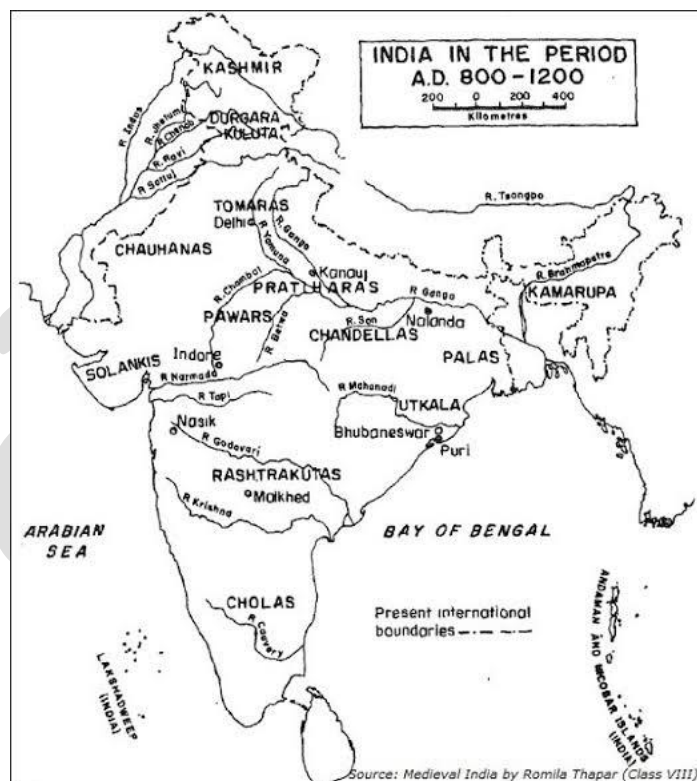


CHAPTER ONE - INDIA AND WORLD

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

- ✓ The word medieval means 'the middle age'. It is used in history to refer to that period which lies between the ancient and the modern period.
- ✓ There were many changes taking place in Indian society during this period, starting from the 8th century A.D. During this time, the changes influenced many aspects of Indian society.
- ✓ The evidence, or the clues about medieval age, are collected from two main sources —



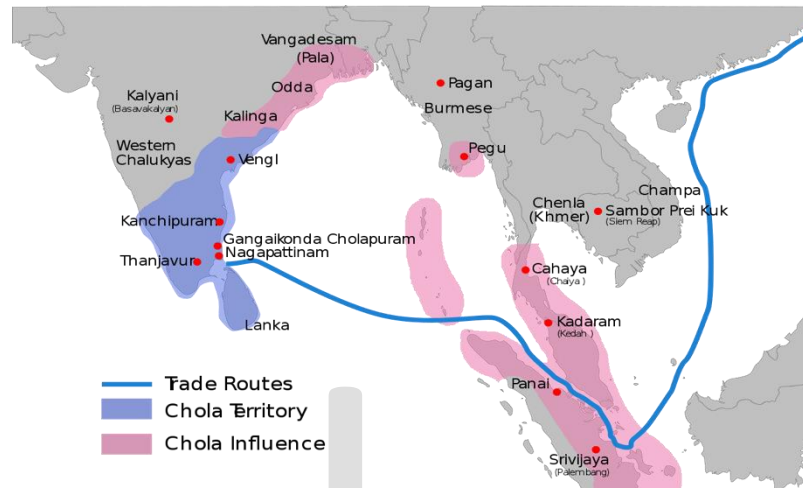
literary and archaeological, like:

- ❖ Inscriptions: These were written on plates of copper or on stone and have been found in large numbers in villages and temples all over India.
- ❖ The early writing was mostly on palm-leaf and birch bark, but from the thirteenth century, paper was used for writing.
- ❖ Some are memoirs or autobiographical accounts, such as the memoirs of Babur and Jahangir.
- ❖ Accounts written by travelers who visited India during these centuries also serve as evidence.
- ❖ Others are works on religious subjects or literature.
- ❖ Many of them are illustrated with beautiful little paintings called miniature paintings.

PHASES OF MEDIEVAL AGE

✓ **EARLY MEDIEVAL AGE**

- The early part of the medieval period stretches from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries. It includes the rule of the Pratiharas, Palas and Rashtrakutas and their conflict over Kanauj, as well as the Rajput kingdoms in the North and the Chola kingdoms in the South.



✓ **LATER MEDIEVAL AGE:**

- The later part of the medieval period, from the thirteenth century onwards, covers the period of what has been called the Delhi Sultanate, the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms and the Mughal empire.
- The rulers were mainly Turks, Afghans and Mughals, who had settled in India. The ideas which they brought with them did not produce any fundamental change in Indian society.

A PICTURE OF THE WORLD IN MEDIEVAL ERA

To understand the coming of these foreigners to India, it is necessary to know what was happening in Western Asia, Europe, Central Asia, China, and South-East Asia.

➤ **WESTERN ASIA**

- An event of great importance took place developed this knowledge further in Arabia in the seventh century A.D. Prophet Muhammad preached the new religion of Islam.
- This united the Arab tribes and soon they became a political group. They conquered many parts of Western Asia—Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and cultural development, the Arabs Turkey, Persia and Sind and Egypt too. After the death of the Prophet, the Arabs were ruled by a series of Caliphs.
- Gradually, the Arabs conquered more territory, especially in North Africa. Conquest was not the only thing which interested the Arabs. Within the territory, under their control, they encouraged the development of trade. This trade made the Arabs rich and they used the money to build a new civilization.

- In the midst of all this prosperity and cultural development, the Arabs were troubled by war with two groups of people: the European and Mongols.

➤ EUROPE

- The power of Europe had declined considerably after the end of the Roman empire.
- Europe suffered because of this, and the period in Europe from the fifth to the eleventh centuries is often called 'The Dark Ages'.
- Law and order suffered, and farmers particularly often had their food looted from them.
- Trade declined and this resulted in the decline of big cities as well. Very little value was placed on knowledge because few people had the leisure to enjoy education. Learning became limited to religious centers and monasteries.
- Only cultural life which did flourish in Europe at this time was Christianity. Christian monks travelled all over the continent, making converts, and Christianity gradually became popular.
- Another major change which took place in Europe during the 'Dark Ages' was the emergence of feudal organization or feudalism.
- During the 'Dark Ages', Europe was cut off from the Arab world. But later, Europe became interested in the Arab world. This interest arose out of two things: trade and religion.
- Some of the European traders also wanted to take part in this trade. The spread of Islam also worried the newly converted Christians of Europe. So, a series of religious wars called the **Crusades**, was organized, in which, European kings and knights with their armies fought the Muslims in the eastern Mediterranean. The wars brought the European and Arab world's closer together, and Europeans began to take part in the Arab trade.

➤ CENTRAL ASIA

- In the ninth century, the power of the Abbasid **Caliphs** weakened. The territory which they had held, and which had been divided into provinces broke away from their control and finally became independent. Among these, were the provinces of **Ghazni and Ghor**.
- The **Seljuk Turks**, who were powerful in Central Asia, moved westwards and began to establish their rule in these provinces. By the eleventh century, the Seljuk Turks were establishing their power in western Asia.
- In the thirteenth century, there was an attack from Central Asia and this time, it was the **Mongols** led under Chinghiz Khan. The attack weakened the power of the Seljuk Turks in western Asia.

➤ CHINA

- The power of the Mongols increased, and they controlled the land from western Asia and southern Russia across Central Asia into China. From the middle of the thirteenth century to the middle of the fourteenth century, the Mongols were ruling in China.



- China had also been a rich and powerful country under the T'ang and Sung dynasties. By conquering China, they increased their political power and wealth in Central Asia.
- Mongols came to control the **Silk route**, a route for trade between China and West Asia.
- The making of gunpowder, paper and the invention of the compass and of printing, all came from China. Thus, Central Asia, because of trade, was a useful area to control. The Mongols had been converted to Islam, so they turn converted some of the tribes living in Central Asia and parts of China.

➤ **SOUTH-EAST ASIA**

- In Countries, such as Annam, Laos, Cambodia, Java, Sumatra, Malaya, both Chinese and Indian merchants competed for trade. The merchants brought not only cargoes but their own cultures as well.
- In the fourteenth century, the Arab merchants had also established themselves in South-East Asia.

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