

Conditions of Pre-Islamic Arabia

Q.no.1: Describe the state of Arabian society before the birth of Prophet Muhammad(S.A.W). Highlight key social, religious, moral and political features. [8 marks]

Tribal Structure

Before the advent of Islam, Arabia was in a state of **Jahiliyyah (ignorance)**, with serious problems in tribal, religious, economic, moral, and social life.

Arab society was organized around a **tribal system**. Loyalty to one's tribe was the highest value, and justice was based on tribal strength rather than fairness. Each tribe was independent and led by a chief, with **no central authority**. Tribal feuds and revenge killings were common, often lasting for generations, which caused constant instability and violence.

Economical Conditions

Economically, Arabia showed **unequal and unjust conditions**. Makkah was a major **trade centre**, and Quraysh benefited from profitable trade caravans to **Syria and Yemen**. However, wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few rich merchants. **Riba (usury)** was common, leading to exploitation and debt slavery. Traders often cheated in weights and measures, and there was **no system of welfare** for the poor, orphans, or widows. Slavery was an essential part of the economy, and slaves were treated as property with no rights.

Religious Conditions

The **religious condition** of Arabia was corrupt. The majority of Arabs were **polytheists**, worshipping idols made of stone, wood, or clay. The Ka'bah contained about **360 idols**. Although they believed in Allah as the Supreme Creator, they associated partners with Him and believed idols could intercede. Superstitions, fortune-telling, and sacrifices to idols were widespread. Only a small number followed Christianity, Judaism, or were Hanifs.

Moral and Social Conditions

The **moral and social conditions** were extremely poor. Drinking alcohol, gambling, adultery, and immorality were common. Women had a **very low status** and were denied basic rights. Female infanticide was practiced due to fear of poverty or shame. Slaves and weaker members of society were abused, while the powerful acted without accountability.

In conclusion, Pre-Islamic Arabia was marked by injustice, inequality, and moral corruption in all areas of life, clearly showing the need for divine guidance, which was later provided through Islam.