

**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF
BRITAIN:I
MODULE I-MEDIEVAL SOCIAL
FORMATIONS**



**KING JOHN AND MAGNA CARTA (1215)
I SEMESTER
I BA ENGLISH COMPLEMENTAR PAPER
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- John – king of England from 1199- 1216
- During his own time, king reputation was no better due to his misrule.
- England lost many territories in war with France and he failed to reconquer that.
- He levied heavy and unnecessary taxes from his subjects to meet his luxurious life and unnecessary war.
- John was not in good terms with the barons of his realm.
- He curtailed many privileges enjoyed by the barons .



- He also quarrelled with Pope Innocent III over the appointment of Archbishop of Canterbury.
- Pope excommunicated the king (1209), declared the throne vacant and invited the French to invade England.
- John finally recognized Pope as his superior in 1213.
- All these events show that John was very unpopular ruler.



- Church and barons wanted John to remove from power or put strict control upon him.
- This was the back ground of signing of a great charter of liberties known as Magna Carta by king John in 1215.

Magna Carta



- Charter of rights signed by King John at Runnymede, near Windsor on 15 June 1215.
- It was drafted at the persuasion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton and some discontent barons of England.
- It contains 63 clauses about what king could and couldn't do .
- Important clauses designed to bring about reforms In Judicial and local administration.
- Set up council of barons to make sure John kept his promises
- Originally written in Latin



- 1. Protection of Church rights- English Church shall be free from royal interferences.
- 2. Protection for the barons from illegal imprisonment
- 3, Access to quick justice
- 4. Limitation on feudal payments to the king
- 5. No freeman shall be arrested or imprisoned without proper trial by jury of peers.



- Clause 1 ; the English church shall be free and shall have her rights entire, and her liberties inviolate and we will that it be thus observed.
- Clause 12 : No scutage (a tax paid in lieu of military service) shall be imposed on our kingdom, unless by common counsel of our kingdom.
- Clause 39; No freeman shall be taken to imprisoned or exiled or in any way destroyed nor will we go upon him nor send upon him except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.
- Clause 40; To no one will we sell , to no one will we refuse or delay ,right or justice
- Clause 54: No one shall be arrested or imprisoned upon the appeal of a woman for the death of any other than her husband.