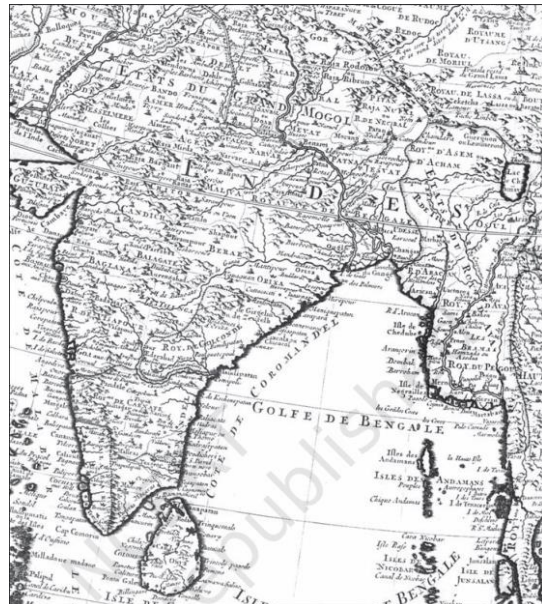


Chapter – 1: Introduction – Tracing Changes Through a Thousand Years

- Map 1 – 1154 CE – Arab Geographer Al-Idrisi
 - South India – at the place of North India
 - Sri Lanka at the top
 - names in Arabic – well-known places – Kanauj, UP (Qanauj in map)
- Map 2 – 1720s – French **cartographer**
 - 600 years after Map 1
 - Information changed so much
 - More familiar to us – coastal line detailed
 - European sailors – used this
- Both – same area – Indian subcontinent – YET – so different
- Fact – equally imp. – science of cartography – different
- Historians read about past – sensitive to context – historical backgrounds



New and Old Terminologies

- If context changes – what about language and meaning?
- Historical records – variety of languages – changed over years
- Medieval Persian – different from modern Persian – not just grammar – meanings of words also change
- Example – ‘Hindustan’
 - Today – India – modern nation-state
 - 13th century – Minhaj-i-Siraj – wrote in Persian – meant the areas of Punjab, Haryana and land between Ganga and Yamuna
 - Used in political sense – lands – part of Delhi Sultanate
 - Areas shifted with Sultanate – never included South India
 - 16th century – Babur – described it as geography, fauna and culture of people living in the subcontinent
 - Similar to the way – 14th century – Amir Khusrau used word ‘Hind’
- Idea of ‘India’ – did exist – ‘Hindustan’ – did not carry political and national meanings
- Historians – careful – terms they use – meant different in the past
- Example – ‘foreigner’

- Today – someone who is not Indian
- Medieval period – anyone who is stranger – not part of society
 - For a city person – forest person – ‘foreigner’ – BUT – 2 farmers – different religion and culture – not ‘foreigners’

Historians and their Sources

- Historians – different types of sources – depending on – period of study and nature of investigation
- Last year – Gupta dynasty and Harshvardhana – this book – following 100 years – roughly 700 to 1750
- Some continuity in the sources – rely on coins, inscriptions, architecture, textual records
- Considerable discontinuity – number and variety of textual records – increased dramatically
- This period – paper – became cheaper and easily available
- People – write holy (religious) texts, chronicles of rulers, letter, teachings of saints, judicial records, registers of accounts and taxes
- Manuscripts – collected by wealthy people, rulers, monasteries and temples – placed in libraries and archives
- Provide – detailed information – difficult to use
- No printing press – scribes (writers) – copied manuscripts by hand
- Sometimes – hand writing – not understandable – forced to guess
- Small but imp. changes – introduced by scribes – grow big over centuries – manuscripts changes so much
- Big problem – original scripts not found
- Historians – read many versions – find out – original content
- Sometimes – authors – revised chronicles
- 14th century – Ziyauddin Barani – 1st chronicle – 1356 – revised 2 years later
- 1st version – remained lost until 1960s

New Social and Political Groups

- Study of years – 700 to 1750 – challenge for historians – scale of variety of development
- At times – new inventions – Persian wheel in irrigation, spinning wheel in weaving, firearms in combat
- New foods and beverages – potatoes, corn, chillies, tea, coffee
- All these inventions – technologies and crops – came along with people – brought ideas with them
- This period – economic, political, social, cultural changes
- Great mobility – groups of people – move long distances – search of opportunities
- Subcontinent – immense wealth
- One group – became imp. – this period – Rajputs – derived from ‘Rajputra’ – son of ruler
- Between 8th and 14th century – term applied – generally – group of warriors – Kshatriya caste
- Included – not only rulers and chieftans – but also – soldiers and commanders
- Bravery, extreme valour, great sense of loyalty – qualities of Rajput
- Other groups – Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Ahoms, and Kayasthas – used opportunities – become politically imp.
- Gradual clearing of forests – extension of agriculture lands

- Many forest people – migrate – others – became peasants
- New peasants – influenced by markets, chieftans, priests, monasteries, temples
- Became part of larger societies – pay taxes, offer gifts – local lords
- Many economic and social differences between peasants
- Some – more productive lands – others kept cattle – some – combined art with agriculture
- Sometime later – people divided into *jatis* or sub-castes and ranks – basis of backgrounds and occupation
- Status of same *jati* – vary from area to area
- *Jatis* – formed their own rules and regulations – enforced by committee of elders – *jati panchayat*
- Jatis - also follow village rules – governed by chieftain
- Together – one small unit of state

Region and Empire

- Large states – Cholas, Tughluqs, Mughals – many regions
- Sanskrit *prashasti* – praising Delhi Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban (1266-1287) – ruler of vast empire – Bengal (Gauda) in east to Ghazni (Gajjana), Afghanistan in west – including south India (Dravida)
- People – different regions – Gauda, Andhra, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat – fled before his armies
- Historians regard them as – exaggerated claims – also wonder – why claim?
- 700 – many regions – different geography, language, culture
- Associated with – ruling dynasties – conflict between them
- Cholas, Khaljis, Tughluqs, Mughals – built empire – pan-regional – spanning multiple regions
- All not equally stable or successful
- Mughal empire – declined in 18th century – re-emergence of states
- Years of imperial, pan-regional rule – altered character of regions
- Regions – left with small and big states
- Evidence – shared traditions – governance, economy, culture, language
- Through 1000 years – character – different regions – did not grow in isolation
- Regions – thought – impact of larger pan-regional kingdom - important

Old and New Religions

- Major developments in religious traditions
- People's belief – deeply personal – usually collective
- Collective belief – religion – connected with society and economy of groups – social world changed – beliefs changed
- This period – imp. changes – Hinduism – worship of new deities, construction of temples by royalties, growing importance of Brahmins, priests – became dominant (imp.)
- Knowledge of Sanskrit – earned respect for Brahmins – position supported by new rulers
- Major development – idea of bhakti – worship of deity – without help of priests
- New religions – appeared in this period
- Merchants and traders – brought teachings of *Quran* to India – 7th century
- Muslims – *Quran* – holy book – accept one God – Allah
- Many rulers – followers of Islam and *ulama* – expert in study of religion

- Like Hinduism – Islam interpreted in different ways
 - Shia Muslims – believed – prophet Mohammad’s son-in-law, Ali – legitimate leader
 - Sunni Muslims – believed – early leaders (Khalifas) and succeeding Khalifas – legitimate leaders

Thinking about Time and Historical Periods

- Historians – time – not only passing of hours, days or years – also reflects changes in social and economic situation
- Study of time – made easier – dividing into periods
- 19th century – British historians – 3 periods – Hindu, Muslim, British
- This division – based of the idea – religion of rulers – only imp. change – ignored rich diversity
- Few historians – follow this
- Others – look for social and economic factors
- Histories last year – included – wide range of early societies – hunter-gatherers, early farmers, early kingdoms
- Histories this year – medieval – spread of peasant societies, rise of regional and imperial states – development of Hinduism and Islam – major religions – arrival of European trading companies
- 1000 years – considerable changes
- 16th and 18th centuries – different from – 8th or 11th century
- ‘Medieval’ period – contrasted (confused) with – ‘modern’ period
- Modernity – refers to sense of material progress and intellectual advancement – suggest – no change in medieval period – but that’s not the case
- 1000 years – societies transformed often – economy reached stage – attracted European trading companies