

## Chapter- 1

### WHEN, WERE HOW-MEDIEVAL PERIOD OF INDIA

#### STUDY NOTES

##### Introduction

The term medieval has been derived from the Latin words 'medius' and 'aevum' which means **middle** age. Thus it is that period of Indian history which falls between the Ancient period and the Modern Period .

The medieval period is again divided into two parts:

- 1 **The Early medieval period** ( AD 700- AD1200).
- 2 **The Late medieval period** (AD 1200- AD1700).

The long rule of the Mughals in the late medieval period stabilized the Indian society and helped in uniting the people from different regions of India.

##### Society

Spread of agriculture led to the clearing of forests. The forest dwellers migrated to other areas. This gave rise to many peasant societies. The society was now divided into sub-castes or jatis instead of varnas.

##### Religion

Major changes took place in **Hinduism** during this period. Many new temples were constructed. People began worshipping many new deities. **Islam**, a new religion was introduced in India. Guru Nanak led the foundation of **Sikhism**.

##### Trade

Due to greater interaction of India with other countries trade flourished. This in turn led to the rise of new towns and cities.

##### How geography shaped our history

Turks, Afghans, Mongols, and other invaders entered India through the passes in the Himalayas. Southern India is cut off from the northern India by Satpura and Vindhya ranges. The long coast line in south India encouraged the southern rulers to establish trade relations with other countries.

##### Main features of Medieval period

- Many foreign powers were attracted to India because of its wealth.
- This was the period of new technologies.
- Many languages spoken in India today, developed during this period.
- Many social customs, beliefs and traditions in India today have their origin in the

medieval period.

- Intermingling from different parts of the world brought new ideas and ways of life.

### Sources of medieval period

Historians have gathered the information from various sources such as inscriptions, coins, sculpture and buildings, paintings, historical writings, etc.

**Inscriptions** are writings engraved on hard surfaces like stones, pillars, rocks etc. which gave us glimpse of history of the period.

**Coins** give us the names of kings and queens who issued those coins. They help the historian to verify the dates about the rule of the king.

**Sculpture and buildings:** Monuments and ancient buildings including temples tell us about the religious practices, social and economic conditions etc. of the period.

**Paintings** tell us about food habits, dresses, jewellery, customs, festivals and celebrations of the important event of the period.

### Historical writings or literary evidence

Literary sources includes plays, novels, epics, biographies and scrolls in archives, museums and libraries.

Literary sources of the period are of two types

**Indigenous sources** include manuscripts written in birch bark, palm leaf, bamboo leaf, cloth and paper.

**Important biographies** tells us many important facts about rulers. It give us a detailed and vivid picture of life during the period.

**Chronicles:** recorded text in which events are described in the order in which they occurred is called Chronicle.

**Biographies** describe the lives and achievements of the kings.

**Folk Tales** are stories that were handed down

verbally over generations before being writtendown.

**Foreign sources:** during the medieval period several foreigners travelled to India as travellers, pilgrims or as students. The accounts of these foreign travellers gave us an objective pictures of the places and the rulersthey visited in India. For example **Al-Masudi** an Arab traveller, **Al-Beruni** the Persian traveller, **Ibn-Batuta** the Moroccan traveller etc.