

World History

The Specific Methods of Study

■ Topics of World History

- Demarcation of national boundary and the rise of nation state. (Although this is a phenomenon of 17th and 18th century, for gaining the proper knowledge of the topic one should broach first topics like Renaissance, Reformation, Commercial Revolution and Mercantilism before coming to the period of thirty years war.)
- **Enlightenment**– This topic requires a wide ranging discussion with reference to the modernization drive in Europe.
- **American Revolution** and American Constitution
- **French Revolution** and its Aftermath, particularly the Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte.
- **Liberalism and Nationalism in Europe and their impact on Europe** : Unification of Italy and Germany, Ottoman Empire and Balkan Issue.
- **Industrial Revolution** in Britain, Industrialization in Germany, Russia and Japan.
- **Imperialism** in Asia and Partition of Africa.
- **Origin and impact of the First World War** – political, economic and social impact, Paris Peace Conference and subjugation of defeated party, policy of Western powers towards Arab world and West Asia.
- **Global Economic Depression, Fascism and Nazism in Italy and Germany.**
- **Mussolini's and Hitler's foreign policy** and the Second World War, Its impact - Decolonization in Asia and Africa.
- **Cold War and NAM**, Big International Crises like Suez canal crisis, Cuba Missile crisis, Vietnam crisis, etc.
- **What is the larger significance of the study of world history?**
- As it is the part of the syllabus so it forms the part of the question paper as well. But

its indirect benefit is much larger than direct one. It opens the vistas of knowledge for various disciplines.

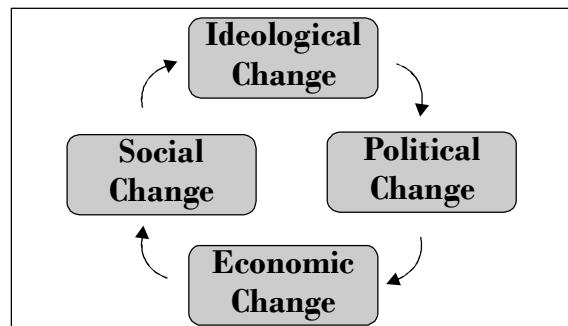
- **Gateway to the knowledge of international Relations** - All existing international issues pertaining to west Asia, Europe, America, Africa and southeast Asia etc. are having their antecedent in world history.

- **Proper understanding of evolution of international economy**- The background of global economy was prepared in course of Commercial Revolution and mercantilism in 17th century. Right from that period till the present era of neo-liberal economy the evolution can better be perceived through world history.

- **To perceive the ideological evolution of the world** - It is through the study of world history one can attain the knowledge of important ideology such as liberalism, nationalism, socialism, Marxism, Anarchism, Fascism, Post modernism etc.

- **What should be the proper strategy for the study of world history?**

- To study history means to underline the elements of change in political, economic, social and cultural fields. Simultaneously, the intrinsic relations among different fields i.e. political, economic etc. also need to be underlined. Following diagram denotes it-

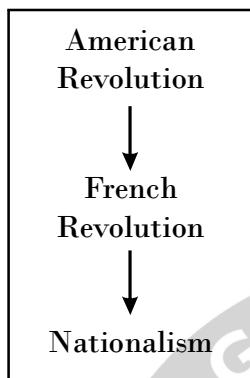


- The diagram imparts that changes are interrelated. Change in economic structure brings social change through accentuating change in class equation. It means the decline of the old class and the rise of a

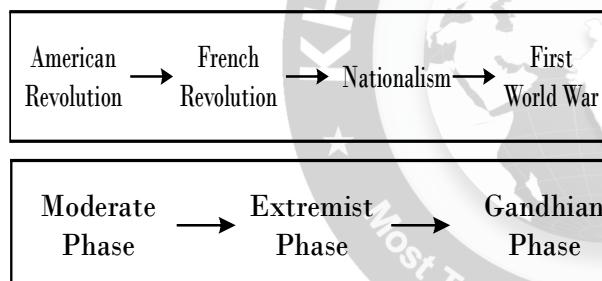
new one. It gives supports to ideological change as newly emerged class would give support to a new ideology. Again ideological factor gives boost to the change in other fields. Thus change continuous .

■ **The specific methods of study**

- **Vertical approach**– To make a wide study of a single topic such as-



- **Horizontal Approach**– To link one topic to other while underlining the elements of change-



World History (Part-I)

Emergence of Ancient & Medieval World

- World, which is visible today, is completely different from what it had appeared to be thousand of years earlier. We need to underline the elements of changes while going through years after years, decades after decades and century after century while measuring the contours of world history. Then a complete picture comes before us.
- But before making a survey of world history we should be aware of the fact that more or less world history is still obsessed with Euro-Centric approach. That's why changes which occurred in different parts of the world are generally viewed in relation to western world. Moreover, the history of modern world starts with colonization of rest by west. Obviously, it is a compulsion for us to observe the progress of world history while keeping Europe in the centre.

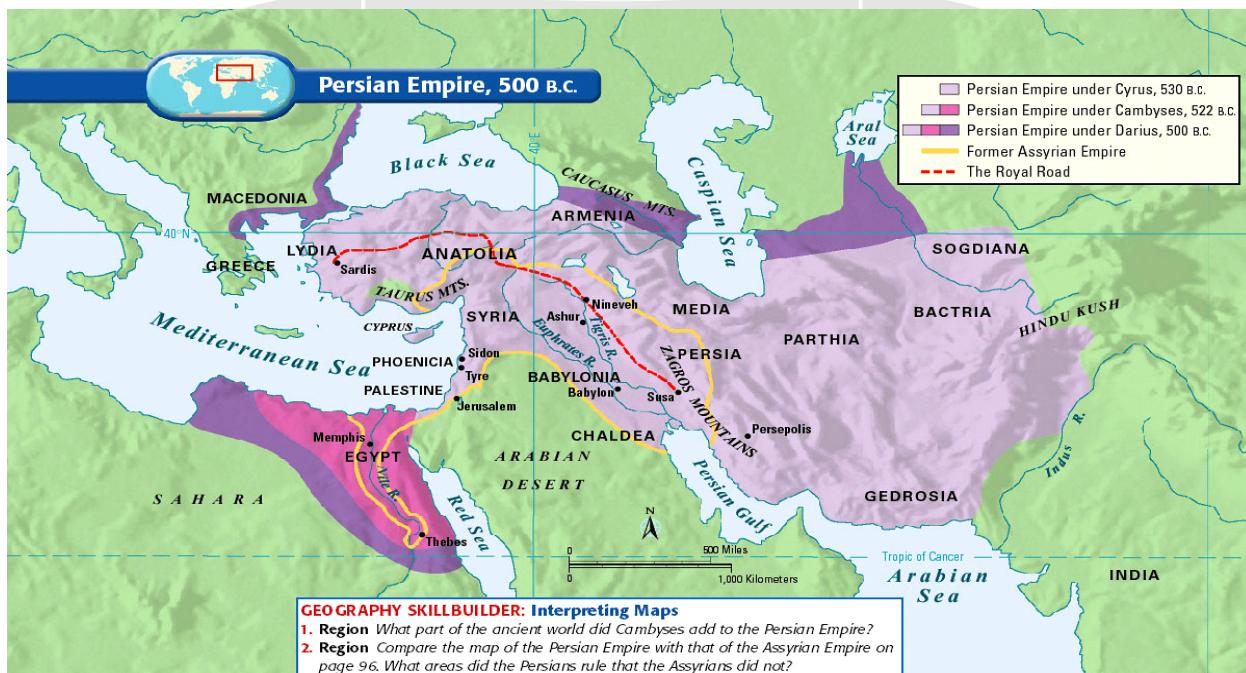
Ancient Europe

■ Political Structure-

- **Persian Empire-** Nearly in 700 BCE, Persian Empire emerged to be a world empire under the great monarchs like Cyrus and Darius first. It is characterised as the

first world empire. It covered a vast region, Aegean sea to North West India including North-west Africa and a part of central Asia. As a Greek scholar Herodotus noted that Indian region was 20th kshatrap (province) of Persian empire and this region used to provide to Persian government 360 talent of gold per annum as tax.

Greek Empire- Up to 4th century the decline of the empire set in and it created a political vacuum in the region which could be filled up by the rise of a Greek empire under Philip and his son Alexander. In fact, among Greek states Macedonia emerged to be a powerful state under an ambitious king Philip. He conquered Italian city-states. In 336 BCE, he was succeeded by his son Alexander the great, who established a Greek empire on the ruins of Persian one. His empire included the vast area of Anatolia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Persia, Afghanistan, some parts of Central Asia and a part of North West India upto the river Vyas, beyond which Alexander's soldier refused to move further. Just parallel to it, Magadh Empire was being created in India. It expanded from the river Beas in the west to Bengal in east to the river





Godavari in South India. Then just after Alexander's exit from India Magadhan empire took a formidable size after seizing even the Greek region in north-west. This empire stretched upto Hindukush in north-west to Brahmgiri in Karnataka. If we are moving further east in China under Qin dynasty empire-building started, although Qin dynasty quickly disappeared. Then, Han dynasty appeared which unified a vast region under an empire and maintained it for coming four centuries.

- Once again returning to the west we can underline the demise of Alexander's empire just after his death in 323 BCE. It was divided among his there ambitious military commanders. One of them Selyucus Nikator got the empire of Syria which was situated in the neighborhood of Mauryan Empire under Chandragupta Maurya. As an Empire works as a carrier of culture, so Alexander's imperialistic project was accompanied by the spread of Greek language, Greek script and Greek culture including Hellenistic art. Later eastern expansion of Roman Empire was supported by the same Greek cultured world created earlier by Alexander.

- Roman Empire—** Nearly three hundred years after Alexander, there appeared a new empire, Roman Empire. During ancient period Roman Empire was the largest and the longest empire. Its nucleus region was Italy but quickly it covered whole Mediterranean region. In 509 BCE Roman state was established as a republic. Earlier than that even Greek city - states were founded as tiny republics. But from modern standard, the term republic should not be applied either to ancient Greek or ancient Rome, as there the actual power was being enjoyed by a handful of elites. Under the Roman states these elites were known as patrician.

- But whatever was the nature of the republic, later republican form of government gave way to monarchy under ambitious rulers like Augustus and Tiberius. Upto early Christian century, Roman empire became formidable in size particularly when it came to conquer Carthage Empire in northern Africa. Then, at the time of Diocletian, the empire was divided into two - Western Roman Empire and Eastern Roman empire or Byzantine Empire. The capital of Western Roman Empire was Rome while that of the

Eastern Roman Empire was Constantinople. In Roman Empire, Greek and Latin both languages were officially encouraged. Eastern part of the empire more directly inherited the legacy of Greek civilisation.

- From 3rd century onwards, Western Roman Empire came to face the onslaught of German invasion as a result of which, Western Roman Empire broke into pieces while eastern Roman empire continued for the next 1000 years, till the Turkish invasion eclipsed it in 1453.

■ **Economic Condition-**

- Whenever we are studying about ancient world empires we can underline two important features about these empires:- Firstly these empires represented a very complex economic structure. In other words, the process of empire building was deeply linked to the initiative of having control over important trade routes. These are true of almost all empires i.e. Persian Empire, Greek Empire and Roman Empire. All were inclined to have control over the main trade routes in West Asia, Central Asia and also the routes leading to the east. Not simply that, to a greater extent even their survival depended over their ability to control these routes. Apart from that, in ancient Greece and Rome, slavery system was prevalent. Their agrarian economy was based on slave labour.

■ **Social condition-**

- The society of ancient Greek and Roman empire was mainly divided into two categories—the masters and the slaves. The landlords generally lived a luxurious life upon slave labour.

■ **Religious Condition-**

- Polytheism was prevalent in ancient Greece and Rome and idol worship was also prevalent. Later, in west Asia, Judaism flourished and it professed monotheism. Its prophet was Abraham. Further, Jews were settled in Syria-Palestine region first which fell under the control of Roman Empire and then persecution of Jews started as

monotheism propagated by Judaism was incompatible with idol worship promoted by cult of monarchy under Roman Empire. Later in the same region Jesus Christ was born. He was born at Bethlehem in Jerusalem. At the age of 30 after receiving a message from God he continued to propagate his ideas. Even Christian theology was based on monotheism. Monotheism of Christianity and Jesus Christ's communion with commoners both were offensive to Roman Empire. In fact, Christian concept of monotheism was antithetical to idol worship promoted by the Roman Empire. Likewise, Jesus' cacophony with the common people gave a signal to the Roman Empire that he was likely to organise a rebellion against the empire. Thus, he was crucified by Roman Governor of Judia. Earlier the identity of Christianity was blurred with that of Judaism, but later it got recognition as a separate sect.

Medieval Europe

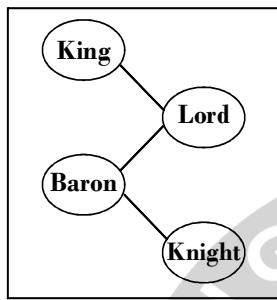
■ **Political Structure-**

- Western Roman Empire declined upto the end of 5th century CE due to persistent barbarous German invasions. Then invaders were neither having inclination nor sagacity to revive the empire again, therefore different German tribal chiefs started to rule independently in different regions. Later, as a result of internecine conflict and coordination a hierarchical political system was created under different chiefs. At the same time, with the disintegration of Western Roman Empire, decline was visible in long distance trade, money economy, urban centers as well. All these changes combined together were characterized as genesis of feudalism in Europe.

■ **Feudalism-**

- Feudalisation of administrative structure was one of the most important features of medieval Europe. As we have observed earlier due to barbaric German invasion

Western Roman Empire disintegrated. Then invading German tribes neither had acumen nor inclination to revive the empire again. Instead different chiefs preferred to establish their rule in different regions and continued to collect taxes from peasantry. In absence of any organised state for securing protection even peasants submitted before local chiefs. Thus emerged feudalism which was based on a hierarchy in which king was on the upper most level.

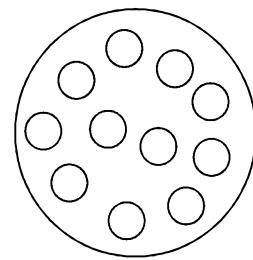


- The king used to provide jagir to lords or Earl who in return rendered military service to the king. Then even the lord offered a part of his fief to a subordinate Baron who also used to give patronage to Knights. All were bound to each other through loyalty and patronage. In this system the position of the king was weak as he depended on subordinate lords for military support and also for feudal dues.

Economic Structure-

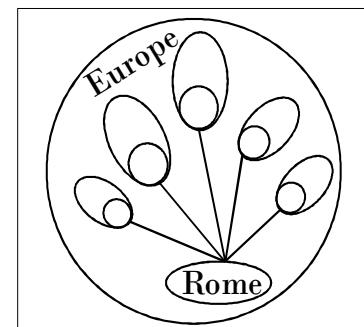
- Feudalism was having an economic dimension too. After the fall of the Roman Empire, trade and urban economy were also declined. Feudalism is marked by ruralisation of economy in which trade and money economy played an insignificant role. On other side, the role of agrarian economy increased. Both feudal lords and peasants were dependent on agrarian economy. The feudal lords used to make the peasants tied to the land. Peasants or tenents could not vacate the land and had to provide free labour on certain days of the week. This was called serfdom.

Europe- Feudalism



Universal Church System-

- Earlier Christianity was simple and free from rituals and it was ideologically inspired by two saints, Saint Paul and Saint Augustine who emphasized on the efficacy of 'faith'. But later Christianity came to be guided by the ideas of two other saints Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas. These saints gave specific emphasis over 'Good works' but the term was defined in a parochial manner. It meant 'guidance by the priests and seven sacraments'.
- Thus started Universal Church System which came to dominate socio-cultural life of European people. Apart from that, church came to own landed property as well. Under this system headquarter of Church was established at Rome while its branches were spread to different parts of Europe. It was headed by the Pope of Rome and patronized by Holy Roman Empire.
- The regional churches used to impose religious taxes on the people. They had monopoly over education and knowledge.



Universal Church System

Rise of Islam and Crusades-

- Arabian region was a desert region. Expect some green felt at Mecca there was dearth

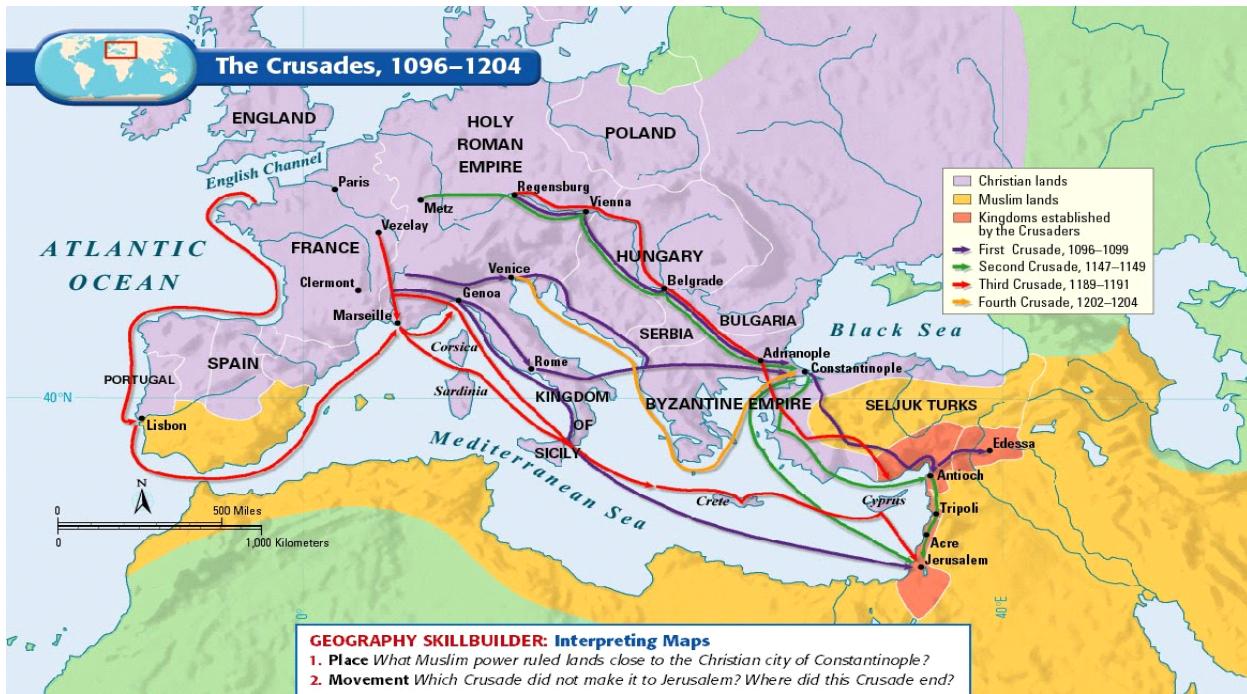
- of agriculture land. This region was peopled by different tribesmen who were known as Bedouin. As an occupation they adopted trade because due to continuous military conflict between Byzantine Empire and Sasanian Empire the main trade route was disturbed. So a new route through Syria and Yaman provided these tribes new opportunity in trade. Even Prophet Muhammad associated with a tribe known as ‘Quraysh’. Most of the tribes were idolater. Mecca, apart from being an economic centre, was a religious centre as well. On a wall of a structure at Mecca there was a black stone. It was known as Kaba. Different tribes placed an idol of their god in the shrine of Mecca.
- In relations among different tribes apart from religious issue, economic issue also was involved. Due to continuous intra tribal conflict and war, trade was hampered. Islam through propagating monotheism and the concept of universal God, tried to remove tribal and religious division both. In 610 Muhammad had an intense spiritual experience, which marked the beginning of prophethood for him. Within a few years, Muhammad had a small group of Meccan followers who accepted his religious ideas. They came to be known as Muslims i.e. those who had submitted to Allah. The religion itself was called Islam, a term implying submission.
- But very soon prophet was opposed by vested interest in Mecca. Its interest was threatened by undiluted monotheism propagated by prophet. So Mecca turned to be a hot bed for prophet who departed to Medina with his followers due to safety reasons. This incident took place in 622 and in the history of Islam this incident was marked by the beginning of Hijri era. It was at Medina that prophet laid the foundation of Islamic state. Islam was different in nature from of other sects, as under Islam religious and temporal power both were combined into a single person

that was Prophet Muhammad. After him a series of caliphs continued his line of succession. Prophet captured Mecca in 630 dint of military force. So, Mecca and Medina became twin centres of Islam. He died in 632 and he was succeeded by some four caliphs –Abu Bakra, Umar, Usman and Ali.

Islam apart from being a religious movement proved to be the biggest political movement in the history of medieval age. The fight which prophet had started for capturing Mecca was soon converted into a fight for expansion. Following factors made a contribution to expansionist policy under Islam. Firstly, Prophet Muhammad was declared to be the last one in a series of prophets which started with Abraham (prophet of Jews and he was followed by Jesus Christ). But difference lies in the fact that Islam claimed that prophet Muhammad’s message was the latest and most authentic version. This made other religious sects incompatible with Islam.

Secondly, Arabian society was a tribal society and there were many war mongering tribes which even after converting to Islam could not be turned into a peace loving community suddenly. Thus through the slogan of ‘Jihad’ internal conflict was channelized outside. Lastly, Islamic state was in need of more and more resources which could have been managed through war booties. This started unrestricted expansion of Islamic power conquering the region of Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Persia, Central Asia and Sind in India. It also reached the door step of Europe. That resulted into Crusades.

Crusades- Three Crusades were fought between Christian state of Europe and Islamic power in the period between 1095 and 1291 in order to capture the region of Jerusalem. This was caused due to the expansionist policy of Islam on one hand and changing political-economic condition of Europe on the other. In Europe, clergy



and aristocratic class were seeking peace for promoting prosperity in Europe. So, internal conflict was consciously exported outside and at the initiative of Byzantine emperor Alexios I and Pope Urban II Christian army moved to Syria and Jerusalem which had remained to be sacred place for Jews, Christian and Islam all.

- One creative impact of this destructive incident was opening of new routes to the east.
- **Society of Medieval Europe-** The society of Medieval Europe was divided into three sections-
 1. **Aristocratic class-** The feudal elites were at the top of the society. They had landed property and belonged to the privileged section of society.
 2. **Clergy class-** After the establishment of Universal Church System, a clergy class came into existence. It also had privileges. Since the churches had landed property, therefore they themselves became a landowner in the name of the Church.
 3. **Commoners-** Rest of the population such as peasants, craftmen and artisans etc belonged to the category of commoners. They fell in the category of non-privileged section of the society and so they were

supposed to pay all kinds of taxes.

■ **Holy Roman Empire-**

- Holy Roman Empire originated out of Roman Empire. After disintegration of Western Roman Empire German tribesmen got settled in different regions. Among German tribes, Franco tribe played very significant role in history. It occupied the region of Gaul and created a powerful dynasty known as Carolingian dynasty under Charles Martin who earned a big name and fame after defeating Islamic army in the battle of Tours in 732. His successor, Pepin, created a big empire. Then most powerful and prestigious ruler in this dynasty was Charlemang on whose head, the Pope of Rome put the crown with his own hand and declared him to be the Holy Roman emperor. Till Crusades continued between Christian and Muslim power, Holy Roman Empire played a significant role in it and after Crusades it continued to work as a protector of the Roman Catholic Church system. After the decline of Carolingian dynasty, the Habsburg dynasty came to play the same role.

- During medieval period of Europe three institutions- Feudalism, Universal Church System and Holy Roman Empire existed and they worked as bulwark against

change. Therefore, for the rise of modern west the demise of these institutions was imperative.



■ Decline of Constantinople (1453)-

- The decline of Constantinople proved the game changer from the view point of the rise of overseas trade. In fact in 1453 Seljuk Turks defeated Byzantine Empire and captured its capital Constantinople. Constantinople was situated on a prime geographical location or at intersection of routes going to India. So almost all the routes leading to the East, were blocked by Islamic power. This incident encouraged sea voyages leading to the discovery of America, India and other regions. Actually, the introduction of new technologies like compass and astrolabes made sea-faring a bit safe.



- The basic motive was the economic gain from Oriental trade but even lofty ideals

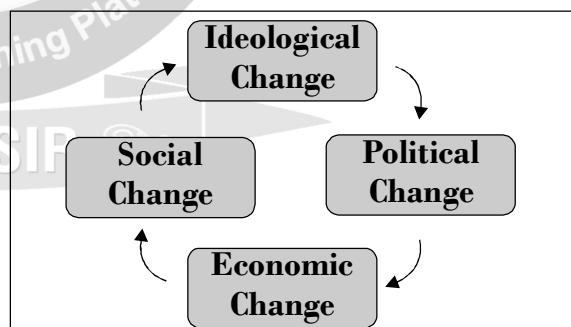
like national prestige as well as spread of Christianity were added to it. Thus was given the slogan 'Gold, Glory and God'.

- As the result of sea voyages, up to the 17th century except Australia and interior region of Africa almost all the regions came to light. So, European coloniser started to subjugate indigenous people in Latin America and northern America popularly known as Red Indians, likewise the indigenous people of Africa. On the other hand Asian States were too powerful to be subdued. Hence, in Asia, European merchants came initially with folded hands seeking permission for trade. These incidents heralded the advent of modern age in Europe.

Rise of Modern West

- Changes were required for the rise of modern west and the following formula can be used to understand the process of change-

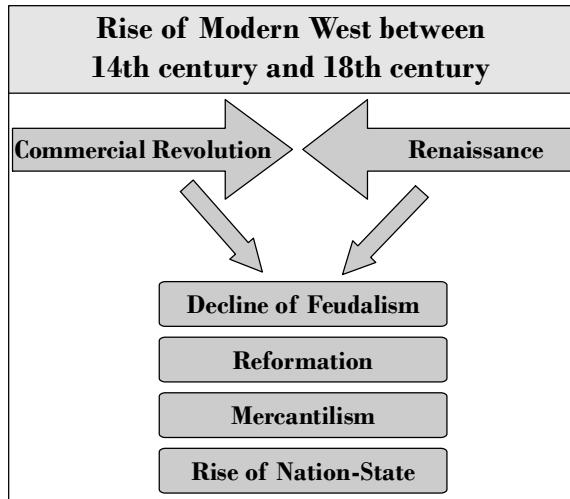
Economic Change → Changing class equation → Social Change → Ideological-Cultural Change → Political Change.



- The formula is very simple. Material change or economic change is the prime mover. As there is a change in economy, the hegemony of the dominant class faces challenges from the newly emerging class. It brings changes in social structures. Change in social structure led to the rise of a new class. Naturally with the emergence of a new class, a new school of ideology emerges and this new ideology brings political change.

Thus is created a cycle of change which is an ongoing process.

- Therefore, rise of modern west can be explained through the prism of the process of change. Moreover, the change in economic structure was accentuated through Commercial Revolution.

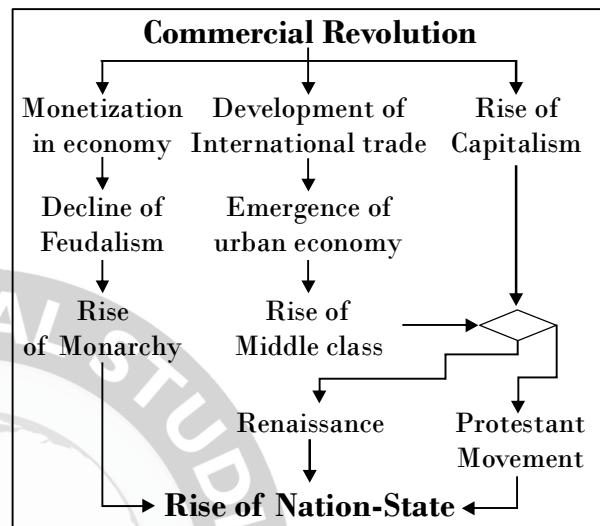


- Commercial Revolution-** From 11th century onwards there was a structural change in economy as a result of which regional, static and feudal economy of Europe transformed into a world, dynamic and capitalist economy. Even banking and currency system came into existence.

- Factors behind growing commercial activities-**

- Some **technological innovation** in agriculture ensured better agrarian surplus, a part of which came to the market. Consequently, monetization of economy increased and it created rupture in feudal structure as lords preferred cash in place of service. As a result of which, a prosperous landed class came into existence and this class raised the demand for goods.
- The role of crusades-** Even crusades brought a major jerk in the economy. It opened trade route between North Western Europe and West Asia (Jerusalem). Thus, it gave a fresh boost to trade and Commerce.
- Decline of Constantinople (1453)-** It led to sea-voyages and also to discovery of new

regions America, India and other parts of the world except Australia and interior region of Africa. Although America was discovered as a matter of chance but it proved much beneficial for European trading countries as it is through precious metal procured from America, Asian trade could have been sustained.



- Impact of Commercial Revolution-** As we know, the Commercial Revolution brought structural change in Europe and this change paved the way for further changes. These changes are as follows -

- Decline of Feudalism-** Feudalism implied a hierarchical structure in which a series of intermediaries were bound together through loyalty and patronage. But technological progress as well as development of three-field system manifested surplus agrarian production. As feudal system was based on a self sufficient economy, surplus production made the feudal structure crumbled. In other words, as a result of growing monetization in economy feudal structure could not survive because landlords preferably started to demand money instead of free labour from tenants.
- Rise of Autocratic Monarchy in Europe-** As a result of the decline of feudalism, which was a pan-European institution, European monarchs were most benefited. He tried to restore his power and also tried to

demarcate a national boundary. Among these rulers, Henry VI and Henry VIII of Britain, Henry IV of France, Frederick the Great of Prussia and Joseph-II of Austria were prominent.

- 3. Rise of Capitalism-** Decline of feudalism led to the rise of capitalism. Capitalism represented a different mode of production. While feudalism was a system based on agrarian system, limited exchange and personal loyalty but capitalism was based on money economy and profit-making. It does not assess the value of a product on the basis of its internal merit but on its demand. It functions on market mechanism. Even capitalism underwent different phases. Earliest phase of capitalism was commercial phase. In this

phase there was formation of mammoth seized trading companies which were procuring the products from one region and distributing them to others. Later, it entered into industrial phase and that of financial phase.

- 4. Rise of Middle Class-** European society in medieval period was divided into three sections- aristocratic class, clergy class and commoners. But commercial activities gave birth to a new social class, mercantile class, which came to be characterized as the middle class.
- It is worth noting that earlier, whereas the European society was driven by the interest of the aristocratic as well as the clergy class, later it came to be guided by that of the middle class.

