

History of India c.1200-1700 PYQ 2020

Q1. Discuss the economic reforms of Alauddin Khalji.

Ans. Alauddin Khalji, who ruled the Delhi Sultanate from 1296 to 1316 CE, implemented a series of economic reforms aimed at strengthening the financial and administrative systems of his empire. His economic policies are often referred to as the "market reforms" or "economic measures" of Alauddin Khalji. These reforms had a significant impact on various aspects of the Delhi Sultanate's economy.

Here are some of the key economic reforms of Alauddin Khalji:

- 1. Market Control and Price Regulation:** One of the most well-known economic measures of Alauddin Khalji was his attempt to control and regulate market prices. He established a system known as the "Diwan-i-Mustakhraj" to assess and fix prices of essential commodities like grains, cloth, and horses. This was done to ensure that prices remained stable and affordable for the common people.
- 2. Control over Grain Supplies:** Alauddin implemented a system known as the "Dagh" or branding of horses. This system allowed the state to maintain control over the grain supplies that were distributed to the military and the populace. It aimed to prevent hoarding and black marketing of grains, ensuring a steady supply of food.
- 3. Military Reforms:** Alauddin Khalji strengthened the military and introduced reforms to ensure a well-paid and disciplined army. He introduced the "Dagh" and "Chehra" systems, which involved the branding and payment of soldiers in cash. This helped reduce corruption and increased the loyalty of the military.
- 4. Taxation Reforms:** Alauddin imposed heavy taxes on the wealthy elite, including the nobility and landowners. He conducted a comprehensive revenue assessment (khalisa) to ensure that the state received its due share of revenue from agricultural lands.
- 5. Inflation Control:** By regulating prices and controlling the supply of currency, Alauddin Khalji aimed to combat inflation. His policies discouraged hoarding and speculative trading.
- 6. Monopolies and State Control:** Alauddin took several steps to establish state monopolies over various economic activities. He controlled the salt trade and monopolized the market for horses, camels, and other animals, ensuring that these strategic resources were available to the state at reasonable prices.
- 7. Public Works and Irrigation:** Alauddin invested in public works projects, including the construction of dams and reservoirs for irrigation. This improved agricultural productivity and food security.
- 8. Market Surveillance:** Alauddin's administration employed spies and informants to monitor market activities and report any illegal or unethical practices. This surveillance contributed to the effectiveness of his market control policies.
- 9. Welfare Measures:** Despite his reputation for being a strict ruler, Alauddin Khalji implemented some welfare measures. He provided salaries to teachers and granted land to religious institutions.
- 10. Focus on Centralization:** Alauddin Khalji's economic reforms were closely tied to his efforts to centralize power. He sought to strengthen the authority of the central government and reduce the influence of the nobility and provincial governors.

It is worth noting that while Alauddin Khalji's economic reforms were effective in certain aspects, they also faced criticism for their stringent measures and the level of control they exerted over the economy. Nevertheless, these reforms played a significant role in stabilizing the Delhi Sultanate's economy during his rule and contributed to the empire's strength and stability during his time.

Q2. Describe the social and economic changes under the Vijayanagara Empire.

Ans. The Vijayanagara Empire, which ruled over the Deccan region of South India from the 14th to the 17th century, witnessed significant social and economic changes during its existence. These changes had a profound impact on the society and economy of the empire. **Here are some key aspects of the social and economic changes under the Vijayanagara Empire:**

Social Changes:

- 1. Religious Syncretism:** The Vijayanagara Empire promoted religious tolerance and syncretism. While the empire was a Hindu kingdom, it allowed various religious communities, including Hindus, Jains, and Muslims, to coexist peacefully. This religious pluralism contributed to the cultural richness of the empire.
- 2. Caste System:** The caste system continued to be a dominant social structure during the Vijayanagara period. However, the empire also saw the rise of new social groups and the emergence of some upward mobility, particularly among warrior classes and administrators.
- 3. Patronage of Arts and Culture:** The Vijayanagara rulers were great patrons of arts and culture. They encouraged the development of literature, music, dance, and architecture. This cultural flourishing is evident in the construction of magnificent temples, the composition of literary works in various languages, and the promotion of classical arts.
- 4. Language and Literature:** The Vijayanagara Empire saw the development of the Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, and Sanskrit languages. Literary works in these languages flourished, with scholars producing remarkable poetry and prose. Notable literary figures like Purandara Dasa and Kanakadasa emerged during this period.

Economic Changes:

- 1. Agriculture:** Agriculture was the backbone of the Vijayanagara economy. The empire invested in irrigation systems, including the construction of tanks and canals, to enhance agricultural productivity. Crops like rice, millets, and pulses were cultivated.
- 2. Trade and Commerce:** The Vijayanagara Empire played a vital role in facilitating trade. Its strategic location allowed for trade with foreign powers, including Arab merchants and European traders. The empire was known for its prosperous trade centers like Hampi, where various goods were exchanged.
- 3. Mining and Metallurgy:** The empire had a thriving mining industry, particularly in the Bellary region, where iron ore was abundant. This supported the production of iron and steel, which were essential for weaponry and architectural purposes. Gold mining was also significant.
- 4. Craftsmanship:** The Vijayanagara period witnessed a flourishing of craftsmanship. Skilled artisans produced intricate sculptures, jewelry, textiles, and pottery. The Hampi region was known for its production of high-quality textiles and gemstones.

- 5. Infrastructure Development:** The Vijayanagara rulers invested in infrastructure projects, including the construction of roads and marketplaces. These developments facilitated trade and commerce within the empire.
- 6. Currency and Coinage:** The empire issued its currency and coinage, which included gold, silver, and copper coins. This standardized currency system promoted economic stability and facilitated trade.
- 7. Taxes and Revenue:** The empire collected taxes in various forms, including land revenue and commercial taxes. The revenue generated from these sources was used to support the administration and public works projects.

In conclusion, the Vijayanagara Empire was marked by a period of social and economic dynamism. It promoted religious pluralism and cultural richness while maintaining a strong agricultural and trade-based economy. The legacy of this empire continues to influence the culture and heritage of South India today.

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

Ans. The Jagirdari system, also known as the Mansabdari system, was a significant administrative and revenue arrangement under the Mughal Empire. It played a crucial role in governing the vast territories of the empire and in rewarding and controlling the nobility. **Here is a trace of the emergence and growth of the Jagirdari system under the Mughals:**

Emergence:

- 1. Babur and Akbar:** The foundations of the Jagirdari system were laid by Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, who initially granted jagirs (land revenue assignments) to his nobles and military officers as a form of compensation for their services. However, it was under Akbar's reign that the system evolved and became more structured.
- 2. Akbar's Administrative Reforms:** Akbar introduced several administrative reforms to centralize power and ensure efficient governance. He devised the Mansabdari system, which was closely related to the Jagirdari system. Under this system, every officer (mansabdar) in the Mughal administration was given a rank (mansab) that determined his military and administrative responsibilities. These officers were rewarded with jagirs, which were typically assigned based on their rank and service.

Growth:

- 1. Expansion of the Empire:** The Mughal Empire expanded rapidly under Akbar and later emperors. As the empire grew, so did the number of jagirs. New territories were annexed, and the need for loyal and efficient administrators and military commanders increased.
- 2. Rank-Based System:** The Jagirdari system was organized hierarchically. Mansabdars were classified into various ranks, known as zat (personal rank) and sawar (cavalry rank). Higher-ranking officers were granted larger and more valuable jagirs. This rank-based system provided an incentive for military and administrative officers to excel in their service.
- 3. Revenue Collection:** Jagirdars were primarily responsible for collecting revenue from their assigned territories. They were expected to remit a fixed revenue amount to the imperial treasury while retaining a portion for themselves. The revenue collected from jagirs was a significant source of income for the empire.

- 4. Control and Monitoring:** To ensure that jagirdars remained loyal and efficient, the Mughal emperors implemented a system of constant monitoring. The movement of jagirdars, their activities, and the condition of their assigned territories were closely observed by imperial officials.
- 5. Transfer and Rotation:** Jagirdars were not allowed to develop hereditary rights to their jagirs. They could be transferred from one jagir to another or rotated to prevent the accumulation of power and wealth in a particular region.
- 6. Decline:** Over time, the Jagirdari system faced challenges. The efficiency and loyalty of jagirdars varied, and some abused their power by extracting excessive revenue from peasants. This led to discontent among the peasantry and contributed to the decline of the system.

The Jagirdari system remained an integral part of the Mughal administrative structure until the decline of the empire in the 18th century. It underwent various changes and adaptations under different emperors, but it played a crucial role in the governance and revenue collection of the Mughal Empire, making it one of the most significant features of Mughal administration.

Q4. Analyze Mughal-Rajput relations under Akbar.

Ans. Mughal-Rajput relations during the reign of Akbar, the third ruler of the Mughal Empire, were characterized by a policy of diplomacy, alliances, and accommodation. Akbar's approach towards the Rajput rulers of North India was marked by pragmatism, political astuteness, and a vision of creating a composite and harmonious empire. **Here is an analysis of Mughal-Rajput relations under Akbar:**

1. Diplomacy and Marriages:

- a) Akbar initiated a policy of matrimonial alliances with the Rajput states. He married several Rajput princesses, most notably Jodha Bai (Harkha Bai), the daughter of Raja Bharmal of Amer (present-day Jaipur), which helped foster goodwill and political stability.
- b) These marriages were not just symbolic but demonstrated Akbar's commitment to integration and cultural exchange. They facilitated better understanding and cooperation between Mughals and Rajputs.

2. Religious Tolerance:

- a) Akbar is known for his religious tolerance and his efforts to create a harmonious atmosphere in his empire. He abolished the Jizya tax on non-Muslims and respected the religious beliefs and practices of the Rajput rulers.
- b) The Din-i Ilahi, a syncretic religious movement initiated by Akbar, aimed to bridge religious divides by incorporating elements from various faiths. This further endeared him to Rajput rulers.

3. Administrative Integration:

- a) Akbar appointed Rajput nobles to key administrative positions in his court and military, recognizing their loyalty and administrative capabilities. This integration helped in decentralizing the administration and bringing Rajput territories under Mughal control.

4. Rajput Rebellion and Reconciliation:

- a) There were instances of Rajput resistance to Mughal rule, notably the Mewar resistance led by Rana Pratap Singh. However, Akbar employed a policy of reconciliation rather than coercion.
- b) After a prolonged period of conflict, Akbar pursued a strategy of reconciliation with the Rajputs. He forgave Rana Pratap and other Rajput leaders, offering them positions within his administration.

5. Rajput Forts and Architecture:

- a) Akbar recognized the military and strategic importance of Rajput forts. He undertook the task of conquering and fortifying key Rajput strongholds like Chittorgarh and Ranthambore, which enhanced Mughal control in the region.
- b) Akbar's reign also saw the integration of Rajput architectural elements into Mughal architecture, leading to the development of the distinctive Indo-Islamic architectural style.

6. Impact on Rajput Culture:

- a) Akbar's patronage of the arts and culture had a profound impact on Rajput courts. The amalgamation of Mughal and Rajput cultures resulted in the flourishing of art, literature, and music in Rajputana.

In summary, Akbar's policy towards the Rajputs was one of diplomacy, integration, and accommodation. He sought to create a unified and harmonious empire by recognizing the value of Rajput alliances, respecting their traditions, and promoting religious tolerance. While there were moments of conflict and resistance, Akbar's pragmatic approach ultimately led to a period of stability and cultural exchange in North India, which left a lasting impact on Mughal-Rajput relations and the cultural landscape of the region.

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

Ans. The emergence of the Maratha State under Shivaji, also known as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, marked a significant chapter in the history of India. Shivaji, born in 1630, was the founder of the Maratha Empire and played a pivotal role in resisting Mughal expansion in the Deccan. **Here are the key aspects of the emergence of the Maratha State under Shivaji:**

1. Early Life and Ambitions:

- a) Shivaji was born into the Bhonsle family in the Shivneri Fort, near Pune, in Maharashtra. From a young age, he was exposed to the political turmoil of the Deccan region, which was characterized by conflicts between the Deccan Sultanates and the Mughal Empire.
- b) Inspired by stories of valor and his mother's teachings, Shivaji developed a strong sense of self-determination and a vision to establish a sovereign Maratha kingdom.

2. Establishment of Swarajya:

- a) Shivaji's early military campaigns focused on capturing forts and territories from the Adilshahi Sultanate of Bijapur and the Nizamshahi Sultanate of Ahmednagar.
- b) In 1674, Shivaji declared himself the Chhatrapati (emperor) and established the Maratha Swarajya (self-rule) at Raigad Fort. This marked the formal establishment of the Maratha State.

3. Guerrilla Warfare and Naval Power:

- a) Shivaji and his Maratha forces were known for their expertise in guerrilla warfare, using hit-and-run tactics to disrupt the larger and more powerful Mughal armies.
- b) Shivaji also recognized the importance of naval power and built a formidable navy to protect the Konkan and coastal regions from foreign invasions.

4. Administrative Reforms:

- a) Shivaji implemented several administrative reforms to ensure efficient governance of his expanding kingdom. He established a council of ministers known as the Ashtapradhan, each responsible for specific aspects of the administration.
- b) He introduced a revenue system based on equitable distribution of land and revenue collection through his famous "Ryotwari" system.

5. Diplomacy and Treaties:

- a) Shivaji was a skilled diplomat and negotiated treaties with various regional powers, including the Mughals. The Treaty of Purandar (1665) and the Treaty of Raja Mahal (1689) were significant diplomatic agreements with the Mughal Empire.

6. Legacy:

- a) Shivaji's legacy goes beyond his military and administrative achievements. He is remembered as a symbol of Maratha pride, Hindu valor, and the champion of self-rule.
- b) The Maratha Empire continued to expand under his successors and became a formidable power in India, challenging the Mughals and other regional kingdoms.

7. Impact on Indian History:

- a) Shivaji's establishment of the Maratha State had a lasting impact on Indian history. His efforts laid the foundation for the Maratha Confederacy, which would play a significant role in the later years of the Mughal Empire.
- b) His administrative and military strategies influenced subsequent Indian rulers and leaders who sought to resist foreign domination.

In conclusion, Shivaji's vision, military prowess, administrative reforms, and diplomatic acumen were instrumental in the emergence of the Maratha State. His legacy as a warrior king and defender of Maratha identity and Swarajya continues to be celebrated in India today.

Q6. To what extent do Mughal Miniature paintings reflect contemporary society?

Ans. Mughal miniature paintings provide a fascinating glimpse into contemporary Mughal society, offering insights into various aspects of life, culture, and politics during the Mughal Empire. **Here's an analysis of the extent to which Mughal miniature paintings reflect contemporary society:**

1. Portraits of Rulers and Nobility:

- a) Mughal miniature paintings often feature detailed portraits of emperors, princes, and nobles. These portraits showcase the opulence, attire, and regal splendor of the ruling elite.
- b) These paintings not only document the physical appearances of the rulers but also convey their authority and status within the empire.

2. Court Life and Culture:

- a) Many Mughal miniatures depict scenes from the royal court, showcasing various courtly activities such as music, dance, poetry readings, and discussions. These paintings provide insights into the sophisticated cultural life of the Mughal elite.
- b) They also capture the fusion of Persian and Indian cultural elements that characterized the Mughal court.

3. Religious Tolerance:

- a) Mughal rulers, particularly Akbar, were known for their religious tolerance, and this is reflected in some miniature paintings. Akbar's interest in religious syncretism is depicted in paintings illustrating discussions with scholars of different faiths.
- b) These paintings reflect the spirit of religious pluralism and intellectual exchange during the Mughal era.

4. Architectural Depictions:

- a) Mughal miniatures often include intricate depictions of architecture, showcasing the grandeur of Mughal buildings and monuments like the Taj Mahal, Red Fort, and Jama Masjid.
- b) These paintings offer valuable records of Mughal architectural achievements and urban planning.

5. Daily Life and Trades:

- a) Some miniatures depict scenes of daily life, including marketplaces, rural activities, and various trades and professions. These paintings provide insights into the economic and social life of the common people.
- b) They also highlight the diversity of trades and crafts practiced during the Mughal period.

6. Historical Events and Battles:

- a) Miniatures often depict historical events and battles, commemorating the triumphs and challenges faced by the Mughal Empire. For example, Akbar's campaigns in the Deccan are a common theme.
- b) These paintings serve as visual records of important moments in Mughal history.

7. Sufi Influence:

- a) Some miniatures depict Sufi saints, reflecting the spiritual and mystical dimensions of Mughal society. These paintings highlight the reverence for Sufi saints and their impact on society.

8. Literature and Poetry:

- a) Mughal miniatures often incorporate verses from Persian and Indian poetry into their compositions. These verses provide a literary dimension to the artwork and reflect the literary tastes of the time.

In conclusion, Mughal miniature paintings serve as valuable historical documents that offer a multi-dimensional view of Mughal society. While they primarily focus on the lives and activities of the elite, they also provide glimpses of religious diversity, daily life, architectural achievements, and historical events. These paintings are not only aesthetically pleasing but also serve as windows into the rich tapestry of Mughal India.