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SOLUTIONS BOOK

CLASS 8

Social Science · Exploring Society

CHAPTER 2

Reshaping India’s Political Map

Complete Questions and Activities Solutions

In-text Questions

Questions and Activities

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Every question is followed by its answer. Question numbers above are clickable and the PDF bookmarks panel lets you jump to any exercise set or question. Figures are reproduced from the NCERT textbook (© NCERT) for educational use.

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2.1

CLASS 8 SOCIAL SCIENCE · CHAPTER 2

In-text Questions

Solutions · 19 questions

Directions (Questions 1–19): These are the questions that appear inside the chapter (The Big Questions, Think About It, Don't Miss Out and Let's Explore), numbered in the order in which they appear. Many are open-ended or discussion questions; model answers based on the chapter are given.

QUESTION 1 *The Big Questions · p. 21*

How did foreign invasions and the rise of new dynasties reshape India's political boundaries during this period?

ANSWER

From the early 11th century, invasions from beyond the Hindu Kush, and the rise and fall of many kingdoms, repeatedly redrew India's political map.

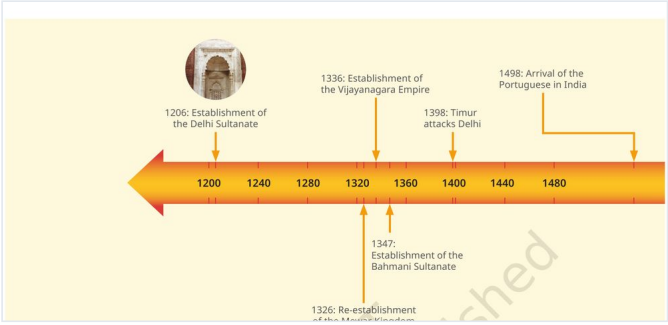

Fig. 2.2. Timeline, 1200–1480 (continued below)

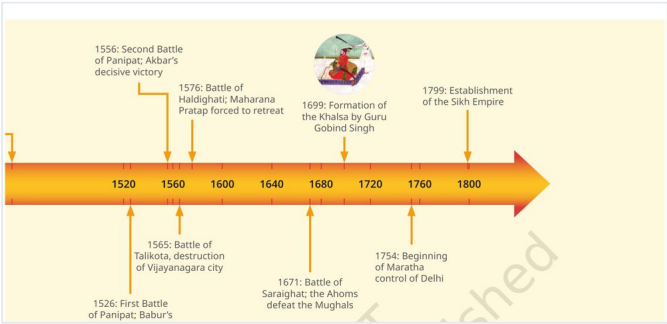

Fig. 2.2. Timeline, 1520–1800

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a Delhi Sultanate and its rivals

- The Delhi Sultanate was formed after the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan in 1192 (the timeline marks 1206 for its establishment) and saw five foreign dynasties: Mamluks, Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids and Lodis.
- Under Muhammad bin Tughlaq, for the first time since the Mauryan Empire, most of the Subcontinent was under one ruler, but briefly.
- Timur’s attack on Delhi (1398) left chaos; the Lodis, the last Sultanate dynasty, ruled a much smaller territory.
- Neighbouring kingdoms such as the Eastern Gangas and the Hoysalas resisted; regional Sultanates (Bahmani, Gujarat, Bengal) rose.

b New powers in the south and Deccan

- Vijayanagara Empire (1336) grew in the south and reached its peak under Krishnadevaraya.
- The Bahmani Sultanate (1347) later split into five Deccan Sultanates; in 1565 they defeated Vijayanagara at Talikota.

c Mughals and regional powers

- Babur’s victory at the First Battle of Panipat (1526) ended the Delhi Sultanate and began the Mughal Empire.
- Under Aurangzeb the Mughal empire reached its greatest expansion.
- Rajputs (Mewar), Ahoms (Battle of Saraighat, 1671), Marathas and the Sikh Empire (1799) kept or created independent regions.

Therefore, conquests, resistance and new dynasties kept changing the boundaries of kingdoms and empires.

QUESTION 2 *The Big Questions · p. 21*

How did Indian society respond to invasions? How did India’s economy adapt during times of political instability?

ANSWER

Society responded with resistance and with rebuilding; the economy adapted through agriculture, crafts, trade and local systems of credit.

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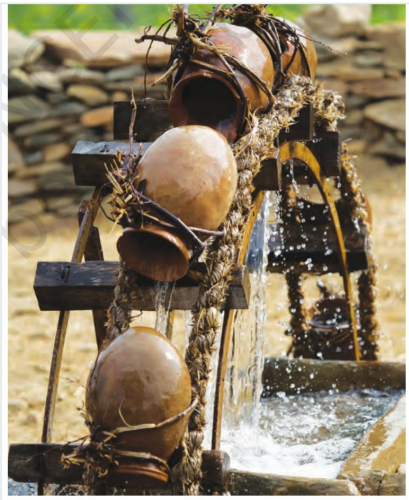

Fig. 2.29. A Persian wheel used to draw water from wells or tanks to irrigate fields

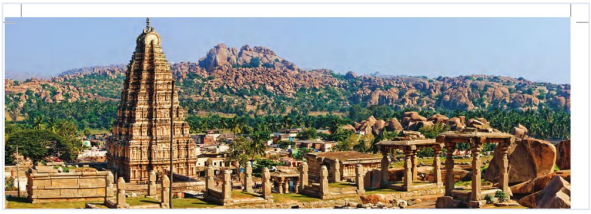

Fig. 2.11. Ruins of Vijayanagara city (present-day Hampi)

a Response of society

- **Armed resistance:** Eastern Gangas, Hoysalas, Vijayanagara, Rana Kumbha, Rana Sanga and Maharana Pratap (guerrilla warfare), Rani Durgavati, the Ahoms, and the Sikhs under the Khalsa.
- **Peasants and tribal groups** (Jats, Bhils, Gonds, Santhals, Kochs) fought harsh exploitation or annexation.
- **Rebuilding:** towns, cities, temples and the economy were rebuilt.
- **Culture:** communities preserved or revived traditions, blended indigenous and foreign elements, and created a shared heritage.

b Adaptation of the economy

- Agriculture was the mainstay; irrigation (such as the Persian wheel) allowed multiple food and non-food crops.
- Craftspeople made textiles, weapons, utensils and ornaments; ship-building developed.
- Exports went through ports like Calicut, Mangalore, Surat, Masulipatnam and Hooghly.
- Guilds (*śhreṇis*), *jātis*, systems of credit and the *hundi* kept trade going; temples were also economic centres.

Therefore, society resisted, rebuilt and adapted, and trade and agriculture kept the economy going.

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QUESTION 3 *The Big Questions · p. 21*

What impact did this period have on the lives of the people?

ANSWER

The period brought suffering and displacement, but also prosperity, art and shared traditions.

a Hardships

- Raids, plunder, massacres and enslavement: for example Timur's attack on Delhi, the sack of Vijayanagara after Talikota, and the massacre at Chittor.
- Taxes: land revenue was typically one-fifth of the produce and sometimes one-half; *jizya* was an economic burden and humiliation.
- Severe famines; in the late 1600s many peasants lost their land and became bonded labourers.
- Wealth was concentrated among rulers, courtiers, officials and merchants.
- Religious intolerance and destruction of places of worship.

b Positive aspects

- Vibrant economic activity and wealth, with agriculture and trade expanding.
- Flourishing of architecture (Qutub Minar complex, Humayun's tomb, Red Forts, Taj Mahal), music, painting and literature.
- By and large, people of different faiths lived peacefully side by side, economically dependent on each other.

Therefore, people faced violence and heavy burdens, yet India remained prosperous and its culture continued to flourish.

QUESTION 4 *Let's Explore · p. 26*

Looking at Fig. 2.6, why do you think Ala-ud-din Khilji called himself 'the second Alexander'?

ANSWER

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Alexander is remembered as a great world conqueror. By taking the title ‘Sikander Sani’ on his coin, Ala-ud-din presented himself as an equally great conqueror.



Fig. 2.6. A coin minted by Ala-ud-din Khilji, with the inscription ‘Sikander Sani’

a **Reasons**

- He conducted military campaigns over large areas of north and central India.
- He repelled several Mongol invasions.
- His general Malik Kafur extended the Sultanate’s reach to the south.
- A coin circulated widely, so the inscription spread his claim to power and glory.

Therefore, the title expressed his ambition and pride in his conquests.

QUESTION 5 *Let’s Explore · p. 26*

What kind of resources do you think were needed to maintain an army and wage war in those days? Discuss in groups the various types of expenditure involved, from weapons or food for soldiers to animals used in warfare, road construction, etc.

ANSWER

Maintaining an army needed people, animals, equipment, supplies, infrastructure and, above all, money.

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a Types of expenditure

Resource	Examples
People	Soldiers' pay, officers, labourers
Weapons and equipment	Swords, bows, armour; later gunpowder, cannons and matchlock guns
Animals	Horses, elephants and camels, with their fodder and care
Food and supplies	Food for soldiers and animals, water, transport
Infrastructure	Roads, bridges, forts, river boats

b How it was paid for

- Taxes collected through the *iqta* system and land revenue.
- Plunder from campaigns (Malik Kafur's plunder helped finance the Sultanate's army).
- Under the Mughals, *mansabdars* were expected to maintain a fixed number of elephants, horses, camels and troops.

Therefore, large armies needed heavy and continuous spending, which came from taxes and plunder.

QUESTION 6 *Think About It · p. 28*

Why do we use the term 'image' rather than common terms like 'idol' or 'icon'?

ANSWER

'Image' is a neutral term, whereas 'idol' and 'icon' are considered pejorative in some traditions.

a Reasons

- In the context of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, whose orthodox sects condemn 'idolatry' or the worship of 'idols' or 'icons', these two terms carry a negative sense.
- India's classical texts used words such as *mūrti, vigraha, pratimā, rūpa* for images, often statues, used for worship in temples or homes; these are not negative.
- In English, 'image' is a neutral term, so it is used.

Therefore, 'image' is used because it describes sacred objects respectfully and neutrally.

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QUESTION 7 *Think About It · p. 29*

During the time of the Tughlaqs, the Musunuri Nayakas, Telugu chieftains, rallied over 75 more chieftains of the region, formed a confederacy that defeated smaller provinces, formed a confederacy that defeated the Delhi Sultanate forces, and expelled Muhammad bin Tughlaq's army from Warangal (present-day Telangana) around 1330–1336. Do you think it would have been an easy task to bring together 75 leaders in those days?

ANSWER

No. Bringing together so many leaders would have been very difficult.

a Why it was difficult

- Each chieftain ruled his own area and had his own interests and rivalries.
- Travel and communication were slow; there were no modern means of messaging.
- Trust had to be built, and everyone had to accept one leader and one plan.
- The Sultanate's army was powerful, so the risk of failure was high.

b What it shows

A common goal, here expelling the Sultanate forces, and able leadership could unite many chiefs and succeed.

Therefore, uniting 75 chieftains was a remarkable achievement of leadership and cooperation.

QUESTION 8 *Let's Explore · p. 31*

Why do you think such locations were chosen for many of the medieval forts? Discuss pros and cons. (Hint: think of issues of strategy, security, vulnerability, etc.)

ANSWER

Forts like Kumbhalgarh were built on hills, surrounded by forests and steep slopes. Such locations have both advantages and disadvantages.

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Fig. 2.10. A view of the Kumbhalgarh Fort in the Aravalli hills

a Pros and cons

Pros (strategy and security)	Cons (vulnerability)
Height gives a clear view of approaching enemies	Difficult to bring in food, water and supplies
Steep slopes and forests make attack and siege hard	Cut off from towns and trade routes
Natural defences reduce the need for heavy walls and large armies	Costly and difficult to build and maintain
A safe refuge for the ruler and people	A long siege can starve out the defenders

Therefore, hill forts offered security and a strategic advantage, but needed careful supply and planning.

QUESTION 9 *Think About It · p. 32*

Have you noticed the term pati in titles like ‘Gajapati’? Pati means ‘lord’ or ‘master’ and was commonly used by many ruling dynasties of this period to signify power and stature. The Vijayanagara kings were called ‘Narapati’, the Bahmani Sultanate rulers ‘Ashwapati’, and the Maratha rulers ‘Chhatrapati’ — each title reflecting different aspects of kingship and power. Can you guess what these three terms might mean?

ANSWER

Each title combines *pati* (lord or master) with a word showing a source of the ruler’s power.

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a Meanings

Title	Meaning	Aspect of power
Narapati	Lord of men (*nara* = man, people)	Ruler of people; manpower
Ashwapati	Lord of horses (*ashwa* = horse)	Cavalry; military strength
Chhatrapati	Lord of the umbrella (*chhatra* = royal umbrella)	Sovereignty and royal authority
Gajapati (given)	Lord of elephants (*gaja* = elephant)	Elephant forces

Therefore, Narapati means lord of men, Ashwapati lord of horses and Chhatrapati lord of the umbrella (the sovereign).

QUESTION 10 *Let's Explore · p. 35*

In Fig. 2.14, what elements do you observe? What do they tell you about life then? (Hint: observe the weapons, the animals, the activities.)

ANSWER

Fig. 2.14 is a carved panel from the Vitthala temple with rows of animals and figures.



Fig. 2.14. A panel from the Vitthala temple

a Elements observed

- Horses with riders, elephants and camels.
- Riders and figures that appear to carry weapons, in action.
- Groups of people in lines or processions.

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b What they tell us about life then

- Horses, elephants and camels were important for war and transport.
- Warfare and military strength were part of everyday life and royal display.
- Horses were precious (traders came to sell horses to Vijayanagara).
- Temples recorded scenes of society, so sculpture is a source of history.

Therefore, the panel shows a society where armies, animals and processions were prominent.

QUESTION 11 *Think About It · p. 37*

What strikes you in Babur’s impressions of India? Discuss in groups.

ANSWER

Babur’s remarks mix criticism and praise, and show why he stayed.

a Points that stand out

- He was nostalgic about Central Asia and found India a ‘country of few charms’.
- Yet he noted that India has masses of gold and silver, and a remarkably fine air in the rainy season.
- He praised the countless artisans and workmen of every sort.
- India’s wealth and skilled workers led him to stay and build his empire.

b Discussion points

- He appreciated architecture, poetry, birds and fruit trees, but was also a brutal conqueror.
- His memoir shows how a foreigner saw India’s wealth and skills.

Therefore, Babur valued India’s wealth, climate and skilled people even though he missed Central Asia.

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QUESTION 12 *Think About It · p. 40*

Why do you think Akbar employed different strategies to expand his empire, while the earlier rulers of Delhi relied mostly on military might?

ANSWER

Akbar needed to hold together a large and diverse empire, and force alone had not given earlier rulers stability.



Fig. 2.17. Akbar in his court receiving scholars, including two Jesuits (dressed in black)

a Reasons

- Sultans' reigns averaged hardly nine years, with violent successions; reliance on force made rule unstable.
- Akbar's own experience, including the heavy losses and cruelty at Chittor, and his later reflection that forcing others to convert was inappropriate.
- The empire had many faiths and communities; winning their support helped stabilise it.
- Rajput rulers were powerful, so alliances gained their support.

b His other strategies

- Marriage alliances with princesses of neighbouring kingdoms.
- Welcoming Rajput and regional leaders into his court and appointing Hindu officials in high positions.
- Abolishing the *jizya* and promoting *sulh-i-kul* (peace with all).

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- Interfaith dialogues and a well-organised administration.

Therefore, Akbar combined force with diplomacy and tolerance to make his rule stable and lasting.

QUESTION 13 *Let's Explore · p. 41*

Compare the maps in Figs. 2.3, 2.12 and 2.16. What differences do you notice? What is the 'reshaping' that has occurred?

ANSWER

The three maps show different periods and powers; comparing them shows how political boundaries kept changing.

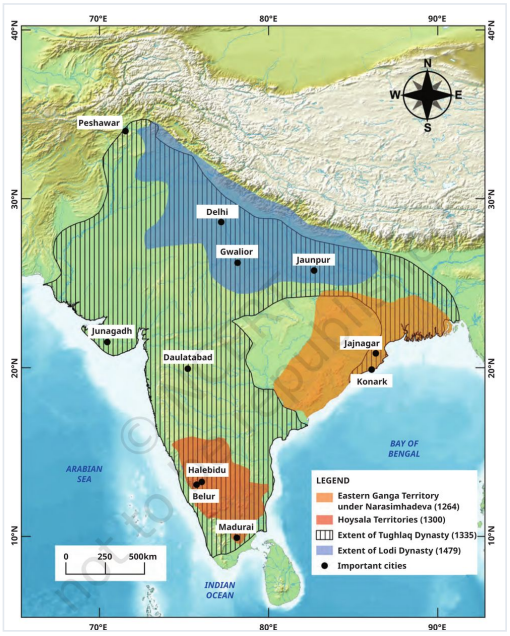

Fig. 2.3

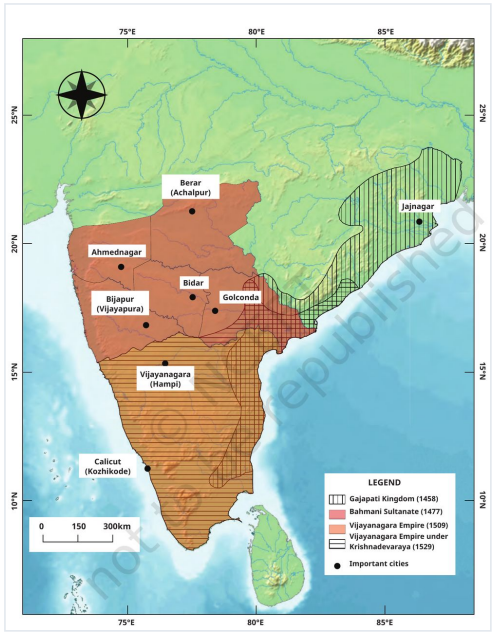

Fig. 2.12

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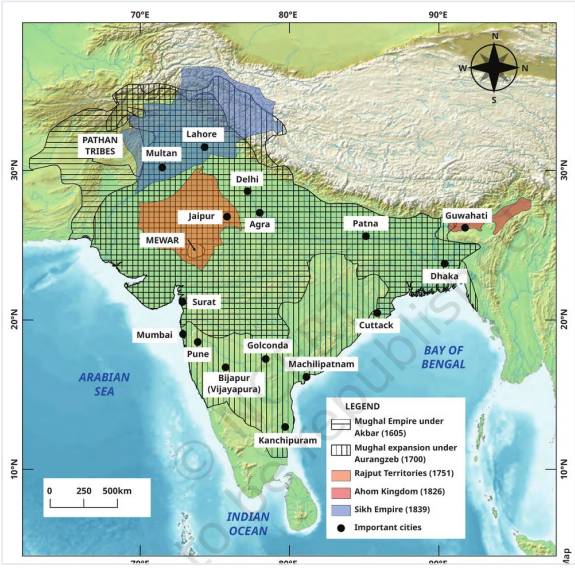

Fig. 2.16

a Differences

Map	What it shows
Fig. 2.3 (13th–15th centuries)	Tughlaq extent (1335) covers most of the Subcontinent; Lodi extent (1479) is much smaller, in the north. Eastern Ganga (1264) and Hoysala (1300) regions in the east and south.
Fig. 2.12 (15th–16th centuries)	Gajapati kingdom (1458) in the east; Bahmani Sultanate (1477) in the Deccan; Vijayanagara Empire (1509, and under Krishnadevaraya, 1529) in the south.
Fig. 2.16 (17th–19th centuries)	Mughal Empire under Akbar (1605), expansion under Aurangzeb (1700) into the south; later regional powers: Rajputs (1751), Ahoms (1826), Sikh Empire (1839).

b The ‘reshaping’

A large Sultanate shrank, regional kingdoms rose in the south, Deccan and east, then the Mughals united much of the Subcontinent, and later regional powers again emerged. Boundaries changed with every new dynasty and conflict.

Therefore, the maps show empires expanding and shrinking and regional powers rising, which is the reshaping of India’s political map.

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QUESTION 14 *Think About It · p. 43*

We saw above that Delhi sultans' average reign lasted about nine years. This figure becomes 27 years in the case of Mughal emperors up to Aurangzeb; and 16 years if we consider all Mughal rulers, up to the end of the empire in the 19th century. What do you make of these numbers of years of reign?

ANSWER

Longer reigns mean more stable rule; shorter reigns point to instability.

a What the numbers suggest

Rulers	Average reign	Meaning
Delhi sultans	About 9 years	Frequent violent successions (almost two sultans in three seized power by eliminating the predecessor); instability
Mughals up to Aurangzeb	27 years	Longer, more stable rule; time to build administration and expand
All Mughals	16 years	Fall after Aurangzeb reflects decline, rebellions and weaker rulers

Therefore, stable periods match long reigns, and unstable periods match short reigns.

QUESTION 15 *Let's Explore · p. 45*

In his last letters to two of his sons, Aurangzeb wrote, "I came alone and am going away alone. I know not who I am and what I have been doing. … I have not done well for the country and the people, and of the future there is no hope. I was helpless [in life] and I am departing helpless." What do these words tell us about Aurangzeb? How do you feel about them?

ANSWER

The words reveal a very different, humbler side of a powerful emperor.

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a What they tell us about Aurangzeb

- He felt lonely and helpless at the end.
- He regretted that he had not done well for the country and its people.
- He had little hope for the future, perhaps because of the wars and strain on the empire (he spent his last 25 years fighting in the Deccan).
- Great power and a long reign did not bring him peace of mind.

b How we may feel

Your own response may include sympathy for his regret, but also awareness of the suffering his policies caused. Mention at least one reason for your feeling.

Therefore, the letters show a sense of failure and regret at the end of Aurangzeb's life.

QUESTION 16 *Let's Explore · p. 48*

Discuss in class how the paik system affected the daily lives of the people in the Ahom kingdom, both in terms of challenges and benefits, and helped the king manage both the army and the economy.

ANSWER

Under the *paik* system every able-bodied man gave labour or military service to the state in exchange for land rights.

a Challenges and benefits for the people

Challenges	Benefits
Time spent on state service, away from family and fields	Land rights in exchange for service
Risk of fighting in wars	A share in the defence of their kingdom
Service was compulsory for every able-bodied man	Public infrastructure that helped everyone

b How it helped the king

- **Army:** a large standing force without a permanent army, since men served when needed.
- **Economy:** labour for public works, and land for agriculture, without large cash payments.

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Therefore, the paik system gave the state labour and soldiers cheaply, and gave people land in return for service.

QUESTION 17 *Let's Explore · p. 49*

How did the Ahoms use the rivers, hills and forests of Assam to their advantage? Can you think of ways in which the geography helped them build defences and fight wars?

ANSWER

The Ahoms knew their terrain well and used it to defeat larger forces.



Fig. 2.24. Plaque commemorating the Battle of Saraighat



Fig. 2.25. Statues of Ahom warriors

a Use of geography

- **Rivers:** they fought on the Brahmaputra with boats; the Battle of Saraighat (1671) was a river battle. Every soldier was expert in rowing.
- **Hills and forests:** dense forests and hills allowed surprise attacks and ambushes (guerrilla tactics).
- **Defences:** difficult terrain slowed down large Mughal armies; the Ahoms also dug trenches.
- **Knowledge of terrain** helped them repulse the Mughals even though Mughals had more men and a larger fleet.

Therefore, the rivers, hills and forests acted as natural defences, and local knowledge helped the Ahoms preserve their independence.

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QUESTION 18 *Don’t Miss Out · p. 51*

Do you know what the Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib in Chandni Chowk — the famous shopping area in Delhi — signifies?

ANSWER

The gurudwara marks the place where Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, was martyred.

a What it signifies

- It marks the site where Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded on Aurangzeb’s orders in 1675.
- He refused to convert to Islam and stood with Kashmiri Pandits seeking protection.
- The Sikh Regiment salutes it before the President in the Republic Day parade each year since 1979.
- It is a symbol of faith and sacrifice in Indian history.

Therefore, Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib stands for the Guru’s sacrifice for freedom of faith.

QUESTION 19 *Think About It · p. 52*

(i) Why do you think Guru Tegh Bahadur endured torture rather than convert? Why did he think his sacrifice would make a difference?
(ii) What values did the Sikh Gurus and the Khalsa embody?
(iii) How are they relevant in today’s world?

ANSWER

The Guru’s sacrifice defended freedom of faith, and the Sikh values of equality, compassion and justice remain important.

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Fig. 2.26. Miniature painting of Guru Gobind Singh

i Why he endured torture

- He believed in oneness of God and respect for all faiths; conversion by force went against this.
- He had decided to stand with the Kashmiri Pandits seeking protection from religious persecution.
- He thought his sacrifice would awaken people's conscience and inspire resistance to injustice; his son Guru Gobind Singh then established the Khalsa.

ii Values

- Equality, compassion and the oneness of God (Guru Nanak).
- Truthfulness, humility and self-control.
- Justice and defence of the faith (the Khalsa), and *seva*.

iii Relevance today

- Equality: treating people equally regardless of religion, caste or gender.
- Justice and tolerance: protecting each person's right to follow their faith.
- Truthful living and service to others in daily life.

Therefore, the Guru's sacrifice and Sikh values continue to inspire respect for freedom, equality and justice.

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2.2

CLASS 8 SOCIAL SCIENCE · CHAPTER 2

Questions and Activities

Solutions · 7 questions

Directions (Questions 1–7): These are the Questions and activities at the end of the chapter (page 59). Answer each in your own words using the points given.

QUESTION 1

Compare the political strategies of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughals. What similarities and differences existed between them?

ANSWER

Both were centralised monarchies depending on land revenue and armies, but the Mughals, especially under Akbar, used more varied strategies.

a Similarities

- Both centred on an all-powerful ruler assisted by ministers.
- Both depended on taxes, mostly from agriculture, to maintain the army.
- Both expanded through conquest and had violent successions.
- Both gave assignments of territory or land to officers (*iqta*; *jagirs* for mansabdars).

b Differences

Point	Delhi Sultanate	Mughals (esp. Akbar)
Main strategy	Mostly military might and plunder	Force plus diplomacy: marriage alliances, Rajput nobles in court
Religion	*Jizya* imposed by some sultans	Akbar abolished *jizya*, promoted *sulh-i-kul* (Aurangzeb reimposed it)
Administration	*Iqta* system; posts not hereditary	Diwan, Mir Bakhshi, Khan-i-Saman, Sadr; twelve *subahs*; *mansabdari*
Revenue	Taxes at every stage; cruelty in collection	Todar Mal’s surveys of crop yields, prices and land
Stability	Average reign about nine years	Average reign 27 years up to Aurangzeb

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Therefore, the Sultanate relied mainly on force, while the Mughals combined force with diplomacy and a better organised administration.

QUESTION 2

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?

ANSWER

Both kingdoms were helped by terrain, strong military arrangements and social support.

a Factors

Factor	Vijayanagara Empire	Ahom Kingdom
Geographical	Located in the south, far from the north; rocky hills around the capital (Hampi)	Dense forests, hills and rivers of the Brahmaputra valley
Military	Strong rulers such as Krishnadevaraya; wealth from trade to maintain forces	Guerrilla tactics, skilled boatmen; *paik* system gave a large force without a permanent army
Social	Grants to temples and patronage of arts won loyalty	Assimilated local culture, promoted agriculture, encouraged diverse faiths

b Note

Vijayanagara finally fell to the Deccan Sultanates at Talikota (1565); the Ahom kingdom preserved its independence. The Vijayanagara geographical points are drawn from the maps and Fig. 2.11.

Therefore, terrain, military organisation and social support helped these kingdoms to resist for a long time.

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QUESTION 3

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.

ANSWER

This is a creative writing task. A model letter from Akbar's court is given, followed by points for Krishnadevaraya's court.



Fig. 2.18. The five-storied 'Panch Mahal' at Fatehpur Sikri, a city built by Akbar near present-day Agra

a Model letter (court of Akbar)

Fatehpur Sikri, 1580s. Dear friend, I write from the court of Emperor Akbar. The Emperor is intent on bringing the entire Subcontinent under Mughal control, yet he also seeks peace: he has married into Rajput families, welcomed Rajput leaders to court and abolished the *jizya*, speaking of *sulh-i-kul*, 'peace with all'.

The administration is well ordered: the Diwan manages finances, the Mir Bakhshi the army, and the empire has twelve provinces. Todar Mal has surveyed land and fixed revenue. Officers called *mansabdars* keep elephants, horses and troops.

In trade, goods flow through ports such as Surat, and merchants use the *hundi* to send money safely. In culture, the Emperor has set up a house of translation where the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita and Panchatantra are being translated into Persian. Scholars of many faiths, even Jesuits, visit the court. Society is lively, though peasants bear heavy taxes. Write soon. Your friend.

b Points for Krishnadevaraya's court

- Politics: the empire is at its peak and dominates the Deccan; rivals are the Deccan Sultanates and the Gajapati rulers.
- Culture: poets and scholars in Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada are patronised; the king composed *Āmuktamālyada*.

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- Religion and architecture: grants to Tirupati and the Vitthala temple; grand temples, palaces and buildings in the capital.
- Trade: foreign travellers visit; Portuguese traders bring horses and are well treated.

Therefore, a good letter covers politics, trade, culture and society, with details from the chapter.

QUESTION 4

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?

ANSWER

The chapter shows that Akbar's reign was 'a blend of brutality and tolerance, shaped by ambition and strategy'. Several reasons may explain the change.

a Possible reasons

- **Personal reflection:** as he grew in knowledge, he felt shame at having forced people to conform and felt it was inappropriate to force others to become Muslims.
- **Experience of war:** early conquests, such as at Chittor, were extremely costly in lives.
- **Need for stability:** a large empire of many communities needed their support, so he made alliances and gained the support of many Rajput rulers.
- **Exposure to ideas:** he invited scholars to court, held interfaith dialogues and studied Persian and Indian texts, and had Sanskrit works translated.

Therefore, experience, reflection, politics and contact with different thinkers together led Akbar towards tolerance.

QUESTION 5

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.

ANSWER

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This is an imaginative question; the points below are possibilities, not facts. In reality, the Deccan Sultanates won in 1565, the city was sacked, and the empire fragmented under Nayakas.

a Political possibilities

- The empire might have continued as the major power of the south, instead of fragmenting under Nayakas and ending in the mid-17th century.
- The Deccan Sultanates might have remained weaker and more divided.

b Cultural possibilities

- Vijayanagara city (Hampi) would not have been destroyed; its temples and palaces might have survived and grown.
- Patronage of poetry, scholarship, music and temple architecture in Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada could have continued.
- Trade with foreign merchants might have continued to flourish.

Therefore, a victory might have preserved Vijayanagara's power and culture, but history cannot be known for certain.

QUESTION 6

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.

ANSWER

Model answer on **equality**. You may choose *seva* or justice instead.

a The value in early Sikhism

Guru Nanak spread the message of equality, compassion and the oneness of God; the Khalsa was committed to justice, equality and defence of the faith.

b Relevance today

- Equality before the law and equal opportunity for all, regardless of religion, caste or gender.
- Respect for people of different faiths, as seen in Guru Tegh Bahadur's stand for others' right to practise their faith.
- In schools and workplaces, fair treatment and inclusion.

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c For seva or justice

Seva means selfless service, as in helping people in need; justice means standing up against unfair treatment.

Therefore, equality remains important for a fair and peaceful society.

QUESTION 7

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.

ANSWER

This is a creative task. A model description for Surat follows, using details from the chapter.

a Model description (Surat)

I stand on the quay at Surat. Ships are being loaded and unloaded all day. Bales of cotton cloth from our weavers, along with products made by craftspeople, are packed for export, and India sells much more than it buys.
Imported goods include silk, horses, metals and luxury items. I trade with merchants from Arabia, Persia and Central Asia, many of whom have settled here. Ship-building goes on along the river. For distant deals, we use the *hundi*, a written order for payment, so that no one needs to carry coins and risk plunder. Our Marwari and other trader communities trust one another's credit.

b Points to include

- Goods exported (textiles, other crafts) and imported (silk, horses, metals, luxury goods).
- People: local merchants, and foreign merchants from Arabia, Persia and Central Asia.
- Ships, ship-building and river and sea trade; the use of *hundi* and credit.

Therefore, port cities were busy centres of trade, connecting India with the wider world.

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