



# **HISTORY OPTIONAL: TOPIC WISE QUESTION BANK OF MEDIEVAL INDIA [1979-2023]**

Question bank is the most important for history optional preparation as most of the questions asked in UPSC History Optional Main Exam is directly or indirectly from previous years papers. It is also very important for General Studies Paper I.

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## 1. Early Medieval India, 750-1200

- (i) Polity: Major political developments in Northern India and the Peninsula, origin and the rise of Rajputs
- (ii) The Cholas: administration, village economy and society
- (iii) Indian Feudalism; Agrarian economy and urban settlements; Trade and commerce
- (iv) Society: the status of the Brahman and the new social order; Condition of women
- (v) Indian science and technology

### **Polity: Major political developments in Northern India and the Peninsula, origin and the rise of Rajputs**

1. Bring out the salient features of the polity & social structure of the Rajputs. To what extent were they responsible for the weakness of the Rajputs to the foreign invaders? [1988, 60m]
2. "Achieving dominance in the south of the Vindhyas did not satisfy the ambitions of the Rashtrakutas, they also wanted to achieve dominance over the Gangetic Plains." Elaborate and comment. [1997, 60m]
3. "The inferior cavalry of the Rajputs was not the only cause of their defeat at the hands of Turko-Afghans and Mughal." Comment. [2001, 60m]

### **The Cholas: administration, village economy and society**

1. Describe the village administration of the Chola period as known from the Uttaramerur inscriptions. [1979, 60m]
2. Describe the development of Chola power under Rajaraja and Rajendra I. Form an estimate of their cultural contributions. [1980, 60m]
3. What were the salient features of the bureaucratic machinery of the Cholas? [1985, 20m]
4. Critically assess the period of the Cholas in the history of South India. [1991, 60m]
5. Write a short essay on: "Local self-government under the Cholas." [1992, 20m]
6. Discuss the contribution of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I for the expansion of the Chola Empire. Analyse the causes and impact of the naval expeditions of the Cholas. [1993, 60m]
7. Assess the importance of the Cholas in the history of South India. [1996, 60m]
8. Critically evaluate the achievements of the Cholas. [1998, 60m]
9. Were the Chola village assemblies democratic in nature? Give reasons for your answer. [2000, 60m]

10. The Cholas are said to have established a strong and well organized administration with an element of self-government at the local level. Do you agree? Give reasons. [2004, 60m]
11. Show that the administrative system in India reached a very high level during the Chola period. [2007, 60m]
12. How far can the village assemblies or communities under the Cholas be really called democratic? [2009, 30m]
13. Assess the contribution of the Cholas in the expansion of Indian culture outside India. [2011, 30m]
14. Evaluate the role of *nadu* and *nagaram* in the growth of urbanisation under the Cholas. [2012, 30m]
15. Evaluating various theories regarding the Chola State, throw light on its village assemblies. [2014, 15m]
16. Analyze the significance of the Uttaramerur inscriptions of the Chola King Parantaka I. [2016, 10 marks]
17. "The Chola rulers were not only mighty conquerors, efficient administrators but also builders of fine temples." Comment. [2021, 15 Marks]
18. Chola maritime expansion was driven largely by the concerns of overseas commerce. Elucidate. [2022, 20 Marks]

**Indian Feudalism; Agrarian economy and urban settlements; Trade and commerce**

1. "Land charters of north India (c. A-D. 750-1200)." Comment. [1995, 20m]
2. Write a short essay on: "The Samanta System" [2006, 20m]
3. Write a short essay on: "Applicability of the term 'Indian Feudalism' to early Medieval Society." [2009, 20m]
4. To what extent 'monetary anaemia' afflicted the erstwhile commercial economy during the early medieval period? [2010, 30m]
5. Evaluate the socio-economic conditions from the Gupta Period to 1200 C.E. as gleaned from the various types of grants or *dana shasana*. [2011, 60m]
6. What kind of changes were visualized by historians on Indian feudalism? Examine critically. [2012, 30m]
7. Critically analyse the agricultural economy from 750 to 1200 CE. [2014, 10m]
8. Do the evidences of land ownership at our disposal support the theory of the prevalence of feudalism in early medieval India? [2015, 15m]

9. Explain the ingredients of the transitory nature of the early medieval India. [2016, 15 Marks]
10. Discuss the different stages of Indian feudalism and analyze its impact on Indian political system. [2021, 10 Marks]
11. What were 'Brahmdeya' grants? How do you account for the large number of such grants in the early medieval period? [2022, 10 Marks]
12. Discuss the various proponents of Indian feudalism. [2023, 10 Marks]

**Society: the status of the Brahman and the new social order; Condition of women**

1. Give an account of the society in Northern and Central India since the death of Harsha to the Muslim conquest of North India. [1996, 60m]
2. Write a short essay on: "Social structure of the Rajputs." [1998, 20m]
3. Critically analyze the changing nature of caste and gender relations during the early medieval period. [2018, 15 Marks]

## 2. Cultural Traditions in India, 750- 1200

- (i) Philosophy: Skankaracharya and Vedanta, Ramanuja and Vishishtadvaita, Madhva and Brahma Mimansa
- (ii) Religion: Forms and features of religion, Tamil devotional cult, growth of Bhakti, Islam and its arrival in India, Sufism
- (iii) Literature: Literature in Sanskrit, growth of Tamil literature, literature in the newly developing languages, Kalhan's Rajtarangini, Alberuni's India
- (iv) Art and Architecture: Temple architecture, sculpture, painting

### **Philosophy: Skankaracharya and Vedanta, Ramanuja and Vishishtadvaita, Madhva and Brahma Mimansa**

1. How did Sankaracharya seek to integrate the different religions cults in India? [1981, 20m]
2. Write a short essay on: "Shankaracharya's philosophy and its impact." [1987, 20m]
3. "Sankaracharya brought about a synthesis of ideas and philosophies." Discuss the statement and analyse the historical significance of his life and thought. [1990, 60m]
4. Write a short essay on: "The Vedanta of Sankaracharya" [2001, 20m]
5. "The Advaita doctrine of Shankara cut at the very root of Bhaktivada." Do you agree? [2016, 15 Marks]
6. Assess the statement that 'the philosophy of Shankaracharya revolutionized religious thoughts in India.' [2019, 20 Marks]

### **Religion: Forms and features of religion, Tamil devotional cult, growth of Bhakti, Islam and its arrival in India, Sufism**

1. Give an account of the impact of Islam on Indian culture in respect of society, religion and fine arts. [1980, 60m]
2. Write a short essay on: "Significance of the Bhakti Movement" [1987, 20m]
3. Trace influence of Islam on Indian culture and civilization. [1999, 60m]
4. Write a short essay on: "The Sufi Movement and its role in promoting communal harmony" [2000, 20m]
5. Evaluate the impact of the Sufi and Bhakti Movements on vernacular languages and life and thought of the common people. [2001, 60m]
6. Write a short essay on: "Origin of the Bhakti Movement" [2002, 20m]
7. Write a short essay on: "Sufi Movements" [2003, 20m]

8. "The tenets of Hindu and Muslim mystics were similar enough that the ground was ripe for syncretic movements involving adherents of both religions." Elucidate. [2005, 60m]
9. Write a short essay on: "Sufism in North India" [2006, 20m]
10. "The tenets of Hindu and Muslim mystics were similar enough that the ground was ripe for syncretic movements involving adherents of both religions." Elucidate. [2007, 60m]
11. What are the manifestations of Tamil devotional cults? How do you account for their growth between C. 750 and C. 1200 CE? [2008, 60m]
12. Assess the contribution of the *Acharyas* in the development of the ideological basis of Bhakti. [2012, 10m]
13. Bhakti and mysticism of Lal Ded emerged as a social force in Kashmir. Comment. [2013, 10m]
14. "Sufis and medieval mystic saints failed to modify either the religious ideas and practices or the outward structure of Islamic/Hindu societies to any appreciable extent." Comment for/against. [2015, 10m]
15. The Virsashaiva Movement in Southern Deccan in the twelfth century was essentially an attempt at social reform. Discuss. [2022, 15 Marks]

**Literature: Literature in Sanskrit, growth of Tamil literature, literature in the newly developing languages, Kalhan's Rajtarangini, Alberuni's India**

1. Discuss the salient features of Indian society on the eve of the campaigns of Mahmud of Ghazni, with particular reference to the observations made by Al-Biruni. [1989, 60m]
2. Write a short essay on: "Al- Biruni's India" [1998, 20m]
3. Write a short essay on: "Kalhan as a historian" [2003, 20m]
4. Attempt a critical essay of the Indian Science and Civilization in the light of Alberuni's writings. What merits and drawbacks, do you find in his account? [2003, 60m]
5. Write a short essay on: "Alberuni on science in India" [2007, 20m]
6. Assess Kalhana's views on History. [2009, 20m]
7. Evaluate Rajtarangini as a source of history. [2012, 10m]
8. Evaluate the 'Kitab al-Hind' of Alberuni as a source of history of India. [2014, 15m]
9. Comment on the veracity of Alberuni's account of the Indian society. [2016, 10 Marks]
10. Do you consider the Rajatarangini of Kalhana to be a reliable source of the political history of Kashmir? Why? [2017, 10 Marks]



11. Examine the defects in Alberuni's assessment of the Indian society. [2023, 10 Marks]

**Art and Architecture: Temple architecture, sculpture, painting**

1. Discuss the role of the Rashtrakutas for the mastery of Kanauj and assess their contribution to art and culture. [1992, 60m]

2. Do you agree with the view that the form and content of temple architecture in South India between c. A.D. 750 and 1200 were products of a specific economic and political milieu? [1994, 60m]

3. Critically evaluate the contribution of Rashtrakutas to art and culture. [1999, 60m]

4. How far do you agree with the view that temples in early medieval period were catalysts in spreading education? [2010, 30m]

5. Discuss the Caurapancashika and Jain styles of paintings. Can the Caurapancashika style truly be called the precursor of pothi format? [2012, 10m]

6. Give a brief account of the early medieval temple architecture of Kashmir. [2015, 10m]

7. Why is Mamallapuram famous? [2015, 10m]

8. The 11th-12th centuries C.E. saw eventful progression in the cultural history of India. Discuss. [2017, 10 Marks]

### 3. The Thirteenth Century

- (i) Establishment of the Delhi Sultanate: The Ghurian invasions – factors behind Ghurian success - Economic, social and cultural consequences
- (ii) Foundation of Delhi Sultanate and early Turkish Sultans - Consolidation: The rule of Iltutmish and Balban

1. What were the problems Balban faced? How far did he succeed in solving them? Was he a trendsetter in his theory of kingship? [1985, 60m]
2. Write a short note on: "Main sources of information for the history of the 13th century." [1987, 20m]
3. Discuss the salient features of Indian society on the eve of the campaigns of Mahmud of Ghazni, with particular reference to the observations made by Al-Biruni. [1989, 60m]
4. Comment on "Balban's theory of kingship." [1995, 20m]
5. Give an estimate of Ghiasuddin Balban. [1996, 60m]
6. Write a short essay on: "The 'Corps of Forty' and its relations with the Sultans." [2004, 20m]
7. Bring out the main features of the administration system under Delhi Sultanate during Turko-Afghan Period. [2006, 60m]
8. Write a short essay on: "The 'Corps of Forty' and its relations with the Sultan." [2008, 20m]
9. Assess the contribution of Iltutmish for the expansion and consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate. [2011, 20m]
10. How did the Mongol invasions affect the Delhi Sultanate and the north-western frontier policy of the Delhi Sultans? [2012, 30m]
11. Analyze the steps taken by Razia Sultan to strengthen her position as an independent ruler despite various obstacles. [2013, 10m]
12. What measures did Balban adopt to combat the Mongol menace? [2015, 10m]
13. Critically examine the 'blood and iron' policy of Balban. [2017, 10 Marks]
14. What measures were initiated by the Sultans for the consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate? Discuss. [2016, 20 Marks]
15. To what extent was the Caliphate the source and sanction to the legal authority of the Sultans of Delhi? [2017, 15 Marks]
16. "The battles of Tarain and Chandawar laid the foundations of Turkish rule in India". Elaborate. [2018, 10 Marks]

17. Internal strife and conflict beset with personal ambitions was enough of an invitation for the Ghurids to invade India. Discuss. [2019, 15 Marks]
18. Assess the causes of the defeat of Northern Indian States against the Turkish invasion. [2020, 20 Marks]
19. Do you consider Sultan Iltutmish to be the real founder of the Delhi Sultanate? Discuss. [2021, 10 Marks]
20. Discuss the importance of Iqta system. How did it help in centralization of administration of the Delhi Sultanate. [2021, 15 Marks]
21. Much of the political instability after the death of Iltutmish was the doing of the Chahalgan. Elucidate. [2022, 10 Marks]
22. Why did Balban prefer 'consolidation' over 'expansion' of the Delhi Sultanate? [2023, 15 Marks]

## 4. The Fourteenth Century

- (i) "The Khalji Revolution" - Alauddin Khalji: Conquests and territorial expansion, agrarian and economic measures
- (ii) Muhammad Tughluq: Major projects, agrarian measures, bureaucracy of Muhammad Tughluq
- (iii) Firuz Tughluq: Agrarian measures, achievements in civil engineering and public works, decline of the Sultanate
- (iv) Foreign contacts and Ibn Battuta's account

### **"The Khalji Revolution" - Alauddin Khalji: Conquests and territorial expansion, agrarian and economic measures**

1. Bring out the essential features of the administration of Ala-ud-din Khalji. [1979, 60m]
2. What were the aims of Alauddin Khalji behind his market regulations, and how far were they achieved? [1981, 60m]
3. Critically examine the views of Balban, Ala-ud-din Khalji and the Tughluq on the nature of Kingship under the Delhi Sultanate. [1982, 60m]
4. Critically examine the economic regulations of Ala-ud-din Khalji. [1983, 60m]
5. Critically examine the price control measures of Alauddin Khalji. What was the main objective behind them and how far was he able to put them into effect? [1987, 60m]
6. Write a short essay on: "The significance of Alauddin Khalji economic regulations for his imperialism." [1989, 20m]
7. What, in your opinion, was the significance of the extensive military expeditions undertaken during the time of Alauddin Khalji? Do you think his reign is considered significant in terms of such expeditions alone? [1991, 60m]
8. Examine the significance of Alauddin Khalji's administrative reforms. Was he really successful in implementing these measures? [1993, 60m]
9. Discuss the implications of Khalji imperialism with reference to administration and economic regulations on the State and people of India. [1997, 60m]
10. Write a short essay on: "Alauddin Khalji was a typical despot" [1999, 20m]
11. Assess the impact of the market reforms of Alauddin Khalji on contemporary economy and society. [2001, 60m]
12. Discuss Balban's concept of kingship. How was it modified by Alauddin Khalji? [2002, 60m]
13. Write a short essay on: "The Khalji Revolution" [2006, 20m]

14. Examine critically the agrarian and economic reforms of Alauddin Khalji. How did it strengthen the Sultanate? [2011, 20m]
15. Analyse the ordinances mentioned by Barani which Alauddin Khalji promulgated for market control. [2014, 10m]
16. The economic measures of Alauddin Khalji were aimed at greater political control. Discuss. [2019, 10 Marks]
17. Elaborate upon the agrarian reforms of Alauddin Khalji. [2020, 20 Marks]
18. Why is the reign of the Khaljis known as the 'Khalji Revolution'? [2021, 15 Marks]
19. The market regulations of Ala-ud-din Khalji were useful for the Sultan's military might but harmful for the economy of the Sultanate. Comment. [2022, 20 Marks]
20. The motive of Alauddin Khalji's agrarian policy was to curb the powers of the intermediaries. Examine the measures which he adopted to achieve his objective. [2023, 10 Marks]

**Muhammad Tughluq: Major projects, agrarian measures, bureaucracy of Muhammad Tughluq**

1. Do you agree with the view that Muhammad Tughluq was 'transcendent failure'? Why did he fail to achieve the ideals he had set for himself? [1984, 60m]
2. Was the state in the Sultanate period a theocracy? Discuss the new orientation of state policies and administrative principles under Muhammad bin Tughluq. [1988, 60m]
3. Muhammad Bin Tughlaq's contradictory qualities were beyond the grasp knowledge and commonsense. Evaluate the significance of his administrative measures and policies in the light of this statement. [1992, 60m]
4. Write a short essay on: "Experiments of Muhammad Tughluq". [2003, 20m]
5. Write a short essay on: "The Token Currency System introduced by Muhammad Tughluq." [2004, 20m]
6. Write a short essay on: "Muhammad Tughluq as an agrarian innovator." [2009, 20m]
7. Do you agree that the schemes of Muhammad bin Tughluq were correctly conceived, badly executed and disastrously abandoned? Discuss. [2017, 15 Marks]
8. "The policy of creating heterogeneous nobility by Muhammad Tughlaq started the process of disintegration of Delhi Sultanate". Explain. [2018, 20 Marks]

**Firuz Tughluq: Agrarian measures, achievements in civil engineering and public works, decline of the Sultanate**

1. Why was Firuz Tughluq regarded as an ideal Muslim king of medieval times? [1983, 20m]
2. Examine the responsibility of Firuz Tughluq for the fall of his dynasty. [1985, 20m]
3. "Firuz Tughluq has been overshadowed by Muhammad Tughluq." In the light of this statement evaluate the significance of the policies and actions of Firuz Tughluq. [1990, 60m]
4. Form an estimate of the personality of Firoz Shah Tughlaq with special reference to his religious policy and public works. [2000, 60m]
5. Evaluating the theory of kingship of the Sultanate, discuss the deviations seen in the reigns of different Sultans. [2014, 20m]
6. What factors do you attribute for the decline of the Delhi Sultanate? [2023, 10 Marks]

#### **Foreign contacts and Ibn Battuta's account**

1. What is your assessment of Ibn Batutah's Rehla as an important source of Indian history. [2011, 20m]
2. Discuss evidence of slavery provided by Ibn Batuta with special reference to female slaves. [2018, 10 Marks]

## 5. Society, Culture and Economy in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

- (i) Society: composition of rural society, ruling classes, town dwellers, women, religious classes, caste and slavery under the Sultanate
- (ii) Culture: Persian literature, literature in the regional languages of North India, literature in the languages of South India, Sultanate architecture and new structural forms, painting, evolution of a composite culture
- (iii) Economy: Agricultural production, rise of urban economy and non-agricultural production, trade and commerce

### Society

1. Analyse the social composition and the role of nobility under the successors of Iltutmish. How did it affect the contemporary politics? [2012, 30m]
2. Critically evaluate the Muslim Nobility during the period of Tughlaq dynasty. [2020, 10m]

### Culture

1. Where, when and how did Urdu originate? [1985, 20m]
2. "The period of Delhi Sultans witnessed the emergence of Indo-Persian culture." Discuss the statement with reference to developments in the fields of language. [1986, 60m]
3. Write a short essay on: "Indo-Islamic architecture during the Khalji and Tughluq period." [1992, 20m]
4. Write a short essay on: "Ziauddin Barani as a historian." [1994, 20m]
5. Comment on: "Growth of regional languages and literature during the medieval period." [1995, 20m]
6. Write a short essay on: "Amir Khusrau was an eminent poet not a historian." [2000, 20m]
7. Give a critical assessment of the contributions of Amir Khusrau and Barani to Indo – Persian Literature. [2009, 30m]
8. Critically evaluate the educational development during Sultanate period. [2013, 15m]
9. Trace the technological and stylistic development in the architecture of the Sultanate period. [2014, 15m]
10. Do you think that the economic measures introduced by the Sultanate rulers were beneficial to the common people as well? Illustrate with examples. [2016, 20 Marks]
11. Evaluate the contents of the Tabaqat-i-Nasiri as a source of medieval history. [2016, 10 Marks]

12. Describe the new architecture features added by successive Sultans in the construction of Tombs in India. [2018, 20 Marks]

13. Identify the different categories of Persian literature which emerged during the Delhi Sultanate. [2021, 10 Marks]

### **Economy**

1. Make a comparative review of the agrarian reforms of Alau-ud-Din Khalji and Sher Shah Suri. [1995, 60m]

2. Throw light on the Land Revenue System of Sultanate period. [1998, 60m]

3. Identify the main factors that sustained the expansion of urban economy in the Delhi Sultanate. [2009, 30m]

4. Examine the increasing importance of maritime trade of India during thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. [2010, 30m]

5. Evaluate the conditions of industries in India from 1200 to 1500 CE. [2013, 20m]

6. Evaluate critically the conditions of labour from 1200 to 1500 CE on the basis of historical sources. [2013, 15m]

7. Discuss in brief the land-revenue system and judicial administration of the Delhi Sultanate. [2015, 15m]

8. Delineate non—agricultural production and urban economy in the 13th and 14th centuries C.E. [2017, 20 Marks]

9. Discuss the advancement made in Textile Technology under the Delhi Sultans. [2018, 10 Marks]

10. Delineate the state of agriculture during Sultanate period. [2019, 15 Marks]

11. How did international trade support urbanisation in North India during the 13-14th century CE. [2020, 10 Marks]

12. Some new crafts production were introduced by the Turks. Comment. [2020, 15 Marks]

13. The establishment of large number of urban settlements in North India in the thirteenth century was principally owing to the deployment of Turkish garrisons across the lands. Comment. [2022, 10 Marks]



## 6. The Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century

- (i) Political Developments and Economy: - Rise of Provincial Dynasties: Bengal, Kashmir (Zainul Abedin), Gujarat, Malwa, Bahmanids
- (ii) The Vijayanagra Empire
- (iii) Lodis
- (iv) Mughal Empire, First phase: Babur and Humayun
- (v) The Sur Empire: Sher Shah's administration
- (vi) Portuguese Colonial enterprise
- (vii) Bhakti and Sufi

### **Political Developments and Economy: - Rise of Provincial Dynasties: Bengal, Kashmir (Zainul Abedin), Gujarat, Malwa, Bahmanids**

1. Write a short essay on: "The Bahmani kingdom" [2005, 20m]
2. Write a short essay on: "The Bahmani Kingdom" [2007, 20m]
3. Assess the Lekhapaddhati as an important source for evaluating the society and economy of the thirteenth century CE with special reference to Gujarat. [2013, 15m]
4. Discuss the state of society and economy of the Bahmani kingdom as gleaned from historical sources. [2013, 10m]
5. Assess the contribution of Firoz Shah Bahamani and Mahmud Gawan in the field of education. [2016, 15 Marks]
6. Evaluate Jonaraja's account of the reign of Zain-ul- Abidin. [2016, 10 Marks]
7. Assess the rule of Zainul Abedin in Kashmir. [2019, 10 Marks]
8. Describe village polity and economy of medieval Deccan. [2020, 15 Marks]

### **The Vijayanagra Empire**

1. Give an account of the polity and society of Vijayanagara empire under Krishnadevaraya. [1979, 60m]
2. Discuss the origin of the Vijayanagara Kingdom. Do you agree with the view that Krishnadevaraya was an ideal ruler of this dynasty? [1980, 60m]
3. Do you think that the reign of Krishnadevaraya inaugurated a new epoch in the history of Vijayanagar? [1983, 20m]
4. What light do inscriptions and accounts of European travelers throw on the antecedents and legacy of the administrative structure of the Vijayanagar Empire? [1994, 60m]
5. Discuss the social dynamics in the Vijayanagara Empire. [2010, 20m]

6. On the basis of contemporary sources evaluate the system of agriculture and irrigation of the Vijayanagar kingdom. [2013, 15m]
7. To what extent is 'Segmentary State' model relevant for defining the Vijayanagar State? Critically examine. [2014, 20m]
8. Mention the salient features of the polity of Vijayanagara Empire under Krishnadevaraya. [2015, 10m]
9. Evaluate the accounts of foreign travellers about the Vijayanagar Empire. [2017, 10 Marks]
10. Do you agree that convergence of political vacuum and impact of Islamic culture and polity in peninsular India has much to do with the growth of Vijayanagara kingdom? [2018, 15 Marks]
11. Describe in details about the foreign travellers' accounts which gave information of Vijayanagar kingdom. [2020, 10 Marks]
12. Amuktamalyada dwells much upon the relationship of fort, Brahmanas and dispersed tribal groups. Comment. [2020, 15 Marks]
13. The prolonged conflict between the Vijayanagara Kingdom and the Bahmani successor states was influenced less by cultural factors, and more by strategic and economic considerations. Comment. [2022, 20 Marks]

### **Lodis**

1. Give your assessment of Bahlol Lodi's relation with his nobility. [2021, 15 Marks]

### **Mughal Empire, First phase: Babur and Humayun**

1. Write a short essay on: "The empire-builder in North India of the sixteenth century." [1989, 20m]
2. Comment on the Turko-Mongol theory of sovereignty. To what extent was it adopted by Babur and Humayun? [2010, 30m]
3. Examine the causes of Babur's success against the Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat. [2021, 10 Marks]

### **The Sur Empire: Sher Shah's administration**

1. Examine the major contributions of the Sur rulers to the administrative system. [1981, 20m]
2. Bring out the significance of the reign of Sher Shah in the history of India. [1986, 60m]

3. Make a comparative review of the agrarian reforms of Alauud-Din Khalji and Sher Shah Suri. [1995m 60m]

4. Write a short essay on: "Sher Shah combined in himself qualities of lion and fox." [1999, 20m]

5. Evaluate the contribution of Sher Shah towards trade and commerce, administration and agricultural reforms. [2020, 15 Marks]

### **Portuguese Colonial enterprise**

1. Write a short essay on: "Portuguese control of the Indian Ocean and its impact." [1992, 20m]

2. Write a short essay on: "Significance of the arrival of the Portuguese in India." [2008, 20m]

3. How was cartaz system used by the Portuguese to maintain their control over the oceanic trade? [2014, 10m]

### **Bhakti and Sufi**

1. What was the most significant contribution of Kabir and Guru Nanakdev to Bhakti movement? [1983, 20m]

2. Discuss briefly the causes that contributed to the religious movements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Analyze their approach to the realities of contemporary life. [1985, 60m]

3. Write a short essay on: "Significance of the Bhakti Movement." [1987, 20m]

4. Write a short essay on: "The Sufi Movement and its role in promoting communal harmony." [2000, 20m]

5. Evaluate the impact of the Sufi and Bhakti Movements on vernacular languages and life and thought of the common people. [2001, 60m]

6. Write a short essay on: "Origin of the Bhakti Movement" [2002, 20m]

7. Write a short essay on: "Sufi Movements" [2003, 20m]

8. What impact did Kabir and Nanak leave on Indian Society and Culture? [2003, 60m]

9. Discuss the growth of the Niguna School of Bhakti Movement emphasising the contribution of Kabir and Nanak to it. [2004, 60m]

10. "The tenets of Hindu and Muslim mystics were similar enough that the ground was ripe for syncretic movements involving adherents of both religious." Elucidate. [2005, 60m]

11. Write a short essay on: "Chaitanyadeva and Vaishnavism" [2005, 20m]

12. Write a short essay on: "Sufism in North India" [2006, 20m]
13. "The tenets of Hindu and Muslim mystics were similar enough that the ground was ripe for syncretic movements involving adherents of both religious." Elucidate. [2007, 60m]
14. Assess the contribution of the *Acharyas* in the development of the ideological basis of Bhakti. [2012, 10m]
15. Discuss and evaluate critically various trends in the historiography of Bhakti. [2013, 15m]
16. Evaluate the Malfuzat texts sources of medieval history. [2013, 10m]
17. Bhakti and mysticism of Lal Ded emerged as a social force in Kashmir. Comment. [2013, 10m]
18. Evaluate the contribution of Vaishnava saints to the growth of medieval Bhakti literature. [2014, 10m]
19. "Sufis and medieval mystic saints failed to modify either the religious ideas and practices or the outward structure of Islamic/Hindu societies to any appreciable extent." Comment for/against. [2015, 10m]
20. "Tantrism, if not in practice, at last on conception level challenged patriarchy." Examine Tantrism specially keeping in mind the above context. [2015, 10m]
21. Why should the sixteenth century be regarded as the period of Indian Renaissance? [2015, 15m]
22. "Bhakti and Sufi movements served the same social purpose." Discuss. [2017, 15 Marks]
23. What was the role of Sufi Folk literature in the diffusion of Islam in India in general and Deccan in particular. [2018, 15 Marks]
24. Sufi and Bhakti thoughts ennobled Indian psyche amidst the vagaries of time. Elucidate. [2019, 15 Marks]
25. The mission of Kabir was to preach a religion of love which would unite all castes and creeds. Explain. [2020, 20 Marks]
26. Discuss the attitude of Chishti saints towards the state. How were the Suhrawardi saints different in their attitude towards the government? [2021, 10 Marks]
27. The Vaishnava Bhakti tradition of the fifteenth century contributed to the flourishing of provincial literature. Discuss with appropriate examples. [2022, 20 Marks]
28. Discuss the importance of Sufic literature as an important source of history. [2023, 10 Marks]

## **7. The Fifteenth and early Sixteenth Century – Society and Culture**

- (i) Regional cultural specificities -Literary traditions - Provincial architecture
- (ii) Society, culture, literature and the arts in Vijayanagara Empire.

1. Discuss the development of art and culture under the Vijayanagar Empire. [1987, 60m]
2. “Art, literature and culture reached a high level of development in the Vijayanagar Empire.” Discuss. [1989, 60m]
3. Write a short essay on: “Architecture of the Vijayanagara Empire.” [2000, 20m]
4. Make an estimate of Rana Kumbha as a patron of literature and art. [2015, 15m]
5. Discuss how Vijayanagar empire became the cultural capital of the south? [2019, 10 Marks]

## 8. Akbar

- (i) Conquests and consolidation of the Empire
- (ii) Establishment of Jagir and Mansab systems
- (iii) Rajput policy
- (iv) Evolution of religious and social outlook, theory of Sulh-i-kul and religious policy
- (v) Court patronage of art and technology

### Conquests and consolidation of the Empire

1. Write a short essay on: "Hemu vikramaditya" [2001, 20m]
2. Analyze how the political processes of state formation of Mewar, from 10<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century CE was challenged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century CE by the imperialist policy of Akbar. [2013, 15]

### Establishment of Jagir and Mansab systems

1. Bring out the main features of the *Mansab* and *Jagir* systems with special reference to the reign of Akbar. [1987, 60m]
2. Analyse the merits and demerits of the Mansabdari System. How did it work under Akbar's successors? [1993, 60m]
3. Write a short essay on: "Mansabdari System" [2002, 20m]
4. Examine the *Mansab* and *Jagir* system by Akbar and its subsequent failure in the 18th century. [2011, 30m]
5. How was iqta system of the Sultans different from the Jagir system under the Mughals? [2014, 15m]
6. Critically analyse whether the success of the Mughals is to be credited to their robust Jagirdari and Mansabdari system. [2019, 15 Marks]
7. Examine the nature of the Mansabdari system during the reign of Akbar. [2022, 15 Marks]

### Rajput policy

1. Write a short essay on: "Rana Pratap's patriotism was his only offence." [1999, 20m]
2. "Akbar built the Mughal Empire by enlisting the support Rajputs." Do you agree? [2003, 60m]
3. Akbar built the Mughal Empire by enlisting the support of the Rajputs; Aurangzeb destroyed it by alienating the Rajputs." Discuss critically. [2007, 60m]
4. Describe the Rajput policy of the Mughal emperors. Do you agree with the view that the reversal of Akbar's Rajput policy by Aurangzeb was responsible for the disintegration of the Mughal Empire? [2000, 60m]

5. Do you think that Akbar's Rajput policy was a conscious attempt to incorporate the Indian ruling elite with the Mughal Imperial System? [2017, 15 Marks]

6. Discuss with relevant illustrations the relations between Akbar and the Rajput states. [2021, 15 Marks]

### **Evolution of religious and social outlook, theory of Sulh-i-kul and religious policy**

1. What motivated Akbar to enunciate Din-i-Ilahi? How far did he succeed in spreading it? [1983, 20m]

2. "In medieval Indian history Akbar is unique for his religio-political ideas and policies." Discuss the statement and compare Akbar with Sher Shah in regard to their administrative policies and revenue administration. [1990, 60m]

3. Highlight the catholicity of Akbar's regime with suitable examples. [1997, 60m]

4. Trace the evolution of the religious views of Akbar. Write a note on his policy of Sulh-i-kul. [2002, 60m]

5. Was Din-i-Ilahi 'a monument of Akbar's folly'? [2004, 20m]

6. Write a short essay on: "Religious tolerance of Akbar." [2006, 20m]

7. "In medieval Indian history Akbar was unique for his religio-political ideas and policies." Analyse this statement. [2015, 15m]

8. Write a short Essay on: "Implications of Akbar's notion of Sulh-i-kul." [2009, 20m]

9. "Akbar wished to assert his strong belief in God, but his concept of the way God is to be worshipped was independent of either orthodox Islam or Hindustan." Comment. [2018, 10 Marks]

### **Court patronage of art and technology**

1. Give an estimate of Akbar as a promoter of technology. [2009, 30m]

## 9. Mughal Empire in the Seventeenth Century

- (i) Major administrative policies of Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb
- (ii) The Empire and the Zamindars
- (iii) Religious policies of Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb
- (iv) Nature of the Mughal State
- (v) Late Seventeenth century crisis and the revolts
- (vi) The Ahom Kingdom
- (vii) Shivaji and the early Maratha Kingdom.

1. Analyze the religious policy of the Mughal emperors from Akbar to Aurangzeb. How did it affect the stability of the Mughal Empire? [1985, 60m]
2. What were the major features of the administrative system of the Mughal State? To what extent did other Indian powers model their administration on this system in the late medieval period? [1991, 60m]
3. Write a short essay on: "Mughals and the British East India Company." [1994, 20m]
4. "Aurangzeb is a much maligned monarch." Argue the case for and against the proposition. [1994, 60m]
5. Changes in the composition of nobility from Akbar to Aurangzeb. Comment. [1995, 20m]
6. Write a short essay on: "Nurjahan" [1998, 20m]
7. Write a short essay on: "Spanish ulcer ruined Napoleon Bonaparte, the Deccan ulcer ruined Aurangzeb." [1999, 20m]
8. In what ways were Aurangzeb's Rajput and religious policies different from those of his predecessors? What were the consequences of the changes made by him? [2004, 60m]
9. Write a short essay on: "Dara Shikoh" [2006, 20m]
10. Identify the broad contours of the Mughal foreign policy and their impacts on the Mughal empire. [2016, 15 Marks]
11. Discuss the working of Zamindari System under the Mughal rulers. Also describe the role played by the Zamindars in the agrarian economy of Mughal Indian. [2018, 20 Marks]
12. Discuss the role of Nur Jahan in the Mughal court politics during the reign of Jahangir. [2023, 20 Marks]
13. Discuss the nature of the Mughal State under Akbar. [2023, 15 Marks]

### **Late Seventeenth century crisis and the revolts**

1. Analyze the cause of the agrarian crisis of the Mughal Empire and briefly discuss the agrarian aspects of the peasant revolt against the Empire. [1982, 60m]



2. "The major cause of revolts against the Mughal Empire during the latter half of the 17th century was economic, rather than religious." Discuss. [2009, 30m]

3. On the basis of the accounts of Europeans bring out the agrarian crisis of the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE India. [2013, 20m]

### **The Ahom Kingdom**

1. Write a short essay on: "The Ahom Kingdom" [2008, 20m]

2. Give a brief account of resistance offered by Ahom State against the Mughal rule. [2014, 10m]

### **Shivaji and the early Maratha Kingdom**

1. Trace the development of Maratha power under Shivaji. [1980, 60m]

2. Review the efforts made by Shivaji in consolidating his power in the Deccan in the seventeenth century. [1982, 60m]

3. Was Shivaji a nationalist leader? [1985, 20m]

4. Account for the rise of the Marathas as a political power. How did they influence the course of history? [1986, 60m]

5. Shivaji was a great organizer and builder of civil institutions, examine this statement in the light of the difficulties of administration and the extent of success achieved by him. [1992, 60m]

6. Write a short essay on: "Meaning and features of the Maharashtra Dharma." [1994, 20m]

7. Shivaji's rise to power cannot be treated as an isolated phenomenon in Maratha history. It was as much the result of his personal daring and heroism as of the peculiar geographical situation of the Deccan country and the unifying religious influences that were animating the people with new hopes and aspirations in the 15th and 16th centuries. Explain. [1996, 60m]

8. Examine circumstances leading to rise of Shivaji. Throw light on his legacy. [1999, 60m]

9. Were the Marathas restricted by their geopolitical limitations from becoming the paramount power of India? [2001, 60m]

10. How did Shivaji organize his administration and finances to consolidate his power? [2010, 30m]

11. Give social background to the rise of the Maratha movement during the seventeenth century. [2012, 10m]

12. Shivaji was not merely a military conqueror but also was an enlightened ruler. Discuss. [2019, 15 Marks]

13. Examine the sources of the history of Chhatrapati Shivaji with special reference to Shivabharat and Sabhasad Bakhar. [2020, 10 Marks]

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## 10. Economy and Society in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

- (i) Population, agricultural production, craft production
- (ii) Towns, commerce with Europe through Dutch, English and French companies: a trade revolution. Indian mercantile classes, banking, insurance and credit systems
- (iii) Condition of peasants, condition of women
- (iv) Evolution of the Sikh community and the Khalsa Panth

### **Population, agricultural production, craft production**

1. Discuss the patterns of land revenue system developed in Medieval India and examine their significant features. [1980, 60m]
2. Review briefly the methods of land-revenue assessment adopted by the Mughals. [1983, 60m]
3. Analyses the distinguishing features of the land revenue system under the Mughals and point out its influence on the strength of the Mughal State. [1989, 60m]
4. Delineate the striking features of agricultural and craft production during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in India. How did they impact the social fabric of the country? [2008, 60m]
5. Write a short essay on: "Estimates of population of Mughal India." [2009, 20m]
6. State the structure of medieval village society in Northern India. What were the passive forms of resistance of the peasants in the medieval period? [2012, 30m]
7. Will it be correct to say that the rural economy in Mughal India was relatively self-sufficient? [2015, 10m]
8. "An important feature of agriculture in Mughal India has been the large number of crops raised by the peasants". Illustrate by giving examples. [2018, 15 marks]

### **Towns, commerce with Europe through Dutch, English and French companies: a trade revolution. Indian mercantile classes, banking, insurance and credit systems**

1. Examine the economic condition of the rural agricultural classes and of the urban artisans and traders during the Mughal period. [1979, 60m]
2. Examine the factors which were responsible for opening and development of European trade in India during the 16th and 17th centuries. [1981, 60m]
3. Which were the major European Powers engaged in trade with India in the medieval period? How did they organise their trade and what were the chief items of trade? [1984, 60m]

4. Write a short essay on: "The Mughals and the European trading companies." [1989, 20m]
5. Do you agree with the view that the advent of the Turks and the Mughals in India heralded many changes in the means of production? Give reasons in support of your answer. [1995, 60m]
6. Give your opinion on the urban development in India during the Mughal times. [2005, 60m]
7. Critically evaluate various approaches to study medieval Indian towns. [2010, 20m]
8. Discuss the different types of Karkhanas in Mughal India. How was the production organized in the different Karkhanas? [2010, 30m]
9. Medieval Indian towns were merely as extension of villages. Comment. [2012, 10m]
10. Give a sketch of Indian trade with Europe during the Mughal period. [2013, 10m]
11. "India had been for hundreds of years the Lancashire of the Eastern world." Critically examine this view. [2014, 15m]
12. Analyse the Mughal monetary system and examine their policy of minting of coins. [2014, 20m]
13. The emergence of early capitalism in the Mughal period was primarily due to urbanisation and commercialisation. Comment. [2019, 20 Marks]
14. Trade and commerce in the Mughal Empire brought about the integration of the Indian subcontinent into a single market. Comment. [2022, 15 Marks]

#### **Condition of peasants, condition of women**

1. Assess the condition of peasantry during 13th to 17th centuries CE. [2017, 15 Marks]

#### **Evolution of the Sikh community and the Khalsa Panth**

1. Write a short essay on: "Evolution of the Khalsa Panth" Comment. [2008, 20m]
2. The religion of the Sikhs was the main force of their unity. Comment. [2017, 10 Marks]
3. Discuss the transformation of Sikh community from a Nirguna Bhakti sect into a politico-military organization. [2021, 20 Marks]

## 11. Culture in the Mughal Empire

- (i) Persian histories and other literature. Hindi and other religious literature
- (ii) Mughal architecture
- (iii) Mughal painting
- (iv) Provincial architecture and painting
- (v) Classical music
- (vi) Science and technology

1. Write a short essay on: "The emergence of composite culture during the period 16th to 18th centuries." [1989, 20m]
2. Trace the development of art and architecture under the Mughals and point out mingling of Hindu elements in them. [1998, 60m]

### Persian histories and other literature. Hindi and other religious literature

1. Identify the traces of Persian and Rajput traditions and show how they were synthesized in the field of painting, architecture and literature at the Mughal court. [1981, 60m]
2. What was the contribution of the Mughals to the development of education and literature? [1984, 60m]
3. Write a short essay on: "Mughal official histories and auto-biographical works." [1992, 20m]
4. Write a short essay on: "Babarnama as a source of history." [2002, 20m]
5. Write a short Essay on the development of Literature during Mughal Period. [2006, 60m]
6. Provide a comparative analysis of the development of Arabic and Persian historiography. [2010, 20m]
7. How does Tuzuk-i-Babri testify that Babar had been a cultures man? [2015, 10m]
8. Discuss the literature written in Hindi in Mughal India. [2018, 10 Marks]
9. Examine the status of Sanskrit in Mughal India. [2019, 10 Marks]
10. Evaluate the aim and impact of the translation of Sanskrit scriptures into Persian language during Mughal period. [2020, 10 Marks]

### Mughal architecture

1. Write a short essay on: "The zenith of Mughal architecture under Shahjehan" [2001, 20m]
2. Explain the principal features of architecture during Akbar's rule. What changes were made in them by Shahjahan? [2002, 60m]

3. "The art of building was carried to highest degree of perfection under Shahjahan". Illustrate by giving architecture details of two of his most celebrated buildings. [2018, 15 Marks]
4. The Mughals built like Titans and embellished like jewellers. Comment. [2019, 15 Marks]
5. Mughal architecture was syncretic in character. Comment. [2023, 20 Marks]

### **Classical music**

1. The various Gharanas of Hindustani classical music were outcomes of patronage by regional princely courts, rather than central imperial ones. Discuss. [2022, 15 Marks]

### **Mughal painting**

1. Write a short essay on: "Narrative paintings under Jahangir and Akbar." [1994, 20m]
2. Write a short essay on: "During the reign of Jaliangir Mughal painting reached its zenith." [2000, 20m]
3. Write a short Essay on: "Mughal painting" [2005, 20m]
4. Write a short Essay on: "Mughal painting" [2007, 20m]
5. Mughal paintings reflect the contemporary socio-political conditions. - Discuss. [2011, 30m]
6. Delineate the development of the Mughal painting during the reign of Jahangir. [2016, 10 Marks]
7. "Mughal paintings reflect social harmony in contemporary society." Discuss. [2017, 15 Marks]
8. Examine the European impact on Mughal paintings. [2019, 10 Marks]
9. Make an estimate of the development of paintings under Mughal rulers with special reference to colours, technique, themes and influences on them. [2020, 15 Marks]
10. What features of European paintings were incorporated in the Mughal miniature painting? [2023, 15 Marks]

### **Provincial architecture and painting**

1. The Rajput School of painting was Mughal in style and Rajput in its content. Comment. [2022, 10 Marks]

### **Science and technology**

1. Write a short essay on: "Sawai jai Singh, the astronomer" [2001, 20m]

2. What was the Indian response to European Technology? [2010, 30m]
3. Assess the development of Science and Technology in the Mughal period. [2013, 20m]

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## 12. The Eighteenth Century

- (i) Factors for the decline of the Mughal Empire
- (ii) The regional principalities: Nizam's Deccan, Bengal, Awadh
- (iii) Maratha ascendancy under the Peshwas
- (iv) The Maratha fiscal and financial system
- (v) Emergence of Afghan Power, Battle of Panipat: 1761
- (vi) State of politics, culture and economy on the eve of the British conquest

1. How would you like to characterize the eighteenth century in Indian history? [2005, 60m]
2. What are the distinguishing components of the debate on "The Eighteenth Century"? [2008, 60m]

### Factors for the decline of the Mughal Empire

1. In which respects did the policies of Aurangzeb contribute to the disintegration of the Mughal Empire? [1979, 60m]
2. Explain with illustrative detail the part played by the following factors in the disintegration of the Mughal Empire: [1981, 60m]
  - (a) Aurangzeb's alleged departure from the policies of his predecessors, [1981, 20m]
  - (b) Inherent defects of the Mansab and Jagir system. [1981, 20m]
  - (c) Growth of new political forces in the provinces. [1981, 20m]
3. "The expansion of Mughal Empire in Deccan brought about its decline." Discuss. [1988, 60m]
4. Do you think that the agrarian crisis of the 17th century led to the disintegration of the Mughal empire? Discuss. [2016, 20 Marks]
5. "The Afghan invasions in the Eighteenth Century not only signified the military irrelevance of the Mughal Empire but also hastened its decline". Explain. [2018, 15 Marks]
6. It was as much the court intrigues as also the defiance of the provincial powers that hastened the decline of the Mughals in the 15th century. Comment. [2019, 20 Marks]
7. The late seventeenth century Mughal India is considered to be a period of Jagirdari crisis. Discuss. [2021, 20 Marks]
8. Aurangzeb's Deccan policy was a major factor in Mughal decline. Discuss. [2022, 15 Marks]
9. The Marathas posed a significant threat to the integrity of the Mughal Empire. Discuss. [2023, 20 Marks]



**The regional principalities: Nizam's Deccan, Bengal, Awadh**

1. Discuss the causes of the rise and growth of regional kingdoms with special reference to Deccan in the 18th century. [2011, 30m]
2. Was it the weakening of the Mughal empire or the rise of regional powers that led to the British conquest of India? Discuss. [2016, 15 Marks]
3. How far is it justified to consider the states like Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad as 'successor states' of the Mughal state? [2021, 20 Marks]
4. "Haidar Ali was born to build an empire, and Tipu Sultan to lose one". Comment. [2023, 15 Marks]
5. Analyze the rise of the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh. [2023, 15 Marks]

**Maratha ascendancy under the Peshwas**

1. Why did the Marathas fail in establishing a lasting empire in India? [1981, 20m]
2. How far did Peshwa Bajirao I succeed in establishing Maratha supremacy in the Deccan and political hegemony in the North? [1983, 60m]
2. Write a short answer on: "Structure and role of the Maratha Confederacy." [1987, 20m]
3. Compare the Peshwas' bureaucratic management with that of the Imperial Mughal administration. [2015, 10m]
4. Is it true that the court intrigues and weak revenue system led to the collapse of the Maratha empire? Comment. [2016, 15 Marks]
5. How will you view the Maratha policy of expansion? Delineate. [2017, 20 Marks]
6. Account for the rise of the Maratha power in the eighteenth century. [2022, 10 Marks]

**The Maratha fiscal and financial system**

1. Write a short essay on: "Chauth and Sardeshmukhi" [2003, 20m]
2. Write a short essay on: "The system of the collection of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi by the Maratha rulers." [2004, 20m]
3. Write a short answer on: "Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the Maratha rulers." [2007, 20m]

**Emergence of Afghan Power, Battle of Panipat: 1761**

1. Write a short essay on: "Third Battle of Panipat" [1998, 20m]
2. Write a short essay on: "Consequences of the Third Battle of Panipat." [2002, 20m]

3. How was the Afghan nobility responsible for the decline of the Afghan Empire? Discuss. [2012, 30m]

**State of politics, culture and economy on the eve of the British conquest**

1. Critically evaluate history of the Eighteenth century India with reference to culture and economy. [2020, 20 Marks]

2. The economy of India was not stagnant in the eighteenth century. Discuss. [2023, 15 Marks]

**Misc.**

1. "The Battle of Plassey that decided the fate of Bengal was won by Clive through intrigues." Explain. [2014, 15m]

2. The political disintegration was responsible for the socio—economic decline in India during the 18th century." Comment [2017, 20 Marks]