

Chapter - 10

THE RISE OF SMALL KINGDOMS IN NORTH INDIA

CLASS VII

(DATE: 20.7.20 TO 24.7.20)

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ *Harshvardhan was the last great ruler of ancient India. After the death , the whole empire distinguished into many small kingdoms due to the miserable economic condition and lack of proper administration by this weak successors. This was a period of political instability in north India. Three powerful kingdoms arose between 750CE and 1000CE out of the ruins of Harsha's empire, and hence, this period is also known as the **Age of three empires**. The **Rashtrakutas** took over the control in northern part of Deccan, The **Palas** in eastern India and the **Pratiharas** in avanti (southern Rajasthan and Gujarat) .*

RASHTRAKUTAS

- ▶ *The rashtrakutas established the most powerful empire in northern Deccan in 753 CE. They became the masters of a large area of the present Gujarat , Madhya pradesh , Bihar , Maharashtra and Karnataka. Their empire acted as a bridge between north and south india. Dantidurga is considered to be the real founder of the Rashtrakuta empire. Govinda III and Amoghavarsha were the well- known Rashtrakutas kings. The Rashtrakutas were great warriors , art lovers and scholars. They took up titles like Chakravati , Param Bhattarak and Maharajadhiraj . Rashtraktas followed Jainism but also patronised Buddhists , Hindus and Muslims.*

PALAS

- ▶ *Very limited information is available about the history of Bengal for the period between the death of Harsha and the ascending of Palas. But, it is well known that during this time, Bengal faced a lot of infighting among the small kingdoms. The people of Bengal elected Gopala as their king to maintain peace and order. He set up an empire, which ruled over for about 400 years. His successors used “Pala” after their name and hence, their empire came to be known as **Pala dynasty**. Dharamshala was the greatest ruler of Pala dynasty. He set up a centre for Buddhist education which was known as **Vikramsheel Vihar**.*

PRATI HARAS

- ▶ *They are also called **Gujara- Pratiharas** because they originated from Gujarat . They ruled over Gujarat and south-western Rajasthan. The founder of the Pratihara empire was Nagabhata - I. The greatest ruler of this dynasty was Mihir Bhoj He conquered Kanauj around 836 B.C. The continuous battles weakened the Pratihara empire and it broke into a number of smaller kingdoms. The Pratiharas were great warriors. They fought many battles with the Palas and the Rashtrakutas. The Pratiharas kings were also great patrons of art and literature. King- Mihir Bhoj himself were known scholar.*

TRIPARTITE STRUGGLE

- ▶ *Kanauj was considered a symbol of power in North India. Hence , the three kingdoms – the Rashtrakuta , the Pala and the Pratihara were continuously engaged in a struggle to possess Kanauj . Their struggle for supremacy was known as the Tripartite struggle. But , the continuous battles weakened them and finally led to the decline of all the three great powers. Their empires disintegrated into many small Kingdoms within a period of hundred years.*

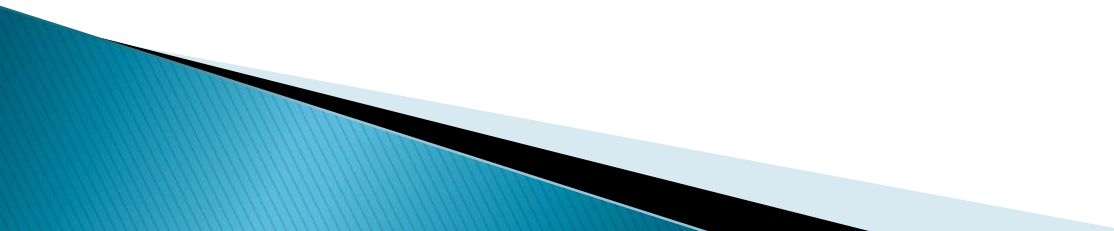
RAJPUTS

- ▶ *The Rajputs played an important role in medieval India. They were famous for their bravery. There is no clarity about the origin of the Rajputs. The word 'Rajput' means 'son of the raja (king). Some historians believe that the rajputs are the descendants of foreign tribes who had settled in India. It is also believed that the main four clans of Rajputs were born from fire altars. Hence . They were known as Agnikulas. They are Paramaras , Pratiharas (Rajasthan – Gujarat) , Chauhans (Ajmer) and Chalukyas (Gujarat). There were about 36 clans of Rajputs*

CHAUHAN DYNASTY

- ▶ *Chauhan Dynasty enjoys a special place of prestige among all the Rajput clans. The chauhan kings ruled over Gujarat and parts of Rajasthan. Prithviraj Chauhan was the most powerful King among chauhans. He came to the throne in 1177 CE. He made many conquests. Even today , Prithviraj Chauhan remains a hero of many folk tales of India. Chand Bardai composed an epic poem , Prithviraj Raso , which narrates his bravery and heroism.*

Governance In North India

- ▶ ***Administration***: The king was all powerful in North India. The empire was divided into provinces. The king was the head of the military as well as the judiciary. The king spent huge amounts of money on building up strong armies.
 - ▶ ***Economy***: There were great economic disparity among different social classes. The royal family , high officials and the traders were prosperous. The people living in villages were poor. The kings granted land as rewards to officers who came to be known as Thakurs . They provided military assistance at the time of war .
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Governance In North India

- ▶ **Society** : *The rigid caste system led to the division of Indian society. The king , the feudal lords and the brahmins in high positions , enjoyed a life of luxury. The condition of women was quite miserable. They were deprived of education.*
- ▶ **Religion**: *The rajputs mainly worshipped Gods Vishnu and Shiva. They also worshipped goddesses Kali , Lakshmi and Durga. Hinduism became more popular than Buddhism. Many buddhists took shelter in south – east Asia when the Turks attacked monasteries at Nalanda.*

Governance in North India

- ▶ **Education** : *The elementary education was limited to temples and monasteries. The universities of Nalanda and Vikramshila became important centres of higher education. The regional languages like Marathi , gujarati , and Bengali developed as they were the languages in which Bhakti saints preached and composed songs. Pali and Prakrit languages were used for writing books on Buddhism and Jainism.*

Governance in North India

- ▶ *Art and Architecture*: The examples of the paintings of North India can be found in the form of Murals in palaces , caves and temples. The Lingaraj and Mukteshwara temples at Bhubneshwar and the sun temple at Konark are the fine examples of the architecture of the period from eighth to twelfth century.
- ▶ *Trade*: India developed trade relations with the countries of the east , south – east , west and central Asia and the European countries . This brought Indians into close contact with the developments in other countries..

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