
Chapter – 1 History

Tracing Changes Through a Thousand Years

- The maps by Arab geographer al-Idrisi (1154) and French cartographer (1720) give a large sketch of Indian subcontinent as known as earlier times.
 - Science of cartography however different in the two time periods.
 - **New and Old Terminologies:**
 - (i) Historical records exist in a variety of languages.
 - (ii) The term Hindustan was coined by Minhaj-i-Siraj, a chronicler who wrote in Persian for areas around Punjab, Haryana, and the lands between Ganga and Yamuna.
 - (iii) Baur used Hindustan to describe the subcontinent along with its flora and fauna.
 - (iv) Fourteenth-century poet Amir Khusrau used the word Hind.
 - (v) In Hindi the term 'pardesi' was used to describe an alien. In Persian it was called 'ajnabi'.
 - **Historians and their Sources:**
 - (i) The information about medieval period is derived from two sources: Archaeological and Literary.
 - (ii) Archaeological sources available to us include monuments, temples, coins, tombs, ornaments and paintings.
 - (iii) Since paper became available in good quantum, a lot of written accounts in the form of chronicles, autobiographies, farmaans and accounts of foreign travelers is available from this period in Persian and Arabic.
 - **New Social and Political Group:**
 - (i) The study of the thousand years between 700 and 1750 is a huge challenge to historian largely because of the scale and variety of developments that occurred over the period.
 - (ii) It was a period of great mobility. One such group of people was Rajaputra. Other group of warriors were Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Ahoms and Kayasthas.
 - (iii) Throughout the period there was a gradual clearing of forests and the extension of agriculture. Challenges in their habitat forced many forest-dwellers to migrate.
 - (iv) As society became more differentiated people were grouped into jatis or sub-castes and ranked on the basis of their backgrounds and their occupations.
 - (v) Ranks were not fixed permanently, and varied according to the power, influence and resources controlled by the members of the jati.
 - **Regions and Empires:**
 - (i) Large states like those of the Cholas, Tughluqs, or Mughals encompassed many regions.
 - (ii) A Sanskrit prashsti that praises Delhi Sultan Balban tells that he was ruler of a vast empire that stretched from Bengal in the east to Ghazni in Afghanistan in the west and included all of the South India (Dravida).
 - (iii) There were considerable conflicts between various states.
 - (iv) When the Mughal empire declined in the 18th century, it led to the re-emergence of regional states.
 - **Old and New Religions:**
 - (i) Religion was often closely associated with the social and economic organization of local communities.
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- (ii) It was during the period that important changes occurred in religion. It included the worship of new deities, construction of temples by royalty, and the growing importance of Brahmanas in the Hindu religion.
 - (iii) Knowledge of Sanskrit helped Brahmins to earn respect.
 - (iv) Islam was patronized by many rulers.

- **Historical Periods:**

- (i) The British historians divided the history of India into three periods: Hindu, Muslim and British.
 - (ii) Most historians look to economic and social factors to characterize the major elements of different moments of the past.
 - (iii) The life of hunter-gatherers, early farmers and early empires was called early societies.
 - (iv) The growth of imperial state formations, development of Hinduism and Islam as major religions and the arrival of European trading companies was called medieval period.
 - (v) The last era was called modernity which carried a sense of material progress and intellectual development.
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