

PREFACE TO THE EDITION

The study of history and archaeology extends beyond the reconstruction of past events; it seeks to uncover the structures, institutions, landscapes, and cultural interactions that have shaped human civilizations across time. By critically engaging with historical sources, material evidence, inscriptions, and archaeological findings, scholars continue to refine our understanding of political authority, economic systems, religious exchanges, environmental adaptations, and social transformations. It is with this scholarly vision that the *International Journal of History and Archaeology Research Studies (IJHARS)* proudly presents its latest issue, featuring original research that illuminates diverse dimensions of medieval Indian history through rigorous historical inquiry and interdisciplinary analysis.

The contributions in this issue collectively explore the intricate relationship between statecraft, economy, religion, trade, infrastructure, and imperial expansion. One study revisits the fiscal architecture of the Maratha Empire, offering a nuanced reassessment of the institutions of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* and demonstrating how innovative revenue mechanisms enabled territorial expansion while simultaneously exposing structural limitations within the Maratha confederacy. Another article examines the rich traditions of Sufi-Hindu convergence in the medieval Deccan, revealing how devotional practices, patronage networks, and political legitimacy fostered meaningful religious interactions while also highlighting the dynamic boundaries of syncretic traditions during periods of political transition.

The maritime world of South India receives significant attention through an insightful investigation into the Chola Empire's naval expansion, where commercial ambition, temple institutions, and overseas trade networks are shown to have functioned as interconnected instruments of political influence across the Indian Ocean. Complementing this perspective, another contribution analyses the trade routes, market towns, and urban political economy of the Delhi Sultanate, demonstrating how state intervention, monetary systems, and commercial regulation transformed urban landscapes and long-distance trade during one of medieval India's most significant political eras.

The issue concludes with an important study on the Vijayanagara Empire's hydraulic infrastructure, illustrating how irrigation systems, agrarian expansion, and environmental management became essential instruments of imperial governance. By integrating archaeological evidence with historical records, the article underscores the enduring relationship between ecological engineering, agricultural productivity, and political authority, while reflecting on the long-term consequences of environmental disruption following the empire's decline.

Collectively, the articles in this volume exemplify the richness of contemporary historical and archaeological scholarship. They demonstrate the value of combining archival research, epigraphy, archaeology, economic history, environmental studies, and cultural analysis to produce deeper interpretations of the past. Rather than viewing historical developments in isolation, the contributors reveal the interconnected forces that shaped societies across regions and centuries, thereby offering fresh perspectives on governance, commerce, religion, and environmental adaptation in medieval India.

The Editorial Board expresses its sincere appreciation to the authors for their valuable scholarly contributions, the reviewers for their thoughtful evaluations and constructive recommendations, and the editorial team for their unwavering commitment to maintaining the journal's academic standards. We also extend our gratitude to our readers and the wider research community for their continued support of IJHARS.

It is our hope that the studies presented in this issue will stimulate further historical and archaeological research, encourage interdisciplinary dialogue, and contribute meaningfully to ongoing discussions concerning the complexity, diversity, and enduring legacy of India's historical past.

Dr. Vinodkumar Kallolickal
Chief Editor

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