
UNIT 11 THE DECCAN

Structure

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11.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit we will know about the nature, organisation and distribution of power in one select region—the Deccan. After studying this Unit you will be able to :

- understand the geographical spread of the Deccan,
- list the major and minor powers that exercised their authority over different territories of the Deccan between the eighth and the thirteenth centuries,
- grasp the political processes of the formation of local powers and their integration into the power structure beyond local bounds,
- grasp the totality of the differential distribution of power, and
- understand the nature of early medieval polity in the Deccan.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Keeping in view the general trend of political developments, specially the nature of polity in Western and Central India (Unit 10), the present Unit should be seen as a complementary component. Beginning with the historical genesis of state society in the times of the Mauryas, the Unit demarcates important strands in the political structure in the Deccan during the early medieval centuries. It attempts to show the operation of such factors as lineage and land rights in the rise of states. Also, the social and economic bases of political power are identified. Finally, it also highlights the nature of the integration of plethora of power levels.

11.2 IDENTIFICATION OF THE REGION

The name Deccan apparently derives from the Sanskrit term 'Dakshina' meaning the South. As to the exact limits of the region called the Deccan, the historical evidences give divergent pieces of information. Sometimes its correspondence is established with the whole of peninsular India and sometimes it is restricted to a part thereof. In its narrowest delimitation the Deccan is identified with Marathi speaking area and lands immediately adjoining it. But the term Deccan may be extended so as to cover the whole of India south of the Narmada. Generally, it is understood as designating a more limited territory in which Malabar and the Tamil regions of the extreme

south are not included. Southern India as distinguished from the plateau of the Deccan (from which it is separated by the Krishna-Tungabhadra rivers) has a character of its own.

Thus limited, the term Deccan signifies the whole region occupied by the Telugu speaking populations as well as Maharashtra with certain parts of northern Karnataka (Kannada speaking).

11.3 FORMATION OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY : THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Deccan was among those nuclear regions which were covered by the state society by as early as the Mauryan period (third century B.C.). The territorial expansion of the Mauryas had resulted in a horizontal extension of authority. The Mauryan control in the Deccan which was supervisory in nature was exercised through the viceroys and a section of the bureaucracy stationed in provincial headquarters. The establishment of provincial headquarters and the association of the local chieftains in a subordinate position saw the emergence of a ruling elite after the retreat of the Mauryan authority from the Deccan. These local elite groups consolidated themselves, ascended to power and established ruling houses after the disintegration of the Mauryan power. The process was particularly marked during the Satavahanas. They evolved a system of government in which vice-royal functions were assigned to the local chieftains conquered by them and assimilated into their power structure. The Satavahana administrative units which were placed under the supervision of the functionaries drawn from the clans of local chiefs emerged later as seats of political authority during the post-Satavahana period.

The total political mechanism came to be built up on a kinship base. It was characterised by a system of alliances controlling subordinate semi-tribal families dominant in different local bases. A permanent ruling class came to be established when the titles became hereditary with further intensification of the process of assimilation and consolidation of the ruling elite. Incidentally, the Satavahanas have left for us the earliest inscriptional evidence of land grants in India. This phenomenon, as already seen (Units 1.7 and 8.3.1) was to affect not only social and economic processes but also the political structure. In course of time, these developments culminated in the real crystallization of state in the Deccan.

Check Your Progress I

1) Read the following statements and mark right (✓) or wrong (✕).

- i) The Deccan is to be identified with Marathi speaking area only.
- ii) The understanding of the real nature of political structure is possible only through totality of socio-economic groups and their resource mobilisation.
- iii) The Deccan was outside the pale of state societies till as late as the eighth century.
- iv) The administrative units placed by the Satavahanas under the supervision of the subordinate officers belonging to local elite families emerged later as seats of political power.

2) Define three linguistic areas that constitute the Deccan.

i)

ii)

iii)

- 3) Write ten lines on the emergence of the ruling elite in the Deccan in the post-Maurya period.

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11.4 EMERGENCE AND EXPANSION OF RULING FAMILIES

The crystallization of the state had taken place over a major portion of the Deccan much before the eighth century. However, it does not mean that there were no shifts in the centres of power and changes in the pattern of the emergence of ruling lineages. The emergence of new ruling lineages was a continuous process.

As elsewhere in India the inscriptions of the Deccan from the seventh century start producing elaborate geneologies of the ruling lineages. The inscriptions issued between the eighth and the thirteenth centuries speak of the emergence of several major and minor ruling powers such as the Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Silaharas, Kakatiyas, Sevunas (Yadavas), Hoysalas, etc.

The period in the Deccan was characterised not only by the emergence of the new ruling lineages but also the branching off of the existing ones. Thus, apart from the main Chalukyan house ruling from Badami, there were collateral Chalukya lines ruling in various places such as Lata, Vengi as also a line bearing the Chalukya name in vemulayada. Individual members claiming to belong to the Chalukya **kula** or **vamsha** in different localities in Karnataka are also known. Similarly, apart from the main Sevuna lineage ruling from Devagiri, we hear of a minor Sevuna family ruling over a territorial division called Masavadi. We also hear of different branches ruling in different localities bearing the name of a particular line, as for example, the Haihayas of Morata and Aralu, the Kadambas of Karadikal, Nurumbada, Goa, Hanagal, Banavase and Bandalike. The Gangas and the Nolambas had thrown off many junior branches. The branches of a ruling line continued to be operative for centuries even after the main line disappeared from the arena. As an example can be cited the Vengi line of the Chalukyas, which was brought into being by Pulakesin-II of the Badami Chalukyas. The minor branches of the Gangas, the Kadambas and others also outlived the main lines of their respective families.

11.4.1 The Lineage and its Territory

The status, power and territorial extent of the lineages were not uniform. Sometimes the relationship between the lineage and its territory was expressed in the form of the name of the area in which the lineage was dominant as for example the Gangavadi, Nolambavadi etc. The nucleus of the power of a lineage could be a small territory. The Sevunas of Masavadi 140, and the Haihayas of Aralu 300 were powerful over the areas comprising the number of villages indicated in the suffixes to their names.

The changing distribution patterns of ruling lineages did not necessarily correspond to static territorial units. For example, the Kalachuris who appear in the sixth century A.D. as the rulers of a vast area comprising Malwa, Gujarat, Konkan, Maharashtra and Vidarbha also established several nuclei of power as in Tripuri (near Jabalpur) and Ratanpur in the upper Narmada basin. One of their branches ventured into a remote area of Eastern India which came to be known as Sarayupar. A segment of the Kalachuri line migrated to Karnataka. Kalachuris of Karnataka claim to be the descendants of the Kalachuris of central India.

11.4.2 The Patterns of the Emergence of Ruling Lineages

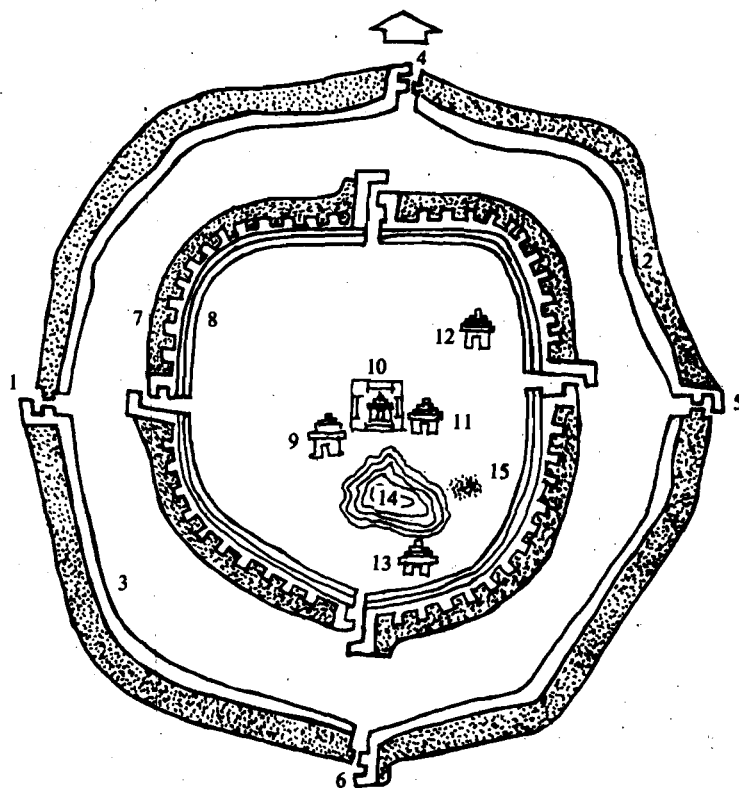
The formation and mobilization of lineage power developed along a variety of ways. A lineage power could be brought into being by simply replacing another. The Vengi line of the Chalukyas was brought into existence by eliminating the erstwhile powerholders of the Telugu speaking country when Pulakesin-II of the Badami Chalukya line conquered it. Second, it could involve settlement of new areas by an immigrant line and change of the economic pattern of the region. For example, Kalanjara having been conquered by the Pratiharas and subsequently by the Rashtrakutas, some members of the Kalachuri line living there migrated southward to seek new pastures. A segment of it migrated towards the forested tract of Kuntala and settled at Mangaliveda now in the Sholapur district of Maharashtra.

Generally the emergence of a ruling lineage as a potentially dominant political force was from a local, often agrarian, base. The interpretation that the term Chaluki resembles the name of an agricultural implement would make one think that the Chalukyas were originally tillers of the soil who took to arms and founded a kingdom subsequently. However, the emergence of the Hoysalas who were the hill chiefs of the forests was characterised not by their association with an agrarian base but by their ability to command other hill forces and to use the political situation in the plains to their advantage.

Again, although it is generally true that the large state structures of India of the early medieval period thrived in potentially rich resource bases or nuclear regions in Ganges basin, Kaveri basin and Krishna-Godavari doab, the resource potential was sought to be expanded. In this context it is notable that Orugallu (Warangal), away from the Krishna-Godavari doab, remained a base on which the large state structure of the Kakatiyas was built. Before the time of the Kakatiyas the tanks were small, the irrigation facilities inadequate and the area of cultivation limited in extent. The Kakatiya kings like Beta-II, Rudra, Ganapathi, Prataprudra got several tanks built in different parts of their kingdom. Prataprudra tried to increase the extent of cultivable land by cutting down forests and bringing large tracts under cultivation, e.g. in the Rayalaseema area. A similar movement of the expansion of arable lands also characterised the early phase of the emergence of the Hoysalas in the Southern Karnataka.

11.4.3 Fabrication of Genealogies

Many of the ruling families, which headed large power structures in the Deccan like the Chalukyas of Kalyan, the Sevunas of Devagiri and the Kakatiyas of Warangal, began their political career as humble feudatories under the Rashtrakuta sovereignty. Rashtrakutas themselves were ruling in the feudatory capacity in central India prior to the rise of Dantidurga in the first half of the eighth century. The exploits of Rashtrakuta Dantidurga and his successors who grew into a regional power from a small patrimony somewhere in Berar can be cited as instances as to how a small family could not only make a bid for political authority but also establish the foundations of large state structures.



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|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. WESTERN GATE | 10. RUINS OF SVAYAMBHU |
| 2. OUTER MOAT | SIVA TEMPLE AND FOUR |
| 3. MUD FORT | TORNA GATES |
| 4. NORTHERN GATE | 11. VISHNU TEMPLE |
| 5. EASTERN GATE | 12. VENKATESWARA TEMPLE |
| 6. SOUTHERN GATE | 13. NELA SHAMBUNIGUDI |
| 7. INNER MOAT & BASTIONS | 14. TANK |
| 8. INNER FORT (KANCHO-KOTA) | 15. OMTI-KONDA (EKASILA) |
| 9. SHAMBUNIGUDI | |

Orugallu Fort

A notable feature of the process of the emergence of ruling lineages in early medieval Deccan is their attempt to align their local roots with a mythical tradition or trace their descent from mythical-heroic lineages. The Rashtrakutas and the Sevunas profess to be descended from Yadu, a puranic hero. The Hoysalas claimed descent from the lunar race through that eponymous hero Yadu and said they were the Yadavas and Lords of the excellent city of Dvaravati, the legendary capital of the Yadava Prince Krishna. Similarly, while the spiritual guru of the Kakatiya king Ganapatideva provided them with the Suryavamsi Kshatriya identity, an inscription of the king himself traces the geneology from a mythical and legendary account of Manu, Ikshvaku, Bhagiratha, Raghu, Dasharatha and Rama.

Such claims are often dismissed on the ground that they were later inventions. It is true that such claims, freely drawing their inspiration from mythology and puranic legends, lack historical accuracy as they refer to times for which no records exist. But from the point of view of political processes the attempts to claim descent in solar or lunar lines assume importance because these claims sought to conceal rather than reveal the original ancestry. Hoysalas for instance were the hill chiefs who gradually established their command over the rest of the hill chiefs, migrated to the plains and established a nucleus of power. The Kakatiyas were the **shudras**. Their political power and "low origin" had to be reconciled by assuming a higher status for themselves. In other words the achievement of political dominance was sought to be correlated with a corresponding social status. The Chalukyas of Kalyan, for example, sought this status by claiming that their progenitor was born out of a handful (**Chuluka**) of water taken by the Sage Bharadvaja i. e. Drona, or the water of Ganga poured out from the cavity of his hands by Ashvatthama, the son of Drona. The

Kshatriya status was a symbol of legitimation. The new and upcoming non-kshatriya groups sought to validate their political power through this. Hence the Yadu vamsha came in very handy and most lineages traced their descent from Yadu.

11.5 THE POWER BROKERS

The process of legitimation of royal power cannot be viewed simply in terms of a newly emerged local polity seeking validation through connections with a respectable ancestry. The validation of power was sought not only in areas where a transition to state society was taking place but also in established states of the Deccan. It means that the need for validation was constant.

Theoretically the temporal power was required to guarantee protection. According to a phrase (**Dushta nigraha-Shishta pratipalana**) which occurs constantly in the inscriptions of the Hoysalas in southern Deccan, a King's duty was two-fold: to restrain the evil and to protect the good. The phrase summarises all the commands addressed to the king by the **dharmaśāstras**. However, the protection did not simply mean physical protection of subjects. It also meant the protection of the social order. In fact, the **danda** or force was intended by the priestly class not so much as a political expedient; it was intended more for the preservation of the social order.

However, the state society was to cut across the barrier of disparate **dharma**s or norms if it were to spread horizontally. The territorial spread of the **brahmanas**, heads of religious sects, institutions such as temples and the **mathas** which represented some kind of a central focus to disparate norms was therefore supported by the early medieval states. There is an obvious emphasis on the mutuality of interests of the ruling chiefs and the men/institutions of religion. In fact, the latter were not only at the receiving end but also contributed to the sanctioning of the authority of rulers. Formation of the ruling elite is quite evident. That accounts for the territorial mobility of the religious beneficiaries and massive support in the form of munificent gifts of gold and land made by the royalty and the nobility to them. There are many examples of the **brahmanas** of one province moving freely to settle in another. While the immigrant **brahmanas** who received grants from the Rashtrakuta kings included those from Vengi (Andhra), Pataliputra (Bihar), Pundrawardhana (in Bengal) and Kavi (Gujarat), those in the Sevuna kingdom included brahmanas from central India and Uttar Pradesh. The kings identifying themselves with a particular religious sect or cult, calling themselves as the **paramamaheshvaras**, or **paramabhagavatas**, and even attributing their political rise to the grace of the divinities was not unknown in the Deccan. For example Taila-II, the overthrower of the Rashtrakutas believed that it was the favour of Jagadguru Ishvara Ghalisasa, the head of a brahmadeya village, that had secured him the throne. Madhavavarman, the founder of the Kakatiya family, is said to have acquired an army comprising thousands of elephants and lakhs of horses and foot soldiers by the grace of the goddess Padmakshi. The benefactions of some kings of the Deccan, for example Kakatiya Prola-I and Beta-II seem to have been confined to the followers of the Shaiva doctrine. There were also a few persecutions here and there.

11.6 INTER-LINEAGE NETWORK

An essential feature of the early medieval polity in the Deccan was a marked inter-relatedness of the polities. No political unit or entity operated in isolation. Military activities of the mighty rivals for the hegemony over the fertile-strategic lands would render neutral existence of the small powers impossible.

While owning real or nominal allegiance to the overlord power, the smaller polities would conserve and consolidate their strength and resources.

In a polity of this nature, the more powerful among the subordinate powers such as the **mahamandaleshvaras** were always to be feared. Their tendency to form alliances against the overlord or to grow at the cost of the other subordinates of the overlord needed to be checked. It is well-known how the Chalukyas of Kalyan, who were the feudatories of the Rashtrakutas, entertained political ambitions and declared

independence realising the weakness of the Rashtrakuta power structure during the period of the successors of Krishna-III. In the mid-twelfth century the Sevunas, the Hoysalas and the Kakatiyas utilised the Chalukya—Kalachuri struggle for their own good and asserted their independence.

Despite these possibilities the inter-lineage relations could not be disregarded as they proved extremely helpful in situations of the military exploits requiring mobilization of greater force. As examples can be cited the Hoysalas of Southern Karnataka rushing to the aid of their overlord Chalukya Someshvara-II. Similarly, the Gangas helped their Rashtrakuta overlords in capturing the fortified town Chakrakuta in Bastar in central India.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) List the names of any five ruling families which emerged in the Deccan between the eighth and thirteenth centuries.
 - i)
 - ii)
 - iii)
 - iv)
 - v)
- 2) Read the following and choose the right answer. Mark (✓) in the columns.
 - i) The patterns of the emergence of the ruling lineages in the early medieval Deccan shows that:
 - a) only the **Kshatriyas** could wield political power
 - b) any clan or a larger ethnic group could make a bid for political power.
 - ii) The state encouraged the territorial spread of the **brahmanas** and religious institutions because:
 - a) it was deemed to be an act of merit.
 - b) they posed a threat to the social order.
 - c) they represented some kind of uniform norms.
 - d) the state society had to cut through the barrier of disparate social norms if it were to spread horizontally.

11.7 LAND AND INTEGRATION OF DISPERSED FOCI AND LEVELS OF POWER

An important point that needs to be noted with reference to the structure politics is the phenomenon of the dispersed distribution of power which was not specific to the Deccan alone but was present in all major political structures of the early medieval period.

These diverse or diffused foci and levels of power in the Deccan were represented by what is called the Samanta-feudatory system. Two types of feudatory powers were noticeable in the Deccan:

- 1) Those petty lineages which were integrated by an expanding polity into its power structure by either reducing them to submission by military manoeuvres or by peaceful means.
- 2) Those which came to be created by the political powers by means of the grant of landed estates as a reward for their help in some military exploit. However, these latter were originally appointed only as governors of an area with feudatory privileges such as the **panchamahashabdas** (See also Unit 9.6). But the principle of hereditary transmissions of office tended to convert them in course of time into full fledged feudatories. Most of the feudatory powers of the larger polities were such pre-existing lineages incorporated into their power structures. For example, when the Rashtrakutas started expanding their power, they had to deal with the

representatives of the famous ruling lineages of the Deccan. Among their feudatories were the Chalukyas of Vengi, Chalukyas of Vemulavada and many individual petty chiefs. The feudatories of the Hoysalas, Sevunas and Kakatiyas bore the names of the erstwhile lineages like the Nolambas, Gangas, Chalukyas, Kadambas, Abhiras, Haihayas and so on.

Inter-marriages into the families of the suzerain and subordinate served as the social bases while the recognition of the enjoyment of the landed estates by the local powers served as the economic bases of the interlinked political process.

In strict political terms the use of force was not unknown especially when the local powers stood in the way of the expansion of a lineage's power. The territories of the Nishad Boyas, a race of hardy warriors who inhabited the region around Nellore were sought to be integrated by means of involving their chief men into the bureaucratic structure. But when the Boyas continued to offer resistance to the advance of the Chalukya arms in the south, the King dispatched an army under Pandaranga with instructions to demolish the strong-holds of the Boyas and to subjugate their country. Similarly, Kakatiya Rudra reduced to submission the Kota chiefs.

Another important political mechanism of the integration of diffused foci of power was the system of ranking i.e. the conferring of titles and ranks associated with roles and services. Kakatiya Ganapatideva conferred upon Recherla Rudra, a Reddy by caste, the rank of **mandalika** along with royal insignia like throne, a pair of chauris, etc., in recognition of the help that Rudra rendered to him in a situation of crisis. Ranks in the families of chiefs varied from one generation to the next. The Kayastha chiefs under the Kakatiyas who were a class of warriors and whose rank was **sahini** (men in charge of cavalry) were elevated to the position of **mahamandaleshvaras** by the king Ganapatideva. These chiefs from the time of Gangaya **sahini** onwards became the governors of a large region extending from Panugallu in Nalagonda to Valluru in Cudappah district. This elevation in their position was in recognition of the participation of Gangaya **sahini** in several battles on behalf of Ganapatideva. Thus in a situation in which the basis of territorial political control was not static, the ranks which had a correlation with such structure could not remain static either.

Integration of dispersed foci of power was not confined to the award of feudal ranks such as **nayaka**, **samanta**, **samanta-dhipati** or **mahasamanta**, **mandalika**, **mahamandaleshvara**, etc., but also extended to bureaucratic positions. Irrespective of multiple forms of integration, it must be realised that the mechanics of integration always did not work only in the direction of integration. Second, whether it was integration or disintegration, land rights served a common feature. Local landlords or chieftains performed the role of integrators when they derived their administrative and financial powers from their overlords, paid tributes and performed various other obligations to them. However, the same landlords became real breakers and wreckers when they lorded over peasants and artisans unmindful of overlords' concern. They acted as an autonomous power within their territory, even though the degree of autonomy varied from region to region. If the central government became weak the feudatories used to be practically independent; in such a situation they could exact their own terms for supporting the fortunes of their titular overlord. Their position became still more strong if there was a war of succession. They could then take sides and try to put their nominee on the imperial throne thus playing the role of the king makers. On such occasions they could settle their old scores by dethroning their overlord and imposing their own terms on the new successor. Rashtrakuta Dhruva, Amoghavarsha-I and Amoghavarsha-II owned their thrones to a considerable degree to the support of their feudatories.

11.8 THE BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE

The political processes of the early medieval Deccan came to be characterised by the dominance of the overlord subordinate relation over other relations and the role of the bureaucracy in the over all structure of polity was varied and sometimes limited.

In the Rashtrakuta grant charters only the royal sign-manual and the names of the composer of the grant and the person who conveyed it to the grantees are found. Ministers and secretaries are conspicuous by their absence. The assumption of a very

big secretariat at their capital is not supported by any information about the manner in which the daily business of administration was carried on at the capital. Although a body of high ranking officers and ministers known as **amatyas** or **mantris** existed in the capital to assist the King the questions regarding the size, constitution and position of a regular council of ministers, if any, have not been satisfactorily answered. In the capital and in provincial headquarters in the Rashtrakuta administration the revenue records, records bearing upon land ownership and original drafts of copperplate grants were carefully preserved.

In the areas directly administered by the officers of the state, the provincial governors (**Rashtrapatis**) enjoyed considerable power over their subordinates in the provinces. Some of the provincial governors were royal princes. The provinces which are said to have been administered by the princes and queens in the later Chalukya administration appear to have been those bestowed upon them as their personal fief. Some others were appointed as governors in recognition of their distinguished military services. Petty offices like those of the supervision over small units consisting of 10 or 12 villages very often went to relatives of the provincial governors.

Provincial governors and district level governors in the Rashtrakuta administration were assisted by a body of assistants called the **Rashtramahattaras** and **Vishayamahattaras** respectively. But very little is known about their powers, modes of election, meetings etc. Their powers must have been considerably less than those of the village councils which were made up of the rural elite.

The nature of the office of the village headmen and divisional headmen, the revenue officers who helped the state officers of the sub-divisions shows that these officials were often remunerated for their services in the form of hereditary rent free fields.

The integration of dispersed foci of power also expressed itself in the absorption of the members of local lineages into the bureaucratic structure. In the Rashtrakuta structure, the district and provincial governors and lower officers like **Vishayapatis** enjoyed feudatory status and were allowed to use feudatory titles. Apparently they were the descendants of the local kings who were once independent but were subsequently conquered by the imperial powers. In such cases they seem to have continued as the government's officers.

11.9 RESOURCE BASE OF THE STATE

The main source of the state income was agricultural taxation. Private individuals holding arable lands paid to the state the land tax which formed the backbone of its revenue. The cultivators were also subject to some additional imposts called the **Upakriti**. **Upakriti** and **Kanika** seem to refer to a kind of customary tax levied by the government on villagers and townsmen in return for some service performed for their benefit by the kings or their officers.

Land taxes were assessed both in kind and cash. In the Kakatiya kingdom the taxes in kind were generally paid in two instalments in the months of **Kartika** and **Vaishakha**, the two main crop seasons. Under the Rashtrakutas they could be paid in three instalments in **Bhadrapada**, **Kartika** and **Magha**, the king's officers went round the villages to collect his share of the grain from them. The State's share of a householder's income was also collected in kind.

Land was divided into dry, wet and garden lands for purposes of assessment in accordance with the nature and fertility of the soil. Part of the state income came from the pastures and forests, the ownership of which was claimed by the state. It also claimed ownership in mines, hidden treasures, waste lands, orchards on State lands, lakes and public wells.

Other important source of state income included customs, excise duties and charges levied on trade and industry. **Sunkamu** or **Sunka**, a term used in this context was of broad import and denoted duties on exports and imports excise duties and customs duties collected on articles of merchandise brought to and taken from market towns. In the Kakatiya system the tolls collected on articles of trade were farmed out to merchant associations comprising members of the trading community on payment of a fixed sum to the government.

Regular offerings and tributes by the feudatory chiefs comprised another source of the income of the state. A Rashtrakuta inscription refers to an occasion when King Govinda-III toured about in the southern parts of the empire to collect the tributes due from his feudatories. Special presents were exacted from the feudatory chiefs on the occasions of festivities in the imperial household.

The picture of the State expenditure is not clear. There is no mention of a department in charge of public works or of officers directly appointed with the duty of carrying out irrigation and other welfare projects. Apparently the state undertook no direct responsibility for the construction and maintenance of irrigation works though some Hoysala and Kakatiya kings were known for evincing keen personal interest in creating a series of irrigation works. Influenced by the belief that the construction of tanks was an act of merit, the kings, chiefs, nobles, officials, religious leaders, merchants and wealthy men sponsored the construction of tanks. State doesn't appear to have spent enormous cash resources on the salaries of the men in its service as the practice of remunerating by grant of landed jagirs to officials was on an increase throughout this period in the Deccan. In military organisation too the state forces consisted partly of the standing army directly recruited by the government and partly of the levies contributed by the provincial viceroys and feudatories.

11.10 POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN THE DECCAN POLITY

Instability was built into the nature of early medieval polity. Frequent changes in the composition of territorial limits of the political powers itself is an indication of this. (See the map showing the territorial extent of the Sevunas in different periods.)

State society even in nuclear areas did not necessarily have a stable locus. Mobilization of military strength could displace existing power holders and create new locus and networks of political relations. We have already noted the decentralised character of the state with different foci of power. The shifting allegiances of the diffused foci of power, e.g. those represented by the subordinate chiefs or **samanta** feudatories, would add to political instability.

Increasing land assignments to various classes of functionaries, including those rendering military service, rent-free grants of villages to various categories of beneficiaries and an increase in the incidence of land grants by the diversification of the ruling elite would weaken the control of the state over revenue resources of the constituent territorial units. A tilt in the balance of loyalty of the landholders and the **samanta** landed aristocracy would weaken its control on its polity as well. These weaknesses surfaced in the face of external threats and brought about the disintegration of even long existent power structures. The dramatic fall of the mighty Rashtrakuta empire can be noted as an example. In 967 A.D. Rashtrakutas under Krishna III were the masters of practically all the territories to the South of the Narmada. Only six years later, with the overthrow of his nephew Karkka by their Chalukya feudatory Taila in 973 the empire of the Rashtrakutas fell and remained only in memory.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Which of the following statements is right or wrong? Mark (✓) or (×).
 - i) The phenomenon of differential distribution of power was a special feature of the Deccan alone.
 - ii) An important political mechanism of the integration of diffused levels of power was the system of ranking.
 - iii) All the feudatory powers in the early medieval polity of Deccan enjoyed the same measure of internal autonomy.
- 2) In Column A are given the names of some prominent regional polities and in B the names of their feudatories. Match A with B.

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| a) Rashtrakutas | i) Haihayas of Morata and Aralu, |
| b) Kakatiyas | ii) Velanadus |

- c) Chalukyas of Vengi iii) The Shilaharas of Konkan
d) Sevunas iv) The Kota chiefs.

3) Write in ten lines about the integration of the dispersed foci of power into the state society.

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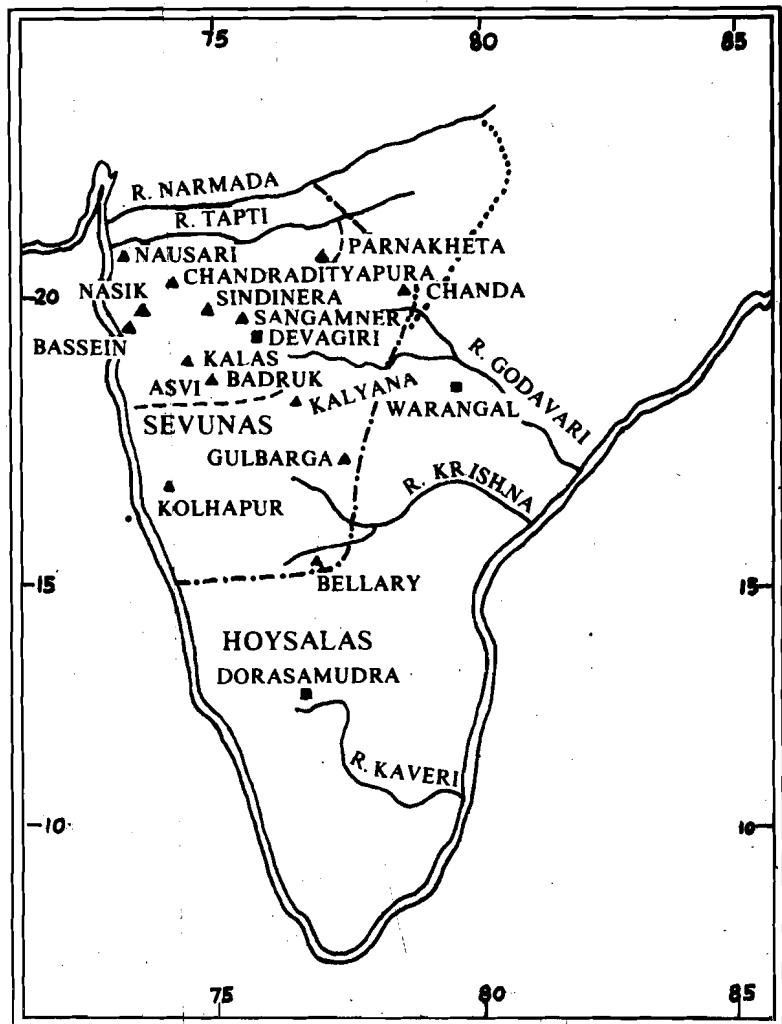
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4) List the main sources of State income.

- i)
- ii)
- iii)
- iv)



Map 3. Territorial extent of Sevunas

11.11 LET US SUM UP

The foregoing account of the political structure in early medieval Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and northern Karnataka shows:

- the local chieftains who were integrated into the Mauryan polity in the Deccan emerged as the ruling elites and introduced monarchical ideology and form of polity in the Deccan,
- the formation of the new ruling lineages and centres of power was a continuous process,
- various social groups, often non-kshatriya in origin, continued to emerge and grow into big political powers by integrating pre-existing lineage powers into their structures. These latter represented diffused foci of power and became vital components in the newly emerging political structures,
- the overlord-subordinate relation came to be dominant over other levels of relations in the political structure,
- apart from claiming Kshatriya status to legitimise the acquired power, the early medieval lineages also encouraged territorial spread of brahmanas and religious institutions as they could provide a central focus to disparate norms,
- land rights explain inter-lineage network,
- resource base of the state relied upon the vast agrarian surplus which sustained integrative elements in society, and
- state also penetrated into growing networks of trade and exchange and diversified and expanded its resource base considerably.

11.12 KEY WORDS

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Danda | : Force |
| Eponymous | : One which gives his name to people, place or institution |
| Kanika | : Tax on villagers/townsmen in return for services performed for their benefit by kings or their officers |
| Panchamahashabda | : A feudatory privilege |
| Paramabhagavata | : Devotee of Vishnu and associated divinities |
| Paramamaheshvara | : Devotee of Shiva |
| Rashtramahattara | : Official of province |
| Sahini | : Men in charge of Cavalry |
| Sunkamu/Sunka | : Customs and excise duties |
| Upakriti | : See Kanika |

11.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) (i) ✗ (ii) ✓ (iii) ✗ (iv) ✓

2) See Sec. 11.2

3) See Sec. 11.3

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Sec. 11.4

2) (i) b ___ (ii) d ___

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) (i) × (ii) ✓ (iii) ×
- 2) (a) iii (b) iv (c) ii (d) i
- 3) See Sec. 11.7
- 4) See Sec. 11.9

