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# ANSWER SHEET

## FULL TEST I

### (ANCIENT INDIA)

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Time Allowed: 180 Minutes

Maximum Marks: 250

Name: MUKUL JAMLOKI

Email ID: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Mobile No. [REDACTED]

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There are EIGHT questions in this paper.

Candidate has to attempt FIVE questions in all.

Question Nos. 1 and 5 are compulsory and out of the remaining, THREE are to be attempted choosing at least ONE question from each section.

The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it.

Word limit in questions, wherever specified, should be adhered to.

Attempts of questions shall be counted in sequential order. Unless struck off, attempt of a question shall be counted even if attempted partly. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-cum-Answer Booklet must be clearly struck off.

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Comments for improvement after evaluation

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Q.2 (a) Examine the main features of the city planning of the Indus civilisation. How far are these features found in modern city planning? [20 Marks]

The Indus civilisation is well known for its elaborately planned cities such as Harappa and Mohenjodaro, which are second to none among other bronze age civilizations.

Main features of city planning →

- The houses were built in a chess board pattern.
- The doors of the houses never opened into the main street while the windows were in plain style, being utilitarian in character.
- Houses had multiple stories, and had a central courtyard, usually having a well.
- In Mohenjodaro, there were common street wells as well.

- The cities were divided into two parts: citadel and lower town. In Dholavira, there was a middle town ~~also~~ also.
- The cities were fully fortified. However, at places such as Rakhigarhi, there's no fortification. Usually only the citadel was fortified, but at Kalibangan, even the lower town is fortified.
- The roads were about 10 metres wide, and used to cross each other at right angles.
- There was an elaborate rainwater harvesting mechanism through underground reservoirs, such as at Dholavira.

The excess rainwater was channelled to the fields.

- The sanitation system was advanced.  
The sewage ducts were regularly cleaned.
- The cemeteries were away from the habitation area, thus marking a difference wrt neolithic and chalcolithic cultures.
- Granaries have been found at many places such as Harappa and Mohenjodaro.
- Rivers were dammed to irrigate the crop-fields.
- There were existence of modern municipal type institutions to look after the upkeep of common town resources such as street-lights, roads, watch & ward system, etc.
- The floors and surfaces were made water-tight. The Great Bath at

Mohenjodaro is the prime example of this innovation.

- The Indus civilization's cities used burnt bricks at a much larger scale as compared to the Egyptian & Mesopotamian civilization.

### Features found in modern city planning

- Planned layout of cities, eg. DDA societies in Delhi
- Rainwater harvesting, eg. Chennai
- Municipal institutions
- Water barrages across rivers for drinking water needs, eg. Yamuna in Delhi
- Sewage systems to ensure prevention of disease outbreaks

The city planning of Indus civilisation continues to ~~aspire~~ inspire town planning not just in India, but across the world.

Q.2 (b) "The Sixth century B.C. was a period of religious and economic unrest in India." Comment.  
[15 Marks]

The sixth century BC marks a ~~higher~~ <sup>mark</sup> high watermark in the history of ancient India that set the stage for enormous developments in the fields of polity, economy & culture.

Arguments for unrest in the field of religion →

- There was a rise of as many as 62 heterodox sects such as the Ajivikas which attracted the masses.
- As the Vedic (Brahmanical) religion became complex and rigid, it began to lose followers.
- The Upanishads criticized the karma-marg (i.e. rituals) prescribed in the Vedas and instead emphasized on the jnana-marg (i.e. knowledge) for moksha.

- Buddhism arose under Gautama Buddha who emphasised the Eight Fold Path and the Four Noble Truths, thus attracting many followers.

- Jainism arose under Mahavira who emphasised asceticism and brahmacharya to achieve moksha.

### Arguments for unrest in the field of economy

- The Mahajanapadas such as the Magadha and Koshala started issuing punch-marked silver & copper coins.

- Monetisation of economy gave new impetus to trade and commerce. The guilds flourished.

- New trade routes such as Uttarapatha and Dakshinapath and ports such as Broach and Sopara and Tamralipti revitalised both overland and seaborne trade.



- The rise of Mahajanapadas led to state impetus to agriculture and allied activities, arts & crafts, thus boosting commerce: domestic & foreign.
- New towns such as Rajagriha & Vaishali.
- Arguments against religious & economic unrest:
  - The peninsular India was having megalithic cultural phase, hence only gradual evolution of economy & culture.
  - The monetisation of economy was still nascent as none of the states minted coins of distinctive qualities.
  - Brahmanical religion still enjoyed popularity over large masses and many kings conducted rituals such as Vajpeya, Ashwamedha & Rajasuya.

Hence, given the diverse range of evidences from Brahmanical, Buddhist & Jain sources, the sixth century BC was definitely a period of economic & religious unrest in Northern India.

Q.2 (c) "Utpanna dravide bhaktih, Karnate vriddhimagata I Sthita kinchit maharashtre gurjare jinatam gata II" - Padmapurana. Account for the emergence of bhakti in Dravida desa. [15 Marks]

The emergence of bhakti in Dravida desa was of immense significance because it not just provided the people respite from the rigid Brahmanical religion, but also shaped the region's polity, economy & culture.

### Emergence of Bhakti →

- During the Sangam Age, i.e. by AD 600, the initially liberal and progressive Brahmanical religion had entered the Dravida desa and gained immense popularity.
- The kings of the Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras promoted Brahmanical rituals and gave lavish gifts to the Brahmans.
- Gradually the local gods of the 'tinai's' such as Saxon, Mayon, etc. were replaced

by Brahmanical gods such as Vishnu & Shiva.

- The Brahmanas occupied the highest position in the ritual hierarchy and pushed the common masses into the 'shudra' varna.
- Given the complexity, rigidity and orthodoxy of the Brahmanical religion propagated by the medium of Sanskrit language, the masses took to bhakti in the local language.
- The emergence of Alvar saints who worshipped Vishnu and Nayanar saints who worshipped Shiva gave a life-line to the socially exploited common masses.
- These Bhakti saints moved from place to place, and spread the ideas of equality, love and devotion to God, and used the local languages.

- Women saints were also members of the Alvar & Nayanar order. They preached anti-untouchability, anti-ritual pollution, etc.
- Tirumurai of Nayanars and Nalayira Divyaprabandham of the Alvars helped in spreading the ideas of Bhakti, further in the Dravida desa.
- Ramanujacharya's Vishishtadvaita ~~com~~ combined monoism with saguna-bhakti and helped in the emancipation of masses, further from the tentacles of the Brahmanical order.
- The kings also gave grants to Bhakti saints to seek legitimacy in the society.

Over time, the Bhakti movement in the Dravida desa led to the emergence of a typical Dravidian culture with local practices and local languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam & Kannada.

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Q.3 (a) Examine the contribution of Vedic culture in the sphere of social institutions and religion. Was there any continuity between the Indus and the Vedic cultures in this respect? [20 Marks]

The period from 1500 BC to 600 BC is called the period of Vedic culture in northern India. The main sources of information for this culture are the Vedas and the archaeological finds such as the potteries, tools, and burial remains.

Contributions of Vedic culture to social institutions →

- Family → family was called 'kula' and was headed by the eldest male called 'kulapati' who represented the family in all cultural events.
- A number of generations used to live together and the labour was organized around kinship.
- The family was patriarchal, patrilocal and patri-lineal in nature.
- Birth of sons was considered desirable.
- Marriage → marriages were post puberty, and were considered a sacrament.
- Vedic sources mention elite women choosing their husbands in a swayamvar.

- Divorce was rare and considered in special cases only. Widow re-marriage was accepted.
- There are eight forms of marriages mentioned: such as Arsha, Deva, Prajapatya, etc.
- ~~Polygamy~~ Monogamy and polygamy, both, were practised.
- Varna system → during the Early Vedic Age, varna distinction was based on the colour of the skin → Aryans, dasas and dasyus.
- Rig veda mentions only Brahmana & the Rajanya but the word varna isn't attached.
- Purushasukta hymn in the tenth mandala of the Rig veda mentions the four-fold division of society for the first time.
- During the later vedic age, four varnas are mentioned: brahmana, rajanya, vaishya and shudra. However, varna is based on profession and not birth. Yet, inter-varna mobility is reduced.

## Contribution of Vedic Culture to Religion →

- The Vedic culture gave physical form to forces of nature such as Indra (rain), Surya (sun), Usha (dawn), etc.
- Gradually towards the end of the Later Vedic Age, Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva trinity came to dominate the pantheon of gods.
- There are female goddesses but they're less significant than male gods.
- Sacrifice assumed immense significance, from those performed by a grihapati (such as agnihotra) to those performed by the rajan (such as Ashwamedha).
- Sacrifice was considered necessary for the upkeep of the universe and the flow of energy.
- The Upanishads in the final part of the Vedas introduce the concepts of 'brahman', 'atman', 'moksha', 'jñana-marga' and 'karma-marga'.

## Continuity between Indus and Vedic cultures →

- The worship of Mother Goddess is a common feature in both, given the dependence on agriculture.
- The proto-shiva of Indus culture as found on a seal from Mohenjodaro becomes Rudra (or Shiva) during Vedic culture.
- Nature worship such as pipal tree, cow, bull, serpent, etc. continued.
- Cremation of the dead was a common feature in both the cultures.
- Sedentary living characterised by subsistence agriculture was a feature of both Indus and Later Vedic culture.
- The social stratification during Indus culture was economic while during the Vedic culture evolved from colour, to profession, to based on birth.

Hence, we observe a number of continuities between the Vedic and the Indus culture.



Q.3 (b) "Art and culture are reflected to a far greater extent than political history in the epigraphic sources." Comment. [15 Marks]

The epigraphic sources of history are few of the most significant primary sources of evidences to reconstruct the history of ancient India.

Reflection of Art and Culture in epigraphic sources →

- The language of inscriptions indicate the cultural milieu of the people. For example, Ashokan inscriptions in Afghanistan are in Kharoshthi script.
- Social practices, eg. Sati reference from Fran (510 AD)
- The inscriptions have been deciphered to understand the donors' economic and social background for the excavation of chaityas and viharas at Ajanta, Ellora, Bhaja, Bedsa, Pitalkhora, etc.
- The epigraphic sources indicate how Sanskrit became the language of the

elite in northern India by the 6<sup>th</sup> century

AD: both the Brahmanical religion and the

Mahayana Buddhism.

- Cultural activities, eg. Kharavela's Hathugumpha inscription
- Ashokan rock edicts are a great inspiration for people across the world as they tell about the welfare outlook of the Mauryan king.

Reflection of political history in epigraphic sources →

- Important historical events can be analysed such as Pulakeshin II defeating Harsha, as available from Aihole inscription
- Wars and battles are known, such as the military exploits of Samudragupta from his Allahabad pillar inscription
- Political boundaries can be known, eg. Ashoka's rock edicts
- The practice of land grants during the early medieval age, through copper plate

inscriptions of kings

- Welfare works by state, as given by Junagadh rock inscription of Rudradaman

- Inscriptions also tell about the names of kings, whose mention isn't there in literary sources, eg. Prabhavati Gupta's inscription from the Deccan

- Self governing bodies, eg. Parantaka I inscriptions

Hence, it's not fair to remark that art and culture are reflected to a greater extent than political history in epigraphic sources.

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Q.3 (c) With the help of Fa Hien's account, give the religious and economic condition of contemporary India. [15 Marks]

Fa Hien was a chinese scholar, who visited India during AD 399-414 and has left a detailed account of contemporary India.

### Religious conditions →

- The Brahmanical religion was dominant as it was patronised by the Guptas.
- Vaishnavism had emerged which dealt with bhakti and was free of priestly domination.
- The Shakti <sup>and Shaiva</sup> cults had emerged which attracted large number of followers.
- The four-fold varna system had strengthened with minimal inter-varna mobility.
- The Chandalas or the untouchables remained outside the city/village and announced their entry by ~~hitting~~ hitting a

wooden stick on the ground.

- Mahayana Buddhism was still popular and began to use Sanskrit, the language of the elites.

### Economic conditions →

- It was a period of prosperity across the towns and villages.
- The guilds were in a flourishing state.
- The nagar-shreshthi (the chief banker of city) and the sarthavaha (the leader of the caravan trade) used to assist the vishyapati in district administration.
- The people had all resources to lead their lives comfortably.
- ~~There~~ There was tremendous monetisation.

of economy because the kuptas issued gold, silver and copper coins.

- This facilitated both domestic and foreign trade and commerce : via overland and sea-borne routes

Fa Hien's account gives a fascinating picture of contemporary India in terms of religion and economy. However, these details must be comborated with archaeological evidences as well. For example, economic prosperity was limited to the cities and towns only as much less number of copper coins are found as compared to gold coins.

\_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_

Q.4 (a) Give an account of Alexander's invasion on India and discuss its effects. [20 Marks]

Alexander the Great of Macedonia invaded India in about 326 BC. This invasion had a significant effect on the polity, economy and the culture of the Indian subcontinent in the time to come.

Alexander's invasion →

- After conquering Persia, the victorious Greek armies reached the western edge of the Indian subcontinent by 326 BC.
- Here, a number of small principalities existed which were constantly fighting with each other.
- Ambhi of Taxila submitted to Alexander who then fought and defeated Porus on the banks of the Jhelum.
- However, Alexander's army refused to march beyond because they were tired and weary to face the huge army of the Nandas.

Hence, Alexander divided his conquered territories among his generals, the foremost among them being Seleucus Nicator.

### Effects on Polity →

- Alexander had defeated a number of small states in Northwest India and hence ~~it~~ made it easy for Chandragupta Maurya to unify them into the Magadha empire.
- Seleucus Nicator fought unsuccessfully against the Mauryas and had to sign a heavy peace.

### Effects on Economy →

- Overland routes between Greece and India were established which gave a great impetus to trade and commerce.

### Effects on Culture →

- Greek knowledge of astronomy reached India called "horashashtra".



- Indian knowledge in philosophy and spirituality such as yoga reached the West.
- The Greeks influenced the Gandhara school of art in India.
- The Greeks brought the 'yunani system' of medicine to India.
- There were exchange of ideas: food habits, religion, epics, songs and drama, for eg. theatre.
- The Greek accounts of Alexander's historians give rich records of two contemporary India.

### Effect on reconstructing history →

- Many Greek historical accounts have helped us to reconstruct ancient Indian history.

- The Kharoshthi language reached India alongside the Greeks.

The net effect of Alexander's invasions →

- Notwithstanding the political & economic effect, the cultural effect was subdued in India because very well evolved cultural traditions already existed.

However, Alexander's invasion was significant in the respect that for the first time ancient Greece interacted with ancient India.

Q.4 (b) Discuss the nature of Ashoka's Dhamma. Was it responsible for the downfall of his empire?  
[15 Marks]

Ashoka's Dhamma was evolved after the Kalinga War (261 BC) when Ashoka decided to replace his policy of Bheinghosha with Dhammaghosha (victory on the ~~per~~ basis of peace and mutual respect).

### Nature of Ashoka's Dhamma

- As opposed to the interpretation as a "religion" by the colonial school of history, Dhamma was actually an ethical-moral code of conduct propounded by Ashoka.
- Dhamma was liberal and progressive as it inspired people of different faiths to live together in peace & harmony.

- Dhamma was non-violent in nature as it opposed violent ~~at~~ Brahmanical rituals and emphasised peaceful co-existence.
- Dhamma was anti-social rigidities as it tried to unify people across varnas and faiths into composite whole.
- Dhamma emphasised tolerance and universal brotherhood among the people.
- Dhamma emphasised kindness & piety by giving donations to brahmanas & shramanas.

### Role of Dhamma in the downfall of Mauryan Empire

- HC Roy chaudhri has remarked that Ashoka's Dhamma led to neglect of the army leading to the empire's downfall.
- However, this has been proven untrue because Ashoka never disbanded his army.

- Some historians have alleged that the huge expenditure on Dhamma activities affected the financial strength of the empire.
- However, a pragmatic ruler such as Ashoka would have never tried to propagate Dhamma at the cost of the strength of the empire.
- Some historians allege that due to Dhamma, Ashoka didn't fight any war after Kalinga and this affected the capability of the army.
- However Ashoka had warned the frontier tribes of military action if they didn't mend their ways.

Hence, it would be impractical to consider Dhamma as the cause of downfall of the empire. The latter happened instead due to the ills of excessive centralisation, role of economic weakness and rise of new states in peripheral regions.

Q.4 (c) What were the privileges granted to the donees in land-grant charters of early India? How far were these charters responsible for integration or disintegration socio-political milieu? [15 Marks]

The land grant charters of early India provide valuable information about the political, social and economic milieu of their time.

- The land grants were given starting from the 6th century B.C. The main reason behind this practice was to bring more land under the plough as most lands were uncultivated.
- The donees were taxed at reduced rates and were given other financial incentives such as irrigation and implements.
- However, the administrative power of the state extended to all these land grants.

- Starting from the post-Mauryan age, land grants were being made by the state to form social alliances with the religious elite and gain legitimacy of the common people. eg. Kushanas
  - Since the times of Gupta, land grants were made to temples, religious men and state officials. Although initially only financial powers were given, but when the central authority weakened: penal and administrative powers began to be exercised by the land holders.
  - During the early medieval age, the process of feudalism emerged as there came up a very large number of land-holders.
- Effect on socio-political milieu
- During ancient age, land grants helped

in the assimilation of the tribal elements into the Brahmanical ritual order.

- This increased the state's economic resources as the tribals became sedentary and began to pay taxes.
- However with the beginning of feudalism around the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, the land-grants led to the disintegration of the socio-political milieu.
- Each land holder began to command the loyalty of those who tilled their land and this reduced the loyalty and respect for the central authority.

This gradual disintegration of the socio-political milieu particularly in North India led to the defeat of the Rajputs against the Turkish invasions



Q.7 (a) How far do the coins of the Gupta's provide clues regarding trends in economy, polity, religion and arts? Discuss them in the light of corroborating evidence from archaeology and literature. [20 Marks]

The Guptas ruled over northern India from about AD 350 to AD 550 and produced a number of illustrious kings. They issued gold, silver and copper coins which provide a lot of information of their reign.

### Trends in economy →

- The monetisation of economy was very high because the Guptas issued the largest number of gold coins in the history of ancient India.
- The literature of the age such as dramas of Kalidasa attest the magnificence of trade and commerce during this period.
- The high monetisation of economy boosted exchange networks which vitalised the secondary and tertiary economic activities.

- Roman sources suggest that ~~the~~ during the rule of Julian (AD 361-63), silk became so cheap that even commoners could afford it.

### Trends in polity →

- A lot of Gupta kings are known only through coins because the coins contain their titles, names and effigy and time period.
- literature is silent about many gupta kings.
- The Ashwamedha type of coins of Samudragupta indicates that he conquered Bengal. This is confirmed through literary sources.
- Gupta royal women such as Dhruvadevi are inscribed on coins. This is confirmed by literary sources that royal women had some powers.

### Trends in religion →

- The titles of 'Parambhagwata' indicates

The Gupta rulers practised Vaishnavism which has been corroborated by literary sources.

- The title of 'Dharmaprativartaka' indicates that Guptas promoted Brahmerical rituals which is corroborated by references to Ashwamedha sacrifice.
- Ganada as the royal emblem is inscribed on many coins which is corroborated by Vayupurana.

### Trends in arts →

- The coins of Samudragupta playing the veena indicate that he took deep interest in music which is ~~corroborated~~ however not corroborated by any sources.
- The script on the coins indicate that Sanskrit had become the language

of the elites and this is corroborated by other archaeological evidences.

- Royal women inscribed on coins indicates high status in society of elite women which is corroborated by Sanskrit literature of the age.

Hence, the trends provided by coins are more or less corroborated by other literary or archaeological sources except the chronology of kings or the personal attributes of specific kings.

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Q.7 (b) Give your comments on the achievements of Harshavardhana referring to Banabhatta. [15 Marks]

Harshvardhana ruled from AD 606-641 over a large part of Northern India, at a time when proto-feudal forces were gaining strength all around him.

Banabhatta described the achievements of his patron in Harshacharita.

- Banabhatt mentions that Harsha vowed that he'd sleep on the floor until he'd defeat Sasanka of Bengal.
- However, Banabhatt mentions nowhere of the battle between the two and hence it seems that Harsha could invade and conquer Bengal only after Sasanka's death.
- Banabhatta mentions that Harsha maintained a very large army of 5 lakh foot-soldiers, 1 lakh cavalry and 50,000 elephants.

- However if this were true, Harsha would have never been defeated by Pulakeshin II on the banks of Narmada, as attested by the Aihole inscription of Ravikirti.
- Banabhatta mentions that Harsha was the ruler of five Indies, i.e. Sakalottarpatha.
- However a closer examination of other archaeological and literary evidences suggest that Harsha's empire comprised only the modern day Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Odisha.
- Banabhatta mentions that Harsha was a fine scholar himself and wrote Ratnavali, Nagananda, etc.
- However, no other literary source confirms this fact. Additionally, kings in that age wanted to be proclaimed as scholars of literary works.

- Banabhatta mentions that Harsha defeated a number of polities in central India.
- This is true, as a matter of fact Harsha established a strong central authority for the first time since the decline of the Guptas.
- Banabhatta mentions that Harsha exchanged emissaries with other rulers, which has been confirmed by other literary and archaeological evidences.

Banabhatta ~~was~~ was Harsha's courtier and hence the former is bound to portray the latter in good light. However Banabhatta's writings must be critically examined and corroborated with other literary and archaeological sources of the period.

Q.7 (c) How far is it correct to say that the Indians of the ancient period indulged only metaphysical things and not in the development of pure sciences? [15 Marks]

Ancient India is remarkable for the developments achieved in metaphysical pursuits and in pure sciences.

### Achievements in metaphysical things

- The Vedas personify the forces of nature and worship them as Gods and Goddesses such as Indra, Usha, Ashwins, etc.
- The Upanishads condemn ~~the~~ Vedic rituals (karma-marga) and introduce the concepts of 'brahman' and 'atman', thereby emphasising the jnana-marga (knowledge).
- As many as 62 heterodox sects emerged in northern India during the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and preached values and philosophies different from Vedic culture.



- Buddhism and Jainism represent the most powerful revolt against the Brahmanical religion by preaching equality, anti-ritual, ~~anti-ritual~~ anti social discrimination, etc values.
- Various 'astika' and 'nastika' schools of thought developed: Charvaka, Vedanta, Mimamsa, Lokyata, etc.
- Bhagvudism & Mahayana Buddhism flourished.  
Achievements in pure sciences →
- By 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, metallurgy was being utilised to mix metals and create alloys for tools and utensils.
- Charaka-samhita was composed which was an ancient treatise in medical science.
- Sushruta-samhita was an ancient treatise in medical surgery.
- Indian steel called 'wootz' became popular all over the country.

- Aryabhatta discovered zero, the decimal system, the eclipses, etc.
- Varahamihira made great discoveries in astronomy and biology.
- Amarsimha compiled scientific knowledge in Amarkosha.
- Nagabhatta wrote a treatise on chemical sciences.

Hence, Indians of ancient period indulged in both metaphysical sciences and pure sciences.

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Q.8 (a) How justified are we in characterizing the post-Mauryan five centuries as the 'Dark Period' of Indian History? Give reasons in support of your answer. [20 Marks]

The five centuries of post-Mauryan period were characterised as 'Dark Period' to indicate that there ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> crises in political, social, economic and cultural spheres.

Developments in Polity →

- The Indo-Greeks, Shakas and Kushans integrated northern India into their Central Asian empires and established uniform and able administration.
- In peninsular India, state formation took place for the first time during the Sangam age under the Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas.

## Development in economy →

- Die-struck coins of good quality were issued which revitalised exchange networks and gave an impetus to trade and commerce.
  - Trade was conducted both via overland routes (Silk Route) and sea-borne trade with the Eastern and Western Roman empires.
  - The discovery of Monsoon winds increased the number of ships leaving the Indian ports by many times.
  - Broach, Sopara and Muziris on the western coast and Tamralipti, Arikamedu on the eastern coast were pioneers of seaborne trade.
  - India exported silk, spices, pearls, muslin, aromatics and jewellery and Roman gold came to India (Pliny)
- ## Development in religion →

- Mahayana Buddhism was in flourishing states, being patronised by kings such as

Kanishka.

- Bhagvatism emerged and Vaishnava-Shaiva-Shakti cults also became popular.
- Religions interconnected and interacted among themselves.

Developments in Culture →

- Indian culture comprising Brahmanical religion and Buddhism reached South <sup>East</sup> Asia and Central Asia.
- The Brahmanical culture moved into peninsular India leading to cultural assimilation.
- Cave architecture flourished at Ajanta, Kanheri, Pitalkhora, etc.
- Stupa architecture also flourished such as at Sanchi.
- The coins of this age represent

incredible example of miniature art.

- Apabhramsa languages developed such as Marathi and Shauraseni.
- Sangam literature: Melkanakku, Kellkanakku  
Hence, given such a high quality developments in all walks of life, it'd be unjustified to call this period "The Dark Age".

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Q.8 (b) How far is it true to say that the strength and vigour of Indian history during c. A.D. 500-750 lay in the south of the Vindhyas? [15 Marks]

The period from AD 500-750 was a remarkable phase in the history of India due to stark contrast in developments on both the sides of the Vindhyas.

Northern India →

- After the decline of the Guptas, proto feudal tendencies emerged which Harsha (606-641) wasn't able to wipe out.
- Decline in economic activities lead to de-urbanisation of cities such as Vaishali and Ahichhata.
- The Brahmanical religion became rigid and extreme social punishments began to be meted out to people.

## Peninsular India

- States flourished <sup>post</sup> ~~during~~ the Sangam age: Pallavas, Chalukyas and Pandyas.
- The Vesara style of temple architecture was seen at Aihole and Badami.
- The Dravidian style of temple architecture was seen at Mahabalipuram & Kanchipuram.
- Trade was practised with China and SE Asia.
- Peninsular India exported cotton, silk, aromatics, spices, food products and imported horses, jewels, tin, etc.
- Sangam literature was revised and culminated in Melkarakettu, Kilkarakettu, Pattupattu, Silapadikaram and Manimekalai.
- Chalukyan king Pulakeshin II even defeated Harsha in AD 629 on the



banks of the Narmada.

- While feudalism gained strength and trade and commerce declined in northern India, immense progress was visible in economics and culture in peninsular India.

Hence it's absolutely correct to say that the strength and vigour of Indian history during AD 500-750 lay in the south of the Vindhyas.

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Q.8 (c) Describe critically the socio-economic life during the Mauryan period. [15 Marks]

The nearly two-centuries long Mauryan period starting from 321 BC led to a number of developments in the socio-economic life.

Progress in socio-economic life →

- The state gave great impetus to agricultural activities by incentivizing expansion of cultivation.
- Herding activities grew manifold as Vivita-Adhyaksha and Go-Adhyaksha were appointed.
- Monetisation of economy increased with the appointment of Lakshna-adhyaksha.
- Guilds were promoted and textiles, metallurgy and liquor were monopolised by the state.

- The Brahmanical religion was rigid but Buddhism and Jainism provided an antidote to it.
- Taxila emerged as an important centre of education.
- The outlook towards merchants and craftsmen were positive.
- The Jataka stories and Dharmashastra of the age indicate progress in literature.

### Issues pulling back socio-economic life

- Excessive control of state in economy hindered individual effort and inhibited guilds from expanding.
- State monopolies in textiles and metallurgy also hindered business.
- Strict market control of prices hurt profits of merchants.

- Rigidities in Brahmanical religion affected the lives of women and shudras.
- Buddhism and Jainism could never become as popular as Brahmanical religion.
- Sanskrit started to emerge as the language of the elites, and of the state thus displacing prakrits and disempowering of common people.

Hence the achievements of socio-economic life in Mauryan age must be viewed in degrees and not in absolute terms.