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HISTORY OF INDIA-V (C. 1550-1605)

B.H.I.C.-109

B.A. History (Hons.) - 4th Semester

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**Sample Preview
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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

HISTORY OF INDIA-V (C.1550-1605) (B.H.I.C.-109)

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. Discuss the process of imperial and sub-imperial transmission of Indian literary traditions in the 16th century.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 12, 'Indic Literary Tradition: Imperial and Sub-Imperial Transmission'.

Q. 2. Discuss Bairam Khan's regency. How did Bairam Khan deal with the initial challenges to his power?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 44, 'Power Politics and Regency of Bairam Khan: 1556-1560' and Page No. 50, Q. No. 1.

Q. 3. Write a note on the emergence and development of the Nayaka kingdoms.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 57, 'Emergence and Development of The Nayaka Kingdoms'.

Q. 4. Write short notes on any two of the following:

(a) Afghan theory of kingship

Ans. The 15th and 16th centuries marked a transformative period in the history of Afghanistan, particularly with regard to the Afghan theory of kingship. During this time, the region saw the rise of significant dynasties and rulers who left a lasting impact on the concept of kingship in Afghanistan.

One of the most prominent dynasties of this era was the Timurid Empire, which was founded by Timur (Tamerlane) and continued under his descendants. The Timurids played a crucial role in shaping the Afghan theory of kingship during the 15th and 16th centuries. The Timurids were of Turkic-Mongol origin but embraced Persian culture, which heavily influenced the Afghan region. Their rule introduced Persian as the court language and promoted Persian art, literature, and architecture. This cultural fusion had a significant impact on the perception of Afghan kings as patrons of Persianate culture.

The Timurid rulers, including Babur and Humayun, attempted to centralize their authority in Afghanistan. They established strong administrative systems and sought to bring various regions under their control. This approach represented a departure from the more fragmented and decentralized governance structures of previous eras.

Like their predecessors, the Timurid rulers maintained a strong emphasis on Islamic legitimacy. They portrayed themselves as protectors of the faith, often issuing coins and inscriptions with religious motifs. This reinforced the idea of the Afghan king as a spiritual leader within the region.

The Timurids engaged in territorial expansion, both within Afghanistan and beyond. Babur, in particular, is well-known for his conquests and the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India. This expansionist approach underscored the Afghan king's role as a conqueror and unifier of territories. The Timurid dynasty followed a strict hereditary system of succession, where the eldest son typically inherited the throne. This practice contributed to the stability of the dynasty and the perception of kingship as a hereditary institution.

While the Timurids aimed to centralize power, they also recognized the importance of local leaders and tribal chiefs. They often integrated these figures into their administrative structure, which helped maintain a degree of regional autonomy. The 15th and 16th centuries witnessed a cultural renaissance in Afghanistan under Timurid rule. This period saw the production of exquisite art, poetry, and architecture, reflecting the king's role as a patron of culture and learning.

(b) Local administration of the Mughals

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 90, Q. No. 11.

(c) Administration under Shershah

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 37, 'Sur Administration'.

(d) **Humayun and the Eastern Afghans**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 36, 'Eastern Afghans and Humayun'.

SECTION-II

Q. 5. Critically examine the nature and pattern of the composition of the Mughal ruling class.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 99, 'Composition of The Mughal Nobility'.

Q. 6. Analyse the methods of assessment and mode of collection of land revenue under the Mughals.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 106, 'Methods of Land Revenue Assessment'.

Q. 7. What do you understand by the term 'Watan System'? What were its chief characteristics?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-14, Page No. 127, Q. No. 21.

Q. 8. Write short notes on any two of the following:

(a) **System of escheat**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 94, Q. No. 5.

(b) **Sulah-i-Kul**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-17, Page No. 144, Q. No. 8.

(c) **Mughal mints**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 130, 'The Mughal Minting System'.

(d) **Cash crops**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-14, Page No. 115, 'Cash Crops'.



Sample Preview of The Chapter

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HISTORY OF INDIA-V (C.1550-1605)

1

Indo-Persian Histories and Persian Literary Traditions

INTRODUCTION

Our study focuses on the period between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries in north India, which was marked by significant historical changes influenced by political, economic, social, religious, and technological factors. These changes signalled the emergence of the 'early modern' era in Indian history. During this period, Persian culture was introduced through the Ghaznavid invasions and gained prominence as a lingua franca that bridged the multi-lingual and multi-religious diversities in India. The Mughals, who spoke Chaghatai Turki, preferred to use Persian for their administrative, literary, and cultural expression, which helped connect the subcontinent with the Islamic world.

This shift to Persian as the dominant language of the Mughal Court reflected an altered worldview. Indo-Persian historians of Mughal India began recounting past events in terms of human actions rather than divine intervention, illustrating a new way of perceiving the world that was more secular. Historiography shifted away from the more religious and didactic outlook of earlier Turko-Afghan historians. Memoirs and autobiographies also became important genres of writing that focused on individuals' self-narrative.

The Persian knowing intellectuals and scribes, along with their courtly patrons, were the carriers of this cultural and literary transformation, coming from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds rooted in Iran, Central Asia, and India. The Indo-Persian literary practices of those days were urbane and cosmopolitan, cultivating a distinct style called the *sabk-i hindi*. This style was reflected in official orders, court histories, poetry, philosophical and mystical concepts, tales of love, wonder, and travel. However, in the absence of the printing press in India, handwritten manuscripts were the primary means for disseminating ideas among the urban literati.

Indo-Persian manuscripts were exceptional works crafted on handmade paper, featuring elegant calligraphy and exquisite illustrations. These manuscripts were not only visual representations of written words, but also self-representations of the patron. The scribes (*khuttab*) and secretaries (*munshis*) who authored or compiled these

works were also appointed as high officials or employed in the Mughal secretariat (*diwan al-rasail or diwan al-Insha*).

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

PERSIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE ON THE EVE OF MUGHAL ADVENT IN INDIA

The Persian language was widely used by the Muslim elites in India for over 500 years, including administrators, literati, and piety-minded individuals. The Ghaznavid invasions in the 11th century marked the expansion of Persianate culture in India, which was characterized by a mixed cultural heritage of pre-Islamic Iran and Arab Muslims. Persian was patronized by the Samanids as the medium of literary expression and official bureaucracy, and ancient Iranian traditions were compiled along with ideas of the Arab-Islamic world. Persian emerged as a powerful medium of connecting diverse ethnic groups, courts, literati, artists, scribes, sufis, and merchants during these centuries.

The Persian literature produced at the court of the Ghaznavid sultans had a significant influence on later generations of Persian scholars in India. This corpus included the epic poem the *Shahnama*, panegyric and lyrical verses, and the *Tarikh-i Baihaqi*. Additionally, Abu Raihan Biruni's *Kitab al-Hind* was an important work on north Indian Brahmanical culture and natural history. Persian speaking emigrants settled in north India after the establishment of the Ghaznavid capital in Lahore, making it the new hub of Persian literary production. This included the introduction of the Sanskrit genre of the *barahmasa* in Persian by Mas'ud Sa'd-i Salman. Works like the *Kashf al-Mahjub* by Shaikh Ali bin Usman Hujwiri Jullabi are important sources for the study of many social, intellectual, political, religious, and cultural aspects of the early stages of sultanate formation in India.

The roots of Persian culture in India were established by the Ghurids, who captured several Indian territories including Lahore, Delhi, and Bengal. Delhi became the seat of cultural patronage during the Delhi Sultanate period, where various forms of literature were produced including genealogies, historiographies, biographies,

and poetic compositions in diverse forms. The literary patronage also included narratives of history.

Indo-Persian history writing in thirteenth and fourteenth centuries combined pre-Islamic and Islamic Persian history to promote Islamic religion. The *Shajarah-i ansab* and *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* used genealogies to show kinship relationships and give political legitimacy to Muslim rulers. The ideas of absolute kingship and justice drawn from Persian kings were combined with the imagery of ghazi sultan to eulogize Muslim political patrons, while emphasizing universal and cross-cultural elements in the narrative strategies of history writing in Persian in India.

Ziauddin Barani, a historian in Perso-Islamic tradition, believed that history should be written with a didactic purpose to teach moral lessons based on Sunni Islam. In his work, *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi*, Barani stressed the importance of moralizing. His *Fatawa-i Jahandari* blended Islamic and Persian concepts, positing that it would be impossible to rule according to Islamic precepts and offering a pragmatic solution to Indo-Muslim rulers to balance the interests of both their Muslim and non-Muslim subjects by following the culturally inclusive practices of pre-Islamic Iranian monarchs.

Amir Khusrau, an Indian-born Turk, was an innovator in Persian literary and musical traditions in India. He experimented with literary styles, narrative events, and epistolography. His works provide insights into courtly life, Sufi devotionism, and the historical evolution of Perso-Islamic culture. Additionally, medieval historians attributed the causation of historical events mostly to the element of fate (*taqdir*) with minimal role for human agency.

Persian in the wake of Timur: After Timur's military campaigns in northern India in 1398, the patronage for Persian literature weakened. Some historians believe that the post-Timurid period from 1398-1556 was a crisis for Persian literature in India, while others believe that Persian became further rooted in the Indian socio-cultural environment. Persian was still the language of the new Muslim political elite in north India and the Deccan, but indigenous languages like Sanskrit were also significant mediums of expression. The period was marked by transcultural and multi-lingual activities that initiated literary and historiographical trends that matured under the Mughals.

After the fall of Delhi to Timur, political authority shifted to regional sultanates and Rajput kingdoms. This led to the patronage of local histories in the style of the Delhi Sultanate, such as Muhammad Bihmad Khani's *Tarikh-i Muhammadi*, a history of Kalpi, and Abdul Malik Isami's *Futuh as Salatin*, a verse history of the Bahmanid Sultanate. While Persian remained the language of the new Muslim political elite, regional rulers also patronized local languages for political, administrative, religious,

and literary discourse. This period is marked by the rise of regional histories and a multi-lingual literary and historiographical trend that matured under the Mughals.

During the 14th and 15th centuries in India, there was a growing indigenization of the Persian language as seen in the production of multi-lingual Persian lexicographic works. These works were of two types, the simple dictionary called *lughat* and the explanatory dictionary called *farhang*, which described the knowledge, culture, and resources of the literary language. Several such dictionaries were compiled in north India during this period in various regional sultanates, indicating the literary status of their patrons in the Persianate world.

During the 14th and 15th centuries, Persian dictionaries were compiled in regional sultanates of India containing words from various languages such as Arabic, Turki, Syrian, Greek, Latin, *Pashto* and *Hindavi*, and were used for language instruction and poetic education. These dictionaries were of two kinds, the simple dictionary known as *lughat*, and the explanatory dictionary known as *farhang*, which describes the knowledge, culture and resources of the literary language. These dictionaries were used for teaching Persian grammar and deepened Persian learning among the military, courtly, scholarly and religious elites of North India.

The Persian language in India underwent a process of indigenization through the production of multi-lingual Persian dictionaries. These dictionaries were used for language and poetic education and contained words from various languages such as Arabic, Turki, Greek, Latin, Pashto, and *Hindavi*. They were organized thematically or alphabetically, with specific sections devoted to words from other languages like *Hindavi*. The inclusion of *Hindavi* words in Persian dictionaries explains the diverse nature of contact between the two cultures and how Persian acquired vocabularies from various regions of India, leading to the 'linguistic indigenization of Persian' and 'provincialization of Persian' in India, setting the foundation for its growth under the Mughals.

During the pre-Mughal period in India (c. 1000-1500), a diverse range of political, economic, social, and cultural factors led to a variety of literary compositions in different languages including Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Apabhramsha, and the vernacular known as *Hindavi* or *Bhakha*. Sanskrit language had a significant influence across the South Asian region, creating a cultural zone of the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis,' while the vernacular literature included works on genealogies, biographies, panegyrics, devotional literature, and governmental records. The cultural spaces occupied by the different languages were not isolated, and there was constant movement, dialogue, and dissemination of ideas among their interlocutors.

The movement across linguistic cultures impacted literary output, with new styles appearing through

adaptations of classical genres of Sanskrit and Persian literature, regional histories and panegyrics being written in Sanskrit and Persian, works of translation from Sanskrit into Persian and vernacular languages being commissioned under political patronage, and the earliest Persian grammatical writing in Sanskrit. This literary production involved constant movement, dialogue, and dissemination of ideas amongst interlocutors proficient in more than one language.

During the post-Timurid period, Persian literary culture experienced a slowdown in India. However, the Mughal dynasty's arrival in northern India in the second quarter of the sixteenth century revived the fortunes of Persian literature under their extraordinary patronage. Contrarily, scholars suggest that Persian became rooted in the multi-lingual and multi-cultural environment in North India and Deccan, leading to its dominance under the Mughals.

HISTORY WRITING IN PERSIAN: FORM, METHOD, AND OBJECTIVE

During the Mughal period, many chroniclers produced accounts of the events and people of the time. This period saw the production of numerous historical literature works, including *Tarikh-i Alfi*, *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, *Muntakhab-ut Tawarikh*, and *Tarikh-i Akbar Shahi*, among others. In this discussion, the focus is on *Abul Fazl Allami* and a few major political works and chroniclers.

During Akbar's reign, a large amount of historical literature was produced. This includes *Tarikh-i Alfi*, commissioned by Akbar himself, and *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, which provides information about the cities and qasbas of Akbar's empire. Badauni wrote *Muntakhab-ut Tawarikh*, which covers the period from Subuktigin to Akbar's reign and provides firsthand information on Ibadat Khana proceedings. Muhammad Arif Qandhari's *Tarikh-i Akbar Shahi* sheds light on the administrative structure of the Mughals, land revenue reforms of Todar Mal, and the condition of peasantry under Akbar.

Memoirs and Other Biographical Writings as History

During the Mughal period, two major accounts fall into the category of memoirs: Babur's memoirs (*Tuzuk-i Baburi/Baburnama*) and Gulbadan Begum's *Humayun Nama/Ahwal-i Humayun Padshah*. Babur's memoirs are considered the 'only true autobiography in Islamic literature.' They are an open and honest account of events, written in the form of a diary. Babur provides a vivid account of his struggles in Farghana and Samarkand, his journey to Hindustan, his battles and victories, but his account abruptly ends on September 7th, 1529, a year before his death. Babur's memoirs provide a detailed account of the political, military, and socio-economic conditions of the region he governed. Babur's memoirs provide a detailed and frank account of the events of his period, including struggles in Farghana

and Samarkand and his battles and victories in India. He observes the weakness and fragile nature of Indian cities and hamlets, but is impressed by the innumerable artisans and the hereditary nature of their professions. Babur also demonstrates a keen interest in the local environment and physical geography of India, but he never thought of India as his homeland and longed for the 'garden palace' of Samarkand and the musk melons of his homeland.

Gulbadan Begum's *Humayun Nama* is a memoir written from personal memories that provides insights into the formation of Mughal sovereignty in India. It gives a detailed account of birth, marriage, and other celebrations and sheds light on the life of the royalty outside the formal court. The memoir also reveals the personal and social relationships of the royalty, the role of women as political intermediaries, and the position of *pardah* in the Mughal harem during the early period. Overall, *Humayun Nama* offers a portrayal of the lived experiences and socio-political realities of the Mughal period.

Universal and Dynastic Histories: Abul Fazl

Abul Fazl was a close friend of Akbar and his monumental work, *Akbarnama*, and *Ain-i Akbari*, a statistical account of Akbar's empire, were of great importance. *Ain-i Akbari* was the third volume of *Akbarnama*. It covers various topics such as the Imperial establishment, the army, details of revenue rates, sub-wise statistics, Hindu philosophy, religion, medicine, customs, and manners. *Ain-i Akbari* was completed in the 42nd regnal year, and a section on Berar was added in the 43rd regnal year. The added portion was probably written during Shahjahan's reign and was largely copied from Mu'tamad Khan's account. *Akbarnama* ends in the 46th regnal year, and Abul Fazl was assassinated in the 47th regnal year. *Ain-i Akbari* is written in the form of a gazetteer while *Akbarnama* is full of battles and events.

Abul Fazl wrote history in a Persian style, but attempted to include Arabic traditions. His intention of including 'people' was limited, as it was necessary to discuss Akbar's activities. He used new methods to present the political and administrative realities of Akbar's realm. His *Ain* provides exhaustive details of Akbar's empire, and he presented monarchy as a light emanating from God, with the sovereign as a just ruler working for the welfare of the people. Akbar was the ideal monarch leading both the spiritual and temporal realms, a *mujtahid*, an infallible leader. Akbar's reign was peaceful, prosperous, stable, with good governance, religious tolerance, and freedom.

The limitations of Abul Fazl's writings lie in his biased presentation of Akbar as an 'ideal' monarch, often overlooking his weaknesses and omitting certain facts that did not fit his scheme. In order to glorify Akbar, he failed to use his 'reason' in presenting the facts, making the account 'partisan'. Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama* is more

of a 'story of Akbar', rather than a balanced historical account.

Poetic Compositions

Akbar's court was home to many scholar-poets, with Iranians dominating among the 59 highest-rated Persian court poets of Akbar, and receiving generous patronage from both Akbar and Mughal nobles. More than 100 poets and 31 scholars of repute were associated with Abdul Rahim Khan-i Khanan alone. Akbar was possibly the first Muslim ruler to institute the position of *malik-ush shuara* (poet-laureate) in his court. The prominent court poets included Faizi, who was Indian-born, and Khwaja Saiyyid Jamaluddin 'Urfi', Naziri, and Khwaja Husain Sanai, who were of Iranian descent, and who composed diwans and masnavis, with Urfi and Husain Sanai's books being widely sold in markets.

Faizi, the brother of Abul Fazl and son of Shaikh Mubarak, was a talented and liberal poet in Akbar's court. He was praised by Badauni and intended to write five masnavis, but could only complete two. One of his major works, *Nal-Daman*, was commissioned by Akbar to bring an 'Indian flavour' to the Persian-speaking world and served to reflect Akbar's political ideals. Faizi's work explores universal themes, such as the nature of love and the problems of kingship, and offers universal solutions to these issues.

INSHA-NAVISI (EPISTOLOGRAPHY) OR THE ART OF DRAFTING

Insha refers to specimen documents, drafts, personal and state correspondences that provide information on medieval administration and socio-cultural conditions. *Insha* writings were largely written in the context of *diwani* and were directly connected to chancellery practices of the Delhi Sultans and later the Mughals. There were two types of *Inshas*: one type was written for epistography writings, which were model documents meant to teach drafting skills, and the other type preserved actual documents, letters, and correspondences, which are of great historical significance.

During the Mughal period, there were many collections of *Insha*, from Hakim Yusufi's *Badai-ul Insha* in 1533 to Malikzada's *Nigarmana-i Munshi* in 1683. Abul Fazl's name stands out among all the collections, including his *Mukatabat-i Allami* and *Ruqqat-i Abul Fazl*, which contain his letters to Akbar, the royal household, and Mughal bureaucrats. Additionally, Nuruddin Muhammad compiled another collection of *Insha* by Abul Fazl's brother Faizi, called *Lataif-i Faizi/Insha-i Faizi*.

Abul Fazl's letters can be categorized into three types: official dispatches sent on behalf of Akbar to nobles and foreign dignitaries, Abul Fazl's petitions and letters to Akbar on matters of state policy, and general and miscellaneous letters. These letters are valuable in understanding the political, social, and religious context of the Mughal period, as well as Akbar's religious outlook

and the Mughal empire's relations with Persia, Turkey, and the Uzbeks in relation to their northwest frontier policy.

Abul Fazl's brother Faizi was a scholar who joined Akbar's court at a young age and was titled '*malik al-shuara*'. Faizi's *Insha-i Faizi* is an informative collection, particularly his five *arzdashts* written to Akbar. One such *arzdasht* written in 1591 provides details about Akbar's relations with Khandesh ruler Farooqi, as well as the practice of *sarparda*. Faizi also provides a detailed account of the cities from Lahore to Burhanpur, as well as the production of high quality fruits in the region. He addresses Akbar as '*zil al-Allah*' and refused permission for *sijda*, in line with Akbar's religious ideas. Faizi's collection is a valuable source of information about the contemporary polity, society, and culture.

Munshat-i Namkin is an important *Insha* collection by Mir Abul Qasim Namkin, who served both Akbar and Jahangir. It contains letters and documents related to appointments and administrative orders during Akbar's reign, as well as letters from Shah Tahmasp and Abdullah Khan Uzbek. The *khatimah* section of the collection is particularly significant. *Munshat* provides a unique insight into the early period of Akbar's reign that is not available in other sources.

Munshat-i Namkin is an important *Insha* collection to understand the socio-economic and cultural milieu of the Mughal period. It is one of the largest surviving *Insha* collections and contains imperial *manshurs*, petitions, *fathnamas*, and administrative orders pertaining to various appointments. *Munshat* also contains letters from Shah Tahmasp, Abdullah Khan Uzbek, and Akbar to Shah Tahmasp. It sheds light on administrative divisions, Akbar's *dahsala* settlement, *batai*, *ijara*, etc. and contains documents related to Central Asia. It is also important in understanding the prevalent marriage norms and the position of women in medieval society.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

In the sixteenth century, there were various official documents that recorded different types of orders and grants issued by the king, prince, and minister. Some of these documents are *farmans*, *nishans*, *parwanas*, *hasb-ul hukm*, *suyurghals*, *waqf namas*, *tamassuk*, *ariyatnama*, *tajviznama*, *muchalka*, *nirakhnama*, and *bainamas*. There are many important documents from Akbar's reign, including *farmans* issued to Sikh Guru Ramdas, Chaitanya sect of Vrindavan, and jogis of Jakhbar, Raja Todar Mal's memorandum on revenue administration, and Akbar's *farman* on the excavation of Hansi-Hisar branch of canal. One document even suggests that during Akbar's early reign, a powerful *vakil* like Khan-i Khanan could issue a *farman* in the name of the emperor.

Mahzar namas were important documents of the Mughal period, serving as legal documents for proof, public recognition of a claim, and evidence in an