

Social, Political and Economical Condition of India on the Eve of Turkish Invasion

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Abstract

The paper aims at providing a complete history of (Social, political and economical condition Of India on the eve of Turkish Invasions) .The historical evidences discussed in the paper helps understand the social, political and economic condition of India in 11th century. Medieval Period in India starts with the Turkish invasion. With the death of Harshvardhana, an era of feudalism rose in India and the social condition of India during this time was very good. The caste system had taken hold of the society entirely and its effects were far-reaching and unhealthy on the social structure. Economic condition of the people were extremely good. India was famous all over the world for the prosperity definitely this was the reason that India became prey to foreign invaders. There was a lot of political disheveling in the north India and everyone was too busy capturing small kingdoms than to take notice of the aggressive invasion of the Turks. The Turkish invasion in India took place around the 11th century.

Keywords: Medieval, Kanauj, Harshvardhana, Rajputs, Jaichand Ghori, Purda Turkish, jute, woollen, Silken clothes, gold and silver ornament, spices, dynasties Historian

Introduction

Turkish invasion start in the medieval period, the Mahmud of Ghazni raiding the country all the way from Afghanistan. He gained his victory against the Hindushahi kings of Peshawar. The next targets were the Muslim rulers of Multan. Mahmud of Ghazni plundered India 17 times in a short time span of around 25 years and looted India off its wealth and resources. The areas around Gujarat and Kanauj were rich and prosperous and were looted mercilessly by Mahmud. This wealth helped him consolidate his hold and power over northern India.

He made many palaces and mosques with the looted wealth in Ghazni located in central Asia. After plundering India many times, he finally died in Ghazni in 1030 A.D. The Rajput kings were fighting among themselves for the possession of princely states during the 11th and 12th centuries. They seized every slight opportunity to engage wars against each other. This was also the time when Prithviraj rose to power and married the daughter of the king Jaichand of Kannauj by abducting her from the middle of her wedding. At this time, Mohammed Ghori was planning to invade India and the Rajput king thought he just wanted to loot India and go back. Thus, he decided to become an ally of Mohammed Ghori and help him defeat Prithviraj. But when he came to know that Ghori wanted to establish a kingdom here, he half heartedly joined Prithviraj along with other Rajput kings and together they were able to defeat Mohammed Ghori. But Prithviraj let him go when Ghori appealed to him. However, the very next year the Afghans launched another attack on Prithviraj and defeated him badly at the war. Ghori however, did not set Prithviraj free and the

kingdoms of Prithviraj went in the hands of Qutub-ud-din. With the conquest of Mohammed Ghori Invasion were as under :

Invasion of Turikhsh : First invasion of Mahmud Ghori in (1000) A.D. and capture a few forts and towns of Khyber. He appointed his own governors and went back.

Second invasion : A fierce battle near Peshawar was fought in which the invaders became victories. Mahmud got 2,50,000 dinars and 50 elephants. Jaipal could not tolerate this insult. He appointed his son Annand Pal as the next king and burnt himself to death.

Third Invasion : Third invasion of Turk ruler in (1005) A.D. and Bijai Rai offered stiff resistance but was defeated. Finding himself helpless, the ruler committed suicide Mahmud looted the kingdom and killed people mercilessly.

Fourth invasion : Mahmud invaded at Multan in (1006) A.D. Multan which was under an Arab ruler and seven days he conquered.

Fifth invasion : Mahmud invaded at Multan in (1007) A.D. A grandson of Jaipal, who had embraced Islam had been appointed the governor of Multan with a Muslim. He renounced Islam and declared himself as an independent ruler. Mohamed invaded and defeated him.

Six invasion : (1008 - 9) : Anand Pal was able to organise a confederacy of the ruler of Ujjain, Gwalior, Kalinjar Ajmie etc. According to contemporary historians Hindu women sold their jewels and sent the money from distant part of the used against the invaders. The two opposing armies remained down up against each other in the campaign.

Invasion on Thanesar : (1014 A.D.) Muhammad began to invade India again and again because of his great greed for amassing huge wealth. When he came to know about the great treasure of temples of Thanesar he at once ordered his army to march against that city. The Hindus in the order to avert danger to their religion and to save their wealth bagged for peace but Mohamed was bent upon destroying them and plundering their wealth.

Invasion on Mathura (1018) They city of Mathura was a beautiful city and sacred place of the Hindus having about 1000 Temples. Mahmud was surprised at the sight of huge beautiful temples.

Other invasion of Turkish ruler, Invasion on Somnath Temple, Invasion of Mathura, Invasion of Kanauj etc.

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Social Conditions

The social condition of India during this time was very deplorable. The caste system had taken hold of the society entirely and its effects were far-reaching and unhealthy on the social structure. The people of low caste were not treated humanely and people of high castes looked down upon them. No feeling of fellowship existed in the Hindu society .The Brahmans enjoyed a special status in the society. Common people of the

society could hardly tolerate a degraded Brahman being respected in the society while a learned sudra was disregarded. Even in the domin of justice equal treatment was not mated out to all the members of the society. The Muslims historian of great reputation. Alberuni too confirms it that the defence of the country was considered as the duty of Kshatriyas alone. the other castes never tried to get themselves varnas were further divided into numerous sub castes and the feelings of brotherhood in the Hindu society had disappeared. However, there were many goods points in the Indian society as well. The women were given great respect in the society. There was not purda system among the women and no restrictions were laid on their receiving education they had full freedom in making a choice of husband

Political Condition

After the death of Harash and before the Turkish invasion in the 11th and 12th centuries. Indian was not politically united. It was not ruled by one single powerful ruler, but was divided into many petty kingdoms, which were generally engaged in mutual quarrels and conflicts. Among them mutual jealousies and Malice were widely prevalent so much, so that they couldn't even unite to face the foreign invaders which posed a common danger to the whole of the country. The was not mighty kingdom in the country that could bring about harmony and unity among that small rulers and minor chiefs and lay the foundation of a powerful empire in the county. At the time of Mahmud Ghaznavi,s invasion and at the end of 12th century there were several Rajput state in north India and similarly there were many independent kingdom ruled by different dynasties in southern India. In northern India, expect Rajputs states, there were some Muslim state also which were ruled over the different Rajputs dynasties.

Economical Condition

Economic condition of the people were extremely good. India was famous all over the world for the prosperity definitely this was the reason that India became prey to foreign invaders. When once a foreign invader knew of India riches, the attack India again and again. Muhmud Ghaznavi launched attacks on India in between 1000 A.D. and 1026 A.D. for about seventeen times and every time he got uncounted riches. This was such a huge sum that according to Historian Lane people, people from all over the world, assembled at Ghazni to see the huge riches looted from India, foreign trade was extremely prosperous. India exported every time like jute, woollen, Silken clothes, gold and silver ornament, spices, scents valuable diamonds weapons etc. Temple also became a treasure of riches, along with the trades. Both of these fell victim to foreign invaders. But it must be agreed that there was unequal distribution of wealth and riches ,no doubt some people were poor. AS the prices of goods were very low, therefore everybody could make booths ends meet easily and nobody starved of hunger.

Conclusion

The Turkish Sultans gave India a Capital in the very heart of northern India. They also gave her a skeleton of an all-India administration by bringing the chief cities and the great roads under the control of the Government of Delhi. The Turkish conquest of India had its impact in various fields. It paved the way for the liquidation of the multi-state system in India. The political ideal of the Turkish Sultan was a centralised political organization controlled by a monarch with unlimited powers and there was

no place for feudalism in it. The institution of Iqtas was employed for the purpose of breaking the feudal traditions of the various areas and for linking up the various parts of the empire to one centre. As a result of the centralised monarchy in Northern India, there was a marked change in the political horizon. The political outlook became broader and the areas of isolation began to shrink. Sir Jadunath Sarkar says: "The intimate contact between India and the outer Asiatic world, which had been established in the early Buddhist age, was lost, when the new Hindu society was reorganised and set in rigidity like a concrete structure about the Eighth century A.D., with the result that India again became self-centred and isolated from the moving world beyond her natural barriers. This touch with the rest of Asia and the nearest parts of Africa was restored by the Muslim conquest at the end of the 12th century." As a matter of fact, the main strength of the early Turkish Sultan lay in these cities which placed the entire surplus of their working classes at the disposal of the Government. The foot soldiers in the Indian armies were replaced by the mounted fighting men (Sawaran-i-muqatala). More emphasis was put on mobility and striking force of the army and not its heaviness or crushing strength. It is these armies which were able to check the Mongolian invasions. Here is the Persian language in which pronunciation of words is in complete agreement with their orthography."

The uniformity of the legal system, the tariff regulations and the currency widened the activities of merchants and facilitated their movement from one place to another. Such a great language is our medium of expression and this Persian of ours is the original Persian. The Indian dialects different at every hundred Karohs but the Persian language is the same over an area of four thousand farsangs. Another effect of the Turkish conquest of Northern India was what is described by Prof. Mohd. Habib as the "Urban Revolution". The old "caste cities" of the Rajput period were thrown open to all types of people. The Turkish Government refused to recognise caste as the basis of social demarcation or as the principle of civic life. The working classes, labourers, artisans and the non-caste people of the un-privileged classes joined hands with the new Government in building new cities. The Turkish conquest also had its effect in the military field. There was a change in the character and composition of the Indian Armies and the methods of their recruitment and maintenance. Fighting was not to be the monopoly of any one caste or group. Recruitment was thrown open to all properly trained soldiers. The soldiers in future came from all sources irrespective of their caste, creed or colour. The Turks introduced Persian at the higher level of administration throughout their territories in India. This brought about uniformity in the language of administration. To quote Amir Khusrau, "But the Persian speech (Guftar) uniform in Hindustan from the banks of the river Sind to the shores of the sea.

The feudal levies gave place to strong standing armies, centrally recruited, centrally paid and centrally administered. Trade received a new impetus. The Turkish conquest had also its effect on the language of administration. Before this conquest many dialects and languages were used for administrative purposes. The Turkish conquest gave a rude shock to the caste system and the idea of physical pollution among the people of India. The conclusion was that those people of India, who suffered under the caste system, became the supporters of the new rulers.

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