

History of India-IV (c.1200-1500) PYQ 2019

Q1. Evaluate the Tarikh i Firozshahi as a source for the history writing on the Delhi Sultanate, with specific reference to Barani's different representations of kingship.

Ans. The "Tarikh-i Firozshahi," written by Ziauddin Barani, is an important historical text that provides valuable insights into the history of the Delhi Sultanate during the reign of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq (r. 1351–1388). When evaluating this work as a source for the history of the Delhi Sultanate, especially in relation to Barani's different representations of kingship, **several key points should be considered:**

Historical Context: Barani wrote the "Tarikh-i Firozshahi" during the reign of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq himself. This context is crucial to understanding the potential biases and perspectives that may have influenced Barani's portrayal of kingship and the ruler.

Favorable Representation: In his portrayal of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq, Barani often presents a favorable image of the ruler. He highlights Firoz Shah's benevolent and just rule, focusing on his patronage of scholarship, religion, and infrastructure development. This representation may be influenced by Barani's position as an official historian in Firoz Shah's court.

Emphasis on Piety and Justice: Barani's writings emphasize the king's piety and sense of justice. He praises Firoz Shah's efforts to maintain law and order, protect his subjects, and provide for the welfare of the people. These aspects of kingship align with Barani's own values and ideas about good governance.

Critique of Previous Rulers: While praising Firoz Shah, Barani also critiques previous rulers, particularly Muhammad bin Tughlaq. He uses the text to contrast Firoz Shah's rule with the perceived excesses and mismanagement of his predecessors. This can be seen as a way to legitimize Firoz Shah's rule.

Historical Bias: It's important to recognize that Barani's work, like many historical texts, may be subject to biases. As a court historian, he may have had incentives to portray his patron, Firoz Shah, in a positive light. This can raise questions about the objectivity of the historical account.

Multiple Perspectives: It's advisable to complement Barani's account with other contemporary and later sources to gain a more well-rounded understanding of the Delhi Sultanate during this period. Comparing Barani's perspective with other historical narratives can help identify potential biases and nuances in his representations of kingship.

In conclusion, the "Tarikh-i Firozshahi" by Ziauddin Barani is a valuable source for the history of the Delhi Sultanate, particularly during Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq's reign. It offers insights into Barani's favorable representation of Firoz Shah's kingship, emphasizing his piety, justice, and governance. However, it's essential to approach Barani's work critically, considering the historical context and potential biases that may have influenced his portrayal of the ruler. To obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the period, it's advisable to consult multiple sources and perspectives on the Delhi Sultanate.

Q2. Discuss the significance of Kakatiya inscriptions as a source for history writing

Ans. The Kakatiya inscriptions are a valuable source for the study of history, particularly the history of the Kakatiya dynasty, which ruled parts of present-day Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in South India from the 12th to the 14th century. These inscriptions, which are found on temple walls, **pillars, and stone tablets, serve several significant purposes in history writing:**

1. **Dynastic History:** Kakatiya inscriptions provide important information about the ruling dynasty's history, including the names and genealogy of rulers, their reigns, and significant events during their rule. They help construct a chronological framework of the dynasty's history.
2. **Political Administration:** Inscriptions often detail aspects of political administration, including land grants, revenue systems, and governance structures. They shed light on the organization of the Kakatiya state and its administrative practices.
3. **Religious and Cultural Patronage:** Many Kakatiya rulers were known for their patronage of Hindu temples and culture. The inscriptions record grants made to temples, including donations of land, money, and jewelry. They also mention the construction and renovation of temples, highlighting the dynasty's cultural contributions.
4. **Economic Insights:** Kakatiya inscriptions can provide insights into the economic conditions of the time. Information about land grants, taxes, and revenue-sharing arrangements can offer a glimpse into the economic activities of the region.
5. **Social and Religious Practices:** These inscriptions often mention religious rituals, festivals, and religious endowments. They provide information about the religious beliefs and practices of the Kakatiya rulers and their subjects.
6. **Language and Script:** Kakatiya inscriptions are valuable for linguists and epigraphists. They preserve the use of the Telugu language in medieval times and demonstrate the evolution of the script.
7. **Regional and Local History:** Kakatiya inscriptions are crucial for understanding the history of specific regions within the Kakatiya realm. They often record local and regional developments, which can be essential for micro-level historical analysis.
8. **Genealogy and Succession:** For historians, these inscriptions are essential for tracing the genealogy of rulers and the patterns of succession within the Kakatiya dynasty.
9. **Cultural and Artistic Insights:** Kakatiya inscriptions sometimes contain references to art, architecture, and cultural practices of the time. This information can be valuable for historians of art and culture.
10. **Historical Validation:** Inscriptions often corroborate events and facts mentioned in other historical sources, providing valuable cross-referencing for historians.

In summary, Kakatiya inscriptions are a rich source for history writing because they offer a multifaceted view of the dynasty's history, including political, administrative, economic, social, religious, and cultural aspects. They help reconstruct the past and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the Kakatiya dynasty and the historical context in which it thrived. These inscriptions are vital for researchers and historians interested in South Indian medieval history.

Q3. Examine the changes in the Iqta system in the 13th and 14th centuries. How did it define the relationship between the Sultan and the ruling class in this period?

Ans. The Iqta system underwent significant changes in the 13th and 14th centuries in the Indian subcontinent, particularly during the Delhi Sultanate period. These changes had a profound impact on the relationship between the Sultan and the ruling class. **Here is an examination of the transformations in the Iqta system during this period and their implications for the power dynamic:**

Origins and Early System:

1. The Iqta system was originally a land revenue assignment system where the Sultan granted Iqtas (revenue-yielding regions) to nobles, officials, or military commanders in exchange for military service, tax collection, and administrative duties.
2. During the early Delhi Sultanate period (12th and early 13th centuries), Iqtas were often temporary assignments, and the Iqtadars (holders of Iqtas) had a high degree of autonomy and independence.

Changes in the 13th Century:

The 13th century saw several changes in the Iqta system:

1. **Centralization:** Iqtas became more centralized as the Sultan sought greater control over revenue collection and administration. Iqtadars were required to remit a fixed portion of revenue to the royal treasury.
2. **Hereditary Iqtas:** Some Iqtas became hereditary, passing from generation to generation within noble families. This shift reduced the Sultan's control over Iqta assignments and could lead to the consolidation of local power.
3. **Payment in Cash:** In addition to land assignments, Iqtadars began to receive cash salaries, which further centralized the financial resources with the Sultanate.

Changes in the 14th Century:

The 14th century witnessed further developments:

1. **Fragmentation:** The Delhi Sultanate faced political fragmentation, with multiple regional rulers asserting autonomy and creating their own Iqta systems. The Sultan's authority weakened, leading to a decline in the centralization of Iqta assignments.
2. **Military Turmoil:** Continuous military conflicts and invasions, including the Mongol invasions, put immense pressure on the Iqta system. The efficiency of revenue collection and the ability to fulfill military obligations declined.
3. **Local Elites and Aristocracy:** In some regions, local elites and aristocratic families began to wield significant power, often operating semi-independently under nominal allegiance to the Sultan.

Impact on Sultan-Ruling Class Relationship:

The changes in the Iqta system redefined the relationship between the Sultan and the ruling class:

1. **Reduced Sultan's Control:** The centralization of revenue and the hereditary nature of Iqtas reduced the Sultan's direct control over provincial administration and revenues.
2. **Dependency on Ruling Class:** As the Sultanate faced external threats and internal conflicts, the Sultan became increasingly dependent on the support of powerful regional Iqtadars and military commanders.
3. **Regionalism:** The proliferation of regional centers of power and local aristocracies led to a more fragmented and decentralized political landscape, with regional rulers asserting greater autonomy.

- 4. Turbulent Times:** The Iqta system's changes mirrored the tumultuous political landscape of the 14th century, characterized by political instability, invasions, and shifting power dynamics.

In summary, the changes in the Iqta system in the 13th and 14th centuries, including centralization, hereditary assignments, and the rise of regional rulers, significantly transformed the relationship between the Sultan and the ruling class. While the Sultan sought greater control and revenue centralization, political fragmentation and external pressures weakened the Sultanate's authority and led to the emergence of powerful regional elites. This period marked a shift toward greater regionalism and decentralization within the Delhi Sultanate.

Q4. Analyse the internal and external factors in the making of the political culture of Vijayanagar.

Ans. The political culture of the Vijayanagara Empire, which thrived in South India from the 14th to the 17th century, was shaped by a complex interplay of internal and external factors. **Here's an analysis of these factors and their contributions to the formation of Vijayanagara's political culture:**

Internal Factors:

- 1. Foundation of the Empire:** The founders of the Vijayanagara Empire, Harihara and Bukka Raya, played a pivotal role in shaping its political culture. They established the empire as a Hindu state in response to the decline of the Hoysala and Kakatiya kingdoms, aiming to protect and promote Hindu culture and religion.
- 2. Religious Policy:** The empire's patronage of Hinduism, particularly the worship of Lord Virupaksha (a form of Lord Shiva) as the state deity, was a significant internal factor. This religious policy influenced the empire's political culture, fostering a strong connection between religion and statecraft.
- 3. Administrative Structure:** The Vijayanagara Empire developed a sophisticated administrative system with efficient revenue collection, military organization, and governance. This structure facilitated centralized rule and governance, which were key aspects of the empire's political culture.
- 4. Cultural Flourishing:** The empire witnessed a cultural renaissance, with the development of art, architecture, literature, and music. The promotion of these cultural elements contributed to the richness of Vijayanagara's political culture and its emphasis on preserving and propagating Indian traditions.

External Factors:

- 1. Conflict with Deccan Sultanates:** The Vijayanagara Empire faced external threats from the Deccan Sultanates, particularly the Bahmani Sultanate. These conflicts influenced the empire's militaristic political culture, characterized by the need to defend its territories and uphold its sovereignty.
- 2. Trade and Economic Prosperity:** Vijayanagara's location in South India allowed it to control vital trade routes. The empire's economic prosperity, driven by trade and agriculture, contributed to its political culture by providing the resources needed for governance, military expansion, and cultural patronage.
- 3. Cultural Exchange:** The empire's interaction with neighboring regions and foreign traders brought about cultural exchange. This cross-cultural influence added diversity to Vijayanagara's

political culture, as seen in the architectural styles and artistic motifs adopted from different regions.

4. **Foreign Invasions:** External invasions, such as the raids by the Deccan Sultanates and later the Mughals, had a profound impact on the empire's political culture. These invasions led to the fortification of Vijayanagara's capital and a heightened sense of defense and territorial security.
5. **Dynastic Succession:** Succession disputes and external invasions at times weakened the empire's political stability. The struggle for power and the need to maintain a united front against external threats were key factors in shaping the empire's political culture.
6. **Diplomacy:** Diplomatic relations with neighboring states, such as the Gajapatis of Odisha and the Portuguese, influenced the empire's political culture. These diplomatic efforts aimed at maintaining regional stability and securing alliances.

In summary, the political culture of the Vijayanagara Empire was a complex amalgamation of internal and external factors. The empire's founders, religious policies, administrative structure, and cultural patronage contributed to its distinct political culture. Simultaneously, external factors, including conflicts with neighboring states, economic prosperity, cultural exchanges, and external invasions, played crucial roles in shaping the empire's political outlook and strategies. Vijayanagara's political culture, therefore, reflects the interplay of these multifaceted influences over its centuries-long history.

Q5. Give an account of the changing significance of the Qutub Complex under the Delhi Sultans.

Ans. The Qutub Complex, located in Delhi, India, is a historical site known for the iconic Qutub Minar, a towering structure built during the Delhi Sultanate era. Over time, the significance of the Qutub Complex evolved under different Delhi Sultans. **Here is an account of how its importance changed over the centuries:**

Early Construction (1192-1220s):

- The construction of the Qutub Complex began under the rule of Qutb-ud-din Aibak, the founder of the Delhi Sultanate, in the late 12th century. The primary structure built during his reign was the Qutub Minar.
- During this period, the complex served primarily as a symbol of the Sultanate's conquest and authority over Delhi. The Qutub Minar was likely intended as a victory tower.

Under Iltutmish (1211-1236):

- Iltutmish, the successor to Qutb-ud-din Aibak, completed the construction of the Qutub Minar and added inscriptions to its surface. He also built the Alai Darwaza, an entrance gate.
- The complex began to take on a more religious significance during Iltutmish's rule. He commissioned the construction of the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque within the complex, which became one of the earliest examples of Indo-Islamic architecture in India.
- The presence of the mosque transformed the complex into a religious center for the Muslim community in Delhi.

Expansion by Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316):

- Alauddin Khalji, a powerful ruler of the Delhi Sultanate, added several structures to the complex, including the Alai Minar, which was intended to be twice the height of the Qutub Minar but remained unfinished.
- During Alauddin Khalji's reign, the complex's significance continued to grow as he commissioned further construction of mosques and structures within its precincts.

Tughlaq Dynasty (14th Century):

- The Tughlaq Dynasty, particularly Muhammad bin Tughluq, made additions and alterations to the complex. He constructed the colossal Iron Pillar, which stands in the complex.
- The Tughlaqs continued to maintain and expand the complex, although it may have faced periods of neglect as well.

Mughal Influence (Late 16th Century and Later):

- By the time of the Mughal Empire, the Qutub Complex had become a historical and architectural landmark. Akbar and his successors showed interest in preserving and restoring the site.
- The complex also witnessed the addition of Mughal-era structures and inscriptions, further enriching its historical and architectural heritage.

Colonial and Post-Independence Periods:

- The British colonial administration made efforts to preserve and study the Qutub Complex. Archaeological surveys and restoration work were carried out.
- After India gained independence, the complex continued to be conserved and studied, and it became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993.

In summary, the Qutub Complex's significance evolved over time from a symbol of the Delhi Sultanate's conquest to a religious and architectural landmark. Its transformation into a hub of Indo-Islamic architecture and a revered religious site marked a shift in its role and importance. The complex's historical, architectural, and cultural significance has endured through the centuries, making it one of India's most prominent heritage sites.

Q6. Discuss the nature of socio-economic changes over 13th to 15th centuries.

Ans. The socio-economic changes that occurred in the Indian subcontinent during the 13th to 15th centuries were characterized by a complex interplay of various factors, including political shifts, technological advancements, cultural exchanges, and economic developments. **Here is an overview of the nature of these changes during this period:**

1. Delhi Sultanate and Regional States:

- The 13th century saw the rise of the Delhi Sultanate, which brought about significant political changes. The consolidation of Sultanate rule and the establishment of regional sultanates led to greater centralization of power.
- Regional states, such as the Vijayanagara Empire and the Bahmani Sultanate, emerged in the south, contributing to political diversity and regionalism.

2. Agrarian Economy:

- Agriculture remained the backbone of the Indian economy during this period. New crops, such as rice, cotton, and sugarcane, were introduced, leading to increased agricultural productivity.
- The expansion of irrigation systems, including the construction of canals, helped boost agricultural output.

3. Trade and Commerce:

- Trade flourished both domestically and internationally. India was a center of trade, with maritime routes connecting it to Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.
- Key trading ports like Calicut, Quilon, and Cambay facilitated the exchange of goods, including spices, textiles, precious stones, and ceramics.
- The introduction of the "Hindu-Arabic" numeral system and banking practices enhanced commercial activities.

4. Urbanization and Craftsmanship:

- The growth of trade and commerce led to urbanization. Cities like Delhi, Vijayanagara, and Calicut expanded, becoming centers of culture and economic activity.
- Craftsmanship and manufacturing industries thrived. India was known for its textiles, metallurgy, ceramics, and jewelry, which were highly sought after in international markets.

5. Technological Advancements:

- Technological innovations, such as the use of the spinning wheel (charkha) and improved agricultural tools, increased productivity in various sectors.
- Architectural and engineering achievements, such as the construction of monumental structures like the Qutub Minar and temples in South India, showcased advancements in craftsmanship and engineering.

6. Cultural Exchanges:

- The 13th to 15th centuries saw extensive cultural exchanges between India and other regions. The Delhi Sultanate, for example, was influenced by Persian and Central Asian culture.
- The spread of Sufism and the Bhakti and Sant movements fostered a synthesis of cultural and religious ideas, promoting inclusivity and tolerance.

7. Decline of Feudalism:

- Feudalism, which had characterized earlier periods, began to decline. The emergence of a centralized state led to a shift in power dynamics from local feudal lords to the monarchy.

8. Social Changes:

- There were social changes as well, including greater mobility between castes and communities. The Bhakti and Sant movements advocated social equality and devotion to a personal god.
- Despite societal hierarchies, these movements contributed to a sense of spiritual egalitarianism.

9. Cultural Flourishing:

- The 13th to 15th centuries marked a period of cultural flourishing, with the development of new literary forms, architectural styles, and artistic expressions.

10. Political Turmoil and Invasions:

- The later part of this period witnessed political turmoil, including the invasions of Timur and the eventual arrival of the Mughals, which would lead to further socio-economic changes in the 16th century.

In summary, the socio-economic changes in the Indian subcontinent during the 13th to 15th centuries were characterized by increased urbanization, economic growth, cultural exchanges, and technological advancements. These changes laid the foundation for the subsequent developments that would shape the region's history, including the arrival of the Mughals and the early modern period.

Q7. Analyse the relationship between the Sufis and the state, in the context of the recent study of the Chishtis.

Ans. The relationship between Sufis and the state, particularly in the context of the Chishti order, has been a complex and evolving one in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Sufism, characterized by its mystical and inward-looking approach to Islam, often intersected with the political structures of the time. The study of the Chishti order, one of the prominent Sufi orders in India, provides insights into this dynamic relationship. **Here is an analysis of the relationship between the Chishtis and the state:**

1. Early Independence and Autonomy:

- In its early stages, Sufism, including the Chishti order, was largely independent of the state. Sufis sought spiritual growth and connection with the divine, focusing on personal piety and asceticism.
- Chishti Sufis, like Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, emphasized humility and service to humanity, often working outside the confines of political authority.

2. Social and Cultural Influence:

- The Chishti order and other Sufi orders played a significant role in shaping the social and cultural fabric of India. They emphasized inclusivity, tolerance, and love for humanity, which contributed to the syncretic and pluralistic nature of Indian society.
- Sufi shrines became centers of spiritual and cultural exchange, attracting people from various backgrounds, including different religious communities.

3. Interaction with Rulers:

- Over time, Sufi leaders began to interact with political rulers and elites. This interaction was often characterized by a degree of pragmatism, with Sufis seeking the support and protection of rulers.
- Rulers, in turn, recognized the influence and popularity of Sufi leaders and sometimes patronized Sufi orders or built shrines in their honor.

4. Influence on Rulers:

- Some Sufi leaders, like Nizamuddin Auliya, exerted a moral and ethical influence on rulers, encouraging them to rule justly and benevolently. They often critiqued the excesses of political power and advocated for the welfare of the common people.

- Sufis' emphasis on spirituality and humility could serve as a counterbalance to the arrogance and extravagance of rulers.

5. Role in Mediation:

- Sufis, including Chishti Sufis, occasionally played roles as mediators between conflicting parties or communities. Their reputation for impartiality and fairness made them valuable in resolving disputes.

6. Challenges and Tensions:

- The relationship between Sufis and the state was not always harmonious. There were instances of tension, especially when rulers sought to co-opt Sufis for political purposes or when Sufis resisted state interference in religious affairs.
- Rulers sometimes used Sufi leaders to legitimize their authority or to pacify dissent.

7. Legacy and Influence:

- The influence of the Chishti order and Sufism, in general, endured in India, contributing to the country's rich cultural and religious diversity.
- Sufi shrines and practices continue to be an integral part of India's religious landscape, attracting devotees and visitors from various backgrounds.

In conclusion, the relationship between the Chishti order and the state evolved over time, from early independence and autonomy to interaction and occasional cooperation with political authorities. The Chishtis, like other Sufi orders, left a lasting impact on Indian society, fostering values of inclusivity, tolerance, and spirituality. Their influence on rulers, their role in mediation, and their contribution to the cultural and religious mosaic of India are significant aspects of their historical legacy.

Q8. To what extent did the medieval women Bhakti saints challenge the conventions of patriarchal society?

Ans. The medieval women Bhakti saints in India played a significant role in challenging the conventions of patriarchal society, albeit within the constraints of their time and social contexts. These women, through their spiritual and devotional practices, writings, and teachings, contributed to the empowerment of women and the questioning of traditional gender norms. **Here's an assessment of their impact:**

1. Assertion of Female Agency:

- Women Bhakti saints asserted their agency by actively participating in religious and devotional practices that were traditionally male-dominated. They often defied societal norms by leaving their homes and families to pursue a life of devotion and spirituality.
- Their acts of renunciation challenged the traditional roles assigned to women as homemakers and caretakers.

2. Spiritual Equality:

- Bhakti saints, both male and female, emphasized the concept of spiritual equality, asserting that devotion to the divine transcends gender distinctions. They believed that one's relationship with God is not determined by gender but by the intensity of one's devotion.
- Female Bhakti saints asserted that women, like men, had the same potential for spiritual realization and closeness to the divine.

3. Critique of Patriarchy:

- Many women Bhakti saints critiqued patriarchal practices and oppressive customs prevalent in society. They condemned child marriage, sati (widow burning), and other forms of gender-based violence and discrimination.
- Their outspoken criticism of these practices contributed to broader social awareness and debates on gender rights.

4. Role Models for Women:

- Women Bhakti saints served as role models for other women by demonstrating that it was possible to transcend societal constraints and follow a path of devotion and spirituality.
- Their courage and determination inspired women to challenge oppressive norms and strive for greater autonomy and self-expression.

5. Advocacy for Gender Equality:

- Some women Bhakti saints explicitly advocated for gender equality and women's rights. For example, Mirabai's poetry and devotion to Lord Krishna conveyed messages of independence and defiance of social norms.
- These messages resonated with women facing similar challenges, offering them a sense of hope and empowerment.

6. Community Building:

- Women Bhakti saints often created communities of followers, both men and women, where social hierarchies were challenged. These communities provided spaces for marginalized individuals to come together and support one another.

7. Literary Contributions:

- Many women Bhakti saints composed devotional poetry and songs that conveyed spiritual messages and critiques of social norms. These literary works continue to inspire and empower people, particularly women, to this day.

8. Negotiation within Tradition:

- It is important to note that while challenging patriarchy, these women often worked within the framework of their respective religious traditions and did not seek to dismantle the entire system. They found ways to express their spirituality and critique social norms within the bounds of their faith.

In conclusion, the medieval women Bhakti saints played a transformative role in challenging the conventions of patriarchal society in India. Their spiritual devotion, critiques of gender-based oppression, and advocacy for gender equality contributed to a broader discourse on women's rights and empowerment. While their impact may have been limited by the constraints of their times, their legacy continues to inspire and empower women in India and beyond.