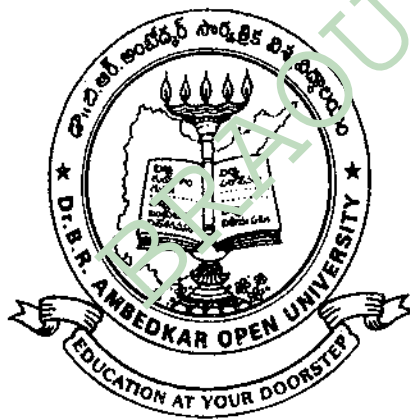


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# INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE UPTO 1526



Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY  
HYDERABAD

2004

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## INTRODUCTION

The study of history is not only important, but also essential to the understanding of our situation and even of ourselves. It enables man to understand the society of the past and to increase his mastery over the society of the present. As pointed out by E.H. Carr, History is indeed, an unending dialogue between the present and the past. The study of ancient history reveals the efforts of our ancestors to evolve from the state of being nomadic, food-gathering tribals to that of becoming members of a settled society, and ultimately, of civilization.

This volume aims at bringing out the importance, meaning, scope and sources of history and attempts a critical evaluation of the geographical influences on India culture and society, features of the Harappan and Vedic civilizations, the emergence and the impact of the two reformist religions of Jainism and Buddhism and finally, the rise and fall of different empires starting from that of the Nandas and ending with that of the Lodis, along with their political, social, economic, religious and cultural contributions. It essentially focuses on the play of socio-economic and cultural factors in ancient and early medieval Indian history, besides of course, bringing out the supporting political history of various dynasties, both native and foreign, that reigned in North and South India during the period. In a nutshell, the book traces the sweep of Indian History and Culture from the pre-historic times 1526 A.D. which marked the establishment of the Mughal rule in India.

This work deals with the topics in Indian History and culture upto 1526 A.D. that are included in the syllabus for the Second year of B.A. Course offered by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. The syllabus for the sake of convenience is divided into four block twenty five units. The units are prepared by specialists in accordance with a format so designed as to enable the student to read and understand them without much difficulty. Each unit begins with a statement of its objectives. To enable the students to check their understanding of the subject in each unit questions under the heading 'Check Your Progress' are given. Students should write the answers for those questions in the space provided in the book. Writing the answers for those questions will enable the students to have a good understanding of the subject. At the end of each unit, the answers for the questions are also given under the heading 'Check Your Progress : Answers'. The important points in each unit are given at the end of each unit with the title 'Let Us sum Up'. The list of books for further reading, the assignments which the students of Open University have to do and the examination model paper for the entire syllabus are given at the end of the volume. Technical terms with which the student may not generally be familiar, are given at the end of the book, under the head 'Glossary'.

The course material is now revised and brought up-to-date. The University hopes that the course material now presented in a revised form will be more useful for the students and that it will help them to learn the subject better.

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## **BLOCK - I : INDIA FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE 6TH C.B.C.**

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This block consists of nine Units. By way of introduction of the subject, Units 1 & 2 explain about the meaning, scope and importance of History, and its relation with other Social Sciences. As environment plays a vital role in shaping the historical developments of the country, this has been dealt with in Unit - 3. Students of Indian History have to be fully aware of the various sources that help in its reconstruction. Hence, these are discussed in Unit-4.

Man's life, civilization and culture evolved through the Stone Age, Chalcolithic (copper and bronze) and Iron or Metal Age. Highly developed urban life, establishment of vast empires, and remarkable reformation in the field of religion, have been witnessed. These have been traced in Units - 5 to 9.

This Block and its Units, thus, provide strength, basis and meaning for the units that follow.

BRAOU

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## **UNIT - 1: WHAT IS HISTORY ? DEFINITION, SCOPE**

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### **Contents**

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Meaning of History
- 1.3 The Traditional view of History
- 1.4 Chinese view of History
- 1.5 Early Indian notion of History
- 1.6 Influence of Muslim Historiography
- 1.7 Early Greek, Roman and Christian ideas on History
- 1.8 Development of History - writing from the 16th to the 20th century
- 1.9 Evolution of Indian Historiography
- 1.10 Scope of History
- 1.11 Philosophy of History
- 1.12 Historical Method
- 1.13 Theories of History : The Idealist school
- 1.14 The Positivist conception of History
- 1.15 Nature of Historical Explanation
- 1.16 Objectivity and subjectivity in History
- 1.17 Let us sum up
- 1.18 Check your Progress : Answers
- 1.19 Examination Model Questions
- 1.20 Books for further reading

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### **1.0 OBJECTIVES**

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A study of this Unit should enable you to :

1. know the meaning of History;
2. have an understanding of the various views and theories of History;
3. realise the scope of History; and
4. grasp what is meant by subjectivity and objectivity in History.

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### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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History has intimate relation with man and society. It keeps constant and close track of the varied developments that relate to them. It makes no distinction between good or bad, and great or mean events. In other words, it acts as the true repository or store house of the political, economic, social, cultural and administrative developments that man and society tried to evolve in different regions and periods.

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## **1.2 MEANING OF HISTORY**

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It is very necessary to understand the meaning of History for having a proper understanding of the course of our Indian History. We should not only know the meaning of the word 'History', but also trace the development of the discipline of History. Every one reads History as a part of social studies at the school level, and studies History as a discipline at the collegiate and post-graduate level. One thing that deserves to be noted in this connection is that, History, as a discipline of study, is barely two hundred years old. What we study as History today, was based on the Western intellectual tradition. This idea of History has been adopted and accepted by modern scholars of Asia and Africa. We should not be under the wrong impression that human societies did not know of History prior to this development. It is enough, if we know that they understood History differently from our understanding of History. Now, let us make a beginning to know how human societies viewed history in pre-modern times.

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## **1.3 THE TRADITIONAL VIEW OF HISTORY**

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The popular meaning of the word 'History' is 'a narrative of past events'. It simply means that events that took place in the past are described in a narrative way, and so what has happened in the past in a prescribed geographical area at a particular time, has become the content of History. We all know that, in evolution of human society from the earliest times, primitive tribes played a crucial role in transmitting their way of life through oral tradition from generation to generation. Thus, a sense of historical knowledge of the past developed. While transmitting and preserving traditions, every primitive tribe tried to offer its explanation of the world from its own view point. Though this type of knowledge may be regarded as historical, it lacked accurate chronology or dating, and details of causation which are the vitals of the modern concept of History. Yet, these historical traditions cannot be rejected, because they reflect the historical consciousness of the tribal societies. We can, thus, believe that every human society in pre-modern times had its own conception of History.

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## **1.4 CHINESE VIEW OF HISTORY**

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You are aware of the fact that China was one of the old civilized societies, and it can claim the oldest continuous historical tradition on earth. From 2nd century B.C. till the 18th century, China had its own tradition of historical writing, and since 18th century it was exposed to the Western intellectual tradition. The Chinese term for History is 'Shih' and it means recording of past events. As the Chinese are ethnocentric people, they are primarily concerned with the history of the Middle Kingdom. The Chinese History revolves round the imperial court, as every dynasty that ruled China had a history office, and consequently they produced standard histories and official compilations. These historical works were supplemented by biographies that were prepared by officials and non-officials using non-official sources. The Chinese view of History was largely governed by the world view of the Chinese intellectuals and the views of Confucius, who advocated that moral factor in the affairs of men should also be a part of History that was prepared by them.

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## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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What is the central idea of the Chinese view of History ?

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### 1.5 EARLY INDIAN NOTION OF HISTORY

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Now let us take up the early Indian conception of History. There is a view that the ancient Indians had no sense of History, and as such, they did not produce records of their History. This view is partially true because they did not record political events of the past independently; but, it is also a fact that they recorded some aspects of the past which they believed to be worth preserving for future generations. Genealogies or lists of order of dynastic succession were preserved, and, legends or tales about valuable ideas were left as a legacy or inheritance of Indian tradition by our ancestors. Ancient Indian view of History is revealed in the textual material, called the *Itihasa - Purana* tradition, whose writers were the literate Brahmin groups. Their idea was not to record in detail the events of the immediate past. They included political details such as the name of the dynasties, the number of years they ruled in a larger scheme of their world view based on their concept of time, which is based on Four Ages or *Chatur Yuga* concept. Their concept of time was cyclical or repetitive in nature, and they regarded that political changes do not matter much in the understanding of the society and its state of moral values.

We notice a change in the conception of Buddhists, compared to the Hindu view of History. The Buddhists took care to maintain chronicles or records of monastic or religious order, and chronicles like the *Dipavamsa*, *Mahavamsa* stand testimony to this fact. Another tendency that we notice is that of preparation of Court chronicles and historical biographies of rulers after 6th century A.D. These chronicles and historical biographies display historical sense to a great extent. However, it is only in the 12th century A.D. that we have a real historical chronicle in Kalhana's *Rajatarangani*.

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### 1.6 INFLUENCE OF MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY

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In the evolution of Indian view of History, Muslim rule in Northern India for a period of six centuries from the 13th century to the 18th century, was an important landmark. The Muslim writing of History in India was influenced by the Islamic Historiography as developed in West Asia and Persia. This tradition was based on the linear or measured concept of time which viewed the birth of Prophet Mohammad as the end and fulfilment of a historical process that had started with the beginning of the world in time. As the Muslims gave utmost importance to Prophet Mohammad's principles, the years of the era of *Hijrah* was the starting point for their historical writing. The Muslim historian gave importance to political history, restricting their scope to administrative and military deeds. They also produced biographies of the

individual rulers in the background of their dynastic rule. The most outstanding Muslim historians of this age are Ziauddin Barani and Abul Fazl. The Muslim historians undoubtedly enriched the view of History of Indians in the Middle Ages.

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## **1.7 THE EARLY GREEK, ROMAN AND CHRISTIAN IDEAS ON HISTORY**

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So far, we acquainted ourselves with the view of History of the Chinese and Indians upto the beginning of modern times. Now, let us make an attempt to know the view of History of the early Greeks and Romans along with that of Christian view of History. It is very interesting to note that 'inquiry' is the root meaning of the word 'History' in Greek. This exhibits the logical attitude of the early Greeks. This logical attitude makes their historical writings to be more reliable. Herodotus, who belonged to sixth century B.C. is appropriately recognized as the 'Father of History'. Besides him, Thucydides stands as a very important Greek historian. The Romans further developed Greek historiographical traditions by applying their own literary techniques, and by using Latin to write Roman History. Most famous Roman historians were Livy, Pliny and Tacitus. The Graeco-Roman historians concentrated their attention on the imperial household, and on intellectual section of society. The early Christian historians questioned the validity of Graeco-Roman view of History by adding a new dimension of divine plan. They gave emphasis to truth, and saw historical process as a battle between good and bad. They also, like Islamic historians, believed in the development of history as a linear or measured time process that would end in the Day of Judgement.

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## **1.8 DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORY - WRITING FROM THE 16TH TO THE 20TH CENTURY**

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By the time we come to Middle Ages, the writing of History was taken up by the churchmen of religious orders in Europe. It was mostly chronological or date-wise narrative of events, but we notice the discussion of events as to why and how they took place besides what happened. Modern age is characterised by Renaissance and Reformation in Europe. Influenced by Renaissance and Reformation ideas, historical writing became more critical and comprehensive in scope. History, though remained a branch of literature, broadened its scope by writing about the larger concerns of the society and the State. In the 17th century, besides taking interest in remote studies, historians began to write about political as well as religious aspects. From the beginning of the enlightenment of the 18th century, we notice a marked change in the view of History and historical writing. Instead of simply narrating what happened in the past, historians began to apply rationalism in analysing and understanding the past. The French Revolution gave a new direction to the historical probing. It was from the 19th century, that the new methods of interpretation of historical facts began. The credit goes to the German historian Leopold Von Ranke who initiated the exclusive study of original documents with critical assessment and giving of truthful pictures without any subjectivity, bias and prejudice. Though there was criticism against his method of too much of reliance on actual facts, yet his impact on the writing of History was of considerable significance. By the time we come to the 20th century, though facts are considered to be essentially sacred, interpretation of historical process became the dominant view of history. By the 20th century, the scope of historical writing became very wide, and, as a result, new specialisations of history like Economic History, Social History, Cultural History, Literary History, Diplomatic History, History of

Science and Technology and Intellectual History began to develop. Besides these specialisations, we have different schools of historiography like Annals, Marxist, Non-Marxist and post-modern in general. Coming to the study of Indian History proper, we have Nationalist, Imperialist, Utilitarian, Marxist and Secular, and non-Marxist schools which try to interpret the historical process of Indian society, polity and economy. With this back-drop, let us try to know the evolution of Indian Historiography in the modern times.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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State how the writings of history developed from the 16th to 20th century ?

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### 1.9 EVOLUTION OF INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

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You are already introduced to the nature of ancient Indian Historiography, and how *Itihas Purana* tradition influenced the writing of History in India. We also know that for the Buddhist period, the Buddhist chronicles help us to reconstruct the history of India at that specific time. By the 6th century A.D., we notice the emergence of historical biographies that were written by court poets depicting the heroic deeds and achievements of particular rulers. By the time we come to 12th century A.D., Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* appeared on the Indian soil, which can be considered as a historical source material. We also know the impact of Islamic historiography of West Asia and Persia on Indian historical writings between the 12th and 18th centuries.

The Modern Indian historiography can be studied under the headings of:

- a) Colonial Indian Historiography ;
- b) Nationalist Indian Historiography ;
- c) Scientific and Marxist Historiography ;
- d) Non-Marxist Historiography ; and
- e) Communalist Interpretation of Indian History.

Let us try to know in a nutshell about the various trends of Indian historiography in modern times.

The advent of the Europeans like the Portuguese, Dutch, French and British as traders, and later British becoming the rulers, brought about the radical change in the art of writing of History of India. The European historical writing was based not only on the original source material pertaining to the administrative and military aspects of the earlier rulers, but also day-to-day correspondence between the colonial masters also. Indian historical writing was also influenced by colonial and imperialist ideology. Among the colonialist and imperialist ideologies, we notice, in particular, two trends - one, those who sympathetically understood

and appreciated Indian culture and History, and they are called "Orientalists". Of them, the most important are Sir William Jones, Alexander Cunningham and Elphinstone. The other group believed that the British rule was divinely established to save India from the barbaric civilisation that existed in India. In this context, 'History of British India' that was written by a Utilitarian by faith - James Stuart Mill - and published in 1818, is an important landmark in the development of Indian historiography of modern times. It is he who divided the History of India as Hindu, Muslim and British periods, and thereby laid a foundation for the communal division of Indian History. Mill in his book strongly criticised Hindu culture as anti-rational and anti-progressive and backward in nature. Christian preachers - Shore and Grant - indirectly supported British rule as divinely arranged, and tried to change Indian society by conversions, and by introducing Western education. Besides these two groups of historians, Alfred Lyall, Henry Maine, Stephen, William Hunter believed that the British rule in India was the result of Oriental and Western cultures. Next to Mill, the most influential administrator and historian was V.A. Smith. Though he made an exhaustive study of Indian History and culture from a critical perspective, the visible aspect of his research was to trace the best of Indian culture to the impact of Greek culture. Thus, his approach was Western culture - oriented. Later historians like P.E. Roberts, T.G.P. Spear, C.H. Philips, Bahadur followed in Ranke's foot steps, and examined critically the source material, and tried to be objective in writing the History of Modern India.

Till the 19th century, the response of Indians to the provocative colonialist and imperialist historiography was nothing but silent acceptance. Thanks to the Renaissance spirit that was spearheaded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the Father of Modern India, India's education on Western lines began to respond to the challenges of imperialist historiography. To this group belong Raja Rajendra Lal Mitra, Ramesh Chandra Dutt, R.G. Bhandarkar and Raychoudhuri. These historians tried to prove that the British approach or understanding was very defective and biased. By using rationalist yard stick to probe deep into the original sources, and contradicting strongly the Imperialist school, Rajanarain Bose, Chandranath Basu, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Avinash Chandra Dasa, Kasi Prasad Jayaswal, Balagangadhara Tilak, V.D. Suktankar made a serious attempt to glorify Indian culture, and they tried to prove that Indian culture was the best compared to Western culture. Keeping themselves aloof from the ideology of nationalist outlook, and making themselves free from enmity towards the British approach, relying only on available source material, Jadunath Sarkar, S.N. Sen, Shafat Ahmad Khan, G.S. Sardesai, S. Krishna Swamy Ayyangar, Srinivasachari attempted the writing of Indian History on Ranke's model. Thus, the pre-Independence History writing in India was influenced by two trends - colonial and imperialist and nationalist response.

In the post-Independence India, attempts are being made by Marxist historians to apply Marxist methodology to understand the historical process. Of this group of Historians, Rajani Palme Dutt, Hiren Mukherjee, S.A. Dange, Muhammad Habib, S. Nurul Hasan, Irfan Habib, D.D. Kosambi, S. Gopal, Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma are the most important.

Another trend we notice in the modern times, is the attempt to study Indian history from the perspective of religion and caste. Religious perspective of the study of History is called communal perspective of history. Another tendency is to study History of India from the perspective of caste-dominance and oppressed castes. This type of study of History poses a problem to our hard-earned Independence by dividing Indian society into warring communities.

Realising the inherent danger of such tendencies taking deep root in the minds, study of History should be done without prejudice, bias and subjectivity.

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### **1.10 SCOPE OF HISTORY**

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Till the beginning of the 18th century, the scope of History was restricted to the simple narrative of past events or recording of past events as they occurred in the past. Though there are different models of historical writing, almost all the historians adopted the method of narration of the past events, and, as such, happens to be the legacy of European and American historiographical tradition. Today the scope of history is widened by taking into consideration the totality of human actions in space and time. It is further believed that the scope of history covers not only what has happened in the past, but also how man, the maker of History, interprets the past. As such, the Oxford English Dictionary defines the meaning of the word 'History' as 'a written narrative constituting a continuous methodical record, in order of time, of public events, especially those connected with a particular country, people or individual'. Now, a great debate is going on whether collection of facts or interpretation of facts is to be given importance to understand the historical process. This debate is the result of the Historical Method. In the last two centuries, the Philosophers and the practising historians are seized with this problem. Now, let us understand what is meant by the Philosophy of History and the Method of History.

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### **1.11 THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY**

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The term 'Philosophy of History' primarily is concerned with the explanation of the Meaning and Scope of History, and the fundamental laws that influence historical change. It is mostly the concern of scholars and philosophers who look at the course of human history as a whole. Philosophy of History got recognition as a specialised subject of interest with the publication of Header's *Ideas for Philosophical History of Mankind* published in 1784. Hegel's *Philosophy of History* is the most famous and an important work in this area. With this understanding of Philosophy of History, now let us take up Method in History.

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### **1.12 HISTORICAL METHOD**

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In the evolution or pursuit of knowledge, the 17th century is an important landmark. In that century, Francis Bacon, Descartes and others tried to apply methods of science in the pursuit of understanding knowledge proper. In the next century, questions about the nature of historical method were raised when there was an attempt to compare History with Natural Sciences. In the 19th century, the methods of Science began to be applied to the study of History. Thus, began the debate as to how far History is a Science, and if so, whether History is an exact Science or an inexact Science. This debate revolves around the applicability of scientific method to study the process of historical change of a society. As a result of this debate, there arose two different theories of historical thinking - the Idealist School and the Positivist School.

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### **1.13 THEORIES OF HISTORY : THE IDEALIST SCHOOL**

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At the end of the 19th century, the Idealist school began, and it took shape through the writings of Benedetto Croce and William Dilthey who advocated that History, as a discipline,

should have its own methods of inquiry, different from Natural Sciences method. They opined that it should be the primary objective of the historians to find out what happened in the past and why it happened. They further opined that historical events in themselves were particular, unique and unrepeatable. R.G. Collingwood, the British Philosopher - historian also pointed out that the essential task of the historian is to 'rethink' and 'reenact' in his mind about the past by using imagination, which is absent in the Scientific method. To the Idealist, the process of imaginative reliving is very central.

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#### **1.14 THE POSITIVIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY**

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The Positivist school strongly believes that all branches of knowledge depend on the same procedure of scientific method of observation, conceptual reflection and verification. But, there were differences among the Positivists. Auguste Comte and his followers agreed that History could be raised to the level of Science by formulating the laws of History, but Karl Popper and others of recent times believe that History is less than a Science, and History could not be placed as high as Physics. Today almost all agree that History may not be an exact Science like Physics, but can be called an inexact Science like Meteorology because, even if we cannot predict exactly what will happen, we can make generalisations based on the observation and systematically arranged knowledge. It is now accepted by all that History is a Social Science, and this leads to the debate on the nature of Historical Explanation.

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#### **1.15 NATURE OF HISTORICAL EXPLANATION**

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An understanding of the nature of Historical Explanation is necessary as the Scope of History consists of knowing not only what has happened in the past, but also why it happened. The explanation as to why it happened requires application of reason to the facts, and establishment of cause and action for what has happened. Thus, historian tries to establish facts by analysing reasons for what has happened. As human behaviour is affected by accidents, it is very difficult to make generalisation on accepted deductive or derived logic. So, we have to bear in mind that what the historian does in his Historical Explanation is not to make general laws that are universally applicable, but tries to illuminate particular situations.

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#### **1.16 OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY IN HISTORY**

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As the primary Scope of History is explanation of the past on facts, the problem of objectivity and subjectivity does not arise. It is well known that facts by themselves cannot speak. It is the historian who chooses facts having historical significance and speaks. While so explaining the historical phenomena, the element of subjectivity comes in. Subjectivity or subjective approach is nothing but looking and explaining historical process from historian's view based on his personal prejudices or interests. This is mostly reflected in interpretative aspect of a fact, event, situation or condition. As such, Croce and Collingood view that Historian's present thoughts would 'recreate' past on the basis of his religious opinion, political beliefs, moral and social ideals. If a historian does it curiously, it becomes propaganda. The historian has to be careful not to look partisan, and effort must be made to make it less subjective. It is also said that an element of subjectivity is inevitable. But, E.H. Carr does not agree with this view. Carr states appropriately that "History is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, and an unending dialogue between the present

and the past". However, as a historian tries to gather all facts about the totality of human action, some will remain beyond his grasp, and as a result, the picture the historian tries to present will remain incomplete or inaccurate. So, the drawing of a total picture of any society of particular space and time is a constant process.

We may conclude by stating that objectivity in scientific sense is unattainable, as so far we have not developed a universally accepted set of principles of interpretation. As such, it is difficult to have a universally acceptable definition of History.

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### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 3**

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Is objectivity attainable in History ?

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### **1.17 LET US SUM UP**

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To sum up, in this Unit an attempt was made :

1. to explain the Meaning and Scope of History ;
2. different theories and views of History ;
3. development of History writing between 16th and 20th centuries ;
4. evolution of Indian historiography ; and
5. Philosophy of History, Method in History, Historical Explanation, and Subjectivity and Objectivity in History

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### **1.18 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS**

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1. The central idea of the Chinese view of History was that, from an ideal state in the beginning, things deteriorated and conditions became worse in course of time.
2. In the 16th century, historical writing became more critical and comprehensive. In the 18th century, a more rational outlook was adopted by the historians for understanding the past. In the 19th century, Ranke, a German historian, attempted to make History into an objective study by using exclusively original documents. In the 20th century, historical issues came to be interpreted in materialistic and economic terms due to the influence of Marx.
3. Objectivity in History, in the scientific sense, is impossible. An element of subjectivity will always be there in historical writings. However, to the extent possible, subjectivity should be eliminated to make History objective.

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## 1.19 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Trace how the writing of history evolved during Ancient and Medieval periods in India.
2. Briefly describe the changes that historiography underwent in Europe during Classical, Mediaeval and Modern Ages.
3. What are the salient features of the various schools that preached about the Philosophy of History?

### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. How did the tribal societies view their past ?
2. What were the methods and views that the Chinese adopted to write History ?
3. Assess the Scope of History today.
4. Explain the nature of Historical Explanation
5. To what extent can History be subjective and objective ?

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## 1.20 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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- |                      |   |   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Carr, E.H.        | : | <i>What is History?</i>                 |
| 2. Collingwood, R.G. | : | <i>Idea of History</i>                  |
| 3. Gardiner, P.E.    | : | <i>Theories of History</i>              |
| 4. Karl Popper       | : | <i>Poverty of Historicism</i>           |
| 5. Walsh, W.H.       | : | <i>Philosophy of History</i>            |
| 6. ----              | : | <i>Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences</i> |
| 7. ----              | : | <i>Encyclopaedia Britannica</i>         |

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## UNIT - 2 : IMPORTANCE OF HISTORY : ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

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### Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Social Sciences Method - Influence of Physics, Biology and Geology
- 2.3 Hierarchy of Social Sciences
- 2.4 Importance of the study of History
- 2.5 History and other Social Sciences
- 2.6 Scientific History
- 2.7 Traditional History
- 2.8 Use of different methods in Social Sciences
- 2.9 Influence of other Social Sciences on History
- 2.10 Influence of Sociology, Anthropology and Psychology on Social History
- 2.11 Various influences on Economic History
- 2.12 Impact of Max Weber and Karl Marx
- 2.13 Need for inter - disciplinary approach
- 2.14 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.15 Check Your Progress - Answers
- 2.16 Examination Model Questions
- 2.17 Books For Further Reading

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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The study of this Unit should enable you to know :

1. the importance and value of the study of History;
2. different types or branches of History; and
3. the relationship between History and other Social Sciences

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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Man and society, since the earliest times, are associated with vast and varied activities in the different parts of the known world. As History deals with them, different branches or specialised studies such as Economic History, Social History etc., have emerged. Similarly, as History is one of the Social Sciences which are interdependent, the extent and the nature of mutual impact among them also needs to be fully understood. History, being concerned with the totality of human action, the importance of its study has got to be clearly realized.

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## **2.2 SOCIAL SCIENCES METHOD : INFLUENCE OF PHYSICS, BIOLOGY AND GEOLOGY**

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In the course of the 19th century, the concept of Social Sciences with History as one of the Social Sciences emerged as a part of total knowledge of mankind, acquired and accrued in the course of human living on earth. At the same time, efforts were initiated to apply the scientific method of nature - study to the study of human affairs. The earliest influence that can be witnessed on the study of Social Sciences was that of Physics. Influenced by the laws of Newton, the society was conceived as a machine. This led to the publication of *Social Statistics* in 1851 by Herbert Spencer. However, the theory of evolution propounded by Charles Darwin revolutionised thinking in the Social Sciences. Further, research in the Science of Geology also brought History into the fold of Science. The theory of evolution brought the idea of progress into human affairs, and, in particular, in the branch of History. The first among the Social Sciences to formulate laws was Political Economy. The credit goes to Adam Smith, Malthus and Marx for formulating the laws of market, law of population, and economic law of motion of modern society respectively.

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## **2.3 HIERARCHY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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In course of time, there developed a hierarchy of status among the Social Sciences. The Greeks who made a systematic study, gave first place to the study of Political Science because it revolved round the study of *polis*, their highest self-governing institution. But, by the 16th century, the study of Economics replaced Political Science as the first of the Social Sciences. History occupies the next place to political Science and Economics. It was also considered as part of the Humanities, but by the application of scientific method of analysis to study human behaviour, History is given a place among the Social Sciences. Anthropology and Sociology are of recent origin in the hierarchy of Social Sciences. Sociology is considered to be the foremost of Social Sciences now. Anthropology is nothing but the study of physical, cultural, social and economic aspects of primitive man who lived in tribes. It is no exaggeration to state that all the Social Sciences, in one way or the other, depended on History, as History is a totality of actions, aspirations and ways of living of human beings, recorded in a systematic chronological order in space and time.

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## **2.4 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF HISTORY**

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Having said that all the Social Sciences are dependent on History, and History is the repository of totality of human life, let us try to understand the importance and value of History. For all the Social Scientists, the object and subject of study is the society, and man as a member of the society. Every Social Scientist, while specialising in his own field of study of society, has naturally to follow the historical method to cull out facts about his study. It may be politics, culture, economy, society, religion, or intellectual ideas. The information furnished by the historian, is important for them. Without adequate factual History, nothing can be positively said about any phase or aspect of society. In that way, History has real importance and value for understanding the social process in space and time.

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## 2.5 HISTORY AND OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

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From the foregoing paragraph, we know that all the Social Sciences have close and useful contact, because their main focus is the study of man in society. Every Social Scientist belonging to any branch, has to give a historical, descriptive, and narrative account of his aspect of specialisation. Historical information is very relevant and useful to all the Social Scientists either directly or indirectly, to prove his point of view. Not only Social Scientist, but also a Physical or Natural Scientist can be benefitted by understanding the History of particular area of his interest.

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## 2.6 SCIENTIFIC HISTORY

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In recent times, two types of Histories-traditional writing of History and the scientific writing of History - have come into vogue. Though the differences of approach between scientific and traditional have not been clearly and universally defined, the two types of Histories are being written and studied. Scientific History is understood as a History written after a critical and judicious corroboration of all the available facts to explain not only what has happened, but also why, where and how it happened, rationally and logically by raising questions to understand the historical process.

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## 2.7 TRADITIONAL HISTORY

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In traditional historical writing, emphasis is given to the narration and description of past events, as they have happened. These traditional Historians describe historical events in a chronological order, giving importance to political events. As such, the domination of political happenings is an important aspect. For them, the changes in society are less important, and their main concern is to make History more interesting than critical evaluation of cause and effect of happenings. Their main concern is to narrate an informative story with a moral message, emphasizing the glory of the past.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. What is the difference between Social Sciences and Physical Sciences ?

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2. What is the ultimate aim of History and other Social Sciences ?

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3. Explain the difference between Traditional and Scientific History ?

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## 2.8 USE OF DIFFERENT METHODS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

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All the Social Sciences do not employ the same theories and techniques in their study. Different methods like the functional method, the statistical method, the comparative method, the genetic method, and typology method are employed in their studies. Besides these major methods, there are a number of methods used by individual Social Scientists in their studies. All these methods enable us to understand the complex human behaviour as exactly as possible.

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## 2.9 INFLUENCE OF OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES ON HISTORY

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We are aware that History was of great help to various Social Sciences. We have also to note that the various techniques and methods mentioned above, are also borrowed by historians in their analysis of the past. For example, Max Weber's typology method, Karl Marx's historical materialism are used to analyse the given situation of a particular period. By employing those techniques and by collecting empirical data, the historian is trying to make his study more and more systematic and scientific. But, historians should judiciously use these methods while analysing the historical process.

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## 2.10 INFLUENCE OF SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND PSYCHOLOGY ON SOCIAL HISTORY

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Development of new branches of knowledge like Sociology and Anthropology in the recent past, and the emphasis on the scientific study of the society in the West, led to an interaction between various Social Sciences as well as the rise of historical sub-disciplines such as Social History, Intellectual Anthropology etc., Here we find borrowing of methods as well as techniques from one Social Science to another Social Science. Social history borrowed heavily from Sociology, Anthropology and Psychology. The discipline of Intellectual History owes much to the conceptual framework that was provided by Sociology and Psychology. Cultural Anthropology as a discipline is very close to History, as both are very much interested in identifying the concept of culture. Thus, the influence and impact of Sociology, Anthropology and Psychology on History is mutually advantageous, and consequently we are able to make a systematic study of Social History of a region in the background of time.

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## 2.11 VARIOUS INFLUENCES ON ECONOMIC HISTORY

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Economic History is the major sub-field of History that has developed in the recent past. Traditional History writers are describing or narrating economy in a single chapter as an appendage to Political History. In the major sub-field of Economic History, the historian is using techniques and methods of economic analysis to reconstruct Economic History from

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his own perspective. For example, the history of technology, nature of the soil, irrigation facilities, ownership of means of production and the role of the State, role of the religion are also studied as a part of Economic History. One of the major works of this type is Marc Bloch's classic 'Feudal Society', and the works of R.S. Sharma, D.N. Jha and Burton Stein in the Indian context.

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## **2.12 IMPACT OF MAX WEBER AND KARL MARX**

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In the last two hundred years, two great social thinkers - Max Weber and Karl Marx - influenced the course of the study of Social Sciences. Max Weber's contribution lies in making Social Sciences value - free, and believing in ideal type by undertaking comparative study of the societies. Karl Marx contributed to the development of the theory of historical materialism. His historical materialism is based primarily on two essential features- (a) History is a dialectical progress towards a morally desirable goal of a free society; and (b) economic conditions explain the dialectic movement. Further, his emphasis on the material base to understand society has a tremendous influence on the Social Sciences.

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### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2**

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How did Max Weber and Karl Marx influence the development of Social Sciences ?

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## **2.13 NEED FOR INTER-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH**

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As the fundamental focus of all the Social Sciences is to study society from the origin to the present day, and as the particular objective of History is to understand the totality of the past, these should be research - based on inter-disciplinary approach. By this approach, all Social Sciences will mutually be benefited, and their understanding of the past and present becomes profoundest, as observed by E.H. Carr.

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## **2.14 LET US SUM UP**

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In this Unit, History is shown as a Social Science, and its relationship with other Social Sciences is explained.

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## **2.15 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS**

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- I. 1. Social Sciences are not exact when compared to Physical Sciences. In Physical Sciences, exact measurement of objects is possible, whereas in Social Sciences which deal with human behaviour, the exact measurement of human behaviour is not possible.
2. Scientific study of the society is the ultimate aim of History and other Social Sciences.

3. Most traditional historians have viewed History merely as a description or narration of the past. That is not scientific history. The tools now available for analysing and interpreting the events of the past are made use of by modern historians for a scientific study of the subject.
- II. 1. Max Weber helped historians to present the past events systematically and in greater unity than at the time of the events happening. Marx formulated the theory of historical materialism, and he emphasised the economic interpretation of history.

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## 2.16 : EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each

1. What are the different Social Sciences and indicate their broad aims of study ?
2. Name some methods that are used in Social Sciences and bring out the purpose of each.
3. State how History is benefited by the use of the techniques and principles of other Social Sciences.

### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each

1. Differentiate between Sciences and Social Sciences.
2. Name the different activities of History that are of importance to the Social Sciences.
3. Distinguish between Scientific History and Traditional History.
4. What was the impact of Max Weber and Karl Marx on the development of the Social Sciences ?

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## 2.17 : BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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- |                      |   |   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Carr, E.H.        | : | <i>What is History ?</i>                |
| 2. Walsh, W.H.       | : | <i>Philosophy of History</i>            |
| 3. Collingwood, R.G. | : | <i>Idea of History</i>                  |
| 4. Karl Popper       | : | <i>Poverty of Historicism</i>           |
| 5. Gardiner, P. (ed) | : | <i>Theories of History</i>              |
| 6. ----              | : | <i>Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences</i> |
| 7. ----              | : | <i>Encyclopaedia Britannica</i>         |

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## **UNIT -3 : ENVIRONMENT : ITS INFLUENCE ON INDIAN HISTORY**

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### **Contents**

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Physical features
  - 3.2.1 The Himalayan Range
  - 3.2.2 The Plains of Hindusthan
  - 3.2.3 The Central Indian Plateau
  - 3.2.4 The Deccan Plateau
  - 3.2.5 The Coastal Region
- 3.3 Influence of Geography on Indian History
  - 3.3.1 Influence of Himalayas
  - 3.3.2 Influence of the Plains
  - 3.3.3 Influence of the sea coast
  - 3.3.4 Influence of the climate
- 3.4 Unity in diversity
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Check Your Progress : Answers
- 3.7 Examination Model Questions
- 3.8 Books for Further Reading

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### **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After studying this Unit, you should be able to :

1. know the physical features of India ; and
2. have an idea of the influence of geographical features on Indian History

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### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In this Unit, an attempt is made to describe the geographical features of India, and explain their influence on the history of the country.

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### **3.2 PHYSICAL FEATURES**

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Before we start the study of the history of any country, we should know something about its geographical features. The mountain ranges, the river systems and the sea coasts have to be noted, because each of them has their effect on the country's history. In the present

study India includes Pakistan in the West, and Bangladesh in the East, though they are now independent countries lying outside India. Unlike the Arabs and the Chinese, the Indians neglected the study of geography and cartography, or did not give them the attention they deserved.

India is a vast country extending over 2000 miles North-South, and 2500 miles East-West, and comprising a territory of 1,800,000 Sq. miles. It is equal in size to the whole of Europe, excluding Russia, and hence, it is called a sub-continent. The country is bounded on the North by the Himalayas, by the Indian Ocean in the South, the Bay of Bengal in the East and the Arabian sea in the West. It has 6000 miles of land frontier, and 5000 miles of coast line.

We can broadly distinguish five main parts : The Himalayan ranges, the plains of Hindustan, the Central Indian plateau, the Deccan plateau and the coastal region.

### 3.2.1 The Himalayan range

The great defensive mountain wall of the Himalayas runs in a Southeast curve all along the Northern border, and the Hindukush mountains, emerging from the Pamirs, form the Northwestern boundary. A series of mountain ranges running South from the Eastern end of the Himalayas, form a natural barrier between India and Burma. The Naga Hills and the Manipur plateau in the Northeast, and the secluded valleys and hill tracks in the Northwest were the habitations of sturdy tribes who tried to preserve their independence against powerful foes. The Kashmir plateau, fringed by mountains, and watered by the Jeelum river and justly considered as 'Earthly Paradise'; the Nepal valley, lying between the Gandak and Kosi basins, and adjacent to the great peaks of Everest, Kanchenjunga, Dhavalagiri, Nangaparvata etc., and the plateau of Assam which separates the valleys of the Brahmaputra in the North and Burma in the South, have mostly remained isolated from the main currents of life of India proper. But, Afghanistan, on the other hand, played an important role as it lay on the main highway between India and the outside world. Access to India is made difficult for large armies by the mountains in the North, Northeast and Northwest. But, traders and visitors could enter India through tracks and mountain passes. The Khyber Pass in the Hindukush which runs along the Kabul valley and descends into the Punjab, however, provides the gateway to India, and the foreign invaders chose this route to enter India. There are other routes which lead to the Indus valley through the Bolan Pass, but the vast stretch of the Thar desert of Rajasthan makes it difficult to reach the interior territory.

### 3.2.2 The plains of Hindusthan

The basins of the rivers, the Ganges, the Jamuna, the Indus and the Brahmaputra, and their affluents and tributaries, form the great plains of Hindustan which are 2000 miles long, and 150 to 200 miles broad. Taking their rise from the Himalayas, the rivers course through winding rocky-beds and reach the level plains, deposit the sediment and make considerable deltas of fertile alluvial soil. They are perennial rivers provided with inexhaustible supplies of water from the Himalayan glaciers, and consequently facilitate irrigation and provide highways of navigation and communication. Centres of civilisation and culture flourished on their banks.

The Indus rises from the Tibetan plateau and coursing through the Himalayan and Karakoram mountains, joins the river Gilgit, and cuts its way to the plains. The rivers Jeelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej combine in Punjab, making it fertile, and join the Indus, which flows through the plain between Baluchistan and the Thar desert, and descends into Sind.

The Ganges rushes on like a mountain torrent till it reaches Haridwar, and then flows Eastwards. It is fed by important tributaries like the Gomti, the Gogra, the Gandak and the Kosi rivers from the North. The Jamuna runs a parallel course on the West, and joins the Ganges at Allahabad. The Ganges which is regarded as the most sacred of rivers, falls into the Bay of Bengal through several mouths, the Hooghly being the Westernmost and the Padma, the Easternmost.

The Bramhaputra is a mighty river which runs East for nearly 700 miles before it enters the Indian territory near Sadiya. Bordered by the Himalayas in the North and the Assam Hills in the South, it flows through a narrow valley, 500 miles long and 50 miles wide, and then courses through the plains of Bengal and joins the Padma, the Easternmost mouth of the Ganges. The Ganges-Jamuna Doab and the Ganges-Bramhaputra Doab, and the deltas formed by them, make the lands fertile.

### **3.2.3 The Central Indian Plateau**

South of Sutlej, the Punjab plain fades away into the Thar desert; and the sandy waste extends up to the Aravali mountains. Beyond Aravali, the Central plateau slopes to the Gangetic plain in the South, and ends in the East in the hills and forests of Chota Nagpur, which extends upto the plains of Bengal and Orissa. The rich valleys of Narmada and Tapti lie South. These rivers flow West, and fall into the gulf of Cambay. The Vindhya and Satpura ranges form a double wall of rock, separating the Northern plains from the peninsular plateau. The Vindhyas rise abruptly from the Narmada valley, and slope to the North, and form the Malwa plateau and the tablelands of Bundelkhand and Baghalkhand. The hills and forests extending from Bundelkhand to Chota Nagpur provide inaccessible retreats for primitive tribes, and enabled them to defy the rulers of the Indo-Gangetic plain. To the South of the Thar desert, and West of the plateau lie the rich lands of Gujarat, covered by low hills and watered by the Mahi, the Sabarmati, the Narmada and the Tapti rivers. This region includes the Kathiawar peninsula, and the great marsh, Rann of Kutch.

### **3.2.4 The Deccan Plateau**

The Deccan plateau to the South of the Gangetic plain, stretches almost over the whole of peninsular India, with the Vindhya and Satpura, and the Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats forming its boundaries. The Vindhya and Satpura mountains run parallel to each other, and form a barricade separating the North from the South. The Narmada and Tapti rivers flow Westward from them, and fall into the gulf of Cambay. The steep and rugged Western Ghats or the Sahyadri mountains run from the South of the gulf down to the coast, and appear as a gigantic sea-wall. A narrow plain separates them from the sea, and is inhabited by the Konkans. As the slope of the Deccan is downward from West to East, the rivers of this region flow eastward, and join the Bay of Bengal; the Mahanadi, the Godavari, the Krishna, the Tungabhadra and the Kaveri and their tributaries flow through the plains, and make them fertile. The valley of the Mahanadi forms a broad plain in the Northeast, and grows narrower as the river passes through Orissa hills to the sea. The Godavari takes its rise from Triambak, and

after passing through a flat region in Madhya Pradesh, takes a Southern turn, and cutting through the Eastern Ghats, flows through the coastal area before joining the Bay of Bengal. The Godavari and its tributaries Wardha, Wainganga, Indravati etc., form an important river system. Next in importance is the Krishna river which rises from Mahabaleswar, passes through Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, receiving on the way waters of the Bhima and the Tungabhadra. Rising from Brahmagiri in Coorg, the Kaveri flows Southeastwards across the plateau, and descends the Eastern Ghats, and traverses the Carnatic low lands, past Trichinopoly and Tanjore to the Bay of Bengal. In its course, it receives a number of tributaries, chief among them being the Kabbai, the Hemavati and the Arkavati. A number of minor rivers like the Palar, the Pennar, the Vagai and the Tamraparni, make the region fertile and prosperous.

The Eastern Ghats are scattered and broken, and of less height, and appear less magnificent than their Western counterpart. They begin in Orissa and pass into Andhra, keeping parallel to the coast. Following a Southern course till the latitude of Madras, they turn Southwest to meet the Western Ghats in the Nilgiris. There is a break in the continuity of these ghats immediately South of the Nilgiris, the Palghat gap, which is about 20 miles North to South; and this affords access from the Carnatic to the Malabar Coast. The Western Ghats terminate at the extremity of Cape Comorin.

### 3.2.5 The Coastal Region

On each side of the plateau, there is a coastal plain. The West Coast, from Daman Southwards to Trivandrum, possesses unity of structure, relief and climate. The Northern half is the Konkan coast, and the Southern half is the Malabar coast. The Konkan is a stretch of land varying in width from 20 to 50 miles. Cliffs butting into sea rise at intervals, and several mountain-streams flow rapidly through the region in the rainy season, though they become dry later. These floods carve tidal creeks which form valuable highways for traffic. The Westward flowing streams become larger in the South, and one of them, the Sharavati plunges from the crest of a mountain to form the famous Gersoppa Falls. The Malabar Coast is wider; inlets and backwaters create beautiful scenery, and provide easy communication. The fertility of the soil from Kathiawar to Cape Comorin which borders the sea, is responsible for the prosperity of the region. The coastal lowlands on the East between the Eastern Ghats and the Bay, extend from Mahanadi to Cape Comorin. The Coromandal Coast (of the Northern Circars) has some of the features of the West coast, and spurs from the ghats project into the sea to form headlands like the Dolphin's Nose at Visakhapatnam. The Chilka Lake and the double delta of the Godavari and Krishna embracing the Kolleru lake, are some of the notable features of this region. The deltas of the Godavari and Krishna rivers are the granaries of rice, and valuable crops like sugarcane, tobacco and cotton are cultivated. The Carnatic or the Tamil plain increases in width Southwards, and stretches over 170 miles in the Kaveri basin. This region may be regarded as "the real old India of the South", the country inhabited by the Dravidians, and it smiles with plenty and prosperity.

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## 3.3 INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHY ON INDIAN HISTORY

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Like most other countries, the history of India is influenced by its geographical features. It contains the highest mountain ranges, lofty plateaus, extensive plains, large rivers, sandy deserts, fertile valleys and dense forests. Climatic conditions vary from part to part, from severe heat to bitter cold. Barriers of hills and rivers are responsible for dividing the country into

local zones, and developing regional affiliations. But, the common natural boundaries and shared culture, religious and social ideals gradually led to a sense of a common motherland and fostered unity amidst diversity of regions. For long, there has been a marked distinction between North India, the Deccan plateau and the peninsular plains of the East and the South. While attempts at political unity within each of these divisions met with a large measure of success, it was rarely possible to effect such unity between any two of these regions. But, this does not mean that contacts between them were altogether absent. There were occasions, though rare, when considerable parts of the three regions were brought under the rule of imperial kings, such as the Mauryas, the Satavahanas, and the Guptas in their heyday of power.

### 3.3.1 Influence of the Himalayas

The Himalayas have proved an effective barrier against intruders from the North. The extensive Tibetan tableland and the Gobi desert beyond it, with their inclement weather conditions, prove inhospitable to man and beast, and provide a magnificent defence system for India. This is an advantage which no other country possesses. The mountain range has benefited the country by giving rise to many great rivers like the Ganges, the Jumna, the Indus and the Brahmaputra, and feeding them with their glaciers to ensure perennial flow, thus making the plains below fertile. The prosperity of the Hindustan plains provoked the envy of ambitious rulers outside, and caused their invasions of the land through the Khyber Pass and other openings in the Hindukush in the Northwest. The Hindus were used to a life of ease because of their wealth and their sense of security; and when the enemies appeared before them, they were unprepared and succumbed to their onslaught. Panipat in the Punjab was the grave of their freedom and power. To the Hindu, the Himalayas marked the end of the world. What lay beyond them was a mystery, and he was not concerned with it. It is this attitude of indifference to neighbouring countries and their affairs, this lack of contacts and affiliations, that has, at times, proved disastrous to the country. China and Persia, on the other hand, gave up isolation, and cultivated a continental outlook, and established relations with their neighbours. The immunity provided by the Himalayas becomes questionable in the changed modern conditions of scientific advancement and growth of air-power. The Himalayas, however, have a fascination for the Hindu wherever he lived, they are venerated as the abode of the Gods, with Siva on Kailas peak. They abound in sacred places like Amarnath (Kashmir), Jwalamukhi, Haridwar, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Pasupatinath (Nepal), and Manasarovar (Tibet). Pilgrims and travellers and traders made their journeys through known tracks, and passed to all these sacred places, braving dangers and difficulties. This proves how there has been a common religious aspiration among all the people belonging to the various divisions of India.

At the same time, the three regions exhibit their own distinct characteristics. The Aryan language and civilisation have swept over the Indo-Gangetic plains, and eliminated the earlier state of things. In the Deccan plateau and all over the Southern peninsula, the non-Aryan languages and customs prevail.

### 3.3.2 Influence of the Plains

Even in these three broad divisions, sub-divisions exist, caused by natural barriers. The desert of Rajasthan has converted the plains of Indus and Ganges into separate units, thus barring any united effort to check the invaders through the Punjab; while at the same time, it

has been unable to check their aggression, for they could by pass it through an opening in its North. But, the people of the desert have imbibed a sturdy character and spirit of independence from the hard life they live. The deserts, the hills and the forests have helped the Rajputs and the Marathas, in their resistance to the imperial power of Delhi. Similarly, Punjab, Sind, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, the plains of Gujarat, the plateaus of Malwa, Bundelkhand, the hilly tracts of Chota Nagpur, have all deep roots of separate entities. The subdivisions in the Deccan are not dissimilar, caused as they are by natural frontiers like mountains, rivers etc. The spirit of isolation has been tenaciously kept up by them even amidst changes of dynasties and rulers. Empires rose and fell. The old kingdoms of Kosala, Magadha, Vanga and Avanti in the North, Kalinga, Andhra, Karnataka, Chalukya, Chola, Pandya etc., in the South are gone, But, these states seem to have eternal lives, they continue their distinct individual existence, though under different names.

India, being a vast country with abundant resources, ambitious rulers bent on conquest and extension of their domain, had enough territory and wealth to satisfy their inordinate thirst. There was no need for them to go outside their country to exhibit their martial powers. The same consideration has prevented mass migrations of people from their native land. The idea of colonisation by conquest or by organised undertaking, has never occurred to them.

### **3.3.3 Influence of the Sea Coast**

It may be noted that the habits of people are affected by the geographical features of the territories they have inhabited. The people who lived in the fertile plains have their wants satisfied, and so cultivated arts or literature or philosophy. Thus, the plains are studded with centres of culture and civilisation. Nature's gifts create an unfavourable climate for the growth of hardihood or a scientific spirit of investigation into the mysteries of physical objects. The extensive coastline has fostered trade and maritime activity. From the early times, the Indians navigated seas both in the East and West and their bold exploits carried them into distant lands. Ports rose in the South of the West Coast as easy communication with the East coast has become possible through the gap between the Nilgiris and the Cardamum Hill in South India. On the East Coast, harbours developed near the mouths of the rivers as they provided communication with the interior. The maritime activities of the Indians were peaceful. Trade gave impetus for the Indian sailors to undertake long voyages to distant lands, and establish centers in Indo-china, Indonesia, Malaya and regions in the Far East. It was private commercial enterprise that slowly built up these colonies in foreign lands without any political implications or economic exploitation. And they turned out to be milestones in the triumphant march of Indian culture over the vast regions. The only exception to this was the Chola overseas expansion and naval warfare with political domination in view. It is of interest to note that naval warfare is ubiquitous, and the sea is indivisible, and that, they account for the long domination of India by the British from London.

### **3.3.4 Influence of the climate**

Climate exercises a great influence on the people. The tropical climate has a tendency to enervate the people and make them ease-loving. That accounts for the inability of the people of the plains to face the virile foes from outside. But, those living in hilly tracts, deserts and forests develop hardihood because they have to fight for a livelihood against unfavourable nature. The Rajputs, the Sikhs excel by their prowess and bravery. To attribute the defeat of Indians

by the foreign invaders to climatic conditions or lack of physical strength, or unity, does not seem to be correct. The true explanation lies in the country's isolation from the outside world, the rise of political powers, the invention of new weapons and the adoption of different tactics. The physical barriers which cut off relations with the outside world have not been able to keep off the invaders. Ironically enough, the conquerors who have settled in India have imbibed the insular spirit, and fallen victims to it. A widening of outlook, an understanding of forces at work in the world outside, and adequate preparation to meet any contingency in an effective way, are essential to safeguard the country and its interests.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. How did the Himalayas influence the course of Indian History ?

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2. How did the sea coast influence Indian History ?

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3. How did the climate influence the history of our country ?

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### 3.4 UNITY IN DIVERSITY

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The most important striking feature of Indian culture is its deep underlying unity inspite of its great diversity. It is evident that our ancestors strove for unity, and they looked upon this vast subcontinent as one land. The name *Bharatavarsha* or the land of Bharata was given to the whole country, after the name of an ancient tribe, called the Bharatas; and the people were called *Bharatasantati* or the descendants of Bharata. The first expression given to the sense of unity was the description of entire land by the single name of *Bharatavarsha*. This very name is given to the whole country in the Epics and Puranas thus :

“Uttaram Yat Samudrasya  
Himadreshchaiva dakshinam  
Varsham tad Bharatam nama  
Bharati yatra santatih” -(Vishnu Purana, 11.3-1)

Since ancient times, India has been the land of several religions and cultures, and varied geographical and climatic features, and they intermingled, and had mutual influence on the life style of one another. Besides, the pilgrimage to religious centres and other ritualistic activities of the society brought over a type of unity in the country. The unity of India was also recognised by the foreigners. The foreigners first came into contact with the people living on the *Sindhu* or the Indus, and so they named the whole country after that river. The word Hindu is derived from the Sanskrit term *Sindhu*, and in course of time, the country came to be known as India in Greek, and *Hind* in Persian and Arabic languages. Traditions, mythology and literature of ancient times created and developed the same type of concept throughout the land. The ancient Epics-the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* - were written and studied in all regional languages. In whatever form the Indian cultural values and ideas were expressed, the substance remained the same throughout the country. All our ancient poets, philosophers and writers viewed the country as an integral unit, and spoke of the land stretching from the Himalayas to the sea as the proper domain of a single universal monarch. The kings who tried to establish their authority throughout the length and breadth of the country were praised as *Chakravartins*. This kind of political unity was attained many times. In third century B.C., Asoka extended his empire over the whole country, except the extreme South. Again in fourth century A.D., Samudra Gupta carried his victorious arms from the river Ganges to Kanchipuram. In the seventh century A.D., Chalukya Pulakesi II of Badami resisted the advance of Harshavardhana into the Deccan. These instances would show how difficult it was to integrate the country as a whole for political purposes. The institution of supreme sovereignty was a familiar political idea of the Hindus in ancient ages. In spite of lack of political unity, political formations all over the country assumed more or less the same shape. The idea that India constituted one single geographical unit persisted in the minds of the conquerors and cultural leaders.

There is an under-current of religious unity among the various religious sects in the country. All the sects and creeds believe in the majesty of the spiritual life. The cow, the Vedas, the Geeta, the Puranas and other scriptures are respected equally throughout the country. A supreme and characteristically Indian expression of the religious unity is the network of shrines and sacred places with which the country has been covered. The conception of pilgrimage was perfected as a means of acquiring an intimate knowledge of the land in ancient times. The daily prayer of a Hindu includes the names of all the main rivers of the North and the South like Sindhu, Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada and Kaveri. Such prayers reflect an all India outlook and breaks narrow, provincial and regional sentiments and lead to a cultural and religious view. The *melas*, fairs and festivals reflect and demonstrate inherent religious and cultural unity.

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### 3.5 LET US SUM UP

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In this Unit, an attempt was made

- i) to describe the important physical features of India;
- ii) to explain how the mountains, rivers, climate and sea coasts have influenced the course of Indian History, and
- iii) to bring out the concept of 'Unity in diversity'

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### 3.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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1. The Himalayas have stood as a barrier against invaders from the North, in the past. It has given rise to many rivers and has also protected the country from the chilly winds of the North.

2. Because the sea coast is not near to many people in the country, Indians did not become a maritime power. The British could easily conquer us because of their naval supremacy and our weakness over the coast.

3. The defeat of Indians at the hands of foreigners is attributed by some scholars to our lethargy and lack of physical strength, which they believe are due to the climatic conditions in the country. Though this is not completely true, it partly accounted for our failures and weakness.

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### 3.7 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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**I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines.**

1. Describe briefly the physical features of India.
2. Trace the influence of geographical factors on Indian History.
3. Explain the concept of 'Unity in diversity' in the context of Indian History.

**II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each**

1. What was the role played by the Himalayan mountains in the country's history ?
2. State the significance of Indo-Gangetic plain in Indian History.
3. How did the Eastern and Western Ghats become prominent in the history of South India ?
4. Describe the coastal region of India.

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### 3.8 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Majumdar, R.C. & Pusalkar, A.D. (Eds) : *The Vedic Age, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan series, Vol. I.*
2. Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudari, H.C. & Dutta : *An Advanced History of India*
3. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. : *A History of South India.*
4. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. : *History of India, Vol. I*
5. Panikkar, K.M. : *Geographical Factors in Indian History*
6. Sathianatha Aiyar, R : *History of India, Vol. I*

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## **UNIT - 4: SOURCES OF INDIAN HISTORY**

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### **Contents**

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Archaeological Sources
  - 4.2.1 Excavations and Monuments
  - 4.2.2 Numismatic Sources
  - 4.2.3 Epigraphic Sources
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- 4.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.5 Check Your progress : Answers
- 4.6 Examination Model Questions
- 4.7 Books for further reading

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### **4.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After studying this Unit, you are expected to know :

1. What is meant by the sources of history, and
2. The archaeological and literary sources of Indian History

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### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The material used for writing history are known as sources of history. For writing Indian History, abundant archaeological and literary sources are available.

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### **4.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES**

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#### **4.2.1 Excavations and Monuments**

Archaeologists are primarily concerned with discovering the material relating to early man before he knew the art of writing. The tools made by him, and his food habits, and the environment in which he lived, are studied by them. The Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic cultures which succeeded each other, show the evolution in the techniques adopted by man to meet his changing needs.

Excavations at various archaeological sites have revealed proto-historic and early historic material relating to India. The excavations conducted at Mohenjodaro and Harappa (now in Pakistan), Lothal (Gujarat) and Kalibangan (Rajasthan), have revealed the culture of a people who preceded the Aryans. A recent count showed that, as many as 1400 Indus sites have been

found, of which 917 are in India, 481 in Pakistan and one in Afghanistan. Excavations at Dholavira in the Rann of Kutch, unearthed a multi-divisional city find of the Harappans, remarkable for its planning. The town probably had the world's oldest and biggest stadium as well as the first sign board. The archaeologists unearthed there a stadium of 284 mts. by 48 mts., and discovered on the fort's Northern gate, a ten-character inscription. During the last five decades, excavations were conducted at various places like Ahichchatra, Hastinapur, Kausambi, Ujjaini, Sravasti, Vaisali and many more, which find mention in the literary texts. Archaeological material, interpreted in conjunction with the literary texts, provides a clue to the understanding of the major social and economic transformation at least in some part of India. Similarly, excavations that were conducted at places like Dwaraka, enable us to understand the cultural details of the remote past. Excavations that were conducted at places like Rangapur (1953), Lothal (1955-63), Prabhas Patan (1956-57), Rojdi (1957-58), Desalpur (1963-64), Surkotda (1972-75) and Dholavira (1990-91), focus new light on the subject. The Aryans, whose culture is known from Vedic literature, are archaeologically associated with the Painted-Grey Ware which comes in succession to the city with streets and well-built houses. They have also indicated the succession of the Parthian and the Kushan rule in that area.

Different types of big stone tombs are excavated in South India. The most important site which reveals megalithic culture is Brahmagiri in the Chitaldurg district of Karnataka. Arikamedu near Pondicherry, yielded Roman coins and pottery, and is believed to be a trading station of the Romans. Kaveripattanam is another important excavated site which yielded Roman pottery, and confirmed the commercial contact of South India with the Romans which is known from the Sangam literature. Many an important Buddhist site has been excavated and exposed to view like Sanchi, Sarnath and Nalanda. And a large number of Buddhist sites in Andhra Pradesh like Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, with their vast epigraphical and sculptural wealth, have been brought to light through excavations. The excavations at Sannati in Gulbarga district of Karnataka have revealed Asokan edicts as well as a number of inscriptions of the Satavahana period. Particularly interesting is the one which has identical passages with the Nasik *Prasasti* on Gautamiputra Satakarni.

While no doubt Satavahanas coins are discovered at various excavated places, those at Kotilingala in the Karimnagar district of Andhra Pradesh are discovered at stratified levels. This has a parallel with the Satavahana coins found in the excavations at Nevasa in Maharashtra.

Besides the monuments that are revealed by excavations, there exist many others in either a good or decaying condition. The architecture of different areas and different periods reveal the skill of the architects and sculptors of those areas and times. Scholars have distinguished the different styles of architecture on the basis of patron dynasties (the Pallava architecture, the Chalukyan architecture), and on the basis of local features (the Orissan style of architecture etc). The world famous Ajanta-Ellora group of caves have affiliations with Buddhist, Jain and Hindu religions. Apart from the religious themes, secular scenes which reflect contemporary society, are depicted in the sculptures.

## 4.2.2 Numismatic Sources

Numismatics is the study of coins. Coins were issued in India from about 6th or 5th century B.C. Even though they were intended to be media of exchange, they are eminently useful for the reconstruction of history.

Among the coins of India, the coins of Indo-Greeks are very helpful in the reconstruction of their political history. Most of the names of the kings are known only from their coins. The areas of their rule can also be fixed with the help of the find-spots of their coins. The Kushana coins show the religious leanings of the family. The figures of Greek, Iranian, Hindu, and Buddhist deities appear on their coins, which fact reveals their religious toleration. The weight system of their coins tallies with the Roman gold coins ; and this indicates their commercial contact with the Roman empire. They might have followed the weight system of the Roman gold coins in order that they may be accepted as a media of exchange in foreign transactions. The issue of gold currency on large scale indicates the flourishing prosperity of the period.

The coins of the Roman emperors of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. are found in different parts of South India. This confirms the prevalence of Roman trade with South India, which is known from foreign literary works.

Gupta coins are very important in so far as they depict the pastimes of the kings, viz., the lion-slayer type, the tiger-slayer type, the elephant-rider type. Samudragupta is depicted as playing on a lyre, and this confirms his skill in music which finds mention in his Allahabad pillar inscription. The peacock-type was issued by Kumaragupta I. He was named after God Kumara or Kartikeya whose vahana was the peacock. So, he must have shown his devotion by engraving his vahana on his coins.

The Muslim coins are not so very important for historical reconstruction, because there are a good number of Persian chronicles giving the history of the Sultanate period, and of the different dynasties. The coins are useful, however, in giving the names of the respective Sultans, the dates of their issue in the Hijra era, and sometimes of the places where they are minted.

## 4.2.3 Epigraphic sources

Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions which are generally engraved on stone and copper. The purpose of most of the inscriptions was only to record the construction of a stupa or temple etc., or make an addition to the existing religious institutions or a donation of land or cash made to them. Historians have been able to reconstruct the contemporary political, social and cultural life, from the details that are supplied in the inscriptions regarding the donar, the recipients, the date of grant, the gift of villages etc.

The earliest writing in India goes back to the Indus period. There are small inscriptions on the Indus seals. The script has not been satisfactorily deciphered as yet, and hence, the language of the inscriptions means different things to different scholars. Inscriptions start regularly from the time of the rule of Asoka. He employed for his inscriptions the Brahmi script for the whole of India, and Kharosthi for Northwestern India. By about the 4th century, A.D., the Brahmi script developed into the Nagari script in Northern India, and Telugu-Kannada script in the Andhra and Kannada regions. About the 7th century A.D., the Brahmi script in the far South evolved into the Tamil-Grantha script.

For the political history of many of the royal families, epigraphy forms the main basis. For instance, the conquest of Kalinga by Asoka and its effects are brought out in many inscriptions. The extent of the empire of Asoka is fixed with the help of the reference made to various areas in his inscriptions, and also by the availability of his inscriptions at different places.

The history of the Satavahanas is known through their inscriptions, though a list of Andhra kings with their periods of rule is available in the *Puranas*. The achievements of Gautamiputra Satakarni are detailed in the Nasik inscription of his son's 19th regnal year. He was described therein as a conqueror of the Kshaharatas, and ruler of over 10 provinces. The famous Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta contains a long list of persons that were defeated, and areas that were conquered. His two Northern campaigns, and his Southern campaign, and the acknowledgement of his suzerainty by the republican tribes and frontier kings, have been set forth in this inscription. The areas that were mentioned in connection with the South Indian campaign show how the region was split into small principalities and lacked cohesion.

One of the important inscriptions in the Deccan is the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II. This contains the genealogical information of the king, and also his achievements and those of his ancestors. Dated 634 A.D., a few years before the end of his rule, the inscription narrates all his achievements - his victories over the Nalas, the Mauryas of Konkan, the Kadambas, and the Pallavas, his successes over the Latas, the Malavas and the Gurjaras, and his pitched battles at Pistapura, and on the banks of Kolleru lake in Andhra. The inscription also states that he defeated the North Indian ruler Harsha; and this was attested by the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang.

The inscriptions of the Cholas contain the *prasastis* of kings in which the achievements of the respective kings were detailed either directly or by implication by their assumption of titles. One interesting inscription of the Chola period is the Tiruvendipuram inscription of Rajaraja III which mentions the troubles in which the king was involved, and the help he secured from the Hoyasalas.

Copper plate inscriptions, of many of the dynasties like the Early Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas, the Eastern Chalukyas and Vijayanagar rulers, invariably gave a long succession of rulers of their respective families, and sometimes, also the individual achievements of the kings; and these have been put to use by historians.

Inscriptions also throw light on the different territorial units of different kingdoms and various officers that manned the administration. Some of the vassals were bestowed with various symbols indicative of their authority. In the Deccan of the Medieval period, we find a number of such chieftans being endowed with 'five mahashabdas'.

For the socio-economic life of the period, we are again indebted to the inscriptions. The names of professional classes, instead of the castes of the people, which occur in the Satavahana inscriptions, show the importance that was given to profession rather than birth in a caste. The admixture of foreigners in Indian society has also been attested by the inscriptions. The assumption of Indian names by foreign rulers and the gifts that were given to Hinduism and Buddhism, point to their absorption into Indian society. The most famous example of this gesture is the Besnagar inscription of Heliiodorus, an ambassador of the Indo-Greek ruler

Antialkidas, at the court of the Sungas. He set up a Garuda pillar in front of the Vasudeva temple.

For promoting economic well-being, kings have either dug new tanks and canals or maintained the old ones in proper condition. There is a long history of the Sudarsana lake that was mentioned in the Junagarh inscription of Rudradaman. It is said to have been originally constructed during the time of Chandragupta Maurya; and conduits or pipes were provided during the reign of Ashoka. Cyclone affected the lake, and this was repaired during the time of Rudradaman, the Saka-Kshatrapa ruler of Western India. The Kakatiya and Vijayanagara inscriptions mention the construction of big - sized tanks for irrigation and drinking purposes. The same two dynasties were responsible for encouraging foreign trade. The inscriptions of Motupalli in Andhra Pradesh that were issued by Kakati Ganapatideva and Sangama Devaraya I indicate the tolls that are to be collected on various goods of export and import. The inscription of Ganapatideva is described as a charter of security (*Abhaya Sasana*) to foreign merchants. Prior to the King's orders, the local chiefs were imposing heavy tolls, and confiscating the merchandise when there was a ship wreck. The friendly relations that existed between the Palas of Bengal and the Sailendras of Suvarnadvipa on one hand, and the Cholas and the Sailendras on the other, are known from their inscriptions. The naval conquest of Chola Rajendra I in the Malay peninsula is known from his inscriptions.

Inscriptions also help us in tracing the evolution of languages like Telugu and Kannada. From the 6th or 7th century A.D., till 10th or 11th century A.D. it is from the inscriptions in Andhra and Karnataka that we get to know the state of the Telugu or Kannada language. After the 10th or 11th century A.D. literary works are available which lessen our dependence on epigraphy. Inscriptions issued in Sanskrit are also sometimes not without merit. The Junagarh inscription of Rudradaman and the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II are of high literary value. Ravikeerti, the composer of the Aihole inscription, compares himself to Kalidas and Bharavi.

The edicts of Ashoka explain the principle of Dhamma or Dharma that was advocated by him. It was not mere Buddhism, but something more comprehensive that Ashoka envisaged in detailing the code of conduct of a person. Ashoka also visited places of Buddhist importance. His inscriptions were intended to be read and explained to the people. The Sungas and the Satavahanas were patrons of Buddhism in spite of their Brahminical leanings.

The Besnagar inscription of the time of the Sungas and the Nanaghat inscription of Naganika indicate the spread of the Vasudeva cult. The Mathura pillar inscription of Chandra Gupta II mentions the history of the Saivite sect of Maheshvaras which flourished in Mathura. It refers to the teacher Uditacharya and his predecessors. Uditacharya speaks of himself as the 10th in the descent from Kusika (who must have been the founder of the sect, and presumably the 1st disciple of the great Lakulisa).

The temples at Tanjore, Tirupati and other religious centres yield hundreds of inscriptions recording constructions, and various types of offerings to the temples. For its many - sided activities, the temple received donations in land, cash, cattle etc.; it apportioned various lands to Gods and to the temple servants like the priests, the dancers, musicians, instrumentalists and others like the mason, the carpenter, the potter etc.

The Malkapuram inscription of Rudramadevi of the Kakatiya family is important in the sense that it mentions the activities of the Golaki *matha* belonging to Saivism. The genealogy

of the patron and the activities of the *matha*, like the establishment of a choultry, a clinic and maternity home, are mentioned in the inscription.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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- (i) How do monuments help the writing of Indian History?
- (ii) Mention how coins and inscriptions are useful for writing Indian History?

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### 4.3 LITERARY SOURCES

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Literature is also a potential source in yielding a lot of historical information. Like numismatics, archaeology, and epigraphy, literature throws a lot of light on the achievements of kings and the political, social or religious aspects of a period.

#### 4.3.1 Native Literature

The literary works produced within the country help us in the reconstruction of the past. From the Vedic literature to the Vijayanagara period, there are many works which are utilised for political, social and cultural history. Linguistic specialists have extracted from the works of grammarians and other authors, many incidental references to the ancient tradition, which collectively amount to a considerable addition to historical knowledge. The Rig Vedic and Later Vedic literatures give us the names of the tribal chiefs and information about the extension of the authority of the Aryans in India. The contemporary social set-up, administrative organisation, economy and religion can also be visualized from it. The early Pali texts composed by Buddhists viz. the *Vinayapitaka* (dealing with the rules of the Buddhist *Sangha*), the *Suttapitaka* (dealing with the collection of Buddha's preachings and the *Abhidhammapitaka* (pertaining to the discussion of metaphysical problems), throw light on the changing patterns of life and thought. The Buddhist *Jatakas*, *Divyavadana*, *Mahavastu* and the *Milindapanho* are equally useful. The Epics - the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* - mention the Aryanization of the country, and throw light on the ideals of kingship, on the pattern of social relations and the preservation of *Dharma*.

The *Puranas* have religious themes, but they are also useful in providing the genealogies of various dynasties of ancient India. The most systematic record of Indian historical tradition is that preserved in the dynastic lists of the *Puranas*. Five out of the eighteen works of this class, viz., the *Vayu*, *Matsya*, *Vishnu*, *Brahmanda*, and *Bhagavata* contain such lists. The *Brahmanda* and *Bhagavata Puranas*, being comparatively late works, the lists in them are corrupt, imperfect, and of slight value. But, those in the oldest documents, the *Vayu*, *Matsya* and *Vishnu* are full, and evidently based upon good authorities. *Vishnu Purana* was composed probably in the fifth or sixth century A.D., and *Vayu* seems to go back to the middle of the fourth century A.D., and the *Matsya* is probably intermediate in date between the two. On the

basis of the Chandragupta Maurya-Seleucus Nikator synchronism, the dates of the rule of different dynasties are fixed by scholars. Even though the *Puranas* try to mention the dynastic lists from the beginning of the Kaliyuga, scholars consider their lists from 5th century B.C. onwards as genuine, as they get corroborated by other sources. The succession of different dynasties and the lists of kings and their periods of rule are given in a detailed manner. The *Puranic* material closes with the rise of the Gupta dynasty. There are no doubt a number of discrepancies in different *Puranas* regarding the data supplied, but the usefulness of the *Puranas* for political history is never questioned. The Buddhist and Jain literatures supplement and correct the *Puranic* evidence.

These chronologies or connected dynastic accounts end with the *Puranas*. None of the later supplies this type of information. However, a number of biographies of rulers exist. Though these praise the kings sky-high, the historical material can be easily found out. *Harshacharita* by Banabhatta, who was noted for his use of Sanskrit prose, *Vikramankadevacharita* by Bilhana, and *Prithvirajaraso* by Chand Bardai, might be cited as examples.

There are also a few local chronicles which describe the history of a region. Mention must be made of the work *Rajatarangini* which was written by Kalhana in 1150 A.D. It deals with the history of Kashmir. The author collected information from the records that were available to him, and also checked it up with the royal inscriptions. This method of critical examination is worthy of note. The history of Gujarat has also been reconstructed with the help of a number of records.

Among the works which deal with subjects other than political history, mention should be made of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* which guided the Mauryan administration and of other kingdoms. The king's duties, the code of conduct of officers, agriculture and industry, taxation, the inter-state relations etc., are all detailed in this work. Smritis like the *Manusmriti*, *Yajnavalkyasmriti*, *Naradasmriti* etc., also deal with state and the legal system. *Yajnavalkyasmriti* was commented upon by Vijnaneswara in his *Mitakshara*. Vijnaneswara lived during the time of Vikramaditya VI (1076-1126 A.D.), the Chalukya ruler of Kalyani. Vikramaditya VI's successor, Someswara III was the author of *Abhilashitarthachintamani* which is an encyclopaedic work. *Chaturvargachintamani* of Hemadri deals with religious matters in a detailed manner. The *Vrata-Khanda* and *Dana-Khanda* sections of this work are very important. Hemadri was a minister of the Yadava ruler, Mahadeva (1261-71 A.D.) Coming to the Vijayanagar period, *Amuktamalyada* (in Telugu) of Krishnadevaraya (1509-29 A.D.) is very important for the study of state system and religion of the Vijayanagar period.

We have another type which is not so valuable, *Puranic* and legendary literature. *Sthalapuranas* are very late, and generally worthless for purposes of history. When used judiciously, the biographies of saints, such as those contained in the *Periyapuranam*, the great treasure house of biographies of Saiva saints are of value. The *Guruparampara* takes a similar position in the Vaishnava system. Some works like Tamil *Ulas* are quasi-historical in character, and one can expect to gain better information from them, than from legendary lore.

Another important source of history is ballads. The value of ballads can hardly be underestimated for the study of Ancient History of India. The ballad is a simple popular poem devoid of much poetic ambition. Some historical events have been cast into that form of

narration eminently fitted for oral circulation among the people. The *Palnati Vira Charitra* and *Katamaraju Gathalu* belong to such category. Those ballads are not without value in that they exhibit the popular reactions to the events they commemorate. In recent days, oral histories, relating to the details of the actual happenings as witnessed by elders or learned people, form an important source for understanding the past.

#### 4.3.2 Foreign Literature

Foreign literature is useful for historical reconstruction because of its unbiassed character. But, it suffers from the ignorance of writers of the language and customs of the people about whom they were writing.

We have good information about the conquest of India by Alexander. Again, the account of Megasthenes, who was the ambassador of Seleucus Nikator in the court of Chandragupta Maurya, is very useful for its elaborate description of the Mauryan administration, and that of the capital Pataliputra. This material is quoted by later writers like Justin, Strabo and Arrian. For knowing the details of the Roman trade with India, we have to depend on the anonymous account, *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, which belongs to the 1st century A.D. It describes the voyage of a sailor who started from the area of the Red Sea and visited the Indian ports. The kings of various areas, the exports and imports of particular places, the names of various ports and internal market places, are all given; and they help us in the reconstruction of the commercial activity of India with Rome. It also throws light on the contacts that the Indian ports on the East established with Southeast Asia. Ptolemy's *Geography*, written in the middle of the 2nd century A.D., mentions various places in India, and their political and commercial importance, confirming many of the details that were given in the *Periplus*.

Next to Greco-Roman sources, we may mention the accounts of the Chinese writers. Fahien, Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing travelled in India and visited places of Buddhist importance and left accounts of them. The first visited India in the 5th century A.D., while the other two in the 7th century A.D. As their main purpose in coming to India was to visit Buddhist places, they noted secular matters incidentally. Fahien does not mention the name of the contemporary Gupta emperor, Chandragupta II. However, Hiuen Tsang left us an account of his royal master, Harsha and other contemporary rulers. Their accounts indicate the position of Buddhism in India at the respective periods.

We may now turn to the Muslim accounts which throw light on the circumstances that led to the establishment of Turko-Afghan power in India. The history of the Delhi Sultanate is reconstructed with the help of these contemporary or later accounts. Alberuni, who accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni, wrote an account of India. He learnt Sanskrit to understand the ancient culture of the country as depicted in the Sanskrit works.

For the reconstruction of the history of the Delhi Sultanate, Minhajuddin's *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri* that was written in the middle of the 13th century A.D., is very useful. It narrates the conquest of India by Mohammad of Ghor, and the foundation of the Turkish kingdom in India, and its history up to 1260 A.D. Amir Khusru's *Khazain-ul-Futuh* belongs to the reign of Alauddin Khilji and mentions his various conquests. Ziauddin Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, written during the time of Firuz Shah Tughlak, deals with the history of the period from the reign of Balban to the sixth year of the reign of Firuz Shah. Later works like *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi* by Ferishta and *Burhan-i-maasir* by Syed Ali help us in reconstructing the history of the

Bahmanis of Gulbarga and of the subsequent families like the Adil Shahis of Bijapur and the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar. They also throw light on the relations of these families with the contemporary Vijayanagar kings.

In addition to the Muslim histories, there are a number of Italian and Portuguese accounts which must also be consulted for writing on the Medieval period. Marco Polo, the Italian traveller, visited Andhra and South India, and made note of the important ports and their trading activity. The diamond and textile industries in Andhra and the pearls in the Pandyan kingdom, are described in his account. The Italian traveller, Niccolo de Conti, the Persian ambassador, Abdur Razzak, and the Portuguese travellers, Paes and Nuniz, left their accounts which glorify the Vijayanagar empire.

These accounts describe graphically the capital city of Vijayanagar, the palace and the court life, the society, the peculiar practice of *Sati-Sahagamana* and the religious festivals of the time.

The sources mentioned above are to be utilised for the reconstruction of Indian history. As there is no connected history of a region or a dynasty, barring very few, the political as well as the cultural history has to be drawn from diverse sources.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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- (i) What are the important indigenous literary sources for writing Indian History ?

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- (ii) What are the important foreign literary sources for the reconstruction of Indian History ?

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### 4.4 LET US SUM UP

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A variety of sources are available for writing Indian History. Monuments, coins, and the inscriptions are the archaeological sources. Among the literary sources, some are indigenous, and some foreign.

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### 4.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - ANSWERS

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1. (i) Monuments tell us the history of the period to which they belong. The temples of different periods, the Buddhist monuments, like the stupas, the architecture of

the Mughals, the monuments of Vijayanagar period, the cave paintings of Ajanta, the forts and other buildings help us to write the history of the country.

(ii) The Roman coins that were found in our country tell us about the trading contacts between India and Rome in the ancient times. The Gupta coins tell us about the Gupta Kings. Samudra Gupta's coins tell us about his accomplishments. Inscriptions help us in writing the political, social and economic history of the country. The Allahabad inscription gives information on Samudragupta's conquests. The Aihole inscription tells us that Pulakesin II defeated Harsha.

2. (i) Indigenous literary sources for writing Indian History could be classified into two categories, (1) Religious and the other (2) Secular. Buddhist and Jain works, the *Vedas*, *Puranas*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are the important religious sources. *Arthasastra*, *Rajatarangini*, *Bana's Harsha Charita* are the important secular sources.

(ii) For the early period, we have the Greco-Roman works, of which the *Indica* of Megasthenes is important. The Chinese works of Fahien provide useful information for the Gupta period. Alberuni's works are valuable sources for the early Medieval period. The works of Italians, Portuguese and the Persians like Marcopolo, Nicolo Conti and Abul Razzak, are valuable sources of history for the Vijayanagar period.

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#### 4.6 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each

1. What is Epigraphy? How is it useful for the reconstruction of Ancient Indian History?
2. How do archeological sources help us in the reconstruction of Indian History?
3. Estimate the contribution of native literary sources for the reconstruction of Ancient and Medieval Indian History.
4. To what extent the foreign literary sources help us in studying the history of India upto 1526 A.D.?

II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each

1. What do you mean by "Numismatics"? How far can this be utilised as a source for the study of economic and religious history of India?
2. How far the Ashokan edicts help in knowing about Ashoka and Mauryans?
3. Narrate the historical details that are provided by the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II?
4. Assess the type of information that is supplied by the Vedas
5. Describe the historical value of Kalhana's 'Rajatarangini'
6. State the information that is found in 'Indica' and 'Periplus of the Erythraean Sea'

7. What valuable historical information was provided by Fahien, Hiuen-Tsang and Itsing?
8. Estimate the contribution was that was made by the European travellers for the study of Medieval Indian History upto 1526 A.D.

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#### 4.7 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Majumdar, R.C. & Pusalkar, A.D. (Eds.) : *The Vedic Age, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series, Volume I.*
2. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. : *A History of South India.*
3. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. : *History of India, Volume I.*
4. Sathianatha Aiyar, R. : *History of India, Volume I*
5. Smith, V.A. : *Oxford History of India.*

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## UNIT - 5 : STONE AGE CULTURES

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### Contents

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Chronology of Stone Age Cultures
- 5.3 Pleistocene period
- 5.4 Palaeolithic tools
  - 5.4.1 Lower Palaeolithic habitations
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  - 5.4.3 Upper Palaeolithic tools
- 5.5 Mesolithic tools and sites
  - 5.5.1 Important aspects of Mesolithic culture
- 5.6 Changes in Neolithic culture
  - 5.6.1 Chronology and sites of Neolithic culture
  - 5.6.2 Neolithic cultures region-wise
  - 5.6.3 Characteristics in the North
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  - 5.6.5 Features in the East
  - 5.6.6 Importance of Neolithic Cultures
  - 5.6.7 Evolution of technology and economy
- 5.7 Art in the Stone age
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- 5.9 Let us Sum Up
- 5.10 Check Your Progress : Answers
- 5.11 Examination Model Questions
- 5.12 Books for further reading

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### 5.0 OBJECTIVES

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From a study of this Unit, you should be able to know :

1. the chronology of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic ages;
2. the habitations of the Stone Age cultures in India;
3. the tools used in those cultures;
4. the regional differences among the Stone age cultures of India;

5. the importance of Neolithic culture; and
6. about art and religion in the Stone Age cultures.

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this Unit, we shall study the patterns of the earliest habitation of man in the Indian sub-continent. This period is known as Pre-historic, whose material is derived from archaeological sources alone, until the Harappan times. The historical period is based on written records which furnish definite information for the reconstruction of man's activities. For the life of the earliest man, one has to depend on the stone, bone and metallic tools that he left. The remains that were left by early man are now dated by scientific tests like the Carbon-14 method and Pollen analysis.

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## 5.2 CHRONOLOGY OF STONE AGE CULTURES

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It is believed that man appeared on the Indian sub-continent 500,000 years ago. The primitive Stone Age cultures in a nomadic stage continued upto 8,000 B.C. - 6000 B.C. During the Neolithic period, he began cultivation and had a settled life. During these periods, various changes took place in man's physical, technological, economic, social and cultural activity. Three stages of development are clearly known from the materials : Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age (about 300,000 to 20,000 years), Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age (about 10,000 to 8,000 B.C.) and Neolithic or New Stone Age (from 6,000 B.C. to about 1,000 B.C.)

### 5.2.1 Points of caution

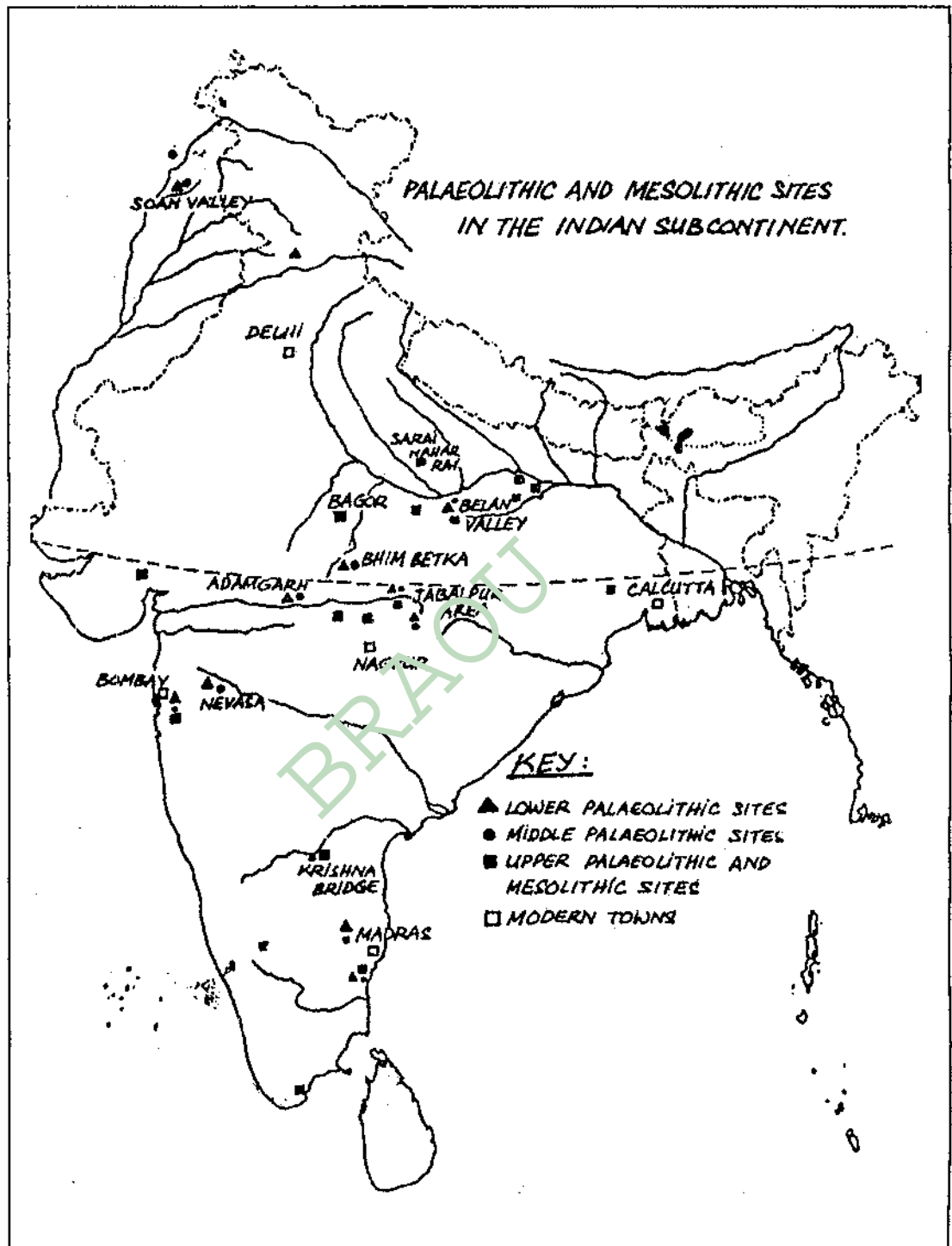
We must remember that the above stages were never distinctly separate. They succeeded one after the other in the natural course. During the period of evolution, there was cultural overlapping with the earlier one. It is not as though the Mesolithic phase completely replaced the Palaeolithic, but the last phase of the Palaeolithic overlaps with the Mesolithic. At some places, there is continuity of cultures from Palaeolithic to the Neolithic - Chalcolithic (copper and bronze using) cultures, without any outside influence (e.g. Belan Valley in Uttar Pradesh). We must note that Stone Age sites are distributed uniformly all over India except in the alluvial on sand and earth-deposited plains of the Indus and the Ganges. The changes in the life of the man took place due to two factors viz., geography and techno-economic developments. Now, we discuss the climate of the times, before we take up the changes that occurred in the tool techniques and economy of the period.

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## 5.3 PLEISTOCENE PERIOD

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There are a number of geological changes that occurred in the Pleistocene period which permitted man to adapt himself to the situation. It is said that Pleistocene glaciation (or Ice Ages) occurred in four phases in the Himalayan zone. This affected Kashmir with increasing and decreasing ice activity. The earliest human activity in Kashmir can be traced back to Second Interglacial phase (or Middle Pleistocene), datable to 400,000 - 200,000 years ago. The glacier did not affect Peninsular and Central India directly, but the latter areas had some heavy rains which are indicated by some erosion and deposition. The earliest habitations of man, as revealed by the Lower, Middle and Upper Palaeolithic cultures, fit into Middle and Later Pleistocene period which corresponds to 400,000 and 20,000 years ago. We are now living in the geological



period, called Holocene, which began 10,000 years ago and include the Mesolithic and Neolithic cultures.

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## **5.4 PALAEOLITHIC TOOLS**

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During the large span of period covering the Palaeolithic period, man began to experiment on producing better tools which were needed by him to suit the climate. This development in the tools permits us to classify the Palaeolithic period into three phases viz., Lower, Middle and Upper. The tools vary from one region to another; some are found along the river-beds and others in rock-shelters.

### **5.4.1 Lower Palaeolithic Habitations**

The earliest habitation of man in South Asia is to be found in the Himalayan area, sometime between 300,000 and 120,000 years ago. The earliest of the Lower Palaeolithic tools are found in the valley of the river Soan, a tributary of the river Indus in West Pakistan. The tools found here include the characteristic heavy hand-axes and pebble-chopper tools, along with finely worked hand-axes, knives and cores. The flake stone industry is a development here, which we find in Middle Palaeolithic period of other areas. Near Madras in South India are found hand-axes and other tools. These are compared with the Acheulian type of tools found in other parts of the world. This type of tools are found around Bhimbetaka in Central India and in the Belan valley in Uttar Pradesh. These two sites have caves and rock shelters which must have been used for seasonal camps. People who introduced this hand-axe technique seem to have spread into other parts of the Peninsula and followed the usual hunting and food-gathering occupations.

### **5.4.2 Middle Palaeolithic Industries**

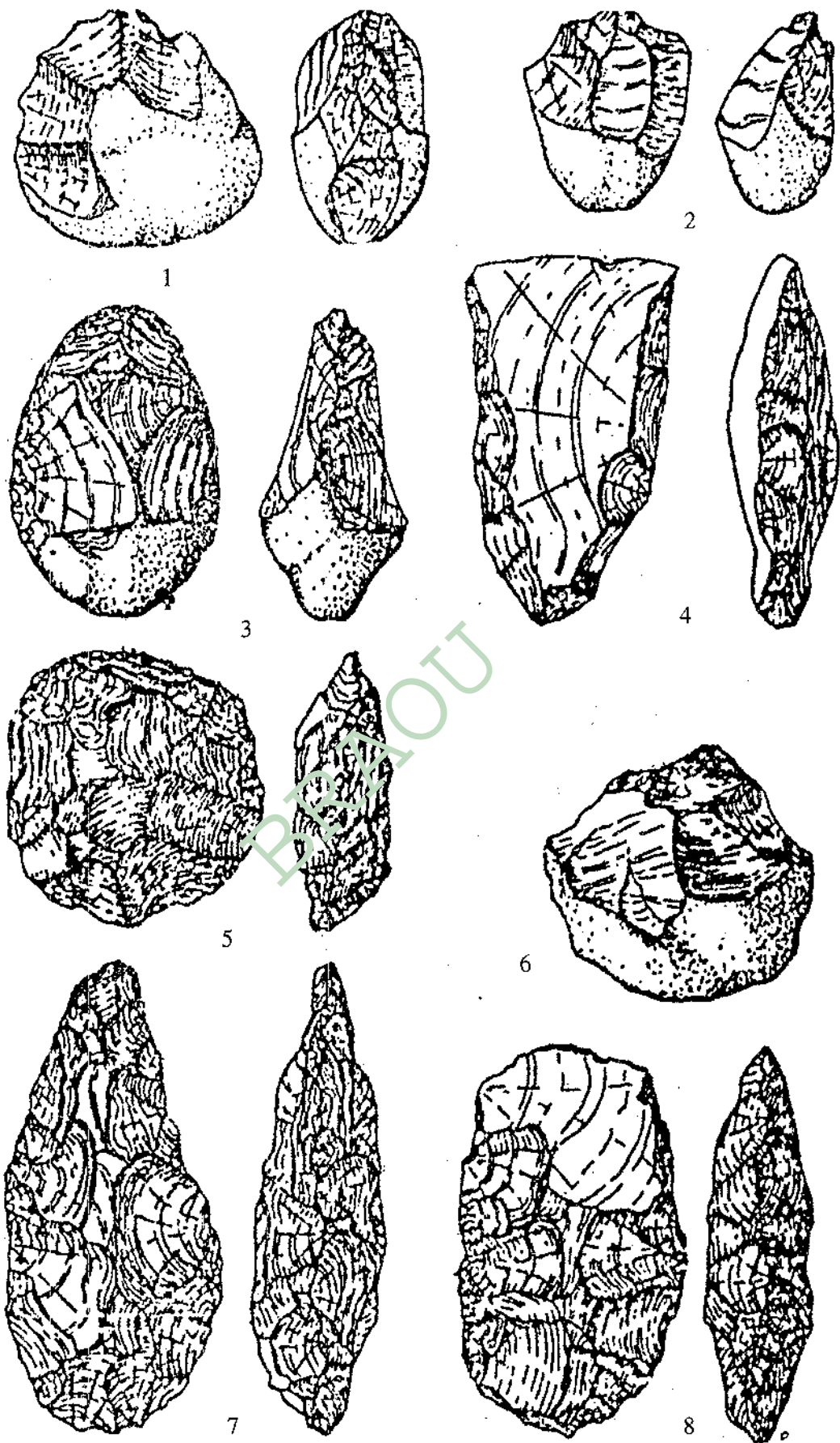
The industries of the Middle Palaeolithic period have a development over those of the Early Palaeolithic period. They are all flake (stone) industries, though there are marked regional variations. They may be dated to 40,000 - 11,000 years ago. Nevasa in Maharashtra is a noted site which yielded flake tools in plenty. The flake industry of the South is different from that found in Northern Punjab and the Indus plains.

The tool types of this period are points, borers, scrapers and nodules, usually made from siliceous rocks like chert and jasper.

### **5.4.3 Upper Palaeolithic Tools**

The Upper Palaeolithic phase is coeval or contemporary with the last phase of the Pleistocene period, when the climate was comparatively warm. The tools of this period were manufactured by men of the modern type, called Homo Sapiens, about 20,000 years ago. The Upper Palaeolithic sites cover a wide variety of ecological or environmental zones, including deserts and forested hills. Blade and burin are the typical tool industries which come from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The Bhimbetaka hill in Madhya Pradesh has yielded the material from caves and rock-shelters. Tools have been picked up from the sand-dunes of Gujarat and Rajasthan as well.

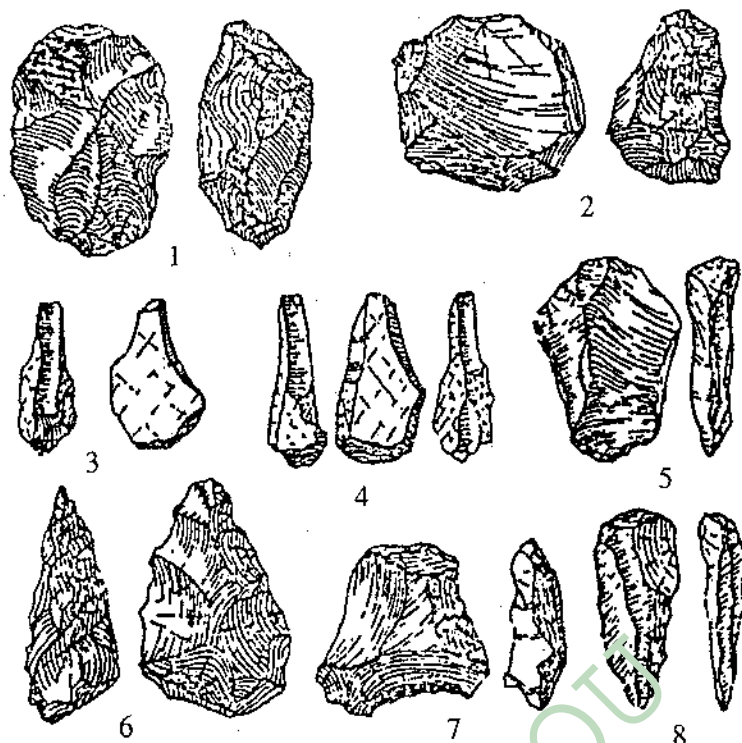
Along with the blades and burins which are the characteristic tools of the period, scrapers, points, borers and bored stones are also discovered. These were made of quartzite or siliceous



Lower Palaeolithic tools : 1-4 Punjab, 1 and 2 Chopping tools, 3 hand-axe made from pebble, 4 cleaver made from large flake, 5-8 Madras, 5 discoidal core, 6 chopping tools, 7 hand-axe, 8 cleaver

LOWER PALAEO LITHIC TOOLS

rock. Bone tools occur for the first time during this period. The earliest art and ornamentation are noticed in the rock paintings at Bhimbetaka caves and the Adamgarh Hill.



Sanghao : Middle and Upper Palaeolithic artefacts from the excavation. 1 unstruck discoidal core, 2 struck core; 3 and 4 burrs, 5 flake struck from prepared core, 6 hand-axe, 7 hollow scraper made on flake, 8 pointed flake struck from prepared core.

Sanghao : Middle and Upper Palaeolithic artefacts from the excavation

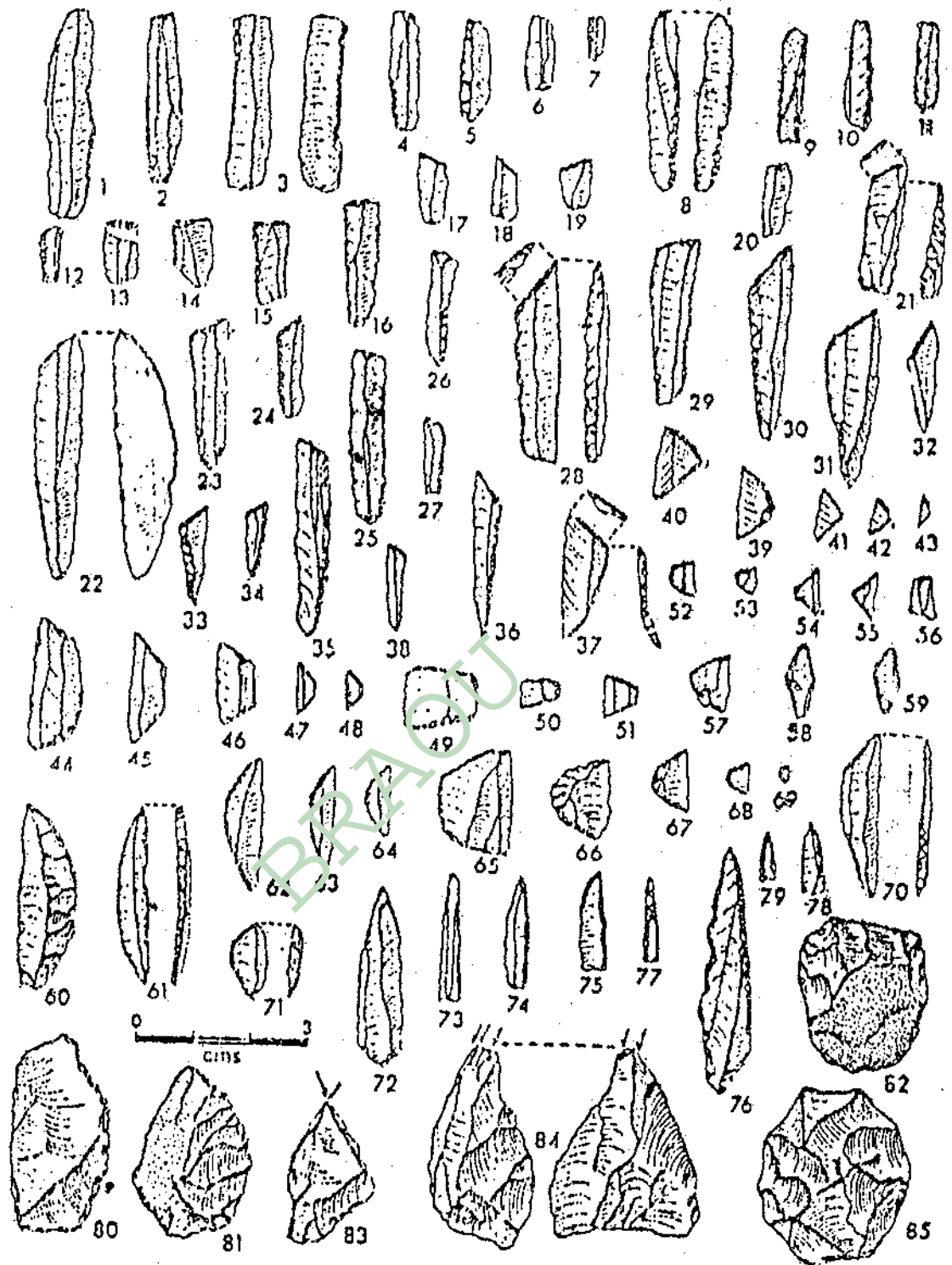
## 5.5 MESOLITHIC TOOLS AND SITES

The Mesolithic culture is dated from 8000 B.C. to 4000 B.C. The tools are microliths or small stone tools. These are mostly found in the Chotanagpur and in the area South of the river Krishna. The Mesolithic phase developed from Upper Palaeolithic, and sometimes, from Middle Palaeolithic tool traditions of Central and Western India. Blades also are found along with microlithic tools. Two important sites have thrown new light on the Mesolithic period. One is Sarai Nahar Rai in Uttar Pradesh which yielded the earliest evidence of man-made dwelling, and the other is Bagor in Rajasthan where bones of domesticated animals are found.

Most of the Mesolithic sites are open-air sites, though some are available from the rock-shelters. Besides small tools, bow and arrow for hunting, and new techniques in fishing were introduced at this stage. Besides bone, wood also might have been used by them.

### 5.5.1 Important Aspects of Mesolithic Culture

The Mesolithic period adjusted itself to a warmer climatic change of the Holocene period. These changes profoundly altered the plants and animals, and also made it possible to human beings to move into new areas. Besides hunting, they had pastoral economy also. This is evidenced by the bones of domesticated animals like the dog, cattle, and the goat. A wide



Bagor : Mesolithic artefacts : 1-12 retouched blades, 13-29 truncated blades, 30-43 triangle, 44-48 and 52-57 trapezes, 49-51 tranverse arrowheads, 38-59 thomboids, 60-71 lunates, 72-79 trimmed points, 80-82 scrapers on flakes; 83 and 84 burins, 85 unstruck disoidal core (after V.N. Misra)

**Bagor : Mesolithic artefacts**

variety of game animals have also been found in the Mesolithic sites. Yet, there is no direct evidence for plant food during this period. This phase is characterised by art in the form of rock painting and bone engravings with geometric designs. It may be concluded that Mesolithic is a transitional phase from Palaeolithic to Neolithic.

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## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. Of the two geological periods, Pleistocene and Holocene, which was the first and which was the later?

2. The economy of Palaeolithic age was based mainly on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

3. The Mesolithic tools were made mainly from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

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## 5.6 CHANGES IN THE NEOLITHIC CULTURE

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In the Neolithic phase also, stone continued to be used for tools. But, the significant change is that, the people used tools and implements of polished stone. Stone axe is the characteristic tool of this period. It is known that there was a major change in the economy during this period throughout the world. This was because of the discovery of agriculture and domestication of animals for food production. This has led to the concept of living in settled groups. Neolithic people had a knowledge of pottery-making, spinning, weaving, basket-making etc.

### 5.6.1 Chronology and sites of Neolithic Culture

It was formerly believed that the domestication of animal and a full-fledged pastoral or grazing economy in South Asia were comparable to such settlements in West Asia. It is true that the earliest evidence of agriculture in the whole world is available at sites in Syria and Iran. Owing to diffusion and migration of the people, Northwestern India learnt agriculture as is known from Kile Gul Mohammad in Baluchistan.

As pointed out earlier, the excavations at Bagor in Rajasthan have proved the existence of domestication of animals even during the Mesolithic phase, sometime in 4,500 B.C. At Koldihawa in the Belan valley in Uttar Pradesh is found evidence of cereal or food grain at the Neolithic level, datable to 4,500 B.C. However, the Neolithic Cultures of Peninsular India do not yield evidence of domestication before 2,300 B.C.

### 5.6.2 Neolithic Cultures, Region-wise

The life in the New Stone Age was different in different regions of the country. The nature of settlement patterns, the varied styles of pottery and economy, in general, make the Peninsular cultures of this period different from those of Northwestern India and Eastern India. We shall now take up the regional variations of the Neolithic Cultures in India under the following heads; North, South and East.

### 5.6.3 Characteristics in the North

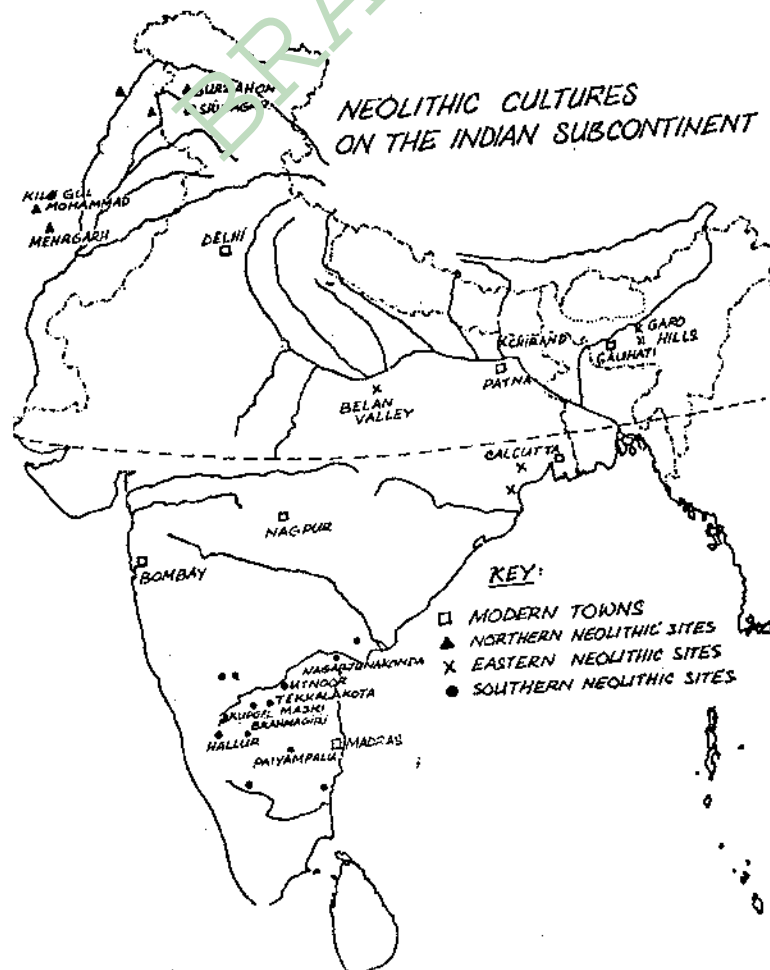
The excavations at Burzahom near Srinagar give us an idea of North Indian Neolithic phase. The earliest date for the site is 2400 B.C. An important feature here is that the people lived on a plain, in what are called pit-dwellings. They used tools of polished stone, bone tools and needles, harpoons (spear-like missiles), and awls (small pointed tools for making holes). But, they were not acquainted with agriculture or domestication of animals. They seem

to have had hunting and fishing economy. They used rough grey pottery and probably mud bricks.

#### 5.6.4 Sites and features in the South

In the South, Neolithic settlements are found South of the river Godavari. A large number of ground-stone axes are found in the Neolithic layers. Many sites have been excavated in South India: Maski, Brahmagiri, Hallur, Tekkalakota, Sanganakallu, T. Narsipur, Piklihal (Karnataka), Utnur, Kesarapalle, Nagarjunakonda, Virapuram (Andhra Pradesh), Paiyampalli and Mangalam (Tamilnadu). This phase is assigned to 2500 B.C. - 1000 B.C., scientific date being 2300 B.C for the remains at Utnur.

The settlements of these people are located on the top of granite hills or on plains near river banks. The characteristic feature is that, the people were cattle rearers. It is believed that they had seasonal camps surrounded by cow-pens. They gathered cow-dung and set fire to it when they left the camp. One important site is Utnur. They also domesticated sheep and goats. Their houses were probably made of mud and reed (grass like plant). Mud floors and circular hutments indicate that agriculture became important for them. They produced crops like ragi and horse-gram (ulavalu). Their pottery was hand-made in the beginning and wheel-made later, with a number of shapes, used for storing food grains and milk, and also for cooking items of food. Some sites like Tekkalakota, Hallur, Paiyampalli, Piklihal etc. have yielded stone blade industry of the earlier tradition. Copper was used after 1500 B.C. The Southern Neolithic settlements show a continuity of tradition.



### **5.6.5 Features in the East**

In the case of the Eastern Neolithic culture, we have only surface collections, and very few excavated materials. In the Garo Hills of Meghalaya are found the flaked (cut or chiselled) stone-axes. It is not clear whether these axes could be related to the Northern or Southern Neolithic Culture. The settlements are found on the Northern spurs of the Vindhya hills in Mirzapur and Banda districts of Uttar Pradesh. Exploration in Eastern Bihar, Western part of Bengal and some parts of Orissa, and limited excavation have brought material which is insufficient for the reconstruction of the culture. Rice was probably cultivated in the Eastern Neolithic phase.

### **5.6.6. Importance of Neolithic Cultures**

The Neolithic Cultures have revealed the existence of the villages for the first time. The first crops that were cultivated in India are known to us, along with a predominant pastoral (grazing) economy. All these characteristics of a settled life in the Neolithic period form the basis for the later civilizations.

### **5.6.7 Evolution of Technology and Economy**

Food is necessary for the survival of man. We have sketched how the earliest men, either as hunting groups or primitive agricultural groups, provided themselves with food. We see a conscious attempt of man in improving the tools he made in course of time. That depended on the availability of raw material and also the purpose of the tool. While Lower Palaeolithic man used the core (undressed or non-cut stone), the Middle Palaeolithic man worked on the flakes (cut or chiselled ones) which were sharper and better used for hunting. The people of the Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods produced good quality tools. A number of factory sites are found in Central India where a particular raw material was available. These industries gradually developed in the Neolithic period, and were used for agricultural purposes. These new tools must have been exchanged among hunting groups which did not have the knowledge of the new technique. Thus we see the coexistence of hunting communities with pastoral and agricultural communities, because of the varied climate of the subcontinent.

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## **5.7 ART IN THE STONE AGE**

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During the Stone Age, man had to depend on tools and weapons made of stone. He had to select his habitation where the stone was available. In spite of its limitations, Stone Age is marked by man's artistic skill as well. It is doubtful whether this can be considered as an art or it reflected only utility aspects. The rock paintings of Central India of the Upper Palaeolithic phase or those of Karnataka of the Neolithic times, reflect cultural traditions that developed in the arts. The content of the rock-art was animals or hunting scenes. Men use bow and arrow, or spear to kill animals. Men are depicted with full of life and action. In South India, the Neolithic phase had rock-cuts by hammering the surface of the granite rocks. Painting on pottery, and modelling on clay for preparing the terracotta (reddish brown clay or earth) figures of the Neolithic period add to the rock art.

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## 5.8 RELIGION IN THE STONE AGE

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It is difficult to know the religious beliefs of the Stone Age communities. But, the data from hunting groups of today would indicate that the early man must have buried the dead, and religious beliefs centred round success in hunting. From the Neolithic times, when agriculture started, beliefs centred round fertility and after-life. The features of belief and worship contained in folk religion must have had their origins in the Neolithic period.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Mention the changes which took place in the Neolithic Age.

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2. Describe the chief differences between the Neolithic cultures of the North and South

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3. Write about art and religion in the Stone Age

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### 5.9 LET US SUM UP

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1. a) The existence of man in the Indian sub-continent can be traced back to 5,00,000 years.  
b) Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age existed about 3,00,000 to 20,000 years ago  
c) Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age existed roughly between 10,000 and 8,000 B.C.  
d) Neolithic or New Stone Age can be dated from 6,000 to 1,000 B.C
2. In the Palaeolithic Age, man slowly learnt the technique of making stone tools. The earliest Palaeolithic tools are found in the Soan river valley in the Sub-continent.

3. The tools mostly used in the Middle Stone Age were borers, scrapers and nodules.
4. In the New Stone Age, people used polished stone tools. Stone-axe was the chief tool.
5. The Stone Age cultures in India had distinct regional variations.
6. In the Neolithic age, people led a settled life with a predominantly pastoral economy. During this period, the first villages came into existence and the first crops were cultivated.

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## 5.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I.
  1. Pleistocene was the first and Holocene the later
  2. Hunting and food-gathering
  3. Chert and Jasper
- II.
  1. The people of the Neolithic age continued to use stone tools. But, they made the tools out of polished stones. Agriculture and domestication of animals started in this age. The beginning of agriculture brought with it the beginning of settled life. New crafts like pottery, spinning and weaving also emerged in this age.
  2. The Neolithic people in the North do not seem to have been acquainted with agriculture and domestication of animals. They probably had a hunting and fishing economy. In the South, a characteristic of the Neolithic people was that, they were mostly cattle-herders. Evidence of their settlement in huts is available. They made use of pots not only as storing vessels but also for cooking and eating.
  3. The Stone Age man had a specific sense of art. The rock paintings, paintings on pottery and terracotta objects are the evidence for the art of that period. The subject matter of their painting was mainly hunting of animals.  
  
We have no clear evidence for the religion of the Stone Age people. They buried the dead. With the development of agriculture, religious beliefs might have developed.

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## 5.11 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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- I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each
  1. How did stone technology develop during the Palaeolithic period? Give examples to show regional variations.
  2. Bring out the characteristic features of the Neolithic cultures that developed in the different regions of India.
  3. Trace the evolution of technology and economy during the Stone Age.
- II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each
  1. Mention the broad chronological division of the Stone Age cultures
  2. What do you know about the Pleistocene Period?

3. Describe the stone tools belonging to the Upper Palaeolithic group
4. Write about the Mesolithic tools and sites
5. Examine the development of art in the Stone Age

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#### 5.12 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Romila Thapar : *History of India, Vol. I*
2. Romila Thapar : *Studies in Ancient Indian Social History*
3. Jha, D.N. : *Ancient India - An Introductory Outline*
4. Sharma, R.S. : *Ancient India*
5. Allchin, B & R : *The Birth of Indian Civilization*
6. Basham, A.L. : *The Wonder that was India*
7. Kosambi, D.D. : *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India:  
An Historical Outline*
8. Sankalia, H.D. : *An Introduction to Indian Archaeology*
9. Majumdar, R.C., : *An Advanced History of India*  
Raychaudhuri, H.C. and Datta, K.

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## UNIT - 6 : HARAPPAN CULTURE

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### Contents

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Origin, extent and chronology
- 6.3 Cultural uniformity of the Harappan sites
- 6.4 Indus Script
- 6.5 Structural remains
  - 6.5.1 Citadel areas
  - 6.5.2 The Great Bath and granaries
  - 6.5.3 Town Planning
- 6.6 Political organisation
- 6.7 Economic conditions
  - 6.7.1 Agricultural economy
  - 6.7.2 Technology and crafts
  - 6.7.3 Trade
- 6.8 Social and religious life of the Indus people
- 6.9 Art
- 6.10 Decline of the civilisation
- 6.11 Other Chalcolithic cultures in India
- 6.12 Let us Sum Up
- 6.13 Check Your Progress : Answers
- 6.14 Examination Model Questions
- 6.15 Books for further reading

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### 6.0 OBJECTIVES

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A study of this Unit should enable you to know about :

- 1) the origin, extent and period of the Harappan culture ;
- 2) the structural remains of the civilization;
- 3) the political organisation in those days;
- 4) the social and economic conditions then prevailing;
- 5) religion and art in that culture and;
- 6) the causes for the decline of the civilization.

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## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this Unit, we shall study that period of Indian pre-history which is marked by the first extensive use of metals, and the first evidence of writing. This does not, however, mean that other materials like stone, wood or bone had ceased to be used. The fact is that the first use of metal brought in a new element of technological development. This helped the expansion of the agricultural economy in some regions of the Indian sub-continent, which made it possible for the first cities to come into existence in this part of ancient world. It will be wrong on our part to single out the Harappan culture as the only metal-using one, though this had the unique position of being the only urbanized community in the third millennium B.C. in South Asia. On the other hand, we have several metal and stone-using cultures that developed about the same time as the Harappan civilization, but mostly after it. Their economies were based mainly on pastoralism and agriculture, but they did not have an urban character. All these settlements put together are known by the term Chalcolithic (chalco meaning 'metal' and lithic meaning 'stone'). Thus, the Harappan culture is the oldest, and by far, the most developed Chalcolithic culture that we know in India. In this Unit, our main concern is to describe the origin, nature and decline of the Harappan civilization. However, since we should like to view this period in its totality, we shall dwell briefly on understanding the character of the Chalcolithic cultures, particularly those of the Deccan.

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## 6.2 ORIGIN, EXTENT AND CHRONOLOGY

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Around the beginning of the third millennium B.C., after a series of pre-Harappan cultural patterns of settlement had evolved, there emerged what is known as the Indus Valley or the Harappan civilization. This civilization was clearly marked by an urban character, and by the use of not only copper, but also bronze. It is commonly called Harappan civilization after the type site Harappa situated in the Montgomery district of Punjab. It was first discovered in 1921. However, this culture covered many other parts of Punjab as well; Sind, Baluchistan, Gujarat, Rajasthan and some parts of Western Uttar Pradesh. By using the term Harappan culture, we can identify the common cultural features that marked the mature stage of development not only at Harappa, but also at other sites that are distributed all over the North-western part of the sub-continent. The next most important Harappan site that has been discovered by the archaeologists is Mohenjodaro in Sind, which is situated 483 Kms away from Harappa.

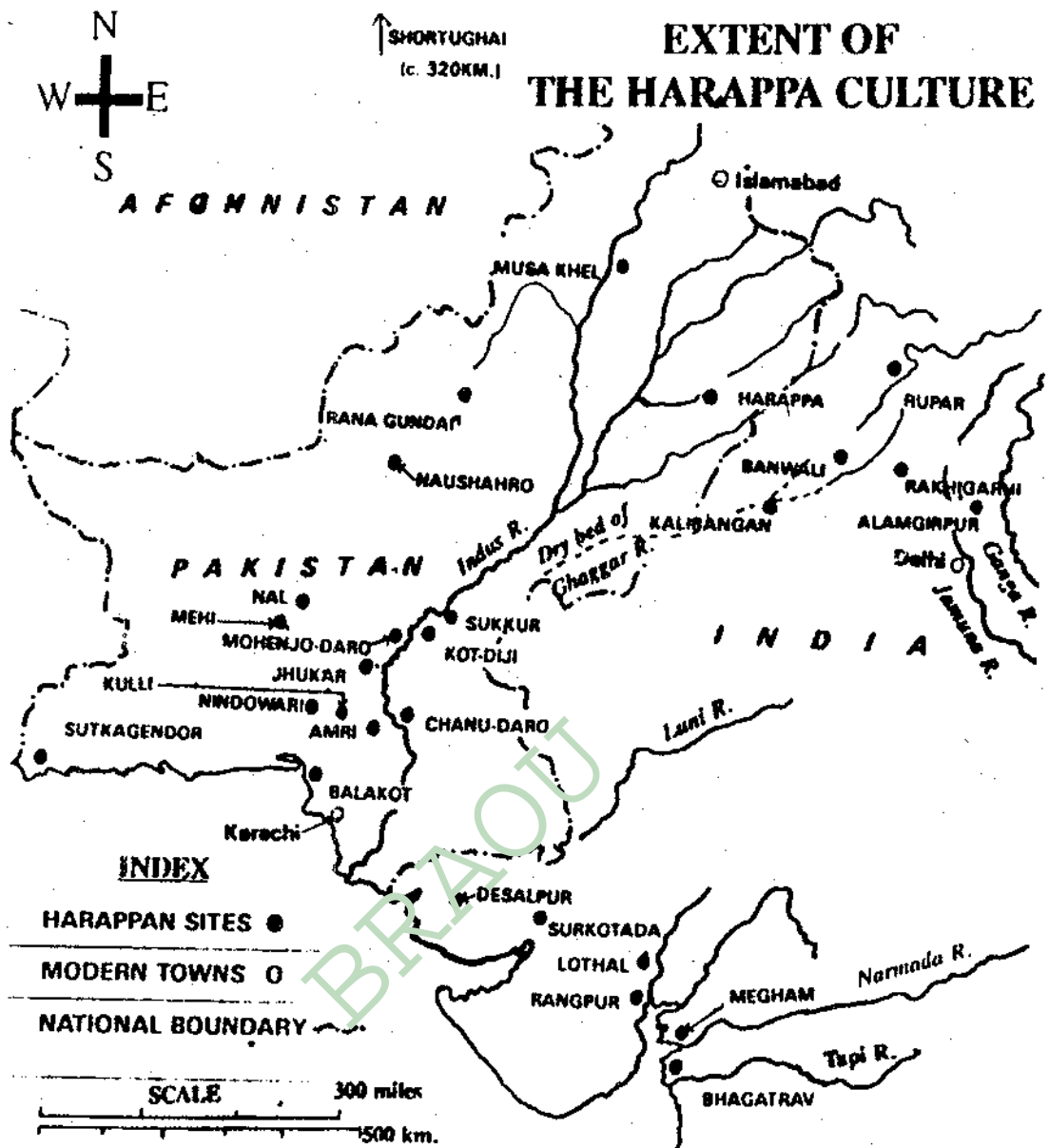
In 1947, after the Partition of India, all the well-known Harappan sites, Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Chanhudaro and Jhukar (near Larkana, Sind, Pakistan), went to Pakistan, leaving only two outposts, Kotla Nihang Khan near Ropar on the Sutlej in Punjab, and Rangapur on the Bhadar in Kathiawar, Gujarat, within the territory of India. Within about four years after the Partition, planned surveys were undertaken in India to locate more sites of the Indus Civilization in the regions nearer to Pakistan frontiers, especially in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat. In 1951-52, Dr. A. Ghosh undertook the search of Ghaggar Valley, and identified as many as 25 Harappan sites within the present borders of India, noteworthy among these was Kalibangan, (Ganganagar district in Rajasthan) which provides a sequence from the pre-Harappan to the mature-Harappan phases. After the above discoveries, as many as 22 more sites were excavated. Noteworthy among these are : Ropar and Bara (1952-55), Bhagwanpura

(1956-76), Mithal (1968), Banwali (1975-77), Manda (1976-77) and Hulas (1978-80). Simultaneously, Dr. S.R. Rao explored a large area in Gujarat including Kutch and Kathiawar, bringing the total number of Harappan sites in Gujarat to over 190. Most noteworthy sites which have been excavated in Gujarat are : Rangapur (1953), Lothal (1955-63), Prabhas Patan (1956-57), Rojdi (1957-58), Desalpur (1963-64), Surkotda (1972-75) and Dholavira (1990-91). The last mentioned site, located in Kutch district, is one of the four largest Harappan settlements in the Indo-Pak sub-continent. Prior to it, the excavations at Diamabad (1974-79) on the Pravara, a tributary of the Godavari, extended the distribution limit of the Indus Civilization further South in the Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra.

To understand the nature of Bronze Age civilization in India, the material and structural remains from these sites need to be studied. As a result of the sustained efforts of archaeologists, the vast extent of the Harappan civilization is now known to us. It extended from Jammu in the North to the Narmada Valley in the South; in the East, its frontiers extended upto the present-day Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, and in the West, upto Makran coast of Baluchistan. This cultural uniformity was the largest to be achieved in the second millennium B.C. In the vast area, besides Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, there were other important sites which had a distinctly urban character. These are Amri, Chanhu Daro, Kot Diji, Kalibangan, Lothal and Banwali.

The origin of the Harappan civilization in Northwestern India has been a matter of controversy till recently. Some archaeologists thought that it had been brought to the Indus region by the Sumerians, who were the inhabitants of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley in the present-day Iraq. Chronologically, it is in West Asia that we have the Bronze Age urban civilization which developed in the third millennium B.C. However, from recent excavations at a number of sites in Sind, Punjab, and particularly in Baluchistan, it has become evident that the Harappan civilization originated in India. This does not mean that there were no outside influences. On the contrary, much of the trade contact of the Indus region was with the Sumerian civilization in Mesopotamia, and thus, there was a lot of commercial and cultural contact between the two regions.

The earliest remains of a settled agricultural village in South Baluchistan and Sind, which can be traced back to about 4,300-3,000 B.C., are said to belong to the pre-Harappan phase. At these settlements, complex societies had emerged who were familiar with the use of metal, and were also using mud-brick constructions and forts in some cases. The sites of Kulli and Rana Ghundai in Baluchistan, Mundigak and Quetta in Afghanistan, Amri and Kot Diji in Sind, and Kalibangan in Rajasthan, all have a pre - Harappan layer of settlement. In the Harappan period, remains of mud-brick platforms, streets, drains and several other features of a mature urban civilization appear. This begins around 3,000 B.C., and is firmly established at most places around 2,500 B.C. There are many opinions among archaeologists about the chronological extent of Harappan civilization, when the cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa were first discovered. It was stated by scholars that the civilization extended from 3,250 B.C. to 2,750 B.C. However, in recent times, since many more Harappan sites have been discovered, and new methods of dating have been adopted, the Harappan civilization is now firmly placed between 2,300 B.C. and 1,750 B.C.



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

1. What is the meaning of chalcolithic ?

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2. Where did the Harappan civilization originate ?

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### **6.3 CULTURAL UNIFORMITY OF THE HARAPPAN SITES**

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An outstanding feature that distinguished the pre-Harappan phase from the Harappan phase is the striking cultural uniformity over the vast area that the latter occupied. This overall similarity of life style is apparent to us from the material and structural remains from the various cities. It is clearly seen in such aspects as town-planning, the use of standardized brick sizes, in many of the technological aspects like pottery types, the use of a standard range of copper and bronze tools, seal-cutting, bead-making, in a single writing system and in a uniform system of weights and measures. The excavated material is not identical in every city, nor is the basic lay-out of each of them exactly alike. All the same, it can be asserted that the Harappans had achieved a certain pattern of technical uniformity. This presupposes some sort of a common, fairly elaborate political and socio-economic organisation. Thus, the process that made the urban culture of the Harappans possible, caused the various little village communities and small towns to come under a single powerful economic system. This system determined the character of the complex and mature Harappan phase.

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### **6.4 INDUS SCRIPT**

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The Harappans invented the art of writing like the people of ancient Mesopotamia. Although the earliest specimen of Harappan script was noticed in 1853 A.D., and the complete script discovered by 1923 A.D., it has not been understood so far. Some try to connect it with the Dravidian or the proto-Dravidian language, others with the Sanskrit language, and still others with the Sumerian language. But none of those readings is satisfactory. As the script has not been understood, one cannot judge the Harappan contribution to literature, nor can say anything about their ideas and beliefs. Unlike the Egyptians and Mesopotamians, the Harappans did not write long inscriptions. Most inscriptions were recorded on seals, and contain only a few words. About 2000 seals have been found, and of these, a great majority carry short inscriptions with pictures of animals. These seals may have been used by propertied people to identify their private property. Altogether there are about 250 to 400 pictographs, and in the form of a picture, each letter stands for some sound, idea or object. The Harappan script is not alphabetical, but mainly pictographic. Attempts have been made to compare it with the contemporary scripts of Mesopotamia and Egypt. But, it is the native product of the Indus region, and does not show any connection with the scripts of Western Asia.

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## 6.5 STRUCTURAL REMAINS

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### 6.5.1 Citadel areas

Let us now examine in some detail the characteristics of the Harappan cities. The structural remains at Harappa and Mohenjodaro, being the largest and the most impressive, have to be dealt with separately. Indeed, it is their town-planning that really enables us to draw firm conclusions about the city life that existed in those days. Both the cities had citadel areas to the West, which were fortified. On this, the most important public buildings had been built. At Harappa, the mound of the citadel was 45-50 feet high, and at Mohenjodaro, it was 20 feet high in the South and 40 feet high in the North. Below the citadel, on the East, both the cities had a lower habitation area. This area had brick houses that were arranged in a symmetrical manner. The lower part of the city was marked by the streets which were laid on some sort of a grid plan. They were straight and cut each other at right angles, dividing the city into rectangular blocks. Some of these streets were as wide as 30 feet. Another outstanding feature of city planning was the drainage system. Drains were connected with sewers constructed under the main street. Regardless of the size of other Harappan cities, the above type of town planning was similar. Kalibangan, like Harappa, had a citadel and a lower habitation area, but Chanhudaro did not have a citadel. Both these, however, had drains and baked brick houses. At Lothal, an artificial platform on which houses of regular plan were built, has been excavated. Besides, here the urban settlement is marked by a brick dockyard indicating its importance as a port.

### 6.5.2 The Great Bath and granaries

From the type of buildings that have been found in the citadel area, it is possible to postulate that they may have been used for religious and governmental purposes. At Mohenjodaro, the Great Bath, a rectangular tank, 39 feet by 23 feet (11.88 by 7.01 metres) and 8 feet deep (2.43 metres), constructed of bricks, is the most striking structure. This was perhaps used for some ritual purpose. To its West lay a large granary, 150 feet (45.71 metres) long from East to West and 75 feet (15.23 metres) wide. At Harappa, on the other hand, we find as many as six granaries, each 50 feet by 20 feet (15.23 by 6.09 metres). To the South of the granaries lay working floors (probably for threshing the grain) in rows of circular brick platforms. Nearby were also found two-roomed barracks where probably the labourers lived. At Kalibangan too, some brick platforms were excavated which may have been used as granaries. At Lothal, besides the dockyard, the raised brick platform representing the foundation of some sort of a granary, is found. The large size of these granaries reflect the importance of storing grains, the distribution of which was probably in the hands of an administrative authority.

### 6.5.3 Town Planning

The houses in the lower part of each of these cities were of varying sizes and consisted generally of rooms constructed round a rectangular courtyard. They sometimes had two or more storeys, but they were all equipped with rubbish bins and bathrooms. In Kalibangan, some of the houses had wells. There were some bigger dwellings which may have been meant for the rich, while the smaller ones were perhaps used by the less well-to-do sections of the society. There is a conspicuous absence of any buildings in stone, and the use of burnt bricks

on a large scale is considered a great achievement of the Harappans. All in all, what impresses a lay observer about the cultural set-up of the Harappan cities is the emphasis that was laid by these ancient people on aspects of civic and public cleanliness.

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### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2**

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1. Write about town planning of the Harappan people

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2. Write about the Great Bath

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### **6.6 POLITICAL ORGANIZATION**

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Although a total excavation of many of the cities has not been done, we can draw broad conclusions about the type of life that must have prevailed. For instance, people living in the citadel area must definitely have been an elite group. They must have been people who were vested with some authority. Secondly, from the excavation as a whole, the methodical manner in which aspects of town planning were carried out, indicates that the Harappan people had developed some type of municipal administration which was under an overall state organisation. Any idea about the Harappan state as such is based on guess work since there is no written evidence to tell us about who controlled the economy, the civil government and the religious life of the state. Though archaeologists have recovered about 2500 Harappan inscriptions engraved on seals, they have not been able to decipher the script. Thus, we can only speculate the mechanism of this government and how it was able to control the various aspects of life in the individual cities that we have described above. Next, we turn to examine the ways in which the economic and social organization made it possible for the cities to survive for at least a thousand years.

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### **6.7 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

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#### **6.7.1 Agricultural Economy**

Besides structural buildings, there are other material objects found at the various Harappan sites. With regard to outlining the agrarian base, we have evidence to indicate that wheat and barley were the main food crops. Two varieties of wheat were produced. Other items that were grown were sesamum, mustard, dates, peas; and evidence for rice is only from Lothal, where

rice husks imprinted in clay and pottery have been discovered. The huge granaries found at these cities indicate clearly that there was enough surplus produced, and probably taxes must have been received in cereals. Since a major part of the area where the Harappan sites are situated is regarded as a low rainfall area, agriculture must have been dependent on irrigation. This was largely determined by the floods that inundated the banks of river Indus. Unlike Mesopotamia, no evidence of irrigation channels have been found around the Harappan sites. On the other hand, walls of burnt bricks – most of the cities situated on the bend of the river, were, in all probability, built to protect the cities from the floods that took place annually. No hoes or ploughs have been found. However, recently at Kalibangan, furrows were discovered in the pre-Harappan phase, indicating that fields were ploughed. One may postulate that ploughs similar to modern ones were used by Harappan villagers. For harvesting, stone sickles may have been used. Most of these food-producing areas had village settlements on the flood plains. It was these villages that met the demand for food from the cities where the merchants, artisans, politicians, priests and so on resided.

We cannot conclude that the Harappans were dependent only on agriculture. Enough evidence has also been found to show that they must have domesticated animals to supplement their largely agrarian economy. Undoubtedly, they must have had a pastoral economy in the hilly regions. Depiction of oxen, buffaloes, goats, sheep, humped bulls on a large number of terracottas indicates the familiarity of the Harappans with these animals. Other animals known to them were dogs, elephants, and to some extent, camels and horses. The evidence for the latter is still uncertain, indicating that they were still not in regular use. Wild animals too, have been depicted on seals and one can imagine that they were also hunted for food.

#### **6.7.2 Technology and crafts**

Without highly developed technological skills, they would have been unable to carry on agriculture and trade. The people of these Bronze Age cities were still familiar with many tools and implements made of stone. However, the main techniques developed by them were in the sphere of metal-working. Copper was in plentiful supply during this period, and a large variety of copper tools like flat axes, knives, saws and spears have been found at the excavated sites. Brick kilns associated with copper-working have also been discovered. The manufacture of bronze needed tin, which was then mixed with copper to produce bronze. The bronze tools discovered from Harappan sites contained a small percentage of tin which indicates that it was probably not very easily available. Nonetheless, bronze smiths, because of the complex nature of their task, must have held an important place among artisans. Besides utensils, bronze weapons have also been found.

Numerous other arts and crafts flourished in the Harappan towns. Seal-cutting seems to have been a very common occupation, but significant in that these were probably used for both religious and commercial purposes. Another very popular craft must have been bead-making. The Harappans were experts in bead-making. Chanhudaro and Lothal were probably the important centres for their manufacture, as large numbers of them have been found in certain structures situated at these sites. The materials used to make them were gold, silver, faience, steatite, shells, pottery and semi-precious stones. The long carnelian beads stand out as one of the technical skills of the Harappans. Textile impressions on several objects have been found reflecting the weaver's craft. The most common yarns used were wool and cotton.



Modern plaster impressions of stoneware seals with undeciphered script, from Mohenjodaro (A) Bull, (B) rhinoceros, (C) 'lord of beasts' Harappa or Indus-Valley Civilization, c. 2300-1750 b.c.

Among the major crafts, in terms of quantity, brick-laying and making of burnt bricks were significant, simply because of the large amount of such structures found at all these sites. Stone was indeed used, but only for sculptures, of which eleven have been found at Mohenjodaro and two from Harappa. The statue of the 'dancing girl' has become famous as an indication of the fine quality in which bronze could be worked. The crafts of making terra-cotta and pottery flourished on a large scale. The popularity and utilitarian nature of these objects, for ritual purposes and daily use suggests the immense familiarity of the Harappans with these two crafts.

### 6.7.3 Trade

The existence of such developed arts and crafts clearly shows that the Harappans engaged in trade, as many of the raw materials for the commodities they produced were not available in the Indus Valley. For instance, within the Indian sub-continent, gold was imported from South India, probably from Mysore. Metals like silver probably came from Afghanistan, and copper from Beluchistan. Besides, semi-precious stones like turquoise, amethyst, carnelian and agate came from different parts of Western India. The Harappans had not developed the use of metallic money and therefore, these goods were probably exchanged for either the finished goods they produced, or with food grains. With the knowledge of the wheel, road transport had developed considerably. Plentiful evidence from terra-cotta models of bullock-carts indicates that this was a common mode of road transport. Communication was also carried on by boats along the river.

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## 6.8 SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE INDUS PEOPLE

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An important characteristic of the Indus Civilization was its urban life. The rural areas not only supported, but often contributed to the socio-cultural development at the urban-rural level. The Indus Civilization reflects a highly developed civic life. City settlements are spread over an area of five to seven kilometers in circumference. In the social and political life, there is uniformity of pattern. Similarities in social and cultural patterns may be due to the use of similar political system, and authorities of administrative units in different city areas. Social planning is implied in the planning of cities, which reflects acute awareness of requirements of community living and public health. The existence of religious-cum-political leadership of the priestly class is more likely than any secular political authority. Lack of any outstanding monuments of supreme gods or other supreme sacred objects suggests the absence of any higher authority or dictatorial government. The society mainly consisted of middle class urban people. The Indus Civilization had socio-political groups which were generally very selective in their approach, and critical of their own society. It was a highly disciplined and intellectual-dominated society.

The Indus society, class-ridden as it was, included administrators, officials, priests, traders, merchants, craftsmen, landlords, peasants, herdsmen and labourers. The social position and gradation is reflected in the houses and disposition of the dead bodies in the graves. The rich and the influential people lived in big and palatial buildings, others in smaller houses, while the labourers etc., lived in barrack-like residences. The peasantry and labourers must have formed the largest number in the society.

Besides wheat, barley and rice, milk, vegetables, and fruits were included in the diet of the Harappan people. In addition, animal food, such as beef, mutton, pork, river-water fish and dried fish from the sea, were also eaten. Grind stones were used for grinding spices and cereals. People enjoyed non-vegetarian food. Remains of stag, buffalo, pig, tortoise, goat, ox and fish have been found. Sometimes in large jars, used for storing the bones of oxen, sheep and goats have been found. Animal sacrifice was in practice. On a few seals, hunting of wild rhino and stag are shown. Copper arrowheads and small pieces of clay used in sling, were employed for bird shooting. Models of several hunting dogs, including bulldogs, have been found. Cock-fighting is seen on one seal. Partridges were trained to fight. Fishing was a regular occupation. A number of fish hooks have been traced. Traps were used for catching mice.

The dress as revealed by the terra-cotta or red clay figures of the Mother Goddess indicates that the ladies were scantily dressed. They wore a short skirt that reached up to the knee; and it was held by a girdle - a string of beads. The male used a robe with or without embroidery. It was worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm. A man, on a seal from Harappa, wears a *dhoti*. No footwear has survived, nor is shown in any of the figures. Cotton was used. There is no evidence of linen or wool, though sheep and goat were known, and might have provided enough raw material.

Women took special care of their hair. The dancing girl from Mohenjodaro has her hair arranged like a horse tail. Some females have a plait tied with a bow at the end. The men had several styles of hair dressing. Hair was parted in the middle, and tied with a band. Sometimes, the hair was gathered up in a bun, or coiled in a ring on the top of the head. The crawling child depicted on a clay figure from Mohenjodaro has curly hair. Beards were trimmed and

upper lips were shaven. Completely shaven faces with a small beard on the chin are also noticed. Very long beards were not preferred. Mirrors of bronze were very common.

With the traditional oriental fondness for ornaments, men and women, both rich and poor, decorated themselves with them and all known semi-precious stones and metals were utilized for manufacturing various ornaments. Women wore a fan-shaped head-dress. Small cones of gold, silver, copper, and decorated earthenware or porcelain, as also of shell, were worn on the sides of the head. The forehead was decorated with a band or a headband. Ear-rings were made of coils of gold, silver, copper, or glazed earthenware or porcelain. It is doubtful whether any nose ornaments were used. There was a variety of necklaces having pendants in the middle, with a number of rows of beads of various shapes and materials artistically arranged, using spacers and terminals. Finger-rings were in large numbers, and bangles and bracelets of gold, silver, copper, bronze, glazed earthenware, shell, and pottery were commonly used. A bracelet with six strings of globular beads is an excellent specimen of workmanship. Girdles, of which two fine specimens have been found, were worn round the waist. Anklets of the type still used by hill women, were worn. Various stones such as carnelian, steatite, agate, chalcedony, jasper, etc., were used for the manufacture of beads which show fine workmanship and technical skill on the part of the manufactures. Of the various ornaments mentioned above, men wore fillets, necklaces, finger-rings, and armlets.

Toilet jars were made of ivory, metal, earthenware, and stone. Small decorated or glazed earthenware or porcelain vessels having four compartments were used for keeping expensive perfumes or cosmetics. It appears that the ladies at Mohenjodaro knew of the use of collyrium, face-paint and other cosmetics. Small shell-fish shells containing a red cosmetic for colouring the cheeks, lumps of green earth, white face-paint and black beauty-substance show that the ladies in ancient Sind attended to beauty and toilet culture. It is interesting to note that Chanhudaro finds indicate the use of lipstick. Carbonate of lead, a face-paint, might also have been employed as an eye-ointment or hair-wash. Round metal rods in copper and bronze, with both ends rounded and polished, were probably used for applying cosmetics. There were small toilet tables specially designed for women. Other articles on the dressing round table included round - shaped bronze mirrors, and ivory combs of different shapes. Some combs were probably worn in the hair. Bronze razors of various types served for the toilet of the male.

A large number of toys and objects used in games have been unearthed from all the important sites. The favourite toy was the baked clay cart. Sound makers in the form of hollow balls with balls inside, are many. Singing birds were kept in cages. A whistle, shaped like a bird, a small animal climbing up the pole, and models of household vessels, were the pastimes of the children. Bulls with nodding heads, monkey with movable arms, figures which ran up and down a string, were complex toys, and must have been produced by professional toy-makers. Dice were used in gambling. Chess men of stone have been found. A brick has been marked out for a game played with pebbles. Marbles of jasper and chert were played by rich children. Numerous small cones of pottery might be playthings, and marbles were used to knock them down.

A drum hangs from the neck of a figure in pottery. Some of the signs of script look like harps (harmonium) and lyres (violin or veena). Music and dance were both secular and religious.

Like in all ancient cultures of the world, religion must have played a dominant role in the lives of the Harappan people. But, our information on the subject is very meagre and indirect, based solely on the Harappan seals, seal impressions, terracotta or clay and metal figures, burial grounds etc. Except for the discovery of fire platforms at Kalibangan, we have not found any religious objects, temple or place of worship at any of the Harappan sites. On the basis of our meagre knowledge, we can say that the Harappan people had many features of later Hinduism, such as worship of the Mother Goddess, *Pashupati Shiva*, sacred animals, trees, etc. Here we can only refer to a few leading religious beliefs of the Harappan people.

The first in order of importance is the worship of the Mother Goddess. A number of figures of terracotta, decorated or glazed earthenware, etc., show a standing and semi-nude female figure wearing a girdle or band round her loins, with elaborate head-dress and necklace; sometimes the ear-ornaments are like caps suspended on either side of the head. Some of the figures are smoke-stained, and it is possible that oil or, perhaps, incense, was burnt before them in order that the goddess might listen favourably to a petition. Figures similar to those in the Indus Valley, have also been discovered in many countries in Western Asia. These figures are rightly taken to represent the Mother or Nature Goddess.

Among the male Gods, the most remarkable is a three-faced God wearing a horned head-dress, seated cross-legged on a throne, and surrounded by elephant, tiger, buffalo, and rhinoceros, with deer appearing under the seat. It wears a number of bangles and an inscription of seven letters appears at the top. This representation has at least three concepts which are usually associated with *Shiva* viz., that he is (i) *Trimukha* (three-faced), (ii) *Pashupati* (lord of animals), and (iii) *Yogisvara or Manayogi*. The first two aspects are apparent from the seal itself. The God is sitting cross-legged in a *padmasana* posture with eyes turned towards the tip of the nose which evidences the *Yogisvara* aspect of the God. Two more seals of *Shiva* have been found in the course of further excavations. The God is always nude, and has a horned head-dress. Marshall boldly called it *Proto-Shiva*, who is, in his most important aspect, a fertility God, and also known as *Pashupati*, the Lord of Beasts and Animals.

The discovery of certain mysterious objects at Mohenjodaro during John Marshall's excavations evoked speculations concerning the phallic (*lingam*) worship in the Harappan civilization. During the course of his excavations, Marshall discovered some conical and cylindrical stones, on the basis of which he guessed that *linga* worship was practised, and provided the prototype for the phallic (*lingam*) aspect of *Shiva* as known in later Hinduism. Similarly, on the basis of discovery of small ring stones, Marshall suggested them as representation of the female generative organ (*Yoni*), and hence, worship of the Mother Goddess. But, the excavations at Kot Diji, Amri, Balakot and Kalibangan, have yielded no convincing new evidence for *Linga* or *Yoni* worship. George F. Dales has completely rejected Marshall's views in this connection, and says, "there is no archaeological evidence to support claims of special sexually-oriented aspects of Harappan religion".

That animal worship or zoolatry formed part of the religious beliefs of the people is indicated by the representations of animals on seals and sealings, or in reel clay, decorated or glazed earthenware as porcelain and stone figurines. The animals fall into three groups: (1) mythical animals, eg. A semi-human, semi-bovine creature, attacking a horned tiger resembling Eabani or Enkidu in Sumerian mythology; or, complex animals, with the heads of different animals attached to a central boss, which may possibly be an attempt to bring together the

representation of various deities; (ii) ambiguous animals, which are not completely mythical, like the strange unicorn, accompanied with manger or incense-burner. The frequency with which the unicorn appears has been taken to indicate that it was the protective God of the city; and (iii) actual animals, including the rhinoceros, the bison, the tiger, the elephant, the buffalo, the humped-bull or zebra, the short-horned bull, etc. The feeding troughs which appear before some of these have been taken as symbolizing food offerings to beasts which could not be domesticated, indicating the animals as objects of worship. The most common animal found on the Harappan seals is the bull, which is usually depicted with a single horn, and has often been referred to as 'a unicorn'. The cow, so suspected in later Hinduism, is nowhere shown.

The worship of tree, fire, and water also seems to have been in practice. The existence of tree worship is evidenced by the representations on several seals and sealings. The most interesting of these depicts the *trisola*-horned God, standing nude, with long hair, between two branches of a tree with the half-kneeling figure of a worshipper with long hair, armlets, and horns, behind whom is a composite animal, in the lower register appear seven standing figures, with dresses down to the knees, in procession. The leaves of the tree appear like those of the pipal. Some sealings from Harappa show trees enclosed by a wall or a railing. It cannot at present be stated definitely whether tree worship pertained to trees in their natural state or to their inside spirits.

On a seal is depicted a six-rayed design which may signify the Sun. Clay models of oxen were used as votive offerings. Some panels of clay and copper were used as charm against evil. *Swastikas* and cross signs were regarded as givers of good luck. A shell inlay, shaped like a heart, was probably used as a giver of good luck. On a seal is shown a ceremonial dance; a woman is dancing before the bull. Daya Ram Sankh, who discovered the famous dancing girl, associates her with the '*devadasis*' attached to the temples.

In the excavations at Kalibangan, a series of 'fire platforms' or mud-brick platforms were discovered. The platforms were in fact clay-lined pits, each measuring about 75x55 cm. Within each pit were found ash, charcoal, and the remains of a clay stele as well as terra-cotta cakes. A short distance away from these platforms, were a well and the remains of a few bath pavements with attached drains. This kind of layout clearly suggests that a ceremonial bathing constituted a part of the ritual. Within another 'fire platform', bovine, bones and branched horns of a stag or deer were discovered, which represent some kind of animal sacrifice. That the offering of animals in sacrifice was a Harappan practice is also suggested by certain seals discovered from Mohenjodaro and Kalibangan. Thus, at least two kinds of rituals were performed: one relating to animal sacrifice, and the other in which fire played an important part. No fire platforms have so far been reported from any other Harappan site.

Although definitive evidence about the religion of the Harappan Civilization still escapes us, it would appear that the religious beliefs and practices of the Harappan people varied from region to region.

Like religion, different practices are present in burial practices as well. From the discovery of a grave yard containing at least 67 graves at Harappa by Mortimer Wheeler, it appears that burial was the usual rite. But, the burial practices differed from site to site.

Three forms of burials have been found at Mohenjodaro, viz., complete burials, fractional burials, and post-cremation burials. Complete burial means the burial of the whole body, ceremonially performed in various forms along with the grave furniture, offerings, etc. About 30 skeletons, showing complete burials, have been found in different groups. Some of these appear to have been victims of accidental death. All these burials appear, on stratigraphical evidence, to relate to the declining years of Mohenjodaro.

Fractional burial represents a collection of some bones after the exposure of the body to wild beasts and birds. Five such burials have been found, the best specimen being an urn containing a skull and some fragmentary bones, along with a number of earthenware vessels, and a variety of small objects including balls, beads, shell spoon, bits of ivory, and smaller vessels. Human bones are not found in all specimens, probably because after exposure bones were ground to dust before interment.

Post-cremation burials have been inferred from large wide-mouthed urns containing a number of smaller vessels, bones of animals like lambs, goats etc. and of birds or fishes, and a variety of small objects, such as beads, bangles, figurines, etc., sometimes mixed with charcoal ashes. These are generally found underneath a floor or a street. Human bones are rarely found, as bones are hardly necessary for post-cremation burials. The grave yards at various Harappan settlements were also not located at identical places, with varying burial practices. At Kalibangan, three types of burial practices are noticed; (i) extended inhumation in rectangular or round graves, containing pottery and other grave goods, (ii) pot-burial in a circular pit, containing besides the central urn, other pots and grave goods like beads, etc., and (iii) pottery deposit in rectangular or round graves. At Lothal, two types of burial practices were followed. While one type contained, besides the grave goods, a single skeleton, the other contained two skeletons buried together.

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## 6.9 ART

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The art of the city is intrinsically related to their daily life. The culture of stone and metal, the seal-cutter's, the potter's art, were not considered apart from the normal activities of the people. For instance, the seals of this civilization can be understood in terms of their economic importance or in terms of their religious significance. But to us, these are the most impressive examples of Harappan art. Animals were particularly portrayed with great sensitivity, while the examples of human figures like the sculptures of the dancing girls and the bearded man characterize a tendency that mark a high level of refinement.

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## 6.10 DECLINE OF THE CIVILIZATION

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We began this Unit by saying that the whole style of Harappan life had a markedly uniform character, also that its unique position in Indian pre-history is that, it had developed an urban character. We have also seen that it emerged from pre-Harappan settlements, which knew of the use of metal, but were not highly developed, and gradually they merged into the mature Harappan phase (2200 B.C. - 2000 B.C.) Therefore, there was a continuous organic growth of this civilization. After about 1750 B.C. some of the cities like Harappa and Mohenjodaro, were broken up and disappeared, while at other sites, particularly in the Southern part of the Indus valley, Harappan culture faded out gradually in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Western Uttar Pradesh. We have, what is called 'a degenerate Harappan phase', which has material

remains that are not very sophisticated, but indicate Harappan contacts. At almost all the Harappan sites, town planning becomes inferior and the pottery has new motifs on it. At Mohenjodaro, for instance, it is suggested that constant floods destroyed the city and the people were forced to migrate from there. At Harappa, on the other hand, it is believed that barbarians attacked it and destroyed the city. Human skeletons hurriedly buried at Mohenjodaro and Harappa indicate that there was some sort of invasion that destroyed these cities. It must however, be mentioned that this was not the case with the other Harappan cities. Kot Digi, Kalibangan, Lothal do not show signs of sudden end. Here, floods caused violent changes in the lower Indus region and obstructed the usual system of irrigation, thereby bringing about economic decline of the cities. Around 1750 B.C., trade also was obstructed because of the Kassite invasion in Sumer. This too affected the economic order of many of the Harappan cities. Thus, we find that in case of some of the cities, particularly the Northern ones, there was total disruption. In others, although the Harappan culture continued, signs of its decline were clearly visible. The causes of the end of Harappan civilization were thus many. We, nonetheless must conclude that many of the traits, as apparent in the cities of the 3rd millennium B.C., continued in a changed form during the later phase of the Indian civilization.

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## 6.11 OTHER CHALCOLITHIC CULTURES IN INDIA

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There were many cultures which we have described above as Chalcolithic that co-existed with the later phase of the Harappan civilization, and after it. These must be viewed along with the Harappan civilization, since they tell us about the cultural diversity of Indian pre-history. For example between 2000 and 1800 B.C., about 40 hordes, consisting of copper objects, have been dated, and these have been found in an area extending from the Upper Ganges Valley to the Chota Nagpur plateau. In many parts of the Ganga - Yamuna doab, these copper implements and weapons have been found in association with pottery of an ochre colour. Though much is not known about these cultures, they do tell us that people, who were necessarily no descendants of the Harappans, used a primitive copper technology. The earliest primitive agriculturists of the Ganges valley inhabited this part of Northern India during the so-called Chalcolithic age. Similarly, over a substantial part of Southeastern Rajasthan, Western part of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and also Eastern India, cultures using copper have been excavated. The dates of these are not older than 1000 B.C., and in some areas, they continued upto 800 B.C. All these were essentially agriculturist, but were acquainted with such techniques as smelting copper, making burnt bricks, permanent settlement, and in some parts (Malwa), spindle whorls have been discovered. It is difficult to generalise about all these cultures, because there were many characteristics that were different, though one common feature was the existence of the black and red ware (pottery). However, it will be wrong for us to conclude that all those who used this, possessed the same culture. The importance of these chalcolithic cultures is that, they evolved in a region which essentially was dry, away from alluvial plains and thick forested areas. Therefore, their individual character and their limitations must be viewed against the ecological background of the Northern Deccan Plateau and Central India as a whole, which essentially determined their economic and social pattern of life.

Apart from understanding Indian pre-history in its totality, we have tried to show above that the Harappan civilization was the most outstanding Chalcolithic culture. It no doubt succumbed to the invasions from the Northwest, which were, in all probability, those of the Indo-Aryans, but, in the Southern area of its influence, i.e., Rajasthan and parts of Gujarat, it

interacted with other cultures, and its elements continued to survive long after the cities had disappeared.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 3

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1. Describe the religion and art of the Harappan people
2. What were the causes for the disintegration of the Harappan civilization?

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### 6.12 LET US SUM UP

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1. Harappan civilization was the first urbanised chalcolithic civilization in South Asia.
2. It was not confined to Sind region only, but extended to a large area in the North.
3. 2300 B.C. to 1750 B.C. is considered as the period of the Harappan civilization.
4. There is striking cultural uniformity in the vast area of the Harappan civilization.
5. Town planning was the most important feature of that civilization.
6. Besides agriculture, there were other occupations like carpentry, metal-work, brick-making, weaving etc. The people had trading contacts with other countries.
7. Worship of Mother Goddess was very popular. Siva was also worshipped.
8. Sculpture and painting flourished
9. This civilization might have disintegrated due to floods and invasions.

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### 6.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I.
1. Chalcolithic means metal stone.
  2. Some scholars have expressed the view that the Harappan civilization was brought to India by the Sumerians who inhabited the Tigris-Euphrates valley in modern Iran. But, the excavations in a number of places have proved that the Harappan civilization originated in India.

III.

1. Worship of Mother Goddess was the most important feature of the Harappan civilization. Siva was also worshipped. The *linga* and the *Yoni* were worshipped. Nature worship and worship of animals also seems to have existed.

The sculptures of dancing girl and the bearded man are the most impressive specimens of the Harappan art. The paintings on pottery are a testimony to their artistic nature.

2. Constant floods might have destroyed the civilization. Foreign invasions also might have been a cause for the destruction of the civilization. Remains of human skeletons which seem to have been hurriedly buried, indicate that some invasion destroyed that civilization.

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## 6.14 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Bring out the main features of the Harappan Civilization
2. Describe the structural remains of the Harappan cities.
3. State the chief characteristics of the economic life of the Indus people.

II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. Examine the origin and chronology of the Harappan Civilization.
2. Write about the cultural uniformity of the Harappan sites.
3. What could be the possible political organization of the Harappan civilization?
4. State the religious practices of the Indus people.
5. How do you account for the decline of the Harappan civilization?
6. What were the characteristics of the chalcolithic cultures in Central India, Ganges valley, Southeastern Rajasthan and the Deccan.

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## 6.15 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Alkhn, B&R : *The Birth of Indian Civilization*
2. Jha, D.N. : *Ancient India - An Introductory Outline*
3. Romila Thapar : *History of India, Volume I.*
4. Romila Thapar : *Studies in Ancient Indian Social History*
5. Sharma, R.S. : *Ancient India*
6. Wheeler, R.F.M. : *The Indus Civilization and beyond.*

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## UNIT-7: THE VEDIC AGE

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- 7.2 Linguistic affiliation of the Aryans
- 7.3 Theories regarding the original home of the Aryans
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- 7.11 Let us sum up
- 7.12 Check your progress : Answers
- 7.13 Examination Model Questions
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## 7.0 OBJECTIVES

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By the study of this Unit, you must be able to know clearly about :

1. theories relating to the original home of the Aryans;
2. nature and contents of Vedic literature, covering Early and Later periods;
3. theories regarding the dating of the Vedic literature;
4. the Aryan Settlements;
5. the political, social, economic and religious conditions of the Early Vedic period;
6. the political, social, economic and religious conditions of the Later Vedic period

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## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

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In Units five and six, you are introduced to the prehistoric background of India, and to the character and nature of the native Harappan or Indus Valley civilization. In this present Unit, let us move to the Gangetic valley to understand the contributions made by the Indo-Aryan migrants to the Indian society and culture. The Unit covers the span of time from 1500 B.C to 600 B.C. This long period is divided for convenience into Early and Later Vedic periods for understanding the society, administration, economy and religious conditions. The Early Vedic period or Rigvedic period is assigned to 1500 B.C. to 1000 B.C., and the Later Vedic period assigned to 1000 B.C. to 600 B.C. The sources to understand the Vedic age are primarily Vedic texts and other literature that was composed by the Aryans for a long time. In recent years, archaeological discoveries are analysed to corroborate the literary evidences, so as to arrive at a comprehensive picture of the Vedic age.

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## 7.2 LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION OF THE ARYANS

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In the evolution of Indian culture and Indian society, the Vedic age covering from 1500 B.C. to 600 B.C. as accepted by many, is an important landmark. As this age happens to be the mostly accepted basis for the formation of the early culture and civilization of India, a debate is going on about the time span, the original home of the authors of this stage of Indian culture, and whether its authors are natives or foreigners who migrated to India, and also about the meaning of the word Aryan itself. The opinion is so sharply divided between historians who believe it to be purely native and those who believe it to be the culmination of intermingling of native and foreign elements.

As already stated, there is a strong view that the Aryans were one of the Indo - European speaking people who migrated to India in waves beginning around 2000 B.C. Our native Sanskrit literature calls them Aryans. This view made the historians to regard 'Aryan' as term referring to a linguistic group, but not to a race, and as such, the view of Aryan and Dravidian divide on the basis of racial features, is also not true. It is also established now that there was no single Aryan invasion which is attributed to the destruction of Harappan culture, but there are several waves of migrations of Aryans into India.

The debate about the original home of the Aryans began with the statement of Sir William Jones in 1786 that the languages such as Greek, Latin, Goethic, Celtic, Sanskrit and Persian

have a common origin, and the ancestors of the people who spoke these languages had a common language and home. They were called Indo-Europeans, and their language was called Indo-European. Max Muller's statement that : "Aryan is utterly inapplicable to race. It means language and nothing but language" strengthened the belief that the Indo-European communities had the same cultural background before they migrated in waves to different parts of the world.

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### 7.3 THEORIES REGARDING THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE ARYANS

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Many theories have been put forward by scholars regarding the original home of the Aryans. The reasons for the proposition of various theories was the urge to establish their national pride, and antiquity of their culture. Tilak was of the view that the original home of the Aryans was the Arctic region, and that they migrated to India around 6000 B.C. Sir Leonard Wooley proposes that North European plains could be the homeland of the Aryans. There is also a view that Eurasia i.e., the region which stretches from Poland to Central Asia could be the original home of the Aryans. Various theories were also put forward to explain why migration took place. Though much of the evidence regarding the migrations is very scanty, a picture of migrations has been recorded on the basis of literary, inscriptional and archaeological data which indicate the existence of elements of Indo-Europeans that have been found in Europe, Asia Minor, Iran, Iraq and India. The Indo-Europeans who migrated to India made *Sapta Sindhu* valley their first home and then moved Eastwards towards the Ganges Valley.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS -

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1. When did the Aryans migrate to India?

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2. Who declared the theory of a common origin to several Indo-European Languages?

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3. How did Maxmuller regard the term 'Aryan'?

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4. Which became the first home of the Indo-Aryans? When they migrated to India?

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#### 7.4 COMMON ELEMENTS OF INDO-EUROPEAN CULTURE

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On the basis of literary evidences available, it can be stated that the Indo-European tribes shared certain common elements of culture and had a common mythology and spoke closely related languages within the Indo-European framework. This must have been the result of their common home before they migrated and settled in India. The Indo-European tribes appear to have started their migrations around 2000 B.C. in small waves to India, and established themselves firmly by 1500 B.C. in the Punjab region. The Aryans who spoke Sanskrit language are regarded as the descendants of Indo-Europeans.

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#### 7.5 EARLY ARYAN SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA

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It is suggested that before they landed in India, the Aryans remained for some time in Bactria and Northern Iranian plateau, and by 1500 B.C. reached Northern India through the passes of the Hindukush. They inhabited first in Punjab, and probably it was here, that the hymns of the Rigveda were memorised and collected. It is also to be noted that all the tribes were not one and the same and there were considerable differences between them. This can be understood from the references to inter-tribal warfare in the early Vedic texts.

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#### 7.6 VEDIC LITERATURE : THE FOUR VEDAS

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Vedic literature which happens to be the earliest literature that was produced in India was the known primary source for the study of the Vedic age. First among the Vedic literature was the Rigveda and the three other Vedas, the *Sama Veda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Atharva Veda* belong to later times. These are believed to be revealed texts, and as such, they are classified as *Shruti* (that which is heard) texts. Rigveda contains 1028 hymns and ten *mandalas*. These hymns are mainly concerned with prayers to nature Gods. These were to be recited at the time of sacrifice. The *Yajur Veda* contains verses on sacrifices that were to be recited when the manual part of the sacrifice was performed. The *Sama Veda* is a collection of verses from the *Rigveda* on literacy. The *Atharva Veda* consists of mainly of magic spells and charms. Of this Vedic literature, Rigveda occupies a primary place because it was not only the earliest of the four Vedas, but also reflects conditions of life in the present - day Afghanistan, Pakistan and Punjab in India. It is believed that all these could have been composed between 1500 B.C. to 900 B.C. It is very difficult to fix the dating of these texts, as none of them were completed at a given point of time. From a critical examination of the *Rigveda*, it is suggested that Books-II and VII were of earlier times, whereas the Books-I and X are of a later period. From this evidence, it is presumed that they belonged to distant periods. We can establish that they were not composed homogenously because of different geographical locale and repetition of the same ideas and terminologies in various texts.

### 7.6.1 Other Vedic Texts

*Samhitas* are part of the *shruti* tradition. These *Samhitas* were attached to a particular Vedic school, and were intended to serve as guides conducting rituals. Besides *Samhitas*, we have *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas*, and the *Upanishads*. This entire Vedic literature constitutes the Vedic tradition. The *Brahmanas* were the prose manuals of the Vedas. *Aranyakas* were the concluding portion of the *Brahmanas*. As they contain magical powers, these were taught in the forests. The *Upanishads* which are attached to the *Aranyakas* were of philosophical nature. Though they are assigned to the age of 1000 B.C. to 600 B.C. it is very difficult to fix up the exact date of the composition of this literature, or to fix up the phase when they were composed. We also notice overlapping of them as in the case of *Samhitas* overlapping with early *Brahmanas*. *Satapatha* and *Aitareya* are important *Brahmanas*. It is now accepted that the *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads* as a class belong to later times. According to Max Muller, Vedic hymns were composed between 1200 - 1000 B.C., the early *Brahmanas* and *Samhitas* between 1000 B.C. to 800 B.C., and the later *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and early *Upanishads* between 800 B.C. to 600 B.C. These dates are contested, and many dates are suggested, but it is accepted by many that the early limits of the Vedas are placed between 2500 B.C., and 1000 B.C.

### 7.6.2 Archaeological Data For Dating Of The Vedic Tradition

Till 1960, what we know of Vedic period is only based on the knowledge from a critical and appreciative study of the Vedic literature. But, after 1960, the discoveries by the Archaeological Survey of India and State Departments of Archaeology provided a new evidence to examine and corroborate the available literary data to arrive at a comprehensive view of the Vedic age. Archaeologists discovered the Gandhara grave, the Grey Ware and the Painted Grey Ware cultures in Pakistan and Northern India. R.S. Sharma is of the opinion that these cultures correspond to the Early and Later Vedic civilizations. He also found connection between the *Rigveda* and Gandhara Grave cultures, and the Grey Ware culture pottery is found concentrated in Punjab, and the date given to it is between 1700-1000 B.C. This painted Grey Ware settlements become common in the Ganga-Yamuna doab region around 1000 B.C. Iron is also associated with this culture. The dating of the Vedic texts and the above culture known from archaeological discoveries is assigned to 1500-500 B.C. In this way, archaeological discoveries not only enrich our knowledge, but also prove the truthfulness of the Vedic texts.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Write briefly about Vedic literature.

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2. What is the important contribution of the Indo-Aryans to Indian culture?

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## 7.7 CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARYANS TO INDIAN CULTURE

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The Aryans laid the foundations of a civilization which became the source of all the subsequent civilizations in India. Aryans who are believed to be foreigners, after deciding to settle in the Punjab region, developed contacts, sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile with the native population, and as a result, there developed a new pattern of Aryan civilisation. Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas, provided a stable base for the literary and religious traditions of India for many centuries to come. But, we should remember that in the formation of Indian culture, though the Aryans played a dominant role, there were many other divergent factors which contributed to the creation of the totality of Indian culture.

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## 7.8 EARLY VEDIC PERIOD

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Rigveda describes that the early Aryans led a very simple life. From Rigveda, we come to know that their geographical knowledge did not extend beyond the river Yamuna in the East, and, as already mentioned, they lived in the region of the Land of Seven Rivers i.e. the present-day Eastern Afghanistan, Punjab and Western parts of Uttar Pradesh. Another dominant factor mentioned in the Rigveda is the constant intra-tribal warfare among the different tribes, and the Aryans and non-Aryans. Of such battles, the best example is the battle of Ten Kings or the famous *Dasaraja* battle. Rigveda has many hymns through which the prayers are made to Indra, the god of war to destroy the non-Aryan settlements. The non-Aryans are referred to as *Dasyas* in the Rigveda. The result of the intra-warfare among the Aryan tribes, and the hostilities between the Aryan and Non-Aryan groups is the emergence of new political affiliations and a mingling of Aryan and non-Aryan elements. The emergence of Kurus as a strong political force by joining of the Purus and Bharatas, is the result of such intra-tribal warfare. This Kuru tribe, as we all know, played a crucial role in the Later Vedic period.

### 7.8.1 Economy

Aryans of the Rigvedic age led the life of semi-nomads. Their economy was a mixture of cattle-rearing and elementary agriculture. The early Aryans appear to be more engaged in cattle rearing by innumerable references to cow and the acquisition of the cattle as the cause for many battles. The term for war used by Rigveda was '*gavishti*' and it means search for cows. As the priests were paid in cows for offerings, and property was estimated on the basis of the number of cows, we can say that cow was the medium of exchange. Besides cows, they domesticated goats, sheep and horses. By using chariots drawn by horses, they could secure victories in battles. We can say that the early Aryans knew agriculture, as there are references to five seasons and techniques of sowing, reaping and harvesting. It is suggested that while cattle was owned individually, the land was the property of the tribe. As Rigveda refers to artisans such as the carpenter, charriot - maker, weaver, leather - worker, potter etc., we may put forward a theory that craft occupations also began to take place in the society to cater to the needs of the semi - nomadic communities. There is a reference to a term '*ayas*' which means metal, and it is suggested that the metals known to early Aryans are copper and bronze. Thus, the economy was mainly based on cattle-rearing with rudimentary agriculture.

### 7.8.2 Political

Polity or administrative mechanism and political structure of the early Aryans appears to be essentially tribal in nature. The chief of the tribe was called *Rajan* and he exercised supreme authority over his tribe, but not on specific area of land. We may suggest that every tribe had its chief. By the end of this period, the idea of hereditary kingship is taking shape, but his authority appears to have been limited by the *Sabha* and *Samithi* and *Vidhata Gana* which are referred to in the Rig Veda. It is suggested that these assemblies exercised military and religious functions. The *Sabha* appears to be the house of the elders of the tribe, and *Samithi* was the general assembly of all the members of the tribe. As women were not yet looked down, they attended the *Sabha* and *Samithi* deliberations. The *Sabha* and *Samithi* performed both judicial and political functions. In day-to-day administration, the *Rajan* was helped by functionaries like *Purohit*, *Senapati* and other officers like *Vrajapati*, *Gramani* etc., As the *Rajan* was considered to be the head of the tribe and protected them, the members of the tribe voluntarily offered for the maintenance of *Rajan*. It is called '*Bali*'. We do not have any specific information about the quantity of offerings in the shape of *Bali*. The spoils of war were equally distributed among the members of the tribe. As there was semi-nomadic living, no reference is made to the need for standing army or to a permanent structure like fort.

Rigveda refers at several places to *jana* but never to *janapada*. The *jana* was divided into *vish* or clan. We do not have any direct evidence to the creation of villages or *gramas*. The character of the family was patriarchal, but yet, women enjoyed a better social status in father-headed society. Women mastered ritual offerings and participated equally with men in performing sacrifices. Begetting male children was favoured, as their society was engaged in constant wars, intra and inter-tribal.

### 7.8.3 Society

Early Aryan society was divided into three classes, the warriors, priests and the common people. We also notice the assimilation of non-Aryan native groups into the Aryan society. It is suggested that sages like Angirasa, and priests like Viswamitra belonged to the non-Aryan tribes. But, by the end of this phase, we notice that the visible distinction between higher and lower classes was becoming rigid. The 10th book of Rigveda refers to the four-fold division of society into *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya* and *Sudra*. The division was based on *varna* or colour of the skin. But, there is a view that it was an addition and the *Chaturvarna* system did not originate in this phase of Rigvedic civilisation. The social organisation can be said to be flexible because it was of a simple kind.

### 7.8.4 Religious Beliefs

Religious beliefs of the early Aryans were also simple. They worshipped nature Gods who are predominantly male. We find them to be praying to *Indra*, *Varuna*, *Agni*, *Surya*, *Soma*, *Pushan*, and *Savitri*. We notice a graded position of the nature gods. *Agni* occupied a unique place in this gradation as he got nurtured in the homes of the ordinary people, and acted as an intermediary between Gods and men. *Agni*'s importance increased, as performance of sacrifices became very common. We can say that they were primarily nature worshippers, and we also notice the assimilation of non-Aryan practices like worshipping of *Rudra*, *Tvashtri* and others.

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## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 3

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1. In the Rigveda, the non-Aryans are referred to as \_\_\_\_\_
2. The Rigvedic economy centred round the animal
3. The important officials who assisted the king were
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_; and
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name two Gods of the early Vedic period who were very popular
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_

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## 7.9 LATER VEDIC PERIOD : EXPANSION OF THE ARYANS

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In this phase of the Vedic age, chronologically assigned to 1000 B.C. to 500 B.C., we witness remarkable change in every aspect of the life of the Aryans. The sources to understand the above said changes are the literary texts and archaeological tools or weapons discovered in recent times. During this phase, the Ganga-Yamuna doab became the centre of activity. The expansion of the Aryan inhabitation into the Ganges valley took place Eastwards along the Himalayan foot-hills, North of the river Ganga. They appear to have resorted to this expansion by burning forests and by using iron. This phase appears to be contemporary with the Painted Grey Ware culture of the archaeological excavations.

### 7.9.1 Use of iron

Archaeologist's spade has brought to light Copper Hoard Cultures, which are assigned to 1700-1000 B.C. It is suggested that the Aryans might have imposed themselves on the people of this culture. Archaeologists are of the opinion that the use of iron began in 800 B.C. as the Hastinapur excavations testify. By clearing forests and by using iron implements such as arrow heads and spear heads, the Aryans appear to have gained an upper hand in this region and started settled life around 600 B.C. Thus, superior technological knowledge enabled the Aryans to gain upper hand, and become dominant group politically and economically.

### 7.9.2 Tribes of the Ganges valley

The literary texts of this period refer to the tribes of Purus, Bharatas as the major ones, and by combining themselves, they formed the Kuru tribe. The Kurus occupied the region around Delhi and the upper portion of the Doab. They were the people who participated in the famous battle, which is the theme of the *Mahabharata*. The Panchalas are another important tribe, which practised Vedic life with utmost care. Their region is well-known for its philosophers. The kingdoms of Kosala and Vidarbha also became prominent. The story of the *Ramayana* is associated with Kosala which has no reference in Vedic literature.

### 7.9.3 Economy

During this phase, the economy was based on settled agriculture, along with cattle-rearing. Ploughing of land with oxen has become very common during this phase. The *Satapatha Brahmana* graphically and vividly describes rites connected with ploughing and other agricultural activities. Besides barley, wheat, beans and sesamam were grown by them. Cattle did not lose its importance, as cattle was needed to carry on agricultural operations. The ideas of private property of land began to take shape.

We also notice that with the surplus produced from agricultural operations, people began to better their material base encouraging a number of occupations needed for their survival. Occupations such as that of the smelter, the smith, the carpenter, the weaver, the jeweller and the potter became common. Undoubtedly, this phase witnesses more and more of commodity production. Though no actual specimens of coins are available in the excavations, references to money-lending occur in the *Satapatha Brahmana*. We can reasonably assume that there existed some sort of elementary trade. The evidence of the urbanisation or the growth of the towns is not supported by archaeological discoveries. It is believed that what is gained as surplus through agriculture was used to support the necessary political and religious authority, i.e. the kings and the priests.

### 7.9.4 Society

Simple society of the early Aryan phase appears to have become complex during this phase. There is a view that social gradation based on birth and *varna* appears to have taken shape, and rigidity in practice is visible now. There is a view that the *Brahmins* have become socially and economically powerful because of large-scale practice of sacrifices, and offering fee to the priests. It is also said that there appears to have prevailed close understanding between the *Brahmins* and the *Kshatriyas*, the ruling community. The *Vaisyas* engaged themselves in agriculture and cattle-breeding. They paid tribute to the king. All the three *varnas* - *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya* and *Vaisya* were entitled for having sacred thread ceremony which entitled them to be considered twice-born. The *Sudras* formed bulk of the population and they were employed as domestic servants and agricultural labourers. *Varnasrama dharma* was maintained rigidly by *Dharmasastra* literature. The institution of *gotra* was introduced during this period. The patriarchal system continued, and the birth of sons was favoured, and the birth of a daughter was discouraged. Monogamy was generally the accepted norm, but Princes could marry more than one. Polyandry was unknown. More and more restrictions were imposed on women. Though there were women scholars like Gargi, the position of women deteriorated.

### 7.9.5 Political Organisation

As a result of the changes brought about by the introduction of settled agricultural operations, and the introduction of iron technology, kingship no longer was tribal in character. Assemblies like the *Sabha* and the *Samithi* lost their power and that power was grabbed by the royalty. While *Vidhata* and *Gana* totally went into darkness, the other *Sabha* and *Samithi* remained only in theory. Women were no longer allowed to attend them. Nobles and the *Brahmanas* began to exercise more power in the assemblies. One important development of far-reaching influence was the formation of territorial kingdoms. It means that people exhibit loyalty now to the territory rather than to the tribe. *Atharva Veda* openly describes the territorial

aspect of kingship. We come across different forms of government prevalent in different parts of the country. The kingdoms are named after their tribes. The increase in the power of the king, and the rise of territorial kingship, decided the nature of political organisation.

The duties of the king dominated the organisation of the government. The king was not only a military leader, but also the protector of people's lives and one who would look after their well-being. Performance of *Rajasuya*, *Vajapeya* and *Aswametha* has become symbolic expressions of royal ability and power. Further, his power was strengthened by the authority of imposing and collecting taxes. He was also paid a number of tributes and offerings by his subjects. The beginning of bureaucratic apparatus can be seen in this phase. We hear of twelve *ratins* who performed the duties of the priest, the commander, the chief queen and so on. Of these 12 *ratins*, the *Sangrahit* collected taxes. These officers not only assisted him, but increased his power. During this period, the *Kshatriyas* and the *Brahmans* controlled the state and society.

### 7.9.6 Religious ideas

Religious ideas of this phase were dominated by the sacrifice which was accompanied by innumerable rituals and *mantras*. The priests that were skilled in the performance of the sacrifices, conducted them, where animals were killed for offerings. The prominent gods like *Indra* and *Agni* lost their importance, and minor gods of early Aryan age like *Prajapati*, *Rudra* and *Vishnu* became prominent. Further, every caste began to have a god for it. Instead of prayers, performing of sacrifice assumed significance. Consequently, the position of the *Brahmanas* became very strong and powerful. Towards the end of this phase, the theory of *karma* and transmigration of soul became the dominant aspect of philosophy of life. In one way, the *Upanishads* may be regarded as opposed to sacrifices, and killing of animals as offerings. The *Upanishads* also preached the need for understanding 'atma' and its relation with 'Paramatma'. In this period, asceticism and leading the life of a *Sanyasi* also became popular. Corresponding to these developments, the *Dharma Sastra* literature also prescribes four *asramas* - *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha*, *Vanaprastha* and *Sanyasa* - as stages in the life of a man.

Thus, an attempt is made to give a comprehensive picture of the society, and the changes that took place from one phase to another with the available literary and archaeological sources. The Vedic age was definitely a formative stage in the evolution of Indian culture wherein we find both the Aryan and non-Aryan beliefs and practices being integrated to evolve a culture of significance.

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## 7.10 EPIC AGE

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Next in Vedic literature are the Epics. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are the two known Epics of the Aryans. There is a view that the Epics cannot be considered historical because they are full of mythological information. The Epics are said to be composed before the date of Buddha, and it is said that they belonged to the age of the *Sutras*. There is also a controversy regarding the date of the writing of the Epics. The importance of the historical value of the Epics is that, while the *Ramayana* illustrates the story of the beginning of Aryanisation of the country, the *Mahabharata* illustrates how the whole Deccan was Aryanised.

We also notice a change in the political, economic, social and religious views of the people by the analysis of the two Epics.

Both the Epics are considered the life-blood of Indian people. People consider them the very part and parcel of their daily life. The ideals in these Epics have remained unsurpassed. These ideals have inspired our society and kept it quite intact. In the personality of Rama, we find an ideal son, an ideal king, an ideal husband, and Sita is depicted as the very embodiment of grace, purity, service and modesty. The *Mahabharata* draws the picture of war between good and evil in which the good wins. Thus, the rule of *Dharma* is established. The *Gita* which is the essence of *Mahabharata*, is the soul of Indian people. Encyclopaedic in character, together the Epics form the contents of our collective consciousness wherein is breathed the united soul of India and the individual souls of her people. The two Epics represent the two modes of our Aryan civilisation, viz., moral and intellectual, and it is indeed impossible to grasp the true spirit and meaning behind the moving drama of Indian life without a thorough and intelligent understanding of the Epics. And to trace the influence of the Indian Epics on the life and civilization of the nation, and on the development of modern languages, literature and religious reforms, in the words of R.C. Dutt, is to comprehend the real history of the people during the last three thousand years.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 4

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1. Which area was the centre of activity in the Later Vedic period?

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2. What is the main distinguishing factor between the Early Vedic period and the Later Vedic period?

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3. Name a woman of the Vedic period known for her knowledge.

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4. Name two sacrifices performed by the Later Vedic kings.
- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Mention the names of three Gods who were popular in the Later Vedic period.
- a) \_\_\_\_\_ b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_

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### 7.11 LET US SUM UP

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1. The Vedic age broadly corresponds to 1500 - 600 B.C.
2. The early Aryans lived in the regions of Eastern Afghanistan, Punjab and parts of Western U.P.
3. The cow was an important form of wealth and the economy was primarily based on cattle-rearing with elementary knowledge of agriculture.
4. Political organisation was tribal in nature. *Rajan* was the head of the tribe, and was assisted by *Sabha* and *Samiti*.
5. Caste system was taking shape at the end of the Vedic period.
6. Vedic people worshipped nature gods, particularly male gods.
7. The Gangetic valley was the centre of the Later Vedic age.
8. The Later Vedic people know the use of iron.
9. The economy was based on settled agriculture during the Later Vedic period.
10. Division of society into castes became more rigid in the Later Vedic period.
11. Kingship became territory - oriented in the Later Vedic period.
12. Sacrifices increased, and Rudra and Vishnu became popular during the Later Vedic period.

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### 7.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. The Aryans came to India in several waves of migration. It is wrong to believe that there was a single Aryan invasion of India. The Aryan migration to India took place in a period of about 1000 years commencing from 2000 B.C.
  2. Sir William Jones
  3. Max Muller regarded the term 'Aryan' as referring to language, but not race. This strengthened the belief of the same cultural background of the Indo-European Communities before they migrated in waves to the different parts of the world.
  4. Indra, Varuna, Mitra.
- II. 1. The four Vedas, the Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and the Upanishads constitute the Vedic literature. These Vedic texts are not homogeneous in character. Hence, it is supposed that they were composed during different periods. The

Rigveda is the earliest of them. On the basis of literary and archaeological data, the period from 1500 B.C. to 500 B.C. is suggested as the period of the Vedic literature.

2. The Vedic literature and the Sanskrit language of the Indo-Aryans have provided the stable base for Indian culture. This is the important contribution of the Indo-Aryans to Indian Culture.

- III.
1. *Dasyus*
  2. Cow
  3. (a) Purohit  
(b) Senani  
(c) Gramani
  4. (a) Indra  
(b) Varuna

- IV.
1. Gangetic Valley
  2. Use of iron in the Later Vedic period.
  3. Gargi
  4. (a) Asvamedha  
(b) Rajasuya
  5. (a) Rajapati  
(b) Rudra  
(c) Vishnu

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### 7.13 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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#### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Give an account of the political organisation of the Early Vedic period.
2. State the main changes that took place in Aryan economic organization during the Later Vedic period.
3. Trace the evolution that took place in social organisation during the Later Vedic period.
4. What are the significant developments in the Later Vedic political and administrative organisation?
5. Indicate the important changes that took place in the religious organization of Later Vedic Aryans.

#### II. Answer the following in about 15 lines each.

1. State the features of the early Aryan economy as described by Rig Veda.
2. Indicate the organisation of society during the Early Vedic period.

3. Briefly state the Aryan religious beliefs during the Rig Vedic Period.
4. What do the archaeological cultures tell us about the material life of the Later Vedic Aryans?
5. Give reasons as to why the caste system became rigid during the later Vedic Period
6. Bring out the essential features of Upanishadic philosophy.

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#### 7.14 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Basham, A.L.                                  | : | <i>The Wonder that was India</i>   |
| 2. Jha, D.N.                                     | : | <i>Ancient India - An Introductory Outline</i>                               |
| 3. Kosambi, D.D.                                 | : | <i>The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India - A Historical Outline.</i> |
| 4. Majumdar, R.C. (ed)                           | : | <i>The Vedic Age, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series, Vol. I</i>                  |
| 5. Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudari, H.C. & Datta, K. | : | <i>An Advanced History of India</i>  |
| 6. Nilakanta Sastry, K.A.                        | : | <i>History of India, Vol. I</i>  |
| 7. Romila Thapar                                 | : | <i>History of India Vol. I</i>   |
| 8. Sathianatha Aiyar, R.                         | : | <i>History of India, Vol. I</i>  |
| 9. Sharma, R.S.                                  | : | <i>Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India.</i>         |
| 10. Wooley, Sir Leonord (ed)                     | : | <i>History of Mankind Series, UNESCO, Vol. I</i>                             |

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## **UNIT - 8 : 6TH CENTURY B.C. : RELIGIOUS PROTEST**

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### **Contents**

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- 8.2 Conditions in the 6th century B.C.
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- 8.3 Emergence of new religious sects
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- 8.5 Let us sum up
- 8.6 Check Your Progress : Answers
- 8.7 Examination Model Questions
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### **8.0 OBJECTIVES**

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This unit is intended to make you know :

1. about the emergence of certain new economic, social and religious conditions in the 6th century B.C.
2. the life and teachings of Vardhamana Mahavira;
3. the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha;
4. the importance and impact of the two new religions, and also about
5. the rise and prevalence of other heterodox cults.

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### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

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By the 6th century B.C., the Indo-Aryans had migrated into the Eastern Ganges valley. The plains of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar saw the permanent settlement of monarchical kingdoms around this time. Simultaneously, the widespread use of iron transformed the economic life of the region. Amidst these fundamental changes arose the religions of Buddhism and Jainism. In the present context, we are not simply concerned with understanding the

religious ideas, beliefs and philosophies of these two religions. Rather, it is our aim in this Unit first to identify the basic material, socio-economic conditions which led to the rise of these faiths which were essentially protestant in nature. This will help us subsequently in the latter half of this Unit to highlight some of the closely held ideals of Buddhism and Jainism which rose in response to the changed conditions of life in Northeastern India of the 6th century B.C. Another important point to note is that, Buddhism and Jainism were amongst several sects that emerged as religious movements during this period. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to state that many of these religious sects and their philosophies were indebted to the existing religious customs and rituals that were present among the various people of Northeastern India. Thus, in this Unit, besides highlighting the origins and principles of Jainism and Buddhism, we shall see why these two religious sects were the most successful of all the religious movements.

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## 8.2 CONDITIONS IN THE 6TH CENTURY B.C.

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### 8.2.1 Emergence of new material conditions and their impact

New material conditions arose as a result of the diffusion of iron technology in Eastern Gangetic valley. This meant that, not only were new agricultural tools and implements introduced, but also the dense forests of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar could be cleared easily with the above tools. This increase in the availability of new fertile land as well as the improvement in agricultural techniques meant that, there was an increase in the knowledge of cultivated plants. In turn, all these three factors, i.e. increase in cultivable area, improved technology, and new knowledge of cultivation enabled the peasants to produce more surplus. The growth of trade and towns in Northwestern India is a marked feature of the 6th century B.C. Not only does the Buddhist literature mention the names of twenty towns, archaeology also indicates that urban centres flourished during this period. The increased agricultural surplus as well as the increase in trade were responsible for the growth of urbanization. The increase in the trade and commerce had a direct effect on the development of a money economy and also to the proliferation of diverse arts and crafts. This signifies specialization in the field of commodity production. We hear of artisans and craftsmen organized into guilds during this period. There were guilds like those of wood workers, smiths etc. which were concentrated in the towns. By virtue of wealth that these groups acquired, they were treated with respect in the society, and therefore, emerged as a new social class.

The possession of land had become the chief criteria by which wealth was measured in the countryside. A greater part of land was owned by groups called '*gahapatis*' in Buddhist literature, who were essentially peasant proprietors. The growth of rich '*gahapatis*' broke down the earlier tribal ideas of kinship and equality, and thus, many economic inequalities emerged. The newly developed features of the economic life did not fit in with the Vedic norms that had been set in the earlier period. The rich traders and merchants in the towns essentially had their base in the countryside, and therefore, the overall changes in the technology and economy affected all social groups.

### 8.2.2 Social Conditions

According to the **Dharmasutras**, society as it had been organised around the 6th century B.C., was divided into four *varnas* - *Brahmanas*, *kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Sudras*.

Varna was based on birth, but the two higher *varnas* were given some privileges, and therefore, they claimed the highest status in society. The higher the *varna*, the more pure a person was considered. The *varna*-based society which was formulated in Later Vedic times, generated tensions. It is difficult to identify the reactions of *vaishyas* and lower orders to the ritualistic domination of the *brahmanas*, but the reaction of the *kshatriyas* is apparent in that, the leaders of both the religious movements, Vardhamana Mahavira and Gautama Buddha belonged to the *kshatriya* clan. As we shall see subsequently, the principles of both Jainism and Buddhism were, in opposition to the sacrificial religion of the *brahmanas* and both disputed the authority of the *brahmanas*. Apart from this, it was essentially the rise of new social classes because of the introduction of a new agricultural economy, that the traditional social divisions did not function as they were meant to. In the first place, the rising merchant classes in the urban areas were deprived of their aspirations in the traditional system. They were placed as the third *Varna Vaishyas*, though economically the *Vaishyas* as a group were the ones that got benefited most out of the changing features of economic life in the towns as well as in the countryside. The *Kshatriyas* too got benefited from these changes, since they were the ones that had their base in land, and also because they were the ones that were paid the taxes got from the agrarian surplus. Thus, while the *Kshatriyas* reacted to the excessive domination of the *Brahmanas*, the *Vaishyas* looked for an outlet to improve their social status.

### 8.2.3 Changes in the religious sphere

All these changes, such as the expansion of the agrarian base, the growth of towns, the emergence of a rich and powerful land-owning class, the increase in the number of the artisan class and so on, were closely linked with changes in the sphere of religion and philosophical speculation. The sixth century B.C. witnessed the spread of a wide range of philosophical speculation that ranged from determinism to materialism. The **Upanishadic** thought of the earlier period had maintained a tradition of unorthodox thinking in that, its writers had rejected the emphasis on ritual and sacrifice. We have thus to see the growth of Buddhism amidst the general ethical and religious movements of the given period. Though we are familiar with the names of Gautama Buddha and Vardhamana Mahavira, the asceticism they practised had become a widespread phenomena during this period. This had a wide implication as the many groups who took to religious protest, all rejected the Veda as a source of knowledge. Thus, apart from the generation of new religious and social ideas, they had a strong basis in protest, the results of which were seen more in the social sphere than in the religious one. We shall examine some of these points towards the end of the Unit. But, first let us discuss some of the principles on which these religious protest movements were founded.

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## 8.3 EMERGENCE OF NEW RELIGIOUS SECTS

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Besides the Buddhists and the Jains, an important group of religious thinkers that preached in sixth century Northeastern India were the Ajivikas. The exponent of this sect was Makhalli Gosala who behaved in a non-conformist manner i.e., he roamed about naked and drunk. He advocated extremism of a kind that could never have a mass following. This sect believed in the philosophy of pre-determination. The soul in their opinion had to pass through a pre-determined cycle of rebirths irrespective of any action by the body. In other words, destiny controlled every part of human action and nothing could change this. The Ajivikas were organised as a body of monks, and this too, they thought, was pre-determined. On the other

hand, co-existing with this school of philosophical thought, was another, that of the Charvakas who preached a doctrine of total materialism. They were also called the Lokayatas. As a school of thought, they derived a great deal from the teachings of Ajita Keshakambalin. He described man to have been formed of four elements that would return to dust after a man died. The propagation of this doctrine of annihilation by them was looked down upon with scorn by the orthodox *brahmins*. The materialists totally rejected the rituals that were performed by the Vedic *brahmins* as they regarded them to be meaningless. It is impossible for us to judge how popular these schools of thought were, since most of our source material hardly gives any direct information on them. Some of the other preachers of the time were Pakudha Katyayana of the Vaisesika school of Indian philosophy, and Purana Kassapa; an exponent of the Sankhya system of philosophy. Each school laid emphasis on one particular aspect of the nature of life and its relationship to the larger universe.

### 8.3.1 Jainism, Vardhamana Mahavira : early life and teachings

Of all these sects, two that had a greater impact on Indian life through the ages, as also on the world, were the puritanical sects of Jainism and Buddhism. Both were independent religions. Even before Mahavira (born 540 B.C.), the founder of Jainism, began his teachings, his predecessors like Parsva had propagated Jain ideas. Mahavira gave them shape, and with his teachings, the religion rapidly spread, and was also organized. Vardhamana Mahavira belonged to a *kshatriya* family of Vaishali in North Bihar. Till the age of thirty (i.e., till 510 B.C.), he led the life of a householder, and then abandoned it to wander about in search of truth. This he did for twelve years after which, he is said to have attained perfect knowledge, called, '*kaivalya*', through which he is said to have conquered both misery and happiness. The five major doctrines that were taught to the early followers of Jainism were non-violence, not to speak a lie, not to steal, not to acquire property, and to lead a *brahmacharya* life. Many of these, particularly ideas on non-violence, were impressed upon with such an extremity that, even an unconscious killing of small insects was considered a sin. Mahavira asked his followers to discard their clothes completely. This practice indicated that the Jains were supposed to follow a very austere life. During the later stages of its development, Jainism was divided into two sects, the '*Svetambaras*' or those that wore white dress, and the '*Digambaras*' or those who kept themselves naked.

Jainism recognized the existence of Gods, but they were placed below the *Jina* i.e. the conqueror who was Mahavira. Thus, the existence of God was irrelevant to its doctrine. Every human being had the potentiality to become a prophet or *tirthankara*, if he followed the principle of the purification of the soul through a long course of fasting and rigorous practice of non-violence. It was this purification which was the main purpose of living. The Jain principles clearly stated that purification of the soul and its detachment from the body to achieve bliss, could not be gained through knowledge, since each man could only be part of true knowledge. Since knowledge was relative, it would not ever be the right path for salvation. In this sense, Mahavira disagreed with the thought of the **Upanishadic** teachers who taught that purification could be achieved through knowledge. Jainism mainly concentrated on the attainment of freedom from worldly bond. It rejected the use of any ritual to achieve this aim, and therefore, antagonized the **brahmins**. However, Jainism did not condemn the **varna** system. Mahavira postulated that a person is born into a higher or lower **varna** because of

the virtues or sins committed by him in his previous life. Thus, only a pure and meritorious life could lead to liberation for members of the lower orders too.

### 8.3.2 Jain monastic order and spread of Jainism

In order to make it possible to spread his teachings, Mahavira organized his followers into an order. Both men and women were allowed to join it. This order preserved the Jain teaching in an oral tradition. In the 3rd century B.C., it was collated and recorded. According to tradition, a famine in Magadha resulted in the migration of Jain monks to South India under the leadership of Bhadrabahu. In order to sort out the differences among the various Jain monks, a Council was convened at Pataliputra which the Southern Jain monks boycotted. The Jain faith spread gradually to Karnataka, Orissa, some parts of Tamil Nadu, and finally during the later centuries, to Malwa, Gujarat and Rajasthan. The trading community particularly patronized it. The excessive emphasis on non-violence probably prevented agriculturists from becoming its followers. Some ideas in Jainism like frugality, restriction on the acquisition of landed property, fitted in with many of the occupations that were concentrated in the urban setting. Although Jainism was not as popular as Buddhism, during the early years of its spread, it has continued to survive in India even today, while Buddhism has practically disappeared from India.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. Who were Gahapatis?

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2. Who was the exponent of the Ajivika sect?

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3. Which communities patronised Jains, and which communities did not? Please state with reasons.

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### 8.3.3 Buddhism, Gautama Buddha : life and teachings

Buddhism was founded by Gautama Buddha (born 563 B.C.). Before enlightenment, he was called Siddhartha, and belonged to **Kshatriya** family of Kapilavastu. He came from a republican tradition of the Shakya tribe. Like Mahavira, he also led the life of a householder, and only at the age of twenty nine, did he leave home in search of truth. Having been moved by the misery that people suffered in the world, he took to asceticism as a means of salvation, but rejected it, and subsequently decided on meditation as a method for understanding the cause of suffering in the world. He eventually achieved enlightenment, and delivered his first sermon at Sarnath, where his first five disciples had gathered. This first sermon is called **dharmachakrapravartana** or the Turning of the Wheel of Law. In it lies the essence of the Buddhist teaching. The Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold-Path were incorporated in this. It advocated that the way to salvation from the material world of suffering was through adopting a middle way. These simple teachings did not require complicated metaphysical thinking. The basis of Buddha's argument was rational, and he underlined the notion of causality in understanding reality. Nothing was left to divine intervention. Therefore, Buddha did not indulge in the various controversies regarding the nature of soul (**atman**) which the Brahmanical texts concentrated on. He was concerned about worldly problems and answers for them. Like Mahavira, Buddha too laid down a code of conduct for his followers. It emphasised moral values, such as not to covet the property of others, to be non-violent, to speak the truth, to avoid corrupt practices and so on. In the Buddhist view of things, the penultimate aim of all things was to achieve **nirvana** or freedom from the wheel of rebirth. In this connection, the doctrine of **karma** was important to Buddhist thought. The place of God in their way of thinking was secondary, as the universe essentially saw natural cosmic rise and fall. In this universe, the main reason for man's suffering was desire, which in turn, stemmed from ignorance. To eradicate ignorance, the Buddha way had to be adopted, what is called the Middle Path. Buddhist views and values, thus, naturally rejected Brahmanical ritual and cults. In fact, during his wanderings to preach the doctrine, Buddha encountered many *brahmanas* whom he defeated in philosophical debates.

### 8.3.4 Buddhism's appeal to the common people : reasons

Buddhism appealed to the common people on many counts. Many of the popular cults, like the worship of trees, was accepted by the Buddhists. This did not interfere with the early Buddhist philosophy in a way. Rather, the appeal of Buddhism to the people was its simple ideas which were explained by Buddha in a way meant to evoke goodness and love. In this regard, his personality played an important role. He tackled his opponents with a calmness and clarity of mind, and therefore, he refused to be provoked by others. In comparison with **Brahmanism**, Buddhism emerged as a more liberal and open system of thought. Women were allowed to become members of the **Sangha** or Buddhist order of monks. This was a revolutionary step with regard to the status of women, as their position was traditionally not very good. Men of the lower orders also lost their caste identity once they joined the Order. The Order was based on the tradition of the republican assembly.

The democratic organization of the **Sangha** and the use of Pali i.e., the language of the people, also facilitated the spread of Buddhist doctrines among all sections of the society. On joining the **Sangha**, the monks and nuns had to strictly follow rules and regulations. They

had to take three vows, that of continence, poverty and faith. There are thus, three main elements of Buddhism: Buddha, **Sangha Dharma** and **Dhamma**. During the life time of the Buddha, the faith had become popular in both the monarchical and republican States of Northeastern India, like Magadha, Kosala, Kausambi, the kingdom of the Lichchavis and Shakyas etc. During the subsequent centuries, Buddhism spread to Central Asia, West Asia, Sri Lanka, Burma, Tibet, China and Japan. Some of these countries profess this faith, though it has disappeared from the land of its birth. In the present context, we cannot dwell upon the reasons for its decline. Suffice it to say that during the later centuries, Buddhism too succumbed to ritualistic practices and idol worship. On social issues also, it could not take a stand that opposed the caste system totally.

### 8.3.5 Importance and influence of Jainism and Buddhism

We next turn to evaluate the importance and influence of the principles and ideas on which Jainism and Buddhism were based. It would be wrong to simply assess their significance in terms of their religious protest against **Brahmanic** situation, i.e., the practice of animal sacrifices. No doubt, by denying the **Vedas** as a source of knowledge, for the first time in the history of India, they posed a serious threat to the authority of **brahmanical** orthodoxy. However, it is important to underline that, both Buddhism and Jainism focussed on society as well. The social manifestations of these religious movements have a bearing on discussing how they took into account historical changes of the sixth century B.C. In other words, the founders of these two ideologies answered some of the questions related to their historical milieu. It is well accepted that they appeared in response to an essentially urban civilization which had been the result of the introduction of a new iron technology and extension of plough agriculture. These technological changes gave way to significant developments in the break up of the tribal way of life, and led to the establishment of kingdoms. The complexity of the new socio-economic order and political structure disturbed the existing social relations, and people felt alienated and displaced in the changed circumstances. Particularly, both Buddha and Mahavira after gaining enlightenment, travelled through innumerable towns and villages to spread their respective messages. They appealed to people to reject the evils that had resulted from the emergence of new material conditions. Though only a small percentage of people opted to join the monastic order, the social message of their teachings had wider implications. Though this was a period when a considerable amount of new wealth was being generated, especially in towns, Buddha as well as Mahavira preached against the accumulation of wealth as that would create sharp social distinctions, wherein some people would be very poor and others very rich. Several times advice was given by Buddha to eradicate poverty as that was the cause of hatred, cruelty and violence. Buddhism also taught that if the poor gave alms to monks, they would be born wealthy in the next world. To the monks, strict instructions were given for being frugal and restricting the food, dress and sexual habits. These measures were totally in opposition to, and a reaction against the new prosperous and material life of the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. The code of conduct for monks reflects a way of life that was egalitarian, harking back to a kind of tribal life in which the evils of social stratification and sharp economic distinction did not exist.

The above aspect of Buddhist view point could not bear for the society as a whole. Therefore, we also see in Buddhist and Jain principles many ideas which aim to consolidate the social and economic changes resulting from the new material life of the 6th century B.C.

Buddha particularly advocated a Middle Path devoid of all excesses so as to deal with the real problems of social life. For instance, with the increasing development of plough cultivation, cattle had become indispensable. The sacrificial religion of the Later Vedic period legitimized unnecessary killing, which went in conflict with the new economy. In this context, the doctrine of **ahimsa** or non-injury to life has direct implications for saving the animal wealth which could be used for agricultural purposes. The Jains indulged in an extreme form of non-violence and this went against the agriculturists, and that is why Jainism could not have a large following even during the period of its early growth. The ethics of **ahimsa** also appealed to those who were discouraging inter-tribal wars and supporting the establishment of stable kingdoms. In this regard, the **kshatriya** kings and nobles, as also **gahapatis**, traders and landowners stood to gain. Particularly, these two groups also gained in social status in the Buddhist view of things. The **kshatriyas** were placed above the **brahmanas** in the Buddhist texts. The **vaishyas** patronized Buddhism and Jainism with money and land, thereby encouraging the spread of their respective faiths. The rule of the **Sangha** that people in debt and slaves could not join the monastic Order, naturally helped the money-lenders and the richer sections of the society. Both these religious movements rebelled against the old hierarchy of the **varna** system, but did not reject the caste system as such. The individual within a caste group was allowed the freedom to join the monastic Order, but the inequalities inherent in the social system were not abolished. In fact, the **karma** theory became a useful way in which the origin of social inequality was explained. Though untouchability was not eradicated, Buddha and Mahavira emphatically announced that **Chandalas** and other low caste people could attain knowledge and ultimate **nirvana** or enlightenment. Further, monks and nuns were not debarred from approaching members of all the four **varnas** for food or mix with them. One can only guess to what extent the practices and norms of life adopted by monks, (i.e., the Buddhist or Jain way of life **par excellence**) in fact influenced the lay or ordinary followers of these faiths. As far as town life is concerned, the Buddhists accepted many of the new changes that affected social relations in this context. For instance, they patronized eating houses that had emerged in the cities. Prostitute houses also flourished under urban conditions, and both Jainism and Buddhism did not debar prostitutes from joining the Order. Ambapali, a famous courtesan was converted to Buddhism. Both also adopted an identical attitude towards trade. Whereas the **brahmanical** law books looked down upon this activity, the former received generous gifts from traders. Ultimately, they both made attempts to appeal to the **non-brahmana** sections of the society. Intellectual ideas on life and culture were for the first time made accessible to all social groups. The lack of expenses in performing worship attracted many people to follow the principles of Jainism and Buddhism.

Gautama Buddha and Vardhamana Mahavira essentially set out to seek answers to a philosophical quest about the position and nature of man in the universe. Their answers in the form of their teachings generated immense moral authority. The old social and religious order which they sought to question and protest against, ultimately stood to gain by the challenge this reformist spirit posed for it. The ideas on non-violence and vegetarianism in subsequent Indian thought were apparently derived from Buddhist teachings. The first images of human worship in India were probably those of Buddha. Buddhist monasteries became great seats of learning in education during the later centuries. Though the monastic organization of the Buddhists and Jains involved egalitarian and so-called democratic principles, they were unable to bring about a radical change in either the social or political organization. The hierarchical

principle continued to dominate the social and political structure of those times. It is often said that Buddhism and Jainism in fact offered a justification for the newly rising mercantile class to establish their social status in a changed economic milieu. Despite all this, one cannot fail to recognize the contribution. These religious movements had contributed to the intellectual and cultural traditions of India.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Enumerate the reasons for the appeal of Buddhism to the common people

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2. Write briefly about the contribution of Buddhism to Indian culture.

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### 8.4 OTHER HETERODOX CULTS

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The conflict between the Vedic religious practices and the aspirations of the rising social groups led to the search for new religious and philosophical ideas which would fit in with the basic changes in the material life of the people. During the sixth century B.C. in the Gangetic valley, there emerged many new religious teachers who preached against Vedic religion. Not surprisingly, the Buddhist sources speak of as many as sixty two religious sects and the Jain texts refer to three hundred and sixty three sects in the sixth century B.C. Many of these were based on regional customs and rituals. But, some of them might have formed the basis of later philosophical ideas. Thus, Ajita Kesakambala propagated a thorough-going materialist doctrine from which the *Lokayata* or *Charvaka* school of philosophy is believed to have derived a great deal. Pakudha Katyayana, another religious leader, held that, just as the earth, water, air and light are primary indestructible elements, so are sorrow, happiness and life; it has been suggested that the later *Vaiseshika* school originated from his ideas. Purana Kassapa, still another contemporary preacher, regarded the soul as distinct from the body, and laid the foundation of the *Sankhya* system of philosophy. His immediate follower was Makkhali Gosala, the exponent of the *Ajivika* sect. Born a slave himself, Makkhali was a radical teacher who denied even the basic doctrine of Hindu thought i.e., the theory of *Karma*. No less significant is the large number of wandering teachers, mentioned as teaching their own doctrines, without, however, following any definite sect.

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## 8.5 LET US SUM UP

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1. Increase in the land cultivated, and increased agricultural production due to improved implements and techniques, resulted in increased wealth.
2. In the society, there was a reaction to the domination of the *brahmins*, particularly from the *kshatriyas*, due to economic and social changes in the society.
3. The sixth century B.C. in the field of religion, was an age of protest against orthodox and old beliefs and practices.
4. Jainism is one of the religious sects which became prominent in the 6th century B.C. Vardhamana Mahavira laid emphasis on the principles of non-violence.
5. Buddhism is another religion which arose in the sixth century B.C. Buddha advocated the Middle Path.
6. Buddhism and Jainism contributed richly to the intellectual and cultural traditions of India.
7. Several other heterodox cults arose, some of which laid emphasis on materialist philosophy.

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## 8.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. Groups of land owners  
2. Makkhali Gosala  
3. The trading community especially patronised Jainism, because frugality and non-violence, the important principles of Jainism, appealed to them. Agriculturists did not take to Jainism probably because of the excessive emphasis laid by that religion on non-violence.
- II.1. The simple ideas of Buddhism appealed to the common people. The personality of Buddha also played an important part in the appeal of Buddhism to the common people. Admission of women and the lower castes to the Buddhist **Sangha** also attracted the common people. The use of Pali, the language of the people, by the Buddhists, also attracted many common people towards Buddhism.
2. Buddhism's contribution to Indian culture is varied and remarkable. Due to Buddhism, art developed in the country. Probably, the first images of human worship in India are those of Buddha. The Buddhist stupas, and their paintings have enriched Indian culture. The Buddhist monasteries were great centres of learning, and Indian literature progressed due to Buddhist contribution.

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## 8.7 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.

1. What are the principles of Mahavira and how did he try to propagate them?

2. Examine the teachings of Buddha and state the reasons for their appeal to the common people.
3. Evaluate the importance and the influence of the principles of Jainism and Buddhism.

**II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.**

1. What are the conditions that favoured the rise of Jainism and Buddhism?
2. Distinguish between Jains and Buddhists regarding the observance of the principle of Ahimsa or non-injury.
3. What do you know about the Middle Path?
4. What did heterodox cults other than Jainism and Buddhism preach?

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**8.8 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING**

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- |     |  |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 1.  | Basham, A.L.                                   | : | <i>The Wonder that was India</i>  |
| 2.  | Jha, D.N.                                      | : | <i>Ancient India - An Introductory Outline</i>                              |
| 3.  | Kosambi, D.D.                                  | : | <i>The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India - A Historical Outline</i> |
| 4.  | Majumdar, R.C. (ed)                            | : | <i>The Classical Age, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series, Vol. II</i>            |
| 5.  | Majumdar, R.C. Raychaudhari, H.C. and Datta K. | : | <i>Advanced History of India, Vol. I</i>                                    |
| 6.  | Nilakantha Sastri, K.A.                        | : | <i>History of India, Vol. I</i>   |
| 7.  | Romila Thapar                                  | : | <i>History of India, Vol. I</i>   |
| 8.  | Sathianatha Aiyar, R.                          | : | <i>History of India, Vol. I</i>   |
| 9.  | Sharma, R.S.                                   | : | <i>Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India</i>         |
| 10. | Wooley, Sir Leonard (ed)                       | : | <i>History of Mankind Series, UNESCO, Vol. I</i>                            |

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## UNIT - 9 : 6TH TO 4TH CENTURIES B.C. : POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTHERN INDIA

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- 9.2 Emergence of 16 *Mahajanapadas*
- 9.3 Rise of Magadha
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- 9.4 Persian Invasion
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  - 9.5.2 Effects of Alexander's Invasion
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### 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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The objectives of this Unit are to enable you to know :

1. about the emergence of 16 *Mahajanapadas*;
2. about the rise of Magadha under Bimbisara, Ajatashatru and the Nandas, and the causes for the success of Magadha; and
3. the causes, significance and results of Alexander's invasion of India.

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### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

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6th century B.C. saw the first emergence of kingdoms in Northern India. In traditional books on early Indian history, this phase has been called "the Buddhist period". The reason for this terminology is that, the first authentic dates about political events and the names of rulers of these kingdoms come to us from the Buddhist literature. However, in recent years, this period has been described as one in which the **Mahajanapadas** flourished. **Janapada** literally means a 'territory' and **Mahajanapadas** refer to the kingdoms, both monarchical and

republican that were situated in India of this period. It is again the Buddhist literature that defines for us the sixteen **Mahajanapadas** or large states. In this Unit, our main concern shall be in outlining the political developments of the **Mahajanapadas** during the 5th and 6th centuries B.C. Besides, we shall also be concerned with the reasons why the kingdom of Magadha became powerful and subsequently dominated the whole of Northern India. In this context, the invasion of Alexander to India provides us with the first authentic historical date. Hence, before Alexander's invasion, the foundations of the early Indian state had been completed.

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## 9.2 EMERGENCE OF 16 MAHAJANAPADAS

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Centuries before the beginning of territorial kingdoms, they had seen political organization which was tribal in nature. There had been tribal conflicts which reflected uncertain political conditions. In the previous Unit, we had outlined how many of these tribes had begun to settle in the Western part of the Ganges valley. However, many political contradictions continued to exist. In order to overcome these, and also to take into account the new material conditions of the 6th century B.C., new type of political organization was required. The political contradiction pertained to the tradition from the tribal way of life to permanent settlement. For the first time, the concept of territorial identity meant that an effective political control in the form of a fully developed administrative system was the need of the hour. As far as the changed material conditions were concerned, as a result of the introduction of a superior technology in the form of iron weaponry, the warrior class had come to play an important role in society. Further, the new iron agricultural implements enabled the peasants to produce more. This surplus had to be collected by the military and administrative authority to meet the growing needs of expenditure, and therefore, a full-fledged governmental organization was also the need of the hour. To overcome the problems created by the changed circumstances, and also to maintain possession of the acquired territory of a particular tribe, there emerged a political system wherein certain groups in society began to dominate over the other boundaries of these kingdoms as well as the numerous towns that had grown during the 6th century B.C. The Buddhist texts mention the sixteen **Mahajanapadas** for the first time. These were mostly situated North of the Vindhyas, and many of them were concentrated in the Ganges valley. They were Anga, Magadha, Vriji, Malla, Kosala, Vatsa, Panchala, Matsya, Surasena, Kuru, Kamboja, Gandhara, Chedi, Avanti and Asmaka. Of these, Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa and Avanti were of considerable importance. The Mallas, for instance, had a republican form of government. The Vrijjis also had a republic, but were formed of a confederacy of tribes. The majority of the **Mahajanapadas** mentioned above were monarchical in character. It has been observed that these kingdoms were concentrated in the Ganges plains, while the republics were mostly found in the foothills. An important point to note about this differentiation is that, the former were concentrated in more fertile region, while the latter, besides being small in size, tended to occupy less fertile and hilly areas. Excavations have brought to light important urban settlements mainly situated in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, like Rajghat, Chirand, Rajgir, Vaishali, Kausambi, Hastinapura, which all indicate that the material basis had naturally facilitated in strengthening the base of these kingdoms. While in the monarchical kingdoms the formation of state organs like the army, taxation, bureaucracy found congenial soil, in the republican kingdoms many of the tribal traditions continued, though the loyalty was now to the territory, and not to an individual single tribe.

It is of some significance to note that the Buddhist literature is silent about the political condition of the kingdoms that were situated in Western Uttar Pradesh. The land of Kuru Panchala during the Later Vedic phase had played a prominent role before the 6th century B.C. The Buddhist literature, instead, concentrated on describing the kingdoms of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and in fact, mentions some new kingdoms for the first time. The Easternmost kingdom was that of Anga with its capital at Champa. Eventually, this came under the suzerainty of Magadha. Magadha gradually grew into the most important kingdom. North of the Ganga was situated the kingdom of the Vrijjis (Vajjis) which included eight clans. Of these, Lichchavis, with their capital at Vaishali, were the most powerful. The kingdom of Kasi was important, and during the first half of this period, it had its capital at Varanasi. However, later, the kingdom of Kosala was able to overpower it. Kosala had its capital at Shravasti. It is associated with the story that is described in the **Ramayana**. In this kingdom was also included the tribal republican territory of the Shakyas. Near the Kosala kingdom also lay the republican territory of the Mallas, whose capital lay at Kusinagara. The kingdom of Vatsas lay to the West of these, and they had their capital at Kausambi. The older states of the **Kurus** and the **Panchalas** were situated further West, and as mentioned before, they did not enjoy much political importance during this period. The kingdom of Avanti was situated in central Malwa and the adjoining parts of Madhya Pradesh. It had its capital at Ujjain. The two kingdoms situated in the Northwest were those of Kambhoja and Gandhara. Many of these kingdoms had more than one capital city. The political history of the period is marked by the incessant struggles for supremacy between these states. Each of them wanted to expand politically at the expense of the others. In the republican kingdoms, the tribal loyalty was stronger which permitted these smaller republican kingdoms, particularly to function well. But, in cases of conflict with the monarchical kingdoms, the latter were more successful. The struggle for ascendancy in the Ganges Valley was, thus, essentially among the monarchical kingdoms. After the kingdom of Kasi lost its preeminence, the real struggle for power was between the kingdoms of Kosala and Magadha. They were rivals for the control of the strategic and economically advantageous Ganges valley plains. The Magadhan kingdom also had a long period of conflict with the republic of Vrijjis, whom they could suppress only after a long time. This battle for the preeminence of Magadha lasted for about 400 years.

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### 9.3 RISE OF MAGADHA

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#### 9.3.1 Bimbisara

Magadha became the centre of political activity around the middle of the 6th century B.C., when Bimbisara ascended the throne (c.542 B.C. -c 490 B.C.). He was the contemporary of Buddha, and under his leadership, a policy of conquest and aggrandisement was started. The establishment of this expansionist policy continued to dominate the political history of Magadha, culminating in the establishment of the Mauryan empire. Bimbisara began by acquiring the kingdom of Magadha, which he placed under his son, Ajatashatru. Dynastic relations based on marriage was another way by which Bimbisara strengthened his position. He had marriage alliance with the royal house of Kosala, which brought him a village yielding as dowry. He married the sister of the king of Kosala. He also married a Lichchavi princess from Vaishali and the daughter of a chief from the Madra clan of Punjab. All these strengthened his expansionist policy and added to the prestige of the royal family of Magadha. Besides,

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MAHAJANAPADA ANGA

ANCIENT CITY ●

MODERN TOWN ○

NATIONAL BOUNDARY



Bimbisara also tried to establish friendship with king Pradyota of Avanti, though he was Magadha's most serious rival during the early years of the former's rule. Bimbisara's diplomacy also extended to kingdoms far away from the ruler of Gandhara. Bimbisara established the first capital of Magadha at Rajgir.

### 9.3.2 Ajatashatru

The aggressive policy of Magadha and its stability during the reign of Bimbisara was achieved partly because of the friendly relations that existed between the kingdoms of Kosala and Magadha. However, Ajatashatru became ambitious and killed his father, and ascended the throne. According to the Buddhist tradition, Bimbisara ruled for 52 years. Ajatashatru's reign is placed between 492-460 B.C. His relations with Prasenajit, the king of Kosala, deteriorated as a result of this, and therefore, war broke out between the two. Prasenajit was betrayed by his minister and he became a fugitive. Thus, the kingdom of Kosala was annexed to Magadha without fighting. Ajatashatru also came into conflict with the tribal confederacy of the Vrijjis that was headed by the Lichchavis of Vaishali. The reason for the conflict was that, they were the allies of Kosala. The character of Government in the Vrijji confederacy was tribal. On the other hand, a monarchical government like that of Magadha had a well-organised standing army. But, it still took sixteen full years to destroy Vaishali. Ajatashatru had to use his **brahman** minister, Vassakra, to sow the seeds of internal dissension among the Lichchavis, which weakened their solidarity, and thus, he was able to defeat them. The Mallas, another tribal republic, were also defeated by him. It is important to note that not only dissension and lack of strong military organization led to the decay of tribal life, but other reasons also contributed. Wealth had increased, and with the emergence of the importance of private property, the egalitarianism in the tribal form of organization was gradually eroded.

### 9.3.3 Successors of Ajatashatru : Sisunaga Dynasty

After settling his relationship with the republican kingdoms, Ajatashatru faced yet another rival i.e., the ruler of Avanti. Avanti had defeated the Vatsas of Kausambi, and according to Buddhist tradition, had planned to invade Magadha. To meet his aggression, the fortifications at Rajgir were strengthened, but the invasion did not materialise. Ajatashatru died in 461 B.C. and was succeeded by Udyan, who ruled from 461 to 444 B.C. Again, according to Buddhist tradition which is preserved in Sri Lanka, Udyan and four other kings who succeeded him are supposed to have ascended the throne after killing their fathers. The last of these was deposed in 413 B.C., after which the Sisunaga dynasty ruled for half a century. They shifted their capital to Vaishali. Their main achievement was the destruction of the power of Avanti. Finally, this kingdom also became part of the Magadhan empire. Nothing is known about the amalgamation of Vatsa with Magadha. The other tribal kingdoms like those of the Surasenans, Matsyas etc., did not last beyond the 4th century B.C.

### 9.3.4 Nandas

It was Ajatashatru who had succeeded in expanding the frontiers of Magadha, and thus, he had laid the foundations of what later became an empire. The Sisunaga dynasty was succeeded by the Nanda dynasty. Mahapadma Nanda, the first king, usurped the throne. The Nandas proved to be the most powerful rulers of Magadha. They added Kalinga to the kingdom. Mahapadma Nanda claimed the status of the sole sovereign (**ekarat**) since he had destroyed

all the other ruling princes. In fact, in the **Puranas**, he is called the destroyer of **Kshatriyas**. It is not very clear whether the Nandas themselves were *Kshatriyas*, since some of the sources state that Mahapadma was the son of a **Shudra** woman. Nonetheless, the Nandas who inherited the kingdom of Magadha can be described as the first empire-builders of India. Though the exact extent of the empire is not known, it is said that their army consisted of 60,000 cavalry, 200,000 infantry and 6000 war elephants. Such a huge army indicates that they were constantly endeavouring to extend their frontiers, and, no doubt, succeeded in making Magadha the most powerful kingdom.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. Mention the names of important kingdoms among the 16 Mahajanapadas.

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2. What were the methods adopted by Bimbisara for the expansion of Magadha?

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3. What were the important achievements of Ajatashatru?

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4. Who was the first Nanda king of Magadha?

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## 9.4 PERSIAN INVASION

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In the Northeastern India, smaller principalities and republics gradually merged with the Magadhan empire. But, the Northwestern India presented a different picture in the first half of the sixth century B.C. Several small principalities such as those of the Kambhojas, Gandharas, and Madras, fought with one another. It did not have any powerful kingdom like that of Magadha to weld the warring communities into one organised kingdom. The area was also wealthy, and could be easily entered through the passes of Hindukush.

The Achaemenian rulers of Iran, who expanded their empire at the same time as the Magadhan princes, took advantage of the political disunity on the Northwestern frontier. The Iran ruler, Darius, penetrated into Northwestern India in 516 B.C. and annexed Punjab, west of the Indus and Sindh. These areas constituted the twentieth province or satrapy of Iran, the total number of satrapies in the Iranian empire being twenty eight. These were the most fertile and populous parts of the empire. It paid a tribute of three hundred and sixty *talents* of gold which accounted for one-third of the total revenue of Iran from its Asian provinces. The Indian subjects were also enrolled in the Iran army. Xerxes, the successor of Darius, employed the Indians in the long war against the Greeks. It appears that India continued to be a part of Iranian empire till Alexander's invasion of India.

The Persian invasion on India had a cultural impact. It is believed that the evolving of Aramaic script and the rising of stone pillars during Mauryan times have been considerably influenced by the Persian style. The development of the Science of Astronomy also had the Persian influence.

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## 9.5 ALEXANDER'S INVASION : CAUSES

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Alexander had an inborn instinct to become and get known as a world conqueror. It is for this reason that after establishing his hold over the ancestral kingdom of Macedonia, he turned towards India.

After defeating Darius III, the Achaemenian ruler, he wanted to establish his supremacy over the entire Achaemenian empire which once included the Northwestern parts of India also.

As a keen student of Geography, Alexander wanted to find out the physical, natural and mineral wealth of India by attempting an invasion of India from its Northwestern side. It is for this purpose that, he sent the expedition against India in two directions, i.e., one through land route, and the other through sea route.

### 9.5.1 Course of the Invasion

While the consolidation of the Magadhan empire was taking place in Central and Eastern India, Alexander of Macedonia invaded Northwestern India. It is said that Alexander did not advance against the Nandas because of their enormous riches and their large army. Alexander had already consolidated his position outside India by defeating the Achaemenian ruler, Darius-III of Iran. The Achaemenian rulers themselves had penetrated into Northwestern India as early as 516 B.C. However, Alexander's victory destroyed the supremacy of the Persians, and after his campaigns in Bactria, he crossed the Hindukush mountains, and in 327 B.C. entered Northwestern India. The political conditions in this part of India were not very stable

at this time. There existed many independent monarchies and tribal republics. Among these rulers, two were important. The first, Ambhi, the ruler of Taxila, submitted to Alexander without a battle. The other ruler Porus (Purushottama), whose kingdom lay between the Jhelum and the Chenab, resisted his advance, but was defeated and captured by Alexander. Much impressed by the bravery and courage of Porus, Alexander restored his kingdom to him, and made him his ally. Alexander did advance further Eastwards, but it was not possible for his army to fight under the Indian climatic conditions. Greek historians also mention that the Indians fought well and were superior to other nations of the area in the art of warfare. Many other tribal kingdoms like Malava, Kshudraka, and Sivi, put up strong resistance, and it was in the battle with the Malavas that Alexander was injured. He was forced to retreat from Northwestern India, where he had stayed for two years (327-325 B.C.). Alexander's exploits in India were thus left incomplete. He was unable to organise his Indian provinces which were then divided amongst the Greek governors, who founded a number of cities in this region in order to maintain their power.

### 9.5.2 Effects of Alexander's Invasion

Alexander's premature death destroyed the fruits of his well-planned and successful enterprise. Within three years of his departure, his officers had been ousted, his garrisons destroyed, and all traces of his rule had disappeared. The colonies which he founded in India, unlike those established in the other Asiatic provinces, took no root. The campaign, although carefully designed to secure a permanent conquest, was in actual effect no more than a brilliantly successful raid on a gigantic scale, which left upon India no mark save the horrid scars of bloody war. No Indian author, Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain, makes even the faintest reference to Alexander or his deeds.

However, Alexander's invasion provided the first occasion when ancient Europe came into close contact with ancient India. It is to be admitted that it produced certain important results. The Indian campaign of Alexander was a triumphant success. He added to his empire an Indian province which was much larger than that conquered by Iran, though the Greek possessions in India were soon lost to the then Mauryan rulers.

The most important outcome of this invasion was the establishment of direct contact between India and Greece in different fields. Alexander's campaign opened up four distinct routes by land and sea. It paved the way for Greek merchants and craftsmen, and increased the existing facilities for trade.

Although we hear of some Greeks living in the Northwest even before the invasion of Alexander, the invasion led to the establishment of more Greek settlements in this area. The most important of them were the city of Alexandria in the Kabul region, Boukephala on the Jhelum, and Alexandria in Sind. Although the areas were conquered by the Mauryans, the settlements were not wiped out, and some of the Greeks continued to live in this area, under both Chandragupta Maurya and Asoka. In course of time, these settlements contributed for the exercising of Hellenistic influence on the evolution of early Indian art.

Alexander was deeply interested in the geography of the mysterious ocean which he saw for the first time at the mouth of the Indus. Therefore, he despatched his new fleet under his friend Nearchus to explore the coast, and search for harbours from the mouth of the Indus to that of the Euphrates. So, Alexander's historians have left valuable geographical accounts.

They also have left clearly - dated records of Alexander's campaign, which form the sheet-anchor of Indian chronology for subsequent events on a definite basis. Alexander's historians also give us important information about social and economic conditions. They tell us about the *sati* system, the sale of girls in market places by poor parents, and the fine breed of oxen in Northwestern India. Alexander sent from there 200,000 oxen to Macedonia for use in Greece. The art of carpentry was the most flourishing craft in India, and carpenters built chariots, boats and ships.

By destroying the power of petty states in Northwestern India, Alexander's invasion paved the way for the expansion of the Mauryan empire in that area. According to tradition, Chandragupta Maurya, who founded the Mauryan empire, had seen something of the working of the military machine of Alexander, and had acquired some knowledge which helped him in destroying the power of the Nandas.

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## 9.6 REASONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF MAGADHA

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The success of Magadha cannot be explained only in terms of its military strength. In fact, as we have outlined above, Magadhan kings, like Bimbisara, Ajatashatru and Mahapadma Nanda, used foul means as well to enlarge and strengthen their kingdom. Also, even when Magadha was ruled by weak rulers like the successors of Ajatashatru or Mahapadma Nanda, it continued to grow in strength. Therefore, scholars have sought to give various reasons for the success of Magadha. It is said that the favourable geographical position enabled it to control the lower Gangetic plains. The rich alluvial soil provided it with a strong agricultural base. Further, it is said that the richest iron deposits were situated near Rajgir which was the earliest capital of Magadha. The availability of this enabled the Magadhan kings to have control over areas of iron ore. The thick forests in South Bihar supplied abundant timber for buildings and elephants for the army. Besides the use of iron implements, Magadhan rulers could take advantage of improving their military technology with the help of iron weapons. The three important cities of Magadha, Rajgir and Pataliputra were also situated strategically. The traffic on the river Ganges which was the effective means of carrying on trade, was also controlled easily by the Magadhan kings. With these advantages, Magadhan society was able to prosper, and ultimately, it became the nucleus of an extensive empire. It is interesting to note that in the early Vedic literature, the people of Magadha were held in low esteem. However, from the 6th century B.C. to the 3rd century B.C., it was that region of Northern India which not only held political sway, but was also the centre of economic, cultural and intellectual life.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Who were the two important rulers in Northwestern India when Alexander invaded India?

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2. What is the most important effect of Alexander's invasion of India?

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### 9.7 LET US SUM UP

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1. The most important political feature of the 6th century B.C. was the emergence of 16 Mahajanapadas.
2. The expansion of the kingdom of Magadha started with Bimbisara.
3. Ajatashatru expanded the frontiers of Magadha and laid the foundation for the Magadhan empire.
4. The Nandas were the most powerful rulers of Magadha.
5. Alexander's invasion of India in 327 B.C. is a landmark in Indian History. His invasion of Northwestern India paved the way for the political unification of India under Chandragupta Maurya.

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### 9.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa and Avanti.  
2. Bimbisara adopted the policy of matrimonial alliance, diplomacy, and conquests for the expansion of Magadha.  
3. The greatest achievement of Ajatashatru was the expansion of the kingdom of Magadha. He annexed the kingdom of Kosala to Magadha, the Vrijjis and the Mallas were also defeated and placed under the control of Magadha.  
4. Mahapadma Nanda
- II. 1. Ambhi of Taxila and Porus  
2. Paving the way for the political unification of India under the Mauryans by destroying the small kingdoms in the Northwest of India was the most important effect of Alexander's invasion of India.

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### 9.9 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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- I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.
  1. Describe the territorial and administrative constitution of the sixteen Mahajanapadas.
  2. State how Bimbisara and Ajatashatru had contributed for Magadhan ascendancy.

3. Trace the causes, course and the effects of Alexander's invasion

**II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.**

1. Describe the achievements of Nanda rulers.
2. Examine the significance of Persian Invasion.
3. What are the factors that accounted for the supremacy of Magadha?

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**9.10 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING**

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1. Basham, A.L. : *The Wonder that was India*
2. Jha, D.N. : *Ancient India - An Introductory Outline*
3. Kosambi, D.D. : *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India - A Historical Outline*
4. Majumdar, R.C. (ed) : *The Classical Age, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series, Vol. II*
5. Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhari, H.C. : *Advanced History of India, Vol. I*  
and Datta K.
6. Nilakantha Sastri, K.A. : *History of India, Vol. I*
7. Romila Thapar : *History of India, Vol. I*
8. Sathianatha Aiyar, R. : *History of India, Vol. I*
9. Sharma, R.S. : *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*
10. Wooley, Sir Leonard (ed) : *History of Mankind Series, UNESCO, Vol. I*

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## **BLOCK - II      INDIA FROM THE MAURYAN AGE TO 7TH CENTURY A.D.**

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This Block consists of the Units from 10 to 17. The first Unit in this block is on the Mauryans. Kushan and Gupta empires in the North, and the social, economic and cultural conditions during the time of those empires, are described in some of the Units of this Block. The career and achievements of Harshavardhana and the socio-economic and cultural conditions during his time are also explained in this Block. The system and type of administration that prevailed during Mauryan, Kushan, Gupta and Harsha times, have also been portrayed in the Units of this Block.

The significance of the Sangam literature, and the history of the Satavahanas and Chedis, together with the socio-economic conditions during their time is explained in Unit - 13. Further to cap it all, the struggle for hegemony in South India and the administrative economic, social and cultural conditions that existed in the Deccan and South India from 7th to 13th centuries A.D., have been discussed in Units - 16 and 17 of this Block. Thus, this Block deals with the prominent dynasties that ruled during the Ancient period both in Northern and Southern India, and the life and conditions of the people during this vast and momentous period in the history of India.

BRAOU

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## UNIT - 10 : MAURYANS

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### Contents

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Chandragupta Maurya
- 10.3 Bindusara
- 10.4 Asoka
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  - 10.4.2 The Kalinga War
  - 10.4.3 Extent of the Empire
  - 10.4.4 Asoka's Dharma
- 10.5 Disintegration of the Mauryan Empire
- 10.6 Sungas
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  - 10.6.3 Agnimitra and the later rulers
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- 10.11 Check Your Progress : Answers
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- 10.13 Books for further reading

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### 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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By a study of this Unit, you will know about :

1. the early Mauryan kings Chandragupta Maurya and Bindusara;
2. Asoka;
3. the extent of the Mauryan Empire; and
4. the causes for the disintegration of the Mauryan Empire

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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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The Mauryan period in Indian history is an important period for various reasons. The period witnessed the establishment of one of the biggest empires in India. A uniform and highly

developed system of administration existed in the Mauryan empire. The availability of abundant source material for writing the history of this period also makes this period unique. The Buddhist and Jain works like the **Mahavamsa** and the **Dipavamsa**, the writings of the Greeks like Justin, Strabo and Plutarch, **Indica** of Megasthenes, Kautilya's **Arthashastra** and the edicts of Asoka, are the most valuable sources of information for this period.

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## 10.2 CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

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Chandragupta Maurya who has been described by R.K. Mookerjee as the first historical emperor of India, was the founder of the Mauryan empire. He defeated Dhanananda, the last Nanda king of Magadha, and laid the foundation of the Mauryan empire in 324 B.C. In his efforts to overthrow the Nanda king, he was ably guided and supported by Chanakya, who was also known as Kautilya. There are conflicting opinions regarding the ancestry of Chandragupta Maurya. The Puranas and the Greek accounts have described him as **sudra**. The Buddhist works like the **Mahavamsa** and **Divyavadana**, however, have recorded that he belonged to the **kshatriya** caste. The word Mauryan, according to some scholars, is derived from Mura, the name of the mother of Chandragupta. According to some others, it is derived from the word Moria, which was the name of a tribe inhabiting the region of Pippalivana.

R.K. Mookerjee is of the view that Chandragupta Maurya first defeated the prefects of Alexander in the Northwestern region of India, and then defeated Dhanananda of Magadha. This view is not supported by Nilakanta Sastri and Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, who have stated that Chandragupta Maurya first established his rule in Magadha in 324 B.C., and later expanded his kingdom to the Northwest by defeating the Greek prefects around 317 B.C. The defeat of the Greek rulers in the Northwestern region of India resulted in the liberation of the people of that region from foreign rule.

The defeat of Selukos was another great achievement of Chandragupta. Selukos, who became the successor of Alexander in the Eastern part of Alexander's empire, tried to regain the territory that was conquered by Chandragupta Maurya in the Northwest of India, and came into conflict with the Mauryan emperor. The war between the two took place in 305 B.C. After his defeat, Selukos concluded a treaty with Chandragupta Maurya, by which, he surrendered a large territory comprising Kabul, Herat, Kandahar and Beluchistan, in return for 500 elephants. The treaty also resulted in a matrimonial alliance between the two. A Greek ambassador, by name Megasthenes was later sent to the court of Chandragupta Maurya.

Chandragupta conquered Avanti and Saurashtra also. Practically the whole of India, with the exception of the far South, comprising the territories of the Chola, Pandya, Keralaputra, Satyaputra and the region of the Brahmaputra, lay under the banner of the Mauryan dynasty.

Chandragupta Maurya, who had liberated one part of the country from the rule of an unpopular dynasty, and another from foreign yoke, and established an extensive empire in India, was a great administrator also. It was during his time that the Mauryan administration was evolved.

According to Jain accounts, during his last years he became a Jain, abdicated the throne in favour of his son, and went to Sravana Belgola in Karnataka along with the Jain monk Bhadra Bahu, and died there by resorting to starvation, following the orthodox Jain tradition.

A period of 24 years is credited to the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. Assuming that his reign started in 324 B.C., it should have come to an end in 301 B.C.

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### 10.3 BINDUSARA

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Bindusara was the son and successor of Chandragupta Maurya. He was known to the Greeks as **Amitraehates**, which is probably a corrupt form of his Sanskrit title **Amitraghata**, which means destroyer of enemies. Bindusara not only preserved the imperial heritage of his father, but also in some respects prepared the way for his great son, Asoka.

Bindusara continued to maintain friendly relations with the Greek kings ruling in the West. According to Strabo, the king of Syria sent an ambassador, by name Deimachus, to the court of Bindusara. The Greek writers have also reported that Bindusara asked Anitiochus I of Syria (son of Selukos Nikater) to buy and send him sweet wine, dried figs and a sophist. We learn that the Syrian king replied "We shall send you figs and the wine, but in Greece, the laws forbid a sophist to be sold. The above information proves that Bindusara was interested not only in maintaining friendly relations with the Hellenic world, but also in learning about Greek culture and philosophy.

The Buddhist accounts state that Bindusara ruled for 28 years, while the Puranas ascribe 25 years to him. If he ascended the throne in 301 B.C., his reign might have ended in 273 B.C., assuming that he ruled for 28 years.

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### 10.4 ASOKA

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Asoka, Bindusara's successor to the throne of the Mauryan empire, was one of the greatest kings in the annals of world history. According to H. G. Wells, amidst the tens and thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history... the name of Asoka shines almost alone like a star. From Volga to Japan, his name is still honoured. More living men cherish his memory today than have heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne.

Yet, till about a century ago, not much was known about Asoka. After scholars were able to decipher the contents of the edicts of Asoka, we have a wealth of information about the activities of that great king.

#### 10.4.1 Early Life

According to one tradition, Asoka's mother was Subhadraangi, who was a **brahmin**. According to another tradition, he was the son of a **kshatriya** lady Dhamma, the chief queen of Bindusara. Taranath, the Tibetan historian writes that he was born to a **vaisya** woman. The Tibetan historian states that Asoka was born after the period of mourning following the death of the king's (Bindusara) mother was over, and hence named Asoka, meaning the end of grief. The name Asoka is mentioned only in the Maski and Gujarat edicts of Asoka. In other edicts he referred to himself as '**Devanam Priya**' (Dear to the Gods) or as '**Priya Darsana**' (of amiable appearance or good-looking).

Tradition associates Asoka with the viceroyalty of Avanti and Taxila. When he was the viceroy of Avanti, he fell in love with Devi of Vidisa and married her. She was the first wife of Asoka, and being a Buddhist, probably she was the first person to draw Asoka towards

Buddhism. Mahendra and Sanghamitra, who went to Ceylon and preached Buddhism there, were born to Vidisa Devi.

The Ceylonese works **Mahavamsa** and **Dipavamsa**, mention that Asoka seized sovereignty by killing 99 of his brothers. The above works also state that there was an interregnum of four years between the accession and coronation of Asoka as emperor.

However, basing their arguments mainly on the fact that Asoka refers to his brothers and their harems in Rock Edict No. V, scholars like Bhandarkar, K.P. Jayaswal, R.K. Mookerjee and Nilakanta Sastri have refuted the version that Asoka killed 99 of his brothers. But, the interval of four years (273-269 B.C.) between the accession and coronation of Asoka cannot be explained easily, even if it is accepted that Asoka's brothers, were alive during his reign. Probably there was a fight for the throne among the brothers, and Asoka might have killed some of his brothers before he was successful in the war for the throne. The version of **Mahavamsa** and **Dipavamsa** may not be an altogether concocted story. However, it may be an exaggeration.

#### 10.4.2 Kalinga War

The Kalinga war was a turning point in the reign of Asoka. It had far-reaching consequences. Kalinga, which more or less corresponds to modern Orissa, had much strategic and economic importance. Hence, Asoka decided to conquer it. Asoka mentions about the Kalinga war in his XIII edict. It is stated that the war was waged in the eighth year of his coronation, i.e., in 262 B.C. Asoka himself described the devastating destruction caused by the Kalinga war. In the XIII edict, he stated "A hundred and fifty thousand were killed and many times that number perished". The colossal destruction in the Kalinga war filled Asoka's mind with remorse and sorrow, and brought about a change in his thinking. After that war, he decided not to wage any wars in future, and was determined to adhere to the path of non-violence or **ahimsa**. The king emphatically declared that he would not henceforth undertake conquest by arms, but would follow the policy of **Dharma Vijaya**. As H.C. Raychaudari remarks. "The conquest of Kalinga... marks the close of the career of conquest and aggrandisement. Asoka probably is the only king in the entire history of the world to give up the policy of conquests after gaining a great victory in war. Further, the Kalinga war brought Asoka nearer to Buddhism.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - I

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- i) What are the important achievements of Chandragupta Maurya?

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ii) Write about the importance of Kalinga War.

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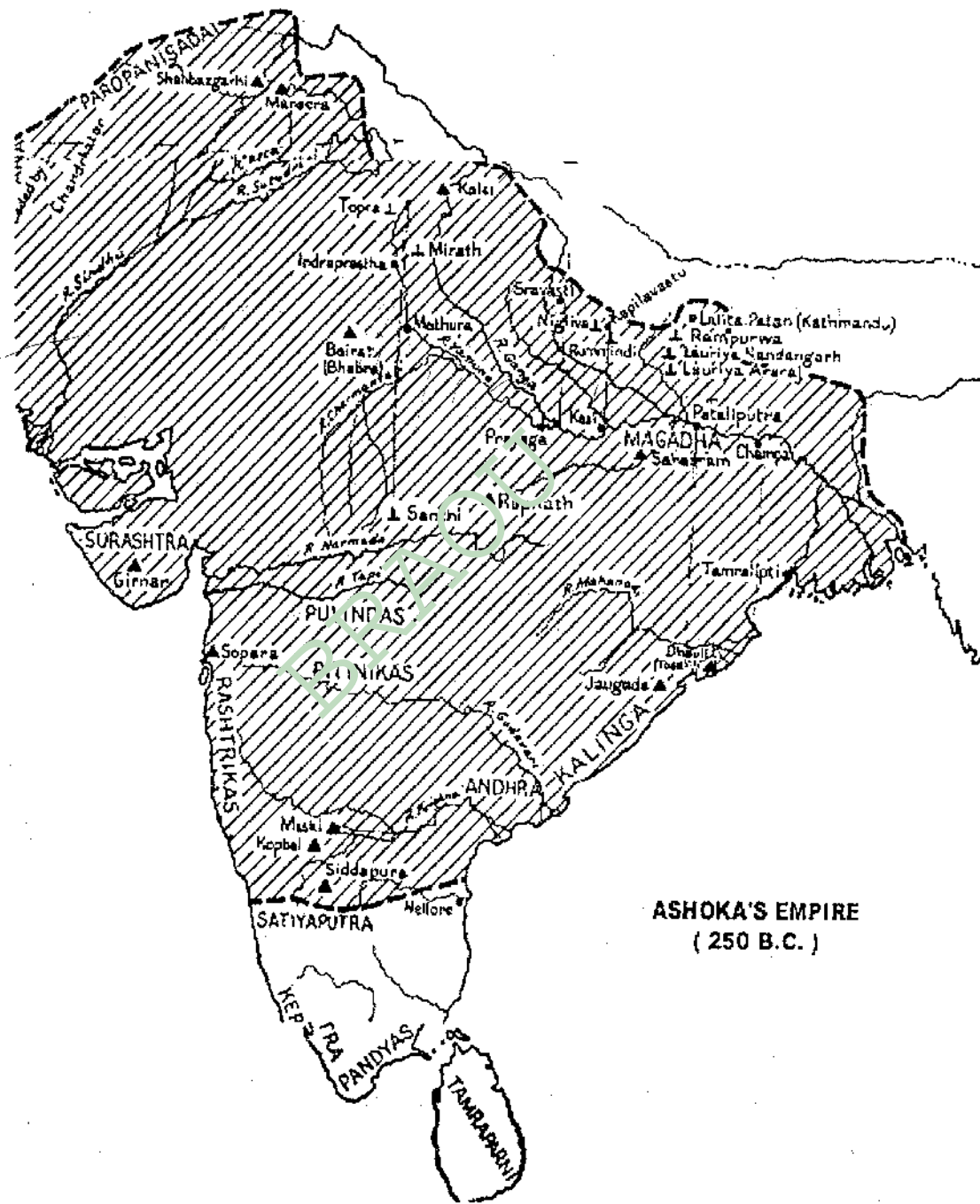
### 10.4.3 Extent of the Empire

After the conquest of Kalinga, Asoka's empire extended practically over the whole of India, with the exception of the extreme South, which according to Edict II was occupied by the independent states of Chola, Pandya, Satyapura and Keralaputra. In the Northwest, his empire consisted of a considerable portion of Afghanistan and Beluchistan. Kashmir was also a part of his empire. In the East, the discovery of Asokan edicts and *stupas* in Samatata and Pundravardhana proves the inclusion of Bengal in his empire. However, there is no evidence for the inclusion of Kamarupa (Assam). In the South, his empire probably extended upto Kanchipuram in Tamilnadu. Thus, the empire of Asoka was extensive, and was bigger than the British empire in India. The Mauryan empire was probably the most extensive empire known to Indian history.

### 10.4.4 Asoka's Dharma

Asoka strove very hard for the welfare of his subjects. In fact, the principal object which he had invariably before his mind was the spiritual good of man, the dissemination of what he loved to call **dharma**. He is quite explicit on this point, and gives us not only the attributes that fall under the term **dharma**, but also specific practices which were prescribed by the king to his people. In Pillar Edicts II and VII, Asoka specifies virtues such as kindness (*daya*), liberality (*dana*), truthfulness (*satya*), purity (*sachayi*), gentleness (*mardava*), as his **dharma**. His different edicts speak of the similar message. The word **dharma** and its meaning are so sweet to him that he not only repeats the code of duties which constitute it, but also glorifies it by instituting a comparison between **dharma** and the ordinary practices of life, and establishing the superiority of the former over the later. In Rock Edicts IX, XI and XIV, Asoka explained **dharma** and enumerates his ethical practices by saying that **dharma-dana** or alms-giving of **Dharma** can be conferred by any body on any body, for instance, by father on his son. In Pillar Edict II he appeals to the people to get rid of the harmful feelings such as violence, cruelty, anger, conceit and envy. Thus, not only the performance of moral duties was enumerated by Asoka, but also freedom from such passions, which was felt to be necessary for the full and adequate fulfilment of **dharma**.

His **dharma** may be described as the common property of all religions. Asoka is famous for preaching **dharma** to the people. His **dharma** was not just Buddhist **dharma**. His **dharma** was essentially an ethical code of conduct. Respect to parents, elders and teachers; speaking the truth; not committing sins; being generous to others; and toleration of others, are some of the important principles of Asoka's **dharma**. In the Yerragudi Minor Rock Edict, Asoka stated: 'Obedience must be rendered to mother and father, likewise to elders; truth must be spoken'.



ASHOKA'S EMPIRE  
( 250 B.C. )

In the Seventh Rock Edict, we find Asoka laying emphasis on the qualities of the mind. Self-control, purity of mind, gratitude and firm devotion were stressed in that edict. The Eleventh and Thirteenth Rock Edicts point out that the serfs and the servants should be properly treated. That animals and all living creatures should be kindly treated is also an important principle of Asoka's **dharm**. Asoka condemned evil passions like fierceness, cruelty, anger, pride and envy, and warned people that they should not commit evil deeds under their influence. Thus, in his **dharm** Asoka laid stress on personal conduct.

#### 10.4.5 Religious Policy

Before he became a Buddhist, Asoka was an orthodox Hindu. According to Kalhana, the author of **Rajatarangini**, Siva was the favourite deity of Asoka before he became a Buddhist.

The **Dipavamsa** and **Mahavamsa** state that Asoka became a Buddhist due to the influence of Nigrodha, who was the son of the eldest brother (Sumana) of Asoka. We learn from the above-mentioned works that Asoka became a Buddhist in the fourth year of his coronation, i.e., before the Kalinga war itself. Based on the information provided in Minor Rock Edict I and Rock Edict XIII, R.K. Mookherjee has stated that Asoka was a mere lay disciple or **upasaka** of Buddhism for two and a half years before he became actively associated with the Buddhist **Sangha**.

In the past, it was believed that Asoka, filled with remorse after the Kalinga war, became a Buddhist immediately after the war. The historical evidence does not support that belief. In fact, the conversion of Asoka to Buddhism was not an overnight or sudden conversion.

Asoka raised Buddhism from the state of a local sect to that of an international religion. He propagated Buddhism in several ways. By practicing what he preached, he was able to spread the influence of Buddhism. He stopped the slaughter of animals, and adhered to the policy of **ahimsa**. Further, in Rock Edict I, Asoka made it known that previously in the royal kitchen many hundreds and thousands of living beings were killed, and that at the time of issue of the Edict, only three living creatures were killed every day, and that the slaughter of even these three would be stopped in future. Further, he undertook **dharmayatras** or religious tours. In Rock Edict VIII, he states that in the past kings used to go on pleasure tours resorting to hunting and other kinds of amusements, and that he would undertake **dharmayatras** and not pleasure tours. During one of his religious tours, he visited Bodh Gaya. In his Rock Edict VII, Asoka states that he visited **sambodhi** (the Bodhi Tree at Bodh Gaya), ten years after his coronation. In the 20th year after the coronation, Asoka visited the place of Buddha's birth (Lumbinivana), and in the Rumminde inscription located there, declared that he lowered the rate of taxation for the people.

According to the Ceylonese chronicles, Asoka convened the third Buddhist Council at Pataliputra, the capital of his empire. According to the **Mahavamsa**, it was convened in the 17th year of Asoka's reign. The Council was presided over by the great Buddhist scholar, Moggaliputta Tissa. Asoka made efforts to prevent divisions in Buddhism. But, in spite of his efforts, the Buddhist **sangha** came to be divided into two sects, **Hinayana** and **Mahayana**. Asoka sent missionaries to several countries to spread Buddhism. Mahendra and Sanghamitra were sent to Ceylon. Missionaries were also sent to Burma, Sumatra, Syria, Egypt, Macedonia and Cyrene or Epirus.

Asoka undertook humanitarian activities both within his own empire and outside the empire. In Rock Edict II, Asoka mentions that he made provision for medical treatment of both men and animals. Besides medical aid, for every nine miles, wells were dug, and shade-giving trees were planted along the roads. Asoka deserves to be ranked as one of the greatest monarchs not only in Indian history, but in the history of the entire world. The service which he rendered to Buddhism, his policy of religious toleration, his concern for the welfare of not only human beings, but of all living beings, and the policy of peace which he followed after achieving success in the Kalinga war, entitle him to a prominent place in world history.

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## 10.5 DISINTEGRATION OF THE MAURYAN EMPIRE

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It is generally believed that Asoka died in 232 B.C., after ruling for 37 years. After Asoka's death, the Mauryan empire became weak and disintegrated. There is much obscurity and confusion in Mauryan history after Asoka's death. According to the **Puranas**, Kunala was the successor of Asoka. But, **Divyavadana** mentions Sampradi as the successor of Asoka. It does not make any mention of Kunala's rule. Kalhana, the Kashmir historian, states that Jalauka was the successor of Asoka. Taranath, the Tibetan historian, has his own version of the successors of Asoka. The confusing account of Mauryan history after Asoka, only proves that the empire disintegrated after his death.

The vast Mauryan empire came to an end in 187 B.C., 45 years after the death of Asoka. The last Mauryan king Brihadratha was assassinated by Pushyamitra Sunga, the commander-in-chief of the army. Several causes were responsible for the downfall of the Mauryan empire. According to H.P. Sastry and others, Asoka's policy of propagating Buddhism affected the interests of **brahmins** who felt aggrieved, and engineered a coup against the Mauryan king Brihadratha under the leadership of Pushyamitra Sunga who was a **brahmin**. It is argued by some scholars that the fall of the Mauryan empire was the result of the **brahminical** reaction against the pro-Buddhist policy of Asoka.

Further, according to Bhandarkar and some other scholars, the policy of peace and **ahimsa** of Asoka weakened the army and the administrative machinery of the Mauryan empire, and thereby destroyed it.

But, the available evidence does not prove the above views. Asoka himself exhorted his subjects to show respect to the **brahmins**. Besides, there is no evidence to show that Asoka's successors followed an anti-*brahmin* policy. It is also not correct to say that Asoka's policy of **ahimsa** displeased the **brahmins**, because the Hindu works like the **Upanishads** also preached the policy of **ahimsa**. Further, there is no basis to believe that Asoka's policy of peace weakened the Mauryan empire. It is mentioned that Jalauka, one of the successors of Asoka, was able to drive out the **mlechchas** (Greeks). Again, Pushyamitra, as the commander-in-chief of Mauryan army, was able to prevent Demetrius, the Greek invader, from seizing Pataliputra. These examples show that the Mauryan army had not become weak due to Asoka's policy of peace.

According to D.D. Kosambi, the Mauryan empire collapsed due to financial bankruptcy. His conclusion is based on the debasement of the Mauryan coins in the later years. He further argues that the strain of severe taxation also weakened the empire.

Probably, the most important cause of the collapse of the Mauryan empire was the succession of weak kings after Asoka. Dynastic empires depend for their continued existence on the succession of able monarchs. None of the successors of Asoka had the ability to maintain his vast empire. Hence, the Mauryan empire disappeared.

Available evidence clearly indicates that the successors fought among themselves. Kunala and Sampradi, who both belonged to the Mauryan dynasty, fought against each other. While Jalauka tried to drive out the Greeks, his cousin Subhagasena helped the Greeks. Such internal conflicts within the dynasty hastened the downfall of the Mauryan empire.

Lack of nationalism both among the rulers and the people, also contributed for the downfall of the empire. The caste, linguistic, regional and other parochial feelings prevented the growth of a feeling of unity, and finally weakened the Mauryan empire.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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i) What are the important achievements of Asoka?

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ii) What are the important causes for the disintegration of the Mauryan Empire?

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## 10.6 SUNGAS

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### 10.6.1 Origin

In North India, the immediate successors of the Mauryas were the Sungas, a Brahmana family of obscure origin. Very likely, they came from the region of Ujjain, where they had served the Mauryas. Pushyamitra Sunga, a general of the last Maurya king Brihadratha, slew his master, and succeeded to the throne in 184 B.C.

### 10.6.2 Pushyamitra Sunga

Pushyamitra is well known as an enthusiastic supporter of the orthodox Brahmanical faith, and is said to have performed two *Asvamedha* sacrifices. Buddhist literature portrays him as

a persecutor of Buddhists and destroyer of their monasteries and places of worship. The Sunga dominions comprised the entire Gangetic valley and extended to the river Narmada. The cities of Pataliputra, Ayodhya, Vidisa, Jullundhar and Sakala (Sialkot) were included in the Sunga kingdom. Pushyamitra ruled for 36 years, and was succeeded by his son, Agnimitra in 148 B.C.

### 10.6.3 Agnimitra and the later rulers

Agnimitra's rule in the areas of Eastern Malwa even during the period of Pushyamitra is known from Kalidasa's drama *Malavikagnimitra*. He was succeeded by Suzyeshtha and Sumitra respectively. *Puranas* assign a total duration of one hundred and twelve years to the Sunga dynasty. Some of the noblest Buddhist monuments - the *stupas* of Sanchi and Bharhut continued to receive both private and royal support under the Sungas. A number of additions to the beautifully sculptured railings of those monuments were made under them; and there is a definite mention of a donation to the *stupa* at Bharhut during the Sunga rule. One of the last rulers, Bhagabhadra, had relation with the Indo-Greek ruler, Antialkidas. The ambassador of the Greek ruler, Heliodoros erected the Garuda pillar at Besnagar during the reign of Bhagabhadra. This shows how foreigners adopted the Hindu religion.

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## 10.7 KANVAS

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The Kanvas or Kanvayanas who succeeded the Sungas, were also *brahmanas*, and figure among the ancient priestly families of Vedic times. The kingdom to which the founder of the dynasty, Kanva Vasudeva succeeded, was much diminished in extent. Its jurisdiction was probably confined to Magadha alone. Vasudeva, Bhumimitra, Narayana and Susarman were the successive rulers of this family, and this dynasty came to an end after 45 years of existence. According to the *Puranas*, the Andhra monarch, Pulumavi overthrew Kanva Susarman.

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## 10.8 ART AND ARCHITECTURE

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This period is an epoch of great sculptural achievements. The beautiful pillars which Asoka raised in different parts of his empire, and sculptures on the *stupas* of Bharhut and Sanchi, and the Ajivika caves near Gaya, are some examples of the art of this period. Serving as a vehicle of communication to meet the needs of the expanding religion, the art in the early phase is mainly narrative, and follows the usual practices of continuous narration. The next phase in the movement is supplied by the reliefs on gateways of the *stupa* at Bharhut erected during the rule of the Sungas. On the gateways, there are representations of the *Yakshas*, the *Yakshis* and other semi-divine beings. In the scenes of the previous lives of the Master, the Bodhisatva, as he was then called, is represented in human form according to the needs of the stories. But, in those of his life, he is never represented as such. His presence, when occasion demands, is indicated by symbols, such as the *Bodhi* tree, the *Vajrasana*, the foot-prints, the wheel, the *stupa* etc. The inscriptions clearly testify that such symbols actually stand for the Master. M.J. Havell considers the sculptures of the *stupas* of Bharhut and Sanchi as work which combines non-Aryan and Aryan elements.

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## 10.9 LITERARY DEVELOPMENT

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The period of the Sungas is famous for the commentary on Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* viz., the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali. The works of Katyayana and Patanjali go to show how the Sanskrit language was perfected and systematized. Though works of the period are not available, a considerable number of scholars must have been engaged in teaching the *Vedas*, *Vedangas* and *Darsanas*. However, since the Asokan times, Prakrit language became the medium of the epigraphs. The Buddhist religion had set the norms, and hence, even the Besnagar inscription which speaks of the erection of the Garuda pillar in front of the Vasudeva temple, was also written in Prakrit.

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## 10.10 LET US SUM UP

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Chandragupta Maurya founded the Mauryan Empire in 324 B.C. Asoka (269-232 B.C.) was the greatest of the Mauryan kings. The Kalinga War was a turning point in his life. Asoka spread Buddhism to many parts of India and to other countries also. But, he followed a policy of tolerance. After Asoka, the Mauryan empire disintegrated. Some historians think that Asoka himself was responsible for the downfall of the empire. But, many factors like financial bankruptcy, weak successors and foreign invasions, contributed to the break-up of the Mauryan Empire. Following the Mauryas, the Sungas and Kanvas reigned for brief periods, but known for the development of religion, art and literature.

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## 10.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- 1.(i) Founding the Mauryan Empire by defeating Dhanananda was one of the greatest achievements of Chandragupta Maurya. Liberation of the people in the Northwestern region of India from the foreign rule of Greeks was also one of his great achievements. Another important achievement of Chandragupta Maurya was the defeat of Selukos Nikator. Chandragupta Maurya was a great administrator also.
- (ii) The Kalinga war is a turning point in the life of Asoka and in the history of India. Asoka gave up wars and adopted a policy of peace after the Kalinga War. He devoted his life after the war for the propagation of **Dharma**.
2. (i) Asoka made the Mauryan empire extensive. He followed the policy of peace after the Kalinga War and spread Buddhism to many parts of the country and to other countries also. Another important achievement of Asoka was that, he followed the policy of religious toleration. During his time, Mauryan art also developed.
- (ii) It is argued by some scholars that Asoka's propagation of Buddhism and his policy of *Ahimsa* contributed to the disintegration of the Mauryan Empire. This view is not accepted by many scholars. Weak successors of Asoka, the disputes among them, financial difficulties of the empire, and the Greek invasions, contributed for the downfall of the Mauryan empire.

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## 10.12 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Give an account of the life and achievements of Chandragupta Maurya
2. Explain why Asoka can be considered as a great monarch
3. Evaluate the significance and the effects of Asoka's religious policy.
4. Critically examine the causes that led to the fall of the Mauryan empire.

### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines.

1. Describe the achievements of Bindusara
2. State the arguments that are put forward regarding the accession of Asoka to the throne.
3. Examine the importance of Kalinga War in Asoka's reign.
4. Explain Asoka's Dharma
5. Bring out the contribution of the Sungas for cultural development.

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## 10.13 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Basham, A.L. : *The Wonder that was India*
2. Bhandarkar, E.R. : *Asoka*
3. Dikshitar, V.R. : *Mauryan Polity*
4. Kosambi, D.D. : *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India : A Historical Outline*
5. Majumdar, R.C. (ed) : *The Age of Imperial Unity, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series, Vol. II*
6. Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhari, H.C. : *An Advanced History of India and Datta, K.*
7. Mookerjee, R.K. : *Chandragupta Maurya and his times*
8. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. (ed) : *The Age of Nandas and the Mauryas*
9. Rapson (ed) : *Cambridge History of India, Vol. I*
10. Romila Thapar : *History of India, Vol. I*
11. Romila Thapar : *Asoka and the decline of the Mauryas*
12. Raychaudhari, H.C. : *Political History of Ancient India.*
13. Sircar, D.C. : *Inscriptions of Asoka*
14. Smith, Vincent : *Asoka.*

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## UNIT - 11: MAURYAN AGE : ADMINISTRATION, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

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### 11.0 OBJECTIVES

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Study of this unit should enable you to know :

1. the salient features of Mauryan administration ; and
2. the social, economic and religious life in the Mauryan period.

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## 11.1. INTRODUCTION

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The Mauryan age is an important period of Indian history. The administration in the Mauryan empire was highly organised. According to V.A. Smith, the Mauryan administration was better organised than even that of the Mughals. From the literary and archaeological sources, we have information about the social and economic conditions during the Mauryan age. A brief account of those conditions is given in this Unit.

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## 11.2 ADMINISTRATION

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Mauryan administration has been paternal in its nature. It is the first well-organised system that was put into operation in Ancient India.

### 11.2.1 The King

The king during the Mauryan period had enormous powers. He appointed the ministers and most important officers. Regulations were framed, and laws were enacted, and justice was also administered by the king. He took part in wars and maintained control over many officials. Even though the powers of the king were extensive, he was not a dictator. According to Ramachandra Dikshitar, the Mauryan king was a constitutional monarch. The paternal conception of kingship was in vogue during the Mauryan period. Asoka in his Kalinga Edict declared 'All men are my children'. In Pillar Edict IV, he said that just as parents entrust their children to skillful nurses, he has entrusted the task of the welfare of people to his officers like Rajukas. Again in Edict VI, he proclaimed that whatever he was doing, was to discharge his debt to the people, so that they would feel happy and attain heavenly bliss. In the same Edict, Asoka stated that wherever he was, in the palace, or in harem or in the inner chamber or in the garden, and whatever he was doing, he could be approached. The above declarations of Asoka are examples for his paternal philosophy of kingship. The following exhortation of Kautilya to the king in the *Arthashastra* also proves that in the Mauryan period, paternal kingship was considered as the ideal. Kautilya wrote "The happiness of the subject is the happiness of the king; their well-being is his. The king's welfare lies not in his own pleasure, but in that of his subjects".

### 11.2.2 Mantriparishad

As the king had a heavy load of responsibilities, a *mantriparishad* or Council of Ministers existed to assist the king. According to Rock Edict III and Rock Edict VI, the *mantriparishad* had the power to supervise the *Yuktas*, who were officers dealing with accounts. The *mantriparishad* also had the power to discuss and even differ from the orders of the king, which had to be transmitted to the officers working in various parts of the empire. The number of ministers varied from time to time. Even the status and powers of the Council of Ministers must have depended on the personality of the king.

### 11.2.3 Pura and Janapada

Ramachandra Dikshitar in his book *The Mauryan Polity* states that two assemblies known as *Pura* and *Janapada* existed at Pataliputra during the Mauryan period. He mentions that Pillar Edict IV and Rock Edict VIII of Asoka make references to the *Pura* and *Janapada*.

The important men of the kingdom were probably the members of these bodies. They seem to have exercised important functions like discussing and approving the policies of the king.

#### 11.2.4 Bureaucracy

From the accounts of **Arthashastra**, **Indica** and the Edicts of Asoka, it is clear that an elaborate machinery of officials functioned in the Mauryan empire.

The **Samaharta** was in charge of supervising the collections of revenue from the whole kingdom. He had also the responsibility of controlling the expenditure of the Government. The **Arthashastra** mentions **Adyakshas** or superintendents, who were the heads of departments. The names of the departments mentioned are: Treasury, Mines, Metals, Mint, Salt, Gold, Storehouses, Trade, Forest Produce, Armoury, Weights and Measures, Measurement of Space and time, Tolls, Spinning and Weaving, Agriculture, Intoxicating liquor, Slaughter houses, Courtesans, Shopping, Cattle, Houses, Elephants, Charriots, Infantry, Passports, Pastures, Elephant-forests, Spies, Religious Institutions, Gambling, Jails and Ports. The description of the elaborate duties of the **Adhyakshas** in the **Arthashastra** proves that the Mauryan government was a highly complex system.

The officials mentioned in the Edicts of Asoka are **Yuktas**, **Pradesikas**, **Rajukas**, **Mahamatras**, **Dharmamahamatras**, **Prativedikas**, and others. The **Yuktas**, as already mentioned, were accounts officers. The **Pradesikas** were officials in charge of a unit of territory, known as *Pradesa*. The **Rajukas** looked after the welfare of the people, and were also judges. **Mahamatras**, who are frequently mentioned in the Edicts, were officers of the highest rank. The **Dharmamahamatras**, were entrusted with the duties of the propagation of *Dharma*. The **Prativedikas** were informants. The Officials were paid salaries. The **Arthashastra** mentions the salaries of some officials. The **Senapati** received 48,000 **Panas** and the **Treasurer** and the Chief Collector 24,000 **panas**. The accountant and clerks got 500 **panas**. But, the value of the *pana* or the period for which the salary was paid, are not known.

#### 11.2.5 Divisions of the Empire

It is clear from the evidence available from the Edicts of Asoka and the contemporary literary sources that the Mauryan empire was divided into provinces, and each province was headed by a Governor. The information available in the Edicts of Asoka indicates that there were atleast three provinces that were ruled by the Viceroys of royal blood in the time of Asoka. The province of **Uttarapatha**, with its capital at Taxila, probably comprised Punjab, Kashmir and Afghanistan. The Western province, probably consisting of Malwa, Gujarat and Saurashtra, had its capital at Ujjain. The Southern province consisting of territories South of the Vindhya mountains, had its capital at Suvarnagiri. The newly conquered territory, Kalinga, was probably kept as a separate province.

The provinces were further divided into small units of administration like **Ahara**, **Vishaya** and **Pradesha**. The **Rajuka** was probably the head of the **Ahara**. The **Sthanika** was an official who looked after the administration in one of the local units. The **Gopa** looked after five to ten villages. The **Pradesika** was in charge of the **Pradesha**. The village was the lowest unit of administration. The **Gramani** was the village official. He carried on the administration of the village with the help of **Gramavridhas** (village elders).

### 11.2.6 Administration of Pataliputra

Special arrangements for urban administration was a unique feature of the Mauryan administration. Each city had a **Nagaraka** or City Superintendent to maintain law and order in the city and for other purposes. The capital of empire, Pataliputra, had a special system of administration. Megasthenes, in his **Indica**, has described the administration of Pataliputra in detail. According to him, the city was administered by thirty officials divided into six committees, each committee consisting of five members. Each committee was entrusted with one of the following subjects : 1. Industries, 2. Welfare of the Foreigners, 3. Registration of Births and Deaths, 4. Trade and Commerce, 5. Supervision of the sale of manufacture of goods and 6. Collection of cash on articles sold.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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(i) Was the Mauryan king a dictator?

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(ii) How was Pataliputra administered?

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### 11.2.7 Income and Expenditure

From the available evidence, it can be said that the following were the important sources of income during the Mauryan period.

1. Land Revenue : generally, 1/4th of the produce was collected. But, the actual rate varied from place to place and time to time.
2. Other taxes on land, like water rate
3. Income from forests
4. Income from mines and industries
5. Customs collected at the frontiers
6. Fines levied by the law courts, and
7. Fees for the grant of various licences

Under expenditure, maintenance of the palace and the royal family was an important item. Salaries of officials also constituted a considerable portion of the Government expenditure. Expenditure on public works was also heavy. Establishment and maintenance of hospitals, grants to religious organisations, construction of irrigation facilities, laying of roads and gardens, and such other works of public utility, resulted in considerable expenditure for the Government. The army also accounted for a large portion of the Government's expenditure.

### 11.2.8 Administration of Justice

The king was the fountain of justice. From the village to the cities, there was a gradation of courts. Two sets of courts known as **Dharmasthanas** and **Kantaka Sodhana** courts existed. It is presumed that the **Dharmasthanas** dealt with civil cases, and the **Kantaka Sodhana** courts with criminal cases. It is believed that the punishments were severe. Fines, imprisonment, whipping and execution were some of the punishments that were awarded by the courts.

### 11.2.9 Army

The Mauryan emperors maintained a huge standing army. According to Pliny, Chandragupta's army included 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry and 9,000 elephants. The charriots also formed part of the army. The head of the army was the **Senapathi**. There existed 30 members grouped into six boards to supervise the following matters pertaining to the administration of the army : 1. Transport and commissariat 2. Infantry 3. Cavalry 4. Charriots 5. Elephants and 6. Navy. The separation of the military and civil services was one of the modern features of the Mauryan administration.

### 11.2.10 Espionage System

An important feature of the Mauryan administration was the espionage system. The **Arthashastra** advocates the frequent use of the spies by the kings to keep themselves informed about all the activities in the kingdom. In the same work, it is suggested that the spies should disguise themselves as beggars, merchants, ascetics, students, women, prostitutes and so on, in order to gather the necessary information.

Thus, the Mauryan system of administration was well-organised and contained many modern features of administration. However, there were some weak points also in that system. One important weakness of the Mauryan administration was over-centralisation. Appointment and control of many officials, including those who functioned far away from the seat of the Government, was in the hands of the emperor. Such a system proved to be efficient when the king was strong, but failed when he was weak.

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## 11.3 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

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Megasthenes in his **Indica** writes that the Mauryan society was divided into seven castes. Obviously, he mistook occupation as a caste. In the Mauryan period also, as in ancient times, the four-fold caste system existed. But, the seven castes mentioned by Megasthenes were the chief occupations of those days. The seven castes mentioned by Megasthenes were : (1) Philosophers (2) Farmers (3) Soldiers (4) Herdsmen (5) Artisans (6) Magistrates and (7) Councillors. The philosophers included *brahmins*; Soldiers, Magistrates and Councillors were probably *kshatriyas*. Farmers, herdsmen and artisans probably belonged to the *sudra* caste. The first three castes were more privileged than the *sudras*. The *vaishyas* who controlled

commerce, tried to gain supremacy in the society along with the *brahmins* and the *kshatriyas*. But, they could not become equal in status with the first two castes.

Greek writers inform us that inter-caste marriages were not allowed, and that occupations could not be changed. However, the influx of foreigners and the influence of Buddhism and Jainism must have, to some extent, reduced the rigidity of the caste system.

Slaves existed in the society. Asoka's inscriptions and Kautilya's **Arthashastra** refer to the existence of slaves. But, Megasthenes states that "all the Indians are free and not one of them is a slave". But, the slaves were treated kindly. Probably due to the good treatment enjoyed by the slaves, Megasthenes, might have come to the conclusion that there were no slaves in India.

Women were respected in the society. But, they were denied equal rights with men. Polygamy was practised by the rulers and nobles. There were Superintendents to look after the welfare of women in the Mauryan society. Women seem to have taken to many professions. From the accounts of the Greek writers, we have information that there were women philosophers and also women bodyguards.

The Greeks have written that the Indians during the Mauryan period lived frugally, and were mild and gentle. According to them, theft was a rare occurrence, and people did not tell lies. Written agreements or contracts were not common, as people did not feel the necessity for such things. We are further informed that the houses and property were generally left unguarded. Though the above account is an exaggerated version, it indicates that the people in general were cultured.

Asoka's Edicts refer to *Mtsava* and *Samaja*, which were occasions for the social gathering of a large number of people. *Samajas* were generally organised in honour of Gods like Shiva, Brahma, and Saraswathi. At the time of the *Samajas*, wrestling, chariot races, fighting between men and animals and such other competitions were organised. Sometimes, such competitions resulted in violence and bloodshed. Probably, because of such evil effects of those festivals, Asoka declared in an Edict that certain types of *Samajas* should not be organised.

### 11.3.1 Religious Life

Religion had an all-pervasive influence on the people during this period. Buddhism, Jainism and Brahminism were the important religions of the Mauryan period. The priests played an important part in the religious life of the people. The ascetics who were known as *Sramanas*, were also an influential group of people in the society. They worked as philosophers, astrologers and physicians.

Sacrifices were very much in evidence during this age. Sacrifices of human beings and animals were performed on certain occasions. Asoka tried to put an end to these sacrifices.

Asoka's Edicts refer to the existence of the *Ajivikas* and *Nirgranthas*. The *Ajivikas* were ascetics. They had among them both *brahman* and non-*brahman* traditions. The *Nirgranthas* were also ascetics. They believed in the principles of Buddhism. As they went about naked, they were described as naked ascetics.

Due to Asoka's conversion to Buddhism, that religion became popular in the Mauryan period. Although Asoka took several steps for the propagation Buddhism, Hinduism continued

to have large number of followers. **Indra, Varuna, Siva, Skanda, Vasudeva** were some of the important Hindu deities, worshipped during the Mauryan period.

Jainism also had a firm hold on some sections of the people during this period. During Chandragupta's days, Jainism seems to have gained royal support.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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- (i) Write about the caste system, status of woman and the nature of people in the Mauryan period.

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- (ii) Write about the economy of the Mauryan period.

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### 11.4 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

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The economy of India during this period was predominantly agrarian. The majority of the people were agriculturists and lived in villages. The **Arthashastra** describes the procedure that was adopted for the clearing and cultivation of new areas of settlement. Large numbers of *sudras* from over - populated regions were deported to the new settlements for cultivation of the lands there. The state provided irrigational facilities. Construction and maintenance of tanks, reservoirs, canals and wells was done by the kings.

Besides agriculture, industry also provided livelihood to the people. Manufacture of cloth, wooden articles including ships, production of agricultural, household and military implements, provided jobs to many people. A tax was levied on all manufactured articles, and the date was stamped on them to enable the consumers to distinguish between old and new articles. Sale of articles was supervised by the Government officials.

There was no banking system. But, the practice of money-lending prevailed. Usually, 15% interest was collected on borrowed money. But, in certain insecure transactions involving long sea voyage, even 60% interest was collected.

All sources of information indicate that both inland and foreign trade increased during the Mauryan period. The efficient Mauryan administration helped the growth of trade. India had direct commercial contacts with Syria, Egypt and other Hellenistic countries. Fine cloth was one of our important exports in those days. Luxury goods and wine were imported. The Government exercised considerable control both over internal and external trade.

Pliny wrote that there was a heavy drain of Roman coins into our country due to the import of many Indian goods by the Greek countries. The copper coin known as Karshapana was in circulation. Smaller copper coins known as Kakani, were also used as a medium of exchange.

*Srenis* or guilds existed in the Mauryan period. Many professions had their own guilds. Guilds of weavers, oil-millers, bamboo-workers, etc., existed.

Thus, we find that the economy of India during the Mauryan age was highly developed and well-organised.

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## 11.5 CULTURAL CONDITIONS

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The political unity, material prosperity and comparative freedom from foreign menace might have provided the country an opportunity to divert its attention and energy to intellectual activity and cultural pursuits.

### 11.5.1 Literature

Learning and literature received great attention. The **Arthashastra**, a treatise on government and economics, is assigned to this period. Its author, Kautilya, is believed to be the chief adviser of Chandragupta. Its encyclopaedic range indicates that many branches of knowledge were studied and greatly developed. Taxila became a famous centre of learning. There, the courses of study included philosophy, economics, politics and *Itihasas*. The Buddhist philosophy also got remarkably expanded. The third Buddhist Council held during the reign of Asoka added **Abhidhammapitaka** to the existing law texts. Moggaliputta Tissa compiled the **Kathavattu**, a treatise rejecting the heretical doctrines of those times. The Jain literature also was revised and enlarged. Bhadrabahu's **Kalpasutra** was produced during the same period. Prakrit was the state language, and the large number of Asokan Edicts show that the Brahmi script and the art of writing attained a high level of development.

### 11.5.2 : Art

The art specimens executed under the inspiration of the Mauryan monarchs include the remains of the royal palace and city of Pataliputra, a single stone - cut fencing at Saranath, the excavated *chaitya* halls or cave dwellings in the Barabar and Nagarjuni hills of Gaya, including the Sudama cave, dated in the twelfth year of Asoka's rule, the pillars, the animal sculptures crowning the pillars, and the front hall of the representation of an elephant carved out in the round from a live rock at Dhauri in Orissa. Most of them were made of hard grey sandstone. They were nicely chiselled and beautifully polished. They also exhibit high engineering and technical skill of the Mauryan artists. The capital of the Saranath pillar with the figures of four lions, stands as a specimen of the artistic excellence of the Mauryans at its best. Tradition credits Asoka with the construction of 84000 *Stupas* all over India, the most prominent being the Sanchi *stupa*. Some scholars trace Iranian and Hellenistic influence on the Mauryan art. Probably, ornamentation might have been borrowed from foreign source. Many minor arts, especially the jeweller's art, also received great attention.

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## 11.6 LET US SUM UP

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The Mauryan administration was well-organised. There were many modern features in the Mauryan system of administration. Paternal conception of kingship existed in those days. Special arrangements for urban administration, as in the case of Pataliputra, was a unique feature of Mauryan administration. Though Megasthenese wrote that there were seven castes in the Mauryan empire, the four-fold caste system existed in those days also. Buddhism became popular in that age. The Mauryan economy was predominantly agricultural. Trade flourished and the country in general was prosperous. Sanskrit and Prakrit languages have flourished and prominent works were composed in them. Construction of stone buildings, pillars and *stupas* was witnessed in beautiful and majestic style.

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## 11.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- 1.(i) Though the Mauryan king had many powers, he was a constitutional monarch, and not a dictator. The paternal kingship was the ideal of kingship in those days. The *Mantriparishad* assisted the king. The existence of assemblies like *Pura* and *Janapada* also proves that the king was not a dictator.
- (ii) The city of Pataliputra was administered by 30 officials who were divided into six committees of five members each. Each committee was entrusted with one important aspect of the administration of the city.
2. (i) The four-fold caste system existed in the Mauryan age also. The statement of Megasthenese that there were seven castes in the society is not correct. The influence of the foreigners (Greeks), and the Buddhists might have reduced the rigidity of the caste system. Slaves existed. But, they were treated well. Women were respected. But, they were not treated as equals. Polygamy existed. Women took to many professions. There were women philosophers and bodyguards also.
- (ii) Majority of the people were dependent on agriculture. Cloth manufacture, ship-building, production of agricultural implements, household articles and carpentry, provided livelihood to many people in those days. Inland and foreign trade prospered. The foreigners imported many Indian articles. Coins were in circulation. Guilds existed.

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## 11.8 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Bring out the salient features of Mauryan administration and point out its merits and defects.
2. Describe the social and economic conditions of the Mauryan period.

### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. What was the condition of trade under the Mauryans?
2. How was religious life under the Mauryans?
3. Trace the cultural conditions under the Mauryans

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## 11.9 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Basham, A.L. : *The Wonder that was India*
2. Bhandarkar, D.R. : *Asoka*
3. Dikshitar, V.R. : *Mauryan Polity*
4. Kosambi, D.D. : *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India : A Historical Outline*
5. Majumdar, R.C. (ed) : *The Age of Imperial Unity, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series, Vol. II*
6. Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhari, H.C. : *An Advanced History of India*  
and Datta, K.
7. Mookerjee, R.K. : *Chandragupta Maurya and his times*
8. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. (ed) : *The Age of Nandas and the Mauryas*
9. Rapson (ed) : *Cambridge History of India, Vol. I*
10. Romila Thapar : *History of India, Vol. I*
11. Romila Thapar : *Asoka and the decline of the Mauryas*
12. Raychaudhari, H.C. : *Political History of Ancient India.*
13. Sircar, D.C. : *Inscriptions of Asoka*
14. Smith, Vincent : *Asoka.*

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## UNIT - 12 : KUSHANS : KANISHKA

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- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Rule of Indo-Greeks
- 12.3 Rule of Scytho-Parthians
- 12.4 Advent of the Kushans
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- 12.6 Rule of the Kanishka group of Kings
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- 12.10 Check your progress : Answers
- 12.11 Examination Model Questions
- 12.12 Books for further reading

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### 12.0: OBJECTIVES

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After studying the unit, you should be able to:

1. know about the invasions of Indo-Greeks, Scytho-Parthians and Kushans;
2. have an idea of the rule of Kanishka and his achievements; and
3. the effects of the rule of these foreigners on India

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## 12.1: INTRODUCTION

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In Unit-9, the invasion of Alexander on India and its effects have been explained. It facilitated the rise of the Mauryan power and the consolidation of their empire under able rulers like Chandragupta and his grandson, Asoka. Asoka died in 232 B.C. Prior to his death, Bactria and Parthia, two provinces of the Seleucid empire, became independent, and played an important part in establishing their power in India in the last years of the Mauryan rule and thereafter. The history of North and Northwestern India, after the fall of the Mauryans, is mainly the history of the Indo-Greek, Scytho-Parthian and the Kushan powers. No doubt, native dynasties like the Sungas, the Kanvas and the Satavahanas made their own contribution to the country. But, the dominating influence was that of the foreigners. Here, we shall trace the rule of the foreign dynasties with emphasis on the Kushans who contributed most to Indian religions and art.

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## 12.2: RULE OF THE INDO-GREEKS

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The Bactrian Greeks established their kingdom in the middle of the 3rd century B.C. in the region between the Hindukush mountains and the river Oxus. Diodotus was the first independent ruler who shook off the allegiance to the Seleucids. He was followed by Diodotus II whose authority was overthrown by Euthydemas. The Seleucid ruler, Antiochus III, besieged Euthydemas in his capital city, Bactria, for two years. The hostilities terminated with a marriage between a daughter of Antiochus III, and Demetrius, the son of Euthydemas. Euthydemas was also permitted to use the royal title. He ruled over Southern Afghanistan, parts of Iran and Northwestern India. It was left to his son, Demetrius, to establish the Greek hold in India.

Demetrius led an invasion into India at the beginning of the 2nd century B.C. The Greek army occupied Saketa (near Ayodhya), Panchala (Rohilkhand area), Mathura, Madhyamika (near Chitor in Rajasthan) and Fataliputra. All these do not seem to have been under his control, because he had to retreat to his own area. In Bactria, there was a revolt under one Eucratides which reduced the authority of Demetrius in his last years.

Demetrius issued many silver and copper coins. His main coin-type has the Greek god, Heracles. While on the coins of his father, the god was seated, the coins of Demetrius show him as standing with lion's skin and crowning himself. These features are taken to indicate the victories of Demetrius. Sometimes, Heracles is replaced by Zeus, the chief god of the Greeks. On his coins, Demetrius is usually depicted with the elephant-scalp headdress.

Another of the Indo-Greek rulers who was famous in history was Menander (about 150 B.C.). Justin mentions him, along with Apollodotus, as an Indian king. Menander was noted for his justice, and was so popular with his subjects that, at the time of his death, different cities vied with each other for the possession of his ashes. This has a resemblance to the story about Buddha's *nirvana*, when different tribes and cities wanted to possess the Master's ashes.

The availability of the coins of Menander in large numbers in different areas shows that, his authority was widespread and included parts of Afghanistan, Northwest Frontier Province, Punjab, Sind, Rajasthan, Saurashtra and Uttar Pradesh. One inscription refers to his rule when

the relics of Buddha were installed in a casket for worship by Viyakamitra, a feudatory of Menander.

The silver and copper coins of Menander show a great variety of types. Many of his coins have his bust, either with a crown or a helmet. He was described on his coins as a protector and a just ruler. An eight-spoked wheel on a few of his copper coins is taken by scholars to be the Buddhist symbol *dharmachakra*, and is considered as a corroboration of the king's Buddhist leanings contained in the *Milindapanha*. In this book, the questions of Menander on disputed points in Buddhism are answered by a monk, named Nagasena. After the discussion, the king is said to have embraced Buddhism.

Another important ruler was Antialkidas, who ruled over the Taxila region in or about 90 B.C. His ambassador to the Sunga court was Heliodorus, who set up the Garuda pillar in front of the Vasudeva temple at Besnagar. The possessions of the Indo-Greeks were gradually lost to the Parthians, Scythians and the Kushans. The Sakas were driven from Central Asia by the Yuehchis, and hence, they occupied the area near the Kabul river. Later, in the 1st century A.D., they settled in Seistan, and spread their power into the Indus valley and Western India.

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### **12.3 : RULE OF THE SCYTHO-PARTHIAN**

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A number of Scytho-Parthian or Saka-Pahlava kings are known from their inscriptions and coins. Among them, we may mention rulers like Maues, Azes I, Azilises and Azes II. Azes-I is credited with the foundation of the Vikrama Era which started in 58 B.C., though tradition states that the native king, Vikramaditya, was the founder of the era. After Azes-II, the Saka areas went under the control of the Parthian Gondophernes (20-50 A.D.). He was one of the greatest rulers of the Parthian family. He seems to have occupied the upper Kabul valley from Hermaeus, the last of the Indo-Greek rulers. This was short-lived, because the area went into the hands of Kujula Kadphises later. Later, he directed his attention towards the Saka areas. His Takht-i-bahi inscription shows him as a ruler in Gandhara area. He had a number of military governors who administered the different parts of his kingdom. The successors of Gondophernes were disunited, and displaced each other.

Gondophernes issued only one silver coin; but his coins were mostly in billon (a mixture of copper and silver) and copper. This might suggest that the kingdom was in economic difficulties. But, it is also probable that the silver coins of the predecessors like Indo-Greeks and Scythians must have circulated, and hence there was no need to strike coins in the same metal. The issue of coins in baser metals also points to the fact that this catered to the transactions of the common people. On his coins, he wears crown and is seated on a horseback. His coins also bear the figure of Siva which shows his Indian affiliation.

Another group of Saka-Pahlava kings, from the time of Vonones, ruled from Southern Afghanistan. He ruled jointly with his brother, Spalahora, and with his nephew, Spalagadama. The Yuehchi saw the decline of the Saka-Pahlava power, and the five tribes of the Yeuhchi, under the leadership of Kushana Kujula Kadphises, occupied their possessions.

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## 12.4 : ADVENT OF THE KUSHANS

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The nationality of the Kushans has been a perplexing problem, and different scholars have expressed differing views on the subject. One of the views expressed is that, they were of a Turkish origin. The basis for this view was that, their names and designations show affiliations to the Turkish language, and their facial features bear evidence of Turkish descent. Another theory traces the Kushans to Mongoloid origin on the basis of the Chinese accounts- *The Annals of the First Han Dynasty* by Pan-ku and *The Annals of the Later Han Dynasty* by Fan-ye. According to this view, the Kushan tribe happens to be the most powerful branch of the Yuch-chi tribe which occupied Bactria. A third view is that, the Kushans were of Saka origin with their home in Bactria, and that they were known as Tokharians or Tukharas, and to the Indians, as Tusharas; that their names and designations find their explanation in an Iranian language which was spoken and used in the literature of Chinese Turkestan, and only in it; and this is identified with Saka language; that they owed allegiance to Yueh-chis for a time, and later asserted their independence; and pushing Southeast, defeated the last Greek ruler of Kabul; and that their chief, Kujula Kadphises, thus set up a foot-board for the conquest of India by his son, Wima Kadphises. The two Kadphises Kushana rulers - father and son- preceded the other Kushan family headed by Kanishka.

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## 12.5 : RULE OF KUJULA KADPHISES GROUP

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### 12.5.1 : Kujula Kadphises

After bringing the four other tribes settled in Bactria under his power, Kujula invaded Ansi (Parthia), and taking advantage of the weak rule of Gondophernes, occupied Kabul (Kofu) region, sometime between 45 and 64 A.D. The successors of Gondophernes, became his feudatories, and so, he must have marked time. But, when Abdagases, one of them, made a show of independence by assuming the title of **Rajadhiraja**, the second phase of conquest began, and Pu-ta (Taxila) and Ki-pin (Gandhara) came under the Kushan empire.

The appearance of the bust of Roman Emperor on some of his coins, revealing close identity with the busts of Augustus and Claudius on the Roman gold coins, suggests contacts with the Roman empire on a commercial level.

### 12.5.2 : Wima Kadphises

Wima Kadphises, the son of the octagenarian Kujula Kadphises, succeeded to the throne. He extended his father's empire by conquering the Indus region and Sind, the ancient stronghold of the Saka empire in India. The date of his accession might be placed in the old Saka year 136 (78 A.D.). But, those who claim that Kanishka was the founder of Saka era in 78 A.D. club the reigns of the two Kadphises between 45 A.D. and 78 A.D. and assign a period of 14 years to Wima Kadphises. The number of years given to Wima appear too little for his extensive conquests, and abundant and widespread coinage. Moreover, Kanishka did not immediately succeed Wima; there is a gap between them. And so, Wima may be regarded as the founder of the Saka era in 78 A.D. The main criticism against this claim is the use of the old era in Wima's own records. But, we are not sure that the Kushan ruler of Taxila record was Wima. It is more probably associated with his father who conquered Gandhara, and more

natural that the appellations recorded in Panjtjar record and Taxila inscription, should refer to the same person, the elder Kadphises.

The Kushan empire under Wima Kadphises was vast, extending from Parthia in the West to Varanasi in the East (and comprising all the countries now known as Russian Turkestan (in part), Bukhara, Turkestan, Afghanistan, Sind and Malwa etc). The Kushan ruler must have had commercial contacts with Rome, as is testified by the adoption of the Roman weight standard for his gold coins, and by the numerous finds of Roman coins in India. With the Chinese, the relations of Wima became strained when his demand for the hand of a Chinese princess was rejected, and his army was routed by the Chinese general, Pan-Chao. He was compelled to pay tribute. This humiliation was later retrieved when Kanishka defeated a Chinese vassal ruler in Central Asia, and kept his sons as hostages.

The death of Wima in 125 A.D., gave the signal for the disruption of the empire. The Kshatrapas in the Northern, Central and Southwestern regions declared their independence. Zeionses of Taxila, Soter Megas in Mathura, the Saka Kshatrapas of the families of Chashtana and Rudradaman of Western India, had their own sway. It was after a gap of a decade or more, that the Kushans from Turkestan under Kanishka's leadership arrived on the Indian scene to reestablish a new empire.

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## 12.6 : RULE OF KANISHKA GROUP OF KINGS

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### 12.6.1 : Kanishka

The advent of a new family of Kushans under Kanishka to power was marked by several new features. The inscriptions are dated in an era commencing with the year 1; the coins are minted in gold with divinities from different pantheons engraved on them; the Greek and Kharoshti legends on them were considerably reduced. There is close resemblance between the figures of Kanishka and Wima Kadphises in costume, thus ruling out any difference in race.

Kanishka's conquests were carried out in several phases, and covered vast areas, as could be seen from the find-spots of his inscriptions dated in the year 2 at Kosam (Allahabad Dt.), 3 at Saranath, 4 onwards at Mathura, 11 at Suivihar (Bhawalpur) and 18 at Manikiala (Rawalpindi). The first phase related to his conquest of India and assuming power at Peshawar, and initiating the Kanishka era, which his successors continued after him, and extending sway over Madhyadesa. The second phase brought under his control the Southern Punjab and Sind. The last phase was confined to Kashmir and Khotan; and their conquest resulted in the integration of Central Asian powers which previously were weak.

It is generally believed that Kanishka appointed the Saka Satrap Chashtana for the governance of Western India. The former ruler Nahapana who was a Saka Pahlava, was defeated by Gautamiputra Satakarni of the Satavahana family who annexed Nahapana's territories. Now it was for Chashtana to regain that region. He and his son Jayadaman, fought with the Satavahanas, and regained Saurashtra, Kukura, Akara and Avanti which comprised parts of Gujarat and Malwa. Ptolemy refers to Chashtana as the ruler of Ujjain, and Pulomavi as the ruler of Paithan. In the course of the campaigns, Chashtana lost his son, Jayadaman. As a result, he associated his grandson, Rudradaman, as a *Kshatrapa* or *Yuvaraja* in the

administration. Later, Rudradaman rose to be a very powerful ruler who evicted the Satavahanas from even Maharashtra.

### 12.6.2 : Cultural Life

Kanishka was a patron of literature, religion and art. Buddhism was the main religion that received the king's benefactions. As a result, Buddhist literature grew during this period. The famous Gandhara art flourished at this time.

#### 12.6.2.1 : Religion and Literature

The Buddhist philosophers, Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Vasumitra lived in his court. Asvaghosha wrote *Buddhacharita* and *Saundarananda*. The former describes the life of Buddha with certain incidents being depicted in a touching manner. The latter work describes how Buddha's half-brother, Nanda, was converted to Buddhism by Buddha himself. Nagarjuna, who was the Madhyamika Philosopher, was the author of *Madhyamika Karika* and *Suhrullekha*. Charaka and Susruta also belonged to his time, and wrote works on medicine and surgery. Kanishka adopted a liberal view of religion. His coins depict the figures of Buddha, Siva and Greek and Persian deities. But, it was his patronage to Buddhism that made him great. Inscriptions show that he was a Buddhist, and made donations to the *Viharas*. The fourth Buddhist Council was held during his time. It was presided over by Vasumitra. It met for the purpose of compilation of Buddhist works, and preparing commentaries on them.

#### 12.6.2.2 : Art

Kanishka's rule is famous for the flourishing of the Gandhara art. Here is a blend of the foreign and Indian elements. The theme is Buddhistic and the execution is Greek or Roman. The artists were foreign to the Indian tradition. They carved the figures of Buddha and Bodhisattva. Scholars think that the Buddha figure from Bimran was the earliest. Buddha is shown in *abhaya mudra* indicating protection. The *ushnisha* on his head and the moustache are prominent. Some scholars consider the figure to have nearness to that of Greek God, Apollo. Some of the Bodhisattva figures show the Roman influence. In addition to the above images, the artists depicted the incidents in the life of Buddha and stories from *Dipankara* and *Sibi Jatakas* are also depicted.

#### 12.6.2.3 : Economy and Trade

The condition of the people appears to have been flourishing during the reign of Kanishka. Agriculture was the mainstay of the population. People took to a number of professions. There were goldsmiths, weavers, potters, oil-millers, corn-dealers, etc. Most of these had *srenis* or guilds which protected their interests.

There was internal and external trade activity. Caravan leaders took their commodities to different regions from Taxila to Varanasi. Though there was road communication, people had to take precautions from robberies. Western India which was under Nahapana, owing nominal allegiance to the Kushans, had controlled the foreign trade. Barygaza (Broach) was the most important port. India had contact with the Roman empire, as is known from the accounts of Pliny and the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*. The Kushans seem to have profited by this commercial activity. The Kushans were the first in India to introduce gold coinage in large numbers. This must have been the result of influx of Roman coins into India, and also

because of the Kushana hold of areas that covered the silk trade route between China and Rome.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. The religion patronised by Menander was \_\_\_\_\_
2. The Kushans belonged to \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe
3. Who were the Buddhist philosophers of the time of Kanishka?

#### 12.6.3 : Huvishka

The reign of Huvishka marks the brightest period of Kushan history. Inscriptions and coins are found over the vast region of the empire from Kapisa to Bihar. The famous Mathura record of the year 28 records an endowment by Kanakasarukumana, the lord of Kharasalera, (the lord of Vakana or Badakshan) to cover expenses for feeding 100 *brahmins* and supplying provisions to the poor. This shows that Huvishka's authority extended over Badakshan. The mention of his name in **Rajatarangini** as the foremost Kushan ruler points to his actual conquest of Kashmir. The records in Mathura give him various titles like *Maharaja, Rajadhiraja, Maharaja Devaputra* and *Maharaja Rajadhiraja Devaputra*. The records of Huvishka's time are dated without break from the years 28 to 60; and the last one is 62.

#### 12.6.4 : Vasudeva

Vasudeva is the last in the line of the imperial Kushans of Kanishka family. His name indicates his complete Indianisation. He ruled from the year 67 to 98 or 99. His coins found over a vast area suggest his rule over the entire inherited kingdom from Varanasi in the East to Taxila and Afghanistan, and Kashmir in the North. It was he who sent an embassy to the Chinese emperor (Po-tiao) in 230 A.D. and received the title, "King of the Yueh-chi". The inscriptions of this ruler range from 67 to 98 or 99, of the Kanishka era.

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### 12.7 : DISINTEGRATION OF THE KUSHAN POWER

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There was an eclipse of Kushan power in Bactria and the Northwest, after the year 99 of Kanishka era (243 A.D.) The Eastern part of the empire, however, remained unaffected by the happenings in the Northwest. A set of inscriptions at Sanchi and Mathura suggest that these parts continued under Kushan rulers. Probably the Yaudheyas, the Kunindas, the Malvas, the Nagas and the Maghas struck at the root of Kushan power, and brought about its disintegration.

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### 12.8 : ADMINISTRATION OF THE KUSHANS

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A good administrative system should provide protection against external aggression and internal strife, and it should effect a balance between forces preserving status quo and those favouring social change. The Kushan rulers must have found it difficult to evolve a pattern which could be effective in administering a vast empire stretching from Balkh and Khotan in the West, to Bihar in the East and, from Kashmir in the North to upper Sind in the Southeast. It was necessarily a decentralised system, with powers distributed among units forming a hierarchy. The king remained an absolute monarch; and the heads of the various divisions,

the *Kshatrapas* or *Mahakshatrapas*, owed allegiance to him, and ruled as his subordinates. The legends on the coins and the titles mentioned in the inscriptions show the monarch's status, and his ambition to be recognised as a ruler on par with the Chinese emperor (*Devaputra*) and the Roman emperor (*Kaisara*). There are references in Buddhist literature to the existence of a council of ministers to advise the king, but the Kushan records do not make any such mention. The *Mahakshatrapas* were rulers of dominions with powers to issue their coins. Whether they mentioned the name of the overlord or not, it was a fact that they recognised his sovereignty. In the Saranath record of Kanishka, Kharapallana is entitled *Mahakshatrapa* and Vanaspara as *Kshatrapa*, possibly to distinguish their relative status, the former as a higher dignitary having his capital at Mathura, and the latter as of lower status, a ruler at Varanasi. Basing on Kushan records, similar units might be located at Kapisa (Afghanistan); Taxila, (Northwestern region), Kashmir (North) and another at some place in Sind. *Dandanayaka* and *Mahadandanayaka* were the terms used for two grades of feudatory chiefs appointed by the king to render civil and military aid. They were linked with the administration in either of the two capacities, as judge or Magistrate (Rod-applier) and leader of armies or prefect of police or both. Military, judicial and police functions were associated with this office. There were occasions when these chiefs were promoted to the position of Ministers (*Sandhivigrahikas*). The *Kshatrapas* and the *Dandanayakas* of the two grades were mostly foreigners.

The administration at the lower levels was left in the hands of the local heads, called variously as **Gramika** or **Padrapala**. They were village headmen and enjoyed certain privileges, and the office appeared hereditary. The Kushan records yield no information about their functions, remuneration and other details. Whatever might have been the actual set-up of administration, it is evident that safety and security were ensured, leading to peace and prosperity among all sections of the people.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Who was the Kushan king who sent an embassy to the Chinese emperor, Po-Tiao?

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2. The *Kshatrapa* was

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3. Who was *Padrapala*?

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## 12.9 : LET US SUM UP

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1. The Bactrian Greeks ruled over parts of Northwestern India from 3rd century B.C. to the first century B.C.
2. The Scytho-Parthian or Saka Pahlava kings were another group of foreigners who ruled over parts of North India after the disintegration of the Mauryan empire.
3. The Kushans came to India during the first century A.D. Kanishka was the greatest among them. During the Kushan period, art and trade developed.

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## 12.10 : CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. Buddhism
  2. Yeuh-Chi
  3. Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Vasumitra
- II. 1. Vasudeva
  2. Viceroy
  3. Village headman

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## 12.11 : EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Give an account of the Kushan rule under Wima Kadphises
2. Describe the achievements and importance of Kanishka's reign
3. What are the salient features of the administrative system under the Kushans?
4. State the important events during the rule of the Indo-Greeks.

### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. Give an account of the rule of the Scytho-Parthians.
2. Write about the economy and trade under the Kushans.

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## 12.12 : BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Majumdar, R.C. and Puskalkar, A.D. (Eds) : *The Age of Imperial Unity* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series)
2. Puri, B.N. : *India under the Kushans*
3. Rapson, E.J. (Ed.) : *The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I*
4. Smith, V.A. : *Early History of India.*

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## UNIT-13 : SATAVAHANAS, CHEDIS

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### 13.0 OBJECTIVES

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By a study of this Unit, you will know about :

1. Origin of the Satavahanas;
2. Social, Political and Religious conditions under the Satavahanas;
3. Achievements of Kharavela of Kalinga; and
4. Social life in Sangam Age as reflected in the literature.

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## 13.1 INTRODUCTION

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The Satavahanas were the first empire-builders in the Deccan. The political and socio-cultural life of the Deccan starts with them. The Satavahana period witnessed the heyday of Buddhism which taught castelessness, and stressed the ethical code of individuals. The beginnings of art were laid in the Deccan during this period; and Buddhism was the source of motivation for art.

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## 13.2 ORIGIN AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE SATAVAHANAS

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Who were the Satavahanas, and when did their rule start, are questions that await solution. Many theories are in the field, and we have to choose the more plausible ones. The term "Satavahana" is given fanciful meanings; according to some, it is a variant of *Sapta-vahana* meaning Surya; and therefore, the kings are considered worshippers of that God. Some say that Satavahana was one who received hundred *vahanas* indicating an important status in the administration. A story contained in the *Kathasaritsagara* says that Satavahana was so-called because, he had a *yaksha*, by name Sara, as his mount. These explanations may not be correct. But, there is a king called Satavahana, known from coins; and as such, the dynastic name might have been derived from the name of the earliest king.

The Satavahanas are identified with the Andhras of the *Puranas*. Though inscriptions of these kings call them Satavahanas, the *Puranas* do not mention this name. But, as the Andhra kings mentioned in the *Puranas* and the kings styled Satavahanas in the inscriptions are the same, they are identified by scholars. Satavahana is the dynastic name, and Andhra is the tribal name. But, it is not clear as to how the Satavahanas are related to the Andhras mentioned in the *Aitareya Brahmana* and the Asokan edicts. The above literary work mentions the Andhras and classes them among the non-Aryan tribes. As such, they must have lived in the region South of the Vindhya. Later, they must have spread to Maharashtra and Andhra, with which the Satavahanas who belonged to the Andhra tribe, are connected. The Asokan edicts mention the Andhras among the people of the Deccan and state that they accepted Mauryan suzerainty.

Now we come to the question of the period of the Satavahanas. There are two widely divergent opinions of scholars, some taking the initial year of the Satavahanas to the 3rd century B.C., and others point to the 1st century B.C. The first view is taken because the *Puranas* allot 4 1/2 centuries of rule to the Satavahanas, which yields a date in the 3rd century B.C. for their beginning. The second view is held because the *Puranas* mention the Andhras as successors of the Kanvas, which indicates the rise of the Andhras in 28 B.C. Various explanations are given for each view by different scholars, and confirmations are sought in epigraphic and numismatic sources. Inherent contradictions in the *Puranas* are better resolved in the view that takes the rise of the Satavahanas in the 3rd century B.C. Here also, there are differences as to whether the Satavahanas rose to power as contemporaries of Asoka (271 B.C.). This latter view is accepted in this Chapter.

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## 13.3 POLITICAL HISTORY

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Out of the 30 kings of the Satavahana family mentioned in the *Puranas*, about 10 kings are worth mentioning for their achievements. According to all the *Puranas*, Simuka or Sisuka

or Sivraka was the founder. He is said to have killed Susarman of the Kanva family and established his own dynasty. Scholars doubt this because, a small chief in the Deccan who founded his family could not have at the same time, brought about the fall of the distant kingdom of the Kanvas. Recently, coins with the name Chihimuka, which have been ascribed to Simuka, have been discovered in the Karimnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. Simuka's figure is portrayed in the Nanaghat cave in the period of one of his successors viz., Satakarni II. Simuka ruled for 23 years, and was succeeded by his brother Krishna, who had a rule of 18 years. He was the first to issue inscriptions. His inscription at the Nasik cave refers to the scooping of a cave for Buddhists. It is curious to note that one *Mahamatra* was in charge of the monks at Nasik. The term *Mahamatra* recalls to our mind the *Dharma Mahamatras* of Asoka's reign. Krishna might have been influenced by the Asokan *Dharma* and *Buddhism* of the period.

### 13.3.1 Satakarni II

The next important ruler of the family was Satakarni II, who had a long rule of 56 years. In the early years, he was confronted by the raids of Kharavela of Kalinga. According to the Hathigumpha inscription, Kharavela is said to have invaded the area of Satakarni, and was successful. Sometime later, this Satakarni must have asserted his power again, and deserved the epithet '*Dakshinapathapati*' or '*Lord of the Deccan*'. He also entered into a matrimonial alliance with Maharathi Tranakayiro by marrying his daughter, Naganika. The figures of Satakarni, Naganika and Tranakayiro are engraved in the Nanaghat cave. The coins of Satakarni have been discovered in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh; and this gives us an idea of the extent of his empire. To celebrate his victories, Satakarni performed various sacrifices like the *Asvamedha*, *Rajasuya*, *Agnyahya*, *Gargatriratra* etc., and made donations of cows, horses, elephants and thousands of *Karshapanas* (probably of the lead variety) to those who conducted the rituals.

### 13.3.2 Pulumavi

After Satakarni, there was no important king till Pulumavi, the 15th ruler. Many of the scholars say that it was he who put an end to the Kanva power by killing Susarman. He is said to have even occupied Pataliputra, the capital of the dynasties like the Mauryas and the Sungas. But, there is no clear evidence of Satavahana rule over Magadha. Pulumavi was followed by weak rulers on the throne until the emergence of Gautamiputra Satakarni, the 23rd ruler on the political scene. One of the rulers in the intervening period, Hala, is important only for his contribution to Prakrit literature.

### 13.3.3 Gautamiputra Satakarni

Prior to Gautamiputra Satakarni, parts of the Satavahana empire,, consisting of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, were under the control of the Western Kshatrapas who ruled in Malwa and Saurashtra for about three centuries. These were originally governors of the Saka-Pahlava kings who ruled in Northern India in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., and later asserted their independent power. The Western Kshatrapas were divided into two families viz., Kshaharatas and Kardamakas. Bhumaka and Nahapana belonged to the early group and were contemporaries of Gautamiputra Satakarni and a few of his predecessors. Kardamaka kings like Chashtana and Rudradaman had relations with the Satavahanas, and the successors of Rudradaman ruled upto the time of Chandragupta II when their dynasty came to an end.

Bhumaka and his successor Nahapana seem to have stabilised their power in Saurashtra in the late first or early second century A.D. It was to the credit of Nahapana that he conquered parts of the Satavahana empire and issued inscriptions and coins in the conquered area. He defeated Sundara Satakarni, the 20th Satavahana king, and obtained parts of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and established commercial supremacy on the Western coast. This was the state of affairs when Gautamiputra Satakarni came to the throne.

Gautamiputra Satakarni made careful preparations for 18 years for an attack on Nahapana. In that year, he scored a victory over Nahapana, and restruck the coins of Nahapana. He recovered all the former territories of Satavahanas, and made the Satavahana power felt in the whole of the Deccan. According to the Nasik inscription of Gautamiputra's mother Balasri, he was the lord of Asika and Asaka (part of Telangana), Mulaka (with capital at Paithan), Suratha (South Kathiawar), Kukura (North of Suratha), Aparant (North Konkan and the area near Sopara and Nasik), Anupa (Southern Malwa), Akara (Eastern Malwa), Avanti (Western Malwa) and Vidarbha (Berar). Gautamiputra Satakarni enjoyed these possessions for six years, and left the kingdom to his son, Vasishthiputra Pulumavi.

Vasishthiputra Pulumavi seems to have lost the Malwa region to Chashtana of the **Kardamaka** family. The earliest Satavahana inscription in Andhra hailing from Amaravati, belongs to the reign of this Pulumavi. Vasishthiputra Satakarni, probably a brother of Pulumavi, seems to have deserted the Satavahanas, and sought alliance with Rudradaman, the grandson of Chashtana. He married a daughter of Rudradaman, and seems to have helped Rudradaman in getting some of the Satavahana territories like Aparanta. Their Satavahana rival seems to be Yajna Satakarni, who was defeated twice by Rudradaman, but set free, probably because he was related to his son-in-law. Aparanta seems to have been bestowed by Rudradaman on his son-in-law.

Yajna Satakarni was the last important ruler of the Satavahana dynasty. His inscriptions are found in both Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The last three rulers issued inscriptions, each of which indicates roughly the area of their authority. Vijaya Satakarni's inscription is available at Nagarjunakonda, Chanda Satakarni's inscription is at Kodagolu near Pithapuram, and Pulumavi's inscription is at Mayakadoni in Bellary. The vast Satavahana territory stretching over the whole of Deccan passed into the hands of the Ikshvakus in the East, the Chutus in the West and Southwest, and the Abhiras and the Western Kshatras in the North and Northwest.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. Who were the Satavahanas? How did they get that name?

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2. During which period did the Satavahanas rule?

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## 13.4. ADMINISTRATION

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The administration of the Satavahana empire was modelled on that of the Mauryas. The king was the head of the state. He secured his position through heredity. He was not a law-maker, but one who was to implement the laws and conventions of the land. He should protect the people from internal and external trouble. There is at least one instance in the Satavahana period, of a king viz., Gautamiputra Satakarni, who seems to have fulfilled the duties of a king in a remarkable manner. He restored the prestige of the Satavahana family by getting back the lost territories from Kshaharata Nahapana. He was well read in sacred lore. He was a unique archer and a hero. As a king, he emulated the example of such rulers as Nabhaga, Nahusha, Janamejaya, Sagara, Ambarisha, and epic heroes like Rama, Kesava, Arjuna and Bhima. He shared the pleasures and sorrows of his people.

The Satavahana kings, at their zenith, ruled over an extensive empire touching both coasts of the Deccan. Some of the kings like Satakarni-II and Vashistiputra Pulumavi were described as the Lords of Dakshinapatha. It is said that Gautamiputra Satakarni's horses drank the waters of the three oceans, meaning thereby that his empire included the whole of peninsula. But, the empire included only the Northern coastal tract of Tamilnadu in the South, but not the whole of Tamilnadu and Kerala. Karnataka, Andhra, Maharashtra and parts of Madhya Pradesh were definitely included in the empire at one time or the other.

The Satavahana empire was divided, for the sake of administrative convenience, into *aharas* or districts. We have such districts as Govardhana, Sopara, Mamala etc., These areas were entrusted to the care of officers known as *amatyas*. *Amatyas* generally mean ministers or councillors to the king. But, in the case of the Satavahanas, they discharged the functions of Heads of Districts. There must have been frequent transfers of these officers, as can be gathered from the inscriptions at Nasik in the reigns of Gautamiputra Satakarni, and his son Pulumavi. There were other officers like *Mahamatra* (endowments officer), *nibandhakara* (one who registered documents), *bhandagarika* (superintendent of stores). *Mahasenapathi* was the general of the army. Sometimes, he administered a district. *Gramani* was the head of the village. In addition to these officers who served the king, there were *mahatalavaras*, *mahabhojas* and *maharathis*, who were vassals of the king, who could issue inscriptions and coins independently. Satakarni II married Naganika, who was a daughter of Tranakayiro of the *Maharathi* family.

Theoretically, the king was the owner of all lands. But, there were private people who owned their respective lands, while the rest belonged to the state. The kings had their own personal lands. When land donations were made by the kings to the Buddhist monks, mention was made in them of their exemption from all taxes that were payable to the state. For the first time in Indian history, Gautamiputra Satakarni gave up administrative control over the donated areas, and gave a number of concessions. Such lands were not to be dug for salt, and officers of the state were forbidden entry into them. This means that, other villages which did not get exemptions were required to pay taxes and meet the obligations of the state when officers visited them etc. Taxes were paid in cash and kind. The state officers do not seem to have been remunerated by the grant of lands or villages at this stage. They seem to have been mostly paid in cash. Coins were widely in use during the Satavahana period.

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## 13.5 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

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There was much corporate activity among the different sections of the people. Various professional groups came into existence during this period. Agriculturists, potters, weavers and workers in metal, stone and wood, formed themselves into guilds which protected their interests. The guilds acted sometimes as banks, receiving deposits and lending money. They were so much esteemed for their integrity, and their functioning was so remarkably efficient, that kings and courtiers deposited the amounts in guilds and requested them to pay the interest on the deposits to the monks of a particular place.

### 13.5.1 Trade

Foreign literary works throw light on the internal and external trade of the Deccan of this period. Paithan, Tagara, Junnar, Nasik and Banavasi were inland commercial centres. On the Eastern side, Dhanyakataka and Vijayapuri seem to have played an important part as centres of commercial activity.

The most important activity of the Deccan in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. was its commercial contacts with the Roman empire. This was highly profitable to India, as the balance of trade tilted in favour of India. Our country exported different kinds of muslin, spices and medicinal herbs. In return, wine, copper, tin, lead, coral, topaz, gold and silver coins were imported. The last item of import namely, gold and silver currency of the Romans, show that the Romans were forced to part with their gold and silver currency (which was famous for purity of metal of specified weight) as they were unable to send any commodities of equal value to India. The availability of the gold and silver coins of the Romans in South India shows that those coins were used by the local rulers as regular currency.

Bharukachcha was the most important port on the West that carried on these transactions. Next to it in importance were Sopara and Kalyan. On the Eastern side, there were ports like Ghantasala and Gudur near the mouths of the river Krishna. Arikamedu near Pondicherry was an important Roman trading station.

In addition to the contacts with the West, Eastern Deccan had good relations with Southeast Asia. We find also the flourishing of Buddhism in Southeast Asia during this period, as a result of commercial contacts.

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## 13.6 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

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The society the Satavahana period had the traditional four-fold caste system, consisting of the *brahmanas*, *kshatriyas*, *vaisyas* and *sudras*. Each caste had its own traditional vocation i.e., the *brahman* learning Vedas and other sacred lore and performing sacrifices; the *kshatriyas* ruling the country; the *vaisyas* looking after mercantile and maritime activity and the *sudra* taking up agricultural operations. Though a majority of the population followed the duties as enjoined by the *Sastras*, the Satavahana period offered exceptions also. It is not clear whether the Satavahanas were *kshatriyas*. They are believed by some scholars to be either *brahmanas* or *sudras*, in which case the duties of the *kshatriyas* were taken over by one of these two castes. One inscription mentions that two *kshatriya* brothers were following trade as their vocation. This indicates that caste rules were flexible.

The Satavahana period also witnessed the entry of a number of foreigners like the Greeks, Sakas, Pahlavas and Kushans into India. Many of these foreigners were Indianised : they adopted either Hinduism or Buddhism. Some of them adopted Hindu names; some made donations to Buddhist **viharas**. This entry of foreigners into Hindu society seems to have been, for a time, stopped by Gautamiputra Satakarni, as he is described as having put an end to the contamination of the four castes.

The social system must have undergone changes because of the spread of Buddhism in the Deccan. Buddhism does not attach any importance to castes. The popularity of Buddhism in the Satavahana period should point to the flexibility of the caste structure.

### 13.6.1 Family

The traditional joint family system was very much in evidence in the Satavahana period, with importance being given to men in the family. But, women were also given importance as could be seen from the gifts that they made without any reference to their fathers or husbands. It is also interesting to note that from the time of Gautamiputra Satakarni onwards, the practice of mentioning the matronymic or the *gotra* of the mother began. Particularly, ladies in ancient India, sometimes seem to have retained their paternal *gotras* even after their marriage. It may be noted that some women participated in the administration. Naganika, the wife of Satakarni-II, acted as a regent for her son Vedisri, and so did Balasri in the last years of her son, Gautamiputra Satakarni.

### 13.6.2 Food, Dress and Ornament

Wheat, rice and millets formed the staple food of the people. Excavations have revealed the bones of animals like goat, sheep, pig, birds and fish which indicate the non-vegetarian food of the times. People took intoxicating liquors which were manufactured within the country, and also imported from outside.

The dress of men consisted of a loin cloth, an upper garment and a turban. Women wore a single piece garment and a number of ornaments like rings, ear-pendants, armlets, bangles, girdles and necklaces. Some of these ornaments were worn by men as well. In sculptures, women were portrayed with scanty dress, but with profuse ornaments.

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## 13.7 LITERATURE

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The Satavahanas patronised Prakrit language and literature. Their inscriptions were mostly written in Prakrit, and its use as well as that of its dialects was encouraged, so that the message could be understood by the local people. Prakrit had become so prevalent in the inscriptions that even the Nanaghat inscription, intended to record the performance of Vedic sacrifices, had also to be written in Prakrit.

Hala, the 17th ruler of the Satavahana dynasty, compiled the work **Gatha saptasati** consisting of 700 erotic verses in the Maharashtri Prakrit. At the same time, Hala himself encouraged Sanskrit studies. His minister Sarvavarman wrote a grammar in Sanskrit, by name **Katantra**. Gunadhya wrote a book in Paisachi Prakrit, by name, **Brihatkatha**. The original **Brihatkatha** is lost. Its stories were later retold in works like the **Kathasaritsagara**.

The Buddhists, who employed the Prakrit language for inscriptions and literature, had also to change the medium of expression to Sanskrit in course of time. Nagarjuna, a contemporary of Yajna Satakarni, wrote his works in Sanskrit.

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### 13.8 ART

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The Buddhist architecture of the Satavahana period can be divided into two categories: (i) Rock-cut architecture of Western Deccan and (ii) Brick-built structures of Eastern Deccan. The rock-cut caves contain a *Chaitya* and a *Vihara* or a number of *Viharas*. The *Chaitya* is a prayer hall used for the worship of the Buddhist symbols like the vacant throne, Buddha-padas etc., during the *Hinayana* period. It consisted of a vaulted hall with an apsidal end. Two longitudinal rows of pillars divided the prayer hall. Nearby, it had a *vihara* or a monastery where the monks were provided accommodation. The Karle *Chaitya* is regarded as the most famous monument of the rock-cut group.

Coming to the Eastern side, the Amaravati *Stupa* is the best example of brick-built *Stupas*. Starting from the Asokan period, this *stupa* had a long evolution in architecture. It was in the first and second centuries A.D. that the *stupa* was beautified. In each cardinal direction, there was a platform on which five pillars were erected. These represented the five incidents in the life of Buddha viz., his birth indicated in sculpture by the lotus, his leaving the house depicted by the figure of the horse, his enlightenment symbolised by the Bodhi tree; his message by the portrayal of *Dharmachakra*; and his death represented by the figure of the *stupa*.

Satavahana sculpture is considered as a great contribution to Indian art. Religious as well as secular themes were depicted in these sculptures. Symbolic representations of the Buddha as well as his human figures appear in these sculptures. Buddha as a standing figure with a graceful attitude is the typical example of the Amaravati school.

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### 13.9 RELIGION

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The Satavahana period witnessed the hey-day of Buddhism. Though some of the kings had Brahmanical leanings, the popular religion was Buddhism. Harmony prevailed between both the religions. Gautamiputra Satakarni was a believer in the *varna* system, and a donor of Buddhist *stupas* and *viharas* at Nasik and Karle. Vedic leanings were no doubt in evidence, as was borne out by the long list of sacrifices performed by Satakarni II. The worship of Vedic Gods like Indra and Varuna was prevalent. The people worshipped Vasudeva for whom a Garuda pillar was erected at Besnagar by a foreigner. But, Hindu temples of this period are not extant now. The available information shows the predominance of Buddhism during this period.

There are large number of Buddhist monuments spread over the whole of the Deccan. Bhaja, Karle, Nasik and Kanheri in Maharashtra, Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh, Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Bhattiprolu, Salihundam and Kondapur in Andhra, were the most important Buddhist centres.

Buddhism must have spread to the Deccan during the time of Asoka whose inscriptions are available in the area. The later Satavahanas, starting from the time of Gautamiputra Satakarni, were mostly patrons of Buddhism. It is believed that Yajna Satakarni was a patron of Nagarjuna, the famous Buddhist philosopher.

Inscriptions mention that a number of Buddhists flourished during this period. The two schools viz., *Theravadin* and *Mahasanghika* into which the Buddhist church was divided, find mention in the inscriptions. The *Bhadrayanias* are mentioned in the inscriptions at Nasik and Kanheri; the *Dharmottariyas* at Sopara; the *Mahasanghikas* at Karle on the Eastern side; predominance of the *Mahasanghika* sects like *Purva sailiyas* and *Apara sailiyas* is well in evidence. The *Theravadin* and *Mahasanghika* schools have later on come to be known as the *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* schools respectively. Nagarjuna was the exponent of the *Madhyamika* philosophy in Buddhism.

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### 13.10 ACHIEVEMENTS OF KHARAVELA OF KALINGA

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Kharavela was a contemporary of Satakarni of the Satavahana dynasty. He was the master of Kalinga, which at this time comprised at least Puri, Ganjam and Cuttack districts of Orissa, with extension into North Andhra. He is known from the famous Hathigumpha inscription which informs us the achievements of the king. The inscription is unique in the sense that the activities of the king, political or otherwise, have been catalogued one after the other, from his accession to his 13th regnal year when the inscription was probably issued.

References to the conquest of Kalinga by the Nandas, and later by Asoka Maurya, are available. The latter conquest had profound effect on Asoka. He was personally inclined towards Buddhism, and propagated *dharmas*. What happened to Kalinga after the conquest of Asoka, and before the rise of Kharavela, is uncertain.

Kharavela belonged to the Chedi or Cheti family, and he was the third member of that family. He was also called the Mahameghavahana, which is taken to mean that he descended from this ruler, who could be the founder of this dynasty.

The king spent his first fifteen years in games and learning three Rs. He was installed as crown Prince (*Yuvaraja*) in his sixteenth year. He was crowned after he completed his 24th year. He was described as a *Maharaja* and *Kalingadhipati*. He was a devotee of Jina, but respected other religions as well.

Soon after his assumption of power, he sent in his 2nd regnal year a large army towards the West, not minding the ruler Satakarni. His army followed the course of the river Krishna and attacked Rishika Nagara or Musika Nagara. But, a direct conflict with king Satakarni is not mentioned. In the 4th year, Kharavela conquered the area of the Rashtrikas and Bhojakas of Berar. In his 8th year, he laid seize to Rajagriha and forced the Yavana ruler (Demetrius) to retreat. Three years later, he attacked the city of Pithunda near the river Krishna. Next year, he defeated the Magadhan king, Bahasatimita, who is identified differently, with Pushyamitra of the Sungas and Brihatsvatimitra of the Mitra kings of Magadha. Kharavela is said to have brought back some Jain images which were formerly taken away by a Nanda ruler from Kalinga.

In addition to the above achievements in the political sphere, the Hathigumpha inscription states that he enlarged an irrigation canal, dug originally by a Nanda ruler. He rebuilt his capital, when it was devastated by a cyclone. He scooped out caves for Jains.

The date of Kharavela is controversial. Just like the Satavahana chronology, difficulty is experienced by scholars in arriving at an unanimous date for Kharavela. Scholars who believe that the Satavahanas were established in the Deccan in the 3rd century B.C., state that Satakarni

and Kharavela were contemporaries circa 180-150 B.C. Others who date the Satavahanas in the 1st century B.C. place them both at the end of the 1st century B.C., or the beginning of the 1st century A.D.

After Kharavela, nothing is known of Kalinga. Only one prince, Vadhuka, probably a successor of Kharavela, figures in an inscription. It is only from the 4th or 5th century A.D., that we hear of kings of Kalinga who are termed Vasisthas and Matharas.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Write briefly about the development of literature in the Satavahana period.

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2. Write briefly about the development of art in the Satavahana period.

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### 13.11 SANGAM AGE : SOCIAL LIFE AS REFLECTED IN THE LITERATURE

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The Sangam Age depicts the earliest phase of Tamil culture. During this period, covering the first three centuries of the Christian era, the poets described the contemporary Society, Economic Life, the Trade activity and Religion.

#### 13.11.1 Economic Conditions

That South India witnessed in the first and second centuries a brisk trade with the Roman empire is also known from this literature, besides the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* and Pliny's *Natural History*. The Yavanas (Romans) traded at different ports like Saliyur in the Pandyan Kingdom, and Bandar in the Chera kingdom. Puhar near the Kaveri is considered as the most important trading centre. The houses of the businessmen are described in detail.

#### 13.11.2 Social Conditions

The Sangam literature mentions the *brahmanas* and the Vedic tradition and rituals. Society is divided into four castes viz., *tudiyar*, *panan*, *paraiyan* and *kadamban*. A number of occupational groups lived in a town or village in close proximity. There were differences in status and economic conditions. A number of foreigners, particularly Romans, visited the ports of Tamilnadu and Kerala during this period. They were called Yavanas.

The richer classes lived in brick houses and the walls were painted with figures of gods and goddesses. Royal palaces had gardens. Common people lived in small structures in villages or towns. People believed in omens and astrology. Amulets were used by children to prevent any bad occurrence. Banyan tree was worshipped because of the belief that gods live on it. There was also the worship of hero-stones. Widowhood as well as *Sati-sahagamana* were common.

### 13.11.3 Religion

In the sphere of religion, the influence of Northern ideas is striking. Kings performed Vedic sacrifices on which huge money was spent. *Brahmins* were devoted to Vedic and allied studies and had a respectable position in society. There were the religious disputations between the Vedic scholars and those of other religions viz., Buddhists and Jains. Siva and other associated gods like Murugan were worshipped. Vishnu, Balarama and Krishna received worship. Siva in the *ardhanarisvara* form, and Vishnu in the *anantasayana* form were mentioned. A temple of Sarasvati is mentioned in the *Manimekhalai*. Indra was worshipped at the annual festival held at Puhar.

Belief in *Karma* and its effect on the next birth, and incarnations of gods were familiar to the people.

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### 13.12 LET US SUM UP

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1. The Satavahanas are identified with the Andhras of Puranas.
2. They ruled from 2nd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.
3. Gautamiputra Satakarni was the greatest among them.
4. The Satavahana administration was similar to Mauryan administration.
5. The Satavahana period witnessed the Indianisation of foreigners like the Greeks, Sakas, Pahlavas and Kushans.
6. The Satavahana period witnessed the hey-day of Buddhism.
7. The Satavahanas were great patrons of art and literature.
8. Kharavela of Kalinga, the contemporary of Satakarni II, was a great conqueror and administrator.

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### 13.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. The Satavahanas are identified as the Andhras of the *Puranas*. There are many theories regarding the origin of the name of Satavahanas. Probably, they are known as Satavahanas because one of their early kings was known as Satavahana.
2. There are many theories regarding the period of the Satavahanas. The theory accepted by many scholars is that they ruled from 3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.
- II. 1. The Satavahanas patronised Prakrit language and literature. Hala, the 17th ruler of the Satavahana dynasty, compiled the **Gatha Saptasati**. His minister Sarva

Varma wrote a Grammar in Sanskrit, known as **Katantra**. Gunadhya's **Brihatkatha** is also an important literary work of this period.

2. Art of the Satavahana period was Buddhist art. The architecture of the period can be classified into (1) rock-cut structures and (2) brick-built structures. Karle Chaitya is the most important rock-cut monument of this period. The Amaravati Stupa is the most important example for the brick-built structure of this period.

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### 13.14 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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#### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Mention the political achievements of the Satavahanas.
2. Give an account of the system of administration under the Satavahanas.
3. State briefly the social and economic conditions of the people under the Satavahanas.
4. What was the cultural contribution of the Satavahanas?
5. Write briefly about the achievements of Kharavela of Kalinga.

#### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. Origin and chronology of the Satavahanas.
2. Gautamiputra Satakarni
3. Trade under the Satavahanas
4. The Amaravati Stupa
5. The Hathigumpha inscription

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### 13.15 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Gopalachari, K. : *Early History of the Andhra Country*
2. Majumdar, R.C. and Pusalkar, A.D. (eds) : *The Age of Imperial Unity, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series*
3. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. : *History of South India*
4. Rapson, E.J. (ed) : *The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I*
5. Sharma, R.S. : *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*
6. Smith, V.A. : *Early History of India*
7. Smith, V.A. : *Oxford History of India*
8. Sircar, D.C. : *"The Satavahanas and the Chedis"*  
(Chapter) in *The Age of Imperial Unity, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series*
9. Somasekhara Sarma, M. : *Telugu Samskriti, Part I of Telugu Vijnana Sarvasvam (Chapter on Satavahanas)*

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## UNIT-14 : GUPTAS : POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS

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- 14.8.4 Metal working
- 14.9 Architecture
  - 14.9.1 Structural Temples
    - 14.9.1.1 Nachna and Bhumra Temples
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  - 14.10.5 Six schools of Thought
- 14.11 Let us sum up
- 14.12 Check your progress : Answers
- 14.13 Examination Model Questions
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## 14.0 OBJECTIVES

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A study of this Unit should enable you to know :

1. the sources of history for the Gupta period;
2. the political history of the Guptas with special reference to the achievements of Samudragupta and Chandragupta-II;
3. the causes for the decline of the Gupta empire;
4. the important features of Gupta administration; and
5. the economic and social conditions in the Gupta Age.

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## 14.1 INTRODUCTION

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The Gupta period is an important period in Indian History. It witnessed the rise of a big empire in India. The Gupta kings were great conquerors, administrators and builders. In this Unit, an account of the Gupta rulers, their administration and their achievements is given. The economic, social and cultural conditions during their times are also described in this Unit.

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## 14.2 SOURCES

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The Gupta inscriptions and those of contemporary rulers form the main source. Among these, the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, composed by Harisena, is the most important record. It describes the military exploits of Samudragupta, and as such, provides the political geography of North India as well as South India. The inscription found at Udayagiri provides evidence of Chandragupta's stay in Malwa in connection with the campaigns against the Sakas. The literature of the Gupta period is a valuable source. Among these works, the *Devichandraguptam* of Visakhadatta sketches the events after the death of Samudragupta. Ramagupta, who had to encounter the attack of the Saka king, was forced to surrender his queen Dhruvadevi. Chandragupta, by his valour and strategem, drove away the Sakas, and killed Ramagupta, and saved the honour of the queen. Kalidasa's works, *Raghuvamsa*, *Kumara Sambhava* etc., portray the life of the times. The *Puranas* like the *Vishnu*, *Vayu*, *Matsya* etc., contain valuable accounts of the dynasties, the society, the economy and religious aspects. The *Dharmasastra* literature of the period provides details on the law and legal institutions. *Katyayana Smriti* is the most important work of this period. Varahamihira's encyclopaedic work, *Brihat Samhita* deals with all branches of knowledge and economy. Clay seals discovered at Vaisali etc., provide information on the guilds.

Inscriptions, art objects and the temples provide information on the state of religion. The epigraphs found at Sanchi, Saranath, Nalanda etc., describe the state of Buddhism. The Gupta inscriptions, especially at Mandisor and Udayagiri, are notable sources for the Vaishnavism of this period. The Gupta coins are a valuable source for the study of the religious affiliations of the rulers and the economy of the period.

Fa-hien, the Chinese pilgrim gives a very brief account of the life of the people during the rule of Chandragupta II, in his **The Travels or Record of Buddhist Kingdom.**

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## 14.3 POLITICAL HISTORY

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### 14.3.1 Early Rulers

After centuries of foreign rule over Northern India, the Guptas rose to power and established a small kingdom in 319 A.D. Regarding their origin and original home, definite evidence is not available. But probably, they hailed from a family of wealthy land owners who gained political control in the region of Magadha. In the inscriptions, the Guptas trace their descent from *maharaja* Sri Gupta. His successor was Ghatotkacha, about whom little is known. They were known as *maharajas*, which indicates their feudatory status.

### 14.3.2 Chandragupta I (320-335 A.D.)

Chandragupta I, the son of Ghatotkacha, was the first independent ruler, for he used the title *maharajadhiraja*. By virtue of his marriage with Kumaradevi of the Lichchavi family, Chandragupta had gained prestige and support. But, Vaisali did not form part of the Gupta kingdom. Chandragupta conquered the territories along the Gangetic valley upto Prayaga. The extent of the kingdom was confined to Saketa, Awadh and Prayaga. He founded a new era which starts from 319 A.D.

### 14.3.3 Samudragupta (335-380 A.D.)

The succession to the throne after Chandragupta, was contested, and finally, Samudragupta overpowered his elder brother, Kacha. Samudragupta ascended the throne in 335 A.D. The Allahabad Pillar inscription, composed by his general, Harisena, describes the military achievements of Samudragupta and the political conditions in India. The extension of Gupta authority was achieved by defeating Achyutanaga of Ahichchatra, Nagasena of Padmavati (Modern Padma Pawaya in M.P.) and Ganapatinaga of Mathura. He also captured the prince of the Kota family in the Bulandshahr area. These conquests established Samudragupta as a ruler of considerable power in the North.

Samudragupta's expedition into South India is detailed in the Allahabad **Prasasti**. The following Table shows the conquered kings and their territories.

King	Kingdom	Region
Mahendra	Kosala	Eastern and Southern part of Madhya Pradesh
Vyaghraraja	Mahakantara	Gondwana, with the capital at Sambalpur in M.P.
Mantaraja	Kurala	Kuluta, modern Chanda district in M.P.
Mahendra	Pisthapura	Pithapur in East Godavari district of A.P.
Svamidatta	Kottura	at the foot hills in the Visakhapatnam district of A.P.
Damana	Erandapalla	Aradalavalasa in Srikakulam district of A.P.
Vishnugopa	Kanchi	Kanchi in Tamilnadu
Nilaraja	Avamukta	on the banks of the Godavari river near Vengi in A.P.
Hastivarman	Vengi	Vengi in A.P.
Ugrasena	Palaka or Palakkada	Pulicat in Nellore District of A.P.
Dhananjaya	Kusasthala	Kulattur in North Arcot district of Tamilnadu.

Harisena records that Samudragupta had captured all the South Indian kings, but released and reinstated them. The South Indian conquest did not lead to any permanent annexation. The rulers merely paid homage to Samudragupta.

Soon after the South Indian campaign, Samudragupta had to face the challenge of a confederacy of rulers, consisting of Matila, Nagadatta, Chandravarman, Ganapatinaga, Nagasena, Achyuta, Nandi and Balavarman under the leadership of Rudradeva, who is identified with Rudrasena, the Vakataka ruler. Samudragupta encountered this confederacy, probably at Kausambi, and defeated them. This success gave him mastery over Aryavarta.

Samudragupta next turned his attention towards the forest kingdoms, which were Samatata (East of Tamralipti), Davaka (modern Davok in Assam), Kamarupa (Gauhati region), Nepal and Kartipura (Garhwal and Rohilkhand in the Himalayan region). They were forced into feudatory status. The Republican states on the South and Southwestern frontiers of the

kingdoms viz., Arjunayanas (Bharatpur and Alwar region), Yaudheyas (East Punjab), Madrakas (in the region between the rivers Ravi and Chenab), Malvas (Malwa), Abhiras (Western Rajasthan), Prarjunas (Narsipur District in M.P.), Sanakanika (Eastern Malwa), Kakas (Sanchi region), and Kharaparikas (Central India), were also forced to submit to Samudragupta.

Although the rulers of foreign States, viz., *Daivaputra Shahi Shahanshahi*, the Kushan ruler in the Kabul valley, the Sakas of Western India and the prince of Simhala - sent presents, they were not subjugated. According to a Chinese source, king Meghavarna of Ceylon sought permission to build a monastery at Gaya.

Thus, Samudragupta had carved out an empire, and celebrated his conquests by performing the *Asvamedha* sacrifice. He issued gold coins on this occasion, which bore the legend '*Asvamedha Parakrmah*'.

The Allahabad *prasasti* portrays Samudragupta as a man of sharp and polished intellect. He had the title *Kaviraja*. A coin type of Samudragupta portrays him seated on a couch playing on the *vina*. As a great poet, musician and a patron of learning, Samudragupta was an exceptional monarch. He was liberal to other religious sects, and he was the patron of the great Buddhist scholar, Vasubandhu.

Samudragupta was succeeded by his eldest son, Ramagupta. But, his weak rule was cut short by the Sakas, and Chandragupta-II himself killed Ramagupta, and drove away the Sakas, and rescued Dhruvadevi, the queen who was to be surrendered by Ramagupta to the Sakas.

#### 14.3.4 Chandragupta-II (376-415 A.D.)

Chandragupta-II ruled for forty years, and was known popularly as *Vikramaditya*. His victory over the Sakas, and saving the honour of Dhruvadevi, have won him heroic and legendary fame. The *Devi Chandraguptam*, a drama written by Visakhadatta, makes use of his above episode for its plot. He conquered the Sakas and annexed Western India. He married Kuberanaga of the Naga family, whose daughter was Prabhavati Gupta. She was given in marriage to Rudrasena II of the Vakataka dynasty. She ruled as a regent after the death of her husband. As a result, the Vakataka kingdom became part of the Gupta empire. His reign is best remembered for his patronage of art and literature. The renowned poet and playwright, Kalidasa, was a member of his court. Fa-hien, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, visited India during this period.

#### 14.3.5. Kumaragupta and Skandagupta

During the rule of Kumaragupta (415-455 A.D.), the Huns from Central Asia, occupied Bactria, and threatened to cross over the Hindukush mountains to attack India. But, Kumaragupta's reign passed off peacefully. In the reign of Skandagupta (455-467 A.D.), the Hun attack was repelled. The feudatories were becoming independent, and the economic crisis in the empire, as indicated by the debased coins, brought the weakness of the empire to the surface. The last known date of Skandagupta is 467 A.D.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

1. Describe the conquests of Samudragupta.

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2. Write about the achievements of Chandragupta-II

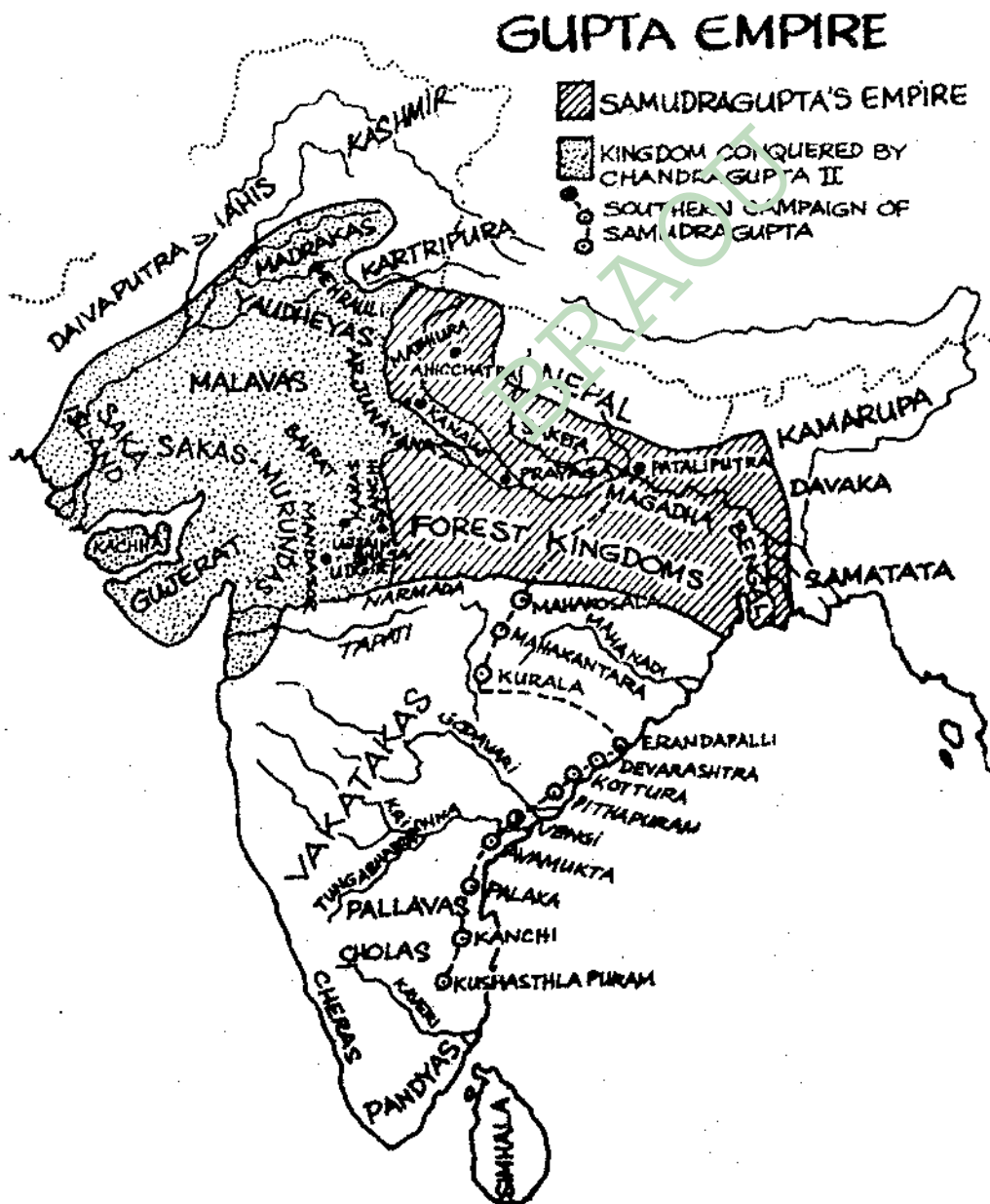
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### 14.3.6 Successors of Skandagupta and the decline of the Guptas

After Skandagupta, Purugupta ruled for a short period. Although the imperial rule was continued by the sons of Purugupta, there is evidence to show that the royal succession was challenged. Kumaragupta ruled in 474 A.D.

Budhagupta, the son of Purugupta, ascended the throne in 477 A.D., and he died probably in about 500 A.D. The feudatories, like Jayanatha, Maharaja, Lakshmana and others, did not acknowledge the imperial authority. The Vakatakas under Narendrasena seized the Southern parts of the Gupta kingdom. The threat of the Hunas was also a major factor during this period. All these factors led to the Gupta empire breaking up into a number of smaller and semi-independent kingdoms. After the death of Budhagupta, the Gupta dynasty was divided, and the names of successive kings that followed are uncertain. The Hunas under Toramana had conquered Punjab and large parts of Western India upto Eran. The last known Gupta rulers are Narasimhagupta, Kumaragupta, and Vishnugupta, whose authority was nominal.

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## 14.4. ADMINISTRATION

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In the Gupta administration, the king was the sovereign ruler, and the succession to the throne was hereditary. The Guptas used high - sounding titles like *maharajadhiraja parambhattarak etc.* There were several feudatory kings of varied status. The important feudatories - the Maitrakas of Valabhi, the Maukharis of Kanauj, the Vardhanas of Thaneswar, the later Guptas of Magadha and the Chandas of Bengal - asserted their independence when the weak rulers came, and caused the empire to disintegrate. The Guptas did not possess a big army. The feudatories supplied the troops, and this naturally contributed to the assertion of independence by the chiefs when the opportunity arose.

The king was assisted by a council of ministers whose office was mostly hereditary. They were mostly drawn from the cadre of *kumaramatyas* which denotes either the son of an *amatya*, the minister or prince. The officers, viz., *mantri*, *senapathi*, *mahadandanayaka*, *sandhivigrahika*, are known from the inscriptions. Besides the ministers, reference is made to *vinayasthitisthapaka* (censor) *mahapratihara* (chamberlain), *bhatasvapati* (chief of army and cavalry), and *ranabhandagarika* (Master - General of the military stores).

The empire was divided into *bhuktis* (provinces) and they were under *uparika*, *maharajas* or *goptris*. The next division is called *vishya*, which had *vishyapati*. Often, this post was held by officers like *nagarasresthi* (head of the city guild), *sarthavaha* (head of the merchant guild), *prathanmakulika* (President of the artisan guild), *Prathama kayastha* (chief of the writers) and *Pustapals* (the keeper of the records); are known from the records. Each *vishaya* was subdivided into *gramas*. The *gramadhyaksha* was assisted by a Council - *Panchamandala* - which consisted of the *Grama Vriddhas*, the village elders.

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## 14.5 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

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Agriculture was encouraged by the State. The reclamation of land by individuals brought large areas under cultivation. With regard to the method of cultivation, the **Brihat samhita** mentions two main harvests. The Persian water-wheel was in use for irrigating the fields. Rice and wheat were produced. Sugarcane, fruit and other crops were grown.

### 14.5.1 Land Grants

The increase in land grants to the priests and temples, free of taxes, and villages granted to officials with administrative rights, weakened the central authority. It also led to subjugation of the peasantry to oppressive taxation, and the growth of the feudal system. Peasants were attached to the land which they were cultivating, even though it was granted to the officers, *brahmanas* or temples. The donee of the land was given the right to assign the land to tenants at will, which made the position of peasants insecure. Imposition of forced labour (*Visthi*) was extended to all classes of subjects. The villagers were forced to supply all the requirements to the royal troops and officials, and also to provide for transportation. Thus, the landed gentry and officials exploited village resources to the maximum extent possible. Taxation had also become oppressive.

Increase in the land grants suggest large areas being brought under cultivation. Wheat in the West, and rice in the Magadha and Eastern areas, were grown. Water wheels were used to draw water from the tanks, wells and channels.

### 14.5.2 Trade Guilds

The increase in trade and the consequent growth in guild organisations during the age of the Satavahanas and the Kushans, lost their pre-eminent position during the Gupta period. Indo-Roman trade in the preceding age was mainly based on silk and spices. The production of silk in the Byzantine empire by the middle of the sixth century A.D., and the increasing use of Central Asian routes, and sea routes, affected the large scale exports of silk and muslin from India. The navigation on the rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Narmada etc., was increasing for trade purposes. Tamralipti, the sea port in Bengal, was the outlet for the Gangetic valley's trade to the Southeast Asian countries. Metal work was flourishing, and bronze was increasingly used. The decline in foreign trade affected the urban centres more in the Gangetic valley. Vaisali, Pataliputra, Sohagpur etc., were on the decline, or had actually decayed. However, there existed prosperous urban centres. The guilds of artisans and merchants did play an important role in the urban centres. People engaged in industries, the *kulikas* formed into a *nigama*, an organisation. The *sreshtis* or the traders had their own *nigama*, while the *sarthavaha* - the traders engaged in import and export - also had their *nigama*. The Vaisali seals refer to the federation of these as *sreshti sarthavaha kulika nigama*. But, at Vaisali, the great guild did not exist. The seals came from outside Vaisali.

### 14.5.3 Coins

Besides the guilds, the Buddhist *sangha*, which during this age was wealthy, participated in commercial activities. They supplied money to the merchants on interest. Interest on loan during this period was twenty percent per annum. Although the Guptas issued a large number of gold coins, day-to-day exchange was probably through copper and silver coins. The gold coins were called *dinara* or *suvarna* in the epigraphs. The silver coins were called *rupaka*. The silver coins were found in large numbers in the Western part of the empire, while the gold coins were largely found in the Eastern parts. The copper coins were fewer in number. The shortage of copper coins, according to R.S. Sharma, would imply that the state employees of lower grades were not maintained in large numbers. A gold coin was equal to 15 silver coins. Fa-hien observes that cowries were in use as medium of exchange.

#### 14.5.4 Standard of Living

Contemporary literature portrays a high standard of living. The variety of copper and iron objects, spotted pottery, jewels, and clothes of good quality found in the Gupta times in the excavations, attest the above statement. These were probably restricted to the upper classes in the urban centres, and there existed great disparity in the standards of living. The accounts of foreign travellers, however, portray the villagers as being generally well off.

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### 14.6 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

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Society, during Gupta times, though remained traditional in its nature, was not rigid, either in the observance of caste rules or occupational following. But, yet, *brahmins* enjoyed higher social status. Further, it remained essentially a patriarchal society, giving lower status to women.

#### 14.6.1 Caste System

The traditional caste system consisting of the *brahman*, *kshatriya*, *vaisya* and *sudra* was not rigid, although the *varna* distinction in social life began to take shape. The foreign elements in Indian society which were absorbed in the traditional social order caused a distinct change in the *brahmanical dharmasastra* works and *Puranic* literature. They describe the Sakas, Yavanas, etc., as *mlechhas*. The Hunas etc., as ruling classes, were absorbed into the *kshatriya* caste. They were regarded as degraded *kshatriya*. The Hunas and Gurjaras later became the Rajputs. During this period, an increase in the number of *sudra* castes and untouchables is recorded. This is largely due to the absorption of forest tribes and to the extension of agriculture in the reclaimed areas.

The connection between the caste and occupation was adhered to, but not rigidly, according to the rules of the *dharmasastras*. The guilds of craftsmen adopted different professions alien to their own caste. The guild of silk weavers in Western India migrated to another region of Western India, and adopted the professions of archers, soldiers, bards, scholars etc. This new land management gave rise to a new caste called the *Kayasthas* (scribes), claiming higher status.

#### 14.6.2 Status of Brahmins

As this period witnessed the resurgence of *brahmanical* religion and royal patronage, the *brahman's* ritual status was emphasized. The term '*dvija*' was increasingly used. The *sastras* codified during this period lay stress on *brahman* purity, thus underlining the impurity of the lowly castes. Fa-hien observes that if any outcaste passed by a *Dvija*, the latter had to perform a ritual purification. Distinction also came in other spheres. Food was not to be accepted by a *brahmana* from the *sudras*. Discriminatory rules were made in laws for the *Varnas*. In the case of inheritance of property, the *sudra* son of a person belonging to a higher caste was entitled to the smallest share. The progeny of the *dvija* through a *sudra* woman, were not allowed any share in the property.

Similarly, the relations between the *sudras* and *chandalas* were also regulated. A *sudra* married to a *chandala* spouse was given the status of a *chandala*.

### 14.6.3 Karma Theory

The Epic and Puranic literature laid stress on the theory of *karma* in preserving the social order. The need for following the respective professions and duties to whichever castes they belonged, was repeatedly emphasized in the literature of this period.

### 14.6.4 Family

The patriarchal society was strengthened by the law, by according a lower status to women. The joint family system was an essential feature of the society during this period. The inheritance laws give equal ownership to the father and sons in the ancestral property. In the case of the property of the father, sons had equal rights.

### 14.6.5 Status of Women

The status of women decreased, and they were given a subordinate position. Early marriages i.e., the pre-puberty type, were encouraged and practised. The *Sati* system was also encouraged. An inscription at Eran dated 510 A.D. refers to the practice of *Sati*. Education was given to women, only in a limited manner.

The courtesan was an accepted feature of society, particularly in the life of the cities and urban centres. The institution of *Devadasis* also was in evidence during this period. Kalidasa refers to the women attached to the Mahakali temple at Ujjain.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Trace the main features of the social conditions in the Gupta empire.

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2. Trace the main features of the economic conditions in the Gupta empire.

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### 14.7 LITERATURE

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Sanskrit attained the status of a court language and also that of the upper classes. Royal edicts were composed in chaste Sanskrit. Among the eulogists of the Gupta period, Harisena, the composer of Allahabad *prasasti*, Vatsabhattacharya, the composer of an inscription of silk-weavers of Dasapura of Kumaragupta's reign, are noteworthy. Even the Buddhists had accepted Sanskrit and many of their canonical works were produced in Sanskrit.

### 14.7.1 Kalidasa

Prakrit remained as the language of the ordinary folk. It continued to be cultivated by the Jains and the Buddhists. Among the poets of secular literature, Kalidasa is the most distinguished. It is generally held that he lived at the court of Chandragupta II. His outstanding work, the play *Abhijnana Sakuntala*, is regarded as one of the best in Sanskrit literature. It deals with the theme of the union of king Dushyanta and Sakuntala, which is based on the story of Sakuntala, as narrated in the Mahabharata. In the adaptation of the theme, Kalidasa reveals his mastery of characterization, sentiment, dramatic situations and in the lyrical quality of the work. The *Malavikagnimitra* is a comedy, and this play portrays the love between the king Agnimitra and a maid in the service of one of his queens. The *Vikramorvasiya* deals with the love theme of celestial nymph and a mortal, Urvashi and Pururava. This play is also noted for its characterization and the sweetness of the lyrics.

Kalidasa's lyrical *kavyas* of the highest order are the *Raghuvamsa*, the *Kumarasambhava* and the *Meghaduta*. The *Raghuvamsa* deals with the 30 kings of *suryavamsa*, and several incidents in the lives of the kings. It is said that the *Raghuvamsa* refers to the Gupta conquests indirectly. The *Kumarasambhava* deals with the love of Parvati and Siva and ends with the birth of Kartikeya. This poem is noted for its beautiful descriptions, the brilliance of its imagery and warmth of feeling. The *Meghaduta* also displays Kalidasa's versatility in the description of nature. The theme portrays the separation of *yaksha* from his beloved, and *yaksha's* request to the cloud to carry the message from Ramagiri, the place of his exile, to Alaka, the abode of his beloved. Kalidasa is hailed as the 'finest master of Indian poetic style'.

### 14.7.2 Visakhadatta

Another notable playwright of the Gupta period was Visakhadatta. The *Mudrarakshasa*, and *Devichandraguptam* are known as his works. The *Mudrarakshasa* is based on the events related to the overthrow of Nanda rule by Chandragupta Maurya. In the play, political stratagems and diplomacy are described in detail. The *Devichandraguptam* recounts the events during the time of Ramagupta. The overthrow of the Sakas by a strategem, and the saving of the honour of Dhruvadevi, the queen of Ramagupta, by Chandragupta, form the base of the plot.

Sudraka was another notable playwright. He wrote the drama *Mrichakatika* which deals with the love of Charudatta for a courtesan, named Vasantasena. The characters are portrayed in an earthly and lively fashion.

### 14.7.3 Puranas

The *Puranas*, which were originally composed by the bards in the earlier ages, were rewritten (redacted) during the Gupta age. They are encyclopaedic in range and deal with aspects of creation of the universe, dynastic history, religion, society, rites and customs, art and architecture etc. It is held that the *Markandeya Purana*, *Brahmanda Purana*, *Vayu Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Matsya Purana* were older, and belong to the Gupta period. The *Puranas*, thus rewritten during the Gupta age, represented the interpretation of the past according to the Brahmanical tradition.

The *Mahabharata* was also rewritten. The original version consisting of 24,000 verses grew into 1,000,000 verses. The *Panchatantra* fables were also collected and produced as a

work by Vishnu Sarma. Its popularity was great, and it was first translated into Pahlavi in the sixth century A.D.

The *Dharmasastras* were also rewritten during this period. The *Smritis* of Narada, Katyayana and Brihaspati are attributed to the Gupta period. The *smritis* deal with rituals and customs, civil laws and legal procedures. The *Katyayana Smriti*, an important work on polity, is not existing, and it is known mostly through the quotations in other works.

The *Brihatsamhita* includes a chapter on metres in Sanskrit and Prakrit.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 3

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1. Who was the most important court poet of Chandragupta II?

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2. Write the names of two dramas that were written by Visakhadatta.

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## 14.8 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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### 14.8.1 Aryabhatta

Technical and scientific literature also were produced during this age. The developments in the field of astronomy as a result of the contacts with the Greeks, were expounded by the famous astronomer Aryabhatta in his work, **Aryabhattiyam**. He was responsible for making astronomy a distinct discipline. "He calculated  $\pi$  to 3.1416 and the length of solar year to 365.358 6805 days, both remarkably close to recent estimates". The occurrence of the eclipses was explained scientifically. He opined that the earth's rotation on its axis caused its shadow to fall on the moon, which led to the occurrence of the eclipse. His theories were scientific and were opposed to those who combined religion and tradition. He used the decimal place value system.

### 14.8.2 Varahamihira

Varahamihira, another astronomer who lived at the close of the fifth century A.D., wrote **Panchasiddhantika**. It deals with five astronomical systems. Among these, two systems reveal deep knowledge of Greek astronomy. The **Laghu and Brihatjatakas** written by him deal with

horoscopy. His most famous work, **Brihat Samhita** is encyclopaedic in range, and deals with technical subjects such as architecture, and iconography.

### 14.8.3 Medicine

Medicine was pursued systematically during this period. Vagbhata wrote **Ashtangasamgraha**, a treatise on Indian medicine. Susruta is also said to have flourished in this period. Veterinary science received attention, and works relating chiefly to horses and elephants were produced. There were contacts with the West in this field.

### 14.8.4 Metal Working

Metal working was widely practised in this period. The coins of gold and silver and seals attached to the copper plates attest to the quality of workmanship. The Gupta coins can be regarded as masterpieces of numismatic art. The figures of birds like the peacock, the portraits of the kings and figures of the divinities are very realistic. Excellent proportions of the human figures, slender form, facile contours and expressive faces, characterise their art., The animals portrayed on the 'Lion-slayer type' and the 'Tiger-slayer type' reveal well-modelled bodies and robust quality. The features of Gupta art find few parallels in numismatic art. The casting of iron and bronze was highly advanced. The famous Iron Pillar at Delhi, roughly 23 feet high, has survived the ravages of time and has not rusted. This has an inscription describing the exploits of "Chandra" who has been identified with Chandragupta II. The bronze images of the Buddha from Dhanaser Khera, Suttangunj etc., reveal the traditions of the Sarnath art school and excellent craftsmanship in bronze casting.

Inscriptions, literature and art themes reveal the accomplishments of Gupta rule. In the fields of literature, art and sciences, the Gupta period achieved excellence. These remained an ideal, like Vikramaditya, the model ruler. It is probable that the development of the Vikramaditya legend was associated with Gupta rule, and came to be treated as model age. Likewise, Gupta art, the literary works of Kalidasa and the advances in technical sciences were all achievements of this age.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 4

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1. Mention the important temples of the Gupta period

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2. Name two important astronomers of Gupta period.

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3. What is the significance of the Iron Pillar of Delhi?

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## 14.9 ARCHITECTURE

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India witnessed unprecedented artistic activity during the Gupta age. The prominent surviving architectural pieces of this period are the temples, the *stupas* and the caves. As in the pre-Gupta period, in this age also rock-cut temple construction continued with certain modifications. The *Viharas* (residences for Buddhist monks) at Bagh which are nine in number, are dated to 6th century A.D. Here, a different or separate architectural tradition was introduced because of the presence of a *Chaitya* (prayer hall) instead of the image of Buddha, and a Central hall surrounded by the cells, except in the front. At Udayagiri, we find a rock-cut tradition as well as a structural one. Here, though the *sanctum* (inner room where the deity is there) is cut into the rock, the *mandapa* (front portion) with two pillars, is structural.

### 14.9.1 Structural Temples

Along with rock-cut temples, the tradition of all-stone structural temple construction began to take deep roots. These structural temples of stone appear to have had simple - tiered superstructure. These temples are small in size with unimpressive architectural features. We also see a gradual evolution in structural temple construction. The Temple Number 17 at Sanchi, Tigawa and Eran are dated to the first half of the 5th century A.D.

#### 14.9.1.1 Nachna and Bhumra Temples

The Parvati temple at Nachna and the Siva temple at Bhumra are ascribed to the later half of the 5th century A.D. We notice obvious difference in the architectural styles. In these temples, a circumambulatory (*pradakshina*) passage is provided. The Pillar with *purnaghata* (pot-shaped) at the base, and door-carvings with Ganga-Yamuna symbols, are characteristic of these temples.

#### 14.9.1.2 Deogarh Temple

The Dasavtara temple is ascribed to the 6th century. This temple has a wide platform. At the centre is located a square sanctorum (*garbhagudi*), and beautiful sculptural specimens are to be seen on the panels and walls of the sanctum. An important factor to be noted is the rudimentary form of *sikhara* as a superstructure of this temple with pyramidal elevation. Another notable feature is the introduction of a shrine (holy place) at each corner of the platform. This temple is classified as a *Panchayatana* (temple containing five Gods or Goddesses) type of temple.

#### 14.9.1.3 Bhitargaon Temple

The Brick temple at Bhitargaon is also dated to 6th century A.D. It has a rich sculptural wealth. Its superstructure is also pyramidal in shape. The Mahabodhi temple at Bodhgaya of the 6th century A.D. also resembles Bhitargaon temple.

### 14.9.2 Sculpture

The Dhamek *Stupa* at Sarnath has all the characteristics of refinement and restraint. The Gupta art exhibits simplicity of expression and elegance. It exhibits naturalness and refinement in the use of drapery (dress) and ornaments. We do not notice excessive decoration. Art critics are of the view that the Gupta art has evolved from the Kushan style of Mathura. Mathura is the main centre of art, and we notice provincial art centres at Sarnath and Sanchi. We also notice regional trends in Gupta style of sculpture and that can be noticed in the Buddha image of Mathura and Sarnath. The Sarnath image is famous for the transparent dress and calmness in Buddha's face.

The Varaha image from Eran and the Varaha carving at Udayagiri, *Ekamukhalinga* from Khoh, Ganga from Besnagar, *Mahishasura Mardini* from Bhumra, are some of the examples of regional sculptural traditions of the Gupta times. The Gupta art is noted for the rich presentation of patterns with flowers and leaves in a geometrical proportion. The Dasavatara temple is good example of the Gupta art at its excellence.

### 14.9.3 Painting

Paintings of the Gupta age survive only partially at Bagh. The Ajanta paintings are also considered as masterpieces of the Gupta style. It may be a Gupta regional style. Its root lay in the Deccan under the Vakataka rule. Ajanta paintings are excellent in their style and range of themes. The ceilings in the caves (XXI, XVII, XIX) at Ajanta, are painted with Buddhist Jataka stories, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, designs of leaves and jewellery in geometrical proportion. The Ajanta paintings reflect the religious theme and urban life. The *Vishnu Dharmottara Purana* describes the technique of painting.

### 14.9.4 Music

Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitra* describes the technique of music. It refers to musical terms like *tala*, *laya*, *svara* and *ragas* like *lalita saranga*. The contemporary literature mentions musical instruments like *Veena* (violin) flute, *pallaki* etc. The coins of Samudragupta and Kumaragupta show them as playing on the *veena*.

### 14.9.5 Dance

Several rules for the theatre that had been prescribed by Bharata's *Natya Sastra*, a work of an earlier period, seem to have been followed during this period.

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## 14.10 RELIGION

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### 14.10.1 Bhagavata Cult

The Brahmanical religion was in the ascendance, and Buddhism was on the decline. The *bhakti* cult was popular and images were worshipped. The cult of *Panchaviras* or the five *Vrishni* heroes, recede into the background, and the Bhagavata religion was widely prevalent. The *vyuha* and *avatara* theories associated with the *Pancharatra* or Bhagavata religion, became popular. The *dasavataras* of Vishnu were held in high esteem. Especially, the Varaha and Vamana *avataras* were the favourites of the Gupta rulers, for they provided an opportunity to equate themselves with Vishnu, who retrieved the world from the *asuras*. By the end of the

Gupta period, Buddha too came to be regarded as an *avatara* of Vishnu. The epic *Ramayana* was popular, and the episodes of this epic were often portrayed in art. Thus, the *dasavatara* theory propagated the belief that in each of his *avatars*, God Vishnu would deliver the devotee from the miseries of the world. In particular, Kalki is projected as a God who will come on horse back to annihilate the *mlechhas* and restore *dharma*. It was during this age that the concept of Vishnu as the ruler of heaven, was equated with the king as the ruler of the earth, in the form of Vishnu. Vaishnavism enjoyed the support of the Gupta kings.

#### 14.10.2 Saivism - Pasupatas

Saivism was also equally popular. Its sect, the *Pasupatas* were in control of several centres of worship. The Mathura inscription dated A.D. 380-81, refers to the Lakulisa-*Pasupatas*. A *Siva linga* found at Karamdanda in Uttar Pradesh, has an inscription of Kumaragupta I, which refers to the Ayodhya *brahmins* who were well-versed in the sectarian rites and theological lore. The cults of Durga, Skanda, and Ganesa, were also popular. The Sun cult had its adherents, and the priests were called *maghas*, and they were of Iranian origin.

#### 14.10.3 Buddhism

Though Buddhism received less support from the royalty, it continued to flourish. Mahayanism, with its several sects, was prevalent. With the emphasis on *bhakti*, *bodhisatva* doctrine and image worship, Mahayanism in its popular form was almost identical with brahmanism. The Hinayana sect flourished, and Fa-hien noted the existence of its schools in the Magadha region.

Nalanda, Sarnath, Mathura, Pataliputra, and Valabhi were notable centres.

Nalanda, as a centre of Buddhist studies, came into existence during the 5th century A.D. At Valabhi, the Buddhist monastery became an important centre of Buddhist studies during the Gupta period. However, during this period, Kashmir was noted for its Buddhist centres, and played a leading role in the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, China etc. Vasubandhu, the founder of the idealist school (*Vijnanavada*) of Mahayana philosophy, and the author of the *Abhidharma Kosa*, flourished during the reign of Samudragupta.

#### 14.10.4 Jainism

Jainism continued to flourish and its canonical works were committed to writing in 453 A.D. at Valabhi. Mathura and Valabhi were centres of *Svetambara* sect, while Pundravardhana was the centre of the *Digambara* sect.

#### 14.10.5 Six Schools of Thought

The Gupta period witnessed the emergence of the six schools of thought, *shaddarsana*, which became the essential feature of Indian philosophy. The six systems were *Nyaya* (analysis), *Vaisesika* (Individual characteristics), *Sankhya* (enumeration), *Yoga* (application), *Mimamsa* (enquiry) and *Vedanta* (of the Vedas).

The final composition of the **Puranas** and the **Dharmasastras** helped to make social laws sacred. The four ends of men were defined as *Dharma* (religion and the social law), *Artha* (economic well-being), *Kama* (pleasure) and *Moksha* (the salvation of the Soul).

In the *nyaya*, particular stress was laid on knowledge, and logic played a great role. The *vaisesika* states that the universe originated from a number of atoms. The soul is differentiated from the atoms. So, it follows that there are universes of soul and matter. The *Sankhya* puts forth the view that there are 25 elements of the world, and the dual nature of the soul and matter is noted. The *Yoga* recognises physical discipline as essential for meditation. The control over the body and the senses will lead to the knowledge of ultimate reality. The *mimamsa* recognises that the Vedas are the ultimate source of knowledge and the foundation of all philosophical thought. *Vedanta* thus became predominant, and all non-brahmanical systems were refuted. The eternity of the soul was emphasized, and the union of the individual with the soul after death was stressed as the goal of living.

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#### 14.11 LET US SUM UP

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1. Chandragupta-I was the first independent Gupta ruler.
2. Samudragupta conquered almost the whole of North India and defeated many South Indian kings also.
3. Chandra Gupta II was the greatest of the Gupta rulers.
4. The Gupta empire disintegrated in the 5th century A.D. after Skandagupta.
5. There was economic prosperity in the Gupta age with high standard of living.
6. *Brahmins* enjoyed a high status in the society. The position of women in the society deteriorated.
7. Sanskrit language and literature developed in the Gupta Period, but Prakrit continued as the language of the common people.
8. Kalidasa was the greatest poet of this period.
9. Visakhadatta and Sudraka also belonged to this age.
10. The *Puranas*, *Mahabharata* and *Dharmasastras* were rewritten. The *Panchatantra* was also written in the Gupta period.
11. The Gupta age witnessed the growth of science and technology. Aryabhatta and Varahamihira were the great astronomers of this period. Susruta of this period was a great physician.
12. Metallurgy also developed in this age. The famous Iron Pillar at Delhi is a testimony for it.
13. The temples of this period were small and built with bricks. The Bhumara, Bhitargaon and Deogarh temples are the most important. Some of the Ajanta paintings belong to the Gupta age.

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#### 14.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. Allahabad Pillar Inscription describes the conquests of Samudragupta. By defeating Achutanaga of Achichatra and Ganapatnaga of Mathura, Samudragupta increased his authority in the North. He is also credited with victory against a confederacy of rulers under the leadership of Rudrasena, the Vakataka ruler. His success against

Rudrasena gave him mastery over North India. The forest kingdoms of Samatata, Davaka and Kamarupa were also subjugated by Samudragupta. The republican states in the North were also brought under the hold of the Gupta power by Samudragupta. Besides his conquests in the North, Samudragupta defeated a number of kings in the South also, and extended the influence of the Guptas to the South also.

2. Chandragupta-II was the greatest of the Gupta kings. He was also known as Chandragupta Vikramaditya. He defeated the Sakas and annexed Western India. The Vakataka kingdom also became part of the Gupta empire during his time. Fa-hien, the Chinese pilgrim visited India during the time of Chandra Gupta-II. He is well known for his patronage of art and literature. It is said that Kalidasa, the famous poet, was his court-poet.
- II. 1. Large areas of land were brought under cultivation. Taxation was oppressive. There was increase in trade. The guilds played an important part in the economic system. Coins were in use as medium of exchange. Standard of living of the people was high.
2. Caste system was rigid. Some people were treated as untouchables. The *brahmins* had a high status. Thus, position of women deteriorated.
- III. 1. Kalidasa
2. Mudra Rakshasa, Devi Chandraguptam
- IV 1. Bhumara temple, Deogarh temple, and Bhitargan temple
2. Aryabhata, and Varahamihira
  3. The Iron Pillar at Delhi is unique because it has not rusted even though it is exposed to Sun and rain for several centuries. It is a monument to the metallurgical skill of the scientists of that period.

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### 14.13 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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**I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.**

1. Estimate the achievements of Samudragupta
2. Trace the economic conditions under Gupta rule
3. Examine the social conditions that prevailed during the Gupta period.
4. Describe the literary development that took place during the Gupta period.
5. Trace the evolution of temple architecture during the Gupta period
6. State the growth of science and technology during the Gupta times.
7. What were the significant features of the development of religion and philosophy under the Guptas?

**II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each**

1. State the sources that are available for the study and reconstruction of Gupta history.
2. Write about the role of Chandragupta-II
3. Bring out the salient features of Gupta administrative system.
4. Trace the nature and effects of the system of land grants that prevailed under the Guptas.
5. Describe the caste system that prevailed in Gupta society.
6. Estimate Kalidasa and his works
7. Trace the development of Gupta art.
8. How did the Bhagavata cult flourish under the Gupta rule?
9. What was the condition of Buddhism during the Gupta times?
10. Explain the six schools of thought that emerged during the Gupta period.

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**14.14 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING**

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- |     |   |   |  |
|-----|---|---|--|
| 1.  | Goyal, S.R.   | : | <i>A history of the Imperial Guptas</i>  |
| 2.  | Jha, D.N.   | : | <i>Ancient India, an Introductory Outline</i>                                      |
| 3.  | Krishna Deva  | : | <i>Temples of North India</i>  |
| 4.  | Majumdar, R.C.  | : | <i>The Age of Imperial Unity, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series, Vols. I &amp; II.</i> |
| 5.  | Majumdar, R.C.,<br>Raychaudhari, H.C.<br>and Datta, K | : | <i>Advanced History of India</i>   |
| 6.  | Majumdar, R.C. (ed)                                   | : | <i>The Classical Age, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series, Vol. III</i>                  |
| 7.  | Mookerji, R.K.  | : | <i>The Gupta Empire</i>  |
| 8.  | Nilakanta Sastri, K.A.                                | : | <i>Comprehensive History of India</i>  |
| 9.  | Nilakanta Sastri, K.A.                                | : | <i>A History of South India from Prehistory times to the fall of Vijayanagar</i>   |
| 10. | Romila Thapar   | : | <i>A History of India, Vol. I</i>  |
| 11. | Sathianatha Aiyar, R.                                 | : | <i>History of India Vol. I.</i>  |

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## UNIT-15 : HARSHA AND HIS TIMES : ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONDITIONS

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- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Sources
- 15.3 Political conditions during the sixth century A.D.
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- 15.6 Extent of Harsha's empire
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- 15.9 Divisions of the empire
- 15.10 Economic Conditions
  - 15.10.1 Agriculture
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- 15.11 Cultural Conditions
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  - 15.11.3 Jainism
  - 15.11.4 Vaishnavism
  - 15.11.5 Saivism
  - 15.11.6 Cult of Sun God
  - 15.11.7 Art
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- 15.13 Accounts of Foreign Travellers
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- 15.15 Check up your progress : Answers
- 15.16 Examination Model Questions
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## 15.0 OBJECTIVES

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From a study of this Unit, you should be able to know

1. how Harsha came to power ;
2. about his conquests and other achievements;
3. about his administration, Economic, Cultural and Social conditions that prevailed during his reign period; and
4. also about the valuable accounts of foreign travellers that visited India during the 7th century A.D.

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## 15.1 INTRODUCTION

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Harsha Vardhana, the distinguished ruler of the Vardhana dynasty, ascended the throne in 606 A.D., and ruled till 647 A.D. An account of his political achievements, administrative system during his reign, and the Economic, Cultural and Social conditions that prevailed at that time, along with the accounts of Chinese travellers that visited India during the 7th century A.D., is provided in this Unit.

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## 15.2 SOURCES

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The main sources to reconstruct the history of the later half of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., are the inscriptions of the later Guptas, the Maukharis, the Maitrakas, the Chalukyas, the kings of Bengal and Orissa. But, literary works and travel accounts are the chief sources. Bana, the court poet of Harsha, wrote a biographical work, the **Harsha Charita**. Hiuen-Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim's travel account, **Hsi-yu-chi or The Records of the Western World** and the life of the **Master of the Law** written by the monk, Hui-li, are very valuable. Though these accounts give a favourable and enthusiastic account of Harsha, by and large, the writings are balanced. The remains of Nalanda University, and the coins of Harsha, are other useful material.

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## 15.3 POLITICAL CONDITIONS DURING THE SIXTH CENTURY A.D.

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From the fall of the Gupta empire in the second quarter of the sixth century A.D., due to Huna invasions, Northern India was afflicted by centrifugal forces which destroyed the political fabric of the country. The later Guptas, the Maukharis, Sasanka of Gauda, and the Maitrakas of Vallabhi, reigned supreme in their dominions owing no allegiance to any central authority.

The Vardhana dynasty was one such power that ruled over the region of Sthanesvara in Eastern Punjab. The earliest member, Pushyabhuti, was a legendary figure, known only from Bana's **Harsha Charita**. In this line of kings, four ancestors of Harsha Vardhana are mentioned in the epigraphs. They are Maharaja Naravardhan, Maharaja Rajyavardhana, Maharaja Adityavardhana and Prabhakara Vardhana. Naravardhana commenced his rule from 505 A.D. The Vardhanas were matrimonially connected with later Gupta kings. The sister of Mahasena Gupta was the queen of Aditya Vardhana. Prabhakara Vardhana, the father of Harsha, is described by Bana as a 'lion to the Huna deer' Prabhakara Vardhana's reign witnessed the gradual expansion of the kingdom. The king of Sindhu, Rai Sihras-II, was defeated, and later

Prabhakara Vardhana raided the Gurjara kingdom in the Jodhpur region in Rajasthan. The Gandhara region was subjected to successful raids. The Kalachuris defeated the later Gupta king, Mahasena. Malwa was ruled by Deva Gupta. The Maukhari Grahavarman was ruling the Kanauj as well as the Magadha region. This was the political picture at the time of Prabhakara Vardhana's rule.

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#### 15.4 EVENTS LEADING TO HARSHA'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

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He had two sons - Rajya Vardhana and Harsha Vardhana - and a daughter, Rajyasri. She was given in marriage to the Maukhari king, Grahavarman, in 603-4 A.D. Soon after this, Vardhana forces under Rajya Vardhana led a victorious campaign against the Hunas. At the same time, Prabhakara Vardhana fell ill and died. This turn of events was taken advantage by the king of Malwa to raid the territory of Grahavarman. After killing the Maukhari king, the king of Malwa took away Rajyasri as captive to Kanyakubja. Hearing this news, Rajya Vardhana led a military campaign against Kanauj. Though victorious, Rajya Vardhana met his death due to the treacherous means adopted by Sasanka, the Gauda prince who was an ally of Devagupta. This forced Harsha to lead the search for Rajyasri. In this pursuit, Harsha occupied Kanauj and was able to recover Rajyasri from the hermitage of Buddhist monk, Divakara Mitra.

The succession of these dramatic events on the eve of the accession to the throne by Harsha are narrated in the **Harsha Charita**, and in Hiuen-Tsang's account. The occupation of Kanauj gave him great prestige, and the kingdom became more centrally based in the Gangetic valley.

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#### 15.5. CAMPAIGNS OF HARSHA

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After ascending the throne in 606 A.D. Harsha made Kanauj the capital. He had embarked upon *digvijaya*. In the first stage of his conquests, Harsha subdued Purnavarman, and appointed him as the governor of Magadha province. Next, he met Sasanka, the king of Gauda at Pundravardhana, and defeated him. With the retreat of Sasanka to the Eastern Bengal, Harsha became the master of entire U.P. and Bihar. In the second stage of *digvijaya*, Harsha had marched upto the Sutlej to consolidate his power over Sankisa, Atranjikhera, Govisana, Bramhapura, Matipura, Srughna, Sthanesvara, Mathura, Jaipur, Sirhind, Kullu, Jalandara, China Bhukti and Takka. This was achieved by 612 A.D. Between 618-27 A.D., Harsha had annexed the whole of Bengal.

In 629 A.D. Harsha conquered the Valabhi kingdom by defeating Dhuruvasena Baladitya. This conquest brought Harsha into conflict with the Chalukyan ruler, Pulakesin II, whose sphere of influence extended into the Tapti valley. Aihole inscription of Pulakesin records the defeat of Harsha. Probably, Harsha's defeat must have occurred when he marched into the Malwa region. Harsha was forced to recognise the Narmada river as the boundary between the two empires.

The kingdoms between the rivers, Sarasvati and Ganga, acknowledged the supremacy of Harsha. Harsha's power was also recognised in Kashmir. By 642 A.D. Harsha had conquered the Odra region in Orissa.

The Chinese emperor Tai-Tsung sent an embassy to Harsha's court in 643 and 647 A.D. But, Harsha died before the second embassy had arrived.

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## 15.6 EXTENT OF HARSHA'S EMPIRE

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Harsha's empire comprised the regions from the foot hills of the Himalayas and Kashmir in the North, and the Narmada river in the South, and upto Kongoda on the Southeast, while on the Northwest, it extended upto the Sutlej. The empire was large, but was not rigidly controlled. Loose ties of the feudal system characterised the empire.

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## 15.7 HARSHA'S PERSONALITY

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By virtue of Harsha's ability and military leadership, a small kingdom became a mighty empire. In the face of Huna invasions, and the instability caused due to the death of Prabhakara Vardhana and Rajyavardhana, Harsha rose to the occasion, and successfully defeated most of the independent rulers of North India. Harsha was recognised as the emperor of North India by Pulakesin II.

Harsha was not only a patron of letters, but also a distinguished playwright. He wrote *Ratnavali*, *Priyadarasika* and *Nagananda*. Harsha was praised by Bana, as a poet. Itsing notes the performing of the play, *Nagananda* on the stage. He patronised the poets Banabhatta, Mayura etc. His mastery over calligraphy is attested by his signature in the Banskhera Inscription.

Though Harsha was drawn to Buddhism, he was liberal and tolerant to all religious sects. Harsha was known for his acts of piety. Hiuen-Tsang records that Harsha had conducted an assembly, and performed the great ceremony every five years, called the quinquennial assembly or *mahamoksha parishad* at Prayaga. On these occasions, Harsha had distributed immense wealth to Buddhists, Brahmans, scholars, ascetics and the poor. Hiuen-Tsang portrays an exaggerated picture of the religious assemblies held at Prayaga, and notably the one that was held at Kanauj. In sum, Harsha emerges as an able monarch, patron of letters, and distinguished playwright, noted for his benevolence and magnanimity.

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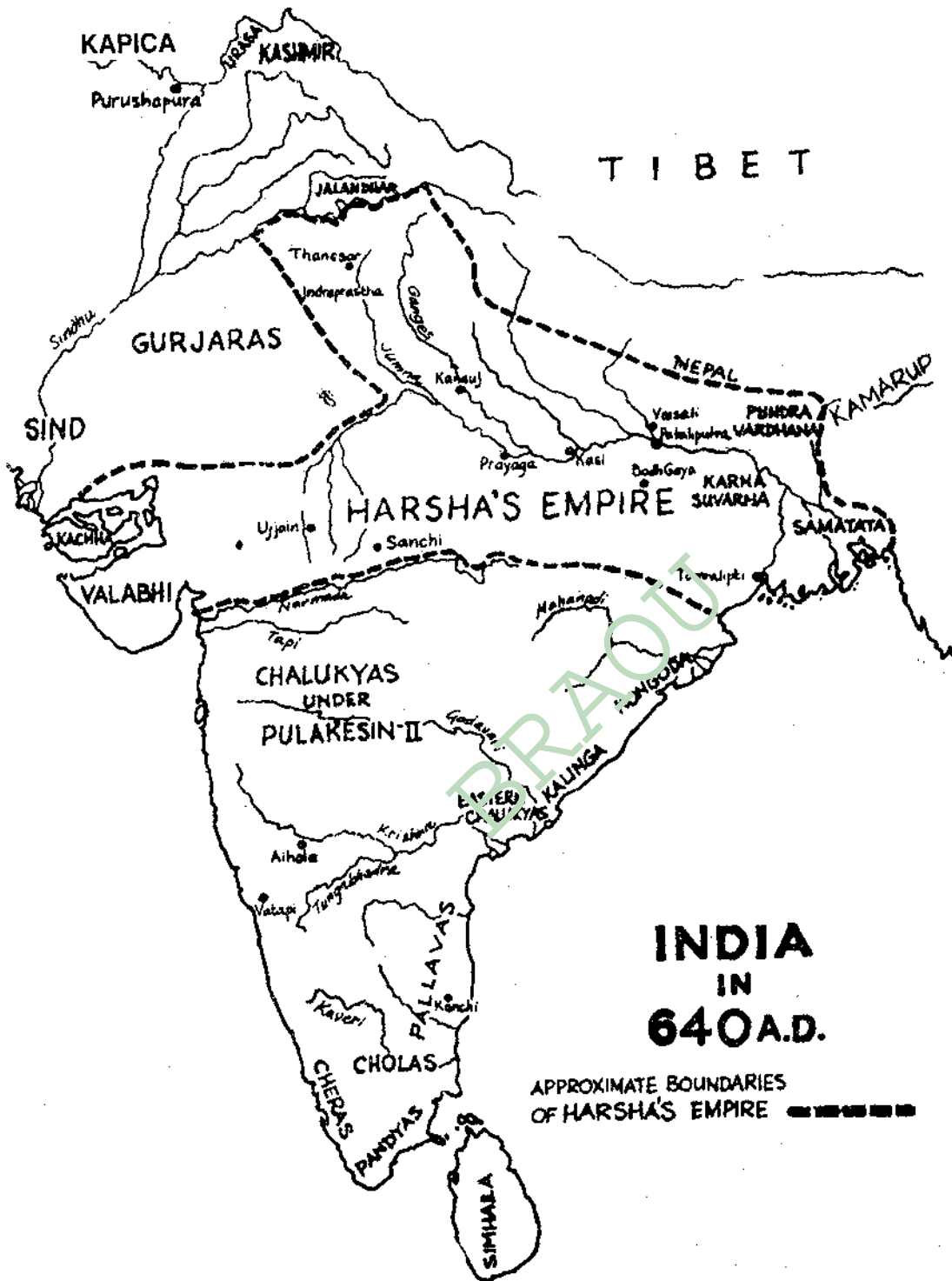
## 15.8 ADMINISTRATION

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The king was the sovereign ruler in the monarchical form of government. Subordinate kings were called *rajas* or *bhupalas*, but were mostly known as *samantas*. They also used the title *maharaja*. They acted as officials also. For their services, the king granted villages and territories. *Samantas* provided military assistance in the time of war and paid tribute. Increase in the award of land grants in lieu of cash to the officials, weakened central authority.

The king was assisted by a Council of Ministers. The *mantrin* and *mahasandhi-vigraha-adhikrth*, the minister of peace and war, and the *samantas*, formed the court. *Mahadandanayaka* was concerned with police duties.

The military consisted of infantry, cavalry, elephants and boats. The charriot force was not in use, though Hiuen-Tsang refers to it. Harsha's army consisted of 60,000 elephant soldiers and 100,000 cavalry. The army officers were known as *mahadandanayak*, *senapati* and *baladhyaksha*. Recruitment to the army was mainly done from *kshatriya*, *sudra* and tribal sections of the society.



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## 15.9 DIVISIONS OF THE EMPIRE

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Harsha's empire was divided into *Desa*, the largest territorial unit, with sub-divisions like the *Bhukti*, *Vishaya*, *Pathaka* and *Grama*. The *Desa* was governed by the king's representative, *Rajasthaniya*. The *Bhuktis* were administered by the *Uparikas* who were appointed by the king. The *Vishaya* or the district was headed by the *Vishayapati*, who was appointed by the *Uparika*. The *Grama* had a *Gramadhyaksha*.

In the administration of *Vishaya*, a council consisting of 20 members, called *Vishaya mahattaras* was constituted. The members were drawn from the guilds and other walks of life. The law courts were looked after by the *Nyayadhikarana* and the *Dharmadhikarana*. The guilds had their courts to settle the disputes.

The archival departments were in existence which were looked after by the *Pustapala*. The superintendent of accounts, the *Aksha patalika*, supervised the land transactions besides other duties.

In the village, a council of *Grama mahattaras* assisted the *Grameyaka* in day-to-day affairs, and in administering law disputes. The *Simakaras* measured the lands, and *Gramadhyaksha patalikas* and *Karanis* were the other officials who looked after the accounts and records.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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- I. 1. Harsha ascended the throne in the year \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who defeated Harsha? \_\_\_\_\_
- II. 1. Give the titles of the dramas which Harsha wrote. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Harsha conducted \_\_\_\_\_ once in every five years \_\_\_\_\_
3. The largest administrative unit in Harsha's empire was \_\_\_\_\_

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## 15.10 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

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### 15.10.1 Agriculture

During the 7th century A.D. land grants were frequently made. The officials were given land instead of salaries. Men of religious learning were also given land. This led to the growing fragmentation of land and feudal formations in society and economy. Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy.

Hsien-Tsang records that the *Pariyatra* (*Bairat*) rice was cultivated which was ready for cutting in 60 days. Fragrant rice was grown in the *Magadha* region. The *Sthanesvara* region, according to *Bana*, was very fertile, and produced rice, wheat and sugarcane. Fruits were grown in orchards in *Poonch*, *Mathura* and *Odra*. Saffron was grown in the *Kashmir* region. With regard to the methods of cultivation, the *Brihat Samhita* mentions two main harvests. Hsien-Tsang mentions the use of Persian water - wheels for irrigating the fields. It is estimated, on *Bana's* reference, that an average village possessed approximately 1,333 acres.

### 15.10.2 Industry

In the field of industry, textiles occupied an important place during this period. Bana refers to linen, cotton, bark silk, muslin and shot-silk garments worn by the Princess, Rajyasri. Hiuen-Tsang attests to the above varieties in dress materials, Bana also mentions coloured cloth and flowered silk. The weaving techniques, gold and silver brocade, tie-and-dye work, weaving after separate dyeing of the warp and the woof, and spotted muslin, were noticed in the literature and murals of the period. Noted centres of the textile industry were located at Varanasi, Mathura and Kamarupa.

The metal industry flourished. Hiuen-Tsang records that gold and silver were available in the regions of the Northwest i.e. Udayana and Takka. In the region between the Beas and Sutlej, copper and silver were abundant. Hiuen-Tsang observes that brass was extensively used. The large - sized copper image of the Buddha and the Brass Temple at Nalanda, were also noticed by Hiuen-tsang. The jeweller's art and craft were extensively practised.

### 15.10.3 Trade

Trade, both foreign and inland, flourished. The noted sea-ports were Tamralipti, Kongoda and Broach. Ganga was used as an inland trade route for the Ganges valley. Tamralipti was the gateway to Southeast Asia and China. The ships from China touched Indonesia, and reached the Eastern coast of India and Ceylon. Passing the West Coast, they sailed to Persia and Arabia. As the trade in silk was monopolised by the Persians, the silk industry in India declined. Spices and saffron were the noted items of export. Among the items of import were ivory, horses, copper, sapphire, emerald etc.

With regard to the general conditions obtaining in the 7th century A.D., Hiuen-Tsang observations are noteworthy. Towns and villages in the Gandhara region, tracts of the foothills of the Himalayas, the cities, Sravasti, Kapilavastu, Kusinagara and Ramagrama were deserted. Even Pataliputra was mentioned as desolate. Other cities and tracts were noted for their general prosperity.

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## 15.11 CULTURAL CONDITIONS

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### 15.11.1 Religion

Buddhism was on the decline during the 7th century A.D. Hiuen-Tsang observed that the monasteries in the regions of Nagarkot, Gandhara, Udayana, and Takshasila were in ruins, and deserted. Sravasti, Vaisali and other centres in Eastern India were in a similar state.

The Sammatiya sect of Hinayana was widely prevalent. It was especially popular in the Northwestern region, Afghanistan and beyond. The exclusive followers of the Mahayana sect were mostly in the regions of Champa, Takshasila, Kullu, Magadha, Orissa and Vidarbha. Harsha had patronised the Sammatiya sect. Mahayana was also widely prevalent, and in many monasteries, the Mahayana and Hinayana monks lived together. Chandrakirti, Dharmapala and Santideva were famous exponents of the Madhyamika system.

Regarding the form of worship, Hiuen-Tsang observes that the worship of Dhyani Buddha, Bodhisattvas, especially Avalokitesvara, Maitreya and the Goddess Tara was widely prevalent. Besides presenting offerings to the stupas, taking out of charriot procession with the images

of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, was widely prevalent. The Vajrayana form of Buddhism came into being in the 7th century A.D. The tantric rites dominated the cult, and the worship of Tara was the characteristic feature of this cult. Eastern India was the home of its origin.

A notable feature of Buddhism during this period was the development of monasteries as great academic centres. They were Nalanda, Vikramasila and Valabhi.

#### 15.11.2 Nalanda Monastery

The Nalanda monastery became well-established during the Gupta period. Hiuen-tsang observes that Nalanda became famous due to the monks of high character and learning. It was reported that 10,000 monks were residing at Nalanda, and the buildings consisted of 8 halls, besides the great college. Revenues of 100 villages were endowed for its maintenance. Strict examination was conducted to admit pupils. The works on 18 schools of Buddhism, the Vedas, the *Hetu Vidya* (logic), the *Sabda Vidya* (Grammar), the *Chikitsa Vidya* (Medicine), the *Atharva Vidya*, the *Sankhya* etc., were taught. Chandrakirti, the great abbot of Nalanda wrote **Prasanna pada**, a commentary on the **Mulamadhyanika**, which is considered a master piece. Chandrakirti was succeeded by Dharmapala in 636 A.D. His successors were Jayadeva and Santideva. Dharmapala, Dharmakirti, Silabhadra were other abbots at Nalanda during this period.

#### 15.11.3 Jainism

Jainism was prevalent in some regions, especially in Gujarat. Hieuen-Tsang found the monks of both *Svetambara* and *Digambara* sects near Taxila, Vipula, Pundravardhana and Samatata.

#### 15.11.4 Vaishnavism

During this period, Vaishnavism was well-established. The kings were called *parama bhagavatas*. The mythology of Vishnu, the popularity of the Dasavataras, the worship of Harihara, and the influence of the tantric cult on the mother-goddesses, were the notable features of this period.

#### 15.11.5 Saivism

The *Pasupata*, *Kalamukha* and *Kapalika* sects of Saivism were prevalent. The members of the Pushyabhuti dynasty, the Maitrakas of Vallabhi were devotees of Siva.

#### 15.11.6 Cult of Sun God

The cult of the Sun God was also prevalent as in the preceding period. The ancestors of Harsha were called *paramadityabhaktas*. Harsha, though a Saiva, did not give up the worship of the Sun God. Hiuen-Tsang reports that in the quinquennial assembly, the image of the Sun God was also placed along with those of Buddha and Siva. The Sakadvipi Brahmins were responsible for the spread of the cult of Sun God.

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## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Briefly describe the economic conditions of North India in the 7th century A.D.

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2. Describe the religious conditions of North India in the 7th century A.D.

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### 15.11.7 Art

Notable art centres of the 7th century A.D. which were located at Mahua, Mudesvari, Gyaraspur, Saranath, Tezpur, Mandisor etc., attest to the building and sculptural activity. Among these centres, Mudesvari is noteworthy. An inscription of Harsha, dated 636 A.D. refers to the Vanitisvara and Srimandalesvara temples. The temple with an octagonal plan is a unique example, and is dated to the first half of the 7th century A.D. Architecture became more complex, and the evolution of the curvilinear *shikhara*, typical of the Northern style, emerges during this period.

### 15.11.8 Literature

The literature in Sanskrit and Prakrit continued to be produced as in the preceding age. The analysis of the Puranas revealed that "from about the sixth century A.D. they dealt with new topics relating to gifts, glorification of holy places, *Vrata* (vow), *Puja* (popular worship), consecration of images, sacrifices to the planets and their appeasement etc.

Among the Dharmasastra literature, **Katyayana smriti**, the **Nitisara** of Kamandaka, Akshaya's commentary on **Narada smriti** etc., are ascribed to the period 450-650 A.D.

Kamandaka's **Nitisara** was the most popular work on polity and deals with various aspects of statecraft. Kumarila and Gaudapada are the great names associated with Vedanta in the 7th century A.D. Kumarila, an exponent of the Mimamsa school, wrote the **Sloka Varttika**, the **Tantravarttika** and **Tuptika**. Gaudapada, the guru of Sankara, was the first exponent of monistic Vedanta.

Harsha Vardhana was a great patron of learning and letters. The literary climate and activity of Harsha's court was comparable to that of Samudragupta or Chandragupta. Bana, Mayura, and Divakara, the great scholars, lived in his court. Bana wrote the biography of Harsha, entitled **Harshacharita**. Though Bana portrays an enthusiastic and, an exaggerated

at times, picture of the life of Harsha, yet a realistic account of contemporary life, is found in the **Harshacharita**. Bana's **Kadambari**, also exhibits his poetic skill. Mayura was a relative of Bana, while Matanga Divakara, a Jain writer, was a Chandala. He composed hymns in praise of Surya. Harsha's three plays, **Ratnavali**, **Priyadarsika** and **Nagananda**, reveal Harsha's poetic skill.

In the field of astronomy, Varahamihira's **Panchsiddhantika** and Brahma Gupta's **Brahmasiddhanta** and **Dhyanagraha**, deserve mention.

The Prakrit literature of the Jains, and the commentaries on Buddhist texts in Pali, can be ascribed to this period.

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## 15.12 POSITION OF CASTES

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The rise of the *brahmanas* and the role they played in furthering the cause of Brahmanical religion, helped to strengthen their position during this period. Other groups of society also changed their role, and sometimes rose in importance. The Sudras achieved new status by differentiating themselves from the untouchables. The Sudras were admitted to important Brahmanical rituals. Increase in land grants to the temples, monasteries, Brahmanas, and officials, has already been referred to.

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## 15.13 ACCOUNTS OF FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

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### 15.13.1 Hiuen-Tsang

The Chinese accounts of this period provide information on contemporary life and religion in India. Hiuen-Tsang visited India in 629 A.D. and stayed for nearly 13 years. Although he was partial to Buddhist kings and Buddhism, his observations are balanced. The non-Buddhist rulers like those of Mahes arapura, Parityatra and Ujjain, are praised for their learning and prowess. The ruler of Valabhi, a Buddhist, is described as 'shallow in wisdom and statecraft and hasty in disposition'. The people of Bharukachcha, though adherents of the Sthavira schools of Buddhism, are described as cold, indifferent and perverse. The people of Matipura are described as sincere and truthful, and fond of learning. It is recorded that the king of Gauda had destroyed the Buddhist monasteries.

Hiuen-Tsang describes the location of places, distances and the size of the population. Though these contain mistakes, and are at times conflicting, in general, they are reliable.

Hiuen-Tsang gives an enthusiastic account of Harsha's conquests, administration, religion etc. It is noteworthy that, Hiuen-Tsang records that Harsha could not defeat Pulakesin's forces.

Hiuen-Tsang records that the administration and the people live together in harmony. Taxation was light and the land tax was fixed at one-sixth of the produce. He calls the people hot-tempered. High standards of dress and hygiene were observed. He also shows his fondness for Sanskrit.

The capital Kanauj was described as a great and affluent city. It had beautiful gardens, high structures and tanks.

He notes that education was widely prevalent, and the intellectual climate was favourable to it. Among the important centres of learning, Kashmir, Benaras, Nalanda, Valabhi, Kanauj,

Prayaga, Jalandhara etc., were noticed in North India. Nalanda receives great praise from Hiuen-Tsang for the rigour in the methods of education and the erudition of the abbots. Hiuen-Tsang is eloquent in his praise for Harsha's patronage of men of great learning and those noted for the purity of their lives. His generous gifts and magnanimity were recorded by Hiuen-Tsang. The quinquennial assemblies, called *mahamokshapariashad*, held at Prayaga on six occasions, were described enthusiastically by Hiuen-Tsang. Harsha, on these occasions, distributed everything to the poor, and to all religious sects.

The geographical distribution of Buddhist centres and sects is given by Hiuen-Tsang in a detailed manner.

Hiuen-Tsang had translated 74 works into the Chinese language, and copied various texts. He returned to China in 642 A.D., through Northwest India and Khotan. Six missions were exchanged between Harsha and T'ai-Tsung, the Chinese emperor, between 641-648 A.D.. When the last mission arrived in India in 648 A.D., Harsha had already died. All the missions sent to China presented Buddhist relics, works of scholarship, and in particular, the third mission, it was stated, carried the cuttings of Bodhi tree, as a noted present. These missions were fruitful, for they encouraged not only the study of religion, but also the sciences like astronomy, mathematics, medicine etc.

### 15.13.2 Itsing

Itsing visited India, and during his stay between 673-85 A.D. had also collected works on Indian science and Buddhist texts - a collection of 400 Sanskrit manuscripts. The Sanskrit - Chinese dictionary, and a biography of about 60 Buddhist monks who visited India, were his other notable works.

Among the important Buddhist monks who visited China during this period were Prabhakara Mitra and Bodhiruchi.

Thus, during the 7th century A.D., a steady stream of Chinese and Indian scholars were responsible for popularising Indian astronomy, mathematics and medicine, and also trade relations.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 3

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1. Write about Kumarila and Gaudapada.

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2. What did Hiuen-Tsang write about the administration, economic and cultural conditions in India?

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### 15.14. LET US SUM UP

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1. Harsha ruled over North India from 606 to 647 A.D.
2. Harsha defeated many of his contemporary kings like Sasanka of Gauda. But, he was defeated by the Chalukyan king, Pulakesin II.
3. Harsha himself was a man of letters, and patronised poets like Bana.
4. He patronised Buddhism. Hiuen-Tsang visited India during Harsha's time. Once in every five years, Harsha conducted the *Mahamoksha Parishad* at Prayaga. On those occasions, he distributed immense wealth to Buddhists, *brahmanas*, scholars, ascetics and the poor.
5. In his administration, Harsha was assisted by the Council of Ministers and a host of officials. *Desa*, *Bhukti*, *Vishaya* and *Grama* were the important administrative units in the empire.
6. Hiuen-Tsang noted the general prosperity in the country.
7. Buddhists developed monasteries as great academic centres. The Nalanda monastery is a unique example. Jainism, Saivism, Vaishnavism and the cult of Sun God were prevalent.
8. the accounts of Hiuen-Tsang are useful as sources for the History of the period. He has given an enthusiastic description of the conditions in India.

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### 15.15 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. 606 A.D.
2. Pulakesin - II
- ii. 1. *Nagananda*, *Priyadarsika*, and *Ratnavali*
2. Mahamoksha Parishad
3. Desa
- II. 4. Agriculture was the main occupation of the people. Hiuen Tsang mentions that Persian water-wheels were used for irrigating the lands. The textile industry flourished. Varieties of fine cloth were produced. Both inland and foreign trade flourished. Tamralipti, Kongoda, and Broach were the important sea - ports.
5. Buddhism was on the decline in the 7th century A.D. The *Vajrayana* form of Buddhism came into being in the 7th century A.D. Tantric rites dominated the cult. During this period, important Buddhist monasteries, like the Nalanda Monastery became great centres of learning. Jainism was prevalent in Gujarat. Many kings during this period were Vaishnavites, and they patronised Vaishnavism. Some kings were Saivites, and Saivism was also followed by many people. The cult of Sun God was also prevalent in those days.
- III. 1. Kumarila and Gaudapada were great writers and philosophers of the 7th century A.D. Kumarila was an exponent of the Mimamsa school. He wrote

the **Sloka Varttika**, **Tantra Varttika** and **Tuptika**. Gaudapada was the *guru* of Shankara. He was the first exponent of monistic Vedanta.

2. Hiuen-Tsang has given an interesting account of the conditions in India. According to him, the administration was efficient. He mentions that taxation was light, and states that one-sixth of the produce was collected as land tax. He noted that prosperity prevailed in the country in many places.

Hiuen-Tsang also observed that the people were honest and peace-loving. He mentions that education was widely prevalent, and gives details of the educational centres at Nalanda and other places.

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## 15.16 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines.

1. Estimate the achievements of Harsha
2. Trace the administrative system that prevailed during Harsha's reign.
3. Give an account of the economic and cultural conditions in India during the 7th century A.D.
4. Examine Hiuen-Tsang's account of economic, social and cultural conditions in India.

II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines

1. Mention the sources that are useful for the study of the history of sixth and seventh centuries A.D.
2. Give an account of the political conditions that prevailed in India during the 6th century A.D.
3. Describe the conquests of Harsha
4. Estimate the personality of Harsha
5. Trace the economic conditions in India during the 7th century A.D.
6. Examine about the social and cultural conditions in India during the 7th century A.D.

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## 15.17 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Devabhuti : *Harsha, A Political Study*
2. Majumdar, R.C. : *The Classical Age, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series, Vol. III*
3. Majumdar, R.C. : *A Comprehensive History of India, Vol. III, Parts I & II.*
4. Majumdar, R.C.,  
Rayachaudhri, H.C. and  
Datta, K. : *Advanced History of India*
5. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. : *History of India, Vol. I*
6. Romila Thapar : *A History of India, Vol. I*
7. Sathianatha Aiyar, R. : *History of India, Vol. I*

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## UNIT-16 : SOUTH INDIA : STRUGGLE FOR HEGEMONY

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## 16.0 OBJECTIVES

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A study of this Unit should enable you to have knowledge of the political history of the

1. Pallavas
2. Chalukyas
3. Rashtrakutas
4. Cholas and
5. Kalyani Chalukyas

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## 16.1 INTRODUCTION

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Between the sixth and thirteenth centuries A.D., the Deccan and South India witnessed the rise of imperial powers. These were the Pallavas of Kanchi, the Cholas of Tanjavoor in the South, and the Chalukyas of Badami, Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta and the Chalukyas of Kalyani in the Deccan. In this Unit, the political history of these dynasties is traced.

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## 16.2 PALLAVAS OF KANCHI

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The chiefs of Kalabhra clan were ruling over Tamilnadu until the middle of 6th century A.D. The Pallavas of Simhavishnu line, and the Pandyas of Kadungou family, overthrew the Kalabhra clan, and this resulted in the setting up of independent kingdoms by the Pallavas with Kanchi as their capital, and by the Pandyas with Madurai as their capital.

### 16.2.1 Origin of the Pallavas

The origin of the Pallavas still remains a mystery. Scholars like Lewis Rice and V. Venkayya put forward the view that the Pallavas of Kanchi were of Persian (Parthian) origin. Their consideration was based on etymological grounds. The Pallavas of Kanchi were identified with the Pahlavas of the Northwestern India. Dubreuil and V.A. Smith also pointed out that the Pallavas were foreign intruders, probably a branch of the Pahlavas or Parthians of Northwestern India. However, the words Pallava and Pahlava may be the same philologically, but historically they refer to different people. Rajasekhara, the great poet and playwright in the Gurjara - Pratihara court at Kanauj, made a clear distinction between the Pallavas occupying South India and the Pahlavas (Parthians) occupying the trans-Indus Valley.

Dr. K.P. Jayaswal expressed the view that the Pallavas were a branch of the Vakatakas ruling in Central India. But, the fact is that the Pallavas rose to independent sovereignty simultaneously with the Vakatakas, if not earlier. Hence, Jayaswal's view is not acceptable. On the basis of a story fabricated by a commentator in the 14th century in the Tamil classic 'Manimekhalai', Rasanayagam concluded that the Pallavas were an off-spring of the Chola-Naga alliance, and their home should be located only in the South. Since the basis for this is a fabricated story of a later date, this view also cannot be accepted.

Prof. R. Sathianathaiyar opined that the Pallavas had originated in Tondaimandalam itself. He identified them with the Paladas or the Pulindas of the Asokan edicts. But, the word 'Pallava' has philologically, greater affinity with the word 'Pahlava' rather than with 'Pulinda'. According to Dr. S.K. Iyengar, the Pallavas were the Tondaiyar tribe of Tondaimandalam. They were officers and governors in the Southeastern part of the Satavahana empire, and after the fall of the Satavahanas, they succeeded in annexing a great part of the Chola territory by which their territory thereupon came to be known as Tondaimandalam. However, it may be pointed out that the early Pallavas issued their inscriptions in Prakrit and not in Tamil, and they patronised Sanskrit literature rather than Tamil literature. How then could they be given Tamil Origin?

Since the early Tamil literature treats the Pallavas as different from the Tamils, scholars like N.V. Ranganayya conjectured the Telugu origin of the Pallavas on the basis of their early association with the Andhra country. The 'Mahavamsa' refers to Pallava Bogga as a stronghold of Buddhism, and locates it at the mouth of the river Krishna. This description of Pallava

Bogga agrees with the Palanadu region in the Guntur district. Moreover most of the inscriptions of the Pallavas before Simhavishnu are found in the Guntur - Nellore tract of the Andhra country. "The Telugu country, South of the Krishna, formed the bulk of the Pallava kingdom till the last quarter of the sixth century A.D." The Pallavas even maintained relations friendly or otherwise, with their contemporary dynasties in the rest of the land. Further, their early administrative system was on the lines of the Andhra Satavahana system. Hence, the conclusion is that the Pallavas were the original inhabitants of the region at the mouth of the Krishna, and that they went to Tondaimandalam as the Satavahana feudatories, consolidated their position with the help of the local Naga princes, and became independent subsequent to the fall of the Satavahanas. Whether this Telugu origin of the Pallavas is acceptable or not, one thing is certain that their political and cultural influences were felt by Andhra till it was swept by the Chalukyan invasion led by Pulakesin II, in the first quarter of the 7th century A.D.

### 16.2.2 Simhavishnu

The founders of this new Pallava dynasty were Simhavarma, and his son, Simhavishnuvarma. Simhavishnu was the first king to extend the territory upto Tiruchirapalli. His son, Mahendrarvarman praises Simhavishnu in his play, **Mattavilasa Prahasana** as the vanquisher of the Kalabhras, Malays, Cholas, Pandyas and Simhalas, in his campaigns upto the river Kaveri.

### 16.2.3 Mahendra Varman (580-630 A.D.)

Mahendra Varman's (580-630 A.D.) reign was eventful in political, religious and literary field. With his rule began the Pallava and Chalukya, and the Pallava and Pandya conflicts. The feud with the Pandyas was due to the need to control the Kaveri deltaic area, the heart of Cholanadu. Mahendrarvarman's conflict with Chalukya Pulakesin - II was mainly to contain the imperialistic designs of the Chalukyas. The Aihole inscription of Pulakesin-II refers to the defeat of Pallavas. The Chalukyas forced the Pallavas to retreat to Kanchi. The Northernmost portions of Pallava territories, viz., the Southern portion of coastal Andhra and the Cuddapah and Anantapur districts, were lost due to this campaign. However, the Kasakkudi Plates refer to the victory of Mahendrarvarman, but do not mention the Chalukyas or the name of the king. Probably, this refers to the hard-won victory at Pullalur near Kanchi against the Chalukyas. Mahendra's kingdom extended up to the river Kaveri. He assumed the title *Vichitra Chitta* which is symbolic of his versatility in the field of arts, and his greatness.

### 16.2.4 Narasimhavarman I (630-668 A.D.)

Narasimhavarman-I (630-668 A.D.,) sported the title of *Mamalla* or *Mahamalla*. He avenged the earlier defeat by defeating the Chalukyas. Assisted by his general Cirutonda, he defeated the Chalukya Pulakesin at three places, which finally ended in the death of Pulakesin. The Badami inscription, dated 643 A.D. helps to date the Pallava-Chalukya conflicts between 639-643 A.D. The Pallava occupation of Badami is symbolised in the title *Vatapikonda* of Narasimhavarman. The lost Northern parts of the kingdom and Southern parts of the Chalukyan territory came under the sway of the Pallavas. Narasimhavarman was helped by the Ceylonese Prince, Manavarma in his campaigns against the Chalukyas. This necessitated Narasimha Varman to invade Ceylon to reinstate Manavarma.

Narasimha Varma is also credited with the victories over the Cholas, Cheras, Kalabhras, and Pandyas, but details of these campaigns are not available.

Hsuen-Tsang, the Chinese Pilgrim, visited Kanchi in 640 A.D.

Mahendravarman-II (668-672 A.D.), too, continued the hostile policy towards the Chalukyas. But, Mahendravarman faced defeat at the hands of Vikramaditya. In the Adivaraha temple at Mahabalipuram, the portraits of Mahendravarman and Narasimhavarman with their queens are found.

### 16.2.5 Paramesvara Varman I

Paramesvara Varman I's (672-700 A.D.) reign was full of wars. The Chalukya Vikramaditya, according to the Gadwal Plates, conquered Kanchi, and camped near Urgapura (near Uraiyur) on the Kaveri, in 674 A.D. The Pallava records, however, clearly mention that Paramesvaravarman defeated the forces of Vikramaditya in the battle of Peruvalanallur, and drove the forces to retreat. There was enmity between the Pallavas and the Gangas during this period. Bhuvikrama, the Ganga king, claimed to have defeated a Pallava king, probably Paramesvara Varman, in the battle at Vilandai.

The reign of Narasimhavarman-II (700-728 A.D.) Rajasimha, was peaceful. He sent embassies to China in 720 A.D.

Mahendravarman-III seems to have ruled jointly as a crown prince from 728 A.D. The Ganga king, Sripursha (725-788 A.D.) claimed to have killed the king of Kanchi, who according to the narrative sculptures in the Vaikuntha Perumal temple, was Mahendravarman, whose body was brought from the battle field into the presence of Narasimhavarman.

Paramesvaravarman-II's (723-731 A.D.) reign was short. The Chalukya Vikramaditya invaded Kanchi in 731 A.D. and levied tribute. Probably, this brought anarchy in the kingdom, and the death of Paramesvaravarman as well.

### 16.2.6 Nandivarman

This sudden turn of events made the succession to the throne difficult. The historical narrative-labeled sculptures in the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple reveal that a deputation of **matres**, **mulapurushas**, and others had approached Hiranyavarman, a member of collateral line, and in the assembly of chiefs and Hiranyavarman's family, made an offer of the Pallava kingship to any one that came forward. Nandivarman alone had accepted the offer. But, this was not so simple as the sculptural narrative suggested. Opposition was there from Pallavadirayan and Citramaya, the sons of Mahendravarman-III. Citramaya was supported by the Pandyan king, Maravarman. Pallavadirayan led a mighty force against Nandivarman. However, Nandivarman succeeded to the throne and had a very long reign of 65 years (731-796 A.D.).

Nandivarman had to face the Chalukyan invasion by Vikramaditya-II in 741-742 A.D. In this, Nandivarman was defeated. He fled away from Kanchi. But, Vikramaditya was magnanimous. After liberally donating to the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi, Vikramaditya left for Badami, sparing Kanchi for reoccupation by Nandivarman.

The Pandya King, Rajasimha, marched into the Pallava kingdom, and in the encounter at Nandigram, Udayachandra, the general of Nandivarman, killed Citramaya, and defeated

the Pandyan enemies. Later, Udayachandra had put down the rebellions of the Sabara king, Udyana, and the Nishda chieftain, Prithiviyagha.

An important event of his reign is Dantidurga's (the founder of Rashtrakuta line) expedition to Kanchi. After the show of superiority, Dantidurga gave his daughter Reva in marriage to Nandivarman.

Nandivarman led an expedition against the Ganga king, Sripurusha, which brought much wealth as booty to the Pallavas. The Southeastern part of the Ganga kingdom was taken over by the Pallavas, and the Bana king Jayanandivarman was made the Governor in 783 A.D.

In a conflict with the Pandyas, Nandivarman was defeated by Jatila Parantaka Nedunjadaiyan alias Varuguna Maharaja at Pennagadam on the bank of the river Kaveri, in 775 A.D.

The growing power of the Pandyas under Varuguna-I, was the dominating feature in the last quarter of 8th century A.D. Although Nandivarman entered into alliances with the rulers of Kongu and Kerala, and faced the Pandyas, the Pandya presence in the Kaveri valley, and further North in the Pallava territory, was notable. The whole of Kongu region became part of the Pandya Kingdom.

Nandivarman was credited with the performance of *Asvamedha* sacrifice. Another memorable act is the portrayal of the history of the Pallavas from the beginning to the later years of his reign in narrative sculpture in the *Prakara* of the Vaikuntha Perumal temple at Kanchi. This is a rare feature and an unique example in Indian History.

#### 16.2.7. Dantivarman

Dantivarman's (796-817 A.D.) rule witnessed the Rashtrakuta expedition under Govinda-III. The capture of Kanchi in 803 A.D. resulted in the supremacy of the Rashtrakutas over the Pallava territory. He was also unable to check the Pandyan aggression. Although Dantivarman recaptured Tondaimandalam after Govinda's death, the Telugu Choda, Srikantha, and the Pandya Srimara, were successful in occupying Tondimandala in 817 A.D.

Nandivarman-III (829-853 A.D.), after an interregnum, recaptured Tondaimandalam in 829 A.D, after a battle won at Tellaru. He soon became powerful in the Kongu and Chola territories.

#### 16.2.8 Decline of the Pallavas

Nrupatungavarman (854-880 A.D.) defeated Pandya King, Srimara. Varugunavarman, the successor to the Pandya throne, became his friend. The Pallava authority over the Kaveri Valley was occasional. The Pallavas had to face his cousin, Pallava Aparajita aided by Ganga Prithvipati-I. The Pandya-Pallava defeat at the Tiruppurambiyam battle in 877-78 A.D.) marked the decline of the Pallavas, and the rise of the Cholas. Aditya Chola put an end to the Pallava rule by killing Aparajita Varman in 894 A.D.

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### 16.3 CHALUKYAS OF BADAMI

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In the Northern Deccan, a new kingdom was founded by Pulakesin-I. His ancestors were Jayasimha and Ranaraga. In the Malaprabha Valley, Pulakesin fortified the hills at Badami, known as Vatapi, a place near a famous religious centre Mahakuta, and a trade centre called

Ayyavolu, the modern Aihole. The Badami fort inscription, dated 543-4 records the performance of the horse sacrifice and the proclamation of his independent status. Kirtivarman-I had subjugated the Kadambas of Banvasi, the Mauryas of Konkan, and the Nallas, which brought the entire Northern Karnataka under his control. Mangalesa occupied the throne as regent for Pulakesin-II, who was a minor at the death of Kirtivarman. He waged wars against the Kalachuri king, Budhraj, and brought large booty in 600 A.D. Pulakesin rebelled against Mangalesa, and killed him in a battle.

### 16.3.1 Origin of the Chalukyas of Badami

The rise of the Chalukyas to prominence marks the beginning of a new era in the history of the Deccan. From the middle of the sixth century to the middle of the eighth century, they enjoyed imperial authority over a greater part of the Deccan. Scholars hold different views regarding the origin of the Chalukyas. A section of them, including John Fleet and B.L. Rice, attribute a foreign origin to them. Another section thinks that they appear to have represented an indigenous Kannada origin, claiming the status of *Kshatriyas*. With the available source material, it has not been possible to establish either of them.

The *Puranas* and mythological legends give more improbable versions. According to the Handarike inscription of the time of Vikramaditya VI, the Chalukyas were born from the interior of the *Chulka* or *Chuluka*, the hand hollowed to hold water, of the sage Haritipanchashikhi, when he was making offerings to the gods. The court poet of the same king in his *Vikramankadeva Charita* says that the ancestors of the Chalukyas sprang from the *Chuluka* of the creator Brahma when he desired to create a hero, at the request of Indra, to protect the earth from the evil-doers. Therefore, the Chalukyas claim descent from the sage Hariti (*Haritiputras*) and of *Menavyagotra*. They claim that they were nursed by the Seven Mothers (*Sapta Matrikas*). All the princes submitted at the very sight of their *Varaha lanchana* or the Boar crest, which they obtained from God Vishnu. This, no doubt, indicates that their family god was Lord Vishnu, and their banner was the Boar crest. However, scholars have rejected the traditional account as "a mere ferrago of vague legends and Puranic myths" of no authority or value.

The earliest authentic names of this line known to history are those of Jayasimha and his son Ranaraga who flourished in the regions of Badami, in the modern Bijapur district, in the first half of the sixth century A.D.

### 16.3.2 Pulakesin - II (609-642 A.D.)

The reign of Pulakesin-II (609-10 to 642 A.D.) was eventful, and paved the way for the Chalukyan imperialism over the Deccan.

After defeating the rebels, Appayika and Govinda, he invaded Banavasi, the capital of Kadambas, and defeated the Alupas of South coastal Karnataka and the Gangas of Talkad, in the Southern Karnataka. After these conquests and making matrimonial alliance with the Gangas, Pulakesin defeated the Mauryas of Konkan, and occupied Pur (the modern Elephanta). A notable event was the extension of the Chalukyan power into North India. Pulakesin conquered the Latas, Malavas and Gujaras in the modern region of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. This brought him into conflict with Harsha, the lord of North India, and it ended in

the Chalukyan victory. The river Narmada was recognised as the frontier between these two kingdoms.

After these exploits, Pulakesin proceeded on *digvijaya* over the Eastern parts of Deccan. The Kosala and Kalinga were overrun first, and Pishtapura was captured. The power of Durjayas and Vishnukundins was reduced later. The Chalukyan armies reached the Pallava kingdom, and at Pullalur near Kanchi, the Chalukyas were forced to retreat. However, the Northern parts of Pallava territory were conquered, and added to the Chalukyan kingdom. Coastal Andhra was made a Chalukya fief, which was entrusted to his brother, Vishnuvardhana in 621 A.D. Vishnuvardhana became the founder of the line of the Chalukyas, who began to rule from Vengi, which outlived the parent dynasty. In 625 A.D. Pulakesin sent an embassy to the Persian court of Khusru.

In the last decade of his reign, Pulakesin once again, launched a campaign against the Pallavas. After defeating the Banas, Pulakesin entered the Pallava territory, but was defeated in several battles, notably at Pariyala and Manimangala.

Narasimhavarma, the Pallava king, immediately invaded the Chalukyan heartland, and occupied Badami. Pulakesin met his death in one of the battles. Narasimhavarman retreated to the South, and an interregnum for 12 years prevailed in the Chalukyan kingdom.

### 16.3.3 Vikramaditya

Vikramaditya, with the help of his brother, Jayasimhavarman, and the Ganga king, Durvinita, was able to regain the lost territories, and subjugate the vassals. In 654-5 A.D., he began his rule, and his records are found in the coastal Andhra from the very beginning. Mahendravarman-II was defeated in the Karnataka, and later in the Paramesvaravarman's reign, the Chalukyan forces marched to the neighbourhood of Kanchi, forcing Paramesvaravarman to flee. Vikramaditya further proceeded to the Kaveri valley, and camped at Uraiur. Probably, his ally, the Pandyan king, Kochchandaiyan joined there. However, Paramesvaravarman faced the Ganga forces led by Bhuvikrama.

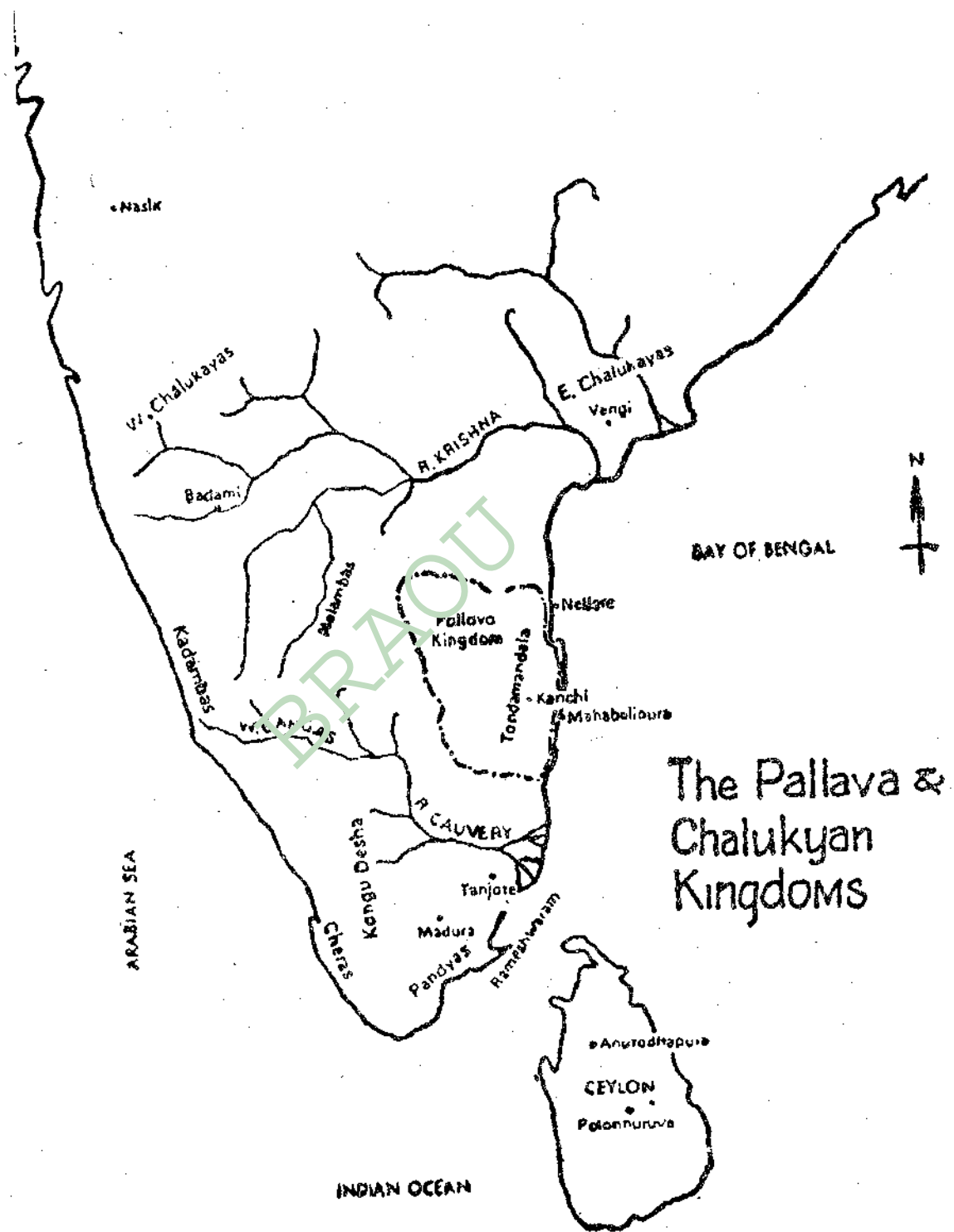
Though defeated, the Pallava king sent a counter expedition into the Chalukyan territory, and faced the Chalukyan advance at Peruvalanallur, and defeated them. Jayasimhavarman was appointed the Governor of Lata, the Southern Gujarat region.

### 16.3.4 Vinayaditya

Vinayaditya's (681-96 A.D.) rule was peaceful. The only expedition mentioned in the records, refers to Vinayaditya's expedition into Northern India. No details are available.

### 16.3.5 Vijayaditya

Vijayaditya's (696-733 A.D.) reign was known for peace, and Pattadkal or Kisivalol was beautified, and became the city intended for coronations. The crown prince, Vikramaditya-II, assisted by the Ganga prince Eryappa, led expedition into the Pallava Kingdom, which brought large booty to the Chalukyas. But, Paramesvaravarman met his death in a battle at Vilande at the hands of the Ganga ruler.



### 16.3.6 Vikramaditya - II

Vikramaditya-II (733-44 A.D.), in his early years, had to face the growing power of the Arabs in Sind, and their advance into the Deccan. Pulakesin, the prince of the Chalukya branch of Gujarat, was successful in checking the advance, in which the Rashtrakuta Dantidurga also participated. The Chalukyan invasion in 740 A.D. over the Pallavas, was indeed, a reply to the earlier loss suffered by the Chalukya Pulakesin, for the Chalukyas occupied Kanchi and after some time, left Kanchi to its ruler. Again, another expedition into the Pallava territory was led by Kirtivarman, who brought large booty.

### 16.3.7 Kirtivarman (744-5 A.D.)

Kirtivarman (744-5 A.D.) was the last Chalukya ruler. By 752-753 A.D., Dantidurga, who was ruling the Ellora region, succeeded in showing his superiority over the Chalukya power in the Deccan.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - I

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1. Who was the Pallava king who defeated Pulakesin II?

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2. With the death of — Pallava rule came to an end.

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3. Who was the founder of the kingdom of Chalukyas of Vengi?

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## 16.4 RASHTRAKUTAS

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### 16.4.1 Origin of the Rashtrakutas

According to Anant Sadasiv Altekar, the Rashtrakutas belonged to a Karnataka origin. R.G. Bhandarkar had suggested that the Rashtrakutas were the main branch of the *Kshatriyas* named Rattas who gave their name to the country of Maharashtra. Burnel has identified them with the Reddis of South India. As against this view, John Fleet held that there had been no traces of the Rashtrakutas in the South, and they belonged to a Northern origin. Pathak held

that the name Rasthrakuta occurs as a surname among the Maratha families. Therefore, they belonged to Maratha origin. Their country was Rattavadi, and their capital, at first Mayurkhandi in Nasik district, and then Malkhed or Manyakheta in the Nizam's dominions. Besides these, there has been the mythological or traditional view that the Rashtrakutas descended from Satyaki, a Yadava prince of the North, as stated in their later records.

Aitekar has vehemently refuted all these views, and has concluded that the Rashtrakutas of the main branch are different from those of the Rashtrakutas of Manapura, who called themselves as *Lattalurapuradhisha*, meaning the Lord of Lattalura, the best of towns. According to him, Lattalura was located in a Kannada - speaking area.

#### **16.4.2 Dantidurga**

Dantidurga (752-56 A.D.), was the founder of the dynasty. In his successful expedition, he occupied the territories of Kosala, Kalinga and Srisaila region, and came into conflict with Nandivarman Pallava. He gave his daughter, Reva to the latter in marriage.

#### **16.4.3 Krishna - I**

When Krishna (756-775 A.D.), the uncle of Dantidurga, ascended the throne, the eclipse of Chalukya power was complete. The conquests of Krishna included the Southern Konkan, the Gangavadi and the Vengidesa. The Silara family was entrusted with the Konkan, while Sripurusha had surrendered to the new ruler. The loyalty of Vijayaditya-I, the ruler of Vengi, was also obtained with the show of force in 769-70 A.D. Krishna's great achievement was the creation of the Kailasa temple at Ellora.

#### **16.4.4 Govinda - II**

Govinda-II ascended the throne in 772 A.D. Because of easy life, Govinda could not retain the monarchy in the face of Dhruva's ambitious attack over the confederacy of the Pallava, Ganga, Vengi and Malwa forces that supported Govinda.

#### **16.4.5 Dhruva**

After ascending the throne in 780 A.D., Dhruva began to attack the supporters of Govinda. Pallavamalla was defeated, Sivamara was imprisoned, and the Gujarat king, Vatsaraja was forced to flee into the desert. In Vengi Desa, Vishnuvardhana was forced to surrender the territory. He also gave his daughter, Silamahadevi in marriage to Dhruva. Another campaign into North India brought glory, when he defeated Dharmapala of Bengal.

#### **16.4.6 Govinda - III**

Dhruva retired after making his youngest son, Govinda-III the emperor. But, soon after the death of Dhruva in 793-4 A.D., all princes and the eldest brother, Kambha revolted. Although Govinda had released Sivamara, the Ganga king from the prison, he joined the rebel forces headed by Kambha. The rebel forces were defeated by Govinda, and he was generous at the victory. His brother Kambha, was appointed as the viceroy of Gangavadi. Indra, the brother who supported Govinda, was made the Governor of Lata. But, Sivamara was sent to the prison. The Northern campaign of Govinda resulted in the victory over Nagabhata-II, the Gujarat ruler of Malwa, and Chandragupta, an ally of Nagabhata. The conquered territory of

Malwa was made part of Lata province. In the same campaign, Govinda subjugated Chakrayudha of Kanauj, and his protector, Dharmapala.

After the successful Northern campaign, Govinda launched an attack on the Pallavas of Kanchi in 803-4 A.D. Dantivarma, the Pallava king, was defeated, and Govinda interfered in the affairs of Vengi by supporting Bhima Saluki, which however, could not prevent Vijayaditya-II, from becoming the king of Vengi.

#### **16.4.7 Amoghavarsha I**

Amoghavarsha alias Nripatunga, ascended the throne in 814 A.D. He was opposed by the nobility who were supported by the Vengi king, Vijayaditya-II, and Ganga king, Rachamalla. This was suppressed by Amoghavarsha with the able support of Karka. Rashtrakutas faced the revolt of Ganga Vijayaditya-III in 850 A.D., and the conflict ended in the victory of the Rashtrakutas, at Vingavalli near modern Cumburn.

The revolt of Gangas followed when Ganga Eraya, the son of Rachamalla, supported by other kings, threatened the Rashtrakuta authority. Bankesa led the Rashtrakuta forces into Gangavadi, and suppressed the revolt. Immediately, he had to rush to the capital to face the revolt of Krishna, the crown prince, and Dhruva, the ruler of Lata. In the armed conflict, Dhruva was killed, but the Lata forces led by Akalavarsha and Dhruva, the son and grandson respectively, continued the fight. But, Dhruva could not continue the fight as the Gurjara ruler, Mihir Bhoja, invaded Lata. This turn of events forced Dhruva-II to make peace with Amoghavarsha.

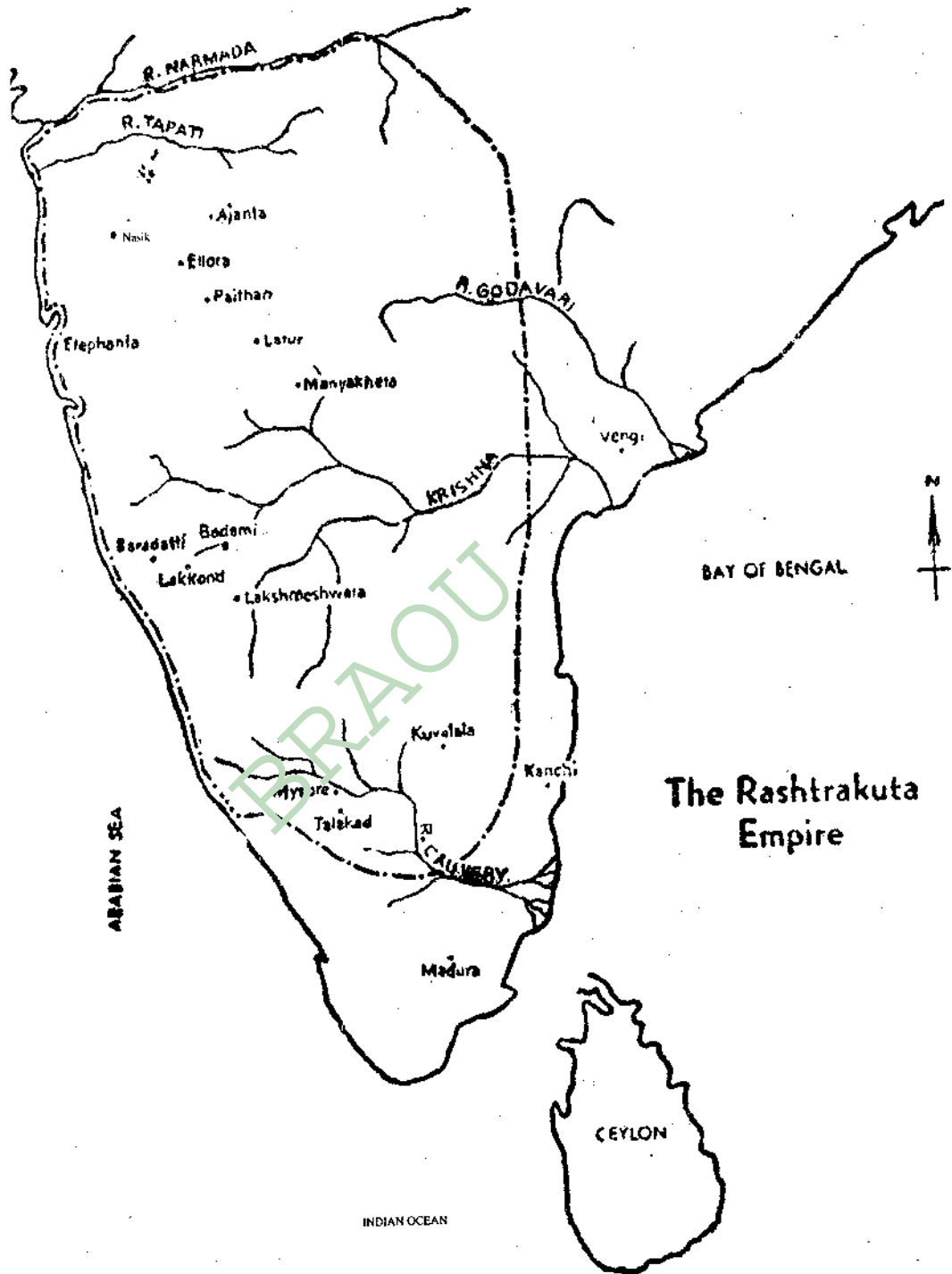
Bankesa's recall made Amoghavarsha to entrust Gurjara Vijayaditya, the task of settling the affairs in the Gangavadi. In his march, Gurjara first entered Nolambavadi, and its king, Nolambadhi Raja, alias Mangi, was killed. Gurjara forces entered Gangavadi, and Nitimarga was compelled to make peace.

Thus, in the long reign of 64 years of Amoghavarsha, the Rashtrakuta authority, time and again, was challenged. However, the Rashtrakutas were supreme in the entire Deccan and South India.

#### **16.4.8 Krishna - II**

Krishna II succeeded his father in 880 A.D. The Gurjara king, Bhoja-I invaded the Rashtrakuta dominions, but was repelled. But, Krishna waged war with the Vengi Chalukyan king, Gunaga Vijayaditya. Defeated and pursued by the Vengi forces led by Panduranga, Krishna took shelter in the Chedi king, Kakkala's court. When the war broke out, the Rashtrakuta forces were defeated, and Krishna was taken prisoner, but released and was allowed to rule. Thus, till the end of Gunaga's rule in 892 A.D., Krishna had to acknowledge the supremacy of Vengi. Soon after the death of Gunaga, Krishna occupied Vengi, but Bhima was able to occupy the throne. Later, Krishna invaded Vengi, but was defeated decisively.

Krishna interfered in the politics of Chola kingdom on the death of Aditya. Krishna, aided by the Banas and Vaidumbas, invaded the Chola dominion to make Kannara, the Chola King. But, Parantaka with his Ganga ally, Prithvipati I, defeated Krishna in 914 A.D.



### 16.4.9 Indra III

Indra III came to the throne in 915 A.D. He launched a campaign against the Pratihara ruler, Mahipala-I of Kanauj successfully, thus demonstrating the Rashtrakuta supremacy. The Rashtrakutas were dominant in the Vengi kingdom during the rule of Amma-I, when several claimants to the throne contested for the throne of Vengi.

### 16.4.10 Krishna III

Amoghavarsha-II, Govinda-IV and Amoghavarsha-III, followed in succession to the Rashtrakuta throne until the accession of Krishna III to the throne in 939 A.D. He was an able ruler. He invaded the Chola kingdom along with his ally, Ganga Butuga, and in the battle at Takkolam, the Chola prince Rajaditya was killed. This resulted in the Rashtrakuta occupation of Tondaimandalm, and stationed his own nobles to rule. He proceeded further South and planted a victory pillar at Ramesvaram.

In the Vengi country, the Rashtrakuta interference continued by supporting the cause of Danarnava, Badapa and Tala, against the crowned king, Amma-II. In 963 A.D., Krishna proved, once again, the Rashtrakuta supremacy by defeating the Paramara king, Harsha Siyaka.

### 16.4.11 Khottiga

Khottiga ascended the throne in 967 A.D. The Paramara king, to avenge his defeat, invaded the Rashtrakuta kingdom, and entered Manyakheta in 972-73 A.D. The Paramaras were forced to flee by the Rashtrakutas.

### 16.4.12 Rashtrakuta Decline

After the death of Khottiga, Karka-II succeeded to the throne in 973 A.D. But, Taila-II, the Chalukyan feudatory, drove away Karka, and the attempts of Ganga Narsimha to restore the Rashtrakuta power were futile.

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## 16.5 CHOLAS OF TANJAVOOR

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After the Cholas of Sangam Age and the Kalabhra occupation of Kaveri, the Cholas remained in obscurity. Only in the middle of the ninth century A.D., with the advent of Vijayalaya, the Cholas became the masters of the Kaveri Valley. Vijayalaya Chola defeated Muttaraiyars, and became the lord of Tanjavor around 850 A.D. Vijayalaya's rule was disturbed because of the Pandyan occupation of the Kaveri valley. Aditya I was benefited by the Tirupurambiam battle, where the two groups of the Pallavas fought in 878 A.D. Aditya was friendly with the Ganga Prithvipati-II, Sthanu Ravi, the Chera king and the Bhuti Irrukuel. His major achievement was the overthrow of the Pallavas, and death of Aparajitavarman. His inscriptions between 894-98 A.D. in Tondaimandalam are found in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. His son, Parantaka erected a memorial shrine at this place.

### 16.5.1 Origin of the Cholas of Tanjavor

Among the South Indian royal families, the Cholas may be regarded as the oldest. Their origin and early history is lost in obscurity, though a great part of their later records have been secured. The origin of the Cholas is as old as the epic *Mahabharata*, where they have been referred. The edicts of Asoka also speak of the Chola kings. The foreign testimony of

their ancient origin is available in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* of an unknown author, and also in the *Geography of Ptolemy*. To study the later history of the Cholas, we have good number of inscriptions scattered all over the territories conquered and ruled by them. By examining these various sources, it can be inferred that the Cholas belonged to at least the 4th or 3rd century B.C.

The *Mahavamsa* reveals that Ceylon was conquered by a Chola king Elara, some where in the middle of the 2nd century B.C. Originally, the Cholas came to prominence at Uraiyur or Urugapura. Puhar or Kaveripattanam appears to have become their capital some where in the 2nd century, for the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, which belongs to that age, makes reference to the glory of this city. More over, Karikala Chola, whose reign synchronised with that of Gajabahu of Ceylon, belonged to 2nd century A.D. He ruled at Kaveripattanam. As such, the ancient origin of the Cholas is undisputed.

Kopperun Cholan or the Great Chola king is praised in the ancient Tamil literature. After him, it appears, there were several kings. However, Karikala Chola was the earliest known great king among the Cholas. He is said to have invaded Ceylon and to have brought 12,000 prisoners whom he employed as labourers for the construction of the Kaveri irrigation project. He is believed to have shifted the capital from Orthura or Uraiyur in the Trichinopoly district, to Kaveripattanam. He was succeeded by his grandson, Nedimudikilli. Kaveripattanam is said to have been destroyed by the sea during his reign in about the 3rd century A.D. By about this time, the Chola power seems to have suffered misfortune at the hands of the Cheras, and later on, the Pallavas. After this, they were relegated to the background for a very long time. Even in the 7th century when Hiuen-tsang visited India, he found them only enjoying an insignificant position. They were eclipsed by the imperial designs of the Pallavas and the Pandyas up to the end of the 9th century A.D.

However, on the decline of the Pallavas, the Cholas regained their power, and became an imperial dynasty at the beginning of the 10th century A.D.

### 16.5.2 Parantaka

Parantaka ascended the throne in 907 A.D. Parantaka, in his 3rd year, invaded Pandinadu, and defeated Rajasimha-IV. Rashtrakuta Indra-II marched into the Chola dominions in support of Kannaradeva, the Ganga Prithvipati-II, while the Bana and the Vaidumbas supported the Rashtrakutas. Parantaka won the battle at Vallam, and the conquered Bana Territory was given to the Gangas as a reward. Parantaka sported the title "Vira Chola" after this event.

Parantaka attacked Rajasimha, the Pandyan king, in 915 A.D. and forced him to seek shelter in Ceylon. Thus, Pandinadu was added to the Chola empire.

Rashtrakuta Krishna attacked the Chola kingdom, and Rajaditya, the crown prince was killed in the battle at Takkolam, and in 944 A.D. Tondainadu became part of the Rashtrakuta empire. Rashtrakutas in this campaign marched as far as Ramesvaram. Parantaka managed to retain the Cholanadu, and he died around 954 A.D.

Parantaka was succeeded by Gandaraditya, and was followed by Sundara Chola II (957 - 73 A.D.) Sundara Chola restored the Chola kingdom of old, by defeating Vira Pandyan, and in the North, Aditya II conquered Tondainadu. Aditya II, the son of Sundara Chola was killed in 965 A.D., by Uttama Chola, the son of Gandaraditya, and Sembiyam Mahadevi. This

Sundara Chola appoint Uttama Chola as heir - apparent. Uttama Chola's (971-88 A.D.) reign witnessed the consolidation of the Chola kingdom. Tondaimandalam was recovered from the Rashtrakutas.

### 16.5.3 Rajaraja I (985 - 1012 A.D.)

The Chola imperialism began with the accession of Rajaraja-I (985-1012 A.D.). His conquests brought the territories beyond the Pandinadu to Venadu and Kerala, Kudamalainadu (Coorg), Gangavadi, Banavadi, Nolambavadi, and Rattapadi. The Eastern Chalukyan kingdom of Vengi became part of the Chola empire. Rajaraja gave his daughter, Kundavva in marriage to Vimaladitya, the brother of Saktivarman.

Rajaraja's naval expeditions to Sri Lanka and Maldives in 933 A.D., are notable. The Northern half of Sri Lanka was occupied, and it was renamed as Mummidi-Chola-Mandalam.

The Chola dominance at Vengi was the cause for the Western Chalukyan king, Satyasraya to invade Vengi in 1006 A.D. The Chola forces, led by Rajendra, the *Yuvaraja*, raided the Western Chalukyan territory, and sacked Manyakheta and Banavasi. A large part of Raichur doab was annexed. The Chalukyan armies from Vengi were driven away by another section of the Chola army, and captured Kollipaka. King Satyasraya was forced to retreat from Vengi, and compelled to make peace. Rajaraja's armies brought large booty, which was mostly donated to the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjavoor, built by Rajaraja.

Friendly relations were maintained with the Sri Vijaya Empire. Its ruler had built a Buddhist *Vihara* at Nagapattanam.

### 16.5.4 Rajendra Chola (1012 - 1044 A.D.)

Rajendra Chola's (1012 - 1044 A.D.) reign witnessed the climax of Chola power. Rajendra conquered Sri Lanka, and Mahindra V was taken as prisoner. The Pandya and Kerala regions were annexed, and his son was appointed as the Viceroy. Rajendra had sent two expeditions against the Western Chalukyas. One attacked the Chalukyan forces in the Raichur doab, and Jayasimha was defeated at Maski. The river Tungabhadra was recognised as the frontier between the two kingdoms. In Vengi, the Chola forces had defeated Vijayaditya, and attacked Kalinga. The naval expeditions against Srivijaya in 1025 A.D., were successful. Kadaram and the capital of Srivijaya, were conquered, and its ruler, Sangrama Vijayottunga Varman was taken as captive, and later released. Diplomatic relations existed between China and the Cholas. The embassies were sent to China in 1016, 1033 and 1037 A.D. When rebellions broke out in the Pandyan region and Sri Lanka, they were crushed. The conflict between the Chalukya Someswara and the Cholas did not end in decisive result.

### 16.5.5 Rajadhiraja

Rajadhiraja in his reign (1044-1054 A.D.), had to wage the war with the Chalukyas to drive them away from Vengi. The Chalukyas were defeated at Dhanyakataka, and Kollipaka was sacked. In the West, the Chola forces marched upto Kalyani, and besieged it. To mark this success, he assumed the title Vijayarajendra. The second encounter took place in 1054 A.D., when the Chalukyan armies occupied Vengi, and raided Kanchi. Rajadhiraja was slain in the battle at Kappam. But, the Chola forces continued the fight, and emerged victorious.

### **16.5.6 Rajendra II**

Rajendra-II (1052-64 A.D.) was victorious in the wars with the Chalukyas.

### **16.5.7 Virarajendra (1063-68 A.D.)**

He fought with the Chalukyas in Vengi, but could not achieve decisive victory. After the death of Somesvara in 1068 A.D., Virarajendra had helped Vikramaditya-VI to overthrow his elder brother, Somesvara-II. He gave his daughter in marriage to Vikramaditya. As a result of this, Vikramaditya became the ruler of Southern part of the kingdom, while Somesvara held the Northern part of the Chalukyan empire. This brought an end to the Chalukya-Chola conflicts.

### **16.5.8 Kulottunga Chola**

With the death of Virarajendra, the direct line ended, and the Eastern Chalukyan prince, Rajendra was crowned as the king. He began to rule as Kulottunga (1070-1122 A.D.). His victory over the Chalukya Vikramaditya had established him firmly on the throne. Kalinga was conquered. Rebellions in the region were put down, and military colonies were established. Towards the end of his reign, Gangavadi was lost to the Hoyasalas. Diplomatic relations with China and Srivijaya were maintained.

### **16.5.9 Vikrama Chola**

Vikrama Chola (1118-35 A.D.) won victories in Vengi against the Western Chalukya Somesvara in 1133 A.D. He restored the Chola authority over some parts of the Kolar region.

### **16.5.10 Kulottunga-II**

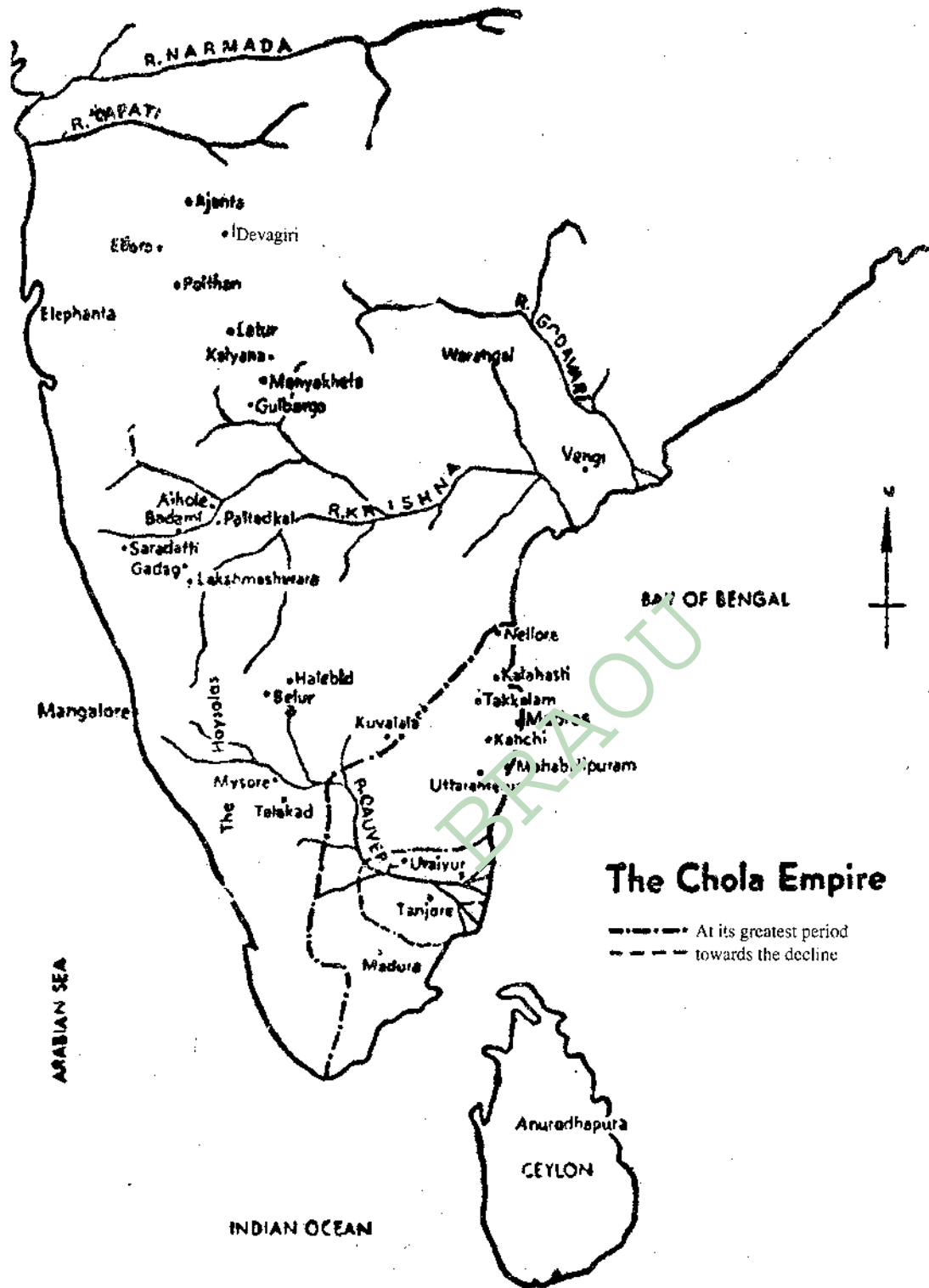
Kulottunga-II's (1135-50 A.D.) reign was peaceful. During the reign of Rajaraja-II (1146-72 A.D.), the central authority became weakened.

### **16.5.11 Rajadhiraja**

During Rajadhiraja's reign (1166-86 A.D.), the succession to the Pandyan throne was contested by Kulasekhara and Parakrama Pandya. Rajadhiraja supported Kulasekhara, and installed him on the Pandyan throne. When Kulasekhara joined the camp of Ceylonese confederay, Rajadhiraja had ousted Kulasekhara, and Vira Pandya was installed on the Pandyan throne. Thus, a new Pandyan power emerged, which later became powerful to put an end to the Chola rule. During this period, the feudatory kingdoms ruled by the Sambuvarayas, Kadavarayas, Telugu Chodas, etc., were asserting themselves by making wars, and entering into new alliances without any reference to the central authority.

### **16.5.12 Decline of the Chola Power**

The regnal periods of Kulottunga - III (1178-1218 A.D.), Rajaraja - III (1216-60 A.D.) and Rajadhiraja - III (1246-79 A.D.), witnessed the rise of Pandyas and the Kadva chieftains. Jatavarma Sundra Pandya finally gave a crushing defeat to the Cholas, and the Chola kingdom became a protectorate of the Pandyan empire known as Chola-mandala.



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## 16.6 KALYANI CHALUKYAS

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### 16.6.1 Origin and Early History

When the Rashtrakuta authority was at its peak in Karnataka, certain branches of the Chalukyas ruled as feudatories. But, when the Rashtrakuta imperialism came to an end in a dramatic manner, a new line of the Chalukyas came into prominence. That was the Kalyani line of Chalukyas.

The founder of the Kalyani Chalukya dynasty was Taila or Tailapa II, whose earliest inscription is assigned to 975 A.D. By his title of *Mahamandalesvara*, it is known that he was a powerful feudatory under the Rashtrakutas who later proclaimed independence. The Chedis, who were the relatives of Tailapa seem to have been helpful in his revolt against the Rashtrakutas. In the later records, Tailapa is stated to have descended from an uncle of Kirtivarman II of the Badami Chalukyan line. Tailapa II ruled from 973 to 997 A.D. He made Kalyani as his capital, and hence, this line is called as Kalyani Chalukyas.

His wife Jakkabbe is said to have been the daughter of Karkka II, the Rashtrakuta king whom he defeated. He was a contemporary of Chola Raja Raja, and inscriptions describe him as "a destroying fire to the Cholas". This reveals the fact that the Kalyani Chalukyas and the Cholas contested for supremacy over the South. Tailapa acquired all the territories of the Badami Chalukyas and also extended authority to the Lata Kingdom, i.e., Southern Gujarat.

### 16.6.2 Satyasraya and Vikramaditya V

Satyasraya, Tailapa's son succeeded to the crown at about 997 A.D. He had the titles *Akalanka Charita* and *Irivibendaga*. During his reign, Chola Raja Raja I invaded Karnataka, and conquered both Gangavadi and Nolambavadi.

Satyasraya's daughter Papadevi was married to the Pallava king Iriva Nolambadhiraja.

Vikramaditya V succeeded his uncle Satyasraya at about 1009 A.D., and ruled upto 1018 A.D. During his reign, the Cholas again invaded the Kalyani Chalukyan kingdom. Hostile relations were continuing between the rulers of both the dynasties.

### 16.6.3 Jayasimha II

Jayasimha II, brother of Vikramaditya V, succeeded to the throne in 1018 A.D. As his inscriptions are found in the Nolambavadi province, it is presumed that he freed Nolambavadi from the Chola occupation. But subsequently, he was defeated by Rajendra Chola and lost Rattapadi province.

It is believed that Jayasimha, originally a Jaina, was converted to Saivism by one of his wives, Suggaladevi. He patronised the Kalamukha sect of Saivism. He was succeeded by his son Somesvara I.

### 16.6.4 Somesvara I (1042-1068 A.D.)

Somesvara I, entitled *Trailokyamalla* and *Ahavamalla*, came to the throne in 1044 A.D. and ruled till 1068 A.D. He was governing the province of Pottalakere when he was crowned. His reign witnessed constant wars with the Cholas, a majority of which were fought for the supremacy over the Vengi kingdom. The Chola kings Rajadhiraja and Rajendra claimed to

have defeated Somesvara I in a disastrous manner in different battles. But, the Chalukya records claim that Somesvara retaliated all those Chola attacks. He is said to have encamped at Arasiyakere on his way to the conquest of the South; and the Shikaripura inscriptions of Somesvara reveal that the Cholas were defeated, and "in the middle of the battle, the Chola king exhausted his valour and died". He is also said to have fought against the Kalingas, Panchalas, Magadhas, Malavas, Keralas and the Nepals. It is stated in the inscriptions that "the seven Malavas, the seven Konkanas and the seven Males were conquered". It is difficult to corroborate these poetical exaggerations.

His inscriptions state that several of the royal family members were associated by him in the administration of the various provinces. His wife Mailaladevi is described as governing Banavasi-12000; his son Somesvara II was ruling Belavala -3000 and Purigera - 300; second son Vikramaditya VI was in possession of Gangavadi - 96000. Somesvara I is believed to have drowned himself in the Tungabhadra river when he was attacked by a malignant fever.

His chief queen Mailaladevi visited Srisailam in about 1059 A.D., and made gifts to the Kalamukha Saiva teacher, Suresvara Panditadeva in the presence of God Mallikarjuna.

He was succeeded by his son *Bhuvanaikamalla* Somesvara II, who ruled between 1068 A.D. and 1076 A.D. His reign witnessed serious internal dissensions, and his brothers rebelled against him. Bilhana in his *Vikramankadevacharita* states that Somesvara II was defeated by his brother Vikramaditya VI.

#### 16.6.5 Vikramaditya VI (1076 - 1126 A.D.)

The greatest among the Kalyani Chalukya kings was Vikramaditya VI, who ruled from 1076 to 1126 A.D. According to Bilhana, Vikramaditya was the favourite son of his father who desired to appoint him as his successor. He had fought several wars and obtained victories for his father. But, when he was encamping on the banks of the river Krishna, he heard the sad news of the death of his father. Thereupon he proceeded to Kalyani to console his elder brother Somesvara, and he was enthroned. Later on, the popularity of Vikramaditya caused jealousy in him. Gangavadi, Banavasi and other territories were taken away from Vikramaditya who was governing them. This led to a civil war. Vikramaditya defeated the chieftains who were favourable to Somesvara II, and finally defeated his elder brother, and became king. It appears that in his war against his brother, Vikramaditya was helped by the Yadava Prince Seunachandra II.

He proclaimed the *Chalukya Vikrama era* by giving up the Saka era. During his long reign of 51 years, Vikramaditya gave peace and prosperity to his subjects. For administrative convenience, he established a number of provincial capitals at places like Etageri, Vijayapura, Manneyakere and Vikramapura. He fought a number of battles with the Chalukyas of Vengi and the Hoyasalas of Dvarasamudra.

He devoted himself for the development of art, architecture, and literature. He was a great patron of learning. Bilhana, who wrote *Vikramankadeva charita* and Vijnanesvara, the author of *Mitakshara* were under his patronage. He was succeeded by his son, Somesvara III.

### 16.6.6 Later Rulers

Somesvara III ruled from 1126 to 1149 A.D. He was a learned king, and his reign was peaceful. An encyclopaedic work, *Abhilashitarthachintamani* or *Manasollasa* was written by him.

Somesvara III was succeeded by his younger brother, Tailapa III in 1150 A.D. It is in his period that Kalachuri Bijjala, his powerful minister dethroned him and established the Kalachuri authority in Karnataka. It was also the time when the earlier feudatories took the opportunity to declare themselves independent.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Who was the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty?

2. What is the period of the Rashtrakuta rule?

3. What are the important conquests of Raja Raja Chola?

4. Who was the greatest among the Kalyani Chalukya Kings?

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### 16.7 LET US SUM UP

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1. The Pallavas ruled from Kanchi between the sixth century A.D. and the ninth century A.D. Mahendravarman I and Narasimhavarman I were the greatest of the Pallava kings.
2. The Chalukyas ruled over North Deccan from the sixth century A.D. to eighth century A.D. Pulakesin II was the greatest among them.
3. The Rashtrakutas ruled from the eighth century A.D. to tenth century A.D.
4. From the middle of the eighth century, the Cholas became powerful, and ruled till the thirteenth century A.D. Raja Raja I and Rajendra Chola were the greatest of the Chola kings.
5. When the Rashtrakuta power came to an end around the last quarter of the 10th century A.D., a new line of Chalukyas, known as Kalyani Chalukyas, rose into prominence, and enjoyed power up to 1149 A.D. Vikramaditya VI was the greatest ruler among them.

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## 16.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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I. 1. Narsimha Varman I

2. Aparajita

3. Vishnuvardhana

II. 1. Dantidurga

2. 8th Century A.D. to 10th Century A.D.

3. Raja Raja I's conquests expanded the Chola empire. He conquered Gangavadi, Banavadi, Nolambavadi and extended the territory to Kerala. The Vengi kingdom also became part of the Chola empire. Raja Raja sent naval expeditions to Sri Lanka and Maldives. Northern Sri Lanka was occupied by the Chola forces.

4. Vikramaditya VI

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## 16.9 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Give an account of the Pallava - Chalukya conflicts for political supremacy
2. Trace the reign and achievements of Nandivarman
3. Describe the rule of Pulakesin II
4. How did Raja Raja and Rajendra Chola expand the Chola empire in the Deccan and South India?
5. Bring out the achievements of Kalyani Chalukyas.

II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. State the achievements of Mahendravarmān I
  2. Write about the significance of the reign of Narasimha Varman I
  3. How did Govinda III contribute for strengthening the political supremacy of the Rashtrakutas?
  4. Briefly describe the achievements of Amoghavarsha I
  5. What are the significant developments during the reign of Somesvara I?
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## 16.10 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Majumdar, R.C. : *A comprehensive History of India, Vol. III*
2. Majumdar, R.C. : *The History and Culture of the Indian people, Vols. III, IV & V.*
3. Nilakanta Sastry, K.A. : *A History of South India from Pre-historic times to the fall of Vijayanagar*
4. Nilakanta Sastry, K.A. : *The Cholas*
5. Romila Thapar : *History of India, Vol. I*
6. Srinivasan, K.R. : *South Indian Temples*
7. Yazdani, G. : *The Early History of the Deccan*

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## UNIT-17 : CONDITIONS IN THE DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIA: 7TH TO 13TH CENTURY A.D.

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  - 17.10.5 Chalukyan temples
  - 17.10.6 Nava Brahma temples
  - 17.10.7 Rashtrakuta temples
  - 17.10.8 Painting
- 17.11 Let us sum up
- 17.12 Check your progress : Answers
- 17.13 Examination Model Questions
- 17.14 Books for Further Reading

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## **17.0 OBJECTIVES**

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A study of this Unit should enable you to know about :

1. the administrative system under the Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Pallavas, and the Cholas;
2. the economic and social conditions in the Deccan and South India between the 7th and 13th centuries A.D. and
3. about the growth of literature, art and architecture during the 7th to 13th centuries A.D. in the Deccan and South India.

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## **17.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In this Unit, social conditions and the nature of economy are dealt with. Development of Saivism and Vaishnavism and the growth of sects are surveyed. The growth of Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada literatures is traced. The patronage extended to the art and architecture by the royal dynasties and the trends in art and architecture are sketched.

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## 17.2 CHALUKYAN ADMINISTRATION

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The form of government was monarchy. The kingship was hereditary. However, succession to the throne was largely dependent on the ability of the prince. Usually, the eldest son was designated as the heir-apparent, the *yuvaraja*. The kings assumed the imperial titles like *Rajadhiraja*, *Maharajadhiraja*, *Parameswara*, *Prithvivallabha*, *Samasta Bhuvanarayya*, *Chakravarthi* etc., The kings proclaimed the maintenance of *varnasramadharm* as their duty.

### 17.2.1 Mantrimandali

The king was assisted by the *Mantrimandali*. Among three ministers, the Chalukyan records refer only to *Mahasandhivigrahaka* i.e., the minister for peace and war, and the *Mahabrahmana*, the Prime Minister. The latter had the epithet, *Rajasarvasva*. The ministers were appointed by the king, and this office was held normally on hereditary basis. Usually, the ministers were rewarded with gifts of land for their services.

### 17.2.2 Provincial Administration

The provinces were governed by the princes of the royal family, and some were administered by the *Samantas* who were directly appointed by the king. The *Samantas* usually belonged to the local ruling families who were expected to provide armies when demanded and pay tribute annually to the king. The governors were vested with the powers to appoint the *Vishyapatis*, *Bhogikas*, etc. It is noteworthy that the *Samantas* were transferred from one region to another.

The Chalukyan kingdom, as mentioned in the Aihole epigraph of Pulakesin, consisted of three Maharashtra, comprising of 99,000 villages. In general terms, the *rashtra* was used to denote the empire. The empire was divided into the *rashtra*, *desa-nadu*, *mandala*, *vishaya*, *bhoga*, *ahara*, *grama*, *pura* or *nagara*.

The term *rashtra* connotes usually a smaller territorial division. The Karmarashtra and the Goparashtra are known. *Desa* and *Vishaya* are used to denote a province. The Chalukya *desa* and Chalukya *Vishya* are the cases in point. The term *Nadu* was applied to the Southern parts of the empire, and the Gangarenadu, Renadu, Vamganur-nadu etc., are met with in the inscriptions. The term *Nadu* probably, means the same as the *rashtra*.

The term *Mandala* is mentioned in the Harihar plates of Vinayaditya. The Vanavasi *Mandala* is said to have comprised four *Vishayas*.

The term *Vishaya* is always referred to in the epigraphs to specify the location of the villages or lands granted. It more or less corresponds to the district. *Vishyapati* was the head of this division.

Another unit of administration is *Bhoga* which probably corresponds to the modern taluk. It was administered by the *Bhogapati* or *Bhogika*. In the Gujarat region, term *Ahara* is used for *Bhoga*.

### 17.2.3 Village Administration

The village or *grama* is the lowest unit of administration. The village was administered by the *Mahajanans*, *Mahattaras*, *Mahattaradhikarins* and *Gamundas*. The *Mahajanans* or the

village elders, the *Mahattaras* or the leading house-holders, constituted the village assembly. The *Gamunda* and *Gramakuta* or *Grāma Bhogika*, were the king's officials. The *Karanas* were the village accountants.

#### 17.2.4 Town Administration

The city or town administration, as given in the Lakshmesvar epigraph of Vikramaditya, was governed by an assembly consisting of the *Mahajanas*, the *Mahalakas* or the chiefs of guilds and the *Sreshthis* or the heads of the guilds. The record specifically mentions 18 *prakritis* (classes) which may be identified with the professional guilds.

#### 17.2.5 Administration of Justice

In the administration of justice, the king was the highest authority. Details of the judicial set-up are not available. But, reference is made to Chauradhi Karana, the Chatas and the Bhatas, the criminal investigating officer, and the policemen.

#### 17.2.6 Military Administration

The Chalukyan military administration was headed by the king. The four wings of infantry, cavalry, elephant force and navy were the mainstay. The Aihole inscription of Pulakesin-II refers to the six types of troops; *Maula*, hereditary troops, *bhrty*, attendant classes to the troops, *Sreni*, troops viz., of feudatories and guilds, *Mitra*, the troops of friendly kings, the *Atavika*, tribal recruits and *Amitra*, the captive force.

The military officers were known as the *mahabala dhikrita*, the commander-in-chief, and the *baladhyaksha*, the commander. The forts were administered by the *durgapati*. The military personnel were mostly recruited from the *kshatriya* and the *sudra* castes, and occasionally from the *brahmin* class as well.

The state finance was largely based on taxes. The land tax was probably 1/6th of the produce. The taxes were levied on the houses, depending on the status of the families, having the house, properties or lack of it. Taxes were levied for arranging the festivals and for providing the articles for worship in the temples. Tolls and market dues were the other major sources of income. Tribute, treasure, and war-booty were the additional sources of income.

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### 17.3 ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM UNDER THE RASHTRAKUTAS

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Information on the administrative system of the Rashtrakuta period in the Deccan is scanty. The empire was divided into the *Rashtra* and *Vishaya*. The term *Mandala* was used with reference to the territories in Andhra and Gujarat. The smallest unit is called *Bhukti*. It was divided into smaller groups of villages. Each group was named after the chief village, and the number is mentioned. The smallest unit was the *Grama*.

The king was assisted by the ministry. *Mahamatya*, *Mahasandhivigrahaka*, etc., are known from the records. The other officials of the king stationed in different localities were known as *Rajasthaniya*.

The *Rashtra* was governed by the *Mahasamanta* or *Mahamandalesvara*. They had the feudatory status. The district officers called the *Vishyapatis* and the *Bhogapatis* were appointed by the king.

The town was administered by the *Nagarapatis*. The village, normally, had a headman, the *Gramapati*. The village council, called *Mahajana*, refers to the *Agraharas*. The composite village councils normally had an assembly of cultivators.

The taxation under the Rashtrakutas was high. References are there to the collection of tax in instalments. The tax was often paid in kind, but, payment in cash was also noticed in the records of the period.

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#### 17.4 PALLAVA ADMINISTRATION

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In the Pallava age, the kingship was hereditary. But, when Paramesvaran died and there was no heir, the deputation of *Matra*, *Mulapurusas* and other chiefs waited on Hiranya Varma, and finally chose Nandivarma as the king. This is a rare instance when the elders, ministers and other groups chose the king. The kings bore the title *Dharma Maharajadhiraja*, *Maharajadhiraja*, *Panchamahalokapalaka*. The king was assisted by a *Mantri Mandali* which consisted of *brahmins*, princes and nobles. The judicial courts are known as *Adhikarana* and *Dharmasana*. The *Adhikaranas* were the judicial magistrates. The *Dharmasana* was a judicial court of the village assemblies, while the *Adhikarana*, the judicial court was located in the city. The king was the head of the army which consisted of elephants, horses, footmen and navy.

The kingdom was divided into *Nadu*, *Kottam* and *Ur*. The *Nattar* was an assembly of the *Nadu*, looking after the *Nadu* administration. Three types of village assemblies are known from the 8th and 9th centuries A.D. They are known as the *Ur*, the *Sabha* and the *Nagaram*.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. Mention the units of administration in the Chalukyan empire.

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2. Who governed the *Rashtra* in the period of the Rashtrakutas?

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3. What were the important units of administration in the Pallava period?

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#### 17.5 CHOLA ADMINISTRATION

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The Chola administrative system was evolved on a different pattern. The form of government was monarchy. The extensive conquests made the Chola kingdom into an empire extending into Andhra and Karnataka. The kings assumed the title *Chakravartiga*. The capital earlier was at Tanjavur, and a new capital city, called Gangaikonda Cholapuram came into existence from the rule of Rajendra Chola. The establishment had a number of *Parivaras*,

groups of officials who served as bodyguards. The palace servants were organised into *Velamas* and they were recruited mostly from the people that were captured in wars.

#### 17.5.1 Power of the kings

The king assumed the role of *Devaraja*, God-king. Gods in the temples raised by the kings were named after them, the notable example being the Adityesvara at Tondamanad, the Rajarajasvera varman etc. The high priest, the *Rajaguru* became an adviser in all matters, sacred as well as secular. The king was assisted by an assembly of officers called Adhigraigal. The officials of higher nobility are known as *Perundaram* and of lower rank, *Siruntaram*.

The king was the head of the army and the navy. The elephant corps, the cavalry, the infantry and the naval fleet constituted the army. The *Senapatis* headed the divisions of the army, and many of them belonged to the *brahmin* class. The army was stationed in cantonments viz., *kadagams*, all over the empire. The *Kaikkolar* were the royal troops.

The salaries were paid in cash and in kind. The whole village or district was granted to the high officials, and in the inscription they are described as the leader of the village or *Nadus*.

#### 17.5.2 King's of Officers

The King's officers of all ranks were generally referred to as *Kurumigal* and *Panimakkal*. Usually, the king's oral order is written by a *tirumandira olai*. It is then compared by three officers, called *Tirumandira Olainayagam*. The order in them was entered in the record books which would be attested by the superintendents and other officers present. The Tirumukkudal inscription of Vira Rajendra narrates the process of the royal order becoming a statute.

#### 17.5.3 Justice

Justice was administered through the *Dharmasana* of the village assemblies. Offences against the king and the royalty were dealt with personally by the king.

#### 17.5.4 Revenue System

The Chola Government had maintained revenue records, called *Tarip-pottagam*. The central office had control over the entire kingdom which conducted land surveys, and supervised the audit. Land revenue surveys throughout the kingdom were conducted during the reigns of Rajaraja-I and Kulottunga-I.

#### 17.5.5 Administrative Divisions

The Chola state was organised on the basis of *Nadu*, *Mandalam* and *Kurram*. While the latter is a village, the *Nadu* is a large area, an ethnically coherent unit. Later, the *Nadus* were reorganised as a result of two major revenue surveys. The *Valanadus* were formed by Rajaraja I, and later reorganised in the reign of Kulottunga I.

#### 17.5.6 Local Administration

The *Nadus* varied in size and in population, owing to the nearness or distance of the river systems. The *Nadus* were dominated by the Vellalas, the land-controlling groups. But, during the 12th-13th centuries, with the changing agrarian order, mercantile groups and weavers also acquired land, and participated in the administration of the *Nadu*. The agricultural and mercantile interests and their administration were integrated by the village assemblies, called

*Ur*, *Sabha*, and *Nagaram*. The *Ur* was largely represented by the non-*brahmin* peasants. The *Sabha* was located mainly in the *brahmadeyas* and the *Nagaram* represented the assemblies of merchant communities. These looked after the irrigation, maintenance of temples, trade and relations with the state officials and the rulers. The chiefs of the *Nadu* were called *Nadu Udaiyan*, *Nadu Kilavan*, *Nalavan*. The *Muvenda Velar* had a special status because they were the descendants of *Velirs* and were matrimonially connected with the rulers. The *Madhyasta* was another representative of the king who supervised the execution of a royal grant.

### 17.5.7 *Brahmadeya*

In the *Nadu*, the *Brahmadeya* played an important role. So far, more than 300 *Brahmadeyas* were located in the Chola kingdom. There were important *Brahmadeyas* and lesser ones. In course of time, the *Brahmadeyas* have grown, and the contiguous settlements of merchants and artisans have also grown. Such large urban complexes were noticed for example, like *Kudamukku* (Modern Kumbakonam).

### 17.5.8 *Sabha*

The *Brahmadeya* was administered by the *Sabha* through its committees called *Variyams*. With the changing conditions, adhoc *Variyams* were constituted as found in the record of Srinivasanallur. Here, a committee was appointed to look after the lands of the temple by the king and not elected by the *Sabha*. The inscription of Parantaka I from Uttaramerur provides detailed information. The Uttaramerur *Brahmadeya* consisted of 30 wards. Those in the age group of 35-70, and those well-versed in the *mantras* and *brahmanas*, were eligible for serving the assembly. Besides the above qualifications, only those who were virtuous, and did not serve on any committee for the last three years were specified as eligible for the election. Those who served on a committee but failed to submit the accounts and their relations were disqualified from standing for elections. Those who committed five sins, and their relations and outcastes, and those who were not observing social laws, were also disqualified for election.

The election was conducted by drawing the names written on tickets from the pot before the great assembly for the 30 wards. From the elected, the experienced persons were to be chosen for the Annual Committee. The garden committee with 12 members, and the tank Committee with 8 members, were also chosen. They hold office for 360 days. After the retirement of the members, the committee for supervision of justice, with the help of arbitrator, held election, and chose the Committees. The arbitrator kept the accounts.

### 17.5.9 *Nagaram*

The *Ur* Assembly was open to all the male adults, but the older members played a prominent role. The *Ur* had an executive body called a *Lunganam*. The *Nagaram*, the merchant assembly played the important role of integrating the local marketing territory. There was one *Nagaram* for each *Nadu*. The *Nagaram* not only looked after the commercial interests, but also shared the administration of the local temples. The *Nagaram* looked after the endowments, and provided interest from them to the temple for upkeep and maintenance.

### 17.5.10 Role of the Temple in the Chola Polity

In Chola State, the temple played an integrating role in the polity. The Cholas adopted the royal Siva cult and *bhakti* ideology. Temples like the Rajarajesvaram and the Gangaikonda

Cholesvaram, etc., were raised, and they symbolised their prestige and power. Since the temples were endowed with large tracts of lands, gold and cash, they acted as a land-holder, employer and consumer of goods and services. The *Sabha* and the *Nagaram* shared in the administration of the temples.

Thus, all the above institutions played an integrative role in the Chola State, and lowered the role of feudatory chiefs.

The state derived its income from land revenue, customs, professional taxes on mineral wealth, forests, etc. Land revenue was fixed at one-sixth or one-third according to the fertility of the soil. The practice of assigning revenues to the nobility, the feudatories and the temples, besides the central levies, led to heavy burden and local excesses. Even temples, in some instances, were forced to sell the lands to pay the taxes. There were several instances of oppressive methods of collecting taxes.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Mention the distinction between *Sabha* and *Nagaram*.

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2. What was the most important feature of Chola administration?

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## 17.6 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

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### 17.6.1 Agriculture

Agriculture was the main basis of the economy. Large areas were brought under cultivation through the land grants given as service tenures and fiefs. The Arab writers have noted that the soil was rich, and rice and fruits were grown in Western India. Jowar and bajra were grown in Karnataka and Maharashtra. Rice and cotton cultivation was noted in Andhra, Tamilnadu and Karnataka during this period. Coconut and palm plantations were extensive. Areca- palm was also largely grown in Karnataka.

The land was specifically mentioned as tank land, *eripatti* in South India. The tank-based irrigation was very widespread throughout the Peninsula. Tank maintenance received special attention in the Chola administration. One-sixth or one-tenth of the produce of the land was paid as tax by the cultivator. Besides this, local taxes in the village for maintenance of irrigation tanks, temples etc., were also paid by the cultivator.

### 17.6.2 Trade

Mercantile activity was not much developed. *Cosmos Indicopleustes* refers to the trade between the Southern coast of India and the West. South India also traded with Southeast Asian

countries. Pepper, cardamom, pearls etc., were the chief items of export. Trade in horses imported from the Northwest was an increasing phenomenon during this period. The textile and allied industries, metal industry, and the jeweller's craft flourished during this period. But, these were mostly localised, and it was only from the 11th or 12th century that the trade gained a new impetus.

During this period, trade was organised by the guilds called *Manigram*, *Nanadesis*, or *Tisaiva avuttu-ammuruvar* in the South. The *Innuruvar* or the 500 *Svamis* of Ayyavoleputa was the most important merchant guild. The *Svamis* of Ayyavolepura was also an important merchant guild. The *Svamis* visited the regions throughout India, Persia and Southeast Asian countries. They were the protectors of the law of noble merchants. *Manigram* was a local guild of merchants. The *Nagaram* was a marketing centre of organised trade in South India.

Trade with China, Srivijaya, was a notable feature of this period. Trade contacts with China and Srivijaya were extensive during the rule of the Cholas. Mahabalipuram, Nagapattinam, Kaveripattinam, Motupalli, Krishnapattinam etc., on the East coast, and on the West coast, Chaul, Sopara and Calicut were notable ports.

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## 17.7 SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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The social structure in the Deccan and South India from the 7th century to the 13th century A.D., was mainly in accordance with the four-fold division, *Varnasrama Dharma* of the *Sastras*. Inscriptions of this period proclaim that the rulers have maintained the *Varnasrama Dharma*. In the society, the *brahmins* occupied a highly privileged position due to their ritual status. By pursuing the military and administrative professions as the *Senapatis* and *Mantris*, they have played an important role and have achieved economic status. Similarly, for pursuing the Vedic learning, the kings granted them *Agraharas* or *Brahmadeyas* as tax-free possessions.

The decline of *Brahmadeyas* from 10th-11th century A.D. onwards in the Deccan and South India can be attributed to the growth of the temple as an institution. With this, and due to the growing importance of artisan and trading classes, the economic position of the *brahmins* declined, and the ritual status alone theoretically at least remained.

Owing to the conquest, the migration of *brahmins* took place. The Chalukyas of Badami, the Rastrakutas of Malkhed, and the Cholas brought many families of priests from the Ahichchatra region. The *brahmanas* were divided according to the geographical division they had inhabited.

The ruling class often claimed the *kshatriya* status. The Pallavas and the Chalukyas were called *kshatriyas* though they might have belonged to the *sudra* community. The Rashtrakutas were counted as a separate sub-caste among the *kshatriyas*, *satkshatriyas*. The ordinary *kshatriyas* were observing the rituals of the *dvijas*. They claimed the lineages of solar and lunar kings to legitimise their status.

The *Vaisyas* constituted the trading and agricultural classes. They were often called *komatis* and *settis*. From the earliest times, the *vaisyas* have formed a corporate body to carry on the trade activities.

The *sudras* were chiefly engaged in the professions of agriculture, military service, agricultural labour etc., With the growing differentiation of the *sudras* from the *chandalas*,

the *sudras* rose to higher status. The *rattadi*, or *reddy*, *vellala*, and *kapu* were the main *sudra* classes. The artisans, the labourers, and the *chandals* have remained low in status till the 10-11th century A.D. *Vishti*, or forced labour was prevalent in the Deccan and South India. The protest against forced labour is recorded in the *Yasastilaka*, a literary work of 10th century A.D.

Thus, from the position of landed peasantry, the Vellalas in the Pallava-Chola territory rose to prominence, and by 12th or 13th century A.D., the control of temple administration, and the *mathas* of the Saivas by the Vellalas was a notable change. Similarly, the Guravas attaining the status of the priests of the Saivaite temples in Karnataka and Andhra during the 9th and 10th centuries, was another notable feature.

The emergence of artisan classes, the *Panchanamvaru* in Andhra, and the *Idangai* classes in Tamilnadu in the 11th century A.D. is noteworthy. The new religious movements of Vira Saivism, Aradhya Saivism, and Sri Vaishnavism were supported by the artisan groups and landed peasants.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 3

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1. What were the chief items of export and import between the 7th and 13th centuries A.D.?

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2. Write briefly about the Vellalas.

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## 17.8 LITERATURE

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### 17.8.1 Sanskrit

Sanskrit received the royal patronage from all the dynasties that ruled South India and the Deccan. Vedic learning and its study were encouraged by granting *agraharas* to the *brahmins* for the specific purpose. Venkata Madhava wrote **Ragarthadipika** during the reign of Parantaka Chola-I. The **Bodhvana Sutra** was commented upon by Bhavasvamin in the ninth or tenth century A.D. The **Bhagavata Purana** was composed in South India in the 10th century A.D.

Bharavi's **Kiratarjuniyam** is regarded as a masterpiece which can be traced to the 7th century A.D. Bharavi was associated with the Eastern Chalukyan ruler, Vishnuvardhana and the Pallava ruler, Simhavishnu. Vijayabhattacharika, the Chalukyan princess of 7th century A.D. was regarded as a great poetess. Mahendravarman's **Mattavilasa Prahasana** and **Bhagavadajjuka** are a satire on the contemporary religious sectarian rivalry. Dandin, the court poet of Pallava Narasimhavarman was the most celebrated for his manual on rhetoric, **Kavya darsa**, a work on literary criticism. His other work, **Dasakumara Charita**, is a prose masterpiece which portrays the life of the times. Kulasekhara's **Mukundamala** is a devotional work of the 9th century A.D. The earliest *champu* in Sanskrit was composed by

**Trivikrambhatta**, a contemporary of the Rashtrakuta Indra. Somadevasuri, the Jain poet (950 A.D.), wrote **Yasastilaka Champu** and **Nitivakyamrta**. Both these works portray the life of the times and polity.

In the philosophical literature, Kumarila and Sankara are outstanding figures. Kumarila wrote **Slokavartika**, **Tantravartika** and **Tuptika**. These are the commentaries on the **Bhashya** of **Sabaravamin** on the **Mimamsasutras** of **Jaimini**. Sankara, the founder of *Advaita*, was the author of great commentaries on the **Brahma Sutras**, the **Upanishads** and the **Bhagavadgita**. He also wrote several *stotras*.

### 17.8.2 Tamil

By the 7th century A.D. the Epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, were translated into Tamil. Under the *bhakti* movement of the Saivaites, a succession of saint poets flourished between the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. Tirunavukkarasu was the first great saint poet. Nambi Andar Nambi, Tirumular, the author of **Tirumandiram**, Sundarar, Appar Sambandar, Mannikkavasigar, were the best known among the saint poets.

The hymns of Sambandar are regarded as of high literary quality. The **Tirumandiram** of Tirumular, a Saiva mystical work, contains 3000 verses. Mannikkavasigar's **Tiruvasagam** is another masterpiece of passionate devotional literature.

The Vaishnava Alvars also composed devotional hymns. The final volume consists of 4000 hymns, and it is called **Nalayira Divya Prabandham**. The Alvars Poyagi, Pey, Tirumalisai, and Andal are the celebrated names. Kulasekhara's **Tirumoli**, and Nammalvar's **Tiruvaymoli**, are notable. Especially, **Tiruvaymoli** gets high honour in the Vaishnava canon. Nathamuni has systematised the entire canon, consisting of 4000 hymns. Nammalvar is considered a great poet.

**Jivaka Chintamani**, datable to 10th century A.D., written by Tiruttakkadevar, a Jain ascetic, is a beautiful *Kavya* and served as a model to Kambar's **Ramyana** later.

The Saiva canon was rearranged by Nambi Andar during the eleventh century A.D.

### 17.8.3 Kannada

During this period, the Kannada language developed considerably under the Chalukyas of Badami. The earliest work is Nripatunga's **Kavirajamarga** (850 A.D.), and it is regarded as the greatest work on rhetoric. Pampa composed **Adipurana** and **Vikramarjuna Vijaya** round 941 A.D. The former is the biography of the *Tirthankara*, while the latter is an adaptation of the **Mahabharata** story. Panna wrote **Santipurana**. Ranna's **Ajitapurana** is a *champu kavya* on the second *Tirthankara*. He also flourished during the 10th century A.D. Chamundaraya composed in 978 A.D., the **Chamundaraya Purana** which deals with 83 biographies of saints, kings etc.

### 17.8.4 Telugu

The beginning of Telugu language can be traced to the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. Telugu prose and verse are available in the records of Chalukyas. The earliest Telugu literary work now preserved is Nannaya's **Mahabharata**. It is said that much of the early Telugu literature was destroyed, for it was mostly written by Jains.

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## 17.9 RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

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### 17.9.1 Saivism

The wide prevalence and royal patronage to Saivism and its sects are well attested by the inscriptional and literary data. The *Pasupatas*, according to Hiuen-Tsang, were widely scattered throughout India. The inscriptions of Chalukya Vikramaditya and his successors, the Pallava Rajasimha records and literature, and the Kondambalur record of the Cholas, and the records of various minor dynasties from the 7th to the 12th century A.D. refer to the *Pasupata* centres.

The *Pasupata* system with its sub-sects like the *Kalamukhas* and the *Kapalikas*, is described as *atmargika*, not conforming to the social order or stability. They represent the integrated aspect of *ghora* aspect of the dual-natured God Rudra-Siva, awe-inspiring and kind. Mahakuta, Alampur in the Chalukyan territory, Kanchi, Kodambalur in the Pallava - Chola kingdom are the notable centres of this system.

The *Kalamukhas* became popular from the 9th century A.D. They were an offshoot of the *Pasupata* order. Most of the early *Pasupata* centres in the Deccan and South India came under the control of the *Kalamukhas*. Srisailam, Alampur, Amaravati, Tiruvorriyur, Melpadi, Kodambalur, etc., were the notable centres.

Under the *Bhakti* cult, the *Nayanars*, the *Sivabhaktas*, were responsible for popularising Saivism. They belong to all sections of the society. Most of them are Veilalas, but the kings, chiefs, cowherds, potters, fishermen, hunters, weavers etc., are also known. The liberal and emotional sides of devotional worship in their lyrical songs, are called *Tevaram*.

The *Siddhanta Sastras*, are said to have been composed by the Saiva theologians, and they represent the philosophical works of Saivism. The *Siddhanta* system is referred to in the Pallava records. The Saiva canon was systematized in the reign of Rajaraja I by Nambi Andar Nambi, and additions were made till the 12th century A.D. The practice of reciting the hymns in the temple came into vogue during the time of Parantaka.

The system of Siva *Visishtadvaita* was expounded by Srikantha. Chidambaram attained fame as the centre of Siva-*Visistadvaita* philosophy. In this system, Siva is regarded "as the supreme being the "Golden person within the Sun" with Siva who is higher than Narayana.

The Mattamayura sect of Northern Saivism was established in Andhra and Tamilnadu. Srikantha Siva Desika of Gaudaden, Jnana Siva Iravar etc., are mentioned in the Chola epigraphs of the 11-12th century A.D. Rajendra's reign witnessed the influx of Saiva teachers from the banks of Ganga.

In the Deccan, during the Rashtrakuta period, the *Kalamuka* and *Kapalika* sects grew popular. The non-*brahmin* worshippers, called *gurava* class came into existence as attested by the records of the 9th century A.D. They were to observe the vow of chastity and serve as priests in the Siva temples. The *gurava* priests were also mentioned in the Eastern Chalukyan inscriptions.

By the end of 11th century A.D. the temple centres like Srisailam with its four gateways (Alampur, Tripurantakam, Sidhavatam, Umamahesvaram) have won great fame. Chidambaram,

Kalahasti and Kanchi, Jambukesvaram and Tiruvannamalai attained the status of *Panchabhuta Kshetras*.

Srisailem was regarded as a great centre for the *Kapalikas*.

### 17.9.2 Vaishnavism

The Vaishnavism was patronised by the early Chalukyan rulers, but from the 8th century onwards, royal patronage to Vaishnavism decreased to a great extent. In Tamilnadu, till the period of Virarajendra, the Vaishnava centres were patronised, but the hostility of the Chola kings to Vaishnavism during the reigns of Kulottunga and Rajaraja - II, was marked.

Among the early Chalukyan rulers, Mangalesa built a Vishnu *griha* and he is described as *parama bhagavata*. The later Pallava kings also called themselves as *parama bhagavatas*. The title *Sri Prithvi Vallabha* assumed by the Chalukya and the Rashtrakuta kings, probably refers to the claim of the kings as incarnations of Vishnu. The worship of the *Avataras* became a notable feature of Vaishnavism. The Narayana aspects of Vaishnavism became popular in the Deccan and South India. Standing, seated and reclining forms of Vishnu attained great popularity. *Alwars* sing in praise of these forms. Among these, the *sayana* reclining form symbolises the highest or para aspects of Vishnu. The first three *Alwars*, Poyagi, Pudam and Pey sang in praise of Anantasayana. Due to the special favour given to the *sayana* form of Vishnu, the Ranganatha shrines became popular from the 7th century A.D., in Tamilnadu, the most famous being Srirangam.

The worship of Goddess Lakshmi, the chief consort of Vishnuvaasudeva, was another characteristic feature of Vaishnavism. In the Vaishnava concept, *Sri* symbolises wealth. She is the chief consort of Vishnu. In the North, this is not seen.

Vaishnavism was propagated by the *Alwars* in South India. The *Bhagavata Purana* refers to the *Alwars* of the Dravidas. These saints, through the songs composed by them, conveyed effectively the *bhakti* (the adoration) and *prapatti* (self-surrender), in which the relationship between God and the devotee are described in several forms. *Alwars* hailed from all sections of the society, and the songs composed by them came to be known as **Divya Prabandham** or **Nalayira Prabandham**. Among the *Alwars*, Andal was the only lady saint, also known as Goda, who described her mystical experiences with God Vishnu in her hymns. Kulasekhara, the Pandyan ruler, was another noted *Alwar*. But, Nammalvar was the most celebrated, and his vast number of hymns show deep philosophical thought and religious experience.

Nathamuni was credited with systematizing the Vaishnava canon by about the close of 10th century A.D. He provided the philosophical base to the *bhakti* cult. He was followed by Yamunacharya.

The founder of the *Visishtadvaita* philosophy of Sri Vaishnavism was Ramanuja. As the head of the Srirangam *matha*, Ramanuja organised and systematized temple worship in the *Pancharatra* mode. He gave equal emphasis to the personal devotion to God and to the philosophy of *Vedanta*. He was responsible for the spread of the *bhakti* doctrine among the *sudras* and *panchamas*. The latter were allowed to enter the temple once in a year.

The sectarian conflicts between the Saivas and the Vaishnavas became a feature of religious life from the 12th century onwards in South India.

The Vaishnava centres that attained celebrity during this period were Srirangam, Kanchi, Ahobilam, Tirumala and Srikurmam.

### 17.9.3 Buddhism

Hiuen-Tsang observes that in Andhra, the Buddhist establishments were deserted, and temples of *brahmanical* affiliation were numerous. Sriparvata had attained the status of an important centre of Vajrapani worship and of Dharanis.

The Vajrayana form of Buddhism became popular from the 7th century A.D. This represents the transformation of the *Mahayana* form, which is also known as Tantric Buddhism. It includes the three mystic practices called the *Vajrayan*, *Sahajayana* and *Kalachakrayana*. The *acharyas* of this movement are called Siddhas, and they were 84 in number. The Vajrayana form of worship includes mystic ceremonies like the *mantra mudra* and *mandala*. On account of this, several Gods and Goddesses are worshipped for attaining the ultimate goal, the *bodhichitta*.

In Andhra, Amaravati, Guntupalli, Sriparvata i.e., Nagarjunakonda, Salihundam, and in Tamilnadu, Nagapattinam and Kanchi, were flourishing centres of Buddhism till the 12th-13th century A.D.

### 17.9.4 Jainism

During the period, Jainism was widely prevalent and more influential than Buddhism. Early Pallava rulers were the patrons of Jainism. Mahendravarman was a Jain, and he later got converted to Saivism. Kanchi was a great centre of Jainism. The Dravida *Sangha* originated at Southern Mathura in 470 A.D. The Jains were large in number in Tamilnadu, in the Pallava and Pandyan territory. The Jaina centres were called *palli*. Vedal, Sriramur, Anandamangalam, Sittannavasal, Kalugumalia, Tirumalai, Tirumalavadi and Jinakanchi were in a flourishing condition during this period. The *Digambara* sect of Jainism was popular in the Tamilnadu region.

Jainism in Andhra flourished owing to the royal patronage of the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. Ayyana Mahadevi, Vishnuvardhana IV and Ammaraja were the great patrons. The Rashtrakutas had furthered the cause of Jainism in Andhra by stationing several officers and nobles who were Jains. Akalanka, Pampa, and Ponna are the great names associated with Jainism in Andhra. The branches of Jainism that flourished in Andhra were the *Mulasangha*, *Yapiniya* and *Dravida Sanghas*. The noted centres of Jainism in Andhra are Perur, Danuvalpadu, Vemulawada, Ramatirtham, Hanumakonda, Patancheru, Kollipaka etc.,

In the Karnataka region, the Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas, and the Gangas of Talkhed were the chief patrons of Jainism. Ravi Kirti, the minister of Pulakesin-II, Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha-I and Chamundaraya were famous patrons. Among the numerous centres, Sravana Belgola, was the most famous centre. The *Digambara* sect was popular in the Karnataka region.

### 17.9.5 Advaita - Sankara

Among the best known religious teachers of Medieval India, Sankara was a great personality. The *Vedanta* and *Advaita* philosophy was propagated by him through debates and writings like the *Bhashyas* on the **Brahmasutras**, **Upanishads** and **Bhagavad Gita**. He had

established the *mathas* to further the spread of *Advaita*. He had put an end to the *vama* practices in the temples, and introduced the pure *Vaidic* form of worship. He was known as *Shanmatasthapaka*, the establisher of six forms of worship. The worship of the deities - Vishnu, Siva, Sakti etc., - through the images consecrated according to the sacred texts, was advocated by him. Thus, the **Agamas** of Saivas and the Vaishnavas attained importance in the mode of worship, in the construction of temples and in the making of the images.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 4

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1. Mention the names of important Sanskrit writers between the 7th and 13th centuries A.D.

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2. Who were the Nayanars and Alwars?

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#### 17.10 ART AND ARCHITECTURE

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In South India and the Deccan, a new tradition of art and architecture was witnessed in the shape of rock-cut temples and structural temples in brick from the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. under the patronage of the Pallava, the Chola and the Chalukyan and Rashtrakuta dynasties.

##### 17.10.1 Rock-Cut Temples

In Andhradesa, 6th century witnessed the excavation of rock-cut temples under the patronage of the Vishnukundins. The temple at Vijayawada and the Anantasayanagudi at Undavalli are the best surviving examples of rock-cut architectural temples.

The Pallavas under the initiative of Pallava Mahendravarman started the construction of rock-cut temples in stone. They are called *Mandapas* and they consisted of a simple - pillared hall with one or more rooms cut in the back wall of the temple. The next phase, known as Mamalla style, was initiated by Narasimhavarman. He introduced mouldings (curves), facade (frontal appearance), and pillars to the temples. Mahabalipuram has ten *mandapas* of the Mamalla period. Of these *mandapas* at Mahabalipuram, *Dharmaraja Ratha*, because of its perfection in the proportion of size of the storeys and excellence in the sculpture and ornamentation, becomes an outstanding example.

##### 17.10.2 Structural Temples

Parameswaravarman I of the Pallava dynasty started the construction of structural temples and the apsidal (shaped in the form of elephant back) temple at Kuram is the earliest example. Of these structural temples, the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi and the Shore temple at Mahabalipuram built by Narasimhavarman Rajasimha stand as outstanding examples. K.R. Srinivasan aptly observes that 'the Shore temple is in some ways culmination not only of the genius of Rajasimha times, but also of the entire Pallava epoch'. A noteworthy feature of the Kailasanatha temple is the integration of seven sub-temples into the main temple.

### 17.10.3 Chola Temples

From the later part of the 9th century A.D., the Cholas rebuilt the brick temples in stone which are normally single-storeyed or two - storeyed. The reigns of Aditya I, Parantaka I and Sembiyan Mahadevi witnessed the growth of temple architecture. Temple construction went on well till the time of Kulottunga I. Of all the Chola temples, Brihadisvara temple stands as an example of outstanding construction.

### 17.10.4 Brihadiswara Temple

The greatest monument of the Chola times is the Brihadiswara temple at Tanjavur. The temple construction was completed in a span of 7 years between 1003-1004 and 1009-1010 A.D. The pyramidal superstructure consists of 16 storeys. It is crowned by an octagonal (eight-sided) *sikhara*. Its height from the base to the *sikhara* is 216 ft. It is the prestigious monument of the symbol of imperialism at its zenith.

Rajendra Chola built a similar temple of smaller size at Gangaikonda Cholapuram. Of the later Chola period, the outstanding examples are Airavateswara temple at Darasuram and Kampahareswara temple at Tribhuvanam.

### 17.10.5 Chalukyan Temples

The Badami Chalukyan rule in the Deccan witnessed an intense activity of temple building at Badami, Aihole, Mahakuta, Pattadakal, Alampur, Satyavolu, Mahanandi etc., between the late sixth and middle of the 8th century A.D.

They too started with rock-cut temples at Badami. Their earliest temple, known as Lakkhan is located at Aihole. It is a large-sized hall, roofed with sloping stones. The Meguti temple is a Jain temple built in the Dravida style. A hall and the *garbhagriha* form the temple. The Durga temple is apsidal (shaped in the form of elephant back) on plan. The temples at Badami follow the Dravida tradition. The temples at Pattadakal represent the climax of the Chalukyan architecture. They built temples both in Nagara and Dravida style. The Papanatha, Jambulinga and Galaganatha temples belong to the Nagara style of architecture.

### 17.10.6 Nava Bramha Temples

The Chalukyan temples at Alampur are very significant. The Navabramha temples of Alampur are dated from 650 - 700 A.D. Of them, except one, the rest are in Northern style. The curvilinear (with curved lines) superstructure with an *amalaka* (top-most portion in the shape of Indian gooseberry) is the usual feature. The importance of Alampur lies in the fact that it has influenced the Pattadakal temples not only in design but also in sculptural carving. It has also influenced other Chalukyan sites in Andhra, in the development of the Chalukyan architecture.

### 17.10.7 Rashtrakuta Temples

The Rashtrakuta period witnessed the rock-cut temples at Ellora. The Kailasa temple at Ellora was the creation of Rashtrakuta Krishna I. It is a monolithic (cut out of a single rock) temple. Its *gopura* is two-storeyed. It is very rich in representing the figure of Siva. The structural temples of the Rashtrakutas are rare. The Jain temple at Pattadakal anticipates developments in architecture during the rule of the Chalukyas of Kalyani.

### 17.10.8 Painting

The art of painting was patronised during the period under survey. The paintings on the ceilings of cave III at Badami show the queen and hand-fan bearers, flying *Vidyadharas* etc., In the Pallava temples, the Goddess Parvati watching the *Sivatandava* in the Talagiriswara temple at Parramalai; the figures of Somaskanda and a prince in the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi, are significant figures. The paintings on the ceilings in the cave temple at Sittannavasal, datable to the 9th century A.D. show a prince and a princess, two dancers and a pool full of lakes, fish, ducks etc. These are graceful. The decoration is simple.

The paintings of the Chola period are known from the Brihadiswara temple at Tanjavur. The ceiling and inner walls of the walking passage around the *garbhagruha* exhibit painting. They show the panels with Siva, Yoga Dakshinamurty, Tripurantaka, Nataraja dances etc., The figures of Rajaraja and the Chola warriors deserve special mention. They are noted for their grace and ornamentation.

The paintings on the walls and the ceilings of the Kailasa temple at Ellora are the best specimens of the Rashtrakutas. The figures of Nataraja, Lingodbhava, Vidyadharas etc., are very rich in colour and detail, and they closely follow the sculptural style.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 5

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1. Mention the important temples of the Pallava period.

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2. Write briefly about Chalukyan architecture.

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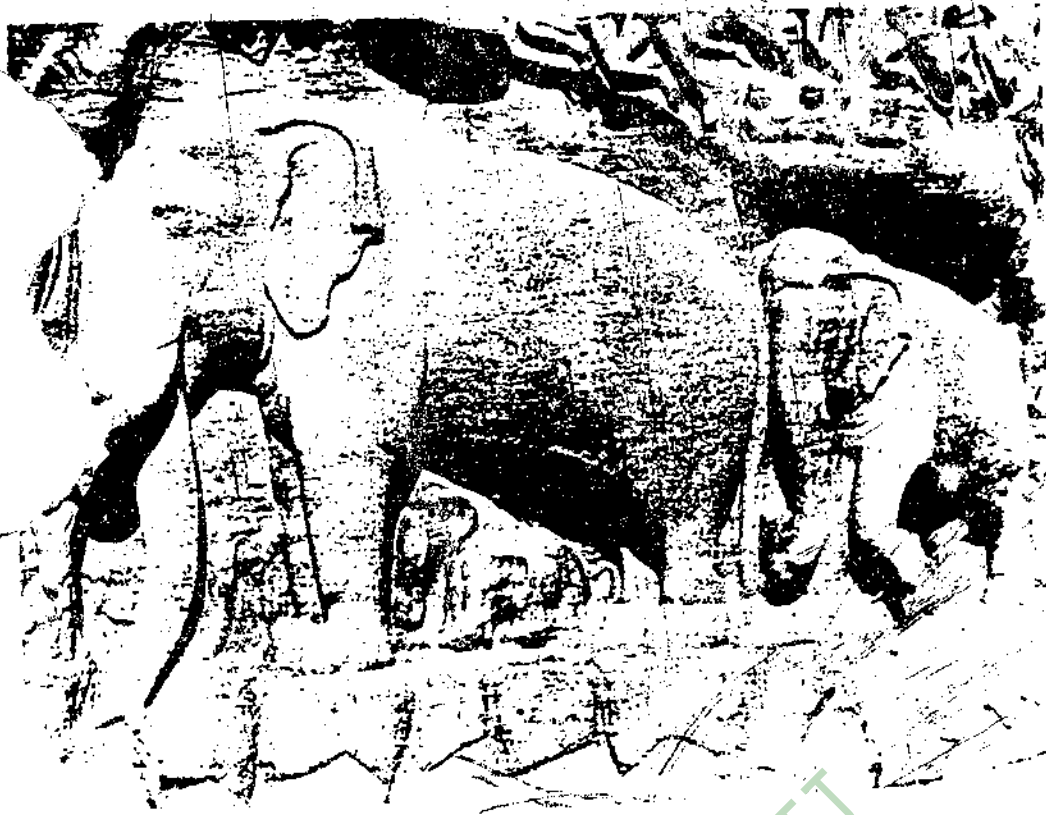
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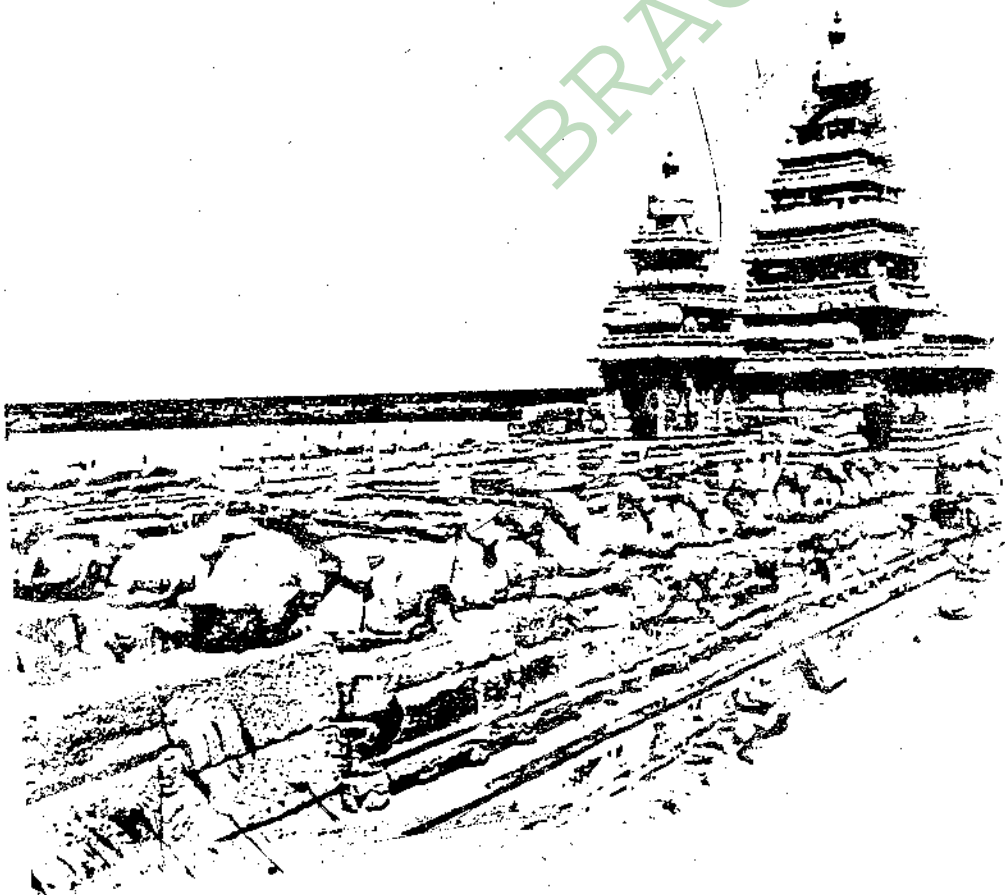
### 17.11 LET US SUM UP

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1. In the Chalukyan empire, the traditional system of administration continued.
2. The Rashtrakuta administration was similar to Chalukyan administration.
3. The village assemblies existed in the Pallava Empire.
4. The most important feature of Chola administration was the existence of self-government in villages. The *Ur*, *Sabha* and *Nagaram* were the three types of assemblies which existed in the Chola period.



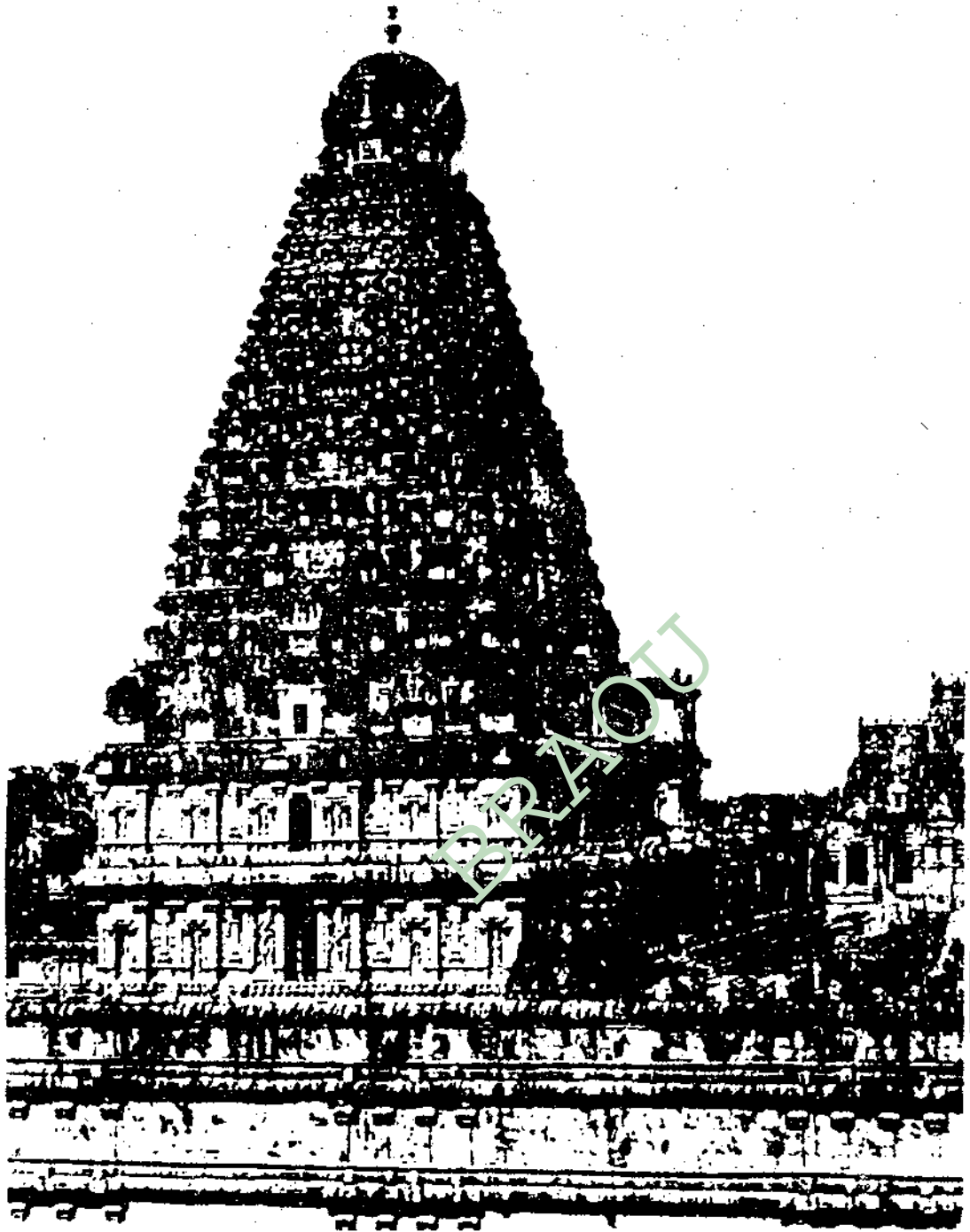
Mamallapuram : Arjuna's Penance, detail seventh-eighth century



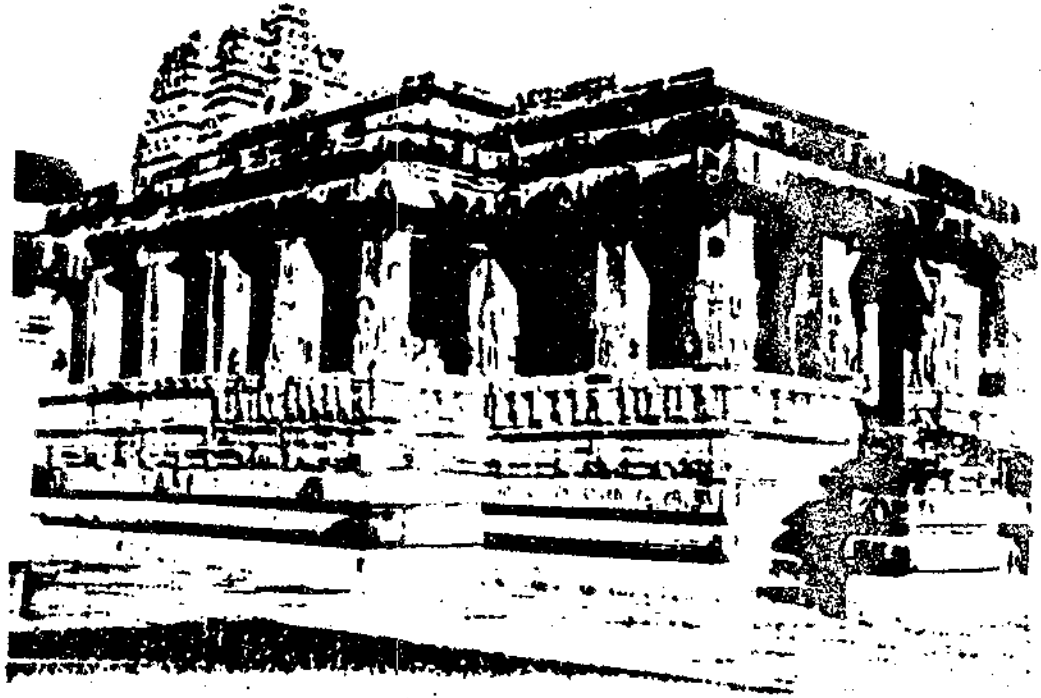
Mamallapuram : Shore temple



Mamallapuram : Rathas, from the West



Brihadeeswara Temple, Tanjore



Aihole, Durga Temple. Eighth Century, first quarter



Aihole Temple, Chalukyas of Badami period, early seventh century A.D.

5. Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy. There was extensive trade with China and Srivijaya.
6. In the society certain new castes arose, and certain castes like the Vellalas who were the landed peasantry in the South, gained prominence.
7. In Sanskrit, Bharavi, Dandi, Mahendrarman, wrote great works. Sankara and Kumarila also wrote Sanskrit works.
8. In Tamil, the Saivite and Vaishnavite saints produced valuable religious literature.
9. The earliest Telugu literary work, Nannayya's **Mahabharata** belongs to this period.
10. In Saivism, *Pasupata* and *Kapalika* sects existed. Vaishnavism was popularised by the *Alvars*. Buddhism was on the decline.
11. The Pallavas are famous for their rock-cut temples. The Shore temple at Mahabalipuram and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi are also famous temples of the Pallava period.
12. The greatest temple of the Chola period is the Brihadiswara temple of Tanjavur.
13. Chalukyas built beautiful temples at Badami Aihole, Pattadakal and Alampur.
14. The Kailasa temple at Ellora is the best specimen for the architecture of the Rashtrakutas.

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### 17.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. *Rashtra, Desa, Nadu, Mandala, Vishaya, Bhoga, Ahara, Nagara, Grama.*
2. *Rashtra* was governed by the *Mahasamanta, Mahamandaleswara.*
3. *Nadu, Kottam* and *Ur.*
- II. 1. *Ur* was mostly an assembly of peasants. *Sabha* was located mainly in predominantly *brahmin* villages. The *Nagaram* existed in villages where the merchants were in a majority.
2. The most important feature of Chola administration was local self-government or self-government in villages.
- III. 1. Pepper, pearls, textiles were the chief items of export, and horses and cosmetics were the chief items of import.
2. The *Vellalas* were a *Sudra* class. They rose to prominence in the 12th and 13th centuries A.D. in the Pallava-Chola territory. They controlled some Saivite *mathas* and temples.
- IV. 1. Bharavi, Dandi, Kulashekhara and Somadevasuri were the important Sanskrit writers of this period.
2. The *Nayanaras* were Saivite saints who popularised Saivism. They composed devotional songs, known as *Tevaram*. The *Alvars* were Vaishnavite saints who popularised Vaishnavism. Nammalvar was the greatest of the *Alvars*. Andal, a

lady saint, was also a prominent *Alvar*. They composed devotional songs, known as **Nalayira Prabandha**, for the propagation of Vaishnavism.

- V. 1. The Pallavas are known for their rock-cut temples. The Pandava *Rathas* at Mahabalipuram are the best examples for the rock-cut temples. The Shore temple at Mahabalipuram and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi, are the best examples for the structural temples of the Pallava period.
2. The Chalukyans built many temples at Badami, Aihole, Pattadakal, Alampur and other places. They built temples in the Nagara style of North India, as well as in the Dravida style of South India. While the temples at Aihole and Pattadakal are mostly in Nagara style, the temples at Badami are in the Dravidian style. The temples at Pattadakal represent the climax of the Chalukyan architecture. The Nava Bramha temples at Alampur are also examples for the Chalukyan architecture.

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### 17.13 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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#### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each

1. Describe the salient features of the administration under the Chalukyas
2. How was the Central Government organised under the Cholas?
3. What are the special features of local administration under the Cholas?
4. Trace the condition of agriculture and trade in South India.
5. Describe the social structure in the Deccan and South India between the 7th and 11th centuries A.D.
6. State briefly the literary development in South India.
7. Examine the development of Saivism in South India.
8. How did Vaishnavism grow in South India?
9. What are the salient features of the Rock-cut and structural temples of Pallava period?
10. Bring out the contribution of the Cholas to the temple architecture in South India.
11. Assess the growth of temple architecture in the Deccan and South India under the Badami Chalukyas.

#### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each

1. Describe the military organisation under the Chalukyas
2. What do you know about the Pallava administrative system?
3. State the role played by Sabha in the Chola administrative system?
4. Trace the administrative system under the Rashtrakutas.
5. State the condition of Buddhism in South India.
6. Trace the growth of Jainism in South India.

7. Describe the architectural significance of the Five Rathas.
8. Bring out the structural features of the Brihadiswara temple.
9. How are the Nava Brahma temples significant?
10. Describe the Kailasa temple of Ellora.
11. Briefly state the development of the art of painting in South India during the period 7th to 13th centuries A.D.

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#### 17.14 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Majumdar, R.C. : *The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vols. III, IV & V.*
2. Majumdar, R.C. : *A Comprehensive History of India, Vol. III*
3. Nilakanta Sastry, K.A. : *A History of South India from Pre-Historic times to the fall of Vijayanagar.*
4. Nilakanta Sastry, K.A. : *The Cholas*
5. Romila Thapar : *History of India*
6. Srinivasan, K.R. : *South Indian Temples*
7. Yazdani, G. : *The Early History of the Deccan*

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**BLOCK - III : NORTHERN INDIA : 650 - 1200 A.D.**

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Rajput Age forms an interesting and significant period towards the close of Ancient period in Indian History. Different dynasties ruling over different Regional kingdoms have made striking impact in political and cultural fields.

Muslim inroads which began with Arabs at Sind, grew into Ghazni and Ghori invasions that spread over Northern India, and ultimately in 1206 A.D., resulted in the establishment of the Turkish or Delhi Sultanate.

The rule of the Delhi Sultanate which extended upto 1526 A.D., has led to significant and striking changes or developments in administrative, economic, social and cultural fields. There has been a synthesis of Hindu and Islamic cultures and ways of life. Bhakti and Sufi movements, Urdu language and Indo-Islamic style of art, have all been the significant by-products of this synthesis and Hindustani way of life.

BRAOU

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## UNIT - 18 : RAJPUTS : POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS

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### Contents

- 18.0 Objectives
- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 Origin of the Rajputs
- 18.3 Pratiharas
  - 18.3.1 Mihira Bhoja
- 18.4 The Gahadwalas
- 18.5 Chauhans
  - 18.5.1 Prithviraj
- 18.6 Paramaras
- 18.7 Chandelas
- 18.8 Solankis
- 18.9 Kalachuris
- 18.10 Administration
- 18.11 Social conditions
- 18.12 Economic conditions
- 18.13 Education and Literature
- 18.14 Architecture
- 18.15 Religious conditions
- 18.16 Let us sum up
- 18.17 Check your progress : Answers
- 18.18 Examination Model Questions
- 18.19 Books For Further Reading

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### 18.0 OBJECTIVES

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A study of this Unit should enable you to have knowledge of

1. the history of the Rajputs and about the five Rajput dynasties - the Pratiharas, Paramaras, Chalukyas and the Chauhans; and
2. you are expected to know from this Unit about the administration, social and economic conditions also during the Rajput period.

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## 18.1 INTRODUCTION

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The period between 647 and 1206 A.D., i.e., between the death of Harshavardhana and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, is known for the valour and adventure of the Rajputs who established their kingdoms in North India and heroically resisted the invasions of the foreigners. A significant feature of this period was the existence of many small kingdoms and the absence of an Indian empire.

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## 18.2 ORIGIN OF THE RAJPUTS

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There is much controversy among historians regarding the origin of the Rajputs. According to the traditions of the Rajputs, they were *Kshatriyas* and descendants of the solar and lunar dynasties.

Col. Tod, in his **Annals of Rajasthan** has stated that the Rajputs were foreigners to India. Based on their culture, funeral rites, use of horses and other customs, he explains that the Scythians, Pahlavas and Huns who invaded India and established their rule in some places of North India, became Indianised due to marriages with the Indians. In his opinion, the Rajputs are the descendants of the Scythians. The Huna and Pahlava rulers also came to India from Central Asia.

However, scholars like C.V. Vaidya and G.P. Ojha have not accepted the theory of the foreign origin of the Rajputs. They maintain that the extreme devotion of the Rajputs for Indian customs and religion supports the conclusion that the Rajputs were of Indian origin.

In the **Prithviraj Raso** composed by Chand Bardoi, it is mentioned that the Pratiharas, Paramaras, Chalukyas (Solankis), and the Chauhans belonged to the **Agni kula**. The five dynasties are supposed to have originated from a mythical figure who is presumed to have emerged from the **homa** performed by Parasurama at Mount Abu after destroying all the *kshatriyas*.

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## 18.3 PRATI HARAS

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The Pratiharas were the first among the Rajputs to become politically prominent. It is believed that they are the descendants of Gurjaras, who came from Central Asia. Rajasthan was known as Gurjara *Rashtra* because of the rule of the Gurjaras over the area.

Pratihara means gate-keeper. As they are supposed to be the descendants of Lakshmana who was the gate-keeper of his brother, Rama, they are known as the Pratiharas.

The founder of the Pratihara kingdom was Nagabhata. He ruled from 783 to 815 A.D. He struggled hard to consolidate his kingdom which was then threatened by invasions from the Arabs of Sind and the Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas of the Deccan.

The next important ruler was Nagabhata II. His most notable achievement was the defeat of Dharmapala, king of Bengal, and the expulsion of Chakrayudha from Kanauj. But, he himself sustained defeat at the hands of the Rashtrakutas who had then become powerful under the leadership of Govinda III.

### 18.3.1 Mihira Bhoja

The greatest of the Pratihara kings was Mihira Bhoja (836-885 A.D.). He was able to expand his kingdom by his conquest. By defeating the Pala and Rashtrakuta kings, he was able to make Kanauj, his capital. His kingdom existed between the Himalayas in the North and the Narmada river in the South. In the East, it extended up to modern Bihar and in the West, up to Gujarat.

The Arab traveller Sulaiman visited his kingdom in the year 851 A.D. He wrote that the kingdom was prosperous, and that, there were no thieves in the kingdom. He has also praised the strength of the cavalry of Mihira Bhoja.

Mihira Bhoja's son, Mahendrapala successfully maintained the empire of his father and even extended it in the East up to Bengal.

The kingdom of the Pratiharas did not last long after the death of Mahendrapala. The Rashtrakuta king, Indra III inflicted a severe defeat on Bhoja II, the successor of Mahendrapala, and captured Kanauj. With that, the kingdom of the Pratiharas vanished.

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## 18.4 THE GAHADWALAS

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The Gahadwalas occupied and ruled from Kanauj, after the extinction of the Pratihara power. The Gahadwalas are also known as the Rathors. Chandra Deva (1085-1100 A.D.) was the founder of the Rathor kingdom. The Rathors played an important part in protecting Central India from the invasion of the Turks. Govinda Chandra (1114-1155 A.D.) occupied Magadha and Eastern Malwa. Jayachandra was the best known among the Rathors. He waged wars against Lakshmana Sena of Bengal and Prithviraj of Delhi. There is a story that Jayachandra invited Ghori Mohammad to invade India out of his determination to destroy Prithviraj. He hated Prithviraj because his daughter Samyukta married him against his wishes. Whether the story is true or not, Ghori Mohammad defeated not only Prithviraj, but also Jayachandra. In 1193 A.D. Kanauj was invaded, and in the Chandwar battle, Jayachandra was defeated. Unable to suffer the humiliation, Jayachandra committed suicide. The Gahadwala dynasty came to an end in 1202 A.D. with the death of Harischandra, the son of Jayachandra.

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## 18.5 CHAUHANS

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The Chauhans were the feudatories of the Pratiharas. After the decline of the power of the Pratiharas, they became independent rulers from the time of Simharaj Chauhan, i.e. from 956 A.D. The Chauhan kingdom expanded during the time of Ajaya Raja and Vijayaraja. The town of Ajmer was built by Ajayaraja. Vijayaraja occupied Delhi.

### 18.5.1 Prithviraj (1179 - 1192 A.D.)

The greatest ruler among the Chauhan kings was Prithviraj (1179-92 A.D.) There are many stories and poems in praise of the valour of Prithviraj. Besides the **Prithviraj Raso** of Chand Bardoi in Hindi, there is a Sanskrit work entitled **Prithviraj Vijaya** in praise of Prithviraj. He consolidated his power by defeating the Solanki, Chandela, and Gahadwala

rulers. The most important among his rivals was Jayachandra. Reference has already been made in the above paras to the story about Jayachandra's daughter, Samyukta marrying Prithviraj, and Jayachandra inviting Ghori Mohammad to take revenge against Prithviraj. But, there is no historical evidence in support of the story.

In 1191 A.D., when Ghori Mohammad invaded the Chauhan kingdom, Prithviraj defeated him in the first battle of Tarain. But, the very next year, Ghori Mohammad came back and defeated Prithviraj at the same place. The kingdom of the Chauhans vanished after the defeat of Prithviraj, although nominally members of the dynasty ruled over parts of Ranthambhor till 1302 A.D.

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## 18.6 PARAMARAS

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The Paramaras who were subordinate to the Rashtrakutas, established their kingdom in 950 A.D. They ruled for three centuries in the region of Malwa with Dharanagara as their capital. Munjaraja was one of the strong kings among the Paramaras. He conquered the Abu region by waging wars against the Chauhans and Kalachuris. His greatest rival was Tailapa II, the Chalukya king. Munjaraja was killed in a battle which he fought against Tailapa II. Munjaraja, besides being a great warrior, was also an efficient administrator and patron of literature. Dhananjaya, Halayudha, Danika and Padma Gupta were some of the poets patronised by him. Munjaraja built many temples and lakes also. The Munjeswara lake near Dharanagar was built by him. Bhoja Raja (1010-1055 A.D.) was the greatest among the Paramaras. He has a unique and unrivalled place in the history of Sanskrit literature. Besides being a patron of poets, he was himself a great poet. He also built a town known as Bhojapura. He fought a number of wars against the Solankis and Kalachuris in spite of his deep interest in literature. However, in the end, he lost his kingdom to his rivals.

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## 18.7 CHANDELAS

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The Chandelas ruled over the area known as Bundelkhand in Central India. They were at first the feudatories of Pratiharas. Around 950 A.D., Yasovarma established the independent Chandela kingdom.

Vidyadhara was the greatest among the Chandela rulers. He is credited with the achievement of successfully resisting the invasions of Ghori Mohammad, who attacked his kingdom in 1019 A.D., and 1022 A.D. The existence of the impenetrable forts of Gwalior and Kalinjar in the Chandela kingdom, safeguarded its independence till 1309 A.D., when Allauddin Khilji conquered Bundelkhand and merged it in his empire.

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## 18.8 SOLANKIS

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The founder of the Solanki kingdom was Moola Raja, who established it around 945 A.D. with Anhilwad in Gujarat, as its capital. Some scholars believe that the word 'Solanki' is a corrupt form of Chalukya, and that the Solankis were also Chalukyas. The Solanki kingdom was frequently invaded by the Muslims, Chauhans and Paramaras.

During the time of Bhima Raja I (1022-64 A.D.) Ghazni Mohammad invaded the kingdom and destroyed the Somnath temple. Jayasimha (1094-1143 A.D.) was the greatest among the Solanki rulers. The famous Jain scholar Hemachandra was his Minister. After Jayasimha, the importance of the Solankis declined.

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## 18.9 KALACHURIS

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The Kalachuris became prominent in the 9th century A.D. Kokala (845-880 A.D.) was the founder of Kalachuri kingdom. The Kalachuris claimed that they belonged to the Haihaya sect and the family of Karthaveeryarjuna. Their capital was Tripuri. Gargaya Deva (1019-1041 A.D.) is supposed to have conducted **Digvijaya Yatras** from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. He had titles like **Vikramaditya** and **Srikalingadhipathi**. His son, Karna Deva (1041-1072 A.D.) is known as 'the hero of more than hundred battles'. His kingdom extended from the river Ganga in the North to the river Narmada in the South, and from Gujarat in the West to Bengal in the East. The last important Kalachuri ruler was Yash Karna Deva (1072-1120 A.D.)

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. What is the theory of Col. Tod regarding the origin of Rajputs?

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2. Who is the best known king among the Rathors?

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3. Who was Hemachandra?

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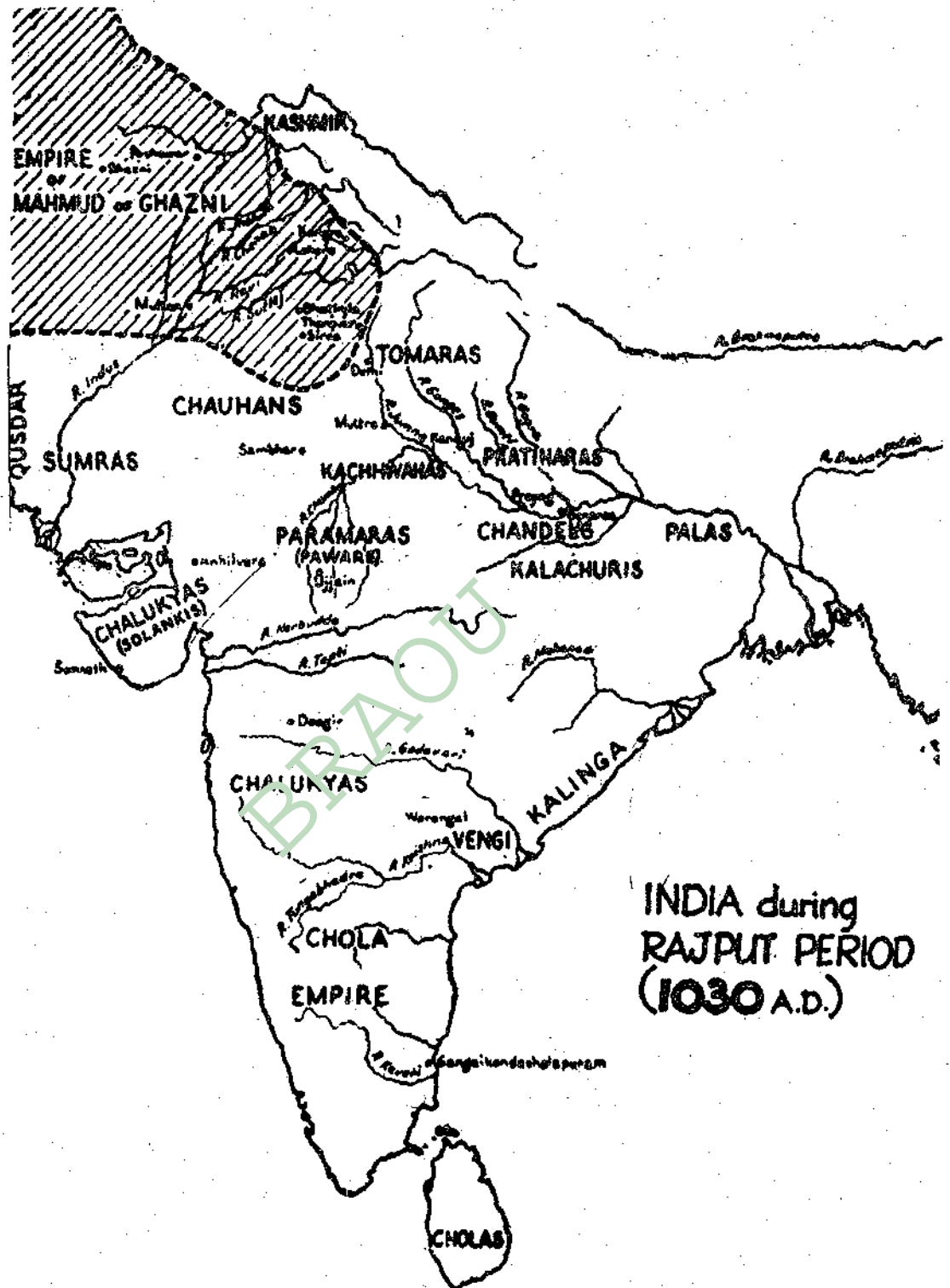
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## 18.10 ADMINISTRATION

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As the Rajputs waged wars frequently, their administration was war - oriented. The king gave lands to those who provided the troops. This, to some extent, reduced the importance of the king, and increased the importance of the feudal lords.

From the mention of terms **Aswapathi**, **Gajapathi** and **Narapathi** in the inscriptions of the Rajput kings, we can infer that cavalry, elephantry and infantry were the important branches of the army. Though the Rajputs were fond of wars, they do not seem to have given any thought



INDIA during  
RAJPUT PERIOD  
(1030 A.D.)

to the invention of new weapons or planning of new war strategies. The ancient weapons like arrow, sword and dagger continued to be the most important weapons of the soldiers.

The ancient system of administration which existed during the Gupta and Harsha periods continued during the time of the Rajputs also. The inscriptions of the Rajputs refer to officers like **Mantri**, **Mahamatya**, **Dharma Karmadhikari**, **Sandhivigrahika**, **Bhandagarika**, **Dandadika**, who existed in the earlier periods also.

The empire was divided into **Bhogas** and **Vishayas**. **Grama** was the smallest unit of administration. The most important change which took place during this period was in revenue administration. The earlier practice of payment of salaries for those who collected revenue was gradually given up, and lands were granted to those who were entrusted with the responsibility of revenue collection. This change brought about many chain reactions. The feudal system came into existence because of this change. Those who were given grants of lands became very important.

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## 18.11 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

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Feudalism which had developed during this period affected the social and economic condition. This society was based on the caste system. There was a proliferation of sub-castes due to increase in the number of professions. The **brahmins** enjoyed predominance in the society. Many of them were rich and powerful as they had land grants from the kings. They were also exempted from the payment of taxes. The **brahmins** kept themselves aloof, and rigidly followed the caste rules. The **brahmins** thought that not only the touch of the **chandals** but even their shadows would make them impure. The **kshatriyas** and **vaisyas** were next in importance to the **brahmins** in the society.

As the Rajputs were a martial race, the **kshatriyas** had more importance in the society than the **vaisyas**. In the Chandela kingdom, villages were donated to families of soldiers who died in war. Heroic virtues were instilled among the **kshatriyas**, right from childhood. Those who shirked fighting were held in contempt. Death on the battle field was considered to be the highest honour.

Of all the people, the **sudras** had a very difficult life. They were mostly peasants and artisans. As already stated, the outcastes, known as **chandals** were treated as untouchables. The rigidity in the caste system during this period, hampered the growth of unity among the Indians to fight against the foreigners.

Generally, inter-caste marriages did not take place. But, **swayamvara** and **gandharva** type of marriages seem to have existed among the princely families. Polygamy was prevalent in royal families. Probably, because of the difficulties involved in getting their daughters married, the custom of killing the new born girls developed among some Rajput families. Some Rajput ladies distinguished themselves not only in fine arts like music and dance, but also in administration and warfare. To Rajput ladies, honour was more important than life. Hence, they used to immolate themselves in fire if they knew that there was a danger to their honour. That practice was known as **jauhar**. The many restrictions imposed on women (for example,

it was stated that women residing in the palace should not go out and see even the sun) indicated that women had a low status in the society. The foreign invasions and the desire of the invaders to capture the Indian women, was probably responsible for the imposition of rigid restrictions on women. Owing to the insecure conditions, women lost their freedom and even the **pardah** system developed. The practice of **sati sahadmana** was widely prevalent.

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### 18.12 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

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Villages were self-sufficient. People in villages generally produced what was required for the village, and did not think of trade, on account of frequent wars, and also because of lack of communications. The aristocracy, who richly benefited from the land revenue which they collected, spent their wealth on pleasures of life and did not invest their wealth in productive enterprises.

Internal as well as external trade declined during this period. Internal trade declined for reasons already explained. External trade declined because people were not encouraged to go abroad. However, from coastal towns trade with China and the Arab countries continued. Indian cloth was the main item of export, and horses, wine, scents and some luxury goods were the important imports.

Probably, owing to decline in trade, the growth of towns was affected. The Arab travellers who visited India during this period, wrote that there were fewer towns in India than in China.

The guilds or professional associations lost their earlier dominant position. The landed aristocracy began to perform many of the duties which the guilds were taking care of in earlier times.

The money-lenders were prosperous. Normally 15% interest was collected on debts. But, from some records of the Chauhans, we have information that sometimes even 30% interest was collected. We have also evidence to conclude that caste considerations were also important in money-lending. The *brahmin* was charged less interest than others. The *sudra* had to pay the highest interest.

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### 18.13 EDUCATION AND LITERATURE

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The educational system was caste-based. For **brahmins** there were separate educational centres. Theological education was imparted to the **brahmins**. They learnt in Sanskrit. For non-**brahmins**, mostly professional education required for artisans, was given by the guilds. For each temple, a school was attached in the villages. The Saiva and Vaishnava **mathas** were also centres of education.

Apart from the Hindu educational centres, Buddhist and Jain centres also existed. But, with the destruction of the Nalanda University by the Turks, Buddhist education almost came to an end in India. Jain educational centres existed in Saurashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Scientific and technological education was almost non-existent, and there was even contempt towards such education. The few scientific works which were produced during this period were commentaries, and not original works. For example, Bhattotpala wrote a commentary

on Varahamihira's **Brihatsamhita**, and Chakrapani Datta wrote commentaries on the **Samhitas** of Charaka and Susruta.

As many of the Rajput kings, like Munjaraja, Mahipala and Bhojaraja were themselves great poets, many forms of literature developed during this period. However, most of the literary works of this period were not original, and were commentaries on earlier works. Usually, themes from the **Puranas** and the **Epics** were adopted by the scholars of this period. Somadeva's **Kathasaritsagara** written in poetic form, in the eleventh century, was a very popular work.

Historical works and biographies of rulers were also important literary works of this period. Kalahana's **Rajatarangini** was essentially the greatest historical work of this period. Padmagupta's life of a king of Malwa (**Navasahasanka charitra**), and Bilhana's life of the Chalukya king, Vikramaditya VI (**Vikramanka Devacharitra**), are the best examples of the biographies of this period.

There was an outburst of erotic poetry during this period. The **Gita Govinda** of Jayadeva, some poems of Bhartruhari, and the **Chaura Panchashika** of Bilhana, contain many instances of erotic descriptions.

Sanskrit was the official language in many kingdoms. Many inscriptions of this period are in Sanskrit. However, in Prakrit also, some works were written. Vakpathi Raja, Rajashekhara and Hemachandra wrote their works in Prakrit. One important development in this period was the growth of regional languages, such as Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and Gujarathi in the North, and Kannada, Telugu and Tamil in the South.

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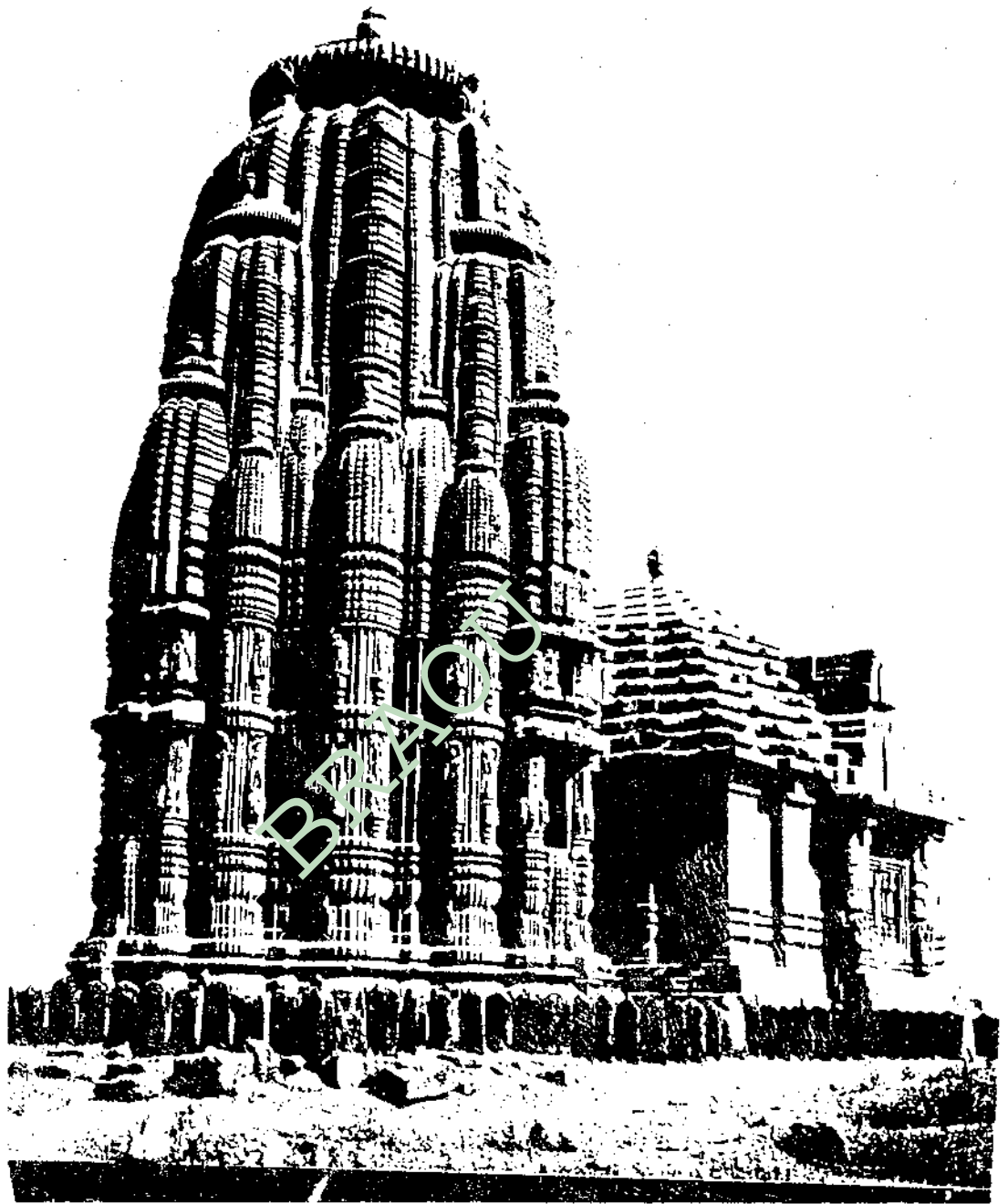
## 18.14 ARCHITECTURE

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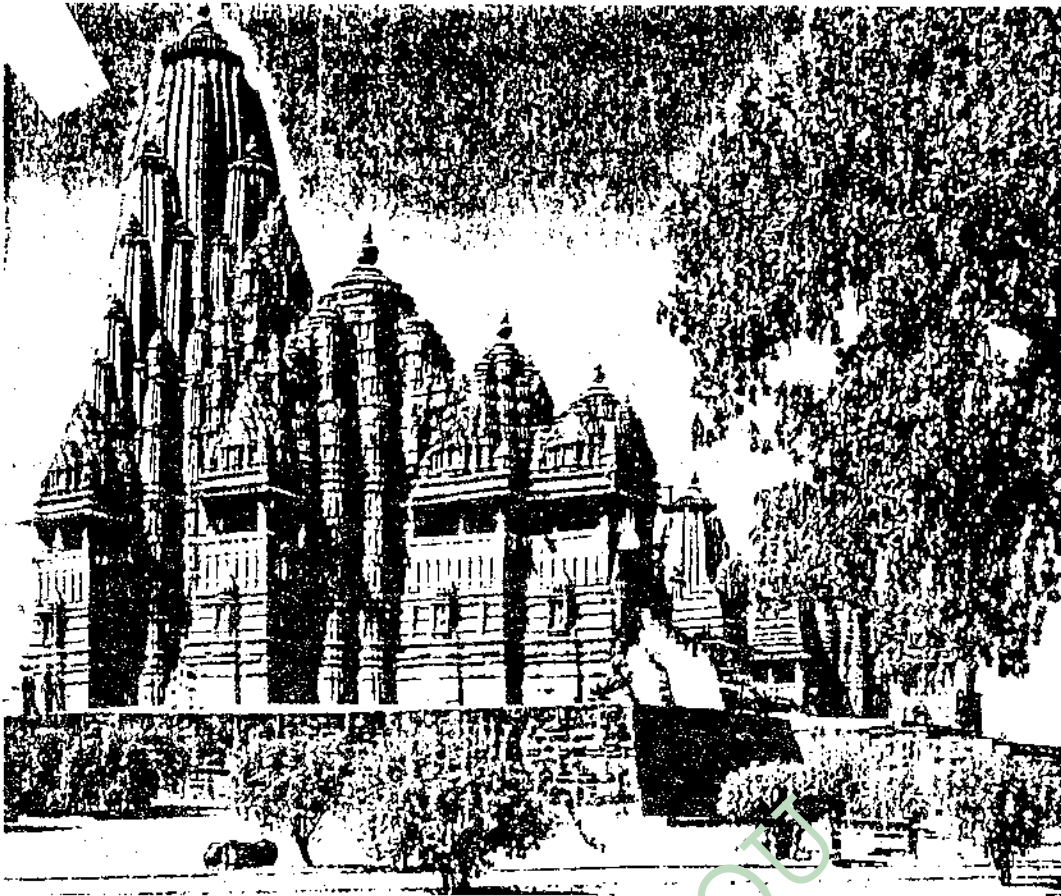
The Rajput kings were great patrons of art and architecture. They built strong forts, beautiful palaces and elegant temples. Their temples and other constructions have survived in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bundelkhand and Orissa. The same architectural style was found in all the temples built by the Rajputs. It was the **Nagara** of North Indian style. The Jain temples of Mt. Abu are evidence of the climax reached in temple architecture during this period. Built with white marble stones, the Abu temples are richly adorned with beautiful sculpture.

The Orissa temples in Bhuvaneshwar, Puri and Konark, are also monuments for the progress achieved in architecture during the period of the Rajputs. The Lingaraja temple and Rajarani temple at Bhuvaneshwar, the Sun temple at Konark, and the Jagannath temple at Puri, are the most famous of the Orissa temples. They are huge in size, and are beautiful in sculpture.

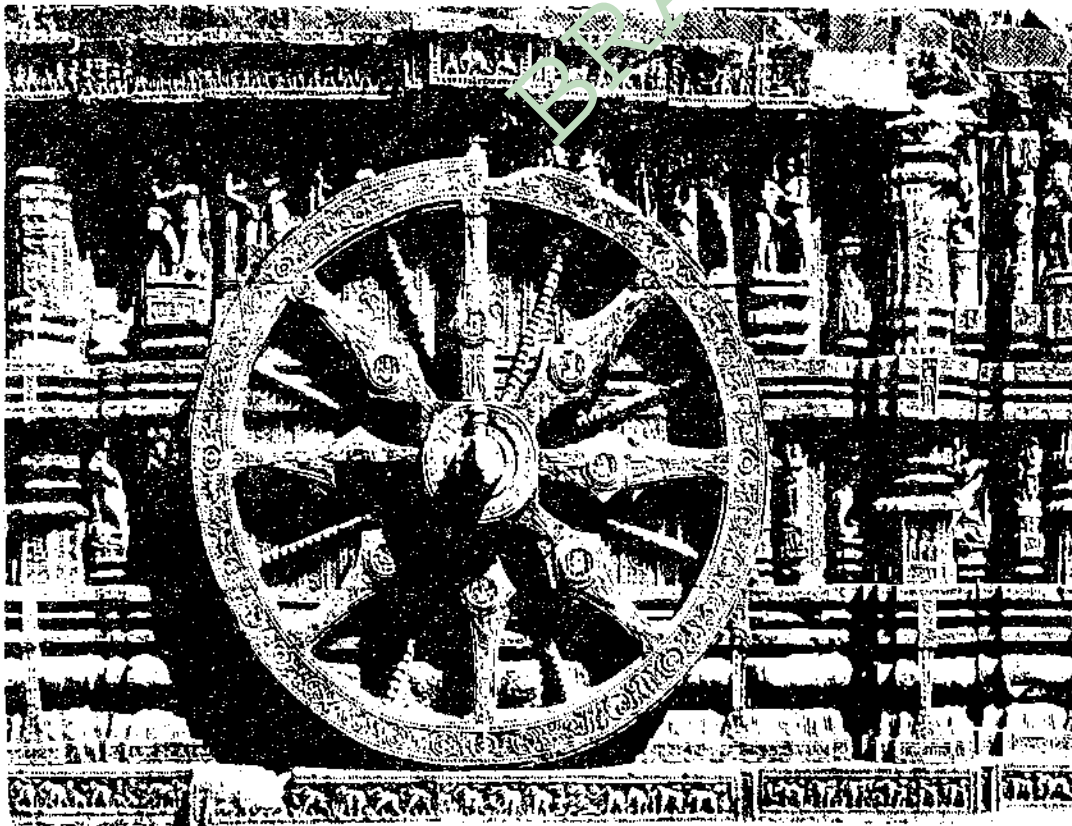
The temples at Khajuraho also testify to the glorious heights attained by architecture during the time of the Rajputs. These temples are also richly decorated with beautiful sculpture. As in literature, in architecture also during this period, we find the display of erotic scenes. The Konark and Khajuraho temples are full of erotic sculptures. Some scholars have expressed the view that such scenes on temple walls, is a sign of moral degeneration in the society.



Bhubaneswar, Rajarani Temple, Eleventh / Twelfth Century A.D.



Khajuraho, Kandariya Mahadev Temple, from the South, 1000 A.D.



Konark, Sun Temple, platform of deul and jagamohana, stone wheel. Mid-thirteenth century A.D.

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## 18.15 RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

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As the Rajputs played the role of protectors of Hinduism, Hinduism gained new strength during their period. Saivism and Vaishnavism were the popular sects in Hinduism. The Krishna cult also developed, and became popular during this period. Worship of the Sun-God also gained popularity. It was perhaps due to the influence of Zoroastrianism. As in earlier periods, there was much difference between the religion of the elite and the religion of the masses. Buddhism was on the decline during this period. Buddha was absorbed into the pantheon of Hindu Gods as an **avatar**. Shankara's preaching of **advaita** had much to do with the decline of Buddhism. Jainism, however, continued to have its pockets of influence in Gujarat. However, in Mysore, Jainism lost its influence owing to the predominating influence of the **Lingayats**.

The **tantric** cult also developed during this period. The **tantric** cult was open to all castes and women also. Those who desired to become members of the **tantric** cult had to be initiated by a *guru*. The practice of this sect involved elaborate rituals. As the **tantric** rituals involved drinking of wine, violence and sex, it was denounced by many.

The period between 650 and 1200 A.D. is sometimes described as the 'dark period' in Indian history, because of political disintegration, moral degeneration and economic stagnation. Though it is true that in some respects this period was a period of stagnation or degeneration, it is not proper to describe it as a 'dark period'. It was, as Romila Thapar described it, a 'formative period'. Many developments of the later times, like growth of regional languages, emergence of new religious cults, and the growth of the landed aristocracy, had their beginning in this period. Hence, this period can be truly described as a 'formative period'.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. What was the most important change which took place in the field of administration during the Rajput period?

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2. Write about the status of women in the society during this period.

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3. Why did trade with other countries decline in this period?

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4. Mention the important literary works of the Rajput period.
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### 18.16 LET US SUM UP

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1. The Rajputs were *Kshatriyas*. While Col. Tod argues that Rajputs were of foreign origin, C.V. Vaidya and others argue that the Rajputs were of Indian origin.
  2. The Pratiharas were the first Rajputs to become politically prominent. Mihira Bhoja (836-885 A.D.) was the greatest among them.
  3. Prithviraj (1179-92 A.D.) of the Chauhan dynasty was another great Rajput king.
  4. The administration of Rajputs was mostly war-oriented.
  5. The Rajputs were great patrons of literature. Bhoja was known for his patronage of literature, and he himself was a poet.
  6. The Jain temples at Mount Abu, the Linga Raja and Raja Rani temple at Bhuvaneswar, Sun temple at Konark and the Jagannath temple at Puri, and the temples at Khajuraho, are the most important monuments of this period.
  7. Hinduism gained new strength in this period. The Krishna cult developed. Shankara was a leading religious figure of this period.
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### 18.17 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. According to Col. Tod, the Rajputs were foreigners to India. Based on their culture, funeral rites, and use of horses, Tod has concluded that the Rajputs were descendants of the Scythians, Hunas and Pahlavas.
  2. Jayachandra
  3. Hemachandra was a famous Jain scholar of the 11th century A.D. He was the Minister of Jayasimha.
- II. 1. The most important change in the field of administration took place in revenue administration. The earlier practice of payment of salaries to revenue collectors was given up, and to them land grants were given. Because of this change, the feudal system came into existence.
  2. Rajput ladies distinguished themselves in literary and artistic pursuits and also in warfare and administration. But, many restrictions were imposed on women in those days. They were not allowed to leave their houses. Child marriages were the order of the day. The practice of *sati* was also widely prevalent. If their honour was in danger, the Rajput women used to perform *jauhar*.
  3. Trade with other countries declined because of the prohibition of travel to other countries.

4. Somadeva's *Katha Saritsagara*, Bilhana's *Vikramanka Devacharitra*, and *Gita Govinda* of Jaya Deva, are the important literary works of the Rajput period.

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### 18.18 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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**I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.**

1. Trace the political condition of North India during the Rajput age.
2. Give an account of the socio-economic conditions that prevailed during the Rajput age.
3. How did education and literature flourish during the Rajput rule?

**II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.**

1. Write a brief note on the origin of the Rajputs.
2. Bring out the achievements of Prithviraj.
3. What do you know about the administrative system of the Rajput rulers?
4. Describe the development of architecture and sculpture during the Rajput age.
5. Examine the religious conditions that prevailed under Rajput Rule.

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### 18.19 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Gopal, C. : *Economic Life of Northern India*
2. Iswari Prasad : *History of Medieval India from 647 to 1526 A.D.*
3. Col. James Tod : *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*
4. Majumdar, R.C. (ed) : *History and Culture of the Indian People, Vols. IV & V*
5. Majumdar, B.P. : *Socio-economic History of Northern India*
6. Mehta, J.L. : *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*
7. Romila Thapar : *A History of India, Vol. I*
8. Sharma, R.S. : *Indian Feudalism*
9. Tripathi, R.S. : *History of Kanauj*
10. Vaidya, C.V. : *History of Medieval Hindu India*

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## UNIT 19 : ARAB, GHAZNI, GHORI INVASIONS

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### Contents

- 19.0 Objectives
- 19.1 Introduction
- 19.2 Arab Invasion of Sind
  - 19.2.1 Results and Significance of the Arab Invasion
- 19.3 The Ghaznavid Invasions
  - 19.3.1 Estimate of Mahmud of Ghazni
  - 19.3.2 Effects of Mahmud's Invasions
- 19.4 Ghori Invasions
  - 19.4.1 Results
- 19.5 Causes for the success of the Turks
- 19.6 Let us sum up
- 19.7 Check your progress : answers
- 19.8 Examination Model Questions
- 19.9 Books For Further Reading

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### 19.0 OBJECTIVES

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A study of this Unit should enable you to know about

1. the causes, significance and results of the Arab invasion of Sind;
2. the causes and results of Mahmud of Ghazni's invasions;
3. the causes and effects of Muhammad Ghori's invasions; and
4. the causes for the success of the Turks.

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### 19.1 INTRODUCTION

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The Arabs who established their rule in Sind, and the Turks who came from Ghazni and Ghori in Afghanistan, were responsible for the increase of India's contact with West Asia. In this Unit, the Arab, Ghazni and Ghori invasions will be described, and their impact on India will be estimated.

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### 19.2 ARAB INVASION OF SIND

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The Arabs started their attempts to invade India from the time of Caliph Umar III (633-44 A.D.). In 636 A.D., an attempt was made to occupy Debal in Sind. But, the attempt failed. After 700 A.D., with the Arab occupation of Afghanistan, their chances of success in India increased.

The ruler of Iran, Al Hajaj sent another huge expedition to Sind under the leadership of his son-in-law, Muhammad-Bin-Kasim who was only a lad of 17 years at that time. Dahir was defeated and killed near Raor in 712 A.D. After occupying Brahmanabad and Alor, he conquered Multan also, which the Arabs described as the city of gold.

The successors of Al Hajaj tried to penetrate into other regions of North India, like Marwar, Malwa, Ujjain and Gujrat, but they were held in check by the Rajputs who were ruling there.

### 19.2.1 Results and significance of the Arab Invasion

The Arab invasion of Sind did not produce any far-reaching effects. Hence, Lane-Poole described it as 'a triumph without results'. Though the Arab invasion did not have any political impact on India, it is significant from the cultural point of view, as it resulted in the widening of contacts between India and West Asia. Trade between India and the West Asian countries increased after the Arab conquest of Sind. The Arab merchants who settled on the sea coast, controlled the trade between India and the Arab countries. The trade between India and the Arab countries, which was carried on both by land and sea, was very profitable.

Apart from the increase in trade, the Arab conquest of Sind had cultural effects also. The Arabs transmitted Indian culture to the Arab countries, and from there to the European countries also. The Arabs learnt from the Indians, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine and other subjects. Indian scholars were invited to Bagdad and from them, the Arab scholars learnt the Indian sciences. Similarly, the Arabs came to India, sat at the feet of the Indian scholars, and learnt many subjects.

Amir Khusrau mentions that an Arabic astronomer, Abu Maiashar stayed at Benaras for over a decade to learn Sanskrit language and astronomy. Ancient Indian works in Sanskrit, like **Brahmasutras**, the **Charaka Samhita**, and **Panchatantra**, were translated into Arabic. In Arabic, the numericals are known as **Hindsas**. This is an evidence to believe that they gained the knowledge of numbers from the Hindus.

Thus, the Arab conquest of Sind had important cultural results, even though politically it had no impact on India.

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## 19.3 THE GHAZNAVID INVASIONS

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Mahmud of Ghazni, who was the son of Sabaktagin, became the king of Ghazni in 998 A.D., at the age of twenty seven years. It is said that he took a vow that he would organise annual expeditions into India. On account of conflicting contemporary evidence, it is difficult to determine the actual number of his invasions into India. But, it is generally believed that he organised seventeen expeditions into India, between 1000 and 1027 A.D. His first expedition into India was against Jayapala, the Raja of Waihand. On November 28, 1001, A.D., Jayapala was defeated at Peshawar. Unable to bear the disgrace of defeat, Jayapala burnt himself to death.

Mahmud's next important campaign was against Anandapala, the king of Lahore. Ferishta has stated that Anandapala organised a union of the armies of Delhi, Ajmir, Kalinjar, Gwalior and Kanauj to fight against Mahmud of Ghazni. The battle took place on the banks of the river Indus, in 1008 A.D. The military strength of Anandapala was far superior to that of the

invading army. But, according to Ferishta, at the crucial moment, when Mahmud, unable to resist the fury of the attack from Anandapala's army, wanted to retreat for the day, the elephant which was carrying Anandapala was wounded and began to run in panic. That was taken as a signal of defeat by the followers of Anandapala, who began to retreat. While retreating, thousands of them were killed. As in the earlier campaigns, from this victory also, Mahmud was able to take with him a large booty.

In 1009 A.D., Mahmud attacked Nagarkot which is in Punjab. There was no resistance to the invading army. So, Mahmud's forces easily entered the fort of Nagarkot. Both Utbi and Ferishta, the contemporary historians, have written that Mahmud acquired immense wealth from the plunder of Nagarkot.

Thaneswar, Mathura, Kanauj, Gwalior and Kalinjar were other places which became the targets of Mahmud's attacks. From all these places, he took away immense wealth.

Mahmud's most important expedition was directed against the Somnath temple in 1025 - 26 A.D. The battle of Somnath lasted only three days. Under the leadership of Raja Bhima, the people of Somnath fought heroically to defend the temple. But at the end, Mahmud won the battle. He followed up his victory by looting the huge wealth in the town and the temple. Thousands of people were also killed in the process. Ferishta relates a story that the priests of Somnath temple requested Mahmud not to destroy the idol in the temple, and that they would offer him all the wealth of the temple. Mahmud, according to the story, spurned the offer, stating that he would like to be known as idol-breaker (**butsnikan**) and not an idol-seller (**butfarosh**). This story is not corroborated by other contemporary historians. Hence, modern writers like Habib and Nizami, do not give credence to this story. The immense wealth acquired by Mahmud after the attack of Somnath, defies all descriptions and calculations. It is said that Mahmud's share alone, which was only one-fifth of the booty, consisted of twenty millions of gold dinars, besides pearls, diamonds, jewellery and other precious articles. In terms of modern calculations, the wealth which he got from Somnath amounted to billions of rupees.

### 19.3.1 Estimate of Mahmud of Ghazni

Mahmud was a great conqueror. Although empire-building was not his ambition, the series of military victories which he won in Central Asia and India, entitle him to be ranked as one of the great generals known to world history.

To his followers, he was a **Ghazi**, a champion of the faith and a destroyer of the infidels. But, to the Indians, he was 'an inhuman tyrant, a veritable Hun', who destroyed their sacred shrines and acted in an inhuman manner.

But, a true estimate of Mahmud of Ghazni should not be based on prejudiced opinions. When we consider his work in a dispassionate manner, it has to be admitted that he was one of the great leaders that the world has known. Apart from his military exploits, he will be remembered in the history of Central Asia as a patron of learning and art. He used his energy for destruction in India, but in his homeland he was a great builder. He made Ghazni one of the beautiful cities in Asia. Magnificent mosques, palaces and a university, were built by Mahmud. The scholars whom he patronised included among others, Alberuni, Utbi and Firadausi.

### 19.3.2 Effects of Mahmud's Invasions

Mahmud's invasions caused immense damage to India both politically and economically. Politically, his frequent campaigns weakened the political and military strength of the Rajputs. By weakening the strength of the Rajputs, Mahmud paved the way for the establishment of a Muslim kingdom in India. Mahmud himself did not have the ambition of establishing his empire in India. Hence, he did not consolidate his conquests.

Economically, the country was ruined by the Ghaznavid invasions. Flourishing cities were reduced to ruins, centuries - old magnificent structures were razed to the ground, and millions of people were rendered homeless, apart from the thousands who were killed.

The invasions also resulted in the forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam. When we remember that Mahmud took a vow that he would wage **jihad** on the **kafirs** at the time of his investiture as **Sultan** by the **Caliph**, the Indian expeditions of Mahmud can't be described as mere looting expeditions. The view of Habib that Mahmud was no missionary; conversion was not his object', is far-fetched and exaggerated.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. Who was the ruler of Sind who was defeated by Muhammad-Bin-Kasim in 712 A.D.?

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2. Who was the king of Somnath who fought against Mahmud of Ghazni in 1025-26 A.D.?

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### 19.4. GHORI INVASIONS

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Nearly 150 years after the last expedition of Mahmud of Ghazni, Muhammad of Ghor, who belonged to the Ghur dynasty in Afghanistan, invaded India. Like Mahmud of Ghazni, Ghori Muhammad also invaded India several times. But, his objectives were different from those of his predecessor. Muhammad of Ghor had strong imperial instinct, and his main objective was to establish an empire in India. Spread of Islam and achievement of personal glory also motivated him to invade India. Loot and plunder were not his main objectives.

In 1175 A.D., he conquered Multan and Uchh in Sind and established his military and administrative control there. In 1178, he attacked Gujarat, but suffered a crushing defeat there at the hands of Mulraj II, the Chalukyan ruler. Undeterred by that defeat, Muhammad proceeded towards Peshawar, and occupied it in 1179 A.D. His next ambition was to annex Lahore in Punjab which was under the control of Khusrau Malik, the last representative of Mahmud of Ghazni. After a couple of expeditions, he was able to realise that ambition, and Lahore came under his control in 1186 A.D.

After his conquest of Lahore, he had to face the powerful Rajputs who were ruling over Delhi and Kanauj. In 1189 A.D., he sieged the fort of Sarhind (Bhatinda) in Punjab which was under the control of Prithviraj. The siege of Bhatinda forced Prithviraj to lead an army for its liberation. The story is that Jayachandra, the ruler of Kanauj invited Muhammad Ghor to invade the kingdom of Prithviraj. But, this story has no historical basis. After the conquest

of Punjab, the invasion of the kingdom of Prithviraj was a natural consequence in the political strategy of Muhammad of Ghor.

In 1191 A.D., the first battle of Tarain took place between the forces of Ghor Muhammad and Prithviraj. The Turks were beaten thoroughly by the Rajputs in that battle. Muhammad of Ghor himself was seriously wounded by Govindraj, the brother of Prithviraj.

But, Muhammad was not disheartened by that defeat. He led another attack on Prithviraj in 1192 A.D. after making vigorous preparations. This battle also took place at Tarain, and is known as the second battle of Tarain.

This battle proved disastrous to the Rajputs. Govindraj died while fighting, and Prithviraj was caught and beheaded.

After the second battle of Tarain, Ajmir was conquered, and then Muhammad of Ghor left to Ghazni. Qutubuddin Aibek, who was the most faithful of his followers, was left in charge of the conquered territories in India. He occupied Delhi in 1193 A.D., and made it the capital of Muhammad's kingdom in India.

#### 19.4.1 Results

The Ghor invasions had more far-reaching political results than the earlier Arab and Ghazni invasions. While Kasim or Mahmud had no ambition of setting up a permanent political kingdom in India, Muhammad of Ghor was a politically ambitious man, and planned his campaigns in India, in such a manner as to establish a permanent Muslim State in India. He consolidated his conquests and laid the foundation for a permanent Turkish rule in India.

The victory achieved by him at Tarain in 1192 A.D. was decisive, and that victory changed the course of Indian history. His follower, Qutubuddin Aibek, was an able statesman, and after the death of Muhammad Ghor, Qutubuddin declared himself as an independent ruler of Delhi, and continued the Turkish rule in India.

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### 19.5 CAUSES FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE TURKS

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The failure of the Indians against the Turks, or the success of the Turks, brought about major political, social and economic consequences. Hence, it is necessary to analyse the causes for the success of the Turks.

One of the major causes for their success was the disunity and dissensions among the Indian rulers. The Rajput rulers, even when threatened by foreign invasions, followed the suicidal policy of fighting among themselves. Toynbee, in his **Study of History** writes, if in the twelfth century, the Rajputs had not turned their swords suicidally upon themselves, the Hindu world might have continued without any undue drain upon its energies to keep the Turks at bay and to work out its own destinies under its own control. And thus, the verdict proves, on appeal, to be suicide instead of assassinations.

The superiority of the Turks in military organisation, discipline and strategy, was also a cause for their success. The Turks adopted the Central Asian tactics based on swift movement and light equipment. They relied heavily on cavalry, whereas the Rajputs relied much on elephants and infantry, which reduced their capacity for quick mobility.

The Indians failed to learn lessons from the Arab invasions and Ghaznavid conquests. After those invasions, if the Indians had become politically united and reorganised their military strategies to effectively challenge the swift-moving Turkish armies, they could have succeeded against the army of Muhammad Ghori. But, bound by traditions and lacking the zeal to learn new techniques, the Indians failed against the Turks. More than a century elapsed between the first and the second Turkish invasions. There was ample time to learn from past defeats. But, the lessons were not learnt. Hence, the failure of the Indians became inevitable.

The religious zeal of the Turkish invaders also helped them to win the wars. The Turks fought with great determination and courage, because they thought that they were fighting for the glory of their religion. The Indian soldiers, on the other hand, were not prompted by any such uniting and driving force.

The material incentive of a share in the spoils of the war also motivated the Turks to fight in a stubborn and heroic manner. Right from the Sultan down to the ordinary soldier, every one had a share in the war booty. So, the attraction of gaining huge wealth made the Turks fight with much vigour and a sense of adventure.

Not only the faults, but also the virtues of the Rajputs, contributed to their failure. They did not resort to treachery in warfare. They did not attack the enemy if he was unarmed or injured. They followed such principles on the battle field even if the enemy was unscrupulous. The Turks waged the war to win it by hook or crook. But, the Rajputs followed all the rules and when the opposite side had no respect for such rules, there was no scope for the success of the Indians.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Who was defeated in the first battle of Tarain?

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2. In which year did the second battle of Tarain take place?

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### 19.6 LET US SUM UP

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1. The Arab invasion of Sind which took place in 712 A.D., had important cultural effects, even though politically it had no impact on India.
2. Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India several times between 1001 and 1027 A.D. His invasions caused much damage to India.
3. The victory of Muhammad of Ghor against Prithviraj in 1192 A.D. had far-reaching consequences. It led to the establishment of Muslim rule in India.

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## 19.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. Dahir
2. Bhima
- II. 1. Muhammad of Ghor
2. 1192 A.D.

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## 19.8 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each

1. Explain the causes and results of the Arab invasion of Sind
2. Describe the nature of Mahmud Ghazni's invasions in India and analyse their results.
3. Account for the success of the Turks in establishing their rule in India.
4. Describe Muhammad Ghori's invasions and their results.

### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each

1. In what way were the invasions of Muhammad of Ghor different from those of Mahmud of Ghazni?
2. Write a brief note on the two battles of Tarain
3. Describe Mahmud Ghazni's expedition against Somnath temple.

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## 19.9 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Briggs, John : *History of the Rise of the Muhammadan Power in India till 1612 A.D. (Translated from the original Persian work of Mohammad Kasim Ferishta, 4 Vols)*
2. Elliot and Dawson (ed) : *History of India as told by its Historians*
3. Habibullah, A.B.M. : *Foundations of Muslim Rule in India*
4. Iswari Prasad : *History of Medieval India from 647 to 1526 A.D.*
5. Jaffar, S.M. : *Medieval India under Muslim Kings*
6. Majumdar, R.C. (ed) : *History and Culture of the Indian People, Vols. IV & V.*
7. Mehta, J.L. : *Advanced study in the History of Medieval India*
8. Muhammad Habib : *Mahmud of Ghazni*
9. Romila Thapar : *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*
10. Wolseley Haig (ed) : *Cambridge History of India, Vol. III*

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## UNIT - 20 : TURKISH SULTANATE

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- 20.0 Objectives
- 20.1 Introduction
- 20.2 Establishment of the Delhi Sultanate
- 20.3 Qutubuddin Aibek : The Slave Dynasty
- 20.4 Iltutmish
- 20.5 Raziya Sultana
- 20.6 Balban and consolidation of the Sultanate
- 20.7 Khilji Dynasty - Allauddin Khilji
  - 20.7.1 Reforms of Allauddin Khilji
- 20.8 Tughlak dynasty : Muhammad-Bin-Tughlak : Reforms
- 20.9 Firoz Tughlak
- 20.10 Disintegration of the Sultanate
- 20.11 Timur's Invasion
- 20.12 Saiyyads
- 20.13 Lodis
  - 20.13.1 Sikander Lodi
  - 20.13.2 Ibrahim Lodi
- 20.14 First Battle of Panipat
- 20.15 Let us sum up
- 20.16 Check your progress : Answers
- 20.17 Examination Model Questions
- 20.18 Books for Further Reading

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### 20.0 OBJECTIVES

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As a result of study of this Unit, you are expected to have a knowledge of:

1. the achievements of the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate ;
2. the causes for the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate; and
3. the first battle of Panipat

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## 20.1 INTRODUCTION

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This Unit traces the establishment of the Turkish Sultanate, its consolidation, expansion and decline, the salient features of the administrative and economic measures of Allauddin Khilji, and achievements of Tughlaks and the Lodies.

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## 20.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

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In the previous Unit, you have studied about Muhammad Ghori's invasions. After his victory in the second battle of Tarain in 1192 A.D., the remaining conquests in North India were made by Qutbuddin Aibek and Bhaktiyar Khilji, the two able lieutenants of Muhammad Ghori. Bihar fell in 1197 A.D., Bengal in 1199 A.D., and Bundelkhand in 1202 A.D. As a result, when Aibek, as the viceroy of Hindustan, inherited the Delhi throne after his master's death in 1206 A.D., the extent of his empire ranged from Delhi in the North to Kalanjar in the South, and from Lakhnauti in the East to Lahore in the West.

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## 20.3 THE SLAVE DYNASTY : QUTBUDDIN AIBEK (1206-1210)

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Qutbuddin Aibek, though a slave, was elected as Sultan by Turkish Amirs in Delhi because of the ability and prowess he showed during his master's time, and thus began the rule of the Slave or Mameluk dynasty, which ran up to 1290 A.D. Though he did not further add to the extent of the empire than what it was during Muhammad Ghori's time, he brought about administrative consolidation of the territory by introducing material and moral peace and prosperity in it. But, from his death in 1210 A.D. to the establishment of Mughal rule in 1526, the dynastic history of the Delhi Sultans, in the words of K.M. Panikkar (*A Survey of Indian History*) "is one of dull monotony, of years of succession, murders of nobles and leading men, and few able men succeeded by weak and licentious potentates".

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## 20.4 ILTUTMISH (1211-1236)

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Among the few able and worthy successors of Aibek, first comes Iltutmish who ascended the throne in 1210 A.D. He ranked as the greatest of the Slave Kings. Though he started his career as the slave of a slave, or in other words, the slave of Qutbuddin Aibek, he rose to eminence by sheer dint of merit. He married his master's daughter and followed him to the Delhi throne by superseding all the hereditary claimants. He not only suppressed his rivals in both Hindustan and Ghazni, but also freed the territory from the Mongol menace, led by Chengiz Khan. He put down the rebellion of the Khilji Maliks in Bengal and added Gwalior and Malwa in Central India to his empire. Iltutmish crowned his achievements by receiving in 1228 A.D. the unique patent of investiture from the Khalifah of Baghdad, the highest pontiff of Islam. The Sultan was also known for building the famous Qutub Minar at Delhi, noted for its massive grandeur and beauty of design. Iltutmish equally extended his patronage to the learned and the pious. His military and administrative achievements greatly consolidated the Sultanate rule that was begun by Aibek.

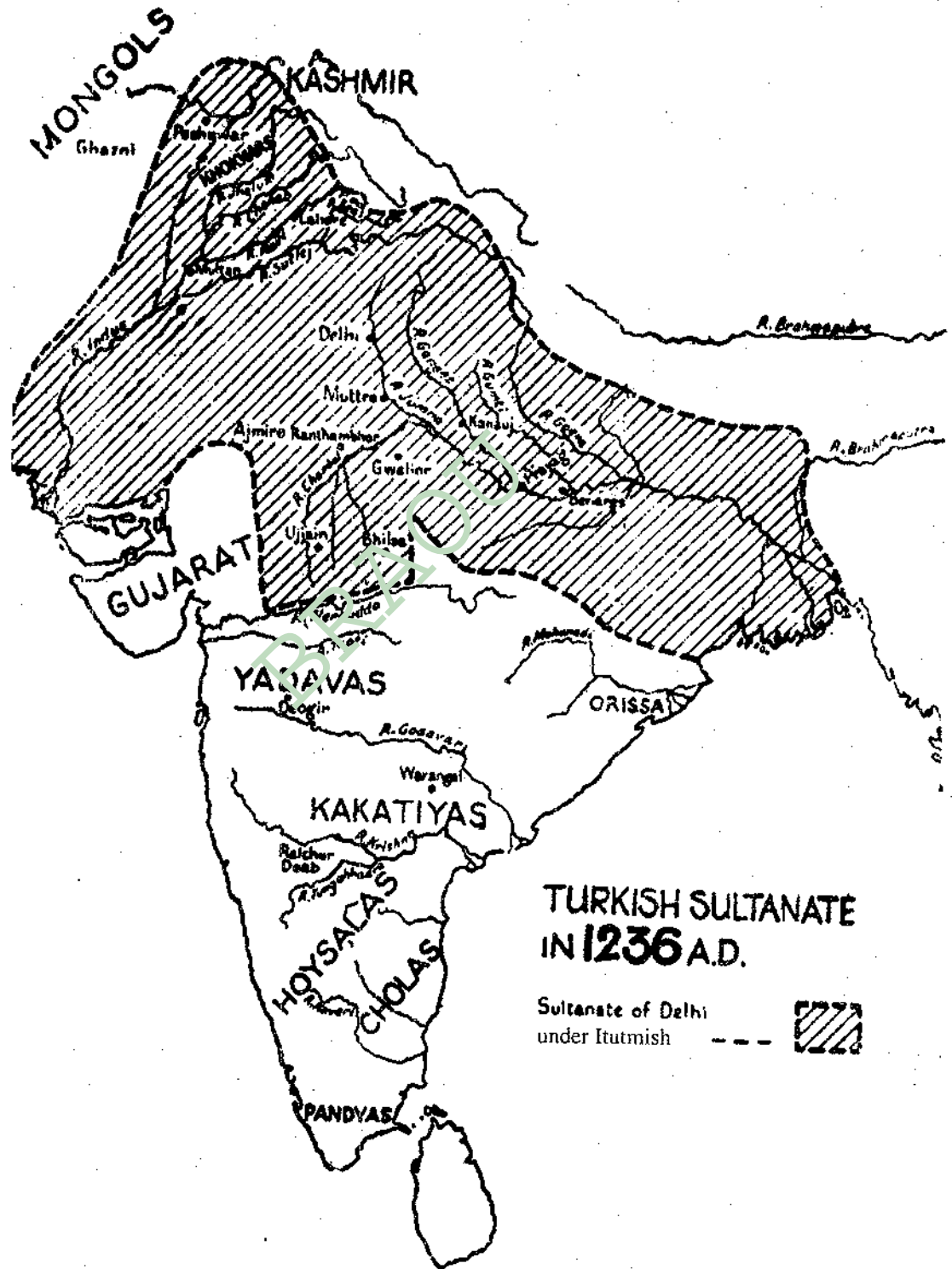
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## 20.5 RAZIYA SULTANA (1236-1240)

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Raziya Begum, daughter of Iltutmish, was chosen by him as his successor because of the incompetency of his sons. She tried in a talented and energetic manner, to guide the destinies

of the State, and even wore man's dress during public appearances. But, the group of powerful Turkish nobles called 'the Forty', did not approve of the rule by a woman, and consequently, her reign ended in 1240 A.D. after a brief period of three and half years. Yet, she ranked in history as the first and the last woman Sultan of Delhi.



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## 20.6 BALBAN (1246-1286) AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE SULTANATE

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After Raziya's removal from the scene, none of the sons of Iltutmish proved equal to the situation and the task of saving the infant Muslim State from internal revolts and external menace from the Mongols. It would have succumbed easily to these pressures and shocks, had not a soldier - administrator in the person of Balban, a Turk of the Ilbari tribe, come on to the scene. For 40 years, from 1246 A.D., he firmly controlled and directed the destinies of the Delhi Sultanate. During the first 20 years, he served as the Principal Minister to Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah, younger son of Iltutmish. Then, after the former's death in 1266, he functioned as the head of the State till 1286 A.D. He did not try to extend the limits of the Turkish State, as Iltutmish had done. Yet, he functioned as a feared and effective administrator. Balban saved the territory from Mongol raids. He sternly suppressed internal revolts such as those which occurred in Bengal, Oudh, and Rajputana. He was also successful in maintaining perfect peace and order in the area. He elevated the prestige and dignity of the kingly office. His was an absolute monarchy run in a pure and perfect manner. Learning and peaceful arts received great patronage from Balban. Amir Khusru, the celebrated Persian poet who proudly styled himself as 'parrot of India', adorned his court. All said and done, the social and political order that was introduced by Balban during his long reign, has greatly contributed for the introduction of wise and effective economic and military reforms and the extension of Muslim power during the time of Allauddin Khilji. The impact of the strong personality of Balban on the Slave kingdom could be seen from the fact that, his death in 1286 A.D., created confusion in the State and none of his successors could fill the breach. In the bloody fight for power that ensued, Jalaluddin Khilji, an Amir and a muster-master, finally emerged successful, and laid the foundations of the Khilji dynasty in 1290 A.D.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS -1

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1. Who built the Qutub Minar?

2. Who was the famous Persian poet who adorned the court of Balban?

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## 20.7 KHILJI DYNASTY - ALLAUDDIN KHILJI (1296-1316)

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Jalaluddin Khilji was an old man of seventy when he came to power, and was averse to war and bloodshed. In 1296 A.D., he was murdered by his energetic and ambitious nephew and son-in-law, Allauddin, the Governor of Kara and Oudh in the Gangetic region. He, though cruel and despotic, proved himself to be one of the greatest Sultans of Delhi, both from the point of view of territorial conquests as well as administrative reforms and stability. After successfully preventing the Mongol incursions from the Northwest, Allauddin Khilji, with the help of his able generals like Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan, turned to the conquest of the key and powerful Rajput States of Ranthambhor, Mewar, Malwa, Chanderi and Gujarat. All these succumbed, one after the other, to the Khilji arms. By the end of 1300 A.D., practically the whole of Northern India came under the sway of Allauddin. He became the author and champion of the policy of imperialism among all the Sultans of Delhi. Consequently, under

the command of his able general Malik Kafur, he embarked on the conquest of the Deccan. The Hindu dynasties-Yadavas of Devagiri, Kakatiyas of Warangal, Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra and Pandyas of Madura-indulged in mutual dissensions and rivalry. As a result, they failed to present a common front before their common enemy. This resulted in easy victory for the Khilji forces at all the places. It also yielded thousands of camel loads of gold, silver, pearls and other rich treasures as war booty and tribute. By the end of 1312 A.D., Allauddin's empire had come to embrace the whole of the North as well as the South. All the leading princes accepted his sovereignty. The Delhi Sultanate, at this time, truly reached its pinnacle of territorial expansion.

### 20.7.1 Reforms of Allauddin Khilji

Allauddin Khilji ascended the throne of Delhi, when his position was comparatively strong in the central portion of his empire i.e. the Upper Ganga valley and the Eastern Rajasthan. In order to further strengthen his position as unrivalled Sultan, he introduced a number of reforms. His reforms may be classified as : (a) Land revenue administration; (b) Suppression of the nobility; (c) military reforms; and (d) market regulations and fixation of prices of the commodities.

Before we take up these reforms in detail, let us know the difference in the approach of Allauddin Khilji and his predecessors. He departed from his predecessors by rejecting the interference and influence of Ulema in the matters of the State. This shows his courage and boldness to take determined stand to achieve his objective of making himself supreme in real sense in religious as well as secular matters. He proclaimed good of the State as his ideal, and in order to achieve it, he introduced the following measures of administration.

#### a) Reforms of land revenue and Administration

1. He was the first Sultan of Delhi Sultanate who wished to maintain direct contact with the peasant.
2. He remodelled the Revenue Department and created the office of *Mustakaraj*. He also introduced the posts of *Amirs* to collect the land revenue from the peasant directly.
3. He got the land surveyed, and got it recorded against the individual. He raised the state demand of land revenue to half from 1/4th or 1/3rd.
4. He increased the salaries of the employees to reduce corruption, and introduced the periodical audit of accounts.
5. He gave relief to peasants by doing away with the corrupt and highly exploiting middle man viz., *Kuto Chaudaries* and *mukaddams*. He gave option to the peasant to pay tax either in cash or in kind.
6. He abolished the hated land-forming method.

#### B) Suppression of the nobility

In order to maintain tranquillity and peace in his kingdom, he introduced a number of measures to suppress the nobility who have become a source of rebellion and threatened law and order. In order to bring the nobles under his control, he issued four ordinances. By the

first ordinance, he captured the property of the Ulemas, and religious institutions. By the second ordinance, he reorganised the spy system, and made them answerable directly to him. By the third ordinance, he prohibited the direct meetings between nobles. He prohibited social gatherings of nobles and also inter-marriages between the families of nobles.

### C) Military Reforms

As Allauddin's power depended on the strength of the army, he introduced reforms to make them contented and happy.

1. Firstly, he paid them decent salaries instead of land assignment
2. He never allowed nobility to have their own armies.
3. He was the first Sultan who maintained a strong standing army, and he kept it directly under his control.
4. He was also the first Sultan who introduced *Dagh* or branding of horses, and *Huliya* or preparation of descriptive rolls of the soldiers.
5. He also maintained strong spy system to report directly the matters to him. In order to maintain the army successfully, he introduced the Market regulations, and thereby to bring the prices under control. He tried to control the prices of goods by fixation of prices of food grains, cloth, all kinds of goods, maid servants etc. In order to control the prices, hoarding of goods by private individuals was severely punished, and by control of transport and supply, he regulated the scale of prices. He also appointed separate officers to keep strict watch and ward over markets, and severely punished those who violated government regulations.

As Lane-poole observes, these measures of the Sultan were evidently intended to counteract the tendency to inflate prices at the metropolis, caused by an inadequate supply.

A critical examination of his reforms in practice reveals that his rule suffered from adverse effects like over-centralisation, repression and spy system. He appears to have succeeded in his measures apparently only, but not in a real sense.

Neither the Hindus and their Rajas, nor the Muslim nobles ever took kindly to his measures. Under the evil and dangerous influence of Malik Kafur, he became increasingly suspicious, neglected his children and began to treat them with great severity. When Allauddin Khilji died of a dropsy in 1316 A.D., Kafur tried to assume power as king-maker, but could do so only for a short while. The slaves of the former emperor who disliked the haughty functioning of Kafur, put him to death. In the confusion and disorder that followed the scramble for power, Ghazi Malik, the Warden of the Marches, or the Frontier Officer at Dipalpur, emerged triumphant in 1320 A.D. He, under the title of Ghiyasuddin Tughlak, started the reign of the 3rd dynasty i.e. the Tughlak dynasty, over Delhi Sultanate.

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## 20.8 TUGHLAK DYNASTY : MUHAMMAD-BIN-TUGHLAK (1325-1351) : REFORMS

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It was a coincidence in the history of the Sultanate that, just as Jalaluddin Khilji, the founder of the Khilji dynasty was put to death, Ghiyasuddin Tughlak, the founder of the Tughlak dynasty was also mysteriously killed in 1325 A.D., after only five years of successful

rule. The crown prince Juna, who was responsible for the former's murder, ascended the throne under the title of Muhammad-Bin-Tughlak in the same year. The new ruler, in the view of Dr. Iswari Prasad (**A Short History of Muslim Rule in India**) "was unquestionably the ablest man among the crowned heads of the Middle Ages". He was a learned and pious Muslim. He was liberal in his attitude towards Hindus, unlike his illustrious Khilji predecessor, Allauddin. Attempts to bring about the suppression of *sati* and the employment of the Hindus in high positions of the State, characterised the liberal and tolerant attitude of Muhammad-Bin-Tughlak. But, it is ironical that his character suffered from some serious defects. These, besides certain other factors, such as the prevalence of a severe decade-long famine, the conservative attitude of the people, were mainly responsible for the total failure of his various measures and schemes. Though his plans were good in principle, and showed advanced thinking, they lacked the much-needed realistic and practical touch. He failed to grasp the pulse of the people. As a result, when they failed to respond to his measures, he indulged in uncontrolled anger. This led ultimately to the infliction of cruel punishments on the innocent people.

#### **A) Taxation in the Doab Region**

The Sultan enhanced the taxation in the Doab region keeping the following points in mind :

- i) to punish the rebellious Hindus of the area;
- ii) to maintain a strong army;
- iii) to organise the administration on an efficient basis.
- iv) He levied additional taxes because they can afford to pay. But, in implementation, without taking into consideration the famine conditions, he levied the taxes, and the officials collected the taxes relentlessly. But, when he came to know of the misery of the people, it was too late, though he took measures to reduce the damage to his reputation.

#### **B) Transfer of the capital**

In the administrative history of India, the transfer of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad was really a new experiment, and was a peculiar invention of Tughlak. On the basis of the following reasons : a) that Daulatabad was centrally situated; b) that it had strategic value, and that c) he can safeguard his kingdom from Mongols, prompted him to carry out the operation. Though he took all measures, and provided facilities to the migrants, ultimately it ended in a colossal failure because he lacked common sense, and has poor judgement of human nature. In the end, his efforts ended as a mis-directed energy.

#### **C) Issue of token currency**

Issuing of token currency was another measure that promoted people to regard him as a mad Sultan. In order to meet the heavy drain upon the treasury, he made this famous experiment of a token currency. He might have taken the idea from the paper money issued by Kublaikhan of China, or from the paper notes with which a Mangal Khan of Persia had recently endeavoured to cheat his people. But, Muhammad Tughlak's copper coinage was not intended to deceive. He was an expert in currency questions. However, he failed in this measure, as he did not make issuing of currency as the state monopoly, and when people demanded repayment

of money, he obliged them. He had the courage to accept his failures, and to redress the grievances.

Though the experiments were worthy, they were far advanced of the times in which he lived.

Further, his futile attempts to win distant lands by spending money, and his failure to suppress rebellions, made him very unpopular. All these testify that with good intentions, he lacked the necessary practical wisdom in implementing his policies.

These lapses of the Sultan resulted not only in huge draining of the exchequer, but also in the great suffering of human lives and loss of property. This was witnessed in the cases of transfer of capital and raising of taxes in the Doab. More serious was the loss of Bengal, Sindh, Gujarat, entire Deccan, Dwarasamudra and Mabar. The rulers of these provinces became independent. The kingdoms of Vijayanagar (1336) and Bahamani (1347) were established after this disintegration of the Tughlak dominion. The conditions of the State became intolerable both for the Sultan and for his people. When he died in March, 1351, Barani, his contemporary and court-historian, observed aptly that "The king was freed from his people and they from their king".

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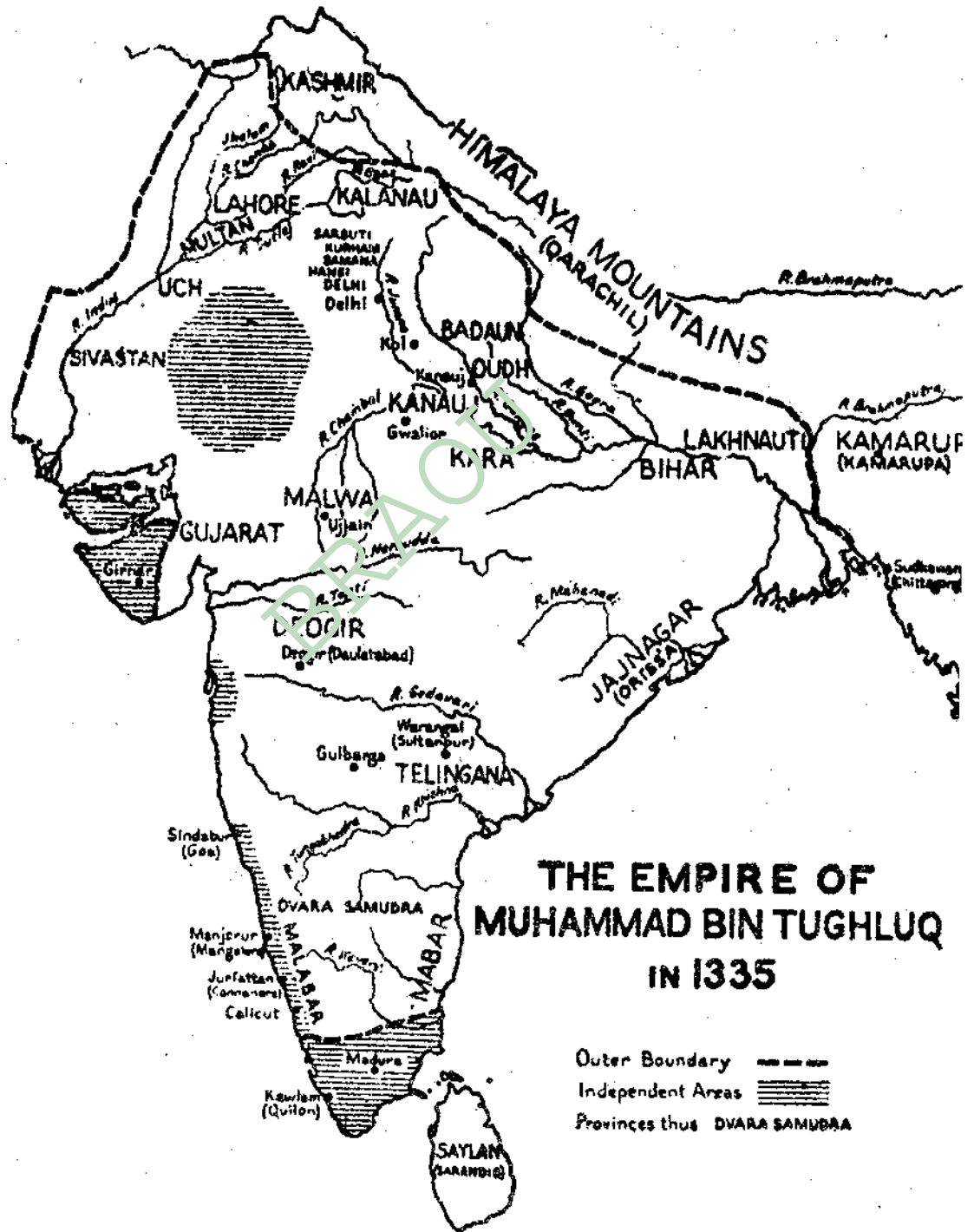
## 20.9 FIROZ TUGHLAK (1351-1388)

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As Muhammad-Bin-Tughlak left no male heirs, his weak and irresolute cousin Firoz Tughlak, was elected by the nobles and Muslim religious heads or **Ulemas** to succeed him. As Dr. Iswari Prasad has rightly observed, "he has little ambition and less fitness for the high position". Firoz Tughlak, unlike his predecessor, acted as a religious bigot. This, unfortunately, influenced matters of administration. He encouraged his non-Muslim subjects to embrace Islam. Hence, he exempted the converts from the payment of **Jeziya**. It was the tax that was levied on non-believers in Islam. In matters of State, he also took the advice of **muftis** and **moulvis** or Muslim religious scholars. This policy contributed considerably towards the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate.

Though Firoz Tughlak's reign suffered from certain defects, it witnessed the introduction of some beneficial measures. **Jagir** system or the granting of lands to officers of the State in lieu of the payment of salaries, was kept in operation. But, he took care to protect the interests of agriculturists. He constructed four irrigation canals for harnessing the waters of the Ghaggar and the Jamuna rivers for cultivation. In fact, he became the only Muslim monarch of Delhi before Sher Shah (1540-1545) who undertook such works of public utility. He also established a hospital at Delhi. Here, medicines and food were supplied free to the patients. Firoz Tughlak's kind-heartedness was reflected in his reform of the legal system. He abolished torture, simplified the legal procedure, and discouraged espionage. In order to help the poor and the unemployed, the **Kotwals** or town chiefs, made lists of those who were in want, and forwarded them to the **Diwan** or the Finance Minister. The latter provided suitable occupation for them. The Sultan also extended his patronage to learned men. He established a number of schools and colleges, primarily meant for theological instruction. Above all, he was a great builder and a great gardener. He built several mosques, palaces, monasteries, and inns for the convenience of travellers. Firoz also founded the towns of Firozabad, Fatehabad and Jaunpur. He laid out as many as 1,200 new gardens in the vicinity of Delhi, in addition to the rebuilding

of 30 old gardens of Allauddin Khilji's time. As a result of the laying out of these numerous gardens and orchards, not only was the waste land reclaimed, but the revenue of the state was also increased by several millions.



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## 20.10 DISINTEGRATION OF THE SULTANATE

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Though Firoz Tughlak's reign was well-known for his administrative reforms, he did not have the ability, intrepidity and vigour of Allauddin Khilji or Muhammad-Bin-Tughlak. His military expeditions to Bengal, Jainagar or Orissa, Nagarkot and Thatta in Sindh between 1353-54 and 1371-72 A.D., were not executed in a dashing and dominating manner, even though fully favourable conditions prevailed. The Sultan's misplaced generosity seriously impaired the efficiency of the army. He allowed aged and infirm persons, no longer fit for active service, to remain in it. Further, a huge army of slaves numbering as many as 1,80,000 with a separate Department, and a regular staff of Officers was maintained in Delhi and the provinces of the empire. This proved a heavy drain on the treasury. Party and factional dissensions that prevailed in Firoz Tughlak's court filled his last days with sorrow and anxiety. He breathed his last, at the age of 80 in October, 1388. The process of disintegration of Delhi Sultanate which had begun during the reign of Muhammad-Bin-Tughlak, gained momentum under Firoz Tughlak. Between 1388 and 1414, it was further accelerated under the latter's weak and incompetent successors. Ambitious chiefs and disloyal governors began to declare themselves independent one after the other. As a result, the once mighty Turkish empire of India was reduced to a small principality of Delhi, within a decade of Firoz Tughlak's death.

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## 20.11 TIMUR'S INVASION (1398)

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To add to the crisis, the invasion of Timur, the renowned Turkish conqueror and master of Central Asia on the Northwest, Delhi and its Northern parts, in September 1398, gave a crushing and mortal blow to the Tughlak power. The raid was made, starting from Uch, Multan and Divalpur, to take advantage of the weak and anarchical conditions of Hindustan. No effective resistance was offered to the invader at any place, except near the capital city of Delhi, which was easily overcome. In all the subjected towns, severe plunder, massacre and destruction took place. This ferocious invader indulged in great human destruction. 1,00,000 Hindus who were taken as his captives, were put to death before he entered into Delhi. After the capture of Delhi, the massacre and looting went on for a fortnight. This brought utter ruin and misery to its inhabitants as well as to the administrative machinery. Finally, when Sultan Mahmud died in 1412 A.D., the kingdom of Delhi fell from the grace of the Turks, who had mightily held the sway for more than two centuries. After his death, scramble for power and throne arose. In this, ultimately, Khizr Khan, the Governor of Multan and Timur's deputy in Northern India, became successful. He started the rule of his dynasty, the Saiyyad - the fourth Muslim and the first non-Turkish - over the much-reduced Sultanate of Delhi in June 1414.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Mention one important economic reform that was introduced by Allauddin Khilji.

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2. State one important reason for the failure of Muhammad-Bin-Tughlak's reform of token currency.

3. When did Timur invade India?

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## 20.12 SAIYYADS

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Khizr Khan (1414-1421 A.D.) ruled independently for a period of seven years till May 1421 A.D. But, he officially described himself as only the viceroy of Timurids. He neither assumed the sovereign title of Sultan or Shah, nor struck coins in his name. His kingdom comprised Sind, Punjab and some parts of the Doab or Western U.P. Though fairly extensive, it happened to be only one of the numerous regional States. These had come into existence after Tughlak disruption, in Bengal, Jaunpur, Rajasthan, Malwa, Gujarat, Khandesh and the Deccan Peninsula. As a result of this shrunken status and strength of the Delhi Sultanate, Khizr Khan, throughout his period of rule, had to fight either against the ambitious neighbouring rulers or the rebellious Hindu chieftains and Muslim nobles within his own dominions.

Mubarak Shah (1421-1434 A.D.) was the son and successor of Khizr Khan. He proved more assertive and capable than his father. He assumed the title of Sultan. He also put down a few revolts of the Hindu *Zamindars* of the Doab and Muslim nobles in Punjab. Mubarak Shah had also defended his shaky kingdom from encroachments by the Rajputs, the Muslim rulers of Jaunpur and Malwa, and the Mughals from Kabul. Unfortunately, the Sultan fell a victim to the conspiracy hatched by his own disaffected nobles. He was beheaded in February, 1434.

The power of Saiyyads declined rapidly after this violent internal dissension. Muhammad Shah (1434-1445 A.D.), a nephew of the deceased Sultan, was brought to the throne. But, the real authority in the state was usurped by Sarwarul-Mulk, the Wazir who headed the conspirators. When he began to liquidate his rivals, many nobles turned against him. This, in turn, threw the already weakened Sultanate into total confusion and anarchy. It also encouraged the rulers of Jaunpur, Gwalior and Malwa to snatch away large slices of the territory of Delhi. The Sultan, though he got rid of the dangerous **Wazir** by murder, failed to cope with the forces of disorder and disintegration. Only the timely help rendered by Bahlol Lodi, the Governor of Lahore, prevented Delhi from falling into the hands of an invading army from Malwa. In recognition of the former's services, the Sultan conferred on him the high title of **Khan-i-Khanan**.

When Muhammad Shah died in 1445, his son Allauddin ascended the Delhi throne with the high-sounding title of *Alam Shah* (or Emperor of the World). But, quite contrarily, he proved to be the most incompetent and also the last ruler of the dynasty. Unable to meet the complex administrative problems, revolts and intrigues in his court, he retired to his personal estate at Badaun in U.P. This provided an easy opportunity to Bahlol Lodi, the most prominent and powerful noble in the State, to depose Alam Shah from the Delhi throne, and commence the

new dynastic rule of the Lodis from 1451 A.D. It was the fifth and the last in the Sultanate period, and the only one of an Afghan descent.

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## 20.13 LODIES

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In the history of the Delhi Sultanate, it is a significant point to note that, since the death of Firoz Tughlak in 1388 A.D., it was only the rulers of the Lodi dynasty who made sincere efforts for the restoration of the power and prestige of the kingdom. Out of the three Sultans of this family who reigned for 75 years commencing from 1451, Bahlol Lodi (1451-1489 A.D.) the founder, enjoyed authority for a long period of 39 years. He realized that his rule depended on the support and loyalty of his Afghan nobles and followers. As the latter had been used to democratic functioning, the Sultan, a clever politician and administrator, never tried to impose his centralised or dictatorial authority over them. Instead, he functioned as the first among the Afghan nobles. This stood in complete contrast to the absolute monarchy that was observed by the earlier Turkish Sultans of Delhi. At the same time, Bahlol Lodi proved himself a strong administrator and also a conqueror. He led expeditions against the rebellious Hindu and Muslim chiefs in the Doab, Multan and Sind, and made these rulers acknowledge his suzerainty. Further, by defeating Ahmad Ali Khan of Mewar, he annexed seven of his **parganas** to Delhi. His remarkable feats of conquest were, his occupation of the Muslim kingdom of Jaunpur from the Sharqi dynasty, and his successful military expedition against Gwalior, making its ruler Mansingh, pay a tribute of 80 **tankas**. The Sultan was known as a just monarch who ruled over his subjects with moderation. Bahlol Lodi, thus, tried to restore the tarnished image of the Delhi Sultanate.

### 20.13.1 Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517 A.D.)

Though there was a dispute for succession, ultimately Nizam Khan, one of the nine sons of Bahlol Lodi, and in fact, the most competent of all of them, ascended the throne, under the title of Sikandar Shah in July, 1489 A.D. The new Sultan, who reigned for 28 years, was the greatest ruler of the dynasty. Within a year of his accession, Sikandar succeeded in either subduing or pacifying his opponents and thereby consolidating his power. When his elder brother, Barbak Shah of Jaunpur tried defiantly to assume independent kingship, he was overthrown, and the Sultan appointed his own officers to carry on the Government. Further, unlike his father who tried to share his authority with fellow Afghan nobles and **amirs**, Sikandar Lodi worked successfully for the introduction of a strong absolute monarchy, akin to the one practised under the Turkish Sultans. As part of this policy, he brought the activities of Afghan chiefs and officers under his strict control and supervision. The corrupt and rebellious elements were subjected to severe punishment. The excellent system of espionage which he borrowed from Allauddin Khilji, aided his administrative success considerably.

Sikandar Lodi attempted the conquest of many of the lost provinces of the Turkish Sultanate of Delhi. He made Agra his new capital in 1504 A.D., to operate against Dholpur, Gwalior and Malwa. He failed against Gwalior and Malwa. But, the Sultan succeeded in subjugating the Hindu chiefs of Dholpur, Narwar and Chanderi. He achieved greater success in 1494 A.D., when he fought against Hussain Shah Sharqi, the ex-ruler of Jaunpur, and occupied Bihar which, became a part of the Delhi Sultanate. His reign was marked by the abolition of duties on corn, and restrictions on trade, as a result of which grain, cloth, and other necessities of life became cheap. But, the one defect which clouded his eventful reign,

was his religious persecution of Hindus, who formed a large section of his subjects. Like Firoz Tughlak, he came under the influence of **Ulemas** and destroyed Hindu idols of worship, collected **Jeziya** and pilgrim tax from the latter, and also imposed inhuman restrictions on the observance of their religious customs. Other than this lapse, Sikandar Lodi loved justice, and extended his patronage to learned men. His rule definitely marked the zenith of Lodi power, and a semi-revival of the former power and authority of the Delhi Sultanate.

#### 20.13.2 Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526 A.D.)

Ibrahim, the eldest son of Sikandar Lodi, succeeded the latter to the Delhi throne in November, 1517 A.D. In foreign affairs, Ibrahim Lodi tried to continue the policy of conquest and expansion that was begun by his father. Accordingly, he sent a huge army under the command of Azam Humayun Sarwani to subdue the famous principality of Gwalior. After a determined siege of the fortress, Vikramajit, the weak Rajput chief surrendered, and agreed to become a vassal of the Sultan of Delhi. This was considered to be Ibrahim's greatest achievement. He tried to extend his empire further by sending an expedition against Malwa. It was then, the most powerful State in Rajasthan or Central India, ruled by the valiant Rana Sangram Singh. He was popularly known as Ranga Sanga. The Sultan's army got weakened due to differences and lack of coordination among its chief officers. It suffered severe defeat and huge loss of men at the hands of the Rajputs. Ibrahim Lodi made no further attempts to expand his territory by aggressive conquests.

Internal affairs, however, brought doom to the Sultan's authority. The character of the Afghan government changed under Ibrahim. Nobles belonging to the different tribes such as Lohani, Farmuli and Lodi, held important offices in the State. They entertained individualistic and independent tendencies. The Sultan was looked upon by them as their feudal superior or *primus inter pares* and not a master. Sikandar Lodi, by his tact and strength, was able to keep them under his firm control. But, Ibrahim was ill-equipped in this regard. By his insolence and despotic regimentations, he lost the sympathies of many Afghan nobles. More than that, his prominent confidants and kinsmen turned rebels against his imperial authority.

It is further to be noted that revengeful and cruel treatment was accorded by the Sultan to the disaffected nobles who fell into his hands. This terrified the rest from carrying on the struggle to the bitter end. Jalal Khan, the Sultan's younger brother, Azam Humayun Sarwani, the victorious Afghan commander in the siege of Gwalior fort, Main Bhua, the aged **Wazir** of Sikandar Lodi's time, and Main Hussain Khan Farmuli, the governor of Chanderi, had all been subjected to cruel persecution and assassination. In consequence, Bahadurkhan Lohani, the governor of Bihar, Nasir Khan Lohani, the governor of Ghazipur, Daulat Khan Lodi, the governor of Lahore and Alam Khan Lodi, the governor of Dipalpur, all rose in revolt in self-defence, and declared their independence. The Sultan's inability to suppress them was amply demonstrated. As a result, the Sultanate was further disintegrated when its Eastern and Northwestern parts assumed independent status. The last nail in the coffin of the Delhi Sultanate was driven when governors of Lahore and Dipalpur in the Northwest, extended invitations to Babur, the Mughal ruler of Kabul, to invade and capture the throne of Delhi.

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## 20.14 FIRST BATTLE OF PANIPAT (1526 A.D.)

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Babur united in his person the blood of two ferocious conquerors - Timur, the Turk, from his father's side and Chengiz Khan, the Mongol, from his mother's side. He lost his ancestral kingdom of Samarkhand in Central Asia at a young age. Not losing his nerve, he fell on Kabul and occupied it in 1504 A.D. Then, he turned his attention towards India in 1519-20 A.D. Preliminary raids were made on the areas bordering the Northwest of India. Under these conditions, the invitation from the Lodi governors of Northwestern India reinforced Babur's efforts. In 1524-25 A.D., he made a successful raid on Punjab and established himself as its master.

The Mughal conqueror then marched to give battle to the Delhi Sultan. The two armies met on April 12, 1526 A.D., at the fateful village Panipat, North of Delhi. The Lodi army numbered one lakh men, and outnumbered the enemy. But, in able commandership, efficient cavalry and effective artillery, the Mughals far excelled the Afghans. The battle lasted till mid-day only. Ibrahim Lodi was killed and his army suffered a rout. This success forms a milestone in the history of India. It was the crumbling of Delhi Sultanate to pieces, and the establishment of the Mughal Empire on its ruins. A new era began in India's history from 1526 A.D.

The establishment, consolidation, growth and decline of the Turkish and Delhi Sultanate, have been traced in this Unit. They together occupied more than 300 years of Medieval Indian history. As many as five dynasties have adorned the stage of history during this period. Strength or the weakness of the Sultanate, has very much varied in direct proportion to the type of personality of a Sultan. It generally followed that, a strong reign has often been followed by one or a number of a weak ones. Might of arms has formed the basis of power. The identification of the ruler with the interests or the welfare of majority of the ruled, was very much conspicuous by its absence during this Early Medieval period. Yet, the synthesis between Hindu and Islamic cultures in different areas, has made its beginning during this age. It saw its fruition during the succeeding age of the Mughals.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 3

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1. Mention two important achievements of Sikandar Lodi.

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2. Who was defeated in the first battle of Panipat?

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### 20.15 LET US SUM UP

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1. Qutubuddin Aibek (1206-1210 A.D.) was the founder of the Turkish Sultanate in India.

2. Balban (1246-1286 A.D.) was one of the greatest Slave rulers. He consolidated the Delhi Sultanate.
3. Allauddin Khilji (1296-1316 A.D.) was a great conqueror and also introduced important military and economic reforms.
4. The disintegration of the Sultanate started from the time of Muhammad-Bin-Tughlak.
5. Timur's invasion in 1398 gave a crumbling blow to the Sultanate.
6. The Turkish Sultanate of Delhi came to an end with the first battle of Panipat in 1526 A.D.

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### 20.16 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I.
  1. Iltutmish
  2. Amir Khusru
- II.
  1. He fixed prices for essential commodities and those who sold at higher prices were punished.
  2. The token currency system failed because he did not take steps to prevent private agencies from minting the currency.
  3. 1398 A.D.
- III.
  1. Sikandar Lodi fought against Hussain Shah Sharqui and made Bihar a part of the Delhi Sultanate. He subjugated the Hindu chiefs of Dholpur, Narwar and Chanderi also.
  2. Ibrahim Lodi

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### 20.17 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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- I. **Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each**
  1. State how Balban tried to consolidate the power of the Turkish Sultanate.
  2. Examine the administrative and economic reforms that were introduced by Alauddin Khilji.
  3. Critically analyse the character and policies of Muhammad - Bin-Tughlak
  4. Describe the various reforms of Firoz Tughlak and indicate how far they contributed to the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate?
  5. How far did the Lodi Sultans try to restore the power and prestige of the Delhi Sultanate?
- II. **Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each**
  1. What were the events that led to the establishment of the Turkish Sultanate in India?
  2. Estimate the reign of Iltutmish

3. Briefly describe Timur's invasion and its effects
4. How far did the policies of Ibrahim Lodi contribute to the decline of the Delhi Sultanate ?
5. Trace the causes and effects of the First Battle of Panipat?

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### 20.18 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Iswari Prasad : *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*
2. Iswari Prasad : *History of Medieval India from 647 to 1526 A.D.*
3. Majumdar, R.C. (ed) : *History and culture of the Indian people, Vol. VI, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan series.*
4. Mehta, J.L. : *Advanced study in the History of Medieval India, Vol. I*
5. Panikkar, K.M. : *A Survey of India*
6. Srivastava, A.L. : *Sultanate of Delhi*

BRAOU

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## **UNIT-21: DELHI SULTANATE : ADMINISTRATIVE, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS**

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## 21.0 OBJECTIVES

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By studying this Unit, you should be able to know about:

1. the administration of the Delhi Sultanate;
2. the social and economic conditions of the people during the period of the Delhi Sultanate.

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## 21.1 INTRODUCTION

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The period of the Delhi Sultanate commencing with the eleventh century A.D. and ending with the sixteenth century A.D. is an important period in Indian history. Important administrative, social and economic changes took place in that period. The features of the administration of the Delhi Sultanate and the economic and social systems that prevailed in the country during that period, are described in this Unit.

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## 21.2 ADMINISTRATION : NATURE OF THE STATE

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A debate is going on about the nature of the State of the Delhi Sultanate. While some historians are of the strong view that it was a theocracy or a religious state, some others say that, in practice, it was the product of expediency and necessity, wherein the needs of the young state assumed utmost importance. The Muslim Turkish state established itself in North India by conquests, and made efforts to expand and consolidate its position by the same means. Even when they became masters by virtue of their victory, the Muslims were less in number, compared to the native population whom they tried to govern. But, they lacked the necessary resources, and had to gain control over resources. So, the efforts of the State had been to gain control over resources rather than to have control over populace. The necessity to gain control over resources has a bearing on the nature of the Turkish State in India.

Though in a theoretical and formal sense, the State of Delhi Sultanate recognised the supremacy of the Islamic law or *Shariat*, in practice, it had to follow certain secular regulations that were framed by the Sultans. So, it is not very much correct to show the nature of the State of Delhi Sultanate as theocratic, and that every aspect of their rule was influenced by religious perspective. After critical examination of the way the Sultans reigned, we can say that in practice, the Turkish State was not theocratic, but evolved according to its special needs and circumstances, despite the fact that the main ruling class championed Islam. It is not very much true to say that the Delhi Sultanate was anti-theocratic to the interests of the others who were not Muslims. As they're numerically less in number, and still the administration at the village level was in the hands of the Hindus, they could not exhibit their ill-will against *Kafurs* (non-Muslims). It is true that there existed suspicion between the two communities sometimes, but that becomes inevitable when two new groups or cultures meet.

### 21.2.1 Status And Powers of the Sultan

The Sultan, or the king, who was the head of the State, was all powerful. His word was law. He was the chief executive, sole legislator, fountain of judicial authority and commander-in-chief. However, the strength or weakness of a Sultan depended upon his personality and

character. Weak kings could not be dictatorial, whereas strong rulers like Balban and Allauddin Khilji were able to act in a dictatorial manner.

There was no law of succession in those days. The principle of 'survival of the fittest' or 'might is right' operated. Often, there used to be fighting among brothers when the throne became vacant due to the death of the Sultan.

The Sultans transacted the business of the State in a magnificent **darbar**, which itself constituted a political institution. The Sultans organised their courts on the Persian model and spent lavishly on their maintenance. The Sultan generally discussed all important matters of the State in a Council, known as **Majlis-Am** or **Majlis-I-Khalwat** in which, the most trusted and highest officers, including the Ministers, were present. But, the Council did not have any constitutional status, and its decisions were not binding on the Sultan. It was purely a constitutional body.

### 21.2.2 Functions of the Ministers

The Sultan was assisted in the discharge of his functions by some Ministers, and a number of officials. The number of Ministers, was not fixed. It varied from time to time.

Among the Ministers who assisted the Sultan, the *Wazir* was the most important. He was also sometimes known as **Vakil**. He was the Prime Minister of the Sultan. He was in charge of the Finance Department, and was also the head of the entire administrative set-up. He appointed the important officers in the kingdom with the approval of the Sultan, and exercised control over the bureaucracy. In the discharge of his duties as Finance Minister, the *Wazir* was so important that a powerful **Wazir** could always control a weak Sultan.

The post of **Naib-Wazir** or Deputy Prime Minister also existed in those days.

Next to the **Wazir**, the **Ariz-I-Mamalik** was a powerful Minister. He can be compared to the modern Defence Minister. He had complete administrative control over the army. His duties included recruitment of the defence personnel, fixation of their salaries, providing equipment to the army, and deployment of the army whenever necessary. In times of war he went to the battle-field, but acted there as a subordinate to the Commander-in-chief. He also supervised the construction and maintenance of the forts. After the war, the **Ariz-I-Mamalik** supervised the distribution of booty, and saw that the State got its due share in it. He was assisted by *Naib* or Deputy Minister.

The **Dabir-I-Mamalik** was the Minister in charge of the Department of Correspondence and records of the royal court. This Department was known as the **Diwan-I-Insha**. The **Dabir-I-Mamalik** was also known as **Dabir-I-Khas** or **Amir Munshi**. All correspondence of the Sultan with the provincial and local Governments and foreign Governments, was carried on under his supervision. He was also responsible for the drafting of the **Firmans** of the Sultan. A number of **Dabirs** (clerks and calligraphists) were employed in this Department to carry on the correspondence.

The **Diwani-I-Risalat** was another important Department in the administration of the Delhi Sultanate. The Minister in charge of this department was known as **Sadr-us-Sudur**, who was primarily a Minister of ecclesiastical affairs. He supervised the management of religious institutions and also the disbursement of grants and stipends to the **Ulema**, **Shaikhs** and other

holy men. He also received appeals and complaints from the people and tried to redress their grievances.

The chief **Qazi** or the chief justice was also the Minister in charge of the Department of Justice, which was known as **Diwan-i-qaza**. **Barid-i-mamalik**, who was the Head of the Information and Intelligence Department, was also an important Minister during the period of the Delhi Sultans.

The Ministers were the personal servants of the Sultan and held their office as long as the Sultan was pleased with them. Their advice was not binding on the Sultan.

### 21.2.3 Provincial Government

The Provincial Government was an exact copy of the Central Government. The Head of the Provincial Government was the **Wali** or Governor. He was also known as **Muqti**. He was appointed by the Sultan, and was a deputy to him. The **Wali** was both a civil and military head of the State. He was responsible for the defence of the province, and for the maintenance of law and order. He was also the commander of the provincial army. The **Wali**, like the Sultan, maintained his *darbar*.

In the discharge of his duties, the provincial Head was assisted by provincial Ministers like **Wazir**, **Ariz**, and the **Qazi**. These provincial Ministers and other important officers in the province, were sometimes appointed directly by the Sultan. But generally, they were appointed by the Governor in consultation with the Sultan.

### 21.2.4 Local Government

Local Government, like the provincial Government, was not so well-developed during the Delhi Sultanate, as in the Mughal period.

The provinces were divided into some **Shiqs**, and each **Shiq** was divided into some **Parganas**. The **Shiqdar** was the head of the **Shiq**. He was the chief executive head of the **Shiq** or district, and was in charge of the maintenance of law and order in this territory.

Each **Pargana** or **Qasba** was a group of villages. According to Iban Bātuta, the **Pargana** consisted of about one hundred villages. The officials in a **Pargana** were **Amil**, **Mushrif**, **Khazandar** and **Qazi**. The **Amil** collected revenues, the **Mushrif** kept accounts, and the **Khazandar** was in charge of the Treasury. The **Qazi** was the judge. The **Kotwal** was also an important official in those days in local Government. He was the police chief of a town, and was vested with important powers to maintain law and order in the town.

### 21.2.5 Fiscal Policy

The State collected four kinds of taxes, the levy of which was prescribed by the Muslim law. The four taxes were **Zakat**, **Kharaj**, **Khams** and **Jiziya**. The **Zakat** was a religious tax paid by the Muslims as an act of piety for the benefit and welfare of their co-religionists. It was collected at the rate of 2.5% of the actual income or property. The **Kharaj** was the land revenue which varied from 10 to 50 per cent of the agricultural produce. It was payable in cash or in kind. The **Khams** was the State's share of war-booty. Generally 1/5 of what was acquired in the war was taken as the share of the state. The **Jiziya** was a tax collected from the Hindus.

### 21.2.6 The Iqta System

The **Iqta** system was a unique system developed during the Delhi Sultanate. Vast tracts of conquered territory, known as **Iqta**, was distributed by the Sultans to the nobles who helped the Sultans in the management of those territories. The nobles who got the **Iqtas** were known as **Iqtadars**. They had to bring the conquered territory under their control by establishing their administration there. The **Iqtadars** passed on their **Iqtas** to their descendants. This system made the nobles prosperous and powerful.

### 21.2.7 The Judiciary

The Sultan was the fountain of justice. His **darbar** constituted the highest civil and criminal court of justice, where original as well as appellate cases were heard. Next to the Sultan, the chief **Qazi** was the highest judicial authority. In the provinces, the Governors and the **Qazis** had judicial powers. Each town also had a **Qazi**. The **Shariat** or the Muslim law was followed in the administration of justice. The penal code was severe in those days. Capital punishment and physical torture were frequently awarded as punishments. Cutting of the limbs, driving nails into the body, pouring molten lead into the throat, and such other inhuman punishments were common in those days.

### 21.2.8 Military Organisation

The Government of the Delhi Sultans depended heavily on their army. The circumstances in which the Sultanate was placed, always necessitated the existence of a strong army. Hence, they bestowed much attention on the Turkish model. The military reforms of Allauddin Khilji resulted in the greater centralisation of the army. The cavalry was the most important branch of the army of the Sultans. It was their superiority in this branch of the army which helped them to win against the Indians. The infantry was the next important branch of the army. Elephants were also used for the transport of men and materials. The army during the Sultanate had no permanent commander-in-chief. The Sultan himself was the commander-in-chief. But, whenever an expedition was sent, a commander-in-chief was appointed. For example, Malik Kafur was appointed as the commander-in-chief for the southern expeditions by Allauddin Khilji.

The Government of the Delhi Sultans, inspite of its defects, served the people fairly well. Though not as developed as the Mughal system of administration, it was a fairly efficient system. Sir Wolseley Haig states: 'on the whole, it may be assumed that the rule of the Slave kings ..... was as just and humane as that of the Norman kings in England and far more tolerant than that of Philip II in Spain and the Netherlands'.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. How was the Prime Minister of the Delhi Sultan called?

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2. Who was the head of the provincial government?

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3. Name the two important units of local administration.

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### 21.3 THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM

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The economic system of the Delhi Sultanate was feudal in nature. The nobility who owned vast lands, had great social prominence because of their economic prosperity. The village was the basic economic unit. It was a self-sufficient system and production in the village was largely for local consumption. The techniques and instruments of production were primitive, but they served the purpose of limited production. The craftsmen in the villages were organised into distinct professions. In course of time, gradually, towns began to flourish. With the increase in towns, production in villages increased, and internal trade expanded. In the towns also, artisans lived and production was carried on. Certain towns specialised in the production of goods for export. The towns in Gujarat and Bengal, produced a variety of textiles, like white cotton, silk, velvet, satin and quilts. The Cambay cotton was famous for its quality and cheapness. Every town had a market place where merchants and consumers gathered. Fairs were held regularly for purposes of trade. In the course of his travels in India (1333-46), Ibn Batuta found the big cities with rich markets in the Gangetic valley, Malwa, Gujarat, Bengal, Deccan and Malabar. Among all the Sultans of Delhi, Alauddin Khilji showed much interest in economic matters. He introduced a number of reforms in the economic sphere. The most important of his reforms was the control of prices. He fixed the prices of all the commodities and took effective steps to see that the merchants sold the goods only at the prices fixed by the Government. The objective of his economic reforms was to enable the soldiers to live happily within the salaries which they got. All merchants had to register their names with the government to carry on trade. To implement the economic measures of the Sultan, two top officials, **Diwan-I-Riyasat** and **Sahana-I-Mandi** were appointed. The merchants who sold the goods at higher prices, and those who did not follow the regulations of the government, were severely punished.

#### 21.3.1 Agriculture

According to the foreign travellers who visited India, during this period, agriculture was flourishing in many parts of the country. Food crops, commercial crops, vegetable and fruit gardens, were grown in plenty. Ibn Batuta wrote that the fertility of the soil helped high production in the agricultural field. The irrigational facilities provided by the rulers also stimulated growth in the agricultural field. A large number of people in villages were dependant on agriculture.

#### 21.3.2 Industries

The textile industry was the most important industry in the country. Gujarat and Bengal were famous centres for cloth manufacture. In Gujarat, the city of Cambay was well-known

for its fine and cheap cloth. The cloth of Cambay was exported to many foreign countries. Bengal was famous for the abundance and variety of fine textiles, which also had a good market in foreign countries. In Malabar, the town of Shaliyat near Calicut, was famous for its cotton fabrics.

Apart from the textile industry, there were industries also for the production of luxury goods and household articles. Manufacture of jewellery, ivory goods, carpets and other articles, attracted the attention of the foreign travellers. Gujarat, which was famous for the textile industry, was equally famous for the production of the luxury goods that are mentioned above.

### 21.3.3 Inland Trade

Trade provided the livelihood for many people. In fact, it contributed to the prosperity of several people. Improvement of communications like roads and bridges, helped the growth of trade. But, one factor which was a hindrance to the growth of trade was the presence of thieves in trade routes. Capital cities were important centres of trade. Delhi was described by Ibn Batuta as the most magnificent city in the Muslim world, not only because of its buildings and political importance, but also because of the existence of large-scale trade. The **Vaisyas** and **Marwaris** of Gujarat and Rajasthan, and the Muslims controlled the trade. The **Banjaras** were roving traders with large caravans that were used for the transportation of goods. Fedlars going from house to house to sell their articles, also existed in those days.

The inn or the resting place gained much importance because of the expansion of trade.

### 21.3.4 Foreign Trade

There was extensive trade with foreign countries, particularly with West Asian countries during this period. Goa, Calicut, Cochin and Cambay were the important sea-ports from where foreign trade was carried on. The important items of exports were, pepper, cloves, ginger and other spices, sugar, rice, coconuts and cloth. The important items of imports were, horses, dry fruit, salt, copper and sulphur. Foreign trade was mostly in the hands of Muslims. They were either foreign or semi-foreign Muslims, who had come to India from Persia and the Arab countries to carry on trade between India and other foreign countries. These Muslims who almost had a monopoly of foreign trade, became very prosperous.

Extensive trade resulted in the increased use of coins. The **Jital** and the **tanka** were the most frequently used coins. The **jital** was a copper coin, and the **tanka** was a silver coin. It was the standard monetary unit of the Sultans.

### 21.3.5 General condition of the people

In general, the period of the Delhi Sultanate was a period of prosperity. The accounts of the foreigners who visited various parts of the country during this period, testify to the abundant wealth in the country.

Barbosa refers to the affluent life of the people in Gujarat. He states that the houses there were well-furnished, and that, people used to wear silk clothes and adorn themselves with precious ornaments. Malwa was also referred by him as an area of high prosperity. Wang Tayuan of China who visited India during the fourteenth century wrote that, nine out of ten people going to Orissa for trade from other countries, did not like to return because of the cheap living there. Another Chinese writer, Mahuan, who was in India, at the beginning of

the fifteenth century, notes that, Bengal was also prosperous. Iban Batuta wrote that, prices of commodities in Bengal were cheaper than in any other country which he had visited.

However, it must be noted that in the midst of plenty there was also poverty. The prosperity referred to by the foreigners was mostly confined to the higher classes in the society. The people of the lower classes, particularly the artisans, labourers, and others did not enjoy the comforts and luxuries of the wealthy people. They had to be contented with the bare necessities of life. The society consisted of only two classes, the rich and the poor. The middle class did not exist. Both Indian and foreign writers like Shams-i-siraj, Iban Batuta and Athanatius Nikitin were struck by the disparity that existed between the luxurious life of the rich on the one hand, and the miserable existence of the common people on the other.

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## 21.4 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

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The conquest of several parts of North India by the Muslims, and the establishment of their rule had far-reaching effects on the Indian society.

### 21.4.1 Vertical Division of the Society

One important consequence was the vertical division of the society into Hindus and Muslims. The invaders, who came to India during the earlier periods, were absorbed into the Hindu society. But, the total absorption of the Muslims into the Hindu fold or the Hindus into Islam, was impossible. Hence, the two communities lived with separate identities. The process of conversion of Hindus into Islam took place, resulting in some Hindus becoming Muslims. But, a large portion of the population continued to be Hindu. Though the two communities were distinct from one another, living together for several years in the same villages or towns, brought about some understanding and tolerance between the Hindus and Muslims. The Muslims practised the local customs and traditions, and the Hindus participated in the functions and festivals of the Muslims. Thus, in spite of the differences between the two, there was also some understanding and mutual cooperation among them.

### 21.4.2 Classes among the Muslims

The Muslim population mainly consisted of the nobility, merchants and artisans. The nobility and the merchants consisted of many foreign Muslims. But, the artisans were mainly Indians. Although theoretically there were no caste distinctions among the Muslims, in practice the Muslims of foreign origin did not mingle with the converted Indian Muslims.

### 21.4.3 Position of the Hindus

As the State of the Delhi Sultans was a theocracy, the Hindus occupied an inferior position in the society. They were called **Zimmis** or a people under a contract of protection. As Hindus they had to pay the religious tax, **Jiziya**. Generally, the Hindus were not given the top posts in the Government. They were considered fit only for small jobs. The treatment that was given to the Hindus by Allauddin Khilji, was an extreme type of fanaticism followed by a Sultan of this period towards the Hindus. Although all the Sultans did not follow such extremely fanatical policy towards the Hindus, it can be definitely stated that the Hindus were not treated as equal to the Muslims, by the Delhi Sultans.

#### 21.4.4 Position of Women

Among the Hindus as well as the Muslims, birth of daughters was disliked, and preference was shown to male children. That indicates the inferior status which women had in the society. Women had no freedom, and were kept secluded. The **Purdah** system existed both among the Muslims and the Hindus. Women were kept in the **Zanana** or separate apartments, outside which they were not allowed to appear, except in **Purdah**. Amir Khusrau, in his advice to his daughter, asks her 'not to leave the thread of the spinning wheel, and always to keep her face towards the wall of the house and her back towards the door, so that no body would be able to look at her'. Muslim women were not allowed to visit the tombs of holy men outside the city. The practice of **sati** and **jauhar** were widely prevalent. These sacrifices of women were admired. Amir Khusrau described **sati** as a noble practice. Iban Batuta witnessed the **Sati** on many occasions and gives details of such sacrifices.

#### 21.4.5 Was Hindu Society Degenerate?

Scholars such as Iswari Prasad believe that, the Hindu society during this period was degenerate. Its exclusiveness, pride and self-conceit are cited as evidence for their degeneration. The thinking of the Hindus that they knew everything and that all others were **Mlechchas** (impure people), is also mentioned as an example for the degeneration of the Hindu society. But, exclusiveness, branding others as **Mlechcha**, prohibition of sea-voyage and such other practices, were a reaction to the attack of the foreigners on the Hindu society. Loss of political freedom and power, definitely weakened the Hindus. But, the society did not remain static. To meet the new challenges, the society adopted new customs and traditions, and thereby proved that it was not stagnant.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Which were the important centres of textile production?

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2. Which were the most frequently used coins?

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3. Mention two important social consequences of the Muslim occupation of India.

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#### 21.5 LET US SUM UP

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1. The Delhi Sultanate was a theocracy. The principle of 'survival of the fittest' operated in matters relating to succession to the throne. The Sultan was assisted by the *Wazir* and other Ministers and officials.

2. The *Iqta* system developed in the Delhi Sultanate.
3. The economic system was feudal in nature. In general, it was a period of prosperity. But, in the midst of plenty, there was poverty.
4. Society was vertically divided into Hindus and Muslims
5. The Hindus were subjected to many difficulties.

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## 21.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. *Wazir* or *Vakil*
2. The Head of the provincial Government was the Governor. He was called *Wali* or *Muqti*.
3. *Shiq* and *Pargana*
- II 1. Bengal, Gujarat and Kerala were the famous centres of textile production. In Gujarat, Cambay, and in Kerala, Shaliyat near Calicut, were famous.
2. The *Jital* a copper coin, and the *Tanka* a silver coin.
3. (a) The society was vertically divided into Hindus and Muslims  
(b) The Hindus were subjected to ill-treatment by some fanatical rulers.

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## 21.7 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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### I. Answer the following questions in about 40 lines each

1. Bring out the salient features of the administrative system of the Delhi Sultanate.
2. How were the economic conditions in India under the Delhi Sultanate?
3. Give an account of the social conditions in North India during the Sultanate period.

### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each

1. Describe the status and powers of the Sultan during the Sultanate period
2. How was the provincial administration organised under the Delhi Sultanate?
3. Write about the system of local government during the Sultanate period.
4. State the system of military organisation under the Delhi Sultanate
5. How was the general condition of the people during the Sultanate period?
6. Examine the Hindu-Muslim relations under the Delhi Sultanate.

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## 21.8 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Day, U.N. : *Administrative System of Delhi Sultanate*
2. Iswari Prasad : *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*
3. Iswari Prasad : *History of Medieval India from 647 to 1526 A.D.*
4. Majumdar R.C. (ed) : *History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. VI*
5. Mehta, J.L. : *Advanced study in the History of Medieval India, Vol. I*
6. Panikkar, K.M. : *A Survey of India*
7. Qureshi, I.H. : *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*
8. Srivastava, A.L. : *Sultanate of Delhi*
9. Tarachand : *Influence of Islam on Indian culture*
10. Tripathi, A.S. : *Some Aspects of Muslim Rule in India.*

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## UNIT - 22: RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

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- 22.4 Rise and development of Sikhism
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  - 22.4.2 Khalsa Organisation
  - 22.4.3 Angad and Amardas
  - 22.4.4 Ramdas and Arjun
  - 22.4.5 Sikhism as a militant sect
- 22.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 22.6 Check Your progress : Answers
- 22.7 Examination Model Questions
- 22.8 Books for Further Reading

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### 22.0 OBJECTIVES

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By a study of this Unit, you must be able to know about

1. the features of the *Bhakti* movement and the important leaders of the *Bhakti* movement
2. *Sufism* and
3. Guru Nanak's preachings and the development of Sikhism

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## 22.1 INTRODUCTION

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The religious movements of the Medieval period, like the *Bhakti* cult and *Sufism* played an important part in Indian history. The nature, importance and impact of these movements will be explained in this Unit. A new religion, Sikhism, was born in the 15th century. This Unit will also give an account of the rise and development of Sikhism.

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## 22.2 BHAKTI MOVEMENT

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The **Bhakti** movement was the most important religious movement of the Medieval period in Indian History. Like Buddhism and Jainism, it was a reform movement. It was also a reaction against the predominance of rituals in the Hindu religion. It is said that the *Bhakti* cult is as old as the fifth century B.C. and that, the **Bhagavad Gita** also contains the philosophy of the **Bhakti** cult. But, the **Bhakti** cult, as preached by Ramananda, Chaitanya, Kabir and others, originated in 11th century. Among the leaders of that movement, some like Ramananda and Chaitanya were not influenced by Islam. But, others like Namadeva, Kabir and Nanak, were very much influenced by Islam.

The fundamental principle of the **Bhakti** cult was **Bhakti** or complete devotion and love of God. Those who preached this philosophy criticised the elaborate rituals, and proclaimed that God could be reached through *Bhakti* alone. **Bhakti**, it was said, is the final stage in the spiritual development of man.

### 22.2.1 Ramanuja

Ramanuja was perhaps the first philosopher and priest of the **Bhakti** cult in the Medieval period. He imbibed the spirit of **Bhakti** from the **Alvars** or Tamil saints of Ancient period. Ramanuja tried to dislodge the doctrine of **Advaita** of Shankaracharya, according to which God is form-less. Ramanuja encouraged the worship of God who is endowed with a form, and a number of virtues. This conception of God provided scope for **Bhakti** towards God.

### 22.2.2 Nimbarkar

A contemporary of Ramanuja, Nimbarkar also preached the **Bhakti** philosophy. He went from South India to North India, and preached his doctrines there. Nimbarkar was a great devotee of Krishna. He said 'the way to reach the lotus-feet of Krishna is the path of devotion'.

### 22.2.3 Madhva

Another great teacher of this period, Madhva, who was born about 1200 A.D. in the **Udipi** district of South Kanara, also laid emphasis on **Bhakti**. According to him, knowledge leads to **Bhakti**, and at the final stage of man's spiritual evolution, complete devotion to God will lead to liberation.

### 22.2.4 Ramananda

Another great exponent of the **Bhakti** cult was Ramananda. There is much controversy about the period in which he lived. According to some scholars, he belonged to the 14th century. Some others say that, he belonged to the first half of the 15th century. He opposed the doctrine of **maya** and encouraged people to worship Rama and Sita. Although he was a *brahmin*, he

opposed caste distinctions, and allowed people of all castes to become his disciples. He was the first among the reformers of the Medieval period to denounce the caste system. It can be said that he began what is known as the religious renaissance in North India. Ramananda had many followers in North India. Kabir was the greatest of his disciples.

#### 22.2.5 Vallabhacharya

Vallabhacharya of the 15th century was also a distinguished leader of religion. But, as stated by Monier Williams, Vallabhacharya's cult became in its degenerate form, 'the epicurianism of the East'.

#### 22.2.6. Chaitanya and Namadeva

A contemporary of Vallabhacharya was the famous Bengali reformer and saint, Chaitanya, who was born in 1484 A.D. became a *sanyasi* at the age of twenty five, and toured several parts of the country. Like Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya also preached the doctrine of love of Krishna. He said the individual soul can reach Krishna, the supreme lord, by **Bhakti** and **Bhakti** alone. Chaitanya also denounced the caste system and proclaimed the universal brotherhood of man. The futility of ceremonial rites was also emphasised by him. It was his staunch belief that love is the supreme regulating principle of this universe, which gave strength to his preachings. He told his disciples that the message of love for Krishna should be taught to all men, including the **chandals**. Chaitanya had thousands of his followers in Bengal and Orissa. The religious reformers, who were influenced by Islam, preached monotheism and condemned the caste system and idol worship. The first among such reformers was Namadeva, who belonged to the 13th century. He said that God is one and deprecated idol worship. He was a saint of Maharashtra, and wrote in the language of the people, simple poems condemning caste distinctions and also all types of rituals.

#### 22.2.7 Kabir

Kabir was perhaps the greatest of the socio-religious reformers of the Medieval period. Facts about his birth are shrouded in mystery. He was born in about 1398 A.D. According to tradition, he was born to a *brahmin* widow, who cast him off near a water tank to escape social tyranny. The child, it seems, was picked by Niru, a weaver, and was brought up by his wife, Nima, with great love and affection. Kabir's philosophy represents the process of assimilation which has taken place in his age between Hindu and Muslim thought. He sincerely preached Hindu-Muslim unity. The Hindu and the Muslim, according to him, are the pots of the same clay. He said that both are striving through different routes to reach the same goal. He condemned all kinds of rituals and preached pure devotion. He wrote, 'of what avail is the worship of stone and bathing in the Ganges, if the heart is not pure? Of what avail is pilgrimage to Mecca, if the pilgrim marches towards the **Kaba** with a deceitful and impure heart?'

Kabir preached a religion of universal brotherhood. He was convinced that the essence of Islam and Hinduism was the same, and declared that there is only one God, although he is called by different names - Ram, Rahim, Allah, Khuda, Hari, Govind and so on. His life-long mission was to unite the Hindus and Muslims, and wipe out all distinctions of caste and creed. As stated by K.S. Lal, he was 'perhaps the first socio-religious reformer who clearly and repeatedly declared that Hindus and Musalmans were the children of the Supreme Being'.

### 22.2.8 Features of the Bhakti Movement

All the leaders or philosophers who preached the *Bhakti* cult preached it in the language of the people. Namadeva wrote in Marathi, Chitanya wrote in Bengali, and Kabir's compositions were in the simple Hindi. Shankara Deva, the **Bhakti** leader of Assam, popularised the use of Assamese. The important religious works of the Hindus, like the **Puranas** and the **Bhagavad Gita**, were translated into the local languages during this period to enable the common people to study their religious works. This was indeed a very important development.

Another feature of the **Bhakti** movement was that, it appealed to many low class people. They were attracted to the teachings of Ramananda, Namadeva and Kabir, because they preached social equality. The upper class and orthodox people criticised and opposed the movement of the social reformers. But, the reformers carried on their work with patience and determination, and made an impact on the common people. K.S. Lal states that Kabir was like Christ to the lower class people.

The religious reformers of the Medieval period occupy an important place in the history of India, for the valuable contribution made by them in the religious and social spheres. They gave to the people, a simple religion, devoid of rituals and ceremonies. The simplification of the religions revitalised Hinduism, and enabled many common people to follow Hinduism, without any difficulty.

The greatest contribution of the **Bhakti** cult was that, it gave the privilege of 'communion with God to all, high and low, without distinction and without the aid of the self-seeking priestly class'.

The contribution of the reformers in the social sphere was much more significant than in the religious field. By their ideas of unity and equality, they revolutionised the Indian society in a peaceful and silent manner. Their powerful attacks on the caste system helped the millions of downtrodden people to improve their status in the society. Their ideas of Hindu-Muslim unity also, to some extent, built bridges of understanding between the two communities.

Although the **Bhakti** movement had a good impact on religion, society and the languages of the people, we should not overlook the limitations of the movement. The preachings of the reform leaders unfortunately did not bring about any change in the attitudes of the high caste and orthodox people.

Further, the effect of their propagation regarding social equality and religious unity, was only short-lived. After the death of the reformers, their ideas were forgotten, and the same old conditions of social inequality and misunderstanding continued.

Some scholars have expressed the view that the **Bhakti** movement of India was mainly the result of the impact of Islam. Yousuf Hussain, in his book, **Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture**, states that "the Bhakti movement of Medieval India represents the first effective impingement on Hindu society of Islamic culture and outlook". However, scholars like K.S. Lal believe that the **Bhakti** cult was not influenced by Islamic thought. He points out that Kabir was influenced by Ramananda, and that, Ramananda was influenced by Ramanuja, and not by Muslim thought. Though the thought of the **Bhakti** saints was essentially Hindu in

spirit, it cannot be denied that they were influenced by the contemporary Muslim philosophy, particularly in preaching the unity of the God, social equality, and in denouncing idol worship.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - I

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1. Who was the first among the reformers of the Medieval period to denounce the caste system?

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2. What was the life-long mission of Kabir?

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3. Mention two important effects of the *Bhakti* movement.

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### 22.3 SUFISM

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**Sufism** was an important religious force in India during the Medieval period. Like the **Bhakti** movement among the Hindus, **Sufism** exercised considerable influence on the people of India, in the social and religious spheres. The **Sufis** came to India after the establishment of the Turkish rule in India.

The **Sufis** became prominent in Persia in the 10th century, and from there they came to India. Their important doctrine is that, union with God can be achieved through the love of God. In their emphasis on love, they resembled the **Bhakti** saints. Because of their emphasis on love, they were tolerant of other religions and sects. They believed that there can be many paths to God. Because of their tolerance, they did not try to convert the Hindus to Islam. Some of the **Sufi** saints were influenced by the Hindu philosophy.

The **Sufis** generally isolated themselves from the society, and lived in seclusion. This was, to some extent, due to the attacks of the orthodox Muslims on the **Sufi** doctrines. **Sufism** was also a kind of revolt against orthodox Islam, just as the **Bhakti** cult was a revolt against, orthodox Hinduism. The **Sufis** said that the **Ulemas** misinterpreted the **Quran**. They also declared original democratic and egalitarian principles of the **Quran**. While the **Ulemas** accused the **Sufis** of being liberal, the **Sufis** alleged that the **Ulemas** succumbed to temporal temptations. The **Sufis** were far away from rebellion. The **Sufis** were organised into different religious orders under the leadership of a **Pir** or **Shaikh** who can be compared to the Hindu **guru**. The members of such orders were called **fakirs** or **dervishes**. Some of the Hindu customs like fasting and meditation, were practised by the saints, and provided a fertile ground for the growth of **Sufism** in India.

#### 22.3.1 Sufi Orders in India

There were three chief orders of the **Sufis** in India. The first among them was that of **Chisti**. Its leader was Moinuddin Chisti of Ajmir. He belonged to the 13th century. He said

that God can be reached through devotional music. Among the followers of Moinuddin Chisti, such illustrious people as the historian Barani and Amir Khusrau, the famous poet, were there. The **Chisti** order had many followers in the region of Delhi. The second order was that of Shaik Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, whose following was mainly in Sind. The third order was that of Firdausi, who was popular in the region of Bihar. Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi was respected by the Sultans and the people. He was an honest and brave man. He was not afraid of criticising even the actions of the Sultan.

There were also other **Sufi** saints like Baba Farid who lived at Ajodhan, which is now in Pakistan. Saiyid Muhammad Gesudaraz of Gulbarga, Shah Alam Bukhari of Gujarat, Baha-ud-din Zakariya of Multan were the other important **Sufi** saints of Medieval India.

The **Pirs** or **Shaiks** of **Sufism** were held in veneration by the Hindus also, because the doctrines and practices of the **Sufis** were akin to Hinduism. The Hindus went on pilgrimage to the places where the **Sufi** leaders were residing, and participated in the religious gatherings there, along with the Muslims. This unique devotion of the Hindus for the **Sufi** leaders continue even now in our country.

The **Sufi** cult, like the **Bhakti** cult, appealed to many low class people. The **Sufis** not only preached equality, but practised it, by allowing the artisans, cultivators and other low class people, to come into close contact with them. The democratic and egalitarian concepts of Islam were thus effectively put into practice by the **Sufis**.

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## 22.4 RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF SIKHISM

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Like Kabir, Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was a great socio-religious reform leader of the 15th century. Nanak was born on the full moon day of **Kartik**, i.e., on 26th November 1469 at Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib, on the banks of the river Ravi, about 40 miles from Lahore. According to Sikh tradition, he was employed for some time as an accountant in the Office of the Governor, Daulat Khan Lodi. But Nanak, because of his spiritual hunger, did not continue in that job. When he was about 30 years old, he left his wife and children, and became a **sanyasi**. He met many *Sufis* and saints, and travelled throughout the country. It is also believed that he visited Mecca also. Finally he settled down at Kartharpur in Punjab, and preached his ideas to his followers. His teachings, in the form of verses, were collected in a book, called, the **Adigranth**, which is the sacred book of the Sikhs.

### 22.4.1 Nanak's Preachings

The mission of Nanak's life was Hindu-Muslim unity. He tried to bridge the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims by declaring that God is one. Soon after he became **Guru**, Nanak declared that 'there is no Hindu, there is no Musalman'. Nanak's intention was to do away with the differences between the two. According to Nanak, God is one even though he is known by several names. Nanak freely used the names of Ram, Hari, Govind, Brahma, Allah, Khuda, Saheb, Parameswara and so on, for describing God.

Nanak did not approve renunciation or giving up worldly life. He said that renunciation amounts to running away from the battle of life. He advocated a middle path between extreme asceticism and free satisfaction of the senses.

Nanak, like Kabir, emphatically declared that all human beings are equal, and appealed to people not to practise the caste distinctions. He insisted that his followers should eat in a common kitchen **langar**, where every one could take food without caste distinctions. His denunciation of the caste system, attracted many people of the lower castes towards his religion.

#### 22.4.2 Khalsa Organisation

In course of time, the followers of Nanak were organised into a new religion, known as Sikhism. The Sikhs were organised as the **Khalsa** which means 'the pure'. Probably, the followers of Nanak also might have disappeared after Nanak, like the **Kabir panthis**, the followers of Kabir, if Nanak had not appointed a successor for him before his death. Nanak appointed Angad as his successor. The appointment of Angad as the successor of Nanak, was of immense significance. It assured the continuity of Sikhism and also unity in the religion.

#### 22.4.3 Angad and Amardas

Angad (1538-52 A.D.) developed the Sikhs into a distinct community. Tradition ascribes to him the invention of the **Gurumukhi** script. Both during the time of Nanak and Angad, some Hindus as well as Muslims, were converted as Sikhs. The successor of Angad was **Amardas**, during whose time Sikhism made further progress. The separate identity of Sikhs in their customs and practices was developed during his time. New ceremonies for births and deaths were started for the Sikhs. In those ceremonies, the recitation of the hymns of Sikh **Gurus** replaced the Sanskrit **slokas**.

#### 22.4.4 Ramdas and Arjun

The fourth **Guru** of the Sikhs was Ramdas (1578-87 A.D.), in whose time foundation was laid for the holy city of Amritsar. During his time, it was known as Ramdaspura. Ramdas nominated his youngest son Arjun as the next **Guru**. With that, the post became hereditary. **Guru Arjun** (1581-1606 A.D.), the fifth **Guru** of the Sikhs, was a great organiser. A tax was collected by him from all the Sikhs. The tax was known as '*das vandh*', and all the Sikhs had to pay 1/10th of their income as tax. With that, the Sikhs were organised into a distinct and self-sufficient community within the State. The greatest achievement of **Guru Arjun** was the compilation of the **Granth Sahib**, consisting of the sacred verses of the Sikhs. The conflict between the Muslims and the Sikhs started from the time of **Guru Arjun**, who was tortured to death by the Mughal emperor, Jehangir.

#### 22.4.5 Sikhism as a Militant Sect

The rise of Sikhism as a militant sect started from the 17th century, with the beginning of the conflict between the Sikhs and Mughals. It was then that the Sikhs distinguished themselves from other people by the five characteristics which are commonly called the five **K's**— **Kesha** (hair), **Kangha** (comb), **Kara** (iron bracelet), **Kirpan** (dagger) and **Kachahha** (underwear).

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## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. From where did the *Sufis* come to India?

2. Mention the important principles of *Sufism*

3. Mention two important teaching of Guru Nanak

4. Who killed Guru Arjun?

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## 22.5 LET US SUM UP

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1. The *Bhakti* movement which originated in the 11th century was a reform movement. The leaders of this movement denounced ritual, and said that God could be reached through *Bhakti* only.
2. Ramananda and Kabir were among the important religious leaders of the *Bhakti* movement. Ramananda denounced caste system. Kabir said that God is one and preached Hindu-Muslim unity.
3. The *Bhakti* cult had a great impact on many low caste people.
4. Like the *Bhakti* movement among the Hindus, the *Sufi* movement among the Muslims was a reform movement. The *Sufis* were opposed to orthodoxy and the combining of religion with politics.
5. Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, preached Hindu-Muslim unity, and denounced rituals and the caste system.
6. Sikhism became a militant sect, with the conflict between the Sikhs and the Muslims in the Mughal period.

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## 22.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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1. 1. Ramananda
2. To create Hindu-Muslim unity and to remove caste distinctions in the society
3. (a) The *Bhakti* movement reduced the prominence of rituals in Hinduism.  
(b) The attacks of the reform leaders on caste system, improved the social status of the lower castes in Hinduism.

- II. 1. Persia
2. The *Sufis* believed that there can be many
- (a) Paths to reach God
- (b) They were against orthodoxy and opposed the combining of religion with politics
3. (a) Nanak preached Hindu-Muslim Unity.
- (b) He denounced rituals and idol-worship.
4. Mughal Emperor Jahangir

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## 22.7 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each

1. Discuss the origin, growth and the impact of the Bhakti movement in Medieval India.
2. Give an account of the Sufi movement in Medieval India.
3. Trace the rise and development of Sikhism.

### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each

1. Bring out the salient features of the Bhakti movement.
2. What was the contribution of Ramananda to the Bhakti movement?
3. Write a short note on Kabir.
4. What were the main ideas of Sufism?
5. Mention the chief orders and saints of Sufism in India.
6. State the contribution of Ramadas and Arjun for the growth of Sikhism.

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## 22.8 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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- |                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Carpenter, J.E.     | : | <i>Theism in Medieval India</i>                                |
| 2. Iswari Prasad       | : | <i>History of Medieval India from 647 to 1526 A.D.</i>         |
| 3. Kushwant Singh      | : | <i>A History of the Sikhs, Vol. I</i>                          |
| 4. Lal, K.S.           | : | <i>The Twilight of the Sultanate</i>                           |
| 5. Majumdar, R.C. (ed) | : | <i>History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. II</i>       |
| 6. Mehta J.L.          | : | <i>Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India, Vol. I</i> |
| 7. Panikkar, K.M.      | : | <i>A Survey of India</i>                                       |
| 8. Sen, K.M.           | : | <i>Medieval Mysticism in India</i>                             |
| 9. Tarachand           | : | <i>Influence of Islam on Indian Culture</i>                    |
| 10. Yousuf Hussain     | : | <i>Glimpses of Indian Culture</i>                              |
| 11. Westcott           | : | <i>Kabir and the Kabir Panth</i>                               |

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## **BLOCK - IV : KAKATIYA, HOYSALA, SEUNA, VIJAYANAGAR AND BAHAMANI KINGDOMS**

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In this last Block of this Course, there are three Units. Unit 23 is on the Kakatiyas, Hoysalas, and Seunas. Unit 24 is on the Vijayanagar Kingdom. The last Unit is on the Bahamani Kingdom.

Kakatiyas, Hoysalas, Seunas, Vijayanagar rulers and the Bahamanis have played a significant and vital role in the Deccan politics since the second half of the 12th Century. Whereas the first three dynasties fought for political supremacy among themselves and against the Delhi Sultans, the latter two fought against each other, as the Delhi's authority became weak by their time. In spite of these political contests, this period has been enriched by the development of agriculture, industries and trade, and rich and extensive patronage and development of literature, art and religion. It has been a glorious period in the history of the Deccan and South India.

BRAOU

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## UNITE - 23: KAKATIYAS, HOYSALAS, SEUNAS

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- 23.5 Let us sum up

- 23.6 Check your progress : Answers
- 23.7 Examination Model Questions
- 23.8 Books for Further Reading

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## 23.0 OBJECTIVES

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By studying this Unit, you should be able to know about :

1. the origin and history of the Kakatiyas;
2. their administration and the economic and social conditions during their times;
3. the origin and history of the Hoysalas
4. the social and economic conditions during the time of the Hoysalas; and
5. the origin and history of the Seunas.

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## 23.1 INTRODUCTION

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Before tracing the rule of the Kakatiyas and the Hoysalas, it is necessary to state that these dynasties, along with the Yadavas or Seunas of Devagiri, were once feudatories of the Later Chalukyas of Kalyani (973-1189 A.D). Part of the Chalukyan history has been noted in an earlier Unit in so far as their relations with the Cholas is concerned. The empire was nurtured by rulers like Jayasimha II and Somesvara I and reached its climax during the reign of Vikramaditya VI (1076-1126 A.D), who started an era called the Chalukya Vikrama era to commemorate his accession to the throne. His death permitted the erstwhile feudatories to extend their areas at the expense of the masters, and they shook off their allegiance at different dates. The Northern part of the Chalukyan kingdom was annexed by the Yadavas, the Southern part by the Hoysalas, and the Eastern part by the Kakatiyas. There was interregnum in the Chalukyan rule during 1157 and 1183 A.D, which witnessed the rule of the Kalachuris. Though the Chalukya rule was restored in 1183 A.D. by Somesvara IV, it did not last long.

During the period of the rule of Kalachuri Bijjala, flourished Basava, the founder of the Vira Saiva sect that influenced the Kannada and Andhra areas.

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## 23.2 KAKATIYAS

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### 23.2.1 Origin

In the history of Andhra, the Kakatiya rule is significant in many respects. Next to the Satavahanas, it was they who ruled over the whole of the present Andhra Pradesh, while in between the Satavahanas and the Kakatiyas, many dynasties held their authority only in some part of the area. In addition, they did much for the economic development of Andhra.

The origin of the Kakatiyas is not clear; some scholars say that they derived their name from the Goddess **Kakati**, who was their family deity.

### 23.2.2 Early History

For a long time it was believed that the founder of their family was Beta I, who ruled in or about 1000 A.D. But, the Bayyaram Tank inscription of the time of Ganapatideva has

mentioned the generations preceding Beta I. The details supplied by this inscription indicate that the ancestors of Beta I were Generals in the army of the Rashtrakutas (753-973 A.D.), and played a role in the conflict of the Rashtrakutas with the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. After the fall of the Rashtrakutas, the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani rose to power in the Deccan. The Kakatiyas now helped the Western Chalukyas in their wars with the Cholas. Beta's son, Prola I helped Vikramaditya VI (1076-1126 A.D.) in his conquest of Konkan. He also successfully fought against his neighbours. He secured from his overlord the Anumakonda **vishaya** for his services. He was followed by Beta II, and the latter by Prola II. Prola II established his authority in the Telangana part of Andhra Pradesh by defeating the neighbouring chiefs and making defiant vassals of his overlord loyal. Prola's son was Rudradeva who declared his independence.

### 23.2.3 Rudradeva

Rudradeva (1150-1195 A.D.) defeated a number of chiefs who were holding territories adjacent to his kingdom, and consolidated his power in Telangana. Within a decade after his accession, he invaded coastal Andhra, and probably gained a part of it for a decade or so. In his last years, he sent an army to Palnad to help Nalagama in the famous battle of Palnad. But, the result of the battle is not clear. The Velanadu chiefs were powerful in coastal Andhra; and therefore, Rudradeva could not occupy the area. At the fag end of his rule, Rudradeva had to meet the opposition of the Seunas. In the battle that ensued, Rudradeva lost his life. Rudradeva was succeeded by his brother Mahadeva (1196-1199 A.D.) who had a very short rule. He opposed the Yadavas, and he too died in a battle. His son, Ganapatideva was imprisoned and later released.

Rudradeva was a great conqueror. He was assisted by valiant generals like the chiefs of Cheraku, Malyala, and Recherlas in the expansion of his kingdom. He had the title *Daya-gaja-kesari* and issued coins bearing this legend.

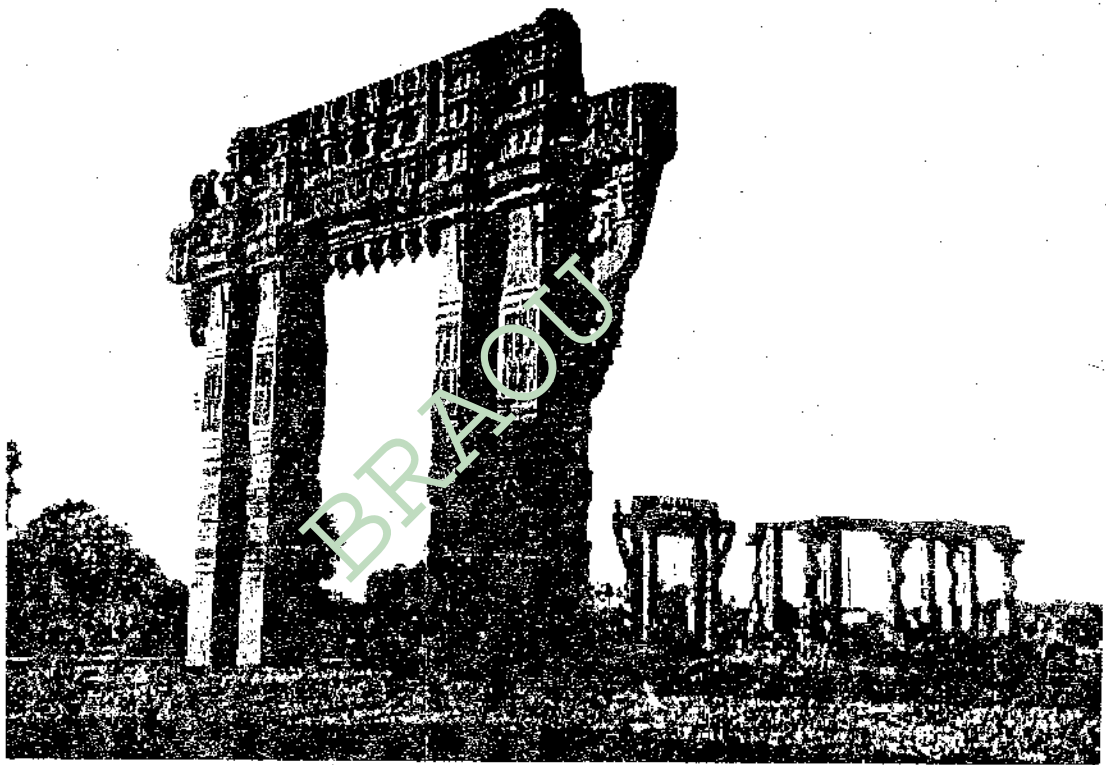
Rudradeva was a patron of art and letters. In order to meet the increasing needs of civil and military administration of his kingdom, he laid foundation for a new fort near Warangal. He constructed the Rudradeva temple, otherwise known as Thousand - Pillared temple at Anumakonda.

### 23.2.4 Ganapatideva

Ganapatideva's reign (1199-1261 A.D.) was a glorious period in the Kakatiya history, though it started and ended in unfavourable circumstances. Within a few years after his accession, Ganapati could reestablish himself, and soon he conquered Bezvada, and later the island of Divi near the mouth of river Krishna. He concluded a matrimonial alliance with the chief of Divi. Soon after, the authority of the Velanadu chiefs declined; and by 1212 A.D., Ganapati could send an army against Kalinga. He entered into the Kingdom of Nellore. When there was a struggle for succession to the throne, he placed Choda Tikka on the throne. Much later, in 1248 A.D there was again struggle for succession after Choda Tikka's death. Then, Ganapati supported the cause of Manumasiddhi II, son of the late monarch. Western Andhra came under the hold of the Cholas of Nellore, who were allied to the Kakatiyas. In spite of these victories of Ganapati, he failed against the Pandyas who defeated the Kakatiyas in the battle of Muttukur in the last years of Ganapati.

An important event which rebounds to the credit of Ganapideva was the change of the capital from Anumakonda to Orugallu (Warangal). The foundations for the new capital were laid by his uncle Rudradeva in his last years. Ganapati continued this work, and constructed two forts one within the other, in stone and mud respectively. The new fort, according to tradition, was provided with seventy-five bastions, the protection of each being entrusted to a **nayaka** in the service of the king.

Tradition has it that, poet Tikkana visited Warangal, and pleased Ganapatideva by his poetry. Again, Jayapanayaka, the **Gaja-sahini** and brother-in-law of Ganapatideva, wrote *Nrittaratnavali*, *Vadyaratnavali*, and *Gitaratnavali*, among which the first one only is available. It was a treatise on dance, where the *Marga* and *Desi* styles have been mentioned.



Warangal Fort Gateway

Ganapatideva bore the title *Raya-gaja-kesari* and issued coins and other standard measures and weights under that legend - *Kesari-mada*, *kesari-tumu* and *kesari-putti* etc.

#### 23.2.5 Rudramadevi

Ganapatideva nominated his daughter, Rudramadevi (1261-1289 A.D.) as his successor. He trained her in the civil and military affairs. Rudrama occupied for some time the Nellore region from the Pandyas; but the area changed its masters often. She came into conflict with the Yadavas, and secured a victory over them. It was, however, the rebellion of Kayastha Ambadeva in Western Andhra that brought about the death of Rudramadevi. Along with her Generals, Sripati and Ganapati Mallikarjuna, she died in a battle in 1289.

Rudrama married Chalukya Virabhadra, son of Indusekhara of Nidadavolu, and begot three daughters Mummadamba, Rudrama, and Ruyyama. The eldest is married to a Kakatiya prince, named Mahadeva, the second daughter to the Yadava prince Ellanadeva, and the last to the Induluri chief, Annayamatya.

Though a woman, she was undoubtedly one of the greatest rulers of the Andhra country. She took an active part in the government of the kingdom. Attired in male garments, she daily adorned the royal seat, gave interviews to foreigners, listened to the reports of the secret service, held consultations with her ministers, generals and other high dignitaries of the State, and advised them how they should act to promote the best interests of the State. On occasions of emergency, she did not hesitate to take the field in person, and led her troops against the enemy. She was a valiant and courageous fighter with great abilities of a general to lead her men in war.

Rudramadevi appropriated the title *Raya-gaja-kesari* of her father. She issued not only coins and measures with the title but also represented herself with this title in sculptural motif, where she is depicted as a warrior riding a lion standing on an elephant.

Her grandson, Mummadamma's son Kumararudra i.e., Prataparudra succeeded her to the throne.

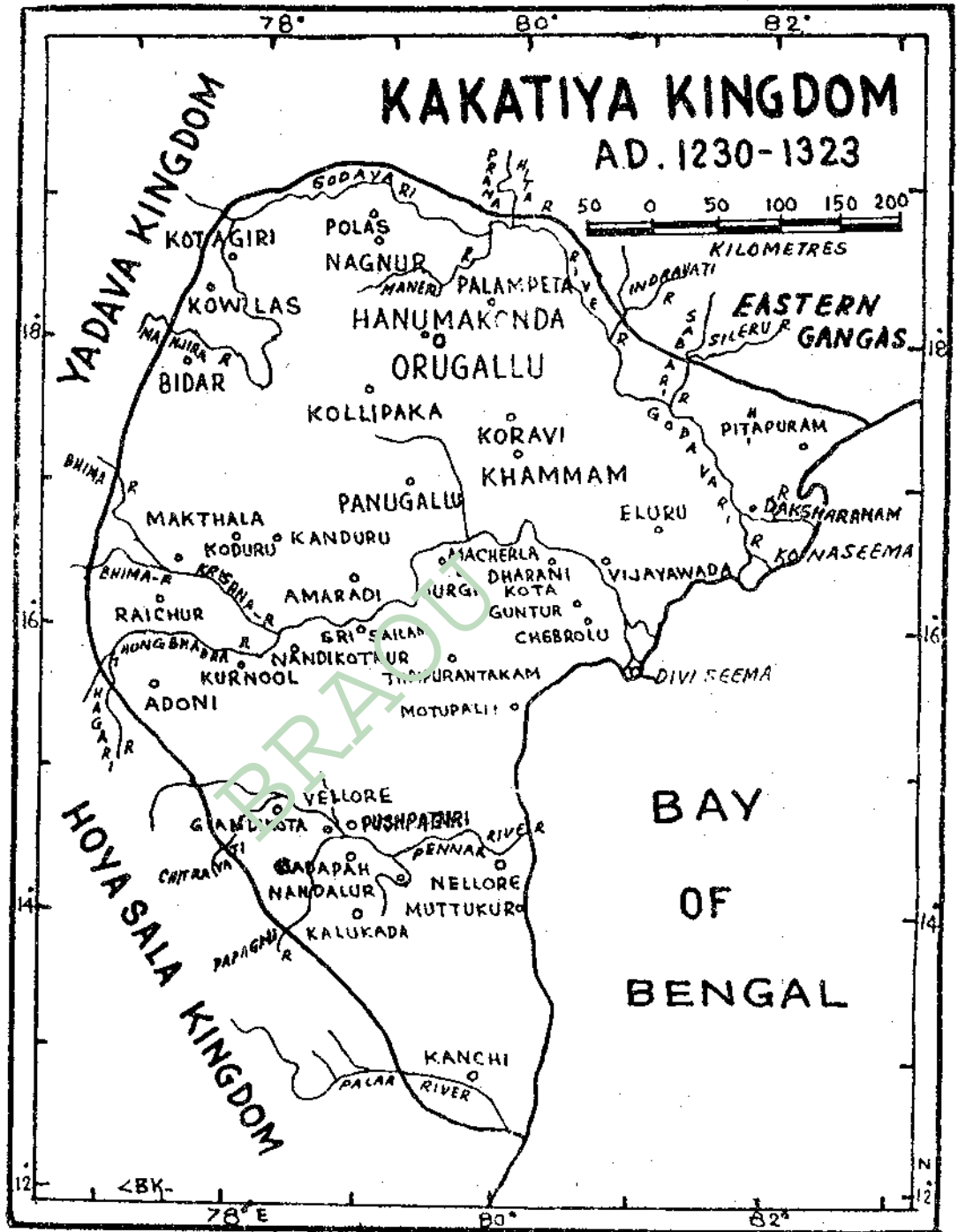
#### 23.2.6 Prataparudra

Prataparudra's immediate action, after his assumption of authority, was waging a war against Ambadeva. The latter was defeated, and his power delimited. This was followed by a successful attack on the Yadava territory. These successes did not last long. It was the Khilji and Tughlak invasions of the Deccan that brought about the end of the Kakatiya kingdom. The Deccan invasion of Allauddin Khilji in 1294-95 A.D. was the first of a series of invasions. After Devagiri, Warangal was attacked in 1302-03 A.D and 1309-10, during the reign of Allauddin Khilji. The latter invasion was led by Malik Kafur. By about 1318 A.D. Devagiri area was annexed by the Khiljis. The Tughlaks that succeeded the Khiljis, continued the attacks on Warangal. In 1321 A.D, Ghiasuddin Tughlak sent his son Juna to occupy the Kakatiya kingdom, in which he was successful; but, a false report of the death of his father came in his way. He came a year later, in 1322-23 and occupied the Kakatiya kingdom, and took Prataparudra as a captive. He seems to have passed away on the way to Delhi. The Vilasa grant of Musunuri Prolaya Nayaka states that Prataparudra, of his own will, passed away on the banks of the river Narmada.

The Telugu Chola kings - Opili Siddhi of Kotyadona, Manuma Ganda Gopala of Nellore and Telungu Bijjana s- were prominent among the vassals of Prataparudra. The Cheraku chiefs continued to be the hereditary subordinates that served the Kakatiyas even during this regime.

#### 23.2.7 Administration

Works on polity say that the king should be a master of the Vedas, Sastras and polity. He was also expected to rule justly with the help of able officers. Though high offices were filled by the *brahmanas*, others also were appointed, which shows that merit was the criterion. Ministers who advised the king are known by the names like **amatya**, **preggada** and **pradhana**. Whether these were identical or there was difference in their functions, it is not clear. One officer, called **bahattaraniyogadhipati**, supervised the 72 Departments relating to the palace



establishment. A number of officers connected with infantry, cavalry and elephant forces are mentioned in the Kakatiya inscriptions, e.g., **dandanayakas**, **asva-sahinis** and **gaja-sahinis**. There were a number of **lenkas** or bodyguards of the king.

The kingdom was divided into **nadus**, **sthalas** and **gramas**. The village was self-sufficient and settled its own affairs. It was administered by officers called **ayagars**, which included **Karanam**, **Reddi** and heads of different professions. The officers received shares in the village land as remuneration for their services. Apart from the direct administration by the king, some of the areas were under the vassals, who paid tribute to the king and might have helped him in his wars. The **Nayankara** system, largely prevalent in the Vijayanagara empire, had its origin in this period.

### 23.2.8 Economic and Social Conditions

The Kakatiya period witnessed the growth of sea-borne commerce. Ganapatideva issued a Charter of security at Motupalli to the foreign merchants by fixing the tolls to be collected at that port. Earlier, there was no such regulation; and hence, the local chiefs extracted much money from the traders. This was stopped and the tolls on items of export and import fixed.

The Kakatiyas encouraged agriculture and brought forest land under cultivation. It is said that during the time of the last ruler Prataparudra, the forest area in the Kurnool district was cleared and human habitation encouraged. To populate this area, concessions were given to the first settlers.

Lands were owned by individuals, and the rest belonged to the State. When gifts of lands or villages were made to temples or **Brahmanas**, they were exempted from taxes. Full ownership of land meant the rights of an individual over **bidhi**, **nikshepa**, **akshina**, **agami**, **siddha**, **sandhya**, **jala**, and **Pashana**.

For irrigation and drinking purposes, the Kakatiyas and their vassals constructed or dug tanks in different parts of the country. Tank construction has come to be regarded as an act of religious merit. As such, many well-to-do people undertook the construction. The construction of the Pakhal and Bayyaram tanks, the Chaunda **sanudram**, Nama **Samudram** and a number of canals dug from the beds of the rivers, show the interest evinced in the economic well-being by the Kakatiyas and their vassals, like the Malyala and Recherla families.

The four-fold caste system continued during this period. But, the professions enjoined on different castes in the **Sastras** were not followed strictly. The **Sudras** became the ruling class by now. With the spread of Vira Saivism in Andhra in 12th and 13th centuries, the superiority of **brahmanas** in the society was questioned. But, a number of **brahmanas** were given **agraharas** by the kings for the spread of education. The **Vaisyas** figure prominently during this period. Their important seat was Penugonda in the West Godavari district. Some of the **Vaisyas** acted as suppliers of articles needed by the Court. While some of them were owners of shops, others went on touring a number of places taking their wares. These caravans passed through forest and mountainous regions. They maintained their own military establishment to protect the caravans. In addition to the **Vaisyas**, the **Telikis** and **Balanjas** of **Sudra** community also carried on commerce. Each had its own guild to protect the interests of the respective professional classes. There was much corporate activity among them as is indicated by the terms like **Teliki-1000**, **Balanja** (or **Pekkandru**)-500. The number represented

the families which were constituted into one unit. They received a number of social privileges which would indicate their distinctiveness. There was internal trade in consumable articles like grains, pulses, vegetables, gingelly, spices, arecanut etc. There were also transactions in precious stones, lead, copper, cloth etc. Warangal, Nellore and a number of capitals of ruling dynasties and pilgrim centres, were the places where much business was transacted.

### 23.2.9 Literature

Telugu literature was encouraged by the kings and their vassals. Tikkana continued the work of Nannaya in translating the Sanskrit **Mahabharata**. Tikkana has a major share, in that he wrote 15 **parvas** out of 18. He lived in the court of Manumasiddhi II of Nellore, to whom Tikkana dedicated his **Nirvachanottara Ramayanam**. During this period were also written the **Bhaskara Ramayanam** and the **Ranganatha Ramayanam**.

Besides the epics, a number of other works were written during this period. Marana, a disciple of Tikkana, wrote **Markandeya Puranam**; Ketana was the author of **Dasakumaracharitam**, **Vijnanesvariya** and **Andhrabhashabhushanam**. The second work is a translation of Vijnanesvara's **Mitakshara** (Sanskrit), which was a commentary on **Yajnavalkya Smriti**.

Vijnanesvara lived in the court of Vikramaditya VI of the Chalukyas of Kalyani. This work of Vijnanesvara has been accepted as an authority on legal affairs in most parts of India.

A number of books have come out in Sanskrit, the most notable ones being Vidyanatha's **Prataparudrayasobhushanam** and Jayapa Nayaka's **Nrittaratnavali**. The former was the court-poet of Prataparudra and dealt with rhetoric in his book. The latter was the brother-in-law of Ganapatideva and he served him as a minister and General. This work on dance is considered as a masterpiece on the subject.

Among the religious works of this period, the most prominent were, Panditaradhya's **Sivatatvasaramu** and Palkuriki Somanatha's **Basava Puranam** and **Panditaradhya Charitam**. He was also the author of **Namaskara-gadya**, and **Vrishadhipa Satakamu**, which were useful for the devotees of Siva. The adoption by Somanatha of the **dvipada** metre in the place of **Vritta** metres, shows how literature was intended to speak to the masses.

### 23.2.10 Art and Architecture

The Kakatiyas inherited the main architectural style of the Chalukyas of Kalyani. However, the distinct feature of the Kakatiya architecture is the display of more native art than following the principles that are laid down in the texts on *Vastu* and *Silpa*. In the Trikuta temples, they closely followed the architecture of the Chalukyas. The earliest among the Kakatiya structures of importance is the Trikuta (having three *sikharas*) at Anumakonda, popularly known as Thousand - pillared temple. It is a uniform structure with a square hall in the centre, with the three shrines projecting to the East, West and North, and portico projecting to the South. The pillars in the *mukhamantapa* (frontal hall), the door-ways, the *panavatta* (base) of the Sivalinga, and the Nandi, exhibit rich decoration and the highest degree of polishing. The temple at Palampet which is not a Trikuta shrine, consists of a *garbha-griha*, and an elaborate *mantapa* with *antarala* (passage between *mandapa* and *garbha griha*) on one side, and porticos on the other side. It is constructed on an *upapitha* (sub-base) which forms also a platform for *pradakshina-patha*. The recess on the walls of the main temple is

provided with *kudus* (small windows) and ornamental pilaster (pillars partly merged into the wall). The superstructure is of pyramidal type consisting of four stories. It is built of light brick specially manufactured for that purpose. The door-jambs (door frames), lintels etc. are richly carved, and illustrated the masterly skill of the architects. The *rangamantapa* (dancing hall) where the musicians and singers used to recite the songs, contains pillars with most elegant carvings representing scenes from the *Bhagavata*. The '*nagini*' figurines which were placed in base reliefs, i.e., corner top portions under the roof, at the Ramappa temple at Palampet, are very popular for their artistic expression and beautification. *Toranas* (gateways majestic), *kirthimukha* (gateways), *alasa kanyas* (divine ladies), nandis, swans, on the gateways, *kolata scenes*, *paruveta*, (Siva's hunting scene), etc. are the specialities of the Kakatiya sculptors. It is observed by the scholars that dancing scenes represent the native style that was described by Jayapanayaka in his *Nritta Ratnavali*.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - I

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1. Who was the founder of the Kakatiya kingdom?

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2. Mention two important achievements of Ganapati Deva.

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3. Who was the last Kakatiya king?

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4. What were the important administrative units in the Kakatiya empire?

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5. What did the Kakatiyas do to provide water for agricultural purposes?

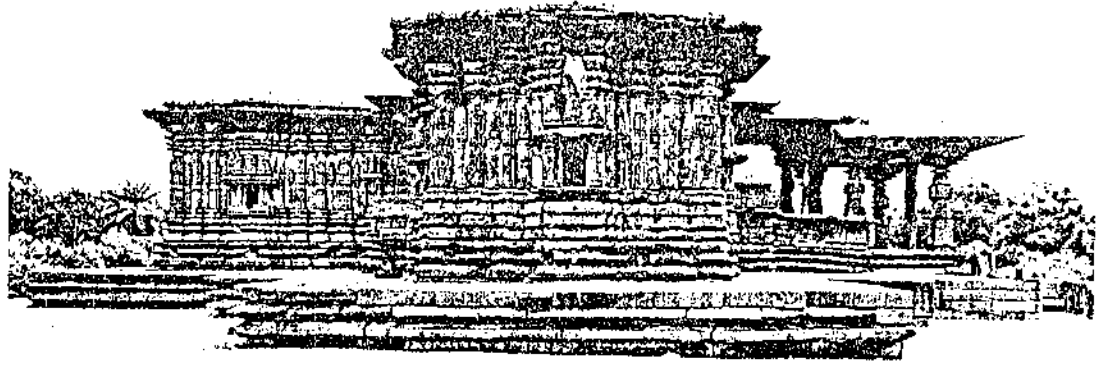
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6. Mention the works of Marana and Ketana.

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Main structure, "Thousand - Pillared" temple, from west, Hanamkonda, Andhra Pradesh, India. Kakatiya period, reign of Rudra I. Built in 1162



"Nagini" in Ramappa Temple at Palampet, Andhra Pradesh, India, relating to the Kakatiya period of Ganapati Deva of early 13th Century A.D.

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## 23.3 HOYSALAS

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The Hoysalas, like the Kakatiyas, were the feudatories of the Chalukya of Kalyani, who declared themselves independent. At the zenith of their power, they were masters of the whole of the Karnataka region.

### 23.3.1 Origin and Early History

Inscriptions mention that the Hoysalas hailed from Sosevur (the ancient Sasakapura) in the Chikmagalur district. They traced descent from Yadu. The earliest of the dynasty was one Sala, who killed a tiger at the time when he was worshipping a goddess. The dynasty came to be called Hoysala or Poysala after this incident. Except this story, there is no other evidence of the rule of Sala. Sala was probably a local chief. His successors Nripakama, Vinayaditya, Ereyanga and Ballala I, made efforts to conquer the neighbouring chiefs and consolidate their gains. Among these, Vinayaditya ruled for about 50 years from about 1047 A.D. He assisted his overlords Somesvara I, and later Somesvara II. He had to accept the subordination to Vikramaditya VI, when Somesvara II was overpowered. His son, Ereyanga attacked the fort of Dhara and captured Chakrakottam. This action might have been viewed seriously by his overlord, Vikramaditya. The result was Parama Jagaddeva's attack on Dvarasamudra. But, this was ably met by the sons of Ereyanga viz., Ballala and Vishnuvardhana. Ereyanga had a short rule and was succeeded by Ballala I, who in turn, was succeeded by his brother, Vishnuvardhana.

### 23.3.2 Vishnuvardhana

Vishnuvardhana (1110-1152 A.D) was responsible for the later greatness of the Hoysala kingdom. His important conquest was that of Gangavadi from the Cholas. He issued the coins with the title of "Talakadugonda", capture of Talakadu, the headquarters of Gangavadi. This was followed by conquests of other areas, particularly of the Cholas. He was mentioned as the conqueror of Kanchi; and his inscriptions are found in parts of Tamilnadu. In spite of these conquests, Vishnuvardhana described himself as a feudatory of Vikramaditya VI. It was only afterwards that he asserted his independence.

### 23.3.3 Narasimha I, II & III

Vishnuvardhana was succeeded by Narasimha I, who in turn, was succeeded by his son, Ballala II (1173-1220 A.D). This ruler expanded the kingdom at the expense of his neighbours, and clashed with the Yadavas of Devagiri at Soratur, and defeated Bhillama. At this time, there was contest between these two powers for occupying the Chalukyan possessions. During this period, a number of inscriptions of the Hoysalas were issued in Tamilnadu, suggesting the effective authority of the Hoysalas in that region. This was possible because of the difficulties of Chola Rajaraja III, whose authority was curbed by the Pandyas. The king seems to have interfered in the Southern politics by assisting the Chola ruler. In these campaigns, he got the assistance of his son, Narasimha II, and grandson, Somesvara. Narasimha ruled in his own right, and was succeeded by Somesvara (1233-67 A.D.). The latter had to change the policy towards the Cholas, and give support to the Pandyas, as Chola Rajendra II tried to assert the Chola authority. But, the accession of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya to the Pandyan throne in 1251 A.D, and the resultant fear among the Southern kings, made the Hoysalas and the

Cholas come together. In the last years of Somesvara, the empire was partitioned between his two sons, Narasimha III and Ramanatha. Narasimha III (1254-1292 A.D.) got most of the Karnataka area, while his brother was given the Tamil possessions of the empire. By about 1280 A.D, the Chola empire was annexed by the Pandyas; and this became a threat to the Hoysalas. But, the partition of the Hoysala empire had its own evil effects. To counteract these, Ballala III (1292-1342 A.D.), the son of Narasimha III, had to restore unity of the kingdom.

#### **23.3.4 Ballala III**

Ballala III was the last great ruler of the Hoysala family. He had to contend against the Yadavas of Devagiri, the Pandyas of Madura and later, the Muslim advance into the South. The conflicts among the rulers of the South paved the way for the establishment of Muslim rule. They were not able to see the common danger that was befalling them. Malik Kafur invaded the Hoysala kingdom in 1310 A.D, when Ballala was away from the capital. Though he returned immediately from the South, he thought it invain to give battle at that time. He had to conclude an alliance with the Muslims. By 1318 A.D, the Khiljis occupied the kingdom of Devagiri, and brought more pressure on the Kakatiya and Hoysala kingdoms. The Kakatiya kingdom was occupied in 1323 A.D. by the Muslims. By 1326, the Tughlaks invaded Kampila and Hoysala kingdoms, while pursuing one of the Muslim rebel governors. Here also, Ballala found it wise to hand over the rebel to the Sultan and save his dominions. In spite of the efforts of Ballala III, the Muslims could establish their power in Madura in 1335 A.D, and ruled up to 1368 A.D, when the Vijayanagar rulers who established their power in 1336 A.D, occupied it. The relations between Ballala III and the Vijayanagar rulers are interpreted differently. Some scholars feel that the Hoysalas and the Sangamas jointly fought against the Muslims. Others say that no such alliance existed between them. Ultimately, Ballala III was killed in the battle of Koppam in 1342 A.D. With him ends practically the history of the Hoysalas.

#### **23.3.5 Economy**

Like the Kakatiyas, the Hoysalas also encouraged reclamation of land, offering exemptions to the new settlers. They constructed tanks and dug canals for irrigating the fields. The matters relating to the repairs to the irrigation works were entrusted to the village assembly.

Inscriptions make mention of various industries like working on gold, silver, copper, brass, iron, wood-work, textiles, etc. There were markets where purchases and sales took place in items like grains, cloth, cattle, oil etc. There are references to the import of horses, elephants and pearls, and export of muslins, betel-nut etc. One merchant takes the credit of catering to the needs of Malwa, Kalinga, Chola and Pandya rulers, which speaks of the trade activity of the period.

#### **23.3.6 Social Conditions**

The Hoysalas described themselves as the protectors of **varnasramadharm**. The traditional four-fold system continued with a good number of sub-divisions. The customs prevalent among them must be given due respect by the kings. One of the kings of this family takes the credit of having seen to it that there was no mingling of castes. The **Settis** or merchants played an important part during this period. Other trading and artisan classes like the **Virabalanjas**, goldsmiths, carpenters, masons etc., attained importance during this period. The

kings used to appoint 'Garudas' who protected the king's person. This office is similar to that of Lenka of the Kakatiya period.

Women were honoured in society. Women of the higher classes were accomplished in fine arts. Some of the queens are stated to be ruling the country. Santaladevi, the queen of Vishnuvardhana, was an adept in music and dancing. Vira Saivism also accorded a good position to women.

Rice and millets formed the staple food of the people. Fruits like plantains, mangoes and jack fruits, and milk and its products were in frequent use.

### 23.3.7 Literature

The Hoysala period witnessed the composition of many works in Sanskrit and Kannada, in addition to the study of the old ones. The **Visishtadvaita** and **Dvaita** schools were founded during this period by Ramanuja and Madhva respectively. As both the preachers had contact with Karnataka, their works must have been studied by scholars. Ramanuja wrote commentaries in Sanskrit on the **Brahma Sutras** and **Bhagavad Gita**, and Madhva was the author of **Rig-Bhashya** and a commentary on the **Brahma Sutras** etc., A number of philosophical works in Sanskrit appeared in the wake of these works. Works on the **Advaita** school are not lacking in this period. Among the secular works of this period, mention may be made of **Gadyakarnamrita** by Vidyachakravarti. His name-sake grandson was the author of **Rukmini-Kalyana** and a commentator on **Kavyaprakasa** and **Alankara sarvasva**.

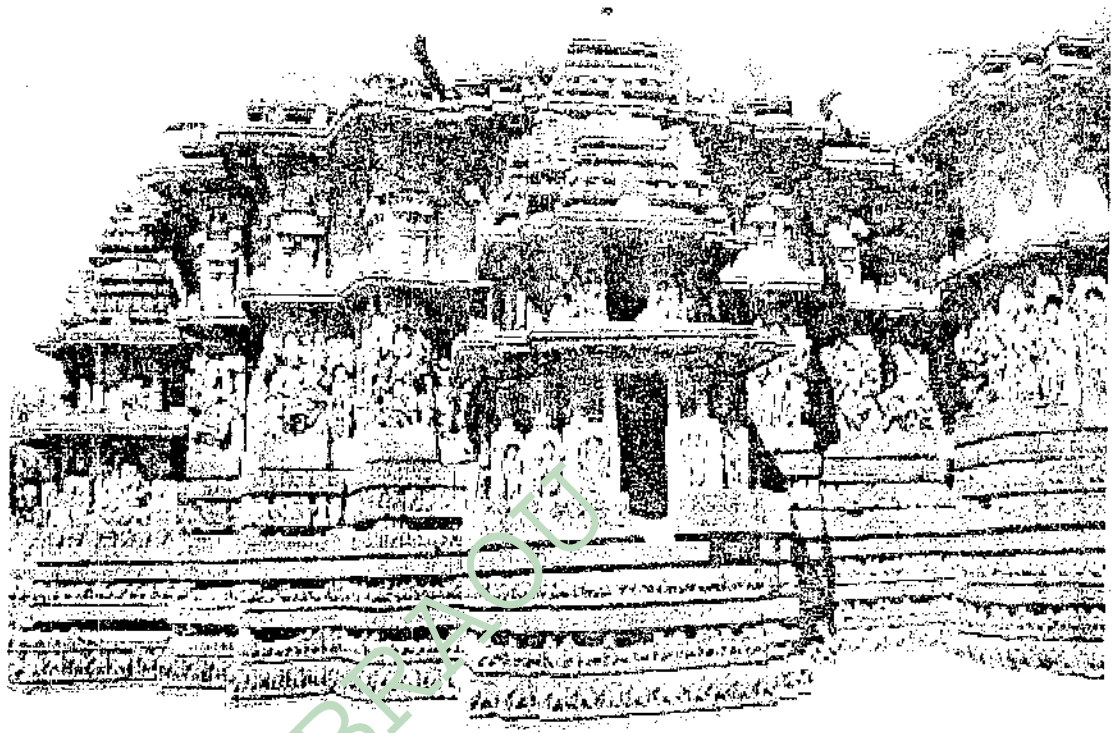
Among the Kannada works, **Girija Kalyana** by Hariharadeva, is very important; and it has Kalidasa's **Kumarasambhava** as its model. The same writer described in hundred works called **Ragale**, the lives of the Saiva and Vira Saiva saints. Rudrabhatta's **Jagannatha-Vijaya**, portrays the life of Lord Krishna. Nemichandra authored a Jain work, **Neminatha Purana**. The above works also show the changes brought about by writers in the Kannada language to suit the needs of the day.

### 23.3.8 Art and Architecture

In the field of art and architecture, the Hoysala contribution is remarkable with its own distinct characteristic features. The Hoysala temples are generally erected on raised platforms, planned in the shape of a star. They are known for decorative carvings from bottom to top. The walls contain the rows of elephants in the lower part. Among them, the images of gods and goddesses are chiselled. The Hoysala architects seem to have paid more attention for detailed carvings rather than ground structures and elevated towers. The Kesava temple, the Kappechannigaraya temple at Belur, the Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid and the temple with three *sikharas* (*trikuta*) at Somanathapur, stand as an excellent testimony to the glorious architectural achievements of the Hoysalas.

The Kesava temple was built in 1117 A.D. by Vishnuvardhana in commemoration of his victories. The temple is on an elevated platform with successive horizontal panels of elephants and lion heads. The cornices (upper portion of the interior of the walls) contain the bead-work; small human figures in the projecting ornamental niches (hollow portions). Inside the temple, the sculpture work is finer. The vestibule (passage between *mandapa* and *girbhagriha*) or the *Sukanasi* is surrounded by the *Dvarapalas*. The pillars in the central hall glorify the architectural abilities of the Hoysala architect. The delicate carvings in the Kappechannigaraya

temple illustrate the fact that the sculptors had chiselled them out perfectly after dedicated labour. The Hoysalesvara temple is a double-shrined (having two *sikharas*) one. As remarked by Percy Brown, “the temple at Halebid is the supreme climax of Indian architecture in its most prodigal plastic manifestation”. The Hoysala architecture reveals the culture and luxurious life led by the people of the age.



Temple wall, Hoysalesvara temple. Halebid, Karnataka, India. Hoysala period. Ca. 1121-60

### 23.3.9 Religion

The three important religions - Jainism, Saivism and Vaishnavism - flourished during the Hoysala period. The native place of the Hoysalas viz., Sosevur, was a centre of Jainism, and the kingdom was blessed by the Jain ascetic, Sudatta. The early rulers were guided by the Jain preachers. Though Vishnuvardhana became a follower of Vaishnavism under the influence of Ramanuja, he continued to patronise Jainism. His wife, Santaladevi was a follower of Jainism. The successors of Vishnuvardhana and their courtiers were devoted Jain preachers and were instrumental in constructing Jain temples in their capital, Dvarasamudra.

The Hoysalas patronised other religions as well. Some of the kings were called protectors of Saiva faith as well as champions of Vaishnavism. This shows that all religions were respected by them and were given encouragement. The Vira Saiva sect of Saivism was also popular in Karnataka during this period.

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## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. The Hoysalas were the feudatories of .....

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2. In which year did Malik Kafur occupy the Hoysala kingdom?

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3. Who wrote 'Girija Kalyana' in Kannada?

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BRAOU

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### 23.4 SEUNAS

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#### 23.4.1 Origin and Early History

The Seunas who are otherwise known as the Yadavas, served as feudatories under the Chalukyas of Kalyani, and later declared their independence, and established their authority in Karnataka with Devagiri as their headquarters. At the time when these Seunas rose to power, the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra were contesting for supremacy in Karnataka, which led to continuous hostility between them.

The Seunas claim descent from Yadu, one of the five sons of Yayati according to the *Puranas*. The *Vratakhanda* of Hemadri states that the Seunas were Yadavas who were originally lords of Mathura and later became kings of Dwaraka. In the South, it is stated, their authority was extended by the son of Subahu. During the time of Seuna Chandra I, the grandson of Subahu, the Yadava country derived the name Seunadesa, its territories extending from Nasik to Devagiri.

#### 23.4.2 Billama and Jaitugi

The known history of the dynasty begins with Billama who ruled in between 1173 to 1192 A.D. It is under him the Seunas overcame the Kalachuries, and became overlords of Western Deccan. But, Hoysala Ballala II opposed Billama and his successor Jaitugi or Jaitrapala (1192-1200 A.D.) and obtained a series of victories. The dreadful battle fought between them at Soratur checked the growth of the Seunas, though in course of time, they gained an upper hand, and pushed the Hoysalas to the South of Tungabhadra.

Basing on a verse in Jalhana's *Suktimuktavali*, some scholars held the view that Kakati Rudradeva was defeated by Billama. But, it is doubtful. By other evidences like Hemadri's *Vratakhanda*, it is evident that the Kakatiyas were defeated by Jaitrapala. The Kakatiya rulers - Rudradeva and Mahadeva - were killed, and Ganapatideva was taken as a captive.

#### 23.4.3 Singhana and his Successors

The earliest inscriptions available of the Seunas belong to the period of Singhana. Singhana's relations with the Kakatiyas were normally amicable. Though the clear circumstances are not known, Ganapatideva is stated to have given asylum to Permadideva, a son of Singhana.

His grandson, Kandhara, has boasted of having subdued the Rattas, the Kadambas, the Pandyas and the Hoysalas, and setting up pillars of victory near the Cauvery.

Mahadeva of the Seunas is stated to have invaded the Kakatiya kingdom. The Kakatiya sources stated that the Kakatiya queen Rudrama destroyed the Seuna army, and Mahadeva was chased up to Devagiri. But Hemadri states that Yadava Mahadeva, though defeated Rudrama, left her free, because of his reluctance to kill a woman. It seems some Yadava chiefs like Sarangapanideva, son of Singhana, due to their differences with Mahadeva, sought asylum in the Kakatiya kingdom.

Ellanadeva who is said to have born in the line of Billama and Jaitrapala, was married to a daughter of Kakati Rudramadevi.

#### 23.4.4 Ramachandra

The reign of Kandhara's son Ramachandra (Ramadeva) witnessed the first Muhammadan invasion of South India. Allauddin Khilji attacked Devagiri when Ramachandra was unprepared for a war. He was compelled to sue for peace, and by 1309 A.D. he was reduced to the position of a subordinate to the Sultan of Delhi.

After him, his son Sankaradeva, appears to have revived hostilities with the Khiljis. But, he was captured and killed in about 1312 A.D. Haripala, the son-in-law of Ramachandra, continued the struggle with the Northern power. In 1318 A.D. he became a captive in the hands of Mubarak Shah, and was ordered to be burnt alive, and his head was put up over the gate of his own capital, Devagiri. Thus, the Seuna kingdom of Devagiri disappeared from the political scene, and it became a province of the Khiljis.

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### 23.5 LET US SUM UP

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1. The Kakatiyas ruled over Andhra desa from the eleventh century A.D. Ganapati Deva, Rudrama Devi and Pratapa Rudra were prominent among the Kakatiyas.
2. The Kakatiyas are known for their patronage of art and literature. Temples at Hanumakonda, Palampeta and Pillalamarri are the best examples for their architecture.
3. The Hoysalas were contemporaries of the Kakatiyas in the Karnataka region. The greatest among them was Vira Ballala III.
4. The Hoysalas were also great patrons of art and literature. They continued the Chalukyan style of architecture. The best temples of this period are found at Belur, Halebid and Somanathpur.
5. The Seunas or Yadavas established their authority in Karnataka, and rivalled for political supremacy with the Hoysalas and the Kakatiyas.

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### 23.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS

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- I. 1. Beta I
  2. (a) He conquered Bezwada and Divi Island near Bezwada  
(b) He interfered in the succession struggle in Nellore and made Choda-Tikka as the king of Nellore.
  3. Prataparudra
  4. *Nadu, Sthalam and Grama*
  5. The Kakatiyas constructed irrigational tanks and canals.
  6. Marana wrote 'Markandeya Puranam' and Ketana was the author of 'Dasakumara Charitam', 'Vijnaneswariyam' and 'Andhrabhashabhushanam'.
- II. 1. Chalukyas
  2. 1310 A.D.
  3. Hariharadeva

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### 23.7 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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- I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.
1. Estimate the political achievements of the Kakatiyas.
  2. Trace the economic and social conditions under the Kakatiya rule
  3. Describe the cultural achievements of the Kakatiyas.
  4. Bring out the political achievements of the Hoysalas.
  5. What were the cultural developments under the Hoysala rule?
  6. Trace the history of the Seunas

**II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each**

1. Describe the administrative system under the Kakatiyas.
2. Trace the literary development under Kakatiya rule.
3. Bring out the economic and social conditions under the Hoysalas.
4. How did art develop during the Hoysala rule?
5. State the development of literature under the Hoysalas
6. Narrate the origin and early history of the Seunas

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**23.8 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING**

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- |     |  |   |  |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 1.  | Iswari Prasad                                      | : | <i>History of Medieval India from 647 to 1526 A.D.</i> |
| 2.  | Majumundar, R.C., Raychaudhari, H.C. and Datta, K. | : | <i>An Advanced History of India</i>                    |
| 3.  | Nilakanta Sastri, K.A.                             | : | <i>A History of South India</i>                        |
| 4.  | Nilakanta Sastri, K.A.                             | : | <i>History of India, Part II</i>                       |
| 5.  | Parabrahma Sastry, P.V.                            | : | <i>The Kakatiyas of Warangal</i>                       |
| 6.  | Qureshi, I.H.                                      | : | <i>The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi</i>    |
| 7.  | Satish Chandra                                     | : | <i>Medieval India (NCERT publications) vol. VI</i>     |
| 8.  | Stanley LanePoole                                  | : | <i>Medieval India</i>                                  |
| 9.  | Tarachand  | : | <i>Influence of Islam on Indian culture</i>            |
| 10. | Tripathi, A.S.                                     | : | <i>Some Aspects of Muslim Rule in India</i>            |
| 11. | Yazdani, G. (ed)                                   | : | <i>The Early History of the Deccan, Vol. II</i>        |

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## UNIT - 24 : VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE : CONDITIONS

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## 24.0 OBJECTIVES

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By a study of this Unit, you are expected to know

1. the political history of Vijayanagar, including the achievements of Krishnadevaraya;
2. causes for the disintegration of the empire;
3. administration in Vijayanagar empire;
4. social and economic conditions in the empire; and
5. growth of literature, art and architecture in the empire.

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## 24.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this Unit, the political and cultural history of the Vijayanagar kingdom is traced. It was the last Hindu kingdom in South India. It united the whole of the South, politically and culturally, without affecting the local customs and local culture in Telugu, Kannada and Tamil areas.

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## 24.2 POLITICAL HISTORY

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The history of Vijayanagar is a glorious chapter in the history of Medieval South India. It combined in itself, the areas of the Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam people. In political and cultural spheres, the rule of the Vijayanagar kings is remarkable. It was the last important Hindu kingdom in South India. It shaped the destinies of the South Indian people for three centuries (1336-1650 A.D.)

### 24.2.1 Sangamas - Harihar - And Bukka

The Empire of Vijayanagar was established by Harihara and Bukka in 1336 A.D., with the advice of sage Vidyaranya. They were the sons of Sangama and hence, their dynasty was named after him. The successors of Harihara and Bukka ruled up to 1485 A.D. and gave place to the Saluvas under Narasimha. Narasimha and his children ruled from 1486 to 1505. Then came the Tuluvas to the Vijayanagar throne. Their rule lasted upto 1570, when they were displaced by the Aravidus, who had ruled upto 1650 A.D. Though the dynasties were different, all these four ruled over a major part of South India, with variations in the extent of empire.

Regarding the origin of the founders, viz., Harihara and Bukka, there are differences of opinion among scholars. Some consider them as Andhras, connected with the Kakatiyas of Warangal, and others, as Karnatakas connected with the Hoysalas of Dwaramudra. There is no clear-cut contemporary inscription or literature or any other source, associating the founders with either dynasty.

Some accounts state that the two brothers served Prataparudra of the Kakatiya family, and after the latter's captivity in 1323 A.D. took shelter in the kingdom of Kampila, and stayed there upto 1327-28 A.D. When that kingdom was attacked by Muhammad-bin-Tuglak, they were taken as prisoners to Delhi. When there were Hindu rebellions in the South, the Sultan is said to have released them, and sent them to the South for the restoration of Muslim power. Though their activities during this period are not known, they became independent by 1336 A.D. They followed the example of the Musunuris and the Reddis in coastal Andhra,

who shook off the allegiance to the Tughlak ruler, a decade earlier. The success of the Hindu rulers is as much due to their zeal to become independent, as to the policies of Muhammad-bin-Tughlak, like the transfer of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad etc., which badly affected his empire.

The Vijayanagar Empire had to clash with the Reddis and the Hoysalas, and after 1347 A.D. with the Bahmanis of Gulbarga, who were established by then. By 1346 A.D. the Hoysala territories were occupied by the Vijayanagar rulers. There was continuous hostility with the Reddis and the Bahmanis. In the reigns of Harihara and Bukka, the empire touched parts of Nellore District, and Udayagiri became one of the important forts and the headquarters of a province. Their efforts were directed towards extension of their power up to the river Krishna. That would be a natural frontier with the Northeastern powers. It took a long time for the Rayas of Vijayanagar to realise this ambition. Rulers like Harihara-II and Devaraya-I, extended their power in this direction. The establishment of the Reddi kingdom of Rajahmundry during the reign of Kumaragiri Reddi (1386-1402 A.D.), and the conflict that ensued later between Kataya Vema and Peda Komati Vema, respectively of Rajahmundry and Kondavidu kingdoms, gave an opportunity to the Rayas to ally themselves with the Rajahmundry Reddis, and extend their power at the expense of the kings of Kondavidu. By 1424 A.D., the Reddi kingdom of Kondavidu disappeared, and its place was taken by the Vijayanagar rulers. The Reddi kingdom of Rajahmundry survived for only a quarter of a century, when it was occupied by the Gajapatis of Cuttack.

Another power with which the Sangamas fought throughout their rule, was that of the Bahmanis. Though the victories of the Rayas are mentioned in their inscriptions, the Muslim sources always credit the Sultans with success over the Rayas. The relations of the Bahmanis and the Vijayanagar rulers are detailed in the next Unit. It may be noted that most of the wars were fought for the acquisition of supremacy over the Krishna - Tungabhadra doab or Raichur doab. This was a fertile region, and hence, both the empires tried to occupy this area. However, both the powers exercised their authority in different parts of their doab. It must be said that, while the invasions of the Rayas were mostly confined to the restoration of their authority in the doab, the Bahmani forces attacked Hampi number of times and laid waste the Vijayanagar territory.

The Vijayanagar rulers could withstand these attacks as they had occupied the whole of the South. We have already indicated that the Hoysalas were put an end to, and their Kannada areas and a part of Tamil areas were taken before 1346 A.D. In the far South, an independent Muslim Sultanate came into being by 1335 A.D. This was overthrown by Bukka's son, Kumara Kampana, between 1365 and 1370 A.D; and, as a result, Vijayanagar rulers became masters of the far South as well. During the reign of Harihara II, son of Bukka I, the ports of Goa, Chaul and Dabhol were wrested from the Muslims. Ceylon also paid tribute to the Raya.

The Rayas of the Sangama line were confronted in their last years by the Gajapathis of Cuttack. Starting from 1435 A.D., Kapilesvara (1435-70 A.D.) and his successors viz., Purushottama (1470-97 A.D.) and Prataparudra (1497-1538 A.D.), ruled for a century, and influenced the politics of South India. The Vijayanagar rulers that succeeded Devaraya II (1422-46 A.D.), were weak and addicted to vices, and could not protect the empire. As a result, Kapilesvara Gajapati occupied the Northeastern parts of the Vijayanagar empire, like Kondavidu, Udayagiri etc., and conducted a raid as far as Trichinopoly. Owing to the internal

weakness and external threat, the Sangama power fell, and in its place, Saluvas rose to power.

### 24.2.2 Saluva Narasimha

Saluva Narasimha was governor of Chandragiri. Though he continued for a long time as a subordinate of the Sangamas, he thought that things could be set right, if he occupied the throne. He secured the throne with the help of Tuluva Narasa Nayaka, who was the father of the famous Krishnadevaraya. He was the ruler between 1486 and 1491 A.D. and appointed Narasa as the regent for his two sons. Narasa Nayaka served them loyally, but his eldest son, Vira Narasimha usurped the throne, and established the Tuluva family.

### 24.2.3 Tuluvas - Krishnadevaraya

The greatest of the Tuluvas was Krishnadevaraya (1509-29 A.D.). Immediately after his accession to the throne, Prataparudra Gajapati and Sultan Yousuf Adil Shah of Bijapur, led a campaign against Vijayanagar. Krishnadevaraya overpowered both of them soon, and deserved the epithets, 'Gajapati Gajakuta Palaka' and 'Paribhuta - suratrana'. But, the Raya had again to face these enemies during his reign. The Raya brought back the rebel chief of Ummattur to loyalty. He occupied Raichur in 1511 A.D. and led his forces to Gulbarga, where he defeated Amir Barid, the minister and regent of Mahmud, the Bahmani Sultan. This was followed by a campaign into Bidar, where he released Sultan Mahmud from prison, and took the title of '*Yavanarajya-Sthapanacharya*'. In 1513 A.D., he launched a campaign against Prataparudra Gajapati, and conquered Udayagiri, Kondavida, Kondapalli, Rajahmundry and a number of forts in Telangana, and set up a victory pillar at Potnur, and issued gifts to the temple at Simhachalam. His armies are stated to have reached Cuttack, and defeated the Gajapati; and as a result, the Gajapati came to terms with him, by which Prataparudra give his daughter in marriage to Krishnadevaraya in 1519 A.D. The latter gave over the areas North of the river Krishna to Prataparudra.

While Krishnadevaraya was engaged in the Kalinga campaign, Ismail Adil Shah, the Bijapur Sultan occupied the fort of Raichur. After this success over the Gajapati, Krishnadevaraya campaigned at Raichur in 1520 A.D. He was ultimately victorious. The Portuguese also helped him in this war. With the victory at Raichur, the Sultans feared the Vijayanagar empire. The Adil Shah Sultan sent Asad Khan Lari for the conclusion of a treaty with Krishnadevaraya. But, the latter's intrigue forced Krishnadevaraya to lead his army up to Gulbarga. He proceeded from there to Bijapur, and occupied it for sometime. At Gulbarga, he released from prison, the sons of Mahmud Bahmani.

Besides being a great general, Krishnadevaraya was a statesman, an administrator, a poet and a patron of art and letters. He has enunciated methods of good administration and statemanship in his work, *Amuktamalyada*. He was a patron of the '*Ashtadiggajas*' or eight renowned poets. He was not only a great builder of temples, but also the excavator of tanks, and one who received justly the appreciation of the people. He was succeeded by Achyutaraya (1529-42 A.D.), whose contribution was comparatively little. This was due mostly to the intrigues of Aliya Ramaraya of the Aravidu family who was the son-in-law of Krishnadevaraya. Ramaraya was successful in placing Sadasisvaraya, a nephew of Achyutaraya, on the throne by 1542 A.D, and himself became his regent. But, the king had no voice, and all state affairs were dealt by Ramaraya and his brothers.

#### 24.2.4 Ramaraya

Ramaraya took active interest in the Deccan politics, and helped different Sultans at different times. These Sultans, who partitioned the former Bahmani empire, were always jealous of each other, and were frequently at war. This was taken advantage by Ramaraya. He increased his power as arbitrator of the Sultans, and extended his empire at their expense. This was realized by the Sultans later, and they gave a united attack to Ramaraya. The result was the battle of Talikota, or better known as Rakshasi-Tangadi, fought in January 1565. Ramaraya lost his life in this battle. There are accounts to show that the Sultans could do it by a stratagem, and not by regular methods of warfare. The defection of the Muslim officers serving the Vijayanagar kings during the fight, also was a factor for Ramaraya's defeat.

#### 24.2.5 Downfall of the Empire

The battle of Talikota was a turning point in the history of Vijayanagar. The glory of the empire was lost, and there was none except Venkata II (1586-1614 A.D), among the Aravidus who could revive the prestige of Vijayanagar. The capitals were frequently shifted from Penukonda to Chandragiri, Chandragiri to Vellore etc., and the kings had to abandon Hampi, which served as capital for more than two centuries. The Raichur doab became a part of the Adil Shahi Kingdom of Bijapur, and could not be disputed by the Rayas. They carried on their conquests from the Northwestern side, while from the Northeast, the Sultans of Golkonda expanded their power at the expense of Vijayanagar. The Nayaks of the South, like those of Madura and Gingee, always defied the Vijayanagar authority, and hence, the kings could not get their support in men and materials, and subordinates like the Nayaks of Tanjore, Ikkeri, the Raja of Mysore etc., continued their regional authority but with no hope to recover the Vijayanagar authority in the South. Thus, ended the Vijayanagar empire which shaped the destinies of the people of the South for over three centuries.

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#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

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1. When was the Vijayanagar empire established? Who were its founders?

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2. Mention the reasons for the importance of Krishnadevaraya's reign?

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3. Which battle was responsible for the disintegration of Vijayanagar empire?

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## 24.3 ADMINISTRATION AND POLITY

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There was a big administrative machinery in the Vijayanagar Empire, as its extent was very wide. The empire was divided into **Rajyas** or **Mandalas** or provinces. These were divided into **Kottams** or **Kurrams**, which were again subdivided into **Nadus** and villages in Tamilnadu; and **Venthes**, **Simas**, **Sthalas** etc. in Karnataka; and **Simas** and **Sthalas** in Andhra. All these were under the control of the Central Government, consisting of the king and his ministry, who assisted him in the administration. The king was, however, not bound to accept the decisions of the ministers. Strong rulers had their own way, even though they consulted the council of ministers. The kings, however, respected public opinion and local customs. Krishnadevaraya's **Amuktamalyada** describes how the king should govern the kingdom and work for the welfare of the people. Sometimes, the nobles and the ministry enthroned the kings and influenced them. There are a number of regencies in the history of Vijayanagar, the most important one being that of Aliya Ramaraya, who was the **de facto** ruler in the reign of Sadasivaraya.

### 24.3.1 Provincial Administration

The king used to appoint governors for provinces from out of the prominent commanders or from the royal family itself. Sons and brothers could be appointed as Viceroys or governors in order that, they might possess administrative experience. Otherwise, military leaders were appointed as governors for the protection of the area from the external threat and for civilian duties. Sometimes, ministers were put in charge of provinces which they administered through their agents.

### 24.3.2 Semi-independent Rulers

In addition to the provincial governors, there are a number of **Nayakas**, who were appointed by the **Rayas** as semi-independent rulers. This **Nayankara** system started from the time of Aliya Ramaraya. During this period, important **Nayakships** centering round Madura, Tanjore and Gingee, came into existence. They used to pay annual tribute to the **Raya**, and maintained a quota of army that was allotted by the king. This army was to be supplied at the time of king's wars. These **Nayaks** were allowed to rule independently in their own area, as long as they fulfilled the above conditions. This system relieved the king of the internal administration of the area, and permitted him to concentrate on other affairs of the kingdom. But, during the rule of the Aravidu dynasty, the Southern **Nayaks**, except the **Nayak** of Tanjore, defied the Vijayanagar authority, and sometimes were in collusion with the enemies. This brought about the downfall of the Vijayanagar empire.

### 24.3.3 Village Administration

At the lowest level, i.e. the village level, the administration was run by **Ayagars**, who numbered twelve, and who included the **Karanam**, headman, and the elders of the different communities living in the area. The **Talari** functioned as the Police Officer. Generally in the far South, the local government was patterned on that of the Chola period, when effective measures were taken for the proper administration of the village. The merchant communities were entrusted with the administration of the towns.

### 24.3.4 Military Organisation

The Vijayanagar kings maintained a large army for the protection of the country. Their army was divided into three parts - infantry, cavalry and elephants - among which infantry was predominant. The foreign travellers were struck by the huge army that was maintained by the Vijayanagar kings. Nuniz says that Krishnadevaraya had 50,000 soldiers among whom 6,000 horsemen protected the palace; 200 cavalry men always followed the king. There were 3,000 men to look after the elephants, and 300 horse trainers. Much importance was given to forts, because, some of them like Penukonda, Chandragiri, Gutti, Kondavidu etc., happened to be the administrative headquarters as well.

### 24.3.5 Judicial Administration

Justice was administered on the basis of the **Smritis** and such other sacred books. Local customs and practices were given due weight. The king was no law-maker, but a regulator of law. He was the highest dispenser of justice. The **Amuktamalyada** says that the king should rule with an eye towards **Dharma**. Treason against the king and country was considered the greatest offence punishable with death. **Brahmins** were exempted from capital punishment. Legal cases at the village level were disposed of by its own court (**Dharmasana**) which consisted of important persons of the village, and the **Ayagars**. Similar courts existed at the provincial level. Sometimes, the king decided the cases with the help of the ministers and experts in legal matters. Ordeals were administered on suspected people to elicit truth in offences.

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## 24.4 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

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### 24.4.1 Caste System

The four-fold caste division of society into **Brahmanas**, **Kshatriyas**, **Vaisyas** and **Sudras** continued during this period. Kings considered themselves as protectors of this social system. But, many other social groups attained importance during this period, and were accorded special privileges. Though social harmony was maintained with occasional conflicts, each group tried to maintain its distinctiveness.

The **Brahmins** were given a respectable position in the society for their learning and righteous life. Foreign travellers invariably make mention of this caste. We know from other sources that, they were learned in Hindu scriptures, and were granted **Agraharas** or tax-free villages for their own maintainance and for that of their students. Some of them were priests in the temples. There were others who occupied important posts like ministers, generals and lower positions like accountants etc., in various offices. The kings were given a high status, whether they were **Kshatriyas** or not. The ruling class also received the attention of foreign travellers like Nicolo-di-Conti, Abdur Razzak, Paes, Nuniz etc. They visited the royal courts, and hence, noted the pomp of the kings. They described the person of the king, and their dress and ornaments. The way the king interviews the people, and the customary **salam** or respect made by persons, are all described in the accounts of the foreigners. Kings like Krishnadevaraya had a regulated programme described in the **Amuktamalyada**, and in the account of the contemporary Portuguese traveller, Paes. The king used to get up early, applied gingelly oil, and used to do exercises. After finishing his bath, he used to give audience to the people. He

used to discuss the state affairs with ministers and subordinate officers. In the afternoon, he spent time with scholars well versed in **Dharma**; and after dinner with musicians.

The third caste - the **Vaisyas** - mostly confined their attention to trade and commerce. They were one of the most wealthy castes in the society. The fourth caste - the **Sudras** - were large in numbers. They cultivated the land and attended to cattle-rearing. Some of the communities like the **Balanjas** attained prominence and took to trade as their profession. The army staff consisted of these people mostly.

In addition to these castes in the Vijayanagar period, there were others, like the Right-hand and Left-hand castes, each of which is said to have been divided into 98 sects. There are also references to **Kaikkolas** (weavers), **Vipravinodins** (Jugglers), barbers etc. The barber community received a number of exemptions from taxes during the time of Aliya Ramaraya.

#### 24.4.2 Habitations, Food and Dress

The capital city, Hampi, consisted of king's palace and a number of big and multi-storeyed houses. Every foreign traveller refers to the city, and how it was well protected by 7 fortified walls. Middle class lived in flat-roofed houses, while the lower classes in thatched houses.

Rice, millets and grains formed the articles of food. Kings took vegetarian, as well as the flesh of all animals, except that of cows and oxen. The kings spent large sums of money on their clothing. They wore silk clothes, worked with gold. Ordinary people wore **dhoti** and a shirt, and had small turban or cap. Though a majority walked bare-footed, people used shoes.

#### 24.4.3 Position of Women

Women were accorded a good position in society. Some of them were educated and known to be writers, e.g., Gangadevi, wife of Kumara Kampana, wrote **Maduravijayam**; and Tirumalamba authored **Vardambika Parinaya**. Foreign visitors mention the family women, and women who were connected with the temples (**Devadasis**). The latter used to possess good houses in fine streets at the capital city. They were dancers in the temples, and were remunerated by the temple administration, by granting lands in villages owned by the temples. The custom of **sati** was popular in Karnataka, which attracted the attention of foreign travellers.

#### 24.4.4 Economic Conditions

As agriculture was the mainstay of the population, the Vijayanagar kings tried for the irrigation of the lands. A number of tanks were constructed or dug for the purposes of irrigation, as well as drinking water. As an example, the Porumamilla tank in the Cuddapah district can be cited. An inscription at that place interestingly mentions the places where the tanks should or should not be constructed. Paes and Nuniz mention that, with the Portuguese assistance, Krishnadevaraya constructed a big tank near Hampi. A number of inscriptions mention the concessions that were granted to those who bring the land for the first time under cultivation. In the same manner, jungle clearance and subsequent habitation of the area were encouraged. These ultimately helped the kings in getting revenue from these areas. As most of the foreign travellers visited Hampi, the capital of the empire, they left much information pertaining to Karnataka and its coast. They attest to the fertility of the soil and cattle breeding. Rice, wheat, grains, cotton and gingelly, were the major products of the country. The kingdom produced textiles, and perfumery, and knew metallurgy and mining. The provincial centres and the

pilgrim centres were generally connected by roads which ran in different directions. One road connected Hampi - Vijayanagar and Goa, another road, Bhatkal and Vijayanagar, and another Vijayanagar and Madras, via Penukonda, Tirupati, Chandragiri and Pulicat. Exports included cloth, rice, iron and spices, and horses were imported. There was much struggle among the Bahmanis, Vijayanagar and the Portuguese, for the possession of Goa, which transacted this business. Vijayanagar was a centre where diamond trade was transacted. There were a number of ports on either side of the coast like Honavar, Bhatkal, Calicut on the West, Motupalli, Pulicat, Madras and Nagapatnam on the East. The ships from Burma and Malaya, halted at some of these ports, and took Indian wares to the Red Sea.

A number of taxes were collected from the agriculturists and the industrial workers. Tolls were collected at various business centres, and also at the village boundaries. Sometimes the taxes were farmed out to the highest bidder, and as a result, people were put to much hardship. Sometimes, owing to oppressive taxation, people of a village deserted it, and at a later date, the higher officials invited them, and gave concessions to them.

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## 24.5 RELIGION AND ART

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Among the religions popular in the Vijayanagar period and patronized by the **Rayas**, Saivism and Vaishnavism are significant. No doubt, Jainism also had a number of followers; and at the capital city Hampi itself, there are a few Jain monuments. There is only one instance of a conflict between the Jains and the Vaishnavas, which was set right by Bukka. Otherwise, there was harmony among the religions. There were complaints that, Hindus destroyed mosques, and the Muslims razed to the ground Hindu temples; but, these are mostly things that happened in the course of the campaigns. Devaraya II and Aliya Ramaraya are stated to be tolerant towards Islam; both employed a number of Muslims in their armies, and the former is said to have placed a copy of the **Quran** near him, so that the Muslims could pay respect to it, when they met him.

### 24.5.1 Saivism

There are two important sects of Saivism viz., **Kalamukha** and **Pasupata**, of which, the former was patronized by the early Vijayanagar kings. The **Kalamukhas** believed in the supremacy of Rudra and observance of the Vedic ritual, while the **Pasupatas** attach more importance to Saiva **agamas** than the Vedas, though they do not reject the latter. Kriyasakti Pandita was the **Kulaguru** of early Vijayanagar rulers. It may be mentioned that the tutelary deity of the Vijayanagar kings of the first three dynasties was God Virupaksha of Hampi. Vidyaranya, who is credited as the mentor of Harihara I and Bukka I, was a Saivite preacher.

Vira Saivism, the extreme form of Saivism, which preaches extreme devotion to Siva for salvation, was also popular in the Kannada area of the empire. It has broken the caste barriers for admission of individuals into its fold. It rejected the Vedic ceremonies and supremacy of the **Brahmana** caste in social and religious life.

**Sakti** worship was also common, and it was attended with animal sacrifice. All foreign travellers refer to the **Mahanavami** celebrations which were celebrated on a grand scale.

### 24.5.2 Vaishnavism

The followers of Ramanuja were now divided into two sects viz., **Vadagalai** and **Tengalai**. Vedanta Desikar was the leader of the former and Manavaala Muni was the leader of the latter. These flourished in 14th - 15th century. Though both the sects stress on devotion that would lead to one's salvation, there are differences on social and religious questions. The **Vadagalai** sect believed in the Vedas; in the self-effort of a person before self-surrender to the god; and in the caste system for governing persons of each caste, etc. The **Tengalai** sect, on the other hand, used Tamil **Prabandhas** as their source; believed that no self-effort was necessary for divine grace, and did not recognise caste.

Among the votaries of Vishnu can be mentioned, persons of the Vallabha sect. Vallabhacharya, who seems to be a contemporary of Krishnadevaraya, preached the worship of Krishna and Radha. He is said to have defeated Vyasa-tirtha, the celebrated Madhva teacher of the period of Krishnadevaraya. There were a number of followers of the Madhva school of thought, which started in 13th century. The message of the Madhva philosophy was spread in the form of **Kirtanas** by Haridasa in Kannada.

Vaishnavism attained importance in the Saluva period. The Saluvas were devotees of Venkatesa of Tirupati and Narasimha of Ahobilam. The Tuluvas also patronized many Vaishnavite temples. But, during the Saluva and Tuluva periods, the tutelary deity continued to be Virupaksha. Rulers like Krishnadevaraya gave as many gifts to Saivite temples as to the Vaishnavite temples. In the Aravidu dynasty, however, there was the change of the family deity from Virupaksha of Hampi to Venkatesa of Tirupati.

### 24.5.3 Temple and Matha

These two institutions played a notable role in the religious and cultural life of the people. Regular performance of the rituals in the temples was ensured by grant of tax-free lands to the temples or grant of taxes and tolls etc., that were otherwise due to the state, or to persons who were successful bidders in the auctions of these tolls. The rituals in the temples increased. The **Kalyanotsavas** of Gods were popular, and much business was transacted at the time of such temple festivals.

The temple created employment to many people. Architects, sculptors, astrologers, priests, potters, goldsmiths, scholars in Vedic, Epic and sectarian learning, and blacksmiths, musicians, dancers, instrumentalists all found a place in the temple establishment. They were allotted a piece of land belonging to the temple, as remuneration for their service. The affairs of the temple were managed by the **Sthanikas** or trustees, who must have wielded much influence. They could appoint and dismiss temple servants. They got the temple lands cultivated, and could dispose of the yield in a suitable manner. The cash donations made to the temple must have been given as loans for the needy. Some of the temples undertook humanitarian works like the maintenance of a hospital. Thus, the temple had a role in the socio-cultural spheres, in addition to the propagation of religion.

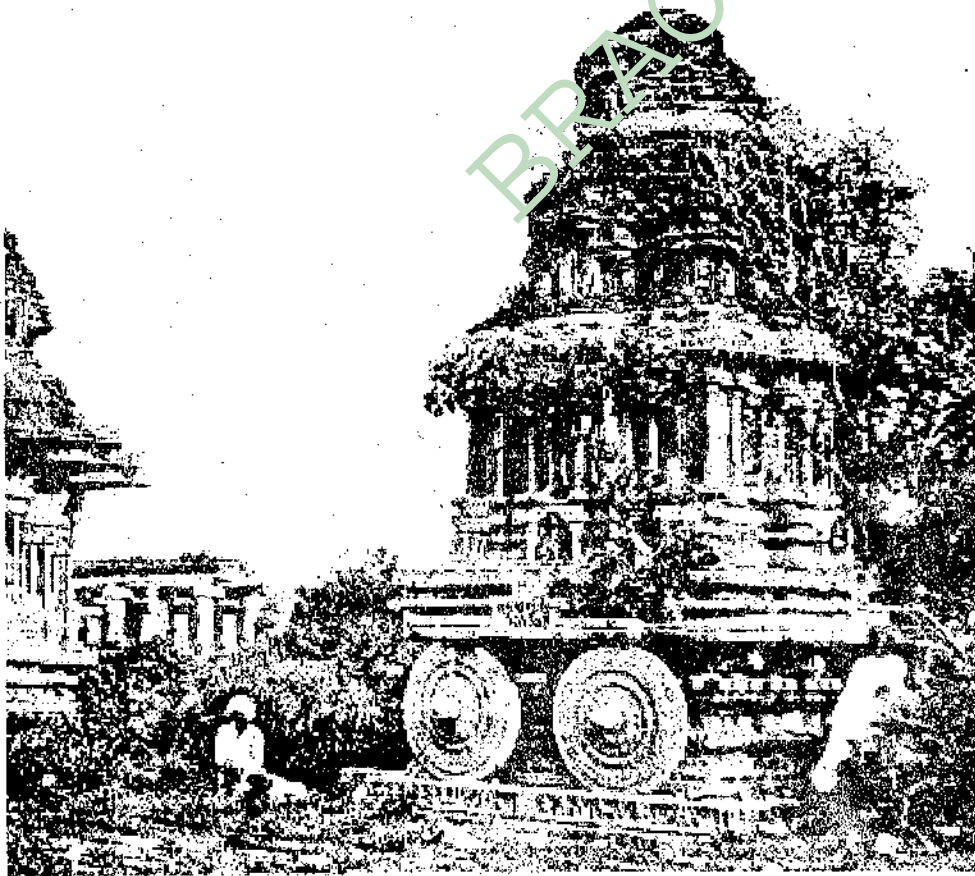
The **matha's** duty was to preach the sectarian learning, and spread its message to the people. It was a place where the monks of that sect lived. A number of **mathas** were powerful during the Vijayanagar period: Sringeri **matha**, Kanchi Kamakoti **pitha**, Pushpagiri **matha**, Vyasara **matha**, etc. They received the munificence of the State for their maintenance.

#### 24.5.4 Architecture and sculpture

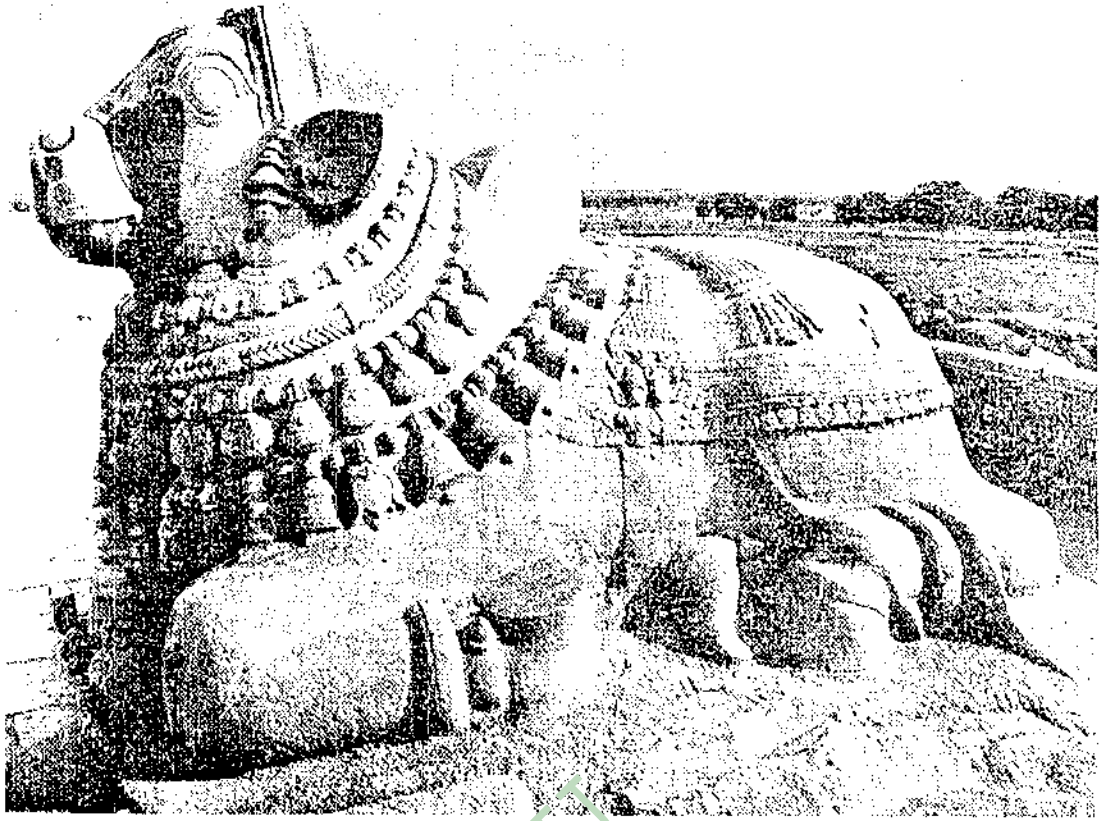
During the Vijayanagar period, there were some developments in architecture over the earlier features. The earlier practice of concentration on the **Vimana** or the structure raised over the **Sanctum Sanctorum**, has given place now to the **Gopuras** or towers erected at the entrance gates of the temple. This became a regular feature, even though it started and evolved during the Pandyan period. In addition to the main deity, a number of subordinate deities also figure in the temple now, the shrine of Goddess (**Amman** shrine) being the most important. Again, owing to the performance of the marriage of the God and Goddess, a separate pillared hall (**Mandapa**) used to be constructed for the performance of this ritual.

The constructions or additions of the Vijayanagar period can be noticed in the temples of Madura, Srirangam, Chidambaram, Kanchipuram, Tadipatri, Tiruvannamalai, etc. At Hampi, a number of temples were constructed, the most important of them being the Vithala temple and the Hazara Rama temple. The lower portions of some secular buildings at Hampi, known as the King's Audience Hall, and the throne platform, are available now. The former was a hall of hundred pillars. The latter was decorated, and the figures of animals were carved in the lower stages.

In respect of sculpture, the figure of Narasimha is found in most of the Vaishnavite temples. Two feminine **dwarapalikas** at the entrance of the temple gates are figured. They represent Ganga and Yamuna.



Stone chariot in the courtyard of Vitthalaswami temple, as it appeared in 1856, at Vijayanagar (Hampi), Karnataka, India. Vijayanagar period, probably reign of Krishnadevaraya. Ca. second-third decades of sixteenth century



Nandi, to the Northeast of Virabhadra temple, Lepakshi, Andhra Pradesh, India.  
Vijayanagar period Ca. Sixteenth century

The Vijayanagar period is also famous for specimens of painting. The temples of Virabhadra at Lepakshi, and Brinadisvara temple at Tanjore, are noted examples. The earlier practice of applying water-mixed pigments to the wet plaster gave place to pigments which were mixed with lime water, and applied to the dry plaster on the wall. At Lepakshi there were depicted scenes from the **Ramayana**, and figures of incarnations of Vishnu.

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## 24.6 LITERATURE

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For the spread of education, the Vijayanagar rulers, like the earlier kings, granted **agraharas** or tax-free villages, and lands to learned scholars for their own maintenance as well as that of the students, who were to be provided free education, boarding and lodging. Temples also attracted scholars as well as expounders of **Puranas** and philosophical issues, so that students could be trained in various fields of study.

### 24.6.1 Sanskrit

The Vijayanagar kings patronized Sanskrit in general, and also the vernaculars in different regions of their kingdom. Like the development in other fields, Vijayanagar rule witnessed enormous growth in literary works. During the reign of Bukka I, the **Samhitas** of all the four Vedas, and many of the **Brahmanas** and the **Aranyakas** were commented upon by a group of scholars under the leadership of Sayana. The Epics, **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata**, were also commented upon during this period.

Vedanta Desika (1268-1368 A.D.), wrote a **mahakavya** on Krishna's life, named **Yadavabhyudaya**; authored **Hamsa Sandesa**, in imitation of Kalidasa's **Meghasandesa**, and a drama entitled **Sankalpasuryodaya**, to reestablish the **Visistadvaitic** philosophy, and to counter the **Advaitic** drama, **Prabodhachandrodaya**. He wrote a commentary of Ramanuja's **Sribhashya**, entitled **Tatva-tika**, and a number of other works in support of **Visishtadvaita** philosophy. Even the **Tengalai** saint Manavalamuni, who preferred Tamil to Sanskrit, was the author of Sanskrit works like **Tatvatraya**, **Rahasyatraya**, etc.

Among the **Advaita** works, or commentaries, may be mentioned Vidyanaraya's **Vivaranaprimeyasangraha**, **Panchadasi** etc., and Sayana Madhava's **Sarvadarsana sangraha**. The **Dvaita** philosophy found its champions in Jayatirtha, a contemporary of Vidyanaraya, and author of a commentary, **Nyayasudha** on the **Brahmasutrashashya** of Madhava; and in Vyasaraya (1477-1539 A.D.) who wrote **Bhedojjivana**, **Tatparyachandrika** etc., reiterating the dualistic theory.

In legal literature, mention should be made of **Parasara Madhaviya**, a commentary on **Parasara Smriti**.

There are a number of works written by the kings and queens of Vijayanagar that have literary merit. Gangadevi, wife of Kumara Kampana, and daughter-in-law of Bukka I related her husband's conquest of Madura from the Sultans in her **Madhurevijayam**; Krishnadevaraya wrote **Jambavati Kalyana**; Tirumalamba wrote **Varadamalikaparinaya** relating to the marriage of Achyutaraya with Varadambika.

We may mention here the contributions of Appayya Dikshita (1520-92 A.D.) and Govinda Dikshita (who was patronised by Sevvappa Nayaka of Tanjore and his successors). The former wrote hundred works on different subjects - a commentary on **Yadavabhyudaya** of Vedanta Desika; **Parimala** which advocates **Advaita**; **Kavyayananda**, treatise on figures of speech; **Varadarajastava** etc. The latter wrote **Sahityasudha**, which was a history of the rulers, Achyutappa and Raghunatha of Tanjore. A number of works were written in the courts of the **Nayaks** of Tanjore, Madura etc.

#### 24.6.2 Vernaculars

Telugu, Kannada and Tamil literatures received much encouragement from the kings.

Bukka I was the patron of the work, **Uttara Harivamsam** written by Nachana Somana; under Tuluva Narasa, who was the regent to Immadi Narasimha, flourished Nandi Mallayya and Ghanta Singayya, who wrote **Varahapuram** and **Narasimha Puranam** and translated Krishna Misra's **Prabodhchandrodayam**. It is, however, the reign of Krishnadevaraya that attained celebrity in Telugu literature. It is generally believed that eight great poets "**Ashtadiggajas**" lived in his court. Himself the author of **Amuktamalyada**, he patronised a number of scholars, though some of the poets are chronologically far removed from the king. Peddana, the author of **Manucharitra**, Timmana, the author of **Parijatapaharanam** and Dhurjati, the author of **Kalahastimahatmyam** were definitely his contemporaries. Others like Ramarajabhushana, Ayyalaraju Ramabhadra, Pingali Surana and Tenali Rama Krishna, received recognition only after the time of Krishnadevaraya.

Most of the Kannada literature relates to Jain and Vira Saiva religions, though at a later stage, Brahmanical literature was produced. Bhimakavi was a scholar in Telugu and Kannada,

and translated Somanatha's **Basavapurana** into Kannada. Madhura wrote **Dharmnathapurana** on the fifteenth Jain Tirthankara. Chamarasa's **Prabhulingalila**, Mahalingadeva's **Ekottara Shatsthala**, Jakkana's **Nurondusthala**, are the works on Vira Saivism. Kumaravyasa was the author of ten **Parvas** of the *Bharata* in Kannada. Kumara Valmiki was the author of **Ramajaya** in Kannada. Among the Vaishnava writers, mention must be made of Purandaradasa, a contemporary of Krishnadevaraya.

In Tamil literature, we have a number of works belonging to the Vijayanagar period. Svarupananda Desikar's **Sivaprakasa Perundirattu**, and his pupil, Tattuvarayar's **Kurundirattu** are anthologies relating to Saivite Philosophies. Arunagirinatha's **Thiruppugal** praises **Muruga** (Kartikeya), and his seats, particularly, Palani. Manavalamahamuni wrote commentaries on Ramanuja's works. The **Bharatam** of Viluputtur gives the entire story of **Mahabharata**. There are a number of lexicons produced during this period, viz., **Niganduchudamani**, by Mandalapurusha, a Jain; **Agaradinigandu** by Chidambararevana Siddar, a Virasaiva; and **Kayadaram** by Kayadara, a *Brahmin*.

Thus, the Vijayanagar empire, during its existence of three centuries, united the whole of South India politically, while giving due weight to local customs and local cultures. It was the last Hindu empire that protected the Hindu interests in the South. South Indian History would have been different, had the Southern **Nayaks** rendered their wholehearted support to their overlord in troublous times in the 17th century.

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### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

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1. Write about the village administration in the Vijayanagar empire.

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2. How was the position of women in the Vijayanagar empire?

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3. Mention two places where the specimens of Vijayanagar painting are found.

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4. Who wrote **Parijathapaharanam**?

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## 24.7 LET US SUM UP

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1. The Vijayanagar kingdom was founded in 1336 A.D. by Harihara and Bukka on the advice of sage Vidyanaraya.
2. The early rulers belonged to Sangama dynasty. After the Sangamas, the Saluvas and Tuluvas ruled. Krishnadevaraya belonged to the Tuluva dynasty.
3. The battle of Tallikota in 1565 resulted in the downfall of the empire.
4. The **Nayankara** system of administration developed during the last days of the empire.
5. The kings considered themselves to be the protectors of **Varnashrama dharma**. Taxation was oppressive. But, there was general prosperity.
6. Temples and *Mathas* played a notable role in the life of people.
7. The Vijayanagar period is famous for the construction of many big and beautiful temples. The Vithala temple and the Hazara Rama temple at Hampi, are famous among them.
8. The **Astadiggajas** or eight great poets were patronised by Krishnadevaraya.

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## 24.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - ANSWERS

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- I.
  1. 1336 A.D. by Harihara I and Bukka I
  2. Krishnadevaraya's reign is important because
    - a) by his conquests, he extended the empire. He defeated the Gajapatis of Orissa and the Sultan of Bijapur.
    - b) he was a great administrator, and
    - c) he developed literature and art.
  3. The battle of Tallikota which was fought in 1565.
- II.
  1. Village administration in the Vijayanagar empire was run by 12 **Ayagars**. The **Karnam** was the most important village official. The **Talari** was the police authority in the village.
  2. Women were respected in the Vijayanagar society. Some of them, like Ganga Devi, were great writers. Women distinguished themselves in all fields. Women writers and women accountants are also mentioned during this period by foreign travellers. Practice of *sati* existed in the Karnataka region.
  3. Virabhadra temple at Lepakshi and Brihadiswara temple at Tanjore.
  4. Timmana

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## 24.9 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each

1. Trace the political achievements of the Sangama dynasty.
2. Estimate the achievements of Krishnadevaraya
3. Bring out the salient features of the administrative system of the Vijayanagar empire.
4. How were the social conditions during the Vijayanagar period?
5. What were the characteristics of religious development under the Vijayanagar rulers?
6. Describe the growth of literature during the Vijayanagar period.

### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. What was Ramaraya's role in Vijayanagar history?
2. Trace the causes that led to the decline of the Vijayanagar Empire.
3. Briefly describe the economic conditions that prevailed during the Vijayanagar period.
4. How did architecture and sculpture develop under the Vijayanagar rulers?

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## 24.10 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Iswari Prasad : *History of Medieval India from 647 to 1526 A.D.*
2. Mahalingam : *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar*
3. Majumdar, R.C.,  
Rayachaudari, H.S. : *An Advanced History of India*  
and Datta, K.
4. Nilakanta Sastry, K.A. : *A History of South India*
5. Sewell : *A Forgotten Empire*
6. Subramanian : *History of Tamilnadu.*

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## UNIT - 25: BAHAMANI KINGDOM - RISE AND DECLINE

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### Contents

- 25.0 Objectives
- 25.1 Introduction
- 25.2 Political History
  - 25.2.1 Muhammad Shah I
  - 25.2.2 Mujahid
  - 25.2.3 Muhammad Shah II
  - 25.2.4 Firoz Shah
  - 25.2.5 Ahmad Shah I and Alauddin II
  - 25.2.6 Humayun
  - 25.2.7 Muhammad Shah III - Mahmud Gawan
  - 25.2.8 Dissolution of the Kingdom
- 25.3 Administration
- 25.4 Monuments
- 25.5 Let us sum up
- 25.6 Check your progress: Answers
- 25.7 Examination Model Questions
- 25.8 Books For Further Reading

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### 25.0 OBJECTIVES

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By studying the contents of this Unit, you are expected to know;

1. the political history of the Bahamani kingdom;
2. reforms of Mahmud Gawan;
3. causes for the disintegration of the Bahamani kingdom;
4. the salient features of Bahamani administration; and
5. about the monuments of the Bahamani kingdom.

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### 25.1 INTRODUCTION

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The disturbed conditions in the Deccan, following the policies of Muhammad-Bin-Tughlak, resulted in the establishment of independent kingdoms in the Deccan and South India. The Reddis (1325 A.D.), the Sultans of Madura (1335 A.D.), and the **Rayas** of Vijayanagar (1336 A.D.), had already established their own power. In the Western Deccan also, there was a revolt against the Tughlak authority. At Daulatabad, the Afghan **amirs** under Ismail Makh assumed power, but they were overpowered by the Sultan's forces for a time. After restoration,

Ismail handed over power to Hasan Gangu in 1347 A.D. who came to be known as Allauddin Bahman Shah, and ruled up to 1358 A.D. Allauddin's family ruled up to 1526 A.D., though their rule after 1490 was ineffective, marked by the declaration of independence by the erstwhile subordinates. During their rule, the Bahmanis fought incessantly with Vijayanagar, and occasionally with other neighbours. Their rule contributed for the development of Islamic architecture in the Deccan.

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## 25.2. POLITICAL HISTORY

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Allauddin tried his best to extend his territory after putting down opposition from nobles who had leanings towards the Tughlak ruler. Within two years of his rule, he defeated Kapaya Nayaka of the Musunoori family, and wrested the fort of Kaulas. He also conquered the Raichur doab successfully. By about 1354 A.D. the Sultan attacked the kingdom of Vijayanagar for a second time. Whether he was successful in this expedition, it is not clear. Both Allauddin and Harihara are credited with success. From the events of a later period, it may be noted that at least, the Raichur doab or a part of it, must have gone under the control of the Bahmanis. As a result of these campaigns, the Penganga and the Krishna (and a part of Raichur doab) in the North and the South, the West coast and Bhongir in the East, formed the boundaries of the Bahamani empire. He made Gulbarga as his capital.

### 25.2.1 Muhammad Shah I

Allauddin was succeeded by his son, Muhammad Shah I (1358-75 A.D.). Soon after his accession, the kings of Telangana and Vijayanagar viz., Kapaya Nayaka and Bukka I, demanded the Sultan to restore their areas, which were conquered by his father. The Sultan feared at this time an attack on his territory by Firoz Shah Tughlak, and hence, he did not respond immediately. After Firoz Shah gave up the invasion, the Sultan demanded tribute from the Hindu Kings. Kapaya Nayaka sent his son to seize the fort of Kaulas, but he was defeated by the Sultan. Again, the Sultan landed in Telangana, occupied Warangal and Golkonda, and forced Kapaya Nayaka to give up the latter fort. After his victory, Muhammad Shah I celebrated this success and ordered that the musicians who entertained him, should be paid from the Vijayanagar treasury. But, the musicians were humiliated at Vijayanagar, and sent back; and Bukka captured Mudgal. This infuriated the Sultan who marched against Vijayanagar, and retook Mudgal, and laid waste the Vijayanagar territory. Bukka was forced to come to terms with the Sultan by paying money to the musicians. The treaty concluded by them recognised the river Krishna to be the boundary for both; and hence, it is doubtful whether the Sultan was really successful. One of the terms of the treaty was that, non-combatants should not be molested.

Internally, the Sultan could suppress the rebellion of Bahram Khan, the Governor of Daulatabad.

### 25.2.2 Mujahid

Muhammad Shah I's successor on the throne was his son Mujahid, who had a short rule of 3 years (1375-78 A.D), which was not uneventful. He sent a message to Bukka that the latter should waive his claim over the Krishna - Tungabhadra doab, as joint possession of the area was leading to constant trouble. The Rayas refused the request. The Sultan began invading the Vijayanagar territory. After a prolonged conflict, the Raya shut himself up in his capital.

The Sultan could not capture the city, and hence raised the siege. Mujahid was murdered on his way to his kingdom at the instance of his uncle, Daud Khan. The latter ruled for a month and was murdered, and the throne passed to Muhammad Shah II, a grandson of the founder.

### 25.2.3 Muhammad Shah II

Muhammad Shah II (1378-97 A.D.), was a peace-loving ruler. During his period, the Vijayanagar ruler, Harihara II grabbed the important ports like Goa, Chaul and Dabhol from the Bahmanis, and gained commercial supremacy on the West coast. The year 1397 A.D. witnessed the death of Muhammad and the short rule of two Sultans, before Firoz Shah (1397-1422) could ascend the throne.

### 25.2.4 Firoz Shah

Firoz Shah was one of the greatest rulers of the Bahamanis. In the period that intervened the death of Muhammad Shah II and the accession of Firoz Shah, Harihara II marched towards the doab for the occupation of Raichur and Mudgal. By a stratagem, the Sultan's forces crossed the river Krishna, and a few Muslims disguised as entertainers, killed a prince. There was much confusion in the Hindu camp, and the Hindus left the battle field. They were pursued up to their capital and the area of the **Rayas** was laid waste. The Vijayanagar king was forced to conclude a treaty by which **status quo** of the boundaries was agreed.

The next war took place in 1406 A.D when Devaraya I sent an expedition into the doab in search of a girl who lived at Mudgal. By the time the Vijayanagar army came to Mudgal, the girl and her family left the city, and hence, the Vijayanagar forces looted the area. The Sultan marched against Devaraya and defeated him, and forced Devaraya to give his daughter in marriage to the Sultan and to cede the fort of Banapur as dowry. There was another war between Bahamani and Vijayanagar kingdoms in 1417 A.D, which was fought for about two years for the possession of the fort of Panagal. The Sultan could not succeed on this occasion. The Recherlas who had usually supported the Sultan, defected on this occasion. This could also be a cause for the defeat of the Sultan. Firoz Shah was perturbed by this disaster, and abdicated the throne in favour of his brother, Ahmad Shah I.

### 25.2.5 Ahmad Shah I and Allauddin II

Ahmad Shah I (1422-35 A.D) immediately avenged his defeat, and forced the Vijayanagar king Vijayaraya, to come to terms by paying a large amount. He was also successful in capturing Warangal. He defeated the king of Malwa on the banks of the Tapti. He shifted the capital from Gulbarga to Bidar. Ahmad was succeeded by his son, Allauddin II (1436-58 A.D). By this time, there were rival groups in the Bahamani court, one consisting of the foreigners and the other, the Deccani Muslims. He supported the foreigners, which act gave much trouble from the side of the Deccanis. He deputed his brother, Muhammad for waging a war against his brother, but was subdued, and he was made governor of Raichur doab. In 1437-A.D, parts of Konkan were conquered by the Sultan. It resulted in the matrimonial alliance of the Sultan with a Hindu ruler. The new wife was preferred by the Sultan, to the daughter of Nasir Khan of Khandesh, whom he married earlier. This provoked Nasir Khan who took the field and invaded Berar. At this time, the governor of Daulatabad, who was also the leader of the foreigners, defeated Nasir Khan and this event enhanced the prestige of the foreigners in the court. Meanwhile, Devaraya II reorganised his army, and occupied Mudgal, and laid siege to

Raichur. There were three battles in which success varied. Finally, the Raya had to come to terms with the Sultan. The rule of Allauddin II witnessed the slaughter of many of the foreigners, as a result of the intrigues of the Deccanis.

#### **25.2.6 Humayun**

Allauddin nominated his son Humayun, to the throne. He ruled from 1458 to 1461 A.D. He was notorious for his cruelty and oppression. A conspiracy and two revolts were suppressed mercilessly. He was a very unpopular ruler, and was killed by his own servants. And his eldest son, Nizam Shah was enthroned, when he was barely eight years old. The Gajapatis invaded the Bahamani kingdom at the time, which, however, failed. When the Sultan of Malwa marched against the Bahamanis, the latter secured the support of the ruler of Gujarat, and saved his kingdom. Two years after his accession, Nizam Shah died suddenly, and was succeeded by his brother, Muhammad Shah III (1463-82 A.D).

#### **25.2.7 Muhammad Shah III - Mahmud Gawan**

Muhammad's reign is very important in that he was served by Mahmud Gawan, one of the most successful generals and administrators of the Medieval period. Gawan wanted to conquer the Konkan coast effectively, so that trade with Western countries could be revived. Again, the local Hindu chiefs in that area were harassing Muslim merchants and pilgrims. He was successful in subjugating this area and occupying Goa, the most important port on the West coast. This was effected by 1472 A.D.


While Gawan was engaged in wresting Konkan, the assistance of the Bahamanis was sought by Hamvira, one of the sons of Kapilesvara Gajapati, in his bid to become the ruler of Orissa in succession of his father and against his brother, Purushottama. Hamvira was assisted by a general of the Bahamanis in becoming the ruler. But, soon Purushottama, the other son of Kapilesvara made himself the ruler of Orissa, and relegated Hamvira to a subordinate position. Successful attempts were made by the Bahamanis to wrest coastal Andhra, in particular Kondavidu and Rajahmundry.

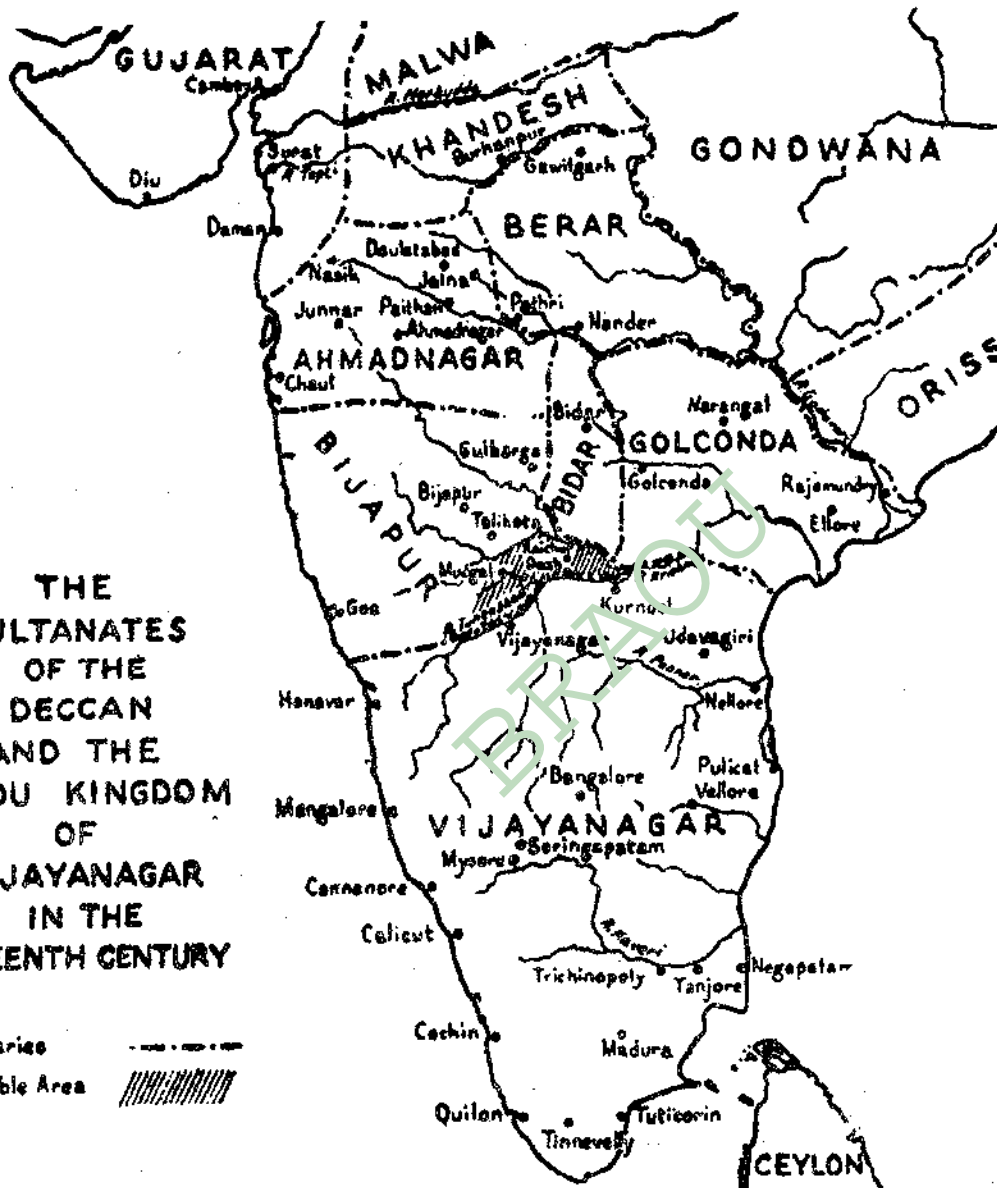
The Bahamani empire now became a territory touching both the coasts. Political honours were distributed between the foreigners and the Deccanis. Yousuf Adil Khan and Mahmud Gawan, who were foreigners, governed Gulbarga, Bijapur and Daulatabad; Malik Hasan held Telangana, and Fathullah Imad-ul-mulk governed Berar.

The loss of Konkan coast was felt heavily by Vijayanagar, and Virupaksha II instigated the local rulers and tried to recover Goa, but failed. Kondavidu also rose against the Bahamanis, and went under the Gajapatis temporarily. But, Muhammad marched against the area, and consolidated his gains in Kondavidu and Rajahmundry by 1478 A.D. Telangana was also completely subdued, and the Eastern area was divided into provinces, with Warangal and Rajahmundry as capitals.

Some time after this, the Sultan wanted to punish Saluva Narasimha, a governor in the Vijayanagar empire, who seems to have assisted the Gajapati. The Sultan marched through Rajahmundry, and stationed himself at Kondapalli. Entrusting it to his son Mahmud, and the minister Gawan, he marched as far as Kanchi, and raided the area. He captured Machilipatnam, but incurred some losses, while at war with Saluva Narasimha.

**THE  
SULTANATES  
OF THE  
DECCAN  
AND THE  
HINDU KINGDOM  
OF  
VIJAYANAGAR  
IN THE  
SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

Boundaries ————  
Debatable Area 



Mahmud Gawan carried out a number of reforms in administration, which dispelled any fear of rebellion. As he was a foreigner, this reform affected the Deccanis who were in charge of five governorships out of eight. They plotted against Gawan, and forged a letter purported to have been written by Gawan to the ruler of Orissa, requesting him to invade the Bahamani territory. They also secured Gawan's seal affixed to a blank paper on which, they wrote the above letter. They showed this to the Sultan who was enraged at this treachery and punished the minister with death. Thus, ended the life of one of the most loyal counsellors and statesmen of the Bahamani kingdom. This was realized late by the Sultan.

The Sultan reconciled himself with the Deccanis, who were responsible for Gawan's death. The Deccanis became more influential now, under Malik Hasan. The nobles did not cooperate with the Sultan; and hence, when Saluva Narasimha planned to attack Goa, he deputed Yousuf Adil Khan to its rescue. At the age of twenty nine, he died at Bidar in 1482 A.D., and was succeeded by his son. Mahmud (1482-1518 A.D.).

### 25.2.8 Dissolution of the Kingdom

During the rule of Mahmud, the kingdom came to dissolution. The Imad Shahis of Berar, the Adilshahis of Bijapur, and the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, declared themselves independent in their own areas, as a result of the weakness of the centre. The Qutub Shahis of Gokonda, and the Barid Shahis of Bidar, followed suit. By the time when Babur invaded India in 1526 A.D., not only were there a number of small kingdoms in North India, with independent rule in limited areas, the Deccan also presented the same look. The unity that the Bahmanis gave to the Deccan is now lost, and small kingdoms emerged in its place.

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## 25.3 ADMINISTRATION

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The kingdom was divided into **tarafs** or provinces under the charge of a governor (**Tarafdar**). There were four of them viz., Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Bidar and Berar. Later, during the reign of Muhammad Shah III, Gawan divided each of them into two, and appointed governors for them for effective authority, as the empire became unwieldy. But, he restricted the power of the governors by appointing various district collectors to manage the revenues of certain villages in each governorship.

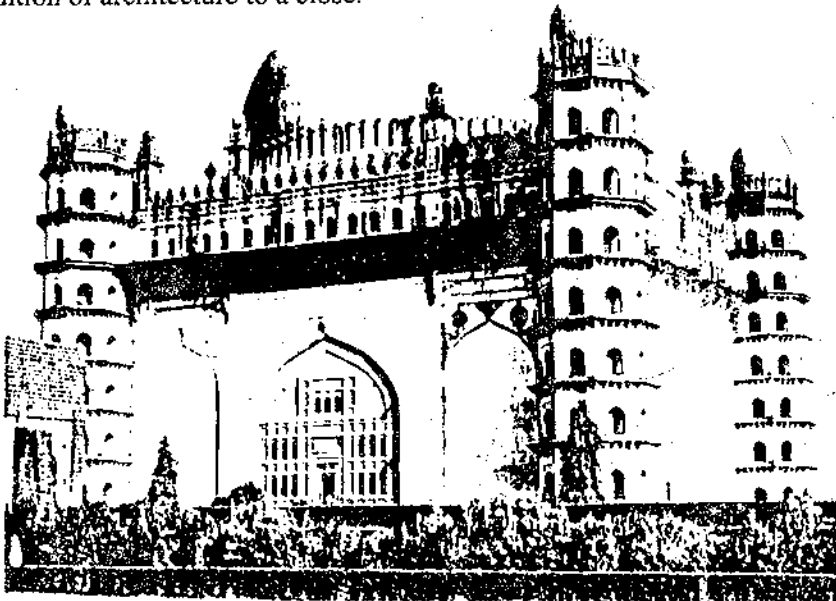
The governors were entrusted with the charge of only one fort, while other forts were managed by different generals of the Sultan. This was a check against the rebellion of the governors. The maintenance of troops by the governors for the king was also closely supervised by the centre. As stated earlier, these administrative measures brought unpopularity for Gawan among the Deccanis which led to his fall.

During the rule of Muhammad Shah I, a council of eight ministers was created, which continued later. They were: 1. **Vakil-us-Sultanat** or lieutenant of the kingdom, and next to the sovereign; 2. **Wazir-i-kull** or the supervisor of the work of the ministers; 3. **Amir-i-Jumla** or minister of finance; 4. **Wazir-i-ashraf** or minister of foreign affairs; 5. **Wazir** or assistant minister of finance; 6. **Peshwa** or an associate of **Vakil-us-Sultanat**; 7. **Kotwal** or chief of police and city magistrate; 8. **Sadr-i-jehan** or chief justice and one in-charge of religious affairs. Muhammad Shah was successful in suppressing highway robbery.

## 25.4 MONUMENTS

The architecture of the Bahamanis, who were the patrons of art, letters and sciences, was a composite mixture of several elements, Indian, Turkish, Egyptian and Persian. The architecture of the Bahamanis developed definitely a regional character. The architectural development in the Deccan may be broadly divided into three phases - Gulbarga, Bidar and Golkonda. As and when Gulbarga became the capital of the Bahamanis, then began the Bahamani architecture. The early constructions did not represent a distinctive style of the Deccan Islamic architecture. In the early stages, they followed the contemporary Tughlak tradition of the North. However, the Jami Masjid built in 1367 inside the Gulbarga Fort was unique. This Masjid was conceived and designed by an architect of 14th century, by name Rafi, who was a native of Persia under the service of the Bahamanis. He reversed all the architectural principles of mosques with a courtyard in a very unorthodox fashion. As this design was not repeated later, we may conclude that this unconventional design was not liked by the orthodox elements.

In 1425, Ahmad Shah shifted his capital to Bidar. Soon the new capital witnessed the construction of large palaces with large audience halls, *hamams*, mosques, a *madarsa* and royal tombs. These buildings exhibit a strong Iranian influence. Though they did not totally abandon Indo-Islamic traditions, the substantive style of architecture was now composed of forms very largely borrowed from Iran, modified and adopted to suit local needs. The important feature of the Bidar style was the use of coloured tiles and the wall painting. The shining tiles imported from Iran were used to cover the outer portions. There is a distinctive change in the shape of some of the domes, and the drums of these domes are made tall, so as to project the domes in full view. Muhammad Shah I built two mosques viz. Shah Bazar Masjid and the famous Jami Masjid. The college of Gawan at Bidar is noted for its Persian style. This has three stories and has towering minarets (decorative pillars) in the front corners. It contains a mosque, a library and lecture halls, and quarters for the teachers and rooms to students. The fall of the Bahamani Sultanate towards the beginning of the 16th century, brought the first phase of the Deccan tradition of architecture to a close.



Bijapur, Gol Gumbaz (mausoleum of Sultan Muhammad Adil Shah, died in 1656 A.D.)

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**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - I**

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1. Who established the Bahamani kingdom and when?

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2. Who was Mahmud Gawan?

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3. Which cities were the capitals of the Bahamani kingdom?

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**25.5 LET US SUM UP**

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1. Hasan Gangu established the Bahamani kingdom in 1347 A.D. which lasted up to 1526 A.D. There were incessant wars between Bahamani kings and the Vijayanagar rulers.
2. Mahmud Gawan, the minister of Muhammad Shah III, introduced many administrative reforms which increased the powers of the Sultan and reduced those of the Governors.
3. The Bahamani kings built a number of forts and towns. Muhammad Shah I built the famous Jami Masjid at Gulbarga.

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**25.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : ANSWERS**

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1.
  1. Hasan Gangu in 1347 A.D.
  2. He was the Minister of Muhammad Shah III
  3. Gulbarga and Bidar

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## 25.7 EXAMINATION MODEL QUESTIONS

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### I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each

1. State briefly the political achievements of the Bahamanis
2. Give an account of the Vijayanagar - Bahamani relations
3. Write about the achievements of Muhammad Shah III.

### II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each

1. State the origin and significance of the Bahamani rule.
2. Trace the political achievements of Muhammad Shah I.
3. How was the reign of Firoz Shah Bahamani the great?
4. Describe the organisation of administration under the Bahamanis
5. What was the contribution of Bahamanis to the Deccani architecture?
6. Give an account of the achievements of Mahmud Gawan

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## 25.8 BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

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1. Iswari Prasad : *History of Medieval India from 647 to 1526 A.D.*
2. Majumdar R.C.,  
Raychaudhari and Datta, K.: *An Advanced History of India*
3. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. : *History of India, Part II*
4. Satish Chandra : *Medieval India (NCERT publication)*
5. Sherwani, H.K. : *Bahamani kingdom*
6. Stanley Lane Poole. : *Medieval India*
7. Yazdani, G (ed). : *The Early History of the Deccan, Vol. II*

## GLOSSARY

1. Abbot : Superior in a monastery.
2. Abhayamudra : Hand posture of a deity or saint as a gesture of protection or reassurance to the devotees.
3. Advaita : A philosophical concept of the Hindus which preaches the non-duality or identity of the Brahman with the universe of spirit and matter, otherwise known as monism.
4. Agraharas : A royal donation of land or village to brahmanas.
5. Alluvial : Fertile soil that is formed due to the flowing of a river or sea in a plain.
6. Amalaka : In Sanskrit, it refers to a fruit of Indian gooseberry. In architecture, it is a high flattened ribbed disc in the shape of this fruit. It forms one of the crowning elements of the north Indian temples.
7. Ambulatory : Passage adopted for walking.
8. Amil : A revenue official.
9. Amirs : Rich nobles occupying higher positions in medieval Indian administration under the Muslim rulers.
10. Antiquities : Ancient things.
11. Antithetican : Contrasting; consisting of two opposites.
12. Apsidal : Semi-circular or polygonal, usually domed projection of a building, especially at the altar.
13. Arabesque : A complex and ornate design with interwoven flowers, leaves and geometrical figures.
14. Arhat : A Buddhist monk who has reached the stage of Nirvana or heavenly bliss.
15. Aryavartha : Northern India, or the land inhabited by the Aryans in the Vedic period.
16. Artha : Material prosperity or wealth, whose acquiring formed one of the four purposes of a man's life according to Hindu mythology.
17. Artifact : Something made or given shape by man, such as a tool or a work of art, especially an object of archaeological interest.
18. Asvamedha : Horse sacrifice performed by ancient Hindu rulers to proclaim their suzerainty over the land.

19. Avatara : An incarnation, Vishnu is believed to have descended on the earth in mortal form from time to time, to save mankind from evil forces or persons. So far, ten such incarnations are known, the last being of Kali Avatara.
20. Avestan : Pertaining to Avesta, the sacred writings of Zoroastrian religion of ancient Persia.
21. Awl : A point of bone, flint or metal used for piercing holes.
22. Ayake : Five columns, standing on the projecting platforms on four sides of some Stupas. Example. Amaravathi Stupa.
23. Bards : Poets who composed and recited verses on the legends and history of the people.
24. Barrel-vault : A simple vault or arch, with a continuous semi-circular section.
25. Bead-making : Making of neck ornaments with beads or pearls or semi-precious stones.
26. Beaker-pottery : Pottery used for drinking purposes.
27. Bhagavata : A cult of devotion to Vishnu
28. Bhakti : Devotion
29. Blade : A long parallel-sided flake struck from a specially prepared core.
30. Bodhisatva : One who works for the welfare of the world and voluntarily postpones his own release from rebirth; also regarded as an incarnation of the Buddha, prior to his own birth in the world.
31. Brick-Kiln : The hot-oven like structure in which wet bricks are burnt for gaining hardness or strength.
32. Brahmadeya : Revenue from a village or a land donated to a Brahman.
33. Burin : A pointed tool made of chipped flint or stone and used for engraving on bone, antler, wood or ivory.
34. Causation : Causing; producing an effect; doctrine that things have causes.
35. Calligraphy : The art of fine hand-writing.
36. Campu : Writing in which both prose and verse forms are used.
37. Capital : Head or upper part of the column, wider than the shaft of the column.

38. Canonical texts : Authoritative or officially approved works of a religious faith.
39. Centaur : Greek mythological monster which is partly human and partly horse.
40. Chaitya : A sacred enclosure, built of brick over the remains or the relics of Buddha. These have come to be regarded as places of worship by the Mahayana Buddhists.
41. Chalcolithic : Using both stone and copper simultaneously.
42. Chronicle : Register or record that describes events of a period or country in order of time.
43. Chronological : Date or year-wise.
44. Citadel : Fortress.
45. Cleaver : A heavy core of flake tool with dishaped outline and a transverse cutting edge.
46. Clerestory : A way of lighting the interior of a building from above, by raising the roof of some parts over the neighbouring parts and cutting windows in the vertical walls between the two levels of the ceiling.
47. Cloister : A covered passage, usually, around an open court, with arcades (a series of arches) on the side of the court, and walled on the opposite side.
48. Corbel : Also called bracket is a projecting member from a wall or column to support weight (corbelling is a method of construction, where each successive block of stone projects a little beyond the one below, resembling in inverted step.
49. Consciousness : Totality of persons thoughts and feelings.
50. Conduits : Canals
51. Core : A lump of stone from which flake or blades are removed.
52. Corbelled-ceiling : Ceiling or roof with wooden or stone supports such as beams or rafts.
53. Cornelian : Semi-precious stone used in ornament making.
54. Cupola : Domed roof or ceiling.
55. Datum : Thing known or granted, from which inferences can be drawn.
56. Demographic : Vital statistics of communities.
57. Dhamma : Dharma or code of conduct.

58. Dinar : Any of several units of gold and silver currency used in the Middle East from the 8th to the 19th Century.
59. Dialectical : Investigating truth of opinions in a logical manner.
60. Documentary : Record or writing that furnishes evidence for a fact or statement.
61. Drum (of the Stupa) : A cylindrical block or section forming the shaft of a stone pillar. It also refers to a circular or polygonal wall or structure, such as that supporting a dome.
62. Dvija : The twice-born ; referring to the three upper castes of Hindu society Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya where the first birth is the physical birth and the second is the initiation into caste status.
63. Dvipada : Poems in two line stanzas
64. Dvaita : The school of thought propounded by Madhva, stating that individual soul and supreme soul are two different things, and the former must strive by different methods, for merger into the latter.
65. Ecclesiastical : Of the church or clergy.
66. Ecology : Study of plants, animals or of people and institutions in relation to their environment.
67. Ecozone : Habitable area.
68. Empirical : Way of judging things by observations and experiment.
69. Entablature : In classical architecture, it is the collective name for the horizontal parts of a building above the supporting columns.
70. Epicurianism : The philosophy advanced by Epicurus, a Greek thinker, It is devoted to the pursuit of pleasure by being fond of good food, comfort and ease.
71. Erotic : Tending to arouse sexual love or desire.
72. Ethnographic data : Data that is available by a study of tribes or races.
73. Evangelization : Conversion by means of preaching
74. Excavations : Digging of an ancient site for unearthing valuable remains of bygone people and ages.
75. Faience : Decorated earthen ware or porcelain.
76. Firman : Royal order of proclamation.
77. Flake : A fragment removed from a large stone or a core by percussion of pressure out of which, more complex flake tools are made.

78. Flora and Fauna : Vegetation, animals and birds
79. Frieze : The central part of the entablature between the architrave and cornices.
80. Fructified : Bear fruit; give results.
81. Functionaries : Those who hold office or a trust.
82. Furrow : Narrow track made by a plough.
83. Gable : Any triangular architectural section, usually ornamental, as over a door or window.
84. Ganas : Demi-God attendants of Shiva
85. Ganas : Family tree or pedigree.
86. Ghat : Mountain range.
87. Gotra : Family affiliation that distinguishes one Hindu family from the other or preserves its identity.
88. Grid plan : Arrangement of town plan in a rectangular pattern.
89. Hand axe : A large bifacially worked core tool, normally oval or bean-shaped.
90. Harpoon : A throwing spear.
91. Hijrah : It is an era of reckoning employed by Muslim rulers.
92. Historiography : Writing of History
93. Horoscopy : The casting and reading of horoscopes, which is a diagram of the signs of the Zodiac based on the configuration of the planets and starts at a given moment, such as the moment of a person's birth.
94. Iconography : A given set of symbolic forms bearing the meaning of a stylised work of art. It also refers to the conventions defining them and governing their relationships.
95. Idealists : Those scholars who, towards the end of the 19th Century, came to believe that history as a discipline should have its own methods of enquiring and regarded a process of imaginative re-living as central to historical thinking.
96. Indology : Study of Indian history, languages and culture.
97. Inscriptions : Words recorded on monuments, stones, coins etc.
98. Intellectual history : Study of knowledge which is mainly derived from reason.
99. Interregnum : Interval when the state does not have normal ruler.
100. Jatakas : These refer to tales about the birth and life of Buddha.

101. Jihad : Holy war; especially, the one waged by medieval Muslim rulers against non-muslims.
102. Jital : Copper coin.
103. Kayastha : A sub-caste of medieval origin, who mainly took up to the profession of scribes, writers or accountants.
104. Karma : Action or deed, and also the theory of conditioning one's birth by the deeds of the present or previous births.
105. Kharosthi : A script used in north-western India and derived from that of Aramaic prevalent in Western Asia.
106. Khams : State's share of war booty.
107. Khan-i-khanan : Highest title conferred on officials in medieval India for trusted and faithful service of high order to the state.
108. Kirthimukhas : Grotesque mask used commonly as a decorative feature.
109. Kotwal : Officer in charge of the city. Also, police chief.
110. Linga : The Phallic symbol worshipped largely by shaivites.
111. Linear : Involving measurement in one dimension long and narrow.
112. Liturgy : The rituals or established formulas of public worship.
113. Mandapa : An open or closed pillared assembly hall, in front of the shrine of a Hindu temple.
114. Madhyamika : A Buddhist school, of which Nagarjuna was the most famous exponent, which believed that the life of the world is the same as Nirvana... and really there is no difference between them at all".
115. (Doctrine of) Maya : Illusion especially, the visible material world conceived of as being purely illusionary.
116. Matha : A centre of education and religion attached to a temple.
117. Megalith : Large or big stone used as a monument.
118. Metre : Any form of poetic rhythm, determined by character and number of feet.
119. Mithraic : Pertaining to Persian god, identified with sun.
120. Mithuna : Amorous embracing.
121. Microlith : A very small tool made of a blade or flake. They served as barbs and tips of arrows.

122. Milieu : State or life; social surroundings.
123. Mlechhas : Impure or sullied. Term used to describe the foreigners during the post Mauryan period.
124. Monastic : Religious, pertaining to monastery or Matha.
125. Monistic Vedanta : Philosophy that denies the duality of matter and mind. and states that only one being exists.
126. Motif : A repeated figure or design in architecture of decoration.
127. Moulding : A strip of stone, wood or other material with a shaped section, used as an embellishment on a building, wall or other surface.
128. Murals : Large paintings or pictures, drawn on walls or ceilings.
129. Mukhalinga : Siva Idol, installed on a platform and in hypaetral (open to the sky) temples, such as at Gudimallam.
130. Muslin : Any of various, fine, see-through cotton fabrics, used for dresses or curtains.
131. Muster-Master : An officer in Medieval India, who was in charge of the muster or pay and descriptive rolls of solidiers.
132. Nagaram : Local council in urban area.
133. Narrative : Tale, story or recital of facts.
134. Nayankara system : Under this system, Nayaks or semi-independent rulers were set up. They paid tributes to the king and maintained the quota of troops allotted to them.
135. Niche : A recese in a wall for holding a statue or other ornaments.
136. Nidhi : stored wealth.
137. Nikshepa : Treasures or minerals hidden under the earth
138. Nirvana : The state of absolute blessedness, characterised by release from the cycle of reincarnations and attained through the extinction of the self.
139. Palmette : A stylised palm leaf used as a decorative element, notably in Persian rugs and in classical mouldings, reliefs, frescoes etc.
140. Panchabhuta Kshetras : Famous Saiva temple centres in South India.
141. Panchamas : The fifth caste or the untouchables.
142. Panchayatana : A Hindu temple with the main shrine surrounded by four shrines at the corners.

143. Painted Grey Ware : Pottery of this type, consisting mainly of bowls and dishes, has been found in as many as 500 sites in Punjab and Ganges-Yamuna Doab, during the period 1000-600 B.C. indicating Indo-Aryan settlements in a concentrated manner, in these regions.
144. Parametres : Within the scope or limit.
145. Par excellence : Above all others.
146. Pastoral economy : An economy in which cattle or sheep-breeding is the main source of living.
147. Patriarchal : A form of social organisation in which father is the head of the family, clan or tribe. Descent is reckoned on the male line.
148. Pebble chopper tool : Pebble tool with cutting edge.
149. Peninsula : Area surrounded by water on three sides and by hill or land features on the fourth side.
150. Perforators : Objects with holes.
151. Phenomena : Remarkable thing or development.
152. Philology : The scientific study or written records of literary, social and cultural history in order to establish authenticity, accuracy and meaning, especially historical and comparative.
153. Pilastered wat : A rectangular column with a capital and base, set into a wall to ornament it.
154. Pir : Saint or spiritual guide.
155. Plinth : A block or slab upon which a pedestal, column or statue is placed; A continuous course of stones supporting a wall.
156. Plateau : An elevated and comparatively level expanse of land; table-land.
157. Polygamy : The practice of marrying more than one wife.
158. Porch : A projecting entrance, partly enclosed with a roof of its own.
159. Pollen analysis : Study of the remains of fossil pollen grains from the excavated area.
160. Prasastis : Accounts which generally indulged in praising or eulogising the ruler of a state or an empire.
161. Prefects : Rulers or governors.
162. Puritanical : To effect great purity or strictness of life and religious principle.

163. Purna Ghata : A full jar. It came to be adopted as an auspicious symbol of plenty or fertility. It was carved on either side of the gate-ways of shrines.
164. Pushpapotika : An elaborate form of corbel, characteristic of the Vijayanagar period.
165. Radio-carbon dating : The organic matter from excavations that is scientifically dated, where the amount of carbon is detected. The less the carbon, the older is the age of the material.
166. Renaissance : Rebirth or revival of art and letters under the influence of classical models in 15th and 16th centuries.
167. Rock-bruising : Etching or engraving on rocks.
168. Romantic school : School of thought characterised by preference to grandeur or pictures sequences or passion or irregular beauty than to finish and proportion.
169. Romaka Siddhanta : One of the five astronomical system (Siddhantas) known to the the 6th centuray astronomer, Varahamihira.
170. Sanctum : A sacred or holy place an inviolable private place.
171. Sankhya : A system of Hindu philosophy based on the distinction between spirit and matter.
172. Sati : The practice of a woman immolating herself on the funeral pyre of her husband.
173. Scrapers : An artifact of chipped stone or flint probably used in wood-working or for scraping hides.
174. Seal : Animal or human figures made up of terracotta or red clay, containing also an undeciphered script.
175. Sentient being : A person having the power of sensation of consciousness.
176. Sesterce : A silver or bronze coin of ancient Rome.
177. Shaikh : A Muslim of high social status or a religious guide.
178. Shikhara : Tower surmounting the temple.
179. Shreni : Guild or organisation of merchants or artisans of different trades for mutual aid.
180. Shruti : The literature which was transmitted orally as a sacred revelation from one to the other.
181. Silecious rocks : Rocks containing silica, a hard white material, the varieties of which are flint and quartz.
182. Smriti : A class of religious literature, comprising law-books, epics and Puranas, especially the first.

183. Srenidharma : Rules and regulations governing the members of a Sreni or guild.
184. Srenidharma : Rules and regulations governing the members of a Sreni or guild.
185. Status quo : To maintain conditions as they had been earlier.
186. Steatite : Kind of talc or soapstone.
187. Steppes : One of the vast, more or less level plains devoid of trees.
188. Stratigraphic : To deposit in layers.
189. Stupa : A round brick structure, built over the relics of the Buddha or others revered by the Buddhists.
190. Sunyata : Nonreality; void.
191. Synchronism : Going together or agreeing together in reckoning or happenings.
192. Syntax : A branch of grammar which explains how the words are put together to form phrases and sentences.
193. Tanka : Silver coin of the Sultanate.
194. Tapering : To become gradually narrower or thinner towards one end of an elongated object, for example a tower.
195. Tacit : Understood, existing without being stated.
196. Tantric : A religious cult relating to the worship of Goddess Kali, representing the female personification of divine energy.
197. Temperate climate : Climate which is moderate in heat or cold
198. Terracotta : Baked clay that is kept in safe place. It is fragile.
199. Threshing : To beat out the grain from the stalk by beating or threshing.
200. Tools : Export and import duties
201. Tropical climate : Hot climate.
202. Triton : He is a sea-god in Greek mythology, portrayed as having the head and trunk of a man and the tail of a fish.
203. Ulema : A Muslim theologian or scholar.
204. Ushnisha : A turban with frontal protuberance; India's Characteristic head-dress; protuberance on the head of the Budha.

205. Vajrayana : It is a new branch of Buddhism that emerged in 7th century A.D. in eastern India influenced by Tantric rites. This Thunderbolt vehicle (Vajrayana) gave female counterpart to the existing male figures of the Bhuddhist Pantheon and these counterparts were termed Taras (or Saviouresses). The cult of Taras remains prevalent in Nepal and Tibet.
206. Varna : Colour-used more commonly for caste.
207. Varnasrama : The regulation that the traditional castes or Varnas have to follow the professions or the practices prescribed for them in the Holy Scriptures.
208. Vaisesika : A school of Hindu philosophy which postulated a dualism of matter and soul and declared that salvation depends on fully recognizing the atomoc nature of the universe and its differences from the soul.
209. Value-free : Free from standards and principles that an individual or society regards as desirable or undesirable.
210. Vestibule : A passage hall or ante-room, usually between a Mandapa and the main shrine in the Indian temple plans.
211. Vijnana-vada : It completely rejected the realism of the Lesser Vehicle and maintained a through going idealism not even allowing, the qualified realism or the Madhyamikas.
212. Visishtadvaita : Expounded by Ramanuja of the 12th Century A.D.; this philosophy of qualified monism rejects the absolute monism (Advaita) of Sankara and lays emphasis on Bhakti as a menas of salvation.
213. Vihara : Buddhist or Jain Monastery.
214. Water-tight : Rigid or staunch.
215. Warp and the woof : Processes undergone before a cloth is woven.
216. Yaksha : The Yakshas, especially associated with God Kubera, were a sort of gnome or fairy, respected by country people. Before the christian era, their cult was wide-spread but, they lost their significance as the great gods of Hinduism became more widely worshipped. They were generally looked on as friendly to men, but their women-folk might sometimes be malevolent, and ate little children.
217. Yavana : Used in Indian sources for Greeks.

# Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY

## FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

B.A. II Year (3 Y.D.C) Examination

MODEL QUESTION PAPER

HISTORY - COURSE - I

INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE UPTO 1526 A.D.

Time : 5 hours.

Max. Marks : 100

Min Marks : 35

Section - A

(Marks 4 x 15 = 60)

Answer any FOUR of the following questions in about 30 lines  
Each question carries 15 marks.

1. What is the significance of history ? State how history is benefited by the use of the techniques of other social sciences
2. What is epigraphy ? How is it useful for the reconstruction of oncient Indian History
3. Indicate the important changes that took place in the religious organisation of the later vedic Aryans.
4. Explain the salient features of Mouryan Administration.
5. Describe the development of Art, Literature and Science during the Gupta Period. What were the reasons for their growth during that period?
6. Explian the causes and results the Arab invasious of India.
7. Give an account of the salient features of the Bhakti movement
8. Examine the origin, growth and distingration of the Bahmani kingdom

Section - B

Marks 5 x 8 = 60

Answer any five of the following questions in about fifteen lines each.

Each Question carries eight marks.

9. Explain the influence of Himalayas on Indian History.
10. Write about the script of Indus valley civilization
11. What were the courses for the prominence of Magadha in the sixth century B.C.?
12. Estimate kanishka's contribution to Buddhism
13. Explain the important feature of local self administration during the chola period.
14. Write briefly about Prithviraj Chouhan
15. What was the importance of two battles of Tarain?
16. Give an account of the sufi movement in Medieval India.
17. Brifly describe the Socio economic counditions in Kakatiya kingdom.
18. What we the important achievements of Mohamed Gawan?

# Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY

## UNDERGRADUATE COURSES II YEAR

### Subject - History

COURSE - 1 : INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE UPTO 1526 A.D.

### ASSIGNMENT - I

#### Instructions to the Candidates :

1. Do not copy the answer directly from any of the books
2. As far as possible try to answer the question independently in your own words.
3. If it is necessary to quote from any source, mention the source from which you are quoting.
4. Use your own full size paper for writing the assignments
5. Leave sufficient margins for the comments of the evaluator
6. Completion of this assignment normally should not take more than two hours time.

#### Section - I

- I. Answer the following in about 30 Lines.
1. Explain the concept of Unity in diversity in the context of Indian History.
  2. Evaluate the importance and the influence of the principles of Jainism and Buddhism.

#### Section - II

- II. Answer the following questions in about 15 Lines.
1. Explain the contribution of foreign accounts of source of Indian History of the ancient period.
  2. What were the factors that accounted for the supremacy of Magadha.

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**SUBJECT - HISTORY**  
**COURSE - 1 : INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE UPTO 1526 A.D.**  
**ASSIGNMENT - II**

Instructions to the Candidates :

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4. Use your own full size paper for writing the assignments
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6. Completion of this assignment normally should not take more than two hours time.

**Section - A**

- I. Answer the following in about 30 Lines.
1. Give an account of the social and economic condition of people under Satavahans.
  2. Describe the Pallava - Chalukya conflicts for political supremacy.

**Section - B**

- II. Answer the following questions in about 15 Lines.
1. How far Asoka's religious policy is responsible for the downfall of Mauryan empire
  2. What did Hiuen-Tsang write about the social conditions in India during 7th Century A.D.

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### ASSIGNMENT - III

#### Instructions to the Candidates :

1. Do not copy the answer directly from any of the books
2. As far as possible try to answer the question independently in your own words.
3. If it is necessary to quote from any source, mention the source from which you are quoting.
4. Use your own full size paper for writing the assignments
5. Leave sufficient margins for the comments of the evaluator
6. Completion of this assignment normally should not take more than two hours time.

#### Section - A

I. Answer the following in about 30 Lines.

1. Critically analyse the causes for the disintegration of Delhi sultanate.
2. Bring out the salient features of administrative system of Vijayanagar empire

#### Section - B

II. Answer the following questions in about 15 Lines.

1. What were the causes for the success of the Marathas in India
2. What was the social impact of the Bhakti movement?

BRAOU

