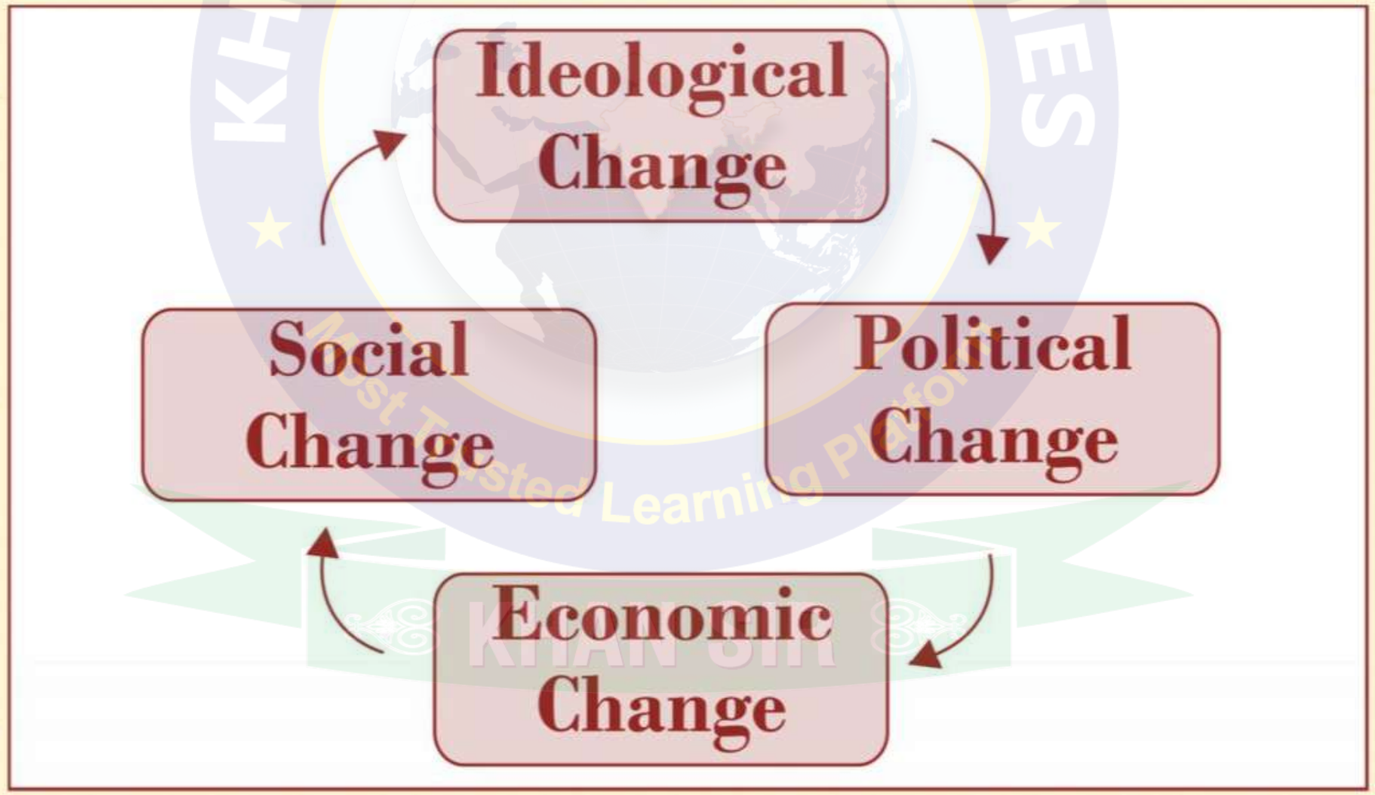
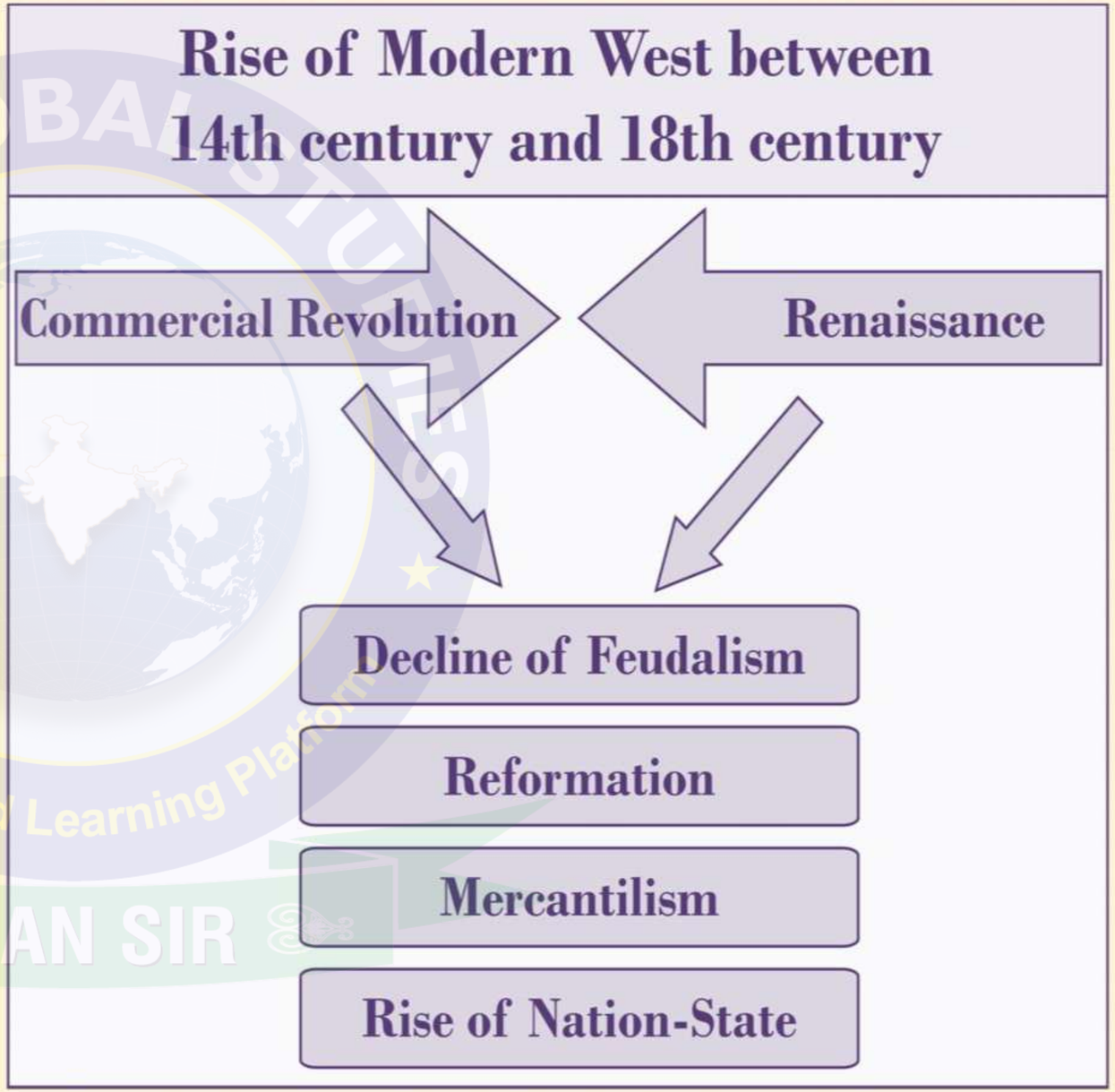
Rise of Modern West

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



- 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. 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.



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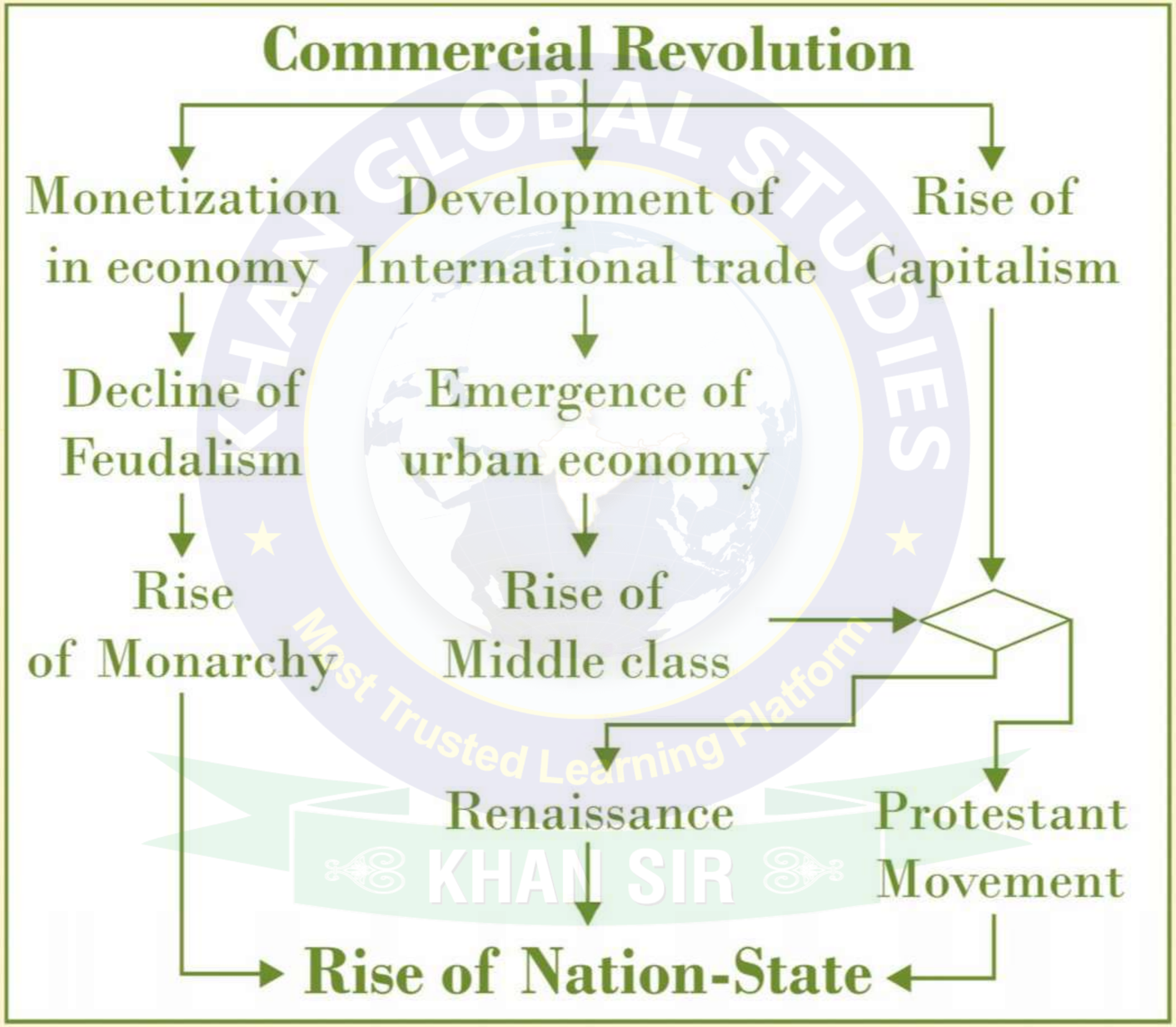
- **Commercial Revolution-** From 11th century onwards there was a structural change in economy as a result of which regional, static and feudal economy of Europe transformed into a world, dynamic and capitalist economy. Even banking and currency system came into existence.

- **Factors behind growing commercial activities-**

1. **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.

2. **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.
3. **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.



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- **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 -

1. **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.

2. **Rise of Autocratic Monarchy in Europe-** As aresult 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.

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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.

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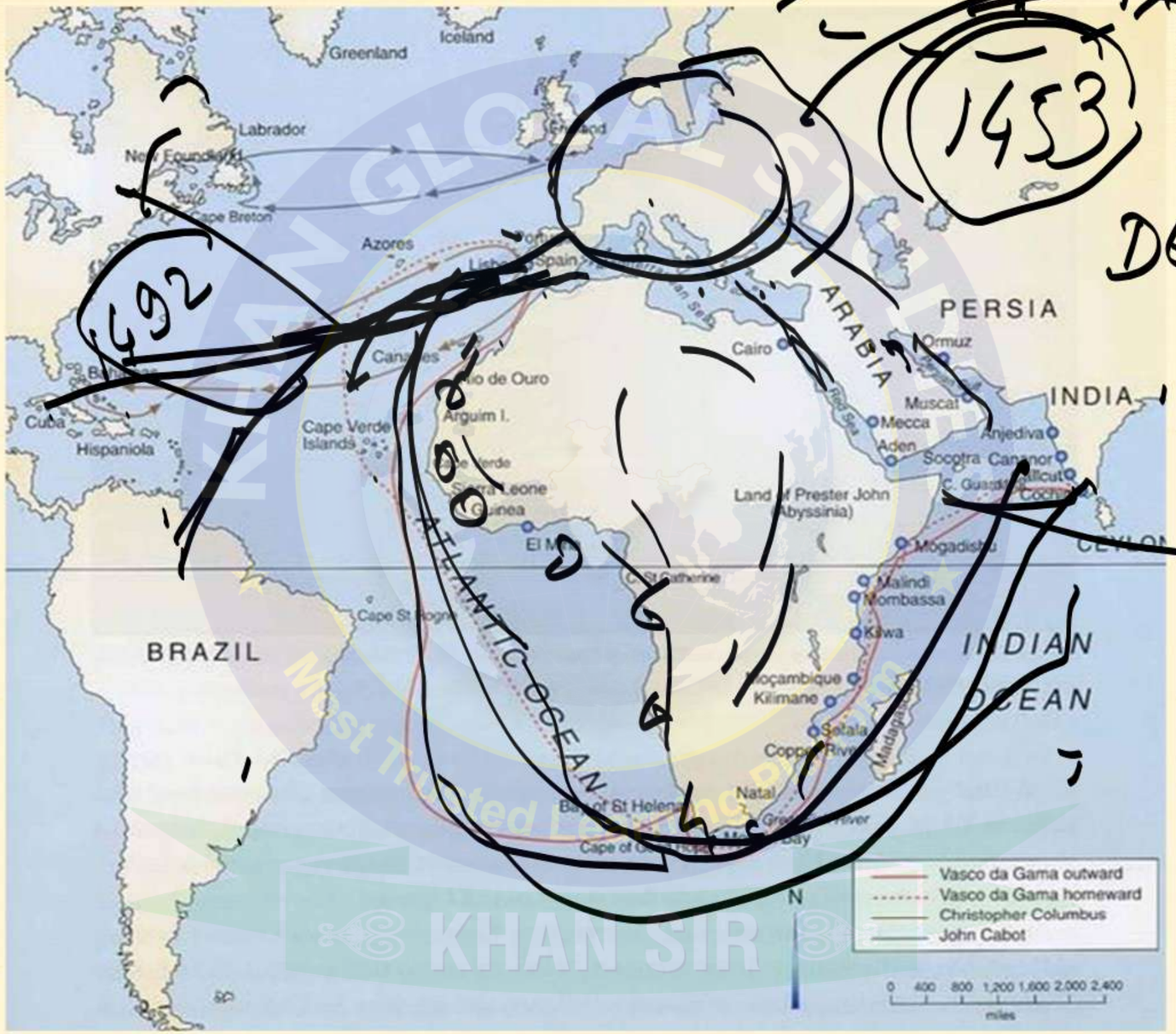

1492

1453

Turks ottoman finish Constantinople

Decline of Constantinople

Commercial Revolution

- Money economy

Commercial Revolution

- Growth of money economy
  - Decline of feudalism
  - Revival of monarchy
- Rise of capitalism
  - Mercantile phase
  - Industrial phase
  - Financial phase
- Rise of a mercantile class or a middle class
  - Renaissance
  - Reformation

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Commercial Revolution

13th century onwards

(i) Technological upgradation in Agricul-

(ii) [illegible]

3. Decline of Constantinople - 1453

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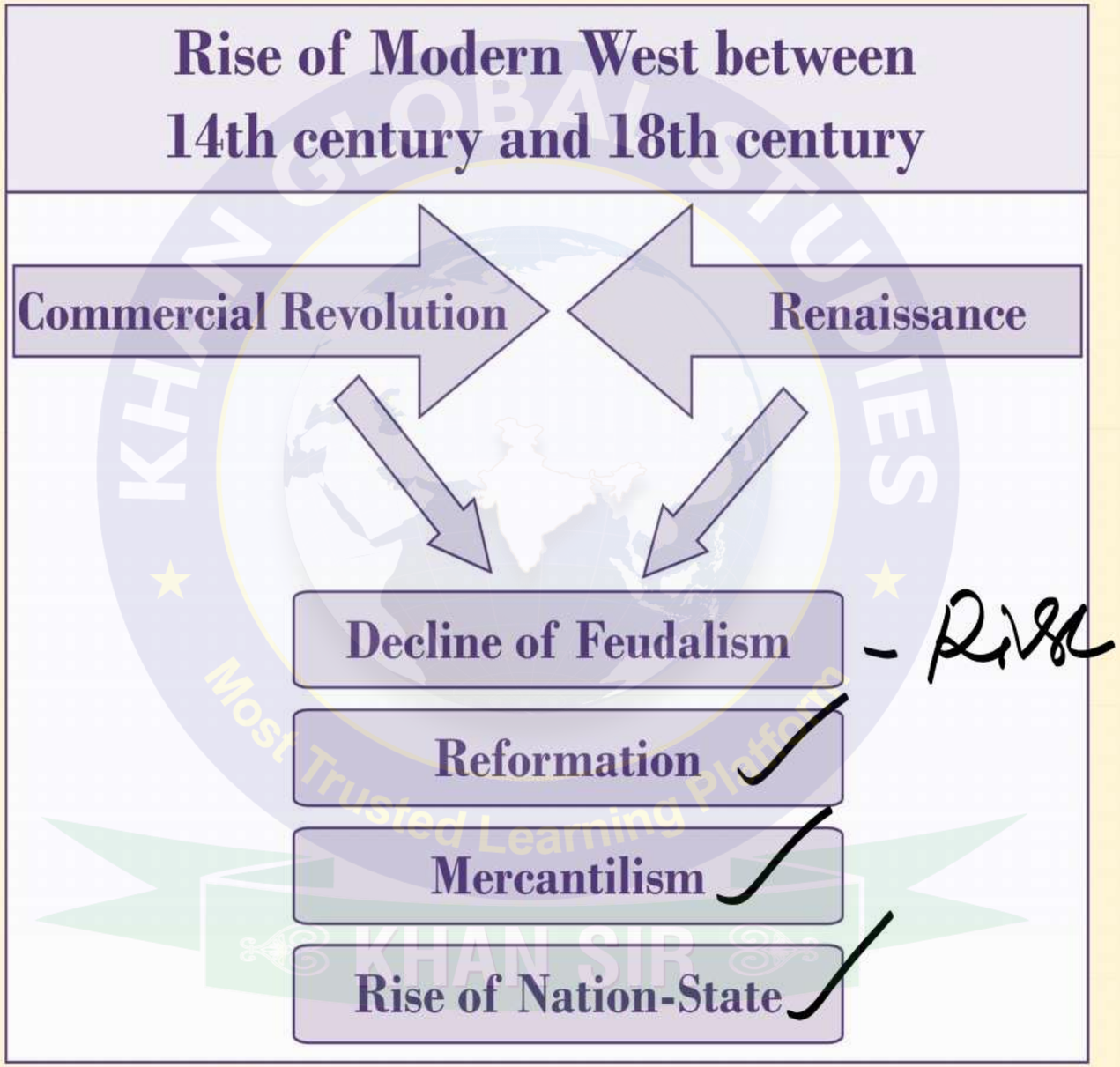

- Rise of Capitalism

14th century and 16th century

Renaissance

1. Sea voyages
(Greek civilisations — (Roman civilisations)

Humanism — Greek and Roman classical Literature.

(1) Printing press

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Renaissance

- The period between 14th century and 16 century is marked by intellectual fermentation that was called renaissance. The literal meaning of Renaissance is 'reawakening'. It reflects an attitude of mind so, it is supposed to be an ideological-attitudinal change of European people. As a result of sea-voyages as well as geographical expansion, there was an exchange between Western and Eastern ideas and cultural values. At the same time, application of printing press boosted wider circulation of new ideas. The Renaissance was a mood or outlook, it was not an intellectual revolution. Its emphasis was on the following factors-

- **Curiosity and the spirit of enquiry-** The attraction towards worldly life inspired a new kind of curiosity among the scholars. This factor encouraged scientific discovery. Thus emerged the great scientists of the age, Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and Newton. When Newton saw the fruit falling down, he formulated gravitational theory having been inspired by curiosity.
- **Spirit of adventure-** The growing importance of human strengthened the spirit of adventure in him. This encouraged geographical exploration and great voyages.
- **Humanism-** It emphasized the dignity of man and material age.

- **Individualism-** Greater importance attached to an individual led to composition of autobiography. For example, an artist, Cellini wrote his autobiography for the first time.
- **Secularism-** Here secularism means the criticism of those priests, in whose words and actions there was a greater dichotomy. It led to ~~decline~~ neutralising the impact of religion on human mind. In this way Renaissance encouraged new culture in Europe.

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- **Impact of Renaissance-** In fact, the element of humanism, individualism and secularism became the basic ethos of the European civilization. It was that ethos which got expression in the compositions of Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Cervantes, paintings of Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci etc. as well as in the political philosophy of Machiavelli etc. Likewise, the idea of secularism gave impetus to the Protestant movement.

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Reformation

- When we talk about the Reformation two different pictures appeared before us. First one is that of Counter-reformation Movement which, under the influence of renaissance, targeted internal reforms within Roman Catholic Church system.
- The second one trend was a revolt against Universal Church System. That is known as Protestant Movement. It was first organised by a German priest Martin Luther. In 1517, he stuck 95 theses to the wall of the church of Wittenberg. He demanded a reply from the Pope. It symbolised an open revolt against Roman Catholic Church system.

Reformation

Counter-Reformation

Economic
political
factors

Protestant Movement
by
Martin Luther.

1517

Reasons - (1) Religious corruption -
Views of Church
Sale of indulgences

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- Whenever we compare renaissance with reformation, we find that renaissance remained to be an intellect movement with elite base but the protestant movement was having a popular character.
- Very soon it spread as a forest fire. In Germany itself another reformer Calvin became active while Zwingli carried the movement in Switzerland.

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The factors which inspired the movement–

- If we explore the causes of the protestant movement, we find that a religious cause was definitely there. But we should be aware of the fact that religious cause was not a major factor behind that. It was particularly due to the fact that reforms had already started within the Roman Catholic Church system under the influence of Counter Reformation. Hence, it was the contemporary economic and political factor which made protestant movement inevitable.
- **Corrupt religious practices-** Religious corruption was a big scar on the face of the Roman Catholic Church system and its climax being the sale of indulgences (in return of money priest were giving guarantee of heaven in life after death).

- **The interest of the mercantile class-** As for the economic factor, we can say that this period was marked by extending trade and Commerce. Usury and profit making were the backbone of trade while the Roman Catholic Church denounced them. On the other hand, Protestants tried to legitimise usury and profit making. In this way it gave ideological support to rising capitalism in Europe. German sociologist, Max Weber, in his famous text 'Protestant ethics and spirit of capitalism' projected Protestantism as a major factor behind the rise of capitalism. So, Protestantism got the support of the mercantile class.

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- **Political ambition of European Monarchs-** As for the political factor, we can say this period was marked by the rise of nationalist consciousness. Gradually different regions, cemented through linguistic and cultural uniformity and under the leadership of ambitious monarchs, were being crystallized into a nation but Universal Church system was antithetical to nationalist aspiration. That's why even some ambitious monarchs encouraged the protestant Movement in order to consolidate their own position.
- So, in conclusion we can say that economic and political factors played a more decisive role in the protestant movement.

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Impact –

- **Rise of nation-state-** It paved the way for the rise of the nation-state by creating a rupture in the Universal Church System.
- **Rise of capitalism-** It gave a major boost to capitalism by providing legitimacy to money lending and profit making.

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Mercantilism

- Subsequently, commercial revolution assumed some new features which came to be known as mercantilism. Mercantilism was an economic programme guided by a political objective. In other words, earlier commercial revolution had been channelized according to the interest of the emerging middle class but when it came to be shaped according to the interests of emerging absolutist monarchy of Europe it was known as mercantilism. Mercantilism had the following features –

1. **Bullionism-** It meant seeking and preserving precious metal. In 16 century and 17 century Europe, gold and silver were taken as the mark of prosperity. So whichever country possessed a larger quantity of precious metal was supposed to be prosperous and powerful.

2. **Favourable balance of trade-** If some country did not own precious metal, it hardly mattered but it should have increased its export in comparison to its import so that the balance of trade could have been maintained in its favour.
3. **Colonialism-** Another aspect of mercantilism was colonialism. A colony was supposed to promote the interest of the metropolitan state (That which develops colony). Colony was compelled to provide precious metal if possible, if not it was expected to work as a supplier of raw material and to provide a market for finished goods.

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4. **Economic nationalism-** For the balance of trade to be maintained in its favour, the nation concerned had to maintain a higher level of production. So economic self-reliance became the main mantra that's why European governments forcefully encouraged production. It is said that in Britain, a legislation was initiated for the removal of slothness (laziness). If someone was caught sitting idle without work he was punished.

- During the period of mercantilism , the mercantile class or the middle class adopted a policy of cooperation towards the monarchy, while the monarchy strengthened its position against the feudal class with the support of the emerging middle class. So we consider mercantilism as an economic program guided by a political objective.

Rise of Nation-State

Contributory factors-

- **Decline of feudalism-** Due to growing monetization and surplus production feudalism crumbled. So the demolition of feudal structures could have resulted into either political anarchy or rule by the people. But in the meantime ambitious monarchs of Europe stepped into fill up the vacuum and tried to reassert their position.
- **Protestant movement (Reformation)-** It created rupture within Roman Catholic Church system which had so far worked as a hurdle behind demarcating the boundary of nation-state.

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- **Mercantilism-** It strengthened the economic base of the nation-state. Actually, it was from the rubble of the feudalism that absolutist monarchy emerged. Now these monarchs were no more dependent on feudal levy. They established a modern taxation system, insured prosperity of treasury through promoting mercantilist policy and they created a standing army and appointed professional bureaucracy. Louis XI in France, Maxmilian in Austria, Henry VII in England and Isabella and Ferdinand in Spain were absolutist monarchs who started organising standing army, a professional bureaucracy and national taxation.

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- **Renaissance-** As an impact of renaissance old Roman code of law was revived and this code gave much emphasis over the power of monarchy.
- **Ideological support by scholars-** Scholars like Hobbes and Bodin advocated for powerful monarchy as they believed only powerful monarchy could ensure peace and stability in society.

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Thirty Years War & Treaty of Westphalia (1618 – 1648)

- Thirty years war and the treaty of Westphalia gave a big blow to the old order. Thirty years war proved to be a turning point in European politics. In 1630 it started on a religious issue when Holy Roman emperor Ferdinand II tried to punish Protestants of Bohemia. Very soon it took the form of an all European war based on the polarisation between Catholic power and protestant States. This war stretched for 18 long years.

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Europe 1648 (Treaty of Westphalia)
boundary of Holy Roman Empire
Brandenburg-Prussia
Austrian Habsburg
Spanish Habsburg
Swedish possessions
Venetian possessions
Ottoman empire
0 200 mi
0 400 km
NORWAY
SWEDEN
Stockholm
ESTONIA
LIVONIA
North Sea
DENMARK
Baltic Sea
DUCHY OF PRUSSIA
Königsberg
RUSSIA
UNITED NETH.
Amsterdam
Hamburg
POMERANIA
BRANDENBURG
Warsaw
Kiev
SPANISH NETH.
Munster
WEST-PHALIA
SAXONY
POLAND
Paris
Heidelberg
BOHEMIA
AUSTRIA
Vienna
UKRAINE
BAVARIA
STYRIA
MOLDAVIA
Budapest
FRANCE
TYROL
CARINTHIA
CRIMEA
SWITZ.
SAVOY
PIEDMONT
MILAN
HUNGARY
WALLACHIA
Black Sea
Genoa
Belgrade
VENETIAN REPUBLIC
PAPAL STATES
MONTE-NEGRO
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
PORTUGAL
Madrid
SPAIN
Corsica
Rome
Naples
Constantinople
Sardinia
KINGDOM OF THE TWO SICILIES
Ionian Islands
Palermo
Crete
Mediterranean Sea

- The most interesting aspect of this war is a sharp turn from religious to strategic interest of the European powers. An issue of dynastic supremacy came to be attached with this war. In fact, Holy Roman Emperor was associated with most prestigious dynasty, Habsburg dynasty while French emperor with Bourbon dynasty. Interestingly, Thirty Years War proved a contest between Bourbon dynasty and Habsburg dynasty for dynastic prestige, inspite of the fact that both were Roman Catholic powers.

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- France even after being a Catholic power gave support to the protestant states like Britain, Sweden and Denmark and directly rose against Holy Roman Empire in spite of the fact that Holy Roman Empire was the protector of Roman Catholic Church system. So this war ended the era of religious war and became a harbinger of realism in European politics.
- As the result of the war both the parties were exhausted so finally in 1648 the 'Treaty of Westphalia' was signed. It is said that through the treaty of Westphalia the modern nation-state system came into being.

1. After this treaty, the Holy Roman Empire existed simply in name but practically, it was non-existent.

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2. In this treaty, the German states got freedom to conduct their foreign policy and declare war and peace.
3. Likewise, in international-relation, the equality of all the states irrespective of their size was accepted.
4. Furthermore, as a substitute for war, international diplomacy started including exchange of ambassadors.
5. Last but not the least, at the initiative of a scholar Grotius international laws came into existence.

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6. Above all, after the demise of Universal Church system and decline of the Holy Roman Empire, in inter-state relations the concept of balance of power became the most reliable tool. Moreover, France and Britain both had their individual perception about balance of power. For France, the balance of power in Europe had to be maintained on disunity of Central Europe i.e. division of Germany. So right from the time of treaty of Westphalia onwards France was conscious about the fact that German region which was divided among nearly 200 tiny states should not be unified.

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Interdisciplinary Approach

- **International Economy –** Global economy came into existence for the first time during the era of mercantilism (16-17th century). It was during this period, a wider trade network was established in a vast area from American continent to east and south-east Asia. In fact, mercantilism was an economic philosophy as well; it believed that the volume of international trade was fixed. Therefore, the surplus trade of the one nation was possible due to trade deficit of the other. So, every nation should have tried to maintain the trade surplus in its favour by adopting some artificial measures. But it was definitely a dangerous economic theory, as it used to create hurdles in the free flow of the goods among different regions. That's why in 18th century, a reputed economist Adam Smith gave a serious jolt to this theory through propounding a new theory of laissez faire (free trade).

- **Modernization of Europe – This period is marked by the rise of new cultural values like humanism, individualism and secularism which carried Europe on the path of modernization further. So, Europe entered into the era of enlightenment in 18th century.**

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END

Thank You!

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