



# UNIQUE STUDY POINT

## Chapter 1 Tracing Changes Through A Thousand Years

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**Question 1:** Who was considered a “foreigner” in the past?

**Answer:** The term ‘foreigner’ is used in the sense of a person who is not an Indian. In the medieval period it was applied to any stranger who appeared, say in a given village, someone who was not a part of that society or culture. In this sense a forest-dweller was a foreigner for a city-dweller. But two peasants living in the same village were not foreigners to each other, even though they may have had different religious or caste backgrounds.

**Question 2:** State whether true or false:

- (a) We do not find inscriptions for the period after 700.
- (b) The Marathas asserted their political importance during this period.
- (c) Forest-dwellers were sometimes pushed out of their lands with the spread of agricultural settlements.
- (d) Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban controlled Assam, Manipur and Kashmir.

**Answer:** (a) False

(b) True

(c) True

(d) False

**Question 3:** Fill in the blanks:

(a) Archives are places where \_\_\_\_\_ are kept.

(b) \_\_\_\_\_ was a fourteenth-century chronicler.

(c) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ were some of the new crops introduced into the subcontinent during this period.

**Answer:** (a) Archives are places where **manuscripts** are kept.

(b) **Ziyauddin Barani** was a fourteenth-century chronicler.

(c) **Potatoes, corn, chilies, tea** and coffee were some of the new crops introduced into the subcontinent during this period.

**Question 4:** List some of the technological changes associated with this period.

**Answer:** Some of the technological changes associated with this period were – the Persian wheel for irrigation, the spinning wheel in weaving and firearms in combat.

**Question 5:** What were some of the major religious developments during this period?

**Answer:** Some of the major significant religious developments occurred in Hinduism. The worship of new deities, the construction of temples by royalty and growing importance of Brahmanas, the priests, as dominant groups in society were the new changes. Brahmanas' importance grew due to their knowledge of Sanskrit language. They were patronized by the Emperors. The idea of bhakti emerged among people. The merchants and migrants brought with them the teachings of Quran, the holy book of Muslims.

**Question 6:** In what ways has the meaning of the term "Hindustan" changed over the centuries?

**Answer:** The meaning of the term 'Hindustan' has changed over the centuries in the following manner:

- In the thirteenth century, the term stood for the lands under the Delhi Sultanate. It never stood for the region covering south India. It meant the areas of Punjab, Haryana and the lands between the Ganga and Yamuna.
- The fourteenth century poet, Amir Khusrau referred to "Hind" for the culture and people of the Indus river.

- In the early sixteenth century, Babur used the term to describe the geography, culture and fauna of the subcontinent.
- Now, it represents the modern nation state of India.

**Question 7:** How were the affairs of jatis regulated?

**Answer:** The affairs of the jatis were regulated by an assembly of elders, known in some areas as the jati panchayat. But, jatis were also required to follow the rules of their village. Several villages were governed by a chieftain.

**Question 8:** What does the term pan-regional empire mean?

**Answer:** The term pan-regional empire refers to an empire which stretches over many diverse regions. The Mughal empire and the Chola empire are good examples of pan-regional empires.

**Question 9:** What are the difficulties historians face in using manuscripts?

**Answer:** While using manuscripts, the historians face a number of difficulties. Manuscripts were written with hand and as a result there were small but significant difference between any two copies. The scribes who copied them introduced changes. As a result historians have to read different manuscript versions of the same text to guess what the authors had originally written.

**Question 10:** How do historians divide the past into periods? Do they face any problems in doing so?

**Answer:** Historians divide the past into periods based on the economic and social factors which characterize them. In doing so, they are faced with two problems. First, economic and social changes keep taking place hence, definite boundaries cannot be drawn. Second, these periods are compared with modernity. Modernity gives a sense of progress. This implies that there was no progress before, which is not true.

**Extra Questions**  
**Very Short Answer Questions**

**1. What is an archive?**

**Answer:** A place where documents and manuscripts are stored is called an archive.

**2. What is an archive?**

**Answer:** A place where documents and manuscripts are stored is called an archive.

**3. How are archives useful in medieval India?**

**Answer:** Manuscripts were collected by wealthy people, rulers, monasteries and temples. They were placed in libraries and archives. These provide a lot of detailed information to historians.

**4. What were the languages according to Amir Khusrau existed in the region?**

**Answer:** Sindhi, Lahori, Kashmiri, Dvasamudri (in Southern Karnataka), Telangani, Gujari, Ma' bari, Gauri, Awadhi and Hindawi. Further, Brahmins knew the Sanskrit language.

**5. Who were patrons?**

**Answer:** Patrons were influential wealthy individuals, who supported another person—an artiste, a craftsperson, a learned man or a noble.

**Short Answer Questions**

**1. What do you know about 'Rajputs'?**

**Answer: (i)** The Rajputs derived their name from 'Rajputras'.

**(ii)** This term was used for the Kshatriya caste, warriors and included rulers, chieftains, commanders and soldiers of the different monarchs all over the subcontinent.

## **2. How did medieval India affect caste system?**

**Answer:** Indian society continued to be divided into many castes and sub castes (Jatis and Upjatis). Most jatis had their own rules of marriages. In villages, Panchayats collected most of the taxes. Sati, polygamy and purdah systems were prevalent rapidly.

## **3. How do literary sources help in knowing about medieval history?**

**Answer:** Since paper was available, a lot of written accounts in the form of chronicles, autobiographies, farmaans and accounts of foreign travellers are available from this period in Persian and Arabic. These provide a detailed account of rulers, their achievements and lifestyle which existed during this period.

## **4. What does a Sanskrit Prashasti write about Balban?**

**Answer:** A Sanskrit prashasti praised the Delhi Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban (1266– 1287) by saying that he was the ruler of a vast empire that stretched from Bengal (Gauda) in the east to Ghazni (Gajjana) in Afghanistan in the west and included all of South India (Dravida). People of different regions—Gauda, Andhra, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat apparently fled before his armies.

## **5. How did the French cartographer depict India? How is it different from al-Idirisi?**

**Answer:** In 1720, a French cartographer gave an improved version of the Indian subcontinent. It depicts the Indian subcontinent as it is shown now. It gives us information about the coastal areas. European traders came to India by using this map. This map seems more familiar to us.

### **Long Answer Questions**

#### **1. What was the progress in Indian religion in this period?**

**Answer: (i)** The earlier invaders like the Greeks who came to India, followed Indian religions—Hinduism and Buddhism.

**(ii)** The new invaders—Turks, Afghans and Mughals—brought a new religion, Islam with them.

(iii) Islam spread in India. Later on, Sikhism was born and the advent of Europeans saw the spread of Christianity.

(iv) Hinduism also underwent major changes but remained the main religion of India.

(v) Two new religious cults—Bhakti Movement and Sufi Movement brought a new way of understanding between Islam and Hinduism.

## **2. Describe the jati system in India.**

**Answer:** People in India were grouped into Jatis or sub-castes and ranked on the basis of their backgrounds and different occupations. Jatis framed their own rules and regulations. These were enforced by an assembly of elders called jati panchayat. But jatis were also required to follow the rules of their villages. Several villages were governed by a chieftain.

## **3. What was the influence of pan-regional rulers on the character of regions in India?**

**Answer:** Years of imperial, pan-regional rule altered the character of the regions. Across most of the subcontinent, the regions were left with the legacies of big and small states that had ruled over them. This was visible in emergence of many distinct and shared traditions: in the realms of governance, the management of the economy, and emergence of elite cultures and languages.

### **Hots (Higher Order Thinking Skills)**

#### **1. Why information about the medieval period is much more than the ancient period?**

**Answer:** The number and variety of textual records increased dramatically during this period. They slowly displaced other types of available information. Through this period, paper gradually became cheaper and more widely available. People used it to write holy texts, chronicles of rulers, letters and teachings of saints, petitions and judicial records, and for registers of accounts and taxes. Manuscripts were collected by wealthy people, rulers, monasteries and temples. They were placed in libraries and archives.

#### **2. How did Islam grow as a major religion in medieval India?**

**Answer:** Merchants and migrants first brought the teachings of the holy Quran to India in the 7th century. Many rulers were patrons of Islam and the ulama learned theologians and jurists. Islam was interpreted in a number of ways by its followers. There were the Shia Muslims, who believed that the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, was the leader of the Muslim community and the Sunni Muslims accepted the authority of the Khalifas.

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