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INDIA: FROM 8th CENTURY TO 15th CENTURY A.D.

By: Alam Kumar

M.A. (History & Political Science)

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of the
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QUESTION PAPER

(June - 2019)

(Solved)

INDIA FROM 8TH CENTURY TO 15TH CENTURY A.D.

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

(Weightage: 70%)

Note: Answer any two questions from Section - I. Any four questions from Section - II and two short notes from Section - III.

SECTION-I

Q. 1. Critically examine the character and role of various types of agrarian settlements in the early medieval period with special reference to *Brahmadeya* and *Agrahara*.

Ans. Land grants began in the beginning of 12th century in the entire subcontinent of India. In early medieval period agriculture flourished due to advanced agricultural techniques and new irrigation technology. Commercial activities in agriculture and non-agricultural commodities developed.

Also Ref. : See Chapter-1, Page No. 1, 'Agrarian Expansion', 'Agrarian Organisation', Page No. 2, 'Technological Improvements' and 'Agriculture and Exchange Network'.

Q. 2. What were the factors responsible for the rise of urban centres in early medieval India? Discuss the process of transformation of rural centres into urban centres.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 5, 'Form and Substance of Urban Centres' and 'Regional Variations and Types'.

Q. 3. What role did religion and the religious classed play in the socio-economic and political life of the Vijayanagara empire?

Ans. The Vijayanagar Kingdom dominated in South of the Vindhya. The Vijayanagar and Bahmani kingdoms emerged in second quarter of 14th century. Harihara and Bukka the founder of Vijayanagar were the sons of Sangama had been in service of the Kakatiyas of Warangal and later became the ministers in the kingdom of Kampili in modern Karnataka. When

the Kampili overran by Muhammad Tughluq for giving refuge to a Muslim rebel the two brothers were imprisoned. But later on they were freed and declared their independence and founded the state of Vijayanagar in 1336.

Also Ref.: Chapter-27, Page No. 92, '(B) Religion and Politics'.

Also Add : Economic Role of Temple: Temple in South India during Vijayanagar were important centres of economic activities. They were not only landholders, but they also carried banking activities. Temple officers managed the *devadana* village to ensure that the grant was utilised properly. The income from *devadana* villages provided sustenance to the ritual functionaries. Temple officers purchased local goods for performance of ritual services. They gave loans to individuals and village assemblies for economic purpose.

Q. 4. Discuss the growth of Chisti *Silsilah* in India during the Sultanate period.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-31, Page No. 109, Q. No. 1 and Page No. 107, '(A) Chishti *Silsilah*'.

SECTION-II

Q. 5. Give a brief account of the rise of Chengiz Khan's power in Central Asia.

Ans. The period from 10th-12th century saw a rapid change both in West and Central Asia. It were these developments which lead to the incursion of Turks into Northern India and 12th-15th century. Mongols also attacked on India. These invaders were eventually famed by the civilizations they had conquered.

Also Ref.: Chapter-13, Page No. 43, '(E) The Mongols' and Page No. 44, Q. No. 2 (CYP-3).

Q. 6. Critically examine the factors behind the Turkish success against the Rajputs.

Ans. Turkish success to the attacked on India. India was divided into small principalities during the Rajput period. They were continuously involved in religious as well as social matters. In the mean time Turks under the leadership of Ghori attacked on India.

Also Ref.: Chapter-14, Page No. 45, '(E) Why The Turk Succeeded?'

Q. 7. Enumerate the chief features of Delhi Sultans' Deccan policy.

Ans. The Sultans of Delhi had faced not only internal dissensions and foreign invasions, but also internal rebellions as well. Primary objective of the later Sultans became the consolidation of the Sultanate. Thus, it was not until the establishment of the Khaljis ruler that the boundaries of the Sultanate expanded beyond the early gains. The overthrow of Turkish hegemony at the end of 13th century and its replacement with the Khaljis. But during Alaaddin period territorial expansion reached on zenith.

Expansion under the Khaljis : The Delhi Sultanate was gradually geared up for his renewed phase of expansion. Alaaddin Khaljis period was of territorial annexation and expansion of the Sultanate which saw the frontiers of the Sultanate reaching close to the tip of the Southern peninsula by the middle of 14th century.

Deccan and Southward Expansion: When Alaaddin was a Governor of Kara had already plundered on Devagiri in 1296 AD. The next military campaign in Deccan was again planned by Alaaddin against Rai Ramchandra Dev of Devagiri in 1306-07. Then campaign against Rai Karan, Rai Karan fought bravely, but he could not resist for long.

The command of the Deccan campaign was given to Malik Kafur a trusted army general. Rai Ramchandra who surrendered to Malik Kafur. Ramchandra Dev accorded great honour by the Sultan and restored to the throne of Devagiri in return for the assurance of regular payment of annual tribute to the Sultan. Rai also gave his daughter in marriage to Sultan. This alliance with Rai Ramchandra was to prove

to be of great value to Alaaddin in his further aggrandisement in the Deccan.

Between 1309-11 Malik Kafur led two campaigns in South India:

- (i) Against Warrangal in the Telangana area
- (ii) Against Dwar Samudra and Mabar (modern Karnataka and Tamil Nadu)

Amir Khusrau has given details of these campaigns in his book *Khazain-ul-Futuh*. After the death of Alaaddin situation became very critical in South. Most of the Southern kingdoms became independence but Rai Ramchandra remain loyal to Sultan. Malik Kafur came back South and crushed the rebellion. Alaaddin's son Mubark Shah sat on throne.

Alaaddin's Deccan and South campaigns were aimed at achieving two basic objectives:

- (i) A formal recognition of the authority of Delhi Sultan over these regions and
- (ii) The amassing of maximum wealth at the minimal loss of life.

Within a year however of Malik Kafur's return from Mabar development in the Deccan called for a review of the policy of non-annexation. Ram Deva's son Bhillama refused to accept the suzerain status of Sultan of Delhi.

Q. 8. Define the term Iqta. Discuss its role in the consolidation of the Sultanate.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 53, '(1) Iqta' and Chapter-17, Page No. 57, '(C) Iqta and Dispersal of Resources Among the Ruling Class'.

Q. 9. Examine the role of nobility in the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-18, Page No. 60, Q. No. 1. and Page No. 59, '(B) Conflict between the Nobility and the Sultans'.

Q. 10. Which technological devices related agriculture were introduced in the Sultanate period?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-22, Page No. 72, 'Introduction' and '(A) Agricultural Technology'.

Q. 11. Discuss the growth of music in the provincial kingdoms in the 13th-15th centuries.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-32, Page No. 116, '(3) Music', Page No. 117, Q. No. 1, Q. No. 2 and Q. No. 3.

Sample Preview of The Chapter

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HISTORY

INDIA: FROM 8th TO 15th CENTURY

Agrarian Economy

1

INTRODUCTION

Land grants began in the beginning of 12th century in the entire Subcontinent of India. In early medieval period agriculture flourished due to advanced agricultural techniques and new irrigation technology. Commercial activities in agriculture and non-agricultural commodities developed. This chapter also discuss the decay and revival of urban settlements and development in trade and commerce. All these changes seen in agrarian economy in the early medieval period.

Agrarian Expansion

4th century onwards agrarian expansion started with the establishment of *brahmadeya* and *agrahara*, through this land grants to Brahmanas and religious beneficiaries. Cultivation land increased through clearing forest. A large number virgin land converted into cultivated land. After that Brahmanas introduced new methods of cultivation through special knowledge of ploughing and irrigation etc.

Land grant system shows following:

- (i) 4th-5th century: Central India and Northern Deccan.
- (ii) 5th-7th century: Eastern India and Western India.
- (iii) 7th-8th century: Tamil Nadu and Karnatka.
- (iv) 9th century: Kerala
- (v) 12th century: Entire Sub-continent.

Land grants or gift was developed by the Brahmanical texts which means of acquiring merit (*Punya*) and destroying sin (*Pataka*). There are different items of gifts:

- (i) Food, grains, paddy etc.
- (ii) Movable assets like gold, money etc.
- (iii) Immovable assets like garden, cultivable land and residential land.

Among the gifts cow, oxen, ploughshare were also gifted to the Brahmanas. But in Vedic period gifts only granted to temple priests.

Agrarian Organisation

(1) Character and Role of Various Types of Agrarian Settlements: *Brahmadeya* is a process through which lands were granted to the Brahmanas, and making them landowners or land-controllers, by ruling dynasties and feudatories.

Brahmanas played a crucial role in various socio-economic groups into the new order. Lands were given either single Brahmana or to several Brahmanas.

- (i) They were exempted from various taxes or dues either entirely or at least, initial stages.
- (ii) They were given a lot of privileges in society.

Brahmadeya were generally lived near irrigated area or tank or lakes. Sometimes two or more settlements were clubbed together to form a *Brahmadeya*.

Taxes were assigned from the villages to the Brahmana donees.

Secular Grants: 7th century onward officers of state were also being rewarded through land grants. Because of it another class of landlords came in power who were not Brahmanas. In post-Gupta period practice of gift of land was on top level. The Rajas, Rajputras and Mahasamantas were vassals connected with land in 10th-12th century.

Devadanas: Rent-free land gifted to Brahmanical temple deities. Various peasants and tribal settlements integrated various socio-economic groups. Temple lands were leased out to tenants, who paid higher share of the produce to the temple. Such lands were also look after either by Sabha of the Brahmadeya or *mahajanans*. In non-Brahmana settlements temple become the central institution.

Temple lands were look after by Brahmana and non-Brahmana landed elite. Landed elite also consisted heads of kinship groups and head of families.

Rights of Land: Hereditary ownership of land seems to have developed on communal basis both the religious and secular phenomenon.

Technological Improvements

The increase in the number of irrigation sources was due to an advancement of modern technology during the early medieval period. Scientific methods improved in irrigation and also for flood control. Knowledge of fertilizers improved water lifting devices such as *agrahatta* and *ghatiyantra* were used. Vrikshayarveda mentions that many steps had been taken to cure the diseases of trees or plants. Marco-Polo said that more than hundred types of cereals were used. Crops rotations were known widely. Irrigation sources such as canals, lakes, tanks and wells were used frequently. Thus, the advance agricultural technology was being systematised and diffused in various parts of the country causing substantial boom in agricultural production.

Agriculture and the Exchange Network

In the early medieval period there were a little scope of economic growth because of predominantly agrarian and self-sufficient village economy was not followed the laws of the market. Craftsmen and artisans were attached either to villages or religious establishments. There was no significant role of traders and middlemen. But in 9th century the emergence of merchants and itinerant traders change the pattern of landownership towards the close of the early medieval period. Merchants, craftsmen like weavers purchased

and made gift of land. In Karnataka Jagati-Kottali (community of weavers) and Telligas (oil presser) were actively participated in agriculture.

The Characterisation of Early Medieval Agrarian Economy

In early medieval agrarian economy carried two different views:

- (i) Manifestation of feudal economy.
- (ii) Dubbed as a Peasant State and Society.

(A) First Feudal Economy

The salient features of Indian Feudal economy are:

(1) Emergence of hierarchical landed intermediaries: Vassals and officers of state and other secular assignee had military obligations and feudal titles Sub-infeudation by these donees to get their land cultivated led to growth of different strata of intermediaries. It was a hierarchy of landed aristocrats, tenant and cultivators.

(2) The Prevalance of Forced Labour: Brahmanas and Zamindars had right to take forced labour (*Vishti*). Forced labour was originally a privilege of the king or the state. It was transferable to one-another. During Chola period we have the evidence of forced labour (*Vishti*). Even the peasants and artisans came in forced labour. As a result Serfdom emerged.

(3) Peasant Suffered: Due to growing claim of right of ownership of land and intermediaries peasants suffered more. A large number of peasants were only *ardhikas* (share croppers).

(4) Surplus (Excess of Expenditure): Due to the rise of new property relations, new mechanisms and economic subordinate a lot of goods produced. A large number of development took place during the Chola period.

Transfer of human resources and upliftment of peasants, craftsmen, artisans, grants ensured control over village economy.

(B) Second Dubbed as a Peasant State and Society

The theory of peasant of State and Society following features:

- (i) In early medieval period in South India peasant regions called *nadus*.
- (ii) They were organised on the basis of clan and kinship ties.
- (iii) People of the *nadu* organised themselves into assemblies.
- (iv) Nadus member of assemblies were Velalals or non-Brahman peasants.

In short we can say that the theory of Indian feudalism and autonomous peasant societies have adherents and claim to be based on empirical evidence. However early medieval agrarian economy was a highly complex one.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1

Q. 1. What were the different items of *dana* (gift) to Brahmanas? Which was considered as the best gift?

Ans. In the Brahmanical texts the idea of *dana* or gift to Brahmanas was to acquiring merits (Punya) and destroying sin (Pataka). This was the systematically started to support the Brahmanas. In post-Gupta period Brahmanas were given cultivable land and registration of gift of land on copper plates are recommended by all the Smritis and Puranas. There were different items of gift:

- (i) Food, grain, paddy etc.
- (ii) Movable assets like gold, money etc.
- (iii) The immovable assets like cultivated land, garden, residential plot.

Among all the gift of land was considered to be the best of all types of gift made to the Brahmana.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2

Q. 1. How did Brahmadeyas helped in agrarian expansion?

Ans. Brahmadeya was a symbol or example of grant of land either in individual plots or whole villages given to Brahmanas making them landowners or land controllers. Brahmadeyas main function was bring vergin or barren land into cultivated land. For the achievement of this Brahmadeya settled near tanks or lakes, especially in areas depend on rains. Except that Brahmadeya or an *agrahara* were also given the right to get the donated land cultivated, boundaries of donated land or village were often carefully demarcated.

Q. 2. What is the difference between *brahmadeya* secular and *devadana* grants?

Ans. (1) Brahmadeya: Brahmadeya is a tax-free land or village given as gift to a single Brahmana or to several Brahmana families which ranged from a few to several hundreds or even more than a thousand as seen in South Indian context.

(2) Secular: From the 7th century onwards, officers of the States were also being remunerated through land grants. This is of special significance because it created another class of landlords who were not Brahmanas. We can say that incidence of grant of

State officer varies from one region to another is also a part of secularism.

(3) Devadanas: Rent-free land gifted to brahmanical temples dities. Its Jain and Buddhist counterpart is called *Pallichanda*. These centres worked for agricultural settlement and help in integrating various peasant and tribal settlements through a process of collection. Temple lands were leased out to tenants, who paid higher share of produce to the temple.

Q. 3. What was the nature of rights enjoyed by land?

Ans. Nature of right conferred upon the grantees included fiscal and administrative rights. Land tax was the major source of revenue, payable to king or government. But king was also not fully exempted from payment, based on royal ownership of land and also based on hereditary ownership of land.

Q. 4. Describe briefly the main methods of irrigation.

Ans. Sources of irrigation during early medieval period were canal, lakes, tanks and wells (Kupa and Kinaru).

(1) South Karnataka: Nadi (river).

(2) In Bengal: Pushkarini (tank) and Sarota (water channel).

(3) In Rajasthan: Araghatta-well.

Water-lifts by men and animal power were also known. Advance irrigation technology, scientific methods, damming of river water, flood control these are the methods through which much more irrigation took place. Lake and reservoirs more commonly used in dry and rain affected areas.

New device of water lifting such as *araghatta* and *ghatiyantra* also bust up in irrigation.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-3

Q. 1. Give a few causes for tensions in rural areas during the period under review.

Ans. There were few reasons for a build up tension the rural areas. The main causes were:

(i) The conversion of the *brahmadeyas* into non-*brahmadeyas* and latter into *agrahras*. This lead to building a tension in rural areas.

(ii) Except that damara revolt in Kashmir, act of self-immolation situation in Tamil Nadu, rebellion of the Kaivasthas in Bengal and appropriation of donated land by Shudras in Pandya territory are the new landed intermediaries.

The fact is that donors often look for land where cultivation was not disputed also shows the seeds of turmoil.

Q. 2. What was the pattern of commerce in early medieval period? Did it effect the pattern of land ownership?

Ans. Firstly, the medieval period saw an expansion in agriculture by the *Brahmadeya*. Secular grants and *Devdanas* with this agriculture produce also increased. With the increase in production there was surplus of goods which needed a local market for local exchange between the peasant and artisans. Generally, the local market felt that the need for exchange within the region and soon these were exchanged with other regions. This is how the pattern of commerce evolved. Suddenly merchants emerge as an important organisation, who travelled from place to place to do trade. This period also saw the exchange of money being used particularly as means of exchange.

Even though with the increase in trade there was more money in the market but land was still considered the best investment. The land which was earlier owned by Brahmanas, religious institutions could now be owned by traders and craftsmen. There is evidence that merchants and weavers making gift of land and digging tanks.

Q. 3. Give five salient features of Indian Feudalism?

Ans. Historians have put forward different views on the structure of the medieval agrarian economy.

Some say it is a manifestation of feudal economy and other say it was a peasants' state and society. But there are certain salient features of Indian Feudalism.

(1) The first feature which emerges before us is that the landed intermediaries had a hierarchical status. Sometimes they even had feudal titles. These donors get their land cultivated led to grow different strata of intermediaries. Basically, it was a hierarchy of landed aristocrats, tenants, share croppers and cultivators. Overall we can say that Indian feudalism distributed the land and its produce unequal.

(2) Forced labour (*Vishti*) have been used by the Brahmana and other grantees of land was another important feature. King or the State have special right to keep forced labour, which was transferable. In medieval period serfdom emerged due to regular increase of *Vishti*, even peasants and artisans also came in forced labour (*Vishti*).

(3) Peasant also suffered due to cut off a part of land rights. A large number of peasants were only *ardhika* (share croppers). Serfdom caused due to the burden of taxation.

(4) Due to rise of new machines, new property relations, surplus of goods increase in medieval period, especially in Chola period in South India.

(5) Craftsmen and artisans were always attached to villages and interdependent on each-other. This is the process through which village economy stagnant.

■ ■