

# History of India From c. 1200-1700 PYQ 2021

## Q1. Examine the working of the Iqta system in the Delhi Sultanate.

**Ans.** The Iqta system was a significant administrative and revenue arrangement that was implemented during the Delhi Sultanate in the Indian subcontinent. The Delhi Sultanate, which existed from the 13th to the 16th centuries, encompassed a series of Muslim dynasties that ruled over large parts of North India. The Iqta system played a crucial role in the administration, revenue collection, and military organization of this region.

### Here's how the Iqta system worked in the Delhi Sultanate:

**Grant of Land:** The central authority, which was usually the Sultan, granted land (called Iqta) to military officers or nobles known as Iqtadars or Muqti's. These grants were not outright ownership but rather the right to collect revenue from the land and its inhabitants.

**Revenue Collection:** The Iqtadars were responsible for collecting revenue from the allocated land. They had the authority to extract taxes, rents, and other forms of revenue from the peasants and local population residing on their assigned territory.

**Military Obligations:** In return for the land grant and revenue collection rights, the Iqtadars were expected to maintain a certain number of troops for the Sultan's army. This military service was a crucial aspect of the Iqta system. It helped the Sultanate maintain a standing army without the need for a centralized treasury to support the soldiers.

**Administrative Autonomy:** The Iqtadars enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy in governing their assigned territories. They could appoint local officials, judges, and administrators to help with the governance of their Iqta. This allowed for a decentralized administrative structure across the Sultanate.

**Transferability:** Iqta grants were not necessarily hereditary, although some did become so over time. The Sultan retained the right to revoke or reassign Iqta lands, ensuring that the system remained flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances.

**Revenue Sharing:** The Iqtadars were allowed to keep a portion of the revenue they collected as compensation for their administrative and military responsibilities. The remainder of the revenue was sent to the central treasury of the Sultanate.

**Control Mechanism:** To prevent the Iqtadars from becoming too powerful and independent, the Sultanate employed mechanisms such as periodic audits and rotations of Iqta assignments. This prevented the Iqtadars from consolidating too much power in a single region.

### The Iqta system had both positive and negative implications for the Delhi Sultanate:

#### Positive Aspects:

1. It provided a decentralized administrative structure, allowing the Sultanate to efficiently govern a vast territory.
2. It helped maintain a standing army without straining the central treasury.
3. It enabled the quick mobilization of troops during times of conflict.

### **Negative Aspects:**

1. It sometimes led to conflicts between the central authority and powerful Iqtadars who aimed to establish semi-independent domains.
2. There were instances of corruption and exploitation by some Iqtadars who oppressed the local population to extract maximum revenue.
3. The system's reliance on military service sometimes resulted in inefficient governance and conflicts over control of troops.

**Overall**, the Iqta system was an essential administrative and revenue mechanism that contributed to the stability and governance of the Delhi Sultanate. It combined military and administrative functions, allowing the Sultanate to manage its vast territories effectively.

### **Q2. Discuss the nature of administrative structure of Vijayanagar Kingdom.**

**Ans.** The Vijayanagara Empire, which existed from the 14th to the 17th century in South India, had a well-organized and sophisticated administrative structure. Known for its cultural achievements, military prowess, and trade activities, the empire established an administrative system that contributed to its stability and prosperity. **Here is an overview of the nature of the administrative structure of the Vijayanagara Kingdom:**

#### **Monarchy and Central Authority:**

The empire was ruled by a monarch who held absolute authority. The king was considered a divine ruler, and his authority was often reinforced by religious beliefs. The king was responsible for making important decisions, overseeing the administration, and maintaining law and order.

#### **Hierarchy of Officials:**

The administrative structure was hierarchical, with various officials holding specific responsibilities. These officials were appointed based on their competence, loyalty, and administrative skills.

**Mahapradhana:** The prime minister or chief minister who held significant power and advised the king on important matters of governance.

**Adhikari:** District administrators responsible for governance and revenue collection in specific regions. They were in charge of maintaining law and order, supervising the collection of taxes, and ensuring the welfare of the population.

**Nayakas:** Provincial governors who oversaw larger territories and reported to the king. They were responsible for both administrative and military matters in their regions.

**Amatya:** Officials who managed the treasury, revenue collection, and financial matters of the empire.

**Dandanayakas:** Military commanders responsible for maintaining the army, security, and defense of the empire.

**Asthana Vidwan:** The court scholar responsible for advising the king on matters of religion, philosophy, and culture.

#### **Decentralized Administration:**

The empire practiced a form of decentralized administration, where local regions and provinces were given a certain degree of autonomy in managing their affairs. This approach allowed for efficient governance while catering to the diverse cultural and linguistic differences within the empire.

#### **Revenue System:**

The Vijayanagara Empire had a well-organized revenue system. Land revenue was a significant source of income, and the administration closely monitored land ownership and taxation. The empire also controlled trade routes and collected taxes on trade and commerce. Taxes were collected in both cash and kind.

#### **Justice and Law Enforcement:**

The empire had a structured legal system. Local disputes were resolved by village councils, while more complex cases were referred to higher courts. The king ensured that justice was delivered impartially and efficiently. Law enforcement was the responsibility of the local officials, and there were severe punishments for crimes against the state.

#### **Cultural Patronage:**

The administration of the Vijayanagara Empire was closely tied to its cultural and religious pursuits. The empire's rulers were great patrons of art, architecture, literature, and religious institutions. This cultural patronage played a role in shaping the administrative structure and the symbiotic relationship between the state and religion.

**In summary**, the administrative structure of the Vijayanagara Kingdom was characterized by a centralized monarchy, a hierarchy of officials, decentralized governance, a robust revenue system, and a strong emphasis on culture and religion. This combination of effective governance and cultural patronage contributed to the empire's prominence and enduring legacy in South Indian history.

### **Q3. Trace the emergence and growth of the Jagirdari system under the Mughals.**

**Ans.** The Jagirdari system under the Mughal Empire was a significant administrative and revenue arrangement that evolved over time. It played a crucial role in governing the vast territories of the empire and maintaining a standing army. **Here's a trace of the emergence and growth of the Jagirdari system under the Mughals:**

#### **1. Emergence:**

The Jagirdari system emerged during the early years of the Mughal Empire, particularly under the reign of Akbar the Great (1556-1605). The system was influenced by earlier systems like the Iqta system of the Delhi Sultanate and the Timar system of the Ottoman Empire. The Mughals adapted and expanded these systems to suit their administrative needs.

#### **2. Administrative and Revenue System:**

Under the Jagirdari system, the emperor granted land (jagir) to nobles, military commanders, and administrative officials in exchange for their services to the state. These land grants came with the right to collect revenue from the assigned territory. The jagirdars, also known as mansabdars, were

responsible for maintaining law and order, collecting taxes, and providing military support to the empire.

### **3. Mansabdari System:**

The Mughals introduced the Mansabdari system, which assigned each jagirdar a rank (mansab) based on the number of cavalymen (sowar) they were required to maintain for the imperial army. The ranks ranged from 10 to 10,000, and the higher the rank, the larger the jagir and responsibilities. This system ensured that the empire had a strong military force at its disposal without the need for a centralized standing army.

### **4. Growth and Centralization:**

The Jagirdari system expanded and became more sophisticated during the reign of Akbar and his successors. Akbar implemented reforms to centralize power and increase imperial control over the jagirdars. He introduced the practice of "dagh" (a branding mark) on horses to prevent fraudulent claims of soldiers in the army, thus ensuring greater accountability.

### **5. Economic and Administrative Changes:**

During Jahangir's reign (1605-1627) and beyond, the empire faced economic challenges. The fixed salaries of the jagirdars became a strain on the treasury due to inflation and increased administrative expenses. This led to a shift from fixed cash salaries to revenue assignments based on the productivity of the jagirs. This change allowed the jagirdars to collect revenue directly from the assigned territories.

### **6. Decline and Abuses:**

Over time, the Jagirdari system faced challenges such as corruption, revenue mismanagement, and increasing centralization of power. Many jagirdars exploited their territories, leading to the oppression of peasants. The centralization of authority also meant that the emperor's control over the system could be manipulated by powerful courtiers and officials.

### **7. Transition to Zabt System:**

By the later years of the Mughal Empire, especially during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707), the Jagirdari system started giving way to the Zabt system. The Zabt system involved directly appointed revenue officials who collected taxes on behalf of the state, reducing the reliance on jagirdars.

### **8. Legacy:**

The Jagirdari system left a lasting impact on the administrative and revenue structures of the Mughal Empire. It facilitated the maintenance of a large standing army and administrative machinery. However, its eventual decline was a result of both economic challenges and administrative shortcomings.

**In conclusion**, the Jagirdari system emerged as an essential administrative and revenue arrangement under the Mughal Empire. It evolved over time and contributed to the empire's governance, military strength, and financial administration. However, challenges and abuses led to its decline, ultimately giving way to different administrative systems.

#### **Q4. Analyze Mughal-Rajput relations under Akbar.**

**Ans.** The Mughal-Rajput relations under Akbar were characterized by a strategic blend of diplomacy, military alliances, and cultural assimilation. Akbar, one of the most notable Mughal emperors, sought to establish friendly and cooperative relationships with the Rajput rulers, who were powerful and influential in North India. This policy of engagement led to a period of relative stability and harmony between the Mughal Empire and various Rajput states. **Here's an analysis of Mughal-Rajput relations under Akbar:**

##### **1. Diplomacy and Alliances:**

Akbar recognized the military prowess of the Rajputs and understood the strategic advantage of having them as allies rather than adversaries. He initiated a policy of matrimonial alliances, wherein he married Rajput princesses and established familial ties with Rajput rulers. This approach helped to foster goodwill and loyalty among the Rajput nobility.

##### **2. Marriage Alliances:**

Akbar's most notable Rajput marriages included those with the states of Amber (Jaipur), Mewar (Udaipur), Bikaner, and Jaisalmer. His marriage to Rajput princesses not only solidified political ties but also demonstrated his respect for Rajput culture and traditions. He allowed his Rajput queens to continue practicing their religion and customs.

##### **3. Integration of Rajput Nobility:**

Akbar appointed Rajput nobles to high administrative and military positions within his court. This policy aimed to create a sense of participation and shared responsibility among the Rajputs in governing the Mughal Empire. Prominent Rajput nobles like Raja Man Singh played pivotal roles in Akbar's administration and military campaigns.

##### **4. Religious Tolerance:**

Akbar was known for his policy of religious tolerance and inclusivity. He actively sought to bridge the cultural and religious gap between the Muslim Mughal court and the predominantly Hindu Rajput nobility. This policy helped in building trust and rapport between the two groups.

##### **5. Cultural Syncretism:**

Akbar was a patron of art, literature, and culture. His court was a melting pot of diverse cultural influences, and he encouraged interaction between Mughal and Rajput artists, scholars, and intellectuals. This cultural syncretism played a role in creating a shared cultural milieu and promoting harmony.

##### **6. Military Cooperation:**

Akbar's alliances with the Rajputs proved beneficial during military campaigns. The Rajput allies provided significant support to Akbar's military ventures, which expanded the territorial boundaries of the Mughal Empire. Rajput warriors, known for their martial skills, contributed to the strength of Akbar's armies.

##### **7. Challenges and Disputes:**

While the Mughal-Rajput relations under Akbar were generally positive, there were moments of tension and conflict. Some Rajput rulers, such as Rana Pratap of Mewar, chose to resist Mughal

authority instead of forming alliances. Akbar's expansionist policies and demands for tribute also led to disagreements.

### **8. Legacy:**

The policies and approach of Akbar in dealing with the Rajputs set a precedent for subsequent Mughal rulers. While there were challenges, his efforts to build bridges between the Mughal Empire and the Rajput states laid the foundation for a relatively peaceful and cooperative coexistence.

**In conclusion**, Akbar's approach to Mughal-Rajput relations was characterized by a blend of diplomatic marriages, military alliances, administrative integration, cultural inclusivity, and religious tolerance. This strategy not only ensured the loyalty of the Rajput states but also contributed to the expansion and stability of the Mughal Empire during his reign.

### **Q5. Discuss the emergence of the Maratha State under Shivaji.**

**Ans.** The emergence of the Maratha State under Shivaji was a significant historical development that laid the foundation for the Maratha Empire's rise to prominence in India. Shivaji, a visionary leader and military strategist, founded the state in the 17th century by challenging the dominant powers of the time and establishing a decentralized yet effective administration. **Here's a discussion of the key factors that contributed to the emergence of the Maratha State under Shivaji:**

#### **1. Early Life and Upbringing:**

Shivaji was born in 1630 to Shahaji Bhonsle, a nobleman of the Bijapur Sultanate, and Jijabai. His early exposure to the complex political landscape of the Deccan region and his mother's tales of Hindu valor and resistance inspired him to establish a strong and independent Maratha kingdom.

#### **2. Guerrilla Warfare and Fortification:**

Shivaji recognized the strategic importance of forts in the mountainous terrain of the Western Ghats. He adopted guerrilla warfare tactics and captured key forts from the Bijapur and Mughal forces. These victories not only expanded his territory but also showcased his military prowess and leadership.

#### **3. Raigad Coronation (1674):**

In 1674, Shivaji crowned himself as an independent monarch at the Raigad Fort. This coronation marked the formal establishment of the Maratha State and Shivaji's emergence as a sovereign ruler.

#### **4. Administrative Reforms:**

Shivaji implemented administrative reforms to consolidate his power and create a functioning state. He introduced a structured revenue system, improved tax collection, and established a council of ministers to assist in governance. His emphasis on efficient administration contributed to the state's stability.

#### **5. Naval Expansion:**

Shivaji recognized the importance of naval power in controlling trade routes and coastal regions. He established a naval fleet and successfully challenged the Portuguese, Siddis, and other maritime powers. This naval expansion enhanced the Maratha State's influence and revenue.

#### **6. Religious and Social Policies:**

Shivaji's state was characterized by religious tolerance and social inclusivity. He promoted the welfare of his subjects, regardless of their religion, and sought the support of the local population by offering protection and promoting Hindu values.

#### **7. Diplomacy and Alliances:**

Shivaji realized the necessity of forming alliances to secure his state's position. He entered into treaties with regional powers, both Hindu and Muslim, and maintained a delicate balance between cooperation and confrontation to ensure the state's security.

#### **8. Legacy and Expansion:**

Shivaji's reign marked the beginning of the Maratha Empire's expansion. After his death in 1680, his successors, particularly the Peshwas, continued to expand the Maratha territories, reaching their zenith in the 18th century.

#### **9. Impact on Indian History:**

Shivaji's establishment of the Maratha State had a profound impact on India's history. His model of decentralized administration, military innovation, and strategic diplomacy influenced subsequent rulers and set the stage for the Maratha Empire's growth.

**In conclusion**, the emergence of the Maratha State under Shivaji was a remarkable achievement that arose from his visionary leadership, military acumen, administrative reforms, and diplomatic strategies. His legacy as a resilient and forward-thinking leader continues to inspire generations, and his contributions laid the groundwork for the Maratha Empire's eventual rise to power.

#### **Q6. Trace the development of trade and commerce in India between 16th and 17th centuries.**

**Ans.** Between the 16th and 17th centuries, trade and commerce in India underwent significant changes due to a combination of factors such as European colonialism, technological advancements, the expansion of maritime routes, and the integration of global trade networks. **Here's a trace of the development of trade and commerce in India during this period:**

##### **1. European Colonialism and Maritime Trade:**

The 16th century marked the beginning of European colonialism in India. Portuguese, Dutch, English, and French traders established their presence along the Indian coastline, primarily for the spice trade. They built trading posts and fortified settlements, which gradually evolved into full-fledged colonial territories.

##### **2. Arrival of European Trading Companies:**

In the early 17th century, major European trading companies, such as the British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company, gained prominence. These companies were granted charters by

their respective governments and were given monopolistic rights to trade in specific regions, leading to their dominance in Indian trade.

### **3. Impact of European Trade:**

European colonial powers introduced new trade routes, technologies, and products to India. The influx of silver from the Americas and the growth of European demand for Indian textiles, spices, and other commodities had a transformative effect on India's economy and trade networks.

### **4. Establishment of Ports and Trading Posts:**

European powers established key ports and trading posts along India's coastlines, such as Goa, Mumbai (Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta), Chennai (Madras), and Surat. These ports became important centers for maritime trade and attracted merchants from various parts of the world.

### **5. Decline of Traditional Trade Routes:**

The expansion of maritime trade led to the decline of traditional overland trade routes, such as the Silk Road. The Indian Ocean trade routes gained prominence, connecting India with the Middle East, East Africa, Southeast Asia, and even Europe.

### **6. Export of Textiles and Spices:**

Indian textiles, particularly cotton and silk fabrics, were in high demand in global markets. Indian spices like pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, and cloves were also sought after by European traders, contributing to India's economic significance.

### **7. Commercialization of Agriculture:**

The demand for cash crops in the global market led to the commercialization of agriculture in India. Farmers shifted from subsistence farming to producing crops like cotton, indigo, and opium for export.

### **8. Integration into Global Trade Networks:**

India's trade connections expanded beyond its traditional partners. It became a vital node in the interconnected network of global trade, with goods flowing between Europe, Asia, and Africa.

### **9. Technological Advances:**

The 16th and 17th centuries witnessed technological advancements in maritime navigation and shipbuilding. The use of larger and more efficient ships improved long-distance trade capabilities.

### **10. Economic Fluctuations and Cultural Exchange:**

The expansion of trade brought both prosperity and challenges. It led to economic fluctuations, inflation, and changes in local economies. Additionally, cultural exchange occurred as goods, ideas, and technologies were shared across different regions.

**In conclusion**, the period between the 16th and 17th centuries marked a transformative era in India's trade and commerce due to European colonialism, maritime expansion, and the integration into global trade networks. The influx of European trading companies and the resultant changes in trade routes and commodities significantly impacted India's economy and its position in the global trading landscape.