

Social Science
Social and Political Life – II
Textbook for Class VII

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राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
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Foreword

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy on Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily timetable is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days is actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory group in Social Sciences, Professor Hari Vasudevan, the Chief Advisor, Sarada Balagopalan and the Advisor, Arvind Sardana for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources,

material and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resources Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande, for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement.

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The photographs that this book uses were procured from various sources and we are deeply grateful to all these institutions and individuals. The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) was more than generous with their photographs and Amit Shankar and Anil with their time. *Outlook Magazine* also shared with us, at very short notice, photos from their archives. Sheeba Chacchi provided us with her photos for the photo-essay on the women's movement. Salil Chaturvedi and Shahid Datawala helped provide appropriate images from their collection. Mahesh Basadia provided us with photos of the Tawa Matsya Sangh (TMS) and the Mahila Balvikas Department at Dewas gave us the image of the *Anganwadi*. Harsh Man Rai and Baji Rao Pawar also contributed their photos as well as helped click new photos that we needed. M.V. Srinivasan helped with coordinating the photos from Erode. Devajyoti Dutta created the advertisements used in the advertising chapter. We thank Navdanya for some of the images used for the collage on health. Sarada Balagopalan also helped click some of the images used in this book.

The passion and patience that Orijit Sen and Salil Chaturvedi have invested as the main illustrator and designer of this book can be seen in every page, and we thank them for this.

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Introductory note for teachers

There is a substantial difference between Civics and Social and Political Life, not only in terms of the topics covered but also in the pedagogic approaches required in each subject area. Keeping these in mind, this Introduction attempts to clarify certain aspects of Social and Political Life.

What is Social and Political Life?

Social and Political Life (SPL) is a new subject area in middle school social science that has replaced the earlier subject of Civics. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 strongly argues that Civics should be discontinued and its focus on government institutions and functioning should be tempered in the new subject that replaces it. SPL, as its name suggests, focuses on topics related to social, political and economic life in contemporary India.

What pedagogical approach does SPL use?

SPL's use of 'real-life' situations is a marked departure from Civics. SPL uses these real situations to teach concepts because it recognises that children learn best through concrete experiences. It uses material that draws upon the experiential understanding of familial and social issues that middle school children bring to the classroom. SPL further develops the learner's abilities to critically understand and analyse these issues in keeping with the tenets of the Indian Constitution.

This pedagogical approach tends to avoid the use of definitions to sum up a concept. Instead, it uses case studies and narratives to explain concepts. The concepts embedded within the narratives are made clear through the in-text and end-text questions. The aim is to have the learner understand the concept through their own experiences and write about it in their own words.

This often means that there is seldom one 'correct' answer to the questions posed. However



Case studies and narratives used in SPL are a mix of rural and urban examples.

there is a wrong answer. Teachers should try to gauge whether an answer to a question adequately reflects the learner's understanding of the concept being discussed.

Given that children learn best through understanding and applying concepts to local realities, can a 'national' textbook adequately reflect the many 'locals' that make up the nation?

SPL functions by the pedagogic principle that children learn best through an experiential understanding of concepts. This poses a contradiction when the effort is to write a 'national' textbook, because a national text can neither sufficiently represent all the various aspects of the various locals, nor fix the sociocultural background of the child for whom the book is intended. Therefore, the case studies and narratives used in SPL are a mix of rural and urban examples in which the assumed learner is not easily discernible.



The SPL text specifically names communities, for example, Dalit, Muslim, poor, etc. SPL counts on the teacher to transact the material with a firm commitment to respecting the dignity of all students.

In addition to the important job of transacting the text, what crucial role does SPL expect teachers to play in the classroom?

SPL counts on the teacher to play a very significant role in the classroom for the following reasons. First, the SPL text specifically names communities (for example: Dalit, Muslim, poor etc.) in its discussion of various issues and this may lead to some discomfort in a classroom that has a student population from different sociocultural and (perhaps) economic backgrounds. We expect the teacher to play a crucial role in transacting this material with a sensitivity and firm commitment to respecting the dignity of all students in the classroom and the school. Second, given the limited ability of this 'national' text to engage the local we also envision the teacher playing a major role in adding local examples to the discussion of concepts, provided these remain true to the logic and understanding of each concept as intended by the book's authors.

How does the SPL help the learner assimilate the values enshrined in the Constitution?

At first glance it might appear to some that unlike Civics, SPL's focus on 'real' examples contradicts the tenets of the Constitution. Such a focus, however, is a technique utilised in SPL in response to a critique of Civics textbooks that

always only discussed the ideal and seldom deliberated upon the reality that was very different. Since the learner is already aware of such realities, to avoid discussing them would make the learning of social and political concepts didactic and disconnected. Instead, SPL uses this embedded awareness to make the learner understand and accept not only the legitimacy but also the urgency of the values enshrined in the Constitution. Additionally, this approach allows the learner to understand the role of people's struggles in the realisation of these values.

What are the issues included in the Class VII textbook?

The theme for the Class VII grade book is the crucial role that equality plays in Indian democracy. This theme also serves as one of the Units in addition to which the book has four more Units. These include Health and State Government; Gender; Media and Advertising; and Markets. Each Unit consists of two consecutive chapters, except in the case of the first Unit in which they make up the first and the concluding chapters of the text.

What elements does the Class VII book utilise to explain selected issues?

◆ **Storyboards:** One component of the feedback regarding Class VI book (Social and Political Life-I) was that teachers needed more assistance in understanding where fictional narratives began and ended and in identifying the central concepts



within these. With this in mind, this year's book introduces storyboards to clearly indicate which segments have been fictionalised, and to draw the learner into the narrative through the use of visuals that are often more expressive than lines of text. Specific concepts raised through the storyboards are analysed in the accompanying text.

◆ **Unit Pages:** Each Unit begins with a Unit Page for teachers to help highlight the main points raised in the two chapters.

◆ **Note on Evaluation:** As with the Class VI text, this book does not contain definitions or a synthesis of concepts. While we recognise that this makes it difficult for teachers to evaluate what the child has learnt, our attempt is also to try and shift some of the understanding amongst teachers on what children are expected to learn and how such learning should be evaluated. This book contains a short note on evaluation procedures that we hope will assist teachers in their efforts to move students away from rote learning.

◆ **Glossary:** The inclusion of a Glossary with each chapter is intended to offer the learner greater clarity on the language used in the text. The words of the Glossary are NOT limited to concepts, and it should not be viewed as something to be memorised with the expectation that such rote learning will contribute to conceptual understanding.

◆ **In-text and End-text Questions:** As with the Class VI text, this year's book includes in-text and end-text questions, making use of visual material and experiential analysis. In-text questions found within the text can be used to assess the extent to which content has been assimilated. End-text questions usually cover the main concepts raised by the chapter and ask learners to explain these in their own words.



Glossary

Weekly Market: These markets are not daily markets but are to be found at a particular place on one or maybe two days of the week. These markets most often sell everything that a household needs ranging from vegetables to clothes to utensils.

Mall: This is an enclosed shopping space. This is usually a large building with many floors that has shops, restaurants and, at times, even a cinema theatre. These shops most often sell branded products.

Wholesale: This refers to buying and selling in large quantities. Most products, including vegetables, fruits and flowers have special wholesale markets.

Chain of markets: A series of markets that are connected like links in a chain because products pass from one market to another.

EXERCISES

1. In a democracy why is universal adult franchise important?
2. Re-read the box on Article 15 and state two ways in which this Article addresses inequality?
3. In what ways was Omprakash Valmiki's experience similar to that of the Ansaris?
4. What do you understand by the term 'all persons are equal before the law'? Why do you think it is important in a democracy?
5. The Government of India passed the Disabilities Act in 1995. This law states that persons with disabilities have equal rights, and that the government should make possible their full participation in society. The government has to provide free education and integrate children with disabilities into mainstream schools. This law also states that all public places including buildings, schools, etc. should be accessible and provided with ramps.

Look at the photograph and think about the boy who is being carried down the stairs. Do you think the above law is being implemented in his case? What needs to be done to make the building more accessible for him? How would his being carried down the stairs affect his dignity as well as his safety?

Teacher's note on evaluation

Rethinking the ways in which we evaluate learning is a difficult task but one that this new subject area requires. Over the years our evaluation system has for the most part rewarded students who learnt by rote. This involuntarily encouraged many teachers to mark or underline the answers in the text and in this way a vicious cycle in which each reinforced the other, was produced. It is this system that needs to be changed to relieve both the teacher and the student. Teachers will play a significant role in changing evaluation and this note is an effort in this direction.

On questions

Teachers need to begin by insisting that evaluation be based on 'new' questions. These will be similar to the ones used in the text, but not the same. Students will be expected to answer these questions in their own words. The confidence to do this needs to be built in the students and language corrections should, therefore, be tactful and gentle.

Teachers will also need to design a variety of questions that cover a range of skills. Questions that demand recalling information by rote should be minimal. Instead, there needs to be different kinds of questions based on the main conceptual ideas of each chapter. Some may be designed to draw upon the learner's ability to reason; to compare and contrast experiences; and to infer and extrapolate from situations provided.

The following are some examples taken from this text to explain the above:

Ability to reason

These questions aim to gauge the extent to which the learner has understood the concepts included in the chapter and is able to articulate its main ideas in their own words as well as apply these to different contexts. Examples of this include:

What do you understand by the term, "all persons are equal before the law"? Why do you think it is important in a democracy?

Why should the decisions taken by the Chief Minister and other ministers be debated in the Legislative Assembly?

Can you list two ways in which you feel that advertising affects issues of equality in a democracy?

How do you think your neighbourhood shop gets its goods? Find out and explain with some examples.

Compare and contrast experiences

These questions require the learner to draw upon the main ideas in the text by comparing and contrasting concrete situations. These questions often involve the child's own experiences. Examples of this include:

What is the difference between the work that MLAs do in the Assembly and the work done by government departments?

In what ways do the experiences of Samoan children and teenagers differ from your own experiences of growing up? Is there anything described in this experience that you wish were part of your growing up?

Compare the earnings per shirt of the worker in the garment factory, the garment exporter and the shop-owner in the US. What do you find?

What differences do you find between private and public health services in your area? Use the following table to write about these.

Facility	Cost of services	Availability of service
Private		
Public		

Infer and extrapolate from situations

This type of question is important to SPL because of the extensive use of narratives to explain concepts as well as the constant reference to the learner's own experiences. It is these questions that link the narrative to the underlying concept. The learner's ability to understand the narrative as well as its explication of the concept can be gauged through these questions.

Why do you think Omprakash Valmiki was treated unequally by his teacher? Imagine yourself as Omprakash Valmiki and write four lines about how you would feel if you were in the above situation?

Were Harmeet and Shonali correct in saying that Harmeet's mother did not work?

In India it is often said that we are unable to provide health services for all because the government does not have enough money and facilities. After reading the left hand column above do you think that this is true? Discuss.

What does this ad want me to feel when I use this brand?

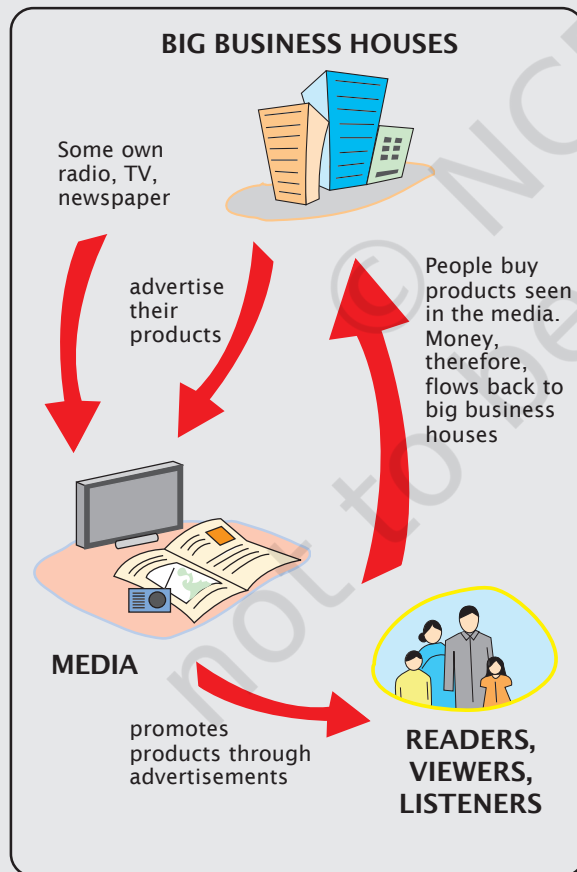
Interpreting visual material

Similarly students should have an opportunity to read and interpret visual material. Hence there should be questions based on pictures, tables, flowcharts, etc.

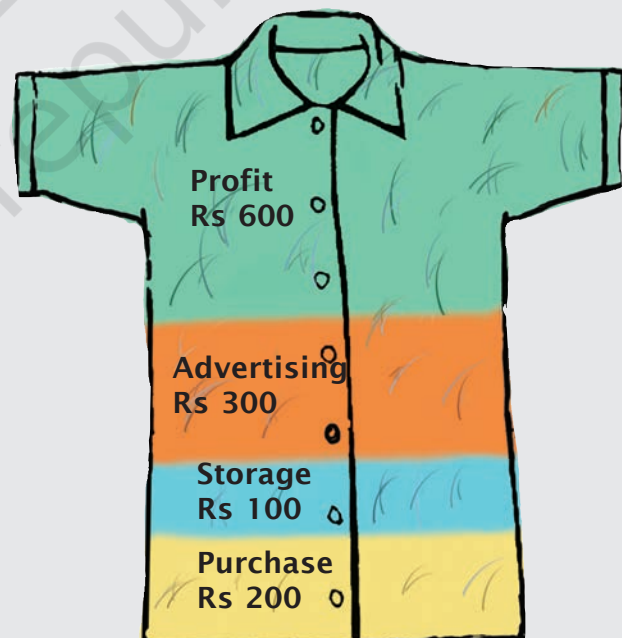
- ① Look at the photograph and think about the boy who is being carried down the stairs. Do you think the above law is being implemented in his case? What needs to be done to make the building more accessible for him? How would his being carried down the stairs affect his dignity as well as his safety?



- ② Can you give this diagram a title? What do you understand about the link between media and big business from this diagram?



- ③ The shirt below shows the profit made by the businessperson, and the various costs that he had to pay. Find out from the diagram below, what the cost price includes.



On answers

Since the learner is being asked to write in their own words teachers will need to stop expecting 'exact' responses. Instead, the learner should be encouraged to state in their own words their understanding of the material and concepts they've read. Their comprehension, ability to soundly reason and communicate their ideas is what needs to be evaluated.

It would also be fair to expect a range of correct answers when the learner is asked to think through a particular narrative situation and apply the underlying concept. It is crucial that teachers discuss a common evaluation scheme that helps them distinguish between the range of correct answers as well as more crucially identify wrong answers.

An example of what we mean by a range of responses to a question, as well as a wrong answer is provided below:

**If you were one of the Ansaris
how would you have responded
to the property dealer's
suggestion that you change
your name?**

Range of right answers

"If I were one of the Ansaris I would have decided not to change my name because this would deeply affect my dignity and self-respect."

This is a short, clear answer that indicates good comprehension and ability to communicate ideas.

"I would not change my name if I were one of the Ansaris because this is the name that my family has had for generations and it would make me feel bad to say that I was someone else."

Here, the learner does not use the word 'dignity', but has understood the concept and is attempting to communicate this in her own words.

"I will take up the property dealer's suggestion and change my name. I will do this because I am tired of looking for a flat. I would not like to do so but I need a place to stay."

On the face of it, this might appear to be the wrong answer since the learner agrees with the property dealer's suggestion. If a question has asked for an opinion it could be either way. As long as the learner puts forward a logical argument to support their opinion, the answer is right. This answer shows that they have understood the idea of the Ansaris' dignity being affected.

Wrong answer

"If I were one of the Ansaris I will agree to change my name because this will increase my dignity."

This question is asked as part of the section on 'Recognising Dignity' in the text. The learner has not been able to make the connection between the discrimination and disrespect faced by the Ansaris, and their loss of dignity.

Other forms of evaluation

We need to demystify the stress on examinations as the best tool for evaluating the learner. Rather than wait for alternate evaluation structures to trickle down from the higher grades, we need to use the learner's years in middle school to experiment with other ways of evaluation. For this purpose we need to use different methods, some of which are briefly discussed below –

◆ **Open-book exercises:** As the name implies 'open-book' is a process in which the learner is allowed to refer to the textbook while answering a question. Open book exercises offer children an opportunity to pick out answers without feeling the burden of "remembering the details". The learner would be asked to read portions of the text again with the question in mind. New questions are essential for this exercise. Questions based on the learner's ability to infer, extrapolate and apply concepts are ideal for open-book exercises. Answering the question in the learner's own words should be emphasised.

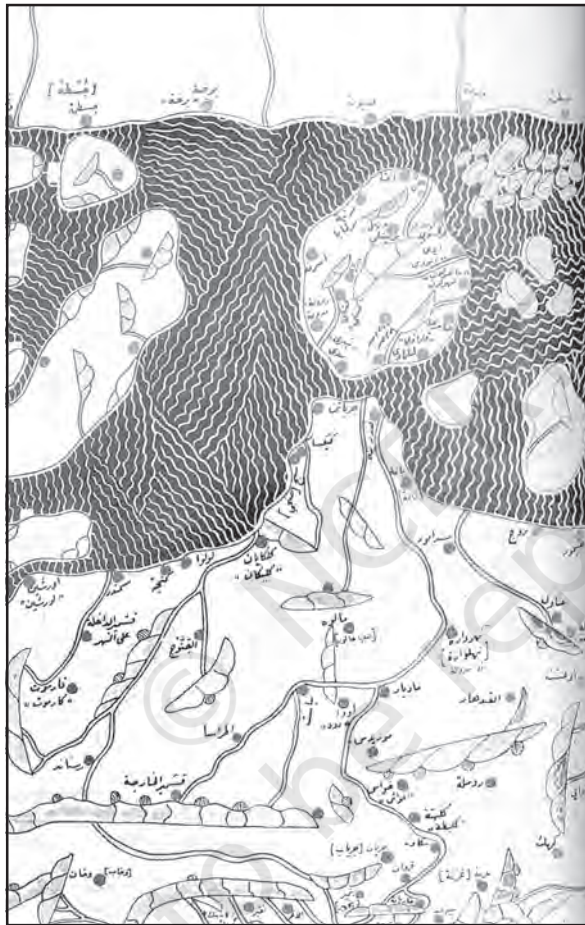
◆ **Oral reasoning and comprehension:** Children express so much through speaking and sharing in a classroom. Yet, most often, our current educational system tends to regard this as 'useless talk'. Learning from peers and expressing themselves through the spoken word is something that needs to be encouraged. Oral evaluation exercises provide an avenue through which to value this. A number of in-text questions in this book can be answered orally and the teacher should begin this process in the classroom.

◆ **Collective project work:** Collective project work is another way to evaluate students. Preparing a wall-paper is one such example used in the text. The expectations from these projects should be reasonable and limited to what learners can do on their own. Project work should be done in the classroom and not as homework. Many end-text questions in this book can be converted into small projects.

These forms of evaluation help emphasise that learning is continuous and happens in multiple ways. Evaluation should be designed to enable and encourage this learning and not be reduced to a filtering mechanism.

1

TRACING CHANGES THROUGH A THOUSAND YEARS



Map 1

A section of the world map drawn by the geographer al-Idrisi in the twelfth century showing the Indian subcontinent from land to sea.

Cartographer

A person who makes maps.

Take a look at Maps 1 and 2. Map 1 was made in 1154 CE by the Arab geographer Al-Idrisi. The section reproduced here is a detail of the Indian subcontinent from his larger map of the world. Map 2 was made in the 1720s by a French cartographer. The two maps are quite different even though they are of the same area. In al-Idrisi's map, south India is where we would expect to find north India and Sri Lanka is the island at the top. Place-names are marked in Arabic,

Map 2
The subcontinent, from the early-eighteenth-century Atlas Nouveau of Guillaume de l'Isle.



and there are some well-known names like Kanauj in Uttar Pradesh (spelt in the map as Qanauj). Map 2 was made nearly 600 years after Map 1, during which time information about the subcontinent had changed considerably. This map seems more familiar to us and the coastal areas in particular are surprisingly detailed. This map was used by European sailors and merchants on their voyages (see Chapter 6).



Look at the areas in the interior of the subcontinent on Map 2. Are they as detailed as those on the coast? Follow the course of the River Ganga and see how it is shown. Why do you think there is a difference in the level of detail and accuracy between the coastal and inland areas in this map?

Equally important is the fact that the science of cartography differed in the two periods. When historians read documents, maps and texts from the past they have to be sensitive to the different historical backgrounds – the *contexts* – in which information about the past was produced.

New and Old Terminologies

If the context in which information is produced changes with time, what about language and meanings? Historical records exist in a variety of languages which have changed considerably over the years. Medieval Persian, for example, is different from modern Persian. The difference is not just with regard to grammar and vocabulary; the meanings of words also change over time.

Take the term “Hindustan”, for example. Today we understand it as “India”, the modern *nation-state*. When the term was used in the thirteenth century by Minhaj-i-Siraj, a chronicler who wrote in Persian, he meant the areas of Punjab, Haryana and the lands between the Ganga and Yamuna. He used the term in a political sense for lands that were a part of the dominions of the Delhi Sultan. The areas included in this term shifted with the extent of the Sultanate but the term never included south India. By contrast, in the early sixteenth century Babur used Hindustan to describe the geography, the fauna and the culture of the inhabitants of the subcontinent. As we will see later in the chapter, this was somewhat similar to the way the fourteenth-century poet Amir Khusrau used the word “Hind”. While the idea of a geographical and cultural entity like “India” did exist, the term “Hindustan” did not carry the political and national meanings which we associate with it today.

Historians today have to be careful about the terms they use because they meant different things in the past. Take, for example, a simple term like “foreigner”. It is used today to mean someone who is not an Indian. In



Can you think of any other words whose meanings change in different contexts?

the medieval period a “foreigner” was any stranger who appeared say in a given village, someone who was not a part of that society or culture. (In Hindi the term *pardesi* might be used to describe such a person and in Persian, *ajnabi*.) A city-dweller, therefore, might have regarded a forest-dweller as a “foreigner”, but two peasants living in the same village were not foreigners to each other, even though they may have had different religious or caste backgrounds.

Historians and their Sources

Historians use different types of sources to learn about the past depending upon the period of their study and the nature of their investigation. Last year, for example, you read about rulers of the Gupta dynasty and Harshavardhana. In this book we will read about the following thousand years, from roughly 700 to 1750.

You will notice some continuity in the sources used by historians for the study of this period. **They still rely on coins, inscriptions, architecture and textual records for information.** But there is also considerable discontinuity. The number and variety of textual records increased dramatically during this period. They slowly displaced other types of available information. Through this period paper gradually became cheaper and more

The value of paper

Compare the following:

(1) In the middle of the thirteenth century a scholar wanted to copy a book. But he did not have enough paper. So he washed the writing off a manuscript he did not want, dried the paper and used it.

(2) A century later, if you bought some food in the market you could be lucky and have the shopkeeper wrap it for you in some paper.



When was paper more expensive and easily available – in the thirteenth or the fourteenth century?

widely available. People used it to write holy texts, chronicles of rulers, letters and teachings of saints, petitions and judicial records, and for registers of accounts and taxes. Manuscripts were collected by wealthy people, rulers, monasteries and temples. They were placed in libraries and **archives**. These manuscripts and documents provide a lot of detailed information to historians but they are also difficult to use.

There was no printing press in those days so scribes copied manuscripts by hand. If you have ever copied a friend's homework you would know that this is not a simple exercise. Sometimes you cannot read your friend's handwriting and are forced to guess what is written. As a result there are small but significant differences in your copy of your friend's work. Manuscript copying is somewhat similar. As scribes copied manuscripts, they also introduced small changes – a word here, a sentence there. These small differences grew over centuries of copying until manuscripts of the



Archive

A place where documents and manuscripts are stored. Today all national and state governments have archives where they keep all their old official records and transactions.

Fig. 1

A painting of a scribe making a copy of a manuscript. This painting is only 10.5 cm by 7.1 cm in size. Because of its size it is called a miniature. Miniature paintings were sometimes used to illustrate the texts of manuscripts. They were so beautiful that later collectors often took the manuscripts apart and sold just the miniatures.

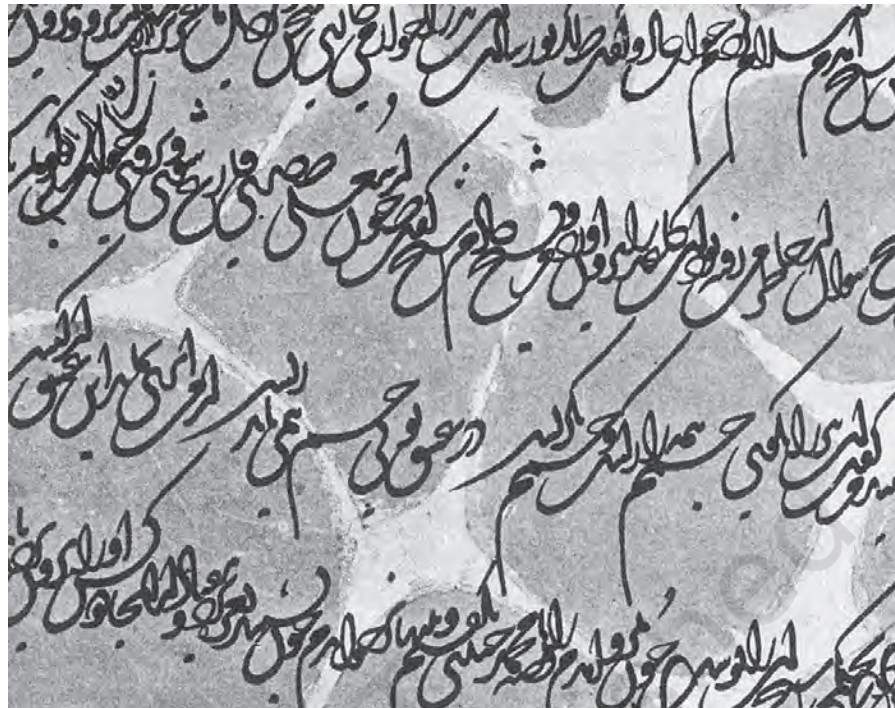


Fig. 2
 Different kinds of handwriting could make the reading of Persian and Arabic difficult. The nastaliq style (on the left) is cursive and easy to read, the shikaste (on the right) is denser and more difficult.

same text became substantially different from one another. This is a serious problem because we rarely find the original manuscript of the author today. We are totally dependent upon the copies made by later scribes. As a result historians have to read different manuscript versions of the same text to guess what the author had originally written.

On occasion authors revised their chronicles at different times. The fourteenth-century chronicler Ziyauddin Barani wrote his chronicle first in 1356 and another version two years later. The two differ from each other but historians did not know about the existence of the first version until the 1960s. It remained lost in large library collections.

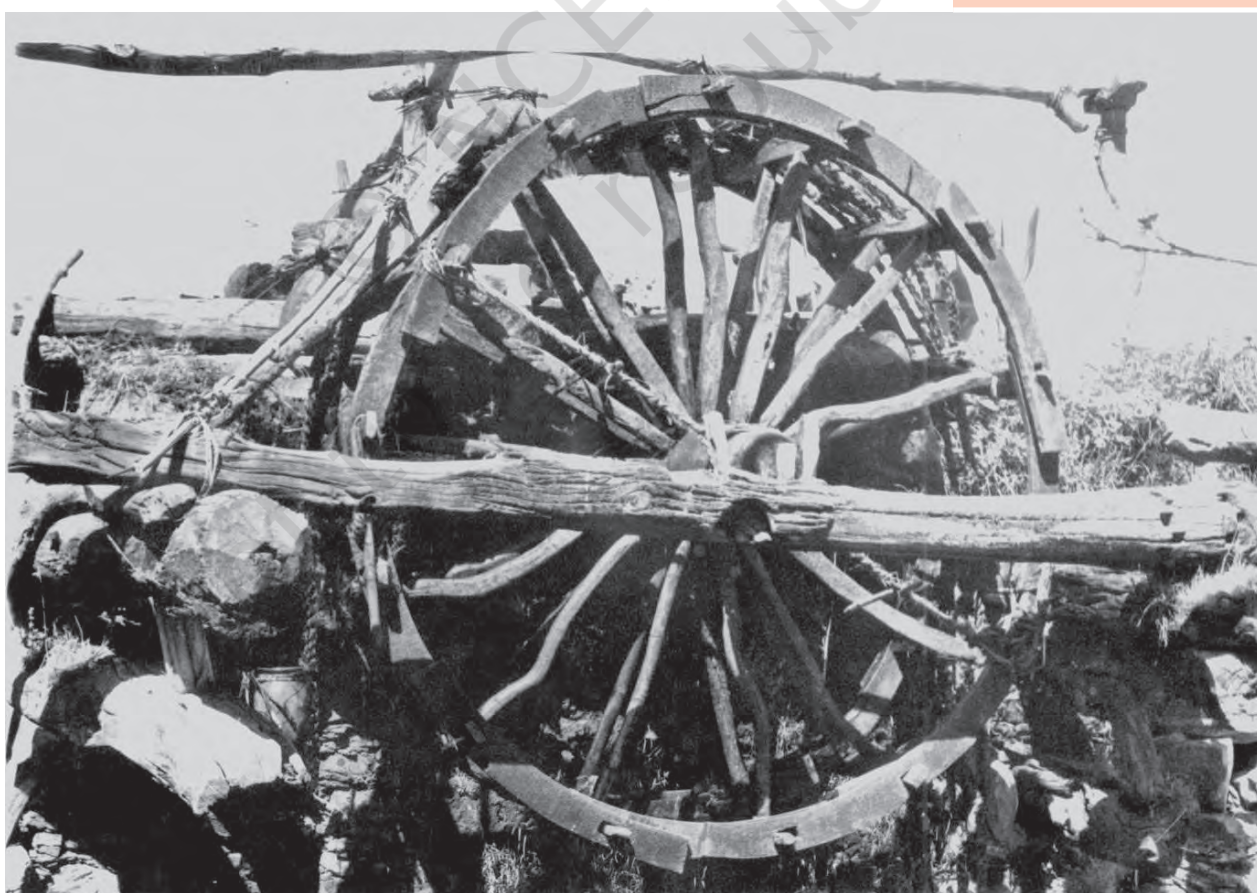
New Social and Political Groups

The study of the thousand years between 700 and 1750 is a huge challenge to historians largely because of the scale and variety of developments that occurred over the period. At different moments in this period new technologies made their appearance – like the Persian

wheel in irrigation, the spinning wheel in weaving, and firearms in combat. New foods and beverages arrived in the subcontinent – potatoes, corn, chillies, tea and coffee. Remember that all these innovations – new technologies and crops – came along with people, who brought other ideas with them as well. As a result, this was a period of economic, political, social and cultural changes. You will learn about some of these changes in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

This was also a period of great mobility. Groups of people travelled long distances in search of opportunity. The subcontinent held immense wealth and the possibilities for people to carve a fortune. One group of people who became important in this period were the **Rajputs, a name derived from “Rajaputra”, the son of a ruler. Between the eighth and fourteenth centuries the term was applied more generally to a group of warriors who claimed Kshatriya caste status.** The term included

Fig. 3
The Persian wheel.



not just rulers and chieftains but also soldiers and commanders who served in the armies of different monarchs all over the subcontinent. A chivalric code of conduct – extreme valour and a great sense of loyalty – were the qualities attributed to Rajputs by their poets and bards. Other groups of people such as the **Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Ahoms and Kayasthas** (a caste of scribes and secretaries) also used the opportunities of the age to become politically important.

Habitat

Refers to the environment of a region and the social and economic lifestyle of its residents.



Of the technological, economic, social and cultural changes described in this section, which do you think were most significant in the town or village in which you live?

Throughout this period there was a gradual clearing of forests and the extension of agriculture, a change faster and more complete in some areas than in others. Changes in their **habitat** forced many forest-dwellers to migrate. Others started tilling the land and became peasants. These new peasant groups gradually began to be influenced by regional markets, chieftains, priests, monasteries and temples. They became part of large, complex societies, and were required to pay taxes and offer goods and services to local lords. As a result, significant economic and social differences emerged amongst peasants. Some possessed more productive land, others also kept cattle, and some combined artisanal work with agricultural activity during the lean season. As society became more differentiated, people were grouped into *jatis* or sub-castes and ranked on the basis of their backgrounds and their occupations. Ranks were not fixed permanently, and varied according to the power, influence and resources controlled by members of the *jati*. The status of the same *jati* could vary from area to area.

Jatis framed their own rules and regulations to manage the conduct of their members. These regulations were enforced by an assembly of elders, described in some areas as the *jati panchayat*. But *jatis* were also required to follow the rules of their villages. Several villages were governed by a chieftain. Together they were only one small unit of a state.

Region and Empire

Large states like those of the Cholas (Chapter 2), Tughluqs (Chapter 3) or Mughals (Chapter 4) encompassed many regions. A Sanskrit *prashasti* (see Chapter 2 for an example of a *prashasti*) praising the Delhi Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban (1266-1287) explained that he was the ruler of a vast empire that stretched from Bengal (Gauda) in the east to Ghazni (Gajjana) in Afghanistan in the west and included all of south India (Dravida). People of different regions – Gauda, Andhra, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat – apparently fled before his armies. Historians



I	Siwistan	VII	Sarsuti	XIII	Kara	XIX	Gujarat
II	Uchch	VIII	Kuhram	XIV	Awadh	XX	Devagiri
III	Multan	IX	Hansi	XV	Bihar	XXI	Tilingana
IV	Kalanaur	X	Delhi	XVI	Lakhnauti	XXII	Talanj
V	Lahor	XI	Badayun	XVII	Jajnagar	XXIII	Dvarasamudra
VI	Samana	XII	Qannauj	XVIII	Malwa	XXIV	Ma'bar

Map 3

Provinces of the Delhi Sultanate during Muhammad Tughluq's reign according to the Egyptian source *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar* of Shihabuddin Umari.



Why do you think rulers made such claims?

regard these as exaggerated claims of conquests. At the same time, they try to understand why rulers kept claiming to have control over different parts of the subcontinent.

Language and region

In 1318 the poet Amir Khusrau noted that there was *a different language in every region of this land: Sindhi, Lahori, Kashmiri, Dvarsamudri (in southern Karnataka), Telangani (in Andhra Pradesh), Gujari (in Gujarat), Ma'bari (in Tamil Nadu), Gauri, (in Bengal) ... Awadhi (in eastern Uttar Pradesh) and Hindawi (in the area around Delhi).*

Amir Khusrau went on to explain that in contrast to these languages there was Sanskrit which did not belong to any region. It was an old language and *“common people do not know it, only the Brahmanas do”*.

Make a list of the languages mentioned by Amir Khusrau. Prepare another list of the names of languages spoken today in the regions he mentioned. Underline names that are similar and circle those that are different.



Did you notice that the names by which languages are known have changed over time?

By 700 many regions already possessed distinct geographical dimensions and their own language and cultural characteristics. You will learn more about these in Chapter 9. They were also associated with specific ruling dynasties. There was considerable conflict between these states. Occasionally dynasties like the Cholas, Khaljis, Tughluqs and Mughals were able to build an empire that was pan-regional – spanning diverse regions. Not all these empires were equally stable or successful. Compare, for example, Table 1 in Chapters 3 and 4. What was the duration of rule of the Khalji and Mughal dynasties?

When the Mughal Empire declined in the eighteenth century, it led to the re-emergence of regional states (Chapter 10). But years of imperial, pan-regional rule had altered the character of the regions. Across most of the subcontinent the regions were left with the legacies of the big and small states that had ruled over them. This was apparent in the emergence of many distinct and shared traditions: in the realms of governance, the management of the economy, elite cultures, and language. Through the thousand years between 700 and 1750 the character of the different regions did not grow in isolation. These regions felt the impact of larger pan-regional forces of integration without ever quite losing their distinctiveness.

Old and New Religions

The thousand years of history that we are exploring witnessed major developments in religious traditions. People's belief in the divine was sometimes deeply personal, but more usually it was collective. Collective belief in a supernatural agency – religion – was often closely connected with the social and economic organisation of local communities. As the social worlds of these groups altered so too did their beliefs.

It was during this period that important changes occurred in what we call Hinduism today. These included the worship of new deities, the construction of temples by royalty and the growing importance of Brahmanas, the priests, as dominant groups in society.

Their knowledge of Sanskrit texts earned the Brahmanas a lot of respect in society. Their dominant position was consolidated by the support of their **patrons** – new rulers searching for prestige.

One of the major developments of this period was the emergence of the idea of bhakti – of a loving, personal deity that devotees could reach without the aid of priests or elaborate rituals. You will be learning about this, and other traditions, in Chapter 8.



Find out whether and for how long your state was part of these pan-regional empires.



Do you remember what Amir Khusrau had to say regarding Sanskrit, knowledge and Brahmanas?

Patron

An influential, wealthy individual who supports another person – an artiste, a craftsman, a learned man, or a noble.

This was also the period when new religions appeared in the subcontinent. Merchants and migrants first brought the teachings of the holy *Quran* to India in the seventh century. Muslims regard the *Quran* as their holy book and accept the sovereignty of the one God, Allah, whose love, mercy and bounty embrace all those who believe in Him, without regard to social background.

Many rulers were patrons of Islam and the *ulama* – learned theologians and jurists. And like Hinduism, Islam was interpreted in a variety of ways by its followers. There were the Shia Muslims who believed that the Prophet Muhammad’s son-in-law, Ali, was the legitimate leader of the Muslim community, and the Sunni Muslims who accepted the authority of the early leaders (Khalifas) of the community, and the succeeding Khalifas. There were other important differences between the various schools of law (Hanafi and Shafi’i mainly in India), and in theology and mystic traditions.

Thinking about Time and Historical Periods

Historians do not see time just as a passing of hours, days or years – as a clock or a calendar. Time also reflects changes in social and economic organisation, in the persistence and transformation of ideas and beliefs. The study of time is made somewhat easier by dividing the past into large segments – periods – that possess shared characteristics.

In the middle of the nineteenth century British historians divided the history of India into three periods: “Hindu”, “Muslim” and “British”. This division was based on the idea that the religion of rulers was the only important historical change, and that there were no other significant developments – in the economy, society or culture. Such a division also ignored the rich diversity of the subcontinent.

Few historians follow this periodisation today. Most look to economic and social factors to characterise the major elements of different moments of the past. The histories you read last year included a wide range of early societies – hunter-gatherers, early farmers, people living in towns and villages, and early empires and kingdoms. The histories you will be studying this year are often described as “medieval”. You will find out more about the spread of peasant societies, the rise of regional and imperial state formations – sometimes at the cost of pastoral and forest people – the development of Hinduism and Islam as major religions and the arrival of European trading companies.

These thousand years of Indian history witnessed considerable change. After all, the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries were quite different from the eighth or the eleventh. Therefore, describing the entire period as one historical unit is not without its problems. Moreover, the “medieval” period is often contrasted with the “modern” period. “Modernity” carries with it a sense of material progress and intellectual advancement. This seems to suggest that the medieval period was lacking in any change whatsoever. But of course we know this was not the case.

During these thousand years the societies of the subcontinent were transformed often and economies in several regions reached a level of prosperity that attracted the interest of European trading companies. As you read this book, look out for signs of change and the historical processes at work. Also, whenever you can, compare what you read in this book with what you read last year. Look out for changes and continuities wherever you can, and look at the world around you to see what else has changed or remained the same.

KEYWORDS

manuscript

jati

region

periodisation



Imagine

You are a historian. Choose one of the themes mentioned in this chapter, such as economic, social or political history, and discuss why you think it would be interesting to find out the history of that theme.

Let's recall

1. Who was considered a "foreigner" in the past?
2. State whether true or false:
 - (a) We do not find inscriptions for the period after 700.
 - (b) The Marathas asserted their political importance during this period.
 - (c) Forest-dwellers were sometimes pushed out of their lands with the spread of agricultural settlements.
 - (d) Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban controlled Assam, Manipur and Kashmir.
3. Fill in the blanks:
 - (a) Archives are places where _____ are kept.
 - (b) _____ was a fourteenth-century chronicler.
 - (c) _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____ were some of the new crops introduced into the subcontinent during this period.
4. List some of the technological changes associated with this period.

5. What were some of the major religious developments during this period?

Let's understand

6. In what ways has the meaning of the term "Hindustan" changed over the centuries?
7. How were the affairs of *jatis* regulated?
8. What does the term pan-regional empire mean?

Let's discuss

9. What are the difficulties historians face in using manuscripts?
10. How do historians divide the past into periods? Do they face any problems in doing so?

Let's do

11. Compare either Map 1 or Map 2 with the present-day map of the subcontinent, listing as many similarities and differences as you can find.
12. Find out where records are kept in your village or city. Who writes these records? Is there an archive? Who manages it? What kinds of documents are stored there? Who are the people who use it?



2 NEW KINGS AND KINGDOMS

Many new dynasties emerged after the seventh century. Map 1 shows the major ruling dynasties in different parts of the subcontinent between the seventh and twelfth centuries.

Map 1
Major kingdoms,
seventh-twelfth
centuries



Locate the Gurjara-Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas, Palas, Cholas and Chahamanas (Chauhans). Can you identify the present-day states over which they exercised control?



The Emergence of New Dynasties

By the seventh century there were big landlords or warrior chiefs in different regions of the subcontinent. Existing kings often acknowledged them as their subordinates or *samantas*. They were expected to bring gifts for their kings or overlords, be present at their courts and provide them with military support. **As *samantas* gained power and wealth, they declared themselves to be *maha-samanta*, *maha-mandaleshwara* (the great lord of a “circle” or region) and so on.** Sometimes they asserted their independence from their overlords.

One such instance was that of the Rashtrakutas in the Deccan. Initially they were subordinate to the Chalukyas of Karnataka. In the mid-eighth century, Dantidurga, a Rashtrakuta chief, overthrew his Chalukya overlord and performed a ritual called *hiranya-garbha* (literally, the golden womb). When this ritual was performed with the help of Brahmanas, it was thought to lead to the “rebirth” of the sacrificer as a Kshatriya, even if he was not one by birth.

In other cases, men from enterprising families used their military skills to carve out kingdoms. For instance, the Kadamba Mayurasharma and the Gurjara-Pratihara Harichandra were Brahmanas who gave up their traditional professions and took to arms, successfully establishing kingdoms in Karnataka and Rajasthan respectively.

Administration in the Kingdoms

Many of these new kings adopted high-sounding titles such as *maharaja-adhiraja* (great king, overlord of kings), *tribhuvana-chakravartin* (lord of the three worlds) and so on. However, in spite of such claims,



Fig. 1
Wall relief from Cave 15, Ellora, showing Vishnu as Narasimha, the man-lion. It is a work of the Rashtrakuta period.



Do you think being born as a Kshatriya was important in order to become a ruler during this period?



In what ways was this form of administration different from the present-day system?

they often shared power with their *samantas* as well as with associations of peasants, traders and Brahmanas.

In each of these states, resources were obtained from the producers – that is, peasants, cattle-keepers, artisans – who were often persuaded or compelled to surrender part of what they produced. Sometimes these were claimed as “rent” due to a lord who asserted that he owned the land. Revenue was also collected from traders.

Four hundred taxes!

The inscriptions of the Cholas who ruled in Tamil Nadu refer to more than 400 terms for different kinds of taxes. The most frequently mentioned tax is *vetti*, taken not in cash but in the form of forced labour, and *kadamai*, or land revenue. There were also taxes on thatching the house, the use of a ladder to climb palm trees, a cess on succession to family property, etc.



Are any such taxes collected today?

These resources were used to finance the king’s establishment, as well as for the construction of temples and forts. They were also used to fight wars, which were in turn expected to lead to the acquisition of wealth in the form of plunder, and access to land as well as trade routes.

The functionaries for collecting revenue were generally recruited from influential families, and positions were often hereditary. This was true about the army as well. In many cases, close relatives of the king held these positions.

Prashastis and Land Grants

Prashastis contain details that may not be literally true. But they tell us how rulers wanted to depict themselves – as valiant, victorious warriors, for example. These were composed by learned Brahmanas, who occasionally helped in the administration.

The “achievements” of Nagabhata

Many rulers described their achievements in *prashastis* (you read about the *prashasti* of the Gupta ruler Samudragupta last year).

One *prashasti*, written in Sanskrit and found in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, describes the exploits of Nagabhata, a Pratihara king, as follows:

The kings of Andhra, Saindhava (Sind), Vidarbha (part of Maharashtra) and Kalinga (part of Orissa) fell before him even as he was a prince ...

He won a victory over Chakrayudha (the ruler of Kanauj) ...

He defeated the king of Vanga (part of Bengal), Anarta (part of Gujarat), Malava (part of Madhya Pradesh), Kirata (forest peoples), Turushka (Turks), Vatsa, Matsya (both kingdoms in north India) ...

Kings often rewarded Brahmanas by grants of land. These were recorded on copper plates, which were given to those who received the land.



Also, see if you can find some of the areas mentioned in the inscription on Map 1. Other rulers made similar claims as well. Why do you think they made these claims?

Fig. 2

This is a set of copper plates recording a grant of land made by a ruler in the ninth century, written partly in Sanskrit and partly in Tamil. The ring holding the plates together is secured with the royal seal, to indicate that this is an authentic document.

What was given with the land

This is part of the Tamil section of a land grant given by the Cholas:

We have demarcated the boundaries of the land by making earthen embankments, as well as by planting thorny bushes. This is what the land contains: fruit-bearing trees, water, land, gardens and orchards, trees, wells, open spaces, pasture-land, a village, anthills, platforms, canals, ditches, rivers, silt-laden land, tanks, granaries, fish ponds, bee hives, and deep lakes.

He who receives the land can collect taxes from it. He can collect the taxes imposed by judicial officers as fines, the tax on betel-leaves, that on woven cloth, as well as on vehicles. He can build large rooms, with upper stories made of baked bricks, he can get large and small wells dug, he can plant trees and thorny bushes, if necessary, he can get canals constructed for irrigation. He should ensure that water is not wasted, and that embankments are built.



List all the possible sources of irrigation mentioned in the inscription, and discuss how these might have been used.

Unusual for the twelfth century was a long Sanskrit poem containing the history of kings who ruled over Kashmir. It was composed by an author named Kalhana. He used a variety of sources, including inscriptions, documents, eyewitness accounts and earlier histories, to write his account. Unlike the writers of *prashastis*, he was often critical about rulers and their policies.

Warfare for Wealth

You may have noticed that each of these ruling dynasties was based in a specific region. At the same time, they tried to control other areas. One particularly

prized area was the city of Kanauj in the Ganga valley. For centuries, rulers belonging to the Gurjara-Pratihara, Rashtrakuta and Pala dynasties fought for control over Kanauj. Because there were three “parties” in this long-drawn conflict, historians often describe it as the “tripartite struggle”.

As we will see (pp. 62-66), rulers also tried to demonstrate their power and resources by building large temples. So, when they attacked one another’s kingdoms, they often chose to target temples, which were sometimes extremely rich. You will read more about this in Chapter 5.

One of the best known of such rulers is **Sultan** Mahmud of Ghazni, Afghanistan. He ruled from 997 to 1030, and extended control over parts of Central Asia, Iran and the north-western part of the subcontinent. He raided the subcontinent almost every year – his targets were wealthy temples, including that of Somnath, Gujarat. Much of the wealth Mahmud carried away was used to create a splendid capital city at Ghazni.

Sultan Mahmud was also interested in finding out more about the people he conquered, and entrusted a scholar named Al-Biruni to write an account of the subcontinent. This Arabic work, known as the *Kitab ul-Hind*, remains an important source for historians. He consulted Sanskrit scholars to prepare this account.

Other kings who engaged in warfare included the Chahamanas, later known as the Chauhans, who ruled over the region around Delhi and Ajmer. They attempted to expand their control to the west and the east, where they were opposed by the Chalukyas of Gujarat and the Gahadavalas of western Uttar Pradesh. The best-known Chahamana ruler was Prithviraja III (1168-1192), who defeated an Afghan ruler named Sultan Muhammad Ghori in 1191, but lost to him the very next year, in 1192.



Look at Map 1 and suggest reasons why these rulers wanted to control Kanauj and the Ganga valley.

Sultan
An Arabic term meaning ruler.



Look at Map 1 again and discuss why the Chahamanas may have wanted to expand their territories.

A Closer Look: The Cholas



Map 2
The Chola kingdom
and its neighbours.

From Uraiyur to Thanjavur

How did the Cholas rise to power? A minor chiefly family known as the Muttaraiyar held power in the Kaveri delta. They were subordinate to the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram. Vijayalaya, who belonged to the ancient chiefly family of the Cholas from Uraiyur, captured the delta from the Muttaraiyar in the middle of the ninth century. He built the town of Thanjavur and a temple for goddess Nishumbhasudini there.

The successors of Vijayalaya conquered neighbouring regions and the kingdom grew in size and power. The Pandyan and the Pallava territories to the south and north were made part of this kingdom.

Rajaraja I, considered the most powerful Chola ruler, became king in 985 and expanded control over most of these areas. He also reorganised the administration of the empire. Rajaraja's son Rajendra I continued his policies and even raided the Ganga valley, Sri Lanka and countries of Southeast Asia, developing a navy for these expeditions.

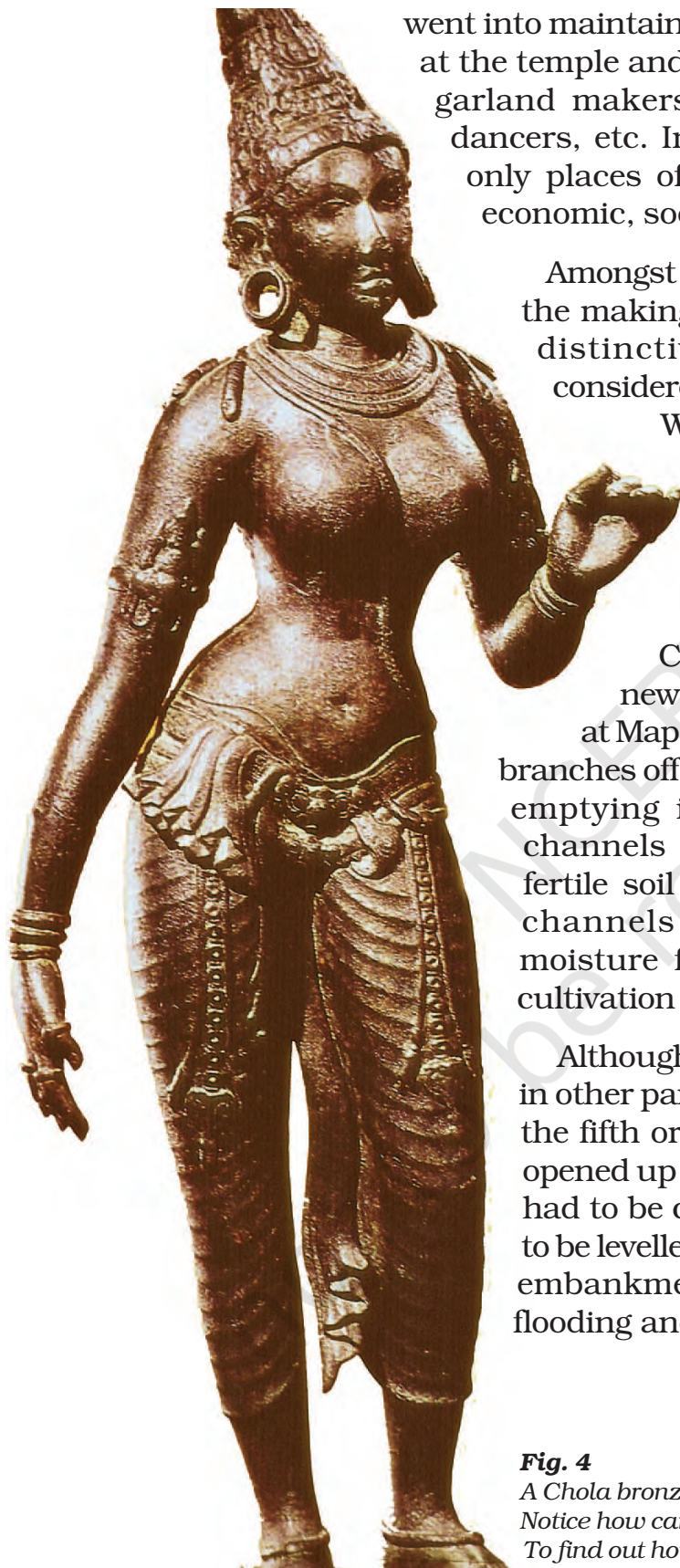
Splendid Temples and Bronze Sculpture

The big temples of Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram, built by Rajaraja and Rajendra, are architectural and sculptural marvels.

Chola temples often became the nuclei of settlements which grew around them. These were centres of craft production. Temples were also endowed with land by rulers as well as by others. The produce of this land



Fig. 3
The temple at Gangaikondacholapuram. Notice the way in which the roof tapers. Also look at the elaborate stone sculptures used to decorate the outer walls.



went into maintaining all the specialists who worked at the temple and very often lived near it – priests, garland makers, cooks, sweepers, musicians, dancers, etc. In other words, temples were not only places of worship; they were the hub of economic, social and cultural life as well.

Amongst the crafts associated with temples, the making of bronze images was the most distinctive. Chola bronze images are considered amongst the finest in the world.

While most images were of deities, sometimes images were made of devotees as well.

Agriculture and Irrigation

Many of the achievements of the Cholas were made possible through new developments in agriculture. Look at Map 2 again. Notice that the river Kaveri branches off into several small channels before emptying into the Bay of Bengal. These channels overflow frequently, depositing fertile soil on their banks. Water from the channels also provides the necessary moisture for agriculture, particularly the cultivation of rice.

Although agriculture had developed earlier in other parts of Tamil Nadu, it was only from the fifth or sixth century that this area was opened up for large-scale cultivation. Forests had to be cleared in some regions; land had to be levelled in other areas. In the delta region embankments had to be built to prevent flooding and canals had to be constructed to

Fig. 4

A Chola bronze sculpture.

Notice how carefully it is decorated.

To find out how these images were made, see Chapter 6.



carry water to the fields. In many areas two crops were grown in a year.

In many cases it was necessary to water crops artificially. A variety of methods were used for irrigation. In some areas wells were dug. In other places huge tanks were constructed to collect rainwater. Remember that irrigation works require planning – organising labour and resources, maintaining these works and deciding on how water is to be shared. Most of the new rulers, as well as people living in villages, took an active interest in these activities.

The Administration of the Empire

How was the administration organised? Settlements of peasants, known as *ur*, became prosperous with the spread of irrigation agriculture. Groups of such villages formed larger units called *nadu*. The village council and the *nadu* performed several administrative functions including dispensing justice and collecting taxes.

Rich peasants of the Vellala caste exercised considerable control over the affairs of the *nadu* under the supervision of the central Chola government. The Chola kings gave some rich landowners titles like *muwendavelan* (a *velan* or peasant serving three kings), *araiyar* (chief), etc. as markers of respect, and entrusted them with important offices of the state at the centre.

Fig. 5
A ninth-century sluice-gate in Tamil Nadu. It regulated the outflow of water from a tank into the channels that irrigated the fields. A sluice gate is traditionally a wood or metal barrier which is commonly used to control water levels and flow rates in rivers and canals.

Types of land

Chola inscriptions mention several categories of land:

vellanvagai

land of non-Brahmana peasant proprietors

brahmadeya

land gifted to Brahmanas

shalabhoga

land for the maintenance of a school

devadana, tirunamattukkani

land gifted to temples

pallichchhandam

land donated to Jaina institutions

We have seen that Brahmanas often received land grants or *brahmadeya*. As a result, a large number of Brahmana settlements emerged in the Kaveri valley as in other parts of south India.

Each *brahmadeya* was looked after by an assembly or *sabha* of prominent Brahmana landholders. These assemblies worked very efficiently. Their decisions were recorded in detail in inscriptions, often on the stone walls of temples. Associations of traders known as *nagarams* also occasionally performed administrative functions in towns.

Inscriptions from Uttaramerur in Chingleput district, Tamil Nadu, provide details of the way in which the *sabha* was organised. The *sabha* had separate committees to look after irrigation works, gardens, temples, etc. Names of those eligible to be members of these committees were written on small tickets of palm leaf; these tickets were put into an earthenware pot, from which a young boy was asked to take out the tickets, one by one for each committee.

Inscriptions and texts

Who could be a member of a sabha? The Uttaramerur inscription lays down:

All those who wish to become members of the sabha should be owners of land from which land revenue is collected.

They should have their own homes.

They should be between 35 and 70 years of age.

They should have knowledge of the Vedas.

They should be well-versed in administrative matters and honest.

If anyone has been a member of any committee in the last three years, he cannot become a member of another committee.

Anyone who has not submitted his accounts, and those of his relatives, cannot contest the elections.

While inscriptions tell us about kings and powerful men, here is an excerpt from the *Periyapuramam*, a twelfth-century Tamil work, which informs us about the lives of ordinary men and women.

On the outskirts of Adanur was a small hamlet of Pulaiyas (a name used for a social group considered "outcastes" by Brahmanas and Vellalas), studded with small huts under old thatches and inhabited by agrarian labourers engaged in menial occupations. In the thresholds of the huts covered with strips of leather, little chickens moved about in groups; dark children who wore bracelets of black iron were prancing about, carrying little puppies ... In the shade of the marudu (arjuna) trees, a female labourer put her baby to sleep on a sheet of leather; there were mango trees from whose branches drums were hanging; and under the coconut palms, in little hollows on the ground, tiny-headed bitches lay after whelping. The red-crested cocks crowed before dawn calling the brawny Pulaiyar (plural) to their day's work; and by day, under the shade of the kanji tree spread the voice of the wavy-haired Pulaiya women singing as they were husking paddy ...



Do you think women participated in these assemblies? In your view are lotteries useful in choosing members of committees?




Were there any Brahmanas in this hamlet? Describe all the activities that were taking place in the village. Why do you think temple inscriptions ignore these activities?

China under the Tang dynasty

In China, an empire was established under the Tang dynasty, which remained in power for about 300 years (from the seventh to the tenth centuries). Its capital, Xi'an, was one of the largest cities in the world, visited by Turks, Iranians, Indians, Japanese and Koreans.

The Tang empire was administered by a bureaucracy recruited through an examination, which was open to all who wished to appear for it. This system of selecting officials remained in place, with some changes, till 1911.

 *In what ways was this system different from those prevalent in the Indian subcontinent?*



Imagine

You are present in an election for a *sabha*. Describe what you see and hear.

Let's recall

1. Match the following:

Gurjara-Pratiharas

Western Deccan

Rashtrakutas

Bengal

Palas

Gujarat and Rajasthan

Cholas

Tamil Nadu

2. Who were the parties involved in the "tripartite struggle"?

3. What were the qualifications necessary to become a member of a committee of the *sabha* in the Chola empire?

4. What were the two major cities under the control of the Chahamanas?

Let's understand

5. How did the Rashtrakutas become powerful?
6. What did the new dynasties do to gain acceptance?
7. What kind of irrigation works were developed in the Tamil region?
8. What were the activities associated with Chola temples?

Let's discuss

9. Look at Map 1 once more and find out whether there were any kingdoms in the state in which you live.
10. Contrast the "elections" in Uttaramerur with present-day panchayat elections.

Let's do

11. Compare the temple shown in this chapter with any present-day temple in your neighbourhood, highlighting any similarities and differences that you notice.
12. Find out more about taxes that are collected at present. Are these in cash, kind, or labour services?

KEYWORDS

▼
samanta

temple

nadu

sabha
▲



3 THE DELHI SULTANS

In Chapter 2 we saw that regions like the Kaveri delta became the centre of large kingdoms. Did you notice that there was no mention of a kingdom with Delhi as its capital? That was because Delhi became an important city only in the twelfth century.

Take a look at Table 1. Delhi first became the capital of a kingdom under the Tomara Rajputs, who were defeated in the middle of the twelfth century by the Chauhans (also referred to as Chahamanas) of Ajmer. It was under the Tomaras and Chauhans that Delhi became an important commercial centre. Many rich Jaina merchants lived in the city and constructed several temples. Coins minted here, called *dehliwal*, had a wide circulation.

Map 1
Selected Sultanate cities of Delhi, thirteenth-fourteenth centuries.



The transformation of Delhi into a capital that controlled vast areas of the subcontinent started with the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Take a look at Table 1 again and identify the five dynasties that together made the Delhi Sultanate.

The Delhi Sultans built many cities in the area that we now know as Delhi. Look at Map 1 and locate Dehli-i Kuhna, Siri and Jahanpanah.

THE RULERS OF DELHI

Table 1

RAJPUT DYNASTIES

Tomaras

Ananga Pala

Early twelfth century-1165

1130-1145

Chauhans

Prithviraj Chauhan

1165-1192

1175-1192

EARLY TURKISH RULERS 1206-1290

Qutbuddin Aybak

1206-1210

Shamsuddin Iltutmish

1210-1236

Raziyya

1236-1240

Ghiyasuddin Balban

1266-1287



Iltutmish's tomb



Alai Darwaza

KHALJI DYNASTY 1290-1320

Jalaluddin Khalji

1290-1296

Alauddin Khalji

1296-1316

TUGHLUQ DYNASTY 1320-1414

Ghiyasuddin Tughluq

1320-1324

Muhammad Tughluq

1324-1351

Firuz Shah Tughluq

1351-1388

SAYYID DYNASTY 1414-1451

Khizr Khan

1414-1421

LODI DYNASTY 1451-1526

Bahlul Lodi

1451-1489



Firuz Shah Tughluq's tomb

Finding Out about the Delhi Sultans

Although inscriptions, coins and architecture provide a lot of information, especially valuable are “histories”, *tarikh* (singular) / *tawarikh* (plural), written in Persian, the language of administration under the Delhi Sultans.



Fig.1

Four stages in the making of a manuscript:

- A. Preparing the paper.
- B. Writing the text.
- C. Melting gold to highlight important words and passages.
- D. Preparing the binding.

The authors of *tawarikh* were learned men: secretaries, administrators, poets and courtiers, who both recounted events and advised rulers on governance, emphasising the importance of just rule.

The circle of justice

Fakhr-i Mudabbir wrote in the thirteenth century:

A king cannot survive without soldiers. And soldiers cannot live without salaries. Salaries come from the revenue collected from peasants. But peasants can pay revenue only when they are prosperous and happy. This happens when the king promotes justice and honest governance.



Do you think the circle of justice is an appropriate term to describe the relationship between the king and his subjects?


Keep the following additional details in mind: (1) the authors of *tawarikh* lived in cities (mainly Delhi) and hardly ever in villages. (2) They often wrote their histories for Sultans in the hope of rich rewards. (3) These authors advised rulers on the need to preserve an “ideal” social order based on **birthright** and **gender distinctions**. Their ideas were not shared by everybody.

In 1236 Sultan **Ilutmish's daughter, Raziyya, became Sultan**. The chronicler of the age, Minhaj-i Siraj, recognised that she was more able and qualified than all her brothers. But he was not comfortable at having a queen as ruler. Nor were the nobles happy at her attempts to rule independently. She was removed from the throne in 1240.

What Minhaj-i Siraj thought about Raziyya

Minhaj-i Siraj thought that the queen's rule went against the ideal social order created by God, in which women were supposed to be subordinate to men. He therefore asked: “In the register of God's creation, since her account did not fall under the column of men, how did she gain from all of her excellent qualities?”

On her inscriptions and coins Raziyya mentioned that she was the daughter of Sultan Ilutmish. This was in contrast to the queen Rudramadevi (1262-1289), of the Kakatiya dynasty of Warangal, part of modern Andhra Pradesh. Rudramadevi changed her name on her inscriptions and pretended she was a man. Another queen, Didda, ruled in Kashmir (980-1003). Her title is interesting: it comes from “didi” or “elder sister”, an obviously affectionate term given to a loved ruler by her subjects.

 Express Minhaj's ideas in your own words. Do you think Raziyya shared these ideas? Why do you think it was so difficult for a woman to be a ruler?

Birthright

Privileges claimed on account of birth. For example, people believed that nobles inherited their rights to govern, because they were born in certain families.

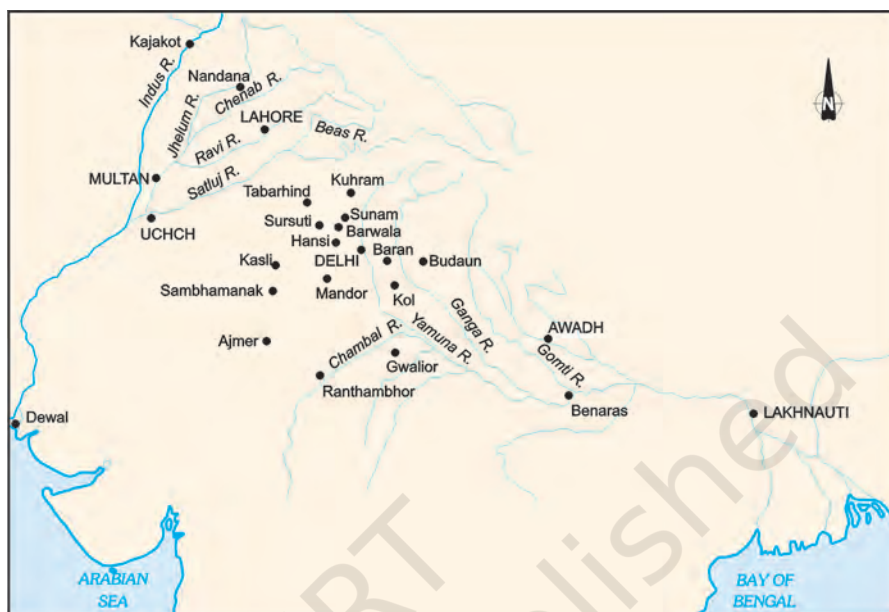
Gender distinctions

Social and biological differences between women and men. Usually, these differences are used to argue that men are superior to women.

From Garrison Town to Empire: The Expansion of the Delhi Sultanate

Map 2

Major cities captured
by Shamsuddin
Iltutmish.



Hinterland

The lands
adjacent to a city
or port that supply
it with goods and
services.

Garrison town

A fortified
settlement, with
soldiers.

In the early thirteenth century the control of the Delhi Sultans rarely went beyond heavily fortified towns occupied by garrisons. The Sultans seldom controlled the **hinterland** of the cities and were therefore dependent upon trade, tribute or plunder for supplies.

Controlling **garrison towns** in distant Bengal and Sind from Delhi was extremely difficult. Rebellion, war, even bad weather could snap fragile communication routes. Delhi's authority was also challenged by Mongol invasions from Afghanistan and by governors who rebelled at any sign of the Sultan's weakness. The Sultanate barely survived these challenges. Its consolidation occurred during the reign of Ghiyasuddin Balban and further expansion under Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq.

The first set of campaigns along the "internal frontier" of the Sultanate aimed at consolidating the hinterlands of the garrison towns. During these campaigns forests were cleared in the Ganga-Yamuna doab and hunter-gatherers and pastoralists expelled from their habitat.

These lands were given to peasants and agriculture was encouraged. New fortresses, garrison towns and towns were established to protect trade routes and to promote regional trade.

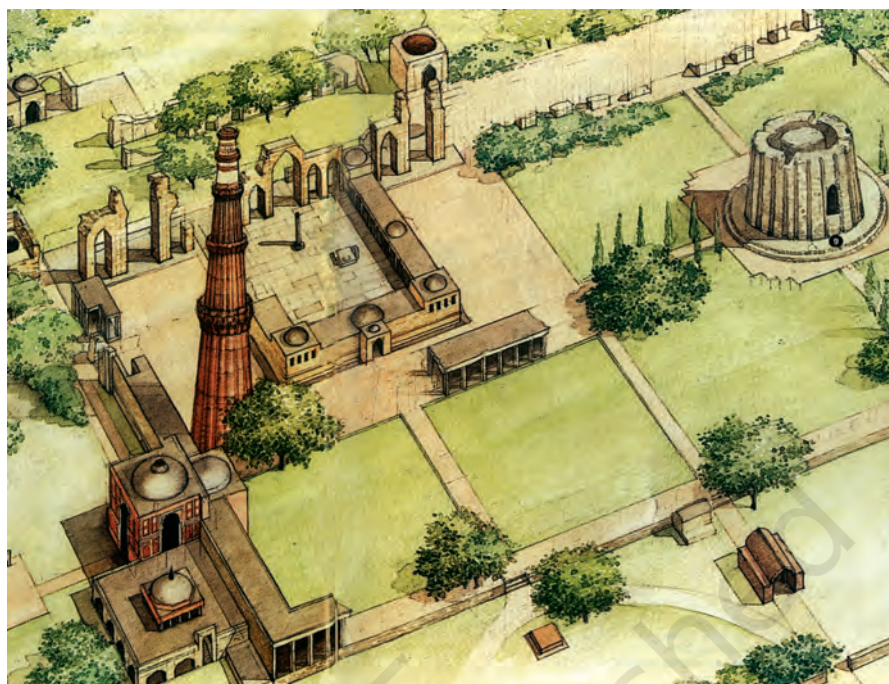
The second expansion occurred along the “external frontier” of the Sultanate. Military expeditions into southern India started during the reign of Alauddin Khalji (see Map 3) and culminated with Muhammad Tughluq. In their campaigns, Sultanate armies captured elephants, horses and slaves and carried away precious metals.

By the end of Muhammad Tughluq’s reign, 150 years after somewhat humble beginnings, the armies of the Delhi Sultanate had marched across a large part of the subcontinent. They had defeated rival armies and seized cities. The Sultanate collected taxes from the peasantry and dispensed justice in its realm. But how complete and effective was its control over such a vast territory?



Map 3
Alauddin Khalji's campaign into south India.

Fig. 2
Quwwat al-Islam mosque and minaret, built during the last decade of the twelfth century. This was the congregational mosque of the first city built by the Delhi Sultans, described in the chronicles as *Dehli-i-Kuhna* (the old city). The mosque was enlarged by Iltutmish and Alauddin Khalji. The minar was built by two Sultans: Qutbuddin Aybak and Iltutmish.



The Masjid

A mosque is called a *masjid* in Arabic, literally a place where a Muslim prostrates in reverence to Allah. In a “congregational mosque” (*masjid-i-jami* or *jama masjid*) Muslims read their prayers (*namaz*) together. Members of the congregation choose the most respected, learned male as their leader (*imam*) for the rituals of prayer. He also delivers the sermon (*khutba*) during the Friday prayer.

During prayer, Muslims stand facing Mecca. In India this is to the west. This is called the *qibla*.



Fig. 3
Begumpuri mosque, built in the reign of Muhammad Tughluq, was the main mosque of Jahanpanah, the “Sanctuary of the World”, his new capital in Delhi. See Map 1.



The Delhi Sultans built several mosques in cities all over the subcontinent. These demonstrated their claims to be protectors of Islam and Muslims. Mosques also helped to create the sense of a community of believers



Fig. 4
Moth ki Masjid, built in the reign of Sikandar Lodi by his minister.



who shared a belief system and a code of conduct. It was necessary to reinforce this idea of a community because Muslims came from a variety of backgrounds.



Fig. 5
Mosque of Jamali Kamali, built in the late 1520s.



Compare Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5. What similarities and differences do you notice amongst the mosques? The mosques in Figures 3, 4 and 5 show an evolution in architectural tradition that culminates in Shah Jahan's mosque in Delhi (see Fig. 7 in Chapter 5).

A Closer Look: Administration and Consolidation under the Khaljis and Tughluqs

The consolidation of a kingdom as vast as the Delhi Sultanate needed reliable governors and administrators. Rather than appointing aristocrats and landed chieftains as governors, the early Delhi Sultans, especially **Ilututnish, favoured their special slaves purchased for military service, called *bandagan* in Persian.** They were carefully trained to man some of the most important political offices in the kingdom. Since they were totally dependent upon their master, the Sultan could trust and rely upon them.

Client
Someone who is under the protection of another; a dependent or hanger-on.

Slaves rather than sons

The Sultans were advised:

A slave, whom one has brought up and promoted, must be looked after for it needs a whole lifetime and good luck to find a worthy and experienced slave. Wise men have said that a worthy and experienced slave is better than a son ...



Can you think of any reason why a slave would be better than a son?

The Khaljis and Tughluqs continued to use *bandagan* and also raised people of humble birth, who were often their **clients**, to high political positions. They were appointed as generals and governors. However, this also introduced an element of political instability.

Slaves and clients were loyal to their masters and patrons, but not to their heirs. New Sultans had their own servants. As a result the accession of a new monarch often saw conflict between the old and the new nobility. The patronage of these humble people by the Delhi Sultans also shocked many elites and the authors of Persian *tawarikh* criticised the Delhi Sultans for appointing the “low and base-born” to high offices.

Officials of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq

Sultan Muhammad Tughluq appointed Aziz Khummar, a wine distiller, Firuz Hajjam, a barber, Manka Tabbakh, a cook, and two gardeners, Ladha and Pira, to high administrative posts. Ziyauddin Barani, a mid-fourteenth-century chronicler, reported their appointments as a sign of the Sultan’s loss of political judgement and his incapacity to rule.



Why do you think Barani criticised the Sultan?

Like the earlier Sultans, the Khalji and Tughluq monarchs appointed military commanders as governors of territories of varying sizes. These lands were called *iqta* and their holder was called *iqtadar* or *muqti*. The duty of the *muqtis* was to lead military campaigns and maintain law and order in their *iqtas*. In exchange for their military services, the *muqtis* collected the revenues of their assignments as salary. They also paid their soldiers from these revenues. Control over *muqtis* was most effective if their office was not inheritable and if they were assigned *iqtas* for a short period of time before being shifted. These harsh conditions of service were rigorously imposed during the reigns of Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq. Accountants were appointed by the state to check the amount of revenue collected by the *muqtis*. Care was taken that the *muqti* collected only the taxes prescribed by the state and that he kept the required number of soldiers.

As the Delhi Sultans brought the hinterland of the cities under their control, they forced the landed chieftains – the *samanta* aristocrats – and rich landlords to accept their authority. Under Alauddin Khalji the state brought the assessment and collection of land revenue under its own control. The rights of the local chieftains to levy taxes were cancelled and they were also forced to pay taxes. The Sultan's administrators measured the land and kept careful accounts. Some of the old chieftains and landlords served the Sultanate as revenue collectors and assessors. There were three types of taxes: (1) on cultivation called *kharaj* and amounting to about 50 per cent of the peasant's produce, (2) on cattle and (3) on houses.

It is important to remember that large parts of the subcontinent remained outside the control of the Delhi Sultans. It was difficult to control distant provinces like Bengal from Delhi and soon after annexing southern India, the entire region became independent. Even in the Gangetic plain there were forested areas

that Sultanate forces could not penetrate. Local chieftains established their rule in these regions. Sometimes rulers like Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq could force their control in these areas but only for a short duration.

Chieftains and their fortifications

Ibn Battuta, a fourteenth-century traveller from Morocco, Africa, explained that chieftains sometimes

fortified themselves in mountains, in rocky, uneven and rugged places as well as in bamboo groves. In India the bamboo is not hollow; it is big. Its several parts are so intertwined that even fire cannot affect them, and they are on the whole very strong. The chieftains live in these forests which serve them as ramparts, inside which are their cattle and their crops. There is also water for them within, that is, rain water which collects there. Hence they cannot be subdued except by powerful armies, who entering these forests, cut down the bamboos with specially prepared instruments.



Describe the ways in which the chieftains arranged for their defence.

The Mongols under Genghis Khan invaded Transoxiana in north-east Iran in 1219 and the Delhi Sultanate faced their onslaught soon after. Mongol attacks on the Delhi Sultanate increased during the reign of Alauddin Khalji and in the early years of Muhammad Tughluq's rule. This forced the two rulers to mobilise a large standing army in Delhi which posed a huge administrative challenge. Let us see how the two Sultans dealt with this.

Alauddin Khalji	Muhammad Tughluq
<p>Delhi was attacked twice, in 1299/1300 and 1302-1303. As a defensive measure, Alauddin Khalji raised a large standing army.</p>	<p>The Sultanate was attacked in the early years of Muhammad Tughluq's reign. The Mongol army was defeated. Muhammad Tughluq was confident about the strength of his army and his resources to plan an attack on Transoxiana. He therefore raised a large standing army.</p>
<p>Alauddin constructed a new garrison town named Siri for his soldiers. See Map 1.</p>	<p>Rather than constructing a new garrison town, the oldest of the four cities of Delhi (Dehli-i Kuhna) was emptied of its residents and the soldiers garrisoned there. The residents of the old city were sent to the new capital of Daulatabad in the south.</p>
<p>The soldiers had to be fed. This was done through the produce collected as tax from lands between the Ganga and Yamuna. Tax was fixed at 50 per cent of the peasant's yield.</p>	<p>Produce from the same area was collected as tax to feed the army. But to meet the expense of maintaining such a large number of soldiers the Sultan levied additional taxes. This coincided with famine in the area.</p>
<p>The soldiers had to be paid. Alauddin chose to pay his soldiers salaries in cash rather than <i>iqtas</i>. The soldiers would buy their supplies from merchants in Delhi and it was thus feared that merchants would raise their prices. To stop this, Alauddin controlled the prices of goods in Delhi. Prices were carefully surveyed by officers, and merchants who did not sell at the prescribed rates were punished.</p>	<p>Muhammad Tughluq also paid his soldiers cash salaries. But instead of controlling prices, he used a "token" currency, somewhat like present-day paper currency, but made out of cheap metals, not gold and silver. People in the fourteenth century did not trust these coins. They were very smart: they saved their gold and silver coins and paid all their taxes to the state with this token currency. This cheap currency could also be counterfeited easily.</p>
<p>Alauddin's administrative measures were quite successful and chroniclers praised his reign for its cheap prices and efficient supplies of goods in the market. He successfully withstood the threat of Mongol invasions.</p>	<p>Muhammad Tughluq's administrative measures were a failure. His campaign into Kashmir was a disaster. He then gave up his plans to invade Transoxiana and disbanded his large army. Meanwhile, his administrative measures created complications. The shifting of people to Daulatabad was resented. The raising of taxes and famine in the Ganga-Yamuna belt led to widespread rebellion. And finally, the "token" currency had to be recalled.</p>

In this list of Muhammad Tughluq's failures we sometimes forget that for the first time in the history of the Sultanate, a Delhi Sultan planned a campaign to capture Mongol territory. Unlike Alauddin's defensive measures, Muhammad Tughluq's measures were conceived as a part of a military offensive against the Mongols.

The Sultanate in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

Take a look at Table 1 again. You will notice that after the Tughluqs, the Sayyid and Lodi dynasties ruled from Delhi and Agra until 1526. By then, Jaunpur, Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajasthan and the entire south India had independent rulers who established flourishing states and prosperous capitals. This was also the period which saw the emergence of new ruling groups like the Afghans and the Rajputs.

Some of the states established in this period were small but powerful and extremely well administered. **Sher Shah Sur (1540-1545) started his career as the manager of a small territory for his uncle in Bihar and eventually challenged and defeated the Mughal emperor Humayun (1530-1540, 1555-1556).** Sher Shah captured Delhi and established his own dynasty. Although the Sur dynasty ruled for only fifteen years (1540-1555), it introduced an administration that borrowed elements from Alauddin Khalji and made them more efficient. Sher Shah's administration became the model followed by the great emperor Akbar (1556-1605) when he consolidated the Mughal Empire.

The “Three Orders”, the “Peace of God”, Knights and the Crusades

The idea of the “Three Orders” was first formulated in France in the early eleventh century. It divided society into three classes: those who prayed, those who fought, and those who tilled the land. This division of society into “Three Orders” was supported by the Church to consolidate its dominant role in society. This helped the emergence of a new warrior group called Knights.

The Church patronised this group and used them to propagate their idea of “Peace of God”. The attempt was to direct warriors away from conflict amongst themselves and send them instead on a campaign against the Muslims who had captured the city of Jerusalem. This led to a series of campaigns called the Crusades. These campaigns in the service of God and the Church completely altered the status of Knights. Originally, these Knights did not belong to the class of nobles. But by the end of the eleventh century in France, and a century later in Germany, the humble origins of these warriors were forgotten. By the twelfth century, nobles also wanted to be known as Knights.

Imagine



You are a peasant in Alauddin Khalji’s or Muhammad Tughluq’s reign and you cannot pay the taxes demanded by the Sultan. What will you do?

Let’s recall

1. Which ruler first established his or her capital at Delhi?
2. What was the language of administration under the Delhi Sultans?
3. In whose reign did the Sultanate reach its farthest extent?
4. From which country did Ibn Battuta travel to India?

KEYWORDS



iqta

tarikh

garrison

Mongols

gender

kharaj



Let's understand

5. According to the “circle of justice”, why was it important for military commanders to keep the interests of the peasantry in mind?
6. What is meant by the “internal” and “external” frontiers of the Sultanate?
7. What were the steps taken to ensure that *muqtis* performed their duties? Why do you think they may have wanted to defy the orders of the Sultans?
8. What was the impact of the Mongol invasions on the Delhi Sultanate?

Let's discuss

9. Do you think the authors of *tawarikh* would provide information about the lives of ordinary men and women?
10. Raziyya Sultan was unique in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. Do you think women leaders are accepted more readily today?
11. Why were the Delhi Sultans interested in cutting down forests? Does deforestation occur for the same reasons today?

Let's do

12. Find out whether there are any buildings built by the Delhi Sultans in your area. Are there any other buildings in your area that were built between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries? Describe some of these buildings, and draw sketches of them.

4

THE MUGHAL EMPIRE



Ruling as large a territory as the Indian subcontinent with such a diversity of people and cultures was an extremely difficult task for any ruler to accomplish in the Middle Ages. Quite in contrast to their predecessors, the Mughals created an empire and accomplished what had hitherto seemed possible for only short periods of time. From the latter half of the sixteenth century they expanded their kingdom from Agra and Delhi, until in the seventeenth century they controlled nearly all of the subcontinent. They imposed structures of administration and ideas of governance that outlasted their rule, leaving a political legacy that succeeding rulers of the subcontinent could not ignore. Today the Prime Minister of India addresses the nation on Independence Day from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi, the residence of the Mughal emperors.

Fig. 1
The Red Fort.



Who were the Mughals?

The Mughals were descendants of two great lineages of rulers. From their mother's side they were descendants of Genghis Khan (died 1227), the Mongol ruler who ruled over parts of China and Central Asia. From their father's side they were the successors of Timur (died 1404), the ruler of Iran, Iraq and modern-day Turkey. However, the Mughals did not like to be called Mughal or Mongol. This was because Genghis Khan's memory was associated with the massacre of innumerable people. It was also linked with the Uzbeks, their Mongol competitors. On the other hand, the Mughals were



Do you think this painting suggests that the Mughals claimed kingship as a birthright?

Fig. 2

A miniature painting (dated 1702-1712) of Timur, his descendants and the Mughal emperors. Timur is in the centre and on his right is his son Miran Shah (the first Mughal emperor Babur's great-great-grandfather) and then Abu Said (Babur's grandfather). To the left of Timur are Sultan Muhammad Mirza (Babur's great-grandfather) and Umar Shaikh (Babur's father). The Mughal emperors Babur, Akbar and Shah Jahan are the third, fourth and fifth individuals on Timur's right and on his left, in the same order, are Humayun, Jahangir and Aurangzeb.



proud of their Timurid ancestry, not least of all because their great ancestor had captured Delhi in 1398.

They celebrated their genealogy pictorially, each ruler getting a picture made of Timur and himself. Take a look at Figure 2, which is somewhat like a “group photograph”.

Mughal Military Campaigns

Babur, the first Mughal emperor (1526-1530), succeeded to the throne of Ferghana in 1494 when he was only 12 years old. He was forced to leave his ancestral throne due to the invasion of another Mongol group, the Uzbeks. After years of wandering he seized Kabul in 1504. In 1526 he defeated the Sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, at Panipat and captured Delhi and Agra.

Table 1 charts some of the major campaigns of the Mughals. Study it carefully and see if you can notice any long-term patterns. You will notice, for example, that the Afghans were an immediate threat to Mughal authority.



Note the relationship between the Mughals and the Ahoms (see also Chapter 7), the Sikhs (see also Chapters 8 and 10), and Mewar and Marwar (see also Chapter 9). How was Humayun’s relationship with Safavid Iran different from Akbar’s? Did the annexation of Golconda and Bijapur in Aurangzeb’s reign end hostilities in the Deccan?

Fig. 3

Mughal army on campaign.



Fig. 4

Cannons were an important addition in sixteenth-century warfare. Babur used them effectively in the first battle of Panipat.

Gun powder technology was brought to India for warfare in the 14th century. Fire arms were used for the first time in regions such as Gujarat, Malwa and Deccan, and was used by Babur in early 16th century.

Table 1

MUGHAL EMPERORS

Major campaigns and events



BABUR 1526-1530

1526 – defeated Ibrahim Lodi and his Afghan supporters at Panipat.

1527 – defeated Rana Sanga, Rajput rulers and allies at Khanua.

1528 – defeated the Rajputs at Chanderi;

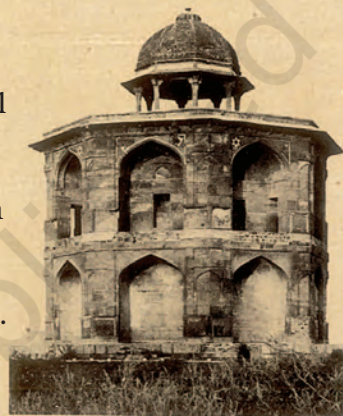
Established control over Agra and Delhi before his death.

HUMAYUN 1530-1540, 1555-1556

(1) Humayun divided his inheritance according to the will of his father. His brothers were each given a province.

The ambitions of his brother Mirza Kamran weakened Humayun's cause against Afghan competitors. Sher Khan defeated Humayun at Chausa (1539) and Kanauj (1540), forcing him to flee to Iran.

(2) In Iran Humayun received help from the Safavid Shah. He recaptured Delhi in 1555 but died the next year after an accident in this building.



AKBAR 1556-1605



Akbar was 13 years old when he became emperor. His reign can be divided into three periods.

(1) 1556-1570 – Akbar became independent of the regent Bairam Khan and other members of his domestic staff. Military campaigns were launched against the Suris and other Afghans, against the neighbouring kingdoms of Malwa and Gondwana, and to suppress the **revolt of his half-brother Mirza Hakim** and the Uzbegs. In 1568 the Sisodiya capital of Chittor was seized and in 1569 Ranthambhor.

(2) 1570-1585 – military campaigns in Gujarat were followed by campaigns in the east in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. These campaigns were complicated by the **1579-1580 revolt in support of Mirza Hakim.**

(3) 1585-1605 – expansion of Akbar's empire. Campaigns were launched in the north-west. Gandahar was seized from the Safavids, Kashmir was annexed, as also Kabul, after the death of Mirza Hakim. Campaigns in the Deccan started and Berar, Khandesh and parts of Ahmadnagar were annexed. **In the last years of his reign Akbar was distracted by the rebellion of Prince Salim, the future Emperor Jahangir.**



Jahangir 1605-1627

Military campaigns started by Akbar continued. The Sisodiya ruler of Mewar, Amar Singh, accepted Mughal service. Less successful campaigns against the Sikhs, the Ahoms and Ahmadnagar followed.

Prince Khurram, the future Emperor Shah Jahan, rebelled in the last years of his reign. The efforts of Nur Jahan, Jahangir's wife, to marginalise him were unsuccessful.

Shah Jahan 1627-1658

Mughal campaigns continued in the Deccan under Shah Jahan. The Afghan noble Khan Jahan Lodi rebelled and was defeated. Campaigns were launched against Ahmadnagar; the Bundelas were defeated and Orchha seized. In the north-west, the campaign to seize Balkh from the Uzbeks was unsuccessful and Qandahar was lost to the Safavids. In 1632

Ahmadnagar was finally annexed and the Bijapur forces sued for peace. In 1657-1658, there was conflict over succession amongst Shah Jahan's sons.

Aurangzeb was victorious and his three brothers, including Dara Shukoh, were killed. Shah Jahan was imprisoned for the rest of his life in Agra.



Aurangzeb 1658-1707

(1) In the north-east, the Ahoms were defeated in 1663, but rebelled again in the 1680s. Campaigns in the north-west against the Yusufzai and the Sikhs were temporarily successful. Mughal intervention in the

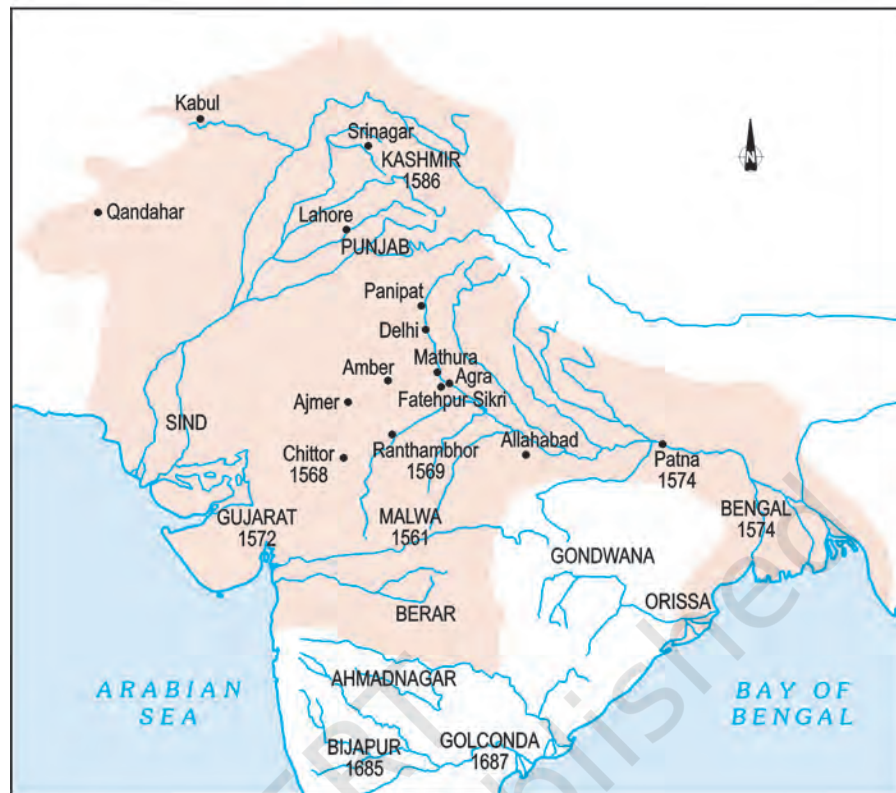
succession and internal politics of the Rathor Rajputs of Marwar led to their rebellion. Campaigns against the Maratha chieftain Shivaji were initially successful. But Aurangzeb insulted Shivaji who escaped from Agra, declared himself an independent king and resumed his campaigns against the Mughals. Prince Akbar rebelled against Aurangzeb and received support from the Marathas and the Deccan Sultanate. He finally fled to Safavid Iran.

(2) After Akbar's rebellion Aurangzeb sent armies against the Deccan Sultanates. Bijapur was annexed in 1685 and Golconda in 1687. From 1698 Aurangzeb personally managed campaigns in the Deccan against the Marathas who started guerrilla warfare. Aurangzeb also had to face the rebellion in north India of the Sikhs, Jats and Satnamis, in the north-east of the Ahoms and in the Deccan of the Marathas. His death was followed by a succession conflict amongst his sons.



Map 1

Military campaigns under Akbar and Aurangzeb.



Mughal Traditions of Succession

The Mughals did not believe in the rule of primogeniture, where the eldest son inherited his father's estate. Instead they followed the Mughal and Timurid custom of coparcenary inheritance, or a division of the inheritance amongst all the sons. Follow the highlighted passages in Table 1, and note the evidence for rebellions by Mughal princes. Which do you think is a fairer division of inheritance: primogeniture or coparcenary?

Mughal marriages with the Rajputs

The mother of Jahangir was a Kachhwaha princess, daughter of the Rajput ruler of Amber (modern-day Jaipur). The mother of Shah Jahan was a Rathor princess, daughter of the Rajput ruler of Marwar (Jodhpur).

Mughal Relations with Other Rulers

Take a look at Table 1 once again. You will notice that the Mughal rulers campaigned constantly against rulers who refused to accept their authority. But as the Mughals became powerful many other rulers also joined them voluntarily. The Rajputs are a good example of this. Many of them married their daughters into Mughal families and received high positions. But many resisted as well.

The Sisodiya Rajputs of Mewar refused to accept Mughal authority for a long time. Once defeated, however, they were honourably treated by the Mughals, given their lands (*watan*) back as assignments (*watan jagir*). The careful balance between defeating but not humiliating their opponents enabled the Mughals to extend their influence over many kings and chieftains. But it was difficult to keep this balance all the time. Look at Table 1 again – note that Aurangzeb insulted Shivaji when he came to accept Mughal authority. What was the consequence of this insult?

Mansabdars and Jagirdars

As the empire expanded to encompass different regions the Mughals recruited diverse bodies of people. From a small nucleus of Turkish nobles (Turanis) they expanded to include Iranians, Indian Muslims, Afghans, Rajputs, Marathas and other groups. Those who joined Mughal service were enrolled as *mansabdars*.

The term *mansabdar* refers to an individual who holds a *mansab*, meaning a position or rank. It was a grading system used by the Mughals to fix (1) rank, (2) salary and (3) military responsibilities. Rank and salary were determined by a numerical value called *zat*. The higher the *zat*, the more prestigious was the noble's position in court and the larger his salary.

The *mansabdar's* military responsibilities required him to maintain a specified number of *sawar* or cavalymen. The *mansabdar* brought his cavalymen for review, got them registered, their horses branded and then received money to pay them as salary.

Mansabdars received their salaries as revenue assignments called *jagirs* which were somewhat like *iqtas*. But unlike *muqtis*, most *mansabdars* did not actually reside in or administer their *jagirs*. They only had rights to the revenue of their assignments which was collected for them by their servants while the

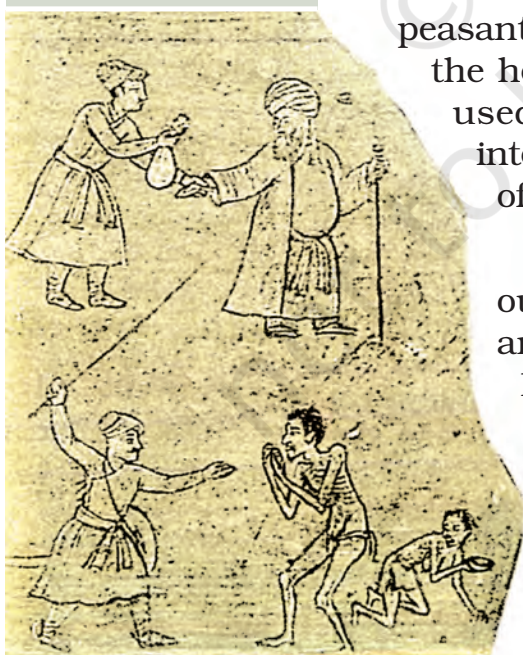
Zat ranking

Nobles with a *zat* of 5,000 were ranked higher than those of 1,000. In Akbar's reign there were 29 *mansabdars* with a rank of 5,000 *zat*; by Aurangzeb's reign the number of *mansabdars* had increased to 79. Would this have meant more expenditure for the state?



Fig. 5
A mansabdar on march with his sawars.

Fig. 6
Details from a miniature from Shah Jahan's reign depicting corruption in his father's administration: (1) a corrupt officer receiving a bribe and (2) a tax-collector punishing poor peasants.



mansabdars themselves served in some other part of the country.

In Akbar's reign these *jagirs* were carefully assessed so that their revenues were roughly equal to the salary of the *mansabdar*. By Aurangzeb's reign this was no longer the case and the actual revenue

collected was often less than the granted sum. There was also a huge increase in the number of *mansabdars*, which meant a long wait before they received a *jagir*. These and other factors created a shortage in the number of *jagirs*. As a result, many *jagirdars* tried to extract as much revenue as possible while they had a *jagir*. Aurangzeb was unable to control these developments in the last years of his reign and the peasantry therefore suffered tremendously.

Zabt and Zamindars

The main source of income available to Mughal rulers was tax on the produce of the peasantry. In most places, peasants paid taxes through the rural elites, that is, the headman or the local chieftain. The Mughals used one term – *zamindars* – to describe all intermediaries, whether they were local headmen of villages or powerful chieftains.

Akbar's revenue minister, Todar Mal, carried out a careful survey of crop yields, prices and areas cultivated for a 10-year period, 1570-1580. On the basis of this data, tax was fixed on each crop in cash. Each province was divided into revenue circles with its own schedule of revenue rates for individual crops. This revenue system was known as *zabt*. It was prevalent in those areas where Mughal administrators could survey the land

and keep very careful accounts. This was not possible in provinces such as Gujarat and Bengal.

In some areas the zamindars exercised a great deal of power. The exploitation by Mughal administrators could drive them to rebellion. Sometimes zamindars and peasants of the same caste allied in rebelling against Mughal authority. These peasant revolts challenged the stability of the Mughal Empire from the end of the seventeenth century.

Akbar Nama and Ain-i Akbari

Akbar ordered one of his close friends and courtiers, Abul Fazl, to write a history of his reign. Abul Fazl wrote a three-volume history of Akbar's reign, titled *Akbar Nama*. The first volume dealt with Akbar's ancestors and the second volume recorded the events of Akbar's reign. The third volume is the *Ain-i Akbari*. It deals with Akbar's administration, household, army, the revenues and the geography of his empire. It also provides rich details about the traditions and culture of the people living in India. The most interesting aspect about the *Ain-i Akbari* is its rich statistical details about things as diverse as crops, yields, prices, wages and revenues.



Fig. 7
Akbar receiving the Akbar Nama from Abul Fazl.

A Closer Look: Akbar's Policies

The broad features of administration were laid down by Akbar and were elaborately discussed by Abul Fazl in his book, the *Akbar Nama*, in particular in its last volume, the *Ain-i Akbari*.

Abul Fazl explained that the empire was divided into provinces called *subas*, governed by a *subadar* who carried out both political and military functions. Each province also had a financial officer or *diwan*. For the maintenance of peace and order in his province, the *subadar* was supported by other officers

such as the military paymaster (*bakhshi*), the minister in charge of religious and charitable patronage (*sadr*), military commanders (*faujdar*) and the town police commander (*kotwal*).

Nur Jahan's influence in Jahangir's court

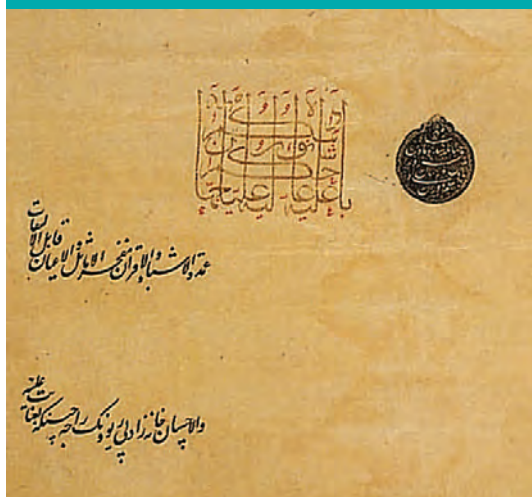


Fig. 8
Nur Jahan's farman.

Mehrunnisa married the Emperor Jahangir in 1611 and received the title Nur Jahan. She remained extremely loyal and supportive to the monarch. As a mark of honour, Jahangir struck silver coins bearing his own titles on one side and on the other the inscription "struck in the name of the Queen Begum, Nur Jahan".

The adjoining document is an order (*farman*) of Nur Jahan. The square seal states, "Command of her most Sublime and Elevated Majesty Nur Jahan Padshah Begum".

The round seal states, "by the sun of Shah Jahangir she became as brilliant as the moon; may Nur Jahan Padshah be the lady of the age".

Dogma

A statement or an interpretation declared as authoritative with the expectation that it would be followed without question.

Bigot

An individual who is intolerant of another person's religious beliefs or culture.

Akbar's nobles commanded large armies and had access to large amounts of revenue. While they were loyal the empire functioned efficiently but by the end of the seventeenth century many nobles had built independent networks of their own. Their loyalties to the empire were weakened by their own self-interest.

While Akbar was at Fatehpur Sikri during the 1570s he started discussions on religion with the *ulama*, Brahmanas, Jesuit priests who were Roman Catholics, and Zoroastrians. These discussions took place in the *ibadat khana*. He was interested in the religion and social customs of different people. Akbar's interaction with people of different faiths made him realise that religious scholars who emphasised ritual and **dogma** were often **bigots**. Their teachings created divisions and disharmony amongst his subjects. This eventually



Fig. 9
Akbar holding discussions with learned individuals of different faiths in the ibadat khana.



Can you identify the Jesuit priests in this picture?

led Akbar to the idea of *sulh-i kul* or “universal peace”. This idea of tolerance did not discriminate between people of different religions in his realm. Instead it focused on a system of ethics – honesty, justice, peace – that was universally applicable. Abul Fazl helped Akbar in framing a vision of governance around this idea of *sulh-i kul*. This principle of governance was followed by Jahangir and Shah Jahan as well.

Sulh-i kul

Jahangir, Akbar’s son, described his father’s policy of *sulh-i kul* in the following words:

As in the wide expanse of the divine compassion there is room for all classes and the followers of all creeds, so ... in his Imperial dominions, which on all sides were limited only by the sea, there was room for the professors of opposite religions, and for beliefs, good and bad, and the road to intolerance was closed. Sunnis and Shias met in one mosque and Christians and Jews in one church to pray. He consistently followed the principle of “universal peace” (sulh-i kul).

Akbar commissioned the translation of many Sanskrit works into Persian. A Maktab Khana or translation bureau was also established at Fatehpur Sikri for this purpose. The Mahabharata, Ramayana, Lilavati and Yogavashisht were some of the notable Sanskrit works that were taken up for translation. The Razmnamah, Persian translation of the Mahabharata contains lavish illustrations of the events of Mahabharata.

The Mughal Empire in the Seventeenth Century and After

The administrative and military efficiency of the Mughal Empire led to great economic and commercial prosperity. International travellers described it as the fabled land of wealth. But these same visitors were also appalled at the state of poverty that existed side by side with the greatest opulence. The inequalities were glaring. Documents from the twentieth year of Shah Jahan's reign inform us that the highest-ranking *mansabdars* were only 445 in number out of a total of 8,000. This small number – a mere 5.6 per cent of the total number of *mansabdars* – received 61.5 per cent of the total estimated revenue of the empire as salaries for themselves and their troopers.


The Mughal emperors and their *mansabdars* spent a great deal of their income on salaries and goods. This expenditure benefited the artisans and peasantry who supplied them with goods and produce. But the scale of revenue collection left very little for investment in the hands of the primary producers – the peasant and the artisan. The poorest amongst them lived from hand to mouth and they could hardly consider investing in additional resources – tools and supplies – to increase productivity. The wealthier peasantry and artisanal groups, the merchants and bankers profited in this economic world.

The enormous wealth and resources commanded by the Mughal elite made them an extremely powerful group of people in the late seventeenth century. As the authority of the Mughal emperor slowly declined, his servants emerged as powerful centres of power in the regions. They constituted new dynasties and held command of provinces like Hyderabad and Awadh. Although they continued to recognise the Mughal emperor in Delhi as their master, by the eighteenth century the provinces of the empire had consolidated their independent political identities. We will read more about them in Chapter 10.

Kings and queens

There were several great monarchs – all near-contemporaries – in different parts of the world in the sixteenth century.

These included the ruler of Ottoman Turkey, Sultan Suleyman 1520-1566. During his rule the Ottoman state expanded into Europe, seizing Hungary and besieging Austria. His armies also seized Baghdad and Iraq. Much of north Africa, all the way into Morocco, acknowledged Ottoman authority. Suleyman also reconstructed the Ottoman navy. Its domination over the eastern Mediterranean brought the navy into competition with Spain. In the Arabian Sea it challenged the Portuguese. The monarch was given the title of “al-Qanuni” (the “lawgiver”) because of the large number of regulations (*qanun*) passed during his reign. These were aimed to standardise administrative procedures throughout the expanding domains of the empire and specifically to protect the peasantry from forced labour and extraordinary taxes. Later, in the seventeenth century, when public order declined in the Ottoman domains, the reign of Suleyman Qanuni was remembered as a period of ideal governance.

 Find out more about Akbar’s other contemporaries – the ruler of England, Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603); the Safavid ruler of Iran, Shah Abbas (1588-1629); and the more controversial Russian ruler, Czar Ivan IV Vasilyevich, also called “Ivan the Terrible” (1530-1584).



Imagine

You have inherited a kingdom. (Remember Babur and Akbar were about your age when they became rulers). How would you make your kingdom stable and prosperous?

Let’s recall

1. Match the following:

<i>mansab</i>	Marwar
Mongol	governor
Sisodiya Rajput	Uzbek
Rathor Rajput	Mewar
Nur Jahan	rank
<i>subadar</i>	Jahangir

KEYWORDS



Mughal

mansab

jagir

zat

sawar

sulh-i kul

primogeniture

coparcenary

zabt

zamindar



2. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) The capital of Mirza Hakim, Akbar's half-brother, was _____.
- (b) The five Deccan Sultanates were Berar, Khandesh, Ahmadnagar, _____ and _____.
- (c) If *zat* determined a *mansabdar's* rank and salary, *sawar* indicated his _____.
- (d) Abul Fazl, Akbar's friend and counsellor, helped him frame the idea of _____ so that he could govern a society composed of many religions, cultures and castes.

3. What were the central provinces under the control of the Mughals?

4. What was the relationship between the *mansabdar* and the *jagir*?

Let's understand

- 5. What was the role of the zamindar in Mughal administration?
- 6. How were the debates with religious scholars important in the formation of Akbar's ideas on governance?
- 7. Why did the Mughals emphasise their Timurid and not their Mongol descent?

Let's discuss

8. How important was the income from land revenue to the stability of the Mughal Empire?
9. Why was it important for the Mughals to recruit *mansabdars* from diverse backgrounds and not just Turanis and Iranis?
10. Like the Mughal Empire, India today is also made up of many social and cultural units. Does this pose a challenge to national integration?
11. Peasants were vital for the economy of the Mughal Empire. Do you think that they are as important today? Has the gap in the income between the rich and the poor in India changed a great deal from the period of the Mughals?

Let's do

12. The Mughal Empire left its impact on the different regions of the subcontinent in a variety of ways. Find out if it had any impact in the city, village or region in which you live.



5 RULERS AND BUILDINGS

Figure 1 shows the first balcony of the Qutb Minar. Qutbuddin Aybak had this constructed around 1199. Notice the pattern created under the balcony by the small arches and geometrical designs. Can you see two bands of inscriptions under the balcony? These are in Arabic. Notice that the surface of the *minar* is curved and angular. Placing an inscription on such a surface required great precision. Only the most skilled craftsman could perform this task. Remember that very few buildings were made of stone or brick 800 years ago. What would have been the impact of a building like the Qutb Minar on observers in the thirteenth century?

Between the eighth and the eighteenth centuries kings and their officers built two kinds of structures:

Fig. 1

The Qutb Minar is five storeys high. The band of inscriptions you see are under its first balcony. The first floor was constructed by Qutbuddin Aybak and the rest by Iltutmish around 1229. Over the years it was damaged by lightning and earthquakes and repaired by Alauddin Khalji, Muhammad Tughluq, Firuz Shah Tughluq and Ibrahim Lodi.



the first were forts, palaces, garden residences and tombs – safe, protected and grandiose places of rest in this world and the next; the second were structures meant for public activity including temples, mosques, tanks, wells, caravanserais and bazaars. Kings were expected to care for their subjects, and by making structures for their use and comfort, rulers hoped to win their praise. Construction activity was also carried out by others, including merchants. They built temples, mosques and wells. However, domestic architecture – large mansions (*havelis*) of merchants – has survived only from the eighteenth century.

Engineering Skills and Construction

Monuments provide an insight into the technologies used for construction. Take something like a roof for example. We can make this by placing wooden beams or a slab of stone across four walls. But the task becomes difficult if we want to make a large room with an elaborate **superstructure**. This requires more sophisticated skills.

Between the seventh and tenth centuries architects started adding more rooms, doors and windows to buildings. Roofs, doors and windows were still made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns, a style of architecture called “trabeate” or “corbelled”. Between the eighth and thirteenth centuries the trabeate style was used in the construction of temples, mosques, tombs and in buildings attached to large stepped-wells (*baolis*).



Fig. 2a

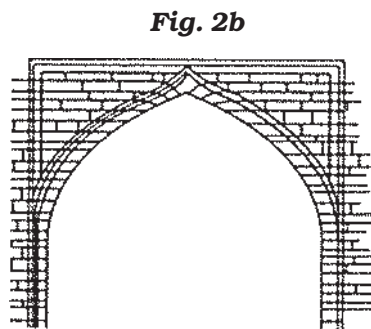


Fig. 2b

Labour for the Agra Fort

Built by Akbar, the Agra Fort required 2,000 stone-cutters, 2,000 cement and lime-makers and 8,000 labourers.

Raniji ki baori or the 'Queen's Stepwell', located in Bundi in Rajasthan is the largest among the fifty step wells that were built to meet the need for water. Known for its architectural beauty, the baori was constructed in 1699 C.E. by Rani Nathavat Ji, the queen of Raja Anirudh Singh of Bundi.

Fig. 2a
Screen in the Quwwat al-Islam mosque, Delhi (late twelfth century).

Fig. 2b
Corbelled technique used in the construction of the screen.

Temple Construction in the Early Eleventh Century

The Kandariya Mahadeva temple dedicated to Shiva was constructed in 999 by the king Dhangadeva of the Chandela dynasty. Fig. 3b is the plan of the temple. An ornamented gateway led to an entrance, and the main hall (mahamandapa) where dances were performed. The image of the chief deity was kept in the main shrine

(garbhagriha). This was the place for ritual worship where only the king, his immediate family and priests gathered. The Khajuraho complex contained royal temples where commoners were not allowed entry. The temples were decorated with elaborately carved sculptures.

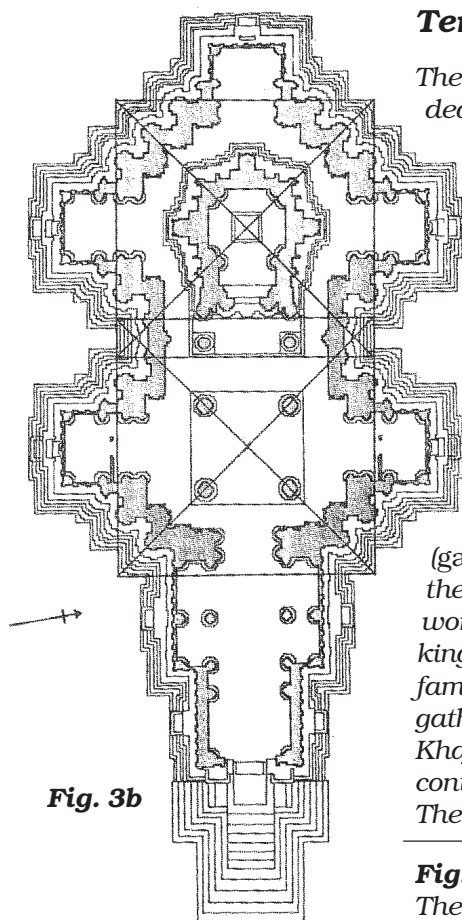


Fig. 3b

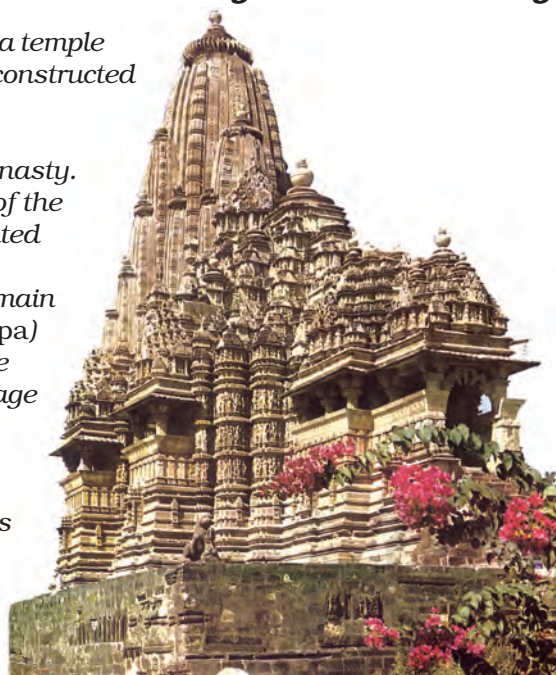
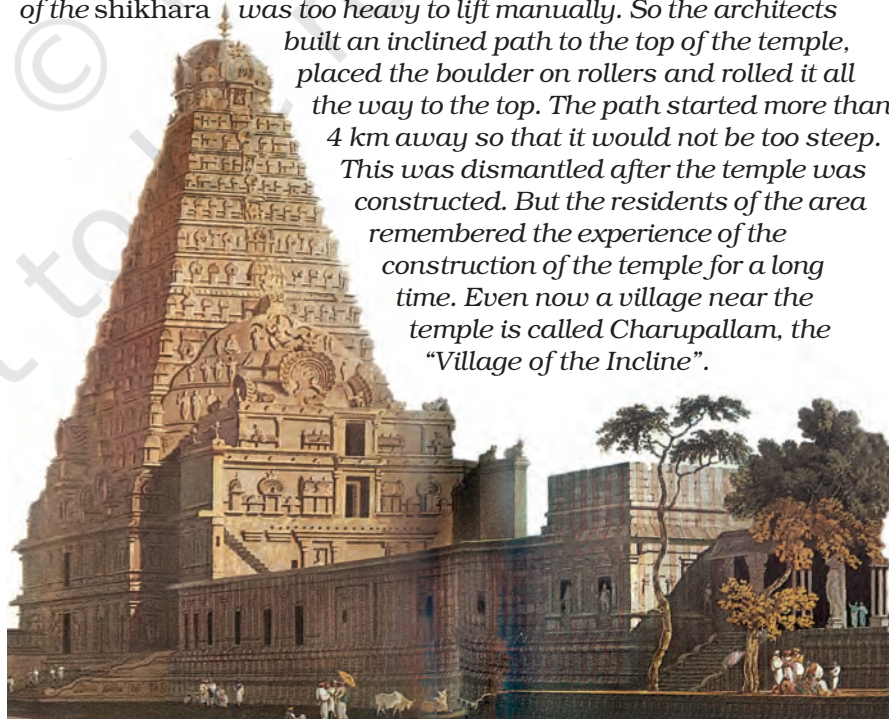


Fig. 3a

Fig. 4

The Rajarajeshvara temple at Thanjavur had the tallest shikhara amongst temples of its time. Constructing it was not easy because there were no cranes in those days and the 90 tonne stone for the top of the shikhara was too heavy to lift manually. So the architects built an inclined path to the top of the temple, placed the boulder on rollers and rolled it all the way to the top. The path started more than 4 km away so that it would not be too steep. This was dismantled after the temple was constructed. But the residents of the area remembered the experience of the construction of the temple for a long time. Even now a village near the temple is called Charupallam, the "Village of the Incline".



What differences do you notice between the *shikharas* of the two temples? Can you make out that the *shikhara* of the Rajarajeshvara temple is twice as high as that of the Kandariya Mahadeva?

Two technological and stylistic developments are noticeable from the twelfth century. (1) The weight of the superstructure above the doors and windows was sometimes carried by arches. This architectural form was called “arcuate”.

Compare Figures 2a and 2b with Figures 5a and 5b.

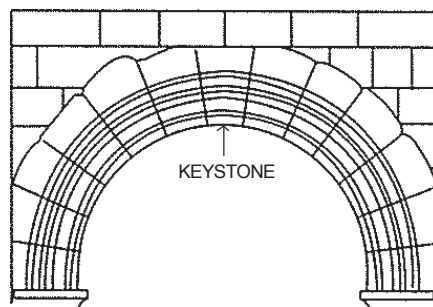


Fig. 5a
A “true” arch. The “keystone” at the centre of the arch transferred the weight of the superstructure to the base of the arch.

(2) Limestone cement was increasingly used in construction. This was very high-quality cement, which, when mixed with stone chips hardened into concrete. This made construction of large structures easier and faster. Take a look at the construction site in Figure 6.



Describe what the labourers are doing, the tools shown, and the means of carrying stones.



Fig. 5b
True arch; detail from the Alai Darwaza (early fourteenth century). Quwwat al-Islam mosque, Delhi.

Fig. 6
A painting from the Akbar Nama (dated 1590-1595), showing the construction of the water-gate at the Agra Fort.

Building Temples, Mosques and Tanks

Temples and mosques were beautifully constructed because they were places of worship. They were also meant to demonstrate the power, wealth and devotion of the patron. Take the example of the Rajarajeshvara temple. An inscription mentions that it was built by King Rajarajadeva for the worship of his god, Rajarajeshvaram. Notice how the names

A royal architect

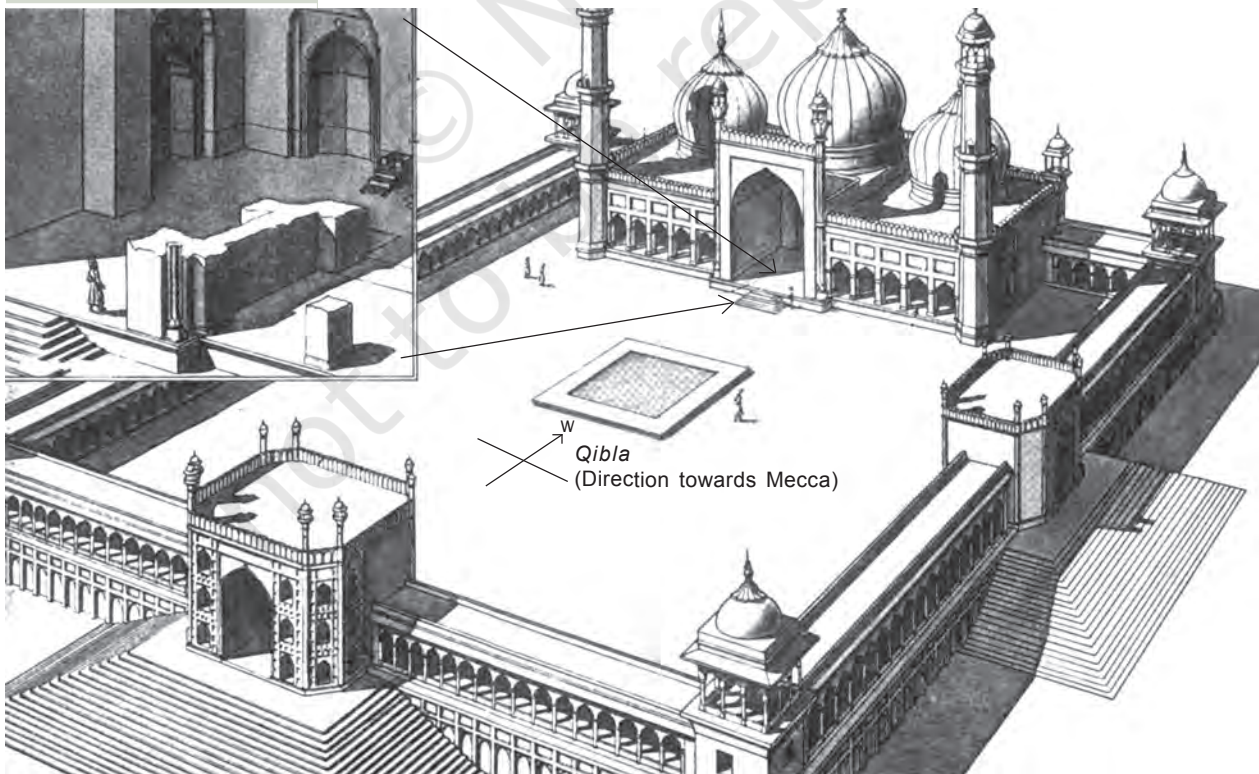
The Mughal emperor Shah Jahan's chronicler declared that the ruler was the "architect of the workshop of empire and religion".

Fig. 7
Plan of the Jami Masjid built by Shah Jahan in his new capital at Shahjahanabad, 1650-1656.

of the ruler and the god are very similar. The king took the god's name because it was auspicious and he wanted to appear like a god. Through the rituals of worship in the temple one god (Rajarajadeva) honoured another (Rajarajeshvaram).

The largest temples were all constructed by kings. The other, lesser deities in the temple were gods and goddesses of the allies and subordinates of the ruler. The temple was a miniature model of the world ruled by the king and his allies. As they worshipped their deities together in the royal temples, it seemed as if they brought the just rule of the gods on earth.

Muslim Sultans and Padshahs did not claim to be incarnations of god but Persian court chronicles described the Sultan as the "Shadow of God". An inscription in the Quwwat al-Islam mosque explained that God chose Alauddin as a king because he had the qualities of Moses and Solomon, the great lawgivers of the past. The greatest lawgiver and architect was God Himself. He created the world out of chaos and introduced order and symmetry.



As each new dynasty came to power, kings wanted to emphasise their moral right to be rulers. Constructing places of worship provided rulers with the chance to proclaim their close relationship with God, especially important in an age of rapid political change. Rulers also offered patronage to the learned and pious, and tried to transform their capitals and cities into great cultural centres that brought fame to their rule and their realm.

It was widely believed that the rule of a just king would be an age of plenty when the heavens would not withhold rain. At the same time, making precious water available by constructing tanks and reservoirs was highly praised. Sultan Iltutmish won universal respect for constructing a large reservoir just outside Dehli-i-Kuhna. It was called the Hauz-i-Sultani or the “King’s Reservoir”. Can you find it on Map 1 in Chapter 3? Rulers often constructed tanks and reservoirs – big and small – for use by ordinary people. Sometimes these tanks and reservoirs were part of a temple, mosque (note the small tank in the *Jami Masjid* in Fig. 7) or a *gurdwara* (a place of worship and congregation for Sikhs, Fig. 8).

Why were Temples Destroyed?

Because kings built temples to demonstrate their devotion to God and their power and wealth, it is not surprising that when they attacked one another’s kingdoms they often targeted these buildings. In the early ninth century when the Pandyan king Shrimara Shrivallabha invaded Sri Lanka and defeated the

Importance of water

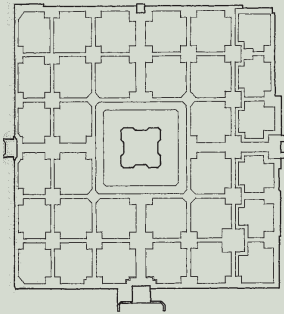
The Persian terms *abad*, populated, prosperous, and *abadi*, flourishing, are both derived from the word *ab*, meaning water.



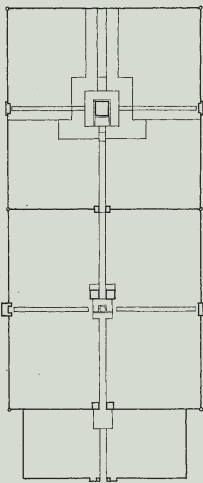
Fig. 8
Harmandar Sahib (Golden Temple) with the holy sarovar (tank) in Amritsar.

Fig. 9

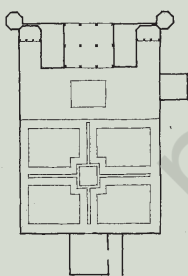
Mughal chahar baghs



(a) The chahar bagh in Humayun's tomb, Delhi, 1562-1571.



(b) Terraced chahar bagh at Shalimar gardens, Kashmir, 1620 and 1634.



(c) The chahar bagh adapted as a river-front garden at Lal Mahal Bari, 1637.

king, Sena I (831-851), the Buddhist monk and chronicler Dhammakitti noted: "he removed all the valuables ... The statue of the Buddha made entirely of gold in the Jewel Palace ... and the golden images in the various monasteries – all these he seized." The blow to the pride of the Sinhalese ruler had to be avenged and the next Sinhalese ruler, Sena II, ordered his general to invade Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas. The Buddhist chronicler noted that the expedition made a special effort to find and restore the gold statue of the Buddha.

Similarly in the early eleventh century, when the Chola king Rajendra I built a Shiva temple in his capital he filled it with prized statues seized from defeated rulers. An incomplete list included: a Sun-pedestal from the Chalukyas, a Ganesha statue and several statues of Durga; a Nandi statue from the eastern Chalukyas; an image of Bhairava (a form of Shiva) and Bhairavi from the Kalingas of Orissa; and a Kali statue from the Palas of Bengal.

Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni was a contemporary of Rajendra I. During his campaigns in the subcontinent he also attacked the temples of defeated kings and looted their wealth and idols. Sultan Mahmud was not a very important ruler at that time. But by destroying temples – especially the one at Somnath – he tried to win credit as a great hero of Islam. In the political culture of the Middle Ages most rulers displayed their political might and military success by attacking and looting the places of worship of defeated rulers.



In what ways do you think the policies of Rajendra I and Mahmud of Ghazni were a product of their times? How were the actions of the two rulers different?

Gardens, Tombs and Forts

Under the Mughals, architecture became more complex. Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, and especially Shah Jahan were personally interested in

literature, art and architecture. In his autobiography, Babur described his interest in planning and laying out formal gardens, placed within rectangular walled enclosures and divided into four quarters by artificial channels.

These gardens were called *chahar bagh*, four gardens, because of their symmetrical division into quarters. Beginning with Akbar, some of the most beautiful *chahar baghs* were constructed by Jahangir and Shah Jahan in Kashmir, Agra and Delhi (see Fig. 9).

There were several important architectural innovations during Akbar's reign. For inspiration, Akbar's architects turned to the tombs of his Central Asian ancestor, Timur. The central towering dome and the tall gateway (*pishtaq*) became important aspects of Mughal



Fig. 10
A 1590 painting of Babur supervising workers laying out a *chahar bagh* in Kabul. Note how the intersecting channels on the path create the characteristic *chahar bagh* design.



Fig. 11
Tomb of Humayun, constructed between 1562 and 1571. Can you see the water channels?

Fig. 12
The throne balcony
in the diwan-i am in
Delhi, completed
in 1648.



architecture, first visible in Humayun's tomb. The tomb was placed in the centre of a huge formal *chahar bagh* and built in the tradition known as "eight paradises" or *hasht bihisht* – a central hall surrounded by eight rooms. The building was constructed with red sandstone, edged with white marble.

It was during Shah Jahan's reign that the different elements of Mughal architecture were fused together in a grand harmonious synthesis. His reign witnessed a huge amount of construction activity especially in Agra and Delhi. The ceremonial halls of public and private audience (*diwan-i khas o am*) were carefully planned. Placed within a large courtyard, these courts were also described as *chihil sutun* or forty-pillared halls.

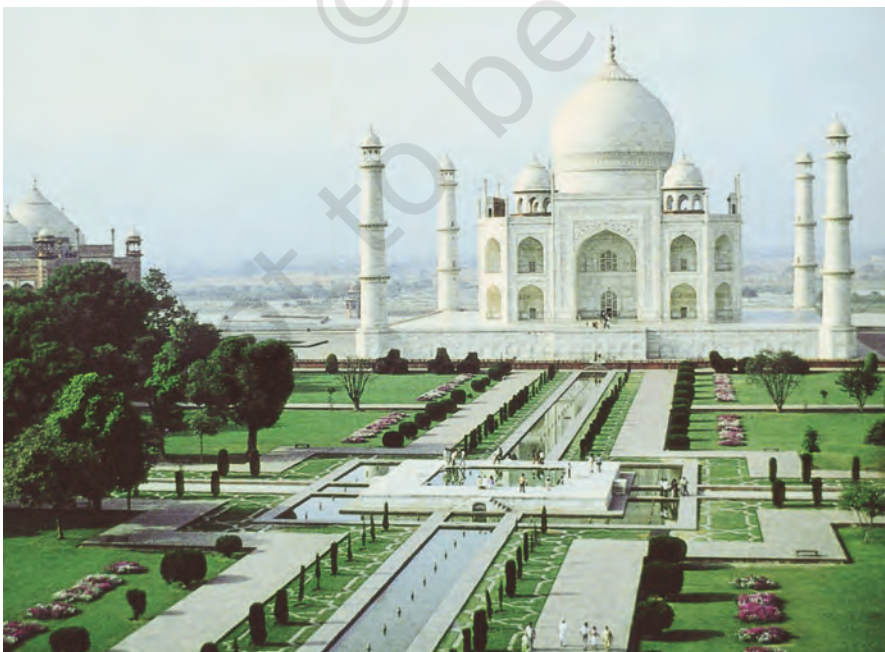
Shah Jahan's audience halls were specially constructed to resemble a mosque. The pedestal on which his throne was placed was frequently described as the *qibla*, the direction faced by Muslims at prayer, since everybody faced that direction when court was in session. The idea of the king as a representative of God on earth was suggested by these architectural features.

The connection between royal justice and the imperial court was emphasised by Shah Jahan in his

newly constructed court in the Red Fort at Delhi. Behind the emperor's throne were a series of **pietra dura** inlays that depicted the legendary Greek god Orpheus playing the lute. It was believed that Orpheus's music could calm ferocious beasts until they coexisted together peaceably. The construction of Shah Jahan's audience hall aimed to communicate that the king's justice would treat the high and the low as equals creating a world where all could live together in harmony.

In the early years of his reign, Shah Jahan's capital was at Agra, a city where the nobility had constructed their homes on the banks of the river Yamuna. These were set in the midst of formal gardens constructed in the *chahar bagh* format. The *chahar bagh* garden also had a variation that historians describe as the "river-front garden". In this the dwelling was not located in the middle of the *chahar bagh* but at its edge, close to the bank of the river.

Shah Jahan adapted the river-front garden in the layout of the Taj Mahal, the grandest architectural accomplishment of his reign. Here the white marble mausoleum was placed on a terrace by the edge of the river and the garden was to its south. Shah Jahan



Pietra dura
Coloured, hard stones placed in depressions carved into marble or sandstone creating beautiful, ornate patterns.

Fig. 13
The Taj Mahal at Agra, completed in 1643.