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Periodisation

Lesson Plan

Contents

- ▶ An overview of the timeline of Medieval history of India
- ▶ To understand how the periods have been divided and arranged in Indian History with reference to sources

Objectives

- ▶ To understand the timeline for the early and late Medieval Period of Indian history
- ▶ To learn the arrangement of early Medieval and late Medieval history of India – in the context of the wider picture not limited to Delhi alone
- ▶ To know about the complete history of India – beyond and including the Muslim invasions, sultanates and empires
- ▶ To appreciate the expanse of Medieval Indian history in different parts of India

Teacher's Aids

- ▶ Pictures, atlas, a wall map of the subcontinent
- ▶ Blackboard
- ▶ Internet

Tips for Teacher

- ▶ Explain the extent of the subcontinent when the Gupta Empire and successive kingdoms existed immediately prior to what is termed the Medieval period.
- ▶ In giving examples of literary and archaeological sources, go beyond the text because the period is rich in them all over India.
- ▶ Students should be encouraged to know places, locations and their placement on the maps.

Background and Reading

- ▶ Read the lesson aloud and explain, sharing the aids, etc., pausing to examine and explain the data in the boxes.

- ▶ Particularly focus on the timeline and the expanse of what constituted the different parts of India during the period.

The Early Medieval Period

- ▶ The timeline and the activities in different parts of the subcontinent during that period.
- ▶ Began after the collapse of the Gupta Empire during AD 550.
- ▶ The timeline is given from AD 606 to AD 1498: references to significant kingdoms and empires on the subcontinent [Harshvardhan, Rashtrakutas, Chandelas, Cholas, Kadambas, Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Vikramaditya, Prithviraj Chauhan, Vijayanagara], travellers [Hiuen Tsang, Al Beruni, Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama] and their records, invasions and raids by Muslim warlords [Mohammad bin Qasim, Mahmud of Ghazni, Mohammad Ghori, Khalji].

What is Periodisation

- ▶ Periodisation: Division of time to study political, social and economic changes.
- ▶ Not just clocking the time in terms of days or months or years—shows changes in the social and political organisations with consequent changes in economic and cultural life, ideas and beliefs.
- ▶ Ancient, Medieval and Modern periods in Indian history.

India during the Medieval Period

- ▶ British historians in the 19th century wrote Indian history by dividing it into three sections, largely based on the entrance of Islam and Christianity into India.
- ▶ 8th century onwards—changes in the social scenario of India—distinct from ancient period.
- ▶ Now the periods are called Ancient, Medieval and Modern.
- ▶ Medieval refers to the Sultanate period in the North and the Chola period in the South.
- ▶ Europe—Medieval period also called Middle Ages [5th century to 16th century].
- ▶ India—8th century to 18th century.
- ▶ Early mid-period: Rule by the Palas, Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas, Cholas and the early Rajputs.
- ▶ Later mid-period: Entry of Turks, establishing the Delhi Sultanate, later the Mughals.
- ▶ List of names showing progression of India as a country, a nation—Jambudvipa, Bharatvarsha, Aryavarta, Sapta Sindhu, Hindustan, India/Bharat.

Sources of the Medieval Period

- ▶ Biographies, autobiographies, drama and stories, travel reports, forts, temples, palaces, inscriptions.
- ▶ Two main sources: Literary and Archaeological.

Literary Sources

- ▶ Sources in many languages—cover fields of politics, science, religion, medicine.

- ▶ Indigenous and foreign sources – religious and non-religious sources [also paintings – picture of society and culture].

Archaeological Sources

- ▶ Study of physical remains of earlier times: Pottery, weapons, sculptures, inscriptions, coins and buildings – Forts like Red Forts at Delhi and Agra, Tughlaqabad, Chittorgarh, and add forts like Kumbhalgarh, the constructions at Hampi and Halebid, etc.; temples like Brihadeeswara at Tanjore, Sun Temple at Konark, and several as at Ellora, etc., palaces at Jaipur, Jodhpur, etc., across Rajasthan – inscriptions on temple walls and copper plates – study is called epigraphy – study of coins is called numismatics.

Features of the Medieval Period

- ▶ Feudalism on the rise
- ▶ Rajputs rise to power in north and west
- ▶ Tripartite struggle between Palas, Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas
- ▶ Establishment of the Sultanate and later Mughal Empire in Delhi
- ▶ Spread of the Bhakti and Sufi movements
- ▶ Rise of the Sikhs and Marathas to power
- ▶ India's wealth attracts Europeans

Importance of Periodisation

- ▶ Reconstruct the past – a guide for future generations.

Assessment Corner

Oral Assignment

- A. Ask for answers at random from the students. Confirm the right answers. Let them write down the correct answers if they like in their books.

Written Assignment

- B–D. The teacher has two options – (i) Either do these exercises orally first and then ask the students to write them down. OR (ii) Ask the students to write the answers on their own. Then the teacher can announce the correct answers and students can ask partners to cross-check them.

In either case, the answers can be written as homework and teacher can check them in the class.

Think Tank

- E. **HOTS question:** Discuss the questions in the class and let the students write the answers to E and F as homework. Teacher should assess individual work.