SOCIAL FORMATION IN INDIA

COURSE CODE: B21HS32AN

Ancillary Course History
For Undergraduate Programmes
Self Learning Material

SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

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The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.

Mission

To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

Social Formation in India

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Semester - III

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(With Model Question Paper Sets)

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MESSAGE FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear learner,

I extend my heartfelt greetings and profound enthusiasm as I warmly welcome you to Sreenarayanaguru Open University. Established in September 2020 as a state-led endeavour to promote higher education through open and distance learning modes, our institution was shaped by the guiding principle that access and quality are the cornerstones of equity. We have firmly resolved to uphold the highest standards of education, setting the benchmark and charting the course.

The courses offered by the Sreenarayanaguru Open University aim to strike a quality balance, ensuring students are equipped for both personal growth and professional excellence. The University embraces the widely acclaimed "blended format," a practical framework that harmoniously integrates Self-Learning Materials, Classroom Counseling, and Virtual modes, fostering a dynamic and enriching experience for both learners and instructors.

The university aims to offer you an engaging and thought-provoking educational journey. The curriculum adheres to the UGC guidelines that mandate a bundle of three disciplines, thereby requiring two ancillary disciplines as a compulsory part of the programme. This material addresses the syllabus for Social Formation in India as an ancillary course. It provides ample opportunity to introduce the fundamental concepts of the discipline to new learners, with a strong focus on the development of ideas and institutions, as well as cultural identities within the Indian context. The aim of the course is to familiarise learners with the essential elements in the development of social, cultural and political ideas and entities. The Self-Learning Material has been meticulously crafted, incorporating relevant examples to facilitate better comprehension.

Rest assured, the university's student support services will be at your disposal throughout your academic journey, readily available to address any concerns or grievances you may encounter. We encourage you to reach out to us freely regarding any matter about your academic programme. It is our sincere wish that you achieve the utmost success.

Warm regards.
Dr. Jagathy Raj V. P.

05-07-2024

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Food Gatherers, Food Producers and Surplus Appropriators

UNIT 1

Stone Age Settlements

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the chronological framework of the Stone Age
- compare and contrast the subsistence strategies of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic people
- identify and locate major Stone Age archaeological sites in India

Prerequisites

The study of Stone Age settlements in India offers profound insights into the early human history and prehistoric culture of the Indian subcontinent. The Stone Age, a period that marks the advent of human tool-making and the development of early societies, is divided into three main phases: Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age), Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age), and Neolithic (New Stone Age). Each of these phases is characterised by significant developments in tool technology, subsistence patterns, and social organisation. The Palaeolithic period is further divided into Lower, Middle, and Upper Palaeolithic phases. This period is marked by the use of rudimentary stone tools and a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. The Mesolithic period witnessed a transition from purely hunting and gathering to a more diversified subsistence strategy that included fishing and the use of microliths (small stone tools). The Neolithic period marks the advent of agriculture, the domestication of animals, and the establishment of permanent settlements. This period is characterised by polished stone tools, pottery, and the construction of houses. India's rich archaeological evidence provides a unique perspective on early human

development, tracing the evolution from basic stone tools to advanced micro-liths and polished tools. Studying how human societies evolved culturally from nomadic to settled lifestyles provides crucial insights into the development of human societies, technologies, and cultures. The study of Stone Age settlements in India not only enriches our knowledge of the past but also our understanding of human adaptability and innovation, providing valuable lessons for the present and future.

Keywords

Stone Age, Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Megalithic, Microliths

Discussion

1.1.1 Settlement Pattern

The concept of 'settlement pattern' was first introduced in archaeological studies by the American scholar G.R. Willey during his research on prehistoric settlements in Peru, South America. Throughout history, humans have frequently been characterised as "tool-using animals," with cultural progress often associated with the increasing utilisation of tools and implements. These advancements enabled humans to exert control over their environment and create more favourable living conditions. Studies of prehistoric societies indicate that the transition from hunting and gathering to food production was a gradual process rather than an abrupt change. This shift, often termed a revolution, represented a significant milestone in human development and served as the groundwork for the emergence of subsequent civilizations.

1.1.1.1 Stone Age

Human history is divided into prehistory, proto-history, and the historical period, based on the presence of written records and the advancement of civilizations, to trace the evolution of human civilization.The history of human settlement in India goes back to Prehistoric times. Daniel Wilson coined the term Prehistory in 1851. No written records are available for the prehistoric periods. Chronologically, Pre-history covers the largest period of human history. Since stone was the chief material that was used by early man to procure food or to protect himself, this period is also described as the Stone Age. However, plenty of archaeological remains are found in different parts of India to reconstruct the history of this period. It marks the progress from an animal-hunting and wild food-collecting wandering life to that of a food-producing and cattle-herding settled life.

The Stone age is divided into the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic periods, which are based on the geological age and the type and technology of stone tools used by man. In 1863, John Lubbock divided the Stone Age into two parts, the

Palaeolithic and Neolithic. A few years later, C.J. Thomsen suggested the division of the Palaeolithic into the lower, middle and upper Palaeolithic, largely on the basis of different tool types used by man. The use of the term Mesolithic is relatively recent.

1.1.2 Palaeolithic Period: Hunters and Food Gatherers

The term "Palaeolithic" derives from the Greek words "palaios," meaning old, and "lithos," meaning stone, designating the period commonly known as the Old Stone Age. This era, which began approximately 500,000 years ago and ended around 10,000 BCE, marks the longest phase of prehistory, encompassing the entire Pleistocene epoch, roughly 2 million years ago. The classification of different stone ages was primarily based on the types of stone tools employed by early humans.

Robert Bruce Foote, associated with the Geological Survey of India, made a significant discovery in this context when he identified the first Palaeolithic tools in the subcontinent at Pallavaram, near Chennai, on May 30, 1863. The end of the Palaeolithic period coincided with the advent of agriculture, animal domestication, and the practice of copper ore smelting.

Evidence from this era is limited, largely derived from stone tools such as hand axes and flakes, which were utilised for hunting and cutting. Palaeolithic people typically relied on animal skins, bark, or leaves for protection against the elements and did not engage in farming or the construction of permanent dwellings.

Palaeolithic tools have been discovered across various locations, including river valleys in Pakistan, the Chota Nagpur plateau in Jharkhand, Belahara in Mirzapur district, Billa Surgam in Andhra Pradesh, Attirampakkam near Chennai, Velangudi in Tamil Nadu, Kibbanahalli in Mysore, the Wainganga River in Maharashtra, and the Adamgarh hill in the Narmada valley, Madhya Pradesh. Additionally, some excavation sites have yielded bone implements and animal remains, providing further insights into the lives of early humans.

1.1.2.1 Phases in the Palaeolithic Age

The Palaeolithic period was developed in the Pleistocene period of the Ice Age. Based on the types and nature of tools and their technology, the Palaeolithic age is further divided into three phases:

a. Lower Palaeolithic Age - 500,000 BCE to 50.000 BCE

b. Middle Palaeolithic Age -50,000 BCE to 40,000 BCE

c. Upper Palaeolithic Age- 40.000 BCE to 10,000 BCE

The Lower Palaeolithic phase

During the Lower Palaeolithic era, which predominated during the Ice Age, early humans are believed to have primarily utilised rough stone tools such as hand-axes, cleavers, and choppers. These tools have been unearthed in various locations, including the Soan River valley, Kashmir, and the Thar Desert. In the Belan Valley of the Mirzapur district in Uttar Pradesh, Lower Palaeolithic tools have also been discovered. Stone tools found in the desert region of Didwana in Rajasthan and the rock shelters of Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh are estimated to date back to around one hundred millennia BCE.

Some of the major archaeological sites associated with the Lower Palaeolithic period include Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh, Hunsgi in Karnataka, Anagwadi in Karnataka,

Chirki-Nevasa in Maharashtra, Didwana in Rajasthan, and Samadhiyala in Gujarat.

The Middle Palaeolithic Age

Middle Palaeolithic tools have been discovered in the Narmada Valley and various locations situated to the south of the Tungabhadra River. These implements are crafted from flakes and comprise a range of blades, points, and scrapers. Despite their presence across different regions of the country, these tools exhibit distinct regional variations.

The Upper Palaeolithic period

During the Upper Palaeolithic period, the climate was drier as it aligned with the final stage of the Ice Age, characterised by relatively warmer temperatures. This era also witnesses the emergence of Homo sapiens. Upper Palaeolithic settlements have been identified in regions such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, the southern Bihar plateau, and Uttar Pradesh. The presence of cave and rock shelters utilised by humans during this period is evidenced by sites like Bhimbetka. Significant Upper Palaeolithic sites include the Kurnool Caves and Didwana Lake in Rajasthan.

1.1.3 Mesolithic Age

The Mesolithic era serves as a transitional phase between the Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods, identified by H.D. Sankalia. This period followed the Palaeolithic age, which concluded around 9000 BCE with the end of the ice age, leading to a warmer and drier climate. During the Mesolithic, people largely maintained the hunting and food-gathering lifestyle of their predecessors, but towards the end of this period, there were initial attempts at animal domestication, setting the stage for Neolithic culture.

Microliths, small blades measuring 1 to 4 cm, became characteristic tools of the Mesolithic age. These small tools were fashioned into various implements, including arrowheads, knives, sickles, and harpoons, often affixed to wood or bone handles. The presence of Mesolithic communities in India was first documented in the late 19th century by A.C.L. Carlleyle, who discovered numerous microliths in caves and rock shelters in the Kaimur range of Mirzapur District, Uttar Pradesh. Further significant advancements in understanding this period were made through H.D. Sankalia's excavations in the 1950s at sites like Langhnaj in Gujarat.

Mesolithic tools have been unearthed at various sites across Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, central and eastern India, and south of the Krishna River. Bagor in Rajasthan is notable as a typical Mesolithic site, characterised by a distinct microlith industry. Inhabitants of this area likely relied on hunting and pastoralism. The earliest evidence of animal domestication has been found at sites such as Adamgarh in Madhya Pradesh and Bagor in Rajasthan.

Both Palaeolithic and Mesolithic peoples engaged in rock painting, with the Bhimbetka site near Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh showcasing over five hundred painted rock shelters across ten square kilometers. These paintings, found in regions like Azamgarh, Pratapgarh, and Mirzapur, depict scenes featuring birds, animals, and human figures. The presence of hunted animals in the artwork suggests an economy focused on hunting and food gathering, with no indication of agricultural practices during this period.

1.1.4 Neolithic Age: Food Producers

The Neolithic era, often referred to as the "food-producing stage" or the "Neolithic Revolution," marks a significant transition from food gathering to food production,

representing one of the most transformative changes in human history. This period, the final phase of the Stone Age, is characterised by the use of ground and polished tools, as well as pottery, distinguishing it from the preceding Palaeolithic and Mesolithic cultures. The term "Neolithic" was coined in the 19th century by Danish prehistorian Christian Jurgensen Thomsen to highlight these technological advancements.

Neolithic people utilised polished stone tools, with the stone axe being a hallmark of this period, serving various purposes. Archaeologists have identified three primary Neolithic settlement areas in India based on the presence of these axes: north-western, north-eastern, and southern regions. In Kashmir, polished stone tools and numerous bone implements have been unearthed. The Burzahom culture is noted for its coarse grey pottery, some featuring mat-marked bases. Unique burial practices at Burzahom, such as placing domestic dogs alongside their owners, set it apart from other Indian Neolithic sites, raising questions about its relationship with other Neolithic cultures in India.

1.1.4.1 Neolithic Settlements

The Neolithic age in the Indian subcontinent began around 7000 BCE, with the earliest known settlement at Mehrgarh in Baluchistan, Pakistan. Neolithic sites in central India date back to around 5000 BCE, while those in southern India are not older than 2500 BCE. In parts of eastern India, Neolithic settlements have been identified as late as 1000 BCE.

Burzahom, located near Srinagar in Kashmir, is one of the earliest and most significant Neolithic sites in north-western India. The name translates to "the place of birch," and the settlement features dwelling pits, various ceramics, and diverse stone and bone tools. Although direct evidence of subsistence practices is lacking, hunting is believed to have been an important activity here. Another notable Neolithic site in Kashmir, Gufkral, translates to "the cave of the potter." Evidence suggests that the inhabitants engaged in both agriculture and animal domestication.

Neolithic communities in southern India were primarily located south of the Godavari River. Numerous sites, including Maski, Brahmagiri, Sanganakallu, Piklihal, Tekkalakote, Hallur, and Kodakkal in Karnataka, as well as Utnur in Telangana and Paiyampalli in Tamil Nadu, have been excavated. These communities typically settled in hilly areas or on plateaus near riverbanks, utilizing stone axes and blades. Evidence of animal domestication, including cattle, sheep, and goats, has been found, along with predominantly handmade grey or brown pottery. Rubbing stones suggest familiarity with grain production.

In the northeastern region, Neolithic sites have been excavated in the hills of Assam and the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Neolithic tools and implements have also been discovered in the Allahabad and Mirzapur districts of Uttar Pradesh. Tools from Assam exhibit similarities to those found in China and Burma, although the cultural connections of the Garo Hills communities with other parts of India remain unclear.

1.1.5 Changes in Economic Production, Society and Culture

During the Neolithic age, humanity transitioned from a nomadic lifestyle to settled agricultural living, marking significant changes in economic production compared to the earlier Palaeolithic and Mesolithic eras. Neolithic communities were among the first to engage in agriculture, primarily

practicing subsistence farming. Evidence of agriculture varies across sites, with clear indications found in southern India, where grains like horse gram, green gram, and ragi have been discovered at locations such as Tekkalakota, Paiyampalli, and Hallur. The people of Mehrgarh were particularly advanced, cultivating crops like wheat, cotton, and ragi, often employing terracing techniques for cultivation. Archaeologist Gordon Childe characterised Neolithic culture as self-sufficient and food-producing, with fishing also becoming significant in coastal regions.

Neolithic societies actively domesticated various animals. For instance, the inhabitants of Piklihal were primarily cattle herders, domesticating cattle, sheep, and goats. While humped cattle bones are common at many sites, evidence of buffalo domestication is less certain. Remains of split and cut bones indicate that cattle were used for food, and cattle pens at Utnur provided protection from wild animals at night.

Neolithic communities utilised a diverse range of stone tools, including celts, axes, adses, and chisels, with innovations like pecking and grinding stones enhancing cutting and chopping tasks. They also employed stone hoes and digging sticks, often equipped with ring stones. These tools have been discovered in regions such as Orissa and the Chotanagpur hills.

Typically, Neolithic people lived in circular or rectangular houses made from mud and reeds, akin to the mud-brick structures found at Mehrgarh. Their predominantly settled lifestyle revolved around farming, and they frequently shared common property.

Advancements in pottery-making during the Neolithic period allowed communities to store grains and prepare food more efficiently. Initially handcrafted, pottery evolved with the introduction of foot wheels, leading to varieties like black burnished ware, grey ware, and mat-impressed ware, often decorated and painted. Evidence of painted walls has been found at sites like Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh, showcasing the artistic developments of this era.

While these developments began later in India than in Western and Central Asia, by the end of the Neolithic period, Indian societies were on the cusp of civilization. This era brought profound shifts in human life, leading scholars like Gordon Childe to label it the "Neolithic Revolution." Transformative changes occurred across various aspects of existence, including the economy, production methods, artistic endeavors, societal structures, and cultural practices. In many regions, Neolithic and Chalcolithic findings overlap, leading some archaeologists to consider them together. However, it is now widely acknowledged that a distinct Neolithic period existed, characterised by settled life, animal husbandry, and early agriculture reliant solely on stone tools. The subsequent use of copper alongside stone tools marks the transition into the Chalcolithic period.

1.1.6 Chalcolithic Age

The Chalcolithic Age, characterised by the introduction and utilization of copper alongside stone tools, marked a significant transformation in human life and culture. This period, known as the Stone-Copper phase, emerged by the second millennium BCE across the Indian subcontinent, distinct from the urban Harappan civilization. Chalcolithic cultures were predominantly rural and thrived in diverse geographical settings, particularly in hilly regions and along riversides.

Chalcolithic cultures can be delineated based on their geographical distribution, with key examples including:

- **Banas Culture**: Located in the Banas

Valley of Rajasthan, known for its village metallurgy and pottery trade.

- **Malwa Culture**: Spanning Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- **Jorwe Culture**: Found primarily in Maharashtra, dating between 1400 and 700 BCE. Initially rural, the later stages of the Jorwe culture exhibited signs of urbanization, particularly in areas like Daimabad and Inamgaon.

Excavations have unearthed Chalcolithic cultural artifacts in regions such as Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, and Karnataka. Notable sites include:

- **Ahar and Gilund**: Associated with the Banas culture.
- **Kayatha and Eran**: Linked to the Kayatha culture.
- **Malwa**: Representing the Malwa culture.
- **Jorwe, Nevasa, Daimabad, Chandbli, Songaon, Inamgaon, Prakash, and Nasik**: Key sites for the Jorwe culture, with extensive excavations conducted in Maharashtra.

1.1.6.1 Tools and Technology

Chalcolithic people utilised both stone and copper tools interchangeably. The Ahar culture notably refrained from using microlithic stone tools like axes or blades, instead crafting their implements from locally available copper. Ahar, formerly known as "Tambavati" or "place possessing copper," was renowned for its early adoption of smelting and metallurgy. Other sites, such as Gilund in Rajasthan and Jorwe and Chandoli in Maharashtra, yielded copper artifacts like flat and rectangular axes.

The discovery of a copper harpoon alongside pottery known as Ochre-Coloured Pottery (OCP) in Saifai, Etawah district, Uttar Pradesh, led to the classification of sites in the Ganga-Yamuna doab as belonging to the OCP Culture, dated approximately from 2000 to 1500 BCE.

1.1.6.2 Social and Economic Life

Chalcolithic communities employed various types of pottery, predominantly in red, black, or grey hues, with both wheel-made and handcrafted forms. Jorwe pottery features black and red paint with a matte surface, while Malwa ware boasts a thick buff slip adorned with black or dark brown patterns. Ahar culture pottery is characterised by black and red ware with white paint. Chalcolithic artisans displayed expertise in copper craftsmanship, producing numerous copper artifacts and ornaments. Terracotta objects, including human and animal figures, were also prevalent, with stylised terracotta bulls found at Kayatha and various animal figures discovered at Daimabad.

Thriving in regions with black cotton soil, Chalcolithic cultures cultivated a diverse array of crops, including barley, wheat, rice, bajra, lentils, horse gram, beans, peas, black gram, and green gram, with barley serving as the primary cereal. Chalcolithic communities domesticated various animals, such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses, with abundant cattle bones found at many sites, indicating they were slaughtered for consumption.

Housing patterns among Chalcolithic cultures typically included rectangular and circular mud-walled houses with thatched roofs. Houses were often clustered closely together, with intervening spaces that may have served as lanes, featuring large oval fire pits for cooking.

Burial practices were widespread among Chalcolithic people, with children buried in urns and adults interred in extended positions,

often within house pits or courtyards. In Jorwe, some adults were buried with deliberately amputated ankles, possibly reflecting beliefs aimed at preventing the deceased from becoming restless spirits.

Settlement patterns and burial practices suggest the emergence of social inequalities within Chalcolithic society, with variations in house sises indicating social ranking, particularly evident in Jorwe. This hierarchy implies the presence of some form of administrative organisation. Despite these developments, Chalcolithic communities did not develop writing systems or urban civilizations, and many settlements in valleys like the Godavari were abandoned and later reoccupied after several centuries.

1.1.7.The Megalithic Background

The transition from the prehistoric to the historical period in India is marked by several key developments, including the establishment of large-scale rural settlements engaged in plough agriculture using iron tools, the emergence of state systems, the development of social classes, the adoption of writing systems, the introduction of metal currency, and the beginnings of written literature. However, these changes were not widespread in the southern tip of the peninsula, particularly in the Kaveri delta region, until around the 2nd century BCE.

Evidence of these advancements primarily comes from burial sites rather than actual settlements, as few settlements from this period have been discovered. These burial sites, known as 'megaliths' due to the large stones encircling them, contain human skeletons along with pottery and iron artifacts. Various types of pottery were utilised, including red ware, with black-and-red ware being particularly popular. The practice of burying goods with the deceased likely stemmed from a belief in their necessity in the afterlife. Concentrations of such burial sites have been observed in eastern Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Recap

- The Stone Age in India is divided into three major periods: Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic.
- The Palaeolithic period (Old Stone Age) dates back to around 2.5 million years ago and lasted until around 10,000 BCE.
- During this period, humans were primarily hunter-gatherers, relying on stone tools for various tasks.
- Important Palaeolithic sites in India include Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh, which has rock shelters with cave paintings dating back to this era.
- The Mesolithic period (Middle Stone Age) followed the Palaeolithic period and lasted roughly from 10,000 BCE to 6,000 BCE.
- Mesolithic people began to engage in more sophisticated tool-making techniques and started to domesticate animals.

- Some notable Mesolithic sites in India include Bagor in Rajasthan and Adamgarh in Madhya Pradesh.
- The Neolithic period (New Stone Age) began around 6,000 BCE and witnessed the advent of agriculture and settled communities.
- Neolithic settlements in India were characterised by the cultivation of crops, domestication of animals, and the use of polished stone tools.
- Mehrgarh in present-day Pakistan and Burzahom in Kashmir are among the significant Neolithic sites in the Indian subcontinent.
- These settlements mark important milestones in human history, reflecting the transition from nomadic lifestyles to settled agricultural communities.

Objective Questions

1. Which period in the Stone Age is characterised by the use of polished stone tools and the advent of agriculture?
2. Where are the famous Bhimbetka rock shelters located, known for their cave paintings from the Palaeolithic period?
3. Which period in the Stone Age witnessed the transition from nomadic hunting and gathering to settled agricultural communities?
4. Which Stone Age period in India saw the beginning of animal domestication?
5. Bagor, an important archaeological site from the Stone Age, is located in which Indian state?
6. When did the Palaeolithic period in India end?
7. Which period in the Stone Age is characterised by the use of microliths?
8. What is the significance of Stone Age settlements in India?
9. Who described the Mesolithic age as a transitional phase between the Paleolithic and Neolithic ages?

Answers

1. Neolithic
2. Madhya Pradesh
3. Neolithic
4. Mesolithic
5. Rajasthan
6. Around 10,000 BCE
7. Mesolithic
8. They reflect the transition from nomadic lifestyles to settled communities.
9. H.D Sankalia

Assignments

1. Analyse the key features of Neolithic culture, focusing on its technological advancements, agricultural practices, social organisation, and artistic expressions
2. Discuss the different periods of the Stone Age in India, including the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic eras.
3. Explain the transition from Palaeolithic to Mesolithic cultures, focusing on changes in technology, subsistence practices, and social organization.
4. Examine the transition from hunting-gathering to agriculture. Discuss the key factors that led to the transition from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle to settled agriculture in Neolithic India.

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UNIT 2

Harappan Societies

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- identify major Harappan sities and understand its significance in the history of India
- evaluate the importance of artefacts belonging to the Harappan period
- describe the economic activities of the Harappans
- discuss the theories behind the decline of the Harppan civilization

Prerequisites

Familiarity with archaeological methods like excavation and analysis of artefacts will help you understand the Harappan society. A basic knowledge of ancient history, particularly surrounding civilizations in Mesopotamia, can shed light on potential trade connections. Understanding the geography and climate of the Indus Valley, where the Harappans thrived, provides crucial context for their development. Finally, an interest in material culture, like analysing pottery or figurines, offers insights into their social life and practices.

Keywords

Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Dholavira, Lothal, Urban Planning, Drainage System, Pottery, Settlement Patterns

Discussion

1.2.1 Discovery of Harappan Civilization

In ancient times, humans first used stone tools and weapons before transitioning to metals, with copper being the first metal employed for tool-making. This shift marked the beginning of the Chalcolithic period (from the Greek "chalco," meaning copper, and "lithic," meaning stone). During this era, various cultures emerged in the Indian subcontinent, characterised by the use of both stone and copper tools. Additionally, bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, was also utilised for making tools.

The discovery of the Harappan civilization significantly expanded our understanding of ancient Indian history, dating back to over 2600 BCE. In 1826, Charles Masson visited Harappa in Western Punjab (now in Pakistan) and noted the remains of an ancient settlement with impressive walls and towers. Initially thought to be from the time of Alexander the Great, further exploration by Alexander Cunningham in 1872 revealed the city's much older origins. Excavations beginning in the 1920s at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, along with surrounding areas, uncovered evidence of a civilization as ancient as those of Egypt and Mesopotamia. However, the Harappan script remains undeciphered, and ongoing excavations could further change our understanding of this civilization.

The Harappan civilization flourished during the Bronze Age, with over a thousand excavated settlements and many more yet to be explored. Analysis of skeletal remains indicates that the population of Harappan cities included individuals from Proto-Australoid, Mongoloid, Mediterranean, and Alpine backgrounds, showcasing a diverse society. Some scholars suggest that the social system of the Indus people may have surpassed that of contemporary civilizations like Egypt and Babylon, reflecting a high standard of living.

1.2.2. Chronology of Harappan Civilization

Archaeological evidence indicates that prior to the rise of the Harappan civilization, people lived in small villages. Over time, these settlements evolved into small towns, eventually culminating in fully developed urban centers during the Harappan period.

The Harappan civilization is generally divided into three phases:

- **Early Harappan phase (3500 BCE - 2600 BCE):** During this period, rudimentary town-planning emerged in the form of mud structures, basic trade networks, and the development of arts and crafts. Various types of villages appeared in the hills and plains of Baluchistan and the Indus region, where people were familiar with the use of copper, the wheel, the plough, and pottery making.
- **Mature Harappan phase (2600 BCE - 1900 BCE)**: This era saw the rise of planned cities and well-developed towns featuring burnt brick structures, extensive trade networks (both domestic and foreign), diverse crafts, and other cultural advancements. A new village culture emerged in the Punjab region, which later extended into Gujarat.
- **Late Harappan phase (1900 BCE - 1700 BCE):** This period marked a decline in the Harappan civilization, characterised by the abandonment of

many cities and a decline in trade, leading to the gradual deterioration of urban characteristics.

1.2.3 The Geographical Extent of the Harappan Civilization

The Harappan civilization predominantly thrived in the northwestern regions of the Indian subcontinent. While the exact geographical extent of this Bronze Age civilization is still being determined due to ongoing excavations, it is estimated to have covered an area exceeding 13,000 square kilometres. Its boundaries extended from the Makran coast of Baluchistan in the west to Meerut in the northeast, Jammu in the north, and the Narmada Valley in the south. Geographically, this civilization encompassed a larger area compared to its contemporary counterparts in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Archaeological findings indicate that the Harappan culture spanned present-day Indian states such as Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh, as well as parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Key sites of this civilization include Manda in Jammu and Kashmir, Shortughai in Afghanistan, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro in Pakistan's Western Punjab and Sindh provinces, respectively, Kalibangan in Rajasthan, Lothal and Dholavira in Gujarat, and Banawali and Rakhigarhi in Haryana. Sutkagendor on the Makran Coast and Alamgirpur in western Uttar Pradesh are the westernmost and easternmost sites of the Harappan civilization.

The heartland of this civilization, comprising Harappa, Kalibangan, and Mohenjo-Daro, was located along the Indus River and its tributaries. Most settlements were concentrated in this region due to its uniform features, such as soil type, climate, and subsistence patterns. The area's flat terrain relied on monsoons and Himalayan rivers for water supply, facilitating an agro-pastoral economy.

Archaeologists have established that the Harappan civilization did not utilise iron, as iron usage in India began only in the early second millennium BCE. This is further substantiated by the discovery of Harappan artifacts at Mesopotamian sites, indicating that both civilizations thrived simultaneously during the third millennium BCE.

1.2.4 Harappan Cities

The exact date of the emergence of Harappan cities remains uncertain, as these urban centres developed over centuries across a vast geographical area. Ongoing excavations suggest that many Harappan sites are yet to be unearthed, and even those excavated are not fully explored. A significant obstacle to understanding this civilisation is the undeciphered Indus script.

Harappa

Harappa was the first site to be excavated and is primarily regarded as a town, given its size and the variety of artefacts found. Situated on the banks of the Ravi River in western Punjab, Harappa was explored by archaeologists such as Daya Ram Sahni, M.S. Vats, and Mortimer Wheeler starting in 1921. The ruins span approximately three miles. A considerable portion of Harappa's population likely engaged in non-food-producing activities, including administration, trade, and crafts, while food was supplied by nearby villagers via bullock carts and boats. Harappa was strategically located along a trade route connecting Jammu to Central Asia through Afghanistan.

Mohenjo-daro

Mohenjo-daro is the largest city of the Harappan civilisation, with a population nearing 35,000. Located in the Larkana

district of Sindh, on the banks of the Indus River, its excavation began in 1922 under the direction of John Marshall, R.D. Banerji. The site offers significant evidence of town planning and includes numerous seals. Residents of Mohenjo-daro frequently rebuilt their houses to address flood damage, which contributed to the elevation of the archaeological remains.

Kalibangan

Kalibangan, located in Rajasthan along the dried-up bed of the Ghaggar River, is another important Harappan city. Excavated by B.K.Thapar in the 1960s, this site shows evidence of both pre-Harappan and Harappan habitation. Some scholars suggest that Kalibangan represents the 'eastern domain' of the Harappan civilisation, which also includes settlements like Siswal in Haryana and Alamgirpur in western Uttar Pradesh, where local pottery traditions coexisted with common Harappan styles.

Lothal

Lothal, in Gujarat, is another significant city excavated by S.R. Rao, who led excavations at various Harappan sites in the region. Located in the coastal area of the Gulf of Cambay, Lothal is notable for its dockyard, indicating its role as a trade outpost with West Asian territories. Excavations have revealed an extensive artificial platform, along with well-planned streets and residential structures.

1.2.4.1 Urban Features of Indus Cities

The most striking feature of Harappan urbanisation is their systematic town planning, particularly visible in Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, and Kalibangan. These cities displayed a uniform approach to urban design, dividing space into distinct sections.

Urban Planning

Streets were integral to Harappan urban planning, with settlements laid out according to the cardinal directions. Major streets ran north-south and east-west, intersecting at right angles to form a grid pattern and dividing settlements into square or rectangular blocks.

The Citadel

Each city was divided into two main areas: the Citadel and the lower city. The Citadel, typically situated on a high mud-brick platform, likely housed administrative buildings. The lower city was primarily residential. Harappa and Mohenjo-daro featured brick walls surrounding the Citadel, while Kalibangan had walls enclosing both sections. Unlike the others, Lothal did not exhibit this division but was instead a rectangular settlement enclosed by a brick wall.

Brick Making

Harappan construction utilised both baked and unbaked bricks, with baked bricks predominant in Mohenjo-daro and mud bricks more common in Kalibangan. Brick-making was a widespread activity, resulting in a variety of house sizes, from single-room units to larger residences with courtyards and multiple rooms. Larger homes often included private wells and toilets, accessible through narrow lanes that intersected main streets.

Houses and Buildings

Residential and public buildings were clustered together, forming larger blocks bordered by streets. Most houses opened onto narrower lanes rather than main thoroughfares. Typically, each house had a bathroom, latrine, and drainage system, with many equipped with their own wells. Floors were made of rammed earth or moulded mud bricks, and some houses featured staircases, indicating potential upper stories. In Mohenjo-daro, houses were often arranged around a central courtyard, with

doorways and windows facing side lanes, thus maintaining privacy. Some houses had multiple storeys, with hard-packed earth floors and ceilings over three metres high. Roofs were constructed from wooden beams covered with reeds and packed clay, while doors and windows were made of wood and mats, often adorned with simple carvings.

Drainage System

The Harappan cities boasted well-planned and efficient drainage systems. Sewage chutes and pipes were distinct from rainwater collection systems, with terracotta drain pipes directing wastewater to open brick drains that lined the streets. The main drains were covered by corbelled arches and included rectangular soak pits for solid waste collection. Regular maintenance was crucial to prevent blockages. The drainage system in Mohenjo-daro, in particular, was exceptional, with a common system linking household bathrooms to the main drains, indicating organised civic management.

Large Structures

Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, and Kalibangan featured large structures, likely serving special purposes, built on elevated mud-brick platforms.

Great Bath

The most renowned structure is the Great Bath in Mohenjo-daro. Constructed using bricks on the Citadel mound, it featured steps at both ends and side rooms for changing. Water for the tank was sourced from an adjacent well connected to the drainage system. Scholars believe the Great Bath was used for ritual bathing by the ruling class or priests.

Granary

Mohenjo-daro also contained a large granary, measuring 45.71 metres long and 15.23 metres wide. Harappa featured six granaries near the riverbank, each measuring 15.23 × 6.09 metres, collectively covering an area of approximately 838 square metres. Nearby, circular brick platforms suggest grain threshing activities, and two-roomed barracks likely housed labourers. Granaries were also found at Kalibangan and Lothal, situated along riverbanks for grain storage.

1.2.5 Agriculture and Domestication of Animals

The Harappan subsistence system was based on diverse agriculture and animal husbandry, supporting an urban population reliant on nearby villages for food. Crops such as barley, wheat, peas, mustard, and sesame were cultivated, with evidence from Lothal suggesting rice cultivation as well. A fragment of cotton cloth from Mohenjo-daro indicates the growth and use of cotton. Furrowed fields in Kalibangan imply the use of ploughs and potentially double cropping.

Animal remains indicate domestication of sheep, goats, humped cattle, and fowl, while the domestication of buffaloes, elephants, and camels is uncertain. Seals depicting caparisoned elephants suggest familiarity with these animals. The Harappans also knew of wild species such as rhinoceroses and deer, but horses appear to have been unknown.

1.2.6 Political Organisation

Scholars hold varying opinions regarding the political organisation of the Indus civilization. The ruling class of the Harappan civilization is generally categorised into three groups: administrators, traders, and priests. The emergence of civilization is closely linked to the establishment of a centralised decision-making system led by a decision-making authority. The uniformity observed in town planning, tools, pottery, and weights and measures suggests the presence of such a ruling authority. The construction and maintenance of complex drainage systems indicate a form of municipal administration. Similarly, the existence of granaries points to

a governing body responsible for collecting and storing food grains from rural areas.

The consistent designs and production techniques of tools and implements suggest central oversight. For example, the factory site at Sukkur in Sindh indicates large-scale production and distribution of implements. The widespread production and distribution of goods across more than a thousand kilometers reflect the ruling class's power. This authority likely determined the quantity and quality of goods to be produced and distributed to various urban and rural areas.

Larger cities like Mohenjo-daro featured assembly halls, temples, and palaces, hinting at a centralised authority. The division of cities into the citadel and lower city sections suggests a social hierarchy, with the ruling class overseeing political, religious, and economic matters. The numerous seals recovered from Mohenjo-daro, marked with the authority of traders, priests, or administrators, further underline the existence of a ruling class. The prominence of Mohenjo-daro is highlighted by the largest number of seals and monuments found there, indicating its central role in the civilization.

1.2.7 Arts and Crafts

Arts and crafts in the Indus cities were deeply interconnected, making it difficult to distinguish between them. The bronse dancing figure from Mohenjo-daro is one of the finest examples of Indus art. The figure is depicted with its right arm on the hip and the left arm hanging down, adorned with numerous bangles. Other notable artefacts include figures of buffaloes and toy carts. A significant piece of art from Mohenjo-daro is the bearded head, with half-closed eyes suggesting meditation, possibly representing a priest. Numerous terracotta figurines have been found across Indus sites, featuring various birds, monkeys, sheep, dogs, and cattle. Models of bullock carts have also been discovered, showcasing the craftsmanship of the Indus people.

1.2.7.1 Steatite and Jewellery

Steatite was commonly used for making beads, though gold and silver were also employed. Small silver dishes and gold bead jewellery were discovered at Mohenjo-daro. Over ten thousand seals have been found in cities in Indus, which are considered a significant contribution to ancient craftsmanship. Most seals are square, with some round ones primarily made of steatite. These seals feature carvings of human and semi-human figures, geometric patterns, animals, and the semi-pictographic Indus script. Animal motifs include elephants, tigers, rhinoceroses, bulls, and bison. A recurring motif is a composite animal with the trunk and tusks of an elephant, the horns and forepart of a ram, and the hindquarters of a tiger, likely used for religious purposes. One notable seal depicts a horned deity in a yoga posture, surrounded by animals, identified with the Pashupati god. These seals may have facilitated trade and the exchange of goods across distant areas, reflecting the Indus civilization's intricate artistry and trade practices.

Pottery remains from Harappan sites typically display a plain style, though some pieces feature black-painted decorations depicting leaves, plants, and trees, particularly on cylindrical vessels and dishes. Despite regional variations in Gujarat and Rajasthan, Harappan pottery generally exhibited a uniform pattern. This consistency is also evident in the design and production techniques of tools and implements, which were crafted from bronze, copper, and stone. Common tools included flat axes, knives, spearheads, and arrowheads, with both stone and metal tools being extensively utilised.

1.2.7.2 Art of Writing

The Indus people possessed a form of

literacy, as demonstrated by their script found on seals. However, scholars have yet to decipher this script. The prevailing understanding is that it employed ideograms and was written from right to left. Deciphering challenges arise from the small size of the seals and the lack of continuity in script usage in later periods. Unlike Egyptian and Mesopotamian scripts, which persisted into later languages, the Indus script did not endure. There is hope that future discoveries may unlock the mysteries of the Indus script, providing deeper insights into the Harappan civilisation.

1.2.8 Religion

The religious beliefs of the Indus people remain a topic of significant scholarly debate, primarily because their script has not been deciphered. However, certain assumptions are made that are parallel to modern practices. Large buildings on the citadel of Mohenjo-daro are thought to be places of worship, as they contain large stone sculptures. Additionally, a large building in the lower city of Mohenjo-daro has two human stone sculptures on high platforms, possibly indicating religious use. The Great Bath is another significant structure associated with religious practices, assumed to be used for rituals due to its similarity to ritual baths in the later periods. A nearby large room is believed to be the seat of a high priest.

1.2.8.1 Shiva or 'Pashupati' Seal

The objects of worship in the Indus civilization are inferred from figures on various seals. The most famous is the figure identified as proto-Shiva or 'Pashupati,' named by John Marshall. This deity is depicted wearing a buffalo horned headdress, sitting in a yogic posture, and surrounded by animals like goats, elephants, tigers, and antelopes. In some seals, Pashupati has a sprouting plant between his horns. Another seal shows a horned deity with flowering hair standing nude between branches of a peepal tree, with a worshiper kneeling in front. Snakes are also depicted with the yogic figure on one seal. These features are attributed to Shiva in later periods, suggesting proto-Shiva was a prominent deity among the Indus people.

1.2.8.2 Mother Goddess and Fertility Cult

The worship of a Mother Goddess and a fertility cult likely existed, inferred from terracotta figurines of females adorned with girdles, loincloths, and necklaces, sometimes holding infants. The worship of tree spirits is suggested by images of peepal trees with worshipers kneeling before them. A horned figure standing between peepal tree branches, accompanied by seven human figures, indicates a connection with Shiva and the seven sages of Indian mythology. The combined worship of the peepal tree and Shiva persisted in India for a long time.

1.2.8.3 Mythical Heroes and Animal Worship

Human figures with horns and long tails point to the worship of mythical heroes, akin to practices in Mesopotamia. Numerous animal figures on seals and terracotta structures indicate the worship of various animals, including bulls. This likely influenced later practices of cow and bull worship. Composite animal figures, combining parts of elephants, bulls, and other animals, are also found on seals. One notable figure is the 'Unicorn,' a horse-like beast with a single horn, unique among the animals depicted.

The religious practices at Kalibangan differed from other cities, evidenced by the presence of a 'fire-altar' on a brick platform, unique to Kalibangan. These fire-altars are brick-lined pits containing ash and animal bones, with nearby wells and bathing places

suggesting a ritual center for animal sacrifices and fire rituals. Fire-altars were also found at Lothal, indicating diverse religious rituals in different geographical areas.

1.2.8.4 Belief in Afterlife

Burial practices were a significant aspect of Indus religious activity. While no monumental structures like those in Egypt or Mesopotamia were found, several graves have been discovered. The dead were laid on their backs in a north-south orientation, with grave goods like earthen pots, ornaments, copper mirrors, and sticks. Some graves were constructed with bricks, and a coffin burial was found at Harappa. Small circular pits with large urns at Kalibangan contained no skeletal remains. At Lothal, pairs of male and female skeletons were discovered in one pit. Predominantly, the Indus people practised cremation, and the presence of grave goods indicates a belief in life after death.

Cemeteries have been discovered at Harappa, Lothal, and Kalibangan. Burial sites often included grave goods such as pottery and ornaments. At Harappa, traces of coffin burials with reed shrouds have been found. Sometimes, graves were constructed as brick chambers particularly in Kalibangan. Lothal revealed unique practices, including double burials where a male and female were buried side by side in a single grave. Bones were occasionally deposited in pits. A specific type of pottery appears to be associated with burial rites at Cemetery H (late Harappan) in Harappa.

The variation in religious practices across Indus cities reflects the composite nature of these urban centers. Unlike tribal societies where members follow the same religious practices, urban centers often consist of diverse groups with distinct religious traditions. This diversity is especially notable among traders who maintained their earlier religious customs.

1.2.9 Trade

An urban economy involves interactions between cities and surrounding and distant areas, leading to exchange and trade. The Indus cities maintained trade relations with both nearby and far-flung regions. Their strategic locations, whether in fertile areas, along trade routes, or near resource centers, facilitated these interactions. The urban centers procured food grains in bulk from surrounding villages, typically transported by bullock carts and boats. They controlled river transport across the five rivers of Punjab.

The Indus people sourced precious stones like *lapis lazuli* and turquoise from the northwest frontier areas, and mineral salt from nearby salt ranges. They procured tin and copper from Rajasthan, timber and gold from Kashmir, and gold from Karnataka. Seashells came from the Gujarat coast. Despite the limited availability of copper and tin, these metals were used throughout the Indus area, indicating a well-developed exchange system. Silver, though not locally sourced, was likely imported from Afghanistan, Iran, and other distant lands.

Trade in the Indus region appeared to be an administrative activity rather than purely commercial. The administration established an extensive inter-regional trade network, both within and beyond the Indian subcontinent. A uniform system of weights and measures, crucial for regulating exchanges, suggests centralised control. The binary and decimal systems were used for weights throughout the Indus area.

1.2.9.1 Foreign Trade and Harappan Seals

The Indus civilization had trade contacts with the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamian cities. Harappan seals have been found in Mesopotamian cities like Ur, Nippur, Susa, Umma, and Kish, indicating trade relations. These seals marked ownership and

showed that Indus goods were received in Mesopotamia. Distinctive terracotta figurines, Harappan beads, and weights have been discovered in Mesopotamian cities. For instance, a Harappan seal with a unicorn motif was found at Nippur.

Three Mesopotamian cylinder seals have been found in Mohenjo-daro, and circular button seals from Lothal have been seen in large numbers at Bahrain's port. This suggests that Indus traders transported goods to Persian Gulf settlements, from where they were further distributed to Mesopotamian cities. King Sargon of Akkad (circa 2350 BCE) mentioned ships from Magan, Dilmun, and Meluha docking at his capital, with Meluha identified as a coastal town in the Indus region.

Mesopotamian merchants imported copper, ivory, shell, lapis lazuli, and pearls from Meluha, all abundant in Harappan cities. Early Mesopotamian literature mentions a community of Meluha merchants in Mesopotamia. However, Indus goods are found in several Mesopotamian cities and Persian Gulf regions, while Mesopotamian goods are rarely found in Indus cities. Scholars suggest that Mesopotamian exports like garments, leather goods, and wool were perishable, which may explain their absence in Harappan cities. Silver, used by the Indus people, might have also been procured from Mesopotamia.

1.2.10 Social Differentiation

The Harappan society appears to have favoured matriarchal structures, as indicated by the prevalence of the mother goddess, with numerous terracotta female figurines found in the Punjab and Sindh regions. The society comprised various professions, including priests, warriors, peasants, traders, and artisans like masons, weavers, goldsmiths, and potters. Archaeological evidence from sites like Harappa and Lothal suggests a range of buildings that catered to different social classes. For example, workmen's quarters were found near granaries at Harappa, while workshops for coppersmiths and bead-makers were identified at Lothal. Larger houses likely belonged to the wealthier classes, whereas simpler barrack-like quarters housed labourers.

Information about Harappan clothing mainly comes from terracotta figurines and stone sculptures. Men are often depicted wearing wrapped garments with one end draped over the left shoulder and under the right arm, along with a skirt-like garment. Cotton and wool were commonly used. Evidence from Mohenjo-daro includes woven cloth and tools such as spindles and needles.

Harappans took pride in personal adornment, as shown in figurines depicting elaborate hairstyles for both genders. They wore a variety of ornaments, including necklaces, armlets, earrings, beads, and bangles. Wealthier individuals likely wore jewellery made from gold, silver, and semi-precious stones, while those with fewer resources opted for terracotta alternatives.

Archaeological findings also provide insights into the Harappan diet, which included both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options like wheat, barley, rice, millets, fruits, vegetables, milk, ghee, and various meats from domesticated animals. They used spices for flavour and sweetened food with honey. The presence of seeds from jujube and dates at Harappan sites indicates their importance in the diet. Bones from domesticated and wild animals, along with fish, further highlight their diverse food sources, though it remains unclear whether the Harappans hunted these animals themselves or acquired meat from others.

A clearer understanding of clothing and jewellery comes from terracotta figurines and pottery paintings. Harappans mainly wore cotton and wool garments, often resembling

modern sarees wrapped around the waist. Women adorned themselves with colourful skirts, blouses, and dupattas, while both genders enjoyed various ornaments. The affluent showcased elaborate pieces crafted from gold, silver, ivory, and gemstones, while those with fewer resources wore items made from shell, bone, copper, and terracotta. Cosmetics were popular among both men and women, with finds of ivory combs, ornate bronze mirrors, razors, scented oils, lipsticks, and rouge highlighting their interest in beauty products.

Entertainment was important in Harappan life, with a preference for indoor activities like dancing and games resembling chess. Outdoor pursuits included hunting, fishing, and animal rearing. Children played with clay toys, such as rattles, whistles, miniature birds, wheeled carts, and figurines.

Women held a respected role in Harappan society, valued within both families and the community. The figurines from various sites suggest that women were not merely viewed as domestic helpers but were also revered as representations of the Mother Goddess.

1.2.11 Decline of Harappan Civilization

The organised cities of Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, and Kalibangan gradually degenerated into slum-like conditions as a result of a gradual decline in urban planning, according to archaeological findings, construction activities encroached upon the streets, resulting in the gradual contraction of Mohenjo-daro into a smaller area over time, eventually culminating in the complete abandonment of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Before Harappa's abandonment, evidence points to the arrival of a new group with distinct burial practices, referred to as the 'Cemetery' culture by archaeologists. Similar signs of decline are observed in other cities like Kalibangan, Chanhudaro, and Bahawalpur, where the number of settlements dwindled in later periods, indicating either a decline in population or migration to other regions.

Remarkably, while Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, and Kalibangan were declining, new settlements were emerging simultaneously in the peripheral regions of Gujarat, East Punjab, and Haryana. The sudden population growth in these areas may have been linked to emigration from the early settlements. However, the inhabitants of these new settlements exhibited distinct lifestyles from the Harappans, with the disappearance of Harappan script, weights, measures, and pottery.

The abandonment of the Indus cities is provisionally dated to around 1800 BCE, coinciding with the desertion of major cities and the de-urbanization of other settlements, corroborated by archaeological findings. Scholars have proposed various theories to explain the decline of the Harappan or Indus cities.

R.L. Raikes' Flood Theory

Many scholars suggest that abnormal floods, possibly accompanied by earthquakes, contributed to the downfall of the cities. They point to the silty clay covering the streets and buildings of Mohenjo-daro as evidence left behind by floodwaters. Hydrologist R.L. Raikes supports this theory, arguing that catastrophic floods submerged the Indus cities, possibly exacerbated by earthquakes. However, proponents of this theory struggle to account for the decline of cities outside the Indus area.

H.T. Lambrick's River Course Change Theory

H.T.Lambrick argues that changes in the course of the Indus River led to the decline of the cities. The Indus is known for its instability, having shifted approximately

thirty miles away from Mohenjo-daro. This theory suggests that the population may have suffered from water scarcity, ultimately prompting them to abandon the cities. Proponents of this view propose that the silt found in the city debris was not from floods but rather from wind action depositing sand and silt. However, this theory also fails to explain the decline of other Indus cities.

D.P. Aggarwal's Aridity Theory

Another theory posits that increased aridity and the drying up of the Ghaggar-Hakra River, which was central to the Indus civilization, contributed to the decline. D.P. Aggarwal, a proponent of this theory, argues that even minor reductions in moisture and water availability in semi-arid regions like Harappa could have impacted agricultural production, leading to the decline. However, a challenge with this theory is the lack of precise dating for the drying of the Ghaggar River, necessitating further research for confirmation.

Mortimer Wheeler's Aryan Invasion Theory

Wheeler suggests the Aryan invasion theory, proposing that the Harappan cities were destroyed by invaders from outside. Human remains found in the streets of Mohenjo-daro support this idea, along with references to "dasas" and "dasyus" in the Rig Veda. However, a significant challenge to this theory is the timeline; while the Indus civilization is believed to have ended around 1800 BCE, the Aryans are thought to have arrived in India only around 1500 BCE, making it unlikely that they encountered the Harappans.

1.2.11.1 Ecological Imbalances

Walter Fairservis, an American archaeologist, and other scholars connect the decline of the Indus civilization to ecological imbalances in the region. Fairservis argues that a city like Mohenjo-daro, with a population of thirty-five thousand, would have required numerous food-producing villages nearby. The semi-arid areas surrounding the cities may not have been able to sustain the needs of the urban population, farmers, and herders. Floods, droughts, and attacks from neighbouring communities may have exacerbated this situation, leading the Indus people to migrate towards Gujarat and eastern regions. However, the long-term fertility of the soil in these areas challenges this theory. Since the 1960s, scholars have shifted focus from debating the decline of the Indus civilization to studying its continuity with later cultures.

Gregory Possehl explored the continuity of the Harappan civilization, noting a transition from urban to rural culture. Some settlements were abandoned while new ones emerged, displaying regional variations in weight, measures, seals, writing, and pottery. This shift from urban to rural life is evident in agricultural settlements in the upper Gangetic valley, influenced by the late Harappan period.

The Rigveda contains references to the destruction of non-Aryan cities, with a battle at a location identified as 'Hariyupiya,' possibly Harappa connection disputed by some scholars.

Recap

- The Harappan civilization, also known as the Indus Valley Civilization, flourished in the Indus Valley region of South Asia from roughly 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE.
- The civilization covered a vast area of around the Indus River basin in modern-day Pakistan to the Ghaggar-Hakra River valley in northwestern India.
- Major cities included Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, Dholavira, Lothal, and Rakhigarhi.
- Harappans were among the first South Asian groups to develop well-planned cities.
- Baked brick houses, advanced drainage systems, Granaries for food storage, Citadels possibly housing elite members are the features of the cities.
- Harappans had contacts with civilizations in Mesopotamia and Central Asia.
- They traded items like Beads, Pottery, and Textiles
- They were skilled in bronse work for tools and weapons, sealing with intricately carved steatite seals, possibly used for administration or trade
- The Indus Valley script remains undeciphered, but it's believed to be a logographic script using symbols for words or ideas.
- They might have worshipped Proto Shiva, Mother goddess as fertility god
- Evidence suggests the use of figurines and amulets for religious purposes
- The social structure is debated, with some suggesting a hierarchical system and others a more egalitarian one.
- The reasons for their decline remain unclear, with possibilities including climate change, environmental degradation and Aryan invasion

Objective Questions

1. Which animal was frequently depicted on Harappan seals?
2. Harappan civilization engaged in trade with which ancient civilization?
3. What is the other name for the Indus Valley Civilization?
4. What is the approximate period of the Indus Valley Civilization?
5. Which materials were likely traded by the Harappans?
6. What material is mostly used to make most Harappan seals?
7. On the banks of which river is the city of Harappa situated?
8. Which phase of the Harappan civilization is characterised by planned cities and advanced trade networks?
9. Who proposed the theory of 'River Course Change' in the context of Harappan decline?
10. Which site was the first to be excavated in the Indus Valley Civilization?

Answers

1. Bull
2. Mesopotamia
3. Harappan Civilization
4. 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE
5. Metal and beads
6. Steatite
7. Ravi
8. Mature Harappan phase
9. H.L.Lambrick
10. Harappa

Assignments

1. Examine the role of religious practices, deities, and ritual spaces in shaping the socio-cultural structure of Harappan society.
2. Discuss the major factors that contributed to the decline of the Harappan Civilization, exploring various theories associated with this decline. Provide evidence and scholarly perspectives to substantiate your argument.
3. Analyse the key features of religious life in the Harappan civilization, focusing on the available archaeological evidence and interpretations.

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UNIT 3

Aryanization

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- identify the significant events and phases in the process of Aryanization and the subsequent agrarian expansion
- learn how the Aryans assimilated with Indigenous cultures and how this fusion influenced the development of ancient Indian society
- understand the evolution of social structures and how it impacted Indian society
- explore the transition from pastoral to agrarian societies, examining the introduction and development of agricultural practices by the Aryans
- assess the economic impacts of agrarian expansion

Prerequisites

Studying the complexities of Aryanization, or rather, the spread of Indo-European languages alongside agrarian expansion in India, requires a solid foundation in a few areas. Firstly, a basic understanding of South Asian history, particularly the Indus Valley Civilization and the Vedic period, will provide context for the arrival of these languages. Secondly, some familiarity with Indo-European languages and their distribution across Eurasia is helpful. Additionally, an awareness of archaeological methods and how they reveal past societies is crucial. It is essential to address the ongoing debate around the Aryan migration model versus cultural diffusion in explaining the spread of these languages.

Keywords

Indo-Aryan Migration, Vedic Period, *Rigveda*, *Varna* System, Fertility Cults, *Sapta Sindhu*

Discussion

1.3.1 The Aryans

Rigvedic Society has been characterised as tribal, while the later Vedic period is viewed as one of state-based kingdoms, with this transformation occurring from the late second to the early first millennium BCE. According to the conquest theory, Aryans gained control over indigenous societies, leading to the establishment of states. Class stratification and the emergence of castes, with the Kshatriya forming the ruling class and the peasantry, contributed to Aryan expansion.

Theories regarding Aryan expansion have sparked controversy, particularly the notion of an Aryan invasion of the urban centers of the Harappan people, resulting in the disappearance of their culture. Max Muller, a prominent German scholar and linguist. William Jones first expounded the invasion theory, with Muller proposing the Central Asian theory regarding the original home of Aryans. In India, socio-economic reformers like Dayanand Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj in 1875, emphasised Aryan culture as the foundation of Indian tradition, with Saraswati advocating the Tibet Home Theory. Jyotiba Phule took a radical approach, portraying the Aryans as foreign invaders who subjugated indigenous people described in Brahmanical texts as Dasas and Sudras, providing ideological support to non-Brahman movements.

The Aryans are considered a linguistic group speaking Indo-European languages, and one historical interpretation suggests that they migrated to India from West Asia in stages or waves. Linguistic similarities between the *Rig Veda* and *Avesta*, the oldest Iranian text, support the theory of Aryan migration, with the chronological precedence of *Avesta* over *Rig Veda* further reinforcing this notion.

Pastoralism was a prevalent practice in Vedic society, characterised by a way of life centered around the herding of animals, primarily cattle, sheep, and goats. Pastoralists also engaged in small-scale farming activities. Environmental changes have historically compelled pastoral societies to frequently relocate their settlements. Families held distinct rights over pastoral and cultivated lands, and a barter system was in place for economic transactions.

1.3.2 Vedic Literature

The term "Aryan" originates from the Sanskrit word "arya,". The primary sources of information regarding the early history of Aryans in India are the Vedas, which are among the oldest literary remnants of the Indo-European language group.

1.3.2.1 The Vedas

The Vedic society emerged in northern and northwestern India following the decline of the mature phase of the Indus Civilisation, evolving as a continuation of the late Harappan rural culture. This era, known as the Vedic period, relies heavily on

information derived from the four Vedas: *Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda,* and *Atharva Veda,* supplemented by archaeological evidence.

The Vedas, also referred to as "samhitas," represent the oral tradition of the period and were initially intended for recitation and learning, transmitted orally before being recorded over several centuries. In addition to the four Vedas, Vedic literature includes *Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads, Itihasas,* and *Puranas*, offering valuable insights into Vedic society.

The *Rig Veda*, the oldest Veda, comprises ten books or *Mandalas*, with books II to VII considered the earliest and the rest added later. It contains a total of 1028 hymns addressed to various gods like Surya, Agni, Vayu, and Indra. The hymns were part of elaborate rituals of sacrifices composed by several sages.

The geographical scope of Rigvedic hymns suggests the initial settlement of Aryans in eastern Afghanistan, Punjab, and the fringes of western Uttar Pradesh. The *Rig Veda* mentions rivers such as the Gomati (modern Gomal), Krumu (modern Kurram), Kubha (modern Kabul), and Suvastu (Swat), indicating the Aryan presence in these regions. However, the primary focus of Rigvedic culture appears to be the Punjab and Delhi region, with frequent mentions of rivers like the Sindhu (Indus), Saraswati (now lost), Drishadvati (Ghaggar), and the five streams collectively known as the Punjab. The geographical knowledge of early Aryans seems limited to the Yamuna as mentioned in the *Rig Veda*.

The Battle of Ten Kings, or *dasarajna*, was a significant conflict among early Aryan settlers vying for control over the Land of the Seven Rivers (Sapta Sindhu), symbolised by the Indus and its main tributaries. Sudas, the king of the Bharata tribe situated in the western Punjab, led his people in this war. Initially, Sudas was supported by Vishvamitra, his chief priest, who had guided him to victory in campaigns along the Vipas and Shutudri rivers. However, Sudas later replaced Vishvamitra with Vasishtha, leading to Vishvamitra forming a confederacy of ten tribes, including five prominent ones known as *panchajanah*. The battle ensued on the banks of the Parushni, where Sudas emerged victorious, although similar intertribal conflicts likely occurred.

Another significant aspect of the Aryan conflict involved clashes with non-Aryan indigenous populations, particularly the Panis and Dasas. The Panis, described as wealthy but unwilling to engage with Vedic priests or rituals, were often at odds with the Aryans, while the Dasas were considered even more antagonistic. Divodasa, a Bharata clan chief, defeated the non-Aryan Sambara, indicating ongoing struggles with indigenous groups.

The *Rig Veda* depicts numerous instances of Dasyu slaughter, indicating conflicts with a group speaking a language distinct from that of the Aryans. It proposed that the Dasas and Dasyus were likely originally Aryan-speaking peoples who acquired different cultural traits during migration to the subcontinent. The *Rig Veda* describes them as "black-skinned," "malignant," and "non-sacrificing," indicating a significant cultural division.

Sama Veda : The *Sama Veda* comprised approximately 1810 verses. It is called the "Book of Chants". A specific class of the Brahmanas called Udgatris sang these hymns during the Soma sacrifice. The *Sama Veda* is considered the earliest Indian text on music. The recensions (shaka) of the *Sama Veda* are Kauthuma, Ranayina and Jaiminiya.

Yajur Veda: The *Yajur Veda* contains the essential formulas for sacrificial ceremonies. The *Atharva Veda* is divided into twenty

sections called *qantas*, comprising 730 hymns, primarily serving as a prayer book.

Atharva Veda : The *Atharva Veda* was not originally included in the Vedic Samhitas. The *Atharva Veda* was originally called *Atharvāṅgirasa,* since it had two parts, the Atharvan and the Āṅgirasa. It is considered as the latest Veda and contains hymns from the *Rig Veda*. It is considered as a text of magic. The *Atharva Veda Samhita* deals mostly with charms, magic, and spells. For this reason, this *Samhita* was not included in the Vedic literature for a long time.

Samhitas: The Vedas consist of the '*Samhitas*' or Vedic hymns, while the *Brahmanas* provide prose commentaries on the *Samhitas*. Additionally, the *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads* contain philosophical doctrines.

Vedangas: There are six '*Vedangas*' or limbs of the Vedas, including *Siksha* (phonetics), *Kalpa* (ritual), *Vyakarana* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Chandas* (metrics), and *Jyotisha* (astronomy). These disciplines aid in the correct understanding of the Vedas. Over time, specialised schools emerged for systematic study of various branches of Vedic knowledge.

Sutras: These schools developed their own texts known as '*Sutras*'. The 'Kalpa Sutras' provide manuals on rituals, the 'Srauta Sutras' outline rules for sacrifices, the 'Grihya Sutras' cover domestic rites, and the 'Sulva Sutras' detail measurements for constructing sacrificial altars.

Brahmanas: Prose commentaries on the Samhitas, *Brahmanas*, are attached to each Veda. For example, the 'Aitereya Brahmana' and 'Kausitika Brahmana' accompany the Rigveda, focusing on sacrificial performance. The 'Prandha' and 'Chandogya' Brahmanas are associated with the Samaveda, addressing sacrifices and ceremonies. The 'Gopatha Brahmana' is a part of the Atharvaveda.

Aranyakas: In the concluding sections of the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas delve into philosophical doctrines and the mystical meanings of Samhita texts. Considered sacred, the Aranyakas were traditionally meant to be read only in the forest ('aranya'). Upanishads, often embedded within the Aranyakas or serving as supplements, explore spiritual topics such as the universal soul, individual self, origin of the world, and mysteries of nature.

Upanishad: The term 'Upanishad' originates from the root 'up-nisad', meaning 'to sit down near someone' (implying a student sitting near the guru). In contemporary usage, it denotes spiritual knowledge. There are a total of one hundred and eight *Upanishads*, categorised according to the Vedas. *Upanishads* typically criticise ceremonial religious practices and expound on the doctrine of soul transmigration. They have significantly influenced Indian philosophical thought.

Epics: Following the Vedas, ancient India produced two major epics, the 'Ramayana' and the 'Mahabharata', alongside the 'Puranas'. While the Vedas cater to a select audience, the epics are intended for various segments of society. They portray the political and social conditions of their respective eras, focusing on power struggles. Compiled around the early fifth century CE, different parts of the epics were composed at various times.

Eighteen Puranas: The Puranas serve as a resource for studying Vedic society. Among the eighteen Puranas, some hold greater historical significance than others. Notable ones include the 'Vishnu Purana', 'Vayu Purana', 'Matsya Purana', 'Brahma Purana', and 'Bhavishya Purana'. Each *Purana* addresses five different subjects, with genealogy ('Vamsa Charita') being

particularly relevant from a historical standpoint.

1.3.3 Archaeological Sources

The history of the Indus civilisation is primarily pieced together from archaeological findings, while the Vedic period draws more from literary sources. Archaeological evidence serves as a supplement to the literary accounts, shedding light on the material culture and societal structures of ancient times. It provides insights into settlement patterns, pottery styles, tools, weapons, and architectural remains.

Pottery has been a focal point of archaeological excavations in regions like Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and northern Rajasthan, spanning from approximately 1700 BCE to 600 BCE. Various pottery types, including 'Ochre Coloured Pottery', 'Black and Red Ware', and 'Painted Grey Ware' cultures, have been uncovered. However, pottery alone does not encapsulate the entirety of the culture. Through the analysis of pottery remnants, historians can discern specific cultural traits. Literary sources often mention geographical regions such as Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan, providing additional context to archaeological findings.

The Ochre Coloured Pottery (OCP) culture is identified by its distinctive pottery, which has been unearthed at more than a hundred sites in the Ganga-Yamuna doab. Following the OCP culture, the Black and Red Ware (BRW) and Painted Grey Ware (PGW) cultures emerged.

Ochre Coloured Pottery, discovered in Uttar Pradesh during the 1950s, is characterised by its grainy clay composition, fired under low temperatures, and washed off. OCP sites, typically situated along river banks, are relatively small. Pottery remains, including jars, bowls, and handled pots, are prominent. Archaeobotanical findings at sites like Atranjikhera suggest the cultivation of rice, barley, and gram. The OCP culture dates approximately from 2000 BCE and 1500 BCE.

Black and Red Ware, found initially at Atranjikhera during the early 1960s, often occurs between OCP and PGW layers. The key feature of BRW pottery is its black interior and rim, with the rest of the body being red. BRW varies in craftsmanship and may include painted motifs, particularly in regions like Rajasthan, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh. The period of BRW extends from around 2400 BCE to the early Christian era.

Painted Grey Ware, first excavated at Ahichchhatra in 1946, is widespread in northern India, with settlements along river banks. PGW pottery, typically wheel-made and grey in color, includes common items like bowls and dishes. Houses from this period are either circular or rectangular, some with multiple rooms. Various objects made of copper, iron, glass, and bone have been discovered at PGW sites.

Iron artefacts are ubiquitous in PGW sites, indicating skilled metalworking. Ornaments and agricultural remains, such as rice, wheat, and barley, have been found at sites like Atranjikhera and Hastinapura. Additionally, semi-precious stone beads not native to the region suggest trade or exchange networks during the PGW period.

1.3.4 Rig Vedic Pastoralism

The Rig Vedic society operated on a tribal structure, with social relationships primarily built on kinship bonds. Within this framework, the *Rajas* (chiefs), *Purohits* (priests), and common people were all integral parts of the clan. The tribe, known as 'Jana,' comprised various groups mentioned in the *Rig Veda.*

Inter-tribal conflicts were common

occurrences, often stemming from issues like cattle raids and thefts. Cattle served as the primary measure of wealth, and battles during this period were often termed 'gavishti,' meaning 'search for cows.'

At the helm of the tribe stood the 'raja' or 'gopati,' the protector of cows. Terms like 'godhuli' for a measure of time and 'gotra' for kinship units derive from 'gau,' meaning cow. The position of Raja was not hereditary but rather chosen from among clan members. The clan typically resided in villages or 'grama,' reflecting a patriarchal society where the birth of a son was highly esteemed.

In the patriarchal society depicted in the *Rig Veda,* women held significant positions despite their dependence on fathers, brothers, or husbands. They received education and participated in assemblies, with the privilege of selecting their partners and delaying marriage. Noteworthy women like Lopamudra, Vishwavara, Ghoshala, and Apala are mentioned, some of whom composed hymns. While monogamy was prevalent, occasional references to polygamy were found, yet women maintained a respectable status within the family structure.

1.3.4.1 Political and Social Divisions

The *Rig Veda* highlights the significance accorded to male members within the Vedic society, evident in numerous hymns. The text also mentions various tribal assemblies such as *Gana, Vidhatha, Sabha*, and *Samiti*, highlighting the organisational structure of the society.

Assemblies

It is believed that the 'Gana' functioned as a gathering of warriors actively engaged in inter-tribal conflicts. The leader of the *Gana* was known as the 'Ganapathi.' Members of the Gana would surrender their war spoils to the *Ganapati*, who would then distribute them among the group. The *Rig Veda* mentions this practice of war booty being surrendered to the *Ganapati*.

The 'Sabha' likely served as a council of chosen clan members, while the 'Samiti' potentially represented the entire clan. These assemblies fulfilled governmental and administrative roles, including the selection of a *Raja*. However, there was no clear political hierarchy during the Rig Vedic era. Some historians speculate that the *Vidhatha* may have been responsible for distributing tribal wealth.

The term 'Gotra,' meaning 'cow-den' or 'cow-shed,' is referenced in the *Rig Veda.* Over time, its significance evolved to denote both 'household' and 'clan.' Initially, *Gotra* may have been referred to as a unit of kinship, where people living together with their cows were known as a 'gotra.' However, membership in a *gotra* did not necessarily imply descent from a common ancestor. Each *gotra* likely had its own unique mark for identifying their cattle. As society transitioned to joint families, the term *Gotra* expanded to encompass both household and clan identities.

The term 'Kula' for family is infrequently mentioned in the *Rig Veda.* The 'Kulapa' was the head of the family, which included the mother, father, sons, enslaved people, and others. Additionally, the term 'griha' appears repeatedly in the *Rig Veda* to refer to the family. The Rig Vedic family structure likely consisted of a large patriarchal unit spanning two or three generations.

Political Structure

The political structure of Vedic society was fundamentally tribal, devoid of a centralised state. At its core was the 'Raja', who acted as both protector and leader during conflicts.

Unlike hereditary kingship, the Raja was chosen from among the clansmen. The term 'vis' in the Rig Veda referred to these tribal units or clans, which collectively formed tribes.

Supporting the Raja in governance was a cadre of functionaries, among whom the 'purohita' played a crucial role. This priestly figure conducted 'yajnas', or sacrifices, for the tribe's benefit and received gifts in return. Prominent purohitas mentioned in the Rig Veda include Vasishta and Viswamitra. As the significance of sacrifices grew, so too did the status of the purohita and, consequently, the power of the Raja.

The 'senani', or military commander, was another key figure, leading the tribe into battle alongside the Raja. While the Rig Veda does not explicitly mention tax collectors, the Raja received public offerings known as 'bali'. Regional functionaries were less clearly defined, though the 'vrajapati' was responsible for overseeing pasture grounds, and the 'gramanis', who commanded fighting groups, eventually merged with the vrajapatis. The Raja did not maintain a standing army, highlighting the Rig Vedic polity's emphasis on military readiness.

The Rig Vedic Aryans distinguished themselves from groups like the 'Dasas' and 'Dasyus' primarily by physical appearance, especially skin colour. The Dasas were depicted as dark-skinned and hostile, while the Aryans were described as fair-skinned. The term 'varna', meaning colour, may have served as an identity marker in this context. Sudasa, a prominent chief, led the Bharata tribe in the Battle of the Ten Kings, his name linking to the Dasas referenced in ancient Iranian texts. Conversely, the Dasyus are believed to represent the region's earlier inhabitants.

As Vedic society evolved, social divisions emerged, delineating the roles of the Raja, the warriors or 'Rajanyas', the priests or 'Purohitas', and the common people. The Rajanyas held higher status, while references to domestic enslaved individuals given as gifts to priests appear in the Rig Veda. The term 'Shudra' emerges in the later-added tenth book, suggesting it was not present in the earlier Rig Vedic context.

Occupational differentiation began to manifest in society, with mentions of various groups such as weavers, carpenters, smiths, leatherworkers, and chariot makers. However, these divisions were not strictly enforced; individuals within families often pursued different occupations. Social inequality began to develop, largely due to the unequal distribution of war spoils.

Agricultural practices in the Rig Vedic period are referenced minimally, with most agricultural terminology appearing in later texts. Barley, referred to as 'yava', is the only grain explicitly mentioned, and while the people were familiar with agricultural processes such as sowing and harvesting, the specifics of their practices remain vague. It is speculated that they may have employed wooden ploughs and engaged in shifting cultivation. The low rainfall in the regions where the Rig Vedic people settled would have made extensive, permanent agriculture challenging, particularly without the irrigation infrastructure that was not yet developed during that time.

1.3.5 Religion

The Rig Vedic hymns provide valuable insight into the religious beliefs of ancient Aryans, who venerated natural forces such as wind, water, rain, thunder, and fire, often personifying them in masculine forms. Female deities were relatively few, with male gods representing the raw power of nature. Among these, Indra, the god of thunderstorms and rain, was particularly esteemed, celebrated as the formidable

warlord who led the Aryans to victory in battle and known as 'purandara', or destroyer of forts. Approximately 250 hymns in the Rig Veda are dedicated to Indra.

Agni, the god of fire, served as an intermediary between heaven and earth, with around 200 hymns devoted to him. Fire was seen as a purifying force and played a central role in rituals; no sacrifice could commence without offerings to Agni. Varuna represented water and upheld the natural order, regulating rivers and maintaining cosmic balance, while Yama presided over death and was associated with plants and wood. Marut, the storm god, also featured prominently in Rig Vedic prayers.

Among the few female deities, Ushas, the goddess of dawn, received significant veneration, with hymns celebrating her beauty and connection to nature. Aditi, invoked for liberation, and Saraswati, the river deity, are also mentioned, though female gods were generally less prominent in the patriarchal Rig Vedic society.

Worship during this period primarily involved prayers and sacrifices, performed both individually and collectively to seek victory in battle, acquire cattle, or gain other blessings. The significance of sacrifices grew, contributing to the increasing influence of the priesthood. Animal sacrifice became an essential aspect of pastoral life, with older animals offered to relieve the burden on their owners, thus aligning with the community's economic needs.

1.3.6 The Later Vedic Period

The Later Vedic period, spanning from around 1000 to 600 BCE, marked a significant shift as some Vedic tribes moved eastward, particularly into the upper Gangetic valley and surrounding regions. Archaeological evidence reveals the presence of agricultural communities during this time, characterised by the use of Painted Grey Ware pottery and the adoption of iron technology.

Later Vedic texts describe the migration of Aryans from Punjab to the Ganga-Yamuna doab in Uttar Pradesh, where the Kuru and Panchala tribes settled and expanded their territory into eastern Uttar Pradesh. This period saw the mingling of Vedic people with existing tribal groups, leading to a transition from tribal identities to territorial ones. For example, the term 'jana,' which previously referred to a tribe, began to signify the area where a tribe resided. The name of the Panchala tribe became associated with the territory they occupied, reflecting this merging of identities.

In terms of religion and social structure, Later Vedic society became divided into four *varnas*: Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras. The later portions of the Rig Veda outline the origins of these *varnas*, with Brahmanas at the top and Sudras at the bottom. Varna status became hereditary, maintained through rules of endogamy and ritual purity. However, the rigid enforcement of the varna system was not always evident, with instances of individuals from non-Kshatriya backgrounds claiming Kshatriya status.

The power of the Brahmanas increased significantly due to the rise of sacrifices, leading them to become the most influential class in society. Initially one of sixteen classes of priests, they gradually gained prominence. The Kshatriyas, as warriors and nobles, held a high status and occasionally clashed with Brahmanas for dominance. However, they often collaborated, especially in managing lower *varnas*, particularly towards the end of the Later Vedic period.

The Vaishyas, composed of common people engaged in agriculture, cattle rearing, and artisanal work, also played a significant role. They shared a common practice of wearing sacred threads as a mark of their status.

Sudras occupied the lowest tier of the

varna hierarchy. The Aitareya Brahmana assigns them a subservient role, viewing them as servants subject to the will of others. Later Vedic texts typically distinguish the three higher *varnas* from Sudras, though Sudras were allowed to participate in certain rituals, such as the coronation of a Raja.

The concept of *varna-dharma* prescribed different life stages known as 'ashrams': Brahmachari (student), Grihastha (householder), and Vanaprastha (retired life). While only the first three ashrams are mentioned in Later Vedic texts, the Upanishads later introduce the fourth stage, Sanyasin (ascetic). The term '*jati*,' meaning 'birth' or 'assigned birth,' also appears in these texts, signifying an extended family that determined social status and eventually became a measure of socio-economic standing, with each *jati* having its own religious observances.

During the Vedic period, two distinct religious traditions emerged: the sacrificial religion found in the Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Brahmanas, and the non-Vedic tradition represented by the Atharva Veda. Sacrifices became central to the Vedic tradition, gaining both public and private significance.

1.3.6.1 Evolution of Society

In the Later Vedic period, significant changes occurred in the political, social, and religious landscape of society. Rituals such as *Aswamedha*, *Rajasuya* and *Vajapeya* were established to bolster the authority of the Raja, enhancing his prestige and territorial identity. These ceremonies symbolised a shift from the Raja being merely a war leader to a recognised ruler. Despite this elevation, the Raja's sovereignty remained constrained by the Kshatriya class, with no strict hereditary principles governing his position.

In contrast to the earlier period, where rituals were simpler, the Later Vedic sacrifices became more intricate, requiring trained professionals to conduct them. Specific rules (*vidhis*) were developed for each ceremony, tailored to the patron's needs, leading to the emergence of a specialised priesthood.

Religiously, the Later Vedic period marked a notable shift in the pantheon of deities. While *Indra* and *Agni* were central figures in the early Vedic texts, their importance waned in favour of new gods like *Prajapati*, the creator, and *Rudra*, who gained prominence. *Vishnu* emerged as a significant deity, embodying the roles of creator, preserver, and protector. This evolution mirrored the transition of society from a pastoral to an agrarian economy, as the Chaturvarna system led different social groups to worship their own deities. For example, *Pushan*, initially a protector of cattle, became a divine figure, highlighting the changing values and priorities of the community.

The *Atharva Veda* provided insights into non-sacrificial folk traditions, characterised by superstitions and practical beliefs. Deities like *pisachas* and *rakshasas* were invoked for everyday purposes, reflecting a shift in religious practices from the earlier emphasis on elaborate sacrifices.

Technologically, Later Vedic society began to transition from a pastoral lifestyle to an agrarian one, aided by the advent of iron technology. Discoveries of iron tools, such as arrowheads and sickles, were prevalent, particularly in regions like eastern and western Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. However, the use of iron for agriculture was limited until later in the first millennium BCE. Iron plough shares facilitated ploughing, but the primary use of iron remained in weaponry, indicating a slower advancement in agricultural practices compared to military applications.

The socio-economic dynamics also evolved significantly. Redistribution of wealth, through mechanisms like *Dana*, *Dakshina*, *Bali*, and *Bhaga*, became crucial in

shaping social structure and power dynamics. While *Dana* and *Dakshina* initially referred to gift-giving, they developed distinct meanings, with *Dana* being a general act of giving and *Dakshina* specifically denoting gifts to priests or ritual performers. Cattle remained highly valued as gifts, while land was not yet considered a wealth object.

Bali, originally a form of tribute or booty, transitioned into a systematic land tax during the Later Vedic period, representing a shift from voluntary offerings to structured taxation. *Bhaga*, denoting a share in land production, evolved from the king being the "*bhaga dugha*" (the one who milks the share) to a regular tax on agricultural output.

Conflicts in society also transformed, shifting from cattle ownership disputes to land acquisition conflicts, likely due to population growth. Key officials, such as *Ratnavahakas*, assisted the Raja in administration, and while a *Senani* (military commander) existed, it remains unclear if the Raja maintained a standing army, often relying on tribal levies in emergencies.

Tribal assemblies like *Sabha* and *Samiti* played vital roles in governance during the Later Vedic period, with the *Sabha* gaining prominence over the *Samiti*, reflecting the changing status of the *Rajanyas*. The *Sabha* supported the Raja in administration and was integral to his selection, underscoring the importance of collaboration between the king and his council for ensuring prosperity.

The post-Vedic period witnessed the rise of an artisan class and the development of trade, aligning with the shift towards a food-producing economy and urbanisation. Craft specialisation increased the demand for tools and implements, leading artisans to produce goods in larger quantities. What began as familial specialisation eventually became hereditary, giving rise to guild-like structures within various professions, further distinguishing the Later Vedic period from its early counterpart.

1.3.7 Agrarian Expansion During the Vedic Era

The Later Vedic era was marked by significant agrarian expansion. This era saw the transformation of vedic society from a nomadic, pastoral lifestyle to a more settled agricultural existence. Several factors contributed to this agrarian expansion, which played a crucial role in shaping the socio-economic structure of early Indian society.

Technological Advancements

One of the primary drivers of agrarian expansion during the Vedic era was the introduction of new agricultural techniques and tools. The Vedic people, primarily pastoralists, began to adopt farming practices that enabled them to cultivate the land more effectively. The use of iron ploughshares, which became prevalent towards the end of the Vedic period, allowed for deeper tillage and improved soil fertility. This advancement was crucial as it facilitated the cultivation of larger areas and supported the growth of diverse crops. Iron tools not only enhanced agricultural productivity but also contributed to the efficiency of land preparation and harvesting processes, further driving the agrarian transformation.

Extent of Agricultural Expansion

The expansion of agriculture during this period was substantial, particularly in the fertile Indo-Gangetic plains. Archaeological evidence indicates that settlements grew in size and number, with an increase in the area under cultivation. By the late Vedic period, agriculture was not only prevalent in the northern regions but also began to spread southward and eastward. This expansion laid the groundwork for agrarian societies that would flourish in the subsequent periods,

enabling communities to support larger populations and engage in trade.

The agrarian practices of the Vedic people were characterised by the cultivation of a variety of crops. Key staples included barley and rice, which were well-suited to the climatic conditions of the region. Other important crops included wheat, legumes, and millet. The Vedic texts often reference the significance of these crops, highlighting their role in rituals and daily life. The diversity in crop cultivation contributed to food security and economic stability, allowing communities to thrive and develop complex social structures.

Environmental Factors

The geographical landscape of ancient India also played a significant role in agrarian expansion. The fertile plains of the Indo-Gangetic region provided ideal conditions for agriculture. Seasonal monsoons ensured a reliable water supply, which was essential for farming. The Vedic texts reflect an understanding of these environmental conditions, highlighting the importance of rituals and prayers to ensure bountiful harvests.

Social and Economic Changes

As agricultural practices developed, Vedic society began to experience significant social and economic changes. The growth of agriculture led to increased food production, which supported population growth and the establishment of permanent settlements. With the shift to a more sedentary lifestyle, communities became more complex, giving rise to new social structures and divisions of labour. The emergence of a land-owning class contributed to the development of social hierarchies, which would later evolve into the varna system.

Moreover, agricultural surplus facilitated trade, both within local communities and with distant regions. This trade network fostered economic interdependence and encouraged cultural exchanges, enriching Vedic society. The burgeoning economy also supported the rise of artisans and craftsmen, further diversifying the social fabric of the time.

Religious and Cultural Dimensions

The agrarian expansion of the Vedic era was also intertwined with religious and cultural practices. Agriculture was central to Vedic rituals, and many hymns in the Rigveda extol the virtues of farming and the deities associated with it. Sacrifices and offerings to agrarian deities were commonplace, reflecting the deep-seated belief that divine favour was essential for successful harvests. This intertwining of religion and agriculture reinforced the significance of farming as a cultural cornerstone, shaping the identity of Vedic society.

Recap

- The Early Vedic period (c. 1500-1000 BCE) was predominantly pastoral.
- Society was tribal, centred around clans and families.
- The *Raja* served as a war leader and protector.
- Key roles included priests (*purohitas*) and military commanders (*senanis*).
- The Rig Veda reflects the lifestyle and beliefs of this time.
- Pastoralism dominated Early Vedic life and economy.
- Livestock, especially cattle, were central to wealth and status.
- Communities moved seasonally to access grazing lands.
- Animal husbandry supported trade and cultural exchanges.
- The pastoral lifestyle influenced social structures and rituals.
- The Later Vedic period (c. 1000-600 BCE) marked increased territoriality.
- Political authority shifted towards more centralised leadership.
- Kingship became more recognised, with rituals enhancing the Raja's power.
- The *Rajasuya* and *Ashwamedha* rituals reinforced royal authority.
- Social hierarchies became more defined with the varna system.
- Society was structured into four main *varnas*: Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras.
- The Brahmanas gained influence through the importance of rituals.
- Kshatriyas were warriors, often in conflict with Brahmanas.
- Vaishyas engaged in agriculture and trade, while Sudras served others.
- *Jati* emerged, indicating more specific social divisions and identities.
- Shift from pastoral to settled agricultural lifestyles.
- Iron tools boosted agricultural productivity and efficiency.
- Diverse crops supported economic stability and trade.

Objective Questions

1. Which sacred text is the primary source of information about the early Aryans in India?
2. Which ancient river, now dry, which was significant to the early Vedic Aryans?
3. What was the hierarchical structure of the Vedic society known as?
4. Which region is often referred to as the "land of the seven rivers" (Sapta Sindhu) in Vedic texts?
5. What was the primary occupation of the early Aryans before they settled into agrarian communities?
6. What was the role of the *Sabha* and *Samiti* in Vedic society?
7. What is the meaning of the term 'Arya'?
8. What significant change in agricultural practice is attributed to the Aryans?
9. How did the Aryans influence the social structure of ancient India?
10. What marked the transition in Vedic society?

Answers

1. *Rig Veda*
2. Sarasvati
3. Varna system
4. Punjab
5. Pastoralism
6. Assemblies for decision making
7. Noble or Free-born
8. Use of iron ploughs
9. By developing a stratified *varna* system
10. Shift from nomadic to agricultural lifestyles.

Assignments

1. Analyse the contribution of Indo-Aryans to the development of Vedic religion, highlighting the importance of the Vedas as a source of information about this period.
2. Analyse the intricate relationship between Indo-Aryan migration and the development of the *Varna* system in ancient India.
3. Explore the influence of Indo-Aryans on early Indian literature and the development of epics like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

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UNIT 4

Slave Societies in Janapadas

Learning Outcomes

On the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the emergence and development of ancient Indian Janapadas
- describe the historical background and significance of the *Varna* system and its evolution into the caste system
- evaluate how ancient social stratification systems influenced economic development, cultural practices, and social mobility

Prerequisites

Before delving into the study of slave societies in the Janapadas and the social stratification through *Varna*, caste, and class, it is essential to have a foundational understanding of ancient Indian history and society. The Janapadas, which were early Iron Age states in India, formed the basis of the sociopolitical landscape from the 6th century BCE onwards. It is important to understand the emergence and organization of these states, as well as their economic structures, which often included slavery. Familiarity with the concept of Varna, a categorization system mentioned in ancient texts like the Rigveda, is crucial, as it laid the groundwork for the later caste system. Varna divides society into four groups: Brahmanas (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (traders), and Sudras (servants). Over time, this broad classification evolved into a more rigid and hereditary caste system, deeply entrenching social hierarchies. Additionally, an understanding of class distinctions within this framework, including the economic and social disparities that influenced people's status and roles, will provide a comprehensive backdrop for

examining how slavery functioned and how various social groups interacted within the Janapadas.

Keywords

Janapadas, Dasa, Bonded labor, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Sudras, Varna hierarchy,*Jati* and Varna Endogamy, Untouchability

Discussion

1.4.1 Second Urbanisation: Important Urban Centres

The second urbanisation in ancient India, following the decline of the Harappan civilization, was characterised by the emergence of cities that endured for centuries and marked the beginning of a literary tradition. Factors such as the spread of agricultural settlements, the development of iron technology, and surplus grain production contributed to this urban growth. Iron technology facilitated agriculture, leading to surplus production utilised to support non-food producing classes and stimulating trade. Craft specialisation and trade emerged as crucial aspects of the urban economy. Urban centers saw a rise in population due to migration from rural areas, with cities absorbing surplus rural populations. These cities originated under diverse circumstances, serving as trading, religious, educational, administrative, or strategic centers.

Contemporary literature used terms like Pura, Durga, Nigama, and Nagar to denote urban centers. "Pura" initially referred to fortified settlements or royal residences but later meant a city. "Durga" denoted fortified capitals, emphasizing control and protection. "Nigama" referred to merchant towns where commercial activities took place. Buddhist literature mentions six Mahanagaras, including Champa, Rajagriha, Kasi, Sravasti, Saketa, and Kausambi, all situated in the Gangetic basin. Kausambi, founded by King Kausamba, is notable among these cities.

1.4.1.1 Janapadas and Mahajanapadas

During the Vedic period, tribal political organization gradually transitioned to territorial states. Clans formed "janas" and settled territories called "Janapadas," mainly focused on hunting and pastoralism. The core units were the "kula" (family) and "gramas" (villages) comprising several families. As the economy shifted, these settlements expanded, evolving into larger units known as "Janapadas" and later "Mahajanapadas."

By the 6th century B.C., permanent settlements led to the emergence of "Janapadas," marking a shift from tribal loyalty to territorial allegiance. These territories expanded, becoming "Mahajanapadas," large states with towns as seats of power. Political life was characterised

by the rise of territorial states, where several Janapadas merged to form Mahajanapadas.

The Mahajanapadas comprised thousands of villages and a few cities. Buddhist and Jain texts mention sixteen Mahajanapadas, including Kashi, Kosala, Magadha, Vajji, and Malla. These territories extended across present-day northern India, from modern-day Pakistan to Bihar, and from the foothills of the Himalayas to the river Godavari in the south.

Each Mahajanapadas had unique characteristics. Kashi, for example, was renowned for its textile industry, while Magadha emerged as the most important Mahajanapadas due to its fertile lands, strategic location, and significant figures like Buddha. The Vajji confederation, a notable non-monarchical state, played a crucial role in the region's politics.

The Mahajanapadas saw socio-economic and political transformations, with territorial expansion, war, and population growth shaping their development. The emergence of cities and towns, such as Pura and Nagara, reflected the centers of power controlled by kings. Conflicts between Mahajanapadas, like Kashi, Kosala, and Magadha, were common, with Magadha eventually emerging as the dominant power in northern India. This period saw complex political maneuvers, such as alliances and betrayals, as rulers vied for control over strategic territories.

1.4.1.2. Republics and Monarchies

The political systems of the Mahajanapadas varied, with some having monarchical rule while others adopted a republican form of government. Monarchical states were characterised by a ruler supported by a council of ministers for administration, whereas republican states were oligarchic, led by groups of Kshatriya chiefs known as rajahs.

Republics were either individual entities called "Ganas" or confederations known as "Gana-Samghas." These republics were not ruled by a single powerful king but by a group of chiefs. Internal struggles and the expansion of territory often led republics to adopt monarchy. Tax collection in republics was decentralised, managed by regional chiefs.

Magadha emerged as the most powerful Mahajanapada, led by rulers like Bimbisara and Ajatasatru, who expanded the kingdom through conquests and alliances. Magadha's early rulers maintained regular armies and collected taxes through village heads. Bimbisara's reign marked Magadha's rise to prominence in the Ganges valley.

After the Sisunaga dynasty, Mahapadma Nanda established the Nanda rule, consolidating power over Magadha and the Ganges plains. The Nanda rulers are considered India's first empire builders, with Mahapadma Nanda being the most powerful among them. However, the Nanda dynasty eventually weakened due to unpopular policies, leading to Chandragupta Maurya's ascent to power in Magadha.

1.4.2 The Varna System and Caste Structure in India

The varna system's origins are traced back to the early Vedic texts, particularly the Rig Veda, which describes its emergence through the self-sacrifice of Purusha, the cosmic being. The Purusha-Sukta hymn delineates the four *varnas*: Brahmanas originated from Purusha's mouth, Kshatriyas from his arms, Vaishyas from his thighs, and Sudras from his feet. While these classifications hint at social divisions, they were less rigid in early texts compared to later interpretations.

S.C. Dube's Triguna theory posits that individuals possess three inherent qualities:

sattva (goodness), rajas (passion), and tamas (dullness). Those with predominately sattvic traits became Brahmanas, while rajasic individuals were classified as Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, with tamasic individuals identified as Sudras. This highlights that initial social divisions may have been influenced by cultural interactions and functional specializations rather than strict racial lines.

The concept of Aryanisation arose through cultural exchanges rather than a simplistic donor-recipient model. Pre-Aryan traditions significantly influenced Aryan social structures, as groups adopted new traits while retaining aspects of their original customs. The metaphor of Purusha also reflects both cosmic creation and social order, with later texts like the Mahabharata and Dharma-Sastras elaborating on the varna system's evolution. Initially, all were regarded as Brahmanas, but actions led to divisions, with those neglecting duties descending into Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra roles.

Manu's writings support this classification, positing that distinct duties were allocated to each varna to maintain cosmic order. According to Manu, only the four *varnas* exist, and the notion of mixed castes, or *jatis*, emerges from the offspring of higher *varnas* and lower-status women, leading to a proliferation of sub-castes.

The duties associated with each varna are symbolically linked to Purusha's body. Brahmanas are tasked with preserving knowledge, Kshatriyas with governance and defense, Vaishyas with agriculture and trade, and Sudras with servitude and manual labor. This hierarchical order is emphasised in the Dharmashastras, where Brahmanas occupy the highest position, tasked with upholding dharma.

Caste, derived from the Spanish word "casta," refers to hereditary, endogamous groups that determine social status and profession, creating rigid boundaries against intermarriage and inter-dining. This system is intricately linked to the Chaturvarna classification, with Brahmanas at the top and Sudras at the bottom. Although the caste system is often attributed to Brahminic culture, it evolved through complex interactions between different societal groups.

Caste membership is fixed at birth, with endogamy being a predominant practice. While there is some scope for social mobility through processes like Sanskritisation or urbanization, significant changes are often positional rather than structural. Kinship systems further reinforce caste, as individuals typically marry within their caste, while broader regional variations influence social dynamics.

Moreover, Hindus are expected to navigate four ashrams (stages of life): brahmacharya (education), grihasthashram (family life), vanaprashthashram (spiritual pursuit), and sanyasashram (renunciation). These stages, like the varna system, are idealised rather than mandatory, reflecting a framework for individual development.

Finally, sanskaras, or rites of passage, are rituals that signify transitions throughout life. They serve to purify and elevate status, demonstrating that through Vedic knowledge, even a Shudra can aspire to become a Dvija (twice-born) and ultimately attain enlightenment. This intricate web of social structure, duties, and rites illustrates the complexity of the varna and caste systems in India, revealing both their historical roots and continued relevance.

1.4.3 The Creation of Castes

The term "caste," derived from a root meaning 'pure,' relates to the concept of varna, translated as ritual status. In this hierarchical system, brahmans occupy the highest status.

Greek writer Megasthenes described Indian society as having seven divisions without linking them to purity levels, noting the high respect for philosophers, including Brahmans and sramanas.

The concept of caste is rooted in Vedic texts, which assert the creation of four *varnas*—brahman (priest), Kshatriya (warrior), Vaishya (trader), and Shudra (laborer)—alongside the untouchables who exist outside this system. Alternative perspectives view caste as comprising *jatis*, or birth groups, with their hierarchies being inconsistent and diverse. Scholars debate whether varna or *jati* emerged first; some argue varna was the initial division, while others believe they originated separately.

For a society to evolve into a caste-based system, social disparities, unequal access to resources, and legitimization through a hierarchical structure are essential. This hierarchy often involves perceived purity levels, with the ideology of varna legitimizing caste divisions, particularly within Hindu society, where the notion of purity necessitates the existence of impure groups.

Parallels exist between clans and *jatis*, as both determine group membership and status, reinforced by variations in rituals and cultural practices. *Jatis*, influenced by occupation, emerge in societies with diverse roles, and their identities evolve through interactions with other groups.

The transition from tribe or clan to caste signifies a fundamental change in Indian social history. This transformation, influenced by religious, economic, and political factors, affected all aspects of life, including dietary restrictions and the status of women. As *jatis* formed, they adopted religious identities aligned with Vedic Brahmanism, reinforcing hierarchies based on purity and pollution.

Importantly, *jati* identities persisted even among non-Hindu religious communities, revealing the deep-rooted nature of caste in Indian society. This continuity, marked by kinship and inheritance rules, highlights the complexities of social organization and the interplay between caste and religion.

Understanding the development of caste and the rise of Magadha requires recognition of the dynamics of social evolution, including assimilation, confrontation, and ideological justification. The interaction of these factors shaped the historical landscape of India, revealing a complex interplay between power, identity, and hierarchy.

1.4.4 The Evolution of the Varna System During the Mahajanapadas

The Mahajanapadas period, spanning approximately from the 6th to the 3rd century BCE, marked a pivotal era in the social and political landscape of ancient India. During this time, the varna system, which classifies society into four primary groups—Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras—underwent significant evolution. This transformation was shaped by various economic, social, cultural, and political factors, contributing to a more defined and hierarchical social structure.

Economic Factors

One of the most influential drivers of the evolution of the varna system was economic expansion. The Mahajanapadas witnessed substantial growth in agriculture and trade. Improved agricultural techniques, coupled with favourable climatic conditions, led to increased productivity and surplus production. This surplus allowed for the rise of a wealthy landowning class, which became instrumental in shaping societal norms and structures. As landowners gained economic power, they sought to maintain their status

and ensure the continuation of their wealth, often relying on a stable workforce. This need for reliable labour contributed to the solidification of the varna system, as each group was assigned specific economic roles.

The Brahmanas, as religious and educational leaders, emerged as influential figures, guiding the social and economic practices of the time. The Kshatriyas, responsible for governance and military protection, gained prominence in political structures, while the Vaishyas, acting as traders and agriculturalists, became vital for the economy's functioning. The Sudras, often engaged in manual labour and services, formed the backbone of this evolving economic structure. The increasing interdependence of these groups further entrenched the varna system as a mechanism for social organisation.

Social Stratification

With the growth of wealth and economic complexity, social stratification became more pronounced during the Mahajanapadas. The varna system began to crystallise into a more rigid hierarchy, where individuals were classified not only by their occupation but also by their birth. This solidification of social roles was evident in the codification of duties (dharma) associated with each varna, as outlined in various texts, including the Vedas and later, the Manusmriti.

The Brahmanas were tasked with spiritual and educational responsibilities, ensuring the transmission of sacred knowledge and rituals. The Kshatriyas were expected to protect and govern, reflecting their role as leaders. The Vaishyas were primarily engaged in commerce and agriculture, while the Sudras provided essential labour and services. This division of labour reinforced social boundaries and contributed to the growing disparities between the upper and lower strata of society.

Cultural and Religious Influences

Cultural and religious factors also played a significant role in the evolution of the varna system. The period saw the emergence of new religious practices and philosophies, which further solidified the Brahmanas' status as the guardians of sacred knowledge. Rituals, sacrifices, and ceremonies conducted by Brahmanas became crucial for societal prosperity, elevating their position within the varna hierarchy.

Moreover, the integration of various local beliefs and customs contributed to the complexity of the varna system. As new communities interacted, their practices were assimilated into the existing framework, often leading to the identification of certain groups with specific *varnas* based on their occupations and societal roles. This cultural synthesis not only reinforced the significance of the varna system but also laid the groundwork for its eventual entrenchment within Indian society.

Impact of Warfare

Warfare during the Mahajanapadas period also played a crucial role in shaping the varna system. Frequent conflicts among the Mahajanapadas resulted in the capture of prisoners, many of whom were enslaved. Conquered populations were often absorbed into the social hierarchy, with those from lower social backgrounds relegated to the status of Sudras. This practice of incorporating war captives into the varna system served to both reinforce existing hierarchies and to create new social dynamics.

As a result, the varna system became increasingly linked to notions of purity

and pollution, further entrenching social divisions. The perceived purity of the higher *varnas* contrasted sharply with the pollution associated with the lower groups, particularly the Sudras. This rigid adherence to concepts of purity created barriers that would persist for centuries, affecting inter-caste relations and reinforcing the hierarchical structure of Indian society.

Recap

- Janapada refers to large territories ruled by kings.
- Slavery involved individuals owned and deprived of freedoms.
- The Varna system classifies society into four categories.
- Brahmanas are priests and teachers performing rituals.
- Kshatriyas are warriors responsible for protection and governance.
- Vaishyas engage in commerce, agriculture, and trade.
- Sudras perform various forms of manual labour.
- Each varna assigned specific duties, or dharma.
- The caste system includes numerous localised sub-castes.
- The varna system originates from early Vedic texts.
- Purusha's self-sacrifice defines the four *varnas*.
- Social divisions were less rigid in early interpretations.
- S.C. Dube's Triguna theory describes inherent qualities.
- Aryanisation involved cultural exchanges and adaptations.
- Manu's writings categorise duties for each varna.
- Caste is hereditary and linked to social status.
- *Jatis*, or birth groups, reflect diverse hierarchies.
- Caste identities persist even in non-Hindu communities.
- Social mobility existed but was limited.
- Four ashrams outline life stages in Hindu society.
- Sanskaras signify transitions and elevate social status.

Objective Questions

1. What is the term used for the four main social classes in ancient India?
2. What was the primary role of the Brahmanas in the Varna system?
3. How the concept of caste differs from the Varna system in Indian society
4. Did slavery exist in Janapada societies?
5. What were the social and economic implications of the Varna system
6. What were Janapadas in ancient India?
7. What does the term "Purusha" refer to in the varna system?
8. What is the primary role of Kshatriyas in the varna system?
9. What is the significance of the concept of *jati* in the caste system?

Answers

1. Varna
2. Scholarship, religious studies, and rituals
3. Caste is a more rigid and hereditary system within each Varna.
4. Yes, slavery was a common practice, with enslaved people used for various purposes.
5. It created a hierarchical society with limited social mobility.
6. Tribal republics or kingdoms
7. A cosmic being involved in creation
8. Governance and protection.
9. Determines social status and occupation.

Assignments

1. Provide a comprehensive overview of the Janapadas: Analyse their historical context, political structures, and socio-economic dynamics in early Indian history.
2. Examine the presence and role of slaves in Janapada Societies: An analysis of social, economic, and political dimensions.
3. Analyse the practice of untouchability in the ancient Indian social system.

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2

BLOCK

Towards Feudal Society (4th Century CE to 8th Century CE)

UNIT 1

Land Grants and Changing Production Relations

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- discern the changes in land relations at the end of the Gupta period
- understand the background of the feudal system
- differentiate Indian feudalism from that of the European feudal set-up
- evaluate the after effects of the formation of the new socio-economic system in northern India

Prerequisites

Do you know that the medieval period in Europe was known as the 'Dark Ages? It was due to the new socio-economic system that emerged in Europe consequent to the liquidation of the Western Roman empire. Scholars named this particular system feudalism, under which society was classified based on land holdings and the ties and bondages related to the cultivation of land. Some scholars argue that such a socio-economic phenomenon was also in practice in India during the Middle Ages. The prominent Marxist historian who pointed this out was R S Sharma through his monumental work Indian Feudalism. The period was marked by the concentration of land in the hands of a few whom we call feudal lords. It happened during the second historical phase, as scholars term it. The following content will let us know more about the changes that came about during this second historical phase.

Keywords

Land grants, Brahmanisation, *Varanasankara, Kaliyuga*, *Brahmadeyas*, Agrarian relations

Discussion

The period between the second to sixth centuries marked a shift from the ancient to the medieval historical phase. This shift was from the phase during which Satavahans ascended in Deccan and southern Tamil Nadu. They also controlled the land between Godavari and Mahanadi. This is known to us through their land charters. The introduction of numerous crafts, local and overseas exchanges, the rise of towns and the abundant use of coins marked the first historical phase. However, there was a change in the nature of the economy and land relations during the second historical phase. It witnessed a rapid expansion of the agrarian economy. Brahmanical revival and construction of temples dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu in the South. The practice of land grants marked the change from the ancient to the medieval society in India.

Based on the varna system, the ancient society was divided into Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. Among them the Vaishyas and Sudras, were the 'productive' and labour classes. The Vaishyas paid for royal officials, priests, and other expenses, while the Sudras were the serving classes. A social crisis occurred in the third-fourth century, leading to the *Varnasankara*, or *Kaliyuga* period, which supported the central authority. The second historical phase saw power struggles between the Pallavas and Chalukyas in Central-south India, and the spread of Brahmanical Hinduism. The rural peasantry faced increased demand for revenue to support war expenses, art and culture, and administrative costs. Land grants were introduced from the fifth century onwards, with Brahmanas receiving tax-free lands and the right to rule over the people who resided in the land. The discharging of justice in donated areas rested with the king, but later it was transferred to the person who received the land. The power of the ruler was undermined from the Gupta period, and the practice of payment of royal officials through land grants also weakened central power. Officials were paid in cash, but by the sixth century, the practice changed to land revenues, with one-third of the revenue set aside for public officials. This led to the rise of landlordism, the rise of subject peasantry, and the weakening of central authority.

2.1.1 Royal Land Grants to Brahmanas

The earliest references to royal land grants to Brahmanas are found in later Vedic texts, including the *Mahabharata.* In the *Danadharma Parva,* three main types of gifts are mentioned: gold *(hiranya-dana)*, cattle (*go-dana)*, and land (*prithvi-dana)*. Among these, land is considered the most valuable, as it provides essential resources like jewels, animals, and grain. Both the *Dharmashastra* and the *Puranas* highly praise land gifts to Brahmanas, emphasising that those who give such gifts to deserving Brahmanas will achieve future fame and happiness. The first indication that Brahmana settlements established through royal grants enjoyed tax exemptions is found in the *Arthashastra*.

The Brihaspati Smriti asserts that land gifted by kings to Brahmanas should be tax-free.

The earliest inscriptions of royal land grants are found in Naneghat and Nasik in the western Deccan. The practice of land grants grew significantly from the 4th century onwards, and by the 5th or 6th century, kings regularly made such gifts. Villages granted to Brahmanas were known as agraharas, or *brahmadeyas*. Although royal grants were sometimes given to Buddhist and Jaina monasteries, as well as Vaishnava and Shaiva temples, the majority of grants before the 10th century CE were made to Brahmanas.

In the 20th century, scholars began to focus more on the socio-economic and political structures of the Gupta period, moving beyond mere political narratives. Marxist historians like D.D. Kosambi and B.N. Datta discussed the emergence of 'Indian feudalism', a concept further developed by R.S. Sharma, who argued that key feudal features present during the Gupta era became more pronounced in later periods.

The Gupta economy was primarily agrarian, relying on agriculture as its backbone, but also encompassed commerce, trade, and craftsmanship. Agriculture was the main revenue source for the state, with a diverse range of crops such as paddy, cotton, and oilseeds cultivated using advanced agricultural techniques and irrigation systems. The *Amarakosha* provides insights into various soil types and crops, indicating sophisticated agricultural knowledge.

The imperial Guptas had limited involvement in establishing agraharas with only one genuine inscription documenting a land grant by a Gupta king. The Bhitari stone pillar inscription of Skandagupta notes a village gift to a Vishnu temple but lacks specific details. Inscriptions, such as the Gaya and Nalanda copper plates attributed to Samudragupta, mention grants to Brahmanas, including Revatika, Bhadrapushkaraka, and Purnanaga. These grants involved a payment known as **uparikara**, instructing villagers to obey the donees and pay taxes, while prohibiting tax-paying cultivators and artisans from entering the *agrahara*. Scholars rose question the authenticity of the Gaya and Nalanda inscriptions due to errors and inappropriate titles for Samudragupta. A stone inscription from Bihar, possibly from Budhagupta or Purugupta, records a minister—who was also the brother-in-law of King Kumaragupta—erecting a *sacrificial post (Yupas)* and mentioning shares in two villages for temple maintenance.

The Vakatakas, significant land donors to Brahmanas, are noted for 35 gifted villages in their inscriptions. During Pravarasena II's reign, 18-19 inscriptions recorded the donation of 20 villages. Land grants by subordinate rulers of the Guptas and Vakatakas also contributed to this practice, with an increase in grants to Brahmanas in Karnataka from the 2nd century, particularly after the 7th century.

The earliest Pallava land grants, from the 3rd or 4th century, are found in the Mayidavolu and Hire Hadagalli plates. The Pulankurichi inscription of the 5th century records the establishment of a *brahmadeya* settlement, highlighting the superior rights of the donees. Additionally, inscriptions from Bengal indicate that private individuals and royal officers also contributed to land grants. These royal land grants were crucial in shaping the historical landscape of early medieval India, spanning roughly from 400 to 1300 CE.

2.1.2 Political and Economic Significance of Brahmanisation

Royal land grants were a crucial aspect of early medieval India's history, particularly between 600 and 1200 CE, when there was

a notable increase in grants from kings to Brahmanas. These grants carried political significance, as royal decrees established and confirmed the rights of Brahmana donees. The feudalism hypothesis suggests that *brahmadeyas* contributed to political fragmentation, but this view is hard to support. Instead, the early medieval period was characterised by a rise in regional and trans-regional state polities within a context of agrarian expansion. Land grants to Brahmanas were not indicative of political disintegration or royal weakness; rather, they were part of integrative and legitimising policies implemented by kings.

In these early kingdoms, the patronage of Brahmanas—a privileged social group—did not substantially reduce state revenue or control. Kings granting land to Brahmanas often struggled to extract revenue from these lands. Established kingdoms typically did not suffer significant resource depletion due to a few land grants. In fact, the most powerful dynasties made the most generous grants, demonstrating their strong control over productive resources. Strategies for maintaining control, forming alliances, and collabourating with respected social groups were vital to the political landscape of the time. The wealth and influence of Brahmanas and institutions like temples did not diminish royal power.

Inscriptions from early medieval dynasties reveal the Brahmanisation of royal courts, as Brahmanas became key legitimisers of political authority. They crafted royal genealogies and performed prestigious sacrifices, linking royal lineages to the Epic-Puranic tradition and assigning kings a respectable varna status. Origin myths often highlighted relationships between social groups and institutions, notably the connections among kings, Brahmanas, and temples. During the Chera period, Brahmanas from major settlements were part of the Nalu Tali at Mahodayapuram.

While royal grants to Brahmanas continued throughout the early medieval period, by the 10th century, there was a noticeable shift towards donations to temples. There were also 'secular grants' in regions like Karnataka and Orissa, where kings granted land in return for military service. However, at the subcontinental level, military grants were less common than those made to Brahmanas and religious establishments, with few instances of such grants documented.

During the early medieval period, Brahmana landowners saw a significant expansion of their control over land. Land grants were often made to Brahmanas by private individuals, at their request, or by kings responding to specific requests. While earlier inscriptions reveal complex dynamics, later records suggest that other influential figures sometimes played a role in grants that appeared to be made solely by kings. For instance, the 13th-century Calcutta Sahitya Parishat copper plate inscription of Vishvarupa Sena documents a gift to a Brahmana named Halayudha, five of whose eleven plots had been purchased by him.

In Orissa, some Brahmana donees served as priests, astrologers, and administrators connected to the royal court. Brahmana recipients of royal grants are often identified by their ancestry, *gotra* (clan), *pravara* (lineage), *charana* (school of Vedic learning), *shakha* (recension of a Veda), and native place, reflecting their educational background and migration patterns. References to *gotra* and *pravara* suggest significant spatial mobility among Brahmanas, with some migrations possibly beginning around 800 BCE. Early Brahmanical literature reflects an eastward movement, while legends associated with Agastya and Parashurama link to a southward migration.

By the 10th century, a division emerged between the Pancha-Gaudas (northern Brahmanas) and the Pancha-Dravidas

(southern groups). The Pancha-Gaudas included Sarasvata, Gauda, Kanyakubja, Maithila, and Utkala Brahmanas, while the Pancha-Dravida group comprised Gurjjaras, Maharashtriyas, Karnatakas, Trailingas, and Dravidas. Migrations of Brahmanas were likely driven by political instability, land pressure, and the decline of traditional sacrificial practices, prompting many to seek new livelihoods. The proliferation of kingdoms during this period created opportunities for educated Brahmanas, who were essential for legitimising new political elites and providing administrative support.

2.1.3 Brahmadeyas

Land grant inscriptions from the Chola Empire reveal that grants often included not just land but also treasure troves, hidden deposits, forests, and heirless properties. While kings theoretically retained rights over these resources, transferring them to the donees affected the state's prerogatives. Inscriptions indicate that *brahmadeyas* were to be free from interference by the state, effectively making them autonomous areas where Brahmana donees could operate independently. Some grants even established Brahmana settlements outside existing agricultural zones, expanding cultivation, although most were made in already settled areas.

Brahmadeya land grants varied in size, from small plots to entire villages, and could involve single or multiple donees. For example, the 10th-century Pashchimbhag plate of Srichandra records a grant to 6,000 Brahmanas, along with members of a monastery dedicated to Brahma and a temple of Vishnu. The language of these inscriptions can be complex, but it's evident that most grants provided permanent tax-free status to Brahmana settlements, meaning that state dues were redirected to the donees.

In Bengal and Bihar, royal land grants were typically permanent and inheritable. The Palas, who ruled these regions from the 8th to the 12th centuries, granted various land types—grass, pastures, trees, and water—along with exemptions from all dues like *bhaga, bhoga, kara*, and *hiranya*, suggesting that these gifts were primarily inherited. Pala inscriptions also included terms like *a-chata-bhata-praveshya,* indicating that the land was off-limits to the king's troops. Understanding terms such as sa-dashaparadha and *sa-chauroddharana* is vital for discerning whether Brahmana donees hold judicial rights. *Sa-dashaparadha*, for instance, could denote rights to fines, immunity from punishment, or the authority to try offenders.

Inscriptions from across the subcontinent show the broad authority granted to donees. For instance, some Orissa inscriptions describe land grants that included habitat and forest rights, similar to later Bengal inscriptions transferring rights over habitat land. However, many donees lacked the critical right to alienate land, as indicated by stipulations that grants were made according to *nivi-dharma* or a*kshaya-nivi-dharma*. Some inscriptions also contained the term *alekhani-praveshataya*, meaning the land could not be sold. Thus, the rights of Brahmana donees were greater than those of a landlord but less than those of a full landowner.

2.1.4 Impact on Agrarian Relations

Royal patronage in the early medieval period strengthened the economic power of a section of the Brahmana community, leading to the growth of a Brahmana landed elite. This elite is not considered 'Brahmana feudatories', as they were not passing taxes or resources on to the kings. Most historians view the early medieval period as one of agrarian expansion, with land grants playing a significant role. However, there are major

differences in opinion regarding the nature of agrarian relations during this time. It is argued that land grants led to increased subordination and oppression of rural groups by Brahmana donees. Burton Stein mentions a Brahmana-peasant alliance in early medieval South India. The integration or processual model has not directly addressed the nature of agrarian relations. The insertion of Brahmana donees into the village community introduced a new element into agrarian relations, eroding older ones. Rajan Gurukkal argues that such settlements involving the employment of non-family labour eroded the kinship basis of production relations.

Most land grants in the Brahmana system were tax-free, requiring villagers to pay various dues to the donees. Inscriptions often mentioned the general dues or tax exemptions, which villagers had to pay to the donees instead of the state. The donees also had rights over water resources, trees, forests, and habitation areas, which affected the rights of the village community. The terms of *brahmadeya* grants created a class of Brahmana donees who enjoyed superior rights and control over the village's resources and inhabitants. The relationship between Brahmana donees and other rural groups was marked by dominance and exploitation. The substitution of state exploitation by close-at-hand Brahmana exploitation would have led to higher levels of subjection for the average farmer. The level of social and economic stratification in rural society varied in different areas, with factors such as ecology, arable land availability, organisation among Brahmanas, and the presence or absence of competing social and corporate groups.

In South India, corporate organisations of Brahmanas, known as *sabhas,* furthered the power of the donees. In Kerala, the absence of corporate organisations of other social groups enhanced the power and influence of the *sabha*. Increasing rural stratification sharpened socio-economic conflicts, although direct references to such conflicts are few and far between.

2.1.5 Land Grants as a part of Larger Social and Cultural Processes

B. D. Chattopadhyaya argues that key historical processes in Indian history, particularly during the early medieval period, involved the expansion of state society, the transformation of tribes into peasants, and the formation of castes. Land grants significantly bolstered the position of certain Brahmanas in rural areas, granting them political support and economic power by giving them control over land, resources, and people. Consequently, *Brahmanas* emerged as a dominant caste in brahmadeya villages, while some tribal groups were integrated into caste society, whereas others were relegated to the status of outcastes or untouchables.

The phenomenon of land grants also contributed to the proliferation of castes in several ways. For instance, the need to document numerous land transactions led to the segmentation of Brahmanas into sub-castes, particularly among migrant groups. In Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the Shiva Brahmanas, linked to Shiva temples, emerged as a sub-caste due to their involvement in temple religion. This engagement prompted changes in marriage practices, such as the adoption of matriliny, with Nambudri Brahmanas forming *sambandam* relationships with Nair women.

The early medieval period witnessed a rise in temple-based sectarian religion, marked by increased royal patronage for temples. Many Brahmanas became temple managers or priests, while others assumed less prominent roles. Inscriptions from South India reveal the active participation of Brahmanas and Brahmana sabhas in temple management, indicating their centrality in these religious practices. Brahmana settlements in Kerala

were notably temple-centered, highlighting their significant role in promoting temple-oriented religion. *Brahmadeyas* served as points of interaction between Brahmanical and tribal religions, resulting in various religious syntheses. Through this engagement, tribal communities were exposed to Brahmanism, which evolved by incorporating elements from regional, local, and tribal traditions.

Marriages between Brahmanas and local women during migration may have facilitated the interaction between the Brahmanical and tribal worlds. These interactions were reciprocal but not evenly balanced, as Brahmanical elements eventually emerged as dominant. The cult of Jagannatha in Orissa is an example of the Brahmanisation of a tribal deity. Land grants played a significant role in the emergence and development of Tantra during the early medieval period. The proliferation of land grants to Brahmanas also led to an enormous output in Sanskrit literature. The administrative structures of proliferating royal courts provided employment opportunities for literate Brahmanas, including scholars, poets, and dramatists. Patronage through land grants also promoted and sustained Brahmana scholarship. Wealth based on land control and the emergence of clusters of settlements inhabited by Brahmana specialists in various branches of Sanskrit learning may have provided a section of the Brahmanas with the security and wealth necessary for sustained intellectual activity.

Recap

- Beginning in the fifth century, land grants shifted power from central authorities to local rulers and Brahmanas, weakening central authority and leading to landlordism, and subject peasantry.
- Royal land grants between 600 and 1200 CE supported the rise of regional states during agrarian expansion without leading to political fragmentation.
- Inscriptions indicate that Brahmanas legitimised political authority by crafting genealogies and performing rituals at royal courts.
- By the 10th century, temple donations increased, alongside secular grants for military service in regions like Karnataka and Orissa.
- By the 10th century, northern and southern Brahmana groups diverged due to political instability, creating opportunities for educated Brahmanas.
- Early medieval royal patronage enhanced Brahmana elites' economic power through land grants, though they did not pass taxes to kings.
- Most Brahmana land grants were tax-free, deepening rural stratification by giving donees control over village resources.
- In South India, Brahmana *sabhas* amplified donees' power, particularly in Kerala, leading to socio-economic conflicts.

- B. D. Chattopadhyaya argues that land grants elevated Brahmanas as the dominant caste during the early medieval period.
- Land grants contributed to the formation of sub-castes among Brahmanas and influenced marriage practices.
- Brahmanas played key roles in temple management and religious syncretism with tribal communities in early medieval South India.
- Marriages between Brahmanas and local women fostered interaction between Brahmanical and tribal traditions, leading to Brahmanisation.
- Land grants to Brahmanas facilitated the development of Tantra and Sanskrit literature, providing resources for scholarly pursuits.

Objective Questions

1. How did land grants contribute to the political and economic power of Brahmanas in rural areas?
2. In Kerala, Brahmana settlements were typically centered around which institution?
3. How did land grants influence the development of *Tantra* during the early medieval period?
4. What political significance did royal land grants to Brahmanas hold in early medieval India?
5. Which group became key legitimisers of political authority in royal courts during the early medieval period?
6. Which two broad groups of Brahmanas were recognised by the 10th century?
7. Which term indicates that royal land grants were tax-free for Brahmana settlements?
8. By the 10th century, land grants began to shift from Brahmanas to which of the following?
9. The emergence of which economic structure is closely associated with the increase in land grants during the early medieval period?
10. What is the significance of *Brahmadeya* in ancient Indian land grants?

Answers

1. By granting them land, resources, and control over people
2. Temples
3. By supporting Brahmana scholars involved in *Tantra*
4. They were part of integrative and legitimising policies.
5. Brahmanas
6. Pancha-Gaudas and Pancha-Dravidas
7. *Nivi-dharma*
8. Temples
9. Feudalism
10. Land granted for the purpose of supporting Brahmanas and religious institutions

Assignments

1. In what ways did royal land grants influence the social status of Brahmanas in early medieval India?
2. What significance did inscriptions hold in documenting and legitimising land grants to Brahmanas during this period?
3. How did royal land grants to Brahmanas shape the political and economic structure of early medieval India (600-1200 CE)?
4. Explain the complex relationship between Brahmanas and royal power during the early medieval period.
5. Explore the role of Brahmana migrations and the segmentation of Brahmanas into sub-castes, particularly in South India.

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UNIT 2

Urban Decline

Learning Outcomes

On the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- identify the urban centres of north India during the Gupta period
- discern the factors that promote urban growth
- develop awareness of the historical debate around the concept of 'urban decline'
- understand the concept of feudalism in the Indian context

Prerequisites

During the Medieval period, changes in land relations and the mode of production led to the emergence of a new socio-economic system called feudalism. The period also marked a deterioration of towns and ports, sided with the emergence of self-sufficient village communities. The land owners who belonged to different social strata depended on the cultivators to utilise the land received from the ruler. Thus, the land was subdivided into tracts placed under tenants who paid an annual rent to the land owner, zamindar or Brahmin landlords or government officials. The tenants exploited the labour force of the people who belonged to the backward sections of the society, who often stayed in the land which they cultivated. Gradually, their stay on the land they cultivated became hereditary, and the system continued for successive generations. Such a development was also a result of the decline in the urban centres and port towns that had flourished for a long time.

Keywords

Feudalism, Urbanisation, 'Urban decline', Trade, Inscriptions, Coinage, Urban centres

Discussion

2.2.1 Decline of Urban Centres in North India

The term 'Feudalism' in the Indian context can be termed as a process marked by the breakdown of central authority, the emergence of a number of regional states, urban decline and agrarian expansion leading to the rise of landlords and subject peasantry. The beginning of the second historical phase, as denoted by scholars like R. S. Sharma, seems to have begun by the 6th century CE. The general social disorder created considerable chaos in economic relations, too. The social classes who were assigned different roles began to forget their assigned roles and started assuming new professions as per their aspiration and skills. In such a situation, a change occurred in the economic system which adversely affected the urban centres. R.S. Sharma, by analysing the archaeological findings which point out the disappearance of urban traits, has coined the term 'Urban Decay.'

2.2.2 Urban Decline/ Decay

Trade relations with the Roman Empire began during the Kushana period and continued through the Gupta period, with western Indian ports like Brigukachchha, Kalyana, and Sind engaging in direct trade with Roman ports. However, from the sixth century onwards, India experienced a sharp decline in urban centres due to the end of trade with the Roman empire and the cessation of silk trade with Iran and Byzantium. India continued some commerce with China and Southeast Asia, but intermediaries, primarily Arabs, reaped the most benefits, leaving Indian towns struggling. Archaeological evidence indicates that towns in the post-Gupta period faced severe decay. This decline of trade is evident in the absence of gold coins in India, and the paucity of metallic money in north and south India.

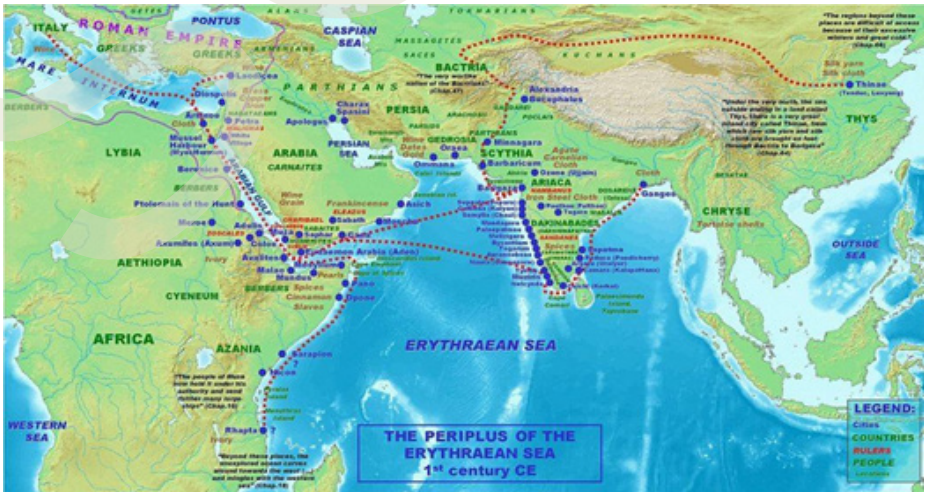

Fig 2.1. Trading ports marked by the author of *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea.* https://www.indica.today/long-reads/ancient-indian-economy-indo-roman-trade-paradigm-indic-history/

R. S. Sharma describes this phenomenon as "urban decay, " linking the decline of trade to the deterioration of urban centres. The decay of towns led to the decay of cities, with some flourishing under the Satavahanas and Kushans, while others largely disappeared in post-Gupta times. Major towns such as those in Haryana and East Punjab, Purana Qila (Delhi), Mathura, and Pataliputra experienced significant decline. Hiuen Tsang, who visited India between 602 and 664 CE, noted many sacred towns he encountered were deserted or in decline. In the late fifth century, a group of silk weavers from the western coast migrated to Mandasor in Malwa and gave up silk weaving. As urban artisans and craftsmen migrated to rural areas, they turned to agriculture for sustenance, producing their own goods like oil, salt, and spices. This led to smaller, self-sufficient production units.

Merchants who had once been managers of land administration during the Gupta period became landowners, cultivating large tracts of land, including cleared forest areas. The role of merchants as landlords was linked to the decline of trade and towns. The contraction of trade, exacerbated by Hunic invasions, resulted in the desertion of urban centres and a decline in the use of money. This shift contributed to the ruralisation of society, fostering the development of feudal elements. The lack of metallic coins after the sixth century, lasting around 300 years, further supports the notion of a decline in trade. Consequently, the urban decline reduced state income, making it increasingly challenging for rulers to maintain their armies and administrative systems. The state was also troubled by the local riots. Therefore, the distant areas were granted to the Brahmanas, as well as temples and monasteries, for policing and ensuring security and peace.

According to Upinder Singh, the hypothesis of Indian feudalism posits that early medieval times saw a decline in cities, urban crafts, trade, and the use of money. Singh mentions that R. S. Sharma's theory of urban decay, which he suggests began in the latter half of the 3rd or 4th century and continued past the 6th century, is supported by archaeological evidence and accounts from writers like Hiuen Tsang and various Arab historians. This urban decline weakened urban-based artisans and traders, driving them to migrate to rural areas and blurring the lines between towns and villages.

However, this urban contraction coincided with agrarian expansion. Sharma also notes the transfer of market rights to donees and the shift of profits from merchants to temples, along with customs dues transitioning from the state to temples. This points to a feudalisation of trade and commerce. He asserts that a mild urban renewal began in some regions by the 11th century, with urban processes becoming firmly established by the 14th century. Factors such as a revival in foreign trade, increased cash crop cultivation, improved irrigation techniques, and a rise in internal trade are cited as key reasons for this urban revival and the decline of the feudal order.

Fig 2. 2 2. Urban Centres in India c. 1300 [After Chakravarti, Ranabir, Exploring Early India up to c.AD 1300, Third Edition (New Delhi: Primus Books), Map 8, p. 417.]

2.2.3 Critique of Urban Decay

The theory of Urban decline was questioned by some historians like D.C. Sircar, who argued that medieval writers like Al Biruni described the long-distance trade that existed in India and that there was no decline in international trade or trade routes. Scholars like R. Champakalakshmi and others argue that while some of the urban centres declined, others did not show any proof of deterioration. According to them, there is ample evidence for the towns and port towns both in north and south India. References about the urban space can be detected from the literary and epigraphical sources. By the 9th century CE, urban centres were recorded in inscriptions, with terms like *hatta* and *mandapika*. We also come across terms like *pura, nagara, mahanagara* or *pattinam* in literary sources.

Hattas were notable for combining manufacturing and trade, which were the two main activities of these settlements. These urban areas, part of the non-agrarian economy, were interconnected with trade centres, and many served as significant hubs for commerce. This evidence suggests that urban life continued to thrive and evolve during this period, rather than experiencing a universal decline. The creation of urban centres in early medieval India is not well-documented. While records from this period mention townships established by rulers and officials, there is little information on their planning and development. It appears

that urban centres may have emerged as extensions of existing processes, such as the establishment of core exchange or ceremonial centres.

B.D. Chattopadhyaya argues that foreign trade was not essential for the growth of urban centres. He suggests that a decline in foreign trade does not necessarily indicate a downturn in internal trade or local commodity exchanges. Chattopadhyaya examined urban centres as a key factor in Indian feudalism, using inscriptions from regions such as Rajasthan, the upper and middle Ganga river valley, and Malwa. His research highlights the expansion of exchange centres, or nodal points, like *hatta* or *mandapika*, along with associated residential areas. These often became seats of local ruling lineages. For instance, Naddula evolved from one of twelve villages into a trade centre with a mandapika, eventually becoming an urban and administrative centre under the Chahamanas.

B.D Chattopadyaya deny the urban decay theory based on the fact that there are such references to settlements during the medieval period. Chattopadhyaya argues that while some cities, such as Kaushambi, Shravasti, Vaishali, and Kapilavastu, were in decline, others, like Thaneswar, Varanasi, and Kanyakubja, continued to flourish. Archaeological data on settlements is limited, but some early historical cities, like Ahichchhatra, Atranjikhera, Rajghat, and Chirand, continued to be inhabited. Epigraphic evidence from the Indo-Gangetic divide, upper Ganga basin, and Malwa plateau, particularly Prithudaka, Tattan-dapura, Siyadoni, and Gopagiri, can provide insight into the continued vibrancy of city life. Literary works, sculpture, and architecture, likely patronised by urban elites, also contribute to this understanding.

Ranabir Chakravarti's studies of *mandapika* and *pentha* as intermediary market centres reveal the connections between urban marketplaces and rural settlements. Mandapikas, also known as *sulka mandapika*, collected tolls and customs, showcasing a diverse range of commodities for sale. Penthas, which were larger than local markets but smaller than cities, persisted in the Deccan for an extended period. Additionally, nagarams located on important trade routes developed into significant towns and served as local market hubs. These findings challenge the notion of universal urban decline during this era and emphasise the interconnectedness of urban centres with broader trade networks and interactions.

John S. Deyell argues that money was not scarce in early medieval India, and states were not experiencing financial crises. While there was a reduction in coin types and decline in aesthetic quality, the volume of coins in circulation remained relatively high. Deyell's work focuses on the post 1000 CE period, but the roots of currency systems lay in the preceding centuries. Debasement of coinage was not necessarily a sign of financial or economic crises, but could reflect increasing demand for coins in a restricted supply of precious metals.

Urban decline is also reflected in the decline of coinage during the post-Gupta period, suggesting a drop in trade and urban life. The increase in land grants during this time is viewed as a shift in the socio-economic landscape that contributed to the establishment of Indian feudalism. R.S. Sharma pointed to inscriptions showing that Brahmanas moved from cities to rural areas and stressed the importance of excavating at urban edges to connect towns with their agricultural bases. He linked the decline of urban centres to the fall in long-distance trade, which was vital for feudalism in India. This decline was tied to a shortage of coins, as the Palas, Senas, Rashtrakutas, and Gurjara-Pratiharas issued lower-quality currency.

D.N. Jha critiqued Sharma's emphasis on foreign trade but agreed that urban decline was significant. He argued that focusing solely on foreign trade was inadequate, as it ignored internal issues that contributed to reduced trade, a shortage of coins, and closed economies. Sharma's archaeological work highlighted a marked decline in trade, crafts, and metal money as signs of de-urbanisation, linking this to the rise of feudalism and agrarian expansion. Puranic texts describe the poor conditions of merchants during the *Kaliyuga,* prompting rulers to grant land to support priests and officials, which turned towns into fiefs. The Prakrit text *Vividharathakalpa* mentions that urban centres became villages, shifting their focus to religious purposes rather than trade or production. Texts like *Manasara*, compiled around or after the 12th century CE, highlight how the planning of villages and towns blurred their distinctions.

Recap

- Breakdown of central authority, the emergence of a number of regional states, urban decline and agrarian expansion leading to the rise of landlords and subject peasantry are the attributed features of feudalism.
- R S Sharma, the famous Marxist historian, has coined the term 'Urban Decay.'
- 'Urban decay' in Indian regions was understood by the analysis of the disappearance of the urban traits from different urban sites.
- Hiuen Tsang noted the abandonment of many sacred towns during his visit to India in the 7th century CE.
- The contraction of trade and commerce with the Roman Empire caused the decline of the urban centres.
- With the invasion of Huns, ruralisation and the deserting of the urban centres took place.
- The decline of the Roman empire led to a decline in trading activities.
- There was a contraction of urban areas and an expansion of agriculture.
- Absence of coinage is pointed out as evidence for the decline of westerly trade.
- Urban artisans migrated to rural areas, transitioning to agriculture and creating self-sufficient production units.
- Merchants became landowners, linking their shift to the overall decline of trade and urban centers.
- Scholars like D.C. Sircar has questioned the decline in international trade by citing the accounts of Al Biruni.

- According to R.Champakalakshmi, there is ample evidence for thriving towns and port towns both in north and south India.
- B. D. Chattopadhyaya also denies the idea of a complete decline of trade in the medieval period.
- John S. Deyell argues that while coin types decreased, overall money circulation in early medieval India remained stable.
- The rise in land grants during the post-Gupta period reflects a shift to feudalism, turning urban areas into agrarian communities.

Objective Questions

1. Which western Indian ports engaged in direct trade with Roman ports?
2. What term does R. S. Sharma used to describe the decline of urban centres?
3. According to R.S. Sharma, when did the second historical phase of urban decline begin?
4. Which cities does Chattopadhyaya mention as continuing to flourish despite urban decline?
5. What economic change during the post-Gupta period is viewed as contributing to the establishment of Indian feudalism?
6. Which ancient trade relationships began to decline in India around the sixth century CE?
7. What is one internal issue D.N. Jha suggests it contributed to reduced trade in early medieval India?
8. What terms are used in inscriptions to identify urban spaces during the 9th century CE?
9. Who noted the decline of sacred towns in India during his travels between 602 and 664 CE?
10. What was one effect of the urban decline on artisans and merchants during the post-Gupta period?
11. Which historian argued that the theory of urban decline is not universally applicable and pointed out evidence of thriving urban centers?
12. According to John S. Deyell, what was the status of money circulation in early medieval India despite the reduction in coin types?

Answers

1. Brigukachchha, Kalyana, and Sind
2. ·Urban decay'
3. By the 6th century CE
4. Thaneswar, Varanasi, and Kanyakubja
5. The increase in land grants
6. Trade with the Roman Empire and silk trade with Iran and Byzantium
7. A shortage of coins
8. The terms "hatta" and "mandapika" are used to identify urban spaces in inscriptions
9. Hiuen Tsang
10. Migration to rural areas and reliance to agriculture for sustenance
11. D.C. Sircar
12. The volume of coins in circulation remained relatively high

Assignments

1. Explain R.S. Sharma's theory of 'urban decay' in early medieval India, highlighting factors that led to the deterioration of towns and cities.
2. Discuss critiques of Sharma's theory, including evidence of regional variations, continued urban activity in some areas, and new archaeological findings that question the extent of urban decline.
3. Evaluate the role of foreign and internal trade in the development and decline of urban centers in India, as discussed by various historians. How did changes in trade routes and economic practices influence urban life and the overall socio-economic structure in the early medieval period?

4. Explain the impact of agrarian expansion on the socio-economic structure of North India during the decline of urban centers.
5. How did the transformation of merchants into landowners reflect the shift in economic structures during the decline of urban centers?

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UNIT 3

Proliferation of *Jati*

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand how the land grants led to the proliferation of *Jatis*.
- recognise the structure and depth of the caste system in society.
- recognises the factors that promoted the proliferation of *Jati*.

Prerequisites

The term *Jati* is used to suggest the type or category of something, evolved to represent caste groups within Indian society. This concept of *jati* became a key component of the socio-cultural structure during the early medieval period. In the earlier Vedic period, society was organised into *varnas*, primarily the Bra*hmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas,* and *Sudras*. Over time, as human settlements expanded, particularly in the Gangetic valley and beyond, the social structure became more diverse and stratified, leading to a proliferation of *jati* groups.

With the growth of agricultural communities and the spread of iron-based technologies, new economic roles emerged, leading to further fragmentation within the *varna* system. Artisans, traders, craftsmen, and other occupational groups began to form distinct castes (*jatis*), each associated with specific professions and duties. As a result, social relations became increasingly complex, with caste groups interacting in a more layered and hierarchical manner.

Keywords

Proliferation, *Jati, Varnas,* Caste system, Clans, Fragmentation, Caste groups, *Jati dharma,* Social Mobility

Discussion

2.3.1 Transformation of the *Varna* System in Early Medieval India

From the sixth century onwards, several changes began to take place in the social structure of India. In the Gangetic plains of North India, the *Vaishyas*, who were once considered free peasants, gradually lost their status. This happened due to the growing practice of granting land to landlords. These landlords came between the peasants and the king, leading to the *Vaishyas* being pushed down to the level of *Sudras*. This shift altered the traditional Brahmanical social order, which later expanded from North India to regions like Bengal and South India, due to the land grants given to *Brahmanas* starting from the fifth or sixth centuries. In these regions, society was mostly divided into two groups: *Brahmanas* and *Sudras*.

Power struggles and frequent land grants resulted in the rise of various categories of landowners. Many people who gained land and power aspired to elevate their social status. Even if they belonged to lower *varnas*, receiving large land grants from rulers raised their economic standing. However, despite their wealth, they were still considered socially and ritually inferior. According to the *Dharmashastras*, social status was mainly determined by the *varna* system, with *Brahmanas* at the top and *Sudras* at the bottom.

Economic privileges were also tied to one's *varna*. To accommodate the rising class of landowners, changes had to be made to traditional laws. For example, Varahamihira, a sixth-century astrologer, suggested that house sizes should be based not only on *varna* but also on the rank of various rulers. This marked a shift from the past, where social ranking depended entirely on the *varna* system, to a new order where land ownership also influenced status.

Despite some law books allowing practices like *niyoga* (levirate) or widow remarriage, these practices were mostly permitted for women from the lower classes. From the beginning, women were denied rights to property, especially immovable property, which they could not inherit.

From the seventh century onwards, the number of castes multiplied. By the eighth century, it was noted in a *Purana* that numerous mixed castes had emerged, often due to relationships between *Vaishya* women and men of lower castes. This led to the division of *Sudras* and untouchables into countless sub-castes, and even *Brahmanas* and *Rajputs*, who had become significant figures in Indian society, were divided into various sub-castes by the seventh century.

According to R.S. Sharma, the rise in the number of castes was partly due to the economy of the time, where mobility was limited, and people tended to stay in one place. Even when people in different regions performed the same work, they were divided into sub-castes based on their location. Furthermore, many tribal groups

were integrated into the Brahmanical social order through land grants given to *Brahmanas* in tribal areas. These tribes were usually classified as *Sudras* or mixed castes, with each tribe or kinship group being assigned a separate caste within Brahmanical society.

2.3.2 Social Hierarchy and Economic Relations

According to R.S Sharma, in post-Vedic times, three significant processes occurred simultaneously: 'Aryanisation," ironisation,' and 'urbanisation'. Aryanisation refers to the spread of Indo-Aryan languages, such as Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Pali. It also involved the rise of the upper social classes and the oppression of women. In later Vedic texts, the term "arya" indicated the first three *varnas* (social classes), while the *sudras* and *dasas* were excluded from this classification. In the Buddhist context, the term "arya" was associated with nobility. During this period, Aryanisation also meant that non-Aryan tribes began to adopt Brahmanical culture.

Ironisation involved the introduction of tools and weapons made from low carbon steel, which transformed agriculture and crafts, leading to an increase in settlements. This advancement also strengthened the military power of rulers, enabling them to expand their territories and support the *Varna* system.

'Urbanisation,' or the growth of towns, benefitted traders and artisans, resulting in increased state revenue. The use of iron tools for crafting and farming facilitated a significant change from the relatively egalitarian society of the Vedic period to a more stratified caste system by around the fifth century BCE. In earlier times, iron tools were rare, but this changed as forested areas of the Gangetic plains were cleared using fire and iron axes, making way for one of the world's most fertile regions to be settled.

From 500 BCE onwards, many rural and urban settlements emerged, leading to the formation of large territorial states like the Magadhan empire. This transformation was made possible by the use of iron ploughshares, sickles, and other tools, allowing peasants to produce more food than they needed for basic survival. Furthermore, peasants relied on artisans for tools, clothing, and other necessities, while artisans also supplied weapons and luxury goods to the rulers and priests. The new agricultural techniques developed during post-Vedic times reached a much higher level than those of the Vedic era.

In ancient India, the structure of land ownership and agricultural practices evolved significantly over time. Initially, during the Vedic period, farming was primarily a family affair. People cultivated their fields with the assistance of family members, and there was no concept of wage earners in society. However, as new agricultural techniques emerged, particularly by the time of the Buddha, the landscape began to change. Some individuals acquired large stretches of land, leading to the necessity for slaves and hired labourers to manage the increased agricultural demands. The *Arthashastra*, a text by Kautilya from the Maurya period, reveals that slaves and hired workers were commonly employed on large state-owned farms.

With advancements in farming methods, peasants, artisans, and labourers were able to produce more than they required for their subsistence. This surplus was collected by rulers and priests, who needed a systematic way to gather these resources. To facilitate this, kings appointed tax collectors to assess and collect taxes from the population. Alongside this administrative effort, it became essential to convince people of the importance of obeying the king and fulfilling their tax obligations. This led to the establishment of the *Varna* system,

which created a hierarchy that distinguished between different social groups.

The *Varna* system classified society into four main categories, with the three higher groups—*Brahmanas, Kshatriyas*, and *Vaishyas*—enjoying specific privileges. The *Sudras*, positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy, had limited rights and were often relegated to subordinate roles. The twice-born, which included the three higher *varnas*, were granted the opportunity to study the Vedas and participate in certain religious rituals. In contrast, the *Sudras* and women were excluded from these practices, highlighting the disparities within the social structure.

Within the twice-born groups, further distinctions arose. *Brahmanas*, who traditionally refrained from engaging in agriculture, developed a contempt for manual labour. This disdain contributed to the marginalisation of certain workers, who were deemed untouchables. The *Vaishyas*, while part of the twice-born, played essential roles as farmers, herders, and traders. Their contributions were crucial to the economy, as they provided vital support to both the *Kshatriyas* and *Brahmanas*, maintaining the social structure of ancient Indian society.

Economic relationships were intricately tied to this social hierarchy. The *Kshatriyas* were tasked with collecting taxes from peasants and traders, ensuring they had the means to support their priests and sustain their own status. This system established different interest rates based on one's *Varna*, with *Sudras* facing the highest rates, reflecting their subordinate position in society. Such economic disparities reinforced the social order, creating clear lines between the various classes.

Despite the existing tensions between *Kshatriyas* and *Brahmanas* over social standing and resource allocation, both groups recognised their interdependence for mutual prosperity. Ancient texts emphasise that the *Kshatriyas* could not thrive without the support of the *Brahmanas*, and vice versa. Their success was linked to collaboration, highlighting the importance of cooperation between these dominant social classes in maintaining their power and influence within society.

2.3.3 Factors led to the Proliferation of *Jati*

The process of consolidation and proliferation of *jati* was initiated in the early historical phase as urbanisation spread in the sub-continent under the Mauryan empire. This process was consolidated in the early medieval context. It engulfed the agrarian as well as the non-agrarian groups such as the pastoralists, the gatherers, hunters and the forest dwellers. The 6th century in India saw significant changes in social structures, particularly in the proliferation of ***jati***, or sub-castes, within the broader framework of the caste system. Several factors contributed to this process:

- **Decline of Large Empires**: The decline of large empires, such as the Gupta Empire, led to the emergence of regional kingdoms. This political fragmentation allowed local communities to assert their identities, and often, it resulted in the formation of new *jatis*.
- **Emergence of various occupational groups**: The rise of trade and urbanisation during this period facilitated the growth of various occupational groups. Many non-agriculture businesses started flourishing, and foreign trade expanded in urban centres. As new trades and crafts developed, they often gave rise to distinct *jatis* based on profession.
- **Influence of Buddhism and Jainism**: The influence of Buddhism and

Jainism, which emphasised merit and individual conduct over hereditary status, challenged the rigidities of the caste system, indirectly encouraging the proliferation of *jatis* as communities negotiated their identities.

- **Religious affiliation**: The emergence of various sects had a close affinity with the *jatis* they emerged from and the gods they worshipped. This process was linked to the state formation as well.
- **Cultural Diversity**: India's vast geographical and cultural diversity also played a role as different regions developed their own local customs, traditions, and social structures, leading to the formation of unique *jatis.*
- **Social Mobility**: The evolving economic structure allowed for some degree of social mobility. People could rise or fall in the social hierarchy, leading to the emergence of new *jatis* that reflected these changes.

2.3.4 Features of Caste System

The social mobility of the early medieval period was marked by the transformation of *varnas* to *jatis.* According to A. S. Altaker, 'the *jati* system transformed simple, sedentary societies into more complex endogamous groups. Different occupational groups and indigenous and non-indigenous groups were incorporated into various levels within the *Jati* system. The process of proliferation of *Jati* began in the 6th to the 15th century CE. The highest strata of *Brahamans* were subdivided into several *gotras*, *pravaras, vamshas, pakshas, anvayas, ganas, gamis* etc. The north-south binary led to the creation of two different types of Brahmans called *pancha-gaudas* (the northern group) and *pancha - dravidas* (the southern group). Politically, the *Brahmanas* became powerful as legalising agents.

The majority of the population in the sixth century lived outside the caste system irrespective of their position in the caste hierarchy. Low caste and non-castes lived in the agricultural areas, though they were barred from temples and other public ceremonies. The power of the caste society spread from the centres of ritual to outwards. However, by the beginning of the early medieval period, the existing caste groups and *varnas* had begun to split up into several sub-castes and minor castes. The evidence of the increase in the number of castes and *varnas* can be traced from the *Brahmanas,* where the names of the castes based on the rituals they practiced are referred.

The land grants gave a boost to the fragmentation of castes. In the *Brahmanas,* the names of their ancestors, clans, and their original home are mentioned. According to scholars like Satish Chandra, the *Kshatriyas* assumed an ideal position and gave way to the formation of new social groups called *Rajaputras* or the *Rajputs.* During this period, they assumed separate identities based on their ancestral traits. The formation of sub-clans or the minor clans from the main clans became prominent. For example, *Devada, Mohila and Soni* were sub-clans of the *Chahamanas,* as observed by B.D.Chattopadhyaya. Local communities and tribes like the *Bhils, Chandelas* and *Palas* were awarded honourable *Kshatriya* lineage by the *Brahmana* genealogists. Thus, the Bactrian Greeks, Parthians and Sakas were able to merge with the mainstream of Indian society. Gradually, Huns, Gurjaras, Chalukyas, Parmaras, Chahmanas, and Tomaras joined the process. The proliferation was not just confined to the upper strata. Instead the process was seen in all castes and *Jatis,* as evident from the literature from the fifth century onwards.

Within the *Vaishya* caste, there was the inclusion of other groups like ***vanij***. They were associated with the production of craft items like gems, pearls, corals, metals, woven clothes, perfumes and condiments. According to *Siyadoni* inscriptions (a 9th century inscription), *nemeka vanij* (salt merchant) gave contributions to religious institutions and became a member of *nemaka jati.* Thus, the traditional profession-based social status was turned into a caste group. Socio-economic and political conditions of the early medieval period also led to the proliferation of the *sudra* community. *Sudra* caste became a mixed caste, and the process had no uniformity or static. Some of the older names continued while some new groups were added.

The fragmentation of castes can be attributed to a number of reasons, as traced from the literature of the 7th and 8th centuries. Regional conquest by minor rulers, commercial growth and agricultural expansion led to the rise of more and more *jatis.* The co-mingling of different groups was not always peaceful. By the 9th and 12th centuries, clashes between *Abhiras* and other castes were found all over Deccan. The battles were aimed at political domination as well as social ranks. *Abhiras* were never admitted into the higher castes. Instead, there was infighting among the intermediate caste groups and sub-caste groups among the Abhiras themselves.

The concept of *Jati dharma* remained unchanged. The artisans and craftsmen developed their own caste groups based on their profession. The trade organisations and the guilds, as well as the *Srenis*, developed caste status and turned into close groupings.

The head of the merchant guilds was called *Sethis,* and they were also bankers. The head of the guild held the position for the entire lifetime. After his life, his son succeeded him. Damodarpur inscriptions from the 6th century attest that a person called Bhupala held the position of *nagara sreshti* for about fifty years. The development of craft groups at the regional level is evident from the names of the caste groups like *napita, tamblika, citrakara, swarnakara, malakara, modaka,* etc.

Thus, by the medieval period, the number of caste groups increased to thousands, and there were innumerable castes all over the Indian subcontinent. Medieval literature, as well as the accounts of foreign travellers like Hiuen-Tsang, attests to the existence of numerous castes that makes the social ties more and more complex.

2.3.5 Consolidation of *Jatis*

The consolidation of *jatis* within the socio-economic context of the period is crucial and this issue should be explored through the lens of the feudalism argument or the theory of third urbanisation.

In the sixth century, a significant portion of the population consisted of groups outside the established caste system. Despite the growth of *dharma*, many people remained outside caste society. Low castes and non-caste individuals inhabited agricultural regions, while the influence of caste expanded downward from the elite and outward from ritual and conquest centers. The dynamics of patriarchal alliances allowed for a flexible inclusion of diverse groups within transactional territories formed by market exchanges and political hierarchies.

As we mentioned during the early medieval period, existing caste groups and *varnas* fragmented into numerous castes and *jatis*, with many *Brahmana* castes named after specific rituals they performed. The growth of the land grant economy contributed to this fragmentation. Land charters of *Brahmanas* and castes were often identified by their *gotras* (clan names), the names of male

ancestors, branches of learning, and their original homes. The emergence of the Rajput identity illustrates the complexity of this proliferation, with local communities such as the *Bhils, Chandelas*, and *Palas* adopting respectable *Kshatriya* lineages.

By the fifth century, over a hundred caste groups were documented, with thousands of mixed castes emerging due to conquest, trade, and agricultural expansion. The merging of *Sabaras*, *Bhillas*, and *Pulinda* in medieval inscriptions from central India was often accompanied by violent conflicts, particularly between the *Abhiras* and others in the Deccan from the ninth to the thirteenth century. Local tribal groups negotiated their status within the larger social structure, sometimes resorting to violence or leveraging trade networks. *Jatidharma* remained largely unaffected during this amalgamation, with crafts evolving into distinct caste groups.

In early Buddhist literature, guilds and trade groups known as *srenis* gained caste status and became exclusive communities. The leader of a guild, referred to as the *jetthaka* or *pamukkha*, wielded significant power over its members. *Setthis*, who were merchant-bankers, often led these guilds, with leadership typically passing to the eldest son. Succession was noted only upon the death of the head, indicating that leaders usually held their position for life.

Local crafts, such as *napita* (barbers), *tambulika* (betel leaf sellers), *citrakara* (painters), *svarnakara* (goldsmiths), *malakara* (florists), and *modaka* (sweet makers), evolved into caste groups as mixed castes. These crafts contributed to the emergence of new *jatis* within mixed caste groups. Religious affiliation also influenced the proliferation of *jatis*, as various sects maintained close ties with their associated *jatis* and the deities they worshipped. This process was linked to state formation and the consolidation of castes and *jatis*, as seen in the examples of the Lingayats and Virashaivas, who were united under a central authority. This consolidation affected the entire social spectrum, not just the higher castes, highlighting significant patterns in the development of castes and *jatis* in early medieval societies.

Recap

- Lower varna individuals gained status through land grants but remained inferior.
- The seventh century saw numerous castes from inter-caste and tribal integration.
- Aryanisation and Urbanisation introduced new agricultural tools and settlements.
- Land ownership shifted from family farms to large estates needing hired labour.
- The *Varna* system favoured *Brahmanas* and *Kshatriyas* over *Sudras*.

- Economic relations mirrored social hierarchy, with *Sudras* facing higher interest rates.
- The decline of empires and urbanisation led to the rise of new *jatis* based on profession.
- The *jati* system arose, increasing social stratification among occupational groups.
- Land grants allowed Brahmanas to gain power and fragmented castes into multiple sub-castes.
- Proliferation of *Jati* occurred between the 6th and 15th centuries CE.
- Various factors contributed to *Jati* proliferation.
- Brahman strata subdivided into multiple groups.
- North-south divide created *pancha-gaudas* and *pancha-dravidas*.
- Emergence of sub-clans from main clans.
- Siyadoni inscriptions detail contributions of salt merchants.
- Artisans and craftsmen formed caste groups by profession.
- Damodarpur inscriptions confirm Bhupala's long tenure.

Objective Questions

1. Which were the two types of *Brahmanas*?
2. Who were called *nemeka vanij?*
3. What was the basis of the development of caste groups by the 12th century?
4. Which inscription mentions that *Bhupala* held the position of *nagara sreshti* for about fifty years?
5. The bankers of the period were called?
6. Give examples for the development of craft groups at the regional level.
7. What are the four traditional groups in the *Varn*a system?

8. What significant change occurred in the *Varna* system during early medieval India?
9. What factor significantly influenced the transformation of the *Varna* system?
10. Which social group began to gain prominence as a result of agricultural expansion?
11. Which practice became more prevalent as a result of the changes in the *Varna* system?
12. What does the term 'Niyoga' refer to in the context of ancient Indian society?

Answers

1. *Pancha-gaudas* and *pancha - dravidas*
2. Salt Merchants
3. Occupation
4. Damodarpur inscriptions
5. *Sethis*
6. *Napita, tamblika, citrakara*
7. *Sudras, Vaishyas, Kshatriyas* and *Brahmanas*
8. Emergence of sub-castes *(jati)*
9. Diversification of the economic activities
10. *Vaishyas*
11. Inter-caste marriages
12. Levirate marriage system

Assignments

1. Critically examine the socio-political and economic factors that contributed to the proliferation and stratification of castes during the early medieval period.
2. Discuss the main factors that led to the development and consolidation of caste groups in India by the 12th century. Analyse social, economic, and political influences shaped the caste system during this time.
3. Describe the features of the caste system during the early medieval period, particularly focusing on the evolution from *varnas* to *jatis*.
4. Examine the role of Buddhism and Jainism in challenging or reinforcing the caste system.

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UNIT 4

Consolidation of Brahmin Oligarchy

Learning Outcomes

On the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- identify the social changes initiated by the Brahmanical oligarchy in South India
- discern the factors that promoted the land grants and ushered in an era of temple centered society
- evaluate the nature of polity, art, architecture and literature during the medieval south
- evaluate the effects of Brahmanisation in Southern part of Indian subcontinent

Prerequisites

An oligarchy is a form of government or social system in which power is concentrated in the hands of a small, privileged, and often wealthy elite. The medieval period in India was a period of landlordism and subjective peasantry in north India. Scholars have mentioned that it was a period of decline in trade and commerce, urban centres and ruralisation. The land grants to the Brahmanas, temples and monasteries led to the formation of new power formulas in south India. As a result, in the early medieval period, the formation of the political system was dominated by Brahmin sects. In this unit, let us have a look at the formation of Brahmin oligarchies in this part of the subcontinent.

Keywords

Oligarchy, Temple-centred society, *Nadus, Sanketam,* Perumals, Art, Architecture

Discussion

2.4.1 Establishment of Brahmin Settlement

The land relations in South India were different and sometimes even more complicated than those of the North. The early medieval period in south India was marked by the presence of regional kingdoms like Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas. The study of the political and economic system of the regions, which include the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala for the period between the 8th and the 11th century, is based on various inscriptional and literary sources. Major hypotheses about this period have been proposed by prominent scholars like M.G.S Narayanan, Kesavan Veluthat and Rajan Gurukkal.

The south already had a tradition of worshipping Vedic deities, coupled with local folk cults and practices as evident from the Sangam literature. By the dawn of the medieval period, there were some changes in land ownership and distribution patterns emerged due to the unique political and social situation, which included the development of large agricultural communities, the establishment of Brahmin settlements, and the growth of temples. Brahmanas exercised a profound influence over society in the 9th and 10th centuries in the South. However, during this period, the sprawling Brahmin settlements, characterised by extensive agricultural land and temples as central points, had not yet developed. The three elements – the development of large agricultural communities, the establishment of Brahmin settlements, and the growth of temples- are synonymous or interrelated.

2.4.2 The Role of Perumals

The Perumals controlled a vast area and were known for their military powers and strategic alliances. Their military exploits and acquisition of the neighbouring regions attest to their dominance in the region. The Perumals' kingdom was organised into regions called *Nadus*, and during this period, some of the prominent *Nadus* included *Kolathunad, Ramavalanad, Eranad, Puraikizhanad, Nedupurayurnad, Kurumporainad, Venpolinad, Valluvanad, Kizhmalanad, Nanruzhanad*, and *Venad.* Each *Nadu* comprised multiple villages known as *Ur*. The power structure within each *Nadu* was established by consolidating local resources. Rulers of *Nadus* typically inherited power through traditional succession, maintaining a prestigious family background, and having a well-defined military setup. In inscriptions, the term "*Natudayavar*" was used to refer to the rulers of *Nadus*, emphasising their significance in the region.

The rulers were considered divine and they practised rituals, and ceremonies and contributed to temples and Brahmanas. It helped them to legitimise their power and control. However, this type of administration was also looked upon as a type of Brahmanical oligarchy wherein the Brahmin caste dominated the system. They exercised considerable influence in the decision-making process and policy-making. They also

profoundly influenced the socio-religious life of the region. Their command over the language of Sanskrit and the knowledge of *vedas* gained them a pre-eminent position in society. They were placed as councillors and advisors to the Perumals. Their influence shaped the rituals and Brahmanical practices, resulting in the development of a temple-oriented society.

2.4.3 Administration

The rituals and perspectives of the Brahmanas seem to have influenced the administrative system of the period. Inscriptions from this period indicate that the Brahmanas also had profound control over the land, wealth and resources, which granted them social and economic power. They were able to hold key positions in legislative, judicial and executive administration. According to historians, their involvement in the administration of the state led to the formation of an oligarchic rule. The power was concentrated in the hands of a few selected *Brahmanas* from the community. The jurisdictional and political powers of the Brahmanas earned them the privileges regarding certain customary obligations. The social hierarchical relations were governed by sepcific regulatory codes called *kachams*. One of the best examples of such codes was the *muzhikkalam kacham* which regulated *Muzhikkalam,* one of the thirty-two Brahmin settlements of the period. It was also one of the four congregations (*naluthali*), which were important advisory councils to the rulers. These *kachams* speak about the punitive actions taken against oppressive individual landlords.

Legally, temples were the owners of the land, which was managed by the Brahmanas who were members of the ruling body of the temples. The leaseholders of the land had to remit dues to the temples. Several Brahmanas received temple land and acted as the *Karalar* (proprietors) of the temples. Their land was cultivated with the help of a middleman called *Uralar.* Temple functionaries such as priests, secretaries, drummers, garland-makers and sweepers received land on lease. Such land was called *viruthi.* Other occupational groups, such as oil pressers and potters, resided on temple land and had to remit provisions to the temple.

During the 12th century, temple corporations played a significant role, highlighting the influence of Brahmanas in society. These corporations included the properties owned by the temples, and Brahmanas became known as *Sanketams.* The term "Sanketams" referred to small territories under the influence of a temple, distinct from the *Naduvazhis'* control. In this context, *Sanketams* often denoted groups of Namboodiri (Brahmin) families and their authority over temple properties.

Almost all major temples in Kerala had their own *sanketams*. *Sanketams* were in two forms: those established by Brahmin landlords and those founded by rulers as a sign of their devotion to gods and Brahmanas. Both types were governed by Brahmin landowners, and the ruling sovereign had no control over them. The *Sanketams* were governed by a committee called *yogam.* The protection of the property was vested with a group of soldiers known as *nattukoootam* (a unit of hundreds). They received a share of the produce called *rakshabhogam* or *kavalpanam* (protection fee) as a share of the produce for their services. These corporations, responsible for managing temples, became key social, economic, and cultural centers, which elevated the Brahmanas to a virtual ruling status in villages.

2.4.4 Brahmin Oligarchy in Polity, Arts, Literature and Architecture

Though the Perumals held nominal, ritualistic authority, they were still recognised as the sovereigns of Kerala. Under their

rule, Kerala witnessed political and social stability during the ninth and tenth centuries, which played a crucial role in the cultural development of the region. Arts, literature, and culture flourished with royal and aristocratic patronage, leading to significant advancements in architecture, language, literature, and philosophy.

2.4.4.1 Polity

The concept of Brahmin Oligarchy is of recent origin and was exposed in the writings of M.G.S Narayanan, a renowned historian from Kerala. He reassessed his earlier stand on the character of *Nadus* and presented his new position. Accordingly, the Perumals were not very powerful beyond their capital city of Mahodayapuram. The Perumal polity was characterised by the oligarchical rule of the Brahmanas who acted on behalf of the Perumals, who acted as a ritual sovereign. The Brahmanas were very powerful in controlling the temples and temple properties. They played a major role in the functioning of the temples and the temple *Sanketams*. They commanded respect and obedience from the locals as they were the sole masters of the village land and the temple land.

The Perumals established a symbolic regional authority, often functioning as ceremonial heads, which helped legitimise the Brahmin oligarchy's power and influence. They functioned within a feudal framework, where local chieftains and landlords (*naduvazhis*) held power in exchange for loyalty and tribute to the Perumals.

Being a Brahmin-controlled oligarchy, the most politically important settlements near the capital city were predominantly occupied by Brahmanas. Their closeness to the capital and the royal residence gave them significant influence over the Perumal rulers. The Brahmanas largely exercised their authority over the rulers through the *Nalu Tali*, a representative body that strengthened their control.

The *Nalu Tali* was a significant institution in the Perumal kingdom, serving as a representative body for the thirty-two Brahmin settlements across Kerala. This body not only represented the interests of the Brahmanas but also acted as a check on royal authority. It symbolised the hierarchy within the Brahmin settlements, which followed a consistent code of conduct. One such example is the *Muzhikulam Kachcham*, a code that governed the behaviour of the entire Brahmin community

In addition to these community-based representative bodies, the government also had other administrative councils. One of the most prominent was the *Hundred Organisation*, also known as the *Nurruvar*. This organisation held a significant role within the kingdom's administrative structure. The *Nurruvars* were a body of armed retainers who served as the police force in the nadus. Scholars believe they were the predecessors of the later Nair militia. Medieval travellers documented legends about this group, stating that the *Nurruvars* would commit suicide upon the king's death as an ultimate display of loyalty and fulfillment of their oath.

2.4.4.2 Temple Art

The perumal period witnessed flourishing of temple art, characterised by intricate sculptures and murals that depicted Hindu deities and local legends. The production of bronze sculptures, particularly of deities, reached new heights, showcasing both artistic skill and religious devotion.The Brahmanas facilitated trade and cultural exchange, which enriched the artistic traditions of the region, incorporating diverse influences.

The rise of temples in Kerala led to a significant development in culture, with temples serving as the hub of all cultural activities. New festivals were introduced

to make Hindu religion more appealing to the common people, such as the Onam festival. This 28-day celebration was attended in person by all the *naduvazhis* of Kerala, ensuring loyalty and allegiance to the Chera emperor. The festival also sparked deep spirituality among the Vaishnavites.

New art forms like *Koothu* and *Koodiyattam* emerged in Kerala temples from the 9th century, with poet Tolan associated with the former art. The *Koothambalam* for holding kuthu performances also originated in the 9th century. The Devadasis, dancing girls attached to temples, also had a high status in society, as evidenced by Kulasekhara Alwar's actions in presenting his daughter as a *Devadasi* before the Lord of Srirangam. The development of temple arts was accompanied by the progress of sculpture and painting, with temples featuring numerous stone and wooden sculptures representing Puranic themes and deities. Expert artisans from neighbouring Tamil countries and Ceylon contributed to the diverse influences on the temple sculptures of Kerala. Mural painting also had its origins in the Perumal age, with the murals in the temple of Tiruvanchikulam being assigned to this period.

2.4.4.3 Literature

The perumal period provided significant contributions to Malayalam literature, with the development of poetic forms and narratives that reflected local culture and mythology. Works related to temple rituals and the lives of saints became prominent, further embedding religious themes in the literary tradition. Moreover, the influence of the Bhakti movement led to the creation of devotional literature that emphasised personal devotion and spirituality, resonating with the local population.

The Perumal era marked the beginning of Malayalam's independent language and literature, which gradually emerged from Tamil influence. Despite the undeveloped stage of the language, there was a rich literary output in Tamil and Sanskrit, as education was imparted in these languages. The Kulshekaras were great scholars and patrons of learning, with notable figures such as Kulasekhara Alwar, who wrote the *Perumal Tirumozhi* in Tamil and the *Mukundamala* in Sanskrit.

The great Yamaka poet Vasudeva Bhattatiri was also patronised by a Kulasekhara, who wrote the famous *Yudhishtiravijaya*, which describes the Mahabharata in eight cantos. He is also believed to have written two alliterative poems, *Tripuradahana* and *Saurikaihodaya*, and the *Nalodaya*. Sankaranarayana, the great astronomer and author of the *Sankaranarayaniyam*, was a shining light of the age. Sankaracharya, the great *Advaita* philosopher, wrote commentaries on the *Brahma Sutras*, the *Bhagavad* Gita, and the principal Upanishads, composed philosophical poems, and wrote several *Stotra* works.

Tolan, a Namboothiri Brahmin from Iranikulam, was a notable poet of the age, known for his *Attaprakarams* and *Kramadipika*, which are among the earliest specimens of Malayalam literature. Saktibhadra, the celebrated author of the *Ascharyachudamani*, also contributed significantly to Sanskrit literature. Some scholars suggest that the Tamil classic *Silappadikaram* was written around 800 CE by Ilango Adikal.

2.4.4.4 Education and Learning

The Perumal period in Kerala saw significant advancements in education and learning. Vedic schools and colleges, called *Salais*, were established by rulers and private philanthropists, offering free food, clothing, and tuition to young men. These institutions offered specialised courses in higher branches of learning, such as philosophy, grammar,

theology, and law. Each temple accommodated a center of learning in the traditional *Gurukula* style. Social education was fostered by endowments for the recitation and exposition of Puranic stories in temple premises. A typical institution was the *Mahabharata Pattathanam*, where a Brahmin scholar in Sanskrit was engaged for the exposition of *Mahabharata* in Tamil in all important temples. *Chakiar Kuthu*, a mono-drama, was also an important instrument of popular instruction and enlightenment. Devotional songs were also performed in temples by groups of devotees.

Libraries attached to temples had good collections of books on various subjects. Vedic recital and proficiency tests in religious scriptures were conducted in temples to enrich the study of Hindu religion. The most important test was the *Katavallur Anyonyam*, where Namboothiri students from all parts of Kerala participated and won honours. The Katavallur tests were known as *Katavallur Anyonyam*. In addition to promoting literary and educational activities, temples maintained hospitals and dispensaries *(aturasalas)* attached to them.

Recap

- The sources for the study of the medieval South Indian polity are mainly inscriptional.
- By the beginning of the medieval period in the present region of Kerala, some changes had come about in land relations and the pattern of land distribution.
- Land was granted to the nobles and the Brahmanas, leading to the emergence of landlordism
- The development of agricultural communities, the establishment of Brahmin settlements and the growth of temples, are interrelated.
- Under the Perumals, the kingdom was divided into Nadus, and each Nadu comprised multiple villages known as Ur. *Nadus* were administered by the *Nattudayavar.*
- The Brahmanas held powers as councillors to the ruler and the temple officials.
- The social hierarchical relations were governed by certain regulatory codes called kachams.
- Centred around the temples grew temple corporations called Sanketams.
- The Brahmanas controlled the land and resources, and their political influence led to the system of Oligarchy under the Perumals.

- According to M.G.S. Narayanan, the Perumals of Mahodayapuram had fewer powers beyond their capital and on behalf of the Perumals, the Brahmanas exercised political powers.
- The Perumals had nominal authority while Brahmanas greatly influenced politics.
- M.G.S. Narayanan introduced the 'Brahmin Oligarchy' concept. He noted the Perumals had limited power beyond Mahodayapuram, with Brahmanas controlling temples and land.
- *Nalu Tali* represented thirty-two Brahmin settlements. It acted as a check on royal authority and enforced a consistent code of conduct.
- *Nurruvars* were armed retainers served as the kingdom's police force. They were known for extreme loyalty, including committing suicide upon the king's death.

Objective Questions

1. What are the major sources for the study of early medieval and medieval South Indian History?
2. Which were the most important *nadus* of the period?
3. Which ancient Indian text provides information about the political and economic life of southern people?
4. What were the advisory councils to the Perumals called?
5. The Brahmanas who received the land from the Perumal were known as?
6. The middleman who helped the Brahmanas to get the land cultivated was known as?
7. Name the capital of Perumals.
8. What were the temple corporations called?
9. Who put the view that Perumal polity had the nature of Brahmin Oligarchy?
10. What was the remuneration received by the *Natukuttams* called?

Answers

1. Inscriptions
2. *Kolathunad, Ramavalanad, Eranad, Puraikizhanad, Nedupurayurnad, Kurumporainad, Venpolinad, Valluvanad, Kizhmalanad, Nanruzhanad*, and *Venad*
3. Sangam works
4. *Thalis*
5. *Uralars*
6. *Karalars*
7. Mahodayapuram
8. *Sanketams*
9. M.G.S. Narayanan
10. *Rakshabhogam*

Assignments

1. Analyse the nature of Perumal Polity, particularly its administrative structure, socio-political relations, and religious influences in early Medieval South India.
2. Write a detailed note on Temple *Sanketams.* Explore their historical significance, architectural features, cultural implications, and the role they play in the religious and social life of communities in South India.
3. Discuss the role of the Brahmin oligarchy in the political structure of Kerala during the Perumal period. How did the *Nalu Tali* influence royal authority?

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3

BLOCK

Consolidation of Feudalism (13th Century to 17th Century)

UNIT 1

Iqta and Urbanisation

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to

- evaluate the significance of *iqta* system in medieval India
- examine the impact of monetisation on trade networks in medieval India
- analyse the relationship between urbanisation and economic growth in medieval India

Prerequisites

The historical context of medieval India is crucial for understanding the socio-political landscape of the time, particularly the emergence of significant dynasties like the Delhi Sultanate and the Vijayanagara empire. The *iqta* system, a land grant system that replaced the earlier *jagir* system, was a key administrative innovation in this period. It allowed rulers to assign land revenue rights to military commanders and nobles in exchange for their service, facilitating governance and military support. Moreover, the interrelation of trade, monetisation, and urbanisation also played a vital role in shaping the economy and society. As trade routes expanded and the volume of trade increased, cities began to grow in importance. This surge in trade contributed to the rise of urban centers, which became hubs of cultural exchange. These cities were not just places for economic activities; they also witnessed various traditions, ideas, and practices merged. By studying these developments, one can gain a deeper appreciation of how these processes shaped the medieval period.

Keywords

Iqta system, *Iqtadars*, *Muqti*, Monetisation, Urbanisation, Delhi Sultanate, Mughals

Discussion

3.1.1 Iqta System

The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate brought major changes in the land revenue system in India. One of the major land revenue systems of that time was the "**iqta system**". *Iqta* system was adopted from earlier Islamic dynasties by the Delhi Sultanate. The *muqtis* were the holders of territorial assignments under the *iqta* system. The *muqti's* primary duty was to collect taxes from the peasants.

3.1.2 Evolution of Iqta System under the Delhi Sultanate

Taxation in Islamic countries led to the creation of a mechanism to collect and distribute peasant surpluses, known as *iqta*, without compromising the political structure. The *iqta* was a territorial assignment, with its holder designated *muqti*. As mentioned by Irfan Habib, Seljuqid statesman of the eighth century provides a classical view of the *iqta*, which developed before the Ghorian conquests of northern India.

Muqti's holding *iqta* have no claim on subjects/peasants except for collecting the due *mal* (tax, land tax). Once revenue is collected, subjects/peasants were to remain secure from demands for their persons, wealth, wives, children, cultivated lands, and goods. *Muqti's* had no further claims on them. Subjects/peasants could represent their condition in the king's court. If a muqti does not comply, the kings may take away their power and punish them. *Muqti*'s were to realise that the country and peasantry belonged to the Sultan, with the *muqti*'s at their head.

The *iqta* also entails certain obligations, such as maintaining troops and providing them at the Sultan's request. The revenues from the *iqta'* were intended to provide the sultan with resources to fulfill these obligations. Nizamul Mulk Tusi, *vizier* of the Seljuk Empire and author of the *Siyasatnama*, views this as normal, although he notes a tradition where earlier kings paid for their army in cash from the treasury and did not assign *iqta's*. The Sultan's officials collected taxes directly for the royal treasury in *khalisa*.

When Ghorians conquered northern India, they initially divided into commanders who maintained themselves and their troops through plunder and tribute collection. The practice of *iqta* assignments to conquerors led to the designation of commanders as *muqti*'s and their territorial jurisdictions as *iqta's*. With the establishment of the Sultanate, conditions remained consistent, but a gradual process began to convert autonomous principalities into real *iqta's*. The Sultan Iltutmish enforced the practice of transferring *muqti's* from one *iqta* to another, requiring them to provide military assistance upon the Sultan's summons. *Muqtis* were free to sub-assign small *iqta's* to anyone they chose, and they likely paid their troops through this method.

The Sultans in India sought to expand their *khalisa* land, with Iltutmish appointing a slave as the *Shahna* of the *khalisat* of Tabarhinda. Delhi and its surrounding districts were part of the Sultan's *khalisa.* Iltutmish paid cavalry soldiers by assigning villages, called *iqta's,* to his 'central' army (*qalb*). This practice continued under **Balban** (1266-86), who did not abolish assignments but only reduced or resumed those from which full or proper service was not forthcoming. Sultan Balban's appointment of a *khwaja* alongside the *muqti'* suggests the Sultan's government is now investigating the actual collection and spending within the *iqta*'.

During the reign of **Alauddin Khalji** (1296-1316), the empire expanded and imposed a full land tax on the peasantry. This expansion led to significant changes in the organisation of *iqta'*. As more distant areas became subject to the empire, they were assigned to *iqta'*, while areas nearer the capital were annexed to the *khalisa* land, covering the middle Doab and parts of modern Rohilkhand. The system of paying cavalry troops by village assignment was abolished, with the entire revenue coming into the treasury and soldiers paid in cash.

Alauddin Khalji maintained the practice of assigning *iqta's* to his commanders, *muqti's.* However, the Sultan's bureaucracy intervened in the administration of *iqta's*, dictating a new system of assessment and collection of agrarian taxes in a large region. The Finance Department estimated tax from each *iqta'*, which was constantly sought to enhance this estimate. A portion of the estimated income was allowed for the pay of troops placed under the *muqti'* or *wali*, while the rest was treated as the *muqti's* personal *iqta*. The *muqtis* were tempted to conceal their true receipts and understate the excess payable to the Sultan.

The Sultan's government was intent on preventing concealment and defalcation by the *muqti's,* but also harboured suspicions against their own subordinates. Harsh measures, including imprisonment and physical torture, were taken as part of audit at both levels. Sharaf Qai, the minister of Alauddin Khalji, audited village accountants' papers to check fraud, keeping revenue officials in chains and subjecting them to torture for small misappropriations. Shams Siraj Afif, a court historian of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, alleges that the same minister imposed enhancements in the estimated income of the *iqta's,* resulting in the entire Sultanate being 'devastated'. These enhancements may have been based on detections made through his rigorous audit practices.

Ghiyasuddin Tughluq introduced moderation in the Sultan's government system, limiting the Finance Department's income estimate to one-tenth or one-eighth annually. *Muqti's* were not to take anything from the portion of the *iqta'* reserved for troop payment, and were warned not to ill-treat officials for small amounts taken over and above their salaries. However, they were not allowed to take anything from the portion of the *iqta'* reserved for the payment of the troops. Under **Muhammad Tughluq** (1325-51), the control of the Sultan's government was further extended, with the functions of collecting taxes and maintaining troops being separated, possibly due to a desire for larger income.

The Arabic work, *Masalik al-Absar*, describes the *iqta'* system under Muhammad Tughluq. All army commanders, from *khans* to *Isfahlar* were assigned *iqta* in lieu of their salaries. The estimated income of the *iqta'*, against which the salary was adjusted, was always less than the actual. The troops were always paid in cash by the treasury, and the *iqta's* were given only in lieu of the commanders' personal salaries. Muhammad Tughluq's difficulties with army officers, known as *amiran-i saada*, may have been due

to the lack of gains from *Iqta's* management.

Firuz Tughluq's accession to the Sultanate in 1351 was marked by political crises and promises of concessions to the nobility. He prepared a new estimate of the Sultanate's revenues, known as the *jama'*, which remained unchanged for the rest of his reign. This fixed figure allowed *muqti's* to avoid trouble due to increased payments to the treasury. Sultan Firuz also increased the personal pay of his great nobles, giving them pay ranging from 400,000 to 800,000 *tankas* for their personal income. They also received separate *iqtas* and *parganas*. Although technically the portion of the *iqta* assigned for the *muqti's* personal pay remained separate from that for his troops, the separation seemed to have become increasingly nominal due to the absence of control mechanisms.

Firuz Tughluq's policy was to distribute the empire's revenues among the people, reducing the *khalisa* and re-establishing the system of paying soldiers by assigning village revenues as *wajh* in lieu of their salaries. Soldiers who were not assigned *wajh* were paid their salaries in cash from the treasury or by way of drafts on the *iqtas* of the nobles. In such cases, soldiers received only half of their claim from the *iqta's*. The reign of Firuz Tughluq was notable for its respect for the hereditary principle, as the ruling class had been marked by instability since the Khalji coup of 1290. Firuz Tughluq also conferred offices of deceased incumbents upon their sons, which continued in the *iqta's* of the incumbents and their sons. No restoration of central control of earlier times was possible under Firuz's successors, as Mubarak Shah (1421—34) gave the *iqta'* of Lahore to a noble with 2,000 cavalry placed under him. Cases of transfer of *iqta's* also occurred, but these appear to have been exceptions.

3.1.3 Types of *Iqtas*

There were multiple categories within the *iqta* system, each with a distinct function.

i. ***Iqta-i-Tamlik*** **:** These were grants of land given as hereditary property to individuals, typically in recognition of their services. Their descendants had permanent rights over the land and its revenue. These grants were less common than the authority's control over land and revenue.

ii. ***Iqta-i Istighlal*:** These grants allowed the holders to collect from a specific area and keep them for themselves.The state assigned tax revenue to an individual, known as a *muqti*, who collected taxes and kept them for themselves. They maintained and supplied troops to the Sultan, often receiving *Iqta-i-Istighlal* as a salary. *Muqti* also received a portion of peasants' crops worth more than their fixed rate.

iii. ***Iqta-i-Bil-Muqata's*:** This type of *iqta* was assigned for a specific period, and the holder was responsible for collecting and remitting a fixed amount of revenue to the state treasury. The holder could keep any surplus revenue beyond the fixed amount, incentivising efficient administration and collection.

iv. ***Iqta-i-Khalisa*:** These were lands retained directly under the control of the state. The revenue collected from these lands went directly into the central treasury.

v. ***Iqta-i-Mustaqil*:** These were permanent grants given to individuals, often for their lifetime, but not necessarily hereditary. Holders had long-term rights over the land and its revenue but were still subject to the central authority's control and regulation.

vi. ***Iqta al-Zira'ah*:** Grantees, who received the land for agricultural growth and

income creation, were in charge of growing the land and gathering crops. Agriculture-related income was often divided between the state and the beneficiary.

vii. ***Iqta Mutawassitah*:** Allotted for a predetermined time or mission, following which it would return to the state, frequently utilised for brief military operations or unique tasks. After completing the work at hand, the grantee would restore possession of the *iqta*.

The relevance of *iqta* system declined in later periods alongside the rise of centralised bureaucratic institutions and new fiscal policies.

3.1.4 Urbanisation and Monetisation During Medieval India

The Arab conquest of Sindh and Punjab in 712-13 CE, followed by the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni and the Ghorid dynasty, laid the foundation for the Turkish Sultanate in India. These events greatly influenced and reshaped the traditional social and political systems of the subcontinent. On the international front, by the 11th century, Arab expansion focused more on Persia and the Persian Gulf, leading to shifts in trade routes. During the 8th to 12th centuries, the Persian Gulf was a dominant trade route, with Venice being a major player in trade. In contrast, the Red Sea route was less significant at this time. However, the Turkish and Mongol invasions, along with the weakening of the Caliphate, brought the Red Sea route into prominence. Cities like Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt gained importance as major trade hubs. Egypt and Syria became key centers for distributing goods, connecting eastern ports like Calicut and Aden with the Red Sea. This led to an increased trading network that extended to Malacca, a vital link in the trade between China and India. These developments boosted international trade, enriching the subcontinent's hinterlands and contributing to a higher level of monetisation and urban growth.

Urbanisation, which had started to re-emerge in the 9th and 10th centuries, continued to grow rapidly during the Sultanate period. The Delhi Sultans managed to bring a large part of India under their control, and the stability that followed encouraged trade and craftsmanship. The introduction of new tools and techniques sparked the rise of new crafts, further accelerated by the removal of strict caste restrictions that had previously limited mobility for craftsmen. Historian Mohammad Habib referred to this change as an 'urban revolution.' As a result, many new towns were established, and existing ones underwent significant changes.

The ruling elite, who were largely based in cities, drew significant revenue from rural areas to support their armies and lavish lifestyles. This increased demand for goods spurred the growth of new crafts and the expansion of existing ones. The state's emphasis on collecting taxes in cash helped accelerate the use of money and the growth of markets across India during the 14th century.

The Turkish conquest also brought about significant changes to the physical landscape of cities. Since the new rulers followed Islam, mosques and tombs became prominent features in the urban environment. New architectural styles, including the use of arches, domes, and improved construction materials, transformed the appearance of cities.

The Mongol invasions in Central Asia and Iran caused political instability, leading to the migration of Muslim scholars and *literati* to India. This migration helped make northern Indian cities more cosmopolitan and diverse, a trend that continued even after the decline of the Sultanate. Many

cities flourished across different regions of India, with new urban centers such as Mandu, Jaunpur, Gulbarga,Gaur or Pandua, Bidar, and Ahmedabad emerging during the 15th century. Meanwhile in southern India, urbanisation followed a different pattern. Temples and ceremonial complexes became central institutions around which towns grew.

While we consider the urbanisation process of the Mughal period, European accounts of Mughal cities often viewed them through a European lens, labelling many Mughal cities as "camp cities" due to their perception as temporary or impermanent. Sociologist Max Weber made a distinction between the 'Occident' (the West) and the 'Orient' (the East). According to Weber and others, cities in the East, or 'Oriental' cities, were seen as extensions of the imperial household, where the ruler was the center of power. The relationship between the emperor and the people was viewed as a patron-client system, which led some historians to label Mughal cities as "patrimonial-bureaucratic." This means that they saw these cities as being shaped by the ruler's personal control over his subjects. Similarly, historian Perry Anderson believed that Asian cities were heavily influenced by the decisions and desires of the princes.

Many studies on medieval Mughal cities have criticised this period as one of stagnation, ignoring the vibrancy and growth of these cities. Under the stability brought by the Mughal Empire, known as the *Pax Mughalica*, urbanisation flourished. The empire's monetary system was highly developed, and centralisation of power, improvements in road and communication networks, and efforts to make travel easier boosted trade and commerce. The groundwork for this expansion was laid by Sher Shah Suri in the 16th century and further strengthened under the Mughals. European traveller Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's remark that even the smallest Indian villages had a money-changer or *shroff,* who acted like a banker, highlights how widespread monetisation was during the Mughal period.

By the late 17th century, Mughal control extended over much of the Deccan, and cities such as Bidar, Bijapur, Golconda, and Burhanpur emerged as important urban centers. Despite the strong influence of the Mughal Empire, these Deccan cities retained their unique cultural identities, blending Mughal elements with their indigenous traditions in their architecture and city life.

The social and cultural life of Mughal cities was diverse and complex. The cities were generally divided into two broad groups: the *ashraf*, or the upper-class elites, and the *ajlaf*, or the common people. However, a growing middle class also played a significant role in urban life. Mughal cities were marked by a cross-cultural exchange, where, despite the presence of religious and caste divisions, people often shared traditions and celebrations. Status was very important in these cities, sometimes leading to conflicts, but clashes based on religion or community were not common. These communal tensions only became more prominent during the colonial period.

Abul Fazl, in his *Ain-i Akbari*, highlights the importance of cities during the medieval period, noting that towns were vital as centers of progress and cosmopolitan life. These cities were busy with people from different regions, creating hubs of activity, trade, and cultural exchange.

During the Mughal era, various terms were used to describe different types of towns. For example:

Qasba: A township with both rural and urban characteristics, often acting as a major administrative center in a larger area known as a *pargana*. Khwaja Yasin described a *qasba* as a large village that gave its name

to the *pargana*.

Shahr: This term referred to large towns or metropolitan cities, often with grand buildings and beautiful gardens.

Bandar: This term was used for port towns.

Dar-ul Khilafat: The capital cities of the empire.

Furthermore, newly established centers were often given the epithet *abad,* and *pura* was used to refer to a marketplace or suburb. These terms illustrate the variety of urban centers in the Mughal period and reflect the distinct roles each played.

The stability provided by the *Pax-Mughalica,* or "Mughal Peace," greatly accelerated urban growth. With a surplus of revenue flowing into towns, *qasbas*—intermediate towns—grew significantly. While the larger cities flourished under political patronage, smaller towns and commercial hubs like Bayana and Khairabad also thrived due to their specialised crafts. Urbanisation in Mughal India during this period was remarkable, even surpassing the urban growth seen in Western Europe at the time.

Recap

- The *iqta* system was a land revenue mechanism in the Delhi Sultanate that assigned land rights to military commanders.
- *Muqtis* were granted land in exchange for military service and were responsible for tax collection and governance.
- This system helped centralise power within the Sultanate and supported religious institutions through revenue-free grants.
- A bureaucratic structure managed the *iqta* system, estimating revenues and conducting audits to prevent fraud.
- Alauddin Khalji reformed the system by centralising revenue collection, which increased income for the treasury.
- The *iqta* system declined as centralised bureaucratic structures and new fiscal policies emerged, ultimately setting the stage for Mughal urban development.\
- By the 11th century, shifts in trade routes due to Arab expansion led to the rise of the Persian Gulf and later the Red Sea as significant trade hubs.
- Urbanisation re-emerged in the 9th and 10th centuries, accelerating during the Sultanate period due to stability and increased trade and craftsmanship.
- The Turkish conquest transformed urban landscapes, with mosques and tombs becoming prominent features in cities and introducing new architectural styles.

- Mughal cities were often labelled as "camp cities" by Europeans, reflecting a misunderstanding of their permanent urban nature.
- The stability of the Mughal Empire, or *Pax Mughalica*, facilitated significant urban growth and monetisation, establishing a developed monetary system.
- Cities in the Deccan retained their cultural identities while incorporating Mughal architectural influences during the late 17th century.
- Terms like *qasba, shahr,* and *bandar* were used to describe different urban centers.

Objective Questions

1. What was the primary duty of the *muqti* under the *iqta* system?
2. Which Sultan was responsible for introducing the practice of transferring *muqtis* from one *iqta* to another?
3. Under which Sultan was the system of paying cavalry troops by village assignment abolished?
4. Who was the *vizier* of the Seljuk Empire and author of the *Siyasatnama*?
5. What term describes the revenue assignments directly controlled by the sultanate, with the revenue going into the central treasury?
6. Which type of *iqta* was granted as hereditary property to individuals, often as a reward for services?
7. Who was the court historian of Firoz Shah Tughlaq that mentioned the audit of village accountants' papers?
8. During which Sultan's reign was the Finance Department's income estimate limited to one-tenth or one-eighth annually to avoid burdening the *iqta* holders?
9. What term refers to temporary *iqta* grants, often used for specific missions or military operations, after which they returned to the state?
10. Which type of *iqta* allowed the holder to keep the surplus revenue beyond a fixed amount after remitting a fixed amount to the state treasury?

11. Which trade route became prominent due to the Turkish and Mongol invasions?
12. During which centuries did urbanisation begin to re-emerge in India?
13. Who was a significant figure in establishing trade routes during the Mughal period?
14. Which sociologist distinguished between 'Occident' and 'Orient' cities?

Answers

1. To collect taxes from the peasants
2. Iltutmish
3. Alauddin Khalji
4. Nizamu'l Mulk Tusi
5. *Iqta-i-Khalisa*
6. *Iqta-i-Tamlik*
7. Shams Siraj 'Afif
8. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq
9. *Iqta' Mutawassitah*
10. *Iqta-i-Bil-Muqata*
11. The Red Sea route
12. The 9th and 10th centuries
13. Sher Shah Suri
14. Max Weber

Assignments

1. Explain the evolution of the *Iqta* system under the Delhi Sultanate.
2. Discuss the role of the *muqti* in the administration of the *Iqta* system.
3. What were the different types of *iqtas* in the medieval period, and how did they function in medieval India?
4. Discuss the reforms introduced by Sultan Balban and Alauddin Khalji regarding the *iqta* system. How did their policies alter the traditional practices of *iqta* distribution and military funding?
5. Explore the decline of the *iqta* system in the later period of the Delhi Sultanate. What are the factors that led to its decreasing relevance?
6. Explain the growth of urbanisation during the Mughal period.
7. How did the introduction of standardised currency contribute to the economic development and urbanisation of medieval India?
8. Examine the relationship between trade routes and urban growth in medieval India.

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UNIT 2

Mansabdari and Jagirdari System

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of the unit, the learner will be able to :

- understand the *Jagir* dari and *Mansabdari* systems and their importance in the Mughal governance structure
- explore the expansion of agriculture during the medieval period
- compare the administrative practices under Akbar with those of his successors

Prerequisites

The Mughal dynasty, one of the most significant and influential empires in South Asian history, flourished from the early 16th to the mid-18th century. Founded by Babur, a descendant of Timur (Tamerlane) on his father's side and Genghis Khan on his mother's, the dynasty was established when Babur invaded India and defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the ruler of the Delhi Sultanate, at the First Battle of Panipat in 1526. This victory marked the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India.

The Delhi Sultanate, which thrived from the 13th to the 16th century, established key administrative frameworks that significantly influenced Mughal governance. It introduced a centralised bureaucratic system, characterised by a hierarchy of officials responsible for revenue collection, law enforcement, and military organisation. This system emphasised the importance of a strong central authority, setting the stage for Mughal emperors who adopted and refined these practices. The Sultanate's revenue system, based on land taxes and a well-defined agrarian structure, provided a model for the Mughals. They inherited the practice of appointing local officials, known as *zamindars*, to manage land and ensure tax collection, which was crucial for maintaining state finances.

The *Mansabdari* system, which has Central Asian roots, is believed by some to have been introduced to North India by Mughal Emperor Babur. However, it was Akbar who provided it with a structured institutional framework, making it the foundation of the Mughal military organisation. The *Mansabdari* system was a distinctive military administrative system established by Akbar in the 16th century.

Keywords

Mansabdari system, *Mansab, Zat, Sawar, Dagh, Chahra, Kud-kasht, Pahi-Kasht, Jagir , Khalisa*, *Jagir dari* system

Discussion

3.2.1 The Jagirdari System

An essential aspect of pre-colonial and early colonial India was the complex socio-economic and political structure of the *Jagirdari* **system**, which significantly influenced administration and land tenure in the subcontinent. The term "Jagirdari" is derived from the Persian word "jagir," which means land or property. This system represented a form of feudal land tenure where land grants were made to military leaders and nobles in return for their services to the empire. The crisis of the *Jagirdari* system within the Mughal empire was closely linked to economic and social relations, as well as the administrative structures that emerged from these relationships. The effectiveness of the Mughal revenue system depended on the capabilities of the Mughal government and its local representatives, including ***faujdar*** (military commanders) and ***jagirdars*** (landholders).

3.2.2 Establishment of the Delhi Sultanate

The *Jagirdari* system is often seen as an extension or evolution of the earlier *iqta* system prevalent during the Delhi Sultanate, especially under the reign of Sultan Iltutmish and his successors. However, the term "Jagirdari" specifically refers to land assignments that became more formally recognised under the Mughal Empire. This system was implemented as part of a broader feudal framework that aimed to consolidate state authority and incentivise loyalty among military commanders and the nobility. **Sultan Ghiyasu -Din Tughluq** was among the early proponents of this system, granting land assignments to his loyal military officers. **Alauddin Khalji** focused on creating a more centralised revenue system and military organisation, which later influenced the *Jagirdari* system during the Mughal period.

Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq, reintroduced land grants and incentivized military loyalty. During this period, the terms such as "*iqta"* (land grant) were commonly used

to describe the income assignments granted by the Delhi Sultans. These assignments allowed nobles to collect taxes from the land, which they managed in exchange for military service. The *iqta* system, while similar to the *Jagirdari* system, also reflected a specific relationship between the ruler and the landholder, emphasising the importance of loyalty and administrative duties.

3.2.1.2 Expansion of the Jagirdari System under the Mughals

The Mughal emperors integrated and modified existing systems (like the *iqta* system) to suit their administrative needs. They refined the *Jagirdari* system by distributing *jagirs* to compensate aristocrats, military leaders, and influential figures for their services to the empire. This system allowed the Mughals to maintain a network of loyal supporters while exercising control over local administration .

Jagirdars played a crucial role in this framework, as they were responsible for tax collection in their assigned territories. They acted as local administrators, overseeing the agricultural production and revenue generation in their lands. This facilitated the centralisation of authority while ensuring local administration, as *jagirdars* had both military and administrative responsibilities. They were expected to maintain law and order, collect taxes, and manage the agrarian economy, which was essential for the Mughal state's fiscal health.

3.2.1.3 Role of *Jagirdars* in Medieval Society

The *Jagirdari* system also had a profound impact on social hierarchies within Mughal society. *Jagirdars*, who were often drawn from the nobility, enjoyed significant power and prestige in their localities. They acted as intermediaries between the Mughal administration and the local population, which included peasants, artisans, and traders. This position allowed them to accumulate wealth and influence, leading to the formation of a landed aristocracy.

The relationship between *jagirdars* and the local population was complex. While *jagirdars* were responsible for tax collection and governance, their actions often led to grievances among cultivators, particularly due to excessive taxation or harsh enforcement of tax collection. To maintain stability, the Mughal emperors emphasised justice and fair administration, encouraging the population to seek redress from the central authority rather than relying solely on local *jagirdars*.

3.2.1.4 Features of Jagirdari System

The *jagirdari* system in medieval and early modern India was characterised by several essential features that defined its social impact and administrative structure:

Grant of Revenue Rights: Under this system, rulers granted *jagirdars* the authority to levy taxes and collect land revenue from designated areas. This revenue was often just a fraction of the total amount collected, with the majority going to the imperial or local treasury. This structure allowed the state to maintain its financial operations while giving *jagirdars* a degree of economic power within their regions.

Hereditary Nature: The *jagirdari* system typically allowed for the hereditary transfer of rights within the same family or lineage, although the central authority could intervene to redistribute *jagirs* for political reasons, such as to reward loyalty or punish mismanagement. This aspect entrenched the status and power of *jagirdars*, creating a quasi-feudal system. The inheritance of land and tax rights led to the establishment

of a social hierarchy where families with *jagirdar* status enjoyed significant influence and wealth over generations.

Administrative and Military Responsibilities: *Jagirdars* were expected to perform various administrative duties, including maintaining law and order, enforcing legal norms, and overseeing local governance within their domains. The degree of authority and responsibility varied based on the specific jagirdar's relationship with the central authority and local conditions. Additionally, they were responsible for supplying military forces and resources to the central government during times of conflict, ensuring the ruler's control over their territories.

Relationship with the Central Authority: The *jagirdari* system established a patron-client relationship between the *jagirdars* and the central authority, whether a regional king or an emperor. *Jagirdars* owed their allegiance and military support in exchange for their *jagirs*. This arrangement allowed the central government to exert control over vast regions while relying on local elites to manage day-to-day governance.

Regional Variations: The implementation of the *jagirdari* system varied across India, influenced by regional contexts and historical circumstances. While the Mughals institutionalised and centralised the system, its characteristics and effects could differ significantly based on local governance styles and the rulers in power at various times.

3.2.1.5 Merits and Drawbacks of Jagirdari System Under Mughals

Merits	Demerits
1. Administrative Effectiveness: The duties of *jagirdars* included local administration, upholding law and order, and collecting taxes. This decentralised system allowed for more effective governance, particularly in a vast empire like the Mughal Empire, as local leaders with in-depth knowledge of their areas were empowered to make decisions.	**1. Exploitative Nature**: The control exercised by *jagirdars* often led to the exploitation of peasants. They sometimes imposed excessive taxes, which placed a heavy financial burden on the cultivators, leading to widespread discontent.
2.Revenue Collection: The central authority was guaranteed a consistent stream of money under the mechanism. Within their designated areas, *jagirdars* were responsible for obtaining taxes from peasants and other kinds of revenue. This revenue was essential to maintaining the state's administrative apparatus and financing the imperial treasury.	**2. Lack of Perpetual Ownership:** *Jagirs* (land grants) were not owned perpetually by *jagirdars*. They were granted by the emperor and could be arbitrarily revoked or transferred, causing instability and discouraging long-term investment in the land.

3.Military Service: In addition to being in charge of maintaining an army for the empire, *jagirdars* frequently acted as military commanders. Guaranteeing that there was a localised army prepared to respond to threats or maintain order, thereby enhancing the empire's overall security and stability.	**3.Social Inequalities:** Social hierarchies and inequalities were strengthened by the *Jagirdari* system. The *jagirdars* belonged to the upper classes and frequently had access to rights and abilities that the general public did not enjoy.
4. Meritocracy: The *Jagirdari* system was originally founded on meritocracy, in which positions were granted only on the basis of loyalty and talent rather than inherited privilege. This made it possible for capable individuals from diverse backgrounds to ascend the imperial hierarchy according to their aptitude for leadership and military skills.	**4. Ineffective Revenue Collection**: The system mostly depended on the Jagirdars' capacity for effective revenue collection. Nevertheless, rather than making sure the state collected taxes effectively, a large number of jagirdars were more concerned with increasing their personal riches.

The *jagirdari system*, at its peak, profoundly influenced the political and economic landscape of South Asia. Its decline mirrored broader shifts in administrative practices, paving the way for modern land tenure systems and agricultural reforms. The government initially focused on ensuring that the assessment, collection, and administration of *jagirdari* were efficient. However, the system's reliance on taxation led to the increased power of *jagirdars*, often resulting in oppressive conditions for the peasantry. This oppressive nature of the system contributed to a deteriorating economic situation, inviting significant criticism and calls for reform.

3.2.2 Innovations under Akbar

Under Akbar, the *Jagirdari* system underwent significant reforms that transformed it into a vital component of Mughal administration. One of the key innovations during Akbar's reign was the integration of the *Jagirdari* system with the *Mansab* system. The ranks of *mansabdars* (military and administrative officials) were closely tied to this land revenue framework. Emperor Akbar implemented a structured ranking system that ensured *mansabdars* had clearly defined responsibilities in both military command and revenue collection. Ranks within the *mansab* system could range from 10 to 7,000, corresponding to the scale of their duties in governance. This integration helped to establish a more systematic and organised administrative framework, where each official's status and responsibilities were aligned with their contribution to the empire.

To prevent the consolidation of power among *jagirdars* and to ensure loyalty to the central authority, Emperor Akbar instituted a **practice of regular transfers** of *jagirs*. This approach was particularly evident in regions like Sehwan in Sindh, which experienced multiple transfers within a short span. By frequently relocating *jagirdars*, the Mughal administration aimed to mitigate potential abuses of power and corruption that could arise from long-term local authority. This strategy not only curtailed the influence of individual *jagirdars* but also reinforced the central government's oversight and control over local administration.

In addition to transfers, Akbar emphasised **merit-based promotions** within the *Jagirdari* system. Promotions and demotions were determined by an individual's performance and loyalty rather than by birthright or social status. It was a departure from the norms prevalent in earlier periods, which often relied heavily on hereditary privileges This meritocratic approach fostered a more accountable administrative structure, as *jagirdars* were motivated to fulfill their duties effectively to secure their positions. By promoting individuals based on their capabilities, Akbar enhanced the overall efficiency and responsiveness of the administration, allowing for a more dynamic and capable governing body.

Akbar's governance also placed a strong emphasis on justice and equity. He promoted the idea that the central authority was responsible for the welfare of all subjects, which cultivated a sense of shared responsibility among the state and its officials. This led to the development of a triangular relationship among the central government, *jagirdars*, and cultivators. This relationship represented a shift towards more direct accountability between the central authority and the cultivators, enhancing state oversight. In this system, the central government became the ultimate arbiter of grievances, gradually reducing the power of *jagirdars*. By ensuring that the needs and rights of the cultivators were recognised and addressed, Akbar not only strengthened his rule but also fostered a more harmonious relationship between different social layers, contributing to the stability and prosperity of the Mughal empire.

3.2.3 Expansion of Agriculture during the Sultanate Period

Even during medieval times, India was predominantly an agricultural society. The population was largely self-sufficient, producing enough to meet their needs except during famines or natural calamities. Agriculture played a crucial role in the economy and society despite the political upheaval of the period.

During the medieval period, crop cultivation in India was diverse, with various crops being grown across different regions. Major crops included rice, wheat, barley, pulses, sugarcane, cotton, and spices like pepper and ginger. The selection of crops was heavily influenced by local climatic conditions and soil fertility, which determined the types of agriculture practised in each area.

Technological advancements significantly impacted agricultural practices during this time. The development of irrigation systems, such as canals known as "bandha," allowed farmers to harness river water effectively, stabilising and increasing crop yields. This innovation was crucial in regions where rainfall was unpredictable or insufficient for sustaining agriculture.

The land tenure system was well-established and varied across different regions. Feudal lords and local rulers controlled large tracts of land, ensuring agricultural productivity through a hierarchical structure. Peasants, often referred to as "ryots" worked the land either as tenants or labourers, providing the labour necessary for crop cultivation. The agrarian economy was also highly sensitive to climatic conditions. Monsoon patterns played a significant role in determining crop yields, with regions that had reliable water sources—such as coastal areas and river valleys—tending to be more agriculturally productive. This reliance on monsoons made agricultural output precarious, particularly during periods of drought or flooding.

Trade and markets were intrinsically linked to agriculture, with surplus agricultural produce being exchanged in local and regional markets. Certain areas specialised in cash crops, like spices and cotton, which had high demand both domestically and

internationally. This specialisation helped integrate local economies into broader trade networks.

Festivals related to agricultural cycles, such as Baisakhi and Pongal, were celebrated with great enthusiasm. Despite the challenges posed by political fragmentation and invasions, which occasionally disrupted agricultural activities, productivity generally remained stable enough to support the growing population and economic activities of the time.

3.2.4 *Mansabdari* System

The *Mansabdari* system was a distinctive feature of governance and military administration in medieval India under the Mughal empire. Introduced by Emperor Akbar in the late 16th century, this system was designed to organise and regulate the nobility based on their ranks, known as "mansabs." The term "mansab" itself denotes a position or rank, which determines both a noble's military responsibilities and administrative duties within the empire. Under this system, every officer in the Mughal army was assigned a rank known as 'mansab', which determined their status and salary. *Mansab* ranks were denoted by a number followed by the title 'mansabdar'. For example, a *Mansabdar*-5000 would command 5000 soldiers. This hierarchical system not only facilitated the centralisation of power but also fostered loyalty among the nobles through rewards and promotions based on merit and service to the emperor. The *Mansabdari* system became integral to the Mughal imperial structure, influencing both military strategy and administrative efficiency during its zenith in the 17th century.

Initially, Akbar faced challenges in managing the diverse territories and populations of the empire. The *Mansabdari* system helped him organise and control the military and administrative functions more effectively. During Akbar's reign, the *Mansabdari* system was established with a hierarchical structure based on ranks *(mansabs*) that determined a noble's military command and administrative responsibilities. *Mansabs* were granted based on the number of soldiers a noble could maintain, ranging from 10 to 7,000 or more. The system ensured that military commanders also held administrative roles, which helped in the efficient governance of regions.

Akbar's successors, Jahangir (1605-1627) and Shah Jahan (1628-1658), further refined and expanded the *Mansabdari* system. The number of *Mansabdars* increased, reflecting the growth and territorial expansion of the empire. The system became more entrenched as a key feature of Mughal governance, blending military and administrative functions to maintain imperial control. "Zat" and "Sawar" were terms used within the *Mansabdari* system of the Mughal empire to denote different aspects of a noble's rank and military command. Here's what each term signifies:

Zat referred to the personal status or numerical rank of a noble within the Mughal hierarchy. It indicated the personal standing or dignity of a *Mansabdar* (noble), which was often associated with the size of his military force or the prestige of his position. For example, a *Mansabdar* might be referred to by his *Zat* number, such as *Zat* 1000, indicating his personal rank or status within the system. This rank typically determined the individual's salary and his standing at the Mughal court. It did not directly represent the number of soldiers maintained by the *Mansabdar*, although higher *Zat* ranks were generally given to those responsible for larger administrative duties.

Sawar referred to the number of horse riders or cavalrymen that a *Mansabdar* was expected to maintain and command as part of his military obligations. *Sawar*

represented the military component of Mansabdar's rank. The number of *Sawar* determined the Mansabdar's official military responsibility and prestige. For example, a *Mansabdar* might hold the rank of *Sawar* 5000, meaning he was expected to maintain and command a contingent of 5000 cavalry soldiers. However, an important point is that sometimes a Mansabdar's *Sawar* rank could be lower than his *Zat* rank. Jahangir introduced variations like *Du-aspah* and *Sih-aspah,* where the *Sawar* rank could be increased without altering the *Zat* rank. This allowed nobles to maintain additional cavalry without necessarily increasing their overall status or salary.

3.2.4.1 Features of *Mansabdari* System

The *Mansabdari* system, introduced by Emperor Akbar, became a cornerstone of the Mughal administrative and military structure, shaping the administration of the empire. Let us have a look at its key features:

1. Rank-Based Hierarchy

The *Mansabdari* system classified nobles into ranks, or *mansabs*, which determined their status, salary, and responsibilities. Each rank corresponded to the number of troops *Mansabdar* was expected to command, with values ranging from 10 to over 7,000. For instance, a *Mansabdar* with a rank of 5000 was responsible for maintaining 5000 soldiers. This system of ranked positions created a structured and merit-based framework within the Mughal military and administration.

2. Dual Military and Administrative Roles

Mansabdars served both as military commanders and as civil administrators. They were tasked with raising and maintaining troops, often in regions far from their administrative assignments, while also handling governance duties such as tax collection and regional management. This dual role allowed the Mughals to combine military strength with effective local governance, ensuring stability across vast territories.

3. Centralised Authority and Loyalty

Emperor Akbar designed the *Mansabdari* system to centralise power under the emperor. Appointments to *Mansab* positions were based on loyalty, merit, and service to the empire rather than hereditary rights. This practice strengthened the emperor's direct control over both military and administrative officials, reducing the risk of rebellion and fostering a sense of personal loyalty among the nobility.

4. Merit-Based Promotions

The *Mansabdari* system was inherently flexible, allowing for promotions or demotions based on individual performance. *Mansabdars* could rise through the ranks based on their loyalty and contributions to the empire. This meritocratic element helped ensure a more competent and motivated governing class, reducing corruption and inefficiency.

5. Jagir Revenue Assignments

Mansabdars were compensated not through regular salaries but via revenue grants known as *jagirs*. These land assignments provided the *Mansabdars* with income derived from local taxation, encouraging loyalty and embedding the administrative elite into the economic framework of the empire. The *Jagir* system ensured that nobles had a vested interest in both the economic

and political stability of the regions they governed.

6. Structured Bureaucratic Efficiency

The *Mansabdari* system contributed to a more disciplined and efficient bureaucracy. Structuring administrative and military duties within a clear, rank-based hierarchy ensured that governance and military operations were coordinated and systematic. This was especially crucial for managing the diverse and vast expanse of the Mughal empire, from Deccan to the North-Western Frontier.

3.2.4.2 Classes of Cultivators

During the Mughal period, approximately 85% of India's population lived in rural areas, with peasants or cultivators forming the largest segment. There were three main classes of peasants:

Khud-Kasht (Riyayat): These residential peasants lived in their villages, owned their land and implements, and paid land revenue at a concessional rate. They formed the governing body of the village community and were also known as mirasdars in Maharashtra and gharu-hala in Rajasthan.

Pahi-Kasht: These peasants were typically outsiders who cultivated rented land in villages, either residing there (residential *Pahi-Kasht)* or from neighbouring villages (non-residential *Pahi-Kasht*).

Muzarian (Raiyatis): This group included individuals from the same village who lacked land or implements and relied on *Khud-Kasht* peasants for support. They were divided into two categories: tenants-at-will and those with hereditary tenant rights.

The peasantry in the Mughal empire was highly stratified, with significant differences in landholding sizes, produce, and resources among peasants in the same region. The economy was diversified, with various crops being cultivated. Cash crops, such as cotton and indigo, attracted higher land revenue rates. The introduction of tobacco and maize in the 17th century and the adoption of potatoes and red chillies in the 18th century further diversified agricultural production. Although life was challenging for peasants, they managed to meet their basic needs as long as they paid their land revenue.

3.2.4.3 Irrigation Systems

Irrigation systems were vital for agriculture during medieval times in India. Here are the key points regarding these systems:

1. **Tank Irrigation** *(Ahar-Pyne)*: This prevalent system involved constructing small reservoirs *(ahar)* and channels *(pyne)* to capture and distribute rainwater for agricultural use, often managed by local communities. This method was particularly effective in regions with seasonal rainfall.

2. **Stepwells** *(Baoli)*: Stepwells were elaborate structures designed for accessing groundwater. They often served as social gathering places and were crucial for ensuring a reliable water supply for irrigation, especially during dry seasons.

3. **Canal Systems**: Mughal rulers undertook extensive canal projects to divert river water to distant fields, which significantly boosted agricultural productivity. The creation of canals helped distribute water more evenly across agricultural lands, facilitating multiple cropping cycles.

4. **Water Lifting Devices**: Mechanical devices like the Persian wheel *(Rehat)* were introduced during medieval times, particularly by Islamic rulers who brought Persian technology to India. These devices improved the efficiency of lifting water from wells and reservoirs, making irrigation more accessible,

especially in arid regions.

These irrigation systems were supported by royal patronage and community cooperation, significantly impacting agricultural practices and contributing to economic prosperity. They facilitated multiple cropping seasons and reduced reliance on monsoon rains, leading to greater stability and social cohesion in agrarian societies.

Advances in Agricultural Technology

The medieval period in India saw significant technological advancements in agriculture that greatly enhanced productivity and efficiency. These innovations contributed to the stability of the agrarian economy and supported the population's needs. In addition to tank irrigation and canal systems, stepwells and water-lifting devices improved agricultural practices. The Persian wheel was particularly notable for its efficiency in lifting water for irrigation, especially in regions with limited water access. The traditional wooden plough was enhanced with iron-tipped implements, increasing its effectiveness in breaking up tougher soil. This adaptation allowed for deeper tillage and improved soil aeration, resulting in better crop production. Farmers began to adopt more sophisticated crop rotation practices, which helped maintain soil fertility and reduce pest cycles. The integration of legumes into crop rotations enriched the soil with nitrogen, enhancing productivity. This period saw the introduction of new crops, such as maize, potatoes, and chillies, which diversified agricultural production and contributed to food security. These crops, particularly from the Americas, adapted well to local climatic conditions and became staples in various regions.

3.2.4.4 Merits and Demerits of Mansabdari System

The *Mansabdari* system stands as a testament to the administrative and military innovations of the Mughal empire in medieval India. The system's emphasis on meritocracy and loyalty ensured a stable hierarchy that contributed to the empire's territorial expansion and internal cohesion. Despite its eventual decline in the 18th century, the *Mansabdari* system left a legacy on India's administrative framework.

Merits	Demerits
♦ The *Mansabdari* system provided a centralised administrative structure that allowed the Mughal emperors to effectively govern a vast and diverse empire. It facilitated uniform governance and policy implementation across regions, enhancing stability and order.	♦ Over time, the system became plagued by corruption as some *Mansabdars* abused their positions for personal gain. This led to inefficiencies in revenue collection, administrative practices, and military operations, undermining the system's effectiveness.
♦ By integrating military and administrative roles, the system ensured a well-organised and disciplined military force. *Mansabdars* were responsible for maintaining troops and commanding them, which contributed to the empire's military strength and defence capabilities.	♦ Appointments and promotions within the system often depended on personal loyalty to the emperor rather than solely on merit. This sometimes resulted in favouritism and instability, especially during periods of weak or contested succession.

♦ *Mansabdars* were paid through revenue assignments *(jagirs*), which helped in efficient revenue collection and management across the empire. This economic structure provided financial stability and resources for the empire's administration and military operations.	♦ The system entrenched social inequalities, as wealth and status were often tied to military and administrative positions. This hindered social mobility and contributed to disparities within Mughal society, affecting cohesion and unity

Recap

- The *Jagirdari* system involved assigning land (*jagirs*) to nobles in exchange for military and administrative service.
- *Jagirdars* collected revenue from their assigned land but did not own it, serving as intermediaries between the state and the peasants.
- The system helped decentralise administration while maintaining the central authority of the Mughal emperor.
- Akbar connected the *Jagirdari* system with the *Mansab* system, assigning ranks based on military and revenue duties.
- Regular transfers of *jagirs* prevented the concentration of power and ensured loyalty to the central authority.
- Merit-based promotions replaced hereditary privileges, leading to a more efficient administration.
- *Mansabdari* system was established by Emperor Akbar to centralise Mughal authority.
- *Mansabdari* system ranked nobles based on military and administrative roles.
- Mansabdars held ranks from 10 to 7,000
- Salaries determined by rank, known as *'zat'*.
- Agriculture thrived through crop rotation and irrigation practices.

Objective Questions

1. What was the *Mansabdari* system?
2. Who introduced the *Mansabdari* system in the Mughal Empire?
3. What determined a *Mansabdar's* rank?
4. What was the role of *Mansabdars*?
5. What was the primary function of the *Jagirdar*s under the Mughal administration?
6. What did the term "mansab" refer to in the *Mansabdari* system?
7. Which Mughal emperor integrated the *Jagirdari* system with the *Mansabdari* system?
8. In the *Mansabdari* system, what did the term "*Zat*" refer to?
9. What was the purpose of Akbar's regular transfer of *jagirs*?
10. What was the significance of the terms "Du-aspah" and "Sih-aspah" in the *Mansabdari* system?
11. What was one of the main cash crops grown during the medieval period in India that contributed to international trade?

Answers

1. The *Mansabdari* system was designed to organise and control the nobility and the military in the Mughal empire
2. Akbar
3. Military command and administrative authority
4. Military commanders and local administrators
5. To manage and collect revenue from their assigned land
6. Rank or position
7. Akbar

8. Personal status or rank of a noble within the Mughal hierarchy
9. To prevent the consolidation of power among *jagirdars* and ensure loyalty to the central authority
10. They allowed nobles to maintain additional cavalry without changing their overall rank.
11. Spices (like pepper) and cotton

Assignments

1. Discuss the development of the agriculture under the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire.
2. To what extent did Akbar's policy of regularly transferring *jagirs* prevent the misuse of power by *jagirdars*?
3. Compare and contrast the terms "*Zat*" and "Sawar" within the *Mansabdari* system. How did they reflect the status and military obligations of a noble?
4. Compare the *Mansabdari* system with the *Jagirdari* system. In what ways were they similar, and how did they differ in terms of their impact on governance and society?
5. Explain the role of irrigation systems, including tank irrigation, stepwells, and canal systems, in stabilising agricultural production during the medieval period.

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UNIT 3

Sufi and Bhakti Movement

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the origin and development of Bhakti and Sufi movement
- identify features of the Bhakti and Sufi movements
- explore teachings and influence of Bhakti tradition
- understand the philosophies of Sufism and Bhakti traditions

Prerequisites

The rise of heterodox religions in India often emerged as a reaction against the social and religious rigidity prevalent in the established traditions. Just as movements like Buddhism and Jainism challenged the caste system and ritualistic practices of Brahmanical Hinduism, the Bhakti and Sufi traditions also sought to transcend social constraints. Both movements emphasised personal devotion and a direct relationship with the divine, positioning individual experience above institutional dogma.

The Bhakti movement, with its focus on love and devotion to personal deities, directly opposed the hierarchical structures of caste and ritualism, advocating for spiritual equality among all devotees, irrespective of social status. Similarly, Sufism promotes universal brotherhood and inner spirituality rather than rigid adherence to law.

Moreover, both traditions drew upon indigenous cultural elements, using regional languages and poetic forms to convey their messages, making spirituality accessible to the masses. Thus, the Bhakti and Sufi movements, like earlier heterodox religions, emerged as liberating forces, challenging established norms and fostering a spiritual atmosphere in medieval India.

Keywords

Sufism, Sufi orders, Bhakti, Alvars, Nayanars, Silsilah, Khanqah, Tariqa

Discussion

3.3.1 Sufism

Sufism, or Islamic mysticism, had a significant and complex presence in medieval India, influencing both the spiritual and social structure of the region.

Early in Islamic history, Sufism developed primarily under Hasan al-Basri's guidance and in part as a response to the worldliness of the early Umayyad Caliphate (661–750). Sufis adhered to many schools of Islamic theology and jurisprudence and scrupulously observed Islamic law, even though they disapproved of dry legalism. While the vast majority of Sufis, both ancient and contemporary, continue to practice Sunni Islam, in the late medieval era, some Sufi ideas moved into the domain of Shia Islam.

This specifically occurred following Iran's conversion to the Safavids under the doctrine of Irfan. *Dhikr*, or remembering God, is one of the main foci of Sufi devotion. Sufis' missionary and educational endeavors contributed significantly to the expansion of Islam.

Historiographical Background

Muslim merchants from Arabia and Persia introduced Sufi ideas to India, with the earliest Sufi mystics in coastal areas of India. The invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni(11the century) and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate(13th century) increased the influx of Sufis, scholars, and mystics. With Muslim rule expanding in northern India, Sufi saints migrated to India in large numbers. The Persian culture, literature, and Sufi ideas shaped medieval India's intellectual life, with poets like Sa'di and Rumi being widely read in Indian courts.

3.3.1.1 Sufi Orders

Sufism served as a liberal reform movement within Islam, originating in Persia in the eleventh century before spreading to India. Most Sufis were devoted mystics who disapproved of ostentation and the moral decay that followed the decline of the Islamic empire. They emphasised love as the fundamental connection between God and the human soul. Sufis believed that serving humanity was equivalent to serving God, as their love for God translated into love for humanity. In Sufism, self-control was seen as a prerequisite for developing the perception necessary to understand God.

The Sufi orders, or *ṭuruq*, have evolved over time, from individual mysticism to a structured approach to spiritual guidance. By the eleventh century, the emergence of *tariqa* introduced a structured approach to connect with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. The lineage of master and disciple, known

as *Silsilah*, became a vital aspect of Sufi practice, serving as a social network and a sense of authenticity. These lineages played a crucial role in the dissemination of Sufi thought across diverse regions, facilitating the movement of ideas and teachings. The master-disciple relationship established spiritual authority, enriching individual spiritual experiences and fostering a sense of belonging within the broader Sufi community. The symbolic significance of these lineages extends beyond individual spirituality, representing a continuity of tradition and a connection to divine authority. The Sufi orders have shaped the cultural and religious identity of Muslim communities, blending local customs with Islamic teachings.

With the notable exception of the Naqshbandi order, which traces its precepts to Prophet Muhammad through the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, most Sufi groups trace their teachings back to Muhammad by Ali ibn Abi Talib. Formal membership in a *tariqa* was not mandatory; during the Middle Ages, Sufism was not confined to any single order and was nearly as widespread as Islam itself.

Before Sufi teachings were institutionalised into devotional orders (*tariqa*) in the early Middle Ages, Sufism already had a long and rich history. A *tariqa* specifically refers to the mystical teachings and spiritual activities of such institutions, aiming to pursue *ḥaqīqah* (ultimate truth). Each *tariqa* is led or spiritually directed by a *murshid* or guide. Members of a *tariqa* are called *murīdīn* (plural of *murīd*), meaning "desirous," or those "desiring the knowledge of knowing and loving God."

In the seventh century CE, traders from Arabia brought Islam to India through trade along the western coastline. This spread continued northward to Multan and Sind following the conquest by Muhammad Bin Qasim in the eighth century CE. However, Sufism began to rise to prominence during the rule of the Delhi Sultanate in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Sufism in India absorbed many indigenous ideas, including dance, music, and yoga postures, and it gained followers in both Hinduism and Islam. The two broad categories of Sufi orders were:

- **Bashara** – Those who adhered strictly to Islamic law
- **Beshara** – Those who were more liberal in their interpretations

3.3.1.2 Sufi Silsilahs

By the eleventh century, Sufism had evolved into a well-developed movement with an established body of literature on Quranic studies and Sufi practices. Institutionally, Sufis began to organise communities around hospices or *khanqahs* (Persian), led by a teacher or master known as a *shaikh* (in Arabic), *pir*(in Persian). These masters enrolled disciples (*murids*) and appointed successors (*khalifa*), establishing rules for spiritual conduct and interactions among community members, as well as between laypersons and the master.

Sufi *Silsilahs* (plural of *Silsilah*) began to crystallise in various parts of the Islamic world around the twelfth century. The term *Silsilah* literally means a "chain," signifying a continuous link between master and disciple, extending as an unbroken spiritual lineage to the Prophet Muhammad. It was through this channel that spiritual power and blessings were transmitted to devotees.

The four most prominent *Silsilahs* were:

1. The Chisti Silsilah

The Chisti Silsilah was founded around 1192 CE by Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chisti,

also known as Gharib Nawaz. He initially resided in Lahore, then Delhi, before moving to Ajmer, which had a significant Muslim community and served as a political hub. After his death in approximately 1235 CE, his popularity surged following a visit by Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq to his grave. Mahmud Khalji of Malwa constructed a mosque and dome in the fifteenth century. The patronage of the Chisti community reached unprecedented levels under Mughal Emperor Akbar and Sultan Iltutmish, who supported the community's presence in Delhi through Qutub ud din Bhakhtiyar Kaki.

Major Teachers of the Chishti Silsilah

Sufi Teachers	Location of Dargah
Shaikh Muinuddin Sijzi	Ajmer (Rajasthan)
Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki	Delhi
Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar	Ajodhan (Pakistan)
Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya	Delhi
Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Delhi	Delhi

2. The Suhrawardi Silsilah

The Suhrawardi order primarily operated in the regions of Punjab and Multan. Shihabuddin Suhrawardi established it in Baghdad. It was founded in India by Bahauddin Zakariya. The Suhrawardi order actively engaged in politics and accepted maintenance payments from Sultans, distinguishing themselves from the Chisti order. They believed that a Sufi should possess three essential qualities: property, knowledge, and *hal* (mystical illumination). However, they opposed self-mortification and extreme austerities, promoting a synthesis of mysticism and ilm (scholarship).

3. The Naqshbandi Silsilah

The Naqshbandi Silsilah was founded in India by Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshbandi. His successors, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1563–1624) and Sheikh Baqi Billah, further propagated the order. Known as "silent Sufis," they engaged in silent heart meditation. Unlike the Chishtis, who viewed the relationship between man and God as that of a lover and beloved, the Naqshbandis regarded it as one of slave and master. They disapproved of all *bid'ah* (innovations in religion) and upheld *Sharia* law in its purest form. The Naqshbandis opposed Akbar's liberal policies, which included prohibiting cow slaughter, abolishing *jizya,* and elevating the status of several non-Muslims.

4. The Qadri Silsilah

The Qadri Silsilah emerged during the Mughal era and was founded by Sheikh Abdul Qadir along with his sons, Sheikh Niamatullah, Mukhdum Muhammad Jilani, and Miyan Mir. This order gained significant popularity in Punjab, with Shah Badakhshani being another notable saint associated with it. Members of the Qadri order believed in *Wahdat-al-Wajood,* or the "Unity of Existence," positing that God and His creation are fundamentally the same. This perspective often led Qadri saints to disregard traditional religious components.

3.3.1.3 Influence on the Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti saints of the Middle Ages were significantly influenced by the liberal and unconventional aspects of Sufism. Over time, Sufis played a vital role in reminding ruler of their moral responsibilities and shaping their religious outlooks. For instance, the religious beliefs and practices of Akbar, the Mughal Emperor, were profoundly influenced by Sufi thought. The free and unconventional elements of Sufism also

had a major impact on the Bhakti saints, highlighting the interconnectedness of these spiritual traditions in medieval India.

3.3.2 Bhakti Movement

The bhakti movement was a prominent Hindu religious movement in the Middle Ages that aimed to implement religious reforms among all societal classes by using devotion as a means of obtaining salvation. Beginning in Tamilakam in the sixth century, it moved northward after gaining popularity through the poetry and teaching of Shaiva Nayanars and Vaishnava Alvars. It began to spread over east and north India in the fifteenth century and peaked between the 15-17 centuries.

3.3.2.1 Origins and Development of Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti movement is a significant and transformative religious and cultural phenomenon in India that began in the 7th century CE and continued to evolve in the subsequent decades. The term "bhakti" is derived from the Sanskrit word meaning "devotion" or "love." This movement is characterised by its focus on individual devotion to God and fostering a loving relationship between the devotee and the divine. Its roots lie in the rich religious and intellectual traditions of India, particularly influenced by early devotional practices from southern India's Tamil region, notably through the poetry and hymns of the Alvars and Nayanars. These two groups of devotees expressed profound love and adoration for the deities Vishnu and Shiva.

The Bhakti movement began to take shape in the 7th and 8th centuries, with the contributions of several key figures. Saints such as Ramanuja, who advocated Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism), along with later leaders like Kabir, Mirabai, and Tulsidas, played a pivotal role in its development in northern India. These saints emphasised individual devotion over caste divisions and ceremonial customs.

3.3.2.2 Basic Features of the Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti Movement centered around devotion to a specific deity, emphasising a personal relationship with God, in stark contrast to traditional Vedic practices that focused on rituals and sacrifices. The movement strongly criticised the caste system and promoted the idea of universal brotherhood, asserting that spiritual salvation could be attained through devotion by anyone, regardless of caste.

Bhakti saints frequently challenged the rigid caste structure, maintaining that anyone could devote themselves to God, irrespective of social standing. Instead of using Sanskrit, these saints composed hymns and poetry in regional languages, making religious teachings more accessible to the general public. For instance, Bhakti saint Kabir wrote in various Hindi dialects, while Mirabai composed in Rajasthani.

While Bhakti reformers were largely united in condemning social evils, they also adhered to certain positive principles. They believed that the path to God could only be discovered through a guru who guides disciples from darkness to light and from ignorance to knowledge. Without a guru, individuals would struggle to find the correct path in their spiritual journey.

3.3.2.3 Causes for the Rise of the Bhakti Movement

The rise of the Bhakti movement is attributed to a combination of several factors:

Dissatisfaction with Philosophical Exposition: Many individuals found the

highly philosophical interpretations of Hinduism, particularly those articulated by Sankaracharya, to be complex and sought a more accessible spiritual path.

Caste Inequities: The rigid caste structure of medieval Hindu society led to widespread atrocities committed by higher castes against lower castes and untouchables. This environment sparked a strong reaction among Hindu saints and philosophers, compelling them to advocate for a movement that emphasised devotion over caste distinctions.

Influence of Islamic teachings: The influence of Islamic teachings, such as principles of universal brotherhood, human equality, and opposition to idol worship, played a role in shaping the Bhakti movement. In India, the growth of Sufism encouraged a similar devotional style among Hindus.

3.3.2.4 Important Saints of Bhakti Movement

Ramanuja

Ramanuja is recognised as the earliest exponent of the Bhakti movement. Born in 1017 CE, at Sriperumbudur in south India, he received his education in Kanchipuram and Srirangam. As a disciple of the renowned Vaishnava saint Yamuna Charya, Ramanuja provided a philosophical foundation for the teachings of Vaishnavism. He authored a commentary on the Brahma Sutra called Sri Bhasya, in which he refuted Shankara's arguments and presented his interpretation rooted in theistic ideas. Ramanuja viewed 'Brahma' as the supreme entity and considered individual souls to be Brahma's attributes. He emphasised 'bhakti' as the primary means to attain the supreme reality or ultimate bliss, advocating that even the Sudras and outcasts could achieve salvation by completely surrendering to the will of God.

Nimbarka

Nimbarka, a contemporary of Ramanuja, significantly contributed to the Bhakti movement. He wrote Vedanta-Parijat Saurabh, a commentary on the Brahma Sutra. Nimbarka placed great importance on the pursuit of knowledge and devotion. Although originally from the south, he spent much of his life in Braj, near Mathura.

Madhavacharya

Madhavacharya was another philosopher who wrote extensively, producing thirty-seven texts that dealt with the Brahma Sutra, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Mahabharata. He criticised the Advaita Vedanta of Adi Shankara and the Vishishtadvaita Vedanta of Ramanuja. Madhvacharya traveled extensively across India, visiting regions such as Bengal, Badrinath, Varanasi, Dwaraka, Goa, and Kanyakumari. He actively participated in philosophical discussions and engaged with various Hindu educational institutions. In 1285 CE, he established the Krishna Mutt in Udupi, using a murti obtained from Dwarka, Gujarat. His teachings center on the belief that the *Atman* (individual soul) and *Brahman* (ultimate reality or God Vishnu) are distinct and ever-changing realities, with the individual soul dependent on Brahman. Madhavacharya asserted that liberation could only be achieved through God's mercy. His Dvaita school of thought, alongside Advaita and Vishishtadvaita Vedanta, became one of the three major Vedanta philosophies that influenced Vaishnavism and the Bhakti movement in medieval India. He categorised human souls into three groups, claiming that one must love only God to attain salvation with the guidance of the guru and sincere devotion.

Vallabhacharya

Vallabhacharya studied Hindu philosophy from an early age and traveled extensively throughout the Indian subcontinent for over twenty years. He emerged as a significant leader in the devotional Bhakti movement, winning numerous philosophical debates against followers of Advaita Vedanta. Vallabhacharya wrote commentaries on the Brahma Sutras, the Jaimini Sutra, Anubhashya, and Tatvartha-dipa-nibandha. He advocated for a system of pure non-dualism, devoid of the concept of *maya*, while also recognising the Vedas as the highest authority, which he followed diligently. His influence extended to prominent saints like Mirabai and Narsi Mehta.

Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak, a notable bhakti saint, was heavily influenced by the teachings of Kabir. Born in 1469 in a village known as Talwandi, near Lahore, he emphasised the oneness of God and preached principles such as truth, human fraternity, righteous living, the dignity of labour, and the importance of charity. Nanak asserted that individuals could attain salvation by adhering to four principles: fearing God, doing the right, trusting in His mercy, and seeking guidance to navigate the path toward the ultimate goal. According to Anil Chandra Banerjee, "the sweetness of his character and the simple truth behind his teachings made him an object of love to all, earning him the title 'Guru Nanak Shah Fakir'. His followers eventually established a new sect known as Sikhism.

Kabir

Kabir, a revered saint and poet from 15th-century India, is celebrated for his significant contributions to the Bhakti movement. His verses, written in a blend of Hindi and regional dialects, focus on devotion to a formless God, while critiquing the ritualistic practices prevalent in both Hinduism and Islam. Kabir's poetry explores themes of divine love, unity, and the futility of sectarianism. He challenges social norms and advocates for a personal, direct experience of the divine rather than through intermediaries or religious rituals. Known for his simple yet profound expressions, Kabir uses language of the people and metaphors to convey deep spiritual truths. His hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikhism, and are also integral to various devotional traditions in India. Kabir's teachings continue to inspire individuals across different faiths, highlighting the universal nature of his message.

Tulsidas

Tulsidas, an Indian Vaishnavite poet, was born in Varanasi. His most popular work Ramcharitmanas, expresses the religious sentiment of Bhakti to Rama, a popular avatar of the Hindu deity Vishnu. His eclectic approach to doctrinal questions led to widespread support for Rama worship in northern India, replacing the cult of Krishna with that of Rama as the dominant religious influence. He is credited with eleven other works, including Krishna *Gitavali, Vinay pattrika,* and *Kavitavali.* The *Ramcharitmanas* was attributed to Valmiki. The poem, written in Awadhi, consists of seven cantos of unequal lengths. The central narrative is based on the Sanskrit *Ramayana,* but Tulsidas's principal immediate source was the *Adhyatma Ramayana,* a late medieval recasting that sought to harmonise Advaita Vedanta philosophy and Rama worship.

Mira Bai

Mira Bai was a Hindu mystic and poetess who was a Rajput princess and the only

child of Ratan Singh, the ruler of Merta. She was educated in music, religion, politics, and government. Mira was married to Bhoj Raj, the crown prince of Mewar, but was subjected to persecution and intrigue by her brother-in-law and successor, Vikram Singh. Mira spent most of her days in her private temple dedicated to Krishna, receiving holy men and pilgrims from India. Her lyrics are known for their use of everyday images and the sweetness of emotions easily understood by the people of India. Mira Bai's devotional songs, primarily bhajans, describe her love, salutation, separation from Krishna, and dissatisfaction with the world. One of her most popular compositions is "Payoji maine Ram Ratan dhan payo." Mira's poems are lyrical padas in Rajasthani, with mātric poetic line being the most common meter.

3.3.2.5 Influence of the Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti movement prioritised personal devotion to God over ritualistic practices and caste distinctions. It promoted the belief that anyone, regardless of social status or gender, could achieve spiritual fulfillment through sincere devotion. The movement, which spread throughout India, had a profound impact on the populace. Reformers preached to the masses in their native languages, contributing to the evolution of languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, and Maithili. Prof. Srivastava notes that "the period of the Bhakti movement proved to be a golden era in the history of the growth of our vernacular literature."

Recap

- Sufism originated within early Islamic tradition
- Various Sufi orders and teachings were established during the Medieval Period
- Important saints: Nizamuddin Auliya, Moinuddin Chishti, Amir Khusro
- Influential through teachings and poetry
- Focuses on direct experience of the Divine
- Practices include meditation, chanting, and asceticism
- Emphasises divine love and longing for union
- Uses poetry and music to express devotion
- Incorporates local traditions and beliefs
- Creates syncretic spirituality bridging religions

- Challenges social hierarchies and emphasises equality
- Influences social and religious reform
- Four main Silsilahs: Chishti, Suhrawadi, Naqshbandi, Qadri
- The Bhakti Movement centered around the concept of bhakti
- The Bhakti movement, a transformative religious and cultural phenomenon in India, focused on individual devotion to God and began in the 7th century CE.
- The term "bhakti" originates from Sanskrit, signifying "devotion" or "love," and emphasises a personal relationship with the divine.
- The Bhakti movement's roots lie in India's rich religious traditions, particularly influenced by the Alvars and Nayanars of the Tamil region.
- Chief saints include Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Madhavacharya.
- Other notable saints: Vallabhacharya, Guru Nanak, Kabir
- The Bhakti movement promoted devotion to a specific deity, criticised the caste system, and encouraged personal spiritual experiences over ritualistic practices.

Objective Questions

1. What was the primary focus of Sufi devotion?
2. Which Sufi order emphasised silent heart meditation?
3. Which Sufi order was founded in India by Bahauddin Zakariya?
4. Which saint is associated with founding the Suhrawardi Silsilah in India?
5. Which Sufi order was founded by Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chishti?
6. Which Sufi concept refers to "the unity of existence," where God and creation are considered one?
7. Which Sufi order was involved in politics and accepted payments from sultans?
8. Which regional language was predominantly used by Tulsidas to compose his devotional works?

9. Who was a prominent Bhakti poetess known for her devotional songs dedicated to Krishna?
10. In which century did the Bhakti movement begin?
11. Who wrote the commentary on the *Brahma Sutra* entitled *Sri Bhasya*?
12. What does the term "Bhakti" mean in Sanskrit?
13. Which philosophical school was established by Madhavacharya?
14. Which Bhakti saint's hymns are included in the Sikh holy book, *Guru Granth Sahib*?

Answers

1. *Dhikr* (remembering God)
2. Naqshbandi
3. Suhrawardi
4. Khwaja Bahauddin Zakariya
5. Chisthi
6. Wahdat-al-Wajood
7. Suhrawardi
8. Awadhi
9. Mirabai
10. In the 7th century
11. Ramanuja
12. Love or devotion
13. Dvaita Vedanta
14. Kabir

Assignments

1. What were the primary beliefs and principles of the Bhakti movement?
2. How did the Bhakti movement challenge the traditional caste system in India?
3. In what ways did Sufism promote social justice and challenge societal norms?
4. Discuss the significance of Sufi orders (Silsilahs) and their impact on spiritual practices.
5. Discuss the historical circumstances that led to the rise of Sufism in India during the medieval period. How did the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate influence its growth?
6. Analyse the teachings and contributions of prominent Bhakti saints such as Ramanuja, Kabir, or Mira Bai. How did their ideas reflect the core tenets of the Bhakti movement?

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UNIT 4

Taxation and Social Stratification

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- gain insights into the political, economic, and social contexts that shaped the taxation systems and land revenue systems during the medieval period
- analyse the agrarian economy and trade networks that were foundational to tax collection
- understand the administrative frameworks and bureaucratic processes involved in tax collection
- analyse how taxation policies impacted economic development, social welfare, and their long-term impact on society

Prerequisites

The taxation system in medieval India was a crucial mechanism for state revenue and governance, influenced by various interconnected factors. The presence of strong centralised authorities, such as the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, provided the necessary governance to implement tax policies. Local administrative structures, including officials like *zamindars* and *iqtadars*, were critical for enforcing tax collection and maintaining order in rural areas.

Keywords

Taxation, *Bhaga, Khalisa, Khuts, Muqaddams, Iqtas, Dahsala* system, Social Stratification

Discussion

The period from the 13th to the 17th century in India was marked by significant political, economic, and social changes. This era saw the rise and fall of powerful dynasties, the flourishing of trade, and the complex interplay of various social groups. Central to this transformation were the systems of taxation and social stratification, which played critical roles in shaping the lives of people across the subcontinent. During this period, taxation was primarily agrarian, reflecting the economy's dependence on agriculture. Different regions adopted varying revenue systems based on their specific needs and circumstances.

3.4.1. Taxation System under Delhi Sultanate

Before the arrival of the Turks in north India, our understanding of agrarian policies and practices was limited. Cultivators had to pay various cesses, broadly categorised as *bhaga* (land revenue), *bhoga* (cesses), and *kar* (extra cesses). However, it is difficult to determine the exact portion of produce these represented or how much went to the ruler versus his subordinates or local landed elites. While the *Dharmashastras* traditionally stipulated one-sixth of the produce as payable by peasants, we hear of some kings in southern India demanding one-third or even two-thirds. In practice, land revenue demands likely depended on what peasants could be compelled to pay.

During the 13th century, there was little change in the structure of rural society. Early Turkish rulers relied on local chiefs to collect land revenue, leaving them to extract payments from peasants according to existing norms. This complicates our understanding of the exact amount demanded from cultivators. Almost a century later, Barani provides some insight into the approach of the Turkish ruling class. He records Balban advising his son, Bughra Khan, to set land revenue (*Kharaj*) at a level that did not impoverish peasants but also not so low that they grew rebellious due to excess wealth. It remains unclear how this policy was applied in practice, but it appears the intent was to maintain the traditional village setup without major interference.

The 14th century saw several new developments in the land revenue system. Alauddin Khalji raised the land-revenue demand to half in the upper Doab region up to Aligarh and in some areas of Rajasthan and Malwa. This area was made *Khalisa* land, i.e., the land-revenue of these areas should be collected there and went directly to the Imperial treasury. The land-revenue demand was based on the measurement of the area cultivated by each cultivator. Further, except in the area around Delhi, the cultivators were encouraged to pay land revenue in cash. Alauddin Khalji tried to ensure that the cultivators sold their grains to the *banjaras*(traders), while the crops were still standing in the field, i.e., without transporting them to their own stores so as to be sold later when more favorable prices might prevail. However, this had to be modified in practice because many of the cultivators themselves brought their grains for sale in the local *mandi(*market*)*.

3.4.1.1 Alauddin Khalji's Agrarian Measures

Alauddin's agrarian measures amounted to a massive intervention in village affairs. He tried to operate against the privileged sections in the villages, the *Khuts, muqaddams*, and *chaudhuris*, and, to some extent, the rich

peasants who had surplus food-grains to sell. The village cultivators like *Khuts* and *muqaddams* were suspected of passing their burden on to the weaker sections and not paying the *ghari* and *charai* taxes. In Barani's picturesque language, the *khuts* and *muqaddams* became so poor that they could not wear costly clothes and ride on Arabi and Iraqi horses. Barani, no doubt, exaggerates. But the attempt to take away all the inherited privileges of the *khuts* and *muqaddams*, or the upper sections of the landed nobility and to appoint an army of *amils*, most of whom proved to be corrupt, to supervise revenue collection was not liable to succeed.

There is an ambiguity that after the death of Alauddin Khalji, whether the system of measurement was abolished, as well as the demand for half of the produce in the *Khalisa* areas of the Doab. The restoration of the privileges of the *khuts* and *muqaddams* implies that the state no longer tried to assess the land revenue based on the holdings, i.e., the area cultivated by each individual, but assessed it as a lump sum, leaving the assessment of individuals to the *khuts* and *muqaddams*. This was also a recognition of the economic and social power wielded by the *khuts* and *muqaddams* in the countryside.

3.4.1.2 Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq's Reforms

Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq took the definite step of replacing the system of measurement by sharing in the *Khalisa* areas. This change was seen as helpful to cultivators. Under the old system, farmers bore most of the risk. The new sharing system meant both profits and losses were split between farmers and the government. Ghiyasuddin took another important step. In the territories held by the holders of *iqtas*, i.e., outside the *khalisa* areas, he ordered that the revenue demand should not be raised on the basis of guess or computation. Barani explains this policy of moderate increases by saying that the revenue demand in the areas of the *iqtas* should not be increased by "one in ten or eleven." This phrase does not mean that the increase may be one-tenth or one-eleventh. Nor does it mean that the land revenue should be one-tenth, or the theoretical minimum of one-fifth, as some modern historians have assumed. Barani nowhere mentions the scale of the revenue demand, either in the *khalisa* areas of the Doab or in the *iqtas*. Perhaps, the traditional demand in the areas outside the *khalisa* area remained one-third as before.

3.4.1.3 Taxation Policies under the Tughlaqs

Muhammad Tughlaq sought to extend and revive Alauddin Khalji's agrarian reforms across his entire empire. However, these measures led to a severe peasant uprising in the Doab region, primarily due to issues in the way land revenue was assessed and collected. Instead of basing taxes on the actual yield, the state used an artificially fixed standard yield. Furthermore, during the conversion of produce into cash, the administration applied official prices, which were often lower than market rates. The additional imposition of taxes on cattle and houses worsened the burden on the peasantry. As a result, the actual incidence of land revenue in some cases amounted to half or more of the total produce.

Like Alauddin's reforms, Muhammad Tughlaq's policies aimed to reduce the privileges of affluent village groups like the *khuts* and *muqaddams*. However, these policies also negatively impacted ordinary cultivators, leading to significant unrest in the Doab. In an attempt to improve agricultural productivity in the *khalisa* (crown) lands of the Doab, Muhammad Tughlaq introduced measures to shift cultivation from inferior

to superior crops. He also offered loans (*sondhar*) to farmers for infrastructure development, such as digging wells. This policy, however, depended on the cooperation of the wealthier landholders—the *khuts* and *muqaddams*—who had the resources to implement these changes. Unfortunately, the officials tasked with these efforts were corrupt and lacked knowledge of local conditions, which undermined the initiative.

Firuz Shah Tughlaq had greater success in agricultural reforms by constructing a canal system in Haryana, which provided consistent irrigation to the region. Though he levied an additional 10 percent tax for this service, Firuz allowed peasants the freedom to cultivate crops of their choice. His measures proved more effective in improving agricultural conditions than Muhammad Tughlaq's efforts.

3.4.2. Taxation System under the Mughals

During the medieval period, agriculture was the primary occupation, and land revenue served as the principal source of income for the empire. While additional sources of revenue included *khams* (booty), trade taxes, minting, salt tax, unclaimed property, and income from industries, the government's popularity largely depended on the success of its land revenue policy. Under Babur and Humayun, religious taxes like *zakat* (from Muslims) and *jizya* (from Hindus) were collected, but Akbar abolished these taxes, a move that was integral to his liberal approach toward peasants. However, later rulers reinstated these religious taxes, hastening the decline of the Mughal Empire.

Key Developments in the Mughal Land Revenue System

Babur divided his territory into two parts: *Khalisa* (crown land) and *Jagir* (land held by *jagirdars*). This system persisted through Humayun's unstable reign but saw significant changes under Sher Shah Suri, who reformed land and revenue practices. Humayun, after his return to power, discarded Sher Shah's reforms, but Akbar later reinstated them, closely following Sher Shah's model.

Akbar took direct control of the government in 1560 and aimed to reform the land revenue system. During the reign of Akbar the practice of distinguishing between crown lands and *jagirdari* lands, measuring crown lands, and setting revenue rates based on crop prices, was introduced and he was inspired by Sher Shah's system.

During Akbar's period the *Hal-i-Hasil* system was introduced through appointed *qanungos* (record keepers). The attempt to convert state revenue into cash succeeded partially, but the system was disrupted by the Uzbeg revolt.

During the period of Akbar, an yearly assessment and price fixing of crops was done. Through the *Nasq* or *Kankut* system, an estimate of total produce was prepared, and landlords or middlemen were given the responsibility of collecting revenue. Although this system streamlined the process, it lacked longevity.

3.4.2.1 *Dahsala* System

Under the Mughal administration, significant attention was paid to the measurement of land and the maintenance of law and justice. Raja Todar Mal revolutionised land measurement by replacing ropes with bamboo poles joined by iron rings. The standard unit of land became the *bigha*, measuring 60 x 60 yards (3,600 square yards). The *Dahsala* system, introduced by Raja Todar Mal during the reign of Emperor Akbar in the late 16th century, was a key feature of the Mughal land revenue administration. It sought to standardise and streamline revenue collection. The following are its significant features:

1. Average Yield-Based Assessment

The *Dahsala* system was based on a ten-year average of crop yields. The average productivity of different crops over the past decade was calculated to determine the revenue demand from each region. This provided a fairer and more stable estimate of the land's fertility and productivity.

2.Cash Revenue Payment (*Zabti* System)

Under the *Dahsala* system, the state revenue demand was fixed in cash rather than in kind (produce). This was a shift from earlier systems where taxes were collected in grain or produce. The cash demand was based on the prevailing market prices of the crops, thus linking taxation directly to the economy.

3. Standardisation of Revenue Rates

The system aimed to standardise revenue rates across different regions. These rates were determined by calculating the productivity and market prices, resulting in fixed rates for each crop type. This brought consistency to the tax structure and simplified revenue collection.

4. Division of Land into Categories

Agricultural land was categorised based on its fertility and productivity. This classification into *polaj* (cultivated land), *parauti* (fallow land), *chachar* (land left fallow for 3-4 years), and *banjar* (waste land) allowed for differential tax rates based on the land's potential.

5. Flexibility in Taxation

If a region suffered from poor crops due to natural calamities or droughts, the *Dahsala* system allowed for adjustments in the tax demand. This flexibility helped avoid economic distress for cultivators during difficult times.

6. Transparency and Record-Keeping

Detailed records were maintained under the *Dahsala* system, which improved transparency in revenue assessment and collection. It facilitated better governance by enabling a clearer understanding of the state's revenue and land resources.

7. Supervision by Local Officers

Revenue collection was overseen by a hierarchy of officials such as *amils* (revenue officers) and *qanungos* (record keepers), ensuring proper implementation and minimising corruption. The system was closely monitored by higher officials to prevent abuses by local officers.

The *Dahsala* system was a significant reform that contributed to the stability and efficiency of the Mughal revenue administration, helping to ensure fairness and regularity in the taxation process.

3.4.2.2 Shortcomings of the Mughal Land Revenue System

Despite its innovations, the Mughal land revenue system faced significant challenges, many of which created deep-rooted problems within the agrarian society.

- **Over-Assessment and High Tax Burden:** One of the most significant flaws of the Mughal revenue system was the over-assessment of land. The state often demanded between one-third to one-half of the land's produce as tax. This was an extremely high rate, particularly during times of poor harvests. Peasants had little margin for saving or reinvesting in their lands, which stifled agricultural growth and

personal prosperity. In years of crop failure, such high taxation often pushed farmers into debt, poverty, or even abandonment of their land.

- **Exploitation by Zamindars:** The *zamindars*, who were local intermediaries or landholders, played a key role in collecting revenue on behalf of the state. However, these *zamindars* often exploited their position by extracting more taxes than the official demand. This excessive taxation burdened the peasantry even further, leading to widespread resentment. Additionally, *zamindars* often enjoyed significant local power, and their exploitation was difficult for the central authorities to regulate, particularly in distant provinces.
- **Corruption Among Officials:** Centralised control over revenue collection also opened the door to corruption. Many officials, including the *mansabdars*, manipulated the system for personal gain. The lack of an effective audit or oversight mechanism meant that corruption often went unchecked. Officials would underreport tax collections, misappropriate funds, or demand bribes from peasants, thereby increasing the financial burden on the rural population.
- **Shift to Cash-Based Payments:** During the later years of Mughal rule, particularly under Aurangzeb, there was a growing emphasis on cash-based taxation. This shift was problematic for the predominantly agrarian economy, where barter was still prevalent, especially in rural areas. Many peasants struggled to convert their agricultural produce into cash, and the fluctuating prices of crops made it difficult for them to meet fixed cash tax demands. This further contributed to financial distress among the farming community.
- **Lack of Technological and Infrastructure Development:** Despite providing *taccavi* loans, the Mughal administration did not invest enough in large-scale infrastructural improvements, particularly in irrigation. Agriculture in many parts of the empire remained dependent on rainfall, making it vulnerable to droughts. The lack of technological advancement in farming and irrigation hindered agricultural productivity. This issue became more acute in drought-prone regions, where farmers were often unable to meet tax demands due to poor yields.

3.4.3 Social Stratification in Medieval India

Medieval India, stretching from the 6th to the 18th centuries, was characterised by a complex and multifaceted social structure shaped by religion, caste, economy, and political power. This period saw the rise and fall of numerous dynasties, each contributing to the intricacies of social hierarchies and interactions. Two major periods, the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) and the Mughal Empire (1526-1707), brought distinct social transformations that left lasting impacts on the Indian subcontinent.

3.4.3.1 The Caste System and Regional Variations

At the core of social stratification in medieval India was the caste system, dividing society into four principal *varnas*: Brahmanas (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (merchants), and Sudras (labourers). This hierarchical structure was further complicated by the emergence of numerous *jatis* (sub-castes), which dictated social interactions, professions, and even marriage, reinforcing rigid societal boundaries. However, regional variations were significant. In northern India, during the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal

period the traditional Hindu elite shared power with Turkish, Afghan, and Central Asian nobles, leading to a dual social system where zamindars (landholders) coexisted with foreign nobility. In southern India, kingdoms like the Cholas and Vijayanagara had their own distinct hierarchies, with local chieftains and a powerful agrarian class dominating the social landscape.

3.4.3.2 Social Stratification in the Delhi Sultanate

With the establishment of the Slave Dynasty and followed by the Khaljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids, and Lodis, added layers of complexity to the existing caste-based social order. A new ruling class of Turkish, Afghan, and Persian origin emerged, often occupying the highest strata of society, displacing the traditional Hindu elites. The *khuts* and *muqaddams* (village leaders) represented the wealthy rural classes, while the bulk of the peasantry remained tied to the land.

The Sultanate period also saw the rise of new social identities through conversions to Islam, which offered opportunities for upward mobility, especially among lower-caste Hindus. However, these converts often faced marginalisation, as they were not fully accepted by either Hindu society or the established Muslim elites. The tension between the landowning classes, rural peasantry, and the state became a significant feature of this era, as seen in frequent revolts and uprisings in response to harsh land revenue demands, such as those during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq.

3.4.3.3 Social Stratification in the Mughal Era

Under the Mughals, social stratification became even more defined, with an emphasis on centralised control, aristocratic hierarchy, and patronage systems. The Mughal court was dominated by a multi-ethnic nobility that included Turks, Afghans, Persians, and Rajputs, as well as indigenous groups like the Marathas and Sikhs, who were co-opted into imperial administration over time. The Mughal ruling class, known as the *mansabdars*, were ranked according to military and administrative service, which determined their power and wealth. The *mansabdari* system, introduced by Akbar, became a critical feature of Mughal governance, blending Persian bureaucratic structures with Indian traditions of land control.

Land ownership was central to the social hierarchy in the Mughal era, and the zamindari system continued to play a prominent role. Zamindars acted as intermediaries between the state and the peasantry, collecting taxes and managing local governance. While the zamindars were often influential and wealthy, their power was checked by the central Mughal administration, which sought to maintain control over land revenue through reforms like Raja Todar Mal's *Dahsala* system, which standardised taxation. The Mughal era also saw the persistence of the caste system, although with greater fluidity, particularly in urban centers where merchants, artisans, and traders could achieve significant prosperity and influence.

3.4.3.4 Role of Religion

Religion played a pivotal role in shaping social stratification during the medieval period. The introduction of Islam to India brought new religious and social dynamics. The Muslim elite, comprising nobles, military leaders, and administrators, held the highest positions in society, often at odds with the traditional Hindu power structures.

3.4.3.5 Economic Factors and Social Mobility

Economic factors significantly influenced

social stratification. The zamindari system established a powerful class of landlords who controlled vast tracts of agricultural land, exerting influence over local governance and society. Peasants, who formed the majority of the population, bore the burden of heavy land revenue demands, contributing to frequent revolts, particularly under oppressive rulers. However, the urban economy offered some avenues for social mobility. Merchants, traders, and artisans in cities like Delhi, Agra, and Lahore flourished under the Mughals, contributing to a vibrant commercial life that allowed them to negotiate their place within the rigid social hierarchy.

3.4.3.6 Gender and Social Stratification

Gender was another factor that influenced social stratification. In both the Sultanate and Mughal periods, the status of women varied by class and region. Noblewomen, especially within the royal courts, could wield considerable influence in matters of politics, family alliances, and administration. However, women from lower classes, particularly peasants, were more likely to be confined to labour-intensive roles in agriculture and domestic duties. Practices like *purdah* (seclusion) among the aristocracy and the increasing institutionalisation of patriarchy during the Mughal era further restricted women's role in public life and access to education.

Despite the rigid social hierarchies, the medieval period was marked by rich cultural interactions. The blending of Persian, Central Asian, and Indian traditions under the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughals led to significant developments in art, architecture, music, and literature. The Mughal rulers, especially Akbar, were patrons of cultural synthesis, promoting arts that transcended social and religious boundaries. Festivals, poetry, and music were shared across class lines, and Sufi and Bhakti movements during this period further bridged the divides between different social and religious groups.

Recap

- Significant political, economic, and social changes occurred from 13th-17th century India
- The Delhi Sultanate taxed cultivators through land revenue and extra cesses
- Early Turkish rulers relied on chiefs to pay land-revenue
- Alauddin Khalji raised land-revenue demand to half in certain regions
- Revenue was based on cultivated land measurement in some areas (*Khalisa*).
- Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq replaced area measurement with revenue sharing in

Khalisa areas.

- Muhammad Tughlaq's attempts to extend Alauddin's system caused peasant uprisings
- Agricultural reforms in the Doab included crop improvement by Muhammad Tughlaq
- Land revenue was the Mughal Empire's primary income source
- Abdul Mazid Khan became Akbar's first finance minister in 1560
- Todar Mal reformed the Mughal land revenue system with the *Dahsala* system
- Medieval India's social structure was shaped by religion, caste, and economy
- Babur divided his territory into crown land (*Khalisa*) and land held by *jagirdars* (*Jagir*), with significant reforms later by Sher Shah Suri and Akbar
- Akbar reformed the revenue system, distinguishing crown lands from *jagirdari* lands and implementing crop-based revenue rates inspired by Sher Shah Suri's model.
- Raja Todar Mal's *Dahsala* system standardised revenue collection by calculating average crop yields and fixing cash-based revenue demands.
- The caste system dominated medieval Indian society, but regional variations, especially under Muslim rule, introduced new dynamics and hierarchies.
- The Mughal period reinforced social hierarchies through centralised aristocracy, land ownership, and the *mansabdari* system, with religious tolerance fluctuating under different rulers.
- Economic conditions, especially land ownership and urban trade, played a significant role in shaping social hierarchies, with some opportunities for mobility in urban centers.
- Gender stratification was marked by class distinctions, with noblewomen exercising influence, while lower-class women were restricted to labour-intensive roles and patriarchal norms.

Objective Questions

1. Which Sultan of Delhi Sultanate replaced the measurement system with a sharing system for land revenue?
2. Who increased the land-revenue demand to half in the upper Doab region up to Aligarh, and in some areas of Rajasthan and Malwa?
3. Name the land which was directly under the emperor.
4. What was the land under the possession of *Jagirdars* known as?
5. Who introduced the *Dahsala* system?
6. Who introduced the judicial book *Fatwa-i-Jahandari*?
7. When was Raja Todar Mal appointed as the *Diwan* of Gujarat?
8. In which Mughal ruler's period the *Nasq* or *Kankut* system was introduced?
9. Which system was based on the estimation of a ten year average crop yields?
10. Name the loan offered to the farmers for infrastructural development during the Mughal period.

Answers

1. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq
2. Alauddin Khalji
3. *Khalisa*
4. *Jagir*
5. Raja Todar Mal
6. Aurangzeb
7. 1573 CE
8. Akbar
9. *Dahsala* system
10. *Sondher*

Assignments

1. Examine the various forms of taxation introduced during this period, the administrative mechanisms involved, and their impact on the economy and society.
2. Consider how the taxation system contributed to the consolidation of Mughal power and its relationship with local governance.
3. How did Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq's agrarian policies differ from those of Alauddin Khalji?
4. Discuss the causes of the peasant uprising in the Doab region during the Medieval period.
5. What were the factors that contributed to social stratification in Medieval India?

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BLOCK

Colonial India (18th century to 19th century)

UNIT 1

Mercantile Interest in the Indian Sub-continent

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- know the general circumstances of the Indian subcontinent prior to the establishment of colonialism
- understand how the Indian subcontinent transitioned from a pre-colonial to a colonial order
- examine the mercantile motivations of Europeans for the Indian subcontinent

Prerequisites

To understand the mercantile interest in the Indian subcontinent during the 18th century, it is essential to explore the broader context of European colonial expansion and the global trade networks that had begun to flourish since the 16th century. The establishment of the British, Dutch, Portuguese, and French East India Companies, alongside a growing demand for Indian textiles, spices, and raw materials, played a pivotal role in transforming the region into a hub of commerce. The weakening of the Mughal Empire created power vacuums that enabled European trading companies to exercise both political and economic control, leading to intense competition among them. This period saw the blending of commerce and empire-building, where mercantile interests paved the way for eventual colonial domination of the subcontinent. . Furthermore, India was renowned for its rich natural resources—such as cotton, silk, spices, and tea—that were highly sought after in Europe. The

demand for Indian textiles, in particular, drove European traders to establish and expand their presence. Technological advances in navigation and shipbuilding also made long-distance sea trade more feasible, while growing European consumer markets fuelled an increase in global commerce. The shift toward mercantilism, with its focus on controlling trade routes and accumulating wealth, made the Indian subcontinent a critical region for competing European powers seeking economic dominance. Understanding these shifts in political power, European trade policies, and the economic changes of local Indian rulers is crucial for studying this phase of history.

Keywords

Mercantilism, Portuguese, Dutch, Industrial Revolution, Spice Route

Discussion

The Industrial Revolution influenced the path of economic change in the Third World. Industrializing countries in Western Europe benefited from the larger international availability of capital and technological know-how, while colonies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America served as sources of raw materials and absorbers of finished goods. India's economy in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century was not typical due to its size and varied economic structure.

The discovery of the maritime route to the East Indies via the Cape of Good Hope in the fifteenth century opened new opportunities for trade between Europe and Asia. European merchants began procuring Asian goods like spices and silk, but since Europe lacked competitive goods to trade in return, they relied on precious metals to pay for these imports. The Portuguese Crown initially dominated this trade, especially in pepper, but faced difficulties in maintaining its control. This led Dutch merchants from the northern Netherlands to challenge the Portuguese monopoly by entering the spice trade directly. In 1595, the Amsterdam-based 'Company of Far Lands' successfully sent four ships to the East Indies, yielding an enormous profit of 400 percent. Alarmed by the growing Dutch influence, English merchants in London sought a monopoly charter for the East India trade to secure their own share of the lucrative market.

4.1.1 Advent of Europeans

Before the advent of Europeans in India, the subcontinent had a well-established and vibrant trade network that operated on both regional and international levels. Indian merchants engaged in extensive commercial relations with neighbouring regions, including Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa, exchanging a variety of goods such as spices, textiles, precious stones, and metals. The Indian economy was characterised by a complex system of local markets and trade

routes, with important centers in cities like Calicut, Cochin, and Surat. The maritime trade was particularly significant, facilitated by monsoon winds, which allowed ships to navigate the Indian Ocean with relative ease. Indian textiles, especially cotton and silk, were in high demand across the globe, and the trade in spices like pepper and cardamom positioned India as a crucial player in the global economy. Moreover, the Indian subcontinent was home to various kingdoms and empires, each contributing to a dynamic marketplace with diverse cultural influences and practices. This flourishing trade environment was characterised by intricate social and economic networks that predated European involvement, highlighting India's historical significance as a center of commerce and cultural exchange long before colonial powers arrived.

The Spice Routes are a network of sea routes that connect the East with the West, stretching over 15,000 kilometers. These routes have been in use since ancient times, driven by trade and the sharing of knowledge between peoples. Spices, such as cinnamon and other items like ivory, silk, porcelain, metals, and gemstones, were traded across long distances, resulting in the sharing of knowledge. The demand for spices was primarily due to their ritual and medicinal value, which could only grow in the tropical East. The spice trade was a significant source of wealth and power, with traders from Indonesia, the Middle East, and the North trading with each other. The wealth from trading spices brought great power and influence, leading to bloody battles over the centuries.

Trade between Europe and Asia increased significantly during the Greek era, with land routes connecting Greece to the northwest of the Indian subcontinent via Anatolia. During Roman times, land and sea routes from the Mediterranean basin to southern India flourished. However, the Ottoman Empire's rise in 1453 abruptly ended trade between East and West, causing the Silk Road to lose its significance.

4.1.1.1 Arrival of Portuguese

The first recorded voyage from Europe to the Indian subcontinent passing through the Cape of Good Hope was made by the Portuguese when they discovered the sea route to India. It was carried out between 1495 and 1499 under the direction of the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama. The crew of 170 men embarked on an expedition to India in 1497. They had sailing charts marked with the positions of the African coast, quadrants, astrolabes, tables with calculations, needle and bobs, one ship carrying groceries sufficient for three years, and continuous replenishment along the coast of Africa. Despite the adversities of the trip, the crew reached India on May 20, 1498 (reached Kappakadavu or Kappad, near Calicut, of Kerala). The era of European colonialism in India begins at this point.

Sea Route to India

In 1501, they set up a trading factory at Cannanore, which led to the establishment

of Portuguese centres in India. In 1505, Francisco de Almeida was appointed as the first Portuguese governor in India, and Alfonso de Albuquerque captured Goa from the Sultan of Bijapur in 1510. By the end of the 16th century, the Portuguese had captured Goa, Daman, Diu, and Salsette, as well as a vast stretch along the Indian coast.

The Portuguese arrived in India with mixed reception from Indian traders, with some welcoming them as potential partners in trade and others viewing them with suspicion. To establish a foothold, the Portuguese formed alliances with local rulers and engaged in hostile encounters, such as the Battle of Calicut in 1500. As they consolidated power, they established coastal forts and trading posts along the western and eastern coasts of India, including Goa, Cochin (Kochi), and Diu. Goa became the administrative capital and a vital hub for trade between Europe and Asia.

The Portuguese also sought to spread Christianity in India, establishing missions and churches, with figures like St. Francis Xavier playing a pivotal role in this missionary work. However, the imposition of Christianity often met resistance from local beliefs and customs, leading to tensions between the Portuguese and indigenous communities.

The Portuguese presence in India had profound cultural implications, facilitating the exchange of ideas, technology, and cultural practices between Europe and India, introducing new agricultural products, culinary practices, and artistic influences. Despite their early successes, the Portuguese faced significant challenges in maintaining their dominance in India. By the late 16th century, competition from other European powers, such as the Dutch and the English, began to undermine their control over trade routes and territories.

4.1.1.2 The English East India Company

The English East India Company was formed in 1600 to trade with East and Southeast Asia and India. It became an agent of British imperialism in India from the early 18th century to the mid-19th century, and served as a catalyst for the expansion of British influence in China.

The establishment of the English East India Company on December 31, 1600, marked a significant turning point in the history of British trade and colonialism in India. Formed through a Royal Charter issued by the British Crown, the Company was initially authorised to trade in the East Indies, operating under the official name "Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies." This Charter granted the Company a monopoly on trade in the region, enabling it to dominate the lucrative spice and textile markets that had long attracted European powers. From the early 18th century to the middle of the 19th century, the Company, which began as a monopolistic trading organisation, got involved in politics and served as an agent of British imperialism in India.

In Surat, the factory was established in 1608 as a trade and transit hub. The first ship to anchor at Surat was Sir William Hawkins' ship, which arrived in 1608 on a voyage under his command. During his two years as an envoy at the court of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, Hawkins unsuccessfully attempted to secure trade concessions. In Masulipattanam (present-day Andhra Pradesh), south India's first company factory was established by 1610. The Company was making a lot of money from its trade with India. The East India Company (EIC) was frequently at odds with other European companies, such as the Portuguese and Dutch, who had established themselves earlier in

the subcontinent.

The Battle of Swally (Suvali in Surat), which took place in 1612, involved Portuguese and Company forces. The Company triumphed handily, which helped the EIC become India's dominant force and put an end to Portuguese hegemony. Following this, the Company made the decision to establish a territorial base in India. Sir Thomas Roe was sent to Jahangir's court in 1612 on behalf of British King James I. Roe was successful in obtaining the Company's exclusive rights to stay in Surat and establish factories there and in a few other places. The Company gradually gained an advantage over other European competitors and established trading posts in Surat (1619), Madras (1639), Bombay (1668), and Calcutta (1690). The main factories evolved into the walled forts of Madras' Fort St. George, Bengal's Fort William, and Bombay Castle.

4.1.1.3 The Dutch East India Company

The "United East India Company" (later known as the Dutch East India Company) was founded in 1602. The Dutch East India Company (known in Dutch as the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or VOC), is regarded as the world's first multinational corporation. Additionally, it was the first Company to issue stock. It was the first Company to be granted authority to engage in colonial activities like waging war, putting death row inmates to death, creating new colonies, and minting coins. Indonesia was the site of its first permanent trading post. They started their first factory in India in Masulipattanam in 1605. This was followed by factories in Pulicat (1610), Surat (1616), Bimilipatam (1641), and Chinsurah (1653). They built a factory in Pipli, Bengal, but later abandoned it.

The Dutch succeeded in displacing the Portuguese as the most dominant power in European trade, and their main objective remained aggressively eradicating the Portuguese and British merchandise powers from India and Southeast Asia. In 1610, they built a factory in Pulicat, which quickly became their main hub of activity. Later, it was referred to as Fort Geldria. The Portuguese suffered due to the harshness and intolerance of Albuquerque's bad successors, while the Dutch struggled as a result of the corruption of the burgeoning English and French powers. Additionally, the Dutch government interfered heavily, which led to the eventual extinction of the Dutch in India. The Dutch were successful in driving the Portuguese out of Ceylon between 1638 and 1658. They occupied Malacca in 1641. They succeeded in taking the Cape of Good Hope in 1652.

The Dutch East India Company reached its zenith in 1669, when it had an army of 10,000 soldiers, 150 merchant ships, 40 warships, 50,000 employees, and was the richest private Company in the world. The Battle of Colachel (1741), a conflict between the State of Travancore army and the Dutch East India Company (Marthanda Varma defeated the Dutch troops), was the most significant event in India. This significant loss of a European power in India signalled the beginning of the Dutch Influence's demise. In 1800, the Dutch East India Company was formally dissolved as a result of fraud and bankruptcy. The Dutch had long since lost their influence in India, but they still held sway in Indonesia. Dutch East Indies, a nationalised colony that was roughly within the borders of contemporary Indonesia, was founded by the Dutch government.

4.1.1.4 The French East India Company

The French were the last Europeans to arrive in India. In order to conduct operations with India, the French East India

Company was established in 1664 during the reign of King Louis XIV. The French built their first factory in Surat in 1668, and they built a second one in Masaulipatam in 1669. The Mughal Subedar of Bengal permitted the French to establish a township at Chandernagore in 1673.

The French took possession of the village of Pondicherry from the Sultan of Bijapur in 1674 and built a prosperous city there that would later serve as their main stronghold in India. With time, the French East India Company expanded its trade hubs at Mahe, Karaikal, Balasore, and Qasim Bazar. The French primarily came to India for trade and commerce. The French, like the British, had only commercial goals from the time of their arrival until 1741. Yanam was conquered by the French East India Company in 1723, Mahe on the Malabar Coast in 1725, and Karaikal in 1739.

As time went on, their motivations changed, and they started to view India as their colony. The first step towards achieving this realisation and goal was the appointment of Joseph Francois Dupleix as the Governor of the French East India Company in 1741. During his administration, political motivations started to emerge clearly and even trump their business goals. Dupleix, who possessed exceptional talent, exploited the rivalry between local tyrants and saw an opportunity to establish the French empire in India. He excelled at diplomacy and intrigue, which helped him gain respect in the Indian political system. But it was the British who challenged the French under Dupleix and subsequently both powers had a face-off. When British officer Robert Clive arrived in India in 1744, he soundly defeated Dupleix. In 1754 following this defeat, Dupleix was called back to France.

Thomas Arthur, comte de Lally who was sent by the French government to drive the British out of India got some initial success particularly when he pulled down Fort St. David in Cuddalore District in 1758. However, the Battle of Wandiwash between the French and the British broke the back of the French as they had to lose Hyderabad region, which led to the British siege of Pondicherry in 1760. The British destroyed Pondicherry in 1761. The French thus lost control of South India. Pondicherry was later returned to France in 1765 in accordance with the terms of the peace treaty signed with Britain in 1763.

4.1.2 The Reasons for the English East India Company's Victory Over its European Competitors

The Mughal Empire's Decay: Following Aurangzeb's death in 1707, the empire faced a succession of weak rulers who were unable to maintain central authority, leading to increasing factionalism and regionalism among the provinces under the Empire. The heavy taxation imposed to finance Aurangzeb's military campaigns in the Deccan further alienated local rulers and peasantry, inciting revolts and civil wars. Simultaneously, the emergence of powerful regional powers, such as the Marathas, Sikhs, and Rajputs, further eroded Mughal power. Additionally, the arrival of European colonial powers, particularly the British and the French, intensified the empire's vulnerabilities, as they began to exploit the weakened political landscape. The culmination of these factors ultimately led to the disintegration of Mughal authority, paving the way for British colonial domination in India by the mid-19th century.

The Modest Beginnings of the Company: The East India Company was founded in 1600 as a joint stock Company of London merchants to meet Dutch competition. It had the monopoly of all trade from England to the East and was permitted to carry bullion out of the country to finance its trade. In 1615, Thomas Roe reached out to the court

of Jahangir to establish a factory at Surat. In 1623, the EIC were driven out of Indonesia due to the Dutch East Indies' strong foothold. The East India Company moved on to trading with India, setting up factories in Surat, Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. In 1687, Bombay became the headquarters of the west coast, and by 1715, the Company had established bases and expanded trade around the Persian Gulf, Southeast and East Asia.

The Complete Monopoly and Conquest: The War of Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War in the 1740s caused animosity between European competitors in the sub-continent and France. Between 1756 and 1760, the British defeated the French threat with Governor General Robert Clive leading the British army. The EIC became a powerful player in local polity and was offered financial help from merchants and bankers. The Mughal attack on Calcutta's Fort William in June 1756 aimed to assert control over the increasingly powerful British East India Company. However, the assault was short-lived due to the Nawab Siraj ud-Daulah's lack of resources and the inability to sustain a prolonged siege. The British quickly regrouped and received reinforcements, leading to their successful recapture of Calcutta and ultimately paving the way for British dominance in Bengal following the decisive Battle of Plassey in 1757. The Battle of Buxar in 1764 led to the Mughal emperor signing a treaty with the East India Company, granting them diwani rights of Bengal and the right to collect tax revenue. By the early nineteenth century, the EIC was the dominant political power in India; with direct control over two-thirds of the subcontinent and indirect control over the rest.

4.1.3 The British Colonialism of India

The English East India Company's (EEIC) initial and primary function in India was to conduct trade. Through the Royal Charter of 1600, the Company obtained permission from the British Queen to do that. However, after establishing fortified trade centres and trade settlements at various strategic locations throughout India, they also displayed political interests. In India, the period of development when the Company went from being a trader to a ruler is known as the capitalist colonial period.

The early voyages of the Company proved quite profitable. But during the initial days, the Company faced stiff competition from the Dutch and the Portuguese. Meanwhile, these challenges were not enough to stop it from making rapid progress. Towards the end of the 17th century, the Company grew into a well-organised capitalist monopolised Company, i.e., the most powerful private Company in history.

Captain Hawkins received the royal farman from Mughal Emperor Jahangir so he could build factories on the western coast. Later, Sir Thomas Roe was able to secure the farman to build factories across the entire Mughal empire. Followed by Jahangir's concession for trade in 1611, the Company carried peaceful trade and established trade centres at different parts of India. Soon they established powerful trade centres and forts all over India. The English East India Company obtained a three-mile-long strip of land from Damarla Venkatadri Nayaka, the Nayaka of Wandiwash, in 1639. This land grant was renewed in 1642 and 1645 respectively, and the Company became the owners of the village and exercised their rules and regulations there. In 1785, Madras became one of three provinces established by the East India Company in India.

Bombay Island was under Portuguese control when the British arrived in India. Through a marriage treaty, Charles II of England acquired Bombay on 11 May 1661(through the royal dowry of Catherine

Braganza, the Portuguese Princess, by way of his marriage treaty). The land was then leased in fee tail by the East India Company via the Royal Charter of 27 March 1668. Further, the trade settlements in the western coast were controlled from Bombay. The Pitt's India Act of 1784 realised Bombay as one of the three provinces under the direct rule of East India Company.

From trading posts established in Hugli under Emperor Jahangir in 1612, the Bengal Presidency was born. The Company built a factory on the Hugli River's banks in 1651. The merchants were persuaded to locate close to the factory by them. After Fort William was built, the Hugli trade location became a fortified settlement by 1696. Additionally, they obtained "Royal Farman" from the Mughal court to facilitate duty-free trade through the Bay of Bengal. They built the city of Calcutta thereafter acquiring three sizable villages, namely Sutanuti, Gobindapur, and Kalikata, from the local landlords. Fort William became a strategic location in the north-eastern part of the country. The English East India Company's capital was located in Fort William.

4.1.3.1 Battle of Plassey

The EEIC experienced direct conflicts and wars due to increased capitalist colonial interests, leading to the elimination of other European opponents. Alivardi Khan and Siraj-ud-Daulah were the Nawabs of Bengal. There emerged a tension between the Company and the Nawabs, culminating in the Battle of Plassey. The 'Black Hole Tragedy' was a justification for the revenge and conquest of the East India Company during the Seven Years War. After Siraj-ud-Daulah's capture of Fort William, a rumour was spread that the Nawab killed English prisoners, leading to a conspiracy between Jagat Seths, Robert Clive and Mir Jafar, the Commander in Chief of Bengal. On 23 June 1757, the Nawab lost the battle due to the treachery of Mir Jafar and Robert Clive. Robert Clive emerged victorious, and Mir Jafar was appointed as the new Nawab of Bengal.

Political Effects of the Battle

The Battle of Plassey marked the beginning of British rule in India, as Mir Jafar became the new Nawab of Bengal and gave large sums of money and zamindari rights of 24 parganas to the East India Company. The victory established the military supremacy of the English in Bengal, ousting their main rivals, the French. They gained territories for a well-equipped military force and increased their prestige. However, there was no apparent change in the form of government, and the supreme control of affairs passed to Clive, whose support Mir Jafar relied on. The English recognised their sovereignty over Calcutta and posted a resident at the Nawab's court.

The direct result of the Battle was the political growth of the East India Company. The Battle of Plassey is considered the foundation stone of British rule in India. The Company acquired Bengal's trade and commercial control by using the Nawab Mir Jafar.

The misuse of *Farman* and *Dastak*, and also the trade expansionist aspiration of the English East India Company led to another clash in Bengal. After the defeat at Plassey, Siraj-ud-Daulah was assassinated and Mir Jafar, who made the Nawab. But he failed to please the Company, and he was replaced by Mir Qasim. The Company's expansionist interests were not advanced through this political change, too. In his turn, Mir Qasim challenged the authority of the East India Company and started to remove the trade concessions they enjoyed. While realising a conspiracy to remove him from the throne, the Nawab made secret alliances with the Mughal ruler and the Nawab of Awadh

to eliminate the Company from Bengal.

4.1.3.2.The Battle of Buxar

The battle of Buxar was the decisive battle that defined the British as the political head of Bengal, which was fought between the Company and the combined force of Mir Kasim, the Nawab of Bengal, Nawab of Oudh and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II. On 22 October 1764, the Battle of Buxar took place, and the combined native army was defeated. In 1765, the Allahabad Treaty was signed by Shuja-ud-daulah and Shah Alam with Robert Clive, the newly appointed Governor of the Company in Bengal. Through this treaty, the English Company secured the *Diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha, which gave the Company the right to collect revenue from these territories. Also, the Nawab of Awadh and the Mughal Emperor have become the pensioners of the Company.

The revenue administration was managed by the Company then through a political arrangement called '**the Dual Government**'. Now, the revenue from India could finance the Company's expenses like the maintenance of the military, and purchase of raw cotton materials from India, and meet the cost of building the Company's fort and offices at Calcutta. By 1765, the British had become the virtual rulers of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha.

4.1.3.3 The Carnatic Wars

The Carnatic Wars were a series of conflicts between the English East India Company and the French East India Company in India. The First Carnatic War (1740-1748) was an offshoot of the Austrian War of Succession and ended with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. The English sought support from the Nawab but were defeated at the hands of the French. The Second Carnatic War was a civil war of succession between the French and English, with the French advancing victorious. Robert Clive recaptured Arcot in 1751 and made Muhammad Ali the Nawab of Carnatic. The Third Carnatic War began in 1756 and ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The victory in Carnatic enhanced British fame, and they were left alone to rule India.

4.1.3.4 The Anglo-Mysore Wars

The Conquest of Mysore was an Islamic native state consolidated by Hyder Ali in 1761. He attempted to expel the English East India Company through the consolidation of the entire south. To conquer Mysore, the English fought four wars with it. In 1766, a tripartite alliance was formed against Haider Ali by the Britishers, the Nizam Ali of Hyderabad and the Marathas. The Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-1784) was set forth when Haider attacked the Carnatic and captured Arcot.

Tipu Sultan continued the task and diplomatically entered into a peace treaty with the Company in 1784. In 1790, Tipu Sultan attacked Travancore and caused the third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-1792). He signed the peace treaty of Srirangapatanam in March 1792, which required Mysore to surrender nearly half of their territory to the British and pay a war indemnity of over three crore rupees. The victory in the Anglo-Mysore war made the East India Company the political masters in South India.

4.1.3.5 The Anglo-Maratha Wars

The Anglo- Maratha wars resulted in a series of conflicts between the East India Company and the Maratha Confederacy, including the first Anglo-Maratha war (1775-1782) and the second war (1803-1805). The Peshwa accepted British protection in 1802, but the Sindhia and Bhonsle families contested the agreement. The final battle of the Anglo-Maratha struggle (1817-1818) began after Lord Hastings was appointed as Governor-General of India. The Peshwa

was defeated in the conflict and had to sign the Treaty of Poona in 1817, ceding the Konkan, Malwa, and Bundelkhand territories to the British. The Third Anglo-Maratha War of 1817–1819 destroyed Maratha's power, giving the Company total dominance over the regions south of the Vindhya Mountains.

4.1.3.6 The Anglo-Sikh Wars

The expansionist ambitions of the British in northwestern India resulted in two wars between the English East India Company and the Sikh power. The first conflict was caused by mutual suspicions and the turbulence of the Sikh army, which was defeated at Mudki, Firozpur, Aliwal, and Sobraon, respectively. The conflicts were settled through the Lahore Peace Treaty on 9th March 1846. The final Anglo-Sikh War began with a native revolt at Multan in April 1848, which became a national revolt when the Sikh army joined the rebels on September 14.

During Lord Hastings' governor-generalship from 1813 to 1823, a new "paramountcy" policy was put into place. The Company now asserted that because of its supreme or paramount authority, it was legitimate to annex or threaten to annex any Indian kingdom. Later, British policies were still influenced by this viewpoint. Because they were worried about a Russian invasion during these times, the British shifted their control to the northwest. Between 1838 and 1842, the British engaged in a protracted conflict with Afghanistan, establishing indirect Company rule there. Sind was seized and Punjab was annexed in 1849.

4.1.4 Expansion of the Company Rule

The East India Company in India changed its strategy of power expansion through strategic military-political policies over the native Indian states after a period of direct conflicts or wars. Through the Residents, the Company officials began interfering in the internal affairs of Indian states. Sometimes, the Company forced the states into a "subsidiary alliance". According to the terms of this alliance, Indian rulers were not allowed to have their independent armed forces. They will be protected by the Company but have to pay for the "subsidiary forces" that the Company maintains for the purpose of this protection. If the Indian rulers failed to make the payment, then part of their territory was taken away as a penalty.

The final wave of annexations took place under Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General from 1848 to 1856, who implemented the policy of Doctrine of Lapse. According to the doctrine, an Indian king's kingdom would "lapse" or become a part of Company territory if the king died without a male heir. Simply by using this doctrine, numerous kingdoms were annexed, as seen in the cases of Satara (1848), Sambalpur (1850), Udaipur (1852), Nagpur (1853), and Jhansi (1854). Finally, the Company seized control of Awadh in 1856. Now, the British claimed that they seized control of Awadh in order to free the populace from the "misgovernment" of the Nawab, which incensed the Nawab, who was overthrown. Later, the people of Awadh joined the massive uprising that started in 1857.

An important factor in the growth of the Company's power was played by Warren Hastings, who served as governor-general from 1772 to 1885. The first Governor-General, Warren Hastings, brought about a number of administrative reforms, particularly in the area of justice. During his period, the Company had expanded its influence beyond Bengal to include Bombay and Madras, which were regarded as separate administrative regions known as Presidencies. The highest ranking official in the administration was the Governor-General. A new Supreme Court was established by the Regulating Act of 1773, and a court of

appeal, the Sadar Nizamat Adalat, was also established in Calcutta. The principal figure in an Indian district was the Collector, whose main job was to collect revenue and taxes and maintain law and order in his district with the help of judges, police officers, etc.

Recap

- India and the West had been trading partners since ancient times via a land route.
- After the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople in 1453, they seized control of traditional trade routes, prompting Europeans to seek new, particularly maritime, routes.
- Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese navigator, discovered a new trade route in 1498 and became the first European to reach India by sea in 1498, arriving in Calicut, Kerala.
- The Portuguese were the first to establish colonies in India.
- The Portuguese could easily hold their positions against India's strong land forces because of their maritime superiority.
- The Dutch East India Company was established in 1602.
- The Dutch people were given permission by their government to wage war, sign treaties, conquer lands, and erect fortifications.
- A group of English traders established the Merchant Adventurers in 1599 in order to conduct trade in the East.
- In 1600, the queen granted it permission and exclusive rights to trade with the East.
- The British were consolidated in Bengal as a result of the Battle of Plassey, which took place between the British East India Company and the Nawab of Bengal and his French allies.
- The Battle of Plassey marked the beginning of British political supremacy in India, paving the way for British mastery of Bengal and, eventually, the whole of India.
- It boosted British prestige and raised them to the status of a major contender for the Indian Empire.
- The rich revenues of Bengal enabled them to organise a strong army and meet the cost of conquest.
- The British fought four wars with Mysore and the Marathas.

Objective Questions

1. Which European power established the first permanent trading post in India at Masulipatnam?
2. Who was the Governor of the French East India Company known for attempting to expand French influence in India during the mid-18th century?
3. Where was the Headquarters of the English East India Company in India?
4. Which battle is known as the 'Waterloo' of the French East India Company in India?
5. In which year was the Srirangapatnam Peace Treaty signed?
6. In which year did the Battle of Plassey take place?
7. What was a significant outcome of the Battle of Plassey in 1757?
8. Which policy did Lord Dalhousie implement that led to the annexation of several Indian kingdoms?
9. What was the primary function of the English East India Company when it was first established?
10. What was the name of the peace treaty that concluded the First Carnatic War?
11. Which was the peace treaty signed at the end of the First Anglo-Sikh War?
12. Who was the first Governor-General of India to implement administrative reforms, including the establishment of a new Supreme Court?
13. In which year the Treaty of Salbai concluded?

Answers

1. Dutch
2. Joseph François Dupleix
3. Fort William, Calcutta
4. Battle of Wandiwash

5. 1792
6. 1757
7. British dominance in Bengal
8. Doctrine of Lapse
9. Trade
10. Aix-la-Chapelle
11. Treaty of Lahore
12. Warren Hastings
13. 1782

Assignments

1. Prepare a timeline of European Invasions in India.
2. Prepare a report on 'Consolidation British Power in India'.
3. Discuss the significance of the 'Treaty of Allahabad' following the Battle of Buxar.
4. Examine the significance of the Battle of Plassey (1757) in the context of British colonial expansion in India.
5. How did the Carnatic Wars contribute to the rise of the British East India Company in India?
6. Assess the impact of the Anglo-Maratha Wars on the socio-economic conditions in India during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.
7. Discuss the motivations behind European exploration and the establishment of trade routes to India.
8. How did the Mughal Empire's decline contribute to the rise of British authority in India?

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UNIT 2

De-Industrialization

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- comprehend the various phases of the English East India Company's colonial exploitation of India
- differentiate between the various tactics used by the English East India Company to gain wealth from India
- examine the impact of colonial policies on India's economy

Prerequisites

Prior to British rule, the Indian subcontinent was renowned for its high-quality textiles, such as silk and cotton, which were in high demand both domestically and internationally. Indian artisans and craftsmen played a significant role in the economy, contributing to a thriving trade network that spanned not only South Asia but also the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

However, the onset of British colonialism drastically altered this economic system. The British East India Company's policies prioritised the extraction of resources and the establishment of a colonial economy that favoured British interests. This led to the dismantling of traditional industries and the imposition of new forms of production that served the needs of the British market. The British colonial rule in India marked a significant turning point in the country's economic and social structure, culminating in widespread de-industrialization and increased poverty among its society.

Keywords

Colonialism, Imperialism, The Drain of Wealth, Commercialisation, De-Industrialisation

Discussion

4.2.1 Company's Rule (1773-1858)

The term 'Company Rule' is used to refer to the rule of the British East India Company. The British East India Company was founded in 1600 as a trading organisation and became a governing body in 1765. The East India Company obtained the *Diwani* (right to collect taxes) of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa after the Battle of Buxar (1764), and over time, it began meddling in Indian affairs. The Company had all the authority but no responsibility during the years 1765-72, while its Indian representatives had all the responsibility but no authority. This led to widespread corruption among Company employees, oppression of the peasantry and excessive revenue collection, resulting in the Company's insolvency. To restore some order to the Company, as the British government made the decision to gradually regulate the Company.The Regulating Act of 1773 served as the foundation for the Company Rule (1773–1858), which was dismantled in 1857 as a result of a widespread sepoy uprising in India.

The Regulating Act of 1773 gave the East India Company the legal right to control operations and maintain territorial possessions in India. As a result, the Company Rule was established in India. This Act established the position of Governor-General and granted the British Cabinet the power to direct Indian affairs. The first governor-general of Bengal under Company Rule was Warren Hastings. The Act made it crucial for the Court of Directors of the English East India Company (EIC) to provide reports on India's finances, civil affairs, and military affairs. This Act was followed by Pitt's India Act of 1784 and a number of Charter Acts, all of which confirmed the Company's status as India's political ruler. The Company kept numerous forts scattered throughout India as well as a standing troop. Additionally, they meddled in the domestic affairs of native states through their strategic doctrine of lapse and subsidiary alliance policies.

4.2.2 Land Revenue Systems in British India

The British successfully established control over India by implementing various land revenue systems that taxed the local population. Their policies introduced new land tenure systems and revenue administrative policies, aiming to extract maximum income from the land without considering the interests of cultivators. This changed the agrarian structure. The corruption of the Company's employees also became a factor that contributed to a severe famine in Bengal in 1769-70. The Governor General Warren Hastings adopted the *Ijaradari* system, or farming system, to regulate revenue collection. The power to collect land revenue was given to contractors, chosen based on the highest bids, who were 'farmed out' to the highest bidders. The system resulted in extortion and oppression, as the contractors were revenue farmers

interested in their profit and did not care for the welfare of the peasants. The policy also discouraged traditional zamindars from bidding, leading to the ousting of many hereditary zamindars. Corruption reduced the amount of revenue actually going to the government, leading to an impoverished status and the decline of items traded in silk and cotton.

4.2.2.1 Permanent Settlement

The East India Company's negligence contributed to the devastating Bengal famine of 1770. Warren Hastings attempted reforms, such as five-year inspections and annual land settlements. Lord Cornwallis proposed the Permanent Settlement system in 1786, which was made possible by the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793.

The word zamindar, which derives from the Persian words "zamin" (land) and "dar" (to have, hold, or possess), has entered the historical vocabulary of medieval India to denote the superior landed interest (*Banglapedia*). The term "zamindar" was used to refer to a broad range of landowners and rights during the Mughal era, including autonomous chieftains and peasant-proprietors. They were small-time landowners in the villages, descended from former ruling families who had kept a small amount of their ancestral lands.

The *Zamindari* System was an agreement between the English East India Company and the Zamindars of Bengal regarding the assessment, fixing and collection of land revenue. It recognised the Zamindars as the owners of the land, who then leased their lands to tenant farmers in return for a fixed share of the produce. The Zamindars were instructed to pay 89% of the annual revenue from the land to the Company and were permitted to enjoy 11% of the income as their share. The land under the control of the Zamindar became a hereditary possession, and he was also allowed to sell or buy the land. The Company was able to get regular fixed land revenue from Bengal without spending much on it, but the rate of the land revenue was too high, and the Zamindars were not keen on improving cultivation and fertility.

The system was oppressive and exploitative for the cultivators, who had to approach money lenders to pay the tax, and the Zamindars were leaving the duty of tax collection to intermediaries. The system of tax collection in Bengal was oppressive and unjust, with the Zamindars assuming the status of tax collectors and the cultivators reduced to deprivation of rights. This resulted in the sale of land and peasants leaving cultivation, with no effort from the Company or Zamindars to improve conditions. Issues related to peasants resulted in peasant outbreaks.

4.2.2.2 The *Ryotwari* System

The Company admitted the reality that India is not a land of uniformity but diversity in all respects when they acquired political power in India. So, they devised different policies in different parts of India. In southern India, the Company was not in a position to implement the Permanent Settlement because of the absence of hereditary landlords like Zamindars for tax collection. So, they tried another form of land revenue settlement in their south Indian territories.

A much more practical system of land revenue collection that came to be known as the *Ryotwari* System was devised by Captain Alexander Read and Thomas Munro at the end of the 18th century. The system was implemented by Thomas Munro when he was governor of the Madras Presidency (1819–26). Unlike the Permanent Settlement, the land revenue was directly paid by the farmers to the Company here. It was prevalent in most of southern India; it was primarily

introduced in the Tamil Nadu regions of Madras province. Soon, it was extended to Maratha, Virar, East Punjab, Coorg and Assam.

The *Ryotwari* System was a beneficial system of land revenue for both the farmers and the Company. Ryots had full rights regarding the sale, transfer, and leasing of the land, no intermediaries, and a high rate of tax. However, it was dominated by mahajans and moneylenders who granted loans to cultivators, burdening them with heavy interest and evicting them from their land in case of loan default.

4.2.2.3 The *Mahalwari* System

By the beginning of the second quarter of the 19th century, Company officials were convinced that the system of land revenue had to be changed again. At this time, the Company was in need of money due to its war and conquests in North India. So, the prime source of income, the land revenue, could not be fixed permanently at such a crucial time as the Company needed money and resources to meet its expansion expenses. Thus, a much better land revenue system was devised for North Western India, which contains the fruits of previous revenue systems.

The *Mahalwari* system was introduced by Holt Mackenzie in 1822. The word *mahalwari* is derived from the Hindi word *mahal*, meaning a house or, by extension, a district (ref.Britannica). The *Mahalwari* comprised landlords, or Lambardar, permitted to correspond to villages or groups of villages. In this system, along with the farmers of the village, the landlords were jointly responsible for the payment of land revenue. The *Mahalwari* system prevailed in parts of Uttar Pradesh, the North Western province, parts of Central India and Punjab.

The *Mahalwari* System was the primary land revenue system in North-West India during the Company's rule. It contained elements from both the *Zamindari* and *Ryotwari* systems, with the basic unit of tax assessment being the *Mahal*. However, the system was criticised for being impractical and based on faulty assumptions. The village headman forced the peasants to pay too much without considering the realities, leading to the peasants fleeing the countryside and the Mahals becoming deserted.

4.2.3 Consequences of Land Revenue Systems

The *Mahalwari* Settlement and *Ryotwari* System were introduced in British India, covering 30% and 51% of the total area, respectively. These revenue settlements were disastrous for farmers and Zamindars, leading to defaults, property seizure, and lifelong debt. The new form of private land ownership led to impoverishment and rural indebtedness. The ownership of land became unequal, with land becoming saleable, mortgageable, and alienable to protect government revenue. Village communities were divided into hostile groups, and artisans became landless labourers. Law courts, lawyer's fees, and formal procedures replaced old customs.

The British land revenue systems exposed Indian peasantry to exploitation by moneylenders and intermediaries, leading to absentee landlordism and the commercialisation of agriculture. The government's arbitrarily high revenue demands exposed the Indian peasantry to the exploitation of moneylenders and intermediaries. The Company's revenue interventions led to land becoming private property and commodity, causing peasant and tribal uprisings in India from the 1760s to 1857. The Bengal famine, taxation issues, and frequent land evictions led to widespread poverty. The evicted peasants joined the Sanyasis and Muslim fakir bands, leading to the Sanyasi-Fakir Rebellion (1770-1800),

a protest against the Company.

4.2.3.1 Breakdown of Traditional Farmers and Peasants

The East India Company took over the *Diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and parts of Orissa in 1765 and auctioned the *zamindari* to the highest bidders. This policy of maximising land revenue altered the composition of landed society, leading to famines, loss of human life and large areas of land being rendered as waste land. Between 1765 and 1793, the revenue demand of the Company nearly doubled.

In Northern India, *Zamindari* and *Mahalwari* systems were introduced, initially with Bengal-type permanent settlement. In Punjab and parts of the United Provinces, the Mahalwari system was introduced, where the unit of assessment was the village, and payment of revenue became the joint responsibility of the village's proprietary body. In the central parts of India, heavy assessments were the rule, leading to impoverished people. In 1834, a long settlement of twenty years was concluded in these territories. In 1864, malguzars were recognised as the proprietors of the soil with a right to sell or mortgage their property.

Settlement officers did not accept the actual rental of estates, leading to a higher land revenue demand than actual rental. The payment of revenue in cash generated pressure on cultivators, forcing them to produce cash crops and borrow money for tax payments. The Chandel Rajputs in the Shahjahanpur district refused to grow sugarcane.

The introduction of transferable proprietary rights in land increased land sales and indebtedness. Official opinion was opposed to any tampering with free trade in land due to the realisation that legislative inference could seriously upset the provision of rural credit and jeopardize the security of the land revenue. Legislation in the form of the Bundelkhand Alienation Act of 1903 prompted professional moneylenders in Bundelkhand to remain a permanent part of the rural scene and sustain their hold over peasants. The Zamindari Abolition Committee Report,1948 showed that the majority of land in North Western Provinces was held by a small group of large landholders, with just 1.3 per cent of the population having more than half of the land. In Punjab, only 20,000 people cultivated more than 50 acres, and between 1891-92 and 1939-40, the area cultivated by the tenants increased from 10.6 million acres to 17.8 million acres. 85% of the 'tenants at will' were without tenure security and were paying high rents.

The *ryotwari* system of revenue collection in Western India was introduced in the late 1860s, with the cultivator being directly under the state and able to sublet, mortgage or transfer his plot of land. The American Civil War stimulated the international demand for Indian cotton, and large investments in railways and irrigation facilitated exports, leading to a sharp rise in the prices of agricultural commodities. This led to the Deccan riots in 1875 against moneylenders. The new legal system also gave the village moneylenders more freedom, allowing them to control crops and trade.

The banias and kunbis both took to moneylending, with the banias having a greater appetite for land than the mercantile castes. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the cultivation of cash crops such as sugarcane, tobacco, groundnut and cotton expanded, leading to the rise of the rich peasantry and increasing stratification of the peasantry. Rich farmers replaced traditional moneylenders with commercialised agriculturists and purchased the land of small

cultivators. In 1924-25, 86% of the total cultivated area was held by large owners. Tenancy increased significantly from the 1880s onwards, with landlords paying half of the crop and landlords paying the land revenue. This system was particularly advantageous to landlords when prices were rising.

The British experimented with methods of collecting land revenue in South India, initially in *ryotwari* settlements and later in permanent settlements. The land revenue was fixed in perpetuity, the zamindaris were made inheritable and transferable, and uncultivated land was given to the zamindars tax-free. By 1830, over a third of the Presidency was under the *zamindari* system; thereafter the area under *zamindari* declined whenever zamindars were unable to pay the revenue as demanded. Later, the government converted estates to *ryotwari,* but one-fourth of the area remained under *zamindari* until the 1940s. The division of rights between the peasants and the zamindars remained undefined. Land revenue collection was contracted out to middlemen, but by 1822, the *ryotwari* system was introduced. The land revenue was fixed at half the gross produce on unirrigated lands and three-fifths on irrigated lands, with unrecorded plunder by revenue officials.

The area under cultivation increased faster than the population in the late 19th century, leading to a rise in prices of the land and increased real income. Rich peasants invested in industries and extended their money-lending practices, but the economic depression of the 1930s hit both the rich and the poor. Grain looting and attacks on rich moneylenders and landlords were symptoms of widespread agrarian distress. The 19th century saw a decline in food grain output per head, and the burden of debt increased. The tenancy was common, with sharecropping and input-sharing arrangements. Tenants in the *ryotwari* areas had no legal standing, and tenancy disputes were rare. Despite this, no measures were taken to protect tenants in Madras presidency.

The decline of domestic industries and the disintegration of the peasantry led to the transformation of the social basis of the agrarian society in India, with new classes appearing on the scene: moneylenders and rich peasants, pauperized peasants and agricultural labourers. Numerous changes took place, and they had an impact on the socio-economic and political spheres of Indian society with the establishment of British rule. The main distinction between the British colonists in India and earlier invaders was that none of the earlier invaders changed the economic structure of India or syphoned off its wealth as tribute. India's economy was transformed under British rule into a colonial economy, where the British economy's interests dictated how it should be structured and run. According to historians' estimates, India constituted about 23% of the world economy at the beginning of the 18th century. When India became independent, this percentage decreased to just under 3%.

4.2.3.2 De-industrialisation

After the Charter Act of 1813, which granted British citizens the right to one-way free trade, the Indian market was inundated with low-cost imports made in factories. On the other hand, it became more and more challenging for Indian goods to sell in Europe. Indian textiles were subject to tariffs of almost 80%, rendering them unaffordable. Indian exports were essentially prohibited from reaching European markets after 1820. The Indian market was flooded with cheap clothing made in Britain. India did not undergo a modern industrialisation process, and it lost its traditional livelihoods.

India's de-industrialisation is clearly demonstrated by the destruction of its textile industry's competition. The Bengal

revenue was used by the British instead of paying in pounds for Indian textiles, further depressing the livelihood of the peasants. It also destroyed a thriving shipbuilding industry. On the western and eastern coasts, the shipbuilding industries were well-known in Surat and Malabar, as well as Bengal and Masulipatnam. The British ships were given a monopoly on trade routes by the Company, while Indian merchant ships operating along the coast were charged exorbitant fees.

4.2.3.3 Ruralisation

The deindustrialisation process also resulted in the decline of many cities and the ruralisation of India. Due to declining profits and oppressive laws, many artisans gave up their jobs, relocated to villages, and started working in agriculture. Pressure on the land increased as a result. During British rule, an overworked agricultural sector was a major contributor to poverty, which disrupted the village's economic structure.

4.2.3.4 Commercialisation of Agriculture

Agriculture used to be viewed more as a way of life than a commercial enterprise. Agriculture used to be viewed more as a way of life than a commercial venture. Agriculture began to be impacted by commercial factors. Instead of being grown for consumption in the village, some specialised crops started to be grown for sale in local, national, and even international markets. Commercial crops like cotton, jute, groundnuts, oilseeds, sugarcane, tobacco, and others were more profitable than grains. Perhaps the plantation industry—which produced goods like tea, coffee, rubber, indigo, and others—were Europeans predominated, and the products were sold to a wider market, is where the commercialisation trend peaked.

To the Indian peasant, commercialisation seemed to be a forced process. Their subsistence level left him with little surplus to invest in commercial crops, and commercialisation connected Indian agriculture to trends and fluctuations in the global market. When cotton prices fell in 1866, they hit the growers the hardest, leading to heavy debt, famine, and agrarian riots in the Deccan in the 1870s. Cotton prices rose in the 1860s, but this primarily benefited the intermediaries. As a result of the new commercialisation trend, the cultivator did not fare much better.

4.2.3.5 Deterioration of Agriculture

Agriculture was deteriorating because the cultivator lacked the resources and the drive to invest in it. The government made little investment in mass education, technology, or agriculture, and the zamindar had no ties to the villages. All of this made it challenging to introduce modern technology, resulting in a persistently low level of productivity, along with land fragmentation brought on by sub-infeudation.

4.2.3.6 Famine and Poverty

Famines kept happening, and they eventually became a common occurrence in India. These famines were brought on by both a lack of food grains and poverty. Between 1850 and 1900, 2.8 crore people perished in famines.

4.2.3.7 Late Development of Modern Industries

Indian-owned businesses first appeared in the cotton and jute textile industries in the nineteenth century. Later, in the twentieth century, they also appeared in the sugar and cement industries, among others. India did not develop modern machine-based industries until the second half of the nineteenth century. The disadvantages for Indian-owned

industries included credit issues, a lack of tariff protection from the government, unfair competition from foreign firms, and obstinate opposition from British capitalist interests who were supported by a robust domestic financial and technological infrastructure.

4.2.4 Drain of Wealth

Dadabhai Naoroji developed the theory of the drain of wealth during the 19th century. The British used India as a source of cheap raw materials for their own industries during the colonial era, and this was their main reason for conquering the country. India exported raw materials, and expensive finished goods were imported into India. Additionally, the British government used the money it received from India to pay the high administrative costs associated with maintaining colonial rule, including the wages and salaries of the administrative staffs as well as the costs of war and administration.

The "drain of wealth theory" refers to the steady transfer of national wealth from India to England, during which India received insufficient economic, commercial, or material returns. The term "economic outflow" refers to a portion of India's national output, which, due to political considerations, was being sent to Britain rather than being consumed by its people. This was because India was not receiving enough economic input from Britain. In his book "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India," published in 1871, Dadabhai Naoroji raises the issue of resource flow from India to England. The British method of syphoning off India's resources and wealth has been dubbed "The Economic Drain" by economists like R.C. Dutt and Dadabhai Naoroji, among others.

The colonial era saw the exploitation of Indian resources by Britain, who invaded India to control a reliable supply of cheap raw materials. Indians' income was used to purchase expensive finished items imported from Britain, which helped Britain become wealthier at India's expense. The British government expanded its colonial influence outside of India by using Indian labour. Revenue from India and the export surplus produced by India's overseas trade were used to fund the British Government's military and administrative costs to govern colonial control in India. The British plundered Indian wealth for its own purposes, with the surplus of exports over imports appearing as a drain.

The colonial form of administration included remittances made to England by European workers, purchases of British goods in India, government-issued loans, and private riches acquired by the East India Company's employees. The main objective of British policy in India was to make it a lucrative market for the home country and a source of inexpensive and secure raw material-producing agrarian nations.

According to R.C. Dutt, each year, half of India's net income leaves the country. In early 20th-century British currency, this was equivalent to about £20 million. According to M.G. Ranade, the government in India had taken more than a third of the country's gross domestic product. Dadabhai Naoroji asserted that about $12 million per year, or one-fourth of the money raised in India, was sent to England.

The drain of wealth had a detrimental impact on India's economic growth, employment, and income. However, when it was sent out, it did not stimulate trade industries or the local economy. The drain of capital to England stripped India of its productive capital, creating a shortage of capital

that hindered industrial development. This impoverished India and stultified the capital formation process. India's wealth was the source of financing for the Industrial Revolution in England but was primarily stolen and diverted to England. The tax burden in India was 14.3% of total income, much higher than England's 6.93%. The British economy grew more quickly with the same amount of wealth. Dadabhai Naoroji believed that the potential surplus sucked out was a potential surplus that could lead to increased economic growth if invested in India.

Recap

- The Regulating Act of 1773 gave the English East India Company the legal right to control operations and maintain territorial possessions in India.
- Rural indebtedness during British rule was widespread due to the dependence of peasants on credit and the acquisition of lands by defaulting peasants.
- In Northern India, *Zamindari* and *Mahalwari* systems were introduced, initially with Bengal-type permanent settlements.
- Settlement officers did not accept the actual rental of estates, leading to a higher land revenue demand than actual rental.
- The introduction of transferable proprietary rights in land increased land sales and indebtedness.
- The *ryotwari* system of revenue collection in Western India was introduced in the late 1860s, with the ryot cultivator being directly under the state and able to sublet, mortgage or transfer his plot of land.
- After the Charter Act of 1813, which granted British citizens the right to one-way free trade, the Indian market was inundated with low-cost imports made in factories.
- India's de-industrialisation is clearly demonstrated by the destruction of its textile industry's competition.
- To the Indian peasant, commercialisation seemed to be a forced process.
- The people's subsistence level limited their surplus for commercial crops, and commercialisation influenced Indian agriculture's response to global market trends and fluctuations.

Objective Questions

1. Who introduced Permanent Settlement in Bengal?
2. Which land revenue system was introduced in South India by the British East India Company?
3. Who introduced the *Ryotwari* System in South India?
4. Name the system of land revenue introduced in Punjab and North Western India.
5. The Santhal rebellion was a resistance against which system?
6. Which land revenue system is called the 'Modern Zamindari System'?
7. The Poligar rebellion was the result of which system?
8. Which system holds responsibility for tax collection with the village headman?
9. Through which land revenue system did the zamindars in India become hereditary landowners?
10. When was the Permanent Settlement introduced?

Answers

1. Lord Cornwallis
2. *Ryotwari* System
3. Thomas Munro
4. *Mahalwari* System
5. *Zamindari* System
6. *Mahalwari* System
7. *Ryotwari* System
8. *Mahalwari* System
9. Permanent Settlement
10. 1793

Assignment

1. Examine the process of commercialisation of agriculture during British rule in India. How did the shift from subsistence farming to cash crops affect the lives of Indian farmers and the agrarian economy".
2. Examine the Drain of wealth theory. Discuss the economic and social implications of this drain on Indian society.
3. Explain the impact of the British land revenue system in India.
4. Discuss the key features of the revenue system, the methods used for tax collection, and the effects of these policies on the agrarian economy, social hierarchies, and local livelihoods.
5. Analyse the reality of the Drain of Wealth during the British period in India.

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UNIT 3

English Education and Modern Industries

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the socio-cultural and economic impingement of colonial intervention
- evaluate the genesis and growth of English education in colonial India
- analyse the economic impacts of the colonialism in India

Prerequisites

As the all know the mother tongue refers to the language a person has been exposed to from an early age. According to A.R. Desai, India "presents a spectacle of a museum of tongues." India is referred to as a "veritable tower of Babel." Grierson, a renowned linguist, noted in his "Linguistic Survey of India" that there are 179 official languages and 544 regional languages in India. On the other hand, the 1971 census indicated that 1652 languages were spoken as the mother tongue in India. The majority of languages are spoken in northern India. However, not all of these languages are equally spoken. While some of these languages are spoken by millions of people, many of them are tribal dialects and have less than 1% of the world's population as speakers.

The Indo-Aryan language family includes Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Oriya, Punjabi, Bihari, Rajasthani, Assamese, Sanskrit, Sindhi, and Kashmiri. Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu are all dravidian languages. The family of European languages also includes English, Portuguese, and French. However, one of these languages, the English language, is unique and widely used in India for both official and non-official purposes. Why did this happen? The answer is

straightforward and unambiguous: For the purpose of maintaining and bolstering colonialism, which lasted for nearly 200 years, Britain spread English education and the English language throughout India.

Keywords

Linguistic Diversity, Western Education, Macaulay's Minute, Wood's Dispatch

Discussion

4.3.1 Socio-Cultural Impacts of British Rule

After Robert Clive's victory at the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the British took control of India and ruled it for about 190 years. However during the 190 years of foreign rule, India's socio-cultural and political-economic system underwent a variety of changes. The term "British Raj" describes the British crown's direct control over its colonial holdings in India. Despite the fact that English colonial endeavours had started hundreds of years earlier, it wasn't until the Indian Rebellion of 1857 that the British Government took direct control of the subcontinent.

Indian society was in turmoil during the nineteenth century. The long-standing customs and traditions were degraded, and in their place, many social evils, such as female infanticide, sati, child marriage, the caste system, the *purdah* system, the ban on female education, widow remarriage, etc., were practised. The British invasion of India in the 18th and 19th centuries revealed some significant flaws and shortcomings in Indian social institutions. The status of women was the most upsetting. The term "Indian Renaissance" refers to the social and intellectual revolution that occurred in the area of social reform. On the basis of post-Enlightenment rationalism, reforming society from the outside was a significant aspect of the European Renaissance. However, in an Indian context, it meant rediscovering rationalism from India's earlier history.

Indians were profoundly affected by the British government's interference in their cultural and social lives. First, during the British occupation, India's social system underwent significant change. By successfully rescinding the superstitious norms, the British government successfully reduced the irrationality in traditional Indian society. Social reformers in Indian society, including Raja Ram Maham Roy and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, were able to abolish superstitious social norms like "Sati Daha Pratha" and "Child Marriage" with Lord Bentinck's assistance. In traditional Indian society, Lord Bentinck also assisted the social reformers in introducing new social norms like "Widow Remarriage."

By introducing fresh concepts like equality, human rights, and liberty, the introduction to British culture influenced social reformations in Indian society. Allowing the Indian people to logically consider the conditions of traditional society helped improve their situation. The concept of women's rights

and advancement was most importantly promoted in Indian society. It also had an impact on the introduction of the English language and culture into Indian society, which opened up chances for the nation to develop.

4.3.2 Introduction of Western Education

Prior to the arrival of the British, Hindus and Muslims received their education through pathshala and madrasa, respectively. Since trade and financial gain were the British East India Company's main goals, they were initially unconcerned with the advancement of the educational system. Later the missionaries who arrived with EIC established new educational institutions in India. They intended to rule India by educating a select group of upper and middle-class people to produce a class that was "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste". They would serve as a conduit between the government and the general populace. The "downward filtration theory" was another name for this.

Development of Modern Education

Modern Western education was introduced in India as a result of British rule, which made a significant cultural contribution. Unlike traditional Indian education, formal English education significantly altered Indian society and culture. The key to the golden door of freedom that can transform the world is education. With the establishment of British rule in India, their policies and practices violated the traditions of traditional educational institutions, necessitating the creation of a class of subordinates. They implemented a number of laws to do this, using the educational system to paint an Indian canvas with English hues.

The Calcutta Madrasa was founded by Warren Hastings in 1781 to teach Muslim law for this reason. Jonathan Duncan founded a Sanskrit College in Varanasi in 1791 to teach Hindu philosophy and law. In India, missionaries promoted the adoption of Western education primarily for proselytising purposes. They started many schools, but they only saw education as a means to the end of "civilising" and converting the natives to Christianity. In Bengal's Serampore, there was a Baptist Mission established by William Carey, a Baptist missionary who had arrived in India in 1793.

4.3.2.1The Charter Act 1813

The East India Company was forced to abandon its intervention policy by missionary activists Charles Grant and William Wilberforce in order to allow for the spread of education through English, the teaching of Western literature and the proclamation of Christianity. As a result, the British Parliament added a clause to the Charter(1813) stating that the Governor-General-in-Council could allocate no more than one lakh rupees for education and that Christian Missionaries could spread their religious beliefs throughout India. The Act was significant in that it was the first time the British East India Company had acknowledged the need to advance education in India. The Calcutta College, which offers a Western education, was established due to the efforts of Raja Ram Mohun Roy. Three Sanskrit colleges were also established in Calcutta.

4.3.2.2 General Committee of Public Instruction, 1823

This Committee was established to oversee the advancement of education in India, where Orientalists, as opposed to Anglicans, were the major supporters of oriental learning. They consequently put

enormous pressure on the British India Company to advance Western education. As a result, the debate over the spread of education in India became Orientalist-Anglicist, and Macaulay's resolution presented a distinct image of the British educational system.

4.3.2.3 Lord Macaulay's Education Policy, 1835

The Indian reformers believed that a modern educational system was required to keep up with the times in order to spread logical thinking and scientific principles. The government of Lord William Bentinck decided in 1835 that Indians would be taught Western sciences and literature in English. Thomas Babington Macaulay was chosen by Bentinck to lead the General Committee of Public Instruction. Macaulay valued Western culture and criticised Indian culture as stagnant and inferior to European scientific and philosophical thought. He once claimed that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. He claimed that traditional Indian education should be replaced with English instruction because the oriental culture was "defective" and "unholy."

Macaulay believed in educating a few upper and middle-class Indian students. This policy, known as "downward filtration," was an attempt to establish an educational system that only educates the upper strata of society through English education. The court language was changed from Persian to English in accordance with the recommendations. The policy promoted the printing of English books and made them both free and inexpensively available. Comparatively speaking, English education received more funding than oriental education. John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune established Bethune School in 1849. It was followed by the establishment of the Pusa (Bihar) Agriculture Institute and the Roorkee Engineering Institute. In 1835, the Elphinstone College (Bombay) and the Calcutta Medical College were established.

4.3.2.4 Wood's Dispatch, 1854

Charles Wood was the President of the Board of Control of the Company in 1854 when he sent a dispatch to the then Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie. Wood's Dispatch was considered the "Magna Carta of English Education in India" and contained a comprehensive plan for spreading education in India. The following are the Wood's Dispatch recommendations.

- Regularise the educational system from primary to university levels.
- Indians were to be educated in both English and their mother tongue.
- Every province was supposed to have its own educational system.
- Each district should have at least one public school.
- Aid may be granted to affiliated private schools.
- Women's education should be prioritised.
- By 1857, Universities in Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay had been established.
- Punjab University was founded in 1882, and Allahabad University was founded in 1887.
- This dispatch requested that the government assume responsibility for public education.

4.3.2.5 Hunter Commission (1882-83)

The government appointed a Commission in 1882, chaired by W.W. Hunter, to review the progress of education in the country

since the Dispatch of 1854. The Commission primarily focused on primary and secondary education, as previous schemes neglected these areas. The provinces' limited resources further exacerbated the situation.

- The Commission emphasised the need for special care for the extension and improvement of primary education, emphasising the importance of delivering primary education through vernacular methods.
- The recommendation was to transfer primary education control to newly established district and municipal boards.
- It recommended for secondary education to be divided into two categories: literary—leading up to university and vocational—for commercial careers.
- It highlighted the lack of adequate facilities for female education, particularly outside presidential towns, and recommended its expansion.

4.3.2.6 Sadler Commission (1917)

In 1917, the Indian government appointed the Calcutta University Commission, also known as the Sadler Commission, to study and report on the problems of Calcutta University, with recommendations applicable to other universities. The Commission reviewed the entire field, from school education to university education, arguing that improving secondary education was a necessary precondition for improving university education. The recommendations of the Commission are:

School courses should last 12 years, and students should enter university after an intermediate stage for a three-year degree course, aiming to prepare students for university, relieve universities of under-standard students, and provide collegiate education to those not planning to go through university.

- A separate board of secondary and intermediate education should be established for the administration and control of these educational institutions.
- University regulations should be more flexible and less rigid.
- A university should be a centralised, unitary residential-teaching autonomous body rather than scattered, affiliated colleges.
- Expansion of female education, applied scientific and technological education, and teachers' training, including those for professional and vocational colleges.

The Sadler Commission's recommendations significantly influenced India's educational development. From 1916 to 1921, seven new universities were established, including Mysore, Patna, Benaras, Aligarh, Dacca, Lucknow, and Osmani. The functions of these universities were to provide affiliation, conduct examinations, and confer degrees. The introduction of Honours Courses increased academic activities, and studies of different Indian languages began. Facilities for higher studies and research were also provided. The Department of Education was opened at Calcutta and Dacca universities. Internal administration improved, and the Academic Council was created to address curriculum construction, examination, and research. In 1925, an Inter-University Board was established to coordinate among Indian universities. Students' welfare became an important matter in universities, with a board of students' welfare formed in each university.

4.3.3 Impacts of Modern Western Education in India

In India, the introduction of modern Western education had far-reaching effects. English education was introduced for British administrative convenience and to efficiently rule the nation. But this process's knock-on effects eventually gave rise to Indian nationalism and the national movement. The foundation of social and religious reform movements, the creation of political associations and organisations, and Indian political education helped the rise of the English-educated middle class. India's political, educational, and cultural systems have been influenced by Western education. India has advanced its thought process since Western education was introduced here. Let's have a look into the major impacts of modern western education in India.

4.3.3.1 Socio-Religious Reform Movements

The Socio-Religious Reform Movements in India have been linked to various factors, including the presence of colonial government, economic and social backwardness, the influence of modern Western education, the rise of intellectual awakening in the middle class, and the poor position of women in society. The British rule in India acted as a catalyst for deep-seated social changes, and modern Western education influenced Indian life and thought in several ways. The major social problems addressed by these movements included the emancipation of women, casteism and untouchability, education for enlightenment, and religious issues such as idolatry, polytheism, religious superstitions, and priest exploitation.

Western education played a crucial role in shaping the socio-religious reform movements in India by introducing modern ideas of liberty, equality, and rationalism. Educated Indians, influenced by Enlightenment values and liberal thought, began to question orthodox traditions, caste discrimination, and gender inequality. Reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dayanand Saraswati, Derozio, Justice Justice Govind Mahadeo Ranade, Theosophical Society, and Ramakrishna Mission advocated for social change, including widow remarriage, the abolition of sati, and opposition to idolatry. Western education fostered a sense of national consciousness and helped reformers bridge Indian tradition with modernity.

.Influenced by modern Western education, the Socio-religious movements in the nineteenth century aimed to promote Indian philosophy and culture, instilling pride and faith in Indians. These movements promoted female education, established schools for girls, and established medical colleges for women. The greatest impact of these movements was the creation of a national awakening, the revival of Hinduism as a tolerant, rational religion, an onslaught on indignities committed to women, untouchables, and other oppressed sections of Indian society, the creation of feelings of sacrifice, service, and rationalism, an attack on the hereditary character and rigidities of the caste system, and a sense of equality, indigenisation, and co-existence of cultures and religions.

4.3.3.2 Formation of an Intellectual Middle Class

In India, the middle classes emerged in the nineteenth century under British colonial rule, played a significant role in India's struggle for independence and shaping economic development policies. The British rule in India was fundamentally different from earlier political systems and empires in the sub-continent. The British established their rule over most parts of the sub-continent

and transformed the economy and polity of the region. They initiated policies to industrialise various sectors, reorganised political and administrative structures, and introduced modern Western education ideas and cultural values to the Indian people. The Indian middle class emerged more as a consequence of changes in the system of law and public administration than in economic development.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the colonial rulers had brought a large proportion of Indian territory under their rule. Industrial products from Britain began to flow into India, and the volume of trade between Britain and India expanded. They introduced railways and other modern servicing sectors, such as the press and postal departments. A large number of educated individuals were required to staff these administrative institutions, and the British opened schools and colleges in different parts of India, particularly in big cities like Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.

The educated middle class steadily grew in size during the second half of the nineteenth century, with members mostly concentrated in upper caste backgrounds. They brought with them new ideas of "liberalism" and "democracy" that had become popular in the West after the French Revolution. They became carriers of not only British cultural values but also modern ideas of freedom, equality, and democracy.

Apart from the English-educated segment, other sections of Indian society could be called the middle classes. The most prominent among them were petty traders, shopkeepers, and independent artisans, who were traditionally separate social strata in the West. As the economy changed in response to the new administrative policies of the colonial rulers, many merchants moved to newly emerging towns and cities and became independent traders.

The middle classes in India, educated in English, emerged under British rule and became involved in social reform movements. They raised political questions and eventually challenged British rule. This middle-class elite provided leadership to the movement for independence, opposing British rule in favour of advanced bourgeois democracy. The Indian National Congress, initially dominated by the professional middle classes, was dominated by lawyers, journalists, and educationists.

4.3.3.3 Emergence of Early Political Associations

The emergence of early political associations or pre-Congress organisations in India was the next tangible result of modern Western education. The first fifty years of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of associations. They were initially dominated by the wealthy, well-educated intelligentsia. They conducted their business on a regional rather than a pan-Indian scale. They had general demands, such as increasing the number of Indians in government services, promoting educational and military reforms, to work for India's modern industrial development, etc. In the past, they used to send lengthy petitions to the government.

These associations worked to protect landlords' interests, promote administrative reforms, and spread education. The Zamindari Association(landholders' society), founded in 1838, protected landlords' interests and used constitutional agitation methods to address their grievances. The Bengal British India Society, formed by William Adam in 1843, advocated for improving the situation of Indians by exposing the British's extreme conditions. The British India Association, formed by merging the Bengal Landholders Society and the British India Society, submitted petitions to the British Parliament and provided suggestions for the new Charter Law of the Company.

The East India Association, founded by Dadabhai Naoroji in London in 1866, advocated for generating awareness among the British people about India's conditions and generating popular support for Indian well-being. It was the predecessor association to the Indian National Congress and challenged the notion of Asians being inferior to Europeans. The Indian League, formed in 1875, aimed to stimulate nationalism and encourage political education. The Indian National Association, formed in 1876, aimed to reform civil services examinations and unify public opinion on national issues.

The Madras Mahajan Sabha, a Madras Presidency-based Indian nationalist organisation, was a forerunner of the Indian National Congress. It was founded in 1884. The Bombay Association (Bombay Native Association) was founded in 1852. Despite their limited activities, these associations contributed to the development of nationalism, political will, and demands in India. The formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 marked a significant milestone in the development of Indian politics.

4.3.4.Development of Modern Industries

India's textile and handicraft industries were established before the British arrival, but they were slowly destroyed due to de-industrialisation and competition from machine-made products. The introduction of railways and lopsided infrastructure hindered the growth of modern industries, while the scarcity of basic and heavy industries further hindered their development. The Industrial Revolution in Europe from 1750 to the 19th century saw an increase in the production of goods, with hand-made products being replaced by machine-made products. This process affected traditional Indian industries. Indian handicrafts slowly declined because they could not compete against the cheaper products imported from Britain.

The revolt of 1857 made the British government realise the importance of faster transport and communication in India. The first phase of industrialisation in India began with the development of Indian railways, which led to the emergence of various industries like cotton plantations, iron and steel, paper, and coal mining. The machine age began in India with the starting of cotton textiles, jute, and coal mining industries in the 1850s. Other mechanical industries, such as rice, flour, timber mills, leather tanneries, woollen textiles, paper and sugar mills, iron and steel works, and some mineral industries, also emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

The growth of plantation industries, such as indigo, rubber, tea, and coffee, was significant in British Indian economic history. Cotton manufacture began in India, and indigo cultivation and dye production were replaced by machines. The tea industry flourished, and the rubber industry also developed. Coal mining in India was a significant industry, but it could not flourish due to competition from synthetic dyes. The introduction of railways increased the reach of British products to every corner of the country, but this led to the downfall of the textile and handicraft industries. The slow growth of modern industries in India was influenced by lopsided infrastructure, scarcity of basic and heavy industries, and the influence of European managing agencies. The following were the main factors behind the industrial sector's dismal growth:

- Systematic de-industrialisation: The main motivation behind the British for deindustrialization was twofold.

  (i) To turn India into a net exporter of low-cost raw materials to British industries.

(ii) To increase the price at which British goods are sold in the Indian market.

The British adopted a discriminatory approach to tariffs. Discriminatory tariff practises entail free export of raw materials from India, the import of finished goods from the UK, and a high duty on the export of Indian handicrafts.

- Lopsided modern industrial structure: Modernisation was never encouraged, and neither were expanding industries, by British authorities. The imbalanced and lopsided growth structures were a leftover from India under British rule. The first coal mine, jute mill, and cotton mill were all built between 1850 and 1855. The western region of the nation (Maharashtra and Gujarat) contained 194 cotton mills and 36 jute mills by the end of the 19th century.
- Lacking capital goods industry: The term "capital goods industry" describes the production of items like machines, tools, and more that can be used to create consumer goods. The main goal of the British colonial authorities in India was to create an industry that would never be able to compete with the British industry. In order to obtain capital goods, they want to make the Indian industry dependent on the British industry.

4.3.4.1 Impacts of the Railways

Railways were introduced in the Indian subcontinent in 1853, marking a significant milestone in history. The introduction of railways in India allowed the British Raj to exploit the subcontinent and maximise their profits. However, it also negatively impacted the Indian masses, as it took away their homes and lands related to railway development. The British introduced railways to promote commercialisation, facilitate the transfer of raw materials, and make travel easier and more comfortable. Lord Dalhousie, the British Governor-General from 1848 to 1856, played a crucial role in introducing railways in India.

The impact of railways in British India was immense, benefiting both Britishers and Indians. The Britishers were able to transport goods, establish control, and build industries related to finished goods. This led to a rise in industries catering to jute, iron, steel, and cotton, and it led to economic strengthening. However, major problems faced in constructing railways in India included diversification in physical features and socio-economic issues with the land. The introduction of railways in India has had both positive and negative effects on the Indian subcontinent. While the introduction of railways helped boost trade and economic growth, it also led to the loss of homes and lands for the Indian population.

Recap

- The British took control of India after the Battle of Plassey in 1757, governing it for about 190 years.
- During this period, India's socio-cultural and political-economic system underwent significant changes, leading to economic and social upheaval.
- The British invasion of India in the 18th and 19th centuries exposed flaws in Indian social institutions, including the status of women.
- The British government's interference in Indian society led to significant reforms, such as rescinding superstitious norms and introducing new social norms like widow marriage.
- The British East India Company implemented various laws to promote Western education and established a Sanskrit College in Varanasi.
- Missionaries promoted Western education primarily for proselytising purposes but saw it as a means to convert natives to Christianity.
- The 1813 Charter Act was a significant step in allowing for the spread of education through English and the teaching of Western literature.
- Lord Macaulay's Education Policy in 1835 aimed to establish a modern educational system that educated the upper strata of society through English. The policy promoted the printing of English books and made them both freely and inexpensively available.
- The Wood's Dispatch of 1854 proposed a comprehensive plan for India's education, including regulating the system, teaching in English and their mother tongue, and establishing universities.
- The Hunter Commission (1882-83) evaluated the achievements of Wood Dispatch and recommended two divisions of secondary education: literary up to university and vocational for commercial careers.
- The Sadler Commission also studied the problems of Calcutta University and recommended extended facilities for applied scientific and technological education, teacher's training, and female education.
- The introduction of modern Western education in India has had a significant impact on the country's political, educational, and cultural systems.
- Socio-religious reform movements in India have been influenced by factors like Colonial government, economic backwardness, Western education, intellectual awakening, and women's societal disadvantage.

- These movements addressed major social problems such as the emancipation of women, casteism and untouchability, education for enlightenment, and religious issues such as idolatry, polytheism, religious superstitions, and priest exploitation.
- The reform movements were led by the English-educated emerging intellectual middle class, who emphasised the progress of Indian society.
- Middle classes emerged in the nineteenth century under British rule, playing a significant role in India's struggle for independence and shaping economic development policies.
- The educated middle class grew in size during the second half of the nineteenth century, with members mostly from upper-caste backgrounds.
- This middle-class elite provided leadership to the movement for independence, opposing British rule in favor of advanced bourgeois democracy. The Indian National Congress, initially dominated by the professional middle classes, was dominated by lawyers, journalists, and educationists.
- Early political associations emerged in India, dominated by wealthy, well-educated intelligentsia, who sought to increase the number of Indians in government, promote educational and military reforms, and work for India's modern industry development.
- India's textile and handicraft industries were established before the British arrived, but they were slowly destroyed due to de-industrialisation and competition from machine-made products.
- The Industrial Revolution in Europe from 1750 to the 19th century saw an increase in the production of goods, with hand-made products being replaced by machine-made products.
- Railways were introduced in the Indian subcontinent in 1853, marking a significant milestone in history.
- The British introduced railways to promote commercialisation, facilitate the transfer of raw materials, and make travel easier and more comfortable.

Objective Questions

1. Who founded the Calcutta Madrasa to teach Muslim law?
2. What do you mean by "downward filtration"?

3. Who is known as the 'father of the Indian renaissance'?
4. Who founded the Deccan Education Society?
5. Who founded Arya Samaj ?
6. When the Zamindari Association was founded?
7. Who founded The East India Association?
8. Name of the Governor General who played an important role in introducing railways in India.
9. When the Bombay Association was founded?
10. Which educational reform is considered the "Magna Carta of English Education in India"?

Answers

1. Warren Hastings (1781)
2. Educating upper and middle class students, this idea forwarded by Lord Macaulay.
3. Raja Ram Mohan Roy
4. Arya Samaj was founded by Dayanand Saraswati in the year 1875.
5. M.G. Ranade
6. 1838
7. East India Association founded by Dadabhai Naoroji in London in 1867
8. Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856)
9. 1852
10. Wood's Dispatch

Assignments

1. Discuss the development of Indian education during the colonial period.
2. List the major industries that started during British rule with pictures and a brief report.
3. Examine the contributions of notable Indian reformers, such as Raja Rammohan Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, in promoting English education.
4. Discuss the factors that led to the introduction of railways in India by the British during the 19th century.
5. Discuss the development of education in India through various education commissions.
6. Discuss the key recommendations and reforms proposed by education commissions and their impact on the educational system of the country.

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UNIT

Peasant Uprising of 19th Century and Poverty

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the causes of the tribal and peasant uprisings that occurred before 1857
- evaluate the problems that led to these uprisings
- know the characteristics of public participation and mobilisation in these uprisings

Prerequisites

The East India Company, a trading company, took over political and administrative power in India, creating land revenue systems like the Zamindari, Ryotwari, and Mahalwari systems. These systems looted Indian wealth and impoverished our peasantry. The Sanyasi Rebellion in the late 18th century was a monk rebellion in Jalpaiguri, Bengal, fuelled by caste discrimination and internal clashes. The British East India Company was seen as an oppressor, leading to uprisings in Rangpur and Dinajpur. The Treaty of Carnatic in 1801 granted the British the exclusive control over Carnatic territories. Poverty during British rule was primarily caused by economic growth, unequal land distribution, unemployment, slow income growth, and population growth. The British government's revenue system led to a decline in peasants' financial standing and poverty. The Zamindars imposed heavy taxes on peasants, leading to a decline in the Indian economy from 1760 to 1943.

Keywords

Peasant Uprising, Tribal Uprising, Sanyasi Rebellion, Poligars Revolt, Bhils Uprising, Kol Uprising, Mappila revolt

Discussion

4.4.1 Origin of Peasant and Tribal Uprisings

The Peasant and Tribal Movements in India were a part of societal movements against the British atrocities during the British colonial period in the 18th and 19th centuries. These movements aimed to restore previous political and social structures, addressing issues such as high rents, unlawful taxes, arbitrary evictions, and unpaid labour. The colonial economic policies, destruction of handicrafts, new land tax system, and colonial administrative and judicial systems contributed to the impoverishment of Indian peasants. In the zamindari regions, peasants faced high rents, illegal taxes, arbitrary evictions, and poorly compensated labour, leading to the development of the peasant movement. The government levied high land taxes in Ryotwari areas, and overburdened farmers sought financial assistance from local moneylenders. They were often compelled to mortgage their property and livestock, and mortgaged items could sometimes be seized by the lender. Real farmers were demoted to tenants-at-will, sharecroppers, and landless labourers.

Most of the peasant revolts in ancient and early medieval India were against high taxes. The term Janapada-Kopa, linked to the oppression and subsequent uprising of the peasantry, is mentioned in Kautilya's work. These revolts continued for over 200 years, with most uprisings in free India showing a continuity of the tactics of the British-era peasant revolts. The Mughal era saw more oppressive taxation and local rulers making incursions into tribal territories. During the East India Company rule, the land ownership pattern went through a huge change. The British changed the system of land revenue collection, and the ownership of land also changed. They instituted a policy of eviction and sale of land in case revenue was not paid in whole. This led to land becoming a mobile commodity, many peasants becoming landless, and zamindars becoming wealthy.

The permanent land settlement deteriorated the condition of the peasantry, with new landlords including old Zamindars, village headmen, religious functionaries, moneylenders, and other landlords. The lower ranks of cultivating tenants lost their hereditary rights and were evicted if their landlords found them unnecessary, unmanageable, or unable to pay rent. Additionally, there was increased encroachment of tribal hill territories, oppression by European and Indian planters, government usurpation of forest areas, unequal terms of trade, usury, and slave labour.

4.4.2 Important Peasant/Tribal Uprisings

This part will briefly discuss some of the most significant peasant and tribal uprisings of the colonial period. The simmering discontent of peasants and tribal people erupted into popular uprisings in various

parts of India at various times during the first hundred years of British rule. Whatever the immediate cause of each uprising, in general, these protest movements were inspired by a common experience of oppression, including colonial oppression.

4.4.2.1The Sanyasi Rebellion (1760-1800)

The Sanyasi revolt took place in the Murshidabad and Baikunthpur forests of Jalpaiguri, Bengal, towards the end of the eighteenth century. Pandit Bhabani Charan Pathak served as the leader of the Sanyasi rebellion. Pathak was an ascetic who lived in Murshidabad for a decade before the Sanyasi revolt. The Sanyasi rebellion was a manifestation of the sanyasis' and sadhus' unhappiness with and resistance to the oppressive British government. These ascetics, who belonged to a Hindu religious order, organised a sizable following and raised their arms against the British government. This uprising was a catalyst for future anti-colonial movements in India and became a symbol of resistance.

In February 1770, a famine in Bengal province led to a revolt by a small group of Hindu Sanyasis in Eastern India. The revolt was driven by specific grievances against British rule and the mistreatment of peasants. In the official correspondence of the East India Company in the second half of the eighteenth century, the invasion of the nomadic Sanyasis and Fakirs, mostly in northern Bengal, was frequently mentioned. Prior to the Bengal famine of 1770, there were already groups of Hindu and Muslim saints who travelled from location to location and launched surprise attacks on the properties of rich local people and government officials as well as food crop storage facilities. Even though the Sanyasis and Fakirs were religious nomads, they were originally peasants, including some who had been driven off their land.

However, the Bengal famine of 1770, rising revenue demands, and the growing hardship of the peasantry led to a significant influx of dispossessed small Zamindars, disbanded soldiers, and rural poor into the bands of Sanyasis and Fakirs. In bands of 5000 to 7000, they travelled through various regions of Bengal and Bihar and used the guerilla strategy. The wealthy's grain reserves were their main target, but later, they also attacked government officials. They robbed the local government's vaults. Sometimes, the poor received a share of the looted wealth. In Bogra and Mymensingh, they established separate governments.

The revolt was driven by specific grievances against British rule and the mistreatment of peasants. The Sanyasi revolt, which lasted from 1770 to 1779, was driven by caste discrimination and internal clashes. The equal involvement of Hindus and Muslims in these uprisings was one notable aspect. Manju Shah, Musa Shah, Bhawani Pathak, and Debi Chaudhurani were a few of the key figures in these movements. Up until 1800, Sanyasis-Fakirs and the British forces were a common sight throughout Bengal and Bihar. To put down the rebels, the British deployed all of their resources. The revolt was influenced by the Santhal revolt of 1855-56 and the Chuar revolt of 1799. The failure of the Sanyasi revolt was attributed to caste discrimination, with Bhabani Charan Pathak, a prominent figure in West Bengal's oppressed society, being killed by the British.

4.4.2.2 Peasant Uprising of Rangpur, Bengal, 1783

Following the establishment of British control over Bengal in 1757 and their various land revenue experiments in Bengal to extract as much as possible from peasants, the common man faced unbearable hardship. Rangpur and Dinajpur were two Bengal districts that faced a slew of illegal demands from the East India Company and its revenue

contractors. The revenue contractors' harsh attitude and exactions became a regular feature of peasant life. Debi Singh of Rangpur and Dinajpur was one such revenue contractor. In the two districts of northern Bengal, he and his agents inflicted a reign of terror. Increased taxes on the Zamindars were actually passed along to cultivators or ryots by the Zamindars themselves. Ryots did not engage in a position to satisfy Debi Singh and his agents' increasing demands. Not even women were spared when Debi Singh and his men used to beat and flog the peasants, burn down their homes, and destroy their crops.

The Company's executives were urged by the peasants to address their complaints. However, no one responded to their plea. The peasants took the law into their own hands after being denied justice. A sizable group of peasants who were armed with swords, shields, bows, and arrows were gathered by the rebel peasants by the beat of a drum. They chose Dirjinarain as their leader and attacked the local butcher shops and grain storage facilities owned by contractors' and government officials' local agents. They frequently snatched prisoners away from government guards. In order to pay for the costs of the rebellion, the rebels established their own government, ceased sending money to the one in place, and imposed "insurrection charges." Muslims and Hindus fought alongside one another during the uprising. In the end, the government's armed forces assumed command and put an end to the uprising.

4.4.2.3 Poligars Revolt (1795-1805)

The Poligars, a group of South Indian feudal lords, were granted land in return for their military services and designated as military chiefs. They were viewed as independent sovereign authorities within their territories, and the issue began in 1781 when the Nawab of Arcot granted the British East India Company authority over Tirunelveli and the Carnatic Provinces. The Poligars, led by Kattabomman Nayak, led the first Poligar rebellion in September 1799, which began in the Tirunelveli area. Their grievances regarding the introduction of a new land revenue system were ignored by the authorities. The proprietorships over land were lost and hence, they, along with the peasants, started a revolt against colonial authorities. The British forces eventually defeated Kattabomman after a series of battles in the Panchalankurichi fort. The Second Poligar revolt erupted in 1800-1901, with more bloodshed occurring during this time.

The Poligars held in the Palayamkottai fort managed to flee in February 1801, sparking the beginning of the second uprising. The rebels, led by Oomaithurai, took over many forts and fought against the East India Company in a broad coalition. The British forces eventually prevailed in quelling the Poligar rebellion, and the Treaty of Carnatic was signed in July 1801, giving the East India Company exclusive control over the civil and military governance of all Carnatic territories and dependencies. The chieftains' power was eliminated as a result of the Poligar rebellion's suppression in 1799 and 1800-1805. The Poligars of North Arcot and Yedaragunta also revolted against the Company's rule between 1803 and 1805.

4.4.2.4 The Uprising of the Bhils (1818-1831)

The Khandesh hill ranges were where the Bhils were mainly based. The Bhils were upset by the British occupation of Khandesh in 1818 because they were wary of outsiders encroaching on their territory. Additionally, it was thought that Trimbakji, a rebel minister of Bari Rao II, inspired the Bhils to oppose British rule over Khandesh. In 1819, there was a general uprising, and

the Bhils, in various small groups, decimated the plains. Similar insurrections by the Bhil chiefs against the British occurred quite frequently. The British government attempted to appease the rebels while simultaneously suppressing them with military force and pursuing various forms of appeasement. But despite their best efforts, the British were unable to win over the Bhils.

4.4.2.5 The Rebellion at Mysore (1830-1831)

The British handed back Mysore to the Wodeyar king after Tipu Sultan was finally defeated and imposed the subsidiary alliance on him. The ruler of Mysore was forced to raise his demands for revenue from the Zamindars due to financial pressure from the Company. The cultivators ultimately bore an increasing portion of the financial burden. The existing suffering of the peasants was made worse by the corruption and extortion of local officials.

One of Mysore's four provinces, Nagara, experienced an open uprising as a result of the peasants' growing discontent. The rebellious peasants of Nagara attracted the support of peasants from other provinces, and they found their leader in Sardar Malla, the Kremsi native son of a common ryot. The peasants disobeyed the Mysore ruler. Strong resistance forced the British to retake Nagara from the rebel peasants, and in the end, the British gained control of the state's administration.

4.4.2.6 The Kol Uprising (1831-1832)

The Kol tribe, consisting of Mundas, Oraons, Hos, and Bhumijs, lived in the Chhota Nagpur region of India for centuries. In the early 19th century, the East India Company expanded its control over Chhota Nagpur. Tensions among the tribal people were caused by British incursion into this region and an attempt to impose British law and order over the authority of the Kol Chiefs. Due to the British occupation of Singhbhum and the surrounding territories, many outsiders started to settle here, which led to the transfer of tribal lands to the outsiders. The hereditary independence of the tribal chiefs was seriously threatened by the transfer of tribal lands, the arrival of merchants and moneylenders, and the application of British law in the tribal area. This greatly inflamed tribal people's resentment and sparked uprisings against outsiders in the tribal region. Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Palamau, and Manbhum were all affected by the uprising. The settlers from other areas were the target of the attack; and their homes were set on fire, and their property was looted. The British militia brutally put an end to the uprising.

4.4.2.7 The Faraizi Disturbances (1838-1851)

The Haji Shariatullah of Faridpur founded the Faraizi sect. The original Faraizi movement was motivated by the grievances of peasants who had been evicted by landlords and British rulers. The Faraizis came together as a religious sect with an egalitarian ideology under Dudu Miyan, the son of the sect's founder. The peasants were drawn to his straightforward teaching style and conviction that all people are created equal, that all land belongs to the God, and that no one has the right to tax it. In some areas of Eastern Bengal, the Faraizis established a parallel government and village courts to resolve disputes among the peasants. They requested that the peasants refrain from paying taxes to the Zamindars in order to protect cultivators from the Zamindars' excesses. They ransacked the homes and butcheries of the Zamindars and set fire to the indigo factory in Panch-char. The movement was put down by the government

and Zamindar's forces, and Dudu Miyan was imprisoned.

4.4.2.8 The Mappila Uprisings (1836-1854)

The Mappila uprisings of Malabar, a region inhabited by Mappilas, were significant challenges to colonial rule. The British occupation in the 18th century brought hardships to the Mappilas, including the transfer of 'Janmi' from traditional partnership to independent landownership and eviction rights. Over-assessment, illegal taxes and hostile government officials led to rebellion against the British and landlords. Religious leaders played a crucial role in strengthening the Mappilas' solidarity and fostering anti-British consciousness. Between 1836 and 1854, around twenty-two uprisings occurred in Malabar, with rebels mostly coming from the Mappilas.

4.4.2.9 The Santhal Rebellion (1855-56)

The Santhals, inhabitants of the districts of Birbhum, Bankura, Murshidabad, Fakur, Dumka, Bhagalpur, and Purnea, faced oppression from Zamindars and money lenders. Gradual penetration by outsiders led to misery and oppression for the Santhals. The Santhals took up arms to protect themselves, initially committing robbery and looting of Zamindars and money-lenders' houses. However, violent suppression and harassment by police and local officials made them more violent. The Santhals, led by two brothers, Sidhu and Kanhu, decided to give an ultimatum to the Zamindars and government officials to stop the oppression and set up their own government. Eventually, the Santhals flared up in an open armed insurrection against local government officials, Zamindars, and money lenders, spreading rapidly throughout the entire Santhal Pargana. The government and Zamindars counter-attacked the insurgents, but the struggle ultimately failed due to British superiority of arms.

4.4.2.10 Indigo Rebellion (1859-1862)

The Indigo rebellion was the first peasant outbreak after the revolt of 1857 and was a movement against the cultivation of indigo by peasants in Bengal. Farmers were dissatisfied with low prices, low profitability, and soil fertility. The movement was supported by the press and missionaries. Harish Chandra Mukherjee and Dinabandhu Mitra's play 'Nil Darpan' portrayed the peasantry's plight. The East India Company banned the movement, but the government appointed an Indigo Commission in November 1860, recognising the illegality of indigo cultivation.

4.4.2.11 Pabna Movement (1873-1876)

In the majority of Eastern Bengal, landlords extorted rent and land taxes, which were frequently increased for the underprivileged peasants. Act X of 1859 also prohibited peasants from acquiring occupancy rights. An Agrarian League was established in May 1873 in Patna (East Bengal), in the Yusufshahi Pargana of the Pabna district. The struggle was organised through rent strikes, money was raised, and it spread throughout Patna and to other East Bengal districts. The conflict mainly consisted of legal resistance and minimal violence. The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, which the government passed, increased the occupancy rights, but the unrest persisted until that point. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, R.C. Dutt, and the Indian Association, led by Surendranath Banerjea, all supported the struggle.

4.4.2.12 Deccan Riots (1875)

The Marwari and Gujarati money lenders'

excesses were the main targets of the Deccan peasants' uprising. Under the Ryotwari system, the riots were heavily taxed. In 1867, the land revenue was also increased by 50%. To protest moneylenders, the riots organised a social boycott in 1874. They refused to work on the moneylenders' fields and shop at their establishments. The riots were turned away by the barbers, washermen, and shoemakers. Rapidly spreading to the villages of Poona, Ahmednagar, Solapur, and Satara, this social boycott became agrarian riots with deliberate attacks on the homes and trade organisations of moneylenders. The movement was successfully put down by the government. The Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act was passed in 1879 as a conciliation measure.

4.4.3 Nature of Popular Movements in 18th and 19th Centuries

Different schools of historians have interpreted peasant and tribal movements in different ways. Numerous issues that these tribes and peasants faced from pre-colonial to colonial times (see above) were frequently disregarded as potential causes for these uprisings. The rebels were frequently portrayed as undeveloped savages fighting against "civilisation." The Nationalists tended to ignore some other aspects of the struggle of the oppressed people and appropriate peasant and tribal history for the anti-colonial struggle. The logic of peasant and tribal protest was frequently refuted by those who were more sympathetic to the cause of the latter, often using examples from the experience of the people. It's also important to comprehend the peasant and tribal realm of action in its own terms.

The question of leadership, i.e., who led these movements, became crucial and was a serious matter of study among historians. In this period, movements frequently produced leaders who went up and down with the movement. There was very little room for a leadership to enter from outside, in which these movements emerged. These movements frequently relied on men or women who lived in the same cultural milieu as the peasants led for leadership. They were able to express the protest of the oppressed. The Faraizi rebellion showed how religious leaders attempted to restore the purity of their religion, while also addressing the issues of the peasants. Thus, the idea that all land was considered to be the property of God and that everyone had an equal share in it helped to inspire the 'true' religion and to inspire the oppressed peasants.

The peasant and tribal protest movements in India have a certain level of political and social consciousness. They often involve redefinition of the relationship of the oppressed to the language, culture, and religion of the dominant classes. These movements took on the character of public and collective acts, with the participant methods having specific features. Public declarations and public legitimacy allowed for peaceful conferences, planning, assembly, and attacks. The underlying bond uniting the rebels against the perceived enemy was often forged between class, caste, ethnic, and religious groups.

Religion forged a bond between the poorer and more affluent sections of the peasantry to create grounds for a fight against landlord oppression. Ethnicity also created bonds of solidarity. The regional spread of rebellions of tribal and peasant communities was influenced by their perception of the region they belonged to, the geographical boundaries within which they lived and worked, and the ties of ethnicity. For the Santhals, it was a battle for their 'fatherland' that had been grabbed by the outsiders. Sometimes, ethnic bonds extended the territorial limits of a tribal group, as seen in the case of the Larka and Dhangar Kols, who came together in rebellion.

The Indian revolts created awareness among the peasantry, inspiring other uprisings against exploitation and oppression. The non-differentiation and anti-imperialist struggle united all sections of the peasantry, including landless labourers. The movement also encouraged post-independence reforms, such as the abolition of Zamindari, reducing the power of the landed class and transforming the agrarian structure.

Several historians and anthropologists have categorised various popular protests in different ways. Kathleen Gough has emphasised both restorative and transformative movements. E.J. Hobsbawm, in his study of pre-industrial Europe, introduced the concept of social banditry, distinguishing between crime and revolt. Gough has also utilised this framework. However, Ranajit Guha has critiqued Hobsbawm's characterisation of such protests as "pre-political" in pre-industrial Europe. Guha argues that under British colonial rule, peasant revolts, though in their early stages, had political aims and ideological foundations.

4.4.4: Poverty and Famine During Colonial Rule

The widespread poverty during colonial rule had a number of causes. The lack of economic growth during the British colonial era is one historical factor. The cycle of poverty was exacerbated by the unequal distribution of land and other resources, a lack of employment opportunities, a slow rate of income growth, failure to encourage economic growth, and unchecked population growth. The main causes of poverty in general are the impoverishment of the peasantry, the exploitation of land revenue and agriculture by Colonial masters and landlords, famine and draughts, and farmer hardships.

Famines can occur for a variety of reasons, including inflation, governmental actions, war, poor crop seasons, high poverty rates, or population imbalances. The majority of the time, it is combined with an epidemic, high mortality rates, and malnutrition. Throughout the 19th century, famines repeatedly ravaged the Indian population. This was a result of colonial policies like rack-renting, open trade, disregard for agriculture, and high levies. There were 31 famines in total during the British Raj, the last of which, the Bengal Famine, claimed about 4 million lives.

The British government's system of taxation and oppression of peasants in Bengal and other areas led to a decline in their financial standing and poverty. The Zamindars, who imposed heavy taxes on peasants, forced them to work without payment and were responsible for half of the gross produce demanded by the government. This led to a general feeling that peasants in the British-Indian organisation were poorer and more discouraged than their native counterparts. The inflexible way of collecting land taxes further exacerbated the problem, as workers received minimal monetary benefits in lieu of their hard work. The British did not take any initiative to improve farming, and peasants had to hand over all their earnings to meet the requirements of the British-Indian organisation.

The new taxation system empowered moneylenders, who took advantage of the peasants' lack of education and knowledge to manipulate the law. As the peasants became more obliged, more land went under the control of moneylenders, vendors, and other well-to-do classes. In areas where the Zamindari system was followed, peasants lost their lands and became subtenants of moneylenders. The burden of tax assessment and growing neediness pushed cultivators into debt, leading to their poverty.

From 1760 to 1943, the Indian economy witnessed a major downfall, and about 85 million Indians died due to massive famines. These were consequences of the

economic policies undertaken under British rule. Below is a list of these famines with respect to region, consequences and the governors-general-

- **Famine in Bengal of 1770:** The regions covered under the famine were primarily Central Bengal and Bihar. It was under John Cartier, and about one-third of the total population in the area died as a result of the famine.
- **The famine of Chalisa:** 1783-1784: The regions covered under this famine were Punjab, Kashmir, Delhi and Rajputana. It was under Warren Hastings, leading to the death of 11 million people.
- **The famine of Doji Bara in 1788**: Marwar, Hyderabad, Gujarat, and the Deccan are the regions covered under this famine. And it led to the death of about 11 million people.
- **The famine of Agra of 1837:** The regions covered under this famine were regions of Jumna districts and Central Doab. It lasted for a year and ended in 1838. It was under George Eden, and about 0.8 million died due to it.
- **The famine of Upper Doab of 1861**: The regions affected by the famine include Punjab, Delhi, and Agra areas. Like the former, this famine lasted for a year and led to the death of 2 million people. The region was under Lord Canning.
- **The famine of Orissa 1866**: The affected regions include Bihar and Orissa. The area was under Lord John Lawrence, and led to the death of about 1 million people.

Recap

- The peasant and tribal movements in India were a part of social movements against British atrocities during the British colonial period in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- The permanent land settlement further deteriorated the condition of the peasantry, with new landlords including old Zamindars, village headmen, religious functionaries, moneylenders, and other landlords.
- The Sanyasi rebellion, which broke out in the Murshidabad and Baikunthpur forests of Jalpaiguri, Bengal, occurred in the late 18th century.
- It was a manifestation of the Sanyasis' and Sadhus' unhappiness with British rule and resistance to the British government.
- The British East India Company was seen as an oppressor, and the failure of the revolt was attributed to caste discrimination.

- The British colonisation of Bengal in 1757 led to land revenue experiments and hardships for the common man. Rangpur and Dinajpur faced illegal demands from the East India Company, leading to uprisings.
- The Poligars revolt, led by Kattabomma Nayak, led to the first Poligar rebellion in 1799. The second Poligar war erupted in 1800-1901, but British forces eventually prevailed.
- The Bhils revolted against British rule in 1818-31, while the Kol Uprising in 1831-32 threatened tribal chiefs' hereditary independence.
- The Faraizi disturbances in 1838-51 and the Mappila Uprisings in 1836-54 were significant events in the Indian subcontinent's history.
- During colonial rule in British India, poverty was primarily caused by economic growth, unequal land distribution, unemployment, slow income growth, and population growth.
- The British government's taxation system led to a decline in peasants' financial standing and poverty.
- The Zamindars imposed heavy taxes on peasants, forcing them to work without payment and imposing inflexible land taxes.
- This led to a decline in the Indian economy from 1760 to 1943, with around 85 million dying due to massive famines.
- The famines had consequences such as rising mortality, social disruption, women's migration, exploitation, cloth famine, and a fall in hygiene standards.

Objective Questions

1. In which region did the Munda uprising take place?
2. Which tribal rebellion was made famous by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee through his novel *Anandmath*?
3. Who was the leader of the Bundela revolt of Bundelkhand?
4. Why was the Kuka movement started?
5. Which uprising/rebellion is also known as Ulgulan?
6. In which year did the Kol uprising take place?
7. Name the leaders of the Munda rebellion.

8. In which region did the Bhil revolt primarily take place?
9. Who led the Poligar revolt?
10. Identify the leaders of the Santhal Rebellion.

Answers

1. Chhotangapur region, Ranchi
2. Sanyasi Rebellion
3. Madhukar Shah and Jawahir Singh
4. Degeneration of Sikh religion and loss of sikh sovereignty
5. Munda Uprising/Rebellion
6. 1831
7. Birsa Munda
8. Khandesh
9. Kattabomman
10. Two brothers, Sidhu and Kanhu

Assignments

1. Create a chronological timeline illustrating the major peasant and tribal uprisings in colonial India, highlighting key events, causes, and outcomes associated with each uprising.
2. Analyse how colonial policies contributed to peasant uprisings in India. Discuss the specific policies that triggered unrest among the peasantry, and examine the socio-economic and political factors that fuelled these uprisings.
3. Analyse the characteristics and dynamics of popular movements in the 19th century, focusing on their causes, key events, and social impact.

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BLOCK

Modern India

UNIT 1

Precolonial Perspectives

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- learn how different social classes in India were impacted by British colonial rule
- identify key factors that shaped the rise of national consciousness in India
- examine the ways Indian masses and the middle class reacted to colonial oppression
- assess the evolution of national consciousness into an organised movement for independence

Prerequisites

'Nationalism' and 'patriotism' in India under British colonial rule emerged as responses to exploitation and oppression. Indian nationalism, which advocated for the country's self-determination and sovereignty, developed gradually as the British extended their control over India. Early nationalist movements were led by educated elites, like those in the Indian National Congress, who initially sought reforms and greater autonomy within the British system. Over time, this evolved into a demand for complete independence, especially after the partition of Bengal in 1905, which spurred widespread protests.

'Patriotism', in the Indian context, was tied to a deep emotional attachment to the land and its cultural heritage. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi invoked patriotism by emphasising love for the country and the moral duty to resist colonial exploitation. His idea of *swaraj* (self-rule) blended both patriotism and nationalism, advocating

for non-violent resistance as a means of securing freedom.

Nationalist leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak promoted more assertive forms of nationalism, insisting on complete independence. By the 1920s and 1930s, Indian nationalism had transformed into a mass movement, uniting people across regions, religions, and languages in the fight against British rule. Ultimately, this synthesis of 'nationalism' and 'patriotism' culminated in India's independence in 1947.

Keywords

Nationalism, Patriotism, National Consciousness, Racial discrimination, Intellectual Awakening

Discussion

5.1.1 First Organised Resistance- Attingal Revolt

The Attingal Outbreak is considered the first organised revolt against British authority in India. Anjengo, a crucial location for the British in Travancore, was chosen for its strategic location to connect the North through Kerala waters and enhance their trade networks. The British were granted permission to build a factory in 1684 and a fort in 1690, which was completed in 1695. Anjengo became one of the earliest British settlements in Kerala, along with a military store depot. The British expansion in Anjengo led to natives attacking the factory due to variations in pepper prices and the fort's transformation into a military camp. Corruption by company officials and the indigenous elites fueled hostilities between the two groups, resulting in a series of attacks between 1695 and 1721. On 15th April 1721, locals in Anjengo murdered 140 British men under Gyfford, the Anjengo Chief factor, who were supposed to meet Rani of Attingal. They attacked Anjengo fort and besieged it for six months, marking the first organised revolt against the British. Rani of Attingal had to compensate by allowing the Company to build a godown at her territorial premises and grant them a trade monopoly on pepper.

5.1.2. The Revolt of 1857

A number of intermittent military uprisings took place in various regions of India prior to the Revolt of 1857. The first Indian sepoy mutiny took place in 1764 when a full battalion of Hector Munro's Forces, who were fighting Mir Kasim at Patna, joined the Nawab's army. They were, however, defeated and punished. This was primarily caused by the British officers' ignorance of the social and religious practices of the sepoys they were in charge of. The British officers told the sepoys to shave their beards and get rid of the caste marks on their foreheads in order to improve discipline in the army. The sepoys developed a variety of anxieties and suspicions as a result of this enforced practice. Early in May 1806—because of this—the sepoys staged a mutiny in the Vellore fort. A British contingent put an end to the mutiny. The 34th Regiment at Ferozpur declined to

march into Sindh in 1844. The rebellious soldiers were marched back, and their leaders were dealt with harshly.

5.1.2.1 Causes, Suppression, and Consequences

On May 10, 1857, the Company's Indian soldiers in Meerut began their uprising. The British referred to it as the 'Sepoy Mutiny', while some Indian scholars considered it as 'the First War of Independence' against the British authorities. Killing their European officers, the Indian soldiers advanced on Delhi. The causes of the revolt are rooted in the political, economic, social ,religious and administrative grievances of the Indians.

1. **Political Causes:** Annexation Policies- The British policy of aggressive territorial expansion, particularly under Lord Dalhousie's Doctrine of Lapse, angered many Indian rulers. According to this doctrine, any princely state under direct or indirect British control where the ruler died without a male heir would be annexed by the British. This led to the annexation of states like Satara, Jhansi, and Nagpur. The dethroning of legitimate rulers created widespread resentment, particularly among the ruling classes.

2. **Social and Religious Causes**: The British were not sensitive to the feelings of the vast mass of Indian people, leading to social reforms like the abolition of sati, female infanticide, encouragement of widow remarriage, and women's education. The Act XXI of 1850 allowed converts to Christianity to inherit ancestral property, but this was interpreted as a concession to Christian converts, further causing anxiety and fear among the people. The religious sentiments of the sepoys were also hurt by the Madras presidency, with Hindus and Muslims being asked to remove caste marks from their foreheads and trim their beards. The loyalty of the sepoys was further undermined by certain military reforms.

3. **Economic Causes**: Heavy Taxation and Land Revenue Policies- The British introduced exploitative land revenue systems such as the Zamindari, Ryotwari, and Mahalwari systems, which forced Indian peasants to pay high taxes. These burdens often led to widespread rural indebtedness and even loss of land for many peasants.

4. **Drain of Wealth**: The economic policies of the British led to the systematic drain of wealth from India to Britain, as articulated by thinkers like Dadabhai Naoroji. Traditional industries, particularly weaving and textiles, were devastated by the influx of cheap British-made goods, leading to mass unemployment among artisans and craftspeople.

5. **Military Causes**: Discontent among Indian Soldiers: The sepoys (Indian soldiers serving in the British East India Company's army) were increasingly disappointed due to poor pay, lack of promotion opportunities, and racial discrimination. They were paid far less than their British counterparts and faced harsher treatment.

The revolt of 1857-1858 was a popular and widespread revolt in India, characterised by Hindu-Muslim unity and unity between different regions. It was not a class revolt, as the peasantry only directed attacks against money-lending grain dealers or British government representatives. The revolt in Awadh and other regions was popular, as it pertained to people as a whole and was carried out by them. It was the first time soldiers from different communities, including Hindus, Muslims, landlords, and peasants, came together in opposition to the

British. This revolt provided the foundation for later successful anti-colonial struggles against the British.

The Revolt of 1857 marked a significant turning point in Indian history, as it challenged British rule across caste, community, and class barriers. The British government was pressured to change their policy towards India, leading to the abolishment of the Board of Control and the creation of the Secretary of State for India. The British crown assumed control of India from the East India Company, and Queen Victoria was crowned empress of India in 1858. The British Crown continued the company's policies, dividing and ruling the country and implementing the Indian Civil Service Act of 1861. The revolt played a pivotal role in Anglo-Indian history, with the British becoming cautious and defensive about their empire.

Consequences of the Revolt of 1857

- The mutiny brought about far-reaching changes in the character of the Indian administration. After the mutiny, the English East India Company lost its power, and India was brought under the direct rule of the British crown.
- The famous proclamation of Queen Victoria, made on November 1, 1858, promised that the British government would do its utmost for the material and moral progress of the people of India.
- The end of Peshwaship and Mughal Rule was one of the major political consequences of the Revolt of 1857. The title of Mughal Emperor was also abolished.
- The Army was reorganised to prevent the possibility of an outbreak in the future. The ratio between the Europeans and Indians in the army changed from 1:6 to 2:5.

5.1.3 Factors Contributing to the Rise of National Consciousness

British rule largely resulted in the rise of national consciousness in the nineteenth century. All classes of Indians were oppressed as a result of the economic, political, and social changes brought about by British rule, which led to widespread discontent among the populace. Additionally, the British developed postal and telegraph systems, railroads, printing presses, and educational institutions, which were initially developed to run an efficient government. Such factors played a crucial role in creating favourable conditions for the rise and expansion of national movements. Some administrative measures and new policies introduced by the British government to establish their control in India helped Indians gain a sense of national identity. Now, let's look at these policies and their results.

- **Unified System of Administration:** The British placed a large portion of India under a uniform system of governance to better exploit the resources of the country. Important measures to achieve this uniformity in administration included reforms in the police, legal system, law and order apparatus, and land revenue administration.
- **Communication Network**: Post and telegraph services were expanded and improved. The major towns were connected by telegraph networks. Work on railway lines began after 1853. The goal was to connect the presidencies and the hinterland with important ports. The main benefit of railroads for the British was the low-cost transportation of goods to and from ports. However, as the railway network expanded, passenger traffic also increased, giving people who

lived far apart new opportunities for social interaction.

- **Printing Press:** The introduction of the printing press reduced the cost of transmitting ideas and learning. Several newspapers and periodicals began to appear. People in different parts of the country could share their problems through these publications. The press played an important role in the development of national consciousness among the literate sections of the population.

- **Modern Western Education**: The British introduced a new educational system that was heavily influenced by the West, both in form and content. The main idea behind this system was to create a loyal group of Indians who would perform clerical and lower administrative tasks for the British. According to Macaulay, the goal was to create "a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, opinions, morals, and intellect." However, in an atmosphere of growing disillusionment with colonial rule, the modern educational system acquainted the educated classes with the ideas of equality, liberty, and nationalism. The education system itself fostered disillusionment because it was elitist, serving only a small segment of the population, and as many as 92% of Indians were illiterate even in 1921.

As a result, educated Indians turned to contemporary European nationalist movements (such as German unification, Italian unification, and nationalist movements against the Ottoman Empire). They were introduced to the works of liberal writers and thinkers such as John Milton, Shelly, Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Rousseau, Voltaire, Mazzini, and Garibaldi. When Indian students returned to India after studying in England, they discovered that they were denied all of the rights that Europeans took for granted.

- **British Policy of Expansion**: In the beginning, the British conquered various regions to establish control. This policy of expansion continued thereafter. They kept extending their territories by annexing Indian states, one after another, even if those states were not at war with the British. The important annexations were of Sind (1843), Punjab (1849), Rangoon and Pegu (1852) and Awadh (1856). Jhansi, Satara and Nagpur were also taken over. The Indian rulers were getting apprehensive of the British.

- **Intellectual Awakening**: Social reform and intellectual ferment characterised nineteenth-century India. By intellectual ferment, we mean an attempt to conduct a critical and creative examination of contemporary society in order to transform it along modern lines. This was done by intellectuals who had benefited from modern education. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen, and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar were the key figures in this intellectual awakening. M.G. Ranade and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan were among the nineteenth-century intellectuals who contributed to the awakening of national consciousness.

- **Racial Discrimination**: The English Sense of racial superiority also contributed to the rise of Nationalist sentiments. Apart from social behaviour, this discrimination was also manifested in judicial matters. G.O. Trevelyan, an influential civil servant and historian, observed in 1864: "The testimony of a single one of our countrymen has more weight with the court than that of any number of Hindus, a circumstance which places a terrible instrument of

power in the hands of an unscrupulous and grasping English man." The experience of discrimination also aided in the development of national consciousness

Recap

- The Revolt of 1857 transferred power to the crown
- Indian council created with 15 members
- The British government instilled fear after the revolt
- Reduction of Indian soldiers; increase in English soldiers
- Attingal Outbreak: triggered by corruption and pepper price manipulation
- Trade agreements made with Rani of Attingal
- Rebellion fuelled by dissatisfaction with colonial policies
- Economic changes caused widespread discontent in India
- British development of infrastructure facilitated nationalism
- Postal and telegraph systems improved communication
- Railroads and printing presses modernised India
- Economic policies devastated agriculture and handicrafts
- Educated Indians inspired by European nationalist movements
- Indian National Congress was formed in 1885 to protest against British colonialism

Objective Questions

1. What was the first organised revolt against the English East India Company in India?
2. When did the Attingal Revolt occur?
3. When did the Vellore Mutiny happen?
4. When did the uprising at Meerut occur?

5. Who led the Revolt in Delhi?
6. When Queen Victoria was assumed as the ruler of India?
7. In which year was the Indian Civil Service Act introduced?
8. What are the chief reasons for the rise of national consciousness among the Indians?
9. Which British policy, associated with Lord Dalhousie, angered many Indian rulers and led to the annexation of several states?
10. Give three examples of the states that were annexed under the Doctrine of Lapse.

Answers

1. Attingal Revolt
2. 1721
3. 1806
4. May 10, 1857
5. Bahadurshah Safar
6. 1858
7. 1861
8. Modern Western Education, Political Unification, British policy of exploitation.
9. Doctrine of Lapse
10. Satara, Jhansi and Nagpur

Assignments

1. Analyse the causes, major events, and consequences of the 1857 revolt and discuss its significance in the context of the Indian struggle for independence.
2. Discuss the socio-political, economic, and cultural influences that played a significant role in shaping nationalist sentiments during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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UNIT 2

Social Transformation

Learning Outcomes

On the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- analyse the nature and characteristics of social transformation in Indian society
- understand the British impact on Indian society
- examine the shift from tradition to modernity

Prerequisites

Social change refers to the shifts in the structure of society due to alterations in social institutions, behaviours, or relationships. When these changes are sustained on a larger scale, they can lead to social transformation. Social transformation is the process through which established relationships, norms, values, and hierarchies evolve over time. This transformation is influenced by various factors, including economic growth, scientific advancements, technological innovations, and important events such as wars or political upheavals.

During British rule in India, traditional society experienced significant reforms and changes, particularly regarding social norms. The nineteenth century saw the questioning and modification of irrational practices such as the caste system, *Sati*, polygamy, child marriage, and female infanticide. These changes were crucial in redefining Indian society and addressing age-old social issues.

Keywords

Social Transformation, Sanskritisation, Westernisation, Modernity, Education, Women, Christian Missionary, Reform

Discussion

5.2.1 Nature of Indian Society During 18th Century

In the 18th century, Indian society experienced stagnation and strong dependence on the past. The society was divided based on religion, region, tribe, language, and caste. The caste system was rigid, with higher castes monopolising social prestige and privileges. Profession choices were often determined by caste, although there were some exceptions. The family system was patriarchal, with women subjected to male authority. The custom of early marriage and the practice of sati (the burning of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre) were prevalent across the country. Cultural activities were financed by the royal Court, rulers, nobles, chiefs, and zamindars.

5.2.2 British Impact on Indian Society

Indian society underwent many changes following the arrival of the British. In the 19th century, certain detrimental social practices like female infanticide, child marriage, sati, polygamy and a rigid caste system became more prevalent. These practices were against human dignity and values. Women were discriminated against at all stages of life and were marginalised within society. They did not have access to any development opportunities to improve their status. Education was limited primarily to a handful of men from upper castes, particularly Brahmanas, who had access to the Vedas, which were written in Sanskrit. The priestly class outlined expensive rituals, sacrifices, and customs associated with birth and death.

The British brought new ideas such as liberty, equality, freedom, and human rights, which were influenced by the Renaissance, the Reformation, and various revolutions in Europe. These ideas appealed to some sections of our society and led to several reform movements across the country.

British utilitarianism aimed to modernise India, leading to the development of education policies like Macaulay's Minute in 1835. The Filtration Theory emphasised the potential for English-educated Indians to disseminate modern ideas to the broader population. However, this Westernisation led to varied responses from Indian society. Traditional intelligentsia accepted English education for utilitarian reasons but resisted Westernisation. Christianity also posed a significant challenge, and some Indian intellectuals embraced its teachings.

Traditionalists viewed English education as a means to secure employment under British rule, similar to Persian knowledge that was valued during pre-colonial regimes. Ram Mohan Roy participated in creative engagement with the West, blending new knowledge with indigenous traditions and reassessing Indian tradition through modern education channels. English education played a crucial role in facilitating cultural transformation in nineteenth-century India.

5.2.3 Tradition to Modernity

Traditional society is characterised by agriculture, rural life, primitive technology on a small scale, established customs, and a straightforward social structure. In these societies, social institutions and interpersonal relationships are believed to be harmonious. Institutions, accepted norms, and behavioral patterns are consistent, functioning through customs, folkways, and mores as mechanisms of social control. In traditional societies, expectations and accomplishments are often closely aligned.

In contrast, modern society is defined by industry, urbanisation, advanced technology, the rule of law, democracy, and a complex social structure. In order to accomplish new objectives, set as a result of the reform movement, earlier behaviour frequently becomes ineffective due to the introduction of new social relations and social roles. This transition can lead to tensions and frustrations as individuals adapt to changes, resulting in the emergence of new behavioural patterns. Confusion may arise when the established order is altered. Changes in various cultural elements (such as acceptance of technology) would entail acceptance of a scientific outlook on life, showing up on time for work, and new types of social organisation like unions that differ from conventional values. In the phase of transition, when the 'old' is not completely replaced, it takes time for people to adapt to the new situations.

Colonialism in India disrupted the traditional framework of coexistence, forcing Indian society to reevaluate its internal constitution. The British introduced colonial modernity. The elites of various religious entities organised themselves into pressure groups to negotiate with the colonial authorities, resulting in a rise in community-based political coherence and national-level exchange of ideas. This led to novel forms of political engagement, necessitating dialogue among diverse groups to share opinions and ideas.

The British conquest changed India's social and political landscape, leading to the politicisation of the colonial state. Power became the major concern of different groups, with privileged spokespeople deploying new idioms to articulate their interests. This produced the conflictual intermeshing of diverse notions of social good.

The need for a secular system to democratically manage competing notions of good emerged from the internal exigencies of Indian society. However, the peculiar logic of Indian modernity produced new styles of culture and politics unevenly. The intellectual origins of modernity in India can be found in foreign ideas introduced by the British state and its institutions. The middle class, divided into sections, was influenced by Western ideas due to their social and economic proximity to the British state.

The Indian middle class in the 19th century began glorifying the West and imitating the liberal trends of British superiors. This led to the abolition of cruel social practices, rejection of irrational religious rituals, and loosening of patriarchal regulations over women. However, the social base of these reforms was an economically exploitative middle class seeking to reconcile its traditional position of power with the modern colonial rulers. The Indian Renaissance's conceptual vocabulary was based on religion and caste, neglecting the broader theme of socio-political struggles against exploitation.

In religious communities, the Indian Renaissance leaders legitimised or opposed social reforms through an interpretative dependence on religious texts. They drew upon Vedanta as the philosophical inspiration for their social vision, resulting in monotheism and universalism. The Indian Renaissance's exclusivist tendency overpowered its

universalist message, leading to a tension between rationalist critique and universalism. The Indian Renaissance thinkers contributed to the entrenchment of faith as the dominant criterion for considering the validity of any change, setting aside the critical application of reason to unjust social practices.

5.2.4 The Key Changes in Society under British Rule

Under British rule, India underwent a number of notable changes in various fields and promoted growth in Indian society and culture. Here are a few significant changes made during British rule.

1. **Education:** The British rulers established English education as a tool for a more comprehensive plan to westernise India. From that vantage point, western education emerged as one of India's major catalysts for cultural change during the nineteenth century. Scholars have, however, interpreted Macaulay's policy as a component of an imperial cultural policy that disrupted the indigenous educational system without laying the groundwork for a comprehensive modern education that included the dissemination of scientific and technological knowledge. The emphasis on literary education marginalised traditional sources of knowledge and led to a number of long-term deficiencies in the modern educational system in nineteenth-century India.

New education in India enabled Indians to engage with the West and explore new fields of inquiry. Scholars like Jagadish Chandra Bose and Prafulla Chandra Roy explored ancient India's antiquity and used scientific knowledge for entrepreneurship. Indian educationists managed to cross barriers created by British rule and use liberal political language to critique British rule.

2. **Women's Rights**: During the dawn of British rule in India, women faced a low status, with low literacy rates and social practices such as child marriage, enforced widowhood, and polygamy. Social reformers, such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, aimed to address these injustices and promote education and legal reform. The Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed in 1929, but it was not enforced properly. Lord William Bentinck initiated steps against 'Sati', which was legally abolished in 1829. The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act in 1856 and the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act in 1937 improved the legal position of women and made them self-sufficient in terms of food and shelter. The National Movement and women's movements paved the way for their liberation from social evils and religious taboos.

3. **Caste Identities**: The colonisers used categorical systems of religion, race, caste, and tribe to frame the diversity in pre-colonial India. While caste identities existed prior to colonial rule, this simplified categorisation created new hierarchies and rigid boundaries. This rigid categorisation became further entrenched during the 19th century, with religion-based electorates in British India and caste-based reservations in independent India solidifying these previously fluid categories.

4. **Christian Missionaries' Role:** British Christian missionaries sought to influence the faith of Indians by promoting the superiority of Christianity. They endeavoured to instill Western ideas in Indians to maintain imperial law and order. Also, they contributed to educational reforms and social improvements in areas such as women's rights and health.

5. **Social Legislations:** In the early 19th century, British policies aimed to eradicate social evils in India, but they eventually breached the socio-religious fabric due to their focus on English perception and attitude. Orientalism exponents argued for modernization and Westernisation, and the Christian Missionaries supported this. The British government adopted measures to improve women's conditions and eradicate social evils, such as banning female infanticide. The Bengal Regulation Acts of 1795 and 1804 declared murdering female infants illegal, and in 1870, an act was passed to prohibit female infanticide.

- **Abolition of Sati:** This was influenced by the step of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's frontal attack. The British Government decided to abolish the practice of Sati or live burning of widows and declared it as culpable homicide. The Regulation of 1829 was applicable for the first instance to the Bengal Presidency alone but was extended with slight modification to Madras and Bombay Presidencies in 1830.
- **Abolition of Slavery**: This was another practice which came under British scanner. Hence, under the Charter Act of 1833, slavery in India was abolished and under Act V of 1843, the practice of slavery was sacked by law and declared illegal. The Penal Code of 1860 also declared trade in slavery illegal.
- **Widow Remarriage**: These practices were high on Brahma Samaj's agenda, and the issue got polarised. There were a number of steps taken to promote widow remarriage by establishing women's colleges, universities, and associations and preaching the Vedic stand on widow remarriage.
- **Abolition of Child Marriage**: The Native Marriage Act (Civil Marriage Act) of 1872 sought to enact legislation against interracial marriage, but its reach was very constrained because it did not cover Muslims, Hindus, or other recognised religions. B.M. Malabari's efforts paid off in 1891 when the Age of Consent Act, which forbade the marriage of girls younger than 12 years old, was passed. After India gained its independence, the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment), also known as the Sharda Act, further changed the legal age of marriage, making it 14 for girls and 18 for boys.

6. **Modern Transport and Communication System**

Rapid industrialization introduced modern transport and communication systems, such as railway lines, highways, and the Grand Trunk Road. Lord Dalhousie introduced the uniform Postage System and telegraph system, transforming India into a modern world. This modernization greatly impacted Indian life and benefited British authorities in India.

Economy: British rule in India ruined the country's economy, transforming its rural economy to suit industrial Britain. This led to a decline in Indian manufacturing skills, causing poverty for peasants. Traditional agriculture was converted to cash crops, and raw materials were exported to England, causing the country to become poorer. However, the inflow of Western capital, modern banking, and the establishment of factories led to rapid industrialization, urbanisation, and increased artistic skill in India. The legacy of Indian coffee and tea plantations continues to support the country's economy.

Recap

- 18th century India faced stagnation
- Society was divided based on religion, tribe, language, and caste
- Patriarchal family system-controlled women's lives
- Caste-determined professional choices for many
- Women faced discrimination and limited opportunities
- Education primarily accessed by upper castes
- Visionaries sought social unity and equality
- Transition led to tensions and frustrations
- British colonial modernity challenged social diversity
- Colonial rule altered India's social and political landscape
- Social legislation aimed to eradicate evils
- Urbanisation reshaped social classes in India

Objective Questions

1. Which social issue did the Bengal Regulation Act of 1829 primarily deal with?
2. What issue did Charles Wood's dispatch address?
3. What were the primary social issues faced by women in India during the early British rule?
4. What served as a strong catalyst for social transformation in British India?
5. When did the British government legally abolish sati in India?
6. In which year was the Widow Remarriage Act passed?
7. In which year was the Sharda Act passed?

8. In which year was the Women's Right to Property Act enacted?
9. What legislation aimed to address child marriage in India?
10. What is the other name of the Child Marriage Restraint Act?

Answers

1. Abolition of Sati
2. Educational reforms and the promotion of Western education in India
3. Low status, low literacy rates, and social practices such as child marriage, enforced widowhood, and polygamy
4. Indian Middle Class, New laws and Social reforms, Western ideas
5. 1829
6. 1856
7. 1929
8. 1937
9. The Age of Consent Act (1891)
10. Sharda Act

Assignments

1. Discuss the concept of 'Colonial Modernity.' Analyse how British colonial policies influenced social, economic, and cultural transformations in Indian society.
2. Analyse the impact of British rule on social transformation in India. Discuss the key changes in social structures, cultural practices.
3. Discuss the key social legislation introduced by the British in India in the 19th

century. Analyse the objectives, impacts, and controversies surrounding these laws and evaluate their significance in shaping Indian society.

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UNIT

Social Reform Movements

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able:

- know the various socio-religious reform organisations that emerged in India during the 19th century
- understand why and how various socio-religious reforms were initiated in India
- appreciates the activities of leading reformers and their ideas about the nature of Indian society
- analyse the scope, methods and impacts of various socio-religious reform organisations

Prerequisites

Sati, or *suttee*, was a historical practice in which widows sacrificed themselves on their husbands' funeral pyres. This custom persisted in Indian society until the 19th century. Various forms of sati included being buried alive or drowning alongside the deceased husband. However, superstition and harmful social practices began to decline due to education and government legislation. Socio-religious reform movements emerged to combat these customs, led by figures like Rammohan Roy in Bengal and Gopal Hari Deshmukh in Maharashtra. These reformers aimed for both political advancement and social improvement, addressing the need for change in Indian society.

Keywords

Revivalism, Sati, Idolatry, Polytheism, Infanticide, Age of Consent Bill, Monotheism, Rationalism, Universalism

Discussion

5.3.1 Socio-Religious Movements in the 19th Century

Indian society is diverse and consists of individuals with different religions, castes, colours, and faiths. However, human greed for power and authority leads to exploitative practices that become social evils. Indian society faced social evils such as casteism, superstitions, and child marriage from the early ages. The British introduced modern ideas like liberty, social equality, fraternity, democracy, and justice, which significantly impacted Indian society. Indian intellectuals scrutinised the country's past and discovered that many beliefs and practices were no longer useful and needed to be discarded. This led to the birth of socio-religious reform movements, affecting all segments of Indian society.

Socio-religious reforms in the nineteenth century laid the groundwork for the rise of Indian nationalism. The reason for this was the spread of Western education and liberal ideas. As we all know, these reforms began in Bengal and quickly spread throughout India. We should note that these movements were largely confined to specific regions and religions, and evolved at different times in different parts of the country. Despite this, they shared some characteristics; all demanded societal changes through social or educational reforms. Their main areas of focus were social issues such as emancipation of women's problems (Sati, female infanticide, widow remarriage, women's education, and so on); casting doubt on casteism and untouchability; and religious issues such as idolatry, polytheism, religious superstitions, and priest exploitation.

5.3.2 Major Reform Movements

Raja Rammohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj

The terms "Father of Modern India" and "Father of Indian Renaissance" have been used to describe Rammohan Roy. Being a multifaceted individual, he touched on almost every facet of national life and fought for the regeneration of the Indian nation. He was a literate scholar of his time who was fluent in many languages. In Tuhfat-ul Muwahhidin (A Gift to Monotheists), his first philosophical work, he analysed the world's major religions in the context of "reason" and "social comfort," and it was published in 1804. He made an effort to dispel the myth of miracles associated with religion and refuted the idea that it was just a matter of blind faith.

Rammohan Roy, a reformer who relocated to Calcutta in 1814, initiated reform efforts by founding the Atmiya Sabha and opposing social and religious wrongdoing. He promoted monotheism and condemned idolatry, accusing Brahmin priests of fostering religious vices. Roy published scriptures in Bengali translation to educate the populace and wrote extensively in favour of monotheism. Despite being a

rationalist throughout his intellectual life, Roy sought guidance from the scriptures to reform Hindu society. In 1828, he founded the Brahmo Sabha, later known as Brahmo Samaj, with the aim of spreading monotheism and purging Hinduism of its vices. The organization incorporated ideas from other religions, serving as a platform for humanism, monotheism, and social regeneration.

He was especially concerned about the appalling situation that women face in society. He began a crusade against Sati, the depraved practice of a widow being burned on her husband's funeral pyre. Finally, Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, put an end to that practice in 1829 as a result of his advocacy. He advocated ascetical widowhood rather than widow-marriage for the living widows, though. He opposed early marriage, polygamy, and women's subjugation, as well as the treatment of women as second-class citizens. He connected their issues to the fundamental deficiency of property rights. He saw female education as an additional powerful tool for overcoming social immobility. He promoted the introduction and growth of modern education, which could serve as a key means of disseminating contemporary ideas throughout the nation. He enthusiastically assisted David Hare, who established the renowned Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817, along with many other Indian notables. On his own dime, he also operated an English school in Calcutta. He established the Vedanta College, which provided instruction in both Indian and Western cultures, in 1825.

Rammohan emphasised India's need for Western scientific knowledge, including mathematics, natural philosophy, and anatomy. He aimed to fuse the best of East and West, addressing social, religious, political, and economic issues. Rammohan advocated for the Indianisation of services, trial by jury, separation of powers, press freedom, and judicial equality. He criticised the Zamindari system for oppressive practices and aimed to create nation-building through social and religious reforms. He criticised the caste system for creating inequality and division, depriving Indians of patriotic feeling.

Brahmo Samaj

As stated above, Brahmo Samaj, founded in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore, was a significant socio-religious movement in India. It aimed to promote women's empowerment and eradicate dowry and caste systems, becoming a trailblazer in the Bengal Renaissance. The main objectives of Brahmo Samaj were to promote monotheism, purify Hinduism, and condemn idolatry. The Brahmo Samaj's principles included monotheism, love for God and knowledge. It opposed totalitarianism, superstitions, scriptures and the idea of liberation. It opposed totalitarianism as it divided people based on colour, caste, religion, creed, and race. The Brahmo Samaj opposed the notion of an infinite singularity and superstition and opposed the concept of a mediator between human souls and Brahmans. The Brahmo Samaj also rejected the idea of Mukthi and the concept of heaven and hell. The Brahmo Samaj also believed in the immortality of the soul and the importance of a logical intellect.

Brahmo Samaj has two sub-sections (two divisions), Adi Brahmo Samaj and Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. From "Brahmoism," this branch of the Brahmo Samaj evolved and became the first organised movement in British India. This was counterproductive to the false notion that the caste system distinguished people according to their caste. For the purpose of eradicating the previous social conventions, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Prasanna Coomar Tagore, and Debendranath Tagore founded the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Disunity within the Brahmo Samaj is what gave rise to the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. In a public gathering held in the Calcutta

Town Hall, the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj was founded. Anand Mohan oversaw activities for the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Ananda Mohan Bose, Sibnath Shastri, and Umesh Chandra Dutta were in charge of this Sadharan Brahmo Samaj religious organization.

Brahmo Samaj and Debendranath Tagore

Tattvabodhini Sabha was founded in 1839, and Debendranath Tagore, the father of Rabindranath Tagore, served as its leader. In 1842, he joined the Brahmo Samaj, and via their informal alliance, he gave the Brahmo Samaj a clear framework. His contribution to the Brahma Samaj resulted in the development of new capabilities. Later, a large number of free thinkers, including Ashwini Kumar Datta, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Derozians, and other Rammohan supporters, backed the Brahmo Samaj.

Brahmo Samaj and Keshab Chandra Sen

In 1857, Keshab Chandra Sen joined the Brahmo Samaj along with Debendranath Tagore. With his introduction to the Brahmo Samaj, there was a surge of energy, and the Brahmo Samaj grew outside of Bengal to towns like Bombay, Punjab, Madras, and the United Provinces (this was known as the Adi Brahmo Samaj). Because of this, members of the community rejected the 13-year-old girl's child marriage to a young Hindu Maharaja of Cooch-Behar, which led to the couple's separation in the late 1870s. Additionally, Keshab Chandra Sen was charged with authoritarianism.

Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj

In 1875, Swami Dayananda Saraswati founded the Hindu monotheistic socio-religious organisation known as the Arya Samaj in Bombay. In order to restore the true spirit of Hinduism among the masses, it supports the practices and principles based on the authority of the Vedas and its significance in the Hindu religion. These are based on two fundamental tenets: monotheism and the infallible authority of the Vedas. British India underwent successful changes in education, spirituality, religion, and society thanks to the Arya Samaj. It became a change agent, challenging established social norms and promoting personal empowerment through education and self-improvement.

Being a monotheistic Hindu reform movement in India, it aimed to restore the Vedas as the revealed truth and promote physical, spiritual, and social welfare. This movement emphasised the importance of reading, teaching, hearing, and reciting the Vedas. The Ten Principles of Arya Samaj include God as the primary cause of all true knowledge, God as existent, intelligent, and blissful, and the duty of all Aryans to read, teach, and recite the Vedas. The primary object of Arya Samaj is benevolence, which promotes physical, spiritual, and social good guided by love, righteousness, and justice. The movement emphasized dispelling ignorance and promoting knowledge, promoting welfare for others, and recognizing oneself as restricted to societal rules for individual welfare. Because of these factors, this movement is considered a revivalist movement in Hinduism.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati, also known as Mul Shankar Tiwari, was a prominent Hindu reformer born in 1824 in Tankara, Gujarat. He was raised in a wealthy family and studied Sanskrit and the Vedas. After his parents' deaths, he began to question life and began practicing yoga. Virajanand Dandeesha served as his spiritual preceptor. He lived as an ascetic for 25 years, exploring holy places and the Himalayas, giving up everything he owned to find the truth about life.

Among Dayananda's contributions was his advocacy for Campaigns against caste discrimination, upliftment of marginalised communities, working to improve the status of women, promoting education and opposing practices like child marriage and sati. He accepted the Vedas' unchallengeable authority. Dayananda promoted reincarnation and karma theories. He emphasised the brahmacharya ideals of celibacy and devotion to God, which are found in the Vedas. He harshly criticised superstitious practices that he saw as being practised in India at the time, such as sorcery and astrology. In his book Satyarth Prakash, he outlined his philosophical principles.

Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Mission

The Ramakrishna Movement, also referred to as the Vedanta Movement, is centred on the Hindu religious and spiritual organisation known as the Ramakrishna Mission. The mission is named after and inspired by the Indian spiritual leader Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and was founded on May 1, 1897, by Swami Vivekananda, who was Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's primary disciple. The organisation's main roots are the Hindu philosophy of Advaita Vedanta and the four yogic precepts of Jnana, Bhakti, Karma, and Raja yoga.

Vivekananda, a humanitarian, used the Ramakrishna Mission to aid individuals in need and advance religion and society. He preached the doctrine of service, which defined the service of all creatures as worship of Siva. Vivekananda promoted the use of modern science and technology for humanity's good. The first math was established in Baranagar, and a second math was established in Belur in 1897. The Belur Math is responsible for managing and running maths throughout India and beyond. The mission's saint, Sri Ramakrishna, is drawn to the mission by his life and teachings' values and principles. Ramakrishna, raised in a low-income Brahmin family, is considered one of India's most revered spiritual teachers.

The mission's objectives included helping the poor, advancing women's rights, eradicating superstition and untouchability, and reforming the educational system. Swami Vivekananda emphasised the importance of Hindu culture and religion. He asserted that Western culture and civilization would be materialistic, whereas Hinduism would be centred on spiritual ideals. He firmly believed that all religions are equal and are one. He favoured agro-based small-scale businesses in terms of economics. His ideas about religion, spirituality, and society were all based on humanism. Monasticism became socially and spiritually relevant to the lives of regular people thanks to the Ramakrishna Mission. The first to ask priests to make it their duty to lessen suffering was Vivekananda. He believed that Indian nationalism might be supported by four pillars: recognition of India's past magnificence, national awakening, growth of moral and physical toughness, and unification based on shared spiritual ideals. He wanted the nation's youth to rise up, become aware of their situation, and fight to eradicate hunger and illiteracy.

Prarthana Samaj

Dr. Atma Ram Pandurang founded the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay in 1867 with the intention of promoting social change and rational worship. R.C. Bhandarkar and Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade were the two outstanding members of this Samaj. They committed themselves to the work of social reform, including inter-caste dining, inter-caste marriage, widow remarriage, and bettering the lot of women and lower-class people.

The four-point social agenda of Prarthana Samaj was:

- Disapproval of the caste system
- Women education
- Widow remarriage
- Raising the age of marriage for both males and females

Mahadev Govind Ranade, a member of the Samaj, founded the Widow Remarriage Association (1861), the Deccan Education Society, as well as the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha. He believed that religious reform was inextricably linked to social reform and that if religious ideas were rigid, there would be no success in social, economic, or political spheres. However, Prarthana Samaj did not insist upon a rigid exclusion of idol worship and a definite break from the caste system.

Theosophical Society and Annie Besant

Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky established the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875. Universal Brotherhood and Spirituality are the main ideologies of this society. However, his ideology did not become ingrained in Indian society and culture until 1879. It took shape in the Madras Presidency, which had its main office in Adayar. In India, Annie Besant popularised the movement. Theosophy is the wisdom underlying all religions when they are stripped of accretions and superstitions. It provides a philosophy that makes life understandable and shows how justice and love govern the cosmos. Without relying on any outside phenomena, its teachings help reveal the human being's dormant spiritual nature.

The Theosophical Society gained roots in Indian culture in 1879. Theosophists based their philosophy on three principles: universal brotherhood, comparative religion and philosophy, and investigations into natural laws. They respected all religions, opposed conversions, and believed in the transmigration of soul and occult mysticism. Theosophists also worked for social acceptability and integration of marginalized sections, encouraging them to take mainstream education. Annie Besant established educational societies and promoted the need for modern education.

Annie Besant joined the Theosophical Society in 1889, believing in Vedas and Upanishads. She saw India as liberating and enlightening and protested against evils like child marriage and widow remarriage. She established the Banaras Central Hindu School, which later became Banaras Hindu University. Besant also worked on education, philosophy, and politics and started the Home Rule League in 1916. She published journals called "The New India" and "Common Weal." The Theosophical Movement gained popularity among intelligentsia and became allied with the Hindu Renaissance.

Veda Samaj

Veda Samaj was established by Keshab Chandra Sen and K. Sridharalu Naidu when the former visited Madras in 1864. K. Sridharalu Naidu later visited Calcutta to study the Brahmo Samaj movement, and when he returned, he renamed the Veda Samaj Brahmo Samaj of Southern India in 1871. He translated the books of Brahmo Dharma into Tamil and Telugu and undertook missionary tours to propagate the faith. However, Naidu's untimely death in 1874 in an accident led to several schisms in this organization.

Young Bengal Movement

The Young Bengal Movement was started by Henry Louis Vivian Derozio. He was the movement's creator and founder-leader. Derozio insisted on his pupils exercising free thought and challenging all forms of

authority. Derozio promoted radical ideals and organised discussions and debates on literature, history, philosophy, and science. With these activities, Derozio essentially seduced the young Calcutta students, sparking an intellectual revolution. He actively promoted reason, liberty, equality, and freedom, and he exhorted his students to do the same. Due to his divisive views, he was expelled from the college and passed away in 1831 from cholera. His students, known as Derozians, challenged tradition and custom, demanded women's education and pushed for freedom of thought and speech.

Satyashodhak Samaj

Satyashodhak Samaj was founded by Jyotiba Phule. It argued against Brahminical rule and for the emancipation of widows, untouchables, and people from lower castes. Tenants in Satara revolted against their brahman landlords in 1919, which was in line with the Samaj's anti-religious stance. When the Satyashodhak Samaj arrived, the uprising in neighbouring Maharashtrian cities took on a similar shape due to their doctrine that mocked Brahmin superiority. In addition to interrupting Brahmin rituals, vandalising temples, and destroying idols, peasants stopped relying on them for religious rituals. These Maharashtrian peasant uprisings demonstrated how well-liked and successful the Satyashodhak Samaj's doctrine was at energising the populace. The movement started in order to combat the rigid, irrational high caste status and unjust caste system of this society. He questioned the Brahmanas who identified themselves as channels to God and representatives of the Supreme Being. The Samaj rejected the Upanishads, the Vedic culture's ideology, and the dominance of Aryan society. He asserted that he disagreed with the Aryan society's attempts to ostracise and oppress non-Aryans.

Justice Party

Justice Party—officially the South Indian Liberal Federation—was active in Madras province since 1916. It was founded on November 20, 1916, by Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar in Madras' Victoria Public Hall with assistance from T. M. Nair, P. Theagaraya Chetty, and Alamelu Mangai Thayarammal. This was the result of numerous non-Brahmin conferences and meetings in the presidency. Caste prejudices and the disproportionate representation of Brahmanas in government positions were the main causes of the communal divisions between Brahmanas and non-Brahmanas that first emerged in the presidency in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The beginning of the Dravidian Movement is regarded as having occurred with the formation of the Justice Party, which was the result of numerous attempts to find a group to represent non-Brahmanas in Madras. Objectives of the Justice Party were:

- To promote the educational, social, economic, and political advancement of all communities in South India other than the Brahmanas.
- To work for the development of non-Brahmanas through a constitutional government.
- To create a truly representative government
- To mobilise public opinion in support of non-Brahmanas' demands.

The party petitioned imperial administrative bodies and British colonial officials for more non-Brahmin representation in the government during its early years. The Justice Party took part in presidential governance when the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 established a diarchy system of government.

Self-Respect Movement and EV Ramaswamy Naiker

The Self-Respect Movement was a vibrant social movement that sought to completely overthrow the modern Hindu social structure and establish a new, rational society devoid of caste, religion, and deities. Erode Venkata Ramasamy Naicker, also known as Periyar and Vaikom Hero, founded the lower caste movement to oppose Brahmanical religion and culture, which he saw as exploiting the lower castes. He believed that developing self-respect would lead to individuality and political freedom and that nationalists like Gandhi and Nehru did not cover individual self-respect. The Self-Respect Movement aimed to eliminate inequality, economic and social differences, and attachments to caste, religion, and country. Ramasamy, also known as the 'Father of the Dravidian movement,' joined the Indian National Congress in 1919 and resigned in 1925. He advocated for an independent Dravida Nadu and promoted principles of rationalism, self-respect, women's rights, and the eradication of caste. In 1936, Ramasamy criticisedthe compromise with Regent Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, but in 1936, access to the eastern road and entry into the temple was allowed to the lower castes.

E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker founded the Self-Respect Movement in Tamil Nadu in 1925. It was an egalitarian movement that promoted the ideas of ending Brahminical hegemony, granting equal rights to women and members of the underprivileged classes, and reviving Dravidian languages like Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam.

The objectives of the Self-Respect Movement have been outlined and stated in two pamphlets, "Namathu Kurikkol" and "Tiravitakkalaka Lateiyam", which have been given below:

- The movement aims to do away with such a social structure of the society where one class of people claim to be superior to others, and some men claim to be of higher birth than others.
- It aims to work to provide equal opportunities for all people, irrespective of their communities. It will strive to secure equal status for women along with men in life and according to law.
- All people should be given equal opportunities for growth and development.
- It aims to eradicate untouchability completely and to establish a united society based on brotherhood and sisterhood.
- Friendship and fellow feelings should be natural among all the people.
- To establish and maintain homes for orphans and widows and to run educational institutions.
- To discourage people from building new temples, mutts, Vedic Schools. People should drop the caste titles in their names. Common funds should be utilised for educational purposes and for creating employment opportunities for the unemployed.
- The Self-Respect Movement played a significant role in the political, social and religious life of the people of South India. It brought the message of Tamil Nationalism to the masses.
- The monopoly of power and influence enjoyed by the Brahmanas was slowly lost due to E.V.R.'s unceasing propaganda against orthodoxy. It is filled with a sense of self-respect and, above all, self-confidence to fight against social injustice perpetrated by the Brahmanas of the day.
- It led to the promotion of inter-caste

and inter-religious marriages and legalization of marriages without Brahman priests. Post-independence, Tamil Nadu passed a law and became the first state to legalise Hindu marriage without a Brahmin priest.

SNDP Yogam and Sree Narayana Guru

Sree Narayana Guru was a prominent socio-religious reformer in India, transforming social, moral, and spiritual values in his contemporaries. Born in August 1855 (according to Malayalam Calendar 1032, in the month of Chingam) in Chempazhanthi, he was one of the socio-religious reformers and Gurus in South India, particularly in Kerala. His impact on education, society, religion, economy, politics, and culture has reflected Kerala's diverse landscape. In 1903, along with Dr. Palpu and Kumaranasan, Guru founded Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP Yogam) in Varkala, a hilly area with a significant role in the modern world's socio-religious history. The S.N.D.P Yogam is founded on Sree Narayana Guru's principles and philosophy. Guru dedicated his life to fighting social and economic inequity, casteism, and superstitions in Kerala society. The Yogam has the moral and social responsibility to model the Sree Narayana dharmas.

Aruvippuram, located in Neyyattinkara, Trivandrum District, was the birthplace of the Revolution of India, a peaceful movement without violence or force. The right of worship was reserved for the Savarnas, who were restricted to temples. In 1888, Gurudevan drowned the deepest part of the Neyyar River, Sankaran Kuzhi. Swami appeared with a stone resembling the Sivalinga (the symbolic representation of Lord Siva) and installed the prathishta there.

Sree Narayana Guru was dedicated to the social and moral regeneration of backward communities in Kerala. The SNDP Yogam, under Guru's leadership, achieved significant social reforms, addressing superstitions, irrational customs, and caste systems. The reforms not only improved the social status of the marginalised groups but also provided them with economic advantages. The Yogam's religious reform movement included the construction of new temples and the promotion of brotherhood between Ezhavas and other low castes. Sree Narayana Guru consecrated more than 60 temples in different parts of Kerala. His teachings and the temples he consecrated continue to influence social reform and spiritual practices in Kerala and beyond. lower castes.

The Yogam also emphasised the educational and economic prosperity of the backward-class people. Attached to the temples, educational institutions have also started and opened for all underprivileged communities.

The SNDP Yogam fought for equality and social justice in the legislative assembly. The Yogam also focused on the education of Ezhava women, requesting the government to open government schools for girls to Ezhavas and other backward communities. The Yogam's efforts contributed to the social progress of the Ezhava community and the development of a strong sense of self-respect and equality.

Guru's Famous Quotes

- One Caste, One religion, One God for man
- Whatever the religion, it is enough if a man becomes good
- Ask not, think not, and say not caste
- Gain freedom through education
- Gain strength through organization

- Gain prosperity through industry
- Acts that one performs for one's own sake should also aim at the good of other men
- Liquor is poison: make it not, sell it not and drink it not
- Of one in kind, one in faith, one in God is man, of the same womb, one same form, difference none there is at all

Wahabi Movement

The teachings of Abdul Wahab of Arabia and the preachings of Shah Walliullah inspired this essentially revivalist response to Western influences and the degeneration which had set in among Indian Muslims and called for a return to the true spirit of Islam. He was the first Indian Muslim leader of the 18th century to organise Muslims around the two-fold ideals of this movement:

- Desirability of harmony among the four schools of Muslim jurisprudence, which had divided the Indian Muslims (he sought to integrate the best elements of the four schools).
- Recognition of the role of individual conscience in religion where conflicting interpretations were derived from the Quran and the Hadis.

The teachings of Waliullah were further popularised by Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmed Barelvi, who also gave them a political perspective. Un-Islamic practices that had crept into Muslim society were sought to be eliminated. Syed Ahmed called for a return to pure Islam and the kind of society that had existed in the Arabia of the Prophet's time. India was considered to be dar-ul-Harb (land of the kafirs), and it needed to be converted to dar-ul-Islam (land of Islam). Initially, the movement was directed at the Sikhs in Punjab, but after the British annexation of Punjab (1849), the movement was directed against the British. During the 1857 Revolt, the Wahabis played an important role in spreading anti-British feelings. The Wahhabi Movement fizzled out in the face of British military might in the 1870s.

Ahmadiyya Movement

The Ahmadiyya form a sect of Islam which originated in India. It was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1889. It was based on liberal principles. It described itself as the standard-bearer of the Mohammedan Renaissance.It based itself, like the Brahmo Samaj, on the principles of the universal religion of all humanity, opposing jihad (sacred war against non-Muslims). The movement spread Western liberal education among the Indian Muslims. The Ahmadiyya community is the only Islamic sect to believe that the Messiah had come in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to end religious wars and bloodshed and to reinstate morality, peace and justice. They believed in separating the mosque from the State as well as in human rights and tolerance. However, the Ahmadiyya Movement, like Bahaism, which flourished in the West Asian countries, suffered from mysticism.

Aligarh Movement

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan is, first and foremost, known for his pioneering role in transforming the educational opportunities for Muslims. He realised that Muslims could only make progress if they took to modern education. For this, he started the Aligarh movement. It was a systemic movement aimed at reforming the social, political and educational aspects of the Muslim community. The movement undertook to modernise Muslim education by adapting English as a medium of learning and Western education rather than just

focusing on traditional teachings. He wanted to reconcile Western scientific education with the teachings of the Quran, which were to be interpreted in the light of contemporary rationalism and science, even though he also held the Quran to be the ultimate authority. He said that religion should be adaptable with time or else it would become fossilised and that religious tenets were not immutable. He advocated a critical approach and freedom of thought and not complete dependence on tradition or custom.

Sir Syed established the Scientific Society in 1864 in Aligarh to translate Western works into Indian languages to prepare the Muslims to accept Western education and to inculcate scientific temperament among the Muslims. The Aligarh Institute Gazette, a magazine published by Sir Syed, was an organ of the Scientific Society. In 1877, he founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College on the pattern of Oxford and Cambridge universities. The college later grew into Aligarh Muslim University. The Aligarh Movement helped in the Muslim revival. It gave them a common language— Urdu. Sir Syed also pushed for social reforms and was a champion of democratic ideals and freedom of speech. He was against religious intolerance, ignorance and irrationalism. He denounced purdah, polygamy and easy divorce. Tahzebul Akhlaq (Social Reformer in English), a magazine founded by him, tried to awaken people's consciousness on social and religious issues in very expressive prose.

Deoband Movement

The Deoband Movement was organised by the orthodox section among the Muslim ulema as a revivalist movement with the twin objectives of propagating pure teachings of the Quran and Hadis among Muslims and keeping alive the spirit of jihad against foreign rulers. The Deoband Movement was begun at the Darul Uloom (or Islamic academic centre), Deoband, in Saharanpur district (United Provinces) in 1866 by Mohammad Qasim Nanotavi and Rashid Ahmed Gangohi to train religious leaders for the Muslim community.

Some critics attribute Deoband's support of the nationalists more to its determined opposition to Syed Ahmed Khan than to any positive political philosophy. Mahmud-ul-Hasan, the new Deoband leader, gave political and intellectual content to the religious ideas of the school. He worked out a synthesis of Islamic principles and nationalist aspirations. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema gave a concrete shape to Hasan's ideas of protection of the religious and political rights of Muslims in the overall context of Indian unity and national objectives. Shibli Numani, a supporter of the Deoband school, favoured the inclusion of the English language and European sciences in the system of education. Muhammad Ali Mungeri founded the Nadwatul Ulama and Darul Uloom in Lucknow in 1894-96. He believed in the idealism of the Congress and cooperation between the Muslims and the Hindus of India to create a state in which both could live amicably.

Religious Reform among the Parsis

Religious reform began among the Parsis in Mumbai in the middle of the 19th century. In 1851, the Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha or Religious Reform Association, was founded by Nauroji Furdonji, Dadabhai Naoroji, S.S. Bengalee and others. They started a journal called Rast Goftar for social-religious reforms among the Parsis. They also played an important role in the spread of education, especially among girls. They campaigned against the entrenched orthodoxy in the religious field. They initiated the modernization of Parsi social customs regarding the education of girls, widow remarriage and the social position of women in general. In the course of time, the Parsis became socially the most Westernised section

of Indian society.

Religious Reform among the Sikhs

Religious reform among the Sikhs was started at the end of the 19th Century when the Khalsa College started at Amritsar. Through the efforts of the Singh Sabhas (1870) and with British support, the Khalsa College was founded at Amritsar in 1892. This college and school were set up as a result of similar efforts and promoted Gurumukhi, Sikh learning and Punjabi literature as a whole. After 1920, the Sikh movement gained momentum when the Akali Movement rose in Punjab. The chief object of the Akalis was to improve the management of the Gurudwaras or Sikh Shrines that were under the control of priests or Mahants who treated them as their private property. In 1925, a law was passed that gave the right to manage Gurudwaras to the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee.

Recap

- Diversity of Indian society
- The British introduced modern ideas in the early 19th century
- Intellectuals challenged outdated beliefs and practices
- Socio-religious reform movements emerged in India
- Movements aimed to address social inequalities
- Reform movements: reformist and revivalist categories
- Both movements appealed to religion's lost purity
- Four trends: internal reforms and legislative changes
- British rule fostered intellectual growth in society
- European Orientalists critiqued India's historical perspectives
- Atmiya Sabha and Brahmo Samaj initiated reforms
- Rammohan Roy became the "Father of Modern India"
- Prarthana Samaj promoted social change and rational worship
- Theosophical Society emphasised universal brotherhood principles
- Satyashodhak Samaj fought for lower caste rights
- Aligarh Movement transformed educational opportunities for Muslims

Objective Questions

1. Who is regarded as the "Maker of Modern India"?
2. Who wrote *Ghoolamgiri*?
3. Who gave the slogan "*Go Back to Vedas*"?
4. Who is credited with the contribution of the 'Academic Association' in Indian history?
5. In which year was the 'Hindu Widow Remarriage Acs passed?
6. In which year Atmiya Sabha was founded?
7. In which year was 'Sati' abolished?
8. In which year SNDP Yogam was formed?
9. Which social reformer initiated the 'Self Respect Movement'?
10. Who started Prarthana Samaj?

Answers

1. Ram Mohan Roy
2. Jyotiba Phule
3. Dayanand Saraswati
4. Derozio
5. 1856
6. 1814
7. 1829
8. 1903
9. E.V. Ramaswami
10. Athmaram Pandurang

Assignments

1. Discuss the key factors that contributed to the emergence of socio-religious movements in India. Analyse how these factors shaped the movements' objectives and strategies in addressing social reform and religious revival.
2. Discuss the contributions of Ram Mohan Roy as a social reformer in India. Highlight his key reforms, the socio-political context in which he operated, and the lasting impact of his efforts on Indian society.
3. Analyse the contributions of Sree Narayana Guru and the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam in the upliftment of the Avarnas in Kerala.
4. Discuss the formation and main objectives of socio-religious organisations of the 19th century.
5. How did Periyar's Self-Respect Movement challenge Brahmanical orthodoxy and caste-based inequalities? Examine how the Self-Respect Movement addressed issues related to women's rights and gender equality.

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UNIT 4

Pluralism, Identity Politics and Freedom Struggle

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- know the features of Indian Nationalism
- understand the background of the emergence of the Indian National Movement
- evaluate the role of political leaders and political parties in the Indian National Movement

Prerequisites

'Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it'. This slogan was coined by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, also referred to as Lokamanya Tilak, was a leader of the Indian independence movement and belonged to the extremist faction of Indian National Congress. He was also regarded as the 'Father of Indian Unrest'.

Have you ever considered why he said, 'Swaraj is my birthright, and I shall have it'? Check out the context in which Subhash Chandra Bose said, "You give me blood, I will give you freedom." The most likely explanation is that India was subject to foreign rule for nearly 190 years. Indians formed political organisations and launched the freedom movement in response to colonial exploitation. The process of developing national consciousness and launching resistance movements is referred to as the Indian National Movement. Let us now go into greater detail about the formation and operation of the Indian National Movement.

Keywords

Early Political Associations, Indian National Movement, Non-cooperation Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement, Quit India Movement

5.4.1 Early Political Associations

The Indian National Congress was not the country's first political party. Before the Indian National Congress (INC), there were numerous political organisations. However, in the early half of the nineteenth century, wealthy and aristocratic elements dominated most political associations. They had regional or local flavors to them. In the second half of the nineteenth century, political organisations were increasingly dominated by the educated middle class—lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers, and so on—who had a broader perspective and a larger agenda. Political associations in Bengal, political associations in Bombay, and political associations in Madras are the three types of organisations. The interesting thing is that all of these provinces were directly administered by colonial rule.

Political Association in Bengal

Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha: Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha was founded in 1836 by the associates of Raja Rammohan Roy. It worked for administrative reforms, the association of Indians with the administration, and the spread of education and helped in arousing general will and laying down a path towards modern nationalism among the masses.

- **Landholders Society**: Formed to protect the landlords' interests. It is also called "Zamindari Association. It was founded in July 1838. This organization was formed by Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Dwarkanath Tagore and Radhakant Deb. The goals of the Landholders' Society were constrained to serving the needs of landlords only. It launched organised political activity by using constitutional agitation techniques to address grievances.
- **Bengal British India Society**: It was formed by William Adam, a friend of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, in England in 1843. It advocated improving the situation of Indians by letting the world know about the extreme circumstances in which the British were keeping the Indians. They used constitutional and legal means to achieve their objectives.
- **British Indian Association**: In 1851, the British India Society and the Landholders Society of Bengal were merged to form this organisation. This group used to submit petitions that addressed the complaints of regular people. For instance, they offered suggestions for the company's new Charter Law and submitted a petition to the British Parliament. This resulted in the Charter Act of 1853 accepting one such recommendation, which resulted in the addition of 6 new members to the Governor General's Council for Legislative Purposes.
- **East India Association:** It was started by Dadabhai Naoroji in London in 1866. It advocated for generating awareness among people of the UK about the conditions in India and generated popular support among British People for Indian well-being. It is also known as the predecessor association to the Indian National Congress. It challenged the notion of Asians being inferior to the Europeans by the Ethnological Society of London in 1866. It had a presence in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta in 1869.
- **Indian League:** The Indian League was founded in 1875 by Sisir Kumar Ghosh with the goal of "stimulating a sense of nationalism among the people" and encouraging political

education. This organisation was associated with nationalist leaders such as Ananda Mohan Bose, Durgamohan Das, Nabagopal Mitra, Surendranath Banerjee, and others.

- **Indian Association of Calcutta or Indian National Association:** Anand Mohan Bose and Surendranath Banerjee, two Bengali Nationalists, founded this group in 1876. Their goals included modernising civil service exams and forming and coordinating public opinion on crucial national political issues. They were present in many Indian cities, which allowed them to increase the number of people in their membership. With the Indian National Congress, it later merged.

Political Associations in Bombay

Poona Sarvajanik Sabha: Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was established in 1870 by M.G. Ranade, G.V. Joshi, S.H. Chiplankar and associates. It was a socio-political organisation in British India which worked as a mediating body between the government and the people of India in order to popularize the peasants' legal rights.

- **Bombay Presidency Association:** The Bombay Presidency Association was established by Pherozshah Mehta, K.T Telang, and Badruddin Tyabji in 1885. It was the direct consequence of Lytton's reactionary policies and the Ilbert Bill controversy. The Bombay Presidency or Bombay Province, also known as Bombay and Sind (1843–1936), was an administrative subdivision (province) of British India, with its capital in Bombay, the first mainland territory acquired in the Konkan region with the Treaty of Bassein (1802).
- **Bombay Association** (Bombay Native Association): It was started in 1852 by Jaggannath Shankersheth along with Sir Jamshedji Jejibhai, Jagannath Shankarshet, Naoroji Fursungi, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad, Dadabhai Naoroji and Vinayak Shankarshet. It is also known as the first political party/organisation of Bombay Province. They advocated addressing public grievances through Legal agitational means.
- Political Associations in Madras
- **Madras Mahajan Sabha:** Madras Mahajan Sabha was a Madras Presidency-based Indian nationalist organization. It is regarded as a forerunner of the Indian National Congress, along with the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, the Bombay Presidency Association, and the Indian Association. M. Veeraraghavachariar, G. Subramania Iyer, and P. Ananda Charlu founded the Madras Mahajana Sabha in May 1884.
- **Madras Native Association:** This organization was formed by Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty in 1852 in the Madras Presidency. It was the first political organization in Madras.

5.4.2 Formation of Indian National Congress

With the establishment of the Indian National Congress (INC), one of the most important political organisations of the 20th century was born. The foundation for the Indian National Congress, through early political associations, was laid in 1885. A.O. Hume, a retired English civil servant, gave this idea its definitive form with the assistance of well-known intellectuals of the time. The viceroy of India at the time, Lord Dufferin, gave Hume his blessing for the first session. It was moved from Poona to Bombay due to a cholera outbreak in Poona, where it was initially planned to occur. In an open letter to Calcutta University graduates from 1883, Hume expressed his desire to establish an organisation for educated Indians in order to

demand greater participation in government and to provide a forum for discussion. The Indian National Congress was started by Allan O. Hume in 1885, just before the Indian Association of A. M. Boss desired to be a national political organisation. The party was founded to promote Indian participation in politics. The Indian Association soon joined the Indian National Congress.

The Indian National Congress was formally established on December 28th, 1885, at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Mumbai (then Bombay) with 72 delegates from different parts of the country. The party's founder, A.O Hume, took on the role of secretary, and Womesh Chandra Banerjee was selected as president. The party was founded with the goal of fostering civil discourse between Indians and the British. The British believed they could gain support for their rule in India through the Congress. This was made possible because educated Indians were more receptive to modernization concepts and could, therefore, influence other Indians.

5.4.3 Phases of Indian National Movement: Moderate Phase 1885-1905

The Indian national movement can be broken down into three distinct phases: the early phase, the First World War period, and the Second World War period. From the viewpoint of the national congress, this periodisation is a moderate phase, an extreme phase, and a Gandhian phase. The moderate early years of the Indian National Movement called for Indian participation in Indian governance. However, nationalism's nature changed after the partition of Bengal in 1905, and 'self-rule' became the desired outcome. Satyagraha, non-cooperation, and civil disobedience were the tools used during the Gandhian era to overthrow foreign rule and install the Indian national government.

During the first phase (moderate phase) of the National Movement, prominent figures included W.C. Bonnerjee, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, Feroze Shah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Badiruddin Tyabji, and Mahadev Govind Ranade. Because they pursued their goals through lawful and peaceful means, they were referred to as moderates. The moderators asked for things like

Constitutional Demands

- Expansion of Legislative Council and Assembly at the centre and the provinces
- Adequate representation of Indians in the Viceroy's Executive Council
- Moderates demanded Swaraj within the British empire
- Majority of elected Indians in higher posts
- Control over budget

Economic Demands

- Salt tax and sugar duty to be abolished
- Reduction of the Army expenditure
- Reduction of land revenue and thereby decrease the burden of the cultivators
- Encouragement of modern industries via government aid and tariff protection

Administrative Demands

- Indian civil service examination to be conducted simultaneously in England and India
- Local bodies to be given more power
- Complete separation of judiciary and executive

- Spread of primary education
- Repeal of the arms act of 1878 and License Act
- Improvement in the working condition of plantation workers
- Better treatment of Indian labours abroad
- Increase in expenditure on welfare

Civil Rights Demands

- Right to form associations
- Freedom of speech and expression
- Right to a free press

The Moderates had complete faith in the British and were loyal to them. Through petitions, resolutions, meetings, leaflets and pamphlets, memoranda, and representatives, the Moderates made their requests known. They restricted political participation to the educated classes only. They wanted to achieve political freedom and self-government gradually. The only request from Congress that was granted by the British government was the Indian Council Act of 1892, which increased the size of the legislative councils.

Contribution of Moderates

- They were the architects of the first all-India political forum. They built up a political platform which became the focal point of the national mainstream movement in the years to come.
- They exposed the true nature of colonial rule and elements associated with it –that Indian poverty was the result of colonial exploitation. They could corrode much of the popular belief in the benevolence and goodwill of imperial rule
- They strengthened the process of India becoming a nation. They fostered a sense of political unity, the spirit of togetherness and a unity of purpose
- They also began the process of inculcating national sentiments among the people in an organised manner. They strengthened democratic conception and popularised the idea of representative institutions and elective principles.
- Some of the major achievements of moderates were the Passing of the Indians Council's Act of 1882, the formation of the Welby Commission on Indian expenditure in 1895 and the passing of the resolution in the House of Commons in 1893 for supporting simultaneous examination in India and England.

Criticisms of Moderate Phase

- They did not broaden the scope of their demands.
- The Indian national movement's moderate era featured minimal mass participation and only a small portion of the population.
- Moderates underrate the potential of massive uprisings.
- They received criticism for using the method of petition and prayer.
- Because the educated class dominated it, it drew inspiration from Western political ideologies.

Even though the Moderate phase of the Indian national movement did not result in immediate success, it did instill a sense of nationalism in the populace. It lay the groundwork for the movement's future development. The Moderate phase, according to M.N. Roy, was the pinnacle of modern Indian history.

5.4.4 Second Phase –Extremist Phase

In the Indian National Movement, the extremist movement, started in 1905 as a result of dissatisfaction with the moderate's methods' lack of success. The negotiations that moderate leaders had with the British did not result in any gains. Their opposition to radical ideas sparked a rise in extremism in India that sought to expose the truth about British atrocities to the general public. Extremism has its roots in using aggression to oppose British tyranny and create a "Swaraj" that belongs to the people of the country.

The extremist phase was a result of British contempt for Indians, which created resentment among extremist leaders. Additionally, there was a worry that moderates were attempting to westernise and reshape the country in the likeness of Britain. India's extremist movement sparked a resurgence of national pride. Although violent, extremist leaders were also influenced by the spiritual precepts of the day. The Japanese victory over Russia and Italy's defeat in Abyssinia both had an impact on the extremist phase of the Indian National Movement. Extremists wanted to end British rule in India, and they did so by employing radical tactics where moderates had failed. Bipin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Lala Lajpat Rai were the three major extremist leaders who were leading the movement in Bengal, Bombay, and Punjab. These three came to be known as Lal-Bal-Pal as they gained recognition and popularity for their efforts.

The Ilbert Bill Controversy, the Vernacular Press Act, Lord Curzon's reactionary policies, and the partition of Bengal are the main causes of the emergence of this youth wing that opposed the attitudes of the moderates.

- **Partition of Bengal:** On October 16, 1905, Lord Curzon, the viceroy of British India, divided Bengal with a justification of administrative ease. The partition divided the province between West Bengal, whose majority was Hindu, and East Bengal, whose majority was Muslim, but left considerable minorities of Hindus in East Bengal and Muslims in West Bengal. The real goal was to weaken the national movement by dividing the population along communal lines. However, in opposition to this action, people banded together in the name of unity and started the Swadeshi movement.

- **Swadeshi Movement:** The Swadeshi movement was declared on August 7, 1905, following the partition of Bengal. The Bengali people boycotted goods like Manchester cloth and Liverpool salt, demonstrating opposition after partition. They sang Vande Mataram, composed Amar Sonar Bangla, and tied *rakhis* as a symbol of unity. The movement spread to Poona, Bombay, Punjab, Delhi, and Madras.

The Congress adopted achieving Swaraj in terms of Dominion status within the British Empire as its objective in 1906. The new extremist leaders made an effort to remove the moderates from Congress. This disastrous decision ultimately caused the Congress to split in 1907 at Surat, where the extremists were expelled from the party. Taking advantage of the circumstances, the colonial state used force to repress the extremist leaders. Tilak was detained and transported to the Mandalay prison in Burma. Moderate leaders started to gain support from the public and, from that point on, lived in the belief that they were guiding the nation towards liberation through constitutional reforms.

Revolutionary Nationalism

Radical covert organisations, or what is known as revolutionary nationalists, emerged as a result of the partition of

Bengal. Through violence against British officials, they hoped to overthrow British rule. The major organisations that turned to militant nationalism included **Anuseelan Samithi, Abhinav Bharath, Yugander, and the Gadhar Party.** Their activities took two forms- the assassination of oppressive officials, traitors and informers, and dacoities to raise funds for the purchase of arms, etc. These sacrifices helped build national consciousness and contributed to gaining independence. However, the movement failed to achieve its objectives, with the death of Chandrasekhar Azad in 1931 and Surya Sen's martyrdom ending terrorist activity in Bengal. The movement ended in the post-1930s due to lack of a central organization, unattractive mass following, unreliable arms and funds, demoralization by Germany, the US, Montagu's self-governance package, disapproval by upper-middle-class politicians, and Gandhi's satyagraha, which resulted to the decline of revolutionary and terrorist activities.

Home Rule Movement

At the time of the First World War, the Home Rule movement led by Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhara Tilak tried to inspire the scattered nationalist forces into action. The moderate-extremist split and its effects led to a state of stagnation in the Indian National Movement during this period. It demanded home rule or self-governance for India under the pretext that Indians were now capable of managing its administration on their own, having been influenced by the Irish movement for home rule. Home Rule Leagues of Tilak (1915) and Besant (1916) enlisted volunteers and published pamphlets in which the demands, reasons and modes of Home Rule were articulated.

By 1917, Tilak's leagues in Karnataka, Central Provinces, Bengal and United Provinces had 14000 volunteers, while Annie Besant's League, which propagated ideas through *New India* and *Commonwealth*, had 7000 volunteers. A number of future leaders of India, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Shankarlal Banker and Byornkesh Chakravarty learned their first political lessons as volunteers of these leagues. The government was not happy with the popularity and radicalism of the movement. Besant was arrested in 1917, raising a storm of protest. She was released in September, and on the request of Tilak was elected the president of Congress.

5.4.5 Third Phase – Gandhian Phase

The Indian National Movement went through an intense phase in its third stage. The Gandhian Phase is so named because after returning from South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi took charge of the country's freedom movement. The striking aspect of the national movement at this point was its use of Gandhian political tactics. Through the Champaran Satyagraha, Gandhi entered Indian politics in 1917 after he founded Sabarmati Ashram in May 1915.

Gandhi was the movement's leader during the 1917 **Champaran Satyagraha,** a farmer's uprising against indigo farming and peasant oppression in Northern India. The Germans' development of less expensive artificial dye caused the demand for indigo to decline, but the World War increased that demand. However, the tenants are upset and resentful because the peasants were made to grow indigo despite the fact that the economic yield is quite disappointing. The Champaran Satyagraha achieved most of its goals, leading to the introduction of the Champaran Agrarian Bill by W. Maude. This legislation, which included Mahatma Gandhi's suggestions, changed British perceptions of India and established Mahatma Gandhi's moral superiority. The movement ended the Tinkathia System, reducing planters' oppression.

The Ahmedabad Mill Strike was another instance of the success of the Gandhian intervention, where workers in Ahmedabad's textile mills fought for economic justice after the mill owners stopped giving out plague bonuses. On March 15, 1918, Mahatma Gandhi began his first fast until his death. Finally, the mill owners agreed to a 35% wage hike for workers.

Mahatma Gandhi began the **Kheda Satyagraha** on March 11th, 1918. Despite a catastrophic crop failure and an increase in the plague and cholera, the British government increased taxes by 23 percent. After the authorities denied the Kheda peasants' requests for the non-payment of land tax, Gandhi encouraged them to engage in satyagraha. The administration made an effort to facilitate a peaceful resolution between the parties. The rate increase would be scaled back, all confiscated property would be returned, and taxes for the current and subsequent years would be postponed. Kheda Satyagraha is India's greatest triumph, promoting patriotism and national pride through modest, challenging movements that aimed to prevent violence. In the following sections, the other significant occurrences from the Gandhian phase are described.

5.4.6 Rowlatt Act & Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

The British government passed the Rowlatt Act to rein in the rising anti-British revolutionary activities in India. The British parliament approved this law in March 1919. The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919 is its official name. The British government was given the go-ahead to detain anyone suspected of terrorist activity by this act. Additionally, it gave the government permission to hold such people in custody for up to two years without a trial. It gave the police permission to search without a warrant. The freedom of the press was also severely constrained. The act was widely denounced as a "Black Act" by Indian leaders and the general public.

Indian National Congress started outspoken protests against this act. An All-India Hartal was declared by Gandhi on April 6, 1919. During the protest, Dr. Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew, two well-known Punjabi Congress leaders, were detained. When the law went into effect, there was a huge uprising, and Punjab needed the army to put an end to it. The Jallian Wallabag Massacre was a significant and sad incident during the anti-Rowlatt protest.

The second week of April 1919 saw the declaration of martial law in Punjab, making gatherings of more than four people unlawful. A group of peaceful protestors had gathered in Jallianwala Bagh, a public garden in Amritsar, on April 13, 1919, the day of the Baisakhi festival. Additionally, there were pilgrims there to celebrate Baisakhi. The police officer, General Dyer, arrived there with his troops and immediately ordered fire at the unarmed crowd, which also included children. Over 1500 people were injured in the massacre, and at least 1000 people died. Indians' faith in the British justice system was destroyed as a result of the incident.

5.4.7 The Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movement (1919-24)

It was a political campaign in British India, focusing on British policy against Turkey and planned dismemberment after World War I. Leaders included Shaukat Ali, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Hakim Ajmal Khan, and Abul Kalam Azad. Mahatma Gandhi supported the movement, advocating wider non-cooperation. The Khilafat committee published the Khilafat Manifesto in 1920, calling for the British to protect the Caliphate and for Indian Muslims to unite and hold the British accountable.

In 1920, an alliance was formed between Khilafat leaders and the Indian National

Congress, with Congress leader Mahatma Gandhi and the Khilafat leaders promising to work together for the causes of Khilafat and Swaraj. The Khilafatists became a major part of the non-cooperation movement, promoting independent education and social rejuvenation for Muslims. The movement was initially successful but eventually weakened as Muslims were divided between working for the Congress, the Khilafat cause, and the Muslim League.

In November 1919, the All India Khilafat Committee met at Allahabad, and Gandhi's proposal for a non-violent Non-Cooperation movement was accepted. In the special session of the INC convened at Calcutta in September 1920, there was some opposition to the proposal of the Non-cooperation movement. In December 1920, however, the Congress at its Nagpur session unanimously accepted the Non-cooperation resolution. The movement was launched on 5th September 1920 by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi was the main force behind the non-cooperation movement. In March 1920, he issued a manifesto declaring a doctrine of the non-violent non-cooperation movement. Gandhi, through this manifesto, wanted people to:

Adopt swadeshi principles

Adopt Swadeshi habits, including hand spinning & weaving

Work for the eradication of untouchability from society

Gandhi travelled across the nation in 1921, explaining the tenets of the movement. The non-violent protest against the British government in India involved people resigning from local bodies and government jobs, withdrawing children from schools and colleges, boycotting foreign goods, boycotting elections, and not serving in the British army. The INC demanded *Swarajya* or self-government, and the non-cooperation movement marked a decisive step in the independence movement. Gandhiji promised Swaraj would be achieved within a year if the movement was continued.

In February 1922, Gandhi called off the Non-Cooperation Movement due to the Chauri Chaura incident. A violent mob killed 22 policemen, prompting Gandhi to call off the movement. Leaders like Motilal Nehru and C R Das opposed the suspension.

5.4.8 Political Scene between Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movement

Despite being stopped due to violence, the non-cooperation movement caused unrest among congress leaders. It led to another ideological split within the body of Congress after the Surat split of 1907. While some wanted to continue non-cooperation, others wanted to end the legislature boycott and contest elections. The former were called no-changers, and such leaders included Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, C Rajagopalachari, etc. The pro-changers, including C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel, wanted to run the legislative councils and extend non-cooperation within the legislative bodies. In 1922, in the Gaya session of the Congress, C.R. Das (who was presiding over the session) moved a proposal to enter the legislature, but it was defeated. C.R. Das and other leaders broke away from the Congress and formed the Swaraj Party. C.R.Das was the President and the Secretary was Motilal Nehru.

The Swaraj Party aimed to achieve dominion status, a constitution, control over bureaucracy, provincial autonomy, Swarajya (self-rule), and control over government machinery. The party won 42 out of 104 seats in the Central Legislature in 1923 and aimed to obstruct the government by boycotting

official functions and voicing grievances. The Swaraj Party's notable achievements include Vithalbhai Patel's election as speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1925, defeating the Public Safety Bill in 1928, and exposing the weaknesses of Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. However, the party faced drawbacks such as the inability to coordinate their struggle with the mass freedom struggle, reliance on newspapers, and internal divisions. The party's failure to support the peasant cause in Bengal led to a loss of support for many members. The party merged with the Congress in 1935.

The Simon Commission, a seven-member commission formed by the British Crown in 1927, was sent to India to examine the shortcomings of the Indian administrative system. The commission had only British members, which lacked Indian representation. Thus, the Simon Commission was met with great backlash, and it was greeted with the slogan 'Go back, Simon'. All parties, including the Congress and the Muslim League, participated in the demonstrations. But it completed its report in 1930. The report suggested abolishing the diarchy system and setting up provincial units of governance that worked with relevant representatives. It also suggested the setting up of communal electorates to resolve communal tensions between different sects of society, primarily the Hindu-Muslim issue. The Simon Commission led to the Round Table Conferences and the Government of India Act of 1935, which served as the blueprint for the current Indian Constitution.

The Secretary of State at the time, Lord Birkenhead, had publicly criticised the inability of Indians to come up with reforms on their own. A committee was established to draft a potential constitution for India during an all-party conference called by the Congress party in response to this challenge. The committee produced the **Nehru report in 1928,** while Motilal Nehru served as its chairman. Muslim League withdrew its support for the report because it continued to demand a separate electoral process, but the report did not support this demand.

The cessation of non-cooperation and anti-Simon Commission protests has once more aided in the resurgence of militant nationalism among young Indians. This phase can be found in the 1924 structure of the **Hindustan Republican Association**. However, the British government declared the organisation to be illegal as a result of the Kakori train robbery case against its leaders. However, the organisation was revived as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in 1928 by Chandrasekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, and others. However, Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru, and Sukh Dev were executed as retaliation for Saunders' killing (Lahore Conspiracy Case) and the bomb case in Delhi Legislative Council.

The British government convened an all-party conference in London to discuss political issues in India and potential constitutional changes in the interim. All significant political parties from both India and England attended the three annual Round Table Conferences, which were held in London. But Congress decided to abstain. In 1929, the Congress session in Lahore marked a significant moment in Indian history, as the Indian National Congress adopted the resolution of 'Poorna Swaraj', or complete independence. Pandit Nehru, the president, emphasized the goal of full freedom and the need for Indian nationalists to fight for it. The Congress approved hoisting of the tricolour national flag at the bank of river Ravi on December 31, 1929, celebrated the first Independence Day on 26th January 1930 and marked the beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement under the leadership of Gandhi to achieve total independence or Purna Swaraj.

5.4.9 Civil Disobedience Movement

The Civil Disobedience Movement, a pivotal moment in the Indian National movement, played a significant role in attracting the common man into the freedom movement. It began with Mahatma Gandhi's **Dandi March** (March 12, 1930), a campaign of civil disobedience along with 78 of his dependable volunteers. On 6th April 1930, they observed the Salt Satyagraha at Dandi beach, where Gandhi broke the Salt Law, an illegal British Indian law. The Salt Satyagraha, on a national level, was observed in different parts of the country under the Congress leaders. This campaign against British government policy gained significant support and enabled Gandhi to start further campaigns of civil disobedience. The movement involved students, women, tribals, businesspeople, labourers, and peasants. The Congress boycotted the first-round table conference.

Civil Disobedience Movement involved:

- Defiance of Salt Laws
- Boycott of liquor
- Boycott of foreign cloth & British goods of all kinds
- Non-payment of taxes and revenues.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact

Without the Indian National Congress, the first-round table conference was rendered useless. In order to convince the Congress to take part in the second-round table conference, the British government set up a meeting with Gandhi and Lord Irwin. This political pact, which was reached on March 5, 1931, between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin, India's viceroy at the time, is known as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact." They reached the following conclusions

- The Indian National Congress (INC) agreed to take part in the Round Table Conference.
- Gandhi and INC agreed to stop the civil disobedience movement.
- Viceroy agreed to the withdrawal of all ordinances that curbed the activities of the Congress.
- Withdrawal of all prosecutions except those involving violent crimes.
- Release of those who were arrested for taking part in the civil disobedience movement.
- Concession in salt tax

Thus, in 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin pact led to the cessation of the civil disobedience movement. However, after Gandhi and other Indian political leaders failed to reach any political agreements at the second-round table conference, India began its next phase of civil disobedience. However, since the movement was put on hold without yielding any positive results for the Indian freedom movement, both members of the public and its leaders lost faith in it. Nevertheless, the movement persisted until 1934 despite receiving little public support.

Round Table Conferences 1930-1932

The British government called three round table conferences (1930, 1931 & 1932) in London to address India's political issues and discuss its future politics. The First-Round Table conference was presided over by Ramsay MacDonald and featured 74 Indian delegates, 58 representatives from political parties in India, and 16 delegates from princely states. The British government acknowledged the need for Indian National Congress involvement in discussions about India's future constitutional governance. The conference covered topics such as the

structure of the federal government, provincial charters, defence services for minorities, legislative accountability of the executive, and a national federation. The conference was considered a failure due to the continued Civil Disobedience Movement.

The Second Round Table Conference, held in London from September 7th to 1st December 1931, aimed to address the shortcomings of the First Round Table Conference. The conference included Gandhi and the Indian National Congress, who were invited to participate due to the Gandhi-Irwin pact. Gandhi rejected the British's support for a separate electorate for minorities, and the Poona Pact, 1932, an agreement between Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Gandhi, helped resolve this issue. Despite the conference's success, it was regarded as a failure due to conflicts and differences among attendees.

The Third Round Table Conference was held in 1932, with 46 delegates attending due to the absence of political leaders and Maharajas. The conference's recommendations were published in 1933 and were later discussed in the British Parliament. The Government of India Act of 1935 was passed based on the recommendations.

5.4.10 Government of India Act of 1935

The Government of India Act (1935) was a response to the unsatisfactory 1919 Government of India Act, which was too short for self-government. Indian politicians were frustrated with the British officials' control over their areas, leading to the Simon Commission Report. The Round Table Conferences failed to fulfil their goals, but a white paper was released in 1933, leading to the creation of a committee under Lord Linlithgow's chairmanship. The committee's report was published in 1934 and passed in the British Parliament, and the Act was enforced in 1935, establishing a federal form of government for India.

It aimed to establish a Federation of India, consisting of the Governor's Provinces and Chief Commissioner's Provinces in British India, as well as any Indian States that voluntarily joined it. It marked the beginning of Provincial Autonomy, allowing provinces to act as autonomous units of administration in their defined spheres. The Act also established responsible governments in provinces and compelled the governor to act on the advice of ministers accountable to the provincial legislature. The Act also introduced dyarchy at the Centre, with two categories of federal subjects: **Reserved Subjects** and **Transferred Subjects**. The Governor-General was in charge of both the Reserved and Transferred subjects overall. The Central Legislature was bicameral, consisting of the Federal Assembly and Council of States.

This Act is important to India's constitutional history because it served as the country's constitution until the adoption of the current constitution in 1950. It was also crucial to the Indian National Movement because it partially met the demands of Indian political parties and gave the provinces more autonomy. Since the Act granted provincial autonomy, the federal system failed due to its unitary nature and the overwhelming influence of Europeans on the central government. Nehru categorically criticised it as a "vehicle with strong breaks but no engine."

5.4.11 Second World War and Indian National Movement

The Second World War was a devastating global conflict that began in 1939 and ended in 1945. It involved 100 million people from over 30 countries. Because it was led by Britain on one side, the war had a significant impact on the Indian National Movement. The Congress and other political parties pushed for the country's independence, launching

a variety of political struggles and mass movements. By making political offers through authorities and sending a number of constitutional commissions, Britain, on the other hand, tried to gain Indian support for their war efforts and to calm the political climate in India. Let's have a brief look into our national movement during and after the Second World War.

The British Indian government entered the war without consulting the National Congress or the central legislature's elected members. Congress leaders demanded that India be declared free or that effective power be transferred to it before it could actively participate in the war. The Congress ordered the resignation of its ministers after the British government refused to accept this demand. In October 1940, Gandhi called for a limited Satyagraha by a few select individuals. Individual satyagraha was first offered by Acharya Vinobha Bhave. By March 1942, Japan had quickly occupied Rangoon and had overrun the Philippines, Indo-China, Indonesia, Malaya, and Burma. This effectively brought the war to India's doorstep. The British government now needed Indians to actively participate in the war effort.

Viceroy Linlithgow made the August Offer in 1940, promising to expand the Executive Council of the Viceroy of India to include more Indians, to establish an advisory war council, to give full weight to the minority opinion, and to recognise Indians' right to frame their own constitution (after the war). In exchange, it was hoped that all Indian parties and communities would support Britain's efforts in World War II. However, the Congress rejected this proposal because minorities, particularly the Muslim League, were assured that no constitutional scheme would be acceptable to the government without their agreement, i.e. giving the Muslim League veto power.

The Muslim League declined the offer because it did not provide a clear guarantee for the establishment of Pakistan. Jinnah openly demanded a separate state for the Muslim community at the All-Indian Muslim League session in Lahore in 1940. According to the Two-Nation theory, Hindus and Muslims in India are two distinct communities that cannot coexist in a single state without dominating and discriminating against one another or without constant conflict. It was the primary reason for the partition of India in 1947.

Cripps Mission: To secure this cooperation, the British government sent a mission to India in March 1942, led by Cabinet Minister Sir Stafford Cripps. The goal of British policy in India, according to Cripps, is "the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India," but detailed negotiations between the British Government and Congress leaders fell through when the British Government refused to accept the Congress'demand for an immediate transfer of effective power to Indians. Gandhiji called Cripps Mission '*A post-dated cheque drawn on a failing bank*' due to the Cripps' offer of Dominion Status after the war.

Quit India Movement: The All-India Congress Committee met in Bombay on August 8, 1942. It passed the well-known 'Quit India' Resolution and proposed a non-violent mass struggle led by Gandhiji to achieve this goal. On August 9, Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were arrested, and the Congress was declared illegal once more. The arrests shocked the country, and a spontaneous protest movement erupted across the country, expressing the people's pent-up rage. Across the country, there were strikes in factories, schools, and colleges, as well as demonstrations that were lathi-charged and fired upon. For its part, the government went all out to crush the 1942 movement. Its repression was unbounded. The press was effectively silenced. Protesters were machine-gunned and even bombed from the air. Finally, the government was able to

crush the movement. In fact, the so-called 1942 Revolt was brief. Following the suppression of the 1942 Revolt, there was little political activity within the country until the war ended in 1945.

Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj): The national movement, however, found new expression outside of the country's borders. Subhas Chandra Bose fled India in March 1941, seeking help from the Soviet Union. He relocated to Germany when the Soviet Union joined the Allies in June 1941. In February 1943, Bose travelled to Japan to organise an armed struggle against British rule with Japanese assistance. In Singapore, Bose established the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army or INA) to conduct a military campaign for India's liberation. Rash Behari Bose, an experienced terrorist revolutionary, aided him.

Prior to the arrival of Subhash Bose, General Mohan Singh (then a captain in the British Indian army) had begun the process of organising the INA. Subhash Bose, now known as Netaji by INA soldiers, issued the battle cry 'Jai Hind.' The INA marched alongside the Japanese army from Burma to India. With Subhash Bose at the helm of the Provisional Government of Free India, the soldiers and officers of the Indian National Army (INA) hoped to enter India as its liberators. On August 15, 1945 the surrender of Japan in the Second World War took place, and with this the INA also surrendered.

Wavell Plan: In 1943, Lord Wavell became the Viceroy of India. He visited London in 1945 and discussed his ideas with the British Government. He presented the details at the Shimla Conference later. The Wavell Plan proposed a Viceroy's Executive Council with a balanced representation of all Indians, including caste-Hindus, Muslims, Depressed Classes, and Sikhs. Muslims were given 6 out of 14 members, accounting for 25% of the population. The Viceroy/Governor-General would have minimal veto power. The foreign affairs portfolio would be transferred to an Indian member, and the defence would be handled by a British general until full power transfer.

However, the plan failed due to disagreements between the League and Congress. Jinnah demanded that only League members could be Muslim representatives in the Council, while Congress opposed this demand. The Wavell Plan was dissolved, leaving the last chance to avoid partition. The war ended, and a new Labour government was elected in Britain, aiming for India's independence. The failure of the Wavell Plan and the Shimla Conference marked a watershed moment in the Indian Independence struggle, as all attempts to prevent partition were met with failure.

Royal Indian Navy Mutiny: The Royal Indian Navy Mutiny began as a strike by ratings demanding better food and accommodation. Indian sailors were treated poorly by British commanders and faced disparities in pay, living conditions, and basic amenities. The strike evolved into an open revolt, with sailors from various cities joining the Bombay sailors. The revolt was inspired by the INA trials and the persona of Subhas Chandra Bose. However, the revolt failed to gain support from the Indian leadership, with only the Communist Party of India and INC's Aruna Asaf Ali openly supporting the sailors. The mutiny ended with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's intervention, and the mutineers surrendered on 23 February 1946. The Navy Mutiny ended the British Empire's ambitions in India, putting the final nail in the coffin. The RIN Revolt was one of the factors that accelerated the fall of British authority in India. Leaders realized that any popular uprising necessarily runs the risk of preventing the central government from retaining more power

Cabinet Mission Plan: The Cabinet Mission was a high-powered mission sent in February 1946 to India by the Attlee Government (British Prime Minister.) The mission had three British cabinet members – Pethick Lawrence, Stafford Cripps, and A.V. Alexander. The Cabinet Mission aimed to discuss the transfer of power from British to Indian leadership. The Cabinet Mission aimed to establish a constitution for India, formulate a constitution-making body, and establish an Executive Council with the support of major Indian parties. However, the mission failed due to ideological differences between the Congress Party and the Muslim League. The Indian National Congress opposed the plan; they were against the idea of grouping provinces on the basis of religion. They also wanted a stronger centre, while the Muslim League opposed any changes. In June 1946, a new plan was proposed, dividing India into a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority India, later renamed Pakistan. The Congress Party agreed to be part of the constituent assembly, and the Viceroy invited 14 men to form an interim government.

The Congress leaders entered the viceroy's interim council, and Nehru headed the interim government. The new government began framing a constitution, and Congress-led governments formed in most provinces, including the NWFP. However, Jinnah and the League objected to the new central government and called for 'Direct Action Day' on August 16, leading to widespread communal rioting and a call for partition. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was one of the first Congress leaders to acknowledge the inevitability of partition as a means to stop brutal violence.

5.4.12 Partition and Transfer of Power

Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, proposed the **'Dickie Bird Plan' (also known as Mountbatten Plan)** in May 1947, which proposed declaring provinces as independent successor states and allowing them to choose whether to join the constituent assembly. Jawaharlal Nehru when apprised of the plan, vehemently opposed it, saying it would lead to the Balkanisation of the country. Hence, this plan was also called Plan Balkan. The **June 3rd Plan**, included principles of partition, autonomy, sovereignty, and the right to make their own constitution. The plan was accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League, and the Indian Independence Act 1947 passed in the British Parliament.

British India was partitioned into two dominions: India and Pakistan. The constitution would not apply to Muslim-majority areas, and the legislative assemblies of Bengal and Punjab voted for the partition. The NWFP decided to join Pakistan, while Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan boycotted the referendum. The transfer of power was scheduled for August 15, 1947. The Boundary Commission was established to demarcate Bengal and Punjab into the new countries.

The princely states were given the choice to remain independent or accede to India or Pakistan. The British monarch would no longer use the title 'Emperor of India'. The Governor-General would assent any law passed by the constituent assemblies of the dominions in His Majesty's name until the new constitutions came into existence.

The Indian Independence Movement, also known as the Indian National Movement, was a 90-year-long mass movement that began with the revolt of 1857 and ended with the partition and transfer of power to free India. The founding of the Indian National Congress and early political associations in the important British Indian provinces strengthened the freedom movement's aims and tactics. Early leaders of moderates, young leaders or extremists, martyrs of militant nationalism,

and nonviolent, peaceful Gandhian struggles all made valuable contributions to the great run for freedom. Gandhi's ideology was supported by influential figures like Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and Maulana Azad. Intellectuals like Rabindranath Tagore and Subramania Bharati spread patriotic awareness. Female leaders like Sarojini Naidu promoted women's emancipation in the freedom struggle. The Indian independence movement evolved from anti-colonial to secular, democratic, republican, and civil-libertarian, culminating in the 1947 Indian Independence Act.

Recap

- Early political associations emerged in Bengal, Bombay, and Madras
- Early associations focused on spreading education
- Aimed to increase Indian representation in councils
- Opposed British discriminatory actions against Indians
- Advocated for administrative reforms in India
- Sought to ensure freedom of the press
- Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha was established in Bengal
- Landholders Society represented landowner interests
- British India Association addressed various political concerns
- Indian National Congress formed due to British suspicions
- Safety Valve Theory suggested Congress addressed Indian unease
- Lightning Conductor Theory united nationalistic forces against British
- The Moderate phase sought lawful, peaceful methods
- Extremist phase arose from dissatisfaction with moderates
- The Gandhian Phase emphasised non-cooperation and Swadeshi principles

Objective Questions

1. Who presided over the Surat Session of Indian National Congress in 1907?
2. In which session of the Muslim League was the Two-Nation Theory propounded?
3. Who was the founder of INC?
4. Who was the first president of INC?
5. Who was the founder of the Swaraj Party?
6. When did the Chauri Chaura incident took place?
7. Who gave the call 'Do or Die'?
8. What was the reason behind the suspension of the Non-cooperation movement?
9. What was the main reason behind the 'Lahore Conspiracy'?
10. What was the result of the failure of the Cripps Mission?

Answers

1. Ras Behari Ghosh
2. Lahore Session, 1940
3. A. O. Hume
4. W C Bonnerjee
5. Motilal Nehru and C.R.Das
6. February 4,1922
7. M. K. Gandhi
8. Chauri Chaura Incident
9. Lala Lajapat Rai was brutally wounded by Saunders
10. Intensification of the Quit India Movement

Assignments

1. Analyse the significance of the Surat Session of the Indian National Congress in 1907. Discuss the key events that transpired during this session, the divisions it revealed within the Congress, and its impact on the Indian freedom movement.
2. Discuss the significance of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in India's struggle for freedom. How did it influence public sentiment towards British rule?
3. Discuss the challenges faced by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress during the Gandhian phase of the freedom struggle. How did these challenges shape the strategies used in the movement?
4. Compare and contrast the methods and objectives of the Moderates and Extremists within the Indian National Congress. How did their differing approaches shape the early phase of India's freedom struggle?

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Independent India

UNIT 1

Five-Year Plans and Social Reconstruction

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the evolution of economic and social planning in India
- analyse the significance of India's Five-Year Plans
- explore the impact of the Green Revolution
- assess the shifts in planning strategies

Prerequisites

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, played a pivotal role in shaping the nation's post-independence future. His commitment to a modern, secular, and socialist India laid the foundation for significant economic and social policies, notably the introduction of the Five Year Plans in 1951, inspired by Soviet planning. After gaining independence in 1947, India faced immense challenges, including partition, poverty, unemployment, and a lack of infrastructure. Recognising the need for integrated economic planning, Nehru's government aimed to foster self-reliance, industrialisation, agricultural growth, and social welfare. The First Five Year Plan prioritised agriculture to address food shortages, while subsequent plans expanded efforts across industry, education, healthcare, and infrastructure. This unit will examine how these plans shaped India's trajectory, highlighting the successes and challenges faced in building a modern economy.

Keywords

Five Year Plans, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Green Revolution, Planning

Discussion

Economic and social planning of a nation is a type of commitment towards determined action. It enables the government to accommodate itself to the changing socio-economic and political scenario, keeping an eye on the development of a nation. India's Five-Year Plans have played a pivotal role in shaping the country's economic landscape and fostering social reconstruction. It aims at the change in the social organisation and welfare of the society. The history of planning in India goes back to 1940's advocated by M. Visvesvaraya. As early as 1948, the Indian government had appointed a National Planning Committee. Yet, it was the Tata-Birla plan, also known as the 'Bombay Plan' which familiarised the term 'planning' to Indians.

In 1950, a Planning Commission was set up with the Prime Minister as its Chairperson. Initiated in December 1951, these plans aimed at achieving sustainable development by focusing on key sectors of the economy. It aimed at goals like modernisation, growth, self-reliance and equity. However, the significance of the Five-Year Plans extends beyond economic considerations, as they have been instrumental in addressing social inequalities and promoting inclusive growth. The people of India from different walks of life appreciated and accepted the plans with applause and debates.

6.1.1 First Two Five-Year Plans (1951-1961): Laying the Foundation

The initial two Five-Year Plans laid the groundwork for economic development in India. Emphasising heavy industries, agriculture, and infrastructure, these plans aimed to overcome the challenges of a predominantly agrarian economy. K. N. Raj was instrumental in drafting the first five-year plan. The first plan focused on agrarian development, including investment in dams and irrigation projects. Huge projects like Bhakra Nangal (Himachal Pradesh) were included in this plan. The focus on building a robust industrial base contributed to job creation and skill development, indirectly fostering social upliftment.

6.1.2. Third to Fifth Plans (1961-1974): A Shift towards Social Welfare

The subsequent plans witnessed a shift towards social welfare and poverty alleviation. The Third Five-Year Plan, in particular, prioritised sectors like education, healthcare, and rural development. Investments in education aimed to reduce illiteracy, empowering the population with knowledge and skills. Health initiatives sought to improve the overall well-being of citizens, promoting a healthier and more productive society.

6.1.2.1 Green Revolution

In 1965, the government of India launched the Green Revolution with the expertise and assistance of the geneticist S. Swaminathan. During the third five-year plan, a series of initiatives and changes were introduced in the agricultural sector, starting in the 1960's and implemented over several decades. It aimed to increase agricultural output by introducing high-yielding variety (HYV) crops, improving irrigation methods, and using modern techniques such as fertilizers and pesticides.

The implementation of the Green Revolution spanned across multiple plans. The low-income groups which spend their income mainly on the purchase of food, benefitted a lot from the Green Revolution on account of marketed surplus. The portion of agricultural produce which is sold in the market by the farmers is called marketed surplus. The Green Revolution enabled the government to procure sufficient amounts of food grains to build a stock that could be used in times of food shortage. Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), and Submission on Agriculture Extension (SAME) were some of the schemes launched under the Green Revolution. The process of the Green Revolution came to an end in 1978.

6.1.3 Balancing Economic Growth and Social Justice: The Evolution of India's Five-Year Plans

During the Emergency period (1975-1980), India adopted a more authoritarian approach to economic planning while striving to address social disparities. The Sixth Five-Year Plan emphasised balancing economic growth with social justice, implementing programmes like Integrated Rural Development and the Minimum Needs Program to target poverty eradication and improve living standards.

As the country progressed to the Seventh through Tenth Plans (1985-2002), the focus shifted towards decentralisation and local governance. The introduction of the Panchayati Raj system empowered local bodies to plan and execute developmental activities, ensuring that the benefits of economic growth reached marginalised communities.

In the 21st century, the Eleventh and Twelfth Plans (2007-2017) further evolved to confront challenges related to globalization and environmental sustainability. These plans prioritised inclusive growth by emphasising social inclusion, education, healthcare, and skill development. Notable initiatives, such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), were launched to provide livelihood security for rural households, reinforcing the commitment to fostering an equitable society. Together, these phases of planning reflect India's ongoing efforts to achieve a balanced and inclusive development trajectory, adapting to the changing socio-economic landscape while addressing the needs of various communities.

6.1.4 Post-Planning Era and Social Reconstruction: Contemporary Perspectives

In 2015, NITI Aayog was established to replace the Planning Commission, reflecting a new approach to economic planning in India. NITI Aayog, or the National Institution for Transforming India, aims to enhance cooperative federalism and implement a bottom-up planning framework. Its focus includes sustainable development, innovation, and inclusive growth, with an emphasis on engaging diverse stakeholders in policy formulation. The organisation is tasked with monitoring national priorities and fostering

state involvement in the planning process, contrasting with the centralised nature of the Planning Commission. This transition is designed to address contemporary economic challenges effectively.

The local self-government became the executive agency for the various schemes at the regional level. Contemporary policies focus on addressing social reconstruction through targeted initiatives in digital inclusion, women's empowerment, and environmental sustainability. For example, *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* aims to improve public health by promoting sanitation and eliminating open defecation. *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* focuses on ensuring girls' education and addressing gender imbalances through community-level awareness and support systems. These programmes are designed to create safer and healthier living environments while empowering marginalised communities, particularly women, to access better educational and social opportunities. By integrating these objectives, the policies aim to promote overall social welfare and sustainable development.

The Five Year Plans in India emerged as a critical tool for state-led economic development, embodying Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of a mixed economy that balanced public and private sectors. These plans aimed not only to promote economic stability but also to reduce inequalities, ensuring that the benefits of development reached all sections of society. This approach marked a significant departure from colonial economic policies that had previously drained India's wealth, striving instead to create a self-sufficient and progressive nation.

Additionally, the emphasis on both economic and social planning has been vital in addressing social inequalities and promoting inclusive growth. The legacy of these plans continues to influence contemporary policies, underscoring a commitment to social reconstruction for a more equitable and prosperous future. As India progresses, it is crucial to build upon the successes of past plans while adapting to the evolving challenges of the present and future.

Recap

- The Bombay Plan outlined industrialisation and state intervention
- The First Plan focused on irrigation and agriculture
- The Second Plan emphasised rapid industrialisation and heavy industries
- Introduction of the Green Revolution in the mid-1960s
- The Fourth Plan prioritised self-reliance amid oil shocks
- The Fifth Plan tackled poverty through targeted programmes
- The Emergency impacted the implementation of the Sixth Plan
- The Seventh Plan introduced the Panchayati Raj system for decentralisation

- The Eighth Plan encouraged market liberalization and economic reforms
- The Ninth Plan addressed regional disparities and social justice
- The Tenth Plan targeted faster growth and poverty alleviation
- NITI Aayog was established to replace the Planning Commission
- The Eleventh Plan focused on inclusive and equitable development
- The Twelfth Plan emphasised sustainable growth and social inclusion
- Decentralized planning post-abolition of Five-Year Plans
- 21st-century plans addressed globalization, sustainability, inclusive growth
- Initiatives like *Swachh Bharat* and *Beti Bachao* drive social reform

Objective Questions

1. When was the Planning Commission set up in India, and who was its initial Chairperson?
2. Who advocated the idea of 'planning' in India during the 1940s?
3. What was the primary focus of the First Five-Year Plan (1951-1956)?
4. Who played a key role in drafting the First Five-Year Plan?
5. Which plan witnessed a shift towards social welfare and poverty alleviation?
6. What was the objective of the Green Revolution launched in 1965?
7. What are some of the schemes launched under the Green Revolution?
8. During which plan did the government focus on balancing economic growth and social justice?
9. Which plans prioritised decentralisation and local governance in India?
10. What were the key areas of focus in the Eleventh and Twelfth Five-Year Plans(2007-2017)?

Answers

1. 1950, Jawaharlal Nehru
2. M. Visvesvaraya
3. Heavy industries, agriculture, infrastructure
4. K. N. Raj
5. The Third Five-Year Plan
6. Increase agricultural output
7. MIDH, NFSM, NMSA, SAME
8. The Sixth Five-Year Plan
9. The Seventh to Tenth Plans
10. Social inclusion, education, healthcare

Assignments

1. Analyse the Green Revolution in India, focusing on its objectives, key strategies, and the impact on agricultural productivity.
2. Write a short essay discussing the objectives, achievements, and challenges of India's Five Year Plans. Analyse how these plans contributed to the nation's economic development and social welfare.
3. How effective were the Five-Year Plans in achieving their stated goals of economic development and social equity, and what were the key successes and failures in addressing the needs of various socio-economic groups?

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UNIT 2

Growth of Indigenous Capital and Restatement of Class Structure

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the historical evolution of the Indian economy and its key phases over time
- recognise significant economic changes in India after World War I, including colonial challenges faced
- appreciate the socio-economic transformations and developments that occurred in post-independence India
- comprehend the challenges in land distribution and the complexities of implementing land reforms after Indian independence

Prerequisites

During the Post-independence period, the Indian economy emerged from a structure primarily designed to serve colonial interests. For many years, it was exploited and reshaped to meet the needs of British colonial rule. Traditional Indian industries and enterprises were modified to align with the British economy, resulting in a subordinated economic identity prior to independence. The colonial government's policies were largely exploitative and one-sided. Following independence, significant efforts were made to dismantle this inherited colonial structure. A key focus was on fostering domestic capital and developing an independent economic framework that could support India's growth and self-sufficiency.

Keywords

Domestic capital, Public Sector, Dominance, Agricultural transformation,, Industrialization, Mixed Economy

Discussion

After the First World War, notable changes occurred in the Indian economy. Despite the challenges faced by colonialism, the Indian capitalist class could grow and establish a substantial independent economic foundation for capital accumulation. This trend continued both during the colonial period and on a larger scale after gaining independence. The period following India's independence in 1947 witnessed profound socio-economic changes, marked by efforts to foster indigenous capital and redefine the country's class structure. These transformative endeavours were integral to the nation's pursuit of economic self-reliance and social equity. In the twentieth century, a significant and widely accepted development in the Indian colonial economy was the commencement of a swift import substitution phase. This primarily occurred in major consumer goods industries and specific intermediate and capital goods sectors such as textiles, sugar, matches, cement, paper, and iron. Following the First World War, India witnessed a decrease in its international trade volume, primarily due to global economic disruptions. However, internal trade flourished, particularly in essential commodities like cotton, sugar, iron and steel, and cement, which experienced a notable increase—often two to three times higher than before.

During the post-independence period, India pursued a strategy aimed at reducing reliance on foreign trade, aligning with the government's vision of establishing a self-sufficient economy. This strategy emphasised import substitution and domestic production, aiming to reduce dependency on external markets. Such policies were integral to fostering national development and stability, particularly in the context of historical colonial exploitation. While India aimed to minimise its ties with metropolitan economies, it has still been influenced by global economic trends, particularly since the onset of globalization in the 1990s. This period marked a significant shift in India's economic policies, leading to increased integration with the global market. As a result, India began to experience both opportunities and challenges arising from international economic dynamics.

6.2.1 Initial Years of Independence (1947-1950s): Land Reforms and Industrialization

In the initial years following independence (from 1947 to the 1950s), India confronted the challenge of correcting historical inequalities in the distribution of land. Large landowners possessed significant portions of land, while many were left without any. To address this imbalance, the government implemented land reforms, a set of policies aimed at redistributing land from those with extensive holdings to those who had none. The objective was to establish a more equitable and just society by ensuring that more people had access to land.

The Second Five-Year Plan (1956-1961) was particularly notable for emphasising the development of heavy industries, which is crucial for achieving self-reliance and economic stability. This plan aimed to build a strong industrial base to reduce dependence on imports and lay the groundwork for a diversified economy. The government allocated substantial resources to key sectors, including steel, coal, and heavy machinery, focusing on creating an industrial network to support economic growth.

The establishment of the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) in 1973 and the expansion of the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) underscored this focus on heavy industry. SAIL quickly became a major player in the Indian steel industry, facilitating infrastructure development and employment opportunities. The Bhilai Steel Plant, set up with assistance from the Soviet Union, became one of the largest steel producers in India, exemplifying the government's commitment to industrialisation.

6.2.2 Nehruvian Era (1950s-1960s): Mixed Economy and Public Sector Dominance

During Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister, India adopted a mixed economy model that integrated elements of socialism and capitalism. This framework involved significant government control over key industries, particularly in the public sector, while also allowing for the participation of private enterprises, including those operated by local entrepreneurs. As a result, a bureaucratic and technocratic elite emerged, wielding considerable influence in decision-making processes due to their expertise and administrative power. This concentration of authority within the public sector was a defining characteristic of India's mixed economy under Nehru's leadership.

6.2.2.1 Establishment of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)

The creation of PSUs was central to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of a mixed economy. These state-owned enterprises were established to promote industrialisation and economic development. The government believed that the public sector would not only create employment opportunities but also ensure that the wealth generated through industrialisation benefited all sections of society. By the 1980s, PSUs had become integral to various sectors, including telecommunications, energy, and manufacturing, significantly contributing to India's GDP.

Moreover, the PSU model aimed to safeguard national interests in key industries.

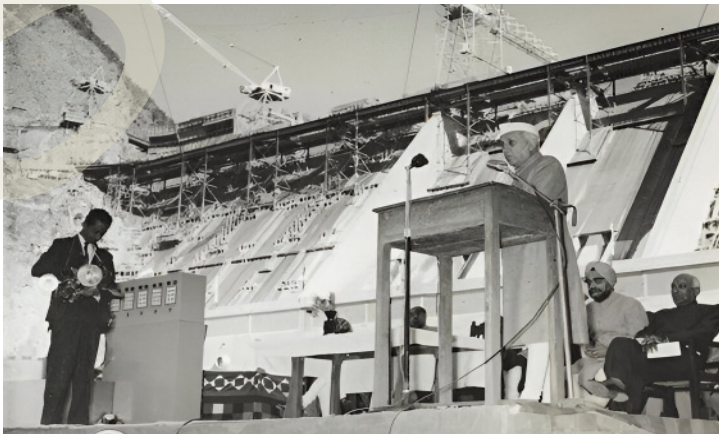

Fig.6.2.1 : Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru dedicates the Bhakra Nangal Dam on 22 October 1963 to the nation

Companies such as Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) were established to enhance technological capabilities and reduce reliance on foreign manufacturers. The focus on heavy industries and PSUs helped position India as one of the largest producers of steel and cement among developing nations by the 1970s.

6.2.3 Green Revolution and Mixed Economy

The Green Revolution, initiated in the 1960s, marked a significant turning point in Indian agriculture, fundamentally altering the agrarian landscape and significantly contributing to the country's economic growth. This transformation was primarily driven by the introduction of high-yielding varieties (HYVs) of crops, modern irrigation methods, and the extensive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The collaboration between Indian scientists, most notably Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, and international agricultural organisations were crucial in implementing these innovations.

One of the most notable achievements of the Green Revolution was the dramatic increase in food grain production. The introduction of HYVs, such as dwarf wheat and rice varieties, led to a surge in crop yields, effectively alleviating the chronic food shortages that plagued India in the early post-independence years. For instance, wheat production soared from 6 million tons in 1965 to over 20 million tons by the early 1970s, positioning India as one of the largest producers of wheat globally.

Furthermore, the adoption of modern irrigation techniques, including tube wells and drip irrigation, allowed farmers to cultivate more land and grow multiple crops per year, thus enhancing productivity. The focus on irrigation not only facilitated a reliable water supply but also empowered farmers to manage their production cycles more effectively, reducing dependence on seasonal monsoons. This shift towards increased agricultural productivity fostered economic growth, contributing to India's GDP and improving rural livelihoods.

The Green Revolution also played a critical role in changing the socio-economic dynamics of rural India. Indigenous farmers became essential players in the economy as they transitioned from subsistence farming to more commercialised agriculture. This shift resulted in increased income for farmers, enabling them to invest in education, healthcare, and improved living standards. However, the benefits of the Green Revolution were not uniformly distributed; wealthier farmers with better access to resources reaped greater advantages, leading to increased disparities within rural communities.

Despite its successes, the Green Revolution also brought challenges, such as environmental degradation, soil health issues, and increased dependency on chemical inputs. The sustainability of this agricultural model has since been a point of debate, prompting calls for more eco-friendly practices and policies.

6.2.4 Social and Economic Evolution in the Post Nehruvian Era

The period from the 1970s to the early 1990s was pivotal in shaping India's economy, society, and infrastructure. This era was characterised by significant growth, various challenges, and a gradual transformation that set the stage for the liberalization reforms of 1991. During the 1970s, India experienced a phase of relatively slow economic growth, which was around 3-4% annually. This was largely due to several factors, including a lack of technological advancement, inefficient public sector enterprises, and widespread poverty. The government implemented a

series of five-year plans aimed at increasing agricultural and industrial output, with a focus on self-sufficiency and import substitution.

The Green revolution, which began in the late 1960s and continued into the 1970s, played a crucial role in enhancing agricultural productivity. The introduction of high-yielding variety seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation facilities led to significant increases in food production, making India self-sufficient in food grains by the mid-1970s. This agricultural growth helped in reducing hunger and improving rural livelihoods, although it also led to disparities in wealth and resource distribution.

The 1970s and 1980s saw significant social changes driven by economic shifts and urbanisation. Increased industrialisation led to migration from rural areas to cities as people sought better employment opportunities. This urban migration contributed to the growth of a burgeoning middle class, which began to demand more from the government in terms of services and infrastructure.

However, rapid urbanisation also created significant challenges. Cities faced increasing pressure from a rising population, leading to problems such as inadequate housing, poor sanitation, and traffic congestion. Social stratification persisted, with entrenched caste systems and regional disparities influencing access to opportunities.

The political landscape also transformed during this period. The Emergency (1975-1977), imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, marked a significant political upheaval that affected civil liberties and political rights. This period fostered widespread discontent and ultimately led to a realignment in Indian politics with the rise of coalition governments in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Infrastructure development lagged behind the rapid population growth and urbanisation. The government focused on building public sector enterprises, but many suffered from inefficiency and corruption. Despite this, key infrastructure projects, including the expansion of road networks and the development of ports and railways, were initiated. The power sector, however, faced chronic shortages and inefficiencies, impacting industrial productivity.

6.2.4.1 Challenges Faced

The Indian economy faced significant challenges during the late 1970s and 1980s, primarily stemming from external shocks and internal structural issues. One of the most critical events was the global oil crisis in the 1970s, which led to skyrocketing oil prices and a sharp increase in inflation. This inflation erodes purchasing power, stifling consumer demand and causing widespread economic distress. Additionally, India's balance of payments deteriorated as the country struggled to pay for rising oil imports, resulting in growing trade deficits and a depletion of foreign exchange reserves.

The focus on import substitution industrialisation (ISI) during this period further worsened the situation. While the intent was to develop domestic industries and reduce dependence on foreign goods, this approach resulted in inefficiencies. Many Indian industries operated under protective tariffs, leading to a lack of competitiveness in the global market. Domestic manufacturers were shielded from international competition, which stifled innovation and productivity, and by the late 1980s, this protective environment failed to yield the desired economic growth.

By the late 1980s, India's foreign exchange reserves were alarmingly low, equivalent to just a few weeks of imports. This precarious situation prompted a balance of payments crisis, necessitating urgent intervention. In July 1991, faced with the risk of defaulting on international loans, the Indian government,

led by Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, initiated a series of liberalization reforms. These reforms marked a significant departure from decades of state-led economic planning.

The liberalization agenda included devaluing the Indian rupee, reducing import tariffs, deregulating domestic industries, and encouraging foreign investment. The government sought to create a more market-oriented economy that would foster competition, attract global capital, and stimulate growth. This shift led to unprecedented economic expansion in subsequent years, transforming India into one of the world's fastest-growing economies. The reforms of 1991 laid the foundation for a more integrated and competitive economy, ultimately reshaping India's position in the global market.

6.2.5 Contemporary Dynamics (21st Century): Information Technology, Start-ups, and Social Entrepreneurship

In the 21st century, India has undergone significant changes, particularly in information technology, entrepreneurship, and social innovation. Over the past seven decades, the wealth of the average Indian has experienced exponential growth, driven by economic reforms and liberalization that have led to higher per capita income and improved living standards. The rise of the IT sector has positioned India as a global leader in technology and software services, attracting substantial foreign investments and fostering a thriving ecosystem for innovation.

The emergence of start-ups has been a transformative force in the Indian economy. Entrepreneurs are launching diverse ventures across various sectors, from e-commerce to fintech, contributing to economic growth and creating millions of job opportunities. This entrepreneurial spirit is supported by a growing network of incubators, accelerators, and venture capital firms, facilitating the development of new ideas and businesses.

Additionally, social entrepreneurship has gained momentum, with initiatives focused on addressing societal issues such as education, healthcare, and sustainability. These ventures aim to create social impact while being financially viable, contributing to a more inclusive economy. Social development indicators, such as literacy rates, access to healthcare, and poverty reduction, have shown marked improvement, reflecting the positive impact of economic policies on the overall quality of life.

The growth of indigenous capital has been a multifaceted journey intertwined with land reforms, industrialisation, agricultural transformation, and economic liberalization. Initially dominated by the public sector, the Indian economy has evolved to feature a vibrant private sector, flourishing start-ups, and a burgeoning middle class. This demographic shift provides more individuals with opportunities for upward mobility, improving their quality of life. As access to education and resources improves, more people are empowered to pursue their aspirations.

However, as India progresses on its developmental path, it faces the challenge of ensuring inclusive growth and addressing persistent socio-economic disparities. Overall, India's trajectory demonstrates a remarkable shift toward a more dynamic economy, with significant advancements in technology and business, leading to increased opportunities for social development and improved livelihoods for its citizens.

Recap

- India faced the challenge of historical disparities in land ownership.
- Land reforms were introduced to redistribute land and create a more egalitarian society.
- In the early years of independence, India focused on industrialisation.
- The Public sector enterprises were established to build a self-sufficient economy.
- Jawaharlal Nehru led India to adopt a mixed economy model.
- Public and private sectors coexisted, leading to a bureaucratic and technocratic elite in key industries.
- The Green Revolution transformed Indian agriculture in the 1960s-1970s.
- High-yielding crops, modern irrigation, and fertilizers increased productivity, empowering indigenous farmers.
- The 1990s marked a shift in economic liberalistion and globalization.
- In the 21st century, India experienced an Information Technology boom.
- The economy saw the rise of start-ups, social entrepreneurship, and a growing middle class.

Objective Questions

1. What were the goals of land reforms post-independence?
2. What economic model did India adopt during the Nehruvian era?
3. What major economic changes occurred in India during the 1990s?
4. What characterised the Green Revolution in agriculture?
5. What was a key feature of the Indian economy in the 21st century?
6. What was the primary goal of the Green Revolution?

Answers

1. Land redistribution
2. Mixed economy
3. Liberalization and globalization
4. High-yield crops
5. IT boom
6. Increase productivity

Assignments

1. Examine India's post-independence economic transformation focusing on land reforms and industrialisation. How did these policies address historical inequalities and build a self-sufficient economy?
2. Discuss the mixed economy model during the Nehruvian era. How did it impact socio-economic development and lead to the rise of bureaucratic and technocratic elites?
3. Analyse the Green Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s. How did high-yield crops and modern practices transform agriculture and contribute to economic growth?
4. Evaluate the impact of economic liberalization and globalization in the 1990s. How did these reforms change the Indian economy, and which sectors benefitted most?

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UNIT 3

Decay of Mixed Economy

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explore and understand the origins and decay of India's mixed economy
- investigate Nehruvian initiatives and the Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR) of 1948
- analyse the impact of liberalization reforms in the 1990s
- evaluate contemporary dynamics and the digital economy

Prerequisites

Countries worldwide adopt various economic systems based on their natural resources and population. Upon gaining independence, India adopted a mixed economy. Before independence, India operated under a laissez-faire policy. During the post-independence period, India faced the urgent need to enhance productivity in key sectors such as agriculture, employment, land reforms, and living conditions to promote economic growth and combat poverty. The mixed economy model was chosen to balance the benefits of a market-driven capitalist system with the necessity of state intervention to address social inequalities, promote inclusive development, and ensure economic stability.

Keywords

Mixed Economy, Gig economy, Industrial Policy Resolution, Private sector, Digital economy

Discussion

India's mixed economy model, adopted in the early years of post-independence, blended elements of socialism and capitalism. This model aimed to achieve economic self-sufficiency while addressing social inequalities. However, over the years, various factors have contributed to the decay of this mixed economy, leading to shifts in economic policies and structures. Before our independence, the British government created a public sector in things like railways, postal services, telegraphs, irrigation, weapon factories, and the opium industry. They also established specific factories like the Sindri Fertilizer Factory, the Visakhapatnam shipyard in 1951, and the Aircraft factory in Bangalore in 1940. Thus, in a way, what we received from the British was already a mixed economic system. The Indian economy is not purely capitalist or socialist. In India, the government has intentionally chosen to play a more active role. This includes not only promoting and regulating but also directly participating by taking control of or establishing production facilities for various activities.

6.3.1 Nehruvian Initiatives

The mixed economy model was championed by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. During this era, the public sector played a dominant role in key industries, focusing on infrastructure development and heavy industries. The strategy led to significant achievements, including the establishment of steel plants, dams, and institutions of higher learning. After Independence, the government of India outlined the areas of work for the public and private sectors in the Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR) of 1948. The main idea of the 1948, Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR) was to promote a mixed economy where both the public and private sectors coexist. It aimed to achieve social justice by maximizing production. Industries were categorised into four groups:

a. Industries exclusively controlled by the central government.

b. Industries that only the state could undertake.

c. Industries considered of fundamental importance, requiring planning and regulation by the central government.

d. The remaining industrial sector, open to private enterprise, including individuals and cooperatives.

Despite early successes, the mixed economy model faced challenges, including bureaucratic hurdles and inefficiencies in the public sector. Over time, the expansion of state-owned enterprises led to a lack of competition, resulting in lower efficiency, increased corruption, and a growing burden on government resources.

6.3.2 Factors Leading to the Decline of Mixed Economy

The decay of the mixed economy gained momentum in the 1990s when India embarked on economic liberalization. Facing a severe balance of payments crisis, the government, under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, initiated economic reforms. This included dismantling the License Raj, opening up the economy to foreign investment, and encouraging private enterprise.

The pivotal moment in India's economic history in 1991, was marked by the initiation of a comprehensive economic liberalization programme by the government. This

programme encompassed various reforms such as the removal of import restrictions, industry deregulation, and the privatisation of state-owned enterprises. The era of economic liberalization symbolised a notable shift towards a more market-oriented economy, diminishing the role of the state and empowering the private sector. The driving force behind this transition was the belief that market forces would be more effective in fostering economic growth compared to government intervention. Firstly, the economic liberalization policies implemented in 1991 aimed to reduce the state's role and promote market competition, significantly diminishing the relevance of the mixed economy model. These reforms included deregulation, the reduction of import tariffs, and the opening up of sectors previously restricted to public enterprises. By allowing private players to enter various industries, the government sought to stimulate economic growth, enhance efficiency, and attract foreign investment.

Secondly, technological advancements and globalization have transformed the global economic landscape, compelling India to adopt a more market-oriented approach. The rapid growth of information technology, communications, and transportation has enabled companies to operate on a global scale, pressuring India to integrate with international markets to remain competitive. As a result, policies favouring liberalization have further entrenched the shift away from a mixed economy.

6.3.2.1 The Rise of the Private Sector

Furthermore, the growing private sector in India has emerged as a major force driving economic growth and innovation. Sectors that were once dominated by public enterprises, such as telecommunications, aviation, and banking, have been liberalised, leading to the emergence of successful private companies. This shift has reduced the necessity for the government to dominate the economy, as the private sector now plays a crucial role in creating jobs, enhancing productivity, and contributing to national revenue.

The 1990s marked a decisive shift towards a more market-oriented economy. Private sector participation increased significantly as industries that were once exclusively in the public domain were opened up for competition. This era saw the emergence of a new business class comprising entrepreneurs and corporate leaders who capitalised on liberalization opportunities. The integration of India into the global economy facilitated foreign investments, leading to the establishment of multinational corporations and the expansion of Indian companies into international markets.

While liberalization spurred economic growth, it also exacerbated social and economic disparities. Income inequality surged as wealth concentrated in urban areas and among specific demographics, leaving behind marginalised groups, particularly in rural regions. Sectors such as agriculture and small-scale industries faced significant challenges, as market forces often favoured larger corporations over traditional practices. The decay of the mixed economy model raised concerns about the adverse effects on these vulnerable sections of society, highlighting the need for policies that address inequality and foster inclusive development.

The Digital Economy

In the 21st century, India is witnessing a digital revolution and the rise of the gig economy. The gig economy refers to a labor market characterised by short-term, flexible jobs and freelance or independent work, often facilitated through digital platforms or

technology. This new economic landscape has generated both challenges and opportunities. While technology-driven disruptions have transformed traditional industries, creating new job categories and enhancing efficiency, they have also raised concerns regarding job security, workers' rights, and income stability.

Recap

- India's mixed economy emerged during post-independence period
- Nehru championed a mixed economy via the 1948 Industrial Policy
- Early focus on infrastructure and heavy industries succeeded
- Challenges included bureaucratic hurdles and inefficiencies faced
- 1990s reforms led by P.V. Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh initiated
- 1991 marked the beginning of comprehensive economic liberalization
- Shift towards a market-oriented economy reduced state involvement
- Private sector growth increased competition and disparities
- The 21st century presents the digital revolution and gig economy
- Mixed economy decay reflects policy and global trends

Objective Questions

1. Who championed India's mixed economy model?
2. Which resolution outlined public-private sector coexistence in 1948?
3. What were the early achievements of the mixed economy?
4. Who led the 1990s economic liberalization reforms?
5. What did the 1991 liberalization programme involve?
6. What factors contributed to the mixed economy decline?
7. What marked the 1990s regarding globalization and the private sector?
8. What characterises 21st-century economic dynamics in India?

Answers

1. Jawaharlal Nehru
2. Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR)
3. Steel plants and dams
4. P.V. Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh
5. Import restrictions removal and deregulation
6. Liberalization, technology and private sector
7. Increased private sector participation
8. Digital revolution and gig economy

Assignments

1. Analyse the impact of Nehruvian policies on the establishment of India's Mixed Economy model.
2. Examine the factors contributing to the decline of the Mixed Economy model in India.

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UNIT 4

Globalization, Liberalization and Social Identities

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the economic changes in India post-1990s
- gain insight into India's global IT prominence, the economic contributions of the IT sector, and the growth of outsourcing
- develop awareness of the cultural impact of globalization, specifically the international popularity of Indian products
- comprehend the concept of economic liberalization in India during the early 1990s

Prerequisites

The post-independence era in India marked significant economic reforms with the adoption of a mixed economy model, blending capitalism and socialism to promote industrial growth and social equity. The state played a central role, focusing on infrastructure and public sector enterprises while allowing private sector participation. However, by the early 1990s, internal and external factors, including a balance of payments crisis and high inflation, necessitated a shift away from state-led intervention. In response, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh introduced economic liberalization measures in 1991. Key reforms included privatisation of state-owned enterprises, trade liberalization, and deregulation aimed at integrating India into the global economy. These changes stimulated growth and attracted foreign investment but also exacerbated economic inequality and raised social concerns, particularly for

rural communities and traditional industries. Understanding this transformation requires knowledge of the mixed economy's foundations and the global trends influencing India's policy shifts.

The following unit will explore how these changes were implemented, examine the measures taken, and analyse both the opportunities and challenges brought about by this economic transformation.

Keywords

Globalization, MNC, Liberalization, Privatisation, Information Technology, Middle Class

Discussion

6.4.1 Globalization and Its Impact

In the 1980s, the world underwent a significant shift towards globalization, driven by advancements in technology, communication, and trade. This era marked the rise of neoliberal economic policies, emphasising deregulation, privatisation, and open markets as countries sought to enhance their global competitiveness. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 symbolised the end of the Cold War, facilitating the integration of Eastern European nations into the global economy. Additionally, the establishment of international organisations like the World Trade Organisation (WTO) promoted free trade and aimed to reduce barriers between countries.

During this time, multinational corporations (MNCs) began to expand their operations internationally, seeking new markets and cost-effective production options. Technological innovations, particularly in information technology and transportation, made global business operations more accessible, increasing the flow of goods, services, and capital across borders. This interconnectedness set the stage for India's economic liberalization in the early 1990s, as the nation aimed to engage with the expanding global economy.

In the early 1990s, India initiated a process of economic liberalization characterised by reducing trade barriers and fostering a welcoming environment for foreign investment. These reforms led to a substantial increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), particularly in sectors like information technology, telecommunications, and manufacturing. As a result, India's economic landscape underwent a significant transformation, with multinational corporations playing a pivotal role in shaping its economy.

India emerged as a global Information Technology (IT) hub, with cities such as Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai becoming prominent technology centers. The

IT sector not only contributed significantly to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but also generated numerous employment opportunities. Furthermore, India established itself as a key outsourcing destination, particularly for customer support services, fueling the rapid growth of the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. This dual identity—as both an IT hub and outsourcing center—enhanced India's economic stature and solidified its position in the global technology and services arena.

Globalization also facilitated the international exchange of cultural products, allowing Indian movies, music, and television to gain widespread popularity. Bollywood, in particular, has developed a global fan base, enhancing the international appeal of Indian entertainment. Increased exposure to diverse global cultures has significantly influenced India's own cultural landscape, resulting in a more varied and cosmopolitan societal identity. The interplay of various cultural influences has fostered a society that embraces diversity and reflects a globalised perspective.

The effects of globalization on education are evident in the growing mobility of students, with an increasing number of Indians pursuing higher education abroad. This trend not only broadens individual students' horizons but also contributes to a global pool of skilled professionals. In response to these changes, India has implemented skill development programmes aimed at meeting international standards and addressing the demand for skilled labor. These initiatives are designed to equip the workforce with essential skills and knowledge, ensuring that India remains competitive in the global job market.

Impact on Agriculture: Globalization has opened up new opportunities for Indian agricultural products to access international markets, fostering potential growth for the sector. However, it has also brought challenges, particularly from foreign competitors that heavily subsidise their agricultural sectors. This increased competition makes it difficult for Indian farmers to compete on a global scale. Effectively balancing the benefits and challenges of globalization in agriculture is essential for India to navigate these dynamics successfully.

Urbanisation and Infrastructure Development: The forces of globalization have accelerated urbanisation, transforming cities into centers for business, technology, and services. To enhance global competitiveness, India has made significant investments in infrastructure, focusing on improvements in transportation, communication, and energy sectors.

Environmental Concerns: The rise in industrial activities driven by globalization has raised pressing environmental concerns. The challenge for India lies in striking a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability. This ongoing effort requires cooperation between governments and industries to ensure that economic advancement does not compromise long-term ecological health.

Challenges and Inequalities: While globalization has spurred economic growth, it has also exacerbated income disparities. Urban areas and certain industries have experienced more benefits compared to rural regions and traditional sectors. Additionally, globalization has facilitated cultural shifts, sparking debates about the preservation of traditional values in the face of Western influences.

Global Challenges and Pandemics: India's economy remains sensitive to global economic trends and events, making it vulnerable to international downturns. Globalization has also increased the risk of rapid disease transmission, as evidenced by

the COVID-19 pandemic, which underscored the interconnectedness of global health and economic stability. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies that consider the complex interplay between globalization and local realities.

6.4.2 Liberalization, Globalization, and their Impact on Indian Society and Economy

In the early 1990s, India embarked on a transformative journey of economic liberalization, marking a significant departure from decades of a regulated and protectionist economy. This shift aimed to open the Indian economy to the world, attract foreign investment, and foster domestic entrepreneurship. The liberalization process was catalysed by a severe balance of payments crisis, prompting the government, under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, to adopt a new economic policy that dismantled the License Raj—a system characterised by extensive government control and regulations.

The liberalization of the Indian economy, paired with globalization, has led to substantial positive changes, particularly in the growth of various sectors and the expansion of the middle class. With the acceleration of GDP growth and an influx of multinational corporations, many in the Indian populace experienced increased disposable income and access to a broader array of consumer goods.

The growth of the services sector, especially in IT and telecommunications, has created a wealth of high-paying jobs, significantly contributing to the emergence of a vibrant middle class. Indian cities like Bangalore and Hyderabad have established themselves as global IT hubs, leading to increased employment opportunities and fostering innovation. Companies such as Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, and Wipro have become international giants, propelling India's standing in the global economy.

Moreover, the rise of the middle class has transformed lifestyle patterns, leading to greater consumption of automobiles, electronics, and luxury goods. This shift is reflective of changing aspirations and has introduced a new consumer culture in India, with global brands like Apple, Coca-Cola, and McDonald's becoming part of daily life.

The opening up of the economy also facilitated foreign direct investment (FDI), which has been pivotal in sectors such as manufacturing and telecommunications, enhancing productivity and competitiveness. Additionally, trade liberalization has allowed Indian industries to engage more competitively in the global market, resulting in improved quality of goods and services.

6.4.2.1 Critical Assessment of Impact of Globalization and Liberalization on the Middle Class

However, the benefits of this economic transformation have not been uniformly distributed. While metropolitan areas such as Bangalore, Mumbai, and Delhi have seen the rise of a prosperous middle class, regions like Bihar, Odisha, and parts of Uttar Pradesh lag. This divergence highlights a critical aspect of globalization and liberalization: they have contributed to a widening wealth gap within the country. The disparity between the urban middle class, who have reaped the benefits of globalization, and rural populations, who remain dependent on agriculture, has deepened. The rural sector has struggled with declining agricultural productivity and limited access to education and healthcare, exacerbating socio-economic divides.

Furthermore, the entry of global brands

and changing consumer habits have transformed lifestyle patterns, pushing the middle class toward greater consumption of luxury goods. However, this has also led to a culture of consumerism, where aspirations often exceed income levels, resulting in increased debt among middle-class families. The focus on consumption has sometimes overshadowed the importance of savings and financial security, leaving many in precarious economic situations.

The impact of globalization and liberalization on wealth distribution in India raises critical questions about equity and inclusion. While the reforms have generated significant economic growth, they have also resulted in pronounced income inequality. Data indicates that the richest 10% of the population holds a disproportionate share of the nation's wealth, while a significant portion of the population remains impoverished. The growing divide between the wealthy elite and lower-income groups underscores the need for inclusive policies that ensure the benefits of economic growth extend to all segments of society.

Moreover, the liberalization policies have favoured capital-intensive industries and services, often at the expense of labour-intensive sectors, which traditionally employed a large portion of the workforce. The transition towards a more technology-driven economy has led to job losses in manufacturing and agriculture, resulting in underemployment and unemployment among unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The informal sector, which employs a significant portion of India's workforce, has remained vulnerable, with workers lacking job security, social benefits, and fair wages.

6.4.2.2 Addressing Inequities

Policymakers face the ongoing challenge of addressing these disparities while fostering economic growth. The Indian government has implemented various social welfare schemes, such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, to provide a safety net for marginalised communities. Additionally, initiatives aimed at financial inclusion, such as the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme, aim to ensure that subsidies and benefits reach the poor directly, reducing corruption and improving access to essential services.

Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain. The question of how to distribute the gains of liberalization more equitably is pressing, and the government must continue to prioritize inclusive growth strategies. This includes investing in education, healthcare, and rural infrastructure while ensuring that marginalized communities—such as women, tribal populations, and Dalits—have access to the opportunities created by a liberalised economy.

6.4.2.3 Globalization and Cultural Shifts

The impact of globalization extends beyond economic parameters. It has facilitated the explosion of information on the web, contributing to greater awareness among people and broadening perspectives. However, globalization has also fostered a greater need for specialization, prompting a focus on higher education in India. As the world becomes more interconnected, the emphasis on specialized skills and knowledge has grown, highlighting the importance of educational advancement to meet the demands of a globalized society.

The emergence of private education, coaching classes, and paid study materials has made it more challenging for individuals to access higher education, creating a gap between those who can afford these resources and those who cannot. By 2050, it is projected that over half of India's population will reside in urban areas, marking a significant

demographic shift.

Traditional clothing for women, such as saris and suits, and men's attire, like dhotis and kurtas, have seen changes as Western influences permeate society. While the cultural landscape has diversified, with Indo-Western clothing gaining popularity, traditional practices have also faced challenges.

Recap

- Economic liberalization began in the early 1990s.
- Reduced trade barriers to boost foreign investment.
- Significant increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).
- Rise of multinational corporations in India.
- Bangalore and Hyderabad became global IT hubs.
- Job creation through IT sector growth.
- Globalization enhanced the international popularity of Bollywood.
- Increased mobility of students for education.
- Skill development programmes to meet global standards.
- Growth of the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry.
- Urbanisation led to a burgeoning middle class.
- Regional disparities widened in economic benefits.
- Rural areas lagged in economic growth.
- Social welfare schemes aimed at inclusive growth.
- Cultural shifts towards Indo-Western clothing styles.
- Enhanced access to technology and information.

Objective Questions

1. Which year did India began its economic liberalization?
2. Which Prime Minister was in office during the initiation of economic liberalization in India?
3. What system was dismantled during the liberalization process?
4. Which sector saw significant growth due to globalization in India?
5. What has been a major consequence of globalization for the Indian middle class?
6. What issue has emerged due to the uneven benefits of liberalization?
7. Which of the following has been a challenge for the rural sector post-liberalization?
8. What social welfare scheme was introduced to aid marginalised communities?
9. What cultural shift has been observed due to globalization?
10. What has globalization enabled in terms of education in India?

Answers

1. 1991
2. P.V. Narasimha Rao
3. License Raj
4. Information Technology (IT)
5. Widening wealth gap
6. Income inequality
7. Declining agricultural productivity
8. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)

9. Increased diversity and cosmopolitanism
10. Greater mobility of students for higher education

Assignments

1. Discuss how the liberal economic reforms influenced growth and development in India since their implementation in the early 1990s.
2. Explain in what ways liberalization reforms affected income inequality and wealth distribution among different social groups in India.
3. Assess the social and cultural changes that occurred in Indian society due to the liberal economic reforms, particularly in consumer behaviour and lifestyle.

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Model Question Paper Sets

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

MODEL QUESTION PAPER

SET-A

QP CODE: …… **Reg. No: …….....**

Name: …….....

THIRD SEMESTER B.A. ECONOMICS /SOCIOLOGY EXAMINATION

ANCILLARY COURSE - B21HS32AN - SOCIAL FORMATION IN INDIA

HISTORY (CBCS - UG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours **Max Marks: 70**

SECTION - A

Answer any ten questions from the following. Each question carries one mark.

(10x1=10 Marks)

1. Which period in the stone age witnessed the transition from nomadic hunting and gathering to settled agricultural communities?
2. What was the primary goal of the Green Revolution in Indian agriculture?
3. What was the primary social issue Sree Narayana Guru and the SNDP Yogam aimed to address?
4. In which session of the Indian National Congress the two-nation theory was rejected?
5. What was the primary occupation of the early Aryans before they settled into agrarian communities?
6. Which regional language was predominantly used by Tulsidas to compose his devotional works?
7. In which year was the Indian Civil Service Act introduced?
8. Who is regarded as the 'Maker of Modern India'?
9. When was the Planning Commission set up in India?
10. Who were the archaeologists involved in the exploration of Harappa, starting in 1921?

11. Who championed the mixed economy model in India?
12. Under which social reformer was the first lawful Hindu widow remarriage among upper castes in India celebrated?
13. What is the term used for the four main social classes in ancient India?
14. Which ancient Civilisation had trade relations with the Harappan Civilisation?
15. In which hierarchical structure was Vedic society primarily organised into?

SECTION – B

Answer any ten questions from the following. Each question carries two marks.

(10x2 =20 Marks)

16. Pabna movement
17. 'Muqti'
18. Feudalism
19. Wahhabi Movement
20. Role of the Brahmins in the Varna system
21. Home Rule movement
22. 'Urban Decay'
23. Dandi March
24. Jorwe culture
25. Lord Macaulay's Education policy
26. Mixed economy in India
27. Twelfth Five year plan
28. Swadeshi movement
29. Maha Janapadas
30. Ramakrishna Mission

SECTION – C

Write short notes on any five of the following. Each question carries four marks.

(5x4= 20 Marks)

31. Explain the role of Sree Narayana Guru to the upliftment of a*varnas* in Kerala.
32. Explain the characteristic features of urban centres in Harappan civilizations.
33. Describe the practice of untouchability which became prevalent in the Indian social system.
34. Explain the different theories related with the establishment of Indian National Congress.
35. Write a short note on the revolt of 1857.
36. Discuss the reasons for the decline of Harappan Civilisation.
37. Explain the features of the Iqta system in medieval India.
38. Describe the nature of Perumal Polity.
39. Explain the Green revolution and its impact.
40. Explain the role of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the Indian social reform movement.

SECTION – D

Answer any two questions from the following. Each question carries ten marks.

(2x10= 20 Marks)

41. Examine the key features and significance of the different phases of the Stone Age in India.
42. Analyse the impact of the social reform movements in South India.
43. Critically examine the revenue administration of the English East India Company in India.
44. Examine the contribution of Indo- Aryans to the development of Vedic religion.

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

MODEL QUESTION PAPER

SET-B

QP CODE: …… **Reg. No: …….....**

Name: …….....

THIRD SEMESTER B.A. ECONOMICS /SOCIOLOGY EXAMINATION

ANCILLARY COURSE - B21HS32AN - SOCIAL FORMATION IN INDIA

HISTORY (CBCS - UG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours **Max Marks: 70**

SECTION - A

Answer any ten questions from the following. Each question carries one mark.

(10x1=10 Marks)

1. Where are the famous Bhimbetka rock shelters located?
2. The Treaty of Salbai concluded which war?
3. Which tribal rebellion was popularised by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his novel Anandamath?
4. Who was a prominent Bhakti poetess known for her devotional songs dedicated to Krishna?
5. Who introduced the Mansabdari system in India?
6. Who was the geneticist behind the Green Revolution launched by the government of India in 1965?
7. Which animal was frequently depicted on Harappan seals?
8. The Santhal rebellion was a resistance against which revenue system?
9. Which period in the Stone age is characterised by the use of microliths?
10. Which sacred text is the primary source of information about the early Aryans in India?
11. Which Act of the British Government in India granted rupees 1 lakh for Indian

education for the first time?

12. Which battle established the British as the political head of Bengal?
13. Which ancient Indian text is often cited for outlining the Varna system?
14. What technological advancements contributed to globalization in the 1980s?
15. Who was the founder of the Chishti Silisilah in India?

SECTION – B

Answer any ten questions from the following. Each question carries two marks.

(10x2 =20 Marks)

16. 'Iqta' system
17. Neolithic age
18. The concept of 'Mixed economy' in India
19. August Offer
20. Maha Janapada
21. Liberalization
22. 'Khalisa'
23. Sufi Orders
24. Gross Domestic Product
25. Green Revolution
26. Battle of Plassey
27. Wood's Despatch
28. 'Drain of Wealth' theory
29. Mahalwari system
30. Proto-history

SECTION – C

Write short notes on any five of the following. Each question carries four marks.

(5x4= 20 Marks)

31. Discuss the role of British Governor Generals in expanding the British Empire in India.
32. Explain the significance of globalization and its impact on global and local economies.
33. Briefly describe the functioning and role of the Jagirdari system during the Mughal period.
34. Write a short note on the significance of Nadus in South Indian society.
35. Mention the key objectives and achievements of the first three Five-Year Plans in India.
36. Explain the basic features of the Bhakti Movement and its social impact.
37. Distinguish between the methods and programs of Moderates and Extremists in Indian politics.
38. Describe the presence and role of slaves in early Janapada societies.
39. Prepare a brief note on the social structure of Later Vedic society.
40. Explain the characteristic features of urban centres in Harappan civilization.

SECTION – D

Answer any two questions from the following. Each question carries ten marks.

(2x10= 20 Marks)

41. Explain the process and factors behind the proliferation of castes in early medieval India.
42. Discuss the transition from Palaeolithic to Mesolithic culture, focusing on technological and social changes.
43. Analyse Harappan town planning and its key architectural and infrastructural features.
44. Evaluate the merits and demerits of the Mansabdari system under Mughal administration.

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Social Formation in India

COURSE CODE: B21HS32AN

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