90 Days UPSC Mains Optional Answer Writing Initiative

History – Paper 1

Question and Model Answers from Subject Experts
12-Nov-2018 - Question 1

How did the early Indian historical tradition, as reflected in Itihasa-Purana, emerge? What are the distinctive features of this genre? (2018)

Model Answer

The word Purana means old. According to the tradition, the Puranas were composed by Vyasa. However, the form of Puranas clearly reveals they are not the compositions of a single person. The Puranas are 18 in number including Vishnu, Vayu, Agni, Matsya, Itihasa etc. They were composed over a long period of time from 2\textsuperscript{nd} c. BCE to 10\textsuperscript{th} c. AD.

Among various sources used in the reconstruction of early Indian historical traditions, the Puranas enjoy a place of great significance. Puranas conceptualised time as cyclical rather than linear. Four ages divided as yuga. Further, they are written in future tense, as a prophecy, e.g. Bhavishya Purana.

The earliest parts of the Puranic genealogies are either entirely or partially mythical. Later parts, particularly, the kings of kaliyuga onwards have historical material.

Distinctive features of Puranas:

- Most of them are divided into five parts- Sarga(rise of a dynasty), Pratisarga(fall of a dynasty), Manvantra(the periods of various Manus), Vamsa(genealogies of gods and rishis ), Vamsanucharita( the genealogies of royal dynasties).
- They provide information about both secular and religious life of the ancient age.
- Some Puranas deal with specific dynasties. Ex. Vishnu Purana- Mauryan dynasty.
- Puranas contain accounts of mountains, rivers used for the study of geography.
- Puranas were accessible to the shudras and women of the villages as they were allowed to hear their recitations.

Puranas, though cannot be accepted as a historical work in the true sense. However, they are a very important source for understanding the early Indian historical traditions.
12-Nov-2018 - Question 2

Delineate and account for the regional characteristics of the Neolithic period in India. (2016)

Model Answer

Neolithic age in the Indian subcontinent commenced from 8000 BCE. It is characterised by the use of igneous stone tools, settled village life, domestication of animals, cultivation of food grains etc.

Regional Distribution:

1. Belan valley (U.P) - 6000 BCE – The archaeological evidence at Koldihava have brought to light that the people of Koldihava were aware of both wild and cultivable varieties of rice in 6000 BCE.

2. Bolan valley (Pakistan) - 5000 BCE – The archaeological evidence at Mehargarh have brought to light that Mehargarh was a flourishing village in 5000 BCE. The people lived a settled life, cultivated- wheat, rice, domesticated ram and goat.

3. Kashmir Valley – 2500 BCE. Burzahom and Gufkaral, evidence of pit-dwelling, cultivation of rice and barley, domestication of goat and sheep. Evidence of graves where a dog was buried along with man also found, typical in some Chinese cultures.

4. Eastern India – 2000 BCE to 1600 BCE – Chopanimando, Senuar, etc. prominent places. Evidence of bone tools (Chirand).

5. North-East India- 2000 BCE – Daojali Hadig, Assam valley etc. cultivated barley, domesticated goat, used stone tools.

6. Peninsular India – 2500-1100 BCE – phases of transition seen from unrefined pottery to refined redware, wheat, barley and pea cultivated, buffalo, donkey, goat domesticated.
14-Nov-2018 - Question 1

Discuss the water management and its conservation planning in the Harappan cities. (2013)

Model Answer

The Harappan cities were very planned and laid out in a grid pattern. The city was divided into two parts – the upper town and the lower town. Similarly, Harappan people managed water efficiently and effectively.

For instance, every house in Mohenjodaro had a well. There was a public well in every street, more than 700 wells were found in the city of Mohenjodaro. Every street was having underground covered drainage. There were soak pits in drainage for recharging of the underground water table. This indicates they practised water-harvesting. The left out water in the drain was carried to fields for irrigation purposes.

Harappan people also collected rainwater in ponds. 16 water reservoirs have been found at Dholavira. Some of these water reservoirs were interconnected. This indicates that they were aware of the technique of water filtration using the sedimentation process.

The ponds were filled by collecting the rainwater from nearby areas. In this way, the Harappan people conserved water and arid cities like Dholavira could flourish.

Dams were constructed on rivers for flood irrigation as well as storage purposes.
14-Nov-2018 - Question 2

In what ways can the Megalithic culture be considered a foundational phase of the history of peninsular India? (2014)

Model Answer

Megalithic cultural phase flourished in Peninsular India during 1100 BCE to 500 BCE. This cultural phase was characterised by the use of big-stone boulders around the graves. Different types of the grave have been designated such as Menhirs, Dolmen, cist burial etc. Since most of the evidence have been discovered from the graves, this phase of human life is known as Megalithic culture.

Megalithic culture as a foundational phase of the history of peninsular India:

- Megalithic culture covered almost whole of the Peninsular India ex. Jaunapani (Maharashtra), Maski (Karnataka), Nagarjunikonda (Andhra Pradesh), Adiachanallur (Tamil Nadu), Thirussur (Kerala).

- The Megalithic people lived in villages. The thickness of the debris indicates that the megalithic people stayed for about 50-100 years at one place and then migrated to other places. This village life also marks the foundation of the Sangam age to flourish in the future.

- The Megalithic people also cultivated food grains such as wheat and rice. They domesticated buffalo and donkey. Further, agriculture was yet to reach the surplus stage, again working as a foundation for settled life.

- The discovery of iron objects in graves also indicates the use of iron metallurgy, indicating their technological advancement. Similar advancements can also be seen with the presence of black and red ware pottery in the graves.

- Further, evidence of carnelian beads and lapis lazuli, copper and bronze objects indicates that their trading systems were in an advanced state. Similarly, the discovery of Roman coins and pottery suggest that the Megalithic people evolved into early historic age cultures.
16-Nov-2018 - Question 1

"Archeological evidence does not give direct access to the possible social and political dimensions of the decline of the Harappan civilization. What it does indicate very clearly is that the Harappan culture underwent a gradual process of de-urbanization"? Comment. (2018)

Model Answer

The Harappan culture can be divided into phases such as pre-Harappan, mature Harappan, and late- Harappan. The process of decline also set in, in phases. For instance, in Mohenjodaro, decline set by 2200 BCE and the settlement had come to an end by 2000 BCE. There are various theories explaining the decline of Harappan civilization.

1. The theory of Aryan Invasion: Seconded by R.E. Mortimer Wheeler, least archaeological evidence has been found for this theory. Wheeler argued that references in Rig Veda to various kinds of forts, attacks on walled cities, the epithet purandara, the evidences of 37 skeletons with wounds etc. reflect an Aryan invasion. However, there have been no evidences of any kind of military assault or conflict at any Harappan site. The 37 group of skeletons belong to different stratigraphic levels thus negating the theory.

2. According to Sir John Marshall, S.R Rao flood was responsible for the decline of Harappan civilization. Mohenjodaro was flooded seven times. Further, rise in the sea level of Arabian Sea would have flooded the coastal settlements.

3. According to M. Dimitriyev, the civilization was destroyed by a physio-chemical explosion. Ex. The massive fire at Rakhigarhi.

4. Change in the course of the rivers because of tectonic activities and earthquakes is cited as another reason the decline of the Harappan civilization. Change in the course of river ghagghar, capture of Sutlej by the Indus etc. are cited as examples.

5. Theory of gradual decline: Propounded on the basis of the researches of M. Auriol Stein, Fairservis, and A. N. Ghosh etc. This reveals that decline of Harappan civilization was a gradual phenomenon driven by ecological imbalances and
climate change. Over-exploitation through over-cultivation, over-grazing and excessive cutting of the trees for fuel and farming. This would have resulted into decreasing soil fertility, floods, and increase in soil salinity. Making estimates of population, land, food and fodder requirements on the basis of modern data, Fairservis, suggests that the civilization declined because the growing population of people and cattle could not be supported from the resources within the Harappan cultural zone. Thus archaeological evidence does not give direct access to the possible social and political dimensions of the decline of the Harappan civilization. What it does indicate very clearly is that the Harappan culture underwent a gradual process of de-urbanization as indicated by the theory of gradual decline.
Art and culture are reflected to a far greater extent than political history in the epigraphic sources. Comment. (2017)

Model Answer

Epigraphy implies the study of inscriptions. Beginning from the age of Harappan civilization a number of inscriptions have been discovered belonging to different periods of early Indian history. These inscriptions throw light on the politico-administrative, socio-cultural and religious life of the people.

Political History as reflected in Epigraphic sources:

- The inscriptions contain the names, titles and other details of rulers which help in the chronological reconstruction of history. Ex. Mauryan History would be incomplete without Ashokan inscriptions.

- Inscriptions throw light on politico-administrative institutions and practices. Ex. Ashokan inscriptions contain the designations and the responsibilities of various officers.

- Inscriptions are a valuable source for understanding the economic life in some cases taxation systems. For instance, According to the Lumbini pillar inscription, Ashoka reduced the rate of land revenue for this village from ¼ to 1/8. It was also exempt from Bhoja.

- The inscriptions also contain the details of wars and battles- ex. Aihole inscription of Ravikirti indicates the defeat of Harsha by Pulkesein II. Similarly, Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta provides a detailed description of his military achievements.

Art and Culture as reflected in Epigraphic Sources:

- The inscriptions help in understanding the language and the script of the age. For instance, the Ashokan inscriptions inform that Prakrit was the common language and Brahmi the most common script.
The objects used for writing inscriptions help in understanding the material culture of the age. Ex. Harappan people used steatite. Mauryans used stone and copper plate inscriptions.

Inscriptions also help in understanding the social and cultural life of the ancient age. Ex. Eran inscription (510A.D) provides the first written record of Sati. Many inscriptions contain details of the donations and land grants to temples, monasteries and men of education and learning.


Thus both art and culture as well as political life are reflected well in the epigraphic sources. At the same time, they must be complemented and supplemented by literary sources and other evidence to create a better picture of the early Indian Historical Tradition.
26-Nov-2018 - Question 1

Discuss the experimentations with art and architecture during Gupta-Vakatak period. (2018)

Model Answer

The time period of 3rd to 6th century AD was the period of Gupta and Vakataks. Guptas mainly ruled in northern part of India and created one of largest empire of Indian history, while Vakataks ruled from the Deccan after the decline of Satavahanas. The art of this period was largely influenced by religion.

Temple architecture: During the Guptan period that Hindu temples began to be made of stone, both temples that were rock-cut caves as well as temples built from stone blocks. The temples were usually built from brick and erected over a raised platform. The temples of these periods generally contained garbhagriha, mandapa, antarala and flat roofs containing shikhara. The most of the temples made in this period are dedicated to Lord Vishnu. Dashavatar temple of Deogarh, Vishnu temple of Tigwa, Nachna Kuthar temple and Krishna temple of Bhitargaon.

Cave architecture: The Cave art of this period was mainly influenced by Brahmanism and Buddhism. The best example of Brahmanical cave of this period is Udaigiri. The rock-cut caves of Ajanta and Bagh were also constructed during this period which depicts the Buddha and events related to his life. The caves of Ajanta built in this period was constructed by vakataks. The early caves of Ajanta were simple and devoid of any anthropogenic representation of Buddha. the later caves have the more elaborate pillars and capitals of the Gupta-Vakataka period, the more developed chaitya window type and sculptural embellishment, with the uddesika stupa in the chaitya, clearly showing the Master in human form on the side walls.

The Gupta-Vakataka period had also witnessed the construction of numerous, stupas, chaityas and viharas. The famous Damekh stupa of Sarnath was also constructed during this period.

Sculpture art: the sculpture art of Gupta-Vakatak period was also influenced by religion. The sculptures of this period show originality and picturesqueness. Mathura, Sarnath, and Pataliputra were the important center of sculpture arts.
Gods and goddesses were depicted in human form. A bronze sculpture of Buddha made in Gupta period is found from Sultanganj. The main feature of Buddha images of this period was curly hair, decorated halo and diverse use of postures.

**Paintings:** Paintings witnessed a remarkable progress during Gupta-Vakataka period. The use of colours and lines, the depiction of emotions and themes were undertaken effectively. The paintings of Ajanta caves indicates the prosperity of higher class whereas paintings of Bagh show temporal life.

The remarkable progress had been witnessed in other fields of arts also like, music, dance, drama etc. This is the reason behind calling this period as the golden age of Indian history.
26-Nov-2018 - Question 2

Trace the role of guilds and trade organisations in the development of early Indian economy. (2015)

Model Answer

Guilds or Sreni were a form of industrial and mercantile organization which played an important role in the development of the economy in ancient India. The reference of guilds can be found in Vedic literature but at the time of Buddha, it existed in every important Indian town. By the time of Mauryas, it started to perform multiple roles and responsibilities. These guilds and trade organizations were like a state within the state and its autonomy was respected by kings.

- The guilds united both craftsmen’s cooperative and individual workmen of a given trade into a single corporate body.
- The guilds issued their own coin and contributed to monetization of the economy.
- It fixed the rules of work and wages, and standards and prices of the commodities in which its members dealt.
- Guilds maintained troops for the safety of convoys, Sarthawaha was the head of mobile guilds.
- It also looked after the education of its members. In this way, guilds ensured the passage of vocational knowledge from one generation to next.
- Guilds worked as a banking institution. They received money on interest and credit was extended by guilds for various economic activities.
- Doners used to deposit their money with guilds and interest earned was dedicated to supporting the community activities like maintenance of schools and temples.

Guilds played an unparallel role in the development of the Indian economy and assisted the state economic administration. The system of self-regulation saved him from the unnecessary interference of state which further contributed to the flourishment of the economy in ancient India.
28-Nov-2018 - Question 1

Examine the relationship among economic growth, urbanization and State formation from c. 7th BCE to 3rd century BCE. (2016)

Model Answer

In the later Vedic period a trend of replacement of tribal-state with the regional state had been started around 7th century BC, these states later called Mahajanapadas. The Buddhist scripture ‘Anguttar Nikaya’ mentioned the 16 mahajanapadas. This age was recognized as the age of second urbanization. There was a relationship between economic growth, urbanization and state formation during this period.

Role of agriculture: The use of iron tools started which helped in clearing the forest at a large scale which added more land to cultivation. The use of better agriculture methodology and enhanced agricultural tools led to a surplus in agricultural produce, which is essential to support the people engaged in primary and tertiary activities.

Role of Arts and Crafts:

In this period use of iron in art and crafts had increased further as a result of which a number of new arts and crafts had emerged. Craft based on leatherworking and woolen textile, pottery goldsmithing, coppersmithing, and carpentry had progressed immensely. The availability of the agricultural surplus demand for arts and crafts products had been increased. This process led to the emergence of craft centers such as Mathura which resulted into the beginning of urbanization in north India.

Role of Trade and Commerce:

For the first time, punch-marked coins were introduced which led to the monetization of the economy. The monetization helped in the growth of the exchange network which boosted the economy. The awareness of script also facilitated the growth of trade and commerce as the account of the transaction could be maintained. The emergence of guilds also contributed to the development of the organized economy. It provided a sizeable population engaged in non-primary activities, which formed the base of urbanization.
The progress in the economic activities resulted in the emergence of new urban centers and the character of existing settlement got transformed.
28-Nov-2018 - Question 2

Buddha's teachings to a large extent could be helpful in understanding and resolving the problems of today's society. Analyse critically. (2014)

Model Answer

Buddha attained the ‘nirvana’ and got eternal knowledge. He preached his teachings to a number of people who became his followers. His teachings were oriented to solve the worldly problems faced by a human being in the then orthodox society. Although his teachings are almost 2500 years old but capable to resolve the problems of today’s society.

Buddha believed in the efficacy of the middle path i.e. neither path of extreme luxury nor extreme self ascetism. In today's world where extreme ideology is being strengthened the following of middle path could provide a way. The concept of the middle path is applied in every aspect of life, this concept could guide us in maintaining a balanced approach between ambition and outcome, modernism and tradition etc.

Buddha believed in the idea of conditioned co-production i.e. ‘Pratitya Samutpada’. According to this idea, one state of life leads to next i.e. present activity shape future. This teaching compels us to work hard for a better future and do it in a planned way.

Buddha emphasized the reason as the base of knowledge and held that no source of knowledge is infallible. This can provide us with a scientific approach in our daily life. This can check the problems like fake news, rumors which often creates a problem of law and order.

Buddha was against any form of untouchability. Although the constitution of India has abolished undoability but practice is still continued in many parts of the country. So, we can eradicate this derogatory practice by following Buddha’s teaching.

According to Mahatma Buddha materialistic desire is the root cause of every problem. This desire in excess forms becomes greed and leads to corruption. This greed has resulted in environmental degradation, the disintegration of family and society and the degeneration of human values. By following this teaching if a man posses only required to fulfill his need then society will become happier.
Buddha believed in the efficacy of knowledge and relevance of knowledge is great in today’s society. It is necessary not only to remain away from wrong deeds but also to pursue the path of righteousness.

The teachings of Buddha has great relevance in today’s contemporary world. To live a happy and meaningful life Buddha’s teachings are very helpful. The problems like war, environmental degradation, extremist, terrorism can be solved by following the teachings of Buddha.
30-Nov-2018 - Question 1

**Do you agree with the popular view that Mauryas established a unitary and highly centralized if not monolithic state system? (2018)**

**Model Answer**

Mauryan Empire was the first great empire in the history of Indian sub-continent. To rule such a vast territory a highly effective administrative system was required. Nature and character of Mauryan state system can be inferred through the information provided by Arthashastra of Kautilya, Indica of Megasthenes and inscriptions of Ashoka.

Mauryan polity was monarchical i.e. King was the fountainhead of all the authority of the state.

Mauryan polity was despotic in nature. Rulers maintained a huge council of ministers and advisors. The work of the council of ministers to advise the emperor on policymaking. They were supposed to take the customs and traditions into acts while issuing the order, but in conflicting scenario order of the king was final.

In Arthashastra it is mentioned that Mauryan administration had an extensive bureaucracy and the higher officials are called teerth, mahamatr or amatya; mantri, purohit, yuvaraj and samaharta, vyavharik

The Central administration was conducted by a highly skilled Superintendents or Adhyakshas who looked after various departments. Kautilya in the second book of his Arthasastra, Adhyakshapracchara, gives an account of the working of nearly 30 adhyakasas.

Mauryan emperors maintained a large standing army established a separate department to look after this. The department had a board of 30 members which were divided into 6 committees and their working domain had been determined.

To maintain law and order and prevent the crimes police and espionage system was developed. These spies had kept vigil on the activities of common people as well as officials and even activities of Yuvraj was observed.
In the judicial system, most of the cases were handled at the local level, a number of courts had also been established. King was the highest appellate body.

Mauryans had a highly evolved revenue and taxation system, Samahartas were appointed to look into the collection of revenue.

The three major officials of the provinces were the pradesika, the rajuka and the yukta. The pradesika was in charge of the overall administration of a district – supervising the collection of revenue and of maintaining law and order both in the rural areas and in the towns within his district. The rajuka was responsible for surveying and assessing land. The yuktas appear to have been subordinate officials whose duties were largely secretarial work and accounting. The officials were appointed by the central government. They don’t had any hereditary rights over the office and could be transferred by king at any time.

The Mauryan state system from the above discussions appears highly centralized and top heavy as there were a large number of officials at central level. This type of state system required kings of exceptional capability to manage the affairs effectively, because of this when weak rulers ascended to throne Mauryan empire collapsed
30-Nov-2018 - Question 2

Identify the following places marked on the map supplied to you and write a short note of about 30 words on each of them in the answer paper. Locational hints for each of the places marked on the map are given below: 25 marks

I. A Neolithic site.
II. A Neolithic site.
III. A Harappan site.
IV. A Megalithic site.
V. A Harappan site.
VI. A painted-Grey-ware site.
VII. An inscriptional site.
VIII. An important ancient city.
IX. An ancient port.
X. A site of ancient cave-paintings.
Model Answer

I. A Neolithic site. **(Gufkral)** It is situated in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, its literal meaning is cave of pottery. Its settlements are dated back around 2500-1500 BC. The special feature of Gufkral is pit dwelling.

II. A Neolithic site. **(Mehergarh)** It is situated near Bolan pass in Balochistan province of Pakistan. Mehergarh is one of earliest neolithic settlement of Indian sub-continent. It is the earliest site of Indian sub-continent where evidence of cultivation of wheat and barley has been found.

III. A Harappan site. **(Banawali)** Banawali is located in Hissar district of Haryana. Banwali shows the evidence of pre-Harappan as well as Harappan culture. Here lower city and citadel are constructed inside a single boundary. Barley, mustard and rapeseed have been found from Banawali.

IV. A Megalithic site. **(Adichanallur)** It is situated in the Tirunelveli district of Tamilnadu. More than 50 clay pottery and iron implements have been found from Adichanallur. At Adichanallur evidence of practice of urn burial have been found.

V. A Harappan site **(Surkotada)** It is situated in Kutch region of Gujarat. Evidence of skeletal remains of horses are found here. The antiquities obtained here includes a teracotta seal with Harappan script but without animal, beads of steatite and carnelian.

VI. A painted-Grey-ware site. **(Ahichhatra)** It is located in Bareily district of Uttar pradesh. The place was mentioned in Indian epic Mahabharat and Mahabhasya of Patanjali. Trade route of northern India in ancient times was passes through Ahichhatra. In addition to copper and iron objects copper coins of Panchala, Kushana and Achyuta have been found here.

VII. An inscriptional site. **(Girnar/Junagarh)** It is situated in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat. A Sanskrit inscription of the western Kshatrap Shaka ruler Rudradaman has been found here. An Ashokan rock edict in Brahmi script also found here. Girnar is the birthplace of 22nd Jain Teerthankar Neminath. Here Sudarshan lake was built by the governor of Chandragupta Maurya.
VIII. An important ancient city. **(Ujjain)** Ujjain is located on the banks of river Kshipra. It was the capital of Avanti mahajanpad in the sixth century BC. One of the 12 Jyotirlinga Mahakaleshwar is situated in Ujjain.

IX. An ancient port. **(Tamralipti)** It is situated in Midnapore district of West Bengal and was the most important sea-port and trade emporium in east India. It was connected to the Uttarapatha and river port of Champa.

X. A site of ancient cave-paintings. **(Sittanvasal)** It is located in the Pudukkottai district of Tamilnadu and famous for the paintings and rock-cut temples of Jainas. Few mural paintings are done here in Ajanta style. This cave also contains an early Brahmi inscription along with some other inscriptions of 7th century AD. The rock paintings belong to the period of Pallava king Mahendravarman.
10-Dec-2018 - Question 1

The period of Indian History from 3rd century BCE to 5th century CE was the epoq of innovation and interaction. How will you react? (2017) (20 Marks, 300 words)

Model Answer

The period of the 3rd century BCE to 5th century CE was the age decline of Mauryas and covers the zenith of Guptas. The period can be termed as the age of innovation and interaction on the following ground:

- Remarkable progress has been witnessed in the field of medical. Charak Samhita and Sushruta Samhita were written in this period were dealing in medicine and surgery branch. In metallurgy Mehrauli pillar and Buddha image at Sutanganj indicates excellence. The wootz steel of India was world famous started to manufacture around 1st-century CE. Medicinal property of metals was also discovered during this period. In astronomy, Aryabhatta proposed the heliocentric view of the universe. He also calculated the radius of the earth and the value of pie.

- The art of making sculpture flourished in this period. Three distinct styles of sculpture were evolved viz. Gandhara style, Mathura style, and Amravati. Foreign influence can be seen mostly in the Gandhara style. The depiction of deities in image form started in this period. In Gupta age, all the three schools flourished and a new Sarnath school of sculpture emerged.

- Massive buildings were started to build for royal and religious purposes. Stupa, chaitya, and Viharas were built in large number and temple structures also started to be constructed. The ornamentation of the wall with images and motifs started in this period.

- The foreign contact in this period brought various changes in Indian society. In North-west Parthians, Pahalavas, Shak, and Kushan ruled for a long time. Initially, they were kept out of the Varna system but later ‘Vratyastoma’ sacrifice developed to facilitate entry of foreigner into Brahmanical order.

- The long-distance trade has been started and now people become familiar with the different part of the country as well as foreign people. The ports of south India was Muziris and Arikamedu actively participated in Indo-Roman trade.

- Brahmanism distinctly divided into Vaishnavism and Shaivism. Bhakti form of worship also emerged during this period.

Thus, the period between 3rd century BCE and 5th century CE can be termed as the period of innovation and interaction; although some of the social evils like untouchability, veil system, devadasi system, the custom of Sati have also emerged in this period.
10-Dec-2018 - Question 2

"Doubtless it was not a free state; it was any rate a state." (K.A. N Sastri). Reflect upon the nature of local self-government institutions in the Chola country. (2018) (10 Marks, 150 words)

Model Answer

Chola empire was one of the most extensive and powerful empires of south India. Along with other features, its one of most remarkable achievement was in the field of local self-government. There were three types of local bodies known in the Chola period viz. Ur, Sabha or Mahasabha and Nagaram. But, we have more information about the Mahasabha through Uttaramerur inscription. The nature of the Chola local self-government can be enlisted as:

- The affairs of the village were managed by an executive committee. Its membership was not hereditary but was chosen either by drawing lots or by rotation.
- There was an eligibility criterion for its membership which includes wealth as well as education.
- The members of the executive committee have to retire after three years which shows that life-long membership was not awarded and was more democratic in selecting its members.
- These institutions had developed the committee systems to execute a particular work e.g. committee on maintenance of law and order, the committee on justice and committee on tank etc.
- The Mahasabha could distribute new lands and exercise control over them. It could also raise the loan for the village and levy taxes.

It can’t be said that these institutions were functioned as an autonomous body but, at the same time, it cannot be denied that there would be little interference of the state in the village affairs. It had a democratic approach towards the membership of the body. It also shows the characteristics of delegated functioning. To a certain extent, it had financial autonomy also. So. we can say that the local-self government bodies of Chola country acted itself as a state.
Kailasa temple built at Ellora marks the culmination of rock-cut architecture in India. Elucidate. (2015) (15 Marks, 250 words)

Model Answer

Kailasa temple at Ellora is one of the largest rock-cut temples of Hindus dated back to 8th century AD. Its construction is generally attributed to the eighth-century Rashtrakuta king Krishna I. Kailasa temple exhibits a marvelous piece of art and marks the culmination of rock-cut architecture in India.

- Kailasa temple is a monolithic monument carved on a large rock. The Kailasanatha temple exhibits typical Dravidian features. A gateway, an enclosure for Nandi, and a mandapam line up in front of the sanctum which is crowned with a vimana, composed of successively receding storeys, decorated with miniature buildings.
- The mandapa outside the sanctum is a large hall with carved pillars. On either side of the Nandi Mandapam are two 50 feet high obelisk-like pillars decorated with frieze carvings.
- Along the bottom of the cliff face, a narrow gallery is running which forms the pradaksina path. Temple has a very large compound and vimana of the temple attains a height of 32 m from the ground.
- The temple has a low gopuram, the most of the deities on the left side of the entrance are Shaivite and on the right of the entrance are mostly Vaishnavite deities.
- The architectural evidence suggests that the entire temple was planned at the beginning of construction. The main shrine is very similar to the Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal, which itself is a replica of the Kailasa temple at Kanchi. It shows the Pallava-Chalukya influence over the temple.
- The towers of temples resemble the Ratha temples of Mahabalipuram. The shikhara displays a profusion of sculpted images.
- The Kailasa Temple is notable for its vertical excavation carvers started at the top of the original rock and excavated downward.

The Kailasa temple of Ellora is unique and one most outstanding piece of the monument. It contains the features of earlier rock-cut architecture schools and
also contains various unique features. Such a masterpiece in rock-cut architecture is very rare and can be treated as the culmination of rock-cut architecture in India.
12-Dec-2018 - Question 2

Evaluate the 'Kitab-al-Hind' of Alberuni as a source of history of India(2014) (15 Marks, 250 words)

Model Answer

Alberuni was the courtier of the Sultan Mahmud of the Ghazani. Alberuni was one of the greatest scholars of medieval Islamic era and well versed in physics, mathematics, natural sciences, and philosophy. He was also a distinguished historian and chronologists. He wrote an account Kitab-al-Hind which deals with the contemporary history of India. It provides an outlook on the following subjects.

**Society:** He provided detailed information about the caste system in India and tried to explain it with the parallels in other societies. Alberuni’s description of the caste system was deeply influenced by his study of normative Sanskrit texts which laid down the rules governing the system from the point of view of the Brahmanas. He also discussed about the prevailing condition of the Varna system in the society. He mentioned the subordinate condition of women in society.

**Economy:** According to Alberuni, the main occupation of people was agriculture. The occupation of every varna was defined and choosing an occupation outside it was a punishable offense.

**Science and technology:** Among the 'Hindus' sciences Al-Beruni devotes special attention to astronomy partly because it was 'the most famous among them' and partly because of his own interest in the subject. He also writes about some other 'Hindus' sciences, such as alchemy, metrology, medicine. He also notes the religious beliefs of peoples of India. He also mentions that Indian astronomers knew about the real cause behind solar and lunar eclipses and that their calculations are scientific.

**Dietary pattern and standard of living:** he mentioned that people were generally vegetarian. The killing of animals was prohibited but some animals were killed for food. Common people were restricted to the use of intoxicants but Shudras were allowed.
Marriage and other social customs: Usually marriages were held in small age and fixed by parents. Dowry system was not in trend, divorce was also not in practice. Polygamy was allowed but usually, monogamy was practiced. Widow-remarriage was not all allowed. Sati system was in practice but not a common phenomenon. Anuloma marriage was permitted but pratiloma marriage was restricted.

Writing system and alphabet: According to Alberuni Hindus wrote on either palm leaf or bhojapatra. He wrote that son of Parashar, Vyas had developed the alphabet for Hindus which contained fifty letters. He mentioned the various scripts being used in India.

Geography: Al-Beruni while giving an account of the physical geography of the country seems to have an eye for everything ranging from the shape, size, and make of rock and stones to the anthropological features and costumes of the people.

Limitations of the work of Alberuni:

- The information provided by him was not empirical and heard from others and used them in the book without verification.
- He also used theoretical information from sources and did not try to verify their ground realities.
- Anti-Hindu attitude can be seen in his writings.
- Gods and goddesses were dumped as prophets and angels.
- Sources were Brahmanical and Brahmanical interpretation was not followed on the ground.
- His attitude towards India was quite critical, Indian contact with the world was not completely absent as he himself wrote various trade routes connecting India.
- He didn’t write about his master's intention behind invading India.

We can say that Kitab-al-Hind of Alberuni is an important historical source for medieval Indian History but, it has some limitations also and care must be taken while using it as a source.
14-Dec-2018 - Question 1

How did the temples of South India, as financial institutions, have deep impact on the social institutions of early medieval period? Critically examine. (2016) (15 Marks. 250 word)

Model Answer

Temples of south India has an important place in cultural and religious life. In the early medieval period, almost all ruling dynasties build the temples. The temple has had an enduring ideological importance in Indian history, which makes it the central focus of historical processes like religions, social, economic and political. It impact on the social institutions of the early medieval period can be listed below.

- Temple came to be the legitimating institution of the ruling elite, the king in particular, who acquired legitimacy and tried to convey the authority through the temple and its symbolism.
- As a superordinate institution, temple acted as an integrating force for organizing society, economy and polity.
- As belief in god strengthened, temple became pivotal because they served as a sacred meeting place for the community to congregate and revitalize their spiritual energies.
- Tax-free lands were granted to upkeep the temple which were maintained mainly by brahmin priests, which strengthened the position of brahmins.
- The temple based Bhakti was capable of developing into a transcendental norm and hence, acquired a centrality that provided a focus for achieving uniformity among different religions and sects, given their differences.
- The temple, as the major channel of socio-political communication, conveyed the royal orders through inscriptions. Equally important was the fact that it became the venue of the enactment of plays that narrated the king’s achievements both in sacred and the political spheres.
- Temples were designed to discharge the secular functions: they were fortresses, land holders, employers, treasuries, court houses, parks, fairs, exhibition sheds, the halls of learning and of amusement, the consumer of goods and services, as banks, schools, museums, hospitals and theatres.
• Music and dancing, and theatrical presentation of popular tales and legends, formed part of the ordinary routine works of the temple and received special attention on festive occasions. And natakasalas were specially constructed for this purpose.

• The granaries of the temple helped to the hungry, and these unable to earn their livelihood due to disease and deformity.

• There are several instances of even hospitals and dispensaries being run by the temple. The temple played the role of a court of law for settling disputes. The temple also gave shelter to the people during wars.

Temples of South India in early medieval period played multiple roles for the society which includes religious as well as secular functions. Temples were centre of religion, education, culture and other works. It helped in integrating the people of the region.
14-Dec-2018 - Question 2

Review critically the evolution of different schools of art in the Indian subcontinent between the second century BCE and the third century CE, and evaluate the socio-religious factors responsible for it. (2014) (20 Marks, 300 words)

Model Answer

From the second century BCE and the third century CE three distinct school of sculpture art evolved in India. There were various religious, political and social factors behind their development.

Gandhara:
Flourished in present Afghanistan and northern Pakistan (region between Kabul and Indus Valley) under Kushana rulers.

Sculptures of Gandhara School shows the Greek and Roman Influence. The theme of Gandhara Art were predominantly Buddhist but a number of artifacts are derived from Roman or Hellenistic origin.

Representative feature of Gandhara art was the Buddha seated in the position of a yogi having large ears, the third eye on the forehead and a protuberance over his head.

Buddha always is shown in a monk garment and having short hair, whereas Bodhisattvas and Buddhist saints were shown in bare upper body, scarves, jewel and long hairs.

Mathura:
Sculptures of Mathura school belongs to Buddhism, Jainism, and Brahmanism, which illustrate the cultural fusion of the region, but artifacts of Buddhist origin are found in large number.

The material used here was white spotted red sandstone. There is boldness in carving the large images, the volume of the images is projected out of the picture plane, and the faces are round and smiling. The garments of the body are clearly visible and they cover the left shoulder.
Mathura sculptures also incorporated many Hellenistic influences like curly hair, folded garments.

Mathura art gave more attention to inner beauty and facial emotion rather than bodily gesture.

Various Brahmanical deities got their forms crystallized at Mathura for the first time.

Apart from the religious theme sculpture of secular nature were also made e.g. headless figure of Kanishka, the image of Vema Kadphesis etc.

**Amravati:**
Flourished in the region between lower Krishna and Godavari valley, patronized early by Satvahanas and later by Ikshvanku rulers.

The themes of sculptures revolve around Buddha and his life, main feature of this school is the depiction of enlightened Buddha.

The images of Buddha are mainly in ‘sthanak’ (standing position) or ‘asana’ (sitting position) and in many images Buddha’s hands are in abhayamudra. Nagarjunakonda along with Amravati were the important seats of this art.

**Factors responsible for the evolution of sculpture art:**

- The emergence of the new kingdoms and empires led to the development of new artists guilds near the urban centers where sculpture art flourished.
- The foreign contact in north-west India brought various features to sculpture art which contributed to the development of sculpture art.
- In this period agricultural produce was sufficient to feed the people engaged in secondary works like sculpture.
- The idol making of Buddha, Jaina Tirthankaras and Hindu god-goddesses provided a wide range of experimentation and contributed to the development of art.
24-Dec-2018 - Question 1

Analyse the ordinances mentioned by Barani which Alauddin Khalji promulgated for market control. (2014) (10 Marks, 150 words)

Model Answer

Zia-Ud-Din Barani in his books Fatwa-i-Zahandari and Tarikh-i-Firozshahi mentioned that there were seven ordinances had been issued by Allaudin Khailji to implement market reforms in and around the Delhi.

- The first ordinance talks about the fixation of the price of grains, e.g. the price of wheat was fixed at 7.5 jittals per mann whereas the price of barley was fixed at 5 jittals per mann. The price of a commodity could not be increased under any circumstances.
- The second ordinance talks about the appointment of Shahna-i-Mandi for the regulation of the market.
- In third of his ordinance, he declared that revenue of the entire khalisa land would be collected in the form of grain and collected grains would be stored in the government godowns.
- The fourth ordinance ordered a strict vigilance roving traders.
- The fifth ordinance had restrained the profiteering, and guilty to be awarded severe punishment.
- The sixth ordinance was about to ensure that traders of the doab region would sell their grains at a fixed price.
- The seventh ordinance had made it compulsory for Shahna, Barid Munaheyyan, and Munhis to send a daily report to Sultan.

Alauddin Khilji has introduced market reforms to maintain a large standing army at low cost for his military expeditions. He ensured the success of his experiments through strict regulatory measures. The experiments of market control were functioned till his life as these rules were against the natural rules of economics.
24-Dec-2018 - Question 2

Evaluate the theory of kingship of the Sultanate, discuss the deviations seen in the reigns of different Sultans. (2014) 920 Marks, 300 words)

Model Answer

From the beginning of the 13th century to the early part of the 16th century Delhi was ruled by the Sultans and the period is known as Sultanate period. The theory of Kinship of the Sultanate is following:

Sultan was the fountainhead of the power, he was the supreme army commander, the highest court of appeal and supreme law-making authority.

The rules of the sultanate were based on the Muslim rules and Sultanate was essentially a Muslim state.

The ruler treated himself as a representative of the Kalipha and rulers took recognition from the Kalipha after the coronation.

There were no laws present to govern the succession of Sultans, war of succession was a common phenomenon.

The Power of Sultan had been shared by the nobility which often pressurized Sultans in decision making.

The appointment of the higher official was highly influenced by the kinship, but merit also had an important place.

Rulers maintained glory and grandeur to show his supreme position and a huge amount was spent to maintain the pomp of the royal court.

Changes introduced by the Balban:

Balban declared himself the Zil-i-Illahi i.e. shadow of god on the earth. He introduced ‘sijda’ and ‘paibos’ system to increase the prestige of the crown.
Balban reserved the post of higher authority to only high born people, and did not want to share power even with his nearest relatives. He abolished the group of forty Turk nobles ‘Turqan-i-Chihalghani’

He used this ‘blood and iron’ with great vengeance against his rivals, rebels, robbers, thieves and the invaders. By following this policy, he wanted to create terror in the minds of the people that whosoever dared to challenge the authority of the Sultan.

Changes introduced by Allauddin Khilji:

Khilji restricted the interference of Ulemas in political affairs of the government, he also had not taken recognition from the Khalifa, i.e. he separated religion from the politics.

Allauddin Khilji had believed in strict maintenance of law and order for the welfare of the people.

Changes introduced by other rulers:

Muhammad Bin Tughalaq has introduced the meritocracy in the appointment by conducting the examinations. He also tried to increase the revenue of the state by focussing on increasing production.

Firoz Shah Tughalaq gave Sultanate a welfare approach, i.e. he took various initiatives like free hospitals, the establishment of educational institutions providing assistance to poor people.
26-Dec-2018 - Question 1

Evaluate the contribution of Vaishnava saints to the growth of medieval Bhakti literature. (2014) (10 Marks, 150 words)

Model Answer

The word Bhakti is referred to devotion to almighty. In the medieval period, there were two main branches of bhakti viz. Sagun and Nirgun. In Sagun form of bhakti Shaivism, Vaishnavism, and Shaktism were distinct sect but Vaishnavism was most popular. The Vaishnavite saints had a major contribution to the growth of medieval bhakti literature.

Medieval Vaishnava saints used the vernacular language to compose their literature and preach their ideologies which could be easily understood by the common people.

Tulsidas choose to write in Awadhi and he wrote religious scriptures like Ramcharitmanas, Vinay Patrika, Gitawali, Hanuman Chalisa etc, which made Ramayan and other scriptures made accessible to the common man.

Surdas, a blind poet, had composed songs in praise of Lord Krishna. Of his total compilation of close to 100000 poems, only around 8000 have survived. His compositions were made in Braj Basha, a dialect of Hindi, which eventually led to its attainment of a literary language status.

Mirabai composed poems in the praise of Lord Krishna. Her bhajans have high literary value and symbolize passion, eroticism, and complete surrender to her master Lord Krishna.

Jayadev wrote Geet Govinda having theme love of Lord Krishna and Radha. It was the most prominent Sanskrit lyrical work of the bhakti period.

Chaitanya and Chandidasa were among the famous Vaishnava poets of Bengal. They produced Vaishnava literature, mainly poetry, which represents a mix of eroticism and spiritual fervor.
Shankaradeva and Madhavadeva were Assamese poets ‘Kirtanaghosha’ was composed by them is an anthology of devotional songs.

The works of Narasimha Mehta, Bhalana, and Akho led to the growth of Gujarati literature under the influence of Vaishnava Bhakti.

In Marathi works of Tukaram, Gyaneshwar, and Namdev are considered as sacred devotional literature and are still popular.

The literature of Vaishnava Bhakti simplified the relationship between god and devotee. It discarded the rites and rituals earlier proposed by the Sanskrit literature. It increases the spirituality among masses and contributed to the development of vernacular languages.
26-Dec-2018 - Question 2

Critically analyse the agricultural economy from 750 to 1200 CE. (2014) (10 Marks, 150 words)

Model Answer

The economy of the early medieval period was based on agriculture. Indian agriculture witnessed a lot of improvement during this period.

- Due to the development of feudalism and land-grant system, the pressure over agriculture had been increased. Efforts had been taken to bring more land under cultivation.
- Large landlords cultivated their land through sharecroppers and landless laborers.
- King was the owner of all the land, a farmer had to pay land revenue in lieu of cultivation.
- Bhumia (having hereditary rights over land) and Girasiya (having cultivation right only).
- Peasants were also divided into two categories viz. Kutumbi (independent farmer) and sirin (sharecropper).
- Akshapatalik and Kayastha were important officers associated with land records.
- The land was measured and it was divided into different categories on the basis of produce.
- It was regarded as the duty of the state to provide proper means of irrigation. Besides, it was regarded a pious duty as well and so rich people also constructed wells, ponds, etc. for public welfare. Rajatarangini talks about the construction of a dam over river Jhelum and canals associated with it. Rahat was used for irrigation in northern India.
- The major crops grown in this period were rice, wheat, barley, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane, and various fruits and vegetables.
- Rent-free land often granted to Brahmanas and religious institutions.
- Peasants have to do free labour and they have to give other taxes besides land revenue.
- Animal husbandry was also a source of livelihood and mixed agriculture was in practice.

The agriculture in the early medieval period had formed the base of the economy and supported the secondary and tertiary activities. The condition of peasants was miserable but had enough to eat and clothe well. Political instability and feudal war had also affected the condition of agriculture.
28-Dec-2018 - Question 1

Discuss the advancement made in Textile Technology under the Delhi Sultans. (2018) (10 Marks, 150 words)

Model Answer

During the Sultanate period India witnessed technological development in various aspects of life mainly due to cultural infusion. The major advancements made in textile technology during the Sultanate period are the following:

Though India had an ancient history of wild and domesticated silks, the practice of sericulture was started during the time of Bengal Sultanate and within two centuries Bengal became one of the great silk exporting regions of the world.

The spinning wheel was a Chinese invention but introduced in India through Central Asia and Iran in the mid-fourteenth century.

Treadle loom was also introduced in the same period. Spinning wheel along with the treadle loom revolutionized the textile production in India.

The cloth-printing, through ancient clay blocks, was in practice but its first textual reference found in 14th century when words chhipa (cloth printer) and chhapa (to stamp) which firmly attests the presence of block printing.

The art of textile printing become more widespread and by 16th century ‘chintz’ (chhint) has become a major variety of Indian textile.

The cloth was continued to be used as writing material during the Sultanate period even after the introduction of paper in India.

The technological advancements introduced in the textile during the Sultanate period increased the textile production significantly and India become the leading producer and exporter of cotton and silk textiles.
Discuss in brief the land-revenue system and judicial administration of the Delhi Sultanate. (2015) (20 Marks, 300 words)

Model Answer

Delhi Sultanate was established in the early thirteenth century when Qutubuddin Aibak laid the foundation of Ilbari Turq Dynasty (Slave dynasty). The new systems were developed in every field of statecraft which marks the diffusion of Indian and Muslim civilization.

Land-revenue system:

The land-revenue system of the Sultans was based on the Hanafi school of Muslim law.

The entire territory was divided into Iqtas and it was the duty of Iqtadar to collect the revenue and send it to the royal treasury after deducting his expense. Khalisa land was under direct control of the crown whose revenue was used for the expense of royal court.

Initially, assessment of revenue was done by the guess or computation. Allauddin Khilji had devised the scheme of Jarib and strived hard to remove the defects of the then existing system of assessment.

The land assessment was called Kharaj. It was mainly of two types, they were Kharaji-Wizijah and kharaji-I-Muqasimah. Allauddin had increased it up to 50 percent.

Allauddin exercised strict control over the officers engaged in revenue collection and regularly checked the account.

The payment of tax could be given in both cash and kind.
Muhammad Bin Tughalaq had established a separate department for agriculture ‘Diwan-i-Amir-Kohi’ which took efforts to bring more land under cultivation so that more revenue could be generated.

Firuz Shah Tughalaq had taken effort for irrigation and constructed the various canal. He collected the one-tenth of the produce as irrigation tax.

Judicial System:

Emperor was the highest judicial authority of the state. He was the highest appellate authority of the state.

Qazi-ul-Quzat was the highest judicial officer in the state after the Sultan. He had both original and appellate jurisdiction. Mostly, the offices of Sadr-us-sudur and Qazi-ul-quzat were combined in one person.

Qazis and Sadars were appointed in the cities to look after the civil as well as criminal cases.

The Chaudhry, the Patwari, the Khut, the Muqaddam and the Chaukidar were the hereditary officers of the village who dispensed justice at the local level.

The legal system was based on Islamic law i.e. on Quran and Hadith but rulers like Alllauddin and Muhammad Bin Tughalaq also considered rationality in judgment and kept religious elements away from the political affairs.

The judicial system was not organized well and often trial was conducted without proper investigation. The nature of the law was harsh punishments like mutilation of organ, capital punishment was very frequent.
07-Jan-2019 - Question 1

Mention the salient features of the polity of Vijaynagara Empire under Krishnadevaraya. (2015) (10 Marks, 150 words)

Model Answer

Krishnadeva Raya was the greatest ruler of Vijayanagar empire and belong to Tuluva dynasty. He ruled Vijayanagara from 1509 AD to 1529 AD and the state witnessed remarkable development in every aspect of the life. The polity of the Vijayanagara empire under Krishnadeva Raya can be described as following:

King was the head of state and all the power and authority flows through him. King’s position semi-divine in nature. Krishnadeva himself wrote that it is the duty of King to protect the good and punish the wicked.

To advise the king there was a council of ministers which consisted of the great nobles of the kingdom. They were appointed by the king and remain in the office until the pleasure of the king.

King was also the head of military and judiciary, he was the highest court of appeal and often lead the military campaigns.

The Kingdom was divided into mandalam (province) below which nadu (district), sthala (sub-district) and grama. The governors of provinces were either royal princes or nobles. The governors enjoyed larger degree of autonomy, they held their own court, appointed officials, maintained the army and issued coins of small denomination.

In the centrally controlled area, the king granted amaram or territory with a fixed revenue to military chiefs. These chiefs were called Nayaks and maintained a fixed number of soldiers.

The village was the smallest unit of administration which was apparently self-dependent. There was gram panchayat in every village which manages the village affairs with the help of village level officials.
How was the Iqta system of the Sultans different from the Jagir system under the Mughals? (2014) (15 Marks, 250 words)

Model Answer

Iqta System was introduced in India by Turk Sultants. This system plays an important role in the rise and fall of the Sultanate. Iqta system appears similar to jagir system of the Mughals but there was a number of difference among them.

Iqta was a bureaucratic system, the system had an military and economic dimension as well but jagir system was essentially an economic system. Mansabdars of Mughal empires were often awarded jagirs in lieu of their salary but all jagirdars were not mansabdars.

Iqtas were allotted to higher Muslim nobles only and Turk and persian nobles were preffered whereas Jagir system was more secular and inclusive in character. Hindus and Indian Muslims also got jagirs.

Number of Iqtas were also limited and territorial extent was larger but in jagir system size of territory could be vary from few square kilimeters to few thousand square kilometers.

Both Iqtas and jagirs were tranferable and were not of hereditary kind. These were governed by law of eascheats i.e. entire earning becomes the property of state after the death of holder. Feroz Shah Tughlaq had given hereditary rights to Iqtadars.

Jagirdari system was closely associated with mansabdari system and size of jagir assigned to a mansabdar depends upon the rank of mansabdar.

The size of Iqtas and jagirs were not fixed, emperor could increase or decrease as and when he wanted. Allauddin kiliji had abolished the iqtas of doab and declared them as khalisa land.
Under Lodhis iqtdars were allowed to retain the revenue but in jagir system jagirdars were always asked to submit the land revenue collected by them to central government.

Though there was a number of difference among iqtas and jagirs both were the steel frame of respective empires. The empire expanded and functioned well till these systems functioned well and their non-functioning was responsible for the collapse of their respective empires.
09-Jan-2019 - Question 1

“In medieval Indian history Akbar was unique for his religio-political ideas and policies.” Analyse this statement. (10 Marks, 150 words)

Model Answer

Akbar was born and brought up in a very liberal environment. His father was a Sunni and his mother was a Shiya and Akbar born in the house of a Hindu noble. He inherited liberal religious sacraments which reflected in his policies later.

- In 1563 Akbar abolished the pilgrimage tax which was collected from Hindus. In 1564 He abolished jizya tax collected from non-Muslims.
- He deeply interested in knowing the truth of all religion and constructed ibadatkhana at Fatehpur Sikri to conduct the debates among different religious groups. He realized that all religions are good and started the celebrations of festivals of other religions also.
- He started a new faith called ‘Din-i-Ilahi’ by incorporating the essence of all the religions.
- In the administrative and military appointments, religion was not a factor as Akbar preferred merit over religion.
- His religio-political policies were guided by the principle ‘Sulh-i-kul’ which aimed to welfare of every citizen irrespective of their religion or financial status.
- Akbar also abolished the Islamic theory of crown and established divine theory of crown which makes emperor not only a ruler but also gives responsibility for the upkeep of the people.

Akbar’s religio-political ideas and policies were the results of tolerance shown by Akbar. His policies were responsible for creating a harmonious society and making him a great ruler.
09-Jan-2019 - Question 2

Do you think that Akbar’s Rajput Policy was a conscious attempt to incorporate the Indian ruling elite with the Mughal Imperial System? (2017) (15 Marks, 250 words)

Model Answer

Rajputs were Indian ruling elites and known for chivalry and their commitment and truthfulness. The essential features of Akbar’s Rajput policy can be listed below.

- Akbar’s Rajput policy was pragmatic in character because he knows that friendship and loyal support could help Mughal empire in many ways.
- The Rajput policy of Akbar was based on carrot and stick. He used coercion as well as the inducement. Those Rajputs who accepted the Mughal sovereignty were awarded higher mansab ranks.
- Akbar’s Rajput policy was secular in nature, religious content was absent. Akbar adopted the liberal and flexible attitude towards Rajput.
- His Rajput policy was imperialistic in outlook because it was essentially guided by the political, military and economic interest of Mughal empire.

Functioning of Rajput Policy:

- Akbar established matrimonial alliances with rajputs. In 1562, Akbar married the daughter of Raja Bhar Mal of Amber. He also married two other princesses, one of Jodhpur and other of Jaisalmer.
- Akbar given high mansab to rajput nobles. Mansingh was his most trusted and ablest general. They got equal treatment with muslim leaders.
- Akbar granted full religious independence to the Rajput’s in respect of their religion. They could build temples, worship in them and celebrate their festivals.
- Akbar never interfered in internal matters of Rajput Kingdoms.
- He maintained a close personal relation with rajputs, when son-in law of Rai singh of Bikaner died, Akbar himself went there to console the family and share their grief.
Akbar launched fierce military campaigns against the rajput rulers who refused to surrender.

We can say that Akbar was well aware that to rule in India for a longer time the support of Indian nobility was much required and Rajputs suited them best because of their valour and character. The Rajput policy of Akbar was a conscious attempt to incorporate them in Mughal imperial system.
"Tantrism, if not in practice, at least on conquest level challenged patriarchy."
Examine tantrism specially keeping in mind the above context. (2015) (15 Marks, 250 words)

Model Answer

Tantrism was a religious sect which worshipped feminine divinities. It is also known as Shaktism and ‘left hand’. The tantric sect was mostly practiced in eastern India especially Bengal and Buddhism was also influenced by it which lead to the development of a new Buddhist school ‘Vajrayana’. This sect challenged the existing patriarchy of society in the following way:

- Tantrism believed that it is easier to make happy goddesses due to their motherly nature and their worship increased respect for women in society.
- The followers of Tantrism did not believe in the usual rituals they undergone long rites of initiation and practiced other ceremonies of greater efficiency.
- The Tantric rites involved the breaking of the all the usual taboos of Hinduism. The tantric rites were also performed in the funeral grounds.
- The members of the sect may have come from the different section of society but there was no discrimination among the members within the sect.
- Tantriks believed in Panch-makars (five Ms) viz. Madya (alcohol), Mansa (meat), Matsya (fish), Mudra (hand gesture), Maithuna (sexual intercourse). For maithuna even incest was allowed.

Tantricism tried to challenge the dominance of male in society. They worshipped goddesses and demigoddesses in place of male deities. But, it was limited to certain regions and even this sect was also dominated by male members.
11-Jan-2019 - Question 2

“Sufis and medieval mystic saints failed to modify either the religious ideas and practices or the outward structure of Islamic/Hindu societies to any appreciable extent.” Comment for/against. (2015) (20 Marks, 300 words)

Model Answer

Sufism and Bhakti was the most essential feature of the medieval Indian society which tried to mend the differences between Hindu and Muslim community and to create a harmonious society. They contribution in modifying the religious ideas and practices or outward structure of society is debatable.

Arguments in favour:

Sufism and Bhakti movement was successful in getting rid of the orthodox nature of the respective religion. The Bhakti saints who were engaged in breaking down the barriers within Hinduism, the Sufis too infused a new liberal outlook within Islam.

Sufism and Bhakti movements emphasized that God is one and people worship him in the different form. This idea was helpful in spreading universal love and brotherhood.

Bhakti saints wrote in vernacular languages which could be easily understood by common people. They rewrote the religious scriptures in local languages like Ramayana was rewritten as Ramcharitmanas by Tulsidas in Awadhi language, which made religious scriptures accessible to the lower section of people.

These movements discarded the need of rituals and priestly classes for the worship of God. It was emphasized that there is direct contact between God and worshipper. The emergence of Nirguna sect also discarded the need of physical depiction of god.

Arguments in against:

Hindu and Muslim societies continued their discriminatory practices like caste system and class system. Higher class people still enjoyed several privileges.
These movements were functioned locally and there was little or no interaction among these religious leaders. Lack of integration was the major region that it failed to leave a large impact.

There was no royal patronage for these movements which could have assist it in propagation. The upper class of the society was still orthodox and opposed the changes in the outer structure of the religion.

The Sufi saints and Bhakti saints did not form institutional structures. In the absence of organization, the lineage of saints could not continue for a long.

The Sufi and Bhakti saints failed to offer a proper alternative to the social customs that they attacked. Thus, the absence of an alternative to the social customs left the status of the traditions unaffected.

The Sufi and Bhakti movement bring a respite for the people suffering from the intense form of religion. It harmonized the society and brought the Hindu and Muslims nearer but failed to leave a long-lasting impact due to inherent weaknesses of the movement.
21-Jan-2019 - Question 1

"Mughal paintings reflect social harmony in contemporary society." Discuss. (2017) (15 marks, 250 words)

Model Answer

Mughal painting is a style of Indian painting flourished in India during the Mughal rule of medieval India. Humayun brought two painters from the Persia Abdus Samad and Mir Sayid Ali. The amalgamation of Indian painting style with Persian style led to the development of a new style.

Mughal painting was essentially a type of miniature painting.

Akbar established a separate department for painting and build tasveer khana and artists were hired on salary where they develop their own style. He invited all those artists to tasveer khana who had worked with Indian rulers which brought Indian influence in the painting.

The major feature of painting during Akbar’s period was the use of three-dimensional figure and the use of foreshortening. The use of calligraphy in paintings was encouraged. The focus was given on the representation of the court life.

In the time of Jehangir theme of the paintings were more focussed on flora and fauna. Portrait painting was introduced during his reign.

The painters recruited for the royal paintings were Muslims as well as Hindus, especially from lower castes. Daswant and Basawan during Akbar’s time and Masoor during Jahangir’s time were famous painters.

The themes of paintings were religious as well as secular. Painters illustrated the famous Hindu texts like Mahabharata, Panchatantra, Hitopadesha etc.

During Akbar’s time, European painting was introduced by Portuguese priests and under their influence, the principles of foreshortening were introduced.
We can say that a sharp observation reveals that Mughal painting may have Persian origin but it accommodated the Indian styles and European styles. The social base of painters was large which indicates the merit system. The themes of paintings were also not limited to the ruling religion and we can say that Mughal painting indicates the social harmony prevailing in the society.
21-Jan-2019 - Question 2

How will you view the Maratha policy of expansion? Delineate. (2017) (20 Marks, 300 words)

Model Answer

Marathas are a group of warrior castes residing in the present Maharashtra state of India. Initially, Marathas were scattered and a number of Maratha chiefs were serving either Deccani Sultans or Mughals. In the 17th century, Marathas were organized under the leadership of Chhatrapati Shivaji and carved out the first Maratha empire which was further expanded under the Peshwas. The Maratha policy of expansion is divided into three phases viz. i) 1680 (after Shivaji’s death) - 1719 ii) 1720-1741 (Peshwa Bajirao’s reign) iii) 1741-1761 (3rd battle of Panipat)

The Maratha expansion was not based on socio-religious reforms but it sees itself in Shivaji’s policy of Swarajya and in the policy of Hindu Pad Padshahi.

In the first phase of Maratha expansion, Maratha chief took individual effort without any central leadership and tried to occupy Mughal territories. These Maratha sardars came from very humble families, some of them without any proper education and they are not concerned with the socio-religious reforms or with the peasants, unless it touches their own interest.

Bajirao became Peshwa in 1719 and adopted a distinct policy of expansion. He opined that Mughal empire is a old tree and we should strike over its trunk and the whole tree will fall down. Bajirao had a distinct policy for southern kingdoms also. he has stated that the Maratha policy should be to plunder the rich areas of the north to get the financial strength and ultimately the Marathas will plant their flag on the bank of the Indus.

Bajirao was a very practical person and he realized that it is not possible to plant a Hindu in the throne of Delhi. Bajirao wanted to use the Mughal emperor to
increase his own demands and increase his own prestige. It is to this policy that Bajirao adhered to.

In 1741 after the death of Bajirao, Nana Sahib becomes Peshwa. He was far more practical in diplomacy but he did not know much of the situation in North India. He was a very poor general and the problem for him was that he wanted not to fight in Northern India because that would involve money. In 1761 the third battle of Panipat was fought between Marthas and the forces of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The defeat of the Maratha army practically ended their expansion policy.

Nature of Maratha expansion policy:

Marthas were interested in only collecting Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the region and often did not exercise direct control.

The expansion policy was not formulated by a central body rather it was done mainly by feudal chiefs. The Maratha King was only nominal head and power was exercised by Peshwa.

No institutional set up was established in the captured region and even masses were plundered heavily, that's why they never won the support of people.

Establishment of Swarjya and Hindu Pad Padshahi were guiding principles of Maratha expansion policy but a practical policy of expansion was followed.

It can be said that Maratha expansion policy had followed the principles of the great Shivaji and captured a large territory but failed to establish a lasting empire due to the inherent faults.
23-Jan-2019 - Question 1

Analyse the Mughal monetary system and examine their policy of minting of coins. (2014) (20 marks, 300 words)

Model Answer

Mughal empire was strengthened not only by a huge territory and strong army but also due to prosperous economic conditions which were based upon a strong monetary system.

The Mughal rulers held the right to issue coins. In fact, Khutba along with Sikka (right to issue coins) were considered as the most unmistakable insignia of the sovereignty.

In the standard Mughal Currency system, the three basic coins were the Muhr of gold, the rupee of silver and the dam of copper.

The mints of the Mughal Empire were open to all. Anyone could get his nonofficial coins or bullion converted into the standard coins by paying the prescribed mint charges and seignorage. The seignorage charged on coining constituted an important source of state revenue.

Under the Mughal rule, the weight and fineness standards of the coins were strictly maintained. The gold muhr weighed 169 grains, the weight of silver rupee was initially 178 grains and copper dam weighed 323 grains.

The minting of coins was managed centrally. The mint workers were State employees and the mint an imperial karkhana.

The circulation rate of Mughal coins was high. The Mughal currency circulated freely and uniformly from Kabul to Decca and from Surat to Madras. Besides, the land tax demand was expressed in money terms; the salary of the officials and the military was paid in cash and the commodity
sales 'in an intensifying network of markets must, altogether, have increased the number and velocity of coins in circulation.

The domestic production of bullions in India negligible and these metals come to India through favourable foreign trade.
23-Jan-2019 - Question 2

Do you think that the agrarian crisis of the 17th century led to the disintegration of the Mughal empire? Discuss. (2016) (20 Marks, 300 words)

Model Answer

Mughal empire was one of the largest empire established in the history of India. The Mughal empire was virtually disintegrated after the death of the Aurangzeb A number of factors were responsible for the disintegration of the Mughal empire and the agrarian crisis of the 17th century was one of them.

The total area under the cultivation witnessed a considerable expansion but agricultural production was not increased as rapidly as the situation required.

No new method of cultivation was available to counter the trend of declining production as the soil become exhausted.

The land revenue was heavy, it was practically half of the produce if we include the share of zamindars and other local elements.

While agricultural production increased slowly the demand of ruling classes expanded rapidly. The number of mansabdars increased from 2000 at Jahangir’s accession to the throne to 11,500 during later half of Auranzeb’s reign. The salary and emoluments of nobles were also increased during this period which added burden over land.

The jagir system was also responsible for the agrarian crisis. There was little territory was added but due to huge increase in number of jagirs there was a competition among mansabdars to acquire the most profitable jagirs. They tried to collect more and more revenue but paid little attention to increase the productivity of the soil or to expand the agricultural land.

Since land revenue was the main source of state income, the royal court faces some serious problems like they could not maintain a large standing army and they could not fund their military campaign.
The agricultural crisis was an important cause of the disintegration of the Mughal empire but, a large empire do not collapse due to a single reason other factors like weak successor, court politics, the prolonged military campaigns, external invasions and the rise of regional powers also played an important role in the disintegration of Mughal empire.
25-Jan-2019 - Question 1

"The art of building was carried to highest degree of perfection under Shahjahan." Illustrate by giving architectural details of two of his most celebrated buildings. (2018) (20 Marks, 300 words)

Model Answer

Shahjahan carried the architectural legacy of his forefathers to another level. Several new features were added during his reign which reflects in the monuments constructed during his period.

**Tajmahal:** It constructed in the memory of the wife of Shahjahan Mumtaj Begham. The idea of construction seems to inspire from the Humayun’s tomb and the tomb of Ittamad-ud-daula. The entire Taj complex consists of five major constituents, namely Darwaza (main gateway), Bageecha (gardens), Masjid (mosque), Naqqar Khana (rest house) and Rauza (main mausoleum). Tajmahal is completely made from the white marble. deliberate interplay is established between the building's elements, its surface decoration, materials, geometric planning and its acoustics. This interplay extends from what can be experienced directly with the senses, into religious, intellectual, mathematical and poetic ideas. In the complex, passages from the Qur'an are used as decorative elements. The perfectly carved arches, domes, and minarets added charm to its beauty. The floral pattern of inner walls had been made in pietra-dura style.

**Red Fort of Delhi:** Shahjahan had established a new city Shahjahanabad at Delhi constructed the Red Fort. This fort is 3100 ft. long and 1650 ft. wide. It is constructed from the costly red sandstone. The fort complex consists beautifully constructed buildings Diwan-i-Aam and Diwan-i-Khas. To supply the water and keep buildings cool Nahr-i-Bahisht was constructed. The Rang Mahal housed the emperor's wives and mistresses. Its name means "Palace of Colours", since it was brightly painted and decorated with a mosaic of mirrors. The central marble pool is fed by the Nahr-i-Bihisht. The Khas Mahal was the emperor's apartment. Connected to it is the Muthamman Burj, an octagonal tower where he appeared before the people waiting on the riverbank. Chatta Chowk was the market place near Lahori gate inside the fort. The fort has high walls and watchtowers for the soldiers.
25-Jan-2019 - Question 2

"The Afghan invasions in the Eighteenth century not only signified the military irrelevance of the Mughal Empire but also hastened its decline." Explain. (2018) (20 Marks, 300 words)

Model Answer

The Mughal empire in the 18th century was struggling with the inherent weaknesses and factionism at the royal court. In addition to that, they had to face two Afghan invasions which gave serious jolt to the Mughal empire in India.

Nadir Shah attacked India in 1738-39 and defeated the Mughal Army several times. Saadat Khan, the Nawab of Awadh wanted to become Mir Bakshi but the position was awarded to Nizam so he decided to take the side of Nadir Shah. In 1739 Nadir Shah captured Delhi and ended Mughal rule for few months. Later Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India several times and fought the third battle of Panipat in 1761 and defeated the Marathas.

The Afghan invasion of 18th century reveals:

The Mughal emperor has no control over his nobles, they indulged in playing against each other and even emperor become their target. They don’t hesitated to aid the enemy of empire to fulfill their ambitions.

The defeat in these wars revealed that Mughal Army is no longer strong enough to safeguard its territory.

In the third battle of Panipat Mughal Army was weak enough that they don’t face the Ahmad Shah Abdali and Marathas fought as representing India. This indicates that they were no longer representative force of India.

Due to defeat in these wars Mughal empire loses a large territory in north-west to Afghans which was a large source of revenue. The mughal governors also started to declare their independence from the central authority like Murshid Quli khan in Bengal and Chin Qulich Khan in Hyderabad and Saadat Khan in Awadh which further disintegrated the Mughal empire.
Due to Mansabdari structure of the Mughal rule there was very little central army which eliminated the chance of regaining its lost territories.

We can say that, Afghan invasion had weaken the Mughal empire and due to its weakness its disintegration process was speeded up.