

Towns Traders and Craftspersons

Textbook Exercises

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LET'S RECALL

1. Who was considered a 'foreigner' in the past?

Ans. Any stranger who appeared say in a given village, someone who was not a part of that society or culture was considered a 'foreigner' in the past.

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 Ghyasuddin Balban controlled Assam, Manipur and Kashmir.

Ans. (a) false (b) true (c) true (d) false

3. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Archives are places where are kept.
- (b) was a fourteen-century chronicler.
- (c),, and were some of the new crops introduced into the subcontinent during this period.

Ans. (a) documents and manuscripts
(b) Ziyauddin Barani
(c) Potatoes, corn, chillies, tea, coffee

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

Ans. (i) The Persian wheel in irrigation,
(ii) The spinning wheel in weaving,
(iii) Firearms in combat.

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

Ans. During this period important changes occurred in the Hindu religion. The Hindus started worshipping new deities. The construction of temples by royalty, and the growing importance of Brahmanas, the priests were other developments of this period. One of the major developments of this period was the emergence of the idea of bhakti—of a loving, personal deity that devotees could reach without the aid of priests or elaborate rituals. This was also the period when new religions appeared in the subcontinent. Muslims regard the Quran as their holy book and accept the sovereignty of the one God, Allah. Like Hinduism, Islam was interpreted in a variety of ways by its followers.

LET'S UNDERSTAND

6. In what ways has the meaning of the term "Hindustan" changed over the centuries?

Ans. In the thirteenth century the term "Hindustan" meant the areas of Punjab, Haryana and the lands between the Ganga and Yamuna. The term was used in the political sense for lands that were a part of the dominions

of the Delhi Sultan. The areas included in this term shifted with the extent of the Sultanate but the term never included south India. In the early sixteenth century Babur used Hindustan to describe the geography, the fauna and the culture of the inhabitants of the subcontinent. While the idea of a geographical and cultural entity like 'India' did exist, the term "Hindustan" did not carry the political and national meanings which we associate with it today. Today we understand the term "Hindustan" as "India", the modern nation-state.

7. How were the affairs of jatis regulated?

Ans. Jatis framed their own rules and regulations to manage the conduct of their members. 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. Several villages were governed by a chieftain. Together they were only one small unit of a state.

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

Ans. The term pan-regional empire means an empire spanning diverse regions.

LET'S DISCUSS

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

Ans. The historians face several difficulties in using manuscripts. There was no printing press in those days so scribes copied manuscripts by hand. Manuscript copying is not an easy job. As scribes copied manuscripts, they also introduced small changes—a word here, a sentence there. These small differences grew over centuries of copying until manuscripts of the same text became substantially different from one another. This is a serious problem because we rarely find the original manuscript of the author today. We are totally dependent upon the copies made by later scribes. As a result historians have to read different manuscript versions of the same text to guess what the author had originally written.

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

Ans. Historians divide the past into large segments—periods—that possess shared characteristics. In the middle of the nineteenth century British historians divided the history of India into three periods: "Hindu", "Muslim" and "British". This division was based on the idea that the religion of rulers was the only important historical change, and that there were no other significant developments—in the economy, society or culture. Few historians follow this periodisation today. Most look to economic and social factors to characterize the major elements of different moments of the past.

Historians face many problems while dividing the past into periods. The reason is that there was a good amount of technological development in the medieval period which can be called modern in the contemporary context. Despite that the period is not called modern but medieval. On the other hand, the modern past is followed by the medieval past.

LET'S DO

11. Compare either Map 1 or Map 2 with the present-day map of the subcontinent, listing as many similarities and differences as you can find.

Ans. There are many similarities and differences we can find between Map 2 and the present-day map of the subcontinent. So far similarities are concerned, we can notice that the coastline is almost as curved as it is in the present-day map. The location of most of the places shown in the map are almost correct. The names of coastal areas are almost similar.

So far differences are concerned, we can notice that the present-day map is more accurate. Unlike Map 2, the present-day map shows the coastal boundary of the subcontinent.

12. Find out where records are kept in your village or city? Who writes these records? Is there any archive? Who manages it? What kind of documents are stored there? Who are the people who use it?

Ans. Do it yourself.