the Coimbatore region. This is attributed to the important role this region had played in the Indo-Roman trade.

5.8 Chronology

Dating the Sangam literature has not been an easy task in the absence of specific evidence. As a result, there is no unanimous opinion among the scholars on the dateof the Sangam literature. Some scholars date it between third century B.C. and fifth century A.D., while others place it between first century and fifth century A.D. Someof the criteria used for dating the Sangam literature are listed below:

- Based on the linguistic development of Tamil language used in the Sangam literature, the works are dated between second century B.C. and third century A.D.
- Tamil Brahmi inscriptions with similar individual names mentioned in the Sangam literature are dated from second century B.C. to fourth century A.D.
- Foreign accounts such as *Periplus Maraei of Erythreidate* the trading centers mentioned in the Sangam literature to the early centuries of Christian era.

No reference to the Pallava rulers in the Sangam literature denotes a pre-Pallava chronology for the works. Though the broad time range of the entire corpus of Sangam literature can be easily fixed, the internal chronology is a problematic. Among the Sangam works, the texts grouped under the *athinenmelkanakku* are considered earlier than the *Pathinenkilkanakku* texts. Within the *Pathinenmelkanakku*, *Ettutokai* with the exception of *Kalitokai* and *Paripatal* was the earliest. Some of the *arrupadailiterature* is also dated to early period.

There is controversy among the scholars regarding the chronology of the Sangam age. The main reason behind this is the lack of unanimity concerning the age of the Sangam works, which are of great historical value for the study of the Sangam age. On the basis of the composition of Sangam literature K.A.N. Sastri traces the Sangam age to the period A.D. 100-250. According to tradition, the Tolkappiyam is the oldest among extant Tamil works. M. Arokiaswami holds that as Tolkappiar, the author of Tolkappiyam, flourished sometime in the 4th or 3rd c.B.C., the same date can be assigned to this literary work. The corroboration of the literary sources with archaeological data enables us to place the Sangam age in the chronological span of roughly about 600 years from c. 300 B.C to A.D 300.

5.9 The Tradition of the Three Sangams

The theory of the three Sangams establishes that these were successive and not contemporary. The traditional accounts of Iraiyanar Ahapporul mention that there were three Sangams (I, II and III) held, which flourished for 9990 years at frequent intervals. These were attended by 8598 scholars. Sage Agastya was the founding father. The Ahapporul commentary also mentions about their successive order and the deluges occurring during the intervals between them. These Sangams or academies were patronized by 197 Pandyan kings. According to the tradition, of the three successive Sangams the first two belong to prehistory. All the three were held in the capital of the Pandyas. As the capital was shifted from time to time, old Madurai was the headquarters of the first Sangam, and the second academy was held at Kapatapuram. Both these centers were washed away by the sea during successive deluges. The third Sangam was located in modern Madurai. The date of the third Sangam can be established with more probability than the other Sangams. This date is taken to be the first two centuries of the Christian era and probably the century immediately preceding the Christian era. The age of Tolkappiar is believed to be in the second Sangam era and the third Sangam era coincides with the Indo-Roman trade with the contemporary Imperial Rome. This dating is based on the evidence available in the accounts of the Greek writers of the time. There are several references to the overseas trading activities between the Mediterranean world and Tamil region. The same is also attested by the Sangam literature. Thus, the third Sangam witnessed the production of numerous extant works. The Sangams can be compared to the French Academy in Europe in modern times, which aimed at maintaining the purity of the language and literary standards. In the beginning, admission to the Sangam was by co-option, but later it was by means of miraculous contrivance by the Lord Siva, who was the permanent president of this august body.

5.10 Society from Sangam Texts

Sangam texts suggest several stages of social evolution. The narrative texts are considered works of heroic poetry in which heroes are glorified and perpetual wars and cattle raids are frequently mentioned. They show that the early Tamil people were primarily pastoral. Traces of early megalithic life appear in the Sangam texts. "The earliest megalithic people seem to be primarily pastoralists, hunters, and fishermen, though they also produced rice. Hoes and sickles occur at many sites in peninsular India but not ploughshares. Other iron objects include wedges, flat celts, arrowheads, long swords and lances, spikes and spearheads, horse-bits, and the like. These tools were meant primarily for war and hunting. This has some parallels in the Sangam texts which speak of perpetual war and cattle raids. The texts suggest that war booty was an important source of livelihood. They also state that when a hero dies, he is reduced to a piece of stone. This reminds us of the circles of stone that were raised over the graves of the megalithic people. This may have led to the later practice of raising hero stones called virarkal in honour of the heroes who had died fighting for kine and other things. It is likely that the earliest phase of social evolution reflected in the Sangam works relates to the early megalithic stage. The narrative Sangam texts give some idea of the state format which the army consisted of groups of warriors, and the taxation system and judiciary arose in a rudimentary form. The texts also tell us about trade, merchants, craftsmen, and farmers. They speak of several towns such as Kanchi, Korkai, Madurai, Puhar, and Uraiyur. Of them, Puhar or Kaveripattanam was the most important. The Sangam references to towns and economic activities are corroborated by Greek and Roman accounts, and by the excavation of the Sangam sites. By the second century BC, the megalithic people had moved from the upland into fertile river basins and reclaimed marshy deltaic areas. Under the stimulus of contact with the elements of material culture brought from the north to the extreme end of the peninsula by traders, conquerors, Jaina, Buddhist, and some brahmana missionaries, they began practicing wet paddy cultivation, founded numerous villages and towns, and developed social classes. Cultural

andeconomic contacts between the north and the Deep South, known as Tamizhakam, became extremely important from the fourth century BC onwards.

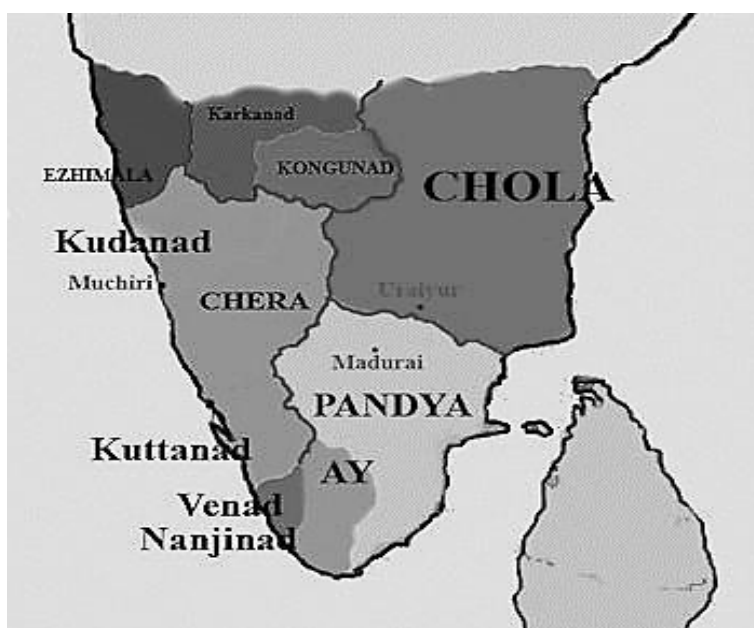
Income from trade, war booty, and agricultural produce enabled the king to maintain groups of professional warriors and also to pay the bards and priests who were largely brahmanas. The brahmanas first appear in the Tamil land in the Sangam age. An ideal king was one who never hurt the brahmanas. Many brahmanas functioned as poets, and in this role they were generously rewarded by the king. The kshatriyas and vaishyas appear as regular varnas in the Sangam texts. The warrior class was an important element in the polity and society. The captain of army were invested with the title of enadi at a formal ceremony. However we have no clear idea about the vaishyas. Civil and military offices were held under both the Cholas and Pandyas by vellalas or rich peasants. The ruling class was called arasar, and its members had marriage relations with the vellalas, who formed the fourth caste. They held the bulk of the land and thus constituted the cultivating class divided in to rich and poor. The rich did not plough the land themselves but employed laborers to undertake this. Agricultural operations were generally the task of members of the lowest class. Some artisans were not differentiated from agricultural laborers. The pariyars were agricultural laborers who also worked with animal skins and used them as mats. Several outcastes and tribes suffered from extreme poverty and lived from hand to mouth. We notice sharp social inequalities in the Sangam age.

5.11 Formation and Development of State and Civilization

The route to the south, called the Dakshinapatha was valued by the northerner because the south supplied gold, pearls and various precious stones. The Pandya state was known to Megasthenes who lived in Pataliputra. The earlier Sangam texts were familiar with rivers Ganges and Son and also with Pataliputra, the capital of Magadhan Empire. The Asokaninscription mentions Cholas, Pandyas, Keralaputras, and Satyaputras living on the borders of the empire.

5.12 The Three Early Kingdoms

The southern end of the Indian peninsula situated south of the Krishna river was divided into three kingdoms: Chola, Pandya, and Chera or Kerala. The Pandyas are first mentioned by Megasthenes, who says that their kingdom was celebrated for pearls. The Pandya territory occupied the southernmost and the south-eastern portion of the Indian peninsula, and it roughly included the modern districts of Tirunelveli, Ramnad and Madurai in Tamil Nadu with its capital at Madurai. The Sangam literature mentions one or two Pandya conquerors. However, this literature shows clearly that the state was wealthy and prosperous. The Pandya kings profited from trade with the Roman empire and sent ambassadors to the Roman emperor Augustus. The brahmanas enjoyed considerable influence, and the Pandya king performed Vedic sacrifices in the early centuries of the Christian era.



The Chola kingdom, which came to be called Cholamandalam (Coromandel), in early medieval times, was situated to the north-east of the territory of the Pandyas, between the Pennar and the Velar rivers. We have some idea of the political history of the Cholas from the Sangam texts. Their chief centre of political power lay at Uraiyu, a place famous for cotton trade. It seems that in the mid-second century BC, a Chola king named Elara conquered Sri Lanka and ruled over it for nearly fifty years. A clearer history of the Cholas begins in the second century AD with their famous king Karikala. He founded Puhar and constructed 160 km of embankment along the Kaveri River. This was built with the labor of 12,000 slaves who were brought as captives from Sri Lanka. Puhar is coterminous with Kaveripattanam, the Chola capital. It was a great centre of trade and commerce, and excavations show that it had a large dock. One of the principal sources of the wealth of the Cholas was trade in cotton cloth. They maintained an efficient navy. Under Karikalas successors Chola power rapidly declined. Their capital Kaveripattanam, was overwhelmed and destroyed. Their two neighbour powers, the Cheras and the Pandyas, expanded at the cost of Cholas. What remained of the Chola power was almost wiped out by the attacks or Pallavas from the north. From the fourth to the ninth century, the played only a marginal part in south Indian history. The Chera or the Kerala country was situated to the west and north of the land of the Pandyas. It included the narrow strip of land between the sea and the mountains, and covered portions of both Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In the early centuries of the Christian era, the Chera state was as important as the states of the Cholas and Pandyas, and owed its position to trade with the Romans. The Romans set up two regimens at Muziris coterminous with Cranganore in the Chera state, to protect their interest. It is said that they also built there a temple of Augustus. The history of the Cheras is a continuing battle with the Cholas and Although the Cheras killed the father of the Chola king Karikala, the Chera king also lost his life. Later, the two kingdoms temporarily became friends and concluded a matrimonial alliance. The Chera king next allied with the Pandya rulers against the Cholas, but the Cholas defeated the allies, and it is said that as the Chera king was wounded in the back, he felt shamed and committed suicide. According to the Chera poets, their greatest king was Senguttuvan, the Red or Good Chera. He routed his rivals and established his cousin securely on the throne. It is said that he invaded the north and crossed the Ganges. All this however seems an exaggeration. After the second century, Chera power declined, and we know nothing of its history until the eighth century. The principal interest of the political history of these three kingdoms lies in the continuing wars they fought with one another and also with Sri Lanka. Although these states were weakened by the wars, they greatly profited from their natural resources and foreign trade. They grew spices, especially pepper,

Which was in great demand in the Western world. Their elephants supplied ivory, which was highly valued in the West. The sea yielded pearls and their mines produced precious stones, and both these were exported to the West in substantial quantities. In addition, they produced muslin and silk. We hear of cotton cloth as thin as the slough of a snake. The early Tamil poems also mention the weaving of complex patterns on silk. Uraiyur was noted for its cotton trade. In ancient times, the Tamils traded with the Greek or Hellenistic kingdom of Egypt and Arabia, on the one hand, and with the Malay Archipelago and China, on the other. As a result of trade, the words in Greek for rice, ginger, cinnamon, and several other articles were derived from Tamil. When Egypt became a Roman province and the monsoon was discovered at about the beginning of first century AD, this trade received great impetus. Thus, for the first two and a half centuries, southern kingdoms conducted a lucrative trade with the Romans. With the decline of this trade, these kingdoms began to decay.

5.13 Polity

The political formations of the Sangam age were in a preliminary stage. There was no major empire, but only three large kingdoms ruled by Ventars (crowned kings), and many chieftains (Velirs), who controlled small territories. The Cheras and Cholas and Pandyas were the Muventars or three major kings, who controlled large territories and ruled independently. The Muventars performed Vedic sacrifices (e.g. Rajasuya) to legitimize their kingship. There are references to these monarchs in the Asokan inscriptions as Chodas, Padas and Keralaputos. The Asokan inscriptions also mention Satiyaputos' who are identified with the rulers of Tagadur region (Dharmapuri region in western Tamil Nadu). The ventars and the chieftains frequently fought among themselves for supremacy. While a few of chieftains were independent, others were aligned with one of the Muventars. The history of Sangam Cheras is gleaned from Patirrupattu, a work of eight anthologies. The Pugalur Tamil Brahmi inscription of early centuries of the Christian era also refers to the genealogy of the Chera rulers.

The Cheras ruled over most part of Kerala and western Tamil Nadu from Vanchi and Karur. Vanji is identified with modern Karur near Tiruchirapalli. Some scholars identify it with Kodungallore near Thrissur in Kerala. Muziris near the mouth of Periyar was the famous port of the Cheras. Senguttuvan was the prominent ruler of this dynasty and he was a contemporary of Gajabahu of Sri Lanka. Bow and arrow was the emblem of the Cheras. The Cholas ruled over the Kaveri delta. Their capital was situated at Uraiyur. They also had another capital at Puhar (Kaveripattinam), which also acted as a port city. Karikala was the famous king of this dynasty, who is said to have destroyed all his enemies at a very young age and also credited with the building of a dam or bund across the river Kaveri. There were other rulers such as Nedunkilli. Tiger was their emblem.

The Pandyas are considered to be the earliest rulers of the Sangam Age. There are many references to Pandyas in literary sources such as the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Arthashastra and the accounts of Megasthenes. They ruled over the southern Tamil country. According to legends, they patronized the poets of Sangam Age. Their capital was at Madurai. Korkai was their port city. Neducheliyan was the famous ruler of this dynasty, who is said to have defeated the Aryan rulers. Fish was their emblem. There were numerous chieftains like Ori, Kari, Pari, Atiyaman, Nalliyakotan, and Ay, ruling over small areas. There were frequent battles among the chieftains to control territories and to collect booty. The collected booty was redistributed by the chief among the followers (warriors, bards and others). Some of the chieftains were powerful and received tributes from other smaller chieftains (Purananuru 97). The chieftains also fought with the Ventars, e.g. Pari of Parambu hills.

Summary

Thus, the picture that emerges from the study of Sangam literature reflects that the period witnessed the conception of state for the first time in South India. However, it was still in the process of crystallization. Sangam polity was characterized by the patriarchal and patrimonial systems in which the administrative staff system and various offices were directly controlled by the rulers. We also notice social inequalities with the dominance of the Brahmanas. But the acute class distinction, which appeared in later times, were lacking in Sangam age. Agriculture was the backbone of Sangam economy. The trading activities, especially trade relations with the Mediterranean World enriched their economy. The foreign elements also influenced the socio-economic and cultural life of people. The beliefs and customs practiced by Sangam people suggest the complex nature of their religion. Both, animism and idol worship, were followed during the Sangam age. Many of the traditions of the age continued and survived in the later periods and some exist even till today. Thus, the picture that emerges from the study of Sangam literature reflects that the period witnessed the conception of state for the first time in South India. However, it was still in the process of crystallization. Sangam polity was characterized by the patriarchal and patrimonial systems in which the administrative staff system and various offices were directly controlled by the rulers. We also notice social inequalities with the dominance of the Brahmanas. But the acute class distinction, which appeared in later times, were lacking in Sangam age. Agriculture was the backbone of Sangam economy. The trading activities, especially trade relations with the Mediterranean world enriched their economy. The foreign elements also influenced the socio-economic and cultural life of people. The beliefs and customs practiced by Sangam people suggest the complex nature of their religion. Both, animism and idol worship, were followed during the *Sangam* age. Many of the traditions of the age continued and survived in the later periods and some exist even till today.

Keyword

Sangam People, Cultural values, Tradition of Sangam, Social structure, Tamil literature

Self Assessment

1. Which Indian saint is given the credit of spreading the Aryan culture in South India?
 - A. Sattnar
 - B. Agastya
 - C. Tolkappiyar
 - D. Tiruttakadevanar

2. What was the 'Naddukala' or 'Virakala'?
- A. The agricultural labourers
 - B. The followers of the famous Pattini Cult.
 - C. Stones erected in the memory of a dead warrior.
 - D. Worshippers of Murugan.
3. The castes 'Usvar' and 'Vellara' are related to:
- A. Kurunji
 - B. Pallai
 - C. Mullai
 - D. Marudam
4. Cholas ultimate capital was ?
- A. Puhar
 - B. Kannauj
 - C. Vanji
 - D. Tondi
5. What sources are not used for the construction of the sangam period?
- A. Literary sources
 - B. Scientific treaties
 - C. Inscriptions
 - D. Copper plates
6. Which inscription refers to the three generations of Cheras?
- A. Pugalur inscription
 - B. Junagadh rock inscription
 - C. Edicts of Ashoka
 - D. Nasik inscription
7. During the chola period the traders were known as?
- A. Sabha
 - B. Nagaram
 - C. Graman
 - D. Shrines
8. Cholas collected land-revenue through?
- A. Treasurer
 - B. Feudal lord
 - C. Gram- Sabha
 - D. Government official
9. During chola period the group of villages were known as
- A. Kottam
 - B. Kudavolai

- C. Variam
D. Tan kurram
10. In sangam age, Tolkappiyam is the greatest work of which literature?
A. Telegu
B. Tamil
C. Kannad
D. Sanskrit
11. A dynasty that was not in the power during the sangam age?
A. Cheras
B. Cholas
C. Pallavas
D. Pandyas
12. Sangam assemblies were held in which of the following cities?
A. Thiruvarur
B. Madurai
C. Tiruvallur
D. Nagapattinam
13. During the sangam period the “amaichar” were?
A. Military commanders
B. Ministers
C. Sepoys
D. Envoys
14. Sangam literature is related to which of the ancient and medieval India?
A. North-east India
B. West india
C. South India
D. North India
15. The empire that was founded by sangam princes Harihara and Bukka
A. Vijayanagar
B. Malwa
C. Bengal
D. Vengi

Answers for Self Assessment

1. B 2. C 3. D 4. A 5. B
6. A 7. B 8. C 9. B 10. B

11. C 12. B 13. B 14. C 15. A

Review Questions

- 1) Discuss the nature of the sources for the early historic period for Sangam age.
- 2) Discuss in detail the concept of Tinai.
- 3) What was the importance of cattle raids in the early Tamil society?
- 4) Critically analyze the significance of Sangam Period in the Ancient Indian History.



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Unit 06: Towards the Early Medieval I

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Objectives

After reading thoroughly about the Pallavas in this chapter, you will be able to answer:

- how Pallavas originated,
- their way of handling the throne,
- the rulers ruling period and their significant achievements,
- their contribution towards the art and architecture of the south India,
- how well their economy was,
- whether they were as powerful as other rulers of north and south.

Introduction

Scholars have always faced problems when it comes to explaining the different kinds of Pallavas and it seems to be difficult as every scholar had its own view regarding the origin of the Pallava clan and retaining every fact that all the scholars provided was a difficult task. These abundant viewpoints arrived because there were a certain set of people known as, "Pahlavas" who ruled alongside of Sakas, in the northwestern part of India. Sometimes the literary sources tend to use Pallava instead of Pahlavas as the alternatives to each other and they are assumed to be identical to each other. Though they seem to be identical, yet no conclusion is provided in any later texts that proves it. The rulers to Kanchi took up the titles of being Pallavas which doubtlessly came afterwards. Not a single record of Pallavas of Kanchi talks about or mentions about the word Pahlavas or any connection that they both had previously or later on. Prof. S.K. Aiyengar in his book, 'History of the Pallavas of Kanchi' states, "the word as applied to 'Pallavas' in the first instance seems to be a translation of the Tamil words 'Tondaiyar' and 'Tondaman', and this finds confirmation in some of the copper-plate charters, which do bring in tender twigs of some kind in connection with the eponymous 'Pallava'." Though without a doubt the term Pallava was used much-much later, and it does sound foreign to us but not when compared to the 'Pahlavas'.

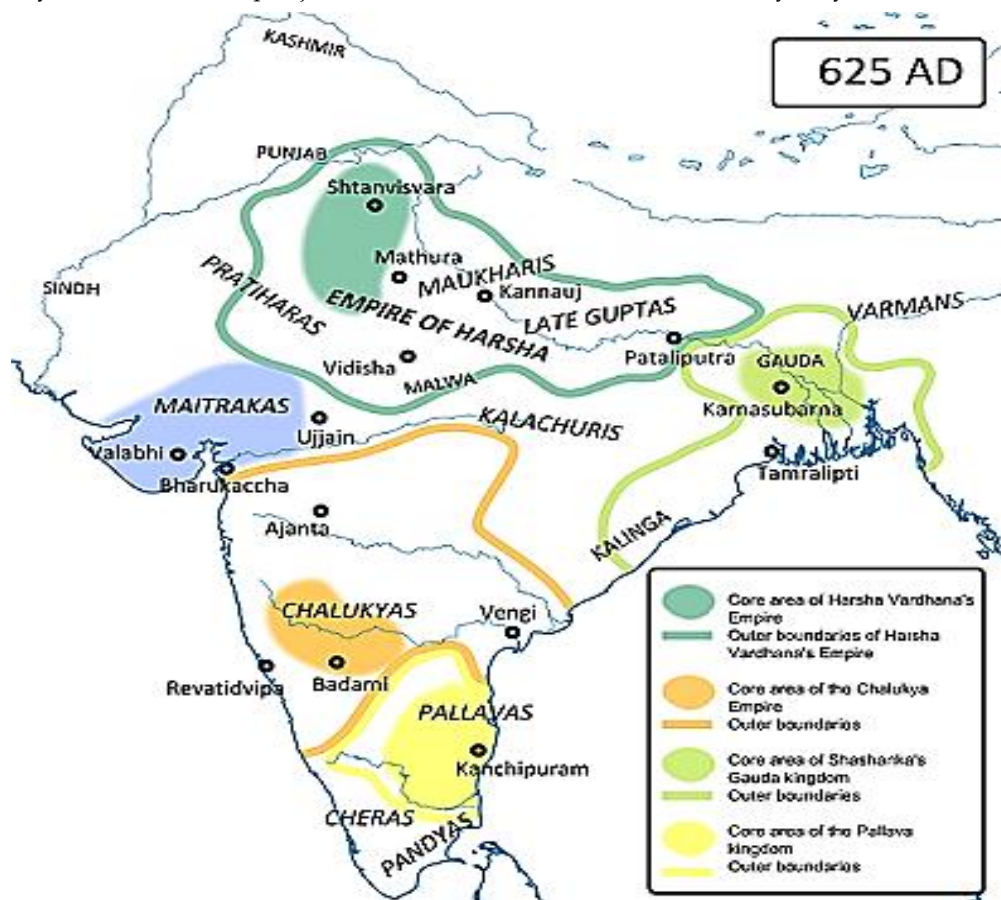
So, the rule begins and the Tondaman were the rulers of Kanchi while the local people of that locality were said to be the Tondaiyar and the place that they occupied to live in was called as Tondamandalam. The South Indian records and literature traces their names and act a proof that yes Pallavas existed and ruled India. Also, Tondamandalam is said to be land where the Pallavas ruled and had supreme authority.

6.1 Origin

Ptolemy, when he wrote his geography somewhere in the middle of the second century A.D., Kanchi was being ruled by Nagas at that time. Thus, it makes clear that Pallavas did not rule this place before fourth century A.D. henceforth the Pallavas are believed that they had a rise during the middle of the fourth century A.D., which is also the time period of the 'Samudragupta Allahabad Pillar Inscription'. The record states that some Vishnugopa and the Gupta king had indulged themselves into some conflict when the Gupta king was paying a visit to the southern India for his campaign. Later on, it came to light that Vishnugopa was the ruler of Kanchi and was a part of the Pallava clan. Pallavas capital was Kanchi which is almost forty-five miles southwest of Madras and their coastal port or the chief port was Mallei. It is mentioned that during their early rule they probably ruled some parts of the Deccan too.

Kanchipuram being the most extensive town that covered a wide area for about five square miles yet is said to be dull when compared to others. Though once it used to be a proliferating place and came under seven sacred places that were, Mathura, Avanti, Kasi, Kanchi, Maya, Dwarka and Ayodhya, in which if a person dies, they attain moksha. Kanchi is said to be sacred not only to Siva and Vishnu but also to Kamakshi and sanmukha. Kanchi is part of eighteen Sakti pitas in India, also being a tirtha. The early copperplates of the Pallavas are said to be written in Prakrit. Three copper plates namely, 'Mayidavolu Grant of Yuva-Maharaja Sivaskandavarman', 'the Hirahadagalli Plates of Dharmamaharajadhiraja Sivaskandavarman', and 'the British Museum Plates of Queen Carudevi'. Details tell us that the Mayidavolu grant is said to be the early copper plate of the Pallavas also whose letters and symbols describe close harmony to the 'Jaya Varman's Kondamudi plate' and 'Gautamiputa's Karle inscription'. Which tells us that the ruler that is described in the Mayidavolu grant wasn't removed by any of the mentioned kings. As mentioned by C. Minakshi, "Kanchi is said to be the 'Pallavendrapuri', the city of the lord of the Pallavas, in the Talagunda inscription of the Kadamba Kakusthavarmam."

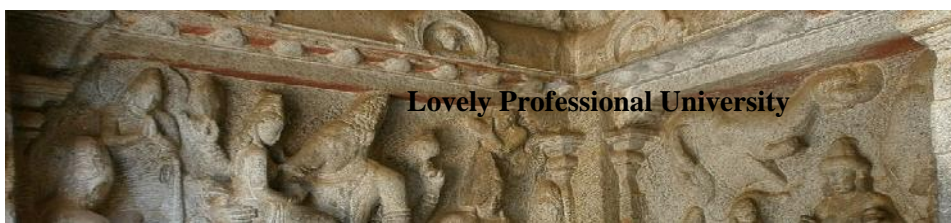
The recollecting of the actuality tells us that the Pallavas were not known to the early Tamil literature of the Sangam which makes it clear that Pallavas of Kanchi came long after the end of the early Tamil literature. Aparajita is said to be the last ruler of the Pallava dynasty.



Society

In the book *Kanchipuram In Early South Indian History*, Venkayya states – “according to the tondamandala-satakam tondaimandalam (i.e., the Pallava territory) was bounded on the north by Tirupati and Kalahasti mountains on the south by the river Palar; and on the west by the Ghauts.” As we all are aware about the fact that India’s society is divided into four sections namely, Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The Kuram grant mentions about, how Mahendravarman I rigorously carried upon the religious (sacred law) of the castes- ‘Supranitavarnasrama dharmasya’, also in Kasakudi Plates, the Pallavas have said to impose some special rules regarding castes and other orders- ‘Paripalita skald varnasramavyavastha visesah’.

- Brahmans were the head of the society who were educated, well-learned people, had complete knowledge about the shastras and stood together to form a land of intelligent people. Kings paid them huge respect and patronized them. They are presented as ‘Devas of the earth’ in the copper plates. In Vaikunthaperumal inscription, brahmans political indulgence can be seen also they were employed as government officers. The society consisted of other members- artisans, traders, etc.
- Few evidence can be seen regarding the women of the Pallavas. The queens of the Pallava ruler were reverent, civilized and religious by nature and were a part of charities and construction of monuments of deities. The earliest Pallava queen, Carudevi, queen of Yuvamaharaja (Vijayabuddhavarman) mother of Buddhyanura, we learn about her from the copper plates that recorded a charity of four nivartanas. The records found on copper plate states that her position was high in the state and her orders were carried out just like those of her lord. Rajasimha who built the Kailasanatha Temple had a queen Rangapataka who was the favorite of the king. The temple on its east side had eight small shrines, which stood in a line from north to south, six were on the right side and two on the left side. The queen built the third shrine and that he evident from an inscription. She is described as an inside out queen and is said to be the dearest to Rajasimha. As mentioned by C. Minakshi in her book, ‘Administration and social life under the Pallavas’, “the chief queen or mahisi of Nandi Varman Pallava Malla was the Rashtrakuta princess, Reva, ‘who, like (the river) Reva had (her) birth from a great king (or from a high mountain)’. The builder of the Muktesvara temple at kanchi was evidently a queen of Nandi Varman Pallava Malla. The shrine is called in its inscription, ‘Dharmamahadevisvaragham’; to it a grant was made by the same queen (Dharma Mahadevi) in the twenty-eighth year of king Nandi Varman. It is not possible to say whether this queen is to be identified with Nandi Varman’s Mahisi Reva.”
- The ancient customs and rituals of India were to preserve the memory and belongings of the dead by doing charitable endowments, building temples on the tombs of the dead, making portrait statues and building monuments.
 - Evidence of an endowment of gold is made by the Pallava feudatory for the caliber of the two heroes.
 - Construction of portrait statues wasn’t uncommon during the Pallava rule. ‘The Adi Varaha cave at Mamallapuram’ is an example of such portrait statues. The cave depicts two sets portraits both belonging to the royal clan, first being Simhavishnu and his queens and second being Mahendravarman and his queens. Assumption is made that the son and successor of Mahendravarman I built this Adi Varaha Cave.
- The Tamil literature of early times gives us a detailed description about the making of the small shrines or temples over the tomb of the dead to give them honour. As Mr. K.V. Subramanian Aiyar states, “the earliest reference to a temple built on the tomb of a dead person is perhaps the one at Satyavedu in the Ponneri Taluka of Chingleput District.”
- An inscription is found from the North Arcto District of Kampavarman in which a chief namely Raj Aditya who built a Saiva temple and a tomb in remembrance of his late father Prithivi Gangaraiyar.



6.2 Polity

Political Condition

Pallavas divided themselves into different units. The copperplates of Pallavas tell us about the division of these political units such as- 'Visaya' and 'Rastra'. As stated above Visaya is mentioned before Rashtra, it can be said that visaya was the larger unit than rashtra. The king was said to be the head of the central government. The Pallava clan during its early times acquired the throne through hereditary but by the time simhavishnu came to rule, it's hard to find whether this hereditary continued or not. Example stated will make it a little clear, historians are unable to identify the rulers who ruled between the pallava ruler, simhavarman II and simhavishnu. The titles carried out by the pallava kings were Dharmamaharajahiraja, Maharajadhiraja, Dharmamaharaja and Maharaja. Pallavas were the learners of culture. As Mahendravarman I was said to be a musician, a royal artist and was an author of a Sanskrit play. The emblem of the Pallava rulers was the Bull whose significance was that 'the religion of the state always came first and then came patience and other industrious work that were necessary to achieve greatness. The Prakrit authorization states a number of kings who had ruled the Pallava dynasty at the begin of fourth century A.D. included Sivaskandavarman. It is believed that he was one of the greatest rulers and he also performed Ashvamedha sacrifice.

Vishnugopa

One of the rulers of the Pallavas was Vishnugopa, who was also among the twelve kings of Dakshinapatha, who got defeated by Samudragupta. His time period was A.D. 350-375. Another king named Simhavarman, who was a Buddhist, came to the throne in about A.D. 436 and ruled for a period of time.

Simhavishnu

As stated in VD MAHAJAN'S, Ancient India- "Simhavishnu Avanisimha (Lion of the Earth) ascended the throne about 575 A.D." Simhavishnu time period is considered to be blessed with all types of political, cultural and architectural achievements. He is given the credit of overpowering the Cholamandalam. He conquest and defeated Kalabharas as well as the kings of Ceylon. Some reliefs of Simhavishnu and his queens are found at Mahabalipuram.

Mahendravarman

Simhavishnu son Mahendravarman succeeded him and came to the throne in around 600 A.D. and ruled until 630 A.D. Being one of the great rulers, he was very fond of titles such that- Chirtrakrapulli (tiger among painters), Vichitrachitra (myriad minded), Chetthakari (Temple builder) and Mattavillasa (addicted to enjoyment). In starting he was a Jain while later on he became an ardent follower of Siva. Being a great builder, he also made many rock-cut temples in places like Arcto (north and south) district, Chingleput and Trichinopoly. In order to pay honour, he built temples of Brahma, Ishvara and Vishnu. Mandagapattu Inscription of Mahendravarman says, "This brick less, timber less, metal-less, and mortarless temple which is a mansion for Brahmas, Ishvara and Vishnu, was caused to be created by the king Vichitrachitta." According to VD Mahajan, "Mahendravarman was not only a patron of art but was also himself the author of a book on music. The Mattavilasaprahasana of Mahendravarman is a farce. It ridicules the foibles and follies of Shaiva and Buddhist ascetics." Mahendravarman lost many battles to Pulakeshin II and later on suffered a severe defeat and had to give up his territory to Pulakeshin II. Pulakeshin II Aihole inscription states that, "caused the splendor of the lord of the Pallavas...to be obscured by the dust of his army and to vanish behind the walls of Kanchipuram."

Narsimhavarman I

Narsimhavarman I son of Mahendravarman succeeded him and ruled from 630-668 A.D. and was termed as the greatest ruler of the Pallavas. Within some time, he became the supreme authority of the south. Pulakeshin II got defeated by him, not in one but in three battles, and he successfully captured the capital 'Vatapi' from the Pulakeshin II. Pulakeshin II killed himself while Narsimhavarman I continued to conquer the southern part of the Chalukyas. Some of the titles that he got were- Vatapikonda (captor of Vatapi) and Mahamalla. Hiuen Tsang visited the Pallavas during Narsimhavarman I time period. Hiuen Tsang gives us a detailed description about the pallava kingdom. He says Kanchi is in about 6 miles in outline/boundary. A hundred monasteries are found of the Buddhist and nearly or more than ten thousand monks lived here. Non-Buddhist temples are said to be eighty in total and completely belonged to the Jains. People expertise in learning. Raja-vihara is said to be a monastery where mostly all learned men of the country met. The boundary of the Pallavas was approximately one thousand miles. The soil that they possessed was fertile and well cultivated which in return gave a mammoth of production. He was also known to build a sea beach town sort of near Kanchi and gave it the name 'Mahamallaipuram' now Mahabalipuram.

Mahendravarman II

Mahendravarman II, son and successor of Narsimhavarman I ruled the kingdom at a max of two years from 668-670 A.D. Nothing of great importance was seen in his reign. Parmesvarvarman I, his son acquired the throne right after him and ruled from 670-695 A.D. Now, the old quarrelling started once again with the Chalukyas and with that Vikramaditya I was fortunate enough to overpower the Pallavas and capture Kanchi. Though many records of the Pallavas state that the Pallavas were the ones who were victorious against Chalukyas.

Narsimhavarman II

Son of Parmesvarvarman, Narsimha Varman II succeeded him. He ruled for about twenty seven years i.e. 695-722 A.D. and acquired the titles such as- Sankar bhakta (devotee of Siva), Agampriya (lover of sculpture) and Rajasimha (lion among the kings). His reign was a peaceful one. Kailashnath temple is built by him at Kanchi. His court-poet was Dandin who was indeed a great Sanskrit writer. His son Parmesvarvarman II succeeded him but his reign was quite a small one as he has to face Chalukyan led army of Yuvaraja-Vikramaditya II.

Nandivarman II

He is said to be one of the important rulers of the Pallava kingdom. His ruling period was from 730-800 A.D. and once again the conflict between the Chalukyas and the Pallavas began. Though Vikramaditya II was successful in capturing Kanchi, it was very soon recovered back by the Pallavas. Nandi Varman fought against the Rashtrakutas and Pandyas. Though Dantidurga was able to capture Kanchi but later on his daughter was married to Nandivarman. Nandivarman was an ardent follower of Vishnu. Muktesvara temple was built by him at Kanchi.

Dantivarman

Dantivarman was the son of Nandivarman and succeeded him and many rulers came after him and ruled the throne in which the last ruler was Aparajita Pallava. He also overpowers the Pandya King.

In the course of time the Pallava decline started, and they had to fight against the Rashtrakutas.

Economy

The Pallava kingdom saw a glorious and eminent economy. Dry lands were cultivated, lakes-canal were provided a wider area for better irrigation facilities. Most of the brahmins migrated and donated their lands which resulted in huge recreation of quite a lot number of villages, towns, colonies, temples.

- **Tax and Revenue-** The central government collected the revenue of the state by imposing taxation on various items and also by asking the dues to be paid. In the inscriptions of the Pallavas there are the name of these taxes mentioned. If a certain village was stated to be tax free then it didn't mean that the people of the village or the village was not going to pay the tax, it

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basically meant that by the time the grant replenishes the income earned or collected through taxes will not be kept or given to the king but it will pass on to the person who is mentioned in the grant. There was a burden of taxation among the people of the Pallavas both early and later. Considering the revenue that was collected from the agricultural lands, only one word can be given in reference to this and that is 'irai'. In the 'History of Tamil Nadu' it is stated, "Ilamputchi was levied on toddy drawers; Visakkanam was levied on shepherds; Kalyanakkanam was given during marriage; Kattikanam was levied on blacksmith; Sungavari was the excise duty; Visakkanam was paid for the village chief; Kusakkanam was levied on those who made pottery; Nedum-Parai was paid to those who beat drums; Manrupadu was levied in courts."

- **LAND-** It was divided into two parts- Payal and Adai. While the entire kingdom and its land was measured, and a sort of sketch was drawn of every village after its measuring was done. Payal was the income shared between the landowners and the cultivators while Adai land was said to be the crown land which was cultivated by the farmers on 'lease'. The lands that were donated to the brahmins were called as 'Brahmadeya' and if the land was donated to a single brahmin then that is called 'Ehaboga Brahma'. The important characteristic of these land is that they were exempted from the tax and were never meant to be sold out. Other than Brahmadeya land all other lands were allowed to be donated.
- **Wells and Irrigation-** Wells were mainly constructed to build to satisfy the need of drinking as well as irrigation purpose. Dantivarman reign period is said to have completed 'Marpidugu perunkiraru or Nalumulaikkeni at Thiruvellarai and it is around thirty seven square feet. Water was taken from the river by the means of canals for irrigation purpose. It was taken from the rivers with the help of the canals to the lakes and then there were fields adjoined to the lakes and that's how water reached to them. Thambu cites canal. There were these big canals such as Vairamega canal and perumbidugu canal from which small canals like Sridara Canal and Ganpathi canal carried out water.
- **Crop and Plants-** To plant coconut trees government mandate or permission was necessary. Pallava inscription talk about 'paddy and rice, Thella Nello (for god) Sennel, Narnel(irrigation purpose), and Pattettu Kutthiya Pallava(polished rice)'. The Devadana village and Brahmadeya village were excluded from taxation. Taxes imposed on plants were known as Senkodikanam, Kannittakanam and Kuvalaikanam. To plant, plants like Mari Kollunda, senkodi, etc government valid license should be obtained. In which Marikollunda was imported from china.
- **Inland Trade-** Brahmins were not biased and mostly they indulged in the non-partial form of education. Other caste people had various professions, such that, pot making, weaving, wholesale business, ornament making and grazing of cows and sheep. They paid a good amount of tax to the government. Villages/towns had shops and inscriptions which clearly spoke about the activities that their shops used to carry in those time period. Basic necessity things were sold, like- ghee, vegetables, flowers, cloth, sugar, coconut, oil, etc.
- **Foreign Trade-** Mahabalipuram is said to be the 'harbour' during the time of Sangam age. As stated by Thirumangaiyalar, "this harbour was busily exporting to and importing from North India and western countries." Huiyen Tsang also states that Mahabalipuram was said to be the chief port. Boats were available which were used to transfer and transport commodities from Kanchi to Mahabalipuram. A rememberable port named, 'Nagapattinam' was also there. The kind of china is said to have high regards for Narsimhavarman II as he constructed Buddhist temples for visitors and traders. A good relationship was maintained with china and southeast Asia.
- **Coins-**Coins were basically founded of gold, silver and copper. They carried the emblem upon themselves of Nandi and two ships. As mentioned in the history of the Tamil Nadu, "wheel, saga, arrow, fish, Swastik, umbrella, lion, horse crab, tortoise etc, were found on the obverse of the coins. The terms Sriparan and Srinidhi were found in the coins having Nandi and Nandi with fish. Descriptions of coins are found in the hymns of Devaram and inscriptions."

6.3 Cultural Contribution

In the words of Prof. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, "the Pallavas made a very important contribution to the art and culture of south India." The rule of Pallavas was rememberable in many ways. They were

the great patron of learning, as well as most of their inscriptions were written in Sanskrit. It is said

ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE AT MAHABALIPURAM

The ancient port city of Mamallapuram under Pallava dynasty in Tamil Nadu, flourished with a number of marvelous architecture. This 7th century **Pallava site** was declared as **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1984 by the name "Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram".

They include:

1. **Ratha Temples or Pancha Ratha:** Also known as Pandava Rathas, they are the earliest rock cut temples in India, comprising of **Dharmaraja Ratha, Bhima Ratha, Arjuna Ratha, Nakula and Sahadeva Ratha, and Draupadi Ratha** dated around 7th century AD. Dharmaraja Ratha is the largest structure among the five.
2. **Rock-cut Caves:** include **Varaha Cave Temple, Krishna Cave Temple, Panchapandava Cave Temple, and the Mahishasuramardini Mandapa** (Bas-relief of Goddess Durga killing Mahishasura).
3. **Open Air Rock Reliefs:** include **Descent of the Ganges** also known as **Arjuna's Penance or Bhagiratha's Penance** carved on two huge boulders. It narrates the story of descent of River Ganga on earth from heaven by the efforts of Bhagiratha. In close proximity lies a big rock boulder, known as **Krishna's Butter Ball**.
4. **Shore Temple Complex:** It has two small and one large temple enclosed within a two tier compound wall studded with images of Nandi, the Vahana of Shiva. The temple is **predominantly dedicated to Lord Shiva** with a sculpture of **Anantashayana Vishnu** in one of the three temples within the complex.






Figure: Descent of the Ganges
Figure: Shore Temple Complex

that Kanchi held great importance for the learning of Sanskrit. According to VD Mahajan, "there were 108 families which were completely devoted to the study of the Vedas. The royal patronage was extended also to the classics in the Tamil." The Tamil literature, Vaishnava and Saiva mainly got developed during the Pallava reign. The Pallavas were said to be 'orthodox Hindus' as they generally followed Vishnu but sometimes, they are the devotee of Siva. The Dharma sutra gained its supremacy during the Pallavas reign. The Seven Ratha temples built during the Pallava reign is discovered at Mahabalipuram.

Grousset says, "From an early date they created an architecture of their own which was to be the basis of all the styles of the south and at the time of Yuan-Chwang's visit their metropolis, Mamalapuram, began to be filled with those admirable works of art that have made it one of the chief centers of Indian art...monolith temples which cover the whole shore, challenging their replicas of Cham or the Malay Archipelago, rocks sculptured in the shapes of animals with a wonderfully broad and powerful naturalism, whole cliffs worked in stone frescoes, immense pictures which were unparalleled at the time in all India in their order, movement and lyrical value."

Pallavas temple architecture can be divided into two parts, rock-cut and structural, whereas the rock-cut can be further sub divided into, excavated pillared halls and monolithic shrines. Mahendravarman, I started the excavation of stone temples from the solid rocks. It is also mentioned in Mahajan, "by doing so, he made it, 'the birth-place of south Indian architecture and sculpture'. It is also stated in the same that under the supervision of Narsimhavarman I 'a new and more ornate series of cut-in cave temples, cut-in shrines and some open air has relief compositions of considerable size' were made and finishing was given." In the words of Percy Brown, "The bases of the pillars are often found shaped into squatting vyalas and lions. The shrine-cells in all cases well projected into the mandapa have all the angas of a vimana front, moulded adhishtana, pilasters with components, prastara with Kapeta and Kudu-arches; the further super-structure is not visible."

History of India C. 300 to 1206

Narshimhavarman II Rajasimha traded or switched to bricks and timber for stone in the temple. Mainly six temples were built during his time period, in which the Kailasanatha temple (largest temple among the other Pallava temples) and Vaikunta Perumal temple at Kanchi (by Nandivarman II) and Shore temple at Mahabalipuram were of great importance. The 'descent of the Ganga' was astounding in many ways. H. Heras describes it, "Two nagas are joyfully playing with the water in middle of the stream; here a brahman goes back home with a large pot of water on one of his shoulders; there a deer is approaching the stream to appease its thirst. Above two swans are in pose to plunge into the water; below numerous ascetics are performing their penances round a small shrine. On the other side of the river, a cat, wishing to imitate those ascetics, takes up the same posture of penances by lifting its whole body on its hind legs and raising its front paws above his head. In the meantime, the little mice of the forest, on seeing their enemy in such an ascetic, harmless posture, run about fearlessly here and there and even seen daring enough to worship him as their god."

Percy Brown states, "Of all the great powers that together made the history of the southern India, none had a more marked effect on the architecture of their reign than the earliest of all, that of the Pallavas, whose production provided the foundation of the Dravidian style" and also contributed towards the culture of the southern India in a significant way.

Summary

The Pallavas came out to be the alarming power in the southern India in around fourth century A.D and were on their peak until the seventh century A.D. It is stated that the Pallavas captured Kanchi from The Cholas. They probably ruled the Deccan for nearly about five hundred years. They constructed temples, structures, various sculptures, towns and cities, various place for learning as they were great patron of learning. Though their origin is a kind of mystery, yet various theories are told by the historians to prove their existence. The rise of the Rashtrakutas led the decline of the Pallava kingdom while the chola king severely defeated Aparajitavarman, who was the last ruler of the Pallavas.

Keywords

- **Reverent**- respectful towards somebody; showing immense respect.
- **Monolithic shrines**- an architecture that says where buildings are casted or excavated from one piece or single piece of material basically rock.
- **Kudu**- they are the arched architecture that primarily appeared in the Buddhist cave temple where kudu is mainly a horseshoe.
- **Mammoth**- giant or very big, huge in nature.
- **Prastara**- a sort of classical architecture found in Hindu temple architecture.
- **Vyala**- a popular pattern in Indian art which is the composition of leonine creature with the head of a tiger, bird, elephant or some other animal.
- **Dharmasutra**- they are the prose that are the earliest source of Hindu law.

SelfAssessment

1. Who is said to be the founder of the Pallava dynasty?
 - A. Nandivarman
 - B. Simhavishnu
 - C. Mahendravarman II
 - D. Narsimhavaram I
2. Seven Ratha temples are found at which place?
 - A. Avadh
 - B. Kanchi
 - C. Mahabalipuram
 - D. Jhansi
3. Pallavas capital is called...
 - A. Kanchipuram
 - B. Kanauj
 - C. Oudh

-
- D. Madras
4. Who among the following was the Pallava ruler?
- Rajaraja I
 - Pulakesin II
 - Mahendravarman I
 - Samudragupta
5. Who was the court-poet of Narsimhavarman II?
- Hiuen-Tsang
 - Dandin
 - Ravikirti
 - Shiv Skanda
6. Which tax was levied on the pottery makers?
- Visakkanam
 - Manrupadu
 - Kalyanakkanam
 - Kusakkanam
7. Who captured the Chalukyan kingdom and got the title of 'Vatapikonda'?
- Narsimhavarman I
 - Aparajitvarman
 - Mahendravarman I
 - Mahendravarman II
8. Which Pallava ruler built the shore temple at Mahabalipuram?
- Nandivarman
 - Mahendravarman I
 - Dantidurga
 - Narsimhavarman II
9. Under which Pallava ruler's reign did the Chinese traveler Hiuen-Tsang visited?
- Nandivarman
 - Narsimhavarman I
 - Mahendravarman II
 - Simhavishnu
10. Which Pallava ruler built the Vaikuntha- Perumal temple at Kanchi?
- Mahendravarman II
 - Nandivarman II
 - Parnesvaravarman I
 - Narsimhavarman I
11. The Kuram grant mentions about which Pallava ruler?
- Nandivarman II
 - Simhavishnu
 - Mahendravarman II
 - Mahendravarman I
12. What were the primary examples of Pallava architecture and constructions ?
- Temples
 - Bricked wells
 - Rock-cut temples
 - Cut-caves
13. Earliest Pallava inscriptions are written in?
- Tamil language
 - Telugu language
 - Sanskrit language
 - Arabic language

14. The Pallavas captured Kanchi from whom?

- A. The Cholas
- B. The Rashtrakutas
- C. The Chalukyas
- D. The Pratiharas

15. The emblem of the Pallavas was?

- A. Golden eagle
- B. Nandi(bull) and Simha(lion)
- C. Jumping tiger and twin fish
- D. Bow and arrow

Answer for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 2. C | 3. A | 4. C | 5. B |
| 6. D | 7. A | 8. D | 9. B | 10. B |
| 11. D | 12. C | 13. C | 14. A | 15. B |

Review Questions

1. Give a detailed account of Pallavas contribution towards architecture.
2. How did Pallavas originated? Comment.
3. What achievements did Pallava ruler achieved during their reign?
4. Along with the supreme ruler, talk about the political conditions of the Pallavas during their ruling period.
5. Briefly state the economic condition of the Pallavas.
6. What sort of changes did Pallavas bring into society?



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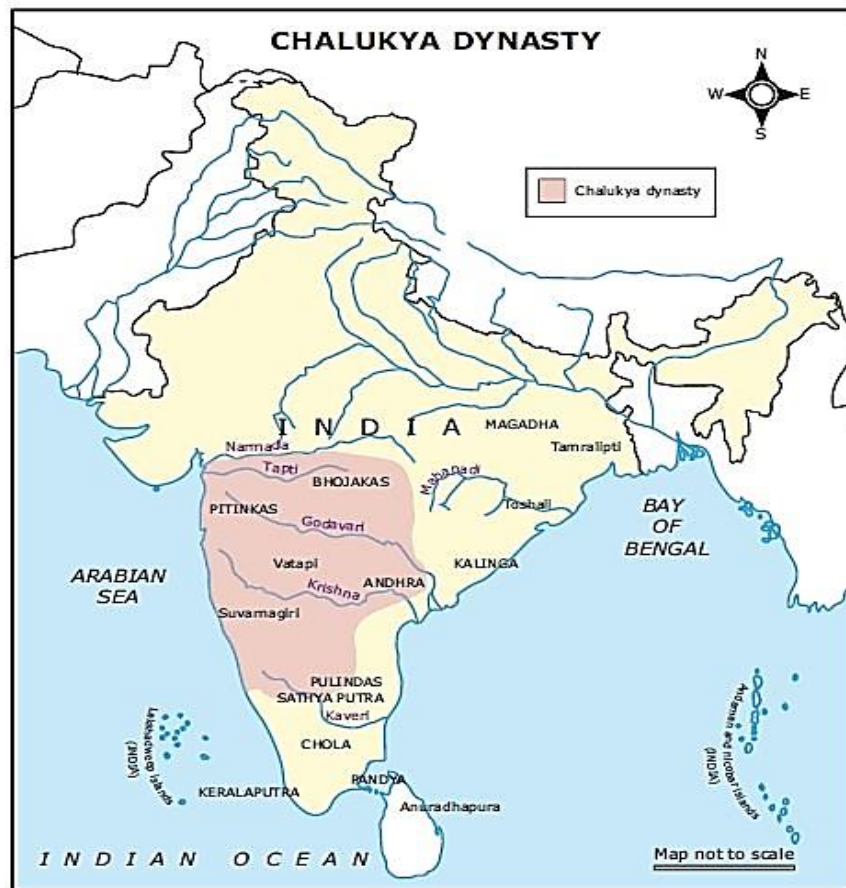
Objectives

- after reading this chapter you will be familiar with the word Chalukya,
- their origin and societal changes are mentioned precisely,
- in this history of Chalukyas, Pulakesin II marks up for huge importance, you'll be thorough with that,
- how economically strong Chalukyas were can be seen in detail,
- you will see their contribution towards the art and architecture marks great importance,
- their ruling techniques and political condition can tell how well off they were.

Introduction

The history of the Deccan marks the importance of the sixth century A.D. as Chalukyas had the unanimous power from 6th to the 8th century A.D. when number of kingdoms were fighting for primacy, the Chalukyas emerged. The early western Chalukyas governed for about two centuries and then, they were toppled by the rashtrakutas. But the later western Chalukyas did not allow the rashtrakutas to survive and administer the throne for a long time and the Chalukyas of Kalyani ousted the rashtrakutas in about second half of tenth century. In totality Chalukyas continued to rule until 12th century. The Chalukyas did their best to bring and maintain the unity of the country. They had a set ideal, Ekarata, that were never compromised and they struggled hard to attain their mission of supremacy. They established an empire in Deccan and were able to assume the title of Dakshinapathapati, despite being continuously challenged, opposed they stood strong for their empire.

7.1 Origin



When it comes to the origin of the Chalukyas a lot of controversies are mentioned and those too, don't clarify their emergence or origin. According to Durga P Dikshit, "the main reason for this controversy is the absence of any reference to the original home of the chalukyas in their records. The stories, fanciful and contradictory in nature, add to the confusion in this respect. It becomes equally uncertain whether the chalukyas could trace their ancestry to the lunar or the solar family." V.A. Smith tell us, "Chalukyas were connected with the Chapas and so with the foreign gurjara tribe of which the Chapas were a branch, and they migrated to Rajputana from the Deccan." While D.C. Sircar completely rejected the view of Smith and told us about Chalukyas that, "Chalukyas represented an indigenous Kanarese family that claimed the status of Kshatriyas. The name Chalukyas is sometimes associated with Chulika people of Uttarapatha who are supposed to have been identical with the Sogdians." Though Sircar's evidence are not yet proved to be true. Bilhana, author of Vikramankacharita mentions, "original home of the Chalukyas was Ayodhya." Chalukyan inscriptions of the later Chalukyas also claims Ayodhya as their progenitor. The real founder of the Chalukyas is said to be Pulakesin I.

Changes in Society

Following the policy of religious toleration, Chalukyas are known to be the followers of Brahmanical religion, and that's the prominent reason why Buddhism began to decline. But Buddhism did not vanish as an explanation by Hieun Tsang clears it, "Of buddhist monasteries, there were about 100, and the Brethren who were adherents of both vehicles, were more than 5000 in numbers. Within and outside the capital were five Ashoka topes where the four past buddhas had sat and walked for exercise; and there were innumerable other types of stone or bricks." When they ascended the royal seat of the Deccan, Jainism began to prosper. A Jain author of Aihole inscription, Ravikirti, received huge favours from Pulakesin II. The Puranic deities gained prominence during Brahmanism. Structures to honour Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were set up at Badami. A form of worship known as sacrificial form of worship was paid heed to. Pulakesin I am said to have performed such worship a number of times, they were Vajapeya, Ashvamedha, etc. The movement of rock-cut halls was started during the seventh century A.D., at Pattadakal there are at least 10 temples that belonged to this period, and six of them followed Dravidian style. Lokamahadevi, the queen of Vikramaditya II, built the temple of Virupaksha which is of greater significance. Percy brown states about Virupaksha temple, "there is a bold beauty in the appearance of the Virupaksha temple as a whole which is best seen in the exterior. It is a comprehensive scheme as consists not only of the central structure, but of a detached Nandi pavilion in front and it is contained within a walled enclosure entered by an appropriate gateway. The main building is 120 feet. The mouldings, the pilasters, brackets and cornices and the perforated windows are important. The exterior body of the temple consists of niches in which are kept life size statues. The temple has a spare Sikhara."

7.2 Society

Position of Women:

During this period, the role of women hugely depended upon the level of education provided and also their economic status. Women from royal families and other urban families had more freedom compared to others. Women participated in fine arts as well as were skilled in dance and music. Some records show, "royal women were involved in administrative and martial affairs such as princess Akkadevi, sister to King Jayasimha II, who fought and defeated rebellious feudal." Records throw light upon that there was a public acceptance to widowhood, Sati which was present on voluntary basis.

Caste System:

Brahmans enjoyed the topmost position as they were said to be the knowledge builders of the society and indulged themselves in careers that were related to religion and sometimes learning about martial affairs. They functioned as neutral arbiters who grouped together and solved local problems. The Kings, nobles and wealthy aristocrats proposed grants of land and houses to these very learned brahman and ask them to settle down in their respective villages and towns in order to use their knowledge as a tool to educate and teach discipline and ethical conduct in every community.

Food and Drinking Habits:

The brahman, Jains, Shaiva's and Buddhist were vegetarian while different types of meat were consumed among different communities. Two different kinds of meat were sold in the market, such that of domesticated animals-pig, sheep, goat and exotic meat- hare, wild fowl, boar and partridge. People were amused by wrestling matches, gambling was there, and horse racing was the popular amongst.

Education and Learning:

As mentioned in the records, hospitals and schools were built in the surrounding of the temples. People discussed and gave their opinions on local issues at the marketplaces that were, open air town halls. Sanskrit and some other local languages were learned, which Sanskrit was only taught by brahman and they received royal funding for their cause. Brahmapuri or Ghatika or Agrahari was the school of higher learning. Among royal students the most popular subjects were, Vartta(economics), Dandaniti (political science), Trayi(veda) and Anvikshiki(philosophy).

7.3 Polity Economy

Polity

Political Conditions- The administration exercised in south India was on some extent very different from the one practiced by the Chalukyas. Chalukyas practiced a paternalistic authority when it comes to village administration. Villages had a sense of freedom under other rulers while under Chalukyas the liberty was absent. Deccan's political condition during this time fell apart, small families were scattered over the vast area, ruling it but nonetheless states were in constant struggle with one another and the outcome didn't lead to any progress, materially or politically. Earlier Vakatakas and Nalas ruled the central part of the Deccan. Vakatakas and Chalukyas didn't probably faced each other though Nalas came in contact, got defeated and realized Chalukyas primacy. The Chalukyas invaded and occupied the territories of early rashtrakutas that were previously occupied by Nalas and Mauryas.

Pulakesin I-

Under Jayasimha and his son ranaraga, Chalukyas began their ruling, later Pulakesin I succeeded them and ruled from 535 to 566 A.D. and was known to be the Maharaja as well as the founder of the dynasty. Titles that Pulakesin I took upon, Ranavikrama, Sri-Vallabha, Shri-Prithivi Vallabha, Satyasraya. Pulakesin I performed various sacrifices and is compared to mythical heroes, Yayati and Dilipa. The foundation of the fort of Vatapi is laid by Pulakesin I, modern day Badami.

Kirtivarman I-

Kirtivarman I, son of Pulakesin I succeeded him in 567 A.D. and took up the titles- Prithvi-Vallabha, Vallabha, Puru-Ranaparakrama, Satyasraya. He is said to be the "first maker of Vatapi" as he made the town beautiful with temples and buildings. It is mentioned that he has performed the Bahusuvarna and Agnishtoma sacrifices. Kirtivarman is said to be the "night of destruction" to what he did to the Mauryas, Nalas, and Kadambas. In an inscription it is stated that "kirtivarman defeated the rulers of Vanga, Anga, Kalinga, Vatturu, Magadha, Madraka, Kerala, Ganga, Pandya, Mushaka, Dramila, Choliya, Aluka, Vaijyanti." D.C Sircar states, "the political influence of the Chalukyas extended over the wide regions in the southern part of state of Maharashtra and in the adjoining area of Mysore and the Madras state. It appears that Kirtivarman annexed part of the Maurya territories in the Konkan."

Mangalesa

Mangalesa, brother of Kirtivarman I succeeded him in 598 A.D. and was known as the Paramabhagavata of the Bhagavat (devout worshipper of the Vishnu). He acquired the titles- Ranavikranta, Uru-Ranavikranta, Prithivi-Vallabha and Sri-Prithivi-Vallabha. He is known to gain victory over the Kalachuris and the defeating of Revatidvipa. The Kalachuri King, Buddha got defeated and his complete possessions was annexed. A war between Mangalesa and Pulakesin II commenced which resulted in such a way that Mangalesa lost his life and Pulakesin II acquired the seat of the King.

Pulakesin II

The greatest king of the Chalukyan dynasty is said to be Pulakesin II, who's ruling period is said to be from 610-11 A.D to 642 A.D. He had various titles too- Paramabhogavata, Parameswara, Vallabha, Prithivi-Vallabha, Sri-Prithivi-Vallabha. The war that took place between Pulakesin II and Mangalesa led various Chalukya empire to call for their independence. According to Aihole inscription, "thus whole world was enveloped in the darkness that were the enemies." Appayika and Govinda attacked his home provinces and thus this made Pulakesin II follow the policy of dividing the enemies and then conquering over them. This made Pulakesin II win over Govinda, who later became is ally. Also, he was able to defeat Appayika. His army is said to have 100 ships. The Jain poet, Ravikirti mentioned in his Aihole inscription, "Pulakesin II besieged and reduced Vanavasi, the capital of Kadambas. The Gnagas of south Mysore and the Alupas were compelled to submit. The Mauryas of Konkan were invaded and defeated. The Latas, Malavas and Gurjaras were also forced to submit." Harsha invaded Kathiawar in around 636 A.D. whereas Pulakesin II united with Sasanka of Bengal and his feudatories and also with the kings of Bharuch and Vallabhi. Thus, with this amalgamation Pulakesin II was able to vanquish(defeat) Harsha in around 637-638 A.D. It is said, "the struggle between the kings of Madhyadesa and Dakshinapati apparently ensued from the attempts of both to extend their power over the present Gujarat region of the Aparanta division of India." Records of Pulakesin II successor state that, "Pulakesin II got the title of Parameswara by defeating the glorious Harshvardhan, the warlike lord of all the regions of the North." Mahendravarma I, ruler of the Pallavas got defeated by Pulakesin II. But the Pallavas didn't lose hope. They took revenge and attacked Badami and acquired it and it appears that Pulakesin II died during this battle. Without any doubt, Pulakesin II is regarded as the greatest ruler of ancient India. Later in 641 A.D. Hiuen Tsang visited Deccan and stated, "Pulakesin II was a Kshatriya and he was obeyed by his subjects willingly." The court poet of him, Ravikirti, was Jain, who composed "Aihole Inscription."

Vikramaditya I

Though the death of Pulakesin II led the empire weaken yet the Pallavas still controlled most of the south districts as well as Badami. The royal seat was unoccupied during 645-655 A.D. Vikramaditya I took up as the successor and laid hold of the titles- Avantivarita, Satyasraya, Parameswara, Sri-Prithivi-Vallabha, Rajamalla, Maharajadhiraj Parameswara, Bhattaraka. Vikramaditya I army got defeated in a battle called Peruvallanallur by Paramesvara-varman I. Later on, Vinayaditya (681-696 A.D.) son of Vikramaditya I occupied the throne. He too fought against Pallavas. After him, Vijayaditya (696-733 A.D.) succeeded him. Reign of Vijayaditya is said to be peaceful.

Vikramaditya II

Vijayaditya's son Vikramaditya II governed the throne after him from 734-745 A.D. A temple at Pattadakal of Siva was made by a queen of Vikramaditya II. Mallikarjuna Temple and Virupaksha Temple was built during his reign.

7.4 Economy

Agriculture & Labour

The main or the initial source of the income during this period was collection of tax from the production done over the agricultural lands. Farming is said to be the main work for the mass who lived in villages and grew crops like- cotton, pulses in dry area while where there was sufficient rainfall, sugarcane was preferred more to be grown and the main cash crops were Areca and Betel. The labourers who did the ploughing and farming over the lands had a bearable lifestyle and the records don't mention any fussy behavior between them and the wealthy landlords.

Taxation:

To fulfil transport facilities, additional income was generated through tolls. Taxes were primarily collected through forest products and mines. Taxes were collected from all sort of commodities such as, gold perfumes, clothing's. Production from agriculture also levied taxes such as, pepper, sugar, coconut, betel leaves, palm leaves. After doing frequent surveys, looking into the production type and the condition of the land, land tax was collected. Records of Chalukyas preciously talk about red soil, black soil, supplementary about dry lands and wet lands when they have to tell about the taxation rates.

Guilds

11th century saw an increase of organization of corporate enterprises. There were no independent craftsmen or artist and all the arts and crafts were arranged in society and everything was done according to corporate mode. Merchants considered themselves as powerful guilds who worked as political divisors but did not touch the areas of war and revolutions. The Manigramam, the Nagarattar, the Anjuvannam were some south Indian merchant guilds.

Trade And Commerce:

The Aihole inscription states close bonding with kingdoms likes- Pandyas, Maleya, Chera, Kambhoja, Lata, Nepal, Saurashtra, Magadh, Kurumba. By paying export and import taxes, royal traders gave significantly huge amount of treasures to this royal kingdom. They travelled mostly through land routes or sea routes and marketed mainly in camphor, precious stones, perfumes and spices. The business of stones prospered, instance- topaz, carbuncles, diamonds, lapis, onyx, emeralds and lazuli. Spices that were mostly merchandised were cloves, cardamom and saffron. Perfumes dealt with musk, sandalwood, rose and civet. The exorbitant imports were shipments of Arabian horses done to south India and the Arabs and the local traders(brahmans) had a monopoly over this trade. A traveller, Marco Polo of thirteen century made it clear in his records that these very horses were never able to survive in India's climatic conditions, additionally the grassland and soil had also differed.

Cultural Contribution

A scholar from Deccan in late eleventh century stated, "there is not, was not, nor will ever be a city on this Earth like Kalyana." Chalukyas contribution to art-architecture and religion is in immense amount. Their period of ruling is said to revive Hindu traditions and culture. Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Jainism is said to be emboldened. Vedic rights and spirituality and rituals were of great importance. He was basically mentioning about the city town position, a place mainly a political juggernaut, where astounding cultural production took place in form of Kannada and Sanskrit. Chalukyas built a number of temples and palaces surrounded by various forms of markets that made their dynasty a memorable one.

Best source of knowing about the cultural and religious lifestyle of any period is looking into their monuments. Monuments of the Chalukyan dynasty were limited to mainly three places- Aihole, Vatapi and Pattadakal in Karnataka. Some early monuments are located at Alampur. Temples related to various god-goddess were constructed by the royal family members. Apart from Vaishnav and Shaiva temple, Jain temples were also found and Aditya and Ganapati were the ones that were built during the supremacy of the early Chalukyas. The temples built during this period had a blossoming architecture and sculpture and blooming painting which determined the factor that the Chalukyas were indeed a patron of art and leaning as well as were pronounced builders. Temples of this period stood alone and were made out of stones and bricks. The UNESCO, united nation educational, scientific and cultural organization mentions some of the oldest temples at Pattadakal in Karnataka as preserved of this period. At Pattadakal, the temples faced east side and were made in the honour of Shiva. Sangameshvara Temple is an example of this. It was built in around 720 CE. The temple has sculpted images of god Vishnu and Shiva and additionally there is a chisel of Nandi (the bull of lord shiv). Temples like, Kasivisweswara, Kadasiddheswara and Kadasiddheswara are built at this place too. Some examples are, Lad Khan Temple located as Aihole Karnataka was built was Chalukya kings. The Jain temple found at Meguti was built by the court poet of Pulakesin II, Ravikirti. Again, at Aihole Karnataka, Huchimalligudi Temple was built by various Chalukya kings.

Unit 07: Towards the Early Medieval II

The records of Chalukyas gives us a detailed source about the rich culture of Chalukyan dynasty. Undoubtedly their bona-fide behavior when it comes to their records and inscriptions made it clear that a supreme authority kept a good check over the authenticity. Because of these very supreme rulers one can keep a track over Chalukyan period and get complete knowledge about their history and administration. Nearly one-fifty inscription have been found since then. Records of Chalukyas were engraved on “stone numbering 96” while on “Copper Plates 63” involved few bogus ones who were only thirteen in number. The copper plates of all types contained government orders which the royal family or ally gave and mostly they used to be of charity or donation. Small amount of administrative reference is also found in these records. Prince Vikramaditya II, Lakshmesvar Inscription is an epigraph that mainly deals with the administration, either related to modification over taxes or words about laws and duties in respect to royal member and local bodies. The epigraphs of the Chalukyas are seen to be on caves, walls, pillars, tablets, rocks, images, temples and slabs. Mangalesa’s “Mahakuta Pillar Inscription” and the well-known “Aihole Inscription of Pulakesin II were formed or set up as Prasastis. The stone inscriptions are mostly inscribed over pillar, tablets and slabs. The “Yekkeri Stone Inscription of Pulakesin II” and “the Badami Inscription of the Saka year 465”, can be hinted as the rock inscription of Chalukya dynasty. Badami is said to be the only source of cave records of this dynasty. Badami, Mahakuta and Pattadakal are famous for the pillar inscription of the Chalukyan dynasty. These pillar inscriptions were principally formed to symbolize the victory or gains by the royal members, example being- Mahakuta Pillar Inscription of Mangalesa, which is graved upon a red sandstone “monolithic column” known as “Dharma Jayastambha” and it is said to be in the yard of Mahakuta Temple. The inscriptions mentioned on walls and tanks generally lack history or information. Coins are said to be the important and the main source of determining the sequential framework of the Chalukyas. The inherent or the natural value and the circulation of these were held to be the major source of prosperity when the cultural point of view is given a thought. Detailed information in relation to costumes, dresses and ornaments are said to be mentioned over these coins. They also serve authentic information about the political history of that period. Vikramaditya I coin were the ones that are discovered among other Chalukyan coins. Pana, Rupaka, and Gadyanaka were some of the coins that held the supremacy in this period. Gadyanaka was the gold coin while rupaka is said by the silver coin which signifies Chalukyas overpowering over Kalachuri territory. The Lakshmesvara Inscription of Vikramaditya II gives a detailed reference about the pana, which is mentioned as the copper coinage.



Summary

The rise of the Rashtrakutas led the decline of Badami, where Kirtivarman II got defeated. Though Chalukyas presence could be traced in eastern Deccan because of the matrimonial connections. In the history of southern, Chalukyas presence is breakthrough and the period turn out to be the golden age of Karnataka. Chalukyas were great patrons of art and architecture. Aihole is called as, "the support of Indian temple architecture." The promotion of art and painting can be very well seen by the paintings found at Ajanta's cave number one. Two panels can be seen, one on the roof(ceiling) and second being on the wall, that depicted Persia ruler Khusrau II and Shirin, his queen and Pulakesin II accepting an embassy. Thus, Chalukyas engaged immensely and contributed enough to the political, economy and culture of the southern India.

Keywords

Religious toleration- is where one can appreciate the religious beliefs and values other than their own religion.

Ashwamedha sacrifice- a Vedic religious rite of ancient India which is said to be the grandest of all basically performed by the king to mark his supreme authority.

Pauranic- collection of ancient Indian literature that covers the vast topic, mainly religious and traditional.

Dakshinapatha- route leading to the southern part.

Frosted windows- they are the frosted glass obtained from sandblasting.

Carbuncle- originally a small coal, more like a precious stones of a red or fiery colour.

Areca- a sort of palm tree that produces small nuts(betel nut).

Self Assessment

1. A temple that was not built by The Chalukyas
 - A. Sangameshvara Temple
 - B. Lad Khan Temple
 - C. Krishneshvara Temple
 - D. Huchimalligudi Temple

2. The real founder of the Chalukya dynasty was
 - A. Vikramaditya I
 - B. Pulakesin II
 - C. Pulakesin I
 - D. Mangalesa

3. Yekkeri Stone Inscription was composed by
 - A. Pulakesin I
 - B. Vijayaditya I
 - C. Khusaro
 - D. Pulakesin II

4. Pulakesin II defeated Harsha in the year
 - A. 620-621 A.D.
 - B. 637-638 A.D.
 - C. 627-628 A.D.
 - D. 616 A.D.

5. The capital of Chalukyas was
 - A. Badami
 - B. Magadha
 - C. Thanjavur
 - D. Patliputra

6. Dharma Jayastambha is
 - A. Yekkeri Stone Inscription
 - B. Aihole Inscription

-
- C. Mahakuta Pillar Inscription of Mangalesa
D. The Badami Inscription
7. What type of coin was Gadyanaka
A. Gold coin
B. Copper coin
C. Brass coin
D. Silver coin
8. Who composed Aihole Inscription
A. Hiuen Tsang
B. Pulakesin II
C. Ravikirti
D. Harshavardhan
9. Which Chalukyan king received an embassy from the Persian ruler Khusaro
A. Vinayaditya
B. Pulakesin II
C. Mangalesa
D. Pulakesin I
10. Which Chalukyan king received the titles- Ranavikrama, Shri-Prithivi Vallabha, Satyashraya
A. Vijayaditya
B. Pulakesin II
C. Vikramaditya I
D. Pulakesin I
11. During which rulers rule, the temples- Mallikarjuna and Virupaksha Temple were built
A. Pulakesin II
B. Ravikirti
C. Vikramaditya II
D. Vikramaditya I
12. Pulakesin I ruled the dynasty until
A. 536 A.D.
B. 566 A.D.
C. 568 A.D.
D. 555 A.D.
13. Kirtivarman I was succeeded by
A. Vijayadita
B. Mangalesa
C. Vikramaditya II
D. Pulakesin II
14. Which form of worship was given more importance
A. Mantra japa
B. Pranava mantra
C. Satsanga
D. Sacrificial
15. Chinese traveller that visited during Chalukyas reign
A. Fa-hien
B. I-tsing
C. Faxian
D. Hiuen-Tsang

Answer for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 2. C | 3. D | 4. B | 5. A |
| 6. C | 7. A | 8. C | 9. B | 10. D |
| 11. C | 12. B | 13. B | 14. D | 15. D |

Review Questions

1. Brief out about the early medieval II, Chalukyas.
2. What sort of society or changes in society are found during the Chalukyan period?
3. What contribution towards the culture can be seen during Chalukya's supremacy.
Comment.
4. Who was Pulakesin II? Give a detailed description.
5. How was the political condition at the time of the Chalukyas?
6. State the attributes of the Chalukya economy.



Further Readings

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Unit 08: Evolution of the Political Structure of the Pala Dynasty**CONTENTS**

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Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

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Objectives

This Unit explores the history of the Palas and their descendant of Bengal. In this unit, we will discuss the origin, polity, and contribution of the Palas to Indian history. After studying this unit, you will be able to :

- Identify the origin and history of the Pala rulers;
- Explain the political history of the Pala dynasty;
- Assess the growth of society, and religion during the regime of Palas
- Evaluate the overall contributions of the Palas; and
- Examine the administration and economy under the Pala.

Introduction

Bengal played an important role in Indian politics between the eighth and the eleventh centuries. This was the age of the famous Pala dynasty, some of whose rulers were the ablest in ancient India. For nearly a century after Harsha's death in 647 C.E, Bengal had been subject to much interference and disruption by its near and farther neighbors. The respite came in C.E 765 with the election by the people of an able leader, Gopala, who was neither a Brahman nor a kshatriya. The

dynasty prospered under Gopala's successors, Dharmapala and Devapala. The Palas realized the importance of Madhyadesha in the Indian political sphere, and fought hard to gain power and influence there. Their main rivals, of course, were the Gurjara-Pratihara and the Rashtrakuta, although with the latter there were useful marriage alliances. In the triangular contest over Madhyadesha and Kanauj, all three dynasties ultimately exhausted themselves. However, the fact that the Palas were ever-present, asserting their right to reorder affairs to their advantage, meant that Bengal was no longer on the margins of the Indian polity. Over different periods of time, the dynasty also ruled over Bihar, Odisha and Assam. The Bengal kingdom's reputation reached beyond the boundaries of India, into Nepal and Tibet and, above all, towards Southeast Asia, in Java, Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula ruled by the Shailendra dynasty. Commerce and religion linked the fortunes of Bengal, Tibet and Nepal. There was also the desire for territorial power. The Palas during the rule of Dharmapala extended their suzerainty in Assam. Pala suzerainty in Bengal and eastern India lasted until the end of the eleventh century, when they were succeeded by the Senas, who, in turn, lost out to the Turkish Khaljis in the thirteenth century. In this chapter a brief history of the Palas will be discussed to understand their contribution to Indian history and culture.

8.1 Origin of the Pala Dynasty

The Palas appeared in the political scenario after the death of Sasanka, when there was great political upheaval in Bengal. There are no clear evidences of the origin and early history of the Palas. Epigraphic sources of the contemporary era and official Pala records are generally silent about the caste, origin and early history of the Palas. Since no clear evidence is available, historians had to depend on indirect evidences, which shed light on the reign of the Palas in Bengal. Hence there are enough controversies among historians about the origin and ancestry of the Palas. From official records of the Palas it is known that Gopala's father was Vapyata and his grandfather was Dayita Vishnu. They are mentioned in a very general tone without referring to any royal or exalted status. In their inscriptions the Palas do not claim descent from any mythical figure or epic hero like contemporary dynasties. The Khalimpur plate of Dharmapala informs us that Gopala I, the founder of the dynasty, was the son of 'khanditarati (killer of enemies) Vapyata and grandson of 'sarva-avadata' Dayitavisnu. From this it seems that before Gopala I this family was not of much importance. In the commentary on 'Astasahasika-Prajnaparamita' by Haribhadra, Dharmapala has been described as 'Rajabhatadi-vamsa-patita'. On the basis of facts provided by poet Baribhadra, contemporary to the second Pala king Dharmapala, some scholars have suggested that the Pala kings were connected to king Rajabhata of the Buddhist Khadga of eastern Bengal. Again some scholars have provided other views about the origin of the Palas. They have opined on the basis of evidences from Khalimpur Copper Plate that the Palas were originally descendants of the Bhadra Dynasty. Moreover, controversy lies in the fact that the Palas themselves claimed to be solar descendants. Though the early Palas did not declare themselves any mythical ancestry, yet the later Palas claimed themselves as solar descendants or "Surya Kula". Sandhyakara Nandi in "Rama Charita", Ghanarama in "Dharma Mangala" and other chronicles of the Age referred to Samudra Kula, or the 'origin of the Palas from Ocean'.

Although there are no conclusive evidences about the origin and ancestry of the Palas, yet it has been opined by historians that the Palas were Kshatriya by caste. Evidences supplied by "Ramcharita" and Taranatha corroborate the above theory. This was further supported by their matrimonial relationship with the Rashtrakutas and the Kalachuriyas. Again, according to another group of historians the Palas did not belong to any higher caste. In "Arya-manjusri-mula-kalpa", the Palas were described as "Dasajivina" or Sudra by occupation. A medieval Muslim writer, Abul Fazal, depending on this tradition had described the Palas as "kayasthas". But modern scholars have opined that the Palas were staunch Buddhists, depending on official records of the Palas. Their court had become the stronghold of Buddhism. Copper plates of the Pala kings bore a clear mark of their Buddhist affiliation. Though it is not known whether the founder of the Pala dynasty in Bengal was originally of Buddhist origin, yet there is evidence that the Pala kings held an important position in the international Buddhist world.

The original homeland of the Pala kings or the actual extent of the kingdom of Gopala, the founder king, cannot exactly be determined. Taranatha says that Gopala was elected to the vacant throne of Vanga some years after the rule of the Candra dynasty. His evidence is not reliable unless it is corroborated by some other sources. Sandhyakarauandi's 'Ramacarita' and the Kamauli grant refer to Verendra as the 'janakabhu' fatherland of the Palas, and from this it would seem that northern Bengal was their original home. The Tibetan historian further records that Gopala extended his

power over Magadha. The extension of power from Varendra to Magadha was natural rather than from Vanga to Magadha.

The century that followed the death of Sasanka was marked with political upheavals, extreme chaos and foreign invasion. Peace within the province was horribly disturbed. Moreover, after the death of Sasanka, Harshavardhana and the Kamrupa king Bhaskarvarmana had annexed Bengal or Gauda. Later a strong wave of the Tibetan invasion swept away remnants of the political stability of Bengal. The ultimate result was that, the entire province of Bengal was divided into several small provincial units, who unfurled the flag of independence. Each one struggled for the mastery of land. The absence of any central authority or Government made the situation even more anarchic, which vitally affected the situation. Ultimately the state of anarchy in Bengal came to an end when Gopala ascended the throne. It is known from facts of the Khalimpur Copper Plate that Gopala was made emperor by popular support. The people in order to put an end to this lawlessness established him as the central authority and thus Gopala appeared in the political scenario of Bengal. Gopala was an eminent chief and a competent military general. It is presumed that Gopala did not possess royal blood because he was not born in a high and distinguished family. But it was just because of his martial and exceptional leadership qualities that he was chosen the leader of the lawless country. The main achievement of Gopala was that he had established durable peace within Bengal by removing the prevailing state of anarchy. Gopala became the king of Bengal and supremacy of the Pala kings was established in 8th century C.E, which continued uninterrupted till 12th century.



8.2 Political History of the Palas

Pala dynasty was founded by Gopala. As the names of all the succeeding kings ended with 'Pala' this dynasty came to be known as the 'Pala' dynasty. The son and grandson of Gopala, viz; Dharmapala and Devapala greatly extended the power and prestige of the Pala dynasty. About eighteen generations of rulers ruled over this dynasty for a period of four hundred years. Following paragraphs will discuss the career and achievements of few rulers of this dynasty.

8.3 Gopala

The chaos and anarchy that engulfed Bengal for almost a century after Harshvardhana's death made the people elect a chieftain called Gopala to be their king, around C.E 730-40. It is pretty sure that Gopala must have given ample proof of his military ability and political wisdom before his election to the throne at the most critical juncture when the very existence of the kingdom was at stake. This unmistakably shows that he was the only man who was thought competent to cope with the situation. It is quite probable that Gopala might have come into prominence by warding off one of the foreign invasions that preceded his rise. It has been suggested that in the first verse of the Bhagalpur grant of Narayancipala a pun has been used on the word 'kamakari', and in case of Buddha it refers to Mara, while it may refer to king Harsa of Kamrupa in case of Gopala. Taranatha most probably confused Harsa of Kamrupa with Harsa of Kasmira who, according to him, was a contemporary of Gopala. He must have been a man of unusual abilities which commanded respects from his contemporaries.

The spirit of the inscriptions points out that he proved himself equal to the occasion and the confidence that was reposed in him was amply justified. We do not know who were the enemies against whom he had to fight, but his military preparations and campaigns are alluded to in the Mongyr plate of Devapala, which further records that he extended the boundary of his kingdom upto the sea-coast. If Taranatha is to be believed, Magadha was also annexed. If he cannot be credited with any great political achievement, it seems that peace and order was restored after a period of misrule and anarchy, and a strong consolidated kingdom was left, thus making the task of his successor Dharmapala easier in order to take an active part in north-Indian politics. According to Taranatha, Gopala ruled for 45 years. It seems that he was sufficiently advanced in age before his election. The 'ManjusriMulakalpa' records that he died at the age of eighty after a reign of 27 years. He was succeeded by his son Dharmapala.

8.4 Dharmapala

The outstanding political fact of the period from 750 to 950 C.E. was the tripartite struggle among the three great powers, the Pratiharas, the Palas and the Rastrakutas, for imperial suzerainty of northern India and for the possession of Kanauj, the imperial city of the time. Dharmapala inherited a consolidated kingdom, and it seems that his ambition was to make Bengal the suzerain power in northern India. Naturally he turned his attention to the west. It is not known which were the powers with whom he had to fight at first for the westward expansion of his kingdom. The Gwalior *prasasti* informs that Pratihara Vatsaraja wrested the sovereignty of Kanauj from Bhandikula. Dharmapala must have regarded him as a rival, but in the encounter the Pala king was defeated. We know from the Wani and Radhanpur plates that Rastrakuta Dhruva defeated Vatsaraja who had inflicted a defeat on the Gauda king. But though defeated in his first attempt, Dharmapala did not give up his imperial ambition and made further attempts to occupy Kanauj, because not long after this we find him in the possession of the Ganges-Yamuna Doab. The Sanjan plates of Amoghavarsa record that the Gauda king was defeated by Dhruva in the Ganges-Yamuna valley and this is confirmed by the Baroda and Surat plates of Karkaraja. Chronologically it stands thus that in the westward expansion of his kingdom Dharmapala received two checks—first from Vatsaraja and next from Dhruva. Dhruva attacked Vatsaraja in C.789 C.E, and therefore Dharmapala was defeated by Vatsaraja before that. Dhruva died before May, 794 C.E, and he must have defeated the Pala king before that date.

But nothing could arrest the political expansion of Bengal, reinvigorated and regenerated as it was from the political turmoil after the election of Gopala. The Palas were determined to assert themselves in north Indian politics and make Bengal a first-class political power. The Pratihara king was driven into the desert by Dhruva and the next Pratihara king Govinda III was engaged in a fratricidal war for succession with his brother Stambha, and thus the time was opportune for Dharmapala. The 7th verse of the Mongyr plate of Devapala states that his Dharmapala's (army in course of 'digvijaya' visited Kedara) in the Himalayas and Gokarna which has been sought to be identified with Gokarna-tirtham Nepal, Gokarna in the Bombay Presidency and in Odisha. The 12th verse of the Khalimpur plate enumerates the countries that actually acknowledged his overlordship. It is told that "with a sign of his gracefully moved eyebrows he installed the illustrious king of Kanya-kubja, who readily was accepted by the kings of Bhoja (Vidarbha), Matsya (Jaipur), Madra (E. Panjab), Kuru (Delhi region), Yadu (Mathura), Yavana (W. Panjab), Avanti (Malwa), Ghandhara (Taxila) and Kira (Kangra valley), bowing down respectfully with their diadems trembling and for whom his own golden coronation jar was lifted by the delighted elders of

Pancala. "Further light in the whole situation is thrown by the 3rd verse of the Bhagalpur plate of Narayanapala. It is known there from that Dharmapala took possession of Kanauj from Indraraja and installed, his own protégé Cakrayudha on its throne by calling an imperial assembly. His overlordship was acknowledged, and the war of '*digvijaya*' he had to undertake for this purpose speaks of the stupendousness of the task. The supreme political achievement was sanctified by holding the imperial assembly at Kanauj.

The undisputed sovereignty of Dharmapala over northern India and his handling of the situation according to his pleasure did not go unchallenged. The invasion of Dhruva did not crush the Pratihara power but only gave a temporary blow to its vigorous rise. Nagabhata II, son and successor of Vatsaraja, once more tried to consolidate the Pratihara power in order to make another trial of strength with the Palas. Before actually taking the field, he came to a close understanding with the kings of Sindhu, Andhra, Vidarbha and Kalinga thus making a strong confederacy of states. Thus, strengthening his position, Nagabhata II most probably first directed his attention to his eastern rival and defeated Cakrayudha, Dharmapala's nominee on the throne of Kanauj. This was nothing but a challenge to the suzerainty of Dharmapala and necessarily brought him on the field. This fight between Nagabhata II and Dharmapala for the overlordship of northern India was one of the most fiercely contested battles of the period and in all probability "both the parties were equally matched. The epigraphic records of the vassals of the Pratiharas claim victories over the Gauda emperor, implying that they followed Nagabhata in his campaign. In an inscription of Avantivarman II, great grandson of Vahukadhavala and a feudatory of Mahendrapala, it has been claimed that Vahukadhavala defeated king Dharma who may be identified with Dharamapala. Again, from the Catsu inscription of Baladitya it is known that Sankaragana, the Guhilot prince, conquered Bhata, king of the Gauda country, and made a present of his kingdom to his overlord. It is known from the Jodhpur inscription, of Bauka that his father Kakka won distinction by fighting with the Gaudas at Mudgagiri.

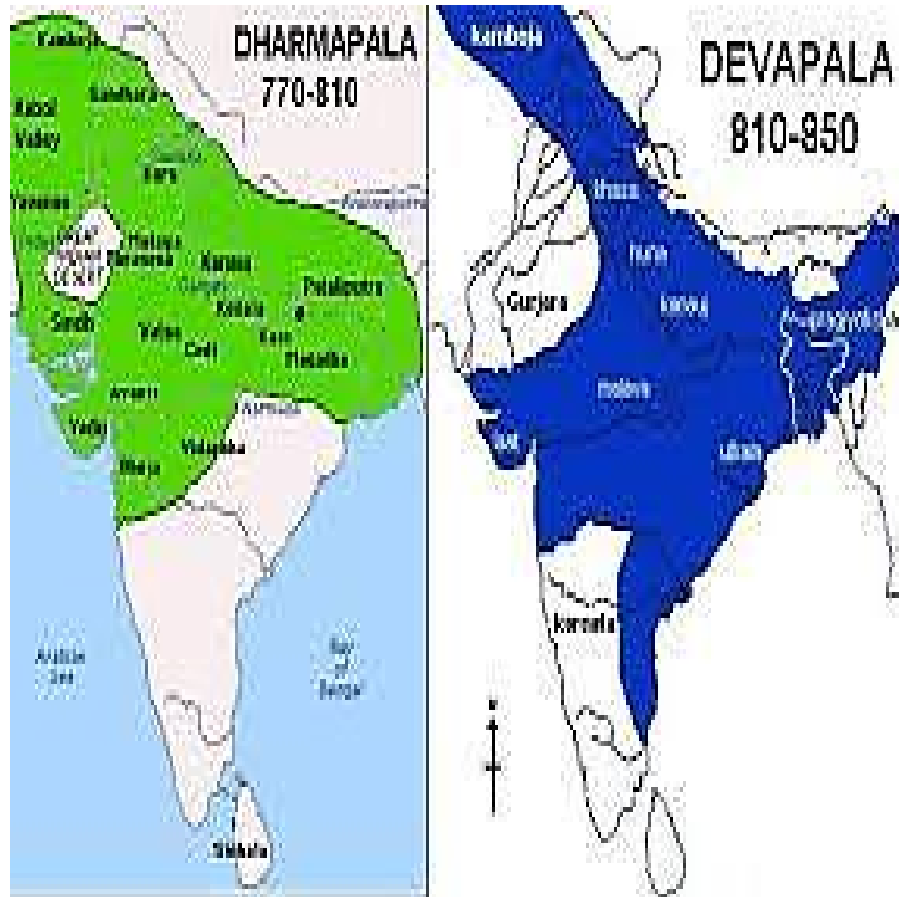
Though no details regarding the preparations of Dharmapala are known, yet from the nature of the vast and elaborate preparations of his rival from every possible quarter and from the description of the array of the mighty hosts of the lord of Vanga in the *Gawalioprasasti*, it can be presumed that the Pala emperor must have equipped himself fully well to meet the formidable enemy. If Kakka's fight with the Gauda as refers to Nagabhata II's fight with Dharmapala, the Pratiharas advanced as far as Mongyr and the victory of this severe battle was also on their side. But the victory, so strenuously and valiantly won, could not offer to the Pratihara king the desired overlordship. Once more the Rasthrakutas under Govinda III appeared on the scene and the Radhanpur plates record that the Pratihara king "in fear vanished nobody knew wither. "Govinda III overran the Pratihara territory and advanced as far as the Himalayas. The Sanjan plates inform us that Dharmapala and Chakrayudha submitted to the Rasthrakuta monarch of their own accord. In the Nilgund inscription it is mentioned that Govinda III fettered the people of Gauda. Dharmapala after his defeat by Nagabhata II did not risk another encounter with the Rasthrakutas and thought it wise to submit to Govinda III. From a comparison of the Wani and Radhanpur grants the northern invasion of Govinda III can be assigned to the period between 807 and 808 C.E. It is therefore clear that the reverses of Dharmapala must have taken place before that date.

Dharmapala is one of the greatest kings of the Pala dynasty and takes an honorable place among the great kings known to Indian history. He assumed the highest imperial titles of those days, viz. Paramabhattaraka, Paramesvara and Maharajadhiraja, while his father was styled only Maharajadhiaaja. His name and fame was not confined within his kingdom. Poet Sodhdhala of the eleventh century calls him Uttarapathasvamin. He assumed the title Vikramasila either to signalise his might or to commemorate the foundation of the Vikramasila monastery. The Somapuri-mahavihara also owed its origin to the great Pala king.

The second verse of the Bhagalpur plate of Narayanapala records certain facts which throw light on his administration and the liberality of the man himself, and these seem to be corroborated by other sources too. Though himself a devout Buddhist, he was very particular in following the policy that his subjects should be governed in accordance with their respective sastric rules. This is alluded to in the 5th verse of the Mongyr plate of his son. That this tolerance was not a thing to be boasted of in the *prasastis* attested by the Mahabodhi inscription or *Kesavaprasasti* of the 26th year of Dharmapala's reign, which records the setting up of a Caturmukha-linga of Mahadeva in the great Buddhist holy place. It is further recorded in the Bhagalpur plate that incidence of his taxation was equitable and just. Many kings sought his protecting shelter which he gladly accorded to them. The defeated kings were not uprooted but reinstated on their thrones and a friendly policy was adopted towards them. It is no wonder that a monarch with such brilliant achievements to his credit, whose government was based on so just and benign principles, should win the love and respect of all

classes of his subjects. His court-poet records that his praises were sung by the cowherd boys, hermits, village folk, traders and the rich alike.

Dharmapala was the second king of the dynasty and there are claims that he ruled for an astounding 32 years. The Tibetan historian Taranath describes Dharmapala's kingdom to have stretched from the Bay of Bengal to Delhi and Jullunder in the north and to the Vindhya ranges in the south. In addition he also states that Dharmapala also had a large number of vassal states in the periphery of his kingdom in the Punjab, the western hills, Rajputana, Malwa and Berar. The emergence of Dharmapala as the most powerful king of the time is clear indication of the visible change that the political climate was undergoing. The exercise of supreme power in North India was transferred from the Pratiharas to the Palas, at least for a period of time. Dharmapala was also an avid Buddhist and built the monastery of Vikramasila on a hill overlooking the River Ganges. The site of the monastery is considered to be at Patharghata in Bhagalpur district and it is stated that at its height it contained 107 temples and six colleges.



8.5 Devapala

It is known from the Khalimpur plate that the crown prince Tribhuvanapala was the dutaka of that grant. Most probably he died during the life-time of his father. Dharmapala was succeeded by Devapala, his son by the Rastrakuta princess Rannsdevi. During the reign of Devapala the Pala arms were crowned with success everywhere. It is stated in the Mongyr plate that in course of his 'digvijaya' he advanced as far as the Vindhyas and the Kamboj a country. This is confirmed by the 13th verse of the Badal Pillar inscription where Devapala's victories in the Vindhyas and Kamboj. It seems that he fought with the Rastrakutas during the interregnum and the period of minority of Amoghavarsal. It is not precisely known where the Kambojas lived at this time. Thus the statement In the Badal Pillar inscription that by the wise counsel and policy of his minister the whole tract bounded by the Vindhyas and the Himalayas and by the eastern and western seas paid tribute to Devapala was not a mere political exaggeration but an actual fact.

These achievements in the said *prasastihave* been attributed to Darbhapani, but it is also stated therein that by the policy and counsel of Kedaramisra, who also served Devapala the Gauda king "eradicated the race of the Utkalas, humbled the pride of the Hunas and shattered the conceit of

Dravida and Gurjara kings." It seems that the victories and supremacy won during the first part of his reign were challenged, and Devapala had to undertake another expedition to curb their power and maintain Pala supremacy. That the two rival powers, the Pratiharas and Rastrakutas, tried to assert their power is also hinted at in their own records, though they are scrupulously silent of their own defeats. The Gwalior inscription of Vailabhata indicates that Gwalior was the boundary of the Pratihara kingdom at the time of Ramabhadra and in the early part of the reign of Bhoja. The 12th verse of the Gwalior *prasasti* of Bhoja seems to imply that Ramabhadra freed his country from the yoke of foreign soldiers. The evidence of Daulatpura plates and Ghatiyala inscription goes to show that some time before 843 C.E. the Pratiharas under Bhojama made an attempt to reassert their power, and though it met with some initial success, his power was again checked some time before 861 C.E. This is in complete agreement with what we know from the Pala records.

Amoghavarsa I was the Rastrakuta contemporary of Devapala. During the period of his minority and anarchy Devapala victoriously advanced as far as the Vindhya in course of his first expedition. It is stated in the Sirur and Nilgund grants that the kings of Anga, Vanga and Magadha paid homage to Amoghavarsa, but there are reasons to hold that the Rastrakutas advanced through Odisha after the conquest of Vengi. Amoghavarsa finally crushed the power of the Vengi ruler Vijayaditya II sometime before 866 C.E, the date of the issuing of the Sirur grants. It seems, therefore, that the Rastrakuta invasion of Bengal should be placed after 860 C.E, and that Devapala defeated the Rastrakutas sometime before that date in course of his second expedition, when Amoghavarsa was perhaps engaged in wars with his Gujarat cousins and in putting down risings of the rebellious chiefs.

It is not known who was the contemporary Utkala king defeated by Devapala. The conquest of the Utkalas is corroborated by the Bhagalpur plate in which it is recorded that Jayapala, cousin and general of Devapala, drove away the Utkala king from the throne. Hunamandala in northern Malwa has been mentioned in an inscription of the Paramara king Vakpati-Munja. The Bhagalpur plate also records that Jayapala defeated the king of Pragyo-tisa-Kamarupa. The Kamarupa king defeated by Jayapala was most probably Harjaravarman whose Tezpur rock inscription is dated in 829 C.E, or his successor Vanamala.

The Nalanda inscription of the 39th year of Devapala reveals the fact that there was constant intercourse between the Pala kingdom and the Indian colonies in the Pacific Ocean, specially Java and Sumatra. The object of the inscription was to grant five villages for the upkeep of the Buddhist monastery built by the Sailendra king Balaputradeva of Suvarnavipa and Yavadvipa at the instance of his mother Taradevi. He requested Devapala to grant the income of five villages for its maintenance. This request was gladly and readily complied with, thus showing that his wide charities compared with those of Bali, Karna and Vikramaditya were not vague flattery of the court-poet. This religious contact must have been accompanied by brisk commercial activity, as the testimonies of Fa-hien, I-tsing and other Chinese travellers point to such a state of things even before the rise of the Palas.

Thus, Devapala the third king of the dynasty is considered by most historians to have been the most illustrious and powerful of the Pala kings after Dharmapala. While his predecessors had concentrated on growing westwards, Devapala's interests lay to the east. He led his army as far as the banks of the Indus, the first and only time a king of Bengal achieved this feat. It has not been repeated anytime thereafter. A historian remarks "The reigns of Dharmapala and Devapala constitute the most brilliant chapter in the history of Bengal. Never before, or since, till the advent of the British, did Bengal play such an important role in Indian politics". He was a devoted Buddhist and ruled for 48 years.

8.6 Descendant of Devapala

The dutaka of the Mongyr plate was the crown prince Rajyapala, but Devapala was succeeded by Vighrapala. The Badal inscription places Surapala between Devapala and Narayanapala, and therefore it can be accepted that Surapala was a viruda of Vighrapala. The relation of Vighrapala with Devapala cannot be ascertained, and the opinions of the scholars are divided on this point. The Bhagalpur plate after describing the achievements of Dharmapala introduces his brother Vakpala and states that from him ('tasmat') was born Jayapala. In the next verse Devapala has been described as 'purvaja' referring to Jayapala. Again, in the sixth verse the achievements of Jayapala on behalf of Devapala have been recorded, and in the next verse it is said that from him was born Vighrapala. The most important point in the controversy is that there is no mention of Vakpala and Jayapala in the grants of Dharmapala and Devapala, whereas in the grants of subsequent Pala kings the victories of those two reigns have been ascribed to Vakpala and Jayapala. Although it

may be argued that the praises of Vakpala and Jayapala in the public records might have made them popular heroes and that after their death the subsequent Pala kings did not feel jealous to give due credit to the two distinguished generals of their own family, yet the way in which the names of Vakpala and Jayapala have been introduced cannot be overlooked, and it suggests that Vighrahapala and Narayarjapala were probably directly connected with them and not with Dharmapala and Devapala.

The short reign of Vighrahapala I was not without political significance, the king of Anga, Vanga and Magadha who paid homage to Amoghavarsa I was very likely Vighrahapala I, as it has already been pointed out that the Rastrakuta invasion took place after 850 C.E. The acceptance of an ascetic life by him by shirking all responsibilities to his son might have been due to defeats by the foreign invaders and humiliation consequent thereon. It cannot be clearly stated whether Vighrahapala I suffered defeats at the hands of Bhoja, though the probability is strongly so. The Pala records are significantly silent over the Pratihara invasions of the time. But the gradual extension of the Pratihara empire at the cost of the Palas can no longer be doubted. Bhoja, like his grandfather, made extensive preparations in his Bengal campaign. It is known from the Kalha plates of Sodhadeva that the Kalchuri chief Gunambodhideva who ruled in Kalanjara got some territories from Bhoja and took away the fortune of Gauda by a warlike expedition. The evidence of the Benares and Bilhari inscriptions has, been generally construed to imply that Bhoja was most probably assisted by the Kalacuri king Kokkaladeva against the Palas. After the publication of the Amoda plates that view is perhaps to be changed, and it seems that Kokkaladeva I raided Vanga on his own account most probably during the reign of Vighrahapala I or that of his successor.

Though no record has yet come to light to show the subjugation of Magadha and adjacent countries by Bhoja, the discovery of the inscriptions of the early part of the reign of his son Mahendrapala and the absence of Pala records in that region indicate that the expansion of the Pratihara power over Magadha might have taken place in the reign of Bhoja. In the 7th and 9th years of the reign of Narayanapala the Pala sway was acknowledged in Gaya, and his Bhagalpur grant was issued in his 17th regnal year from Mongyr, and it seems that Magadha was included in the Pala empire in c. 880 C.E. Bhoja died in c.890 C.E. The evidence of the Ram-Gaya, Guneria and Itkhauri inscriptions unmistakably to show that some portion of Magadha was included in the Pratihara empire in the last decade of the 9th century. The discovery of the Paharpur pillar inscription of the 5th year of the reign of Mahendrapala shows further expansion of the Pratihara power. It is quite likely that the Pratiharas advanced along the northern bank of the Ganges and occupied the very citadel of the Palas. Thus in the long struggle with the Pratiharas, the Palas were ousted for the time being from their 'janakabhu' Varendri. There is nothing to be wondered at how the name of Mahendrapala has been included by the Tibetan historian Taranatha in the list of the kings of Magadha and Gauda.

It is not known how long the Pratihara occupation of Magadha and northern Bengal lasted. In the 54th year of Narayanapala i.e., about the second decade of the 10th century an image was set up at Nalanda which goes to show that south-eastern Magadha was under the Palas. Inscriptions of Rajyapala I and Gopala II have been found at Nalanda, Bodh-Gaya, and in northern Bengal. After the death of Mahendrapala the Pratihara empire began to break up. The Rastrakutas under Indra III dealt a crushing blow to the Pratiharas in c.916 C. E, and it is not unlikely that the Palas might have attempted during this troubled time of the Pratiharas to recover some of their lost possessions. It must be noted that no record of the Palas from the time of Narayanapala to Mahipala I both exclusive has yet been found in northern Behar. The Pala kingdom was considerably reduced during the weak rules of Vighrahapala I, Narayanapala, Rajyapala, Gopala II and Vighrahapala II, and during their reigns many foreign invaders took the opportunity of carrying on their depredations in Bengal. It is known from two Kalacuri' inscriptions that the Cedi king Yuvaraja I and his son Iyaksmanaraja invaded Gauda and Vangala respectively. Yuvaraja I was the father-in-law of Amoghavarsa III, the Rastrakuta king, whose reign commenced in c. 935 C.E. Therefore, Yuvaraja I and his son seem to have reigned in the first half of the 10th century C.E, whose Pala contemporaries were probably Rajyapala and Gopala II. Yuvaraja I carried on raids on many countries far and near, viz., Gauda, Karnata, Lata, Kasmira and Kalinga. Laksmanaraja defeated the Vangalas, Pandyas, Gurjaras and Kasmira. Nor was the other central Indian power sitting inactive. The Khajuraho inscription of Candella Yasovarman, dated in 954 C.E, informs us that he defeated the king of Gauda. Another Khajuraho inscription, dated in 1001 C.E, records that the wives of the kings of Kanchi, Andhra, Radha and Anga lingered in the prison of his son Dhangadeva.

8.7 Mahipala

In the second half of the 10th century C.E, the ruling Pala king was ousted by a hill tribe called Kambojas whose raid was, at least initially, definitely oriented towards plunder, but changed during the course of the invasion to conquest and rule. This defeat of the Palas and subsequent Kamboja rule is commemorated in an inscription on a pillar at Dinajpur. The Pala king who was defeated and his position in the dynastic tree is unclear. However, around C.E 978-80, Mahipala who was the ninth Pala king expelled the Kambojas and regained the kingdom. The fact that Mahipala was counted as the ninth of the dynasty means that the Palas were not obliterated after being overthrown by the Kambojas from their primary holdings but continued as a ruling family, perhaps overseeing only a minor principality.

Mahipala ruled for 52 years, an estimate that is considered accurate. Mahipala is also the best remembered Pala king and songs praising his rule are still sung in many parts of Bengal, especially in the rural areas. His rule was marked by two important events—the conscious revival of Buddhism; and the invasions of the Pala kingdom by powerful kings from other parts of the sub-continent.

Religious revival was marked by the mission of a group of holy men sent to Tibet in 1013 C.E, led by the well-known sage Dharmapala. Dharmapala was also the principle personality instrumental in restoring the status and reviving Buddhism, obviously with the ardent support of Mahipala. Buddhist revival was very clearly very close to Mahipala's heart and an inscription at Sarnath near Benares, dated to around C.E 1026 claims that Mahipala built Buddhist temples and monasteries and also repaired many structures that had fallen in disrepair. More importantly, the inscription at this place indicates that his Empire extended all the way to Benares in the west. This assumption is questioned by few historians, but in the absence of any contradictory proof or information, and considering that the Palas had been ruling parts even further west and north, there is a very high probability that Mahipala ruled the entire Gangetic basin from the Bay of Bengal to at least Benares.

Around C.E 1023, Mahipala was attacked by the illustrious Rajendra Chola of the Southern Chola dynasty. The Chola records indicate that Rajendra first defeated the king of Dandabhukti (an area corresponding to Midnapore), named Dharmapala (not from the Pala dynasty); then conquered southern Radha (the Burdwan district area) ruled by king Ranasura; and then defeated the forces of Govindachandra ruling Vangala. Chola records indicate these three kings as being independent rulers, which if correct would mean that the southern parts of Bengal was not under direct Pala rule. It is conceivable that these three kings acknowledged Pala supremacy only in a perfunctory manner and therefore the Pala king was not 'honour-bound' to go to their rescue. Rajendra Chola then battled Mahipala himself and conquered northern Radha. Even though this defeat was a setback for Mahipala, it is certain that this invasion did not leave any deep impression on the Pala kingdom. Rajendra Chola's northern adventure was nothing but a sweeping raid that spanned a vast area, without any aim to conquer and hold territory. The illustrious Chola was following the age-old tradition of kings, the search for wealth and stature through the subjugation of other rulers.

Towards the end of Mahipala's reign he was attacked and defeated by the Kalachuri ruler, Gangeyadeva. The claim from the Kalachuri side is of the defeat of the king of Anga and the dates start to be substantiated by external sources at this stage. The Kalachuri claim is corroborated by the Muslim writer Baihaqui who states that when Ahmed Niyaltigin invaded Benares in C.E 1034, the town was in the possession of a king called Gang, who was almost certainly Gangeyadeva. Since it has been confirmed that Mahipala controlled Benares in C.E 1026, it can be ascertained that the Kalachuri-Pala encounter took place sometime between C.E 1026 and C.E 1034.

The timeframe of Mahipala's rule coincide with the initial Ghaznavid invasion from the north-west. Later historians have leveled criticism at Mahipala stating that as a Buddhist king he kept away from joining the confederacy that the north-western Hindu kings were putting together to ward off the Islamic invasion. There is a hint of labeling Mahipala as being disloyal to 'India' in this criticism; and that if he had joined this alliance, the Muslim invasion could have been beaten back. Viewed dispassionately it is seen that the criticism is unfounded. At this stage in Indian history, Mahipala was obviously pre-occupied in containing internal dissent, having only reclaimed the ancestral throne few years earlier. Further, his kingdom itself was under the onslaught of two of the most powerful dynasties of the time—the Cholas and the Kalachuris—and therefore he could ill afford to send a military expedition to the far north to stem a Muslim onslaught that would have had no direct repercussions on his empire. It has also to be emphasized here that there was no concept of 'India' during this period. So Mahipala was only doing the right thing for the welfare of his kingdom and people by not dissipating his rather limited spare resources in futile military adventures, however exalted the aim.

Mahipala saved the Pala Empire and to a large extent restored its old glory against great odds, which is a highly credible achievement. He is rightly considered the founder of the second Pala Empire; his half-century rule still celebrated as a memorable period in the history of Bengal.

8.8 The Successors of Mahipala

The great Mahipala was succeeded to the throne by Nayapala who is mentioned as the king of Magadha in Tibetan records. At this time the Kalachuri king was Karna the son of Gangeydeva. Karna invaded Pala territory which resulted in a protracted war between the kingdoms. Nayapala finally managed to defeat Karna and peace between the warring dynasties was arbitrated by Atista, a Buddhist monk then residing at the monastery in Vikramasila. Around C.E 1040-42, Nayapala sent another Buddhist mission to Tibet led by the same Atista, who was a revered monk and missionary also called Dipankar Sijnana. At this time Tibetan Buddhism was firmly rooted in Bengal.

Nayapala's son Vigrahapala III who was married to Karna's daughter Yauvansri defeated another Karna, the king of Chedi. Vigrahapala died around C.E 1070 leaving three sons—Mahipala II, Surapala II, and Ramapala. Mahipala II, as the eldest, succeeded to the throne but was unsure about his capacity to rule. Almost immediately on becoming king he imprisoned his brothers to avoid their creating any alternative centres of power and/or vying for the throne. He was an indifferent and cruel ruler—a result of his incompetence and under-confidence—and the kingdom lapsed into misrule very rapidly. At this stage the kingdom was almost continually being invaded by other States, which weakened central control and facilitated the increase in power of feudatories.

Perceiving, rather shrewdly, that the Pala power was in decline, Divyoka the chief of the Chasi-Kaivarta tribe from North Bengal invaded the kingdom around C.E 1074-75 and captured the throne after killing Mahipala II. Divyoka's nephew Bhima became the king of Varendra, heralding the brief Kaivarta interlude in the history of Bengal. Bhima was followed on the throne by his brother Rudok and then by Bhima II. The rule by three successive kings of the Kaivarta family indicate the consolidation of power by the tribe. Contemporary writings indicate that Bhima II's reign was prosperous and that the people were generally without any great trouble. However, this idyllic situation as not to last for long.

8.9 Ramapala

In the initial confusion of the Kaivarta take-over, Ramapala had escaped from captivity and started to travel around North and Central India requesting support from local kings and collecting an army to recapture the Pala throne. Ramapala was related by marriage to the powerful Rashtrakutas, his mother having been the sister of the Rashtrakuta chief Mathanadeva then ruling Anga, who provided him assistance in terms of financial resources and personnel. When he felt that he had gathered a sufficiently strong force, Ramapala attacked the old Pala kingdom—in a bitterly fought battle Bhima II was killed and Ramapala regained his father's throne. A contemporary historical poem, found in Nepal, called Ramacharita written by Sandhyakara Nandi provides graphic descriptions of the battle, the killing of Bhima II, and the recapture of the kingdom.

Ramapala was a vigorous king, ambitious and daring, bent on re-establishing the power of the Palas and extending his territorial holdings after the debacle of losing the kingdom to a hill tribe. This may also have been a reason why his elder brother who was inefficient imprisoned Ramapala in the first instance. He conquered Mithila and North Bihar and then moved towards East Bengal. This region was ruled by Yadavas called Varmans. Ramapala sent his chief general Timgyadeva to annex Kamarupa, whose king Harivarman surrendered to the Pala general rather than fight and face destruction of the kingdom. In turn, Ramapala rewarded Timgyadeva by installing him as the governor of Kamarupa.

Buddhism, although in its final decline all over India, continued to flourish as the religion of choice in the Pala dominions during Ramapala's reign. Ramapala led a long life, full of suffering in the early stages, and as king, almost continually campaigning to extend the holdings of the dynasty. His strength of character, sound decision-making skills, and resourcefulness is clearly visible in all the actions that he successfully initiated. During the latter part of his life he handed over the running of his kingdom to his eldest son Rajyapala, withdrawing from kingly duties. It is likely that Rajyapala predeceased him since records show that he was succeeded by another son Kumarapala on the throne. He handed over a kingdom in a much better shape than he had found it when he re-

established Pala rule. After installing his son on the throne Ramapala committed ritual suicide by drowning in the River Ganges in C.E 1120.

8.10 The downfall of Pala Dynasty

The Tibetan historian Taranath writes that Ramapala was the last of his dynasty, which is technically incorrect since there is clear evidence of at least another five kings from the Pala dynasty-recorded in the Dinajpur Pillar-who ruled the kingdom. However, there is no doubt that he was the last powerful king of the dynasty, the successors being men of limited vision and stature. When Kumarapala came to the throne, the Pala kingdom encompassed the whole of Bengal, Bihar and Assam, a sizeable territory by any reckoning. However, the signs of decay and disintegration were already becoming visible.

By the time of Ramapala's death, the some of the feudatories were already functioning with increased autonomy and it was not long before they declared independence. The Gahadvalas and the Kalachuris had started to make inroads into Pala territory from the west; and the governor of Kamarupa, Timgyadeva the old Pala general, was in open rebellion. Kumarapala was an inherently weak personality and died in C.E 1125, completely overwhelmed by the troubles facing the kingdom, leaving it tottering at the brink of collapse. The next king Gopala III is supposed to have ruled for 14 years and then died an unnatural death, details of which are unavailable. He was followed on the throne by his uncle, Madanapala the youngest son of Ramapala, who tried to save the kingdom and the dynasty, but failed.

By the time Madanapala came to power and started to exert himself in an effort to regroup the power of the Palas, the empire and the dynasty were both almost on their death bed. There was on-going conflict with the Gahadavalas with Bihar changing hands at least twice; and the Kalinga king Anantavarma Chodaganaga had increased his power and could not be conclusively defeated, becoming a constant irritant and threat to the Pala kingdom. These continuous wars depleted the Pala treasury and also sapped the energy of the kingdom. However, the greatest threat to the dynasty emanated within Bengal itself-from the Senas of Kasipuri in Radha. In a severe battle at the banks of the River Kalindi in Malda district, Madanapala was defeated and had to surrender the territory of Varendri to the Sena king, presumably Vijayasena. Thereafter the Palas ruled only the Anga territory. Madanapala died in C.E 1161 and is the last king of the Palas about whom detailed information is available. He could be called the last 'known' Pala king.

There is indication that a king named Govindapala was ruling the much diminished Pala territory in C.E 1175 and while he could have been related to Madanapala, he is not considered a direct descendant of the great Pala dynasty. This Govindapala, for some inexplicable reason, titled himself the Lord of Gauda. Further, tradition has it that king Indrayumnapala was on the throne in C.E 1197 at the time of the Muhammadan conquest of Magadha. After this defeat, the Palas fade into obscurity and is not heard of again in the context of the political history of the land that they ruled for nearly five centuries.

Several factors are behind the collapse of the Pala dynasty. It is well known that after the end of the triangular struggle among the Palas, Pratiharas and Rastrakutas, the new powers like the Kalachuris, Candellas, Calukyas and Paramaras carried on raids almost on every opportune occasion. Certainly some of these raids were accompanied with loots and plunders. Political and military glory might have been one of the leading motives but the more material and economic motive was not also perhaps absent. Whoever might have been the victor, these incessant raids were a great strain on the treasury of the Palas.

Again, the feudatories also took utmost advantage of the weakness of the central power to assume a defiant, if not almost independent, attitude. We know of two such cases in Magadha. Two records from Gaya of the 15th year of Nayapala introduce us to one Visvaditya son of Sudraka and grandson of Paritosa. The family seems to have been devoted to religion and constructed temples and installed gods at Gaya. Nothing is known of its political status. Another Gaya inscription of the 5th regnal year of Vighrapala III describes Sudraka in vague terms and records that Visvarupa destroyed his enemies. It is clear that he was a contemporary of Nayapala and Vighrapala III.

The Govindapurprasthi of the poet Gangadhara of 1137-28 C.E. introduces us to two princes of the Mana family, namely Magadharaja Varnamana and Rudramana, who ruled towards the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th century C.E. The attitude of these two princes towards the Palas is not known. We have already noted that Devaraksita of the Cikkore family and ruler of Pithi, who was subdued by Mathanadeva, might have tried to secede from the Pala kingdom. It seems that at

the time of the Kaivarta revolt the Pala feudatories of Magadha were assuming a semi-independent attitude. The history of eastern and western Bengal which will be narrated in the next chapter also shows the same state of things. The verses of the Ramacarita indicate that Divvoka was an officer of the Palas, and the Samanta-cakra at first sided with him.

Taking a broader view of the Pala history, it appears that from the tenth century onwards the Pala power was collapsing. The disruptive tendencies and disintegrating forces were kept in check for the time being by the vigour and energy of Mahlapala I and Ramapala, who tried to revive the Pala suzerainty in eastern India and gave it a longer lease of life. It began to crumble after the death of Ramapala and the task devolved on Vijayasena to found a united kingdom all over Bengal by suppressing all the disintegrating forces, and the death-knell of the tottering Pala kingdom was rung by him.

8.11 Administrative Structure

Pala Dynasty ruled ancient Bengal and Bihar for over a longer period. The supremacy era of this dynasty witnessed a glorious period in the history of these two states. The dynasty ruled for about four hundred years, the Palas spread their empire far and wide and furthermore their ruling policy oriented towards matchless superiority in the field of arts and literature. The Administration of Pala Dynasty was quite organized system. They always thought about the welfare of the people. In addition to that the Pala dynasty extended their power towards Kanauj in the beginning of the ninth century. It is in the period of the Pala dynasty, that Bengal successfully got involved in politics of northern India.

The system of Administration of Pala Dynasty was monarchical. The king or monarch was the centre of all power. The Pala kings were offered the title of Parameshwar, paramvattaraka or Maharajadhiraja. The structure of Pala administration followed the appointment of the Prime Ministers. Furthermore, the Pala Empire was divided into separate Vuktis (Provinces). These Vuktis were segmented into Vishaya (Divisions) and then Mandala (Districts). Other smaller units were Khandala, Bhaga, Avritti, Chaturaka, and Pattaka.

The Pala kings gave land grants to brahmans, priests and temples. These grants were permanent. They also bestowed land grants on Buddhist monasteries. The land grants carried with them various economic and administrative perquisites. The Pala grants are specifically related to maintenance of law and order and of administration of justice. A Pala grant (802 C.E) mentions an official in North Bengal called Dasagramika who was given one kula of land as inferred from Manu. Land grants were also given to Kaivartas who were peasants. The pala records (land charters) refer to rajas, Rajputras, Ranakas, Rajarajanakas, Mahasamantas, Mahasamantadhipatis, etc. They were probably feudatories who were given lands in lieu of military services. There is no evidence for sub-infeudation under the Palas.

Administration of Pala Dynasty covered a widespread area from. The Pala kings managed the whole society from the proletariat to the royal court. Their achievements were experienced all throughout. The village level to the central government level was introduced to an exceptional planned structure. According to the history of Pala Dynasty, they inherited an administrative structure from the Guptas. Nevertheless, the administrative system of the Palas was far more efficiently practiced. The system introduced arrangement for revenue collection. The administration over all took care of every sphere of public life. During their long period of influence, the Pala Dynasty developed the ferry ghats to the river ways, land routes, trade and commerce, towns and ports, as well as skillfully managed the law and order in the country.

The Pala system of government had a long record of state-officials. The copperplates of the Pala dynasty indicate about the efficient administrative system. Moreover, these copperplates announced the laudable achievement of Administration of Pala Dynasty. The Pala dynasty had the assigned position such as the Raja, or the Mahasamanta (Vassal kings), Mahasandhivigrahika (Foreign minister), Duta (Head ambassador), Rajasthaniya (Deputy), Sasthadhikrta (Tax collector) Other important positions in the royal court included Mahaksapatalika (Accountant), Jyesthakayastha (Dealing documents), the Ksetrapa (Head of land use division) and Pramatr (Head of land measurements).

The Administration of Pala Dynasty also featured the Mahadandanayaka or Dharmadhikara (Chief justice), the Mahapratihara (Police forces), Khola (Secret service). Agricultural posts were also allocated and the positions in the society included Gavadhakshya (Head of dairy farms), Chhagadhyakshya (Head of goat farms), Meshadyakshya (Head of sheep farms),

Mahishadyakshya(Head of Buffalo farms) and Nakadhyakshya(Aviation ministry). This extensive system of administration and management glorified the power and strength of the Pala rule and allowed them to possess supremacy in northern India till 10th and 11th centuries C.E.

8.12 Structure of Society in the Palas Regime

The long reign of the Palas formed a glorious period in the history of ancient Bengal. The dynasty had ruled for about four hundred years, a rarity in chronicles of dynastic history. Credits of achievements of Bengal during this long period indeed can be attributed to the glories of the Palas. Widespread empire organized administrative system, ruling policy oriented towards welfare of the people, unprecedented excellence in fields of art and cultivation of knowledge and literature were the achievements and resplendencies of the Pala Empire in Bengal.

Social life during the Pala period was marked by the emergence of feudalism in Bengal. With the emergence of feudalism, hero cult and bravery in warfare also was developed. This hero cult reverberated in the "Nalanda inscription" of BalaVarmana, in the legend of bravery of Hari, the general of Bhima, in the folk songs. Sacrificing one's life in the battlefield was considered a sacred duty and was highly praised during the reign of the Pala kings in Bengal.

In spite of the Buddhist inclination of the Pala kings, social structure represented the essence of Brahmanism in its organization according to the caste basis. The Varna or caste system though was not rigid like the preceding eras, yet was deeply rooted within the society and Buddhists had to adjust them with that. Though caste system prevailed, the orthodox Brahmanical division had undergone a massive change. The supremacy of the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas was no more important in the socio-political life. Though Sandhyakara Nandi describes the Pala kings of Kshatriya origin, yet they did not actually belong to the Kshatriya caste, as later evidences record. The Brahmins were first mentioned in the land grants, which they use to receive predominately. Though Brahmins were accorded first place in the social hierarchy, but in practice, neither Brahmins, nor the Kshatriyas had portrayed any significant part in the public life during the Pala period. Their place was taken by the Karana Kayasthas. Even some Brahmins during the Pala period had chosen the profession of the Karanas. Though "Vyasa Smriti" describes the Kayasthas as Sudras, yet they had ascendancy in the social hierarchy during Pala period. The AmbasthaVaidyas also had dominance during this age. The Kaivartas also possessed control during the Pala realm. The Kaivartas for the first time appeared in pages of history right from the time of the Pala supremacy in Bengal. The liberal social policy of the Palas opened the way for superiority of the Kaivartas during the period. Pala records also mention lower castes like Andhras, Chandalas, Madas, Doms, Savaras etc. They pursued their occupation and also served in the Pala army.

As a whole, though the social structure was based on the rules laid by Brahmanical Hinduism, yet the Pala kings were staunch Buddhists. During this period Buddhism had earned enormous patronage of the Palas. They had restored Buddhism from being completely worsened in 7th century C.E. Though the Palas respected the Brahmanas and their status and theoretically had accepted the Varna system, yet in practice they had granted higher status to the middle Varnas and Sudras.

From the inscriptions and epigraphic evidences of the Pala period, it is known that though the caste system was not so rigid, yet people of the lower castes were considered untouchables. Bhaba-Deva Bhatta in his "Law book" has described the Chandalas, Medas, Savaras, Kapalis as untouchables. They were considered outcasts and lived on the outskirts of villages. The "Charya Padas" refer to the lax sexuality of this class of people, which gradually penetrated into the life of the upper castes. The trading and merchant classes, as also the Kshatriyas had lost their importance in society. This happened probably due to the decline of trade in 7th century C.E. The Varna or caste regulation during the Pala age was extremely flexible. The rigidity in the Varna system did not affect the society of Bengal during the Pala Age, probably due to the absence of 'Smritis' or law books in Bengal. In the Sena period, Bhaba-Deva Bhatta and other Smriti writers had introduced rigidity in the Varna system and the concept of untouchability.

The most glorious aspect of Pala rule was their policy of public-welfare. The Pala rulers were Buddhists, but majority of their subjects were Hindus. Dharmapala had adopted the policy of religious toleration as their state policy. He had declared that he is 'conversant with the precepts of Shastras and he made 'the castes conform to their proper tenets'. This policy was followed by his successors. There is no doubt that Hindu gods and goddesses and Brahmins use to receive liberal patronage from the Pala rulers, though they themselves were devout Buddhists. The Brahmins

occupied high official posts. Except one or two, all the Pala copperplates record grant of land to temples of Hindu gods and goddesses or to Brahmins. There is no evidence of any religious discord between the Buddhists and Hindus in the society. Religious toleration and mutual coexistence can be identified as the characteristic of social life of the people during the Pala period.

The everyday lifestyle of the Pala period pinpoints to one of the significant aspects of social life. People led a very simple life and staple food comprised rice, lentil, fish, milk and milk products, gur or sugar, meat and wheat etc. People used to chew betel leaves mixed with spices after meals. Populace during the Pala Age devoted their leisure in different pastimes. The ruling and upper class people were fond of hunting. But lower class people took hunting as their livelihood. The Paharpur and Moynamoti inscriptions depict such various hunting expeditions. While common men were fond of wrestling, horse racing and chariot racing were the favorite pursuits of higher or aristocratic class. Upper class women spent their leisure in gardening, water sports, dancing, singing etc. A class of courtesans and temple dancing girls were called 'Devdasis'. The Devdasi system was widely prevalent during the Pala society. Garments used by individuals of the Pala period depict the simplicity of lifestyle during that era. Men folk generally wore dhoti and chaddar. Seldom had they used stitched garments for the upper part of the body, resembling fashion of the northwestern community. Women used to wear sarees and scarf. Aristocratic women also used cholis. Jimutavahana had recommended special dress for festive occasions. Dancing girls used to wear special decorative garments. Workers and common men used to wear very short dhoti or a very short cloth, just to cover the waist.

The condition of women in the Pala social order was no better than that of the previous periods. According to Vatsayana, women of Gauda loved luxury. They used to apply vermilion dots on their foreheads and fragrant sandal powder and sandal paste on their body, flower on their hair knots. Upper class ladies living in towns lived in enough pomp and lavishness. But the village women lived a simple, unsophisticated life. Poor women also had to participate in domestic duties with their male partners. Polygamy was still widely prevalent during the Palas. Dowry system was the general practice. Even a groom of the upper class did not hesitate to marry a lower caste bride, if he could draw a good amount from her. Widows were highly detested in the Pala society and they were forced to live a life of penance. The idea of womanhood prevalent throughout the Pala society was to be a good and devoted wife, a caring mother and to be able to suffer the sins committed by her husband. Women from lower caste suffered the most. Self-respect and freedom of women were curtailed in a male predominated society.

On a whole, the Pala period in ancient India had witnessed a period of lingering peace and security in their societal life. Caste system became more flexible and people belonging to different caste and creed were given due respect and status. In spite of the deplorable condition of the fair sex and the poor, social life during the Palas left its mark in the history of ancient India as an era of absolute peace and prosperity. This social peace during the Palas contributed to the prosperity of ancient India in all fields over a long period of time.

8.13 Economical Condition of Pala Period

Under the majestic Palas Bengal had witnessed a protracted period of social peace and material prosperity. Available sources state that the Pala period was marked by economic and material prosperity. The main source of economy during the Pala period was agriculture. The Pala kings usually granted land to the farmers. The chief source of income of the common people was derived from agricultural products of the land granted to them. Rice, sugarcane, mango, bamboo, coconut etc. were the important agricultural products produced during the Pala period. During the Palas, paddy production had become the chief source of economy in Bengal. The "Monghyr inscription" of Devapala refers to mango and fish as the products of land granted by him. "Bhagalpur inscription" of Narayanapala also refers to the production of rice and mango, betel nut etc. as the important agricultural products produced in lands allowed by them.

Salt production also shared a significant position in the agricultural economy during the Pala period. The "Irda inscription" of Nayapala refers to the production of salt. South Midnapore was famous for the production of salt in seawater. North Bengal was famous for the production of Pundri Sugarcane, from which good quality sugar was produced. Various fruits, like jackfruit, date palm, betel nut, coconut, mango and useful articles like bamboo were also grown. The "Paharpur terracotta plate" also refers to banana. Betel leaf was cultivated in a wide scale. Cocoa leaf, long pepper, cardamom, clove were grown and exported to west Asia. High quality cotton was also grown in Bengal. The Chinese traveler of 13th century C.E and the Venetian traveler Marco Polo

also referred to the production of fine quality cotton in Bengal. The “Charya Padas” refer to cotton production as the important part of Bengal's economy during the Pala period. Silkworm cultivation was also very popular in Bengal. As a whole, agriculture shared a significant part of the economy during the Pala period.

Apart from agriculture, mineral resources also played an important part in the economy during the Pala period. Mineral resources were abundant during the Palas. Iron ores existed in plenty, in Radha's Jangalkhand and in Bankura and Birbhum districts. Though the use of iron ore was not very extensive, yet the process of smelting ore was well known to the people. Bengal, heart of the Pala Empire, was famous for producing the double-edged sword from the ore. These swords were highly in demand during the Pala period. Copper deposits were found in the Suvarnarekha valley. Diamond ores were available in the Pundravardhana and Tippera Valleys. Kautilya had mentioned about this in his accounts. Pearl was also found in the confluence of the Ganges according to Periplus, though not in plenty.

Historians have opined that Bengal was prosperous and economically affluent during the Pala period. Bengal became a flourishing country, abounding in agriculture and mineral resources. Land grants of the Pala kings referred to the various products grown on the granted land and bamboo groves that grew on that soil as well as tanks full of fishes.

Not only agriculture and mineral resources, Bengal during the Pala period also had witnessed thriving prosperity in the field of industry. Since agricultural products were grown in plenty, industries therefore were mainly agro-based. Textile industry was in high requirement during the Pala period. Cotton was the principal industry in Bengal. Bengal became the harbor of fine quality cotton fabrics, which made brisk trade of cotton goods with distant countries, like Arab and China. Apart from the production of fine cotton, creation of coarse cotton goods for daily use was also manufactured on a daily basis. Many people had adopted weaving as a profession during the Pala era. Literary evidences during the Pala period recorded the profession of weaving that had become a source of economy for the commons. Silk industry was very popular in Bengal, because it not only owned a domestic market, but foreign market as well. Economy during the Pala period had flourished both in inland and foreign countries. Bengal was also famous for the Sugar industry, next only to the textile industry. Gur (molasses) and sugar was produced in plenty from the sugarcane industry. Gur, being one of the important foods in Bengal, had a huge inland market. According to some scholars, the name 'Gauda' is derived from “Gur”. Gur produced in Bengal, during the Pala period was exported to foreign countries like Ceylon, Arabia and Persia. The 13th century C.E Portuguese traveller Barbossa had stated that Bengal during the Pala kings was in huge competition with Southern India in the export of sugar to foreign countries.

Apart from these two major industries, other industries like gold smithy also produced silver and gold ornaments and plates. Black smithy, carpentry, and the brass metal industry also had played an important part in the industrial economy of the Pala period.

Though trade had flourished during the Pala phase, yet it could not attain the thriving popularity like Gupta period. The decline of standard of trade is evident from the debased coins of the Pala period. The scarcity of gold and the silver coins led to the dependence on copper coins. Hence foreign trade had received a great blow during the Palas. Moreover the brisk trade from port of Tamralipta had declined from the time when the course of river Saraswati was altered. During 8th century C.E., trade of the Palas had declined considerably, with the descent of the Tamralipta port. As a result the economic system became entirely dependent on agriculture. Since Bengal had an agrarian climate, therefore agriculture flourished on a huge scale. The flowering agrarian economy gave rise to feudalism in society. Agricultural economy and feudalism had developed simultaneously by crushing the peasants ruthlessly. Hence the Pala epoch though had witnessed material and economic prosperity and affluence, yet it was concentrated within a limited group of the upper class or aristocratic society. Common men were cut-off from financial prosperity during the Palas.

8.14 Religious Structure in the Pala Reign

During the Pala Age, Brahmanical Hinduism had gained wider acceptance. But Hinduism was transformed throughout the Palas, due to extreme popularity of Vaishnavism and Shakti cult. Puranic themes and legends dominated religious beliefs of the people. Most of the inscriptions, temples and images of deities during that time depict the essence of Puranic Hinduism. Vedic Hinduism and Vedic gods had passed into oblivion during the Pala era. The Puranic kings and heroes, who had inspired the lifestyle of the upper classes, became widely popular in the Pala

phase. The concept of Vishnu became more humanized all through the Pala period, which gave way to the cult of Krishna. Due to the influence of Puranic Hinduism, the concept of Siva underwent a massive change. Lord Siva became a generous, powerful god, oblivious to his own material interests, but always kind towards his devotees. The concept of SiddhidataGanesha came into vogue, which was much popular among the merchant community. The cult of Saraswati developed as the goddess of learning. Puranic themes were added to the faculties of Vishnu. Lakshmi and Saraswati were considered wives to Lord Vishnu.

Buddhism received a massive impetus during the Palas. However, Mahayana Buddhism was further transformed during the Pala period. Philosophical aspects of Mahayana Buddhism were discarded and gradually Tantric practices infiltrated the Mahayana cult and it came to be known as "Vajrayana". It was said that salvation could be attained by performing 'Bodhichitta'. Another school of Buddhism also had flourished during this period, called "Sahajayana". While the Vajrayanists believed in Mantra Tantra, gods and goddesses, the Sahajayanists discarded all these things. They completely denied the efficacy of worship, rituals, sacrifices, penance and sufferings for the attainment of salvation. According to them, body is a temple, which could alone bring salvation. Thus both the concept of "Vajrayana" and "Sahajayana" had influenced the socio-religious life of the Pala Age.

All Pala kings were zealous Buddhists. They were liberal with their support to numerous monastic communities and for the upkeep of monasteries with patronage of the learned teachers heading them. Dharmapala reformed the religion although over the years his successors moved towards the Tantric form of Buddhist worship. By the middle years of the Pala rule the practice of Buddhism in Bengal was far removed from the one propagated by its originator, the 'Enlightened One'. It had moved to a completely different space, with no connection to the original concept. The original version relied on a rationalization of the human condition and was based on the observance of a code of ethics, which was considered inviolate. The trappings associated with conventional religion, its rituals and deities, were anathema and completely ignored. This idealistic situation could not endure for long and over a period of time Buddhism succumbed to the practices of the orthodox religion from which it was trying to separate.

By the time the Pala dynasty reached the zenith of its power, the Buddhist icons were indistinguishable from the Hindu idols. Buddhist religious practice had by now acquired all that was shunned by the Buddha himself and was far removed from the 'Middle Way' that he had preached. In Bengal it also came under Tantric influence. The Tantras originate from a collection of esoteric texts of unknown origin that elaborate and describe difficult practices, which provided the practitioner a chance to commune with divinity and to assume supernatural powers. Its rituals and disciplines are complex and secret. The practice of Tantric rites consists mainly of mantras; yantras; and mudras.

The shift towards a Tantric-influenced worship in the Buddhist religion compromised whatever was appealing in the practice of that religion for the lay person. This proved to be counter-productive for the popularity of Buddhism in the long-term. Over a period of time it became difficult for the common man to differentiate between orthodox Hindu practices and that of the evolving Buddhism, directly contributing to the decline and eclipse of the religion in its last bastion in India.

Apart from Vajrayanas and Sahajayanas, there also developed some other sects, which had attained much popularity during the Pala period. These sects comprised the Nathas, Sahajiya cult etc. According to historians, the bauls of Bengal owe their origin to the Sahajiya cult. Since socio-religious codes during the Pala period were widely flexible, various religious sects apart from Brahmanical Hinduism and Buddhism had flourished with thriving prosperity.

It is during the Pala rule, the spread of Mahayana Buddhism occurred in the countries like Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and the Indonesian archipelago. Several Buddhist scholars of the Pala Empire travelled from Bengal to the Far-East and propagated Buddhism. Outstanding Personalities such as Shantarakshit, Padmanava, Dansree, Bimalamitra, Jinamitra, Muktimitra, Sugatasree, Dansheel, Sambhogabajra, Virachan, Manjughosh and Atish Dipankar Srigyan travelled to the neighboring countries for the extend of Buddhism.

The long Pala period and the selected Religion during Pala Dynasty produced a commixture atmosphere of Hindu-Buddhist culture. This admixture resulted in the evolution of the sahaiya and tantrik cults. The Palas introduced a heritage of religious-social-cultural synthesis and this can be marked as the glorious achievement of the period and this attribute became a vital ingredient of ancient Bengal.

Conclusion

At the height of their power, the Palas controlled a wide realm and enjoyed extensive influence across entire North India. As the predominant dynasty of the time, they were able to assert the right to reorder the affairs of North India to their own advantage. Bengal was no more at the periphery of Indian polity, but the core of politico-economic and military strength. The century between C.E 780-890, which coincides with the combined rule of Dharmapala and Devapala, can be correctly assumed to be the most prosperous and greatest years of the Pala rule. The century is known for its marked intellectual and artistic activities and achievements.

The Palas remain one of the most remarkable dynasties to have ruled a large Empire in India. Irrespective of the fact that there were two minor interludes when the Kambojas invaded in the 10th century C.E and thereafter when the Kaivarta's usurped power in the 11th century C.E for a limited period, the Palas were at one time the foremost imperial power of medieval India. Like every other dynasty in Indian history, the Palas vanished from the scene not in a blaze of glory, but in a rather timid manner, gradually becoming irrelevant to the broader political developments, holding on to an ever-decreasing geographical territory, becoming targets of rising and ambitious kings in the neighborhood, and finally becoming a memory amongst the people. The golden days are remembered in folklore and song as are the faults and foibles of the lesser capable kings.

Summary

- The Pala Dynasty reigned the Indian states of Bihar and Bengal from 8th to the 12th centuries C.E .
- The founder of the Pala dynasty was Gopala .His successor, Dharmapala made the dynasty a dominant power of northern India .This dynasty is acknowledged as the Palas because all the rulers had their last names as "Pala "which means protector .
- The actual Origin and rise to power was not stated in the Pala records .There are no exact evidences on the origin and ancestry of the Pala .However, scholars suggest that the Pala kings were connected to king Rajabhata of the Buddhist Khadga of eastern Bengal .
- The Palas ruled for about four hundred years .This ruling decade by the Pala Dynasty was considered to be the glorious age as Bengal witnessed several achievements .
- Social Life during the Pala Period was quite prosperous .The society was dominated by religion but the status of the Vedic Brahmanas declined .Furthermore, the social condition in the days of the Palas was peaceful .
- The basis of Administration of Pala Dynasty was monarchical .The center of all power was the King or Monarch .The kings were accompanied by a Prime Ministers and the empire was divided into separate Vuktis or Provinces .Further, these Vuktis were divided into Vishaya(Divisions)and then Mandala was divided into (Districts).
- Economic Life during the Pala period introduced the society to a feudal economy .Trade declined and the agro economy flourished, in addition to that minerals also played a role in uplifting the economy of the state.
- The Pala Dynasty was the followers of Buddhism .They belonged to the Mahayana Buddhism group .Buddhism as well as Hinduism was the Religion during Pala Dynasty that flourished .
- The Palas excelled in art and sculpture and thus they provided distinctive form of Buddhist art .The form of Art and Architecture of Pala Dynasty was identified as the "Pala School of Sculptural Art " .
- This dynasty ruled the state and continued with eighteen generations of kings .Long struggle against the different dynasty of other part of India, declining economic condition, weak rulers and rise of feudal power finally led the decline and disintegration of the Pala Empire.

Keywords

- Nalanda
- Vajrayanas
- Buddhism
- Education
- Vaishnavism
- Shakt
- Economics

Self Assessment

1. Who was/were the founder(s) of the Pala Dynasty?
A. Gopala I
B. Dharpala
C. Devpala
D. All of the above
2. Consider the following
I. He patronized the Vikramashila University and the Nalanda University.
II. Famous poet Vajradatta who was author of Lokeshvarashataka was one of the gems of his court.
Which of the above statement (s) is/are correct about Devpala?
A. Only I
B. Only II
C. Both I and II
D. Neither I nor II
3. Who built the great Vihara at Somapuri in Verendri and the Vihara in Paharpur?
A. Mahendrapala
B. Dharpala
C. Narayanpala
D. Vighrapala I
4. Who among the following Pala ruler was associated with Badal Pillar inscription?
A. Narayanpala
B. Gopala II
C. Vighrapala
D. Mahipala I
5. Pala dynasty ruled ?
A. Bihar and Bengal
B. Madhya Pradesh
C. Karnataka
D. Uttar Pradesh
6. Who was the greatest and most successful ruler of Palas of Bengal.
A. Gopala
B. Dharpala
C. Devpala
D. Mahipala I
7. Who was the author of 'Gita Govinda'?
A. Kalhana
B. Kalidasa
C. Vatsayana
D. Jayadeva

8. What does "Pala" mean?
- A. Power
 - B. Knowledge
 - C. Silent
 - D. Protector
9. VikramshilaMahaVihar was established by the ruler of
- A. Sen Dynasty
 - B. Pala Dynasty
 - C. Varman Dynasty
 - D. Pushyabhuti Dynasty
10. Which one of the following places was not the centre of learning during early medieval period?
- A. Taxila
 - B. Uddantapur
 - C. Vikramashila
 - D. Nalanda
11. Who is the father of the Hindu god Chitragupta?
- A. Lord Shiva
 - B. Lord Vishnu
 - C. Lord Brahma
 - D. Parashurama
12. When was Nalanda University founded?
- A. in the 7th century
 - B. In the 5th century
 - C. In the 4th century
 - D. In the 3rd century
13. Vikramshila University was established by
- A. Devapala
 - B. Dharmapala
 - C. Mahendrapala
 - D. Ramapala
14. With reference to the economic history of medieval India, the term 'Arghatta' refers to
- A. Waterwheel used for the irrigation of land
 - B. Wasteland converted to cultivated land
 - C. Land grants made to military officers
 - D. Bonded labour
14. The author of Gaudavaho was
- A. Vakpati
 - B. Banabhatta
 - C. Aryabhatta
 - D. Harishena

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. C | 3. B | 4. A | 5. A |
| 6. A | 7. D | 8. D | 9. B | 10. A |
| 11. C | 12. B | 13. B | 14. A | 15. A |

Review Questions

1. What was the cause of conflict between the three powers during C.E 750-1000?
2. Examine the changes that occurred in the society and economy during the Pala rule in Bengal.
3. Discuss the career and achievements of Dharmapala.
4. Write an essay on the religious condition of Bengal under the Pala dynasty.
5. Give an account on the origin and early history of Pala dynasty in Bengal.

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Unit09: Evolution of Political Structures of Rashtrakutas**CONTENTS**

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Summary

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Objectives

This unit deals with the history of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. Here a discussion on the origin, polity, and contribution of the Rashtrakuta to Indian history will be discussed. After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify the theory of origin and development of the Rashtrakuta dynasty;
- Understand the political history of the Rashtrakuta dynasty;
- Evaluate the cultural contributions of the Rashtrakutas; and
- Examine the administration, society, and economy of the Rashtrakutas

Introduction

The Rashtrakuta dynasty ruled over large portions of India from the 8th to 12th century C.E. India at the time was under the threat of invasion from the Arabs, who conquered Sind in 712 C.E and were looking to expand to the west and control trade routes in the region. A royal family called the Calukyas controlled this territory and successfully resisted Arab attacks. This significantly weakened their power. Seeing an opportunity an official in the Calukyas' administration named Dantidurga declared his independence in C.E 753. The dynasty that he and his family formed the core of was called the Rashtrakuta, with their capital based at Manyakheta. Geographically the Rashtrakuta kingdom located nearly in the middle of India along the top of the Deccan Plateau. This position afforded many opportunities for expansion. The Rashtrakutas took advantage of this and frequently interfered with both the northern and southern kingdoms of India. The northern kingdoms were particularly easy to prey on, as there was no one powerful enough to effectively repel the Rashtrakutas. The Rashtrakutas also controlled large portions of the western coast of India. The majority of the trade with West Asia came through these ports and much of the Rashtrakutas wealth along with it. Tea and cotton textiles were exported out of the kingdom and horses were imported to be sold further inland. The Rashtrakutas also maintained good relations with the Arabs in Sind and traded extensively with them. By the end of the 10th century the geographical advantages the Rashtrakutas had enjoyed turned to disadvantages, as new powers in the north and south emerged as threats. In the south the Colas were becoming the dominant kingdom in the area. The Calukya dynasty, whom the Rashtrakutas had originally overthrown, was regaining much of their former power and territory. With this new threat in the south the Rashtrakutas were unable to keep the Colas from regaining their northern territories. Along with the threat of these two kingdoms was the rise of the Shilaharas in the north-western Decca. They took over much of the western coast and port cities of Western India. In the end the Rashtrakuta's dynasty came full circle and was overthrown by the Calukyas, from whom Dantidurga had claimed independence from hundreds of years ago.

9.1 Origin of the Rashtrakuta

The origin of the dynasty is still a matter of controversy among historians. Several theories are put forward to explain the origin of the Rashtrakutas. It is said that they were indigenous people of the country claiming descent from the sacred Yadava family of Epic fame, especially considering their predominance in the Gujarat and Deccan region. Of the 75 inscriptions and copper grants of the Rashtrakutas of Deccan and Gujarat that have so far been discovered, only eight mention any connection between the Rashtrakutas and the Yadavas. The earliest one that connects the two dynasties is dated to C.E 860, with all the earlier ones being completely silent on the issue. However, a copper grant dated to 914 C.E states, 'Rashtrakuta Dantidurga was born in the line of Yadava Satyaki'. The book *Kavirahasya* by Halayudha also mentions the Rashtrakutas as being the descendants of Yadava Satyaki.

Another opinion is that Rashtrakuta was a title given to governors of provinces by the Chalukya kings and meant 'head of the region'. Since it was such governor who established an independent kingdom, the dynasty itself came to be called the Rashtrakutas. On becoming more powerful, they also assumed the title of Prithvi Vallabha with the 'Vallabha' getting transliterated into 'Balharas' in the Arab chronicles of the time. Irrespective of the vagueness regarding the origins of the dynasty, their rise was rapid and relatively painless by the standards of the day.

The earliest reference to the Rashtrakutas is found in the Edicts of Asoka Maurya as Rashtrika and Rathika, who have been used to refer to a tribe at that time resident in the North-Western regions. It has been opined that Rashtrika refers to the same tribe as the Arattas of Punjab. The Arattas are mentioned in the Mahabharata and also in the account of Alexander's invasion of Gandhara. In the Asokan edict they are mentioned immediately after the Kambojas and Gandharas, giving credence to the belief that they were resident in the Punjab. The prominent historian C.V. Vaidya is of the opinion that the Rashtrakutas were initially settlers of Punjab who migrated south and carved out a kingdom in the Deccan, gradually becoming the Kshatriyas of Maharashtra.

Dr. A.S. Altekar has pointed out that the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta originally lived in the Karnataka country and their mother tongue was Kanarese. They used the Kanarese script. Several inscriptions describe them as "Lord of Lattura". This place is identified with Latur-in Bidar in modern Karnataka. Thus it is assumed that the Rashtrakuta were initially served as the district officer under the Chalukya of Badami. With the passage of time when the early Chalukya lost their

power, taking advantage of this situation the Rashtrakuta overpowered them and established their dynasty.

9.2 Sources of Rashtrakuta History

The study of the history of the early Rashtrakutas and the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta has been made possible by the availability of numerous inscriptions spread all over the Deccan. Most of the inscriptions were written in Sanskrit, Kannada language and stone records. There are literary sources as well such as ancient literature in Pali, contemporaneous Kannada literature such as Kavirajamarga (850 C.E) and Vikramarjuna Vijaya (941 C.E), Sanskrit writings by Somadeva, Rajashekhara, Gunabhadra, Jinasena and others and the notes of Arab travelers of those times such as Suleiman, Ibn Haukal, Al Masudi, Al Istakhri and others.

9.3 Political History of Rashtrakutas

The Rashtrakuta lived in various parts of Deccan in the 5th Century C.E. In the 7th Century C.E they became feudatories of the Chalukyas. In subsequent years one of the Rashtrakuta clans established a strong kingdom under Indra. He was married to a Chalukya princess and managed to maintain friendly relations with them. The power of the Rashtrakuta dynasty further increased under the reign of Dantidurga, the son and successor of Indra.



9.4 Dantidurga

Indraraja was followed on the throne by his son Dantidurga who is credited with re-establishing the Rashtrakuta rule over most of Deccan, which his descendants thereafter sustained for the next 225 years. He recaptured territory lost to the Chalukyas earlier by defeating the Chalukya king Kirtivarman II sometime between C.E 747 and 753. Inscriptions, copper plate grants and Sanskrit texts independently confirm Dantidurga's victory as a fact. There are two copper grants of later

Rashtrakuta kings dated 807 and 812 C.E, that clearly mention Dantidurga II's defeat of the Chalukya king Kirtivarman II and the annexation of almost the entire Chalukya kingdom into the Rashtrakuta fold. He went on to conquer Shri Saila (Kurnool district in Andhra), Kalinga, South Koshala, Malwa and Lata. After the initial victory over the Chalukyas, he assumed the title of Rajadhiraja (King of Kings) and Parameswara (Supreme Lord). At the end of his conquests the Rashtrakuta kingdom controlled Gujarat and Malwa in the north and included Rameswaram in the south, while it stretched across the Peninsula to touch both the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. There is also an inscription that mentions that he put down a revolt in Kanchi, confirming the spread of his kingdom. His look is said to have had the effect of a sword on his enemies, obviously a metaphorical expression to indicate his ferocity and valor. He assumed the title of Khadagavaloka (the one wielding the Khadaga) and towards the end of his reign he was also called Maharajadhiraja (The Greatest King of Kings).

9.5 Krishnaraja-I

Around 760 Krishnaraja-I, the uncle of Dantidurga came to power. There is one opinion that he usurped the throne by deposing Dantidurga because the king had become unpopular. Considering his achievements, this theory is difficult to believe. In fact it can be considered patently incorrect since there is an inscription that states very clearly that Krishnaraja-I came to power on the 'demise of the great king Dantidurga'. Three stone inscriptions, one copper grant and 1800 silver coins of Krishnaraja's reign have been found and identified. The first inscription in Hattimattur is not dated; the second at Telegaon is dated to 768; and the third at Alas is dated to 770 C.E with the copper grant being dated 772 C.E. The flag of Rashtrakuta ascendancy was kept flying by Krishna I. He extinguished the lingering power of the Chalukyas in 760 C.E by inflicting the final defeat on Kirtivarman II. He assumed the title of Subhatunga and Akalavarsa. Krishna I became the unrivalled master of Deccan by defeating the Gangas of Mysore and the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. He extended his sway up to Southern Konkona. The Bhandaka plate informs us that Krishna ruled over the whole of central India. Perhaps he captured Lata or Gujrat. So the Rashtrakuta empire under Krishna I comprised whole of modern Maharashtra, a good part of Mysore, the whole of Andhra Pradesh. A part of Vengi and Central India acknowledged his supremacy. Krishna I patronized art and architecture. He constructed the famous rock cut temple of Siva at Ellora, which is known as the Kailashanatha temple. The Kailashanatha temple at Ellora alone is fit to immortalize the name of Krishna I. The front portion of a hill was carved in such a manner that it was converted into a vast complex of Siva temple with exquisite sculptures depicting stories of epics in most lively form. He also built another eighteen Shiva temples, which confirms him as a Shiva worshipper. He was a great patron of learning and founded a 'college' called Kanneshawara where a large number of scholars lived and worked. The famous Jain author Akalanka Bhatta, the author of the tome Rajavartika lived in the college during the time of Krishnaraja. Krishnaraja had two sons- Govindaraja and Dhruvaraja.

9.6 Govindaraja II

The elder son, Govindaraja succeeded Krishnaraja to the throne. As a prince, he had conquered Vengi, the eastern coastal district that lie between the Rivers Krishna and Godavari, annexing it to the spreading Rashtrakuta kingdom. Although two copper plates of the time of his reign has been found (one dated 775 and the other 779 C.E), they do not mention the king by name, but only that of his brother Dhruvaraja as well as that of his son Karakaraja. The copper grant found in Wardha reports that Govindaraja was excessively fond of the good life and of women and entrusted the governance of the kingdom to his younger brother Nirupama, one of the titles of Dhruvaraja. Dhruvaraja subsequently deposed him from the throne. Govindaraja unsuccessfully tried to regain the throne with the assistance of the kings of Malwa and Kanchi, during which the combined armies were defeated by Dhruvaraja.

The Jain author Jinasena, of the Digambara sect, confirms towards the end of his monumental work Harivamsha Purana that, 'in Shaka S.705 (783 C.E.), king Indrayudha reigned in the north; Krishna's son Shrivallabha in the south; Vatsaraja of 'Avanti' in the east; and Varaha in the west'. Here Indryudha is doubtless the Rashtrakuta king of Kanauj and Krishna's son could either be Govindaraja or Dhruvaraja, since the Rashtrakuta kings of the Deccan were also titled 'Vallabha'. Subsequently the son of Vatsaraja, Pratihara Nagabhatta II seized the kingdom of Kanauj, defeating Indrayudha's sons and successor, Chakrayudha.

9.7 Dhruvaraja

The second son of Krishnaraja dethroned his brother, with the actual date of his accession being confirmed as C.E 780, although he had been the virtual ruler for some years before that. There is an opinion, probably correct, that he took over the kingdom only to save it from its covetous neighbours who were planning to take advantage of the weak rule of Govindaraja II. Dhruvaraja was a brave and wise king and defeated both the Pallavas of Kanchi and the Chera king further south. He also attacked and routed Pratihara Vatsaraja, who had already conquered Gauda, and drove him towards Marwar. This particular event is mentioned in the Harivamsha Purana. He is said to have captured the canopies of the defeated kings, obviously a custom of the day that denoted complete subjugation of the defeated forces. It is possible that his kingdom ranged from Ayodhya in the north to Rameshawaram in the south. Three inscriptions in Canarese found at Pattadakal, Naregal and Lakshmeshvar, made during his reign corroborate the information from other sources. During his lifetime itself he appointed his son Govindaraja III as the ruler of a kingdom that by then extended from Kanthika (Konkan) in the south to Khambat (Cambay). There is some indication that he was fatally wounded while trying to put down a rebellion in Gujarat, although this cannot be conclusively proved. However, it is certain that Dhruvaraja was found of waging aggressive wars, so dear to the heart of typical Indian rajas or kings. Dhruva assumed a number of high sounding titles like Nirupama (one who has no equal), Kali-Vallabya (fond of war) and dhara varsa (heavy rainer) etc. Dhruva established himself as the lord paramount of Deccan. He made a bid for mastery over northern India. Under him the history of Rashtrakuta became a part of the general history of India.

9.8 Govindaraja III

Dhruvaraja had wanted to give him the title of king even before his own death, but Govindaraja III protested and continued as Prince Regent, not wanting to be called king while his father was still alive. It is significant that he was not the eldest son but was still anointed as successor. Nine copper grants that date between 794 and 813 C.E provide a great deal of information regarding the rule of this powerful king.

The records show that there was some sort of a succession struggle, which is not surprising considering that Govindaraja was not the eldest son of his father and that primogeniture was the confirmed tradition of the time. His brother named as Stambha in one of the plates, possibly Shauchkhamba who is mentioned in other sources, assembled an army supported by twelve other kings and attacked Govindaraja. However Govindaraja defeated them and established himself as the sovereign ruler. Govinda III showed an extraordinary magnanimity in restoring his elder brother to the previous office and earned his eternal loyalty.

In order to fulfill his dream of imperial supremacy in the north Govinda III had to fight with Pratihara king Nagabhata II and Pala king Dharmapala. Govinda routed Nagabhata in a pitched battle in the Bundelkhand region. Dharmapala and his protégée Chakrayudha of Kanauj submitted to him without resistance and followed his camp. It is said that Govinda III defeated many other king of northern India and reinstated them again as his vassals. He marched up to the Himalayas and became the suzerain of northern India.

The Sanjan plate states that Govinda also humbled the pride of the kings of Kalinga, Dahala, Odraka and Vengi. We have neither details about his campaign against Kaliga or Odraka, nor any corroboration from other sources. But Govinda's campaign against Vengi is authentic. After all Rashtrakuta rivalry with Vengi was an ancient one dating from the time of Dhruva. Govinda's contemporary on the throne of Vengi were Vishnu Vardhana IV and Vijayaditya II. Probably Vijayaditya II the king of Vengi, was reported to have accepted Govindaraja's supremacy and attended his court to pay obeisance.

The Sanjan plate also states that Govinda III marched south ward to the south of Tungabhadra against the Dravida, Kerala, Pandyas and Cheras. It is recorded that Govindaraja defeated king Dantiga of Kanchi. This Dantiga could have been the Pallava king Dantivarman, whose son Nandivarman subsequently married princess Shankha, Govindaraja's granddaughter. Govindaraja was magnanimous enough to liberate the Chera king Ganga who had been imprisoned for life by his father, but was also pragmatic enough to put him back in prison when Ganga rebelled after being free for some time.

Govindaraja subsequently invaded and conquered Malwa. The most important development that took place during the reign of this illustrious king was that he conquered Lata (central and southern

Gujarat) and made his younger brother Indraraja the ruler of the region. Indraraja went on to found the second branch of the Rashtrakuta line who became the kings of Gujarat. The kings of Bengal and Magadha also yielded to the power of Govindaraja, probably without going to war. An inscription in Nilgund dated to 866 C.E. claims that he also conquered Kerala and Chitrakuta (Chittor). However, lack of any other corroborative evidence makes this claim a bit tenuous and hard to believe.

While the core Rashtrakuta kingdom ruled by Govindaraja directly was the territory between the Narmada and the Tungabhadra Rives, kings of territories ranging from Vindhya and Malwa in the north and Kanchi in the south were under his sway and could be considered autonomous feudatories of the Rashtrakutas. It is also possible that some of the achievements attributed to Govindaraja III could have been that of his father Dhruvaraja who was himself a dynamic and successful king. This confusion arises because of the fact that contemporary writings of the time are at times unclear regarding their dating and therefore open to differing interpretations. In either case, Govindaraja III was one of the more successful Rashtrakuta kings, a dynasty that produced a number of very capable rulers.

9.9 Amoghavarsha

Govinda III was succeeded by his minor son named Amoghavarsha. This name is only considered a title by several scholars. His real name remains a mystery even today. However, in later years the title lapsed into being considered a name that succeeding kings of the dynasty adopted. The reign of Amoghavarsha was started with rouble. During the period of his minority the feudal chiefs revolted against him. In the wake of disruption the Eastern Chalukya king Vijayaditya of Vengi took a revenge for the past defeat by overthrowing Amoghavarsha from his ancestral throne. The Sanjan plate states that Vijayaditya II of Vengi joined with the Ganga ruler to overthrow him. But with the help of his cousin Karkaraja, the regent, Amoghavarsha slowly and steadily recovered his fortune by defeating Vijayaditya in 830 C.E.

He then went on to amass real power. He is reported to have possessed a number of royal emblems that included the three canopies captured earlier by his ancestor Govindaraja II. The copper grants found in Baroda and Kavi in Broach that deal with Amoghavarsha's rule, mention the charitable generosity of the king and indicate that he put down another rebellion in Gujarat by a Rashtrakuta king. Inscriptions, dating from 843 C.E. onwards found at Kanheri in Thane district, at Konur, at Shirur, provide a great deal of information regarding Amoghavarsha's reign. It is known that Pulla Shakti of the Shilahara dynasty and the governor of Konkan was his chief feudatory; that Pulla Shakti was a Buddhist and succeeded by Kapardi II to the governorship; and that Amoghavarsha was a benevolent king. In one inscription it is mentioned that the Rashtrakutas were an off-shoot of the Yadavas and that they adopted a new title of Vira Narayana.

Amoghavarsha ruled for a long period of 64 years was full of revolts and attack by neighbours. He had to wage many wars to crush these rebellions. First he defeated the eastern Chalukyas of Vengi, the eternal enemy of the Rashtrakuta revolted again in and about 850 C.E. At this time ruler of Vengi was Gunaga Vijayaditya. Gunaga was determined to assert the independence of Vengi and made an attack on Kurnool district, a part of Rashtrakuta kingdom. Amoghavarsha inflicted a crushing defeat on his Chalukyan adversary in the battle of Vingavalli. The Sanjan plate narrates the incident.

Amoghavarsha had to cross his sword repeatedly with the Ganga king of Gangavadi. The Konnur inscription gives a faithful description of Amoghavarsha's wars against the Gangas. Amogha recruited a meritorious general Bankesha Sellaketana of Vanavasi. Bankesha or Bankeya belonged to the Mukua clan. On the king's orders Bankeya invaded Vatavadi of Gangavadi, and although he did not get any assistance from any of the other feudatories, captured the fort of Kedal on his own. He defeated the Ganga king "Nitimarga-Ranavikrama" and brought him to the path of loyalty. He proceeded further and defeated the ruler of Talavan on the north bank of the River Kaveri. Thereafter he crossed the river and invaded the province of Saptapada. At this stage there was a rebellion against Amoghavarsha in the Deccan and Bankeya returned to put down the rebellion against his king. For the services he rendered to his King, Amoghavarsha granted 30 villages for the upkeep of the Jain temple that Bankeya was having built at that time.

The inscriptions also show the figure of the Garuda in Amoghavarsha's coat of arms and mention that the kings of Anga, Banga, Magadha and Malwa continued to accept Rashtrakuta superiority over themselves. According to the last inscription, in his 61st regnal year he attempted to overthrow the 'Dravidian' kings ruling Kerala, Chola, Pandya and Kalinga territories. The result of this

obviously military effort is not mentioned and it can be presumed that this attempt did not meet the level of success required for it to be recorded for posterity as yet another achievement of a great king. However, it is confirmed that he put down an insurrection of some courtiers who had revolted under the instigation of the Gangavamsi ruler of the time, who was captured and imprisoned for life. The courtiers who sided with him paid a higher prize—they were all executed.

Amoghavarsha also shifted the capital of the Deccan Rashtrakutas from Nasik to Manykhela mentioned as Mankir in the Arab chronicles. Throughout his reign he was at odds with the Western Chalukyas over control of fertile lands, both the kingdoms regularly resorting to conflict. His daughter Abbalabba was married to Gunadattaranga Bhutuga, the king of the Ganga dynasty. This alliance was to stand the Rashtrakutas in good stead in later years.

While there is no doubt that he was a great patron of Jainism, it is also possible that Amoghavarsha was himself a practitioner of the religion. It is likely that he followed the 'Digambara' sect of Jainism, which can be confirmed if circumstantial evidences can be accepted. A Jain writer, Jinasena, mentions in one of his works that the king Amoghavarsha was an ardent follower of the Jain religion. This Jinasena also compiled the Adipurana, the first half of what was to later become the Mahapurana, which mentions the king's religious affiliation. Jaydhavala, the book of Digambara principles, probably dated 837 C.E, was also written during Amoghavarsha's reign. It is claimed that the king himself was an author of repute, but there is no evidence to prove this. The incontrovertible proof of Amoghavarsha being a follower of the Jain religion comes at the end of his life, when after having handed over the governance of the kingdom to his son after 65 years of tumultuous but glorious rule, he opted to spend the rest of his life in religious meditation, while gradually starving himself to death—the epitome of Jain belief. The excessive patronage that the Digambara sect of Jainism enjoyed during his long reign is often mentioned as one of the primary reasons for the decay of Buddhism in the Indian sub-continent.

9.10 Krishna-II

Krishnaraja II was the son of Amoghavarsha and ascended the throne around 875 while his father was still alive. Information regarding his rule comes from four inscriptions and two copper grants that have so far been discovered. The first three inscriptions, dated between C.E 900 and 903 C.E were found in Bijapur, Ardeshalli and Mulgund in Dharwar district while the fourth is dated to 912 C.E and found at Aihole near Bijapur. The second copper plate provides the genealogy of the Rashtrakutas from Krishnaraja I to Krishnaraja II. In some places the king has been referred to as 'Krishnavallabha', confirming that the term Vallabha was a title used by Rashtrakuta kings to indicate status and power.

Krishnaraja II was married to Mahadevi, princess of Chedi and the daughter of king Kokkala of the Kalachuri, also called Haihaya, dynasty. She was also the daughter of Krishnaraja's maternal uncle. This system of marrying the maternal uncle's daughter was common in the Rashtrakuta dynasty and is a custom that is still prevalent in some South Indian communities. During Krishnaraja's reign the conflict with the Western Chalukyas continued with sporadic increases in the intensity of the battles and skirmishes taking place. He is also reported as having overthrown the Rashtrakuta king of the off-shoot dynasty in Lata and annexing the area to the primary Deccan kingdom. However, the annexation could have been a temporary measure and the Lata Rashtrakutas continued their independent rule even after this disruption. Legend has it that his son Jagattunga won many battles on behalf of his father and extended the territorial holding of the kingdom. There is a lack of firm evidence to confirm this, especially since Jagattunga predeceased his father and did not succeed him as king. The kingdom under Krishnaraja II is supposed to have touched the River Ganges in the north and encompassed Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari) in the south. This claim may be a bit of an exaggeration, the scribe taking poetic license in writing the copper plates and inscriptions. However, there is no doubt that the Rashtrakuta kingdom held a position of predominant power in the sub-continent during these times. Krishnaraja II died around C.E 911 and was followed on the throne by his grandson Indraraja III.

9.11 Indraraja III

Indraraja was the son of Jagattunga and Lakshmi the princess of the Kalachuri dynasty. His coronation was held at the village of Kurundaka, located at the confluence of the Rivers Krishna and Panchganga, and not in the kingdom's capital. It has not been possible to ascertain any reason for this break from tradition, which remains an enigma. A copper plate of his reign mentions that

the Rashtrakutas were descendants of Satyaki Yadava, a connection that continually comes up in their history, but is impossible to ascertain as being correct. According to a copper plate, Indraraja III laid waste Meru, ruled by Pratihara Mahipala. This could be a reference to Mahodaya which was another name for Kanauj. It was also during his reign that the author Trivikrama Bhatta wrote the books *Damayanti Katha* and *Madalasa Champu*. Indraraja III died in C.E 916 having ruled for only about six years. He had two sons and was succeeded by his elder son Amoghavarsha II who died within a year of accession.

9.12 Govindaraja IV

Govindaraja was the younger brother of Amoghavarsha and took over the reins of power on the untimely death of his brother. There is some speculation of foul play in Amoghavarsha's untimely death and Govindaraja's complicity in it although there is no evidence to prove it. Conflict with the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi broke out at this stage, although Govindaraja's attempt at attacking Chalukya territory did not meet with any notable success. He is also mentioned in copper grant as a 'Yaduvanshi' of the lunar lineage. Govindaraja also did not rule for long, died at an early age.

9.13 Baddiga

The death of Govindaraja brought on greater confusion in an already turbulent kingdom that was suffering from a deficit of governance. The feudatories of the Rashtrakutas, in order to stabilise the core kingdom, brought Amoghavarsha III commonly called Baddiga, to the throne around C.E 935. He was the son of Jagattunga through another queen and therefore a stepbrother of Indraraja III. He proved to be an effective and wise king and managed to recover the kingdom from any further decline. He was married to Kundakadevi, the daughter of Yuvaraja I of the Kalachuri dynasty and his daughter was married to Satyavakya Bhutuga II of the Ganga dynasty. It is certain that the Rashtrakuta kings traditionally took Kalachuri brides and their daughters were normally married into the Ganga dynasty. Baddiga returned to these traditional alliances to re-establish relationships and to ensure stability. His rule too was short, may be since he himself had come to power at a late age. He had four sons who came to the throne after him sequentially.

9.14 Krishnaraja III

Krishnaraja was the eldest son of Baddiga and came to power around C.E 939. Even as a Crown Prince he exercised a powerful influence in ruling the kingdom during his father's short reign. On ascending the throne he went on to become an effective ruler. He successfully battled the Chola dynasty in C.E 949-50 at a place called Takkola. An inscription to commemorate the victory mentions that during the battle Krishnaraja killed the Chola king Rajaditya. In actual fact this is wrong. Rajaditya was indeed killed, but through treacherous means by Stayavakya Bhutuga II, the husband of Krishnaraja's elder sister Revakanimmadi.

Information regarding Krishnaraja's rule is available from sixteen inscriptions and two copper grants. There is some confusion regarding the dates of events mentioned since only seven of the inscriptions provide actual Shaka Era dates, the other eight only mentions the king's regnal year. Since the exact date of his ascending the throne is still vague, the calculations can vary by as much as a decade at times. The collated information gives a picture of a successful and conquering king who was renowned for his personal bravery and at the same time was a patron of learning, art and literature.

Krishna II was a military genius. Throughout his reign he led military campaign against all direction. First Krishna III defeated the Gurjara king with the help of some Rashtrakuta feudatories. Secondly he led a campaign towards South India in which king Dantiga of Kanchi and Vappuga was defeated and killed, while his kingdom was conquered and destroyed, the Pandya territory was conquered, and the king of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) was subjugated. He also defeated king Antiga of the Pallava dynasty and also protected the Kalachuris from invasion of the Gurjaras. The inscriptions also describe him as the conqueror of Kanchi and Tanjore as well as the incarnation of death to Chola kings. It is written that he assumed the title of Chakravarti around C.E 949 and that he had feudatories from the Himalayas to Ceylon and also touching both the oceans. He was also not reluctant to conquering territories held by allies and relatives. He dethroned Rachmala I of the Ganga dynasty and installed his brother-in-law Bhutuga II on the throne, who subsequently had

Rachmala assassinated. Krishnaraja also defeated Shasharjuna the Kalachuri king of Chedi, although whether the kingdom was annexed or not is unclear.

In Deoli he granted lands in memory of his younger brother Jagattunga who had died earlier and in 945 C.E supported the school that was opened by his Minister Narayana where students from all over the kingdom and the feudatories came to be taught by renowned masters. The king was also a worshipper of Shiva, which is confirmed by his adoption of the title Parama Mahesvara. He was renowned patron of literature and supported a number of authors and poets in his court. Somadeva was an author and scholar who wrote *Yashastilaka Champu* in C.E 959, which describes Krishnaraja's conquest of Chera, Chola, Pandya, and Simhala lands. His other work *Nitivakyamrita* is mentioned in the later date Jain *Sahitya Samshodhaka*. The poet Ponna, a Jain, wrote *Shanti Purana* in Canarese and was bestowed the title 'Ubhayabhasa Chakravarti' by the king. Of particular importance is the work of the Poet Laureate Pushpadanta since it provides the first confirmed indication of the decline and subsequent fall of this illustrious dynasty. Pushpadanta was resident in the capital Manykheta and started to compile the Jain Mahapurana in Apabramsha language, although it was completed only during Krishnaraja's successor's rule. It is certain that Krishnaraja III ruled at least till C.E 966.

9.15 Khottiga

Krishnaraja's immediate younger brother Jagattunga having predeceased him, the next brother Khottiga inherited the throne. In C.E 972, the powerful king of Malwa, Siyaka II of the Paramara dynasty, attacked and defeated Khottiga, going on to plunder the capital Manykheta. In this battle, Khottiga was killed, a fact confirmed in Pushpadanta's book. This was the beginning of the end of the Deccan Rashtrakutas and they never recovered from this defeat. From this point it did not take long for the dynasty to collapse and rapidly go into oblivion. Khottiga died without any male heirs, leaving the succession path clear for the son of his younger brother Nirupama to ascend to the throne. An inscription of the time of Paramara king Udayaditya, found at Udaipur (Gwalior), contains the following lines: i.e. Shri Harsha (Siyaka II of the Paramara dynasty of Malwa) had seized the kingdom from Khottigadeva.'

9.16 Karakaraja II

Karakaraja came to the throne almost around C.E 972 at the death of his uncle Khottiga at the hands of the invading Malwa king. This is indicative of the fact that the kingdom was not annexed, but only plundered and destroyed to a certain extent. The Malwa invasion weakened the Rashtrakutas considerably and the Chalukya king Tailapa II took the opportunity to mount an assault in 973 C.E, finishing the destruction that had been started by Siyaka II of Malwa. The Chalukyas regained lost power through this act and became the predominant dynasty of the Deccan with their capital at Kalyani. C.E 973 can be considered the end of the primary Deccan branch of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. An inscription of Vijaya of the Kalachuri dynasty and the primary feudatory of the Rashtrakutas for two centuries confirms that Karakraja II was killed by Tailapa during the Chalukya invasion. The complete defeat of the Rashtrakutas is corroborated by two copper plates dated to C.E 997 and 1008 of Aparajita of the Shilara dynasty, which was a confirmed feudatory, indicating that he was now independent of the Rashtrakutas.

Immediately after this defeat, Peramanadi Marasimha of the Ganga dynasty, allied through matrimony to the Rashtrakutas for several generations, attempted to recoup the Rashtrakuta strength and place Indraraja IV, the grandson of Krishnaraja III and his own cousin, on the throne. The attempt failed and with it the powerful dynasty of the Deccan Rashtrakutas came to an inglorious end. The unpredictable march of Indian history continued, the fall of a once glorious dynasty was but the beginning of another that would scale the same heights of power and again come to an end at the hands, at times, of lesser mortals. The underlying commonality in the theme of history does not change.

9.17 Rashtrakuta Administration

In the Rashtrakuta system of governance, the king was the sovereign and fountain of power. He used high sounding titles like Paramesvara, Paramabhattaraka, Maharajadhiraja to add to his dignity. He lived in extraordinary pomp and grandeur. The Rashtrakuta court was marked with impressive ceremonies and etiquettes. In the court, the king was attended by Ministers, officers,

vassals, generals, poets etc. Kingship was hereditary. It usually passed from the father to the eldest son. The latter was called Yuvaraja. In special cases younger sons were selected as heir to the throne.

The actual work of the administration was carried by the ministers whose number is unknown. Persons of efficiency were appointed as ministers. Some officers were appointed to carry out tours of inspection throughout the empire and keep watch upon the vassals. The Emperor established direct rule over part of the empire and the rest was governed by vassals. Powerful vassals enjoyed complete autonomy in their internal administration. They could even make grants of land without seeking the consent of the suzerain. The vassals attended the court when summoned by the Emperor. Sometimes they accompanied the king in military campaigns.

The empire under direct rule of the monarch was divided into administrative units styled *Rashtras* or *Vishayas*. The *Vishayas* were subdivided into *Bhuktis*. Each *Bhukti* consisted of a number of villages. *Rashtra* was headed by *Rashtrapati* who exercised both civil and military jurisdiction over the *Rashtra*. He maintained law and order, collected taxes and maintained records of accounts. Village headmen carried out administration at village level. In the village administration, the popular representative council played some important role. Households were represented in the councils.

The revenue of the state was mainly derived from the tributes paid by the vassals. Mines, forests and wasteland also brought the revenue. Land tax was called the *Udranga* or *Bhagakara*, the king's share. Normally the tax collected was $\frac{1}{4}$ of the gross produce. The lands that were granted to the Brahmins and temples were also not exempted from taxation, but the tax on such land was low. If the state was visited by natural disasters like drought or famine, the tax was not levied. The *Rashtrakuta* had a well developed system of coins. There were five kinds of coins—*Drama*, *Suvarna*, *Godhyanka*, *Kalanju* and *Kasu*. Some gold coins were also issued by *Rashtrakuta* emperors.

The *Rashtrakuta* had a vast army. A greater part of the army was always stationed at the capital for safety. The *Rashtrakuta* standing army was employed both for defensive and offensive purposes. Added to this the armies of the provincial and feudatories also could be drawn whenever necessary. The *Rashtrakuta* armies were well organized and known for their efficiency.

9.18 Socio-Economic Condition under the Rashtrakuta

The *Dharmasastras* and the accounts of the Arab writers help us to form a picture of the society and economic condition during this period. There were a number of social groups. Among the four castes, the Brahmins enjoyed a superior status. In actual practice, the privileges of the *Kshatriyas* were no less than those of the *Brahmins*. The status of the *Vaishyas* had degenerated to a great extent. The period witnessed great improvement in the position of the *Sudras*. The *Bhakti* movements led by *Nayanars* and *Alvars* which preached the footing equality of man with man narrowed down the gulf between the high and low castes. The untouchables had come to be excluded from the main stream life. Joint family system was the order of the day. Widows and daughters were recognized as heirs to the property. *Sati* system was not popular in the Deccan. Child marriage had become common in society.

In the sphere of economy, agriculture continued to receive the attention of the government as before. But the period made much progress in mining and industry. Textile industry, which was the principal industry of the period made considerable progress. Cloth was manufactured in sufficient quantity to meet internal demand and to leave large surplus for export. *Muslins*, *hides*, *mats*, *indigo*, *incense*, *sandal* and *teakwood*, *ivory* were main articles of exports. Among the articles of imports were *gold*, *wine*, *copper*, *tin*, *lead*, *topaz* etc. Commercial transactions were carried on either by barter or by the exchange of gold and silver. But barter system was in vogue. Trade and industries were organized into their respective guilds. They used to regulate trade and industry and do the banking business. Foreign trade must have been handled by the Arab merchants who have by now become intermediaries in Indian overseas trade.

9.19 Contribution in Religion and Literature of Rashtrakuta

The *Rashtrakuta* kings were great patrons of literature and religion. The three main religions flourished during this period are *Brahminism*, *Jainism* and *Buddhism*. The opening verse in the *Rashtrakuta* copper plates pays homage to both *Siva* and *Vishnu*. The *Rashtrakuta* seals contained either the *Eagle* or the *Garuda*. Later king leaned towards *Jainism*. It appears that *Jainism* was highly popular. Tolerance was the keynote of the *Rashtrakuta* rulers. There was complete harmony among

the adherents of different religions. Magnificent temples were erected and endowments were granted by the Rashtrakuta rulers.

In the field of literature, the contribution of the Rashtrakuta is at once rich and many sided. This period witnessed the beginning of Kannada literature. The earliest Kannada literature can only be traced from the Rashtrakuta period. As mentioned in Kavirajmarga, written by Amoghavarsa, Vimaladoya, Nagarjuna, Jayabandhu, Durvinita and others were notable Kannada prose writers. Among the poets Kavisara, Pandita, Chandra and Lokapala are named as most admired. Asasa, the author of Vardhamanacharita, Guanvarma the author of Neminathapurana and Gunanandi were living in this period. Harisena, the spiritual preceptor of Amoghavarsa composed the Harivansa. Krishna III was aliberal patron of literature. In his court flourished many great Kannada poets-Pampa-Ponna and Chavudraya. Chavudraya has written a prose work Chavudrayapurana. Pampa wrote Adipurana. But the poet laureate of the time was Ponna who wrote Santipurana for which he received the title Ubhaya Kavichakravartin. Sanskrit literature also flourished to a great extent Sakatayana was an eminent scholar in Sanskrit and he was the author of Savdanusana. The Rashtrakutas widely patronized the Sanskrit literature. There were many scholars in the Rashtrakuta court. Trivikrama wrote Nalachampu and the Kavirahasya was composed by Halayudha during the reign of Krishna III. The Jain literature flourished under the patronage of the Rashtrakutas. Amogavarsha I, who was a Jain patronized many Jain scholars. His teacher Jinasena composed Parsvabhudaya, a biography of Parsva in verses. Another scholar Gunabhadra wrote the Adipurana, the life stories of various Jain saints. Sakatayana wrote the grammar work called Amogavritti.

Conclusion

The Rashtrakutas created a vast empire and established their glorious rule. In the field of religion, art and architecture the Rashtrakuta contribution is noteworthy. They not only brought the entire south India under their control but also penetrated deep the territories of north. Many of them earned laurel as invincible conquerors and efficient rulers. On the Rashtrakuta A.S. Altekar opined "The period of Rashtrakuta ascendancy in the Deccan constitutes perhaps, the most brilliant chapter in its history. No other ruling dynasties in Deccan played such a dominant part in the history of India till the rise of Marathas as an imperial power in 18th century.... Their campaign against their powerful adversaries was repeatedly crowned with brilliant success".

Summary

- The Rashtrakuta dynasty ruled over large portions of India from the C.E 8th to 10th century.
- Taking the advantage of weak Chalukya power, an official in the Chalukyas' administration named Dantidurga declared his independence in C.E 753. The dynasty that he and his family formed the core of was called the Rashtrakuta, with their capital based in Ellora.
- After Dantidurga came Krishna I, who was responsible for starting construction of Kailasa temple at Ellora in the late 8th century C.E. This rock-temple was entirely out of a hillside to represent Mt. Kailasa, which is a mountain in the Himalayas said to be the home of Vishnu.
- Due to strategic location of their Empire in the middle of India along the top of the Deccan Plateau, the Rashtrakutas took advantage of this and frequently interfered with both the northern and southern kingdoms of India.
- The Rashtrakutas also controlled large portions of the western coast of India. The majority of the trade with West Asia came through these ports and much of the Rashtrakutas wealth along with it. The Rashtrakutas also maintained good relations with the Arabs in Sind and traded extensively with them.
- Amogavarsha was one of the longest-reigning kings in India and also one of the most powerful. His power was so great he was acknowledged as one of the greatest monarchs in the world along with the Caliph of Baghdad, Emperor of China, and the Emperor of Rome.
- He was favorable to the Jain religion, and may have been partially responsible for its rise in popularity, along with the decline in Buddhism.

- A major focus of the Rashtrakuta dynasty was the control of Kanauj. The Rashtrakuta, Pratihara, and Pala were all kingdoms focused on controlling this city and fought among each other known in Indian history as tripartite struggle.
- The Rashtrakuta Empire was divided into several provinces called rashtras, Visya and Bhukti for proper administration.
- The village administration was carried on by the village headmen. However, the village assemblies played a significant role in the village administration.
- Under the Rashtrakuta Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism flourished harmoniously. Later Jainism received the patronage of Rashtrakuta kings and officers. Almost one third of the populations of the Deccan were Jains. There were some prosperous Buddhist settlements at places like Kanheri, Sholapur and Dharwar.
- The economy was also in a flourishing condition. There was an active commerce between the Deccan and the Arabs. The Rashtrakuta kings promoted the Arab trade by maintaining friendship with them.
- The Rashtrakutas widely patronized the Sanskrit and Kanarese literature. There were many scholars in the Rashtrakuta court.
- The Jain literature flourished under the patronage of the Rashtrakutas. Amogavarsha I, who was a Jain patronized many Jain scholars.
- The Kannada literature saw its beginning during the period of the Rashtrakutas. Amogavarsha's Kavirajamarga was the first poetic work in Kannada language. Pampa was the greatest of the Kannada poets.
- The art and architecture of the Rashtrakutas were found at Ellora and Elephanta. At Ellora, the most remarkable temple is the Kailasa temple.
- By the end of the 10th century the geographical advantages the Rashtrakutas had enjoyed turned to disadvantages, as new powers in the north and south emerged as threats. The Colas in South, the Calukya dynasty in the west, and the rise of the Shilaharas in the north-western Deccan finally led the downfall of Rashtrakuta's.

Keywords

- Manykheta
- Administration
- Struggle
- Patronize
- Tripartite

Self Assessment

1. Who among the following was the founder of Rashtrakutas?
 - A. Dantidurga
 - B. Yashovarman
 - C. Mihir Bhoja
 - D. Vakpatiraja

2. Who among the following ruling dynasty of early Medieval India called themselves descendants of Satyaki?
 - A. Pala
 - B. Rashtrakutas
 - C. Chola
 - D. Vijayanagara

3. The Rashtrakutas were patrons of.....
- A. Shaivism
 - B. Jainism
 - C. Buddhism
 - D. Vaishnavism
4. Who among the following composed a poem Madra-mahi-vijaya?
- A. Vakpatiraja
 - B. Mihir Bhoja
 - C. Yashovarman
 - D. Amogvarsha
5. Who was the last Rashtrakuta king?
- A. Govinda III
 - B. Indira III
 - C. Krishna II
 - D. Krishna III
6. The Rashtrakutas were constantly involved in fight against which of the following?
- 1. Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi
 - 2. Pallavas of Kanchi
 - 3. Pandyas of Madurai
- Select the correct option from the codes given below:
- A. Only 1&2
 - B. Only 1
 - C. Only 2&3
 - D. 1,2,3
7. Which of the following was the capital of Rashtrakutas?
- A. Manyakuta
 - B. Ujjain
 - C. Vallaru
 - D. Bijapur
8. The vimana is the _____ part of the Dravidian architecture.
- A. central
 - B. porch
 - C. gateway
 - D. entrance hall
9. What was the main type of architectural style did the Rashtrakuta Dynasty use?
- A. Vesara
 - B. Dravidean
 - C. Mughal
 - D. Kaliga
10. Kailasantha Temple was built out of _____.
- A. mud bricks
 - B. a single stone
 - C. cement
 - D. a cliff
11. Who shifted the capital from Ellora to Manyakuta?
- A. Amoghavarsha
 - B. Singhana
 - C. Govinda III
 - D. Indira III

12. The Rashtrakuta king who gave his daughter in marriage to Vishnuvardhana IV of Eastern Chalukyas?
- A. Dhruva
B. Krishna
C. Simhavishnu
D. Vijayaditya
13. The Arab traveller who visited the court of Amoghavarsha?
- A. Nuniz
B. Suleiman
C. Almasud
D. Barbosa
14. Ginasen was the court poet of
- A. Krishna I
B. Amoghavarsha
C. Dantidurga
D. Indra I
15. The Rashtrakuta ruler who patronized Jainism?
- A. Krishna I
B. Dantidurga
C. Amoghavarsha
D. Dhruva

Answers for Self Assessment

1. A 2. B 3. B 4. A 5. D
6. D 7. A 8. C 9. B 10. B
11. A 12. A 13. B 14. B 15. C

Review Questions

1. Write an essay on the origin of Rashtrakutas dynasty.
2. Describe in brief the political history of the Rashtrakutas.
3. Write a note on the Northern campaign of Rashtrakutas Monarchs.
4. Give an account of the Socio-Religious and Economic condition of Rashtrakutas Empire.
5. Discuss the contribution of Rashtrakutas monarch for the growth of Art and Literature.

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Unit10: Evolution of Political Structures of Pratiharas

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Objectives

This Unit deals with the history of India in the post-Harshavardhana era. Here a discussion on the emergence of Rajput and particularly the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty and their contribution to various fields of India will be discussed. After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify the different Rajput clan in India which emerged during post-Harsha era.
- Examine the various theory regarding origin of Rajput clan in India;
- Discuss the origin and polity of Gurjara-Pratihara in Indian history;
- Evaluate the cultural activities of the Gurjara-Pratihara; and
- Assess the significance of Gurjara-Pratihara in Indian history.

Introduction

The period between 750 and 1200 C.E is referred to as an early medieval period of Indian History. During this time the whole country was divided into numerous regional states which were busy fighting with each other. Though politically divided, during this period India witnessed a growth of new and rich cultural activities in the fields of art, literature and language. Indian political history in the post-Harshavardhan was marked by the growth of three important political powers in India. These were GurjaraPratiharas in north India, Palas in eastern India, and Rashtrakutas in South India. These powers were constantly fighting with each other with the aim to set up their control on Gangetic region in northern India.

The GurjaraPratiharas were one of the most powerful dynasties of early medieval India. They occupied western India, an area frequented by Arab travelers. The GurjaraPratihara dominion was known as al-Juzr to the Arabs, who regarded them as one of the three most powerful Indian ruling dynasties, the other two being the Palas and the Rashtrakutas. This dynasty saw its fortunes rising under Nagabhata I (730-760 A.D.) who successfully defeated Arab invaders. Bhoja or MihiraBhoja (c. 836- 885 A.D.) was the most well-known king of this dynasty.

The Pratiharas were known chiefly for their patronage of art, sculpture and temple-building, and for their continuous warfare with contemporary powers like the Palas (8th century A.D. - 12th century A.D.) of eastern India and the Rashtrakuta Dynasty (8th century A.D.- 10th century A.D.) of southern India. All these powers came to be engaged in a conflict known as the "tripartite struggle" for the possession of the city of Kanauj in the Ganga-Jamuna doab, the region between these two important rivers in northern India. In this conflict the Pratiharas ultimately emerged as the most successful, establishing their authority over the city and the area.

10.1 Evolution of Rajput

The anarchy and confusion which followed Harsha's death is the transitional period of Indian history. This period was marked by the rise of the Rajput clans who began to play a significant part in the history of northern and western India from the 8th century C.E onwards. The term Rajput denotes a tribe or clan, the members of which claimed themselves as Kshatriyas belonging to the 'solar' or 'lunar' dynasties. There is a keen controversy among scholars regarding the origin of the Rajputs. In spite of painstaking researches on the subject, there is a lot of obscurity around it. In the absence of any definite theory on the origin of the Rajputs, we can merely cite some of the views put forth by historians on this aspect of Indian history.

10.2 Descendants of the Kshatriyas

Various suppositions regarding origin of Rajputs have been put forward. The term Rajputs seems to be the corrupt form of "Rajaputra". A different observation is that Rajputs are the descendants of Brahmin or Kshatriya families. On the basis of ancient inscriptions they have rejected the story of sacrificial-fire pit and also the view of the foreign origin of the Rajputs. They believe that the founder of Chauhans, the Gehrals, the Pallavas, the Kadambas, the Pratiharas and the Parmaras were Brahmins. In the accounts of Bana and Indian Puranas, "Rajaputra" is mentioned as a highborn Kshatriya. According to the contemporary literary sources, the Rajputs were originated from the highborn Kshatriyas. The centuries between the death of Harsha and the Turkish conquest was marked by the ascendancy of the Rajputs. The entire northern India was disintegrated and came under the sway of the different houses of the Rajput. The Rajputs are usually a social group of northern India and Gujarat flourished during the period. The Rajputs were the dominant martial and land-owning community of northern India. The period is conveniently termed as the Rajput period of Indian history.

10.3 Foreign Origin

Many historians believe that they are the brood of distant invaders like Sakas, Kushanas, Huns who were Hinduized. The upper rank came to be known as Rajputs. Some scholars have opined that Gurjaras entered India through Afghanistan, settled themselves in different parts of India and were the ancestors of the Rajputs. However this theory had less acceptability. Other hypotheses, ascribing to them a Scythian origin. Invasions of the Huns had an impact on Indian society socially and culturally which also established many new ruling empires. Later, they mixed themselves in the

Indian society and almost lost their individuality. Certain customs like women's status in society, horse worship were similar to clan of Shakas, Huns and Kushanas so their foreign origin is proved.

10.4 Agnikula Theory

Chand Bardai, court poet of Prithviraja Chauhan state that Rajput's origin lies in sacrificial fire pit. Sage Parasuram destroyed all the Kshatriyas and then the ancient sages performed a yajna on Mount Abu to guard the Vedic religion. Out of that yajna four heroes were born and their progeny were the Chauhans, Solanki, Parmara, and Pratihara. This is believed to be origin of Agnivanshi Rajputs. Suryavanshi Rajputs trace their ancestry to the Sun. They ruled Mewar, Marwar, and Amber. Chandravanshi Rajputs descended from Moon. Gujarat, Jaisalmer was ruled by Chandravanshi Rajputs.

Whatever the origin is, the Rajputs were believed till date as one of the virulent warrior tribes ever ruled in India. They never originated as a tribe or a single community. They were a collection of clans ruling different regions. The term Rajput as it is used today refers to the set of intermarrying royal clans. "It is their war like occupation coupled with their aristocratic rank that gave them a distinctive common feature and made the Brahmins recognize them as Kshatriyas." In a broad spectrum no single origin-theory can be held to be authoritative.

10.5 The Gurjara-Pratihara

Gurjara-Pratihara of all the Rajput clans that ruled in India, the Pratiharas had the most dazzling record. The command of the Pratiharas was obeyed from Punjab to Central India and from Kathiwar to North Bengal. For three centuries, they stood as the bulwark of India's defence against the Muslim invaders. They revived the dream of the political unification of India after the fall of Harsha's dynasty.

10.6 Origin of the Pratiharas

According to epigraphic evidence, the Pratiharas were descendants of Lakshmana of the solar race of the great epic, the Ramayana. Some scholars opine that they were a branch of the Gurjara race. They are mentioned in the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II, the records of Hieun Tsang and the Hashacharita of Bana. It is known from the Rashtrakuta record that the Pratiharas belonged to the Gurjara stock. It is also held by some scholars that the Gurjaras were central Asiatic nomads who accompanied the Hunas into India. Some others are of the opinion that the Gurjaras were of indigenous origin. Another opinion is that the Pratiharas were a tribe of the land called Gurjaradesa. The expression Gurjara-Pratihara family of the Gurjara country was possessed by the Pratiharas since the time of Vatsaraja. Whatsoever may be the fact that the Gurjaras came into prominence about the second half of the 6th century C.E. they took advantage of the downfall of the Gupta Empire to establish their political authority. Their most important kingdom was that founded in the heart of Rajputna near Jodhpur and gradually advanced towards the South and took hold of Avanti and later on conquered Kannauj. The Avanti branch of the Pratiharas has become famous by their success over the Arab Muslims.

The Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty was founded by Nagabhata I in the region of Malwa in the eighth century C.E. He belonged to a Rajput clan. Later one of his successors, Vatsaraja extended his rule over to a large part of North India and made Kannauj in western Uttar Pradesh his capital. Vatsaraja's policy of expansion brought him in conflict with Dharamapala, the Pala King of Bengal and Bihar. Soon, the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva from south India jumped into the fight. And thus began what is known as 'Tripartite Struggle' i.e. struggle among three powers. It continued for about the next hundred and fifty years under various succeeding kings with ups and downs. The Gurjara-Pratiharas, however, could continue to maintain their hold over Kannauj till the last. One of the important kings of this dynasty was Mihira Bhoja (ninth century). He was highly praised by an Arabian scholar Sulaiman for keeping his empire safe from robbers.

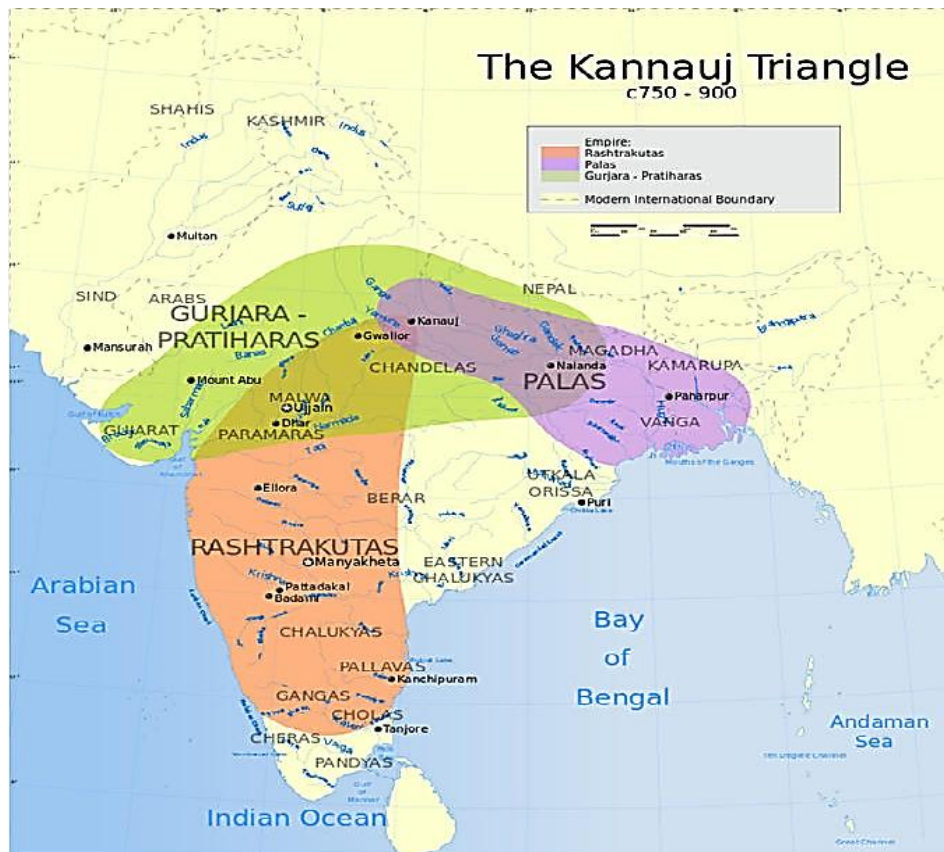
10.7 Rise of Gurjara-Pratiharas

In 647 A.D., the fall of the Pushyabhuti Dynasty based at Kanyakubja (modern Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh) under Harshavardhana (606-647 A.D.) led to chaos and political instability. Many kingdoms rose and fell, and those which came to dominate were those of the Pratiharas, the Palas

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of eastern India and the Rashtrakutas of southern India. Kanyakubja was ruled at the time by the Ayudha dynasty (c. 9th century A.D.).

According to epigraphic evidence, the Pratiharas were descendants of Lakshmana of the solar race of the great epic, the Ramayana. Some scholars opine that they were a branch of the Gurjara race. They are mentioned in the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II, the records of HieunTsang and the Harshacharita of Bana. It is known from the Rashtrakuta record that the Pratiharas belonged to the Gurjara stock. It is also held by some scholars that the Gurjars were central Asiatic nomads who accompanied the Hunas into India. Some others are of the opinion that the Gurjars were of indigenous origin. Another opinion is that the Pratiharas were a tribe of the land called Gurjaradesa. The expression GurjaraPratihara family of the Gurjara country was possessed by the Pratiharas since the time of Vatsaraja. Whatsoever may be the fact that the Gurjars came into prominence about the second half of the 6th century A.D., they took advantage of the downfall of the Gupta Empire to establish their political authority. Their most important kingdom was that founded in the heart of Rajputna near Jodhpur and gradually advanced towards the South and took hold of Avanti and later on conquered Kannauj. The Avanti branch of the Pratiharas has become famous by their success over the Arab Muslims. The GurjaraPratihara dynasty was founded by Nagabhata I in the region of Malwa in the eighth century A.D. He belonged to a Rajput clan. Later one of his successors, Vatsaraja extended his rule over to a large part of North India and made Kannauj in western Uttar Pradesh his capital. Vatsaraja's policy of expansion brought him in conflict with Dharamapala, the Pal a King of Bengal and Bihar. Soon, the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva from south India jumped into the fight. And thus began what is known as 'Tripartite Struggle' i.e. struggle among three powers. It continued for about the next hundred and fifty years under various succeeding kings with ups and downs. The Gurjara-Pratiharas, however, could continue to maintain their hold over Kannauj till the last. One of the important kings of this dynasty was Mihir a Bhoja (ninth century). He was highly praised by an Arabian scholar Sulaiman for keeping his empire safe from robbers.



10.8 Political History of the Dynasty

The Pratihara Kings ruled from 6th century till the end of 11th century C.E. Among Pratihara Kings, their kingdom was laid by Harichandra near modern Jodhpur in the mid sixth century C.E. Harichandra was a Brahmin who had two wives, one was Brahmana and the other one was a

Kshatriya. His sons from his Brahmana wife were called Pratihara Brahmins while his sons from his Kshatriya wife established the ruling dynasty of the Pratiharas. His four sons established a separate kingdom for themselves. Their dominion was concentrated in Jodhpur, Nandipura, Broach, Ujjayani and nearby areas.

10.9 Nagabhata I

The foundation of Pratihara dynasty's magnitude was positioned by Nagabhata I, who ruled between 730-756 C.E. His rule was prominent because of his successful confrontation with the Arabs. He established an empire extending from Gujarat to Gwalior and defied the Arab invasions towards further east of Sindh. He fought against King Dantidurga the Rashtrakuta ruler as well and was defeated. Conversely the success of Dantidurga was short-term and Nagabhata left for his successors a far-reaching empire which included Gujarat, Malwa and parts of Rajputana. Nagabhata I was succeeded by his brother's sons, Kakkuka and Devaraja.

10.10 Vatsaraja

Devaraja was succeeded by his son Vatsaraja who proved to be an influential ruler. He ruled from C.E 775 to 805. He seems to have consolidated his position and made Ujjain as his capital. He was in the verge of his imperial career in Western India. He in trying to be ruler of Northern India annexed the territories upto Kanauj and central Rajputana by defeating Bhandi, the ruling dynasty probably related to the Vardhanas. His ambition to capture Kannauj led him into conflicts with the Pala ruler Dharmapala of Bengal and the Rashtrakuta ruler Dhruva. He succeeded in defeating Dharmapala in the Doab region and vanquished Northern India including the Ganga Yamuna valley. Dhruva defeated him later on and captured Kannauj. Vatsaraja was succeeded by Nagabhata II.

10.11 Nagabhata II

Nagabhata II who succeeded Vatsaraja revived the lost prestige of the empire by conquering Sindh, Andhra, Vidarbha. After the defeat of Vatsaraja by Dhruva the Pratihara empire was limited only to Rajputana. Nagabhata II revived the policy of conquest and extension of the empire. He defeated the rulers of Andhra, Saindhava, Vidarbha and Kalinga. He subdued Matsayas in the North, Vatsas in the East and Turuskka (Muslims) in the West. Dharmapala had defeated Indrayudh and made Chakrayudh, his brother, the ruler of Kannauj. Nagabhata attacked Kannauj and after defeating Chakrayudh occupied it. He also succeeded in defeating Dharmapala and entered into his territories as far as Munger in Bihar. But he could not enjoy his success for long. Nagabhata II was initially defeated by the Rashtrakuta ruler Govinda III, but later recovered Malwa from the Rashtrakutas. He rebuilt the great Shiva temple at Somnath in Gujarat, which had been demolished in an Arab raid from Sindh. Kannauj became the center of the Gurjar Pratihara state, which covered much of northern India during the peak of their power. Rambhadra, the son and successor of Nagabhata II proved incapable and lost some of his territories, probably, to Pala ruler, Devapala. He was succeeded by his son Mihirbhoj who proved to be an ambitious ruler.

10.12 Mihirbhoj

Mihirabhoja ascended the throne on 836 C.E. He was a very brave and powerful king. A glorious chapter of the history of the Pratiharas begins with the accession of Mihirabhoja. He reorganized and consolidated the empire inherited from his ancestors and ushered in an era of prosperity of the Pratiharas. He is credited with many conquests; the prominent among them are follows.

Conquest of Bundelkhanda: During the reign of Mihirabhoja's father, Bundelkhanda had become independent. That is why Ramabhadra could not certify and continue the charity given by Nagabhata in Kalanjaramandal, but Mihirabhoja again started it. This indicates that he had conquered Bundelkhanda and king Jayasakti had accepted his suzerainty as well.

Conquest of Rajputana: Varaha, Daulatpur and Kahala inscriptions indicate that he had brought Rajputana and several other provinces under his control. It can also be stated that king Kakkata of Mandsor branch of the Pratiharas who was the samanta of Nagabhata again became the ruler of this region. Kakkata had fought against the Gaudas in Mudoggiri. Bahuka was his son who had killed Nandabala and Mayra and had defeated the kings of nine Mandals. Bahuka had also become independent but Mihirabhoja again brought him under his control. Pratapgarh inscription mentions

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the following words. It also confirms the control of Mihirabhoja over the southern portion of Rajputana. Chatus inscription of Jaipur also let the reader know that Mihirabhoja had compelled Harsha Gupta, who had defeated the gauda King, to accept his sovereignty. Harsha Guhila had presented many horses to Mihirabhoja.

Conquest of Punjab: 'Rajatarangini' of Kalahana and Pahewa inscription indicate that Karnal region of the eastern Punjab was under the control of Mihirabhoja. However, it is stated that when Mihirabhoja was in the wars of eastern India, king Sankarvarman of Kashmir had brought this region under his control. But even after that some portion of the Karnal region remained under the control of Mihirabhoja.

Conquest of western India: According to one copper plate one samanta Balavarman had defeated Vishad and killed Jajap and other kings and thus drove away the Hunas.

Conquest of central India: The inscriptions found at Gwalior and Deogarh of central India indicate that Deogarh i.e. Jhansi region and Gwalior region were being governed by the representatives of Mihirabhoja.

War with the Rashtrakutas: During the reign of Mihirabhoja, Amoghavarsa and Krishna II were the Rashtrakuta kings who were ruling over Kannauj. These were weak rulers and hence Mihirabhoja captured Kannauj and extended his empire up to river Narmada. In the course of time, however, Dhruva II, the Gujarat samanta of Amoghavarsa defeated Mihirabhoja in the battle and had driven him away. The war between Rashtrakutas and Bhoja continued for several years and both tried to bring the province of Avanti under their control. Even the last years of the reign of Mihirabhoja passed in these wars.

War with the Palas: King Devapala of the Pala dynasty was a brave and powerful king during the reign of Mihirabhoja. His inscriptions refer that he realized tributes and taxes from the Kings of the territories from Himalaya to Vindhyachal and from the eastern frontier to the western frontier of northern India. Though these descriptions seem to be an exaggeration, yet the power of Devapala was so strong that it appears that both Bhoja and Palas must have shared victories as well as defeats in their wars with each other. The historian expresses different views with regard to the final victory. But according to Gwalior prasasti, in the end, Bhoja has defeated the son of Devapala.

Other conquests: Mihirabhoja had also conquered many other provinces. He had attacked Karnal, western and southern Saurashtra etc. The Arab travelling Suleman has praised his big army and his efficient administration.

Mihirabhoja was the most powerful ruler of the Pratihara dynasty. His empire extended from the Terai of Himalay to Bundelkhanda and Kausambhi, to the frontier of Pala kingdom in the east, and Saurashtra in the west. A large portion of Rajasthan was also under his control. Some of the coins of Mihirabhoja that are found can be mentioned as alloyed silver which indicates that on account of constant wars his economic condition had become bad. He was the worshipper of Vishnu and Shiva.

From the above account it appears that Mihirabhoja made Kannauj his capital and succeeded in consolidating Pratihara power and influence in Malwa, Rajputana and Madhyadesh. He had to face continuously defeats in the hands of Devapala, King Dhruva and King Kokkalla. These consecutive trounce resulted in weakening his grasp over Rajputana and even the feudatory Pratihara ruler of Jodhpur became independent. The death of Devapala, ruler of Bengal and, thereafter, weakness of his successors gave Mihirabhoja an opportunity to restore his strength towards the east and south due to the policies undertaken by Rashtrakuta ruler. He conquered part of Western Kingdom by defeating the Pala king Narayanapala. Yet again he took offensive against the Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna II and defeated him on the banks of the Narmada. Subsequently he occupied Malwa and Kathiawar. He had an extensive empire which included Kathiawar, territories up to the Punjab in the North-West, Malwa and Madhyadesh. He had consolidated his power in Rajputana and the Kalachuris of Bihar and Chandelas of Bundelkhand had accepted his sovereignty. He made conquests in Punjab, Oudh and other Northern territories. Mihirabhoja was not only a great conqueror but also a great lover of art and literature. He was a great patron of men and letters. Poet Rajasekhara adorned his court. Consequently his reign was regarded as the glorious period of Pratihara ascendancy.

10.13 Mahendrapala and his Successor

Mahendrapala succeeded to the throne of his father, Mihirabhoja. He succeeded in maintaining the empire of his father and also extended it further by annexing Magadha and parts of Northern

Unit 10: Evolution of Political Structures of Pratiharas

Bengal. He lost some parts to the Kings of Kashmir. It is believed that his empire extended from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas and from the Eastern to the Western ocean. After death of Mahendrapala, a war of succession took place which substantially weakened the power of the dynasty.

Mahendrapala was succeeded by his son Bhoja II but his cousin, Mahipala, shortly dethroned him and became the ruler of Kannauj. During his period, the Rashtrakutas King, Indra III defeated Mahipala of Kannauj. After Indra III retiring to the south, Mahipala again consolidated his position. In the period in-between the Pala rulers captured some eastern parts of his empire and occupied the forts of Kalinjar and Chitrakuta. His period marked the beginning of the decline of the power of Pratiharas.

Mahipala was succeeded by his son Mahendrapala II. He ruled only for a year. Afterwards, we find no less than four successors during a period of fifteen years. Devapala, Vinayakapala II, Mahipala II and Vijayapala ruled in succession over the throne of Kannauj but none of them proved to be a capable ruler. Rather, the quick succession of these rulers proves that family feuds had started among the Pratiharas. This resulted in the disintegration of the Pratihara Empire during the reign of Devapala.

10.14 Decline of Pratihara Dynasty

Several feudatories of the empire took advantage of the temporary weakness of the GurjarPratiharas during war of succession and they declare their independence, notably the Paramaras of Malwa, the Chandelas of Bundelkhand, and the Kalachuris of Mahakoshal. The Rashtrakuta emperor Indra III briefly captured Kannauj, and although the Pratiharas regained the city, their position continued to weaken in the 10th century, partly as a result of the drain of simultaneously fighting off Turkic attacks from the west and the Pala advances in the east. The Gurjar-Pratiharas lost control of Rajasthan to their feudatories, and the Chandelas captured the strategic fortress of Gwalior in central India, 950 C.E. By the end of the tenth century the GurjarPratihara domains had dwindled to a small state centered on Kannauj. Mahmud of Ghazni sacked Kannauj in 1018 C.E, and the Pratihara ruler Rajapala fled. The Chandela ruler Gauda captured and killed Rajapala, placing Rajapala's son Trilochanpala on the throne as a proxy. Jasapala, the last Gurjara ruler of Kanauj, died in 1036 C.E. With this the Gurjara-Pratihara went into the historical horizon of India.

10.15 Administrative Structure of the Pratihara

In the Gurjara-Pratihara history, king occupied the highest position in the state and had enormous powers, kings adopted big titles such as 'Parmeshwara', 'Maharajadhiraja', 'Parambhatarak'. The appointment of the samantas and singing on grants and charities were also the works of the kings. The samantas used to give military help to their Kings and fought for them the advice of the high officers was taken in matters of administration. However, there is no reference of mantriparishad or ministers in the inscriptions of that period. There are eight types of different officers in the administration of the Pratiharas such as Kottapala; highest officer of the fort, Tantrapala; representative of the king in samanta states, Dandapashika was highest officer of the police, Dandanayaka look after the military and justice department, Dutaka carry order and grants of the king to specified persons, Bhangika was the officer who wrote order of charities and grants, Vynaharina was probably some legal expert and used to provide legal advice and finally Baladhikrat was the chief of army .

The entire state was divided into many bhuktis. There were many mandals in each bhukti and each mandala had several cities and many villages as well. Thus the Pratiharas had organized their empire into different units for administrative convenience. The samantas were called Mahasamantahipati or MahaPratihara. The villages were locally administered. The elders of the villages were called Mahattar who looked after the administration of the village. Gramapati was an officer of the state who advised in matters of village administration. The administration of the city was looked after by councils which are referred as Goshthi, Panchakula, Sanviyaka and Uttar sobha in the inscriptions of the Pratiharas. Thus the administration of the Pratiharas was quite efficient. It was on account of the efficient administration that the Pratiharas were able to defend India from the attacks of the Arabs.

10.16 Social Condition

Caste system was prevalent in Indian during Gurjara-Pratihara period and the reference of all the four caste of the Vedic period is found in the inscription as well. The inscription refers the Brahmans as Vipra and several Prakrit words are used for Kshatriyas. The people of each caste were divided into different classes. Chaturveda and Bhatta groups were prominent among the Brahmans. Among the Vaishyas the Kanchuka and Vakata groups were prominent. The Arab writer IbdakKhurdadab has referred seven castes in the time of the Pratiharas. According to him, there existed the classes of Savakufria, Brahman, Kataria, Sudaria, Bandalia and Labla. King was selected from the Savakufria class whereas people of Brahman class did not take wine and married their sons with the daughters of the Kataria class. The Kataria classes were regarded as Kshatriyas. The people of Sudaria were regarded as Sudras and usually did farming or cattle rearing. Basuria class was the Vaishya class whose duty was to serve other classes. The people of Sandila class did the work of Chandals. Lahuda class constituted of low and wandering tribe.

The above description of the Arab writer indicates that the Vaishyas did the work of the Sudars and the Sudar did the work of the Vishyas. It appears that the caste system was slowly and gradually breaking in a nice manner. The Brahmans started marrying kshatriya girls and the vaishyas performed the work of the sudras as well.

The Muslim attacks had begun during this period and many Hindus of the conquered states had been becoming the followers of Islam. It also appears that the Hindu society had allowed the purification of such Hindus. Smriti Ghandrayana Vrat, 'Biladuri' and the writings of Aluberni and other Muslim writers also confirm this fact.

Some references of the inter caste marriage have also been found. The prominent Sanskrit scholar Rajasekhar had married Kshatriya girl named Avanti Sundari. Kings and the rich classes practiced polygamy. However, usually men had only one wife. It can also be known from some reference where on the death of their husbands, women had burnt themselves along with their husbands. Thus sati pratha was there though it was not very much prevalent.

There was no purdah system among the women of the royal families. According to Rajasekhar women learnt music, dancing and paintings. Women were very much fond of ornaments and also used oils and cosmetics. People of the rich families used to wear very thin clothes. The Arab writer Sulaman has written that in this period, silk used to be so thin and delicate that clothes made of it could pass through a ring.

10.17 Economical Structure of Pratihara Dynasty

Economy in Pratihara Empire was largely based on agriculture. The major expenditure of government during the Pratihara Empire was on the royal household and the army. Economy in Pratihara Empire was mainly dependent on agricultural production. Thus, the major source of government revenue at that time was the tax derived from the bulk of agricultural production. The feudal levies due from subordinates to the Gurjara king were supplemented by standing armies garrisoned on the frontiers. The use of money was strongly implied by such a system. The maintenance of large permanent military forces required the regular disbursement of pay or expenses in the form of ready cash. The forms of money needed to fulfill two conditions: sufficiently high value units to be easily transportable from point of collection to point of disbursement; yet sufficiently low value units to meet the modest salary or expenditure levels of individual soldiers.

GurjaraPratiharas ruled over an empire which encompassed at one time or another parts of present-day Gujarat, Rajasthan, Malwa and the Ganga basin from Punjab to Bihar. The commercial enterprises of the GurjaraPratihara kingdom were considered to be both users of money on a regular basis and source of revenue through taxes. Some historiographers have interpreted the period as one in which commerce was moribund, with trade highly localised and dispersed to the village level, where barter relationships replaced monetary exchanges. Historians have further used the term 'feudalism' to describe the political, economic and social process of the Pratihara Empire. The period was characterized by the decentralisation of governmental authority, devolution of economic activity from international to local scale, and de-urbanization. This interpretation is heavily reliant upon the evidence of land-grants, a biased sample which encourages over-estimation of the strength or prevalence of a trend.

Moreover, regarding the economy and trade in Pratihara Empire, Arab travellers of the ninth and tenth centuries described a number of trade goods originating in various parts of the subcontinent, which moved to market by a variety of pack animals. Indeed, one of the most consistently

demanding trade items have been the horse itself. Historians have also confirmed that an active exchange of products internal to Indian kingdoms, as well as between these states, and outside, existed during the time of the Gurjara-Pratihara Empire. The Arab geographers have also mentioned the types of coins used during that period.

Several archaeological factors confirm that there was a regular and well-used medium of exchange in the Gurjara-Pratihara dominions during the ninth and tenth centuries. Inscriptional evidence confirms this surmise. An epigraph from Bharatpur records the distribution of coins called *drammas* by King Bhoja in C.E. 905-6. The *Siyadoni* inscription from Jhansi District recorded a number of donations by individuals to temple deities from 902 to 967 C.E. Two specific denominations of coins are notable, the *VigrahapalaDramma* and the *AdivardhaDramma*. There seems to have been no gold coinage in the Gurjara-Pratihara dominions. The smallest purchases were made not with copper and this was the major medium of exchange during that period.

10.18 Religious Aspects of the Pratihara Period

This age was the age of the progress of the Brahminical religion. Vaishnava, Shaiva, Sakta and Surya were the important sects of Brahmanism where the Brahmin enjoyed the first class. This age was the age of the progress of the Brahminical religion. Different sects of Brahmanism further progressed during this period. Vaishnava, Shaiva, Sakta and Surya were the prominent sects of Brahmanism, which were prevalent during this period. The people of these sects considered the construction of temples and statues a sacred duty. The kings and other rich persons gave donations to the temples for their expenses. The followers of Shaiva religion worshipped Siva with different names such as Indra, Sankar, Pashupati, Yoga swami, Shambhu etc. Kings such as Vatsaraja, Mahendrapala and Trilochanapala were the worshippers of Siva. The statues of Vishnu, Surya, and Brahma were also established in the Siva temples. Besides this there were other small sects who worshipped different goddesses. The most prominent among these goddesses were Durga, Chamunda, Bhagavati and Kali. Surya and Vinayaka were also worshipped at some places. From the religious point of view the Pratihara kings were tolerant and had allowed the people to follow any acts they looked. But as a whole they cannot be said to have followed policy of religious toleration. It is because that though within a religion people was free to follow any sect. There are also some references of the persecutions of the followers of other religion.

Besides idol worship, Yajanas and giving of charity at religious places were also prominent. It is always learnt from an inscription that on the day of Sankranti, Trilochanapala had given in charity a village to 6,000 Brahman after worshipping lord Siva. Milladitya had made a pilgrimage to hardwar. Buddhism and Jainism: Buddhism was on the decline during this period and the number of its followers was diminishing. So was the case with the followers of Jainism whose followers mostly lived in Rajputana, Gujarat and Deogarh.

Thus it can be seen that while Jainism and Buddhism were declining, Brahmanism was progressing during the period of Pratiharas. Besides, the followers of Islam were also coming to India and were making converts to their religion.

10.19 Contribution & Legacy of Pratihara:

Pointing out the importance of the Gurjara-Pratihara Empire in the history of India, Dr. R.C. Majumdar has observed, "The Gurjara-Pratihara Empire which continued in full glory for nearly a century, was the last great empire in Northern India before the Muslim conquest. This honor is accorded to the empire of Harsha by many historians of repute, but without any real justification, for the Pratihara Empire was probably larger, certainly not less in extent, rivaled the Gupta Empire and brought political unity and its attendant blessings upon a large part of Northern India. But its chief credit lies in its successful resistance to the foreign invasions from the west, from the days of Junaid. This was frankly recognized by the Arab writers themselves."

Historians of India, since the days of Eliphinstone, have wondered at the slow progress of Muslim invaders in India, as compared with their rapid advance in other parts of the world. Arguments of doubtful validity have often been put forward to explain this unique phenomenon. Currently it is believed that it was the power of the Gurjara-Pratihara army that effectively barred the progress of the Muslims beyond the confines of Sindh, their first conquest for nearly three hundred years. In the light of later events this might be regarded as the "Chief contribution of the Gurjara-Pratiharas to the history of India".

Conclusion

The Pratiharas sustained the dignity of a great empire in North India for about a century and fulfilled their duty to fight against foreign attackers. The empire of the Pratiharas proved more resilient as compared to the Palas and the Rashtrakutas. After the fall of the empire of King Harsha, Pratiharas played an important role in unification of Northern India. There was no dearth of genius during the reign of Pratiharas. They were considerate towards the welfare of their subjects. The Pratihara Kings were patrons of art and letters. Rajashekhara, the well-known Sanskrit writer was renowned in the court of Bhoja I and Mahendrapala, his son. The decline in the power and authority of Pratiharas was due to the assault of Rashtrakutas, revolt of Vassal chiefs, and undoubtedly foray of Muslims. Towards the end of tenth century, the prestige of the Pratiharas came to an end.

Keywords

- administration
- urbanization
- adivarah
- bhukti
- literary account

Summary

- The GurjaraPratihara, often simply called Pratihara Empire, was an imperial Indian dynasty that ruled much of Northern India from the 6th to the 11th centuries.
- Kannauj was the capital of imperial GurjaraPratiharas. The GurjaraPratihara rulers in the tenth century were entitled as Maharajadhiraja of Aryavarta.
- The word "Pratihara" means protector or "who takes over the enemy or opponent" and was used by the Gurjara-Pratihara rulers as self-designation.
- The Pratihara rulers claim descent from the Hindu mythological character Lakshmana, who had performed the duty of a guardian ("pratihara") for his elder brother Rama. They were thus Suryavansh dynasty according to traditional Ideology.
- Harichandra is said to have laid the foundation of this dynasty in the 6th century C.E. He created a small kingdom at Bhinmal near about 550 C.E. after the fall of Gupta Empire.
- Nagabhata I extended his control east and south from Mandor, conquering Malwa as far as Gwalior and the port of Bharuch in Gujarat. He established his capital at Avanti in Malwa, and checked the expansion of the Arabs, who had established themselves in Sind.
- Nagabhata I was followed by two weak successors, who were in turn succeeded by Vatsraja (775-805 C.E).
- Vatsraja ambitions for capturing Kannauj, brought the Pratiharas into conflict with the Pala dynasty of Bengal and the Rashtrakutas of the northern Deccan, with whom they would contest for primacy in northern India for the next two centuries.
- Vatsraja successfully challenged and defeated the Pala ruler Dharmapala and Dantidurga the Rashtrakuta king for control of Kannauj. In about 786 C.E. the Rashtrakuta ruler Dhruva crossed the Narmada River into Malwa, defeated Vatsraja and from there tried to capture Kannauj. Vatsraja was defeated by Dhruva around 800 C.E.
- Vatsraja was succeeded by Nagabhata II. Nagabhata II was initially defeated by the Rashtrakuta ruler Govinda III, but later recovered Malwa from the Rashtrakutas, conquered Kannauj and the Indo-Gangetic Plain as far as Bihar from the Palas, and again checked the Muslims in the west.

- Bhoja I or Mihir Bhoja expanded the Gurjar dominions west to the border of Sind, east to Bengal, and south to the Narmada. He was the greatest among the Pratihara rulers and was also a great patron of art and letter.
- After Bhoja, many rulers such as Mahenderpal-I, Bhoja II, Mahipala-I, Rajapala, Trilochanpala ruled as kings. Jasapala, was the last Gurjar ruler of Kanauj, died in 1036.
- Weak rulers provided opportunity to the feudatories of the empire, who declare their independence. Repeated Turkis invasion also resulted in the decline of the Pratihara kingdom.
- The Gurjara-Pratihara rulers were great patrons of arts, architecture and literature. Mihir Bhoj, was the most outstanding ruler of the dynasty. Several fine sculptures and temple at Osian in Rajasthan speaks us about the growth of art activities under Pratihara kingdom.
- Under the Pratihara rule economic condition of people was prosperous, social life was peaceful and religious life was harmonious.
- The GurjaraPratihara Empire which continued in full glory for nearly a century was the last great empire in Northern India before the Muslim conquest. The Pratihara Empire was probably larger, certainly not less in extent, rivalled the Gupta Empire and brought political unity and its attendant blessings upon a large part of Northern India.
- The Pratihara successfully resisted the foreign invasions from the west, from the days of Junaid, which was frankly recognised by the Arab writers themselves.

Self Assessment

1. Who among the following Rajput ruler built a temple and installed his own image to be worship?
 - A. Latingdev
 - B. Ajay Singh
 - C. Pradyumandev
 - D. Rao Bika
2. In Rajput period, the subjects of education were?
 - A. Ved and Grammar
 - B. Technical and Surgery
 - C. Law, Literature and Science
 - D. Prakrit Literature
3. Which dynasty is known for the temples of Khajuraho?
 - A. Shahi dynasty
 - B. Gahadwal dynasty
 - C. Parmara dynasty
 - D. Chandella dynasty
4. Which among the following dynasty is also called as Solanki Dynasty?
 - A. Chalukyas dynasty
 - B. Chandella dynasty
 - C. Sena dynasty
 - D. Yadhuvans dynasty

5. Which of the following place there were no Buddhist education centre during Rajput period?
- A. Vikramshila
 - B. Nalanda
 - C. Odantpur
 - D. Mount Abu
6. The minister of the Gahadwal King Govindachandra and author of Kalpadruma was ?
- A. Apararka
 - B. Chandesvara
 - C. Lakshmidhara
 - D. Vijnanesvara
7. Tanjore , Anhilwada, Dhara&Kanauj were the capitals of respectively which among the following dynasties?
- A. Pratihara, Parmara, Solanki, Chola
 - B. Chola, Solanki, Paramara, Pratihara
 - C. Pandya, Solanki, Pratihara, Chola
 - D. Chola, Paramara, Pratihara, Solanki
8. Who among the following established Mewar Kingdom in Rajasthan ?
- A. Nagaditya
 - B. Shiladitya
 - C. Bappa Rawal
 - D. Mahendra II
9. Battle of Mandsaur was fought between which of the following?
- A. Rajputs and britishers
 - B. Marathas and rajputs
 - C. Marathas and Mughals
 - D. Rajputs and Mughals
10. Which rajput clan once ruled over Bundelkhand?
- A. Rathores
 - B. Paramaras
 - C. Chauhans
 - D. Chandelas
11. Who defeated Khilji and erected the tower of victory (vijaystambha) in Chittorgarh?
- A. Prithviraj chauhan
 - B. Jai chand
 - C. Rana sangramsingh
 - D. Rana kumbha

12. Which dynasty of the Rajputana took part in the tripartite struggle for the control over the city of kannauj?
- A. Chauhans
B. Gurjarapratihara
C. Parmara
D. Chandelles
13. "Awal- Bawal" is the agreement that took place in 1453 between
- A. Rana kumbha and raojodha
B. Rana kumbha and maldeo
C. Rana kumbha and raochunda
D. Rao ranmal and raojodha
14. Which historian has claimed that the chauhans originated from the brahmin?
- A. Dr. Bhandarkar
B. Cunningham
C. Dr. Ojha
D. C.V. Vaidh
15. Which rajput ruler of Mewar in 1576 fought the battle of haldighati and then fled the field on his horse, chetak?
- A. Maharana pratap
B. Rana amarsingh
C. Maharaja udaisingh
D. Raja man singh

Answers for Self Assessment

1. A 2. C 3. D 4. A 5. D
6. C 7. B 8. C 9. B 10. D
11. D 12. B 13. A 14. A 15. A

Review Question

1. Write an essay on the India during post Harsa period.
2. Give an account on the theories of origin of the Rajput in early medieval India.
3. Discuss the political history of Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty.
4. Describe the socio-religious and economic condition of Gurjara-Pratihara Empire.
5. Write a note on the Art and Architecture flourished under Gurjara-Pratihara Empire.



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Unit11: The emergence of Rajput States in Northern India

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Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will:

- Know about how various political power configurations emerged in western and central India with reference to Rajputs.
- Understand the nature of the distribution of political authority as well as the structure of polity of the Rajputs; and
- Be able to analyze the patterns of the formation of political powers and their consolidation.

Introduction

In conventional studies on Indian polity there is greater stress on the genealogy of the ruling dynasties and chronology of their rules. Changes in polity are mostly conceived as changes represented by dynastic shifts. In view of the inadequacy of this framework, recent studies on polity have attempted to view the ancient and medieval polity from the perspective of possible processes which were in operation. There is a marked emphasis now on themes such as state formation, structure of polity, nature of power and political control, etc. However generalization at sub continental level need to be probed further from a microscopic point of view. In this Unit we shall know about the emergence and evolution of regional polity in western and central India with reference to Rajputs. This region comprises modern states of Rajasthan, Gujarat and most of Madhya Pradesh. Owing to the fact that regional political formations in various parts of India have not been studied fully, the generalizations at sub-continental level require further precision, The study of regional political formations should, however, assume importance in view of the fact that:

- 1) There were frequent shifts in the centers of powers, and
- 2) The formation of new polities was a continuous process.

Western and central India provide us with examples of fresh spurt in the emergence of local states. For example, the Rajput clans such as the GurjaraPratihara, Guhila, Paramara, Cahamana as well as the Kalachuris and Candella exploited political uncertainties of post-Gupta and post tenth centuries in western and central India. They dominated the political scene for centuries, especially during the period extending from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries. The picture of the political processes

that resulted in the replacement of old dynasties by new Rajput powers of uncertain origins is not clear. None the less, an attempt has been made to work out some essential traits of the nature of distribution of political authority. Unlike northern and eastern India, the region under discussion shows some influence of lineage – at least in some parts of the region. Even in these parts, the dispersal of administrative and fiscal powers along with the changes in the bureaucratic set-up – all based on new landholdings – set the tone of feudal polity.

11.1 Origin of Raputas: Their Political Implications

The Arabs invaded Sindh and Multan in 712-13 CE. Within the next 25 years they overran Marwar, Malwa and Broach and threatened other parts of India. These raids contributed to remarkable changes in the political map of western India and the Deccan. Powers like the Rashtrakutas and clans now known to us as Rajputs came to the fore in this period. These clans not heard of in earlier times, began to play important part from about the eighth century. With obscure origins the lineages like the Paramaras and the Cahamanas, after passing through many vicissitudes, came to the fore in the context of the inter-state conflicts of the major powers such as the GurjaraPratiharas and Rashtrakutas. The rise of the Rajputs to political prominence appears to be accidental, but an understanding of the early political developments shows that their appearance on political scene was not sudden. The emergence of these clans took place within the existing hierarchical political structure. Their emergence therefore, should be understood as a total process.



The problem of the origin of Rajput dynasties is highly complex and controversial. Their gotrochhara makes them kshatriyas of the lunar family (Chandravamshi) while on the basis of old kavyas some maintain that they were of the solar race. The myths of solar origin regard them as kshatriya created in kali Yuga to wipe-out the mlechhas (foreigners). Rajasthani bards and chroniclers regard them as fire-born (Agnikula). According to the Agnikulamyth recorded by a court poet, the founder of the house of the Paramaras originated from the firepit of sage Vasishtha on Mount Abu. The man who thus sprang out of the fire forcibly wrested the wish-granting cow of sage Vasishtha from sage Vishwamitra and restored it to the former. Sage Vasishtha gave him the fitting name of paramara-slayer of the enemy. From him sprang a race which obtained high esteem by virtuous kings. The Paramara inscriptions also declare the origin of the Paramara from the firepit of sage Vasishtha on Mount Abu. The Rajasthani bards went a step further and ascribed the fire origin not only to Paramaras but also to Pratiharas, the Chalukyas of Gujarat and the Cahamanas. Speaking of the fire origin of the Cahamanas the bardic tales said that Agastya and other sages began a great sacrifice on Mount Abu. Demons rendered it impure by showering down filthy

things. Vasishtha created from the fire pit three warriors Pratihara, Chalukya, and Paramara, but none succeeded in keeping the demons away. Vasishtha dug a new pit from where issued forth a four armed figure. The sages named him Cahuvana. This warrior defeated the demon. This Agnikulamyth was nothing more than poetic imagination of bards. In their hunt for a fine pedigree for their patrons they had woven the story of the fire-origin of the Paramaras. They found that it could splendidly explain the origin of the Cahamanastoo if they added some more details. The problem of the origin, when viewed in its totality instead of viewing it from the angle of any particular dynasty, would help us understand its political significance. The practice of new social groups claiming kshatriya status became widespread in the early medieval period. Kshatriya status was one of the various symbols that the emergent social groups sought for the legitimation of their newly acquired power. The early medieval and medieval Rajput clans, representing a mixed caste and constituting a fairly large section of petty chiefs holding estates, achieved political eminence gradually. There was corresponding relationship between the achievement of political eminence by Pratiharas, Guhilas, Cahamanas and other clans and their movement towards a respectable social status, viz. acquiring akshatriya lineage. In this context it is important to note that these dynasties claimed descent from ancient kshatriyas long after their accession to power. Let us note the example of the GurjaraPratiharas, chronologically the earliest and historically the most important of the Rajput dynasties. In an inscription of the late ninth century issued by king Bhoja-I, they claim solar descent for the dynasty and say that Lakshmana, the brother of the epic hero Rama was the ancestor of their family.

Their inscriptions are silent on the question of origin till the glorious days of Bhoja. This epigraphic tradition of the solar descent is connected chronologically with the period during which the GurjaraPratiharas were the dominant political power. The tradition, thus represents a stage of imperial prominence with the temptation to establish a link with the heroic age of the Epics. The tradition of the legendary kshatriya origin of powers such as the Paramaras and Cahamanas too had not originated at the initial stage of the rise of these powers. In short, the entry into the Rajput fold was possible through the acquisition of political power. And the newly acquired power was to be legitimized by claiming linkages with the kshatriya lines of the mythical past.

11.2 Distribution of Political Power

In India the distribution of political power did not follow a uniform pattern. A study of the process of emergence of the political powers in medieval western India shows that the distribution of political authority could be organized by a network of lineages (kula, vamsha) within the framework of the monarchical form of polity. The political annals of the Rajput dynasties such as the Cahamanas of Rajasthan and Paramaras of southern Rajasthan, Gujarat and Malwa provide examples of the clan-based distribution of political authority.

11.3 Expansion of Rajput Clans

The bardic chronicles of Marwar state that Dharanivara of the Paramara dynasty of Abu made himself master of the NavkotMarwar which he afterwards divided among his nine brothers: Mandovar to one brother, Ajmer to the second and soon. Thus, apart from the Paramaras of Malwa there were at least four lines of the Paramaras ruling in: i) Abu, ii) Bhinmal iii) Jalor and iv) Vagada. Similarly, apart from the Cahamanas of Broach there was another line of the Cahamanas in Pratabgarh region. It was headed by a *mahasamanta* of the Pratihara overlord. The ancestor of this *mahasamanta* was a member of the famous Cahamana line of Shakambhari. The Cahamanas of Shakambhari with their cradle land in the tract extending from Pushkar to Harsa (central and eastern Rajasthan) had themselves branched off into Cahamanas of (i) Nadol (ii) Jalor (iii) Satyapura and (iv) Abu. During about five centuries of their rule they exercised control over a vast region in western Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Chapas were another Rajput clan of the early medieval period. They ruled over principalities like Bhillamala, Vadhiar in Kathiawad, and Anahilapataka in Gujarat. Similarly the Guhilas ruled over the regions of Udaipur and Mewar.

Apart from the sub-divisions of major clans, the emergence of various minor clans was another important aspect of the proliferation of the Rajputs in early medieval period: The continuing process of the formation of Rajput clans was through the acquisition of political power. The new clans and sub-divisions of earlier clans were drawn into Rajput political network in a variety of ways.

11.4 Establishment of Ancestry Power

The formation and consolidation of lineage power did not develop in a uniform way. One of the indicators of the process of lineage power formation was the colonization of new areas, as is evident in the expansion of the number of settlements. The colonization of new areas could result from the annexation of the new territories by means of organized military strength. The Chauhan kingdom of Nadol known as *Saptashatais* said to have been made into *Saptasahasrikadeshy* by a Chauhan chief who killed chiefs on the boundaries of his kingdom and annexed their villages. Territorial expansion of the western Indian powers was accomplished, in some areas, at the expense of tribal settlements. For example, MandorPratiharaKakkuka is said to have resettled a place which was terrible because of being inhabited by the Abhiras. Similarly, there are examples of the suppression of tribal population like Shabaras, Bhillas and Pulindas in western and central India.

Similar movements are found in the case of the Guhilas and the Cahamanas as well. For example, though the Guhila settlements were to be found in various parts of Rajasthan as early as the seventh century, slightly later traditions recorded in the inscriptions of the Nagada-AharGuhilas trace their movement from Gujarat. The bardic tradition also suggests that the Guhila kingdoms in south Rajasthan succeeded the earlier tribal chiefdoms of the Bhils. The movement of the Chauhans was from Ahichhatrapura to Jangaladesh (Shakambhari) which, as the name indicates, was an inhospitable area. Their movement led to its colonization. A tenth century record says that Lakshmana, the son of Vakpati-I of the ShakambhariCahamana lineage started with few followers and fought against the Medas who had been terrorizing the people around Naddul with their free-booting raids. It so pleased the brahmana masters of the area that they appointed him the guard of the towns. Gradually Lakshmana built up a small band of troopers and suppressed the Medas in their own territory. The Medas agreed to keep off from villages paying tribute to Lakshmana. He became a master of 20 horses and extended his dominions at ease and built a great palace in Nadol.

Political authority of a lineage could even be brought about by simply replacing one lineage by another as evident in the case of the Cahamanas of Jalor, a splinter line of the NadolCahamana branch. Kirtipala, a son of NadolCahamana Alhanawas dissatisfied with the share of land assigned to him. A man of ambition, he found that the situation in Mewar offered an advantage for an invader. Having failed there, he made his way into the region which was ruled by the Paramaras.

He attacked Jalor, their capital, and made it the capital of his new kingdom.

Similarly the Cahamana line of Broach was brought into being when a Cahamanachief Bharatvaddha-II founded a principality over the tract of the Gurjaras of Broach. He was helped by PratiharaNagabhata-I in ousting the Gurjaras from Broach in the chaotic situation created by the coming of the Arabs. He then assumed the title of *mahasamantadhipati* in 756 CE. Thus the formation of lineage power evolved through multiple channels and processes which were not compartmentalized and interacted with one another.

Rising of Social Condition

The political history of western India shows that a large ethnic group of an area could successfully compete for political power. It could also lay the foundations of large state structures lasting for centuries. Starting from a local agrarian base a lineage could in course of time, emerge as a big regional power by integrating other local lineages. For example, a tract of land variously called as *Gujaratra*, *Gujarabhumi*, *Gurjarashtra*, etc. all referring possibly to the same area (territories contiguous with southern Rajasthan) was the base from where many lineages emerged.

In the process of stratification that developed within the Gurjara stock, some families attained political dominance and became ruling lineages. From seventh century onwards various lineages that had branched off the Gurjara stock through the channel of political power became widely distributed in western India. Gurjara-Pratihara power represents a classic example of the rise in the social ladder. It would suggest that potential and dominant power structures could emerge from within local agrarian bases by following a path of upward mobility in favorable political circumstances.

Alliance of Ancestry Supremacy

The emergence of the political powers in western and central India was associated with certain features. At the level of economy, the patterns of land distribution are noteworthy. From about the

late tenth century there is evidence for the distribution of land among the members of Cahamanaruling lineages. King Simharaja, his brothers Vatsaraja and Vigrharaja and his two brothers Chandaraja, and Govindaraja had their own personal estates. In the areas held by the Cahamanas

of Nadol assignments called as *grasa*, *grasabhumi* or *bhukti* were held by the king, the crown prince, other sons of the king, queens and so on. The incidence of these assignments was higher in Rajasthan than in other parts. This feature apparently represented a process which gradually developed and was associated with the spread of a clan. Another pattern was the holding of units consisting of villages which were part of administrative divisions as *mandala* or *bhukti*. These units seem to have become centers of some kind of local control. The units of 84 villages (*chaurasia*) which were held in Saurashtra by the GurjaraPratihara gradually spread to Rajasthan. This extension facilitated the land distribution and political control among the ruling elites. Between the tenth and twelfth centuries the kings and princes of Cahamana and Paramara clans held such big holdings. The process coincided with the construction of fortresses on a large scale in different locations. Apart from serving defense purposes the fortresses also worked as foci of control for their rural surroundings and helped the process of the consolidation of ruling families.

The marriage network among the ruling clans is another pointer to the process of the consolidation of clan power at the social level. Marriage networks brought about inter-clan relationships which had significant political implications because the families were mostly the ruling Rajput clans. Apart from Paramara-Rashtrakuta and Cahamana-Paramara matrimonial relations, the Guhila marriage network was varied and widespread. Though the Guhilas extended their marriage relations with Chaulukyas, Rashtrakutas, Chedis and Hunas in addition to those Rajput clans like Cahamana and the Paramara, the marriage network mostly constituted the Rajput clan category. The choice obviously was political as the families cited above constituted the ruling elite of the early medieval western India. Inter-clan marriage relationships were expected to lead to collaboration in wider activities of sociopolitical nature since they facilitated the presence of clan members in different kingdoms and courts.

11.5 Nature and Condition of Polity

The political geography of early medieval western India and the evidence of the formation of political authority in disparate zones by ever proliferating lineages in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Malwa show that there was not always a necessary corresponding relation between a ruling lineage and a fixed territory. The movement of lineages outside their early centers of power led to the establishment of new ruling families. Guhilas of Mewar may be cited as one among such lineages.

Political Variability

Mobilization of military strength could not only displace a ruling lineage but also create new locus and network of power. The case of the Vagada branch of the main line of the Paramaras provides an example for this. The Vagada branch was in existence from as early as the first decade of the ninth century. Following the death of Upendra Paramara, his son was ruling in Banswara and Dungarpur areas as a feudatory of the house of Malwa. This Vagada branch continued to be a loyal

feudatory line for centuries till Chamundaraja, one of its rulers, defied the Paramaras of Malwa and became independent in the second half of the eleventh century. The Vagada was lost to the kingdom of Malwa in the beginning of the twelfth century. After the successor of Chamundaraja nothing is heard of the Vagada branch. Three decades later we find one Maharaja Shurapala ruling over the region of the erstwhile Vagada branch. This shows that by 1155 the Paramaras were dethroned by the members of a family who, as their genealogy shows, were not connected with the Paramara dynasty of Vagada. Within next 25 years this line was also uprooted and a Guhila king was ruling over Vagada by 1179. He in turn appears to have been dispossessed of his newly established kingdom by a ruler who styled himself *maharajadhiraja*. He seems to have established himself therewith the help of his Chalukya overlord.

Administrative Structure

It is hardly likely that the early medieval powers such as the Chalukyas, Paramaras and Cahamanas could give stable government to the country without a powerful bureaucracy in the structure of their polities. We come across the names of a number of officers who evidently assisted in the

transaction of the affairs of the state. *Lekhapaddhati* furnishes the names of *karanas* (departments) of the government. It is supposed to be applicable to the Chalukya government as the largest number of its documents are datable to the Chalukya period in the history of Gujarat. A few *karanas* mentioned in the work also figure in the Chalukya records. *Sri-karana* (Chief secretariat), for instance, was a familiar term in their inscriptions. Also known from their records are *Vyaya Karana* or the accounts department. *Vyaparakarana* or the department in charge of general supervision of trade and the collection of import and export duties and *mandapika-karna* or the secretariat in charge of the collection of taxes. Such *karanas* were headed by ministers known by the term *mahamatyas*. Little except the names of these ministers are available in the records and the actual nature and functions of bureaucracy are difficult to determine. Besides the *mahamatyas*, there were other officers called *mahamantrins*, *mantrins* and *sachivas*. The information about their status is also very meager as they are only casually mentioned in only a few inscriptions. Of the more frequently mentioned officers in early medieval western India was *mahasandhivigrahika* who was a minister of peace and war and whose duties also included that of conveyor of a grant. A *mahamatyamahasandhivigrahika* of the Chalukyas also in charge of the *Sri-Karana* and the *Mudra* (the department that issued passports and collected import duties). Another officer mentioned was *mahakshapatika* or the head of accounts or record office. He kept a full account of the income of the state and also of the expenditure. He also registered land grants under the Paramara administration. *Mahamantrin* or *mahapradhana*, literally meaning a chief minister was an official of great importance. He held charge of the royal seal and exercised general supervision over all departments. *Dandanayaka* or *senapati* was also an important official, who was primarily a military officer. The Cahamana records show that the cavalry commanders and *baladhipas* or officers in charge of the military stationed in outposts and towns were placed under him. The whole administration was controlled by a department, the *Baladhikarana*, stationed at the capital.

The so called central officialdom also included, among others, the *dutaka* who conveyed the ruler's sanction of a grant to local officials who then had the charter drawn up and delivered. *Mahapratihara* (the Lord Chamberlain) and *bhandagarika* (in charge of provisions) also figure as governmental officers.

11.6 Ancestry State and Feudal Polity

From the Gupta period onwards there was a marked interrelatedness of polities which was the result of the horizontal spread of state society. The differentiated polities, including clan based ruling lineages, had certain vital components that cut across all major political structures of the early medieval period. The region of western and central India was no exception. To begin with, let us be familiar with the material base of lineage based state. It was not just consolidation of the lineage power in terms of political power. Much more than that was the factor of landholding. One gets the impression of some sort of land grabbing on the part of the members of ruling families. The exercise of important governmental functions was gradually being linked up with landholding. Thus under the rule of the GurjaraPratiharas we find references to states held by chiefs of the Cahamana, Guhila and Chalukya clans. Mathanadeva, another chief of the GurjaraPratihara lineage also claimed to have obtained his allotment as *svabhogavapta* (own share). The Nadol plate of Rajaputra Kirtipal dated in 1161 refers to a group of twelve villages which a junior prince had received from the reigning prince. The Kalvan plates of Yashovarman (of the time of the Paramara king Bhojadeva) mentions a chief who had acquired a royal charter of 84 villages, obviously from his overlord. Unlike the Cahamanas and GurjaraPratiharas, there seems to be somewhat lesser frequency of land grants based on clan consideration among the Paramaras. But the Paramara records refer to more groups of villages that is the case with the Cahamana records. Groups of villages in units of twelve or its multiples (12, 24, 36 etc.) and even in units of sixteen or its multiples have been mentioned in at least seven cases. A Paramara inscription of 1017 refers to a stray example of district comprising 52 villages, which does not fit in either in the pattern of the multiples of twelve or in that of sixteen. But, it cannot be ascertained fully, whether the clan system of administration covered the major part of the Paramara kingdom. Irrespective of the incidence or frequency of clan influences, the more substantive component of the so-called lineage state is the nature of landholding. So far the lineage state or integrative polity has not offered any alternative material base of political structure/s. No wonder, therefore, even in these states of western and central India the phenomenon of different foci or level of power cuts across all major political structures which reiterates the validity of the hypothesis of feudal polity. What is broadly labeled as *samanta* system was not, however, a uniform category. It included a wide range of status all of which corresponded to the landed aristocracy of the period. The kingdoms of all the major powers of western and central India included the territories which were under the control of the feudatories

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who were known under the generic title of mandalika, but sometimes styled themselves as maharajadhiraja, mahamandalesvara, mahamandalikas, mahasamantas and samantas. The most important of the feudatory princes of the Chalukyas were the Paramaras of Abu and the Cahamanas of Jalor; others of minor importance being the Mer king Jagamalla and Paramara Somesvara. Similarly, a considerable portion of the Cahamanas state, especially in Nadol and Jalor, was held by landed intermediaries variously known as thakkuras, ranakas, and bhoktas, on the condition that they supplied certain quotas of soldiers when required by the overlord.

The categories of feudatory chiefs under the Paramaras consisted of those officers and princes:

- 1) Who were rewarded by the king with land in consideration of their valuable services;
- 2) Who had built up their own principalities during the period of aggrandizement and acknowledged the supremacy of the premier line. (To this category belonged the Paramaras of Vagada, and the Paramaras of Kiradu);
- 3) Who had carved out their principalities by the force of their own arms in defiance of the central authority during the difficult days of the Paramaras. (In this category came the Paramara Mahakumaras who used subordinate titles but were for all practical purposes independent); and
- 4) Who were defeated and forced to accept the suzerainty of the Paramaras and were given the status of a vassal.

Big feudatory chiefs such as the Paramaras of Ambudamandala and the Paramara Mahakumaras enjoyed large amount of internal autonomy. They could create their own sub-feudatories and appoint their own officers. It was possible for feudatory chiefs also to distribute their lands among their dependents. The thakkuras served the feudatory chiefs in almost all the feudatory states under the Paramaras. The feudatories could also assign taxes, alienate villages and exempt certain people from taxation. This practice of granting land and its associated fiscal and evidence for this, particularly under the Pratiharas. It was practiced both in the areas of direct Pratihara control as well as those under their vassals. Examples of sub-infeudation caused by service grants in Gujarat under Chalukyas are also known. A subordinate functionary, probably a *bania* under Bhimadeva II constructed an irrigation-well and a watering trough attached to it, and for their upkeep he granted certain plots of land to a man of Pragvata clan, probably a merchant. The evidence for the prevalence of sub-infeudation in the Paramara kingdom does not seem to be clear. Thus in the course of time the *samantas* system encompassed a proliferating range of designations and assumed the characteristics of a hierarchical political formation represented by the ranks such as *ranaka*, *rauta*, *thakkura*, *samanta*, *mahasamanta* etc. The incidence of grants to state officials vary from one region to another. To illustrate, while we hear about half a dozen Paramara official ranks, only a few of them are known to have received land grants – none at least in the eleventh century. But very large territories were granted to vassals and high officers under the Chalukyas of Gujarat. Chalukya copper plates of 12th-13th centuries and their comparison with the data of the *Lekhapaddhati* help us in stressing that vassals and high officers gradually merged into one another. In the 11th to 12th centuries key officials were also being paid through regular and exclusive taxes. Thus, the *pattakilas* and *dushtasadhya*s of the Kalachuri kingdom and *baladhipas* of the Cahamanas received such sustenance. Indeed some Candella inscriptions of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century specifically enjoin the feudatories, royal officials, forest officials, constables, etc. to give up their perquisites in the villages transferred as gifts. There are also references to resumption of such rights. The feudatories owed fiscal and military obligations to the overlord. Generally the authority of the feudatories was derivative, dependent on the fulfillment of certain conditions of which supplying the overlord with certain quotas of soldiers in time of need was one. The Paramaras of Vagada fought in the cause of the imperial Paramaras of Malwa for more than once. The Paramaras of Abu, Kiradu and Jalor being the feudatory chiefs of the Chalukyas of Gujarat, laid down their lives in the cause of their masters many a times. However, the feudatory chiefs were eager to free themselves whenever there was an opportunity. In this case the relation between the suzerain and vassal rested absolutely on the force one could use. For example, the Guhilas of Mewar accepted the Paramara overlordship when they were defeated by Vakapati-II but tried to re-establish their lost position during the period of confusion which followed the death of Bhoja-1. Similarly, Cahamana Katudeva tried to assert his independence during the last years of his overlord Chalukya Siddharaja so that Chalukya Kumarapala deprived him of his principality and brought Naddula under direct administration placing a *dandanayaka* in charge of the area. Kumarapala also removed from Abu its rebellious prince Vikramasimha and installed the latter's nephew Yasodhaval on the throne. Yasodhaval's son and successor Dharavarsha rendered distinguished service to three generations of Chalukya overlords. But even he turned against

[Subject]

Bhima-11 and was either won over or forced to submission to the Chalukya overlordship. The most important duty of a feudatory prince was to help his suzerain against the enemy. Sometimes the feudatories conquered new territories for the suzerain or brought another prince under the latter's vassalage. An inscription seems to imply that at the accession of a new king the feudatories swore loyalty to their new overlord who confirmed them in their possession. Feudatories are also said to have paid tribute to their overlord both in cash and kind. However, there was no hard and fast rule regarding the obligations of the feudatory chiefs of different categories. The general relations between the overlord and the feudatory depended upon the circumstances and relative strength of the feudatory *vis-a-vis* his suzerain.

The feudatories under Chalukyas of Gujarat such as the Paramaras of Abu or the Cahamanas of Nadol ruled over quite extensive territories and had their own systems of administration. Instability of the political conditions was partly the result of the *samanta-feudatory* system. Often the strength of the feudatory bonds depended upon the personality of the overlord. Overlords who went on expeditions to distant lands had to entrust some of their capable generals with the administration of certain territories as feudatory chiefs. The personal relations between the king and the subordinate, which might have been strong enough to keep the territories together for a generation or two, faded out in the course of time and the feudatory chiefs tended to assert their independence. Often samantas had no permanent bonds and were prepared to transfer their allegiance to a powerful invader in return for greater privileges.

Summary

From about the beginning of the eighth century there emerged a political set up in western India and central India in which new social groups acquired political power by various means such as settlement of new areas. The pattern of the emergence of the Rajputs which was partly clan based organization of political authority shows some deviations from developments outside western India. However, the mobility of new powers towards kshatriya status for legitimization was not specific to western India as a similar process was in operation elsewhere in early medieval India. After seeking legitimacy for their new kshatriya role the ruling clans of western and central India formulated detailed genealogies in the period of their transition from feudatory to independent status. They consolidated their political position by means of specific patterns of land distribution and territorial system. Some other prominent features of the polity in the region are:

Keywords

Baladhipa: Military officer put in charge of customs house.

Chaurasia: Holders of grant of 84 villages.

Dushtasadhya: Police officials in charge of criminal administration.

Gotrochhara: Announcing of *gotra*.

Legitimation: Seeking lawful acceptance or justification.

Lineage: A line of descent, *kulaorvamsha*.

Mleccha: Name applied to the Arabs, Turks and other foreigners.

Patrimony: lands or villages granted to dependents for maintenance *jagirs*.

Self Assessment

- The author of 'Prithviraj Raso' is
 - Jayanaka
 - Chand Bardai
 - Bilhana
 - Kalhana
- The period between 647 to 1200 A.D. is known as:
 - Muslim Periods

- B. Rajput Periods
 - C. Mughal Periods
 - D. None of the above
3. Which tradition were built by the Rajputs
- A. Bravery
 - B. Courage
 - C. Sacrifice& Patriotism
 - D. All the three
4. The position of king during
- A. Dictator
 - B. Autocrate
 - C. Limited Monarchy
 - D. None of the three
5. What was the chief reason of failure of Rajputs:
- A. Lack of political
 - B. Lack of sun sight
 - C. Defective Army Organization
 - D. All the three
6. Geet- Govind was composed by:
- A. Damodar Gupta
 - B. Jaideva
 - C. Bhatti
 - D. Dandivi
7. According to Alberuni there were ... classes in Indian society during the Rajput periods.
- A. 15
 - B. 16
 - C. 17
 - D. 18
8. Condition of women during Rajput period was:
- A. Honourable and respected
 - B. Deterioted
 - C. Declined
 - D. None of the three
9. Rajput women had feelings of:
- A. Patriotism
 - B. Chastity
 - C. Both I &II
 - D. Neither of the two
10. Was there system of sati prevalent during the Rajput Age?
- A. No
 - B. Yes
 - C. Both I&II

D. Neither of the two

11. In Rajput period, the subjects of education were?

- A. Ved and Grammar
- B. Technical and Surgery
- C. Law, Literature and Science
- D. Prakrit Literature

12. Rajputs being warriors believed in the worship of:

- A. Jainism
- B. Buddhism
- C. Shaivism
- D. Shakti worship

13. Rajputs's administration was based on?

- A. Feudalism
- B. Centralized Monarchical system
- C. Both (a) and (b)
- D. None of them

14. Which is true of economy of Rajputs?

- A. canals were dug
- B. Dams were raised/
- C. Rain water was harvested.
- D. All of the above are true.

15. Did India import horses from Central Asia during Rajput rule?

- A. Correct
- B. Partially correct
- C. No
- D. spices were imported

16. How did Rajput rulers collect taxes?

- A. In kind
- B. In cash
- C. Both in kind and cash
- D. None of the above is true

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 2. B | 3. D | 4. B | 5. D |
| 6. B | 7. B | 8. B | 9. C | 10. B |
| 11. C | 12. D | 13. A | 14. D | 15. A |
| 16. C | | | | |

Review Questions

1. Critically Analyze the Origin theory of Rajputas.
2. Discuss the powers and functions of the feudatory chiefs.
3. What is the *Agnikula myth* in the Rajputa Origin?



Further Readings

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Unit12: Arabs in Sindh

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Summary

Keyword

Self Assessment

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Objective

After reading this Unit, you will be able to understand:

- The background for understanding the foreign invasions from Arabia in
- Early medieval period;
- The sources on the Arab conquest of Sindh;
- The reasons for the capture of Sindh by the Arabs;
- The phases of conquest of Sindh;
- The colonial understanding of Sindh conquest; and
- Cultural comingling between the Arab and Indian cultures.

Introduction

In the Units so far, we had studied about the social, political, economic and cultural aspects of Ancient India. Based on the unique traits of the period, historians have called it as Ancient history. Similarly, the period that followed had its own characteristic features to be termed as Medieval. The rise of Islam in west Asia and the Muslim conquests around the world is atypical of the early medieval period. In this Unit, we will study one such inter-related development in the Indian subcontinent. This is the Arab conquest of Sindh in the north-western region of the subcontinent.

Sources

As far as the historical sources on the Arab conquest on Sindh are concerned, there is a miserable dearth. Even the Arab sources only give brief, scant details or passing reference to this episode while discussing the rise and expansion of early Islam. The conquest is compressed into a few pages of the *Futuh al Buldan* of Al-Baladhuri. Al-Madaini gives plentiful information on the Arab conquest of Transoxiana, but Sindh finds little mention in his account. However, this dearth of the Arab sources on the theme is largely compensated for by the *Chach Nama*, a Persian text written by Ali Kufi in 1226 CE. It is a reliable historical work that claims to be the translation of a lost Arab account dealing with the history of this conquest; it is only to the *Chach Nama* that one can give the credit of providing detailed information on the Arab invasion of Sindh.

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The *ChachNamah* details on the history of Sindh from 680-718 CE. Etymologically, the term *ChachNamah* means the story of Chach. He was the Hindu Brahmin ruler of Sindh. This book was a Persian prose work written in the city of Uchch, which was the political capital of Sindh in those times. Presently, it can be located around 70 kilometers north of the port city of Karachi in Pakistan. As an important historical source of Muslim India, the *ChachNamah* has not received its due share of attention. Its partial translation in English was done by Elliot and Dowson, and a full translation from Persian to English was done in 1900 by Mirza Kalich Beg, the first Sindhi novelist. The first and only edition of the Persian text appeared in 1939.

The *ChachNamah* has not been given adequate importance since most historians, like the colonial and the nationalist historians, have seen it only as a narrative on the advent of early Islam to the Indian subcontinent. However, Ali Kufi's claim of the *ChachNamah* being a translation of an 8th century work in Arabic shows that it can be a repository of other types of information apart from that on the advent of Islam. In fact, the text indeed gives more information. Scholars like Yohanan Friedmann, Manan Ahmed Asif etc., who have read and analyzed it, contend that it has a wide variety of information, and no systematic attempt has been made to classify and analyze all the available data. After its detailed examination, they certified the fact that it has relevant information on the history of Sindh, its government and politics. Therefore, the scholars who have read this text realize the dire need to read and understand this medieval source in entirety, and refrain from seeing it only as a text on the advent of early Islam and its capture of Sindh.

12.1 The Rise and Spread of Islam

The religion of Islam was founded in the 7th century by Muhammad: an Arabian merchant from Mecca. At this time, the region of Arabia was inhabited by several warring Bedouin tribes following pagan faiths, worshipping many deities. They constantly fought with each other over economic or religious issues. However, Muhammad unified these Arabian tribes with his monotheistic teachings. Perhaps this was the biggest contribution of Muhammad in Arabia. Along with bringing this unity, his new faith had greatly influenced the political and economic policies of the future Muslim states as well. After his death, the rapid expansion of the Muslim polity in and outside the Arabian Peninsula happened under the Rashidun and Umayyad Caliphates. The expanded empire stretched from Central Asia across the Middle East and North Africa to the Atlantic. Some scholars opine that the political formation of a state in the Arabian peninsula and religious unity and mobilization were the most significant reasons for the establishment of the largest empire in the pre-modern period. This empire formed by the Islamic caliphate was around 13 million square kilometers. With Islam as their religion and the new empire as their booty, the Arabs lived amongst a vast array of people belonging to different race, among which they formed a ruling minority of conquerors. However, the gradual end of wars and the development of economic life produced a new governing class of administrators and traders, heterogeneous in race, language and ethnicity. This is how the Muslim population kept spreading in and around the Arabian Peninsula. The conquest of Sindh in the Indian subcontinent was an extension of this endeavor by the Muslim world.



Rise of Islam is an important incident in the history of Islam. Prophet Muhammad was not only the founder of a new religion, but he was also the head of a city-state. Muhammad left no male heir. On his death claims were made on behalf of his son-in-law and cousin Ali, but senior members of the community elected as their leader or caliph, the Prophet's companion, Abu Bakr, who was one of the earliest converts to Islam. Abu Bakr died after only two years in office, and was succeeded by Umar (r. 634-644), under whose leadership the Islamic community was transformed into a vast empire. Umar was succeeded by Usman (r. 644-656), who was followed by Ali (r. 656-661), the last of the four "Righteous Caliphs." Owing to his relationship with the Prophet as well as to personal bravery, nobility of character, and intellectual and literary gifts, Caliph Ali occupies a special place in the history of Islam, but he was unable to control the tribal and personal quarrels of the Arabs. After his death, Muawiyah (r. 661-680), the first of the Umayyad caliphs, seized power and transferred the seat of caliphate from Medina to Damascus. Three years later the succession passed from Muawiyah's grandson to another branch of the Umayyad dynasty, which continued in power until 750. During this period the Muslim armies overran Asia Minor, conquered the north coast of Africa, occupied Spain, and were halted only in the heart of France at Tours. In the east the Muslim empire was extended to Central Asia, and, as we shall see, it was during this period that a part of the Indian subcontinent was annexed. In the course of these conquests, the Arabs became subject to older civilizations.

12.2 The Arab Conquest of Sind



It was against this background of rapid expansion that the first contacts between Islam and India took place. Since time immemorial spices and other articles from India and southeast Asia had been in great demand in Egypt and southern Europe, with the transit trade largely in the hands of Arabs, who brought merchandise from the Indian ports to Yemen in southern Arabia. The goods were then sent by land to the Syrian ports to be shipped again to Egypt and Europe. The rise of Islam did not, therefore, give rise to the connection with India, but it added a new dimension. Trade continued after the Arabs had embraced Islam, and the first major conflict between the Indian subcontinent and Muslim Arabia arose out of developments connected with Arab sailors plying their trade about the Indian Ocean.

12.3 Causes for Invasion of Sind by the Arabs

The Arabs had been the carriers of Indian trade to Europe for centuries. After conversion to Islam, they cast their covetous eyes on the fabulous wealth of India as well as they were eager to propagate their new religion in India. However, the opportunity to invade Sind came to the Arabians in the beginning of the eighth century. With the passage of time, the History of India, after the occupation of Sind had entered into its medieval phase. The widespread political instability in India after the death of Harshavardhan, the last independent Hindu King had inspired the foreign elements once again to attack and enter India. The Arabs were no exception to it. After the rise of

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Islam, the Arabs having successfully implanting it in Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Persia had cast a covetous eye on Sind. In 712 A.D. they were successful in occupying Sind. Several factors were responsible for the Arab invasion on Sind. They are as follows:

Propagation of Islam: Propagation of Islam was one of the key factors behind the Arab invasion of Sind. After the spread of Islam in Egypt and Syria, the Caliph Walid 1 of Damascus had permitted the Arabs to go ahead with their Indian mission. Further the followers of Islam were dead against idolatry practice of the Hindus of India. So, they thought the spoliation of the idolaters would be a means of earning. **Fabulous Wealth of India:** India was known to the world for her fabulous wealth and splendor. So, like other invaders of the past, it had tempted the Arabs to grab her wealth. **Political Condition of India:** The then Political condition of India was also a major factor behind the Arab invasion of Sind. There was mutual rivalry and wars among the kings of petty provinces of India. Dahir, the ruler of Sind was unpopular and not liked by many. The Arabs took full advantage of it.

The Immediate Cause: The immediate cause of the Arab invasion of Sind was the looting of the eight Arab ships which carried the gifts and treasures sent by the king of Ceylon to the Caliph, at the port of Debal near Sind. Some Historians have opined that the ships were also carrying some beautiful women as well as valuable articles for the khalifa. This unlawful act of piracy was strongly protested by Hajaj, the governor of Iraq. He demanded compensation from Dahir, the king of Sind. But Dahir refuted Hajaj's demands by saying that he had no control over pirates. This infuriated Hajaj who decided to send military expeditions to Sind. He also obtained permission from the Caliph in this regard. However, the first two expeditions sent by Hajaj against Sind were beaten back by Dahir. Enraged at the repeated failures, Hajaj sent his nephew and Son-in-law Imaduddin Muhammad- bin-Qasim at the head of a huge army to Sind. Muhammad-bin- Qasim was an able and young commander-in-chief.

Invasion of Sind by Muhammad-bin-Qasim: Muhammad-bin-Qasim was a young man of hardly seventeen years when he was entrusted with the work of invading Sind. He was very bold, courageous and ambitious. The story of his adventures, —Writes Stanley Lane-poole, is one of the romances of history. Reflecting of his rise to power, his achievements and his fall, Ishwari Prasad writes, —His blooming youth, his dash and heroism, his noble deportment throughout the expedition and his tragic fall have invested his career with the halo of martyrdom. However towards the end of 711 A.D. Muhammad- bin-Qasim at the head of a huge army consisting of three thousand infantry, six thousand cavalry and six thousand Iraqian camelmen appeared at the north western border near Makran.

Capture of Debal: Muhammad-bin-Qasim led his army towards Debal, a famous seaport, where the Arab's ships were looted by some pirates. The port town Debal was well protected by strong fortifications, and it was not easy on the part of the Qasim's army to penetrate into it so easily. A nephew of Dahir was the governor of Debal. Though he had an army of very small size with him, he tried to resist Qasim. But it became futile, when a treacherous Brahmin deserted the fortress and gave Qasim all the information's regarding the secrets of its defense. He also came to know from the Brahman that the strength of the Sind army lay in the massive Hindu temple inside the fort of Debal and as long as the red flag fluttered atop the temple, he could not defeat the Hindus. The temple was also garrisoned by 4000 Rajput's and 3000 Brahmins serving at the temple. However, after a fierce battle Qasim brought down the red flag and the Arabian army resorted to a massacre. Despite a bold fight, the Hindus of Debal were defeated by the Arabs. The nephew of Dahir who was the governor fled away. Debal was captured and a huge booty with a large number of women fell into the hands of the Arabs. The people were given the option of accepting Islam or death. Many thousands of Hindus including Brahmans were mercilessly killed on their refusal to embrace Islam. The massacre continued for three days. It was very unfortunate that Dahir who had prior information of the Arabian attack, did not care at all.

Fall of Nirun: Flushed with success, Muhammad-bin-Qasim marched towards Nirun, which was under the charge of Dahir's Son Jai Sindh. With the approach of the Arabs, Jai Sindh fled away after handing over the fort to a priest. Qasim captured it without a fight. It is said Nirun fell because of the treachery of some Buddhist citizens. Whatever may be the fact; Dahir had taken the matter lightly and did not attempt to check the further advances of the Arabs.

Fall of Sehwan: After capturing Debal&Nirun, Muhammad-bin- Qasim marched against Sehwan, a town which was under the charge of the cousin of Dahir named Bajhra? The town was mostly inhabited by the merchant class and the priests. Bajhra could not defend the town in the face of the Arabian attack and fled away with panic. After his flight, the people of Sehwan surrendered to Muhammadbin-Qasim. Sehwan fell because of poor defense.

Fall of Sisam and Victory over the Jats: Sisam also met the same fate as had happened to Sehwan. It was the capital of the Jats of Budhiya and was ruled by Kaka, a jat king. Kaka had given shelter to Bajhra after his flight from Sehwan. Muhammad-bin-Qasim defeated the Jats who in turn surrendered to the Arabs. But during the encounter, Bajhra and his followers were killed. When so much had happened, yet Dahir did not raise his little finger to check the invader. Muhammad-bin-Qasim then reached the river Mihran where he was detained for some months because most of his horses of his army died of scurvy and he had to wait for fresh re-inforcement from home. Dahir could have taken the full advantage of this opportunity to attack and destroy the Arabs. But he remained inactive. He also did not check the Arabs when they crossed the river Mihran. Probably, Dahir was confident to defeat his enemy in a single encounter and that's why he was waiting for it at Rawar on the bank of the Indus.

The Battle of Rawar: Dahir, the powerful king of Sind was waiting for the Arab invader with a huge army of 50,000 sword men, horsemen and elephantry at a place called Rawar. He was determined to finish the enemy once for all. He did not know that the Arab army led by Muhammad-bin-Qasim was also equally strong to face any challenge. After waiting for some days, both the armies started fighting on 20th June, 712 A.D. It was a serious and severe battle. Dahir was a great warrior. He was fighting with a great spirit and was leading his army from the front. By riding on an elephant he was at the front and was attacking the opponent with great courage and valour. In the mean while an arrow attached with burning cotton struck Dahir's howdah' and set it flame. At this the elephant got frightened and rushed towards the river Indus. This made Dahir very much disturbed at the mid of the war. He became restless, inconsistent and inattentive. At this moment he was injured by an arrow and fell from his elephant. Although the elephant was brought to control, Dahir did not wait for it. He immediately rode a horse and resumed fighting. But as he was not seen on the back of his elephant, his soldiers became panicky and fled away from the field of battle. However, Dahir gave a heroic fight and laid down his life after two days of his bloody battle. His widow Queen Ranibai refused to surrender the fort of Rawar and fought the invader to the bitter end. She performed juchar along with some besieged ladies of the fort. Muhammad-bin-Qasim became victorious. Nevertheless, he took about eight months to acquire control over Sind because his army had to face tough resistance by the local people of many other towns and palaces including Alor and Brahmanabad.

Occupation of Multan: After conquering Sind, Muhammad-bin-Qasim marched towards Multan, a major city situated in the upper Indus basin. On the way he had to encounter tough resistance by the local people but overpowered them. On reaching Multan he found the city strongly fortified and people in full revolt. But at Multan he was also fortunate to get the help of a traitor who gave him the information regarding the source of water supply to the city. Muhammad-bin-Qasim cut-off the source. The people of Multan surrendered at last after fighting bravely against the Arabs. Thus, the city fell into the hands of the invader in 713 A.D. The Arabs massacred and plundered the city. Women and children were made captives and a large quantity of gold was collected by the Arabs. He obtained so much gold that they named the city as the city of gold. After completing his mission in Sind and Multan, Muhammad-bin-Qasim was planning to proceed more into the interior of India. In the mean while there came a tragic end to his life. He was put to death by an order of Calipha, the religious head of the Islamic world.

Death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim: The death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim has been put to debate as there are two divergent views by different historians. Historian Mir Massum in his 'Tarik Sind' has described an interesting story about the death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim. Muhammad-bin-Qasim during his campaign of Brahmanabad had captured the two virgin daughters of Dahir. They were Surya Devi and Parimal Devi. They were sent to the Calipha as gifts from Muhammad-bin-Qasim. These two girls were determined to take revenge on Muhammad-bin-Qasim. So, when they reached Calipha, they told him that they had been used and dishonored by Muhammad-bin-Qasim before they were sent to him. This made the Calipha so much angry that he at once ordered that Muhammad-bin-Qasim should be put to death and his body, being sewn up in the raw hide of an ox, should be despatched to him. His order was immediately carried out. When Muhammad-bin-Qasim's coffin was opened before the Calipha, the two girls were delighted at having avenged on the enemy and killer of their father. Their mission was completed and so they declared that Qasim was innocent. This made the Calipha furious. At his order, the two sisters were tied to the tails of horses and were dragged to death. But the other view regarding the death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim has been ascribed to a political cause. Some modern historians believe that Muhammad had become a victim of the court intrigues of the Calipha. Calipha Walid died in 715 A.D. and was succeeded by his brother Sulaiman who had enmity with Hajaj, the governor of Iraq and father-in-law of Muhammad-bin-Qasim. He could not tolerate the importance of Hajaj as a result of Muhammad's victorious campaigns in India. To bring an end to this Calipha might have ordered to

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kill Muhammad-binQasim. Whatever may be the fact? Mohammad-bin-Kasim got a tragic end of his life.

The region of Sindh is located on the south eastern-zone of present-day Pakistan. This area on the western coast of the Indian subcontinent has a long history. Since ancient times, it has been a hotbed of trade and commerce. The Arabmerchants had active trade relations with their Indian and south-east Asiancounterparts. They were known to the sea routes to the western coast of India. To be precise, these merchants sailed from Siraf and Hormuz on the PersianGulf to the mouth of the Indus, and thence to Sapera and Cambay, and further to Calicut and other ports on the Malabar coast. They brought back tidings of Indian wealth and luxury goods like gold, diamond, jeweled idols etc. to Arabia. Therefore, as India had been famous for its riches for long, the Arabs wanted toconquer it. After their "Islamization", they had the proselytizing zeal that madethem overrun many regions in Middle East, Europe, Africa and Asia. The penetration of the Arabs in the coastal towns of Sindh in Indian subcontinent had started as early as 636 CE during the reign of caliph Umar, the second successor of the Prophet. The pillaging expeditions such as the one in Thane (near Bombay) in 637 CE continued for a long time. However, such expeditions were only plundering raids and not conquests. A systematic Arab conquest happened only in 712 CE during the reign of the Umayyad caliph al-Walid. It was then that Sindh was incorporated to the Muslim empire.

As mentioned before, along with the aspiration to own Indian riches, the reason for the conquest of Sindh was the desire of the Arabs to spread Islam. But, the immediate cause was the Sindhi pirates who had plundered some Arab ships near the coast of Dabol/Daybul or Karachi. Historical evidences show that these ships carried gifts sent by the king of Ceylon for the Caliph of Baghdad, and also al-Hajjaj, the governor of Iraq. This was sent to establish cordial relations with Hajjaj. However, the ship was plundered by the pirates near the mouth of the river Indus, and the Arabs were detained at the port of Dabol. A demand for restitution was made to Dahar, the king of Sindh, to compensate for the outrage and punish the offenders. But, he refused to do so. He showed his inability to control the pirates as a reason behind his refusal. Nevertheless, he was not trusted, and was rather accused by Baghdad of protecting the pirates. So, Hajjaj took the permission of caliph Walid for attacking Sindh. Thereafter, three military expeditions, one after the other, were led against the king. It was in the third expedition by Muhammad Bin Qasim in Debal that Dahar was defeated and killed. Subsequently, all the neighboring towns of Nirun, Rewar, Brahmanabad, Alor and Multan were also captured. This is how the state of Sindh was finally conquered by the Arabs in 712 CE.

12.4 Muhammad Bin Qasim, the Conqueror, and his Expeditions



He was the 17 years old Umayyad general who had led the conquest of Sindh. This adolescent conqueror followed in the footsteps of Alexander in carrying a new faith and a new culture into the Indus basin. He has been mentioned in the *Chach Nama* between the years 709-711 CE when Hajjaj, the governor of Iraq, had made him the head of an expedition against Sindh. Qasim was the nephew of Hajjaj, and being an able commander, he was appointed by his uncle as the head of the frontier district of Makran. He was given a mission of conquest in the direction of Sindh. Qasim's expedition against Sindh was prepared with utmost care. The backbone of his force consisted of 6,000 men of the *gund* of Syria, and also various other contingents. Shiraz was the base for planning the eastward campaign. Under Hajjaj's orders, Qasim had stayed there for months concentrating on his troops. From here, he moved eastward with Muhammad ibn Harun (who died during this march), his predecessor in the command of the frontier district. As the Arab sources show, the Indus basin was ruled by a king named Dahar in the 8th century. He was the son and successor of king Chach.

The Arab forces wanted to conquer this basin. According to the *Chach Nama*, Chach had a vast empire that extended from Makran, Kashmir, etc. But, that ruled by his son was not as expansive, and it only comprised of the lower Indus region consisting of cities like Brahmanabad, Aror, Debal, etc. Therefore, the huge empire established by Chach could sustain only till his lifetime. After him, it was reduced to a small state under king Dahar, especially after the Arab invasion.

As a general, Qasim reached the delta of the Indus besieging the city of Debal by land; the additional war materials reached him by sea. Debal was a great city on the mouth of river Indus that was ruled by a lieutenant of king Dahar. After this, the forces proceeded upwards in the Indus valley. They reached Nirun (near to present-day Hyderabad in Pakistan), and it surrendered peacefully. After this, many other regions like Sadusan, Sawandri, Basmad, etc. were captured. Finally, Qasim aimed to tackle Dahar himself by crossing the river Indus. On his part, Dahar along with his strong army valiantly fought the invaders for many days. However, he was badly defeated and killed by the Arab forces. Subsequently, the capital of Brahmanabad, and also Alor were captured. Moving further northwards towards the eastern bank of the Indus, Qasim aimed to conquer Multan. The *Chach Nama* mentions that Hajjaj had directed Qasim to capture Multan as the final goal.

As a matter of principle and policy, even after getting a series of victories in Sindh, this conquest by Qasim did not blindly lead to *en masse* conversion to Islam. Though the Arab conquests in Debal

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and Multan were followed by massacre, there were examples like Alor, Nirun, Surast, Sawandri, etc. that saw negotiations and settlement between the victor and the vanquished. The principle of tolerance and religious freedom practiced by Qasim in Alor paved the way for the co-existence of conquering Islam with the religion and culture of India.

As the *Chach Nama* says, Qasim followed a policy of tolerance towards the defeated population. He allowed religious freedom to both the Brahmanic and Buddhist people. He preserved the privileges of the priests from both religions. It shows Qasim to be upholding the Indian social tradition of privileging the Brahmins. In fact, *Chach Nama* mentions that he used to call the Brahmins as "good and faithful people", and after the siege of Brahmanabad they were reappointed to the same positions as they had held under the Hindu dynasty. Furthermore, these positions were also made hereditary by him. The common people were also left free to worship as per their wish, provided they paid the Arabs the same taxes as they had paid to Raja Dahar. In short, he did not meddle with the social systems of Sindh, and agreed to maintain peace in many regions. Such a policy was followed by Qasim under the instructions of Hajjaj who believed in granting religious freedom to people. Therefore, as the *Chach Nama* states, Qasim had left Brahmanabad in an orderly and peaceful condition to proceed northward towards Alor. Such a policy of elasticity and tolerance was peculiar to Islam during its initial period of conquest, and its followers practiced it.

The end of this valiant general was tragic. There are different narratives regarding his end journey. The *Chach Nama* attributes his demise to the two virgin daughters of king Dahar named Suryadevi and Palmaldevi who were sent to the caliph Walid as prisoners of war after the death of their father. As a revenge of their father's death, they had accused Qasim of having violated them. This incurred the wrath of the Caliph who had ordered to kill him instantaneously. He ordered that wherever he might be, Qasim was to get himself sewn in cow's skin, and be sent to the Caliph. After his death, when his body was shown to the two daughters they revealed the truth of avenging Qasim for killing their father and destroying their family. Subsequently, even they were punished with death by the Caliph. On the other hand, another text titled *Futuh ul Buldan* of Baladhuri gives an altogether different reason for the downfall and death of Muhammad Qasim. It says that Qasim was captured and tortured to death by caliph Sulaiman who had bitter enmity with Hajjaj, the uncle of Muhammad Bin Qasim. Baladhuri contends that his end was related to the contemporary political situation in the Arab empire and was interconnected with the reactions of caliph Sulaiman, who succeeded his brother Walid in 715 CE. As a blind follower of caliph Walid, Hajjaj had supported him against his brother Sulaiman. Walid had toyed with the idea of putting aside Sulaiman's claim to succession by appointing his son instead of him, and Hajjaj had supported this plan of Walid. This is how Sulaiman was deprived of his right to succession, and this had enraged him especially against the powerful governor of Baghdad. The hatred reached its zenith when the Umayyad prince gave asylum to Yazid Bin al-Muhallab who had escaped the persecution by Hajjaj. The rivalry between the Hajjajites and Muhallabites was born like this. It was seen during the entire period of Arab empire under the caliphates of Walid, Sulaiman and Yazid II, and this rivalry struck hard at the roots of the Umayyad empire that had seen both the Muhallabites and Hajjajites as loyal servants.

The anti-Hajjajites reaction broke out when Sulaiman came to power with the Muhallabites as his faithful servants. This reaction could have affected Hajjaj the least, since as per his wish he had died a little before his caliph Walid. However, the rivalry had definitely affected the faithful protégés and kinsmen of Walid. The first and the foremost victim of this reaction was Qutaiba Bin Muslim, who was persecuted for rebelling against the new caliph Sulaiman. Qutaiba is known in the pages of history as the Arab conqueror of Central Asia. Likewise, the next victim was the favorite of Hajjaj - Muhammad Bin Qasim. Though evidences do not substantiate Qasim's declaration regarding the lapse of Sulaiman's right to succession in the territories conquered by him. But, it is believed that Qasim had followed this order of Hajjaj. Therefore, the destiny meted out to him was more than expected after the deaths of Hajjaj and Walid. In that case, the story of being sewn in cow's skin remains a fictitious narrative. As per the popular practice, perhaps he was arrested by Yazid Bin Kabsha as-Saksaki, his successor in the government of Sindh. This had happened under the order of the new financial governor of Iraq named Salih Bin Abd ar-Rahman. After four years of adventurous campaigns for enlarging the dominion of Arabism and Islam, Qasim was put behind bars at Wasit. It was here that he was put together with the other relatives of Hajjaj, and was tortured to death in 715 CE. This is how a tragic destiny waited for almost all the architects of the great Arab conquests during their second and final wave of expansion.

12.5 Arab conquest of Sindh: A victory without Results

The Arab conquest of Sindh has been seen as “a triumph without results” by scholars like Stanley Lane Poole, Elphinstone, etc. because there was no major victory for either the Muslim Arabs or the Indian rulers. They opine that this victory of the Arabs was without any impact or result on the history of the Indian subcontinent. It could not affect the political or military conditions of the rest of India. The Arab rule only got confined to the Sindh region, and the Indian rulers ruled their states without fearing or ousting the Arabs from their frontiers. The influence of the Arabs was restricted to only a small part of the subcontinent. They could not get a foothold in the Indian subcontinent, unlike the Turks who had established a full-fledged state a few centuries later (i.e. the Delhi Sultanate from 12th century onwards). However, the scholars critiquing this viewpoint have given varied arguments for refuting it. They hold that even though the conquest did not have any substantial effect on the political geography of India, it had definite political influences on both sides. As seen before from the sources, Muhammad Bin Qasim was as able an administrator as a warrior. After his victories, he maintained the law and order of a region, and believed in placing good administration under the Muslim rule. The arrangements made by him with the non-Muslims provided the basis for later Muslim policy in the subcontinent. Under the able guidance from his uncle Hajjaj, he had given socio-cultural and religious freedom to the defeated population. By the time Islamic law had been codified, stringent provisions were given for the idolaters. The reason why we find these provisions were not followed on the Hindus was mainly due to the tolerant policies of Qasim. He exhibited the political acumen to keep the native social customs and traditions intact. Neither did he lead to forceful conversion of the non-Muslims nor to end the social institutions like caste system etc. This was how the caste system remained untouched and was followed as ever before.

The prevalence of such practices showed the internal weaknesses of the Indian social and political systems to the Arabs and the Muslim world. Therefore, these fissions in the social fabric were used by them to their own advantage. As discussed before, perhaps the Brahmins of Brahmanabad were termed as faithful people by him to continue their all-round support in running the Arab polity and administration. Undoubtedly, the Arab invasion did not affect the political set up of India then, but it definitely gave a good view of the social weaknesses of the region. These were used by the invaders a few centuries later. Further, the cultural intermingling between the Indian and Arab cultures showed its effects on various other fields like literature, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, etc. Such contacts at an intellectual level led to the mutual growth and development of both the cultures. The earliest recorded Indo-Arab intellectual contact happened in 771 CE when a Hindu astronomer and mathematician reached Baghdad with a Sanskrit work called *Brahma Siddhanta* by Brahmagupta. This text was translated into Arabic with the help of an Arab mathematician, and was named as *Sindhind*. It had the greatest influence on the development of Arab astronomy even though three other works on mathematics were also translated to Arabic. In mathematics, the most important contribution of the Indian culture to Arab learning was the Arabic numerals.

Similarly, even greater attention was given to Indian medicine by the Arabs. At least 15 Sanskrit works were translated, including those of Charaka and Sushruta. The Indian doctors were given great prestige and honor at Baghdad, and so they were found in good numbers there. Manka was one such doctor who had earned prestige and money by curing the ailing caliph Harun-al-Rashid. Further, astrology and palmistry also gained the Arab attention, and many books from these fields were translated into Arabic. They, too, have been preserved in the Arab historiographies. Other translations were from the fields of statecraft, art of war, logic, ethics, magic, etc. This is how the famous *Panchatantra* was translated and known as the story of Kalila and Dimna in Arabic. Indian music had a considerable influence on Arabic music even if no translated works have been found. The work of an Arab author named Jahiz reveals the appreciation got by the former at Baghdad. He called the music of the people of Indian subcontinent as pleasing. Another such reference on Indian music was from an Arab author who talks about an Indian book on tunes and melodies. It has been suggested by some scholars that many of the technical terms for Arab music were borrowed from Persia and India. Likewise, even Indian music incorporated many Perso-Arab airs like Yemanand Hijj. As against the availability of such information from the Arab works on the vibrant relations between the Indian and Arabic cultures, it will be unreasonable to call the Arab conquest of Sindh as a triumph without results. In other words, it would be incorrect to give leverage to the political consequences alone and negate the socio-cultural or other impacts or results.

Summary

The rise of Islam in the early medieval period had far-reaching political, socioeconomic and cultural implications around the world. Its first contact with the Indian subcontinent in the 8th century is mostly known from the Persian text named Chach Nama, a source that enumerates the history of Sindh in general. However, the colonial understanding of it was one of origin of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. The trend of seeing it only as a source on the rise of Islam or conquest of Sindh sprang from this understanding, and it has largely been refuted by the contemporary historiographers. They see the details of the conquest only as one of its aspects. The text is an enumeration of the history of Sindh in general.

The descriptive account of the conquest involves the discussion of a young general named Mohammad Bin Qasim, who valiantly conquered the region of Sindh. The text elucidates the tolerant and broad-minded approach of this Muslim conqueror towards the vanquished Hindu population. However, his rise as well as fall depended upon his relations with the caliphate, and the change of the caliph led to the downfall and decline of him and many other able and promising Arab conquerors. Such politics at the court of the caliphate greatly affected the fate of Arab conquests in Indian subcontinent and around the world. The containment of Arab empire to the north-western region of India should be understood under this light. The inability of the Arab conquerors and rulers of Sindh to extend their influence into India cannot be seen as their complete failure; their triumph over Sindh cannot be belittled under this light by simply calling it a triumph without results. Even if the Arabs could not affect the political situation inside India, they definitely influenced the Indian culture in various other ways. The cultural proximity between the Indian and Arab cultures has its definite imprints on their literature, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, etc. Over and above this, the successful invasion of India by the Muslim Turks like Mahmud Ghazni and Muhammad Ghouri in the 11th and 12th centuries respectively can be seen as the climax of the background prepared by the conquest of Sindh in the 8th century.

Keyword

Adequate: Sufficient

Containment: Action of preventing the expansion of something

Dearth: Shortage

Elucidate: Throw light on

Endeavour: Attempt

Etymology: The study of the sources and development

Opine: Suggest

Pronouncement: A formal and authoritative announcement or declaration

Proximity: Nearness

Tenacity: Ability to grip something firmly

Self Assessment

1. Who among the following granted financial aid for the restoration of a demolished mosque in Khambhat?
 - A. Kumarpal
 - B. Mahipaladeva
 - C. Jayasimha Siddharaja
 - D. Chamundaraya

2. Aalha-Udal were related to
 - A. Mahoba
 - B. Panna
 - C. Vidisha
 - D. Chanderi

-
3. The author of 'Prithviraj Raso' is
 - A. Jayanaka
 - B. Chand Bardai
 - C. Bilhana
 - D. Kalhana

 4. The chief aim of Arab invasion was:
 - A. Political
 - B. Religion
 - C. Economic
 - D. All the above

 5. The first invasion of Arab was made against:
 - A. Thana
 - B. Makaran
 - C. Brahmanabad
 - D. None of Above

 6. Who attained victory against Sindh?
 - A. Abdulla
 - B. Shiabuddin
 - C. Muhammad Bin Qasim
 - D. Hajjaj

 7. The Arab attained their last victory in 713 A.D. over
 - A. Robar
 - B. Multan
 - C. Makran
 - D. None of the above

 8. The first Khalifs who established their sway were:
 - A. Omayyids
 - B. Abbasid
 - C. Both I & II
 - D. Neither of two

 9. Who was the first ruler of Ghazni?
 - A. Subuktgains
 - B. Mahmood
 - C. Alptagain
 - D. None of three

 10. Which of the following was the First ruler Hindushashi kingdom?
 - A. Rampala
 - B. Anandapala
 - C. Bhipala
 - D. Jaipala

 11. The caliph of Baghdad offered a little of Mahmood after his victories over India in 999 A.D
 - A. Yamin-ud- daulla
 - B. Amin - ul-Millah
 - C. Both I & II
 - D. Neither of the

12. Which of the following succeeded the throne after Jaipala had committed suicide?
 A. Trilochanpala
 B. Anandpala
 C. Bhunpala
 D. Rampala
13. Temple of Somnath was invaded by Mahmood Ghaznavi in?
 A. 1020
 B. 1021
 C. 1022
 D. 1024
14. The name of the book of Ferdausi was:
 A. Padshahnama
 B. Shahnama
 C. Badshahnama
 D. All the three
15. What is the mean by Darul -Herb?
 A. Muslim Territory
 B. Unconquered Territory
 C. Jewish Territory
 D. Hindu Territory

Answers for Self Assessment

1. C 2. A 3. B 4. D 5. A
 6. C 7. B 8. A 9. C 10. D
 11. C 12. B 13. D 14. B 15. D

Review Questions

1. Discuss the cultural contacts between the Indians and Arabs in the early medieval period.
2. What is the colonial argument on the consequences of the conquest of Sindh?
3. Discuss the narratives in the *ChachNama* about Muhammad Bin Qasim's death.
4. Who was Ali Kufi and why is he important to the study of Indian history?

**Further Readings**

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Unit 13: Struggle for Power in Northern India

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Objectives

After reading this Unit, you will be able to learn:

- How the political scenario of north India changed in the 7th-10th century CE;
- The emergence of new types of political centres – the Kanauj;
- Why Kanauj became the new political centre of north India;
- About the Tripartite struggle between the Palas, Pratiharas, and Rashtrakuta

Introduction

Kanauj located in the central Gangetic valley was a very important center for trade and commerce. Hence obviously all the dominant dynasties of the time fought for power and control over this area. The dominant dynasties of this time were GurjaraPratiharas, Palas and Rashtrakutas. Historians often describe this fight between the three dominant dynasties of 8th century as the tripartite struggle. Palas ruled the eastern parts of India and Pratiharas dominated western India and Rashtrakutas controlled Deccan regions of India. The tripartite struggle ultimately ended in favor of Nagabhata II, Gurjara –Pratihara ruler.

The contours of their kingdoms were rather fluid. Matrimonial alliances as well as conflicts were common among the lineages. B. D. Chattopadhyaya has shown that in early medieval India lineage ties were central to political formations and there was actually no dichotomy between lineage and states. The prashastis (eulogies) of this period are indicative of a hierarchical political structure. Inscriptions of the subordinate kings refer to their overlord. The phrase commonly used in this connection is *tatpadanudhyata* literally meaning “meditating at his feet”. This phrase is also used by kings in connection to their fathers. However, when used by a subordinate in connection to his overlord, it meant ‘favored by his feet’, thereby claiming a sort of closer association with him than others. It is also an issue of how far the term ‘feudatory’ or ‘vassal’ is applicable to subordinate rulers who were obliged to offer allegiance or military service? There used to be no contract between the overlord and subordinates as was the case in western European feudalism. The actual evidence of the ruler granting land to his feudatory (secular or non-religious land grants) are very few. Therefore, the increase in the number of land grants from the 6th century could not have been a contributing factor to the emergence of ‘feudal polity’.



Sources:

There are the sources of Tripartite Struggle as below:

1. Pala inscriptions Copper plate inscriptions: Khalimpur, Munger, Bhagalpur, Jagajjivanpura Pillar inscription, Badal Prasasti (an eulogistic inscription).
2. Pratihara inscriptions: Daulatpur, Barā
3. Rashtrakuta inscriptions: Sanjān, Sirpur
4. Literary source: Ramacharita by Sandhyakar Nandi
- 5.

13.1 Importance of Kanauj

The importance of that city in ancient times was probably due to its strategic advantages. The city stood on a cliff on the right bank of the Ganges this part was actually then the highway of commerce and communication Kanauj – a convenient centre for river traffic in the upper Doab.

Alexander Cunningham opine about struggle for Kanauj that the situation is a commanding one, and before the use of the cannon the height alone must have made Kanauj a strong and important position. With the passing away of Yasovarman and Lolitaditya, no great power or political personality arose in Northern India and for nearly half a century it offered a most tempting field to every ambitious political adventurer. In that context in the eighth century the main political powers like the Palas of Bengal, the Rashtrakutas of South and the GurjaraPratiharas of the West involved into a conflict. R.S. Tripathi's view in this reference Kanauj was the witness of the rise and fall of mighty empires, the appearance and disappearance of successive dynasties. Although this fascinating panorama of

events chiefly unfolds itself during the centuries that intervene between the decline of the Guptas and the Muslim conquest.

Causes of tripartite struggle

Kannauj was the erstwhile capital of Harshavardhana Empire in North India. Along with it the main causes which provoked tripartite struggle are like- Kannauj was the symbol of prestige and power during early medieval period. Control of Kannauj also implied control of Central Gangetic valley which had plenty of resources and thus it was both strategically and commercial important. This center was best for trade and commerce as it was connected to silk route. Desire to loot through war.

Problem of discussion about the Struggle:

According to the R.C. Majumdar, It is difficult to follow the exact course of this struggle in strict chronological order, as the few isolated facts, known to us from the inscriptions of the three dynasties, are capable of different interpretations.

13.2 The Beginning of Tripartite Struggle

The Pratihara ruler named Vatsaraja was very ambitious about Kannauj. Similarly, Dharmapala, the Pala ruler also wanted to rule over Kannauj. And thus, these two rulers were into a conflict. Vatsaraja defeated Dharmapala in a battle at Gangetic Doab. And at the same time Vatsaraja was defeated by the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva. Dhruva also defeated Dharmapala. Finally this pronounced enmity led to Tripartite Struggle between Palas, Rashtrakutas and Pratiharas.

The Struggle-Phase - I:

The fight between the Palas and the Pratiharas was the natural consequence of the imperial design of both these powers. Dharmapala inherited a consolidated and powerful kingdom and began to expand his dominions towards the West, where the political situation was admirably suited to his ambition. Vatsaraja, the king of the Pratiharas, also felled the same urge of imperial ambitions and utilizes the same opportunity by pushing his conquest towards the North and East. In the light of subsequent events, one might safely conclude that the possession of the imperial city of Kanauj was the common objective of both, and the contending parties probably came into clash somewhere in the Doab. Vatsaraja defeated Dharmapala in a battle somewhere in the Gangetic Doab.

Involvement of Rashtrakuta:

Intervention of the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva started with inflicted a disastrous defeat upon Vatsaraja. After defeating him, Dhruva evidently marched through his dominions right up to the Doab. Here he met Dharmapala and defeated him. Dhruva was too far away from his base to follow up his victory and there were probably other causes to induce him to turn back.

It is rightly contended by R. C. Majumdar that Dharmapala had gained more than he had lost. While the Pratihara dynasty lost heavily, Dharmapala did not lose much. The Rashtrakutas not only crushed the Pratiharas who were the rivals of the Palas but also offered a golden opportunity to the Palas to add to their strength by their quick withdrawal from Northern India. Dharmapala took full advantage of the situation and by a series of victorious campaigns, made himself the lord of practically the whole of Northern India.

The Struggle-Phase -II:

In the second chance Dharmapala defeated Indraraja or Indrayudha, the ruler of Kanauj, deposed him and in his place put Chakrayudha on the throne of Kanauj. We get the information about the victory from Bhagalpur inscription, Munger inscription and Jagajjivanpura copper inscription. According to the Khalimpur inscription after this victory, Dharmapala held a Durbar at Kanauj. This Durbar was attended by a large number of vassal chiefs and the names of the rulers of Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yadu, Avanti, Gandhar and Kira are mentioned in this connection. We are told that these chiefs not only approved of the action of Dharmapala but also "bowed down respectfully with their diadems trembling".

Gandhara represents the Western Punjab and lower Kabul Valley. Madra was in Central Punjab. Kira, Kuru and Matsya represented Kangra, Thaneswar and Jaipur regions respectively. Avanti represents the whole or a part of Malava. Yavana represented some Muslim territory in the Sindhu

Valley. The Yadu or Yadava had settlements in Simhapura, Mathura and Dwarka. Probably Berar or a part of it was ruled by Bhojas.

Significance of this Victory:

It cannot be contended that these states were annexed by Dharmapala. It only means this that they accepted his suzerainty and were left undisturbed in their internal affairs as long as they paid homage and fulfilled the other conditions. Dharmapala became the paramount lord in northern India and no wonder he is called Uttarapathasvamin or lord of Northern India. But it was temporary; Dharmapala had to meet another challenge.

The Struggle-Phase - III:

Nagabhatta II, the Pratihara ruler, conquered Kanauj and drove away its ruler, Chakrayudha. As Chakrayudha was a protégé of Dharmapala, a war between Nagabhatta II and Dharmapala became inevitable. A pitched battle was fought probably near Munger in which Nagabhatta defeated Dharmapala. Nagabhatta II was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his victory for a long time. He was himself defeated by Govinda III, the Rashtrakuta ruler. Soon after this victory, Govinda III left for the Deccan and thus Northern India became a free field for the military ambitions of Dharmapala. The success of Nagabhatta II was merely a passing phase and Dharmapala remained a mighty king till the end of his life.

13.3 Conflict During Devapala Reign

According to Badal inscription Devapala got tributes from the rulers of the whole of Northern India from the Himalaya to the Vindhya and from the Eastern to Western ocean. His campaigns took him to Kamboja in the West and the Vindhya in the South. Exterminated the Utkalas, Conquered Pragjyotisha, Curbed the pride of the Hunas, Humbled the rulers of the Gurjaras and Dravidas. Abdul Momin Chowdhuri opinion about tripartite struggle that the description of Badal inscription is actually related and similar to a traditional idea of Indian empire and an idea of 'uttarapathasvamin'. But it is also true that Huna kingdom, Pragjyotisha, Kamboja, Utkala were situated in the border area of the empire formed by Dharmapala. So devapala could try to conquer those regions. He himself stated about Kamboja and Vindhya expeditions in one of his copper plate inscriptions. We are told that as soon as the armies of Devapala under Jayapala reached near, the king of Pragjyotisha made surrender without fighting against the invader. Likewise, the king of Utkala left his capital and ran away. Some scholars argue that the Utkalas were defeated by a combined force of Kamarupa and Gauda. The Hunas had many principalities and one of them was in Uttarapatha near the Himalayas. That was conquered by Devapala. From there, Devapala proceeded to the Kamboja territory. But according to Abdul Momin Chowdhury, if we remember about the Shahi rulers of Punjab, then we can say that it is impossible for Devapala to conquer Kamboja region. The kingdom of Ramabhadra, the Pratihara king who was son of Nagabhatta II, was invaded by Devapala and he was defeated. King Bhoja also was defeated by Devapala. But in the Gwalior inscription it is stated that Devapala was defeated by Bhoja. Chowdhury argued that in the initial stage Devapala was defeated but later Bhoja was defeated by Devapala.



Devapala had to fight against three generations of the Pratihara rulers and in spite of difficulties, he was able to maintain his supremacy in Northern India. In general it is said that the Dravidas stated in Badal inscription were actually the Rashtrakutas. It is also said in Munger copper inscription that the territory of Devapala was extended up to Rameswar. But in an inscription of Rashtrakuta king Amoghvarsha it is stated that the Rashtrakuta king conquered Bengal. But it is difficult to accept that Devapala was defeated by the Rashtrakutas. R.C. Majumdar argued that the 'Dravidanath' stated there, was actually Pandya king SrimarSriballava. But Niharranjan Ray opposed him. This he probably did in alliance with all those sates who regarded the Rashtrakutas as their common enemy. It is actually difficult to reach in a decision about that matter. Sometime after 860 A.D., the Rashtrakutas defeated the Palas. The Pratiharas took advantage of this and extended their power to the East. The Palas lost Magadha or South Bihar. For some time, even North Bengal came into the hands of Pratiharas. The subordinate chiefs under the Palas revolted. The Sailodbhavas established themselves in Orissa. So it can be said that Devapala became successful as a conqueror but he failed to consolidate his empire and as result of that the empire started to be declined after his death. Contemporary feudal nature and decentralizing factors were also responsible for the decline of the empire. But yet we can agree with R.C. Majumdar's view that the reigns of Dharmapala and Devapala constitute the most brilliant chapter in the history of Bengal.

13.4 Tripartite Struggle after Devapala

Devapala was succeeded by Vigrahapala. Some scholars regard him as his nephew and other regard him as his son. He ruled for about 3 or 4 years. After that, he abdicated and began to live the life of an ascetic. Vigrahapala was succeeded by Narayanapala. He ruled for more than half a century. He was a man of pacific and religious disposition. Sometime after 860 A.D., the Rashtrakutas defeated the Palas. The Pratiharas took advantage of this and extended their power to the East. The Palas lost Magadha or South Bihar. For some time, even North Bengal came into the hands of Pratiharas. The success of Pratiharas weakened all the more the Palas. The subordinate chiefs under the pals revolted. King Harjara of Assam took up imperial titles. The Sailodbhavas established themselves in Orissa. It is stated that for a time the rule of Narayanapala was confined to a part of Bengal alone.

However, he is stated to have recovered North Bengal and South Bihar from the Pratiharas about the year 908 A.D. this was done after the defeat of the Pratiharas by the Rashtrakutas under their king Krishna II. It is also possible that Narayanapala was defeated by Krishna II. Before his death in about 908 A.D., Narayanapala was able to establish his supremacy in Bengal and Bihar.

Aftermath: The Tripartite Struggle for Kanauj:

Harsha is credited to have established Kanyakubja as the symbol of royal power in north India. In the subsequent period we see repeated attempts by rulers to position themselves as kings of Kanyakubja. In the early 8th century Yasovarman, the hero of a Prakrit poem Gaudavaho posed himself as the ruler of Kanyakubja. The title of the poem Gaudavaho (in Sanskrit Gaudavadha means the defeat and death of the king of Gauda) suggests rivalry between Gauda and Kanyakubja. According to D. C. Sircar, it began as early as the reign of the Maukharis, when in his Haraha inscription, dated 554 CE, Ishanavarman claimed to have defeated the Gaudas. This legacy of the rivalry between these two powers continued with Harsha representing Kanauj and Sasanka representing Gauda and ultimately ended up with the conflict between the Palas of Bengal and Bihar (represented as Gaudesvara in the north Indian sources) and the Gurjara-Pratihars of Kanauj. Even in the Rajatarangini Kalhana claims that Yasovarman was defeated by Lalitaditya Muktapida of the Karkota dynasty of Kashmir. The veracity of the varied claims of majestic conquests put forward by the respective court poets can never be ascertained. However, such representations of heroes of poems posing themselves as conquerors of Kanauj nevertheless indicates the growing importance of Kanyakubja in the political scenario of 6th-8th/9th century north India.

Summary

After that all the three powers became weak and then declined. We can see some features of the tripartite struggle. All the powers were not local and they fought against each other to establish supremacy over Kanauj. Finally the Pratihars became partly successful. But after the long term war all the powers lost their potentiality to survive. So there was no final result. But the political and economic significance of tripartite struggle was very important. For the continuous war they had to maintain big army and so that the tax was very high. We can easily trace some rebellions against the rulers. Prepared by Gautam Mukhopadhyay.

Some scholars like R.S. Sharma identified the Kaibartya rebellions during the Pala period as a peasant revolt. All the contemporary powers became dependable on the samantas that was their weakness. After sometime the samanta kings became powerful and caused the downfall of the big powers. On the other hand the unnecessary war weakened the dynasties so that in North India we do not see any powerful empire in the later period. At the time of Muslim invasion North Indian powers became unable to protect themselves. So in conclusion we can say that tripartite struggle was a war without gain for the powers.

Keywords

Jayaskandhavara: literally "Camp of victory", it implies a temporary camp situated at a strategic location. Tripartite struggle: the struggle among three powers, namely the Palas of Bihar and Bengal, the Gurjara-Pratihars of western India and the Rashtrakutas of Deccan for capturing Kanyakubja in the 8th-9th century CE.

CharitaKavya: biographical poem.

Sakalottarapathesvara: the war-like lord of all the regions of the north, signifying the sovereign ruler of Uttarapatha (north India).

Samantachakra: circle of feudatories.

Tatpadanudhyata/padanudhyata: literally meaning "meditating at his feet", it is often used to refer to the son and successor of the king or the favourite samanta (subordinate).

SelfAssessment

1. Which among the following two dynasties of the Northern India confronted with the Rashtrakutas?
 - A. The Pratihars and the Paramaras
 - B. The Palas and the Chandelas
 - C. The Pratihars and the Pala

D. The Chalukyas and the Chahamanas

2. The Tripartite Struggle for control of northern India took place between which of the following empires?

1. Rashtrakutas
2. Pratiharas
3. Palas

Select the correct option from the codes given below:

- A. Only 1 & 2
- B. Only 1 & 3
- C. Only 2 & 3
- D. 1, 2 & 3

3. Name the Pala ruler who was the first to plunge into the tripartite struggle.

- A. Devapala
- B. Mahipala
- C. Dharmapala
- D. Gopala

4. Who was the founder of the pratihara dynasty?

- A. Narasimhadeva 1
- B. Nagabhata 1
- C. Harshavardhana
- D. Ramachandra

5. Who among the following laid the foundation of rashtrakuta empire?

- A. Dhruva
- B. Dantidurga
- C. Amoghvarsha
- D. Krishna 1

6. The Palas, Pratiharas and Rashtrakutas fought for the control of which of the following place that was the symbol of power after Harsha's reign?

- A. Punjab
- B. Kannauj
- C. Ujjain
- D. Kanchi

7. Adi-varaha was the title of which gurjarpratihara ruler?

- A. Vatsrajra
- B. Nagabhata 2
- C. Mihirabhoja
- D. Nagabhata 1

8. Power struggle between Palas, Pratiharas and Rashtrakutas is called

- A. Struggle for succession
 - B. Struggle for stopping invasions
 - C. Tripartite struggle
 - D. Struggle for dominance in south
9. Who organised a grand darbar at Kannauj when Rashtrakuta ruler Dhruva went back to South?
- A. Mihirabhoja
 - B. Dharmapala
 - C. Mahipala
 - D. Vatsraja
10. Of all the three dynasties in tripartite struggle, which dynasty ruled for the longest period of time?
- A. Pala dynasty
 - B. Rashtrakuta and pala
 - C. Rashtrakuta dynasty
 - D. Gurjarapratihara
11. In which Kingdom among three pardah system was not prevalent?
- A. Pratihara kingdom
 - B. Rashtrakuta kingdom
 - C. Pala kingdom
 - D. None of these
12. During which ruler, mungur became the capital of pala dynasty?
- A. Devpala
 - B. Mahipala
 - C. Mihirabhoja
 - D. Gopala
13. Which GurjaraPratihara ruler started the tripartite struggle for dominance of Kannauj?
- A. Dhruva
 - B. Vatsraja
 - C. Mihirabhoja
 - D. Harichandra
14. How long did the tripartite struggle lasted between Palas of Bengal, GurjaraPratiharas and Rashtrakuta of Deccan?
- A. Almost one century
 - B. Three centuries
 - C. Almost two centuries
 - D. Almost three centuries
15. Which GurjaraPratihara ruler won Kannauj and made it the capital of his kingdom?

- A. Vatsraja
- B. Naga Bhatta II
- C. Naga Bhatta I
- D. Rambhadra

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 2. D | 3. D | 4. B | 5. B |
| 6. B | 7. C | 8. C | 9. B | 10. C |
| 11. B | 12. A | 13. B | 14. C | 15. B |

Review Questions

1. Write the analytical note on the emergence of Kanauj as political centre of north India during Pre-Medieval period.
2. What was the strategic importance of Kanauj and what was the instantaneous reason for the tripartite struggle.
3. Critically examine the role and responsibility of Pratiharas in the struggle for power in the north India for Kanauj.



Further Readings

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Unit14: Establishment of Sultanate

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Objective

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the nature of Muhammad Ghori's invasion
- Identify the factors that helped the establishment of Turkish rule in North India
- By Muhammad Ghori
- Provide an account of the expansion of Delhi Sultanate under the Mamluk sultans
- Outline the challenges faced by the Sultans in consolidating their rule

Introduction

The tenth and the eleventh centuries in north India were featured with the emergence of small regional kingdoms. Beyond the north-west frontiers of India, in Central Asia, kingdoms and empires were rising to prominence under the Islamic influence. During that process, two kingdoms emerged prominent centered on the two cities of Ghazna and Ghur. The situation in Central Asia brought the rulers of these two kingdoms to India leading to the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Turks and Afghans invaded parts of northern India and established the Delhi Sultanate by the beginning of the thirteenth century. The Slave Dynasty managed to conquer large areas of northern India approximately equal to the ancient Gupta regime of the Guptas, while the Khilji empire was also able to conquer most of central India. However, they were ultimately unsuccessful in conquering most of the subcontinent, until the onset of the Mughals.

The rulers who ruled substantial parts of the North India between AD1200 to AD1526 were termed as Sultans and the period of their rule as the Delhi Sultanate. These rulers were of Turkish and Afghan origin. They established their rule in India after defeating the Indian ruling dynasties which were mainly Rajputs in northern India. The main ruler who was overthrown by the invading Turk Muhammad Ghori from Delhi was Prithvi Raj Chauhan. These Sultans ruled for more than 300 years (from around AD 1200 to AD 1526). The last of the Delhi Sultan, Ibrahim Lodi was defeated by the Mughals under the leadership of Babur in AD1526 who established the Mughal Empire in India. During this period of around three hundred years five different dynasties ruled Delhi. These were the Mamluks (AD 1206–AD 1290) (popularly known as slave dynasty), the Khaljis (AD 1290–AD 1320), the Tughlaqs (AD 1320–AD 1412), the Sayyids (AD 1412–AD 1451) and the Lodis (AD 1451–AD 1526). All these dynasties are collectively referred as the Delhi Sultanate. In this Unit we will give you a detailed account of the process of conquest, expansion and consolidation of Delhi Sultanate in India.

Sources:

The medieval period of Indian history is one of the most important periods because of the several developments that took place in the field of architecture, religion and culture. The medieval period also saw other religions come into India and its impact on the people of India. The medieval period began when the ancient age ended and several small kingdoms and dynasties rose to power. The medieval period is also referred to as post-classical era of the Indian history and spanned from the sixth century to the eighteenth century. During the early medieval period, there were several wars among small regional kingdoms. In the late medieval period, India was invaded by Mughals, Turks and Afghans who then established their rule in India. At the end of the fifteenth century, the Europeans established trade links with India and by the middle of the eighteenth century; they were able to consolidate their power as a major political force in the country. This marked the end of the medieval period of the Indian history.

A large number of sources are available to study the history of medieval India. These sources provide a great deal of information about the medieval times – the art and architecture, history and literature, agriculture, industry, commerce and trade, civilization, philosophy and religion. These sources cover the socio-economic aspects of medieval India. The chief sources of history of medieval India include the following:

Official Records: Official records have been found relating to the history of the Turko-Afghan and the Mughal rule in India. These are apparently the most valuable and reliable source materials for the said period.

Historical accounts of the writings of scholars on paper: A lot of information about medieval India can be gathered from the writings of contemporary chroniclers. The famous Arab scholar Al Beruni wrote chronicle called 'An Enquiry into India'. It dealt with the affairs of India when Sultan Mahmud invaded India. Another important work called *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* was written by Minhaj-ud-din Siraj. It narrates the story of Muslim India up to the sixties of the thirteenth century. Other contemporary chronicles include the works of Amir Khusro, *Fatah-i-Firoz Shahi*, by the Sultan himself and *Fatah-us-Salatin* by Iqbal Khan. Regarding the source materials of the Mughal period, the most remarkable works are the *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* by Abdul Fazal.

Historical accounts by foreign travelers: The earliest African traveler who visited Muslim India was Ibn Battuta. His *Rehala* on travels furnishes details of the various aspects of the Tughlaq-shahi period. Another important traveler was Abdur Razaq who left us valuable information about the Vijaynagar kingdom.

Literary accounts: A lot of information about the period can also be obtained from memoirs and biographies. In the Sultanate period, Firoz Shah Tughlaq wrote his biography called *Futuh-i-Firoz Shahi*. Sultan Mahmud and Timur had their own biographies. Chand Bardai became famous for his lyrical ballad called *PrithvirajRaso*. The most important memoirs and biographies of the Mughal India are the memoirs of Babar and Jahangir and biographical sketch of Humayun by Gulbadan Begum.

Archaeological sources: The monuments of the medieval period are important sources of information about the medieval Indian history. They are an indispensable aid to the proper understanding of the artistic, cultural and even economic history of medieval India.

Coins and inscriptions: During the period of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal India, various kinds of coins were introduced by the Sultans and the Mughal emperors. From the standard of the metals used and from the engravings on them, it is quite possible to understand the economic condition of the time. Besides, these contain evidences relating to the year of accession, the extent of the dominions of the Sultans and their relations with the neighboring powers and so forth.

14.1 Background: Initial Conquests up to 1190 A.D

The period between the 9th and 11th century saw the emergence of 'warrior castes'--military ruling clans which ultimately coalesced into a single caste, that of the Rajputs, the term being derived from the Sanskrit word *rajaputra*. The four Rajput clans that claimed a special status during his time were the Pratiharas, the Chalukyas, the Chauhans (also called Chahamanas), and the Solankis.

In political and military terms, the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni were the actual precursors of the Delhi Sultanate. Beginning in A.D. 1000, when the Shahiya king, Jaypala was routed, the incursions became almost an annual feature of Mahmud and came to end only with his death in A.D. 1030. After taking Multan, he occupied Punjab. Later, Mahmud made incursions into the

Ganga-Yamw doab. The major interest of Mahmud in India was its fabulous wealth, vast quantities of which (in the form of cash, jewelry, and golden images) had been deposited in temples. From 1010 to 1026, the invasions were thus directed to the temple-towns of Bmwar, Mathura, Kannauj and, finally, Bmnaath. The ultimate result was the breakdown of Indian state, paving the way for Turkish conquests in the future. More importantly, the aftermath of the campaigns had exposed the inadequacy of Indian politics to offer a defence against external threats.

Within a short time of Mahmud's death, his empire met the fate of other empires. Newly emerging centres of power, formed around growing clusters of Turkish soldier adventurers, replaced the older ones. The Ghaznavid possessions in Khurasan and Transoxiana were thus annexed, first by the Seljuqs and later by the Khwarsh Shah. In their own homeland, Afghanistan, their hegemony was ended by the principality of Ghor under the Shansabani dynasty. However, in the midst of these buffeting, the Ghaznavid rule survived in Punjab and Sind till about A.D. 1175.

The extent of the Ghaznavid territory in the north-west India is difficult to ascertain. Towards the north, it included Sialkot and probably, Pesbawar. The southern limits were steadily pushed back by the Chauhan Rajputs who re-established control over portions of Punjab. In the initial phase of invasions, Muhammad Ghori's military objective was to gain control over Punjab and Sind. Unlike earlier invaders, he decided to enter the Indus plains through the Goad pass and not through the more common Khyber Pass further north. By 1179 Peshawar, Uchh and Multan were seized. Later, Lahore was attacked. Muhammad Ghori now pressed his conquests further into India. Within a short time, military operations were directed against the Rajput kingdoms

controlling the Gangetic plains. The Chauhans faced the most acute pressure as they ruled the territory from Ajmer to Delhi-the gateway to Hindustan. Bhatinda was besieged in 1191. The garrison quickly surrendered, but the Chauhans, under Prithviraj, speedily retrieved it after inflicting a humiliating defeat on the Ghorians. In the following year, Muhammad Ghori returned with a larger force. At the famous battle of Tarain, fought in 1192, he conclusively defeated the Chauhans. All places of military importance-Hansi, Kuhram, Sarsuti-were immediately occupied and garrisoned. Muhammad Ghori returned to his projects in Central Asia, leaving behind 'an occupation army at Indraprasth (near Delhi) under the command of Qutbuddin Aibak'. The latter was given wide powers to extend and consolidate the conquests.



The battle of Tarain proved to be a watershed in the history of India. It paved the way for the ascendancy of the Turks. From this date onwards, the Rajput power entered the phase of irreversible decay. For some time to come, the Ghorians did not think it convenient to immediately take over the administration of all the conquered territories. Wherever it seemed feasible, they allowed the Rajputs to continue, provided Turkish suzerainty was acknowledged. Thus Ajmer, for instance, was allowed to be retained by Prithviraj's son as a vassal ruler. This uneasy balance, however, was often disturbed by the recurrent conflicts between the imperial designs of the Ghorians and local rulers.

Under Aibak's leadership, the Turks continued to make territorial advance in all bedions. After having refortified Hansi towards the end of 1192, Aibak crossed the Yamuna to establish a military base in the upper Doab, Meerut and Baran (modern Bulandshahr) capitulated in 1192. In 1193 Delhi was occupied. Its location and historical tradition made it most suitable as a capital for Turkish power in India. It was both close to the Ghorid stronghold in Punjab as well as conveniently placed for sending expeditions towards the east. In 1194 Aibak crossed the Yamuna for the second time and captured Kol (Aligarh).

The above military successes encouraged Muhammad Ghori to confront king Jayachandra of the Gahadavala dynasty in the vicinity of Chandwar (between Etah and Kanpur). Jayachandra, eventually lost. Afterwards, Turkish military stations were placed at Bharas, Asni and other important towns. However, the capital city of Kannauj could not be occupied until 1198-99. The other important areas over which the Ghorians were able to extend their sway were Bayana, Gwalior and Anhilwara in 1195-96, and Badaun in 1197-98. The opening of the 13th century saw action against the 'last surviving imperial Rajputs'-the Chandellas of Bundekhand. Around 1202, Kalinjar, Mahoba and Khajuraho were occupied and grouped into a military division.

From 1203 onwards, the Turks made forays into the eastern provinces of the Indian subcontinent with varying degrees of success. Magadha was conquered for the 'Sultanate' by Bakhtiyar Khalji

and his tribesmen. Under him, the Turkish intrusions could also penetrate Bengal (ruled by the Lakshmanas).

In general, during this phase, the Ghoriens were able to extend their hegemony over a very considerable part of Northern India. But, as yet, they stood on shaky ground. Areas once conquered tended to slip out of control. It took several decades before their control found firm ground.

Causes of Success:

Various reasons have been assigned for the success of the Turkish conquests of North India. Many of the contemporary chroniclers do not go beyond the standard explanation of attributing this major event to the 'Will of God'. Some British historians, who initiated the study of Indian history in greater depth, accounted for the success of the Turks as follows: The Ghori armies were drawn from the warlike tribes inhabiting the difficult region lying between the Indus and the Oxus. They had gathered military powers and expertise fighting the Seljuqs and other fierce tribes of Central Asia. On the other hand, the Indians were pacifist and not given to war. Moreover, they were divided into small states which hampered expansionist ambitions.

The explanation is inadequate and unbalanced insofar as it leaves out of consideration well-known facts of Indian history as well as the history of countries from where the invaders came. It should be remembered that the large-scale conquest and destruction of the so-called warlike Islamic regions by the Mongols in 1218-19 and it was carried out without any real resistance. On the other hand, the Rajputs, whom the Turks conquered, were not lacking in bravery and martial spirit. The period from the 8th to the 12th century is one long story of warfare and violent internal struggles. It is, therefore, hardly worthwhile to emphasize the peaceful or docile temperament of the Indian populations as the cause of the Turkish success.

Some Indian historians have traced the Turkish success to the peculiar social structure created by Islam. Jadunath Sarkar, for instance, lays stress on three unique characteristics which Islam imparted to the Arabs, Berbers, Pathans, and Turks: first complete equality and social solidarity as regards legal and religious status. Unlike India, the Turks were not divided into castes that were exclusive of each other.

Secondly, an absolute faith in God and his will which gave them drive and a sense of mission. Finally, Islam secured the Turkish conquerors from drunkenness which, according to Sarkar, was the ruin of the Rajputs, Marathas, and other Indian rulers. Whatever partial truth it might contain, this explanation, too, seems insufficiently grounded in history.

A more comprehensive view of the Indian debacle must perhaps consider at least two major factors: the prevailing socio-political system in India and her military preparedness.

After the fall of the Gujara-Pratihara empire, no single state took its place. Instead, there arose small independent powers like Gahadavalas in Kannauj, Parmaras in Malwa, Chalukyas in Gujarat, Chauhans in Ajmer, Tomars in Delhi, Chandellas in Bundelkhand, etc. Far from being united, they tended to operate within the confines of small empires and were in a state of perpetual internal conflicts. Lack of centralized power was an important factor in emasculating the strength and efficiency of the armed forces. FakhrMudabbir in his *Adab-ul Harb* al-shuja't mentions that Indian forces consisted of 'feudal levies'. Each military contingent was under the command of its immediate overlord/chief and not that of the king. Thus, the army lacked 'Unity of Command'. Besides, since only few castes and clans took military profession, the bulk of the population was excluded from military training. This made the general population of the country totally detached from the defense of the country; when the Turks came, we find the Indian masses hardly came to the rescue of their kings. The concept of physical pollution (Chhut) also hampered military efficiency since it made the division of labor impossible; the soldiers had to do all their work on their own, from fighting to the fetching of water.

Another important reason for the success of the Turks was their superior military technology and art of war. These nomads from the steppes could be credited with introducing the age of the horse'. The Turks used iron stirrup and horse-shoes that reinforced their striking power and the stamina of the cavalry, while horse-shoes provided greater mobility to the horse, stirrup gave the soldiers a distinct advantage.

The popular notion that the Indians were defeated on account of the use of elephants does not seem plausible now, we do not find any evidence in the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* or other sources in support of this view. Jayapala's case is an exception where his elephants took to flight: Such examples are hard to come by. In fact, Mahmud of Ghazni is reported to have maintained large number of elephants that he took to his Kingdom from India and employed them with success.

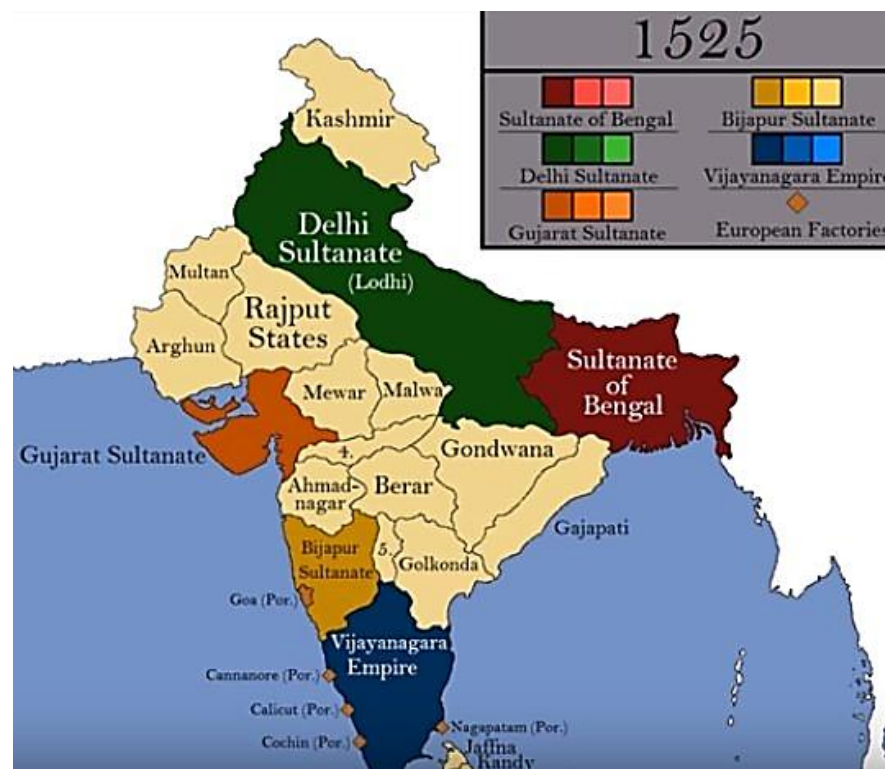
14.2 Establishment of Sultanate

The period from 1206 to 1290 constitutes the formative and the most challenging period in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. It was marked by a prolonged, multi-cornered conflict within the Ghorian ruling class as well as against the renewed Rajput resurgence.

Muhammad Ghori's sudden death in 1206 resulted in a tussle for supremacy among his three important generals, Tajuddin Yalduz, Nasiruddin Qubacha and Qutbuddin Aibak. Yalduz held Karman and Sankuran on the route between Afghanistan and upper Sind. Qubacha held the important charge of Uchh, while Aibak had already been deputed as the 'viceroy' of Muhammad Ghori and the overall commander of the army in India. Though, technically still a slave, the title of sultan was conferred upon him soon after the death of his master. The formal establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, as an entity in its own rights, is traced back to this event. Subsequent developments made this a reality.

Early in his brief reign of four years, Aibak (d. 1210) moved his capital to Lahore in order to frustrate Yalduz's ambition of annexing Punjab. With the Khwarizm Shah keenly advancing on Ghor, there was partly a compulsion in Yalduz's attempt to establish himself in India.

Aibak was succeeded on the throne by his son-in-law Iltutmish who brought back the capital to Delhi. Large portions of the territories conquered by the Turks had slipped out of control and subjugated Rajput chieftains had withheld tribute and repudiated allegiance. Iltutmish's quarter century reign (1210-1236) was distinguished by a concerted drive to re-establish the Sultanate's authority on areas that had been lost. In 1215, Yalduz was defeated at Tarain and in 1217 Iltutmish wrested the province of Uchh from Qubacha and placed it under his own governor.



Within three years of this event, the Mongol under Chengiz Khan's leadership, appeared on the banks of the Indus in pursuit of Jalduddin Mangbarni (the son of the Khwarizmian ruler) who had taken refuge in Punjab.

Though the Mongol presence had upset Iltutmish's plan of consolidation on the north-west, it also created conditions for the destruction of Qubacha who held Uchh and faced the brunt of Mangbarni's invasion. As a consequence, Iltutmish was able to seize Bhatinda, Kuhram, and Sarsuti. About 1228, he launched a two-pronged attack on Multan and Uchh. Defeated; Qubacha drowned himself in the Indus. Unified control over the north-west now became possible for the Delhi Sultanate. In Rajputana, the Turks were able to reclaim Ranthambhor, Mandor, Jalor, Bayana and Thangir. After 1225, Iltutmish could turn towards the east. Apart from sporadic military successes,

however, Lakhnauti (in Bengal) and Bihar continued to evade the authority of the Sultanate. A modern historian assesses the Sultan's achievement as follows:

"To him the Sultanate owed the first outline of its administrative system. He laid, the foundations of an absolutist monarchy that was to serve later as the instrument of a military imperialism under the Khaljis. Aibak outlined the Delhi I Sultanate and its sovereign status; Iltutmish was unquestionably its first king."

Iltutmish's death saw more sharpened factionalism and intrigue among the Turks. In a period of some thirty years, four rulers, (descendants of Iltutmish) occupied the throne. The most prominent group to decide the course of high politics during these years is identified as the Turkan-e-Chahalgani (the 'forty' Turkish slave "officers" of Iltutmish). The fourteenth century historian, Ziauddin Barani, has left behind concise and insightful account of these critical years:

"During the reign of Shamsuddin - (Iltutmish), owing to the presence of 1 peerless maliks, wazirs... educated, wise and capable, the court of the Sultan (Shamsuddin) had become stable. ... But after the death of the Sultan. ...h is 'forty' Turkish slaves got the upper hand So owing to the supremacy of the Turkish slave officers, all these men of noble birthwere destroyed under various pretexts during the reigns of the successors of Shamsud din....".

In the main, Barani's account is borne out by contemporary developments. Between 1235-1265 political developments revolved round a conflict between the crown and a military aristocracy, determined to retain its privileged position with the balance often increasingly tilting in favor of the latter.

In these circumstances, the very survival of the Sultanate was under question. Political instability was exacerbated by the recalcitrance of smaller Rajput chiefs and local leaders. Moreover, the Mongols were constantly active in and around Punjab.

The accession of Balban in 1265 provided the Sultanate with an iron-willed ruler. Balban addressed himself to two major objectives:

(i) to raise the prestige of the crown through elaborate court ceremonials, and inculcation of Sassanian traditions that distanced the ruler from ordinary folks, converting him into a symbol of awe;

(ii) consolidating Turkish power: rebellions were put down with determination and administrative procedures were streamlined. After the death of Balban, struggle for the throne started. Balban had nominated Kai Khusrau, son of Muhammad (Balban's eldest son) but the nobles helped Baiqubad, son of Bughra Khan, to ascend the throne. Intrigues continued for more than two years. Finally, Jalaluddin Khalji, who was a prominent noble during this period, managed to capture the throne which was strongly resented because it was thought that the Khaljis were not Turks but belonged to a different race. Barani does not specify the race to which the Khaljis belonged. The Khaljis had been occupying important positions during the period 1206-1290. For example, Bakhtiyar Khalji was the muqti of Bengal. Even Jalaluddin Khalji was the muqti of Sunam in Western Punjab.

14.3 Consequences of the Establishment of Sultanate

The Turkish conquest of India brought about some far-reaching changes in the political economic and Social conditions of India. Its first major consequence was to replace the 'feudal', multi-centered, polity of the country by a centralized state, in which the king enjoyed practically unlimited powers. The chief institution which made the Sultanate possible was that of the iqta: transferable revenue assignments, an institution which the Seljuqs found in operation in the Abbasid ruled areas and which they updated in the light of their own requirements. Under this system, the officers of the king were assigned territories to realize revenue and maintain troops and cavalry contingents. The holders of such assignments were known as Muqti. Unlike the pre-Turkish system wherein the land grantees had acquired permanent rights of ownership, the iqta-holders were regularly transferred and their tenure in particular places or localities was normally for 3 to 4 years.

Taking the Delhi Sultanate as a whole, such a system made the assignee dependent on the central authority to a far greater extent than it was possible under the earlier Indian politics. While the rajas, ranas and thakurs failed to unite the country, the Turks succeeded in establishing an "all-India administration by bringing the chief cities and the great routes under the control of the government of Delhi."

Decline of Delhi Sultanate:

With the establishment of the Mughal Empire the rule of Delhi sultanate came to an end. During more than 300 years of its rule the Delhi sultanate went through various ups and downs but survived as a political force. Here we would like to discuss the major challenges the sultanate faced.

Attacks by Mongols and others:

Since its inception the major threat to the sultanate came in the form of Mongol invasions. Mongols were nomadic groups who inhabited the steppes north of China and east of Lake Baikal. They formed a huge nomadic empire under Chengiz Khan in the 12th century. From 13th century onwards they repeatedly attacked the Delhi Sultanate. The Sultans as a policy appeased them and also at times confronted. Balban and Allauddin Khalji confronted them with full military might. During Khalji's time Mongols under Qutlug Khwaja even besieged Delhi and caused a lot of damage. The last significant attack of Mongols was by Tarmashirin during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq. A lot of energy and resources of the Sultans were spent in facing these invasions but they could not destroy the sultanate. Another important attack which shook the foundation of the sultanate was by Timur in 1398. The weakness of the Delhi Sultanate was made even worse by Timur's invasion of Delhi (1398). Timur was a son of the Chief of Chagtai branch of Turks. When he invaded India, he was the master of almost whole of Central Asia. Timur's raid into India was a plundering raid and his motive was to seize the wealth accumulated by the Sultans of Delhi over the last 200 years. Sultan Nasiruddin and his Wazir Malluqbasl faced Timur but were defeated. Timur entered Delhi and stayed for 15 days. He ordered general massacre and large number of Hindu and Muslim including women and children were murdered. Before leaving India Timur's invasion indicated the downfall of Delhi Sultanate. Delhi Sultanate lost control over Punjab. Timur appointed Khizr Khan, the ruler for Multan who controlled Punjab also. After the fall of Tughlaq dynasty he occupied Delhi and became the ruler of Delhi Sultanate. He laid the foundation of Saiyyid Dynasty.

Inner Conflict of Nobility:

Three hundred years of Delhi Sultanate witnessed five dynasties ruling over it. The main reason for change of dynasties and deposing of rulers was a constant struggle between the Sultan and the nobility (Umaras). Soon after the death of Aibak they started fighting over the question of succession. Finally, Iltutmish emerged victorious. Iltutmish created a group of loyal nobles called Turkan-i-Chihilgani ('The Forty').

After the death of Iltutmish various factions of the group of forty got involved in making their favorite son/daughter as the sultan. In ten years five sultans were changed. After that the Sultan who occupied the throne (Nasiruddin Mahmud) for 20 years hardly ruled and one of the powerful noble Balban was defacto sultan. The same Balban succeeded Nasiruddin after his death. Almost similar events happened after the death of each powerful sultan (Balban, Alauddin Khalji, Firoz Tughlaq and others.) Since there was no well-defined law of succession each noble tried to either crown himself or support some favourite heir of the dead sultan. Finally, Afghans replaced the Turks as sultan with the accession of Bahlol Lodi.

Provincial Kingdoms:

Another consequence of this conflict was declaration of independence by various provincial heads in the regions. As a result, a number of independent Afghan and Turkish kingdoms emerged. Important ones of such states were Bengal (Lakhnauti), Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat, the Bahmani kingdom in the Deccan etc. Quite often these states were at war with the Sultanate. The whole process weakened the sultanate.

Resistance by Indian Chiefs:

The sultans had to face the resistance from Indian chiefs at regular intervals. The Rajput chiefs in Rajputana (Mewar, Ranthambhor, Chittor etc.), Warangal, Deogiri & Ma'bar in Deccan and South, the king of Dhar, Malwa in Central India, Jajnagar in Orissa and a host of smaller chieftains were constantly at war even after successive defeats. All these struggles weakened the sultanate. The Delhi sultanate was considerably weakened after the Khalji and Tughlaq reign. Finally the invasion of Babur in AD 1526 brought it to an end. Now a much more centralised and strong empire under the Mughals established itself in India and ruled for a further period of more than two hundred years. We will discuss it in our next lesson on the Mughal Rule. But before moving to the Mughals we provide you a brief account of the provincial kingdoms.

Summary

The Unit began with the description of Indian political scenario on the eve of Turkish invasion. India was not a unified political unit but divided into number of small states ruled by kings and autonomous chiefs. Muhammad Ghori tried to subjugate them, the culmination of which may be seen in the defeat of PrithvirajChauhau at the battle of Tarain. This laid the foundation of the Turkish rule in India. After Muhammad Ghori's departure one of his commanders, QutbuddinAibak got busy in establishing the Turkish power in India.

In the process he suppressed Yalduz, the Muizi slave who had rival claims to the Muizi throne in India. But, he failed to suppress Qubacha. The task was left to Illutmish not only expanded the Muizi empire but also organized and strengthened the administrative machinery with the help of the group of nobles called-the 'Forty'. He also introduced certain Sassanid institutions like iqta that helped greatly in centralizing the administration. This unit also covered the factor behind the Turkish success and its consequences. Turks succeeded primarily because of their superior military technology and on account of the fact that Indian armies mainly consisted of 'feudal levies'. Turkish conquest was not, simply the change of one dynasty by another. It had a far-reaching effect on Indian society, economy and polity.

Keywords

Epigraphy: It is the study of inscriptions is called epigraphy.

Expedition: It is an organized journey with a particular purpose, especially to find out about a place that is not well-known.

Shariat or Sharia: It is the system of religious laws that Muslims follow.

Jagir: It was a type of feudal land grant in South Asia bestowed by a monarch to a feudal superior in recognition of his administrative or military service.

SelfAssessment

Q.1 Which was the basic reason of the fame of Gaur province?

- A. Fine Horse
- B. Steal
- C. Both (i) & (ii)
- D. Neither of the two

Q.2 Which ruler was known by the name of 'Rai- Pithaura'?

- A. Parmal Deva
- B. Prithviraj II
- C. Jai Chand
- D. Siddhraj

Q.3 First battle of Tarain was fought in:

- A. 1188 A.D.
- B. 1189 A.D.
- C. 1190 A.D.
- D. 1191 A.D.

Q.4 Lohu was defeated in the second battle of Tarain in 1192 A.D?

- A. Muhammad Gauri
- B. Jai Chand
- C. Prithviraj III
- D. None of the above

Q.5 Which of the following battle was fought in 1194 A.D?

- A. Battle of Kannauj
 - B. Battle of Panipat
 - C. Battle of Tarain
 - D. Battle of Chasuer
6. When did Gauri visit last to India for invasion?
- A. 1202 A.D
 - B. 1203 A.D.
 - C. 1204 A.D.
 - D. 1205 A.D
7. Where was Gauri buried after death?
- A. In Gaur province
 - B. In Ghazni province
 - C. In India
 - D. None of the three
8. Lower Sindh was ruled by... at the time of invasion of Gaur?
- A. Bhatti ruler
 - B. Shai ruler
 - C. Sumra ruler
 - D. Karmakhian ruler
9. Muhammad Gauri was defeated by..... in an expedition against Gujarat?
- A. Khusrau Malik
 - B. (Ramraja
 - C. Krishna Deva
 - D. Bhim II and Moolraj
10. Which commander of Gauri attained victory against Bengal?
- A. Aibak
 - B. Illutmish
 - C. Bin Bikhtiyar Khilji
 - D. None of the three
11. Muhammad Ghori was ... ruler.
- A. Fanatic
 - B. Liberal
 - C. Opportunist
 - D. None of the three
12. Muhammad Ghori was killed by the Khakhar in:
- A. 1903
 - B. 1904
 - C. 1905
 - D. 1906

13. What was the chief reason of defeat of Rajput against the Muslims?

- A. Ignorance of War Tactics
- B. Responsibility of safety rested with only the Rajputs
- C. Lack of religious zeal among Hindus.
- D. All of above

14. The chief effect of Muslim rule in India was:

- A. Islam began to spread
- B. Cultural synthesis flourished
- C. Both (i)& (ii)
- D. Neither of the two

15. Which of the following Slave Sultans of Delhi Sultanate did not belong to Ilabari Tribe of the Turks?

- A. Qutbuddin Aibak
- B. Iltutmish
- C. Ghiyasuddin Balban
- D. Nasiruddin Mahmud Tughlaq

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 2. B | 3. D | 4. C | 5. A |
| 6. D | 7. B | 8. C | 9. D | 10. C |
| 11. A | 12. D | 13. D | 14. C | 15. D |

Review Question

1. Describe the advent of the Delhi sultanate and the Turkish rule in India.
2. Why was 'Group of Forty' (Turkan-i-Chahalgani) formed by Iltutmish?
3. Critically analyses the about the causes of success for the establishment of Delhi Sultanate.
4. What were the consequences of establishment of Delhi Sultanate on the political scenario of India.



Further Readings

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