

CHAPTER 2

KINGS, FARMERS AND TOWNS EARLY STATES AND ECONOMIES

2Marks Questions:

1: Why were rivers significant in the development of early states and economies?

Answer :

Rivers were crucial for transportation, trade, and agriculture, providing fertile land and easy access to waterways.

2: How did the social structure differ between kings, farmers, and townspeople?

Answer :

Kings were often at the top of the social hierarchy, followed by priests and nobles, while farmers and townspeople made up the broader population.

3: What economic activities were common in early towns?

Answer :

Early towns engaged in activities such as trade, craftsmanship, and market-based economies, contributing to the overall economic development.

4: What impact did technological advancements have on early economies?

Answer :

Technological advancements, such as the use of metal tools and improved agricultural techniques, enhanced productivity and contributed to economic growth.

5: How did early states maintain control over their territories?

Answer :

Early states used a combination of military force, legal systems, and religious authority to maintain control over their territories.

6: What is the significance of writing systems in early states?

Answer :

Writing systems were crucial for record-keeping, communication, and the development of complex societies, contributing to administrative and economic efficiency.

7. How did the relationship between kings and religious institutions influence early states?

Answer :

The close relationship between kings and religious institutions often legitimized the rulers' authority and provided a unifying force in early states.

4Marks Questions:

1.What role did kings play in early states, and how did they contribute to the economy?

Answer :

In early states, kings held a central role as political leaders and often served as the highest authority. They played a crucial role in organizing and maintaining social order. Economically, kings could influence trade and commerce by establishing regulations and overseeing the circulation of goods. Additionally, they often controlled the distribution of resources and taxes, contributing to the economic stability of their realms.

2.Explain the significance of farmers in the development of early states and economies.

Answer :

Farmers were pivotal in the development of early states and economies. They were the backbone of agricultural societies, providing sustenance and surplus that supported the population.

The surplus agricultural produce enabled the growth of towns and cities. Furthermore, farmers played a crucial role in the emergence of a division of labor, as their surplus allowed others to pursue specialized occupations, contributing to the overall economic complexity of early states.

3.How did the growth of towns impact early state economies, and what functions did towns serve?

Answer :

The growth of towns had a significant impact on early state economies. Towns served as centers of trade, commerce, and cultural exchange. They facilitated economic specialization, allowing for the development of artisans, merchants, and other specialized occupations. Additionally, towns often served as administrative and political centers, contributing to the overall governance and coordination of the state. The concentration of economic activities in towns also fostered innovation and the exchange of ideas.

Feel free to use these questions and answers as a reference for your lesson on "Kings, Farmers, and Towns: Early States and Economies."

4.Mention any two features of the administrative system of the Mauryan Empire

Answer:Two main features of the administrative system of the Mauryan Empire were:There were five major political centres in the empire viz, Pataliputra, Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali and Suvamagiri.

The administrative control was strongest in areas around the capital and the provincial centres and these centres were carefully chosen by the kings.

5.How did Magadha become the most powerful mahajanapada between 6th and 4th century BCE? Give two reasons.

Answer:

Historians explained the reason behind the emergence of Magadha as the most powerful mahajanapada in the following ways:

Agriculture was very productive in Magadha.

Magadha was rich in iron mines which provided resources for tools and weapons. Further, elephants were found in large number in this region.

6.Explain why the communication along both land and riverine routes was vital for the existence of the empire during the period of Mauryan.

Answer:

During the Mauryan period, communication along both land and riverine routes was vital for the existence of the empire because:

The Mauryan empire was a very vast empire. Thus, for political control, military activity and people's movement, both land and riverine routes were required.

Communication through roadways and waterways were necessary for trade and commerce and also for the exchange of ideas and knowledge, etc.

7Marks Questions:

1. Discuss the evidence of craft production in Early Historic cities. In what ways is this different from the evidence from Harappan cities?

Answer:

Widespread and deep excavations in the early historic towns have not been possible due to the fact that these towns are still inhabited. In Harappan Civilisation, we have been fortunate enough that excavations have taken place widespread. Despite this shortcoming, we have found many artefacts in the historic towns. These throw light on the craftsmanship of those days. There are other evidences too, that throw light on the craftsmanship of those days. The salient features of such evidences are as follows:

1. From the sights the fine pottery bowls and dishes have been found. They are glossy too and we call them Northern Black Polished Ware. It looks they were used by the rich people.
2. There have also been evidence of ornaments, tools, weapons, vessels and figurines. There are a wide range of items made of gold, silver, copper, bronze, ivory, glass, shell and terracotta.
3. The donor inscription tells who all lived in towns in terms of professionals and craftsmen. It included washer men, weaver, scribes, carpenters, goldsmith, ironsmith, etc. It is notable in Harappan towns there are no evidences of iron use.
4. The craftsmen and artisans built their guilds too. They collectively bought raw materials, produced and marketed their products.

2. Describe the salient features of mahajanapadas.

Answer:

The salient features of mahajanapadas are as follows :The most important mahajanapadas were Vajji, Magadha, Koshala, Kuru, Panchala, Gandhara and Avanti. Most mahajanapadas were ruled by kings. Some, known as ganas or sanghas, were oligarchies where power was shared by a number of men, often collectively called rajas. In some cases, as in the case of the Vajji sangha, the rajas probably controlled resources such as land collectively. Each mahajanapada had a capital city, which was often fortified. Brahmanas composed the Dharmasutras which laid down norms for rulers as well as for other social categories. The rulers were ideally expected to be Kshatriyas. Rulers were advised to collect taxes and tribute from cultivators, traders and artisans. Sometimes raids on neighbouring states were conducted for acquiring wealth. These raids were recognised as legitimate means.

Gradually, some states acquired standing armies and maintained regular bureaucracies. Others continued to depend on militia, recruited from the peasantry.

3. How do historians reconstruct the lives of ordinary people?

Answer: Ordinary people could not leave behind any historical evidence about their life. Hence, the historians use a variety of sources to reconstruct the lives of the common people during the ancient times. The important sources are:

1. Remains of houses and pottery give an idea of the life of common men.
2. Some inscriptions and scriptures talk about the relation between monarchs and the subject. It talks about taxes and happiness and unhappiness of the common men.
3. Changing tools of craftsmen and farmers talk about the lifestyle of the people.
4. Historians also depend upon folklores to reconstruct the lives of the people during the ancient times.
5. This is a statement made by one of the best-known epigraphists of the twentieth century, D.C. Sircar: "There is no aspect of life, culture, activities of the Indians that is not reflected in inscriptions." Discuss.
6. Information about conduct of Kings: Inscriptions describe the conduct and character of the kings quite well. It is through the inscriptions only that we know Asoka worked for the welfare of the masses.

4. Discuss the notions of kingship that developed in the post-Mauryan period.

Answer:

In the post-Mauryan age, the idea of kingship got associated with divine theory of state. Now, the monarchs began to talk about divine sanction to rule the people. Kushan rulers propagated the idea of the same at the unprecedented scale. They ruled from central Asia to western India. We can discuss the kingship based on the dynasties.

1. **Kushan Kings:** Kushan Kings called themselves Devputra and hence, godly status. They built great statues of themselves in temples.
2. **Gupta Rulers:** Second development of kingship is found during Gupta dynasty. It was a period of large-sized states. Such states were dependent on Samantas who sometimes became powerful enough to usurp the power of kings too.
3. **Literature, coins and inscriptions** helped us in creating history of those days. Very often poets would describe the monarch often to praise them but giving insight into the history and kingship too. A good example is of Harisena who praised Samudragupta, the great Gupta ruler.

5. To what extent were agricultural practices transformed in the period under consideration?

Answer: The demand for taxes increased in the post 600 BC. In order to meet the demand of excessive taxes, without taking lesser produce, forced the farmers to increase productivity. This resulted in the use of new tools and practices of agriculture. The important ones are as follows:

1. **Use of plough:** Ploughs became commonplace. They were hardly heard of in the past. The use of ploughs began in the Ganga and Cauvery basins. In places where rain was abundant, the plough was used with iron tip. This increased the paddy production manifold.
2. **Use of spade:** Another tool that changed the system of agriculture is spade. Those farmers who lived in the areas of harsh land used spade.
3. **Artificial Irrigation:** Apart from rainfall, the farmers now began to look at artificial form of irrigation. This prompted farmers to build wells, ponds, and – canals often collectively. This increased the agricultural production. The production increased due to new technology and tools.

Multiple choice questions:

1. What was the primary economic activity in early states and economies?

- A. Fishing
- B. Agriculture
- C. Mining
- D. Hunting

2. Which social class was likely to have the most influence in early states?

- A. Merchants
- B. Kings and rulers
- C. Farmers
- D. Artisans

3. What role did towns play in early state economies?

- A. They were centers of trade and commerce.
- B. They primarily focused on agricultural activities.
- C. Towns had no significant economic role.
- D. They served as military outposts.

4. How did kings maintain control over their territories in early states?

- A. Through religious authority
- B. Strict economic regulations
- C. Military force
- D. Democratic processes

5. What was a key factor contributing to the growth of early towns?

- A. Decline in agricultural productivity
- B. Nomadic lifestyle
- C. Increase in trade and commerce
- D. Lack of resources

6. What economic system characterized early states and economies?

- A. Capitalism
- B. Feudalism
- C. Socialism
- D. Barter system

7. Which group played a crucial role in supporting the economy through skilled craftsmanship in early states?

- A. Merchants
- B. Artisans
- C. Farmers
- D. Priests

8. How did the relationship between kings and farmers influence the economy in early states?

- A. Farmers had complete autonomy.
- B. Kings controlled agricultural production.
- C. Farmers were exempt from taxes.
- D. Kings had no involvement in agriculture.

Answer:

- 1. B
- 2. B
- 3. A
- 4. C
- 5. C
- 6. B
- 7. B
- 8. B

Fill in the Blanks:

1. In early states, the _____ played a crucial role in governing and maintaining order.
2. The agricultural surplus produced by _____ contributed to the growth of early economies.
3. The development of towns was closely linked to the rise of _____ and increased trade.
4. _____ were often responsible for collecting taxes and enforcing laws in early states.
5. The exchange of goods and services between different regions fostered the growth of _____.
6. Agricultural advancements led to the rise of surplus production, allowing for the specialization of labor and the growth of _____.
7. _____ played a vital role in shaping the social and economic structures of early states.
8. Towns served as centers for _____, where people could engage in commerce and trade.

Answer:

1. Kings
2. : farmers
3. economies
4. kings
5. economies
6. towns
7. farmers
8. economies

Summary:

Leadership:

The concept of kingship often involved divine or religious legitimacy, with rulers seen as representatives of gods or possessing a divine right to rule.

Kings exercised political, military, and sometimes religious authority, maintaining control over territories and subjects.

Farmers and Agriculture:

Agriculture was a fundamental aspect of early state economies, with farmers cultivating land for sustenance and surplus production.

The surplus agricultural produce allowed for the development of non-agricultural professions and the growth of towns and cities.

Various agricultural systems, such as irrigation and crop rotation, contributed to increased productivity and population growth.

Towns and Urbanization:

Towns and cities emerged as centers of commerce, administration, and cultural exchange.

Urbanization was linked to economic specialization, with artisans, traders, and other non-agricultural professions concentrated in urban areas.

Towns served as hubs for trade, facilitating the exchange of goods and ideas, and contributing to the overall economic development of early states.

Economies of Early States:

Early state economies were often characterized by a combination of agricultural and non-agricultural activities.

Trade and commerce, facilitated by the existence of towns and cities, played a crucial role in economic development.

The state, often headed by a king, played a role in regulating economic activities, collecting taxes, and maintaining infrastructure.

It's important to note that the specifics can vary across different ancient civilizations and regions, such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, and others. If you have a particular civilization or time period in mind, I can provide more detailed information based on that context.