



6. To what extent do you think caste was a factor in influencing social and economic relations in agrarian society?

Ans:

(i) Cultivators were divided on the basis of their caste and other caste-like distinctions or caste-based distinctions. Thus, among the peasants were many who worked as agricultural labourers (majurs) or worked as manacles. Thus, they were not allowed to live in villages. They resided outside the village and were assigned to do menial tasks and lacked resources. Thus, they were poverty-stricken.

(ii) Caste distinctions had also begun to permeate other communities as well. In Muslim communities menials were like halkhoron (scavengers). A direct relation existed between caste poverty and social status.

(iii) In the seventeenth century Marwar Rajputs are described as peasants and equated with jats. They were given an inferior status in the caste hierarchy.

(iv) Castes like Ahirs, Gujjars and Malis reached an elevated status in the eastern regions.

(v) The pastoral and fishing castes like the Sadgops and Kaivatas acquired the status of peasants.

7. How were the lives of forest dwellers transformed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? (or) Describe the lives of forest-dwellers in the 16-17th centuries.

Ans: Transformation in the lives of forest-dwellers (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries):

(i) Huge areas were covered with forests in the various parts of India in the 16th and 17th century. Forest-dwellers were called Jangli. The term 'Jungli' was used to describe those whose occupations included activities such as hunting, gathering of forest produce, and shifting cultivation. These activities were performed according to a specific reason in the various regions. Consider the example of the Bhils who fished in summer and collected forest produce in spring. Such activities enabled the forest tribes to be mobile which was a characteristic feature of their life.

(ii) As the state required elephants for the consolidation of a mighty army, the peskesh levied on the forest people to supply of elephants.

(iii) The lives of the forest-dwellers led to the spread of commercial agriculture. Forest products like honey, beeswax, gum and lac were in huge demand. Gum and lac became major items of overseas exports in the seventeenth century, and earned valuable foreign exchange.

(iv) Elephants were also captured and sold.

(v) Tribes like the Punjab Lohanis engaged in overland trade with Afghanistan and internal trade in Punjab as well.

(vi) Social factors were also responsible for transforming the lives of the forest-dwellers.

(vii) Many tribal chiefs became zamindars, some even became kings. They recruit people from their own tribes in their army. For example in Assam, the Ahom Kings depended on people who rendered military services in exchange of land.

(viii) By the sixteenth century, the transition from a tribal to a monarchical system had taken place. In Ain-i Akbari description has

been mentioned about the existence of tribal kingdoms in north-eastern India. Description is also made regarding the kings who fought and conquered a number of tribes. New cultural influences also entered in the forested areas. Probably sufi saints played a remarkable role in spreading Islam in these areas.

8. Examine the role played by zamindars in Mughal India.

Ans: The zamindars were the people who did not directly participate in the processes of agricultural production, but they enjoyed high status in the society.

(i) The zamindars considered their land as their property (milkiyat). They had control to sell, give and mortgage their property.

(ii) They enjoyed many social and economic privileges because of their superior status in society.

(iii) The zamindars belonged to the upper caste which added to their exalted status in society.

(iv) The zamindars rendered certain services (khidmat) for the state. As a result of their service they received and attained higher position in the state.

(v) The zamindars had the right to collect revenue on behalf of the state and also received financial compensation for this work.

(vi) The zamindars had kept strict control over the military resources of the state. They kept a fortress and a well knit armed unit comprising cavalry, artillery and infantry.

(vii) The zamindars also played significant role in developing the agricultural land. They helped in the settlements of farmers by lending them money and agricultural instruments. It resulted in an increase in agricultural produce and the sale and purchase of land by the zamindars. There are also evidences that the zamindars held bazaars. The farmers came to these bazaars to sell their crops.

(viii) If we observe social relation of village of Mughal age as a pyramid then zamindars were at the top. They occupied the highest position in the society.

(ix) No doubt the zamindars exploited the people but their relations with the farmers depended on their mutual togetherness and hereditary part on age. So, they were able to get peasants in case of the revolt against the state.

9. Discuss the ways in which panchayat and village headmen regulated rural society. (or) Explain the role of Panchayats in the Mughal rural Indian society during 16th-17th centuries.

Ans: Regulation of rural society by panchayats and headmen:

(i) Meaning of panchayat: The village panchayat consisted of an assembly of elders, they represent different castes and communities except the menial class. Usually important were people of the village with hereditary right over their property.

(ii) General composition and function: In the mixed caste village, the panchayat was usually a heterogeneous body. The panchayat represented different castes and communities in the village.

The village panchayat was headed by Muqaddam also known as mandal. He was elected with consensus of the village elders and remained in the office till he enjoyed the confidence of village elders. His function was to prepare village account with the help of patwari.

(i) The main function of panchayat was to ensure that caste boundaries among the various communities inhabiting the village were upheld.

(ii) It had also the authority to levy fines and taxes.

(iii) It can also give punishment like expulsion from the community.

(iv) Each Jati in the village had its own Jati panchayat. Jati Panchayat wielded considerable power in the society. In Rajasthan, the Jati panchayats arbitrated civil disputes between members of the different castes. It also mediated in disputes claims on land, decided whether marriages had been performed according to that castes norm, etc. In most cases, the state respected the decisions

taken by the Jati Panchayat.

(v) The panchayats were also regarded as the court of appeal, that would ensure that the state carried out its moral responsibilities.

(vi) For justice petitions were often made to the panchayat collectively by a group of caste or a community protesting against what they considered to be morally illegitimate demands on the part of elites.

(vii) In cases of excessive revenue demands, the panchayat often suggested a compromise. If this failed, the peasants took recourse to more drastic forms of punishment such as deserting the village.

10. On an outline map of world, mark the areas which had economic links with the Mughal Empire, and trace out possible routes of communication.

Ans: Iran, Afghanistan, China, the countries of Central and Western Asia, Italy, Portugal, France, Britain, Holland, etc.

Possible Routes: Trade that linked to Mughal Empire in India.

(i) Sea route via Atlantic ocean to Cape of Good Hope (South Africa), Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean.

(ii) Red Sea, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal to China Sea.

(iii) Land Route from Central Asia to Afghanistan through modern Pakistan upto Kerala or Goa.

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