



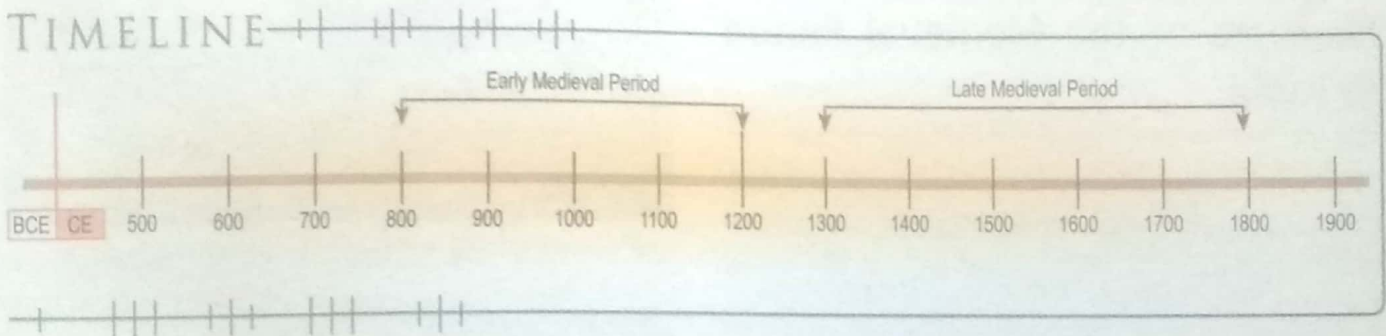
THE MEDIEVAL YEARS AND ITS SOURCES

Spotlight

- ◆ Extent of the medieval period
- ◆ Different names for India
- ◆ Outline of the major political, socio-economic and cultural developments
- ◆ Important sources

Gear Up

The medieval period introduced many new elements in Indian society. Dresses like sherwani, kurta, churidar and food items like kebabs, biryani, korma, mangoes and grapes. Can you think of more changes which took place during this time?



Introduction

In India, the medieval period stretches for nearly a thousand years. It began in 800 CE and continued till 1800 CE. This period was marked by diverse changes in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the people in the subcontinent. Further divided into two phases, the early medieval period (from 800 to 1200 CE) deals with the history of powerful dynasties such as the Palas, Rajputs, Rashtrakutas and the Cholas. Various historical developments brought about by the rule of the Afghans, Turks and the Mughals occurred in the late medieval period (from 1300 to 1800 CE).

GOOD TO KNOW

During the medieval period, feudalism was a dominant trend in Europe. It was a socio-political system in which the king shared power with the nobility in return for military service. The nobility allowed the common people to use its lands in return for money and services.

Different Names For India

Across the ages, India has been referred to by different names. However, quite often, the area of land suggested by each name has differed. The geographical area varied from the region of the

Indus and its tributaries to the entire subcontinent. The more famous among these names are listed below.

- ◆ *Jambudvipa*: This name is mentioned in ancient Buddhist texts and the *Puranas*.
- ◆ *Bharatavarsha*: The country was so named after the Bharata tribe that existed in the Rig Vedic times.
- ◆ *Aryavarta* (the land of the Aryans): This name was given around 150 BCE to the northern part of India.
- ◆ *Tien Chu* and *Yin Tu*: The Chinese used these terms for India.
- ◆ *Hindustan*: This term is derived from the Greek word 'Indus' or 'Indos'.
- ◆ *Hind*: This term was used by the Arabs.
- ◆ *India*: This term was used by the British.

TIME TO THINK

Why do you think the geographical area indicated by each name has differed?

Features of the Medieval Period in India

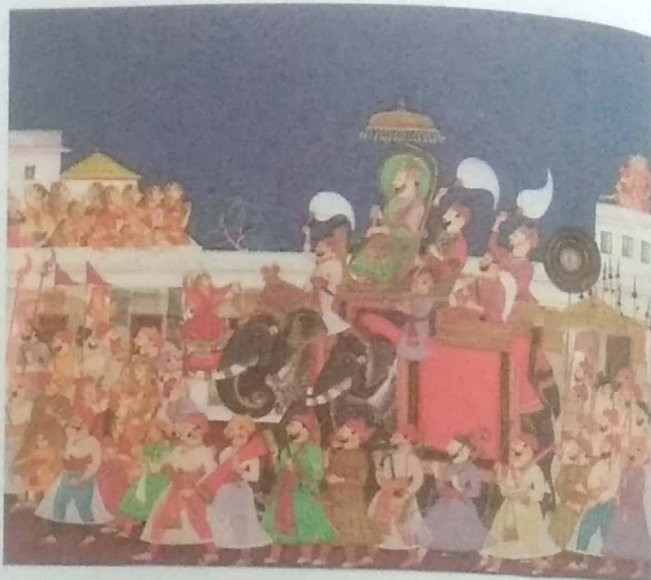
The medieval period in India was quite eventful. Several changes took place in the socio-cultural and political life. Let us take a brief look at the broad trends in this period.

- ◆ struggle for power between the Palas, Pratiharas and Rashtrakutas
- ◆ emergence of several Rajput kingdoms in northern and western India
- ◆ extensive clearing of land led to spread of agriculture and establishment of larger settlements
- ◆ formation of complex societies with economic and social differences
- ◆ arrival of the Turks from the North-west and establishment of the Delhi Sultanate
- ◆ spread of the Bhakti and Sufi Movements
- ◆ establishment of the Mughal Empire

- ◆ rise of the Marathas and Sikhs
- ◆ increase in trade and economic prosperity of India
- ◆ arrival of European companies
- ◆ emergence of new cities
- ◆ evolution of a composite Indian culture

Sources of History

History cannot be written on the basis of information in people's memory alone. An accurate historical account relies upon several sources. Literary and archaeological sources are used to reconstruct events of the medieval period.



A medieval painting depicting the procession of a Rajput king

Literary Sources

Literary sources constitute all accounts written during the period under study. These cover various subjects like religion, science, astronomy and medicine.

Literary sources can be broadly classified into indigenous and foreign sources. The former were written by those who lived on the Indian subcontinent. The latter were composed by foreigners who travelled to India.

These different writings give us an insight into the social, political, economic and cultural conditions of people. Let us look at some literary sources.

Important Literary Sources

Chronicles	<i>Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi</i> by Zia-ud-din Barani, <i>Tughlaqnama</i> by Amir Khusrau
Autobiographies	Babur's <i>Tuzuk-i-Baburi</i> , Jahangir's <i>Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri</i>
Biographies	Chandbardai's <i>Prithviraj Raso</i> , Gulbadan Begum's <i>Humayunnama</i> , Abul Fazl's <i>Ain-i-Akbari</i> and <i>Akbarnama</i>
Accounts of foreign travellers	Works by Ibn Battuta, Abdur Razzaq, Thomas Roe, Bernier and Marco Polo
<i>Farmans</i>	Royal orders issued by different rulers
Folklores, dramas and stories	Somadeva's <i>Kathasaritsagar</i> and <i>Brihatkathakosha</i>

are also, rich sources of information about the different aspects of life in the medieval times.

- ◆ Inscriptions on stone surfaces, copper plates and walls of temples, reveal the extent of medieval kingdoms and achievements of different rulers. For example, the Gwalior inscription of Bhoja I gives a detailed account of his predecessors and their achievements. The study of inscriptions is called epigraphy.
- ◆ Coins inform us about the names of rulers, their reigns and mark important events. They also give us some idea of the economic conditions of those periods. The study of coins is called numismatics.



Gold coins issued in medieval India

- ◆ Miniature paintings of the medieval period tell us about the customs, clothes, food and other cultural habits of the people.

GOOD TO KNOW

Rajtarangini (River of Kings), written in the twelfth century by Kalhana, is a chronicle of the kings of Kashmir. It is regarded as the first historical work by any Indian.

Archaeological Sources

Archaeology can be defined as the study of the past in the light of the material remains left behind by our ancestors. Sources of archaeology include remains of buildings, pottery, weapons, ornaments, sculptures, inscriptions (writings on stone surfaces), paintings and coins. These are obtained during excavations of various historical sites. Experts who study these remains are called archaeologists. Major archaeological remains that highlight various aspects of life during the medieval period are briefly described below.

- ◆ Forts, temples, mosques, palaces and other such structures tell us about architectural styles, artistic skills and materials used in the construction of buildings in those days. They

PICSTOP



1. Describe what is shown in the picture.
2. Can you describe the dressing style of men in medieval times?

SUM IT UP

- ◆ In India, the medieval period stretches for nearly a thousand years.
- ◆ The early medieval period extends from 800 to 1200 CE and the late medieval period from 1300 to 1800 CE.
- ◆ *Jambudvipa, Bharatvarsha, Hindustan* are some of the different names for India.
- ◆ This rise of powerful local dynasties along with the rule of the Afghans, Turks and the Mughals led to important changes in the social, cultural and economic life in India.
- ◆ Growth in trade enabled more contact between different groups of people. This in turn, helped to foster cultural developments.
- ◆ Literary and archeological sources are used to study medieval Indian history.

CORNER

CREATIVE

1. **Timeline:** Mark the extent of the early and late medieval period on a timeline.
2. **Map Work:** On a map of India, find out and mark cities or towns where the following are located:
 - a. Golkonda Fort
 - b. Qutb Minar
 - c. Inscription of Bhoja I
 - d. Konark Temple
 - e. Buland Darwaza
3. **Think and Answer:** Write 'A' for archaeological sources or 'L' for literary sources.
 - a. pottery, terracotta
 - b. coins
 - c. monuments
 - d. *farmans*
 - e. weapons
 - f. ornaments
 - g. accounts of travellers
 - h. utensils
4. **Reconstructing the Past:** Conduct interviews, identify appropriate sources, and gather historical evidence to accurately reconstruct the events of the day you turned one year old. Present your reconstructed day in class through charts and pictures. Pay special attention to the sources you used.

Sources you can rely on:-

 - ◆ photographs
 - ◆ letters/invitation cards/other written sources
 - ◆ gift items
 - ◆ old objects
 - ◆ hearsay/information based on oral discussions

GLOSSARY

archaeology	study of the past in the light of material remains left behind by our ancestors
chronicle	a fact-based written account of historical events
autobiography	a person's account of life written by himself or herself

EXERCISES

- A. Answer the questions by choosing the most appropriate alternative from those given below.
1. When did the late medieval period begin in India?
 - a. 1000 CE
 - b. 1600 CE
 - c. 1200 CE
 - d. 1300 CE

2. Which name did the Chinese use for India?
 - a. *Inde*
 - b. *Tien Chu*
 - c. *Hind*
 - d. None of them
3. Which of the following is a biography?
 - a. *Rajtarangini*
 - b. *Humayunnama*
 - c. *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*
 - d. *Kathasaritsagar*
4. Which of the following is not an archeological source?
 - a. paintings
 - b. monuments
 - c. chronicles
 - d. coins
5. Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. The Afghans ruled in the early medieval period.
 - b. Inscriptions tell us about the architectural styles of a period.
 - c. Archaeologists focus on the study of coins.
 - d. Growth in trade was responsible for the development of composite culture in medieval India.

B. Match the following:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Somadeva | a. <i>Ain-i-Akbari</i> |
| 2. Firoz Tughlaq | b. <i>Humayunnama</i> |
| 3. Abul Fazl | c. <i>Kathasaritsagar</i> |
| 4. Chandbardai | d. <i>Futuh-i-Firozshahi</i> |
| 5. Gulbadan Begum | e. <i>Prithviraj Raso</i> |

C. Answer the questions in about 50–70 words.

1. Name some powerful dynasties which emerged in the early medieval period.
2. To which part of India does *Aryavarta* refer to?
3. Mention one economic development in the medieval period.
4. What is epigraphy?
5. How can one write an objective historical account?

D. Answer the questions in about 80–100 words.

1. Mention the different names that were used to refer to India over the ages.
2. State four broad trends of the medieval period in India.
3. Discuss the types of literary sources used to study medieval Indian history. Give examples.
4. How does an archaeologist reconstruct the past?
5. Distinguish between archaeological and literary sources.

E. Think and answer.

1. Why is the medieval period divided into two phases?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of literary sources?

PROJECT WORK

Imagine that you are a foreign traveller from Italy visiting India for the first time, in the medieval period. You disembark at Surat and decide to take a brief tour of the city. With a group of five classmates, write and enact a short skit narrating your experiences during the tour.

- ◆ Conduct a research on the medieval city of Surat and the people who lived there, in order to write and enact the play.
- ◆ Show how different Surat was from a city in Italy, during the medieval period.
- ◆ The skit should not be more than 10 minutes long.

LIFE SKILL (DECISION-MAKING)

Your cousins, living abroad, are coming for a week to your city. Plan an itinerary for them. Make a list of all the places you want to visit (like museums and monuments).

SURF AND LEARN

Use these links to learn more about the topics:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BAry0TcKtM>

<http://mughalminiatures.blogspot.in/2009/06/akbarnama-painting-medieval-hostory-of.html>

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/490128/Rajatarangini>

SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

1. I have understood the extent of medieval history.
2. I have learnt about the features of the medieval period.
3. I have learnt about the different sources of the medieval period.

YES

NO

PARTIALLY

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____