



CLASS: VII

SUBJECT: SST (History)

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L1: Tracing Changes Through a Thousand Years

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.

Ans- False

(b) The Maratha's asserted their political importance during this period.

Ans-False

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

Ans-True

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

Ans-False

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

Answer: Some notable technological changes associated with this period were:

(i) The use of Persian wheel in irrigation;

(ii) The use of spinning wheel in weaving;

(iii) The use of 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 term 'Hindustan' was used for the first time by Minhaj-I Siraj, a thirteenth century Persian chronicler. He, with this term, meant the areas of Punjab, Haryana and the lands between the Ganga and Yamuna. It was used in a political sense for lands constituting a part of the dominions of the Delhi Sultan. Later in the sixteenth century, Babur, while using this term, meant the geography, the fauna and the culture of the inhabitants of the subcontinent. The remarkable point is that while the idea of geographical and cultural entity like 'India' did exist, the term Hindustan did not carry the political and national meanings that we associate with it today.

Question 7. How were the affairs of jatis regulated?

Answer: Jatis were the sub-castes which were grouped on the basis of economic and social status. They were ranked as per their backgrounds and their occupations. Ranks were not fixed permanently. They varied as per the power, influence and resources controlled by members of the jatis. Hence the status of the same jati could vary from area to area. Jatis had their own system of ruling. They framed their own rules and regulations for managing the conduct of their members. An assembly of elders was responsible for enforcing these regulations. This assembly of elders was called jati panchayat. But jatis were also required to abide by the rules of their villages.

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

Answer: The term 'pan-regional' was used in the sense of the areas of empires spanning diverse regions.

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

Answer: Manuscripts in early days were handwritten. Writers used palm leaves as paper for writing manuscripts. The historians used to copy down those manuscripts. Different historians presented their version in their own way as many of the words or sentences were beyond their understanding. So, they copied what they understood. Later it was difficult to recognize which one was the original manuscript. Historians interpreted the facts as per the manuscripts which they got. Hence, we find a number of facts with different illustrations in history.

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

Answer: British historians, in the middle of the nineteenth century, divided time into three periods—Hindu, Muslim and British. This division was made on the basis of the fact that no significant change other than the religion of the rulers could occur during these periods. But as a matter of fact, this division ignored the rich diversity of the subcontinent. Today while most of the historians take the economic and social factors into account in order to characterize the major elements of different moments of the past. The history of the past thousand years has seen considerable changes.