UNIT 11: SOCIETY, RELIGION, CULTURE AND ECONOMY UNDER THE GUPTA RULE

UNIT STRUCTURE

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11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand the society under the Gupta rule,
- discuss the economy under the Gupta rule,
- discuss the religion under the Gupta rule,
- describe the culture under the Gupta rule.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we have already discussed the Gupta Empire. In this unit, we are going to discuss the society, economy, religion and culture under the Gupta Empire. The Gupta rulers were both able administrators as well as well wishers of their people and therefore in this period all round development of the society was noticed. So the Gupta period was called as 'Golden Period' of Indian history.

11.3 SOCIETY AND ECONOMY IN THE GUPTA PERIOD

The Guptas established a large Empire in India. The Gupta rulers with sound administration provided a stable authority in the kingdom which helped in maintaining the social fabric and facilitated the economic growth. Our study of the Gupta Empire will be incomplete without discussing the condition of the society and economy during the Gupta period. In this unit we will discuss the social and economic condition of the Gupta Empire in the following sections with separate sub-headings.

11.3.1 Society under the Guptas

The *Puranas*, *Sastras*, the *Niti Sastras* of Narada, the *Dramas* of Kalidasa, etc supply us with a good deal of information regarding the social life of the Gupta period. Many interesting features about the social life are also found to be referred to in the contemporary inscriptions. Fa-hien, the famous Chinese pilgrim had also made some observations about the society as it existed in India towards the opening of the 5th century A.D.

- **Division of Society:** During the Gupta period society was divided into four castes –*Brahmana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Shudra*. Each one of these comprised a major caste or *varna* and had specific duties assigned to them. Fa-hien's account about the plight of *Shudras* proves the prevalence of caste system and caste prejudices in the Indian society during the Gupta period. The reference to the people of various castes in the epigraphs and literary works also point towards the existence of caste system during this period.

  The *Brahmanas* were primarily concerned with the study and teachings of *Vedas* and other scriptures as also the performance of sacrifices and other religious practices. The *Kshatriyas* came next to *Brahmanas* in status and position in the society. *Kshatriyas*, being the ruling class, enjoyed a very high status in the society. The

Kshatriyas as well as the *Vaishyas* enjoyed the status of ***Dvijati*** or twice born as the *Brahmanas*. The *Vaishyas* because of their immense wealth were also shown due regard. *Shudras* formed the lowest rank of the caste system. They were forced to serve the other three classes. Besides the division of the society into four major castes, the contemporary inscriptions and literature bear ample testimony to the existence of sub-castes. However, there were no rigid rules in respect of either inter-caste marriage or inter-dining among them.



LET US KNOW

There were four stages in the life of a Hindu. These stages were known as *Ashramas*. The first 25 years of the life called *Brahmacharya Ashrama* were to be spent in studying the scriptures and getting education in different fields according to one's caste. The second stage was the *Grihastha Ashrama* in which one enjoyed the life of a householder for another 25 years. The third stage *Vanaprastha* (going to the forest) began when one attained the age of 50 years and retired to the forest to live in solitude and meditation. This was the *Vanaprastha Ashrama*. The last stage was *Sanyasa*, which began with one crossing the age of 75 years, and continued for the rest of one's life. During this period a *Brahmana* was required to completely isolate himself from all worldly ties. The object of the division of life into four distinct stages seems to have been to discipline the human lives according to a set pattern and to provide against excesses in any form.

- **Slavery:** Although there was no institutionalized slave system in India, sources refer to the prevalence of slaves during the period. There were various categories of slaves during the Gupta age. Prisoners of war were often reduced to the status of slaves.

Drunkards, gamblers, etc, who were unable to pay off their debts to their creditors, were often compelled to sell themselves as slaves. Persons doing manual works in the royal household too were termed as slaves. But the slave system under the Imperial Guptas differed from the slave system in Western countries. In India, any slave could get emancipation after fulfilling certain conditions. The slaves could regain their liberty after the payment of their dues either by themselves or their relatives and friends. It is evident from the contemporary records that even prisoners of war could be free if they could provide a substitute for themselves. A slave who saved the life of his master did not only become free but also become entitled to a equal son's share of his master's property.

- **Position of Women:** The position of women in Hindu society has been different from age to age. In the Vedic age, she enjoyed honour and respect in society. In the Gupta age, the *Puranas* did their best to improve the lot of the women in some respect of life, but not much could be done due to some prejudice against women. According to *Manavadharmasastra* women should be under the protection of their father, husbands or eldest son as the society was distinctly patriarchal. Yet, woman like Prabhavati Gupta, the daughter of Chandragupta II was regent in the Vakataka kingdom, following the death of her husband.

  Many writers have stated the usual eight forms of marriage for a woman. There are *Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa* and *Paisacha*.The first four forms are approved, as they involve parental consent although in the *Daiva* and *Arsha* forms a bride price is demanded. The last four forms are not approved although the *Asura* (marriage by abduction of the bride, sometimes with her consent) and *Gandharva* (marriage by mutual consent, without the necessity of parental approval) forms were prevalent in the society.

The practice of *Sati* was in vogue during the Gupta rule. Vatsayana and Kalidasa refer to it. Some instances of *Sati* are found in the time of the Gupta period. From the *Mandasor Stone Inscription* of Kumaragupta I, we come to know that practice of *Sati* was prevalent during the Gupta age. Polygamy was very popular during the Gupta age. The kings and feudatory lords often had more than one wife. The practice was not confined to kings, but extended also to other people. A woman suffered the misfortune of getting a co-wife if she was stupid, or barren, or if she repeatedly bore daughters. Inscription refer to Kuvera Naga and Dhrubaswamini as the queens of Chandragupta II.

- **Food:** According to the description of Kalidasa, the food of the people of Gupta period, was both delicious and nutritious. Barley, Wheat and Rice were their staple food. Cucumber, onion, garlic, pumpkin, gourd, etc. were used as vegetables.

  We have ample references to edible spices, oil-crops and medicinal herbs. Mustard seed, tamarind, cardamoms, cloves, betel nut, ginger, turmeric and saffron were used for different purposes. Moreover the forests and gardens yielded a large variety of valuable fruits such as mango, orange, jackfruit, pomegranate, grapes, banana, coconut, etc. Sugar was manufactured from sugarcane. Various kinds of sweet dishes were prepared out of milk and sugar. Honey was another item of food, which was also used in the reception of a guest and at other festive rites.

- **Dress:** Suiting to all occasions and weather, men and women used various kinds of dresses. Kalidasa refers to hunting dress. Man put on *dhoti*, turban and a scarf. They were generally made of cotton, but their wedding dresses were of silk. Women used *sari* and shawl. Clothes were of various colours such as white, red, blue, saffron, multi coloured and black. Both men and women of this period

commonly used different kinds of jewellery, such as ornaments for head and hair, ears, neck, arm, waist, feet and fingers. A large variety of jewellery used by men and women are seen from the sculptures and the Ajanta paintings.

- **Amusement and Sports:** Kalidasa has vividly described the high standard of music both in theory and practice. Music, dancing and acting were quite popular in the Gupta society. The spring festival and another popular amusement in some festivity was the sprinkling of coloured water. Dicing was a popular game. Hunting was another pastime. Elephant riding was the favourite outdoor sport of the kings.

11.3.2 Economy under the Guptas

The establishment of the political unity by the Gupta monarchs coupled with an efficient and benevolent government provided a fruitful soil for the development of trade, industry and agriculture which helped to build the economic conditions of the country on a sound footing.

- **Agriculture:** Agriculture was, as in the past, still the mainstay of the economic life of the majority of the people during the Gupta period. There was an increase in the demand for more and more land for cultivation purpose as is evidenced from the Bengal land grants and other sources. Since the revenue from land was still the main source of the income of the state, the Gupta monarchs took special pains to promote the interests of the cultivators and increase the produce of the soil. Attempts were made to expand agriculture. Wastelands were brought under cultivation through various means such as the digging of tanks, wells, cutting of canals, etc. The establishment of a large number of irrigation works gave a further impetus to the growth of agriculture even in the dry lands. The *Junagarh Rock Inscription* refers to the

repairing of the dam of the Sudarsan, an artificial lake, by Skandagupta's governor Parnadatta.

The scientists of the age had laid down guidelines for the development of agriculture along scientific lines. In this respect the *Brihat Samhita* of Varahamihira is especially noteworthy. Rice, Barley and Wheat continued to be the principal crops. Different varieties of vegetables, peas, beans and many more were also grown. Cultivation of oil-seeds was done on an extensive scale. A large number of fruit trees, Indian and foreign, were also grown.

Inscriptions or other records of the Gupta period provide no clue to the existence of anything like the *zamindari* system of modern times. However, this period witnessed the inauguration of a new type of feudal economy with the state gradually granting away different rights over the land to *Brahmanas* and temples.

Keeping in view the importance of agriculture, the state laid down rules and regulations to protect the interests of the agriculturists. Rules were also been prescribed to safeguard the interests of agricultural labourers and land-holders.

- **Industry:** The economic conditions during the Gupta period were specially marked by an all round development in the field of industry and handicrafts. The richness of the country in natural resources, mineral, animal and plant produce provided enough scope for the development of a large number of handicrafts and professions. Both the law books and epigraphs, have laid stress on the state ownership of the mines and forests and as such these were controlled and maintained by the state for all practical purposes. A special officer was appointed by the government to superintend the forests.

Metals were most useful in everyday life of the people for agricultural implements and domestic articles, including vessels. This industry was one of the most flourishing industries during the Gupta period.The Mehrauli Iron Pillar near the Qutub Minar in old Delhi stands testimony to the art of metallurgy.

The large number of articles made of Gold point towards the flourishing conditions of Gold industry. Gold ornaments generally satisfied the demands of richer sections of the society settled mainly in big towns and cities. *Amarkosa, Brihat Samhita* and the works of Kalidasa refer to diamonds, pearls, corals and precious stones which indicate the existence of small industrial units for these articles. The extensive use of Copper proves the existence of Copper industry. Pottery, making of utensils and articles of clay was one of the most popular industries of the period.

Textile industry was yet another popular industry that prospered during the period of the Imperial Gupta monarchs. Wood Carving was yet another important industry because of the use of wood for building purpose along with bamboo.

The archaeological discoveries, reference in contemporary literary works and a large number of epigraphs have all proved the existence of a flourishing trade and commerce, internal as well as external during the Gupta period. The chief articles of internal trade included all sorts of commodities of everyday use. The economic prosperity of the Gupta period is exhibited in a flourishing external trade by land and water routes. Fine quality silk was imported from China.

The economic prosperity of the country during the Imperial Gupta period is amply borne out by numismatic and literary evidences. The majority of coins issued by the Gupta

monarchs were minted out of pure Gold. While Samudragupta issued eight different types of Gold coins, his grandson Kumaragupta I issued as many as nine varieties of Gold coins. Fa-hien, the famous Chinese traveler who visited during the time of Chandragupta II also hinted at the prosperous economic conditions of the country during the period.

Thus the above general survey of the economic conditions during the Gupta period leaves no doubt that in the field of economic prosperity the Gupta period was indeed a Golden Age of Indian history.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Write True / False:

a) Fa-hien was a famous Chinese Pilgrim.

b) There were various categories of slaves during the Gupta age.

c) In the Vedic age women were disrespected in the society.

d) Parnadatta was the commander-in-chief of Skandagupta.

e) Amarkosa was the work of Kalidasa.

f) Kumaragupta I issued eight varieties of gold coins.

Q.2. Fill in the blanks:

a) Brahmanas were primarily concerned with the study of _____.

b) There was no institutionalized _____ system in India.

c) There was usually ._____ forms of marraige for a woman.

d) Mandasore Stone Inscription belongs to the reign of _____.

e) The author of Brihat Samhita was _____.

f) Fine quality silk was imported from _____.

Q.3. What were the four stages of life?

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Q.4. What was the favourite outdoor sports of the Gupta kings?

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Q.5. By what means wastelands were brought under cultivation?

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Q.6. Write a note within 40 words on the growth of industry in the Gupta period?

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11.4 RELIGION AND CULTURE IN THE GUPTA PERIOD

The Gupta period witnessed new developments in the field of religion and culture. In this section we will discuss the religious and cultural developments that took place during the Gupta period.

11.4.1 Religious Condition under the Guptas

The age of the Imperial Guptas was an age of great religious activity. It was particularly remarkable for new advancement made in the field of Hindu revival. Much of the progress made during the Gupta period in the sphere of Hindu revivalism was due to the patronage extended by the Gupta monarchs, most of whom were followers of the Brahmanical God Vishnu.

- **Hinduism:** Incarnations of Vishnu also became popular during this period. Samudragupta was a devout worshipper of Vishnu. *Garuda*, the vehicle of Vishnu was the emblem of the family. There were coins, which were struck with *Garuda* standing by him. It is true that the word *Bhagavat*, no doubt, implied Vishnu worshippers in general but to a particular sect of the Vaishnavas. Chandragupta II or Vikramaditya became a more influential advocate of the *Bhagavat* form of

Vaishnavism than his father. He styled himself with the title of *Parambhagavat*. In the Mathura and Gadhwa inscriptions he is called by these titles. The *Udayagiri Cave Inscription* dated 401-402 A.D. reveals that Vishnudeva, a sub-ordinate of the king was a *Bhagavat*. His name shows that he was a devotee of Vishnu.

Like Vaishnavism, the followers of Saivism regard Shiva as the highest god. Although the Gupta rulers were devotees of Vishnu, they extended their patronage to other religious sects. Some of the Gupta rulers and their chiefs were the worshippers of Shiva.

Sun God was also worshipped during the Gupta period. The *Mandasor Inscription* dated 436 A.D. of the time of Kumaragupta I records that a guild of silk weavers built a temple for Sun. Mihirakula, the Huna Chief, was a devout worshipper of *Surya*. He built a Sun Temple on the Gopa Mountain to increase his religious merit. There were other temples at Mandasor, Gwalior, Indore and Asramaka, dedicated to the Sun God *Surya* and built during the Gupta rule. The images of *Surya* have been found in various parts of North India, including Assam.

Worship of *Shakti* was also popular. She is known by various names such as *Uma*, *Parvati*, *Durga*, *Kali*, *Maheswari*, etc. In the *Markandeya Purana* the exploits as the destroyer of demons are recorded. With the passage of time, Shakti became associated with Shiva and became his consort. A feudal lord under Chandragupta II dug a cave near Sanchi where an image of *Mahishamardini*, a form of Shakti, was established. Shakti worship in India can be traced to the worship of the Mother Goddess of the Harappan people.

- **Jainism:** In addition to the popularity of various cults and creeds of Hinduism, Jainism had many adherents. Not only Jain philosophy but also Jain religion was enriched. A religious

council at Valabhi was called in 453 A.D. Many Jain temples were built during the Gupta period. During the time of Skandagupta idols of 5 ***Tirthangkaras*** were established a Kahaum in Gorakhpur district. Fa-hien records that Jain mode of worship in their Jain temples were expensive. The grand procession of images was also a costly affair and a popular form of worship of the Jaina deities.

- **Buddhism:** Buddhism flourished during this age. Paharpur, Ajanta, Nagarjuna-konda, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Punjab were the strong holds of Buddhism. Mathura, Kosambi, Kasi and Sarnath were the important centres of Buddhism. The Buddhist ***Stupas*** and ***Viharas*** in Andhra, Ajanta and Ellora were very famous. The University of Nalanda, the seat of Buddhist studies attracted students from various foreign countries. Its intellectual and moral standard won the admiration of all. Many Gupta rulers like Narasimhagupta, Buddhagupta were ardent followers of Buddhism according to the testimony of Hiuen-Tsang.

  Samudragupta, who was an ardent Vaishnava, had Vasubandhu, a Buddhist of the Mahayana School as one of his advisors. Kumaragupta I was a patron of the Buddhist University at Nalanda. The kings favoured Vaishnavism, Saivism and Buddhism. The Gupta rulers were not intolerant towards other religion.

11.4.2 Cultural activities under the Guptas

The Guptas were patron of art and architecture. Small flat-roofed temples, sometimes surrounded by the pillared halls are characteristic of the early Gupta period. Temple at Sanchi furnishes a good example. But a few shrines, with a sikhara on the roof, started a new style in North India which later came to be adopted all over the country. Two best examples of Gupta temples are brick temple at Bhitargaon and the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh.

The age of Imperial Guptas was also a dynamic age in the field of literary activity. Sanskrit literature, reached its culmination during this period.



Fig. 11.1: Sanchi Temple

- **Sculpture:** In the domain of sculpture, the Gupta period witnessed the highest development. The Gupta sculpture may be regarded as typically Indian in every sense of the term. The figures of Buddha found in large number at Sarnath and other places show a fully evolved form. The fine image of Buddha at Sarnath exhibits at once the grace and refinement. This high quality generally marks also the figures of *Brahmanical* Gods as illustrated by the images of Shiva, Visnu and others in the sculptured panels of the Deoghar temples.

  The Gupta artists and craftsmen were also capable in working metals. A copper image of Buddha, about 80 feet high, was erected at Nalanda in Bihar at the close of the 6th century A.D. Another important characteristic of Gupta art is the concept of beauty and simplicity of style.



Fig. 11.2: Buddha image at Sarnath

- **Painting :** No description of Gupta art can be completed without a reference to the highly developed art of paintings. The *Chitra Sutra, Kamasutra,* etc are sources for the study of painting of the Gupta period.

  The paintings in Ajanta caves are world famous. The themes of the Ajanta paintings are intensely religious in tone and mostly centre round Buddha, Bodhibattavas, incidents from life of Buddha and Jataka.



Fig. 11.3: Ajanta Paintings

Another example of Gupta painting is the paintings of the Buddhist caves of Bagh. The paintings of Bagh represent only an extension of the Ajanta school and in variety of design vigorous execution and decorative quality seem to have ranked as high as those of Ajanta. Though stylistically the

paintings of Ajanta and Bagh belong to the same norms, there is a slight difference between the two. Paintings at Bagh are secular.

- **Sanskrit Literature:** The Gupta age was the heyday of Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas. The Prakrit languages and Pali were superseded. Sanskrit became the official language of the Gupta Empire and was spoken by the king and the elite. All the religious and secular literature of the playwright, Kalidasa, adorned the Ujjaini court, most probably in the days of Chandragupta II. He was undoubtedly the leading light of the age and one of the greatest poets. His great dramas are *Abhinjanam Shakuntalam, Malavikagnimitra* and *Vikramorvasi*. These dealt with love, romance and princely life. *Meghaduta* (cloud messenger) and *Ritu Samhara* (a description of the seasons) are his lyrical poems. *Raghuvamsa* and *Kumarasambhava* are his *Kavyas* or epics. His works are marked by "vivid portraiture, compact and elegant expression and an ardent love of nature". Other dramatists of the age are Sudraka and Vishakhadatta. The *Mrichchakatika* of Sudraka traces the story of Charudatta's love for Vasantasena, a courtesan of Ujjain. Vishakhadatta was the author of two historical plays *Mudrarakshasa* dealing with the Mauryan revolution and *Devichandraguptam* based on the Gupta conquest of the Sakas.

  During the Gupta age, the literary and scientific progress was made possible because of two important factors. In the first place, the Gupta monarchs gave political unity to the country after a long spell of foreign domination and political disintegration. The Imperial Gupta monarchs having integrated the country into a single political unit gave it the best and most benevolent administration. The peace and tranquility established by the Gupta rulers provided a

suitable atmosphere for the development of intellect of the people of the country.

Secondly, the era of economic prosperity ushered in by a brisk internal and external trade, made the people of India free from want and provided them with an opportunity to concentrate on the art of peace such as religion, philosophy, art, literature and science. Thirdly, the Gupta monarchs themselves were men of learning and scholarship. Samudragupta is significantly given the title of *Kaviraja* by the court poet Harisena. In one of his Gold coins he is depicted playing the lute. These Gupta monarchs extended staunch patronage to Sanskrit learning. The progress of Sanskrit literature during the Gupta period may conveniently be studied under two heads- Religious literature and Secular literature.

- **Religious Literature :** In the field of religious literature, the age of the Imperial Guptas was the richest in Indian history. The two great Epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were given their present shape in the Gupta period and the subject matter in them was rearranged and edited with such a skill as to give them the shape of almost a new literature.

  The renowned authors of *Niti* and *Dharmasastras* such as Yajnavalkya, Narada, Katyayana, Brihaspati and Kamandaka flourished in this period. The best works of *Mahayana* Buddhist philosophy were a product of their period, the contributors to which were a galaxy of brilliant thinkers like Sasanga, Vasubandhu and Dignaga.

- **Secular Literature:** The progress in secular literature was more marked during the Gupta period than in any other period of Indian history. Technical literature, *Kavya* literature, the *Puranas* are various branches of Sanskrit literature.

  Among the technical literature, mention may be made of *Chandravyakarana* by Chandra Gomin, *Amarakosa* by

Amarasingha, *Vrihatsamhita* by Varahamihira, etc.

The famous *Kavya* writers of the age were Kalidasa, Vatsabhatti, etc. The style of writing partly in verse was developed for the first time. The style is popularly known as the *Champu Kavya* in the history of the period.

Among the *Prasasti* writers of the period, Harisena, the author of Allahabad *Prasasti* and court poet of Samudragupta occupied the foremost rank. Vatsabhatti was another notable writer of the *Prasasti* type of literature.

Among the Buddhist literature, Nagarjuna was the founder of the *Madhyamika* School of philosophy. Arya Deva and Arya Asanga are the two most notable writers of this school.

The Jaina canonical literature at first grew up in Prakrit dialects.But Sanskrit came to be the medium later. Vimala, Devardhi Gani, Siddhasena Divakara are important scholars of the age.

The works of various literary figures that happened to flourish during this period were not only known for their literary qualities, but also provide us with a most reliable index for a study of the culture of the society of the period.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.7. Write True/False:

a) The Gupta rulers were followers of Vaisnavism.

b) Vehicle of Vishnu was a lion.

c) Chandragupta II took the title of Parambhagavat.

d) The Gupta rulers were intolerant towards other religion.

e) The copper image of Buddha at Nalanda was about 80 feet high.

f) The themes of the Ajanta paintings were not religious.

g) Ritu Samhara provide description of the seasons.

Q.8. Match the following:

a) Meghadutam	1. Sudraka
b) Mrichchakatikam	2. Vishakhadatta
c) Mudrarakshasa	3. Kalidasa

Q.9. Fill in the blanks:

a) _____ styled himself with the title of Param-bhagavat.

b) _____ was the Huna chief.

c) _____ was a notable writer of the Madhyamika School of Philosophy.

d) Buddhagupta was an ardent follower of _____.

e) Vasubandhu was the advisor of _____.

f) Abhinjanam Shakuntalam was written by _____.

g) Samudragupta was given the title of Kaviraja by his court poet _____.

h) Vatsabhatti was a famous _____ writer of the Gupta age.

Q.10. Mention one characteristic of the early Gupta temple.

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Q.11. What is the main difference between Ajanta and Bagh painting?

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11.5 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit, you have learnt that-

- the society was divided into four major castes. There were also different sub-castes in the society. Different categories of slaves were there in the society. Women had to live under the protection and domination of male in the patriarchal society.

- Sati and Polygammy were prevalent in the society. The people used to have delicious and nutritious food.
- As per the occassion and weather, men and women wore different kind of dresses. They too used different kinds of jewellery.
- The people were fond of amusement and sports. Agriculture was the main occupation of the people.
- Land revenue being the main source of income of the state, the Gupta rulers looked after the welfare of the cultivators and development of agriculture.
- All round development was also made in the field of industry and handicrafts. Gold, Copper, Textile and Wood Carving were popular industry of the period.
- Trade and commerce, both internal and external too was in a flourishing condition. The Gupta monarchs issued pure Gold coins which show that the Gupta period was economically very prosperous.
- the Gupta period was an age of religious activity. There was the reveival of Hinduism. Incarnations of Vishnu and worship of Shakti was very popular. Some of the Gupta rulers and their chiefs worshipped Shiva. Sun God was also worshipped.
- Jainism was too popular in the Gupta period and had many followers. Many Jaina temples were built during the Gupta period. Buddhism too flourished during the Gupta period. There were different centres of Buddhism. The University of Nalanda was the seat of Buddhist studies and it attracted students from various foreign countries.
- Art and architecture too developed in the Gupta period under the royal patronage. In the field of sculpture, there was the highest development. The art of painting was also highly developed as depicted in the world famous paintings in the Ajanta caves and caves of Bagh.
- Litearture too greatly developed in the Gupta period.Sanskrit literature reached the apex of its development. Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas became the official language of the Gupta Empire and it

superseded Pali and Prakrit. Sanskrit literature developed as a religious literature and secular literature.



11.6 FURTHER READING

1) Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhuri, H.C., Datta, K. (1986). *An Advanced History of India*. New Delhi, Macmillan India Ltd.

2) Thapar, Romila. (2002). *The Penguin History of Early India from The Origins to A D 1300.* New Delhi, The Penguin Group.

3) Tripathi, Ramashankar. (1999). *History of Ancient India*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.



11.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to the Question no 1: a) True, b) True, c) False, d) True, e) False, f) False, g) False

Answer to the Question no 2: a) Vedas, b) slave, c) eight, d) Kumaragupta, e) Varamihira, f) China

Answer to the Question no 3: Brahmacharya, Garhastha, Banaprastha and Sanyas.

Answer to the Question no 4: Elephant Riding

Answer to the Question no 5: By digging of tanks, wells, cutting of cannals, etc.

Answer to the Question no 6: An all round industrial growth was witnessed in the Gupta period.This growth was facilitated by the richness of the country in natural resources, mineral, animal and plant produce. Gold, Copper, Textile and Wood Carving were popular industry of the period.

Answer to the Question no 7: a) True, b) False, c) True, d) False, e) True, f) False, g) True

Answer to the Question no 8: a) 3, b) 1, c) 2

Answer to the Question no 9: a) Chandragupta II, b) Mihirakula, c) Bimola, d) Buddhism, e) Samudragupta, f) Kalidasa, g) Harisena, h) Kavya

Answer to the Question no 10: Small flat roofed temples, sometimes surrounded by the pillared halls are characteristic of the early Gupta period.

Answer to the Question no 11: Paintings of Ajanta are religious by nature, where as Bagh paintings are purely secular.



11.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) VERY SHORT QUESTIONS(Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q.1: Who authored the Allahabad *Prasasti?*

Q.2: Mention two historical plays of Vishakhadatta.

Q.3: Mention two Gupta temples.

Q.4: Who was Mihirakula?

Q.5: What do you know about the Junagarh Inscription?

B) SHORT QUESTIONS(Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: How was the society divided in the Gupta period?

Q.2: What was the position of women in the Gupta period?

Q.3: Write a note on the development of agriculture in the Gupta period.

Q.4: Write a note on the development of Brahmanical Hinduism during the Gupta rule.

C) LONG QUESTIONS(Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Discuss the development of Sanskrit literature in the Gupta period.

Q.2: Describe the socio-economic condition of the Gupta period.

Q.3: What kind of religious development took place in the Gupta period? Do you think that the Gupta rulers were secular?

Q.4: How the Gupta rule contributed to the growth of architecture, sculpture and painting?

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UNIT 12: EMERGENCE OF MAJOR POLITICAL DYNASTIES

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 The Pratiharas

12.4 The Rashtrakutas

12.5 The Palas

12.6 Origin of the Rajputs

12.7 The Chauhans

12.8 The Chandelas

12.9 The Kalachuris

12.10 Let Us Sum Up

12.11 Further Reading

12.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.13 Model Questionsr Progress

11.8 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know about the emergence of the power of the Pratiharas,
- discuss the rise of the Rashtrakutas as a major political power in India,
- describe the Pala Dynasty,
- know about the origin of the Rajputs,
- discuss the emergence of the Chauhan Dynasty,
- know about the Chandelas,
- explain the rise of the Kalachuris,

12.2 INTRODUCTION

The early medieval India witnessed the emergence of various dynasties as major political powers. All these powers played a very important role in shaping the course of the Indian history in the early medieval period. In this unit we will discuss the emergence of the major political dynasties in India in the early medieval period. These dynasties are: the Pratiharas, the Rastrakutras, the Palas, the Rajputs, the Chauhans, the Chnadels and the Kalachuris.

12.3 THE PRATIHARAS

The Pratiharas were one of the most important political powers of India. They were also known as the Gurjara- Pratiharas, probably because they settled around the Gurjarastra or South-Western Rajasthan. The earliest well known king of the Pratihara dynasty was Nagabhatta I. He was famous for repulsing the attack of the *mlechhas.* The *mlechhas* were possibly the Arabs of Sind.

Vatsaraja, the grand nephew of Nagabhatta I was another notable ruler of the Pratihara dynasty. He ruled in around 813 A.D. He included Jodhpur to his kingdom and also defeated Dharmapala, the Pala ruler of Bengal. But unfortunately, Vatsaraja was defeated by the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva.

Vatsaraja's successor Nagabhatta II shifted his capital from Bhinmal to Kannauj. He followed a policy of conquest and defeated the rulers of Vidarva, Kaling and subdued the Matsayas in the North, Vatsas in the East and Turuskka in the West. He also attacked and occupied Kannauj after defeating Chakrayudha. Thereafter, he defeated Dharmapala. But soon Nagabhatta II was defeated by the Rashtrakuta King Govinda III and thereafter the latter occupied Malwa. After this failure, Nagabhatta II tried to extend his kingdom towards the East and he succeeded in conquering territories as far as Gwalior, Kalinjar and up to Kannauj. His son Rambhadra ruled only for three years, but he proved himself to been incapable ruler and lost some of his territories to the Pala ruler, Devapala.

Rambhadra's son and successor Mihir Bhoja or Bhoja was one of the greatest rulers of the Pratihara dynasty. He ruled from 836-85 A.D. Soon after his accession to the throne, Bhoja tried to extend his control in the east but failed because he was defeated by the Pala ruler, Devapala. So, Bhoja turned his attention towards the central India, Deccan and Gujarat. This resulted in the revival of the struggle with the Rashtrakutas under their king Dhruva II and a battle was fought between the Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas on the bank of the river Narmada. After this battle, Bhoja was able to establish his control over considerable parts of Malwa and Gujarat. The Daulatpura Copper Plate Inscriptions of Bhoja confirms that he had succeeded in reasserting his authority over central and eastern Rajputana. After the death of the powerful Pala ruler Devapala, Bhoja defeated the weak Pala king Narayanapala and secured a considerable part of the Pala Kingdom. The Arab traveller, Sulaiman paid high tribute to the efficiency of the administration of king Bhoja. During the reign of Bhoja, the Pratihara kingdom extended up to Sutlej in the North-West, the foot of the Himalayas in the North, Bengal in the East, major portion of Rajaputana in the West and Narmada in the South. Bhoja was a devotee of Vishnu and he adopted the title of *Adivaraha*.

Bhoja was succeeded by his son Mahendrapala I. Mahendrapala I extended the empire over Magadha and North Bengal. But he had lost some territories in the Punjab to the king of Kashmir. During the reign of the Pratihara king Mahipala, the city of Kannauj was completely destroyed by the Rashtrakuta ruler Indra III. This undermined the prestige of the Pratiharas.

One of the last powerful Pratihara rulers was Rajyapala. During his reign Mahmud of Gazni invaded Kannauj in 1018 A.D. Instead of facing the invader, Rajyapala fled away from Kannauj. This behaviour of Rajyapala greatly disappointed the Chandella king Vidyadhara, and therefore he attacked and killed Rajyapala. Thereafter, the power of the Pratiharas started to decline. But it is beyond doubt that the Pratiharas were one of the most powerful ruling dynasties of India.

12.4 THE RASHTRAKUTAS

The Rashtrakuta dynasty was founded by Dantidurga in 753 A.D. He, in the beginning, was a feudatory of the Chalukyas of Badami. But taking advantage of the weak rule of his overlord Kirtivarman II, Dantidurga rose to power. The two great records of the reign of Dantidurga –the Dasavatara Cave Inscription of Ellora and the Samangad Plates -provide a detail account of his victorious career. He invaded Malwa under the Gurjara-Pratiharas and brought that area under his control. After his death, he was succeeded by his uncle Krishna I in 756 A.D. Krishna I defeated the Chalukyas of Badami, attacked the Ganges of Mysore and he forced the Chalukyas of Vengi to acknowledge his suzerainty. He had also constructed the magnificent rock-cut temple at Ellora known as the Kailasha temple. He was succeeded by his son Govinda II. But very soon, Govinda II was dethroned by his ambitious younger brother Dhruva in 779 A.D.

Dhruva ruled from 779 A.D. to793 A.D. He was the first Rashtrakuta ruler to powerfully intervene in the tripartite struggle that was waged for the supremacy of north India. He defeated the Pratihara ruler Vatsaraja and occupied Malwa and thereafter defeated the Pala ruler Dharmapala. Dhruva was succeeded by Govinda III (793-814 A.D.). Govinda III launched a very successful expedition against Nagabhatta II of Kannauj and annexed Malwa. Chakrayudha and Dharmapala unconditionally surrendered to Govinda III. Thereafter, Govinda III turned his attention towards the south and had crushed the confederacy of the Cheras, Pandyas and the Cholas, which was formed against him.

Govinda III was succeeded by his son Sarva, who was better known as Amoghavarsha. Amoghavarsha ruled from 814 A.D. to 880 A.D. Though he had ruled for 64 years, yet he preferred the pursuit of religion and literature to war. He patronised men of letters, such as Jinasena (the author of *Adipurana*), Mahaviracharya (the author of *Ganitasara-Samgraha*) and Saktayana (the author of *Amoghavritti*). Amoghavarsha himself was a great author and he wrote the first Kannada book on poetics called *Kavirajamarga*. He was a great builder also and had built the city of Manyakhet to excel the

city of Indra. During his later life, Amoghavarsha got attracted towards Jainism under his chief preceptor Jinasena. Amoghavarsha was succeeded by his grandson Indra III, who re-established the empire. Indra III defeated the Pratihara king Mahipala and sacked Kannauj in 915 A.D. Al-Masudi, the Arab traveller who visited India at that time, called the Rashtrakuta kings as the greatest kings of India.

Krishna III was the last powerful ruler of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. He ruled from 934 A.D. to 963 A.D. He defeated the Chola king Parantaka I in the battle of Takkolam and annexed the northern part of the Chola Empire. Thereafter, he went to Rameshwaram and set up a pillar of victory and built a temple there. Soon after his death, all of his opponents were united against his successor and occupied and burnt the Rashtrakuta capital, Malkhed in 972 A.D. This marked the end of the Rashtrakuta power. Thereafter one feudatory of the Rashtrakutas, Taila II of the Chalukya family founded the Chalukya Kingdom of Kalyani.

The Rashtrakuta dynasty ruled in the Deccan for almost two hundred years till the end of the tenth century A.D. The rulers of the dynasty were tolerant in religious views and they patronised Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Jainism. Even the Rashtrakuta rulers allowed the Muslim traders to settle and to preach Islam in their dominions. The tolerant policy of the Rashtrakuta rulers helped a lot in promoting foreign trade, which in turn enriched their kingdom. The Rashtrakuta rulers were great patrons of arts and literature and they equally patronised Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha (a forerunner of many modern Indian Languages) and Kannada. Thus, the Rashtrakuta dynasty occupied a very important place in the history of India.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The Pratiharas were known also by which name?

. . . . . .

2. Which title was adopted by the Pratihara king Mihir Bhoja?

. . . . . .

3. Who was the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty?

.....

12.5 THE PALAS

The Pala dynasty was one of the most powerful dynasties of India. The Pala dynasty was founded by Gopala in 750 A.D. The dynasty was founded at a time when there prevailed anarchy and confusion due to the absence of a ruler. So Gopala was elected by different chiefs and nobles of Bengal as their king. Gopala was a devoted Buddhist and it was said that he had built the famous monastery of Odontapuri. He was succeeded by his son Dharmapala. Dharmapala ruled from 790 A.D. to 821 A.D. He was considered the greatest ruler of the Pala dynasty. He built the famous Vikramshila University. He assumed the title of Paramasangata and was an ardent Buddhist. He had constructed a Buddhist *Vihara* at Somapura. During his reign, the Pala Kingdom extended from Pataliputra to Rajshahi. However, he was defeated by the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva. Thereafter, Dharmapala diverted his attention towards Kannauj and accordingly placed Chakrayudha on the throne of Kannauj under his suzerainty. But Dharmapala could not consolidate his control over Kannauj because he was defeated by the Pratihara king Nagabhatta II near Monghyr.

Dharmapala was succeeded by his son Devapala (821-860 A.D). He was a very powerful ruler and had made extensive conquests. The Badal Pillar inscription claims that Devapala had eradicated the Utkalas race and had humbled the pride of the Hunas and Gurjaras. He was a great patron of Buddhism.



LET US KNOW

It is said that Devapala had granted five villages to maintain a Buddhist monastery at Nalada at the request of king Balaputradeva. Dharmapala also stated in an inscription that his father was elected so as to put an end to the 'State of the fishes' and he was supposed to touch 'the heart of fortune'.

The successors of Devapala were very weak and incapable. The advantage of their weakness was exploited fully by the Pratiharas, the Rashtrakutas, the Chandellas, and the Kalachuris to the maximum. This resulted in the disintegration of the Pala dynasty. The importance of the Pala Dynasty for Eastern India is due to the role of that the Pala rulers played in the religious and cultural life of the ancient India. The Palas continued to royal patronage for Buddhist religious institutions. The old Buddhist University of Nalanda maintained its international reputation under them and the University of Vikramsala was founded by Dharmapala.

12.6 ORIGIN OF THE RAJPUTS

The origin of the Rajputs remained in obscurity. Different scholars give different opinions regarding the origin of the Rajputs. According to some historians the Rajputs trace their origin to the legendary Solar and Lunar dynasties. Another group claims their origin to the Kshatriyas of Vedic period. The Rajaputra or Rajputs were known from the early times.



LET US KNOW

The word 'Rajaputra' is mentioned in the Puranas. According to some scholars, the word 'Rajput' was a corrupt form of the Sanskrit word Rajaputra. Even Bana, the famous historian of the ancient India, used the term Rajaputra to denote a high-born Kshatriya. In certain parts of Rajputana, the word Rajput means illegitimate son of a Kshatriya chief.

There is a theory known as the 'Agnikula Theory' regarding the origin of the Rajputs. According to this theory, the Rajputs of Parmar, Chauhan, Pratihara and Solanki or Chalukya clans spread from Vasishta's sacrificial fire pit at Mount Abu. The poet Chand Bardai in his poetical work 'Prithviraja Rasau' had mentioned about the myth of the origin of the Rajputs . However some historians of present time have criticized this Agnikula Theory on various grounds.

There is another theory regarding the origin of the Rajputs. This theory claims the foreign origin of the Rajputs. According to this theory, the Rajputs were descendants of the Sakas, Huns, Kushanas and the Gurjaras and later on became Hindus. The upper ranks of these transformed Hindu foreigners came to be known as the Rajputs and the lower ranks came to be known as the Jats, Ahirs etc. V. Smith supported this theory on grounds that the invasion of the Huns and the other associate foreign clans in the fifth and the sixth centuries resulted in the rearrangement of the castes and ruling families of Northern India. As a result of these, the people belonging to many different races were placed together and were called Rajputs. Further, according to Smith, some Rajputs were descendants of the Hinduised Huns and Gurjaras, while some other Rajputs derived their origin from the native races like Gonds and Bhars etc.

Pandit Gaurishankar Ojha in his *History of Rajputana* has rejected the foreign origin theory of the Rajputs. According to him, though there are some similarities between the manners and customs of the Rajputs and those of the Sakas and the other foreigners, yet ethnology and tradition point to the Aryan origin of the Rajputs. Some practices of the Rajputs like Asvamedha sacrifice, the practice of Sati, the worship of the Sun, etc were not of foreign origin, but practices followed in the Hindu society. This confirms the Hindu origin of the Rajputs.

Thus, there exist various theories regarding the origin of the Rajputs. Whatever may be the reality, it is beyond doubt that the Rajputs were one of the most powerful ruling dynasties of ancient India. With their material lifestyle and feudal culture the Rajputs have an important place in Indian history. An important contribution of the Rajput dynasties to Indian culture was their patronage to building temples and promoting sculpture. The magnificent temples of their creation are a standing testimony of the rich culture.

12.7 THE CHAUHANS

The Chauhans were an important political power who emerged in the Early Medieval India. They also belonged to the Rajput clan. They were also known as the Chahamanas and Chauhan Rajputs. The original home of the Chauhans were probably the Sakambhari or Sambhar region, which was situated on the borders of the present Jodhpur and Jaipur states.

The founder of the Chauhan dynasty was Vasudeva. The Chauhans were originally the feudatories of the Pratiharas. But in the last quarter of the tenth century, Chauhan King Vigraharaja II challenged the political suzerainty of the Pratiharas and thereafter declared the independence of the Chauhan dynasty. He extended the power of the Chauhans up to the Narmada in the South. He had also defeated the Chalukya King Mularaja of Gujrat. One of his successors, Ajayaraja founded the city of Ajaymeru which is popularly known as Ajmer.



LET US KNOW

The *Harikeli Nataka*, portions of which were recovered from an inscribed stone on the wall of the Adhai-din-ka-Jdopra (a mosque built by Qutubuddin Aibek at Ajmer) is supposed to have been composed by the Chauhan King Vigraharaja IV.

King Vigraharaja IV was one of the most powerful rulers of the Chauhan dynasty. He conquered Delhi from the Tomaras and extended his kingdom up to the Punjab. In the south, he plundered the Chalukya dominion of Kumarapala. Not only that, he was also a good poet and a patron of literature.

Vigraharaja IV was succeeded by his son and successor Aparagangeya, who was assassinated by Prithviraja II, one of his cousins. But the reign of Prithviraja II was very short and he had no son to succeed him to the throne. Therefore, after Prithviraja II, Somesvara ascended to the throne of the Chauhan dynasty.

The son and successor of Somesvara, Prithviraja III was considered the most powerful ruler of the Chauhan dynasty. Prithviraja III ascended to the throne in 1177 A.D. He established his suzerainty over a considerable part of Northern India including Delhi and Ajmer. Soon after his accession to the throne, Prithviraja III consolidated his position by defeating his cousin Nagarjuna, who had advanced his claims up on Delhi and Ajmer. Thereafter, Prithviraja III launched an expedition against the Chandella Kingdom, defeated its king Paramardi and occupied Mahoba and the other fortresses in Bundelkhand. Prithviraja III also invaded the Chalukya Kingdom of Gujarat and forced their king Bhima II to conclude a treaty with him in 1188 A.D. The ruler of Malwa, offered his submission and concluded a treaty of friendly alliance with Prithviraja III.

It is said that Prithviraja III had carried away Sanjukta, the daughter of King Jayachandra Ghadavala, the ruler of Kanauj. He married her against the wishes of her father and therefore there was an enmity between Prithviraja III and Jayachandra Ghadavala.

The greatest achievement of Prithviraja III was checking the power of Muhammad Ghori of Ghazni in the First Battle of Tarain in 1191 A.D. Thereafter Muhammad Ghori returned to Ghazni, but in order to take a revenge of his defeat, he returned back to India in the next year with a reorganised army. In the Second Battle of Tarain in 1192 A.D. Muhammad Ghori defeated Prithviraja III, took him a prisoner and later on executed him. With the death of Prithviraja III, the power of the Chauhan dynasty started declining. However, in name the dynasty continued to rule from Ranthambhor till its capture by Alauddin Khalji in 1301 A.D.

Prithviraja III was a very powerful ruler and his achievements were narrated in two great literary works, viz., the *Prithviraj Raso,* written by his court poet Chand bardai and *Prithvirajavijaya* written by Jayanka.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

4. Who was considered as the greatest ruler of the Chauhan dynasty?

. . . . . .

5. Who was the founder of the Pala dynasty?

. . . . . .

6. Who was the founder of the Chauhan dynasty?

. . . . . .

12.8 THE CHANDELAS

The Chandelas ruled over the region of Bundelkhand and the area was called Jejakabhukti. The Chandelas were regarded as a clan of aboriginal chiefs who were upheld to the rank of Kshatriyas. Nannuka was the founder of the Chandela dynasty. The greatest king of the Chandelas was Dhanga, who was the son and successor of Yasovarman. Dhanga ruled from 954- 1002 A.D. He extended his kingdom from Yamuna to Chedi and from Gwalior to Kalinjar. He built some magnificent temples at Khajuraho.

The next powerful ruler of the Chandella dynasty was Vidyadhara and during his reign Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni twice invaded his territory in 1019 A.D. and 1022 A.D. respectively. The other two notable rulers of the Chandella dynasty were Kirtivarman and Madanavarman. The last prominent king of the Chandella dynasty was Paramardideva, who was defeated by the Chauhan king Prithviraja III in 1182 A.D. This inaugurated the process of declining of the Chandella dynasty.

12.9 THE KALACHURIS

The Kalachuris claimed themselves to be the descendents of Haihayas. Their power was limited to Dahala near Jabalpur with the capital at Tripuri. The Kalachuri dynasty was founded by Kokalla, who ruled from

875-925 A.D. He had matrimonial alliances with the Rashtrakutas and the Chandellas and friendly relations with the Pratiharas. Through these alliances, he strengthened the power and prestige of the Kalachuri dynasty.

During the reign of the Kalachuri King Gangeyadeva Vikramaditya (1030-1041 A.D.) the power of the dynasty increased rapidly. He occupied Allahabad and also raided Punjab,Bengal and Orissa. He also defeated the Chalukyas of Kalyani. Finally, he was defeated by Bhoja Paramara.

Laxmi-Karna was the son and successor of Gangeyadeva Vikramaditya. Laxmi-Karna made extensive conquests and raised the power of the Kalachuris. With the help of the Chalukyas of Kalyani and Anhilvad, he overthrew Bhoja. He also conquered the Chandellas and the Palas. His kingdom was extended from Gujarat to Bengal and from Ganges to Mahanadi. Later on the Kalachuris were conquered by the Sultans of Delhi.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

7. Who was Nannuka?

. . . . . .

8. Who was the last prominent king of the Chandella dynasty?

. . . . . .

9. Who was the founder of the Kalachuri dynasty?

. . . . . .

10. In which year the Kalachuri King Gangeyadeva Vikramaditya ascended to the throne?

. . . . . .



12.10 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit you have learnt-

- The early medieval India witnessed the emergence of various dynasties as a major political power. The most important

among them were the Pratiharas, the Rashtrakutas, the Palas, the Chauhans, the Chandelas, and the Kalachuris etc.

- The Pratiharas were also known as the Gurjara- Pratiharas and the earliest well known king of the Pratihara dynasty was Nagabhatta I. Some of the notable rulers of the Pratihara dynasty were Vatsaraja, Nagabhatta II, Mihir Bhoja, Mahendrapala I and Mahendrapala I etc. One of the last powerful Pratihara rulers was Rajyapala.
- The Rashtrakuta dynasty was founded by Dantidurga in 753 A.D. Some of the powerful rulers of the Rashtrakuta dynasty were Krishna I, Dhruva, Govinda III, Amoghavarsha, Indra III and Krishna III etc.
- The Pala dynasty was founded by Gopala in 750 A.D. His son and successors Dharmapala was considered as the greatest ruler of the Pala dynasty. Devapala was another powerful ruler of the dynasty. The advantage of the weakness of the successors of Devapala was utilized by the Pratiharas, the Rashtrakutas, the Chandellas, and the Kalachuris to the maximum, which resulted in the disintegration of the Pala dynasty.
- There are different theories regarding the origin of the Rajputs. Some important theories among them are the 'Agnikula Theory, the foreign origin of the Rajputs, the Aryan origin of the Rajputs etc.
- The founder of the Chauhan dynasty was Vasudeva. Vigraharaja II, Ajayaraja, Vigraharaja IV were some of the powerful rulers of the Chauhan dynasty. Prithviraja III was considered as the most powerful ruler of the Chauhan dynasty.
- Nannuka was the founder of the Chandela dynasty. The greatest king of the Chandelas was Dhanga, He extended his kingdom from Yamuna to Chedi and from Gwalior to

Kalinjar. Vidyadhara, Kirtivarman and Madanavarman were other notable rulers of the dynasty. The last prominent king of the Chandella dynasty was Paramardideva.

- The Kalachuri dynasty was founded by Kokalla, who ruled from 875-925 A.D. During the reign of the Kalachuri King Gangeyadeva Vikramaditya (1030-1041 A.D.) the power of the dynasty increased rapidly. Laxmi-Karna was another powerful ruler of the dynasty. Later on the Kalachuris were conquered by the Sultans of Delhi.



12.11 FURTHER READING

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12.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to the question no 1: Gurjara Pratiharas

Answer to the question no 2: The title of *Adivaraha*

Answer to the question no 3: Dantidurga

Answer to the question no 4: Prithviraja III

Answer to the question no 5: Gopala

Answer to the question no 6: Vasudeva

Answer to the question no 7: The founder of the Chandela dynasty

Answer to the question no 8: Paramardideva

Answer to the question no 9: Kokalla

Answer to the question no 10: 1030 A.D.



12.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) VERY SHORT QUESTIONS (Answer each question within 50 words)

Q.1: Which Pratihara King shifted his capital from Bhinmal to Kannauj?

Q.2: Who built the city of Manyakhet?

Q.3: During the reign of which Rashtrakuta king the Kailasha temple at Ellora was constructed?

Q.4: Name one theory related to the origin of the Rajputs?

Q5: Name two notable rulers of the Chauhan dynasty?

B) SHORT QUESTIONS (Answer each question within 150 words)

Q.1: The Gurjara-Pratiharas settled in which area?

Q.2: Mention two great records of the reign of Dantidurg.

Q.3: Who built the famous Vikramshila University?

Q.4: What is the Agnikunda Theory?

Q.5: In which year the first battle of Tarain took place and between whom?

C) LONG QUESTIONS (Answer each question in between 300-500 words)

Q.1: Discuss in brief about the Pratihara dynasty.

Q.2: Write a note on the Rashtrakutas.

Q.3: Write a short note on the Palas.

Q.4: Describe in brief about the origin of the Rajputs.

Q5: Write a short note on the Chauhan dynasty.

Q6: Discuss in brief about the Chandelas and Kalachuris.

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UNIT 13: RISE OF REGIONAL POWERS IN THE POST GUPTA ERA

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Chalukyas

- 13.3.1 Chalukyas of Badami
- 13.3.2 Chalukyas of Vengi
- 13.3.3 Chalukyas of Kalyani

13.4 Pallavas

13.5 Cheras

13.6 Pandyas

13.7 Cholas

13.8 Let Us Sum Up

13.9 Further Reading

13.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.11 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know about the emergence of the Chalukyas in the post Gupta era
- discuss about the rise of the Pallavas in the post Gupta era
- describe about the Cheras
- know about the Pandyas of Madura
- estimate about the emergence of the Cholas in the post Gupta era

13.2 INTRODUCTION

After the downfall of the Gupta Empire, the provinces and feudatory states declared their independence and number of new political powers emerged both in northern and southern India. In this unit we will discuss

about the rise of the major political powers in south India in the post Gupta era. The fall of the Gupta Empire in the sixth century CE cleared the door for the establishment of other minor kingdoms. In certain places, new kingdoms arose, and in others, dynasties that had previously submitted to Gupta suzerainty proclaimed their autonomy. The new powers included, King Yasodharman (515-45 CE) of Malwa and political groups like the Hunas, the Maukharis, and the later Magadhan Guptas. This unit aims to provide a concise overview of the political developments in the North and South India.

The political development of these periods shows the emergence of several great, comparatively long-lived kingdoms along with a significant number of short-lived kingdoms with far narrower spheres of influence. Political hierarchies that are in place are revealed by the *prashastis* or royal inscriptions. While inscriptions of more powerful rulers occasionally gave reference of their subordinates, those of subordinate kings typically refer to their overlord. The term “feudatory” or “vassal” can be used to describe subordinate rulers who were required to pledge allegiance and military service to their overlord, despite the fact that the feudalism concept has multiple shortcomings in nature.

Numerous regional powers arose in various locations in the absence of a dominant power. These powers, which stood for several dynasties, founded their kingdoms and frequently remain engaged in conflict with one another.

During the reign of Kumaragupta-I his feudatory Bandhuvarman ruled over Mandasor which was a major centre of western Malwa. He belonged to the Aulikara family which perhaps ruled there up to the beginning of the sixth century CE. Two stone pillar inscriptions - the Mandasor in Madhya Pradesh, one of which is dated in 532 CE refer to a powerful king Yasodharman. One of these inscriptions reports the victories of Yasodharman. The inscription describes him as the victor against the Hunas. Nothing much is known about Yasodharman after 532-533 CE.

As per the writings of Patanjali and other ancient records, the Maukharis were a prominent family. As the Harsha’s inscription from 554 CE describes the rise of Yajnavarman from Gaya around this period, the Maukharis may

have begun to consolidate their political dominance towards the end of the 5th century CE. The main sources of information related to the Maukharis are the Apshad inscription of Adityasena and the Haraha inscription of Isanavarman. The rulers were merely referred to as Samantas, signifying that they governed as kings while under the Guptas' absolute authority.

Isanavarman is referred to as *maharajadhiraja*, whereas the first three rulers were known as *maharajas*. The Guptas of later times were related to the early Maukhari kings. Nonetheless, it appears that Isanavarman's proclamation of independence damaged the ties between the later Guptas and the Maukharis, as the Apshad inscription records Kumaragupta's triumph over Isanavarman, the fourth king of the Later Gupta family of Magadha. However, it appears that the dynasty continues to persist in ruling. Grahavarman, the final Maukhari king, wed Rajyasri, the sister of the renowned ruler Harshavardhana of the Pushyabhuti dynasty. The Maukhari Empire came to an end with the death of Grahavarman.

The rulers that ruled Magadha between the middle of the sixth century CE until roughly 675 CE were referred to as Magadha Guptas or Later Guptas; however, their relationship to the Imperial Guptas of the preceding period is unclear. The Later Guptas entered into matrimonial alliances with other contemporary ruling families. The Later Gupta line came to an end with the expansion of the power of the Gaudas of Bengal in westward direction.

13.3 CHALUKYAS

The Chalukyas were one of the most important regional powers amongst others that emerged in southern India in the post Gupta era. From the mid 6th century A.D. the Chalukyas had replaced the Vakatakas as the major power in the Deccan. The Chalukyas claimed descent from the lunar race but opinion differs regarding their origin. The Chalukyas ruled over four different regions of India at different periods of time. They were as such known as the Chalukyas of Badami, the Chalukyas of Vengi, the Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Chalukyas of Anhilwada. Anhilwada is located in western India, so we will not study in details about the Chalukyas of

Anhilwada in this unit because this unit deals with the major political powers of Southern India only.

13.3.1 CHALUKYAS OF BADAMI

The Chalukyas began their base at northern Mysore at Vatapi or Badami and the adjacent Aihole. From here they moved northwards and then they annexed the former kingdom of the Vakatakas, which was centered round Nasik and the upper Godavari. The Chalukya power at Badami had a humble beginning under Jayasimha and his son Ranaraga. It is said that after defeating the Rashtrakuta king Indra, Jayasimha established his authority at Badami and marked the beginning of the political history of the Chalukyas. Pulakesin I
(550-566 A.D.) was the third ruler of the Chalukyas of Badami and he was the real founder of the Chalukya dynasty of Badami. He made Vatapi or Badami as his capital. He adopted the title of "Vallabhashvara" and also performed the 'Ashvamedha' sacrifice. He was succeeded by Kirtivarman I. By defeating the Mauryas of North-Konkana and the Nalas of Nanavadi, Kirtivarman I extended his kingdom. He invaded the territories of Bihar and Bengal in the north and the Chola-Pandya region in the south. He was succeeded by his brother Mangalesa. Mangalesa began to rule as a regent because Pulakesin II (the son of Kirtivarman I) was a minor. Mangalesa defeated the Kalachuris of Chedi and established the authority of the Chalukyas over the entire areas between the western and eastern seas. Soon a civil war started between Mangalesa and Pulakesin II when the former refused to hand over the power to the later. In this fight Mangalesa met his death.

Pulakesin II after defeating his uncle Mangalesa, ascended to the throne in 609 A.D. He raised the power and prestige of the Chalukyas of Badami. He adopted the title of Satyashraya. The western Gangas and the Alupas in the south and the Latas, Malavas

and Gurjaras in the north accepted the suzerainty of Pulakesin II. He even defeated Harshavardhana. His first expedition against the Pallava ruler Mahendravarman I was a great success and he annexed Vengi. Pulakesin II appointed his brother Vishnuvardhana as Yuvaraja to govern that area. This marked the beginning of the Eastern Chalukyas or the Chalukyas of Vengi. Unfortunately Pulakesin's second invasion against the Pallavas ended in failure. In about 642 A.D. the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I occupied the Chalukya capital at Badami. Probably in this fight Pulakesin II was killed. Pulakesin II sent an ambassador to Iran in 625 A.D. and in return the Iranian king Khusrau II also sent an ambassador to the Chalukya capital Badami. In about 641 A.D. the famous Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang visited the kingdom of Pulakesin II. Pulakesin II also encouraged art and architecture and also promoted religion and learning. His court poet Ravi Kirti wrote his eulogy in the Aihole inscription.



Vatapikonda means the "Conqueror of Vatapi"

Pulakesin II was succeeded by his son Vikramaditya I. He restored the power of the Chalukyas by regaining the territories which were earlier lost to the Pallavas. He even plundered the Pallava capital Kanchi. He was succeeded by his son Vinayaditya, whose region was generally peaceful and prosperous. The next ruler of the dynasty was Vijayaditya. His region was the longest, the most prosperous and peaceful one. Vikramaditya II succeeded him. It is said that Vikramaditya II had overrun Kanchi three times. In around 740 A.D. he completely routed the Pallavas which marked the end of the Pallava supremacy in southern India. He also resisted the Arab invasion of south Gujarat. The last ruler of the Chalukyas of Badami was Kirtivarman II. He was defeated by one of his feudatories, Dantidurga. Thereafter Dantidurga founded the Rashtrakuta dynasty which finally put an end to the Chalukya dynasty of Badami.

The Chalukya rulers of Badami had immense contribution in the field of art, architecture and temple-building. They had developed the Deccan or Vesara style in the building of structural temples. They also had perfected the art of stone building without mortar. Under their patronage, the Buddhists, Jainas and Brahmanas competed with each other in building cave temples. A large number of temples were constructed under the patronage of the Chalukya rulers of Badami. These temples represented various architectural styles. Some of the temples constructed during that period were the temples at Aihole and Badami, the Ladh Kan temple, the Durga temple, the Hucimaligudi temple, the Jain temple at Meguti, the Melagitti Sivalaya, the Papanath temple and the Virupaksha temple etc.

13.3.2 CHALUKYAS OF VENGI

Pulakesin II, the famous Chalukya king of Badami conquered many places on the bank of the river Godavari and in Andhra Pradesh. He appointed his younger brother Vishnuvardhana as the viceroy of these newly conquered territories. But very soon this viceroyalty developed into an independent kingdom with Vengi as its capital under Vishnuvardhana. Thus Vishnuvardhana was the founder of a new dynasty known as the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. Vijayaditya I (746-764 A.D.) was the next important ruler of this dynasty. During his time the western Chalukyas of Badami were overthrown by the Rashtrakutas. Vijayaditya III was the greatest monarch of the Eastern Chalukya dynasty. He followed a policy of aggressive imperialism and during his time the kingdom extended from the Mahendragiri in the north to the Pulicat luke in the south. He defeated the Rashtrakuta king Krishna II. The kings of Kalinga and Kosala accepted the suzerainty of Vijayaditya III. He was succeeded by a number of weak successors during whose reign Vengi became a part of the Chola Empire. Vimaladitya, one of the rulers of the Vengi dynasty married Kundavai, the daughter of Rajaraja Chola I. Thus began the process

of the Chola- Chalukya matrimonial alliances which finally resulted in the merger of the two dynasties under Kulottunga, son of Rajendra Narendra of Vengi and Princess Amangadevi (daughter of Rajendra Chola I). With his death in 1075 A.D. the Eastern Chalukya dynasty came to an end.

13.3.3 CHALUKYAS OF KALYANI

In 974-975 A.D. the Rashtrakutas were overthrown by Taila II who belonged to the Chalukya dynasty. Thereafter he established a new dynasty with Kalyani as the capital. This dynasty came to be known as later Chalukyas or Chalukyas of Kalyani. Taila II waged a war with the Paramaras and defeated the Paramara king Munja. Later on Munja was put to death. From the time of Taill II, the Chalukya-Chola struggle became a regular feature.

One of the most powerful rulers of the Chalukyas of Kalyani was Somesvara I. He defeated the Chola king Rajadhiraja I in a battle at Koppam in which the Chola king lost his life. However Somesvara I was defeated by Chola king Rajendra II who was the successor of Raadhiraja I in the battle of Kudal Sangamam. Somesvara I conquered north Konkan and invaded Gujarat and Malava and also received the submission of Parmara Bhoja. Vikramaditya VI was the last great ruler of the Chalukyas of Kalyani. He killed his elder brother Somesvara II and ascended to the throne in 1076 A.D. On the time of his coronation, Vikramaditya VI withdrew the Shaka era and introduced the Chalukya- Vikram era. He fought many wars against the Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra, the Kakatiyas of Warangal, the Yadavas of Devagiri and the Kadambasa of Goa. His region also witnessed the development of Chalukyan art and literature. His gave patronage to Bilhana, the author of Vikramankacharita and Vijnanesvara, the author of Mitaksara. In the 12th century A.D. the rule of the Chalukyas of Kalyani came to an end.

13.4 PALLAVAS

The Pallavas were one of the most important powers of South India. They replaced the Ikshvakus from the Krishna-Guntur region. After the fall of the Satavahanas, the Pallavas made themselves the masters of the entire region from Krishna to the Palar River with Kanchi as their capital. A variety of opinions exist regarding the genealogy and chronology of the Pallavas. The term Pallava means 'creeper', and is a Sanskrit version of the Tamil word 'tondai', which also carries the same meaning. Probably the Pallavas were a local tribe who established their authority in the Tondainadu or the land of creepers. The earliest records of the Pallavas are inscriptions in Prakrit, Sanskrit and Tamil languages.

Simha Vishnu (575-600 A.D.) was one of the most powerful rulers of the Pallava kingdom. He waged war against the Cholas, the Pandyas and their allies. During the last quarter of the 6th century A.D. he extended his power up to the Kaveri River. He was succeeded by his son Mahendravarman I (600-630 A.D.). He was a dramatist, musician and a poet. He was the author of a play, 'Mattaritasa-Prahasana'. He suffered several defeats at the hands of Chalukya king Pulakesin II. Pulakesin II even occupied Vengi and appointed his brother Vishnuvardhana as the viceroy of that area. Later on Vishnuvardhana started the line of the Eastern Chalukyas with Vengi as the capital.

Narasimhavarman I (630-660 A.D.) was the son and successor of Mahendravarman I. His surname was Mahamalla. He not only resisted the second invasion of Pulakesin II, but also killed him and thereafter captured the Chalukyan capital Vatapi or Badami. After this success he won the title of 'Vatapikonda'. During his reign the famous Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang visited Kanchi in 642 A.D. He was a great lover of art.

The Chalukya king Vikramaditya I defeated and killed the Pallava ruler Mahendravarman II (668-670 A.D.). The next Pallava ruler Parameshwaravarman I (670-680 A.D.) lost his capital Kanchi to Chalukya king Vikramaditya I, soon recovered it. Parameshwaravarman I was succeeded by his son and successor Narasimhavarman II (680-720 A.D.).

He is also known as Rajasimha. His period is marked by peace and prosperity. The famous Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi and the Shore temple at Mahamallapura were constructed by him. He is said to have sent embassies to China. Maritime trade flourished during his reign.

The next Chalukyan ruler Parameshwaravarman II (728-731 A.D.) faced the combined attack of Chalukyas and the Gangas and he was killed in that attack. During the reign of Pallava king Nandivarman II (731-795 A.D.), the Chalukya king Vikramaditya II invaded and captured the Pallava capital, but withdrew from Kanchi without destroying it. Nandivarman II constructed the Vaikuntaperumal temple at Kanchi.



Maduraikonda means the "Captor of Madurai"



LET US KNOW

After the death of Parameshwaravarman II there was no direct heir to the Pallava throne. So the council of ministers appointed a descendent of Bhimavarman, a younger brother of Simhavishnu as the new ruler of the Pallava dynasty. After ascending to the throne, he came to be known as Nandivarman II.

Aparajita was the last ruler of the Pallavas. He was defeated by Aditya Chola I in the early 10th century A.D. Thus the Imperial Cholas overthrew the Pallavas and this marked an end to the Pallava rule.

The Pallava rulers greatly contributed in the field of art, architecture and literature. A large number of temples were constructed by the Pallava rulers which are known for their architectural beauty. Amongst such temples mention may be made of the rock-out temples at Bhairavakonda, the Anantesvara temple at Undavalli, the Rathas of Mahabalipuram, the Shore temple of Jalashayanaswami, the Kailashanatha temple at Kanchipuram, the Vaikuntaperumal temple at Kanchi, the Muktesvara temple and the Matangesvara temple at Kanchi etc. The best example of Pallava sculpture is the 'Descent of the Ganga' or Arjuna's Penance at Mahabalipuram.

The Pallava capital Kanchi was a great center of Sanskrit learning and Sanskrit was the official language of the Pallavas. Both Bharavi, the author of Kiratarjuniyam and Dandin, the author of Dasakumarcharitam, lived in the Pallava court.

13.5 CHERAS

The Cheras emerged as a political power in southern India in the post Gupta era. The Cheras were also known as Keralas and they belonged to the Dravidian stock. The kingdom of the Cheras roughly covered the modern district of Malabar, the states of Travancore and Cochin, the Kongu region that includes Coimabatore and the southern portion of Salem. Some fine natural ports like Muziris and Vaikkarai were also under the Chera kingdom. Very little is known about the history of the Cheras and their earliest reference was found in the II Rock Edict of Asoka. This Rock Edict mentions about the Keralaputas or Keralaputras (Cheras) along with the Codas (Cholas) and the Pandyas as a frontier power (in the south). Unfortunately the early history of the Cheras before Senguttuvan is remained in obscurity. Senguttuvan was a powerful Chera king and he achieved several victories against his neighbours. His successor had waged wars with the Cholas and the Pandyas who even captured him. But he ultimately managed to escape. After him for a few centuries the history of the Cheras remained in darkness. Once again they came to the forefront in the 8th century A.D. when one Chera king fought with the Pallava Paramesvaravarman. The Chera rulers had to face the aggression of the Pandyas during the later part of the 8th century A.D. Even the Pandya rulers like Maravarman Rajasimha I and Nedunjadayan Varaguna I conquered Kongudesa and Venada (south Travancore) from the Cheras.



Gangaikondachola means 'The Chola conqueror of Ganga'

The Cheras had a cordial relationship with the Cholas and it is said that the famous Chola king Parantaka I had married a Chera princess. But towards the end of the 10th century A.D. Chola king Rajaraja I subjugated the Chera ruler and destroyed their fleet at Kandalur. This deteriorated the Chera-Chola relationship. The Cholas continued to dominate the Cheras until the beginning of their decline in the 12th century A.D. Taking advantage of the declining power of the Cholas one Chera king Virakerala succeeded in asserting his independence.

In the 13th century A.D. the Pandyas under Jatavarman Sundara Pandya reduced the Cheras to subservience. But taking advantage of the

conflict between Malik Kafur (the powerful general of Alauddin Kaliji) and the Pandyas, the Chera king Ravivarman Kulasekhara increased his power. But very soon the growing aggressive activities of the Cheras were checked by the Kakatiya king Rudra I. The later rulers of the Chera dynasty had no notable achievements and soon they disappeared as a major political power in southern India.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1. Which ruler of the Chalukyas adopted the title of "Vallabhashvara"?

.....

Q.2. Who was the founder of the Chalukyas of Kalyani dynasty?

.....

Q.3. What is the meaning of the term 'Pallava'?

.....

Q.4. Who was the author of a play, 'Mattaritasa-Prahasana'?

.....

Q.5. Which Pallava ruler constructed the famous Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi and the Shore temple at Mahamallapura?

.....

13.6 PANDYAS

The Pandyas also emerged as a power in South India in the post Gupta era. Their kingdom roughly comprised the present districts of Madura, Ramnad and Tinnevely in south India. Madura was the capital of the Pandya kingdom. In the early times the Korkai port was the chief commercial centre of the Pandya kingdom. And later on Kayal became the main centre of trade and commerce of the kingdom.

The earliest references of the Pandya kingdom were found in the Arthasastra of Kautilya, in the Mahavamsa, in the writings of Megasthenes, in the Hathigumpha inscription, in the writings of Strabo, in the Periplus, in the Geography of Ptolemy and in the II and III Rock Edicts of Asoka etc. The

II and III Rock Edicts of Asoka described the Pandyas as an independent people on the southern frontiers of his kingdom. However for a long time the chronological and detail history of the Pandyas remained in obscurity. Probably due to the growing power of the Pallavas, the power of the Pandyas got undermined and in the 6th century A.D. the Kalabhras occupied the Pandya kingdom. However towards the end of the 6th century A.D. or the beginning of the 7th century A.D., the Pandya king Kadungon ousted the intruders and revived the Pandya power. But not much information is available about him.

The next notable ruler of the Pandya kingdom was Arikesari Maravarman who ruled in the middle of the 7th century A.D. He was identified with Nedumaran or the legendary Kun Pandya. During the reign of the Arikesari Maravarman and his successors Koccadayan Ranadhira, Maravarman Rajasimha I and Nedunjadayan Varaguna I, the Pandya kingdom continued to expand on all sides at the expense of the Cholas, the Keralas and other neighbours. Nedunjadayan Varaguna I even annexed Venada (south Travancore). His son and successor Sri-Mara-Ari-Vallabha (815-862 A.D.) defeated a combined force of the Pallavas, Gangas and the Cholas at Kudamukku (Kumbakonam). However the Pandya king Varagunavarman or Varaguna II was defeated by the Pallava king Aparajitavarman in about 880 A.D. in the battle of Sri-Purambiyam (Tiruppurambiyam) near Kumbakonam.

The rise of the Cholas gave another blow to the Pandya kingdom. It is said that the Pandya king Maravarman Rajasimha II allied himself with the ruler of Ceylon, attacked the Chola king Parantaka I. But Parantaka I not only successfully repulsed him but also seized the Pandya territories and assumed the title of 'Maduraikonda' to commemorate his victory. Thereafter Maravarman Rajasimha II fled to Ceylon from where he tried to regain his position. But all his efforts ended in failure. From this time onwards the Pandya Kingdom lost their independence and remained under the Chola dominance till the beginning of the 13th century A.D. However from time to time the Pandya rulers tried their level best to throw off the Chola supremacy and regain their lost power and prestige. But all these efforts of the Pandya rulers failed.

The accession of Jatavarman Kulasakhara in 1190 A.D. was a turning point to the fortunes of the Pandyas. From his time onwards the recovery of the Pandya power and prestige began and for a century or more they maintained political dominance in southern India. His successor Maravarman Sundara Pandya I (1216-1238 A.D.) defeated the Cholas and burnt the towns of Tanjore and Uraiyur. In such a situation, Narasimha II Hoysala came forward for the help of the Chola king Rajaraja III. This deteriorated the relationship between the Pandyas and the Hoysalas.

Jatavarman Sundara Pandya (1251-1272 A.D.) was one of the most powerful rulers of the Pandya kingdom. He crushed the Chola authority in south India and occupied Kanchi. He also subdued the Chera country, Kongudesa and Ceylon. In addition to this, he occupied the fortress of Kannanur-Koppam from the Hoysalas. Even he defeated the Kakatiya Ganapati of Warangal and Kopperunjinga, the Pallava chieftain of Sendamangalam. Thus Jatavarman Sundara Pandya rapidly expanded the Pandya kingdom and soon they emerged as one of the most powerful powers of Southern India. To mark his supreme position, Jatavarman Sundara Pandya even assumed the title of 'Maharajadhiraja-Sri-Paramesvara'.

Maravarman Kulasekhara was another powerful ruler of the Pandyas. He won some military successes against the Malainadu and Ceylon. He also built a palace at Jayangondasolapuram. But his last days were very tragic. There was a fratricidal struggle between his illegitimate son Vira Pandya and his legitimate son Sundara and both of them were co-rulers with their father (Maravarman Kulasekhara) since 1296 A.D. and 1303 A.D. respectively. It is suspected that Maravarman Kulasekhara was murdered. The dispute between the two brothers provided a golden opportunity to Malik Kafur, the general of Alauddin Khalji to lead an expedition to Madura in 1310 A.D. He plundered and looted the wealth of Madura. A few years later Alauddin Khalji again sent a strong force against the Pandya kingdom under Khusru Khan. The Chera king Ravivarman Kulasekhara and the Kakatiyas of Warangal also took the advantage of the prevailing chaotic situation in the Pandya kingdom. Thus weakened by all sides, the Pandya kingdom soon disintegrated and disappeared from the scene.

13.7 CHOLAS

After the decline of the Pallavas the imperial Cholas came to the forefront towards the close of the 9th century A.D. The founder of the Chola Empire was Vijayalaya who was a feudatory of the Pallavas of Kanchi. Taking advantage of the Pallava-Pandya conflict he increased his power and captured Tanjore in 850 A.D. His son and successor Aditya I defeated the Pallava king Aparajita in around 903 A.D. and annexed a greater portion of the Pallava kingdom. By the end of the 9th century A.D, the Cholas had completely defeated the Pallavas. The Pandyas were also defeated by the Cholas. The Rashtrakutsa king Krishna II gave his daughter in marriage to Aditya. Aditya I was succeeded by his son Parantaka I in 907 A.D. who enhanced the power and prestige of the Cholas. He conquered Madurai by defeating the Pandya ruler Rajasimha II and thereafter he assumed the title of “Maduraikonda”. However the Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna III inflicted a crushing defeat upon Parantaka I at the battle of “Tokkolam” in 949 A.D. As a result of this defeat the Cholas had to cede Tondamandalam to the Rashtrakutas. This conflict gave a serious setback to the rising power of the Cholas and it took some time to recover from this. With the accession of Parantaka II the revival of the Chola power began. He recovered Tondamandalam.

The power of the Cholas reached its zenith during the reign of Arumolivarman, who was the successor of Parantaka II. He crowned himself as Rajaraja I in 985 A.D. His reign witnessed the territorial expansion of the Chola kingdom along with a well organized administration. He possessed a powerful standing army and navy and with the help of this he defeated the Chera, Pandyas, Ceylon and the Chalukyas of Vengi. After defeating the Ceylonese king Mahinda V, Polonnaruva became the capital of Chola province in North Ceylon. He also annexed Mysore, Tanjore and Maldives to his empire. Rajaraja I built the magnificent Shiva temple of Brihadeshwara or Rajaraja temple at Thanjavur. The construction of this temple was completed in 1010 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Rajendra I in 1014 A.D. Rajendra I followed the expansionist policy of his father and made

extensive conquests in Ceylon. He also defeated Mahipala, the Pala ruler of Bengal in 1022 A.D. and to commemorate the occasion, he assumed the title of "Gangaikondachola". Rajendra I built his new capital near the mouth of the Kaveri and called it "Gangaikondacholapuram" (the city of the Chola conqueror of the Ganga). With his strong naval force, Rajendra I invaded Malaya Peninsula, Srivijaya Empire, Java and the neighbouring islands and thereby controlled the overseas trade route to China. For political as well as commercial purposes he sent two diplomatic missions to China.

Rajendra I was succeeded by his son Rajadhiraja I in 1044 A.D. He suppressed the rebellious Pandyas and defeated the hostile forces in Ceylon and subjugated their territory. After sacking Kalyani, he performed Virabhisheka (coronation of the victor) at Kalyani and assumed the title of Vijayarajendra to celebrate his victory. He died in a battle with the Chalukyan king Somesvara I at Koppam. Rajendra II succeeded his brother Rajadhiraja I and defeated Somesvara I in the battle of Kudal Sangamam. Virarajendra I (1063-1070 A.D.), the next ruler of the Chola Empire defeated the Chalukyas and erected a pillar of victory on the banks of Tungabhadra.

Virarajendra I was succeeded by Kulottunga I (1070-1122 A.D.), the great-grandson of Rajaraja I. He defeated the rulers of Kerala and the Pandya Kingdom. During the reign of Kulottunga I, the Ceylonese king Vijayababu overthrew the Chola authority in Ceylon. Kulottunga I maintained cordial relations with Sri Vijaya and also sent a large embassy of 72 merchants to China. He was titled "Sungam tavirtta" (he who abolished tolls).



LET US KNOW

Kulottunga I was the son of Rajendra Narendra of Vengi and the Chola princess Ammangadevi (daughter of Rajendra Chola I). As a result of this Kulottunga I united the two kingdoms of Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi and the Cholas of Thanjavur.

Kulottunga I was succeeded by weak rulers and there was a clash between the Cholas and the later Chalukyas over the over lordship of Vengi, the Tungabhadra doab and the Ganga country. By the end of the 13th century A.D. the power of the Cholas started to decline. In 1297 A.D. the Pandya king Sundara seized Kanchi and the place of the Cholas was taken over by the Pandyas and the Hoysalas. This marked the end of the Chola power.

The Cholas had a hereditary monarchy and the king was the head of the administration. The council of ministers aid and assist the king in the smooth running of the administration. There were several other officials who used to play an effective role in the administrative matters of the state and they were paid by assignments of land called 'Jivitas' according to their status. The Cholas had a very strong army which was consisted of the infantry, cavalry and the elephants. They also paid special attention to their navy. The land tax was the main source of income of the Chola government.

For better administration, the whole Chola Empire was divided into 'Mandalam' or provinces which were further divided into 'Valanadudus' (divisions), 'Nadus' (districts) and 'Kurrams' (villages). The village was the basic unit of Chola administration. The Cholas were best known for their local self government at the village level. To look after the affairs of the village, each village had an assembly. There were three assemblies called the Ur, Sabha or Mahasabha and Nagaram. Ur was the general assembly of the village which consisted of all the taxpaying residents of an ordinary village. Sabha or Mahasabha was an exclusively Brahmin assembly of the brahmadeya village which functioned largely through its committees called the variyams. The Nagaram was the assembly of the merchants and were found more commonly in the trading centers. There was a close contact between the central authority and the local bodies.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.6. Which Pandya ruler assumed the title of 'Maharajadhiraja-Sri-Paramesvara'?

.....

Q.7. Who was the founder of the Chola Empire?

.....

Q.8. Which Chola ruler assumed the title of "Maduraikonda".

.....

Q.9. Which Chola ruler built the magnificent Shiva temple of 'Brihadeshwara'?

.....

Q.10. Which Chola ruler was titled "Sungam tavirtta"?

.....



13.8 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit we have learnt about-

- The emergence of the Chalukyas in the post Gupta era. They were one of the most important regional powers of south India. They ruled over four different regions of India at different periods of time. They were as such known as the Chalukyas of Badami, the Chalukyas of Vengi, the Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Chalukyas of Anhilwada.
- The Chalukya power at Badami had a humble beginning under Jayasimha and his son Ranaraga. Pulakesin I (550-566 A.D.) was he was the real founder of the Chalukya dynasty of Badami. He made Vatapi or Badami as his capital. Pulakesin II raised the power and prestige of the Chalukyas of Badami. But in about 642 A.D. the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I occupied the Chalukya capital Badami and in this fight Pulakesin II was killed.
- Pulakesin II was succeeded by his son Vikramaditya I. He restored the power of the Chalukyas by regaining the territories which were earlier lost to the Pallavas. He even plundered the Pallava capital

Kanchi. The last ruler of the Chalukyas of Badami was Kirtivarman II. He was defeated by one of his feudatories, Dantidurga. Thereafter Dantidurga founded the Rashtrakuta dynasty which finally put an end to the Chalukya dynasty of Badami. The Chalukya rulers of Badami had immense contribution in the field of art, architecture and temple-building.

- Vishnuvardhana, the younger brother of Pulakesin II, established an independent kingdom with Vengi as its capital. The dynasty established by him came to be known as the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. Vijayaditya III was the greatest monarch of the Eastern Chalukya dynasty. He followed a policy of aggressive imperialism. But he was succeeded by a number of weak successors during whose reign Vengi became a part of the Chola Empire. By 1075 A.D. the Eastern Chalukya dynasty came to an end.
- After overthrowing the Rashtrakutas in 974-975 A.D., Taila II established a new dynasty with Kalyani as the capital. This dynasty came to be known as later Chalukyas or Chalukyas of Kalyani. Somesvara I, Vikramaditya VI were some of the most powerful rulers of the Chalukyas of Kalyani. In the 12th century A.D. the rule of the Chalukyas of Kalyani came to an end.
- The Cheras emerged as a political power in southern India in the post Gupta era. But very little is known about the history of the Cheras and their earliest reference was found in the II Rock Edict of Asoka. Senguttuvan was one of the powerful Chera kings and he achieved several victories against his neighbours. The Chera rulers had to face the aggression of the Pandyas during the later part of the 8th century A.D. Even the Pandya rulers like Maravarman Rajasimha I and Nedunjadayan Varaguna I conquered Kongudesa and Venada (south Travancore) from the Cheras.
- The Cheras had a cordial relationship with the Cholas and it is said that the famous Chola king Parantaka I had married a Chera princess. But towards the end of the 10th century A.D. the Chera-

Chola relationship deteriorated. The Cholas continued to dominate the Cheras until the beginning of their decline in the 12th century A.D. Taking advantage of the declining power of the Cholas one Chera king Virakerala succeeded in asserting his independence. In the 13th century A.D. the Pandyas under Jatavarman Sundara Pandya reduced the Cheras to subservience. The later rulers of the Chera dynasty had no notable achievements and soon they disappeared as a major political power in southern India.

- The Pandyas emerged as a power in South India in the post Gupta era. Their earliest references were found in the Arthasastra of Kautilya, in the Mahavamsa, in the writings of Megasthenes, in the Hathigumpha inscription, in the writings of Strabo, in the Periplus, in the Geography of Ptolemy and in the II and III Rock Edicts of Asoka etc.
- The founder of the Chola Empire was Vijayalaya who was a feudatory of the Pallavas of Kanchi. The Chola king Parantaka I enhanced the power and prestige of the Cholas. The power of the Cholas reached its zenith during the reign of Arumolivarman. Rajendra I, Rajadhiraja I, Rajendra II, Virarajendra I, Kulottunga I were some of the powerful rulers of the Chola kingdom. Kulottunga I was succeeded by weak rulers and by the end of the 13th century A.D. the power of the Cholas started to decline. In 1297 A.D. the Pandya king Sundara seized Kanchi and the place of the Cholas was taken over by the Pandyas and the Hoysalas. This marked the end of the Chola power.



Regent: an interim sovereign authority.



13.9 FURTHER READING

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2) Thapar, Romila. (2002). *The Penguin History of Early India from The Origins to A D 1300.* New Delhi, The Penguin Group.

3) Tripathi, Ramashankar. (1999). *History of Ancient India*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd..

13.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to the question no 1: Pulakesin I

Answer to the question no 2: Taila II

Answer to the question no 3: Creeper

Answer to the question no 4: Mahendravarman I

Answer to the question no 5: Narasimhavarman II

Answer to the question no 6: Jatavarman Sundara Pandya

Answer to the question no 7: Vijayalaya

Answer to the question no 8: Parantaka I

Answer to the question no 9: Rajaraja I

Answer to the question no 10: Kulottunga I

13.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very short questions (Answer each question within 50 words)

Q.1. Who was “Vishnuvardhana”?

Q.2. Who was the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty?

Q.3. Who assumed title of ‘Vatapikonda’?

Q.4. Who was the last ruler of the Pallavas?

Q.5. Who was the author of Dasakumarcharitam?

Q.6. Who is the author of the” Arthasastra”?

B) Short questions (Answer each question within150 words)

Q.1. Name two temples constructed under the patronage of the Chalukya rulers of Badami.

Q.2. Name two temples constructed by the Pallava rulers.

Q.3. Name two natural ports which were under the Chera kingdom.

Q.4. Who was Malik Kafur?

Q.4. What is “Ur”?

C) Long questions (Answer each question within 300-500words)

Q.1. Write in details about the emergence of the Chalukyas as one of the major political powers of south India in the post Gupta period.

Q.2. Discuss about the political history of the Pallavas.

Q.3. Write a note on the Chera Kingdom.

Q.4. Make an estimate of the political history of the Pandyas.

Q.5. Discuss in details about the Cholas as a major political power of south India.

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UNIT 14: DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Deccan Polity

14.4 Society, Trade and Commerce

14.5 Pushyabhutis

14.6 Harshavardhana of Thaneswar

14.7 Relation of Harshavardhana with Kamarupa Kingdom

14.8 Let Us Sum Up

14.9 Further Reading

14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.11 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- analyse the developments made in the nature of polity in the Deccan during early medieval India,
- discuss the society along with trade and commercial developments made in the Deccan in early medieval India,
- describe the Pushyabhuti dynasty and its illustrious ruler king Harshavardhana of Thaneswar,
- examine the relationship of king Harshavardhana of Thaneswar with the kingdom of Kamarupa.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

In the earlier unit, we have studied about the different political powers which emerged in the Southern India (Deccan) during early medieval India. These political powers were the Chalukyas, the Pallavas, the Cheras, the

Pandyas, and the Cholas which used to have power struggle amongst them for establishing their political supremacy. However, inspite of their conflicts, these rulers had an administrative (polity) structure for providing stability to their reigns. This resulted in peace and prosperity in the Deccan society and provided impetus for the development of trade and commerce in Southern India. The structure of the Deccan polity, social condition, and developments made in the field of trade and commerce will be now studied in this unit.

Further, we will also study the Pushyabhutis, a political power which emerged in the Northern India during early medieval India. In this unit the main focus will be on the famous king Harshavardhana of the Pushyabhutis and his relationship with king Bhaskaravarman of the Varman dynasty who ruled over the kingdom of Kamarupa.

14.3 DECCAN POLITY

The polity or the administrative structure of the Deccan rulers under different political power houses or dynasties in the early medieval India seems to be very interesting and politically significant. It is because of the fact that in those days of scanty and slow means of communication it was quite remarkable that they could rule for long periods over extensive territories. Infact, the machinery of administration under different ruling dynasties remained more or less the same in its different aspects, except that its parts or constituents varied with the time. Official designation of the functionaries also changed, but their functions never changed.

There was no non-monarchical form of government. All the ruling dynasties of South India believed in hereditary monarchy. Law of primogeniture was followed. The eldest prince was anointed by the king as *yuvaraja* in his own life time. At the death of the king, the *yuvaraja* used to succeed the deceased king. Sometimes, if a younger prince was found to be having more ability and capability for governance, the claim of the eldest prince used to pass over to the younger prince. In case, the king used to be a minor, a near relation used to act as *regent*.

For their administrative convenience, the Deccan rulers used to divide their kingdom or *rajya* into a number of provinces. The provinces were called *bhukti*, *bhumi*, *mandala* or *mandalam*. The provinces were again sub-divided into divisions called *kottams* or *valanadu* which were subsequently divided into districts called *nadu*. Every *nadu* used to have a group of villages under its jurisdiction which were collectively called as *kurram*. The villages were at the lowest level of administration and were called as *grama* or *gramam*.

A host of officials, the central, provincial and local of high and low category were there to carry out the administration. It was sometime very difficult to differentiate between the civil and the military officials. Other then these officials, there were functionaries like the *mantrins* (ministers) and *amatyas* (counselors) to assist the king in running the administration. But, probably, there was nothing like *mantriparishad* (council of ministers) to advise and guide the king, indicating that the Deccan rulers enjoyed arbitrary powers thereby reigning as absolute authority. The Deccan rulers also had feudatories called *mahasamantas* or *samantas* who provided personal attendance to them and assisted them in military campaigns.

At the bottom of the administrative structure of the Deccan rulers, there existed village assemblies in the form of *sabha* or *mahasabha,* providing uniqueness to the entire polity. These village assemblies were under the supervision of the imperial officials, but they enjoyed full authority in the management of rural affairs. For efficiently performing the task, the village assemblies used to assign their responsibility of upkeep and improvement of temples, tanks, public baths, gardens, fields, etc to various sub-committees. Elaborate rules were devised for the election of the member to these village assemblies. A member was elected for one year only.

In this way the Deccan rulers maintained law and order in the state which they considered as their primary duty. They also undertook works of public utility to promote the prosperity of people. Though the rulers were aggressive in their foreign relations, yet they were very much anxious to preserve peace and security within their kingdoms.

14.4 SOCIETY, TRADE AND COMMERCE

- **Society**

The Deccan society during the early medieval India was organised on the basis of the caste system. The society was divided into a number of social groups or castes. Each caste was hereditary and constituted an occupational group. Apart from the four main castes, there were sub-castes like the Kaikolas, the Chattis, the Kammalas and others.

Brahmanas occupied a privileged position in the society. They enjoyed both religious authority and economic power. They were given lighter punishments for committing any kind of offence. The main duties of the Brahmanas included learning and teaching of the Vedas and performing rituals and ceremonies. Some of them too served as chief priests of the temple. A few of them got themselves engaged in trade.

The position of women was not at all satisfactory in the society. They were inferior to men both in theory and practice. The practice of Sati and child marriage was prevalent. The women who did not perform sati were considered sinful and such women had to live a much degraded life. The women were not allowed to own property. They were not recruited as soldiers, ministers, ambassadors or other advisers of the king. This indicates that the women had no say in the matters of state craft.

There were different kinds of marriages prevalent in the society. The people were accustomed to good food, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Dresses of different forms and qualities were worn by the people. Stitched garments were also in use in a limited manner. Ornaments were too worn by women and they loved perfumes. The people had different means of entertainment to enjoy their leisure time. They also believed in such superstitions the dreams of omens, ghosts, and spirits and were very much afraid of them.

- **Trade and Commerce**

Trade and commerce was in a fairly flourishing condition in the Deccan during the early medieval India. Maritime facilities available in the region greatly facilitated the development of commercial activities. Not only

was there a coastal trade among the different parts of India, but a regular mercantile traffic was also carried on between India on the one hand and the Eastern and Western countries on the other. The Deccan traders also had a regular commercial intercourse with the Indian colonies beyond the sea.

With trade being in such a flourishing tradition, the manufactures in the Deccan produced goods for consumption in the local market as well as for this export to the foreign countries. Superior quality textiles, metal wares, salt and pottery were produced for export as they had a ready market outside. Besides, spices, precious stones, sandal wood, pearls, ivory, camphor, etc were also exported. Some of the famous ports in the Deccan were Mahabalipuram, Kaveripattanam, Korkai, Shaliyur, etc.

The merchants having a profitable trade used to organise themselves into guilds or corporations for regulating their business. Small guilds were known as *nagaram* and the large guilds were known as *manigramam*. Each guild used to have its chief and members in corporate capacity. They were free to administer their internal affairs as the State did not interfere much with them.

The guilds bought goods from the manufacturers and used to sell them in the market. The large guilds ventured in foreign trade and received state protection in case any competing power tried to destroy their trade. These guilds sometimes even acted as banks where money could be deposited at a certain rate of interest.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

Q1: The provinces were called as what under the Deccan system of polity?

……

Q2: For how many years a member of the village assembly was elected under the Deccan system of polity?

.....

Q3: Name any two sub-castes of the Deccan society.

.....

Q4: Who occupied a privilege position in the Deccan society?

.....

Q5: Name any two famous ports of Deccan India.

.....

Q6: Small guilds were known in the Deccan as.

.....

14.5 PUSHYABHUTIS

One of the ruling dynasties that emerged in Northern India during the early medieval India was the Pushyabhutis. The founder ruler of this dynasty was Pushyabhuti after whom the dynasty was named. The Pushyabhuti rulers initially ruled from Thaneswar (Haryana) and later on from Kannauj (Uttar Pradesh). The early rulers of this dynasty, namely, Pushyabhuti, Naravardhana, Rajyavardhana I and Adityavardhana assumed the title of Maharaja which probably indicates that these rulers were feudatory rulers under the imperial Guptas.

Prabhakaravardhana, son of Adityavardhan was the first important ruler of the Pushyabhuti dynasty as he ruled independently assuming the title of *Maharajadhiraja*. He defeated the Hunas, the ruler of Gurjara, and the king of Malwa. He also established matrimonial relationship with the Maukharis, a powerful ruling dynasty of Kannauj by giving in marriage his daughter Rajyashree in marriage to the Maukhari king Grahavarman. Prabhakaravardhana had two sons Rajyavardhana and Harshavardhana, both of whom ruled one after another over the Pushyabhuti kingdom.

At the death of Prabhakaravardhana, his eldest son Rajyavardhana ascended the throne of Pushyabhutis in 605 A.D. Almost at the same time king Devagupta of Malwa and king Sasanka of Gauda formed an alliance and attacked Kannauj. The king Devagupta of Malwa successfully led this campaign against Kannauj killing its ruler Grahavarman, captured queen

Rajyashree and occupied the kingdom. At this Rajyavardhana decided to take revenge of the killing of his brother-in-law, rescue his sister Rajyashree and recover Kannauj. He immediately marched against king Devagupta of Malwa leaving his brother Harshavardhana at the capital to look after the kingdom. In a fierce battle he killed Devagupta and recovered Kannauj. But king Sasanka of Gauda, the ally of deceased king Devagupta, treacherously murdered Rajyavardhana and once again occupied Kannauj.

The sudden death of Rajyavardhana forced his brother Harshavardhana to sit at the throne of Thaneswar at a very young age of 16 in 606 A.D. The reign and achievements of Harshavardhana who emerged as the greatest king of the Pushyabhuti dynasty will be discussed in the next sub-section.

14.6 HARSHAVARDHANA OF THANESWAR

Harshavardhana had to encounter many problems immediately after his accession. He, at first, released his sister Rajyashree and restored her back the kingdom of Kannauj by driving away Sasanka from there. At the request of his sister, Harshavardhana also had to take the responsibility of administering the kingdom of Kannauj as no rightful heir to the throne was there. As such, Harshavardhana united the kingdom of Thaneswar and kingdom of Kannauj into one which greatly strengthened his position. He even transferred his capital from Thaneswar to Kannauj as it was located in a more central place to administer the entire kingdom.

With his newly acquired power and position, Harshavardhana started his conquests. He brought most of Northern India, namely, Punjab, Malwa, Magadha, Orissa, and Mithila under his control and thereby assumed the title of *Siladitya*. Then he turned his attention towards Western India where he defeated the king of Valabhi, but had to face defeat at the hands of Pulakesin II, the Chalukya ruler of Badami. Being defeated, Harshavardhana had to turn towards eastern India where he founded an ally in king Bhaskaravarman of Kamrup who helped him in his successful campaign against king Sasanka of Gauda. Harshavardhana successfully occupied parts of the Gauda kingdom.

The successful expeditions of Harshavardhana, except the one against Pulakesin II, proved his military prowess and also testify the vastness of his kingdom. To rule such a vast kingdom, Harshavardhana organised a decentralised system of administration with elements of feudalism in it. The king was the centre of administration and was assisted by the crown prince. The majority part of the territory conquered by him was ruled by the feudatories. Even princes of royal blood were appointed as Viceroys of provinces. Several ministers and other officials were also there to assist in the administration. In order to supervise the administration, Harshavardhana maintained contact with the public opinion through his officers and by his own tours.

Harshavardhana was also a man of considerable literary interests and talents. Despite of his duties as a ruler, he wrote three plays, *Ratnavali*, *Priyadarshika*, and *Nagananda*. His court was a magnificent one being adorned by great luminaries like Banabhatta, Mayura, Bhartrihari and others. Harshavardhana was even the chief patron of the Nalanda University where during that period 10,000 students from all parts of India and abroad studied. In religious matters, he was liberal and secular. He was a born Hindu and worshipped Lord Shiva. But later on he accepted Buddhism and changed over to its Mahayana form being influenced by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang who visited his kingdom. Harshavardhana also exchanged diplomatic missions with China.

14.7 RELATION OF HARSHAVARDHANA WITH KAMRUPA KINGDOM

The relationship of Harshavardhana with the kingdom of Kamrupa was very much cordial. A friendly relationship, rather an alliance, was established between king Bhaskaravarman and king Harshavardhana. This friendship proved to be equally beneficial for both the rulers in strengthening their respective political positions. Further, Bhaskaravarman, on the basis of this relation, could play an important role in the political history of Northern India in the first half of the 7th century A.D.

Bhaskaravarman ascended the throne of Kamarupa in c.600 A.D and ruled till c.650 A.D. for a period of fifty years. He was the most illustrious of all the Varman rulers. At the time of his accession, the glory of the kingdom of Kamarupa was greatly undermined with the loss of Pundravardhana and the defeat at the hands of Mahasenagupta and Sasanka. Bhaskaravarman could not tolerate the rise of Sasanka of Gauda.

It was under such a situation that Bhaskaravarman sought the friendship of king Harshavardhana who too had enmity with king Sasanka of Gauda. Bhaskaravarman sent an embassy to Harshavardhana under Hamsavega with valuable items for seeking the latter's alliance against their common enemy. Harsha too was in need of an ally and he heartily welcomed the offer and thus, was formed an offensive and defensive alliance between the two independent monarchs of Northern and Eastern India.

The combined forces of Harshavardhana and Bhaskaravarman probably launched an attack upon Sasanka. From the West, Bhandi, the cousin and general of Harshavardhana attacked Gauda. While from the East, Bhaskaravarman fell upon him. Unable to face the combined attack, Sasanka fled away to Orissa where he continued to rule till c.619-620 A.D. With this victory, Gauda with its capital city of Karnasuvarna came into the possession of Bhaskaravarman. To commemorate the occasion, he issued from his victorious camp at Karnasuvarna the famous *Nidhanpur grants* reconfirming the land grants made by Bhutivarman in Pundravardhana.



LET US KNOW

To make friendship with Harshavardhana, king Bhaskaravarman of Kamarupa sent his ambassador Hamsavega, who met Harshavardhana with rich presents like *Abhoga* (umbrella of Varuna), crest jewels, pearl necklaces, silken cloth, manuscripts on aloe bark, drinking vessel, etc.

By forming an alliance with Harshavardhana, Bhaskaravarman not only recovered the lost glory and possession of the kingdom of Kamarupa, but also carried the political glory of Kamarupa to a point not reached ever before. Later, Bhaskaravarman too participated in the religious assembly at Kannauj and religious convocation at Prayaga arranged by Harshavardhana. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang visited the kingdom of Kamarupa and stayed at the court of king Bhaskaravarman. The Chinese pilgrim was very much pleased with the hospitality of Bhaskaravarman and with the peace and prosperity prevailing in the kingdom of Kamarupa.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

Q7: Who was the founder ruler of the Pushyabhuti dynasty?

……

Q8: At what age did Harshavardhana ascend the throne of Thaneswar?

……

Q9: Who united the kingdom of Thaneswar and kingdom of Kannauj?

……

Q10: Who was Pulakesin II?

……

Q11: Who was the chief patron of the Nalanda University?

……

Q12: When did Bhaskaravarman ascended the throne of Kamarupa?

……

Q13: Who was Bhandi?

……

Q14: Name the capital city of the kingdom of Gauda.

……



14.8 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit, you have learnt

- The polity or administrative structure of the Deccan under different ruling dynasties during the early medieval India had been more or less similar despite the geographical variations in territory. It was a monarchical form of government with hereditary monarchy and the law of primogeniture being followed. For administrative convenience, the kingdom was divided into a number of administrative units. There were **mahasamantas**, **samantas**, **mantrins**, **amatyas**, and others to assist the king. The village assemblies in the form of sabha or mahasabha were at the bottom of the Deccan polity.
- During the early medieval India, caste system prevailed in the Deccan society. Apart from the four castes, there were various sub-castes in the society. Position of women was inferior to that of men. The people were very much fond of food, dress, ornaments and amusements.
- Trade and commerce flourished greatly in the Deccan during the early medieval India. Trade was carried on with the foreign countries of both East and West as well as Indian colonies outside. Many ports were there from where textile, metal wares, spices, ivory, etc were exported. The merchants having profitable business used to organise themselves into guilds.
- The Pushyabhuti dynasty emerged in Northern India during the early medieval India. The founder ruler of this dynasty was Pushyabhuti after whom the dynasty was named. The Pushyabhuti rulers initially ruled from Thaneswar (Haryana) and later on from Kannauj (Uttar Pradesh). Prabhakaravardhana was the first important ruler of the Pushyabhuti dynasty. The most illustrious ruler of this dynasty was Harshavardhana, the youngest son of Prabhakaravardhana.

- Harshavardhana ascended the throne of Thaneswar at a very young age of 16 in 606 A.D. and had to face various problems, which he successfully encountered. He was a good warrior and administrator also had interest in literature and wrote three plays.
- Harshavardhana established friendly relationship with king Bhaskaravarman of Kamrupa. Both were in need of an ally and as such they entered into an offensive and defensive alliance. The combined forces of Harshavardhana and Bhaskaravarman probably defeated king Sasanka of Gauda, their common enemy. By forming an alliance with Harshavardhana, Bhaskaravarman carried the political glory of Kamarupa to a point not reached ever before.



14.9 FURTHER READING

1. Chandra, Sathish(2007) *A History of Medieval India*, Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi
2. Chattopadhyaya, B.D.(1994) *The Making of Early Medieval India*, OUP
3. Maiti, Provatansu (2000): *Studies In Ancient India (Pre-Historic Age-1206 A.D.),* Sreedhar Publishers, Calcutta.



14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to the question no 1: The provinces were called as *bhukti*, *bhumi*, *mandala* or *mandalam* under the Deccan system of polity.

Answer to the question no 2: A member of the village assembly was elected for one year only under the Deccan system of polity.

Answer to the question no 3: The Kaikolas and the Chattis.

Answer to the question no 4: The Brahmanas occupied a privilege position in the Deccan society.

Answer to the question no 5: Mahabalipuram and Shaliyur.

Answer to the question no 6: Nagaram.

Answer to the question no 7: Pushyabhuti.

Answer to the question no 8: 16.

Answer to the question no 9: Harshavardhana united the kingdom of Thaneswar and kingdom of Kannauj.

Answer to the question no 10: The Chalukya ruler of Badami who defeated Harshavardhana.

Answer to the question no 11: King Harshavardhana.

Answer to the question no 12: Bhaskaravarman ascended the throne of Kamarupa in c.600 A.D.

Answer to the question no 13: The cousin and general of Harshavardhana.

Answer to the question no 14: Karnasuvarna.



14.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) VERY SHORT QUESTIONS (Answer each question within 50 words)

Q.1: Who used to be anointed as Yuvaraja by the king under the Deccan system of polity?

Q.2: Name the two social evils which were present in the Deccan society.

Q.3: Name any two items exported from the Deccan ports.

Q.4: Who was the first important ruler of the Pushyabhuti dynasty?

Q5: What title was assumed by king Harshavardhana?

Q6: Name the Chinese pilgrim who visited the kingdom of Kamarupa.

B) SHORT QUESTIONS (Answer each question within 150 words)

Q.1: How did the village assemblies function under the Deccan system of Polity?

Q.2: What position was enjoyed by women in the Deccan society?

Q.3: How did the guilds form by the merchants of Deccan did function?

C) LONG QUESTIONS (Answer each question in between 300-500 words)

Q.1: Discuss the Deccan system of Polity.

Q.2: Write a note on the society of Deccan during early medieval India.

Q.3: Describe the emergence of Pushyabhutis in Northern India.

Q.4: Critically estimate the reign of king Harshavardhana?

Q.5: Examine the relationship between king Harshavardhana and king Bhaskaravarman of Kamrupa.

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UNIT 15: SOCIETY, RELIGION AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

15.1 Learning Objectives

15.2 Introduction

15.3 Proliferation of Jatis

15.4 Temple Architecture and various styles

- 15.4.1 Nagara Style
- 15.4.2 Dravida Style
- 15.4.3 Vesara style

15.5 Buddhism and Jainism

- 15.5.1 Shankara and *Advaita Vedanta*

15.6 Bhakti Movement in the South

- 15.6.1 Nayanars and Alvars

15.7 Let us Sum Up

15.8 Further Reading

15.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

15.10 Model Questions

15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know about the early Medieval period and as well as the Proliferation of Jatis
- analyze temple Architecture and its various styles
- discuss Buddhism and Jainism and Sankara's philosophy of *Advaita Vedanta*
- describe Bhakti movement in the south especially emphasizing on Nayanars and Alvars.

15.2 INTRODUCTION

The Medieval period of Indian History comprises a long period, spanning from 6th century A.D i.e. after the fall of the Gupta Empire to the 18th century i.e. the beginning of colonial domination. Modern Historians, for the sake of convenience and for a better understanding of the changes in society, religion and culture, usually divide the Medieval Period into Early Medieval and Late Medieval periods. According to them, the Early Medieval Period refers to the phase of Indian history that stretches from the fall of the Gupta Empire to the beginning of the Sultanate period in the 13th century. Palas, Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas, the Cholas and the early Rajputs dominated the political, socio-economic and cultural patterns of life during the early medieval period.

The early medieval period of Indian History was earlier treated by historians as a 'dark phase'. It was so because during this time the whole country was divided into numerous regional states which were busy fighting with one another. But recent studies have indicated that, though politically divided, India witnessed a growth of new and rich cultural activities in the fields of art, literature and language. In fact, some of the best specimens of temple architecture and Indian literature belong to this period.



LET US KNOW

In North India Gurjara- Prathiharas, Palas in east & Rashtrakutes in South India rose to power in early years (750–1000) while in later years (1000–1200) Rajput states in North & Cholas in South fetched power from previous rulers.

15. 3 PROLIFERATION OF JATIS

The early medieval period was also marked by many social changes. Socially, an important phenomenon of this period was the proliferation or increase in the number of *Jatis* (castes). How did it happen? One of the

reasons for it was the inclusion of newer groups into Brahmanical society. It is suggested that as the number of land grants increased, new areas were brought under cultivation. It made local tribal people leave hunting as their main profession and take up agriculture. They were then transformed into peasants and assimilated in society as Sudras. The land grants in fact resulted in movement and migration of Brahmanas to different internal areas where they were able to introduce and enforce their Brahmanical social values. The land grants also led to the increase in the number of *Kayastha* class. The Kayasthas were basically scribes and they specialized in drafting and writing land grant documents. Naturally, with increase in the number of land grants their importance also increased and they emerged as a distinct caste.

The caste system formed the basis of the society in this period as in earlier periods but now the Kshatriyas and the Brahmins were given more privileges while more and more social and religious disabilities were placed on the sudras and other lower castes. A large number of sub castes such as potters, weavers, gold-smiths, musicians, barbers, rope-makers, leather-workers, fishermen, hunters of birds, etc proliferated. They were classified as *Jatis* now. It is significant that the *Smriti* writers of the period regarded handicrafts as a low occupation. Thus, most of the workers as well as tribals such as the *Bhilas* were classified as 'untouchables'

But the most important feature of this period was the rise of a new class of people called the Rajputs, such as Chahmanas, Paramaras, Pratiharas, Chandellas etc. Some historians believe that they were the descendants of various groups of foreign invaders such as Sakas, Kushanas, Hunas etc, who had been coming to India from northwest during different times of history. These people gradually settled down in the region of Rajasthan and, after intermingling with the Indian society, emerged as a warrior class. There are others who treat them as a part of the Kshatriya varna of the Brahmanical system. But today many scholars see a connection between the rise of Rajput class and the extension of agriculture activities in Rajasthan. It is pointed out that with the spread of land grants there was an increase in the number of agriculture settlements. As a result,

many local chiefs came to acquire enough financial and political power to set up an independent authority. In order to acquire legitimacy and authencity to their newly acquired position in the eyes of their subjects, they invited Brahmanas from Gangetic and other regions to perform for them royal rituals and ceremonies, and in return gave them land and other things as fee, i.e. *dakshina*.

Hinduism was expanding rapidly during this period. It not only absorbed a large number of Buddhists and Jains within its fold, but also Hinduised many indigenous tribes and foreigners. These new sections formed some new castes and also sub-castes, and often continued their own customs, rituals of marriage ceremonies and even worshipped their own tribal gods and goddesses. Thus, society and religion became more and more complex.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

Q1: Who were the Kayasthas?

.....

Q. 2: What was the main factor for the growth of Rajput class?

.....

15.4 TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE AND VARIOUS STYLES

In the early medieval India, the most important activity that received royal patronage was that of temple-building. The temples served as representative of glory of the kings who had them built. The loftier the temple, the greater was the might reflected. Indeed, there was a definite correlation between the two. The construction of large temples and their regular maintenance required the mobilization of huge amount of resources, both financial and human. This could be possible only when the particular king was wealthy & powerful enough.

The three types of temple architecture which evolved during this period are known as the Nagara, Dravida and Vesara (mixed) styles.

15.4.1 Nagara Style:

The characteristic feature of the Nagara style of temples was the lofty tower or spire called the *Shikhara*. The Nagara style is typically characterized by the architectural wonder, which ideally portrayed the craftsmanship of the artists. A study of the temples of northern India reveals two distinct features, in Planning and in Elevation. In plan, the temples were basically quadrangle with graduated projections in the centre. In elevation, it resembles a tower gradually inclining inwards in a convex curve. According to the plan, the projections are carried upwards to the top of the *Sikhara*, and thus there is strong emphasis on vertical lines in elevation. Temples built in this style were spread over large parts of northern India, particularly in Central India, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Orissa. However, even within the general Nagara style, there were distinctive regional characteristics. The Nagara style is widely distributed over a greater part of India, exhibiting distinct varieties and ramifications in lines of evolution and elaboration according to each locality. Some of the outstanding examples of this style are the Lingaraja temple at Bhuvaneshwar, the Sun temple at Konark and the Kandariya Mahadeva temple, built by the Chandella kings at Khajuraho.

15.4.2 Dravida Style:

The Dravida style of architecture is found in South India. It reached the height of its glory under the rule of the Chola kings. Some of the important characteristics of this style are the *garbhagriha*, the *vimanas*, the *mandapa* and the *gopurams*. The *garbhagriha* was the inner sanctum that housed the chiefdeity to whom the temple was dedicated. The number of storeys varied from five to seven and they had a typical style which came to be called the *vimanas.* The *mandapa* was a pillared hall with numerous carved pillars and a flat roof was generally placed before the *garbhagriha*. It acted as

an audience hall and was a place for various other activities such as ceremonial dances which were performed by the *devadasis*-the women dedicated to the service of the gods. The *gopurams* were the lofty gates along the high walls that enclosed the entire temple complex. In course of time, the *vimanas* rose higher and higher, the number of courtyards was increased to two or three and the *gopurams* also became more and more elaborate. The temples generally enjoyed revenue-free grants of lands for their expenses. Some of the temples became so rich that they entered into business, lent money, and took part in business enterprises. An early example of the Dravida style of temple architecture is the eighth century temple of Kailasanatha at Kanchipuram. Another important example of this style is the Brihadishvara temple built by Chola king Rajaraja I at Tanjore.

15.4.3 Vesara style

The Vesara temples represented a mixed style. These were mostly built under the patronage of the Chalukyas and are found at Pattadakal near Badami (Karnataka). There was also great improvement in the art of making sculptures in this period.

An important contribution of Chola artists in this respect was the bronze images of Nataraja. These images represent Siva in his cosmic dance and are unmatched in their rhythm and balance.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

Q 3: What were the three types of temple architecture in early medieval India?

.....

Q. 4: In which state of India Lingaraja temple is located?

.....

Q.5: Who built the famous Brihadishvara temple?

.....

15.5. BUDDHISM AND JAINISM:

During the period of early medieval India, revival and expansion of Hinduism has been noticed and the period is marked by continued decline of Buddhism and Jainism. The tenets of Buddhism and Jainism were challenged at the intellectual level and more than that Buddhist and Jain monks were persecuted. Their temples were taken over. Thus, the temple of Puri was once a Buddhist temple and the temple at Qutub complex was once a Jain temple which was converted into a Vishnu temple. During the period, Buddhism was gradually confined to eastern India and its main patrons were the Pala rulers. The decline of Pala power was also a blow to Buddhism.

Above all, more serious were the internal developments in Buddhism. Buddha basically emphasized and preached a practical philosophy with a minimum of priesthood. Buddha had begun to be worshipped as a god with the rise of Mahayana school of Buddhism in the early centuries of the Christian era and such worship now became more elaborate. A kind of belief developed that a worshipper could be able to attain what he desired by uttering magical words i.e. *mantra* and making various kinds of mystic gestures. They also believed that by all these practices and by secret rites, they could attain supernatural powers like the power to fly in the air, to become invisible etc. Man has always yearned for control over nature in this manner. Many Hindu Yogis adopted these practices and most famous among them was Gorakhnath. The followers of Gorakhnath were called Nath-Panthis and at one time they were popular all over north India. Many of these Yogis belonged to the lower castes. They denounced the caste system and the privileges claimed by the Brahmanas. The path they preached was called *tantra* which was open to all, irrespective of caste distinctions. However, Buddhism did not decline so much, those it assumed forms which made it at times indistinguishable from Hinduism. Buddhist monks established contact with people abroad in South-East Asia. In later centuries the scholars of Nalanda University made notable impact on South-East Asia. However Islamic conquest cut off the holy places of Buddhism.

Jainism continued to be popular, particularly among the trading communities. Jainism was patronised by the Chalukyan rulers of Gujarat. It was during this time that some of the most magnificent Jain temples, such as the Dilwara Temple at Mt. Abu, were built. The Paramara rulers of Malwa also built many huge images of Jain Saints, and of Mahavira who began to be worshipped as a god. The magnificent Jainalayas which were built in various parts also acted as resting places for the travellers. In South India, Jainism attained its high water-mark during the ninth and tenth centuries. The Ganga rulers of Karnataka were its great patrons. During this period, many Jain *basadis* and *mahastambhas* were set up in different parts. The colossal image at Sravana Belgola was set up during this time. The Statue is about 18 metres high and was cut out of a granite rock. It shows the saint standing up, practising rigid austerities unmindful of the snakes coiled around his feet, and the anthills which had grown up.

The Jain doctrine of the four gifts (Learning, food, medicine and shelter) helped to make Jainism popular among the people. In course of time, the growing rigidity of Jainism and the loss of royal patronage led to the decline of Jainism.



LET US KNOW

Basadis means Temples and *Mahastambhas* means Pillars.

15.5.1. Shankara and *Advaita Vedanta*:

Buddhism and Jainism faced the most serious challenge at the intellectual level. Such serious challenge to Buddhism and Jainism was posed by Sankara who reformulated the Hindu philosophy.

Sankara was born in Kerela, probably in the ninth century. Many legends have grown around his life. Persecuted by the Jains, it is said, thereafter, he undertook a triumphant visit to north India where he worsted his opponents in debate. The victory was

completed by a warm welcome by the king on his return to Madurai, and the banishment of the Jains from the court. He composed his main work, the commentary on the Brahmasutras, at Varanasi. Besides, he is credited with establishing the four *maths* in the four centres of India such as Badrinath (in Himalayas), Dwaraka (Gujarat), Puri (Orissa), and Sringeri (Karnataka).

There were six classical philosophical systems. The most influential of these systems was undoubtedly *Vedanta* (end of the *Vedas*) which has often been regarded as the very essence of Indian philosophy. It was Sankaracharya who renewed and systematized Vedanta philosophy by stressing its main principle of monism (*Kevala Advaita* or Absolute Non-dualism). Sankara's philosophy is called *Advaitavada* or the doctrine of non-dualism. According to him, God and the created world was one: the differences were apparent but not real and arose due to ignorance. The way forward to salvation was devotion to God, strengthened by the knowledge that God and the created beings were one and the same. This philosophy is called *Vedanta*. In this way, Sankara upheld the *Vedas* as the fountainhead of true knowledge. He held that the individual soul as embodied in a living being (*jiva*) is tied to the cycle of rebirths (*samsara*) because it believes that this world is real although it is only an illusion (*maya*).



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

Q 6: When did Buddha begin to be worshipped as a god?

.....

Q. 7: Who were the Nath-Panthis?

.....

Q.8: What is Jainalaya?

.....

Q.9: Write down the name of Sankara's philosophy?

.....

15.6. BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN THE SOUTH:

The cult of Bhakti took its birth in the form of a movement in the Tamil country sometime back in the sixth century as a reaction against the growing tide of Buddhism and Jainism. The movement then spread to other parts of southern India and finally also to northern India, giving an entirely new angle to Hinduism. Bhakti as a religious concept means devotional surrender to a personally conceived supreme god for attaining salvation. In Bhagvatism and Bhagwat Puran, devotion (Bhakti) has been acclaimed as the highest end of life.

Bhakti Movement protested against the prevalent methods of worship and emphasized upon the purity of mind and heart. The saints of south as well as of north India considered *Gyan* or knowledge as the necessary constituent of Bhakti. In Bhakti movement, emphasis is laid upon acquiring knowledge from the Guru.

Bhakti Movement was an egalitarian movement. The Saints of Bhakti movement preached in a simple language, as a result, the local languages and dialects like Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, etc, developed. The Bhakti movement widely influenced the Indian peninsula and for centuries this movement continued.

The religious movements began with the advent of Sankaracharya but in the later phase many socio-religious reformers started different religious movements. Ramanand, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Chaitanya, Meera Bai, Ballabhacharya, Surdas, Tulsidas and Dadu were the moving spirits. The follower of Ramanuj named Ramanand introduced Bhakti to north India. In Assam this movement was initiated by Sankaradeva.

15.6.1. Nayanars and Alvars:

Bhakti movement flourished in South India through its two well-defined wings such as Saivism and Vaisnavism. The exponents

of Siva the worship became known as Nayanars and those of Vishnu worship were called as Alvars.

The Nayanars were a group of 63 saints. The list of the Nayanars was initially compiled by *Sundarar* (Sundararmurthi). In his poem, Tiruthonda Thogai, he sings, in eleven verses, the names of the Nayanar saints up to *Karaikkal Ammeiyar*, and refers to himself as "the servant of servants". The Nayanars were from various backgrounds, including Channars, Vellalas, oilmongers, Brahmins, and nobles. Along with the twelve *Vaishnava Alvars*, they are regarded the important saints from Tamil Nadu.

The devotional outpourings of Alvars, composed during the early medieval period of *Tamil history*, helped revive the *Bhakti movement*, through their hymns of worship to Vishnu and his avatars. The collection of their hymns is known as *Divya Prabandha*. The Bhakti literature that sprang from Alvars has contributed to the establishment and sustenance of a culture that broke away from the ritual-oriented Vedic religion and rooted itself in devotion as the only path for salvation. In addition, they helped to make the Tamil religious life independent of the knowledge of *Sanskrit*.

These Nayanars and alvars saints rejected austerities. Their efforts ultimately helped in spreading Bhakti poetry and ideas throughout India. They looked upon religion not as a matter of cold, formal worship but as a living bond based on love between the god and the worshipper. The chief objects of their worship were Siva and Vishnu. They spoke and wrote in Tamil and Telugu. These saints went from place to place carrying their message of love and devotion. Some of them belonged to the lower classes and atleast one of them was a Brahmana. There was also a woman saint, Andal. Andal is the only female saint-poet in the 12 Alvars. Together with the contemporary sixty three *Shaiva Nayanars,* they are among the most important saints from Tamil Nadu. Almost all of them disregarded the inequalities of caste. The path of Bhakti advocated by these saints was open to all, irrespective of caste. The Bhakti

movement not only won to the fold of Hinduism many adherents of Buddhism and Jainism; they also won over many tribals.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

Q 10: What are the well-defined wings of Bhakti Movement?

.....

Q. 11: Who was Andal?

.....



15.7. LET US SUM UP:

After going through this unit, you have learnt –

- Politically, the period between A.D. 750 – A.D 1200 is early medieval period with the rise of numerous regional states. It was marked by various social, religious and cultural activities.
- The early medieval period was also marked by many social changes. Socially, an important phenomenon of this period was the proliferation or increase in the number of *Jatis.*
- This period is of robust cultural development. Nagara, Dravida & Vesara styles of temple architecture evolved during this period.
- Buddhism and Jainism faced the most serious challenge which was posed by Sankara at the intellectual level.
- The cult of Bhakti movement of south India which was developed by the Nayanars and the Alvars saints.



15.8. FURTHER READING:

1) Chandra, Satish. (1990). *Medieval India*, NCERT, New Delhi.

2) Chattopadhyaya, Brajadulal (2012). *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Second edition, Oxford Press, New Delhi.

3) Singh, Upinder (2008). *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*, Pearson Education India.

4) Singh, Vipul (2009). *Interpreting Medieval India: Early medieval, Delhi Sultanate, and regions (circa 750-1550)*, Macmillan

5) Thapar, Romila (2002). *History of Early India, from the origins to AD 1300*, Penguin Books, New Delhi.

15.9. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

Ans to Q No 1: Kayasthas were basically scribes and they specialized in drafting and writing land grant documents.

Ans to Q No. 2: Extension of agricultural activities in Rajasthan.

Ans to Q No 3: The three types of temple architecture which evolved during this period are known as the Nagara, Dravida and Vesara (mixed) styles.

Ans to Q No.4 : Orissa

Ans to Q No 5: Brihadishvara temple was built by Chola king Rajaraja I at Tanjore.

Ans to Q No 6: Buddha had begun to be worshipped as a god with the rise of Mahayana school of Buddhism.

Ans to Q No.7: The followers of Gorakhnath were called Nath-Panthis.

Ans to Q No. 8: Resting place for the travelers built in different parts of India by the Jains.

Ans to Q No. 9: Sankara's philosophy is called *Advaitavada* or the doctrine of non-dualism.

Ans to Q No. 10: Saivism and Vaisnavism.

Ans to Q No. 11: Andal is the only female saint-poet in the 12 Alvars.



15.10. MODEL QUESTIONS:

A. Very Short Questions (Answer each question within 50 words)

Q.1. How did the proliferation of *Jatis* happen in the early medieval India?

Q.2. Who regarded Handicrafts as a low occupations?3

Q. 3. Who were Bhilas?

Q.4 What are the Jain doctrine of the four gifts?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question within 150 words)

Q.1. Write a brief note on Kayastha and Rajput Class.

Q.2 What is *Advaita Vedanta?*

Q.3. Write a short note on Vesara style of temple architecture.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question within 300-500 words)

Q.1 Trace the major architectural development during the early medieval period.

Q.2 Discuss the chief characteristics of Bhakti Movement in the South with special references to the Nayanars and Alvars.

Q.3 Give a brief account of the development of Buddhism and Jainism during the Early Medieval period.

Q.4 Explain Sankara's philosophy of *Advaitavada*?

*** ***** ***



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