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# Political Structure and State Formation in Medieval India

MAHCC204

**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION**



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**POLITICAL STRUCTURE  
AND STATE FORMATION IN  
MEDIEVAL INDIA  
(MAHCC20)4**

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<b>EDITION</b>	:	2024 (Restricted Circulation)
<b>PUBLISHED BY</b>	:	Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad

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**Unit –I:**  
**Studying Early Medieval India: Political Structures**  
Sources: Literary and Archaeology

## **INTRODUCTION**

The paucity of sources has always been an obstacle in re-constructing early medieval history. The advent of the Muslim rulers though brought about the culture of writing history as it prevailed in central and west Asia. The court histories are partisan history but the information's are useful. Moreover, during this time travellers and chroniclers from near and far came to India and left their account that again is a valuable source of history. Thus, the main source of history of the early medieval period should be the historians and the foreign travellers of this period. The Malfuzat text and Bardiclores again can add to information but are difficult to be corroborated with other work. Apart from this the information provided by archaeological (monuments, epigraphy, and numismatics) and literature is very important as traditional source of history for the early medieval period.

## **LITERARY SOURCES**

### **1.2.1 Indigenous Literatures**

From c.700 CE onwards a particular type of literary text called the Charita, (Eulogies on the life of a particular political ruler) started to emerge. This tendency started with the Harshacharita by Banabhatta (court-poet of Harshavardhana), which speaks of the deeds of Harshavardhana. It is not free from limitations, due to the use of hyperbolic statements. Such Charitas need to be constantly checked and verified with information from other contemporary sources, before a historian can accept its statements. Similarly Sandhyakaranandi's Ramacharitam speaks of the gradual waning of the mighty Pala power, or of the last flicker of its existence during the time of Ramapala, who tried to recapture the lost territory of Varendri (present day northern part of Bangladesh), which the Pala's had lost. The recovery of Varendri constitutes the major focus of the Ramacharitam. The text revolves around the career of Ramapala, and points to many interesting political aspects of the last phase of the Pala rule in northern Bengal.

The Vikramankadevacharita of Bilhana, a poet of the eleventh century, describes the career and achievements of his patron, a powerful south Indian ruler Vikramaditya VI, in a similar fashion. A fascinating textual account of a particular region was Kalhana's Rajatarangini (River of Kings), which possibly outclassed the other historical chronicles written in ancient times. This text gives a connected account of the history of Kashmir from very remote times (according to some it goes back to the nineteenth century BCE). Kalhana's account about the pre-seventh century CE was mostly based on hearsay, legends and tales, but from the seventh century CE onwards, it was based on evidence available to him, and was more factual and dependable. Kalhana, a Kashmiri Brahmin, belonged to the twelfth century CE. He states that he checked, read, and studied earlier evidence in the form of coins, accounts, and dynastic chronicles, in

order to compose his text. His approach to these sources, itself surprises us, as he went about his work with remarkable balance and critical judgment. Romila Thapar sees the culmination of the Itihasa Purana type of textual narrative in Kalhana's Rajatarangini. It is noteworthy that this work was fundamentally different from the Charitas, as the latter were composed in a spirit of hero worship, or patron pleasing, while the Rajatarangini was the outcome of a detached and impartial mind, viewing the past and the present with great historical insight.

### **Foreign Accounts**

Besides indigenous texts, foreign accounts (Chinese and Arab) are also useful sources for early medieval India. Yijing or Itsing (635–713 CE), visited India in 7th century CE and his accounts contain the socio-religious condition of those days. One of Yijing's works gives an account of Buddhist doctrines and practices in India. The important Arab works include the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century writings of travellers and geographers such as Sulaiman, Al-Masudi, Abu Zaid, Al-Biduri, and Ibn Haukal. Later Arab writers include Al-Biruni, Al-Idrisi, Muhammad Ufi, and Ibn Batuta. Such accounts are especially useful for information on trade. Al-Biruni gave important information about India. He was Arab scholar and contemporary of Mahmud of Ghazni. Al-Biruni studied Sanskrit and acquired knowledge of Indian society and culture through literature. Therefore, his observations are based on his knowledge about Indian society and culture, but he did not give any political information of his times. Works of Al Masudi (early tenth century), Al Idrisi (twelfth century) etc., are helpful for understanding overseas trade both in the west and east of India.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES**

### **Art and Architecture**

The study of architecture and sculpture helps in forming an impression of the cultural life of early medieval India. The emergence of structural temples usually monumental in size, in the period from 600-1300 CE is marked by the expression of very strong regionalism in Indian culture, which is also reflected in the beginnings of regional vernaculars. Three distinct temple styles emerged in three distinct zones of the sub-continent. The north Indian temple styles with its tapering shikhara, in which the super structure of the main temple is labelled the nagara style of temple. In contrast to this was the Dravida type of temples in south India where we observe a very tall super structure constructed in a pyramidal shape over the main shrine. In the areas of present day Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh there emerged another distinct style called Vesara which in a way represented an admixture or meeting point of the north Indian and the far south Indian styles. The sculpture of this period also displays distinct regional features in both stone as well as metal sculptures. The excellence of metal sculpting comes from the Chola areas in south India, celebrated for the fascinating images of Nataraja Shiva.

The wonderful images of Buddha belonging to the period of Pala rule, over present day Bangladesh, West Bengal, and partly Bihar deserve special mention. In spite of the fact that the

iconography in the subcontinent was derived from the common source of Puranic stories, myths and legends pertaining to different divinities, the styles employed were distinctly regional and had their own regional appeal, thus nurturing the growth and development of multifaceted sculptural traditions.

## **Inscriptions**

Tamil copper-plate inscriptions are copper-plate records of grants of villages, plots of cultivable lands or other privileges to private individuals or public institutions by the members of the various South Indian royal dynasties. The study of these inscriptions, has been especially important in reconstructing the history of Tamil Nadu. These records were an essential component of a highly-structured system of taxation that kept the royal treasuries full by ensuring that all tax obligations were met. The grants range in date from the tenth century CE. to the mid nineteenth century CE. A large number of them pertain to the Chalukyas, the Cholas and the Vijayanagar kings. These plates are valuable epigraphically because they provides an insight into the social conditions of medieval South India; they also help fill chronological gaps in the connected history of the ruling dynasties. Unlike in neighboring Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh where early inscriptions were written in Sanskrit, the early inscriptions in Tamil Nadu used Tamil exclusively. Tamil has the oldest extant literature amongst the Dravidian languages, but dating the language and the literature precisely is difficult. Literary works in India were preserved either in palm leaf manuscripts (implying repeated copying and recopying) or through oral transmission, making direct dating impossible. External chronological records and internal linguistic evidence, however, indicate that the oldest extant works were probably compiled sometime between the second century BCE and the tenth century CE.

Epigraphic attestation of Tamil begins with rock inscriptions from the second century BCE, written in Tamil-Brahmi, an adapted form of the Brahmi script. Beginning in the sixth century both stone and copper-plate inscriptions were also written in Sanskrit, and some were bilingual. Indian archaeologists have discovered hundreds of inscriptions during the last 120 years. Professor E. Hultzsch began collecting South Indian inscriptions systematically from the latter part of 1886, when he was appointed Epigraphist to the Government of Madras. The earliest of the extant copperplate inscriptions date from the tenth century CE. Of these, the Leyden plates, the Tiruvalangadu grant of Rajendra Chola-I, the Anbil plates of Sundara Chola and the Kanyakumari inscription of Virarajendra Chola are the only epigraphical records discovered and published so far, that give genealogical lists of Chola kings. The Thiruvallangadu copperplates discovered in 1905 CE is one of the largest so far recovered and contains 31 copper sheets. They contain both Sanskrit and Tamil texts, which seems to have been written at least a decade apart. These plates record a grant made to the shrine of the goddess at Tiruvalangadu by Rajendra Chola-I. The list of the legendary Chola kings forms the preamble to the Sanskrit portion of these plates.

A typical Chola copperplate inscription currently displayed at the Government Museum, Chennai, India, is dated c. tenth century C.E. Five copper plates are strung in a copper ring, the ends of which are secured with a Chola seal bearing, in relief, a seated tiger facing the right, with two fish to its right. These three figures have a bow below them, a parasol and two fly-whisks (Chamaras) above them, and a lamp on each side. Around the margin is engraved in Grantha characters, "This is the matchless edict of King Parakesarivarman, who teaches justice to the kings of his realm". A portion of this inscription is in Sanskrit and the rest is in Tamil. The plates contain an edict issued at Kachhippedu (Kanchipuram) by the Chola king Ko-ara Kesarivarman (Uththama Chola, an uncle and predecessor of Rajaraja Chola-I), at the request of his minister, to confirm the contents of a number of stone inscriptions, which referred to certain dues to be paid to the temple of Vishnu at Kachhippedu. Arrangements made for several services in the temple are also described. Uththama Chola was an uncle and predecessor of Rajaraja Chola-I.

## **Coins**

Though numerous coins have been found on the surface, many have been found while digging the mounds. Coins are a good source of administrative as well as constitutional history. Coins portray kings and gods, and contain religious symbols and legends, by which one can get an idea of the art and religion of the time. There is a whole category of Indian coins, in the "Indo-Sassanian style", also sometimes called Gadhैया paisa, that were derived from the Sasanian coinage in a rather geometric fashion, among the Gurjaras, Pratiharas, Chaulukya Paramara and Palas from circa 530 CE to 1202 CE. Typically, the bust of the king on the obverse is highly simplified and geometric, and the design of the fire altar, with or without the two attendants, appears as a geometrical motif on the reverse of this type of coinage.

The coins of the Chola Empire bear similarities with other South Indian dynastic issue coins. Chola coins invariably display a tiger crest. The appearance of the fish and bow on Chola issue coins that were emblems associated with the Pandyas and Cheras respectively suggests successful political conquest of these powers as well as co-option of existing coin issuing practices.

The coins of various Rajput princes's ruling in Hindustan and Central India were usually of gold, copper or billon, very rarely silver. These coins had the familiar goddess of wealth, Lakshmi on the obverse. In these coins, the Goddess was shown with four arms than the usual two arms of the Gupta coins; the reverse carried the Nagari legend. The seated bull and horseman were almost invariable devices on Rajput copper and bullion coins.

## **Conclusion**

By now it has become clear that these literary and archaeological sources are important enough to provide welcome light to the economic activities of the early Indians. It has also become clear that any single source cannot explain all aspects of the economic history of the early Indians. Different sources together can help us to explain the economic history of a people



of a particular region during a particular period. The historian writes it by using the sources relevant to the enquiry. But the use of sources depends on what question the historian raises. Accordingly, s/he finds out new sources, if necessary, or evaluates the known sources in order to find out the answer to his or her question. Thus the historian makes sources work for solving the problem s/he deals with.

## Chapter-II

### EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL STRUCTURES: RAJPUTS AND CHOLAS

#### Introduction

The period between 750 and 1200 C.E is referred to as an early medieval period of Indian History. During this time the whole country was divided into numerous regional states which were busy fighting with each other. Though politically divided, during this period India witnessed a growth of new and rich cultural activities in the fields of art, literature and language. Indian political history in the post Harshavardhan, was marked by the growth of three important political powers in India. These were Gurjara Pratiharas in north India, Palas in eastern India and Rashtrakutas in South India. These powers were constantly fighting with each other with a aim to set up their control on Gangetic region in northern India. This armed conflict among these three powers is known as 'Tripartite struggle'. In this unit in three different chapter we will discuss about the above mentioned three ruling dynasties in separately. This chapter will discuss the emergence of Rajput clan with special reference to the Gurjara-Pratihara in the polity of India and their contribution to the various fields of Indian history.

#### 1.1.1. Emergence of Rajput

The anarchy and confusion which followed Harsha's death is the transitional period of Indian history. This period was marked by the rise of the Rajput clans who began to play a significant part in the history of northern and western India from the 8th century C.E onwards. The term Rajput denotes a tribe or clan, the members of which claimed themselves as Kshatriyas belonging to the 'solar' or 'lunar' dynasties. There is a keen controversy among scholars regarding the origin of the Rajputs. In spite of painstaking researches on the subject, there is a lot of obscurity around it. In the absence of any definite theory on the origin of the Rajputs, we can merely some of the views put forth by historian on this aspect of Indian history.

##### 1.1.1.1. Descendants of the Kshatriyas:

Various suppositions regarding origin of Rajputs have been put forward. The term Rajputs seems to be the corrupt form of "Rajaputra". A different observation is that Rajputs are the descendants of Brahmin or Kshatriya families. On the basis of ancient inscriptions they have rejected the story of sacrificial- fire pit and also the view of the foreign origin of the Rajputs. They believe that the founder of Chauhans, the Gehlots, the Pallavas, the Kadambas, the Pratiharas and the Parmaras were Brahmins. In the accounts of Bana and Indian Puranas, "Rajaputra" is mentioned as a highborn Kshatriya. According to the contemporary literary sources, the Rajputs were originated from the highborn Kshatriyas. The centuries between the death of Harsha and the Turkish conquest was marked by the ascendancy of the Rajputs. The entire northern India was disintegrated and came under the sway of the different houses of the Rajput. The Rajputs are usually a social group of northern India and Gujarat flourished during the period. The Rajputs were the dominant martial and land-owning community of northern India. The period is conveniently termed as the Rajput period of Indian history.

##### 1.1.1.2. Foreign Origin:

Many historians believe that that they are the brood of distant invader like Sakas, Kushanas, Huns who were Hinduized. The upper rank came to be known as Rajputs. Some scholars have opined that Gurjaras entered India through Afghanistan, settled themselves in different parts of India and were the ancestors of the Rajputs. However this theory had less acceptability. Other hypotheses, ascribing to them a Scythian origin. Invasions of the Huns had an impact on Indian society socially and culturally which also established many new ruling empires. Later, they mixed themselves in the

Indian society and almost lost their individuality. Certain customs like women's status in society, horse worship were similar to clan of Shakas, Huns and Kushanas so their foreign origin is proved.

### **1.1.1.3. Agnikula Theory:**

Chand Bardai, court poet of Prithviraja Chauhan state that Rajput's origin lies in sacrificial fire pit. Sage Parasuram destroyed all the Kshatriyas and then the ancient sages performed a yajna on Mount Abu to guard the Vedic religion. Out of that yajna four heroes were born and their progeny were the Chauhans, Solanki, Parmara, and Pratihara. This is believed to be origin of Agnivanshi Rajputs. Suryavanshi Rajputs trace their ancestry to the Sun. They ruled Mewar, Marwar, and Amber. Chandravanshi Rajputs descended from Moon. Gujarat, Jaisalmer was ruled by Chandravanshi Rajputs.

Whatever the origin is, the Rajputs were believed till date as one of the virulent warrior tribes ever ruled in India. They never originated as a tribe or a single community. They were a collection of clans ruling different regions. The term Rajput as it is used today refers to the set of intermarrying royal clans. "It is their war like occupation coupled with their aristocratic rank that gave them a distinctive common feature and made the Brahmins recognize them as Kshatriyas." In a broad spectrum no single origin-theory can be held to be authoritative.

### **1.1.2. The Gurjara-Pratihara**

Of all the Rajput clans that ruled in India, the Pratiharas had the most dazzling record. The command of the Pratiharas was obeyed from Punjab to Central India and from Kathiwar to North Bengal. For three centuries, they stood as the bulwark of India's defence against the Muslim invaders. They revived the dream of the political unification of India after the fall of Harsha's dynasty.

### **1.1.3. Origin of the Pratiharas**

According to epigraphic evidence, the Pratiharas were descendants of Lakshamana of the solar race of the great epic, the Ramayana. Some scholars opine that they were a branch of the Gurjara race. They are mentioned in the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II, the records of Hieun Tsang and the Hashacharita of Bana. It is known from the Rashtrakuta record that the Pratiharas belonged to the Gurjara stock. It is also held by some scholars that the Gurjars were central Asiatic nomads who accompanied the Hunas into India. Some others are of the opinion that the Gurjaras were of indigenous origin. Another opinion is that the Pratiharas were a tribe of the land called Gurjaradesa. The expression Gurjara-Pratihara family of the Gurjara country was possessed by the Pratiharas since the time of Vatsaraja. Whatsoever may be the fact that the Gurjaras came into prominence about the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century C.E. they took advantage of the downfall of the Gupta Empire to establish their political authority. Their most important kingdom was that founded in the heart of Rajputna near Jodhpur and gradually advanced towards the South and took hold of Avanti and later on conquered Kannauj. The Avanti branch of the Pratiharas has become famous by their success over the Arab Muslims.

The Gurjara Pratihara dynasty was founded by Nagabhatta I in the region of Malwa in the eighth century C.E. He belonged to a Rajput clan. Later one of his successors, Vatsaraja extended his rule over to a large part of North India and made Kannauj in western Uttara Pradesh his capital. Vatsaraja's policy of expansion brought him in conflict with Dharamapala, the Pala King of Bengal and Bihar. Soon, the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva from south India jumped into the fight. And thus began what is known as 'Tripartite Struggle' i.e struggle among three powers. It continued for about the next hundred and fifty years under various succeeding kings with ups and downs. The Gurjara-Pratiharas, however, could continue to maintain their hold over Kannauj till the last. One of the

important kings of this dynasty was Mihira Bhoja (ninth century). He was highly praised by an Arabian scholar Sulaiman for keeping his empire safe from robbers.

#### **1.1.4. Political History of the Dynasty**

The Pratihara Kings ruled from 6th century till the end of 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Among Pratihara Kings, their kingdom was laid by Harichandra near modern Jodhpur in the mid sixth century C.E. Harichandra was a Brahmin who had two wives, one was Brahamana and the other one was a Kshatriya. His sons from his Brahamana wife were called Pratihara Brahmins while his sons from his Kshatriya wife established the ruling dynasty of the Pratiharas. His four sons established a separate kingdom for themselves. Their dominion was concentrated in Jodhpur, Nandipura, Broach, Ujjayani and nearby areas.

##### **1.1.4.1. Nagabhata I**

The foundation of Pratihara dynasty's magnitude was positioned by Nagabhata I, who ruled between 730-756 C.E. His rule was prominent because of his successful confrontation with the Arabs. He established an empire extending from Gujarat to Gwalior and defied the Arab invasions towards further east of Sindh. He fought against King Dantidurga the Rashtrakuta ruler as well and was defeated. Conversely the success of Dantidurga was short-term and Nagabhata left for his successors a far-reaching empire which included Gujarat, Malwa and parts of Rajputana. Nagabhata I was succeeded by his brother's sons, Kakkuka and Devaraja.

##### **1.1.4.2. Vatsaraja**

Devaraja was succeeded by his son Vatsaraja who proved to be an influential ruler. He ruled from C.E 775 to 805. He seems to have consolidated his position and made Ujjain as his capital. He was in the verge of his imperial career in Western India. He in trying to be ruler of Northern India annexed the territories upto Kanauj and central Rajputra by defeating Bhandi, the ruling dynasty probably related to the Vardhanas. His ambition to capture Kannauj led him into conflicts with the Pala ruler Dharmapala of Bengal and the Rashtrakuta ruler Dhruva. He succeeded in defeating Dharmapala in the Doab region and vanquished Northern India including the Ganga Yamuna valley. Dhruva defeated him later on and captured Kannauj. Vatsaraja was succeeded by Nagabhata II.

##### **1.1.4.3. Nagabhata II**

Nagabhata II who succeeded Vatsaraja revived the lost prestige of the empire by conquering Sindh, Andhra, Vidarbha. After the defeat of Vatsaraja by Dhruva the Pratihara empire was limited only to Rajputana. Nagabhata II revived the policy of conquest and extension of the empire. He defeated the rulers of Andhra, Saindhava, Vidarbha and Kalinga. He subdued Matsayas in the North, Vatsas in the East and Turuskka (Muslims) in the West. Dharmapala had defeated Indrayudh and made Chakrayudh, his brother, the ruler of Kannauj. Nagabhata attacked Kannauj and after defeating Chakrayudh occupied it. He also succeeded in defeating Dharmapala and entered into his territories as far as Munger in Bihar. But he could not enjoy his success for long. Nagabhata II was initially defeated by the Rashtrakuta ruler Govinda III, but later recovered Malwa from the Rashtrakutas. He rebuilt the great Shiva temple at Somnath in Gujarat, which had been demolished in an Arab raid from Sindh. Kannauj became the center of the Gurjar Pratihara state, which covered much of northern India during the peak of their power. Rambhadra, the son and successor of Nagabhata II proved incapable and lost some of his territories, probably, to Pala ruler, Devapal. He was succeeded by his son Mihirbhoj who proved to be an ambitious ruler.

##### **1.1.4.4. Mihirbhoj**

Mihirabhoja ascended the throne on 836 C.E. He was a very brave and powerful king. A glorious chapter of the history of the Pratiharas begins with the accession of Mihirabhoja. He

reorganized and consolidated the empire inherited from his ancestors and ushered in an era of prosperity of the Pratiharas. He is credited with many conquests; the prominent among them are follows.

**Conquest of Bundelkhanda:** During the reign of Mihirabhoja's father, Bundelkhanda had become independent. That is why Ramabhadra could not certify and continue the charity given by Nagabhata in Kalanjaramandal, but Mihirabhoja again started it. This indicates that he had re-conquered Bundelkhanda and king Jayasakti had accepted his suzerainty as well.

**Conquest of Rajputana:** Varaha, Daulatpur and Kahala inscriptions indicate that he had brought Rajputana and several other provinces under his control. It can also be stated that king Kakkata of Mandor branch of the Pratiharas who was the samanta of Nagabhata again became the ruler of this region. Kakkata had fought against the Gaudas in Mudoggiri. Bahuka was his son who had killed Nandabala and Mayra and had defeated the kings of nine Mandals. Bahuka had also become independent but Mihirabhoja again brought him under his control. Pratapgarh inscription mentions the following words. It also confirms the control of Mihirabhoja over the southern portion of Rajputana. Chatus inscription of Jaipur also let the reader know that Mihirabhoja had compelled Harsha Gupta, who had defeated the gauda King, to accept his sovereignty. Harsha Guhila had presented many horses to Mihirabhoja.

**Conquest of Punjab:** 'Rajatarangini' of Kalahana and Pahewa inscription indicate that Karnal region of the eastern Punjab was under the control of Mihirabhoja. However, it is stated that when Mihirabhoja was in the wars of eastern India, king Sankarvarman of Kashmir had brought this region under his control. But even after that some portion of the Karnal region remained under the control of Mihirabhoja.

**Conquest of western India:** According to one copper plate one samanta Balavarman had defeated Vishad and killed Jajjap and other kings and thus drove away the Hunas.

**Conquest of central India:** The inscriptions found at Gwalior and Deogarh of central India indicate that Deogarh i.e. Jhansi region and Gwalior region were being governed by the representatives of Mihirabhoja.

**War with the Rashtrakutas:** During the reign of Mihirabhoja, Amoghavarsa and Krishna II were the Rashtrakuta kings who were ruling over Kannauj. These were weak rulers and hence Mihirabhoja captured Kannauj and extended his empire up to river Narmada. In the course of time, however, Dhruva II, the Gujarat samanta of Amoghavarsa defeated Mihirabhoja in the battle and had driven him away. The war between Rashtrakutas and Bhoja continued for several years and both tried to bring the province of Avanti under their control. Even the last years of the reign of Mihirabhoja passed in these wars.

**War with the Palas:** King Devapala of the Pala dynasty was a brave and powerful king during the reign of Mihirabhoja. His inscriptions refer that he realized tributes and taxes from the Kings of the territories from Himalaya to Vindychal and from the eastern frontier to the western frontier of northern India. Though these descriptions seem to be an exaggeration, yet the power of Devapala was so strong that it appears that both Bhoja and Palas must have shared victories as well as defeats in their wars with each other. The historian expresses different views with regard to the final victory. But according to Gwalior prasasti, in the end, Bhoja has defeated the son of Devapala.

**Other conquests:** Mihirabhoja had also conquered many other provinces. He had attacked Karnal, western and southern Saurashtra etc. The Arab travelling Suleman has praised his big army and his efficient administration.

Mihirabhoja was the most powerful ruler of the Pratihara dynasty. His empire extended from the Terai of Himalaya to Bundelkhanda and Kausambhi, to the frontier of Pala kingdom in the east,

and Saurashtra in the west. A large portion of Rajasthan was also under his control. Some of the coins of Mihirabhoja that are found can be mentioned as alloyed silver which indicates that on account of constant wars his economic condition had become bad. He was the worshipper of Vishnu and Shiva.

From the above account it appears that Mihirbhoj made Kannauj his capital and succeeded in consolidating Pratihara power and influence in Malwa, Rajputana and Madhyadesh. He had to face continuously defeats in the hands of Devapal, King Dhruva and King Kokkalla. These consecutive trounce resulted in weakening his grasp over Rajputana and even the feudatory Pratihara ruler of Jodhpur became independent. The death of Devapal, ruler of Bengal and, thereafter, weakness of his successors gave Mihirbhoj an opportunity to restore his strength towards the east and south due to the policies undertaken by Rashtrakuta ruler. He conquered part of Western Kingdom by defeating the Pala king Narayanapala. Yet again he took offensive against the Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna II and defeated him on the banks of the Narmada. Subsequently he occupied Malwa and Kathiawar. He had an extensive empire which included Kathiawar, territories up to the Punjab in the North-West, Malwa and Madhyadesh. He had consolidated his power in Rajputana and the Kalachuris of Bihar and Chandelas of Bundelkhand had accepted his sovereignty. He made conquests in Punjab, Oudh and other Northern territories. Mihirbhoja was not only a great conqueror but also a great lover of art and literature. He was a great patron of men and letters. Poet Rajasekhara adorned his court. Consequently his reign was regarded as the glorious period of Pratihara ascendancy.

#### **1.1.4.5. Mahendrapala and his successor**

Mahendrapala succeeded to the throne of his father, Mihirbhoja. He succeeded in maintaining the empire of his father and also extended it further by annexing Magadha and parts of Northern Bengal. He lost some parts to the Kings of Kashmir. It is believed that his empire extended from the Himalayas to the Vindhya and from the Eastern to the Western ocean. After death of Mahendrapala, a war of succession took place which substantially weakened the power of the dynasty.

Mahendrapala was succeeded by his son Bhoja II but his cousin, Mahipala, shortly dethroned him and became the ruler of Kannauj. During his period, the Rashtrakuta King, Indra III defeated Mahipala of Kannauj. After Indra III retiring to the south, Mahipala again consolidated his position. In the period in-between the Pala rulers captured some eastern parts of his empire and occupied the forts of Kalinjar and Chitrakuta. His period marked the beginning of the decline of the power of Pratiharas.

Mahipala was succeeded by his son Mahendrapala II. He ruled only for a year. Afterwards, we find no less than four successors during a period of fifteen years. Devapala, Vinayakapala II, Mahipala II and Vijayapala ruled in succession over the throne of Kannauj but none of them proved to be a capable ruler. Rather, the quick succession of these rulers proves that family feuds had started among the Pratiharas. This resulted in the disintegration of the Pratihara Empire during the reign of Devapala.

#### **1.1.5. Decline of Pratihara Dynasty**

Several feudatories of the empire took advantage of the temporary weakness of the Gurjar Pratiharas during war of succession and they declare their independence, notably the Paramaras of Malwa, the Chandelas of Bundelkhand, and the Kalachuris of Mahakoshal. The Rashtrakuta emperor Indra III briefly captured Kannauj, and although the Pratiharas regained the city, their position continued to weaken in the 10th century, partly as a result of the drain of simultaneously fighting off Turkic attacks from the west and the Pala advances in the east. The Gurjar-Pratiharas lost control of Rajasthan to their feudatories, and the Chandelas captured the strategic fortress of Gwalior in central

India, 950 C.E. By the end of the tenth century the Gurjar Pratihara domains had dwindled to a small state centered on Kannauj. Mahmud of Ghazni sacked Kannauj in 1018 C.E, and the Pratihara ruler Rajapala fled. The Chandela ruler Gauda captured and killed Rajapala, placing Rajapala's son Trilochanpala on the throne as a proxy. Jasapala, the last Gurjara ruler of Kanauj, died in 1036 C.E. With this the Gurjara-Pratihara went into the historical horizon of India.

#### **1.1.6. Administration of the Pratihara**

In the Gurjara-Pratihara history, king occupied the highest position in the state and had enormous powers, kings adopted big titles such as 'Parmeshwara', 'Maharajadhiraja', 'Parambhaterak'. The appointment of the samantas and singing on giants and charities were also the works of the kings. The samantas used to give military help to their Kings and fought for them the advice of the high officers was taken in matters of administration. However, there is no reference of mantriparishad or ministers in the inscriptions of that period. There are eight types of different officers in the administration of the Pratiharas such as Kottapala; highest officer of the fort, Tantrapala; representative of the king in samanta states, Dandapashika was highest officer of the police, Dandanayaka look after the military and justice department, Dutaka carry order and grants of the king to specified persons, Bhangika was the officer who wrote order of charities and grants, Vynaharina was probably some legal expert and used to provide legal advice and finally Baladhikrat was the chief of army.

The entire state was divided into many bhuktis. There were many mandals in each bhukti and each mandala had several cities and many villages as well. Thus the Pratiharas had organized their empire into different units for administrative convenience. The samantas were called Maha samantahipati or Maha Pratihara. The villages were locally administered. The elders of the villages were called Mahattar who looked after the administration of the village. Gramapati was an officer of the state who advised in matters of village administration. The administration of the city was looked after by councils which are referred as Goshthi, Panchakula, Sanviyaka and Uttar sobha in the inscriptions of the Pratiharas. Thus the administration of the Pratiharas was quite efficient. It was on account of the efficient administration that the Pratiharas were able to defend India from the attacks of the Arabs.

#### **1.1.7. Social Condition**

Caste system was prevalent in Indian during Gurjara-Pratihara period and the reference of all the four caste of the Vedic period is found in the inscription as well. The inscription refers the Brahmans as Vipra and several Prakrit wards are used for Kshatriyas. The people of each caste were divided into different classes. Chaturveda and Bhatta groups were prominent among the Brahmans. Among the Vaishyas the Kanchuka and Vakata groups were prominent. The Arab writer Ibda Khurdadab has referred seven castes in the time of the Pratiharas. According to him, there existed the classes of Savakufria, Brahman, Kataria, Sudaria, Bandalia and Labla. King was selected from the Savakufria class whereas people of Brahman class did not take wine and married their sons with the daughters of the Kataria class. The Kataria classes were regarded as Kshatriyas. The people of Sudaria were regarded as Sudras and usually did farming or cattle rearing. Basuria class was the Vaishya class whose duty was to serve other classes. The people of Sandila class did the work of Chandals. Lahuda class constituted of low and wandering tribe.

The above description of the Arab writer indicates that the Vaishyas did the work of the Sudars and the Sudar did the work of the Vishyas. It appears that the caste system was slowly and gradually breaking in a nice manner. The Brahmans started marrying kashatriya girls and the vaishyas performed the work of the sudras as well.

The Muslim attacks had begun during this period and many Hindus of the conquered states had been becoming the followers of Islam. It also appears that the Hindu society had allowed the purification of such Hindus. Smriti Ghandrayana Vrat, 'Biladuri' and the writings of Aluberni and other Muslim writers also confirm this fact.

Some references of the inter caste marriage have also been found. The prominent Sanskrit scholar Rajasekhar had married Kshatriya girl named Avanti Sundari. Kings and the rich classes practiced polygamy. However, usually men had only one wife. It can also be known from some reference where on the death of their husbands, women had burnt themselves along with their husbands. Thus sati pratha was there though it was not very much prevalent.

There was no purdah system among the women of the royal families. According to Rajasekhar women learnt music, dancing and paintings. Women were very much fond of ornaments and also used oils and cosmetics. People of the rich families used to wear very thin clothes. The Arab writer Sulaman has written that in this period, silk used to be so thin and delicate that clothes made of it could pass through a ring.

#### **1.1.8. Economy in Pratihara Empire**

Economy in Pratihara Empire was largely based on agriculture. The major expenditure of government during the Pratihara Empire was on the royal household and the army. Economy in Pratihara Empire was mainly dependent on agricultural production. Thus, the major source of government revenue at that time was the tax derived from the bulk of agricultural production. The feudal levies due from subordinates to the Gurjara king were supplemented by standing armies garrisoned on the frontiers. The use of money was strongly implied by such a system. The maintenance of large permanent military forces required the regular disbursement of pay or expenses in the form of ready cash. The forms of money needed to fulfill two conditions: sufficiently high value units to be easily transportable from point of collection to point of disbursement; yet sufficiently low value units to meet the modest salary or expenditure levels of individual soldiers.

Gurjara Pratiharas ruled over an empire which encompassed at one time or another parts of present-day Gujarat, Rajasthan, Malwa and the Ganga basin from Punjab to Bihar. The commercial enterprises of the Gurjara Pratihara kingdom were considered to be both users of money on a regular basis and source of revenue through taxes. Some historiographers have interpreted the period as one in which commerce was moribund, with trade highly localised and dispersed to the village level, where barter relationships replaced monetary exchanges. Historians have further used the term 'feudalism' to describe the political, economic and social process of the Pratihara Empire. The period was characterised by the decentralisation of governmental authority, devolution of economic activity from international to local scale, and de-urbanisation. This interpretation is heavily reliant upon the evidence of land-grants, a biased sample which encourages over-estimation of the strength or prevalence of a trend.

Moreover, regarding the economy and trade in Pratihara Empire, Arab travellers of the ninth and tenth centuries described a number of trade goods originating in various parts of the subcontinent, which moved to market by a variety of pack animals. Indeed, one of the most consistently demanded trade item have been the horse itself. Historians have also confirmed that an active exchange of products internal to Indian kingdoms, as well as between these states, and outside, existed during the time of the Gurjara-Pratihara Empire. The Arab geographers have also mentioned the types of coins used during that period.

Several archaeological factors confirm that there was a regular and well-used medium of exchange in the Gurjara-Pratihara dominions during the ninth and tenth centuries. Inscriptional evidence confirms this surmise. An epigraph from Bharatpur records the distribution of coins called



drammas by King Bhoja in C.E 905-6. The Siyadoni inscription from Jhansi District recorded a number of donations by individuals to temple deities from 902 to 967 C.E. Two specific denominations of coins are notable, the Vighrahapala Drama and the Adivardha Drama. There seems to have been no gold coinage in the Gurjara-Pratihara dominions. The smallest purchases were made not with copper and this was the major medium of exchange during that period.

#### **1.1.9. Religion in India during the Pratihara Period**

This age was the age of the progress of the Brahminical religion. Vaishnava, Shaiva, Sakta and Surya were the important sects of Brahmanism where the Brahmin enjoyed the first class. This age was the age of the progress of the Brahminical religion. Different sects of Brahmanism further progressed during this period. Vaishnava, Shaiva, Sakta and Surya were the prominent sects of Brahmanism, which were prevalent during this period. The people of these sects considered the construction of temples and statues a sacred duty. The kings and other rich persons gave donations to the temples for their expenses. The followers of Shaiva religion worshipped Siva with different names such as Indra, Sankar, Pashupati, Yoga swami, Shambhu etc. Kings such as Vatsaraja, Mahendrapala and Trilochanapala were the worshippers of Siva. The statues of Vishnu, Surya, Brahma were also established in the Siva temples. Besides this there were other small sects who worshipped different goddesses. The most prominent among these goddesses were Durga, Chamunda, Bhagavati and Kali. Surya and vinayaka were also worshipped at some places. From the religious point of view the Pratihara kings were tolerant and had allowed the people to follow any acts they looked. But as a whole they cannot be said to have followed a policy of religious toleration. It is because that though within a religion people was free to follow any sect. There are also some references of the persecutions of the followers of other religion.

Besides idol worship, Yajanas and giving of charity at religious places were also prominent. It is always learnt from an inscription that on the day of Sankranti, Trilochanapala had given in charity a village to 6,000 Brahman after worshipping lord siva. Milladitya had made a pilgrimage to hardwar. Buddhism and Jainism: Buddhism was on the decline during this period and the number of its followers was diminishing. So was the case with the followers of Jainism whose followers mostly lived in Rajputana, Gujarat and Deogarh.

Thus it can be seen that while Jainism and Buddhism were declining. Brahmanism was progressing during the period of Pratiharas. Besides, the followers of Islam were also coming to India and were making converts to their religion.

#### **1.1.10. Legacy**

Pointing out the importance of the Gurjara-Pratihara Empire in the history of India, Dr. R.C. Majumdar has observed, "The Gurjara Pratihara Empire which continued in full glory for nearly a century, was the last great empire in Northern India before the Muslim conquest. This honour is accorded to the empire of Harsha by many historians of repute, but without any real justification, for the Pratihara Empire was probably larger, certainly not less in extent, rivalled the Gupta Empire and brought political unity and its attendant blessings upon a large part of Northern India. But its chief credit lies in its successful resistance to the foreign invasions from the west, from the days of Junaid. This was frankly recognised by the Arab writers themselves."

Historians of India, since the days of Eliphinstone, have wondered at the slow progress of Muslim invaders in India, as compared with their rapid advance in other parts of the world. Arguments of doubtful validity have often been put forward to explain this unique phenomenon. Currently it is believed that it was the power of the Gurjara Pratihara army that effectively barred the progress of the Muslims beyond the confines of Sindh, their first conquest for nearly three hundred

years. In the light of later events this might be regarded as the "Chief contribution of the Gurjara Pratiharas to the history of India".

#### **1.1.11. Conclusion**

The Pratiharas sustained the dignity of a great empire in North India for about a century and fulfilled their duty to fight against foreign attackers. The empire of the Pratiharas proved more resilient as compared to the Palas and the Rashtrakutas. After the fall of the empire of King Harsha, Pratiharas played an important role in unification of Northern India. There was no dearth of genius during the reign of Pratiharas. They were considerate towards the welfare of their subjects. The Pratihara Kings were patrons of art and letters. Rajashekhara, the well known Sanskrit writer was renowned in the court of Bhoja I and Mahendrapala, his son. The decline in the power and authority of Pratiharas was due to the assault of Rashtrakutas, revolt of Vassal chiefs, and undoubtedly foray of Muslims. Towards the end of tenth century, the prestige of the Pratiharas came to an end.

### **Proliferation of Rajput Clans**

It is apparent from the literary and inscriptional evidence of early medieval period, which mention certain members belonging to a Rajput clan or descent, that the structure of Rajput polity may be defined in terms of proliferation. At the later stage, the inter-clan relationships governing the distribution of power consolidated the structure of Rajput polity as well. The emergence of minor clans and sub-divisions of major clans was a result of proliferation. The subclans emerged out from the movement of some members of a clan to newer areas. The proliferation of the Rajput clans with their establishment in different areas led to the further extension of the Rajput fold. It, thus, widened the process of emergence of the Rajputs which may safely be termed as "Rajputization". The absorption of local elements into sub-clans was also a common phenomenon. Usually, the already established clans came into social contact of the newly established clans and provided them a social network which naturally strengthened the latter ones.

### **Political and Military System of the Rajputs**

Inter-state rivalries are represented by the struggle for supremacy. The king was the supreme head of the state and the conductor of the overall executive, judicial and military administration. To some extent, he was assisted in administrative matters by the queens, a number of whom figure in the records of different dynasties of our period. However, none of them is possibly found entrusted with any administrative post. Their involvement in administration is borne out indirectly in some of the landgrants. They are sometimes found granting landgrants with the formal permission of the King. The ministerial council acted as a consultative body on all the important matters of polity. The office of the ministers was generally hereditary. The officials often adopted the feudal titles like rajaputra, ranaka, thakkura, samanta, mahasamanta, raut etc. in addition to the administrative posts like mahasandhivigrahika dutaka, maha-akshapatalika and others. The combining hereditary position and feudal ranks made these officials more powerful. The territorial administration consisted of the vishayas, bhuktis and other sub-divisions was usually fully governed by a class of power feudatories entitled usually as

mandaleshvarars, mandalikas, samantas, thakkuras, ranakas, rajaputras etc. The administrative heads in villages apart from the village headman were the panchkulas (a body of five members in a village like panchayat), mahajanas and mahattaras (village elders). The official posts and designations of administrative officials at various levels were different under various Rajput clans.

The military system of any dynasty is always a direct reflection of its political organization. The feudalization of political structure of the Rajputs had also resulted in their military organization. The military functions were mainly played almost under all the Rajput clans by the feudatory chiefs of various ranks. The chief obligation on the part of such chiefs was to serve the king or the respective overlord at the time of war by fighting valiantly from his side. The literary sources like Lekhapaddhati, Prithvirajvijaya Mahakavya and the contemporary inscriptions throw sufficient light on such obligations and duties of the feudatories towards the state and the overlords. The personal grievances of the feudal lords like rajaputras, ranakas, rautas, samantas etc. created consternation in the whole administrative set up. The powerful feudatories did not hesitate to declare themselves as independent in the hour of the weak position of the king.

The political system of the Rajputs is to be defined as bureaucratic-cum-feudal in character. There was an absence of uniformity in adoption of strategy and the organization of troops in general. Different dynastic clans probably had the tendency to organize the various components of their army in war, in accordance with their own convenience. The chief weakness of the Rajput military was their backwardness in the field of military technology unlike the Turks who were fully conversant with the mounted archery and its strategic use in warfare. However, they prominently used mechanical devices known as munjaniqs and arradas (Persian names of siege machines) in siege operations to hurl heavy stones and projectile weapons on enemy's ranks and fortifications like the Arabs and Turks. That they used these machines in order to bombard enemy's troops from the ramparts of the forts by the Rajput rulers is known from a variety of sources. The Hindus were known to have learnt the use of these machines from the Arabs and Turks who, in turn, imitated the Greek and Romans in using these devices. The Greek and Roman siege machines, which were the variants of machines used by the Hindus and their Muslim adversaries including the Arabs and the Turks, were named as mangonel and catapults.

### **2.2.1. Introduction**

The Cholas dynasty was one of the earliest dynasties that ruled in South India. During the Sangam period it maintained its power and prestige. But after that for several centuries it lists its positions. However the Cholas revived their glory in the middle of the 9th century C.E and maintained its supremacy for about four centuries. There were 20 rulers of the dynasty. Vijayalaya (850-875 C.E) was the founder of the dynasty. The most important rulers of the Chola dynasty were Rajaraja Chola, Rajendra Chola and Rajadhiraja Chola. The period of the Cholas was not only remarkable for political integration of South India, but for the development in art, architecture, literature, trade and maritime activities. The Chola Empire included almost the whole of Tamil Nadu,

and Andhra Pradesh, parts of Karnataka, Coorg, and northern part of Ceylon etc. This chapter will discuss various aspects of the Imperial Chola in outline.

### **2.2.2. Early History of the Chola**

The illustrious Chola dynasty and the kingdom they ruled was known to Panini and acknowledged by Asoka Maurya the Great as an independent entity. Further, the Mayra records confirm that the northern boundary of the Chola holdings was the River Pennar. In fact the limits of Chola Mandalam, the 'Chola Country', in the north and west are determined by tradition and mark the ethnic difference between different peoples rather than political boundaries. During the period of Pallava ascendancy, the Chola kingdom had been weakened and reduced to a much smaller territorial holding, although the dynasty continued to maintain some semblance of independence.

The Chola dynasty is prominently mentioned in the early Tamil literature as well as in Greek and Roman chronicles. During the 1st and 2nd centuries C.E, ports on the Chola coast, transliterated as the 'Coromandal coast', conducted active trade with the West. The main Chola port at that time was Kaveripattinam located at the northern mouth of the River Kaveri. The port is non-existent now. From here the Chola fleet sailed out across the Bay of Bengal to the mouths of the great Rivers Ganga and Irrawaddy, and then ranged across the Malay Archipelago. During its heydays, the Chola kingdom was one of the most predominant maritime powers of the region. The Cholas are celebrated in the Sangam literature although their power seems to have been in decline from the 3rd century C.E onwards.

There is very limited interpretable information available regarding the Cholas from the 4th to 7th centuries C.E. At this stage the Chinese traveller Hieun Tsang once again comes to the rescue of Indian historical narrative. He visited Kanchi around the year C.E 640 and mentions the kingdom of Chu-li-ya (Chola) that was restricted to an area of a 500-mile circumference and being ruled from a small non-descriptive town located about 200 miles south-west of Amaravati. Essentially this territory would be the larger Cudappah district and the country is reported as being rugged and wild with the scanty indigenous population being fierce warriors. It is obvious that the Chola ruler, whose name is not mentioned in the Hieun Tsang chronicles, was subordinate to the Pallava king.

The defeat of the Pallavas by Chalukya Vikramaditya in C.E 740 provided the opportunity for the Chola king to rebel from a position of insignificance and recover the dynastic fortunes. The Chola king, Vijayalaya who claimed descent from the Sun as a Suryavanshi, came to the throne in mid 9<sup>th</sup> century C.E and wrested control of Tanjore from a local chieftain Muttarayer who was a Pandyan subject. Vijayalaya ruled for 34 years and was succeeded by his son Aditya (c. 880-907 C.E) who went on to defeat Aparajita Pallava, conclusively ending the Pallava supremacy in the region. He also conquered the Kongu country and consolidated the annexed territories into a functioning kingdom. Aditya's son Parantaka I who came to the throne in C.E 907 left behind over 40 stone inscriptions dating from the 3rd to the 41<sup>st</sup> year of his rule. Thereafter a great deal of accurate information is available regarding the Chola dynasty.

Parantaka I, who was married to the daughter of the Chera king Sthanuravi was an ambitious and capable king and warrior. He conquered the Pallava kingdom, and invaded and captured the Pandyan capital of Madurai, sending the Pandyan king into exile. He also invaded Ceylon, although this expedition was not very successful other than in collecting a large amount of war booty. The inscriptions made during his rule provide detailed descriptions of the village administration favoured by the Cholas. On the death of Parantaka in 949, his son Rajaditya assumed the throne. However, he was killed in the Battle of Takkolam by the Rashtrakuta king Krishnaraja III and was followed by five obscure and insignificant rulers which created a turmoil for nearly 30 years in the Chola kingdom.

### 2.2.3. Rise of the Imperial Chola

Parantaka had anticipated trouble for the kingdom from the north-west and accordingly placed his eldest son Rajaditya in that region, giving him charge of a large army, which also contained the elephant corps. Unfortunately Rajaditya was killed in the Battle of Takkolam in the same year that he assumed the throne, and the Cholas were forced to cede the northern part of the kingdom to the victorious Rashtrakutas. The Chola throne then fell into the hands of Gandaraditya, who was more religiously oriented than fit to rule a kingdom already in turmoil. By the end of his seven-year rule, in C.E 957, the once illustrious Chola kingdom had been reduced to a small principality. At this stage Krishnaraja III, the Rashtrakuta king, still occupied Tondai Mandalam.

Gandaraditya was followed by his brother Arinjaya who ruled only for two years. Arinjaya was succeeded by his son Sundara Chola, who was forced to concentrate his military activities to the south because Vira Pandya, the Pandyan king had declared independence with the assistance of Mahinda IV, the king of Ceylon. Sundara Chola defeated Vira Pandya who was killed by the crown prince Aditya Chola II in the course of the second battle of the campaign.

Sundara Chola then invaded Ceylon in C.E 959 although it did not result in any definitive results. Further, the victories over the Pandyas also did not re-establish Chola power. After putting out the rebellion in the south to some satisfaction, Sundara Chola turned his attention to the north. Unfortunately he died while preparing to campaign against the Rashtrakutas. At this stage Uttama Chola, the son of Gandaraditya had conspired and assassinated Aditya Chola II and had forced Sundara to declare him heir apparent, instead of Arumolivarman the younger son and next in line for the throne. Uttama became king in C.E 973 and was defeated by the Chalukya Taila II in C.E 980.

#### 2.2.3.1. Rajaraja Chola 'the Great' (c.985-1014 C.E)

In 985, Prince Arumolivarman assumed the throne crowning himself as Rajaraja Deva. This marked the beginning of the real greatness of the Chola Empire. A number of historians qualify Rajaraja with the title 'the Great', while some others refute him this status. In any case he put an end to the intrigue that was becoming a hallmark of Chola dynastic succession and turned out to be an extremely capable ruler. He reigned for a busy 28 years and towards the end of his reign he was known as the 'Lord Paramount of Southern India'. At his death the Chola kingdom consisted of the entire Madras region, a large part of Ceylon and a major portion of Mysore.

**Conquests of Rajaraja's:** Early in his reign Rajaraja destroyed the Chera naval fleet and defeated a confederation of the Pandya, Chera and Ceylon kingdoms in two separate campaigns. He devastated the Pandya kingdom and then went on to conquer the haughty Chera (Kerala) king, attacking and laying waste the towns of Kandalur and Villinum.

Between C.E 995 and 1000, Vengi the erstwhile Eastern Chalukya kingdom was annexed from the Pallavas; Coorg was taken from the Pandyas; and extensive portions of the Deccan tableland brought under direct Chola control.

Rajaraja then turned his attention to the trading posts in the West Coast, where Arab traders had been incorporated into the Malabar society and were proving to be competitors to Chola trade in South-East Asia. In a quest to strike at the root of the competition, he invaded and captured the port of Kollam in C.E 1003 from the Cheras. He next conquered Kalinga in the north-east and added it to his domain. Around C.E 1005, he embarked on a protracted campaign against Ceylon, annexing the northern part of the island to the Chola holdings. This was his last campaign.

By these conquests, the extent of the Chola empire under Rajaraja I included the Pandya, Chera and the Tondaimandalam regions of Tamil Nadu and the Gangavadi, Nolambapadi and the Telugu Choda territories in the Deccan and the northern part of Ceylon and the Maldivian Islands beyond India.

The last eight years of his reign was peaceful and according to Chola custom his son, the crown prince Rajendra, ruled as equal ruler during this period. Rajendra Chola co-ruled with his father from C.E 1011, although there are minor discrepancies in the actual date in different accounts. Since the Cholas had 'inherited' the Pallava lands by this time, the ancient Chalukya-Pallava enmity also came as part of the inheritance taking on the guise of minor internecine wars for almost four years till the final defeat of the Chalukyas, who were by then already subjugated by the Rashtrakutas. Rajaraja maintained a powerful navy, which he used extensively to project Chola power. The last military exploit of Rajaraja was his navy's conquest of Maldives and the Lakadive islands.

Rajaraja assumed a number of titles like Mummidi Chola, Jayankonda and Sivapadasekara. He was a devout follower of Saivism. He completed the construction of the famous Rajarajeswara temple or Brihadeeswara temple at Tanjore in C.E 1010 C.E. Although the king was a confirmed Shiva worshipper, he was also an enlightened liberal and practised religious tolerance. He had the famous and magnificent Tanjavur (Tanjore) temple built, with its walls engraved with details of his military victories.

Religious tolerance is one of the hallmarks of medieval Southern rulers and Rajaraja was not an exception. He endowed a Burmese Buddhist temple, which had originally been constructed by Sri Mara Vijayottungavarman the Sailendra ruler of Sri Vijaya, at the port of Nagapatam.

#### **2.2.3.2. Rajendra Chola I (c.1014-1044 C.E)**

Rajendra Chola continued to further his father's ambitious moves and in comparison was more vigorous and successful. He raised the Chola Empire territorially to its most extensive and in status to the most respected Hindu kingdom of the time.

***Expedition to Kadaram or Sri Vijaya:*** Around C.E 1025 the Chola navy crossed the Bay of Bengal and captured Kadaram or Kedah which was initially Thai, then Malay, and now a Malaysian state north of Penang, which was also called Tharekhetra. The Cholas then went on to capture the ancient capital of Prome or Pegu modern day Burma.

The invading maritime forces then took on the might of the Sri Vijaya Empire ruled by the powerful Sailendra kings. The Sri Vijaya kingdom controlled important trade routes and regularly interfered in the smooth flow of shipping since they had a stranglehold over the Straits of Malacca and Sunda. These activities constrained the smooth flow of Chola trade. The Chola emperor decided to settle this issue through military might, defeating and capturing the Sailendra king while also temporarily annexing the entire Sri Vijaya kingdom. The king was subsequently restored to the throne although Rajendra Chola did not relinquish control over the important sea ports of Takkolam and Matama (Martabian). Two granite pillars were erected to commemorate these victories and they can still be seen in the town of Pegu in Myanmar. The Chola navy next annexed the islands of Nakkavaram (Nicobar), the Andamans, and some parts of Sumatra and Malaya.

***The Conquest of Ceylon:*** After annexing the Andaman and Nicobar islands, Rajendra invaded Ceylon and completed the conquest of the southern part that his father had left unconquered. The Ceylonese king Mahinda V was captured and transported to Chola country where he died in captivity.

Manhinda's son Kassappa then became the focal point of Sinhala resistance, waging a war of attrition for nearly a year before successfully recapturing the southern part of the island, which he ruled as Vikramabahu I for 12 years.

***Gangetic Expedition:*** After the maritime triumphs, Rajendra turned his attention to North India. He waged a number of inconclusive wars with the smaller northern powers and then collided with Mahipala, king of Bengal and Bihar. Again the encounter was inconclusive, although the Chola army managed to reach the banks of the Ganges. He brought back Ganga water from this campaign

and assumed the title Ganagi-Konda (the Victor of Ganga). However, Rajendra did not hold any territory in the north and his invasion of the north can be equated to the southern campaign of Samudragupta.

The assumption of the title of Ganga-Konda was a marked departure from the earlier traditions of the Cholas when the kings had always assumed only unobtrusive titles. Rajendra then titled himself Chakravartigal. More importantly he introduced and encouraged the concept of divinity of the king and a cult of the perception of a God-King by creating and worshiping the images of his forefathers. Temples were built to his deceased predecessors and their worship actively encouraged thereby ensuring the incumbent king was also worshipped almost as god incarnate. The Raja-guru, became the adviser of the king on all matters, both temporal and religious. Rajendra Chola also reduced the Pandyas to a feudatory status and the Pandyan kingdom was ruled by Rajendra's son as viceroy with the title Chola-Pandyan.

**Founding of New Capital:** Rajendra Chola built a new capital in Trichinapoly district and called it Gangaikonda Cholapuram to proclaim his 'conquest' of North India, although in reality the invasion was nothing more than a successful raid. He also constructed a large artificial lake with a 16-mile long embankment and an embedded irrigation system. The capital also had a magnificent palace and a gigantic temple with a 30 feet high black granite Shiva lingam. The ruins of both the palace and the temple are still visible and from what remains it can be confirmed that the sculptures that beautified the buildings were singularly excellent. It is in the ruins of the once magnificent Cholapuram that one can see not only the ravages of time but also the callousness with which modern India treats its resplendent historical background, its cultural artefacts, and its architectural monuments.

He reasserted the Chola authority over the Chera and Pandya countries. He defeated Jayasimha II, the Western Chalukya king and the river Tungabhadra was recognised as the boundary between the Cholas and Chalukyas.

At the death of Rajendra I the extent of the Chola Empire was at its peak. The river Tungabhadra was the northern boundary. The Pandya, Kerala and Mysore regions and also Sri Lanka formed part of the empire. He gave his daughter Ammangadevi to the Vengi Chalukya prince and further continued the matrimonial alliance initiated by his father. Rajendra I assumed a number of titles, the most famous being Mudikondan, Gangaikondan, Kadaram Kondan and Pandita Cholan. Like his father he was also a devout Saiva and built a temple for that god at the new capital Gangaikondacholapuram. He made liberal endowments to this temple and to the Lord Nataraja temple at Chidambaram. He was also tolerant towards the Vaishnava and Buddhist sects.

### **2.2.3.3. Cholas after Rajendra I**

The eldest son of Rajendra, Rajadhiraja, co-ruled the empire with his father for more than fifteen years, continuing an established Chola tradition. The period of the combined rule of the father and son is considered the most decisive in Chola supremacy over the Tamil country. Their control over the Peninsula was almost absolute and never as strong or certain before or after this golden period. Rajadhiraja became king in 1035 and continued the constant and never-ending conflicts with the neighbours. In 1052, he was killed in the fierce Battle of Koppam with the Chalukyas. Although the king died in the battle, the Cholas were not defeated. His brother Rajendra Parakesarivarman was crowned on the battlefield and managed to retrieve the day. He led his forces in an advance to Kollpura and erected a Jayastambha 'victory pillar' there. In the aftermath of this conflict, the Tungabhadra River was recognised to be the geographical border between the Cholas and the Chalukyas.

The regular conflicts, skirmishes, and small-scale wars between the neighbours continued during the reign of the next three kings. From the perspective of the Cholas, no event of any significance took place during this time. In 1062-3, Virarajendra Chola, then ruling the kingdom got involved in the succession struggle of the Chalukyas that was plunging their kingdom into a Civil War. In the Battle of Kudal Sangamam at the junction of the Rivers Tunga and Bhadra, Virarajendra resoundingly defeated Somesvara II who was one of the contenders of the throne. The Chola then placed Vikramaditya, who he had supported in the succession struggle, on the throne and also gave his own daughter in marriage to the new Chalukya king.

Virarajendra died in C.E 1070 and there followed a disputed succession that culminated in a Civil War. By this time Vikramaditya Chalukya was well established in the Deccan and in his turn interfered in the Chola succession, making his brother-in-law Adhirajendra king in 1072. However, Adhirajendra proved to be ineffective and unpopular, being murdered in 1074. He was the last of the direct line of the great medieval Cholas.

#### **2.2.4. The Later Cholas**

Adhirajendra was followed on the throne by a relative, Rajendra, who later assumed the name Kulottunga I. His father was the Eastern Chalukya Prince of Vengi who died in 1062 and his mother was the daughter of the illustrious Gangai-Konda Chola (Rajendra Deva Chola I). The younger Rajendra had opted to stay in the Chola court, letting his uncle rule Vengi on his behalf, but returned to be crowned king of Vengi in C.E 1070. In C.E 1074, on the assassination of Adhirajendra, he assumed governorship of the entire Chola kingdom and founded a new Chalulya-Chola dynasty, with the title Kulottunga Chola. Kulottunga I (Chola) ruled for 49 years, proving to be a worthy king of an extensive empire. The only major battle that he fought was the re-conquest of Kalinga that had once again broken free from Chola subjugation. This was achieved by the defeat of the Anantavarman Choda of the Ganga dynasty, then ruling Kalinga. The regular and routine conflicts with the neighbours continued unabated, although at this stage the power of the Cholas was such that these minor wars could be considered mere pin-pricks in a broader overview.

The Chola Empire now covered the entire country south of the Rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra and at least to the Godavari River in the north-east. It maintained cordial diplomatic relations with the kingdom of Kanauj in North India and had a thriving trade with Kambhoja in Indo-China. Kulottunga's bureaucracy completed a survey in 1086 based on which his internal administration carried out an elaborate revision of revenue. This was a distinguished and important reformation. The peace that prevailed is demonstrated by the fact that although the kings were overtly Shiva worshippers, the venerated Vaishnava teacher and philosopher Ramanuja resided in Srirangam near Trichinapoly for an extensive period of time during this reign. Kulottunga's son Vikrama Chola continued to fight minor conflicts periodically, but presided over a period of relative peace and tranquillity and took great initiatives in temple renovation activities at Chidambaram. He successfully maintained Chola supremacy and predominance in the region.

Kulottunga II followed Vikrama Chola and although religious to a fault in his worship of Shiva, managed to shoulder the kingly responsibilities well, ensuring a peaceful reign. His son Rajaraja II died without any issues and had appointed Rajadhiraja II, the grandson of Vikrama Chola through a daughter as the successor. These three kings were of limited ability and in the long list of impressive Chola warrior-kings is of almost no import. During this time the Chola administration also started to show signs of fatigue and weakness at the Centre. The control over the outlying areas started to unravel and the traditional feudatory chieftains became more assertive regarding their independence. Further, the Cholas also became unnecessarily involved in the Civil War in the



Pandya kingdom with the Ceylonese opposing them, leading to the Chola power gradually being drained by misuse and degradation.

The last Chola of any importance was Kulottunga Chola III who ruled for 38 years (C.E 1178-1216). He fought wars against the kingdom of Ceylon, the Hoyasalas and defeated the Chera king at Karuvur, managing to hold the Chola kingdom together by sheer force of personality and personal abilities as an administrator and warrior. After his death there was a dispute for succession that led to the dissipation of Chola power till it descended to insignificance with no power to influence even minor events in the Peninsula.

### **2.2.5. Administration**

The Cholas as a ruling power rose to eminence in the 9th Century C.E after dethroning the Pallavas. Thereafter the Cholas established control over Pallava territories and subdued the Pandya power. The Chola state stood on a firm footing deriving sustenance from the resource-pocket located in the fertile and rich area of the Kaveri valley. In the period of Rajaraja I and subsequent period various feudatory chiefs were subjugated and the earlier category of Nadu was regrouped into Valanadu and was placed under the subdued chiefs. The landed magnates were also incorporated into the state system and were provided prestigious titles and were assigned administrative and military duties, which included collection and assessment of land revenue.

#### **2.2.5.1. Chola Kingship**

The Cholas traced their origin to the Suryavamsa. Mythical traditions are mentioned in the inscriptions especially in the prasastis containing the genealogies and these are interspersed with information about historical personages. It appears that these served the purpose of legitimization of the rule of the Cholas. The genealogies of the Cholas attribute eminent and prestigious lineage to the king to legitimise his position as king. The Cholas ascribe Kshatriya origin to themselves as is attested by the title Kshatriyasikhamani of the king Rajaraja. The Varman suffix added to the names of the kings was also a part of the process of claiming kshatriya status e.g. Adityavarman (C.E 871-906) and Parantaka Varman (C.E 707-755). The practice of assuming names during coronation also existed under the Cholas e.g.: Prakesarivarman and Rajakesarivarman and Arumolivarman. The charters of the Cholas consist of the prasastis and genealogies in Sanskrit and the details regarding the grant in Tamil. Hiranyagarbha and Tulabhara ceremonies were conducted by the Chola kings. The anointment ceremony was also a means to claim Kshatriya position. A grant of Vira Chola points out that the king was advised by a Brahman moral preacher that bestowment of land to Brahmans would lead his forefathers to heaven. However actual motive for making the grants was redistribution of resources in the form of land, gold, cattle etc. The gifts were bestowed for meritorious service provided by the Brahmans and also to seek legitimacy for them in political sphere. Through the land grants the kings tried to convert unsettled areas into agrarian settlements. These grants did not simply serve a charitable purpose.

Thus, the king was the most important person in the Chola administration. All authority rested in his hands, but he had a council of ministers to advise him. The king often went on tours in order to oversee the administration.

#### **2.2.5.2. Central Government**

The Cholas had an excellent system of administration. The emperor or king was at the top of the administration. The extent and resources of the Chola Empire increased the power and prestige of monarchy. The big capital cities like Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram, the large royal courts and extensive grants to the temples reveal the authority of the king. They undertook royal tours to increase the efficiency of the administration. There was elaborate administrative machinery comprising various officials called *perundanam* and *sirudanam*.

### **2.2.5.3. Revenue Administration**

The land revenue department was well organized. It was called *aspuravubarithinaikkalam*. All lands were carefully surveyed and classified for assessment of revenue. The residential portion of the village was called *urnattam*. These and other lands such as the lands belonging to temples were exempted from tax. Besides land revenue, there were tolls and customs on goods taken from one place to another, various kinds of professional taxes, dues levied on ceremonial occasions like marriages and judicial fines. During the hard times, there were remission of taxes and Kulottunga I became famous by abolishing tolls and earned the title-Sungam Tavirtta Cholan. The main items of government expenditure were the king and his court, army and navy, roads, irrigation tanks and canals. One sixth of the entire gross produce was due to the State and the king also levied a number of other taxes that varied with the nature of the land, its production capacity and the ability of the owner to pay. Fertile fields were taxed by as much as one-third of the produce. The collection of taxes was entrusted to officers designated by the king and there are indications that these officers were often harsh and demanding.

The Cholas had mastered the art of building great dams across the rivers and irrigation canals were constructed on a vast scale, greatly improving the farming output. The popular currency was the gold 'kasu' which was about 28 grains troy in weight with the silver coins that were preponderant in North India becoming common in the Deep South only at a much later date.

### **2.2.5.4. Military Administration**

The Cholas maintained a regular standing army consisting of elephants, cavalry, infantry and navy. About seventy regiments were mentioned in the inscriptions. The royal troops were called *Kaikkolaperumpadai*. Within this there was a personal troop to defend the king known as *Velaikkarar*. Attention was given to the training of the army and military cantonments called *kadagams* existed. The Cholas paid special attention to their navy. The naval achievements of the Tamils reached its climax under the Cholas. They controlled the Malabar and Coromandal coasts. In fact, the Bay of Bengal became a Chola lake for sometime.

### **2.2.5.5. Provincial Administration**

The Chola Empire was divided into *mandalams* and each *mandalam* into *valanadus* and *nadus*. In each *nadu* there were a number of autonomous villages. The royal princes or officers were in charge of *mandalams*. The *valanadu* was under *periyannattar* and *nadu* under *undernattar*. The town was known as *asnagaram* and it was under the administration of a council called *nagarattar*.

### **2.2.5.6. Local Administration: Ur and Nadu**

The system of village autonomy with *sabhas* and their committees developed through the ages and reached its culmination during the Chola rule. Village assemblies were crucial to Chola administration. Those living in the usual peasant villages met in an assembly called the *ur*, whereas those from the *brahmadeya* villages used the superior title of *sabha*. Royal officials were present at the meetings of the *sabha* but do not appear to have played a commanding role. Their participation in village affairs was more as observers and advisers. This permitted continuity in local growth and development without too much interference from political changes at the upper level, and the degree of apparent autonomy at village level deserves to be underlined. Large villages could be divided into wards, each with a smaller assembly representing its households. Given the layout of the village and the tendency for people in similar occupations to be located in the same wards, the latter came to represent professional groups, such as carpenters, potters, smiths and so on.

The assemblies controlled production through consultation with the heads of the peasant families, the *velalas*, who were their members. This necessitated discussion on a range of matters, including those of crucial importance, such as the setting up of irrigation facilities. Rights in land

were insisted upon and among these were the kani, or hereditary rights. Villages were grouped together within a nadu, a defined territory. Agrarian organizations of the brahmadeyas, temples, and the commercial associations linked to centres of exchange, such as the *nagaram*, functioned within the nadu, although some had connections traversing the nadu.

Members of the associations of the velala handling agricultural products, such as the Chitrameli Periyanaadu who were referred to from the twelfth century onwards, traversed the area more widely. The nadu was not an autonomous peripheral area but was under central control. This enabled the centre to regroup the nadus into units called the valanadu and the mandalam, especially as the nadus were not of a uniform size. Such a rearrangement was an indicator of control over the territories. Agricultural expansion in the valanadu became associated with brahman settlers receiving grants of land, as in the Tamraparni Valley of the far south. Where the land was already under cultivation there had to be agreements between the cultivators and the grantees, obviously to the advantage of the latter.

Other units such as mandalams could also be re-aligned to determine revenue demands, administrative controls and the needs of cities in the region. The population of the mandalam consisted of peasants, as well as the settlements of forest and hill peoples in their proximity. If the brahmadeya and the temple were important players in the restructuring of the economy during the Chola period, it was not merely because of their ritual authority, but was also a result of their administrative and functional control over productivity. Ritual is important but does not exist in a social void and, more often than not, is also tied to social and economic realities and ambitions. The grantees themselves were beholden to the king for the grant, and the king's officers were required to allocate temple resources and audit temple accounts. As was the case with Buddhist monasteries, the temple complex could only survive where it had some control over resources from agriculture, or from revenue generated by the regular fairs and festivals which became surrogate markets. This necessitated temple control over agriculture and irrigation, together with some participation in commercial exchange.

The working of these assemblies differed according to local conditions. The ur was open to male adults of the village, but in effect the older members such as heads of households took a more prominent part, some of them forming a small executive body for routine matters. The sabha had the same system and, in addition, could constitute smaller committees of any size from among its members for specialized work. Election to the sabha sometimes appears to have been by lot from among those who were eligible, though amendments to the working of the sabha could be made whenever necessary.

Two inscriptions belonging to the period of Parantaka I found at Uttaramerur provide details of the formation and functions of village councils. The first one an inscription from the temple wall at Uttaramerur (a brahmadeya village) gives details of how the local sabha functioned. It dates to the C.E tenth century and reads:

*There shall be thirty wards. In these thirty wards those that live in each ward shall assemble and shall select each person possessing the following qualifications for inclusion for selection by lot: He must own more than one quarter of the tax-paying land. He must live in a house built on his own site. His age must be below seventy and above thirty-five. He must know the mantras and Brahmanas.*

*Even if he owns only one-eighth of the land, his name shall be included provided he has learnt one Veda and one of the four Bhashyas. Among those possessing these qualifications only such as are well conversant with business and are virtuous shall be taken, and one who possesses honest earnings whose mind is pure and who has not been on any of the committees for the last three*

years shall also be chosen. One who has been on any of the committees but has not submitted his accounts, and his relations specified below, cannot have their names written on the tickets:

*The sons of the younger and elder sisters of his mother. The sons of his paternal aunt and maternal uncle. The uterine brother of his mother. The uterine brother of his father. His uterine brother. His father-in-law. The uterine brother of his wife. The husband of his uterine sister. The sons of his uterine sister. His son-in-law. His father. His son.*

*One against whom incest or the first four of the five great sins are recorded. The five great sins being killing a brahman, drinking alcohol, theft, adultery, and associating with criminals. All his relations specified above shall not be eligible to be chosen by lot. One who has been outcaste for association with low people shall not have his name chosen until he performs the expiatory ceremonies. One who is foolhardy, One who has stolen the property of others, One who has taken forbidden dishes, One who has committed sins and has had to perform expiatory ceremonies of purification.*

*Excluding all these, names shall be written on tickets for thirty wards and each of the wards in these twelve streets shall prepare a separate covering ticket for thirty wards bundled separately. These packets shall be put into a pot. When the tickets have to be drawn a full meeting of the great assembly including the young and old members shall be convened. All the temple priests who happen to be in the village on that day, shall, without any exception whatever, be caused to be seated in the inner hall where the great assembly meets. In the midst of the temple priests, one of them who happens to be the eldest shall stand up and lift that pot, looking upwards so as to be seen by all people. One ward shall be taken out by any young boy standing close who does not know what is inside and shall be transferred to another empty pot and shaken loose. From this pot one ticket shall be drawn and made the arbitrator. While taking charge of the ticket thus given to him, the arbitrator shall receive it on the palm of his hand with the five fingers open. He shall read out the ticket thus received. The ticket shall be read by all the priests present in the inner hall. The name thus read shall be put down and accepted. Similarly one man shall be chosen for each of the thirty wards.*

*Of the thirty men thus chosen those who had previously been on the Garden Committee, and on the Tank Committee, those who are advanced in learning and those who are advanced in age shall be chosen for the Annual Committee. Of the rest, twelve shall be taken for the Garden Committee and the remaining six shall form the Tank Committee. The great men of these three committees shall hold office for full 360 days and then retire. Anyone on a Committee found guilty of an offence shall be removed at once. For appointing the committees after these have retired, the members of the Committee for Supervision of Justice in the twelve streets shall convene an assembly with the help of the arbitrator. The Committees shall be appointed by drawing pot-tickets ... For the Five-fold Committee and the Gold Committee, names shall be written for pot-tickets in the thirty wards (and the same procedure followed). One who has ridden an ass (i.e., been punished) or who has committed a forgery shall not be included.*

*Any arbitrator who possesses honest earnings shall write the accounts of the village. No accountant shall be appointed to that office again before he submits his accounts to the great men of the chief committee and is declared to have been honest. The accounts which he has been writing he shall submit himself, and no other accountant shall be chosen to close his accounts. Thus, from this year onwards as long as the moon and the sun endure, committees shall always be appointed by lot . . . We, the assembly of Uttaramerur chatur-vedi-mangalam made this settlement for the prosperity of our village in order that wicked men may perish and the rest may prosper. At the order of the great men sitting in the assembly, I, the arbitrator Kadadipottan Shivakkuri Raja-malla-mangalapriyan, thus wrote the settlement.*

Other inscriptions refer to similar general procedures, though there are variations in qualifications and requirements and in the sanction of expenditure. The making of rules through amendments from time to time, and the attempts to ensure that factions were kept at a minimum, are striking features of this inscription. The assembly was summoned by the beat of a drum and generally met in the precincts of the temple. Interchange and co-operation among village assemblies was not unknown.

The village assembly was responsible for collecting the assessment for the government and, where stipulated, the taxes on land and produce. In some cases it was collected as a joint assessment on the entire village. In addition, the assembly could make a levy for a particular purpose: for example, the construction of a water tank. Such local funds were kept separate from the taxes collected for the state. The activities of the assembly included the keeping of records, particularly those pertaining to charities and taxes, and the settling of agrarian disputes such as conflicts over tenure arrangements or irrigation rights. The larger assemblies kept a small staff of paid officers, but in the smaller assemblies most of the work was done on a voluntary basis. Professionals were appointed for special purposes at the nadu level as well. The higher officials were often drawn from among the better-off velalas, thus creating a link between state and local administration that enlarged the possibilities of upward mobility, incidentally providing a base for those with political ambitions. The latter part of the Chola period saw greater activity among revenue officials, with an increase in the number of taxes. The degree of autonomy at village level prevented shifting relations in the upper levels of the administrative and political structure from interfering to any large extent with the routine life of the village.

#### **2.2.5.7. Officials in Chola Realm**

A number of officers were responsible for administration in the Chola kingdom although there is no clear evidence of a council of minister but Uddan-kottam seems to have served this purpose. Upward and downward mobility is noticed in the administrative hierarchy. Perundan and Sirutaram were higher and lower category officials respectively. Senapatis (commander of troops) had the middle position referred to as Sirudnattup Perundaram. Nyayattar (judges) were of both category. Officials were paid by allotting land rights. Tax on land was levied in cash and kind both. Officials were referred to as holders of lands. They could further sub-assign land or even sell it. Communal ownership was prevalent and customary rights of villagers were recognised. The lowest unit of administration was the village. They combined to form a Nadu. A Valanadu comprised of a few Nadus. Taniyur was a separate village or settlement site. Above Valanadu there was Mandalam which was equivalent to a province. Karumigal and Panimkkal meant officers and servants. Anbil plates refer to a Brahman Manya Saciva. He was granted land by the king. The king conveyed his orders orally especially with regard to gift to temples. The directive was conveyed through a letter issued by Anatti (executive officer) appointed by the king. The local bodies were apprised and when the process was completed a record was prepared in the presence of the local magnates called Nattukkon, Nndukilavan, Urudaiyan.

Officers associated with the process of bestowment and registration of land grants were many and some are also referred to as Uttaramantri. Puravu-varitinnikkalam was the department of land revenue. Varipottagam was the record of land rights and Vari-pottagak-kanakku was the register of revenue department. Officers associated with the task of maintaining records and registers of land rights 2<sup>nd</sup> land revenue department were Varipottagam and Variyiledu. Kankanis or supervisors were the audit officers. Entry in a record was called Variyilidu. Mugavetti (wrote royal letters) and Pattolai were junior functionaries of land revenue department. Officers of Nadu (of the status of adhikari) were Nadu kuru (revenue assessment and settlement officer), Nadu vagai (revenue official). Mandira

olai was the officer who wrote the firumugam (letter containing the royal order). The term Naduvirukkai was used for vijnapti (vaykkelvi) or petitioner and Anatti (executive officer) who served as a link between monarch and the persons who wished to approach the king. The king made oral orders regarding the issues brought to him by the officers. These requests transformed into orders were sent to local administration and central administration for implementation. The Olai nayagam were the officers who verified the letter written by Mandira-olai. The oral order of the king was put to writing (eluttu) and compared (oppu) and then entered (pugunda). The document was called Tittu and the charity deed (aravolai).

Justice was carried out by the village assemblies through the committees comprising of Nyayattar. The central court of justice was the Dharmasana which conducted its affairs through Dharmasana bhattas (Brahmans proficient in law). It appears that civil and criminal offences were not dealt separately. The penalty for crime committed by a person affecting the king or ruling dynasty was decided by the king himself. Several methods of punishment prevailed viz. imposition of fines, capital punishment etc.

Adhikaris were the king's officers. They possessed the titles Udaiyan, Velan, Muvendavelan, Brahma, Pallavaraiyan, Vilupparaiyan and other chiefly nomenclature. Sometimes more than one nomenclature was adopted. Naduvirukkai were mostly Brahman (held titles like Bhatta, Barhmadhirajan) officers and acted as a link between the royal authority and the bureaucracy and they are always referred to in connection with the adhikaris.

Personnel in charge of temples were Srikaryam but they did not look after the ritual related aspects like worship etc. In some cases we have the evidence of Adhikaris holding the Srikaryam office. Generally they had a distinctive position in the administrative system. The titles held by them were velan, Muvendvelan, Brahma, Bhatta, Kon, Pallavaraiyan, Vilupparaiyan, Nadu title, King title.

Senapati was in charge of military affairs. They bear the king's title, name, and other titles such as Udaiyan, Brahma, Araiyan, Kilans. The office of Dandanayakam was probably akin to the Senapati (military office). The title mentioned for this office is Pallavaaraiyans. The titles held by Senapatis were: udaiyan, brahma, araiyan etc. The office of tiru-mandria olai nayakam was an important office associated with preparation of land grant documents. The titles of these officers were Muvendavelan, Brahma etc.

Officers deputed at Nadu who discharged their duties at the behest of the king were Nadu Vagai who were revenue assessment officers. Kottam-vagai were deputed in Tondaimandalam area and performed the same function as Nadu vagai. Nadukankuninayakam had control over more than one Nadu and had a higher position than Nadu vagai.

The land revenue department was called Puravuvari tinaikkalam. This department was an administrative division of the king's government and had the following personnel: Puravu vari, Vari pottagan, Mugavetti, Vari pottaga, Kanakku, Variyil idu and Pattolai etc.

The titles held by the king's personnel such as Udaiyan, Kilan and Kilavan refer to possession. Other titles were Velan and Muvendavelan. The latter is a typical Chola title and occurs from the time of Parantaka. These titles suggest that those who bore them were land holders or associated with land.

The cattle herders (manradi) supervised the grants for lighting lamps in the temples. Merchants held the titles of Cetti, Mayilatti and Palan. They even occupied the important offices like Senapati and accountant.

We do not get clear evidence of a council of ministers but there existed officers like: Purohita (dharmopadesta), Rajagurus, Tirumandira olai, Adhikari, Vayilketpar etc. There are references to the court in literature. The king's court comprised of: Brahman advisors, Priests, Rajaguru, Adhikaris,

Tirumandira olai nayagams, Vayilketpar, head of the king's bodyguards and Samantas (feudatory chiefs). The various levies of this period were produce-rent, labour-rent and cash payment. Most of the imposts were exacted in kind viz. paddy.

The chiefs held an important position in the state system. The chiefs of the Chola period were: Paluvettaraiyar, Vels, Malavas, Gangas, Banas, etc. It appears that the chiefs were assigned land and collected dues from it in return for protection of territory.

Thus, in the above discussion we noticed that from the earliest times the Chola administration was highly systematised and well organised, run by an elaborate and complex bureaucracy. The Royal officials formed a separate class in society and there was no distinction between civil and military officers. Moreover, the class distinction between the bureaucracy and the common people was underlined by the official positions being made hereditary. One of the cardinal achievements of the Cholas was the effortless manner in which they managed to decentralise governance, a feat never achieved before and not emulated afterwards for a number of centuries. The Chola administration is therefore a subject of a great deal of study, research and analysis. Details of the Chola administrative principles and their antiquity are available for study from the various inscriptions. Overall the administration was efficient and the general population was treated in an unbiased manner.

#### **2.2.6. Socio-economic Life**

Caste system was widely prevalent during the Chola period. Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed special privileges. The inscriptions of the later period of the Chola rule mention about two major divisions among the castes-Valangai and Idangai castes. However, there was cooperation among various castes and sub-castes in social and religious life. The position of women did not improve. The practice of 'sati' was prevalent among the royal families. The devadasi system or dancing girls attached to temples emerged during this period.

Both Saivism and Vaishnavism continued to flourish during the Chola period. A number of temples were built with the patronage of Chola kings and queens. The temples remained centres of economic activity during this period. The mathas had great influence during this period. Both agriculture and industry flourished. Reclamation of forest lands and the construction and maintenance of irrigation tanks led to agricultural prosperity. The weaving industry, particularly the silk-weaving at Kanchi flourished. The metal works developed owing to great demand of images for temples and utensils. Commerce and trade were brisk with trunk roads and merchant guilds. Gold, silver and copper coins were issued in plenty at various denominations. Commercial contacts between the Chola Empire and China, Sumatra, Java and Arabia were extensively prevalent. Arabian horses were imported in large numbers to strengthen the cavalry.

#### **2.2.7. Education and Literature**

Education was also given importance. Besides the temples and mathas as educational centres, several educational institutions also flourished. The inscription at Ennayiram, Thirumukkudal and Thirubhuvanai provide details of the colleges existed in these places. Apart from the Vedas and Epics, subjects like mathematics and medicine were taught in these institutions. Endowment of lands was made to run these institutions. The development of Tamil literature reached its peak during the Chola period. Jivaka Cintamani written by Thiruthakkadevar and Kundalakesi belonged to 10th century. The Ramayana composed by Kamban and the Periyapuram or Tiruttondarapuram by Sekkilar are the two master-pieces of this age. Jayankondar's Kalingattupparani describes the Kalinga war fought by Kulotunga I. The Moovarula written by Ottakuthar depicts the life of three Chola kings. The Nalavenba was written by Pugalendi. The works on Tamil grammar like Kalladam by Kalladanar, Yapperungalam by Amirthasagarar, a Jain, Nannul by Pavanandhi and Virasoliyam

by Buddhamitra were the products of the Chola age. Sanskrit writing was predominated by Vaishnava literature and a succession of Vaishnava teachers, philosophers and saints who wrote numerous devotional poems and philosophical works adorned the Chola court. The prominent amongst them were Ramanuja, Yadavaprakasha, and Yamunacharya.

### **2.2.8. Art and Architecture**

Art tradition in south India was carried to its epitome by the Chola during their rule. The Chola inherited the temple building tradition from the Pallavas and vigorously practiced this tradition. Besides temple architecture, the Cholas also patronized beautiful sculptural tradition both in stone and bronze. Especially the Chola bronze is world famous for their beauty. The Chola were also grate patron of paintings tradition.

#### **2.2.8.1. Temple Architecture**

Temple architecture in South India reached its pinnacles under the rule of imperial Cholas (C.E 850-1250). Early Chola temples however, are not as large as the ambitiously planned Pallava Kailashnatha or the Vaikunthaperumal temples at Kanchipuram. Development in early Chola architecture consists, instead, in perfecting the unique elements of the Dravidian style and combining them harmoniously with new forms in astonishingly diverse ways.

A typical new Chola feature, that is different from the Pallava, is the famed ornamentation of temple walls. This consists in the use of real deep niches with entablatures. These niches, the Devakushtas (niches to house deities), flanked by demi pilasters, appear on wall surfaces of Chola temples. The decoration, in most finished examples, alternates between the various niche devices of koshtapanjaras and Kumbhapanjaras. Space is narrow in these forms but the decoration is more rounded. The pilasters of these niches are crowned by a curved roof moulding adorned by two kudus with crowning lion heads. The bases of these decorative devices have makara (motif based on the mythical sea monster) and warrior heads.

Other Chola distinction is seen in the abandonment of the Pallava yali or the lion at the bases of pillars and pilasters. The pillars too, are more enriched and defined. As earlier noted, the final element in the Dravidian pillar of the notch in the shaft before it flares, with a slight swelling above it, gets transformed now under the Cholas to become the most delicate of vases (kalash). Another elegant feature of the pillar is the decorative device of the kudu, put as a rollmoulding on top of the pillars.

The gateways, which are dwarfed in the Pallava, are in late Chola prominent. The dwarfpalas (gatekeepers) in Chola temples are fierce men with tridents, bearing tusks protruding from mouths, rolled eyes and hands always in threatening gestures. These contrast with the benign natural looking single paired arm dwarfpalas of the past. All these features climax in two temples, the Brihadisvara (Rajarajesvara) at Thanjavur, the capital of the Cholas and the Gangaikondacholapuram, near Kumbakonam. These come at a time of greatest extent of Chola power.

The Cholas continued and developed the art-tradition of the Pallavas. But in comparison with the productions of the last days of the Pallavas, those of the early Chola phase display a certain freshness of spirit which appears to herald a new movement. In fact under the Cholas, the Dravida style of temple architecture enters a brilliant and distinctive phase. The early Chola rulers appear to be great patrons of temple architecture. Among the innumerable Chola temples may be mentioned the Vijayalaya Cholisvara at Melamalai, Balasubramanya at Kannanur, Sundaresvara at Tirukkattala, Muvar Kovil at Kodumbalur, Nagesvarasvami at Kumbhakonam, Brahmapapurisvara at Pullamangai, Kuranganatha at Srinivasanallur, the turn temples of Agastyisvara and Cholisvara at Kiliyanur and the Shiva temple at Tiruvalisvaram.



The Vijayalaya Cholisvara temple at Melamalai, at a distance of ten miles from Pudukottai, is undoubtedly one of the finest examples of early Chola temples. Round the main temple in an open yard are seven small sub-shrines, all facing inwards and resembling the main temple in essential feature. By combining a superb sense of restraint and a discerning choice for embellishments noted in its superstructure, it clearly testifies to the aesthetic vision of its builders. In comparison with the Vijayalaya Cholisvara, the temples of Balasubramnya and Sundaresvara appear to be less refined. The most remarkable feature of Nagesvarasvami temple at Kumbakonam is the remarkable life-size figure sculptures, found on its outer walls. The early phase of Dravida temple is best illustrated in the Kuranganatha temple at Srinivasanallur (Trichinopoly district), built in the reign of Parantaka I. The entire temple is remarkable for proportionate distribution of parts and an overall restraint in embellishment. The twin temples of Agasthisvara and Cholisvara at Kiliyanur (south Arcot), the triple shrine of Muvar Kovil at Kodumbalur (Pudukottai district), are also remarkable for their individual treatment. The Shiva temple at Tiruvalisvaram (Tinnevely district) is almost unique for its fine workmanship and its wealth of iconographic sculpture.

The early architectural works of the Cholas have perished because of the use of impermanent material, although their structure and design formed the basis for subsequent development. It is also clear that South Indian sculpture and architecture developed independent of any outside influence through a gradual evolutionary process that was completely native. In an overarching manner, Chola art can be considered to be an indistinguishable continuation of Pallava art, which in itself was highly evolved through generations of practice and application. The few noticeable differences between the two can be attributed to being the result of spontaneous developments that take place regularly in the evolution of art.

The two great temples of Tanjore and Gangaikonda-cholapurem built respectively during the reigns of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I, constitute a landmark in the history of Indian architecture.

***The Brihadisvara at Thanjavur:*** Rajaraja I, crowned in 985, carved out an overseas empire by establishing a second capital at Pollonaruva in Sri Lanka. The Brihadisvara (995-1010), built by him at his capital Thanjavur, though he did not live to see it completed is a product of this success. The temple inscriptions make clear the triumphal nature of the edifice. Donations to the shrine came from far and wide. The numbers of architects, accountants, guards, functionaries, temple dancers, revenue records of landgrants etc are engraved on the temple walls, thus establishing the importance of the temple as an institution of prime importance in Chola times.

The Brihadisvara is some 210 feet High, the largest and the tallest in India. It is laid out as a Dravida padmagarbhmandala of 16 into 16 squares. It was consecrated in 1009-10. The site is not associated with any Puranic story or any ancient legend, the Rajarajesvara appears to have been an entirely new foundation, a royal monument of power. Within the large enclosure wall are shrines of the parivardevatas (family deities) and the dikpalas (deities of cardinal directions). The eight dikpalas are housed separately against the wall. The two large gopuras in line are first introduced here in Dravidian architecture. The vimana is dvitala (double storied). The vertical base (a square of 82 feet with a height of 50 feet) forms the first storey and the 13 slightly receding tiers form the upper portion. The diminishing tiers taper till the last at the apex to become one third of the base. On top of this rests the crowning dome, which comprises a massive granite block of 25 and a half feet square and estimated to weigh eighty tons. The cupola with its inward curve of its neck is a pleasing break from the outward rigid lines of the composition that has a soaring character.

An internal circumambulatory passage, two stories high, consisting of a series of chambers with sills but no doors, runs inside the precinct. On its walls, in C.E 1930, Nayaka period paintings

were discovered to overlay the Chola murals that included Rajaraja I with three of his queens worshipping Nataraja (dancing Shiva), the patron deity of Cholas. The temple is entered by side doorways approached by large ornamental stairs leading to an antechamber (ardhmandapa), with a platform for bathing the deities. To it is attached a huge mandapa of 36 pillars (mahamandapa), entered by a front mandapa with a central entrance (mukhamandapa). In all there are 18 door guardians flanking the various entrances and sills.

In the decorative treatment, the lower vertical base is of two stories divided by a massive overhanging cornice, reminiscent of the Pallava rock-cut. Except for this powerful horizontal member in the structure, the emphasis is on verticality, the two ranges of vertical pilasters above and below adding to the verticality. Combined with these pilasters are deep niches with motifs of 'tree of knowledge' and other decorative devices. Occupying the middle of each compartment, are ingeniously carved figures. The kumbhapanjara decorative device is introduced here. The surfaces of the tapering part of the vimana are patterned by the horizontal lines of the diminishing tiers intersecting the vertical disposition of the ornamental shrines, thus producing a very rich architectural texture. Finally, there is the contrast of the cupola at the summit, its winged niches on all four sides relieving the severity of the outline, just where it is most required.

Every section and every decoration at the Brihadisvara is designed for maximum effect. It is the finest example of Dravidian architecture with all its elements reaching their zenith.

***Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikonda-cholapuram:*** The great temple at Gangaikonda-cholapuram, built in C.E. 1025 by Rajendra Chola is a replica of the Tanjore temple, but possessing a rich and voluptuous beauty of its own. This great temple has suffered much from modern predatory engineering. The temple itself forms a rectangle 114 metre long and 34 metre wide, composed of a mandapa measuring 58 metre by 32 metre, and the massive Vimana, 34 metre square, with a connecting vestibule. The pyramidal Vimana rises to a height of 54 metre, and has only eight tiers as against thirteen in Tanjore. 'This is perhaps the more beautiful edifice in its palatial architectural formation, and in its sculptural design, but it has not the magnitude of conceptualization found in his father's (Rajaraja) Temple'. Comparing the two architectural productions, Percy Brown observes: "Stately and formal as an epic may epitomize the Tanjore Vimana while the later example has all the sensuous passion of an eastern lyric, but it seems to government even deeper than that. Each is the final and absolute vision of its creator made manifest through the medium of structural form, the one symbolizing conscious might, the other subconscious grace, both dictated by that 'divinity which has seized the soul'".

During the period of the later Cholas, Dravida style loses much of its force and tends to become more and more ornate and florid. This is reflected in two temples, the Airavatesvara at Darasuram and Tribhuanesvara at Tribhuvanam, both in the Tanjore district. During this phase, emphasis is laid on the temple precincts than to the main temple and the gopuram comes to occupy a more prominent position in the temple scheme until with its soaring height it dwarfs the Vimana standing in the midst of the enclosure.

#### **2.2.8.2. Chola Sculpture**

The Chola period is also remarkable for its sculptures, many of which are masterpieces. The three main classes of Chola sculpture are portraits, icons and decorative sculpture. There is a singular paucity of portraits in Chola sculpture. There are three well-preserved and nearly life-size portraits—two women and a man on the walls of the Kuranganatha temple at Srinivasanallur and several others in the Nagesvara temple at Kumbhakonam. The Shiva temple at Tiruvalisvaram (Tinnevely district) is a veritable museum of superb early Chola iconography. The walls of the Brihadisvara temples of Tanjore and Gangaikonda-cholapuram contain numerous icons of large size and forceful execution.

Though the Cholas art is identified with the magnificent bronzes. These bronzes are cast in the lost wax process. The image is first made in wax; it is then given several coats of fine clay and then dried in the shade. Then two holes are made on the top and the bottom, and next the whole is heated so that the wax melt away leaving a hollow mould into which molten metal is poured. The clay mould is broken off after the metals solidified. Final dressing is done by hand with a chisel and abrasive material. The rule of the Cholas between the saw the high watermark of bronze sculpture.

The Pallava bronze tradition, marks the transitional toward the Chola type of bronzes in the latter half of the ninth century. In terms of the bronzes itself the early bold forms gradually change to slender rounded ones that are delicate and more refined with the contours of the figures being softer. The *Kalayansundramurti* (depicting the wedding of Shiva and Parvati) from Vadakalattur being a fine example of Chola bronze art. During the Chola period a large number of temples of stone were transformed into grand and complex buildings as can be seen from the temples at Thanjavur, Gangaikondacholapuram and the large stately Gopurams of Chidambaram. The Chola period saw elaborate festivals with music dance and processions. The bronze images are intended as manifestations of the main deity enshrined in the garbha-griha when taken out in procession were worshipped with adoration. Chola bronzes can be divided into four distinct phases: 1st Phase (Phase upto the first half of the 10th Century C.E) named after Aditya Chola, 2nd Phase (last quarter of 10th century C.E) named after Sembiyan Mahadevi, 3rd Phase (11<sup>th</sup> century C.E) named after Rajaraja 14th Phase (12<sup>th</sup> century) called Later Chola.

It was during the 10th and 11th centuries C.E that the epitome of artistic excellence was reached by the bronzes where great emphasis placed on graceful depiction, bhavas, flowing lines and supple contours. It may be noted that dance forms and poses, karnas, influenced the form of the images. The Agamic and Vastu literature were also sources of inspiration for the creation of these images. Some of the more popular icons created by the sculptors are Kalayanasundarmurti of Shiva and Parvati who are also seen in the Somaskanda depiction. Shiva as Ardhanarishvara, Nataraja and Vrishabhavanamurti as well in Sukahasana were popular subjects. Some portrait sculpture of saints such as Manikavachakar and the royal patrons such Rajendra Chola and Sembiyan Mahadevi also exist. Besides Hindu icons, Buddhist and Jaina images were also cast in bronze during the period.

### **2.2.8.3. Chola Painting**

In the Chola temples there are many fresco paintings seen at Vijayala Cholesvara temple at Narttamalai, Brihadesvara temple at Tanjavur, Sangita-Mandapa at Tiruparuttikunram in Kanchipuram and Vcayapa Matha at Angundi (about the same date). The Chola frescoes were first discovered in C.E. 1931 within the circumambulatory passage of Brihadeshvara temple. In Chola frescoes, large paintings were painted in natural organic pigments. The Chola frescoes have ardent spirit of Saivism expressed in them. In all paintings, Chola physiognomical and stylistic forms are apparent. The Classical values of full roundedness of volume, subtle plasticity are also retained. But at the same time, there is also strongly perceptible lessening of the consistency of colour modelling and hence a flattening of surface is there, despite ample curves and colour.

### **2.2.9. Conclusion on the Cholas**

The Cholas were the most successful dynasty in south Indian polity. They were also the first South Indian dynasty to reverse the trend of conquest set by the Mauryas and the Guptas, intervening in the events of North India and successfully reaching the banks of the River Ganga. The numerous inscriptions that the Cholas have left behind for posterity provide comprehensive and accurate information regarding the dynamics of dynastic expansion and the principles of law and order that the Cholas imposed on their Empire. They also created a distinguished tradition in the development of literature, architecture, sculpture and painting-a hallmark of all great dynasties. Only when peace

and tranquility brings prosperity can the populace at large turn to the more aesthetic pursuits that in a broad manner can be termed cultural development. A major period of the Chola rule provided these preconditions to the people of the State.

The Cholas were responsible for elevating the temples into central institutions of governance. Temples were made into the distribution centres for the wealth that the king gave to the people and created a metropolitan community around it that in turn performed an integrating function for the kingdom. Another way by which the king kept a track of local attitudes was the system of land grants to Brahmans called 'Brahmadeya', spread across the country in every village and kept directly under royal protection. The later Cholas were less capable kings with uncertain and vague aspirations and of limited vision. Their weaknesses led to the Empire falling into pieces.

## **Conclusion**

The 7th-12th century Rajput polity presents a picture of disunited India after the death of Harsha. The first Rajput clan of Gurjara-Pratiharas, who were earlier the feudatory chiefs of Harsha in Ujjain, emerged as an independent political and military power to rule over Kannauj and the neighbouring regions of Northern India. The political and military strength was, thus, to be regarded as a major pointer at this stage in the emergence of the Rajputs. At the second stage the emergence of the feudatories of Gurjara-Pratiharas in different areas of central and western India as independent clan holders was also a ramification of the same trend of the possession of supreme military strength, which led to the independence or dominance of politically and militarily superior clans over the less powerful ones. The allotment or distribution of land among royal kinsmen and to different grades of the feudatories and officials was necessarily a step in the creation of the different grades of feudatories, many of whom later on emerged as clans or sub-clans. The consolidation of the Rajput clans in different parts of central and western provinces of India has also been reflected by the presence of innumerable impregnable forts, which obviously represented the military strength of the clans. The social relations maintained by the marriage alliances among the members of the different clans provided a legitimate position. The emergence of the Rajputs has, thus, to be understood in reality not in terms of the mythological traditions of the Agnikula and solar and lunar dynastic origins. It should be regarded as a process in terms of the political, social and economic developments in the history of early medieval northern India.

## **Chapter-III : LEGITIMIZATION OF KINGSHIP: BRAHMANAS AND TEMPLES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The origin and growth of legitimacy refers to 'a situation in which the rulers and the ruled shared the conviction that rule of the government is right. Legitimacy means the justified existence of concentrated political power wielded by a portion of a community. A new state generally justified its new institutions; hierarchy and power, by introducing new cultural ideas and maintaining traditional 'belief system'. Historians have identified a few steps in the process of legitimation of power of the kingdom emerging from tribal phase. First step was the construction of a fabricated genealogical link of the ruling (tribe) family. Redistribution of concentrated surplus through the construction of public works and building of religious institution was another step. Third step was 'adoption of Indo-Aryan (non-tribal) culture' including language and literature. This adoption and cultivation of new culture went alongside the maintenance of the primordality, resulting in synthesis of adopted and 'primordial culture'. 'Synthesis of culture' that resulted from kingdom formation process eventually resulted into the evolution of 'new cultural phenomena' in northeast India.

### **CONCEPT OF LEGITIMIZATION OF KINGSHIPS**

Construction of a fabricated divine kingship was an essential pre-requisite of early medieval Indian kingdoms and empires. Prior to the formation of the kingdoms, traditional structure of tribal society were based on clan villages maintained through lineage and kinship. With the territorial extension and growth of complexity, the chief and his allies came forward to assume the responsibility of management of the emerging kingdom. Thus the tribal chief was declared as 'King' by the Brahmins who performed the rituals of coronation. The position of the king with regard to both the control of his central area and his relations with his samantas called for a specific emphasis on the legitimacy of kingship to enhance his personal power. This was done by means of highlighting his divine mission and his ritual sovereignty. The Brahmins were instrumental in providing the necessary ideology for this purpose. Many documents recording land grants to Brahmins show this very clearly. In the Gupta empire such land grants had often been made in distant, uncultivated areas where the Brahmins were obviously meant to act as missionaries of Hindu culture.

But from the tenth century onwards land grants followed a rather different pattern. Kings adopted the practice of granting land, or rather the revenue of whole villages, to Brahmins sometimes even in the territories of their samantas. Such a grant was really at the expense of the samanta rather than the king who gained a loyal follower, because the Brahmin would look upon his loyal patron as his true benefactor. The samantas could not object to such grants as they were sanctified by tradition. There was another important change in the policy of granting land to Brahmins. Whereas previously single families or, at the most, small groups had received such grants, the records of the tenth and eleventh centuries suddenly mention large numbers of

Brahmin of the Gahadavala dynasty, for instance, granted one and a half revenue districts with more than a hundred villages to 500 Brahmins in 1093 and 1100 CE.

The area concerned was in the immediate vicinity of Varanasi (Benares) which was the second capital of the Gahadavalas. The king was obviously keen to strengthen his hold on this newly conquered region and did not mind the substantial loss of revenue which he incurred in this way. The following methods are adopted for the legitimation of kingship:

#### **a) Role of the Brahmins**

It was a common phenomenon in tribal polities of northeast Indian that the Brahmins projected and popularized the ruling tribe as ruling caste or as Kshatriya to legitimize their rule. The king also brought Brahmins from different places of India and settled them in the kingdom with land and honour and adopted culture of the Hinduism to legitimize his kingship. The Brahmins conferred him a kingship of an extraordinary origin. There was a super-structured construction of divine link of the founder king of the kingdom and it was a by-product of state patronage to the Brahmins. Thorough propagation of the religious myths, the authority of kings received natural acceptance from the ruled or the common people by the end of the sixteenth century.

#### **b) Coronation of the Kings**

Coronation of the king in Hindu style was a means of legitimation of kingship. At the time of coronation, the king and his successors were compared with the popular deities like Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Indra, Aditi, Vayu, Varuna, Kuvera and Ganesh. The Brahmins had also upgraded the status of the kings and mentioned them in some inscriptions at par with the epic heroes of ancient India like – Arjuna, Dadhichi, Karna and Kandarpa. Composition of inscribed verses of extra-ordinary origin in Sanskrit and performance of coronation ceremony of the kings by the Brahmins helped in reimagining of tribal control. On the contrary, the king established his control over the tribe. Adoption of Hindu titles also had elevated the social status of the chiefs to that of Kshatriya king, i.e. legitimate ruler.

#### **c) Distribution of Concentrated Surplus**

Another step in legitimation process of pre-colonial kingdoms of eastern and north eastern India was the distribution of concentrated surplus through the universal construction of beneficial construction projects and diffusion of new cultural ideologies. They adopted a policy of constructing roads and public tanks for the benefit of the people. The Public road of the region constructed by the rulers, i.e. facilitated the easy movement of the commercial transport which contributed to the growth of trade and commerce. The kings concentrated on construction for tanks for public utility. Construction of these roads and tanks are considered to be a sort of distribution of the surplus accumulated by the kings to popularize their rule among the people.

#### **d) Samantisation of the Regional Kingdoms**

The construction of these temples coincide with the increasing samantisation of the regional kingdoms of India. The temples were obviously supposed to be a counterweight to the divisive forces prevailing in those kingdoms. In order to fulfil this function they were endowed with great grants of land often located near the capital but also sometimes in distant provinces and even in the territories of the samantas. For the performance of the royal ritual hundreds of Brahmins and temple servants were attached to these temples. The very detailed inscriptions of donors at the great temple of Tanjavur tell us exactly from which villages the 137 guards of the temple came. The inscriptions contain instructions to the respective villages to supply the guards coming from those villages with rice. Samantarajas and royal officers were obliged to perform special services in the temple. The personal priest of the king, the Rajguru, was also the head priest of the royal temple and the manager of its enormous property.

#### **e) Upholding the Democratic Values**

The kings also paid attention to the diffusion of Indo-Aryan (non-tribal) culture, which they adopted voluntarily. They found the neo - vaishnavism and Brahmanical Hinduism as the dominant religious form having deep and great impact and influence on the ordinary people of the region. The democratic values and simplicity advocated by religious leaders of that time had united the different communities of the kingdom in the name of a particular sect of religion. The discourse of the saints and their disciples also touched the hearts of the heterogeneous communities through their religious teachings and transformed the neo - Vaishnavism into a popular cult of the region. In return the brahmanas, priests and servants of the temples were provided the grant of lands with the attachment of the temples. Lucrative grants had allured the Brahmins to settle in the region.

#### **f) Adoption of Indo-Aryan Languages**

Adoption and diffusion of new ideology for political legitimacy of the different kingdoms. They adopted Indo-Aryan languages like Sanskrit and Bengali in their courts. Hinduism a general and Vaishnavism as patronized by the state in particular was significantly linked with the language and literatures. Most of the kings were well-versed in Sanskrit, including Vedas, Sanskrit grammar, Puranas and smrities. The knowledge of Sanskrit language and literature was considered a prerequisite for entering into the services of the royal courts in the mid-sixteenth century CE.

#### **g) Realignment of Society**

The kings of early medieval India followed the principle of internal or 'vertical' process of legitimation. In the Hindu tribal frontier area: legitimacy of political power had a twofold aspect- internal (or vertical) and external (or horizontal). The impact of the new kingship, which led to social change and class-oriented stratification in a previously egalitarian society, the

appropriation of the surplus by the king and his retinue and king's divine affiliation, ascribed to him by foreign Brahmanical norms rather than by tribal consensus, required special means of legitimation to win and maintain the loyalty and compliance of social groups within the territory. Remote Hindu court depended upon the loyalty of surrounding tribes for their survival. At the Hindu tribal frontier, which often crisscrossed the territory of the great Hindu kingdoms, political power was based largely on the establishment of an internal of vertical legitimation vis-à-vis the tribes.

#### **h) Role of Tribal Deities**

Tribal deities had always played an important role in the process of legitimation of kingships. Patronage to a specific tribal deity for the purpose of royal legitimation was a common phenomenon in northern India throughout the medieval period. Whether the Hinduized Chiefs of Hindu king had ascended from the local tribes or whether they had entered the respective areas as roaming freebooters, most of them accepted the dominant deities for their territories as family and tutelary deities of their principalities. Ritual space and legitimation of the new power was linked to the extension of political power. The kings or the rajas accepted them as the new *istadevatas*. They donated land for the maintenance of their priests and rituals and in all cases they either built, or considerably enlarged, temples for the new tutelary deities. In contrast to the tribal god, the non-tribal was no less than their counterpart, the tribal.

#### **i) Construction of Royal Hindu Temples**

In order to keep the loyalty of the non-tribal populace the kings constructed many Hindu temples in their territories. It only served, "as symbol of a new Hindu kingship, was still the main source of external or horizontal legitimation rather than of any great significance for the political status of the rajas within the society". They build many mostly Hindu temples, in different parts of their kingdom and made extensive donation of villages and land grants for regular and elaborate performance of these temples. The rise of the great royal temples symbolized the power and religious identity of the respective realm. From the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries such large temples were built in various regional kingdoms of India. They were often three to four times bigger than earlier temples. Some important examples are the Kandariya Mahadeva temple at Khajuraho (around 1002), the Rajarajeshvara Temple at Thanjavur (Tanjore) (around 1012) and the Udayeshvara Temple at Udaipur, the capital of the North Indian kingdom of the Paramaras (c. 105-80).

Orissa can boast of the particularly impressive sequence of such temples: the Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar (around 1060), the Jagannath temple of Puri (c.1135) and the great Sun temple (c. 1250). So far these temples have mainly attracted the attention of the historians of art and architecture and they have not been placed into the context of political history.

#### **j) King and Royal Ritual**



The economic and political functions of the temple were realized in the role of the king in the royal ritual. The Linga, the phallic symbol of Shiva, in the sanctum of the temple was often named after the king who had donated it, e.g. the Udayeshvara Linga or the Rajarajeshvara-Linga in the temples established by Udayaditya and Rajaraja in their respective capitals. Paintings in the temple and sculptures outside it showed the king depicted like a god and the gods in turn were decorated with royal attributes. In order to gain additional legitimation some kings even solemnly transferred their realm to the royal god and ruled it as the god's representative or son (Putra). In this way they could use the royal temple and its staff as instruments of government and could threaten disobedient samantas with the wrath of the royal god if they did not obey the king's order. The settlement of Brahmins and the establishment of royal temples served the purpose of creating a new network of ritual, political and economic relations. This network was centred on the king and was thus an antidote to the centrifugal tendencies of the Samantachakra.

### **k) Matrimonial Alliances**

In order to consolidate their supremacy over a vast geographical area the kings followed the policy of matrimonial alliances with different feudatories marriage was an institution explicitly used to build political alliance and open avenues of economic exchange between 'house' families as politico-economic units. For the ruling elite of medieval Indian courts, of putative Kshatriya lineage, selections and marriage was the most important method of sealing political alliance between kings. Wars between rival kings were often concluded with the defeated house offering women in marriage to the visitors.

### **ROLE OF BRAHMANAS**

The Indian social organization during five hundred years under discussion (8<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> centuries) was extremely vibrant and responsive to changes taking place in the realms of economy, polity and ideas. There is an extremely wide ranging source material, both literary and epigraphic, for the reconstruction of social organization during half a millennium (circa eight to the thirteenth centuries). Practically all major powers of India are known to us through copious inscriptional data. These inscriptions are available in a variety of languages and scripts. These records help us in identifying regional and local peculiarities of the sub-continental scene. The literary sources are also very varied. It is not merely the writings on dhannashastras in the form of commentaries and other 'dharma-nibandhas' which tell us about the ups and downs in the social system. Even work belonging to the realms of kavyas (poetic works), dharma, technical and scientific works as well as treatises and architecture throw enormous light on the post-Gupta developments in the sphere of society.

Kahana's Rajatarangini, Naistwdhiyacbarita of Shriharsha, Prabandha Chintamani of Merutunga, Sodhdhala's Udaya-Sundari-Katha, Adipurana of Jinasena, the dohas of the Siddhas, Medhatithi's and Vigymeshwar's commentaries on the Manusmriti and Yajnavalkyasmriti

respectively, and works such as Manasollasa, Mayamata and Aparajitapriccha are useful aids for reconstructing the social fabric of India during the period under discussion.

### **a) Growing Rigidity for Brahmins**

During the 6th centuries Buddhism and Jainism raised doubts about the rationale of castes based on birth. His anger was particularly related to the brahmanas. Though these voices could not achieve significant breakthrough in the long run, they did not cease either. Simmering discontent against the brahmanical social order raised its head at regular intervals. In Dhanuapariksha (eleventh century) Jaina Amitagati determined caste on the basis of personal conduct. The caste superiority of the brahmanas was challenged by the Jainas in such works as the Khthakushprakarana. A satirical work called Latakamelaka mentions a Buddhist monk who denies importance of caste, regards it as baseless and denounces pollution and caste - based segregation. Kshemendra, the literary genius of Kashmir refers to Kula-Jati-darpa (vanity of caste and clan) as a disease of the society for which he himself was a physician. The padmapurana reveals a conflict of two ideologies- the orthodox one enjoining the shudras, a life of penury and the heterodox one urging upon his the importance of wealth. An eleventh century work focuses on social ranks and divisions based not on birth but on occupations. While the priests of different religions are called hypocrites, the second broad social classification of householders takes note of the following six-categories : (i) the highest included chakravartins, (ii) the high ones comprised the feudal elite, (iii) the middle ones included traders, moneylenders, possessors of cows, buffaloes, camels, horses etc. (iv) small businessmen and pretty cultivators, (v) the degraded ones such as the members of the guilds off artisans and craftsmen and (vi) the highly degraded included chandalas and others following ignoble occupations such as killing of birds and animals.

### **b) Changing Social Order**

The above conflicting trend shows that the social organization was in a flux and far from being harmonious. One single factor which seems to have set the tone of the post-Gupta society, especially from the eighth-century, was the every growing phenomenon of land grants which changed the entire social outlook. This was coupled with : i) a fillip to tendencies of localization, ii) its bearing on fluctuations in the urban setting, iii) its nexus with the monetary system, iv) its role in increasing social and economic immobility and subjection of peasantry, v) non-agricultural toiling workers, and the resultant hierarchy of ruling landed aristocracy. A new social ethos was in the making and that was the feudal formation. In the realm of political organization, a great majority of power centres were marked by feudal tendencies based on graded land rights. The resultant social changes demolish the myth of an unchanging and static social organization of India which was propagated by colonialist and imperialist historians.

The post-eighth century social organization which seems to have prevailed till at least the establishment of the Turkish political power in the thirteenth century, was marked by : (i) newly

founded brahmanical order in Bengal and South India where in the intermediary varnas were absent, (ii) modifications in the varna system such as the transformation of shudras into cultivators thereby, bringing them closer to the vaishyas, (iii) rise of the new literate class struggling for a place in the varna order, and (iv) reduced position of the brahmins.

### **c) Establishments of Brahmin Colonies**

Eventually, by the beginning of the seventh century, the Pallavas of Kanchi, the Chalukyas of Badami, and the Pandyas of Madurai emerged as the rulers of the three major states. The Chalukyas were succeeded by the Rashtrakutas in the western Deccan and the Pallavas were succeeded by the Chola in the Kaveri plain. Besides in the Andhra region the eastern Gangas and several minor ruling dynasties come into existence. All the above dynasties patronized Brahmanas by extending land grants to them and the Brahmins help them to strengthen their rule in frontier region of their kingdoms. This resulted in spread of Brahmana culture. The earlier period is marked by numbers crafts, internal and external trade, widespread use of coins, and a large number of towns. Trade, towns, and coinage seem to have been in a state of decline in the subsequent period, but in that phase numerous land grants free of taxes were made to the temples and brahmanas. The grants suggest that many new areas were brought under cultivation and settlement. This period therefore saw a far greater expansion of agrarian economy as well as spread of Brahminical religion to remote areas.

### **d) Royal patronization of Brahminism**

There was the march of triumphant Brahmanism in the peninsula as it records many instances of the performance of Vedic sacrifices by the kings. This phase also marked the beginning of the construction of stone temples for Shiva and Vishnu in Tamil Nadu under the Pallavas, and the Karnataka under the Chalukyas of Badami. Culturally, the Dravidian element seems to have dominated the scene in the first phase, but during the second phase Aryanization and Brahmanisation came to the fore. This happened because of land grants made by the rulers who were either brahmanas or firm supporters of them. As managers of temple lands, the brahmanas guided cultural and religious activities. They spread Sanskrit, which became the official language.

In northern Maharashtra and Vidarbha (Berar), the Satavahanas were succeeded by the Vakatakas, a local power. The Vakatakas, who were brahmanas themselves, are known from a large number of copperplate land grants issued by them. They were great champions of the brahmanical religion and performed numerous Vedic sacrifices.

The Pallavas, the Kadambas, the Chalukyas of Badami, and their other contemporaries were great champions of Vedic sacrifices. They performed 'ashvamedha' and 'vajapeya' sacrifices which legitimized their position, enhanced their prestige, and enormously increased the income of the priestly class. The brahmanas therefore, emerged as an important class at the expense of the peasantry, from whom they collected their dues directly. They also received as

gifts a substantial proportion of the taxes collected by the king from his subjects. Later the Rashtrakuta and the imperial Chola accelerated the process of Brahmanisation of southern India. Besides the performance of Vedic sacrifices, the worship of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, especially of the last two, was becoming popular. From the seventh century onwards, the Alvar saints, who were great devotees of Vishnu popularized the worship of this god. The Nayanars rendered a similar service to the cult of Shiva. From the seventh century onwards, the cult of Bhakti began to dominate the religious life of South Indians, and the Alvars and Nayanars played a great part in propagating it.

### **e) Emergence of Shudras**

The expansion of the rural space and agricultural activities had been responsible for changes in notion about persons entitled to undertake these. The law books of the post Gupta centuries include agriculture in the samanya-dharm (common occupation) of all the varnas. The smriti of Parashar further emphasizes that in addition to their traditional six-fold duties (studying, teaching, sacrificing, officiating as sacrifice to help others acceptance of gifts from a worthy person of three higher varna and making of gifts), the brahmanas could also be associated with agricultural activities, preferably through labour of shudras. It was also enjoined upon brahmanas that in order to avoid any kind of sin, they should proper treatment to oxen and offer certain fixed quantities of corn to king, gods and fellow brahmanas. Such formalities indicate that very significant development was being made in the brahmanical social order and the varna norms were being sought to be redefined. A major indicator of this effort was the bridging of the gap between the vaishyas and the shudras. While this trend makes it beginnings, in the early centuries of the Christian era, it is significant that in the post-gupta centuries the vaishyas practically lose their identity as a peasant caste. The famous Chinese traveler of the early seventh century, Hsuan-Tsang, mentions shudras as agriculturists, Al-biruni, who came to India along with Mahmud Ghaznavi in the first quarter of the eleventh century, also notes the absence of any difference between the vaishyas and shudras. The Skanda Purana talks about the pitiable conditions of the vaishyas. By the eleventh century they came to be treated with the shudras, both ritually and legally.

Al-beruni, for examples, says that both vaishyas and shudras were punished with amputation of the tongue for reciting the vedic texts. There were certain shudras who were called bhojyanna, i.e food prepared by whom could be taken even by brahmanas. Many tantric and siddha teachers were shudras performing works of fishermen, leather workers, washermen, blacksmiths, etc. A text of the eighth century states that thousands, of mixed castes were produced as a result of marriages between vaishya women and men of lower castes. There is also a mention of 'anashrita shudras' (shudras who were not dependent) who were well-to-do and sometimes became members of the local administrative committees and even made their way into the ruling aristocracy.

### **f) Absence of Intermediary Varnas**

The emergence of a social order typified by an absence of intermediary varnas in Bengal and South India. The new brahmanical order in these areas provided mainly for brahmanas and shudras. This may have been partly due to the influence of non brahmanical religions in these regions. However, the nature of the progress of Brahmanism also contributed to this development. Tribal and non-brahmanical population in the peripheral regions were admitted to the brahmanical system as shudras. In south India, a Shaiva brahmana teacher called basava preached religious equality of men and women. The tendency to eliminate intermediary varnas also noticeable in the status of scribes. The kayasthas, karanas, lekhakas and lipikaras are classed as shudras. Same was true of gavundas (modern day Gowdas in Karnataka) in medieval Deccan.

### **g) Rise of a New Literate Class**

A class of writers and record keepers was mentioned in pre-Gupta inscriptions from Bengal, who were involved in record keeping activities. A part from kayasthas, these classes included karnas, karanikas, pustapala, lekhaka, aksharachanchu, dharmalekhin, aksyapatalika, etc. Though these classes were being recruited from different varanas, later they got crystallized into distinct castes. From the ninth century we hear of a large number of kayastha families such as valabha, ganda, mathur, katana, shrivastavya, Negam etc. individual kayasthas began to play leading role in learning and literature. Tathagatarakshita of Odisha who belonged to a family of physicians by profession and kayastha by caste, was a reputed professor of tantras in the Vikramashila University (in Bihar) in the twelfth century.

### **h) Reduced positions of Brahmanas**

There was phenomenal increase of the new mixed castes because no varna seemed to have remained homogeneous and got fragmented on account of territorial affiliations, purity of gotras and pursuance of specific crafts, professions and vocations. The multiplication of castes as a phenomenon appears to be most pronounced among brahmanas. As already mentioned, they were no longer confined to their traditional six-fold duties. Apart from occupying high governmental positions such as those of ministers, purohitas, judges, etc. They had also started performing military functions. For example, the senapati of Prithviraj Chauhan was a brahmana named Skanda and another brahmanas named Rak was leading the army of a ruler of Sapadalaksha (in Rajasthan) The eleventh century Kashmiri writer Kshemendra mentions brahmanas performing functions of artisans, dancers; horse dealers and betel sellers and indulging in the sale of wine, butter milk, salt, etc. Mitakshara, the famous commentary on the Smriti of Yangyavalkya speaks of the ten-fold gradation of brahmanas ranging between Deva (who is a professor and devoted to religion and shastras) and chandal, who does not perform sandhya three times a day. In between were the shudras- brahmanas who lived by profession of arms and temple priests.

Division within the brahmana varna were also caused by territorial affiliations. In north india we heard sarasvat, kanyakubja, Maithi, Ganda and Utkal Brahmanas. The Gujarat and

Rajasthan they were identified in terms of their 'mula' (original place of habitation) and divided into modha, udichya, Nagra, etc. By the late medieval times, the brahmanas were split into about 180 mulas. There were also the feelings of superiority. While there was a phenomenal migration of brahmanas, certain regions were considered to be papadeshas' (inauspicious regions). These included Saurashtra, Sidh and Dakshmapath.

## **GROWTH AND IMPORTANCE OF TEMPLES**

The centuries between the seventh and the thirteenth gloriously stands for the making of cultural traditions in India. The most notable feature of the traditions is regionalism. Which gets reflected in every sphere like: the formation of political power or the development of arts or the transformations in languages and literature or even religious manifestations. The emergence of regional cultural units such as Andhra, Assam, Bengal, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, etc. was the outcome of significant material changes.

The 'Mudrakshasa', a play written in Sanskrit by Vishakhadatta, speaks of different regions whose inhabitants differ in customs, clothing and language. The identity of some kind of sub-national groups is recognized by the Chinese Pilgrim Huien Tsang who visited India in the first half of the seventh century. The 'Kupalayamala', a Jain text of the eighth century and largely concerned with Western India, notes the existence of 18 major nationalities and describes the anthropological character of sixteen peoples, pointing out their psychological feature and citing the examples of their language. The 'Brabmavaivarta Purana', ascribed to the thirteenth century Bengal explicates 'deshabheda'- differences based on regions / territories. Indian temples have symbolized the very ethos of life-style of people through the millennia.

The panorama of Indian temple architecture may be seen across at extremely wide chronological and geographical horizon. From the simple beginnings at Sanchi in the fifth century of the Christian era to the great edifices at Kanchi, Jhanjavur and Madurai is a story of more than a millennium. The prominent 'Shipashastras' that deal with the subject of temple architecture are: Mayamata, Manasam, Shilparatna, Kamikagama, kashyapasbipa and Ishanagurudevapaddhati.

### **a) Growth of Temple Cites**

The Pallava kings constructed a number of stone temples in the seventh and eighth centuries for housing these gods. The most famous of them are the seven ratha temples at Mahabalipuram, at a distance of 65 km from Chennai. These were built in the seventh century by Narasimkhavarman, who founded the port city of Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram. This city is also famous for the Shore temple, which was a structural construction erected independently and not hewn out of rock. In addition, the Pallavas constructed several such structural samples at their capital Kanchi. A very good example was the Kailashnath temple built in the eighth century. The Chalukyas of Badami erected numerous temples at Aihole, which has as many as seventy, from about 610 CE. The work was continued in the adjacent towns of badami and

Pattadakal. Pattadakal has ten temples built in the seventh and eighth centuries, the most celebrated of which are the Papanatha temple (c. 680 CE) and the Virupaksha temple (c. 740 CE). The first of these, although 30m long, has a low and stunted tower in the northern style; the second was constructed in purely southern style. The latter is about 40m in length and as a very high square and storeyed tower (Shikhara). The temple walls are adorned with beautiful pieces of sculpture, representing scenes from the Ramayana. During the Chola rule Dravidian temple reached its zenith. After the eighth century, land grants to temples became a common practice in South India, and usually they were recorded on the walls of the temples.

Most temples were managed by the brahmanas, by early medieval times, such temples came to own three-fifths of the arable land, and became centres of religious rituals and caste-based ideology in south india. However the earlier temples seem to have been constructed and maintained out of the taxes directly collected by the king from the common people. Some temples in Karnataka under the Chalukyas were erected by Jaina traders. The common people worshipped their village gods by offering them paddy and toddy, but those who could afford it might have made rich offerings to acquire status and satisfy the religious cravings.

### **b) Major Styles of Indian Temples**

The ancient texts on Indian temple architecture broadly classify them into three orders. The terms Nagara, Dravida and Vesard indicate a tendency to highlight typological features of temples and their geographical distribution. These terms describe respectively temples that primarily employ square, octagonal and apsidal ground plan which also regulate the vertical profile of the structure. Nagara and Dravida temples are generally identified with the northern and southern temple styles respectively. All of northern India, from the foothills of the Himalayas to the central Plateau of the Deccan is furnished with temples in the northern style.

There are, of course, certain regional variations in the great expanse of this area. A work entitled 'Aparajitapriccha' confines the Nagari (Nagara) style to the Madhyadesha (roughly the Ganga-Yamuna plains) and further mentions Lati and Vairati (Gujarat and Rajasthan respectively) as separate styles. The local manuscripts of Orissa recognize for main types of Orisa style temples, viz., the Rehka, Bhadra, Kharkhara and Gaudiya. The Dravida or Southern style, comparatively speaking, followed a more consistent development track and was confined to the most southernly, portions of the sub-continent, specially between the Vindhya and the river Krishna. At certain periods there occurred striking overlapping of major styles as influences from different regions confronted each other, e.g. the temples of the early Chalukyas whose kingdom was strategically positioned in the middle of the peninsula in the seventh and eighth centuries. The Kandariya Mahadeva temple in Khajuraho is another striking example where the various architectural elements combined into an integrated whole. Similarly, the Kerala temples display variety in their plan types.

### **c) Presiding Deities**

Temples were dedicated not only to the two great gods of the Brahmanical religion. Such as; Shiva and Vishnu but to the Great Mother Goddess as well. The 'devas' and 'asuras' and countless folk deities such as 'yakshas', 'yakshis', 'apsaras' and 'kinnaras' represent a world of their own. Even the animal or bird 'vehicles' (vahanas) of these divinities become eloquent carriers of meaningful symbolism. Thus, 'Nandi', the agricultural bull of Shiva and 'Tiger', the mount of Durga embodies her fierce strength and aggressiveness. The river goddesses, Ganga and Yamuna are identified by their vahanas, like crocodile and tortoise respectively. Lakshmi's association with elephants, lotus flowers and water not only symbolise her popularity as the goddess of fortune but more importantly as a divinity conveying the magical power of agricultural fertility. Swan carrying saraswati typified not only her grace and elegance but the tremendous intellectual discerning capacity which is an internal element of this goddess of learning. Thus, the 'Shantamurtis' (peaceful, calm and serene deities) are to be installed in Nagara; couples of moving deities in vesara shrines; and heroic dancing or enjoying deities in the Dravida structures.

### **Conclusion**

Political processes and the idea of kingship have always been central to the understanding of the culture and history of early medieval India. Several scholars viz, Prof. Hermann Kulke Prof. Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, Dr Yaaminey Mubayi, and Meenakshi Vashisth have contributed significantly to this field of study through their works on state formation. Historians are unanimous on the fact that this phase in Indian history had a distinct identity and as such differed from the preceding early historical and succeeding medieval. This in turn brings home the presence of the elements of change and continuity in Indian history. It is identified as a phase in the transition to the medieval. Perception of a unilinear and uniform pattern of historical

development is challenged. Changes are identified not merely in dynastic upheavals but are also located in socio-economic, political and cultural conditions.



## Chapter-IV

### ARAB CONQUEST OF SINDH: CAUSES AND

#### 4.1.1. Introduction

Rise of Islam is an important incident in the history of Islam. Prophet Muhammad was not only the founder of a new religion, but he was also the head of a city-state. Muhammad left no male heir. On his death claims were made on behalf of his son-in-law and cousin Ali, but senior members of the community elected as their leader or caliph, the Prophet's companion, Abu Bakr, who was one of the earliest converts to Islam. Abu Bakr died after only two years in office, and was succeeded by Umar (r. 634-644), under whose leadership the Islamic community was transformed into a vast empire. Umar was succeeded by Usman (r. 644-656), who was followed by Ali (r. 656-661), the last of the four "Righteous Caliphs."

Owing to his relationship with the Prophet as well as to personal bravery, nobility of character, and intellectual and literary gifts, Caliph Ali occupies a special place in the history of Islam, but he was unable to control the tribal and personal quarrels of the Arabs. After his death, Muawiyah (r. 661-680), the first of the Umayyad caliphs, seized power and transferred the seat of caliphate from Medina to Damascus. Three years later the succession passed from Muawiyah's grandson to another branch of the Umayyad dynasty, which continued in power until 750. During this period the Muslim armies overran Asia Minor, conquered the north coast of Africa, occupied Spain, and were halted only in the heart of France at Tours. In the east the Muslim empire was extended to Central Asia, and, as we shall see, it was during this period that a part of the Indian subcontinent was annexed. In the course of these conquests, the Arabs became subject to older civilizations.

#### 4.1.2. The Arab Conquest of Sind

It was against this background of rapid expansion that the first contacts between Islam and India took place. Since time immemorial spices and other articles from India and southeast Asia had been in great demand in Egypt and southern Europe, with the transit trade largely in the hands of Arabs, who brought merchandise from the Indian ports to Yemen in southern Arabia. The goods were then sent by land to the Syrian ports to be shipped again to Egypt and Europe. The rise of Islam did not, therefore, give rise to the connection with India, but it added a new dimension. Trade continued after the Arabs had embraced Islam, and the first major conflict between the Indian subcontinent and Muslim Arabia arose out of developments connected with Arab sailors plying their trade about the Indian Ocean.

#### 4.1.3. Causes for Invasion of Sind by the Arabs

The Arabs had been the carriers of Indian trade to Europe for centuries. After conversion to Islam, they cast their covetous eyes on the fabulous wealth of India as well as they were eager to propagate their new religion in India. However, the opportunity to invade Sind came to the Arabians in the beginning of the eighth century.

With the passage of time, the History of India, after the occupation of Sind had entered into its medieval phase. The widespread political instability in India after the death of Harshavardhan, the last independent Hindu King had inspired the foreign elements once again to attack and enter India. The Arabs were no exception to it. After the rise of Islam, the Arabs having successfully implanting it in Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Persia had cast a covetous eye on Sind. In 712 A.D. they were successful in occupying Sind. Several factors were responsible for the Arab invasion on Sind. They are as follows:

##### 4.1.3.1. Propagation of Islam:

Propagation of Islam was one of the key factors behind the Arab invasion of Sind. After the spread of Islam in Egypt and Syria, the Caliph Walid I of Damascus had permitted the Arabs to go ahead with their Indian mission. Further the followers of Islam were dead against idolatry practice of the Hindus of India. So they thought the spoliation of the idolaters would be a means of earning.

#### **4.1.3.2.Fabulous Wealth of India:**

India was known to the world for her fabulous wealth and splendor. So like other invaders of the past, it had tempted the Arabs to grab her wealth.

#### **4.1.3.3.Political Condition of India:**

The then Political condition of India was also a major factor behind the Arab invasion of Sind. There was mutual rivalry and wars among the kings of petty provinces of India. Dahir, the ruler of Sind was unpopular and not liked by many. The Arabs took full advantage of it.

#### **4.1.3.4.The Immediate Cause:**

The immediate cause of the Arab invasion of Sind was the looting of the eight Arab ships which carried the gifts and treasures sent by the king of Ceylon to the Caliph, at the port of Debal near Sind. Some Historians have opined that the ships were also carrying some beautiful women as well as valuable articles for the khalifa. This unlawful act of piracy was strongly protested by Hajaj, the governor of Iraq. He demanded compensation from Dahir, the king of Sind. But Dahir refuted Hajaj's demands by saying that he had no control over pirates. This infuriated Hajaj who decided to send military expeditions to Sind. He also obtained permission from the Caliph in this regard. However, the first two expeditions sent by Hajaj against Sind were beaten back by Dahir. Enraged at the repeated failures, Hajaj sent his nephew and Son-in-law Imaduddin Muhammad-bin-Qasim at the head of a huge army to Sind. Muhammad-bin- Qasim was an able and young commander-in-chief.

#### **4.1.4. Invasion of Sind by Muhammad-bin-Qasim:**

Muhammad-bin-Qasim was a young man of hardly seventeen years when he was entrusted with the work of invading Sind. He was very bold, courageous and ambitious. The story of his adventures, "Writes Stanley Lane-poole," is one of the romances of history. Reflecting of his rise to power, his achievements and his fall, Ishwari Prasad writes, "His blooming youth, his dash and heroism, his noble deportment throughout the expedition and his tragic fall have invested his career with the halo of martyrdom."

However towards the end of 711 A.D. Muhammad-bin-Qasim at the head of a huge army consisting of three thousand infantry, six thousand cavalry and six thousand Iraqian camelmen appeared at the north western border near Makran.

#### **4.1.4.1.Capture of Debal:**

Muhammad-bin-Qasim led his army towards Debal, a famous seaport, where the Arab's ships were looted by some pirates. The port town Debal was well protected by strong fortifications, and it was not easy on the part of the Qasim's army to penetrate into it so easily. A nephew of Dahir was the governor of Debal. Though he had an army of very small size with him, he tried to resist Qasim. But it became futile, when a treacherous Brahmin deserted the fortress and gave Qasim all the information's regarding the secrets of its defence. He also came to know from the Brahman that the strength of the Sind army lay in the massive Hindu temple inside the fort of Debal and as long as the red flag fluttered atop the temple, he could not defeat the Hindus. The temple was also garrisoned by 4000 Rajput's and 3000 Brahmins serving at the temple. However, after a fierce battle Qasim brought down the red flag and the Arabian army resorted to a massacre. Despite a bold fight, the Hindus of Debal were defeated by the Arabs. The nephew

of Dahir who was the governor fled away. Debal was captured and a huge booty with a large number of women fell into the hands of the Arabs. The people were given the option of accepting Islam or death. Many thousands of Hindus including Brahmans were mercilessly killed on their refusal to embrace Islam. The massacre continued for three days. It was very unfortunate that Dahir who had prior information of the Arabian attack, did not care at all.

#### **4.1.4.2.Fall of Nirun:**

Flushed with success, Muhammad-bin-Qasim marched towards Nirun, which was under the charge of Dahir's Son Jai Sindh. With the approach of the Arabs, Jai Sindh fled away after handing over the fort to a priest. Qasim captured it without a fight. It is said Nirun fell because of the treachery of some Buddhist citizens. Whatever may be the fact; Dahir had taken the matter lightly and did not attempt to check the further advances of the Arabs.

#### **4.1.4.3.Fall of Sehwan:**

After capturing Debal & Nirun, Muhammad-bin- Qasim marched against Sehwan, a town which was under the charge of the cousin of Dahir named Bajhra? The town was mostly inhabited by the merchant class and the priests. Bajhra could not defend the town in the face of the Arabian attack and fled away with panic. After his flight, the people of Sehwan surrendered to Muhammad-bin-Qasim. Sehwan fell because of poor defence.

#### **4.1.4.4.Fall of Sisam and Victory over the Jats:**

Sisam also met the same fate as had happened to Sehwan. It was the capital of the Jats of Budhiya and was ruled by Kaka, a jat king. Kaka had given shelter to Bajhra after his flight from Sehwan. Muhammad-bin-Qasim defeated the Jats who in turn surrendered to the Arabs. But during the encounter, Bajhra and his followers were killed. When so much had happened, yet Dahir did not raise his little finger to check the invader. Muhammad-bin-Qasim then reached the river Mihran where he was detained for some months because most of his horses of his army died of scurvy and he had to wait for fresh re-inforcement from home. Dahir could have taken the full advantage of this opportunity to attack and destroy the Arabs. But he remained inactive. He also did not check the Arabs when they crossed the river Mihran. Probably, Dahir was confident to defeat his enemy in a Single encounter and that's why he was waiting for it at Rawar on the bank of the Indus.

#### **4.1.4.5.The Battle of Rawar:**

Dahir, the powerful king of Sind was waiting for the Arab invader with a huge army of 50,000 sword men, horsemen and elephantry at a place called Rawar. He was determined to finish the enemy once for all. He did not know that the Arab army led by Muhammad-bin-Qasim was also equally strong to face any Challenge. After waiting for some days, both the armies started fighting on 20th June, 712 A.D. It was a serious and severe battle. Dahir was a great warrior. He was fighting with a great spirit and was leading his army from the front. By riding on an elephant he was at the front and was attacking the opponent with great courage and valour.

In the mean while an arrow attached with burning cotton struck Dahir's 'howdah' and set it flame. At this the elephant got frightened and rushed towards the river Indus. This made Dahir very much disturbed at the mid of the war. He became restless, inconsistent and inattentive. At this moment he was injured by an arrow and fell from his elephant. Although the elephant was brought to control, Dahir did not wait for it. He immediately rode a horse and resumed fighting. But as he was not seen on the back of his elephant, his soldiers became panicky and fled away from the field of battle. However, Dahir gave a heroic fight and laid down his life after two days of his bloody battle. His widow Queen Ranibai refused to surrender the fort of Rawar and fought the invader to the bitter end.

She performed jouhar along with some besieged ladies of the fort. Muhammad-bin-Qasim became victorious. Nevertheless he took about eight months to acquire control over Sind because his army had to face tough resistance by the local people of many other towns and palaces including Alor and Brahmanabad.

#### **4.1.4.6.Occupation of Multan:**

After conquering Sind, Muhammad-bin-Qasim marched towards Multan, a major city situated in the upper Indus basin. On the way he had to encounter tough resistance by the local people but over powered them. On reaching Multan he found the city strongly fortified and people in full revolt. But at Multan he was also fortunate to get the help of a traitor who gave him the information regarding the source of water supply to the city.

Muhammad-bin-Qasim cut-off the source. The people of Multan surrendered at last after fighting bravely against the Arabs. Thus the city fell into the hands of the invader in 713 A.D. The Arabs massacred and plundered the city. Women and children were made captives and a large quantity of gold was collected by the Arabs. He obtained so much gold that they named the city as the 'city of gold'. After completing his mission in Sind and Multan, Muhammad-bin-Qasim was planning to proceed more into the interior of India. In the mean while there came a tragic end to his life. He was put to death by an order of Calipha, the religious head of the Islamic world.

#### **4.1.4.7.Death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim:**

The Death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim has been put to debate as there are two divergent views by different Historians. Historian Mir Massum in his "Tarik Sind" has described an interesting story about the death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim. Muhammad-bin-Qasim during his campaign of Brahmanabad had captured the two virgin daughters of Dahir. They were Surya Devi and Parimal Devi. They were sent to the Calipha as gifts from Muhammad-bin-Qasim.

These two girls were determined to take revenge on Muhammad-bin-Qasim. So when they reached Calipha, they told him that they had been used and dishonored by Muhammad-bin-Qasim before they were sent to him. This made the Calipha so much angry that he at once ordered that Muhammad-bin-Qasim should be put to death and his body, being sewn up in the raw hide of an ox, should be despatched to him.

His order was immediately carried out. When Muhammad-bin-Qasim's coffin was opened before the calipha, the two girls were delighted at having avenged on the enemy and killer of their father. Their mission was completed and so they declared that Qasim was innocent. This made the Calipha furious. At his order, the two sisters were tied to the tails of horses and were dragged to death.

But the other view regarding the death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim has been ascribed to a political cause. Some modern historians believe that Muhammad had become a victim of the court intrigues of the Calipha. Calipha Walid died in 715 A.D. and was succeeded by his brother Sulaiman who had enmity with Hajaj, the governor of Iraq and father-in-law of Muhammad-bin-Qasim.

He could not tolerate the importance of Hajaj as a result of Muhammad's victorious campaigns in India. To bring an end to this Calipha might have ordered to kill Muhammad-bin-Qasim. Whatever may be the fact? Mohammad-bin-Kasim got a tragic end of his life.

#### **4.1.5. Causes of Arab Success in Sind**

Many factors have been ascribed to the success the Arabs in Sind and Multan. Sind had a heterogeneous population consisting of the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Jains, the Jats, the Meds etc. There was no good relation among them as the subjects of Dahir lack unity at social level.

Instead there prevailed hatred among them. So at the time of Arab invasion of Sind, they could not be united for the cause of their motherland. Some historians have opined that it was due to lack of social solidarity among the people of Sind; the country had to face the wrath of the Arabs.

#### **4.1.5.1.Unpopularity of Dahir:**

Dahir was not liked by some sections of his subjects as he was proud and arrogant and mainly as a son of an usurper. Dahir's father was a minister who had murdered his king and married the widow queen. Thus Dahir, being the son of an usurper, was not liked by the people.

Besides Dahir had enmity with his cousin brothers for the throne which had led the kingdom to a stage of civil war. Further Dahir's governors were almost semi-independent princes and did not co-operate him at the time of crises. Because of his personal nature he was also not liked by his subjects who were mostly non-Hindus. Owing to his unpopularity he did not get the support of the people of his own kingdom at the time of foreign invasion.

#### **4.1.5.2.Betrayal and Treachery:**

It was the betrayal and treachery of some Indian citizens that had contributed a lot for the success of the Arabs. Debal fell because of a Brahmin traitor who exposed secrecy of the Temple and flag which was inside fort of Debal. At Nirun the Buddhists played treacherous role by joining hands with the invader. At Multan, a traitor informed the invader the source of water supply to the city. Some historians have viewed this as the role of the Fifth column in bringing about the fall of their own country.

#### **4.1.5.3.Poverty and Backwardness:**

Sind was a poor, backward kingdom with a sparse population and limited resources. So it was not possible on the part of the Dahir to finance for a large army or to wage a protracted war. This also had tempted the Arabs to invade Sind.

#### **4.1.5.4.Isolation of Sind:**

Isolation of Sind from the rest of India was also a factor for the Arab's success in Sind. Though there were powerful dynasties like the Pratiharas of Malwa and Kanauj they did not come to the help of Sind. None of them bothered or cared for this incident which marked the beginning of Muslim rule in India.

#### **4.1.5.5.Religious Enthusiasm of Arabs:**

The Arabs were inspired by a new religion and had become fanatic. They thought that they were the forces of God and were engaged in a mission to destroy the faiths of the infidel and spared the blessings of Islam. The Arabs had also a great sense of patriotic feelings. The Indians on the other hand had no such religious enthusiasm or patriotism. Rather they had an indifferent, tolerant and cosmopolitan attitude towards other faiths and other people. Undoubtedly this had resulted, the Arab's success in Sind.

#### **4.1.5.6.Strong Army:**

The Arab army under the leadership of Muhammad-bin-Qasim was superior to that of Sind of Dahir in strength and technique. They were also well-equipped. Dahir's army only at Rawar was nearly on par in number with that of the invader. But they were very poorly equipped as the majority of them were hastily recruited on the eve of the war and had not sufficient military training. This had caused the defeat of Dahir.

#### **4.1.5.7.Responsibility of Dahir:**

Dahir was largely responsible for the success of the Arabs owing to his initial lethargy and foolishness. He had remained inactive while Muhammad-bin-Qasim was conquering Debal, Nirun and Sehwan one after another. Even he had remained inactive when Muhammad crossed the Mihran to enter into Rawar. It was foolishness on the part of Dahir to hope that he would finish the enemy in a single stroke at Rawar. At Rawar also Dahir committed a blunder by not commanding the army as its leader. Instead of commanding the army, he fought like a soldier and died.

#### **4.1.6. Arab Administration in Sind**

The Arab administration in Sind followed the general pattern adopted by the Arab conquerors in other countries. The normal rule was to employ local talent and make minimum changes in local practices. Caliph Umar, acknowledged as the chief creator of the Arab system of administration, had laid down the working principle that Arabs should not acquire landed property in conquered territories. Under his system the conquering general of a new territory became its governor, but "most of the subordinate officers were allowed to retain their posts." Available evidence about Sind shows that these injunctions were observed. The Arabs established themselves in large towns, which were also military cantonments, and provided the military garrisons, but civil administration was left largely in the hands of the local chiefs, only a few of whom had accepted Islam.

The administrative arrangements which Muhammad ibn Qasim made with the non-Muslims after his victory over Dahar are often referred to as "the Brahmanabad settlement." The basic principle was to treat the Hindus as "the people of the book," and to confer on them the status of the zimmi (the protected). In some respects the arrangements were even more liberal than those granted to "the people of the book" by the later schools of Islamic law. For example, according to later opinion the zimmi could not repair their places of worship, although existing ones were allowed to stand. The question of repairing a damaged temple came up before Muhammad, who referred the matter to Hajjaj. The latter, having consulted the 'ulama of Damascus, not only granted the permission asked for, but declared that so long as non-Muslims paid their dues to the state they were free to live in whatever manner they liked. "It appears," Hajjaj wrote, "that the chief inhabitants of Brahmanabad had petitioned to be allowed to repair the temple of Budh and pursue their religion. As they have made submission, and have agreed to pay taxes to the Khalifa, nothing more can properly be required from them. They have been taken under our protection, and we cannot in any way stretch out our hands upon their lives or property. Permission is given them to worship their gods. Nobody must be forbidden and prevented from following his own religion. They may live in their houses in whatever manner they like. According to one early Muslim historian, the Arab conqueror countenanced even the privileged position of the Brahmans, not only in religious matters, but also in the administrative sphere. "Muhammad ibn Qasim maintained their dignity and passed orders confirming their pre-eminence. They were protected against opposition and violence." Even the 3 percent share of government revenue which they had received during the ascendancy of the Brahman rulers of Sind, was conceded to them. In his arrangements for the collection of taxes, Muhammad ibn Qasim also made an attempt to provide some safeguards against oppression, by appointing "people from among the villagers and the chief citizens to collect the fixed taxes from the cities and the villages so that there might be the feeling of strength and protection."

When the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyads in 750 they sent their own officers to Sind. The Abbasid governor, Hisham, who came to Sind in 757, carried out successful raids against Gujarat and Kashmir, but no permanent additions to Arab dominion were made. Later, through

preoccupations at home, Arab control over Sind weakened, with the process of disintegration being accelerated by tribal conflicts among local Arabs. One governor went so far as to revolt against Caliph al-Mamun. The rebellion was put down, but Musa (son of Yahya the Barmakid, the famous wazir of Harun-al-Rashid), who was placed in charge of the affairs of Sind, nominated as his successor on his death in 836 his son Amran. The caliph recognized the appointment, but the beginning of the hereditary succession to governorship meant a weakening of the hold of Baghdad. An energetic ruler, Amran dealt firmly with the disturbances of the Jats and the Meds, but internecine quarrels among the Arabs flared up and he lost his life after a brief reign. In 854 the Hibbari family became hereditary rulers of Sind, with Mansura as their capital. In course of time, Multan became independent and the Hindus reestablished themselves in Rohri.

The severance of contacts with Baghdad made Sind and Multan a happy hunting ground for the emissaries of the rivals of the Abbasids, the Ismaili rulers of Cairo. Their first missionary came to Sind in 883 and started secret propaganda in favor of the Ismaili caliph. After the ground had been prepared, military aid was obtained from Cairo, and through a coup d'etat Multan was captured in 977. Ismaili doctrines were now adopted as the official religion, and the khutba was read in the name of the Egyptian ruler. The Ismailis destroyed the old historic temple of Multan, which Muhammad ibn Qasim had left in charge of the Hindus, and built a mosque on its site. Mansura remained with the Hibbari family, at least until 985, but at a later date this also became a small Ismaili stronghold. The Ismailis suffered a setback with the rise of Mahmud of Ghazni, who in 1005 compelled the ruler of Multan to recant his Ismaili beliefs and some twenty years later conquered Mansura on his return from Somnath. The Ismaili creed regained strength as the Ghaznavids weakened, but in 1175 Sultan Muhammad Ghuri captured Multan and appointed an orthodox Sunni as governor. The area was incorporated in the Sunni sultanate first of Ghazni, and later of Delhi.

#### **4.1.7. Intellectual Achievements**

During the Umayyad and the early Abbasid period, when the Arabs were at the height of their political power, they were also active in the intellectual field, making every effort to acquire knowledge from all sources. Sind became the link through which the fruits of Indian learning were transmitted to the Arabs, and by them made available to the rest of the civilized world. Indo-Arab intellectual collaboration was at its height during two distinct periods. During the reign (753-774) of Mansur, embassies from Sind to Baghdad included scholars who brought important books with them. The second fruitful period was the reign (780-808) of Harun-al-Rashid, when the Barmakid family, which provided wazirs to the Abbasid caliphs for half a century, was at the zenith of its power. Arab bibliographers especially mention Harun's wazir, Yahya the Barmakid, Yahya's son Musa, and grandson Amran (both of whom governed Sind for some time) for their interest in India and Indian sciences. Besides sending scholars to India to study medicine and pharmacology, they brought Hindu scholars to Baghdad, made them chief physicians of their hospitals, and commissioned them to translate into Arabic, Sanskrit books on such subjects as medicine, pharmacology, toxicology, philosophy, and astrology.

The earliest recorded Indo-Arab intellectual contact came in 771, when a Hindu astronomer and mathematician reached Baghdad, bringing with him a Sanskrit work (Brahma Siddhanta by Brahma-gupta) which he translated into Arabic with the help of an Arab mathematician. Titles of three other works on astronomy translated from Sanskrit have been preserved by Arab bibliographers, but Siddhanta, which came to be known in Arabic as "Sindhind," had the greatest influence on the development of Arab astronomy. In mathematics the most important contribution of the subcontinent to Arabic learning was the introduction of what are known in the

West as "Arabic numerals," but which Arabs themselves call "Indian numerals" (al-ruqum-al-Hindiyyah).

Indian medicine received even greater attention; the titles of at least fifteen works in Sanskrit which were translated into Arabic have been preserved, including books by Sushruta and Caraka, the foremost authorities in Hindu medicine. One of the translated books was on veterinary science, and another dealt with snakes and their poisons. None of these translations are now known to exist, except a rendering of a book on poisons, which was originally translated into Persian for Khalid-al-Barmaki, the Abbasid wazir, and later was translated into Arabic. Indian doctors enjoyed great prestige at Baghdad, and although their names, like the titles of their works, have been mutilated beyond recognition in Arab bibliographies, their number was very great. One of these men, Manka, was specially sent for when Harun-al-Rashid fell ill and could not be cured by Baghdad doctors. Manka's treatment was successful, and not only was he richly rewarded by the grateful caliph, but he was entrusted with the translation of medical books from Sanskrit. Another Indian physician was called in when a cousin of the caliph suffered a paralytic stroke and was given up for lost by the Greek court physician. Many Indian medicines, some of them in their original names such as atrifal, which is the Hindi tri-phal (a combination of three fruits), found their way into Arab pharmacopoeia.

Astrology and palmistry also received considerable attention at Baghdad, and titles of a large number of books translated from Sanskrit on these subjects have been preserved. Other books which were translated were on logic, alchemy, magic, ethics, statecraft, and the art of war, but literary works gained the greatest popularity. Some of the stories of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments are attributed to Indian origin, and Arabic translations of the Panchtantra, popularly known as the story of Kalila and Dimna, have become famous in various Arabic and Persian versions. The games of chess and chausar were also brought from India and transmitted by Arabs to other parts of the world.

Sind also made a contribution in spheres other than science and learning. While the debt of the Sufis, the Islamic mystics, to Indian religion in general is not certain, the links of Sind with Islamic Sufism are fairly definite. The great early Sufi, Bayazid of Bistam, had a Sindhi as his spiritual teacher. "I learned," he said, "the science of annihilation (ilm-i-fana) and unity (tauhid) from Abu Ali (of Sind) and Abu Ali learned the lessons of Islamic unity from me." The close association of Sind with Sufism is maintained to this day, and one of the most marked features of Sind is the dominant place which Sufism occupies in her literary and religious life.

Our knowledge of India's impact on Arab cultural life is based on contemporary Arab sources, but it is far from complete. No title of any Sanskrit book on music translated at Baghdad is available, but it is known that the music of the subcontinent influenced Arab music. That it was appreciated in the Abbasid capital is indicated by the famous Arab author Jahiz (fl. 869), who wrote in his account of the people of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent that "Their music is pleasing. One of their musical instruments is known as Kankalah, which is played with a string stretched on a pumpkin." This would seem to be a reference to an Indian instrument, the kingar, which is made with two gourds. Another indication of widespread knowledge of Indian music is a reference by an Arabic author from Andalusia to an Indian book on tunes and melodies.<sup>10</sup> It has even been suggested that many of the technical terms for Arab music were borrowed from Persia and India and that Indian music itself has incorporated certain Perso-Arab airs, such as Yeman and Hijj from Hijaz and Zanuglah, corrupted into Jangla.

No connected history of Sind and Multan after the recall of Muhammad ibn Qasim is available, but works of Arab travelers and geographers enable us to fill the gap. In particular



Masudi, who visited what is now West Pakistan in 915-916, has left a brilliant account of the conditions in the Indus valley, from Waihind in the north to Debul in the south. Ibn Haukul, another traveler, visited the area some years later. Both agree that the principal Arab colonies were at Mansura, Multan, Debul, and Nirun, all of which had large Friday mosques. Non-Muslims formed the bulk of the population, and were in a preponderant majority at Debul and Alor. The relations between the Arabs and the non-Muslims were good. Unlike the historians of the sultanate period, the Arab travelers refer to the non-Muslims as zimmi and not as kafir (infidels). Soon after the conquest of Sind and Multan, the killing of cows was banned in the area. The reason may have been a simple desire to preserve the cattle wealth, but regard for Hindu sentiments may also have been partly responsible for this step. Some Hindu chiefs showed a sympathetic interest in Islam, for in 886 a Hindu raja commissioned an Arab linguist from Mansura to translate the Quran into the local language. Another indication of the integration of the population into the general life of the ruling class was the use of Sindhi troops in Arab armies. Contemporary records mention their presence in areas as distant as the frontiers of the Byzantine empire.

Arab rulers adopted local practices to a much greater extent than the Ghaznavids did later at Lahore, or the Turks and the Afghans at Delhi. According to Masudi, the ruler of Mansura had eighty war elephants and occasionally rode in a chariot drawn by elephants. The Arabs of Mansura generally dressed like the people of Iraq, but the dress of the ruler was similar to that of the Hindu rajas, and, like them, he wore earrings and kept his hair long.

After Muhammad ibn Qasim there were no large-scale Arab immigrations, and Arab influence gradually diminished; but Sind and Multan remained in contact with the Arab countries, particularly Iraq and Egypt. At the time of Masudi's visit Arabic and Sindhi were spoken in Sind, but Iranian influences were also strong, particularly after the rise of the Dailamites, when the use of Persian became more prevalent, especially in Multan.

Arab rule produced men of note in Sind and Multan, some of whom achieved fame and distinction in Damascus and Baghdad. One of them, Abu Maashar Sindhi (fl.787), an authority on the life of the Prophet, was so eminent that when he died in Baghdad the reigning caliph led the prayers at his funeral. A number of other scholars and poets connected with Sind are also mentioned in Arabic anthologies. Some of them were from the immigrant families, but many were of Sindhi origin and included descendants of captives taken as slaves during the Arab conquest or the later wars. The most notable Arabic poet of Sindhi origin was Abul Ata Sindhi, who was taken to Syria as a captive during his childhood, and earned his manumission with a qasida or ode. In spite of his command of literary Arabic, his pronunciation of Arabic words bore such traces of his origin that he had to engage a ravi to recite his verses. He wrote forceful qasidas in praise of the Umayyad rulers and poignant elegies on their downfall.

Life in the Arab dominion of Sind and Multan was simple, but agriculture and commerce were highly developed. Masudi mentions a large number of hamlets in the principalities of Multan and Mansura, and apparently the whole country was well cultivated. There was active commerce between Sind and other parts of the Muslim world, with caravans going to Khurasan, most commonly by the route of Kabul and Bamian. There were also communications with Zabulistan and Sijistan through Ghazni and Qandahar. Sindhi Hindus, who were excellent accountants and traders, had a major share in this commerce, and Alor is mentioned as a great commercial center. The prosperity of the area may be judged by the fact that Sind and Multan contributed eleven and a half million dirhams to Abbasid revenue, while the total revenue from the Kabul area in cash and cattle was less than two and a quarter million dirhams.

#### 4.1.8. Consequences of Arab Conquests of Sind

The Arab conquest of Sindh is quite significant in the history of India as well as an Arabia undoubtedly it did not help in the future establishment of Muslim empire in India. According to Stanley Lane-Poole, "The Arabs had conquered Sindh but the conquest was only an episode in the History of India and of Islam, a triumph without results."

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "Of the Arab conquest of Sindh, there is nothing more to be said. It was a mere episode in the History of India and affected only a small portion of the fringe of that vast country. It introduced into one frontier tract the religion which was destined to dominate the greater part of India for nearly five centuries, but it had none of the far-reaching effects attributed to it by Tod in the Annals of Rajasthan.

Mohammad-bin-Quasim never penetrated to Chitor in the heart of Rajputana; the Caliph Walid First did not 'render tributary all that part of India on this side of the Ganges'; the invader was never on the eve of carrying the war against Raja Harchund of Kanauj much less did he actually prosecute it; If Harun-ur-Rashid gave to his second son, al-Ma'-mun, 'Khorasan, Zabullisthan, Cabulisthan, Sindh and Hindusthan', he bestowed on him at least one country which was not his to give; nor was the whole of Northern India, as Tod maintains, convulsed by the invasion of the Arabs.

One of these, as we have seen, advanced to Adhoi in Cutch, but no settlement was made, and the expedition was a mere raid: and though the first news of the irruption may have suggested war-like preparations to the princes of Rajasthan their uneasiness cannot have endured. The tide of Islam, having overflowed Sindh and the lower Punjab, ebbed, leaving some jetam on the strand. The rulers of states beyond the desert had no cause for alarm. That was to come later and the enemy was to be, not the Arab but the Turk, who was to present the faith of the Arabian prophet in a more terrible guise than it had worn when presented by native Arabians."

According to Prof. Habibullah, "The Arab was not destined to raise Islam to be a political force in India. Whatever its cultural implications, politically the Sindh affair led to a dead end. It touched only a fringe of the Indian continent and the faint stirrings it produced were soon forgotten. In the Islamic Commonwealth the Arab soon began to lose ground; geography stood in the way of his expansion in India; and by the tenth century, his conquering role having been played out, the Indian princes recognised in him only the enterprising and adaptable merchant of old."

When the Arabs settled in Sindh, they were dazzled by the ability of the Indians. Instead of influencing them, they were themselves influenced by them. The Arab scholars sat at the feet of the Brahmanas and Buddhist monks and learnt from them philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, chemistry, etc., and later on transmitted the same to Europe. It is contended that the numerical figures which the Europeans learnt from the Arabs were originally learnt from the Indians.

The Arabic name for figure, Hindsa, points out to its Indian origin. During the Khilafat of Mansur in the 8th century A.D., Arab scholars went from India to Baghdad and they carried with them the Brahma Sidhanta and Khanda-Khandvaka of Brahma Gupta and those were translated into Arabic with the help of Indian scholars.

The Arabs also learnt from them the first principles of scientific astronomy. Hindu learning also was encouraged by the ministerial family of Barmaks during the Khilafat of Harun from 786 to 808 A.D. They invited Hindu scholars to Baghdad and asked them to translate

Sanskrit books on medicine, philosophy, astrology etc., into Arabic. They also put the Hindu physicians in charge of their hospitals.

According to Havell, from a political point of view, Arab conquest of Sindh was a comparatively insignificant event but its importance on account of its effect upon the whole culture of Islam was great. For the first time, the Nomads of the Arabian Desert found themselves in the holy land of the Aryans in close contact with Indo-Aryan civilization, which from all points of view politically, economically and intellectually had reached a far higher plane than their own.

To the poetic imagination of the Arab tribesmen, India seemed a land of wonders. In all the arts of peace, India then stood at the pinnacle of the greatness. The Arabs were charmed by the skill of the Indian musicians and the cunning of the Hindu painter. The dome of the temple Mandapam became the dome of the Muslim mosque and tomb. The simplified symbolism of Muslim ritual was all borrowed from India. The pointed arc of the prayer carpet and mihrab was a symbolic arc of the Buddhist and Hindu shrines.

The cathedral mosques of the Muslim royalty were like the Vishnu temple. The entrances of the mosque corresponded to the temple Gopuram and gates of the Indian villages. The Minars of the Mosques were adaptations of the Indian towers of victory. Havell points out that in Sindh, the Arab Shaikhs had their first practical lessons in Indo-Aryan statecraft under the guidance of their Brahman officials. They learnt to adapt their own primitive patriarchal policy to the complicated problems of the highly organised systematic government evolved by centuries of Aryan's imperial rule.

The court language, etiquette and literary accomplishments were borrowed from the Iranian branch of Aryan civilisation. All these scientific elements which made the Arabs famous in Europe were borrowed directly from India. Islam was able to tap the inexhaustible resources of India, spiritual and material and became the agent for their distribution over the whole of Europe. The Indian Pandits brought to Baghdad the works of Brahmaputra and those were translated into Arabic. In the palmy days of the great Harun, the influence of Indian scholars was supreme at the Baghdad court.

Hindu physicians were brought to Baghdad to organise hospitals and medical schools. Hindu scholars translated Sanskrit works into Arabic. The Arabs also went to Indian universities for acquiring knowledge. Havell points out that it was India and not Greece that taught Islam in the impressionable years of its youth formed its philosophy and esoteric religious ideals and inspired its most characteristic expression in literature, art and architecture. The Arabs never won for themselves a permanent political footing in India nor did the Western School of Islam ever take any strong hold upon the mentality or religious feeling of the Indian Muslims.

It is wrong to maintain that the Arab conquest of Sindh had absolutely no effect on India. It cannot be denied that the Arab conquest of Sindh showed the seed of Islam in India. A large number of persons in Sindh were converted to Islam. The footing got by Islam in Sindh proved to be permanent. The legacy of the Arab conquest of Sindh lies in the "debris of ancient buildings which proclaimed to the world the vandalism of the destroyer or a few settlements of a few Muslim families in Sindh as the memorial to Arab conquest of Sindh."

A question has been raised whether the Arab invasion of Sindh was inspired by religion or not. The view of Dr. Tarachand is that it was not. In support of his view, he points out that a number of prominent and influential Hindus favoured Quasim. Among them were Sisakar, the Minister of Dahir, Moka Bisaya, chief of a tribe, Ladi, Dahir's queen, who married Quasim after her husband's death and actually induced the besieged Hindus of Bahmanabad to surrender. On

the other side, Allafi, an Arab Commander of Arab horsemen, fought on the side of Dahir and was his advisor. No Hindu ruler came forward to help Dahir against the Arabs. His son also appealed for help to his brother and nephews and not to the Hindu chiefs of the country.

The Hindu chiefs surrendered in many cases without resistance merely on the assurance that they will be treated kindly. The Hindu defenders submitted and were not molested. The only exceptions were men bearing arms. Quasim took Sisakar into his confidence and told him all his secrets. He relied upon Moka Bisaya to lead foraging parties against Jaisiya. He appointed Kaksa, a cousin of Dahir, as his Vazier with precedence over all Muslim nobles and army commanders. All these facts show that the invasion of Sindh was not a religious crusade.

Dr. Tarachand says that even the results do not justify this conclusion. It is doubtful whether many Sindhis were converted to Islam by the invaders. Their places of worship were not damaged as is proved by the case of the temple at Multan. Many Brahmans were employed in the administration. The Sumras who ruled over Sindh bore Hindu names. The Hindu Amils were the official class under the Kalhoras and Talpurs.

The history of Sindh shows that the factor of religion has been exaggerated. It is stated in Chach Namah and Futuh at Buldan of ATBH adhuri that Hajjaj, the Governor of Iraq, who had dispatched Quasim had a balance sheet of the war prepared which showed that 60,000 silver Dirhems was the expenditure and 120,000 Dirhems was the income from the campaign. The expedition was as much a business enterprise as a venture for the expansion of the empire.

#### **4.1.9. Conclusion**

The Arabs had been the carriers of Indian trade to Europe for centuries. After conversion to Islam, they cast their covetous eyes on the fabulous wealth of India as well as they were eager to propagate their new religion in India. However, the opportunity to invade Sind came to the Arabians in the beginning of the eighth century. The death of Harshavardhana, resulted in political instability in India, this situation inspired the foreign elements once again to attack and enter India. The Arabs were no exception to it. In 712 A.D. they were successful in occupying Sind. The Arab conquest of Sindh is quite significant in the history of India as well as an Arabia undoubtedly it did not help in the future establishment of Muslim empire in India. According to Stanley Lane-Poole, "The Arabs had conquered Sindh but the conquest was only an episode in the History of India and of Islam, a triumph without results."

## Unit-II: Agrarian Structure and Social Change:

### Chapter-I

#### Agricultural Expansion; Crops

##### 4.1.1. Introduction

The early medieval period was also marked by many economic changes. The period from 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century is marked initially with a decline in economic activities as evident from the absence of coins for exchange and the decayed condition of towns in northern India and later we notice a revival of trade activities. Not only do we come across new gold coins, there are also numerous references to trade goods and towns. There seem to be two main reasons for it. One, there was increase in agricultural activities on account of land grants in fresh areas. It led to surplus production of goods for exchange. And second, the Arab traders had emerged on the coastal areas of India as important players in international sea trade. The Arabs had acquired a foothold in Sind in C.E 712 and later, gradually, they set up their settlements all along the sea from Arabia to China. These settlements served as important channels for the sale and purchase of Indian goods, and thus helped in the growth of Indian external trade. In south India, the Chola kings maintained close commercial contact with South-east Asia (Malaya, Indonesia etc) and China. This chapter will discuss the various aspects of economic condition of early medieval India, both from Agrarian and trade point of view.

##### 4.1.2. Sources

The period under discussion was marked with new types of source materials and documents which themselves were witnesses to changing condition. The most important source material for the study of this period is the huge number of inscriptions. Most of the inscriptions of this period are belonged to the category of copper plates or *tamrapatta*. These copper plates recorded transfer of revenuefree landed property by royal orders to recipients of the grant. The practice of issuing land grants became fully established from the fourth century onwards and assumed an all-India proportion after AD 600. Most of the copper plates record the creation of revenue-free grant of land gifted to a brahmanas or a religious institution. The copper plates are invaluable for understanding of rural economy, especially for understanding the process of transfer of landed property, rural settlement pattern, crops, irrigation projects, peasants and agrarian revenue demands. However, on some occasions the grant may also throw light on important merchants and craftsmen whose presence as important witnesses to the pious act of donation of land was recorded. Merchants also figure in copper plate grants in a group or as an assembly on certain auspicious days when the merchants decided to voluntarily offer some cesses on the commodities they dealt in in favour of a deity or temple. In such grants naturally appear not only merchants but also various types of commodities. These inscriptions also inform us about various types of market places from some of which were collected tolls and customs (*sulka*), thereby indicating the revenue bearing potential of trade. Also known are inscriptions recording individual donations by merchants, either in favour of a deity or for some works of public benefactions.

Information on trade and urban centres is available from dharmasastras and smritis literature. Commentaries on these texts such as the commentaries on the Manusmriti and Yajnavalkyasmriti also offer some data on this subject. Relevant data can be gleaned from technical treatises like the famous lexicon, *Amarakosa* by Amarasimha (fifth-sixth centuries C.E), the *Abhidhanachintamani* and the *Desinamamala* by Hemachandra (eleventh-twelfth century) and the *Lekhapaddhati*. Some impressions of commercial activities are available in the vast creative literature, e.g. the works of Kalidasa, the *Mrcchakatikam* of Sudraka, the *Dasakumaracharita* of Dandin and various types of Jain

texts. It is important to take note of the fact that two well known Jaina texts Jagaducharita and Vastupalamahatmyam were biographies of two premier merchants of early medieval Gujarat.

Non-indigenous textual materials are of particular importance as source materials for the history of trade, especially the external trade of India. The Chinese accounts of Fa-hsien (early fifth century C.E), Hsuan Tsang (first half of the 7th century), Itsing (late seventh century) and Chau ju Kua (C.E 1225) are invaluable sources for the understanding of trade in India. Arabic and Persian texts on geography and travel (those by Sulaiman(C.E 851), ibn Khordadbeh (C.E 882), al Masudi (C.E 915), Buzurg ibn Shahriyar (C.E 995), the anonymous author of Hudud al Alam (C.E 982), al Biruni (C.E 973-1048), and al Idrisi (C.E 1162) are replete with information on Indian commodities and India's trade linkages with West Asia, though these accounts are occasionally stereotyped as many of the Arab authors did not visit India. To this may be added the late sixth century C.E accounts of the Syrian Christian monk Cosmas Indicopleustes and the famous descriptions of India by the Venetian traveller Marco Polo (late thirteenth century). An unusual type of source is the letters of medieval Jewish traders, who regularly traded between the west coast of India and the Red Sea. Though the main point of their contacts was the Karnataka and Malabar coasts, these unique business letters, recording the impressions of the actual participants in long-distance trade, furnish significant data on trade in the Gujarat coast.

Coin is also an important source of this period. The gold coinage of the Gupta Emperors was imitated by a number of smaller powers in the seventh century C.E. It is after C.E 1000 that the issuance of precious coinage once again revived. Numismatic sources thus offer lesser data than that furnished by early historical coins. This itself has been interpreted by some scholars as a prime indication of dwindling commerce, especially foreign trade of India during the 600-1000 period. The evidence of coins found in some parts of India during the early medieval times will be discussed in the relevant section. Unlike the early historical settlements, the early medieval ones have not been systematically explored and excavated and therefore the field archaeological data on trade and urbanization are quite inadequate.

#### **4.1.3. Agrarian Economy**

One of the major features of agrarian economy during medieval period is agrarian expansion. This phenomenon of agricultural expansion began with the establishment of *brahmadeya* and *agrahara* settlements through land grants to Brahmanas from the 5<sup>th</sup> century C.E onwards, acquired a uniform and universal form in subsequent periods. The centuries flanked by the eighth and twelfth witnessed the processes of this expansion and the culmination of an agrarian organisation based on land grants to religious and secular beneficiaries, i.e. Brahmanas, temples, and officers of the government of Indian kingdoms. Though, there are significant local variations in this development, both due to geographical as well as ecological factors.

##### **4.1.3.1. Geographical and Chronological Patterns**

Farming was extended not only to the hitherto virgin lands but even through clearing forest regions. This was a continuous procedure and a major characteristic of early medieval agricultural economy. There is a view prevalent in the middle of some scholars that land grants started in outlying, backward, and tribal regions first and later slowly extended to the Ganga valley, which was the hub of the brahmanical culture. In the backward and aboriginal tracts the Brahmanas could spread new methods of farming through regulating agricultural processes through specialized knowledge of the seasons (astronomy), plough, irrigation, etc., as well as through protecting the cattle wealth. Though, this is not true of all regions in India, for, land grants were also made in regions of settled agriculture as well as in other ecological zones, especially for purposes of integrating them into a

new economic order. The chronological appearance of the land grant organization shows the following pattern:

Fourth-fifth centuries: spread in excess of a good part of central India, northern Deccan and Andhra, Fifth-seventh centuries: eastern India (Bengal and Odisha), beginnings in Western India (Gujarat and Rajasthan), Seventh and eighth centuries: Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, Ninth century: Kerala, and End of the twelfth century: approximately the whole sub-continent with the possible exception of Punjab. Ideological Background Ideas relating to the gift of land emphasize the importance of Dana or gift. The thought of Dana or gift to Brahmanas was urbanized through Brahmanical texts as the surest means of acquiring merit (punya) and destroying sin (pataka). It appears to be a conscious and systematic effort to give means of survival to the Brahmanas. Grants of cultivable land to them and registration of gifts of land on copper plates are recommended through all the Smritis and Puranas of the post-Gupta centuries.

There were dissimilar things of gifts: Food, granules, paddy, etc. Movable assets like gold, money, etc. And the immovable assets i.e. cultivable land garden and residential plot. In the middle of the gifts are also incorporated the plough, cows, oxen and ploughshare. Though, the gift of land was measured to be the best of all kinds of gifts made to the learned Brahmana. Imprecations against the destruction of such gifts and the resumption of land donated to a Brahmana ensured their perpetuity. Therefore land grants began to follow a set legal formula systematized through law books (Dhar mashastras).

While the early land grants were made mainly to Vedic priests (Shrotriya fire priests), from the fifth to thirteenth centuries, grants were also made to temple priests. The temple, as an institution, assumed a more central role in agrarian expansion and organisation from the eighth century C.E. Grants to the temple, either plots of land or whole villages were recognized as devadana in the south Indian context. It needs to be stressed that what began as a mere trickle, became a mighty current. The procedure of acquiring landed property was not confined to brahmanical temples.

#### **4.1.3.2. Agrarian Settlement**

During the period under discussion several type of agricultural settlements were come in to existence. In the following paragraphs a brief note of the character and types is give.

**Brahmadeya:** A brahmadeya symbolizes a grant of land either in individual plots or whole villages given absent to Brahmanas creation them landowners or land controllers. It was meant either to bring virgin land under farming or to integrate existing agricultural (or peasant) settlements into the new economic order dominated through a Brahmana proprietor. These Brahmana donees played a major role in integrating several socio-economic groups into the new order, through service tenures and caste under the Varna organization. For instance, the rising peasantisation of shudras was sought to be rationalized in the existing brahmanical social order. The practice of land grants as brahmadeyas was initiated through the ruling dynasties and subsequently followed through chiefs, feudatories, etc. Brahmadeyas facilitated agrarian expansion because they were: Exempted from several taxes or dues either entirely or at least in the initial stages of resolution (e.g. For 12 years); Also endowed with ever rising privileges (pariharas). The ruling families derived economic advantage in the form of the extension of the resource base; moreover, through creating brahmadeyas they also gained ideological support for their political power. Lands were given as brahmadeya either to a single Brahmana or to many Brahmana families which ranged from a few to many hundreds or even more than a thousand. Brahmadeyas were invariably situated close to major irrigation works such as tanks or lakes. Often new irrigation sources were constructed when brahmadeyas were created, especially in regions dependent on rains and in arid and semi-arid regions. When situated in regions of rigorous agriculture in the river valleys, they served to integrate other settlements of a

survival stage manufacture. Sometimes, two or more settlements were clubbed jointly to form a brahmadeya or an agrahara. The taxes from such villages were assigned to the Brahmana donees, which were also given the right to get the donated land cultivated. Boundaries of the donated land or village were very often cautiously demarcated. The several kinds of land, wet, arid, and garden land within the village were specified. Sometimes even specific crops and trees are mentioned. The land donations implied more than the transfer of land rights. For instance, in several cases, beside with the revenues and economic possessions of the village, human possessions such as peasants (cultivators), artisans and others were also transferred to donees. There is also rising proof of the encroachment of the rights of villagers in excess of society lands such as lakes and ponds. Therefore, the Brahmanas became managers of agricultural and artisanal manufacture in these settlements for which they organized themselves into assemblies.

**Secular Grants:** From the seventh century onwards, officers of the state were also being remunerated through land grants. This is of special significance because it created another class of landlords who were not Brahmanas. The gift of land on officials in charge of administrative divisions is mentioned as early as c. C.E. 200 (the time of Manu) but the practice picks up momentum in the post-Gupta era. Literary works dealing with central India, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar and Bengal flanked by the tenth and twelfth centuries create frequent references to several types of grants to ministers, kinsmen, and those who rendered military services. The rajas, rajaputras, ranakas, mahasamantas, etc. mentioned in Pala land charters were mostly vassals linked with land. The incidence of grants to state officials varies from one region to another. To illustrate, while we hear of in relation to the half a dozen Paramar official ranks, only a few of them are recognized to have received land grants. But very big territories were granted to vassals and high officers under the Chalukyas of Gujarat. The accessible proofs suggest that Odisha had more service grants than Assam, Bengal, and Bihar taken jointly. Further, the right of several officials to enjoy specific and exclusive levies—irrespective of the tenure of these levies—was bound to make intermediaries with interests in the lands of the tenants.

**Devadanas:** Big level gifts to the religious establishments, both brahmanical and nonbrahmanical, discover distinctive spaces in inscriptional proofs. These centers worked as nuclei of agricultural settlements and helped in integrating several peasant and tribal settlements through a procedure of acculturation. They also integrated several socio-economic groups through service tenures or remuneration through temple lands. Temple lands were leased out to tenants, who paid a higher share of the produce to the temple. Such lands were also supervised either through the sabha of the brahmadeya or mahajanas of the agrahara settlements. In non-Brahmana settlements also temples became the central institution. Here temple lands came to be administered through the temple executive committees composed of land owning non- Brahmanas. e.g. the Velalas of Tamil Nadu the Okkalu Kampulu etc of Karnataka dissimilar groups were assigned a caste and ritual status. It is in this procedure that people following “impure” and “low occupations” were assigned the status of untouchables, kept out of the temple and given quarters at the fringes of the resolution.

The supervision of temple lands was in the hands of Brahmana and non-Brahmana landed elite. The control of irrigation sources was also a major function of the local bodies dominated through landed elite groups. Therefore the Brahmana, the temple and higher strata of non-Brahmanas as landlords, employers, and holders of superior rights in land became the central characteristic of early medieval agrarian organisation. The new landed elite also consisted of local peasant clan chiefs or heads of kinship groups and heads of families, who had kani rights i.e. rights of possession and supervision. In other words, many strata of intermediaries appeared flanked by the King and the actual producer.



#### **4.1.3.3. Rights in Land**

A significant aspect relating to land grants is the nature of rights granted to the assignees. Rights conferred upon the grantees incorporated fiscal and administrative rights. The taxes, of which land tax was the major source of revenue, theoretically payable to the King or government, came to be assigned to the donees. The reference to *pariharas* or exemptions in the copper plate and stone inscriptions registering such grants indicate that what was theoretically payable to the King was not being totally exempted from payment but the rights were now transferred to the grantees. This was apparently based on the sanction of the *dharmashastras*, which sought to set up the royal ownership of land and hence justify such grants, creating intermediary rights in land. Although there is some proof of a communal foundation of land rights in early settlements, the development of private ownership or rights is indicated through the information that the grantees often enjoyed rights of alienation of land. They also enjoyed other hereditary benefits in the settlements. Land gifts were often made after purchase from private individuals. Hereditary ownership appears to have urbanized out of such grants, both religious and secular.

#### **4.1.3.4. Technological Improvements**

Throughout the early medieval era there was an augment in irrigation sources such as canals, lakes, tanks (*tataka*, *eri*) and wells (*kupa* and *kinaru*). That the accessibility to water possessions was a significant consideration in the spread of rural settlements is shown through local studies. *Keres* or tanks in south Karnataka, *nadi* (river), *pushkarini* (tank), *srota* (water channel) etc. in Bengal and *araghatta*-wells in western Rajasthan used to be natural points of reference whenever sharing and transfer of village lands had to be undertaken. Naturally, the concern for water possessions contributed to the extension of farming and intensification of agricultural behaviors. Water-lifts of dissimilar types operated through man and animal power were also recognized. Epigraphic sources record the construction and maintenance of such irrigation works flanked by eight and thirteenth centuries. Several of the lakes/ tanks of this era have survived well into the contemporary times. Some of them were repaired, revived, and elaborated under the British management. The step wells (*vapis*) in Rajasthan and Gujarat became very popular in the eleventh-thirteenth centuries. They were meant for irrigating the meadows as well as for supplying drinking water.

The augment in the number of irrigation works was due to an advance in irrigation technology. There is proof of the use of more scientific and permanent methods of flood manage, damming of river waters, sluice construction (with piston valve and cisterns) both at the heads of canals and of lakes and tanks. Flood manage was achieved slowly through breaching of rivers for canals and mud embankments which ensured the regulated use of water possessions. Lakes or reservoirs were more commonly used in semi arid' and rain fed regions, as well as river basins where the rivers up in summer construction of water reservoirs was initiated through ruling families and maintained through local organizations such as the *sabha* (Brahmana assembly) and *ur* (non-Brahmana village assembly) in Tamil Nadu. Maintenance of lakes/tanks etc. i.e. desilting, bund and sluice repair was looked after through a special committee of local assemblies and cesses were levied for the purpose.

Royal permission was accorded for digging tanks or wells, when gifts were made to Brahmanas and temples. Land was demarcated for construction and maintenance of canals and tanks, etc. Digging of tanks was measured a part of the privileges enjoyed through the grantees and an act of religious merit. Hence, resourceful private individuals also constructed tanks. No less important were the improvements in agricultural implements. For instance, a tenth century inscription from Ajmer refers to "big" plough. Likewise, separate implements are mentioned for weeding parasitic plants. *Vrikshayarveda* mentions steps to cure diseases of trees. Water lifting devices such as

araghatta and ghatyantra are mentioned in inscriptions and literary works. The former was specially used in the wells of Rajasthan in the ninth and tenth centuries. The Krishisukti of Kashyapa prescribed that the ghatyantra operated through oxen is the best that through men was the worst while the one driven through elephants was of the middling excellence.

Advanced knowledge in relation to the weather circumstances and their use in agricultural operations is noticeable in such texts as the Gurusamhita and Krishinarashwara. More than one hundred kinds of cereals including wheat, barley, lentils, etc. are mentioned in modern writings on agriculture. According to the Shunyapurana more than fifty types of paddy were cultivated in Bengal. The knowledge of fertilizers improved immensely and the use of the compost was recognized. Cash crops such as areca nuts, betel leaves, cotton, sugarcane, etc. discover frequent mention. Rajashekara (early tenth century) tells us in relation to the excellent sugarcane of north Bengal which yielded juice even without the use of pressing instrument. Commodity manufacture of coconut and oranges assumed special importance in peninsular India throughout this era.

Marco-Polo hints at increased manufacture of spices when he says that the municipality of Kinsay in China alone consumed ten thousand pounds of pepper everyday which came from India. He also mentions the great demand for Indian ginger in European markets. Harvesting of three crops and rotation of crops were recognized widely. Therefore, advanced agricultural technology was being systematized and diffused in several parts of the country causing substantial boom in agricultural manufacture.

#### **4.1.3.5. Rural Tension**

Notwithstanding agrarian expansion, the rural landscape was distant from being a homogeneous scene. There is, to begin with, heterogeneous and stratified peasantry. Unlike the age old and pre-Gupta gahapatis we now have graded personnel associated with land: Kshetrik, karshaka, halin and ardhik. Regrettably, there is hardly any indication of landownership in these conditions, which appear to be referring to several categories of cultivators. The conversion of the brahmadeyas into non-brahmadeyas and that of the latter into agraharas were potential sources of tension in rural regions. The damara revolts in Kashmir, rebellion of the Kaivarthas in the reign of Ramapala in Bengal, acts of self immolation in situations of encroachments on land in Tamil Nadu, appropriation of donated land through shudras in the Pandya territory, are indices of distrust against the new landed intermediaries. The information that donors often looked for land where farming was not disputed also shows the seeds of turmoil. The possibility of the hero-stones in and approximately agraharas also has the potential of throwing light on rumblings beneath the surface in agrarian settlements. Why does the concept of brahmahatya (killing of a Brahmana) become very pronounced in early medieval times? Answers to this question raise doubts in relation to the validity of "brahmana-peasant alliance" and "peasant state and society". This is, though, not to deny other possible regions of tension within rural society flanked by Brahmanas and temples and within ranks of secular land holders.

#### **4.1.3.6. Agriculture and the exchange Network**

It is sometimes maintained that in the early medieval economic organisation, which was a predominantly agrarian and self-enough village economy, manufacture was mainly survival oriented and was not in response to the laws of the market. Hence there was little scope for economic growth. Craftsmen and artisans were attached either to villages or estates or religious establishments. Hence there was no important role for traders and middlemen, who only procured and supplied iron apparatus, oil, spices, cloth, etc. to rural folk. In other words the functioning of the market organization was very limited. The aforesaid picture is certainly true for the era 300-800 C.E. Though, the subsequent 500 years witnessed a rapid augment in the number of agrarian settlements

and the growth of local markets initially for local swap. Subsequently, the need for regular swap within a region and with other regions led to organized commerce. This in turn led to the emergence of merchant organisations, itinerant trade, and partial monetization from the ninth century.

Though the relative importance of these characteristics varied from one region to another the rising role of agriculture in this new economy is easily seen. Agricultural products came to be exchanged with things of extensive aloofness trade accepted on through itinerant traders. This development also led to a change in the pattern of land ownership towards the secure of the early medieval era. Merchants and economically influential craftsmen, like weavers, invested in land i.e. purchased land described the Jagati-kottali (society of weavers) and the society of Telligas (oil pressers) was active participants in agriculture. The former are repeatedly mentioned as excavating tanks and laying out gardens.

#### **4.1.3.7. The Characterization of Early Medieval Agrarian Economy**

Dissimilar views have been put forward concerning the nature of the overall set up of early medieval agrarian economy. On the one hand, it is seen as a manifestation of feudal economy, while on the other it is dubbed as a peasant state and society. The salient characteristics of „Indian Feudalism“ are:

Emergence of hierarchical landed intermediaries. Vassals and officers of state and other secular assignee had military obligations and feudal titles. Sub-infeudation (varying in dissimilar regions) through these donees to get their land cultivated led to the growth of dissimilar strata of intermediaries. It was a hierarchy of landed aristocrats, tenants, share croppers, and cultivators. This hierarchy was also reflected in the power/administrative structure, where a sort of lord-vassal connection appeared. In other words, Indian feudalism consisted in the gross unequal sharing of land and its produce.

Another significant characteristic was the prevalence of forced labour. The right of extracting forced labour (vishti) is whispered to have been exercised through the Brahmana and other grantees of land. Forced labour was originally a prerogative of the King or the state. It was transferred to the grantees, petty officials, village authorities and others. In the Chola inscriptions alone, there are more than one hundred references to forced labour. Even the peasants and artisans come within the jurisdiction of vishti. As a result, a type of serfdom appeared, in which agricultural laborers were reduced to the location of semi-serfs. Due to the rising claims of greater rights in excess of land through rulers and intermediaries, peasants also suffered a curtailment of their land rights. Several were reduced to the location of tenants facing ever rising threat of eviction. A number of peasants were only ardhikas (share croppers). The strain on the peasantry was also caused through the burden of taxation, coercion, and augment in their indebtedness. Surplus was extracted through several methods. Extra economic coercion was a conspicuous method. With the rise of new property dealings, new mechanisms of economic subordination also evolved. The rising burden is apparent in the mentioning of more than fifty levies in the inscription of Rajaraja Chola.

It was relatively a closed village economy. The transfer of human possessions beside with land to the beneficiaries shows that in such villages the peasants, craftsmen and artisans were attached to the villages and hence were mutually dependent. Their attachment to land and to service grants ensured manages in excess of them through the beneficiaries. In brief, a subject and immobile peasantry, functioning in relatively selfenough villages buttressed through varna restrictions, was the marked characteristic of the agrarian economy throughout the five centuries under survey.

The theory of the subsistence of autonomous peasant communities is put forward in opposition to the theory of Indian feudalism. It is based mainly on the proof from South Indian

sources. According to this theory, autonomous peasant regions described the nadus evolved in South India through early medieval times. They were organized on the foundation of clan and kinship ties. Agricultural manufacture in the nadus was organized and controlled through the nattar, i.e., people of the nadu, organizing themselves into assemblies, i.e., nadu. Members of this assembly were velalas or non-Brahmana peasants. Their autonomy is indicated through the information that when land grants were made through the kings and lesser chiefs, orders were issued with the consent of the nattar. Orders were first addressed to them. They demarcated the gift land and supervised the execution of the grant because they were the organizers of manufacture. The Brahmanas and dominant peasants became allies in the manufacture procedure.

Apparently, the exponents of this hypothesis share the notion of rural self sufficiency, which is a significant component of Indian feudalism. The theories of Indian feudalism and autonomous peasant communities have their adherents and claim to be based on empirical proof. Though, early medieval agrarian economy was a highly intricate one.

## Chapter-II

### Landlords and Peasants

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The contemporary historiography presents broadly two phases of Indian history at the level of the land, revenue, and agricultural relations between landlords and peasants. Early Indian history is imagined as the age of prosperity marked by long distance trade, spread of urban centres, less unequal distribution of land, communal land ownership, etc. The post-Gupta period is envisioned as the Classical age of Indian feudalism marked by changes such as local state formation, rural and agrarian economy, agrarian expansion, peasantization of tribes, the decline of trade and urban centres, uneven distribution of land, regional agricultural structures, private land ownership etc. Early medieval started with consolidation of peasant activities and state motivated by Brahmanical ideology, structures, and institutions. The dynamic age of c.750-1206 CE showed significant changes in land, revenue, and agrarian relations due to the transformation and expansion of Indian polity, economy, and culture, which need to be studied as being inter-related. The pre-Muslim India touched a higher level of elaboration and complexity than ancient India due to the formation of agrarian regions. Politically, the early medieval period is marked by the emergence of regional powers fighting each other for supremacy. A political disorder and instability became rampant in the absence of a durable power. Positively, small kingdoms expanded state authority into the unreached areas to utilise the local resource base. Peasant settlements, chiefdoms, and larger state systems interacted with each other and changed accordingly. An increasing number of land grants from c. 600 CE became a medium for this expansion in the evolved shortage of workforce and money. Several Marxist historians stress upon substantial changes in socio economic and political processes due to land grants after c. 600 CE, which led to the formation of Indian feudalism. In other words, the revolutionary changes in land, revenue systems, and agriculture are termed as the beginning of Indian feudalism from c. 750 CE. We will try to study these changes in the existing unit, which started in north India and spread across the Indian subcontinent through a process of interaction.

#### **LAND**

Land and associated rights became the centre of almost all activities in between c.750-1206 CE. Early medieval Indian economy, polity, society, and religion became more and more linked and depended on the land and its resources until the establishment of the Muslim empire, which introduced large-scale cash payment. The land became the most important source of income for kings. The sovereign issued land as a medium of exchange for services rendered by officials and religious communities in the time of financial crisis. In this way, kings tried to use the land of their kingdoms and fought each other to acquire more and more. The contemporary society also became more stratified and complicated. The quantity of land became a medium of social mobility and status symbol. We can witness the considerable transformation in the status

of farmers and a rise of complex stratification based on land, such as rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants, sharecroppers, and tenant. The landless labourers who formed the working agricultural population also became a valuable asset for the kingdoms.

The early medieval economy became structured, modified, and functioned around land. Land became a significant source of revenue. And kings also donated land to individuals and institutions for their service to the empire. The system of land-grants became an all-India feature by c. 1200 CE and incorporated almost all kinds of lands such as fertile, semi-fertile, arid, unfertile, pastures, and other ecological kinds.

Religious institutions and communities also emerged as landed magnets. The kings granted them land for their favour and services. Brahmanas, temples, government officers, and royal kinsmen benefitted most by land grants and emerged as landlords. Interestingly, land became valuable as private property in c.750-1206 CE as compared to ancient India. The rights of use, mortgage, resale, and gift were acquired with the land, and the donees were free to use it. We have epigraphical evidence of the sale and purchase of property as far back as the 2nd century CE. Fortunately, we have recovered several land sale records of the post-Gupta the Chola periods. The proprietary rights emerged in undeveloped areas in phases with gradual agrarian development.

### **Land-Grants**

Indian culture has a rich tradition of gift or dana to Brahmins and religious institutions as the surest means of acquiring merit (punya) and destroying sin. There were several items of gifts such as food, grains, paddy, gold, money, land, garden, home, cow, plough, oxen, etc. The donation of land was a part of Indian tradition, which became popular in c. 750-1206 CE due to changed economic situation. Inscriptions and religious literature mention grants of cultivable land to Brahmins as the best of all types of gifts. Indirectly, the conscious and systematic arrangement of land grants provided means of subsistence to the Brahmins, and in return, they offered religious sanction to the monarch and their reign. Politically, land-grants expanded the resource base of the rulers. In the 4th-5th centuries, the land-grant system started in the Ganga valley and spread over northern Deccan and Andhra. In the 6th-7th centuries, the land-grants covered eastern and western India. South India came in contact with land grants in the 8th-9th centuries. Till the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the land-grant system became a uniform and universal feature in the entire Indian subcontinent. The landgrants implied more than the transfer of land rights. For example, in many cases, with the revenues, natural, and economic resources of the village, human resources such as peasants, artisans, and others were transferred to donees.

Land-grants generated differential access to power, resources, and intricate relations of domination and subordination in donated areas. We can divide land grants broadly in two categories, i.e. religious and secular awards. Spiritual gifts include Brahmadeya, Devadana, and Agrahara/Mangalam, which was started by the ruling dynasties and subsequently followed by

chiefs, officials, and feudatories. and granted to one or more numbers of Brahmins are called Brahmadeya. Agrahara/Mangalam were tax-free villages donated to Brahmins for their resettlement respectively in north and south India. Devadana was land given to temples, monasteries and other religious establishments, both Brahmana and non-Brahmana. The institutions such as Brahmadeyas and temples played an essential role in the development and expansion of the agrarian base, consolidation of state power, peasantisation of Shudras, and social differentiation.

Secular grants were made from the 7th century onwards for secular purposes to officials and royal kinsmen who were assisting the king in administration and defence. We find frequent references to awards to ministers, kinsmen, military commanders and others between the 10th and the 12th centuries from Tamil Nadu, Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Assam, and Odisha etc. Officials enjoyed income from their land-grants including taxes and levies irrespective of the tenure of these evies. It is important because it created another class of landlords other than Brahmanas.

The above described developments had significant regional variations due to geographical and ecological factors. It seems that the first religious grants started in outlying, backward, tribal, and arable areas to Brahmins and religious institutions thereby integrating them into the economy. Later secular awards began by the monarch for help in administration and defence. The impact of land-grants on local inhabitants varied over areas depending on whether the donation was in a settled area with a long history of agriculture or in a virgin tract or a tribal frontier.

### **Rights to Land**

Historians maintain three positions on the question of rights to land, especially ownership of agricultural land. The nationalist writings argued for the individual/ peasant ownership of property prevailing all through Indian history. The Marxist historians critically perceived that no private individual could hold land as a matter of absolute right because the king was the ultimate owner with superior rights. The third group of historians took the middle path and argued for common or joint ownership. In this way, we can say that multiple forms of ownership, private and royal prevailed in early medieval India as indicated by literary and archaeological sources. R. S. Sharma also points out to a multiplicity of hierarchically graded rights over land based on the evidence of land-grant charters and the exemptions and privileges granted to the donees.

The land-grants brought fundamental changes in the rights to land. In ancient India, king and farmer had rights over the land, but in the early medieval period, the intermediary rights were created through land-grants. Land-grants destroyed community rights to land. They transformed the community and communal property into feudal property, which affected the means and process of production, leading to the subjection of the peasantry. The individual rights to land developed at the cost of

communal agrarian rights. Yajnavalkya and Brihaspati mention four grades of land rights in the same piece of land: the Mahipati (king), Kshetrasvamin (master of soil), Karshaka (cultivator), and the sub-tenant Peasants remained the owner of their lands, but the pattern of land ownership changed. Land-grants damaged the independent position of peasants through the establishment of superior rights over land. Now, independent landowners transformed into tenants and became a class of subordinated peasants. Circa 800 CE onwards, the king started providing proprietary rights with fiscal and administrative rights to feudal lords, which became hereditary in due time. Land-grants led to hierarchical rights over land and sub-infeudation. The practice gave rise to a hierarchy of landlords surviving on the surplus produced by the actual cultivators.

The different types of landlords that emerged were: maha-mandaleshvara, mandaleshvara, mandalika, samanta, ahasamanta, thakkuraetc

## **REVENUE SYSTEMS**

Land and agriculture have always been the base of the Indian economy, which became more pronounced in our period of study. Land and agricultural tax became crucial for the revenue system in c. 750-1206 CE. Certain levies on trade and commerce too were collected. The revenue system was under great pressure because of the feudal economy. The surplus was extracted through various methods. Economic coercion was a conspicuous method. We can suppose two collectors in the early medieval feudal economy, i.e. king and feudal lords. Both collected revenue mostly in terms of kind. The feudal lords had the right to collect revenues from their donated lands, which was transferred by the king. In the beginning, they were paying a fixed share of the total revenue to the king, but later, they started keeping soldiers for that share, which was supplied to the king whenever he demanded.

### **State**

The state consciously tried to increase income to meet the increased demands in the era of expansion and struggle. It became essential with the tax exemption that was provided to brahmadeyas and devadanas. Also, the king was not allowed to collect revenue from the donated lands. The monarchical state reached to relatively unknown areas with agrarian expansion on an unprecedented scale. The income of the state must have increased through the collection of surplus from hitherto uncultivated and unsettled areas. In between 750-1206 CE, the state charged several taxes and levies on the independent peasants, artisans, merchants, and others. The land-grant charters reflect taxes, dues and levies collected by the state since kings cautiously mentioned their name in the record which was getting transferred to the feudatories. Historian LallanjiGopal provides the list of some important taxes such as bhoga, bhaga, kara, uparikara, hiranya, udranga, halikara, samastapratyaya, dasaparadha, pravanikara, turuskasanda, aksapatalaprastha, pratiharaprastha, visatiathuprastha, visayadana, akara, kutaka, jalakara, gokara, valadi, lavanakara, parnakara etc. In addition to these, sometimes a particular king also imposed extra tax/taxes for some special purpose.



## **Landlords and Peasants Relationship**

In the post-Harsha period, peasants became the main producer and taxpayer. The early peasantry in early medieval India was subjected to an ever-increasing tax/rent burden. Kings provided superior rights to feudal lords to collect all taxes including regular, irregular, fixed, and traditional payments from the inhabitants of granted villages. The list of taxes in the inscriptions has no end because it ends with the expression *adi* or *adikam* meaning etcetera. R. S. Sharma connects it to the further empowerment of landlords as they took advantage of the expression *adi* and collected maximum from peasants through unspecified and extra-legal sources. The donees also collected regular taxes as: *bhoga*, *bhaga*, *kara*, *uparikara*, *hiranya*, *udranga*, *halikara*, *samastapratyaya* etc.

The Vakataka grants list 14 types of taxes. The Pallava records specify 18 to 22 of them. The number of taxes increased enormously until the end of c. 1000 CE. From the 7th century onwards grants provided rights to water resources, trees, bushes, and pastures to the donee which not only badly affected the peasantry of the donated villages but also strengthened the power of the donees. The donees charged levies on the use of above resources of the village, which was earlier in the ownership of the village community and free to all. Above all, the land-grant charters asked the peasants to carry out orders of the landlords as disobedience amounted to treason (*mahadroha*). The right of extracting forced labour, i.e. *vishti* became regular in early medieval India exercised by the Brahmanas and other donees of lands such as officials, village authorities, and others. Land-grants transferred it to the grantee, which was earlier a prerogative of the king. In the Chola inscriptions alone, there are more than 100 references to forced labour.

## **Villages**

Ranabir Chakravarti highlights that a large number of grants enjoyed by landed intermediaries resulted in a situation where both the intermediaries and the ruler exploited the peasants. This resulted peasant-landlord relationship in the emergence of the self-sufficient, enclosed village. The village was also the lowest unit of tax collection but an important one. Villages provided maximum revenue to the state and the lords. The amount of taxes were paid through a large part of the surplus, which was collected by the headman. The village head distributed this burden upon all individual villagers. In this way, both peasants with high and low earnings and tenants survived the heavy burden of taxes of king and feudatories by being a member of the village community. The taxes from an *agrahara* were assigned to the Brahmana donees. The brahmadeya villages were generally exempted from various taxes or dues either entirely or at least in the initial stages of settlement. They were also endowed with ever-growing privileges (*pariharas*).

## **Conclusion:**

Land, revenue system, and agricultural relations between landlords and peasants were the essential part of feudalism developed in c. 750-1206 CE. The revolutionary changes occurred in these sectors compared to the situation that existed in c. 600 CE, which brought broad changes in

early medieval Indian socio-economic and political conditions. In this way, we can question the popular notion of the millennial changelessness of Indian society. The land became crucial and a valuable resource in the era, both politically and economically. Land-grants led to the emergence of new religious and secular landed intermediaries and feudatories. Peasants hardly remained as owner of their areas and almost turned into labourer/tiller. The cultivators were paying numerous legal and extra-legal taxes to landlords and king, including vishti (forced labour). The state shared its revenue resources with feudal lords.

Land-grants led to the availability of new lands hitherto unutilized. It became beneficial for both the state and peasants. The state started generating more revenue through access to new areas and local resource base. The state also carried forward its authority to each corner of the kingdom. The ruler became more powerful politically and economically by creating a loyal group of recipients of royal favour with additional facilities such as irrigation sources. The peasants also got new lands to work since the feudal lords, temples, and Brahmins did not work themselves. New agrarian settlements out of brahmadeya, agraphara, manglam, devadanas and secular grants provided enough opportunities to farmers to acquire land and work. It led to the expansion of agriculture all over India. The peasants remained the sole producer and commanded the directions of the early medieval agrarian economy.

## Chapter-III

### Proliferation of Castes

#### 3.1.1. Introduction

The early medieval period was also marked by many social changes. An important phenomenon of this period was the proliferation or increase in the number of castes. How did it happen? One of the reason 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. Changing caste hierarchy also influence the position of women. The advent of Islam also resulted in downgrading of women in Indian society. This period also witnessed the process of Aryanisation of hinterland region of India. This chapter in brief will discuss the various aspects of early medieval society.

#### 3.1.2. Sources for the Reconstruction of Society

There is a very wide ranging source material for the reconstruction of social organization throughout half a millennium (circa eighth to the thirteenth centuries). These sources comprise both literary and epigraphic notices. Practically all major powers of India are recognized to us through copious inscriptional data. Though no quantification has been attempted at an all India stage, the number of the post-Gupta inscriptions necessity run in thousands even on a rough impressionistic assessment. These inscriptions are accessible in a diversity of languages and scripts. These records help us in identifying regional and regional peculiarities without sacrificing a macro view of the subcontinental scene. The literary sources are also very varied. It is not merely the writings on dharmashastras in the form of commentaries and other dharma-nibandhas which tell us in relation to the ups and downs in the social organization. Even works belonging to the realms of kavyas (poetic works), drama, technological and scientific works as well as treatises and architecture throw enormous light on the post-Gupta growths in the sphere of society. Kalhana's Rajatarangini, Naishadhiyacharita of Shriharsha, Prabandha Chintamani of Merutunga, Soddhala's Udaya-Sundari-Katha, Adipurana of Jinasena, the dohas of the Siddhas, Medhatithi's and Vigyaneshwar's commentaries on the Manusmriti and Yajnavalkyasmriti respectively, and works such as Manasollasa, Mayamata and Aparajitapriccha are useful aids for reconstructing the social fabric of India throughout the era under survey.

#### 3.1.3. Changing Material Base and the New Social Order

The early medieval society witnessed that the social organisation was in a flux and distant from being harmonious. Indeed, it could not have been so, particularly in view of the momentous changes taking lay in the economic structure of the sub-continent. The mechanics of the social organization is hard to comprehend if the improving economic circumstances of a sizeable number of lower classes are ignored. One single factor which appears to have set the tone of the post-Gupta society, especially from the eighth-century, was the ever rising phenomenon of land grants. Its impact on the agrarian expansion changed the whole social outlook. This was coupled with a fillip to tendencies of regionalization, its bearing on fluctuations in the urban setting, its nexus with the

monetary organization, its role in rising social and economic immobility and subjection of peasantry and non-agricultural toiling workers, and the resultant hierarchy of ruling landed aristocracy.

A new social ethos was in the creation. It was shown that the new trends in Indian economy were conducive to feudal formation. In the realm of political organization too, a great majority of power centres were marked through feudal tendencies based on graded land rights. No wonder, the social landscape could not escape the domineering impact of the fast pace of economic changes. The resultant social changes demolish the myth of an unchanging and static social organization of India which was propagated through colonialist and imperialist historians. Regrettably, even nationalist historians too did not question such assumptions. More recent writings, especially of the last three decades, have rightly focused on the dynamism and vibrancy of the Indian social fabric through highlighting its interlinks with changing economic patterns.

#### **3.1.4. The New Social Ethos**

The post-eighth century social organisation which appears to have prevailed till at least the establishment of the Turkish political power in the thirteenth century, was marked through modifications in the varna organization such as the transformation of shudras into cultivators thereby bringing them closer to the vaishyas. Newly founded brahmanical order in Bengal and south India wherein the intermediary varnas were absent, and finally, rise of the new literate class struggling for a lay in the varna order, Phenomenal augment in the rise of new mixed castes. Unequal sharing of land and military power, which in turn, accounts for the emergence of feudal ranks cutting crossways varna distinctions, and rising proof of social tensions.

#### **3.1.5. Emergence of Shudras as Cultivators**

The expansion of the rural legroom and agricultural behaviors had been responsible for changes in notions in relation to the persons entitled to undertake these. The law books of the post-Gupta centuries contain agriculture in the samanya-dharma (general job) of all the varnas. The smriti of Parashar further emphasizes that in addition to their traditional sixfold duties (learning, teaching, sacrificing, officiating as sacrifice to help others, acceptance of gifts from a worthy person of three higher varnas as and creation of gifts), the brahmanas could also be associated with agricultural behaviors, preferably through labour of shudras. It was also enjoined upon brahmanas that in order to avoid any type of sin, they should illustrate proper treatment to oxen and offer sure fixed quantities of com to King, Gods and fellow brahmanas.

Surely, such formalities indicate that very important dent was being made in the brahmanical social order and the varna norms were being sought to be redefined. A major indicator of this effort was the bridging of the gap flanked by the vaishyas and the shudras. While this trend creates its beginnings in the early centuries of the Christian era, it is important that in the post-Gupta centuries the vaishyas practically lose their identity as a peasant caste. The well-known Chinese traveller of the early seventh century, Hsuan-Tsang, mentions shudras as agriculturists. Al-biruni, who came to India beside with Mahmud Ghaznavi in the first quarter of the eleventh century, also notes the absence of any variation flanked by the vaishyas and shudras. The Skanda Purana talks in relation to the pitiable circumstances of the vaishyas. Through the eleventh century they came to be treated with the shudras, both ritually and legally. Al-biruni, for instance, says that both vaishyas and shudras were punished with amputation of the tongue for reciting the Vedic texts. There were sure shudras who were described bhojyanna, i.e. food prepared through whom could be taken even through brahmanas. Several Tantric and Siddha teachers were shudras performing works of fishermen, leather workers, washermen, blacksmiths, etc. A text of the eighth century states that thousands of mixed castes were produced as a result of marriages flanked by vaishya women and men of lower castes. There is also a mention of anashrita shudras (shudras who were not dependent) who were well-to-do and sometimes

became members of the regional administrative committees and even made their method into the ruling aristocracy.

Such achievements of shudras were, of course, rather rare. Dependent peasants, ploughmen and artisans were greatly needed to strengthen the early medieval economic and political set-up characterized through a relatively self-sufficing regional economy and the emergence of a dominant class of rural aristocracy. Such a need was being fulfilled through the approximation of the vaishyas and shudras. This happened despite persistence of brahmana orthodoxy reflected in the attitude of Parashar who threatened the shudras abandoning their duty of serving the dvijas with the dire consequence of hell. Even some orthodox parts of the jainas had urbanized the notion that the shudras were not eligible for religious initiation.

### **3.1.6. Rise of a New Literate Class**

Though the first kayastha is mentioned in Gupta inscriptions from Bengal, the post-Gupta inscriptions are full of references to a great diversity of people involved in record keeping behaviors. Separately from kayasthas, these incorporated karanas, karanikas, pustapala, lekhaka, divira, aksharachanchu, dharmalekhin, akshapatalika, etc. Though these scribes were being recruited from dissimilar varnas, later they got crystallized into separate castes with attendant marriage restrictions. From the ninth century we hear of a big number of kayastha families such as Valabha, Ganda, Mathur, Kataria, Shrivastavya, Negam, etc. The use of Kula and Vamsha with kayastha from the eleventh century and conditions such as jati and gyati with kayastha from 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century illustrate that the emergence of the kayastha caste was apparent. Individual kayasthas began to play leading role in learning and literature. Tathagatarakshita of Odisha who belonged to a family of physicians through profession and kayastha through caste, was a reputed professor of Tantras in the Vikramashilla University (in Bihar) in the twelfth century.

### **3.1.7. Proliferation of Caste**

This is one of the mainly distinctive characteristics of social changes throughout the centuries under reference. The Brahmavaivarta Purana dictum deshaheda (variation based on regions/territories) leads to differences in castes. A village named Brihat-Chhattivanna (inhabited through 36 varnas) is mentioned in a tenth century inscription from Bengal. No varna seemed to have remained homogeneous and got fragmented on explanation of territorial affiliations, purity of gotras and pursuance of specific crafts, professions and vocations:

#### **3.1.7.1. Amongst Brahmanas**

The multiplication of castes as a phenomenon appears to be mainly pronounced in the middle of brahmanas. They were no longer confined to their traditional sixfold duties. Separately from occupying high governmental positions such as those of ministers, purohitas, judges, etc. they had also started performing military functions. For instance, the senapati of Prithviraj Chauhan was a brahmana named Skanda and another brahmana named Rak was leading the army of a ruler of Sapadalaksha (in Rajasthan). Inscriptions from Pehoa and Siyadoni and dated in ninth-tenth century mention brahmanas as horse dealers and betel sellers. The eleventh century Kashmiri writer Kshemendra mentions brahmanas performing functions of artisans, dancers and indulging in the sale of wine, buttermilk, salt, etc. Functional distinction of brahmanas is reflected in such titles as: Shrotriya, pandita, maharaja-pandita, dikshit, yajnik, pathaka, upadhyaya, thakkura, agnihotri, etc. Mitakshara, the well-known commentary on the Smriti of Yagyavalkya speaks of the ten-fold gradation of brahmanas ranging from Deva (who is a professor, and devoted to religion and shastras) and Chandala, who does not perform sandhya three times a day. In between were the shudrabrahmanas who existed through profession of arms and temple priests. Divisions within the brahmana varna were also caused through territorial affiliations. In North India we hear of Sarasvat,

Kanyakubja, Maithi, Ganda and Utkal brahmanas. In Gujarat and Rajasthan they were recognized in conditions of their mula (original lay of environment) and divided into Modha, Udichya, *Nagara*, etc. Through the late medieval times, the brahmanas were split into in relation to the 180 mulas. There were also the feelings of superiority. While there was a phenomenal migration of brahmanas, sure regions were measured to be papadeshas (inipious regions). These incorporated Saurashtra, Sindh and Dakshinapath.

#### 3.1.7.2. **Amongst Kshatriyas**

The ranks of kshatriyas also swelled in the post eighth century. Numerous works provide varying lists of 36 clans of Rajputs in northern India alone. They arose out of dissimilar strata of population-kshatriyas, brahmanas, some other tribes including even the original ones and also out of the ranks of foreign invaders who settled here and got assimilated into the Indian social organization. While the traditional notion invested the kshatriya varna as a whole with functions of rulership, the ideologues were never opposed to recognising in several cases the non-kshatriya rulers as kshatriyas. It is said that from in the middle of the captured “respectable men were enrolled in the middle of the Shekhavnt and the Wadhela tribes of Rajputs whilst the lower types were allotted to castes of Kolis, Khantas and Mers”. Some of the new kshatriyas were described Samskara-Varjita, i.e. they were deprived of ritualistic rites. This may be taken as a cover-up for their admission to the brahmanical social order through inferior rites.

#### 3.1.7.3. **Amongst Vaishyas and Shudras**

The procedure of caste proliferation did not leave the vaishyas and shudras untouched. While these two broad varnas, there is an equally unmistakable proof of jatis (castes). Like the brahmanas, the vaishyas too were being recognized with regional affiliations. Therefore, we explanation for vaishyas described Shrimal's, Palliwals, Nagar, Disawats, etc. No less striking is the heterogeneity of the Shudras who had been performing multifarious functions. They were agricultural laborers, petty peasants, artisans, craftsman, servants and attendants. The Brahma Vaivarta Purana lists as several as one hundred castes of shudras. In their case too, these sub-divisions were based on regional and territorial affiliations.

In addition, shudra castes were also emerging which were related to a specific procedure of industrial working, e.g. Padukakrit, Charmakara (makers of shoes, leather workers), etc. Crystallization of crafts into castes was a complementary phenomenon. It appears that napita, modaka, tumbulika, suvarnakara, sutrakara, malakara, etc. appeared as castes out of several crafts. These castes increased with the growth of ruling aristocracy and their dependence is reflected in their characterization as ashrita. Their subjection and immobility is indicated in the transfer of trading guilds (described shrenis or prakritis) to brahmana donees. An inscription of 1000 C.E, belonging to Yadava mahasamanta Bhillama-II defines the donated village as comprising eighteen guilds. Incidentally, these guilds also functioned as castes.

#### 3.1.8. **Land Sharing, Feudal Ranks and Varna Distinctions**

The studies of the post-Gupta economic and political structures have taken due note of newly appeared graded land rights. The hierarchy of officials and vassals also shows the impact of unequal sharing of land. The multifarious functions of vassals and officials, illustrate in the middle of other characteristics a strong predilection of military obligations. The nature of power dispersal and its links with the structure of land sharing were bound to power the social set-up as well. One very important dimension of this impact was the emergence of feudal ranks cutting crossways varna distinctions.

Constituting the ruling aristocracy was no longer the monopoly of kshatriyas. That the feudal ranks were open to all varnas is clear in the Mansara (a text on architecture) when it lays down that

everybody irrespective of his varna could get the two lower military ranks in the feudal hierarchy: praharka and astragrahin. Although lowest in rank, the astragrahin was entitled to have 500 horses, 5000 elephants, 50,000 soldiers, 5000 women attendants and one queen. We do not have to take these figures literally but surely, the text is an significant indicator of varna distinctions getting a rude shock through new sharing of land and power. The titles such as thakur, raut, nayaka, etc. were not confined to kshatriyas or Rajputs. These were also conferred on kayasthas and other castes who were granted land and who served in army. Kulluka's commentary on the Smriti of Manu mentions the tendency of better merchants joining the ranks of the ruling landed aristocracy. In Kashmir, rajanaka, a little of high honour literally meaning "almost a king", got closely associated with the brahmanas and later; on it became a family name in the form of razdan. Feudal titles were also bestowed upon artisans. For instance, the Deopara inscription of Vijayasena tells us; that Shulapani; who was the head of artisans of Varendra (in West Bengal), held the title ranaka. The symbols and insignia of social identity amongst feudal rank holders were also related, to landed possessions. Badges of honour, fly whisk, umbrella, horses, elephants, palanquins, acquisition of pancha-mahashabda, etc. depended on the specific lay in the feudal hierarchy. To illustrate, chakravartis and mahasamantas were permitted to erect the chief gate (sinhadvar) which could not be done through lesser vassals. The provision of varying sizes of houses for dissimilar grades of vassals and officials was also the product of the impact of unequal holdings.

### **3.1.9. Rising Social Tensions**

Though several modifications were taking lay and growths were happening which cut crossways varna distinctions, nevertheless, the pace of social changes in the post-eighth centuries was distant from being an agent of harmonious and egalitarian set-up. The manifestations of social tensions were too several.

A society which was based on an unequal sharing of bases of economic power was bound to be iniquitous. Though the shudras were rising in their status but untouchability was very much part of the social fabric. A fairly big number of shudras appear to have been the actual workers, whether on land or in industry, working for their feudal overlords, notwithstanding the few and unusual examples of anashrita shudras. Pursuit of the so-described impure occupations, being guilty of prohibited acts, adherence to heretical acts and physical impurities were major factors for the growth of untouchability. The Brihad Naradiya Purana reveals the beginnings of the exclusion of the shudras from spaces of worship. The chandalas and dombas were to carry sticks through striking which they made themselves recognized so that people could avoid touching them. When Vastupala was the governor of Cambay, he constructed platforms and therefore stopped the promiscuous mingling of all castes in shops where curd was sold. Though the brahmanical lawgivers were showing their concern for the proprietary rights of women, especially on stridhan, it was also an age when the barbarous practice of sati appears to have made a real beginning.

### **Conclusion**

Early medieval society was not static but very transformative. The fluid nature of society got well attested to in the transformation of social structure. A hierarchy of rights and statues existed at all levels of social structure. Land grants strengthened the position of Brahmanas in rural areas, and they emerged as landed magnates in this period. Brahman varna also got divided into various sub-castes based on their associations with learnings, locality, villages, regions etc. Early medieval India witnessed the rise of a new ruling class through the process of Rajputization. Rajputs were not a homogeneous group but were divided into numerous clans. Gradually vaishyas left agriculture and became a trading community. Many new vanij castes

emerged due to the incorporation of new professions. This period witnessed upper social mobility for shudras. Shudras became agriculturists due to the expansion of agriculture in new areas. New castes were added in the shudra fold. More untouchable castes were added to the list. Brahmanical literature imposed more restrictions on them. The period also witnessed the emergence of some new castes like the kayastha and vaidyas, cutting across varnas and caste system. Remote areas were brought under state society, leading to subjugation of indigenous tribes or incorporation into Brahmanical order. The dissent groups were suppressed by assigning a shudra or untouchable status. Slavery existed but remained confined to household works. The notion of maleccha was used for those who either did not accept Brahmanical ideology or remained outside of it.



## **Chapter-IV-**

### **Peasantization of Tribes**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Indian social organisation during five hundred years (8th–13th century) for discussion was extremely vibrant and responsive to change taking place in the realms of economy, polity, and ideas. It focuses on the essentials of the new social ethos, whose tone was being set by the nature of new land rights and power bases. The early historic period witnessed the expansion of urbanism, with cities based on trade and commercial enterprise. The decline of trade, among other factors, is said to have precipitated a socio-economic crisis as well as political fragmentation. This led urban civilization to decline into a subsistence economy based on agriculture in the post–Gupta period. This period not only experienced agrarian expansion across various regions of the subcontinent and the spread of state societies through local state formation but also peasantization of tribes and their incorporation within the ‘varna jati’ framework.

The dominant form of sustenance among the tribal communities was pastoralism. There was a subtle movement of the tribals towards sedentarisation. This process of sedentarisation of the pastoralists continued unabated throughout the medieval period. The commercialization of agriculture and the increase in the extent of cultivation were the two crucial factors behind this transformation. The assimilation of tribes into rural socio categories could be discerned by different terminology used for them by modern historians and contemporary chronicles. They called them zamindars, peasants, chiefs, etc. In the case of jat, the tribe process is evident. As they moved northward they abandoned pastoralism and opted for sedentary agriculture. Yuan Chwang mentions them as cattle herders. Similarly, in the Persian translation, they were referred to as pastoralists, soldiers, and the boatmen. Alberuni (c.1030 CE) records them as ‘cattle-owners and low Sudra people’. Scholars like Irfan Habib argues that their northward migration in southern Punjab from Sindh towards Multan occurred sometimes around the 11th century.

The tribal societies that got assimilated into agricultural society appear to have subsumed their tribal identity with some sort of ‘caste’ in the existing rural caste based multilayered hierarchical society. The social position of these tribals so assimilated into the rural society was often fragile. D.D. Kosambi in his *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* argues that tribal elements being fused into a general society’ once tribes got assimilated into the broader social structure. Their status in the hierarchical varna categories largely depended on the profession they pursued. Agricultural communities, generally speaking, joined the peasant caste of that region. However, the hunting-gathering tribals groups generally formed the lowest ranks, outside the fourfold varnas. Irfan Habib believes that the tribals formed a sustainable part of rural ‘menial proletariat’.

#### **SOURCES FOR RECONSTITUTING RURAL SOCIETY**

There is an extremely wide-ranging source material; both literary and epigraphic notices, for the reconstruction of social organisations during half a millennium (from 4th to the 13th centuries). The literary sources like the writings on 'Dharmashastras' in the form of commentaries and other 'dharm-abandas' which tell us about the ups and downs in the social system. Even works belonging to the field of kavyas (poetic works), drama, technical and scientific works as well as treatises. The architecture throws enormous light on the post-Gupta developments in the sphere of society. Kalhana's Rajatarangini, Prabhanda Chintamani of Merutunga, Naishadhiyacharita of Shriharsha, Adipurana of Jinasena, the dohas of Siddhas, Soddhala's Udaya-sundri-katha, Medhatithi's and Vigymeshwar's commentaries on the Manusmriti and Yajnavalkyasmriti respectively, and works such as Manasollasa, Mayamata and Aparajitapriccha are useful aids for reconstructions the social fabric of India during the period under survey. Historians have tended to broadly distinguished between Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic villages in this period. Within Brahmanic villages, a further distinction made between an 'agrahara' (a settlement of Brahmanas) and 'devadana' (a settlement oriented around a temple). The intervention of Brahmanas in rural society involved the imposition of the bureaucratic and priestly elite. It imposed a level of 'Sanskritization' on local cultures. This was established through the 'varna-jati' system with its ideology of differences and well-defined hierarchies. At the ground level, however, it is nearly impossible to order rural society into the idealized categories of the 'Dharmashastra' texts. Within villages, there existed a range of groups- from Brahmanas to Samantas (officials) peasant caste and servile group. Meanwhile, the transformation of tribes into a caste or the peasant was gaining rapidity in this period. The medieval period, in particular, was to see the rise of peasant castes like the jats and ruling lineages like the Rajputs to the center stage of history. While the Varna system provided the overall normative model of such 'incorporation', the categorization of jati allowed for regional variations in the relative positioning of such groups. Such changes cannot be seen as independent of the transformation in agrarian regions and state societies but were fundamentally linked to them.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF THE SUDRAS**

The socio-economic aspect of feudalism in India is intimately connected with the transformation of the Sudras, who were treated as the common helots of the three higher varnas, into the peasant from the Gupta period onward. In the older settled areas, Sudra labourers seem to have been provided with land. In the backward areas, a large number of the tribal peasantry was annexed to the Brahmanical system through land grants, and they were called Sudras. Therefore, Huien-Tsang describes the Sudras as agriculturists, a fact corroborated by Al-Beruni about four centuries later. The Indian peasantry and their subjugation in the early medieval period was a striking development connected with the socio-economic dimension of feudalism, because of (a) the increase in the burden of taxation on the villagers, (b) the imposition of the forced labour, and (c) the right of sub-infeudation.

These factors may be taken as various modes of extracting surplus from the peasant for the benefits of either the king and or his secular and religious beneficiaries. They gave rise to new property relations and a new mechanism of economic subordination from which there was no escape. The peasant reacted to the above process of disposition and impoverishment in two possible forms;(a) to leave the area-referred to the jatakas, and (b) the ascertain of their land of rights in the form of a peasant uprising.

### **RISE OF SUDRA PEASANTS**

The rise of the Sudra peasants is another important development of the early medieval period, there is sufficient reason to believe that Sudras were also becoming peasants in good numbers, as several law-books show that land was rented out to the Sudra for half the crop. This would suggest that the practice of granting land to Sudra sharecroppers was becoming more common. Huien-Tsang describes the Sudras as a class of agriculturists, a description which is confirmed by the Narasimha Purana compiled before the tenth-century ad. Thus, for the rise of feudalism the transformation of Sudras from the position of slaves and hired labourers into that of agriculturists should be regarded as a factor of great significance.

### **SGROWING RIGIDITY OF SOCIAL ORDER**

The coming of 'mlecchas' or foreigners such as the Hunas, Arabs, Turks, etc., had created a fear psychosis and resulted in a tendency, where the emphasis was on the need to preserve the age-old social order. Shankaracharya, the famous religious philosophical leader stated that the varna and ashrama-dharmas were disturbed. Dhanapala, a writer of the eleventh century, also talks about the chaos in the conduct of varna order. Various rulers between the seventh and thirteenth centuries make rather pompous claims about preserving the social order. These are reflected in their inscriptions. 'Varnasharma-dharma-sthapana', i.e. the establishment of the system of varna and ashram becomes a frequently used expression in contemporary inscriptions. A twelfth-century work called 'Manasollasa' even mentions 'Varnadhikarini'- an officer responsible for the maintenance of varnas. It needs to be underlined that this trend of closing social ranks, making social system rigid and denouncing all efforts to change the system was largely the concern of Brahmanical lawgivers and political advisers who had developed vested interests in maintaining a status quo. However, it was by no means a universal phenomenon.

The fundamental bases of the caste system were being questioned, especially by non-Brahmanical followers. Buddha had raised doubts about the rationale of castes based on birth. His anger was particularly heaped upon Brahmanas. Though these voices could not achieve significant breakthroughs, in the long run, they did not cease either. Similarly, in dharmapariksha Jaina sage, Amitagati determined caste based on personal conduct. The caste superiority of the Brahmanas was challenged by the Jainas in the works like the Khthkushprakarana. Another work called Latakamelakamentions a Buddhist monk who denies the importance of caste, regards it as baseless and denounces pollution and caste-based segregation, Kshmendra, the literary genius of

Kashmir refers to Kula-jati-darpa (vanity of caste and clan) as a disease of the society for which he himself as a physician. The Padma Purana reveals a conflict of two ideologies: the orthodox one enjoining on the Shudras- a life of penury, and the heterodox one urging upon him the importance of wealth. An eleventh-century work focuses on social ranks and divisions based not on birth but occupation. The broad classification of householders takes note of the following six categories like: (a) the highest included chakravartins, (b) the high ones comprised the feudal elite, (c) the middle ones included traders, moneylenders, possessors of cows, buffaloes, (d) camels, horses, etc., (e) the small businessmen and petty cultivators, (f) the degraded ones such as the members of guilds of artisans and craftsmen, and (g) the highly degraded included chandalas and other following ignoble occupations such as the killing of birds and animals.

### **CHANGING ECONOMIC BASE**

The above view of conflicting trends shows that the social organisation was in a flux far from being harmonious because of the momentous changes taking place in the economic structure of the Indian society. The mechanics of the social system is difficult to comprehend if the improving economic conditions of the lower classes are missed. An important factor that was, the ever-growing phenomenon of land grants and its impact on agrarian expansion changed the entire social outlook. This was coupled with localisation, fluctuations in the urban setting, its relation with the monetary system, its role in increasing social and economic immobility, and subjection of peasantry class and non-agricultural toiling workers. A new social ethos was in the making. In the field of the political organisation too, a great majority of power centres were marked by feudal tendencies based on graded land rights. As a result, social changes demolish the base of an unchanging and static social organisation of India.

### **FEUDAL RANKS AND VARNA DISTINCTIONS**

The hierarchy of officials and vassals shows the impact of the unequal distribution of land. One very significant dimension of this impact was the emergence of feudal ranks cutting across varna distinctions. Constituting the ruling aristocracy was no longer the monopoly of kshatriyas. That the feudal ranks were open to all varnas is clear in the Mansara (a text on architecture) when it lays down that everybody irrespective of his varna could get the two lower military ranks in the feudal hierarchy: praharka and astragrahin. The titles such as thakur, raut, nayaka, etc., were not confined to kshatriyas or rajputs. These were also conferred on kayasthas and other castes who were granted land and who served in the army. This estimation of social changes during the centuries between the 8th and 13th centuries highlights the following: (a) extremely rich and varied source material for the survey, (b) the Brahmanical perspective with a concern for social rigidity and the need to maintain the varna order, (c) questioning of the bases of caste system where an emphasis is put on consideration of economic factors in the determination of social status, (d) changing the material base and its impact on the emergence of the new social ethos, (e) modifications in the varna order, particularly the changing position of the vaishyas and Shudras and the disappearances of intermediary varnas, especially in Bengal and

south India, rise of Kayastha - a new literate class, (f) multiplication of castes in all varnas, (g) the linkage between a land distribution and the. The emergence of feudal ranks, and (h) absence of a harmonious and egalitarian society marked by various sources of tension.

## **Conclusion**

Therefore, the questions relating to the agrarian order are central to the debates on characterizing the transition to early medieval India. Of particular importance is the phenomenon of land grant charters which began to be issued on a large scale by ruling dynasties across the subcontinent in this period. Grants of land to Brahmanas, temples, and officials are regarded by historians of the 'feudalism school' as marking the weakening of marked by various sources of tension. Royal authority and evidence of fragmentation of power. In contrast, scholars subscribing to the 'integrationist' paradigm see this period as marked by agrarian expansion and the spread of state-society. The integration of rural economy and society led to the creation of an agrarian base upon which new ruling groups could assert themselves. The extension of agriculture also led to the expansion of rural settlements across the country. In outlying areas, the intervention of Brahmanas in rural society involved the imposition of the bureaucratic and priestly elite. It imposed a level of 'Sanskritization' on local cultures. The land grants created differential access to power and resources within local communities and these differences only increased with time. From the 7th century, the growth of the agrarian economy led to the emergence of regional landed aristocracies. The increased subjection of the peasantry and the extraction of forced labour are seen as essential elements of the rise of 'feudal ties'. Thus, rather than a time of stagnation, the transition to the early medieval period was marked by far-reaching changes in rural society and the economy.

## Unit-III: Trade and Commerce:

### Chapter-I

#### Inter-regional Trade

Early medieval period of India as evidence from earlier chapter was a period of political and cultural creativity. Establishments of regional and local kingdoms, growth of regional culture and new agrarian setup were coincided with the rapid development of commodity production, the manufacturing by hand of goods which made India's reputation in these early times as a land of fabulous wealth and elegance. This reputation attracted people to the subcontinent, feeding further the vitality of commerce within and beyond South Asia. The overseas maritime trade resulted in interaction of Indians with the rest of the world. In fact Indians merchants travelled far and wide and left their cultural footprints wherever they went. In return they also brought home ideas, impressions, customs and traditions from these distant lands. The transmission of Indian culture particularly to the distant parts of Central Asia, China, Japan, and especially Southeast Asia is one of the greatest achievements of Indian history or even of the history of mankind also. None of the other great civilizations-not even the Hellenic-had been able to achieve a similar success without military conquest. Though they were influenced by Indian culture, they are nevertheless part and parcel of the history of those respective countries. Here in this chapter we will look into the various aspects of trade and commerce as flourished in the early medieval age and their impact on the growth of Indian culture during the period under discussion. Trade and commerce is an integral component of the Indian economy in the early medieval centuries. The nature and extent of the use of money, the functioning of market, the role of agricultural production, and stages in the conditions of urban settlements are interrelated developments. In this unit we will discuss the importance of trade and commerce in the overall economic history of India, during the early medieval period (700-1300 CE).

#### 4.3.1. Inland Trade and Commerce

The collection, sharing and exchange of goods are described trade. It also involves dissimilar parts of society including traders, merchants, peasants and artisans. In a somewhat indirect manner, even political authorities have a stake in it as taxes on the articles of commerce imposed through them constitute a significant source of revenue of the state. For proper understanding of the historical characteristics of trade throughout the early medieval times we will discuss the topic in two broad phase c.700-900 C.E., and c 900-1300 C.E. Briefly, the two phases are marked through: Relative decline of trade, metallic currency, urban centres and a somewhat closed village economy in the first stage, and reversal of mainly of the aforesaid tendencies in the second stage.

##### 4.3.1.1. Stage of Decline (C.E 750-1000)

The era from C.E. 750-1000 witnessed wide-spread practice of granting land not only to priests and temples but also to warrior chiefs and state officials. This phenomena lead to the emergence of a hierarchy of landlords and growth of self sufficient village economy, where local needs were being satisfied in the vicinity through the imposition of numerous restrictions on the mobility of actual producers. This indirectly led to relative dearth of medium of exchange. Followings are the characteristic features of trade during this stage.

**Mode of Exchange:** India was ruled through several significant dynasties flanked by C.E. 750 and 1000. These contain the Gujjara Pratiharas in Western India, the Palas in Eastern India and the Rashtrakutas in the Deccan. All had the distinction of having been served through some of the mainly powerful kings of the day, several of whom had very extensive lasting reigns. It is astonishing

that their accessible coins are very few and in no method compare either in quantity or excellence with the coins of earlier centuries. Since money plays a significant role in the sale and purchase of goods, the paucity of actual coins and the absence of coin-moulds in archaeological discoveries lead us to consider in the shrinkage of trade throughout the era under survey. Of course some parts of India witnessed minting and circulation of coins but their volume was limited. During this period cowries and money in the form of gold/ silver dust functioned as medium of exchange.

Even when such early medieval coin kinds as the Indo-Sassanian, Shri Vighraha, Shri Adivaraha, Bull and Horseman, Gadhaiya, etc. appeared in Western and North western India and to some extent in the Ganga valley, they could not create much dent in the overall economy. Separately from the doubts in relation to the era of emergence of these coins, their very poor excellence and purchasing power also indicate the shrinkage of their actual role. Further, in relation to the rising population and expanding region of resolution, the overall volume of money circulation was negligible. Hence, we can say that the case for the relative decline of metallic money throughout the first stage is based on convincing empirical proof. This was bound to have an impact on India's trading behaviors.

**Relative Decline of Trade:** Internally, the fragmentation of political power and the dispersal of power to local chiefs, religious grantees, etc. appear to have had an adverse effect, at least in the initial centuries of the land grant economy. Several of the intermediary landlords, particularly of less productive regions, resorted to loot and plunder or excessive taxes on goods passing through their territories. This necessity has dampened the enthusiasm of traders and merchants. Frequent wars amongst potential ruling chiefs were also a cause of decline.

The fall of the great Roman Empire in the fourth century and the knowledge of silk production by Byzantine (Eastern Roman Empire) adversely affected India's foreign trade. India therefore, lost a significant market which had fetched her considerable amount of gold in the early centuries of the Christian era. The decline of foreign trade was also caused through the expansion of Arabs on the North-west frontiers of India in the seventh and eighth centuries. Their attendance in the region made overland routes unsafe for Indian merchants. A story in the Kathasaritsagara tells us that a group of merchants going from Ujjain to Peshawar were captured through an Arab and sold. Later, when they somehow got free, they decided to leave the North-western region forever and returned to South for trade. The fights amongst the Tibetans and Chinese throughout these centuries also affected the flow of goods beside the routes in central Asia. Even the Western coast of India suffered dislocation and disruption of sea trade as the Arabs raided Broach and Thane in the seventh century and destroyed Valabhi, and significant port on the Saurashtra coast, in the eighth century. Though as we have pointed out, later, the Arabs played a significant part in the growth of Indian maritime trade after the tenth century; initially their sea raids had an adverse effect on the Indian commercial action. There are some references in the modern literature to India's get in touch with South-east Asia, but it is doubtful whether it could create up for the loss suffered on explanation of the decline of trade the West.

**Urban Settlements: Decay:** The first stage was also marked through the decay and desertion of several cities. It is a significant symptom of commercial decline because the cities are primarily the settlements of people occupied in crafts and commerce. As trade declined and the demand for craft-goods slumped, the traders and craftsmen livelihood in cities had to disperse to rural regions for alternative means of livelihood. Therefore cities decayed and townfolk became a part of village economy. Beside the accounts of Hiuen Tsang, the Pauranic records too, while referring to Kali age indicate depopulation of significant municipalities. The decay of significant cities such as Vaishali, Pataliputra, Varanasi, etc. is apparent from the archaeological excavations which reveal poverty of

structure and antiquities. The pan-Indian scene is marked through desertion of urban centres or their state of decay' in the era flanked by the third and eighth centuries. Even those settlements which sustained upto the eighth century, were deserted thereafter. One can mention Ropar (in Punjab), Atranjikhera and Bhita (in Uttar Pradesh), Eran (in Madhya Pradesh), Prabhas Patan (in Gujarat), Maheswar and Paunar (in Maharashtra), and Kudavelli (in Andhra Pradesh) in this category of urban settlements.

***Decline in Craft Production:*** The commercial action throughout the first stage of early medieval era had declined but did not disappear totally. In information, trade in costly and luxury goods meant for the use of kings, feudal chiefs and heads of temples and monasteries sustained to exist. The articles such as valuable and semivaluable stones, ivory, horses, etc. shaped a significant part of the extensive aloofness trade, but the proof for transactions in the goods of daily use is quite meager in the sources belonging to this era. The only significant article mentioned in the inscriptions are salt and oil which could not be produced through every village, and therefore had to be brought from outside. If the economy had not been self-enough, the references to trade in granules, sugar, textile, handicrafts, etc. would have been more numerous. In short the nature of commercial action throughout C.E. 750-1000 was such which catered more to the landed intermediaries and feudal lords rather than the masses. Though there were some pockets of trade and commerce such as Pehoa (close to Karnal in Haryana) and Ahar (close to Bulandshahr in Uttar Pradesh) where merchants from distant and wide met to transact business, they could not create any important dent in the closed economy of the country as a whole.

#### **4.3.1.2. The Period of Revival & prosperity (C.E.900-1300)**

This stage is marked through the revival of trade and commerce. It was also the era of agrarian expansion, increased use of money and the reemergence of market economy in which goods were produced for swap rather than for local consumption. These centuries also witnessed a substantial growth of urban settlements in dissimilar parts of the sub-continent. The widespread practice of land grants had been an important factor in agrarian expansion. Though it is recognized that it is not easy to quantify this development, one can also not overlook the noticeable local variations and disparities. Though, the era from the beginning of the tenth century to the end of the thirteenth was the age of greater manufacture of both cereals and pulses as well as of commercial crops. Naturally, it created a favorable climate for widening the scope of both internal and external trade. Characteristic features of this period are as follows.

***Crafts and Industry:*** The growth of agricultural manufacture was complemented through increased craft manufacture. This phase witnessed increased craft manufacturing which stimulated the procedure of both local and inter-local exchange. Textile Industry, which had been well recognized since ancient times, urbanized as a major economic action. Coarse as well as fine cotton goods were now being produced. Marco Polo (C.E. 1293) and Arab writers praise the excellent excellence of cotton fabrics from Bengal and Gujarat. The availability of madder in Bengal and indigo in Gujarat might have acted as significant aides to the growth of textile industry in these regions. Manasollasa, a text of the twelfth century, also mentions Paithan, Negapatnam, Kalinga and Multan as significant centres of textile industry.

The silk weavers of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu also constituted a very significant and influential part of the society. The oil industry acquired great importance throughout this era. From the tenth century onwards, we get more references to the farming of oilseeds as well as to ghanaka or oil mills. Sugarcane farming and cane crushers in this era also indicate big level manufacture of jaggery and other shapes of sugar. Besides the agro- based industry, the craftsmanship in metal and leather goods too reached a high stage of excellence. The literary sources refer to craftsmen linked



with dissimilar kinds of metals such as copper, brass, iron, gold, silver, etc. A number of big beams at Puri and Konarka temples in Odisha indicate the proficiency of the iron smiths of India in the twelfth century. Iron was also used to manufacture swords, spearheads and other arms and weapons of high excellence. Magadha, Benaras, Kalinga and Saurashtra were recognized for the manufacture of good excellence swords. Gujarat was recognized for gold and silver embroidery.

The Ginza records of the Jewish merchants belonging to the twelfth century reveal that Indian brass industry was so well recognized that the customers in Aden sent broken vessels and utensils to India to refashion them according to their own specifications. The existing specimens of Cola bronzes and those from Nalanda, Nepal and Kashmir display the excellence of the Indian metal workers. In the field of leather industry Gujarat occupied an enviable location. Marco Polo mentions that the people of Gujarat made beautiful leather mats in red and blue which were skilfully embroidered with figures of birds and animals. These were in great demand in the Arab World.

***Re-introduction of metallic coins:*** The revival of trade received considerable help from the re-emergence of metal money throughout the centuries under discussion. There is, though, substantial discussion in relation to the degree and stage of monetization. Very often the contenders of the penetration of money in the market invoke literary and inscriptional references to numerous conditions purporting to describe several kinds of coins of early medieval India. Therefore texts such as Prabandhachintamani, Lilavati, Dravyapariksha, Lekhapaddhati, etc. mention bhagaka, rupaka, vimshatika, karshapana, dinar, dramma, nishka, gadhaiyamudra, gadyanaka, tanka, and several other coins with their multiples. No less prolific are inscriptional references. For instance the Siyadoni inscription alone refers to diversities of drammas in the mid-tenth century. The Paramara Chalukya, Chahmana, Pratihara, Pala, Candella and Cola inscriptions corroborate mainly of the conditions establish in modern literature. There has also been considerable speculation in relation to the value of these coins, their metal content and their connection with one another. Nothing could be more simplistic than to suggest the penetration of money in the market basically on the foundation of listing of numismatic gleanings from a mixed bag of inscriptions and literature. We need to scrutinize the contexts of such references.

As distant as the actual specimens of coins are concerned, one can say that the practice of minting gold coins was revived through the Kalacuri King of Tripuri in Madhya Pradesh, the Gahadavala King close to Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, the Chandella rulers in Central India, King Harsha of Kashmir and some Cola Kings in Tamil Nadu also issued gold coins. Despite the plethora of references to coins, the proof of overall volume of money in circulation is approximately negligible. Nor can one overlook the poor purchasing power of early medieval coins, irrespective of the metal used. All coins of the era were highly debased and reduced in weight. Also, in conditions of the rising population and expanding region of resolution, the use of money appears to have been highly restricted. The case revise of early medieval Rajasthan shows that the revival of trade, multiplication of exchange centres and markets and prosperity of merchant families took lay only with the help of "partial monetization". Likewise, the cash nexus on the Western coast (Konkan region) under the Shilaharas (C.E. 850-1250) was also marked through limited use of money. The kinds and denominations of coins remained not only very localized but could not penetrate deep into the economic ethos. Masses were distant absent from handling of coins. The currency organization of South India throughout C.E. 950-1300 also shows that transactions at all stages of the society were not equally affected through coined money. For instance, the fabulous expenses accounted to have been incurred through the Pandyas as regular buyers of imported horses cannot be thought in conditions of what we know as very poor Pandyan currency. Barter was still a significant means of swap in local inter-local and perhaps even in inter-national commerce. There are references which

indicate that caravans of merchants exchanged their commodities with those of other regions. Though the revival of even “partial monetization” was contributing to economic growth, yet no less important was the parallel development of credit instrument through which debits and credits could be transferred without the handling of cash money. In the texts of the era we discover references to a device described *hundika* or the bill of exchange which might have been used through merchants for commercial transactions. Through this device credit could be extended through one merchant to another and, therefore, the obstacle to commerce due to shortage of coined money could be overcome. The *Lakshapaddhati*, a text which throws light on the life of Gujarat in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries, refers to several means of raising loan for consumption as well as commercial ventures through the mortgage of land, homes and cattle.

***Commodities of Trade and their Consumers:*** There are numerous inscriptions which refer to merchants carrying food grains, oil, butter, salt, coconuts, areca nuts, betel leaves, madder, indigo, candid sugar, jaggery, thread cotton fabrics, blankets, metals, spices, etc. from one lay to another, and paying taxes and tolls on them. Benjamin Tudela, a Jesuit priest from Spain (12<sup>th</sup> century) noticed wheat, barley and pulses, besides linsed fiber and cotton cloth brought through the traders to the island of Kish in the Persian Gulf on their method home from India. Al Idrisi also refers to the transshipment of rice from the country of Malabar to Sri Lanka in the twelfth century. The export of palm sugar and coir for ropes is noted through Friar Jordanus who wrote in relation to the C.E. 1330. Marco Polo refers to the export of indigo from Quilon (on the Malabar Coast) and Gujarat.

Besides, cotton fabrics, carpets, leather mats, swords and spears also appear in several sources as significant articles of swap. High value things such as horses, elephants, jewellery, etc. also came to several swap centres. The chief customers of Indian goods were of course the rich inhabitants of China, Arabia and Egypt. Several of the Indian goods might have established their method to Europe as well as via Mediterranean. While the characteristics of foreign trade will be discussed at length later, it needs to be highlighted that the domestic demand was not insignificant. A new class of consumers appeared as a result of big level land grants from the eighth century onwards. The priests who earlier subsisted on meager fees offered at domestic and other rites were now entitled to hereditary enjoyment of vast landed estates, benefices and rights. This new landowning class, beside with the ruling chiefs and rising mercantile class, became a significant buyer of luxuries and necessities because of their better purchasing power.

The brahmanical and non-brahmanical religious establishments, which commanded vast possessions in the form of landed estates and local levies, urbanized as significant consumers of approximately all marketable goods. They required not only such articles as coconuts, betel leaves and areca nuts, which had acquired great ritual sanctity, but also increased quantity of food for presentation to gods or for sharing as *prasadau*. The personnel of religious establishments, which numbered up to several hundreds in case of big and significant temples, constituted a significant consuming group to be fed and clothed through peasants, artisans and merchants. Therefore big temples with their vast possessions and varied necessities also helped in generating commercial action. This phenomenon was more marked in South India where several temple sites became significant commercial centres.

***Trade Routes and Means of Communication:*** A vast network of roads linked dissimilar ports, markets and cities with one another and served as the channel of trade and commerce. The overland connections amongst dissimilar regions is indicated through the itinerary of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang who came to India in the seventh century from crossways the Hindukush and visited several cities and capitals from Kashmir in North to Kanchi in South and from Assam in East to Sindh in West. An inscription of C.E. 953 refers to merchants from Karnataka, Madhyadesha,

South Gujarat and Sindh coming to Ahada in Rajasthan for mercantile behaviors. Bilhana, an eleventh century poet from Kashmir tells us in relation to the bus travels from Kashmir to Mathura, and how he reached Banaras after passing through Kannauj and Prayaga. From Banaras he proceeded to Somanatha (on the Saurashtra coast) via Dhar (close to Ujjain) and Anahilavada (in North Gujarat). From Somanatha, he sailed to Honavar (close to Goa), and then went overland to Rameshwaram on the Eastern coast. Albiruni (C.E. 1030) mentions fifteen routes which started from Kannauj, Mathura, Bayana, etc. The route from Kannauj passed through Prayaga and went eastward up to the port of Tamralipti (Tamluk in the Midnapur district of West Bengal), from where it went beside the Eastern coast to Kanchi in South.

Towards the North-east, this route led to Assam, Nepal and Tibet, from where one could go overland to China. Kannauj and Mathura were also on the route to Balkh in the North-west. This also joined Peshawar and Kabul and ultimately the Grand Silk route connecting China with Europe. This Northwestern route was the chief channel of commercial intercourse flanked by India and Central Asia in the pre-Gupta centuries. But in the early medieval era, it was mainly under the control of Arab and Turkish traders who used it primarily to bring horses from Persia, Balkh and other regions. The route starting from Bayana in Rajasthan passed through the desert of Marwar, and reached the contemporary port of Karachi in Sindh. A branch of this route passed through Abu in the Western foot of the Aravali Hills, and linked ports and cities of Gujarat with Bayana, Mathura and other spaces in North and North-western India. Another route from Mathura and Prayaga proceeded to the port of Broach on the Western coast via Ujjain. These routes played a significant role in opening the interior of India to the international sea trade which acquired a new dimension in the post-tenth centuries. Besides roads, the rivers in the plains of Northern India, and the sea route beside the Eastern and Western coasts in South India also served as significant means of inter-local contacts.

The pleasures and pains of travel in ancient times depended on the geographical circumstances of the trade routes. The routes through desert and hilly regions were certainly more arduous and hard. In the plains, bullock-carts were the chief means of conveyance, but where they could not ply animals, human carriers were employed to transport goods from one lay to another. In the modern literature, there are references to dissimilar kinds of boats which necessity have been used in river traffic whereas big ships plied on the high seas.

An important development in the post-tenth centuries was the keen interest shown through rulers to stay the highways in their kingdoms safe. They took events to punish thieves and robbers and provided military as well as monetary help to villagers to protect the traders and travelers passing through their region. The Chalukya kings of Gujarat had a separate department described the Jialapatha-karana to look after highways. They also built new roads to connect significant ports and markets in their state and exhumed tanks and wells for the benefit of travelers. Trade being a significant source of revenue, political authorities had to be concerned in relation to the safety and well being of traders and merchants. Marco Polo's reference to Cambay as a lay free from pirates designates that Indian kings also took steps to safeguard their ports against piracy which was a major threat all beside the sea route from South China to the Persian Gulf.

## **Conclusion**

The present study of trade and commerce during c. 700-1300 CE has focused on: the two phases of inland and foreign trade, the nature and extent of the use of metal coins and the role of other media of exchange in the trade network, contribution of expansion of agriculture and increased

agricultural production in furthering interests of trade, and impact of trade and commerce on the condition of towns through the centuries. The overall picture of trade and commerce during the six centuries under discussion is that of feudalisation. The way in which money transactions took place, the manipulations of landed interests including those of state officials and ruling chiefs, functioning of the ruling elite in the interests of big traders and merchants and putting restrictions on artisans and craftsmen are indicators of the process of feudalisation.

## Chapter-II.

### Maritime Trade and Forms of Exchange

There was a time in the past, when Indians were the masters of the sea borne trade of Europe, Asia and Africa. They built ships, navigated the sea, and held in their hands all the threads of international commerce, whether carried on overland or sea. In Sanskrit books we constantly read of merchants, traders and men engrossed in commercial pursuits. From the earliest time India has an enormous trade links with Asia and western countries. This glory of Indian overseas trade even continued in the early medieval period. Most important aspect external trade during this period was big level trading behaviors were accepted through sea. This phenomena again helps the Indian culture to spread in to different part of the world. In this discussion we will dealt about the countries occupied in sea trade, the commodities of trade, main ports and security of the sea routes.

#### 4.3.1.3. India's Maritime Trade & Participants

The era under survey was marked through great expansion of sea trade flanked by the two extremities of Asia viz. the Persian Gulf and South China. India which lay midway flanked by the two extremities greatly benefited from this trade. The hazards of extensive sea voyages were sought to be curtailed through anchoring on the Indian coasts. The Asian trade throughout these centuries was mainly dominated through the Arabs, After having destroyed the significant port and market of Valabhi on the Saurashtra coast in the eighth century, they made themselves the chief main time force in the Arabian Ocean. Though, it did not affect the location of Arabs who sustained to uphold their supreme hold on the Asian trade. Fragmentary information in indigenous sources and notices in foreign accounts suggest that despite the forceful competition of the Arabs, Indians were going to the lands beyond the seas for trade from the tenth century onwards.

Abu Zaid, an Arab author of the tenth century refers to Indian merchants visiting Siraf in the Persian Gulf, while Ibn Battuta (14th century) tells us of a colony of Indian merchants at Aden in the Red Sea. A Gujarati text of the 14<sup>th</sup> century refers to a merchant Jagadu of Kutch who traded with Persia with the help of Indian mediators stationed at Hormuz. In South India, the Colas, took keen interest in maritime trade. The Tamil inscriptions establish in Malaya and Sumatra indicates the commercial behaviors of Tamil mercantile society in these regions. The Colas also sent a number of embassies to China to improve economic dealings with her. They even sent naval expedition against the Srivijaya empire in the eleventh century to stay the sea route to China safe for their trade. Though, through and big the references to the physical participation of Indian merchants are quite limited. This did not affect the demand for Indian products which reached the outside world through the Arabs and the Chinese.

#### 4.1.32. Commodities Exchanged

As regards the articles involved in the Asian trade, the Chinese texts indicate that the Malabar coast received silk, porcelain-ware, camphor, cloves, wax, sandalwood, cardamom, etc. from China and South-east Asia. Mainly of these may have been the things of re-export to the Arabian world, but some were meant for India, particularly the silk which was always in great demand in local markets. Marco Polo informs us that the ships coming from the East to the ports of Cambay in Gujarat brought, in the middle of other things, gold, silver and copper. Tin was another metal which came to India from South-east Asia. -

In return for eastern products, India sent its aromatics and spices, particularly pepper. According to Marco Polo pepper was consumed at the rate of 10,000 pounds daily in the municipality of Kinsay (Hang-Chau) alone. Chau Ju Kua. a Chinese port official of the thirteenth

century, tells us that Gujarat, Malwa, Malabar and Coromandel sent cotton cloth to China. It is pointed out through Ibn Battuta (C.E. 1333) that fine cotton fabrics were rarer and more highly priced than silk in the municipalities of China. India also exported ivory, rhinoceros horns, and some valuable and semiprecious stones to China.

A number of Arabic inscriptions establish at Cambay, Samaratha and Junagadh reveal that merchants and shippers from the Persian Gulf visited Western India in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The ships coming to the Gujarat coast from Hormuz in the Persian Gulf are also mentioned in the Lekhapaddhati.

As regards the articles of trade with the Arab and the Western World, the Jewish merchants accepted several goods from the West coast of India to the Egyptian markets. These incorporated spices, aromatics, dyes, medicinal herbs, bronze and brass vessels, textiles, pearls, drops, coconuts, etc. India also exported teakwood which was required for ship-structure and homes construction in the approximately treeless regions of Persian Gulf and South Arabia. Some surplus food-granules, mainly rice, were also sent out from the Indian ports to the communities in other coastal regions which did not produce enough foodstuffs to meet their needs. The fine and embroidered leather mats of Gujarat were according to Marco Polo highly priced in the Arab world. India was also recognized for its iron and steel products, particularly the swords and spears, which enjoyed a wide market in Western countries. As distant as imports from the West are concerned, the mainly important thing was the horse. As the number of feudal lords and chiefs increased in the early medieval era, the demand for horses also increased manifold. Horses were brought both through land and sea. Ibn Battuta tells us that horse-dealers coming through the Northwestern land routes earned big profits. According to an Arab author, Wassaf (C.E. 1328) more than 10,000 horses were brought annually to the Coromandel coast, Cambay and other ports of India in the thirteenth century. Horses were brought from such spaces as Bahrein, Muscat, Aden, Persia, etc. Besides horses, dates, ivory, coral, emeralds, etc. were also brought to India from the West.

#### **4.3.1.4. Ports & trading Centers**

There were a number of ports on the Indian coasts, which not only served the inland trade network but also acted as a link flanked by the eastern and western trade. In information, approximately every creek that could give facility for a safe anchorage of ships, urbanized into a port of some national or international significance.

On the mouth of the Indus, Debal was a significant port which according to Al Idrisi (twelfth century), was visited through vessels from Arabia as well as from China and other Indian ports. Chief ports on the Gujarat coast were Somanatha, Broach and Cambay. Somanatha had links with China in the East and Zanzibar (in Africa) in the West, Broach or ancient Bhrigukachha has had a very extensive history. Cambay is recognized as Khambayat in Arabic sources, and Stambhatirtha in Sanskrit sources. Its earliest reference goes back to the ninth century C.E. Sopara and Thana were other significant ports on the Western coast of India. On the Malabar coast, Quilon had appeared as the mainly significant port. The Arab Writers tell us that ships coming from the West described at the port of Quilon for collecting fresh water before sailing for Kedah in South-east Asia. Likewise, the Chinese sources of the thirteenth century also state that Chinese traders going to the country of the Arabs had to change their ships at Quilon.

Throughout the three centuries flanked by the tenth and thirteenth, the Coromandel coast urbanized into a virtual clearing homes for the ships coming from the East and West. The Arab author, Wassaf, tells us that the wealth of the isles of the Persian Gulf and the beauty of other countries as distant as Europe is derived from the Coromandel coast. The mainly significant port in this region was Nagapattinam. Puri and Kalingapattam were significant ports on the Odisha coast. In

Bengal the fortunes of Tamralipti were reviving though according to some scholars, it was being superseded through another port of Saptagrama.

During the early medieval period India had an extensive trade links with the different parts of the world. Hence she became hub for foreign trade. Earlier the Muslims had their control on India's trade and later who set aside by the Portuguese. Gujarat, Goa, Calicut, Cochin, Quilon etc., described as important ports and these were very much helpful to India to open her doors for foreigners. In *Vijayanagara*, the complete freedom of travel and ownership granted by the kings without enquiry whether he was a Christian, Jew, Moor or Heathen, as well as the great equality and justice shown to all by the ruler and his subjects, drew an enormous number of merchants to the city. Thus, India's foreign trade has rich heritage from the early days.

#### **4.3.2. Trading communities**

The traders form a significant link flanked by producers and consumers. They collect agricultural surplus and products of artisans and craftsmen from dissimilar regions and distribute them in excess of a wide region. Throughout the early medieval centuries, the procedure of collection and sharing of goods involved a big number of merchants, big as well as small, local as well as inter-local. There were hawkers, retailers and other petty traders on the one hand and big merchants and caravan traders on the other. While their role was adversely affected throughout the first stage (C.E. 700-900) on explanation of limited commercial swap, the revival of trade in the second stage (C.E. 900- 1300) led to considerable augment in the status, effectiveness and power of merchant communities. The ancient Indian texts specify trade beside with agriculture and cattle rearing as the lawful means of livelihood for vaishyas. In the seventh century, the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang distinctly mentions vaishyas as traders and shudras as cultivators. Though, the procedure of the two coming closer had already started and shudras were undertaking trade in such articles as wine, honey, salt malt, etc. The barriers of brahmanical varna order were crumbling in the post-Gupta centuries and people were adopting professions cutting crossways varna divisions. Trade was followed through the people of all varnas and castes. Some were compelled to take it up while others establish it more lucrative than other economic behaviors.

In view of the relative decline of trade throughout these centuries, the role of merchants in the society was considerably eroded. As trade slumped and markets disappeared, the merchants had to seek patronage and shelter with the temples and other emerging landed magnates. It robbed them of their selfgoverning commercial action, and forced them to cater to the needs and necessities of their patrons. Some inscriptions from Odisha and Central India reveal that traders, artisans and merchants were amongst those who were transferred to donees. This necessity has meant a serious reduction in their free trading behaviors. Nor is there any important proof of administrative role being assigned to merchants flanked by the eighth and tenth centuries. This is in obvious contrast to their role in management apparent from sticks and sealings from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar throughout the Gupta era. Though, trade did not disappear totally, some merchants were still active, particularly beside the coast. But they were small in number and their behaviors were mainly confined to the luxury articles required through kings, chiefs and temples. In South India too, trade was not a very significant action throughout the centuries under survey. This is indicated through the relative absence of the mention of merchants as a separate class in the records of the era. In other words, it can be said that the first stage of early medieval India was marked through the thinning absent, if not disappearance, of the wealthy and free merchant class.

The second stage of early medieval India brought the mercantile society back into prominence, and we notice big number of merchants carrying luxury and essential goods from one lay to another. They accumulated fabulous wealth through commercial exchanges and acquired fame

in society through creation gifts to temples and priests. Several of them took active part at several stages of management, and even occupied the ministerial positions in royal courts.

The literature and inscriptions of the era refer to the big number of merchants who were recognized through the specialized trade they followed. Therefore, we come crossways dealers in gold, perfumes, wine, granules, horses, textiles, curds, betels, etc. Some of the merchants employed retailers or assistants to help them in trading behaviors. As inter-local trade urbanized a group of merchants specialized in examining and changing coins for traders Money lending also became one of the major behaviors of merchants. Though people deposited money in temple treasury for the religious purpose of endowing flowers, oil, lamps, there are very few references to guilds accepting deposits and paying interest thereon. There appeared a separate group of merchants, described *nikshepa-vanika* in western India, who specialized in banking or money lending. The *Lakshapaddhati*, a text from Gujarat, refers to a merchant's son who claimed his share in the ancestral property to start the business of money lending. *Medhatithi*, a legal commentator, speaks of the association or corporation of moneylenders. The modern literature, though, presents a bad picture of moneylenders and describes them as greedy and untrustworthy who cheat general man through misappropriating deposits. This era also witnessed the emergence of several local merchant groups, i.e. the merchants who were recognized after the region they belonged to. They were mostly from Western India. As this region had a wide network of significant land routes connecting coastal ports with the cities and markets of northern India, the merchants of sure specific spaces in this region establish it more profitable to specialize in inter-local trade. Therefore, the merchant groups described *Oswal* derive their name from a lay described *Osia*, *Palivalas* from *Patli*, *Shrimali* from *Shrimala*, *Modha* from *Modhera* and so on. Mainly of them are now a days collectively recognized as *Marwaris*, i.e. the merchants from *Marwar*. Separately from their functional and local names, merchants were also recognized through several common conditions, the two mainly general being *shreshthi* and *sarthavaha*. Both these conditions were recognized from very early times.

*Sresthi* was a rich wholesale dealer who existed in a city and accepted on his business with the help of retailers and mediators. At times he lent out goods or money to small merchants, and therefore acted as a banker too, though, as we have already pointed out, money lending was becoming a separate and specialized action. The *sarthavaha* was the caravan leader under whose guidance the merchants went to distant spaces to sell and purchase their goods. He was supposed to be a highly capable person knowing not only the routes but also the languages as well as the rules of swap in dissimilar regions. The expansion of agriculture and the availability of surplus from the 8th/9th century onwards led to augment in commercial exchanges in South India too.

It resulted in the emergence of a full time trading society looking after the local swap. This society also participated in wider inter-local and inter-oceanic trade. As in the North, South Indian merchants too specialized in the trade of specific commodities such as textiles, oil or ghee, betel leaves, horses, etc. At the local stage, local markets described *nagaram* were the centres of swap. They were situated in a cluster of agrarian settlements, and they integrated not only collection from hinterland but also commercial traffic from other regions. The numbers of these *nagarams* increased considerably throughout the Cola era in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the term *nagarattar*, i.e. member of the *nagaram* assembly, became a generic term for all Tamil merchants.

***Social Role of Traders:*** As growth of trade brought economic prosperity to merchants, they sought to gain social prestige through participating in the maintenance of temples, priests and religious functions. Numerous inscriptions refer to the grant of cash or goods through merchants for these purposes. Some merchants became very influential and joined the ranks of state officials and ministers. A tenth century inscription refers to a merchant of *Modha* caste who was the chief of



Sanjan (close to Thane) in Maharashtra. In Gujarat, the merchant family of Vimala played a significant role in the political and cultural life of the region. He and his descendants Vastupala and Tajapala occupied significant ministerial positions at the court and are recognized for structure the wellknown marble temples dedicated to Jaina gods at Mount Abu. A thirteenth century inscription from central Gujarat reveals that several significant merchants, traders and artisans were a part of the local administrative bodies.

***Character and Conduct of Traders:*** The foreign authors and travelers such as Al-Idrisi (twelfth century) and Marco Polo (thirteenth century) praise Indian traders for their truthfulness and honesty in business dealings. But in the modern Indian literature we come crossways several instances of greedy and dishonest merchants. The Kashmiri author Kshemendra refers to a typically selfish merchant who used to feel overjoyed at the approach of a famine or some other calamity because he could expect good money on his hoarded food granules. A text of the eleventh century from Western India, divides merchants in two main classes—on the foundation of their location and character—high and low. It points out that rich merchants who indulged in big level sea or land trade enjoyed great reputation while small merchants such as hawkers, retailers, etc. who cheated people through using false weights and events were looked down upon in society. It also comprises artisans in the list of dishonest people. It may, though, be noted that some of these views reflect the modern feudal tendency in which persons working with their own hands and possessions were measured low in society.

#### **4.3.3. Organisation of Traders: The Guild**

The merchants derived their power and prestige not only from wealth but also from the guilds or associations shaped through them to protect their interests. In the first stage the decline of trade weakened the corporate action of merchants, and several of the guilds were reduced to mere local or occupational sub-castes. But as trade revived in the second stage, merchant guilds reappeared as a significant characteristic of the modern economic life.

Guilds were voluntary associations of merchants dealing in the similar kind of commodity such as granules, textiles, betel leaves, horses, perfumes, etc. The guilds framed their own rules and regulations concerning the membership and the code of conduct. They fixed the prices of their goods and could even decide that specific commodity was not to be sold on a scrupulous day through its members. The guild merchants also acted as the custodians of religious interests. The inscriptions refer to numerous instances when they collectively agreed to pay an additional tax on the sale and purchase of their goods for the maintenance of temples or temple functions.

The guild normally worked under the leadership of a chief who was elected through its members. He performed the functions of a magistrate in deciding the economic affairs of the guild. He could punish, condemn or even expel those members who violated the guild rules. One of his main duties was to deal directly with the King, and settle the market tolls and taxes on behalf of his fellow merchants. The growth of corporate action enabled guild-chiefs to consolidate their power and location in society, and several of them acted as the representative of their members on the local administrative councils. A member of the guild worked under a strict code of discipline and was also robbed of some initiative or action but still he enjoyed numerous benefits. He received full backing of the guild in all his economic behaviors and was, therefore, saved from the harassment of local officials. Unlike a hawker or vendor, he had greater credibility in the market on explanation of his membership of the guild. Therefore, inspired by the information that guild chiefs tended to be rude and authoritative at times, the merchants establish guilds a significant means of seeking physical and economic protections. The digests and commentaries of the era refer to the corporate body of merchants through several conditions, such as naigama, shreni, samuha, sartha, samgha, etc. The

naigama is described as an association of caravan merchants of dissimilar castes who travel jointly for the purpose of carrying on trade with other countries. Shreni, according to Medhatithi, was a group of people following the similar profession such as that of traders, moneylenders, artisans, etc. though some authors measured it to be a group of artisans alone. The Lekhapaddhati designates that a special department described the Shrenikarana was constituted through the kings of western India to look after the behaviors of the guilds of merchants and artisans in their region. Another text Manasollasa reveals that several merchant guilds maintained their own troops (shrenibala) for personal safety. Inscriptions too refer to the corporate action of merchants. An inscription from western India refers to vanika-mandala which was almost certainly a guild of local merchants.

The expansion of agriculture and the growth of trade from the tenth century led to the emergence of several merchant guilds or organisations in South India too. The inscriptions refer to these organisations often as samaya, i.e. an organisation born out of an agreement or contract in the middle of its members to follow a set of rules and regulations. The two mainly significant merchant guilds of South India were recognized as the Ayyavole and the Manigraman. Geographically, the region of their operation corresponded to the present day state of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and South Andhra Pradesh. The Cola kings from the tenth century onwards made a concerted effort to trade and commerce through trade missions, maritime expeditions, abolition of tolls, etc. It greatly increased the behaviors of these guilds which were involved in not only inter-local but also inter-oceanic trade crossways the Bay of Bengal. The merchant guild described Ayyavole was also recognized as the guild of “the 500 Swami of Aihole” nanadeshi. While some have argued that such organisations were primarily traders in several kinds of merchandise and not a single unified corporation of merchants. Anjuvannam was another body of merchants in South India, which almost certainly represented an association of foreign merchants, and not a group of five communities or castes as some scholars consider. The vast trading network in South India was controlled through a number of merchant organisations which worked in secure cooperation and harmony with one another. The guild-chiefs, on explanation of their manage on trade and trading organisations, recognized secure links with the royal houses and enjoyed great name and fame in the society.

#### **4.3.4. Merchants, Craftsmen and their relation**

The exact nature of connection flanked by the merchants and craftsmen, the two interdependent parts of commercial world, is not recorded in the modern sources. It is, so, not recognized whether craftsmen such as weavers, metalworkers, etc. acted independently or worked under the command of merchants who supplied them money or raw material or both. There is, though, some proof to suggest that as merchants came to exert greater manage on the mobilization of raw material and finished products, their power on the behaviors of artisans increased considerably. Albiruni, who came to India in the eleventh century as well as Lakshmidhara, a jurist of the 12th century, tell us that artisans existed in the midst of merchants. It may suggest that merchants supplied capital and raw material to artisans who were to produce goods as per the demand and specifications provided through merchants. There are references to some oilmen and weavers who sold their goods themselves and became rich enough to create endowments to temples and priests. In common, the artisans and craftsmen throughout the early medieval era were economically dependent on big merchants.

#### **4.3.5. India’s impact on South-East Asia: Causes and Consequences**

The transmission of Indian culture to distant parts of Central Asia, China, Japan, and especially Southeast Asia is one of the greatest achievements of Indian history or even of the history of mankind. The entire South East Asian region was influenced by Indian culture and they are nevertheless part and parcel of the history of those respective countries. In this section we will

discuss some fundamental problems concerning the transmission of Indian culture to the vast region of Southeast Asia.

#### **4.3.5.1. Medium of Cultural Spread**

There are several theories regarding the transmission of Indian culture to Southeast Asia such as the 'Kshatriya' theory; the 'Vaishya' theory; and the 'Brahmin' theory. The Kshatriya theory states that Indian warriors colonised Southeast Asia. The Vaishya theory attributes the spread of Indian culture to traders. Finally, the Brahmin hypothesis credits Brahmins with the transmission of Indian culture. Besides the role of indigenous people of south east Asia and Buddhist monks of India played important role in the spread of Indian culture in this area.

***Kshatriya, Vaishya and Brahmin Theory:*** Kshatriya theory held that Indian kings and warriors had established such colonies and the Sanskrit names of Southeast Asian rulers seemed to provide ample supporting evidence. As research progressed, it was found that there was very little proof of any direct Indian political influence in those states of Southeast Asia. It was demonstrated that Southeast Asian rulers had adopted Sanskrit names themselves-thus such names could not be adduced as evidence for the presence of Indian kings.

The Vaishya theory, in contrast, emphasised a much more important element of the Indian connection with Southeast Asia. Trade had indeed been the driving force behind all these early contacts. Inscriptions also showed that guilds of Indian merchants had established outposts in many parts of Southeast Asia. Some of their inscriptions were written in languages such as Tamil. However, if such merchants had been the chief agents of the transmission of Indian culture, then their languages should have made an impact on those of Southeast Asia. But this was not so: Sanskrit and, to some extent, Pali words predominated as loan words in Southeast Asian languages. The traders certainly provided an important transmission belt for all kinds of cultural influences. Nevertheless, they did not play the crucial role which some scholars have attributed to them. One of the most important arguments against the Vaishya theory is that some of the earliest traces of Indianised states in Southeast Asia are not found in the coastal areas usually frequented by the traders, but in mountainous, interior areas.

The Brahmin theory is in keeping with what we have shown with regard to the almost contemporary spread of Hindu culture in southern and central India. There Brahmins and Buddhist and Jain monks played the major role in transmitting cultural values and symbols, and in disseminating the style of Hindu kingship. In addition to being religious specialists, the Brahmins also knew the Sanskrit codes regarding law, politics and art and architecture. They could thus serve as 'development planners' in many different fields and were accordingly welcome to Southeast Asian rulers who may have just emerged from what we earlier described as first- and second-phase state formation.

***Role of Indigenous people:*** During the process of indianisation of south East Asia the inhabitant of this region also played an important role. Early Indonesian inscriptions show that there was a considerable development of agriculture, craftsmanship, regional trade and social differentiation before Indian influence made itself felt. However, indigenous tribal organisation was egalitarian and prevented the emergence of higher forms of political organisation. The introduction of such forms required at least a rudimentary form of administration and a kind of legitimation of these new governmental forms which would make them, in the initial stages, acceptable to the people. It was at this point that chieftains and clan heads required Brahmin assistance. Although trade might have helped to spread the necessary information, the initiative came from those indigenous rulers. The invited Brahmins were isolated from the rural people and kept in touch only with their patrons. In this way the royal style emerged in Southeast Asia just as it had done in India.

Initially the local rulers adopted Indian name, later they celebrated great sacrifices and gave valuable presents to the Brahmins. Early inscriptions inform us that after being consecrated by the Brahmins, early rulers of Indonesian Island subjected the neighbouring rulers and made them 'tribute givers' (kara-da). Thus these inscriptions present in a nutshell the history of the rise of an early local Indonesian dynasty. It seems that the dynasty had been founded by a son of a clan chief independently of the Brahmins, who on their arrival consecrated the ruler of the third generation. With this kind of moral support and the new administrative know-how, the ruler could subject his neighbours and obtain tribute from them. Around the middle of the first millennium several of such small states seem to have arisen in this way in Southeast Asia. They have left only a few inscriptions and some ruins of temples; most of them were obviously very short-lived. There must have been a great deal of competition, with many petty rajas vying with each other and all wishing to be recognised as maharajas entitled to all the Indian paraphernalia of kingship. Indian influence increased in this way and in the second half of the first millennium a hectic activity of temple erection could be observed on Java and in Cambodia, where the first larger realms had come into existence.

Though it is now generally accepted that Southeast Asian rulers played an active role in this process of state formation, we cannot entirely rule out the occasional direct contribution of Indian adventurers who proceeded to the East. The most important example of this kind is that of the early history of Funan at the mouth of the Mekong. Chinese sources report the tale of a Brahmin, Kaundinya, who was inspired by a divine dream to go to Funan. There he vanquished the local Naga (serpent) princess by means of his holy bow and married her, thus founding the first dynasty of Funan in the late first century. We have heard of a similar legend in connection with the rise of the Pallava dynasty and this may indicate that Kaundinya came from South India where the Kaundinyas were known as a famous Brahmin lineage.

A Chinese source of the fourth century describes an Indian usurper of the throne of Funan; his name is given as Chu Chan-t'an. 'Chu' always indicates a person of Indian origin and 'Chan-t'an' could have been a transliteration of the title 'Chandana' which can be traced to the Indo-Scythians of northern India. Presumably a member of that dynasty went to Southeast Asia after having been defeated by Samundragupta. In the beginning of the fifth century another Kaundinya arrived in Funan and of him it is said in the Chinese annals: He was originally a Brahmin from India. There a supernatural voice told him: 'You must go to Funan.' Kaundinya rejoiced in his heart. In the South he arrived at P'an-p'an. The people of Funan appeared to him; the whole kingdom rose up with joy, went before him and chose him king. He changed all the laws to conform to the system of India.

This report on the second Kaundinya is the most explicit reference to an Indian ruler who introduced his laws in Southeast Asia. In the same period we notice a general wave of Indian influence in Southeast Asia. We must, however, note that even in this case of early Funan there was no military intervention. Kaundinya had obviously stayed for some time at P'an-p'an at the Isthmus of Siam, then under the control of Funan, and he was later invited by the notables of the court of Funan to ascend the throne at a time of political unrest.

***Contribution of Buddhist Monk:*** So far we have discussed the contribution of Brahmins to the early transmission of Indian culture to Southeast Asia. Buddhist monks, however, were at least as important in this respect. Two characteristic features of Buddhism enabled it to make a specific impact on Southeast Asia: first, Buddhists were imbued with a strong missionary zeal; and, second, they ignored the caste system and did not emphasise the idea of ritual purity. By his teaching as well as by the organisation of his monastic order (sangha) Gautama Buddha had given rise to this

missionary zeal, which had then been fostered by Ashoka's dispatch of Buddhist missionaries to Western Asia, Egypt, Greece, Central Asia, Sri Lanka and Burma.

Buddhism's freedom from ritual restrictions and the spirit of the unity of all adherents enabled Buddhist monks to establish contacts with people abroad, as well as to welcome them in India when they came to visit the sacred places of Buddhism. Chinese sources record 162 visits to India of Chinese Buddhist monks for the period from the fifth to the eighth century. Many more may have travelled without having left a trace in such official records. This was an amazing international scholarly exchange programme for that day and age.

In the early centuries the centre of Buddhist scholarship was the University of Taxila (near the present city of Islamabad), but in the fifth century when the University of Nalanda was founded not far from Bodhi Gaya, Bihar, the centre of Buddhist scholarship shifted to eastern India. This university always had a large contingent of students from Southeast Asia. There they spent many years close to the holy places of Buddhism, copying and translating texts before returning home. Nalanda was a centre of Mahayana Buddhism, which became of increasing importance in Southeast Asia.

One King Balaputra of Shrivijaya established a monastery for students of his realm at Nalanda around C.E 860 which was then endowed with land grants by King Devapala of Bengal. But the Sumatran Empire of Shrivijaya had acquired a good reputation in its own right among Buddhist scholars and from the late seventh century attracted resident Chinese and Indian monks. The Chinese monk I-tsing stopped over at Shrivijaya's capital (present-day Palembang) for six months in C.E 671 in order to learn Sanskrit grammar. He then proceeded to India, where he spent fourteen years, and on his return journey he stayed another four years at Palembang so that he could translate the many texts which he had collected. In this period he went to China for a few months in C.E 689 to recruit assistants for his great translation project (completed only in C.E 695). On his return to China he explicitly recommended that other Chinese Buddhists proceeding to India break journey in Shrivijaya, where a thousand monks lived by the same rules as those prevailing in India. In subsequent years many Chinese Buddhists conscientiously followed this advice.

Prominent Indian Buddhist scholars similarly made a point to visit Shrivijaya. Towards the end of the seventh century Dharmapala of Nalanda is supposed to have visited Suvarnadvipa (Java and Sumatra). In the beginning of the eighth century the South Indian monk Vajrabodhi spent five months in Shrivijaya on his way to China. He and his disciple, Amoghavajra, whom he met in Java, are credited with having introduced Buddhist Tantrism to China. Atisha, who later became known as the great reformer of Tibetan Buddhism, is said to have studied for twelve years in Suvarnadvipa in the early eleventh century. The high standard of Buddhist learning which prevailed in Indonesia for many centuries was one of the important preconditions for that great work of art, the Borobudur, whose many reliefs are a pictorial compendium of Buddhist lore, a tribute both to the craftsmanship of Indonesian artists and to the knowledge of Indonesian Buddhist scholars.

#### **4.3.5.2. The Centers of contact between Southeast Asia South India**

At least as far as the early centuries are concerned, South India-and especially Tamil Nadu-deserves the greatest credit for maintain highest contact with south east Asia. In subsequent periods, however, several regional shifts as well as parallel influences emanating from various centres can be noticed. The influence of Tamil Nadu was very strong as far as the earliest inscriptions in Southeast Asia are concerned, showing as they do the influence of the script prevalent in the Pallava kingdom. The oldest Buddhist sculpture in Southeast Asia-the famous bronze Buddha of Celebes-shows the marks of the Buddhist sculptures of Amaravati (Coastal Andhra) of the third to the fifth centuries C.E. Early Hindu sculptures of Western Java and of the Isthmus of Siam seem to have been guided

by the Pallava style of the seventh and eighth centuries. Early Southeast Asian temple architecture similarly shows the influence of the Pallava and Chola styles, especially on Java and in Cambodia.

The influence of the North Indian Gupta style also made itself felt from the fifth century C.E onwards. The centre of this school was Sarnath, near Varanasi (Benares), where Buddha preached his first sermon. Sarnath produced the classical Buddha image which influenced the art of Burma and Thailand, as well as that of Funan at the mouth of the Mekong. The art of the Shailendra dynasty of Java in the eighth and ninth centuries-of which the Borobudur is the most famous monument-was obviously influenced by what is termed the Late Gupta style of western Central India, as manifested in the great cave temples of Ajanta and Ellora. An inscription at the Plaosan temple in Central Java (C.E 800) explicitly refers to the 'constant flow of the people from Gurjaradesha'-due to which this temple had been built. Indeed, the temple's sculptures show a striking similarity with those of the late Buddhist caves of Ajanta and Ellora.

In later centuries Southeast Asia was more and more influenced by the scholars of the University of Nalanda and the style of the Pala dynasty, the last of the great Indian dynasties which bestowed royal patronage on Buddhism. The influence of Mahayana Buddhism prevailing in Bihar and Bengal under the Palas was so strong at the court of the Shailendras of Java that a Buddhist monk from 'Gaudi' (Bengal), with the typical Bengali name of Kumara Ghosh, became rajguru of the Shailendra king and in this capacity consecrated a statue of Manjushri in the royal temple of the Shailendras in C.E 782. Bengal, eastern Bihar and Odisha were at that time centres of cultural influence. These regions were in constant contact with Southeast Asia, whose painters and sculptors reflected the style of eastern India in their works. Typical of this aesthetic was the special arrangement of figures surrounding the central figure: this type of arrangement can be found both in Indonesian sculptures and in the temple paintings of Pagan (Burma) during this period.

In the same era South Indian influence emerged once more under the Chola dynasty. Maritime trade was of major importance to the Cholas, who thereby also increased their cultural influences. The occasional military interventions of the Cholas did not detract from this peaceful cultural intercourse. At the northern coast of Sumatra the old port of Dilli, near Medan, had great Buddha sculptures evincing a local variation of the Chola style; indeed, a magnificent locally produced statue of the Hindu god Ganesha, in the pure Chola style, has recently been found at Palembang. Close to the famous temple of Padang Lawas, central Sumatra, small but very impressive Chola-style bronze sculptures of a four-armed Lokanath and of Tara have been found. Presently kept in the museum of Jakarta, they are dated at C.E 1039 and a brief inscription containing Old Malay words in addition to Sanskrit words in Tamil proves that the figures were not imported from India but were produced locally. Nevertheless, Chola relations with Southeast Asia were by no means a one-way street. It is presumed that the imperial cult of the Cholas, centred on their enormous temples, was directly influenced by the grand style of Angkor. The great tank at Gangaikondacholapuram was perhaps conceived by the Chola ruler in the same spirit as that which moved contemporary Cambodian rulers who ordered the construction of the famous Barays (tanks) of Angkor, which are considered to be a special indication of royal merit.

In the late thirteenth century Pagan (Burma) was once more exposed to a strong current of direct Indian influence emanating from Bengal, at that time conquered by Islamic rulers. Nalanda had been destroyed by the end of the twelfth century and large groups of monks in search of a new home flocked to Pagan and also to the Buddhist centres of Tibet. The beautiful paintings in the temples of Minnanthu in the eastern part of the city of Pagan may have been due to them. Islamic conquest of northern India cut off the holy places of Buddhism.

A millennium of intensive contacts between India and Buddhist Southeast Asia had come to an end. But there was another factor which must be mentioned in this context. In C.E 1190 Chapata, a Buddhist monk from Pagan, returned to that city after having spent ten years in Sri Lanka. In Burma he led a branch of the Theravada school of Buddhism, established on the strict rules of the Mahavihara monastery of Sri Lanka. This led to a schism in the Burmese Buddhist order which had been established at Pagan by Shin Arahan about 150 years earlier. Shin Arahan was a follower of the South Indian school of Buddhism, which had its centre at Kanchipuram. Chapata's reform prevailed and by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Burma, Thailand and Cambodia had adopted Theravada Buddhism of the Sri Lanka school. In Cambodia this shift from Mahayana to Theravada Buddhism seems to have been part of a socio-cultural revolution. Under the last great king of Angkor, Jayavarman VII (C.E 1181-1218), royal Mahayana Buddhism had become associated in the eyes of the people with the enormous burden which the king imposed upon them in order to build the huge Buddhist temples of Angkor Thom. Even in Indonesia, however, where Tantrist Buddhism with an admixture of Shaivism prevailed at the courts of rulers all the way from Sumatra down to Bali, direct Indian influence rapidly receded in the thirteenth century. This was only partly due to the intervention of Islam in India, its other cause being an upsurge of Javanese art which confined the influence of Indian art to the statues of deified kings erected after the death of the ruler. The outer walls of the temples were covered with Javanese reliefs which evince a great similarity to the Javanese shadow play (wayang kulit). The Chandi Jago (thirteenth century) and the temples of Panantaran (fourteenth century) show this new Javanese style very well. It has remained the dominant style of Bali art up to the present time. A similar trend towards the assertion of indigenous styles can also be found in the Theravada Buddhist countries. The content of the scenes depicted is still derived from Hindu mythology or Buddhist legends, but the presentation clearly incorporates the respective national style.

After the conquest of North India in about 1200 and Central India and its harbours in about 1300, by Muslim rulers, Islam also spread to Southeast Asia via the maritime trade routes which connected India with the spice islands of the East. India once more became an important transmitter of cultural influences under the new dispensation. Indian Sufism played an important role in the early spread of Islam in Indonesia.

#### **4.3.6. Conclusion**

Thus from the above discussion it appears that early medieval period of Indian history no doubt start with a decline in trade and commerce but very soon bounce back and revived. The information found from literary sources, epigraphical and numismatic as well as archaeological investigation inform us about the condition of trade and commerce during the period between C.E 750 -1300. Within India territory inland trade flourished because of agrarian and urban economy. In the external trade overseas trade played important role. Indians established trade contact with the foreigners. Trade and commerce also led to cultural exchange. The art and culture of the various countries got itself reflected over the Indian culture as well as get reflected in the other countries also. Particularly the maritime trade led to spread of Indian culture in South East Asian nations which is still visible in the art and culture of modern south East Asia.

## Chapter.III

### Process of Urbanization

#### INTRODUCTION

Urbanisation in the early medieval period (600-1300 CE) of Indian history was connected with the growth of regional kingdoms and an expansion of Indian Ocean trade. Macro level changes took place which produced new patterns of interaction. Agrahara system of land grants by the royalty created a new class of land holders which was a new socio-economic formation based on land grants. There was a substantial change in the material milieu from the earlier period as a result of these land grants. Expansion of agrarian economy could be perceived along with state formation and expansion of state societies in the periphery. Villages were neither isolates nor undifferentiated, and were connected with the apex or supra-local political centres through administrative tiers at locality levels. Agrarian economy gave fillip to non-agrarian sector thereby leading to a process of urbanisation. Thus early medieval urbanisation could be characterised by changes in the agrarian economy, greater complexities in the political sphere and an expanding Indian Ocean trade network. However to locate the urban centres and then to explain their growth remain a vexed problem and sifting through the vast epigraphic and other types of textual data and looking for a pura, nagara or pattana, different terms denoting urban centres, would be a preliminary way of approaching the problem.

Epigraphic and textual sources are generally used for understanding early medieval urbanisation. Many epigraphs describe towns, exchange centres and commercial networks. Texts like travel accounts, kavya literature, secular texts etc. are often replete with descriptions of a city. Archaeology is not always very helpful in this regard as it is, in the case of early historic urbanism, due to lack of excavations in early medieval sites. Past studies that talked of urban centres, in general, relied heavily on textual sources. Arab Geographers' accounts, Alberuni's evidence or normative, prescriptive treatises like Manasara, Mayamata or Samarangasutradharawere used to discuss the presence or absence of urban centres in India in the early medieval period. Thus Pushpa Niyogi writes, "Towns and Cities along the main or subsidiary trade routes easily developed into commercial centres. Innumerable references to cities flourishing along such routes are found in the writings of Muslim historians".

In a section on instances of planned towns, Niyogi states on the basis of Kumarapalacharita that there were eighty four market at Anahilapura in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and therefore it was a great emporium of trade. Stress is laid on texts like Mayamata, Aparajitaprchchha or Sukranitisara to understand town planning. According to B.B. Dutt, whose work is largely based on Manasara, Mayamata, etc., "the streets of India were arranged and planned according to what is known as rectangular chess board system of planning". The existence of urban centres is taken for granted in such works and no reference is usually made to the historical context in which they may have emerged. Therefore these works finally appear as



compilations of urban place names from literature and epigraphs. The problem with the use of text for understanding urban planning is that in most cases the date of a text cannot be ascertained with certainty.

B.N.S. Yadav argued that, though the description of cities in the texts belonging to post-Gupta period became conventional in nature, yet it was possible to deduce some broad features of city life from these texts. The texts mainly discussed by him were the description of Ujjayini in Padataditakam (c. 6th-7th century CE), the Kadambari (7th century CE) and the Navasahasankacharita (10th century CE), of Kundinapura in the Nalachampu (10th century CE) and the Naisadhiyacharita; of Pravarapura in the Vikramankadevacharita, etc. The urban features in these texts are in the first place, strong fortifications of cities consisting of ramparts and moats, localisation of trading community or professional/occupational groups within the precincts of a city, presence of magnificent mansions and bustling trading activities. These works thus refer to urban centres without attempting to understand the process of urbanisation.

## **FORM AND SUBSTANCE OF URBAN CENTRES**

Study of urban centres is an important aspect of socio-economic history. Urban centres in early medieval India have generally been studied in two ways: i. As a part of economic history i.e. history of trade, commerce and craft production, etc., and ii. as a part of administrative or political history, i.e. as capitals, administrative centres, centres of major and minor ruling families and fort towns. Hence the focus of urban studies has so far been mainly on types of urban centres. Accordingly towns or cities have been listed under various categories such as market, trade or commercial centres, ports, political and administrative centres, religious centres, etc. However, there has been no sufficient attempt to explain the causes behind the emergence of towns. In other words the form of an urban centre is studied but not its meaning or substance. In order to understand both the form and substance of urban centres, and to define their nature and meaning it is necessary to study the processes of urban growth as a part of the broader socio-economic changes.

### **Phases and Definition**

How do we define an urban centre and what are its essential trends; are some of the questions that we take up here. Prior to the coming of the Turks, the Indian subcontinent experienced at least three phases of urban growth: 1) During the Bronze Age Harappan civilization (fourth-second millennium BCE), 2) Early historic urban centres of the Iron Age (c. sixth century BCE to the end of the third century CE), 3) Early medieval towns and cities (c. eighth/ninth to twelfth centuries CE). Amongst the earliest attempts, to define an urban centre one can easily mention Gordon Childe's notion of 'Urban Revolution'. He listed monumental buildings, large settlements with dense population, existence of such people who were not engaged in food production (rulers, artisans and merchants) and cultivation of art, science and writing as prominent features to identify an urban centre. Further, Childe laid great stress on the

presence of craft specialists and the role of agricultural surplus which supported non-food producers living in cities. Not all these traits, which were spelt out in the context of Bronze Age cities, are to be seen in the towns of Iron Age. There has been no dearth of urban centres with sparse population and mud houses. Though agrarian surplus collected from rural areas is almost indispensable for the existence of a town, merely a settlement of non-agriculturists cannot be regarded as an urban centre. Early medieval literary texts refer to towns inhabited by people of all classes surrounded by a wall and moat and marked by the prevalence of the laws and customs of the guilds of artisans and merchants. A recent study based on excavated data from 140 sites spread over the entire Indian subcontinent focusses on: Quality of material life and the nature of occupations, and need to study urban centres not as parasites thriving on agricultural surplus but as centres integrally linked with rural hinterland.

Accordingly, some prominent traits of urban centres which can be applied to early medieval settlements as well, are identified as: Size of a settlement in terms of area and population, Proximity to water resources-river banks, tanks, ring wells, etc., Presence or absence of artefacts representing activities of artisans, e.g. axes, chisels, plough-shares, sickles, hoes, crucibles, ovens, furnaces, dyeing vats, moulds for beads, seals, sealings, jewellery, terracotta, etc., Evidence of coin moulds signifying mint towns. The discovery of metallic, money, when listed with the presence of artisans and merchants, certainly lends a clear urban character to such sites, Presence or otherwise of luxury goods such as precious and semi-precious stones, glassware, ivory objects, fine pottery etc. The possibility is not ruled out that luxuries of ancient towns might become necessities for superior rural classes of early medieval times, Considering the moist, rainy climate of many alluvial plains such as the middle Ganga plain, baked brick (not just burnt bricks) structures on a good scale assume special importance. Though in Central Asia towns consisting of mud structures are also not unknown, Streets, shops, drains and fortifications also give a good idea of the nature of the urban settlement. At several places in the Deccan and elsewhere silos and granaries occur at historical sites, like at Dhulikatt in Andhra Pradesh.

## **THE GENERAL PATTERN**

The post-Gupta centuries witnessed a new socio-economic formation based on the system of land grants. The gradual expansion of cultivation and agrarian economy through land grants had an impact on the growth of towns and cities between the eighth and twelfth centuries. Though the overall picture of the Indian sub-continent is that of revival, of urban centres, there are some regional variations as well. Such variations are seen in the nature, category and hierarchy of such centres due to operative economic forces, ecological and cultural differences and the nature of political organisation. Regional studies of urban centres are, therefore, essential for providing the correct perspectives. Such studies are available only for a few regions like Rajasthan, Central India and South India.

## **REGIONAL VARIATIONS AND TYPES**

In a vast country like India there are a lot of regional variations in the pattern of emergence and growth of urban centres. In this section we will discuss some important variations.

### **Rural Centres Transformed into Urban Centres**

The brahmadeyas and devadanas which are seen as important sources of agrarian expansion of the early medieval period, also provided the nuclei of urban growth. The Brahmana and temple settlements clustered together in certain key areas of agricultural production. Examples of such centres of urban growth are datable from the eighth and ninth centuries and are more commonly found in South India. The Cola city of Kumbakonam (Kudamukku-Palaiyarai) developed out of agrarian clusters and became a multi-temple urban centre between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Kanchipuram is a second major example of such an urban complex. While Kumbakonam's political importance as a residential capital of the Colas was an additional factor in its growth, Kanchipuram too had the additional importance of being the largest craft centre (textile manufacturing) in South India.

### **Market Centres. Trade-network and Itinerant Trade**

Early medieval centuries also witnessed the emergence of urban centres of relatively modest dimensions, as market centres, trade centres (fairs, etc.) which were primarily points of the exchange network. The range of interaction of such centres varied from small agrarian hinterlands to regional commercial hinterlands. Some also functioned beyond their regional frontiers. However, by and large, the early medieval urban centres were rooted in their regional contexts. This is best illustrated by the nagaram of South India, substantial evidence of which comes from Tamil Nadu and also to a limited extent by the existence of nakhara and nagaramu in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh respectively. The nagaram served as the market for the nadu or kurram, an agrarian or peasant region. Some of them emerged due to the exchange needs of the nadu. A fairly large number of such centres were founded by ruling families or were established by royal sanction and were named after the rulers, a feature common to all regions in South India. Such centres had the suffix pura or pattana.

Nagarams located on important trade routes and at the points of intersection developed into more important trade and commercial centres of the region. They were ultimately brought into a network of intra-regional and inter-regional trade as well as overseas trade through the itinerant merchant organisations and the royal ports. Such a development occurred uniformly throughout peninsular India between the tenth and twelfth centuries. During these centuries South India was drawn into the wider trade network in which all the countries of South Asia, South-east Asia and China and the Arab countries came to be involved. The nagarams linked the ports with political and administrative centres and craft centres in the interior.

In Karnataka nagarams emerged more as points of exchange in trading network than as regular markets for agrarian regions. However, the uniform features in all such nagarams is that

they acquired a basic agricultural hinterland for the non-producing urban groups living in such centres. Markets in these centres were controlled by the nagaram assembly headed by a chief merchant called pattanavami.

A similar development of trade and market centres can be seen in Rajasthan and western parts of Madhya Pradesh. Here, the exchange centres were located in the context of the bases of agrarian production i.e. where clusters of rural settlements occur. In Rajasthan these centres were points of intersection for traffic of varying origins, giving rise to a certain measure of hierarchy. The network was further elaborated with the growth of generations of well-known merchant families in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They are named after their places of origin such as Osawala (Osia), Shrimalis (Bhinmal), Pallivalas and Khandelvalas, etc. The resource bases, the main routes for the flow of resources and the centres of exchange were integrated through the expansion of these merchant families. Rajasthan provided the main commercial links between Gujarat, Central India and the Ganga valley. Such links were maintained through towns like Pali, which connected the sea coast towns like Dvaraka and Bhargukachcha (Broach) with Central and North India. Gujarat, with its dominant Jain merchants, continued to be the major trading region of Western India where early historic ports or emporium like Bhargukachcha (Broach) continued to flourish as entrepôts of trade in early medieval times. Bayana, another notable town in Rajasthan was the junction of different routes from different directions. The range of merchandise started probably with agricultural produce (including dairy products) but extended to such high-value items as horses, elephants, horned animals and jewels.

In the trade with the West i.e. Arabia, Persian Gulf and beyond, the West Coast of Peninsular India played a consistently dominant role from the early historic period. Several ports such as Thana, Goa, Bhatkal, Karwar, Honavar and Mangalore developed during the revival of long distance trade, between the tenth and twelfth centuries, with evidence of coastal shipping and ocean navigation. Surprisingly, this commercial activity was taking place only through limited monetization. Incidentally, the Konkan coast (under the Shilaharas) does not even show any signs of rise of markets and their network.

Wider trade networks also existed between Karnataka, Andhra and Tamil Nadu, for the presence of Kannada, Tamil and Telugu merchants is well attested in several towns such as Belgaun (Karnataka), Peruru in Nalgonda district (Andhra Pradesh) and coastal towns of Visakhapatnam and Ghantasala. The Andhra coast turned to the south eastern trade with Motupalli, Visakhapatnam and Ghantasala acting as the major outlets. Market centres of inter-regional importance are represented by places like Nellore, Draksharama, Tripurantakam and Anumakonda in Andhra Pradesh. On the northern and southern banks of Kaveri in its middle reaches arose a number of exchange points between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu such as Talakkad and Mudikondan.

Kerala developed contracts with the West and foreign traders such as the Jews, Christians and Arabs who were given trading towns under special royal charters. Coastal towns such as

Kolikkodu, Kollam etc., became entrepots of South Asian trade. The location of such trading groups as the Anjuvannan and Arab horse dealers enhanced the importance of coastal towns in Karnataka and Kerala.

Major craft centres which developed in response to inter-regional trade were weaving centres in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Some of the craft and commercial centres of the early historic urban phase survived till the early medieval period and were brought into the processes of re-urbanisation which linked them with the new socioeconomic institutions like the temple. Kashi (Varanasi) in the north and Kanchipuram (near Madras) in the south are two very prominent examples of such processes.

### **Sacred/ Pilgrimage Centres**

The idea of pilgrimage to religious centres developed in the early medieval period due to the spread of the cult of Bhakti. Its expansion in different regions through a process of acculturation and interaction between the Brahmanical or Sanskrit forms of worship and folk or popular cults cut across narrow sectarian interests. As a result, some local cult centres of great antiquity as well as those with early associations with brahmanical and non-brahmanical religions, became pilgrimage centres. The pilgrimage network was sometimes confined to the specific cultural region within which a cult centre assumed a sacred character. However, those cult centres, which became sacred tirthas attracted worshippers from various regions. Both types of pilgrimage centres developed urban features due to a mobile pilgrim population, trade and royal patronage. The role of emerging market in the growth of tirthas is now being recognised by historians in a big way.

Pushkara near Ajmer in Rajasthan was a sacred tirtha of regional importance with a dominant Vaishnava association. Kasi (Banaras) acquired a pan-Indian character due to its greater antiquity and importance as a brahmanical sacred centre. In South India, Srirangam (Vaishnava), Chidambaram (Shaiva) and Madurai (Shaiva) etc. developed as regional pilgrimage centres, while Kanchipuram became a part of an all India pilgrimage network. While Melkote was a regional sacred centre in Karnataka, Alampur, Draksharama and Simhachalam show a similar development in Andhra Pradesh. Tirupati was initially an important sacred centre for the Tamil Vaishnavas but acquired a pan-Indian character later in the Vijayanagara period. Jain centres of pilgrimage emerged in Gujarat and Rajasthan where merchant and royal patronage led to the proliferation of Jain temples in groups in centres such as Osia, Mount Abu, Palitana, etc.

In South India the elaboration of temple structures in sacred centres show two types of urban growth. First, it was organised around a single large temple as in Srirangam, Madurai, Tiruvannamalai (Tamil Nadu), Melkote (Karnataka), Draksharama and Simhachalam (Andhra Pradesh). The second type involves the growth around several temples of different religions such as Shivaism. Vishnuism and Saktism.

### **Royal Centres or Capitals**

Royal centres of the seats of power of the ruling families were a major category of urban centres in early medieval India. Some of them had been the seats of royal power even in the early historic period, for example, in the Janapadas of North India or in the traditional polities of South India. Royal families also developed their own ports, which were the main ports of entry into their respective territories and which also linked them with international commerce. Thus, the commercial needs of royal centres created new trade and communication links and built up much closer relationships between the royal centre and their agricultural hinterlands or resource bases. In all the region south of the Vindhyas, where brahmanical kingdoms came to be established by the eighth century CE there is substantial evidence of the growth of such royal centres. Some representative examples are: Vatapi and Vengi of the Chalukyas in the northern Karnataka and Andhra, Kanchipuram of the Pallavas with their royal port at Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram), Madurai of the Pandyas with Korkai as their port, Tanjavur of the Colas with Nagappattinam as their port, Kalyana of the Western Chalukyas, Dvarasamudra of the Hoysalas, and Warangal of the Kakatiyas with Motupalli at their port. Warangal was a rare example of a fortified royal city in South India. Examples of royal centres in North India are: the Gurjara Pratihara capital at Kanyakubja (Kanauj), Khajuraho of the Candellas, Dhara of the Paramaras, and Valabhi of the Solankis. A fairly large number of cities emerged under the powerful Gurjara-Pratiharas, Chahamanas and Paramaras in Rajasthan. Most of them were fortified centres, hill forts (garhkila and durga). Examples of fort-cities in Rajasthan are: Nagara and Nagda under the Guhilas, Bayana, Hanumanghrh and Chitor under the Gurjara-Pratiharas, and Mandor, Ranathambor, Sakambhari and Ajmer under the Chauhans and so on.

On the basis of various sources, a list of 131 places has been compiled for the Chauhan dominions, most of which seem to have been towns. Nearly two dozen towns are identified in Malwa under the Paramaras. Gujarat under the Chalukyas was studded with port towns. The number of towns, however, does not seem to be large in Eastern India although all the nine victory camps (jayaskandavars) of the Palas (Pataliputra, Mudgagiri, Ramavati, Vata Parvataka, Vilaspura, Kapilavasaka, Sahasgand, Kanchanapura and Kanau) may have been towns. The Palas and the Candellas also account for nearly twenty and twenty four fortresses respectively. Sometimes, important trade and market centres were also conferred on feudatory families. Examples of such minor political centres are numerous in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

## **Conclusion**

The changes introduced by the system of land grants in the post-Gupta centuries were not confined to a new agrarian economy. Urban settlements, which had been in the state of decay in the few centuries after the arrival of the Guptas, saw a new life infused into them. The revival of trade, rise of new markets, dispersal of political authority and consolidation of economic power by religious establishments had given rise to numerous towns and cities in different regions of the Indian sub continent with only minor variations noticeable in the relative importance of causative factors.

## **Chapter-IV-**

### **MERCHANT GUILDS OF SOUTH INDIA**

Structure

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The present unit ought to be seen as a complementary facet. An attempt has been made here to demarcate the role of traders and merchants in the society with reference to their organised economic activities in South India. The fluctuations in their relative position through centuries have also been shown. The unit also draws special attention to the overawing influence of big merchants on petty artisans and craftsmen.

#### **POSITION OF MERCHANTS**

The expansion of agriculture and the availability of surplus from the 8th/9th century onwards led to increase in commercial exchanges in South India. It resulted in the emergence of a full time trading community looking after the local exchange. This community also participated in wider inter-regional and inter-oceanic trade. South Indian merchants specialised in the trade of specific commodities such as textiles, oil or ghee, betel leave, hones, etc. At the local regional markets called *namam* were the centres of exchange. They were situated in a cluster of agrarian settlements, and they integrated not only collection from hinterland but also commercial traffic from other areas.

The numbers of these nagarams increased considerably during the Cola period in the 11th and 12th centuries, and the term *nagarattar*, i.e. member of the nagaram assembly, became a generic term for all Tamil merchants.

#### **ORGANISATION OF TRADERS**

The merchants derived their power and prestige not only from wealth but also from the guilds or associations formed by them to protect their interests. In the first phase the decline of trade weakened the corporate activity of merchants, and many of the guilds were reduced to mere regional or occupational sub-castes. But as trade revived in the second phase, merchant guilds reappeared as an important feature of the contemporary economic life.

#### **Guilds: Definition And Functions**

What was a merchant guild? How did it function? What were the benefits which accrued to its members? These are important questions to be answered. Well the guilds were voluntary associations of merchants dealing in the same type of commodity such as grains, textiles, betel leaves, horses, perfumes, etc. They were formed by both local as well as itinerant merchants. The association of local merchants having permanent residence in town was more permanent in

nature than the association of itinerant merchants which was formed only for a specific journey and was terminated at the end of each venture.

The guilds framed their own rules and regulations regarding the membership and the code of conduct. They fixed the prices of their goods and could even decide that specific commodity was not to be sold on a particular day by its members. They could refuse to trade on a particular day by its members. They could refuse to trade in a particular area if they found the local authorities hostile or uncooperative. The guild merchants also acted as the custodians of religious interests. The inscriptions refer to numerous instances when they collectively agreed to pay an additional tax on the sale and purchase of their goods for the maintenance of temples or temple functions.

The guild normally worked under the leadership of a chief who was elected by its members. He performed the functions of a magistrate in deciding the economic affairs of the guild. He could punish, condemn or even expel those members who violated the guild rules. One of his main duties was to deal directly with the King, and settle the market tolls and taxes on behalf of his fellow merchants. The growth of corporate activity enabled guild-chiefs to consolidate their power and position in society, and many of them acted as the representative of their members on the local administrative councils.

A member of the guild worked under a strict code of discipline and was also robbed of some initiative or action but still he enjoyed numerous benefits. He received full backing of the guild in all his economic activities and was, thus, saved from the harassment of local officials. Unlike a hawker or vendor, he had greater credibility in the market on account of his membership of the guild. Thus, instead of the fact that guild-chiefs tended to be rude and authoritative at times, the merchants found guilds an important means of seeking physical and economic protections.

The digests and commentaries of the period refer to the corporate body of merchants by various terms, such as naigama, shreni, samuha, sartha, samgha, etc. The naigama is described as an association of caravan merchants of different castes who travel together for the purpose of carrying on trade with other countries. Shreni, according to Medhatithi, was a group of people following the same profession such as that of traders, moneylenders, artisans, etc. though some authors considered it to be a group of artisans alone. The Lekhapaddhati indicates that a special department called the Shreni-karana was constituted by the kings of western India to look after the activities of the guilds of merchants and artisans in their region. Another text Manasollasa reveals that many merchant guilds maintained their own troops (shrenibala) for personal safety. Inscriptions too refer to the corporate activity of merchants. An inscription from western India refers to vanika-mandala which was probably a guild of local merchants.

### **Organisation of Trading Guilds in South India**



The expansion of agriculture and the growth of trade from the tenth century led to the emergence of many merchant guilds or organisations in South India too. The inscriptions refer to these organisations often as samaya, i.e. an organisation born out of an agreement or contract among its members to follow a set of rules and regulations.

The two most important merchant guilds of South India were known as the Ayyavole and the Manigraman. Geographically, the area of their operation corresponded to the present day state of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and South Andhra Pradesh. The Cola kings from the tenth century onwards made a concerted effort to trade and commerce through trade missions, maritime expeditions, abolition of tolls, etc. It greatly increased the activities of these guilds which were involved in not only inter-regional but also inter-oceanic trade across the Bay of Bengal. The merchant guild called Ayyavole was also known as the guild of "the 500 Swami of Aihole" nanadeshi. The organisation might have had an initial membership of 500. But there is no denying the fact that with the growth of trade and commerce, the Vira Bananjas (representing the trading guild of Ayyavok) operated on a trans-regional plane and had developed deep socio-economic interests between the ninth and fifteenth centuries. They spread from Bhalvani (in Sangli district in Maharashtra) in the north to Kayalpattinam (in Tamil Nadu) in the South. The number "five hundred" also became conventional as the guild became a much larger body and drew its members from various regions, religions and castes. It is in this context that the term nanadeshi came to be used for this organisation.

In course of outward expansion, the members of the Ayyavole guild interacted with the local markets called nagaram, and promoted commercial activity by collecting agricultural goods from the hinterland and distributing the goods brought from elsewhere. The commercial influence of Ayyavole spread even beyond South India. It is indicated by the inscriptions found at Burma, Java, Sumatra and Sri Lanka. As the mercantile activities of Ayyavole increased, some of its members became quite rich and powerful, and acquired the title of samaya chakravarti i.e. the emperor of the trading organisation.

Another important merchant guild of South, India was the Manigraman. It first appeared along the Kerala coast in the ninth century CE. However, as it gradually came into close contact, with the Ayyavole, it greatly improved upon its inter-regional activities and covered a large part of the peninsula. A ninth century Tamil inscription found at Takua pa on the West coast of Malaya indicates that it was engaged in the long distance sea trade from the very beginning. Anjuvannam was another body of merchants in South India, which probably represented an association of foreign merchants, and not a group of five communities or castes as some scholars believe. Like the Manigramam, it also began its commercial activity along the Kerala coast in the eighth or ninth century, and gradually spread out to other coastal areas of South India by the eleventh century. It interacted both with local merchants as well as the Ayyavole and Manigramam organisations.

The importance acquired by trading guilds is apparent in the conscious attempt to trace exalted genealogies of traders of various corporations. The Vira Bananjas of the Ayyavole, for instance, are said to have been born in the race of Vasudeva and their qualities are compared with those of various epic heroes. A typical prashasti (panegyric) of the Vira Bananjas may be seen in the following description found in the Kolhapur stone inscription of the Shilahar King Gandarditya dated in 1130 CE: "Hail! They who are adorned by a multitude of numerous virtues obtained by following the religion of the Five hundred Heroic Men renowned in the whole world; who are virtuous by reason of the maintenance of the code of the heroic Bananjas consisting of truthfulness, pure conduct, agreeable behaviour, political wisdom, courtesy and mercantile knowledge ..... who are exalted with their unfailing adventurous spirit .... who are born in the race of Vasudeva, Khandali and Mulabhadra ... who are invincible when they fight; who are like Brahma in respect of proficiency of the sixty-four arts; like Narayana in the possession of Chakra (discuss); like Rudra, who is the fire of the world destruction in slaying their opponents by their gaze .... who are like Rama in perseverance; like Arjuna in valour; like Bhishma in purity of conduct; like Bhima in adventurous spirit; like Yudhishtira in righteousness ..... like Karna in charity and like the sun in brilliance ....."

In short, the vast trading network in South India was controlled by a number of merchant organisations which worked in close cooperation and harmony with one another. The guild-chiefs, on account of their control on trade and trading organisations, established close links with the royal houses and enjoyed great name and fame in the society.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MERCHANTS AND CRAFTSMEN**

The exact nature of relationship between the merchants and craftsmen, the two interdependent sections of commercial world, is not recorded in the contemporary sources. It is, therefore, not known whether craftsmen such as weavers, metal-workers, etc., acted independently or worked under the command of merchants who supplied them money or raw material or both. There is, however, some evidence to suggest that as merchants came to exert greater control on the mobilisation of raw material and finished products, their influence on the activities of artisans increased considerably. An inscription of the 11th century from Erode in Tamil Nadu refers to an asylum given by merchants to the craftsmen, and thus indicates the dependence of the latter on the merchant organisations. As trade and commerce developed merchants tended to ability of artisans to market their goods personally. There are references to some oilmen and weavers who sold their goods themselves and became rich enough to make endowments to temples and priests. In general, the artisans and craftsmen during the early medieval period were economically dependent on big merchants.

## **Conclusion**

Seeing trader as an important link between the producer and consumer, this chapter underlined : the ups and downs in The relative position of traders and merchants in early

medieval South India, emergence of regional merchant groups; organisations of traders, viz. guilds, which regulated corporate activity of merchants; trans-regional and inter-oceanic activities of guilds in South India; the role of itinerant traders; and growing hold of big merchants over artisans and craftsmen.

## Unit-IV: Religious and Cultural Developments:

### Chapter-I- Puranic Traditions; Buddhism and Jainism

#### 3.1.10. Introduction

In this chapter we would be looking at the overall perspective on the religion in the context of early medieval society. The medieval cultural milieu included divinity and humanity; drew no sharp line between them; and contained various kinds of beings that moved back and forth between them and lived ambiguously at their conjuncture. Royal genealogies trace their ancestry to either the sun or moon. The spirit world was everywhere in everyday life. Celestial beings brought victory in war and commanded human fates. Spirits of nature caused disease, drought, flood, and fertility for animals, crops, and humans. Visible and invisible powers mingled capriciously. Priests, rulers, mystics, and saints evoked divinity and gods lived in society. A diverse Hindu cultural complex spread across medieval domains, endowing many local traditions with common features but also being defined distinctly in each place as local people continued to embrace local traditions. Learned Brahmins received gifts of support from rulers and local elites to organize temples and to conduct ceremonies that incorporated local deities, sentiments, and practices. At the same time, Brahmins rationalized and ritualised the local status hierarchy; they defined local identities in the ritual vocabulary of *varna* and *jati*. Brahmanical cultural forms spread in much the same way- and at the same time- as others were spreading Jainism, Buddhist, Islam, and Christianity. Competing royal patrons backed competing religious specialists, often at the same time. In this lively world of cultural politics, Brahmins defined Hindu orthodoxy in local terms. Brahmin rituals and Sanskrit texts became widely influential in medieval dynasties. The prominence of Sanskrit prose, Puranic deities, and divine genealogy in the inscriptions' prasastis indicates a sweeping royal agreement across South Asia and in parts of Southeast Asia that Brahmins brought to medieval governance a powerful symbolic technology. Many early medieval Sanskrit prasastis report the royal conduct of Vedic rituals, while vernacular texts in many inscriptions record a rulers' financial support for Agrahara settlements, temple building, and temple rituals. There were many ways to sponsor brahmanical influence and they all centred on temple precincts where most inscriptions appear and most identities were initially formed. The spiritual powers of Brahmins mingled with those of the gods that became central figures in medieval life. This chapter will throw some lights on the condition of Brahmanism and other religious during early medieval period of India.

#### 3.1.11. Hindusim

It was in the classical Gupta period that Brahmanism or Hindusim again revived in the northern part of the subcontinent, and especially in the Gangetic basin. During this period in the form of Saivism and Vaishnavism, dominated the field and they vied with each other for supremacy. There was a spirit of toleration in the religious field. Temples grew in numbers and massive grandeur. Image were multiplied without any limit. The spirit of religious toleration overrode narrow sectarian views. The members of the same royal family were known to be votaries of the different religious cult. The founder of Pratihara dynasty was a devotee of Vishnu but his three descendants were worshipper of Siva, Bhagavati and Sun god. Although the Pala rulers staunch Buddhist they employed orthodox Brahmins as their hereditary Chief Ministers and attended their religious ceremonies. The idea of Hari-Hara or the personification of the two gods, Siva and Vishnu, in one image, was an illustration of the same spirit. The emergence of Tantric cult profoundly influenced Buddhism and completely changed it so also influenced Hinduism.

##### 3.1.11.1. Saivism

Saivism attained a dominant position in India during this period. This is proved by the fact that a large number of royal families adhered to this faith and built richly endowed temple across the sub continent. The Pratihara kings, Vatsaraja and Mahendrapala, were worshippers of Siva. Nayanapala of Bengal was a Buddhist but he made a grant in favor of Siva Bhattaraka. Many Chahamanas rulers were worshipper of Siva. Dhang Chandela was an ardent devotee of Siva. At Khajuraho, there are many Siva temples. The Khandariya Mahadeo Temple was constructed in 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Many Siva shrine in Kashmir belonged to this period are mentioned in the *Rajatarangini*. In Odisha, under the Somavamsi ruler large numbers of temple were constructed. The Somavamsi rulers also adopted the title of Paramamahesvara. Yayati II of Somavamsi dynasty built the famous Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar. In the far south large numbers of Siva temple were constructed by the Pallavas and the Chola in their respective dominion.

Siva was worshipped in phallic form as well as in the human form. The image of Siva in the Ardhanarisvara form was also a common object of worship. There are many sects of Saivism flourished during this period. Pasupata Lakulisa was the founder of the Pasupata sect of Saivism. His images are found in a numbers of Siva of temple of this period. The Pasupata regarded the acquisition of qualities of Siva as *dakshina* or *mokshya*. The followers of second sects of Saivism believed in Pati (Lord Siva), Pasu (Individual Soul) and Pasa (Fetters of worldly bondage). The *Kapalika* wore a garland of human bone they lived in cemeteries and took their food from a skull. They believed in non duality. Another form of Saivism was popular in Kashmir known as *Trikai* because it dealt with three principles Siva, Sakti and Anu. According to them individual soul suffers on accounts of ignorance. The Soul get released when it realized it unit with Siva. It is the removal of ignorance which leads to salvation. However, it is mere human efforts which led to supreme freedoms but it is God's grace which ultimately brings about the union of Siva and Jiva. When ignorance is removed, the individual soul is merged in the universal soul (*Brahman*).

Sankaracharya did much to popularize devotion to Siva among the teeming millions of India. He was one of the greatest Hindu philosophers and teachers of Post Gupta period. He established famous monasteries at Sringeri in south, Dwaraka in Gujarat, Puri in Odisha and Badrinath in the Himalaya to popularize Saivism. We will discuss the philosophy of Sanakarachaya in separate section.

### **3.1.11.2. Vaisnavism**

In the Post Gupta period, the influence of Vaisnavism can be traced throughout India. Some of the notable kings of various dynasties flourishing in different parts of India are known to have patroned Vaisnavism. The worshipper of Vishnu was very popular. In his book entitled "*Dasavataracharita*" Kshemendra mentioned ten incarnation of Lord Vishnu and those are Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Trivikrama, Parsurama, Rama, Krishna, Budhha and Kalki. Out of these, Krishan was extremey popular. The Bhagabata purana popularize the worship of Krishna. The Hindu temples constructed at Osian in Rajasthan have numbers of Vaishnava temples. A good description of the shrine of Vishnu constructed in Kashmir during this periods is preserved in *Rajataranagini*. The Chaturbhuj temple of Vishnu at Gwalior was built in 875 A.D.

There were two important school of Vaisnavism and those were the Bhagavatas and the Panchratras. The Pancharatra shall derived its name from its central dogma of the five fold manifestation of Vasudeva namely *Para*, *Vyuha*, *Bivava*, *Antaryamin* and *Archa* form. The views of the Bhagavata is that the nature of Vasudeva is pure knowledge. Letter on, he divided himself into four form as Vasudeva, Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Anirudha representing the higher self, the individual soul, the mind and egoism respectively. Another sect of Vaisnavism was that of the

Vaikhanas, who lived in forest. Their food consisted of wild rice, grain. They worshipped Vishnu and had four companion Achyuta, Satya, Purusha and Anirudha.

It is worthy of notice that the Hindu divinities during this period came to be arranged according to their grades in the hierarchy. Just as societies were divided into unequal classes based on ritual, landed property, military power etc the divinities were also divided into unequal ranks. Vishnu, Siva and Durga appeared as supreme deities, presiding over many gods and goddesses who were placed in the lower position as retainers or attendants. The Supreme mother goddess was represented in a dominating posture in relation to several minor deities. From 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. the Bhakti cult spread throughout the country. The people made all kinds of offerings to the God and got return the Prasada or favour of the God. The devotees completely surrendered themselves to their gods.

### **3.1.11.3. North India**

During this period northern part of the subcontinent witnessed important developments after the decline of the Gupta dynasty. The reign of Harsha in the Gangetic basin during the seventh century was perhaps the last relatively stable period in the north for some centuries. A Chinese pilgrim, Hsuan Tsang, reported that Buddhist institutions continued to flourish under Harsha, not least important Nalanda “university,” which had been founded in the Gupta period and had come to attract scholars from other parts of Asia. With the decline of Harsha’s line, however, the north reverted to the rise of regional satrapies, vying for hegemony and expansion. The eighth through the twelfth centuries were marked by intermittent warfare and relative instability. Three clans, in particular, waxed and waned in importance: the Pratiharas, the Palas, and Rastrakutas. Moreover, by the tenth century at least, hill kingdoms and small city-states had developed in Assam, Nepal, and Kashmir. Regionalism had taken precedence over empire, though in many instances local languages had not yet crystallized. One of the “new” players on the scene of Northwest India were the Rajputs.

The Hindu chieftains and kings of the north practiced a strategy for retaining hegemony not unlike that of the Colas in the south. Most particularly, Brahmans were given land grants and invited to be the court advisers and public relations agents. This would assure that Vedic culture was preserved and provide a “religious umbrella” for all the peoples in the domain. In some instances, large temples were built to institutionalize the royal cult and serve as a centralizing monument for the monarch. Local deities, and especially goddesses, were incorporated into the royal cult. These acts of patronage served to give royal sanction to important pilgrimage sites and incorporate into the kingdom those folk and village communities for whom these goddesses were important. Not only Aryansiation of indigenous tribes and their gods took place but also during this period Vaisnavism and Saivism in north India reached attained a new height. In Vaisnavism, the cult of Bhakti, Jagannath cult and in Saivism Pasupata and Lakulisa cult rose into prominence. Large numbers texts with Bhakti orientation were written such as the Gitagovinda of Jayadeva. In the Rajpur community the Krishna cult was famous.

A major product of this changing religious scenario was the construction of myriad temples across the Indian subcontinent. In Hinduism temples were constructed for all the sects. The Indian Silpasastras recognize three main types of temples known as the *Nagara* or ‘northern’ style, the *Dravidian* or ‘southern’ style, and the *Vesara* or hybrid style. *Nagara* temple belongs to the country from the Himalays to the Vindhys, *Vesara* from the Vindhys to the Krishna and the *Dravida* from the Krishna to the Cape Camorin. There are also other distinct styles in peripheral areas such as Bengal, Kerala and the Himalayan valleys. The Hindu temple construction during the medieval period (6th-13th centuries C.E) took place on a magnificent scale comparable to the building of churches and

cathedrals in the medieval Europe. A detail account of the temple architecture will be discussed in a separate chapter.

#### **3.1.11.4. Bhakti Movement in South**

The deep South became, arguably, the major center of “Hindu” civilization from the eighth through the fifteenth centuries C.E. The “Hinduism or Brahmanism” we see emerging in the deep South remains very similar in many ways to the “Hinduism” one finds in the southern part of the subcontinent even today and is a significant source for later developments in India. It was in the seventh century that an explicitly “Hindu” culture developed in the south. One of the purveyors of this culture was the Pallava dynasty, a royal family who established a capital at Kancipuram and a seaport at Mahabalipuram. The Pallavas brought architectural styles and other influences from the Gupta era by way of the Calukyas. The Pallavas formed an alliance with local landowners and imported brahmins to whom they donated land for villages, known as brahmadeyas, centers from which brahmanic culture radiated outward. Brahmins became the “kingmakers” and together with local landowners legitimated kingship and participated in the construction and conduct of temples.

Two distinct but related phenomena demonstrated the “Hinduization” that occurred from the sixth to the ninth centuries CE. The first was the explosion of devotional (bhakti) literature in the Tamil vernacular; the other was the construction of temples and incorporation of an elaborate symbolic and ritual life therein. In the south

There were two sets of bhakti saints the Alvars and the Nayanmars. Alvars, literally “those who drown” (in the grace of the god), were those who extolled the virtues of Visnu. Over a period of several generations, the alvars composed thousands of stanzas singing of the bliss of surrender (prapatti) to god and exploits of their beloved deity. Among these poets were two known as Periyalvar (big alvar) and Nammalvar (our alvar). Another, Antal, was perhaps the first woman poet in India, certainly the first devotional singer, who likened the relationship with god to that of husband and wife and lover to lover. On the Saivite side, the Nayanmars extolled the virtues of Siva, both his terror and his grace. While there were said to be sixty-three Nayanmars, perhaps in response to the notion of sixty-three Jain teachers, there were, in fact, some six to nine historical figures, some of whom were poets, including those known as Cundarar, Appar, and Nanacampantan. The songs of those poets, Vaisnava and Saiva, were fluid and retained orally; but, both sets of materials were collected and edited in the eleventh century, the Vaisnava corpus into the Nalayira-Divyaprabandham and the Saiva corpus into the Tevaram.

Manikkavacakar, a Saiva poet, only later accepted as one of the classical Nayanmar poets and variously dated between the sixth and ninth centuries C.E, co-opted imageries of love and sexuality to describe the relationship with the divine. The natural landscape was sensually described but was thought to fade into insignificance in the presence of the divine. To be “possessed” by the god was like a form of madness-it transcended all other experiences. Relationships with women similarly faded in comparison with the relationship to Siva. Indeed, the poet was like the beloved who was offered love by the god and united with God as if in sexual union. The bhakti experience as articulated by these singers reflected several patterns at once:

- First, they used the images of early Tamil poetry to localize the deities. The foliage and landscape of Tamil land was the god’s- the god was “here,” he had made his home here, learned the language, and established pilgrimage sites here. Similarly, imageries of love mirrored those used by the sangam poets. “Possession” and “intoxication” reflected the images by which the god made himself known in the “pre-Hindu” context. The poetry and the devotional experience were quintessentially Tamil.

- Second, the poets selectively appropriated myths from the northern epic setting thereby giving the local variations of the deities “sanskritic” or vaidika sanction. Siva’s destruction of the three cities was localized; Visnu was grafted onto Mayon, god of the pastoral tract. Skanda was grafted onto Murukan.
- Third, the songs were responding to a Jain and Buddhist context, at first with some virulence (especially in the Saiva case) then by selectively appropriating elements of Jain and Buddhist ethics and ideology.

There was evidence in the early generations of poets (especially in the writings of the Saiva Nanacampantan) of attacks on Jain or Buddhist attitudes, reflecting the attacks of certain Saivite kings on Buddhist or Jain establishments (such as that at Nagarjunakonda). Yet, in time, one finds the co-opting of Buddhist or Jain themes-hospitality, a sense of community, etc. At least one deity, Sasta, emerged in this period as an apparent alternative to the figure of Buddha- Sasta was teacher; his poses emulated those in earlier Buddhist and Jain iconography; but Sasta was also a son of Siva and accessible to help the devotee. Pilgrimage centers made the deities accessible, unlike the reclusive Jain mendicants. Not least important, Buddhist sacred places (pallis) became sites for “Hindu” temples.

The bhakti poets, in short, expressed a form of Tamil identity that claimed Tamil country for “Hinduism” and placed itself in contradistinction to its religious rivals. These patterns recurred wherever bhakti was popular; the vernacular language became the medium of religious expression, albeit enhanced by forms of Sanskritic culture and there was selective appropriation of and distancing from the ideology of “others.”

### **3.1.11.5. The Virashaiva tradition**

The term *Virashaivas*, literally, 'militant Shaivas'. The Virashaiva movement that suggest continuities with the bhakti of the Nayanars and Alvars. Basavanna is regarded as the founder of the Virashaiva movement. He was born in C.E. 1106 in a Kannada Shaiva brahmana family. As he grew up, he increasingly found the ritualistic Shiva-bhakti of his home pointless and shackling. It is said that he discarded his sacred thread at the age of sixteen, left home and travelled to Kudalasangama, a pilgrim centre with a major temple to Shiva Kudalasangameshvara, 'lord of the meeting rivers'. This 'lord of the meeting rivers' became Basavanna's chosen deity; every vachana (literally, 'saying') Basavanna composed has that god's name in it.

It is believed that Basavanna worshipped the linga in the temple at Kudalasangama till Shiva himself appeared to him - first in his dreams, and then, in the form of a tiny linga that found its way into Basavanna's hand. Basavanna was now free of sacred places, temples and lingas housed in shrines; he had his own personal linga. The Virashaivas are also known as the Lingayatas, 'those who wear the linga'. Orthodox Lingayatas wear a small stone linga in a silver casket around their necks. It is this, rather than a linga in a temple, that is their main object of worship. Its constant wearing symbolizes their chosen god's near presence, and the worship of one's personal linga suggests that no intermediary is required between Shiva and his devotees.

To continue Basavanna's story: after having been initiated by Shiva himself, Basavanna left Kudalasangama and took up service at the court of King Bijjala in Kalyana. As he rose in the administrative hierarchy, his devotion to the 'lord of the meeting rivers' also matured. Apparently he made use of his influential position at Bijjala's court to win converts for his brand of Shaivism. A community of Shiva-bhaktas grew around Basavanna. They opposed image and temple worship, upheld the equality of the sexes and rejected caste distinctions. Not surprisingly, there was fierce opposition to this group. The Virashaivas' opponents also managed to win Bijjala over to their side.



It is said that events took a violent turn when a marriage took place between two of Basavanna's followers from two extremes of the social hierarchy. The bride was a former brahmana (former, because caste distinctions were disregarded in the Virashaiva community) and the groom was an ex-outcaste. This marriage was, in no uncertain terms, a challenge to caste-based society with its detailed rules on who could and could not marry whom, a society in which a marriage between a brahmana woman and an outcaste man was not to be thought of. The king, as the upholder of order, sentenced the arrangers of the marriage -the fathers of the couple -to death. Armed rebellion by at least some of Basavanna's followers ensued. Basavanna himself died during the turmoil in C.E. 1167/1168. The Virashaivas were persecuted for some time but survived to become a dominant community in some parts of Karnataka in recent times.

This outline of Basavanna's life suggests some similarities with the bhakti of the Tamil saints who predated him, as also some differences. It is this theme that we will now explore briefly by citing a few examples. Like the Nayanars, Basavanna was a Shaiva, so were his followers; and the Virashaiva saints named the sixty-three Nayanars among their forebears. Like the Nayanars and alvars the Virashaiva saints composed their poems in the language of their region, not in pan-Indian Sanskrit.

Like the Nayanars and Alvars, the Virashaiva saints expressed their bhakti in terms of personal relationships -those of mother and child, lover and beloved, etc. Basavanna's poem 'As a mother runs ... and looks after me', illustrates this. The mother-child relationship is one that everybody - brahmana or outcaste, man or woman - is familiar with and can speak about.

In fact, the poems of the Virashaiva saints are even more personal than those of the Alvars and Nayanars. Indeed, in their vachanas, Virashaiva protested against different kinds of intermediaries. They rejected the established social hierarchy which excludes so many from direct access to things considered sacred - the Vedas or the image of god in a temple.

All this said, what began as a critique of the status quo was absorbed, in great measure: bit by bit, into the sponge-like body of Puranic religion. In fact, Basavanna himself inaugurated what is in effect a priesthood, the jangamas ('lingas in motion' or wandering mendicants). Each Lingayata has his/her hereditary guru from among the jangamas who are organized around a number of mathas (teaching institutions). Ceremonies such as those performed at the birth of a child, its naming, marriage and death require the presence of a jangama. And most Lingayata life-cycle rituals include worship of the officiating jangama's feet. But we can conclude by emphasizing that Basavanna and his followers did leave a legacy of questioning established convention. They left behind verses of great beauty, intensity and depth, poetry that is both mystical and radical.

#### **3.1.11.6. Philosophical developments**

South India was the arena in which significant philosophical and theological reflection occurred. These speculations often took the form of discourses, even arguments, between various communities, including Buddhists, Vaisnavas, and Saivas. The "primal insight" (mulamantra) was usually given by a particular guru on the basis of experience. This insight would result in aphorisms and cryptic couplets (sutras) often in poetic language. Then, on the basis of discussion and dialectic, elaborations and explanations would occur (sastras). Finally, arguments and/or polemics (tika) would develop in which one viewpoint was defended over against another. The reflection of two schools of thought rooted in the south will illustrate these "philosophical" developments. One tradition is associated with Saivism and the other with Sri Vaisnavism, the primarily brahmanical sect in which Visnu and his consort Sri are worshipped. First, the Saiva alternative.

**Saiva Siddhanta:** Around the eleventh century CE one Meykantar Tevar, a Tamil velala (a landowning community), articulated a theological system that came to be known as Saiva Siddhanta.

His thought was rooted in the belief system of the earlier Śaiva bhaktas but was expressed in terse Tamil couplets, known as the Sivajñanapotam. The devotional experience formed the basis for the intellectual system which then gave further legitimation to devotionalism. Here, as in many Indian schools, it was experience that constituted the most effective way into comprehending what the universe was about.

In Saiva Siddhanta-there were three fundamental concepts. The first concept was the divine (pati). The divine could take an abstract, aniconic, or non-anthropomorphic form (civam) such as may be expressed in the lingam (the creative principle embodied in a pillar). The divine could also take concrete form (civan) such as in a particular manifestation of the deity as in Natarajan (the dancing Siva). This form of the deity was considered active and expressed itself in five ways: creation, preservation, destruction, concealment, revelation or discernment.

The second basic concept was pacu (“soul,” but literally, “cow”). The “soul” took on the character or form of that to which it was attached. The “souls” of all human beings were “attached” to the bonds of existence, hence unable by nature to relate to and become like the deity.

The third concept was paca (the bonds of existence). These bonds constituted the fundamental problem of human being. These bonds were three in number: egocentricity (anava)-this was the orientation of one’s life by selfishness and the will to have one’s own way; maya-this was the tendency to overvalue the “tangible world”; and karman-the principle of causation which, because it was ill-trained, tended to keep one attached to the bonds.

The goal of existence was to become attached to the lord (pati) through the grace (arul.) of god. The *summum bonum* of the religious experience was for the soul and the lord to become inseparable as in a new compound. Several analogies were used for this experience: it was like iron filings on the magnet; or like the fragrance of the flower- different from it but inseparable from it. One could attain this experience in a variety of ways, but most commonly, it occurred through *darsan* (viewing the deity) after the temple ritual sequences. The experience was illustrated in the context of worship in a temple when the foot of the deity (in the form of a crown) was placed on the head of the devotee.

**Vedanta:** The other major school rooted in the south is known as Vedanta (that is, the “end” or culmination of the Vedas) or Advaita (non-dualism) and its variants. This school was rooted in the Upanis.ads and was associated with the Brahmins of the Śrī Vaisnava sect. It was influenced by several sources, including the Visnu Purana, the Bhagavadgīta, and, not least important, the songs of the Tamil Alvars. While the term advaita literally means monism or nondualism, there are, in fact, several variations within the tradition.

The start of this school is ascribed to one Badarayana (apparently not a South Indian), who is said to have compiled the Vedanta Sūtras around the second century CE as a form of commentary on selected Upanis.ads. The tradition was maintained and refined in the south primarily by a succession of acaryas, that is, priests who were also preceptors or tutors affiliated with Śrīvaisnava temples. One of the early Acaryas was Yamuna, who was followed in succession by others, including the famed theologian Ramanuja, who was associated with the temple at Srirangam, and Madhva, a dualist who became especially popular in Karnataka. An important figure in this intellectual climate was Sankara (or Samkara), an eighth-century brahman from Kerala, who eschewed the life of a householder and of a priest-preceptor in order to become a samnyasin, a celibate-seeker cum teacher. Eventually, Sankara is claimed by Saivites and especially by smarta brahmins as the teacher par excellence and an “incarnation” of Siva.

Most of the advaitin thinkers shared certain common principles. The universe had as its fundamental essence brahman. Brahman, once the formless, nameless reality of the early Upanis.ads,

is now understood to be either aniconic and formless or iconic-that is, manifested in specific forms. Hence, most agreed that specific deities were manifestations of brahman. Similarly, there was the individualized form of brahman, that is, atman, which in its natural state was one with brahman, but for most human beings existed in “bondage” within organisms. The atman was involved in the world because of avidya, the inability to discern the reality about existence. The world was an expression of brahman, it was derived from brahman, and/or was pervaded by brahman. However, for some, such as Sankara, the world was less “pure,” even only relatively “real” insofar as it was considerably removed from its source.

How does one know the truth? In two ways- through “experience,” that is, through intuitive wisdom or enlightenment, but also through the sacred texts especially those that are s’ruti (heard or revealed). More specifically, the Upanis.ads were revealed and were thus self-validating but also were validated by experience. Other smṛti literature was cited by some as authoritative (e.g., the Bhagavadgita or the Alvars).

The ultimate destiny to which one should aspire was mokṣ.a (union with brahman). Bhaskaran insisted only brahmins could attain mokṣ.a, but Ramanuja maintained any and all could approach the deity. Most of the proponents of the school, however, tended to exclude sudras from those eligible for mokṣ.a.

Most believed there was logic to the cycle of life. Samsara, the continual cycle of life, death, and rebirth could be sorrowful inasmuch as it could lead to a “second death.” The logic of karma could affect one’s birth and rebirth, a matter that critics point out becomes self-serving for brahmins to maintain. Most of them accepted the Puranic imagery of massive cosmic cycles of evolution and devolution known as yugas; replicated in smaller cycles of time, down to moments within the day. There is a desirability of breaking through to mokṣ.a at moments which serve as the junctions of these cycles.

There was also a hierarchy of space-there was a center to the world, that is, “Mt. Meru”- where the gods reside. There were then mythical concentric circles of the universe the further one was from the center the further into chaos and away from the sacred center. The implication of the cosmology was that cities and temples were to reflect this pattern: temples were at the center of a city; brahmins lived near that center; while outcastes were to live on the fringes.

Enlightenment was generally thought to occur in stages. As one gained insight one saw the earlier stages as less helpful; hence one’s perceptions of the world and social reality change as one neared fuller consciousness. These stages of consciousness were likened to stages of wakefulness (when one is caught up in the affairs of the world); to that of sleep when one dreams and hence retains perceptions and memories of the world; to deep sleep wherein such perceptions have been left behind. The ultimate state of consciousness or bliss was known as turiya.

Individual members of the Vedanta school obviously made their own contributions and diverged to varying degrees from the above consensus. It is worth looking briefly at two of the most creative of South India’s thinkers Sankara and Ramanuja.

Sankara was born a Nambudiri brahmin around 788 CE in Kerala. Clearly a prodigy, tradition claims he was initiated into Vedic learning at the age of seven and within two years had mastered much of the tradition. Early in his youth, the tradition continues, he persuaded his mother to let him become a samnyasi without having to become a householder first. He is said to have had teachers who were influenced by a Buddhist heritage. Gaudapada, for example, one of his gurus, had been influenced by Bhavavineka, a Buddhist philosopher.

In short, Sankara may have been indirectly influenced by a line of such Buddhist thinkers as Asvaghosa, Vasubandhu, and especially Nagarjuna. Indeed, his contemporary and rival, Bhaskaran,

called him a crypto-Buddhist. In fact, Sankara wrote commentaries on certain of the Upanis.ads and sought to base his reflections on those texts while appropriating some quasi-Buddhist ideas. The end result of his lifetime was his ability to outthink the alternative discussants of his day, including Buddhist ones and thereby, in effect, pulling the intellectual rug out from under Buddhist speculation and linking brahmanic speculation more persuasively to the Upanisadic sages. It could be argued that Sankara was the brightest mind of his century in the world.

It is impossible to do justice to Sankara's system in a brief space. Among other things, he argued that the world, and the self as well, were derived from brahman. The world was created at the act of brahman, but the result was less nearly "real" or "pure" than the source just as curds, though derived from milk, are less "pure" than the source. Hence, there were two forms of reality: vyavahara the manifold or phenomenal world; the many (a concept stressed by Ramanuja); and paramatman-the one supreme atman -that "reality" stressed by Sankara. Maya described our misunderstanding of the world, our propensity to think a rope is a snake, to assume what we see is ultimate. Avidya(ignorance) caused one to think the world was ultimate, when, in fact, as one's consciousness was raised, one saw the world as having been derived from brahman. Sankara's sense of the ultimate was nirguna- that which was without attributes. His followers, however, especially smarta brahmins insisted he believed that several specific deities (sagun. a), representing the various sectarian options of the time, were personifications of the absolute (nirgun.a), and that these deities were thought to reside within one.

For Sankara, perceptions (pratyahara) were of different kinds: sabda, for example, was perception through inner understanding (i.e., jnana or buddhi). Anusamdhana was "reflective consciousness," while anumana was inference. Anubhava was to know the oneness of all things, an awareness that came at the highest stage of consciousness (turiya). Sankara was a strict monist-everything was of one nature, though that which was derived was inferior to its source.

Sankara is said to have traveled throughout India and to have established at least four monasteries (matham) including in Kasi (Banaras), Sringeri in Southwestern India, and at Kancipuram near what is now Chennai (Madras). He is said to have died by the age of thirty-two but left behind a legacy still being interpreted by commentators and scholars alike.

Ramanuja was of very different background. He was an acarya (priest preceptor) in the famed Vaisnava temple in Srirankam, son of an acarya and a disciple of Yamuna. Ramanuja sought to give the worship of a personal god a "philosophical" basis. That is, he was perhaps India's greatest "theologian." He based his ideas on the songs of Alvars, on the later theistic Upanis.ads, and especially the Isa and Svetasvatara Upanis.ads, on the Bhagavadgita and those Purana as relating to the exploits and worship of Visnu.

For Ramanuja, brahman was both formless (purusa) and accessible in various forms (prakrti). The world was the form, the extension of god, like a paintbrush in the hand of an artist and the painting once completed. Hence, creation was the rhythm and energy of god and the phenomenal world was relatively good because it was a manifestation of the divine. The divine had its own forms (svarupa) and those forms were many. Moreover, the divine had at least six functions in relation to the world: providence- that is, god was constantly interacting with the world; heroism (virya); majesty or prestige (tejas); power (bala); creativity (sakti); and omniscience (jnana).

Ramanuja is famed for his articulation of the two forms of grace operative in bhakti. Using analogies already known, he suggested, on the one hand, there was "cat grace"- the grace of "faith." The kitten surrenders itself to its mother, who picks it up by the scruff of its neck. So too was the grace of god- it is freely given, the divine does the work while the devotee surrenders in an act known as prapatti. He suggested this is most appropriate for followers of Visnu.

The other kind of grace was “monkey grace”-the grace of “works.” In this case the young monkey clings to its mother’s fur. So too does the devotee work to experience divine grace. By doing certain deeds one could attain the deity’s grace. Prasada was a way of mediating grace- it is exemplified in the priest’s sharing of the offerings with gathered devotees after the completion of a temple ritual.

Ramanuja was responsible for the spread of Vaisnavism in the south. Several temples were converted. It was also after Ramanuja’s time that virtually all deities, represented iconographically in the south, were given two consorts: one, according to the tradition, representing the devotee who merited the deity’s favor, that is, the “grace of works”; the other representing the devotee whose faith was such that the deity bestows his grace freely. Further, while many other of the Srivaisnava acaryas believed that spiritual knowledge was available only to brahmans, Ramanuja is said to have shared his ideas even with dalits, some of whom to this day claim Ramanuja influenced their ancestors.

### **3.1.11.7. Tantrism**

In its present widely accepted sense, Tantra means a literature which spreads knowledge and particularly knowledge of profound things with the help of mystic diagrams(yantra) and words possessing esoteric meanings(matra) and helps the attainment of salvation. The tantra as a special religious or philosophical concept gradually came into use from about 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Century C.E. We can have a fair idea of the general principles of Tantrism from the Mahanirvana Tantra which is one of the most popular and well known Tantric texts.

The origins of tantrism are probably beyond reconstruction. It appeared to combine “folk” and vaidika features and that it was undoubtedly practiced for centuries by groups who were outside the orthoprax mainstream. Its “folk” roots may be linked in an agricultural respect for soil and furrow but manifest themselves in veneration of the female genitalia. The famed “squatting goddess,” Lajja Gauri, for example, apparently represented this early relation between furrow and vagina. She was the goddess seated on her haunches, naked, her genitalia clearly visible- the earliest forms of this figure found to date in the upper Deccan plateau are first century CE. Also part of this “folk” background was the belief that one could be “possessed” by the deity, or, more accurately perhaps, become one with the goddess. Tantrics further affirmed the senses and celebrated all of matter, including things the orthoprax thought defiled, such as meat and liquor. Tantrics assumed the divine was present in all such things and hence they could be used ritually.

Mixed with these “folk” elements are aspects which have their roots in vaidika practice. This included the ritual use of sounds. Sound had cosmogonic power; hence, chants or mantras were thought to link one to the cosmos at large. Vidya (“magical speech”) was used in tantric ritual. This included meditation on a cryptic sentence and directing chants to the deity, almost always a goddess. Further, the body could be used symbolically in ways that resonate with the yogic tradition- winds were thought able to move from various cakras (centers on the body) through mythical veins. Gestures (mudras) were used ritually as were postures (asanas) of various kinds. Pranayama (breath control) was similarly borrowed from hatha yoga. The body, in short, was congruent to the universe and to the alphabet of sounds and to the deities.

In tantra, a man usually worked with a guru, often female, who was believed to be able to lead the devotee to liberation and the use of occult powers. The culmination of the tantric experience was the re-attainment of primordial androgyny, the collapsing of distinctions between separate selves, between males and females, and between deity and devotee. This was ritually expressed by sexual union in which no bodily fluids were ejected. Rather the couple became one.

Hindu tantrics understood their discipline to have seven steps. The first three were common to most Hindu devotees and included basic devotion to Visnu and meditation on Siva. The fourth

stage, sometimes referred to as right handed worship (daksinacara) entailed worship of the supreme goddess in ways consistent with orthoprax patterns. It is in the next stage, “left handed” worship (vamacara) when ritual use of the five “m’s” assumed a significant role: *mamsa* (meat); *matsya* (fish); *mudra* (fried rice); *mada* (intoxicants); *maithuna* (intercourse). These practices were developed with the careful guidance of a guru and were accompanied by a complex system of symbols, including the use of geometric designs (yantra) and special points on the body (cakra). While these practices were mastered in secrecy, at the next stage one would “go public” inasmuch as the initiate had come to understand there was no distinction between the pure and the impure. Finally, one could reach the final stage (kulacara) when all distinctions were believed to have been transcended.

Tantrism became a part of Jain and Buddhist practice as well. In Buddhism, in fact, a new school emerged around the sixth century CE known as Vajrayana. It is the school that made its way into Tibet where it was grafted onto the indigenous religion known as Bon. Like “Hindu” forms of tantrism, Buddhist tantra used body imagery and sounds and understood all of matter, including alleged defilements, to be sacred. The rationale in Buddhism, however, differed. It was rooted in the doctrine of sunyata wherein matter (samsara) and nirvana were rendered homologous since neither had its own existence (svabhava). Further, the female principle was not perceived to be a goddess (except later in Tibetan forms of Vajrayana). Rather, feminine forms were used to personify certain Buddhist perfections, such as wisdom or compassion. One did not worship these feminine forms so much as seek to emulate them or subsume their attributes. Further, the feminine forms were sometimes juxtaposed with masculine ones as in *prajna/purusa* (wisdom/spirit). Hence, in ritual coitus, the distinctions between male and female and of all opposites were collapsed. One became the other; one assumed the attributes of those perfections rendered in male or female form.

It seems likely that tantrism flourished especially in border regions—such as Assam, Northern Bengal, and Northwest India—which were not systematically Hinduized prior to the tenth century. By the ninth and tenth centuries, as such areas were brahmanized, there was assimilation of foreign and/or “offbeat” expressions; families and clans who were previously obscure and outside the circles of power were now being given land grants or in other ways being incorporated into the body politic. Now increasingly, tantric imageries made their way into temple sculptures and architectural symbolism; for example, the icon, at least in Saiva temples, was the *linga* or male principle; the pedestal in which it was set was the *yoni* or female principle. Tantrism had to some extent been “domesticated” and made part of the brahmanic synthesis.

### **3.1.11.8. The New Status of Mother Goddess Cult**

One of the significant developments in the religious life of the subcontinent during the period under discussion was the emergence of goddesses to the status of “high deity.” Up until about the sixth century CE, goddesses had appeared in classical contexts but in relatively subsidiary roles— for example, as consorts, wives, adoptive mothers, and attendants in urban complexes of the Gangetic basin. There was, of course, evidence of goddess worship in agricultural settings from early times—from the Atharvavedic hymn of praise to Prthvi, and terra-cotta representations of fertility goddesses in the first two millennia BCE to the iconography of the naked “squatting goddess” in the Deccan by the first century CE. Now these disparate streams were merging to propel the goddess into a place of supremacy she had not theretofore achieved. There appear to be several reasons for this development:

- The increased visibility of “folk” and tribal communities in areas that had thereto not been fully integrated. Many of these communities were worshipping goddesses of particular places, of natural powers (e.g., diseases) or of particular families.

- The propensity of kings and other would-be patrons to incorporate such people into their domain by “co-opting” their deities into the official cultus. Such was the case, for example, in Odisha and in the Cola courts of South India, where the royal cult of Siva was given a bride derived from the rural landscape.
- The employment of Brahmans in the courts and in public contexts who were prepared to make “connections” (bandhu)-that is, to link the “new” deities to the legitimating older ones.
- The likelihood that goddesses became one strategy by which Hinduism came to replace Buddhism in several settings. There is evidence, for example, that shrines to the goddess were established occasionally on the site of Buddhist pallis (sacred places)- Bhagavati shrines in Kerala are a case in point. These “replacements” were not necessarily arbitrary. Goddesses could personify those attributes (prosperity, creativity, etc.) deemed auspicious to vaidika adherents just as female icons had come to embody perfections and attributes within Buddhism. Further, the Buddhist understanding of the world with its ambiguities and disease could be personified in the person of a goddess who represented the forces of nature and the ambiguous, even hostile, powers of the world. Such may have been the case with Durga, emerging by the tenth century in Bengal, possibly representing a Hindu personification of duh.kha, the Buddhist term for the unsatisfactoriness of the world.
- The increased visibility of tantrism, especially in such places as Bengal, with its worship of the female form, almost certainly lent impetus to the classicalization of a powerful goddess figure.
- Finally, one can identify a dialect of “self” and “other,” when communities or kingdoms sought to differentiate or identify themselves over against other communities or kingdoms. In such dialectics, a mythology of militancy was often evoked- the “asuras” were the representations of the “other guys”; in the mythological rhetoric of warfare, “our deity” was more powerful than theirs. The great goddess was presented mythologically as more powerful than those deities who preceded her. Among the “others” being addressed may have been Buddhist, and eventually, Islamic communities.

Whatever the factors, there appeared during this period a Sanskrit text known as the *Devimahatmya*. The “text” was a series of myths, first recited, no doubt, in oral form, but reduced to writing somewhat later. The first two cycles of myths, at least- the “birth” of the goddess from the navel of the sleeping Visnu and her battles with troublesome *asuras* such as the buffalo Mahisa-were probably datable between the sixth and tenth centuries and represented many of the factors mentioned above:

- The patronage of a royal house-perhaps the Calukyas of the Southwestern Deccan where one finds the oldest extant Durga temple in Aihole and images of Durga slaying the buffalo and of the squatting goddess (Lajja Gauri) by the seventh century (though Bengal is another possible venue for such patronage).
- Mythmakers who used the repertoire of legitimating strategies to announce the exploits of a powerful deity (that is, she was “born” of an authenticating deity, given the weapons of older deities, etc.).
- Evidence of folk elements being incorporated into the myth. For example, the slaying of the buffalo demon Mahisa had a long history in folk culture and was also seen earlier as the protagonist in battles with Skanda.
- There are even hints of a Buddhist presence in the way the goddess personified such attributes as wealth and prosperity (laksmi) etc. In any case the *Devimahatmya* announced the arrival of the goddess as the most powerful deity on the landscape, and once in place, her

persona could be applied to any and all goddesses. Part three of the Devimahatmya, in fact, does precisely that, indicating how the goddess was indeed an expression of Durga and Kali, goddesses which were perceived to have destroyed “demons” associated with Northern India, more than likely Bengal where the third myth of the Devimahatmya may have been composed.

After the tenth century, temples to goddesses proliferated as did their worship in classical contexts. Local goddesses were linked to those already known in the Sanskritic traditions and assumed a role not theirs hitherto. Such goddesses as Durga and Kali had by now entered the “national stage,” while another figure—that of Radha—had become part of classical culture by the twelfth century. In fact, the story of Radha can illustrate something of the way goddesses became increasingly important. For the first six centuries CE she was mentioned only in certain Prakrit sources and in Jain writings, so she may have been a part of lower class Saivism and folk culture. She “entered” textualized classical religion in Jayadeva’s *Gitagovinda* (twelfth century CE) where she is transfigured from a human cowgirl into a deity.

Radha’s assumption of supreme status was not unique to her. Each emergent goddess had her own origins, but once adapted into the classical tradition, she came to embody the power (*sakti*) of the divine, as well as the character of the world’s force. Both Kali and Durga tend to embody this power in ways that are often seen as potentially malevolent. Kali, for example, was portrayed as black, tongue extended as in combat, a necklace of skulls. She was the fierce destroyer of her enemies and powerful protector of those who worshiped her. At the same time, for those on good terms with her, she was mother and sustainer of life.

### **3.1.12. Buddhism and Jainism**

During this period, Buddhism was gradually confined to eastern India. The Pala rulers were patrons of Buddhism. The decline of the Pala power after 10<sup>th</sup> Century C.E was a blow to Buddhism in the area. But even more serious was a blow Buddhism in the area. But even more serious were the internal developments in Buddhism. Buddha had preached a practical philosophy, with a minimum of priesthood and speculation about God. This worship now became more elaborate. The belief grew that a worshipper could attain what he desired by uttering magical words (*mantra*), and making various kinds of mystic gestures. They also believed that by these practices, and by various kinds of austerities and secret rites, they could attain supernatural powers, such as the power to fly in the air, to become invisible, to see things at a distance, etc. This path is called *vajrayana* or *kalachakratantrayana* or tantric mode of worship.

During this period Odisha, under the Bhaumakaras and somavamsi was a famous destination of Vajrayana tantrism. Large numbers of ruined Buddhist establishments found in the Cuttack-Jajpur district of Odisha testify the fact. Thus Buddhism did not so much decline, as it assumed forms which made it indistinguishable from Hinduism.

Jainism continued to be popular, particularly among the trading communities. The Chalukyan rulers of Gujarat patronized Jainism. The Rashtrakutas also patronized Jainism. It was during this time that some of the most magnificent Jain temples, such as the Dilwara temple at Mt. Abu, were built. And also some caves at Ellora were excavated. The Paramars rulers of Malwa also built many huge images of Jain saints and of Mahavira who began to be worshipped as a god. The magnificent Jainalays which were built in various parts also acted as resting places for travelers. In south India, Jainism attained its high water mark during the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Ganga rulers of Karnataka were great patrons of Jainism. During this period, many Jain *basadis* (temples) and *Mahastambhas*(pillars) were set up in different parts. The colossal image at Sravana Belgola was set



up during this time. The Jain doctrine of four gifts (learning, food, medicine and shelter) helped to make Jainism popular among the people.

## **BUDDHISM**

Instead of its ever-growing popularity and expansion, Buddhism failed to swallow up Hinduism entirely. Later on, when Buddhism tended towards its decline, Hinduism again rose to prominence. With the passage of time, the old power and prestige of Buddhism completely disappeared from all over India. The revival of Hinduism was not only the cause of its decline, but some internal factors also contributed to its decline. According to V.A. Smith, "Buddhism passed away in India not from Brahmin persecution, but rather from internal causes such as relaxed discipline and overgrowth of monasticism". Many causes were responsible for the gradual decline and downfall of Buddhism in ancient India, although it continued to flourish in countries beyond India for centuries. Even today, it has a large number of followers all over the world.

According to Ankur Barua, It is important to understand that Buddhism was never wiped off from India on a single day and in any single even. Like the causal web of a disease, it was multi-factorial causation. The process of decline and subsequent disappearance was gradual and lasted for many centuries. Buddhism spread rapidly in India and several other countries. Though today it is one of the largest religions of the world the number of these followers in India is negligible. The common causes of decline are like; Decline of Buddhist Sanghas, Revival of Brahmanism, Division among Buddhists, Use of Sanskrit Language, Image Worship, Loss of Royal Patronage, Emergence of Rajput's, Muslim Invasion,

a) ***Decline of Buddhist Sanghas***: he important cause of the decline and fall of Buddhism was the decline of Buddhist Sanghas. The Sanghas became centres of corruption. The discipline of vinay pitaka was violated. The viharas were dominated by ease-loving people. The monks and nuns began to lead lives of pleasure and ease. The Mahayanist and Hinayanist quarreled with each other. Internal conflict proved to be the ruin of Buddhism.

b) **Revival of Brahmanism**: The revival of Brahmanical Hinduism also served as a cause for the decline of Buddhism. The rites and rituals of Hinduism were simplified. It also incorporated Buddhist principle of non-violence and accepted Buddha as a Hindu incarnation. The Gupta rulers were great patrons of Brahmanical religion and did a lot for it. The reformed Brahmanical Hinduism was able to appeal to the people.

c) **Division among Buddhists**: Buddhism was divided into a number of groups like "Hinayana", "Mahayana" "Vajrayana" "Tantrayana" and "Sahajayana" and ultimately it lost its originality.

d) **Use of Sanskrit Language**: The Buddhist monks gave up pali, the language of the common people. Buddha preached his teachings in Pali which accounted for the spread of Buddhism. But the Buddhist monks took up Sanskrit, the language of intellectuals which was rarely understood by the common people. So people rejected it.

e) **Image Worship**: The Mahayana Buddhists started worshipping Buddha as a God. This image worship was a clear violation of the Buddhist doctrines which opposed the critical rites and rituals of Brahmanical Hinduism. Due to image worship. Buddhism lost its importance as it led the people to believe that Buddhism is coming under the influence of Hinduism.

f) **Loss of Royal Patronage**: With the gradual march of time, Buddhism lost the royal patronage which it received during the period of Asoka, Kaniska and Harshavardhana. Royal patronage helped a lot for the spread of Buddhism earlier. But due to the lack of royal patronage, Buddhism met its end.

g) Emergence of Rajput's: Most parts of Northern India were ruled by the Rajput's from eight to twelfth century who found great pleasure in fighting. They discarded the Buddhist principle of non violence. They patronized Hinduism which was a martial religion. The Buddhist monks feared persecution and fled from Northern India. So Buddhism practically disappeared from Northern India.

h) Muslim Invasion: The Muslim invasion practically gave a death blow to Buddhism in India. The riches of Buddhist Viharas attracted the attention of the Muslim invaders. So the Buddhist Viharas became the targets of Muslim invasion whose sole intention was to plunder the wealth. The Buddhist monks couldn't resist the Muslim attack. Many Buddhist monks were killed, some of them were converted to Islam and others fled to Nepal and Tibet and took shelter there. Ultimately Buddhism died away in India, the land of its birth though it continued to flourish in countries beyond India for centuries.

### **JAINISM**

Jainas had to fight their battle on two fronts since the days of Mahavir: a) against the followers of the Vedic Brahmanic religion, and b) against Buddhists. They fought on the first front for their faith against the vedic manifestation, its bloody sacrifices and its social order which assured precedence to the Brahmanas over all other sections of the society; and on the second, against the Buddhistic denial of the self and its doctrine of salvation which acknowledged asceticism only in a negligible measure and considered the saints other than the Trithankaras as those who could guide one's path to salvation. Buddhism had oppressed Jainism for some time quite strongly.

umarila, the restorer of the vedic sacrificial service, and Sarikara, the Pioneer of the illusionist doctrine of non-duality, also preceded with all the weapons of their spirit, against the Jaina- doctrine as a heterodoxy which was inimical to the Vedas. The constant progress of the movement coming from the orthodoxy against all heterodox trend increased the pressure, gradually but surely, and it weighted heavily upon the Jaina clan, and although this knew to ward-off the attacks, its position had become much weaker and it was shaken.

The consequence of the awakening of the Brahmanic religiosity was the revival of the Vaishnavite and Shaivite sects. Shaivism and Vaishnavism proved to be particularly dangerous opponents, and they did a severe damage to Jainism, particularly in the Deccan and the south. The Shaivite sect of the Lingayats was another mighty enemy of Jainas. Lingayats proceeded against Jainas extremely fanatically, damaged their properties and five destroyed their temples or appropriated them for their purpose. It is said that Saint Ekantada- Ramayya had particularly excelled in the propagation of the new doctrine. It is seen from the inscription from the year 1368 that Jainas were oppressed later by the Sri Vaisnavas. Jainas then complained to king Bukkaraya-I of Vijayanagar against the persecutions to which they were subject on the side of the Vaishnavites. The king then ordered that the members of both the religions should enjoy the same cultural freedom in his land. Further he ordered that 20 guards be appointed near the Gommata-stature in Sravanabelagola to protect the shrine from denigration and saw to it that the destroyed temples were repaired. The growing might of Hinduism was not revealed to Jainism in its losing the followers. It was also expressed in the increasing inclination of its follower's towards hinduistic view and customs. Thus more and more Hindu deities were mentioned in the Jaina-literature from now on, although they have no place in the Jaina system. They also used terms which reveal a strong influence of the Vedanta, and in the following period, there was greater reconciliation even in the religious belief and social life. Some of the major causes responsible for the decline of Jainism in India are as follows: Lack of royal patronage, Lack of efforts, Severity of Jainism , Unintelligible Philosophy ,Factionalism in Jainism , Spread of Buddhism ,Role of Hindu preachers.

a) Lack of Royal Patronage: Firstly, the initial tempo of royal patronage of Jainism by Bimbisara, Ajatasatru, Udayin and Kharavela was not kept up by kings and princes of later times. Rather the zeal and determination of Asoka, Kanishka and Harsha to spread Buddhism came to eclipse Jainism. As such, lack of sincere and determined royal patronage came to relegate Jainism.

b) Lack of Efforts: There was also a decline in the missionary zeal and sincerity of the Jaina mendicants. They were no more particular in undertaking the strain of spreading Jainism in villages and towns. The traders and businessmen still remained loyal to Jainism. But they had no time to do anything for the spread of Jainism.

c) Severity of Jainism:

The severity of Jainism boomeranged against it to bring about its decline. Unlike the 'middle path' of Buddhism, Jainism stood for severe penance, meditation, fasting and restraint etc. All these were too severe to endure. People soon became disillusioned with it. In course of time, Jainism, once adored, became alienated from the people.

d) Unintelligible Philosophy: Most of the Jaina philosophy was unintelligible for the masses. The concepts of eeva, Ajeeva, Pudgala, Syadbada etc. could not be understood properly by the people. Many could not accept the view that stone, water, tree or earth had a soul of their own. There was, thus, a gradual decline in popular faith for Jainism. This paved the way for its decline.

e) Factionalism in Jainism: Factionalism among the Jainas after the death of Mahavira was the fifth cause of the decline of Jainism. Some now advocated to literally follow the teachings of Mahavira, while others wanted to tone down the severity of Jainism. As such, the rift led to a division in Jain ranks. They were now divided into 'Digamvara' and 'Swetamvara' groups. The former, led by Bhadrabahu, gave up dress, adopted severe penance for self-purification and became indifferent to worldly life. The 'Swetamvara' group, led by Sitalabahu, wore white dress. The division weakened Jainism and as such, its spread came to be curtailed.

f) Spread of Buddhism: Buddhism came as formidable obstacle in the path of the spread of Jainism. Buddhist was simple and intelligible. There was no severity in it. Even a householder could follow it.

g) Role of Hindu Preachers: Hinduism posed threats to Jainism, Nimbarka, Ramajuja, Sankaracharya etc. came to make the foundation of Hinduism more solid and stronger. Rise of Vaishnavism, Saivism and Saktism paled Jainism into comparative insignificance. Decline of Jainism, thus, became inevitable and unavoidable. Thus, Jainism which gained momentum came to a declining stage after the spread of Buddhism. The Hindu preachers put constant problem on the path of the spread of Jainism. So, it declined.

Thus in the above discussion on condition of Buddhism and Jainism during early medieval India. Hinduism struggled with Buddhism from the 4th to 9th century. The greatest danger of Buddhism came from its emphasis on tolerance and obliteration of differences. The very fact that Buddhism and Hinduism came nearer to each other led to the disintegration of the former. Decadence of Buddhism in India was hastened by its alliance with forms of magic and erotic mysticism called Saktism. Hindus had, in the meanwhile, absorbed all the good points which Buddhist had to offer. Sankara, led a crusade against Buddhism in 8th and 9th centuries. He took the Buddhist institution as his model and arranged the ascetic orders of Hindus accordingly. His philosophy was also based on Mahayana Buddhism. The final disappearance of Buddhism was, however, mainly due to the destruction of its great monasteries by the Muslim invaders, it must be understood that the decline of Buddhism from India was not its annihilation or exclusion but absorption. Jainism has also influenced by the Hindu caste order. During the early medieval period several castes arose among the Jains. However, it is to be noted here that caste system is not

followed by Jain monks. The Jain caste names are sometimes common with the Hindus, some are named after places while others are exclusively Jains. Though features of Hindu caste system, such as hierarchy also appear in Jain castes, social differentiation is not so clearly marked. Some castes are common to both Svetambaras and Digambaras, while others are exclusive to one or the other. In this context it is again significant to mention here that since most of the Jains belong to the business communities in India, they are widely considered akin to the Vaishya castes. Indeed social reciprocity is higher among the Vaishya Hindus and the Jains.

### **3.1.13. Coming of Islam to India**

Islam is an Arabic word, derived from 'salm' meaning peace and 'slm' meaning submission. Islam speaks for 'a commitment to surrender one's will to the Will of God'. Islam has its roots in the Middle East Asia. The rapid expansion of Islam and Arab culture following the death of Muhammad brought the Muslim empire to the borders of India as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Islam came to the Indian subcontinent within decades of its birth. Arab merchants had been trading along the west coast of India even before the advent of Islam. Now, the Arab traders were Muslims. Increasingly, some of them settled along the southern and western coast, married locally, and formed pockets of Islamic culture interacting peacefully with their neighbors. These settlements were entirely pacific and interactions with neighbors remained virtually without conflict even into the recent past. There were also constant interactions with Muslim traders and craftsmen from Turkey and Central Asia in such areas as Northeast Punjab, Kashmir, and Eastern Bengal from the eighth century on. Many of these "foreign" artisans had settled permanently by the thirteenth century. There was also at least one military incursion, however-that in the area of Sind: Muhammed Ibn Qasim, pursuing pirates who had plundered an Arab ship, led an army of 6,000 against Qahar, king of Sind in C.E 711. Within three years he had established hegemony in the Indus Valley region. Small advances were made from Sind into neighbouring Gujarat and the Kathiawar peninsula, where minor sultanates were established. These soon cut themselves off from Baghdad, and the sultans lived in peace with other rulers of Sind and western Punjab. For the time being, Islamic penetration of the subcontinent was concluded; the restless energies of certain Muslim leaders turned northward into Central Asia and began the conversion of the Turkic pastoralists in a process that joined another in changing the centre of Eurasia and ultimately the subcontinent. It was one such military incursions of Mahmud of Ghazni in the eleventh century that brought Islam to northern plain of India.

### **3.1.14. Conclusion**

A major characteristic of the early medieval period was the development of regional societies. Religion was at the heart of this regionalizing process: gods, temples, inspired poets and philosophers. Buddhism and Jainism were displaced from their towering positions. In far south Bhakti cult became a new aspects in Hinduism. A major formulator of that Hindu theology was a Brahmin named Shankara, in addition to incorporating Buddhist and Jain models for faith and organization, he also incorporated popular worship of lord Shiva, particularly songs of praise. These hymns of devotion-of overwhelming love for Shiva or Vishnu-became the foundation for the new and popular cult of Hinduism that has endured until the present throughout India Called bhakti, this form of religious devotionism began in Tamil country during the sixth century. Further developments of bhakti religion among Tamils were the work of poet devotees and other theologians. Between the sixth and tenth century 63 Shiva and 12 Vishnu worshipping poets created a large corpus of Tamil devotional songs and all are revered as saints by Tamils. Theological works of doctrines for worship of both Siva and Vishnu followed shortly as Brahmins took advantage of the intellectual base which Shankara had provided. This work protected Brahminical leadership role in religious affairs. In Hinduism Saktism and Tantrism also took new shape during this period. Another major religious

trend of this period was advent of Islam in Indian subcontinent initially with the traders later with the invaders. Later Islam influenced Indian society in a major way.

## Chapter-II

### Islamic Intellectual Traditions: Al-Biruni

#### INTRODUCTION: Al-Biruni (973-1039A.D)

Al-Biruni's full name was Abu-Rayhan Mohammad. He passed his youth on the banks of the river Oxus in the city of Khwarizm (Khiva) situated in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The prince and ruler of Khwarizm professed ardent zeal for science and arts, and encouraged scholars like Al-Biruni to study the various branches of knowledge and inspired people to travel different parts of the world. Al-Biruni, through his dedication and vast knowledge, achieved great scholarship in philosophy, religion, mathematics, chronology, medicine, and various languages and literatures. He was a man endowed with creative genius, sagacity, wisdom, sincerity, and commitment to inductive reasoning. His humour, courage, enterprise, objectivity, honesty, prodigious industry and intellectual skills were unprecedented.

#### 2.2.1.1. Early Career

Al-Biruni was one of those prodigious minds at work in the medieval world whose creative, versatile, scientific, and international outlook, coupled with universality of thought, amaze the modern world. He was free from dogmatic conservatism as well as emotional bondages. This helped him to remain free from prejudices.

He was more of a synthesizer than a dogmatic scholar, a keen observer of comparative studies par excellence. Al-Biruni's position as a scientist and scholar may be appreciated from the fact that the eleventh century has been regarded as the 'Age of Al-Biruni'.

According to some historians, Al-Biruni was born on 4th September, 973 A.D. (3rd of Dhul-haj, 362 A.H.). His father and mother expired at an early age. Although a Tajik by race, he was Persian by culture. There is a strong controversy about the birth of Abu-Rayhan. It revolves round the identification, interpretation and meaning of the word 'Biruni', a part of Abu-Rayhan's name. Is Biruni a city? Where was it situated? Or is Biruni a suburb of Khwarizm (Khiva)? Or does it denote one who was born in Khwarizm or one who lived outside the city of Khwarizm? This confusion has led some later authorities to find a logical explanation for this term. According to Samani's *Kitab-al-Ansab*, the people of Khwarizm called foreigners Beruni (Biruni) in Persian and for this reason Abu-Rayhan was called Al-Biruni. The well-known historian, Yaqut, has opined that perhaps Biruni meant one who lived outside the city or in the countryside. Except Abu-Rayhan, no other person was given this appellation which means that it was not in general use.

Abu-Rayhan's stay in Khwarizm was also not short for his first 23 years were spent in that region under Al-i-Iraqi, and a further period of 8-10 years under the Ma'munids. In all he spent nearly 30 years in Khwarizm.

Moreover, he was born in the suburb of Kath-a town in the region of Khwarizm. His other contemporaries like Ibn-Sina stayed for far shorter period in Khwarizm but none was ever styled Al-Biruni, even though Ibn-Sina was a Persian by origin. The use of Al-Biruni with the name of Abu-Rayhan, therefore, appears to refer to his birthplace, a town or a suburb settlement of Khwarizm.

Unfortunately, Abu-Rayhan has not left behind any autobiographical account. There are some scanty references in his writings but these do not throw light on his education and early life. One may presume that he received the traditional Maktab and Madarasah education. Al-Biruni was a great scholar and possessed encyclopaedic mind. He was always in search of new knowledge.

#### **2.2.1.2. Al-Biruni and Different Branches of Learning**

He was a liberal and profoundly interested in science. In his age orthodox reaction had already set in and Abu-Rayhan was wary of being accused of heresy while writing al-Hind. Abu-Rayhan, born with a great analytical mind and keen comprehension, was irresistibly drawn to the study of mathematics. Travelling was always regarded as a part of education in Islam.

But, by the 11th century, numerous rich libraries established by rulers had greatly reduced the need to travel to distant places for acquiring knowledge. However, when Abu-Rayhan wanted to study Indian sciences, he had to travel, visit, and use all the means at his disposal to have access to the scattered sources in Western India.

The most noteworthy trait in Abu-Rayhan's character was his insatiable thirst for knowledge. Like a thirsty man he returned again and again to the fountain of knowledge. Even when his life was ebbing out he would not let the scarce minutes go by uselessly. Very little is known about the family of Al-Biruni. Probably, he had no children and this partly explains his polarized devotion throughout his life. Free from the burden of parenthood he lavished almost parental love on his studies and books.

He studied the Greek books through Arabic translation. He was versed in Persian, Turkish, Syriac and Sanskrit. He was familiar with the Roman language of the Byzantine Empire. He had friendly contacts with Syriac and Christian intellectuals. He was acquainted with the Arabic translation of Indian works. Subsequently, when political developments brought him into contact with the Hindus of the subcontinent, he made full use of this opportunity. He learned Sanskrit when he had already completed 45 years of age. He commanded a vocabulary of nearly 2,500 Sanskrit words.

The facility with which he discusses and explains Indian doctrines shows his full command over the subject. His proficiency in Sanskrit literature is also corroborated by the fact that he was able, while delving into the nature of God, to clearly explain the foundations of the Advaita School. He distinguishes between the beliefs of the educated Hindus and the common

people. It is clear from his works that he made astronomical observations in the cities of Ghazna, Kabul, Lamghan, Peshwar, and Multan. He was a witness to the Muslim conquest of the city of Nagarkot situated at the foot of the Himalayas. This city was famous for an ancient Hindu (idol) temple. Probably, he accompanied the soldiers of Mahmud, up to Mathura and Kanauj on the banks of the Jamuna and the Ganga, respectively. He died at Ghazna in the year 430 A.H. (1039).

The prolific writer, Al-Biruni, has written a number of books and has dwelt upon a great variety of subjects. Among the main works of Al-Biruni include Kitab-al-Hind, Al-Qanun-al-Masudi (The Canon of King Masud), Vestige of the Past Athar-al-Bagiya, Tarikhul-Hind, Kitab-al-Jamakir, and Kitab-al-Saydna. He translated from Sanskrit into Arabic the original title of Patanjali which contains valuable information on India and China. He wrote 27 books on geography, four each on cartography, geodesy, and climatology, and the remaining seven books on comets, meteors and surveying. Al-Biruni's academic interests and activities encompassed a wide variety of subjects, ranging from abstract theories of philosophy to the practical sciences of mathematics, geography, geology, physics, astronomy and medicine. His main field of study, however, was astronomy.

Al-Biruni's age was characterized by orthodox reaction. There were people who regarded astronomy as heresy. This prejudice was similar to people's opposition to logic on the plea that its terminology belonged to pagan Greek literature and language, although the adoption of Greek terms was mainly the fault of the translators. In much the same way, there were people who ignored geography as something without any utility, though the Holy Quran is full of episodes of travels and adventures, e.g., Prophet Abraham's journey from Ur, Moses' journey from Egypt and the hijrah of the Prophet of Islam (peace be on him).

After analyzing these unscientific tendencies, Al-Biruni produced convincing arguments for establishing the claims of physical sciences. He reminded the opponents of astronomy that God asks people to contemplate on the marvels of the earth and heavens, believing that all the phenomena of nature reveal truth of the highest import.

He provided illustrations of the daily use of mathematical and astronomical knowledge. This knowledge helped in ascertaining the influences of the sun and the moon in the form of what we know as the seasons and tides. Knowledge of stars and their positions is of considerable help in setting directions during travels and journeys. Similarly, it is very helpful in ascertaining the correct directions of qiblah and the timings of prayers and the latitudes and longitudes of cities. In this way, astronomy was shown by him to be a useful, functional and applied science and in conformity with the injunctions of Islam.

As astronomy is interrelated with a number of other sciences such as cosmogony, mathematics, and geography, Al-Biruni's magnum opus, the Qanun-al-Masudi is modelled on



the pattern of the Almagast of Ptolemy. His astronomical theories are of significant bearing and, therefore, have been discussed hereunder.

Al-Biruni considered the universe to be situated on the outermost surface of a limited sphere. A detailed study of the origin of the universe was made by Al-Biruni in his book al-Tahdid. The geo-centric and heliocentric controversy engaged the mind of Al-Biruni. Some modern scholars have criticized him for accepting the geocentric theory. However, in that age when telescope and modern precision instruments were lacking, it was difficult to arrive at any definite conclusion. He was not ready to accept the heliocentric theory without definite scientific evidence. Until an alternative theory was conclusively proved, it was but logical to believe and accept the older theory or explanation. Al-Biruni wrote a separate book, Kitab-al-Tatbiq ft Tahqiq, Harkatah al Shams on the movement of the sun.

After discussing the basic problems relating to the sphericity of the skies and the earth, the geocentric theory, the nature of the eastern and western notions of the heavens, Al-Biruni goes on to define the imaginary circles and signs so often referred to in astronomy and geography, i.e., the poles, the equator, longitudes and latitudes, obliquity and the signs of the zodiac.

He devoted special attention to the study of time and dates. He studied the calendars of different nations. He also inquired about the differences in the time of day and night in different regions and the continued long day at the poles. The problem of finding the correct timings of prayers led him to conduct research over a long period beginning with the writing of the Chronology to Qanun al-Masudi. He wrote a book (Risalah) about day and night which also proved the duration of a six month day at the poles. He also compiled a small treatise on the Indian determining division of time.

About the sun, he asserted that it is a fiery body for the solar eruption which is noticeable during the total eclipses. Al-Biruni believed in the geocentric theory and regarded the sun as moving round the earth.

Al-Biruni had his reservations about Ptolemy's view that the distance of the sun from the earth was 286 times the latter's circumference. He, however, found the sun immeasurable with the instruments of that age and its distance remained an object for conjecture.

In his monumental book, Qanun-al-Masudi, he presented a masterly exposition of both the solar and lunar eclipses. He described the obliquity of the eclipse as the angle formed by the intersection of the celestial equator and the ecliptic. Earlier, the Greek, Indian and Chinese astronomers found it to be  $24^{\circ} 51' 20''$ . Al-Biruni himself took measurements at Khwarizm and Ghazna and found the figure to be  $23^{\circ} 35'$  which is very close to the actual obliquity. He also discussed the reasons and timings of dawn and twilight. He found that twilight (morning and

evening) occurs when the sun is  $18^\circ$  below the horizon. Modern researches have confirmed Al-Biruni's findings.

About the moon, he asserted that it does not move in a perfect circle. Its maximum and minimum distances differ appreciably. It changes its path and is variable. Al-Biruni stated that the moon returned to its former position in relation to fixed stars but minute differences occur and accumulate. He discussed the lunar month on a synodic basis, i.e., by referring to its position, and return to it, in relation to the sun.

Al-Biruni measured the longest and the shortest distance of the moon and the earth. These were  $63^\circ 32' 40''$  and  $31^\circ 55' 55''$  of the earth's diameter. However, he was not sure of the diameter of the moon. In this matter, he followed Ptolemy and accepted his value of the moon's diameter as  $31' 20''$  of the earth's diameter. Here again, his scientific insight led him to choose the correct figure, for Ptolemy's value is nearer to the modern value of  $31' 17''$ .

About the tides, he opined that the increase and decrease in the height of the ebbs and tides occurred on the basis of changes in the phases of the moon. He gave a very vivid description of the tides at Somnath and traced the latter's etymology to the moon.

About the stars, he was of the view that it was practically impossible to determine the number of heavenly bodies (stars) even in a small portion of the sky. He was also aware of the limitations of the instruments of his age. Among the ancient astronomers, Hipparchus was the first to catalogue 850 stars. Ptolemy also worked on this basis. Al-Biruni adopted the Greek nomenclature of 48 figures and 12 constellations arranged on a belt.

He rejected Aristotle's contention that the 'Milky Way' was under the sphere of planets and correctly estimated it to belong to the highest sphere of the stars. He also attacked Aristotle for believing that stars cause injury to eyesight and are responsible for sorrow and misfortune. This shows that he was basically rational in approach and did not attach any superstition to natural phenomena. He thought these stars moved to the east on a central axis and parallel to the zodiac.

He believed that as there was no way to find out the parallel of the fixed stars it was impossible to determine their distance and magnitude. The Greeks thought that the stellar sphere was next to the most distant planet. Ptolemy regarded the distance as 19,666 times the earth's radius. Mars was accepted as one and a half times the sun's diameter. Al-Biruni used Indian figures about the distance and magnitude of the stars.

Regarding the planets, Al-Biruni followed Ptolemy taking his works to be the most authentic and correct. From the earth towards the stars, the planets were arranged by him in the following ascending order: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

Al-Biruni was of the view that the Greeks were more exact in their sciences and observations. The Indians, however, were better equipped in solar and lunar studies and the

eclipses. What he basically aimed at was the exposition of the scientific method backed by firm belief in natural laws. He insisted upon continuous observation, collection of reliable data and successful application of all these principles.

Though, Al-Biruni dedicated himself only to astronomy, yet he excelled in mathematics also. In that age, mathematics consisted of arithmetic, geometry, physics and music. Algebra was added to this only after the age of Al-Khwarizm. While Al-Biruni excelled in geometry and arithmetic, he possessed considerable knowledge of algebra too.

He was also interested in physics, though he had no interest in music. In his book, *Kitab-al-Hind*, he discussed Indian beliefs, Hindu literature, grammar, metre, chess, etc., but totally ignored Indian music.

Besides having expertise in spherical trigonometry, Al-Biruni was an adept in Indian arithmetic. He wrote *Rashikat-al-Hind* (The Zodiac in India). He was also familiar with the different methods of arithmetic propounded by Brahma-Siddhanta.

Al-Biruni had special interest in geomorphology and paleontology. He compared the different fossils discovered in the plains of Arabia, Jurjan and Khwarizm along the Caspian Sea. His studies pointed to the existence of sea at these places in some bygone age while history possessed no such record. According to him, the Indo-Gangetic plain was formed by the silt brought by the rivers.

He also discussed the occurrence of floods and springs. His study of the changes in the course of rivers of Jurjaniyah and Balkh and Oxus shows his deep insight in geomorphological processes. He found that the course of the Oxus had undergone a change since the days of Ptolemy-a period of 800 years and he also explained how the life of the people living in the region had been affected by these changes.

He correctly estimated the known habitable world as greater in length, i.e., from China in the east to Morocco and Spain in the west. The seas limited the inhabitable world. The known world was divided into age-old seven-fold divisions of seven aqalim.

Al-Biruni also had an accurate idea of the different bays, gulfs and smaller seas. He referred to the Ice Sea in the north-east of Europe and in the west of Tangier and Spain. He also mentioned the Sea of Warang (Norsemen), i.e., probably the Baltic. In the south of Europe, he was aware of the presence of a sea in the form of gulfs up to Sicily and Bulgaria (Mediterranean Sea). The Indian Ocean, he mentioned as being pricked by islands and felt that it met the oceans in the east and possibly below Africa in the west. The Indian Ocean also had its links with the Klymsa Sea (Red Sea) and with the Persian Gulf. He referred to the seas of China and mentioned the fact that in the east the seas were named after the islands or the countries.

The great geographer was also aware of the huge mountain range known in India as Himavant (the Himalayas) which spread across the length of the known world like a spinal column.

He also mentioned the Warangs and their predatory habits. There was mineral industry in North Europe. He referred to the Sawaras, Bulgars, Russians, Slavs and Azovs in the west and to the country of Frank and Galicia, situated beyond the Roman Empire at the western arm of Europe.

Regarding Africa, he was convinced that it lay and extended far into the south. He referred to the 'Mountain of Moon' situated near the equator which was the source of the Nile River. He analyzed the causes of floods in the Nile and attributed them to the heavy rains in the upper reaches of the Nile.

Al-Biruni's knowledge of Asia was quite extensive and fairly accurate. In his opinion, the Great Central Mountain (the Himalayas) was the source of most of the perennial rivers of Asia. He provided detailed information about the land of the Turks, identified in the Augarer River, and about the region of the Baikal Lake in Eastern Siberia.

He wrote extensively and accurately about the geography of India. His estimate of India's extent from the forts of lower Kashmir to the Deccan Peninsula is amazingly close to the real dimensions of the subcontinent. He had a definite idea of its peninsular form. The mountains of Himavant and Meru (Pamir) surrounded it in the north. He said that the Eastern and Western Ghats controlled the distribution of rainfall in peninsular India. He provided detailed information about the sources of rivers. However, excepting the Indus, his information about the other rivers is limited to the location of their sources, based on hearsay and the knowledge derived from ancient books, e.g., Matsya Parana.

He was the first person to provide correct information about the Indus, its origin, course and floods. His knowledge of the geography of the Punjab and Afghanistan was based on his personal observations. He also described the rivers of Gherwand, Nur, Kaira, Sharvat, Sawa Panchir, Bitur (Afghanistan), Biyatta (Jhelum), Chandrahara (Chenab), Irwa (Ravi) and Shaltladar (Sutlej). The five tributaries of the Indus, according to him, meet the river at Pancanade (Panchanda) in the Punjab near Multan.

Al-Biruni provided valuable information about North-Western India, particularly Kashmir. For Gilgit, he said that it was two days journey from Kashmir. About Kashmir, he said that it lay on a flat fertile plateau, surrounded by inaccessible mountains. The southern and eastern parts of the country belonged to the Hindus, the west to the various Muslim kings, the north and eastern parts to the Turks of Khota (Khatan) and Tibet. The best access to the Kashmir was through the Jhelum gorge.

He also described the city of Qannauj—the city traditionally associated with the Pandavas. Moreover, he acquired considerable knowledge of the terrain and people of the Indo-Gangetic plains.

He gave an accurate account of the seasons of India. He described the nature of the monsoon which brought rainfall to the greater parts of the subcontinent during the summer season. He explains how Kashmir and the Punjab receive rainfall during the winter season.

Al-Biruni also discussed the origin of castes in Hindu society, idolatry, and the Hindu scriptures. His study of Samkbya, the Gita, Patanjali, Vishnu Dharma and of some of the Puranas, coupled with his acquired knowledge of the Vedas, provided Al-Biruni with a unique opportunity to give the first objective description of Hindu beliefs. Al-Biruni found a dualism in Hindu beliefs, i.e., the beliefs held by the educated (scholars) and the beliefs of the ignorant masses. This cleavage became wider with a dualism in linguistics. The language of the masses was quite different from that of the learned. Thus, the educated disapproved of idolatry but the masses believed in it.

In brief, Al-Biruni excelled in philosophy, religion, cosmology, astronomy, geography, geodesy, stratography, geomorphology, mathematics, science, medicine and several languages. He also contributed appreciably in the field of chronology, computation of years and dates. At the same time, he had a clear concept of the ideal historian. His correct view and reasoning led him to think that the institution of Varna (caste), based on inequality, was the main obstacle in a rapport between the Hindus and Muslims. The condition of Indian learning, language, script, centres of learning was also brought out. The gigantic labour, scientific reasoning, and untiring efforts made Al-Biruni one of the most outstanding geographers of the medieval period.

### **2.2.1.3. Alberuni and India**

Attracted by Indian culture, he learnt Sanskrit and studied several books concerning Hindu philosophy and culture. His curious mind and master eyes did not spare even the Puranas and the Bhagwat-Gita. He travelled far and wide and wrote a masterly account of India in his book Tahqiq-i-Hind. This also known as Kitabul Hind (1017-31 A.D).

In addition to it, Alberuni is also credited to have translated many Sanskrit works into Persian and Arabic. Talking of Hindu in general, Alberuni complains of their complacency and ignorance of the outside world. He even finds faults with them for their want of sympathy and communication with other peoples whom they call mlechchas.

Observing the consuming arrogance of Hindus he notes, ‘The Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, and no science like theirs. If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind,’ he adds, ‘for their ancestors were not as narrow-minded as the present generations.’

According to him, India was divided into a number of kingdoms such as Kashmir, Sindh, Malwa and Kannauj. He talks of various kinds of castes and distinctions in the society. Another point of society is that early marriage was common and women who lost their husbands were condemned to perpetual widowhood. Parents arranged marriages for their children and no gifts were settled, though the husband made a gift to his wife which became her stridhana.

A further comment of Alberuni is also worth-noting. He observes that the Hindus did 'not desire that a thing which has once been polluted should be purified and thus recovered'. Thus, the above portrayal clearly shows that all was not well with India. Society as the least compact. Caste tensions were prevalent. There was no sense of cause; the disintegrating tendencies were already serious.

The disorganized people of the country finally surrendered themselves to foreign invaders. Alberuni was able to observe the condition of India very minutely. He wrote what he saw here.

#### **2.2.1.4. Al-Biruni and the Kitab-ul-Hind**

Al-Biruni was born in 973, in Khwarizm in present day Uzbekistan. Khwarizm was an important centre of learning, and Al-Biruni received the best education available at the time. He was well versed in Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew and Sanskrit.

In 1017, when Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni invaded Khwarizm, he took several scholars and poets as hostage to his capital and Al-Biruni was one of them. In Ghazni, Al-Biruni developed an interest for India.

When the Punjab became a part of the Ghaznavid Empire, Al-Biruni came to India and spent years in the company of Brahmana priests and scholars, learning Sanskrit, and studying religious and philosophical texts.

He travelled widely in the Punjab and parts of northern India. He collected various information and wrote a book called Kitab-ul-Hind.

Al-Biruni's Kitab-ul-Hind, written in Arabic, is simple and lucid. It is divided into 80 chapters on subjects such as religion and philosophy, festivals, astronomy, alchemy, manners and customs, social life, weights and measures, iconography, laws and metrology.

Al-Biruni adopted a distinctive structure in each chapter, beginning with a question, following this up with a description based on Sanskrit traditions, and concluding the chapter with a comparison with other cultures.

#### **2.2.1.5. Problems or barriers obstructed Al-Biruni in understanding India.**

Al-Biruni, discussed several "barriers" that he felt obstructed in understanding India. The first amongst these was language. According to him, Sanskrit was so different from Arabic and Persian that ideas and concepts could not be easily translated from one language into another. The second barrier he identified was the difference in religious beliefs and practices. The self-

absorption and consequent insularity of the local population constituted the third barrier. He was aware of these problems so Al-Biruni depended almost exclusively on the works of Brahmanas, often citing passages from the Vedas, the Puranas, Bhagavad Gita, the works of Patanjali, the Manusmriti, etc., to provide an understanding of Indian society.

#### **2.2.1.6. Al-Biruni and His description of the caste system**

According to Al-Biruni the highest caste is the Brahmana, who were created from the head of Brahman. The next caste is the Kshatriya, who were created from the shoulders and hands of Brahman. After them the Vaishya, who were created from the thigh of Brahman. At last the Shudra, who were created from his feet.

As these classes differ from each other, they live together in the same towns and villages, mixed together in the same houses and lodgings.

Al-Biruni tried to explain the caste system by looking for parallels in other societies. He noted that in ancient Persia, four social categories were recognized a)knights and princes; b)monks, fire-priests c) lawyers, physicians, astronomers and other scientists; and d) peasants and artisans.

He attempted to suggest that social divisions were not unique to India. At the same time he pointed out that within Islam all men were considered equal, differing only in their observance of piety. In spite of his acceptance of the Brahmanical description of the caste system, Al-Biruni disapproved of the notion of pollution. As we have seen, Al-Biruni's description of the caste system was deeply influenced by his study of normative Sanskrit texts which laid down the rules governing the system from the point of view of the Brahmanas.

## Conclusion

Most of the works of Al-Biruni are in Arabic although he wrote one of his masterpieces, the *Kitab al-Tafhim* apparently in both Persian and Arabic, showing his mastery over both languages. Bīrūnī's catalogue of his own literary production up to his 65th lunar/63rd solar year lists 103 titles divided into 12 categories: astronomy, mathematical geography, mathematics, astrological aspects and transits, astronomical instruments, chronology, comets, an untitled category, astrology, anecdotes, religion, and books he no longer possesses. After Al-Biruni's death, in the Ghaznavid dynasty and following centuries his work was not built on, nor referenced. It was only hundreds of years later in the West that his books became read and referenced again, especially his book on India which became relevant to the British Empire's activity in India from the 17th century



## Chapter-III:

### Regional Languages and Literature

#### INTRODUCTION

Language and literature are closely connected. The origin of a language pre-supposes a speech community and the speech community in turn pre-supposes a territory where they live in. Language is related to thought and feeling. Literature presupposes a special kind of cultural condition. All works of poetry, criticism, aesthetics, philosophy, art and science are the off springs of culture- intellectual, moral and spiritual, especially as they are evolved from the life of the people. Literature is often the mirror of the age in which it flourishes. A poet or a novelist is bound to be influenced by the ideas and facts of contemporary life and this influence is reflected through his writings.

The period from 750 to 1206 CE currently delineated as the „Early Medieval Period’ of Indian history was marked by an unprecedented growth of a regional identity noticeable in such domains as those of polity, society and culture. The „Early Medieval’ is viewed as a phase different from – and also between the early historical and medieval periods of Indian history. This epoch however needs to be understood in its own terms – the hallmark lying of course in the pronounced regional propensity.

A close perusal of the available literature on the subject proclaims the emergence of a large number of regional polities which sometimes assumed imperial proportions. his coexistence of numerous regional powers expectedly resulted in almost endemic dynastic hostilities. But military victory was not always translated into territorial expansion and most of these outstanding powers like the Palas and Senas of Bengal and Bihar, the Gurjara-Pratiharas of Malwa and Rajputana, the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan, and the Cholas in the far south all remained essentially rooted to their respective regions. A striking transformation was manifest in the domain of economy too. The money economy of early India now assumed the form of natural economy. Villages emerged as units of production ‘ruralization thus being an important dimension of the transition process’. A concomitant result of which was a marked decline of early historical urban centres and commercial networks. This led to the practice of remuneration in land as a substitute for cash, to the migration of different social groups to rural areas, to an agrarian expansion and to the crystallization in rural society of jajmani relationships (relationships of interdependence between patrons and clients).

The society signalled the emergence of landed intermediaries (a dominant landholding social group–the outcome of land grants made initially to religious establishments but later conferred on secular ones too). At the other end of the social ladder were the peasantry–the peasant community subjected to such restrictions as immobility, forced labour, and payment of revenue at exorbitant rates. A marked stratification was noticed here too. Another important development that distinguished the society was the proliferation of castes. This process had

already started in terms of uneven marital relations, but it intensified during the early medieval period. Not only did the epoch witness the appearance of major groups such as the Kayastha community but many of the social groups associated with what was considered to be polluting manual labour came to constitute the degraded rank of untouchables.

In the realm of religion the dominant note was the proliferation of sects and sub sects. The core of the ideology of the period was characterized by 'bhakti' which was feudal in content, since it accentuated the relationship of loyalty and devotion, which are believed to be hallmarks of feudal ties. 'Bhakti' and the worship through bhakti of God as a Lord located in a temple, was the key ideological strand of the period. Evidence of the extensive spread of bhakti is certainly available in South India. One form of this is the devotional hymns of the Vaishnava Alvars and Saiva Nayanars. In South India the term for the temple (kovil) was the same as that for the king's residence. God was the Lord, and the relationship between God and his evotee was seen as parallel to an all-pervasive feudal ideology.

The new agrarian structure created a leisurely class of landed magnates which in turn gave rise to feudal cultural traits. Besides the extensive spread of 'bhakti' the period saw the spread of 'shakti' signifying a coming to the fore of a hitherto dormant religious force. What becomes significant in the context of the shaping of the regional society and culture is when we come across recorded references for the first time and more or less within the same time-frame to local and peripheral deities such as Aranyavasini, Bahughnadevi and Vatayaksinidevi in Rajasthan, to Viraja in Odisha and Kamakhya in Assam, to cite a few cases. They did not all develop into major cults, but some did. They function towards the integration of other local cults and become one of the recognizable symbols of the region. In this manner the religious and ideological expressions of a region in their varied forms thus becomes enmeshed in the web of its polity, economy and society. The interrelated vehicle of their expression is naturally language. In fact in various media of social communication (such as script, language and literature) there was the crystallization of a regional character. Art activities too came to be recognizable only in terms of regional schools, such as Eastern, Odishan, Central Indian, West Indian and Central Deccanese, or in terms of such labels as Pallava and Chola, in which again the regional context is implicit.

## **LITERATURES IN REGIONAL LANGUAGES**

The period under present survey saw the evolution (rise and growth) of several regional languages both in North and South India though comparatively in their incipient forms in the North. Literary works composed in these vernaculars were marked by a regional spirit. It was primarily local demand and the need for a colloquial language – an easy medium for expressing the thought of the commoners that paved the way for such developments.

From Vedic Sanskrit was evolved Classical Sanskrit, which in its turn led to the emergence of four types of Prakrit that are believed to have been spoken in four different parts of

the country – Shauraseni in the Mathura region, Magadhi in Magadh, Paicachi in the North-Western parts of India and Maharashtri in Maharashtra. These regional Prakrits in their turn degenerated into the Apabhramsha. In course of time the regional languages (vernaculars) evolved from these Apabhramshas though in a nascent form during the period under review. The two broad divisions of Indian languages are as follows – those descending from Sanskrit and known as Indo-Aryan group of languages such as Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Odia, Assamese and several others. The other group of languages known as Dravidian Languages such as Tamil, Telegu, Kannada and Malayalam, the latter however traced their evolution to a much earlier date.

## **Bengali**

Religion has always been a part of culture. It undoubtedly played a vital role in shaping the life and thought of a country. This was especially the case of Bengal, a place which served as the cradle of popular religious movements. New ideas in religion have ever found a fit soil to grow upon in this alluvial riverine tract. Bengal was the last in the list of the regions to be included in the Aryan-dominated Aryavarta (Land of the Aryans). Hence the Brahmanic influence was for centuries at a very low ebb here. This justifies the popularity of the comparatively more liberal creeds of Buddhism and Jainism here.

In the later part of the tenth century CE, the Buddhist monks (the Siddhacharyas of the Mahayana Sect of Buddhism) such as Saraha, Lui, Savari and others at the behest of the Pala rulers of Bengal, professing the same religion began to write books in Prakrit. The Charyyapadas were the most notable literary production of the period, though in a rudimentary form. The language of these padas or songs – the Charyyageetis represented old Bengali and was regarded as the precursors of the later Bengali Sahajiya songs, the Vaishnava padas, the shakta hymns, the baul songs and even the marfati songs of sufi inspiration. Their appeal and intension were primarily religious – dealing with the philosophy of several Buddhist schools such as the Vajrayana, Sahajiya and the like. Lacking literary beauty in the true sense of the term, their importance was primarily linguistic (the Gauda-Prakrit, an old form of Bengali) and doctrinal. Infact the literary production of the period owed its origin chiefly to the earnestness of the Tantric Buddhists for popularizing their creed. These initial efforts on the part of the Buddhists to use Bengali as a literary medium were condemned by the Brahman scholars well-versed in Sanskrit. They regarded Bengali as an unfit medium for conveying any serious thought. They did not want to expose the truths of their religion and popularize them through translations. They wanted to preserve their monopoly of interpreting shastras. With the decline of the Palas and the rise of the Senas, Buddhism was fast waning from the land of its origin. During these days of declivity the religious ideas propagated by Gautam Buddha lost their popularity thereby undergoing a serious type of moral and ethical degeneration. Many people who had embraced Buddhism nominally changed their faith and entered the fold of Hinduism in order to escape continued persecution of the Hindu revivalists under the Brahmanid Senas.

The establishment of Sena rule brought about the revival of Hinduism in Bengal. Brahmanism with its strict emphasis on caste regulations and the law of karma was the most assertive religion of Bengal. Brahmans were on the highest rung of the social order and were revered and looked up to by the masses. The Brahman pandits were imbued with a taste for the hard and fast rules of classical grammar denouncing the literary status of the vernacular. The Senas like their Hindu predecessors gloried in keeping a number of Sanskrit scholars attached to their courts. These pandits revelled in the high-flown style and the niceties of rhetoric which abound in the seventh century Sanskrit works. In the field of literature religious works and epics gained preponderance over historical ballads. In the field of literature were Sandhyakaranandi, the author of Ramacharita, Dhoyi, the author of Pavanduta, Jayadev, the author of Geetagevind. The writers of smritishastras were Bhavadevabhata, Jimutbahan, Shulapani. The Sena king Ballalsena himself composed such works as Danasagar and Advutsagar. Furthermore the inscriptions of the Pala and Sena kings of Bengal also bear a testimony of the use of both Sanskrit and vernacular. For instance, Pala king Dharmapala's Khalimpur Copper Plate, Devapala's Nalanda Copper Plate, Sena King Vijayasena's Deopara Prasasti, the Naihati Copper Plate of Lakshmanasena are a few examples of that genre. These epigraphic evidences throw sufficient light on the polity, socio-economy, religion and administrative life of the period under review.

## **Odia**

Lying between North and South India across a natural highway along the eastern coast of India, Odisha also displays in and through her indigenous individuality an interesting synthesis of both Dravidian and Aryan cultures, with delightful assimilation from the life of the tribals, who form not only a considerable portion of her population, but also an integral part of the economic and social life of the state. Though the Odias speak a language of the Indo-Aryan group, nearly three-fourths of their entire social life, under the partial impact of Aryanization is definitely Dravidian. Many of the commonest words of daily use in an Odia household are of Dravidian origin and the general culture manifests closer affinity with southern pattern than with the northern. Like Bengali and Assamese, Odia too is a member of the eastern or Magadhi group of the Indo-Aryan family of languages in India. But as in her total culture, in her script also Odisha presents an interesting synthesis of the north and south of India.

Originating from the Brahmi script in the third century BCE it had gradually developed towards the present form. This combines the characteristics of the southern Kalinga script with those of the so-called Gupta and Proto-Bengali scripts. With the conquest of Kalinga by Asoka in the third century BCE, we get historic utterances made on Odisha's soil in a language that is called Magadhi Prakrit. Scholars are of the opinion that it is from this Magadhi Prakrit and its later Apabhramsha form that the entire group of Eastern-Indian languages, viz. Assamese, Bengali, and Odia has evolved. In the first century B.C. Kalinga's ruler Kharavela's Hatigumpha inscription was written in Pali. Thus, associated with the twin faiths of Jainism and Buddhism

and also with the successive ruling dynasties, Pali-Prakrit must have been the cultural language of Odisha with, of course, some local variations.

The Brahmanic revival that had started with the Imperial Guptas in North India, in the fourth century CE, had firmly established itself in Odisha. But in spite of the rulers leanings towards Sanskrit, the people at large and the Buddhist intellectuals who were in close touch with them, still expressed themselves in a common language of their own which, by that time, as an Apabhramsha, had come much closer to modern Odia than either the edicts of Asoka or Kharavela's inscription. The common religion was at that time nothing but Mahayana, corrupted by Tantric elements called Vajrayana, which is supposed to have originated in this part of India. The Buddhist monks wrote songs and psalms receiving patronage from the Bhauma kings, who like the Palas of Bengal and Bihar were great patrons of art, literature and religion. The spirit and content of these Buddhist poems depict the eternal undercurrent in the Odia culture of the Natha-Mahayanic philosophy of life. The Buddhist poems in the Eastern Indian Apabhramsha of the seventh-ninth centuries are only the beginning of a genre of religious poetry that has been, in different forms, suitable to the succeeding ages, instinctively adopted by the spiritual poets of Odisha down to contemporary times.

Between the Apabhramsha Buddhist poetry of seventh-ninth centuries and the Sisu Veda, the composition of an anonymous poet and the Rudrasudhanidhi of Avadhuta Narayana Swami in the thirteenth century, no literary work worth mentioning in the vernacular has as yet been traced. During this period of four to five centuries, Sanskrit-based Brahmanism held an almost totalitarian sway over the land. The Buddhist Bhaumakaras became practically in no time at all, ardent devotees of all varieties of Hindu gods and goddesses. And there are distinct traditions as well as records to prove that there were systematic persecutions of the Buddhists during the reigns of the Imperial Gangas and the Solars who followed the Bhaumas. This was the period of the great Hindu revivalists, such as Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva and Nimbarka. Each of them visited Odisha and established his zonal headquarters at Puri for the propagation and establishment of his faith in the Eastern region of India. The vehicle of all these revived Hindu faiths was Sanskrit, to which the common people had no access. Buddhism and its concomitant popular culture was gone. However in the midst of the innumerable gift-records and panegyrics to kings in dignified Sanskrit, we come across in the eleventh century, the inscription of Ananta Varma Vajrahasta Deva, King of Kalinga, written in the earliest form of the vernacular.

Devoted to Sanskrit, the intellectuals of Odisha, produced an enormous amount of Sanskrit literature. Books in almost all branches of human knowledge as well as commentaries on almost every well-known book in Sanskrit, books on law (smritis) are as numerous as commentaries, indicating the tight grip of the priestly class on the entire society. Among the literary pieces were Geetagevinda of Jayadeva, the Anargha Raghava Nataka by Murari Misra, the Aryacaptasati by Govardhanacharya, the Sangita Kalpalata by Haladhara Misra and several others.

## **Assamese**

During the period under review or more precisely the period between the sixth and the end of the tenth century CE Kamarupa, formerly known as Pragjyotisa was ruled by Bhutivarman of the Pusyavarman line. His kingdom extended beyond the Teesta in the Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal and he donated lands to two hundred and eight Brahman families to the west of this river. He is described as an asvamedhayayin, a performer of the asvamedha sacrifice, in his Barganga Rock Inscription.

From the sixth to the tenth century CE, the Kamarupi Prakrit developed into the Kamarupi Apabhramsha. As there was no Apabhramsha literature cultivated here, we have no specimen to show. From the beginning of the eleventh century CE the Kamarupi Apabhramsha turned into Kamarupi or early Assamese. The aphorisms of Dak Mahapurusa constitute the earliest extant didactic compositions in Assamese literature. These wise maxims are mostly in verse-form. These were similarly popular in Bengal, Bihar and Nepal. These compositions are significant for the account they give of customs, beliefs and rules of conduct prevailing in the region concerned from earliest times. They reflect the spirit of the age, the principles of Buddhistic ethics and morality. The beginning of distinctive Assamese literature seems to be marked by the composition of folk songs, commonly known as Bihugeets and pastoral ballads, marriage songs and nursery rhymes. Bihu songs are connected with the Bihu festivals – the national festival of Assam observed in the beginning of the autumn and the spring seasons. The word Bihu is supposed to be a corruption of the Sanskrit word Visuvat. However recorded literature in Assamese began from 1200 CE onwards.

## **Marathi**

The Marathi language draws the major part of its vocabulary from Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali and Apabhramsha. It came to be used as a medium of literary expression in about the eleventh century. Very little evidence, however, is available to help us in tracing the evolution of Marathi from Maharashtri Prakrit. The Apabhramsha influence is traceable more clearly. It is also held by some scholars that Marathi represents a re-sanskritized stage. In the ninth century there followed the revival of Hinduism and its reinstatement as the most powerful religion. The development of Marathi synchronized with this.

In the ninth century, the Rashtrakutas ruled over Maharashtra. The powerful kings of this dynasty such as Dantidurga, Krishna, Dhruva and Govinda who ruled over the Deccan for more than two hundred years were patrons of art and learning. But the language of learning in those days was Sanskrit. Marathi had been in use as a spoken language since about c. 600 CE. It had spread in far-flung areas up to Mysore in the south. But it was not yet used as a language of literature. Its traces are, therefore, to be found only in inscriptions which are meant to be seen by all the people. The earliest Marathi inscription (c. 983 CE so far known), is the one at the foot of the huge monolithic statue of Gomateshwara at Shravanbelgola in Mysore. About twenty-eight

inscriptions and copper plates in Marathi, dating from the tenth to the twelfth centuries have been discovered by now. They mark the different stages of the development of the language and its growing position in the life of the people. It is because the language was spoken so widely that deeds of charitable gifts like the one at Patan of c. 1203 CE, celebrating the gift of a math by King Soidev to his guru, and the imperial mandates of King Aparnaditya of c. 1183 CE were drawn up in Marathi. Marathi had acquired a respectable place in court life by the time of the Yadava kings. Marathi was spoken by all castes and classes. Treatises in Marathi were written and read out in the court of kings. In the twelfth century, during the reign of the last three Yadava kings, a great variety of literature in verse and prose was created. There were folk-tales, folk songs and Pauranic stories; and also treatises on astrology, medicine and such other subjects of popular needs. Another kind of literature meant to please the patrons and kings also gradually came into existence. It consisted mostly of long, rhetorical poems, based on Pauranic stories, or religious and philosophical discourses. The oldest work available of this type is Viveksindhu by Mukundaraj.

During the twelfth century there arose in India a number of popular religious cults which broke away from orthodox Hinduism and the domination of Sanskrit. They aimed at a religious awakening of the masses by offering them simple forms for worship through their own languages. Such was the Nath cult which had spread almost all over India. In Maharashtra it resorted to the use of Marathi. It can be easily surmised that many Marathi songs and bhajans must have been in vogue during the days of Macchindranath, Gorakhnath and others. Mukundaraj, the author of Viveksindhu, the earliest available work in Marathi also belonged to the Nath Panthi sect. The main or perhaps the sole current in Marathi literature, however was of religious and philosophical exposition. This like the literature in all the other languages was in verse. Viveksindhu was such work where the author bases his exposition of the basic tenets of Hindu philosophy and the Yogamarga. Mukundaraj also wrote other books such as Paramamrit, Paramvijaya and Mulastambha. His work may be said to be a confluence of various currents of contemporary life. He used the language of the people. He belonged to a leading religious cult, and aimed at presenting some texts of ancient Hinduism from the point of view of the cult. Sanskrit works were also composed under the patronage of the Yadava rulers. Hemadri, the versatile administrator of Ramdevrao, a great patron of learning, art and letters wrote Chaturvarga-Chintamani in Sanskrit where he laid down the principles of the caste system and systematized the relation and respective duties of the four classes, and also laid down the rules about various kinds of ritualistic observances. His Lekhankalpataru is a treatise on the practice of writing, it deals in careful detail with such topics as polite modes of address and forms of letters.

Sanskrit was the literary medium for the high and sophisticated culture of the region to the South of the Vindhyas. However along with the classical language, the regional kingdoms of the Rashtrakutas, Cholas and the like nurtured the languages of the people (the vernaculars) such as Tamil, Kannada, Telegu and Malayalam. But all these languages and their literary productions

owed a great deal to the language of the Aryans as the latter aided each of them to attain the literary status.

## **Tamil**

The oldest body of works now known in the Tamil language was the literature of the Sangam Age, the outcome of the fusion of two originally separate cultures - Tamil and Aryan. The next epoch in the annals of Tamil literature extends over a period of three and a half centuries (c. 500 – 850 CE). In this phase Sanskritic influence became even more marked than before; numerous words and concepts in the domain of ethics, religion and philosophy were freely borrowed and incorporated in Tamil; the Sanskrit codes and law books were accepted as the basis of a considerable volume of didactic literature which forms a striking feature of the time; sometimes entire works in Sanskrit or allied dialects were translated or adapted into Tamil. There was a preponderance of Jain writers to start with as elsewhere Jainism and Buddhism were exercising a strong influence. But the rising tide of Hindu reaction soon produced a great volume of popular devotional literature in verse, which were set to music and ravished the hearts of the common folk. Among the literary productions of the period was the Kural of Tiruvalluvar, a comprehensive manual of ethics, polity and love. The author was most probably a learned Jain divine and his close acquaintance with the works of Manu, Kautilya and Vatsyana is unmistakably evident from the work. Some works were composed during the period between 650 and 750 CE such as Kar-narpadu, a love poem in which a lovelorn lady is supposed to describe the dreadful approach of the rainy season in the absence of her beloved.

Naladi is a Jain anthology (400 verses) put together by Padumanar and arranged in forty chapters. Nanmanikkadigai (100 stanzas) by a Vaishnava poet, Vilambi Naganar, is a work of high literary merit and ranks next only to the Kural. The Asarakkovai is a veritable Tamil smriti by a Saiva author based avowedly on Sanskrit originals.

The widespread Hindu religious revival for which many Saiva nayanars and Vaishnava alvars worked together furnished a powerful stimulus to the growth of a popular devotional literature. It was of great importance alike for its volume and for its influence on the life of the people. Groups of devotees headed by some prominent religious leader moved from place to place and shrine to shrine singing the hymns they composed in the course of these pilgrimages. The result was the use of simple diction and catchy tunes. In this golden age of Tamil Hinduism there must have come into existence a much larger volume of literature than has been preserved in the canonical editions of hymns made in the tenth century by Nambi Andar Nambifor the Saiva group, and Nathamuni for the Vaishnava. Perhaps the earliest author in the group whose works have entered the Saiva canon is Karaikkal Ammai who sang the praises of the deity of Tiruvalangadu. The two other poems written by her mark the beginning of Prabandha literature in Tamil – a genre which counted in course of time no fewer than ninety-six types. The devotional songs of the Vaishnava alvars were compiled in the Natayira Divyaprabandham or Four Thousand Sacred Hymns.



The age of the imperial Cholas (c. 850 – 1200 CE) was the golden age of Tamil culture, and it was naturally marked by the widespread practice and patronage of literature. The Prabandha form became dominant and the systematic treatment of Saiva-siddhanta in philosophical treatises began great Siva temples were built anew and celebrated in hymns on the model of those of the previous period by new authors, and the hagiology of Saivism was standardized in a great purana by Sekkilar. A quantum of Vaishnava devotional literature and commentaries on the canon also came into existence. Jaina and Buddhist authors continued to flourish though not in such numbers as in the earlier age.

In general literature, the Jivakacintamani of the Jain ascetic and poet Tiruttakkadevar was composed early in the tenth century. Another Jain writer of the time was Tolamoli whose Sulamani handles a Jain puranic theme in verse form and is counted among the five minor kavyas of Tamil literature. The Kalingattupparani of the poet – laureate of the chola court, Jayangondar, is a war poem par excellence about the Kalinga war of Kulottunga. Another poet laureate of the Chola court was Kuttan or Ottakkuttan who was the contemporary of Vikrama Chola, Kulottunga-II and Rajaraja-II and sang eloquent Ulas of each of them. Kamban was the celebrated author of the Tamil Ramayanam or Ramavataram, who flourished in the reign of Kulottunga-III. This poem is the greatest epic in Tamil literature, his work is no translation or even adaptation of the original in Sanskrit. The impulse to produce devotional religious literature which was so active in the last period (c. 500-850 CE) continued with some force far into this (c. 850-1200 CE), and the extant arrangement of the Saiva canon into eleven books was the work of Nambi Andar Nambi who lived at the close of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century. His work includes six Prabandhas on Nanasambanar and one on Appar, besides Tirutondar–tiruvandadi which gives brief account of the lives of the sixty – three saints. All these and the poems he wrote in praise of Vinayaka and Chidambaram, find a place in the eleventh book of the canon. The Tirutondar–puranam or Periya-puranam of Sekkilar composed in the reign of Kulottunga-II (c. 1133-50 CE) is a landmark in the history of Tamil Saivism. Vaishnava religious literature during this period was mostly composed in Sanskrit.

In the field of Tamil grammar, the Yapparungalam and Yapparungalakkarigai, two authoritative works on prosody, were composed by Amitasagara, a Jain ascetic of the close of the tenth century. He received patronage from contemporary Chola monarchs and granted liberal assignments of territory. In lexicography the concise nigandu (lexicon) called Pingalam after its author belonged to this period.

## **Kannada**

The earliest extant work on rhetoric in Kannada is Nripatunga's Kavirajamarga - (c.850 CE), in that work the Kannada country is said to have extended from the Kaveri to the Godavari, and thus included much territory in the North where now Marathi is the spoken language. The Kavirajamarga is based in part on Dandin's Kavyadarsa, and must have received the patronage of the Rashtrakuta ruler Nripatunga Amoghavarsha I. Another writer of this early period (c. 650

CE) was Syamakundacarya who was a Jain. The first extant work on literature is the Vaddaradhane of Sivakoti (c. 900 CE), a prose work on the lives of the older Jain saints, written mostly in the oldest Kannada style called Purvahal –Kannada.

Pampa, came of a family from Vengi and flourished in the court of a feudatory of Rashtrakuta king Krishna-III, Arikesari-II of Vemulavada. Pampa is said to have composed two great poems at the relatively early age of thirty-nine (c. 941 CE). His Adipurana narrates the life-story of the first Jain Tirthankara; the other work, Vikramarjuna Vijaya, contains the author's own version of the Mahabharata story, and is called Pampa-Bharata on that account. Critics have unanimously hailed Pampa as the most eminent among Kannada poets. Pampa's junior contemporary was Ponna whose principal work is the Santipurana, the legendary history of the sixteenth Tirthankara. He wrote also the Bhuvanai –Karamabhyudaya now known only from citations in later works, and the Jinaksharamale, a poem in praise of the Jainas. His family also had its origin in Vengi. He got the title 'Ubhayakavicakravarti' (supreme poet in two languages – Sanskrit and Kannada) from Rashtrakuta king Krishna-III.

Ranna, who, with Pampa and Ponna completes 'the Three Gems' who usher in Kannada literature in full panoply, adorned the court of the chalukya king Taila II and his successor. From a humble beginning Ranna rose to the rank of Kavicakravarti (poet – laureate) in the chalukya court and enjoyed the honours of the golden rod, chauri, elephant and umbrella. His Ajitapurana (c. 993 CE) is a work on the life of the second Tirthankara. The Sahasabhima-vijaya or Gadayuddha (c. 982 CE) reviews the story of the Mahabharata with particular reference to the last fight with clubs (gada) between Bhima and Duryodhana. Chavundaraya, one of Ranna's early patrons, was a feudatory of Ganga Racamalla II. He composed in c. 978 CE the Cavundaraya Purana or Trishashtilakshanamahapurana, one of the earliest extant prose works in Kannada treating of the legends of twenty-four Tirthankaras and several others.

Nagavarma-I, a protégé of Chavundaraya hailing from a Brahman family wrote Chandombudhi (ocean of prosody) addressed by the author to his wife, is the earliest work on the subject in Kannada. The Karnataka – Kadambari is based on Banabhatta's prose romance in Sanskrit; its sweet and flowing style is valued highly by critics. The next writer of note was Durgasimha, a Brahman Saiva minister under Jayasimha II Jagadekamalla; his Pancatantra is a Campu professedly based on Gunadhya's Brihatkatha, it is a learned work perhaps too full of sound jingles (prasa) to suit modern taste.

Another Brahman Advaita Saiva protégé of Jayasimha was Chavundaraya author of Lokopakara (c. 1025 CE), a guide to daily life, a cyclopaedic miscellany in good verse on various subjects such as astronomy and astrology, sculpture, construction of buildings, omens, divination of water, medicinal herbs and their uses, scents, cookery and toxicology. Sridharacarya, a Jain Brahman showed his capacity for scientific writing in his Jataka – tilaka (c. 1049 CE), the earliest work on astrology in Kannada.

The Advaiti Nagavarmacarya, patronized by Ganga Udayaditya (c. 1070 CE), a feudatory of Somesvara II at Banavase, was the author of Candracudamanisataka, a centum of easy verses in mathebha metre on the ethics of renunciation. The next great writer was Nagachandra (c. 1105 CE), a Jain and a man of means who built the Mallinatha Jinalaya dedicated to the nineteenth Tirthankara at Bijapur and also wrote the Mallinathapurana, a Campu. But Nagachandra is best known for his Ramacandra caritapurana which gives the Jain version of the Rama legend in a Campu of sixteen sections. The poem was a necessary complement to the Bharata of Pampa, and earned for its author the title Abhinava (new) Pampa. To the first quarter of the twelfth century belongs also a Jain polemic Samayaparikshe of Brahmasiva which seeks to establish the superiority of Jainism over all other creeds, and the Govaidya of Kirttivama, a work on veterinary science, half medicine and half magic. Round about c. 1145 CE, Karnaparya wrote the life of the twent –second Tirthankara in his Neminathapurana, a Campu in fourteen asvasas in which the story of Krishna and the Mahabharata are also cleverly worked in.

To the same time belongs Nagavarma-II, the author of Kavyavalokana, an important work on the grammar and rhetoric of Kannada in five sections; it takes the form of Sutras in verse illustrated by examples from literature. Another work of Nagavarma on grammar is the Karnatakabhashabhushana; here the sutras and a short explanation are both in Sanskrit, while the illustrations come from Kannada literature. The Vastukosa, a third work of Nagavarma-II is a relatively short lexicon of 800 granthas giving Kannada equivalents of Sanskrit terms. Udayadityalankara (c. 1150 CE) is a short work on the art of poetry based on Dandin's Kavyadarsa by a Chola prince whose name it bears. A work on medicine, Pujiyapada's Kalyanakaraka, was translated from Sanskrit into Kannada at this time by a Jain author Jagaddala Somanatha.

Rajaditya (c. 1190 CE), a Jain of Puvinaabage, showed great skill in reducing to easy verse the mathematical subjects he dealt with in several ganita works like Vyavahara – ganita, Kshetraganita and Lilavati. Most of the writers so far mentioned were Jains, the Vira-saivas and Vaishnavas, who began to influence Kannada literature from the twelfth and fifteenth centuries respectively. Jain writers continued to flourish under the later Hoysalas, and the lives of the Tirthankaras formed the theme of many puranas in the form of Campus. Nemichandra, court-poet under Vira Ballala, wrote the Lilavati, a plain romance with Banavase as its scene of action. Nemichandra undertook to write the Neminathapurana, at the instance of Ballala's minister, but died before completing it, and the work came to be known as Ardha Nemi (unfinished life of Nemi).

## **Telegu**

In ancient times the Telegu country was often called Trilinga, the country which contained or was bounded by the three lingas of Kalahasti, Srisailam and Daksharama and Telinga – Telugu as the name of the country and language may well be traced to this word. It is also suggested that Tel (n) ugu comes from 'tene'(honey) or 'tenu' (way). The beginnings of

the language can be traced from stone inscriptions of the fifth and sixth centuries CE, and its basic elements have unmistakable affinities with Tamil and Kannada. But from the beginning the literary idiom depended very largely upon Sanskrit. The inscriptions of the ruling dynasties of the sixth – seventh centuries are in Sanskrit with an admixture of Prakrit and Telegu words.

In the beginning Telugu had much in common with Kannada and this affinity persisted to a relatively late stage in the development of the two languages. Pampa and Ponna, two of the greatest Kannada poets, came from the Telegu country, and the great Telegu poet Srinatha styles himself a poet in Karnata – bhasha. Early Telegu prose and verse can now be traced only in inscriptions like those of the Telegu-chodas and the Eastern Chalukyas a well - developed verse in sisa metre adorns the grant of General Panduranga (c. 845-46 CE).

Beyond doubt there must have existed much unwritten literature of a popular character which enlivened the daily life of the common folk; such desi compositions may have included lalipatalu ( song of the cradle), melukolupulu (songs of the dawn), mangala haratulu (songs of the festivity), kirtanalulu (devotional songs) and udupu patalu (songs of the harvest). Higher literature strongly influenced by Sanskrit was said to be in the marga style. Of this class no work earlier than the eleventh century has survived. The beginnings and early history of this type of writing can no longer be traced. Telegu literature as we know begins with Nannaya's translation of the Mahabharata undertaken in the reign of Rajaraja Narendra (c. 1019-61 CE). He was able to complete the translation of only two parvas (Adi and Sabha) and of a part of the third (Vana). The translation was not literal, and the poet allowed himself free scope for the exercise of his powers of imaginative creation, he set the model for later translators. Nannaya was perhaps also the author of Andhra- sabda-cintamani, the first Telegu grammar which systematized the language by standardizing words and their usage and earned for the author the title 'Vaganusasana', law-giver of the language.

An eminent younger contemporary of Nannaya was Vemulavada Bhima Kavi, associated by tradition with the Eastern Ganga emperor Anantavarman Chodaganga (c. 1078 -1148 CE). He was the author of kavijanasraya, a Telugu grammar. From the twelfth century Vira-saivism became an important factor in the religious life of the Telegus and a sectarian outlook became more and more common. The poets of the period were generally supporters and propagandists of this faith. Famous among them was Mallikarjuna Pandita, guru of Nanne Choda, his Siva-tattva-Saram is an exposition of Virasaivism in about five hundred verses. Nanne Choda, a Telegu-choda prince, son of Chodaballi of Pakanadu, was the author of Kumarasambhava, a Mahakavya which has recently come to light, it is based on the Sanskrit works on the same theme by Kalidasa and Udbhata, and draws also upon the saiva literature known to the author.

## **Malayalam**

Malayalam was the last of the south Indian languages to develop a separate existence and a literature of its own. The literary idiom of Malayalam, like that of Kannada and Telegu,

borrowed freely from Sanskrit ,and so in order to express the Sanskrit sounds adequately, it had to discard the old Vatteluttu script and evolve a new script based on Tamilgrantha. This happened perhaps about the tenth century or a little later. The early inscription of the country used the grantha script for Sanskrit words in the midst of the Tamil – Malayalam written in Vatteluttu The date of the earliest extant literary composition falls beyond the scope of the present work and hence cannot be mentioned here. Literary activities in this vernacular began from the thirteenth – fourteenth centuries onwards.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, the present survey has attempted to trace the evolution of several regional languages during the period c. 750 – 1206 CE. Literary works composed in the vernaculars discussed were marked by a regional spirit. It was primarily local demand and the need for a colloquial language – an easy medium for expressing the thought of the commoners that paved the way for such developments. While North Indian vernaculars such as Bengali, Odia, Assamese and Marathi were in their incipient stage so far as their literary productions were concerned, the southern Dravidian group of languages however manifested a steady growth compared to their North Indian counterparts producing a huge corpus of literature in different branches of knowledge.

## Chapter-IV:

### Art and Architecture: Evolution of Regional styles: Kalingan and Dravidian style of Temple Architecture

#### Introduction

The period between C.E 700 and 1200 is referred to as an early medieval period of Indian History. During this time the whole country was politically divided into numerous regional states which were busy fighting with each other. Though politically divided, India witnessed a growth of new and rich cultural activities in the fields of art, literature and language. The new regional kingdoms led to the emergence of new regional cultural zones such as Bengal and Odisha in the North, Gujarat and Maharashtra in Central India as well as Andhra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu in the South. The various art forms, languages, literature, etc. that form an important part of our regional cultures today, took their shape around this period. During this period large scale royal patronage was received by the tradition of temple building, sculptural art and paintings. As the temples served as representative of the might and glory of the kings who had them built, due to excessive royal patronization three distinct types of temple architecture evolved during the period are known as the *Nagara*, *Dravida* and *Vesara* styles. There was also great improvement in the art of making sculptures and fresco paintings in temple premises 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. This chapter will throw light on the tradition of art and architecture flourished during the early medieval period of Indian history.

#### 3.3.1. Temple Architecture

Etymologically the term temple is derived from the Latin word 'Tempulum' which in its original sense means a square or a rectangular place marked out by the augur for the purpose of worship. In its primitive sense this word corresponds to a place marked off as sacred to a God, in which the house of God may be erected. The shrine or the abode of the God has different nomenclatures. In ancient Sastras or literature the temple is referred as *Devagriha*, *Devalaya*, *Devakula* etc. In the *Vastusastra* the North Indian temples are known as *Prasada* while as the Southern Indian temples are known as *Vimana*, *Harmya* and occasionally as *Prasada*. The term *mandira* for the first time occurs in Banabhatta's *Kadambari*, a text of 7th century C.E. The temple architecture in India had its humble beginning right from the Mauryan period i.e 3rd century BC as evident from the archaeological excavation at Sanchi (Madhy Pradesh) and Bairat (Rajasthan). However, it gained momentum in the Gupta period. The temple no.17 at Sanchi and temple no.1 at Udayagiri near Vidisa were the earliest examples of temple architecture, which blossomed during the Gupta period. The Indian *Silpasastras* recognize three main types of temples known as the *Nagara* or 'northern' style, the *Dravidian* or 'southern' style, and the *Vesara* or hybrid style. *Nagara* temple belongs to the country from the Himalays to the Vindhys, *Vesara* from the Vindhys to the Krishna and the *Dravida* from the Krishna to the Cape Camorin. There are also other distinct styles in peripheral areas such as Bengal, Kerala and the Himalayan valleys. The Hindu temple construction during the 6th-13th centuries took place on a magnificent scale comparable to the building of churches and cathedrals in the medieval Europe. A large variety of Hindu temples was constructed throughout India with distinction in scale, techniques of building and particularly the deities that were worshipped, which were the result of the differences in political, cultural, climatic, geographical and prosperity between the towns and villages. For the sake of proper understanding of Indian Hindu

temple building tradition here we will discuss the three distinct traditions separately with their evolutionary trend, technical detail and example.

### **3.3.1.1. Elements of Hindu temple**

The architecture of temples varies across India; the basic elements of the temple are the same, but the form and scale varied. The following section describes the elements of the temple. During the late half of the 7th century C.E, the Hindu temple structures of India began to acquire a definite form. The sanctuary as whole is known as the Vimana and consists of two parts. The upper part of the Vimana is called as the Sikhara and the lower portion inside the Vimana is called as the *Garbhagriha* (cella or inner chamber).

*Sikhara* meaning the tower or the spire. It is the pyramidal or tapering portion of the temple which represents the mythological 'Meru' or the highest mountain peak. The shape and the size of the tower vary from region to region. '*Garbhagriha*' meaning the womb chamber. It is nucleus and the innermost chamber of the temple where the image or idol of the deity is placed. The chamber is mostly square in plan and is entered by a doorway on its eastern side. The visitors are not allowed inside the *garbhagriha* in most of the temples, only the priests perform the rituals and worship. '*Pradakshina patha*' meaning the ambulatory passageway for circumambulation. It consists of enclosed corridor carried around the outside of *garbhagriha*. The devotees walk around the deity in clockwise direction as a worship ritual and symbol of respect to the temple god or goddess. *Mandapa* is the pillared hall in front of the *garbhagriha*, for the assembly of the devotees. It is used by the devotees to sit, pray, chant, meditate and watch the priests performing the rituals. It is also known as 'Natamandira' meaning temple hall of dancing, where in olden days ritual of music and dance was performed. In some of the earlier temples the mandapa was an isolated and separate structure from the sanctuary. *Antarala* meaning the vestibule or the intermediate chamber. It unites the main sanctuary and the pillared hall of the temple. '*Ardhamandapa*' meaning the front porch or the main entrance of the temple leading to the mandapa. Some other essential elements found in the Hindu temples are: (vii) 'Gopurams' meaning the monumental and ornate tower at the entrance of the temple complex, specially found in south India. (viii) 'Pitha', the plinth or the platform of the temple. (ix) 'Toranas' the typical gateway of the temple mostly found in north Indian temple and (x) '*Amalaka*' the fluted disc like stone placed at the apex of the sikhara.

Hindu temples are also famous for their decorative elements. The temple is covered with elaborate sculpture and ornament that form a fundamental part of its conception. The decorative elements are grouped in to religious, secular and architectural. The placement of an image in a temple is carefully planned: for instance, river goddesses (Ganga and Yamuna) are usually found at the entrance of a *garbhagriha* in a *Nagara* temple, dvarapalas (doorkeepers) are usually found on the gateways or gopurams of Dravida temples, similarly, *mithunas* (erotic images), *navagrahas* (the nine auspicious planets) and yakshas are also placed at entrances to guard them. Various forms or aspects of the main divinity are to be found on the outer walls of the sanctum. The deities of directions, i.e., the *ashtadikpalas* face the eight key directions on the outer walls of the sanctum and/or on the outer walls of a temple. Subsidiary shrines around the main temple are dedicated to the family or incarnations of the main deity. Finally, various elements of ornamentation such as *gavaksha*, *vyala/yali*, *kalpa-lata*, *amalaka*, *kalasha*, etc. are used in distinct ways and places in a temple.

### **3.3.1.2. The Northern Style-Nagara**

The style of temple architecture that became popular in northern India is known as *nagara*. In North India it is common for an entire temple to be built on a stone platform with steps leading up to it. Further, unlike in South India it does not usually have elaborate boundary walls or gateways. While the earliest temples had just one tower, or *shikhara*, later temples had several. The

*garbhagriha* is always located directly under the tallest tower. There are many subdivisions of *nagara* temples depending on the shape of the *shikhara*. There are different names for the various parts of the temple in different parts of India; however, the most common name for the simple *shikhara* which is square at the base and whose walls curve or slope inward to a point on top is called the '*latina*' or the *rekha-prasada* type of *shikhara*.

The second major type of architectural form in the *nagara* order is the *phamsana*. *Phamsana* buildings tend to be broader and shorter than *latina* ones. Their roofs are composed of several slabs that gently rise to a single point over the centre of the building, unlike the *latina* ones which look like sharply rising tall towers. *Phamsana* roofs do not curve inward, instead they slope upwards on a straight incline. In many North Indian temples you will notice that the *phamsana* design is used for the *mandapas* while the main *garbhagriha* is housed in a *latina* building. Later on, the *latina* buildings grew complex, and instead of appearing like a single tall tower, the temple began to support many smaller towers, which were clustered together like rising mountain-peaks with the tallest one being in the centre, and this was the one which was always above the *garbhagriha*.

The third main sub-type of the *nagara* building is what is generally called the *valabhi* type. These are rectangular buildings with a roof that rises into a vaulted chamber. The edge of this vaulted chamber is rounded, like the bamboo or wooden wagons that would have been drawn by bullocks in ancient times. They are usually called 'wagonvaulted buildings'. As mentioned above, the form of the temple is influenced by ancient building forms that were already in existence before the fifth century CE. The *valabhi* type of building was one of them. For instance, if you study the ground-plan of many of the Buddhist rock-cut chaitya caves, you will notice that they are shaped as long halls which end in a curved back. From the inside, the roof of this portion also looks like a wagon-vaulted roof.

**Central India:** Ancient temples of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan share many traits. The most visible is that they are made of sandstone. Some of the oldest surviving structural temples from the Gupta Period are in Madhya Pradesh. These are relatively modest-looking shrines each having four pillars that support a small *mandapa* which looks like a simple square porch-like extension before an equally small room that served as the *garbhagriha*. Importantly, of the two such temples that survive, one is at Udaigiri, which is on the outskirts of Vidisha and is part of a larger Hindu complex of cave shrines, while the other one is at Sanchi, which was a Buddhist site. This means that similar developments were being incorporated in the architecture of temples of both the religions. The patrons and donors of the temple at Deogarh (in Lalitpur District, Uttar Pradesh) are unknown; however on the basis of both architecture and imagery, it is established that this temple was built in the early sixth century CE. That is, about a hundred years or so after the small temples we just learnt about in Sanchi and Udaigiri.

This makes it a classic example of a late Gupta Period type of temple. This temple is in the *panchayatana* style of architecture where the main shrine is built on a rectangular plinth with four smaller subsidiary shrines at the four corners. The tall and curvilinear *shikhara* also corroborates this date. The presence of this curving *latina* or *rekha-prasada* type of *shikhara* also makes it clear that this is an early example of a classic *nagara* style of temple.

This west-facing temple has a grand doorway with standing sculptures of female figures representing the Ganga on the left side and the Yamuna on the right side. The temple depicts Vishnu in various forms, due to which it was assumed that the four subsidiary shrines must also have housed Vishnu's avatars and the temple was mistaken for a *dasavatara* temple. In fact, it is not actually known to whom the four subsidiary shrines were originally dedicated. There are three main reliefs of Vishnu on the temple walls: *Sheshashayana* on the south, *Nara-Narayan* on the east and



Gajendramoksha on the west. The temple is west-facing, which is less common, as most temples are east- or north-facing.

Numerous temples of smaller dimensions have been constructed over a period of time. By contrast, if we study the temples of Khajuraho made in the tenth century, i.e., about four hundred years after the temple at Deogarh, we can see how dramatically the shape and style of the *nagara* temple architecture had developed.

The Lakshmana temple dedicated to Vishnu is the grandest temple of Khajuraho, built in C.E 954 by the Chandela king, Dhanga. A *nagara* temple, it is placed on a high platform accessed by stairs. There are four smaller temples in the corners, and all the towers or *shikharas* rise high, upward in a curved pyramidal fashion, emphasising the temple's vertical thrust ending in a horizontal fluted disc called an *amalaka* topped with a kalash or vase. The crowning elements: *amalaka* and *kalasha*, are to be found on all *nagara* temples of this period. The temple also has projecting balconies and verandahs, thus very different from Deogarh.

Khajuraho's temples are also known for their extensive erotic sculptures; the erotic expression is given equal importance in human experience as spiritual pursuit, and it is seen as part of a larger cosmic whole. Many Hindu temples therefore feature *mithuna* (embracing couple) sculptures, considered auspicious. Usually, they are placed at the entrance of the temple or on an exterior wall or they may also be placed on the walls between the *mandapa* and the main shrine. Khajuraho's sculptures are highly stylised with typical features: they are in almost full relief, cut away from the surrounding stone, with sharp noses, prominent chins, long slanting eyes and eyebrows. The other notable example at Khajuraho is Kandariya Mahadeo temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. There are many temples at Khajuraho, most of them devoted to Hindu gods. There are some Jain temples as well.

**West India:** The temples in the north-western parts of India including Gujarat and Rajasthan, and stylistically extendable, at times, to western Madhya Pradesh are too numerous to include here in any comprehensive way. The stone used to build the temples ranges in colour and type. While sandstone is the commonest, a grey to black basalt can be seen in some of the tenth to twelfth century temple sculptures. The most exuberant and famed is the manipulatable soft white marble which is also seen in some of the tenth to twelfth century Jain temples in Mount Abu and the fifteenth century temple at Ranakpur. Among the most important art-historical sites in the region is Samlaji in Gujarat which shows how earlier artistic traditions of the region mixed with a post-Gupta style and gave rise to a distinct style of sculpture. A large number of sculptures made of grey schist have been found in this region which can be dated between the sixth and eighth centuries CE. While the patronage of these is debated, the date is established on the basis of the style.

The Sun temple at Modhera dates back to early eleventh century and was built by Raja Bhimdev I of the Solanki Dynasty in 1026. The Solankis were a branch of the later Chalukyas. There is a massive rectangular stepped tank called the *surya kund* in front of it. Proximity of sacred architecture to a water body such as a tank, a river or a pond has been noticed right from the earliest times. By the early eleventh century they had become a part of many temples. This hundred-square-metre rectangular pond is perhaps the grandest temple tank in India. A hundred and eight miniature shrines are carved in between the steps inside the tank. A huge ornamental arch-torana leads one to the *sabha mandapa* (the assembly hall) which is open on all sides, as was the fashion of the times in western and central Indian temples. The influence of the woodcarving tradition of Gujarat is evident in the lavish carving and sculpture work. However, the walls of the central small shrine are devoid of carving and are left plain as the temple faces the east and, every year, at the time of the equinoxes, the sun shines directly into this central shrine.

**East India:** Eastern Indian temples include those found in the North-East, Bengal and Odisha. Each of these three areas produced distinct types of temples. The history of architecture in the North-East and Bengal is hard to study because a number of ancient buildings in those regions were renovated, and what survives now are later brick or concrete temples at those sites. It appears that terracotta was the main medium of construction, and also for moulding plaques which depicted Buddhist and Hindu deities in Bengal until the seventh century. A large number of sculptures have been found in Assam and Bengal which shows the development of important regional schools in those regions.

**Assam:** An old sixth-century sculpted door frame from Daparvatia near Tezpur and another few stray sculptures from Rangagora Tea Estate near Tinsukia in Assam bear witness to the import of the Gupta idiom in that region. This post-Gupta style continued in the region well into the tenth century C.E. However, by the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, a distinct regional style developed in Assam. The style that came with the migration of the Tais from Upper Burma mixed with the dominant Pala style of Bengal and led to the creation of what was later known as the Ahom style in and around Guwahati. Kamakhya temple, a Shakti Peeth, is dedicated to Goddess Kamakhya and was built in the seventeenth century.

**Bengal:** The style of the sculptures during the period between the ninth and eleventh centuries in Bengal (including Bangladesh) and Bihar is known as the Pala style, named after the ruling dynasty at the time, while the style of those of the mid-eleventh to mid-thirteenth centuries is named after the Sena kings. While the Palas are celebrated as patrons of many Buddhist monastic sites, the temples from that region are known to express the local Vanga style. The ninth century Siddheshvara Mahadeva temple in Barakar in Burdwan District, for example, shows a tall curving *shikhara* crowned by a large *amalaka* and is an example of the early Pala style. It is similar to contemporaneous temples of Odisha. This basic form grows loftier with the passing of centuries. Many of the temples from the ninth to the twelfth century were located at Telkupi in Purulia District. They were submerged when dams were built in the region. These were amongst the important examples of architectural styles prevalent in the region which showed an awareness of all the known *nagara* sub-types that were prevalent in the rest of North India. However, several temples still survive in Purulia District which can be dated to this period. The black to grey basalt and chlorite stone pillars and arched niches of these temples heavily influenced the earliest Bengal sultanate buildings at Gaur and Pandua. Many local vernacular building traditions of Bengal also influenced the style of temples in that region. Most prominent of these was the shape of the curving or sloping side of the bamboo roof of a Bengali hut. In the later period, scores of terracotta brick temples were built across Bengal and Bangladesh in a unique style that had elements of local building techniques seen in bamboo huts which were combined with older forms reminiscent of the Pala period and with the forms of arches and domes that were taken from Islamic architecture. These can be widely found in and around Vishnupur, Bankura, Burdwan and Birbhum and are dated mostly to the seventeenth century.

**Odisha:** Most of the main temple sites are located Bhubaneswar or ancient Tribhuvaneshvara, Puri and Konark. An inscription of 1235 C.E in the mukhamandapa of the Amrutesvara temple at Holal in Bellary district of Karnatak speaks of a fourth style i.e Kalinga in addition to the above three. Pratistha Lakshyanasara Samuchaya by Vaivochana a *silpa* text of 11th-12th century AD mentions Kalinga temples as of rekha order. Indigenous texts like Bhubana Pradip, Silpa Prakasa, Silpa Ratnakosha etc. deals exclusively with the Kalingan style of architecture. These silpa text of Odisha mentions three types of temples, *rekhadēul*, *pidhadēul* and *khakaradēul*. The rekha and pidha form two component parts of one architectural scheme, the former is represented by a sanctum with

its curvilinear spire and the latter by the frontal porch having pyramidal roof of receding tiers known as *pidhas*. In the earlier phase, there was no *pidha deul* and the *Jagamohan* or the frontal hall had a by a flat roof. In course of time to meet the growing need of the rituals two more structures were added namely *natamandapa* (dancing hall) and *bhogamandapa* (offering hall) during the Ganga period (12th century C.E). All the four components are arranged in one axial alignment and often the temple complex is enclosed by *prakara* (boundary) wall. The *khakara* order is noted by a semi-cylindrical vaulted that looks like a inverted boat (*boita*) or a pumpkin gourd roof. The temples of this order are usually meant for sakti worship.

Odishan temples constituted a sub-style of the *Nagara* style of north Indian temples. The building activity of this sub-regional style continued for nearly one thousand years from the 6th- 7<sup>th</sup> century to the 15th-16th century C.E in unbroken continuity. Bhubaneswar, the ancient Ekamra Khetra served as the experimental ground of these temple building activities without being distracted by the change of ruling dynasties or their cult affiliation. As a result the temples are identified with the land Kalinga rather than the royal families such as Pallava art, Rastrakuta art, Chandella art, Chalukyan art etc.

The Odishan temple is remarkable for its plan and elevation. The interior ground plan of the temple is square as a rule. Rarely, however the temple has star shaped layout (as noticed at Boudh) or circular plan (Ranipur-Jhariyal & Hirapur) to conform to the nature of rituals. Generally speaking the Odishan temples are distinguished by vertical offset projections called *rathas* (on plan) or *pagas* (on elevation). Depending on the number *pagas*, the temples are classified into *triratha*, *pancharatha*, *saptaratha* and *navaratha*. The earlier temples are characterized by *triratha* plan. On elevation, the temples show interesting features. Both sanctum and the porch can be divided into three parts along the vertical plane viz. *bada*, *gandi* and *mastaka*. From bottom to top or final, each part of the temple has a special name corresponding to that of limbs of human body standing on a *pista* or the platform on which the temple stands (which is not a compulsory element in early temples and is generally found in later temples). The *bada* or the vertical wall portion of the temple is divisible into *pabhaga*, *jangha* and *baranda*. This type of three fold division of *Triangabada* is found in early temples and in later temples, *bada* has five elements namely *pabhaga* (or the foot portion is composed of five mouldings called *khura*, *kumbha*, *patta*, *kani* and *basanta*), *tala jangha* (lower thigh), *bandhana* (mouldings joining the two thigh), *upara jangha* (upper thigh) and *baranda* (the waist portion). The *baranda*, forming the top most part of the *bada* has a set of mouldings, starting with one moulding in the early phase progressing into seven and ten mouldings in the later and last phases of the classical tradition.

The *gandi* (or the torso) of *deul* has a curvilinear super structure; in the temples of early phase *gandi* is devoid of any sculptural embellishment. Fully developed temples have ornamental *bhumis*, *chaity* motifs and *angasikharas* (miniature shrines). The *gandi* of *jagamohana* is of pyramidal shape (designed with receding tiers in a sequence so as to reduce the top most tier to the half of the lower tier). The *mastaka* (the head) consisted of the *beki* (neck) or recessed cylindrical portion above *gandi*, *amalaka* (ribbed circular stone, resembling the *amla* fruit), *khapuri* (skull), *kalasa* (auspicious pot) and the *ayudha* (weapon of the enshrined deity) in succession. The *mastaka* of the *pidha deul* has the same features except for the addition of *ghanta* (bell). The horizontal cross-section of the *bada* and *gandi* in both the *rekha* and the *pidha deul* are square, while the *mastaka* is circular. The ground plan of *khakhara deul* is oblong. The temples are remarkable for abundance of sculptures. Stella Kramarisch has aptly remarked, "Architecture in Odisha is but sculpture on a gigantic scale". The sculptural repertory consists of human figures, *kanyas*, erotic motifs, cult icons,

animal figures including mythical and composite figures, decorative designs like variety of scrolls and architectural motifs like *pidha mundi*, *khakhara mundi*, *vajra mundi* etc.

The temple style was in full vigour in the wake of vast religious and cultural resurgence that took place when the Sailodbhavas ruled from the middle of 6th century C.E till the first quarter of 8th century C.E .The temple building activities gained momentum under the Bhaumakaras (736-950 C.E) and the Somavamsis (950-1112 C.E) and reached the climax during the Ganga period (1112-1435 C.E) .The activities however continued even under the Suryavamsi-Gajapatis (1435-1542 C.E) though on a very small and impoverished scale.

The temples of Odisha portray a picture of organic evolution from Parasuramesvara to Lingaraja through Muktesvara and Vaital, which ultimately culminated in Puri and the gigantic Konark. The evolution can be seen through four distinctive phases of temple building; viz. i) Formative phase, ii) Transitional phase, iii) Mature phase, iv) Phase of decadence. Whatever it may be till recent Odisha has possessed the rich Temple heritage, which are the imprints of our ancestor, still existing with the ravage of time. These are the pride of Odishan people in particular and that of Indian in general. These are most compact and Homogenous architectural group in India.

**The Hills:** A unique form of architecture developed in the hills of Kumaon, Garhwal, Himachal and Kashmir. Kashmir's proximity to prominent Gandhara sites (such as Taxila, Peshawar and the northwest frontier) lent the region a strong Gandhara influence by the fifth century CE. This began to mix with the Gupta and post-Gupta traditions that were brought to it from Sarnath, Mathura and even centres in Gujarat and Bengal. Brahmin pundits and Buddhist monks frequently travelled between Kashmir, Garhwal, Kumaon and religious centres in the plains like Banaras, Nalanda and even as far south as Kanchipuram. As a result both Buddhist and Hindu traditions began to intermingle and spread in the hills. The hills also had their own tradition of wooden buildings with pitched roofs. At several places in the hills, therefore, you will find that while the main *garbhagriha* and *shikhara* are made in a *rekha-prasada* or *latina* style, the *mandapa* is of an older form of wooden architecture. Sometimes, the temple itself takes on a pagoda shape.

The Karkota period of Kashmir is the most significant in terms of architecture. One of the most important temples is Pandrethan, built during the eighth and ninth centuries. In keeping with the tradition of a water tank attached to the shrine, this temple is built on a plinth built in the middle of a tank. Although there are evidences of both Hindu and Buddhist followings in Kashmir, this temple is a Hindu one, possibly dedicated to Shiva. The architecture of this temple is in keeping with the age-old Kashmiri tradition of wooden buildings. Due to the snowy conditions in Kashmir, the roof is peaked and slants slowly outward. The temple is moderately ornamented, moving away from the post-Gupta aesthetics of heavy carving. A row of elephants at the base and a decorated doorway are the only embellishments on the shrine. Like the findings at Samlaji, the sculptures at Chamba also show an amalgamation of local traditions with a post-Gupta style. The images of Mahishasuramardini and Narasimha at the Laksna-Devi Mandir are evidences of the influence of the post-Gupta tradition. Both the images show the influence of the metal sculpture tradition of Kashmir.

The yellow colour of the images is possibly due to an alloy of zinc and copper which were popularly used to make images in Kashmir. This temple bears an inscription that states that it was built during the reign of Meruvarman who lived in the seventh century. Of the temples in Kumaon, the ones at Jageshwar near Almora, and Champavat near Pithoragarh, are classic examples of *nagara* architecture in the region.

**Historical Development of North Indian Temple:** From the point of view of the development of temple forms as such, the Imperial Guptas commenced the vogue from modest ones as temple No. 17 of Sanchi, those of Tigova, Udayagiri, those etc which had floor through a brick

medium at Bhidargoan (Kanpur District), Nagari (Rajasthan) into the pancayatana models at Nachna, Bhumara, Deogrh, etc. and later developed into interesting circular sectioned temples of the Rekha class also, as at Chandrehi, in the 9th-10th century C.E. They were followed by the Pratiharas of Kannauj, the Gurjara Pratiharas of Gujarat (as at Lakroda) and Rajasthan (as at Osian, Buchkala, etc.) ruling from several regional capitals like Mandavyapuri (Mandore near Jodhpur), Nandipuri, etc. and the activity was continued by the Maitrakas, (as at Gop Pindara, Sutrapada Kadyar, etc. forming also a folk-idiom of the Phamsana category), Saindhavas and Chapotkatas of Saurashtra at Wadwan, Tametar and then later the Solankis of Anhilvadpatah in countless temples. In Rajasthan, the trend was further taken up by the Guhilas, Chahamanas, again of various clans ruling from Nagda, Chitogarh, Sakambari, Nodal, Jalor, etc. In Central India, the Paramaras who succeeded the Pratiharas and illustrious kings including Bhoja (the author of Samarangana Sutradhara, Sringara prakasa, Manasollasa, etc.) created a new trend in the Rekha style, formulating the Bhoomija school which spread as far with West as to Menal and Bijholia and whose type site is Udayasvara at Udayapur (M.P.) of the Bhumiya Paramara school which spread as far West into Rajasthan under the Kalachuris of Dahal and South into Aparanta (Konkana) under the Silaharas and under Yadava Senas of Devagiri up to the 13th century C.E. This Bhumiya style decorated the sikharas with a sringara or garland-like string of miniature sikharas between each two cardinal lata (rib) of the manjari and elaborated the facets of the bhitti into two main categories, the orthogonal and the Stellate (*parivartana*) or star shaped ones. One may note that the Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra (Halebid) in Karnataka had effectively created this stellate plan with only the koshtas in bhadra face and these had their impact on the Chalukyas (Solankis) of Gujarat also as at Satnal on the Mahi River near Dakor.

The Kalachuris of Dahala specialised in this order in innumerable temples in Raipur, Bilaspur and other regions and were particularly excelling in slender and lofty sikharas over seven bhoomis, side by side-With the orthogonal type or pure *Nagara* forms, up to Amarkantak, the source of the Narmada. The Chandellas or Jajakabhukti further innovated the pure *Nagara* form into the urati-sringa mode by which the superstructural tower was had several applique half-tower miniatures, progressively becoming smaller in size and clustering like petals, around the moolamanjari which is indeed seen only in the top-most part of these lofty temples rising from its easing like the pistil of a flower. Their centres were again well spread, apart from the classic Khajuraho nucleus, in Banda and Hamirpur districts of Uttar Pradesh as at Mahoba, Rahilya, etc. and as far south in Maharashtra as in the temples at Markandi on thel, Wain ganga river.

The Kalinga class of *Rekhaprasadas* again was starting from the elongated gable roof front mandapa, as at Parasuramesvor, through Vaital deul and Torana-decorated Mukkesvar, into the grand Lingaraja complex, climaxing into the magnificent sun-temple at Konarak. The hall-mark of the Kalinga temple was the astylar corbelled main tower, with horizontal digited courses, division of the Bhitti into Rahapaga, pabhaga and konakapaga and having mostly closed front mandapas and rising vertical profile, with festoones carved on the facets and mildly curving only towards the gandi and the beki. Its plinth was characterised by the bold ghata-shaped moulding and by a general absence of a separate and closely circumscribing Jagati terrace. Its ambit of influence was well into the northernmost parts of coastal Andhra Pradesh, as at Mukhalingam (Somesvara temple) and into the easternmost districts of Madhya Pradesh like Sambalpur and Bastar. The temples are mostly nirandhara.

The Rekhaprasada, by and large, carries a sandhara circuit around the sanctum, with porched bhavra valokana, followed by successive mandapas with ornate pillars and hemispherical ceilings of cusped, kshipta and gajatal decorative motifs and also of simpler nabhicchanda annular ringed

courses, with all its mandapas invariably having cardinal porched openings and forming often a latin-cross lay-out, with the mukhamandapa porch, approached by a flight of steps and the entire temple set on a square spacious jagati terrace. The super structural towers of the subsidiary shrines have ghyantasamvarana type of roofing course and a lofty sukanasa opening on the antarala roof applied to the main sikhara face and with a sardoola in rampart posture located on the edges of the sukanasa and successive roofs at progressively lowered heights. The doorframe of the cella is of multiple sakha overdoor form with jamb-base carrying Ganga and Yamuna on either side, besides Pratiharas (attendants). The beam of the cella door has a lalata-bimba (signature mascot) often either of Gajalakshmi or Ganesha or Lakuleesa (or Mahaveera in Jain temples). The uttaranga above this beam shows small miniature shrines with their appropriate towered tops. These zones are occasionally decorated by navagraha panels. The outer walls carry Dikpalas, in the respective cardinal and oblique angles in a fixed position, with Agni (south-east), Yama (south), Nairuti (south-west), Varuna (west), Vayu (north-west), Kubera (north), Isana (north-east) and Indra (east). They are sometimes provided with Torana entrances beyond the outermost mandapa and a Sringara-chauri mandapa further and also a tank sometimes, even where they are located on the banks of a stream or river. Prakaras and gopura entrances are conspicuous by their absence, in 'Northern' temples, as also parivara shrines including even separate Devi temples. It was customary invariably to build separate temples for all divinities, as of Svayampradhana category, besides Siva and Vishnu, as for Karthikeya, Ganesha, Durga or Amba, the Saptamata's, Bhairava and Surya. This pantheism in substance, which was the hallmark of the approach to Hindu temple-building in the north is in somewhat striking comparability with the generic character of southern temple cults, which already in their earlier stages, lived through a pantheistic stage and went on from there to a dichotomised format wherein the cults nexus and polarisation had been developed amidst the divinities and two dominant divisions into Siva-based and Vishnu-based worship developed, with the consorts also classified for each though in the same stages, a Durga-Kali mass-based cult was also administered as a part of socioreligious and part-ethnic foot-note to the nexus between Saivism and Vaishnavism on the one hand and between Puranic Hinduism and an underlying indigenous cultmatrix of a pan-Indian character, on the other. This, however, is a fit ground for the socio-cultural art historian to tread upon and has no structural or formally identifiable over-tones in architecture as such. It does, none the less, tend to predicate upon one of the basic distinctions between the aims and objective of the 'Northern' temple organism and its 'southern' counterpart.

### **3.3.1.3. Dravida or south Indian temple style**

Unlike the *nagara* temple, the *dravida* temple is enclosed within a compound wall. The front wall has an entrance gateway in its centre, which is known as a *gopuram*. The shape of the main temple tower known as *vimana* in Tamil Nadu is like a stepped pyramid that rises up geometrically rather than the curving *shikhara* of North India. In the South Indian temple, the word '*shikhara*' is used only for the crowning element at the top of the temple which is usually shaped like a small *stupika* or an octagonal cupola-this is equivalent to the *amlak* and *kalasha* of North Indian temples. Whereas at the entrance to the North Indian temple's *garbhagriha*, it would be usual to find images such as *mithunas* and the river goddesses, Ganga and Yamuna, in the south you will generally find sculptures of fierce *dvarapalas* or the door-keepers guarding the temple. It is common to find a large water reservoir, or a temple tank, enclosed within the complex. Subsidiary shrines are either incorporated within the main temple tower, or located as distinct, separate small shrines beside the main temple.

The North Indian idea of multiple *shikharas* rising together as a cluster was not popular in South India. At some of the most sacred temples in South India, the main temple in which the

*garbhagriha* is situated has, in fact, one of the smallest towers. This is because it is usually the oldest part of the temple. With the passage of time, the population and size of the town associated with that temple would have increased, and it would have become necessary to make a new boundary wall around the temple. This would have been taller than the last one, and its gopurams would have been even loftier. So, for instance, the Srirangam temple in Tiruchirappally has as many as seven 'concentric' rectangular enclosure walls, each with gopurams. The outermost is the newest, while the tower right in the centre housing the *garbhagriha* is the oldest.

Temples thus started becoming the focus of urban architecture. Kanchipuram, Thanjavur or Tanjore, Madurai and Kumbakonam are the most famous temple towns of Tamil Nadu, where, during the eighth to twelfth centuries, the role of the temple was not limited to religious matters alone. Temples became rich administrative centres, controlling vast areas of land. Just as there are many subdivisions of the main types of *nagara* temples, there are subdivisions also of dravida temples. These are basically of five different shapes: square, usually called *kuta*, and also *aturasra*; rectangular or *shala* or *ayatasra*; elliptical, called *gaja-prishtha* or elephant backed, or also called *vrittayata*, deriving from wagon-vaulted shapes of apsidal *chaityas* with a horse-shoe shaped entrance facade usually called a *nasi*; circular or *vritta*; and octagonal or *ashtasra*.

Generally speaking, the plan of the temple and the shape of the vimana were conditioned by the iconographic nature of the consecrated deity, so it was appropriate to build specific types of temples for specific types of icons. It must, however, be remembered that this is a simplistic differentiation of the subdivisions. Several different shapes may be combined in specific periods and places to create their own unique style.

The Pallavas were one of the ancient South Indian dynasties that were active in the Andhra region from the second century CE onwards and moved south to settle in Tamil Nadu. Their history is better documented from the sixth to the eighth century, when they left many inscriptions in stone and several monuments. Their powerful kings spread their empire to various parts of the subcontinent, at times reaching the borders of Odisha, and their links with South-East Asia were also strong. Although they were mostly Shaivite, several Vaishnava shrines also survived from their reign, and there is no doubt that they were influenced by the long Buddhist history of the Deccan. Their early buildings, it is generally assumed, were rockcut, while the later ones were structural. However, there is reason to believe that structural buildings were well known even when rock-cut ones were being excavated. The early buildings are generally attributed to the reign of Mahendravarman I, a contemporary of the Chalukyan king, Pulakesin II of Karnataka. Narasimhavarman I, also known as Mamalla, who acceded the Pallava throne around 640 CE, is celebrated for the expansion of the empire, avenging the defeat his father had suffered at the hands of Pulakesin II, and inaugurating most of the building works at Mahabalipuram which is known after him as Mamallapuram.

The shore temple at Mahabalipuram was built later, probably in the reign of Narasimhavarman II, also known as Rajasimha who reigned from 700 to 728 CE. Now it is oriented to the east facing the ocean, but if you study it closely, you will find that it actually houses three shrines, two to Shiva, one facing east and the other west, and a middle one to Vishnu who is shown as Anantashayana. This is unusual, because temples generally have a single main shrine and not three areas of worship. This shows that it was probably not originally conceived like this and different shrines may have been added at different times, modified perhaps with the change of patrons. In the compound there is evidence of a water tank, an early example of a gopuram, and several other images. Sculptures of the bull, Nandi, Shiva's mount, line the temple walls, and these, along with the

carvings on the temple's lower walls have suffered severe disfiguration due to erosion by salt-water laden air over the centuries.

The magnificent Shiva temple of Thanjavur, called the Rajarajeswara or Brihadiswara temple, was completed around 1009 by Rajaraja Chola, and is the largest and tallest of all Indian temples. Temple building was prolific at this time, and over a hundred important temples of the Chola period are in a good state of preservation, and many more are still active shrines. Bigger in scale than anything built by their predecessors, the Pallavas, Chalukyas or Pandyas, this Chola temple's pyramidal multi-storeyed vimana rises a massive seventy metres (approximately two hundred feet), topped by a monolithic *shikhara* which is an octagonal dome-shaped stupika. It is in this temple that one notices for the first time two large gopuras (gateway towers) with an elaborate sculptural programme which was conceived along with the temple. Huge Nandi-figures dot the corners of the *shikhara*, and the kalasha on top by itself is about three metres and eight centimetres in height. Hundreds of stucco figures decorate the vimana, although it is possible that some of these may have been added on during the Maratha Period and did not always belong to the Chola Period. The main deity of the temple is Shiva, who is shown as a huge lingam set in a two storeyed sanctum. The walls surrounding the sanctum have extended mythological narratives which are depicted through painted murals and sculptures.

#### **3.3.1.4. Vesara or Architecture in the Deccan**

Many different styles of temple architecture influenced by both North and South Indian temples were used in regions like Karnataka. While some scholars consider the buildings in this region as being distinctly either *nagara* or *dravida*, a hybridised style that seems to have become popular after the mid-seventh century, is known in some ancient texts as *Vesara*. By the late seventh or the early eighth century, the ambitious projects at Ellora became even grander. By about 750 CE, the early western Chalukya control of the Deccan was taken by the Rashtrakutas. Their greatest achievement in architecture is the Kailashnath temple at Ellora, a culmination of at least a millennium-long tradition in rock-cut architecture in India. It is a complete *dravida* building with a Nandi shrine-since the temple is dedicated to Shiva-a gopuram-like gateway, surrounding cloisters, subsidiary shrines, staircases and an imposing tower or vimana rising to thirty metres. Importantly, all of this is carved out of living rock. One portion of the monolithic hill was carved patiently to build the Kailashnath temple.

The sculpture of the Rashtrakuta phase at Ellora is dynamic, the figures often larger than life-size, infused with unparalleled grandeur and the most overwhelming energy. In the southern part of the Deccan, i.e., in the region of Karnataka is where some of the most experimental hybrid styles of *vesara* architecture are to be found. Pulakesin I established the early western Chalukya kingdom when he secured the land around Badami in 543. The early western Chalukyas ruled most of the Deccan till the mid-eighth century when they were superseded by the Rashtrakutas. Early Chalukyan activity also takes the form of rock-cut caves while later activity is of structural temples. The earliest is probably the Ravana Phadi cave at Aihole which is known for its distinctive sculptural style. One of the most important sculptures at the site is of Nataraja, surrounded by larger-than-life-size depictions of the *saptamatikas*: three to Shiva's left and four to his right. The figures are characterised by graceful, slim bodies, long, oval faces topped with extremely tall cylindrical crowns and shown to wear short dhotis marked by fine incised striations indicating pleating. They are distinctly different from contemporary western Deccan or *Vakataka* styles seen at places such as Paunar and Ramtek. The hybridisation and incorporation of several styles was the hallmark of Chalukyan buildings.



The most elaborate of all Chalukyan temples at Pattadakal made in the reign of Vikramaditya II (733-44) by his chief queen Loka Mahadevi, for instance, shows complete knowledge of Pallava buildings at Kanchipuram and as a corollary, Mahabalipuram. The temple is one of the best early examples of the dravida tradition. By contrast other eastern Chalukyan temples, like the Mahakuta, five kilometers from Badami, and the Swarga Brahma temple at Alampur show a greater assimilation of northern styles from Odisha and Rajasthan. At the same time the Durga temple at Aihole is unique having an even earlier style of an apsidal shrine which is reminiscent of Buddhist chaitya halls and is surrounded by a veranda of a later kind, with a *shikhara* that is stylistically like a *nagara* one. Finally, mention must be made of the Lad Khan temple at Aihole. This seems to be inspired by the wooden-roofed temples of the hills, except that it is constructed out of stone. Undoubtedly, they are dynamic expressions of a creative set of architects who were competing with their peers in the rest of India.

With the waning of Chola and Pandya power, the Hoysalas of Karnataka grew to prominence in South India and became the most important patrons centred at Mysore. The remains of around hundred temples have been found in southern Deccan, though it is only three of them that are most frequently discussed: the temples at Belur, Halebid and Somnathpuram. Perhaps the most characteristic feature of these temples is that they grow extremely complex with so many projecting angles emerging from the previously straightforward square temple, that the plan of these temples starts looking like a star, and is thus known as a stellateplan. Since they are made out of soapstone which is a relatively soft stone, the artists were able to carve their sculptures intricately. This can be seen particularly in the jewellery of the gods that adorn their temple walls.

The Hoysaleswara temple (Lord of the Hoysalas) at Halebid in Karnataka was built in dark schist stone by the Hoysala king in 1150. Hoysala temples are sometimes called hybrid or vesara as their unique style seems neither completely dravida nor *nagara*, but somewhere in between. They are easily distinguishable from other medieval temples by their highly original star-like ground-plans and a profusion of decorative carvings. Dedicated to Shiva as Nataraja, the Halebid temple is a double building with a large hall for the mandapa to facilitate music and dance. A Nandi pavilion precedes each building. The tower of the temple here and at nearby Belur fell long ago, and an idea of the temples' appearance can now only be gleaned from their detailed miniature versions flanking the entrances. From the central square plan cutout angular projections create the star effect decorated with the most profuse carvings of animals and deities. So intricate is the carving that it is said, for instance, in the bottom-most frieze featuring a continuous procession of hundreds of elephants with their mahouts, no two elephants are in the same pose.

Founded in 1336, Vijayanagara, literally 'city of victory', attracted a number of international travellers such as the Italian, Niccolo di Conti, the Portuguese Domingo Paes, Fernao Nuniz and Duarte Barbosa and the Afghan Abd, al-Razzaq, who have left vivid accounts of the city. In addition, various Sanskrit and Telugu works document the vibrant literary tradition of this kingdom. Architecturally, Vijayanagara synthesises the centuries-old dravida temple architecture with Islamic styles demonstrated by the neighbouring sultanates. Their sculpture too, although fundamentally derived from, and consciously seeking to recreate Chola ideals, occasionally shows the presence of foreigners. Their eclectic ruins from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries preserve a fascinating time in history, an age of wealth, exploration and cultural fusion.

#### **3.3.1.5. Temples and Indian Cultural Ethos**

Indian temples symbolised the very mundane urges of humans and were for varied behaviors of the society as a whole. To begin with, common education within the temple was of great importance. Several endowments to temples were specifically made for establishment of colleges

which were incorporated into temple complexes. Teaching of such subjects as grammar and astrology as well as recital and teaching of texts such as the Vedas, the Epics Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the Puranas were encouraged. Music and dance usually shaped part of the daily ritual of the temples and throughout special celebrations and annual festivals these played a particularly dominant role. Big temples would uphold their own musicians- both vocal and instrumental, jointly with dancers, actors and teachers of performing arts. The life-size delineations of such musicians in a tenth-century temple at Khajuraho as well as in the Sun temple at Konarka and *natamandir* (dancing hall) forming an absolutely integral element in the Odishan and other temples also give eloquent testimonies to that effect. And, of course, who can forget the performance of the great cosmic-dance of the Mahadeva Shiva himself at the Chidambaram temple. No less significant was the institution of *devadasis*. These temple maidens played an important role in dancing as well as in singing of devotional hymns through which the temple god was entertained. The information that the Chola emperor Rajaraja I (985-1012) constructed two extensive streets for the accommodation of four hundred dancing women attached to the Brihadishvar temple (Thanjavur), provides us with a thought of the lavish level

### **3.3.2. Sculptural Tradition**

The regional spirit asserting itself is seen in sculptural arts as well. Stylistically, schools of artistic depictions of the human form urbanized in eastern, western, central and northern India. Distinctive contribution also appeared in the Himalayan regions, the Deccan and the distant South. A great majority of these regions produced works of art that were characterized through what has been described as the “medieval factor” through the great art historian and critic Nihar Ranjan Rai. This “medieval factor” was marked through a sure amount of slenderness and an accent on sharp angles and rows. The roundness of bodily form acquires flatness. The curves lose their convexity and turn into the concave. Western and Central Indian sculptures, Eastern Indian and Himalayan metal images, Gujarati and Rajasthani book and textile illustrations, Bengal terracottas and wood carvings and sure Deccan and Odisha miniatures registered this new conception of form through the posttenth centuries.

The pivot of the early medieval sculpture is the human figure, both male and female, in the form of gods and goddesses and their attendants. Since these cult images rest on the assured foundations of a regulated structure of form, it maintains a more or less uniform average of excellence in all artregions of India. Curiously, the creative climax of each art-region is not reached at one and the similar time all in excess of India. In Bihar and Bengal it is reached in the ninth and tenth centuries; in Odisha in the twelfth and thirteenth; in Central India in the tenth and eleventh; in Rajasthan in the tenth; in Gujarat in the eleventh; and in the distant south in the tenth-eleventh centuries. It is in the Deccan alone that the story is of rising torpor and petrification-indeed, Deccan ceases to be a sculptural province after the eighth century.

It is not only the cult images but non-ironic figure sculptures too which conform to more or less standardised kinds within each art-province and hardly reveal any personal attitude or experience of the artist. The multitude of figures related themselves to a big diversity of motifs and subjects. These contain: narrative reliefs, historical or semi-historical scenes; music and dance scenes, mithuna couples in a diversity of poses and attitudes, arrays of warriors and animals and shalabhanjikas (women and the tree). Metal images cast in brass and oct-alloy (*asthta-dhata*), copper and bronze emerge in profusion in eastern India (Bihar, Bengal and Assam), Himalayan kingdoms (especially Nepal and Kashmir) and more particularly in the south. The North Indian images mainly portray brahmanic and Buddhist deities permeated with tantrik powers. The main kinds represented in the extra ordinary galaxy of South Indian metal images are the several shapes of Shiva, especially the

Nataraja, Parvati; the Shaiva saints such as Appar, Sambaudar and Saudarar; Vaishnav saints described Alvars and figures of royal donors.

All in excess of the country, the post-Gupta iconography prominently displays a divine hierarchy which reflects the pyramidal ranks in feudal society. Vishnu, Shiva and Durga appear as supreme deities lording in excess of several other divinities of unequal sizes and placed in lower positions as retainers and attendants. The supreme Mother Goddess is clearly recognized as a self-governing divinity in iconography from this time and is represented in a dominating posture in relation to many minor deities. Even hitherto a puritanical religion like Jainism could not resist the pressure of incorporating the Mother Goddess in its fold, which is fully reflected in the well-known Dilwara temples at Mt. Abu in Rajasthan. The pantheons do not so much reflect syncretism as forcible. In the rock-cut sculptures of Ellora one can feel the fighting mood of the divinities occupied in violent struggles against their enemies. The reality of unequal ranks appears in the Shaivite, Jain and Buddhists monastic organisations. The ceremonies recommended for the consecration of the acharya, the highest in rank, are practically the similar as those for the coronation of the prince.

Though the Pallavas and Cholas were prolific builders of temples and generous patrons of arts, their art is identified with the magnificent bronzes. These great pieces of workmanship were made primarily for processions on festive occasions in temples though some were also made for private worship. Derived from earlier clay images, this form while deemed to be folk art incorporates all aspects of classical art. These bronzes are cast in the cire perdue or lost wax process. The image is first made in wax; it is then given several coats of fine clay and then dried in the shade. Then two holes are made on the top and the bottom, and next the whole is heated so that the wax melt away leaving a hollow mould into which molten metal is poured. The clay mould is broken off after the metals solidified. Final dressing is done by hand with a chisel and abrasive material.

The rule of the Pallavas and Cholas between the 7th to the 13th centuries saw the high watermark of bronze sculpture. Pallava art form manifested itself around the 7th century and probably derived inspiration from the Amaravati School. While there was a foreign influence in the form of Yavana or Roman influences and the presence of Roman artifacts, the bronzes are believed to be largely an indigenous art form. The patronage for these art objects too comes from Pallava rulers like Mahendravarman and others. These bronzes have a resemblance to the lithic (stone) sculpture of the period. The development of the Pallava bronzes can be divided into four phases viz. 1st Phase (Phase upto the 7th Century C.E) termed Mahendra Phase named after Mahendravarman. 2nd Phase (1st half of 8th Century) termed Rajsimha Phase named after the builder of Mammalapuram and Kanchi (C.E 700-730). 3rd Phase (Second half of 8th Century 750-800C.E.) named after Nandivarman II. 4th Phase (Ninth Century 795-845) named after Dantivarman.

The later half of the ninth century marks the transitional toward the Chola type of bronzes. (Rajaraja Chola establishing himself around C.E 850). In terms of the bronzes itself the early bold forms gradually change to slender rounded ones that are delicate and more refined with the contours of the figures being softer. The Kalayansundrammurti (depicting the wedding of Shiva and Parvati) from Vadakalattur being a fine example of Chola bronze art. During the Chola period a large number of temples of stone were transformed into grand and complex buildings as can be seen from the temples at Thanjavur, Gangaikondacholapuram and the large stately Gopurams of Chidambaram. The Chola period saw elaborate festivals with music dance and processions. The bronze images are intended as manifestations of the main deity enshrined in the garbha-griha when taken out in procession were worshipped with adoration.

Chola bronzes can be divided into four distinct phases: 1st Phase (Phase upto the first half of the 10th Century C.E) named after Aditya Chola, 2nd Phase (last quarter of 10th century) named after

Sembiyan Mahadevi, 3rd Phase (11th century C.E) named after Rajaraja I, 4th Phase (12th century) called Later Chola.

It was during the 10th and 11th centuries that the epitome of artistic excellence was reached by the bronzes where great emphasis was placed on graceful depiction, bhavas, flowing lines and supple contours. It may be noted that dance forms and poses, karnas, influenced the form of the images. The Agamic and Vastu literature were also sources of inspiration for the creation of these images. Some of the more popular icons created by the sculptors are Kalayanasundarmurti of Shiva and Parvati who are also seen in the Somaskanda depiction. Shiva as Ardhanarishvara, Nataraja and Vrishabhavanamurti as well in Sukahasana were popular subjects. Some portrait sculpture of saints such as Manikavachakar and the royal patrons such Rajendra Chola and Sembiyan Mahadevi also exist. Besides Hindu icons, Buddhist and Jaina images were also cast in bronze during the period. The Chola bronze tradition continued to inspire artists well into the medieval period as is attested by Vijayanagar bronzes.

### **3.3.3. Painting Tradition**

Of various art forms, painting has always been a very powerful medium of cultural tradition and expression. It is associated with values, beliefs, behaviour of mankind and provides material objects to understand people's way of life, their thought process and creativity. In simple words, painting has become a bridge to our past, reflecting what people think and want to depict. Painting is also a part of tangible material culture, where human creations are termed as artifacts and helps in understanding the cultural values. It is a human way of transforming elements of world into symbol, where each of it has a distinct meaning and can also be manipulated. Compared to sculpture, painting is easier to execute and that is why Stone Age people chose it as an expression of their beliefs and imaginations. In fact, painting marks an entirely new phase in the human history and is regarded as a giant cultural leap. Painting in contemporary Indian literature is also referred as 'Alekhya'. In other words, it is a medium of expression of artist's instinct and emotion reconciled and integrated with his social expression and cultural heritage.

The medieval custom in paintings has the following traits; sharp, jerky and pointed angles, e.g., at the elbow and the shoulders, sensuous facial characteristics-sharp and peaked nose, extensive wide swollen eyes projected sharply and crescent lips, Richness of variegated patterns, motifs etc. Gathered and adapted to the grip of sharp curves, and an intense preference for geometric and abstract patterns of decoration. The manifestations of these traits can be seen in the paintings on the walls of the Kailas temple (eighth century) of Ellora; the Jain shrine at Sittanavasal (ninth century) and the Brihadishvar temple at Thanjavur (eleventh century), both in Tamil Nadu. Though, these traits are still more pronounced in the wellrecognized manuscript-illustrations of Bihar and Bengal, Nepal and Tibet in the post-tenth centuries. Textiles surfaces also offered a very rich field for the development of this custom. At least from the thirteenth century onwards West Indian textile designs, and later, those of the Deccan, South, Odisha and Bengal also register their impact in unmistakable conditions.

During this period in the painting tradition of south India played an important role. South Indian kingdoms of the Cholas, Vijaynagara and Nayakas contributed immensely for the growth of paintings. In the Chola temples there are many fresco paintings seen at Vijayala Colesvara temple at Narttamalai (C.E. 1100), Brihadesvara temple at Thanjavur (C.E. 1100), Sangita – Mandapa at Tiruparuttikunram in Kanchipuram (C.E. 1387-88 ) and Vcayapa Matha at Angundi (about the same date). The Chola frescoes were first discovered in C.E. 1931 within the circumambulatory passage of Brihadeshvara temple. Researchers have discovered the technique used in these frescoes. A smooth batter of lime stone mixture was applied on the stone and over it , large paintings were painted in

natural organic pigments. The Chola frescoes have ardent spirit of Saivism expressed in them. In all paintings, Chola physiognomical and stylistic forms are apparent. The Classical values of full roundedness of volume, subtle plasticity are also retained. But at the same time, there is also strongly perceptible lessening of the consistency of colour modelling and hence a flattening of surface is there, despite ample curves and colour. During the Nayaka period, the Chola paintings were painted over. The latter paintings belonging to the *Vijaynagara* period (the Lepakshi wall painting), show general decline in the art style. Outline became sharper and delicate modelling of earlier period is absent. The human figures appear as phantoms, devoid of expression and there is greater emphasis on the display of iconographic forms and mythological stories.

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