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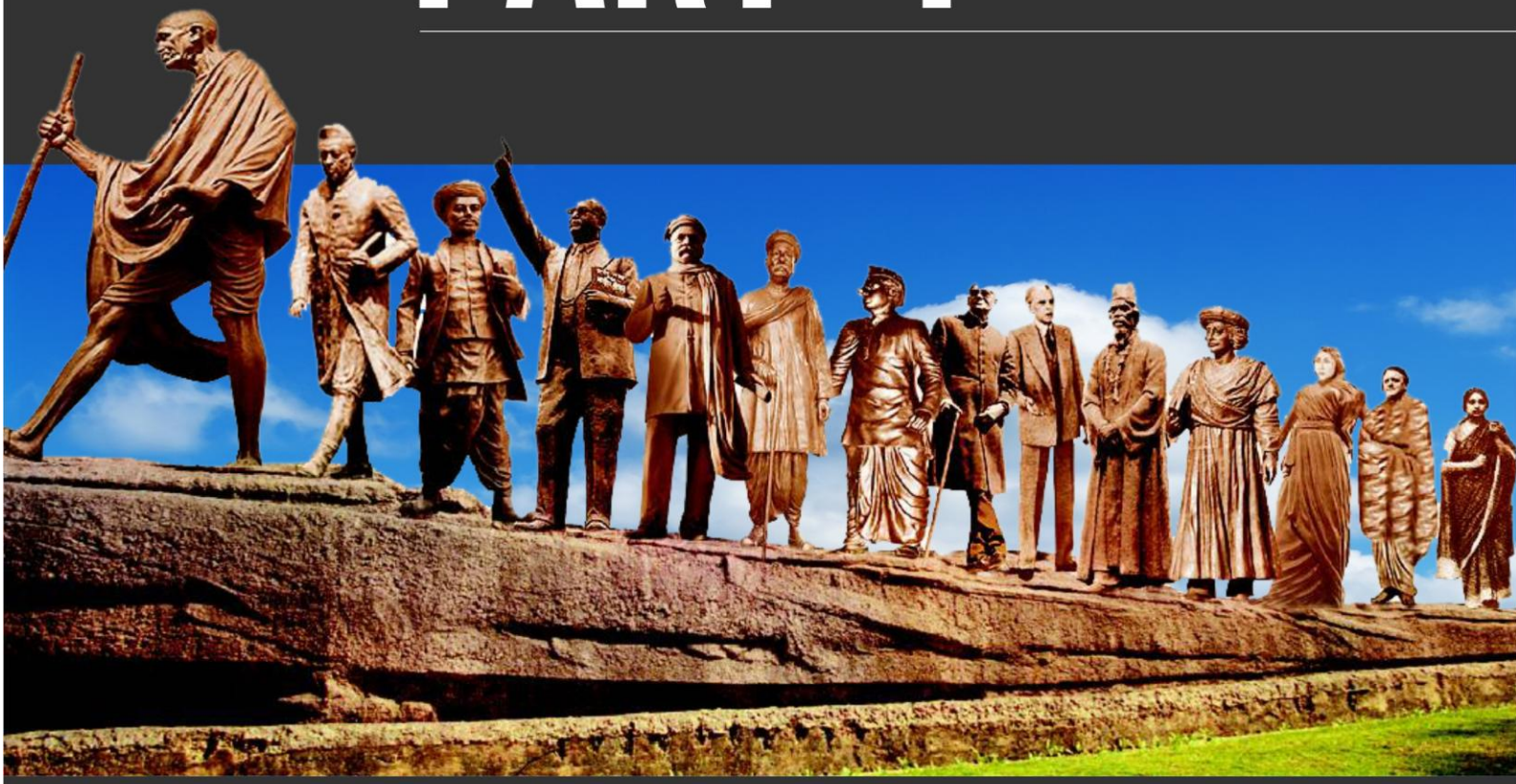
NCERT

HISTORY

PART -I



Study Notes for

UPSC-Prelims + Mains

(Classes VI to VIII)

Prepared by

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NCERT Class VI History- Our Past-I

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NCERT-CLASS VI-

HISTORY

OUR PAST-I

CHAPTER 1

What, Where, How and When?

From our past:

- We can study food, cloths, houses of people, even lives of hunters, herders, farmers etc.
- On the banks of rivers like Ganga, Narmada etc. people used to live in large numbers.
- People also began rearing animals like sheep, goat, and cattle, and lived in villages.
- People travelled from one part of the subcontinent to another through hills and high mountains including the Himalayas, deserts, rivers and seas made journeys dangerous at times.
- Men and women moved in search of livelihood, as also to escape from natural disasters like floods or droughts. Sometimes men marched in armies, conquering others' lands. Besides, merchants travelled with caravans or ships, carrying valuable goods from place to place.
- Religious teachers walked from village to village, town to town, stopping to offer instruction and advice on the way.
- Finally, some people perhaps travelled driven by a spirit of adventure, wanting to discover new and exciting places. All these led to the sharing of ideas between people.
- Two of the words we often use for our country are India and Bharat. The word India comes from the Indus, called Sindhu in Sanskrit.
- The name Bharata was used for a group of people who lived in the northwest, and who are mentioned in the Rig-Veda, the earliest composition in Sanskrit (dated to about 3500 years ago). Later it was used for the country.

Ways to find out past:

- **Manuscripts**-These were usually written on palm leaf, or on the specially prepared bark of a tree known as the birch, which grows in the Himalayas.
  - Over the years, many manuscripts were eaten away by insects, some were destroyed, but many have survived, often preserved in temples and monasteries.
  - These books dealt with all kinds of subjects: religious beliefs and practices, the lives of kings, medicine and science. Besides, there were epics, poems, plays. Many of these were written in Sanskrit, others were in Prakrit (languages used by ordinary people) and Tamil.
- **Inscriptions**-These are writings on relatively hard surfaces such as stone or metal. Sometimes, kings got their orders inscribed so that people could see, read and obey them. There are other kinds of inscriptions as well, where men and women (including kings and queens) recorded what they did.
- **Archeologists**: they study objects like inscription on rocks monuments etc.
  - They also explore and excavate (dig under the surface of the earth) to find tools, weapons, pots, pans, ornaments and coins.
  - Some of these objects may be made of stone, others of bone, baked clay or metal.
  - Objects that are made of hard, imperishable substances usually survive for a long time.

- They also look for bones-of animals, birds, and fish-to find out what people ate in the past. Plant remains survive far more rarely-if seeds of grain or pieces of wood have been burnt, they survive in a charred form.

➢ **Historians**: Scholars, who study the past, often use the word source to refer to the information found from manuscripts, inscriptions and archaeology.

- Years are counted from the date generally assigned to the birth of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity.
- These are some letters with dates:

BC- before Christ
AD- after death (Christ)
CE- Common Era
BCE- before Common Era

CHAPTER 2

On the trail of the earliest people

- Two million years ago, people used to be hunter-gatherer.
- They used to hunt wild animals, caught fish and birds, gathered fruits, roots, nuts, seeds etc.
- To hunt animals or catch fish and birds, people need to be alert, quick, and have lots of presence of mind. To collect plant produce, you need to find out which plants or parts of plants are edible, that is, can be eaten, as many can be poisonous.
- People also needed to find out about the seasons when the fruits ripen.
- There are certain reasons for hunter-gatherer to move from one place to other:
    - If they had stayed at one place for long time, they would have eaten all the available plant and animal resources. They would have had to go elsewhere in search of food.
    - For hunting animals needs to follow them.
    - People may have moved from season to season in search of different kinds of plants.
    - People living on their banks would have had to go in search of water during the dry seasons (winter and summer).
- We get the knowledge of their (ancient people) way of living through the object found like that of stone tools which is supposed to be used for cutting meat and bone etc.
- People tried to find places where good quality stone was easily available. Places where stone was found and where people made tools are known as factory sites.
- With the passing of time grasslands also developed and number of animals like deer, antelope, goat and sheep etc also increased. Those who hunt these animals, learn their food habits and different breeding seasons.
- It is likely that this helped people to start thinking about herding and rearing these animals themselves. Fishing also became important.
- Several grain bearing grasses, including wheat, barley and rice grew naturally in different parts of the subcontinent. Men, women and children probably collected these grains as food, and learnt where they grew, and when they ripened.
- Many of the caves in which these early people lived have paintings on the walls.
- These paintings show wild animals, drawn with great accuracy and skill.
- Ancient tools, cave paintings, various caves have been found at various places in the world and in India.

CHAPTER 3

From Gathering to Growing Food

- Food is very important for the live and this food we get from plants, grasses, trees etc.
- Different plants grow in different conditions-rice, for example, requires more water than wheat and barley. This explains why farmers grow some crops in some areas and not in other areas.
- Different animals too, prefer different environments-for instance, sheep and goat can survive more easily than cattle in dry, hilly environments.
- Women, men and children could also attract and then tame animals by leaving food for them near their shelters. The first animal to be tamed was the wild ancestor of the dog.
- Later, people encouraged animals that were relatively gentle to come near the camps where they lived. These animals such as sheep, goat, cattle and also the pig lived in herds, and most of them ate grass.
- Often, people protected these animals from attacks by other wild animals. This is how they became herders.
- As grain had to be stored for both food and seed, people had to think of ways of storing it, so storehouses were created.
- Animals which are of importance like cow and buffalo which give milk and sheep which gives wool were reared.
- Some of the sites like Mehgarh, Burzahome etc from where grains and bones have been found.
- Paleolithic people used to use different tools as compared to Neolithic people
- Neolithic tools: These include tools that were polished to give a fine cutting edge, and mortars and pestles used for grinding grain and other plant produce. Mortars and pestles are used for grinding grain even today, several thousand years later.
- At the same time, tools of the Paleolithic types continued to be made and used, and remember, some tools were also made of bone.
- Many kinds of earthen pots have also been found. These were sometimes decorated, and were used for storing things.
- But still in many areas, men and women still continued to hunt and gather food, and elsewhere people adopted farming and herding slowly, over several thousand years. Besides, in some cases people tried to combine these activities, doing different things during different seasons.
- Many of the farmers and herders live in groups called tribes.
- Mehgarh: This site is located in a fertile plain, near the Bolan Pass, which is one of the most important routes into Iran.
  It was probably one of the places where women and men learnt to grow barley and wheat, and rear sheep and goats for the first time in this area.
- After excavation of some sites found evidence of many kinds of animal bones from the earliest levels.
- These included bones of wild animals such as the deer and pig.
- In later levels, they found more bones of sheep and goat, and in still later levels, cattle bones are most common, suggesting that this was the animal that was generally kept by the people.
- Other rituals like that of when people die, their relatives and friends generally pay respect to them. People look after them, perhaps in the belief that there is some form of life after death. Burial is one such arrangement. Several burial sites have been found at Mehrgarh. In one instance, the dead person was buried with goats, which were probably meant to serve as food in the next world.

CHAPTER 4,

In the earliest cities

- At some places before eighty years, expedition took place and archaeologists found the site, and realised that this was one of the oldest cities in the subcontinent. As this was the first city to be discovered, all other sites from where similar buildings (and other things) were found were described as Harappan. These cities developed about 4700 years ago.

About these cities:

- Many of these cities were divided into two or more parts. The west part is smaller but higher called as citadel and the part to the east was larger but lower is simple town.
- The bricks were so well made that they have lasted for thousands of years. The bricks were laid in an interlocking pattern and that made the walls strong.
- Very often walls of baked brick were built around each part.
- In some cities, special buildings were constructed on the citadel. For example, in Mohenjodaro, a very special tank, which archaeologists call the Great Bath, was built in this area. This was lined with bricks, coated with plaster, and made water-tight with a layer of natural tar. There were steps leading down to it from two sides, while there were rooms on all sides. Water was probably brought in from a well, and drained out after use. Perhaps important people took a dip in this tank on special occasions.
- Other cities, such as Kalibangan and Lothal had fire altars, where sacrifices may have been performed. And some cities like Mohenjodaro, Harappa, and Lothal had elaborate store houses.
- Many of these cities had covered drains. Notice how carefully these were laid out, in straight lines.
- Each drain had a gentle slope so that water could flow through it. Very often, drains in houses were connected to those on the streets and smaller drains led into bigger ones. As the drains were covered, inspection holes were provided at intervals to clean them.
- All three-houses, drains and streets-were probably planned and built at the same time.

Lives of people:

- A Harappan city was a very busy place. There were people who planned the construction of special buildings in the city. These were probably the rulers. It is likely that the rulers sent people to distant lands to get metal, precious stones, and other things that they wanted.
- And there were scribes, people who knew how to write, who helped prepare the seals, and perhaps wrote on other materials that have not survived. Besides, there were men and women, crafts persons, making all kinds of things-either in their own homes, or in special workshops. People were travelling to distant lands or returning with raw materials and, perhaps, stories.

Crafts:

- Copper and bronze were used to make tools, weapons, ornaments and vessels. Gold and silver were used to make ornaments and vessels. Perhaps the most striking finds are those of beads, weights, and blades.
- Many of the things that were produced were probably the work of specialists. A specialist is a person who is trained to do only one kind of work, for example, cutting stone, or polishing beads, or carving seals. Look at the illustration (page 36) and see how well the face is carved and how carefully the beard is shown. This must have been the work of an expert crafts person.
- Actual pieces of cloth were found attached to the lid of a silver vase and some copper objects at Mohenjodaro.

Raw material:

- Raw materials are substances that are either found naturally (such as wood, or ores of metals) or produced by farmers or herders. These are then used to produce finished goods.
- While some of the raw materials that the Harappans used were available locally, many items such as copper, tin, gold, silver and precious stones had to be brought from distant places.

Food:

- While many people lived in the cities, others living in the countryside grew crops and reared animals. These farmers and herders supplied food to crafts persons, scribes and rulers in the cities.
- The plough was used to dig the earth for turning the soil and planting seeds.
- As this region does not receive heavy rainfall, some form of irrigation may have been used. This means that water was stored and supplied to the fields when the plants were growing.
- The Harappans reared cattle, sheep, goat and buffalo.
- Water and pastures were available around settlements. However, in the dry summer months large herds of animals were probably taken to greater distances in search of grass and water. They also collected fruits like ber, caught fish and hunted wild animals like the antelope.

Harappan Towns (in Gujarat):

- **Dholavira**:
  - The city of Dholavira was located on Khadir Beyt in the Rann of Kutch, where there was fresh water and fertile soil.
  - Dholavira was divided into three parts (Unlike some of the other Harappan cities, which were divided into two parts,) and each part was surrounded with massive stone walls, with entrances through gateways.
  - There was also a large open area in the settlement, where public ceremonies could be held.
  - Other finds include large letters of the Harappan script that were carved out of white stone and perhaps inlaid in wood.

- This is a unique find as generally Harappan writing has been found on small objects such as seals.

➢ **Lothal**:

- The city of Lothal stood beside a tributary of the Sabarmati, in Gujarat, close to the Gulf of Khambat.
- It was situated near areas where raw materials such as semi-precious stones were easily available.
- This was an important centre for making objects out of stone, shell and metal. There was also a store house in the city.
- Many seals and sealing's (the impression of seals on clay) were found in this storehouse.
- A building that was found here was probably a workshop for making beads: pieces of stone, half made beads, tools for bead making, and finished beads have all been found here.

End of this civilization:

➢ Around 3900 years ago we find the beginning of a major change. People stopped living in many of the cities.

➢ Different scholars suggest different reasons of end of the civilization, some says due to rivers dried up and some says due to deforestation this could have happened because fuel was required for baking bricks, and for smelting copper ores. Besides, grazing by large herds of cattle, sheep and goat may have destroyed the green cover. In some areas there were floods. But none of these reasons can explain the end of all the cities. Flooding, or a river drying up would have had an effect in only some areas.

➢ It appears as if the rulers lost control. In any case, the effects of the change are quite clear.

➢ Sites in Sind and west Punjab (present-day Pakistan) were abandoned, while many people moved into newer, smaller settlements to the east and the south.

CHAPTER 5

What Books and Burial Tell Us

Vedas:

- One of the oldest books of the world is Vedas.
- There are four of them – the Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda.
- The oldest Veda is the Rigveda, composed about 3500 years ago. The Rigveda includes more than a thousand hymns, called sukta or "well-said".
- These hymns are in praise of various gods and goddesses. Three gods are especially important: Agni, the god of fire; Indra, a warrior god; and Soma, a plant from which a special drink was prepared.
- These hymns were composed by sages (rishis). Priests taught students to recite and memorise each syllable, word, and sentence, bit by bit, with great care.
- Most of the hymns were composed, taught and learnt by men.
- A few were composed by women.
- The Rigveda is in old or Vedic Sanskrit.
- The Rigveda was recited and heard rather than read. It was written down several centuries after it was first composed, and printed less than 200 years ago.

Archeologist study of Vedas:

- Some of the hymns in the Rigveda are in the form of dialogues. This is part of one such hymn, a dialogue between a sage named Vishvamitra, and two rivers, (Beas and Sutlej) that were worshipped as goddesses.
- There are many prayers in the Rigveda for cattle, children (especially sons), and horses.
- Horses were yoked to chariots that were used in battles, which were fought to capture cattle. Battles were also fought for land, which was important for pasture, and for growing hardy crops that ripened quickly, such as barley.
- Some battles were fought for water, and to capture people.
- Some of the wealth that was obtained was kept by the leaders, some was given to the priests and the rest was distributed amongst the people.
- Some wealth was used for the performance of yajnas or sacrifices in which offerings were made into the fire. These were meant for gods and goddesses.
- Offerings could include ghee, grain, and in some cases, animals.
- Most men took part in these wars.
- There was no regular army, but there were assemblies where people met and discussed matters of war and peace.
- They also chose leaders, who were often brave and skilful warriors.
- There are two groups who are described in terms of their work-the priests, sometimes called brahmins, who performed various rituals and the rajas.
- These rajas were not like the ones you will be learning about later.
- They did not have capital cities, palaces or armies, nor did they collect taxes.
- Sons did not automatically succeed fathers as rajas.

- Two words were used to describe the people or the community as a whole. One was the word jana, which we still use in Hindi and other languages. The other was vish. The word vaishya comes from vish.
- The people who composed the hymns described themselves as Aryans and called their opponents Dasas or Dasyus.
- These were people who did not perform sacrifices, and probably spoke different languages.
- Later, the term dasa (and the feminine dasi) came to mean slave.
- Slaves were women and men who were often captured in war. They were treated as the property of their owners, who could make them do whatever work they wanted.
- The Rigveda was being composed in the north-west of the subcontinent, there were other developments elsewhere.

- **Megalith**:
  - These are stone boulders are known as megaliths (literally big stones).
  - These were carefully arranged by people, and were used to mark burial sites.
  - The practice of erecting megaliths began about 3000 years ago, and was prevalent throughout the Deccan, south India, in the north-east and Kashmir.
  - Some megaliths can be seen on the surface, other megalithic burials are often underground.
  - Archaeologists find a circle of stone boulders or a single large stone standing on the ground. These are the only indications that there are burials beneath.
  - All these burials have some common features. The dead were buried with distinctive pots, which are called Black and Red Ware.
  - Also found are tools and weapons of iron and sometimes, skeletons of horses, horse equipment and ornaments of stone and gold.
- Among various **burials**, one skeleton was buried with 33 gold beads, 2 stone beads, 4 copper bangles, and one conch shell. Other skeletons have only a few pots. These finds suggest that there was some difference in status amongst the people who were buried. Some were rich, others poor, some chiefs, others followers.
- At Inamgaon site(Burials):
  - It was occupied between 3600 and 2700 years ago.
  - Here, adults were generally buried in the ground, laid out straight, with the head towards the north. Sometimes burials were within the houses.
  - Vessels that probably contained food and water were placed with the dead.
  - One man was found buried in a large, four legged clay jar in the courtyard of a five-roomed house (one of the largest houses at the site), in the centre of the settlement.
  - This house also had a granary. The body was placed in a cross-legged position.

- **Miscellaneous things found**:
  - Also found that the seeds of wheat, barley, rice, pulses, millets, peas and sesame.
  - Bones of a number of animals, many bearing cut marks that show they may have been used as food, have also been found.
  - These include cattle, buffalo, goat, sheep, dog, horse, ass, pig, sambhar, spotted deer, blackbuck, antelope, hare, and mongoose, besides birds, crocodile, turtle, crab and fish.
  - There is evidence that fruits such as ber, amla, jamun, dates and a variety of berries were collected.

CHAPTER 6

Kingdoms, King and Early Republics

- **Rajas**: The rajas that performed these big sacrifices were now recognised as being rajas of janapadas rather than janas.

- **Janapadas**: The word janapada literally means the land where the jana set its foot, and settled down.

    - Archaeologists have excavated a number of settlements in these janapadas, such as Purana Qila in Delhi, Hastinapur near Meerut, and Atranjikhera.
    - They found that people lived in huts, and kept cattle as well as other animals. They also grew a variety of crops-rice, wheat, barley, pulses, sugarcane, sesame and mustard.
    - They made earthen pots. Some of these were grey in colour, others were red.
    - One special type of pottery found at these sites is known as Painted Grey Ware.
    - As is obvious from the name, these grey pots had painted designs, usually simple lines and geometric patterns.

- **Mahajanpadas**: Some janapadas became more important than others, and were known as mahajanapadas.
    - Most mahajanapadas had a capital city, many of these were fortified. This means that huge walls of wood, brick or stone were built around them.
    - Forts were probably built because people were afraid of attacks from other kings and needed protection.
    - It is also likely that some rulers wanted to show how rich and powerful they were by building really large, tall and impressive walls around their cities. Also in this way, the land and the people living inside the fortified area could be controlled more easily by the king.
    - Building such huge walls required a great deal of planning.
    - Thousands, if not lakhs of bricks or stone had to be prepared.
    - This in turn meant enormous labour, provided, possibly, by thousands of men, women and children. And resources had to be found for all of this.
    - The new rajas now began maintaining armies. Soldiers were paid regular salaries and maintained by the king throughout the year. Some payments were probably made using punch marked coins.

- **Taxes**: As the rulers of the mahajanapadas were, building huge forts and maintaining big armies, they needed more resources. And they needed officials to collect these. So, instead of depending on occasional gifts brought by people, as in the case of the raja of the janapadas, they started collecting regular taxes.

- Taxes on crops were the most important. This was because most people were farmers. Usually, the tax was fixed at 1/6th of what was produced. This was known as bhaga or a share.
- There were taxes on crafts persons as well. These could have been in the form of labour. For example, a weaver or a smith may have had to work for a day every month for the king.
- Herders were also expected to pay taxes in the form of animals and animal produce.
- There were also taxes on goods that were bought and sold, through trade.
- Hunters and gatherers also had to provide forest produce to the raja.

➢ **Agriculture**: There were two major changes in agriculture around this time.
- One was the growing use of iron ploughshares. This meant that heavy, clayey soil could be turned over better than with a wooden ploughshare, so that more grain could be produced.
- Second, people began transplanting paddy. This meant that instead of scattering seed on the ground, from which plants would sprout, saplings were grown and then planted in the fields.
- This led to increased production, as many more plants survived.
- Generally, slave men and women, (dasas and dasis) and landless agricultural labourers (kammakaras) had to do this work.

➢ **Magadha (Kingdom)**: Magadha became the most important mahajanapada in about two hundred years.
- Many rivers such as the Ganga and Son flowed through Magadha.
- This was important for
  (a) Transport,
  (b) Water supplies
  (c) Making the land fertile.
- Parts of Magadha were forested. Elephants, which lived in the forest, could be captured and trained for the army.
- Forests also provided wood for building houses, carts and chariots. Besides, there were iron ore mines in the region that could be tapped to make strong tools and weapons.
- Magadha had two very powerful rulers, Bimbisara and Ajatasattu, who used all possible means to conquer other janapadas.
- Mahapadma Nanda was another important ruler. He extended his control up to the north-west part of the subcontinent.
- Rajagriha (present-day Rajgir) in Bihar was the capital of Magadha for several years. Later the capital was shifted to Pataliputra (present-day Patna).
- More than 2300 years ago, a ruler named Alexander, who lived in Macedonia in Europe, wanted to become a world conqueror. He didn't conquer the world, but did conquer parts of Egypt and West Asia, and came to the Indian subcontinent, reaching up to the banks of the Beas. When he wanted to march further eastwards, his soldiers refused. They were

scared, as they had heard that the rulers of India had vast armies of foot soldiers, chariots and elephants.

- **Vajji (Kingdom):** Vajji, with its capital at Vaishali (Bihar), was under a different form of government, known as gana or sangha.
  - In a gana or a sangha there were not one, but many rulers.
  - Sometimes, even when thousands of men ruled together, each one was known as a raja. These rajas performed rituals together.
  - They also met in assemblies, and decided what had to be done and how, through discussion and debate.
  - However, women, dasas and kammakaras could not participate in these assemblies.
  - Both Buddha and Mahavira belonged to ganas or sanghas. Some of the most vivid descriptions of life in the sanghas can be found in Buddhist books.
  - Rajas of powerful kingdoms tried to conquer the sanghas. Nevertheless, these lasted for a very long time, till about 1500 years ago, when the last of the ganas or sanghas were conquered by the Gupta rulers.

Certain fact:

Ajatasattu and the Vajjis	Ajatasattu wanted to attack the Vajjis. He sent his minister named Vassakara to the Buddha to get his advice on the matter. The Buddha asked whether the Vajjis met frequently, in full assemblies. • They held full and frequent public assemblies. • They met and acted together. • They followed established rules. • They respected, supported and listened to elders. • Vajji women were not held by force or captured. • Chaityas (local shrines) were maintained in both towns and villages. • Wise saints who followed different beliefs were respected and allowed to enter and leave the country freely.

CHAPTER 7

New Questions and Ideas

Buddhism:

Buddha's life:

- Siddhartha, also known as Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was born about 2500 years ago.
- The Buddha belonged to a small gana known as the Sakya gana, and was a kshatriya.
- When he was a young man, he left the comforts of his home in search of knowledge.
- He wandered for several years, meeting and holding discussions with other thinkers.
- He finally decided to find his own path to realisation, and meditated for days on end under a peepal tree at Bodh Gaya in Bihar, where he attained enlightenment.
- After that, he was known as the Buddha or the Wise One.
- He then went to Sarnath, near Varanasi, where he taught for the first time.
- He spent the rest of his life travelling on foot, going from place to place, teaching people, till he passed away at Kusinara.

Buddha's teachings:

- The Buddha taught that life is full of suffering and unhappiness. This is caused because we have cravings and desires (which often cannot be fulfilled). Sometimes, even if we get what we want, we are not satisfied, and want even more (or want other things).
- The Buddha described this as thirst or tanha. He taught that this constant craving could be removed by following moderation in everything.
- He also taught people to be kind, and to respect the lives of others, including animals. He believed that the results of our actions (called karma), whether good or bad, affect us both in this life and the next.
- The Buddha taught in the language of the ordinary people, Prakrit, so that everybody could understand his message.

Upanishad:

- Upanishad literally means 'approaching and sitting near' and the texts contain conversations between teachers and students. Often, ideas were presented through simple dialogues.
- Most Upanishadic thinkers were men, especially brahmins and rajas.
- Around the time that the Buddha was preaching and perhaps a little earlier, other thinkers also tried to find answers to difficult questions. Some of them wanted to know about life after death, others wanted to know why sacrifices should be performed.
- Many of these thinkers felt that there was something permanent in the universe that would last even after death.
- They described this as the atman or the individual soul and the brahman or the universal soul. They believed that ultimately, both the atman and the brahman were one.

- Many of their ideas were recorded in the Upanishads. These were part of the later Vedic texts.

Jainism:

Life of Mahavir:

- The most famous thinker of the Jainas, Vardhamana Mahavira, also spread his message around this time, i.e. 2500 years ago. He was a kshatriya prince of the Lichchhavis, a group that was part of the Vajji sangha.At the age of thirty, he left home and went to live in a forest. For twelve years he led a hard and lonely life, at the end of which he attained enlightenment.

Teachings:

- He taught a simple doctrine: men and women who wished to know the truth must leave their homes.
- They must follow very strictly the rules of ahimsa, which means not hurting or killing living beings. "All beings," said Mahavira "long to live. To all things life is dear."
- Ordinary people could understand the teachings of Mahavira and his followers, they used Prakrit.
- There were several forms of Prakrit, used in different parts of the country, and named after the regions in which they were used. For example, the Prakrit spoken in Magadha was known as Magadhi.
- Followers of Mahavira, who were known as Jainas, had to lead very simple lives, begging for food. They had to be absolutely honest, and were especially asked not to steal. Also, they had to observe celibacy. And men had to give up everything, including their clothes.
- Jainism was supported mainly by traders.
- Farmers, who had to kill insects to protect their crops, found it more difficult to follow the rules. Over hundreds of years, Jainism spread to different parts of north India, and to Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
- The teachings of Mahavira and his followers were transmitted orally for several centuries. They were written down in the form in which they are presently available at a place called Valabhi, in Gujarat, about 1500 years ago.

Sanghas:

- Buddha and Mahavir felt that those who left their home could only get true knowledge.
- They arranged for them to stay together in the sangha, an association of those who left their homes.
- The rules made for the Buddhist sangha were written down in a book called the Vinaya Pitaka. From this we know that there were separate branches for men and women. All men could join the sangha. However, children had to take the permission of their parents and slaves that of their masters. Those who worked for the king had to take his permission and debtors that of creditors. Women had to take their husbands' permission.
- Men and women who joined the sangha led simple lives. They meditated for most of the time, and went to cities and villages to beg for food during fixed hours. That is why they were known as bhikkhus (the Prakrit word for beggar) and bhikkhunis.

- They taught others, and helped one another. They also held meetings to settle any quarrels that took place within the sangha.
- Those who joined the sangha included brahmins, kshatriyas, merchants, labourers, barbers, courtesans and slaves.
- Many of them wrote down the teachings of the Buddha. Some of them also composed beautiful poems, describing their life in the sangha.

Monasteries:

- Both Jaina and Buddhist monks went from place to place throughout the year, teaching people.
- For permanent shelter monasteries were built.
- These were known as viharas. The earliest viharas were made of wood, and then of brick.
- Some were stay even in caves that were dug out in hills, especially in western India very often, the land on which the vihara was built was donated by a rich merchant or a landowner, or the king.
- The local people came with gifts of food, clothing and medicines for the monks and nuns. In return, they taught the people.
- Over the centuries, Buddhism spread to many parts of the subcontinent and beyond.

Facts:

Ashramas: Four ashramas were recognised:

1. brahmacharya,
2. grihastha,
3. vanaprastha and
4. samnyasa.

Brahmacharya: Brahmin, kshatriya and vaishya men were expected to lead simple lives and study the Vedas during the early years of their life

Grihastha: They had to marry and live as householders.

Vanaprastha: They had to live in the forest and meditate.

Samnyasins: They had to give up everything and become samnyasins.

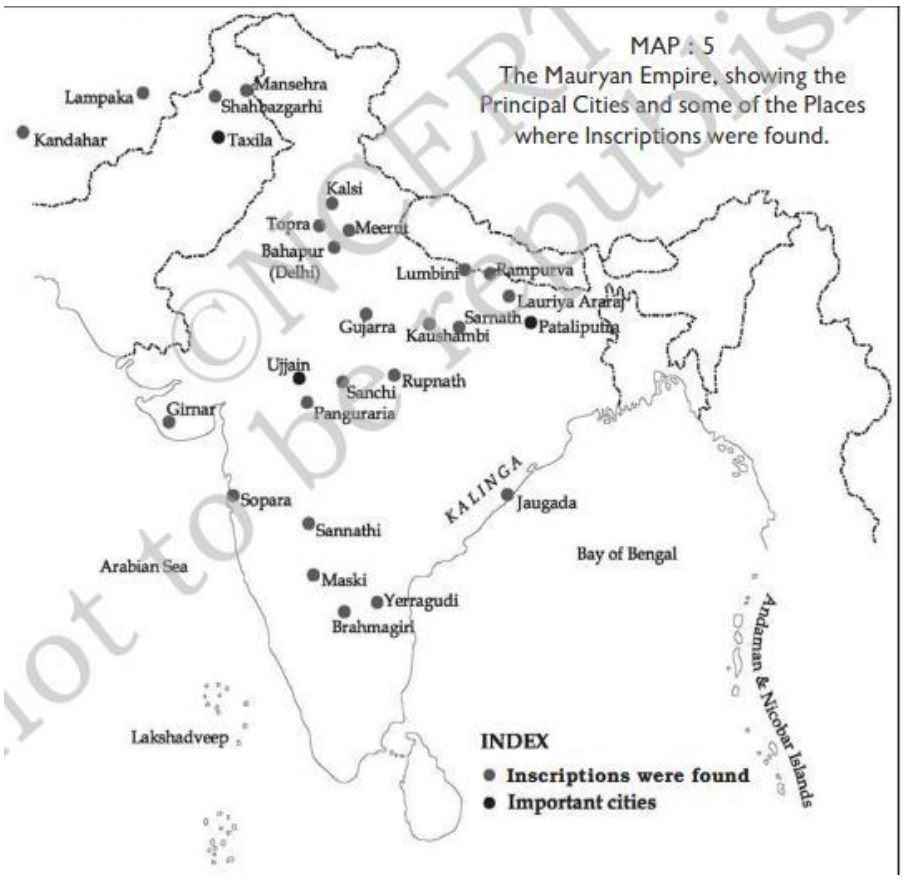
The system of ashramas allowed men to spend some part of their lives in meditation.

Generally, women were not allowed to study the Vedas, and they had to follow the ashramas chosen by their husbands.

CHAPTER 8

Ashoka, the emperor who gave up war

- Ashoka was one of the greatest rulers known to history and on his instructions inscriptions were carved on pillars, as well as on rock surfaces.
- The empire that Ashoka ruled was founded by his grandfather, Chandragupta Maurya, more than 2300 years ago.
- Chandragupta was supported by a wise man named Chanakya or Kautilya.
- Many of Chanakya's ideas were written down in a book called the Arthashastra.
- There were several cities in the empire. These included the capital Pataliputra, Taxila, and Ujjain.
- Taxila was a gateway to the northwest, including Central Asia, while Ujjain lay on the route from north to south India. Merchants, officials and crafts persons probably lived in these cities.



Ashoka's empire:

- In his empire officials were appointed to collect taxes from farmers, herders, crafts persons and traders, who lived in villages and towns in the area.
- Officials also punished those who disobeyed the ruler's orders. Many of these officials were given salaries.
- Messengers went to and fro, and spies kept a watch on the officials.

- The emperor supervised all the work by himself, with the help of members of the royal family, and senior ministers.
- There were other areas or provinces. Each of these was ruled from a provincial capital such as Taxila or Ujjain. Although there was some amount of control from Pataliputra.
- Royal princes were often sent as governors, local customs and rules were probably followed. Besides, there were vast areas between these centres. Here the Mauryas tried to control roads and rivers, which were important for transport, and to collect whatever resources were available as tax and tribute.
- There were also the forested regions. People living in these areas were more or less independent, but may have been expected to provide elephants, timber, honey and wax to Mauryan officials.

Ashoka:

- The most famous Mauryan ruler was Ashoka. He was the first ruler who tried to take his message to the people through inscriptions.
- Most of Ashoka's inscriptions were in Prakrit and were written in the Brahmi script.
- Kalinga is the ancient name of coastal Orissa. Ashoka fought a war to conquer Kalinga. However, he was so horrified when he saw the violence and bloodshed that he decided not to fight any more wars.
- He is the only king in the history of the world who gave up conquest after winning a war.

Ashoka's dhamma:

- Ashoka's dhamma did not involve worship of a god, or performance of a sacrifice.
- He felt that just as a father tries to teach his children, he had a duty to instruct his subjects.
- He was also inspired by the teachings of the Buddha.
- He appointed officials known as 'dhamma mahamatta' who went from place to place teaching people about dhamma due to problems like People in the empire followed different religions, and this sometimes led to conflict. Animals were sacrificed. Slaves and servants were ill treated. Besides, there were quarrels in families and with neighborhood.
- Ashoka got his messages inscribed on rocks and pillars, instructing his officials to read his message to those who could not read it themselves.
- Ashoka also sent messengers to spread ideas about dhamma to other lands, such as Syria, Egypt, Greece and Sri Lanka.
- He built roads, dug wells, and built rest houses. Besides, he arranged for medical treatment for both human beings and animals.

CHAPTER 9

Vital villages and thriving towns

- Things made up of iron are part of our daily routine.
- The use of iron began in the subcontinent around 3000 years ago.
- Old tools and equipments of iron have been found at various places.
- Around 2500 years ago, there is evidence for the growing use of iron tools. These included axes for clearing forests, and the iron ploughshare.

Village life:

- Southern India:
  - There were at least three different kinds of people living in most villages in the southern and northern parts of the subcontinent.
  - In the Tamil region, large landowners were known as vellalar, ordinary ploughmen were known as uzhavar, and landless labourers, including slaves, were known as kadaisiyar and adimai.
- Northern India:
  - The village headman was known as the grama bhojaka.
  - Men from the same family held the position for generations (hereditary).
  - The grama bhojaka was often the largest landowner. Generally, he had slaves and hired workers to cultivate the land. Besides, as he was powerful, the king often used him to collect taxes from the village. He also functioned as a judge, and sometimes as a policeman.
  - There were other independent farmers, known as grihapatis, most of whom were smaller landowners.
  - There were men and women such as the dasa karmakara, who did not own land, and had to earn a living working on the fields owned by others.
  - In most villages there were also some crafts persons such as the blacksmith, potter, carpenter and weaver.

Cities:

- Many of the cities that developed from about 2500 years ago were capitals of the mahajanapadas.
- In many cities, archaeologists have found rows of pots, or ceramic rings arranged one on top of the other.
- These are known as ring wells.
- These seem to have been used as toilets in some cases, and as drains and garbage dumps.
- These ring wells are usually found in individual houses. We have hardly any remains of palaces, markets, or of homes of ordinary people.
- Perhaps some are yet to be discovered by archaeologists. Others, made of wood, mud brick and thatch, may not have survived.

- Another way of finding out about early cities is from the accounts of sailors and travellers who visited them. One of the most detailed accounts that have been found was by an unknown Greek sailor. He described all the ports he visited.

Coins:

- Archaeologists have found several thousands of coins belonging to this period.
- The earliest coins which were in use for about 500 years were punch marked coins, such as the one shown below.
- They have been given this name because the designs were punched on to the metal-silver or copper.

City functions:

- These are short inscriptions, recording gifts made by men (and sometimes women) to monasteries and shrines. These were made by kings and queens, officers, merchants, and crafts persons who lived in the city. For instance, inscriptions from Mathura mention goldsmiths, blacksmiths, weavers, basket makers, garland makers, perfumers.

Crafts and crafts persons:

- These include extremely fine pottery, known as the Northern Black Polished Ware.
- It gets its name from the fact that it is generally found in the northern part of the subcontinent.
- It is usually black in colour, and has a fine sheen.
- There were famous centres such as Varanasi in the north, and Madurai in the south. Both men and women worked in these centres.
- Many crafts persons and merchants now formed associations known as shrenis. These shrenis of crafts persons provided training, procured raw material, and distributed the finished product. Then shrenis of merchants organised the trade.
- Shrenis also served as banks, where rich men and women deposited money. This was invested, and part of the interest was returned or used to support religious institutions such as monasteries.

CHAPTER 10

Traders, Kings and pilgrims

- According to studies: South India was famous for gold, spices, especially pepper, and precious stones. Pepper was particularly valued in the Roman Empire, so much so that it was known as black gold. So, traders carried many of these goods to Rome in ships, across the sea, and by land in caravans. There must have been quite a lot of trade as many Roman gold coins have been found in south India.
- Traders explored several sea routes. Some of these followed the coasts. There were others across the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, where sailors took advantage of the monsoon winds to cross the seas more quickly.

Kingdoms along the coast:

- The southern half of the subcontinent is marked by a long coastline, and with hills, plateaus, and river valleys. Amongst the river valleys, that of the Kaveri is the most fertile.
- Chiefs and kings who controlled the river valleys and the coasts became rich and powerful.
- Sangam literature has mentioned about cholas, cheras and pandyas.
- Each of the three chiefs had two centres of power: one inland, and one on the coast. Of these six cities, two were very important: Puhar or Kaveripattinam, the port of the Cholas, and Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas.
- The chiefs did not collect regular taxes. Instead, they demanded and received gifts from the people. They also went on military expeditions, and collected tribute from neighbouring areas. They kept some of the wealth and distributed the rest amongst their supporters, including members of their family, soldiers, and poets.
- Many poets whose compositions are found in the Sangam collection composed poems in praise of chiefs who often rewarded them with precious stones, gold, horses, elephants, chariots, and fine cloth.
- **Satvahanas**: Around 200 years later a dynasty known as the Satavahanas became powerful in western India. The most important ruler of the Satavahanas was Gautamiputra Shri Satakarni. He and other Satavahana rulers were known as lords of the dakshinapatha, literally the route leading to the south, which was also used as a name for the entire southern region. He sent his army to the eastern, western and southern coasts.

Silk route:

- Techniques of making silk were first invented in China around 7000 years ago. China who went to distant lands on foot, horseback, and on camels, carried silk with them. The paths they followed came to be known as the Silk Route.
- Sometimes, Chinese rulers sent gifts of silk to rulers in Iran and west Asia, and from there, the knowledge of silk spread further west.
- About 2000 years ago, wearing silk became the fashion amongst rulers and rich people in Rome. It was very expensive, as it had to be brought all the way from China, along dangerous roads, through mountains and deserts.
- People living along the route often demanded payments for allowing traders to pass through.

- Some kings tried to control large portions of the route. This was because they could benefit from taxes, tributes and gifts that were brought by traders travelling along the route. In return, they often protected the traders who passed through their kingdoms from attacks by robbers.
- **Kushanas**: The best-known of the rulers who controlled the Silk Route were the Kushanas, who ruled over central Asia and north-west India around 2000 years ago. Their two major centres of power were Peshawar and Mathura. During their rule, a branch of the Silk Route extended from Central Asia down to the seaports at the mouth of the river Indus, from where silk was shipped westwards to the Roman Empire. The Kushanas were amongst the earliest rulers of the subcontinent to issue gold coins. These were used by traders along the Silk Route.

Buddhism:

- The most famous Kushana ruler was Kanishka, who ruled around 1900 years ago. He organised a Buddhist council, where scholars met and discussed important matters.
- Ashvaghosha, a poet who composed a biography of the Buddha, the Buddhacharita, lived in his court. Ashvaghosha and other Buddhist scholars now began writing in Sanskrit.
- A new form of Buddhism, known as Mahayana Buddhism, now developed. This had two distinct features. Earlier, the Buddha's presence was shown in sculpture by using certain signs. For instance, his attainment of enlightenment was shown by sculptures of the peepal tree.
- The second change was a belief in Bodhisattvas. These were supposed to be persons who had attained enlightenment. Once they attained enlightenment, they could live in complete isolation and meditate in peace.
- However, instead of doing that, they remained in the world to teach and help other people. The worship of Bodhisattvas became very popular, and spread throughout Central Asia, China, and later to Korea and Japan.
- Buddhism also spread to western and southern India, where dozens of caves were hollowed out of hills for monks to live in.
- Some of these caves were made on the orders of kings and queens, others by merchants and farmers. These were often located near passes through the Western Ghats. Roads connecting prosperous ports on the coast with cities in the Deccan run through theses passes.
- Traders used to stay in theses caves during their travel.
- Buddhism also spread south eastwards, to Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, and other parts of Southeast Asia including Indonesia. The older form of Buddhism, known as Theravada Buddhism was more popular in these areas.

Bhakti:

- Bhakti is generally understood as a person's devotion to his or her chosen deity. Anybody, whether rich or poor, belonging to the so-called 'high' or 'low' castes, man or woman, could follow the path of Bhakti.
- The idea of Bhakti is present in the Bhagavad Gita, a sacred book of the Hindus, which is included in the Mahabharata. In this Krishna the god, asks Arjuna, his devotee and friend, to abandon all dharmas and take refuge in him, as only he can set Arjuna free from every evil.
- This form of worship gradually spread to different parts of the country. Those who followed the system of Bhakti emphasised devotion and individual worship of a god or goddess, rather than the performance of elaborate sacrifices. According to this system of belief, if a devotee worships the chosen deity with a pure heart, the deity will appear in the form in which he or she may desire. So, the deity could be thought of as a human being, lion, tree or any other form. Once this idea gained acceptance, artists made beautiful images of these deities.
- Bhakti inspired some of the best expressions in art-sculpture, poetry and architecture.

CHAPTER 11

New Empires and Kingdoms

- This inscription is of a special kind known as a prashasti, a Sanskrit word, meaning 'in praise of'. Prashastis were composed for some of the rulers.

Samudragupta's Prashasti:

- The poet praised the king in glowing terms-as a warrior, as a king who won victories in battle, who was learned and the best of poets. He is also described as equal to the gods. The prashasti was composed in very long sentences.
- Harishena describes four different kinds of rulers, and tells us about Samudragupta's policies towards them.
    - The rulers of Aryavarta, the area shaded in green on the map. Here there were nine rulers who were uprooted, and their kingdoms were made a part of Samudragupta's empire.
    - The rulers of Dakshinapatha. Here there were twelve rulers, some of whose capitals are marked with red dots on the map. They surrendered to Samudragupta after being defeated and he then allowed them to rule again.
    - The inner circle of neighbouring states, including Assam, coastal Bengal, Nepal, and a number of gana sanghas in the northwest, marked in purple on the map. They brought tribute, followed his orders, and attended his court.
    - The rulers of the outlying areas, marked in blue on the map, perhaps the descendants of the Kushanas and Shakas, and the ruler of Sri Lanka, who submitted to him and offered daughters in marriage.

Genealogies:

- Most prashastis also mention the ancestors of the ruler. This one mentions Samudragupta's great grandfather, grandfather, father and mother.

Harshvardhan and Harshacharitra:

- Knowledge about the Gupta kings and many others got it from inscriptions and coins.
- Harshavardhana, who ruled nearly 1400 years ago, was one such ruler. His court poet, Banabhatta, wrote his biography, the Harshacharita, in Sanskrit. This gives us the genealogy of Harsha, and ends with his becoming king. Xuan Zang, also spent a lot of time at Harsha's court and left a detailed account of what he saw.
- His brother-in-law was the ruler of Kanauj and he was killed by the ruler of Bengal. Harsha took over the kingdom of Kanauj, and then led an army against the ruler of Bengal.
- Although he was successful in the east, and conquered both Magadha and Bengal, he was not as successful elsewhere.

- He tried to cross the Narmada to march into the Deccan, but was stopped by a ruler belonging to the Chalukya dynasty, Pulakeshin II.

The Pallavas, Chalukyas and Pulakeshin's Prashasti:

- The Pallavas and Chalukyas were the most important ruling dynasties in south India during this period.
- The kingdom of the Pallavas spread from the region around their capital, Kanchipuram, to the Kaveri delta, while that of the Chalukyas was centred around the Raichur Doab, between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra.
- Aihole, the capital of the Chalukyas, was an important trading centre. It developed as a religious centre, with a number of temples.
- The Pallavas and Chalukyas frequently raided one another's lands, especially attacking the capital cities, which were prosperous towns.
- The best-known Chalukya ruler was Pulakeshin II. We know about him from a prashasti, composed by his court poet Ravikirti. This tells us about his ancestors, who are traced back through four generations from father to son. Pulakeshin evidently got the kingdom from his uncle.
- Afterwords, both the Pallavas and the Chalukyas gave way to new rulers belonging to the Rashtrakuta and Chola dynasties.

Administration of the kingdoms:

- There were some new developments as well. Kings adopted a number of steps to win the support of men who were powerful, either economically, or socially, or because of their political and military strength.
- Administration:

  •Some important administrative posts were now hereditary. This means that sons succeeded fathers to these posts. For example, the poet Harishena was a maha-danda-nayaka, or chief judicial officer, like his father.

  • Sometimes, one person held many offices. For instance, besides being a maha-danda-nayaka, Harishena was a kumar-amatya, meaning an important minister, and a sandhi-vigrahika, meaning a minister of war and peace.

  • Besides, important men probably had a say in local administration. These included the nagarashreshthi or chief banker or merchant of the city, the sarthavaha or leader of the merchant caravans, the prathama-kulika or the chief craftsman, and the head of the kayasthas or scribes.
- These policies were reasonably effective, but sooner or later, some of these powerful men grew strong enough to set up independent kingdoms.

New kind of army:

- Like earlier rulers, some of these kings maintained a well-organised army, with elephants, chariots, cavalry and foot soldiers.
- Besides, there were military leaders who provided the king with troops whenever he needed them. They were not paid regular salaries.

- Instead, some of them received grants of land. They collected revenue from the land and used this to maintain soldiers and horses, and provide equipment for warfare.
- These men were known as samantas. Whenever the ruler was weak, samantas tried to become independent.

Assemblies in the southern Kingdom:

- The inscriptions of the Pallavas mention a number of local assemblies. These included the sabha, which was an assembly of brahmin land owners.
- This assembly functioned through subcommittees, which looked after irrigation, agricultural operations, making roads, local temples, etc.
- The ur was a village assembly found in areas where the land owners were not brahmins. And the nagaram was an organisation of merchants.
- These assemblies were controlled by rich and powerful landowners and merchants.
- Many of these local assemblies continued to function for centuries.

Ordinary peoples in the Kingdom:

- Lower caste people had to live on the outskirts of the village.
- High and mighty control the poor and lower people.

CHAPTER - 12

Buildings, Paintings and Books

Stupas:

- The skills of our crafts persons are also apparent in the buildings that have survived, such as stupas.
- The word stupa means a mound. While there are several kinds of stupas, round and tall, big and small, these have certain common features.
- There is a small box placed at the centre or heart of the stupa. This may contain bodily remains (such as teeth, bone or ashes) of the Buddha or his followers, or things they used, as well as precious stones, and coins. This box, known as a relic casket, was covered with earth. Later, a layer of mud brick or baked brick was added on top. And then, the dome like structure was sometimes covered with carved stone slabs.
- Often, a path, known as the pradakshina patha, was laid around the stupa. This was surrounded with railings. Entrance to the path was through gateways.
- Devotees walked around the stupa, in a clockwise direction, as a mark of devotion. Both railings and gateways were often decorated with sculpture.

Other buildings were hollowed out of rock to make artificial caves. Some of these were very elaborately decorated with sculptures and painted walls.

Hindu temples:

- The most important part of the temple was the room known as the garbhagriha, where the image of the chief deity was placed. It was here that priests performed religious rituals, and devotees offered worship to the deity.
- Often, as at Bhitargaon, a tower, known as the shikhara, was built on top of the garbhagriha, to mark this out as a sacred place.
- Building shikharas required careful planning.
- Most temples also had a space known as the mandapa. It was a hall where people could assemble.

Stupas and Temple built:

- For good stupas and temple building-good quality stone had to be found, quarried, and transported to the place that was often carefully chosen for the new building. Here, these rough blocks of stone had to be shaped and carved into pillars, and panels for walls, floors and ceilings. And then these had to be placed in precisely the right position.
- Kings and queens probably spent money from their treasury to pay the crafts persons who worked to build these splendid structures.
- When devotees came to visit the temple or the stupa, they often brought gifts, which were used to decorate the buildings.

- Some, who paid for decorations were merchants, farmers, garland makers, perfumers, smiths, and hundreds of men and women who are known only by their names which were inscribed on pillars, railings and walls.

Paintings:

- Most of the Ajanta caves have good paintings and is Buddhist monasteries.

Books:

- Some of the best–known epics were written during this period. Epics are grand, long compositions, about heroic men and women, and include stories about gods.
- A famous Tamil epic, the Silappadikaram, was composed by a poet named Ilango, around 1800 years ago.
- Another Tamil epic, the Manimekalai was composed by Sattanar around 1400 years ago. This describes the story of the daughter of Kovalan and Madhavi. These beautiful compositions were lost to scholars for many centuries, till their manuscripts were rediscovered, about a hundred years ago. Other writers, such as Kalidasa etc.

Old stories:

- Various books had been written. Puranas. Purana literally mean old. The Puranas contain stories about gods and goddesses, such as Vishnu, Shiva, Durga or Parvati. They also contain details on how they were to be worshipped. Besides, there are accounts about the creation of the world, and about kings. The Puranas were written in simple Sanskrit verse, and were meant to be heard by everybody, including women and shudras, who were not allowed to study the Vedas. They were probably recited in temples by priests, and people came to listen to them.
- Two Sanskrit epics, the Mahabharata and Ramayana had been popular for a very long time. The Mahabharata is about a war fought between the Kauravas and Pandavas, who were cousins this was a war to gain control of the throne of the Kurus, and their capital, Hastinapur. The story itself was an old one, but was written down in the form in which we know it today, about 1500 years ago.
- Both the Puranas and the Mahabharata are supposed to have been compiled by Vyasa.
- The Ramayana is about Rama, a prince of Kosala, who was sent into exile. His wife Sita was abducted by the king of Lanka, named Ravana, and Rama had to fight a battle to get her back. He won and returned to Ayodhya, the capital of Kosala, after his victory.
- Stories told by ordinary people are Jataka stories.

Books based on Science:

- Aryabhatiyam was written by Aryabhata, a mathematician and astronomer.
- He developed a scientific explanation for eclipses as well. He also found a way of calculating the circumference of a circle, which is nearly as accurate as the formula we use today.

NCERT-CLASS VII-

HISTORY

OUR PASTS-II

NCERT Class VII History- Our Past-II

Chapter Number	Chapter Name
1.	Tracing Changes Through A Thousand Years
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3.	The Delhi Sultans
4.	The Mughal Empire
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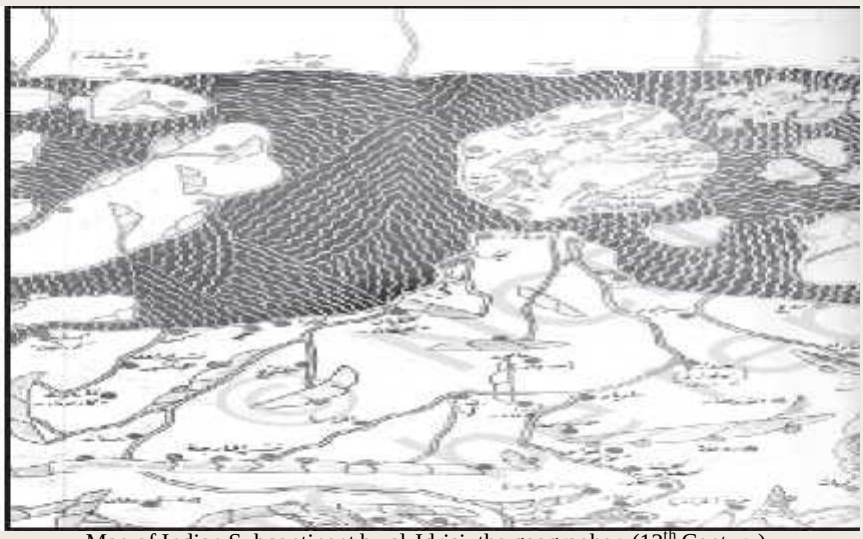
7.	Tribes, Nomads And Settled Communities
8.	Devotional Paths To The Divine
9.	The Making of Regional Cultures
10.	Eighteenth-Century Political Formations

Chapter 1

Tracing Changes Through A Thousand Years

- Take a look at the maps below



Map of Indian Subcontinent by al-Idrisi, the geographer, (12th Century)

Map of Indian subcontinent by a French Cartographer, 1720s

- The two maps shown above are of the same area but are quite different.
  - In al-Idrisi's map, south India is where we would expect to find north India and Sri Lanka is the island at the top. Place-names are marked in Arabic, and there are some well-known names like Kanauj in Uttar Pradesh (spelt in the map as Qanauj).
  - The French map seems more familiar to us and the coastal areas in particular are surprisingly detailed. This map was used by European sailors and merchants on their voyages.

- The science of cartography differed in the two periods.

New and Old Terminologies

- Historical records exist in a variety of languages which have changed considerably over the years. The grammar, vocabulary and even the meanings of words change over time.
- The term "Hindustan" today means nation-state whereas in 13th century it meant only the areas of Punjab, Haryana and the Ganga-Yamuna doab. Babur used the term to describe the geography, the fauna and the culture of the inhabitants of the subcontinent.
- The term "foreigner" meant a strange person unlike today's meaning of a non-Indian person.
- Therefore historians must be careful about the terms they use because they meant different things in the past.

Historians and their Sources

- Historians use different types of sources to learn about the past depending upon the period of their study and the nature of their investigation. They mainly rely on coins, inscriptions, architecture and textual records for information.
- With the introduction of paper, the textual records increased significantly. People used it to write holy texts, chronicles of rulers, letters and teachings of saints, petitions and judicial records, and for registers of accounts and taxes.
- Manuscripts were collected by wealthy people, rulers, monasteries and temples. They were placed in libraries and archives. These manuscripts and documents provide a lot of detailed information to historians but they are also difficult to use.
- There was no printing press in those days so scribes copied manuscripts by hand and introduced small changes– a word here, a sentence there. These small differences grew over centuries of copying until manuscripts of the same text became substantially different from one another. This is a serious problem because we rarely find the original manuscript of the author today.
- We are totally dependent upon the copies made by later scribes. As a result historians have to read different manuscript versions of the same text to guess what the author had originally written.
- Often authors revised their chronicles at different times e.g. Ziyauddin Barani wrote his chronicle first in 1356 and another version two years later. The two differ from each other but historians did not know about the existence of the first version until the 1960s.

New Social and Political Groups

- The study of the thousand years between 700 and 1750 is a huge challenge to historians largely because of the scale and variety of developments that occurred over the period.
- New technologies made their appearance – like the Persian wheel in irrigation, the spinning wheel in weaving, and firearms in combat.
- New foods and beverages arrived in the subcontinent – potatoes, corn, chillies, tea and coffee.
- These technologies and crops came along with people, who brought other ideas with them as well resulting in social, economic, political and cultural changes.
- This was also a period of great mobility. Groups of people travelled long distances in search of opportunity. The subcontinent held immense wealth and the possibilities for people to carve a fortune.
- A group of people called Rajputs became important in this period and the term included not just rulers and chieftains but also soldiers and commanders who served in the armies of different monarchs all over the subcontinent. A chivalric code of conduct – extreme valour and a great sense of loyalty –were the qualities attributed to Rajputs by their poets and bards.
- Other groups of people such as the Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Ahoms and Kayasthas (a caste of scribes and secretaries) also used the opportunities of the age to become politically important.
- Throughout this period there was a gradual clearing of forests and the extension of agriculture. Changes in their habitat forced many forest-dwellers to migrate. Others started tilling the land and became peasants.
- The new peasant groups gradually began to be influenced by regional markets, chieftains, priests, monasteries and temples. They became part of large, complex societies, and were required to pay taxes and offer goods and services to local lords. Therefore, significant economic and social differences emerged amongst peasants.
- As society became more differentiated, people were grouped into jatis or sub-castes and ranked on the basis of their backgrounds and their occupations. Ranks were not fixed permanently, and varied according to the power, influence and resources controlled by members of the jati.

- The status of the same jati could vary from area to area. Jatis framed their own rules and regulations to manage the conduct of their members. These regulations were enforced by an assembly of elders, described in some areas as the jati panchayat.

- Several villages were governed by a chieftain. Together they were only one small unit of a state.

Region and Empire

- Large states like those of the Cholas ,Tughluqs or Mughals encompassed many regions.

- A Sanskrit prashasti explained that Delhi Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban (1266-1287) was the ruler of a vast empire that stretched from Bengal (Gauda) in the east to Ghazni (Gajjana) in Afghanistan in the west and included all of south India (Dravida).

- Historians regard these as exaggerated claims of conquests. At the same time, they try to understand why rulers kept claiming to have control over different parts of the subcontinent.

- By 700 many regions already possessed distinct geographical dimensions and their own language and cultural characteristics. They were also associated with specific ruling dynasties. There was considerable conflict between these states.

- Occasionally dynasties like the Cholas, Khaljis, Tughluqs and Mughals were able to build an empire that was pan-regional – spanning diverse regions. Not all these empires were equally stable or successful.

- When the Mughal Empire declined in the eighteenth century, it led to the re-emergence of regional states. But years of imperial, pan-regional rule had altered the character of the regions.

- Across most of the subcontinent the regions were left with the legacies of the big and small states that had ruled over them.This was apparent in the emergence of many distinct and shared traditions: in the realms of governance, the management of the economy, elite cultures, and language.

- Through the thousand years between 700 and 1750 the character of the different regions did not grow in isolation. These regions felt the impact of larger pan-regional forces of integration without ever quite losing their distinctiveness.

Old and New Religions

- People’s belief in the divine was sometimes deeply personal, but more usually it was collective.

- Collective belief in a supernatural agency – religion – was often closely connected with the social and economic organisation of local communities. As the social worlds of these groups altered so too did their beliefs.

- It was during this period that important changes occurred in what we call Hinduism today. These included the worship of new deities, the construction of temples by royalty and the growing importance of Brahmanas, the priests, as dominant groups in society.

- Their knowledge of Sanskrit texts earned the Brahmanas a lot of respect in society. Their dominant position was consolidated by the support of their patrons – new rulers searching for prestige.

- One of the major developments of this period was the emergence of the idea of bhakti – of a loving, personal deity that devotees could reach without the aid of priests or elaborate rituals.

- This was also the period when new religions appeared in the subcontinent. Merchants and migrants first brought the teachings of the holy Quran to India in the seventh century.

- Many rulers were patrons of Islam and the ulama – learned theologians and jurists. And like Hinduism, Islam was interpreted in a variety of ways by its followers.

- There were the Shia Muslims who believed that the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, was the legitimate leader of the Muslim community, and the Sunni Muslims who accepted the authority of the early leaders (Khalifas) of the community, and the succeeding Khalifas.

- There were other important differences between the various schools of law (Hanafi and Shafi'I mainly in India), and in theology and mystic traditions.

Thinking about Time and Historical Periods

- Historians do not see time just as a passing of hours, days or years – as a clock or a calendar. Time also reflects changes in social and economic organisation, in the persistence and transformation of ideas and beliefs.

- The study of time is made somewhat easier by dividing the past into large segments – periods – that possess shared characteristics.

- In the middle of the nineteenth century British historians divided the history of India into three periods: "Hindu", "Muslim" and "British".

- This division was based on the idea that the religion of rulers was the only important historical change, and that there were no other significant developments – in the economy, society or culture.

- Such a division also ignored the rich diversity of the subcontinent. Few historians follow this periodisation today. Most look to economic and social factors to characterise the major elements of different moments of the past.

- The thousand years of Indian history discussed witnessed considerable change. After all, the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries were quite different from the eighth or the eleventh. Therefore, describing the entire period as one historical unit is not without its problems.

- Moreover, the "medieval" period is often contrasted with the "modern" period. "Modernity" carries with it a sense of material progress and intellectual advancement.

- This seems to suggest that the medieval period was lacking in any change whatsoever. But of course we know this was not the case.

- During these thousand years the societies of the subcontinent were transformed often and economies in several regions reached a level of prosperity that attracted the interest of European trading companies.

Chapter 2
New Kings And Kingdoms

The emergence of new dynasties

- By the seventh century there were big landlords or warrior chiefs in different regions of the subcontinent. Existing kings often acknowledged them as their subordinates or samantas.
- They were expected to bring gifts for their kings or overlords, be present at their courts and provide them with military support.
- As samantas gained power and wealth, they declared themselves to be maha-samanta, mahamandaleshvara (the great lord of a "circle" or region) and so on.
- Sometimes they asserted their independence from their overlords. One such instance was that of the Rashtrakutas in the Deccan.
- Initially they were subordinate to the Chalukyas of Karnataka. In the mid-eighth century, Dantidurga, a Rashtrakuta chief, overthrew his Chalukya overlord and performed a ritual called hiranya-garbha (literally, the golden womb). When this ritual was performed with the help of Brahmanas, it was thought to lead to the "rebirth" of the sacrificer as a Kshatriya, even if he was not one by birth.
- In other cases, men from enterprising families used their military skills to carve out kingdoms. For instance, the Kadamba Mayurasharman and the Gurjara-Pratihara Harichandra were Brahmanas who gave up their traditional professions and took to arms, successfully establishing kingdoms in Karnataka and Rajasthan respectively.

Administration in the kingdoms

- Many of these new kings adopted high-sounding titles such as maharaja-adhiraja (great king, overlord of kings), tribhuvana-chakravartin (lord of the three worlds) and so on.
- However, in spite of such claims, they often shared power with their samantas as well as with associations of peasants, traders and Brahmanas.
- In each of these states, resources were obtained from the producers, that is, peasants, cattle-keepers, artisans, who were often persuaded or compelled to surrender part of what they produced.
- Sometimes these were claimed as "rent" due to a lord who asserted that he owned the land. Revenue was also collected from traders. These resources were used to finance the king's establishment, as well as for the construction of temples and forts.
- They were also used to fight wars, which were in turn expected to lead to the acquisition of wealth in the form of plunder, and access to land as well as trade routes.

- The functionaries for collecting revenue were generally recruited from influential families, and positions were often hereditary. This was true about the army as well. In many cases, close relatives of the king held these positions.

Prashastis and land grants

- Prashastis contain details that may not be literally true. But they tell us how rulers wanted to depict themselves– as valiant, victorious warriors, for example.

- These were composed by learned Brahmanas, who occasionally helped in the administration.

- Kings often rewarded Brahmanas by grants of land. These were recorded on copper plates, which were given to those who received the land.

- Unusual for the twelfth century was a long Sanskrit poem containing the history of kings who ruled over Kashmir. It was composed by an author named Kalhana. He used a variety of sources, including inscriptions, documents, eyewitness accounts and earlier histories, to write his account. Unlike the writers of prashastis, he was often critical about rulers and their policies.

Warfare for wealth

- Each of these ruling dynasties was based in a specific region. At the same time, they tried to control other areas. One particularly prized area was the city of Kanauj in the Ganga valley.

- For centuries, rulers belonging to the Gurjara-Pratihara, Rashtrakuta and Pala dynasties fought for control over Kanauj. Because there were three "parties" in this long drawn conflict, historians often describe it as the "tripartite struggle".

- The rulers also tried to demonstrate their power and resources by building large temples. So, when they attacked one another's kingdoms, they often chose to target temples, which were sometimes extremely rich.

- One of the best known of such rulers is Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, Afghanistan.
    - He ruled from 997 to1030, and extended control over parts of Central Asia, Iran and the north-western part of the subcontinent.
    - He raided the subcontinent almost every year – his targets were wealthy temples, including that of Somnath, Gujarat.
    - Much of the wealth Mahmud carried away was used to create a splendid capital city at Ghazni.
    - He was interested in finding out more about the people he conquered, and entrusted a scholar named al-Biruni to write an account of the subcontinent.
    - This Arabic work, known as the Kitab-al Hind, remains an important source for historians. He consulted Sanskrit scholars to prepare this account.

- Other kings who engaged in warfare include the Chahamanas, later known as the Chauhans, who ruled over the region around Delhi and Ajmer.

- The Chahamanas attempted to expand their control to the west and the east, where they were opposed by the Chalukyas of Gujarat and the Gahadavalas of western Uttar Pradesh.

- The best-known Chahamana ruler was Prithviraja III (1168-1192), who defeated an Afghan ruler named Sultan Muhammad Ghori in 1191, but lost to him the very next year, in 1192.

A closer look–The Cholas

From Uraiyur to Thanjavur

- How did the Cholas rise to power? A minor chiefly family known as the Muttaraiyar held power in the Kaveri delta. They were subordinate to the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram.
- Vijayalaya, who belonged to the ancient chiefly family of the Cholas from Uraiyur, captured the delta from the Muttaraiyar in the middle of the ninth century. He built the town of Thanjavur and a temple for goddess Nishumbhasudini there.
- The successors of Vijayalaya conquered neighbouring regions and the kingdom grew in size and power. The Pandyan and the Pallava territories to the south and north were made part of this kingdom.
- Rajaraja I, considered the most powerful Chola ruler, became king in 985 and expanded control over most of these areas. He also reorganised the administration of the empire.
- Rajaraja's son Rajendra I continued his policies and even raided the Ganga valley, Sri Lanka and countries of Southeast Asia, developing a navy for these expeditions.

Splendid temples and bronze sculpture

- The big temples of Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram, built by Rajaraja and Rajendra, are architectural and sculptural marvels.
- Chola temples often became the nuclei of settlements which grew around them. These were centres of craft production.
- Temples were also endowed with land by rulers as well as by others. The produce of this land went to maintain all the specialists who worked at the temple and very often lived near it – priests, garland makers, cooks, sweepers, musicians, dancers, etc.
- In other words, temples were not only places of worship; they were the hub of economic, social and cultural life as well.
- Amongst the crafts associated with temples, the making of bronze images was the most distinctive.
- Chola bronze images are considered amongst the finest in the world. While most images were of deities, sometimes images were made of devotees as well.

Agriculture and irrigation

- Many of the achievements of the Cholas were made possible through new developments in agriculture.
- Notice that the river Kaveri branches off into several small channels before emptying into the Bay of Bengal. These channels overflow frequently, depositing fertile soil on their banks.
- Water from the channels also provides the necessary moisture for agriculture, particularly the cultivation of rice.
- Although agriculture had developed earlier in other parts of Tamil Nadu, it was only from the fifth or sixth century that this area was opened up for large-scale cultivation.
- Forests had to be cleared in some regions; land had to be levelled in other areas.
- In the delta region embankments had to be built to prevent flooding and canals had to be constructed to carry water to the fields.
- In many areas two crops were grown in a year. In many cases it was necessary to water crops artificially.
- A variety of methods were used for irrigation. In some areas wells were dug. In other places huge tanks were constructed to collect rainwater. Remember that irrigation works require planning – organizing labour and resources, maintaining these works and deciding on how water is to be shared.
- Most of the new rulers, as well as people living in villages, took an active interest in these activities.

The administration of the empire

- Settlements of peasants, known as ur, became prosperous with the spread of irrigation agriculture. Groups of such villages formed larger units called nadu.
- The village council and the nadu had several administrative functions including dispensing justice and collecting taxes.
- Rich peasants of the Vellala caste exercised considerable control over the affairs of the nadu under the supervision of the central Chola government.
- The Chola kings gave some rich landowners titles like muvendavelan (a velan or peasant serving three kings), araiyar (chief), etc. as markers of respect, and entrusted them with important offices of the state at the centre.
- We have seen that Brahmanas often received land grants or brahmadeya. As a result, a large number of Brahmana settlements emerged in the Kaveri valley as in other parts of south India.
- Each brahmadeya was looked after by an assembly or sabha of prominent Brahmana landholders. These assemblies worked very efficiently. Their decisions were recorded in detail in inscriptions, often on the stonewalls of temples.

- Associations of traders known as nagarams also occasionally performed administrative functions in towns.
- Inscriptions from Uttaramerur in Chingleput district, Tamil Nadu, provide details of the way in which the sabha was organised.

- The sabha had separate committees to look after irrigation works, gardens, temples, etc. Names of those eligible to be members of these committees were written on small tickets of palm leaf and kept in an earthenware pot, from which a young boy was asked to pick the tickets, one by one for each committee.

Types of land

Chola inscriptions mention several categories of land.

vellanvagai
land of non-Brahmana peasant proprietors

brahmadeya
land gifted to Brahmanas

shalabhoga
land for the maintenance of a school

devadana, tirunamattukkani
land gifted to temples

pallichchhandam
land donated to Jaina institutions

Chapter 3

The Delhi Sultans

Delhi: The capital city

- Delhi became an important city only in the twelfth century. Delhi first became the capital of a kingdom under the Tomara Rajputs, who were defeated in the middle of the twelfth century by the Chauhans (also referred to as Chahamanas) of Ajmer. It was under the Tomaras and Chauhans that Delhi became an important commercial centre.

- Many rich Jaina merchants lived in the city and constructed several temples. Coins minted here, called dehliwal, had a wide circulation.

- The transformation of Delhi into a capital that controlled vast areas of the subcontinent started with the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate in the beginning of the thirteenth century. There were five dynasties that together made the Delhi Sultanate.

- The Delhi Sultans built many cities in the area such as Dehli-i Kuhna, Siri and Jahanpanah that we now know as Delhi.

- Although inscriptions, coins and architecture provide a lot of information, especially valuable are “histories”, tarikh (singular) / tawarikh (plural), written in Persian, the language of administration under the Delhi Sultans.

- The authors of tawarikh were learned men: secretaries, administrators, poets and courtiers, who both recounted events and advised rulers on governance, emphasising the importance of just rule. They lived in cities (mainly Delhi) and hardly ever in villages, often wrote their histories for Sultans in the hope of rich rewards and advised rulers on the need to preserve an “ideal” social order based on birthright and gender distinctions.Their ideas were not shared by everybody.

- In 1236 Sultan Iltutmish’s daughter, Raziyya, became Sultan. The chronicler of the age, Minhaj-i Siraj, recognised that she was more able and qualified than all her brothers. But he was not comfortable at having a queen as ruler. Nor were the nobles happy at her attempts to rule independently. She was removed from the throne in 1240.

From garrison town to empire

The expansion of the Delhi Sultanate

- In the early thirteenth century the control of the Delhi Sultans rarely went beyond heavily fortified towns occupied by garrisons. The Sultans seldom controlled the hinterland of the cities and were therefore dependent upon trade, tribute or plunder for supplies.

- Controlling garrison towns in distant Bengal and Sind from Delhi was extremely difficult. Rebellion, war, even bad weather could snap fragile communication routes.

- The state was also challenged by Mongol invasions from Afghanistan and by governors who rebelled at any sign of the Sultan's weakness. The Sultanate barely survived these challenges.

- The state's expansion occurred during the reigns of Ghiyasuddin Balban, Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq.

- The first set of campaigns along the "internal frontier" of the Sultanate aimed at consolidating the hinterlands of the garrison towns.
    1. During these campaigns forests were cleared in the Ganga-Yamuna doab and hunter gatherers and pastoralists expelled from their habitat.
    2. These lands were given to peasants and agriculture was encouraged.
    3. New fortresses and towns were established to protect trade routes and to promote regional trade.

- The second expansion occurred along the "external frontier" of the Sultanate.

- Military expeditions into southern India started during the reign of Alauddin Khalji and culminated with Muhammad Tughluq.

- In their campaigns, Sultanate armies captured elephants, horses and slaves and carried away precious metals.

- By the end of Muhammad Tughluq's reign, 150 years after somewhat humble beginnings, the armies of the Delhi Sultanate had marched across a large part of the subcontinent.
    1. They had defeated rival armies and seized cities.
    2. The Sultanate collected taxes from the peasantry and dispensed justice in its realm.

A closer look: Administration and Consolidation under the Khaljis and Tughluqs

- The consolidation of a kingdom as vast as the Delhi Sultanate needed reliable governors and administrators.

- Rather than appointing aristocrats and landed chieftains as governors, the early Delhi Sultans, especially Iltutmish, favoured their special slaves purchased for military service, called bandagan in Persian.

- The slaves were carefully trained to man some of the most important political offices in the kingdom. Since they were totally dependent upon their master, the Sultan could trust and rely upon them.

- The Khaljis and Tughluqs continued to use bandagan and also raised people of humble birth, who were often their clients, to high political positions. They were appointed as generals and governors. However, this also introduced an element of political instability.

- Slaves and clients were loyal to their masters and patrons, but not to their heirs. New Sultans had their own servants. As a result the accession of a new monarch often saw conflict between the old and the new nobility.

- The patronage of these humble people by the Delhi Sultans also shocked many elites and theauthors of Persian tawarikh criticised the Delhi Sultans for appointing the "low and base-born" to high offices.

- Like the earlier Sultans, the Khalji and Tughluq monarchs appointed military commanders as governors of territories of varying sizes. These lands were called iqta and their holder was called iqtadar or muqti.

- The duty of the muqtis was to lead military campaigns and maintain law and order in their iqtas. In exchange for their military services, the muqtis collected the revenues of their assignments as salary. They also paid their soldiers from these revenues.

- Control over muqtis was most effective if their office was not inheritable and if they were assigned iqtas for a short period of time before being shifted. These harsh conditions of service were rigorously imposed during the reigns of Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq.

- Accountants were appointed by the state to check the amount of revenue collected by the muqtis. Care was taken that the muqti collected only the taxes prescribed by the state and that he kept the required number of soldiers.

- As the Delhi Sultans brought the hinterland of the cities under their control, they forced the landed chieftains — the samanta aristocrats — and rich landlords to accept their authority.

- Under Alauddin Khalji the state brought the assessment and collection of land revenue under its own control.
    1. The rights of the local chieftains to levy taxes were cancelled and they were also forced to pay taxes.
    2. The Sultan's administrators measured the land and kept careful accounts.
    3. Some of the old chieftains and landlords served the Sultanate as revenue collectors and assessors.

4. There were three types of taxes –
    1. On cultivation called kharaj and amounting to about 50 per cent of the peasant's produce,
    2. On cattle and
    3. On houses.

- It is important to remember that large parts of the subcontinent remained outside the control of the Delhi Sultans. It was difficult to control distant provinces like Bengal from Delhi and soon after annexing southern India, the entire region became independent.

- Even in the Gangetic plain there were forested areas that Sultanate forces could not penetrate. Local chieftains established their rule in these regions. Sometimes rulers like Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq could force their control in these areas but only for a short duration.

The Mongols

- The Mongols under Genghis Khan invaded Transoxiana in north-east Iran in 1219 and the Delhi Sultanate faced their onslaught soon after.

- Mongol attacks on the Delhi Sultanate increased during the reign of Alauddin Khalji and in the early years of Muhammad Tughluq's rule. This forced the two rulers to mobilise a large standing army in Delhi which posed a huge administrative challenge.

- In the list of Muhammad Tughluq's failures we sometimes forget that for the first time in the history of the Sultanate, a Delhi Sultan planned a campaign to capture Mongol territory. Unlike Alauddin's defensive measures, Muhammad Tughluq's measures were conceived as a part of a military offensive against the Mongols.

The Sultanate in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

- The Sultanate in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. After the Tughluqs, the Sayyid and Lodi dynasties ruled from Delhi and Agra until 1526. By then, Jaunpur, Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajasthan and the entire south India had independent rulers who established flourishing states and prosperous capitals.

- This was also the period which saw the emergence of new ruling groups like the Afghans and the Rajputs. Some of the states established in this period were small but powerful and extremely well administered.

- Sher Shah Sur (1540-1545) started his career as the manager of a small territory for his uncle in Bihar and eventually challenged and defeated the Mughal emperor Humayun (1530-1540, 1555-1556). Sher Shah captured Delhi and established his own dynasty.

- Although the Suri dynasty ruled for only fifteen years (1540-1555), it introduced an administration that borrowed elements from Alauddin Khalji and made them more efficient.

- Sher Shah's administration became the model followed by the great emperor Akbar (1556-1605) when he consolidated the Mughal Empire.

Alauddin Khalji's administration	**Muhammad Tughlaq's administration**
Delhi was attacked twice, in 1299/1300 and 1302-03. As a defensive measure, Alauddin Khalji raised a large standing army.	The Sultanate was attacked in the early years of Muhammad Tughluq's reign. The Mongol army was defeated. Muhammad Tughluq was confident about the strength of his army and his resources to plan an attack on Transoxiana. He therefore raised a large standing army.
Alauddin constructed a new garrison town named Siri for his soldiers.	Rather than constructing a new garrison town, the oldest of the four cities of Delhi (Dehli-i Kuhna) was emptied of its residents and the soldiers garrisoned there. The residents of the old city were sent to the new capital of Daulatabad in the south.
The soldiers had to be fed. This was done through the produce collected as tax from lands between the Ganga and Yamuna. Tax was fixed at 50 per cent of the peasant's yield.	Produce from the same area was collected as tax to feed the army. But to meet the need of the large number of soldiers the Sultan levied additional taxes. This coincided with famine in the area
The soldiers had to be paid. Alauddin chose to pay his soldiers salaries in cash rather than iqtas. The soldiers would buy their supplies from merchants in Delhi and it was thus feared that merchants would raise their prices. To stop this, Alauddin controlled the prices of goods in Delhi. Prices were carefully surveyed by officers, and merchants who did not sell at the prescribed rates were punished.	Muhammad Tughluq also paid his soldiers cash salaries. But instead of controlling prices, he used a "token" currency, somewhat like present-day paper currency, but made out of cheap metals, not gold and silver. People in the fourteenth century did not trust these coins. They were very smart: they saved their gold and silver coins and paid all their taxes to the state with this token currency. This cheap currency could also be counterfeited easily.
Alauddin's administrative measures were quite successful and chroniclers praised his reign for its cheap prices and efficient supplies of goods in the market. He successfully withstood the threat of Mongol invasions.	Muhammad Tughluq's administrative measures were a failure. His campaign into Kashmir was a disaster. He then gave up his plans to invade Transoxiana and disbanded his large army. Meanwhile, his administrative measures created complications. The shifting of people to Daulatabad was resented. The raising of taxes and famine in the Ganga-Yamuna belt led to widespread rebellion. And finally, the "token" currency had to be recalled.

Chapter 4

The Mughal Empire

- Ruling as large a territory as the Indian subcontinent with such a diversity of people and cultures was an extremely difficult task for any ruler to accomplish in the Middle Ages. Quite in contrast to their predecessors, the Mughals created an empire and accomplished what had hitherto seemed possible for only short periods of time.

- From the latter half of the sixteenth century they expanded their kingdom from Agra and Delhi, until in the seventeenth century they controlled nearly all of the subcontinent.

- They imposed structures of administration and ideas of governance that outlasted their rule, leaving a political legacy that succeeding rulers of the subcontinent could not ignore.

- Today the Prime Minister of India addresses the nation on Independence Day from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi, the residence of the Mughal emperors.

Who were the Mughals?

- The Mughals were descendants of two great lineages of rulers. From their mother's side they were descendants of Genghis Khan (died 1227), ruler of the Mongol tribes, China and Central Asia. From their father's side they were the successors of Timur (died 1404), the ruler of Iran, Iraq and modern-day Turkey.

- However, the Mughals did not like to be called Mughal or Mongol. This was because Genghis Khan's memory was associated with the massacre of innumerable people. It was also linked with the Uzbegs, their Mongol competitors.

- On the other hand, the Mughals were proud of their Timurid ancestry, not least of all because their great ancestor had captured Delhi in 1398.

- They celebrated their genealogy pictorially, each ruler getting a picture made of Timur and himself.

Mughal Military Campaigns

- Babur, the first Mughal emperor (1526-1530), succeeded to the throne of Ferghana in 1494 when he was only 12 years old.

- He was forced to leave his ancestral throne due to the invasion of another Mongol group, the Uzbegs.
- After years of wandering he seized Kabul in 1504.

- In 1526 he defeated the Sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, at Panipat and captured Delhi and Agra.

MUGHAL EMPERORS

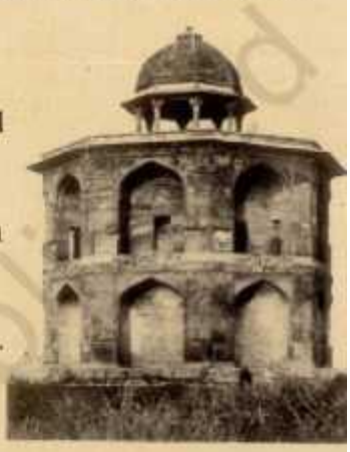
Major campaigns and events

BABUR 1526-1530

1526 – defeated Ibrahim Lodi and his Afghan supporters at Panipat.
1527 – defeated Rana Sanga, Rajput rulers and allies at Khanua.
1528 – defeated the Rajputs at Chanderi;
Established control over Agra and Delhi before his death.

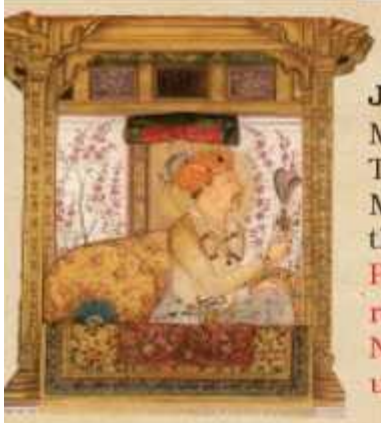
HUMAYUN 1530-1540, 1555-1556

(1) Humayun divided his inheritance according to the will of his father. His brothers were each given a province. The ambitions of his brother Mirza Kamran weakened Humayun's cause against Afghan competitors. Sher Khan defeated Humayun at Chausa (1539) and Kanauj (1540), forcing him to flee to Iran.
(2) In Iran Humayun received help from the Safavid Shah. He recaptured Delhi in 1555 but died the next year after an accident in this building.



AKBAR
1556-1605

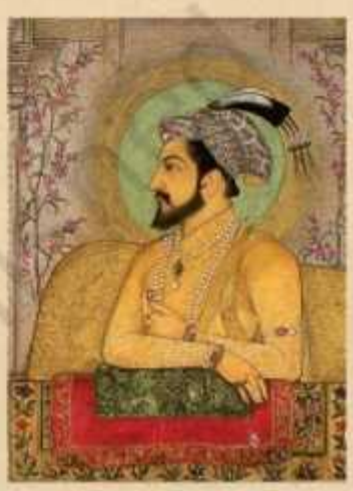
Akbar was 13 years old when he became emperor. His reign can be divided into three periods.
(1) 1556-1570 – Akbar became independent of the regent Bairam Khan and other members of his domestic staff. Military campaigns were launched against the Suris and other Afghans, against the neighbouring kingdoms of Malwa and Gondwana, and to suppress the revolt of his half-brother Mirza Hakim and the Uzbegs. In 1568 the Sisodiya capital of Chittor was seized and in 1569 Ranthambhor.
(2) 1570-1585 – military campaigns in Gujarat were followed by campaigns in the east in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. These campaigns were complicated by the 1579-1580 revolt in support of Mirza Hakim.
(3) 1585-1605 – expansion of Akbar's empire. Campaigns were launched in the north-west. Qandahar was seized from the Safavids, Kashmir was annexed, as also Kabul, after the death of Mirza Hakim. Campaigns in the Deccan started and Berar, Khandesh and parts of Ahmadnagar were annexed. In the last years of his reign Akbar was distracted by the rebellion of Prince Salim, the future Emperor Jahangir.



Jahangir 1605-1627

Military campaigns started by Akbar continued. The Sisodiya ruler of Mewar, Amar Singh, accepted Mughal service. Less successful campaigns against the Sikhs, the Ahoms and Ahmadnagar followed. Prince Khurram, the future Emperor Shah Jahan, rebelled in the last years of his reign. The efforts of Nur Jahan, Jahangir's wife, to marginalise him were unsuccessful.

Shah Jahan 1627-1658



Mughal campaigns continued in the Deccan under Shah Jahan. The Afghan noble Khan Jahan Lodi rebelled and was defeated. Campaigns were launched against Ahmadnagar; the Bundelas were defeated and Orchha seized. In the north-west, the campaign to seize Balkh from the Uzbegs was unsuccessful and Qandahar was lost to the Safavids. In 1632 Ahmadnagar was finally annexed and the Bijapur forces sued for peace. In 1657-1658, there was conflict over succession amongst Shah Jahan's sons. Aurangzeb was victorious and his three brothers, including Dara Shukoh, were killed. Shah Jahan was imprisoned for the rest of his life in Agra.

Aurangzeb 1658-1707

(1) In the north-east, the Ahoms were defeated in 1663, but rebelled again in the 1680s. Campaigns in the north-west against the Yusufzai and the Sikhs were temporarily successful. Mughal intervention in the succession and internal politics of the Rathor Rajputs of Marwar led to their rebellion. Campaigns against the Maratha chieftain Shivaji were initially successful. But Aurangzeb insulted Shivaji who escaped from Agra, declared himself an independent king and resumed his campaigns against the Mughals. Prince Akbar rebelled against Aurangzeb and received support from the Marathas and the Deccan Sultanate. He finally fled to Safavid Iran.

(2) After Akbar's rebellion Aurangzeb sent armies against the Deccan Sultanates. Bijapur was annexed in 1685 and Golconda in 1687. From 1698 Aurangzeb personally managed campaigns in the Deccan against the Marathas who started guerrilla warfare. Aurangzeb also had to face the rebellion in north India of the Sikhs, Jats and Satnamis, in the north-east of the Ahoms and in the Deccan of the Marathas. His death was followed by a succession conflict amongst his sons.

Mughal Traditions of Succession

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

Mughal Relations with Other Rulers

- The Mughal rulers campaigned constantly against rulers who refused to accept their authority. But as the Mughals became powerful many other rulers also joined them voluntarily.
- The Rajputs are a good example of this. Many of them married their daughters into Mughal families and received high positions. But many resisted as well.
- The Sisodiya Rajputs refused to accept Mughal authority for a long time. Once defeated, however, they were honourably treated by the Mughals, given their lands *(watan)* back as assignments *(watan jagir).*
- The careful balance between defeating but not humiliating their opponents enabled the Mughals to extend their influence over many kings and chieftains. But it was difficult to keep this balance all the time.

Mansabdars and Jagirdars

- As the empire expanded to encompass different regions the Mughals recruited diverse bodies of people.
- From a small nucleus of Turkish nobles (Turanis) they expanded to include Iranians, Indian Muslims, Afghans, Rajputs, Marathas and other groups. Those who joined Mughal service were enrolled as ***mansabdars***.
- The term ***mansabdar*** refers to an individual who holds a ***mansab***, meaning a position or rank. It was a grading system used by the Mughals to fix (1) rank, (2) salary and (3) military responsibilities.
- Rank and salary were determined by a numerical value called ***zat.*** The higher the ***zat***, the more prestigious was the noble's position in court and the larger his salary.
- The ***mansabdar's*** military responsibilities required him to maintain a specified number of ***sawar*** or Cavalry men.
- The ***mansabdar*** brought his cavalrymen for review, got them registered, their horses branded and then received money to pay them as salary.

- ***Mansabdars*** received their salaries as revenue assignments called ***jagirs*** which were somewhat like ***iqtas.***

- But unlike ***muqtis***, most ***mansabdars*** did not actually reside in or administer their ***jagirs***. They only had rights to the revenue of their assignments which was collected for them by their servants while the ***mansabdars*** themselves served in some other part of the country.

- In Akbar's reign these ***jagirs*** were carefully assessed so that their revenues were roughly equal to the salary of the ***mansabdar.***

- By Aurangzeb's reign this was no longer the case and the actual revenue collected was often less than the granted sum. There was also a huge increase in the number of ***mansabdars,*** which meant a long wait before they received a ***jagir.***

- These and other factors created a shortage in the number of ***jagirs***. As a result, many ***jagirdars*** tried to extract as much revenue as possible while they had a ***jagir***.

- Aurangzeb was unable to control these developments in the last years of his reign and the peasantry therefore suffered tremendously.

Zabt and Zamindars

- The main source of income available to Mughal rulers was tax on the produce of the peasantry. In most places, peasants paid taxes through the rural elites, that is, the headman or the local chieftain.

- The Mughals used one term – zamindars – to describe all intermediaries, whether they were local headmen of villages or powerful chieftains.

- Akbar's revenue minister, Todar Mal, carried out a careful survey of crop yields, prices and areas cultivated for a 10-year period, 1570- 1580. On the basis of this data, tax was fixed on each crop in cash.

- Each province was divided into revenue circles with its own schedule of revenue rates for individual crops. This revenue system was known as *zabt.*

- It was prevalent in those areas where Mughal administrators could survey the land and keep very careful accounts. This was not possible in provinces such as Gujarat and Bengal.

- In some areas the zamindars exercised a great deal of power. The exploitation by Mughal administrators could drive them to rebellion.

- Sometimes zamindars and peasants of the same caste allied in rebelling against Mughal authority. These peasant revolts challenged the stability of the Mughal Empire from the end of the seventeenth century.

A Closer Look: Akbar's Policies

- The broad features of administration were laid down by Akbar and were elaborately discussed by Abul Fazl in his book, the *Akbar Nama,* in particular in its last volume, the *Ain-i Akbari.*
- Abul Fazl explained that the empire was divided into provinces called *subas,* governed by a *subadar* who carried out both political and military functions.
- Each province also had a financial officer or *diwan.*
- For the maintenance of peace and order in his province, the *subadar* was supported by other officers such as the military paymaster *(bakhshi),* the minister in charge of religious and charitable patronage *(sadr),* military commanders *(faujdars)* and the town police commander *(kotwal).*
- Akbar's nobles commanded large armies and had access to large amounts of revenue. While they were loyal the empire functioned efficiently but by the end of the seventeenth century many nobles had built independent networks of their own. Their loyalties to the empire were weakened by their own self-interest.
- While Akbar was at Fatehpur Sikri during the 1570s he started discussions on religion with the *ulama,* Brahmanas, Jesuit priests who were Roman Catholics, and Zoroastrians. These discussions took place in the *ibadat khana.*
- He was interested in the religion and social customs of different people. Akbar's interaction with people of different faiths made him realise that religious scholars who emphasised ritual and dogma were often bigots. Their teachings created divisions and disharmony amongst his subjects. This eventually led Akbar to the idea of *sulh-i kul* or "universal peace".
- This idea of tolerance did not discriminate between people of different religions in his realm. Instead it focused on a system of ethics – honesty, justice, peace – that was universally applicable.
- Abul Fazl helped Akbar in framing a vision of governance around this idea of *sulh-i kul.* This principle of governance was followed by Jahangir and Shah Jahan as well.

The Mughal Empire in the Seventeenth Century and After

- The administrative and military efficiency of the Mughal Empire led to great economic and commercial prosperity. International travellers described it as the fabled land of wealth.
- But these same visitors were also appalled at the state of poverty that existed side by side with the greatest opulence. The inequalities were glaring.
- Documents from the twentieth year of Shah Jahan's reign inform us that the highest-ranking *mansabdars* were only 445 in number out of a total of 8,000. This small number – a mere 5.6 per cent of the total number of *mansabdars* – received 61.5 per cent of the total estimated revenue of the empire as salaries for themselves and their troopers.

- The Mughal emperors and their *mansabdars* spent a great deal of their income on salaries and goods.This expenditure benefited the artisans and peasantry who supplied them with goods and produce.

- But the scale of revenue collection left very little for investment in the hands of the primary producers – the peasant and the artisan. The poorest amongst them lived from hand to mouth and they could hardly consider investing in additional resources – tools and supplies – to increase productivity.

- The wealthier peasantry and artisanal groups, the merchants and bankers profited in this economic world.

- The enormous wealth and resources commanded by the Mughal elite made them an extremely powerful group of people in the late seventeenth century.

- As the authority of the Mughal emperor slowly declined, his servants emerged as powerful centres of power in the regions. They constituted new dynasties and held command of provinces like Hyderabad and Awadh.

- Although they continued to recognise the Mughal emperor in Delhi as their master, by the eighteenth century the provinces of the empire had consolidated their independent political identities.

Chapter 5

Rulers and Builders

- The figure below shows the first balcony of the Qutb Minar. Qutbuddin Aybak had this constructed around 1199.

  - The pattern created under the balcony by the small arches and geometrical designs is noticeable.
  - The two bands of inscriptions under the balcony are in Arabic.
  - The surface of the minar is curved and angular.
  - Placing an inscription on such a surface required great precision.
  - Only the most skilled craftsperson could perform this task.

- Remember that very few buildings were made of stone or brick 800 years ago. What would have been the impact of a building like the Qutb Minar on observers in the thirteenth century?

- Between the eighth and the eighteenth centuries kings and their officers built two kinds of structures:
  1. Forts, palaces, garden residences and tombs – safe, protected and grandiose places of rest in this world and
  2. Structures meant for public activity including temples, mosques, tanks, wells, caravanserais and bazaars.

- Kings were expected to care for their subjects, and by making structures for their use and comfort, rulers hoped to win their praise.

- Construction activity was also carried out by others, including merchants. They built temples, mosques and wells.

- However, domestic architecture – large mansions (havelis) of merchants – has survived only from the eighteenth century.

Engineering Skills and Construction

- Monuments provide an insight into the technologies used for construction. a roof can be made by placing wooden beams or a slab of stone across four walls. But the task becomes difficult if we want to make a large room with an elaborate superstructure. This requires more sophisticated skills.

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

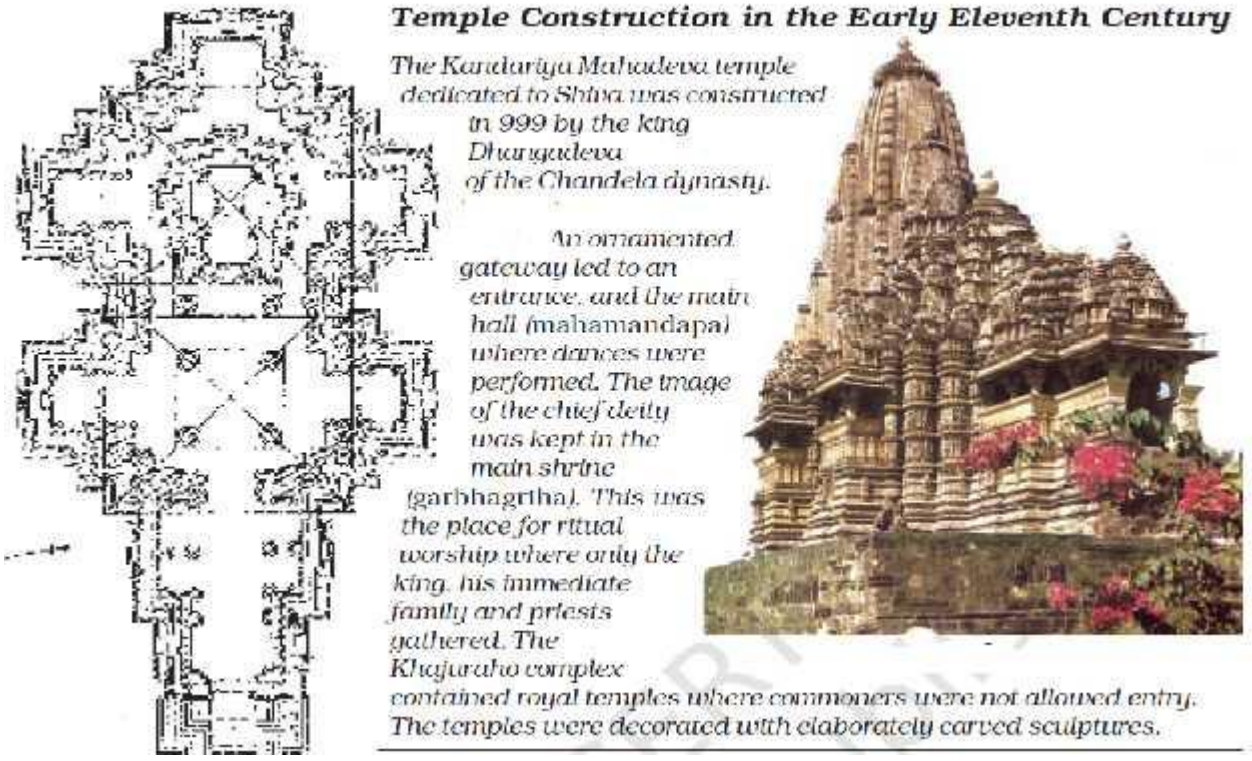
- Roofs, doors and windows were still made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns, a style of architecture called "trabeate" or "corbelled".

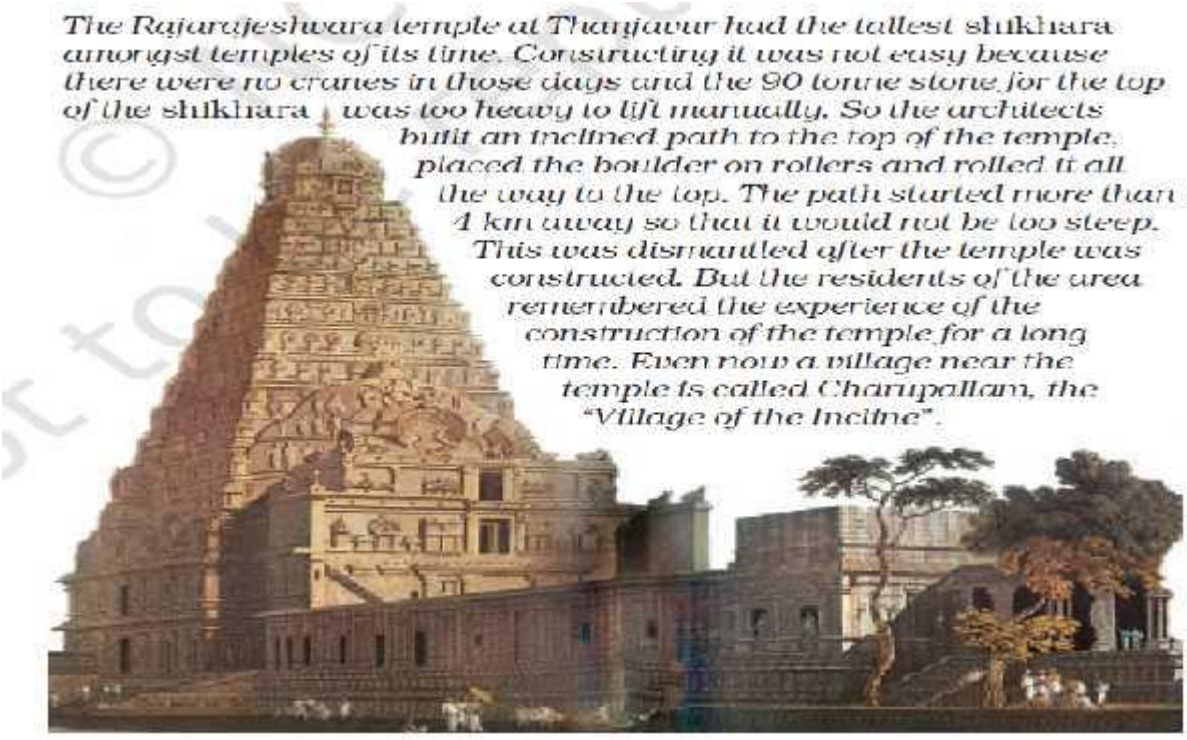
- Between the eighth and thirteenth centuries the trabeate style was used in the construction of temples, mosques, tombs and in buildings attached to large stepped-wells (baolis).

- Two technological and stylistic developments are noticeable from the twelfth century.

    1. The weight of the superstructure above the doors and windows was sometimes carried by arches. This architectural form was called "arcuate".

    2. Limestone cement was increasingly used in construction. This was very high-quality cement, which, when mixed with stone chips hardened into concrete. This made construction of large structures easier and faster.





Building Temples, Mosques and Tanks

- Temples and mosques were beautifully constructed because they were places of worship. They were also meant to demonstrate the power, wealth and devotion of the patron.
- In the Rajarajeshvara temple an inscription mentions that it was built by King Rajarajadeva for the worship of his god, Rajarajeshvaram. It is noticeable how the names of the ruler and the god are very similar.
- The king took the god's name because it was auspicious and he wanted to appear like a god. Through the rituals of worship in the temple one god (Rajarajadeva) honoured another (Rajarajeshvaram).
- The largest temples were all constructed by kings. The other, lesser deities in the temple were gods and goddesses of the allies and subordinates of the ruler.
- The temple was a miniature model of the world ruled by the king and his allies. As they worshipped their deities together in the royal temples, it seemed as if they brought the just rule of the gods on earth.
- Muslim Sultans and Padshahs did not claim to be incarnations of god but Persian court chronicles described the Sultan as the "Shadow of God".

- An inscription in the Quwwat al-Islam mosque explained that:
  - God chose Alauddin as a king because he had the qualities of Moses and Solomon, the great lawgivers of the past.
  - The greatest lawgiver and architect was God Himself.
  - He created the world out of chaos and introduced order and symmetry.

- As each new dynasty came to power, kings wanted to emphasize their moral right to be rulers. Constructing places of worship provided rulers with the chance to proclaim their close relationship with God, especially important in an age of rapid political change.

- Rulers also offered patronage to the learned and pious, and tried to transform their capitals and cities into great cultural centres that brought fame to their rule and their realm.

- It was widely believed that the rule of a just king would be an age of plenty when the heavens would not withhold rain. At the same time, making precious water available by constructing tanks and reservoirs was highly praised.

- Sultan Iltutmish won universal respect for constructing a large reservoir just outside Dehli-i-Kuhna. It was called the Hauz-i-Sultani or the "King's Reservoir".

- Rulers often constructed tanks and reservoirs – big and small – for use by ordinary people. Sometimes these tanks and reservoirs were part of a temple, mosque or a gurdwara (a place of worship and congregation for Sikhs).

Why were Temples Destroyed?

- Because kings built temples to demonstrate their devotion to God and their power and wealth, it is not surprising that when they attacked one another's kingdoms they often targeted these buildings.

- In the early ninth century when the Pandyan king Shrimara Shrivallabha invaded Sri Lanka and defeated the king, Sena I (831-851), the Buddhist monk and chronicler Dhammakitti noted:

  "he removed all the valuables ... The statue of the Buddha made entirely of gold in the Jewel Palace ... and the golden images in the various monasteries – all these he seized."

- The blow to the pride of the Sinhalese ruler had to be avenged and the next Sinhalese ruler, Sena II, ordered his general to invade Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas.

- The Buddhist chronicler noted that the expeditio made a special effort to find and restore the gold statue of the Buddha.

- Similarly in the early eleventh century, when the Chola king Rajendra I built a Shiva temple in his capital he filled it with prized statues seized from defeated rulers. An incomplete list included:
  1. A Sun-pedestal from the Chalukyas,
  2. A Ganesha statue and several statues of Durga;
  3. A Nandi statue from the eastern Chalukyas;
  4. An image of Bhairava (a form of Shiva) and Bhairavi from the Kalingas of Orissa; and
  5. A Kali statue from the Palas of Bengal.

- Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni was a contemporary of Rajendra I.
  - During his campaigns in the subcontinent he also attacked the temples of defeated kings and looted their wealth and idols.
  - Sultan Mahmud was not a very important ruler at that time.
  - But by destroying temples – especially the one at Somnath – he tried to win credit as a great hero of Islam.

- In the political culture of the Middle Ages most rulers displayed their political might and military success by attacking and looting the places of worship of defeated rulers.

Gardens, Tombs and Forts

- Under the Mughals, architecture became more complex. Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, and especially Shah Jahan were personally interested in literature, art and architecture.

- In his autobiography, Babur described his interest in planning and laying out formal gardens, placed within rectangular walled enclosures and divided into four quarters by artificial channels. These gardens were called chahar bagh, four gardens, because of their symmetrical division into quarters.

- Beginning with Akbar, some of the most beautiful chahar baghs were constructed by Jahangir and Shah Jahan in Kashmir, Agra and Delhi.

- There were several important architectural innovations during Akbar's reign. For inspiration, Akbar's architects turned to the tombs of his Central Asian ancestor, Timur.

- The central towering dome and the tall gateway (pishtaq) became important aspects of Mughal architecture, first visible in Humayun's tomb. The tomb was placed in the centre of a huge formal chahar bagh and built in the tradition known as "eight paradises" or ***hasht bihisht*** – a central hall surrounded by eight rooms. The building was constructed with red sandstone, edged with white marble.

- It was during Shah Jahan's reign that the different elements of Mughal architecture were fused together in a grand harmonious synthesis. His reign witnessed a huge amount of construction activity especially in Agra and Delhi.

- The ceremonial halls of public and private audience (diwan-i khas or aam) were carefully planned. Placed within a large courtyard, these courts were also described as ***chihil sutun*** or forty-pillared halls.

- Shah Jahan's audience halls were specially constructed to resemble a mosque. The pedestal on which his throne was placed was frequently described as the ***qibla***, the direction faced by Muslims at prayer, since everybody faced that direction when court was in session.

- The idea of the king as a representative of God on earth was suggested by these architectural features.

- The connection between royal justice and the imperial court was emphasised by Shah Jahan in his newly constructed court in the Red Fort at Delhi.

- Behind the emperor's throne were a series of pietra dura inlays that depicted the legendary Greek god Orpheus playing the lute. It was believed that Orpheus's music could calm ferocious beasts until they coexisted together peaceably.

- The construction of Shah Jahan's audience hall aimed to communicate that the king's justice would treat the high and the low as equals creating a world where all could live together in harmony.

- In the early years of his reign, Shah Jahan's capital was at Agra, a city where the nobility had constructed their homes on the banks of the river Yamuna. These were set in the midst of formal gardens constructed in the chahar bagh format.

- The chahar bagh garden also had a variation that historians describe as the "riverfront garden". In this the dwelling was not located in the middle of the chahar bagh but at its edge, close to the bank of the river.

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

- In the new city of Shahjahanabad that Shah Jahan constructed in Delhi, the imperial palace commanded the river-front. Only specially favoured nobles – like his eldest son Dara Shukoh – were given access to the river.

- All others had to construct their homes in the city away from the River Yamuna.

Region and Empire

- As construction activity increased between the eighth and eighteenth centuries there was also a considerable sharing of ideas across regions: the traditions of one region were adopted by another.

- In Vijayanagara, for example, the elephant stables of the rulers were strongly influenced by the style of architecture found in the adjoining Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda.

- In Vrindavan, near Mathura, temples were constructed in architectural styles that were very similar to the Mughal palaces in Fatehpur Sikri.

- The creation of large empires that brought different regions under their rule helped in this cross-fertilisation of artistic forms and architectural styles.

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

- In Bengal, for example, the local rulers had developed a roof that was designed to resemble a thatched hut. The Mughals liked this "Bangla dome" so much that they used it in their architecture.

- The impact of other regions was also evident. In Akbar's capital at Fatehpur Sikri many of the buildings show the influence of the architectural styles of Gujarat and Malwa.

- Even though the authority of the Mughal rulers waned in the eighteenth century, the architectural styles developed under their patronage were constantly used and adapted by other rulers whenever they tried to establish their own kingdoms.

Chapter 6

Towns, Traders And Craftspersons

- What would a traveller visiting a medieval town expect to find? This would depend on what kind of a town it was – a temple town, an administrative centre, a commercial town or a port town to name just some possibilities.

- In fact, many towns combined several functions – they were administrative centres, temple towns, as well as centres of commercial activities and craft production.

Administrative Centres

- Thanjavur,
  - The capital of the Cholas, as it was a thousand years ago.
  - The perennial river Kaveri flows near this beautiful town.
  - One hears the bells of the Rajarajeshvara temple built by King Rajaraja Chola.
  - The townspeople are all praise for its architect Kunjaramallan Rajaraja Perunthachchan who has proudly carved his name on the temple wall.
  - Inside is a massive Shiva *linga*. Besides the temple, there are palaces with *mandapas* or pavilions.
  - Kings hold court in these *mandapas*, issuing orders to their subordinates.
  - There are also barracks for the army.
  - The town is bustling with markets selling grain, spices, cloth and jewellery.
  - Water supply for the town comes from wells and tanks.
  - The Saliya weavers of Thanjavur and the nearby town of Uraiyur are busy producing cloth for flags to be used in the temple festival, fine cottons for the king and nobility and coarse cotton for the masses.
  - Some distance away at Svamimalai, the *sthapatis* or sculptors are making exquisite bronze idols and tall, ornamental bell metal lamps.

Temple Towns and Pilgrimage Centres

- Thanjavur is also an example of a temple town. Temple towns represent a very important pattern of urbanisation, the process by which cities develop.

- Temples were often central to the economy and society. Rulers built temples to demonstrate their devotion to various deities.

- They also endowed temples with grants of land and money to carry out elaborate rituals, feed pilgrims and priests and celebrate festivals. Pilgrims who flocked to the temples also made donations.

- Temple authorities used their wealth to finance trade and banking. Gradually a large number of priests, workers, artisans, traders, etc. settled near the temple to cater to its needs and those of the pilgrims. Thus grew temple towns.

- Towns emerged around temples such as those of Bhillasvamin (Bhilsa or Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh), and Somnath in Gujarat.

- Other important temple towns included Kanchipuram and Madurai in Tamil Nadu, and Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh.

- Pilgrimage centres also slowly developed into townships. Vrindavan (Uttar Pradesh) and Tiruvannamalai (Tamil Nadu) are examples of two such towns.

- Ajmer (Rajasthan) was the capital of the Chauhan kings in the twelfth century and later became the *suba* headquarters under the Mughals. It provides an excellent example of religious coexistence.

- Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, the celebrated Sufi saint (see also Chapter 8) who settled there in the twelfth century, attracted devotees from all creeds. Near Ajmer is a lake, Pushkar, which has attracted pilgrims from ancient times.

A Network of Small Towns

- From the eighth century onwards the subcontinent was dotted with several small towns. These probably emerged from large villages.

- They usually had a *mandapika* (or *mandi* of later times) to which nearby villagers brought their produce to sell.

- They also had market streets called *hatta* (*haat* of later times) lined with shops. Besides, there were streets for different kinds of artisans such as potters, oil pressers, sugar makers, toddy makers, smiths, stonemasons, etc.

- While some traders lived in the town, others travelled from town to town. Many came from far and near to these towns to buy local articles and sell products of distant places like horses, salt, camphor, saffron, betel nut and spices like pepper.

- Usually a *samanta* or, in later times, a zamindar built a fortified palace in or near these towns. They levied taxes on traders, artisans and articles of trade and sometimes "donated" the "right" to collect these taxes to local temples, which had been built by themselves or by rich merchants. These "rights" were recorded in inscriptions that have survived to this day.

Traders Big and Small

- There were many kinds of traders. These included the Banjaras. Several traders, especially horse traders, formed associations, with headmen who negotiated on their behalf with warriors who bought horses.

- Since traders had to pass through many kingdoms and forests, they usually travelled in caravans and formed guilds to protect their interests.

- There were several such guilds in south India from the eighth century onwards – the most famous being the Manigramam and Nanadesi.

- These guilds traded extensively both within the peninsula and with Southeast Asia and China.

- There were also communities like the Chettiars and the Marwari Oswal who went on to become the principal trading groups of the country.
- Gujarati traders, including the communities of Hindu Baniyas and Muslim Bohras, traded extensively with the ports of the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, East Africa, Southeast Asia and China.
- They sold textiles and spices in these ports and, in exchange, brought gold and ivory from Africa; and spices, tin, Chinese blue pottery and silver from Southeast Asia and China.
- The towns on the west coast were home to Arab, Persian, Chinese, Jewish and Syrian Christian traders.
- Indian spices and cloth sold in the Red Sea ports were purchased by Italian traders and eventually reached European markets, fetching very high profits.
- Spices grown in tropical climates (pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, dried ginger, etc.) became an important part of European cooking, and cotton cloth was very attractive. This eventually drew European traders to India.

Crafts in Towns

- The craftspersons of Bidar were so famed for their inlay work in copper and silver that it came to be called Bidri.
- The Panchalas or Vishwakarma community, consisting of goldsmiths, bronzesmiths, blacksmiths, masons and carpenters, were essential to the building of temples. They also played an important role in the construction of palaces, big buildings, tanks and reservoirs.
- Similarly, weavers such as the Saliyar or Kaikkolars emerged as prosperous communities, making donations to temples.
- Some aspects of cloth making like cotton cleaning, spinning and dyeing became specialized and independent crafts.

A Closer Look: Hampi, Masulipatnam and Surat

The Architectural Splendour of Hampi

- Hampi is located in the Krishna-Tungabhadra basin, which formed the nucleus of the Vijayanagara Empire, founded in 1336.
- The magnificent ruins at Hampi reveal a well-fortified city.
- No mortar or cementing agent was used in the construction of these walls and the technique followed was to wedge them together by interlocking.
- The architecture of Hampi was distinctive. The buildings in the royal complex had splendid arches, domes and pillared halls with niches for holding sculptures.
- They also had well-planned orchards and pleasure gardens with sculptural motifs such as the lotus and corbels.

- In its heyday in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries, Hampi bustled with commercial and cultural activities.
- Moors (a name used collectively for Muslim merchants), Chettis and agents of European traders such as the Portuguese, thronged the markets of Hampi.
- Temples were the hub of cultural activities and *devadasis* (temple dancers) performed before the deity, royalty and masses in the many-pillared halls in the Virupaksha (a form of Shiva) temple.
- The Mahanavami festival, known today as Navaratri in the south, was one of the most important festivals celebrated at Hampi. Archaeologists have found the Mahanavami platform where the king received guests and accepted tribute from subordinate chiefs. From here he also watched dance and music performances as well as wrestling bouts.
- Hampi fell into ruin following the defeat of Vijayanagara in 1565 by the Deccani Sultans – the rulers of Golconda, Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Berar and Bidar.

A Gateway to the West: Surat

- Surat in Gujarat was the **emporium** of western trade during the Mughal period along with Cambay (present day Khambat) and somewhat later, Ahmedabad.
- Surat was the gateway for trade with West Asia via the Gulf of Ormuz.
- Surat has also been called the gate to Mecca because many pilgrim ships set sail from here.
- The city was cosmopolitan and people of all castes and creeds lived there.
- In the seventeenth century the Portuguese, Dutch and English had their factories and warehouses at Surat.
- According to the English chronicler Ovington who wrote an account of the port in 1689, on average a hundred ships of different countries could be found anchored at the port at any given time.
- There were also several retail and wholesale shops selling cotton textiles. The textiles of Surat were famous for their gold lace borders (*zari*) and had a market in West Asia, Africa and Europe.
- The state built numerous rest-houses to take care of the needs of people from all over the world who came to the city.
- There were magnificent buildings and innumerable pleasure parks. The Kathiawad *seths* or *mahajans* (moneychangers) had huge banking houses at Surat.
- It is noteworthy that the Surat ***hundis*** were honoured in the far-off markets of Cairo in Egypt, Basra in Iraq and Antwerp in Belgium.
- However, Surat began to decline towards the end of the seventeenth century. This was because of many factors:

1. The loss of markets and productivity because of the decline of the Mughal Empire,
2. Control of the sea routes by the Portuguese and
3. Competition from Bombay (present-day Mumbai) where the English East India Company shifted its headquarters in 1668.

- Today, Surat is a bustling commercial centre.

Fishing in Troubled Waters: Masulipatnam

- The town of Masulipatnam or Machlipatnam (literally, fish port town) lay on the delta of the Krishna river. In the seventeenth century it was a centre of intense activity.
- Both the Dutch and English East India Companies attempted to control Masulipatnam as it became the most important port on the Andhra coast.
- The fort at Masulipatnam was built by the Dutch.
- The Qutb Shahi rulers of Golconda imposed royal monopolies on the sale of textiles, spices and other items to prevent the trade passing completely into the hands of the various East India Companies.
- Fierce competition among various trading groups – the Golconda nobles, Persian merchants, Telugu Komati Chettis, and European traders – made the city populous and prosperous.
- As the Mughals began to extend their power to Golconda their representative, the governor Mir Jumla who was also a merchant, began to play off the Dutch and the English against each other.
- In 1686-1687 Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb annexed Golconda. This caused the European Companies to look for alternatives.
- It was a part of the new policy of the English East India Company that it was not enough if a port had connections with the production centres of the hinterland. The new Company trade centres, it was felt, should combine political, administrative and commercial roles.
- As the Company traders moved to Bombay, Calcutta (present-day Kolkata) and Madras (present-day Chennai), Masulipatnam lost both its merchants and prosperity and declined in the course of the eighteenth century, being today nothing more than a dilapidated little town.

New Towns and Traders

- In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, European countries were searching for spices and textiles, which had become popular both in Europe and West Asia.
- The English, Dutch and French formed East India Companies in order to expand their commercial activities in the east. Initially great Indian traders like Mulla Abdul Ghafur and Virji Vora who owned a large number of ships competed with them.
- However, the European Companies used their naval power to gain control of the sea trade and forced Indian traders to work as their agents.

- Ultimately, the English emerged as the most successful commercial and political power in the subcontinent.
- The spurt in demand for goods like textiles led to a great expansion of the crafts of spinning, weaving, bleaching, dyeing, etc. with more and more people taking them up.
- Indian textile designs became increasingly refined. However, this period also saw the decline of the independence of craftspersons.
- They now began to work on a system of advances which meant that they had to weave cloth which was already promised to European agents.
- Weavers no longer had the liberty of selling their own cloth or weaving their own patterns. They had to reproduce the designs supplied to them by the Company agents.
- The eighteenth century saw the rise of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, which are nodal cities today.
- Crafts and commerce underwent major changes as merchants and artisans (such as weavers) were moved into the Black Towns established by the European companies within these new cities.
- The “blacks” or native traders and craftspersons were confined here while the “white” rulers occupied the superior residencies of Fort St George in Madras or Fort St William in Calcutta.

Chapter 7

Tribes, Nomads And Settled Communities

- Even as various kingdoms were rising and falling, new arts, crafts and production activities flourished in towns and villages.
- Over the centuries important political, social and economic developments had taken place. But social change was not the same everywhere, because different kinds of societies evolved differently.
- It is important to understand how, and why, this happened. In large parts of the subcontinent, society was already divided according to the rules of *varna*.
- These rules, as prescribed by the Brahmanas, were accepted by the rulers of large kingdoms. The difference between the high and low, and between the rich and poor, increased.
- Under the Delhi Sultans and the Mughals, this hierarchy between social classes grew further.

Beyond Big Cities: Tribal Societies

- There were, however, other kinds of societies as well. Many societies in the subcontinent did not follow the social rules and rituals prescribed by the Brahmanas. Nor were they divided into numerous unequal classes. Such societies are often called tribes.
- Members of each tribe were united by kinship bonds. Many tribes obtained their livelihood from agriculture.Others were hunter-gatherers or herders.
- Most often they combined these activities to make full use of the natural resources of the area in which they lived. Some tribes were nomadic and moved from one place to another.
- A tribal group controlled land and pastures jointly, and divided these amongst households according to its own rules.
- Many large tribes thrived in different parts of the subcontinent. They usually lived in forests, hills, deserts and places difficult to reach.

- Sometimes they clashed with the more powerful caste-based societies. In various ways, the tribes retained their freedom and preserved their separate culture.

- But the caste-based and tribal societies also depended on each other for their diverse needs. This relationship, of conflict and dependence, gradually caused both societies to change.

Who were Tribal People?

- Contemporary historians and travellers give very scanty information about tribes. A few exceptions apart, tribal people did not keep written records.

- But they preserved rich customs and oral traditions. These were passed down to each new generation.

- Present day historians have started using such oral traditions to write tribal histories.

- Tribal people were found in almost every region of the subcontinent.

- The area and influence of a tribe varied at different points of time. Some powerful tribes controlled large territories.

- In Punjab, the Khokhar tribe was very influential during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

- Later, the Gakkhars became more important. Their chief, Kamal Khan Gakkhar, was made a noble (*mansabdar*) by Emperor Akbar.

- In Multan and Sind, the Langahs and Arghuns dominated extensive regions before they were subdued by the Mughals.

- The Balochis were another large and powerful tribe in the north-west. They were divided into many smaller **clans** under different chiefs.

- In the western Himalaya lived the shepherd tribe of Gaddis. The distant north-eastern part of the subcontinent too was entirely dominated by tribes – the Nagas, Ahoms and many others.

- In many areas of present-day Bihar and Jharkhand, Chero chiefdoms had emerged by the twelfth century.

- Raja Man Singh, Akbar's famous general, attacked and defeated the Cheros in 1591. A large amount of booty was taken from them, but they were not entirely subdued.

- Under Aurangzeb, Mughal forces captured many Chero fortresses and subjugated the tribe. The Mundas and Santals were among the other important tribes that lived in this region and also in Orissa and Bengal.

- The Maharashtra highlands and Karnataka were home to Kolis, Berads and numerous others. Kolis also lived in many areas of Gujarat.

- Further south there were large tribal populations of Koragas, Vetars, Maravars and many others.

- The large tribe of Bhils was spread across western and central India. By the late sixteenth century, many of them had become settled agriculturists and some even zamindars.

- Many Bhil clans, nevertheless, remained hunter gatherers. The Gonds were found in great numbers across the present-day states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

How Nomads and Mobile People Lived

- **Nomadic pastoralists:**
  - They moved over long distances with their animals.
  - They lived on milk and other pastoral products.
  - They also exchanged wool, ghee, etc., with settled agriculturists for grain, cloth, utensils and other products.
  - They bought and sold these goods as they moved from one place to another, transporting them on their animals.

- **The Banjaras:**
  - They were the most important trader nomads.
  - Their caravan was called *tanda*.
  - Sultan Alauddin Khalji used the Banjaras to transport grain to the city markets.
  - Emperor Jahangir wrote in his memoirs that the Banjaras carried grain on their bullocks from different areas and sold it in towns.
  - They transported food grain for the Mughal army during military campaigns.
  - With a large army there could be 100,000 bullocks carrying grain.

- Many pastoral tribes reared and sold animals, such as cattle and horses, to the prosperous people.
- Different castes of petty pedlars also travelled from village to village. They made and sold wares such as ropes, reeds, straw matting and coarse sacks. Sometimes mendicants acted as wandering merchants.

- There were castes of entertainers who performed in different towns and villages for their livelihood.

Changing Society: New Castes and Hierarchies

- As the economy and the needs of society grew, people with new skills were required.

- Smaller castes, or *jatis*, emerged within *varnas*. For example, new castes appeared amongst the Brahmanas.

- On the other hand, many tribes and social groups were taken into caste-based society and given the status of *jatis*.

- Specialised artisans – smiths, carpenters and masons– were also recognised as separate *jatis* by the Brahmanas.

- *Jatis*, rather than *varna*, became the basis for organising society.

- **Rajput Clans:**
  - Among the Kshatriyas, new Rajput clans became powerful by the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
  - They belonged to different lineages, such as Hunas, Chandelas, Chalukyas and others.
  - Some of these, too, had been tribes earlier.
  - Many of these clans came to be regarded as Rajputs.
  - They gradually replaced the older rulers, especially in agricultural areas. Here a developed society was emerging, and rulers used their wealth to create powerful states.
  - The rise of Rajput clans to the position of rulers set an example for the tribal people to follow.

- Gradually, with the support of the Brahmanas, many tribes became part of the caste system. But only the leading tribal families could join the ruling class.

- A large majority joined the lower *jatis* of caste society. On the other hand, many dominant tribes of Punjab, Sind and the North-West Frontier had adopted Islam quite early.They continued to reject the caste system.

- The unequal social order, prescribed by orthodox Hinduism, was not widely accepted in these areas.

- The emergence of states is closely related to social change amongst tribal people.

A Closer Look

- **The Gonds:**
  - The Gonds lived in a vast forested region called Gondwana – or "country inhabited by Gonds".
  - They practised **shifting cultivation**.
  - The large Gond tribe was further divided into many smaller clans. Each clan had its own raja or *rai*.
  - About the time that the power of the Delhi Sultans was declining, a few large Gond kingdoms were beginning to dominate the smaller Gond chiefs.
  - The *Akbar Nama*, a history of Akbar's reign, mentions the Gond kingdom of Garha Katanga that had 70,000 villages.
  - The administrative system of these kingdoms was becoming centralised.
  - The kingdom was divided into *garhs*. Each *garh* was controlled by a particular Gond clan.
  - This was further divided into units of 84 villages called *chaurasi*. The *chaurasi* was subdivided into *barhots* which were made up of 12 villages each.
  - The emergence of large states changed the nature of Gond society. Their basically equal society gradually got divided into unequal social classes.
  - Brahmanas received land grants from the Gond rajas and became more influential. The Gond chiefs now wished to be recognised as Rajputs.
  - So, Aman Das, the Gond raja of Garha Katanga, assumed the title of Sangram Shah. His son, Dalpat, married princess Durgawati, the daughter of Salbahan, the Chandel Rajput raja of Mahoba.
  - Dalpat, however, died early. Rani Durgawati was very capable, and started ruling on behalf of her five-year-old son, Bir Narain. Under her, the kingdom became even more extensive.
  - In 1565, the Mughal forces under Asaf Khan attacked Garha Katanga. A strong resistance was put up by Rani Durgawati. She was defeated and preferred to die rather than surrender. Her son, too, died fighting soon after.

- Garha Katanga was a rich state. It earned much wealth by trapping and exporting wild elephants to other kingdoms.
- When the Mughals defeated the Gonds, they captured a huge booty of precious coins and elephants. They annexed part of the kingdom and granted the rest to Chandra Shah, an uncle of Bir Narain.
- Despite the fall of Garha Katanga, the Gond kingdoms survived for some time.
- However, they became much weaker and later struggled unsuccessfully against the stronger Bundelas and Marathas.

➢ **The Ahoms:**

- The Ahoms migrated to the Brahmaputra valley from present-day Myanmar in the thirteenth century.
- They created a new state by suppressing the older political system of the *bhuiyans* (landlords).
- During the sixteenth century, they annexed the kingdoms of the Chhutiyas (1523) and of Koch-Hajo (1581) and subjugated many other tribes.
- The Ahoms built a large state, and for this they used firearms as early as the 1530s.
- By the 1660s they could even make high quality gunpowder and cannons. However, the Ahoms faced many invasions from the south-west.
- In 1662, the Mughals under Mir Jumla attacked the Ahom kingdom. Despite their brave defence, the Ahoms were defeated. But direct Mughal control over the region could not last long.
- The Ahom state depended upon forced labour. Those forced to work for the state were called *paiks*.
- A census of the population was taken. Each village had to send a number of *paiks* by rotation.
- People from heavily populated areas were shifted to less populated places. Ahom clans were thus broken up.
- By the first half of the seventeenth century the administration became quite centralised.
- Almost all adult males served in the army during war. At other times, they were engaged in building dams, irrigation systems and other public works.
- The Ahoms also introduced new methods of rice cultivation.
- Ahom society was divided into clans or *khels*. There were very few castes of artisans, so artisans in the Ahom areas came from the adjoining kingdoms.
- A *khel* often controlled several villages. The peasant was given land by his village community. Even the king could not take it away without the community's consent.

- Originally, the Ahoms worshipped their own tribal gods. During the first half of the seventeenth century, however, the influence of Brahmanas increased.
- Temples and Brahmanas were granted land by the king. In the reign of Sib Singh (1714-1744), Hinduism became the predominant religion. But the Ahom kings did not completely give up their traditional beliefs after adopting Hinduism.
- Ahom society was very sophisticated. Poets and scholars were given land grants. Theatre was encouraged.
- Important works of Sanskrit were translated into the local language. Historical works, known as *buranjis*, were also written – first in the Ahom language and then in Assamese.

Conclusion

- Considerable social change took place in the subcontinent during the period we have been examining.
- *Varna*-based society and tribal people constantly interacted with each other. This interaction caused both kinds of societies to adapt and change.
- There were many different tribes and they took up diverse livelihoods. Over a period of time, many of them merged with caste based society.
- Others, however, rejected both the caste system and orthodox Hinduism. Some tribes established extensive states with well-organised systems of administration.
- They thus became politically powerful. This brought them into conflict with larger and more complex kingdoms and empires.

Chapter 8

Devotional Paths To The Divine

- People perform rituals of worship, or sing bhajans, kirtans or qawwalis, or even repeat the name of God in silence, and some of them are even moved to tears.
- Such intense devotion or love of God is the legacy of various kinds of bhakti and Sufi movements that have evolved since the eighth century.

The Idea of a Supreme God

- Before large kingdoms emerged, different groups of people worshipped their own gods and goddesses.
- As people were brought together through the growth of towns, trade and empires, new ideas began to develop.
- The idea that all living things pass through countless cycles of birth and rebirth performing good deeds and bad came to be widely accepted.
- Similarly, the idea that all human beings are not equal even at birth gained ground during this period. The belief that social privileges came from birth in a "noble" family or a "high" caste was the subject of many learned texts.
- Many people were uneasy with such ideas and turned to the teachings of the Buddha or the Jainas according to which it was possible to overcome social differences and break the cycle of rebirth through personal effort.
- Others felt attracted to the idea of a Supreme God who could deliver humans from such bondage if approached with devotion (or bhakti). This idea, advocated in the *Bhagavadgita,* grew in popularity in the early centuries of the Common Era.
- Shiva, Vishnu and Durga as supreme deities came to be worshipped through elaborate rituals. At the same time, gods and goddesses worshipped in different areas came to be identified with Shiva, Vishnu or Durga.
- In the process, local myths and legends became a part of the Puranic stories, and methods of worship recommended in the Puranas were introduced into the local cults.
- Eventually the Puranas also laid down that it was possible for devotees to receive the grace of God regardless of their caste status.

- The idea of bhakti became so popular that even Buddhists and Jainas adopted these beliefs.

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

- The seventh to ninth centuries saw the emergence of new religious movements, led by the Nayanars (saints devoted to Shiva) and Alvars (saints devoted to Vishnu) who came from all castes including those considered "untouchable" like the Pulaiyar and the Panars.

- They were sharply critical of the Buddhists and Jainas and preached ardent love of Shiva or Vishnu as the path to salvation.

- They drew upon the ideals of love and heroism as found in the Sangam literature (the earliest example of Tamil literature, composed during the early centuries of the Common Era) and blended them with the values of bhakti.

- The Nayanars and Alvars went from place to place composing exquisite poems in praise of the deities enshrined in the villages they visited, and set them to music.

- Between the tenth and twelfth centuries the Chola and Pandya kings built elaborate temples around many of the shrines visited by the saint-poets, strengthening the links between the bhakti tradition and temple worship. This was also the time when their poems were compiled.

- Besides, **hagiographies** or religious biographies of the Alvars and Nayanars were also composed. Today we use these texts as sources for writing histories of the bhakti tradition.

Philosophy and Bhakti

- Shankara:
  - He was one of the most influential philosophers of India, was born in Kerala in the eighth century.
  - He was an advocate of Advaita or the doctrine of the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme God which is the Ultimate Reality.
  - He taught that Brahman, the only or Ultimate Reality, was formless and without any attributes.
  - He considered the world around us to be an illusion or *maya*, and preached renunciation of the world and adoption of the path of knowledge to understand the true nature of Brahman and attain salvation.
- Ramanuja:
  - Born in Tamil Nadu in the eleventh century, he was deeply influenced by the Alvars.
  - According to him the best means of attaining salvation was through intense devotion to Vishnu. Vishnu in His grace helps the devotee to attain the bliss of union with Him.
  - He propounded the doctrine of Vishishtadvaita or qualified oneness in that the soul even when united with the Supreme God remained distinct.
  - Ramanuja's doctrine greatly inspired the new strand of bhakti which developed in north India subsequently.

Basavanna's Virashaivism

- The connection between the Tamil bhakti movement and temple worship led to a reaction that is best represented in the Virashaiva movement initiated by Basavanna and his companions like Allama Prabhu and Akkamahadevi**.**
- This movement began in Karnataka in the mid-twelfth century.
- The Virashaivas argued strongly for the equality of all human beings and against Brahmanical ideas about caste and the treatment of women.
- They were also against all forms of ritual and idol worship.

The Saints of Maharashtra

- From the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries Maharashtra saw a great number of saint-poets, whose songs in simple Marathi continue to inspire people.
- The most important among them were Janeshwar, Namdev, Eknath and Tukaram as well as women like Sakkubai and the family of Chokhamela, who belonged to the "untouchable" Mahar caste.
- This regional tradition of bhakti focused on the Vitthala (a form of Vishnu) temple in Pandharpur, as well as on the notion of a personal god residing in the hearts of all people.
- These saint-poets rejected all forms of ritualism, outward display of piety and social differences based on birth.
- In fact they even rejected the idea of renunciation and preferred to live with their families, earning their livelihood like any other person, while humbly serving fellow human beings in need.
- A new humanist idea emerged as they insisted that bhakti lay in sharing others' pain. As the famous Gujarati saint Narsi Mehta said, "They are Vaishnavas who understand the pain of others."

Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis

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

- Among them were the Nathpanthis, Siddhacharas and Yogis. They advocated renunciation of the world.

- To them the path to salvation lay in meditation on the formless Ultimate Reality and the realisation of oneness with it.

- To achieve this they advocated intense training of the mind and body through practices like *yogasanas*, breathing exercises and meditation.

- These groups became particularly popular among "low" castes. Their criticism of conventional religion created the ground for devotional religion to become a popular force in northern India.

Islam and Sufism

- The *sants* had much in common with the Sufis, so much so that it is believed that they adopted many ideas of each other.

- Sufis were Muslim mystics. They rejected outward religiosity and emphasised love and devotion to God and compassion towards all fellow human beings.

- Islam propagated strict monotheism or submission to one God. It also rejected idol worship and considerably simplified rituals of worship into collective prayers. At the same time Muslim scholars developed a holy law called Shariat.

- The Sufis often rejected the elaborate rituals and codes of behavior demanded by Muslim religious scholars. They sought union with God much as a lover seeks his beloved with a disregard for the world.

- Like the saint-poets, the Sufis too composed poems expressing their feelings, and a rich literature in prose, including anecdotes and fables, developed around them. Among the great Sufis of Central Asia were Ghazzali, Rumi and Sadi.

- Like the Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis, the Sufis too believed that the heart can be trained to look at the world in a different way.

- They developed elaborate methods of training using *zikr* (chanting of a name or sacred formula), contemplation, *sama* (singing), *raqs* (dancing), discussion of parables, breath control, etc. under the guidance of a master or *pir*. Thus emerged the *silsilas*, a genealogy of Sufi teachers, each following a slightly different method (*tariqa*) of instruction and ritual practice.

- A large number of Sufis from Central Asia settled in Hindustan from the eleventh century onwards. This process was strengthened with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate when several major Sufi centres developed all over the subcontinent.

- The Chishti *silsila* was among the most influential orders. It had a long line of teachers like Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer, Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki of Delhi, Baba Farid of Punjab, Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi and Bandanawaz Gisudaraz of Gulbarga.

- The Sufi masters held their assemblies in their *khanqahs* or **hospices**. Devotees of all descriptions including members of the royalty and nobility, and ordinary people flocked to these *khanqahs*. They discussed spiritual matters, sought the blessings of the saints in solving their worldly problems, or simply attended the music and dance sessions.

- Often people attributed Sufi masters with miraculous powers that could relieve others of their illnesses and troubles. The tomb or *dargah* of a Sufi saint became a place of pilgrimage to which thousands of people of all faiths thronged.

New Religious Developments in North India

- The period after the thirteenth century saw a new wave of the bhakti movement in north India. This was an age when Islam, Brahmanical Hinduism, Sufism, various strands of bhakti, and the Nathpanths, Siddhas and Yogis influenced one another.

- New towns and kingdoms were emerging, and people were taking up new professions and finding new roles for themselves. Such people, especially craftspersons, peasants, traders and labourers, thronged to listen to these new saints and spread their ideas.

- Some of them like Kabir and Baba Guru Nanak rejected all orthodox religions.

- Others like Tulsidas and Surdas accepted existing beliefs and practices but wanted to make these accessible to all.

- Tulsidas:
  - He conceived of God in the form of Rama.
  - His composition, the *Ramcharitmanas*, written in Awadhi (a language used in eastern Uttar Pradesh), is important both as an expression of his devotion and as a literary work.

- Surdas was an ardent devotee of Krishna. His compositions, compiled in the *Sursagara*, *Surasaravali* and *Sahitya Lahari*, express his devotion.

- Also contemporary was Shankaradeva of Assam (late fifteenth century) who emphasised devotion to Vishnu, and composed poems and plays in Assamese. He began the practice of setting up *namghars* or houses of recitation and prayer, a practice that continues to date.

- This tradition also included saints like Dadu Dayal, Ravidas and Mirabai.

- Mirabai:
  - She was a Rajput princess married into the royal family of Mewar in the sixteenth century.
  - Mirabai became a disciple of Ravidas, a saint from a caste considered "untouchable".
  - She was devoted to Krishna and composed innumerable *bhajans* expressing her intense devotion.
  - Her songs also openly challenged the norms of the "upper" castes and became popular with the masses in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

- A unique feature of most of the saints is that their works were composed in regional languages and could be sung. They became immensely popular and were handed down orally from generation to generation.

- Usually the poorest, most deprived communities and women transmitted these songs, often adding their own experiences.

- Thus the songs as we have them today are as much a creation of the saints as of generations of people who sang them. They have become a part of our living popular culture.

A Closer Look: Kabir

- Kabir, who probably lived in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries, was one of the most influential saints.

- He was brought up in a family of Muslim *julahas* or weavers settled in or near the city of Benares (Varanasi).

- We get to know of his ideas from a vast collection of verses called *sakhis* and *pads* said to have been composed by him and sung by wandering *bhajan* singers. Some of these were later collected and preserved in the *Guru Granth Sahib, Panch Vani* and *Bijak*.

- Kabir's teachings were based on a complete, indeed vehement, rejection of the major religious traditions.

- His teachings openly ridiculed all forms of external worship of both Brahmanical Hinduism and Islam, the pre-eminence of the priestly classes and the caste system.

- The language of his poetry was a form of spoken Hindi widely understood by ordinary people. He also sometimes used cryptic language, which is difficult to follow.

- Kabir believed in a formless Supreme God and preached that the only path to salvation was through bhakti or devotion. Kabir drew his followers from among both Hindus and Muslims.

A Closer Look: Baba Guru Nanak

- Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was born at Talwandi (Nankana Sahib in Pakistan) and travelled widely before establishing a centre at Kartarpur (Dera Baba Nanak on the river Ravi). A regular worship that consisted of the singing of his own hymns was established there for his followers.

- Irrespective of their former creed, caste or gender, his followers ate together in the common kitchen (*langar)*. The sacred space thus created by Guru Nanak was known as *dharmsal*. It is now known as Gurdwara.

- Before his death in 1539, Guru Nanak appointed one of his followers as his successor. His name was Lehna but he came to be known as Guru Angad, signifying that he wasa part of Guru Nanak himself.

- Guru Angad compiled the compositions of Guru Nanak, to which he added his own in a new script known as Gurmukhi.

- The three successors of Guru Angad also wrote under the name of "Nanak" and all of their compositions were compiled by Guru Arjan in 1604. To this compilation were added the writings of other figures like Shaikh Farid, Sant Kabir, Bhagat Namdev and Guru Tegh Bahadur.

- In 1706 this compilation was authenticated by his son and successor, Guru Gobind Singh. It is now known as *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy scripture of the Sikhs.

- Guru Nanak's followers belonged to a number of castes but traders, agriculturists, artisans and craftsmen predominated. This may have something to do with Guru Nanak's insistence that his followers must be householders and should adopt productive and useful occupations.

- The followers were also expected to contribute to the general funds of the community of followers.

- By the beginning of the seventeenth century the town of Ramdaspur (Amritsar) had developed around the central Gurdwara called Harmandar Sahib (Golden Temple). It was virtually self-governing and modern historians refer to the early seventeenth century Sikh community as 'a state within the state'.

- The Mughal emperor Jahangir looked upon them as a potential threat and he ordered the execution of Guru Arjan in 1606.

- The Sikh movement began to get politicized in the seventeenth century, a development which culminated in the institution of the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. The community of the Sikhs, called the *Khalsa Panth*, became a political entity.

- The changing historical situation during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries influenced the development of the Sikh movement.

- The ideas of Guru Nanak had a huge impact on this development from the very beginning.

    - He emphasized the importance of the worship of one God.
    - He insisted that caste, creed or gender was irrelevant for attaining liberation.
    - His idea of liberation was not that of a state of inert bliss but rather the pursuit of active life with a strong sense of social commitment.
    - He himself used the terms *nam*, *dan* and *isnan* for the essence of his teaching, which actually meant right worship, welfare of others and purity of conduct.
    - His teachings are now remembered as *nam-japna*, *kirt-karna* and *vand-chhakna*, which also underline the importance of right belief and worship, honest living, and helping others.
    - Thus, Guru Nanak's idea of equality had social and political implications.
    - This might partly explain the difference between the history of the followers of Guru Nanak and the history of the followers of the other religious figures of the medieval centuries, like Kabir, Ravidas and Dadu whose ideas were very similar to those of Guru Nanak.

Chapter 9

The Making of Regional Cultures

- One of the commonest ways of describing people is in terms of the language they speak. We also tend to associate each region with distinctive kinds of food, clothes, poetry, dance, music and painting.

- The frontiers separating regions have evolved over time (and in fact are still changing). Also, what we understand as regional cultures today are often the product of complex processes of intermixing of local traditions with ideas from other parts of the subcontinent.

- Some traditions appear specific to some regions, others seem to be similar across regions, and yet others derive from older practices in a particular area, but take a new form in other regions.

The Cheras and the Development of Malayalam

- The Chera kingdom of Mahodayapuram was established in the ninth century in the south-western part of the peninsula, part of present-day Kerala. It is likely that Malayalam was spoken in this area.

- The rulers introduced the Malayalam language and script in their inscriptions. In fact, this is one of the earliest examples of the use of a regional language in official records in the subcontinent.

- At the same time, the Cheras also drew upon Sanskritic traditions. The temple theatre of Kerala, which is traced to this period, borrowed stories from the Sanskrit epics.

- The first literary works in Malayalam, dated to about the twelfth century, are directly indebted to Sanskrit.

- Interestingly enough, a fourteenth-century text, the *Lilatilakam,* dealing with grammar and poetics, was composed in Manipravalam– literally, "diamonds and corals" referring to the two languages, Sanskrit and the regional language.

Rulers and Religious Traditions: The Jagannatha Cult

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

- To date, the local tribal people make the wooden image of the deity, which suggests that the deity was originally a local god, who was later identified with Vishnu.

- In the twelfth century, one of the most important rulers of the Ganga dynasty, Anantavarman, decided to erect a temple for Purushottama Jagannatha at Puri.

- Subsequently, in1230, king Anangabhima III dedicated his kingdom to the deity and proclaimed himself as the "deputy" of the god.

- As the temple gained in importance as a centre of pilgrimage, its authority in social and political matters also increased.

- All those who conquered Orissa, such as the Mughals, the Marathas and the English East India Company, attempted to gain control over the temple. They felt that this would make their rule acceptable to the local people.

The Rajputs and Traditions of Heroism

- In the nineteenth century, the region that constitutes most of present-day Rajasthan, was called Rajputana by the British. While this may suggest that this was an area that was inhabited only or mainly by Rajputs, this is only partly true.

- There were (and are) several groups who identify themselves as Rajputs in many areas of northern and central India.

- From about the eighth century, most of the present-day state of Rajasthan was ruled by various Rajput families. Prithviraj was one such ruler.

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

- Stories about Rajput heroes were recorded in poems and songs, which were recited by specially trained minstrels. These preserved the memories of heroes and were expected to inspire others to follow their example.

- Ordinary people were also attracted by these stories – which often depicted dramatic situations, and a range of strong emotions – loyalty, friendship, love, valour, anger, etc.

- Sometimes, women figure as the "cause" for conflicts, as men fought with one another to either "win" or "protect" women.

- Women are also depicted as following their heroic husbands in both life and death – there are stories about the practice of *sati* or the immolation of widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands. So those who followed the heroic ideal often had to pay for it with their lives.

Beyond Regional Frontiers: The Story of Kathak

- If heroic traditions can be found in different regions in different forms, the same is true of dance.

- Let us look at the history of one dance form, Kathak, now associated with several parts of north India. The term *kathak* is derived from *katha*, a word used in Sanskrit and other languages for story.

- The *kathaks* were originally a caste of story-tellers in temples of north India, who embellished their performances with gestures and songs.

- Kathak began evolving into a distinct mode of dance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the spread of the bhakti movement.

- The legends of Radha-Krishna were enacted in folk plays called r*asa lila*, which combined folk dance with the basic gestures of the *kathak* story-tellers.

- Under the Mughal emperors and their nobles, Kathak was performed in the court, where it acquired its present features and developed into a form of dance with a distinctive style.

- Subsequently, it developed in two traditions or *gharanas*: one in the courts of Rajasthan (Jaipur) and the other in Lucknow. Under the patronage of Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Awadh, it grew into a major art form.

- By the third quarter of the nineteenth century it was firmly entrenched as a dance form not only in these two regions, but in the adjoining areas of present-day Punjab, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

- Emphasis was laid on intricate and rapid footwork, elaborate costumes, as well as on the enactment of stories.

- Kathak, like several other cultural practices, was viewed with disfavour by most British administrators in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

- However, it survived and continued to be performed by courtesans, and was recognised as one of six "classical" forms of dance in the country after independence.

Painting for Patrons: The Tradition of Miniatures

- Another tradition that developed in different ways was that of miniature painting. Miniatures (as their very name suggests) are small-sized paintings, generally done in water colour on cloth or paper.

- The earliest miniatures were on palm leaves or wood. Some of the most beautiful of these, found in western India, were used to illustrate Jaina texts.

- The Mughal emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan patronised highly skilled painters:
    - They primarily illustrated manuscripts containing historical accounts and poetry.
    - These were generally painted in brilliant colours and portrayed court scenes, scenes of battle or hunting, and other aspects of social life.
    - They were often exchanged as gifts and were viewed only by an exclusive few – the emperor and his close associates.

- With the decline of the Mughal Empire, many painters moved out to the courts of the emerging regional states. As a result Mughal artistic tastes influenced the regional courts of the Deccan and the Rajput courts of Rajasthan. At the same time, they retained and developed their distinctive characteristics.

- Portraits of rulers and court scenes came to be painted, following the Mughal example. Besides, themes from mythology and poetry were depicted at centres such as Mewar, Jodhpur, Bundi, Kota and Kishangarh.

- Another region that attracted miniature paintings was the Himalayan foothills around the modern-day state of Himachal Pradesh.
    - By the late seventeenth century this region had developed a bold and intense style of miniature painting called Basohli.
    - The most popular text to be painted here was Bhanudatta's *Rasamanjari*.
    - Nadir Shah's invasion and the conquest of Delhi in 1739 resulted in the migration of Mughal artists to the hills to escape the uncertainties of the plains.
    - Here they found ready patrons which led to the founding of the Kangra school of painting.
    - By the mid eighteenth century the Kangra artists developed a style which breathed a new spirit into miniature painting. The source of inspiration was the Vaishnavite traditions.
    - Soft colours including cool blues and greens, and a lyrical treatment of themes distinguished Kangra painting.
    - Remember that ordinary women and men painted as well – on pots, walls, floors, cloth – works of art that have occasionally survived, unlike the miniatures that were carefully preserved in palaces for centuries.

A Closer Look: Bengal

The Growth of a Regional Language

- We often tend to identify regions in terms of the language spoken by the people. While Bengali is now recognised as a language derived from Sanskrit, early Sanskrit texts (mid-first millennium BCE) suggest that the people of Bengal did not speak Sanskritic languages.

- From the fourth-third centuries BCE, commercial ties began to develop between Bengal and Magadha (south Bihar), which may have led to the growing influence of Sanskrit.

- During the fourth century the Gupta rulers established political control over north Bengal and began to settle Brahmanas in this area. Thus, the linguistic and cultural influence from the mid-Ganga valley became stronger.

- In the seventh century the Chinese traveller Xuan Zang observed that languages related to Sanskrit were in use all over Bengal.

- From the eighth century, Bengal became the centre of a regional kingdom under the Palas.

- Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, Bengal was ruled by Sultans who were independent of the rulers in Delhi. In 1586, when Akbar conquered Bengal, it formed the nucleus of the Bengal *suba.*

- While Persian was the language of administration, Bengali developed as a regional language. In fact by the fifteenth century the Bengali group of dialects came to be united by a common literary language based on the spoken language of the western part of the region, now known as West Bengal.

- Thus, although Bengali is derived from Sanskrit, it passed through several stages of evolution. Also, a wide range of non-Sanskrit words, derived from a variety of sources including tribal languages, Persian, and European languages, have become part of modern Bengali.

- Early Bengali literature may be divided into two categories – one indebted to Sanskrit and the other independent of it.

- The first includes translations of the Sanskrit epics, the Mangalakavyas (literally auspicious poems, dealing with local deities) and bhakti literature such as the biographies of Chaitanyadeva, the leader of the Vaishnava bhakti movement.

- The second includes Nath literature such as the songs of Maynamati and Gopichandra, stories concerning the worship of Dharma Thakur, and fairy tales, folk tales and ballads.

- The texts belonging to the first category are easier to date, as several manuscripts have been found indicating that they were composed between the late fifteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries.

- Those belonging to the second category circulated orally and cannot be precisely dated. They were particularly popular in eastern Bengal, where the influence of Brahmanas was relatively weak.

Pirs and Temples

- From the sixteenth century, people began to migrate in large numbers from the less fertile western Bengal to the forested and marshy areas of south-eastern Bengal. As they moved eastwards, they cleared forests and brought the land under rice cultivation.

- Gradually, local communities of fisher folk and shifting cultivators, often tribals, merged with the new communities of peasants. This coincided with the establishment of Mughal control over Bengal with their capital in the heart of the eastern delta at Dhaka.

- Officials and functionaries received land and often set up mosques that served as centres for religious transformation in these areas.

- The early settlers sought some order and assurance in the unstable conditions of the new settlements. These were provided by community leaders, who also functioned as teachers and adjudicators and were sometimes ascribed with supernatural powers. People referred to them with affection and respect as *pirs*.

- Th term *pir* included saints or Sufis and other religious personalities, daring colonisers and deified soldiers, various Hindu and Buddhist deities and even **animistic** spirits. The cult of *pirs* became very popular and their shrines can be found everywhere in Bengal.

- Bengal also witnessed a temple-building spree from the late fifteenth century, which culminated in the nineteenth century.

- Many of the modest brick and terracotta temples in Bengal were built with the support of several “low” social groups, such as the Kolu (oil pressers) and the Kansari (bell metalworkers).

- The coming of the European trading companies created new economic opportunities; many families belonging to these social groups availed of these. As their social and economic position improved, they proclaimed their status through the construction of temples.

- When local deities, once worshipped in thatched huts in villages, gained the recognition of the Brahmanas, their images began to be housed in temples.

- The temples began to copy the double-roofed (*dochala*) or four-roofed (*chauchala*) structure of the thatched huts. This led to the evolution of the typical Bengali style in temple architecture.

- In the comparatively more complex four-roofed structure, four triangular roofs placed on the four walls move up to converge on a curved line or a point.

- Temples were usually built on a square platform. The interior was relatively plain, but the outer walls of many temples were decorated with paintings, ornamental tiles or terracotta tablets.

- In some temples, particularly in Vishnupur in the Bankura district of West Bengal, such decorations reached a high degree of excellence.

Fish as Food

- Traditional food habits are generally based on locally available items of food. Bengal is a riverine plain which produces plenty of rice and fish.

- Fishing has always been an important occupation and Bengali literature contains several references to fish.

- What is more, terracotta plaques on the walls of temples and *viharas* (Buddhist monasteries) depict scenes of fish being dressed and taken to the market in baskets.

- Brahmanas were not allowed to eat non vegetarian food, but the popularity of fish in the local diet made the Brahmanical authorities relax this prohibition for the Bengal Brahmanas.

- The *Brihaddharma Purana*, a thirteenth-century Sanskrit text from Bengal, permitted the local Brahmanas to eat certain varieties of fish.

Chapter 10

Eighteenth-Century Political Formations

- During the first half of the eighteenth century, the boundaries of the Mughal Empire were reshaped by the emergence of a number of independent kingdoms.

- By 1765, notice how another power, the British, had successfully grabbed major chunks of territory in eastern India. The political conditions in eighteenth century India changed quite dramatically and within a relatively short span of time.

The Crisis of the Empire and the Later Mughals

- The Mughal Empire reached the height of its success and started facing a variety of crises towards the closing years of the seventeenth century. These were caused by a number of factors:

1. Emperor Aurangzeb had depleted the military and financial resources of his empire by fighting a long war in the Deccan.
2. Under his successors, the efficiency of the imperial administration broke down.
3. It became increasingly difficult for the later Mughal emperors to keep a check on their powerful *mansabdars*.
4. Nobles appointed as governors (*subadars*) often controlled the offices of revenue and military administration (*diwani* and *faujdari*) as well. This gave them extraordinary political, economic and military powers over vast regions of the Mughal Empire.
5. As the governors consolidated their control over the provinces, the periodic remission of revenue to the capital declined.
6. Peasant and zamindari rebellions in many parts of northern and western India added to these problems.These revolts were sometimes caused by the pressures of mounting taxes.
7. At other times they were attempts by powerful chieftains to consolidate their own positions. These groups were now able to seize the economic resources of the region to consolidate their positions.
8. In the midst of this economic and political crisis, the ruler of Iran, Nadir Shah, sacked and plundered the city of Delhi in 1739 and took away immense amounts of wealth.
9. This invasion was followed by a series of plundering raids by the Afghan ruler Ahmad Shah Abdali, who invaded north India five times between 1748 and 1761.

10. The empire was further weakened by competition amongst different groups of nobles divided into two major groups or factions, the Iranis and Turanis (nobles of Turkish descent).
11. For a long time, the later Mughal emperors were puppets in the hands of either one or the other of these two powerful groups.

Emergence of New States

- With the decline in the authority of the Mughal emperors, the governors of large provinces, *subadars*, and the great zamindars consolidated their authority in different parts of the subcontinent.

- Through the eighteenth ncentury, the Mughal Empire gradually fragmented into a number of independent, regional states.

- Broadly speaking the states of the eighteenth century can be divided into three overlapping groups:
  1. States that were old Mughal provinces like Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad. Although extremely powerful and quite independent, the rulers of these states did not break their formal ties with the Mughal emperor.
  2. States that had enjoyed considerable independence under the Mughals as *watan jagirs*. These included several Rajput principalities.
  3. The last group included states under the control of Marathas, Sikhs and others like the Jats.
- These were of differing sizes and had seized their independence from the Mughals after a long-drawn armed struggle.

The Old Mughal Provinces

- Amongst the states that were carved out of the old Mughal provinces in the eighteenth century, three stand out very prominently. These were Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad.

- All three states were founded by members of the high Mughal nobility who had been governors of large provinces – Sa‘adat Khan (Awadh), Murshid Quli Khan (Bengal) and Asaf Jah (Hyderabad).

- All three had occupied high *mansabdari* positions and enjoyed the trust and confidence of the emperors. Both Asaf Jah and Murshid Quli Khan held a *zat* rank of 7,000 each, while Sa’adat Khan’s *zat* was 6,000.

Hyderabad

- Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah, the founder of Hyderabad state, was one of the most powerful members at the court of the Mughal Emperor Farrukh Siyar.
- As the Mughal governor of the Deccan provinces, Asaf Jah already had full control over its political and financial administration.
- Taking advantage of the turmoil in the Deccan and the competition amongst the court nobility, he gathered power in his hands and became the actual ruler of that region.
- Asaf Jah brought skilled soldiers and administrators from northern India who welcomed the new opportunities in the south. He appointed *mansabdars* and granted *jagirs*.
- Although he was still a servant of the Mughal emperor, he ruled quite independently without seeking any direction from Delhi or facing any interference.
- The Mughal emperor merely confirmed the decisions already taken by the Nizam.
- The state of Hyderabad was constantly engaged in a struggle against the Marathas to the west and with independent Telugu warrior chiefs (*nayakas*) of the plateau.
- The ambitions of the Nizam to control the rich textile-producing areas of the Coromandel coast in the east were checked by the British who were becoming increasingly powerful in that region.

Awadh

- Burhan-ul-Mulk Sa'adat Khan was appointed *subadar* of Awadh in 1722 and founded a state which was one of the most important to emerge out of the break-up of the Mughal Empire.
- Awadh was a prosperous region, controlling the rich alluvial Ganga plain and the main trade route between north India and Bengal.
- Burhan-ul-Mulk also held the combined offices of *subadari, diwani* and *faujdari.* In other words, he was responsible for managing the political, financial and military affairs of the province of Awadh.

- Burhan-ul-Mulk tried to decrease Mughal influence in the Awadh region by reducing the number of office holders (*jagirdars*) appointed by the Mughals.
- He also reduced the size of *jagirs*, and appointed his own loyal servants to vacant positions.
- The accounts of *jagirdars* were checked to prevent cheating and the revenues of all districts were reassessed by officials appointed by the Nawab's court.
- He seized a number of Rajput zamindaris and the agriculturally fertile lands of the Afghans of Rohilkhand.
- The state depended on local bankers and *mahajans* for loans. It sold the right to collect tax to the highest bidders. These "revenue farmers" (*ijaradars*) agreed to pay the state a fixed sum of money.
- Local bankers guaranteed the payment of this contracted amount to the state. In turn, the revenue-farmers were given considerable freedom in the assessment and collection of taxes.
- These developments allowed new social groups, like moneylenders and bankers, to influence the management of the state's revenue system, something which had not occurred in the past.

Bengal

- Bengal gradually broke away from Mughal control under Murshid Quli Khan who was appointed as the *naib*, deputy to the governor of the province.
- Although never a formal *subadar*, Murshid Quli Khan very quickly seized all the power that went with that office.
- Like the rulers of Hyderabad and Awadh he also commanded the revenue administration of the state.
- In an effort to reduce Mughal influence in Bengal he transferred all Mughal *jagirdars* to Orissa and ordered a major reassessment of the revenues of Bengal.
- Revenue was collected in cash with great strictness from all zamindars. As a result, many zamindars had to borrow money from bankers and moneylenders. Those unable to pay were forced to sell their lands to larger zamindars.

- The formation of a regional state in eighteenth century Bengal therefore led to considerable change amongst the zamindars.

- The close connection between the state and bankers – noticeable in Hyderabad and Awadh as well – was evident in Bengal under the rule of Alivardi Khan (r. 1740-1756).

- During his reign the banking house of Jagat Seth became extremely prosperous.

➢ If we take a bird's eye view, we can detect three common features amongst these states:

1. Though many of the larger states were established by erstwhile Mughal nobles they were highly suspicious of some of the administrative systems that they had inherited, in particular the *jagirdari* system.
2. Their method of tax collection differed. Rather than relying upon the officers of the state, all three regimes contracted with revenue-farmers for the collection of revenue. The practice of *ijaradari*, thoroughly disapproved of by the Mughals, spread all over India in the eighteenth century. Their impact on the countryside differed considerably.
3. Their emerging relationship with rich bankers and merchants. These people lent money to revenue farmers, received land as security and collected taxes from these lands through their own agents. Throughout India the richest merchants and bankers were gaining a stake in the new political order.

The Watan Jagirs of the Rajputs

➢ Many Rajput kings, particularly those belonging to Amber and Jodhpur, had served under the Mughals with distinction. In exchange, they were permitted to enjoy considerable autonomy in their *watan jagirs*.

➢ In the eighteenth century, these rulers now attempted to extend their control over adjacent regions.

➢ These influential Rajput families claimed the *subadari* of the rich provinces of Gujarat and Malwa. Raja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur held the governorship of Gujarat and Sawai Raja Jai Singh of Amber was governor of Malwa.

➢ They also tried to extend their territories by seizing portions of imperial territories neighbouring their *watans*.

- Nagaur was conquered and annexed to the house of Jodhpur, while Amber seized large portions of Bundi. Sawai Raja Jai Singh founded his new capital at Jaipur and was given the *subadari* of Agra in 1722.

- Maratha campaigns into Rajasthan from the 1740s put severe pressure on these principalities and checked their further expansion.

Seizing Independence

The Sikhs

- The organisation of the Sikhs into a political community during the seventeenth century helped in regional state-building in the Punjab.

- Several battles were fought by Guru Gobind Singh against the Rajput and Mughal rulers, both before and after the institution of the *Khalsa* in 1699.

- After his death in 1708, the *Khalsa* rose in revolt against the Mughal authority under Banda Bahadur's leadership, declared their sovereign rule by striking coins in the name of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, and established their own administration between the Sutlej and the Jamuna. Banda Bahadur was captured in 1715 and executed in 1716.

- Under a number of able leaders in the eighteenth century, the Sikhs organized themselves into a number of bands called *jathas*, and later on *misls*.

- Their combined forces were known as the grand army (*dal khalsa*). The entire body used to meet at Amritsar at the time of Baisakhi and Diwali to take collective decisions known as "resolutions of the Guru (*gurmatas*)".

- A system called *rakhi* was introduced, offering protection to cultivators on the payment of a tax of 20 per cent of the produce.

- Guru Gobind Singh had inspired the *Khalsa* with the belief that their destiny was to rule (*raj karega khalsa*).

- Their well-knit organization enabled them to put up a successful resistance to the Mughal governors first and then to Ahmad Shah Abdali who had seized the rich province of the Punjab and the Sarkar of Sirhind from the Mughals.

- The *Khalsa* declared their sovereign rule by striking their own coin again in 1765. Significantly, this coin bore the same inscription as the one on the orders issued by the *Khalsa* in the time of Banda Bahadur.

- The Sikh territories in the late eighteenth century extended from the Indus to the Jamuna but they were divided under different rulers. One of them, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, reunited these groups and established his capital at Lahore in 1799.

The Marathas

- The Maratha kingdom was another powerful regional kingdom to arise out of a sustained opposition to Mughal rule.

- Shivaji (1627-1680) carved out a stable kingdom with the support of powerful warrior families (*deshmukhs*).

- Groups of highly mobile, peasant pastoralists (*kunbis*) provided the backbone of the Maratha army. Shivaji used these forces to challenge the Mughals in the peninsula.

- After Shivaji's death, effective power in the Maratha state was wielded by a family of Chitpavan Brahmanas who served Shivaji's successors as Peshwa (or principal minister).

- Poona became the capital of the Maratha kingdom. Under the Peshwas, the Marathas developed a very successful military organisation.

- Their success lay in bypassing the fortified areas of the Mughals, by raiding cities and by engaging Mughal armies in areas where their supply lines and reinforcements could be easily disturbed.

- Between 1720 and 1761, the Maratha empire expanded. It gradually chipped away at the authority of the Mughal Empire. Malwa and Gujarat were seized from the Mughals by the 1720s.

- By the 1730s, the Maratha king was recognised as the overlord of the entire Deccan peninsula. He possessed the right to levy ***chauth*** and ***sardeshmukhi*** in the entire region.

- After raiding Delhi in 1737 the frontiers of Maratha domination expanded rapidly: into Rajasthan and the Punjab in the north; into Bengal and Orissa in the east; and into Karnataka and the Tamil and Telugu countries in the south. These were not formally included in the Maratha empire, but were made to pay tribute as a way of accepting Maratha sovereignty.

- Expansion brought enormous resources, but it came at a price. These military campaigns also made other rulers hostile towards the Marathas. As a result, they were not inclined to support the Marathas during the third battle of Panipat in 1761.

- Alongside endless military campaigns, the Marathas developed an effective administrative system as well.

- Once conquest had been completed and Maratha rule was secure, revenue demands were gradually introduced taking local conditions into account. Agriculture was encouraged and trade revived.

- This allowed Maratha chiefs (*sardars*) like Sindhia of Gwalior, Gaekwad of Baroda and Bhonsle of Nagpur the resources to raise powerful armies.

- Maratha campaigns into Malwa in the 1720s did not challenge the growth and prosperity of the cities in the region. Ujjain expanded under Sindhia's patronage and Indore under Holkar's.

- By all accounts these cities were large and prosperous and functioned as important commercial and cultural centres. New trade routes emerged within the areas controlled by the Marathas.

- The silk produced in the Chanderi region now found a new outlet in Poona, the Maratha capital.

- Burhanpur which had earlier participated in the trade between Agra and Surat now expanded its hinterland to include Poona and Nagpur in the south and Lucknow and Allahabad in the east.

The Jats

- Like the other states the Jats consolidated their power during the late seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries.

- Under their leader, Churaman, they acquired control over territories situated to the west of the city of Delhi, and by the 1680s they had begun dominating the region between the two imperial cities of Delhi and Agra. For a while they became the virtual custodians of the city of Agra.

- The Jats were prosperous agriculturists, and towns like Panipat and Ballabhgarh became important trading centres in the areas dominated by them.

- Under Suraj Mal the kingdom of Bharatpur emerged as a strong state. When Nadir Shah sacked Delhi in 1739, many of the city's notables took refuge there.

- While the Bharatpur fort was built in a fairly traditional style, at Dig the Jats built an elaborate garden palace combining styles seen at Amber and Agra. Its buildings were modelled on architectural forms first associated with royalty under Shah Jahan.

NCERT-CLASS VIII-HISTORY OUR PASTS-III

NCERT Class VIII History- Our Past-III

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OUR PASTS-III-PART 2

LESSON- 7

Weavers, Iron Smelters and Factory Owners

- In the late 18th century, The East India Company was buying goods in India and exporting those good to England and Europe.
- Dutch and English trading ships began using Surat port (Gujarat) from the early 17th century.
- Production of cotton textiles made Britain the foremost industrial nation and iron and steel industry made it, the "workshop of the world".
- ***Patola*** was woven in Surat, Ahmadabad and Patan. It was highly popular in Indonesia.
- Before British conquered Bengal, India was world's large producer of cotton textile.
- Indian textiles had long been renowned for their fine quality and exquisite craftsmanship.
- They were traded in Southeast Asia (Java, Sumatra and Penang) and West and central Asia.
- From the 16th century European trading companies began buying Indian textiles for sale in Europe.
- There were many words which point to the popularity of Indian textiles in western markets, *example*, the cotton textiles which Portuguese took back to Europe, along with spices came to be called "***calico***"(derived from Calicut),and calico became the general name for all cotton textiles.
- Other such examples are *muslin, chintz, cossaes* and *bandanna.*
- Among which *Jamnadani* is fine muslin on which decorative motifs are woven on the loom. The most important centres of jamnadani weaving were Dacca in Bengal and Lucknow in the United Provinces.
- *Chintz* was produced in Masulipatnam, Andhra Pradesh, and export to Iran and Europe. Bandanna patterns were mostly produced in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- Unable to compete with Indian textiles, English producers wanted a secure market within the country by preventing the entry of Indian textiles.
- In 1720, the British government enacted a legislation banning the use of printed cotton textiles ***Chintz***- in England,which was known as ***Calico Act***.
- In 1764, the ***spinning jenny*** was invented by John Kaye which increased the productivity of the traditional spindles. The invention of the ***Steam engine*** by Richard Arkwright in 1786 revolutionized cotton textile weaving.
- The development of cotton industries in Britain affected textile producers in India as first Indian textile had to compete with British textiles in the European and American markets. Second, exporting textiles to England also became increasingly difficult since very high duties were imposed on Indian textiles imported into Britain.
- As a result, during the national movement, Mahatma Gandhi urged people to boycott imported textiles. Khadi gradually became a symbol of nationalism. The charkha came to represent India and it was put at the centre of the tricolor flag of the Indian National Congress adopted in 1931.
- Thousands of poor peasants, artisans and agricultural laborers moved to the cities to work mills, as mills were established in big cities like ***Mumbai, Ahmadabad***.
- The swords and armor making industry died with the conquest of India by the British and imports of iron and steel from England displaced the iron and steel produced by craftspeople in India.

Because production of wootz steel required a highly specialized technique of refining iron but iron smelting in India was extremely common till the end of the nineteenth century.

**** (wootz is a special type of high carbon steel. it was produced all over south India.)***

- The ***Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO)*** established to produce steel in 1912. Jamshedpur- the industrial area was set up on the bank of river Subarnarekha as Rajhara Hills in Chhattisgarh had one of the finest ores in the world.
- In 1914 the First World War broke out. Steel produced in Britain had to meet the demands of war in Europe. As a result, import of steel in India declined dramatically, and the Indian Railways turned to TISCO for supply of rails.
- Tisco had to produce shells and carriage wheels for the war. By 1919 the colonial government was buying 90 percent of the steel manufactured by Tisco. And thus Tisco became the biggest steel industry within the British Empire.

LESSON- 8

Civilizing the "Native", educating the Nation

The British in India wanted not only territorial conquest and control over revenues. They also felt that they had a cultural mission: they had to "civilize the natives", change their customs and values. British tried to understand Indian culture and Indian literature to please Indian and to win a place in their heart. Many British officials did effort for this.

In 1783, ***William Jones*** had an appointment as a junior judge in Supreme Court (Calcutta). In addition to being expert in law, Jones was a linguist. He had studied **Greek, Latin, French, English, Arabic and Persian.** At Calcutta he started studying ***Sanskrit language, Grammar, and Literature.*** Soon he was studying ancient Indian texts on various subjects. Jones discovered that his interests were shared by many British officials living in Calcutta at the time. Together with ***Henry Colebrooke*** and ***Nathaniel Halhed, Jones*** set up the ***Asiatic Society of Bengal*** and started a journal called ***Asiatick Research.*** In this process the British would become the guardians of Indian culture as well as its masters.

A ***madrasa*** was set up in ***Calcutta in 1781*** to promote the study of Arabic, Persian and Islamic law; and the ***Hindu College*** was established in ***Banaras in 1791*** to encourage the study of ancient Sanskrit texts.

From the early nineteenth century many British officials began to criticize the Orientalist vision of learning. They said that knowledge of the East was full of errors and unscientific thought; Eastern literature was non-serious and light-hearted. So they argued that it was wrong on the part of the British to spend so much effort in encouraging the study of Arabic and Sanskrit language and literature. ***James mill*** was the one of those who attacked the Orientalists.

(*Orientalists - Those with a scholarly knowledge of the language and culture of Asia)

By the 1830s the attack on the Orientalists became sharper. ***Thomas Macaulay*** was the most outspoken and influential of such critics. He saw India as an uncivilized country that needed to be civilized.

Macaulay said***, "A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia".*** With great energy and passion, Macaulay emphasized the need to teach the English language. He said that learning English would enable Indians to read some of the finest literature the world had produced. Teaching of English could thus be a way od civilizing people, changing their tastes, values and culture.

Following Macaulay's minute, ***the English Education Act of 1835*** was introduced. The decision was to make English the medium of instruction for higher education, and to stop the promotion of Oriental institutions like the Calcutta Madrasa and Banaras Sanskrit College.

In 1854, the Court of Directors of the East India Company in London sent an educational Despatch to the Governor-General in India. Issued by Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control of the Company, it has come to be known as ***Wood's Despatch***. Outlining the educational policy that was to be followed in India, it emphasized once again the practical benefits of a system of European learning, as opposed to Oriental knowledge. Wood's Despatch of 1854 marked the final triumph of those who opposed Oriental learning.

One of the practical uses the Despatch pointed to was ***Economics.*** European learners said, it would be enable Indians to recognize the advantages that flow from the expansion of trade and commerce, and create a demand for British goods. Woods dispatch also argued that European learning would improve the moral character of Indians. It would make Indians truthful and honest, and thus supply the Company with trustworthy civil servants.

Following the 1854 Despatch, several measures were introduced by the British. Steps were taken to establish a system of university education. ***In 1857, Universities were being established in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay.***

The argument for practical education was strongly criticized by the Christian missionaries in India in the nineteenth century. The missionaries felt that education should attempt to improve the moral character of the people, and morality could be improved only through Christian education. Until 1813, the East India Company was opposed to missionary activities in India. It feared that missionary activities would provoke reaction amongst the local population and make them suspicious of British presence in India.

Unable to establish an institution within British-controlled territories, ***the missionaries set up a mission at Serampore in an area under the control of the Danish East India Company***. ***A printing press was set up in 1800 and a college established in 1818.*** Over the nineteenth century, missionary schools were set up all over India.

Before 1854, Indian vernacular schools were not in good conditions. They don't have good administration and infrastructure. After 1854 British tried to introduce rules of discipline and compulsory attendance in vernacular schools.

Impressed with the developments in Europe, some Indians felt that Western education would help modernize India. They urged the British to open more schools, colleges and universities, and spend more money on education. There were other Indians, who ***reacted against Western education***. ***Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore*** was two such individuals.

Mahatma Gandhi argued that western education made Indians see western civilization as superior. and Indian began admiring British Rule. He ***advocates to focused on work with their hands, learn a craft and know how different things operated. This would develop their mind and their capacity to understand.***

Rabindranath Tagore started the institution in 1901 called Shantiniketan. Tagore felt that childhood ought to be a time of self- learning, outside the rigid and restricting discipline of the schooling system set up by the British. **According to Tagore, the existing school killed the natural desire of the child to be creative and his sense of wonder**.

Tagore set up his school (**Shantiniketan**) 100 km away from Calcutta in a rural setting, where living in harmony with nature, children could cultivate their natural creativity.

In many senses Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi thought about education in similar ways. There were, however, **differences** too. Gandhi was highly critical of Western civilization and its worship of machines and technology. Tagore wanted to combine elements of modern Western civilization with what he saw as the best within Indian tradition. **He emphasized the need to teach science and technology at Santiniketan, along with art, music and dance.**

LESSON- 9

Women, Caste and Reform

Before 19th century, some social practices like ***Sati, Child marriages and polygamy*** were existed in Indian society. ***Both Hindu and Muslim*** men can marry more than one wife. In some parts of the country widows were praised if they choose death by burning themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands. Women, who died in this manner, whether willingly or otherwise, were called ***"Sati"*** meaning virtuous women. Women's right to property were also restricted. Women had no access to education. In most regions, people were divided along lines of caste. ***Brahmans and Kshatriyas*** considered themselves as *"**upper castes**"*. Traders and moneylenders were place after them. Then came peasants and artisans such as ***weavers and potters*** (referred to as **Shudras**). At the lowest rung were those who labored to keep cities and villages clean or worked at jobs that upper castes considered "polluting", that is, it could l ead to the loss of caste status. The upper castes also treated many of these groups at the bottom as **"untouchable**". They were not allowed to enter temples, draw water from ponds where upper castes bathed. They were seen as inferior human beings.

Working toward change:

From the early 19th century, for the first time, books, newspapers, magazines, leaflets and pamphlets were became new medium of communication. These were cheaper and accessible to ordinary people. People could write their own ideas in their own language. Thus, all kinds of issues – social, political, economic and religious- could be debated in new cities. These debates were often initiated by Indian reformers and reform groups. One of such reformers is,

Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833)- he founded a reform association known as ***Brahmo Samaj*** in Calcutta. He thought that the best way to ensure changes was by persuading people to give up old practices and adopt a new way of life. He was keen to spread the knowledge of western education in the country and bring about greater freedom and equality for women.

Ram Mohan Roy was particularly moved by the problems widows faced in their life. He began a campaign against the practice of Sati. He was ***well versed in Sanskrit, Persian and several other Indian and European languages.*** He tried to show through his writing that the practice of widow burning had no sanction in ancient texts. With the help of British officials he succeeded to abolish Sati. ***In 1829, Sati act was passed, and the practice of Sati became a criminal offense.***

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar- Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, used the ancient texts to suggest that widow could remarry. His suggestions were adopted by British officials, and ***a law passed in 1856 permitting widow remarriage.*** Those who were against the remarriage of widows opposed Vidyasagar, and even boycotted him. Vidyasagar set up schools for girls. By the second half of the 19th century, the movement in favor of widow remarriage spread to other parts of the country.

In the Telugu-speaking areas of Madras presidency, ***Veeresalingam Pantalu*** formed an association for widow remarriage. Around the same time young intellectuals and reformers in Bombay pledged themselves to working for the same cause. ***Schools for girls were established by the Arya Samaj in Punjab and Jyotirao Phule in Maharashtra***.

Despite of all these reforms, women were not supported by family for schools. Therefore, throughout the 19th century, most educated women were taught at home by liberal fathers or husbands.

Women's contribution-

Muslim women like Beghums of Bhopal played a notable role in promoting education among women. **They founded a primary school for girls at Aligarh.** Another remarkable woman, **Beghum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain started schools for Muslim girls in Patna and Calcutta.**
By the 1880s, Indian women began to enter universities. Some of them trained to be doctors, some became teachers. Many women began to write and publish their critical views on the place of women in society. ***Tarabai Shinde, a woman educated at home at Poona, published a book, Stripurushtulna (A comparison between Women and Men), criticizing the social differences between men and women***.
Pandita Ramabai, a great scholar of Sanskrit, felt that Hinduism was oppressive towards women and wrote a book about the miserable lives of upper caste Hindu women. She founded a widow's home at Poona to provide shelter to widows who had been treated badly by their husbands' relatives. Here women were trained so that they could support themselves economically.

In the 20th century leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose lent their support to demands for greater equality and freedom for women. They asked women to concentrate on the anti-British struggles.
With the growth of women's organizations and writing on the issue of "Child marriage", the momentum for reform gained strength. There were a number of Indian legislators in the Central Legislative Assembly who fought to make a law preventing child marriage. ***In 1929, the Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed without the kind of bitter debates.*** According to the Act no man below the age of 18 and woman below the age of 16 could marry. Subsequently these limits were raised to 21 for men and 18 for women.

Caste and Social Reform-

Some of the social reformers criticized caste inequalities. ***Ram Mohan Roy translated an old Buddhist text that was critical of caste. The Prarthana Samaj adhered to the tradition of Bhakti that believed in spiritual equality of all castes. In Bombay the paramhans Mandali was founded in 1840 to work for the abolition of caste***. Many reformers and members of upper castes, ***often in secret meeting, would violate caste taboo on food and touch***, in an effort to get rid of the hold of caste prejudice in their lives.
At the same time, the poor from the villages and small towns, many of them from low castes began moving to the cities where there was a new demand for labor. Some also went to work in plantations in Assam, Mauritius, Trinidad and Indonesia. Work in the new locations was often very hard. But the poor, the people from low castes saw this as an opportunity to get away from the oppressive of upper castes over their lives and the daily humiliation they suffered.

By the 2nd half of the 19th century, Non-Brahmanical movements started in India.

The Satnami movement in Central India was founded by Ghasidas who worked among the leatherworkers and organized a movement to improve their social status. ***In eastern Bengal, Haridas Thakur Matua sect worked among Chandala cultivators***.

One of the most vocal amongst the 'low-caste' leaders was ***Jotirao Phule***. He studied in school set up by Christian missionaries. On growing up he developed his own ideas about the injustices of caste society. He attacked on origin of "upper castes", he argued that the Aryans were foreigners, who came from outside the subcontinent, and defeated and subjugated the local people of the country. ***The Satyashodhak samaj, an association Phule founded propagated caste equality.***

In 1873, Phule wrote a book named Gulamgiri meaning slavery. Phule dedicated his book to all those Americans who had fought to free slaves, thus establishing a link between the conditions of the "lower" castes in India and the black slaves in America.

Since the childhood Ambedkar face the discrimination because of his lower caste. After finishing school, he got fellowship to go to the US for higher studies. ***On his return to India in 1919, he wrote extensively about "upper" caste power in contemporary society. In 1927, Ambedkar started a temple entry movement, in which his Mahar caste followers participated. Ambedkar led three such movements for temple entry between 1927 and 1935.***

Convinced those untouchables had to fight for their dignity; ***Periyar (E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker) founded the Self Respect Movement.*** These assertions did not go unchallenged. The forceful speeches, writings and movements of the lower caste leaders did lead to rethinking and some self criticism among upper-caste nationalist leaders. But ***orthodox Hindu society also reacted by founding Sanatan Dharma Sabhas and Bharat Dharma Mahamandal in the north, and associations like the Brahman Sabha in Bengal.*** The object of these associations was to uphold caste distinctions as a cornerstone of Hinduism.

LESSON -10

The Changing World of Visual Arts

Colonial rule introduced several new art forms, styles, materials and techniques which were creatively adapted by Indian artists for local patrons and markets, in both elite and popular circles. From the eighteenth century a stream of European artists came to India along with the British traders and rulers. The artists brought with them new styles and new conventions of painting. They began producing pictures which became widely popular in Europe and helped shape western perceptions of India. European artists brought with them the idea of realism. They also brought with them the technique of **oil painting** – a technique with which Indian artists were not very familiar. (Oil painting enabled artists to produce images that **looked real**).

One popular imperial tradition was ***picturesque*** landscape painting. **Thomas Daniel** and his nephew **William Daniel** were the most famous artists. Who painted within this tradition. They stayed for seven years in India from 1785, journeying from Calcutta to northern and southern India. They produced some of the most evocative picturesque landscapes of Britain have newly conquered territories in India. Their large oil paintings on canvas were regularly exhibited to select audiences in Britain.

Picturesque: This is a style of painting depicted India as a quant land, to be explored by travelling British artists; its landscape was rugged and wild, seemingly untamed by human hands.

Another tradition of art that became immensely popular in colonial India was portrait painting. Colonial portraits were life-size images that looked life-size images that looked lifelike and real.

Portrait: A picture of a person in which the face and its expression is prominent.

Portraiture: The art of making portraits.

As portrait painting became popular, many European portrait painters came to India in search of profitable commissions. (Commission is to formally choose someone to do a special piece of work usually against payment.) Many of the Indian nawabs too began commissioning imposing oil portraits by European painters. Some nawabs accepted the political and cultural superiority of the British. They hoped to socialize with the British, and adopt their styles and tastes. Muhammad Ali Khan was one such nawab. His portraits were made by two visiting European Artists, i.e. Tilly Kettle and George Willison.

Painting history:

There was a third category of imperial art, called "history paintings" during the late 18th and early 19th century. British victories in India served as rich material for history painters in Britain. These paintings celebrated the British: their power, their victories, and their supremacy. One of the first of these ***history paintings was produced by Francis Hayman in 1762*** and ***placed on public display in the Vauxhall Gardens in London.*** Battle of Plassey, in which the British had defeated Sirajuddaulah and installed Mir Jafar as the Nawab of Murshidabad, was the subject of these paintings. In the painting by Hayman, it

shows Lord Clive being welcomed by Mir Jafar and his troops after the Battle of Plassey.

The celebration of British military triumph can be seen in the many paintings of the battle of Seringapatam (now Srirangapatanam). Battle with Tipu Sultan of Mysore, was one of the popular subject. He was finally defeated in 1799 at the famous battle of Seringapatam. ***The painting dramatizes the event and glorifies the British triumph.***

Perspective: The way that objects appear smaller when they are further away and the way parallel lines appear to meet each other at a point in the distance.

In Mysore, Tipu Sultan resisted the cultural traditions associated with British. He continued to encourage local traditions. His walls of palace at Seringapatam had covered with ***mural paintings*** done by local artists. In late 18th century, local miniature artists at Murshidabad began adopting elements of European realism. They use ***perspective***, which creates a sense of distance between objects that are near and those at a distance. They use light and shade to make figures look life like and real.

With the establishment of British power many of the local courts lost their influence and wealth. They could no longer support painters and pay them to paint for court. Local painters started work for British and their paintings came to be known as ***Company paintings.***

The new popular Indian Art:

In Bengal, around the pilgrimage centre of the temple of kalighat, local village scroll painters(called patuas) and potters (called kumors in eastern India and kumhars in north India) began developing a new style of art. In the early 19th century city was developing. Village artists came and settled in the city in the hope of new patrons and new buyers of their art. Kalighat painters began to develop painting art. ***They began to make the images look three-dimensional***. Kalighat paintings were dramatically changed with changing time. Often the artists mocked at the changes they saw around. They made fun of the westernized baboo, criticized the corrupt priests and warned against women moving out of their homes. They often expressed the anger of common people against the rich.

The Kalighat paintings is the use of a bold, deliberately non-realistic style, where the figures emerge large and powerful, with a minimum of lines, detail and colors

Popular prints were not painted only by the poor village Kalighat patuas. Often, middle class Indian artists set up printing presses and produced prints for a wide market. They were trained in British art schools in new methods of life study, oil painting and print making. ***One of the most successful of these presses that were set up in late 19th century was the Calcutta Art Studio.***

These types of popular pictures were printed and circulated in other parts of India. With the spread of nationalism, popular prints of the early 20th century began carrying nationalist messages. In many of them Bharat Mata appearing as a goddess carrying the national flag.

By the mid-nineteenth century photographers from Europe began travelling to India, taking pictures, setting up studios, and establishing photographic societies to promote the art of photography. Some of them were portrait painters who began taking photographs of imperial officials, presenting them as figures of authority and power.

- With British rule, architectural style also changed. New styles were introduced as new cities were built, new buildings came up.

Towards the end of 19th century, a stronger connection was established between art and nationalism. Raja Ravi Varma was one of the first artists who tried to create a style that was both modern and national. From the 1880s, Ravi Varma's mythological paintings became very famous and popular all over the India. Ravi Varma started a printing press on the outskirts of Bombay, Where color printouts of his paintings were mass produced and became affordable even to the poor class because of their fewer prices.

In Bengal, a new group of nationalist rejected the art of Ravi Varma as imitative and westernized. Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951), the nephew of Rabindranath Tagore was an artist. He argued, a genuine Indian style of painting had to draw inspiration from non-Western art traditions, and try to capture the spiritual essence of the East. They turned for inspiration to medieval Indian traditions of miniature painting and the ***ancient art of mural painting in Ajanta caves***. They were also influenced by the art of Japanese artists who visited India at that time to develop an Asian art movement.

Ravi Varma belonged to the family of the Maharajas of Travancore in Kerala, and was addressed as Raja. He mastered the western art of oil painting and realistic life study, but painted themes from Indian mythology.

In 1904, Okakura Kakuzo published a book in Japan called the ideals of the East. Okakura researched on Japanese art and emphasized the need to save traditional techniques of traditional Japanese art at a time they were being replaced by Western-style painting. He tried to define what modern art could be and how tradition could be retained and modernized. He was the principal founder of the first Japanese art academy.

LESSON – 11

The Making of the National Movement: 1870s-1947

The previous developments such as, The British conquest of territories, and takeover of kingdoms, Introduction of new laws and administrative institutions, Changes in the lives of peasants and tribal, Educational changes in the 19th century, Debates regarding the conditions of women, Challenges to the caste system and social and religious reform, led the people to ask a crucial question about the identity of India.

Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was formed by S.H.Chiplunkar, G.V.Joshi, and M.G.Ranade in 1870.

The answer that gradually emerged was: India was the people of India – all the people irrespective of class, colour, caste, creed, language or gender. And the country, its resources and systems, were meant for all of them. With this answer came the awareness that the British were excersing control over the resources of India and the lives of its people, and until this control was ended India could not be for Indians.

Indian association was formed by Radhakant Deb, in 1851.

This consciousness began to be clearly stated by the political associations formed after 1850. Most of these were led by English-educated professionals such as lawyers. ***The important associations were the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, the Indian Association, the madras Mahajan Sabha, the Bombay Presidency Association and the Indian National Congress.***

Madras Mahajan Sabha was established by P.Anandcharlu and S.Ramaswamy Mudliar in May 1884.

These associations worked with the idea that the people should be **sovereign –** a modern consciousness and a key feature of nationalism. They believed that the Indian people should be empowered to take decisions regarding their affairs.

The dissatisfaction with British rule intensified in 1870s and 1880s**.** ***The Arms Act was passed in 1878, disallowing Indians from possessing arms. In the same year the Vernacular press Act was also enacted in an effort to silence those who were critical of the government. The Act allowed the government to confiscate the assets of newspapers including their printing presses if the newspapers published anything that was found "objectionable". In 1833, there was a furore over the attempt by the government to introduce the Ilbert Bill. The bill provided for the trial of British or European persons by Indian, and sought equality between British and Indian judges in the country. But when European opposition forced the government to withdraw the bill, Indians were enraged. The event highlighted the racial attitudes of British in India.***

Indian National Congress was formed in 28 December 1885. Until the time of independence of India, Indian National Congress was the largest and most prominent public organization.

The need for an all-India organization of educated Indians had been felt since 1880, but the Ilbert Bill controversy deepened this desire. ***The Indian National Congress was established when 72 delegates from all over the country met at Bombay in December 1885. The early leadership – Dadabhai Naoroji, Firozshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, W.C. Bannerji, Surendranath Banerji, Romesh Chandra Dutt, and S. Subramanian Iyer, among others – was largely from Bombay and Calcutta. Naoroji, a businessman and publicist settled in London, and for a time member of the British Parliament, guided the younger nationalists. A retired British official, A.O. Hume, also played a part in bringing Indians from the various regions together.***

The Congress in the first twenty years was ***"moderate"*** in its objectives and methods. During this period it demanded a greater voice for Indians in the government and in administration***. It wanted the Legislative Councils to be made more representative, given more power, and introduced in provinces where none existed. It demanded that Indians be placed in high positions in the government. For this purpose it called for civil service examinations to be held in India as well, not just in London.***

The demand for Indianisation of the administration was part of a movement against racism, since most important jobs at the time were monopolized by British officials. ***Other demands included the separation of the judiciary from the executive, the repeal of the Arms Act and freedom of speech and expression.***

The early Congress also raised a number of economic issues. It declared that British rule had led to poverty and famines. Exportation of food grains to Europe had created food shortages. ***The Congress demanded reduction of revenue, cut in military expenditure, and more funds for irrigation. It passed many resolutions on the salt tax, treatment of Indian labourers abroad.*** The moderate leaders wanted to develop public awareness about the unjust nature of British rule. They criticized British rule in their speeches and in their newspaper articles. They sent representatives to different parts of the country. **They felt that the British had respect for the ideals of freedom and justice, and so they would accept the just demands of Indians.**

By the 1890s many Indians began to raise questions about the political style of the congress. They criticized the moderates for their "politics of prayers", and emphasized the importance of self-reliance and constructive work. Bipin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai were such leaders.

In 1905 Viceroy Curzon partitioned Bengal. At that time Bengal was the biggest province of British India and included Bihar and parts of Orissa. ***The British argued for dividing Bengal for reasons of administrative convenience.*** Perhaps ***the British motives were to curtail the influence of Bengali politicians and to split the Bengali people.***

The partition of Bengal infuriated people all over India. Congress – Moderates and Radicals opposed it. ***The struggle that unfolded came to be known as the Swadeshi movement,*** strongest in Bengal but Echoes elsewhere too- ***in deltaic Andhra for instance, it was known as the Vandemataram movement. The swadeshi movement sought to oppose British rule and encourage the ideas of self-help, swadeshi enterprise, national education and use of Indian languages.***

A group of Muslim landlords and nawabs formed the All India Muslim League at Dacca in 1906. The league supported the partition of Bengal. It desired separate electorates for Muslims, a demand conceded by the government in 1909.

Meanwhile, the Congress split in 1907. After the split, Congress came to be dominated by the Moderates with Tilak's followers functioning from outside. Moderate and extremist reunited in December 1915. Next year the Congress and the Muslim League

Lucknow pact (1916): Lucknow pact refers to an agreement reached between the Indian National Congress and Muslim League at the joint session of both the parties, held in Lucknow.

signed the historic Lucknow pact and decided to work together for representative government in the country.

After 1919 the struggle against British rule gradually became a mass movement, involving peasants, tribal, students and women in large numbers and occasionally factory workers as well.

During the First World War, British needed to expand their army. Villages were pressurized to supply soldiers for an alien cause. A large number of soldiers were sent to serve abroad. Many returned after the war with an understanding of the ways in which imperialist powers were exploiting the peoples of Asia and Africa and with a desire to oppose colonial rule in India.

During the revolution in Russia (1917), news about peasants' and workers' struggles and ideas of socialism circulated widely. It inspired Indian nationalists.

Gandhiji, aged 46, arrived in India in 1915 from South Africa. Having led Indians in that country in non-violent marches against racist restrictions; he was already a respected leader, known internationally. His South African campaigns had brought him in contact with Indians with different classes and religions. Mahatma Gandhi spent his first year in India travelling throughout the country, understanding the people, their needs and the overall situation.

His previous interventions were in local movements in Champaran, Kheda and Ahmadabad where he came into contact with Rajendra Prasad and Vallabhbhai Patel. In Ahmadabad he led a successful millworkers' strike in 1918.

The Rowlett Satyagrah:

In 1919 Gandhiji gave a call for a *Satyagraha* against the Rowlett Act that the British had passed. ***The Act curbed fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression and strengthened police powers***. Indian leaders criticized the Act as "devilish" and tyrannical. Gandhiji asked people to observe 6 April 1919 as a day of non-violent opposition to this Act, as a day of "humiliation and prayer" and hartal. ***Satyagraha sabhas were set up to launch the movement. The Rowlett Satyagrah turned out to be the first all-India struggle against the British government***. It was largely restricted to the cities. The governments used brutal measurements to suppress them. ***The Jalianwala Bagh atrocities, inflicted by General Dyer in Amritsar (13April, 1919) were a part of this repression.*** On learning about massacre, ***Rabindranath Tagore expressed the pain and anger of the country by renouncing his knighthood. During the Rowlatt Satyagraha the participants tried to ensure that Hindus and Muslims were united in the fight against British rule.***

Khilafat agitation and the Non-Cooperation Movement:

In 1920 the British imposed a harsh treaty on the Turkish Sultan or Khalifa. Indian Muslims were keen that the Khalifa be allowed to retain control over Muslim sacred

Motilal Nehru, C.R.Das, C. Rajgopalachari and Asaf Ali etc. are some eminent lawyers who gave up their practices in non-cooperation movement.

places in the erstwhile Ottoman Empire. ***The leaders of the Khilafat agitation, Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali requested Gandhiji to initiate Non-cooperation movemen***t. Gandhiji supported their call and urged the Congress to campaign against "Punjab wrongs" (Jallianwala massacre), the Khilafat wrong and demand swaraj.

During the non-cooperation movement thousands of students left government controlled schools and colleges. Many eminent lawyers gave up their practices. British titles were surrendered and legislatures boycotted. People lit public bonfires of foreign cloth. In many cases people resisted British rule non-violently. Such as, in Kheda, Gujarat, Patidar peasants organized nonviolent campaigns against the high land revenue demand of the British. ***In coastal Andhra and interior Tamil Nadu, liquor shops were picketed. In the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, tribal and poor peasants staged a number of "forest satyagrahas"***, sometimes sending their cattle into forests without paying grazing fee. In these circumstances Mahatma Gandhi emerged as a mass leader. ***He abruptly called off the Non-Cooperation movement after the case of Chauri Chaura***.

Chauri Chaura case: In February 1922 a crowd of peasants set fire to a police station in Chauri Chaura. Twenty two policemen were killed on that day. The peasants were provoked because the police had fired on their

Dandi march

In 1930, Gandhiji declared that he would lead a march to break the salt law. According to this law; the state had a monopoly on the manufacture and sale of salt. ***Mahatma Gandhi along with other nationalists reasoned that it was sinful to tax salt since it is such an essential item of our food***. The Salt March related the general desire of freedom to a specific grievance shared by everybody, and thus did not divide the rich and the poor. Gandhiji and his followers marched for over 240 miles from Sabarmati to the coastal town of Dandi where they broke the government law by gathering natural salt found on the seashore, and boiling sea water to produce salt. Peasants, tribal and women participated in large numbers. ***A business federation published a pamphlet on the salt issue.***

The result of this Indian struggle came in light when the Government of India Act of 1935 prescribed provincial autonomy and Government announced elections to the provincial legislatures in 1937. The Congress formed Governments in 7 out

Quit India and Later:

In September 1939, after two years of Congress rule in the provinces, the Second World War broke out. ***Congress leaders were ready to support the British war effort but in return they wanted that India be granted independence after the war. The British refused to concede the demand. The Congress ministries resigned in protest.***

Mahatma Gandhi told British to quit India immediately. He appeals people to participate aggressively. He told them to ***do or die*** in effort to fight the British. He appealed them to fight non-violently. Students gave up their studies to join the movement.

Meanwhile, ***in 1940 the Muslim League had moved a resolution demanding "Independent States" for Muslims in the north-western and eastern areas of the country. The resolution did not mention partition or Pakistan***.

From the late 1930s, the league began viewing the Muslims as a separate "nation" from the Hindus. The Congress's rejection of the League's desire to form a joint Congress League government in the United Provinces in 1937 annoyed League. It feared that Muslims may even remain unpresented.

The congress's failure to

At the end of the war in 1945, the British opened negotiations between the Congress, the League and themselves for the independence of India. ***The talks failed because the League saw itself as the sole spokesperson of India's Muslims.***

After elections of 1946 in which Congress did well in the "General" constituencies. The League's success in the seats reserved was spectacular and it persisted with its demand for "Pakistan".

In March 1946 the British cabinet sent three-member mission (Cabinet Mission) to Delhi to examine this demand. This mission suggested that India should remain united and constitute itself as a loose confederation with some autonomy for Muslim-majority areas. It could not get the Congress and the Muslim League to agree. ***After the failure of the Cabinet Mission, Muslim League decided on mass agitation for winning its Pakistan demand. It announced 16 August 1946 as "Direct Action Day".*** On this day riots broke out in Calcutta, lasting several days and resulting in death of thousands of people. By March 1947 violence spread to different parts of northern India.

Many hundred thousand people were killed and numerous women had to face untold brutalities during the partition. Partition also meant that India changed, many of its cities changed and a new country – Pakistan – was born. So, the joy of our country's independence from British rule came mixed with the pain and violence of partition.

LESSON - 12

INDIA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

After independence India faced a series of great challenges-

- Rehabilitating the refugees who migrated from Pakistan.
- Merger of princely states.
- Maintenance of law and order.
- Problem of unity as well as problem of development.
- Problem of poverty and promoting new job creating industries.

1) When India became independent in August 1947, it faced a series of great challenges. Such as: huge population had come into India from Pakistan. Their replacement with homes and job was primary problem. 2) Almost 500 princely states were existed in India, each ruled by a maharaja or a nawab and each of them had to be persuaded to join the new nation. 3) In longer term, new India had to adopt a political system that would best serve the hopes and expectations of its population.

A constitution is written:

Between December 1946 and November 1949, the constituent assembly had a series of meetings. Participants came from all over India and from different political parties in "Delhi" for this meeting. These discussions resulted in the framing of the Indian Constitution, which came into effect on 26 January 1950.

Features of the Constitution:

- **Adoption of universal adult franchise -it indicates -**
  All Indians above the age of 21 would be allowed to vote in state and national elections, regardless of gender, class or education.
- **Constitution guaranteed equality before the law –it indicates -** Indian Constitution guaranteed equality before the law to all citizens, regardless of their caste or religious affiliation.
- **Special privileges for the poorest and most disadvantaged Indians – it indicates-** The constitution offered special privileges for the poorest and the most disadvantaged Indians. The practice of untouchability, described as a "slur and a blot". Hindu temples were thrown open to all, including former untouchables. It was recommended that a certain percentage of seats in legislatures as well as jobs in government be reserved for members of the lowest class. Along with the former Untouchables, the *adivasis* or scheduled tribes were also granted reservation in seats and jobs. ***The new privileges granted them by the Constitution were meant to make amends for this.***
- The Constitution sought to balance (between states and union) the competing claims by **providing three lists of subjects:**
  A Union List – with subjects such as taxes, defense and foreign affairs, which would be the exclusive responsibility of the Centre;

Franchise- The right to vote.

Besides Muslims, India also had large population of Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Jains. Under the new Constitution, they would have the same rights as Hindus- the same opportunities when it came to seeking jobs in the government and private sector, the same rights before the law.

The Constituent assembly spent many days discussing the power of the Central government v/s State government. Some members argued for strong

A State List of subjects- such as education and health, which would be taken care of principally by the states;

A Concurrent List- under which would come subjects such as forest and agriculture, in which the Centre and the states would have joint responsibility.

- Another major debate in the Constituent Assembly concerned language. A compromise was finally arrived at: **Hindi would be the "Official language" of India; English would be used in the courts, the services and communications between one state and another.**

States formed-

In 1920s, the Indian National Congress had promised that after independence each major linguistic group would have its own province. However, after independence the Congress did not take any steps to honor this promise as the Country could not afford further division on the basis of language.

The Kannada speakers, Malayalam speakers, the Marathi speakers had looked forward to having their own state. The strongest protest came from Telugu peaking districts**. In October 1952, a veteran Gandhian named Potti Sriramulu went on hunger strike demanding the formation of Andhra state to protect interest of Telugu speakers**. It attracted much support. Hartals and bandhs were observed in many towns. **On 15 December 1952, after fifty eight days into his fast, Potti Sriramalu died**. The protest was so widespread and intense that the central government was forced to give in to the demand. Thus, **on 1 October 1953, the new state of Andhra came into being, which subsequently became Andhra Pradesh.**

Both Prime Minister Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel were against the creation of linguistic states. When Nehru went to campaign in Madras Presidency during the general elections of 1952, he was met with black flags and slogans demanding "we want Andhra"

Planning for Development-

Lifting India and Indians out of poverty, and building a modern technical and industrial base were among the major objectives of the new nation**. In 1950, the government set up a Planning Commission to help design and execute suitable policies for economic development.** India accepted broad agreement on **"mixed economy"** model, where both the state and the private sector would play important and complementary roles in increasing production and generating jobs. **The role of planning commission was to define the role of state and private sectors in industries and to achieve balance between the different regions and states.**

In 1956, when the Second Five Year Plan was formulated, it focused strongly on the developments of heavy industries such as steel and

This approach of state dominance had many strong supporters and some vocal critics. Some felt it had put inadequate emphasis on agriculture. Other argued that it had neglected primary education and some believed that it had not taken into account of the environmental implications of economical policies.

on the building of large dams. These sectors came under the control of the state.

The search for an independent foreign policy

India gained freedom soon after the devastations of the Second World War. At that time a new international body – the United Nations- formed in 1945 was in its infancy. The 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of the Cold War, that is, power rivalries and ideological conflicts between the USA and the USSR, with both countries creating military alliances. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who was also the foreign minister of newly independent India, developed free India's foreign policy in this context. Non-alignment formed the bedrock of this new foreign policy.

Led by statesmen from Egypt, Yugoslavia, Indonesia, Ghana and India, the non-alignment movement urged countries not to join either of the two major alliances. But this policy of staying away from alliances was not a matter of remaining "isolated" or "neutral". The former means remaining aloof from world affairs whereas non-aligned countries such as India played an active role in mediating between the American and Soviet alliances. They tried to prevent war. However, for one reason or another, many non-aligned countries including India got involved in wars. By the 1970s, a large number of countries had joined the non-aligned movement.

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