

# **E-CONTENT PREPARED BY**

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**Name of Course: Political History of Early Medieval India**

**Topic of the E-Content**

**Causes, nature and Result of the invasion of Sultan  
Mahmud**

From time in memorial India always attract foreigners by her great treasures of wealth. The beginning was started with Aryan invasion. After that many influential communities from the different corner of the world had come to fulfil their greet of wealth. The muslims started their invasion on India in the opening of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. In 1000 A.D valorous and determind king of Ghazni of Central Asia Sultan Mahmud crossed Indian frontier. After that he lead 17 expedition against India.

Sultan Mahmud belonged to Turk community ruling royals of Ghazni. He ascended in 998 A.D after his father Sabuktgin's death. He was an external ambitious man. He ruled over a vast dominion which extended from Iraq and the Caspian sea to the Ganga Doab and was more extensive than the empire of Khalipha of Bagdad. After the decline of Abbasid Khaliphath the Country saw Mahmud as their hero. Mahmud became a legend, who never lost any battle during 40 years of ceaseless warfare. To the fanatic Islam he was 'the Holy Warrior'. He established a Turko-Persian empire. To make this empire powerful he needs wealth. This need motivated him to invade over a rich country India. More over the hope to get the prestize in religious world, he was also ready to invade a non Muslim country for the victory of Islam.

On the eve of Mahmud's invasion economically India was rich. It's great material and agricultural wealth enriched her and the great quantity of riches prospered the economic life of India. The top richest people, merchants were millionaires, the ordinary people were rather poor but not in want. People stored their unmesurable wealth in the temples. These temples banks were repository of wealth to the foreigners. As far as India's political conditions were concerned, the picture was not very different from the earlier Arab invasion. The north India was divided in various provinces ruled by the different Rajput clans. In spite of getting united they always were busy in conflicts for accuring kingdom.

The most notable Hindu kingdom extended from the river Chenab to the Hindukush mountain and Kabul was ruled over by Shahi dynasty. The king towards the end of the tenth century was famous Jaipal. It was his kingdom to bear the first onslaught of the Turks from Ghazni.

Kashmir was the next important Hindu kingdom of Northern India. It was under the house of Utpala which was in constant conflict with Kanauj. Under king Shankarvarmana Kashmir extended its boundaries in several directions.

When Sultan Mahmud was hammering at the gates of India Kashmir was under the rule of Dida and the political condition of Kashmir was not at all satisfactory.

Kanauj- near about 836 the imperial city of Kanauj had passed into the hands of the Pratihara dynasty. The Pratiharas exercised sway over Kanauj and Madhyadesh and fought with varying success with their Southern and Northern neighbours. Rajyapala was the last king of the Pratihara dynasty. His capital Kanauj was invaded by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni in 1018.

The Palas of Bengal- King Mahipala of the Pala dynasty was the ruler of Bengal when Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India. When the north- western India was being laid waste by fire and sword by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, the king Rajendracholadava invaded Bengal and defeated the Pala ruler. Bengal, however, remained safe against the inroads of Sultan Mahmud due to sheer distance.

To the Hindu World of his day Mahmud was a devil, a daring bandit and plunderer, and the destroyer of art. So the question naturally arises that, was Mahmud a covetous plunderer?

As we know around 1000 A.D there was a tough competition for political authority among the different central Asian Powers: Ghazni was one of them. Mahmud had an aim to place Ghazni in the top rank of political status in Asia. To make his army stronger he wanted wealth as Ghazni was financially poor. This wanting inspired him to rampage over India. The word rampage is the reverse side of war, battle or conflict. In all the wars of world history in every period, the winner looted the defeated area. The soldiers were given a small salary from the administration. While they found an opportunity on an expedition and they looted and plundered to make sufficient for their income. The Ghaznavide army was composed of heterogeneous material. In the army there were Indians, Afghans, Turks and Persians together. As Ghazni was economically poor, they hoped of future spoil and plunder to make their sufficient income. Mahmud made 17 expeditions on India for filling the financial vacuum in Ghazni. India provided money which made Mahmud the central Asian lord. He came and conquered the particular areas of Hindustan. He could be the emperor of the vast India, but for him the country was only repository of wealth. However his motives were economic rather than religious. He took away the gold idols of Hindus but never forced them to join a creed in which they did not believe.

Result: At the beginning of the 11th century India torn by political strifes lay at his feet. He never tried to consolidate his swiping victory in India and utilized the Indian resources to govern India for the welfare of the Indian people. He only annexed Punjab and Multan for the sake of expediency. With a rude nature Mahmud destroyed fine temple architectures and sculptures in India. His invasion in India produced negative result. His sweeping march exposed the internal rottenness of the Indian body politic. Sultan Mahmud came to India neither with religious zeal of a missionary, nor as an emperor builder like Mhammad Ghuru. Acquisition of wealth by plunder was his guiding principle.

In spite of his plundering nature Mahmud became the founder of Turkish power in India. He paved the way for establishment of the future Sultanate of Delhi.