

EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIA: THE TRIPARTITE STRUGGLE

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INTRODUCTION

After the death of Harshavardhan (647 A.D) a new era started in the history of North India. After anarchy and confusion for sometime a new political system started emerging. On the one hand the Arabs established rule in North West India (Sindh), however its political impact was not long lasting; on the other hand the process of political fragmentation in North India started which ultimately resulted in the rise of new states and dynasties. Gradually among them only three dynasties were able to consolidate their position. These three dynasties were – *Rashtarakutas* in Deccan, *Palas* in Eastern India and *Pratiharas* in Western and Central India. Later on these three states struggled to capture Kannauj. This struggle is known as '*Tripartite Struggle*' in Indian history.

IMPORTANCE OF KANNAUJ

- ❖ Rule on North India without capturing Kannauj was meaningless.
- ❖ Strategic importance of Kannauj as it was situated centrally
 - (a) It was important for Palas to capture Central India and Punjab .
 - (b) For Pratiharas and Rashtrakutas its possession was important for their conquest of Gangetic plain.
 - (c) The fertile land of Ganga-Yamuna doab was a source of good revenue.
 - (d) Its possession was also important for any power to control Gangetic trade route.

DIFFERENT PHASES

- Attack of Pratihara ruler Vatsaraj on Kannauj started the 'Tripartite Struggle'
 - (a) He defeated Indrayudh, the ruler of Kannauj
 - (b) Indrayudh accepted the Pratihara suzerainty
- Pala ruler Dharampala opposed this, but he was also defeated by Vatsaraj
- Rashtrakuta ruler Dhruva intervened and defeated Vatsaraj. Probably Dharampala also accepted suzerainty of Dhruva. Then the Rashtrakuta ruler returned to the south

DIFFERENT PHASES

- Pala ruler Dharampala attacked Kannauj and dethroned Indrayudha. He placed a new ruler Chakrayudh on the throne of Kannauj.
- Chakrayudha accepted Pala suzerainty. Dharampala after this victory assumed the title of “Uttarapathaswamin”
- All these events probably took place in the last quarter of the 8th century.
- Rashtrakutas suddenly attacked the doab region
- Pratihara ruler Nagabhata II attacked Kannauj around 806-07 A.D. and defeated both Chakrayudh and Dharampala
- Nagabhata II made kannauj as his capital in 810 A.D.

DIFFERENT PHASES

- Pala ruler Dharampala made friendship with Rashtrakuta ruler Govind III
- Govind III attacked Kannauj and Pratihara ruler Nagabhata II to retreat. Then he returned to south.
- Rivalry between Pratiharas and Palas started in which Pala position was strong.
- Pratihara power was revived by Mihir Bhoja. He attacked Kannauj in 836 A.D. but was defeated by the Pala ruler Devapala
- After the death of Devapala in 850 A.D. the Pala power declined.

DIFFERENT PHASES

- Pratihara ruler Mihir Bhoja again consolidated his power and finally captured Kannauj in 854 A.D.
- Pratihara continued to rule over Kannauj because the Rashtrakutas ruler Amoghvarsha did not intervene.
- Later on Rashtrakutas attacked twice on Kannauj first by Indra III(915 A.D) and then by Krishna III(963 A.D)
- Pratihara were successful in continuing their rule on Kannauj , But shortly their empire disintegrated.

IMPACT OF TRIPARTITE STRUGGLE

- It was catastrophe for all the three struggling powers
- It contributed in the decline of their power
- **Immediate Result**
 - (1)Pratihra were successful in establishing their rule on Kannauj
 - (2) Rashtrakutas were successful in destroying the power of their rival Pratiharas
 - (3) Since the Palas had very early retracted from the struggle, they were unable to regain their lost glory

IMPACT OF TRIPARTITE STRUGGLE

- *Most Important Result*

(1) Beginning of new realignment of North Indian powers.

(2) Rajput became very important in the politics of northern India.

(3) Increase in number of regional states.