

IAS Prelims Exam: Ancient History

NCERT Questions: The sources of Ancient Indian History

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. Consider the following statements regarding the sources for reconstructing the Ancient History of India:

- I. One of the sources available for reconstructing the Ancient Indian history is the literary sources like Vedic, Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and other literature besides foreign accounts.
- II. Other sources available for reconstructing the Ancient Indian history is the archaeological sources like epigraphic, numismatic and architectural remains besides archaeological explorations and excavations.

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: c

Explanation: WE have a variety of sources for reconstructing the history of ancient India. Broadly, the sources for ancient India's history can be classified under two main categories. The first is the literary and the second archaeological. Under the literary sources can be included Vedic, Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and other literature besides foreign accounts. Under the broad head of archaeology we may consider epigraphic, numismatic and architectural remains besides archaeological explorations

and excavations which have opened great vistas of new information about which we had no Knowledge earlier.

2. Consider the following sentence regarding the literary sources available for reconstructing the ancient Indian history:

I. Most of the ancient literature is religious in nature, and those which are claimed to be history by Indians, i.e., puranic and epic literature, contain no definite dates for events and kings.

II. A large number of inscriptions, coins and local chronicles do indicate an effort towards history writing.

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: c

Explanation: Most of the ancient literature is religious in nature, and those which are claimed to be history by Indians, i.e., puranic and epic literature, contain no definite dates for events and kings. A large number of inscriptions, coins and local chronicles do indicate an effort towards history writing. The rudiments of history are preserved in the Puranas and epics. We find genealogies of kings and sometimes their achievements. But it is difficult to arrange them in chronological order.

3. Consider the following statements regarding the vedic literature available for reconstructing the ancient Indian history:

I. Vedic literature, mainly the four Vedas i.e. Rik, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas, are entirely in a different language, which can be called the Vedic language.

II. The vocabulary of vedic literature contains a wide range of meaning and at times different in grammatical usages.

III. Six vedan gas (limbs of vedas) were evolved for the proper understanding of the Vedas.

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: Vedic literature, mainly the four Vedas i.e. Rik, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas, are entirely in a different language, which can be called the Vedic language. The vocabulary of vedic literature contains a wide range of meaning and at times different in grammatical usages. It has a definite mode of pronunciation in which emphasis changes the meaning entirely. This is the reason why an elaborate means to protect and preserve the mode of pronunciation of the Vedas have been devised. Six vedangas (limbs of vedas) were evolved for the proper understanding of the Vedas. These are Siksha (phonetics), Kalpa (rituals), Vyakarna (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Chhanda (metrics), and Jyotisha (astronomy). Each vedanga has developed a credible literature around it which are in the sutra form i.e., precepts.

4. Which of the following statement is incorrect?

- I. Panini's Ashtadhyayi, book on grammar in eight chapters is the final culmination of this excellent art of writing in sutra (precepts) in which every chapter is precisely interwoven.
- II. The Brahmanas elaborates vedic caste system of the society.
- III. The Aranyakas and the Upanishads give discourses on different spiritual and philosophical problems.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation: Panini's Ashtadhyayi, book on grammar in eight chapters is the final culmination of this excellent art of writing in sutra (precepts) in which every chapter is precisely interwoven. The Brahmanas elaborates vedic rituals of the society. The Aranyakas and the Upanishads give discourses on different spiritual and philosophical problems.

5. Which of the following branches of historical studies, considered to form the subject matter of the Puranas, is correctly matched?

Branches**Subjects**

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| a. Sarga | involution of universe |
| b. Manvantantra | recurring of time |
| c. Pratisarga | evolution of universe |
| d. Vamsa | religious importance |

Answer: b

Explanation: The Puranas, eighteen in number, are mainly historical accounts. Five branches of historical studies are considered to form the subject matter of the Puranas. These are (I) sarga (evolution of universe), (ii) pratisarga (involution of universe), (iii) manvantantra (recurring of time), (iv) vamsa (genealogical list of kings and sages), and (v) vamsanucharita (life stories of some selected characters).

6. Jain and Buddhist literature were written in which of the following language?

- a. Prakrit
- b. Pali
- c. Sanskrit
- d. Both a and b

Answer: d

Explanation: The Jain and the Buddhist literature were written in Prakrit and Pali languages. Prakrit was a form of Sanskrit language and early Jain literature is mostly written in this language. Pali can be regarded as the form of Prakrit language which was in vogue in Magadha. Most of the early Buddhist literature is written in this language. With the Buddhist monks it reached Sri Lanka, where it is a living language. Ashokan edicts are also in this language.

7. Consider the following statements regarding the Dharmasutras and the Smritis:

- I. These texts were considered as the rules and regulations for the general public and for the rulers.
- II. The Dharmasutras and the smritis can also be termed in the modern concept as the constitution and law books for the ancient Indian polity and society.
- III. These texts were compiled between 600 and 200 B. C and Manusmriti is prominent among them.

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 Dharmasutras and the Smritis are rules and regulations for the general public and rulers. It can be termed in the modern concept as the constitution and the law books for the ancient Indian polity and society. These are also called Dharmashastras. These were compiled between 600 and 200B.C. Manusmriti is prominent among them.

8. Consider the following statements regarding the Kautilya's Arthashastra:

- I. Kautilya's Arthashastra is a book on statecraft was written in Gupta Period.
- II. The text is divided into 15 chapters known as books.
- III. Arthashastra was written in the fourth century B.C. by Kautilya, from which it appeared a tradition of writing on and teaching of statecrafts because Kautilya acknowledges his debt to his predecessors in the field.

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: c

Explanation: Kautilya's Arthashastra, a book on statecraft was written in the Mauryan period not in Gupta period. The text is divided into 15 chapters known as books. Different books deal with different subject matter concerning polity, economy and society. It appears that even before the final version of Arthashastra was written in the fourth century B.C. by Kautilya, there appeared a tradition of writing on and teaching of statecrafts because Kautilya acknowledges his debt to his predecessors in the field.

9. Who among the following has written Mudrarakshasha, a play?

- a. Kautilya
- b. Vishakhadatta
- c. Kalidasa
- d. Panini

Answer: b

Explanation: Mudrarakshasha is a historical play written by Vishakhadatta, narrates the ascent of the king Chandragupta Maurya and it also gives a glimpse of society and culture.

10. Who among the following has written Malavikagnimitram?

- a. Pusyamitra Sunga
- b. Banabhatta
- c. Kautilya
- d. Kalidasa

Answer: a

Explanation: Kalidasa's Malavikagnimitram is based on some events of the reign of Pusyamitra Sunga, a dynasty which followed the Mauryas.

11. Which of the following pair is correctly matched?

<u>Poets</u>	<u>Historical Texts</u>
a. Banabhatta	Kumarapalacharita
b. Vakpati	Kumarapalacharita
c. Bilhana	Vikramankadevacharita
d. Jayasimha	Gaudavaho

Answer: c

Explanation: Banabhatta's Harshacharita throws light on many historical facts about which we could not have known otherwise. Vakpati wrote Gaudavaho, based on the exploits of Yasovarman of Kanauj. Similarly, Bilhana's Vikramankadevacharita describes the victories of the later Chalukya king Vikramaditya. There are some other biographical works based on the lives of different kings. Prominent among these are: Kumarapalacharita of Jayasimha, Kumarapalacharita or Dvayashraya Mahakavya of Hemachandra, Hammirakavya of Nayachandra, Navasahasankacharita of Padmagupta, Bhojaprabandha of Billal, Priihvirajacharit of Chandbardai.

12. Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding Sangam literature?

- a. The Sangam literature describes many kings and dynasties of South India.
- b. The Sangam literature describes many kings and dynasties of North India.
- c. Poetic compilations by group of poets of different times patronised by many chiefs and kings are,

called Sangama.

d. The Sangam literature consists of short and long poems which were composed by a large number of poets in praise of their kings.

Answer: b

Explanation: The Sangam literature, describes many kings and dynasties of South India. Poetic compilations by group of poets of different times patronised by many chiefs and kings are, called Sangama. These are, in all, 30,000 lines of poetry arranged in two main groups, Patinenkilkanakku and the Pattupattu. The Sangam literature consists of short and long poems which were composed by a large number of poets in praise of their kings.

13. Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding the foreign accounts on ancient Indian history?

- a. Megasthenese in his "Histories" gives us much information about Indo-Persian relations.
- b. Arrian wrote a detailed account of the invasion of India by Alexander on the basis of information from those who accompanied the campaign.
- c. An anonymous author, who was a Greek, settled in Egypt wrote a book Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, on the basis of his personal voyage of Indian coast in about A.D.80.
- d. Ptolemy wrote a geographical treatise on India in the second century A.D.

Answer: a

Explanation: India figures in the foreign inscriptions like in those of Darius. Herodotus and Ctesian got their information through the Persian sources. Herodotus in his "Histories" gives us much information about Indo-Persian relations. Arrian wrote a detailed account of the invasion of India by Alexander on the basis of information from those who accompanied the campaign. Ambassadors were sent to Patliputra by Greek kings. Some of them were Megasthenese, Deimachus and Dionysios. Megasthenese was in the court of Chandragupta Maurya. He wrote a book on India called Indica.