GSSCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

MAINS TEST SERIES 2023

GS MAINS Q&A

TOPICAL TEST - 09

(5 QUESTION)

HISTORY

The Salient Aspects Of Art Forms

HISTORY - 6

Time Allowed: 50 Mins. *Max. Marks: 75*

1. **Enumerate the Significance of the cave paintings in reconstruction of early History.**
2. **Discuss the distinct features of Dholavira site and provide evidence that led to the rise and fall of the Indus valley Civilization.**
3. **Discuss the important features of Rigvedic religion and explain how it stood apart from religion in Indus valley civilisation and Later Vedic period.**
4. **In 6th and 5th century BC Buddhism not only provided an alternative social and religious system, but also supported the changing economic conditions. Comment.**
5. **To what extent did trade play a role in disseminating Indian culture abroad in ancient times? Illustrate.**

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HISTORY - 6

1. *Enumerate the Significance of the cave paintings in reconstruction of early History.*

Approach

1. ***Briefly introduce the Pre-historic period of India. (40 words)***
2. ***State the Significance of the cave paintings in reconstruction of early History. (170 words)***
3. ***Conclusion (40 words)***

Hints:

The prehistoric Age refers to the time when there was no writing and development. It consists of five periods – Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic & Iron Age. The prehistoric cultures in India are studied through existing artworks, pottery, tools, and other physical things found at archaeological sites. Painting and drawing were the oldest art forms practised by human beings to express themselves, using the cave walls as their canvas.

The Significance of the cave paintings in reconstruction of early History:

Painting and drawing were the oldest art forms practised by human beings to express themselves, using the cave walls as their canvas.

- The paintings of the **Upper Palaeolithic phase to Neolithic phase at Bhimbetka** have linear representations, in green and dark red, of huge animal figures, such as bisons, elephants, tigers, rhinos and boars besides stick-like human figures.
- **The Mesolithic paintings:** During this period the themes are multiple but the paintings are smaller in size. Hunting scenes predominate. The hunting scenes depict people hunting in groups, armed with barbed spears, pointed sticks, arrows and bows.
- **Social structure**: Paintings at Bhimbetka show that Pre-historic people were living in small band (small groups) societies. Eg: One of the interesting scenes depicted at Lakhudiyar is of hand-linked dancing human figures. Paintings also show division of labour on the basis of sex.
- **Subsistence pattern:** was based on exploitation of resources in the form of animal and plant products. Hunting was main source of subsistence;
- **Life style:** Sometimes, men have been adorned with elaborate head-dresses, and sometimes painted with masks also. Women are painted both in the nude and clothed. The young and the old equally find place in these paintings. Children are painted running, jumping and playing. Community dances provide a common theme.
- **Flora and fauna**: Elephant, bison, tiger, boar, deer, antelope, leopard, panther, rhinoceros, fish, frog, lizard, squirrel and at times birds are also depicted.
- **Worship:** Some paintings and engravings in deep caves may have been created within the framework of shamanic beliefs and practices.

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- Sometimes it is possible to distinguish between men and women on the basis of anatomical features.
- Visual record of their day-to-day life, similar to diary.

Conclusion:

Although the true purpose behind cave art may never be revealed, its mere existence strengthens the bonds between modern day people and their earliest ancestors and serves as a beautiful reminder of the essential role art plays in the lives of all humans.

2. Discuss the distinct features of Dholavira site and provide evidence that led to the rise and fall of the Indus valley Civilization.

Approach

1. ***Briefly introduce Dholavira site. (40 words)***
2. ***Enlist distinct features of Dholavira site. (50 words)***
3. ***Provide evidence that led to the rise and fall of the Indus valley Civilization (120 words)***
4. ***Conclusion (40 words)***

Hints:

Dholavira is the most spectacular IVC site in India and the fifth largest in the subcontinent in terms of areal coverage (Mohenjo Daro 250 hectare (Ha), Harappa 150 Ha, Rakhigarhi 80–105 Ha, Ganeriwala 81 Ha and Dholavira 70 Ha). Dholavira is lesser known probably due to its remote location in the salt desert and also it was not studied until recently by using modern scientific techniques.

Distinct features of Dholavira site:

- Largest excavated Harappan site in India which can be seen by the tourists.
- **Continuous settlement**: Dholavira is unique because it records continuous settlement at one given place for over 1700 years from Pre Harappan to Late Harappan period.
- **Urbanization features:** The site has a fortified citadel, a middle town and a lower town with walls made of sandstone or limestone instead of mud bricks in many other Harappan sites.
- Very advanced water conservation and harvesting system from building a series of connected reservoirs, stone and terracotta drainage pipes to wells.
- **Funerary architecture featuring tumulus** — hemispherical structures like the Buddhist Stupas— as some of the unique features of the Dholavira site.
- It shows excellent city planning, wide roads, architecture with geometric precisions, nine gates with unique designs, and craftsmanship.

Following features of Dholavira site provide evidences that led to the rise of the Indus valley Civilization:

- **Similarity in process of urbanization & that of Harappa and Mohenjodaro**: The city expanded very rapidly from 2900 BCE till 2400 BCE when the inhabitants of Dholavira switched over from use of mud bricks to stone bricks for making houses and fortification walls; they built Citadel, , Lower and Middle Town much like what are found in most other contemporary cities like Harappa and Mohenjo Daro.
- **Same sources of raw material**: It is believed that traders of Dholavira used to source copper ore from present-day Rajasthan and Oman and UAE and export finished products from where the other IVC sites had sourced raw material.
- **Prominent centre of non agricultural occupation:** Remains of a copper smelter indicate Harappans, who lived in Dholavira, knew metallurgy. It was also a hub of manufacturing jewellery made of shells and semi-precious stones, like agate and used to export timber.

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- **Terracotta:** Painted Indus black-on-red-ware pottery, square stamp seals, seals without Indus script, a huge signboard measuring about 3 m (9.8 ft) in length, containing ten letters of Indus script.
- **Sculptures**: One poorly preserved seated male figure made of stone has also been found, comparable to high quality two stone sculptures found at Harappa.
- **Trade with Mesopotamia:** beads peculiar to the Harappan workmanship have been found in the royal graves of Mesopotamia, indicating Dholavira used to trade with the Mesopotamians.

Following features of Dholavira site provide evidences that led to the fall of the Indus valley Civilization:

- **Climate change**: from 2000 BC, Dholavira entered a phase of severe aridity due to climate change and rivers like Saraswati started drying up. Because of a drought-like situation, people started migrating toward the Ganges valley or towards south Gujarat and further beyond in Maharashtra.
- **Tectonic activity**: In those times, the Great Rann of Kutch, which surrounds the Khadir Island on which Dholavira is located, used to be navigable, but the sea receded gradually due to tectonic activity and the Rann became a mudflat.
- **Collapse of long distance trade**: Its decline also coincided with the collapse of Mesopotamia, indicating the integration of economies. Harappans, who were maritime people, lost a huge market, affecting the local mining, manufacturing, marketing and export businesses once Mesopotamia fell.

Conclusion:

In its release, UNESCO termed Dholavira as one of the most remarkable and well-preserved urban settlements in South Asia dating from the 3rd to mid-2nd millennium BCE (Before Common Era). Since the excavation at the site, the ASI has developed a museum here. Dholavira, a village with a population of around 2,000, is the nearest human settlement at present. Near the ancient city is a fossil park where wood fossils are preserved.

3. Discuss the important features of Rigvedic religion and explain how it stood apart from religion in Indus valley civilisation and Later Vedic period.

Approach

1. ***Introduce about Rig-Veda era and Rigvedic religion (50 words)***
2. ***Enumerate important features of Rigvedic religion (110 words)***
3. ***Make comparison between the religions of Indus valley civilisation and Post Vedic period with Vedic period. (90 words)***

Hints:

The Vedic age (c. 1500 – c. 500 BCE) refers to the period between the end of the urban Indus Valley Civilisation and a second urbanisation which began in the central Indo-Gangetic Plain. It gets its name from the Vedic Sanskrit texts those were composed during the period. The Rig Vedic religion represents the ideas and practices are found in the Vedic texts, and they were one of the major influences that shaped contemporary Hinduism.

Salient features of Rigvedic religion:

- Temples and idol worship was not present during the early Vedic period. There was also no priestly class acting as intermediaries for performing the religious rites.
- Prayers were offered to the gods in the form of sacrifices or 'Yajna'. Ghee, milk and grain were given as offerings. People observed elaborate yet simplistic rituals during the worship.
- Worshipping of deities was not meant for the spiritual upliftment of the people, or for any other abstract philosophical concept rather was invoked to grant material gains. Praja (children), pashu (cattle), food, wealth, health remained the centre of prayers of the Rig-Vedic Aryans.

- The Rig Vedic hymns had no proper clarity on life after death. Thus, concepts of reincarnation and rebirth were not established well.
- The Vedic people believed in monotheism. The idea of single supreme entity governing the universe is believed to have been emerged during this time.
- Despite being monotheistic, the people worshipped and personified the natural forces into gods such as Prithvi (Earth), Agni (Fire), Vayu (Wind), Varuna (Rain) and Indra (Thunder).
- Indra was the most important God and was also known as Purandara (the destroyer of forts) and God of rain. Agni was second in importance only to Indra. He acted as the intermediary between the Gods and the worshipper. Soma was the God of plants. The Marut personified storm. Very few female dieties were venerated such as Aditi and Usha. The religion thus reflected the patriarchal society and was that of primitive animism.
- The growing importance of priests and rituals surrounding sacrifices in the later Vedic age can be attributed, in fact, to Vedic period due to the gradually rising importance attached with the rituals done during sacrificial ceremonies. An unintended effect of proliferation of Sacrifices were the growth and development in the knowledge of mathematics and animal anatomy.
- Rigvedic religion was not based on magico-ritual formulae, rather it stressed direct communication with the gods through sacrifices, hymns etc. Gods were not worshipped for the spiritual upliftment of the people, or for any other abstract philosophical concept, but were invoked to grant material gains.

Difference between Harappan and Post Vedic religion and Vedic religion:

- Unlike Vedas, Harappan culture lacked a recorded description of religious beliefs such as the Vedas.
- The Indus Valley people were icon-worshippers, whereas the people of Vedic civilization didn't follow icon-worship. The common gods of the Indus Valley people were Mother-goddess, Pashupati, tree, animals unlike the naturalistic Gods of Vedic religion as discussed above.
- Importance of fire worship and Yajnas was predominantly seen in Rig Vedic age which was not the case with religious practices of Indus valley culture. Large scale Yagnas like Rajsuyagna, Vajpeya and Ashwamedh were performed during the former culture.
- Also, terracotta figures of deities like Mother Goddess were found in IVC excavated sites. Material objects of worship of Vedic civilisation are not found.
- In Rigvedic period, offerings to the deities were not bound by strict rituals as was seen in later Vedic age and also the magical power of the word was not considered much important.
- In later period religion became more complex with Brahmins taking dominant roles and requiring number of expensive sacrifices which were out of common people's reach.
- Idol worship gained momentum in the later Vedic period and the worship of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva was noticeable. Indra and Agni and other naturalistic Rigvedic deities lost relevance and importance.
- Later Vedic age experience negative features that stratified the society, promoted inequality and degraded the position of women. Emergence of Buddhism and Jainism was a result of divergence of religion towards Brahminical dominance as witnessed during later Vedic period that was absent in the Vedic age.

4. In 6th and 5th century BC Buddhism not only provided an alternative social and religious system, but also supported the changing economic conditions. Comment.

Approach

1. Introduce with origin of Buddhism (40 words)

2. ***Give a background picture of the society before the emergence of Buddhism (40 words)***
3. ***Describe the impact of Buddhism on social, religious system and economic conditions of the society (140 words)***
4. ***Conclusion (30 words)***

Hints:

Buddhism originated in ancient India as a Shramana tradition sometime between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE, spreading through much of Asia. Buddhism arose in the eastern part of Ancient India, in and around the ancient Kingdom of Magadha (now in Bihar, India), and is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama.

Before the rise of Buddhism:

- The hierarchical ranking in the Varna system was Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The Kshatriyas ranking second strongly objected to the ritualistic domination of the Brahmanas. Also Gautama himself belonged to the Kshatriya Varna.
- The society was mainly pastoral and cattle sacrifice was in vogue which prevented their economic use elsewhere. Vaishyas, 3rd in line, also faced suppression from Brahminical class and their profession was seen as lowly.
- The condition of women and shudras was the most pitiable whereby basic rights were denied to them and was an exploited section.

Emergence of Buddhism brought with it the following religious and social changes:

- Buddhism's individual outlook and disregard for the caste system in attaining enlightenment were appealing to people in lower castes.
- Buddhism suggested that individual people might be able to attain enlightenment in this life and held that caste was not a punishment for deeds committed in a past life.
- Women also had some opportunities within Buddhism that they wouldn't have had access to otherwise, such as the ability to become Buddhist monks. Buddhism gave them an option for work outside the traditional sphere of family and home.
- Buddhism being a heterodox school of philosophy, rejected Vedic practices, religious rites and rituals and gave way to rationalism in thought and action.

Apart from above changes, Buddhism also altered the way economy functioned:

- In 6th and 5th century BC, the newly developed features of the social and economic life of people did not fit in with the Vedic ritualism and animal sacrifice.
- There was the spread of a new agrarian economy in India which led to urbanization and rise of trade. Trade was both the cause and effect of increasing urbanization. Trade, on an increasing scale, led to the birth of money economy i.e. coinage.
- The trading and commercial communities i.e. Vaishyas wanted their private property to be secure and social and religious sanctions for foreign trade and sea-travelling which, by then, was not sanctioned by the Vedic religion. These economic conditions necessitated changes in the society as well.
- Buddhism preached the gospel of non-violence, which would put an end to wars between different kingdoms and consequently promoted trade and commerce.

Conclusion:

Hence, the conflict between the Vedic religious practices and the aspirations of the rising social groups led to the search of new religions and philosophical ideas which would fit with the basic changes in the material life of the people. Buddha's liberal and democratic approach quickly attracted the people

of all sections. This attraction was much greater for trading class, women and lower castes because it helped in destroying the brahminical supremacy and it emphasized on karma.

5. *To what extent did trade play a role in disseminating Indian culture abroad in ancient times? Illustrate.*

Approach

1. ***Briefly describe about status of trade in ancient India (40 words)***
2. ***Explain how trade played important role in spreading Indian trade abroad such as silk road and trade with south east Asia (90 words)***
3. ***Briefly discuss factors like religious, education, etc. that helped in the dissemination of culture (80 words)***
4. ***Conclude (40 words)***

Hints:

India established trade relations with outside world since as early as during the Indus Valley civilization in the third millennium BC. Spread of Indian culture through trade has been called as remarkable because it didn't involve forceful imposition of culture or violence, rather was voluntary adopted between parties.

Trade played a significant role in disseminating Indian culture abroad in ancient times in the following manner:

- Strategic location of India and vicinity near the ancient silk route gave India the advantage of being a centre for cultural admixture.
- Kuchi, a kingdom in central Asia witnessed flourishing of Indian culture. The trading of silk, jade, horses was accompanied with transmission of Indian culture in the form of ancient stupas, temples, monasteries, paintings and images found there.
- Khotan, another ancient trading centre contained ancient coins bearing Prakrit text in Kharoshti script, Sanskrit manuscripts and Buddhist texts.
- Traders from Kashi, Mathura, Ujjain, Pataliputra and port cities of Mammalapuram, Kaveripattanam and Puri travelled extensively in South East Asia in search of trade opportunities, especially to Indonesia, Java, Malaya, Sumatra, Cambodia.
- Indonesia and surrounding regions came to be known as Suvarnadweep as traders travelled in search of gold there. Indonesia housed many Shaivite and Vaishnavite temple. Mahabharat and Ramayan also became quite popular over there which was later represented in the form of Wayung puppetry.
- Similarly, Malaysia too adopted Ramayana and Jataka stories in their folklore. Brahmi script was modified and adopted as script of Malaysia in ancient times.
- The Hindu temples and Buddhist sculptures were also found in Cambodia and Vietnam, eg. The temple of Angkor Vat.
- Traders of Kalinga established cultural links with Srilanka and helped in disseminating Buddhist culture.
- Apart from south East Asia, travelers like Suleman, Al Masudi, Ibn Hauqual and Al Idrisi attest the flourishing trade relations of India with Arab world.
- Arab traders took home astronomical and mathematical treatises by Aryabhatta and Varahamihira, translating it into Arabic. Decimal system, notation and use of zero was widely spread and popularized by Arab traders.

- Merchants from south India traded with Roman Empire in items like pepper, betel, spices, scents and precious stones. The Tamil kings even employed 'yavanas' (people belonging to Western Asia and the Mediterranean) as guards. The Yavanas settles in parts like Kaveripattinam and absorbed Indian culture as well spread their culture with the indigenous people.

Other factors that led to spread of Indian culture abroad in ancient times:

- The universities were the most important centres of cultural interaction. They attracted large numbers of students and scholars. Students and teachers from such universities carried Indian culture abroad along with its knowledge and religion.
- Nalanda, Valabhi, Vikramshila and Odantapuri (Bihar) universities were quite active in cultural transmission. The Chinese pilgrim Huien-tsang has given ample information about his visit to Nalanda and Valabhi universities.
- Along the silk route, there were resting places for monks and missionaries, for pilgrims and merchants and later these became famous centres of Buddhist learning. These monasteries and resting places like Khotan (present day China) transmitted religion and philosophy, ideas and beliefs, languages and literature, and art and culture.
- Indian rulers like King Ashoka made great efforts to propagate Buddhism outside India. He sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra to Sri Lanka to spread the message of the Buddha.

Conclusion:

Cultural exchange was a two way process with India adopting foreign culture such as cooking styles, apparels (Shakas and Kushans introduced turbans, tunics and trousers), coins by Indo Greek and so on. The exchange of culture between India and outside world helped in diversification and development of many cultural aspects like language, food, religion, architecture styles and so on.

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