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Study Notes

Dynasties' of Uttarakhand

Ancient Time

Ancient Uttarakhand was basically a difficult region for humanity. Most of its part was rugged, desolate, full of forests and almost uninhabited. Therefore, there is no clear information about the establishment or development of any permanent state/kingdom here. Sources of its ancient history have been added on the basis of a few coins, inscriptions and copper plates.

Kunind Ruler -

- It is known from various sources that Kunind caste was the first political power to rule Uttarakhand. They ruled the hilly areas of Uttarakhand till 3rd-4th century AD.
- In the Ashoka's inscription obtained from Kalsi, there is mention of Pulindha for the residents of this region and the word 'Aparant' has been used for this region. From this record it seems initially the Kunind people were under the Mauryas.
- According to famous geographer Ptolemy, Kulendra (Kunind) people were spread in the upper regions of Vyas, Ganga and Yamuna in the second century BC.
- The most powerful ruler of the Kuninda dynasty was Amoghabhuti. Its silver and copper coins have been found from Vyas river to Alaknanda river in the west and Sunet (Punjab) and Behat (UP) in the south. On the front part of these coins, the inscription 'Paddevi' and 'Mriga' is marked and in Prakrit 'Ragyah Kunindas Amogha Bhutis Maharajas' is written.
- After the death of Amoghabhuti in the First century BC, the Shakas took control of their plains.
- Prevalence of Shak Samvat in Kumaon region and use of Surya idols and the presence of Surya temples confirms the authority of the Shakas. The Katarmal Sun Temple located near Kosi in Almora is especially famous for Shakas Art in the region.
- The names of kings of the Kuninda dynasty like Asek, Gomitra, Hardatt, Shividutt etc. are inscribed on the coins obtained from Almora.
- After the Shakas, in the second half of the first century, the Kushans took control of the Terai part of the state. Adequate quantities of Kushan period remains have

been found from Virbhadra (Rishikesh), Mordhwaj (near Kotdwar) and Govishan (Kashipur).

- At the time of the decline of Kushans, some new dynasties like Govishana (Kashipur), Kalsi and Lakhamandal were established and Kuninda also continued to rule in some parts of this region.
- The seals of Yaudheya rulers contemporary to Kuninda have been found from Jaunsar-Babar (Dehradun) and Kalon-Danda (Pauri), which confirms their rule. Yaudheya played an important role in crushing the Kushans.
- 'Badwala Yagya Vedika' (3rd century) was built by a king named Shilavarman. Some scholars consider Shilavarman as Kuninda and some as Yaudheya.
- According to some historians, in later phases the Kunind people established the Kartripur state which included Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and the northern part of Rohilkhand.
- In Samudra Gupta's Prayag Prashasti, Kartripur state has been described as a subordinate state located on the northern border of the Gupta Empire.
- In the second half of the fifth century, the Nagas attacked Kunind of Kartripur and ended the rule of the dynasty and took control of Uttarakhand.
- In the second half of the 6th century, the Maukhari dynasty of Kannauj ended the rule of the Nagas and took control of Uttarakhand.
- After the assassination of the last ruler of the Maukhari dynasty, Grihavarma, the Maukhari state came under the rule of his brother-in-law Thaneshwar King Harshvardhan. There is mention of Harshavardhana's marriage with a princess of the mountain region.
- Banabhatta's Harshacharita describes the people who visited Uttarakhand during the reign of Harshvardhan.
- The Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang of the Harsha period went to the state of Po-Li-Hi-Mo-Pu-Lo (Brahmapur) in the Himalayas, which was famous for Buddhism and was under Harsha. He mentions there being five Buddhist monasteries there. Hiuen Tsang writes about Haridwar that On the banks of the river Bhagirathi there is a city called Haridwar, which is about 20 li (Chinese measurement).

- British historian Cunningham considers the entire area of modern Garhwal and Kumaon as Brahmapur.

Era of Polyarchy -

- After the death of Harsh, many small states were established in Uttarakhand. Due to lack of military power, these weak kings had to build small forts for security.
- Among these small states, Brahmapur, Shatrughan and Govishan states were the main, of which Brahmapur state was the largest.
- In the 6th century, Brahmapur was ruled by the Pauravas. The main rulers of this dynasty were Vishnu Varman I, Vrishvarman, Agnivarman, Dyutivarman and Vishnu Varman II.
- During this period of disintegration, there were many external attacks on Uttarakhand. Chauhan king Vigraharaj attacked southern Uttarakhand and Tomar kings captured some parts of eastern Uttarakhand.

Kartikeya Pur or Katyuri dynasty -

- The chaotic situation that arose in Uttarakhand after the death of Harshvardhan ended with the establishment of the Kartikeya Pur dynasty in 700 AD. From the beginning, for about 300 years, the capital of this dynasty was at a place called Kartikeya Pur in Joshimath (Chamoli). Later its capital was shifted to Baijnath (Bageshwar) in Katyur valley of Almora and hence they were also known as Katyuri dynasty. More than three families (lineage) of this dynasty ruled from 700 AD to about 1030 AD.
- The history of this dynasty has been written on the basis of copper articles found in Kutila script from places like Bageshwar, Kandara, Pandukeshwar and Baijnath etc. Therefore, due to authentic evidence, this dynasty is considered to be the first historical dynasty of Uttarakhand (Kumaon).
- According to the British historian Atkinson, the boundaries of Kartikeya Pur state were extended to Tibet Kailash in the north, Sutlej in the west, Gandaki in the east and up to Kather (Rohilkhand) in the south.

- According to the Bageshwar article, the first king of the first family (lineage) of this dynasty was Basantdev. He held the title of Parambhattarak Maharajadhiraj Parmeshwar. He donated a village named Swarneshwar for a temple near Bageshwar.
- The name of the ruler after King Basantdev is not clear in the Bageshwar article, but after him the name of Kharpardev is mentioned.
- Kashmiri historian Kalhan's Rajatarangini book mentions the conquest of the Garhwal region by the Kashmiri king Lalitaditya Muktapida. Probably at this time, Kharpardev had captured Kartikeyapur and established a new dynasty.
- King Kharpardev was a contemporary of King Yashovarman of Kannauj. After this his son Kalyan Raj became the ruler. Whose wife's name was Maharani Laddhadevi.
- The last ruler of the Kharpardev dynasty was his grandson Tribhuvan Raj. He also assumed the title of Parambhattarak Maharajadhiraj Parmeshwar. In the Bageshwar article, there is mention of Tribhuvanraj's treaty with Kirat's son and donation of land for the temple of Vyaghreshwar deity.
- The Nalanda inscription mentions an attack on Garhwal by Dharmapala, the Pala ruler of Bengal. Probably after this attack, the Nimbar dynasty came to power in place of the Kharpardev dynasty in Kartikeya Pur. Nimbar had made a treaty with the Pala Dynasty. Nimbar was a follower of Shaivite. He constructed temple Vimana in Jageshwar.
- After Nimbar, his son Ishtagana Dev became the ruler. He was the first ruler of the Kartikeya Pur dynasty, who tried to unite the entire Uttarakhand. He was also a Shaivite like his father. He had built the temples of Navadurga Mahishamardini, Lakulish and Nataraja in Jageshwar.
- After Ishtagana Dev, his son Lalitshur Dev became the ruler. In the copper plate of Pandukeshwar, he has been described as Barahavatar for the salvation of the earth immersed in Kalikalank.
- There is mention of Bhudev becoming king after Lalitshura Dev in Pandukeshwar copper plate Inscriptions. He opposed Buddhism and helped in the construction of Baijnath temple.

- According to the copper plates Inscriptions obtained from Baleshwar and Pandukeshwar, Salodaditya's son Ichhardev established the rule of Salodaditya dynasty.
- Ichchardeva held the title of 'Bhuvan Vikhyat Durmadarati Seemanvini-Vaidhtyadikshadan- Dakshikaguruh (the guru who succeeded in initiating the wives of the world-famous Durdata enemies into Vaidhya). He was very learned.
- After Ichchhardev, the rulers of this dynasty were Desatdev, Padmadev, Sumikshrajdev etc. respectively.
- Later, Asantidev dynasty was established by Asantidev in Katyuri valley. The last ruler of this dynasty was Brahmadev, who was a tyrannical and sensual ruler. The people were fed up with his atrocities. Among Jagars it is called Biramdev or Birdev.
- According to historian Lakshmidutt Joshi, the kings of Kartikeya Pur were originally from Ayodhya. King Shalivahana is considered to be the ancestor of the kings of Kartikeya Pur. The presiding deity of these kings was Kartikeya. The people of Kumaon also consider Kartikeya as their folk deity.
- Historian Badridatt Pandey calls Kartikeyapuri/Katyuri king Suryavanshi. These rulers were decorated with the high post of Girirajchakra Chudamani. Hence, they are Chakravarti emperors.
- The official language of these rulers was Sanskrit and the folk language was Pali. Their kingdom was Dharmarajya. These kings did many works of public utility. Their administration was of high quality and there was an excellent system of bridges and roads.
- Adi Guru Shankaracharya arrived in Uttarakhand during the reign of Kartikeya Pur dynasty and he played an important role in ending the influence of Buddhism in this region and re-establishing Hinduism. In this sequence, Badrinath and Kedarnath temples were renovated and Jyotirmath was established. He sacrificed his body in Kedarnath in 820 AD.

Medieval Period

Chand Dynasty of Kumaon

- After Katyuri rule in Kumaon, the Chand dynasty was established by Soma Chand between 1020 and 1025 AD.
- After Somchand, his son Atma Chand ascended the throne. After Atma Chand in sequence Purna Chand, Indra Chand, Sansar Chand, Sudha Chand, Hari Chand, Veena Chand, Veer Chand, Nar Chand, Thohar Chand, Trilok Chand, Umar Chand, Dharam Chand, Abhay Chand, Karm Chand, Gyan Chand, Harihar Chand, Dwan Chand, Atm Chand, Hari Chand, Vikram Chand, Dharam Chand, Bharti Chand, Ratna Chand, Kirti Chand, Pratap Chand, Tara Chand, Manik Chand, Kalyan Chand, Purna Chand, Bhishm Chand, Rudra Chand, Balo Kalyan Chand, Rudra Chand, Laxmi Chand, Trimal Chand, Dilip Chand, Baz Bahadur Chand, Udyot Chand, Gyan Chand, Jagat Chand, Devi Chand, Ajit Chand, Kalyan Chand, Deep Chand, Mohan Chand, Shiv Chand and Mahendra Chand etc. ruled respectively.
- Initially the state/territory included only the area near the capital Champawat, but later a few rulers brought present Nainital, Pithoragarh, Almora and some parts of Nepal under their rule.
- Indrachand started the production of silk and silk clothes.
- After 1191 AD, Challa kings of Nepal (Doti) had subdued some rulers. Chand ruler Bharati Chand (1437-77) attacked Nepal and freed it from this subjugation. He was the first Chand king who attacked Nepal.
- Gyan Chand (1365-1420) was the first Chand king, who took gifts to the court of the Sultan of Delhi (Firoz Shah Tughlaq). The Sultan gave him the title of Garuda and he was called Garuda Gyan Chand.
- Balo Kalyan Chand conquered Mankoti state and merged it with Chand kingdom and moved his capital from Champawat to Almora.
- Rudra Chand was a contemporary of Akbar. It was he who established the present Rudrapur city by taking over the Terai. 'Malla Mahal' of Almora was built by him.
- A Chand king named Laxmichand opened settlement offices, Nyowali and Bishtali courts, created categories of state employees and created many types of taxes. He established many large gardens and renovated many temples.
- Trimal Chand was given the titles of Bahadur and Zamindar by Shahjahan.

- Like the Kailash temple of Ellora, Hathiyadeval was built in Thal, pithoragarh by Bajbahadur Chand.
- The second Chand ruler who attacked Nepal was Udyot Chand.
- The establishment of Nanda Devi temple in Almora was done by Gyan Chand.
- The reign of Jagat Chand (1708-20), was called the golden age of Kumaon.
- Kalyapan Chand Bahadur built Chowmahalla Palace in Almora.
- Devi Chand is called Muhammad Tughlaq of Kumaon.
- In 1790 AD, the Gorkhas of Nepal defeated the then Chand king Mahendra Chand in a simple battle at Hawalbagh, Almora and took control of the entire Kumaon region and the Chand dynasty came to an end.
- Chand King Rudra Chandra had composed the texts 'Travenik Dharmanirnaya', 'Usha Rudra Godya' and Raja Roop Chand had composed the texts 'Shyanik Shastra' on the art of bird hunting.
- During the reign of Kalyan Chandra IV (1730-48), the famous poet Shiva composed Kalyan Chandrodayam.
- The state symbol of some kings was 'cow', which was depicted on coins, seals and flags etc.
- Chand Kings were a Shiva worshipper. They built many temples of Goddess, Shiva, Surya, Ganesha and Vishnu. The Lakshminarayan temple of Baijnath was built by Chand Rulers.
- During the reign of Chand kings, the tradition of appointing a village head along with the work of land assessment started in the Kumaon region. During this time, many works were done for the progress of the entire Kumaon region.

Major forts of Kumaon Region

- Khagmara Fort: It is situated in the east of Almora, was built by the King Bhishmachand (1555-60).
- Lalmandi Fort - This fort was built by Raja Kalyan Chand in 1563 within the cantonment area in Paltan Bazar of Almora. It is also called Fort Moira.

- Malla Mahal Fort: Located right in the middle of Almora city, this fort currently houses the court, District Magistrate's office and many other government offices. It was built by Chand king Rudrachand.
- Rajbunga Fort: Located in Champawat, was built by Chand king Somchand.
- Naithda Fort: It is located near the Naithda Devi temple on a steep climb of about 5 km from Masi village on the Ramnagar-Ganai road in Almora district. It is considered to be of Gorkha period.
- Sirmoli Fort: It is an ancient fort in Sirmoli village of Lohaghat Tehsil, Champawat.
- Banasur Fort: Located on a high peak at a distance of 7 km from Lohaghat-Devidhura road in Champawat district, the length of this fort is 80 meters and width 20 meters. According to local beliefs, it was built by a demon king named Banasur. In the local language it is called Markot Fort.
- Golla/Goril Chaud- This ancient fort is in Champawat, which was built by Raja Goril. Gorkha Fort- The Pithoragarh fort is located on top of a hill on the outskirts of Pithoragarh. It was built by the Gorkhas back in the year 1789.

Parmar/Panwar Dynasty of Garhwal -

- Until the 14th century, 52 big and small Thakuri kings (Khasis) ruled the Garhwal region. In the absence of military power, these kings had built forts for security.
- A young man named Kanakpal of the Panwar dynasty from the Gurjar region came on a pilgrimage. Garhi King Sonpal warmly welcomed Kanakpal and declared him his successor, marrying his daughter to him. Kanakpal laid the foundation of the Parmar dynasty in Chandpurgadh (Chamoli) in 688 AD. The Parmar dynasty had a total of 60 kings from 688 AD until August 1949.
- There is no solid historical evidence available about the preceding kings of the 37th king, Ajaypal, in this dynasty. Ajaypal, with his might, transformed the small kingdom of his ancestors into a vast kingdom by conquering all the 51 Gadhpatis and unifying Gadh bhoomi. He shifted the capital from Chandpurgadhi to Srinagar in 1358 AD.

- Ajaypal built a royal palace for himself in Devalgarh and established Kuldevi Rajarajeshwari in it. In Devalgarh, there is a picture of Ajaypal in the Padmasana posture, wearing earrings and a turban on his head, which indicates his affiliation with the Gorakhnath sect.
- Sahajpal, the 42nd ruler of the Parmar dynasty, was a contemporary of Akbar. Following Sahajpal, Balbhadra Shah became the Parmar ruler and added the title 'Shah' before his name. After Balbhadra Shah, this title became a tradition.
- After Balbhadra Shah, Manshah (1561 to 1611 AD) ruled. During his rule, the rulers of Kumaon attempted seven unsuccessful attacks. Manshah's commander, Nandi, captured Champawat.
- Shyamshah ruled as the 45th ruler after Manshah. His name is also mentioned in Jahangirnama.
- After Shyamshah, Mahipat Shah became the ruler. Mahipat Shah, with the title of 'Garvabhanjak,' launched three attacks on Tibet. His three distinctive generals were Madho Singh Bhandari, Rikhola Lodi, and Banwaridas. Mahipat Shah attained martyrdom in the Kumaon war.
- After Mahipat Shah, his seven-year-old son, Prithvipatishah, ascended the throne under the protection of Mother Karnavati. In 1635, the Mughal (Shahjahan) commander Najavat Khan attacked the Doon Valley. Queen Karnavati, the patroness of the Garhwal state, displayed bravery and wisdom by capturing the Mughal soldiers who had escaped death and having their noses cut off. After this incident, Queen Karnavati became famous by the name 'Nakkati Rani.'
- Prithvipati Shah gave shelter to Mughal Prince Suleman Shikoh, the son of Darashikoh, which angered Aurangzeb. Later, Prithvipat Shah's son, Medinishah, handed over Suleman Shah to Delhi against his father's wish. Due to this incident, Prithvipat Shah expelled his son, Medinishah, from the kingdom, and he died in Delhi in 1662 AD. Prithvipat Shah, while he was still alive, placed his grandson, Fatehshah, on the throne.
- Due to the challenging geographical conditions of Garhwal, despite numerous invasions, it could never be brought under the control of the Mughal Empire.

- Fatehshah was a very glorious and art-loving ruler. He had unwavering faith in the Nath sect. He attacked and conquered Paonta and Jonsar of the Sirmaur state. After capturing Saharanpur, Fatehshah established the city of Fatehpur. Shri Sureshanand Barthwal, Shri Khetaram Dhasmana, Shri Rudridatt Kamothi, Shri Haridutt Nautiyal, Shri Baswanand Bahuguna, Shri Shashidhar Dangwal, Shri Sahdev Chandola, Shri Kirtiram Kantola, and Shri Haridutt Thapliyal were the nine gems in the court of Fateh Shah. Upon the invitation of Fateh Shah, Sikh Guru Ram Rai built a Gurudwara in Dehradun.
- After Fateh Shah, Pradeepshah ascended the throne. Pradeep Shah's reign was peaceful and glorious. During his time, there were very good relations between Garhwal and Kumaon. Following Pradeep Shah, Lalit Shah ascended the throne of Garhwal in December 1772. Harshdev Joshi, the minister of the then Kumaon King Deepchand, invited Lalit Shah to conquer Kumaon. Lalit Shah successfully conquered Kumaon and placed his second son, Pradumnashah, on the throne. Unfortunately, he died of malaria while returning from Kumaon.
- After Lalit Shah, his eldest son, Jaikrit Shah, ascended the throne of Garhwal. Jaikrit Shah had enmity with his younger brother, Pradyuman Shah, and hatched a conspiracy to remove him from the throne of Kumaon. As a result, Pradyumnashah attacked Srinagar and resided there for three years before returning to Kumaon. After Pradyumna's return, Jaykritshah again took over the power of Gadhrajya but due to internal discord with younger brother Parakram Shah, he left the throne and went to Raghunath temple in Devprayag and died there. Parakram Shah took over the kingdom.
- After the death of his elder brother, Jaikrit Shah, Pradyumna returned to Garhwal and assumed power in 1786 AD. However, due to the intrigues of his younger brother, Parakram Shah, the condition of Garhwal deteriorated significantly. Taking advantage of the internal strife, the Gorkhas attacked Garhwal in 1791 AD but were defeated at a place called Langurgarh. To prevent further attacks on the state by the Gorkhas, Pradyumna Shah promised to pay Rs 25,000 every year to the defeated Gorkhas so that they would not attack again.

- However, in the aftermath of a major earthquake in Garhwal in 1803, internal factionalism, the dominance of ministers over the king, and civil war, the Gorkhas, under the leadership of Amarsingh Thapa and Hastidal Chaturiya, once again attacked Garhwal in February 1803. They inflicted substantial destruction and captured a significant portion of the region. In response, Pradyumna Shah fled from Garhwal and moved towards the plains.
- Pradyumna Shah re-organized his army, funded the effort by selling his jewelry and precious throne in Saharanpur. Tragically, on 14 May 1804, Pradyumanshah met his martyrdom in the decisive battle against the Gorkhas at Khurbuda Maidan in Dehradun. Consequently, both Garhwal and Kumaon came under the control of the Nepali Gorkhas.
- One of Pradyumna Shah's sons, Kunwar Pritam Shah, was taken prisoner by the Gorkhas and sent to Kathmandu, while the other son, Sudarshan Shah, remained in Haridwar and attempted to gain independence. In response to his request, the British Governor General Lord Hastings dispatched the British army against the Gorkhas in October 1814. Following the war, Garhwal achieved its independence in early 1815.
- It is said that the British took control of half of the eastern part of Garhwal because the The Garhwal king failed to pay the promised 7 lakh rupees for war expenses. Nonetheless, scholars argue that this was a British conspiracy because the original agreement with the Garhwal King was solely for independence. Under pressure, Surdarshan Shah relocated his capital from Srinagar to Tehri on 28 December 1815. His descendants continued to rule Tehri Garhwal until 1 August 1949, when it merged with India, and Tehri state was designated as a district of Uttar Pradesh.
- Under the rule of the Panwar kings, various poems, including Manodaya poetry, Gadharajvansh poetry, and Sudarshannodaya, were created. Among these, the oldest is Manodaya poetry, composed during the reign of King Manshah and credited to Bharat Kavi. Raja Sudarshanshah, also known as the Surat poet, wrote the extensive composition 'Sabhasar' spanning several volumes.

Garhwal kings after Pradyumna Shah

- Sudarshan Shah (1815-1859) Partition of Garhwal, capital shifted from Srinagar to Tehri on 28 December 1815.
- Bhavani Shah (1859-1871) -
- Pratapshah (1871-1886) Started English education in Tehri.
- Sir Kirtishah (1886-1913) – In 1898 the British gave him the title of CSI.
- Narendrashah (1913-1946) - People's movement in demand of Prajamandal, independence movement and demand for abolition of princely state.
- Manvendrashah (1946 1949) Demand and movement for independence after India became independent, establishment of 4-member Prajamandal for democratic rule in February 1948, merger with India on 1 August 1949 and formation of Uttar Pradesh. A district was formed.
- The oldest copper plate of this dynasty is of King Jagatpal, which has been found from the Raghunath temple of Devprayag. Its period is 1455 AD.