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INDIA: EARLIEST TIMES TO 8TH CENTURY A.D.

By: Anamika V. Singh

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QUESTION PAPER

(June - 2019)

(Solved)

INDIA: EARLIEST TIMES TO 8th CENTURY A.D.

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note : The question paper has **three sections**. The students have to attempt any **two questions from Section I**, any **four questions from Section II** and **two short notes from Section III**.

SECTION - I

Q. 1. Critically examine the nature of economy and society of the early Vedic people.

Ans. Archaeological evidence from the Vedic period depicts that the vedic society indulged in a pastoral form of occupation where cattle rearing was the major means of subsistence. From the array of cattle 'cow' was revered the most, this we understand from the many references to the cow in the 'Rigveda' depict the socio-religious terms which were derived from the word 'Gau' i.e. Cow for e.g. Kinship units were called-'gotra'. Godhuli referred to a measure of time. It is understood that agriculture was not as dominant as cattle rearing, which could be because of unfavourable climatic conditions, or not so highly developed implements. Hence, the people in the vedic period performed shifting cultivation, this in turn suggests that the people were either nomadic or semi-nomadic. Consequently, the economy was simple with no concept of private property, but gifts were an important part of tributes and presentations during ceremonies. Economy had not developed to a stage of trade and commerce.

Also Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 32, Q. No. 3.

Q. 2. What were the factors responsible for the growth of Buddhism in the 6th century BCE? Examine the reasons for its popularity.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-17, Page No. 48, Q. No. 1.

Q. 3. Discuss the expansion of trade and urban centre in South India from 200 BCE to 300 CE.?

Ans. India, south of the vindhya mountain and the Narmada river, was known in ancient times as Dakshinapatha; now it is called the Deccan. South of the Deccan is the land of the Dravidian speaking

people. In the first millennium B.C. the life of the people living in the peninsula gradually changed from that of simple agriculturists. They began to lead a more complex and a richer life. This is reflected in the megalithic burials found all over the Deccan in South India. Megalith literally means a huge stone, and large stones were specially placed to mark the site of burials. These burials have given us much information about the life of the people. They were herdsmen and cultivators, who used iron implements, travelled on horses and had ornaments made of beads and gold. There are a variety of burials from simple stone slab enclosures in the ground to rock-cut caves.

It is clear from the excavations of megalithic sites that the people were familiar with iron technology and were quite advanced. They used iron hoes and sickles and probably cultivated rice and millets. There is an abundance of black and red ware pottery which may have been made in the same way as those used further north. The burials suggest that they had complex ideas about life after death and probably practised elaborate burial rituals. Perhaps the graves especially marked with huge stones were the graves of the chiefs and their families. The occurrence of horse bones and parts of horse trappings shows a familiarity with this animal. Doubtless it was the horse which enabled them to travel the vast distances of the peninsula. Travelling also led them to exchange various items, such as beads of precious stones and gold and perhaps iron artefacts as well.

When the Mauryas conquered parts of the peninsula there was already a distinctive culture in these areas. Some of the edicts of Ashoka are found in areas with important megalithic remains as, for example, at Maski in the Raichur Doab. Most of these

kingdoms and areas were annexed by the Mauryas. On the decline of the Mauryan empire these areas became independent. The new kings often belonged to families which had served under the Mauryas.

Technological knowledge about iron work had made great progress, and iron artifacts have been discovered in large numbers in Kushan and Satavahana layers at sundry excavated sites. The Telangana region of Andhra seems to have been the richest in this respect, and in addition to weapons, balance rods, socketed axes and hoes, sickles, ploughshares, razors, and ladles have been discovered in the Karimnagar and Nalgonda districts of this region. Indian iron and steel, including cutlery, were exported to the Abyssinian ports, and they enjoyed great prestige in western Asia. The techniques of cloth-making, silk-weaving, and the manufacture of arms and luxury articles also developed. Mathura was a great centre for the manufacture of a special type of cloth which was called shataka. Dyeing was a thriving craft in some south Indian towns. A brick-built dyeing vat has been unearthed at Uraiyur, a suburb of Tiruchirapalli town in Tamil Nadu, and similar dyeing vats were excavated at Arikamedu.

Q. 4. Discuss social organisation of South India and the Deccan between 200 BCE to 300 CE.

Ans. The ancient history of peninsular (south) India revolves around the fortunes of three outstanding and extensive kingdoms: that of the Pandyas, south of Kaveri river with its capital at Madurai; the Cheras centred around Kerala, and the Cholas on the Coromandel (western) coast. However, there were several other dynasties that co-existed with these prominent ones, though they were unable to reach the same acme of power and glory.

Pandyas were a prominent dynasty in Southern India. Their kingdom, founded in the 6th century BC was spread over the modern districts of Madurai and Tinnevely. Their original capital was at Kolkoi (on the Thambraparny river in Tinnevely) and later at Madurai. The Ashokan edicts of 3rd century BC mention this dynasty. The Kongu Ratta inscription of early 5th century AD bears description of the conflict between the Pandyas and the Kongu Rattas. Very little is known about Pandyas before the 7th century AD. Around 940 AD, King Rajaraja of the

Chola dynasty reduced the Pandyas to the condition of tributary dependence. This situation continued for the next two centuries there is historical evidence that the Pandyas had trade as well as maritime relations with countries like Egypt, Rome, China and Malaysia.

Variouly known as the Andhras, Andhrabhrityas and Satakarnis, this dynasty ruled large portions of Central and South India spanning modern day Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. The Satavahanas started out as feudatories to the Mauryan Empire of northern India, and declared independence soon after the death of Ashoka (232 BC). They were the first native Indian rulers to issue their own coins with portraits of their rulers, a practice probably borrowed from the Indo-Greek kings who occupied the northwestern parts of the country. The Satavahana kings also made significant contributions to Buddhist art and architecture. The great stupas in the Krishna river valley were built by them, the most famous among them being the stupa at Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh. The Satavahana rulers used Prakrit as their official language. The glory of the Satavahanas began to decline by the 3rd century AD and they were supplanted by a number of not so well-known dynasties.

The earliest reference to the modern state of Kerala is to be found on a rock inscription ascribed to Ashoka the Great. It was then an independent kingdom ruled by various kings belonging to the powerful Chera dynasty approximately between 900 BC and 198 AD. Infact theirs was the first known powerful dynasty in the region. The Cheras ruled over the area extending from Alleppy to Calicut, in the present day Kerala state with their capital at Vanchi (identified with either Karur or Kochi of modern times). During the reign of the Cheras, trade continued to bring prosperity to Kerala, as spices, ivory, timber and gems were exported to the countries of the Middle East and to southern Europe.

Also Add: The satavahana rulers extended their patronage to Vedic ritualism. For example, Naganika, an early queen of the Satavahana family performed several Vedic rituals and made gift mentioned in the Vedic texts. Jainism had some following in the region and some of the famous teachers of the Digambara sect flourished in this

Sample Preview of The Chapter

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HISTORY OF INDIA Earliest Times to 800 A.D.

BLOCK-1 Environment and Early Patterns of Adaptation

India : Physical Features

1

Q. 1. Describe the physical features responsible for the rise of Magadha.

Ans. The geographical features play significant role on the human settlement and settlement patterns.

The favourable factors seem to have catalysed in the growth and flourishing of Great Kingdoms.

The factors in the given context have been found to help in the development of great empires. One of such empires was the Magadha empire which had :

- (i) highly fertile soil;
- (ii) adequate rainfall ensuring a rich production of paddy crop;
- (iii) proximity of iron ore mines and vast sources of timber and precious stones;
- (iv) a good network of rivers. Providing communication and trade; and
- (v) the closeness and continuity of settlements.

A combination of aforesaid factors helped in the comfortable conquest of the northern Gangetic plain. As a matter of fact, it was because of these factors that the regions of Indo Gangetic plains were well ahead of their lines as far as the agricultural or population base was concerned. Besides, the Expansion of territories over these plains provided the solid foundation for the rise of the Magadhan Empire.

Q. 2. Describe the Indian Sub-continent from the geographical point of view.

Ans. On the basis of geographical features the Indian Sub-continent can be divided into four parts, namely :

- (i) Himalyan Uplands,
- (ii) Indo-Gangetic Plains,

(iii) Central India and

(iv) Peninsular India.

(i) **Himalyan Uplands** : Due to erosion and weathering, huge quantities of alluvium soil keeps flowing down into the plains. The great river system—Indus Ganga and Brahmaputra, get continual supply of water from the melting of Himalyan snow. The Himalayas are considered to be still rising.

(ii) **Indo Gangetic Plains** : The alluvial plains of Northern part of India stretch in the shape of a 'bow' from the Indus to the Ganga. The extension of their regions is about 3200 kms. The first civilisation of the plains of Indus. And the Ganga beholds life since first millennium B.C. It has nurtured a society, state, city and imperial life since then.

(iii) **Central India** : Central belt of India divides Northern Plains and the Peninsular India. This belt stretches from Gujarat to Western Orissa for about 1600 kms. This is mainly a hilly region of low height broken by steep slopes and comprised of numerous valleys. The Aravali hill range in Rajasthan divides the Indus plain from the peninsular part. This range also constitute of Vindhyan and Satpura ranges besides Chhotanagpur Plateau extending in the regions of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. This area can further be subdivided into four regions :

- (a) The land of Rajputs between Jaipur and Udaipur.
- (b) The Malwa plateau surrounding Ujjain.
- (c) Region around Nagpur

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(d) The Chhattisgarh plains to the east of Madhya Pradesh.

However, the communication and transportation had never been very convenient in this region but traces of contact between these four separated zones are evident.

(iv) **Peninsular India** : Peninsular India is comprised of the Deccan plateau and the surrounding coastal plains. To the Southern part of the Central India begins Peninsular region. It stretches from west to east and the four main rivers – Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri flow into the Bay of Bengal. These rivers produce alluvial plains and have assisted in the development of culture and civilization since ancient period.

The prominent feature of the region is Deccan Plateau. They extend from Vindhyan range in the North to the Southern borders of Karnataka. The black soil of Maharashtra and skirts of Central India is very fertile as it retains moisture and become 'self ploughing'.

The Plateau stretches till the Western Ghats in the West and till Eastern Ghats, which separate it from eastern Coastal Plains. The Nilgiris and Cardamom hills are known to have originated here.

Q. 3. Describe the Indus Plains.

Or

Throw light on the Geographical characteristics of Indus plains.

Ans. The Indus plains can be divided into two main regions :

1. Punjab and
2. Sind.

These can be described as follows :

1. Punjab : It is the land of five rivers. Presently the region of Punjab is divided between India and Pakistan. The five tributaries of Indus which flow across a huge stretch of plain areas make the region very fertile. The eastern part of these plains stretch till the Ganga Basin. Punjab has always served a melting ground of various cultures. It has been tempting the invaders from across the border line to its strategic location and prosperity.

2. Sind : The lower Indus Valley and the Delta forms the region of Sind. The region lies between the hills of Baluchistan to the North West and the Thar Desert to the South Eastern part of India. Although this region receives very less rainfall yet the alluvial soil here is very fertile.

Two of the major civilisations – Harappa and Mohen Jodaro are located in Punjab and Sind respectively.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – 1

1. Mark the correct statements : The knowledge of Physical Geography

- (i) helps in understanding the life patterns of the people who resided in those regions.
- (ii) is of no help in determining the nature of cultural developments in the past.
- (iii) is not at all relevant for students of history.
- (iv) Confines you only to the study of the regions.

Ans. (i)

2. Discuss the physical features responsible for the rise of Magadha.

Ans. Physical geography has proved to have a direct impact on human settlements and settlement patterns.

Settlement with favourable factors have been found to develop into Great Empires Magadha Empire was one of those Empires. The following factors contributed towards the development and growth of Magadha Empire :

- (i) Highly fertile soil.
- (ii) Adequate rainfall ensuring a rich yield of Paddy Crop.
- (iii) Closeness to mines of iron ore and vast sources of timber and precious stones.
- (iv) A good network of rivers providing communication and trade.
- (v) The closeness and continuity of settlements.

A combination of above mentioned factors helped the comfortable conquest of the northern Gangetic plain. As a matter of fact it was because of these factors that the regions of Indo-Gangetic plains were quiet ahead of their limits as far as the agricultural productivity or population base was concerned. Besides the Expansion of territories over these plains provided the solid foundation for the rise of Magadha Empire.

3. Fill in the blanks :

- (i) Geographical factors..... in determining the factors behind the rise and decline of Magadha.

- (ii) Human beingscontrol nature.
- (iii) The basic physiographic division in India are.....
- (iv) The Intermediary zone may consist of

Ans. (i) help us; (ii) attempt to; (iii) three; (iv) sub-regions.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – 2

1. Which of the following statements are correct?

- (i) The eastern Himalyan region was not affected by cultural influences from China.
- (ii) Harappa is located in Punjab.
- (iii) Ganga plains has nurtured greatest number of human settlements.
- (iv) Coastal plains of Deccan Plateau are very broad between Bombay and Palghat.

Ans. (ii) and (iii).

2. Fill in the blanks :

- (i) Himalayas can be divided into _____ (five / three) broad _____ (regions / units).
- (ii) Rann of Kutch turns into a _____ (sea / swamp) during the _____ (Monsoon / Autumn) season.
- (iii) The unirrigated lands in the extreme south produce _____ (wheat / Barley / Millets) and _____ (oil seeds / rice).
- (iv) Telengana has become a land of _____ (rivers / tanks) and forms of artificial _____ (cultivation / irrigation).

Ans. (i) Three, regions; (ii) Swamp, Monsoon; (iii) Millets, oil seeds; (iv) tanks, irrigation.



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Regions in Indian History: Formation and Characteristics



Q. 1. Discuss the various clayware arts and the periods connected with them.

Ans. Clayware is an important source of information about a culture and serves an important medium of archaeological classification, since it is not subjected to wear or tear so easily.

The distribution of types ceramic gives a clear idea of the stages of expansion and territorial boundaries of a culture.

Various cultures are identified by the typical pattern of their pottery.

Some of the various kinds of potteries and their periods of existence are :

PGW (Painted Grey Ware) – Dated approximately between 800 – 400 B.C.

OCP (Ochre Coboured Pottery Ware) – Dated earlier than 1000 B.C.

BRW (Black and Red Ware) – Lies between the above mentioned two periods.

NBP (Northern black Polished Ware) – Between 500 – 100 B.C.

PGW, OCP and BRW types of pottery were found in the Indo-Gangetic belt, Doab and the upper Ganga Valley. NBP was basically encountered in the Central Gangetic Plain.

Q. 2. Discuss the factors obstructing the political unification of Indian Sub-continent.

Ans. Although there had been few demonstration of political unity by some royal empires like the Mauryas, the Tughlaqs, Mughals and the British. However, none, except the British could succeed more or less is acquiring a political unification of Indian sub-continent in terms of geographical and cultural avenues.

It is required to mention here that the India could never be completely united due to strong regional forces and emergence of destructive personalities.

Any powerful Pan-Indian power failed to exert its influence over the central part of India and the far end of the peninsular India. The Vindhyas could succeed, more or less in separating the histories of Northern India and the Deccan Peninsula. Similarly, the Aravalis, stretching from the month of Gulf of Combay to the Delhi constitutes another important border.

In this way, the expansion of material culture along with geographical outlines, and the overall configuration of historical forces such as population, technology, social organisation, communication and others play a significant role in obstructing the unity of Indian sub-continent.

Q. 3. Write note on the Fundamental Geographical Influence.

Ans. The “major structure – lines of Indian Historical Geography” or some vital Geographical characteristics of our past mainly the Narmada-Chhota Nagpur line or line stretching from the Gulf of Cambay to Mathura, which includes Aravali hill range have had a major impact on the trends of cultural diffusion in India. These lines of Indian Historical Geography have been divided basically into four parts :

- (i) The Indus Plains, getting influenced from Central and West Asia.
- (ii) The central Indian intermediate zone, with Gujarat and Orissa as two ends.
- (iii) The Gangetic Plains, starting from Delhi-Mathura line prove to all kinds of influences (be it political or cultural) from north western frontier.
- (iv) Peninsular India which is located at the South the Narmada.

The overall Cultural Scenario, in the North and West or Aravali line seems different. During the initial historical times, only some regions of Rajasthan and Gujarat were influenced by the mainstream of cultural advancement.

There appears to be a period of no-growth in Punjab after the Rig Vedic times. The existence of non-monarchical ‘Janapadas’ in the region till the Gupta period indicates autonomous development. It also suggests weak property in land and poor agricultural development. The land grant inscriptions, which is characteristic of Gupta and post Gupta period in the rest of India, are not found in the plains of Punjab make it more evident. The Brahmanas and Kshatriya had no important role. The evidences of Khatris as Vaisya are found in the region.