

NEW KINGS AND KINGDOMS MODULE –2/3

WARFARE FOR WEALTH AND THE CHOLAS..

HANDOUT

This module focuses on two topics, viz, warfare for wealth and a closer Look: - The Cholas. From the Seventh Century AD to Twelfth Century AD, the ruling dynasty of a particular region wanted to control the other kingdoms. In order to gain control over Kanauj in the Ganga valley, rulers belonging to the Gurjara-Pratihara, Rashtrakuta and Pala dynasties fought for centuries. Since there were three “parties” involved in this long drawn conflict, historians describe it as “tripartite struggle”. Rulers also tried to demonstrate their power and resources by building large temples. In this period many invaders attacked India in order to gain control over the resources of the country. One such ruler is Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, Afghanistan who ruled from 997 to 1030AD. He raided the subcontinent almost every year – his targets being wealthy temples, including that of Somnath temple in Gujarat. He entrusted the work to write an account of the subcontinent to a scholar named Al-Biruni. He wrote a book in Arabic, known as the Kitab al-Hind after consulting Sanskrit scholars. Other kings who engaged in warfare included the Chahamanas, later known as the Chauhans, who ruled over the region around Delhi and Ajmer. The best-known Chahamana ruler was Prithviraja III (1168-1192), who defeated an Afghan ruler named Sultan Muhammad Ghori in 1191, but lost to him the very next year, in 1192.

This module is also dealt with the establishment of the Chola Dynasty in south India. In the middle of the 9th century, Vijayalaya, from Uraiyur, captured the delta from the Muttaraiyar. He built the town of Thanjavur and a temple for goddess Nishumbhasudini there. Rajaraja I, one of the most powerful Chola rulers, became king in 985AD, expanded control over most of these areas and also reorganized the administration of the empire. Rajaraja’s son Rajendra I continued his policies and even raided the Ganga valley, Sri Lanka and countries of Southeast Asia, developing a navy for these expeditions.