

Social science

Our Pasts-II

Textbook of History
for Class VII



Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education

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December 2023***

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FOREWORD

This textbook of Social Science aims at enabling students to develop critical understanding of society and to lay a foundation for an analytical and creative mindset. Change in the textbook entails the change in the content and pedagogical practice of curriculum. Main objective of this change is to enable the children to understand the society and the world in which we live as well as understand socio-economic developments and changes.

Learning of History aims at the cultivation of a scientific and humanistic approach and forward outlook towards life. History is not about the story of great men and their conquest but it should contribute in the widening of the mental horizons of the students based on how men have lived and progressed through ages.

Curriculum updating is a continuous process and hence, The J&K Board of School Education has brought out the revised curricula for different classes. Social Science is of crucial importance because it helps learners in understanding environment in its broader perspective.

In the light of the NEP, the social and cultural aspects of the history of J&K and Ladakh have been included in the book. The contents in this book have been adopted from the NCERT, New Delhi, textbook of History for class VII titled "Our Pasts-II." The book has been contextualized and now the text has been presented in integrated form to make coherence and linkage of NCERT text with local content of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

I am grateful to Principal Secretary to Government, School Education Department who has been the guiding force all along.

I also appreciate the hard work done by the Academic Division, JKBOSE and Textbook Development Committee, JKBOSE responsible for the development of this book. I acknowledge and place on record my deep appreciation to the Director, NCERT and Head Curriculum Division, NCERT for their support and cooperation.

As an organization, committed to systematic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its textbooks, we welcome comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement. I hope this textbook of History shall sensitize learners about the historical perspective in an explicit manner.

Prof. (Dr.) Parikshat Singh Manhas
Chairman, JKBOSE

TEXTBOOK DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF NCERT

CHAIRPERSON, ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR TEXTBOOKS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE FOR THE SECONDARY STAGE

Hari Vasudevan, *Professor*, Department of History, University of Calcutta, Kolkata

CHIEF ADVISOR

Neeladri Bhattacharya, *Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

ADVISOR

Kunal Chakrabarti, *Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Sunil Kumar, *Reader*, Department of History, Delhi University, Delhi

TEAM MEMBERS

Anil Sethi, *Former Professor*, DESS, NCERT, New Delhi

Bhairavi Prasad Sahu, *Professor and Head*, Department of History, Delhi University, Delhi

Chetan Singh, *Professor*, Department of History, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, H.P.

C. N. Subramaniam, *Director*, Eklavya, Kothi Bazar, Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh

Farhat Hasan, *Reader*, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, U.P.

Kesavan Veluthat, *Professor*, Department of History, Mangalore University, Mangalore, Karnataka

Kumkum Roy, *Associate Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Mily Roy, *Sr. Lecturer*, DESS, NCERT, New Delhi

Nayana Das Gupta, *Lecturer in History*, Lady Sri Ram College, Delhi University, Delhi

Rajan Gurukkal, *Professor*, Department of History, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala

Rajat Dutta, *Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Sreela Mitra, *PGT*, History, Vasant Valley School, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi

Suchi Bajaj, *PGT*, History, Springdales School, Pusa Road, New Delhi

Vijaya Ramaswamy, *Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

MEMBER-COORDINATOR

Reetu Singh, *Lecturer*, DESS, NCERT, New Delhi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The vision of National Education Policy is overall transformation of our education system. The focus has been laid on the very core issues which have till now prevented a student's full flowering. Providing a relevant curriculum and content is the backbone of every education system. An organized and uniform content in the form of a textbook is highly facilitating for a fruitful teaching-learning process in the classroom. A textbook cannot be developed in isolation; rather it is the product of intellectual deliberations, tireless revisions and meticulous editing by the illumined and committed experts. Every effort has been made to offer the instructional material for the budding scholars in accordance with the ongoing contemporary challenges to enable them to gain the knowledge of History. But what has been intended goes beyond this effort. The purpose is to train the autonomous learners and in this journey, textbook is mere a learning tool. Albert Einstein has said that the content of most books is perishable but the tools of self-directedness serve one well over time.

We gratefully acknowledge the use of NCERT, New Delhi, textbook of History for class VII in the development of this book. I express my gratitude to Ex-Chairperson and Ex-Director Academics for their vision in the development of this textbook.

I am thankful to Chairperson, JKBOSE, Prof. Parikshat Singh Manhas and Secretary, JKBOSE Ms. Manisha Sarin, JKAS for permission to re-print this edition of the book. My gratitude to the Curriculum Development & Research Wing, JD & KD for their untiring efforts put in making this textbook available for the students of class VII. My sincere thanks to the SCERT for collaborating with JKBOSE to improvise and enrich BOSE Textbooks. I am thankful to the following subject experts for their hardwork, dedication and contribution in developing the local content of this textbook.

Content Development Committee

1. Dr. Ajay Kumar Ghosh, Professor Govt. Hamidia Arts and Commerce College, Barkatullah University, Bhopal (MP)
2. Dr. Varsha Gupta, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Jammu.
3. Dr. Anju Rani, Assistant Professor, GDC Hiranagar, Kathua.
4. Mr. Syed Imran, Principal, GHSS Sunjwan, Jammu.
5. Mr. Tashi Namgail, Lecturer, GHSS Silmoo, Kargil (Ladakh)

U.T Level Content Review Board

1. Dr. Ajay Kumar Ghosh, Professor, Govt. Hamidia Arts and Commerce College, Barkatullah University, Bhopal (MP)
2. Dr. Sajad Ahmad Darzi, Sr. Assistant Professor, University of Kashmir.

As quality can be ensured only through continual striving for improvement, suggestions and feedback from the stakeholders shall be highly appreciated.

Dr. Sudhir Singh
Director Academics, JKBOSE

Notes

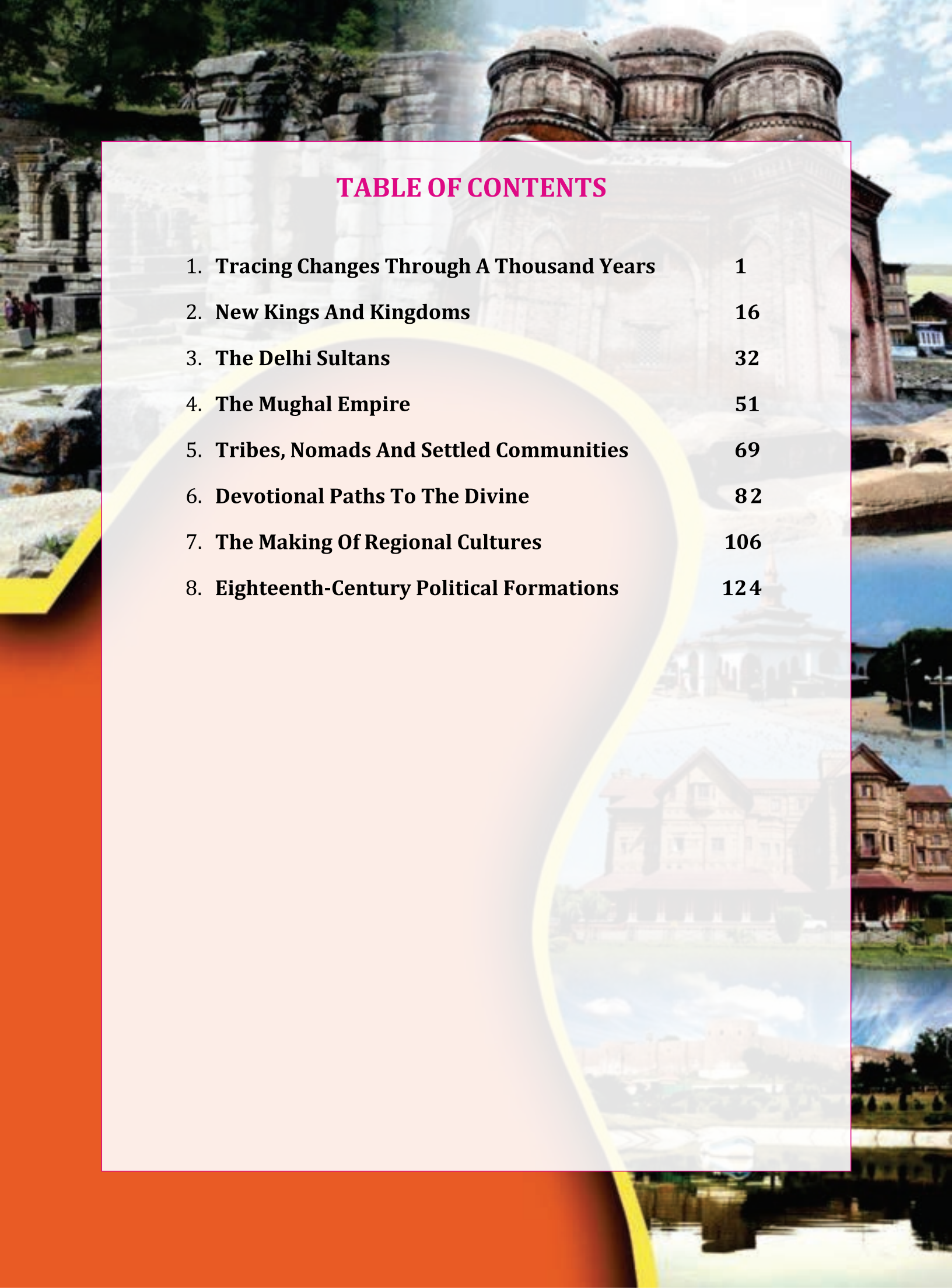


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THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a ¹**[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens :

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the ²[unity and integrity of the Nation];

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

1 TRACING CHANGES THROUGH A THOUSAND YEARS



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Map 1

A section of the world map drawn by the geographer al-Idrisi in the twelfth century showing the Indian subcontinent from land to sea.

Cartographer

A person who makes maps.

Take a look at Maps 1 and 2. Map 1 was made in 1154 CE by the Arab geographer Al-Idrisi. The section reproduced here is a detail of the Indian subcontinent from his larger map of the world. Map 2 was made in the 1720s by a French **cartographer**. The two maps are quite different even though they are of the same area. 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,

Map 2

The subcontinent, from the early-eighteenth-century *Atlas Nouveau* of Guillaume de l'Isle.



and there are some well-known names like Kanauj in Uttar Pradesh (spelt in the map as Qanauj). Map 2 was made nearly 600 years after Map 1, during which time information about the subcontinent had changed considerably. This 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 (see Chapter 6).



Look at the areas in the interior of the subcontinent on Map 2. Are they as detailed as those on the coast? Follow the course of the River Ganga and see how it is shown. Why do you think there is a difference in the level of detail and accuracy between the coastal and inland areas in this map?

Equally important is the fact that the science of cartography differed in the two periods. When historians read documents, maps and texts from the past they have to be sensitive to the different historical backgrounds – the *contexts* – in which information about the past was produced.

New and Old Terminologies

If the context in which information is produced changes with time, what about language and meanings? Historical records exist in a variety of languages which have changed considerably over the years. Medieval Persian, for example, is different from modern Persian. The difference is not just with regard to grammar and vocabulary; the meanings of words also change over time.

Take the term “Hindustan”, for example. Today we understand it as “India”, the modern *nation-state*. When the term was used in the thirteenth century by Minhaj-i-Siraj, a chronicler who wrote in Persian, he meant the areas of Punjab, Haryana and the lands between the Ganga and Yamuna. He used this term in a political sense for lands that were a part of the dominions of the Delhi Sultan. The areas included in this term shifted with the extent of the Sultanate but the term never included south India. By contrast, in the early sixteenth century Babur used Hindustan to describe the geography, the fauna and the culture of the inhabitants of the subcontinent. As we will see later in the chapter, this was somewhat similar to the way the fourteenth-century poet Amir Khusrau used the word “Hind”. While the idea of a geographical and cultural entity like “India” did exist, the term “Hindustan” did not carry the political and national meanings which we associate with it today.

Historians today have to be careful about the terms they use because they meant different things in the past. Take, for example, a simple term like “foreigner”. It is used today to mean someone who is not an Indian. In



Can you think of any other words whose meanings change in different contexts?

the medieval period a “foreigner” was any stranger who appeared say in a given village, someone who was not a part of that society or culture. (In Hindi the term *pardesi* might be used to describe such a person and in Persian, *ajnabi*.) A city-dweller, therefore, might have regarded a forest-dweller as a “foreigner”, but two peasants living in the same village were not foreigners to each other, even though they may have had different religious or caste backgrounds.

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. Last year, for example, you read about rulers of the Gupta dynasty and Harshavardhana. In this book we will read about the following thousand years, from roughly 700 to 1750.

You will notice some continuity in the sources used by historians for the study of this period. They still rely on coins, inscriptions, architecture and textual records for information. But there is also considerable discontinuity. The number and variety of textual records increased dramatically during this period. They slowly displaced other types of available information. Through this period paper gradually became cheaper and more

The value of paper

Compare the following:

(1) In the middle of the thirteenth century a scholar wanted to copy a book. But he did not have enough paper. So he washed the writing off a manuscript he did not want, dried the paper and used it.

(2) A century later, if you bought some food in the market you could be lucky and have the shopkeeper wrap it for you in some paper.



When was paper more expensive and easily available – in the thirteenth or the fourteenth century?

widely available. 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. If you have ever copied a friend's homework you would know that this is not a simple exercise. Sometimes you cannot read your friend's handwriting and are forced to guess what is written. As a result there are small but significant differences in your copy of your friend's work. Manuscript copying is somewhat similar. As scribes copied manuscripts, they also introduced small changes – a word here, a sentence there. These small differences grew over centuries of copying until manuscripts of the



Archive

A place where documents and manuscripts are stored. Today all national and state governments have archives where they keep all their old official records and transactions.

Fig. 1

A painting of a scribe making a copy of a manuscript. This painting is only 10.5 cm by 7.1 cm in size. Because of its size it is called a miniature. Miniature paintings were sometimes used to illustrate the texts of manuscripts. They were so beautiful that later collectors often took the manuscripts apart and sold just the miniatures.

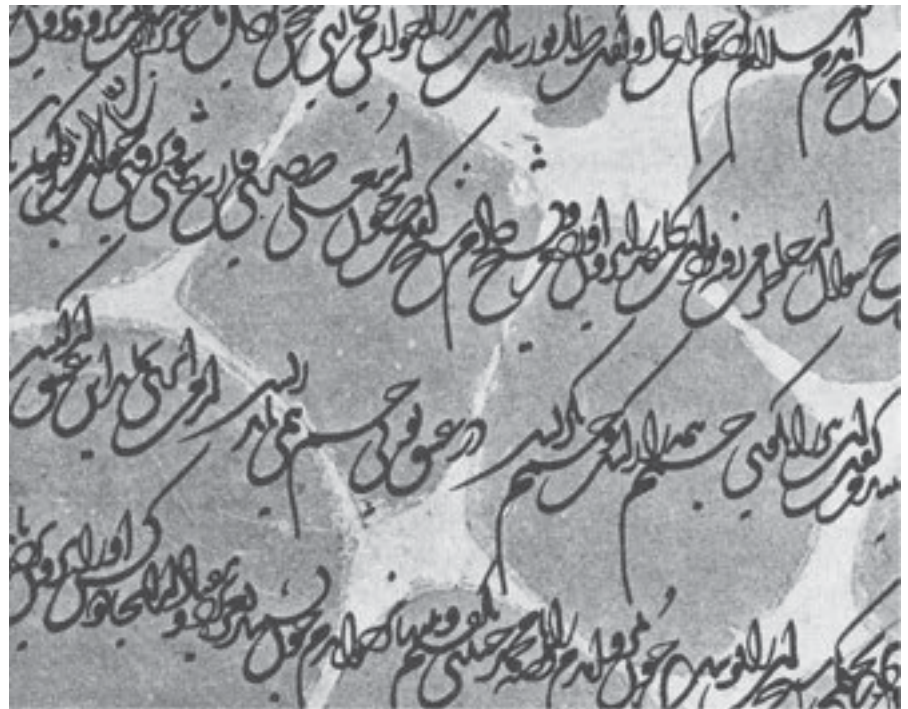
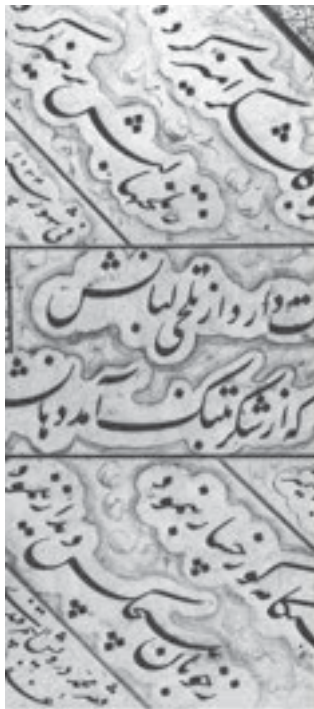


Fig. 2
Different kinds of handwriting could make the reading of Persian and Arabic difficult. The nastaliq style (on the left) is cursive and easy to read, the shikaste (on the right) is denser and more difficult.

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.

On occasion authors revised their chronicles at different times. The fourteenth-century chronicler 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. It remained lost in large library collections.

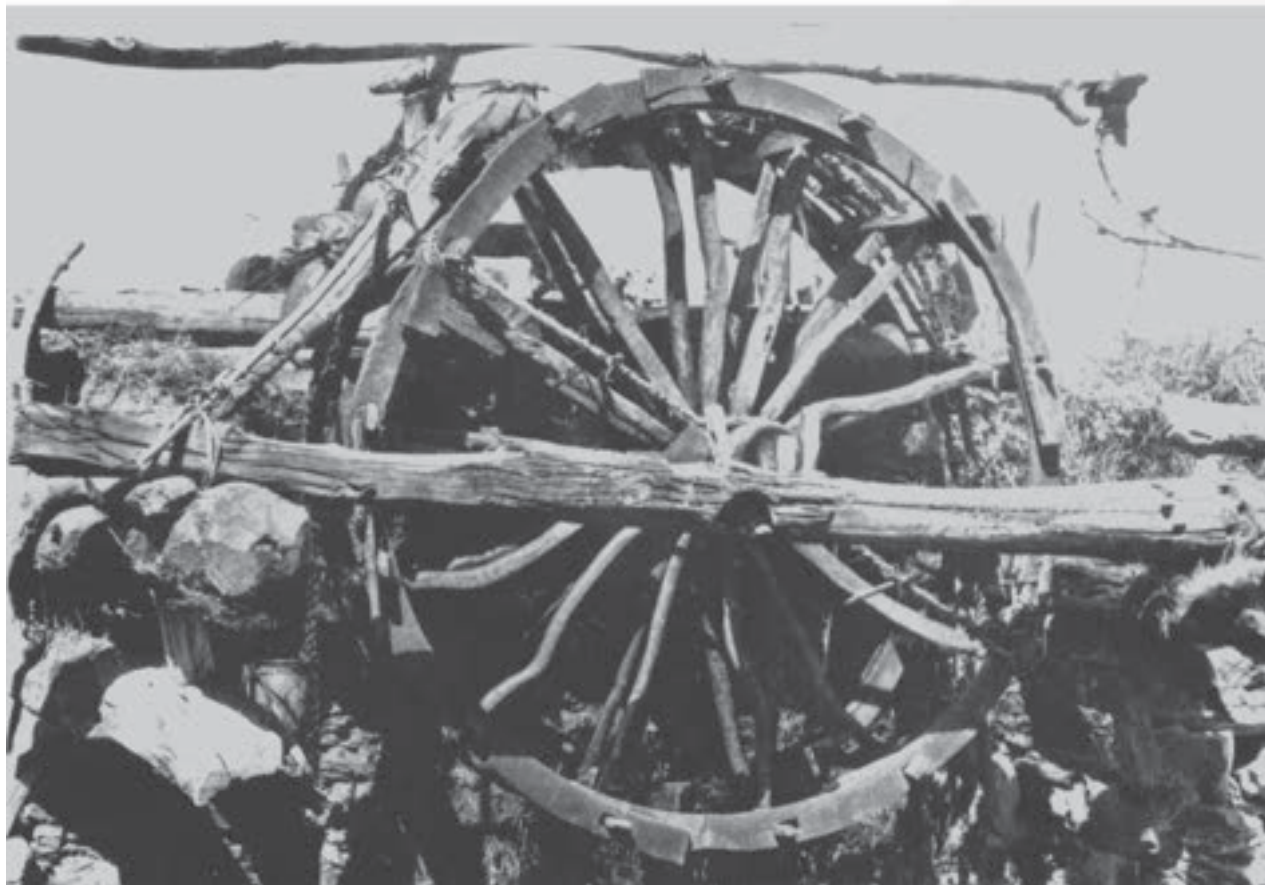
New Social and Political Groups

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. At different moments in this 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. Remember that all these innovations – new technologies and crops – came along with people, who brought other ideas with them as well. As a result, this was a period of economic, political, social and cultural changes. You will learn about some of these changes in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

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. One group of people who became important in this period were the Rajputs, a name derived from “Rajaputra”, the son of a ruler. Between the eighth and fourteenth centuries the term was applied more generally to a group of warriors who claimed Kshatriya caste status. The term included

Fig. 3
The Persian wheel.



Habitat

Refers to the environment of a region and the social and economic lifestyle of its residents.



Of the technological, economic, social and cultural changes described in this section, which do you think were most significant in the town or village in which you live?

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, a change faster and more complete in some areas than in others. Changes in their **habitat** forced many forest-dwellers to migrate. Others started tilling the land and became peasants. These 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. As a result, significant economic and social differences emerged amongst peasants. Some possessed more productive land, others also kept cattle, and some combined artisanal work with agricultural activity during the lean season. 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*. But *jatis* were also required to follow the rules of their villages. 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 (Chapter 2), Tughluqs (Chapter 3) or Mughals (Chapter 4) encompassed many regions. A Sanskrit *prashasti* (see Chapter 2 for an example of a *prashasti*) praising the Delhi Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban (1266-1287) explained that he 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). People of different regions – Gauda, Andhra, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat – apparently fled before his armies. Historians



I	Siwistan	VII	Sarsuti	XIII	Kara	XIX	Gujarat
II	Uchch	VIII	Kuhram	XIV	Awadh	XX	Devagiri
III	Multan	IX	Hansi	XV	Bihar	XXI	Tilingana
IV	Kalansur	X	Delhi	XVI	Lakhnauti	XXII	Talanj
V	Lahor	XI	Badayun	XVII	Jajnagar	XXIII	Dvarasamudra
VI	Samana	XII	Qannauj	XVIII	Malwa	XXIV	Ma'bar

Map 3

Provinces of the Delhi Sultanate during Muhammad Tughluq's reign according to the Egyptian source *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar* of Shihabuddin Umari.



Why do you think rulers made such claims?

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.

Language and region

In 1318 the poet Amir Khusrau noted that there was *a different language in every region of this land: Sindhi, Lahori, Kashmiri, Dvarsamudri (in southern Karnataka), Telangani (in Andhra Pradesh), Gujar (in Gujarat), Ma'bari (in Tamil Nadu), Gauri, (in Bengal) ... Awadhi (in eastern Uttar Pradesh) and Hindawi (in the area around Delhi).*

Amir Khusrau went on to explain that in contrast to these languages there was Sanskrit which did not belong to any region. It was an old language and *"common people do not know it, only the Brahmanas do"*.

Make a list of the languages mentioned by Amir Khusrau. Prepare another list of the names of languages spoken today in the regions he mentioned. Underline names that are similar and circle those that are different.



Did you notice that the names by which languages are known have changed over time?

By 700 many regions already possessed distinct geographical dimensions and their own language and cultural characteristics. You will learn more about these in Chapter 9. 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. Compare, for example, Table 1 in Chapters 3 and 4. What was the duration of rule of the Khalji and Mughal dynasties?

When the Mughal Empire declined in the eighteenth century, it led to the re-emergence of regional states (Chapter 10). 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

The thousand years of history that we are exploring, witnessed major developments in religious traditions. 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. You will be learning about this, and other traditions, in Chapter 8.



Find out whether and for how long your state was part of these pan-regional empires.



Do you remember what Amir Khusrau had to say regarding Sanskrit, knowledge and Brahmanas?

Patron

An influential, wealthy individual who supports another person – an artiste, a craftsman, a learned man, or a noble.

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. Muslims regard the *Quran* as their holy book and accept the sovereignty of the one God, Allah, whose love, mercy and bounty embrace all those who believe in Him, without regard to social background.

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 histories you read last year included a wide range of early societies – hunter-gatherers, early farmers, people living in towns and villages and early empires and kingdoms. The histories you will be studying this year are often described as “medieval”. You will find out more about the spread of peasant societies, the rise of regional and imperial state formations – sometimes at the cost of pastoral and forest people – the development of Hinduism and Islam as major religions and the arrival of European trading companies.

These thousand years of Indian history 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. As you read this book, look out for signs of change and the historical processes at work. Also, whenever you can, compare what you read in this book with what you read last year. Look out for changes and continuities wherever you can, and look at the world around you to see what else has changed or remained the same.

KEYWORDS



manuscript

jati

region

periodisation



Imagine



You are a historian. Choose one of the themes mentioned in this chapter, such as economic, social or political history, and discuss why you think it would be interesting to find out the history of that theme.

Let's recall

1. Who was considered a "foreigner" in the past?
2. State whether true or false:
 - (a) We do not find inscriptions for the period after 700.
 - (b) The Marathas asserted their political importance during this period.
 - (c) Forest-dwellers were sometimes pushed out of their lands with the spread of agricultural settlements.
 - (d) Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban controlled Assam, Manipur and Kashmir.
3. Fill in the blanks:
 - (a) Archives are places where _____ are kept.
 - (b) _____ was a fourteenth-century chronicler.
 - (c) _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____ were some of the new crops introduced into the subcontinent during this period.
4. List some of the technological changes associated with this period.

5. What were some of the major religious developments during this period?

Let's understand

6. In what ways has the meaning of the term "Hindustan" changed over the centuries?
7. How were the affairs of *jatis* regulated?
8. What does the term pan-regional empire mean?

Let's discuss

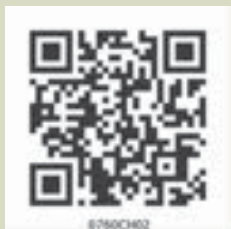
9. What are the difficulties that historians face in using manuscripts?
10. How do historians divide the past into periods? Do they face any problems in doing so?

Let's do

11. Compare either Map 1 or Map 2 with the present-day map of the subcontinent, listing as many similarities and differences as you can find.
12. Find out where records are kept in your village or city. Who writes these records? Is there an archive? Who manages it? What kinds of documents are stored there? Who are the people who use it?



2 NEW KINGS AND KINGDOMS



Map 1
Major kingdoms,
seventh-twelfth
centuries



Locate the Gurjara-Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas, Palas, Cholas and Chahamanas (Chauhans). Can you identify the present-day states over which they exercised control?

Many new dynasties emerged after the seventh century. Map 1 shows the major ruling dynasties in different parts of the subcontinent between the seventh and twelfth centuries.



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*, *maha-mandaleshwara* (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.

Kashmir, during 10th Century was under the indirect rule of Queen Didda i.e., acting as regent of Son Abhimanyu (968 to 980). She took over the throne in 980 to 1003. The *Rajatarangini* (The River of Kings) written by Kalhana in the mid-12th Century mentions about Didda. Didda was succeeded by Sangram Raja who is believed to be the real founder



Fig. 1
Wall relief from Cave 15, Ellora, showing Vishnu as Narasimha, the man-lion. It is a work of the Rashtrakuta period.



Do you think being born as a Kshatriya was important in order to become a ruler during this period?

Monarchy:
A form of
Government with
a Monarch (King)
as the Head.



Who was the real
founder and
organiser of
Ladakhi Kingdom?

of Lohara kingdom. The concluding years of Lohara rule was characterized by weak polity, internal strife and invasions from surrounding areas. The chaos provided an opportunity for strong nobles to aspire for the throne.

Rise of the Kingdom of Ladakh

From the Late 7th or Early 8th Century, until sometime after 842, Ladakh was a part of the Tibetan Empire. However, after the collapse of the Tibetan Monarchy after 842, Tibetan suzerainty in Ladakh ended. This gave rise to an independent Ladakhi Kingdom. According to Tibetan chronicles, dPal-gyi-mgon was the earliest ruler of the kingdom of Ladakh. He was the real founder and organiser of the Ladakhi Kingdom. His kingdom extended over to Zaskar, Spiti and Guge. He had 3 sons amongst whom he divided his kingdom. His first son, Paldegong, ruled over Ladakh (Maryul); Second son, Tashigong, ruled over the area around Mount Sangpo (Zaskar and Spiti); and the third son, Destugong controlled the area of Guge with Mount Kailash as its capital. These three regions symbolised Water, Mountain and Grassland. The Ladakhi chronicles also give the list of 13 successors of dPal-gyi-mgon.

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.

Four hundred taxes!

The inscriptions of the Cholas who ruled in Tamil Nadu refer to more than 400 terms for different kinds of taxes. The most frequently mentioned tax is *vetti*, taken not in cash but in the form of forced labour, and *kadamai*, or land revenue. There were also taxes on thatching the house, the use of a ladder to climb palm trees, a cess on succession to family property, etc.



Are any such taxes collected today?

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.



In what ways was this form of administration different from the present-day system?

Also, see if you can find some of the areas mentioned in the inscription on Map 1. Other rulers made similar claims as well. Why do you think they made these claims?

The “achievements” of Nagabhata

Many rulers described their achievements in *prashastis* (you read about the *prashasti* of the Gupta ruler Samudragupta last year).

One *prashasti*, written in Sanskrit and found in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, describes the exploits of Nagabhata, a Pratihara king, as follows:

The kings of Andhra, Saindhava (Sind), Vidarbha (part of Maharashtra) and Kalinga (part of Orissa) fell before him even as he was a prince ...

He won a victory over Chakrayudha (the ruler of Kanauj) ...

He defeated the king of Vanga (part of Bengal), Anarta (part of Gujarat), Malava (part of Madhya Pradesh), Kirata (forest peoples), Turushka (Turks), Vatsa, Matsya (both kingdoms in north India) ...

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

Fig. 2

This is a set of copper plates recording a grant of land made by a ruler in the ninth century, written partly in Sanskrit and partly in Tamil. The ring holding the plates together is secured with the royal seal, to indicate that this is an authentic document.



What was given with the land

This is part of the Tamil section of a land grant given by the Cholas:

We have demarcated the boundaries of the land by making earthen embankments, as well as by planting thorny bushes. This is what the land contains: fruit-bearing trees, water, land, gardens and orchards, trees, wells, open spaces, pasture-land, a village, anthills, platforms, canals, ditches, rivers, silt-laden land, tanks, granaries, fish ponds, bee hives, and deep lakes.

He who receives the land can collect taxes from it. He can collect the taxes imposed by judicial officers as fines, the tax on betel-leaves, that on woven cloth, as well as on vehicles. He can build large rooms, with upper stories made of baked bricks, he can get large and small wells dug, he can plant trees and thorny bushes, if necessary, he can get canals constructed for irrigation. He should ensure that water is not wasted, and that embankments are built.



List all the possible sources of irrigation mentioned in the inscription, and discuss how these might have been used.

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

You may have noticed that each of these ruling dynasties was based in a specific region. At the same time, they tried to control other areas. One particularly



Look at Map 1 and suggest reasons why these rulers wanted to control Kanauj and the Ganga valley.

Sultan
An Arabic term meaning ruler.



Look at Map 1 again and discuss why the Chahamanas may have wanted to expand their territories.

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”.

As we will see later on, 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. You will read more about this in Chapter 5.

One of the best known of such rulers is **Sultan** Mahmud of Ghazni, Afghanistan. He ruled from 997 to 1030, 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.

Mahmud attacked Kashmir too, but the geographical conditions and difficult terrain did not allow him to enter. Moreover, Kashmir was governed by a strong ruler, Sangram Raja, who had repulsed several attacks on the valley. Hence his attacks on Kashmir failed.

Kalhana, the most celebrated historian of ancient & medieval India, in his *Rajatarangini* (The River of Kings) speaks about the repeated attempts of different powers of adjoining areas to conquer Kashmir.

Sultan Mahmud was also 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 ul-Hind*, remains an important source for historians. He consulted Sanskrit scholars to prepare this account.

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



Map 2
The Chola kingdom and its neighbours.

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 marvel.

Fig. 3

The temple at Gangaikondacholapuram. Notice the way in which the roof tapers. Also look at the elaborate stone sculptures used to decorate the outer walls.





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 into maintaining 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. Look at Map 2 again. 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.

Fig. 4

A Chola bronze sculpture.

Notice how carefully it is decorated.

To find out how these images were made, see Chapter 6.

Fig. 5

A ninth-century sluice-gate in Tamil Nadu. It regulated the outflow of water from a tank into the channels that irrigated the fields. A sluice gate is traditionally a wood or metal barrier which is commonly used to control water levels and flow rates in rivers and canals.



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 – organising 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

How was the administration organised? 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* performed 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 *muwendavelan* (a *velan* or peasant serving three kings), *araiyar* (chief), etc. as a mark of respect, and entrusted them with important offices of the state at the centre.

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

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 stone walls 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; these tickets were put into an earthenware pot, from which a young boy was asked to take out the tickets, one by one for each committee.



Do you think women participated in these assemblies? In your view are lotteries useful in choosing members of committees?



Were there any Brahmanas in this hamlet? Describe all the activities that were taking place in the village. Why do you think temple inscriptions ignore these activities?

Inscriptions and texts

Who could be a member of a sabha? The Uttaramerur inscription lays down:

All those who wish to become members of the sabha should be owners of land from which land revenue is collected.

They should have their own homes.

They should be between 35 and 70 years of age.

They should have knowledge of the Vedas.

They should be well-versed in administrative matters and honest.

If anyone has been a member of any committee in the last three years, he cannot become a member of another committee.

Anyone who has not submitted his accounts, and those of his relatives, cannot contest the elections.

While inscriptions tell us about kings and powerful men, here is an excerpt from the *Periyapuranam*, a twelfth-century Tamil work, which informs us about the lives of ordinary men and women.

On the outskirts of Adanur was a small hamlet of Pulaiyas (a name used for a social group considered “outcastes” by Brahmanas and Vellalas), studded with small huts under old thatches and inhabited by agrarian labourers engaged in menial occupations. In the thresholds of the huts covered with strips of leather, little chickens moved about in groups; dark children who wore bracelets of black iron were prancing about, carrying little puppies ... In the shade of the marudu (arjuna) trees, a female labourer put her baby to sleep on a sheet of leather; there were mango trees from whose branches drums were hanging; and under the coconut palms, in little hollows on the ground, tiny-headed bitches lay after whelping. The red-crested cocks crowed before dawn calling the brawny Pulaiyar (plural) to their day’s work; and by day, under the shade of the kanji tree spread the voice of the wavy-haired Pulaiya women singing as they were husking paddy ...

China under the Tang dynasty

In China, an empire was established under the Tang dynasty, which remained in power for about 300 years (from the seventh to the tenth centuries). Its capital, Xi'an, was one of the largest cities in the world, visited by Turks, Iranians, Indians, Japanese and Koreans.

The Tang empire was administered by a bureaucracy recruited through an examination, which was open to all who wished to appear for it. This system of selecting officials remained in place, with some changes, till 1911.



In what ways was this system different from those prevalent in the Indian subcontinent?



Imagine

You are present in an election for a *sabha*. Describe what you see and hear.

Let's recall

1. Match the following:

Gurjara-Pratiharas

Western Deccan

Rashtrakutas

Bengal

Palas

Gujarat and Rajasthan

Cholas

Tamil Nadu

KEYWORDS



samanta

temple

nadu

sabha



2. Who were the parties involved in the “tripartite struggle”?
3. What were the qualifications necessary to become a member of a committee of the *sabha* in the Chola empire?
4. What were the two major cities under the control of the Chahamanas?

Let's understand

5. How did the Rashtrakutas become powerful?
6. What did the new dynasties do to gain acceptance?
7. What kind of irrigation works were developed in the Tamil region?
8. What were the activities associated with Chola temples?

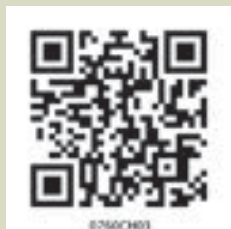
Let's discuss

9. Look at Map 1 once more and find out whether there were any kingdoms in the state in which you live.
10. Contrast the “elections” in Uttaramerur with present-day panchayat elections.

Let's do

11. Compare the temple shown in this chapter with any present-day temple in your neighbourhood, highlighting any similarities and differences that you notice.
12. Find out more about taxes that are collected at present. Are these in cash, kind, or labour services?

3 THE DELHI SULTANS



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Map 1
Selected Sultanate
cities of Delhi,
thirteenth-fourteenth
centuries.



In Chapter 2 we saw that regions like the Kaveri delta became the centre of large kingdoms. Did you notice that there was no mention of a kingdom with Delhi as its capital? That was because Delhi became an important city only in the twelfth century.

Take a look at Table 1. 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. Take a look at Table 1 again and identify the five dynasties that together made the Delhi Sultanate.

The Delhi Sultans built many cities in the area that we now know as Delhi. Look at Map 1 and locate Dehli-i Kuhna, Siri and Jahanpanah.

THE RULERS OF DELHI

Table 1

RAJPUT DYNASTIES

Tomaras

Ananga Pala

Early twelfth century-1165

1130-1145

Chauhans

Prithviraj Chauhan

1165-1192

1175-1192

EARLY TURKISH RULERS 1206-1290

Qutbuddin Aybak

Shamsuddin Iltutmish

Raziyya

Ghiyasuddin Balban

1206-1210

1210-1236

1236-1240

1266-1287



Iltutmish's tomb



Alai Darwaza

KHALJI DYNASTY

1290-1320

Jalaluddin Khalji

Alauddin Khalji

1290-1296

1296-1316

TUGHLUQ DYNASTY 1320-1414

Ghiyasuddin Tughluq

Muhammad Tughluq

Firuz Shah Tughluq

1320-1324

1324-1351

1351-1388

SAYYID DYNASTY

1414-1451

Khizr Khan

LODI DYNASTY

1451-1526

Bahlul Lodi

1451-1489



Firuz Shah Tughluq's tomb

Finding Out about the Delhi Sultans

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.

Fig.1

Four stages in the making of a manuscript:

- A. Preparing the paper.
- B. Writing the text.
- C. Melting gold to highlight important words and passages.
- D. Preparing the binding.



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.

The circle of justice

Fakhr-i Mudabbir wrote in the thirteenth century:

A king cannot survive without soldiers. And soldiers cannot live without salaries. Salaries come from the revenue collected from peasants. But peasants can pay revenue only when they are prosperous and happy. This happens when the king promotes justice and honest governance.



Do you think the circle of justice is an appropriate term to describe the relationship between the king and his subjects?

Keep the following additional details in mind: (1) the authors of *tawarikh* lived in cities (mainly Delhi) and hardly ever in villages. (2) They often wrote their histories for Sultans in the hope of rich rewards. (3) These authors 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.

What Minhaj-i Siraj thought about Raziyya

Minhaj-i Siraj thought that the queen’s rule went against the ideal social order created by God, in which women were supposed to be subordinate to men. He therefore asked: “In the register of God’s creation, since her account did not fall under the column of men, how did she gain from all of her excellent qualities?”

On her inscriptions and coins Raziyya mentioned that she was the daughter of Sultan Iltutmish. This was in contrast to the queen Rudramadevi (1262-1289), of the Kakatiya dynasty of Warangal, part of modern Andhra Pradesh. Rudramadevi changed her name on her inscriptions and pretended she was a man. Another queen, Didda, ruled in Kashmir (980-1003). Her title is interesting: it comes from “didi” or “elder sister”, an obviously affectionate term given to a loved ruler by her subjects.



Express Minhaj’s ideas in your own words. Do you think Raziyya shared these ideas? Why do you think it was so difficult for a woman to be a ruler?

Birthright

Privileges claimed on account of birth. For example, people believed that nobles inherited their rights to govern, because they were born in certain families.

Gender distinctions

Social and biological differences between women and men. Usually, these differences are used to argue that men are superior to women.

From Garrison Town to Empire: The Expansion of the Delhi Sultanate

Map 2

Major cities captured
by Shamsuddin
Iltutmish.



Hinterland

The lands
adjacent to a city
or port that supply
it with goods and
services.

Garrison town

A fortified
settlement, with
soldiers.

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. Delhi's authority 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. Its consolidation occurred during the reign of Ghiyasuddin Balban and further expansion under 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. During these campaigns forests were cleared in the Ganga-Yamuna doab and hunter-gatherers and pastoralists expelled from their habitat.

These lands were given to peasants and agriculture was encouraged. New fortresses, garrison towns 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 (see Map 3) and culminated with Muhammad Tughluq. In their campaigns, Sultanate armies captured elephants, horses and slaves and carried away precious metals.

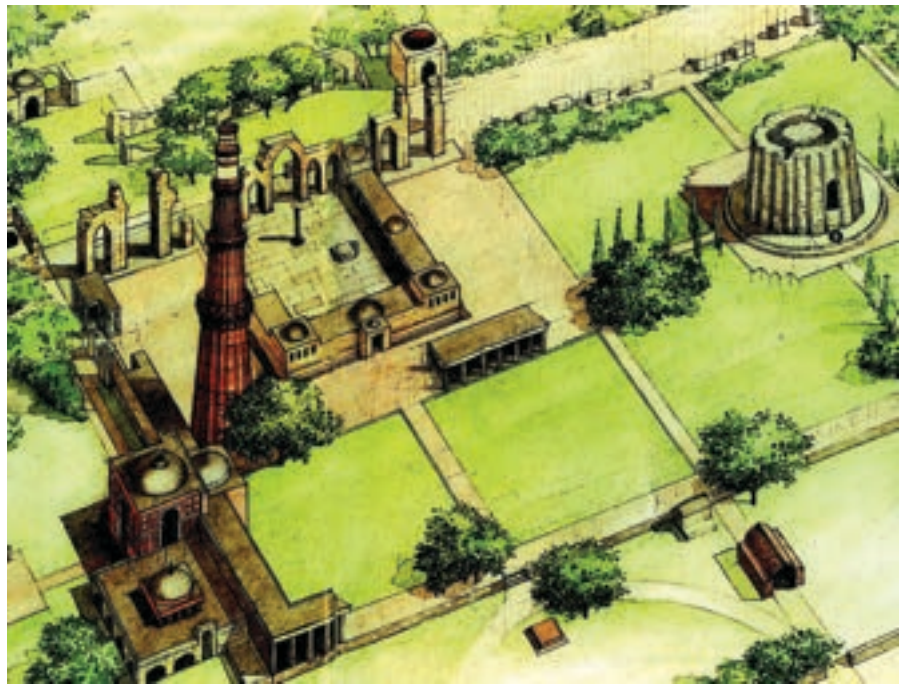
By the end of Muhammad Tughluq’s reign, 150 years after somewhat humble beginnings, the armies of the Delhi Sultanate had marched across a large part of the subcontinent. They had defeated rival armies and seized cities. The Sultanate collected taxes from the peasantry and dispensed justice in its realm. But how complete and effective was its control over such a vast territory?



Map 3
Alauddin Khalji's
campaign into
south India.

Fig. 2

Quwwat al-Islam mosque and minaret, built during the last decade of the twelfth century. This was the congregational mosque of the first city built by the Delhi Sultans, described in the chronicles as Dehli-i-Kuhna (the old city). The mosque was enlarged by Iltutmish and Alauddin Khalji. The minar was built by two Sultans: Qutbuddin Aybak and Iltutmish.



The Masjid

A mosque is called a *masjid* in Arabic, literally a place where a Muslim prostrates in reverence to Allah. In a "congregational mosque" (*masjid-i-jami* or *jama masjid*) Muslims read their prayers (*namaz*) together. Members of the congregation choose the most respected, learned male as their leader (*imam*) for the rituals of prayer. He also delivers the sermon (*khutba*) during the Friday prayer.

During prayer, Muslims stand facing Mecca. In India this is to the west. This is called the *qibla*.



Fig. 3

Begumpuri mosque, built in the reign of Muhammad Tughluq, was the main mosque of Jahanpanah, the "Sanctuary of the World", his new capital in Delhi. See Map 1.



The Delhi Sultans built several mosques in cities all over the subcontinent. These demonstrated their claims to be protectors of Islam and Muslims. Mosques also helped to create the sense of a community of believers



Fig. 4
Moth ki Masjid, built in the reign of Sikandar Lodi by his minister.



who shared a belief system and a code of conduct. It was necessary to reinforce this idea of a community because Muslims came from a variety of backgrounds.

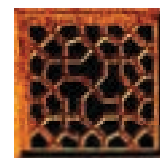


Fig. 5
Mosque of Jamali Kamali, built in the late 1520s.



Compare Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5. What similarities and differences do you notice amongst the mosques? The mosques in Figures 3, 4 and 5 show an evolution in architectural tradition that culminates in Shah Jahan's mosque in Delhi (see Fig. 7 in Chapter 5).

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. They 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.

Client

Someone who is under the protection of another; a dependent or hanger-on.

Slaves rather than sons

The Sultans were advised:

A slave, whom one has brought up and promoted, must be looked after for it needs a whole lifetime and good luck to find a worthy and experienced slave. Wise men have said that a worthy and experienced slave is better than a son ...



Can you think of any reason why a slave would be better than a son?

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 the authors of Persian *tawarikh* criticised the Delhi Sultans for appointing the “low and base-born” to high offices.

Officials of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq

Sultan Muhammad Tughluq appointed Aziz Khummar, a wine distiller, Firuz Hajjam, a barber, Manka Tabbakh, a cook, and two gardeners, Ladha and Pira, to high administrative posts. Ziyauddin Barani, a mid-fourteenth-century chronicler, reported their appointments as a sign of the Sultan’s loss of political judgement and his incapacity to rule.



Why do you think Barani criticised the Sultan?

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. The rights of the local chieftains to levy taxes were cancelled and they were also forced to pay taxes. The Sultan's administrators measured the land and kept careful accounts. Some of the old chieftains and landlords served the Sultanate as revenue collectors and assessors. 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.

Chieftains and their fortifications

Ibn Battuta, a fourteenth-century traveller from Morocco, Africa, explained that chieftains sometimes

fortified themselves in mountains, in rocky, uneven and rugged places as well as in bamboo groves. In India the bamboo is not hollow; it is big. Its several parts are so intertwined that even fire cannot affect them, and they are on the whole very strong. The chieftains live in these forests which serve them as ramparts, inside which are their cattle and their crops. There is also water for them within, that is, rain water which collects there. Hence they cannot be subdued except by powerful armies, who entering these forests, cut down the bamboos with specially prepared instruments.



Describe the ways in which the chieftains arranged for their defence.

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. Let us see how the two Sultans dealt with this.

One of the serious challenges posed to the Sultans of Delhi was by the Khokhar Chiefs – Shaikha and Jasrath. The growing power of Khokhars posed a serious threat to the Delhi Sultans from Iltutmish (1211-1236) to the Lodhis.

Delhi Sultans knew that the menace of Khokhars could be tackled only with the help of the Jammu rulers. Hence, they sought an alliance with them. In this respect, two Jammu Rajas: Raja Hamir Dev (1400-1423) and Raja Bhiram Dev (1457-1589) played a significant role. With the help of Raja Hamir Dev, Sayyid ruler Mubarak Shah (1421-1431) twice defeated the Khokhars. In return, Hamir Dev was honoured with a robe and given the title of 'Rai Bhim'. But it was Raja Bhiram Dev of Jammu, contemporary of Bahlul Lodhi (1451-1488) who completely wiped off the danger from the side of Khokhars by killing the Jasrath. To restore order in the disturbed zone of Khokhars, Bhiram Dev was given the charge of Sialkot and Bahlolpur by Bahlul Lodhi.

The Khokhars were the most prominent of hill tribes inhabiting a large part of India's North-West frontier region. They had spread almost over the entire Punjab and some areas of Jammu.

By studying the relation between the Jammu rulers and the Delhi Sultans, can you tell



Who were Khokhars ?



How Jammu rulers helped Delhi Sultans against the Khokhars ?

Alauddin Khalji	Muhammad Tughluq
Delhi was attacked twice, in 1299/1300 and 1302-1303. 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 <u>standing army</u> .
Alauddin constructed a new garrison town named Siri for his soldiers. See Map 1.	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 expense of maintaining such a 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 <i>iqtas</i> . 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.

In this 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

Take a look at Table 1 again. You will notice that 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. Kashmir during 14th & 15th centuries was ruled by Shahmiri dynasty. The founder of Shahmiri dynasty was Shams-ud-din Shahmir. The waning of Lohara rule provided him the space to become king. He defeated Queen Kota Rani who resisted his bid for power and ascended the throne in 1339. Thus, were laid the foundation of Sultanate in Kashmir. This Shahmiri dynasty was the longest ruling dynasty of Kashmir, which ruled roughly from 1339 to 1561.

The most illustrious ruler of Shahmiri dynasty was Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470), popularly known as *Budshah* (the great Sultan) by the Kashmiris. He established law and order and transformed Kashmir into a prosperous region.

Arts & Crafts

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin was a great patron of Arts & crafts. He revived the existing crafts (e.g.,

Bhojpatra writing) and introduced some new ones including carpet weaving, paper making, book binding, silk weaving, Paper Mache, metal work and fireworks. He invited experts from Central Asia & Persia. Sultan welcomed the craftsmen from Central Asia and Persia and provided them incentives to teach the crafts to local artisans. He also deputed crafts men of Kashmir to cities like Samarkand and Isfahan to learn the arts and crafts.

Public works of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin

Economic prosperity and peace enabled the Sultan to develop new towns, palaces & other works of public utility. He built his new capital at Nowshahar. He constructed the mausoleum for his mother, Noor Zaina Kadal which is almost a replica of Taimur's mausoleum at Samarkand. He founded the towns of Zaina Nagar, Zainagir, Zanipur & Zainkot. He built the Khanqah of Sayyid Mohammad Madni at Srinagar. He laid out Rupa Lanka & Sona Lanka, the two man made Islands on Dal Lake besides Zaina Kadal bridge. The various canals constructed by Zain-ul-Abidin were Kakapura Canal, Zaingir canal, Chakdar, Awantipura, Mar, Krala & Lallkul canals.

Literature

The Sultan patronized Srivara and Jonaraja who wrote Jaina Rajatarangini, Zani Charitra and Zaina Villasa of Yodha Bhatta were written during this period. Sultan himself wrote a Persian Poem, 'Shikayat'. Mullah Ahmad made Persian translation of Rajatarangni. The poetry of Lal Ded known as *Vaakh* and that of Sheikh Nooruddin called *Shruk* (taken from the Sanskrit word 'shloka') emerged during this period.

Religious Tolerance:

The Sultan is remembered for his religious tolerance. He abolished jaziya and the cremation tax & banned cow slaughter. He also repaired some old temples.

Shahmiri dynasty reached climax under Zain-ul-Abidin. The successors of Zain-ul-Abidin were weak hence the nobility emerged very strong and prominent tribes like Magre and Chak became king makers. In the battle for power, the Chaks emerged victorious and ruled Kashmir till 1586.

Sher Shah Suri(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 Sur 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.

The “Three Orders”, the “Peace of God”, Knights and the Crusades

The idea of the “Three Orders” was first formulated in France in the early eleventh century. It divided society into three classes: those who prayed, those who fought, and those who tilled the land. This division of society into “Three Orders” was supported by the Church to consolidate its dominant role in society. This helped the emergence of a new warrior group called Knights.

The Church patronised this group and used them to propagate their idea of “Peace of God”. The attempt was to direct warriors away from conflict amongst themselves and send them instead on a campaign against the Muslims who had captured the city of Jerusalem. This led to a series of campaigns called the Crusades. These campaigns in the service of God and the Church completely altered the status of Knights. Originally, these Knights did not belong to the class of nobles. But by the end of the eleventh century in France, and a century later in Germany, the humble origins of these warriors were forgotten. By the twelfth century, nobles also wanted to be known as Knights.

Imagine



You are a peasant in Alauddin Khalji's or Muhammad Tughluq's reign and you cannot pay the taxes demanded by the Sultan. What will you do?

Let's recall

1. Which ruler first established his or her capital at Delhi?
2. What was the language of administration under the Delhi Sultans?
3. In whose reign did the Sultanate reach its farthest extent?
4. From which country did Ibn Battuta travel to India?

KEYWORDS



iqta

tarikh

garrison

Mongols

gender

kharaj



Let's understand

5. According to the "circle of justice", why was it important for military commanders to keep the interests of the peasantry in mind?
6. What is meant by the "internal" and "external" frontiers of the Sultanate?
7. What were the steps taken to ensure that *muqtis* performed their duties? Why do you think they may have wanted to defy the orders of the Sultans?
8. What was the impact of the Mongol invasions on the Delhi Sultanate?

Let's discuss

9. Do you think the authors of *tawarikh* would provide information about the lives of ordinary men and women?
10. Raziyya Sultan was unique in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. Do you think women leaders are accepted more readily today?
11. Why were the Delhi Sultans interested in cutting down forests? Does deforestation occur for the same reasons today?
12. Discuss the contribution of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin to economy and society of Kashmir.

Let's do

13. Find out whether there are any buildings built by the Delhi Sultans in your area. Are there any other buildings in your area that were built between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries? Describe some of these buildings, and draw sketches of them.

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.

Fig. 1
The Red Fort.



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), the Mongol ruler who ruled over parts of 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 Uzbeks, 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.



Do you think this painting suggests that the Mughals claimed kingship as a birthright?

Fig. 2

A miniature painting (dated 1702-1712) of Timur, his descendants and the Mughal emperors. Timur is in the centre and on his right is his son Miran Shah (the first Mughal emperor Babur's great-great-grandfather) and then Abu Said (Babur's grandfather). To the left of Timur are Sultan Muhammad Mirza (Babur's great-grandfather) and Umar Shaikh (Babur's father). The Mughal emperors Babur, Akbar and Shah Jahan are the third, fourth and fifth individuals on Timur's right and on his left, in the same order, are Humayun, Jahangir and Aurangzeb.



They celebrated their genealogy pictorially, each ruler getting a picture made of Timur and himself. Take a look at Figure 2, which is somewhat like a

“group photograph”.

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 Uzbeks. 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.

The Mughals had an eye on Kashmir too. Babar’s son Mirza Kamran invaded Kashmir but could not keep it.

Mirza Haider Dughlat (Cousin of Babur) was the first Mughal who conquered Kashmir in 1540 and established his political dominance. Initially, he declared Nazuk Shah as the Sultan of Kashmir and later on, read Khutba and issued coins in the name of Humayun. Mirza Haidar acted as a virtual ruler of Kashmir. He died in 1551.

Table 1 charts some of the major campaigns of the Mughals. Study it carefully and see if you can notice any long-term patterns. You will notice, for example, that the Afghans were an immediate threat to Mughal



authority. Note the relationship between the Mughals and the Ahoms (see also Chapter 7), the Sikhs (see also Chapters 8 and 10), and Mewar and Marwar (see also Chapter 9). How was Humayun’s relationship with Safavid Iran different from Akbar’s? Did the annexation of Golconda and Bijapur in Aurangzeb’s reign end hostilities in the Deccan?

Fig. 3
Mughal army on campaign.



Tarikh-e-Rashidi is a book written by Mirza Haider Dughlat.

Fig. 4
Cannons were an important addition in sixteenth-century warfare. Babur used them effectively in the first battle of Panipat.

Table 1

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 Uzbeks. 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. The expansion of Mughal rule entailed a series of conquests. With the death of Mirza Hakim, the half-brother of Akbar, Suba Kabul was annexed. In 1585, the Mughal troops attacked Kashmir, though the ruler Yousuf Shah Chak surrendered, but Mughals could not succeed. In the very next year a full-fledged attack was launched by Mughals under Qasim Khan (Mir-i-Bahar) and Kashmir was annexed in 1586. Yaqub Chak and other nobles later on submitted before the Mughals and Kashmir became part of the Mughal empire. Governors known as Subedars were assigned job of administration and Subedar was assisted by Naib Subedar and Gazi.

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 Uzbeks 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.



Map 1

Military campaigns under Akbar and Aurangzeb.



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. Follow the highlighted passages in Table 1, and note the evidence for rebellions by Mughal princes. Which do you think is a fairer division of inheritance: primogeniture or coparcenary?

Mughal marriages with the Rajputs

The mother of Jahangir was a Kachhwaha princess, daughter of the Rajput ruler of Amber (modern-day Jaipur). The mother of Shah Jahan was a Rathor princess, daughter of the Rajput ruler of Marwar (Jodhpur).

Mughal Relations with Other Rulers

Take a look at Table 1 once again. You will notice that 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 of Mewar 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.

Mughals and Jammu hill principalities

In the year 1588-89, Jammu along with other hill principalities was conquered by the Mughal emperor Akbar. The prime reason for this conquest was to strengthen the security of the North-West frontiers as Mughals had clearly recognized the strategic, military and political importance of this region. For instance, Abul Fazl while discussing the strategic importance of Mankot forts informs that Mankot forts were understood as a line of defence in the Punjab under the Afghans and the Mughals. In addition, the principalities of Kishtwar and Rajouri occupied strategic importance because of their proximity to Kashmir.

After the Mughal conquest Jammu, Jasrota, Mankot, Lakhanpur, etc. were included in the *Subah* of Lahore. All these hill principalities were made tributary by Akbar. Mughal authority sat very lightly on them. The rulers of Jammu were allowed to exercise the powers almost like an independent sovereign. A yearly tribute called *Peshkash* was extracted from them. Some of the rulers of Jammu like Raja Sangram Dev (1594-1626), Hari Dev (1656-1692) and Gaje Singh (1692-1701) were granted *mansab* or military rank in the Mughal army. They also helped the Mughals in their expeditions.

Abul Fazl was the Court historians of Akbar. The name of his work is *Akbarnama*.



Name the Jammu rulers who were accorded *mansab* in the Mughal army?



Why did Akbar conquer Jammu and other hill principalities?

Pashm: the raw wool for Pashmina Shawls.



Why Mughals were keen to subjugate Ladakh?



What is Pashm?

Mughals and Ladakh:

The Mughals showed a keen interest in the subjugation of Ladakh especially after the conquest of Kashmir. One major reason was the Shawl industry of Kashmir, which was the most income generating industry as the Kashmiri shawls were in great demand in foreign lands and fetched higher prices. The **Pashm** wool for the manufacture of these shawls primarily came from Tibet. Therefore, trade routes needed to be secured for the uninterrupted supply of **Pashm**. The first initiative to bring this region under its control was taken by the Mughal Emperor, Akbar who followed a conciliatory policy towards the rulers of Ladakh. His successors also tried their best to have an access to this region.

In 1679, Ladakh was attacked by Tibet. In the ensuing battle, Ladakhi forces were defeated and more than half of the Ladakhi kingdom was lost to Tibet. But somehow, the King of Ladakh, Deldan Namgyal held on to the forts of Basgo and Tingmosgang for at least three years before he sought the help of the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb. In 1683, Aurangzeb sent help to the King of Ladakh through the Governor of Kashmir. The combined forces of Ladakh and Mughals defeated the Tibetan-Mongol army near the plains of Nimo, 25 kms west of Leh. However, in return to the aid provided by the Mughals, Ladakh had to accept certain conditions. Deldan Namgyal was made to embrace Islam, which he did under the name of Aqibat Muhammad Khan. He was also ordered to mint coins in the name of Aurangzeb. The Ladakhi sources insist that neither the ruler or his successor actually practiced Islam. However, the biggest loss to Deldan Namgyal was that he had to grant the Mughals a monopoly of the wool trade through Ladakh.

Look at Table 1 again – note that Aurangzeb insulted Shivaji when he came to accept Mughal authority. What was the consequence of this insult?

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 cavalymen. The *mansabdar* brought his cavalymen 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

Zat ranking

Nobles with a *zat* of 5,000 were ranked higher than those of 1,000. In Akbar's reign there were 29 *mansabdars* with a rank of 5,000 *zat*; by Aurangzeb's reign the number of *mansabdars* had increased to 79. Would this have meant more expenditure for the state?



Fig. 5
A mansabdar on
march with his
sawars.

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.



Fig. 6
Details from a miniature from Shah Jahan's reign depicting corruption in his father's administration: (1) a corrupt officer receiving a bribe and (2) a tax-collector punishing poor peasants.

Akbar Nama and Ain-i Akbari

Akbar ordered one of his close friends and courtiers, Abul Fazl, to write a history of his reign. Abul Fazl wrote a three-volume history of Akbar's reign, titled *Akbar Nama*. The first volume dealt with Akbar's ancestors and the second volume recorded the events of Akbar's reign. The third volume is the *Ain-i Akbari*. It deals with Akbar's administration, household, army, the revenues and the geography of his empire. It also provides rich details about the traditions and culture of the people living in India. The most interesting aspect about the *Ain-i Akbari* is its rich statistical details about things as diverse as crops, yields, prices, wages and revenues.



Fig. 7
Akbar receiving the Akbar Nama
from Abul Fazl.

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 (*fauj-dars*) and the town police commander (*kotwal*).

Nur Jahan's influence in Jahangir's court

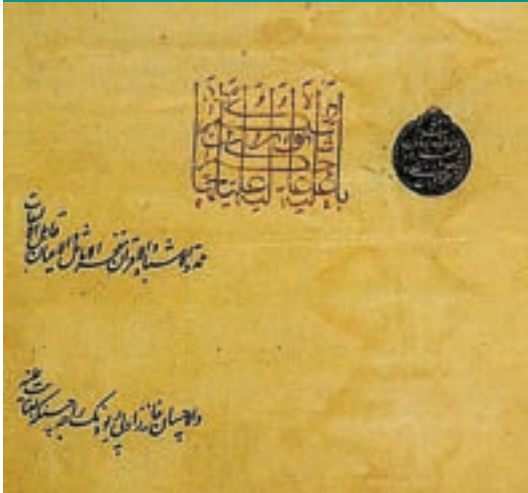


Fig. 8
Nur Jahan's farman.

Mehrunnisa married the Emperor Jahangir in 1611 and received the title Nur Jahan. She remained extremely loyal and supportive to the monarch. As a mark of honour, Jahangir struck silver coins bearing his own titles on one side and on the other the inscription “struck in the name of the Queen Begum, Nur Jahan”.

The adjoining document is an order (*farman*) of Nur Jahan. The square seal states, “Command of her most Sublime and Elevated Majesty Nur Jahan Padshah Begum”.

The round seal states, “by the sun of Shah Jahangir she became as brilliant as the moon; may Nur Jahan Padshah be the lady of the age”.

Dogma

A statement or an interpretation declared as authoritative with the expectation that it would be followed without question.

Bigot

An individual who is intolerant of another person's religious beliefs or culture.

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



Fig. 9
Akbar holding discussions
with learned individuals
of different faiths in the
ibadat khana.



Can you identify
the Jesuit priests
in this picture?

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.

Sulh-i kul

Jahangir, Akbar's son, described his father's policy of *sulh-i kul* in the following words:

As in the wide expanse of the divine compassion there is room for all classes and the followers of all creeds, so ... in his Imperial dominions, which on all sides were limited only by the sea, there was room for the professors of opposite religions, and for beliefs, good and bad, and the road to intolerance was closed. Sunnis and Shias met in one mosque and Christians and Jews in one church to pray. He consistently followed the principle of "universal peace" (sulh-i kul).

Akbar commissioned the translation of many Sanskrit works into Persian. A Maktab Khana or translation bureau was also established at Fatehpur Sikri for this purpose. The Mahabharata, Ramayana, Lilavati and Yogavashisht were some of the notable Sanskrit works that were taken up for translation. The Razminamah, Persian translation of the Mahabharata contains lavish illustrations of the events of Mahabharata.

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. We will read more about them in Chapter 10.

Kings and queens

There were several great monarchs – all near-contemporaries – in different parts of the world in the sixteenth century.

These included the ruler of Ottoman Turkey, Sultan Suleyman 1520-1566. During his rule the Ottoman state expanded into Europe, seizing Hungary and besieging Austria. His armies also seized Baghdad and Iraq. Much of north Africa, all the way into Morocco, acknowledged Ottoman authority. Suleyman also reconstructed the Ottoman navy. Its domination over the eastern Mediterranean brought the navy into competition with Spain. In the Arabian Sea it challenged the Portuguese. The monarch was given the title of “al-Qanuni” (the “lawgiver”) because of the large number of regulations (*qanun*) passed during his reign. These were aimed to standardise administrative procedures throughout the expanding domains of the empire and specifically to protect the peasantry from forced labour and extraordinary taxes. Later, in the seventeenth century, when public order declined in the Ottoman domains, the reign of Suleyman Qanuni was remembered as a period of ideal governance.

Find out more about Akbar's other contemporaries – the ruler of England, Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603); the Safavid ruler of Iran, Shah Abbas (1588-1629); and the more controversial Russian ruler, Czar Ivan IV Vasilyevich, also called “Ivan the Terrible” (1530-1584).



Imagine

You have inherited a kingdom. (Remember Babur and Akbar were about your age when they became rulers). How would you make your kingdom stable and prosperous?

Let's recall

1. Match the following:

mansab

Mongol

Sisodiya Rajput

Rathor Rajput

Nur Jahan

subadar

Marwar

governor

Uzbeg

Mewar

rank

Jahangir

KEYWORDS



Mughal

mansab

jagir

zat

sawar

sulh-i kul

primogeniture

coparcenary

zabt

zamindar



2. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) The capital of Mirza Hakim, Akbar's half-brother, was _____.
- (b) The five Deccan Sultanates were Berar, Khandesh, Ahmadnagar, _____ and _____.
- (c) If *zat* determined a *mansabdar*'s rank and salary, *sawar* indicated his _____.
- (d) Abul Fazl, Akbar's friend and counsellor, helped him frame the idea of _____ so that he could govern a society composed of many religions, cultures and castes.

3. What were the central provinces under the control of the Mughals?

4. What was the relationship between the *mansabdar* and the *jagir*?

Let's understand

- 5. What was the role of the zamindar in Mughal administration?
- 6. How were the debates with religious scholars important in the formation of Akbar's ideas on governance?
- 7. Why did the Mughals emphasise their Timurid and not their Mongol descent?

Let's discuss

8. How important was the income from land revenue to the stability of the Mughal Empire?
9. Why was it important for the Mughals to recruit *mansabdars* from diverse backgrounds and not just Turanis and Iranis?
10. Like the Mughal Empire, India today is also made up of many social and cultural units. Does this pose a challenge to national integration?
11. Peasants were vital for the economy of the Mughal Empire. Do you think that they are as important today? Has the gap in the income between the rich and the poor in India changed a great deal from the period of the Mughals?
12. Discuss the foundation and expansion of Mughal rule in Kashmir.

Let's do

13. The Mughal Empire left its impact on the different regions of the subcontinent in a variety of ways. Find out if it had any impact in the city, village or region in which you live.

Notes

5

TRIBES, NOMADS AND SETTLED COMMUNITIES



0760C1607

Fig. 1
Tribal dance,
Santal painted scroll.

You saw in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 how kingdoms rose and fell. Even as this was happening, 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.





On a physical map of the subcontinent, identify the areas in which tribal people may have lived.

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.



Map 1

Location of some of the major Indian tribes.

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.

Clan

A clan is a group of families or households claiming descent from a common ancestor. Tribal organisation is often based on kinship or clan loyalties.



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 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.

Fig. 2

Bhils hunting deer by night.

Fig.3

A chain of mobile traders connected India to the outside world. Here you see nuts being gathered and loaded on the backs of camels. Central Asian traders brought such goods to India and the Banjaras and other traders carried these to local markets.

They bought and sold these goods as they moved from one place to another, transporting them on their animals.

The Banjaras were the most important trader-nomads. Their caravan was called *tanda*. Sultan Alauddin Khalji (Chapter 3) 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.

The Banjaras

Peter Mundy, an English trader who came to India during the early seventeenth century, has described the Banjaras:

In the morning we met a tanda of Banjaras with 14,000 oxen. They were all laden with grains such as wheat and rice ... These Banjaras carry their household – wives and children – along with them. One tanda consists of many families. Their way of life is similar to that of carriers who continuously travel from place to place. They own their oxen. They are sometimes hired by merchants, but most commonly they are themselves merchants. They buy grain where it is cheaply available and carry it to places where it is dearer. From there, they again reload their oxen with anything that can be profitably sold in other places ... In a tanda there may be as many as 6 or 7 hundred persons ... They do not travel more than 6 or 7 miles a day – that, too, in the cool weather. After unloading their oxen, they turn them free to graze as there is enough land here, and no one there to forbid them.

 Find out how grain is transported from villages to cities at present. In what ways is this similar to or different from the ways in which the Banjaras functioned?

Nomads and itinerant groups

Nomads are wandering people. Many of them are pastoralists who roam from one pasture to another with their flocks and herds. Similarly, itinerant groups, such as craftspeople, pedlars and entertainers travel from place to place practising their different occupations. Both nomads and itinerant groups often visit the same places every year.



Fig. 4
Bronze crocodile,
Kutiya Kond tribe,
Orissa.

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.

Deliberations on *jati*

A twelfth-century inscription from Uyyakondan Udaiyar, in Tiruchirapalli *taluka* (in present-day Tamil Nadu), describes the deliberations in a *sabha* (Chapter 2) of Brahmanas.

They deliberated on the status of a group known as *rathakaras* (literally, chariot makers). They laid down their occupations, which were to include architecture, building coaches and chariots, erecting gateways for temples with images in them, preparing wooden equipment used to perform sacrifices, building *mandapas*, making jewels for the king.

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. Two examples of this important part of our history are described below.

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



Fig. 5
A Gond woman.

Shifting cultivation

Trees and bushes in a forest area are first cut and burnt. The crop is sown in the ashes. When this land loses its fertility, another plot of land is cleared and planted in the same way.



Map 2
Gondwana.

Fig. 6
A carved door.
Gond tribe, Bastar area,
Madhya Pradesh.

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



Discuss why the Mughals were interested in the land of the Gonds.

Map 3

Tribes of eastern India.





Fig. 7
Ear ornaments, Kobot
Naga tribe, Manipur.



Why do you think the Mughals tried to conquer the land of the Ahoms?

In J&K, the Gujjars and Bakarwals settled along Poonch, Kalakot, Rajouri, Nowshera, Surankot, Shopian, Kupwara, Bandipora, Baramulla, Srinagar. The Mughal Emperor, Jahangir, writes in his memoirs that the Gujjars were a group who did little manual labour and subsisted on milk and curds.

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.

Gujjars and Bakarwals

Gujjars and Bakarwals are the tribes of Jammu and Kashmir. Gujjars are semi-pastoralists and Bakarwals are fully pastoralists. Gujjar tend cattle (cows and buffaloes) and Bakarwals herd goats and sheep. They are the most distinct community, claiming an identity distinct from both Hindus and Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir. They assert their tribal identity. They have their own culture, traditions, customs, folklores and ethnicity. Regarding their migration in Jammu and Kashmir, there is a general view that they might have come from Rajasthan and

adjoining areas of Gujarat and Kathiawar . We also come across their references in Mughal Sources. In the early 19th century, we came across the name of a Gujjar chief Sangu, who ruled Punch. He was the contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab.

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.

Let's recall

There were three main tribes in Ladakh. They were the Tibeto-Mongoloid tribe from east side, Mon tribe from South side and Dard Aryan tribe from west side.



Who was Sangu?



Name some tribes of Jammu and Kashmir

The Mongols

ELSEWHERE

Find Mongolia in your atlas. The best-known pastoral and hunter-gatherer tribe in history were the Mongols. They inhabited the grasslands (steppes) of Central Asia and the forested areas further north. By 1206 Genghis Khan had united the Mongol and Turkish tribes into a powerful military force. At the time of his death (1227) he was the ruler of extensive territories. His successors created a vast empire. At different points of time, it included parts of Russia, Eastern Europe and also China and much of West Asia. The Mongols had well-organised military and administrative systems. These were based on the support of different ethnic and religious groups.

KEYWORDS

▼
varna

jati

tanda

garh

chaurasi

barhot

bhuiyans

paik

khel

buranji

census
▲



Imagine

You are a member of a nomadic community that shifts residence every three months. How would this change your life?

1. Match the following:

garh

tanda

labourer

clan

Sib Singh

Durgawati

khel

chaurasi

caravan

Garha Katanga

Ahom state

paik

2. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) The new castes emerging within *varnas* were called _____.
- (b) _____ were historical works written by the Ahoms.
- (c) The _____ mentions that Garha Katanga had 70,000 villages.
- (d) As tribal states became bigger and stronger, they gave land grants to _____ and _____.

3. State whether true or false:

- (a) Tribal societies had rich oral traditions.
- (b) There were no tribal communities in the north-western part of the subcontinent.
- (c) The *chaurasi* in Gond states contained several cities.

- (d) The Bhils lived in the north-eastern part of the subcontinent.

4. What kinds of exchanges took place between nomadic pastoralists and settled agriculturists?

Let's understand

5. How was the administration of the Ahom state organised?
6. What changes took place in *varna*-based society?
7. How did tribal societies change after being organised into a state?

Let's discuss

8. Were the Banjaras important for the economy?
9. In what ways was the history of the Gonds different from that of the Ahoms? Were there any similarities?

Let's do

10. Plot the location of the tribes mentioned in this chapter on a map. For any two, discuss whether their mode of livelihood was suited to the geography and the environment of the area where they lived.
11. Find out about present-day government policies towards tribal populations and organise a discussion about these.
12. Find out more about present-day nomadic pastoral groups in the subcontinent. What animals do they keep? Which are the areas frequented by these groups?



6

DEVOTIONAL PATHS TO THE DIVINE



You may have seen people perform rituals of worship, or singing *bhajans*, *kirtans* or *qawwalis*, or even repeating the name of God in silence, and noticed that some of them are 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 Jains 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 Jains 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.



Fig. 1

A page from a south Indian manuscript of the Bhagavadgita.



You can observe this process of local myths and legends receiving wider acceptance even today. Can you find some examples around you?

Hagiography
Writing of saints' lives.

Fig. 2
A bronze image of Manikkavasagar.



Nayanars and Alvars

There were 63 Nayanars, who belonged to different caste backgrounds such as potters, “untouchable” workers, peasants, hunters, soldiers, Brahmanas and chiefs. The best known among them were Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar and Manikkavasagar. There are two sets of compilations of their songs – *Tevaram* and *Tiruvacakam*.

There were 12 Alvars, who came from equally divergent backgrounds, the best known being Periyalvar, his daughter Andal, Tondaradippodi Alvar and Nammalvar. Their songs were compiled in the *Divya Prabandham*.

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.

The devotee and the Lord

This is a composition of Manikkavasagar:

*Into my vile body of flesh
You came, as though it were a temple of gold,
And soothed me wholly and saved me,
O Lord of Grace, O Gem most Pure,
Sorrow and birth and death and illusion
You took from me, and set me free.
O Bliss! O Light! I have taken refuge in You,
And never can I be parted from You.*



How does the poet describe his relationship with the deity?

Philosophy and Bhakti

Shankara, 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, 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

We noted earlier the connection between the Tamil bhakti movement and temple worship. This in turn 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.



Try and find out more about the ideas of Shankara or Ramanuja.

The Vaishnava poet-saints of Maharashtra such as Jnaneshwar, Namadeva, Eknath and Tukaram were devotees of lord Vitthala. Devotion around lord Vitthala gave rise to the Varkari sect which lay emphasis on an annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur. The cult of Vitthala emerged as a powerful mode of devotion and was very popular amongst the people.

Virashaiva *vachanas*

These are *vachanas* or sayings attributed to Basavanna:

*The rich,
Will make temples for Shiva.
What shall I,
A poor man,
Do?*

*My legs are pillars,
The body the shrine,
The head a cupola
Of gold.*

*Listen, O Lord of the meeting rivers,
Things standing shall fall,
But the moving ever shall stay.*



What is the temple that Basavanna is offering to God?

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 Dnyaneshwar (Gyaneshwar), Namdev, Eknath and Tukaram as well as women like Sakhubai 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."

Questioning the social order

This is an *abhang* (Marathi devotional hymn) of Sant Tukaram:

*He who identifies
with the battered and the beaten
Mark him as a saint
For God is with him
He holds
Every forsaken man
Close to his heart
He treats
A slave
As his own son
Says Tukā
I won't be tired
to repeat again
Such a man
Is God
In person.*

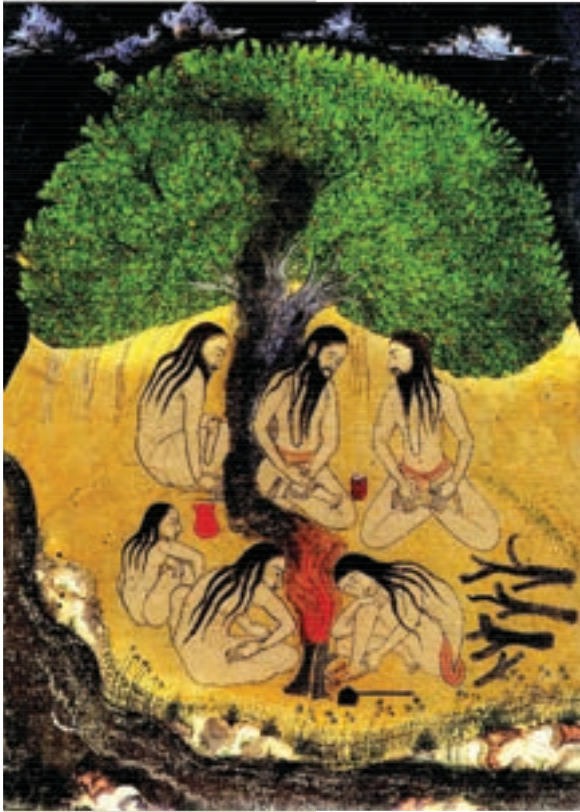
Here is an *abhang* composed by Chokhamela's son:

*You made us low caste,
Why don't you face that fact, Great Lord?
Our whole life – left-over food to eat.
You should be ashamed of this.
You have eaten in our home.
How can you deny it?
Chokha's (son) Karmamela asks
Why did you give me life?*

Discuss the ideas about the social order expressed in these compositions.



Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis



A number of religious groups that emerged during this period criticised 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.

Fig. 3
A fireside gathering of ascetics.

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. In the eighth and ninth centuries religious scholars developed different aspects of the Holy Law (Shariat) and theology of Islam. While the religion of Islam gradually became more complex, Sufis provided it with an additional dimension that favoured a more personal devotion to God. The Sufis often rejected the elaborate rituals and codes of behaviour 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 spiritual genealogy of Sufi teachers, each following a slightly different method (*tariqa*) of instruction and ritual practice.



Fig. 4
Mystics in ecstasy.

In Kashmir the Rishi order of Sufism flourished in the 15th and 16th centuries. This order was established by Sheikh Nuruddin Wali also known as Nund Rishi and had a deep impact on the life of the people in Kashmir. A number of shrines dedicated to Rishi saints can be found in many parts of Kashmir.

Fig. 5

A page from a manuscript of the Quran, Deccan, late fifteenth century.

Hospice

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



Muinuddin
Bakhtiar Kaki of Delhi,
Nizamuddin Auliya
Gisudaraz of Gulbarga.

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 (Chapter 3), 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 Chishti of Ajmer, Qutbuddin Baba Farid of Punjab, Khwaja of Delhi and Bandanawaz

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.

Fig. 6

Devotees of all backgrounds visit Sufi shrines.



Sufism received favourable impetus in Kashmir owing to the age-old mysticism that was mostly promoted by Kashmiri Shaivism, the famous exponent of which was Lalleshwari alias Lal Ded, a revolutionary women mystic of 14th century Kashmir who is known through her poetic verses, referred to as '*Lal-Vaakh*' which she composed in vernacular Kashmiri, the language of common people. Through her Vakhs, she strived to inculcate the spirit of peace and amity in Kashmir. In fact, she acted as a bridge between the Hindus and the Muslims. She is also regarded as the greatest reformer who tried to bring reforms in the Kashmiri society. She also worked for the upliftment of the women. One of the most popular Sufi order in Kashmir which had the indigenous origin was the Rishi. Rishi is a Vedic epithet. Kashmiris used it to describe the Sufi saints. Rishi order was founded by Nur ud din Rishi (1377-1440). He is popularly known as Nund Rishi (*The blissful one*).

Nur ud Din Rishi is said to have been greatly influenced by Lal Ded. Like Lal Ded, he preached equality & tolerance. His poetry clearly reflects his concern for the down-trodden section of Kashmiri society especially the peasants. He also criticised the caste system and laid stress on the unity of mankind, thus was equally respected by all sections of society.

The Rishi movement gained momentum with the disciples of Sheikh Nur-ud-din popularly known as Khulfa. Being commoners, they practically lived with the common masses especially in remote rural areas where they practised agriculture and presented essence of Islam in simplest form. They upheld the human values of kindness and equality regardless of creed, colour or caste and stressed on respect for labour.

Rishi Order crossed the gender frontier as well, the women Rishi saints of Kashmir were Shanga Bibi, Sham Ded, Beab Ded and many others who attained higher levels of spirituality and earned respect from the masses.

It was during this period that Mir Shamsudin Iraqi came to Kashmir. The credit of introducing Shai philosophy in Kashmir goes to him and his son Mir Daniyal.

Amongst the most influential and prolific Orders that developed in 15th and 16th century in Kashmir was Suharawardi Order, the stalwart of which was Sheikh Hamzah Makhdoom. Syed Bulbul Shah also known as Bulbul-e-Kashmir of the Suharawardi Order laid down the foundation of Sufi and secular culture in Kashmir around 1320. The Suharawardis preached the doctrine of love, piety and humanism from village to village in Kashmir. The greatest number of Malfuzat or hagiographic literature was produced by Suharwardi saints like Baba Dawood Khaki, Mullah Ali Raina, Sheikh Ahmad Chaghi and Mullah Haider Tulmulli and Baba Naseeb ud din Ghazi .The account of these saints sufficiently enlighten us about their milieu and are important sources of History in Kashmir.

Spirit of Communal Harmony

Sufism laid the foundation of communal harmony and peace in Kashmir. It taught the lesson of equality, love and brotherhood. Consequently, this enabled the peaceful co-existence of all the communities in Kashmir. The humanistic philosophy of Kashmiri Sufis and Rishis played a prominent role in building the Kashmiri ethos.

The Kashmiri Society evolved to be more open to various beliefs, under the influence of Sufis and Saints of the Rishi Order. Sufi Saints played a valuable role in uplifting socio-economic conditions of the people of Kashmir in providing the livelihood opportunities to the people. Sufis encouraged to introduce several arts and crafts from Central Asia like Shawl Industry, Needle work on the pattern of Central Asian *karkhana*. Sufis also made a valuable contribution in the extension of cultivation. They

encouraged the rulers to dig canals to meet the irrigational requirement.

Some of the festivals in Kashmir which had originated in the Hindu culture attained a secular character and Hindu and Muslims both celebrated them like birthday of river Vitasta (Jhelum) called Veithruwah, festival associated with the beginning of New Year called Chaitra festival called Badamwari (Almond festival) celebrating the onset of Spring season. Lal Ded and Nund Rishi further helped the cause by spreading message of oneness and religious harmony.

The holistics vision of Sufis and their mission of diffusing the message of divine love and social harmony led them to settle in different parts of India including the Jammu hills. The two border regions of Jammu i.e. Punjab and Kashmir had nurtured various centres of Sufism. Jammu region being situated between these two regions, attracted the attention of Sufis from both directions. Pir Roshan Wali Shah is believed to be the earliest Sufi who came to Jammu in the first half of the 13th century. But the hagiographical traditions inform us of a major influx of Sufis from Punjab between 15th-19th centuries. They settled in different areas such as Jammu, Satwari, Akhnoor, Kunjwani, Kathua etc. In addition, there are also a number of Sufi shrines in Rajouri, Poonch, Kishtwar, Bhadarwah.

Here the majority of Sufi saints came from the side of Kashmir. One of the most famous Sufi shrines is the Shrine of Pir Sayyid Ghulam Shah Badshah at Shadra Sharif in modern Rajouri. Besides propagating their mystical ideas, the Sufis of Jammu hills performed a variety of roles while living in the midst of common people. A significant social activity was the organization of community kitchens i.e.

Ghulam Shah Badshah of Rajouri is said to have planted a tree, which became everlasting one, known as *Sadabahar*. It still survives.

Sufi saints from Punjab:- Pir Lakhdatta, Pir Mitha, Jiwan Shah, Bab Rah, etc.

Sufi Saints from Kashmir:- Baba Sain Lal Din, Shaikh Zain Alladin, Baba Latifuddin. It is interesting to note that many of these Sufi Shrines are maintained by non-muslims.

Baoli-stepped well.

Activity

Make a list of the sufi-saints who came to Jammu.

Besides, Nyimapa, other sects like Ge-lugs-pa, Sas-Kyapa also flourished in Ladakh.



Nyimapa was the oldest _____ to be introduced in Ladakh.



Who strengthened the cause of Buddhism in Ladakh?

Langar, which promoted social harmony. The Sufis of Jammu hills also made earnest efforts to maintain ecological balance. For instance, they planted a large number of trees and also maintained water resources, particularly the *baolis*

Buddhism in Ladakh

Buddhism is the prominent religion of the people of Ladakh. Ladakh is known all over the world as the "Ancient Land of Buddhist Lamas". It is believed that Buddhism was introduced in Kashmir by the Mauryan ruler, Ashoka (268-232 BCE). However, it was strengthened by the emigration of several Buddhist Monks from Kashmir. Kashmiri monks also established a number of monasteries in Ladakh for example, Kanika and Alchi. We also come across the names of a number of Buddhist Monks who travelled all the way from Bihar and Bengal to Ladakh and further strengthened the cause of Buddhism there. Some of them were Smiriti, Dharampala, Siddhapala, Gunapala, Atisa etc. They came to Ladakh during the 11th and 12th centuries. The most ancient Buddhist sect to be introduced in Ladakh was the Nyimapa or Red sect. The Buddhist monks of this sect wear red dresses. Most of the present day Monks in Ladakh belong to this sect.

Buddhism was by far the strongest religious influence but from the 10th century onwards, Ladakh also came into contact with the Islamic world viz. Arab and Persia (Iran). Gradually, Islam began to make

its appearance in Ladakh. It is believed that, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani was the first to make converts in Ladakh while passing through the region enroute to Kashgar in 1394.

Finding the Lord

Jalaluddin Rumi was a great thirteenth-century Sufi poet from Iran who wrote in Persian. Here is an excerpt from his work:

He was not on the Cross of the Christians. I went to the Hindu temples. In none of them was there any sign. He was not on the heights or in the lowlands ... I went to the Kaaba of Mecca. He was not there. I asked about him from Avicenna the philosopher. He was beyond the range of Avicenna ... I looked into my heart. In that, his place, I saw him. He was in no other place.

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. We saw that new towns (Chapter 6) and kingdoms (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) 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

Fig. 7

Chaitanyadeva, a sixteenth-century bhakti saint from Bengal, preached selfless devotion to Krishna-Radha. In the picture you see a group of his followers engaged in ecstatic dancing and singing.



Map 1

Major bhakti saints and the regions associated with them.



Note : The map shall be updated as soon as issued by survey of India.

The essence of Shankaradeva's devotion came to be known as Eka Sarana Nama Dharma (supreme surrender to the One). The teachings of Shankaradeva were based on the Bhagavad Gita and Bhagavata Purana. He also encouraged the establishment of satra or monasteries for transmission of knowledge. His major compositions included Kirtana-ghosha.

religions. Others like Tulsidas and Surdas accepted existing beliefs and practices but wanted to make these accessible to all. Tulsidas conceived of God in the form of Rama. Tulsidas's 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 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



Beyond the Rana's palace

This is a song composed by Mirabai:

*Ranaji, I have left your norms of shame,
and false decorum of the princely life.
I have left your town.
And yet Rana why have you kept up
enmity against me?
Rana you gave me a cup of poison.
I drank it laughing.
Rana I will not be destroyed by you.
And yet Rana why have you kept up
enmity against me?*



Why do you think Mirabai left the Rana's palace?

Fig. 8
Mirabai.

An important contribution of Bhakti saints was towards the development of music. Jayadeva of Bengal composed the Gita Govinda in Sanskrit, each song composed in a particular raga and tala. A significant impact that these saints had on music was the use of bhajan, kirtan and abhang. These songs which emphasised on emotional experience had a tremendous appeal to the common people.

become a part of our living popular culture.

By the 16th century there was a rise of Vaishnavism in the cult of Rama and Krishan in the whole of India. The extent of this wave of Vaishnavism was even felt in the regions of Western Himalayas including the region of Jammu. Here the cult of Krishna gained much popularity. In fact, Vaishnavism in Jammu region can be traced back to 8th century, the oldest temple dedicated to Ram is the Ramkund temple at village Narol in Mendhar (Punch). We also come across several devotional folk songs dedicated to Visnu called *Vishan Patey*. The popularity of Vaishnavism in the Jammu region can further be estimated from the fact that the central inspiration of the Basohli school of paintings was Vaishnavism. The devotional poetry of the Bhakti Saints and mystics of the 16th century found visual expression in the Basohli paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Likewise, Saivism was one of the earliest and oldest faith in Jammu region. The temples and shrines dedicated to Shiva are scattered throughout the region. The oldest being the Sudhmahadev belonging to 4th-5th century. Other temples are Kameshwar temple Akhnoor (6th-7th century), Mahabilva Keshwar temple at Billawar constructed between 8th-12th century.

The sanskrit inscriptions found at Sudhmahadev and Kameshwar temple affirm that these were the popular places of pilgrimage and were visited by the people from different parts of India.

The cult of Shakti was equally popular in this region. Kali is the most venerated deity in the region. One of the oldest shrines is the temple of Bhadrakali in Bhadarwah. Goddess Sharika is another popular



Fig 9
Temple of
Sudhmahadev,
Jammu

deity. Her shrine is located halfway between Bhadarwah and Kishtwar. The temple is believed to have belonged to the 14th/15th century.



Name the popular Saiva shrines of Jammu.



Ramkund temple is situated at _____

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

In search of the True Lord

Here is a composition of Kabir:

*O Allah-Ram present in all living beings
Have mercy on your servants, O Lord!*

*Why bump your head on the ground,
Why bathe your body in water?
You kill and you call yourself "humble"
But your vices you conceal.*

*Twenty-four times the Brahmana keeps
the ekadasi fast
While the Qazi observes the Ramzan
Tell me why does he set aside the eleven
months
To seek spiritual fruit in the twelfth?*

*Hari dwells in the East, they say
And Allah resides in the West,
Search for him in your heart, in the heart
of your heart;
There he dwells, Rahim-Ram.*



Fig 10

Kabir working on a loom.



In what ways are the ideas in this poem similar to or different from those of Basavanna and Jalaluddin Rumi?

weavers settled in or near the city of Benares (Varanasi). We have little reliable information about his life. 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.

Fig. 11
Baba Guru Nanak
as a young man, in
discussion with
holy men.



A Closer Look: Baba Guru Nanak

We know more about Baba Guru Nanak (1469-1539) than about Kabir. Born at Talwandi (Nankana Sahib in Pakistan), he 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 Baba Guru Nanak was known as *dharmsal*. It is now known as Gurdwara.

Before his death in 1539, Baba 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 was a part of Baba Guru Nanak himself. Guru Angad compiled the compositions of Baba 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 Guru Tegh Bahadur’s son and successor, Guru Gobind Singh. It is now known as *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy scripture of the Sikhs.

The number of Baba Guru Nanak’s followers increased through the sixteenth century under his successors. They belonged to a number of castes but traders, agriculturists, artisans and craftsmen predominated. This may have something to do with Baba Guru Nanak’s insistence that his followers must be householders and should adopt productive and useful occupations. They 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 Harmandir 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



Fig. 12
An early manuscript
of the Guru Granth
Sahib.

1606. The Sikh movement began to get politicised 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 Baba Guru Nanak had a huge impact on this development from the very beginning. He emphasised 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

Martin Luther and the Reformation

The sixteenth century was a time of religious ferment in Europe as well. One of the most important leaders of the changes that took place within Christianity was Martin Luther (1483-1546). Luther felt that several practices in the Roman Catholic Church

went against the teachings of the Bible. He encouraged the use of the language of ordinary people rather than Latin, and translated the Bible into German. Luther was strongly opposed to the practice of “indulgences” or making donations to the Church so as to gain forgiveness from sins. His writings were widely disseminated with the growing use of the printing press. Many Protestant Christian sects trace their origins to the teachings of Luther.



Fig. 13

Title page of the German Bible translated by Martin Luther.

worship, honest living, and helping others. Thus, Baba Guru Nanak's idea of equality had social and political implications. This might partly explain the difference between the history of the followers of Baba 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 Baba Guru Nanak.



Imagine

You are attending a meeting where a saint is discussing the caste system. Relate the conversation.

Let's recall

1. Match the following:

The Buddha	<i>namghar</i>
Shankaradeva	worship of Vishnu
Nizamuddin Auliya	questioned social differences
Nayanars	Sufi saint
Alvars	worship of Shiva

2. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Shankara was an advocate of _____.
- (b) Ramanuja was influenced by the _____.
- (c) _____, _____ and _____ were advocates of Virashaivism.

KEYWORDS



Virashaivism

bhakti

Sufi

khanqah



- (d) _____ was an important centre of the Bhakti tradition in Maharashtra.
- (e) Sheikh Nur ud din is known as _____.
- (f) _____ was the last Mughal governor of Kashmir

- 3. Describe the beliefs and practices of the Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis.
- 4. What were the major ideas expressed by Kabir? How did he express these?
- 5. Sum up the role of Sufis and Rishis in promoting social harmony in Kashmir.

Let's understand

- 6. What were the major beliefs and practices of the Sufis?
- 7. Why do you think many teachers rejected prevalent religious beliefs and practices?
- 8. What were the major teachings of Baba Guru Nanak?
- 9. What are the important works of Suharwardi saints?

Let's discuss

10. For either the Virashaivas or the sants of Maharashtra, discuss their attitude towards caste.
11. Why do you think ordinary people preserved the memory of Mirabai?

Let's do

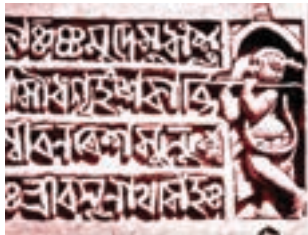
12. Find out whether in your neighbourhood there are any dargahs, gurudwaras or temples associated with the saints of the bhakti tradition in your neighbourhood. Visit any one of these and describe what you see and later.
13. For any of the saint-poets whose compositions have been included in this chapter, find out more about their work, noting down other poems. Find out whether these are sung, how they are sung, and what the poets wrote about.
14. There are several saint-poets whose names have been mentioned but their works have not been included in the chapter. Find out more about the language in which they composed, whether their compositions were sung, and what their compositions were about.

Glossary:

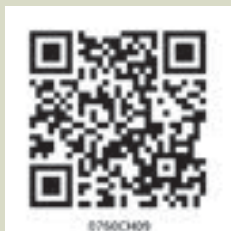
- (a) Silsila: Order
- (b) Khanqah: Hospice
- (c) Suba: Province
- (d) Karkhana: factory

Activity

- (a) Look at the Shawl lying with your mother or grandmother and write about it.
- (b) Make a visit to any historical monument and write about it



7 THE MAKING OF REGIONAL CULTURES



Find out how many states have been created in the last 10 years. Is each of these states a region?

One of the commonest ways of describing people is in terms of the language they speak. When we refer to a person as a Tamil or an Oriya, this usually means that he or she speaks Tamil or Oriya and lives in Tamil Nadu or Orissa. We also tend to associate each region with distinctive kinds of food, clothes, poetry, dance, music and painting. Sometimes we take these identities for granted and assume that they have existed from time immemorial. However, 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. As we will see, 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

Let us begin by looking at an example of the connection between language and region. 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.



Fig. 1
An early Kerala inscription, composed in Malayalam.

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.

Petroglyphs and Rock Sculptures in Ladakh

Many of the Buddhist rock reliefs have been found mostly along the ancient trade routes in Kargil, Leh and Nubra regions attributed to the period between 9th and early 11th century. Their style closely resembles that of Bronze images produced in Kashmir during the same period. This clearly indicates the art influences from Kashmir. Another prominent example is the Gigantic Maitreya rock relief at Mulbek (Mulbhe). In addition, we also find the rock carved five Dhyani Buddhas



Fig. 2 Rock Sculpture in Ladakh



Find out when the language(s) you speak at home were first used for writing.

Petroglyphs- Rocks carvings, especially a pre-historic one.

Panch Dhyani Buddhas or five Celestial Buddhas are

1. Vairochana
2. Akshobya
3. RatnaSambhava
4. Amitabha
5. Amogha Siddha

Manuscripts in Ladakh

Lama Wangchuk Tsultim (Balti Dachomba) 1129-1224 A.D from Baltistan was the first person to write in the Tibetan script. Purig, which is now better known as Kargil was another place where the then king, Choskyong Namgyal (who reigned during the 16th century) commissioned books in the Tibetan Scripts. Kunga Namgyal, the king of Ladakh in 1470 AD ordered to write bKagyur (Tripitaka) in Basgo Palace. From the period of 1470 to 1750 there were total of Ten bKagyurs written. The ink used to write these manuscripts was made of elements like gold, silver, copper, coral and turquoise.

Fig. 3
The icons of
Balabhadra, Subhadra
and Jagannatha, palm-
leaf manuscript,
Orissa.



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, in 1230, 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.



Fig. 4
*Jagannatha temple,
Puri.*

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. And of course, there are several peoples other than Rajputs who live in Rajasthan. However, the Rajputs are often recognised as contributing to the distinctive culture of Rajasthan.

These cultural traditions were closely linked with the ideals and aspirations of rulers. From about the eighth century, most of the present-day state of Rajasthan was ruled by various Rajput families. Prithviraj (Chapter 2) 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



Fig. 5
*Prince Raj Singh of
Bikaner.*

Map 1

Regions discussed in this chapter.



Find out whether there are traditions of heroes/heroines in your town or village. What are the qualities associated with them? In what ways are these similar to or different from the heroic ideals of the Rajputs?

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.

Did women find a place within these stories? Sometimes, they 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 *rasa 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 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.

Fig. 6
Dance class,
Lakshmana temple,
Khajuraho.



“Classical” dances

The question of defining any art form as “classical” is often quite complicated. Do we define something as classical if it deals with a religious theme? Or do we consider it classical because it appears to require a great deal of skill acquired through long years of training? Or is it classical because it is performed according to rules that are laid down, and variations are not encouraged? These are questions we need to think about. It is worth remembering that many dance forms that are classified as “folk” also share several of the characteristics considered typical of “classical” forms. So, while the use of the term “classical” may suggest that these forms are superior, this need not always be literally true.

Other dance forms that are recognised as classical at present are:

- Bharatanatyam (Tamil Nadu)
- Kathakali (Kerala)
- Odissi (Odisha)
- Kuchipudi (Andhra Pradesh)
- Manipuri (Manipur)



Find out more about any one of these dance forms.

Fig. 7
Kathak dancers, a
court painting.

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 who 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 (see also Chapter 10). 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 Western Himalayas (Himachal Pradesh and



Fig. 8
Akbar resting during a hunt, Mughal miniature.



Fig. 9
Radha with her
sakhis and
Krishna,
illustration to *Gita*
Govinda, Basohli,
1730

The *Pahari* school developed under the patronage of the rulers of Basohli, Chamba, Kulu, Mandi, Nurpur, Jammu, etc.

The *Pahari* school is one of the categories of Rajput school of painting, other being Rajasthani School

Jammu). There developed a school of painting called the *Pahari* school.

The *Pahari* school was particularly active from the later part of the 17th century to the 19th century. The most prominent was the Basohli school of painting. Basohli school flourished under the patronage of Raja Kirpal Dev

(1678-93) of Basohli. The charm of the Basohli school lies in its colour appeal. It is also known for its bold and intense style. The central inspiration of the Basohli school of painting is Vaishnavism. The most popular texts to be painted there are Jayadeva's *Gita-Govinda* and Bhanudatta's *Rasmanjari*.



Nadir Shah's invasion and the conquest of Delhi in 1739 resulted in the migration of Mughal artists



Fig. 11
*Krishna, Radha and
her companion, Pahari
miniature, Kangra.*

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

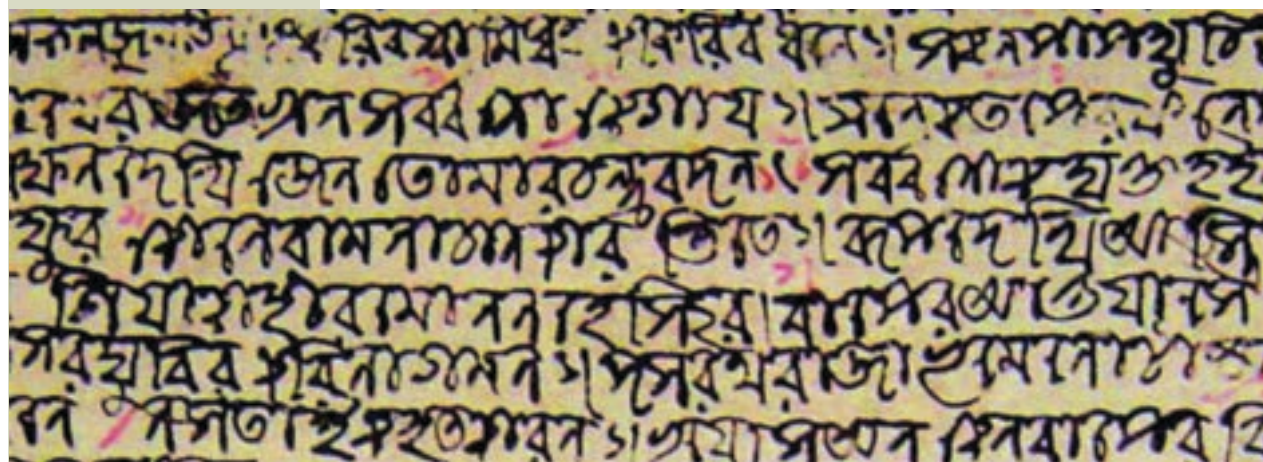
The Growth of a Regional Language

As we saw at the outset, we often tend to identify regions in terms of the language spoken by the people. So, we assume that people in Bengal always spoke Bengali. However, what is interesting is that while Bengali is now recognised as a language derived from

Fig. 12

A page from a palm-leaf manuscript of the earliest Bengali Ramayana.

Sanskrit, early Sanskrit texts (mid-first millennium BCE) suggest that the people of Bengal did not speak Sanskritic languages. How, then, did the new language emerge?



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 (Chapter 2). Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, Bengal was ruled by Sultans who were independent of the rulers in Delhi (Chapter 3). 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 (Chapter 8).

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.

Maynamati, Gopichandra and Dharma Thakur

The Naths were ascetics who engaged in a variety of yogic practices.

This particular song, which was often enacted, described how Maynamati, a queen, encouraged her son Gopichandra to adopt the path of asceticism in the face of a variety of obstacles.

Dharma Thakur is a popular regional deity, often worshipped in the form of a stone or a piece of wood.

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.



Why do you think the second category of texts was not written down?

Kavi Dattu, a 18th century poet has written many lyrics in Dogri, which have gone to folklore. Kavi Dattu also wrote Sanskrit works like *Krishan Mahima Stotra*.

Kavi Lakku, a people's poet from peasantry composed riddles in Dogri.

Ballad- a long song or poem which tells a story.

Pir

A Persian word meaning a spiritual guide.

Animism

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

Development of literature in Jammu:

In the Jammu region we come across a very old tradition of oral literature. There exists a rich treasure of Dogri literature belonging to the medieval period in the form of folk songs, folktales, proverbs, idioms, etc. The use of Dogri was mainly confined to light compositions like songs, *bhajans* and ballads like *Karakas*, *Bar*, *Bakh*, *Geetru*, etc. In addition, we also come across a multilingual literary tradition in Jammu. For instance, there are Sanskrit writings on *Dharmasastras*, *Jyotish*, etc. We also come across literary compositions of *Kavya* style in Braj Bhasha.

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 fisherfolk 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*.

This term 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. We have seen (Chapters 2 and 5)



Compare the temple shown here with that in Chapter 2.

Fig. 13 (left)
A double-roofed thatched hut.

Fig. 14 (right)
A four-roofed temple with a tower.

Fig. 15
Krishna with gopis, terracotta plaque from the Shyamaraya temple, Vishnupur.

that temples and other religious structures were often built by individuals or groups who were becoming powerful – to both demonstrate their power and proclaim their piety. 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 metal workers). 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. (Remember the “Bangla dome” in Chapter 5?) This led to the evolution of the typical Bengali style in temple architecture.

Fig. 16
Fish being
dressed for domestic
consumption, terracotta
plaque from the
Vishalakshi temple,
Arambagh.

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. Understandably, these two items figure prominently in the menu of even poor Bengalis. 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.

ELSEWHERE

Emergence of nation-states in Europe

Till the eighteenth century, people in Europe saw themselves as subjects of an empire, such as the Austro-Hungarian empire, or members of a church, such as the Greek Orthodox church. But, from the late eighteenth century, people also began to identify themselves as members of a community that spoke a common language, such as French or German. By the early nineteenth century, in Rumania school textbooks began to be written in Rumanian rather than in Greek, and in Hungary Hungarian was adopted as the official language instead of Latin. These and other similar developments created the consciousness among the people that each linguistic community was a separate nation. This feeling was strengthened by the movements for Italian and German unification in the late nineteenth century.

KEYWORDS

classical

miniature

pir

dialect

Imagine



You are a Rajput prince. How would you like your story to be told?

Let's recall

1. Match the following:

Anantavarman

Kerala

Jagannatha

Bengal

Mahodayapuram

Orissa

Lilatilakam

Kangra

Mangalakavya

Puri

Miniature

Kerala

2. What is Manipravalam? Name a book written in that language.
3. Who were the major patrons of Kathak?
4. What are the important architectural features of the temples of Bengal ?
5. Write a note on Basohli school of painting.
6. Write a note on the development of Dogri in Medieval Jammu?
7. Where are the Buddhist rock reliefs mainly found in Ladakh?

Let's discuss

8. Why did minstrels proclaim the achievements of heroes?
9. Why do we know much more about the cultural practices of rulers than about those of ordinary people?
10. Why did conquerors try to control the temple of Jagannatha at Puri?
11. Why were temples built in Bengal?

Let's do

12. Describe the most important features of the culture of your region, focusing on buildings, performing arts and painting.
13. Do you use different languages for (a) speaking, (b) reading, (c) writing? Find out about one major composition in language that you use and discuss why you find it interesting.
14. Choose one state each from north, west, south, east and central India. For each of these, prepare a list of foods that are commonly consumed, highlighting any differences and similarities that you notice.
15. Choose another set of five states from each of these regions and prepare a list of clothes that are generally worn by women and men in each. Discuss your findings.



8

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY POLITICAL FORMATIONS



Map 1
*State formations in the
eighteenth century.*

If you look at Maps 1 and 2 closely, you will see something significant happening in the subcontinent during the first half of the eighteenth century. Notice how 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. What these maps tell us is that political conditions in eighteenth-century India changed quite dramatically and within a relatively short span of time.

In this chapter we will read about the emergence of new political groups in the subcontinent during the first half of the eighteenth century – roughly from 1707, when Aurangzeb died, till the third battle of Panipat in 1761.



Map 2
British territories in the mid-eighteenth century.

The Crisis of the Empire and the Later Mughals

In Chapter 4 you saw how 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. Emperor Aurangzeb had depleted the military and financial resources of his empire by fighting a long war in the Deccan.

Under his successors, the efficiency of the imperial administration broke down. It became increasingly difficult for the later Mughal emperors to keep a check on their powerful *mansabdars*. Nobles appointed as governors (*subadars*) often controlled the offices of



See Chapter 4, Table 1. Which group of people challenged Mughal authority for the longest time in Aurangzeb's reign?

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. As the governors consolidated their control over the provinces, the periodic remission of revenue to the capital declined.

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. At other times they were attempts by powerful chieftains to consolidate their own positions. Mughal authority had been challenged by rebellious groups in the past as well. But these groups were now able to seize the economic resources of the region to consolidate their positions. The Mughal emperors after Aurangzeb were unable to arrest the gradual shifting of political and economic authority into the hands of provincial governors, local chieftains and other groups.

Rich harvests and empty coffers

The following is a contemporary writer's account of the financial bankruptcy of the empire:

The great lords are helpless and impoverished. Their peasants raise two crops a year, but their lords see nothing of either, and their agents on the spot are virtual prisoners in the peasants' hands, like a peasant kept in his creditor's house until he can pay his debt. So complete is the collapse of all order and administration that though the peasant reaps a harvest of gold, his lord does not see so much as a wisp of straw. How then can the lord keep the armed force he should? How can he pay the soldiers who should go before him when he goes out, or the horsemen who should ride behind him?

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. 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.

Nadir Shah attacks Delhi

The devastation of Delhi after Nadir Shah's invasion was described by contemporary observers. One described the wealth looted from the Mughal treasury as follows:

sixty lakhs of rupees and some thousand gold coins, nearly one crore worth of gold-ware, nearly fifty crores worth of jewels, most of them unrivalled in the world, and the above included the Peacock throne.

Another account described the invasion's impact upon Delhi:

(those) ... who had been masters were now in dire straits; and those who had been revered couldn't even (get water to) quench their thirst. The recluses were pulled out of their corners. The wealthy were turned into beggars. Those who once set the style in clothes now went naked; and those who owned property were now homeless ... The New City (Shahjahanabad) was turned into rubble. (Nadir Shah) then attacked the Old quarters of the city and destroyed a whole world that existed there ...



Fig. 1
A 1779 portrait of Nadir Shah.

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



Fig. 2
Farrukh Siyar
receiving a noble
in court.

possible humiliation came when two Mughal emperors, Farrukh Siyar (1713-1719) and Alamgir II (1754-1759) were assassinated, and two others Ahmad Shah (1748-1754) and Shah Alam II (1759-1816) were blinded by their nobles.

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 century, 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.

After the death of Aurangzeb, the imperial centre became weak. The governor in provinces started to declare their independence, Mughal governor of Kashmir Abul Qasim Khan also following the course, declared himself the independent ruler of Kashmir. Meanwhile, Ahmed Shah Abdali took full advantage of the disturbed and chaotic political situation of Kashmir. A large Afghan force defeated the Mughals & Kashmir came under the Afghan rule in 1753. Ahmad Shah Abdali & his successors ruled Kashmir through the governors for a period of 67

years. It remained part of Afghan Kingdom up to 1819.

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 (1724-1748), was one of the most powerful members at the court of the Mughal Emperor Farrukh Siyar. He was entrusted first with the governorship of Awadh, and later given charge of the Deccan. As the Mughal governor of the Deccan provinces, during 1720-22 Asaf Jah had already gained control over its political and financial administration. Taking subsequent 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-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah.

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-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah to control

Some Afghan governors of Kashmir:

Abdullah Khan, Nuruddin Khan Bamzai, Haji Karim Dad Khan, Azad Khan, Amir Khan Jawansher.

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 (see Map 2).

The Nizam's army

A description of the Nizam of Hyderabad's personal troopers in 1790:

...The Nizam has a swaree (sawari) of 400 elephants, several thousand of horsemen near his person who receive upwards 100 R(upees)s nominal pay (and) are extremely well mounted and richly caparisoned ...

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



Fig. 3
Burhan-ul-Mulk
Sa'adat Khan.



In trying to consolidate their rule, why did Mughal *subadars* also want to control the office of *diwan*?

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

Fig. 4
Altwardi Khan holding court.



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. First, 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. Second, 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. The third common feature in all these regional states was 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. Ajit Singh,

Many Rajput Chieftains built a number of forts on hill tops which became centres of power. With extensive fortifications, these majestic structures housed urban centres, palaces, temples, trading centres, water harvesting structures and another buildings. The Chittorgarh fort contained many water bodies varying from talabs (ponds) to kundis (wells), baolis (stepwells), etc.



Fig. 4b.
Chittorgarh Fort, Rajasthan

the ruler of Jodhpur, was also involved in the factional politics at the Mughal court.

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. These offices were renewed by Emperor Jahandar Shah in 1713. 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.

Many Rajput rulers had accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals but Mewar was the only Rajput state which defied Mughal authority. Rana Pratap ascended the throne at Mewar in 1572, with Udaipur and large part of Mewar under his control. A series of envoys were sent to the Rana to persuade him to accept Mughal suzerainty, but he stood his ground.



Fig. 4c
Jantar Mantar in Jaipur

Sawai Jai Singh, the ruler of Amber constructed five astronomical observatories, one each in Delhi, Jaipur, Ujjain, Mathura and Varanasi. Commonly known as Jantar Mantar, these observatories had various instruments to study heavenly bodies.



What is the *Khalsa*?
Do you recall reading about it in Chapter 8?

Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur

A description of Raja Jai Singh in a Persian account of 1732:

Raja Jai Singh was at the height of his power. He was the governor of Agra for 12 years and of Malwa for 5 or 6 years. He possessed a large army, artillery and great wealth. His sway extended from Delhi to the banks of the Narmada.



Fig. 5 Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur

Seizing Independence

The Sikhs

The organisation of the Sikhs into a political community during the seventeenth century (see Chapter 8) 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 *misl*s. 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 (*gurmata*s)". 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



Fig. 7
Sword of Maharaja
Ranjit Singh.

Some Sikh Governors of Kashmir:

*Dewan Chunni
Lal, Colonel
Mehan Singh and
Sheikh Ghulam
Mohiuddin*



Fig. 7a
Portrait of Shivaji

Towards the end of the 17th century a powerful state started emerging in the Deccan under the leadership of Shivaji which finally led to the establishment of the Maratha state. Shivaji was born to Shahji and Jija Bai at Shivneri in 1630. Under the guidance of his mother and his guardian Dada Konddev, Shivaji embarked on a career of conquest at a young age. The occupation of Javli made him the undisputed leader of the Mavala highlands which paved the way for further expansion. His exploits against the forces of Bijapur and the Mughals made him a legendary figure. He often resorted to guerrilla warfare against his opponents. By introducing an efficient administrative system supported by a revenue collection method based on chauth and sardeshmukhi he laid the foundations of a strong Maratha state.

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.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh took full advantage of weakening position of Afghan rule, after Abdali's death. The Pandits of Kashmir, prominent among them, Birbal Dhar invited Maharaja Ranjit Singh to end the miseries inflicted on them by the Afghans. The Maharaja conquered Kashmir and annexed it to Lahore Darbar in 1819 thus marking the beginning of Sikh rule that lasted up to 1846.

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 (see Map 1). 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.

Baji Rao I, also known as Baji Rao Ballal was the son of Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath. He was a great Maratha general who is credited to have expanded the Maratha kingdom beyond the Vindhyas and is known for his military campaigns against Malwa, Bundelkhand, Gujarat and the Portuguese.

Chauth

25 per cent of the land revenue claimed by zamindars. In the Deccan this was collected by the Marathas.

Sardeshmukhi

9-10 per cent of the land revenue paid to the head revenue collector in the Deccan.

The power of the Jats reached its zenith under Suraj Mal who consolidated the Jat state at Bharatpur (in present day Rajasthan) during 1756-1763. The areas under the political control of Suraj Mal broadly included parts of modern eastern Rajasthan, southern Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. Suraj Mal built a number of forts and palaces and the famous Lohagarh fort in Bharatpur is regarded as one of the strongest forts built in this region.

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 Ballabgarh 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. His son Jawahir Shah had 30,000 troops of his own and hired another 20,000 Maratha and 15,000 Sikh troops to fight the Mughals.

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 (see Figure 12 in Chapter 5 and Figure 12 in Chapter 9).

Fig. 8
Eighteenth-century
palace complex at Dig.
Note the "Bangla
dome" on the
assembly hall on the
roof of the building.



Rise of Jammu Kingdom

Amidst the chaos and anarchy in the Punjab plains, there was the rise of Jammu under Maharaja Ranjit Dev (1733-1782). Ranjit Dev was perhaps the most notable ruler to rule Jammu. He was a man of great ability and administrative talent. He established his supremacy over all the twenty-two hill-principalities between Ravi and Chenab and it was in his reign that the popular saying arose "among the twenty-two hill states", 'Jammu is head.'

Ranjit Dev not only expanded and consolidated his territories, but he also established peace and prosperity in his Kingdom. Under him Jammu came to be known as 'Abode of peace'. As a result of the chaos and anarchy in the plains, many of the merchants, artisans and political refugees found asylum in Jammu and Ranjit Dev provided equal security to all irrespective of their caste, religion and creed. Ranjit Dev was a secular and just ruler. He gave full religious freedom to all of his subjects. He is also known for his social reforms. He took effective measures to eradicate Sati and female infanticide from Jammu Hills.

It is said that on the approach of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afghan ruler in Punjab, Muin ul Mulk, the Mughal Governor of Punjab sent his mother and family to Jammu under the protection of Ranjit Dev.

Among the other political refugees who took the shelter in Jammu were Malika Zamani, the queen of Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah and Dalpat Rai, son of the Diwan of Mughal governor Yahya Khan.

Sati- practice of Widows burning themselves on the funeral pyre of their husband.

Ladakh in the beginning of the 18th Century

In the beginning of 18th century, Ladakh was ruled by King Nima Namgyal (1694-1720). His reign is significant in many aspects. He occupies a special place among the Kings of Ladakh because of his contributions in the administration of Justice. His re-organisation of judiciary resulted into a sharp decline of crime, such as robbery and theft etc. In the cultural field, the King encouraged printing and many printing blocks of some devotional works were carved during his period. He also erected many

Mani Wall is a wall made of stone, inscribed with a Lamaist Prayer.

Lamas-Buddhist Monks.

images of Buddha, Mani-walls and Prayer wheels. He was a pious King, who presented to all monasteries of Tibet, beginning with Lhasa, gold water and sacrificial lamps. During his reign, the relations between Ladakh and Bhutan also strengthened. Early in the 18th century, a Bhutanese scholar, Seula Byams-Mgon arrived in Ladakh. He was appointed as the Court Chaplin of the Nima Namgyal. Also, during his reign in the year 1715, the Jesuits Desideri visited Ladakh and was well received by the King, Nima Namgyal. Desideri has given a very graphic account of Ladakh, of the court of King Nima and of the Lamas.

ELSEWHERE

The French Revolution (1789-1794)

In the various state systems of eighteenth-century India, the common people did not enjoy the right to participate in the affairs of their governments. In the Western world, this was the situation until the late eighteenth century. The American (1776-1781) and French Revolutions challenged the social and political privileges enjoyed by the aristocrats.

During the French Revolution, the middle classes, peasants and artisans fought against the special rights enjoyed by the clergy and the nobility. They believed that no group in society should have privileges based on birth. Rather, people's social position must depend on merit. The philosophers of the French Revolution suggested that there be equal laws and opportunities for all. They also held that the authority of the government should come from the people who must possess the right to participate in its affairs. Movements such as the French and American Revolutions gradually transformed subjects into citizens.

The ideas of citizenship, nation-state and democratic rights took root in India from the late nineteenth century.

Imagine



You are a ruler of an eighteenth-century kingdom. Tell us about the steps you would take to make your position strong in your province, and what opposition or problems you might face while doing so.

Let's recall

1. Match the following:

<i>subadar</i>	a revenue farmer
<i>faujdar</i>	a high noble
<i>ijaradar</i>	provincial governor
<i>misl</i>	Maratha peasant warriors
<i>chauth</i>	a Mughal military commander
<i>kunbis</i>	a band of Sikh warriors
<i>umara</i>	tax levied by the Marathas

2. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Aurangzeb fought a protracted war in the _____.
- (b) *Umara* and *jagirdars* constituted powerful sections of the Mughal _____.
- (c) Asaf Jah founded the Hyderabad state in _____.
- (d) The founder of the Awadh state was _____.
- (e) Under Ranjit Dev Jammu was called _____.

3. State whether true or false:

- (a) Nadir Shah invaded Bengal.
- (b) Sawai Raja Jai Singh was the ruler of Indore.
- (c) Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth Guru of the Sikhs.
- (d) Poona became the capital of the Marathas in the eighteenth century.

KEYWORDS



subadari
dal khalsa
misl
faujdari
ijaradari
chauth
sardeshmukhi



4. What were the offices held by Sa'adat Khan?
5. Write down the achievements of Ranjit Dev?
6. Write down the achievements of King Nima Namgyal.

Let's discuss

7. Why did the Nawabs of Awadh and Bengal try to do away with the *jagirdari* system?
8. How were the Sikhs organised in the eighteenth century?
9. Why did the Marathas want to expand beyond the Deccan?
10. What were the policies adopted by Asaf Jah to strengthen his position?
11. Do you think merchants and bankers today have the kind of influence they had in the eighteenth century?
12. Did any of the kingdoms mentioned in this chapter develop in your state? If so, in what ways do you think life in the state would have been different in the eighteenth century from what it is in the twenty-first century?

Let's do

13. Find out more about the architecture and culture associated with the new courts of any of the following Awadh, Bengal or Hyderabad.
14. Collect popular tales about-rulers from any one of the following groups of people: the Rajputs, Jats, Sikhs or Marathas.