



**NEERAJ®**

# **INDIAN SOCIETY : IMAGES AND REALITIES**

**B.S.O.G.- 171**

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

*Based on*

**C.B.C.S. (Choice Based Credit System) Syllabus of**

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

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

*By: Taruna Jain*



**NEERAJ  
PUBLICATIONS**

*(Publishers of Educational Books)*

Retail Sales Office:

1507, First Floor, Nai Sarak, Delhi - 6 | Mob.: 8510009872, 8510009878

E-mail : [info@neerajbooks.com](mailto:info@neerajbooks.com) Website : [www.neerajbooks.com](http://www.neerajbooks.com)

**MRP ₹ 280/-**

Published by:



## NEERAJ PUBLICATIONS

(Publishers of Educational Books)

Retail Sales Office: 1507, First Floor, Nai Sarak, Delhi - 6 | Mob.: 8510009872, 8510009878

E-mail : info@neerajbooks.com Website : www.neerajbooks.com

© Copyright Reserved with the Publishers only.

**Reprint Edition with Updation of Sample Question Paper Only**

Typesetting by: Competent Computers, Printed at: Novelty Printing Press

### Disclaimer/T&C

1. For the best & up-to-date study & results, please prefer the recommended textbooks/study material only.
2. This book is just a Guide Book/Reference Book published by NEERAJ PUBLICATIONS based on the suggested syllabus by a particular Board/University.
3. These books are prepared by the author for the help, guidance and reference of the student to get an idea of how he/she can study easily in a short time duration. Content matter & Sample answers given in this Book may be Seen as the Guide/Reference Material only. Neither the publisher nor the author or seller will be responsible for any damage or loss due to any mistake, error or discrepancy as we do not claim the Accuracy of these Solutions/Answers. Any Omission or Error is highly regretted though every care has been taken while preparing, printing, composing and proofreading of these Books. As all the Composing, Printing, Publishing and Proof Reading, etc., are done by Human only and chances of Human Error could not be denied. Any mistake, error or discrepancy noted may be brought to the publishers notice which shall be taken care of in the next edition and thereafter as a good gesture by our company he/she would be provided the rectified Book free of cost. Please consult your Teacher/Tutor or refer to the prescribed & recommended study material of the university/board/institute/ Govt. of India Publication or notification if you have any doubts or confusions regarding any information, data, concept, results, etc. before you appear in the exam or Prepare your Assignments before submitting to the University/Board/Institute.
4. In case of any dispute whatsoever the maximum anybody can claim against NEERAJ PUBLICATIONS is just for the price of the Book.
5. The number of questions in NEERAJ study materials are indicative of general scope and design of the question paper.
6. Any type of ONLINE Sale/Resale of "NEERAJ BOOKS" published by "NEERAJ PUBLICATIONS" in Printed Book format (Hard Copy), Soft Copy, E-book on any Website, Web Portals, any Social Media Platforms – Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, LinkedIn etc. and also on any Online Shopping Sites, like – Amazon, Flipkart, eBay, Snapdeal, Meesho, Kindle, etc., is strictly not permitted without prior written permission from NEERAJ PUBLICATIONS. Any such online sale activity of any NEERAJ BOOK in Printed Book format (Hard Copy), Soft Copy, E-book format by an Individual, Company, Dealer, Bookseller, Book Trader or Distributor will be termed as ILLEGAL SALE of NEERAJ BOOKS and will invite legal action against the offenders.
7. The User agrees Not to reproduce, duplicate, copy, sell, resell or exploit for any commercial purposes, any portion of these Books without the written permission of the publisher. This book or part thereof cannot be translated or reproduced in any form (except for review or criticism) without the written permission of the publishers.
8. All material prewritten or custom written is intended for the sole purpose of research and exemplary purposes only. We encourage you to use our material as a research and study aid only. Plagiarism is a crime, and we condone such behaviour. Please use our material responsibly.
9. All matters, terms & disputes are subject to Delhi Jurisdiction only.

### Get books by Post & Pay Cash on Delivery :

If you want to Buy NEERAJ BOOKS by post then please order your complete requirement at our Website www.neerajbooks.com where you can select your Required NEERAJ BOOKS after seeing the Details of the Course, Subject, Printed Price & the Cover-pages (Title) of NEERAJ BOOKS.

While placing your Order at our Website www.neerajbooks.com You may also avail the “Special Discount Schemes” being offered at our Official website www.neerajbooks.com.

No need to pay in advance as you may pay “Cash on Delivery” (All The Payment including the Price of the Book & the Postal Charges, etc.) are to be Paid to the Delivery Person at the time when You take the Delivery of the Books & they shall Pass the Value of the Goods to us. We usually dispatch the books Nearly within 2-3 days after we receive your order and it takes Nearly 3-4 days in the postal service to reach your Destination (In total it take nearly 6-7 days).

Content

**INDIAN SOCIETY :  
IMAGES AND REALITIES**

*Question Bank – (Previous Year Solved Question Papers)*

Question Paper–June-2023 (Solved) .....	1
Question Paper–December-2022 (Solved) .....	1
Question Paper–Exam Held in March-2022 (Solved) .....	1
Question Paper–Exam Held in February-2021 (Solved) .....	1
Sample Question Paper–1 (Solved) .....	1

---

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i>	<i>Page</i>
1.	Civilization and Culture .....	1
2.	India As Colony .....	13
3.	Nation, State and Society .....	26
4.	Village India .....	39
5.	Urban India .....	51
6.	Language and Religion .....	66
7.	Caste and Class .....	80

---

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i>	<i>Page</i>
8.	Tribes and Ethnicity .....	94
9.	Family and Marriage .....	106
10.	Kinship .....	118
11.	Class, Power and Inequality .....	127
12.	Resistance and Protest .....	139



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

*Published by:*



**NEERAJ  
PUBLICATIONS**

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

# QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

## INDIAN SOCIETY : IMAGES AND REALITIES

B.S.O.G.-171

Time: 3 Hours ]

[ Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five questions. All questions carry equal marks.

**Q. 1. 'Culture of Indian civilization is influenced by its past'. Discuss.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 4, 'Viewing India from a Structural and Cultural Perspective'.

**Q. 2. Elaborate the idea of India as imagined by the ideologists.**

**Ans.** Ideology refers to a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it. A national and, to a great extent, global consensus on India that has been constructed over the years is that it builds itself in a culture of pluralism and nationalism of its own and is a great civilization having a complex structure of great and little traditions. The Post-colonial India leads the story of the success of the largest democracy in the world with a written constitution. This story of success is garnished with references to a secular constitution in a country of many religions, a free press, an independent judiciary and a thriving intellectual community. Many of these claims are grounded in varying degrees of truthful capturing of some aspects of India's economic and political reality. When the captured images are magnified to a scale that a glorified picture of India emerges and leads to theorisation and celebration of the idea called Indian Ideology. This Indian Ideology of celebration of the 'Idea of India' is shared, in different hues, by a vast majority of Indian intellectuals within India and those settled abroad. Perry Anderson's book (2013) "The Indian Ideology" connects three phases of modern Indian history—the struggle for independence led by Gandhi, the 1947 partition and the making of the Indian republic under Nehru's leadership and Indian nationalism. India is often referred to as the land of cultural plurality and diversity where two contrasting worldviews—that of the traditional and continuous and the formal and official (inherited from the British) thrive.

Pluralism is acknowledging the fact that multiple power groups should exist and compete in a free and open place of ideas, from which policies and law are generated to govern the society. It is a form of society in which various social groups including the minorities maintain their independent cultural traditions without any restrictions. In simple terms it can also be a situation where people with disagreeing beliefs live in the same society peacefully without disbanding their beliefs. Secularism in western notion is a practise of separating state from religion, restricting in it from interfering in the religious matters of people. India has its own version of secularism. Keeping in view the pluralistic society and beliefs of the people, Gandhi, during independence struggle had come out with his Indian version of secularism which means equality of all religions. Thus, secularism in India is a result of its pluralistic diversities and this is driving India since many years and continues to do so.

Nationalism is generally seen as a political principle for establishing sovereign nation-states. Nanda (2006) argued that nationalism in a multi-national context is viewed differently at different levels. By analysing several cases of linguistic and provincial movements in India, he tried to demonstrate that in multi-ethnic countries, such as India, nationalism assumes a political connotation at the macro ideological images of India level and a cultural connotation at the regional level. While the political connotation symbolises the establishment of a sovereign nation-state at the macro level, the cultural connotation, by and large, underlines the protection of distinct cultural nation/nationality in a given provincial political space within the common sovereign state.

**Q. 3. Explain the significance of 'little' and 'great' traditions in Indian village with illustrations.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-4, Page No. 41, 'Little Traditions and Great Traditions' and Page No. 50, Q. No. 4.

**Q. 4. In what ways rural and urban societies of India are interlinked? Discuss.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-8, Page No. 56, 'Rural Urban Continuum'.

**Q. 5. Critically examine the role of social mobility in the caste system.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-7, Page No. 81, 'Social Classes in India'.

**Q. 6. Discuss the concept and dimensions of ethnicity.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-8, Page No. 95, 'Concepts Associated with Ethnicity'.

**Q. 7. Explain the major dimensions of South Indian Kinship system.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-10, Page No. 120, 'Kinship System in South India'.

**Q. 8. Discuss feminist resistance against patriarchy in India.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-12, Page No. 140, 'Early Critiques and Struggles' and Page No. 141, 'Ramabai, Tarabai and Beyond: Feminists Crusade Against Patriarchy of Hinduism'.



**NEERAJ**  
**PUBLICATIONS**  
[www.neerajbooks.com](http://www.neerajbooks.com)

# Sample Preview of The Chapter

*Published by:*



**NEERAJ  
PUBLICATIONS**

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



---

# INDIAN SOCIETY : IMAGES AND REALITIES

---

---

## Civilization and Culture

---



### **INTRODUCTION**

India is considered as one of the oldest civilizations in the world. The country is a home to half a billion people and is famous for its cultural diversity and plurality. The country is rich in every dimension of life, in the population, in the geography, environment, modes of livelihood and above all in its cultures and therefore it is difficult to capture all the diversity of the country. The Indian civilization can be studied in four broad approaches. The first section of the chapter deals in these approaches. The Indian population depicts a variety of historical migrations that has resulted in racial, ethnic and religious diversity. The Indian population is diverse in nature and speak diverse languages and have a distinct way of life that sets them apart from each other. The ecological and physiographic variations of different regions of India explain the richness and diversity of the country. The chapter also deals with the cultural and historical geography of India and the social structure and cultural diversity of Indian civilization. The religious and socio-political historical past are significant to understand the evolution of Indian society. It stresses on the fact that no society can be properly understood without reference to its history. The chapter also reflects the significant elements that contribute to the unity of Indian civilization and deals with the fact that regionalism was never a significant threat to the civilization of India unified identity in spite of internal conflicts and almost continuous warfare.

### **CHAPTER AT A GLANCE**

#### **APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION**

The term civilization comes from the Latin word *civis*, meaning “citizen” or “townsman.” Therefore, the

term depicts the complexity of the civilization. The term also shows some agricultural practices, trade, some evidence of planned dwellings, multiple cultures, art, religion and some administrative and political structures. Civilization can be defined as the complex of human grouping/society with cultural-material and non-material/ideational traits and a defined polity. The Indus Valley Civilization whose society is explained to us through its artefacts and monuments is considered a civilisation. India is taken as one of oldest continuing civilizations because its origin is traced back to the Harappan civilization.

There are many scholars who have focused on the Indian civilization devoted to understanding of the nature of Indian society and culture and have explained the diversity and richness of India as a civilization and provide multiple conceptual tools/methodology used to study it.

According to Cohn (1971), the four broad approaches/directions to understand Indian civilization can be derived from the accounts as follows:

- Catalogue Approach
- Cultural Essence Approach
- Cultural Communication Approach
- Approaching India as a Type

#### **The Cataloguing of Traits**

The main objective of the approach is the recording of the traits, the institutions and the qualities that are considered to be essentially Indian. The population of India shows diversity can be depicted in terms of geographical, ecological, regional, class or religious differences. The focus is on the list out traits or qualities that are distinctly Indian or contribute to Indianness which are based on assuming the notion of what it means to be Indian and these may vary from scholar to scholar.

2 / NEERAJ : INDIAN SOCIETY: IMAGES AND REALITIES

**The Reading of Cultural Essence**

In this approach, the focus is on the discovery of essential style and process – the cultural essences which represents the Indian civilization since its inception but not the trait or content. The true spirit of India is depicted in its cultural essence which it has imbibed over the years in the wake of historical and various other exigencies. It shows that India is not statistically measurable and its essence may be understood in terms of concepts like ‘Unity in Diversity’, tolerance and brotherhood, respect for the spiritual and divine. The idea of ethos is abstract and deductive in nature and is highly subjective as a concept.

**The Study of Cultural Communication**

In this approach, the focus is on the ways and processes through which the content of the civilizational system are transmitted and communicated through different levels of society. The stress is on the structural integration of the Indian civilization. The works of the social anthropologists, McKim Marriott (1955) and Robert Redfield (1956) gives us a significant basis to understand the unity and interdependence of various parts of a civilizational entity. Marriott focused on the cultural synthesis and interaction between ‘Great Tradition’ and ‘Little Tradition’ and stressed on festivals celebrated in a small north Indian village, Kishangarhi in Uttar Pradesh. On the other hand, the study of Redfield depicts the constant interaction and communication between great tradition and little tradition in the form of folk-urban continuum, which stands for symbiotic and interdependent relationship between the two.

**Box 1: Parochialization and Universalization**

The work of **McKim Marriott’s** named *Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilization* (1955), explains the twin concepts of Universalization and Parochialization for explaining the cultural exchange between great tradition and little tradition in India. The process of carrying further the great tradition by encompassing the elements of little tradition is Universalization or in other words it explains the systematisation and standardisation of local rites, values and cultural ideals by universal sanskritic belief system. He explained this by taking the example of the *diwali* – the Festival of Lights celebrated locally, in Kishangarhi village to propitiate Goddess of wealth and prosperity *Saurti*. He added that Goddess Lakshmi may be a universalised form of *Saurti* of the little tradition as the former is also symbolic of wealth and prosperity.

This is opposite to the universalization process is parochialization and stands for the downward spread of rites, beliefs and cultural ideals of universal appeal to suit the local environs. It depicts the creativity of little communities within India’s indigenous civilization. According to Marriott, the process is explained by citing the example *Naurtha* festival in Kishangarhi, pointing it as a parochialized version of *Navarathri* in which nine different consecrates of the Sanskritic Goddess Durga is propitiated for nine successive days.

**Box 2: Little and Great Traditions**

*Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization* (1956) is the work of **Robert Redfield** and is based on his experiences with Latin American peasants. He also discovered that the peasant-based societies were not isolated and bounded. The life of the peasants is influenced by tribes, towns and cities people. According to **Robert Redfield**, the peasant society is a system of social relations, with relationships extending outside it to wider communities. He stressed on the interdependence of peasant community as bearers of little tradition on townsfolk and populace who represented great tradition.

**Analysing Indian Civilization as a Type**

The comparative sociologists liked the approach and stressed on the aspect that the Indian civilization is seen as a distinct type in juxtaposition with other societies and culture. The focus is to view Indian society as a traditional society, which is experiencing processes, such as modernisation that illustrate cultural, social and historical principles. The objective is not to read distinct values or aspects that are unique to the structure of India but typify it on the basis of what it has in common with other societies and culture and then to examine variations. In order to view India as a caste society, the futile exercise will be to understand as the concept/ phenomenon of caste is unique to India. This eliminates the possibility for making cross-cultural/societal comparisons of India. The distinct part is thus ‘Scientifically Incomprehensible’ in view of this approach (Cohn 1971:4).

## UNDERSTANDING THE GEOGRAPHY OF INDIA

The historical traditions of the Indian civilization are complex and deeply rooted in nature with a wide variation in custom and behaviour regionally and with the social structure of a particular region (Cohn 1971:7). The geographical distribution of the country explains its diversity and regional variations. The basic physiography of India also explains the broad framework for a persistent historical, cultural and political pattern. It is, therefore, important to take an account of its (historical) geography.

According to Cohn, the three zones into which India may be divided in a broad geographical way are:

- The Perennial or Nuclear Zones
- The Route Zones
- The Zones of Relative Isolation

A description of these zones is as follows:

### The Perennial/Nuclear Zones

The perennial zones consist of the fertile river basins, plains and delta and have been centres/nucleus of human settlement, high population density, political activity and a stable state system. The agriculture practices are settled and are famous for being trade centres of agricultural and craft commodities. There are many pre-modern and modern cities that have emerged in nuclear zones and India is marked by such zones both in north and south India.

The river basins and plains around Peshawar led to the emergence of first nuclear zone in northern India which is Gandhara, a town that is now in Pakistan. An important role was played by this region in spreading the influences from western and central Asia to India. The Sutlej-Jamuna doab and the Gangese-Jamuna doab together make the major nuclear zones of north. These consist of the cities like: Kurukshetra-Panchala, Kanauj, Panipat, Delhi, Agra, which have had a vibrant politico-historical past. The examples of the nuclear zones of north are Kosala, the present day Central Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Saurashtra, the contemporary Gujarat. These zones have distinct linguistic traditions and owing to topographical and climatic variations have evolved a distinctive cropping pattern.

The nuclear zones in south India are – Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra and Mysore. Andhra consists of Telugu speaking people and has rich agricultural delta areas of Godavari and Krishna river. Tamil Nadu consists of Tamil speaking people and is the site of the Chola and Pandyan kingdom and consists

of fertile plains of Pennar river and Kaveri delta and is densely populated. Maharashtra consists of Marathi speaking people and is similar to Mysore, the home of Kannada speaking population in agricultural practices. Both the zones are known for dry agriculture with millet, maize and gram being prominent crops. The south western part of India is Kerala/Malabar and is distinct from other zones in the south owing to its height due to the Niligiri ranges and the rain it receives. The Western Ghats isolate it from other zones in south and render it a distinct culture and social structure, visible in the practice of matriliney by the Nayar community. Kerala also displays agriculture based on wet rice cultivation.

### The Route Zones

One famous example of route zone is Malwa which connects north India with the western coast and Deccan. The place acts as a passage for invaders and traders to reach nuclear zones of attraction and has a distinct cultural region, lying towards south of Aravali ranges. The region is semi-arid in nature. There is no unified and persistent political tradition in the route zone and are mosaics rather than having distinctive culture and social structure (Cohn 1971: 26). They are areas of settlement of migrant population.

### The Zones of Relative Isolation

These zones are relatively inaccessible and geographically lesser conducive areas for human settlement. One such example is Ladakh which is not only icy cold but relatively cut off due to high mountains ranges and has less settlement.

The northern part of the country is hilly and mountainous and depicts several zones of relative isolation which is as follows:

(a) The area in the northern arc. This consists of the regions adjoining the borders of Baluchistan and Afghanistan and has loosely organized tribes who have been Islamised.

(b) The areas around Gilgit and Jammu and Kashmir comprises of distinct cultural tradition, assimilating Hindus from the plains.

(c) The areas along the Himalayas in the plains extending through Nepal border, Bhutan and Sikkim and place where the Brahmaputra River enters Assam plains. All these areas represent dual cultural influence that of Tibetan-Buddhism and Hindu beliefs transmitted from the plains.

(d) In the hilly and forested tracts of north east, the area between Burma and India which is home to various tribes reflecting south-eastern influence.

4 / NEERAJ : INDIAN SOCIETY: IMAGES AND REALITIES

(e) The Rajputana/Marwar is a region of relative isolation in the north west India and is inhabited by the Rajputs and other refugees from Muslim invaders who established their culture over the scattered tribes of the region.

There are two significant zones of isolation in central India which are as follows:

(a) The area runs through Vindhya mountains, eastern Gujarat, Narmada River, eastern Banaras from where Kaimur hills are visible.

(b) The second zone is the mountainous terrain south of Vindhya range, northern Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, north western Orissa and south eastern Bihar.

**VIEWING INDIA FROM A STRUCTURAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE**

The social and the cultural aspect of the Indian civilization is influenced by its past. The religion, economy and politics of the country played an important role in shaping its social structure and culture. The mythicreligious past and direct political past of the country has helped in understanding the mutual alliances and tensions between the various regional political entities that existed in pre-colonial India. The mythic and religious are interconnected with the political and myths such as those of sacred kingship which are often invoked to justify present political hierarchies and relationships.

There are many invasions, migrations and a porous and accepting religion which has added diversity to the Indian population. These aspects have given it an essentially pluralistic content.

This does not mean that India is not seen as a singular entity/unit, a nation. The civilization of India is structurally and culturally highly segmented and stratified. Hinduism is not a doctrinal religion and more of a way of life of the country. The religions such as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism are flourished in the country and accepted outside religions like Islam and Christianity. Therefore, we can say that the religious past of India manifests a high level of differentiation and absorption of diverse elements. The great tradition of India in terms of the hierarchy of *varna*-order and the prolific *jati* system is an all encompassing system of social order that has so permeated the Indian sub-continent that incoming religions such as Islam and Christianity have also accepted this social order in practice if not in ideology. The social and political order from the past has helped in letting the caste system of *varna* and local *jatis* play an important role in the arena of power dynamics and formation of social networks

and groups. The identity of a person even in the contemporary India is connected to his/her *jati* and *varna* identity and legitimized by reference to some imagined and mythical past.

The link with religious past also helps in knowing the means for identification with a distinct kinship group and particular ancestry. There are many Hindus who visit Gaya and Haridwar to perform rituals for their dead, where priests maintain books tracing the genealogical history of their clients. The *varna* and *jati* systems rule the social world by its superimposition on the kinship system by the rule of *jati* endogamy. The concept of generational or blood feuding also exist that is a derivative of kinship and is followed in the societies where kinship plays a vital role even at present. Thus, we could come across households and clans whose members may not enter into marital alliances or inter-dine with each other as their ancestors in the previous generations had arguments or quarrels. The impact of kinship and the *jati* system as an extended kin group limits the social mobility and encloses people to groups identified by the past more than the present.

The perception of the past has changed over the years, particularly since the end of 19th century when our nationalist leaders started to portray India as a nation and its population as a unit. India is no longer seen only as a segment or fragment which is divided into several regions/states with its population representing different religious/social identities. India was declared as a secular state in the year 1947. The Hindu symbols were avoided and a mix of religions was represented in the formation of the national symbols and to reiterate its secular character. In India, secularism refers to a respect for all religions and not its western counterpart of no religion. The flag of the country has a Buddhist wheel of law and the national emblem is made of lions, taken from the seal of the Buddhist king, Ashoka. Also, the national anthem of the country, *jana, gana, mana* spells out peoples and regions of India and focus on its unified identity, despite the underlying diversities. To sum up, we conclude that the focus of the nationalist leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru had been to show India as essentially representative of the principle of 'Unity in Diversity'. The principle of unity and diversity reflects India's ability 'to absorb and reshape what is foreign' (Cohn 1971:57). The civilization of India depicts the assimilation and absorption of elements from long period of several waves of immigrant rule. This helped in the socio-cultural richness and pluralism of the