

Question # 1

Critically analyze the causes and consequences of Muslim arrival in the Indian Sub-continent. How did it shape the socio-political and cultural foundations of the region?

Introduction

Muslim invasion of Sind was one of the epoch making events in the history of sub-continent. It has drastically changed the socio-political and cultural direction of sub-continent. It laid the foundation of Islam in the sub-continent. The causes of Arab invasion of sub-continent range from plunder of pirates to imperial ambitions of Hajjaj. As a consequence of this invasion a new culture, religion, and political structure was introduced in the sub-continent.

It was said that

the Arabs had cast their eyes on the rich soil of India long before they conquered it. However, certain events took place that compelled them to invade the sub-continent.

Causes of Arab Invasion

There were a number of factors which caused the Arabs to invade Sindh

a) Plunder of Muslim Ships by the pirates of Sind

Trade activities between Arabs and sub-continent dates back to antiquity. These activities intensified after the establishment of an Islamic state. Most of the Arab merchants settled on the coastal areas of the sub-continent.

A few Arab merchants died in Ceylon. The ruler of Ceylon sent the family members of these merchants along with valuable present for Caliph and Viceroy by ships. These ships were plundered by the pirates of Sindh. Hajjaj, the Umayyad

for compensation from the ruler of Sindh. The ruler of Sindh refused on the grounds that the pirates were beyond his control and he is unable to chastise them.

2) Shelter to Arab Rebels

The ruler of Sindh gave shelter of rebellious Arab tribes. Mumtaz writes in his book "History of Sindh" "The Hafis tribes who had taken shelter as fugitives seem to have acted as secret agents for the Arab viceroy". The ruler of Sindh refused to capture these rebellious tribes and send them back to Arab Viceroy.

3) Help to Persian against Muslim

The Muslim conquest of Kirman and Makran brought them face to face with the then ruler of Sindh who joined in common cause against Persian against Muslims.

4) Imperialism of Hajjaj

The invasion of sub-continent was included in the imperial

plans of Hajjaj for which some
filmy grounds were needed.

5) Religious and political prejudices of population of sub-continent

The people of sub-continent, especially Sindh were Bhuddists. However, the rulers of Sindh professed Hinduism. As a result religious prejudices arose between rulers and ruled. The people were treated poorly due to the prevalent caste system which is rigorously practiced in Hinduism.

Secondly, the Hindu-rule was established in Sindh after the usurpation of Chach. which brought an end to Rai dynasty. It was followed by the death of all the nobles who oppose Chach. As a result the general population was discontent with his rule.

Due to such religious and political prejudices, when Arabs conquered Sind they faced no resistance from the general population. In the words of "The hand that Crippled the nation was its own"

6) Preaching of Islam

One of the main causes of invasion of sub-continent was the propagation of Islam. It was the Arabs who introduced Islam in the sub-continent. However they were unable to raise it to a political force in the sub-continent. According to professor Habibullah "The Arabs were not destined to raise Islam to a political force in India."

Consequences of Muslim arrival in the sub-continent

The Muslim arrival in the sub-continent paved way for a number of socio-political and cultural consequences.

Socio-political causes of muslim arrival in the sub-continent

i) Abolition of caste system

The Muslim invasion of the sub-continent abolished the caste system. The Arab invaders introduced a new religion in the sub-continent. All the people were treated equally without any favour. It was something

new for the people of sub-continent who were kept in always kept in submission.

ii) It introduced a new administrative system

The Arab invasion of sub-continent introduced a new administrative system. Muhammad Bin-Qasim proved to be a wise administrator. The non-muslim population of Sind was given all rights and facilities. New cities cantonments were formed which flourished into cities. The people of Sind were so content with the administration of Muhammad-bin-Qasim that they fashioned an effigy after his departure from Sindh.

iii) It paved way for further propogation of Islam

The Arab conquest of sub-continent laid the foundation of Islam. A large number of people accepted Islam. According to I.H Qurashi "The establishment of Muslim rule in Sindh paved way for future propogation of Islam in adjoining areas".

Cultural consequences of muslim arrival in sub-continent

i) It resulted in cultural contact

The Arab invasion of sub-continent brought the Hindu and Muslim culture in close contact. Many of the Muslim soldiers married Indian women and settled in India. Muslims and Hindus lived side by side. Sindhi language was also influenced by Arabic. The Sindhi word Wadera has a literal meaning of Sheikh in Arabic.

ii) It opened new doors to knowledge

After the Arab invasion of Sindh, a large number of muslim scholars came to India to gain knowledge of astronomy, medicine etc. The Hindu works on Mathematics, Astronomy, medicine etc were translated from Sanskrit to Arabic. The Arabs also learned chess from Hindus.

iii) It produced men of note

The Arab invasion of Sindh also produced men of note. Arabic Scholar Abu Mashar came to India and study astronomy for 10 years. He was so renowned that his funeral prayers were led by the reigning Caliph. In addition to that Imam Abu Hanifa, a prominent Muslim Scholar was born in Iraq, but his family is said to have migrated there from Sindh.

Conclusion

The Arab invasion of sub-continent was not only a military event, but it also led to a change in political and cultural atmosphere of the sub-continent. There were also numerous causes that led to Arabs invasion of Sindh. Certain historians such as Lane poole believed that the Arab invasion of sub-continent was a mere episode in the history of India. However, this statement can be regarded because Arab Invasion of Sind was a major event & since Aryan Invasion. It not only produced lasting effects but also paved way for future propagation of Islam.

Question #2

Examine the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni with special reference to their political, economic, and religious motivations. To what extent did they contribute to the spread of Islam in the Sub-continent?

Introduction

Mahmud was a Central Asian ruler of Ghazni. He was an excellent military general. He attacked India 17 times. He defeated formidable opponents such as Jaypal of Hindu Shahi Kingdom, his son Anadapal, muslim ruler of Multan Daud etc. He never suffered any major defeat once. However, Mahmud did not take the pains of consolidating his conquests. He only annexed Punjab to his dominion after defeating Trinchopal, the grandson of Jaypal. He annexed Punjab so that he could launch attack on India from there.

Regarding his motives for invasion there are currently 3 schools of thought. According to the first school of thought, Mahmud was a

raider in chief. He came and plundered the wealth of India. According to the second school of thought, Mahmud invaded India from time to time in order to spread Islam through sword. The third school of thought believes that Mahmud had a complex personality and his motives cannot be accessed easily. In order to observe his actual intent, let us study the political, economic, and religious factors which contributed to successive attacks on India.

Political motives of Mahmud

Following were the political motives behind Mahmud's successive attacks on India.

i) Violation of peace treaty by Jaypal

One of the reasons of attacking India was the violation of peace treaty concluded by Jaypal with Amir Subuktgin of Ghazni. The former violated the treaty and attacked Ghazni. However, he was defeated and most of his territory was occupied by Amir Subuktgin.

ii) Breach of Faith by Hindu Rajas.

Another reason for attacking India was the breach of faith by Hindu Rajas. The ruler of Bhira promised to help Mahmud in his conquest against Jaypal. However, he later did not send any help to Mahmud. As a result Mahmud invaded Bhira.

iii) Help to enemies of Sultan.

The Muslim ruler of Multan Daud helped Anadapal, son of Jaypal. However, Anandapal still was still defeated by Mahmud. Later on Mahmud attacked Multan and the ruler of Multan fled away.

iv) Rebellion of Sultan's Indian Vassals

After Mahmud conquered Multan, he appointed Nawasa Shah as the governor of Multan. Nawasa Shah was the grandson of Multan who was captured by Mahmud during his conquest against Jaypal of Hindu Shahi Kingdom. The former embraced Islam and got the name of Nawasa Shah. After

becoming governor, he renounced Islam and challenged Mahmud. However, he was defeated by Mahmud.

v) Molestation of Sultan's Indian allies

The ruler of Gurguj submitted to Mahmud. However, he was killed due to a conspiracy hatched by ruler of Kulnjar, ruler of Gwalior, Delhi, and Ajmer. As a result Mahmud was compelled to attack India to attack India.

Economic factors behind Mahmud's invasion

Following were the economic motives behind Mahmud's successive attacks on India

i) Required Indian wealth for the welfare of Ghazni

Mahmud attacked India in order to obtain its wealth. He used this wealth for the development of Ghazni. Magnificent mosques, buildings, and monuments were erected in Ghazni. Ghazni became the centre of Art and

architecture. Mahmud was also a lover of art and literature. He gave patronage to a large number of poets including Nizam-ud-din Auliya and political philosopher Farabi. On the contrary, Mahmud never erected any building in the sub-continent.

ii) Attacked India in order to sustain his central Asian campaigns

Mahmud had a large army. In order to sustain that army he required wealth. Notable historian Dr Ishwara prasad believed that the temples which Mahmud demolished were storehouses of enormous wealth. Other ~~that~~ that he did not demolish any small temples. Furthermore, Mahmud's army had mercenaries who would only fight if they were paid enough.

Religious factors behind Mahmud's invasion

Following were the religious factors behind Mahmud's invasions

i) Were Mahmud's invasions Jihad?

The word Jihad has been

derived from the word Jihd which means struggle. Allah Almighty in Quran verse 20 surah ix says "Those who suffer exile and strive with might and main in God's cause with their goods and persons have the highest rank in the sight of God. These are the people who shall achieve salvation."

Mahmud's wars were not Jihad because they were not aimed at the propagation of Islam. There is no evidence that he won any converts. Moreover, Islam was not presented in the manner prescribed by the Holy Prophet.

ii) Did he invaded India in order to abolish temples?

Mahmud abolished the temples because they were the store house of enormous wealth. In times of peace he never abolished any temple. Moreover there were a large number of Hindus and temples in Ghazni. Mahmud never demolished them. The Hindus were allowed to observe their religious rites and blow their ~~sankas~~ ^{sankas} under the very nose of Sultan.

Conclusion

It is obvious that Mahmud did not invade India in order to spread Islam. His invasions were of political and economic nature. His invasions exposed the political and military weaknesses of India. They paved a way for the future invasions in India. Moreover, Mahmud was a wise general. He was aware of the fact that it was not possible to establish a muslim empire in India at that time. Therefore he did not aimed at consolidation. He only plundered the wealth of India and left it in a weak state.