

Chapter 1

Tracing Changes Through A Thousand Years

Let's recall

Q.1 Who was considered a “foreigner” in the past?

Ans .: In the past, a foreigner is referred to as a person who was not part of a certain society, culture or we can say an outsider. For example - A city dweller might have considered a forest dweller as a foreigner but not the two farmers from different cast and religion living in the same village were a foreigner to each other.

In other words, foreigner means a person who is not considered as a member of a society or considered an outsider as he may have come from far of places.

Q.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.

Ans.: (a) We do not find inscriptions for the period after 700 (False)

We do find inscriptions for the period after 700. An old inscription was found in Kandahar, present-day Afghanistan, dated about 2250 years ago.

(b) The Marathas asserted their political importance during this period (True)

During this period many groups of people become politically important and Marathas was one of them.

(c) Forest-dwellers were sometimes pushed out of their lands with the spread of agricultural settlements (True)

Changes in the habitat system forced forest-dwellers to migrate.

(d) Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban controlled Assam, Manipur and Kashmir (False)

Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban controlled the area of Bengal in the east to Ghazni in Afghanistan in the west and all the South India.

Q.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.

Ans.: (a) Archives are places where manuscripts are kept.

Manuscripts are the handwritten documents preserved from the past.

(b) Ziyauddin Barni was a fourteenth-century chronicler.

Ziyauddin Barani was a political thinker in Delhi Sulanate.

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

With the invasion of subcontinent foreigners brought new crops with them and Potatoes, Corn, Chilies, Tea and Coffee were the some of the crops.

Q.4 List some of the technological changes associated with this period.

Ans.: Medieval period was the period of economic, social, cultural and technological changes. Some of the technological changes which occurred in this period are – for irrigation people started using the Persian wheel, the spinning wheel for weaving and firearms for combat.

Q.5 What were some of the major religious developments during this period?

Ans.: Some significant development that took place during this period are:

1. In Hinduism, the status of Brahmanas and priest were rising, and many new deities were also included.
2. Bhakti movement also began during this time only.
3. Islam also emerged in sub-continent and teaching of Quran spread in sub-continent.

Let's understand

Q.6 In what ways has the meaning of the term “Hindustan” changed over the centuries?

Ans.: Over the centuries there has been a vast change in the meaning of the term “Hindustan”.

1. Today “Hindustan” is understood as India, the modern nation-state.
2. In the 13th century, the term is used in political context for the lands under the Delhi Sultanate like Punjab, Haryana, and area between Ganga and Yamuna.

3. In the 14th century, Babur and Amir Khusro used the term “Hindustan” to describe the geography, culture, and fauna of the subcontinent.

Q.7 How were the affairs of jatis regulated?

Ans.: The jatis had to formulate their rules and regulations themselves. These regulations were enforced by an assembly of elders, described in some areas as the jati panchayat. But jatis were also required to follow the rules of their villages.

Q.8 What does the term pan-regional empire mean?

Ans.: As the name suggests the term pan-regional empire is applied to an empire which stretches over many regions of diverse culture, religion and geography. The Tughluqs and Mughal empires are the good examples of pan-regional empire.

Let's discuss

Q.9 What are the difficulties historians face in using manuscripts?

Ans.: While using manuscripts, the historians face a number of difficulties.

1. Different interpretations: 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 with their own interpretations.

2. Poor handwriting: As the Manuscripts were written with hand and as a result there were chances of errors while copying these scripts.

3. Copying errors: Copying scripts introduced changes which grew over the centuries. As a result, historians have to read different manuscript versions of the same text to guess what the authors had originally written.

4. Confusion: Different versions of Manuscripts lead to the confusion and it becomes a challenge to decide the chronological order of their release.

Q.10 How do historians divide the past into periods? Do they face any problems in doing so?

Ans.: History consists of everything from our past and it becomes very easy for the historians to divide history into various phases or periods which depends on various factors like social, cultural, economic and political.

E.g., British historians had divided Indian history on the bases of the religion of rulers, i.e., Hindu, Muslim and British, without considering the fact that majority of people in India are Hindus and people with many diverse cultures in had lived together since many years.

However, most of the history is studied today on the bases of social change in the world, i.e.,

- a. Ancient
- b. Medieval
- c. Modern

One of the significant issues, when we study history, is that we tend to compare history with the modern period, which gives us a sense of technological advancement and progress, and had a belief in our mind that no progress was made in other phases of history which is not true.