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## INDIA FROM 16TH CENTURY TO MID-18TH CENTURY

*By: Rakesh Kumar*

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# QUESTION PAPER

(June - 2019)

(Solved)

## INDIA FROM 16TH CENTURY TO MID-18TH CENTURY

Time: 3 Hours ]

[ Maximum Marks: 100  
Weightage: 70%

Note: This question paper has **three** sections. The students have to attempt any **two** questions, from **Section I**, any **four** questions from **Section II** and any **two** short notes from **Section III**.

### SECTION-I

**Q. 1. Who were Zamindars? Discuss their rights and perquisites.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-17, Page No. 100, 'The Zamindars', Page No. 101, 'Zamindari Rights and Military Strength of Zamindars'.

**Q. 2. What was the ideology of Bhakti Movement? Discuss the major schools of Bhakti Movement.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-29, Page No. 155, 'Ideology' and 'Major Schools'.

**Q. 3. Analyse Mughal rulers' attitude towards religion and religious classes.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-30, Page No. 161, 'Attitude of the Mughals Towards Religion'.

**Q. 4. Discuss the empire-centric approach of the decline of the Mughal empire.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-35, Page No. 183, 'Empire Centre Approach'.

### SECTION-II

**Q. 5. Examine the emergence and growth of the Nayak Kingdoms.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-3, Page No. 12-13, 'Rise of the Nayak Kingdoms', 'Senji', 'Tanjore', 'Madura', 'Ikkeri' and 'Odeyar Mysore'.

**Q. 6. Discuss the main stages in the Mughal Persian relations from Akbar to Shahjahan's rule.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-7, Page No. 42, 'Relations with Persia'.

**Q. 7. Discuss the main features of central structure of Mughals administration.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-14, Page No. 86, 'Central Administration : Its Evolution'.

**Q. 8. Discuss the chief characteristics of Rajasthani school of painting.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-34, Page No. 180, 'Rajasthani Painting'.

**Q. 9. Give a brief account of the nature of regional politics in the 18th century.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-36, Page No. 189, 'Nature of Regional Politics'.

**Q. 10. Critically examine Akbar's policy towards autonomous chieftains.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-6, Page No. 37, 'Policies Towards Autonomous Chieftains'.

**Q. 11. What are the methodologist adopted by scholars to estimate the population of Mughal India?**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-26, Page No. 143, 'Estimates of Population of Mughal India'.

**Q. 12. What role did the moneylenders and Sarrafs play in the medieval trade and commerce?**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-24, Page No. 134, 'Introduction' and Page No. 135, 'Moneylenders and Sarrafs'.

**Also Add:** Sarrafs also charged a commission on each *hundi*, the rate of which depended upon the rate of interest prevalent and the period for which it was drawn, that was calculated from the date of issue to its presentation for redemption. The rate also fluctuated on the availability of money at the time of issue and maturity.

Roughly, in normal times, 1.5 % was charged for *hundis* from Patna to Agra and 7.8% from Patna to Surat. For *hundis* drawn at Ahmedabad for Burhanpur, 7.25% was charged in 1622.

The *sarrafs* also received money for safe deposit and returned it to them on demand along with a rate of interest, that kept changing (for Agra for 1645 and for Surat for 1630 it was 9.5% per annum). The *sarrafs* would give money on loan to the needy on a higher rate of interest.

**SECTION-III**

**Q. 13. Write short notes on the following:**

**(a) Persian sources for Akbar's period**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-7, Page No. 42, 'Akbar'.

**(b) Ashtapradhan**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-10, Page No. 69, Q. No. 7 and 9.

**(c) Zat and Sawar ranks**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-15, Page No. 91, 'The Dual Ranks : Zat and Sawar'.

**(d) Development of music in the 16-17th centuries.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-34, Page No. 181, 'Music'.



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# Sample Preview of The Chapter

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# INDIA FROM 16th TO MID-18th CENTURY

## Political Formations in Central and West Asia



### INTRODUCTION

The political reshuffling of the dynastic changes on the north-west frontier of India at the turn of 15th century had a direct bearing on it. This initiated a process that culminated in the final conquest of India by the Mughals. This in turn aided to the formation of two new states *i.e.* Turan (Trans oxiana in Central Asia) under the Uzbeks and Iran (Persia) under the Safavi rulers.

A study of the political formations in West and Central Asia (though the definition of West and Central Asia is a potemic issue, as the boundaries of these regions were subject to alterations with its interpretation. Therefore, it should be rather called as inner Asia, a generally accepted term and the particular regions West and Central Asia as two states known as Turan and Iran) in the first decade of sixteenth century became rather more important because of its geographical location near to India and its tradition of maintaining close cultural and commercial contacts. In fact, one very important reason that attracted Babur to turn his attention towards India was the wresting control of Central Asia from the Timurids by the fugitive Uzbek princes and Dasht-i-Qipchaqled by Shaibani Khan, thus exterminating the dynasty founded by Timur.

Having been well experienced in ruling over Central Asia for over thirteen decades (1370-1505), the Mughals brought with them, a well-tried and tested administrative system that had stood the test of time,

political and economic institutions and practices, which had a bearing on the Mughal rule in India. On the other hand, the neighbouring regions of Turan and Iran, which developed as a separate political and cultural entity in sixteenth century had often formed part of a large empire under one central authority such as Umayyads, Abbasids, Mongols and Timurids. These two states, therefore had some common heritage of organizational structure and administrative system, which they carried with them. Further the religio-political and socio-economic transformation that were arising due to the changing regimes added their new distinctive features without erasing their deep rooted and age-old similarities, traditions and common heritage. Although both these states had their tribal bases in 16th century, their cultural and racial distinctions were retained and even heightened due to sectarian differences until their disintegration.

### GEOGRAPHICAL DELIMITATION OF TURAN AND IRAN

Having been situated between the two rivers Syr and Amu, the region of inner Asia also called Turan, acquired the name of Mawaraunnahr from its Arab conquerors. Since this region was surrounded by Aral sea, river Syr and Turkestan in the north Iran, river Amu and Afghanistan in the south, Tienshan and Hindukush mountains in the east upto Karokorum deserts and the Caspian sea in the west with its diverse geographical features (arid and semiarid lands, steppes, deserts, mountains, valleys and oases). It had a varied

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pattern of life-style ranging from nomadism, pastoralism to a settled mode of living. This region is also a land of inland drainage with enclosed basins away from the sea and is isolated from Atlantic and Pacific circulation. In terms of popularity, agriculture and cattle breeding were very popular professions. Besides, the horses of this region were exported in large numbers to India. On account of their popularity Samarqandi paper and fruits (both fresh and dry) were other items of export.

As regards the physical geography, Iran or Persia consists of extensive mountain ranges from Asia Minor and Caucasus to the plains of Punjab called Iranian Plateau. The sandy and saline deserts of the central plateau was surrounded by a chain of mountains, thus converting it into a closed basin.

Iran had four major divisions, namely:

- (a) the Zagros system comprising Khuzistan and small outer plains,
- (b) the northern highlands of Iran (*i.e.* Elburz and Talish system) and Caspian plain,
- (c) the eastern and south-eastern upland rim, and
- (d) the interior region.

As regards the economic life, a considerable variation is noticed such as pastoralism (mainly practiced in higher regions), agricultural settlements in low lying areas and nomadism among the Kurdish shepherds, towards the west. The north-western section of Zagros connected east-west trade routes, thus providing the commercial outlets to the Iranian wool, leather, carpets and silk from many places.

#### THE ANTECEDENTS OF UZBEGS AND THE SAFAVIS

The Uzbeks of Turan or Transoxiana were the descendants of Chingiz's eldest son Juzi, who derived their name from Uzbek Khan (1312-40) of the Golden Horde and hailed from Jiji's appanage—the Dasht-i-Qipchaq. Being the orthodox Sunni, they followed the Hanafite law. The Uzbeks state was supported by many Turco-Mongol tribes such as Naiman Qushji, Durman Qunghrat and others; while the Mongols, Qazaqs and Qirghiz were the tribes hostile to them. These tribes eroded their power through their continuous invasions.

#### The Safavis

The Safavis were of the native Iranian stock from Kurdistan who professed Shii'sm and followed Perso-Islamic traditions of land, where they were to govern. They spoke Azari, Turkish and Persian. They were of

a very humble SUFI origin who later constructed an impressive genealogy. Even though the Iranian element was very strong in the administrative bureaucracy, the Turcoman tribes were the mainstay of Safavi power. Along with two other groups Georgians and Circassians, that were added later on, they were as much a source of strength in external political relations as they were a cause of perpetual intrigues internally.

#### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE EVE OF THE POLITICAL FORMATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA

The civil wars were common occurrence in the Timurid. During such wars, the princes of Transoxiana like Abu Said, Muhammed Jugi, Sultan Husain Baiqra and Manuchir Mirza used to seek assistance from the Uzbek ruler Dast-i-Qipchaq, against their respective rivals. In one such war, the Uzbek ruler assisted Abu Said (1451), Muhammad Jugi (1455) and others to gain the throne by successfully intervening in Timurid politics. After the disintegration of the empire of Abul Khair (1428–68) in the Dasht, the Timurids of Central Asia gave shelter to his grandson Shaibani. At this time, there were five states in Transoxiana—the three sons of Sultan Abu Said (1451–69) namely Sultan Mahmud Mirza, Sultan Ahmad Mirza (1469–94) and Umar Shaikh Mirza who ruled over the three states comprising Samarqand and Bukhara, Tirmiz, Hisar, Qunduz and Badakhshan and Farghana and its vicinity respectively. Sultan Husain Baiqra held the fourth Timurid state of Balkh and Khurasan. The Mongol rulers Yunus Khan (1462–87) along with his two sons Mohammed Khan and Ahmad Khan ruled over Tashkand and Moghulistan. Yunus Khan had married his three daughters to the three sons of Abu Said, mentioned above. These five states often were involved in wars due to their mutual rivalries and jealousy. In one such conflict, in the battle of Syr between Sultan Ahmad and Sultan Mahmud, the former wired Shaibani along with his retinue hoping him to be a good match to the Mongols in the art of fighting, but due to the secret negotiation by Shaibani with Mahmud Khan, the latter scored an unexpected victory over the other. Shaibani was made the governor of Otrar, a town in Khwarazmia, thus providing him the much awaited base in Transoxiana. Taking the full advantage of prevailing anarchy, Shaibani gradually eliminated the remaining Khanates.

### ESTABLISHING UZBEG POWER IN TRANSOXIANA

The assassination of Sultan Mahmud Mirza followed the death of Umar Shaikh and Sultan Ahmad Mirza, after which the former's two sons Sultan Ali and Baisundhur Mirza contested for the throne of Samarquand and Hisar. Taking advantage of the prevailing anarchy in the Timurid empire, the Tarkhan nobles became powerful, usurped the entire revenue and played one prince against the other. Finding the occasion opportune, Shaibani wrested Bukhara from its Timurid governor Baqar Tarkhan in 1499 and then captured Samarquand. Queen Mother Zuhra Begi agreed to surrender Samarquand on the condition of giving the governorship of the choicest province to her son Sultan Ali, thus Shaibani occupied Samarquand without a war in 1500. Sultan Ali passed away soon after. However, Khwaja Abul Mukarram, soon invited Babur and overthrew the Uzbeks. Due to the lack of assistance, Babur was defeated in the battle of Saripul (1501) and leaving Samarquand went to his uncle Mahmud Khan. The combined forces of Babur and his maternal uncle Mahmud and Ahmad Khan were soon defeated in early 1503 by Shaibani, who captured Babur's both maternal uncles. Shaibani also conquered Farghana and Qunduz in 1504, on the invitation of Babur's noble Tambal and overran Balkh, Memna and Faryabs in 1505. Shaibani put Mahmud Khan and his five children to death (1508), while releasing Mongol Khans, Mahmud and Ahmad due to their previous kindness. Now it was planned by many Timurid princes including Babur, Badiuzzaman and Muzaffar Hussain led by Sultan Hussain Baiqra to become united and then confront the Uzbeks unitedly. But before this dream could translate into reality, Sultan Hussain died in 1506, thereby plunging the Herat into a war of succession. Even after the establishment of the dual rule of Badiuzzaman and Muzaffar Hussain, the chaos persisted, thereby reducing the dream of conquering the last Timurid principality. Finally, Shaibani established his new dynasty known as Shaibani after undertaking a campaign against the Qazaks of Moghulistan in 1508. However, this transfer of power from the Timurids to the Uzbeks were possible mainly due to

- the personal incompetence of the successive Timurid Rulers
- the rivalry between the various rulers

- the absence of any settled rule of succession, and
- the absence of any strong administration.

### The Tripartite Conflict of the Uzbeks, Persians and Timurids

The border of Shaibanid empire came closer to the Safavi one, with the conquest of Khurasan. In 1510, a war took place, leading to the defeat of the Shaibani and his killing, that erupted due to the Shaibani's demand of allegiance from Shah. Shah, thus occupied Khurasan and also assisted Babur to reoccupy Transoxiana from Uzbeks. The Samarqand though gave warm welcome to Babur but disapproved his association with heretic Shia Shah Ismail. The greed of the followers of Babur came in full display, later. This made the Central Asians to long for the 'Uzbek rule'.

### Recovery and Resurgence of the Uzbek Power

Since, the Uzbeks had no courage to face the combined forces of Babur and the Shah, therefore they gathered themselves in Turkistan. Prince Ubaidullah, the nephew of Shaibani conquered Transoxiana after defeating Babur, thereafter gradually recovering Bukhara, Samarqand and other territories in 1512-13.

In 1514 Ubaidullah was invited by Ottoman Sultan Salim (1512-20) to join him against Ismail. Though he could not oblige Salim but the latter successfully defeated Shah through his strategic manoeuvre. Ubaidullah and Abdullah Khan were two next important rulers of the Shaibani empire, who waged several wars against Persia.

The Astrakhanids dynasty came to be known, so six months after the death of Abdullah Khan and the assassination of his only son and successor Abdul Momin.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q. 1. Describe the significance of the study of Central Asian history in relation to the Mughals.**

**Ans.** While understanding the history of a given region, a close understanding of the neighbouring regions should also be attempted, rather than pursuing it in isolation, as it provides the historical perspectives, socio-economic background and ethos of the rulers of the region.

Likewise, since the Mughal had originated and ruled over Central Asia for over thirteen decades, therefore, they had brought with them a well tried and tested administrative system with them along with

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political and economic institutions and practices which had a bearing on the Mughal rule in India. The states of Central Asia and Persia had rose and fell almost simultaneously with that of Mughals, the political and cultural relations had increased at all levels. The continuous exchange of ideas and movement of men and commodities had enriched their common cultural heritage. Therefore having so intricably attached to each-other, the study of one in isolation without the understanding of the other may not provide a genuine insight into it, hence an improper understanding.

**Q. 2. Discuss the antecedents of Uzbegs and Safavis.**

**Ans.** The Uzbegs were the descendants of Juzi, Chingiz Khan's eldest son, who had derived their name-Dasht-i-Qipchaq from Uzbeg Khan of Golden Horde and Juzi's appange. They spoke Chaghtai Turkish and followed Turco-Mongol traditions. They were orthodox Sunnis and followed Hanafite law. They were supported by several Turco-Mongol tribes such as Naiman, Qushji, Durman, Qunghrat and others. While opposed by Mongols Qazaqs, Qirghiz who eroded their power through their continuous invasions.

**Q. 3. Give a geographical description of Turan and Iran.**

**Ans.** Having been situated between the river Syr and Amu, the inner Asian region Turan aptly acquired

the name Mawaraunnahr literally meaning between the two rivers, from the Arab conqueror. This region was surrounded by Aral sea, river Syr and Turkistan in the north Iran, river Amu and Afghanistan in the south, Tienshan and Hindukush mountains in the east upto the Karokarum deserts and the Caspian Sea in the west. This region is also a land of inland drainage with enclosed basins away from the sea and is isolated from Atlantic and Pacific circulations.

Iran or Persia, on the other hand consists of extensive mountain ranges, extending from Asia Minor and Cacusas to the plains of Punjab called Iranian plateau. The sandy saline deserts of central plateau is surrounded by a chain of mountains, thereby converting it into a closed basin.

Physically, Iran had four major divisions namely:

- (a) Zagros system comprising Khuzistan and small outer plains
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- (c) The eastern and south-eastern upland rine, and
- (d) The interior region.

■ ■