

# IAS Prelims Exam: Ancient History

## NCERT Questions: Ancient Indian History

### Writing

Old edition of NCERT Books are still high in demand in terms of UPSC IAS Exam Preparation because it has extensive coverage of the topics given in the UPSC IAS Exam syllabus. The IAS aspirants find it difficult to get an old edition NCERT book from market due to its unavailability in the market.

Here, we have provided Multiple Choice Questions of Ancient Indian History which have been created from the old edition of NCERT book, go and check your level of your Preparation of IAS Prelims Exam.

**1. Who among the following historians has written the book title “The Wonder That was India”?**

- a. A.L. Basham
- b. Alison Bashford
- c. R. C. Majumdar
- d. Satish Chandra

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The book "The Wonder That Was India": Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent before the Coming of the Muslims, is written by Arthur Llewellyn Basham and first published in 1954. The book was aimed at a western audience. Basham, in the book, has attempted to correct the negative stereotypes of India created by authors like James Mill, Thomas Babington Macaulay and Vincent Arthur Smith.

**2. Who among the following historian has attempted to write history on the basis of genealogies of various dynasties given in Puranas?**

- a. H.C. Raychaudhury
- b. F.E. Pargitar
- c. A.L. Basham
- d. Both a and b

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

Many historians like F.E. Pargitar and H.C. Raychaudhury have attempted to write history on the basis of genealogies of various dynasties given in Puranas. The study of families and the tracing of their lineages and history called Geneology

**3.The Greek ambassador Megasthenese was in the court of which one of the following rulers?**

- a.Chandragupta Maurya
- b.Samudragupta Maurya
- c.Alauddin Khalji
- d.Balban

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The Greek ambassador Megasthenese (in the court of Chandragupta Maurya c. 324-300 B.C.) testifies the existence of a list of 153 kings whose reigns had covered a period of about 6053 years up till then. Megasthenese is known for his work 'Indica'.

**4.Who among the following have written the metrical legendary and historical chronicle of the north-western Indian subcontinent, Rajatarangini?**

- a.Megasthenese
- b.Kalhana
- c.Al-Biruni
- d.Herodotus

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Kalhana's Rajatarangini is one of the works of history which is indeed a solitary example of its kind written between 1148 and 1149. It enjoys great respect among the historians for its approach and historical content. Kalhana's work of Rajatarangini consists of 7826 verses, which are divided into eight books called Tarangas ("waves").

**5.Consider the following statements regarding the Megasthenese's writing:**

- I.Megasthenese wrote extensively in a book called 'Indica' which is no longer available to us.  
II.Megasthenese's writings could be seen through various extracts in the writings of Diodorous, Strabo and Arrian.  
III.Megasthenese mentions that Indian society comprised of seven castes (jatis).

**Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?**

- a.Only I  
b.I and II  
c.II and III  
d.All of the above

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

The discrepancies in Megasthenese's works seem to be because of his lack of knowledge of any Indian language and being not part of Indian society and psyche.

**6.Al- Biruni was the contemporary of which of the following Indian rulers?**

- a.Chandragupta Maurya  
b.Mahmud Ghazni  
c.Alauddin Khalji  
d.Balban

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Al-Biruni was born in central Asia in A.D. 913 and died in Ghazni (present-day Afghanistan) in A.D. 1048. He was one of the greatest scholars of his time and a contemporary of Mahmud of Ghazni. When Mahmud conquered part of central Asia, he took Al-Biruni with him. Though Al-Biruni deplored his loss of freedom, he appreciated the favourable circumstances for his work.

**7.Who among the following scholars is not associated with the British East Indian Company?**

- a.John Holwell  
b.Nanthanie  
c.Herodotus  
d.Alexander Dow

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

Many scholars like John Holwell, Nanthaniel Halhed, and Alexander Dow - all associated in various capacities with the British East India Company - wrote about Indian history and culture proving the pre-eminence of Indian civilization in the ancient world. Herodotus was as a Greek historian who was born in Halicarnassus, Caria (modern-day Bodrum, Turkey) and lived in the fifth century BC (c. 484–425 BC), a contemporary of Socrates.

**8. Consider the following statement regarding the writing of John Holwell who described the immense antiquity of human race on the basis of Puranic sources:**

I. Holwell wrote that Hindu texts contained a higher revelation than the Christian one and they predated the flood described in the Old Testament.

II. He discussed the vast periods of time of human history assigned to four Yugas and concluded that human reason can no more reconcile to itself the idea of Patriarchal longevity of few thousand years for the entire span of human race.

**Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?**

- a. Only I
- b. Only II
- c. Both I and II
- d. Neither I nor II

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The second statement is true for Halhed who discussed the vast periods of time of human history assigned to four Yugas and concluded that human reason can no more reconcile to itself the idea of Patriarchal longevity of few thousand years for the entire span of human race.

**9. Who among the following scholars had viewed India as the homeland of religion in its oldest and purest form; and also as the cradle of worldly civilisations?**

- a. Voltaire
- b. Nanthanie

- c.Herodotus
- d.Alexander Dow

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The great intellectual and statesman, Voltaire viewed India as the homeland of religion in its oldest and purest form; and also as the cradle of worldly civilizations. Voltaire was convinced of the priority of Indian achievement in the area of secular learning and worldly culture.

**10. Who among the following scholars wrote "Their religion has a great purity ... (and) one can find traces of pure concept of divinity which cannot easily be found elsewhere"?**

- a.Voltiare
- b.Pierre de Sonnerate
- c.Schelling
- d.Emannual Kant

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

"Their religion has a great purity ... (and) one can find traces of pure concept of divinity which cannot easily be found elsewhere". He also declared that Indian religious thoughts were free of dogmatism and intolerance. Emannual Kant is known for his major work Critique of Pure Reason.

**11. In which of the following years the Asiatic Society of Bengal was established?**

- a.1684
- b.1784
- c.1884
- d.1984

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Sir William Jones founded the Asiatic Society on 15 January 1784 in a meeting presided over by Sir Robert Chambers, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court at the Fort William in Calcutta, then capital of the British Raj, to enhance and further the cause of Oriental research. At the time of its

foundation, this Society was named as "Asiatick Society". In 1825, the society dropped the antique k without any formal resolution and the Society was renamed as "The Asiatic Society".

**12. Who among the following historians prepared the first systematic history of ancient India?**

- a. William Jones
- b. Karl Marx
- c. Vincent Arthur Smith
- d. F.W. Hegel

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

The most prominent among the twentieth century historians belonging to the imperialist school of thought was Vincent Arthur Smith (1843-1920) who prepared the first systematic history of ancient India published in 1904.

**13. Who among the following has edited the Sacred Books of the East?**

- a. Max Muller
- b. Karl Marx
- c. Vincent Arthur Smith
- d. F.W. Hegel

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The Sacred Books of the East is a monumental 50-volume set of English translations of Asian religious writings, edited by Max Müller and published by the Oxford University Press between 1879 and 1910. It incorporates the essential sacred texts of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, and Islam.

**14. Who among the following historians has written the book titled "Early History of India"?**

**James Mill**

- a. J. S. Mill
- b. V. A. Smith
- c. Thomas Macauley

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

Following in the footsteps of James Mill, V.A. Smith an ICS officer serving the British Government in India prepared the text book called Early History of India in 1904. As a loyal member of the civil service he emphasized the role of foreigners in ancient India. Alexander's invasion accounted for almost one-third of his book.

**15. Who is the author of the book title “Hindu Polity”?**

- a.H.C. Raychaudhary
- b.R.C. Majumda
- c.A.S. Altekar
- d. K.P. Jayaswal

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

The book Hindu Polity is considered as one of the most important book ever written on ancient Indian history. In his book Hindu Polity, published in 1924, Jayaswal effectively knocked down the myth that Indians had no political ideas and institutions. His study of literary and epigraphical sources showed that India was not a despotic country as propagated by the imperialist historians. Beside the hereditary kingship, India had the tradition of republics right from Rigvedic times. He also convincingly showed that contrary to the views of British historians, Indian polity and art of governance was far more developed than that of any other part of contemporary world.

**16. Who among the follow historians has written the book title “Political History of Ancient India”?**

- a.R.K. Mookerji
- b.D.R. Bhandarkar
- c.H.C. Raychaudhary
- d.R.C. Majumdar

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

H.C. Raychaudhury (1892-1957) in his book Political History of Ancient India reconstructed the history of ancient India from the time of Mahabharata war to the time of Gupta Empire and practically cleared the clouds created by V.A. Smith.

**17. Who among the following historians does not belong to the Marxist School of Thought?**

- a.D.D. Kosambi
- b.R.C. Majumdar
- c.Romila Thaper
- d.Irfan Habib

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

D.D. Kosambi can be called the first among the pioneers of Marxist school of thought. D.R. Chanana, R. S. Sharma, Romila Thaper, Irfan Habib, Bipan Chandra, and Satish Chandra are some of the leading Marxist historians of India. Marxism is a method of socioeconomic analysis, originating from the mid-to-late 19th century works of German philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that analyzes class relations and societal conflict using a materialist interpretation of historical development and a dialectical view of social transformation.