

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

UPSC PRELIMS PYQ TREND MAP

ANCIENT INDIA & CULTURE

Art & Architecture • Literature • Philosophy • Politics



30 Years Coverage
(1995–2025)

Micro-Topic Analysis

SERIES-1

IYACHAMY MURUGAN

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ANCIENT INDIA & CULTURE – PYQ TREND MAP (1995–2025)

PYQ TREND MAP -1

DEAR ASPIRANTS

Success in the UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination is no longer about how much you know; it is about knowing *what* matters. In an era of information overload, the biggest challenge for an aspirant is not finding resources, but filtering them.

For years, I have observed brilliant students falter not because they lacked hard work, but because they lacked direction. The common narrative is that UPSC is "unpredictable." I strongly disagree. I believe that while the questions change, the **logic** remains consistent. The examiner leaves footprints in the form of recurring themes, evolving concepts, and specific "trap" patterns. The problem is that standard compilations bury these footprints under chronological lists, making it impossible to see the bigger picture.

This **PYQ Trend Map Compilation** is my answer to that chaos.

I have not just compiled questions; I have deconstructed them. By breaking down the syllabus into micro-topics, I have attempted to isolate the DNA of the exam. This book is designed to serve as a high-resolution lens, allowing you to see exactly which areas have been exhausted, which are rising in importance, and which are likely to return after a hiatus. My goal is to transform your preparation from "blind reading" to "strategic targeting."

This current volume focuses on **Ancient India & Culture**. However, I understand that holistic preparation requires consistency across all domains. I am actively working on the Trend Maps for the **remaining subjects** (Polity, Economy, Geography, etc.), which will be published shortly to complete your strategic arsenal.

I invite you to use this book not just to practice, but to understand the mind of the examiner. Stop guessing, start analyzing, and let the trends guide you to the cut-off.

Wish you All the Best

Iyachamy Murugan

Chief Mentor

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WAY OF UTILISING THIS BOOK

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Ancient India & Culture – PYQ Trend Map (1995–2025)

This book contains **6 thematic pillars** – Art & Craft, Culture & Heritage, Architecture, Literature, Religion & Philosophy, and Politics & Society. Each pillar has a **Trend Map** → **PYQs** → **Revision Blueprint**. Follow the steps below **for each pillar separately**, one at a time.

1] Read the Trend Map First – Understand the Battlefield

Before touching any PYQ, read the **Trend Map** at the start of each pillar. Your focus should be on understanding:

- Which micro-topics are **most frequently tested** (High Frequency section)
- Which areas are **rising / newly introduced** (Under-Asked but Rising Areas)
- What **Concept Clusters** UPSC is building across years
- What **traps and swaps** UPSC repeatedly uses

► ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE – Art & Craft Pillar

You open the Art & Craft Trend Map and note:

- **Highest frequency:** Dance form–state mapping (10 Qs – #1 tested area)
- **Rising area:** UNESCO ICH returned in 2024 after a long gap; Institutional history (Gandharva Mahavidyalaya) appeared for the first time in 2025
- **Key trap:** Tyagaraja's kritis = Lord Rama, NOT Krishna → this trap was set in 2018

*Now you **know where to focus** before you even read a single question.*

2] Attempt the PYQs – Diagnose Your Gaps

Now go through the actual PYQs in that pillar. Try to **mentally answer each question**. There is no pressure of getting it correct. Your focus should be on **self-diagnosis**:

- Which micro-topics am I **strong** in?
- Which micro-topics am I **completely blank** on?
- Which questions am I getting wrong because of **confusion / swaps**?

► ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE – Architecture Pillar

You attempt the Architecture PYQs (47 questions) and find:

- Ashokan Edicts questions – you got 8/12 correct → relatively strong
- Cave chronology (Barabar → Ajanta → Ellora) – got 1/5 → major gap
- Temple Architecture – you confuse Nagara vs. Dravida features repeatedly

*This tells you: **Caves and Temple Styles need priority study, not Edicts.***

TIP: Mark each question as (confident), (guessed right), or (couldn't answer). This creates your personal weakness map.

3] Study from Your Notes/Textbook – Targeted, Not Cover-to-Cover

After diagnosing gaps from PYQs, study the relevant topics from your books/notes. **Do not read the entire chapter.** Use the **Source Linkage** and **Revision Blueprint** given at the end of each pillar to know exactly what to read from where.

▶ ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE – Your Weakness: Cave Architecture

The Revision Blueprint tells you:

Micro-Topic: Caves – Chronology (Barabar → Ellora), Religious affiliation

Source: Nitin Singhanian Ch. 4 + NCERT Class 11

Frequency: 8 Questions

So you go to Nitin Singhanian Chapter 4 and study *only* the cave section – focusing on chronological order, which caves are Buddhist/Hindu/Jain, and site-state mapping. While reading, keep your PYQ analysis in mind:

- UPSC asked: “Which caves are Buddhist?” → ensure your notes distinguish religious affiliation of each cave
- UPSC asked chronological order → make a timeline, don't just read descriptions

4] Re-attempt the PYQs – Validate Your Study

After studying the topic in detail, come back and **re-attempt the same PYQs**. This time, you should be getting most answers correct. Three scenarios can occur:

a) You're NOT able to answer, and the question IS from what you've read – This means your reading was superficial. Go back and re-read that specific part with more attention. Pay special attention to the **Conceptual Traps** identified in the Trend Map.

Example

You studied Dhrupad from Nitin Singhanian, but still got this wrong:

“Dhrupad originated and developed in the Rajput Kingdom period” – you marked TRUE.

The Trend Map already warned: **“Dhrupad origin = Prabandha tradition / Mughal era, NOT Rajput period.”**

→ Go back and specifically note the origin timeline. Add it to your Trap Sheet.

b) You're NOT able to answer, and the question is NOT from what you've read – Check the Trend Map to see if this micro-topic is still relevant (High or Rising frequency). If yes, find the source from Source Linkage and **add value to your notes**. If it's a low-frequency / outdated area, skip it and move on.

Example

You can't answer: "Who is the exponent of flute – Ronu Mazumdar?" [2004]

This falls under "Musician-Domain identification" – the Trend Map shows this has **7+ questions** and is a high-frequency micro-topic.

→ Your textbook didn't cover it? Use CCRT website or a current affairs compilation to add a **Musician** ↔ **Instrument/Form** table to your notes.

c) You're able to answer the question – Move on. No need to spend more time on it.

5] Build Your Trap Sheet & Prediction List

After completing Steps 1-4 for each pillar, extract two things:

- h) **Trap Sheet** – All the factual swaps / traps identified across all 6 pillars (for last-day revision)
- i) **2026 Prediction List** – All "Rising Areas" + "High Probability for 2026" items collected from each pillar's Frequency Markers section

▶ SAMPLE TRAP SHEET ENTRIES (from multiple pillars)

Trap (Common Error)	Correct Fact	Pillar
Tyagaraja's kritis = Krishna	Lord RAMA, not Krishna	Art & Craft
Brass plate dance = Bharatanatyam	KUCHIPUDI, not Bharatanatyam	Art & Craft
Gatka = Kerala	PUNJAB, not Kerala	Art & Craft
Jaugada = Madhya Pradesh	ODISHA, not MP	Architecture
Ikshvaku rulers were anti-Buddhist	They were PATRONS of Buddhism	Politics & Society

6] Repeat for All 6 Pillars

Apply Steps 1-5 sequentially for each pillar. Recommended order (based on weightage):

#	Pillar	Total PYQs	Why This Order
1	Politics & Society	63	Highest volume – maximum ROI
2	Architecture	47	Second highest – very fact-heavy
3	Religion & Philosophy	41	Conceptually tricky – needs depth
4	Art & Craft	35	Differentiator – most aspirants neglect
5	Indian Culture & Heritage	31	Overlap with current affairs
6	Literature	30	Smallest basket – finish last

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REMEMBER: This book is NOT a textbook – it is a **strategic weapon**. Do not read it passively. Every Trend Map should change *how* you study. Every PYQ attempt should reveal *where* you're weak. Every Revision Blueprint should tell you *what* to read and from *where*. Use it as your GPS, not your destination.

ANCIENT INDIA & CULTURE- PYQ TREND MAP (1995–2025)

Theme	Scope & Weightage	Core Micro-Topics (The "What")
1. Art & Craft	35 PYQs (1995–2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dance: Classical forms, state mapping, technical features (Tribhanga, brass plate). - Music: Dhrupad, Ragas (time theory), Musical instruments. - Painting: Schools (Kishangarh/Bani Thani), Murals (Ajanta/Lepakshi). - UNESCO: ICH list, latest inclusions (Garba, Durga Puja).
2. Indian Culture & Heritage	31 PYQs (1995–2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tribes: Tribe-State mapping (PVTGs, Changpa, Andaman tribes). - Languages: Classical status, Language families (Austic/Dravidian). - Science: Ancient mathematicians (Aryabhatta, Zero), Medical texts. - Symbols: National Calendar (Saka), Flag, Era conversion.
3. Architecture	47 PYQs (1995–2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temples: Styles (Nagara/Dravida), Locations (Site-State mapping). - Ashokan Edicts: Location, content, decipherment, script. - Caves: Chronology (Barabar to Ellora), Religious affiliation. - Sculpture: Schools (Gandhara vs. Mathura), Material usage.
4. Literature	30 PYQs (1995–2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Works & Authors: Triple match (Author ↔ Work ↔ Dynasty). - Sangam Lit: Terminology (Vattakirutal), Social/Economic context. - Foreign Travellers: Fa-Hien, Xuanzang (Observations & Chronology). - Religious Texts: Vedic/Upanishad content, Jain/Buddhist texts.
5. Religion & Philosophy	41 PYQs (1995–2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buddhism: Sects (Mahasanghika, Sthaviravadin), Bodhisattva concepts. - Jainism: Doctrines (Ahimsa, Jiva in all objects), Sects (Sthanakvasi). - Philosophy: 6 Schools (Sankhya, Nyaya, Mimamsa), Bhakti Saints.
6. Politics & Society	63 PYQs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - South India: Chola (Naval/Admin), Pallava (Art), Vijayanagara.

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(1995–2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admin Terms: Officials (Rajuka, Pradeshika), Land terms (Kulyavapa). - Economic History: Ports, Guilds (Shreni), Coins, Forced Labour (Vishti). - IVC: Material culture, Site findings (Dancing Girl).
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TO GET REGULAR UPDATES ON PYQ: <https://t.me/iyachamyacademy>

ART AND CRAFT IN INDIA (1995–2025)

35 PYQs | 1995–2025 | 7 Themes | 30+ Micro-Topics

ART AND CRAFT IN INDIA (1995–2025)

Theme	No. of PYQs	Year Range	Priority
UNESCO Heritage & ICH	2	2024	HIGH ↑
Music, Musicians & Ragas	7	2000–2025	MEDIUM
Dance Forms & Dancers	10	1997–2017	HIGH
Paintings & Artists	5	1995–2018	MEDIUM
Crafts, Textiles & Handicrafts	3	2006–2018	MEDIUM
Martial Arts, Festivals & Theatre	5	1996–2018	HIGH ↑
Match the Following (Personalities)	3	2007–2009	LOW

KEY INSIGHT: Year-wise Density

- 2018 was the PEAK year for Art & Culture – 6 questions in a single paper
- 2009 was another high-density year with 5 questions
- 2024 saw UNESCO-specific questions return after a gap
- 2025 introduced Gandharva Mahavidyalaya – signalling institutional history focus
- Dance forms dominate the Art & Culture basket historically (29% of questions)

Theme	Sub-Themes / Focus Areas
1. UNESCO World Heritage & Intangible Cultural Heritage	Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) List of India <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chronological order of latest ICH inclusions - Tangible vs. Intangible heritage distinction - Year-wise mapping of elements (Garba, Durga Puja, Kumbh Mela)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNESCO World Heritage Sites year of inscription (Shantiniketan, Hoysalas, etc.)
2. Music, Musicians & Ragas	<p>A: Classical Music Traditions & Institutional History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dhrupad tradition (origins, spiritual nature) - Institutional history (Gandharva Mahavidyalaya) - Carnatic Trinity & Bhakti lineage <p>B: Musicians & Instruments Identification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hindustani vocalists vs. Dancers - Instrument exponents (Flute, Sitar, etc.) - Raga-time theory (Time of day for specific Ragas)
3. Dance Forms & Dancers	<p>A: Classical Dance – Features, Origin & Distinction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific forms: Sattriya, Manipuri Sankirtana, Kuchipudi, Mohiniattam - Technical distinctions (Tribhanga pose, brass plate dance) <p>B: Dance Personalities & Awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dancer identification linked to specific forms - Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards <p>C: Folk & Ritual Dance – State Mapping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ritual dramas (Chakiarkoothu) - Folk dance-state matching (Jhummar, Thali, Mukna)
4. Paintings & Artists	<p>A: Painting Schools & Styles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Miniature Schools (Kishangarh/Bani Thani, Kangra, Pahari) - Regional Styles (Kalamkari, Madhubani) - Mughal influence on other schools - Modern Schools (Bengal School/Revivalistic) <p>B: Artist Identification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Famous modern artists (Amrita Sher-Gil, N.S. Bendre, etc.)
5. Crafts, Textiles & Handicrafts	<p>A: Textile-State Mapping & GI Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shawls & Embroidery (Puthukkuli, Sujni) - Saree/Fabric production centers (Chanderi, Uppada, Kancheepuram) - Northeast India handicraft centers
6. Martial Arts, Festivals & Theatre	<p>A: Tradition-State Mapping (Festivals, Martial Arts, Ballads)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Festivals (Chapchar Kut, Khongjom Parba) - Martial Arts (Thang-Ta, Kalaripayattu, Gatka, Silambam) - Theatre Forms (Ankia Nat, Tamasha, Naqqal)
7. Personality – Domain Match	<p>Multi-domain Cultural Personality Identification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross-domain matching (Dancer vs. Painter vs. Musician vs. Historian) - Key personalities in Arts & Culture (Bhimsen Joshi, Birju Maharaj, Romila Thapar, etc.)

PYQ TREND MAP

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Most Asked Micro-Topics (High Frequency)

- Dance form-state mapping & distinguishing features (10 questions – #1 tested area)
- Tradition/Festival/Craft → State pairing (tested in 2018, 2014, 2009, 2006, 1999, 1996)
- Musician/Dancer/Artist → Domain identification (7+ questions)
- Classical music traditions – Dhrupad, Carnatic, Raga-time mapping

Under-Asked but RISING Areas

- UNESCO ICH & World Heritage – returned in 2024 after long gap; expect growth
- Institutional history of arts (Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, NSD, SNA) – 2025 entry signals new direction
- GI-tagged crafts & textiles – policy convergence with One District One Product
- Martial arts – Khelo India + traditional sports policy creating testing opportunity

Concept Clusters UPSC is Building

- CLUSTER 1: State ↔ Cultural Form mapping (dance, theatre, festival, craft, martial art)
- CLUSTER 2: Classical tradition features + historical accuracy (Dhrupad origin, Tyagaraja's deity, Sattriya composer)
- CLUSTER 3: UNESCO heritage – year-specific knowledge + criteria distinction
- CLUSTER 4: Visual arts continuum – painting schools, textile arts, GI-tagged crafts

HOW UPSC THINKS

Why UPSC Frames Such Questions

- ART & CULTURE is used as a DIFFERENTIATOR in close-scoring papers – aspirants tend to neglect it
- UPSC rewards PRECISION over breadth: knowing Kishangarh (not just 'Rajasthani school') is what matters
- Statement-based questions are designed to test DEPTH: slight factual errors (Krishna vs Rama, Odisha vs Kerala) eliminate superficial preparation
- Match-the-following tests CROSS-DOMAIN awareness: knowing Romila Thapar is a historian, not just knowing historians
- State-mapping questions reflect UPSC's belief that cultural geography is as important as physical geography

Hidden Syllabus Areas

- INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY: Founding of SNA, NSD, Akademis, Music schools – barely covered in standard resources
- NORTHEAST INDIA: Disproportionately tested relative to standard preparation coverage
- NEGATIVE/EXCEPTION questions: 'Which was NOT influenced', 'Which is NOT correctly matched' – require comprehensive knowledge
- TEMPORAL ACCURACY: Contemporaries or not? Year of inscription? When was it founded? – timeline-based traps

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- MATERIAL + TECHNIQUE definitions: Kalamkari = cotton + hand-painted + South India (all three needed)

Conceptual Traps to Watch

- Tyagaraja's kritis = LORD RAMA (not Krishna) – most common error
- Brass plate dance = KUCHIPUDI (not Bharatanatyam) – features often swapped
- Mohiniattam = KERALA (not Odisha) – state attribution trap
- Dhrupad origin = Prabandha tradition/Mughal era (not Rajput period) – historical origin trap
- Gatka = PUNJAB (not Kerala) – martial art state swap
- Thang-Ta = MANIPUR (not Sikkim) – NE state confusion exploited
- 'Only cymbals' in Sankirtana = FALSE – absolute statement trap

REVISION BLUEPRINT (Exam Strategy)

Must-Revise Micro-Topics (Priority Order)

Priority	Micro-Topic	Source	Frequency
1	8 Classical Dances: features, state, exponents	NCERT Class 11 + Nitin Singhanian	10 Qs
2	UNESCO WHC + ICH: India entries with YEAR	MEA website + Current Affairs	2 Qs (rising)
3	Painting Schools: Mughal, Rajasthani, Pahari, Bengal	Nitin Singhanian Ch.3	5 Qs
4	Tradition/Festival/Craft → State mapping	State-wise compilation needed	8+ Qs
5	Hindustani + Carnatic Music fundamentals	NCERT + Nitin Singhanian Ch.1	7 Qs
6	Martial arts + Theatre forms by state	Spectrum/Nitin Singhanian	5 Qs
7	GI-tagged textiles & crafts	GI Registry + ODOP portal	3 Qs (rising)
8	Cultural institutions: NSD, SNA, Akademis	Ministry of Culture website	2 Qs (NEW)

Source Linkage for Preparation

- PRIMARY: Nitin Singhanian – Indian Art & Culture (covers 80% of PYQ territory)
- NCERT: Class 11 – An Introduction to Indian Art; Class 12 – Indian Culture
- CCRT website (ccrt.gov.in): dance forms, music, theatre – official descriptions
- UNESCO India page: updated WHC + ICH lists with year of inscription
- GI Registry (ipindia.gov.in): complete GI-tagged art/craft/textile database

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- CURRENT AFFAIRS: Padma Awards, SNA Awards, new GI tags, UNESCO nominations

FREQUENCY MARKERS & PREDICTION

HIGH PROBABILITY for 2026 Prelims

- UNESCO ICH/WHC: new inscriptions, especially if India gets a new entry in 2025-26
- NE India cultural mapping: festivals, dances, crafts, tribes – appears every 2-3 years
- GI-tagged textiles/crafts with state mapping – policy convergence making this attractive
- Institutional history: founding years, key figures of cultural bodies
- Classical dance/music features: UPSC recycles core concepts with new framing
- Painting schools: Kishangarh-type specific identification + Kalamkari-type definition

ART AND CRAFT IN INDIA

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE & INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

1. Which one of the following was the latest inclusion in the Intangible Cultural Heritage List of UNESCO? [2024]
 - a) Chhau dance
 - b) Durga puja
 - c) Garba dance
 - d) Kumbh mela
2. Consider the following properties included in the World Heritage List released by UNESCO: [2024]
 - 1) Shantiniketan
 - 2) Rani-ki-Vav
 - 3) Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas
 - 4) Mahabodhi Temple Complex at BodhgayaHow many of the above properties were included in 2023?
 - a) Only one
 - b) Only two
 - c) Only three
 - d) All four

MUSIC, MUSICIANS, AND RAGAS

3. The first Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, a music training school, was set up in 1901 by Vishnu Digambar Paluskar in: [2025]
 - a) Delhi
 - b) Gwalior
 - c) Ujjain
 - d) Lahore

4. With reference to cultural history of India, consider the following statements: [2018]

- 1) Most of the Tyagaraja Kritis are devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna.
- 2) Tyagaraja created several new ragas.
- 3) Annamacharya and Tyagaraja are contemporaries.
- 4) Annamacharya kirtnas are devotional songs in praise of Lord Venkateshwara.

Which of the statement is given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 2 and 4 only
- c) 1, 2, and 3
- d) 2, 3 and 4

5. With reference to Dhrupad, one of the major traditions of India that has been kept alive for centuries, which of the following statements are correct? [2012]

- 1) Dhrupad originated and developed in the Rajput Kingdom period.
- 2) Dhrupad is primarily a devotional and spiritual music.
- 3) Dhrupad Alap uses Sanskrit syllables from Mantras.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- a) 1 & 2 Only
- b) 2 & 3 Only
- c) 1, 2 & 3 Only
- d) None is correct

6. The brothers Umakant and Ramakant Gundecha are: [2009]
a) Dhurpad vocalists
b) Kathak dancers
c) Sarod Maestros
d) Tabla players
7. Who among the following is a Hindustani classical singer? [2006]
a) Geeta Chandran
b) Leela Samson
c) Gangubai Hangal
d) Swapnasundari
8. Who among the following is well known as an exponent of flute? [2004]
a) Debu Choudhuri
b) Madhup Mudgal
c) Ronu Mazumdar
d) Shafaat Ahmad
9. The Raga which is sung early in the morning is: [2000]
a) Todi
b) Darbari
c) Bhopali
d) Bhimpalasi

DANCE FORMS AND DANCERS

10. With reference to Manipuri Sankirtana, consider the following statements: [2017]
1) It is a song and dance performance.
2) Cymbals are the only musical instruments used in the performance.
3) It is performed to narrate the life and deeds of Lord Krishna.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1, 2 and 3
b) 1 and 3 only
c) 2 and 3 only
d) 1 only
11. With reference to the famous Sattriya dance, consider the following statements: [2014]
1) Sattriya is a combination of music, dance and drama.
2) It is a centuries-old living tradition of Vaishnavites of Assam.

- 3) It is based on classical Ragas and Talas of devotional songs composed by Tulsidas, Kabir and Mirabai.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
b) 1 and 2 only
c) 2 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3
12. Consider the following pairs: [2014]

- 1) Garba: Gujarat
2) Mohiniattam: Odisha
3) Yakshagana: Karnataka

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- a) 1 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3
13. In the context of cultural history of India, a pose in dance and dramatics called 'Tribhanga' has been a favourite of Indian artists from ancient times till today. Which one of the following statements best describes this pose? [2013]

- a) One leg is bent and the body is slightly but oppositely curved at waist and neck
b) Facial expressions, hand gestures and make-up are combined to symbolize certain epic or historic characters
c) Movements of body, face and hands are used to express oneself or to tell a story
d) A little smile, slightly curved waist and certain hand gestures are emphasized to express the feelings of love or eroticism

14. How do you distinguish between Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam dances? [2012]
1) Dancers occasionally speaking dialogues is found in Kuchipudi dance but not in Bharatanatyam.
2) Dancing on the brass plate by keeping the feet on its edges is a feature of Bharatanatyam but Kuchipudi dance does not have such a form of movements.

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Which of the statements given above is/are Correct?

- Only 1
 - Only 2
 - Both 1 & 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
15. Bimbavati Devi is a well-known dancer of which type of dance? [2008]
- Manipuri
 - Bharat Natyam
 - Kuchipudi
 - Odissi
16. Who among the following was presented with the Sangeet Natak Akadami Ratna Award, 2005 for her lifetime achievement in dance? [2006]
- Chandralekha
 - Tanjavur Balasaraswati
 - Uma Sharma
 - Yamini Krishnamurthy
17. Consider the following statements regarding the Chakiarkoothu form of dance: [2000]
- It is performed by Chakiar caste.
 - It cannot be traditionally witnessed by the higher caste Hindus.
 - Mizhavu is the accompanying instrument.
 - Its theatre form is called koothambalam.
- Which of these statements are correct?
- I, III and IV
 - I, II and III
 - II, III and IV
 - I, II and IV
18. Which one of the following pairs of folk dance forms and states is not correctly matched? [1999]
- Korku: Maharashtra
 - Jhummar: Haryana
 - Thali: Himachal Pradesh
 - Mukna: Manipur
19. Which one of the following dances involves solo performance? [1997]
- Bharatanatyam
 - Kuchipudi
 - Mohiniattam
 - Odissi

PAINTINGS AND ARTISTS

20. The well-known painting "Bani Thani" belongs to the: [2018]
- Bundi School
 - Jaipur School
 - Kangra School
 - Kishangarh School
21. Kalamkari painting refers to: [2015]
- A hand-painted cotton textile in South India
 - A handmade drawing on bamboo handicrafts in North-East India
 - A block-painted woollen cloth in Western Himalayan region of India
 - A hand-painted decorative silk cloth in North-Western India
22. Consider the following famous names: [2009]
- Amrita Sher-Gil
 - Bikash Bhattaeharjee
 - N. S. Bendre
 - Subodh Gupta
- Who of the above is/are-well known as artist (s)?
- 1 only
 - 1 and 4 only
 - 2, 3 and 4 only
 - 1, 2, 3 and 4
23. The paintings of Abanindranath Tagore are classified as: [1999]
- Realistic
 - Socialistic
 - Revivalistic
 - Impressionistic
24. The Mughal School of Painting formed the spinal column of the various schools of Indian miniature art. Which one of the following painting styles was not affected by Mughal painting? [1995]
- Pahari
 - Rajasthani
 - Kangra
 - Kalighata

CRAFTS, TEXTILES, AND HANDICRAFTS

25. Consider the following pairs: [2018]
- Craft – Heritage of:
 - Puthukkuli Shawls – Tamil Nadu
 - Sujni Embroidery – Maharashtra

4) Uppada Jamdani Saris – Karnataka

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2
- c) 3 only
- d) 2 and 3

26. Consider the following towns of India: [2014]

- 1) Bhadrachalam
- 2) Chanderi
- 3) Kancheepuram
- 4) Karnal

Which of the above are famous for the production of traditional sarees/fabric?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 3 and 4

27. Match List I with List II (2006):

Centre of Handicrafts (List I): A. Mon, B. Nalbari, C. Pasighat, D. Tura

State (List II): 1. Arunachal Pradesh, 2. Assam, 3. Meghalaya, 4. Nagaland

Codes (A B C D):

- a) 4 2 1 3
- b) 4 3 2 1
- c) 1 3 4 2
- d) 1 2 4 3

MARTIAL ARTS, FESTIVALS, AND THEATRE

28. Consider the following pairs: [2018]

Tradition – State

- 1) Chapchar Kut Festival – Mizoram
- 2) Khongjom Parba ballad – Manipur
- 3) Thang-Ta dance – Sikkim

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2
- c) 1 and 2
- d) 2 and 3

29. With reference to India's culture and tradition, what is 'Kalaripayattu'? [2014]

- a) It is an ancient Bhakti cult of Shaivism still prevalent in some parts of South India.
- b) It is an ancient style bronze and brasswork still found in southern part of Coromandel area.

c) It is an ancient form of dance-drama and a living tradition in the northern part of Malabar.

d) It is an ancient martial art and a living tradition in some parts of South India.

30. Consider the following statements: [2009]

- 1) The National School of Drama was set up by Sangeet Natak akademi in 1959.
- 2) The highest honour conferred by the Sahitya akademi on a writer is by electing him its Fellow.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

31. Consider the following pairs: [2009]

Tradition: State

- 1) Gatka, a traditional martial art: Kerala
- 2) Madhubani, a traditional painting: Bihar
- 3) Singhey Khababs Sindhu Darshan Festival: Jammu Kashmir

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

32. Which one of the following pairs is correctly matched? [1996]

- a) Naqqal – Bihar
- b) Tamasha – Orissa
- c) Ankia Nat – Assam
- d) Baha – Punjab

MATCH THE FOLLOWING (PERSONALITIES)

33. Match List I (Famous Person) with List II (Well-known for) [2009]:

- A. Mandakini Amte – 1. Theatre direction
- B. Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry – 2. Social Service and Community leadership
- C. Romila Thaper – 3. Dance
- D. Vanashree Rao – 4. History writing

Codes (A B C D):

- a) 2 1 4 3
- b) 2 4 1 3

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

- c) 3 1 4 2
d) 3 4 1 2
34. Match List I (Famous person) with List II (Well-known as) [2009]:
- a) Amrita Sher-Gil – 1. Dancer
b) Bhimsen Joshi – 2. Painter
c) Rukmini Devi Arundale – 3. Poet
d) Suryakant Tripathi Nirala – 4. Singer
- Codes (A B C D):
- a) 2 1 4 3
b) 2 4 1 3
c) 3 1 4 2
d) 3 4 1 2

35. Match List I (Person) with List II (known as) [2007]:
- A. Bhajan Sopori – 1. Bharatnatyam dancer
B. Birju Maharaj – 2. Exponent of Santoor
C. Priyadarsini Govind – 3. Mridangam maestro
D. T.V.Gopalakrishnan – 4. Kathak dancer
- Codes (A B C D):
- a) 2 1 4 3
b) 3 1 4 2
c) 2 4 1 3
d) 3 4 1 2

INDIAN CULTURE & HERITAGE

Awards | Languages | Tribes | Scientific Heritage | National Symbols | Institutions
31 PYQs | 1995–2025 | 6 Themes | 35+ Micro-Topics

OVERVIEW: INDIAN CULTURE & HERITAGE PYQ LANDSCAPE (1995–2025)

Theme	No. of PYQs	Year Range	Priority
Awards & Honours	2	2021–2025	MEDIUM ↑
Languages & Literature	6	1998–2021	HIGH
Tribes, Communities & Festivals	10	2000–2017	VERY HIGH
Scientific & Mathematical Heritage	5	1995–2012	HIGH
National Symbols, Calendars & Eras	6	1995–2014	HIGH
Cultural Institutions & Miscellaneous	2	2006–2014	LOW

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

KEY INSIGHT: Thematic Density Analysis

- TRIBES & COMMUNITIES dominate this domain – 10 questions (32% of total), UPSC's most tested culture area
- 2014 was the PEAK year with 7 questions from this domain alone
- 2021 saw LANGUAGE questions return – 3 questions in one paper (rare clustering)
- 2025 introduced Gandhi Peace Prize – signalling AWARDS as a fresh testing area
- Scientific Heritage questions have DECLINED since 2012 but remain high-value static content
- Calendar/Era conversion is a UNIQUE UPSC skill – tested repeatedly across decades

Theme	Sub-Themes / Focus Areas
1. Awards & Honours	Institutional Framework of National Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gandhi Peace Prize (Jury composition, recipients) - Bharat Ratna (Constitutional status, Article 18 limits) - Padma Awards (Suspension history, selection committee) - Constitutional status of awards vs. titles
2. Languages & Literature	A: Language Classification & Tribal Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tribal language identification (Halbi, Ho, Kui) - Language family classification (Austic, Dravidian, etc.) - Classical Language status and criteria - Language demographics (Speaker statistics) B: Language Policy & International Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International Mother Language Day (UNESCO/UNICEF) - Historical language movements (Bangla) - Writer-Language matching (Literary figures)
3. Tribes, Communities & Festivals	A: Tribe-State-Region Mapping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific Tribe locations (Changpa, Shompen, Onge, Limbu, Karbi, etc.) - PVTG status identification B: Community Occupations & Cultural Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional occupations (Manganiyars/Music, Agaria/Iron smelting) - Ecological practices (Gond & Korku tree planting) - Community-Festival-Pilgrimage linkages (Wari-Warkari, Chaliha Sahib)
4. Scientific & Mathematical Heritage	A: Ancient Indian Mathematics & Astronomy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baudhayan Sulva Sutra (Pythagorean concepts) - Zero invention and formalization - Mathematical constants (Pi, Sine concept) - Astronomers (Aryabhatta, Bhaskaracharya, Brahmagupta) B: Ancient Indian Medical & Scientific Scholars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medical texts and surgery (Sushruta, Charaka) - Scholar-Field matching (distinguishing dramatists from scientists)

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

5. National Symbols, Calendars & Eras	A: Indian Calendar System & Era Conversions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major Eras: Saka, Vikrama, Gupta, Kali, Hijri - Conversion formulas (Mathematical calculation of dates) - National Calendar adoption B: National Symbols & Emblems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origins of symbols (Satyameva Jayate, Dharma Chakra) - Constitutional adoption dates (Flag, Anthem, Song) - Rules and specifications regarding national symbols
6. Cultural Institutions & Miscellaneous	Institutional Identity & Cultural Symbolism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional Governance (Autonomous vs. Ministry controlled - e.g., BNHS) - Cultural Symbolism in modern logos (Indian Airlines/Konark Wheel) - Heritage symbols on currency and stamps

PYQ TREND MAP

Most Asked Micro-Topics (High Frequency)

- Tribe → State/Region mapping (tested 2000, 2004, 2009, 2013, 2014 – 5 direct questions)
- Community → Occupation/Cultural practice (2009, 2014, 2017 – recurring)
- Calendar/Era systems and conversions (1995, 1997, 2003, 2014 – 4 questions across decades)
- Language classification and demographics (1998, 2008, 2014, 2021 – persistent)
- National symbols and their origin (2003, 2008, 2014 – tested every ~5 years)

Under-Asked but RISING Areas

- Awards: mechanism, jury, selection process (2021 & 2025 entries – NEW trend)
- Classical Language policy (politically dynamic after 2024 expansion)
- Tribal ecological practices – Environment + Culture convergence
- Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) – NEP 2020 linkage with ancient science
- Institutional governance: which body is autonomous vs government-affiliated

Concept Clusters UPSC is Building

- CLUSTER 1: Tribal India – geography + occupation + PVTG status + ecological practices + governance (5th/6th Schedule)
- CLUSTER 2: Language diversity – families + classical status + 8th Schedule + endangered + NEP 2020
- CLUSTER 3: Ancient Indian knowledge – mathematics + astronomy + medicine + textual traditions
- CLUSTER 4: National identity – symbols + calendar + eras + constitutional framework of awards
- CLUSTER 5: Awards & Institutions – selection processes, jury structures, institutional independence

HOW UPSC THINKS

Why UPSC Frames Such Questions

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

- TRIBAL QUESTIONS serve a dual purpose: test cultural awareness AND social justice consciousness
- LANGUAGE questions reflect India's constitutional commitment to linguistic diversity (Articles 343-351)
- SCIENTIFIC HERITAGE questions counter colonial narratives while testing factual precision – UPSC rejects BOTH ignorance and exaggeration
- CALENDAR questions are UNIQUE to UPSC – no other exam tests era conversion; it reflects administrative heritage
- AWARDS questions signal UPSC's move toward testing GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES behind cultural institutions

Hidden Syllabus Areas

- PVTG LIST: Never directly named in questions but UNDERLIES all island tribe questions – know the complete list
- UN BODY ATTRIBUTION: UNESCO vs UNICEF vs WHO vs UNDP – UPSC swaps these deliberately across domains
- ARTICLE 18 + AWARDS: Constitutional law overlaps with culture section – cross-paper trap
- ECOLOGICAL TRIBALISM: Gond/Korku/Bishnoi practices = Environment + Culture hybrid zone
- NUMERICAL ERA CONVERSION: Pure calculation skill, rarely taught in standard coaching
- VANDE MATARAM LANGUAGE: Sanskrit vs Bengali debate is a FACTUAL precision test

Top Conceptual Traps in This Domain

- Changpa = LADAKH, not Uttarakhand – Pashmina goat connection is the anchor clue
- Bharat Ratna is NOT a 'title' under Article 18 – Supreme Court ruling
- Padma Awards suspended TWICE, not once – both periods must be memorized
- International Mother Language Day = UNESCO, not UNICEF
- Raja Rao = ENGLISH writer, not Telugu (despite Karnataka origin)
- Zero inventor = 'unknown Indian' – UPSC rejects attribution to any single scholar
- Organ transplant in 3rd century AD = FALSE – UPSC penalizes uncritical acceptance of exaggerated claims
- BNHS = INDEPENDENT NGO, not autonomous body under MoEF
- Satyameva Jayate = MUNDAKA Upanishad (not Katha)
- Korba tribe inhabits CHHATTISGARH (not Kodagu/Karnataka)

REVISION BLUEPRINT (Exam Strategy)

Must-Revise Micro-Topics (Priority Order)

Priority	Micro-Topic	Source	Frequency
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IYACHAMY ACADEMY

1	Tribe-State mapping + PVTGs + Island tribes	Nitin Singhania + MoTA website	10 Qs
2	Calendar eras & conversion formulas	NCERT Ancient India + practice	4 Qs
3	Language families, Classical Languages, 8th Schedule	NCERT + MEA + recent updates	6 Qs
4	Ancient science: scholars, texts, contributions	NCERT Class 11 + Nitin Singhania	5 Qs
5	National symbols: source, adoption, constitutional basis	Indian Polity + Laxmikanth	3 Qs
6	Awards: jury, selection, constitutional status	PIB + Government websites	2 Qs (rising)
7	Community-occupation-festival linkage	Nitin Singhania + ethnography notes	3 Qs
8	Institutional governance: autonomous vs govt bodies	Standard reference + current affairs	2 Qs

SOURCE LINKAGE FOR PREPARATION

- PRIMARY: Nitin Singhania – Indian Art & Culture (tribes, languages, heritage chapters)
- NCERT: Class 11 – Themes in Indian History; Class 6 – Our Pasts (ancient science)
- Laxmikanth: Indian Polity – National Symbols, Article 18, Scheduled Areas chapters
- Ministry of Tribal Affairs: PVTG list, tribal welfare schemes, FRA implementation
- Census + Ethnographic Atlas: tribal demographics, occupation, geographical distribution
- CURRENT AFFAIRS: Classical Language additions (2024), new GI tags, PVTG developments, award ceremonies

Frequency Markers & Prediction for 2026

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

HIGH PROBABILITY for 2026 Prelims

- PVTG-specific question: Shompen (Great Nicobar controversy), Jarawa, Sentinelese – directly in news
- Classical Language expansion: Marathi, Bengali, Pali, Assamese, Prakrit added in 2024 – CERTAIN to be tested
- Awards mechanism: Gandhi Peace Prize, Jnanpith Award, Padma selection committee – process-based
- Era conversion: numerical calculation type – overdue since 2014
- Language families + tribal languages: NEP 2020 implementation driving relevance
- Tribal ecological practices: Bishnoi + Gond + Chipko convergence with environment section
- Ancient Indian science: IKS (Indian Knowledge Systems) under NEP 2020 makes this politically relevant again

INDIAN CULTURE AND HERITAGE

AWARDS AND HONORS

1. Who amongst the following are members of the Jury to select the recipient of 'Gandhi Peace Prize'? [2025]
 - I. The President of India
 - II. The Prime Minister of India
 - III. The Chief Justice of India
 - IV. The Leader of Opposition in the Lok SabhaSelect the correct answer using the code given below.
 - a) II and IV only
 - b) I, II and III
 - c) II, III and IV
 - d) I and III only
2. Consider the following statements in respect of Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards: [2021]
 - 1) Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards are titles under the Article 18(1) of the Constitution of India.
 - 2) Padma Awards, which were instituted in the year 1954, were suspended only once.
 - 3) The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of five in a particular year.Which of the above statements are not correct?
 - a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) 2 and 3 only
 - c) 1 and 3 only
 - d) 1, 2 and 3

LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

3. With reference to India, the terms 'Halbi Ho' and 'Kui' pertain to: [2021]
 - a) Dance forms of Northwest India
 - b) Musical instruments
 - c) Pre-historic cave paintings
 - d) Tribal languages
4. Consider the following statements: [2021]
 - 1) 21st February is declared to be the International Mother Language Day by UNICEF.
 - 2) The demand that Bangla has to be one of the national languages was raised in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. Consider the following languages: [2014]
 - 1) Gujarati
 - 2) Kannada
 - 3) TeluguWhich of the above has/have been declared as 'Classical Language/Languages' by the Government?
 - a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) 3 only
 - c) 2 and 3 only
 - d) 1, 2 and 3

6. Among the Indian languages, which one is spoken maximum in the world after Hindi? [2008]
- Telugu
 - Tamil
 - Bengali
 - Malayalam
7. Which of the following is not correctly matched? [2006]
- Prominent Writer – Indian Language
- Raja Rao: Telugu
 - Gobind Trimbuk Deshpande: Marathi
 - Subramaniam Bharati: Tamil
 - Tara Shankar Joshi: Gujarati
8. Which one of the following languages belongs to the Austric group? [1998]
- Marathi
 - Ladakhi
 - Khasi
 - Tamil

TRIBES, COMMUNITIES AND FESTIVALS

9. Consider the following pairs: [2017]
- Traditions – Communities
- Chaliha Sahib Festival – Sindhis
 - Nanda Raj Jaat Yatra – Gonds
 - Wari-Warkari – Santhals
- Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?
- 1 only
 - 2 & 3 only
 - 1 & 3 only
 - None of the above
10. Every year, a month-long ecologically important campaign/festival is held during which certain communities/tribes plant samplings of fruit-bearing trees. Which of the following are such communities/tribes? [2014]
- Bhutia and Lepcha
 - Gond and Korku
 - Irula and Toda
 - Sahariya and Agariya
11. With reference to the 'Changpa' community of India, consider the following statements: [2014]

- They live mainly in the State of Uttarakhand.
- They rear the Pashmina goats that yield a fine wool.
- They are kept in the category of Scheduled Tribes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
12. A community of people called Manganiyars is well-known for their: [2014]
- Martial arts in North-East India
 - Musical tradition in North-West India.
 - Classical vocal music in South India.
 - Picta dura tradition in Central India.
13. Consider the following pairs: [2013]
- Tribes – State
- Limbo (Limbu): Sikkim
Karbi: Himachal Pradesh
Dongaria Kondh: Odisha
Bonda: Tamil Nadu
- Which of the above pairs are correctly matched?
- 1 and 3 only
 - 2 and 4 only
 - 1, 3 and 4 only
 - 1, 2, 3 and 4
14. Among the following, who are the Agaria community? [2009]
- Traditional toddy tappers community of Andhra Pradesh
 - Traditional fishing community of Maharashtra
 - Traditional silk-weaving community of Karnataka
 - Traditional salt pan workers community of Gujarat
15. In which one of the following places is the Shompen tribe found? [2009]
- Nilgiri Hills
 - Nicobar Islands
 - Spiti Valley

- d) Lakshadweep Islands
16. In which one of the following union territories do the people of the Onge tribe live? [2004]
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands
 - Dadra and Nagar Haveli
 - Daman and Diu
 - Lakshadweep Islands
17. Chapchar Kut is a festival celebrated in the state of: [2002]
- Arunachal Pradesh
 - Assam
 - Mizoram
 - Sikkim
18. Which one of the following pairs of primitive tribes and places of their inhabitation is not correctly matched. [2000]
- Baksa: Pauri-Garhwal
 - Kol: Jabalpur
 - Munda: Chhotanagpur
 - Korba: Kodagu

SCIENTIFIC AND MATHEMATICAL HERITAGE

19. With reference to the scientific progress of ancient India, which of the statements given below are correct? [2012]
- Different kinds of specialised surgical instruments were in common use by the 1st century AD.
 - Transplant of internal organs in the human body had begun by the beginning of 3rd century AD.
 - The concept of sine of an angle was known in 5th century AD.
 - The concept of cyclic quadrilaterals was known in the 7th century AD.
- Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
- 1 and 2 only
 - 3 and 4 only
 - 1, 3 & 4 only
 - 1, 2, 3, 4
20. What does Baudhayan theorem (Baudhayan Sulva Sautra) related to? [2008]
- Lengths of sides of a right-angled triangle
 - Calculation of the value of pi
 - Logarithmic calculations

- d) Normal distribution curve
21. Match List I with List II (2006):
List I (Finding / Invention/ Calculation) – List II (Ancient Indian Scholar)
- Time Taken by the Earth to orbit the Sun – 1. Aryabhatta
 - Calculation of the value of (pi) – 2. Bhaskaracharya
 - Invention of the digit zero – 3. Budhayana
 - The game of snakes and ladders – 4. Gyandev
- Codes (A B C D):
- 2 4 1 3
 - 2 3 1 4
 - 1 3 2 4
 - 1 4 2 3
22. Match List I with List II [1996]:
List I – List II
- Visakhadatta – A) Medicine
 - Varahamihira – B) Drama
 - Charaka – C) Astronomy
 - Brahmagupta – D) Mathematics
- Codes:
- I-A, II-C, III-D, IV-B
 - I-B, II-A, III-C, IV-D
 - I-B, II-C, III-A, IV-D
 - I-C, II-B, III-A, IV-B
23. Zero was invented by: [1995]
- Aryabhatta
 - Varahamihira
 - Bhaskara I
 - An unknown Indian

NATIONAL SYMBOLS, CALENDARS AND ERAS

24. Chaitra 1 of the national calendar based on the Saka Era corresponds to which one of the following dates of the Gregorian calendar in a normal year of 365 days? [2014]
- 22nd March (or 21st March)
 - 15th May (or 16th May)
 - 21st March (or 30th March)
 - 21st April (or 20th April)
25. The national motto of India, 'Satyameva Jayate' inscribed below the Emblem of India is taken from: [2014]
- Katha Upanishad

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- b) Chandogra Upanishad
c) Aitareya Upanishad
d) Mundaka Upanishad
26. What is the number of spokes in the Dharma chakra in the National Flag of India? [2008]
a) 16
b) 18
c) 22
d) 24
27. Which one of the following statements is correct? [2003]
a) The National Song Vande Mataram was composed by Bankimchandra Chatterji originally in Bengali
b) The National Calendar of India based on Saka era has its 1st Chaitra on 22nd March normally and 21st March in a leap year
c) The design of the National Flag of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 22nd July 1947
d) The song 'Jana Gana Mana', composed originally in Bengali by Rabindranath Tagore was adopted in its Hindi version by the Constituent Assembly on 24th January 1950 as the National Anthem of India
28. The Badami rock inscription of Pulakesin I is dated in the Saka year 465. If the same were to be dated in Vikrama Samvat, the year would be: [1997]
a) 601
b) 300
c) 330
d) 407
29. Match List I with List II [1995]:
List I (Eras) – List II (Reckoned from)
I. Vikrama era – A) 3102 B.C.

- II. Saka era – B) 320 A.D.
III. Gupta era – C) 78 A.D.
IV. Kali era – D) 58 B.C.
E) 248 A.D.

Codes:

- a) I-B, II-D, III-E, IV-A
b) I-A, II-C, III-B, IV-D
c) I-D, II-E, III-B, IV-C
d) I-D, II-C, III-B, IV-A

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS

30. With reference to the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), consider the following statements: [2014]

- 1) It is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Environment and Forests.
- 2) It strives to conserve nature through action-based research, education and public awareness.
- 3) It organizes and conducts nature trails and camps for the general public.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
b) 2 only
c) 2 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

31. Indian Airlines (new name: Indian) have redesigned their logo, which is a graphic wheel. This logo has been inspired by which one of the following? [2006]

- a) Hampi Temples
b) Mamallapuram Temples
c) Sun Temple, Konark
d) Khajuraho Temple

ARCHITECTURE

Ancient Sites | Caves | Stupas | Temples | Sculptures | Heritage Institutions
47 PYQs | 1995–2024 | 6 Themes | 50+ Micro-Topics

OVERVIEW: ARCHITECTURE PYQ LANDSCAPE (1995–2024)

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Theme	No. of PYQs	Year Range	Priority
Ancient Sites, Inscriptions & Edicts	12	1995–2024	VERY HIGH
Caves & Rock-Cut Architecture	7	2006–2023	HIGH
Stupa & Buddhist Architecture	3	2006–2023	MEDIUM ↑
Temple Architecture	14	2001–2022	VERY HIGH
Sculptures, Paintings & Art Schools	7	1995–2017	HIGH
Miscellaneous (Heritage Institutions)	4	2004–2023	MEDIUM

KEY INSIGHT: Domain-Level Analysis

- ARCHITECTURE is the SINGLE LARGEST Art & Culture domain in UPSC Prelims – 47 questions
- TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE alone accounts for 14 questions (30%) – UPSC’s #1 favourite
- ASHOKAN EDICTS are the most PERSISTENTLY tested micro-topic: appears across ALL decades
- Site-State mapping is the DOMINANT question format – over 60% of questions involve geographical placement
- 2021–2024 show a SHIFT toward lesser-known sites (Chandraketugarh, Inamgaon, Chausath Yogini)
- Cave architecture maintains steady presence – Ajanta, Ellora, Barabar are anchor sites
- Statement-based questions have INCREASED significantly post-2012, replacing simple identification

Theme	Sub-Themes / Focus Areas
1. Ancient Sites, Inscriptions & Edicts	A: Ashokan Edicts – Location, Content & Decipherment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Major Rock Edict & Pillar locations (Dhauli, Erragudi, Kalsi) – Personal names/titles in inscriptions ('Priyadasi', 'Ranyo Ashoka') – Decipherment history (James Prinsep) – Sangam kingdoms mentioned in edicts B: Archaeological Sites – Identification & State Mapping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Site-State matching (Chandraketugarh, Inamgaon, Salihundam) – Site specific features (Dholavira's water harvesting) – Lesser-known excavation sites
2. Caves & Rock-Cut Architecture	Cave Site Identification & Classification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Religious affiliation of caves (Buddhist, Jain, Hindu, Ajivika)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geography (River gorges vs. Hilltops) - Chaitya (prayer hall) vs. Vihara (monastery) distinction - Chronology of caves (Barabar vs. Ajanta/Ellora) - Key sites: Besnagar, Bhaja, Sittanavasal, Ajanta, Ellora, Badami
3. Stupa & Buddhist Architecture	Stupa Concept & Buddhist Monastery Locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origin of Stupa (Pre-Buddhist mounds vs. Buddhist relics) - Structural elements (relic repository, votive structure) - Monastery-State mapping (Tabo, Dhankar, Kye, Rumtek, Alchi) - Himalayan Buddhist circuit
4. Temple Architecture	A: Temple Styles & Terminology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Architecture styles: Nagara, Dravida, Vesara - Construction styles: Panchayatan - Unique forms: Chausath Yogini (Circular) B: Specific Temple Identification & Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Famous temples: Somnath, Lingaraja, Virupaksha, Vijaya Vittala - Sun Temples (Arasavalli, Modhera, Konark) - Jain Temples (Palitana) - Foreign influence (Angkor Wat) C: Chronological Ordering of Architecture Timeline of construction (Dhuli Elephant → Udayagiri → Mahabalipuram → Lingaraja)
5. Sculptures, Paintings & Art Schools	A: Sculpture Schools & Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gandhara (Green Schist, Hellenistic) vs. Mathura (Red Sandstone) - Chola Bronze Nataraja features B: Famous Paintings & Sculptural Works at Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Painting identification (Bodhisattva Padmapani at Ajanta) - Sculpture-Site matching (Varaha Avatar at Udayagiri, Arjuna's Penance at Mamallapuram) - Mural painting locations (Ajanta, Lepakshi)
6. Heritage Institutions & Miscellaneous	Archaeological Institutions, Personnel & UNESCO Heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Ministry affiliation - Historical Archaeologists (Alexander Rea, Robert Sewell, etc.) - UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Champaner-Pavagadh, etc.)

PYQ TREND MAP

Most Asked Micro-Topics (High Frequency)

- Ashokan Edicts: location, content, decipherment, personal name, title (9 questions – #1)
- Temple-Location identification (8+ questions across all decades)
- Cave classification: Chaitya/Vihara, religion, geography (7 questions)
- Sculpture schools: Gandhara/Mathura/Amaravati – material, influence, dynasty (4 questions)
- Site-State geographical mapping (present in 60%+ of all questions)

Under-Asked but RISING Areas

- Lesser-known archaeological sites: Chandraketugarh, Inamgaon, Kanganahalli (post-2019 trend)

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- Historiography: colonial archaeologists, excavation history (2023 entry)
- Stupa structural elements: Torana, Harmika, Anda – definition-based (NOT yet asked)
- SE Asian Indian architecture: Angkor Wat tested once; Borobudur, Prambanan untouched
- Temple architectural terminology: Shikhara/Vimana/Gopuram/Mandapa definitions
- AMASR Act 1958 and ASI governance framework

Concept Clusters UPSC is Building

- CLUSTER 1: Ashokan Heritage – edicts + pillars + location + content + decipherment + personal references
- CLUSTER 2: Cave Architecture Continuum – Barabar → Bhaja/Karle → Ajanta → Ellora → Elephanta (chronological + religious)
- CLUSTER 3: Temple Evolution – Gupta (Deogarh) → Pallava → Chola → Hoysala → Vijayanagara → Nayaka
- CLUSTER 4: Site-State-Feature Triple Mapping – the 2024 format signals this as the future
- CLUSTER 5: Art Schools + Dynasty Patronage – Gandhara-Kushans, Mathura-Kushans/Guptas, Amaravati-Satavahanas

HOW UPSC THINKS

Why UPSC Frames Such Questions

- ARCHITECTURE is the bridge between History and Culture in UPSC's syllabus – tested from both angles
- Site-State mapping tests GEOGRAPHICAL AWARENESS alongside cultural knowledge – dual-skill assessment
- Ashokan edicts test READING COMPREHENSION of primary sources – aspirants must know CONTENT, not just locations
- Temple questions reward PRECISION: knowing Arasavalli is a Sun temple while Omkareshwar is a Jyotirlinga
- Cave questions test CHRONOLOGICAL THINKING: who built what, when, and for which religious denomination
- The shift to lesser-known sites (Kanganahalli, Chandraketugarh) tests DEPTH beyond textbook familiarity
- Sculpture questions test MATERIAL + STYLE + PATRONAGE together – integrated knowledge, not isolated facts

Top Conceptual Traps in Architecture Domain

- Allahabad Pillar = SAMUDRAGUPTA (not Ashoka) – 'pillar' ≠ 'Ashokan pillar'
- Barabar caves built by ASHOKA (not Chandragupta Maurya) for AJIVIKAS
- Badami caves are NOT the oldest – Barabar is older (3rd century BC)
- Gandhara = MAHAYANA (not Hinayana) – anthropomorphic Buddha images
- Somnath Pran Pratishtha = President RAJENDRA PRASAD (not Radhakrishnan)
- Chausath Yogini = Shaiva/Shakta (NOT Vaishnava); NOT the only circular temple

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

- Jaugada = ODISHA (not MP); Kalsi = UTTARAKHAND (not Karnataka)
- Chandraketugarh = WEST BENGAL (not Odisha)
- Varaha Avatar sculpture = UDAYAGIRI MP (not Mount Abu)
- Kye Monastery = HIMACHAL PRADESH (not Arunachal Pradesh)
- Ashokan pillars are FREESTANDING (not parts of architectural structures)
- Amarkantak = Narmada source; Omkareshwar = Jyotirlinga (NEITHER is a Sun temple)

REVISION BLUEPRINT (Exam Strategy)

Must-Revise Micro-Topics (Priority Order)

Priority	Micro-Topic	Source	Frequency
1	Ashokan Edicts: all locations + content + decipherment	NCERT Class 12 + Nitin Singhanian	9 Qs
2	Temple-Location identification & architectural styles	Nitin Singhanian Ch.4-5 + NCERT	14 Qs
3	Cave architecture: chronology, religion, geography	NCERT Class 11 + Nitin Singhanian	7 Qs
4	Sculpture schools: material, patronage, denomination	NCERT Class 11 + CCRT	4 Qs
5	Archaeological site-state triple mapping	ASI website + standard compilations	5 Qs (rising)
6	Stupa architecture: elements, locations, concept	Nitin Singhanian Ch.2	3 Qs
7	Himalayan Buddhist monasteries: state-wise	Tourism ministry + Nitin Singhanian	3 Qs
8	Paintings at sites: Ajanta, Bagh, Lepakshi, Sittanavasal	NCERT + CCRT website	3 Qs
9	SE Asian Indian architecture: Angkor Wat, Borobudur	NCERT Class 11 World History	1 Q (rising)

10	ASI governance + historiography personnel	Ministry of Culture + current affairs	2 Qs (NEW)
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Source Linkage for Preparation

- PRIMARY: Nitin Singhania – Indian Art & Culture (Architecture chapters 2–6)
- NCERT Class 11: An Introduction to Indian Art (chapters on sculpture, architecture, painting)
- NCERT Class 12: Themes in Indian History (Ashokan edicts, IVC, Vijayanagara)
- CCRT website (ccrt.gov.in): official descriptions of monuments, art schools, cave sites
- ASI website: monument-wise information, excavation reports, protection status
- UNESCO India page: World Heritage Sites with year of inscription
- MAP PRACTICE: physically map all major sites on India map – 60% of questions are geographical

Frequency Markers & Prediction for 2026

HIGH PROBABILITY for 2026 Prelims

- Ashokan Edicts: content-based question (what does Edict X say?) – UPSC shifting from ‘where’ to ‘what’
- Lesser-known sites: Adichanallur, Keeladi, Rakhigarhi – recently excavated/in news
- Temple architectural terminology: Nagara/Dravida structural elements – definition-based
- 1,000 Years of Somnath Temple’s Resilience and Legacy
- Himalayan Buddhist circuit: Tabo, Alchi, Hemis – tourism policy convergence
- Stupa structural elements: Torana, Vedika, Harmika – NEVER directly tested, HIGH probability
- Sculpture school comparison: Gandhara vs Mathura vs Amaravati – tabular knowledge
- SE Asian architecture: Borobudur, Prambanan – Act East Policy cultural dimension
- Archaeological governance: AMASR Act, ASI structure, National Monument Authority
- Historiography: who excavated which site – the 2023 trend will continue

ARCHITECTURE

ANCIENT SITES, INSCRIPTIONS AND EDICTS

1. Consider the following information: [2024]
- Archaeological Site - State - Description
- 1) Chandraketugarh - Odisha - Trading Port town
 - 2) Inamgaon - Maharashtra - Chalcolithic site
 - 3) Mangadu - Kerala - Megalithic site
 - 4) Salihundam - Andhra Pradesh - Rock-cut cave shrines
- In which of the above rows is the given information correctly matched?
- (a) 1 and 2

(b) 2 and 3

(c) 3 and 4

(d) 1 and 4

2. Consider the following pairs: [2022]

Site of Ashoka’s major rock edicts: Location

- 1) Dhauli – Odisha
- 2) Erragudi – Andhra Pradesh
- 3) Jaugada – Madhya Pradesh
- 4) Kalsi – Karnataka

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a) Only one pair
- b) Only two pairs

- c) Only three pairs
d) All four pairs
3. Which one of the following ancient towns is well-known for its elaborate system of water harvesting and management by building a series of dams and channelizing water into connected reservoirs? [2021]
a) Dholavira
b) Kalibangan
c) Rakhigarhi
d) Ropar
4. In which of the following relief sculpture inscriptions is 'Ranyo Ashoka' (King Ashoka) mentioned along with the stone portrait of Ashoka? [2019]
a) Kanganahalli
b) Sanchi
c) Shahbazgarhi
d) Sohgaora
5. Who of the following had first deciphered the edicts of Emperor Ashoka? [2016]
a) Georg Bihler
b) James Prinsep
c) Max Muller
d) William Jones
6. Match List I with List II [2006]:
A. Place of archaeological monument – B. List 2 (State)
A. Sisupalgarh – 1. Assam
B. Piprahwa – 2. Manipur
C. Goalpara – 3. Orissa
D. Bishnupur – 4. Uttar Pradesh
Codes (A B C D):
a) 2 4 1 3
b) 2 1 4 3
c) 3 4 1 2
d) 3 1 4 2
7. The Allahabad Pillar inscription is associated with which one of the following? [2006]
a) Mahapadma Nanda
b) Chandragupta Maurya
c) Ashoka
d) Samudragupta
8. Which one of the following ancient Indian records is the earliest royal order to preserve foodgrains to be utilised during the crises in the country? [1998]
a) Sohagaura Copper-plate
b) Rummindei pillar-edict of Asoka
c) Prayaga-Prasasti
d) Mehrauli Pillar inscription of Chandra
9. The Asokan major rock edicts which tell us about the Sangam Kingdom include rock edicts: [1998]
a) I and X
b) I and XI
c) II and XIII
d) II and XIV
10. Which one of the following statements regarding Asokan stone pillars is incorrect? [1997]
a) These are highly polished
b) These are monolithic
c) The shaft of pillars is tapering in shape
d) These are parts of architectural structures
11. Which one of the following edicts mentions the personal name of Asoka? [1997]
a) Kalsi
b) Rummindei
c) Special Kalinga Edict
d) Maski
12. The name by which Asoka is generally referred to in his inscriptions is: [1995]
a) Chakravarti
b) Dharmadeva
c) Dharmakirti
d) Priyadasi
- CAVES AND ROCK-CUT ARCHITECTURE**
13. Consider the following pairs: [2023]
Site : Well known for
1) Besnagar : Shaivite cave shrine
2) Bhaja : Buddhist cave shrine
3) Sittanavasal: Jain cave shrine
How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?
a) Only one
b) Only two
c) All three
d) None

14. Which one of the following statements is correct? [2021]
- Ajanta Caves lie in the gorge of the Waghora river.
 - Sanchi Stupa lies in the gorge of the Chambal river.
 - Pandu-Lena Cave Shrines lie in the gorge of the Narmada river.
 - Amaravati Stupa lies in the gorge of the Godavari river.
15. What is/are common to the two historical places known as Ajanta and Mahabalipuram? [2016]
- Both were built in the same period.
 - Both belong to the same religious denomination.
 - Both have rock-cut monuments.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below.
- 1 and 2 only
 - 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - None is correct
16. Some Buddhist rock-cut caves are called Chaityas, while the others are called Viharas. What is the difference between the two? [2013]
- Vihara is a place of worship, while Chaitya is the dwelling place of the monks
 - Chaitya is a place of worship, while Vihara is the dwelling place of the monks
 - Chaitya is the stupa at the far end of the cave, while Vihara is the hall axial to it
 - There is no material difference between the two
17. With reference to the history of Indian rock-cut architecture, consider the following statements: [2013]
- The caves at Badami are the oldest Surviving rock-cut caves in India.
- The Barabar rock-cut caves were originally made for Ajivikas by Emperor Chandragupta Maurya.
- At Ellora, caves were made for different faiths. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
18. There are only two known examples of cave paintings of the Gupta period in ancient India. One of these is paintings of Ajanta Caves. Where is the other surviving example of Gupta paintings? [2010]
- Bagh Caves
 - Ellora Caves
 - Lomas Rishi cave
 - Nasik caves
19. Which one of the following pairs is correctly matched? [2006]
- Vikramshila Monastery: Uttar Pradesh
 - Hemkund Gurudwara: Himachal Pradesh
 - Udayagiri Caves: Maharashtra
 - Amaravati Buddhist Stupa: Andhra Pradesh
- STUPA AND BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE**
20. With reference to ancient India, consider the following statements: [2023]
- The concept of Stupa is Buddhist in origin.
 - Stupa was generally a repository of relics.
 - Stupa was a votive and commemorative structure in Buddhist tradition.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - All three
 - None
21. In which State is the Buddhist site Tabo Monastery located? [2009]
- Arunachal Pradesh
 - Himachal Pradesh
 - Sikkim
 - Uttarakhand
22. Which one of the following pairs is not correctly matched? [2006]
- Monastery - State
- Dhankar Monastery - Himachal Pradesh
 - Rumtek Monastery - Sikkim
 - Tabo Monastery - Himachal Pradesh
 - Kye Monastery - Arunachal Pradesh

TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

23. The Prime Minister recently inaugurated the new Circuit House near Somnath Temple at Veraval. Which of the following statements are correct regarding Somnath Temple? [2022]

- 1) Somnath Temple is one of the Jyotirlinga shrines.
- 2) A description of Somnath Temple was given by Al-Biruni.
- 3) Pran Pratishtha of Somnath Temple (installation of the present day temple) was done by President S. Radhakrishnan.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

24. With reference to Chausath Yogini Temple situated near Morena, consider the following statements: [2021]

- 1) It is a circular temple built during the reign of Kachchhapaghata Dynasty.
- 2) It is the only circular temple built in India.
- 3) It was meant to promote the Vaishnava cult in the region.
- 4) Its design has given rise to a popular belief that it was the inspiration behind the Indian Parliament building.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 4
- d) 2, 3 and 4

25. Which of the following is/are famous for Sun temples? [2017]

- 1) Arasavalli
- 2) Amarakantak
- 3) Omkareshwar

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

26. With reference to art and archaeological history of India, which one among the following was made earliest? [2015]

- a) Lingaraja Temple at Bhubaneswar
- b) Rock-cut Elephant at Dhauri
- c) Rock-cut Monuments at Mahabalipuram
- d) Varaha Image at Udayagiri

27. With reference to the cultural history of India, the term 'Panchayatan' refers to: [2014]

- a) An assembly of village elders
- b) A religious sect
- c) A style of temple construction
- d) An administrative functionary

28. The Nagara, the Dravida and the Vesara are the: [2012]

- a) Three main racial groups of the Indian subcontinent
- b) Three main linguistic divisions into which the languages of India can be classified
- c) Three main styles of Indian temple architecture
- d) Three main musical Gharanas prevalent in India

29. Where is the famous Virupaksha temple located? [2009]

- a) Bhadrachalam
- b) Chidambaram
- c) Hampi
- d) Srikalahasti

30. Match List with List II [2009]:

(Famous Temple) – (State)

- A. Vidyashankara – 1. Andhra Pradesh
- B. Rajarani Temple – 2. Karnataka
- C. Kandariya Mahadeo – 3. Madhya Pradesh
- D. Bhimeswara temple – 4. Orissa

Codes (A B C D):

- a) 2 4 3 1
- b) 2 3 4 1
- c) 1 4 3 2
- d) 1 3 4 2

31. Near Which one of the following cities are Palitana Temples located? [2009]

- a) Bhavnagar
- b) Mount Abu

- c) Nasik
d) Ujjain
32. Where is the famous Vijaya Vitala temple having its 56 carved pillars emitting musical notes located? [2008]
a) Belur
b) Bhadrachalam
c) Hampi
d) Sriganam
33. The initial design and construction of which massive temple took place during the reign of Suryavarman II? [2006]
a) Sri Mariamman Temple
b) Angkor Vat
c) Batu Caves Temple
d) Kamakhya Temple
34. Which one of the following statements is correct? [2002]
a) The status of Gomateshwara at Sravanabelagola represents the last Tirthankara of Jains
b) India's largest Buddhist monastery is in Arunachal Pradesh
c) The Khajuraho temples were built under Chandela Kings
d) The Hoysalesvara temple is dedicated to Siva
35. In which one of the following cities is the Lingaraja Temple located? [2001]
a) Bhubaneswar
b) Bijapur
c) Kolkata
d) Shrvanabelagola
36. Hoysala monuments are found in: [2001]
a) Hampi and Hospet
b) Halebid and Belur
c) Mysore and Bangalore
d) Sringeri and Dharwar

SCULPTURES, PAINTINGS AND ART SCHOOLS

37. The painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani is one of the most famous and oft-illustrated paintings at: [2017]
a) Ajanta
b) Badami
c) Bagh

- d) Ellora
38. With reference to the Indian history of art and culture, consider the following pairs: [2014]
Famous work of sculpture – Site
1) A grand image of Buddha's Mahaparinirvana with numerous celestial musicians above and the sorrowful figures of his followers below: Ajanta
2) A huge image of Varaha Avatar (boar incarnation) of Vishnu, as he rescues Goddess Earth from the deep and chaotic waters, sculpted on rock: Mount Abu
3) "Arjuna's Penance"/ "Descent of Ganga" sculpted on the surface of huge boulder: Mamallapuram
Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?
a) 1 and 2 only
b) 3 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3
39. Consider the following historical places: [2013]
1) Ajanta caves
2) Lepakshi temple
3) Sanchi stupa
Which of the above places is/ are also known for mural paintings?
a) 1 only
b) 1 and 2 only
c) 1, 2 and 3
d) None
40. Which one of the following pairs is correctly matched? [2001]
a) Harappan Civilisation - Painted Grey Ware
b) The Kushans - Gandhara School of Art
c) The Mughals - Ajanta Paintings
d) The Marathas - Pahari School of Painting
41. Assertion (A): The Gandhara School of art bears the mark of Hellenistic influence.
Reason (R): Hinayana form was influenced by that art. [1998]
a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
b) Both A and R are true, but R is NOT a correct explanation of A

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

- c) A is true, but R is false
d) A is false, but R is true
42. Which one of the following sculptures invariably used green schist as the medium? [1996]
- Maurya sculptures
 - Mathura sculptures
 - Bharhut sculptures
 - Gandhara sculptures.
43. Bronze icons of Nataraja cast during the Chola period invariably show the deity with: [1995]
- Eight hands
 - Six hands
 - Four hands
 - Two hands

MISCELLANEOUS (HISTORY, INSTITUTIONS & HERITAGE)

44. With reference to the Indian History, Alexander Rea, A.H. Longhurst, Robert Sewell, James Burgess and Walter Elliot were associated with? [2023]
- Archaeological excavations
 - Establishment of English Press in Colonial India
 - Establishment of Churches in Princely States
 - Construction of railways in Colonial India
45. With reference to Buddhist history, tradition and culture in India, consider the following pairs: [2014]
- Famous Shrine: Location

- Tabo monastery and temple complex: Spiti Valley
 - Lhotsava Lhakhang: Zaskar Valley
 - Alchi Temple Complex: Ladakh
- Which of the above pairs given is/are correctly matched?
- 1 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
46. Consider the following sites/monuments : [2005]
- Champaner- Pavagadh Archaeological Park
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji Railway Station, Mumbai
 - Mamallapuram
 - Sun Temple (Konark Temple)
- Which of the above are included in the World Heritage List of UNESCO?
- 1, 2 and 3
 - 1,3 and 4
 - 2 and 4
 - 1, 2, 3 and 4
47. The Archaeological Survey of India is an attached office of the Department / Ministry of: [2004]
- Culture
 - Tourism
 - Science and Technology
 - Human Resource Development

LITERATURE IN ANCIENT INDIA

Vedic Literature | Sangam | Plays & Dramatists | Buddhist & Jain | Foreign Travellers | Scripts
30 PYQs | 1995-2025 | 6 Themes | 40+ Micro-Topics

OVERVIEW: LITERATURE IN ANCIENT INDIA PYQ LANDSCAPE (1995-2025)

Theme	No. of PYQs	Year Range	Priority
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IYACHAMY ACADEMY

Vedic Literature, Upanishads & Puranas	5	1995–2024	HIGH
Sangam Literature & Ancient South India	3	2000–2023	HIGH ↑
Ancient Plays, Dramatists & Literary Works	11	1996–2024	VERY HIGH
Buddhist & Jain Literature	2	1997–2024	MEDIUM ↑
Accounts of Foreign Travellers	4	1999–2025	HIGH
Language, Scripts & Terminology + Legal/Social Lit.	5	1995–2008	MEDIUM

KEY INSIGHT: Domain-Level Analysis

- ANCIENT PLAYS & DRAMATISTS dominate: 11 questions (37%) – Author-Work-Dynasty is THE core format
- Sangam Literature has SURGED post-2020: appeared in 2022 and 2023 after long absence
- Foreign Travellers are PERENNIAL: Fa-Hien question in 2025 shows this is NEVER out of syllabus
- Vedic Literature returned in 2024 after a 20-year gap – signals renewed interest in textual traditions
- Buddhist literature got a VERY SPECIFIC question in 2024 (Sanghabhuti) – micro-detail testing
- Post-2020 shift: UPSC moving from ‘Who wrote X?’ to ‘What was the context/content of X?’
- Author-Work matching remains the MOST RELIABLE question format across 30 years

Theme	Sub-Themes / Focus Areas
1. Vedic Literature, Upanishads & Puranas	A: Vedic Texts – Content & Classification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Atharva Veda (magical charms/spells) – Rig Veda geography (River Sindhu references) – Female scholars (Brahmavadini, Lopamudra) – UNESCO Memory of World Register manuscripts Upanishads & Puranas – Features & Chronology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Parables in Upanishads (Nachiketa-Yama, Shvetaketu) – Chronological ordering (Upanishads vs. Puranas)

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content linkage (Mundaka-'Satyameva Jayate', Katha-Nachiketa)
2. Sangam Literature & Ancient South India	Sangam Texts – Content, Concepts & Classification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific cultural practices (Vattakirutal - ritual suicide) - Material culture and Varna references in Sangam texts - Classification: Aham (Love) vs. Puram (War) - Anthology identification (Padinen Kilukanakku)
3. Ancient Plays, Dramatists & Literary Works	A: Author ↔ Work Matching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key authors: Bhasa, Vishakhadatta, Shudraka, Banabhatta, Bilhana, Somadeva Suri - Work identification: Madhyama-vyayoga, Mudrarakshasa, Mrichchhakatika, Nitivakyamrita - Misattributed authors (Nagarjuna vs. Nagasena) B: Scholar ↔ Dynasty/Patron Matching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Court scholars: Kalidasa (Chandragupta II), Amarasimha - Timeline accuracy (Panini vs. Pushyamitra Sunga) - Plot details linked to history (Malavikagnimitra & Sunga dynasty)
4. Buddhist & Jain Literature	Buddhist Textual Traditions & Author Identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dialogues (Milinda-panha: Menander & Nagasena) - Commentaries and Monks (Sanghabhuti, Sarvastivada Vinaya) - Buddhist Schools & Texts (Prajnaparamita, Visuddhimagga) - Transnational connections (Monks traveling to China)
5. Accounts of Foreign Travellers	A: Chinese Pilgrims – Dynasty Matching & Observations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fa-Hien (Chandragupta II), Xuanzang (Harsha), I-tsing - Observations on society, robbery, and trade duties - Chronological ordering of visits B: European Travellers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traveller specializations (Tavernier & Diamonds) - Other travellers: Bernier, Thevenot, Manucci
6. Language, Scripts, Terminology & Legal/Social Literature	A: Ancient Scripts & Linguistic Terms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Script direction (Kharoshthi: Right to Left) - Linguistic terms (Apabhramsa, Yavanapriya) - Medieval literary figures (Raskhan) B: Legal & Social Texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Arthashastra</i> social provisions (Divorce rights) - Dharmashastra tradition (Manusmriti, Narada Smriti)

PYQ TREND MAP

Most Asked Micro-Topics (High Frequency)

- Author ↔ Work matching (tested 1997, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2016, 2023, 2024 – 11 Qs total)
- Foreign traveller ↔ Dynasty/Ruler identification (1999, 2013, 2018, 2025 – 4 Qs)

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- Vedic text classification and content (1995, 1996, 2004, 2024 – 5 Qs)
- Literary work content/subject description (2002, 2003, 2022, 2023 – rising)

Under-Asked but RISING Areas

- Sangam literature content: appeared 2022 + 2023 after 22-year gap – BUILDING rapidly
- Buddhist textual traditions at micro level: Sanghabhuti (2024) = unprecedented specificity
- Vedic Upanishads: returned in 2024 after 20+ year gap
- Regional language literary traditions: Pampa, Tikkana, Raskhan – tested but infrequently
- Historiography of literature: who wrote commentaries on whom

Concept Clusters UPSC is Building

- CLUSTER 1: Author-Work-Dynasty TRIPLE MATCH – the backbone of this domain
- CLUSTER 2: Traveller-Ruler-Observation TRIPLE MATCH – what they saw, when, under whom
- CLUSTER 3: Sangam Deep Dive – terms, practices, social structures, literary classification
- CLUSTER 4: Textual Content Knowledge – what does the text actually SAY (beyond who wrote it)
- CLUSTER 5: Vedic-Upanishadic Tradition – parables, slogans, hierarchy, gender participation

HOW UPSC THINKS

Why UPSC Frames Such Questions

- LITERATURE bridges multiple subjects: History (dynasties), Philosophy (Upanishads), Polity (Arthashastra), Society (Sangam)
- Author-Work matching is the MOST EFFICIENT way to test breadth: one question covers multiple authors + works + periods
- Content-based questions reflect UPSC's shift from ROTE LEARNING to UNDERSTANDING: 'What is Mrichchhakatika about?'
- Sangam questions reflect UPSC's commitment to PAN-INDIAN history: South India is no longer supplementary
- Foreign traveller questions test CORROBORATION skill: how do external accounts validate/challenge Indian sources?
- Buddhist literature questions at micro-level test TRUE SCHOLARSHIP vs surface preparation

Top Conceptual Traps in Literature Domain

- Devichandragupta = VISHAKHADATTA (not Bilhana) – author swap trap
- Buddhacharita = ASHVAGHOSHA (not Vasubandhu) – Buddhist author confusion
- Milinda-panha: NAGASENA in dialogue (not Nagarjuna) – similar name trap
- Panini is PRE-MAURYAN (not associated with Pushyamitra Sunga) – timeline trap
- Amarasimha is GUPTA-ERA (not Harshavardhana's court) – dynasty swap
- Upanishads DO contain parables (Nachiketa, Shvetaketu) – factual negation trap

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

- Fa-Hien visited CHANDRAGUPTA II (not Samudragupta/Kumaragupta) – Gupta ruler confusion
- Roads NOT immune from robbery per Xuanzang – UPSC tests willingness to choose 'negative' facts
- Gomateshwara = Bahubali (NOT last Tirthankara) – Jain figure misidentification
- Yavanapriya = PEPPER (not muslin/ivory) – trade terminology trap
- Vattakirutal = ritual SUICIDE by starvation (not bodyguards/assemblies) – Sangam vocabulary test

REVISION BLUEPRINT (Exam Strategy)

Must-Revise Micro-Topics (Priority Order)

Priority	Micro-Topic	Source	Frequency
1	Author-Work-Dynasty triple mapping	Nitin Singhania + NCERT Class 11-12	11 Qs
2	Foreign travellers: ruler + observations	NCERT + Tamil Nadu Board History	4 Qs
3	Sangam literature: terms, content, classification	TN Board Class 11 + Nitin Singhania	3 Qs (↑)
4	Vedic literature: 4 Vedas + Upanishad content	NCERT Class 6 + Class 11	5 Qs
5	Buddhist & Jain texts: Tripitaka + key texts	NCERT + specialized references	2 Qs (↑)
6	Ancient scripts: Brahmi, Kharoshthi direction	NCERT Class 6 + Nitin Singhania	1 Q
7	Sanskrit terminology: trade, social, linguistic	Standard compilations	3 Qs
8	Literary work content/plot summaries	Detailed reading of key texts	4 Qs (↑)

Source Linkage for Preparation

- PRIMARY: Nitin Singhania – Indian Art & Culture (Literature chapters)
- NCERT Class 6: Our Pasts (Vedic period, Ashoka, Sangam)
- NCERT Class 11: Themes in Indian History I (Ancient India)
- NCERT Class 12: Themes in Indian History II & III
- Tamil Nadu State Board Class 11: History (excellent for Sangam, South Indian dynasties)
- R.S. Sharma: India's Ancient Past (detailed literary references)

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- CURRENT AFFAIRS: New archaeological discoveries, manuscript preservation, UNESCO inclusions

Frequency Markers & Prediction for 2026

HIGH PROBABILITY for 2026 Prelims

- Author-Work matching: will CERTAINLY appear – prepare 50+ author-work-dynasty sets
- Sangam literature: 3rd consecutive year possible – expect Silappadikaram/Tirukkural content
- Foreign traveller observations: CONTENT-BASED question (what did they note about economy/society?)
- Upanishad content: specific teaching/parable identification – 2024 question opened this door
- Buddhist transnational exchange: Indian monks in China/SE Asia – Act East Policy dimension
- Regional Mahabharata/Ramayana traditions: less-tested but UPSC-worthy (Kamban, Pampa, Tikkana)
- Arthashastra social provisions: gender rights, economic policy – convergence with Polity
- Al-Biruni/Ibn Battuta: under-tested Medieval foreign travellers – due for appearance
- Indus script also Know Ol Chiki is the specialized script for the Santhali language

LITERATURE IN ANCIENT INDIA

VEDIC LITERATURE, UPANISHADS, AND PURANAS

1. Consider the following statements: [2024]
 - 1) There are no parables in Upanishads.
 - 2) Upanishads were composed earlier than the Puranas.Of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
2. Which one of the following four Vedas contains an account of magical charms and spells? [2004]
 - a) Rig-veda
 - b) Yajur-veda
 - c) Atharva-veda
 - d) Sama-veda
3. The famous dialogue between, Nachiketa and Yama is mentioned in the: [1997]
 - a) Chhandogyanishad
 - b) Mundakyanishad
 - c) Kathyanishad

- d) Kenyanishad
4. The river most mentioned in early Vedic literature is: [1996]
 - a) Sindhu
 - b) Sutudri
 - c) Sarasvati
 - d) Ganga
5. Who among the following was a Brahmadini who composed some hymns of the Vedas? [1995]
 - a) Lopamudra
 - b) Gargi
 - c) Leelavati
 - d) Savitri

SANGAM LITERATURE AND ANCIENT SOUTH INDIA

6. Which one of the following explains the practice of 'Vattakirutal' as mentioned in the Sangam poems? [2023]
 - a) Kings employing women bodyguards
 - b) Learned persons assembling in royal courts to discuss religious and philosophical matters.

- c) Young girls keeping watch over agricultural fields and driving away birds and animals.
d) A king defeated in a battle committing ritual suicide by starving himself to death.
7. Which one of the following statements about Sangam literature in ancient South India is correct? [2022]
a) Sangam poems are devoid of any reference to material culture.
b) The social classification of Varna was known to Sangam poets.
c) Sangam poems have no references to warrior ethic.
d) Sangam literature refers to magical forces as irrational.
8. Assertion (A): The Aham and Puram poems of the Padinen Kilukanakku group formed a continuation of the Sangam composition. [2000]
Reason (R): They were included under the Post-Sangam works as against the Sangam works proper.
a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
b) Both A and R are true, but R is not a correct explanation of A
c) A is true, but R is false
d) A is false, but R is true
- ANCIENT PLAYS, DRAMATISTS, AND LITERARY WORKS**
9. Which one of the following is a work attributed to playwright Bhasa? [2024]
a) Kavyalankara
b) Natyashastra
c) Madhyama-vyayoga
d) Mahabhashya
10. With reference to ancient Indian History, consider the following pairs: [2023]
Literary Work : Author
1) Devichandragupta : Bilhana
2) Hammira-Mahakavya : Nayachandra Suri
3) Milinda-panha : Nagarjuna
4) Nitivakyamrita : Somadeva Suri
How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?
- a) Only one
b) Only two
c) Only three
d) All four
11. With reference to the history of ancient India Bhavabhuti, Hastimalla and Kshemeshvara were famous: [2021]
a) Jain monks
b) Playwrights
c) Temple architects
d) Philosophers
12. With reference to the scholars/litterateurs of ancient India, consider the following statements: [2020]
1) Panini is associated with Pushyamitra
2) Amarasimha is associated with Harshavardhana
3) Kalidasa is associated with Chandra Gupta-II
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3
13. Which one of the following books of ancient India has the love story of the son of the founder of Sunga dynasty? [2016]
a) Swapnavasavadatta
b) Malavikagnimitra
c) Meghadoota
d) Ratnavali
14. 'Mrichchhakatika' an ancient Indian book written by Shudraka deals with: [2003]
a) The love affair of a rich merchant with the daughter of a courtesan
b) The victory of Chandragupta II over the Shaka Kshatrapas of western India
c) The military expeditions and exploits of Samudragupta
d) The love affair between a Gupta King and a princess of Kamarupa
15. The ancient Indian play Mudrarakshasa of Visakhadatta has its subject on: [2002]

- a) A conflict between Gods and Demons of ancient Hindu lore
b) A romantic story of an Aryan prince and a tribal woman
c) The story of the power struggle between two Aryan tribes
d) The court intrigues at the time of Chandragupta Maurya
16. Which of the following pairs are correctly matched? [1998]
I. Mrichchakatikam – Shudraka
II. Buddhacharita – Vasuvandhu
III. Mudrarakshasha – Vishakhadatta
IV. Harshacharita – Banabhatta
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
a) I, II, III and IV
b) I, III and IV
c) I and IV
d) II and III
17. Which one of the following pairs of composers in different languages and their works on the Mahabharata theme is correctly matched? [1997]
a) Sarladasa – Bengali
b) Kasirama – Oriya
c) Tikkana – Marathi
d) Pampa – Kannada
18. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer by using the codes given below the lists: [1997]
List I (Author) – List II (Text)
I. Varahamihira – A) Prabandha Chintamani
II. Visakhadatta – B) Mrchchhakatikam
III. Sudraka – C) Brhat-Samhita
IV. Bilhana – D) Devi Chandragupta
– E) Vikramankadevacharita
Codes:
a) I-C, II-D, III-E, IV-B
b) I-C, II-D, III-B, IV-E
c) I-E, II-C, III-D, IV-A
d) I-A, II-C, III-E, IV-B
19. Prem Vatika, poems on the life of Krishna, was composed by: [1996]
a) Bihari

- b) Surdas
c) Raskhan
d) Kabir

BUDDHIST AND JAIN LITERATURE

20. Sanghabhuti, an Indian Buddhist monk, who travelled to China at the end of the fourth century AD, was the author of a commentary on: [2024]
a) Prajnaparamita Sutra
b) Visuddhimagga
c) Sarvastivada Vinaya
d) Lalitavistara
21. Milindapanho is in the form of a dialogue between the King Menander and the Buddhist monk: [1997]
a) Nagasena
b) Nagarjuna
c) Nagabhatta
d) Kumarilabhatta

ACCOUNTS OF FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

22. Fa-hien (Faxian), the Chinese pilgrim, travelled to India during the reign of: [2025]
a) Samudragupta
b) Chandragupta II
c) Kumaragupta I
d) Skandagupta
23. Which one of the following foreign travellers elaborately discussed about Diamonds and diamond mines in India? [2018]
a) Francois Bernier
b) Jean-Baptiste Tavernier
c) Jean de Thevenot
d) Abbe Barthelemy Carre
24. The Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang (Hiuen Tsang) who visited India recorded the general conditions and culture of India at that time. In this context, which of the following statements is/are correct? [2013]
1) The roads and river-routes were completely immune from robbery.
2) As regards punishment for offences, ordeals by fire, water and poison were the instruments for determining the innocence or guilt of a person.

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3) The tradesmen had to play duties at ferries and barrier stations.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

25. The following persons came to India at one time or another: [1999]

- I. Fa-Hien,
- II. I-tsing,
- III. Megasthenese,
- IV. Hieun-Tsang

The correct chronological sequence of their visits is:

- a) III, I, II, IV
- b) III, I, IV, II
- c) I, III, II, IV
- d) I, III, IV, II

LANGUAGE, SCRIPTS, AND TERMINOLOGY

26. Which one of the following scripts of ancient India was written from right to left? [1997]

- a) Brahmi
- b) Nandnagari
- c) Sharada
- d) Kharoshti

27. The term apabhramsa was used in medieval Sanskrit texts to denote: [1996]

- a) Outcastes among the Rajputs
- b) Deviations from Vedic rituals
- c) Early forms of some of the modern Indian languages
- d) Non-Sanskrit verse metres

28. The term 'Yavanapriya', mentioned in ancient Sanskrit texts, denoted: [1995]

- a) A fine variety of Indian muslin
- b) Ivory
- c) Damsels sent to the Greek court for dance performance
- d) Pepper

LEGAL, SOCIAL, AND GENERAL LITERATURE

29. Recently, the manuscripts of which one of the following have been included in the UNESCO's Memory of World Register? [2008]

- a) Abhidhamma Pitaka
- b) Mahabharata
- c) Ramayana
- d) Rig-Veda

30. Which one of the following texts of ancient India allows divorce to a wife deserted by her husband? [1996]

- a) Kamasutra
- b) Manavadharmashastra
- c) Sukra Nitisara
- d) Arthashastra

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Buddhism | Jainism | Hinduism & Bhakti | Indian Philosophical Schools

41 PYQs | 1995-2025 | 5 Themes | 55+ Micro-Topics

OVERVIEW: RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY PYQ LANDSCAPE (1995-2024)

Theme	No. of PYQs	Year Range	Priority
Buddhism (Buddha, Sects, Concepts)	14	1997-2024	VERY HIGH
Jainism (Doctrine, Sects, Literature)	10	1995-2023	VERY HIGH

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Buddhism-Jainism Commonalities	2	1996 & 2012	HIGH
Hinduism, Bhakti & Legal Systems	7	1995–2022	HIGH
Indian Philosophical Thought & General	8	1995–2022	HIGH ↑

KEY INSIGHT: Domain Density & Pattern

- RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY = 41 questions – the SINGLE LARGEST Art & Culture sub-domain
- Buddhism questions appear EVERY YEAR since 2016 – 8 consecutive years (2016–2024) without a gap
- Jainism has SURGED: 2022 (Jain texts), 2023 (souls in objects) – previously dormant for years
- UPSC tests DOCTRINAL NUANCES not just surface facts: Mahayana vs Hinayana, Bodhisattva concept, Paramitas
- SECT IDENTIFICATION is the #1 trap format: which sect belongs to which religion?
- Philosophy questions (Sankhya, Mimamsa, Nyaya) are UNDERWEIGHT but appeared 2013–2014 – due for return
- Bhakti Movement has DECLINED in direct testing but appears embedded in other questions
- The 2020–2024 period shows UPSC moving toward GRANULAR Buddhist sectarian knowledge

Theme	Sub-Themes / Focus Areas
1. Buddhism – Gautama Buddha, Sects & Concepts	<p>A: Buddhist Sects & Doctrinal Classification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sect identification: Sthaviravadins (Hinayana), Mahasanghikas, Lokottaravadin, Sarvastivadin, Sautrantika, Sammitiya – Mahayana features: Deification of Buddha, Bodhisattva path, Image worship – Bodhisattva concept: Compassionate being delaying salvation <p>B: Buddhist Concepts, Mudras & Ceremonies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Paramitas (Perfections) – Bodhisattvas: Avalokiteshvara (Padmapani), Maitreya (Future Buddha), Manjusri, Vajrapani – Core concepts: Nirvana, Eightfold Path – Mudras: Bhumisparsha, Dhyana, Abhaya, Dharmachakra – Ceremonies & Councils: Pavarana, 4th Buddhist Council (Vasumitra)
2. Jainism – Doctrine, Sects & Literature	<p>A: Jain Doctrine & Core Beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Universal Soul (Jiva) in all objects (rocks, water, plants)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Karma philosophy and penance - Universal Law (Cosmology) - Vows: Anuvrata (Lesser vows), Ahimsa (Non-violence) - Tirthankaras: Parshvanatha, Mahavira (Genealogy) <p>B: Jain Sects & Literature Identification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sects: Sthanakvasi (non-idol worshipping), Digambara vs. Svetambara, Terapanthi - Literature: Parishishtaparvan, Trishashtilakshana Mahapurana, Acarangasutra, Sutrakritanga - Distinction from Buddhist texts (e.g., distinguishing from Therigatha)
3. Buddhism-Jainism Commonalities	<p>Shared & Divergent Features</p> <p>Common: Indifference to Vedas, Denial of ritual efficacy, Non-injury to animal</p> <p>Divergent: View on Penance/Austerity (Jainism embraces extreme penance; Buddhism follows the Middle Path)</p>
4. Hinduism, Bhakti Movement & Legal Systems	<p>A: Bhakti Saints, Philosophers & Chronology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Philosophers & Schools: Ramanuja (Vishishtadvaita/Bhakti), Shankara (Advaita), Vallabhacharya (Pushti Marg), Madhva - Saints & Professions: Namdev (Tailor), Kabir (Weaver/Bijak), Ravidas (Cobbler) - Chronological ordering of philosophers • Shaiva Sects (Mattamayura) <p>B: Hindu Legal Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mitakshara: Sons claim property during father's lifetime (Coparcenary) - Dayabhaga: Rights arise only after father's death
5. Indian Philosophical Thought & General Religion	<p>A: Six Schools (Shad Darshana) & Heterodox Traditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orthodox (Astika): Sankhya (Rebirth, Self-knowledge), Mimamsa (Karma/Ritual), Nyaya, Vaisheshika - Heterodox (Nastika): Lokayata (Charvaka), Kapalika - Scholar identification: Aryadeva, Dignaga (Buddhist logicians) vs. Nathamuni (Vaishnava) <p>B: Religious Terminology & General Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terms: Parivrajaka (Wanderer), Shramana (Ascetic), Upasaka (Lay follower) - Professions: Maagadha (Memorizing chronicles) - Yuga Cycle (Krita → Treta → Dvapara → Kali) - Sufism: Chishti Order and saints

PYQ TREND MAP

Most Asked Micro-Topics (High Frequency)

- Buddhist sects & doctrinal classification (Mahayana/Hinayana/Mahasanghika/Sthaviravadin) – 7+ Qs

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- Bodhisattva concept & identification (Avalokiteshvara, Maitreya, Padmapani) – 5 Qs
- Jain doctrine (Karma, Ahimsa, universal soul, Anuvrata) – 5 Qs
- Cross-religion sect/scholar identification – 5 Qs (2017, 2018, 2022, 2024)
- Buddhist ceremonies & concepts (Pavarana, Nirvana, Paramitas, Mudras) – 5 Qs

Under-Asked but RISING Areas

- Jain philosophical concepts: Syadvada, Anekantavada – NOT yet directly tested
- Vajrayana Buddhism: Tantra, Siddhas, Sahajiya tradition
- Buddhist geography: centre-region mapping (Dhanyakataka 2023 = new format)
- Hindu legal systems (Mitakshara/Dayabhaga) – appeared 2021, may expand
- Sufi-Bhakti synthesis & interaction – historically undertested

Concept Clusters UPSC is Building

- CLUSTER 1: Buddhist Sectarian Hierarchy – Sthaviravada → Sarvastivada → Mahasanghika → Mahayana → Vajrayana
- CLUSTER 2: Cross-Religion Identification – which scholar/sect/text belongs to which religion?
- CLUSTER 3: Jain Distinctiveness – what makes Jainism unique (universal Jiva, extreme austerity, Anuvrata)
- CLUSTER 4: Philosophical Schools – 6 Astika + Nastika + liberation methods
- CLUSTER 5: Bhakti Philosopher Hierarchy – Shankara → Ramanuja → Madhva → Vallabha → Chaitanya

HOW UPSC THINKS

Why UPSC Frames Such Questions

- RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY tests India's intellectual heritage – UPSC treats this as civilisational identity assessment
- Cross-religion confusion questions test CATEGORICAL THINKING: can aspirants cleanly separate Buddhist/Jain/Hindu concepts?
- Buddhist sectarian questions reward DEPTH over breadth: knowing Lokottaravadin vs Sarvastivadin separates top rankers
- Jain doctrine questions test CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING: why couldn't farmers be Jains? Because farming kills insects
- Philosophy school questions test SYSTEMATIC KNOWLEDGE: 6 schools + heterodox + key propositions of each
- Bhakti questions combine HISTORY + PHILOSOPHY + SOCIAL CONTEXT: saint's profession, teaching, chronology
- UPSC's ultimate goal: can the aspirant navigate India's INTELLECTUAL PLURALISM with precision?

Top Conceptual Traps in Religion & Philosophy

- Nayaputta = MAHAVIRA's epithet (NOT Buddha's) – cross-religion epithet trap

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- Sthaviravadin = HINAYANA (NOT Mahayana) – the most reliable trap across decades
- Bodhisattva = MAHAYANA central concept (NOT Hinayana) – tested 3 times in 5 years
- Sautrantika & Sammitiya = BUDDHIST sects (NOT Jainism) – religion attribution trap
- Sthanakvasi = JAINISM (NOT Buddhism) – reverse of above trap
- Aryadeva = BUDDHIST scholar (NOT Jain) – 2022 scholar-religion swap
- Bijak = KABIR (NOT Dadu Dayal); Pushti Marg = VALLABHACHARYA (NOT Madhvacharya) – double trap
- Sankhya ACCEPTS rebirth (Statement says it doesn't – FALSE)
- 'Avoidance of extreme penance' = ONLY Buddhist, NOT Jain – the #1 comparison trap
- Shramana = ascetic seeker (NOT 'priest with high status') – definition inversion
- Mitakshara/Dayabhaga = REGIONAL systems (NOT caste-based upper/lower)
- • 'Hindu' = first used by ARABS (not Greeks/Romans)

REVISION BLUEPRINT (Exam Strategy)

Must-Revise Micro-Topics (Priority Order)

Priority	Micro-Topic	Source	Frequency
1	Buddhist sects: hierarchy, doctrines, centres	NCERT Class 11-12 + Nitin Singhania	7+ Qs
2	Bodhisattva: concept, names, Mahayana features	Nitin Singhania + NCERT	5 Qs
3	Jain doctrine: Karma, Ahimsa, Jiva, Anuvrata	NCERT + Nitin Singhania	5 Qs
4	Cross-religion identification (sect/scholar/text)	Comparative tables (self-prepared)	5 Qs
5	Six Darshanas + Nastika schools	NCERT Class 11 + Nitin Singhania	4 Qs
6	Bhakti philosophers: chronology, teachings, works	NCERT Medieval India + Nitin Singhania	5 Qs
7	Buddhist concepts: Nirvana, Mudras, Paramitas	Nitin Singhania + CCRT	4 Qs
8	Jain sects & literature identification	Nitin Singhania + standard compilations	3 Qs (↑)
9	Buddhism-Jainism comparison	NCERT Class 6 + self-prepared tables	2 Qs

Source Linkage

- PRIMARY: Nitin Singhania – Indian Art & Culture (Religion & Philosophy chapters)
- NCERT Class 6: Our Past (Buddha, Mahavira, early states)
- NCERT Class 11: Themes in Indian History (Buddhist, Jain, Bhakti movements)
- NCERT Class 12: Themes in Indian History (Bhakti-Sufi traditions)
- R.S. Sharma: India's Ancient Past (detailed philosophical schools coverage)
- Self-prepared COMPARATIVE TABLES: Buddhism vs Jainism, Astika vs Nastika, Bhakti philosophers

HIGH PROBABILITY for 2026 Prelims

- Buddhist sectarian question: Yogachara vs Madhyamaka, or Vajrayana concepts Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha – DEEPENING trend
- Jain philosophy: Syadvada/Anekantavada definition – NOT yet tested, HIGH probability
- Cross-religion text identification: Buddhist vs Jain text sorting (2022 format continuation)
- Bhakti philosopher teachings: Shankara's Advaita vs Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita – comparison format
- Buddhist geography: mapping centres to regions (Dhanyakataka format from 2023)
- Sufi orders & key saints: Chishti/Suhrawardi/Qadiri comparison
- Hindu legal systems: Mitakshara vs Dayabhaga with modern relevance
- Six Darshanas: liberation method comparison across schools
- Buddhist Mudras: Dhyana, Abhaya, Vitarka – iconography convergence
- Jain councils: Pataliputra + Valabhi – outcomes and participants

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

BUDDHISM (GAUTAMA BUDDHA, SECTS, AND CONCEPTS)

1. With reference to ancient India, Gautama Buddha was generally known by which of the following epithets? [2024]

- 1) Nayaputta
- 2) Shakyamuni
- 3) Tathagata

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2 and 3
- d) None of the above are epithets of Gautama Buddha

2. In which one of the following regions was Dhanyakataka, which flourished as a prominent Buddhist center under the Mahasanghikas, located? [2023]

- a) Andhra
- b) Gandhara
- c) Kalinga
- d) Magadha

3. With reference to the cultural history of India, which one of the following is the correct description of the term 'paramitas'? [2020]

- a) The earliest Dharmashastra texts written in aphoristic (sutra) style
- b) Philosophical schools that did not accept the authority of Vedas
- c) Perfections whose attainment led to the Bodhisattva path
- d) Powerful merchant guilds of early medieval South India

4. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: [2020]

- 1) Sthaviravadins belong to Mahayana Buddhism.

- 2) Lokottaravadin sect was an offshoot of Mahasanghika sect of Buddhism.
- 3) The deification of Buddha by Mahasanghikas fostered Mahayana Buddhism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) 2 and 3 only
 - c) 3 only
 - d) 1, 2 and 3
5. Consider the following: [2019]
- 1) Deification of the Buddha
 - 2) Treading the path of Bodhisattvas
 - 3) Image worship and rituals
- Which of the above is/are the feature/features of Mahayana Buddhism?
- a) 1 only
 - b) 1 and 2 only
 - c) 2 and 3 only
 - d) 1, 2 and 3
6. With reference to the Indian History, who among the following is a future Buddha, yet to come to save the world? [2018]
- a) Avalokiteshvara
 - b) Lokeshvara
 - c) Maitreya
 - d) Padmapani
7. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: [2017]
- 1) Sautrantika and Sammitiya were the sects of Jainism.
 - 2) Sarvastivadin held that the constituents of phenomena were not wholly momentary, but existed forever in a latent form.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: [2016]
- 1) The concept of Bodhisattva is central to Hinayana sect of Buddhism.

- 2) Bodhisattva is a compassionate one on his way to enlightenment.
- 3) Bodhisattva delays achieving his own salvation to help all sentient beings on their path to it.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
 - b) 2 and 3 only
 - c) 2 only
 - d) 1, 2 and 3
9. Which one of the following describes best the concept of Nirvana in Buddhism? [2013]
- a) The extinction of the flame of desire
 - b) The complete annihilation of self
 - c) A state of Bliss and rest
 - d) A mental stage beyond all comprehension
10. Lord Buddha's image is sometimes shown with the hand gesture called 'Bhumisparsha Mudra'. It symbolizes: [2012]
- a) Buddha's calling of the Earth to watch over Mara and to prevent Mara from disturbing his meditation
 - b) Buddha's calling of the Earth to witness his purity and chastity despite the temptations of Mara
 - c) Buddha's reminder to his followers that they all arise from the Earth and finally dissolve into the Earth, and thus this life is transitory
 - d) Both the statements a) and b) are correct in this context
11. In ancient Indian Buddhist monasteries, a ceremony called Pavarana used to be held. It was the: [2003]
- a) Occasion to elect the Sanghapariniyaya and two speakers one on Dhamma and the other on Vinaya
 - b) Confession by monks of their offences committed during their stay in the monasteries during the rainy season
 - c) Ceremony of initiation of new person into the Buddhist Sangha in which the head is shaved and when yellow robes are offered
 - d) Gathering of Buddhist monks on the next day to the full moon day of Ashadha when they

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take up a fixed abode for the next four months of rainy season

12. Who among the following presided over the Buddhist Council held during the reign of Kanishka at Kashmir? [2001]
- Parsva
 - Nagarjuna
 - Sudraka
 - Vasumitra
13. The concept of Eight-fold path forms the theme of: [1998]
- Dipavamsa
 - Divyavadana
 - Mahaparinibban Sutta
 - Dharma Chakara Pravartana Sutta
14. In Mahayana Buddhism, the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara was also known as: [1997]
- Vajrapani
 - Manjusri
 - Padmapani
 - Maitreya

JAINISM (DOCTRINE, SECTS, AND LITERATURE)

15. "Souls are not only the property of animal and plant life, but also of rocks, running water and many other natural objects not looked on as living by other religious sects." [2023]
- The above statement reflects one of the core beliefs of which one of the following religious sects of ancient India?
- Buddhism
 - Jainism
 - Shaivism
 - Vaishnavism
16. With reference to Indian history, consider the following texts: [2022]
- Nettipakarana
 - Parishishtaparvan
 - Avadanashataka
 - Trishashtilakshana Mahapurana
- Which of the above are Jaina texts?
- 1, 2 and 3
 - 2 and 4 only
 - 1, 3 and 4
 - 2, 3 and 4

17. With reference to the religious practices in India, the "Sthanakvasi" sect belongs to: [2018]
- Buddhism
 - Jainism
 - Vaishnavism
 - Shaivism

18. Which of the following statements is/are applicable to Jain doctrine? [2013]
- The surest way of annihilating Karma is to practice penance.
 - Every object, even the smallest particle has a soul.
 - Karma is the bane of the soul and must be ended.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- 1 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
19. The Jain philosophy holds that the world is created and maintained by? [2011]
- Universal law
 - Universal truth
 - Universal faith
 - Universal soul
20. With reference to ancient Jainism, which one of the following statements is correct? [2004]
- Jainism was spread in South India under the leadership of Sthalabahu.
 - The Jainas who remained under the leadership of Bhadrabahu were called Shvetambaras after the Council held at Pataliputra.
 - Jainism enjoyed the patronage of the Kalinga king Kharavela in the first century BC.
 - In the initial stage of Jainism, the Jainas worshipped images unlike Buddhists.
21. Consider the following statements: [2003]
- Vardhamana Mahavira's mother was the daughter of Lichchhavi chief Chetaka.
 - Goutama Buddha's mother was a princess from the Koshalan dynasty.
 - Parshvanatha, the 23rd Tirthankara, belonged to Banaras.

Which of these statements is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) 2 and 3
- d) 1, 2 and 3

22. Assertion (A): The emphasis of Jainism on non-violence (ahimsa) prevented agriculturalists from embracing Jainism. [2000]

Reason (R): Cultivation involved killing of insects and pests.

- a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
- b) Both A and R are true, but R is not a correct explanation of A
- c) A is true, but R is false
- d) A is false, but R is true

23. Which one of the following is not a part of early Jaina literature? [1996]

- a) Therigatha
- b) Acarangasutra
- c) Suttrakritanga
- d) Brihatkalpasutra

24. The concept of Anuvrata was advocated by: [1995]

- a) Mahayana Buddhism
- b) Hinayana Buddhism
- c) Jainism
- d) The Lokayata school

COMMONALITIES BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND JAINISM

25. With reference to the history of ancient India, which of the following was/were common to both Buddhism and Jainism? [2012]

- 1) Avoidance of extremities of penance and enjoyment
- 2) Indifference to the authority of the Vedas
- 3) Denial of efficacy of rituals

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 & 3

26. Which of the following were common to both Buddhism and Jainism? [1996]

- 1) Avoidance of extremities of penance and enjoyment.
- 2) Indifference to the authority of the Vedas
- 3) Denial of efficacy of rituals
- 4) Non-injury to animal life

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- b) 2, 3 and 4
- c) 1, 3 and 4
- d) 1 and 2

HINDUISM, BHAKTI MOVEMENT, AND LEGAL SYSTEMS

27. The world's second tallest statue in sitting pose of Ramanuja was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India at Hyderabad recently. Which one of the following statements correctly represents the teachings of Ramanuja? [2022]

- a) The best means of salvation was devotion.
- b) Vedas are eternal, self-existent and wholly authoritative.
- c) Logical arguments were essential means for the highest bliss.
- d) Salvation was to be obtained through meditation.

28. With reference to the history of ancient India, which of the following statements is/are correct? [2021]

- 1) Mitakshara was the civil law for upper castes and Dayabhaga was the civil law for lower castes.
- 2) In the Mitakshara system, the sons can claim right to the property during the lifetime of the father, whereas in the Dayabhaga system, it is only after the death of the father that the sons can claim right to the property.
- 3) The Mitakshara system deals with the matters related to the property held by male members only of a family, whereas the Dayabhaga system deals with the matters related to the property held by both male and female members of a family.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3
- d) 3 only

29. Consider the following statements: [2014]

- 1) 'Bijak' is a composition of the teachings of Saint Dadu Dayal.
- 2) The Philosophy of Pushti Marg was propounded by Madhvacharya.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

30. Which one of the following sequences indicates the correct chronological order? [2004]

- a) Shankaracharya-Ramanuja-Chaitanya
- b) Ramanuja-Shankaracharya-Chaitanya
- c) Ramanuja-Chaitanya-Shankaracharya
- d) Shankaracharya-Chaitanya-Ramanuja

31. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the Lists: [2001]

List I (Bhakti Saint) – List II (Profession)

- I. Namdev – A) Barber
- II. Kabir – B) Weaver
- III. Ravidas – C) Tailor
- IV. Sena – D) Cobbler

Codes:

- a) I-B, II-C, III-A, IV-D
- b) I-C, II-B, III-D, IV-A
- c) I-C, II-B, III-A, IV-D
- d) I-B, II-C, III-D, IV-A

32. Which one of the following was a Saiva sect in ancient India? [1996]

- a) Ajivika
- b) Mattamayura
- c) Mayamata
- d) Isanasivagurudevapaddhati

33. According to the Mimamsa system of philosophy, liberation is possible by means of: [1995]

- a) Jnana
- b) Bhakti
- c) Yoga
- d) Karma

INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT AND GENERAL RELIGION

34. With reference to Indian history, consider the following pairs: [2022]

Historical person – Known as

- 1) Aryadeva – Jaina Scholar
- 2) Dignaga – Buddhist Scholar
- 3) Nathamuni – Vaishnava scholar

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a) None of the pairs
- b) Only one pair
- c) Only two pairs
- d) All three pairs

35. With reference to the cultural history of India, consider the following pairs: [2020]

- 1) Parivrajaka – Renunciant and Wanderer
- 2) Shramana – Priest with a high status
- 3) Upasaka – Lay follower of Buddhism

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

36. With reference to the cultural history of India, the memorizing of chronicles, dynastic histories and Epictales was the profession of who of the following? [2016]

- a) Shramana
- b) Parivraajaka
- c) Agrahaarika
- d) Maagadha

37. Which one of the following pairs does not form part of the six systems of Indian Philosophy? [2014]

- a) Mimamsa and Vedanta
- b) Nyaya and Vaisheshika

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- c) Lokayata and Kapalika
d) Sankhya and Yoga
38. With reference to the history of philosophical thought in India, consider the following statements regarding Sankhya school? [2013]
- 1) Sankhya does not accept the theory of rebirth or transmigration of soul.
 - 2) Sankhya holds that it is the self-knowledge that leads to liberation and not any exterior influence or agent.
- Which of the statements are correct?
- a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
39. The Sufi saint who maintained that devotional music was one way of coming close to God was: [1996]

- a) Muin-ud-din Chishti
 - b) Baba Farid
 - c) Saiyid Muhammad Gesudaraz
 - d) Shah Alam Bukhari
40. According to ancient Indian cosmogonic ideas the sequential order of the cycle of four aeons (Yugas) is: [1996]
- a) Dvapara, Krita, Treta and Kali
 - b) Krita, Dvapara, Treta and Kali
 - c) Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali
 - d) Treta, Dvapara, Kali and Krita
41. The word 'Hindu' as a reference to the people of Hind (India) was first used by: [1995]
- a) Greeks
 - b) Romans
 - c) Chinese
 - d) Arabs

POLITICS & SOCIETY IN ANCIENT INDIA

IVC | Vedic Age | Mahajanapadas | Mauryas | Post-Maurya | Guptas | Harsha | South India | Post-Harsha
63 PYQs | 1995-2025 | 10 Themes | 80+ Micro-Topics

OVERVIEW: POLITICS & SOCIETY IN ANCIENT INDIA (1995-2025)

Theme	PYQs	Year Range	Priority
Prehistoric Age & Early Historic Places	3	2021-2023	MEDIUM ↑
Indus Valley Civilisation	6	2001-2025	HIGH
Vedic Age	6	1995-2017	HIGH
Mahajanapadas & Buddha's Era	9	1997-2025	VERY HIGH
Mauryan Period	8	1998-2025	VERY HIGH
Post-Mauryan (Greeks, Sakas, Kushans)	5	1998-2006	MEDIUM
Guptas & Vakatakas	10	1995-2020	VERY HIGH
Era of King Harsha	3	2001-2021	MEDIUM

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South Indian Dynasties	9	1997–2025	VERY HIGH ↑
Post-Harsha Period	4	2006–2022	HIGH ↑

KEY INSIGHT: 30-Year Pattern Analysis

- GUPTAS + MAURYAS + MAHAJANAPADAS form the CORE TRIAD – 27 questions combined (43%)
- SOUTH INDIA has SURGED dramatically: 3 questions in 2025 alone (Rajendra I, Mahendravarman I, Chola naval)
- 2020–2025 marks a PARADIGM SHIFT: UPSC now tests ADMINISTRATIVE TERMS, ECONOMIC CONCEPTS, and SOCIAL STRUCTURES over political events
- Geography-History fusion is DOMINANT: 60%+ questions require knowing WHERE a place/kingdom/port is
- Chronological ordering is tested in EVERY decade – timeline skills are non-negotiable
- Post-Harsha period (Pratiharas, Palas, Rashtrakutas) EMERGING strongly since 2020
- IVC returned in 2025 with Dancing Girl question – material culture specifics gaining importance
- 2025 is a LANDMARK year: 4 questions from this single domain, testing admin terms + geography + personality

Theme	Sub-Themes / Focus Areas
1. Prehistoric Age & Early Historic Places	Site Identification & Dynasty Chronology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ancient Ports of South India (Korkai, Poompuhar, Muchiri) - 12th–13th Century Dynasty Identification (Hoysala, Kakatiya, etc.) - Site-Feature Matching (Burzahom, Chandraketugarh, Ganeshwar)
2. Indus Valley Civilisation	IVC Material Culture, Sites & Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Material Knowledge (Dancing Girl/Bronze) - Site-Finding Matches (Lothal, Kalibangan, Dholavira, Banawali) - Absence-based testing (No palaces/temples, No cow on seals) - Secular nature & decline theories
3. Vedic Age	Comparison, Religion & Terminology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IVC vs. Rig Vedic Aryans (Iron, Horse, Protection) - Religious Concepts (Nature worship, Yajnas, Dharma, Rita) - Terminology: 'Aryan' meaning, Kinship terms (Kula, Gotra)
4. Age of Mahajanapadas & Buddha's Era	Geographical Precision & Map Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mahajanapada-River Mapping (Asmaka, Kosala, etc.) - Place-State & Place-Region Matches (Bhilsa, Dwarasamudra, Tirupati) - Kingdoms associated with Buddha - Capital City Identification

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5. Mauryan Period	Governance, Administration & Social History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative Terminology (Pradeshika, Rajuka, Yukta) - <i>Arthashastra</i> Social Provisions (Slavery laws, taxation) - Ashokan Inscriptions (Religious tolerance, Dhamma) - Dynastic Succession & Chronology
6. Post-Mauryan (Greeks, Sakas, Kushans)	Chronology, Trade & Cultural Assimilation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chronological Order of Invasions (Greeks → Sakas → Kushans) - Economic Shifts (Trade to SE Asia, Gold/Silver coins) - Religious assimilation (Buddhism's appeal to foreigners)
7. Guptas & Vakatakas	Administration, Economy & Social Structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative/Land Terms (Kulyavapa, Dronavapa, Vishti) - Trade Geography (Ports like Tamralipti, Ghantasala) - Economic Organizations (Guilds/Shreni) - Cultural/Literary Details (Prakrit in plays, Fa-Hien's timeline)
8. Era of King Harsha	Post-Gupta Kingdoms & Political History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lesser-known North Indian Kingdoms (Maukharis, Maitrakas) - Harsha's Southern Conflict (Pulakesin II) - Religious Assemblies (Prayag)
9. South Indian Dynasties	Naval Power, Architecture & Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chola Naval Power (Campaigns against Srivijaya/Ceylon) - Pallava Rulers & Titles (Mahendravarman I) - Administrative Vocabulary (Eripatti, Taniyurs, Ghatikas, Manigrama) - Dynasty-Site Architecture Matching
10. Post-Harsha Period	Tripartite Struggle & Economic Instruments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - King-Dynasty Matching (Chandela, Pratihara) - Chronological Ordering of Rulers (Pallava to Chola) - Economic History (Hundi/Bill of Exchange) - Religious Patronage (Pala rulers and Buddhism)

PYQ TREND MAP

Most Asked Micro-Topics

- Place/Kingdom → State/River/Region geographical mapping (15+ Qs – #1 tested skill)
- Administrative terminology: Mauryan + Gupta + South Indian terms (8+ Qs, RISING)
- Chronological ordering of dynasties/events/invasions (6+ Qs across all decades)
- IVC material culture: sites, findings, features (6 Qs, steady)
- Ashokan edicts + Mauryan governance (8 Qs, persistent)
- South Indian dynasties: Chola naval power, Pallava architecture, admin terms (9 Qs, SURGING)

Under-Asked but RISING Areas

- Post-Harsha tripartite struggle: Pratihara/Pala/Rashtrakuta – 4 Qs since 2020
- Economic terms: Hundi, Shreni, Vishti, Rupaka – UPSC building economic history cluster
- South Indian administrative vocabulary: Eripatti, Taniyurs, Ghatikas, Manigrama

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- Pallava rulers & titles: Mahendravarman I tested in 2025 – personality-attribute format
- Arthashastra's social provisions: slavery, property, espionage

Concept Clusters UPSC is Building

- CLUSTER 1: Ancient Geography – site-state, kingdom-river, port-trade route mapping
- CLUSTER 2: Administrative Governance – Mauryan + Gupta + Chola admin terms
- CLUSTER 3: Economic History – trade ports, coins, guilds, financial instruments, forced labour
- CLUSTER 4: South Indian Power – Pallava → Chola → maritime expansion → SE Asian influence
- CLUSTER 5: Dynastic Chains – succession, assassination, chronological sequencing

- **HOW UPSC THINKS (Decade Faculty Insight)**

Why UPSC Frames Such Questions

- POLITICS & SOCIETY is not 'political history' anymore – UPSC has systematically shifted from kings & battles to GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS, ECONOMIC STRUCTURES, and SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS since 2012
- GEOGRAPHICAL PRECISION is treated as a CORE COMPETENCY for civil servants: if you can't map ancient kingdoms to rivers, how will you handle district administration?
- Administrative terminology (Pradeshika, Vishti, Shreni, Eripatti) tests whether aspirants understand HOW ancient states FUNCTIONED – not just who ruled
- SOUTH INDIA's dramatic surge (3 Qs in 2025) reflects UPSC's conscious correction of North India-centric history teaching – expect this to be PERMANENT
- Chronological ordering tests TEMPORAL REASONING: can the aspirant place events in correct sequence across centuries? This is a HIGHER-ORDER cognitive skill
- IVC 'absence' questions (no horse, no cow seal, no palaces) test intellectual honesty: knowing what's NOT there is as important as what IS
- Cross-period COMPARISONS (IVC vs Vedic, Mauryan vs Gupta admin) test ANALYTICAL ability – not memorisation
- Arthashastra social provisions (slavery, divorce, property) reflect UPSC's interest in ancient India's PROGRESSIVE elements – aligns with constitutional values
- The 2020–2025 pattern reveals UPSC's new priority hierarchy: ECONOMY > ADMINISTRATION > SOCIETY > POLITICAL EVENTS
- Dynastic chain questions (Maurya→Sunga→Kanva) test whether aspirants see history as CONTINUOUS PROCESS, not isolated dynasties

The Hidden Syllabus UPSC is Testing

- MAP LITERACY: 60%+ questions can only be answered if you've physically mapped sites on India's geography
- TERMINOLOGICAL VOCABULARY: Ancient admin/economic terms are being built into a CUMULATIVE knowledge bank across years
- CENTURY-LEVEL PRECISION: Knowing 'Hoysala = 12th century' vs 'Rashtrakuta = 8th century' is the difference between right and wrong answers

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- PRIMARY SOURCE AWARENESS: Arthashastra, Ashokan edicts, Sangam texts are treated as primary evidence – UPSC increasingly quotes directly
- SOUTH-NORTH BALANCE: The 2025 paper signals that South Indian history (Pallava, Chola, Chalukya) now has EQUAL WEIGHTAGE with Maurya-Gupta
- ECONOMIC HISTORY THREAD: Ports, coins, guilds, trade routes, financial instruments form a CONTINUOUS economic narrative across ancient India
- CIVILISATIONAL CONTINUITY: UPSC wants aspirants to see connections: IVC water management → Chola tank irrigation → modern watershed management

Top Conceptual Traps in This Domain

- Dancing Girl = BRONZE (not clay/gold) – material precision
- COW not on Harappan seals – absence-based testing
- IVC: NO iron, NO horse (debatable), NO palaces/temples
- Aryan = SPEECH GROUP (not ethnic/racial)
- Kamboja = Kabul river area (NOT Vipas); Avanti = Sipra (NOT Mahanadi)
- Dwarasamudra = KARNATAKA (not Maharashtra); Sthanesvara = HARYANA (not UP)
- Pradeshika/Rajuka/Yukta = DISTRICT level (not village/province/central)
- Fa-Hien did NOT attend 4th Buddhist Council (400-year gap)
- Bhoja = PRATIHARA (not Rashtrakuta) – name confusion
- Rajaraja I conquered CEYLON; Rajendra I attacked SRIVIJAYA – father-son attribution
- Taniyurs = villages for Brahmins (definition nuance with 2016 question)
- Guilds NOT registered with central authority in Gupta period

REVISION BLUEPRINT

Priority	Micro-Topic	Source	Freq
1	Geographical mapping: sites, rivers, kingdoms, ports	MAP practice + NCERT	15+ Qs
2	South Indian dynasties: Pallava, Chola, Chalukya	TN Board + NCERT 11-12	9 Qs (↑)
3	Mauryan admin & Arthashastra provisions	R.S. Sharma + NCERT	8 Qs
4	Gupta administration & economic terms	Nitin Singhania + NCERT	10 Qs
5	IVC: site-finding, material culture, features	NCERT Class 12 + standard	6 Qs
6	Chronological ordering across periods	Timeline chart (self-prepared)	6 Qs

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7	Post-Harsha: Pratihara/Pala/Rashtrakuta	Satish Chandra + NCERT	4 Qs (↑)
8	Vedic Age: society, religion, terminology	NCERT Class 6 + R.S. Sharma	6 Qs
9	Post-Mauryan: Greeks/Sakas/Kushans	NCERT + standard	5 Qs
10	Harsha period: kingdoms, events	NCERT Class 6 + R.S. Sharma	3 Qs

HIGH PROBABILITY for 2026 Prelims

- South Indian admin terms: Ur/Sabha/Nagaram + Uttaramerur inscription – 2025 surge will continue
- Chola administration: local self-government mechanism – converges with Polity (Panchayati Raj)
- Mahajanapada geography: 16 Mahajanapadas with capitals and rivers – MAP-BASED
- Arthashastra economic provisions: taxation, trade regulation, Saptanga theory
- Post-Harsha tripartite struggle: Rashtrakuta achievements, Pala universities
- IVC: new excavation sites (Rakhigarhi, Keeladi) – current affairs + archaeology
- Gupta economic terms: Kulyavapa, Dronavapa, Nishka, Dinara, Rupaka – terminology cluster
- Pallava-Chola transition: architectural + naval + administrative evolution
- SE Asian cultural influence: Srivijaya, Angkor Wat, Borobudur – Act East Policy dimension
- Ancient trade routes & ports: maritime + overland with Roman/SE Asian connections

POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ANCIENT INDIA

PREHISTORIC AGE & EARLY HISTORIC PLACES

1. With reference to ancient South India, Korkai, Poompuhar, and Muchiri were well known as: [2023]
 - a) Capital cities
 - b) Ports
 - c) Centres of iron- and- steel making
 - d) Shrines of Jain Tirthankaras
2. Consider the following dynasties: [2023]
 - 1) Hoysala
 - 2) Gahadavala
 - 3) Kakatiya
 - 4) Yadava

How many of the above dynasties established their kingdoms in early eighth century AD?

 - a) Only one
 - b) Only two

c) Only three

d) None

3. Consider the following pairs: [2021]
(Historical place) – (Well-known for)

- 1) Burzahom: Rock-cut shrines
- 2) Chandraketugarh: Terracotta art
- 3) Ganeshwar: Copper artefacts

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2
- c) 3 only
- d) 2 and 3

INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

4. The famous female figurine known as 'Dancing Girl', found at Mohenjo-daro, is made of: [2025]

- a) Carnelian
b) Clay
c) Bronze
d) Gold
5. Which one of the following is not a Harappan site? [2019]
a) Chanhudaro
b) Kot Diji
c) Sohgaora
d) Desalpur
6. Which of the following characterizes/characterizes the people of Indus civilization? [2013]
1) They possessed great palaces and temples.
2) They worshipped both male and female deities.
3) They employed horse-drawn chariots in warfare.
Select the correct statement/statements using the codes given below.
a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 only
c) 1, 2, and 3
d) None is correct
7. Regarding the Indus Valley civilization, consider the following statements? [2011]
1) It was predominantly a secular civilization and the religious element, though present, did not dominate the scene.
2) During this period, cotton was used for manufacturing textiles in India.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists: [2002]
(Ancient Site) – (Archaeological Finding)
A. Lothal – 1. Ploughed field
B. Kalibangan – 2. Dockyard
C. Dholavira – 3. Terracotta replica of plough

D. Banawali – 4. An inscription comprising ten large-sized signs of the Harappan script
Codes (A B C D):

- a) 1 2 3 4
b) 2 1 4 3
c) 1 2 4 3
d) 2 1 3 4
9. Which one of the following animals was NOT represented on the seals and terracotta art of the Harappan culture? [2001]
a) Cow
b) Elephant
c) Rhinoceros
d) Tiger

VEDIC AGE

10. With reference to the difference between the culture of Rigvedic Aryans and Indus Valley people, which of the following statements is/are correct? [2017]
1) Rigvedic Aryans used the coat of mail and helmet in warfare whereas the people of Indus Valley Civilization did not leave any evidence of using them.
2) Rigvedic Aryans knew gold, silver and copper whereas Indus Valley people knew only copper and iron.
3) Rigvedic Aryans had domesticated the horse whereas there is no evidence of Indus Valley people having been aware of this animal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3
11. The religion of early Vedic Aryans was primarily of: [2012]
a) Bhakti
b) Image Worship and Yajnas
c) Worship of Nature and Yajnas
d) Worship of Nature and Bhakti
12. The “dharma” and “Rita” depict a central Idea of ancient Vedic civilization of India. In this

context, consider the following statements:
[2011]

- 1) Dharma was a conception of obligations and of the discharge of one's duties to oneself and to others.
- 2) Rita was the fundamental moral law governing the functioning of the universe and all it contained.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
13. The term 'Aryan' denotes: [1999]
- a) An ethnic group
 - b) A nomadic people
 - c) A speech group
 - d) A superior race
14. In the context of ancient Indian society, which one of the following terms does not belong to the category of the other three? [1996]
- a) Kula
 - b) Vamsa
 - c) Kosa
 - d) Gotra
15. The original home of the gypsies was: [1995]
- a) Egypt
 - b) Russia
 - c) India
 - d) Persia

AGE OF MAHAJANPADAS & BUDDHISM ASSOCIATION

16. With reference to ancient India (600–322 BC), consider the following pairs: [2025]
- Territorial region – River flowing in the region
- I. Asmaka : Godavari
 - II. Kamboja : Vipasa
 - III. Avanti : Mahanadi
 - IV. Kosala : Sarayu
- How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?
- a) Only one
 - b) Only two
 - c) Only three

d) All the four

17. With reference to the history of India, consider the following pairs: [2020]

Famous Place – Present State

- 1) Bhilsa – Madhya Pradesh
- 2) Dwarasamudra – Maharashtra
- 3) Girinagar – Gujarat
- 4) Sthanesvara – Uttar Pradesh

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 1 and 4 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 2 and 4 only

18. Consider the following pairs: [2016]

Famous place - Region

- 1) Bodhgaya - Baghelkhand
- 2) Khajuraho - Bundelkhand
- 3) Shirdi - Vidarbha
- 4) Nasik (Nashik) - Malwa
- 5) Tirupati - Rayalaseema

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a) 1, 2 and 4
- b) 2, 3, 4 and 5
- c) 2 and 5 only
- d) 1, 3, 4 and 5

19. Which of the following Kingdoms were associated with the life of the Buddha? [2014]

1. Avanti
2. Gandhara
3. Kosala
4. Magadha

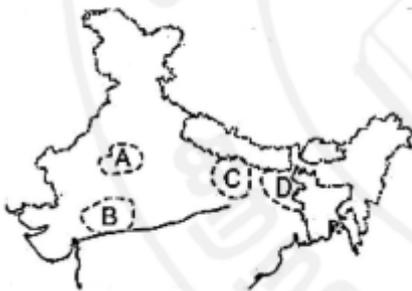
Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 1, 2 and 3
- b) 2 and 4
- c) 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 3 and 4

20. Between which of the following was the ancient town of Takshasila located? [2006]

- a) Indus and Jehelum
- b) Jhelum and Chenab
- c) Chenab and Ravi
- d) Ravi and Beas

21. Who among the following was not a contemporary of the other three? [2005]
- Bimbisara
 - Gautama Buddha
 - Milinda
 - Prasenjit
22. Which one of the following was initially the most powerful city-state of India in the 6th century B.C.? [1999]
- Gandhar
 - Kamboj
 - Kashi
 - Magadh
23. Which of the following pairs are correctly matched? [1998]
- Lothal: Ancient dockyard
 - Sarnath: First Sermon of Buddha
 - Rajgir: Lion capital of Asoka
 - Nalanda: Great seat of Buddhist learning
- Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
- I, II, III and IV
 - III and IV
 - I, II and IV
 - I and II
24. The following maps shows four of the sixteen Mahajanapadas that existed in ancient India: [1997]



The places marked A, B, C and D respectively are:

- Matsya, Cedi, Kosala, Anga
- Surasena, Avanti, Vatsa, Magadha
- Matsya, Avanti, Vatsa, Anga
- Surasena, Cedi, Kosala, Magadha

MAURYAN PERIOD

25. Ashokan inscriptions suggest that the 'Pradeshika', 'Rajuka' and 'Yukta' were important officers at the: [2025]
- village-level administration
 - district-level administration
 - provincial administration
 - level of the central administration

26. According to Kautilya's Arthashastra, which of the following are correct? [2022]
- 1) A person could be a slave as a result of a judicial punishment.
 - 2) If a female slave bore her master a son, she was legally free.
 - 3) If a son born to a female slave was fathered by her master, the son was entitled to the legal status of the master's son.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

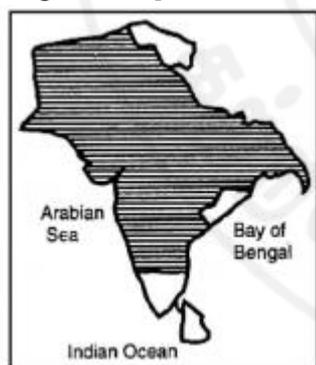
- 1 and 2
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
27. Who among the following rulers advised his subjects through this inscription? [2020]
- "Whosoever praises his religious sect or blames other sects out of excessive devotion to his own sect, with the view of glorifying his own sect, he rather injures his own sect very severely."
- Ashoka
 - Samudragupta
 - Harshavardhana
 - Krishanadeva Raya

28. Consider the following statements: [2003]
- 1) The last Mauryan ruler, Brihadratha was assassinated by his commander in chief, Pushyamitra Sunga.
 - 2) The last Sunga king, Devabhuti was assassinated by his Brahmana minister Vasudeva Kanva who usurped the throne.
 - 3) The last ruler of the Kanva dynasty was deposed by the Andhras.

Which of these statements is/are correct?

- 1 and 2
- Only 2

- c) Only 3
d) 1, 2 and 3
29. Which one of the following dynasties was ruling over North India at the time of Alexander's invasion? [2000]
a) Nanda
b) Maurya
c) Sunga
d) Kanva
30. Assertion (A): Ashoka annexed Kalinga to the Mauryan Empire. [2000]
Reason (R): Kalinga controlled the land and sea routes to South India.
a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
b) Both A and R are true, but R is not a correct explanation of A
c) A is true, but R is false
d) A is false, but R is true
31. Assertion (A): According to Asoka's edicts social harmony among the people was more important than religious devotion. [1998]
Reason (R): He spread ideas of equity instead of promotion of religion.
a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
b) Both A and R are true, but R is NOT a correct explanation of A
c) A is true, but R is false
d) A is false, but R is true
32. The given map relates to: [1998]



- a) Kaniska at the time of his death
b) Samudragupta after the close of his South Indian campaign
c) Asoka towards close of his reign

d) Empire of Thaneswar on the eve of Harsha's accession

POST MAURYAN PERIOD: GREEK, SAKA, PARTHIAN AND KUSHAN

33. With reference to the invaders in ancient India, which one of the following is the correct chronological order? [2006]
a) Greeks . Sakas . Kushans
b) Greeks . Kushans . Sakas
c) Sakas . Greeks . Kushans
d) Sakas . Kushans . Greeks
34. From the third century AD, when the Hun invasion ended the Roman Empire, the Indian merchants relied more and more on the: [1999]
a) African trade
b) West-European trade
c) South-East Asian trade
d) Middle-Eastern trade
35. The Indo-Greek kingdom set up in north Afghanistan in the beginning of the second century BC was: [1999]
a) Bactria
b) Scythia
c) Zedrasia
d) Aria
36. Many of the Greeks, Kushanas and Shakas embraced Buddhism rather than Hinduism because: [1998]
a) Buddhism was in the ascendant at that time
b) They had renounced the policy of war and violence
c) Caste-ridden Hinduism did not attract them
d) Buddhism provided easier access to Indian society
37. What is the correct chronological order in which the following appeared in India? [1998]
I. Gold coins
II. Punch-marked silver coins
III. Iron plough
IV. Urban culture
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
a) III, IV, I, II
b) III, IV, II, I
c) IV, III, I, II

d) IV, III, II, I

GUPTAS AND VAKATAKAS

38. With reference to the history of India, the terms 'kulyavapa' and 'dronavapa' denote: [2020]

- a) Measurement of land
- b) Coins of different monetary value
- c) Classification of urban land
- d) Religious rituals

39. With reference to the period of Gupta dynasty in ancient India, the towns Ghantasala, Kadura and Chaul were known as: [2020]

- a) Ports handling foreign trade
- b) Capitals of powerful kingdoms
- c) Places of exquisite stone art and architecture
- d) Important of Buddhist pilgrimage centres

40. With reference to forced labour (Vishti) in India during the Gupta period, which one of the following statements is correct? [2019]

- a) It was considered a source of income for the State, a sort of tax paid by the people.
- b) It was totally absent in the Madhya Pradesh and Kathiawar regions of the Gupta Empire.
- c) The forced labourer was entitled to weekly wages.
- d) The eldest son of the labourer was sent as the forced labourer.

41. With reference to the guilds (Shreni) of ancient India that played a very important role in the country's economy, which of the following statements is/are correct? [2012]

- 1) Every guild was registered with the central authority of the State and the king was the chief administrative authority on them.
- 2) The wages, rules of work, standards and prices were fixed by the guild.
- 3) The guild had judicial powers over its own members.

Choose the correct option:

- a) 1 & 2 Only
- b) 3 Only
- c) 2 & 3 Only
- d) 1, 2, & 3

42. Consider the following statements: [2004]

1) The Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien attended the fourth Great Buddhist Council held by Kanishka.

2) The Chinese pilgrim Huan-Tsang met Harsha and found him to be antagonistic to Buddhism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

43. Assertion (A): The origin of the feudal system in ancient India can be traced to military campaigns. [2000]

Reason (R): There was considerable expansion of the feudal system during the Gupta period.

- a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
- b) Both A and R are true, but R is not a correct explanation of A
- c) A is true, but R is false
- d) A is false, but R is true

44. Which one of the following ports handled the north Indian trade during the Gupta period? [1999]

- a) Tamralipti
- b) Broach
- c) Kalyan
- d) Cambray

45. The silver coins issued by the Guptas were called: [1997]

- a) Rupaka
- b) Karshapana
- c) Dinara
- d) Pana

46. Who among the following is known for his work on medicine during the Gupta period? [1996]

- a) Saumilla
- b) Sudraka
- c) Shaunaka
- d) Susrutha

47. In Sanskrit plays written during the Gupta Period women and sudras speak: [1995]

- a) Sanskrit
- b) Prakrit
- c) Pali
- d) Sauraseni

ERA OF KING HARSHA

48. From the decline of Guptas until the rise of Harshavardhana in the early seventh century, which of the following kingdoms were holding power in Northern India? [2021]

- 1) The Guptas of Magadha
- 2) The Paramaras of Malwa
- 3) The Pushyabhutis of Thanesar
- 4) The Maukharis of Kanauj
- 5) The Yadavas of Devagiri
- 6) The Maitrakas of Valabhi

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 1, 2 and 5
- b) 1, 3, 4 and 6
- c) 2, 3 and 4
- d) 5 and 6

49. Emperor Harsha's southward march was stopped on the Narmada river by: [2003]

- a) Pulakesin I
- b) Pulakesin II
- c) Vikramaditya I
- d) Vikramaditya II

50. Assertion (A): Harshavardhana convened the Prayag Assembly. [2001]

Reason (R): He wanted to popularise only the Mahayana form of Buddhism.

- a) Both A and R are individually true, and R is the correct explanation of A
 - b) Both A and R are individually true, but R is NOT a correct explanation of A
 - c) A is true, but R is false
 - d) A is false, but R is true
- 9) History of South India

51. Who among the following led a successful military campaign against the kingdom of Srivijaya, the powerful maritime State, which ruled the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java and the neighbouring islands? [2025]

- a) Amoghavarsha (Rashtrakuta)
- b) Prataparudra (Kakatiya)

- c) Rajendra I (Chola)
- d) Vishnuvardhana (Hoysala)

52. Who among the following rulers in ancient India had assumed the titles 'Mattavilasa', 'Vichitrachitta' and 'Gunabhara'? [2025]

- a) Mahendravarman I
- b) Simhavisnu
- c) Narasimhavarman I
- d) Simhavarman

53. In the context of the history of India, consider the following pairs: [2016]

Term: Description

- 1) Eripatti: Land, revenue from which was set apart for the maintenance of the village tank
- 2) Taniyurs: Villages donated to a single Brahmin or a group of Brahmins
- 3) Ghatikas: Colleges generally attached to the temples

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 3 only
- c) 2 and 3
- d) 1 and 3

54. India maintained its early cultural contacts and trade links with southeast Asia across the bay of Bengal. For this pre-eminence of the early maritime history of the Bay of Bengal, which of the following could be the most convincing explanation/explanations? [2011]

- a) As compared to other countries, India had better ship-building technology in ancient and medieval times.
- b) The rulers of southern India always patronised traders, Brahmin priests and Buddhist monks in this context.
- c) Monsoon winds across the bay of Bengal facilitated sea voyages.
- d) Both (a) and b) are convincing explanations in this context.

55. Consider the following statements: [2003]

- 1) The Cholas defeated Pandya and Chera rulers and established their domination

IYACHAMY ACADEMY

over peninsular India in early medieval times.

- 2) The Cholas sent an expedition against the Sailendra empire of SouthEast Asia and conquered some of the areas.

Which of these statements is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

56. Which one of the Chola kings conquered Ceylon? [2001]

- a) Aditya I
- b) Rajaraja I
- c) Rajendra
- d) Vijayalaya

57. One consistent feature found in the history of southern India was the growth of small regional kingdoms rather than large empires because of: [1999]

- a) The absence of minerals like iron
- b) Too many divisions in the social structure
- c) The absence of vast areas of fertile land
- d) The scarcity of manpower

58. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer: [1997]

List I – List II

- I. Gupta – A) Badami
- II. Chandella – B) Panamalai
- III. Chalukya – C) Khajuraho
- IV. Pallava – D) Deogarh

Codes:

- a) I-D, II-C, III-A, IV-B
- b) I-D, II-B, III-C, IV-A
- c) I-B, II-C, III-D, IV-A
- d) I-C, II-D, III-A, IV-B

59. Which one of the following was a corporation of merchants in ancient India? [1997]

- a) Chaturvedimangalam
- b) Parishad
- c) Ashtadikgaja
- d) Manigrama

POST HARSHA PERIOD

60. Consider the following pairs: [2022]

King – Dynasty

- 1) Nannuka – Chandela
- 2) Jayashakti – Paramara
- 3) Nagabhata II – Gurjara-Pratihara
- 4) Bhoja – Rashtrakuta

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a) Only one pair
- b) Only two pairs
- c) Only three pairs
- d) All four pairs

61. Consider the following events in the history of India: [2020]

- 1) Rise of Pratiharas under King Bhoja
- 2) Establishment of Pallava power under Mahendravarman-I
- 3) Establishment of Chola power by Parantaka-I
- 4) Pala dynasty founded by Gopala

What is the correct chronological order of the above events, starting from the earliest time?

- a) 2 – 1 – 4 – 3
- b) 3 – 1 – 4 – 2
- c) 2 – 4 – 1 – 3
- d) 3 – 4 – 1 – 2

62. Which of the following phrases defines the nature of the 'Hundi' generally referred to in the sources of the post-Harsha period? [2020]

- a) An advisory issued by the king to his subordinates
- b) A diary to be maintained for daily accounts
- c) A bill of exchange
- d) An order from the feudal lord to his subordinates

63. Consider the following statements: [2006]

- 1) The Ikshvaku rulers of southern India were antagonistic towards Buddhism.
- 2) The Pala rulers of Eastern India were patrons of Buddhism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2