



1. Write a note on the Kitab-ul-Hind.

Ans: Kitab-ul-Hind was written by Al-Biruni in 1031. It was considered with India and also known by the name of Tarikh-ul-Hind and Tahqiq-ma-ul-Hind. It was written in Arabic. It is divided into 80 Chapters. They have thrown a detailed light on Hindu religions and philosophy, festivals, customs and tradition, the social and economic as well as political life of the people. In each chapter he adopted a distinctive style and had a question in the beginning. It was followed by a description based on Sanskrit tradition, At last he compare the India culture with other culture. This geometric structure he followed is known for its precision and predictability. The main reason for this structure was Al-Biruni's mathematical orientation.

2. Compare and contrast the perspectives from which Ibn Battuta and Bernier wrote their accounts of their travels in India.

Ans: Both have written them accounts in their different prospectives. While Ibn Battuta describe everything that impressed and excited him because of his novelty, Bernier had followed a different intellectual tradition. He wrote whatever he saw in India. Bernier wanted to pin point the weakness of the Indian society and considered the Mughal India Inferior to European society. In his description Ibn Battuta recorded his observation about new culture, people, believes and values.

3. Discuss the picture of urban centres that emerges from Bernier's accout.

Ans: During the 17th century nearly 15% of population was living in town. This was average proportion of urban population of western Europe. Bernier described Mughal towns as court towns. By it he meant those towns which depended upon the imperial court for their existence and survival. These towns came into existence with the imperial court and declined with the impanel court when they moved to other places. In his travel accounts, Bernier described many big towns and cities such as Delhi, Mathura, Kashmir, Surat, Masulipatnam and Golconda. These gained importance as manufacturing centres, trading towns, and sacred towns. The merchant communities had deep influence in these cities. They remained organised due to their own caste and occupational bodies. These trading groups were known as Mahajans in western India. Their head was called Sheth. In Ahmedabad, the chief of Merchant community was known as nagarsheth. Besides the trading groups, musicians, architects, painters, lawyers, calligraphies, etc. lived in towns.

4. Analyse the evidence for slavery provided by Ibn Battuta.

Ans: Battuta has given a detailed description on the practice of slavery prevalent in India. Delhi Sultan-Muhammad bin Tughlaq had a large number of slaves. Most of these slaves were forcibly captured during the aggressions. Many people sold their children as a slave, because of acute poverty. Slaves were also offered as a gift during this time. Battuta when visited him, also brought many horses, camels and slaves for the Sultan to present him. Sultan Muhammad bin Tuglaq, himself had presented two hundred slaves to Nasiruddin a religious preacher.

Nobels are used to keep slave those days. Through these slaves, the Sultan used to get information about the activities of the noble

and all other important events of the empire.

The woman slaves served as servants in the house of the rich (nobles). These women informed the Sultan about the activities of their masters (i.e., nobles). Most of the slaves used to do domestic works and there was a lot of difference between the status of these slaves and the court slaves.

5. What were the elements of the practice of sati that drew the attention of Bernier?

Ans: The practice of sati according to Bernier showed the difference in the treatment of women in western and eastern society. He noticed how a child widow were forcefully burnt screaming on the funeral pyre while many of the older women were resigned their fate.

The following elements drew his attention.

(i) Under this cruel practices an alive widow was forcibly made to sit on the pyre of her husband.

(ii) People had no sympathy for her.

(iii) The widow was an unwilling victim of the sati-practice. She was forced to be a Sati.

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