



11



315en11

EMERGENCE OF REGIONAL STATES IN INDIA: TWELFTH TO EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

There are twenty-eight states in India today. Each of these states has a specific language, geography, food and culture that make the culture of India rich and full of varieties. Have you wondered how these different states and the regional cultures in them developed? Were they like this from time immemorial? When we go back to history, we realise that these states existed in different forms undergoing a constant process of change in different periods of time.

In this lesson, you will study the history of various regional states that existed from twelfth to eighteenth century. Some of the regional states of this period are today a part of one single state. For example, Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Udaipur that existed as independent regional states in the medieval period are all today districts of the state of Rajasthan. Some of the regional states are now a part of more than one state. For example, the Vijayanagar Empire (1336–1565AD) is now a part of the modern states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. There are some regional states that had the same names as those of the modern states today, but were different in terms of areas they covered. For example, the modern states of Gujarat, Bengal, Kashmir and Orissa existed from twelfth and eighteenth century under same names, but their respective geography today is different from what it was in the period between twelfth and eighteenth century.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- give brief account of different regional states from twelfth to eighteenth century.
- Understand the meaning of the term regional states?
- Understand the nature of relations between the regional states and the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire.
- appreciate the relations between various regional states themselves
- Describe the political ideas and organisations of these regional states.
- Explain the Economic and cultural conditions in the regional states.
- List Some of the primary sources or documents of that time that give us Information about the regional states.
- It is very difficult to provide account of all the regional states in one small lesson only a few of them have been selected here for the study. They are as follows:



Notes

1. From north India, we will look at the history of two regional states one Jaunpur, which is today in Uttar Pradesh and another Kashmir.
2. From south India, we will study the history of the Vijayanagara and Bahamani kingdom. As stated earlier, the Vijayanagar Empire can be found in current states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and the Bahamani kingdom can be found in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra.
3. From west India we will study Gujarat, and the Marathas. Gujarat exists with the same name today, and the Marathas had control over today's Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and some other parts of India.
4. Finally, from eastern India we will study the history of Bengal.

11.1 THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERM REGIONAL STATE AND REGIONALISM:

In the history of India, there has been a constant evolution and development of regionalism and regional states. How does one explain the rise of regional states? From the seventh century AD onwards which is the early medieval period till the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, agriculture and agricultural activities played a very significant role in the development of regional states. Wherever, good agricultural activity took place, it not only fed the population but generated a large surplus that could be sold and wealth could be generated. Trade and trading activities, overland as well as maritime, also provided an important source of revenue. One finds the rise of powerful sections in the society that controlled the agricultural surplus. Sometimes, some members of this powerful section asserted themselves and acquired political power and became kings and established ruling dynasties. This led to laying the foundation of the states. Sometimes, some groups came from outside and conquered the land, controlled the administration and became powerful.

It is true that a large number of regional states after thirteenth century arose due to internal weakness of the Delhi Sultanate. Similarly, with the decline of Mughal Empire, there emerged important states in the eighteenth century. But all these states had a regional history that pre-dated both the Sultanate and the Mughal state. For example, Bengal was an important regional kingdom in the eighth and the ninth centuries under the Palas and subsequently in the twelfth century under the Senas. It was an important independent state in the thirteenth and fifteenth century and became a powerful provincial kingdom in the eighteenth century too. We all know that Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire ruled over numerous and different cultural zones. Even the regional state of Vijayanagar ruled over different cultural zones. Therefore, it should be remembered that regionalism never disappeared though the regional dynasties gained and lost power and the regions changed their geographical boundaries.

What is this regionalism? Apart from political features, like regional ruling dynasties, there are some important characteristics of regionalism which developed, evolved and changed over a period of time in these regional states. Some of the characteristics of regionalism are as follows:

1. One of the important aspects is language. For example, Oriya, Gujarati, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Marathi and so on Indian languages spoken in various regions of India are referred as regional languages. These languages developed in the early medieval and medieval period and were associated with the specific regions. Though the languages existed in some form or the other, even prior to this but it was primarily from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, that the



Notes

regional languages came to be used in the official documents. Literary works and local literature came to be written in these languages. In the medieval period, simultaneous with the use of the regional languages, Sanskrit also came to be used in scholastic texts. However a large number of official documents of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire and some regional states were written in Persian.

- Another characteristic is the presence of the local regional cults and religious affiliations. For instance, the cult of Jagannath in Orissa was regional to Orissa. It became the cult of the state, whereby the rulers adopted it, built a huge temple for it and celebrated festivals around it every year. Historians say that Jagannath was a tribal god, whose popularity made the rulers adopt this as the state cult. In the next section, we will further elaborate about the relationship between the states and religion. A large number of sects and the *bhakti* religion developed in the regions. For example, Namdev, Raidas, Tukaram, Guru Nanak were located in the regional states. Religions also have their own myths, legends and interpretations and religious practices. Did you know that in north India, Kartikeya, the son of Shiva and Parvati, is a bachelor and in the Tamil region he has two wives, Devyani and Valli? Each region had different gods and goddesses, different temple and mosque architectures. Interestingly, despite these regional differences, where each tradition was specific to a region, there were similarities in the regional traditions too. The saints and priests migrated from one region to another. For instance, Gesu Daraz, (1321–1422), the Sufi saint, belonged to the Chisti *Silsilah* that was established in Delhi. He migrated from Delhi to Daultabad in the Deccan region as a child in 1328. Seven years later, in 1335 AD, he came back to Delhi and stayed there for sixty three years. Towards the end of fourteenth century, in 1398, when Timur, a Turkish invader from Central Asia attacked Delhi, Gesu Daraz, migrated back to Deccan.
- The regional states were not closed isolated areas. Apart from religious interaction between the states, there were networks of interaction through trade and commerce and migration of artisans from one region to another. For example, in the fifteenth century, the silk weavers, *Pattanulkars* migrated from the Gujarat region to the Vijayanagar state. Also one finds migration of the Africans and Iranians to the Vijayanagar and Bahamani kingdoms.
- Another characteristic is the development of local and regional art schools like that Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Central India, and Rajasthan and so on. Regional identities were formed as a result of process and there have been changes and they did not exist since time immemorial. The various regional dynasties extended their patronage to art, culture, literature and architecture.

Thus, the presence of numerous regional states did not imply chaos and confusion. These states did wage wars amongst themselves, but provided stability over their respective regions. As discussed above, they had a vibrant culture of their own. The regional states influenced each other in the area of architecture and political culture. For instance, the early Vijayanagar rulers called themselves as *Hindu Suratrana*, meaning Hindu Sultan, where the term Sultan was borrowed from the Delhi sultanate. Similarly, the *iqtadari system* of the Delhi Sultanate influenced the administrative systems of the Vijayanagar and Bahamani kingdoms.

What is the difference between the regional states and Empire like Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire? Apart from the characteristics mentioned above of language and culture that were specific to one area, the political and military visions of these states were limited by the regional boundaries.



Notes



INTEXT QUESTION 11.1

1. List any four characteristics of Regionalism in India.

2. Name the regional art Schools that developed in India during Medieval period.

3. Which bhakti religions developed in the regions of India during Medieval times.

4. List any four characteristics of Regionalism in India.

5. Name the regional art Schools that developed in India during Medieval period.

6. Which bhakti religions developed in the regions of India during Medieval times.

11.2 RISE OF REGIONAL STATES: A GENERAL HISTORY

In the lessons you have studied about the regional states from the seventh to the thirteenth century. What happened to these states? Did they disappear completely from medieval Indian politics? A large number of these regional states continued to exist after the thirteenth century but there were changes in the ruling dynasties and geography of these states. In this section, you will get a general overview of the regional states from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century.

The Delhi Sultanate expanded as a result of the annexation of the states like Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Malwa, various Rajput states of Rajasthan, like Ranthambor, Jalore, Nagore, Ajmer, the Deccan states of Warangal, Telengana, Yadavas of Deogir, and the southern states of the Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra, Pandyas of Madurai, and so on. We have already studied about the various campaigns of Alauddin Khalji and the shift of capital from Delhi to Daultabad in the Deccan, during Mohammad bin Tughlaq's period. Those states that were annexed to the Sultanate formed various provinces and were placed under the administration of the provincial governors. From the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the thirteenth century till its downfall in the fifteenth century, there was a constant interaction between the provinces that were once upon a time independent states and the centre, that is, Delhi. However, rebellions from these areas never ceased. We all know that as a prince, Muhammad bin Tughlaq spent his entire career in crushing the rebellions in the Deccan, Orissa and Bengal.

Though these regions were now a part of the Delhi Sultanate, the regional characteristics of language, art, literature and religion remained. In fact, when Islam reached here, it acquired a regional flavour. These states already had settlements of Muslim merchants and Muslims employed in the army. Though there was hardly any regional ruling dynasty, the provincial governors of the Sultanate allied with the local *rajās* and *zamindars* and asserted their independence. Most of the regional states that came up after the fourteenth century when the Delhi Sultanate was declining were a result of the rebellions of the governors. The establishment of Vijayanagar and the Bahamani were a result of the assertion of power by the provincial officers, like Harihara and Bukka and Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah respectively. During the same period, Ben-

**Notes**

gal in the east and Multan and Sind in the west became independent. Feroz Shah Tughlaq tried to regain the lost territories but could not do so. He tried unsuccessfully to take over Bengal. He attacked and plundered Jajnagar (Orissa) but did not annex it. He plundered Kangra and suppressed revolts in Gujarat and Thatta.

With the death of Feroz Shah Tughlaq in 1338, the decline of the Sultanate began. As we have just mentioned, a large number of local governors became powerful and asserted their independence in the provinces. The relationship between the Sultan and the nobles worsened. The conflict with the local rulers and *zamindars* as well as regional and geographical tensions weakened the Sultanate further. The declining Sultanate received the final blow with the invasions of Timur in 1398 AD. Timur was a Turk who had come from Central Asia to plunder the wealth of India. Timur entered Delhi and mercilessly killed both the Hindus and Muslims and massacred women and children as well.

Fifteen years after the Timur's raids in Delhi, the Delhi Sultanate declined. The Sultanates in Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur near Varanasi emerged as powerful regional kingdom. Gujarat and Jaunpur were constantly engaged in tension with the Lodhis of the Delhi Sultanate (1451 to 1526 AD). New regional states independent of the Delhi sultanate arose in Central and South India too, out of which the prominent ones were the Gajapatis of Orissa, the Bahamanis and the Vijayanagara Empire. The Lodhi Sultans like Bahlol Lodhi (1451–1485) and Sikander Lodhi (1489–1526) tried to keep these regional kingdoms under control. Finally, during the rule of Ibrahim Lodhi (1517–1526), Bihar declared its independence. Daulat Khan, the governor of Punjab rebelled and invited Babur to invade India in 1526.

With the establishment of the Mughal Empire in 1526 AD, and its expansion in the later period, the ruling dynasties in the regional states gradually lost their power and these states over a period of time became the part of the Mughal Empire. But the regional features of language, art, literature and religion continued with changes. With the decline of the Mughals in the eighteenth century, there were rebellions of the provincial governors and a few annexed states declared their independence. As a result new regional kingdoms arose, for instance, Punjab, Bengal, Awadh, Hyderabad, Mysore and the Marathas.

**INTEXT QUESTION 11.2**

1. When did decline of Delhi Sultanate began?

2. During the rule of Ibrahim Lodhi, which two states declared their independence?

HISTORY OF THE REGIONAL STATES: A FEW CASE STUDIES**11.3 JAUNPUR:**

Jaunpur is now in Varanasi division in eastern Uttar Pradesh on the banks of river Gomati. It was a prosperous province in the eastern part of the Delhi Sultanate. The governor of Jaunpur was Malik Sarwar, who was a prominent noble during Feroz Shah Tughlaq's period. In 1394, Sultan Nasiruddin Mohammad Shah Tughlaq made him a minister and gave him the title of *Sultanu-Sharq* which means the master of the east. Thereafter, he was known as Malik Sarwar Sultanus Sharq. After Timur's invasion and the weakening of the Delhi Sultanate, Malik Sarwar took advantage of a weak political situation and declared himself independent. Malik Sarwar was



Notes

succeeded by his son Mubarak Shah Sharqi. The Sultan struck coins in his name. During his period, the ruler of the Delhi sultanate was Mahmud Shah Tughlaq, who tried to annex Jaunpur, but failed. Thereafter, there were constant tensions between the various rulers of Jaunpur and Delhi Sultanate. The Sharqi Sultans made several attempts to conquer Delhi, but they could never be successful. In 1402, Ibrahim Shah Sharqi, Mubarak Shah's brother became the Sultan and ruled Jaunpur for thirty four years. Ibrahim was also a scholar, well versed with Islamic theology and law, music and fine arts. He was a great patron of architecture. A distinct style of architecture evolved called the Sharqi style that had some Hindu influence. At its height, the Sharqi Sultanate extended from Aligarh in western Uttar Pradesh to Darbhanga in north Bihar in the east and from Nepal in the north to Bundelkhand in the south. It was during the reign of Hussain Shah Sharqi (1458–1505) that a prolonged war with Bahlol Lodhi started. Bahlol Lodhi attacked Jaunpur in 1484 and Hussain Shah had to flee. Finally, Sikandar Lodhi who succeeded Bahlol Lodhi annexed Jaunpur. Hussain Shah died and the Sharqi dynasty came to an end.

11.4 KASHMIR

Kashmir is in the northern part of India. In the eleventh century, the rulers were followers of Saivism, and Saivism became the central religion in Kashmir. It was a closed kingdom. Albiruni, the Arab traveller who visited India during this period remarked in his work, *Al-Hind* that no one, not even Hindus from outside was allowed access to Kashmir. In 1320s, the ruling dynasty of Kashmir could not check the devastating Mongol invasions. It therefore, lost all public support. In 1339, Shamsuddin Shah deposed the Saiva ruler and became the ruler of Kashmir. From this period onwards, Islam influenced the Kashmiri society. A group of Sufi saints known as the Rishis propagated a religion that combined features of Hinduism and Islam Sufi saints and refugees migrated from Central Asia to Kashmir and further influenced the society and religion. Gradually, the poorer section of the population started converting to Islam. The state encouragement to Islam took place when the Kashmiri Sultan, Sikandar Shah (1389–1413), issued an order that all Hindus especially, the *brahmanas* living in his kingdom should embrace Islam or leave his kingdom. It is said that these orders were issued at the instance of the king's minister, Suha Bhatt who was a Hindu and had recently converted to Islam.

Perhaps, one of the greatest rulers of Kashmir was Zainul Abidin (1420–1470). He was an enlightened ruler and called back those Hindus who had left the state due to the persecution of Sikandar Shah. He abolished *jaziya* and prohibited cow slaughter and gave the Hindus important state posts. A large number of temples were repaired and new ones constructed. Abul Fazl, the court historian of the Mughal Emperor Akbar noted that Kashmir had one hundred and fifty big temples. Sultan Zainul Abidin married the daughters of the Hindu raja of Jammu. Some scholars call Zainul Abidin as the Akbar of Kashmir. Under him, Kashmir became prosperous and he was called the *Bud Shah* or the great king of Kashmiris.

The Sultan contributed to the agricultural development of Kashmir by constructing dams and canals. Agricultural records were maintained. During the period of famine and other natural calamities, relief in terms of loans and grains and fodder was provided to the peasants. Sultan also introduced reforms in the currency. He introduced market control and fixed prices of the commodities. Traders and merchants were asked to sell the commodities at fixed prices. Sultan also subsidized the import of the commodities which were scarce in the state. To make up for the shortage of salt, he imported salt from Ladakh and helped the traders in every possible way. Sultan also paid attention to the development of handicrafts. He sent some people to

**Notes**

Samarqand for training of paper making and book binding. Sultan also encouraged stone cutting and polishing and many other crafts. He introduced carpet and shawl making, which make Kashmir famous till day. Sultan also founded the towns of Zaingir, Zainket and Zainpur and laid out the islands on the Dal Lake that can be seen till today. His chief engineering achievement was the Zaina Lanka, an artificial island in the Woolur Lake on which he built his palace and mosque.

He was a great scholar of Persian, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Arab languages and patronised the Sanskrit and Persian scholars. Under his patronage, the *Mahabharat* and Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* were translated into Persian and many Persian and Arabic works were translated into Hindi. He himself was a poet and wrote poetry under the pen name 'Qutb'.

After him weak rulers ascended the throne of Kashmir and there was confusion. Taking advantage of this, Mirza Haider, Babur's relative occupied Kashmir. In 1586, Akbar conquered Kashmir and made it a part of the Mughal Empire.

11.5 BENGAL

Bengal was an important regional kingdom under the Palas in the eighth century and the Senas in the twelfth century. Bengal was the easternmost province of the Delhi Sultanate. The long distance, uncomfortable climate and poor means of transport and communications made it difficult for the Delhi Sultanate to control this province. Therefore, it was easy for Bengal to assert its independence. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq tried to solve the problem by partitioning Bengal into three independent administrative divisions: Lakhnauti, Satgaon and Sonargaon. However, the problems remained and finally Bengal emerged as an independent regional state in the fourteenth century.

In 1342, one of the nobles, Haji Ilyas Khan united Bengal and became its ruler under the title of Shams-ud-din Ilyas Shah and laid the foundation of the Ilyas Shah dynasty. He tried to annex Bengal and raided Orissa and Tirhut and forced them to pay tribute. Such expansions alarmed the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate, who tried to occupy Bengal several times but were not successful. One of the important rulers of the Ilyas Shah dynasty was Ghiyasuddin Azam. He was a learned man and promoted Persian literature. He was well known for dispensing free and fair justice to people. It is said that once he killed a son of a widow by accident. The widow filed a complaint with Qazi who summoned the ruler to the court. When the case was decided, Azam told the Qazi that had he not discharged his duties honestly he would have killed him. Azam had cordial relations with China. There was a prosperous trading relationship between Bengal and China. The port of Chittagaong was an important centre for exchange of goods. On demand from the king of China, Azam also sent Buddhist monks from Bengal. Pandua and Gaur were the capitals of Bengal.

In 1538, Bengal was annexed by Sher Shah Suri. In 1586, Akbar conquered Bengal, and made it into a *suba*. While Persian was the language of administration, Bengali developed as a regional language. The establishment of Mughal control over Bengal coincided with the rise of agrarian settlements in the forested and marshy areas of south-eastern Bengal. Soon after, with the spread of rice cultivation, this area became heavily populated with the local communities of fisher folks and peasants. The Mughals established their capital in the heart of the eastern delta at Dhaka. Officials and functionaries received land grants and settled there. Alauddin Hussain Shah (1439 to 1519) was another important ruler of Bengal. He was very efficient, and gave high administrative posts to the Hindus and is said to have paid respect to Chaitanya of the Vaisnava sect. He came into conflict with Sikandar Lodhi and had to make peace with him.



Notes

11.6 GUJARAT

This was a fertile and prosperous province. It had flourishing seaports and was famous for its handicrafts. Alauddin Khalji was the first Sultan to annex it to Delhi Sultanate and since then it remained under the Turkish governors of the Sultanate. After Timur's invasion, in 1407, Zafar Khan who was then the governor became the independent ruler and after sometime assumed the title of Muzaffar Shah. Zafar Khan's father was a Rajput who had given his sister in marriage to Feroz Shah Tughlaq.

Ahmad Shah (1411–1441), was one of the important rulers of Gujarat. He founded the city of Ahmadabad and made it his capital in 1413. He built beautiful buildings, like Jama Masjid and Teen Darwaza and beautified the city with gardens, palaces and *bazaars*. Ahmad Shah was influenced by the Jaina architectural traditions of Gujarat. He was an efficient administrator and consolidated the regional state of Gujarat. He subdued the Rajput states, Jhalawar, Bundi and Durgapur. He was supposed to be an orthodox Muslim who imposed *jaziya* on the Hindus and destroyed several temples. However, the picture was complex. At the same time, he appointed Hindus to important administrative positions. Ahmad Shah fought equally fiercely against the Hindu as well as the Muslim rulers. His main enemy were the Muslim rulers of Malwa. The rivalry between Gujarat and Malwa was bitter and prevented both the regional states from concentrating on larger political gains in north Indian politics. He was famous for imparting justice. He publicly executed his son-in-law who had murdered an innocent. The author of *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* has rightly said that the impact of this justice lasted till his reign.

Perhaps the most important ruler of Gujarat was Mahmud Begarha. He was called Mahmud Begarha as he had captured two powerful forts or *garh*, Girnar (Junagarh) in Saurashtra and the fort of Champaner from the Rajputs in south Gujarat. Both these forts were of strategic importance. The fort of Girnar was in the prosperous Saurashtra region and also provided a base for operations against Sindh. The Sultan founded a new town called Mustafabad at the foot of the hill. This town with many beautiful monuments became the second capital of Gujarat. Similarly, the fort of Champaner was crucial to control Malwa and Khandesh. Mahmud constructed a new town called Muhammadabad near Champaner.

According to another version, he was called Begarha as his moustaches resembled the horns of a cow (*begarha*). Mahmud is supposed to have had a flowing beard which reached up to his waist. His moustache was supposed to be so long that he tied it over his head. According to a foreign traveller, Duarte Barbosa, right from his childhood, Mahmud was given some poison as his food which made him so poisonous that if a fly settled on his head, it would meet instant death. Mahmud was also famous for huge appetite. It is said that for breakfast he ate a cup of honey, a cup of butter and one hundred to hundred and fifty bananas. In total, he consumed ten to fifteen kilos of food everyday. Mahmud Begarha ruled for 52 years. He was also a great patron of art and literature. Many works were translated from Arabic to Persian in his court. His court poet was Udayaraja, who composed poetry in Sanskrit.

In 1507, Mahmud led an expedition against the Portuguese who had settled on the western coast and monopolised the trade there, causing immense harm to the Muslim traders. To break the Portuguese trade monopoly he sought the help of the Sultan of Turkey but could not get much headway and finally had to give the Portuguese a site for a factory in Diu. He died in 1511. During the rule of his successors Akbar conquered and annexed Gujarat in 1572 AD.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.3

1. To which areas was Sharqi Sultanate extended?

2. Who is referred as Akbar of Kashmir?

3. Who laid the foundation of the Ilyas Shah dynasty?

4. Ahmed Shah founded which city?

Notes



11.7 THE BAHAMANI SULTANATE

In the fourteenth century two powerful kingdoms arose in South India. One was the Bahamani Sultanate and the second kingdom was the Vijayanagar Empire that ruled for 300 years. In this section we will discuss the history of Bahamani Sultanate and its administrative features.

The Deccan region was a part of the provincial administration of the Delhi Sultanate. In order to establish a stable administration in the Deccan, Mohammad bin Tughlaq appointed *amiran-i-sada*/ *Sada Amir*, who were the administrative heads of hundred villages. From 1337 the conflict between the officers in Deccan and Delhi sultanate accelerated. This led to the establishment of an independent state in the Deccan in 1347 with the capital at Gulbarga in Andhra Pradesh. Its founders Haran Kangu assumed the title Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah as he traced his descent from the mythical hero of Iran, Bahman Shah and the kingdom was named after him, the Bahamani Sultanate. After Mohammad bin Tughlaq there were no attempts by the Delhi Sultanate to control the Deccan region. Therefore, the Bahamani Sultans without any checks annexed the kingdom. One of the important acquisitions was the control over Dabhol, an important port on the west coast.

Under Bahman Shah and his son Muhammad Shah, the administrative system was well organised. The kingdom was divided into four administrative units called '*taraf*' or provinces. These provinces were Daultabad, Bidar, Berar and Gulbarga. Muhammad I defeated the Vijayanagar kingdom and consequently Golconda was annexed to Bahamani kingdom. Every province was under a *tarafdar* who was also called a *subedar*. Some land was converted into *Khalisa* land from the jurisdiction of the *tarafdar*. *Khalisa* land was that piece of land which was used to run expenses of the king and the royal household. Further the services and the salary of every noble was fixed. Those nobles who kept 500 horses were given 1000,000 *huns* annually. If short of the stipulated troops, the *tarafdar* would have to reimburse the amount to the central government. Nobles used to get their salary either in cash or in form of grant of land or '*jagir*' Bahamani ruler depended for military support on his *amirs*. There were two groups in the ranks of *amirs*: One was the Deccanis who were immigrant Muslims and had been staying for a long time in the Deccan region. The other group was Afaquis or *Pardesis* who had recently come from Central Asia, Iran and Iraq and had settled in the



Notes

Deccan region recently. Between both these groups there was always tension to appropriate better administrative positions. Because of their feuds, the stability of the Bahamani Sultanate was affected. For the first time in India both these kingdoms used gunpowder in the warfare. The Bahamanis were already familiar with the use of firearms. They employed Turkish and Portuguese experts to train the soldiers in the latest weaponry of warfare.

One of the most important personalities in the Bahamani kingdom was Mahmud Gawan. Mahmud Gawan's early life is obscure. He was an Iranian by birth and first reached Deccan as a trader. He was granted the title of 'Chief of the Merchants' or *Malik-ut-Tujjar* by the Bahamani ruler, Humayun Shah. The sudden death of Humayun led to the coronation of his minor son Ahmad III. A regency council was set for the administration and Mahmud Gawan was its important member. He was made *wazir* or the prime minister and was given the title of 'Khwaju-i-Jahan.' The history of Bahmani kingdom after this period is actually the record of the achievements of Mahmud Gawan. Despite of being an Afaqui he was liberal and wanted a compromise between the Afaquis and the Deccanis. He controlled the kingdom in an efficient manner and provided it stability. Gawan conquered the Vijayanagar territories up to Kanchi. On the western coast, Goa and Dhabol were conquered. Losing these important ports was a great loss for Vijayanagar. Bahamani strengthened its trading relations with Iran and Iraq after gaining control over Goa and Dabhol.

Gawan carried out many internal reforms and attempted to put an end to the strife in the nobility. In order to curb the military power of the *tarafdar*, Gawan ordered that only one fort of each province was to be under the direct control of the provincial *tarafdar*. The remaining forts of the province were placed under a *Qiladar* or commander of the forts. The Qiladar was appointed by the central Government. However, soon after his death, the governors declared their independence and the Bahamani kingdom broke up. In the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, some *amirs* in Bidar, Ahmadnagar, Golconda and Bijapur and Berar established independent sultanates of their own and formed new states. These were the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, the Adil Shahis of Bijapur, the Qutb Shahis of Golconda, and the Imad Shahis of Berar and the Barid Shahis of Bidar. They formed a league of states and strengthened them by matrimonial alliances. They maintained the traditional rivalry with the Vijayanagar rulers. Golconda and Bijapur entered into matrimonial alliances and led the Battle of Talikota against Vijayanagar. They finally succumbed to the Mughal armies.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.4

1. Who appointed Sada Amir and for which region?

2. Who was Mahmud Gawan?

11.8 THE VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE

A Political History

In 1336, Vijayanagar kingdom was established by Harihara and Bukka, who were two brothers and served in the army of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. They broke away from the Delhi Sultanate and established an independent state in Karnataka and established the

**Notes**

capital city Vijayanagar on the banks of river Tungabhadra in 1336. Their dynasty was called the Sangama dynasty. There are several theories with regard to the origin of this dynasty. According to some scholars, they had been the feudatories of the Kakatiyas of Warangal and after their fall they served the Kampili state. Another view says that they were the feudatories of the Hoysalas and belonged to Karnataka. Harihara and Bukka were helped and inspired by contemporary scholar and a saint Vidyanarya for the establishment of their kingdom. It is believed that to commemorate the memory of their *guru*, the brothers established the city of Vidyanagar or Vijayanagara on the banks of river Tungabhadra. The empire included people from different cultural regions, the Tamil, Telegu and Karnataka region who all spoke different languages and belonged to different cultures.

Between 1336 and 1565, Vijayanagar was ruled by three different dynasties- Sangama, who remained in power till 1485; the Saluva who remained in power till 1503 and the Tuluvas. The last dynasty was the Aravidu dynasty that ruled till seventeenth century. Foreign travellers like Nicolo Conti, Fernao Nuniz, Domingo Paes, Duarto Barbosa and Abdur Razzaq wrote about the magnificence of Vijayanagar.

One of the most important rulers of the Vijayanagar states was Krishnadevaraya, the founder of the Tuluva dynasty. He was a great commander and an efficient administrator. He fought a series of war with the independent kingdoms that came on the ruins of the Bahamani kingdom, maintained law and order and dealt with the Portuguese influence in the Deccan. He completely shattered the Adil Shahi forces of Bijapur first and attacked Gulbarga and set free three Bahamani princes who were imprisoned there. He helped them in recovering the throne of Gulbarga and Krishna Deva himself took the title of *Yavanarajya sthapanacharya*.

Krishnadevaraya built some fine stone temples and added impressive *gopurams* or gateways to many important South Indian temples. He also founded a suburban township near Vijayanagara called Nagalapuram after his mother. Some of the most detailed descriptions of Vijayanagar come from his period. The famous temple of Tirupati developed during his period greatly as the deity there was his titular deity. After Krishna Deva Raya, his brother Achyuta Deva Raya ascended the throne in 1530 AD, who was also an important ruler. During his reign the rival groups began to make his appearance. The struggle for power was mainly between Saluva Vira Narasimha and Aravidu Rama Raya, in which the later emerged victorious. Although Rama Raya did not assume the throne, yet he placed Sadasiva Raya on the throne and ruled as the defacto ruler. He removed the old nobility and replaced it with those loyal to him. Rama Raya tried to balance the Deccan powers by playing one against the other, such a policy could not continue for a long period. The Deccan states formed a confederacy and inflicted a crushing blow on the Vijayanagar armies in the battle of Talikota. Rama Raya was killed. The Deccani armies entered Vijayanagar and reduced it into ruins. Now the focus shifted to the east where the Aravidu dynasty ruled from Penukonda and later from Chandragiri (near Tirupati).

Army and Military Organisation Of The Vijayanagar Empire

In order to wage continuous warfare there was a need to keep a large army. Artillery was important and well bred horses were maintained. The Vijayanagar rulers imported high quality horses from across the Arabian Sea from Arabia and other Gulf countries. The port of Malabar was the centre of this trade and trade in other luxury commodities. The Vijayanagar rulers always attempted to control the port of Malabar. Like the Bahamanis, the Vijayanagar state also was familiar with the use of firearms and employed Turkish and Portuguese experts to train the soldiers in the latest weaponry of warfare. One of the *rayas*, Deva Raya II enrolled Muslims in his armed



Notes

services, allotted them *jagirs* and erected a mosque for their use in the city. Such new techniques in warfare now revolutionised the warfare. The walls of the forts to counter the firearms were now made thick and special kinds of door with fortified walls front were constructed. On the walls of the forts, special kinds of big holes were made to rest the guns. Special kinds of parapets were constructed on the forts to put the canons on it. Firearms were used. Some firearms were small and comprised of rifles and pistols. Some like canons were heavy and had to be put on a bullock cart or on an elephant and pushed into the battlefield.

One of the important characteristics of the Vijayanagar administration was the *amara-nayaka* system. In this system, the commander of the Vijayanagar army was called the *nayaka*. Each *nayaka* was given an area for administration. The *nayaka* was responsible for expanding agricultural activities in his area. He collected taxes in his area and with this income maintained his army, horses, elephants and weapons of warfare that he had to supply to the *raya* or the Vijayanagar ruler. The *nayaka* was also the commander of the forts. Some of the revenue was also used for the maintenance of temples and irrigation works. The *amara-nayakas* sent tribute to the king annually and personally appeared in the royal court with gifts to express their loyalty. In the seventeenth century, several of these *nayakas* became independent and established separate states. The feudal *Nayankaras* used to maintain their own soldiers, forces and elephants. They were a powerful section that challenged the Vijayanagar authority, weakened its Internal structures and contributed to the defeat of the Vijayanagar in the battle of Talikota.

11.8.2 CONFLICT BETWEEN THE VIJAYANAGAR AND THE BAHAMANIS

There were constant conflicts between the Vijayanagar and the Bahamani kingdoms over the control of Raichur *doab* which was the land between rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra. This area was fertile and rich in mineral resources. The famous diamond mines of Golconda were located in the eastern part of the *doab* region. The geography of both the kingdoms was such that expansion was possible only across Tungabhadra in the Deccan. It appears that the battles between the two were not conclusive and the *status quo* was maintained. Sometimes, Bahamani had an advantage and sometimes, Vijayanagar had an advantage. For instance, in 1504, the Bahamani managed to reconquer the Raichur doab. However, with the ascent of Krishna Deva Raya, the Bahamanis lost Raichur, Mudkal, Nalgonda and other inland towns. An important result of these wars was that both the powers were so involved amongst themselves that they never realised the increasing power of the Portuguese on the coast of South India. Besides, continuous warfare exhausted the resources of both the states and weakened them.

The other areas of conflict were the Marathwada region and the deltaic region of Krishna-Godavari. Both regions had fertile areas and important ports that controlled trade to the foreign countries. For instance, the fertile area in the Marathwada region was the Konkan belt that also had the port of Goa which was an important region for trade and export and import especially import of horses from Iraq and Iran.

Often, the battles between the Vijayanagar and the Bahamani states are perceived as Hindu-Muslim conflicts. The above reasons show that the struggle was not due to any religious differences. Territorial and economic motives were the main causes for the war. Despite hostilities between the two states, there were times when they also co-operated with each other. Krishnadevaraya, for example, supported some claim-



ants to power in the Sultanates and took pride in the title “establisher of the Yavana kingdom”. Similarly, the Sultan of Bijapur intervened to resolve succession disputes in Vijayanagra following the death of Krishnadevaraya. There were also sharing and exchange of ideas, especially in the field of art, literature and architecture.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.5**

1. Give names of any four foreign travellers who wrote about magnificence of Vijay nagar empire?

2. Temple of Tirupati was developed during the reign of which king?

3. Where was Amir Nayaka System prevalent?

4. What were the areas of conflict between the Vijaynagar & the Bahamanis?

11.8 REGIONAL STATES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

You must have studied about the crisis in the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century that finally led to the collapse of the Mughal Empire. As the Mughal authority weakened, the governors of the provinces, *subedars*, and the big *zamindars* became powerful and asserted their independence.

The regional states of this period can be divided into three categories:

1. There were some states whose founders were important Mughal nobles and held high *mansabs*. Though they became independent, they never broke from ties with the Mughal state. Some of the important states in this category are Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad. The founder of the Awadh state was Sa’adat Khan. The founder of Bengal was Mushid Quli Khan and the founder of Hyderabad state was Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah. All three were powerful members of the Mughal nobility and were the governors of these provinces. As the Mughal Empire weakened, there was a large-scale migration of soldiers and administrators from Delhi to these new states that promised numerous opportunities.

In these states the position of the previous *zamindars* changed. For example, Sa’adat Khan seized a number of Rajput *zamindaris* and the agriculturally fertile lands of the Afghans at Rohilkhand. Similarly, in an effort to reduce Mughal influence in Bengal, Mushid Quli Khan transferred all Mughal *jagirdars* to Orissa and ordered a major reassessment of the revenues of Bengal. Revenue was collected in cash with great strictness from all *zamindars*. As a result, many *zamindars* had to borrow money from bankers and moneylenders. Those unable to pay were forced to sell their lands to larger *zamindars*.

Another change in these states was the rise of the bankers and moneylenders or *mahajans*. The state and the landed class depended on them for loans. These bankers in turn became powerful and influenced the administration. The state auctioned its right to collect taxes to the highest bidders, who were usually bankers and *mahajans*. In turn, the bankers promised to



Notes

pay a fixed sum of money to the state. Thus, the state was assured of a fixed income. This system was called the *ijaradari* system and those who bought the right to collect taxes were known as *ijaredars*. The Mughal state had always discouraged this system. There were chances that those who collected the tax would collect much more than fixed, exploiting the peasants and would give less to the state thereby causing a loss to the state revenue.

2. The second category of regional states in the eighteenth century was those states that had already enjoyed a lot of independence during the Mughal rule as *watan jagirs*. The Rajput states belonged to this category.
3. The third category of regional states was those that had emerged after rebelling against the Mughal authority. The Sikhs, the Marathas and the Jats belonged to this group. For example, the Sikh rebellion against the Mughals led to state-building in the Punjab.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.6

1. Regional States in 18th century have been divided into which categories?



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

The rise of regional states from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century is due to internal weakness of Delhi Sultanate and decline of Mughal Empire. An understanding of the nature of these regional powers will help you see the Delhi sultanate and Mughal Empire in a clear perspective. It will be useful if the regional states of this period are seen in continuation with the regional states from sixth to the twelfth century also. To understand the regional states, one has to first understand the concept of regionalism, which has political features, language, religious affiliations, Art & Culture as developed and evolved over a period of time as discussed in this lesson. There were a large number of such states but we have taken only a few as case studies. Jaunpur, Kashmir, Gujarat, Bengal, Vijayanagr and Bahamani were discussed. It should be remembered that though these states fought with each other, but they also borrowed ideas in the field of art, architecture and religion from each other. Their relationship with the central authority as well as among themselves kept changing from time to time.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Trace the development of regional States from 13th Century to 18th Century in India.
2. How were regional States different from Central Empire?
3. How Bengal was able to assert its independence so easily!?
4. What was unique about Mahmud Begarha and why he is considered an important ruler of Gujarat?
5. Describe Amara – nayaka System of administration?
6. The Vijay Nagar & the Bahamanis were neighbours but were not at peace, why it was so, Discuss?

**Notes****ANSWER TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****11.1**

1. Language, religions affiliations, Interaction through trade & Commerce, Regional Art Schools
2. Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Central India & Rajasthan
3. Namdev, Raidas, Tukaram, Guru Nanak

11.2

1. In 1338 after the death of Feroz Shah Tuglaq
2. Bihar & Punjab

11.3

1. Aligarh in West, Darbhanga in East, Nepal in North & Bundel Khand in South
2. Zaimil Abidin
3. Haji Ilyas Khan
4. Ahmedabad

11.4

1. Mohamed bin Tughlaq, Deccan
2. Reached Deccan as a trader, granted Malik-ut-Tujjar made Wazir later on

11.5

1. Nicolo Conti, Fernao Nuniz, Domingo Paes, Duareto Barbosa & Abdur Razzaq.
2. Krishna Deva Raya
3. Vijay Nagar administration.
4. Control of Raichur doab; Marathwada region deltaic region of Krishna-Godavari

11.6

1. Founded by Mughal nobles; Watan Jagirs; Rebelled from Mughal authority.

HINTS TO TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Refer 11.2
2. Refer 11.1 last two paras
3. Refer 11.5
4. Refer 11.6
5. Refer 11.8.1
6. Refer 11.8.2



Notes

GLOSSARY

Silsilah	–	Different orders of Sufis
Zamindars	–	Owner of private land having hereditary rights
Sultanu – Sharq	–	Master of the East
Jaziya	–	A kind of tax, other than land tax on non-muslims for not rendering Military service
Khalisa	–	Land controlled directly by the king & not assigned to any Zamindar or officer
Tarafdar	–	Head of a province
Jagir	–	A piece of land assigned to a government officer by the State
Amir	–	Commander, the third highest official grade in Delhi Sultanate