

Class 7 (Social Science)
Chapter - 1 History
Tracing Changes Through a Thousand Years

- The maps by Arab geographer Al-Idrisi (1154) and a French cartographer (1720) give a large sketch of the Indian subcontinent as known in earlier times.
- In Al-Idrisi's map, south India is where we would expect to find north India and Sri Lanka is the island at the top. Place-names are marked in Arabic and there are some well-known names like Kanauj in Uttar Pradesh (spelt in the map as Qanauj).
- The second map seems more familiar to us and the coastal areas in particular are surprisingly detailed. This map was used by European sailors and merchants in their voyages.
- The science of cartography differs in different time periods. When historians read documents, maps and texts from the past, they have to be sensitive to the different historical backgrounds - the contexts - in which information about the past was produced.

NEW AND OLD TERMINOLOGIES:

- (i) Historical records exist in a variety of languages which have changed considerably over the years. The difference is not just with regard to grammar and vocabulary; the meanings of words also change over time.
- (ii) The term Hindustan was coined by Minhaj-i-Siraj, a chronicler who wrote in Persian for areas around Punjab, Haryana, and the lands between Ganga and Yamuna. He used the term in a political sense for lands that were a part of the dominions of the Delhi Sultan. The areas included shifted with the extent of the Sultanate but the term never included south India.
- (iii) In the early sixteenth century, Babur used Hindustan to describe the geography, the fauna and the culture of the inhabitants of the subcontinent. This was somewhat similar to the way the fourteenth-century poet Amir Khusrau used the word "Hind".
- (iv) In Hindi, the term 'pardesi' was used to describe an alien. In Persian, it was called 'ajnabi'.
- (v) Historians today have to be careful about the terms they use because they meant different things in the past. A city-dweller, therefore, might have regarded a forest-dweller as a "foreigner", but two peasants living in the same village were not foreigners to each other, even though they may have had different religious or caste backgrounds.

HISTORIANS AND THEIR SOURCES:

- (i) Historians use different types of sources to learn about the past depending upon the period of their study and the nature of their investigation.
- (ii) Roughly from 700 to 1750 AD, historians rely on coins, inscriptions, architecture and textual records for information. But there is also considerable discontinuity. The

number and variety of textual records increased dramatically during this period. They slowly displaced other types of available information.

- (iii) Through this period, paper gradually became cheaper and more widely available. People used it to write holy texts, chronicles of rulers, letters and teachings of saints, petitions and judicial records, and for registers of accounts and taxes.
- (iv) Manuscripts were collected by wealthy people, rulers, monasteries and temples. They were placed in libraries and archives. These manuscripts and documents provide a lot of detailed information to historians but they are also difficult to use.
- (v) There was no printing press in those days so scribes copied manuscripts by hand. As scribes copied manuscripts, they also introduced small changes - a word here, a sentence there.
- (vi) These small differences grew over centuries of copying until manuscripts of the same text became substantially different from one another. We are totally dependent upon the copies made by later scribes. As a result, historians have to read different manuscript versions of the same text to guess what the author had originally written.
- (vii) On occasion, authors revised their chronicles at different times. For example, the fourteenth-century chronicler Ziyauddin Barani wrote his chronicle first in 1356 and another version two years later. The two differ from each other but historians did not know about the existence of the first version until the 1960s.

NEW SOCIAL AND POLITICAL GROUPS:

- (i) The study of the thousand years between 700 and 1750 is a huge challenge to historians largely because of the scale and variety of developments that occurred over the period.
- (ii) Some of the developments were the introduction of the Persian wheel in irrigation, the spinning wheel in weaving, and firearms in combat. New foods and beverages arrived in the subcontinent - potatoes, corn, chillies, tea and coffee.
- (iii) It was a period of great mobility. Groups of people travelled long distances in search of opportunity. The subcontinent held immense wealth and the possibilities for people to carve a fortune.
- (iv) One such group of people was that of the "Rajputs", name derived from Rajaputra, the son of a ruler. Other groups of warriors were Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Ahoms and Kayasthas (a caste of scribes and secretaries).
- (v) Between the eighth and fourteenth centuries, the term was applied more generally to a group of warriors who claimed Kshatriya caste status. The term included not just rulers and chieftains but also soldiers and commanders who served in the armies of different monarchs all over the subcontinent.
- (vi) A chivalric code of conduct - extreme valour and a great sense of loyalty - were the qualities attributed to Rajputs by their poets and bards.
- (vii) Throughout this period, there was a gradual clearing of forests and the extension of agriculture and changes in their habitat forced many forest-dwellers to migrate. Others started tilling the land and became peasants.

- (viii) These new peasant groups gradually began to be influenced by regional markets, chieftains, priests, monasteries and temples. They became part of large, complex societies, and were required to pay taxes and offer goods and services to local lords.
- (ix) Some peasants possessed more productive land, others also kept cattle, and some combined artisanal work with agricultural activity during the lean season.
- (x) Furthermore, as society became more differentiated, people were grouped into jatis or sub-castes and ranked on the basis of their backgrounds and their occupations. Ranks were not fixed permanently, and varied according to the power, influence and resources controlled by members of the jati. The status of the same jati could vary from area to area.
- (xi) Jatis framed their own rules and regulations to manage the conduct of their members. These regulations were enforced by an assembly of elders, described in some areas as the jati panchayat.
- (xii) But jatis were also required to follow the rules of their villages. Several villages were governed by a chieftain.

REGION AND EMPIRE:

- (i) Large states like those of the Cholas, Tughluqs, or Mughals encompassed many regions.
- (ii) A Sanskrit prashasti that praises Delhi Sultan Balban tells that he was ruler of a vast empire that stretched from Bengal in the east to Ghazni in Afghanistan in the west and included all of the South India (Dravida).
- (iii) People of different regions - Gauda, Andhra, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat - apparently fled before his armies.
- (iv) There were considerable conflicts between various states. Occasionally, dynasties like the Cholas, Khaljis, Tughluqs and Mughals were able to build an empire that was pan-regional - spanning diverse regions. Not all these empires were equally stable or successful.
- (v) When the Mughal Empire declined in the eighteenth century, it led to the re-emergence of regional states. But years of imperial, pan-regional rule had altered the character of the regions.
- (vi) Across most of the subcontinent the regions were left with the legacies of the big and small states that had ruled over them. This was apparent in the emergence of many distinct and shared traditions: in the realms of governance, the management of the economy, elite cultures, and language.

OLD AND NEW RELIGIONS:

- (i) People's belief in the divine was sometimes deeply personal, but more usually it was collective. Collective belief in a supernatural agency - religion - was often closely connected with the social and economic organisation of local communities.
- (ii) Some of the changes in Hinduism were- the worship of new deities, the construction of temples by royalty and the growing importance of Brahmanas, the priests, as dominant groups in society.

- (iii) Their knowledge of Sanskrit texts earned the Brahmanas a lot of respect in society. Their dominant position was consolidated by the support of their patrons - new rulers searching for prestige.
- (iv) This period saw the emergence of the idea of bhakti - of a loving, personal deity that devotees could reach without the aid of priests or elaborate rituals.
- (v) Merchants and migrants first brought the teachings of the holy Quran to India in the seventh century. Muslims regard the Quran as their holy book and accept the sovereignty of the one God, Allah, whose love, mercy and bounty embrace all those who believe in Him, without regard to social background.
- (vi) Many rulers were patrons of Islam and the ulama - learned theologians and jurists. And like Hinduism, Islam was interpreted in a variety of ways by its followers.
 - There were the Shia Muslims who believed that the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, was the legitimate leader of the Muslim community,
 - and the Sunni Muslims who accepted the authority of the early leaders (Khalifas) of the community, and the succeeding Khalifas.
 - There were other important differences between the various schools of law (Hanafi and Shafi'i mainly in India), and in theology and mystic traditions.

THINKING ABOUT TIME AND HISTORICAL PERIODS:

- (i) Time reflects changes in social and economic organisation, in the persistence and transformation of ideas and beliefs. The study of time is made somewhat easier by dividing the past into large segments - periods - that possess shared characteristics.
- (ii) In the middle of the nineteenth century, the British historians divided the history of India into three periods: Hindu, Muslim and British.
- (iii) This division was based on the idea that the religion of rulers was the only important historical change, and that there were no other significant developments - in the economy, society or culture. Such a division also ignored the rich diversity of the subcontinent.
- (iv) Few historians follow this periodization today. Most look to economic and social factors to characterise the major elements of different moments of the past.
- (v) During the medieval period, the societies of the subcontinent were transformed often and economies in several regions reached a level of prosperity that attracted the interest of European trading companies.

EXERCISE

STATE WHETHER TRUE OR FALSE:

- a) We do not find inscriptions for the period after 700.
- b) The Marathas asserted their political importance during this period.
- c) Forest-dwellers were sometimes pushed out of their lands with the spread of agricultural settlements.

d) Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban controlled Assam, Manipur and Kashmir.

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

- a) Archives are places where _____ are kept.
- b) _____ was a fourteenth-century chronicler.
- c) _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____ were some of the new crops introduced into the subcontinent during this period.

VERY SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS.

Q1) Who is known as cartographer?

Ans. A Cartographer is a person who makes map.

Q2) What do you mean by Patron?

Ans. A Patron is an influential, wealthy individual who supports another person - an artiste, a craftsman, a learned man, or a noble.

Q3) What was the new invention for irrigation called?

Ans. Persian wheel was the new invention for irrigation.

Q4) Which century marked the beginning of medieval period?

Ans. The eighth century is taken as the beginning of the medieval period.

Q5) Name the chronicle of 13th century.

Ans. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* is the chronicle written in 13th century by Minhaj-i-Siraj.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS.

Q6) Mention the different sources of medieval period?

Ans. Historians depend on a variety of sources to learn about the past. The different sources used by the historians to study the medieval period are coins, inscriptions, architecture and textual records.

Q7) List some of the technological changes associated with this period.

Ans: Some of the technological changes associated with this period were - the Persian wheel for irrigation, the spinning wheel in weaving and firearms in combat. A Persian wheel is a machine to lift water from moving water sources such as a river or large spring. A spinning wheel is a device for spinning thread or yarn from natural or synthetic fibres. Firearms are used in offensive role mostly by military force.

Q8) What were some of the major religious developments during this period?

Ans: Some of the major religious developments during this period were:

- The inclusion of new deities in Hinduism, the construction of temples by royalty and the growing importance of Brahmanas, the priests, as dominant groups in society. Brahmanas earned a lot of respect in the society due to their knowledge of Sanskrit.
- Merchants and migrants introduced Islam to the subcontinent through the teachings of the Holy Quran. Many rulers were patrons of Islam and the ulama. Islam was interpreted in many ways by its followers.
- The period was the emergence of the idea of bhakti of a loving, personal deity that devotees could reach without the aid of priests or elaborate rituals.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS.

Q9) What are the difficulties historians face in using manuscripts?

Ans: While using manuscripts, historians face a number of difficulties.

- Before the advent of the printing press, Manuscripts were written with hand.
- It was not clear, and so one would be forced to guess what is written. As a result, there were small but significant differences between any two copies.
- Also, it was difficult to read handwritten manuscripts. The scribes who copied them introduced changes. So the original manuscripts were very rare to find.
- As a result, historians have to read different versions of the same text to guess what the authors had originally written.
- This discrepancy in different versions of manuscripts may lead to inaccurate historical information.

Q10) In what ways has the meaning of the term “Hindustan” changed over the centuries?

Ans: Over the centuries, there has been a distinct change in the meaning of the term “Hindustan”.

- In the thirteenth century, the term stood for the lands under the Delhi Sultanate. It never stood for the region covering south India. It meant the areas of Punjab, Haryana .and the lands between the Ganga and Yamuna.
- The fourteenth century poet, Amir Khusrau referred to "Hind" for the culture and people of the Indus river.
- In the early sixteenth century, Babur used the term to describe the geography, culture and fauna of the subcontinent.
- The term Hindustan did not carry the political and national meanings which are associated with it today.
- Now, it represents the modern nation state of India.

Q11) How do historians divide the past into periods? Do they face any problems in doing so?

Ans:

- British historians divided Indian history into three periods – Hindu, Muslim and British.
- It was based on the idea that the religion of rulers was the only important historical change.
- Historians divide the past into periods based on the economic and social factors which characterize them.
- In doing so, they are faced with two problems. First, economic and social changes keep taking place hence, definite boundaries cannot be drawn. Second, these periods are compared with modernity.
- Modernity gives a sense of progress. This implies that there was no progress before, which is not true.

Class 7 (Social Science)
Chapter - 2 History
New Kings and Kingdoms

Several major ruling dynasties emerged in different parts of the subcontinent between the seventh and twelfth centuries.

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW DYNASTIES:

- i) By the 7th century, there were big landlords or warrior chiefs in different regions of the subcontinent.
- ii) Existing kings often acknowledged them as their samantas or subordinates.
- iii) They were expected to bring gifts for their kings or overlords, be present at their courts and provide them with military support. As samantas gained power and wealth, they declared themselves to be maha-samanta, mahamandaleshvara (the great lord of a “circle” or region) and so on. They also asserted their independence from their overlords.
- iv) Initially, the Rashtrakutas were subordinate to the Chalukyas of Karnataka. In the mid-eighth century, Dantidurga, a Rashtrakuta chief, overthrew his Chalukya overlord and performed a ritual called hiranya-garbhā (literally, the golden womb). When this ritual was performed with the help of Brahmanas, it was thought to lead to the “rebirth” of the sacrificer as a Kshatriya, even if he was not one by birth.
- v) In other cases, men from enterprising families used their military skills to carve out kingdoms. For instance, the Kadamba Mayurasharma and the Gurjara-Pratihara Harichandra were Brahmanas who gave up their traditional professions and took to

arms. They successfully established kingdoms in Karnataka and Rajasthan respectively.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE KINGDOMS:

- i) Many of these new kings adopted high-sounding titles such as maharaja-adhiraja (great king, overlord of kings), tribhuvana-chakravartin (lord of the three worlds) and so on.
- ii) However, in spite of such claims, they often shared power with their samantas as well as with associations of peasants, traders and Brahmanas. Material downloaded from
- iii) In each of these states, resources were obtained from the producers, that is, peasants, cattle-keepers, artisans, who were often persuaded or compelled to surrender part of what they produced.
- iv) Sometimes, these were claimed as “rent” due to a lord who asserted that he owned the land. Revenue was also collected from traders.
- v) These resources were used to finance the king's establishment as well as for the construction of temples and forts. They were also used to fight wars, which were in turn expected to lead to the acquisition of wealth in the form of plunder, and access to land as well as trade routes.
- vi) The functionaries for collecting revenue were generally recruited from influential families, and positions were often hereditary. This was true about the army as well. In many cases, close relatives of the king held these positions.

PRASHASTIS AND LAND GRANTS:

- i) Prashastis tell us how rulers wanted to depict themselves – as valiant, victorious warriors, for example. These were composed by learned Brahmanas, who occasionally helped in the administration.
- ii) Kings often rewarded Brahmanas by grants of land. These were recorded on copper plates, which were given to those who received the land.
- iii) Unusual for the twelfth century was a long Sanskrit poem containing the history of kings who ruled over Kashmir. It was composed by an author named Kalhana. He used a variety of sources, including inscriptions, documents, eyewitness accounts and earlier histories, to write his account. Unlike the writers of prashastis, he was often critical about rulers and their policies.

WARFARE FOR WEALTH:

- i) For centuries, rulers belonging to the Gurjara-Pratihara, Rashtrakuta and Pala dynasties fought for control over Kanauj. Because there were three “parties” in this longdrawn conflict, historians often describe it as the “tripartite struggle”.
- ii) Rulers also tried to demonstrate their power and resources by building large temples.

- iii) When they attacked one another's kingdoms, they often chose to target extremely rich temples.
- iv) One of the best known of such rulers is Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, Afghanistan. He ruled from 997 to 1030, and extended control over parts of Central Asia, Iran and the northwestern part of the subcontinent. He raided the subcontinent almost every year – his targets were wealthy temples, including that of Somnath, Gujarat.
- v) Much of the wealth Mahmud carried away was used to create a splendid capital city at Ghazni. He was interested in finding out more about the people he conquered, and entrusted a scholar named al-Biruni to write an account of the subcontinent.
- vi) This Arabic work, known as the Kitab-al Hind, remains an important source for historians. He consulted Sanskrit scholars to prepare this account.
- vii) Other kings who engaged in warfare include the Chahamanas, later known as the Chauhans, who ruled over the region around Delhi and Ajmer. They attempted to expand their control to the west and the east, where they were opposed by the Chalukyas of Gujarat and the Gahadavalas of western Uttar Pradesh. The best-known Chahamana ruler was Prithviraja III (1168-1192), who defeated an Afghan ruler named Sultan Muhammad Ghori in 1191, but lost to him the very next year, in 1192.

THE CHOLAS:

FROM URAIYUR TO THANJAVUR:

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

SPLENDID TEMPLES AND BRONZE SCULPTURE:

- i) The big temples of Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram, built by Rajaraja and Rajendra, are architectural and sculptural marvels. Chola temples often became the nuclei of
- ii) settlements which grew around them.
- iii) These were centres of craft production. Temples were also endowed with land by rulers as well as by others.

- iv) The produce of this land went to maintain all the specialists who worked at the temple and very often lived near it – priests, garland makers, cooks, sweepers, musicians, dancers, etc.
- v) In other words, temples were not only places of worship; they were the hub of economic, social and cultural life as well.
- vi) Amongst the crafts associated with temples, the making of bronze images was the most distinctive. Chola bronze images are considered amongst the finest in the world. While most images were of deities, sometimes images were made of devotees as well.

AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION:

- i) Although agriculture had developed earlier in other parts of Tamil Nadu, it was only from the fifth or sixth century that this area was opened up for large-scale cultivation.
- ii) Forests had to be cleared in some regions; land had to be leveled in other areas. In the delta region, embankments had to be built to prevent water to the fields. In many areas two crops were grown in a year.
- iii) In many cases, it was necessary to water crops artificially. A variety of methods were used for irrigation. In some areas wells were dug. In other places huge tanks were constructed to collect rainwater.
- iv) Irrigation works require planning – organising labour and resources, maintaining these works and deciding on how water is to be shared. Most of the new rulers, as well as people living in villages, took an active interest in these activities.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMPIRE:

- i) Settlements of peasants, known as *ur*, became prosperous with the spread of irrigation agriculture. Groups of such villages formed larger units called *nadu*.
- ii) The village council and the *nadu* had several administrative functions including dispensing justice and collecting taxes.
- iii) Rich peasants of the *Vellala* caste exercised considerable control over the affairs of the *nadu* under the supervision of the central Chola government. The Chola kings gave some rich landowners titles like *muvendavelan* (a *velan* or peasant serving three kings), *araiyar* (chief),
 - iv) etc. as markers of respect, and entrusted them with important offices of the state at the
 - v) centre.
- vi) Types of land: Chola inscriptions mention several categories of land.
 - a. *vellanvagai*- land of non-Brahmana peasant proprietors
 - b. *brahmadeya*- land gifted to Brahmanas
 - c. *shalabhoga*- land for the maintenance of a school
 - d. *devadana, tirunamattukkani*- land gifted to temples
 - e. *pallichchhandam*- land donated to Jaina institutions

- vii) We have seen that Brahmanas often received land grants or brahmadeya. As a result, a large number of Brahmana settlements emerged in the Kaveri valley as in other parts of south India.
- viii) Each brahmadeya was looked after by an assembly or sabha of prominent Brahmana landholders. These assemblies worked very efficiently. Their decisions were recorded in detail in inscriptions, often on the stone walls of temples.
- ix) Associations of traders known as nagarams also occasionally performed administrative functions in towns.
- x) Inscriptions from Uttaramerur in Chingleput district, Tamil Nadu, provide details of the way in which the sabha was organised. The sabha had separate committees to look after irrigation works, gardens, temples, etc.
- xi) Names of those eligible to be members of these committees were written on small tickets of palm leaf and kept in an earthenware pot, from which a young boy was asked to pick the tickets, one by one for each committee.

EXERCISE

VERY SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS:

Q1) Who won the first battle of Tarain?

Ans. Prithviraja Chauhan won the First Battle of Tarain, held in 1191.

Q2) Which were the two major cities under the control of chahamanas?

Ans. Delhi and Ajmer were the two cities under control of the Chahamanas.

Q3) Name the two greatest ruler of the Chola empire.

Ans. The two greatest rulers of the Chola dynasty were Raja Raja Chola and his son, Rajendra Chola.

Q4) Name the author of the book ‘Kitab-ai-hind’.

Ans. Al-Biruni is the author of the book ‘Kitab-ai-hind’.

Q5) Define the term ‘Samanta’.

Ans. The Samanta was a subordinate chieftain or warrior under a king.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS:

Q6) Who were the parties involved in the ‘tripartite struggle’?

Ans. The parties involved in the tripartite struggle were Gurjara-Pratihara, Rashtrakuta and Pala dynasties. The main cause of this struggle was the desire to possess the city of Kanauj.

Q7) What were the qualifications necessary to become a member of a committee of the sabha in the Chola Empire?

Ans. In order to become a member of a committee of the sabha in the Chola Empire -

Members of the sabha should be owners of land from which land revenue is collected, they should have their own homes, they should be between 35 and 70 years of age, they should have knowledge of the Vedas, they should be well-versed in administrative matters and honest, not has been a member of any committee in the last three years and they should submit their accounts as well as of relatives to contest election.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS:

Q8) Who defeated Muhammad Ghori and what happened later on?

Ans. Prithviraja led the Rajputs against Muhammad Ghori at the first battle at Tarain in 1191 and the Rajputs were successful. Muhammad sent for reinforcements and a few months later, in 1192 A.D., a second battle was fought at the same place. Prithviraja was defeated and the kingdom of Delhi fell to Muhammad Ghori.

Q9) What were the activities associated with Chola temples?

Ans. The Chola temples were the nuclei of settlements growing around them which included centres of craft production. Temples were also endowed with land by rulers as well as by others. The produce of the land was used for the maintenance of the priests, garland makers, cooks, sweepers, musicians, dancers etc who were associated with the temples and used to work for them. Hence temples were not simply the place of worship. They were also the hub of economic, social and cultural life as well.

Q10) What did the new dynasties do to gain acceptance?

Ans. The new dynasties gained power and wealth. Thereafter they declared themselves to be maha-samantas or mahamandaleshwara. Many of such kings adopted high sounding titles like maharaja-adhiraja or tribhuvana-chakravartin. They also deputed learned brahmanas to depict them as valiant, victorious warriors. Their activities were recorded in Prashastis. They tried to demonstrate their power and resources by building large temples.

Q11) How did the Rashtrakutas become powerful?

Ans. It was during the seventh century that the kings acknowledged the big landlords as their subordinates or samantas. The samantas were expected to bring gifts and provide military support to their kings. In due course they gained power and wealth. They declared themselves to be maha-samantas, mahamandaleshvar (the great lord of a circle or region) and so on. Rashtrakutas were one of them who were initially the subordinates of the Chalukyas in Deccan. In the mid-eighth century, Dantidurga, a Rashtrakuta chief, performed a ritual hiranya-garbha and overthrew the Chalukya overlord. After the ritual was over he was reborn as Kshatriya, even if he was not by birth. Thereafter, they fought with Gurjara-Pratihara and Pala dynasties and became powerful.