

# History of India-IV (c.1200-1500) PYQ 2020

**Q1. Discuss the significance of Zia Barni's Tarikh-i-Firozshahi for reconstructing the history of Delhi Sultanate.**

**Ans.** Zia Barni's "Tarikh-i-Firozshahi" holds immense significance in the context of reconstructing the history of the Delhi Sultanate, a crucial period in the history of the Indian subcontinent. This historical text, written during the 14th century, provides valuable insights into various aspects of the Delhi Sultanate, making it a valuable source for historians and scholars. **Here's why "Tarikh-i-Firozshahi" is significant for understanding this era:**

- 1. Contemporary Account:** Zia Barni was a contemporary of the events he documented in his work. This contemporaneity is essential because it allows historians to access firsthand accounts of the period. This is particularly valuable because it provides insights that may not have been recorded in later sources or might have been altered through retelling.
- 2. Firoz Shah Tughlaq's Reign:** The "Tarikh-i-Firozshahi" predominantly focuses on the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, one of the most prominent rulers of the Tughlaq dynasty. The detailed account of Firoz Shah's rule, his policies, administrative reforms, and his interactions with various social and religious groups, offers a comprehensive view of his reign.
- 3. Administrative and Economic Insights:** The text contains information about the administrative structure and economic policies of the Delhi Sultanate during Firoz Shah's time. This includes details about the revenue system, taxation, and agrarian policies, which are crucial for understanding the economic aspects of the period.
- 4. Social and Cultural History:** "Tarikh-i-Firozshahi" provides glimpses into the social and cultural life of Delhi Sultanate society. It discusses aspects such as the patronage of art and architecture, religious policies, and interactions with different religious communities. This is particularly valuable for understanding the cultural dynamics of the era.
- 5. Military Campaigns and Foreign Relations:** The text also sheds light on military campaigns, foreign relations, and territorial expansion during Firoz Shah's rule. It provides insights into the military strategies employed, alliances formed, and the challenges faced by the Delhi Sultanate.
- 6. Historical Events and Anecdotes:** Apart from chronicling political and administrative history, "Tarikh-i-Firozshahi" includes historical events and anecdotes that add depth and context to the narrative. These stories can offer a more nuanced understanding of the period.
- 7. Sources and Methods of Historical Writing:** Studying this text allows historians to gain insights into the methods and sources used by medieval Indian historians. Understanding the historiographical tradition of the time is crucial for critically evaluating historical accounts from this era.
- 8. Comparative Analysis:** By comparing "Tarikh-i-Firozshahi" with other historical sources from the same period or earlier and later periods, historians can cross-verify information and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Delhi Sultanate's history. This comparative analysis helps in separating facts from biases and propaganda.

**In summary,** Zia Barni's "Tarikh-i-Firozshahi" is a significant historical source for reconstructing the history of the Delhi Sultanate due to its contemporary nature, its focus on a pivotal ruler (Firoz Shah Tughlaq), and its coverage of various aspects of the Sultanate's history, including administration, culture, and military affairs. This text, like other medieval chronicles, provides a window into a crucial

period of Indian history, allowing historians to piece together the complex narrative of the Delhi Sultanate.

**Q2. Examine the continuity and changes in the Iqta system in the 13th and 14th centuries.**

**Ans.** The Iqta system was a significant administrative and revenue system in medieval Islamic states, including the Delhi Sultanate in the Indian subcontinent during the 13th and 14th centuries. Examining the continuity and changes in the Iqta system during this period reveals shifts in governance and land administration.

**Continuity in the Iqta System (13th and 14th Centuries):**

- a) **Land Grant System:** The core concept of the Iqta system, which involved the granting of revenue-yielding land (Iqta) to military officers (Iqtadars) in exchange for military service, continued to be a fundamental practice. The primary aim remained to maintain a standing army and ensure its financial support.
- b) **Revenue Collection:** Iqtadars collected revenue directly from their assigned territories, which remained a consistent feature of the Iqta system. They were responsible for revenue collection, administration, and maintaining law and order in their Iqta.
- c) **Decentralized Administration:** The Iqta system contributed to decentralized administration. Iqtadars had a degree of autonomy in their territories, which allowed for efficient governance, especially in distant provinces.

**Changes in the Iqta System (13th and 14th Centuries):**

- a) **Centralization:** While the core concept of Iqta remained intact, there was a trend towards centralization in the administration of Iqtas. This means that the central authority, such as the Delhi Sultan, exercised greater control over the Iqtadars. They began to appoint or dismiss Iqtadars more directly, reducing the autonomy previously enjoyed by the Iqtadars.
- b) **Salaries in Place of Revenue:** In some cases, the Iqta system evolved to include the payment of salaries to military officials instead of granting land. This shift represented a move away from the traditional Iqta system, as these salaries were not tied to specific territories.
- c) **Cash Payments:** In addition to land grants or salaries, Iqtadars were sometimes required to make cash payments to the state. These payments could be in the form of a fixed annual sum or a percentage of the revenue collected, further blurring the lines between the traditional Iqta system and taxation.
- d) **Hereditary Iqtas:** Initially, Iqtas were not hereditary, but over time, there was a tendency for Iqtadars to pass down their positions and territories to their heirs. This shift reduced the mobility and flexibility of the Iqta system and created hereditary landowning elites.
- e) **Role of Provincial Governors:** In some cases, provincial governors (amirs) began to play a more significant role in revenue collection and administration, reducing the authority of Iqtadars. This shift contributed to a more centralized governance structure.
- f) **Challenges to the System:** The 14th century saw the Delhi Sultanate facing numerous challenges, including invasions by Mongol and Turkic rulers. These external pressures sometimes led to a breakdown of the Iqta system as local Iqtadars sought greater autonomy, and central authority weakened.

**In summary**, while the Iqta system maintained its core principle of land grants in exchange for military service during the 13th and 14th centuries in the Delhi Sultanate, several changes occurred. These changes included greater centralization, the introduction of cash payments and salaries, the hereditary transmission of Iqtas, and the shifting roles of provincial governors. These shifts reflect the evolving needs and challenges faced by the Delhi Sultanate during this period, as well as the adaptability of the Iqta system in response to changing circumstances.

**Q3. Evaluate the external and internal dynamics in the making of the political culture of the Vijayanagar state.**

**Ans.** The Vijayanagara Empire, which thrived in Southern India from the 14th to the 17th century, had a unique political culture shaped by a combination of external and internal dynamics. **Evaluating these dynamics provides insights into the formation of Vijayanagara's political culture:**

**External Dynamics:**

- a) **Regional Rivalries and Conflicts:** The external dynamics of the Vijayanagara Empire were significantly influenced by regional rivalries and conflicts. The empire was established in response to the growing threat posed by the Deccan Sultanates, particularly the Bahmani Sultanate. This external pressure necessitated the creation of a strong military and a centralized state.
- b) **Influences from the North:** The Vijayanagara Empire was influenced by the political and cultural developments of Northern India. It adopted elements of the Delhi Sultanate's administrative system, including revenue collection and the use of Persian as an administrative language. These influences contributed to the empire's political structure and governance.
- c) **Maritime Trade:** The empire's location on the Deccan Plateau gave it access to important trade routes, both overland and maritime. Vijayanagara's external trade links, particularly with Southeast Asia, brought wealth and cultural influences that contributed to the empire's political culture.
- d) **Interactions with Other South Indian Kingdoms:** Vijayanagara had diplomatic and military interactions with other South Indian kingdoms, such as the Cholas and the Pandya dynasty. These interactions influenced the empire's political alliances, territorial boundaries, and cultural exchange.

**Internal Dynamics:**

- a) **Hinduism as a Unifying Force:** Internally, one of the most significant dynamics shaping the political culture of Vijayanagara was its strong adherence to Hinduism. The empire championed Hindu traditions and culture, with the ruling dynasties portraying themselves as protectors of Hinduism against perceived Islamic threats from the north. This emphasis on Hindu identity played a pivotal role in shaping the empire's political culture.
- b) **Administrative System:** The Vijayanagara Empire developed a sophisticated administrative system that incorporated elements of traditional South Indian governance. The empire was divided into provinces, each ruled by a governor (nayaka) appointed by the central authority. This system contributed to the political stability and efficiency of the empire.
- c) **Patronage of the Arts and Architecture:** The Vijayanagara rulers were great patrons of the arts and architecture. They built grand temples and encouraged the development of literature, music,

and dance. This cultural patronage became an integral part of the empire's political culture, reinforcing its Hindu identity and showcasing its power and prosperity.

- d) **Social Structure:** The empire had a well-defined social hierarchy, with the king at the top, followed by nobles, merchants, and peasants. This hierarchical structure influenced political power dynamics, as the king relied on the support of nobles and administrators to govern effectively.
- e) **Military Strength:** The Vijayanagara Empire maintained a powerful military, which was vital for its survival and expansion. The empire's political culture was characterized by a martial ethos, and military commanders played influential roles in the court.
- f) **Religious Tolerance:** Despite its strong Hindu identity, the Vijayanagara Empire displayed a degree of religious tolerance. It accommodated other religions, such as Jainism and Islam, within its territories, contributing to a relatively diverse cultural and religious landscape.

**In conclusion**, the political culture of the Vijayanagara Empire was shaped by a complex interplay of external and internal dynamics. External pressures, regional rivalries, trade, and influences from Northern India influenced the empire's political structure. Internally, the empire's strong Hindu identity, administrative system, patronage of the arts, social hierarchy, and military strength played significant roles in shaping its political culture. This blend of external and internal factors created a unique and enduring political culture that defined the Vijayanagara Empire throughout its history.

#### **Q4. Discuss the different aspects of rural economy and technology under the Sultans of Delhi.**

**Ans.** During the Delhi Sultanate period in India, which spanned from the 13th to the 16th century, rural economy and technology underwent various changes and developments. The sultans of Delhi, who ruled over large parts of the Indian subcontinent, had a significant impact on these aspects.

**Here are the different aspects of rural economy and technology during this period:**

##### **1. Agriculture:**

- a) **Traditional Agricultural Practices:** Agriculture was the backbone of the rural economy during the Delhi Sultanate. Traditional farming methods included the use of wooden plows drawn by oxen, and farmers primarily cultivated staple crops such as wheat, rice, barley, and pulses.
- b) **Irrigation Systems:** The sultans recognized the importance of irrigation for agricultural productivity. They invested in the construction and maintenance of canals and reservoirs to ensure a consistent water supply for farming. These systems improved crop yields and contributed to economic stability.
- c) **Land Revenue Collection:** The sultans imposed a land revenue system, known as the Iqta system, where revenue was collected from landholders (Iqtadars) in exchange for revenue assignments. This system aimed to ensure a steady income for the state.

##### **2. Technology and Crafts:**

- a) **Metalwork:** Metalworking skills, such as blacksmithing, goldsmithing, and copper and bronze casting, were well-developed during the Delhi Sultanate. Artisans crafted weapons, jewelry, and intricate metal objects.
- b) **Textiles:** The textile industry thrived during this period. Cotton and silk were spun and woven into fine fabrics, and the production of textiles contributed significantly to the economy.

c) **Architecture and Construction:** The Delhi Sultanate witnessed the construction of impressive architectural marvels, including mosques, forts, and palaces. Innovative techniques like the use of arches and domes were incorporated into Islamic architecture.

### 3. Trade and Commerce:

- a) **Urban Centers:** While rural areas played a crucial role in agriculture, urban centers emerged as hubs of trade and commerce. Delhi, in particular, became a major trading city where goods from various parts of the empire and beyond were exchanged.
- b) **Trade Routes:** The Delhi Sultanate was strategically located along the trade routes that connected India with Central Asia, the Middle East, and China. This geographical advantage facilitated trade, including the exchange of spices, textiles, gems, and precious metals.
- c) **Coinage:** The sultans introduced standardized coinage, which helped facilitate trade and economic transactions. Silver and copper coins, such as the jital, were commonly used.

### 4. Technological Innovations:

- a) **Papermaking:** The introduction of papermaking from Central Asia during this period had a profound impact on the dissemination of knowledge and administrative record-keeping.
- b) **Numerical System:** The adoption of the decimal system and Arabic numerals (as opposed to Roman numerals) made calculations and record-keeping more efficient.
- c) **Astronomy and Mathematics:** Scholars in the Delhi Sultanate contributed to advancements in astronomy and mathematics. These disciplines played a crucial role in the administration and agricultural calendar.

It's important to note that the Delhi Sultanate period was marked by a significant blending of indigenous Indian traditions with Islamic influences. This fusion is evident in various aspects of rural economy and technology, from agriculture and architecture to trade and craftsmanship. The sultans of Delhi played a role in fostering this cultural amalgamation, which had a lasting impact on the subsequent history of the Indian subcontinent.

**Q5. Analyze the price regulation measures in the late 13th and early 14th century Delhi Sultanate. Why were these abandoned in later years?**

**Ans.** Price regulation measures during the late 13th and early 14th centuries in the Delhi Sultanate were implemented as part of the state's economic policies to stabilize the economy, control inflation, and ensure fair prices for essential goods. These measures were initiated by Sultan Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316) and are collectively known as the "Market Control" or "Diwani" system. **However, they were abandoned in later years for various reasons:**

#### Price Regulation Measures:

- a) **Fixed Prices (Mandi System):** Alauddin Khalji introduced the mandi system, where the state fixed prices for various essential commodities, including grain, cloth, and cattle. Merchants were not allowed to sell these goods above the government-determined rates.

- b) **Regulation of Essential Commodities:** The government controlled the production, sale, and storage of essential commodities. Merchants and traders had to sell their goods at government-controlled prices.
- c) **Monitoring and Punitive Measures:** The state established a network of spies and officials to monitor market prices and prevent hoarding and black marketing. Severe penalties were imposed on those who violated these regulations.

**Reasons for Abandonment:**

- a) **Economic Strain:** The price regulation measures, while aimed at protecting the common people from inflation, placed a heavy burden on the economy. The government's involvement in controlling prices and production strained resources and disrupted market dynamics.
- b) **Administrative Challenges:** Enforcing the strict price controls required extensive administrative machinery. Maintaining a large number of officials to monitor prices and implement punitive measures became cumbersome and expensive.
- c) **Resentment among Traders:** Merchants and traders, who were directly impacted by price regulations, were often unhappy with these measures. They faced restrictions on their ability to set prices based on market demand and supply, leading to resentment and opposition.
- d) **Black Market Activities:** Despite stringent penalties, black market activities continued to thrive, as individuals found ways to circumvent price controls. This undermined the effectiveness of the regulations.
- e) **Decline in Agricultural Production:** The fixed prices for agricultural produce led to a decline in agricultural production. Farmers, facing constraints on their income, reduced their cultivation efforts, resulting in lower yields.
- f) **Military Expenses:** Alauddin Khalji's aggressive military campaigns, including those in the Deccan and against the Mongols, required substantial financial resources. The cost of these campaigns may have contributed to the abandonment of price regulation measures.
- g) **Successive Weak Rulers:** After the death of Alauddin Khalji, the Delhi Sultanate saw a series of weak rulers who were unable to maintain the administrative machinery needed for price regulation.

**In summary**, the price regulation measures in the late 13th and early 14th century Delhi Sultanate, while initiated with good intentions to stabilize the economy and protect the common people, faced numerous challenges and drawbacks. The economic strain, administrative complexities, resentment among traders, and the decline in agricultural production were some of the key reasons for their abandonment. Additionally, the subsequent rulers' inability to effectively enforce these measures contributed to their discontinuation. These developments highlight the complexities of state intervention in economic matters and the challenges of regulating prices in a medieval context.

**Q6. Discuss with suitable examples whether women saints in Medieval Indian society could be labelled as 'rebels' or 'confirmists'.**

**Ans.** Women saints in medieval Indian society exhibited a wide range of beliefs, practices, and roles, making it challenging to categorize them uniformly as either 'rebels' or 'confirmists.' Their actions and influence often depended on their individual circumstances, the social and religious contexts of their times, and their unique interpretations of spirituality. **Here, I will provide examples of women**

**saints from different periods and regions to illustrate the complexities of their roles as both rebels and confirmists:**

### **1. Akka Mahadevi (12th century, Karnataka):**

**Rebel:** Akka Mahadevi, a prominent Veerashaiva (a Shaiva sect) saint, is known for rejecting societal norms, including clothing, to express her single-minded devotion to Lord Shiva. Her radical act of nudity was a direct challenge to social conventions.

**Confirmist:** At the same time, Akka Mahadevi's devotion to Lord Shiva was firmly rooted in the Shaiva tradition. Her poetry and vachanas (verses) expressed deep religious devotion and adherence to Shaiva philosophy, confirming her loyalty to her faith.

### **2. Meera Bai (16th century, Rajasthan):**

**Rebel:** Meera Bai, a devotee of Lord Krishna, defied her Rajput royal background and her family's expectations by openly embracing Krishna bhakti (devotion). She composed devotional songs and engaged in public devotional practices.

**Confirmist:** Meera Bai's devotion to Lord Krishna can also be seen as an extension of the Bhakti movement, which was a reformist and devotional movement within Hinduism. Her poetry and songs emphasized unwavering devotion to Krishna, which aligns with the core principles of Bhakti.

### **3. Lal Ded (14th century, Kashmir):**

**Rebel:** Lal Ded, a Kashmiri Shaivite saint, challenged societal norms by renouncing her family and conventional married life to become a wandering ascetic. She used her poetry to criticize the hypocrisies and materialism of her society.

**Confirmist:** Lal Ded's poetry and teachings were deeply rooted in Shaivism and Kashmiri mysticism. While her life choices were unconventional, her spiritual teachings were firmly aligned with the Shaiva tradition.

### **4. Sant Soyarabai (17th century, Maharashtra):**

**Rebel:** Sant Soyarabai, a Varkari saint, was known for her defiance of her upper-caste status and her association with the Varkari tradition, which was open to people from all castes and backgrounds.

**Confirmist:** Soyarabai's devotion to Vithoba, a form of Lord Krishna, was firmly within the bounds of the Bhakti tradition. Her abhangas (devotional songs) expressed her deep love and surrender to Vithoba.

**In conclusion,** women saints in medieval Indian society cannot be easily categorized as either 'rebels' or 'confirmists' because they embodied elements of both. They often challenged societal norms and gender roles through their unconventional actions and spiritual choices, which could be seen as rebellious. However, their devotion to their chosen deities and their deep adherence to religious traditions and philosophies confirmed their commitment to their faith. These women were, in many

ways, both rebels against societal norms and confirmists of their religious and spiritual convictions, demonstrating the complexity of their roles in medieval Indian society.

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