



NEERAJ®

HISTORY OF INDIA-I

BHIC-101

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I.G.N.O.U.

& Various Central, State & Other Open Universities

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**Sample Preview
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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2024

(Solved)

HISTORY OF INDIA-I

BHIC-101

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

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

SECTION-I

Q. 1. What are the main features of the Palaeolithic culture of India? Discuss its subsistence patterns.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 22, Q. No. 1.

Q. 2. What are the main features of town planning, drainage and architecture of Harappan civilization?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 46, 'Major Sites' and Page No. 50, Q. No. 4.

Q. 3. What is Megalithic culture? Discuss its types.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 75, 'Megalithic Culture'.

Q. 4. Discuss the following:

(a) Decline of Harappan Civilisation

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 54, 'Decline of Harappan Civilization: The Archaeological Evidence'.

(b) Later Vedic Polity

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 69, 'Polity'.

(c) Teachings of the Buddha

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 88, 'Teachings of the Buddha'.

(d) Rise of Magadha

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 111, Q. No. 2.

SECTION-II

Q. 5. What are the main features of Ashoka's policy of Dhamma?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-17, Page No. 127, 'Dhamma'.

Q. 6. What were the reasons for the disintegration of the Mauryan Empire?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 114, Q. No. 3.

Q. 7. What was the position of women in ancient India?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-19, Page No. 145, 'Position of Women in Early India'.

Q. 8. Discuss the following:

(a) Saptanga Theory

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 122, Q. No. 3.

(b) Megasthenes

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 120, 'Megasthenes' Indica: A Case Study'.

(c) Arthashastra

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 4, 'Kautilya's Arthashastra' and Chapter-16, Page No. 118, 'Arthashastra and the Saptanga Theory'.

(d) Metallurgy in ancient India

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-18, Page No. 138, 'Developments in Metallurgy'.



QUESTION PAPER

December – 2023

(Solved)

HISTORY OF INDIA-I

BHIC-101

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

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

SECTION-I

Q. 1. Discuss the importance of archaeological sources for the reconstruction of ancient Indian history.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 9, Q. No. 4.

Q. 2. How would you define the term 'Neolithic'?

Discuss in detail the concept of Neolithic Revolution.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 32, 'Neolithic Culture' and 'The Concept of Neolithic Revolution'.

Q. 3. Discuss the changes in the economy, polity and society during the later Vedic period.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 69, 'The Nature of Economy' and 'Polity and Society'.

Q. 4. Write short notes on the following:

(a) Importance of Foreign accounts in Ancient Indian History

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 5, 'Foreign Accounts'.

(b) Harappan economy

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 47, 'Economy'.

(c) Ajivikas

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 92, Q. No. 3.

(d) 16 Mahajanapadas

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 99, Q. No. 1.

SECTION-II

Q. 5. Discuss Alexander's invasion of India.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-14, Page No. 104, Q. No. 2.

Q. 6. What are the main features of Mauryan administration?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 123, Q. No. 4.

Q. 7. What is the significance of gender studies? Write a detailed note on the position of women in ancient India.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-19 Page No. 146, 'Significance of Gender Studies' and Page No. 145, 'Position of Women in Early India'.

Q. 8. Write short notes on the following:

(a) Material reasons for the rise of Buddhism and Jainism in the 6th C. BCE.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 88, 'Development of Buddhism' and Page No. 89, 'Development of Jainism'.

(b) Emergence of Iron

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 74, 'Beginnings of Iron Technology'.

(c) Six systems of Indian philosophy

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 85, Q. No. 3.

(d) Hydrology in ancient India.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-18, Page No. 136, 'Hydrology in Ancient India'.

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Sample Preview of The Chapter

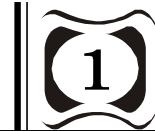
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HISTORY OF INDIA-I



Geographical Regions and Sources

INTRODUCTION

History without geography is partial and does not fulfill its vital substance. The focus of history is from the concept of space. Therefore, history is taken as both the history of humankind and the history of environment. The history of humans and that of the environment are related to each other. The Indian subcontinent is diverse which ranges from the deserts to regions of high rainfall and from vast alluvial plains to high mountains and rocky table-lands. Environment refers to the “physical surroundings and conditions, especially as affecting people’s lives”. The human evolution is based on the conditions like soil, rainfall, vegetation, climate and environment.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS

There are three basic physiographic divisions as follows:

1. Himalayan Uplands,
2. Indo-Gangetic Plains,
3. Peninsular India.

The youngest fold mountains on the Earth are the Himalayas. We get huge quantity of alluvium into the plains from these mountains owing to weathering and erosion. Also the snow from the Himalayan serves the three great river systems – Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra – which tend to flow perennially. The Central India separates the northern plains and Peninsular India extending from Gujarat to western Odisha over a stretch of 1600 kms and the Aravalli hills in Rajasthan separate the Indus plains from the Peninsula. The intermediate zone consists of the Vindhyan and Satpura ranges and the Chotanagpur plateau covering portions of Jharkhand, Odisha, West

Bengal, Bihar and Chhattisgarh. The Peninsular India is on the southern edge of the intermediate zone. The alluvial plains are produced by Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri and have helped in the creation of nuclear areas in the plains and deltas enabling the sustenance of cultural growth through the ancient, medieval and modern periods. The Deccan Plateau extends from the Vindhyas in the north to the southern limits of Karnataka. The black soil in Maharashtra and in the adjoining part of the Central India is rich in nature as it retains moisture and is considered to be ‘self-ploughing’.

Specific Major Geographical Units

We will now focus on the specific major geographical units which conform to linguistic divisions and look into their traits from a historical perspective.

The Himalayas and the Western Frontier

The three units in which Himalayas can be divided are: **Eastern, Western and Central.**

The eastern mountains stretch from the east of the Brahmaputra in the north-south extending from Assam to south China. The central Himalayan region stretches from Bhutan to Chitral, lies at the fringe of the great table-land of Tibet.

The towns like Kabul and Kandahar are situated on trade routes between Iran and India and the great routes connecting the Indian plains with Iran and Central Asia through Afghanistan run through the Gomal, Bolan and Khyber passes.

The Indus Plains

The Indus plains can be divided into two regions: Punjab and Sindh. Punjab is the land of five rivers which are Ravi, Beas, Chenab, Zhelum, and the Sutlej. Punjab is famous as the meeting place and the melting pot of cultures. The lower Indus valley and the delta consist of Sindh. The major cities Harappa and Mohenjodaro are located in the Punjab and Sindh respectively.

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Gangetic Northern India

There are three sub-regions of the Ganga: Upper, Middle, and Lower.

The Upper plains in western and central Uttar Pradesh consist of *Doab* which has been an area of conflict and cultural synthesis. At the terminal point of the *Doab* is Prayagaraj (ancient Prayaga). The Middle Ganga plains correspond to eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The Upper and Middle Ganga plains consist of the Himalayas on the north and the Central Indian hills on the south. The Ganga plains have reared a greater number of settlements and have supported a higher population density than other similar regions.

Eastern, Western and Central India

Central India is a different region and has no central focal point. The south-eastern part of the state to the east of the Aravallis is part of a sub-region called Malwa. The present-day states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh constitute the Central India. Gujarat lies on the western fringe of the Central Indian Belt and consists of three natural divisions: Saurashtra, Anarta (North Gujarat) and Lata (South Gujarat). Kathiawar is the central peninsula of Gujarat. The low-lying Rann of Kutch is another feature which during the monsoon turns into a swamp. The coastal plains of Odisha lie to the south-west of the delta of the Ganga at the eastern end of the hills of Central India.

Peninsular India

The Peninsular India constitutes the Deccan Plateau and the surrounding coastal plains. The plateau is split into four major regions which correspond to the states of Maharashtra, Andhra, Telangana and Karnataka.

The Extreme South

Tamil Nadu constitutes the wide eastern coastal plain in the south and its adjoining hinterland. The epicenter is the Kaveri plain and its delta. The western coastal plain stretches in the extreme south and corresponds to the region known as Malabar or the present state of Kerala. There are many crops and spices have been traded with the West since the post-Mauryan times. Kerala has been open to the sea and interestingly first the Christian and then the Muslim influence here came by sea.

UNEVEN PATTERNS OF THE EMERGENCE OF HISTORICAL REGIONS

The process of emergence of the historical regions has been uneven which was greatly influenced by geography. This uneven development of regions can be illustrated through interesting historical situations.

In the second half of the third millennium BCE one witnessed the Mesolithic cultures in Gujarat and at the same time Neolithic cattle-keepers were traversing the landscape of the Deccan. The striking part is the mature, advanced Harappan civilization co-existed with these cultures and regions at different levels of growth. The Gangetic north attracted settlements early on, the vast areas of intermediate zones or forested hills of Central India were never thoroughly colonized and, therefore, they continued to provide shelter and isolation to tribes at different stages of primitive economy.

THE NATURE OF REGIONS

Another way in which the regions can be classified is to understand them in terms of Areas of Perennial Nuclear Regions, Areas of Relative Isolation and Areas of Isolation.

The perennial nuclear regions consist of the major river valleys like Ganga, Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri which have fascinated the human settlements. These areas are in demand because of the availability of resources and the convergence of trade and communication routes and have come out as important centres of power. The areas of relative isolation in Central India such as the country of Bhils, Bastar and the Rajmahal hills in terms of structure of settlements, agrarian history, social organization and state systems are different from the nuclear regions.

The first urban civilization, Harappan civilization, of the Indian subcontinent developed in a very wide region of the north-west. There is much archaeological evidence which tell us about the extensive use of the plough during this time. There was a beginning of rainy season crops like rice and pulses to the winter crops of wheat, barley, lentils of West Asian origin. Many towns were established where the surplus served to promote further processing and exchange of materials, as well as trade and artisanal activities. Some of the reasons of the collapse of the Indus civilization include the drying up of the Saraswati River, flooding of the Indus, climatic change as evident from palaeobotany, salination of the agricultural soil due to irrigation and over-utilization of the natural resources leading to depletion of the natural vegetation cover. One more reason given by the scholars is the ecological imbalances caused by wearing out of the landscape by continuous human and animal use over a long period of time. The Harappans moved out of the core regions to areas offering better subsistence possibilities.

SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

There are many sources for reconstructing the history of ancient India. They can be broadly classified as:

- **Literary:** These sources include the Vedic, Buddhist and Jain literature, the Epics, *Puranas*, *Sangam* literature, ancient biographies, poetry and drama.
- **Archaeological:** These include epigraphic, numismatic and architectural/archaeological remains that are recovered as the result of archaeological explorations and excavations. Also, archaeological artifacts in the form of temple remains, coins, house remains, post-holes, pottery, soils, etc. also form an important category of evidence. The sources can also be divided into primary and secondary. The primary sources are all archaeological artifacts recovered from the earth or written documents in the form of temple records; *talapatra* (palm-leaf manuscripts) and inscriptions on palm leaves, pillars, rocks, copper plates, pot sherds, etc. When the primary sources are used by the historians to write articles, books or any form of written history, these are called secondary sources. The written primary sources are of two types – Manuscript sources/Inscriptions and Published material.
- **Foreign Accounts:** The accounts of the travelers also serve as an important source for the study of ancient Indian history.

Literary Sources

The Indian literature deals with the religion, theology, cosmology, cosmogony, magic, ritual, prayers and mythology. There are *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Brahmanas*, *Shastra* literature, Epics and *Puranas*, etc. deal broadly with non-secular themes.

Vedas

The word *veda* comes from the Sanskrit root 'vid' which means 'to know'. *Veda* means knowledge. There

are three different classes of literary works in the Vedic literature:

***Samhitas* or Collections:** includes the collections of hymns, prayers, incantations, benedictions, sacrificial formulas and litanies. There are four *Samhitas* which differ from each other:

1. *Rigveda Samhita* which is the *veda* or the knowledge of the songs of praise (*rig*).
2. *Atharvaveda Samhita* is the collection of the *Atharvaveda* or the knowledge of magical formulae (*atharvan*).
3. *Samveda Samhita* is the collection of the *Samveda* i.e. the knowledge of melodies (*saman*).
4. *Yajurveda Samhita* includes the collection of the *Yajurveda* i.e. the knowledge of the sacrificial formulas (*yajus*).

***Brahmanas*:** These includes the prose texts which contain theological matter.

***Aranyakas* (forest texts) and *Upanishads* (secret doctrines):** These include the incantations of the forest hermits and ascetics on God and the world and mankind and contain a good deal of oldest Indian philosophy.

The whole Vedic literature is considered as sacred. The *Rigveda*, *Samveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads* were composed between c. 1000 BCE to 500 BCE. The historians have used the literature to cull out political, religious and social data of much historical value. Information about processes like the transition from a pastoral, pre-class/caste society in the *Rigveda* to agrarian, class, caste society and the formations of political territories in the Later Vedic period has been obtained from these texts. The *Sutras* is a category of texts which form part of the post-Vedic literature. The *Sutra* texts are manuals on ritual (c. 600-300 BCE) and include *Shrautasutra* and *Grihyasutra* and *Dharmasutra*.

Oral and Written Tradition in Early India

The oral tradition includes the *Vedas* which are traditionally regarded as *Shruti* i.e. 'heard' or revealed texts or the words said to have been uttered by God Brahma in the ears of the first Man. These traditions were handed down from one generation to the next with focus on memorization. The increase in trade and commerce coexisted with the use of script and references abound about promissory notes, letters of credit, and records of items produced and exchanged and even usury. Another important source of records is the inscriptions. The Ashokan inscriptions dating to the third century BCE used the Brahmi script, the earliest evidence of the use of Brahmi.

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Kautilya's Arthashastra

This is an important law book in which the text is divided into fifteen books and was put into final form in the beginning of the Common Era. The earliest portions show the state and society of the Mauryan period. It is an important source for the study of early Indian polity and economy.

Ramayana and Mahabharata

The two famous Epics, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* are known as *Itihasa* or narratives. The *Mahabharata* is older and narrates the Kaurava-Pandava conflict related to the Later Vedic period. Both *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* include interpolations and portions added at various points of time. The excavations of many sites mentioned in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have been done. The excavation of Ayodhya tells us about the settlement going back to the Northern Black Polished Ware period. The excavation of many other sites tell us that both the epics are a mine of information on religious sects and how they were integrated into mainstream Hinduism, social practices and norms current at the time and philosophy.

Puranas

The *Puranas* belong to a category of texts attributed to Vyasa. There are 18 *Mahapuranas* and many *Upapuranas* (secondary *Puranas*). There are five sections of *Puranas* – *sarga* (the creation of the world), *pratisarga* (re-creation), *manvantaras* (periods of the various Manus), *vamsha* (the genealogy of gods and *rishis*), and *Vamshanucharita* (an account of royal dynasties). There are many other *Puranas* like *Vayu*, *Brahmanda*, *Brahma*, *Harivamsha*, *Matsya*, *Vishnu* which consists of the useful information for reconstructing the history of ancient India.

The *Puranas* contain considerable genealogical information. The dynastic lists end with the Guptas which tells us that the *Puranas* may have been compiled by fourth-sixth centuries CE. The *Puranas* also provide us with the geographical information on rivers, lakes, mountains and other places. They provide us with the information on the three major cults of Hinduism – Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti. *Puranas* are taken as vehicle through which the Brahmanas spread their social and religious values.

Sangam Literature

The *Sangam* literature refers to the work of poets who composed them over a period of three to four centuries. *Sangam* refers to the assembly in colleges and the literature produced in these colleges was called *Sangam* literature. The first and the *Sangam* were at

Madurai and the second at Kapatapuram. The term “Early classical Tamil literature” is used by the scholars rather than *Sangam* literature (Singh, 2008). The theme of the poems are mainly on love and war and were modelled on the bardic songs of ancient times and transmitted orally for a long time before they were compiled. There is no religious literature. There are many poems which mention a king or a hero by name and describe in detail his military exploits. There are many flourishing towns such as Kaveripattinam mentioned in the literature.

Biographies, Poetry and Drama

The earliest Sanskrit poets and playwrights include Ashvagoshya and Bhasa. *Buddhacharita*, *Sariputra-prakarna* and *Saundarananda* were written by Ashvagoshya and *Pancharatra*, *Dutavakya*, *Balacarita* and *Svapna-Vasavadatta* were written by Bhasa. Kalidasa authored dramas like *Abhijnana-Shakuntalam*, *Malavikagnimitram*, *Vikramorvashiyam* and poetic works such as: *Raghuvamsha*, *Kumara-sambhavam* and *Meghadutam*. There are many ancient dramas on historical themes. Then there are narrative literature which includes *Panchatantra* (fifth-sixth centuries) and *Kathasaritasagara* (Ocean of Streams of Stories) which are collections of popular folk tales. The literature talks about the well-known kings and were written by court poets and writers in praise of their royal patrons. Banabhatta's *Harshacharita* is the oldest surviving biography in India.

Buddhist and Jaina Literature

Buddhist and Jain literature are an important category of the source of information. The Pali texts *Tripitakas* or the ‘Three Baskets’ tells us about the state of affairs in India at the time of the Buddha and sixteen *Mahajanapadas*. The *Tripitikas* consist of three books – the *Sutta*, *Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma*. The *Sutta Pitaka* includes the discourses of the Buddha on various doctrinal issues in stories, poems and dialogue form. The *Vinaya* consists of the 227 rules and regulations for monks and nuns of the *Sangha* and includes the explanations about the founding of each rule by the Buddha. The *Abhidhamma Pitaka* (literally ‘higher *Dhamma*’) consists of the matter related to Buddhist philosophy in accordance with the *Theravada* school and contains lists, summaries and questions and answers. The *Sutta Pitaka* contains *Theragatha*, *Therigatha* and *Jatakas*. There are some important stories about the former births of the Buddha in the form of a *deva*, man, animal, fairy, spirit or a mythological character in *Jatakas* and *Theragatha*