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History

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HISTORY

1. Concept, Ideas and Terms	1
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Unit - 1

1. Sources of Ancient History	31
2. Pre-History and Proto-History	50
3. Harappa Civilization	60
4. Vedic and Later Vedic Periods	81
5. Megaliths in South India	105
6. Expansion of State System	107
7. Emergence of Heterodox Sects (Buddhism, Jainism, Ajivika)	120

Unit – 2

1. From State to Empire Rise of Magadha and Mauryan Empire	141
2. Dissolution of Empire and Emergence of Regional Powers	170
3. Sangam Age	193
4. The Gupta and Other Contemporary Rulers	205
5. Post Gupta Era	226

Unit – 3

1. Emergence of Regional Kingdoms	235
2. Kingdom in South India	247
3. Kingdom in Eastern India	254
4. Kingdom in Western India	261
5. Kingdom in North India	265
6. Characteristics of Early Medieval India	271
7. Arab Contacts	305

Concepts, Ideas and Terms

Bharatvarsha

Bharatvarsha is named after emperor Bharata, the son of Shakuntala and Dushyanta, so Bharatvarsha means the land of Bharat. It's said in Vishnu Purana. "The Country (Varsham) that lies North of the ocean and South of the snowy mountains is called Bharatvarsham, there dwell the descendants of Bharata". Our ancient poets, philosophers and writers viewed the country as an integral unit.

According to the scriptural description of the Brahmand, the entire earth is called Bharatvarsha. Bharatvarsha but particularly the area of the continent that lies south of the Himalayas is called Bharatvarsha. It is also called Aryavarta. In Rig Veda, the country named 'Sapt Sindhau' where Aryans were first inhabited.

In constitution of India, there is reference of Bharatvarsha as "India, that is Bharat".

It means India has two names India and Bharat. Bharat is the short form of Bharatvarsha.

Sabha and Samiti

A very striking feature of the Rig-Veda political structure was the institution of two legislative units known as the Sabha and the Samiti. The Sabha was a body of elders and was attended by persons from noble classes - Brahmanas and rich patrons. Women who were called Sabhavati also attended this assembly. Judicial matters were decided by the Sabha and it was as important as the Samiti.

The Samiti was an ordinary assembly of the tribe and its members were called Visha. The king attended the Samiti and the most important work of the Samiti was to elect the king.

Justice was based on dharma and the king was the head of the judicial set up. The village head, Gramini led the villagers in time of war and attended the meetings of the Sabha and Samiti. Sabha performed judicial functions which samiti did not. Later Sabha became a small aristocratic body and Samiti ceased to exist.

Varnasrama

The division of Aryan society is based on orders of life. The whole structure of this division is called 'Varnashram'. The life of individual Aryans was divided into four stages. These are Brahmacharya, means the student life, Grihastha or the householder's life, Vanaprastha or the retired life and Sannyasa or the devotional life. The first reference to the Varnashrama system is made in 'Purush Sukta' of Rig Veda.

Vedanta

It is one of the six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy. It literally means the end of vedas with the emergence of philosophy of the Upanishads. Vedanta is also referred to as Vedanta Mimamsa (Reflection of Vedanta), Uttara Mimamsa (Reflection on the latter part of the Vedas) and Brahma Mimamsa (Reflection on Brahma). It is an umbrella for many sub traditions ranging from dualism to non dualism. These five sub traditions of Vedanta include (i) Advaita (ii) Vishishtadvaita (iii) Dvaita (iv) Bheda Abheda (v) Kevala Advaita. Vedanta adopted ideas from orthodox schools like: Yoga and Nyaya. Schools like Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Shaktism shaped and influenced the doctrines of Vedanta. It had historic and central influence of Hinduism.

The three fundamental texts of Vedanta are Upanishads, Brahmasutras and Bhagwadgita. In the six schools of Hindu philosophy including Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa and lastly Vedanta became predominant in India.

Purusharthas

In Hinduism, purushartha (that, which is sought by man) refers to a goal, end or aim of human existence. There are generally considered to be four such purusharthas namely: Dharma (duty, ethics), Artha (prosperity) Kama (pleasure and sensuazl gratification and Moksha (the pursuit of liberation). Purusharthas are the blueprint for human fulfilment.

Rina

Tri Rina concept in Hindu Dharma means that man is indebted to Gods, ancestors and sages. It is the concept that lays down social duties on an individual towards parents, guru, ancestors and Gods.

The debts are termed as Tri Rina (Three Debts)

- (i) Deva Rina is debt towards Gods. It is paid by performing sacrifices over yajnas and chanting of mantras with sacred wood at the sacred alter.
- (ii) Pitra Rina is a debt towards ancestors. It is fulfilled by begetting children. Rituals are prescribed for the welfare of children during their upkeep.
- (iii) Rishi Rina is a debt towards the Rishis, the learned (law givers). It is paid by studying of scriptures, observing continence and fasting on these auspicious days.

Samskaras

The Dharmashastras describe the Samskaras (literally) preparation or arrangement as rituals marking important stages of life. There are 16 Samskaras of Hindus which cover the entire lifespan of a person and take them to the door steps of truth. The 16 Samskaras are Garbhanan, Punsavana, Simantonnayana, Jatakarma, Nama Karana, Nishkramana, Annaprasana Chudakarana, Karna vedha, Upanayan and Vidyarambha, Samavartan, Vivaha, Vanaprastha, Sanyas, Antyesthi.

Yajna

Yajna is a ritual of sacrifice derived from the practice in vedic times. Yajna is a ritual of sacrificing and sublimating the hawana samagri in the fire accompanied by the chanting of Vedic mantras.

Kalpasutras list following yajna types

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|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| (i) The pakayajnas | (ii) Soma Yajnas | (iii) Havis Yajnas |
| (iv) Panch Maha Yajna | (v) Vedavrata | |

The remaining 16 yajnas which are one time samskaras or rituals with 'mantras' are Samskaras Garbadhana, Punsavana, Simant, Jatakarma, Nama Karana, Nishkramana, Annaprasana, Chudakarka, Karna Vedha, Upanayana and Vidyarambha, Samavartana, Vivaha, Vanaprastha, Sanyas, Antyesthi. These are specified by the Grhya Sutra.'

Dasa

Dasa and related word such as Dasyuare found in the Rig Veda . The Rig veda describes them as savages. It denoted the enemies of the ancient Aryan people described in the Rig Veda. It comes into usage with the Aryan invasion theory which connects the Dasa with darker Dravidian speaking people. Some scholars believe that original dasa were Indo Iranian who rejected Aryan practices (religiious) but later merged with them. The concept can also be interpreted on a metaphysical front of relationship to divinity which expresses utter submission to God.

Ganarajya

The sixth century BC saw the emergence of the large number of states in Northern India which were ruled by republics or oligarchies which were called Ganarajya. KP Jayaswal laid emphasis ont eh term gana as a republican form of constitution. The term ganasangha or ganarajya refers to the claim to be of equal status. According to Romila Thapar, heads of families belonging to a clan or clan chiefs in a confederacy of clans, governed the territory of the clan or confederacy through an assembly of which alone they were members.

The constitution and form of ganarajya is widely debated among historians where some believe that every adult population participated in the administration others believe that it was restricted to Kshatriya class only while others points out that head of the family (joint) were allowed to participate int eh administration.

The Republics were divided into three categories according to Dr KP Jayaswal

- (i) Democracies or pure gana adult population participated in the adminstration
- (ii) Aristocracies or pure kula selected families participated in the administration.
- (iii) Mixed aristocracies and democracies it was a mixture of Kula and Gana.

Ganarajya or Republican states had a unitary character and were called city republics or nigamas. The important republics of 6th century BC were

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|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| (i) Shakyas of Kapilavastu | (v) Koliya of Ramagrama |
| (ii) Lichchavis of Vaishali | (vi) Bhagga of Sumsugiri |
| (iii) Mallas of Pava | (vii) Mauryas of Pippalivana |
| (iv) Mallas of Kushinara | (viii) Kalama of Keshapatta |

Janapadas

Vedic texts point out that Aryan tribes were called 'Janas' vedic samhitas point out the term jaja denotes tribe whose members believed in shared ancestry. They were originally semi nomadic pastoral communities gradually associated with specific territories.

Initially janapada was gathering places of men, merchants and artisans akin to market place or town surrounded by villages. Later Janapadas became republics or kingdoms of Vedic India. The Janapadin was the ruler of Janapada. Panini mentions 22 janapadas out of which Magadha, Avanti, Kosala and Vatsa were important.

The ordinary people of Janapada were called 'vis' which were further divided into gramas or unions of many families. Every janapada had a pura or chief city (capital) where the king resided.

Kautilya uses the term janapada for territory as the constituent of state. Every janapada was politically named as Rastra. Literary evidence suggests that the janapadas flourished between 1500 BCE to 500 BCE. The first time the term is found in Aitreya and Shatapatha Brahmanas.

The janapadas were administered by the following assemblies in addition to the king

- (i) Sabha (Council)
- (ii) Paura Sabha (Executive Council)
- (iii) Samiti (General Assembly)

Doctrine of Karma

Karma is the universal causal law by which good bad actions determine the future modes of an individual's existence.

The Doctrine of Karma is closely associated with the idea of re birth According to Hindu Philosophy, "A good action creates good karma, as does good intent. A bad action creates bad karma. as does bad intent".

Dandaniti

Dandaniti is the administration of force, or rajaniti, the conduct of kings was a severely practical science and the text curiously dismiss the more philosophical aspects of the state and the conduct of governmental affairs.

Arthashastra

The Arthashastra is an ancient work on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy, written in sanskrit. It is attributed to kautilya the prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya. The Arthashastra was composed, expanded and redacted between the 2nd century BCE and 3rd century BCE. It was influential until the 12th century when it disappeared. it was rediscovered in 1905 by R Shamasastri who published it in 1909. The first English translation was published in 1915. It is often translated as the science of politics. The text contains 15 Adhikarans. The Arthashastra is written in prose form but there are 380 shlokas incorporated in this book.

Saptanga

Literally meaning of saptanga is the seven limbed state. The Arthashastra is the first Indian text to define a state. Its concept of saptanga rajya considers the state as consisting of seven inter related and inter locking constitutional limbs or elements (angas), these are Swami (the lord), Amatya (the ministers), Janapada (the territory and the people), Durga (the fortified capital), Kosha (the treasury), Danada (justice of force) and Mitra (ally).

Dharmavijaya

The literally meaning of Dharmavijaya is lawaful conquest. The concept of Dharmavijya is associated with the king Ashoka. Ashoka's Dharmavijaya was a unique exercise for the spread of morals inside out. It included his peace misssions to West Asia and the Greem mainlands which carried Indian thoughts about universal peace, piety, non violence, human brotherhood to the Western world. No monarch of ancient world is credited with such cultural contact by the west.

Stupa/Chaitya

The term chaitya means a sacred space, but is more specifically used to refer to Buddhist shrines. Many of the early Buddhist cave shrines contained a stupa as the object of veneration and large independent stupas soon came to form an integral part of Buddhist monasteries. The stupa represented many things in Buddhist tradition.

A stupa is a mound like hemispherical structure containing relics typically the remains of Buddhist that is used as a place of meditation. It stood for the axis mundi (the centre of the universe), It symbolised the passing away of the Buddha, It was a repository of relics of the Buddha and it was also a place of veneration, worship and pilgrimage for monks and laity.

Vihara

Vihara monastery consisting of an open court surrounded by open cells assemble through an entrance porch. They were sacred in character with small stupas and images of Buddha were installed in the central court.

They were for a purpose of living, residences of monks, Viharas were made of wood and later stone cut Viharas emerged.

Some examples of Viharas are Junnar Vihara, Konkade Vihara, Kanheri Vihara. When communities of monks grew, Mahaviharas came into existence.

Nagara Style

In Northern part of India a distinct style of temple architecture has been developed which is known as the Nagara Style of architecture. This style of temple architecture developed from 5th Century AD onwards.

Some of important features of Nagara style are as follows

- The temples follow the Panchayatan style of temple making, which consists of subsidiary shrines laid out in a crucified ground plan with respect to the principle shrine.
- There are presence of assembly halls or mandaps in front of the principle shrine.
- There are no water tank or reservoirs present in the temple premises.

- The temples are generally built on raised platforms.
- The porticos have a pillared approach.
- The Shikharas are of different type based on the size and shape.
- The ambulatory passageway or the pradakshina path around the sanctum sanatorium are carved.
- Generally the temple premises do not have elaborate boundary walls or gateways.

Under the Nagara School of temple architecture, three different types of sub schools have emerged such as

1. Odisha School
2. Khajuraho School
3. Solanki School

Dravida Style

The South Indian style is different from the Nagara temple. The chief features of Dravida temple can be summarised as follows.

- The front wall has an entrance gateway in its centre, which is known as Gopuram.
- The shape of the main temple tower known as Vimana is like a stepped pyramid that rises up geometrically rather than the curving Shikhara of North India.
- At the entrance to South Indian temple, it is usual to find sculptures of fierce dvarapalas or the door keepers guarding the temple.
- It is common to find a large water reservoir or a temple tank. Subsidiary shrines are either incorporated within the main temple tower or located as distinct, separate, small shrines beside the main temple.
- These are various sub divisions of Dravida temples architecture Square usually called 'Kute' and also 'Caturasra Rectangular or shala or ayatasra Elliptical also called Goja Prishta or elephant backed Circular or Uritta Octagonal or ashtasra.
- The plan of the temple and shape of the Vrinana were conditioned by the iconographic nature of the consecrated deity.

Vesara Style

Vesara style of temples as an independent style created through the mixing of Nagara and Dravida styles.

It was started by Chalukyas of Badami (500-753 AD), Rashtrakutas of Masnyakheta (750-983AD), Western Chalukyas of Kalyani (983-1195 AD) and Hoysala empire (1000-1330 AD). It was found in Decan, parts of North India and Central India, between the Vindhya and the river Krishna. Belur, Halebidu and Somnathpura are leading examples of the Vesara style. It is also known as Karnataka style of architecture.

The shape of two structures over the sanctum is usually pyramidal in profile.

Its Shikharas shorter than the Northern shikhara tower.

Five walls and superstructure are broadly circular or a straight sided coke.

Its geometry is based on rotating a square imposed on a circle.

Bodhisatva

In Buddhism, Bodhisatvas is someone who is on the path to attain the status of an enlightened being. It was a term primarily used to refer to Gautama Buddha in his former life. The Bodhisatva is also called a pusa. Mahayana Buddhism is based principally upon the path of Bodhisatva.

There are 8 important Bodhisattvas, who were Avalokitesvara, Manjusri, Samantabhadra, Kshitigarbha, Maitreya, Vajrapani, Sadaparibhuta, Akasagarbha etc.

Tirthankara

In Jainism, Tirthankara is saviour and spiritual leader of dharma. 'Tirthankara' literally means a food maker. The word Tirthankara signifies the founder of a 'tirtha'. According to Jainism, a Tirthankara is a rare individual who has conquered the world, the cycle of death and rebirth. Tirthankara is that, who made a path for others to follow. There are 24 Tirthankara in Jain philosophy. Rishabhdev was the first Tirthankara and Swami Mahavir was the 24th and last Tirthankara of Jainism.

The Tirthankara's teachings form the basis for the Jain Canons. They are arahants, who after attained 'Kevalajnan'.

Alvars/Nayanars

Alvars or Azhwar's were Tamil Poet saints of South India who espoused Bhakti to Hindu God Lord Vishnu and his avatar Lord Krishna. They between 5th century to 10th century. Its historical references say that there are 12 Alvars, Andal being the only female saint poet out of the 12 Alvars. They praised 108 (abodes) temples also known as Divya Desams of the Vaishnava deities.

They represent Vaishnava philosophy and religion. They provided a development of the system of Visistadvaita vedanta. They are also attributed to 4000 devotional Tamil hymns collectively known as Nladyira Divya Prabandham.

They practiced different forms of devotion but the most common is called prapatti (self surrender) a form of Bhakti The hymns of Alvars take into account 5 aspects of God Svarupa (essential nature), attributes (guna), personality (vigraha), incarnations (avatara) and activities (lila).

Amaram

The administrative system arrangements under the Vijayanagara empire came to be known as Nayakara system in which outstanding military chieftains received local grants and privileged states as Nayakas of the state. The territory under these military chiefs was called Amaran. The nayaks did not give any fixed income to the state they merely rendered military service in return for land and privileges granted to them.

Scholars have estimated that 3/4th of villages of the empire were under 'Amaran tennur.' The system prevalent in the Vijayanagar empire cannot be equated to the Turkish Iqta system. The nayaks were not slaves or subordinates they were hereditary territorial lords of the ruler. They promised loyalty and service to the ruler whose grant legitimised their position. They had their own administration paid part of their income to the ruler.

Raya Rekho

Raya Rekho was a fixed standard of assessment of land revenue in the Vijayanagara empire. The assessment was based on the measurement and rates of payment so fixed and maintained.

The accounts were so arranged that the assessment of each spot of land was shown on a separate line, hence the term Rekha meaning line or row. It is also called 'Rekhamar' 'mar' meaning land of area fencing to 2 Kurgis (equal to 16 to 80 acres).

Sreni

Sreni was an association of traders, merchants and artisans. Generally, a separate sreni existed for a particular group of persons engaged in the same vocation or activity. Srenis are like guilds.

Over a period of time, some srenis became very wealthy with surplus resources and acted as custodians and bankers of religious and other endowments.

For example, Sreni, ivory carvers of Vidisha is accredited with sponsoring and financially supporting the construction of the Southern gateway of the stupa at Sanchi. Srenis were responsible for protecting the specific traditions of craft and trade secrets also.

Bhaga

Rig Veda mentions Bhaga as an epithet of both mortals and Gods who bestow wealth and prosperity as well as personification God Bhaga survives in the 2nd century AD inscription of Rudradaman I, where it is used as a fiscal term.

Bhaga is one of the 12 Adityas a group of deities known as the Sun God described in the Bhavata Purana. Adhityas are different from Avatars of Lord Vishnu in the form of Sun God Surya also known in Vedic traditions as Bhagavan. As Bhaga he resides in the body of all living beings. Bhaga has lordship over Purva Phalguni Nakshatra. Bhaga is the bestower of fortune. In Sanskrit Bhaga means 'a portion'.

Bhara/Vishti

Kara has been interpreted as regular revenue or oppressive tax like vishti or forced labour, prevalent during post Gupta period.

Vishti were the forced labour during Gupta and post Gupta period. During Gupta era, land taxes were increased in number and in addition, whenever the royal army passes through the country side, the local people had to feed them. The peasants had to supply animals, foodgrains, furnitures etc. For the maintenance of royal

officers on duty in rural areas. In central and Western India, the villagers were also subjected to forced labour called Vishti by the royal army and officials.

Stridhana

There was a category of property stridhana, over which the smritikaras conceded, that a women did have rights. Stridhana means women's property, but referred specifically to certain special kinds of moveable property given to a woman on various occasions during her lifetime. These included presents (jewellery, clothes, household articles etc) given by her parents, at the time of marriage and by her relatives on other occasions. The Dharmashastra agreed, that stridhana was passed on from mother to daughter. If the marriage is performed in the form of Brahma, Daiva, Gandharba or Prajapatya, the husband of deceased woman is entitled to get the stridhan in Vedic culture, but in case of Asura, Rakshya, Paisacha form of marriage the stridhana of issueless deceased women will be taken by her father or mother.

Memorial Stones

The erection of memorials to honour the dead is an ancient and worldwide phenomenon. They were erected between 3rd century BC and 18th century AD. About 2650 hero stones the earliest dated 5th century have been discovered in Karnataka. The memorials took different forms in different countries and times.

In Tamil Nadu, the act of erecting memorials gets its firm foot in the megalithic culture. The gradual transformation of the megalithic cult into the hero cult is reflected in Sangam literature. The rituals for erecting hero stones (Nadu Kal) are also mentioned in Tamil Grammatical works. Specimens of hero stones are available only from 6th century onwards.

Agraharas

Agaraharas is the name given to the Brahmin quarter of a heterogenous village. These were gifted to the Brahmins by the king. Agraharas were also known as Chaturvedi mangalams in ancient times. Agraharas at times blossomed into centres of traditional education and are well described in the ancient literary works and in the inscriptions of the various kings. They were also known as ghatoka and boyas.

Sarraf

A community engaged in monetary transactions are called sarraf. Reference of this term began to appear from the sultanate period.

It developed three distinct functions

1. As money changers, the role of the sarraf was, that he was considered an expert in judging the metallic purity of coins as well as their weight. He also determined the current exchange rate of specific coins.
2. As bankers, they received deposits and gave loans on interest.
3. As traders, they dealt in gold, silver and jewellery. Besides, they also issued hundis or bills of exchange.

Turkan-i-Chahalgani

Qutb ud din was succeeded by Iltutmish of the slave dynasty (AD 1206 AD 1290), who made Delhi his capital. His reign was marked by his efforts in securing his throne from rivals, attacks by Chengiz Khan and the Mongol hordes. Iltutmish organized his government and made several reforms First, he organized the ruling elite or nobility, which is known as Turkan i chahalgani or chalisa.; It was an organization of a group of forty loyal nobles.

Iqta

Iqta was form of administrative grant and its nature varied according to time and place. The Iqta system was provided institutional status by Ilutmish. This system provided an agrarian system to the country while the members of the ruling class attained income without any permanent attachment to any territory. Under Iqta system the land of the empire was divided into several large and small Iqta and assigned to soldiers officers and nobles. Firuz Shah Tughlaq was the first sultan. who made Iqta hereditary.

Bengal Vaishnavism

Bengal Vaishnavism or Gaudiya Vaishnavism after Bengal's older name Gaur is unique in India in several ways. It claims, that Krishna is the supreme deity rather than an incarnation of Vishnu and that he is in external play (leela) with his beloved consor Radha.

The geographical focus of Bengali Vaishnavism is in Nadiya district, especially the town of Navadvipa, which has some of the largest and best known communities. The Vaishnavite movement arose in the 11th and 12th century AD in Bengal. The 2 offshoots of Gaudiya (also Chaitanya) Vaishnavism are Sahajiya or Tantric Vaishnavism.

Jangama

Jangama are the Shaivite order of wandering religious mendicants. They are the priests or gurus of the Shaivite, sect of the Lingayats. The word Jangam is derived from the emblem (linga) of Lord Shiva. They migrated from Karnataka in order to propagate the Shavite cult as to act as priests for those, who do not avail the services of Brahmanas for performing religious rites.

Ain-i- Dahsala

It is also called the Zabti system was introduced by Raja Todarmal in the reign of Akbar in the year 1580-82. It was introduced to alleviate the problems arising due to fixing prices every year and doing settlements of revenue of previous years.

In this system the land cultivation and price of the produce was calculated for a period of 10 years and one tenth of this part was the part of the state for one year.

The system prevailed in regions like: Malwa, Gujarat and from Lahore to Allahabad. It remained the standard system of revenue assessment during the Mughal regime in the Deccan it was introduced by Murshid Quli Khan.

Pargana

By the middle of 14th century, the basic collection of villages as an administrative unit came to be called pargana. Choudhari was the hereditary Zamindar in charge of collection of revenue in each pargana.

It was introduced in the Delhi Sultanate. The word has a Persian origin. A pargana consists of several mouzas which are the smallest revenue units consisting of one or more villages, and surrounding countryside. It also consisted of several tarfs.

Baluta

The servants in the 18th century Maharahtrian village categorized as twelve baluta servants served and were maintained by the village as a territorial whole. The Bara Balutedar system is a servant system in Maharashtra's villages, which occurs in some castes, who used to work for farmers in their surroundings.

The balutedars, whose services are still in demand are carpenters (sutar), the barber (nhavi), idol dresser (gurav), the barber (nhavi), idol dresser (gurav), the water carrier (koli), the shoe maker (chambhar), the watchman (mahar), the blacksmith (lohar), the washerman (parit), the potter (kumbhar) and the rope maker (mang).

Jizyah

Under Islamic law, jizyah is a tax levied on a section of an Islamic state non Muslim citizens. The tax was to be levied on adult males of military age and affording power from the point of view of the muslim rulers, jizyah was material proof of the non Muslims acceptance of subjection to the state and its laws.

In return, non Muslim citizens were permitted to practice their faith, to enjoy a measure of communal autonomy, to their faith to enjoy a measure of communal autonomy, to be entitled to the Muslim state protection from outside aggression and to be exempted from military services and the zaqat taxes. the word jizyah is derived from the root word, that refers to part hence taken from a part of the wealth of the non Muslim citizens.

Zakat

It is a form a charity which is treated in Islam as a religious obligation or tax. It literally menas that which purifies. It is one of the five pillars of Islam. Zakat is based on the value of one possessions which is customarily 1/40th of total savings. Zakat collectors collect the amount and pay to the poort and needy. It is considered a amount and pay to the poor and needy. It is considered a way to purify one income and wealth which sometimes becomes impure with the ways of acquisition. It promotes a more equitable redistribution of wealth and fosters a sense of solidarity among the members of Ummah.