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Kings and Kingdoms

Lesson Plan

Contents

- ▶ An overview of India during AD 800–AD 1200
- ▶ To understand the internal situation of the subcontinent during the early part of the Medieval period

Objectives

- ▶ To understand the early centuries of Medieval India
- ▶ To learn about its political, social, economic and cultural environment
- ▶ To know about the various kingdoms and empires that existed on the subcontinent at the time
- ▶ To appreciate the reasons why the social and cultural changes came about in India at the time

Teacher's Aids

- ▶ Globe
- ▶ Pictures, charts, atlas and historical wall maps
- ▶ Blackboard
- ▶ Internet

Tips for Teacher

- ▶ Explain the dynamics of the kingdoms that came up all over India from AD 800–AD 1200.
- ▶ Make a chart of the dynasties/kingdoms and the timeline for the easy understanding of students.
- ▶ 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 number of kingdoms before the Sultanate and their internal dynamics as well as the culture of the period.

Timeline: Kings/Kingdoms of the Medieval Period

Dynasty	Kingdom	Period
Pratihara	North India–rival of Gupta Empire in extent over most of India	6th–11th century
Rashtrakuta	Kannada rule over large part of subcontinent – built Ellora, Maharashtra World Heritage Centre	6th–10th century
E. Chalukyas	Kannada rule over present Andhra Pradesh–descended from W. Chalukyas	7th–12th century
Pallava	Empire–Telugu and some Tamil areas	6th–9th century
Pala	Last major Buddhist rulers–Bengal, brief control of N. India in 9th century	8th–12th century
Chola	Empire–Tamil Nadu–extended to SE Asia	9th–13th century
Harshavardhana	Empire–most of North India	AD 601–AD 647
W. Chalukyas	Empire–Western Deccan and some parts of S. India–Kannada–Badami was their capital	10th–12th century
Kalachuri	Parts of Central India	10th–12th century
W. Ganga	Important dynasty of Karnataka–Under other overlords	AD 350–AD 1000
E. Ganga	Dynasty in Odisha region – descent From Kannada W. Ganga dynasty and Tamil Chola dynasty	
Hoysala	Kannada Empire in Karnataka–Capital–Belur– moved to Halebidu	10th–14th century
Kakatiya	Telugu dynasty–most of Andhra Pradesh	AD 1083–AD 1323
Sena	Hindu dynasty in Bengal–covered most of north-eastern India–origin at Karnataka	11th–12th century

- ▶ Political, social, economic changes–new technologies and new ideas–several regional kingdoms–established by people who came from other parts of the world.

The Emergence of New Dynasties

- ▶ AD 647–Death of Harshavardhana–his vast kingdom began to disintegrate.
- ▶ Regional kingdoms in North India, the Deccan and South India–wanted to build empire–fought with each other continuously for territory and control.
- ▶ North and West–Rajputs–most prominent were the Chahamanas or Chauhans; Eastern India–Palas; Western India and upper Gangetic valley–Gurjara-Pratiharas; Deccan and territories in North and South India–Rashtrakutas; Deccan–Chalukyas; South–Cholas powerful, famed for administration, agricultural development–Pandyas, Cheras.

Dynasties:

- ▶ **The Palas:** Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand – Gopala the founder; Devapala, Dharmapala strengthened kingdom and encouraged trade with SE Asia – Dharmapala founded Vikramashila University in Bihar and also monastery – dynasty collapsed in 12th century – succeeded by Sena dynasty.
- ▶ **The Gurjaras and Pratiharas:** Pratiharas – parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat – Raja Bhoj, Mahendrapala; Nagabhatta I founder – trade with Central Asia – successors weak – could not protect kingdom against Mahmud of Ghazni.
- ▶ **The Tripartite Struggle:** Kanauj Harsha's capital – centre of political developments in N. India – accessible by rivers Ganga and Yamuna – easy trade – rich soil attracted neighbours – battles between Gurjaras, Rashtrakutas, and Palas – to control Ganga valley and Kanauj.
- ▶ **The Rise of Rajputs:** Sanskrit – rajaputra meaning 'son of a king' – many kingdoms due to Tripartite struggle in North and Central India – kings claiming descent from Sun or Moon [Suryavanshi; Chandravanshi] – Chauhans most powerful.
- ▶ **The Chauhans:** Prithviraj Chauhan (AD 1179 – AD 1192) – most powerful – defeated Mohammad Ghori at Battle of Tarain in 1191 – Second Battle of Tarain in 1192 – Prithviraj defeated and killed – Chand Bardai wrote 'Prithviraj Raso' [biography] – founded Ajaymeru [Ajmer]
- ▶ **The Rashtrakutas:** Powerful in Deccan – between Tungabhadra and Krishna rivers – patrons of art, literature and architecture – Kailash Temple at Ellora and Elephanta Cave temples – patrons of Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Jainism – Dantidurga and Krishna I.
- ▶ **Paramaras:** Region around Malwa – 10th-12th century – Capital at Dhar – Raja Bhoj – kingdom captured by Alauddin Khalji – Nilakatheshwara temple, Udaipur.
- ▶ **The Pallavas:** South India – capital at Kanchi – 6th-8th century – patrons of art, architecture – Mahendravarman, Narasimhavarman – Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram and Kailashanath Temple, Kanchi.
- ▶ **The Pandyas:** Marco Polo left an account of the Pandya kingdom – south of Cholas – region around Madurai, the capital – a centre of learning.
- ▶ **The Cholas:** Empire in South India – capital at Tanjore – Rajaraja I and Rajendra I – most powerful – Rajaraja I built strong navy – led a naval expedition to Sri Lanka and Maldiv Islands – Rajendra I title of Gangaikonda Cholan [conqueror of Ganga], and built capital called Gangaikonda Cholapuram – came to power under Vijayalaya – other prominent rulers: Parantaka I expanded empire and title of Maduraikonda [conqueror of Madurai] – Rajaraja I suppressed Cheras and expanded his territory, built the Brihadeeswara Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva at Tanjore in 11th century in Dravidian style – Cholas encouraged art, craft, metal statues and architecture – bronze Nataraja is a masterpiece.
- ▶ **Administration** – well-organised – headed by the king – assisted by ministers – efficient armed force: Cavalry, infantry, elephants, navy – empire divided into Mandalams and Valanadus [provinces and districts] consisting of many villages – administered by village assemblies called Ur [village assembly], Sabha [assembly of learned people] and Nagaram [merchants, traders and artisans] – good local self-government – Uttaramerur inscriptions give details of Chola administration.

- ▶ **Society:** Brahmins learned and respected – merchants respected for wealth – artisans, farmers, craftsmen and workers – and women treated with honour.
- ▶ **Literature:** Literary and religious texts translated from Sanskrit into Tamil, Telugu and Kannada – Kamban's 'Ramayanam' in Tamil – 'Mahabharata' in Telugu – 'Pampa', 'Ponna' and 'Ranna' the jewels of Kannada literature.
- ▶ **Temple Architecture:** Temples the centre of social life in Chola period – places of worship and also centres for economic, political and cultural activities – chief feature the Vimana or tower – Brihadeswara temple built by Rajaraja Chola I: 13 storeys crowned by a single block of granite – Rajendra I built capital: Gangaikonda Cholapuram.

The Turkish Invasion

- ▶ Turks and Afghans invaded at end of 10th century – Rajputs caught unawares.
- ▶ **Mahmud of Ghazni:** Son of Sabuktgin – attacked several times between AD 1010 and AD 1026 – captured Kangra, Mathura, Kanauj, Thanesar, Gwalior, and Somnath – attacked Somnath 17 times – took away gold and idols.
- ▶ **Muhammad Ghori:** Governor of province of Ghazni – general of Ghori dynasty – conquered Multan, Peshawar and Lahore – battles with Prithviraj Chauhan – defeated him in AD 1192 – established Muslim rule in India.

Causes of the Defeat of the Indian Rulers

- ▶ Weapons of Turks not better, but horses fast and archers too – Indian rulers used elephants – they were very slow – Muslim rulers efficient and good commanders – Turks well-trained – Indian rulers not united and did not have a common plan of action.
- ▶ Al Beruni – 'Tarikh-i-Hind'.
- ▶ Impact of the invasion on society: Intermingling of cultures and spread of Islamic culture.

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–F. 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 to the students and ask their partners to cross-check them.

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

Think Tank

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