



**NEERAJ®**

# **M.H.I.-101**

## **Ancient and Medieval Societies**

**Chapter Wise Reference Book  
Including Many Solved Sample Papers**

*Based on*

---

# **I.G.N.O.U.**

**& Various Central, State & Other Open Universities**

---

*By: Gaurav Sahni*



**NEERAJ  
PUBLICATIONS**

*(Publishers of Educational Books)*

---

Mob.: 8510009872, 8510009878    E-mail: [info@neerajbooks.com](mailto:info@neerajbooks.com)

Website: [www.neerajbooks.com](http://www.neerajbooks.com)

---

**MRP ₹ 280/-**

## Content

### **Ancient And Medieval Societies**

Sample Question Paper—1 (Solved).....	1
Sample Question Paper—2 (Solved).....	1
Sample Question Paper—3 (Solved).....	1
Sample Question Paper—4 (Solved).....	1

---

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i>	<i>Page</i>
1.	Early Human Societies.....	1
2.	Bronze Age Civilizations-I.....	9
3.	Bronze Age Civilizations-II.....	15
4.	The Persian Empire.....	21
5.	Ancient Greece.....	27
6.	The Roman Empire.....	35
7.	Latin America.....	42
8.	Africa.....	49
9.	Nomadic Empires.....	57
10.	The Late Roman World.....	63
11.	The Arab World.....	72
12.	China.....	81
13.	Debates on Feudalism.....	88
14.	Feudalism: Forms, Structures and Phases.....	94

---

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i>	<i>Page</i>
15.	Trade and the Decline of Feudalism.....	100
16.	Oceanic Trade.....	105
17.	Business Communities.....	112
18.	Commercial Practices.....	118
19.	Craft Production.....	124
20.	Science and Technologies and Expansion of Knowledge.....	130
21.	Religious Establishment.....	137
22.	Urbanism.....	145
23.	Technologies of Warfare and Communication.....	151
24.	Transition to Modern World.....	157



**Sample Preview  
of the  
Solved  
Sample Question  
Papers**

*Published by:*



**NEERAJ  
PUBLICATIONS**

[www.neerajbooks.com](http://www.neerajbooks.com)

Sample

# QUESTION PAPER - 1

(Solved)

## ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL SOCIETIES

M.H.I.-101

*Time: 3 Hours ]*

*[ Maximum Marks : 100*

**Note:** Answer any **five** of the following questions. All questions carry **equal** marks.

**Q. 1.** What role did language play in the process of human development?

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 6, Q. No. 4.

**Q. 2.** What are important characteristics of early Mesopotamian civilization?

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-2, Page No. 12, Q. No. 2.

**Q. 3.** Write a note on administrative organization of the Persian Empire.

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-4, Page No. 24, Q. No. 2.

**Q. 4.** How did transition to democracy happen in ancient Greece?

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-5, Page No. 31, Q. No. 2.

**Q. 5.** Discuss kingship, organization of government and society in North Africa.

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-8, Page No. 53, Q. No. 1.

**Q. 6.** What was the position of lower classes and slaves in the Roman Society?

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-10, Page No. 68, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 7.** Analyze in brief the nature of Chinese society.

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-12, Page No. 85, Q. No. 2.

**Q. 8.** What is the relationship between the rise in urban centres and the decline of feudalism.

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-15, Page No. 102, Q. No. 2.

**Q. 9.** Give a brief account of the pattern of trade in Europe.

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-18, Page No. 120, Q. No. 1.

**Q. 10.** Write short notes on the following:

(a) Glass Making

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-19, Page No. 125, 'Glass Making'.

(b) Calvinism

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-21, Page No. 139, 'Calvinism'.

(c) Medieval Towns

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-22, Page No. 146, 'Understanding Medieval Towns'.

(d) Gunpowder Revolution

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-23, Page No. 151, 'Gunpowder Revolution'.

■ ■

Sample  
**QUESTION PAPER - 2**

(Solved)

**ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL SOCIETIES**

**M.H.I.-101**

*Time: 3 Hours ]*

*[ Maximum Marks : 100*

**Note:** Answer any **five** of the following questions. All questions carry **equal** marks.

**Q. 1.** How markets and fairs developed as centres with the development of commercial activities?

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-18, Page No. 120, Q. No. 2.

**Q. 2.** Maurice Dobb and Georges Duby both emphasise internal developments within feudalism for its decline rather than trade; yet there is substantial differences between them. Can you locate these differences?

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-15, Page No. 103, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 3.** Can Confucianism be treated as a religion? How did Buddhism spread in China?

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-12, Page No. 85, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 4.** Analyze the early religious sects in the Roman Empire.

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-10, Page No. 68, Q. No. 4.

**Q. 5.** What were the major monarchies of West Africa?

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-8, Page No. 53, Q. No. 2.

**Q. 6.** Write short notes on slave labour and the Delian league.

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-5, Page No. 31, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 7.** Briefly discuss the system of coinage and the evolution of Zoroastrianism in the Persian Empire.

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-4, Page No. 24, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 8.** In what ways the Harrapan civilization was unique?

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-2, Page No. 12, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 9.** Write a short note on Pastoral nomadism.

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 6, Q. No. 5.

**Q. 10.** Write short notes on the following:

(a) Putting Out System

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-19, Page No. 127, Q. No. 4(i).

(b) Transport and Navigation

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-23, Page No. 152, 'Transport and Navigation'.

(c) Urban Centres

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-22, Page No. 145, 'Urban Centres: Question of Definition'.

(d) Anabaptists

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-21, Page No. 139, 'Anabaptists'.

■ ■

# Sample Preview of The Chapter

*Published by:*



**NEERAJ  
PUBLICATIONS**

[www.neerajbooks.com](http://www.neerajbooks.com)

# ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL SOCIETIES

## Early Human Societies

### INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the history is difficult to decide. For example, we have studied the evolution of *Homo sapiens sapiens* during the last 2 to 4 millions of years. But that was not the beginning; the process of evolution did not start at any particular point of time. Similarly we cannot decide that when the earliest *Homo habilis* ceased to be an animal and became humans. As there is no inevitability about evolution whose trajectory is neither straight nor linear, all groups of hunter-gatherers did not change into agricultural communities and sedentary societies. Some have chosen nomadic life. The linkages of various aspects of development provide the proper perspective to understand the evolution of human societies.

### CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

#### SOURCES OF STUDY

To reconstruct the past is not easy as there are no textual sources of the period, archeological excavations are the only means. The archeologists are helped by experts of many disciplines, e.g. medical scientists who examine the bones, botanists who study plants, physicists who use radio-carbon dating. Scholars of pre-history have keenly studied a few existing foraging societies who continue to live in comparable environments and patterns of our ancestors, in order to get insights to understand the past. Similarly, the study of non-human primates like chimpanzees in the wild has helped us to understand the behaviour of hominids in the past. We have also learnt that humans were not the only tool using animals, the chimpanzees as well make use of tools.

#### ORIGINS OF HUMANS

According to available information the ancestors of modern humans walked in Africa around 3 to 4

million years ago. They are known as hominids who evolved into *homo* genus.

Hominids included *Australopithecus* whose fossils, have been found in Tanzania and Ethiopia. Many different species of *Australopithecines* lived for a period of 2 million years or more and their most important feature which resembled later humans was that they walked on two legs, though their height was less than four feet. They were somewhat similar to modern chimps. The *Australopithecines* mainly lived in eastern and southern parts of Africa and food collected from the plants was their main diet.

The *Australopithecines* were followed by *homo habilis*, though scholars are not sure about which species of *Australopithecines* later turned into *homo habilis* who appeared around in East and South Africa around two million years ago.

#### Modern Humans (*Homo Sapiens Sapiens*)

Modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens* implying the thinking humans) appeared around two hundred thousands years ago. Their 120,000 to 60,000 years old sites have been found in the Klaiser River mouth caves in South Africa. From Africa they migrated to all four corners of the world, reaching Australia 60,000 years ago and America about 20,000 years ago. It is believed that in the process of adaptation their skin colour and body size, etc. changed gradually in accordance with the region in which they had settled.

The study of their sites in Europe reveals that *Homo sapiens sapiens* reached there in the interglacial period which was comparatively warm and offered appropriate circumstances for their evolution. They inherited the expertise developed by their forefathers such as use of fire, building shelters and superior tools to hunt down big animals and exploiting sea resources



like fishes. They developed flexibility to inhabit new areas by adjust to altering environment.

#### **How are Humans Different from Animals?**

The *homo sapiens sapiens* are different from all other species that have inhabited the earth. There are six main differences among humans and other animals which include their ability to make tools, capability to eat both cooked and uncooked foods, large kinship system consisting of relatives by descent and marriage, barter and exchange with other human communities, communication by way of complex languages, invention of arts and capability to grow food.

#### **INVENTION OF TOOLS AND DISCOVERY OF FIRE**

The ability to make tools is a feature that distinguishes man from animals. Though some primates like chimpanzee are found to use tools, but that is rare and incidental. Only humans have the ability to shape their tools. Tools have been defined man made object intended for manual work. Pre-historic man used stone tools, he may have made use of bone or wood also as tools. While the tools made from bones and wood have not survived, the tools made from stones show the gradual advance made in refining and sharpening them.

About 2.5 million years ago Australopithecines were probably the first to use tools. To be identifiable as tools the stones must have been worked upon to give them a sharp edge. Such tools have been found at a number of pre-historic sites. It is believed that women developed containers from wood of tree trunks to make possible storing and transporting of gathered food. The stone tools were used by our ancestors for quite long period. Earlier, the used stones were mainly in raw form but later they became more lethal and pronounced.

#### **Discovery of Fire**

After the invention of tools, the discovery of fire was another landmark in the process of evolution. To know the use of fire is one thing, but to devise ways to make controlled use of fire was rather difficult.

#### **KINSHIP**

Large kinship system consisting of relatives by descent and marriage is a unique characteristic of humans that differentiates them from other species. Kinship is a system of social organization between people who are biologically related or who are given the status of relatives by marriage, adoption, or other ritual. No other species has any such system, though

brotherhood or sisterhood relation is known among a small number of primates. But the concept of in-laws is not applicable in any species other than humans.

In human society kinship is the broad term for all the relationships that people are born into or create later in their life which are considered binding in the eyes of society. Every person belongs to a family of orientation having mother, father, brothers and sisters. Inheritance and succession which includes transmission of power and position in society usually follow kinship lines.

#### **How did Kinship Emerge?**

It is believed that the appearance of kinship took place during the development of *Homo erectus*. Its emergence was also associated with the expansion of hunting activities. In the early period the task of food-gathering could be carried out by groups of people along with other activities like playing, talking and taking care of the children. However, for hunting both covertness and quietness were essential. Often, particularly in hunting large animals, covering long distances swiftly was also required.

Hence, the hunting turned out to be the preserve of healthy and young men. This led to a sort of division of labour among men and women. While men used to go for hunting, the women did the work of gathering food and taking care of the children and they required each other to share the fruits and vegetables gathered by women and the meat brought by men. This division of labour brought about the creation of domestic units consisting of males, females and their young ones. This had significant outcomes for the relations among the pre-historic communities.

#### **When did Kinship Emerge?**

The period of emergence of kinship is not apparent. Its evidence is found among the plains of Nile in Egypt where around 17,000 years old settlements had about 25 to 30 people. Each of these cluster of settlements had their own distinctive tools and methods of food gathering. Since they lived in close immediacy for a long period, it is probable that kinship linked them with each other.

#### **EXCHANGE**

The system of barter and exchange is another feature which distinguishes humans from other species. The system led to strong linkages between groups of hunter-gatherers as is evident from findings of stone tools, which are not available locally, from pre-historic sites. As the saying goes, "Gifts make friends and friends make gifts", it seems that the groups of hunter-

EARLY HUMAN SOCIETIES / 3

gatherers used to exchange gifts among themselves. They hardly had anything other than stone and stone tools.

**INVENTION OF ARTS AND LANGUAGE**

The use of language and ability to speak is the most distinguishing feature of humans. No other species has this faculty, though other animals can produce sound to express their feelings but in a very limited range. One of the most crucial evolutionary developments that led to the rapid growth of modern man was the emergence of language as a method for communication.

In the course of evolution, more than 150,000 years ago human anatomy became capable of speaking. The growth of language relies on far more physiological, social, and neural systems than just the inter-costal muscles that drive human phonation. It depends on systems for cortical control of vocalization, changes in group structure and affective relations, growth in cognitive abilities, neural pathways for information integration, etc. The earliest proof of use of language is found about 40,000 years ago in Europe.

Thus, the language is a unique hallmark of the human species. Although many species can communicate in limited ways about things that are physically present, only humans can construct a full narrative characterization of events occurring outside of the here and now. By using language to control the social coordination of tool making, humans have produced a material society that has achieved domination over all the species of the globe.

**HUNTER-GATHERERS: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THEM?**

The evolution of modern humans from hominids took around 3 millions years. The emergence of *homo sapiens sapiens* is rather recent. It is estimated that 90 per cent of the total people who inhabited the earth departed before the modern man appeared about 12,000 years ago. At that time they all lived as hunter-gatherers, with very simple things such as stones, wood and bones. Should any one of them is brought to the present day world, he would not recognize us as his descendants; in fact, he would not recognize any other thing except animals in the zoo.

**THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION**

The *Homo-sapiens sapiens* have been physiologically strong enough to face changes in climate. Around 12,000 years ago Holocene era began. All over the world weather became warmer leading to huge changes. The forests in West Asia were replaced

by dry deserts and in Europe snow melted away and forests grew. The hunter-gatherers groups worked out new forms of adaptation to face these climatic changes which can be divided into *four* broad categories:

- (a) The majority of the hunter-gatherers groups continued their hunting-gathering life. As forests and rivers in several regions had marine species and various kinds of seeds, they just included them in their diets. These groups lived in around one third of the world including Australia, North and South Americas, Africa, and Northeast Asia.
- (b) Some other groups of hunter-gatherers started cultivating plants but did not leave their way of life as nomadic foragers. They continued to flourish in this combined form for more than two thousand years. They mainly inhabited in Mexico and in China but did not adopt a settled village life.
- (c) Some hunter-gatherers groups adopted agriculture and settled down in some fertile lands and also domesticated animals. In both of these tasks water was required, hence their settlements were in the regions where water was easily available.
- (d) Some communities of hunter-gatherers adopted pastoral nomadism. Obviously, their way of life was determined by the necessities of their herds and the compulsions of the environment. On the one hand, the mobility of these groups managed support for life in arid and semi-arid areas, and on the other hand, they adapted their food production mechanism in line with the environment.

**PASTORAL NOMADISM**

All groups of hunter-gatherers did not take up agriculture and chose herding of animals. The development of agriculture and domestication of animals started at nearly the same time. The land and climate in many regions was not suitable for growth of agricultural societies. For example, as countries of vast Central Asian steppes including Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, etc., were not opportune for settled agriculture, herding of animals was the dominant form of living which continued for thousands of years. In the beginning the groups of hunter-gatherers used to kill animals and eat them. Later they started rearing animals and consumed them as and when required. Pastoral communities kept

moving in search of pastures. Besides Central Asian steppes, pastoral communities populated grassy plains of Africa and the Americas.

These communities learnt to live in keeping with the climatic and ecological conditions of their regions. While species like yak, camel, reindeer and llamas were particular to their native regions, many other species like – sheep, goat, cattle, pig and horses did not have any such limitations and were reared in large numbers. They not only had more adaptability to climatic changes but also consumed a wide range of the grasses and shrubs which were of no utility for humans. In addition to being a source of milk, they were also a rich source of meat with rich proteins.

#### **AGRICULTURE**

After the beginning of Holocene era in the fertile lands of West Asia, Egypt, India and China transition to agriculture took place. Mobile life of hunter-gatherers, who obtained their food from wild plants and animals, was replaced by the settled life of agriculturists. Though farming was the dominant form of living, animals were also domesticated. Agricultural output and animal domestication led to large increase in the production. This surplus helped in the development of society in many spheres of life.

Domestication of plants and animals led to human domestication. As the jobs related to agriculture required the farmers to live in one place for a long period, human settlements emerged. This was the beginning of villages which led to emergence of towns in course of time. Earlier in some places where plentiful supply of food was available all the year round, the foraging communities settled and established villages but such places were exceptional.

#### **CONSEQUENCES OF AGRICULTURE**

Agricultural production and domestication of animals led to widespread changes. Slowly and steadily agriculture transformed the life and made the society more stratified. For thousands of years it remained the dominant mode of life and continues to be the dominant occupation of the majority of humans even today.

#### **Birth of Village Culture**

The start of agriculture led to permanent settlements and growth of the villages. In fact, the domestication of plants and animals set in motion the process which resulted in domestication of humans. The appearance of villages led to building roads, transport and towns in due course of time.

#### **Increase in Population and Expansion of Settlements**

The new agricultural economy gradually expanded and the requirements of sedentary life led to new crafts like pottery and metallurgy and growth of population. A farmer could grow more food than a hunter-gatherer could manage to collect. Moreover, the food produced by the farmer could be stored for quite some time. Consequently, the farmer could afford to support more people.

#### **Emergence of Tribal Communities**

Earlier foraging communities were not in a position to plan their next day or week but for a farmer planning for a season was necessary and settled way of life led to planning for long-term. Hence, the development of agriculture also led to the appearance of enduring patterns of collaboration. In groups of hunter-gatherers the requirement of cooperation was limited to some time only. The group had no relevance after the hunt was over and game had been shared. On the other hand, a farmer required assistance from the time of sowing to harvesting. While a hunting group might continue for some days or a week, a farmer always needed help in his field. This led to close cooperation among agricultural communities and large kinship systems.

#### **New Epidemics and Diseases**

The emergence of settled communities led to new type of environmental problems. Though the average life-span increased with increased availability of food but the living conditions gave rise to new ailments. More often than not, irrigation of crops and accumulation of water near the residences resulted in growth of mosquitoes.

#### **New Forms of Order and Disputes**

In the hunting-gathering period the people were not concerned about their possessions, the emergence of settled life made them aware of their. It was natural too as the construction of a permanent house and belongings development of an agricultural field required a lot of labour, the people became conscious of defending them and safeguarding their interests. While earlier, in case of a quarrel among hunting-gathering groups, the losing side would depart and go elsewhere, but this was no longer possible because the farmer had no other place to go and could not leave his house and field. Hence, the development of agriculture made the conflicts among the people more serious and long-lasting.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

#### **Q.1. Briefly discuss the origin of humans.**

**Ans.** The ancestors of modern human can be traced Hominids who appeared around 3-4 million