

New Kings and Kingdoms

Introduction

After the decline of the Gupta Empire, many **new kingdoms** emerged in different parts of India during the early medieval period. Powerful rulers expanded their territories, fought wars, and established strong administrations. This chapter explains the rise of new kings, important dynasties, and the methods they used to govern their kingdoms.

Emergence of New Kingdoms

Rise of Powerful Rulers

Many regional kingdoms developed between the **7th and 12th centuries**. Kings increased their power by conquering neighbouring regions and forming large empires.

Some important dynasties were:

- **Cholas**
- **Rashtrakutas**
- **Palas**
- **Pratiharas**
- **Chahamanas (Chauhans)**

How Kings Became Powerful

Sources of Power

Kings strengthened their rule by:

- Winning battles and expanding their kingdoms.
- Collecting taxes from the people.
- Maintaining strong armies.
- Appointing officials to manage the administration.
- Building temples and supporting religious activities.

Many rulers performed grand ceremonies such as the **Ashvamedha Yajna** to display their power.

Administration of the Kingdom

System of Governance

The king was the supreme ruler and was assisted by ministers and officials.

The administration included:

- Collection of taxes.
- Maintenance of law and order.
- Protection of the kingdom.
- Management of villages and towns.

Village assemblies also helped in local administration.

The Chola Kingdom

A Powerful South Indian Empire

The **Cholas** were one of the most powerful dynasties in South India.

Important rulers included:

- **Rajaraja I**
- **Rajendra I**

Achievements of the Cholas:

- Strong navy.
- Efficient administration.
- Development of trade.
- Construction of magnificent temples such as the **Brihadeshwara Temple**.

The Rashtrakutas and Other Dynasties

Important Kingdoms

The **Rashtrakutas** ruled over large parts of western and central India.

Other important kingdoms included:

- **Palas** of Bengal.
- **Pratiharas** of northern India.
- **Chahamanas (Chauhans)** of Rajasthan.

These dynasties often fought each other to control the rich city of **Kannauj**.

Temples and Society

Importance of Temples

Temples were not only places of worship but also centres of:

- Education.
- Art and culture.
- Economic activities.
- Social gatherings.

Kings donated land and wealth to temples to gain public support and religious prestige.

Trade and Economy

Growth of Commerce

Agriculture remained the main occupation.

Other important activities included:

- Inland and overseas trade.
- Handicrafts.
- Collection of land revenue.
- Growth of towns and markets.

Trade increased the prosperity of many kingdoms.

Key Points

- Many new kingdoms emerged after the Gupta Empire.
- The Cholas, Rashtrakutas, Palas, and Pratiharas were important dynasties.
- Kings expanded their kingdoms through wars and strong administration.
- Temples played religious, social, and economic roles.
- Agriculture and trade formed the backbone of the economy.
- Village assemblies helped in local administration.

Chapter Summary

The chapter describes the rise of new kingdoms in early medieval India. Powerful rulers established strong administrations, expanded their territories, and promoted trade, art, and architecture. Dynasties such as the Cholas, Rashtrakutas, Palas, and Pratiharas played a significant role in shaping Indian history. Their contributions to governance, economy, and culture left a lasting impact on the country.