

Lesson 11

EMERGENCE OF REGIONAL STATES IN INDIA: TWELFTH TO EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Summary

The people in medieval India pursued diverse range of economic activities to earn their basic livelihood. The sphere of their works varied from agricultural to artisanal production, trade and commerce and associated commercial and financial services. These activities underwent various changes throughout the course of this period. The state mobilized its resources through collection of different types of taxes for its survival and expansion. In this lesson, you will learn about various ways and means of production, mobilization of resources, trade and commercial activities conducted in Medieval India.

CHARACTERISTIC OF REGIONALISM

1. One of the important aspects is language

1. presence of the local regional cults and religious affiliations.

Development of local and regional art schools

Political and military visions of these states were limited by the regional boundaries.

RISE OF REGIONAL STATES: A GENERAL HISTORY

- 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.
- When Islam reached here, it acquired a regional flavour.
- 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.
- With the death of Feroz Shah Tughlaq in 1338, the decline of the Sultanate began.
- 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
- Fifteen years after the Timur's raids in Delhi, the Delhi Sultanate declined
- 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.

HISTORY OF THE REGIONAL STATES: A FEW CASE STUDIES

Jaunpur

- Jaunpur 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.
- 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 succeeded by his son Mubarak Shah Sharqi.
- Mahmud Shah Tughlaq (delhi sultan) tried to annex Jaunpur, but failed.
- There were constant tensions between the various rulers of Jaunpur and Delhi Sultanate.
- In 1402, Ibrahim Shah Sharqi, Mubarak Shah's brother became the Sultan and ruled Jaunpur for thirty four years
- 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.

Kashmir

- In the eleventh century, the rulers were followers of Saivism, and Saivism became the central religion in Kashmir
- In 1320s, the ruling dynasty of Kashmir could not check the devastating Mongol invasions.
- In 1339, Shamsuddin Shah deposed the Saiva ruler and became the ruler of Kashmir.
- From this period onwards, Islam influenced the Kashmiri society.
- One of the greatest rulers of Kashmir was Zainul Abidin (1420–1470).

- 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
- 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
- Sultan also introduced reforms in the currency.
- He introduced market control and fixed prices of the commodities.
- He introduced carpet and shawl making, which make Kashmir famous till day.
- Under his patronage, the *Mahabharat* and Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* were translated into Persian
- In 1586, Akbar conquered Kashmir and made it a part of the Mughal Empire.

Bengal

- Bengal was an important regional kingdom under the Palas in the eighth century and the Senas in the twelfth century
- In 1342, one of the nobles, Haji Ilyas Khan united Bengal and became its ruler under the title of Shamsud-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.
- In 1538, Bengal was annexed by Sher Shah Suri.
- In 1586, Akbar conquered Bengal, and made it into a *suba*.
- The Mughals established their capital in the heart of the eastern delta at Dhaka.

GUJARAT

- Alauddin Khalji was the first Sultan to annex it to Delhi Sultanate and since

then it remained under the Turkish governors of the Sultanate.

- 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.
- 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.
- The most important ruler of Gujarat was Mahmud Begarha
- The Sultan founded a new town called Mustafabad at the foot of the hill.
- Mahmud constructed a new town called Muhammadabad near Champaner.
- He died in 1511.
- During the rule of his successors Akbar conquered and annexed Gujarat in 1572 AD.

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.
- 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.
- Muhammad I defeated the Vijayanagar kingdom and consequently Golconda was annexed to Bahamani kingdom.
- One of the most important personalities in the Bahamani kingdom was Mahmud Gawan.
- He was granted the title of 'Chief of the Merchants' or *Malikut-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.'
- Gawan conquered the Vijayanagar territories up to Kanchi.
- After his death, the governors declared their independence and the Bahamani kingdom broke up.

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.
- 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
- One of the most important rulers of the Vijayanagar states was Krishnadevaraya, the founder of the Tuluva dynasty
- He completely shattered the Adil Shahi forces of Bijapur first and attacked Gulbarga and set free three Bahamani princes who were imprisoned there
- Krishnadevaraya built some fine stone temples and added impressive *gopurams* or gateways to many important South Indian temples
- After Krishna Deva Raya, his brother Achyuta Deva Raya ascended the throne in 1530 AD
- The struggle for power was mainly between Saluva Vira Narasimha and Aravidu Rama Raya, in which the later emerged victorious
- Rama Raya did not assume the throne, yet he placed Sada siva Raya on the throne and ruled as the defacto ruler

- The Deccan states formed a confederacy and inflicted a crushing blow on the Vijayanagar armies in the battle of Talikota. Rama Raya was killed

Army and Military Organisation of the Vijayanagar Empire

- Artillery was important and well-bred horses were maintained.
- The port of Malabar was the centre of horse trade and 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
- One of the important characteristics of the Vijayanagar administration was the *amaranayaka* 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.
- The *amara-nayakas* sent tribute to the king annually and personally appeared in the royal court with gifts to express their loyalty

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
- 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
- The other areas of conflict were the Marathwada region and the deltaic region of Krishna-Godavari.

- Territorial and economic motives were the main causes for the war between them.

REGIONAL STATES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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 formal ties with the Mughal state. Some of the important states in this category are Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad.
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 *watanjagirs*. 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.

Evaluate Yourself

- Q. Examine the main reasons of conflict between Vijaynagar and Bahmani Empire
- Q. Explain the meaning of the term regional state.
- Q. Differentiate regionalism and nationalism.