UNIT 10 WESTERN AND CENTRAL INDIA

Structure

10.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit you will:

- know about how various political power configurations emerged in Western and Central India,

- understand the nature of the distribution of political authority as well as the structure of polity, and

- be able to analyse the patterns of the formation of political powers and their consolidation.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In conventional studies on Indian polity there is greater stress on the genealogy of the ruling dynasties and chronology of their rules. Changes in polity are mostly conceived as changes represented by dynastic shifts. In view of the inadequacy of this framework, recent studies on the polity have attempted to view the ancient and medieval polity from the perspective of possible processes which were in operation. There is a marked emphasis now on themes such as state formation, structure of polity, nature of power and political control, etc. However generalization at sub-continental level need to be probed further from a microscopic point of view. In this Unit we shall know about the emergence and evolution of regional polity in Western and Central India. This region comprises modern states of Rajasthan, Gujarat and most of Madhya Pradesh.

Owing to the fact that regional political formations in various parts of India have not been studied fully, the generalizations at sub-continental level require further precision. The study of regional political formations should, however, assume importance in view of the fact that:

1) there were frequent shifts in the centres of powers, and
2) the formation of new polities was a continuous process.

Western and Central India provide us with examples of fresh spurt in the emergence of local states. For example, the Rajput clans such as the Gurjara Pratihara, Guhila, Paramara, Chahamana as well as the Kalachuris and Chandella exploited political uncertainties of post-Gupta and post tenth centuries in Western and Central India. They dominated the political scene for centuries, especially during the period

extending from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries. The picture of the political processes that resulted in the replacement of old dynasties by new Rajput powers of uncertain origin is not clear. None the less, an attempt has been made to work out some essential traits of the nature of the distribution of political authority. Unlike Northern and Eastern India, the region under discussion shows some influence of lineage—at least in some parts of the region (See also Unit 8.3.3). Even in these parts, the dispersal of administrative and fiscal powers along with the changes in the bureaucratic set-up—all based on new landholdings   set the tone of feudal polity.

10.2   THE RISE OF RAJPUT DYNASTIES

The Arabs invaded Sind and Multan in 712-13 A.D. Within the next 25 years they overran Marwar, Malwa and Broach and threatened other parts of India. These raids contributed to remarkable changes in the political map of Western India and the Deccan. Powers like Rashtrakutas and clans now known to us as Rajputs came to the fore in this period. These clans, not heard of in earlier times, began to play an important part from about the eighth century. With obscure origins the lineages like the Paramaras and the Chahamanas, after passing through many vicissitudes, came to the fore in the context of the inter-state conflicts of the major powers such as the Gurjara Pratiharas and Rashtrakutas (See also Unit 8.2.1).

The rise of the Rajputs to political prominence appears to be accidental. But an understanding of the early political developments shows that their appearance on the political scene was not sudden. The emergence of these clans took place within the existing hierarchical political structure. Their emergence, therefore, should be understood as a total process.

10.3   ORIGIN LEGENDS : THEIR POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

The problem of the origin of Rajput dynasties is highly complex and controversial. Their **gotrochhara** makes them **kshatriyas** of the Lunar family (**Somavamshi**) while on the basis of old **kavyas** some maintain that they were of the Solar race. The myths of Solar origin regard them as kshatriya created in **kaliyuga** to wipe-out the **mlecchas** (foreigners). Rajasthani bards and chroniclers regard them as fire-born (**Agnikula**).

According to the **Agnikula** myth recorded by a court poet, the founder of the house of the Paramaras originated from the firepit of sage Vasishtha on Mount Abu. The man who thus sprang out of the fire forcibly wrested the wish-granting cow of sage Vasishtha from sage Vishwamitra and restored it to the former. Sage Vasishtha gave him the fitting name of **paramara**—slayer of the enemy. From him sprang a race which obtained high esteem by virtuous kings. The Paramara inscriptions also declare the origin of the Paramaras from the firepit of sage Vasishtha on the Mount Abu.

The Rajasthani bards went a step further and ascribed the fire origin not only to the Paramaras but also to the Pratiharas, the Chaulukyas of Gujarat and the Chahamanas. Speaking of the fire origin of the Chahamanas the bardic tales said that Agastya and other sages began a great sacrifice on the Mount Abu. Demons rendered it impure by showering down filthy things. Vasishtha created from the firepit three warriors Pratihara, Chaulukya, and Paramara, but none succeeded in keeping the demons away. Vasishtha dug a new pit from where issued forth a four armed figure. The sages named him Chahuvana. This warrior defeated the demons.

This **Agnikula** myth was nothing more than poetic imagination of bards. In their hunt for a fine pedigree for their patrons they had woven the story of the fire-origin of the Paramaras. They found that it could splendidly explain the origin of the Chahamanas too if they added some more details.

The problem of the origin, when viewed in its totality instead of viewing it from the angle of any particular dynasty, would help us understand its political significance. The practice of new social groups claiming **kshatriya** status became widespread in the early medieval period. **Kshatriya** status was one of the various symbols that the emergent social groups sought for the legitimation of their newly acquired power. The early medieval and medieval Rajput clans, representing a mixed caste and constituting a fairly large section of petty chiefs holding estates, achieved political eminence gradually. There was corresponding relationship between the achievement of political eminence by Pratiharas, Guhilas, Chahamanas and other clans and their movement towards a respectable social status, viz. acquiring a **kshatriya** lineage. In this context it is important to note that these dynasties claimed descent from ancient **kshatriyas** long after their accession to power. Let us note the example of the Gurjara Pratiharas, chronologically the earliest and historically the most important of the Rajput dynasties. In an inscription of the late ninth century issued by King Bhoja-I they claim Solar descent for the dynasty and say that Lakshmana, the brother of the epic hero Rama was the ancestor of their family. Their inscriptions are silent on the question of origin till the glorious days of Bhoja. This epigraphic tradition of the Solar descent is connected chronologically with the period during which the Gurjara Pratiharas were the dominant political power. The tradition, thus, represents a stage of imperial prominence with the temptation to establish a link with the heroic age of the epics. The tradition of the legendary **kshatriya** origin of powers such as the Paramaras and Chahamanas too had not originated at the initial stage of the rise of these powers. In short, the entry to the Rajput fold was possible through the acquisition of political power. And the newly acquired power was to be legitimised by claiming linkages with the **kshatriya** lines of the mythical past. (See also Unit 9.7).

Check Your Progress 1

1) Why did the bards create the **Agnikula** myth? Answer in about five lines.

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2) List the reasons for the need to study regional polity.

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3) Which of the following statements are right (✓) or wrong (✗) ?
   i) Rajput clans suddenly appeared on the Indian political scene.
   ii) New social groups started claiming **kshatriya** status in the early medieval period.
   iii) Arabs invaded Sind in sixth century A.D.
   iv) There is no problem regarding the origin of Rajput dynasties.

10.4 DISTRIBUTION OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY

In India the distribution of political power did not follow a uniform pattern. A study of the process of emergence of the political powers in medieval Western India shows that the distribution of political authority could be organised by a network of lineages **(kula, vamsha)** within the framework of the monarchical form of polity. The

political annals of the Rajput dynasties such as the Chahamanas of Rajasthan and
the Paramaras of southern Rajasthan, Gujarat and Malwa provide examples of the
clan based distribution of political authority.

10.4.1 Proliferation of Rajput Clans

The bardic chronicles of Marwar state that Dharanivaraha of the Paramara dynasty
of Abu made himself master of the Navkot Marwar which he afterwards divided
among his nine brothers : Mandovar to one brother, Ajmer to the second and so on.
Thus, apart from the Paramaras of Malwa there were at least four lines of the
Paramaras ruling in : i) Abu, ii) Bhinmal, iii) Jalor, and iv) Vagada. Similarly, apart
from the Chahamanas of Broach there was another line of the Chahamanas in
Pratabgarh region. It was headed by a **mahasamanta** of the Pratihara overlord. The
ancestor of this **mahasamanta** was a member of the famous Chahamana line of
Shakambhari. The Chahamanas of Shakambhari with their cradle land in the tract
extending from Pushkar to Harsa (central and eastern Rajasthan) had themselves
branched off into Chahamanas of i) Nadol, ii) Jalor, iii) Satyapura, and iv) Abu.
During about five centuries of their rule they exercised control over a vast region in
western Rajasthan and Gujarat.

The Chapas were another Rajput clan of the early medieval period. They ruled over
principalities like Bhillamala, Vadhiar in Kathiawad, and Anahilapataka in Gujarat.
Similarly the Guhilas ruled over the regions of Udaipur and Mewar.

Apart from the sub-divisions of major clans, the emergence of various minor clans
was another important aspect of the proliferation of the Rajputs in early medieval
period. The continuing process of the formation of Rajput clans was through the
acquisition of political power. The new clans and sub-divisions of earlier clans were
drawn into Rajput political network in a variety of ways.

10.4.2 Formation of Lineage Power

The formation and consolidation of lineage power did not develop in a uniform way.
One of the indicators of the process of lineage power formation was the colonization
of new areas, as is evident in the expansion of the number of settlements. The
colonization of new areas could result from the annexation of the new territories by
means of organised military strength. The Chauhan kingdom of Nadol known as
Saptashata is said to have been made into **Saptasahasrikadesha** by a Chauhan chief
who killed chiefs of the boundaries of his kingdom and annexed their villages.
Territorial expansion of the Western Indian powers was accomplished, on some
areas, at the expense of tribal settlements. For example, Mandor Pratihar Kakkuka
is said to have resettled a place which was terrible because of being inhabited by the
Abhiras. Similarly, there are examples of the suppression of tribal population like
Shabaras, Bhillas and Pulindas in Western and Central India.

Similar movements are found in the case of the Guhilas and the Chahamanas as
well. For example, though the Guhila settlements were to be found in various parts
of Rajasthan as early as the seventh century, slightly later traditions recorded in the
inscriptions of the Nagada-Ahar Guhilas trace their movement from Gujarat. The
bardic tradition also suggests that the Guhila kingdoms in south Rajasthan
succeeded the earlier tribal chiefdoms of the Bhils.

The movement of the Chauhanas was from Ahichhatrapura to Jangaldesha
(Shakambhari) which, as the name indicates, was an inhospitable area. Their
movement led to its colonization. A tenth century record says that Lakshmana, the
son of Vakpati-I of the Shakambhari Chahamana lineage started with few followers
and fought against the Medas who had been terrorising the people around Naddula
with their free-booting raids. It so pleased the **brahmana** masters of the area that
they appointed him the guard of the towns. Gradually Lakshmana built up a small
band of troopers and suppressed the Medas in their own territory. The Medas agreed
to keep off from villages paying tribute to Lakshmana. He became a master of 2000
horses and extended his dominions at ease and built a great palace in Nadol.

Political authority of a lineage could even be brought about by simply replacing one
lineage by another as evident in the case of the Chahamanas of Jalor, a splinter line
of the Nadol Chahamana branch. Kirtipala, a son of Nadol Chahamana Alhana was
dissatisfied with the share of land assigned to him. A man of ambition, he found that

the situation in Mewar offered an advantage for an invader. Having failed there, he made his way into the region which was ruled by the Paramaras. He attacked Jalor, their capital, and made it the capital of his new kingdom. Similarly Chahamana line of Broach was brought into being when a Chahamana chief Bharatravaddha-II founded a principality over the tract of the Gurjaras of Broach. He was helped by Pratihara Nagabhata-I in ousting the Gurjaras from Broach in the chaotic situation created by the coming of the Arabs. He then assumed the title of **mahasamantadhipati** in 756 A.D.

Thus the formation of lineage power evolved through multiple channels and processes which were not compartmentalised and interacted with one another.

10.4.3   Process of Rising in Social Status

The political history of Western India shows that a large ethnic group of an area could successfully compete for political power. It could also lay the foundations of large state structures lasting for centuries. Starting from a local agrarian base a lineage could in course of time, emerge as a big regional power by integrating other local lineages. For example, a tract of land variously called as **Gujaratra, Ghujarabhumi, Gurjjarashtra,** etc. all referring possibly to the same area (territories contiguous with southern Rajasthan) was the base from where many lineages emerged.

In the process of stratification that developed within the Gurjara stock, some families attained political dominance and became ruling lineages. From seventh century onwards various lineages that had branched off the Gurjara stock through the channel of political power became widely distributed in Western India. Gurjara-Pratihara power represents a classic example of the rise in the social ladder. It would suggest that potential and dominant power structures could emerge from within local agrarian bases by following a path of upward mobility in favourable political circumstances.

10.5   CONSOLIDATION OF LINEAGE POWER

The emergence of the political powers in Western and Central India was associated with certain features. At the level of economy the patterns of land distribution are noteworthy. From about the late tenth century there are evidences for the distribution of land among the members of Chahamana ruling lineages. King Simharaja, his brothers Vatsasraja and Vigrharaja and his two brothers Chandaraja, and Govindaraja had their own personal estates. In the areas held by the Chahamanas of Nadol assignments called as **grasa, grasabhumil** or **bhukti** were held by the King, the crown prince, other sons of the King, queens and so on. The incidence of these assignments was higher in Rajasthan than in other parts. This feature apparently represented a process which gradually developed and was associated with the spread of a clan. Another pattern was the holding of units consisting of villages which were part of administrative divisions as **mandala** or **bhukti**. These units seem to have become centres of some kind of local control. The units of 84 villages **(chaurasia)** which were held in Saurastra by the Gurjara Pratiharas gradually spread to Rajasthan. This extension facilitated the land distribution and political control among the ruling elites. Between the tenth and twelfth centuries the kings and princes of Chahamana and Paramara clans held such big holdings. The process coincided with the construction of fortresses on a large scale in different locations. Apart from serving defence purposes the fortresses also worked as foci of control for their rural surroundings and helped the process of the consolidation of ruling families.

The marriage network among the ruling clans is another pointer to the process of the consolidation of clan power at the social level. Marriage network brought about inter-clan relationship which had significant political implications because the families were mostly the ruling Rajput clans. Apart from Paramara-Rashtrakuta and Chahamana-Paramara matrimonial relations, the Guhila marriage network was varied and widespread. Though the Guhilas extended their marriage relations with Chaulukyas, Rashtrakutas, Chedis and Hunas in addition to those with Rajput clans like Chahamana and the Paramara, the marriage network mostly constituted the

Rajput clan category. The choice obviously was political as the families cited above constituted the ruling elite of the early medieval Western India. Inter-clan marriage relationships were expected to lead to collaboration in wider activities of socio-political nature since they facilitated the presence of clan members in different kingdom and courts.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Write in about five lines about the settlement of new areas as an indicator of the process of lineage power formation in Western India.

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2) Cite examples of the assignment of land among royal kinsmen in Rajasthan in the post-tenth century.

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3) Which of the following statements are right (✓) or wrong (✗) ?

   i) The newly acquired power was sought to be legitimised by claiming respectable social status.

   ii) The marriage network among the ruling clans had nothing to do with wider activities of socio-political nature.

   iii) Inter-clan marriages had significant political implications.

   iv) The acquisition of political power had no role in the formation of Rajput clans.

10.6 NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF POLITY

The political geography of early medieval Western India and the evidence of the formation of political authority in disparate zones by ever proliferating lineages in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Malwa show that there was not always a necessary corresponding relation between a ruling lineage and a fixed territory. The movement of lineages outside their early centres of power led to the establishment of new ruling families. Guhilas of Mewar may be cited as one among such lineages.

10.6.1 Political Instability

Mobilization of military strength could not only displace a ruling lineage but also create new locus and network of power. The case of the Vagada branch of the main line of the Paramaras provides an example for this. The Vagada branch was in existence from as early as the first decade of the ninth century. Following the death of Upendra Paramara, his son was ruling in Banswara and Dungarpur area as a feudatory of the house of Malwa. This Vagada branch continued to be a loyal feudatory line for centuries till Chamundaraja; one of its rulers defied the Paramaras of Malwa and became independent in the second half of the eleventh century. The Vagada was lost to the kingdom of Malwa in the beginning of the twelfth century. After the successor of Chamundaraja nothing is heard of the Vagada branch. Three decades later we find one Maharaja Shurapala ruling over the region of the erstwhile Vagada branch. This shows that by 1155 the Paramara were dethroned by the members of a family who, as their geneology shows, were not connected with the Paramara dynasty of Vagada. Within next 25 years this line was also uprooted and a Guhila King was ruling over Vagada by 1179. He in turn appears to have been dispossessed of his newly established kingdom by a ruler who styled himself

maharajadhiraja. He seems to have established himself there with the help of his Chalukya overlord.

10.6.2 Bureaucratic Structure

It is hardly likely that the early medieval powers such as the Chaulukyas, Paramaras and Chahamanas could give stable government to the country without a powerful bureaucracy in the structure of their polities. We come across the names of a number of officers who evidently assisted in the transaction of the affairs of the state.

Lekhapaddhati furnishes the names of **karanas** (departments) of the government. It is supposed to be applicable to the Chaulukya government as the largest number of its documents are datable to the Chaulukya period in the history of Gujarat. A few **karanas** mentioned in the work also figure in the Chaulukya records. **Sri-Karana** (Chief secretariat), for instance, is a familiar term in their inscriptions. Also known from their records are **Vyaya Karana** or the accounts department, **Vyapara-Karana** or the department in charge of general supervision of trade and the collection of import and export duties and **mandapika-karna** or the secretariat in charge of the collection of taxes. Such **karanas** were headed by ministers known by the term **mahamatyas**. Little except the names of these ministers are available in the records and the actual nature and functions of bureaucracy are difficult to determine. Besides the **mahamatyas**, there were other officers called **mahamantrins, mantrins** and **sachivas**. The information about their status is also very meagre as they are only casually mentioned in only a few inscriptions. Of the more frequently mentioned officers in early medieval Western India was **mahasandhivigrahika** who was a minister of peace and war and whose duties also included that of a conveyor of a grant. A **mahamatya mahasandhivigrahika** of the Chaulukyas was also in charge of the **Sri-Karana** and the **Mudra** (the department that issued passports and collected import duties). Another officer mentioned was **mahakshapatalika** or the head of accounts or record office. He kept a full account of the income of the state and also of the expenditure. He also registered land grants under the Paramara administration.

Mahamantrin or **mahapradhana**, literally meaning a chief minister, was an official of great importance. He held charge of the royal seal and exercised general supervision over all departments. **Dandanayaka** or **senapati** was also an important official, who was primarily a military officer. The Chahamana records show that the cavalary commanders and **baladhipas** or officers in charge of the military stationed in outposts and towns were placed under him. The whole administration was controlled by a department, the **Baladhikarana**, stationed at the capital.

The so called central officialdom also included, among others, the **dutaka** who conveyed the rulers sanction of a grant to local officials who then had the charter drawn up and delivered. **Mahapratihara** (the Lord chamberlain) and **bhandagarika** (in charge of provisions) also figure as governmental officers.

10.6.3 Lineage State and Feudal Polity

From the Gupta period onwards there was a marked interrelatedness of polities, which was the result of the horizontal spread of state society. The differentiated polities, including clan based ruling lineages, had certain vital components that cut across all major political structures of the early medieval period. The region of Western and Central India was no exception.

To begin with, let us be familiar with the material base of lineage based state. (See also Unit 9.4.4). It was not just consolidation of the lineage power in terms of political power. Much more than that was the factor of landholding. One gets the impression of some sort of land grabbing on the part of the members of ruling families. The exercise of important governmental functions was gradually being linked up with landholding. Thus, under the rule of the Gurjara Pratiharas we find references to estates held by chiefs of the Chahamana, Guhila and Chalukya clans. Mathanadeva, another chief of the Gurjara Pratihara lineage also claimed to have obtained his allotment as svabhogavapta (own share). The Nadol plates of **Rajaputra** Kirtipala dated in 1161 refer to a group of twelve villages which a junior prince had received from the reigning prince. The Kalvan plates of Yashovarman (of the time of the Paramara King Bhojadeva) mentions a chief who had acquired a royal charter of 84 villages, obviously from his overlord (See also Unit 11.4.2).

Unlike the Chahamana and Gurjara Pratiharas, there seems to be somewhat lesser
frequency of land grants based on clan consideration amongst the Paramaras. But
the Paramara records refer to more groups of villages than is the case with the
Chahamana records. Groups of villages in units of twelve or its multiples (12, 24, 36
etc.) and even in units of sixteen or its multiples have been mentioned in at least
seven cases. A Paramara inscription of 1017 refers to a stray example of district
comprising 52 villages, which does not fit in either in the pattern of the multiples of
twelve or in that of sixteen. But, it cannot be ascertained fully, whether the clan
system of administration covered the major part of the Paramara kingdom.

Irrespective of the incidence or frequency of clan influences, the more substantive
component of the so-called lineage state is the nature of landholding. As already
indicated (see Unit 8.3.3), so far the lineage state or integrative polity has not offered
any alternative material base of political structure/s. No wonder, therefore, even in
these states of Western and Central India the phenomenon of different foci or levels
of power cuts across all major political structures which reiterates the validity of the
hypothesis of feudal polity.

What is broadly labelled as **samanta** system was not, however, a uniform category. It
included a wide range of status all of which corresponded to the landed aristocracy
of the period.

The Kingdoms of all the major powers of Western and Central India included the
territories which were under the control of the feudatories who were known under
the generic title of **mandalika,** but sometimes styled themselves as **maharajadhiraja,
mahamandalesvara, mahamandalikas, mahasamantas** and **samantas.** The most
important of the feudatory princes of the Chaulukyas were the Paramaras of Abu
and the Chahamanas of Jalor; others of minor importance being the Mer King
Jagamalla and Paramara Somesvara. Similarly, a considerable portion of the
Chahamana state, especially in Nadol and Jalor, was held by landed intermediaries
variously known as **thakkuras, ranakas,** and **bhoktas,** on the condition that they
supplied certain quotas of soldiers when required by the overlord.

The categories of feudatory chiefs under the Paramaras consisted of those officers
and princes :

i)   who were rewarded by the King with land in consideration of their valuable
     services;

ii) who had built up their own principalities during the period of aggrandisement
     and acknowledged the supremacy of the premier line. (To this category belonged
     the Paramaras of Vagada, and the Paramaras of Kiradu),

iii) who had carved out their principalities by the force of their own arms in
     defiance of the central authority during the difficult days of the Paramaras. (In
     this category came the Paramara Mahakumaras who used subordinate titles but
     were for all practical purposes independent), and

iv) who were defeated and forced to accept the suzerainty of the Paramaras and
     were given the status of a vassal.

Big feudatory chiefs such as the Paramaras of Arnbudamandala and the Paramara
Mahakumaras enjoyed large amount of internal autonomy. They could create their
own sub-feudatories and appoint their own officers. It was possible for feudatory
chiefs also to distribute their lands among their dependents. The **thakkuras** served
the feudatory chiefs in almost all the feudatory states under the Paramaras. The
feudatories could also assign taxes, alienate villages and exempt certain people from
taxation. This practice of granting land and its associated fiscal and administrative
rights is called sub-infeudation. There is surprisingly sufficient evidence for this,
particularly under the Pratiharas. It was practiced both in the areas of direct
Pratihara control as well as those under their vassals. Examples of sub-infeudation
caused by service grants in Gujarat under Chaulukyas are also known. A subordinate
functionary, probably a **bania** under Bhimadeva-II, constructed an irrigation-well
and a watering trough attached to it, and for their upkeep he granted certain plots of
land to a man of Pragvata clan, probably a merchant. The evidence for the
prevalence of sub-infeudation in the Paramara kingdom does not seem to be clear.
Thus, in course of time the **samanta** system encompassed a proliferating range of

designations and assumed the characteristics of a hierarchical political formation represented by the ranks such as **ranaka, rauta, thakkura, samanta, mahasamanta,** etc.

The incidence of grants to state officials vary from one region to another. To illustrate, while we hear about half a dozen Paramara official ranks, only a few of them are known to have received land grants — none at least in the eleventh century. But very large terrritories were granted to vassals and high officers under the Chaulukyas of Gujarat. Chaulukya copperplates of 12th-13th centuries and their comparison with the data of the **Lekhapaddhati** help us in stressing that vassals and high officers gradually merged into one another. In the 11th to 12th centuries key officials were also being paid through regular and exclusive taxes. Thus, the **pattakilas** and **dushtasadhyas** of the Kalacuri kingdom and **baladhipas** of the Chahamanas received such sustenance. Indeed some Chandella inscriptions of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century specifically enjoin the feudatories, royal officials, forest officials, constables, etc. to give up their perquisites in the villages transferred as gifts. There are also references to resumption of such rights.

The feudatories owed fiscal and military obligations to the overlord. Generally the authority of the feudatories was derivative, dependent on the fulfilment of certain conditions of which supplying the overlord with certain quotas of soldiers in time of need was one. The Paramaras of Vagada fought in the cause of the imperial Paramaras of Malwa for more than once. The Paramaras of Abu, Kiradu and Jalor being the feudatory chiefs of the Chaulukyas of Gujarat, laid down their lives in the cause of their masters many a times. However, the feudatory chiefs were eager to free themselves whenever there was an opportunity. In this case the relation between the suzerain and vassal rested absolutely on the force one could use. For example, the Guhilas of Mewar accepted the Paramara overlordship when they were defeated by Vakapati-II but tried to re-establish their lost position during the period of confusion which followed the death of Bhoja-I. Similarly, Chahamana Katudeva tried to assert his independence during the last years of his overlord Chaulukya Siddharaja so that Chaulukya Kumarapala deprived him of his principality and brought Naddula under direct administration placing a **dandanayaka** in charge of the area. Kumarapala also removed from Abu its rebellious prince Vikramasimha and installed the latter's nephew Yasodhavala, on the throne. Yasodhavala's son and successor Dharavarsha rendered distinguished service to three generations of Chaulukya overlords. But even he turned against Bhima-II and was either won over or forced to submission to the Chaulukya overlordship.

The most important duty of a feudatory prince was to help his suzerain against the enemy. Sometimes the feudatories conquered new territories for the suzerain or brought another prince under the later's vassalage. An inscription seems to imply that at the accession of a new King the feudatories swore loyalty to their new overlord who confirmed them in their possession. Feudatories are also said to have paid tribute to their overlord both in cash and kind. However, there was no hard and fast rule regarding the obligations of the feudatory chiefs of different categories. The general relations between the overlord and the feudatory depended upon the circumstances and relative strength of the feudatory vis-a-vis his suzerain. The feudatories under Chaulukyas of Gujarat such as the Paramaras of Abu or the Chahamanas of Nadol ruled over quite extensive territories and had their own systems of administration.

Instability of the political conditions was partly the result of the **samanta**-feudatory system. Often the strength of the feudatory bonds depended upon the personality of the overlord. Overlords who went on expeditions to distant lands had to entrust some of their capable generals with the administration of certain territories as feudatory chiefs. The personal relations between the King and the subordinate, which might have been strong enough to keep the territories together for a generation or two, faded out in the course of time and the feudatory chiefs tended to assert their independence. Often **samantas** had no permanent bonds and were prepared to transfer their allegiance to a powerful invader in return for greater privileges.

Check Your Progress 3

1) In column A some terms from **Lekhapaddhati** are given and in B the
departments with which they were connected. Match A and B.

	A		B
i)	**Vyaya-karana**	a)	Chief Secretariat
ii)	**Vyapara-karana**	b)	Accounts Department
iii)	**Shri-karana**	c)	Dept. in charge of supervision of trade
iv)	**Mandapika-karana**	d)	Dept. in charge of collection of taxes

2) Discuss in about 10 lines the powers and functions of the feudatory chiefs.

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3) Which of the following statements are right (✓) or wrong (✗)?

i) **Samanta** system was not a uniform category and included a wide range of
status.

ii) Centralization is an essential characteristic of the state structure.

iii) Feudatories were permanently bonded to their overlords and could not
transfer their allegiance to others.

10.7 LET US SUM UP

From about the beginning of the eighth century there emerged a political set up in
Western India and Central India in which new social groups acquired political power
by various means such as settlement of new areas. The pattern of the emergence of
the Rajputs, which was partly clan based organization of political authority, shows
some deviations from developments outside Western India. However, the mobility of
new powers towards **kshatriya** status for legitimation was not specific to Western
India as a similar process was in operation elsewhere in early medieval India. After
seeking legitimacy for their new **kshatriya** role the ruling clans of Western and
Central India formulated detailed geneologies in the period of their transition from
feudatory to independent status. They consolidated their political position by means
of specific patterns of land distribution and territorial system. Some other prominent
features of the polity in the region are :

• organisation of bureaucracy which could connect different modes in their political
structures marked by different foci or levels of power,

• dominance of overlord-subordinate relations,

• landholding as an important component of the **samanta** status,

• integration of local polities into larger state polities,

• certain amount of land based ranking associated with politico-administrative roles
and services, and

• wielding of vast-administrative and financial powers by vassals and officers to the
extent of sub-infeudation.

10.8 KEY WORDS

Baladhipa : Military officer put in charge of customs house.

Chaurasia : Holders of grant of 84 villages.

Dushtasadhyas : Police officials in charge of criminal administration.

Gotrocchara : Announcing of **gotra**.

Legitimation : Seeking lawful acceptance or justification.

Lineage : A line of descent, **kula** or **vamsha**.

Mleccha : Name applied to the Arabs, Turks and other foreigners.

Patrimony : Lands or villages granted to dependents for maintenance jagirs.

10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) The **Agnikula** myth was created by the bards to find a fine pedigree for their patrons and splendidly explain their origin. See Sec. 10.3.

2) See Sec. 10.1.

3) i) ✗ ii) ✓ iii) ✗ iv) ✗

Check Your Progress 2

1) The colonization and annexation of new areas/territories led to the spread of clans etc. See Sub-sec. 10.4.2.

2) See Sec. 10.5.

3) i) ✓ ii) ✗ iii) ✓ iv) ✗

Check Your Progress 3

1) i) b   ii) c   iii) a   iv) d

2) Your answer should be based on the powers and functions mentioned in Sub-sec. 10.6.3.

3) i) ✓ ii) ✗ iii) ✗