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## Reshaping India's Political Map

This chapter explores the major political changes in India from the 11th to the 17th centuries, a period often referred to as the latter part of the medieval period in Indian history. It covers the impact of foreign invasions, the rise and fall of dynasties, and the resulting shifts in political boundaries. The chapter also examines the social and economic responses to these changes and their effects on the lives of people.

## Delhi Sultanate and Its Dynasties

The Delhi Sultanate was established after the defeat of King Prithviraj Chauhan in 1192. It was ruled by five successive foreign dynasties of Turkic-Afghan origin: the Mamluks (Slave dynasty), the Khiljis, the Tughlaqs, the Sayyids, and the Lodis. The Sultanate

controlled parts of northern India but faced resistance from kingdoms like the Eastern Gangas and the Hoysalas.

The period was marked by political instability, frequent violent successions, military campaigns, and territorial expansion. The sultans often plundered cities and temples, and imposed taxes such as the jizya on non-Muslims. The Sultanate also saw cultural interactions, as seen in architecture like the Qutb Minar and Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque.

## Exam Questions

**Q:** What were the main dynasties of the Delhi Sultanate?

**A:** The main dynasties were the Mamluks, Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids, and Lodis.

**Q:** How did the Delhi Sultanate impact Indian architecture?

**A:** It introduced Islamic architectural styles, exemplified by the Qutb Minar and the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, which incorporated materials from older Hindu and Jain temples.

## Vijayanagara Empire and Deccan Sultanates

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The Vijayanagara Empire was founded in 1336 by Harihara and Bukka, who established an independent kingdom in southern India. It became a major power, especially under Krishnadevaraya in the 16th century, who expanded the empire and patronised arts and culture.

The Bahmani Sultanate, a rival power in the Deccan, eventually fragmented into five Deccan Sultanates: Bijapur, Golconda, Berar, Ahmednagar, and Bidar. These kingdoms frequently engaged in alliances and wars.

## Exam Questions

**Q:** Who were the founders of the Vijayanagara Empire?

**A:** Harihara and Bukka, former governors under Muhammad bin Tughlaq, founded the empire.

**Q:** What was the significance of Krishnadevaraya's reign?

**A:** He expanded the empire, promoted cultural renaissance, and patronised literature and temple building.

## Mughal Empire and Major Rulers

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The Mughal Empire was established by Babur in 1526 after defeating Ibrahim Lodi at the First Battle of Panipat. Babur was a cultured but ruthless conqueror. His son Humayun struggled to maintain the empire, but it was Akbar who consolidated and expanded it significantly.

Akbar's reign was notable for military conquests, administrative reforms, religious tolerance, and cultural patronage. He abolished the jizya tax and promoted the doctrine of sulh-i-kul (peace with all). His successors Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb continued the empire's expansion and cultural achievements, though Aurangzeb's reign saw religious intolerance and reimposition of jizya.

## Exam Questions

**Q:** What were some key features of Akbar's administration?

**A:** Akbar introduced administrative reforms, promoted religious tolerance, abolished jizya, and patronised arts and culture.

**Q:** How did Aurangzeb's policies differ from Akbar's?

**A:** Aurangzeb was more religiously orthodox, reimposed jizya, banned music and dance in court, and destroyed some temples.

## Resistance and Rebellions

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Various groups resisted the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire. The Rajputs, especially under rulers like Rana Kumbha, Rana Sanga, and Maharana Pratap, fought to maintain independence. The Ahoms in the northeast used guerrilla tactics to repel Mughal invasions, notably winning the Battle of Saraighat in 1671.

The Sikh Gurus, starting with Guru Nanak, spread messages of equality and justice. Later Gurus, such as Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur, faced persecution. Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa, a martial brotherhood committed to defending the faith and justice.

Rani Durgavati of the Gond kingdom is remembered for her valiant resistance against Mughal forces.

## Exam Questions

**Q:** What was the significance of the Battle of Saraighat?

**A:** It was a decisive victory by the Ahoms against the Mughal forces, preserving their independence.

**Q:** Who was Guru Gobind Singh and what did he establish?

**A:** He was the tenth Sikh Guru who established the Khalsa, a martial brotherhood.

## Administration under Delhi Sultanate and Mughals

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The Delhi Sultanate was ruled by a sultan with absolute authority, assisted by a council of ministers. The iqta system assigned territories to nobles for tax collection to maintain the army.

Akbar reorganised administration with ministers handling finance, military, public works, and justice. The mansabdari system ranked officers who maintained troops and animals, paid through land grants (jagirs). Despite reforms, non-Muslims were underrepresented in higher administration.

## Exam Questions

**Q:** What was the iqta system?

**A:** It was a system where territories were assigned to nobles to collect taxes and maintain the army.

**Q:** Describe the mansabdari system.

**A:** It was a ranking system for officers who maintained troops and were paid through land grants.

## Economy and Society

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Despite political instability, India's economy thrived on agriculture, artisanal industries, and trade. The period saw infrastructural developments like roads, canals, and new cities. Currency systems evolved with coins in various metals.

Temples were centres of economic activity, managing land grants, markets, and credit systems. Trade networks connected India to Arabia, Persia, and Central Asia. The hundi system facilitated secure financial transactions across regions.

However, peasants and craftspeople often faced harsh conditions, with heavy taxation and famines. Despite religious conflicts, communities generally coexisted peacefully, contributing to a shared cultural heritage.

## Exam Questions

**Q:** What role did temples play in the economy?

**A:** Temples managed land, markets, credit, and community infrastructure, acting as economic hubs.

**Q:** How did the hundi system benefit merchants?

**A:** It allowed secure transfer of funds across political boundaries without carrying currency.

## Solved Examples

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**Example 1:** Explain the significance of the Battle of Panipat in 1526.

**Answer:** The Battle of Panipat in 1526 marked the beginning of the Mughal Empire in India when Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi. It introduced gunpowder weapons and changed the political landscape by ending the Delhi Sultanate.

**Example 2:** Describe the administrative reforms introduced by Akbar.

**Answer:** Akbar reorganised the administration by appointing ministers for finance, military, public works, and justice. He introduced the mansabdari system to maintain a flexible army and improved revenue collection through detailed land surveys.

## Practice Set

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### Easy

- Who founded the Delhi Sultanate?
- Name two major dynasties of the Delhi Sultanate.
- What was the jizya tax?

### Moderate

- Explain the significance of the Vijayanagara Empire in southern India.
- What were the main features of Akbar's policy of sulh-i-kul?
- Describe the mansabdari system.

### Challenging

- Discuss the impact of Aurangzeb's religious policies on the Mughal Empire.
- Analyze the role of regional kingdoms in resisting the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal expansion.
- Explain how the hundi system facilitated trade during this period.

## Answer Key

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- Q: Who founded the Delhi Sultanate? A: Qutb-ud-din Aibak.
- Q: Name two major dynasties of the Delhi Sultanate. A: Mamluks and Khiljis.
- Q: What was the jizya tax? A: A tax imposed on non-Muslims for protection and exemption from military service.
- Q: Explain the significance of the Vijayanagara Empire in southern India. A: It was a major kingdom that promoted culture, arts, and resisted northern invasions.
- Q: What were the main features of Akbar's policy of sulh-i-kul? A: Religious tolerance, peace with all faiths, and inclusion of diverse communities.
- Q: Describe the mansabdari system. A: A ranking system for officers who maintained troops and were paid through land grants.
- Q: Discuss the impact of Aurangzeb's religious policies on the Mughal Empire. A: Reimposition of jizya, destruction of temples, and religious intolerance led to unrest and decline.
- Q: Analyze the role of regional kingdoms in resisting the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal expansion. A: Kingdoms like Mewar, Ahoms, and Sikh confederacies resisted invasions and maintained independence.
- Q: Explain how the hundi system facilitated trade during this period. A: It allowed merchants to transfer money securely across regions without carrying physical currency.

## Quick Reference

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- **Delhi Sultanate:** Five dynasties of Turkic-Afghan origin ruling northern India (13th-15th centuries).
- **Vijayanagara Empire:** Powerful South Indian kingdom (14th-17th centuries) known for culture and military strength.
- **Mughal Empire:** Founded by Babur in 1526, expanded under Akbar, reached peak under Aurangzeb.
- **Jizya:** Tax on non-Muslims imposed by some Muslim rulers.

- **Sulh-i-kul:** Akbar’s policy of religious tolerance and peace.
- **Mansabdari system:** Administrative ranking system for military officers under Akbar.
- **Hundi:** Financial instrument for secure money transfer across regions.
- **Jauhar:** Mass self-immolation by Rajput women to avoid capture during invasions.

## Glossary

- **Turkic:** Peoples and cultures from Central Asia to Turkey and Siberia.
- **Sultanate:** Territory ruled by a Sultan, a Muslim ruler.
- **Iconoclasm:** Destruction of religious images considered idolatrous.
- **Jizya:** Tax on non-Muslim subjects for protection and exemption from military service.
- **Guerrilla warfare:** Fighting using small groups and surprise attacks.
- **Khalsa:** Martial brotherhood established by Guru Gobind Singh.
- **Iqta system:** Land revenue system assigning territories to nobles for tax collection.
- **Mansabdari system:** Ranking system for officers maintaining troops, introduced by Akbar.
- **Hundi:** Financial instrument for transferring money without physical currency.
- **Jauhar:** Mass self-immolation by Rajput women to avoid capture during invasions.

## Chronology of Major Events

| Year | Event                            | Significance                                        |
|------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1206 | Establishment of Delhi Sultanate | Start of Muslim rule in northern India              |
| 1336 | Founding of Vijayanagara Empire  | Rise of a major South Indian kingdom                |
| 1526 | First Battle of Panipat          | Babur’s victory and foundation of Mughal Empire     |
| 1556 | Second Battle of Panipat         | Akbar’s decisive victory consolidating Mughal power |
| 1565 | Battle of Talikota               | Defeat of Vijayanagara Empire by Deccan Sultanates  |

|      |                                          |                                                   |
|------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1671 | Battle of Saraighat                      | Ahom victory preserving independence from Mughals |
| 1699 | Formation of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh | Establishment of Sikh martial brotherhood         |
| 1707 | Death of Aurangzeb                       | Beginning of Mughal decline                       |

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