

Reshaping India's Political Map

Comprehensive Exam Question Bank

Class VIII | Social Science — Exploring Society: India and Beyond | Chapter 2

www.masterg.net
MasterG.Net CBSE Coaching Classes | 9910725407

1. CHAPTER COVERAGE / KEY CONCEPTS

- The Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526): five dynasties — Mamluks (Slave dynasty), Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids, Lodis; the iqta system; violent successions.
- Ala-ud-din Khilji's campaigns, repelling Mongol invasions; Malik Kafur's southern campaigns.
- Muhammad bin Tughlaq: transfer of capital to Daulatabad; introduction of token currency.
- Jizya tax and its social/economic impact; iconoclasm and destruction of temples during the Sultanate period.
- Timur's invasion of Delhi (1398) and its aftermath; rise of the Lodis.
- Resistance to the Delhi Sultanate: Eastern Ganga kingdom (Narasimhadeva I, Konark temple), Hoysalas (Belur, Halebidu), Musunuri Nayakas.
- The Vijayanagara Empire: founding by Harihara and Bukka Raya; Krishnadevaraya's reign, Āmuktamālyada; Battle of Talikota (1565); Deccan Sultanates.
- The Mughals: Babur and the First Battle of Panipat (1526); Baburnama; Humayun and Sher Shah Suri's Sur Empire; Himu and the Second Battle of Panipat.
- Akbar: Chittorgarh siege and jauhar; sulh-i-kul; abolition of jizya; mansabdari and administrative reforms; Todar Mal's revenue system.
- Shah Jahan and the Taj Mahal; Aurangzeb: succession war, religious policies, reimposition of jizya, temple destruction, Deccan campaigns.
- Resistance to the Mughals: Jat peasantry, tribal resistance (Rani Durgavati), Rajputs (Rana Sanga, Maharana Pratap, Haldighati, Durga Das Rathore).
- The Ahoms of Assam: paik system, Battle of Saraighat (1671), Lachit Borphukan.
- The Rise of the Sikhs: Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan, Guru Hargobind, Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom, Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa (1699), Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
- Administration: the iqta system (Sultanate) vs the mansabdari/jagirdari system, Diwan/Mir Bakhshi/Khan-i-Saman/Sadr (Mughal provinces or subahs).
- People's lives: agrarian economy, śhreṇis and jātis, hundi system, temples as economic centres, trade through Calicut, Surat, Masulipatnam, Hooghly.
- Key terms: Sultanate, Turkic, Infidel, Iconoclasm, Rana, Guerrilla warfare, jizya, jauhar, hundi, mansabdar, jagirdar, iqta, paik.

1A. TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS — "Questions and Activities" (p.59)

These are the exact 7 questions printed at the end of the chapter. Because they come straight from the textbook, they carry the highest chance of being reused or lightly reworded in class tests and periodic assessments — prepare these first.

Q1. Compare the political strategies of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughals. What similarities and differences existed between them? [5 Marks]

Ans:

- Similarities: both relied heavily on military conquest and expansion (the Sultanate's raids and campaigns; the Mughals' battles at Panipat, Chittorgarh, and the Deccan); both used a system of assigning land/revenue rights to nobles in exchange for military service (iqta under the Sultanate; mansabdari/jagirdari under the Mughals); both faced frequent rebellions from regional powers (Rajputs, Ahoms, Vijayanagara/Deccan kingdoms).
- Differences: Sultanate succession was highly violent (almost two out of three sultans seized power by eliminating a predecessor, giving an average reign of only nine years), whereas Mughal emperors up to Aurangzeb averaged 27 years, reflecting somewhat greater stability.
- The Sultanate relied mostly on military might and taxation (including the discriminatory jizya on non-Muslims); the Mughals, especially under Akbar, combined conquest with diplomacy — marriage alliances,

welcoming Rajput nobles into the court, abolishing the jizya, and promoting sulh-i-kul (tolerance of all faiths).

- The Mughal administrative machinery (Diwan, Mir Bakhshi, Khan-i-Saman, Sadr; twelve subahs; the mansabdari system) was more elaborately organised than the Sultanate's system, giving Mughal rule greater administrative reach and durability — though later rulers like Aurangzeb reversed some of Akbar's tolerant policies.

Q2. Why did kingdoms like the Vijayanagara Empire and the Ahom Kingdom manage to resist conquest for a longer time compared to others? What geographical, military, and social factors contributed to their success? [5 Marks]

Ans:

- Geographical factors: Vijayanagara's capital at Hampi was set amid hills and rocky terrain that made large-scale invasion difficult; the Ahom kingdom was protected by the dense forests, hills and rivers of the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam.
- Military factors: both maintained strong, adaptable armies — Vijayanagara under rulers like Krishnadevaraya won repeated battles against the Deccan Sultanates and Gajapatis; the Ahoms used sustained guerrilla tactics and river warfare (as at the Battle of Saraighat, 1671) to defeat much larger Mughal forces.
- Social factors: the Ahoms' paik system bound every able-bodied man to state service, allowing them to raise a large force without a permanent standing army; Vijayanagara's rulers patronised art, literature and temples, which helped build a cohesive, prosperous society that could sustain long resistance.
- Both kingdoms ultimately did decline (Vijayanagara after the Battle of Talikota in 1565; the Ahom kingdom only much later, in the 19th century) — but they held out far longer than many neighbouring kingdoms because of this combination of terrain, military adaptability, and social organisation.

Q3. Imagine you are a scholar in the court of Akbar or Krishnadevaraya. Write a letter to a friend describing the politics, trade, culture, and society you are witnessing. [4 Marks]

Ans:

- This is an open-ended, creative writing question — there is no single 'correct' answer, but a strong response should be historically grounded. Guidance for a letter set in Akbar's court: mention the 'house of translation' at Fatehpur Sikri translating the Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa and Bhagavad Gītā into Persian; the emperor's policy of sulh-i-kul and marriage alliances with Rajput princesses; the mansabdari system organising the nobility; and the bustling trade and craft production supported by Todar Mal's revenue reforms.
- Guidance for a letter set in Krishnadevaraya's court: mention his patronage of Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada poets; his own composition, the epic Āmuktamālyada; grand temple building (e.g., the Vitthala temple with its 'musical pillars'); the bustling markets and wealth of Vijayanagara city as described by the traveller Domingo Paes; and the flourishing horse trade with Portuguese merchants.
- Marking guidance: award marks for accurate historical detail woven naturally into the letter format (salutation, personal tone, closing), not for the letter format alone.

Q4. How come Akbar, a ruthless conqueror in his young days, grew tolerant and benevolent after some years? What could have led to such a change? [4 Marks]

Ans:

- Early in his reign (e.g., the Chittorgarh siege, where he ordered the massacre of about 30,000 civilians), Akbar followed the same harsh, purely military approach as many of his predecessors.
- As his empire grew larger and more diverse, purely coercive rule became harder to sustain — Akbar increasingly needed the cooperation of Rajput and regional elites, non-Muslim officials, and diverse communities to administer such a vast territory effectively.
- His own words (recorded by Abul Fazl) suggest a personal change of conscience: he said he had once 'persecuted men into conformity' with his faith but grew 'overwhelmed with shame' as he gained knowledge, concluding it was 'unmeet' to force others to convert.

- Practical political strategy likely reinforced this: marriage alliances, tolerance (sulh-i-kul), and abolishing the jizya helped him win the loyalty of Rajput rulers and stabilise a multi-religious empire more effectively than force alone could — a shift from pure conquest to consolidation and long-term governance.

Q5. What might have happened if the Vijayanagara Empire had won the Battle of Talikota? Imagine and describe how it could have changed the political and cultural history of south India. [4 Marks]

Ans:

- This is an open-ended, imaginative/HOTS question — answers should be plausible extrapolations from the chapter's evidence, not fixed facts. A strong answer might suggest: Vijayanagara would likely have remained the dominant power in the Deccan and south India, possibly checking the growth or fragmentation of the Deccan Sultanates (Bijapur, Golconda, Berar, Ahmednagar, Bidar).
- The city of Vijayanagara (Hampi) would likely have continued to flourish rather than being sacked and left in ruins — allowing further development of temples like the Vitthala temple and continued literary patronage in Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada.
- Political power would likely have stayed centralised under the Vijayanagara rulers rather than fragmenting into smaller Nayaka-ruled territories, potentially giving south India a stronger, more unified base from which to resist future Mughal expansion into the Deccan.
- Marking guidance: reward answers that logically connect the imagined outcome to specific evidence from the chapter (e.g., Krishnadevaraya's earlier successes, the empire's wealth and cultural patronage) rather than purely speculative claims.

Q6. Many values promoted by early Sikhism, including equality, seva, and justice, remain relevant today. Select one of these values and discuss how it remains relevant in contemporary society. [4 Marks]

Ans:

- Example using 'equality': Guru Nanak's teaching of the oneness of God (Ik Onkār) and the essential equality of all people, regardless of birth or status, directly challenged social hierarchies of his time.
- This value remains relevant today in contexts such as opposing caste-based or gender-based discrimination, and in institutions like the langar (community kitchen) tradition, where people of all backgrounds eat together as equals.
- Example using 'justice': Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom — sacrificing his life to protect Kashmiri Pandits' right to practise their faith — models standing up for others' rights even at great personal cost, a value still invoked today in defence of religious freedom and human rights.
- A good answer should pick ONE value, define it using the chapter's own examples, and then give at least one concrete present-day application or contemporary example.

Q7. Imagine you are a trader in a port city (Surat, Calicut or Hooghly). Describe the scenes you see as regards goods, people you trade with, movement of ships, etc. [4 Marks]

Ans:

- This is an open-ended, creative writing question, best answered as a first-person descriptive account grounded in the chapter's account of trade. Key details to include: ships being loaded/unloaded with exports such as cotton textiles, silk, wool, dyes, spices, and timber.
- Imports arriving at the port: horses (especially prized by inland kingdoms like Vijayanagara), silk, metals, and luxury goods.
- Merchants from Arabia, Persia and Central Asia settled at Indian ports and mingled with local traders; describe the use of the hundi system, allowing funds to be transferred without carrying risky amounts of cash.
- Mention the general bustle of laden oxen carts, warehouses, and shipbuilding activity described in the chapter as central to overseas and river trade.
- Marking guidance: award marks for vivid, specific detail drawn from the chapter (hundi, specific goods, specific ports) rather than generic descriptions of 'a busy port'.

2. MUST PREPARE

MCQs

Q1. The Delhi Sultanate was established after the defeat of which ruler in 1192?

- (a) Rana Sanga
- (b) Prithviraj Chauhan
- (c) Rana Kumbha
- (d) Ibrahim Lodi

Answer: (b) Prithviraj Chauhan

Explanation: The chapter states the Sultanate was formed after the 1192 defeat of King Prithviraj Chauhan.

Q2. Who founded the Mughal Empire in India, and in which battle?

- (a) Akbar; Second Battle of Panipat
- (b) Humayun; Battle of Khanwa
- (c) Babur; First Battle of Panipat (1526)
- (d) Aurangzeb; Battle of Talikota

Answer: (c) Babur; First Battle of Panipat (1526)

Explanation: Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi at the First Battle of Panipat in 1526, ending the Delhi Sultanate and founding the Mughal Empire. (Note: several online sources wrongly credit Aurangzeb — always verify against the textbook.)

Q3. Which title did Ala-ud-din Khilji give himself, as inscribed on his coin?

- (a) Alamgir
- (b) Sikander Sani (the second Alexander)
- (c) Narapati
- (d) Ashwapati

Answer: (b) Sikander Sani (the second Alexander)

Explanation: Fig. 2.6 shows a coin of Ala-ud-din Khilji inscribed 'Sikander Sani'.

Q4. Muhammad bin Tughlaq's transfer of the capital was from Delhi to:

- (a) Daulatabad (Devagiri)
- (b) Agra
- (c) Fatehpur Sikri
- (d) Hampi

Answer: (a) Daulatabad (Devagiri)

Explanation: He moved the capital to Daulatabad, near present-day Sambhaji Nagar, and later reversed the decision.

Q5. The 'token currency' experiment of Muhammad bin Tughlaq involved:

- (a) Gold coins replacing silver
- (b) Copper coins given the value of silver/gold coins
- (c) Abolishing all currency
- (d) Importing foreign coins

Answer: (b) Copper coins given the value of silver/gold coins

Explanation: Cheap copper coins were declared tokens equal in value to silver or gold coins, leading to counterfeiting and confusion.

Q6. Which ruler's memoirs describe his objective as waging 'war with the infidels' during his invasion of Delhi in 1398?

- (a) Babur
- (b) Timur
- (c) Muhammad bin Tughlaq

(d) Nadir Shah

Answer: (b) Timur

Explanation: Timur invaded northwest India at the end of the 14th century and recorded this two-fold objective in his memoirs.

Q7. The Eastern Ganga ruler who built the Surya temple at Konark was:

- (a) Krishnadevaraya
- (b) Rana Kumbha
- (c) Narasimhadeva I
- (d) Harihara

Answer: (c) Narasimhadeva I

Explanation: Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga kingdom built the Konark temple partly to commemorate his victories against the Delhi Sultanate.

Q8. The Vijayanagara Empire was founded by:

- (a) Harihara and Bukka Raya
- (b) Rana Kumbha and Rana Sanga
- (c) Malik Kafur and Ala-ud-din Khilji
- (d) Sher Shah Suri and Humayun

Answer: (a) Harihara and Bukka Raya

Explanation: Two brothers who had served as governors under Muhammad bin Tughlaq rejected Delhi's authority and founded Vijayanagara.

Q9. The Vijayanagara Empire suffered a decisive defeat at the Battle of Talikota (1565) at the hands of:

- (a) The Mughals
- (b) A coalition of the Deccan Sultanates
- (c) The Rajputs
- (d) The Ahoms

Answer: (b) A coalition of the Deccan Sultanates

Explanation: The Deccan Sultanates formed a coalition and defeated Vijayanagara forces led by Ramaraya.

Q10. Akbar's policy of 'peace with all' or tolerance of all faiths is known as:

- (a) Sulh-i-kul
- (b) Jizya
- (c) Mansabdari
- (d) Paik

Answer: (a) Sulh-i-kul

Explanation: Akbar promoted sulh-i-kul as part of his strategy to stabilise and expand his empire.

Q11. Who introduced the systematic land-revenue survey and pricing system under Akbar?

- (a) Abul Fazl
- (b) Todar Mal
- (c) Malik Kafur
- (d) Birbal

Answer: (b) Todar Mal

Explanation: Todar Mal, Akbar's finance minister, conducted crop-yield and price surveys to determine land revenue.

Q12. The Taj Mahal at Agra was built by:

- (a) Akbar
- (b) Jahangir
- (c) Shah Jahan
- (d) Aurangzeb

Answer: (c) Shah Jahan

Explanation: Shah Jahan is best remembered as the builder of the Taj Mahal.

Q13. Which Mughal emperor reimposed the jizya tax that Akbar had abolished?

- (a) Jahangir
- (b) Shah Jahan
- (c) Aurangzeb
- (d) Humayun

Answer: (c) Aurangzeb

Explanation: Aurangzeb reimposed the jizya on non-Muslims and a pilgrimage tax on Hindus.

Q14. The Battle of Haldighati (1576) was fought between the Mughals and:

- (a) Rana Kumbha
- (b) Maharana Pratap
- (c) Durga Das Rathore
- (d) Rani Durgavati

Answer: (b) Maharana Pratap

Explanation: Maharana Pratap confronted the Mughal army at the Haldighati pass and later waged guerrilla warfare from the Aravallis.

Q15. The Ahom commander who defeated the Mughals at the Battle of Saraighat (1671) was:

- (a) Lachit Borphukan
- (b) Guru Gobind Singh
- (c) Rana Sanga
- (d) Durga Das Rathore

Answer: (a) Lachit Borphukan

Explanation: Lachit Borphukan led 10,000 Ahom soldiers to victory over a much larger Mughal force on the Brahmaputra.

Q16. The Khalsa was established in 1699 by:

- (a) Guru Nanak
- (b) Guru Arjan
- (c) Guru Tegh Bahadur
- (d) Guru Gobind Singh

Answer: (d) Guru Gobind Singh

Explanation: Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th Sikh Guru, founded the Khalsa as a martial brotherhood after his father's martyrdom.

Very Short Answer Questions

Q1. Name the five dynasties that ruled the Delhi Sultanate. [1 Mark]

Ans: Mamluks (Slave dynasty), Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids, and Lodis.

Q2. What was the 'iqta' system? [1 Mark]

Ans: A system in which territories were assigned to nobles (iqtdars) to collect taxes, most of which went to the Sultan's treasury, mainly to maintain the army.

Q3. Who was Malik Kafur? [1 Mark]

Ans: A slave-general of Ala-ud-din Khilji who expanded the Sultanate's reach into southern India, attacking Hindu centres like Srirangam, Madurai and Chidambaram.

Q4. What does 'jizya' mean? [1 Mark]

Ans: A tax imposed by some sultans/Mughal rulers on non-Muslim subjects in exchange for protection and exemption from military service.

Q5. Who wrote the Baburnama? [1 Mark]

Ans: Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, wrote it as his autobiography/memoirs.

Q6. What is 'jauhar'? [1 Mark]

Ans: A practice in which women, to avoid capture and enslavement by invading armies, took their own lives, often by jumping into mass fires; it was regarded as a heroic final act of resistance.

Q7. Name the epic poem composed by Krishnadevaraya and its subject. [1 Mark]

Ans: Āmuktamālyada, a Telugu epic on the story of the Tamil poet-saint Āṇḍāl.

Q8. What was the 'paik' system of the Ahoms? [1 Mark]

Ans: A system in which every able-bodied man provided labour or military service to the state in exchange for land rights, allowing the state to maintain a large force without a permanent army.

Q9. Who compiled the Guru Granth Sahib initially? [1 Mark]

Ans: Guru Arjan first compiled it; Guru Tegh Bahadur's hymns were added later.

Q10. Name the fort built by Rana Kumbha, famous for its 36-km wall. [1 Mark]

Ans: Kumbhalgarh Fort, in the Aravalli hills.

Short Answer Questions

Q1. Why is Muhammad bin Tughlaq's reign considered a mix of ambition and poor execution? [3 Marks]

Ans:

- He briefly unified most of the Subcontinent under Delhi Sultanate control — the first such unification since the Mauryas.
- His transfer of the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad forced people to travel over 1,000 km; the plan misfired and the capital was shifted back, causing great loss of life.
- His introduction of token currency (copper coins valued as silver/gold) was a progressive idea in principle but caused confusion, counterfeiting and economic decline in practice.

Q2. Describe the role of the Bhils in Maharana Pratap's resistance against the Mughals. [3 Marks]

Ans:

- The Bhils joined Maharana Pratap's troops as skilled archers.
- They contributed valuable knowledge of the Aravalli terrain, aiding guerrilla warfare.
- Their service earned them a respected place in Mewar's military tradition, symbolised by a Bhil warrior on the Mewar emblem.

Q3. How did Akbar's administrative strategies differ from his early conquests? [3 Marks]

Ans:

- Early in his reign, Akbar showed no mercy — e.g., the massacre at Chittorgarh and enslavement of survivors.
- Later he shifted to political strategies: marriage alliances with neighbouring princesses, welcoming Rajput and regional leaders into his court.
- He abolished the jizya and promoted sulh-i-kul (tolerance of all faiths), and appointed non-Muslim officials, though they remained a minority in top positions.

Q4. Explain the significance of the Battle of Saraighat (1671). [3 Marks]

Ans:

- It was fought on the Brahmaputra River near present-day Guwahati between Ahom and Mughal forces.
- Ahom commander Lachit Borphukan, with about 10,000 men, defeated a much larger Mughal force of 30,000 using knowledge of local terrain and guerrilla tactics.
- It allowed the Ahoms to preserve their independence from Mughal control.

Q5. What led to the emergence of the Deccan Sultanates, and name them. [3 Marks]

Ans:

- The Bahmani Sultanate, once a major rival of Vijayanagara, eventually fragmented into five independent states.
- These were governed by former governors (tarafdars) who declared autonomy.
- They were: Bijapur, Golconda, Berar, Ahmednagar, and Bidar.

Q6. Describe the mansabdari system introduced by Akbar. *[3 Marks]*

Ans:

- Officers (mansabdars) were ranked by their mansab and required to maintain a fixed number of elephants, horses, camels and troops for the state.
- This let Akbar assemble an army quickly without maintaining a large permanent standing force; regular inspections ensured compliance.
- Mansabdars were usually paid through land assignments (jagirs) and were therefore also called jagirdars.

Q7. Why did the Hoysalas remain the only independent kingdom in the south for a period, and how did their story end? *[3 Marks]*

Ans:

- They fended off several attacks from the Delhi Sultanate, especially during Ala-ud-din Khilji's southward campaigns.
- They were weakened by repeated attacks and internal conflicts.
- In the mid-14th century, the Hoysala kingdom was absorbed into the growing Vijayanagara Empire.

Q8. How did the hundi system support trade during this period? *[3 Marks]*

Ans:

- A hundi was a written instruction enabling merchants to transfer funds across political boundaries without physically carrying currency.
- This reduced vulnerability to plunder during transport.
- Trader communities such as the Marwaris used it to operate across different political regimes, developing credit networks independent of official structures.

Long Answer Questions

Q1. Trace the rise and decline of the Delhi Sultanate, referring to at least three rulers. *[5 Marks]*

Ans:

- Founded in 1192 after the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan, ruled successively by the Mamluks, Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids and Lodis.
- Ala-ud-din Khilji (turn of the 14th century) expanded control over north and central India, repelled Mongol invasions, and (through Malik Kafur) extended influence into the south.
- Muhammad bin Tughlaq briefly unified most of the Subcontinent but weakened the Sultanate through poorly executed schemes — the Daulatabad capital shift and token currency.
- Timur's devastating invasion of Delhi in 1398 left the Sultanate in chaos; the Lodis, the last dynasty, ruled over a much-shrunken territory due to resistance from regional kingdoms.
- Babur's victory over Ibrahim Lodi at the First Battle of Panipat (1526) finally ended the Sultanate.

Q2. Discuss Akbar's reign as 'a blend of brutality and tolerance'. Support your answer with examples. *[5 Marks]*

Ans:

- Brutality: the siege of Chittorgarh, where Akbar ordered the massacre of around 30,000 civilians and enslaved survivors after Rajput women committed jauhar; his own victory message spoke of destroying 'infidelity' and temples.

- Tolerance (later in his reign): marriage alliances with Rajput princesses, welcoming Rajput and regional leaders into his court, abolition of the jizya, and promotion of sulh-i-kul.
- He set up a 'house of translation' at Fatehpur Sikri to translate Sanskrit texts (Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, Bhagavad Gītā, Pañchatantra) into Persian.
- His reforms (mansabdari system, Todar Mal's revenue survey) show a shift towards administrative stability rather than pure military conquest, though non-Muslims remained a minority in high administrative posts.

Q3. Describe the resistance offered by regional powers to the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughals, with examples of at least four groups. [5 Marks]

Ans:

- The Eastern Ganga kingdom under Narasimhadeva I repelled Sultanate inroads and defeated the Sultanate's governor of Bengal.
- The Hoysalas fended off Delhi Sultanate attacks and remained the only independent southern kingdom for a time.
- The Rajputs (Rana Sanga, Rana Kumbha, Maharana Pratap, Durga Das Rathore) resisted both the Sultanate and later the Mughals from strongholds such as Kumbhalgarh, sometimes through guerrilla warfare.
- The Ahoms of Assam used the paik system and guerrilla tactics (Battle of Saraighat, 1671) to repel Mughal expansion into the Northeast and preserve independence.
- The Sikhs, after the martyrdom of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur, formed the martial Khalsa under Guru Gobind Singh and fought the Mughals.

Q4. Explain the economic life of the people of India during the 13th–17th centuries. [5 Marks]

Ans:

- Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy; rulers extracted land revenue typically at one-fifth (sometimes up to one-half) of the produce.
- Irrigation expansion (e.g., Persian wheels) increased productivity, allowing cultivation of food crops (rice, wheat, barley) and cash crops (cotton, silk, dyes) that fed thriving artisanal industries.
- Trade flourished through port towns like Calicut, Surat, Masulipatnam and Hooghly; India exported more than it imported (importing silk, horses, metals, luxury goods).
- Decentralised systems such as śhrenīs (guilds), jātis, and the hundi credit system (used by communities like the Marwaris) supported commerce independently of the ruling powers.
- Temples served as centres of economic activity, providing credit and funding trade, besides being centres of worship and learning; despite this prosperity, peasants, craftspeople and labourers often faced harsh conditions, especially by the late 1600s.

3. SHOULD PREPARE

MCQs

Q1. The 'Sultanate' title refers to a territory ruled by a:

- (a) Rana
- (b) Sultan
- (c) Nayaka
- (d) Chhatrapati

Answer: (b) Sultan

Explanation: The glossary explains 'Sultanate' as a territory ruled by a Sultan, a title adopted by some Muslim rulers.

Q2. Which foreign traveller left a detailed account of Vijayanagara city, comparing it favourably to Rome?

- (a) Ibn Battuta
- (b) Domingo Paes

(c) Marco Polo

(d) Al-Biruni

Answer: (b) Domingo Paes

Explanation: Domingo Paes, a Portuguese traveller, left a long and detailed record of the Vijayanagara capital.

Q3. Sher Shah Suri briefly took advantage of the weak rule of which Mughal emperor to establish the Sur Empire?

(a) Babur

(b) Humayun

(c) Akbar

(d) Jahangir

Answer: (b) Humayun

Explanation: After Babur's death, his son Humayun struggled to hold the empire together, allowing Sher Shah Suri to establish the Sur Empire before Humayun reconquered the lost ground.

Q4. Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed on the orders of which Mughal emperor?

(a) Jahangir

(b) Shah Jahan

(c) Aurangzeb

(d) Akbar

Answer: (c) Aurangzeb

Explanation: Guru Tegh Bahadur was publicly beheaded in Chandni Chowk, Delhi, on Aurangzeb's orders in 1675.

Q5. Who unified the Sikh confederacies into a centralised Sikh Empire around the turn of the 19th century?

(a) Guru Gobind Singh

(b) Guru Hargobind

(c) Maharaja Ranjit Singh

(d) Durga Das Rathore

Answer: (c) Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Explanation: Maharaja Ranjit Singh unified the Sikh confederacies through military skill, diplomacy, and religious tolerance.

Short/Long Answer Questions

Q1. What does the title 'Alamgir', adopted by Aurangzeb, mean? *[2 Marks]*

Ans: 'Conqueror of the world' — Aurangzeb crowned himself emperor in 1658 and took this title.

Q2. Describe the resistance of the Musunuri Nayakas against the Delhi Sultanate. *[2 Marks]*

Ans:

- Telugu chieftains led by the Musunuri Nayakas rallied over 75 chieftains of the region into a confederacy.
- This confederacy defeated smaller provinces and Delhi Sultanate forces, expelling Muhammad bin Tughlaq's army from Warangal (present-day Telangana) around 1330–1336.

Q3. What was significant about Rani Durgavati's resistance to Akbar's forces? *[3 Marks]*

Ans:

- She was the ruler of the Garha kingdom (a Gond kingdom in central India) and maintained a strong army of 20,000 soldiers and 1,000 elephants.
- In 1564, despite being outnumbered and outmatched in weaponry against a general sent by Akbar, she personally led her troops into battle.
- Wounded, she took her own life on the battlefield rather than be captured, becoming a symbol of regional resistance.

Q4. Explain the administrative structure of the Mughal Empire under Akbar. *[3 Marks]*

Ans:

- The Diwan handled finances; the Mir Bakhshi looked after military matters; the Khan-i-Saman managed public works, trade, industry and the royal household; the Sadr handled justice, religious and educational matters.
- The empire was divided into twelve provinces (subahs), each further subdivided, with checks and balances between officials.
- At the village level, traditional structures of self-governance continued largely undisturbed.

Q5. Why do historians describe the wealth of India during this period as unevenly distributed? [3 Marks]

Ans:

- India remained a land of abundance, as testified by Arab and European travellers.
- However, wealth was largely concentrated among rulers, courtiers, high officials and the merchant class.
- Peasants were often left with a small share of their produce after taxes and payments to intermediaries, sometimes becoming bonded labourers, especially from the late 1600s onward.

Q6. Why is the term 'medieval' considered not entirely appropriate for Indian history? [2 Marks]

Ans: The term 'medieval' was originally applied to European history (from the fall of Rome to the Renaissance) and once implied a 'dark age'; since India's history followed a different trajectory, historians do not fully agree on which period the term should cover in India — the chapter uses it loosely for the 11th to 17th centuries.

4. HIGHER-ORDER / APPLICATION / COMPETENCY

Assertion–Reason Questions

Directions: Each question has an Assertion (A) and a Reason (R). 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.

Q1. Assertion (A): The average reign of a Delhi Sultan was hardly more than nine years.

Reason (R): Almost two out of three sultans seized power by eliminating their predecessor, making successions frequently violent.

Answer: (a)

Explanation: The chapter directly links the short average reigns to the violent, frequent successions.

Q2. Assertion (A): Muhammad bin Tughlaq's token currency was a fundamentally flawed idea.

Reason (R): Most modern currency today is also 'token' currency, not backed directly by precious metal.

Answer: (d)

Explanation: The idea itself was progressive (most currency today is indeed 'token'); the problem lay in poor execution (counterfeiting, confusion in trade) at that time, not the concept — so A is false, R is true.

Q3. Assertion (A): Akbar is described as having a reign that was a blend of brutality and tolerance.

Reason (R): He ordered the massacre of Chittorgarh's civilians early in his reign but later abolished the jizya and promoted sulh-i-kul.

Answer: (a)

Explanation: R correctly explains why Akbar's reign is called a blend — brutal early conquests followed by tolerant policies.

Q4. Assertion (A): The Ahoms were able to preserve their independence from Mughal control.

Reason (R): They had a much larger army and navy than the Mughals at the Battle of Saraighat.

Answer: (c)

Explanation: A is true (the Ahoms did preserve independence), but R is false — the Mughals actually had more men and a larger fleet; the Ahoms won through terrain knowledge and guerrilla tactics, not numerical superiority.

Q5. Assertion (A): The Vijayanagara Empire declined rapidly after the Battle of Talikota (1565).

Reason (R): The city of Vijayanagara was sacked and left in ruins, and the empire fragmented into regions ruled by Nayakas.

Answer: (a)

Explanation: R correctly explains the cause of the rapid decline described in A.

Case/Source-Based Question

Read the following excerpt (paraphrased from the chapter) and answer the questions that follow:

"Domingo Paes, a Portuguese traveller, described Vijayanagara as a city as large as Rome, with abundant groves, water channels, and countless people; he called it the best-provided city in the world, with markets full of goods."

Q(i). Who was Domingo Paes, and why was he in Vijayanagara? [2 Marks]

Ans: He was a Portuguese traveller who visited Vijayanagara; Portuguese travellers came mainly to trade, especially selling horses, and were treated well because the king did not want them selling horses to rival kingdoms.

Q(ii). What does this account tell us about Vijayanagara's prosperity? [2 Marks]

Ans: It suggests the city was large, well-planned (with gardens, water channels, lakes), densely populated, and commercially vibrant, reflecting the empire's wealth under rulers like Krishnadevaraya.

Q(iii). Name one structure in Vijayanagara noted for its architectural grandeur. [1 Mark]

Ans: The Vitthala temple (with its 'musical pillars') or the Virūpāksha temple.

HOTS / Application-Based Questions

Q1. "A monarch should be ever intent on conquest, otherwise his enemies rise in arms against him" — Akbar. Do you agree that constant expansion was necessary for a ruler's survival in this period? Justify with two examples from the chapter. [4 Marks]

Ans:

- Agree, with evidence: Sultans and emperors who failed to expand or defend often faced rebellion — e.g., the Delhi Sultanate's territory shrank considerably by the time of the Lodis due to resistance from Rajputs, Hoysalas, and the Eastern Gangas.
- Counter-view: Akbar himself later relied more on diplomacy (marriage alliances, *shuh-i-kul*) than pure conquest to stabilise his empire, showing that political strategy — not just military expansion — was equally important for long-term stability.
- Conclude: constant conquest brought short-term dominance but often strained resources (e.g., Aurangzeb's Deccan campaigns depleted the treasury and contributed to Mughal decline after 1707).

Q2. Compare the guerrilla resistance strategies of Maharana Pratap and Lachit Borphukan. What common lesson do they offer about facing a militarily stronger opponent? [4 Marks]

Ans:

- Both faced numerically/technologically superior forces: Maharana Pratap against the Mughal army at Haldighati, and Lachit Borphukan against a much larger Mughal force at Saraighat.
- Both used terrain to their advantage — the Aravalli hills for Maharana Pratap, and the rivers, hills and forests of Assam for the Ahoms.
- Common lesson: a smaller force with superior knowledge of local terrain and the support of local communities (e.g., the Bhils for Maharana Pratap) can offset a numerically superior but less locally-adapted enemy.

Q3. If Akbar had continued the harsh policies of his early reign (as at Chittorgarh) throughout his rule, how might Mughal history have been different? [4 Marks]

Ans:

- The empire may have faced sustained, unified Rajput resistance instead of gaining Rajput allies through marriage and court positions.
- Lack of tolerance policies (sulh-i-kul, abolition of jizya) could have deepened the empire's dependence on force alone, similar to Aurangzeb's later reign, which faced significant rebellions.
- The empire's long-term stability and the flowering of syncretic art/culture (e.g., the 'house of translation') might not have developed in the same way.

Q4. The chapter notes that 'people of different faiths and communities lived peacefully side by side, economically dependent on each other' despite instances of religious persecution by some rulers. How can both statements be true at once? *[4 Marks]*

Ans:

- State policy (imposed by rulers, e.g., jizya, temple destruction) is different from everyday social and economic relations between ordinary people.
- Economic interdependence — through guilds (śhreṇis), trade networks, and shared marketplaces — often continued regardless of the ruler's religious policies.
- This shows that top-down political/religious decisions did not always determine how communities interacted at the local, everyday level.

5. DIAGRAM / MAP / DATA-BASED QUESTIONS

Q1. Study the timeline (Fig. 2.2/ Fig. 2.24 style) of this chapter. Arrange the following events in chronological order: Formation of the Khalsa; Establishment of the Delhi Sultanate; Battle of Talikota; First Battle of Panipat. *[3 Marks]*

Ans:

- Establishment of the Delhi Sultanate — 1206 (or 1192, the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan).
- Battle of Talikota — 1565.
- First Battle of Panipat — 1526 (note: this occurred before Talikota; if the sequence is asked strictly by date: 1206/1192 → 1526 → 1565 → 1699).
- Formation of the Khalsa — 1699.

Q2. Refer to Fig. 2.3 (map of Tughlaq and Lodi dynasty extents). Why does the map show the Lodi Dynasty's extent (1479) as smaller than the Tughlaq Dynasty's extent (1335)? *[3 Marks]*

Ans:

- It reflects the shrinking of Delhi Sultanate territory over the 13th–15th centuries due to increasing resistance from regional kingdoms (Eastern Gangas, Hoysalas) and the aftermath of Timur's devastating invasion in 1398.
- It shows the political fragmentation and decline of central Sultanate authority by the time of the Lodis, the last dynasty.

Q3. Refer to Fig. 2.16 (map of the Mughal Empire and rise of regional powers). Identify and explain the significance of any two regional powers shown outside the core Mughal territory. *[3 Marks]*

Ans:

- Rajput Territories (Mewar, 1751): shows sustained Rajput independence in parts of Rajasthan even after Mughal decline.
- Sikh Empire (1839): shows the rise of a strong, centralised Sikh state in the Northwest under Maharaja Ranjit Singh after Mughal power waned.
- Ahom Kingdom (1826): shows the Ahoms' long-preserved independence in the Northeast, resisting both Sultanate and Mughal expansion.

Q4. Examine Fig. 2.6, the coin of Ala-ud-din Khilji. What does the inscription 'Sikander Sani' suggest about how he wished to be seen? [2 Marks]

Ans:

- 'Sikander Sani' means 'the second Alexander' — comparing himself to Alexander the Great.
- This suggests Ala-ud-din Khilji wanted to project an image of a great conqueror and world-ruler, consistent with his extensive military campaigns across north, central, and southern India.

Q5. Fig. 2.27 groups the chief dynasties of this chapter under a single diagram. Using it, name any three dynasties that co-existed with, but remained independent of, the Delhi Sultanate/Mughal Empire for significant periods. [3 Marks]

Ans:

- The Ahoms (Northeast) — resisted both Sultanate and Mughal expansion.
- The Eastern Ganga Kingdom / Gajapati Kingdom (East) — resisted Sultanate advance; built Konark temple.
- The Hoysalas / Vijayanagara Empire (South) — remained independent, later a major regional power in its own right.

6. FREQUENTLY REPEATED / HIGH-FREQUENCY THEMES

Based on the chapter's own emphasis (the 'Let's Explore' and 'Think About It' boxes, which are the textbook's own hint of examinable ideas) and on the recurring focus of online worksheets, MCQ banks and NCERT-solution sites for this new chapter (see Section 9), the following themes appear most consistently:

Comparing the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughals (political strategy)

Frequency: Very high — appears as the textbook's own Question 1, and is repeated across nearly every solutions/worksheet source found.

Asked as: Compare/contrast questions, long-answer essay questions, and as a competency-based prompt.

Why it matters: It tests understanding of continuity and change in medieval Indian administration — a core theme of the chapter.

Why Vijayanagara and the Ahoms resisted conquest longer than others

Frequency: Very high — the textbook's own Question 2; found in nearly all solution sets and worksheets.

Asked as: As a direct short/long-answer question, and as a 'factors' or 'geographical/military/social' analysis question.

Why it matters: Tests the ability to connect geography, military strategy and social cohesion — a HOTS-style skill.

Akbar's transformation from a brutal conqueror to a tolerant ruler

Frequency: High — appears as the textbook's own Question 4 and in multiple extra-question sets.

Asked as: As a direct 'how/why did Akbar change' question, and as an assertion-reason or HOTS question.

Why it matters: Central to understanding Mughal consolidation strategy and is a recurring 'change over time' theme.

Key dates and founders (Delhi Sultanate 1192/1206, First Battle of Panipat 1526, Battle of Talikota 1565, Khalsa 1699)

Frequency: Very high — nearly universal in MCQ banks and fill-in-the-blank worksheets found online.

Asked as: As one-mark MCQs, fill-in-the-blanks, and true/false questions.

Why it matters: These are the chapter's core factual anchors and are the most 'safe' one-mark questions to set.

Jizya, jauhar, sulh-i-kul, hundi, paik, iqta, mansabdari — key term definitions

Frequency: High — appears across nearly all MCQ and glossary-based worksheets.

Asked as: As definition-based very short answer questions and MCQs.

Why it matters: The chapter itself boxes these terms, signalling their examinability.

Resistance figures — Maharana Pratap, Rani Durgavati, Lachit Borphukan, Guru Tegh Bahadur/Guru Gobind Singh

Frequency: High — recurring across competency-based and skill-based question sets found online.

Asked as: As short-answer 'describe the significance of...' questions and as HOTS/values-based questions (linking to courage, sacrifice).

Why it matters: These figures let examiners test both factual recall and values-education objectives (a CBSE competency-based priority).

7. TOP 15 — MUST DO BEFORE EXAM

1. Trace the rise and fall of the Delhi Sultanate (five dynasties, key rulers, reasons for decline).

Revision cue: 1192/1206 founding → Khilji/Tughlaq peak → Timur's 1398 invasion → Lodis' shrunken territory → ended by Babur, 1526.

2. Describe Akbar's reign as a blend of brutality and tolerance.

Revision cue: Chittorgarh massacre vs. sulh-i-kul, abolition of jizya, Rajput alliances, mansabdari system.

3. Why did the Vijayanagara Empire and the Ahom Kingdom resist conquest for longer?

Revision cue: Geography (hills/terrain), strong armies, guerrilla tactics, social/community cohesion.

4. Compare the political strategies of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughals.

Revision cue: Both used military conquest; Mughals added diplomacy, marriage alliances, administrative reform (mansabdari, subahs).

5. Explain the significance of the First Battle of Panipat (1526).

Revision cue: Babur defeats Ibrahim Lodi using gunpowder/artillery; ends Sultanate; founds Mughal Empire.

6. Explain the significance of the Battle of Talikota (1565).

Revision cue: Deccan Sultanates' coalition defeats Vijayanagara; city sacked; empire fragments under Nayakas.

7. Describe the resistance of the Rajputs to the Sultanate and Mughals.

Revision cue: Rana Sanga, Rana Kumbha (Kumbhalgarh), Maharana Pratap (Haldighati, guerrilla war), Durga Das Rathore.

8. Describe the Battle of Saraighat (1671) and its significance.

Revision cue: Lachit Borphukan's Ahom forces defeat a larger Mughal army; Ahom independence preserved.

9. Explain the rise of the Sikhs and the formation of the Khalsa.

Revision cue: Guru Nanak → persecution of Gurus (Arjan, Tegh Bahadur) → Guru Gobind Singh forms Khalsa, 1699.

10. Define and explain: jizya, jauhar, sulh-i-kul, hundi, mansabdari, iqta, paik.

Revision cue: Key glossary terms boxed directly in the chapter — very high MCQ/VSA frequency.

11. Describe Muhammad bin Tughlaq's capital transfer and token currency experiments.

Revision cue: Delhi → Daulatabad shift (forced migration, reversed); copper 'token' coins causing economic disruption.

12. Explain the administrative systems: iqta (Sultanate) vs mansabdari/jagirdari (Mughal).

Revision cue: Iqta = tax-collecting nobles; mansabdari = rank-based troop/military obligation system paid via jagirs.

13. Describe economic life: agriculture, trade, and the hundi/temple economy.

Revision cue: Land revenue (1/5 to 1/2 of produce), guilds (śhreṇis), port trade (Calicut, Surat), temple-based credit.

14. Describe Rani Durgavati's resistance to Akbar's forces.

Revision cue: Gond queen of Garha; fought Akbar's general in 1564; took her own life rather than be captured.

15. Interpret the chapter's maps (Figs. 2.3, 2.12, 2.16) to explain how India's political map was 'reshaped'.

Revision cue: Shrinking Sultanate → rise of Vijayanagara/Bahmani/Deccan Sultanates → Mughal peak → rise of Rajput/Sikh/Ahom regional powers.

8. NEXT 15 — SHOULD DO

1. Who was Malik Kafur, and what were his contributions to Sultanate expansion?

Revision cue: Slave-general of Ala-ud-din Khilji; led southern campaigns; financed military via plundered wealth.

2. Explain the causes and effects of Timur's invasion of Delhi (1398).

Revision cue: Sought wealth and to 'wage war with infidels'; devastated Delhi; weakened the Sultanate ahead of the Lodis.

3. Describe the resistance of the Eastern Ganga kingdom under Narasimhadeva I.

Revision cue: Repelled Sultanate inroads; defeated the Bengal governor; built the Konark Surya temple.

4. Explain the story and significance of the Musunuri Nayakas' confederacy.

Revision cue: 75+ Telugu chieftains united to expel Muhammad bin Tughlaq's army from Warangal, c. 1330–1336.

5. Describe Krishnadevaraya's contributions to the Vijayanagara Empire.

Revision cue: Military dominance over the Deccan; patron of Sanskrit/Telugu/Kannada literature; wrote Āmuktamālyada; temple grants.

6. Who was Sher Shah Suri, and what happened to his Sur Empire?

Revision cue: Afghan leader who took advantage of Humayun's weak hold to found the Sur Empire; short-lived — Humayun reconquered it.

7. Explain the story of Himu (Hemchandra Vikramaditya).

Revision cue: Chief minister under the Suris; briefly ruled Delhi; defeated and captured by Akbar at the Second Battle of Panipat; beheaded.

8. Describe Aurangzeb's rise to power and religious policies.

Revision cue: Defeated/executed brothers, imprisoned Shah Jahan; reimposed jizya and pilgrimage tax; destroyed temples at Banaras, Mathura, Somnath.

9. Explain the significance of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom.

Revision cue: Refused to convert despite torture; protected Kashmiri Pandits; publicly beheaded on Aurangzeb's orders in 1675; led to formation of the Khalsa.

10. Describe the role of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Sikh history.

Revision cue: Unified Sikh confederacies into a centralised empire around 1800; resisted Mughal remnants and later British expansion till mid-19th century.

11. What was the significance of the jizya tax's abolition and later reimposition?

Revision cue: Akbar abolished it as part of sulh-i-kul; Aurangzeb reimposed it, reflecting a shift back toward orthodoxy and causing tension.

12. Explain the role of temples as centres of economic activity.

Revision cue: Received land/wealth grants (dāna); funded infrastructure, pilgrim accommodation, credit for merchants and trade.

13. Describe the Jat peasantry's rebellion against Mughal administration.

Revision cue: 17th-century Jat peasants (western UP/Haryana/eastern Rajasthan) killed an oppressive officer; 20,000 fought before being suppressed.

14. What is meant by 'guerrilla warfare', and which two groups used it in this chapter?

Revision cue: Small, terrain-savvy groups using surprise attacks; used by Maharana Pratap (Aravallis) and the Ahoms (rivers/forests of Assam).

15. Why do historians prefer the term 'image' over 'idol' or 'icon'?

Revision cue: 'Idol'/'icon' are considered pejorative in Abrahamic religious contexts; India's classical texts used neutral terms like mūrti, vighraha, pratimā, rūpa.

9. RESEARCH SOURCES

A. Textbook-derived content

All chapter facts, definitions, and the textbook's own end-of-chapter 'Questions and activities' (7 questions) are drawn directly from the attached NCERT Class 8 'Exploring Society: India and Beyond' textbook, Chapter 2 — 'Reshaping India's Political Map' (2026–27 reprint).

B. Themes/formats supported by external examination-preparation sources

- LearnCBSE.in — NCERT solutions, MCQ bank, extra questions, competency-based and skill-based questions for this exact chapter (learncbse.in/reshaping-indias-political-map-class-8-*).
- Vedantu — NCERT Solutions overview confirming key examinable topics for CBSE 2026–27 syllabus (vedantu.com/ncert-solutions/ncert-solutions-class-8-social-science-chapter-2).

- myCBSEguide.com — worked NCERT solutions for the textbook's own end-of-chapter questions (mycbseguide.com/blog/reshaping-indias-political-map-...).
- OnePointLearning.com — downloadable worksheet with fill-in-the-blanks, MCQs, true/false, and short/long answers for this chapter.
- ComeToLearn.in — a standalone MCQ set (30+ questions) for this chapter.
- jnvteacher.in — additional Q&A set including MCQs on comparative Sultanate/Mughal strategy.
- EduRev.in — short and long answer question set aligned to the 'New NCERT' Class 8 Social Science syllabus.

Note: this is a newly introduced NCERT chapter (2026–27 syllabus), so no verified board-level previous-year papers exist yet; the sources above are teacher/tutoring-site worksheets and solution sets, not official past exam papers. Where an online source contained a factual error (for example, one site incorrectly attributed the founding of the Mughal Empire to Aurangzeb instead of Babur), the error has been corrected here against the textbook.