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# **HISTORY OF INDIA-III**

## **(c. 750-1206 C.E.)**

**B.H.I.C.- 105**

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*By: Prieti Gupta*



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

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# QUESTION PAPER

June – 2024

(Solved)

**HISTORY OF INDIA-III**  
**(C. 750-1206 C.E.)**

**B.H.I.C.-105**

**Time: 3 Hours ]**

**[ Maximum Marks: 100**

**Note: Answer any five of the following questions. Attempt at least two questions from each section. All questions carry equal marks.**

## SECTION-I

**Q. 1. Analyse the significance of biographies or characters in reconstructing the history of the early medieval India period.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 1, 'Biographies or Charities' and Page No. 4, Q. No. 1.

**Q. 2. Critically examine the characteristics of lineage state and feudal polity in the early medieval India.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-2, Page No. 12, 'Formation of Lineage Power', 'Consolidation of Lineage Power' and 'Nature and Structure of Polity'.

**Q. 3. Write a note on the temple architecture during the early medieval period.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-5, Page No. 38, 'Temple Architecture'.

**Q. 4. Write short notes on the following:**

**(a) Conquest of Sindh**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-6, Page No. 45, 'The Conquest of Sindh'.

**(b) Sculptures in the early medieval period**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-5, Page No. 40, 'Sculptures: Stone and Metal Images'.

**(c) The Chachnama**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-6, Page No. 44, 'The Chachnama'.

**(d) Ur and Nadu**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-4, Page No. 31, Q. No. 3.

## SECTION-II

**Q. 5. Critically examine the feudalism debate in the early medieval Indian History.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-10, Page No. 84, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 6. Write a note on science and technology in the early medieval period.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-17, Page No. 141, 'Science and Learning in the Early Medieval Period' and Page No. 143, 'Technology'.

**Q. 7. Discuss the social background to the rise of regional languages in the early medieval period.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-16, Page No. 136, 'Regional Languages'.

**Q. 8. Write short notes on the following:**

**(a) Nayanars and Alvars**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-14, Page No. 118, 'Popular Devotional Movements: The Bhakti of the Nayanars and Alvars (CE 600-1000)'.

**(b) Irrigation technology**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-17, Page No. 145, Q. No. 4.

**(c) Virashaivism**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-14, Page No. 120, 'Virashaivism'.

**(d) Third urbanization**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-13, Page No. 107, 'Third Urbanization' and Page No. 110, Q. No. 1.



# QUESTION PAPER

*December – 2023*

*(Solved)*

**HISTORY OF INDIA-III  
(C. 750-1206 C.E.)**

**B.H.I.C.-105**

**Time: 3 Hours ]**

**[ Maximum Marks: 100**

**Note:** Answer any **five** of the following questions. Attempt at least **two** questions from each section. All questions carry equal marks.

## SECTION-I

**Q. 1. Discuss the nature of Rashtrakuta administration.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-3, Page No. 21, 'Rashtrakuta Administration' and Page No. 25, Q. No. 2.

**Q. 2. Write a note on the significance of inscription for the reconstructions of history of early medieval India.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 5, Q. No. 2.

**Q. 3. Write a note on the Brahmdeya and Nagaram.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-4, Page No. 32, Q. No. 4, Page No. Q. No. 5.

**Q. 4. Write short notes on the following:**

**(a) Ur and Nadu**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-4, Page No. 31, Q. No. 3.

**(b) Temple Architecture**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-5, Page No. 38, 'Temple Architecture'.

**(c) Significance of battles of Tarain**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-6, Page No. 54, Q. No. 3.

**(d) Pala polity**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-3, Page No. 23, Q. No. 5.

## SECTION-II

**Q. 5. Briefly discuss the importance of the Shakti cult.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-15, Page No. 132, Q. No. 4.

**Q. 6. Discuss the significance of Chola invasion of Srivijaya kingdom.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-9, Page No. 74, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 7. Write a note on the New social order during the early medieval times in India.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-11, Page No. 88, 'The New Social Order'.

**Q. 8. Write short notes on the following:**

**(a) Debate on Urban decay**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-12, Page No. 102, Q. No. 2.

**(b) Guilds**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-13, Page No. 110, 'Guilds'.

**(c) Tamil and Kannada literature**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-16, Page No. 136, 'Tamil' and 'Kannada'.

**(d) Bhakti in North India**

**Ans.** The Bhakti movements of the 13th to 15th centuries in North and East India and Maharashtra emphasized religious equality and devotion (bhakti). These movements, often linked to South Indian Vaishnava acharyas, are considered by scholars to be a continuation or resurgence of older Bhakti traditions. Notably, Kabir and other leaders of non-conformist monotheistic movements in North India are believed to be disciples of Ramananda, who was connected to Ramanuja's philosophical order. Chaitanya is associated with Madhava's school, while Nimbarka's emphasis on Krishna Bhakti also influenced these movements. Although the Bhakti movements were broadly united by their focus on bhakti and equality, they were not a single homogeneous movement. Each had its own regional identity and socio-cultural context. For example, the non-conformist monotheistic Bhakti movements, represented by figures like Kabir and Nanak, differed significantly from Vaishnava Bhakti movements. Within Vaishnavism, the movements in Maharashtra, Bengal, and North India (associated with

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# HISTORY OF INDIA-III (750-1206 CE)



## Historical Sources

### INTRODUCTION

Early medieval sources could be classified into Literary and Archaeological sources. Besides, some accounts of Chinese pilgrims also provide information about that period. This period is also marked by the beginning of the Islamic rule in northern India so a number of Islamic texts are available that helps in reconstructing the early history of the Sultanate period. In this chapter we will discuss the various sources that can be used for the reconstruction of the history from the 8th to the early 13th century. In addition, new genres of writing such as: *charitas*, *vamsavali* and *prashastis* are helpful in this context.

### CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

#### BIOGRAPHIES OR CHARITAS

*Charitas*, *prasastis* and *vamsavalis* are three types of post-Gupta historical writings.

*Charitas* were historical biographies which included the activities of a person. *Charitas* are written primarily as *kavyas* as an important source for the reconstruction of history. Banabhatta's *Harshacharita* is the most remarkable here. It tells about Harshavardhana, the king of Kannauj and his attempts to acquire sovereignty and his reign. The activities of persons in authority are related to *charitas*. *Charitas* are considered more literature than historical writing but still they are an important historical source. By the middle of the first millennium CE, a large number of polities emerged and worthy court poets were appointed in the new courts for composing the biographies of the king in order to legitimise the dynasty and to publicize the activities of the kings. By the end of the first millennium CE, the biographical tradition had become extensive popular. This was the time when the *Puranas*

were popular as they were used for sectarian worship. An important biography was *Ramacharita* which was written by Sandhyakaranandin in the early 12th century CE., focussed on the reign of Palas of eastern India particularly king Ramapala. *Charitas* like *Ramacharita* become significant from a historical point of view as it threw light on the changes in the king's relationship with his subordinates especially where the politics of opposition is made apparent. The kings belonged to *vamsanucharita* section of the *Puranas* were treated in a perfunctory fashion (due to the fact that many of the new emergent kings were patrons of non brahmanical sects) found space in the *Charitas*. Padmagupta's *Navasahasankacharita*, Bilhana's *Vikramankadevacharita*, and Hemchandra's *Kumara-palacharita* were some of the examples of *Charitas*, who had become important historical sources.

#### INSCRIPTIONS

The inscriptions contain historical data in the form of royal edicts, votive inscriptions recording gifts, brief biographical statements, eulogies of rulers, records of particular events, legal documents pertaining to rights and obligations over land, etc. The historical changes are reflected in the inscription. The inscriptions belonged to the royal court contains official data regarding administration; religious sects regarding land grants, etc. The inscriptions were engraved in public spaces such as temple walls or copper plates, that passed down from one generation to the next. By the 7th century CE, inscriptions begin with a *prashasti* that provides chronological historical information about the dynasty, religious affiliation of the king, updated version of dynastic history, important kings, ancestry and much more. The historian deduced that through the practice of land grants, brahmanas become owners of land and hence powerful. They introduced



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brahmanical traditions and fostered the acceptance of kingship. Inscriptions also helped historians to mark changes in the economic structure of the kingdoms from the pre-Gupta to the post-Gupta times. From the sixth century CE inscriptions began to be used as official statements. Most of these included grants of land to brahmanas, religious establishments, seminaries or even individuals. The official royal inscriptions (*rajakiyam*) included categories such as: *Sasanam* (instructions), *Jayapatram* (legal decisions), *Ajnapatram* (orders), and *Prajnanam* (proclamations), which were important documents for king and thus they were kept in the royal custody. Many inscriptions were possessed by the royal seal to prove its authenticity. The language of the inscriptions belonged to pre-Gupta period was Prakrit but subsequently they were in Sanskrit. By the second millennium CE, regional languages started getting used in inscriptions but the language of the prashasti remained Sanskrit. The inscriptions regarding land grants, from the Gupta period onwards, are significant for the reconstruction of the economy, society, status of craftsmen and crafts, crops, samantas, feudatories, kings and queens, etc. Royal inscriptions of this period possessed the information of other aspects of life besides the information regarding the governance. These inscriptions helped the modern scholars to estimate a new periodization of Indian history, differentiating the late first millennium CE from the earlier period. The ways of state formation of newly emerged polity to full-fledged kingdoms like Chandella kingdom can be studied with the help of these inscriptions.

### TEMPLES

Temple building was in a growing phase during the post Gupta period. Various new emerging polities are building sacred structures in order to legitimize their occupation of the throne. The *Cholas* built enormous temples. The stature of the king increased with the fame of the temple. Because of using superior material, temples had greater longevity and they symbolised the power of the kingdom. With time, temple structure got elaborated with multiple *mandapas*, pavilions, gopurams, towers, etc. and most of the people settled around temples. These temples helped the historians to obtain information about architectural traditions, royal ideology, status, kings and their local dignitaries, etc.

### ORAL TRADITION AS SOURCE

Bardic tradition is another perspective to know about the royal and elite class. This type of literature

was presented by subordinates, who occasionally may have participated in court activities from some distance. The bards are maintained by samantas or local lords, who used to keep a record of their genealogies and property rights. On special occasions, such as a marriage, the birth of a son, or the death of an elder, or whenever a special rite had to be performed, the bards were invited with their families. The bardic narrative normally focuses on local heroes as they reflect the perceptions of lower status. The bardic narrative adds diversity in historical awareness. Prithvirajarasau of Chand Bardai is an example of an epic poem on the Chauhan Rajput and their conflict with later Chandella kings. This type of literature also provide a subaltern perspective and enhance our knowledge.

### PURANAS

Composed in the first millennium CE, these ancient texts or *Purana* play an important role in the reconstruction of history of the early medieval period. They provide genealogical information about the various dynasties ruling that time. Each *Purana* revolved around a deity and contains the descriptions of the *sarga* (primary creation), *prati-sarga* (secondary creation), *manvantara* (the time cycles), *vamsa* (succession), and the *vamsanucarita*. There are 18 *Mahapuranas* and many *Upa Puranas* (subsidiary texts). Examples are *Sthala Purana* associated with places of pilgrimage; Caste Puranas telling about Mallas, the Srimallas, and the *Dharmaranyas*; *Upa Puranas* that provide information on popular beliefs, customs and festivals. The Jainas had their own *Puranas*, presenting a different perspective from the brahmanical.

### LAW BOOKS

A large number of important and inspiring *Dharmasastra* compilations, digests and commentaries were written in the early medieval period. They provide information regarding the processes of formalisation of law and legal procedures on the basis of which the state regulate and arbitrate in the social life of its subjects. Examples are: *Chaturvimshatimata* containing the teachings of 24 laws, Jimutavahana's work on procedural law called the *Vyavaharamatrika*, Vijnaneshvara's *Mitakshara*, Devanabhatta's *Smritichandrika*, etc.

### POEMS, SONGS AND OTHER LITERARY SOURCES

Some other literary sources are Tamil texts that includes the devotional songs of Alvars and Nayanars and the hagiographies of the saints. *Nandikkalambakam*

is poem of 80 stanzas that provide eulogistic account of the reign of the Pallava king Nandivarman III. Kannada works related to Jainism were composed under the royal patronage of the Rashtakutas, Hoysalas and Chalukyas. A Sanskrit and Prakrit work composed in Gujarat and containing various types of legal documents, called *Lekhapaddhati*, provides useful historical information. *Krishiparashara* is another text composed in Bengal associated with agriculture.

#### CHINESE ACCOUNTS

Literary works of monks Xuanzang and Yijing who visited India during 6th century CE are significant for reconstructing the history of Buddhist doctrines and various Buddhist practices in India.

#### COMMENTARIES

During the mid-first millennium CE. many commentaries on Theravada Sangha were composed. Since Pali was more popular than Sanskrit and Mahayanists preferred Sanskrit hence, Theravadins chose Pali over Sanskrit. Buddhaghosa's work on Visuddhimagga, the Samantapasadika and the Sumangalavilasini were significant for presenting the authoritative perspective on the Theravada. *Madhuratha-vilasini* by Buddhadatta was a commentary on the Buddhavamsa. A 12th century work called *Vamsatthappakasiniwell* was commentary on *Mahavamsa*. *Dathavamsa* and *Thupavamsa* were composed during the 13th century that include history of objects and relics, such as the Tooth of the Buddha. All of the above mentioned literature works provide narratives of the patrons of the Sangha.

#### CHRONICLES OR VAMSAVALIS

Rajatarangini written by Kalhan in 1148 is an example of a chronicle of Kashmir region. Chronicle and Vamsavalis illustrate the history of a region, state or kingdom from its beginnings to the present including various changes particularly of the point when the small kingdom got converted into a more powerful larger one. From the ninth to the 12th century, Kashmir was the centre of scholarship in grammar, aesthetics, and philosophy. Al-Biruni, the Central Asian scholar, who spent time in India during 11th century also confirmed this. According to him, due to Mahmud of Ghazni scholars fled to Kashmir and Benaras. Kashmir was one of the important centres of Northern Buddhism, from where Buddhist monks and scholars went to Central Asia and China in the early centuries CE.

Rajatarangini is a historical chronicle of the early Kashmir. It covers the entire span of history in the Kashmir region from the earliest times to the middle

of the 12th century. It was written in Sanskrit by Kashmiri historian Kalhana in the 12th century CE. The work consists of 7826 verses, which are divided into eight books called Tarangas.

*Chamba Vamsavali* was another important chronicle written by unknown scholar. The text is about the settlement at Brahmaur in the upper parts of the Ravi, connected by routes in various directions. The inscriptions suggested that the town of Chamba, after which the kingdom was named, was located on a fertile plateau above the junction of the Ravi and Saho rivers, that was ruled by ranas, intermediaries who were under the suzerainty of the king of Chamba. The text included the succession of rulers and events, other significant processes of change such as the formation of the kingdom, the emergence of intermediaries, the transition to a caste society, and the coming of Puranic Hinduism.

#### ISLAMIC SOURCES

The language of the Islamic sources were Persian dominantly but some work were composed in Arabic also. Abdur Razzaq's *Matla-us-Sadain* (travelogue), Tutsi's *Siyasatnama* (administration and polity), Fakhri Mudabbir's *Adab Ul-Harb-waas-Shujaat* (warfare), are a few important among initial Islamic work regarding Indian history in Persian. A few Arabic works like Ibn Battuta (Rihla) and Shihab-al Din al-Umari (Masalik al-absar Mamalik al-Ansar) have provided excellent travel accounts.

Muhammad bin Mansur, also known as Fakhri Mudabbir compiled *Shajra-i-Ansab*, the book of genealogies of the Prophet of Islam, his companions and the Muslim rulers, including the ancestors of Sultan Muizzuddin Muhammad bin Sam (Sultan Shihabuddin Muhammad Ghuri). His work is considered as the first history of the Ghurian conquest and the foundation of an independent Sultanate i.e. *Qutubddin* Aibak's reign in India. His another important work was *Adab Ul-Harb-waas-Shujaat* dedicated to Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish. He provided information regarding the duties of king, the functioning of state departments, war tactics, mode of warfare, war-horses, their treatment, etc. by illustrating important events that occurred during the period. Another important history of the Ghurian conquest and the Sultanate is *Tajul Ma'asir* written by Hasan Nizami, who migrated from Nishapur to India. He started compiling the history of Qutbuddin Aibak's achievements after his accession to the throne in 1206 with the motive to obtain royal patronage. He described

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all the historical events in detail from the year 1192 upto 1196. But it seems due to the accidental death of Qutbuddin Aibak he stopped the work, which was later resumed after Iltutmish got the throne. Besides the gap, Hasan Nizami presented authentic information about every event that he describes in his work.

Minhaj Siraj Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* is placed among some of the most reliable work in history writing of India during the sultanate period. Minhaj belonged to family of scholars who were associated with the courts of the Ghurid Sultans of Firozkoh and Ghazna. He himself served under different Ghurid princes and nobles before his migration to India, where he was appointed as the head of the Firuzi Madrassa in Uch, the Capital of Sultan Nasiruddin Qubacha. He served as Qazi (Judicial officer) of Gwalior under Iltutmish. Sultan Razia appointed him the head of Madrassa-i Nasiri in Delhi. After that, he became the Chief Qazi of the Sultanate during the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, under which he decided to write the history of Islam upto his own time. Minhaj adopted the Tabaqat System of history-writing. He provided authentic information about the victory of the Mongols over the Muslim rulers and the destruction of Muslim cities and towns. Ziauddin Barani was also impressed from Minhaj's style of writing history.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

The archaeology of the early medieval period is yet to be explored. Due to limited excavation, the layers belonging to the early medieval period either are sterile or show poor remains. But still scholars like R.S. Sharma formulated their theory of urban decline and decay of towns and cities in the early medieval period. Very few remains are found of this period at sites like Atranjikhhera, Hastinapur and Kausambi. In many cases like at Hastinapur and Sringaverapura, the dates of layers often merge with the medieval period and it is difficult to differentiate the earlier phases. During excavation at Hastinapur, brick wall and a room, alongwith pottery, iron objects, terracotta objects and three stone images were found that belonged to Period V of medieval period dated from the 11th century CE. Remains of Rajput period from the 11th to the 12th centuries CE are obtained from Lal Kot in Delhi. Some decorated potsherds, beads, and a fine but damaged stone sculpture are among some noteworthy objects that has been excavated. One of the five structural phases of Rajput period is characterised by the mud floors with ovens. Copper coins, carnelian beads, terracotta

objects, ornate moulded bricks and a small figure of Vishnu in stone, etc. some other important findings. The excavation at Rajghat situated in Varanasi, UP revealed that the town was well planned with elaborate drainage systems, large buildings both residential and 'public', industrial activity and religious structures. Excavation at Pallavamedu in Tamil Nadu has yielded archaeological evidence of the Pallavas. From a recent survey work at the famous temple complex in Aihole in Karnataka, it has been found that the early Chalukyan temples were a part of a larger settlement system with the discovery of pottery scatters, reservoirs, large architectural complex with a pillared hall and room blocks, stone quarries and mortars in the 1 sq. km area surrounding the temple complex. Thus, we can say that despite limited excavation and poor remains, early medieval archaeology had reconstructed various theories such as those of urban decay, feudalism, Third urbanization, etc. It shows the potential of the archeology department and after getting more attention and through further work may correct many assumptions.

#### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q. 1. What is *Charita* literature? What is its significance in the reconstruction of the history of the early medieval period? Illustrate with the help of examples.**

**Ans.** Generally, the *charit* is the narrative of a character's life and/or exploits, but what exactly the word 'charit' refers to depends upon the subject of the narrative, for in some languages, *charit* means the historical record of a king's reign and not the exploits of a fictional or semi-fictional character. *Charitas* were historical biographies and played an important role in the reconstruction of history. *Charitas* were written primarily as *kavyas*.

Banabhatta's *Harshacharita* is significant in this regard. *Harshacharita* is written about Harshavardhana of Kannauj and his attempts to acquire sovereignty and his reign. According to Romila Thapar, *Charita* emerged as the new tradition of historical writing that deals with the actions of a particular person, indicates their works and purpose and locates them in time and space. *Charitas* were not considered typical historical writing as they functioned more as literature. But these are significant in context to history writings. By the middle of the first millennium CE, a large number of polities were emerging and it had become a custom to