

Our past II

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Overview

Our Past II is a history textbook published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) for Class VII students in India. It provides a comprehensive overview of medieval Indian history, spanning roughly from the 7th to the 18th century. The book delves into the political, social, economic, and cultural developments that shaped the Indian subcontinent during this crucial period. It explores the rise and fall of various dynasties, the establishment and consolidation of major empires like the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, and the emergence of numerous regional kingdoms.

The textbook emphasizes the dynamic interplay of different cultures, religions, and traditions, highlighting the processes of cultural synthesis and exchange. It covers diverse aspects such as the evolution of administrative systems, architectural innovations, the growth of trade and urban centers, the lives of ordinary people, and the impact of religious movements like Bhakti and Sufism. By presenting a nuanced perspective on medieval India, Our Past II aims to foster a deeper understanding of the complexities and continuities of Indian history, encouraging students to analyze historical events and their long-term consequences. It serves as a foundational text for understanding the historical trajectory that led to modern India.

Key Takeaways

- Understand the political landscape of early medieval India, characterized by numerous regional kingdoms and frequent power struggles.
- Grasp the significant administrative, social, and cultural changes introduced by the Delhi Sultans and the subsequent Mughal Empire.
- Recognize the profound impact of religious movements like Bhakti and Sufism on Indian society and their role in promoting social harmony and reform.
- Appreciate the architectural marvels and artistic innovations that flourished under various medieval rulers, reflecting a rich synthesis of styles.
- Learn about the economic structures, trade networks, and the lives of craftspersons and traders that contributed to the prosperity of medieval towns.
- Identify the diverse social groups, including tribes, nomads, and settled communities, and their interactions within the evolving medieval Indian society.

- Analyze the factors leading to the decline of major empires and the emergence of new regional political formations in the 18th century.

Chapter Summaries

Tracing Changes Through a Thousand Years

This chapter introduces the concept of studying history over a long period, from 700 to 1750 CE. It discusses the challenges historians face in interpreting historical sources, the evolution of cartography, and changes in terminology and the meaning of historical terms over time. It sets the stage for understanding the diverse political, social, and economic transformations that occurred in medieval India.

New Kings and Kingdoms

This chapter explores the emergence of various new dynasties and kingdoms in different parts of the subcontinent between the 7th and 12th centuries. It covers prominent regional powers like the Gurjara-Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas, Palas, Cholas, and Chauhans, discussing their administrative structures, military strategies, and cultural contributions, particularly in temple building.

The Delhi Sultans

Focusing on the establishment and expansion of the Delhi Sultanate, this chapter details the rule of various dynasties including the Mamluks, Khaljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids, and Lodis. It examines their administrative policies, military campaigns, architectural styles, and the impact of their rule on society, economy, and culture in North India.

The Mughal Empire

This chapter traces the rise of the Mughal Empire from Babur to Aurangzeb, highlighting its consolidation, expansion, and administrative innovations. It discusses key policies like Akbar's religious tolerance, the Mansabdari system, revenue administration, and the cultural synthesis that characterized the Mughal era, including its rich artistic and architectural legacy.

Rulers and Buildings

This chapter explores the magnificent architectural achievements of medieval Indian rulers, focusing on the construction of temples, mosques, tombs, and forts. It discusses the engineering skills, artistic styles, and symbolic meanings embedded in these structures, showcasing examples from various dynasties, including the Cholas, Delhi Sultans, and Mughals.

Towns, Traders and Craftspersons

This chapter examines the growth of urban centers, trade networks, and the role of various craftspersons in medieval India. It describes different types of towns – temple towns,

administrative centers, and commercial towns – and the vibrant economic activities that sustained them, including the production of textiles, metalwork, and the exchange of goods.

Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities

This chapter sheds light on the diverse social structures beyond the traditional varna system, focusing on tribal societies, nomadic pastoralists, and other settled communities. It discusses their unique ways of life, social organization, economic activities, and their interactions with the mainstream societies and ruling powers of the time.

Devotional Paths to the Divine

This chapter explores the Bhakti and Sufi movements that swept across India during the medieval period. It discusses the teachings of prominent saints and mystics, their emphasis on devotion, equality, and personal experience of God, and their profound impact on religious practices, social reform, and the development of regional languages and literature.

The Making of Regional Cultures

This chapter investigates how distinct regional cultures developed and flourished in different parts of India. It examines the interplay of language, literature, art, architecture, and religious traditions in shaping unique regional identities, with examples from Bengal, Orissa, and other regions, highlighting the diversity within the broader Indian cultural fabric.

Eighteenth-Century Political Formations

The final chapter discusses the political changes in the 18th century, marked by the decline of the Mughal Empire and the emergence of new independent regional states. It covers the rise of successor states like Awadh and Bengal, the Marathas, Sikhs, and Jats, setting the stage for the subsequent colonial period and the end of medieval India.

Themes

- Medieval Indian History
- Dynastic Rule
- Cultural Synthesis
- Social Structures
- Religious Movements
- Regional Identities

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Our past II about?

Our Past II is an NCERT history textbook for Class VII that covers medieval Indian history from approximately 700 CE to 1750 CE. It explores the political, social, economic, and cultural developments, including the rise of new kingdoms, the Delhi Sultanate, the Mughal Empire, and the emergence of regional cultures and religious movements like Bhakti and Sufism.

Is Our past II worth reading?

Yes, Our Past II is highly worth reading, especially for students and anyone interested in a foundational understanding of medieval Indian history. It provides a well-structured and accessible overview of a complex period, covering key dynasties, administrative systems, cultural exchanges, and social changes that shaped the subcontinent.

How does Our past II end?

Spoiler: Our Past II concludes with the political formations of the 18th century. It describes the decline of the mighty Mughal Empire and the subsequent rise of various independent regional states and powers, such as the Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, and successor states like Awadh and Bengal, setting the stage for the modern period of Indian history.

Who should read Our past II?

Our Past II is primarily designed for Class VII students in India as part of their school curriculum. However, it is also an excellent resource for anyone seeking a clear, concise, and reliable introduction to medieval Indian history, including competitive exam aspirants or general readers interested in the subject.

How long does it take to read Our past II?

Reading Our Past II typically takes about 6 to 10 hours for a focused reader. As a textbook, it is often read over several weeks or months as part of a curriculum, allowing for deeper study and revision of each chapter.