

Theme 5 Through the Eyes of Travellers

Fastrack Revision

► Accounts of Travellers

- Whenever people travel to a different place, they come across a different world in terms of physical environment, customs, languages, beliefs and practices of people. Both women and men travelled for various reasons. The accounts that survive are often varied in terms of their subject matter. Some deal with affairs of court, religious issues, architectural features and monuments. Though women travelled, but there are no accounts of travel left by women.
- As these authors came from vastly different social and cultural environments, they were often more attentive to everyday activities and practices which were taken for granted by indigenous writers, for whom these were routine matters, not worthy of being recorded.

► Al-Biruni and the Kitab-ul-Hind

- From Khwarizm to the Punjab
- He was born in 973 CE, in Khwarizm in present day Uzbekistan which was an important centre of learning. He got the best education and was well versed in many languages like Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew and Sanskrit. He did not know Greek, but read the works of Plato and other Greek philosophers in Arabic translations.
- Al-Biruni was one of the many scholars and poets who were taken to Ghazni by Sultan Mahmud when he invaded Khwarizm in 1017 CE. Though Al-Biruni came as a hostage (prisoner), but he later developed a liking for the city and spent his rest of life there.

The objective of Al-Biruni's work as described by him were:

- A help to those who wanted to discuss religious questions with them (the Hindus).
- A repertory (some house) of information to those who want to associate with them.
- Al-Biruni developed interest about India in Ghazni. His interest development is not unusual because from the eighth century onwards, Sanskrit work on astronomy, mathematics and medicine were already translated into Arabic.
- When Punjab became part of Ghaznavid Empire, contacts with local population created a friendly environment. Al-Biruni spent many years with Brahmana priests and scholars and learnt Sanskrit, studied religious and philosophical texts. He must have travelled widely in the Punjab and other parts of Northern India.

- Travel literature was already an accepted part of Arabic literature. This literature contained about far away lands like Sahara desert in the West and river Volga in the North. Before 1500, few people in India and outside India would have read Al-Biruni.

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As per Al-Biruni account of the system of Varnas, the highest caste was the Brahmana.

► The Kitab-ul-Hind

- Al-Biruni wrote Kitab-ul-Hind in Arabic in simple and easy language. It is **divided into 80 chapters** on subjects such as **religion and philosophy, festivals, astronomy, alchemy, manners and customs, social life, weights and measures, iconography, laws and metrology.**
- Al-Biruni's style of writing was different. He used to start with a question, followed with a description based on Sanskrit traditions and conclusion was based on comparison with other cultures.
- Present day scholars thought that geometric structures, remarkable precision and predictability in his writings were the result of his mathematical orientation.
- Al-Biruni had intended his work for people living along the boundaries of the subcontinent. He also became familiar with the translations and adaptations of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit texts into Arabic.
- These texts were about different subjects like fables, astronomy and medicine. He wanted to improve these texts as he was not happy with the way these texts were written earlier.

► Al-Biruni and the Sanskrit Tradition

- Al-Biruni discussed about the problems in understanding the local practices. These problems were:
 - His first problems was Sanskrit. He said that Sanskrit was so different from Arabic and Persian and the ideas and concepts could not be easily translated from one language into another. According to Al-Biruni, learning Sanskrit was difficult. It had wide range and forms of words.
 - The second problem was differences in religious beliefs and practices.
 - The third problem was the local population were pre-occupied with their own feelings and their ignorance or lack of interest in cultures, ideas, or peoples outside their experience.

- ▶ Despite these problems, Al-Biruni depended exclusively on the works of Brahmanas and often cited passages from the *Vedas*, the *Puranas*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the works of Patanjali, the *Manusmriti*, etc, to provide an understanding of Indian society.
- ▶ **Al-Biruni's Description of the Caste System**
 - ▶ Al-Biruni tried to explain caste system by comparing it with similar systems in other societies. Caste system was not unique in India. He noted that in ancient Persia, four social categories were recognised. These were:
 - Knights and princes.
 - Monks, fire-priests and lawyers.
 - Physicians, astronomers and other scientists.
 - Peasants and artisans.
 - ▶ He pointed out that in **Islam**, all men were considered equal and they differ only in their observance of piety.
 - ▶ Al-Biruni's description of the caste system was deeply influenced by his study of normative Sanskrit texts. These texts laid down the rules for governing the system from the point of view of Brahmanas. But in real life system, it was not so rigid.
 - ▶ For example, categories defined as **antyaaja** which means born outside the system, were often expected to provide inexpensive labour to both peasants and **zamindars**. They were often subjected to social oppression, but they were included within the economic networks.
- ▶ **Al-Biruni views on Pollution**
 - ▶ Al-Biruni accepted the Brahmanical description of the caste system, but he rejected the notion of pollution. Here, pollution refers to the **practice of untouchability and discrimination against lower caste people by upper caste people**.
 - ▶ According to Al-Biruni, everything that is polluted will try to regain its original condition of purity. According to Al-Biruni, the concept of social pollution which is present in the caste system is against the laws of nature.
- ▶ **The System of Varnas**
 - ▶ This is Al-Biruni's account of the system of **varnas**:
 - ▶ The highest caste are the Brahmana, of whom the books of the Hindus tell us that they were created from the head of Brahman. And as the Brahman is only another name for the force called nature and the head is the highest part of the body, the Brahmana are the choice part of the whole genus. Therefore, the Hindus consider them as the very best of mankind.
 - ▶ The next caste are the Kshatriya, who were created, as they say, from the shoulders and hands of Brahman. Their degree is not much below that of the Brahmana.
 - ▶ After them follow the Vaishya, who were created from the thigh of Brahman.
 - ▶ The Shudra, who were created from his feet.
 - ▶ Between the latter two classes there is no very great distance. Much, however, as these classes differ from each other, they live together in the same towns and villages, mixed together in the same houses and lodgings.
- ▶ **Ibn Battuta**
 - ▶ He was born in Tangier, a city in Morocco, into one of the most respectable and educated families. His family

was known for their expertise in Islamic religious law or *sharia*.

- ▶ Ibn Battuta received literary and scholastic education when he was very young. Ibn Battuta's book of travels, called **Rihla** was written in Arabic. It has extremely rich and interesting information about the social and cultural life in the subcontinent in the 14th century. Ibn Battuta considered experience gained through travels to be a more important source of knowledge than books.
- ▶ He loved travelling and before travelling to India in 1332-33, he had made pilgrimage trips to Mecca. He travelled to different countries like Syria, Iraq, Persia, Yemen, Oman and a few trading ports on the coast of East Africa.
- ▶ Ibn Battuta was an inveterate (habitual) traveller. He spent a great part of his life travelling through North Africa, West Asia and parts of Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent and China.
- ▶ **Ibn Battuta's Travel to India**
 - ▶ Ibn Battuta reached Sind in 1333 CE, by travelling overland through Central Asia. He was attracted by the reputation of **Muhammad bin Tughlaq**, the Sultan of Delhi, for his generous patron of arts and letters. Hence, he moved for Delhi, passing through Multan and Uch.
 - ▶ The Sultan was impressed by his scholarship and appointed him as **Gazi** or **Judge of Delhi**. Later due to misunderstanding between Sultan and Ibn Battuta, he was thrown into prison. When this misunderstanding was cleared, he was restored to Imperial service by the Sultan.

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Ibn Battuta described about coconut and paan which were completely unfamiliar to his family.

- ▶ **Ibn Battuta's Travel to China**
 - ▶ Ibn Battuta was ordered in 1342 CE by Sultan to travel to China as the Sultan's representative to the Mongol ruler. Ibn Battuta with the new assignment, proceeded to the Malabar coast through Central India. From Malabar, he went to the Maldives.
 - ▶ He stayed in Maldives for eighteen months as the *Qazi*, and then decided to travel to Sri Lanka. Before going to China, he once again went to Malabar coast, the Maldives and also visited Bengal and Assam.
 - ▶ He took a ship to Sumatra and from there another ship for the Chinese port town of Zaytun, presently known as Quanzhou. He travelled extensively in China, went to Beijing, but did not stay long and decided to return home in 1347 CE.
 - ▶ Ibn Battuta's account was compared with that of **Marco Polo**, who visited China and India from his home country Venice in the late thirteenth century.
- ▶ **Analysis of Ibn Battuta's Travel**
 - ▶ Ibn Battuta recorded his observations about new cultures, people, beliefs, values, etc. In 14th century, travelling was more difficult and dangerous than present times.
 - ▶ According to Ibn Battuta, it took forty days to travel from Multan to Delhi, about fifty days from Sind to Delhi, about forty days from Daulatabad to Delhi and about ten days from Gwalior to Delhi.

- ▶ Travelling in those days was very insecure. Ibn Battuta was attacked by groups of robbers many times. He mostly preferred to travel in **caravan** along with companions, but it did not help because highway robbers also attacked these **caravans**.
- ▶ While he was travelling from Multan to Delhi, his **caravan** was attacked and many of his fellow travellers lost their lives. He survived, but severely wounded.
- ▶ **Ibn Battuta and the Excitement of the Unfamiliar**
 - ▶ Ibn Battuta himself travelled extensively through these lands, visiting sacred shrines, spending time with learned men and rulers, often officiating as **Qazi** and enjoying the cosmopolitan culture of urban centres where people who spoke Arabic, Persian, Turkish and other languages, shared ideas, information and anecdotes.
 - ▶ These included stories about men noted for their piety, kings who could be both cruel and generous and about the lives of ordinary men and women; anything that was unfamiliar was particularly highlighted in order to ensure that the listener or the reader was suitably impressed by accounts of distant yet accessible worlds.
- ▶ **The Coconut and the Paan**
 - ▶ Ibn Battuta described about coconut and **paan** which were completely unfamiliar to his people. He described that the coconut trees were similar to date-palms but the difference was that while date-palms produced dates, coconut trees produced nuts.
 - ▶ The coconut's fibre was used for making cords which were used to sew ships instead of using iron nails and they also made cables for vessels using this fibre.
 - ▶ He also described another fascinating thing *i.e.*, **paan**. He described that betel is a tree which has no fruit and was grown only for the sake of its leaves.
- ▶ **Ibn Battuta and Indian Cities**
 - ▶ According to Ibn Battuta, Indian cities were full of opportunities for those who had the necessary drive, resources and skills.
 - ▶ These cities were densely populated and prosperous but were disrupted when there were invasions and wars.
 - ▶ Most cities had crowded streets and bright and colourful markets that were arranged with a variety of goods. He described **Delhi** as a big city, with a great population, the largest in India. **Daulatabad** in Maharashtra was also equal in size with Delhi.
- ▶ **Ibn Battuta's views about Delhi**
 - ▶ According to Ibn Battuta, the city of Delhi covers a wide area and had a large population. The defensive wall around the city had no comparison. The breadth of the wall was eleven cubits. There were houses inside for night sentry and gate keepers. There were also store-houses for storing edibles, magazines, ammunition, ballistas and siege machines.
 - ▶ The stored grains could last long without rotting. There were windows in the wall through which light enter inside. The lower part of the defensive wall was built of stone and upper part with bricks and also had many towers close to one another.
 - ▶ There are many gates called **darwaza** and the **Budaun darwaza** was the greatest among them. There was a grain market inside the **Mandwi darwaza** and near to **Gul darwaza**, there was an orchard.
- ▶ City of Delhi also had a fine cemetery in which graves had domes over them and those without dome had an arch.
- ▶ **Ibn Battuta's views about Daulatabad**
 - ▶ In Daulatabad there is a market place for male and female singers, which is known as **Tarababad**. It is one of the greatest and most beautiful **bazaars**. It has numerous shops and every shop has a door which leads into the house of the owner. The shops are decorated with carpets and at the centre of a shop there is a swing on which sits the female singer. She is decked with all kinds of finery and her female attendants swing her.
 - ▶ In the middle of the market place there stands a large cupola, which is carpeted and decorated and in which the chief of the musicians takes his place every Thursday after the dawn prayers, accompanied by his servants and slaves.
 - ▶ The female singers come in successive crowds, sing before him and dance until dusk after which he withdraws. In this **bazaar** there are mosques for offering prayers. One of the Hindu rulers ... alighted at the cupola every time he passed by this market place and the female singers would sing before him. Even some Muslim rulers did the same.
- ▶ **Ibn Battuta's views about the Economy Agriculture and Trade**
 - ▶ According to Ibn Battuta, the **bazaars** were important places of economic transactions, as well as hub of social and cultural activities.
 - ▶ Most **bazaars** had a mosque and a temple and in some of them, spaces were marked for public performance by dancers, musicians and singers.
 - ▶ Historians used Ibn Battuta's accounts and explained about the prosperity of the towns. The towns derived significant portion of its wealth from the surplus of villages.
 - ▶ Ibn Battuta found Indian agriculture very productive because of the fertility of the soil. This fertility allowed farmers to cultivate two crops a year. The subcontinent was well connected and integrated with inter-Asian networks of trade and commerce.
 - ▶ The Indian manufacturers were in great demand in both West Asia and South-East Asia and this brought huge profits for artisans and merchants.
 - ▶ There was great demand for Indian textiles like cotton cloth, fine muslins, silks, brocade and satin. Few varieties of fine muslin were so expensive that only nobles and very rich class could afford it.
- ▶ **Ibn Battuta's Description about Indian Postal System**
 - ▶ Ibn Battuta was surprised by the efficient postal system of India. The postal system not only allowed merchants to send information and remit credit across long distances, but also dispatched goods required at short notice. It took fifty days to reach Delhi from Sind, but it took just five days for postal system to send news reports of spies to the Sultan.
 - ▶ Indian postal system was of two types:
 - The **horse-post** was called **uluq** which was ran by royal horses stationed at a distance of every four miles.
 - The other was **foot-post** called **dawa**, which had three stations per mile.

- ▶ At every third of a mile there was well-populated village where there were men present to carry the courier. When a courier starts from the city, he holds the letter in one hand and the rod with copper bells on the other and ran as fast as he can.
- ▶ The other men in next *dawa*, when hears this bell he gets ready and as soon as courier reaches them, he takes it and transfers it to next *dawa*. This continues till it reaches its destination.
- ▶ The foot-post was quicker than the horse-post and was used to transport **fruits of Khurasan** which were much desired in India.
- ▶ **Francols Bernier**
 - ▶ He was a doctor, political philosopher and historian from France. He came to Mughal Empire in search of opportunities and was in India between 1656 and 1668 CE.
 - ▶ He was **closely associated with the Mughal court**. He was physician to Prince Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Emperor Shah Jahan.
 - ▶ Later he worked as an intellectual and scientists with Danishmand Khan (an Armenian noble) at the Mughal court.
- ▶ **Comparing East and West**
 - ▶ Bernier travelled to several parts of India. He wrote accounts about what he saw and compared them with the situation in Europe in general and France in particular.
 - ▶ **He dedicated his major writing to Louis XIV** and many of his other works were written in form of letters to influential officials and ministers.
 - ▶ He described the situation in India as not hopeful and not so encouraging compared to the developments in Europe. His main focus was on things which were depressing and he wanted to influence the policy makers and the intelligentsia to make right decisions.
- ▶ **Publishing of Bernier's Works**
 - ▶ Bernier's works were published in France in 1670-71 CE and translated into English, Dutch, German and Italian within the next five years.
 - ▶ His accounts was reprinted in French eight times between 1670 and 1725 CE and by 1684 CE, it had been reprinted three times in English. As compared to it, Arabic and Persian accounts were circulated as manuscripts and were not published before 1800 CE.
- ▶ **Bernier's Book "Travels in the Mughal Empire"**
 - ▶ Bernier's Travels in the Mughal Empire is marked by detailed observations, critical insights and reflection. His account contains discussions trying to place the history of the Mughals within some sort of a universal framework. He constantly compared Mughal India with contemporary Europe, generally emphasising the superiority of the latter. His representation of India works on the model of binary opposition, where India is presented as the inverse of Europe.
- ▶ **The Question of Land Ownership**
 - ▶ The Questioning of Bernier, one of the fundamental differences between Mughal India and Europe was the lack of private property in land in the former.
 - ▶ He was a firm believer in the virtues of private property and saw crown ownership of land as being harmful for both the state and its people. He thought that in the Mughal Empire the emperor owned all the land and distributed it among his nobles and that this had disastrous consequences for the economy and society.
- ▶ Owing to crown ownership of land, argued Bernier, landholders could not pass on their land to their children. So they were averse to any long-term investment in the sustenance and expansion of production. The absence of private property in land had, therefore, prevented the emergence of the class of 'improving' landlords (as in Western Europe) with a concern to maintain to improve the land.
- ▶ It had led to the uniform ruination of agriculture, excessive oppression of the peasantry and a continuous decline in the living standards of all sections of society, except the ruling aristocracy.
- ▶ Mughal official documents does not show that state was the sole owner of land. The sixteenth century official chronicle **Abu'l Fazl** during Akbar's reign describes the land revenue as 'remunerations of sovereignty'.
- ▶ This means that a ruler can claim on his subjects, for the protection he provided for the land and not the rent on land that he owned. European travellers assumed this claim to be rent because land revenue demands were very high in those times. But in reality this was not a rent or a land tax, it was a tax on crop.
- ▶ **Bernier's views on Peasantry**
 - ▶ Of the vast tracts of country constituting the empire of Hindustan, many are little more than sand or barren mountains, badly cultivated and thinly populated.
 - ▶ Even a considerable portion of the good land remains untilled for want of labourers; many of whom perish in consequence of the bad treatment they experience from Governors.
 - ▶ The poor people, when they become incapable of discharging the demands of their rapacious lords, are not only often deprived of the means of subsistence, but are also made to lose their children, who are carried away as slaves. Thus, it happens that the peasantry, driven to despair by so excessive a tyranny, abandon the country.
- ▶ **Bernier's views about Towns**
 - ▶ During 17th century, about 15 per cent of the population lived in towns. This was an average higher than the percentage of urban population in Western Europe in the same period.
 - ▶ In spite of this, Bernier described Mughal cities as 'camp towns' which meant that these towns existed and depended on the imperial camp for their survival.
 - ▶ He believed that these towns came into existence when imperial court came and rapidly declined when it moved out. He pointed out that these towns did not have viable social and economic foundations and were dependent on imperial patronage (protection).
 - ▶ However, Bernier had drawn an oversimplified picture about towns. In reality there were all kinds of towns like manufacturing towns, trading towns, port-towns, sacred centres, pilgrimage towns, etc. Their existence was an index of the prosperity of merchant communities and professional classes.
- ▶ **Merchants and other Professionals in Towns**
 - ▶ Merchants had a strong community and kin ties were organised into their own caste-cum-occupational bodies. In Western India, these groups were called **Mahajans**, and their chief, the **Sheth**.



- ▶ In urban centres such as Ahmedabad the **Mahajans** were collectively represented by the chief of the merchant community who was called the **Nagarsheth**.
- ▶ There were other professionals existed in towns like physicians (**hakim** or **vaid**), teachers (**pundit** or **mulla**), lawyers (**wakil**), painters, architects, musicians, calligraphers, etc.
- ▶ Some of these professionals depended on imperial patronage, many of them made their living by serving other patrons and some others served ordinary people in crowded markets or **bazaars**.
- ▶ **Criticism of Indian Society of Bernier**
 - ▶ Bernier criticised Indian society that it consisted of undifferentiated masses of poor people, suppressed by a small minority of very rich and powerful ruling class.
 - ▶ He stated that there was no middle state in India *i.e.*, in between the poorest of the poor and the richest of the rich, there was no social group or class.
 - ▶ Subcontinent's cities and towns were ruined and polluted with bad air and its fields were overspread with bushes and full of infectious waterlogged areas. Crown ownership of land was responsible for all this bad state of affairs.
- ▶ **Bernier's Account on Imperial Karkhanas**
 - ▶ Bernier is perhaps the only historian who provides a detailed account of the working of the imperial **karkhanas** or workshops.
 - ▶ Large halls are seen at many places, called **karkhanas** or workshops for the artisans. In one hall, embroiderers are busily employed, superintended by a master. In another, you see the goldsmiths; in a third, painters; in a fourth, varnishers in lacquer-work; in a fifth, joiners, turners, tailors and shoe-makers; in a sixth, manufacturers of silk, brocade and fine muslins.
 - ▶ The artisans come every morning to their **karkhanas** where they remain employed the whole day; and in the evening return to their homes. In this quiet regular manner, their time glides away; no one aspiring for any improvement in the condition of life wherein he happens to be born.
- ▶ **Influence of Bernier's Account on other Scholars**
 - ▶ Bernier's descriptions influenced Western theorists from the eighteenth century onwards. The French philosopher Montesquieu, for instance, used this account to develop the idea of oriental despotism, according to which rulers in Asia (the Orient or the East) enjoyed absolute authority over their subjects, who were kept in conditions of subjugation and poverty, arguing that all land belonged to the king and that private property was non-existent. According to this view, everybody, except the emperor and his nobles, barely managed to survive.
 - ▶ This idea was further developed as the concept of the Asiatic mode of production by Karl Marx in the 19th century. He argued that in India (and other Asian countries), before colonialism, surplus was appropriated by the state. This led to the emergence of a society that was composed of a large number of autonomous and (internally) egalitarian village communities. The imperial court presided over these village communities, respecting their autonomy as long as the flow of surplus was unimpeded. This was regarded as a stagnant system.
- ▶ **Reality of Rural Society**
 - ▶ The picture depicted by Western thinkers about subcontinent's rural society was not real. Rural society was characterised by considerable social and economic differentiation during 16th and 17th centuries.
- ▶ On one hand, there was big **zamindars** with superior rights in land and on the other, there were untouchable landless labourers.
- ▶ In between was the big peasant, who used hired labour and engaged in commodity production and the smaller peasant who could barely produce for his subsistence.
- ▶ **Other European Travellers**
 - ▶ After 1600 CE, there were growing numbers of Dutch, English and French travellers coming to India.
 - ▶ Among them, the French jeweller **Jean-Baptiste Tavernier** was famous, who travelled to India at least six times. He was especially fascinated with the trading conditions in India and compared India to Iran and the Ottoman empire.
 - ▶ Some travellers like Italian doctor **Manucci**, settled down in India and never returned to Europe.
 - ▶ After Portuguese arrived in India in about 1500, a number of European scholars wrote detailed account regarding Indian customs and religious practices.
 - ▶ A few of them, like Jesuit Roberto Nobili translated Indian texts into European languages. Duarte Barbosa was the best known among the Portuguese writers, he wrote a detailed account of trade and society in South India.
- ▶ **Women : Slaves, Sati and Labourers**
 - ▶ Travellers who left written accounts were generally men who were interested in and sometimes intrigued by the condition of women in the subcontinent. Sometimes they took social inequities for granted as a 'natural' state of affairs.
 - ▶ For instance, slaves were openly sold in markets, like any other commodity and were regularly exchanged as gifts. When Ibn Battuta reached Sindh he purchased 'horses, camels and slaves' as gifts for Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq. When he reached Multan, he presented the governor with, "a slave and horse together with raisins and almonds".
 - ▶ Muhammad bin Tughlaq became so happy with the sermon of a preacher named Nasiruddin and gave him a hundred thousand **Tankas** (coins) and two hundred slaves.
 - ▶ Ibn Battuta's account shows that there was considerable differentiation among slaves. Some female slaves in the service of the Sultan were experts in music and dance.
 - ▶ Female slaves were also employed by Sultan to keep a watch on his nobles. Slaves were also used for domestic labour and Ibn Battuta found their services absolute necessary for carrying women and men on palanquins or **dola**.
 - ▶ Price of female slaves required for domestic labour was very low, therefore most families who could afford slaves, kept at least one or two of them.
- ▶ **European Traveller's views on Condition of Women**
 - ▶ Many contemporary European travellers and writers often highlighted the treatment of women as a crucial marker of difference between Western and Eastern societies.
 - ▶ Bernier choose the practice of **Sati** for this detailed description. He noted that while some women seemed to accept death cheerfully, others were forced to die.
 - ▶ Women were also involved in other things. Their labour was crucial in both agricultural and non-agricultural production.
 - ▶ Women from merchant families participated in commercial activities, sometimes even taking mercantile disputes to the court of law.



Practice Exercise



Multiple Choice Questions

Q 1. When and where Al-Biruni was born?

- a. 873 CE, Uzbekistan
- b. 973 CE, Uzbekistan
- c. 783 CE, Morocco
- d. 973 CE, Morocco

Q 2. Identify the name of the person from the information given below. (CBSE SQP 2023-24)

- a. He was born at Tangier in one of the most respectable and educated family.
- b. He considered experience gained through travel as a source of knowledge than books.
- c. He had travelled to middle east and few trading ports on the coast of east Africa.
- d. He wrote a book named Rihla

Q 3. means born outside the system, were often expected to provide inexpensive labour to both peasants and zamindars.

- a. Caravans
- b. Antyaja
- c. Zaytun
- d. Mahajans

Q 4. How many social categories were recognised by Al-Biruni?

- a. Three
- b. Four
- c. Five
- d. Six

Q 5. As per Al-Biruni account of the system of varnas, arrange them according to the order of precedence:

- (i) Shudra
- (ii) Vaishya
- (iii) Brahmana
- (iv) Kshatriya

Codes:

- a. (iii), (iv), (ii), (i)
- b. (ii), (i), (iv), (iii)
- c. (iv), (iii), (ii), (i)
- d. (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)

Q 6. Which of the following is not the hurdle mentioned by Al-Biruni in understanding the local practices?

- a. Sanskrit language
- b. Differences in religious beliefs
- c. Locals population were pre-occupied with their own understanding
- d. Gender inequality

Q 7. Which of the following is related to the Al-Biruni's concept of pollution?

- a. Concept of water pollution
- b. Sustainable development
- c. Destroying tree cover of earth
- d. Concept of social pollution

Q 8. Which of the following statement is correct regarding Al-Biruni's Kitab-ul-Hind?

- a. It is in Sanskrit language
- b. It is divided into 100 chapters
- c. It is divided into several subjects like religion, philosophy, festivals, etc
- d. He used such a language which was not easily understandable by other locals

Q 9. Which of the following category of society of ancient Persia was not recognised by the Al-Biruni?

- a. Knights and princes
- b. Monks and fire-priests
- c. Peasants and artisans
- d. Men and women

Q 10. According to Ibn Battuta, Indian Postal system was used for which of the following activities?

- a. To send information
- b. To remit credit across long distances
- c. To dispatch goods required at short notice
- d. All of the above

Q 11. Which of the following statement is correct, regarding the traveller Ibn Battuta?

- a. He was born in Khwarizm, Uzbekistan
- b. His book Rihla is written in Persian language
- c. He has not travelled much before coming to India
- d. He travelled to different countries like Syria, Iraq, Persia, etc

Q 12. Arrange the journey of Ibn Battuta in chronological order.

- (i) Maldives
- (ii) Sri Lanka
- (iii) Malabar
- (iv) China

Codes:

- a. (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)
- b. (iii), (i), (ii), (iv)
- c. (ii), (iii), (i), (iv)
- d. (iii), (ii), (iv), (i)

Q 13. Which of the following is the greatest gate?

- a. Gurl Darwaza
- b. Mandwi Darwaza
- c. Budaun Darwaza
- d. Buda Darwaza

Q 14. Where was market place for male and female singers situated?

- a. Delhi
- b. Mumbai
- c. Daulatabad
- d. Sind

Q 15. Consider the following statements and select the correct from the following options:

- (i) Francois Bernier was closely associated with the Prince Dara Shukoh.
- (ii) Bernier travelled to several parts of the country, and wrote accounts.
- (iii) He dedicated his major writing to the king of France and Aurangzeb. (CBSE SQP 2022-23)

Codes:

- a. (ii) and (iii)
- b. (i), (ii) and (iii)
- c. (i) and (ii)
- d. (i) and (iii)



Q 16. Francois Bernier came to Mughal Empire in search of:

- a. financial help b. opportunities
c. judicial remedy d. medical facility

Q 17. Arranged the following visitors of India as per the chronology.

- (i) Marco Polo (ii) Francois Bernier
(iii) Ibn Battuta (iv) Al-Biruni

Codes:

- a. (iii), (ii), (iv), (i) b. (iv), (i), (iii), (ii)
c. (iv), (iii), (ii), (i) d. (ii), (iii), (i), (iv)

Q 18. Who wrote the book Kitab-ul-Hind?

(CBSE SQP 2023-24)

- a. Ibn Battuta b. Al-Biruni
c. Francois Bernier d. Abdur Razzaq.

Assertion & Reason Type Questions ↘

Directions (Q. Nos. 19-21): In the following questions given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:

- a. Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
b. Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
c. (A) is true, but (R) is false
d. (A) is false, but (R) is true

Q 19. Assertion (A): There was lack of private property of land in India.

Reason (R): The emperor owned all the land and distributed it among his nobles.

Q 20. Assertion (A): Ibn Battuta travelled to different countries.

Reason (R): He considered experience gained through travel as the real experience of the social and economic conditions of the society.

Q 21. Assertion (A): Bernier was a firm believer in the virtues of private property. He saw crown ownership of land in the Mughal empire as being harmful to both State and the people.

Reason (R): Landlords could not pass on their land to their children, so they were averse to any long term investment in the expansion of production.

(CBSE 2020)

Fill in the Blank Type Questions ↘

Q 22. is the name of book written by Al-Biruni.

- a. Akbarnama b. Kitab-ul-Hind
c. Rihla d. Brahamana Friends.

Q 23. Al-Biruni studied the works of who was a Greek philosopher.

- a. Plato b. Ibn Battuta
c. Francois Bernier d. Abdur Razzaq

Q 24. According to Ibn Battuta, cities in the were densely populated.

- a. continent b. recontinent
c. subcontinent d. None of these

Q 25. The language of the people living East of the Indus was

- a. Hindvani b. English
c. French d. Sanskrit

Q 26. According to Bernier class did not exist in India.

- a. top b. middle
c. lower d. Both (b) and (c)

Correct and Rewrite Type Questions ↘

Q 27. Al-Biruni was from Tangier and had written the Kitab-ul-Hind in Arabic language.

Q 28. Ibn Battuta's Kitab-ul-Hind, written in Persian focuses on religion and philosophy, festivals, astronomy, alchemy, manners and customs, social life, weights and measures, iconography, laws and metrology.

Q 29. The Moroccan traveller, Francois Bernier considered experience gained through travels to be a more important source of knowledge than books.

Q 30. Impressed by his wide knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, the Sultan of Delhi, Alauddin Khilji appointed Ibn Battuta as the Qazi (judge) of Delhi.

Q 31. In 1342 CE., Ibn Battuta as a Sultan's envoy to the Mongol ruler, visited China via the land route passing Himalayas through Tibet.

Q 32. Slaves were generally used for commercial labour and Ibn Battuta found their services particularly dispensable.

Q 33. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier was Portuguese doctor who visited India at least six times in seventeen century CE.

Match the Following Type Questions ↘

Q 34. Match the column I and column II.

Column I	Column II
A. Al-Biruni	1. Uzbekistan
B. Francois Bernier	2. Italy
C. Duarte Barbosa	3. France
D. Manucci	4. Portugal

Codes:

- A B C D A B C D
a. 1 2 3 4 b. 2 1 4 3
c. 3 1 2 4 d. 1 3 4 2

Q 35. Match the column I and column II.

Column I	Column II
A. Ibn Battuta	1. Uzbekistan
B. Francois Bernier	2. Morocco
C. Al-Biruni	3. France

Codes:

- A B C A B C
a. 2 3 1 b. 2 1 3
c. 3 2 1 d. 3 1 2

Q 36. Match the column I and column II.

Column I	Column II
A. Brahmana	1. Thigh
B. Kshatriya	2. Feet
C. Vaishya	3. Hands
D. Shudra	4. Head

Codes:

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| A B C D | A B C D |
| a. 2 1 3 4 | b. 4 3 1 2 |
| c. 4 1 3 2 | d. 3 2 1 4 |

Q 37. Match the column I and column II.

Column I	Column II
A. The horse-post	1. Dawa
B. The foot-post	2. Nagarsheth
C. Domed building	3. Uluq
D. Community merchant	4. Cupola

Codes:

- | |
|------------|
| A B C D |
| a. 1 2 3 4 |
| b. 3 2 1 4 |
| c. 3 1 4 2 |
| d. 4 3 2 1 |

Answers

1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (b) 5. (a)
 6. (d) 7. (d) 8. (c) 9. (d) 10. (d)
 11. (d) 12. (b) 13. (c) 14. (c) 15. (c)
 16. (b) 17. (b) 18. (b) 19. (b) 20. (a)
 21. (a) 22. (a) 23. (a) 24. (c) 25. (a)
 26. (b)
 27. Al-Biruni was from Khwarizm and he had written the Kitab-ul-Hind in Arabic language.
 28. Al-Biruni's, Kitab-ul-Hind, written in Arabic, focuses on religion and philosophy, festivals, astronomy, alchemy, manners and customs, social life, weights and measures, iconography, laws and metrology.
 29. The Moroccan traveller, Ibn Battuta considered experience gained through travels to be a more important source of knowledge than books.
 30. Impressed by his wide knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, the Sultan of Delhi, Muhammad bin Tughluq appointed Ibn Battuta as the Qazi (Judge) of Delhi.
 31. In 1342 CE., Ibn Battuta as a Sultan's envoy to the Mongol ruler, visited China via sea route crossing the ports of Sumatra and Zaytun.
 32. Slaves were generally used for domestic labour and Ibn Battuta found their services particularly indispensable.

33. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier was French jeweller who visited India at least six times in seventeenth century C.E.

34. (d) 35. (a) 36. (b) 37. (c)



Picture Based Type Questions

Q 1. Study this figure of "Priest King" carefully and answer any three of the following questions by choosing the correct options.



(i) Why did the robbers attack the travellers?

- Majority of travellers were merchants who carried considerable amount of wealth with them for trading purpose.
- Robbers resided in the forested and sparse populated areas which remained aloof from state machinery and policing.
- Because of the rampant poverty and impoverishment in India.
- All of the above

(ii) How can you distinguish the travellers from the robbers?

- Robbers were half naked and looked impoverished.
- The travellers in this painting were beautifully dressed.
- Both a. and b.
- None of the above

(iii) What can be inferred about the landscape projected in this painting?

- Hilly and forested area
- Desert area
- Both a. and b.
- City situated on the bank of a river

(iv) Who among the following foreign traveller was attacked by the robbers?

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| a. Francois Bernier | b. Duarte Barbosa |
| c. Ibn Battuta | d. Al-Biruni |

Answers

- (i) (d) All of the above
- (ii) (c) Both a. and b.
- (iii) (a) Hilly and forested area
- (iv) (c) Ibn Battuta

Q 2. Study this sculpted panel from Mathura depicting travellers carefully and answer any three of the following questions by choosing correct options :



- (i) **What are the various modes of transport that are shown in the given sculpture?**
 - a. Horses and horse driven palanquin
 - b. Elephant
 - c. Pedestrian
 - d. All of the above
- (ii) **Which of the following is/are correct regarding significance of Mathura in the context of architecture and trade and commerce?**
 - a. Trade and commerce flourished in Mathura as it lied on the important tri-junction of different trade routes in India.
 - b. Since the ancient time, it was the seat of unique and indigenus style of architecture.
 - c. Being in close vicinity to Delhi, it was a centre for many crafts in India.
 - d. All of the above
- (iii) **Consider the following statements:**
 - I. During the medieval era, India was visited by travellers from Europe and Arabian Peninsula.
 - II. They wrote extensive account on the culture, theology, mineralogy and about administration in India.

Choose the correct option:

 - a. Both I and II are correct
 - b. Only I is correct
 - c. Only II is correct
 - d. None of the above

Answers

- (i) (d) All of the above
- (ii) (d) All of the above
- (iii) (a) Both I and II are correct.



Source Based Type Questions

Source 1

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

Once the Portuguese arrived in India in about 1500, a number of them wrote detailed accounts regarding Indian social customs and religious practices. A few of them, such as the Jesuit Roberto Nobili, even translated Indian texts into European languages. Among the best known of the Portuguese writers is Duarte Barbosa, who wrote a detailed account of trade and society in South India. Later, after 1600, we find growing numbers of Dutch, English and French travellers coming to India. One of the most famous was the French jeweller Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, who travelled to India at least six times. He was particularly fascinated with the trading conditions in India and compared India to Iran and the Ottoman empire. Some of these travellers, like the Italian doctor Manucci, never returned to Europe and settled down in India.

- Q 1. Why Europeans were interested in travelling India?**
 - a. Because of the commercial opportunities.
 - b. To know more about the Indian Social customs and religious practices.
 - c. To get trading concessions and favors from Indian rulers.
 - d. All of the above.
- Q 2. Who among the following were the first European nation to settle in India?**
 - a. French
 - b. Portuguese
 - c. English
 - d. Italian

Q 3. Choose the correct options:

Assertion (A): The French traveller Jean-Baptiste Tavernier travelled to India at least six times.

Reason (R): He was impressed by the mineral wealth and trading situation in the country.

Codes:

- a. Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- b. Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- c. (A) is true, but (R) is false.
- d. (A) is false, but (R) is true.

Q 4. Consider the following statements:

- I. Europeans were the first foreigners, who had written detailed account of trade, religion and society in medieval India.

II. Many among them were merchants, doctors and other professionals who were looking for commercial opportunities in India.

Choose the correct option:

- Both I and II are correct
- Only I is correct
- Only II is correct
- None of the above

Answers

1. (d) 2. (b) 3. (a) 4. (c)

Source 2

Read the following source carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Al-Biruni's Objectives and Translating Texts, Sharing Ideas

Al-Biruni described his work as a help to those who want to discuss religious questions with them (the Hindus) and as a repertory of information to those who want to associate with them.

Al-Biruni's expertise in several languages allowed him to compare languages and translate texts. He translated several Sanskrit works, including Patanjali's work on grammar, into Arabic. For his Brahmana friends, he translated the works of Euclid Greek mathematician into Sanskrit.

Q 1. How did Al-Biruni described his work?

Ans. Al-Biruni stated that his work was to help those who wanted to discuss religious questions with them.

Q 2. What is the meaning of word 'repertory'? How did expertise in several languages help Al-Biruni?

Ans. Repertory means 'collection'. Expertise in several languages helped Al-Biruni to compare languages and translate texts.

Q 3. What were the works that Al-Biruni translated?

Ans. Al-Biruni translated Patanjali's Sanskrit work on grammar into Arabic. He also translated works of Euclid, Greek mathematician, into Sanskrit.

Source 3

Read the following source carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Education and Entertainment

This is what Ibn Juzayy, who was deputed to write what Ibn Battuta dictated, said in his introduction.

A gracious direction was transmitted (by the ruler) that he (Ibn Battuta) should dictate an account of the cities which he had seen in his travel, and of the interesting events which had clung to his memory, and that he should speak of those whom he had met of the rulers of countries, of their-distinguished men of learning and their pious saints. Accordingly, he dictated upon these subjects a narrative which gave entertainment to

the mind and delight to the ears and eyes, with a variety of curious particulars by the exposition of which he gave edification and of marvellous things, by referring to which he aroused interest.

Q 1. Why did the Sultan of Morocco insist Ibn Battuta to dictate the story of his travel to Ibn Juzayy?

Ans. The Sultan of Morocco, Abu Inan Faris, insisted that Ibn Battuta dictate the story of his travels to Ibn Juzayy, a scholar and writer, because the sultan was impressed by Ibn Battuta's extensive travels and wanted to preserve his experiences for future generations.

Q 2. Highlight the places Ibn Battuta explored during his travel.

Ans. Africa. The Middle East. India and South Asia.

Q 3. What do Ibn Battuta's travel account reveal about the things he noted in India?

Ans. Ibn Battuta's travel account provides valuable insights into the cultural, social, economic and political aspects of India during the 14th century. Here are some of the things that Ibn Battuta noted about India in his travel account. Religion, Society, Economy, Architecture, Politics etc.



Very Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. When did Al-Biruni reached Ghazni?

Ans. Al-Biruni reached Ghazni in 1017 CE.

Q 2. Name the book written by Al-Biruni on religion, philosophy, astronomy and laws of India. (CBSE 2020)

Ans. Kitab-ul-Hind.

Q 3. Which kind of texts did Al-Biruni translated?

Ans. Al-Biruni translated several Sanskrit works, like Patanjali's work on grammar into Arabic.

Q 4. "In real life the system was not quite as rigid." This statement is contradictory to whose caste system? Identify the person related to the statement.

Ans. Al-Biruni.

Q 5. Jean-Baptiste belongs to which country?

Ans. France.

Q 6. What did Ibn Battuta do when he reached Sind and Multan?

Ans. He purchased horses, camels and slaves as gifts for Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Q 7. Why did Ibn Battuta think slaves were important?

Ans. It is because they were used as domestic labour.

Q 8. Why Ibn Battuta got attracted by the Muhammad bin Tughlaq?

Ans. It is because of his reputation as a patronage of Arts and literature.

Q 9. When Portuguese were arrived in India?

Ans. Portuguese arrived in India in about 1500 CE.

Q 10. Name any two Portuguese travellers who wrote about India.

Ans. Jesuit Roberto Nobili and Duarte Barbosa.

Q 11. How do you think Francois Bernier was closely associated with the Mughal Court? (Delhi 2020)

Ans. Francois Bernier was closely associated with the Mughal court as a physician to Prince Dara Shukoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan and later as an intellectual and scientist with Danishmand Khan, an Armenian noble at the Mughal court.

Q 12. Who was the Mughal Emperor when Francois Bernier came to India?

Ans. Dara Shukoh (known as Dara Shikoh)

Q 13. What does Bernier wrote about Sati?

Ans. Bernier chose the practice of Sati for this detailed description. He noted that while some women seemed to accept death cheerfully, others were forced to die.

Q 14. Who try to place the history of the Mughals within some sort of a universal framework?

Ans. Francois Bernier.

Q 15. What was the Bernier's view on towns?

Ans. He said that the towns in India were just like camp towns.

Q 16. What do you mean by oriental despotism according to Montesquieu?

Ans. It means the rulers in Asia enjoyed absolute authority over their subjects.

Q 17. Who gave the idea of oriental despotism?

Ans. French Philosopher Montesquieu.

Q 18. What do you mean by antyaja?

Ans. It means someone born outside the system, were often expected to provide inexpensive labour to both peasants and zamindars.

Q 19. What was the fundamental difference between Mughal India and Europe according to Bernier?

Ans. According to Bernier, the fundamental difference was the concept of private property in land.



Identify the Image Type Question

Q 1. Identify the picture given below.



Ans. It is a gold spoon studded with emeralds and rubies, an example of the dexterity of Mughal artisans.



Short Answer Type Questions

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

Ans. Writer: Al-Biruni

Language: Arabic

Subjects: It is divided into 80 chapters on subjects such as religion and philosophy, festivals, astronomy, alchemy, manners and customs, social life, weights and measures, iconography, laws and metrology.

Style: Al-Biruni's style of writing was different. He used to start with question, followed with a description based on Sanskrit traditions and conclusion was based on comparison with other cultures.

Geometric Structure: Some scholars praised about this structure and compared it with geometric structure known for its precision and predictability. This was due to Al-Biruni's mathematical orientation.

Q 2. Examine the causes that made Al-Biruni visit India. (CBSE 2017)

Ans. The causes that made Al-Biruni visit India were:

(i) **Invasion of Sultan Mahmud:** When Sultan Mahmud invaded Khwarizm, he took several scholars and poets back to his Capital Ghazni, Al-Biruni was one of them.

(ii) **Interest in India:** Al-Biruni developed an interest in India through Ghazni. When the Punjab became a part of the Ghaznavid Empire, Al Biruni travelled widely in the Punjab and parts of Northern India.

(iii) **Wanted to learn mathematics, astronomy and medicine:** Al-Biruni wanted to learn more of mathematics, astronomy and medicine, so he visited India. Al-Biruni spent years in the company of Brahmana priests and scholars, learning Sanskrit and studying religious and philosophical texts. He read the Vedas, the Puranas, the Bhagavad Gita, the works of Patanjali, the Manusmriti, etc. to understand Indian society properly.

Q 3. State the inherent problems faced by Al-Biruni in the task of understanding Indian social and Brahmanical practices. Mention any two sources that provided him the support. (CBSE 2016)

Ans. The inherent problems faced by Al-Biruni in the task of understanding Indian social and Brahmanical practices were:

(i) He found it difficult to translate the contents to Arabic or Persian as he did not understand Sanskrit.

(ii) He found it difficult to understand the caste system that was prevailing.

(iii) He found that self-absorption and consequent insularity of the local population constituted the another barrier.

Two sources that provided Al-Biruni support were:

- (i) Al-Biruni depended exclusively on the Vedas, the Puranas and the Bhagavad Gita.
- (ii) Al-Biruni also mentioned the support from the works of Patanjali and Manusmriti to understand Indian society.

Q 4. Discuss briefly about Al-Biruni.

Ans. Detail about Al-Biruni

Born: Khwarizm in Uzbekistan on 4th September 973 CE

Education: He attained his early education in Khwarizm, which was famous centre of learning at that time. Here, he became well versed in different languages like Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Sanskrit and Syriac.

Member: He became the member of council of Khwarizm because of his immense capability.

Ghazni invasion: During Mahmud of Ghazni invasion on Khwarizm in 1017 CE, he was made a prisoner and brought to Ghazni.

Title: Mahmud Ghazni impressed by his ability and assigned him the title of Shah-e-Khwarizm.

Q 5. How did the term 'Hindu' derive?

Ans. The term 'Hindu' was derived from an old Persian word used around 6th-5th century BCE to refer to the region to the East of the river Sindhu (Indus).

The Arabs continued the Persian usage and called this region 'Al-Hind' and its people 'Hind'.

Later, the Turks referred to the people East of Indus as 'Hindu' and their land as 'Hindustan' and their language as 'Hindavi'.

These expressions did not indicate the religious identity of the people. It was much later that the term developed religious implications.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|---------|---|--------|
| I | → | Persian | → | Sindhu |
| II | → | Arabs | → | Hind |
| III | → | Turks | → | Hindu |

Q 6. Why is Al-Biruni's text Kitab-ul-Hind considered as a voluminous text? (CBSE 2019)

Ans. Al-Biruni's text Kitab-ul-Hind considered as a voluminous text because:

- (i) It was a big text, divided into 80 chapters.
- (ii) It included subjects like religion and philosophy, festivals, astronomy, alchemy, manners and customs, social life, weights and measures, iconography, laws and metrology.
- (iii) He followed a different structure beginning with a question followed up with a comparison with other cultures.

Q 7. Name the book authored by Al-Biruni. Why did he disapprove the notion of the Indian caste system. Give one reason.

Ans. Book: Kitab-ul-Hind also known as Tarikh-ul-Hind.

Reason: He disapproved the notion of the Indian caste system. He accepted the Brahmanical description of caste system and his views were deeply influenced by his study of Sanskrit books and the views of Brahmanas.

He did not accept the notion of pollution and said that state of impurity does not stay forever. His views were against the caste system as God considers everyone equally.

COMMON ERROR

Sometimes, students only write the book authored by Al-Biruni.



TIP

The students should give a detailed description about the book.

Q 8. Discuss about the travel plans of Ibn Battuta, after his new assignment of going to China as Sultan's envoy.

Ans. The travel plan of Ibn Battuta was as follows:

Ibn Battuta was ordered in 1342 CE by Sultan to travel to China as the Sultan's representative to the Mongol ruler. Ibn Battuta with the new assignment proceeded to the Malabar coast through Central India. From Malabar, he went to the Maldives. He stayed in Maldives for eighteen months as the Qazi, but then decided to proceed to Sri Lanka.

Before going to China, he once again went to Malabar Coast, the Maldives and also visited Bengal and Assam.

He took a ship to Sumatra and from there another ship for the Chinese port town of Zaytun, presently known as Quanzhou.

He travelled extensively in China, went to Beijing, but did not stay long and decided to return home in 1347 CE.

Q 9. Analyse the evidence for slavery provided by Ibn Battuta.

Ans. The evidences of slavery provided by the account of Ibn Battuta were:

Openly sold in market: Slaves were openly sold in markets, like other commodities and were exchanged as gifts. Ibn Battuta himself bought slaves along with horses and camels when he reached Sind, as gifts for Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Differentiation among slaves: From Ibn Battuta's account, there was significant differentiation among slaves. Some female slaves in the service of sultans were experts in music and dance. Female slaves were also employed by Sultan to spy on his nobles.

Used for domestic labour: Slaves were generally used for domestic labour and Ibn Battuta found their services absolute necessary. Price of female slaves required for domestic labour, was very low and most families who could afford to do kept at least one or two of them.

Q 10. Compare and contrast the perspectives from which Ibn Battuta and Bernier wrote their accounts of their travels in India.

Ans. Ibn Battuta and Bernier's perspectives in their accounts of travel in India was:

Ibn Battuta	Bernier
He was very much excited about the new unfamiliar things. He wrote a detailed description about coconut and panna that was used in India.	Bernier compared the situations he saw in India with those of Europe in general and France in particular. He mainly focused on the depressing things of India. He wanted to influence the European policy makers to make the right decisions.
He wrote stories about men noted for their devotion, kings who could be both cruel and generous and about lives of ordinary men and women.	Bernier compared Mughal Empire with that of Europe and stressed on the superiority of the Europe. He showed India to be inferior to that of Europe.
He wrote about anything that was unfamiliar and particularly highlighted in order to ensure that the listener or the reader was suitably impressed by accounts of far, but accessible worlds.	

Both of them wrote account on different perspective. Ibn Battuta mentioned and explained what he was impressed from whereas Bernier pointed out the things that were the weakness of the Indian society. He pointed the weakness of the Indian society and considered the Mughal India inferior to the European society. Ibn Battuta recorded observations about culture, people, beliefs and value.

Q 11. Discuss about initial days of Ibn Battuta in the subcontinent.

Ans. Ibn Battuta reached Sind in 1333 CE. by travelling overland through Central Asia. He was attracted by the reputation of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, the Sultan of Delhi, for his generous patron of arts and letters. Hence, he moved for Delhi, passing through Multan and Uch.

The Sultan was impressed by his scholarship and appointed him as Qazi or judge of Delhi.

Later due to misunderstanding between Sultan and Ibn Battuta, he was thrown into prison. When this misunderstanding was cleared, he was restored to imperial service by the Sultan.

Q 12. Discuss about the Ibn Battuta's description of Indian economy.

Ans. The views of Ibn Battuta on Indian economy were: According to Ibn Battuta, the bazaars were important places of economic transactions, as well as hub of social and cultural activities.

Ibn Battuta found Indian agriculture very productive because of the fertility of soil. This fertility allowed farmers to cultivate two crops a year. The subcontinent was well connected and integrated with Inter-Asian networks of trade and commerce.

The Indian manufacturers were in great demand in both West Asia and South-East Asia and this brought huge profits for artisans and merchants. There was great demand for Indian textiles like cotton cloth, fine muslins, silks, brocade and satin. Few varieties of fine muslin were so expensive that only nobles and very rich class could afford it.

Q 13. 'India had unique system of communication during the 14th century' Examine the statement made by Ibn Battuta.

(CBSE SQP 2017, 2023-24)

OR

How did Ibn Battuta explain the system of communication in India?

(CBSE 2020)

Ans. Ibn Battuta examined the unique system of communication in India in the followings ways:

(i) Indian postal system was of two types: The horse-post was called uluq which was ran by royal horses stationed at a distance of every four miles.

The other was foot-post called dawa, which had three stations per mile.

(ii) At every third of a mile there was well-populated village where there were men present to carry the courier. When a courier starts from the city, he hold the letter in one hand and the rod with copper bells on the other and ran as fast as he can. The other men in next dawa, when hears this bell he gets ready and as soon as

courier reaches them. he takes it and transfers it to next *dawa*. This continues till it reaches its destination.

- (iii) The foot-post was quicker than the horse-post and was used to transport fruits of *Khurasan* which were much desired in India.

Q 14. From the descriptions of Ibn Battuta, what glimpse we find about the agricultural economy of the village and trade and commerce of the subcontinent?

Ans. Ibn Battuta had no interest in describing the prosperity of the cities. But historians used Ibn Battuta's accounts and explained about the prosperity of the towns. The towns derived significant portion of its wealth from the surplus of villages.

According to Ibn Battuta, Indian agriculture was quite productive. Its reason was the fertility of the land. It was easy for the farmers to grow two crops in a year.

The subcontinent was well connected and integrated with Inter-Asian networks of trade and commerce. The Indian manufacturers were in great demand in both West Asia and South-East Asia and this brought huge profits for artisans and merchants.

There was great demand for Indian textiles like cotton cloth, fine muslins, silks, brocade and satin. Few varieties of fine muslin were so expensive that only nobles and very rich class could afford it.

Q 15. What was the reality about rural society in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in contradiction to Karl Marx's view?

Ans. The picture depicted by Western thinkers about subcontinent's rural society was not real:

Rural society was characterised by considerable social and economic differentiation during 16th and 17th centuries.

On one hand, there were big zamindars with superior rights in land and on the other, there were untouchables landless labourers.

Between them, there was the big peasant who used hired labour and engaged in commodity production and the smaller peasant who could barely produce for his livelihood.

Q 16. How did crown ownership of land effect the living standards of all sections of society according to Bernier?

Ans. According to Bernier, the crown ownership of land effect the living standard of society in the following ways:

According to Bernier, in crown ownership of land, landholders could not pass on the land to their children. This discouraged landholders to invest in the maintenance and expansion of production.

The absence of private property in land prevented the emergence of the class of landlords who focus on improving their lands as in Western Europe.

This practice had led to the uniform destruction of agriculture, excessive oppression of the peasantry and continuous decline in the living standards of all sections of society except the ruling aristocracy.

Q 17. What were the elements of the practice of Sati that drew the attention of Bernier?

Ans. The following elements of the practice of Sati drew the attention of Bernier:

- (i) Under this cruel practices an alive widow was forcibly made to sit on the pyre of her husband.
- (ii) The widow was an unwilling victim of the Sati-practice. She was forced to be a Sati.
- (iii) The people had no sympathy even for the child-widows.
- (iv) The Brahmins and the elderly women of the house participated in this practice or process.

Q 18. Explain why Bernier described Mughal cities as 'Camp towns'. (CBSE 2017)

OR

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

Ans. The picture of urban centres from Bernier's account was: During the 17th century about 15% of the population lived in towns. This was an average, higher than the proportion of urban population in Western Europe in the same period. In spite of this Bernier described Mughal cities as "Camp Towns", by which he meant towns that owned their existence and depended for their survival on the imperial camp. He believed that these came into existence when the imperial court moved in and rapidly declined when it moved out.

The cities and towns were ruined with contaminated air, its fields overspread with bushes and full of dirty stagnant water.

Bernier suggested that urban centres did not have viable social and economic foundations and were dependent on imperial protection.

Q 19. Explain the views of Bernier about more complex social reality of the Mughal Empire.

Ans. Bernier's pre-occupation with projecting the Mughal state as tyrannical is obvious, his descriptions occasionally hint at a more complex social reality: He felt that artisans had no incentive to improve the quality of their manufactures, since profits were appropriated by the state. Manufactures were, consequently, everywhere in decline.

He conceded that vast quantities of the world's precious metals flowed into India, as manufactures were exported in exchange for gold and silver.



He also noticed the existence of a prosperous merchant community, engaged in long distance exchange.

Q 20. Describe briefly about Imperial Karkhanas.

Ans. Bernier provided a detailed account of the working of the imperial Karkhanas or workshops.

Large halls are seen at many places, called Karkhanas or workshops for the artisans. In one hall embroiderers are busily employed, superintended by a master. In another there are the goldsmiths, in a third, painters, in a fourth varnishers in lacquer-work; in fifth, joiners, turners, tailors and shoemakers, in a sixth, manufacturers of silk, brocade and fine muslins.

The artisans come every morning to their Karkhanas where they remain employed the whole day and in the evening return to their homes.

In this quiet regular manner, their time glides away, no one aspiring for any improvement in the condition of life wherein he happens to be born.

Q 21. 'Bernier's description of Imperial land ownership influenced Western theorists like French philosopher Montesquieu and German Karl Marx.' Justify it with suitable arguments.

OR

Analyse the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production as stated by Karl Marx? (CBSE 2022)

Ans. Bernier's description about Imperial land ownership influenced Western theorists. These Western theorists like Montesquieu and Karl Marx have developed new theories based on this.

(i) Oriental Despotism – Theory of Montesquieu:

Montesquieu further developed Bernier's idea into oriental despotism. According to it, the rulers in Asia exercised the full authority over their subjects. The subjects were kept in the conditions of subjugation and poverty. All land belonged to the king and private property was non-existent. According to this view, everybody except the king and nobles barely managed to survive.

(ii) Karl Marx's Concept of Asiatic Mode of Production:

This idea was further developed as the concept of the Asiatic mode of production by Karl Marx in the 19th century. He argued that in India and other Asian countries, the surplus was appropriated by the state. He added that this led to the emergence of a society with a large number of autonomous and egalitarian village communities. Marx thought that it was a stagnant system.

Q 22. 'Bernier wanted to express India inferior to the Western world.' Elucidate the statement.

Ans. Bernier's work 'Travels in the Mughal Empire' is marked by detailed observations, critical insights and reflects. His account contains discussions trying to keep the Mughal history with the universal framework.

He compared Mughal India with contemporary Europe and stressed on the superiority of the Europe. His representation of Indian work was on the model of binary opposition in which India is expressed as the inverse of Europe.

He also described the differences which he saw so that India could be expressed inferior to the Western world.

Q 23. Describe the perspective of Ibn Battuta and Francois Bernier on the condition of women in the Indian subcontinent. (CBSE 2019)

Ans. Perspective of Ibn Battuta:

Ibn Battuta's account shows that there was considerable differentiation among slaves. Some female slaves in the service of the Sultan were experts in music and dance.

Female slaves were also employed by Sultan to keep a watch on his nobles.

Price of female slaves required for domestic labour was very low, therefore most families who could afford slaves, kept at least one or two of them.

Perspective of Francois Bernier:

According to Francois Bernier, some women seemed to embrace death cheerfully during 'Sati', but others were forced to die.

Bernier pointed out that women were also involved in other activities of the society. Their labour was crucial in both agricultural and non-agricultural production. Women from merchant families participated in commercial activities, sometimes even taking mercantile disputes to the court of law.

Q 24. Discuss Al-Biruni's understanding of the caste system.

Ans. Al-Biruni's description about caste system as he understood. Al-Biruni tried to explain the caste system by looking for parallels in other societies. He described that in ancient Persia, four social categories were recognised.

(i) Knight and princes

(ii) Monks

(iii) Fire-priests and lawyers, physicians, astronomers, other scientists.

(iv) Finally, peasants and artisans. He attempted to suggest that social divisions were not unique to India.

His description of the caste system in India was deeply influenced by his study of Sanskrit texts. He described that highest castes were the Brahmanas who were created from the head of Brahman and thus Hindus consider them as the very best of mankind.

Next caste are the kshatriyas who were created from the shoulders and hands of Brahman. They are followed by Valshyas who were created from the thigh of Brahman and Shudras were created from the feet of Brahman.

Al-Biruni accepted Brahmanical description of caste system, but he was against the notion of pollution. He believed that according to the laws of nature anything which becomes impure ultimately becomes pure again, e.g., the sun clears the air.

The concept of social pollution, intrinsic to the caste system, was according to him, contrary to the laws of nature. He was not able to foresee that the caste system was not rigid as portrayed in the Sanskrit texts.

Q 25. Do you think Ibn Battuta's account is useful in arriving at an understanding of life in contemporary urban centres? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans. Yes, Ibn Battuta's account is useful for understanding life in contemporary urban centres. He has described about Indian urban centres in a positive way which was as follows:

- (i) Ibn Battuta stated that Indian cities had many exciting opportunities. They were useful for those who had the necessary drive, skill and resources.
- (ii) The Indian cities were densely populated. They were also prosperous. They had crowded streets. They had bright and colourful markets. They had a variety of goods.
- (iii) According to Ibn Battuta, Delhi was a vast city. It had a lot of population. It was the largest city in India. He also described that Daulatabad was also equally big as Delhi.
- (iv) He stated that bazaars in urban centres were not just places of economic transactions, but also hub of social and cultural activities. Most bazaars had a mosque and a temple and some of them also had specific places marked for public performances by dancers, musicians and singers.
- (v) Ibn Battuta found that many towns derived their wealth and prosperity through the appropriation of surplus from villages.
- (vi) According to Ibn Battuta, Indian agriculture was very productive. The farmers cultivated two crops a year because the land was very fertile.
- (vii) The Indian manufacturers were in great demand in both West Asia and South-East Asia and this brought huge profits for artisans and merchants. The subcontinent was well integrated with inter-Asian networks of trade and commerce.

Q 26. Discuss the extent to which Bernier's account enables historians to reconstruct contemporary rural society.

Ans. The assessment of Bernier about the rural society of India was not correct. It was misleading and far

away from truth. But there is some truth in his descriptions which is evident from the following:

- (i) Bernier has stated that in the Mughal Empire, the emperor owned all the land and distributed it among his nobles. It had a disastrous impact on the Indian economy and society.
- (ii) According to him the system of crown ownership of land was not good. It was because, the land holders could not pass on their land to their children. They did not make any long-term investment on the land.
- (iii) As there were no private property in land, there was not an improved class of landlords. This system ruined the whole agriculture. It also led to the oppression of the peasants. It also lowered the living standards of all sections of society.

The Bernier's view of Indian society had the following features:

- (i) It had impoverished people. The rich people constituted a small minority.
- (ii) It had only the poorest of the poor and the richest of the rich and there was no middle class in between them.
- (iii) The Mughal king was the king of beggars and barbarians.
- (iv) All the cities and towns were ruined. They had contaminated air.

Thus, Bernier's descriptions of Indian rural society brought out many social and economic differences. There were big zamindars. There were also landless labourers who were despised as the untouchables.

Q 27. Read this excerpt from Bernier:

Numerous are the instances of handsome pieces of workmanship made by persons destitute of tools and who can scarcely be said to have received instruction from a master. Sometimes they imitate so perfectly articles of European manufacture that the difference between the original and copy can hardly be discerned. Among other things, the Indians make excellent muskets and fowling-pieces and such beautiful gold ornaments that it may be doubted if the exquisite workmanship of those articles can be exceeded by any European goldsmith. It have often admired the beauty, softness and delicacy of their paintings.

List the crafts mentioned in the passage. Compare these with the descriptions of artisanal activity in the chapter.

Ans. The lists of crafts mentioned in the passage are excellent muskets, fowling pieces, beautiful ornaments and paintings. These products were beautifully made. Bernier were amazed to see these products.

Comparison of crafts referred in the passage with the description of artisanal activity in the chapter is discussed ahead:

- (i) In the chapter boat manufacturing and terracotta sculpture and temple architecture has been mentioned.
- (ii) Art of painting has been referred.
- (iii) Art of carpet manufacturing has been referred.
- (iv) Art of dance, music and calligraphy have been referred in the chapter.
- (v) Description about Rajal Khamos have also been mentioned.
- (vi) Artisanal activity of goldsmiths is also mentioned. For instance, gold spoon with emeralds and rubies shows the skills of Mughal artisans



Long Answer Type Questions ↘

Q 1. 'Ibn Battuta found Delhi as a city full of exciting opportunities.' Support your answer with evidences given by him.

Ans. Ibn Battuta found cities in the subcontinent full of exciting opportunities for those who had the necessary drive, resources and skills.

Some of the evidences given by him were:

The cities were densely populated and prosperous, but were disrupted when there were invasions and wars. Most cities had crowded streets and bright and colourful markets that were arranged with a variety of goods.

He described Delhi as a big city, with a great population, the largest in India. Daulatabad in Maharashtra was also equal in size with Delhi.

According to Ibn Battuta, the city of Delhi covers a wide area and had a large population. The defensive wall around the city had no comparison. The breadth of the wall was eleven cubits. There were houses inside for night sentry and gate keepers.

There were also store-houses for storing edibles, magazines, ammunition, ballistas and siege machines. The stored grains could last long without rotting. There were windows in the wall through which light enter inside. The lower part of the defensive wall was built of stone and upper part with bricks and also had many towers close to one another.

There are many gates called darwaza and the Budaun darwaza was the greatest among them. There was a grain market inside the Mandwi darwaza and near to Gul darwaza, there were an orchard.

City of Delhi also had a fine cemetery in which graves had domes over them and those without dome had an arch.

Q 2. Describe the experiences of Al-Biruni in the Indian subcontinent.

Ans. Experiences of Al-Biruni in the Indian subcontinent:
(i) Al-Biruni discussed several barriers, that he

felt, obstructed understanding of the Indian subcontinent.

- (ii) His first problem was Sanskrit. He said that Sanskrit was so different from Arabic and Persian and the ideas and concepts could not be easily translated from one language into another. According to Al-Biruni, learning Sanskrit was difficult. It had wide range and forms of words.
- (iii) The second problem was differences in religious beliefs and practices.
- (iv) The third problem was the local population were pre-occupied with their own feelings and their ignorance or lack of interest in cultures, ideas or people outside their experience.
- (v) Despite these problems, Al-Biruni depended exclusively on the works of Brahmanas and often cited passages from the Vedas, the Purans, the Bhagavad Gita, the work of Patanjali, The Manusmriti, etc., to provide an understanding of Indian society.
- (vi) He attempted to suggest that social divisions were not unique to India. He noted that in ancient Persia four social categories were recognised.
- (vii) Though he accepted the Brahmanical description of the caste system, Al-Biruni disapproved of the notion of pollution.
- (viii) He remarked that everything which falls into a state of impurity strives and succeeds in regaining original condition of purity.

Q 3. 'Ibn Battuta's strategies of representation were evident in the ways in which he described the coconut and the paan.'

Look at the statement and give description of Ibn Battuta on coconut and paan.

Ans. Some of the best examples of Ibn Battuta's strategies of representation are evident in the ways in which he described the coconut and the paan, two kinds of plant produce that were completely unfamiliar to his audience.

Following are his descriptions about coconut and the paan:

- (i) **Coconut:** These trees are among the most peculiar trees in kind and most astonishing in habit. They look exactly like date-palms, without any difference between them except that the one produces nuts as its fruits and the other produces dates.

The nut of a coconut tree resembles a man's head, for in it are what look like two eyes and a mouth and the inside of it when it is green looks like the brain and attached to it is a fibre which looks like hair. They make from this cords

with which they sew up ships instead of (using) iron nails and they (also) make from it cables for vessels.

(ii) **The Paan:** The betel is a tree which is cultivated in the same manner as the grape-vine. The betel has no fruit and is grown only for the sake of its leaves. The manner of its use is that before eating it one takes areca nut; this is like a nutmeg, but is broken up until it is reduced to small pellets and one places these in his mouth and chews them. Then he takes the leaves of betel, puts a little chalk on them and masticates them along with the betel.

Q 4. 'Travellers who left written accounts were generally men who were interested in and sometimes intrigued by the condition of women in the subcontinent. Sometimes they took social inequalities for granted as a natural state of affairs.' Discuss about the conditions of slaves and women in subcontinent.

Ans. Many travellers have written about the condition of slaves and women in their travel accounts.

These are discussed below:

Slaves were openly sold in markets, like other commodities and were exchanged as gifts. Ibn Battuta himself bought slaves along with horses and camels. When he reached Sindh, as gifts for Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq. After reaching Multan, he gifted a slave and horse along with raisins and almonds to the Governor.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq became so happy with the sermon of a preacher named Nasiruddin and gave him a hundred thousand tankas (coins) and two hundred slaves.

Ibn Battuta's account shows that there was considerable differentiation among slaves. Some female slaves in the service of the Sultan were experts in music and dance. Female slaves were also employed by Sultan to keep a watch on his nobles.

Slaves were also used for domestic labour and Ibn Battuta found their services absolute necessary for carrying women and men on palanquins or dola.

Price of female slaves required for domestic labour was very low, therefore most families who could afford slaves, kept at least one or two of them.

Bernier described about the practice of Sati. He noted that while some women seemed to accept death cheerfully, others were forced to die.

Women were also involved in other things. Their labour was crucial in both agricultural and non-agricultural production. Women from merchant families participated in commercial activities, sometimes even taking mercantile disputes to the court of law.

Q 5. Discuss about the travellers, other than Al-Biruni, Ibn Battuta and Bernier, who travelled to India and wrote their accounts.

Ans. Many writers and travellers followed the footsteps of Al-Biruni and Ibn Battuta. Among the best known writers were:

(i) **Abdur Razzaq Samarqandi:** The travelogue of Abdur Razzaq written in the 1440s was an interesting mixture of emotions and perceptions about India. He did not appreciate what he saw in the port of Calicut in Kerala, which was populated by people as their likes were very different from the Abdur Razzaq's imagination. He described them as a strange notion.

Later, when he visited India, he arrived in Mangalore and crossed the Western Ghats. Here when he saw a temple, he was full of admirations. He described the temple that, such a kind of idol house could not be found anywhere in the world. He was amazed by the craft and artisanship of the temple.

(ii) **Portuguese Writers:** After Portuguese arrived in India in about 1500, a number of European scholars wrote detailed accounts regarding Indian customs and religious practices.

A few of them, like Jesuit Roberto Nobili translated Indian texts into European languages. Duarte Barbosa was the best known among the Portuguese writers, he wrote a detailed account of trade and society in South India.

(iii) **Other Travellers:** After 1600 CE, there were growing numbers of Dutch, English and French travellers coming to India. Among them, the French traveller Jean-Baptiste Tavernier was famous who travelled to India at least six times. He was especially fascinated with the trading conditions in India and compared India to Iran and Ottoman empire.

Some travellers like Italian doctor Manucci, settled down in India and never returned to Europe.

