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HISTORY

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

History - IAS Mains Q & A - revised and updated edition (2022) covers topic-wise solution to previous years' papers as per the latest syllabus.

Answer writing in this Book: We have put forth answers to each question as per the demand of the question. We have adopted an elaborate approach while writing these answers to arm you with relevant knowledge related to all aspects of a particular topic. In most of the answers, we have provided additional information, not necessarily adhering to the prescribed word limit but covering all dimensions to that question. This will enrich you with in-depth knowledge on that topic and help in writing better answers in future.

How to use this Book: This book will assist you in answer writing practice in two ways - use this book as a source of reference for the topics and write answers in your own unique way or alternatively, you may write previous years' answers and compare them with the standard answers provided in this book.

Importance of History as an Optional: History is a popular and very important subject in the UPSC scheme of things because it is included in the IAS Prelims exam and in IAS Mains General Studies papers as well. So you can better use your time by simultaneously preparing for Optional and GS Papers. Topics in History will also be helpful in Essay papers.

Optional subjects have become the deciding factor in getting an interview call. Though UPSC has introduced four GS papers to give a level playing field to all, the dynamic and unpredictable questions of GS papers defeated the purpose and made Optional paper the magic wand. The toppers' score also tells it loudly that optional subjects play a defining role in determining the selection of the candidates.

So, overall this book is an ideal companion for you going to appear for the Mains examination. To help the aspirants to get acclimated with the pattern and trend of the exam, this book is a valuable gift to our readers.

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MAP SECTION

Q. Identify the following places marked on the map and write a short note of about 30 words on each of them. Locational hints for each of the places marked on the map are given below seriatim: (CSE 2021)

- (i) Paleolithic site
- (ii) Mesolithic site
- (iii) Neolithic site
- (iv) Neolithic-Chalcolithic site
- (v) Harappan site
- (vi) Proto-historic and historic site
- (vii) Inscription site
- (viii) Jain monastic site
- (ix) Coin hoard
- (x) Paleolithic site
- (xi) Terracotta site
- (xii) Rock-cut caves
- (xiii) Ancient learning centre
- (xiv) Political and cultural centre
- (xv) Buddhist site
- (xvi) Ancient port
- (xvii) Early historic site
- (xviii) Ivory hoard
- (xix) Buddhist monastic centre
- (xx) Temple complex

Ans: (i) **Attirampakkam:** It is a paleolithic site situated in northwest of Chennai.

- From this site oldest stone-age tools were discovered.
- Set of animal footprint also discovered from this site.
- Animal fossil teeth also found.
- Acheulean artifacts mainly hand axes, made of quartzite stone have been found along with cleavers and small flakes.

(ii) **Langhnaj:** Situated in northern Gujarat.

- Microlith tools like blade, triangles, crescents, scrapers, and burins were found here.
- Animal bones of both wild and domesticated animals have been found here.
- Evidence of pottery at Mesolithic level found here.

(iii) **Daojali Hading:** It is located in North Cachar Hills of Assam.

- Hand-made pottery as well as plain red pottery was found here.
- Tools like chisels, querns, mullers, etc. found here.
- Evidence of domestication of animals and practice of agriculture activities.
- Also, few pieces of worked bone found here.

(iv) **Mehergarh:** Located in Balochistan.

- Earliest evidence of agriculture like wheat and barley.
- Domestication of animal.
- Settlement like mud brick house also found.
- People here also involved in trade and craft production like beads.
- Various stone tools like axe, chisels, querns, etc. were found here.

(v) **Manda:** Located in Jammu and Kashmir.

- It is the northern-most sites of Indus Valley Civilization.
- Harappan artifacts pottery, potsherds bearing, terracotta was found here.

(vi) **Ropar:** Located on the banks of Sutlej river.

- Here, a steatite seal in Indus script was used for authentication of trading goods.
- Copper implements, terracotta beads and bangles, Harappan pottery, etc. were found here.
- Dead body were buried with head to the north

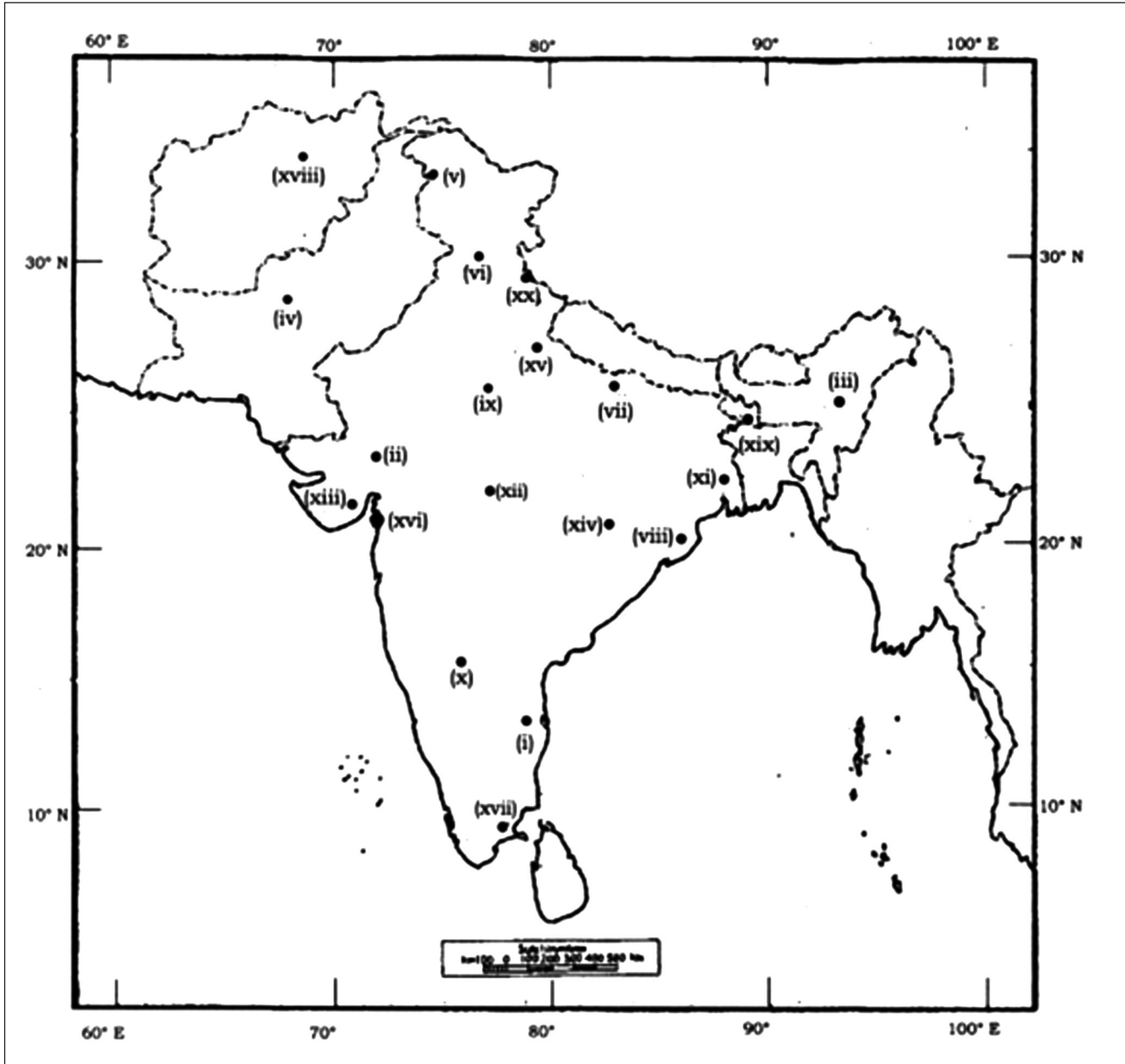
(vii) **Sohgaura:** It is a village on the banks of the Rapti River, about 20 km south-east of Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

- Copper plate inscription found here - written in Prakrit and in the Brahmi script.
- Ashokan inscription of famine also found.

(viii) **Udayagiri-Kandhagiri Caves:** These caves were carved out during the reign of king Kharavela for the Jaina monks.

- Udayagiri have 18 caves while Khandagiri have 15 caves. The most important of them are Ranigumpha and Hathigumpha.

(ix) **Bayana:** Located in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan, from this site hoard of Gupta coins were found.



(x) **Hunsgi:** Situated in the Gulbarga district of Karnataka on the bank of river Hungsi.

- Lower Paleolithic tools made up of stones like limestone, sandstone, quartzite, etc. were found here.
- It was also the factory site.
- At some sites, large numbers of the tools, used for all sorts of activities, were found, suggesting that these were probably habitation-cum factory sites.

(xi) **Chandraketugarh:** It is located in 24 Parganas district, West Bengal.

- Archeological evidences of NBPW, ring wells, terracotta beads, red and black ware are found here.
- It was an important terracotta object manufacturing site.

(xii) **Adamgarh:** Situated in northern Narmada river in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh.

- The place is famous for prehistoric rock shelter and painting done in red and white ware.
- Stone Age artifact, lower paleolithic and Mesolithic implements have been excavated here.
- Evidence of earliest excavation of the domestication of animal found here.

(xiii) **Vallabhi:** Vallabhi is an ancient city located in the Saurashtra peninsula of Gujarat, near Bhavnagar.

- It was an important center of Buddhist learning and championed the cause of Hinayana Buddhism.
- It was an important center for trade and commerce.
- It was the capital of Maitraka Empire.

7

PERIOD OF MAHAJANAPADAS

Q. "The political and economic needs of ruler, combined with economic and status needs of merchant class, together provide the receptive cultural milieu in which Buddhism flourished". Comment (CSE 2021)

Ans: Religions developed against the backdrop of certain political systems, political philosophy, economic and social order, and practising of particular religious activities in ancient India. Buddhism created the vision of an alternative society, the possibility of organising society on different principles from the hierarchical, and in egalitarian ideology and practices that had begun to gain ground. Buddhism represented the most serious and most comprehensive attempt to analyse the rapidly changing society in which it originated and to provide an enduring social philosophy for mankind.

The rise of a new wealthy class in villages and towns caused economic inequalities which further liquidated the tribal ideas of kingship. Many tribes of the Vedic period were affected by the concentration of private property in the hands of a few persons. This naturally tended to strengthen the fourfold division of society.

In the country side a new social group was coming to the forefront by virtue of its wealth. The greater part of land came to be owned by the Gahapati. The emergence of Gahapati from the Vedic householder to a comparatively wealthy person within society happened.

During the starting period of second urbanization which witnessed huge expansion in trade and commerce, thus Buddhism adopted the feasible attitude towards this aspect which was quite tough in Brahmanical orthodoxy. Trade and use of money gave rise to money lending and usury but the Dharmasastra did not favour these new practices. On the other hand, there are repeated references to debtor, creditor, debt and interest in the Pali texts. Money lending was not condemned. However, there was an emphasis on clearing of debts which supposedly made a person happy.

Earlier lawgivers laid down principles that Brahmans should not accept food from the person who charged interest.

The urban setting led to emergence of eating houses, prostitutes which did not find favour with

the Brahmanical texts. Apastamba lays down that the brahmanas should not eat food prepared in shops. But Buddhist texts do not exhibit such an attitude.

Another significant development in urban social life was the growth of prostitution. Promoted by this, Bimbisara appointed a courtesan for the capital of Rajagariha but the Brahminical injunction condemn this.

According to Baudhayana, food offered by a prostitute or an unchaste woman is prohibited.

In contrast the Buddha did not believe in any such injunctions. Women were admitted in the Buddhist order and there was no prohibition on prostitutes joining the Sangha.

The newly developed feature of the social and economic feature of life of the people did not fit in the Vedic ritualism and animal sacrifice. The conflict between the Vedic religious practices and the aspiration of the rising social group led to the search of new religion and philosophical ideas which would fit the basic change of the material life of the people.

Q. A number of scholars considered Alexander as 'The Great', although long term impacts of Alexander's invasion on India need to be re-evaluated. Comment. (CSE, 2020)

Ans: Alexander the Great, also known as Alexander III was king of Macedonia (336–323 BCE), who overthrew the Persian empire, carried Macedonian arms to India, and laid the foundations for the Hellenistic world of territorial kingdoms. Already in his lifetime the subject of fabulous stories, he later became the hero of a full-scale legend bearing only the sketchiest resemblance to his historical career.

Alexander's short reign marks a decisive moment in the history of Europe and Asia. His expedition and his own personal interest in scientific investigation brought many advances in the knowledge of geography and natural history.

His career led to the moving of the great centres of civilization eastward and initiated the new age of the Greek territorial monarchies; it spread Hellenism in a vast colonizing wave throughout the Middle East and created, if not politically at least economically and

culturally, a single world stretching from Gibraltar to the Punjab, open to trade and social intercourse and with a considerable overlay of common civilization and the Greek koine as a lingua franca. It is not untrue to say that the Roman Empire, the spread of Christianity as a world religion, and the long centuries of Byzantium were all in some degree the fruits of Alexander's achievement.

Invasion on India and Effects

In 326 BC, Alexander invaded India, after crossing the river Indus he advanced towards Taxila. He then challenged king Porus, ruler of the kingdom between the rivers - Jhelum and Chenab. Some historians have concluded that the Indians were defeated in the fierce battle, even though they fought with elephants, which the Macedonians had never seen before.

- The invasion by Alexander established a direct link between India and the European continent. It also led to the establishment of four different trade routes by land and sea.
- Alexander's historians maintained precise records of his campaigns and their dates. These helped Indian historians in fixing exact dates for later events and reconstructed the history of India in a chronological fashion.
- The cultural contact with the Greeks led to the development of the distinct Indo-Greek school of art called the Gandhara School of Art.
- Alexander's invasion destroyed the power of the small north-western states. This enabled Chandragupta Maurya to expand his territories in this region and ultimately helped in the process of the political unification of India under the Mauryas.

Re-evaluation of Alexander

We know that Alexander was a powerful military leader. He led important campaigns and expanded his empire from Greece to Persia, Babylon, Egypt and beyond, taking advantage of local political contexts as he conquered new territory. It's also important to remember that history is not comprised simply of the stories of great men. Alexander the Great's empire developed not only because of his military prowess but also because of his father's success, which took advantage of an unstable political context in Greece. Alexander's own conquests happened in very specific political contexts as well, which facilitated his ability to expand his empire rapidly and with little resistance.

Surprisingly, Alexander himself did not issue coins with his own image; his successors did. The reason is that Alexander the Great was—and still is—a powerful symbol of power, military genius, and conquest, whether or not this description of him is historically accurate. His image, name, and legendary power remained resonant—and politically visible—long after his death.

So, telling the history of Alexander, pulling apart the myths and legends and reconstructing an accurate narrative is a difficult task.

But it's an important one, because the history of Alexander is a history of the Greek empire, which had a massive influence on vast regions stretching across Europe, Asia, and Africa.

We have ancient narratives of Alexander's life, written between 30 BCE and the third century CE—hundreds of years after his death. The earliest known account is by the Greek historian Diodorus, but we also have histories written by other historians, including Roman historians; these writers are called the Alexander historians. They interpreted written accounts from shortly after Alexander's death, penned by those who fought alongside Alexander on his campaigns.

It's unclear how reliable these narratives are, however, as they are mingled with the propaganda of various Greek and Roman states, who were ruled by emperors that used Alexander's image to cement their own power. In order to get a fuller picture, historians interpret sources from other regions of Alexander the Great's empire, like Babylon. On one Babylonian tablet, for example, Alexander's death is recorded with an inscription in Akkadian that reads "on the 29th day, the king died."

Alexander definitely was not a gentle or large hearted king. Egoistical, shrewd, ruthless and a brilliant military leader like many great warriors. Alexander was also known as the Accursed, the Conqueror of the World, the Philosopher-King, and the Mad-Man of Macedonia, among others names. It is recorded that Alexander had slaughtered a large portion of the population of the Phoenician city of Tyre (in what is now Lebanon) after that city fell to his forces in 332 BC.

Ultimately, Alexander's reign was very short—only about a decade. Perhaps the greatest effect of his empire was the spread of Greek culture through the successor empires that long outlasted Alexander's rule.

Q. Give an account of gana-sanghas (non-monarchical state systems)? Why did they decline? (CSE, 2018)

Ans: According to nationalist historians like R.S.Sharma, ancient Indian republics or Gana-Sanghas were an ideal republican form of governance practiced in ancient India akin to the Greek or Roman systems of governance.

However, on closer analysis, it is seen that though the Gana-Sangha system was not a monarchy like a lot of its neighbours, it was more of an oligarchy (according to historian Upinder Singh) rather than a republic.

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PAPER-II

EUROPEAN PENETRATION INTO INDIA

Q. "It was Dupleix who had first showed the way of intervening in disputes of the Indian rulers and thereby acquiring political control over vast territories – a technique which was later perfected by the English East India Company." Elaborate. (CSE, 2020)

Ans: Dupleix was an influential governor-general (1742-1754) of the French East India Company during his three decades in India. He expanded the commercial, political, and military operations of the French East India Company, and his administration marked the apex of French colonial ambitions in India. His accumulation of an enormous personal fortune led to suspicions about his integrity and, eventually, his recall to France.

Dupleix's Techniques with Indian Rulers

Dupleix successfully protected French interests from threats from local authorities such as the Marathas, the Nawabs of Arcot, and Nizams of Hyderabad. His lifestyle and methods defined the paradigm of the "Nabob Game". He also led the French in a war with the British East India Company and prevailed on the ground at first. The high point occurred in 1746, when French forces captured nearby Madras (Chennai) and held it until the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle restored it in 1748. Many of Dupleix's practices were imitated by the British East India Company, most notably by Robert Clive.

Perfection by English East India Company

A subsidiary alliance, in South Asian history, was a tributary alliance between an Indian state and a European East India Company. The system of subsidiary alliances was pioneered by the French East India Company Governor Joseph François Dupleix, who in the late 1740s established treaties with the Nizam of Hyderabad and other Indian princes in the Carnatic.

The method was subsequently adopted by the British East India Company, with Robert Clive negotiating a series of conditions with Mir Jafar following his victory in the 1757 Battle of Plassey, and subsequently those in the 1765 Treaty of Allahabad, as a result of the Company's success in the 1764 Battle of Buxar.

A successor of Clive, Richard Wellesley initially took a non-interventionist policy towards the various Indian states which were allied to the British East India Company, but later adopted, and refined the

policy of forming subsidiary alliances. In a Subsidiary Alliance, princely rulers were forbidden from making any negotiations and treaty with any other Indian ruler without first making inquiries to Company officials. They were also forbidden from maintaining any standing armies. They were instead to be protected by the troops of the European companies, paying for their upkeep.

By the late 18th century, the power of the Maratha Empire had weakened and the Indian subcontinent was left with a great number of states, most small and weak. Many rulers accepted the offer of protection by Wellesley, as it gave them security against attack by their neighbors.

Conclusion

The principal protagonist François Joseph Dupleix was the architect who prepared the blueprint for a potential French empire in India. He was, par excellence, who rose within its ranks serving first in the Advisory Council of the Company in Pondicherry, then as the sectional head in Chandernagore before becoming the Governor of Pondicherry heading the French Government in India. It is an irony of fate that his downfall which is symbolized by his eventual recall to France by the French East India Company was caused not by his foes in India but by clever machinations by the British, by his rivals in France and, most importantly, by the stockholders of the French East India Company who were dissatisfied with the financial statements of the Company. With the departure of Dupleix began the downfall of the stronghold of the French epitomized by the singular personality of the latter. Dupleix was also the first to formulate a theory which would influence all of the 19th century, and which would be adopted a few years later by his enemy Robert Clive with, as we know, what success. This policy, conceived of course in the interests of Europeans and which brought nothing to the exploited poor, had nevertheless allowed the emergence, in Pondicherry, of a prosperous middle class, artisans, businessmen and intermediaries, undoubtedly for the most part banias.

Dupleix's report could have been of interest to the Company. But it was too late.

Q. Do you subscribe to the view that the Anglo-French tussle in Carnatic demonstrated the internal decay of the provincial chieftains of South India? (CSE, 2019)

Ans: Though the British and the French came to India for trading purposes, they were ultimately drawn into the politics of India. Both had vision of establishing political power over the region. The Carnatic wars, which were the result of internal conflicts of the native rulers of Hyderabad and Carnatic in the first Carnatic War; the dynastic dispute in the second and the direct Anglo-French confrontation over St. David Fort, provided this opportunity. The first Carnatic War (the Battle of St. Thome) was fought between the French forces and the forces of Anwar-ud-din, the Nawab of Carnatic, to whom the English appealed for help. The small French army defeated the huge Indian army, which was an eye opener for the native rulers about the military strength of the Europeans.

Similarly, the accession dispute between, Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib in the Deccan and Carnatic on the one hand and Nasir Jang and Anwar-ud-din on the other hand over Carnatic provided the French and English another opportunity to increase their political influences. Both the parties asked for French and English help which made evident that the countenance of Indian authority was no longer necessary for European success; rather Indian authority itself was becoming dependent on European support. Muhammad Ali in the Carnatic and Salabat Jang in Hyderabad became clients rather than patrons.

The Third Carnatic War (the Battle of Wandiwash) proved more decisive as it exposed the internal decay of the Southern native powers. The French political influence completely disappeared after the war and post Treaty of Paris, the English became the supreme European power in the Indian subcontinent and were ready to take over the rule of the entire country. Significantly, in the Battle of Wandiwash (1760), natives served in both the armies as sepoys. Thus, irrespective of which side won, there was inevitability about the fall of India to European invaders. The lack of sensitivity to geopolitics of the day as well as a lack of foresight on the part of native rulers thus, demonstrated the internal decay of the provincial chieftains of the South India.

Q. Comment on the French ambition of building a territorial empire in India. (CSE, 2016)

Ans: The French were late by six decades in India. As with other European colonists — British and the Dutch, the French too started their colonisation through commercial activities. The first French factory in India was established at Surat in 1668 and later one at Machillipatnam.

The French settlement in India began in 1673 with the purchase of land at Chandernagore from the Mughal Governor of Bengal. The next year they acquired Pondicherry from the Sultan of Bijapur. Both became the centres of maritime commercial activities of the French in India. Like the British, the French decided to extend their

area of influence taking advantage of mutual discord among Indian rulers. For this, they locked horns with the British to assert their economic and political fortunes in India. Joseph Francois Dupleix, who was initially appointed as Intendent of Chandernagore in 1731, sowed the seeds of colonisation.

Soon after his arrival in 1741, the most famous governor of French India, Joseph François Dupleix, began to cherish the ambition of a French territorial empire in India in spite of the pronounced uninterested attitude of his distant superiors and of the French government, which didn't want to provoke the British. Dupleix's ambition clashed with British interests in India and a period of military skirmishes and political intrigues began and continued even in rare periods when France and Great Britain were officially at peace. Under the command of the Marquis de Bussy-Castelnau, Dupleix's army successfully controlled the area between Hyderabad and Cape Comorin. But then Robert Clive arrived in India in 1744, a British officer who dashed the hopes of Dupleix to create a French empire India.

After a defeat and failed peace talks, Dupleix was summarily dismissed and recalled to France in 1754.

In spite of a treaty between the British and French agreeing not to interfere in regional Indian affairs, their colonial intrigues continued. The French expanded their influence at the court of the Nawab of Bengal and increased their trading activity in Bengal. In 1756, the French encouraged the Nawab (Siraj ud-Daulah) to attack and take the British Fort William in Calcutta. This led to the Battle of Plassey in 1757, where the British decisively defeated the Nawab and his French allies, resulting in the extension of British power over the entire province of Bengal.

Subsequently, France sent Lally-Tollendal to recover the lost French possessions and drive the British out of India. Lally arrived in Pondichéry in 1758, had some initial success and razed Fort St. David in Cuddalore District to the ground in 1758, but strategic mistakes by Lally led to the loss of the Hyderabad region, the Battle of Wandiwash, and the siege of Pondicherry in 1760. In 1761, the British razed Pondichéry to the ground in revenge for the French depredations; it lay in ruins for four years. The French lost their hold in India too.

Q. "Plassey did not complete the British conquest of India. Had the English been convincingly defeated in any subsequent battle in India, then (the battle of) Plassey would have remained as a minor episode in the history of India." (CSE, 2014)

Ans. The battle of Plassey was a conspiracy of the British. Through that, the British wanted to keep the Nawab as figurehead and they wanted to hold the real power.

SOCIAL & RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS IN BENGAL & OTHER AREAS

Q. "In the initial stages, when Indian nationalism was immature, just sprouting, it found expression in many liberal religio-reform movements." (CSE-2020)

Ans: Nationalism is an idea and movement that holds that the nation should be congruent with the state. As a movement, nationalism tends to promote the interests of a particular nation (as in a group of people), especially with the aim of gaining and maintaining the nation's sovereignty (self-governance) over its homeland. Nationalism holds that each nation should govern itself, free from outside interference (self-determination), that a nation is a natural and ideal basis for a polity and that the nation is the only rightful source of political power (popular sovereignty). It further aims to build and maintain a single national identity, based on shared social characteristics of culture, ethnicity, geographic location, language, politics (or the government), religion, traditions and belief in a shared singular history, and to promote national unity or solidarity.

Nationalism seeks to preserve and foster a nation's traditional cultures and cultural revivals have been associated with nationalist movements. It also encourages pride in national achievements and is closely linked to patriotism. Nationalism can be combined with diverse political goals and ideologies such as conservatism (national conservatism) or socialism (left-wing nationalism).

Stages of Indian Nationalism

The Indian national movement was undoubtedly one of the biggest mass movements of modern societies has ever seen. It was also popular and multi-class movement. It was basically the result of a fundamental contradiction between the interest of the Indian people and that of British colonialism. The Indian people were able to see that India was regressing economically and undergoing a process of underdevelopment. This anti-colonial ideology and critique of colonialism was disseminated during the mass phase of the movement. The Indian National Congress which emerged in 1885 championed the cause of Indian people.

It derived its entire strength, especially after 1918 from the militancy and self-sacrificing spirit of the masses. Satyagraha as a form of struggle was based on the active participation of the people and on the sympathy and support of the non-participating millions.

The 'non-cooperation' movement, the 'civil disobedience' movement and the 'Quit India' movement were the reflection of the popularity of the Congress. The Muslim League which formed in 1906 gradually widened its base. The move towards Pakistan became inevitable when Jinnah and the Muslim League came with the theory that Hindu and Muslim were two nations which must have separate homeland and put forward the demand for Pakistan. So, on 15th August 1947, a hard-earned, prized freedom were won after long, glorious years of struggle but a bloody, tragic partition rent asunder the fabric of the emerging free nation.

Contribution of Liberal Religio-Reform Movement in Indian Nationalism

Religious perspective was universalistic. Raja Ram Mohan Roy considered different religion as national embodiments of universal theism. The Brahmo Samaj was initially conceived by him as a universalist church. He was a defender of the basic and universal principles of all religions - the monotheism of the Vedas and the Unitarianism of Christianity - and at the same time attacked polytheism of Hinduism and the trinitarianism of Christianity. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan echoed the same idea: all prophets had the same din (faith) and every country and nation had different prophets. This perspective found clearer articulation in Keshub Chandra Sen's ideas saying that our position is not that truths are to be found in all religions, but all established religions of the world are true. He also gave expression to the social implication of this universalist perspective saying that whosoever worships the True God daily must learn to recognize all his fellow countrymen as brethren. Caste would vanish in such a state of a society.

Conclusion

The socio religious reform movement, as a whole, was against backward element of traditional culture in terms of both religious and social evils.

The focus was on regeneration of traditional institutions including medicine, education, and philosophy and so on. There were differences in methods of those reform movements but all of them were concerned with the regeneration of society through social and educational reforms. In terms of their limitations, it can be said that these movements were not able to reach vast masses of peasantry and urban poor and there was inadequate focus on composite culture and heritage of masses including music, art, architecture and literature, and science and technological achievement. Each of these reform movements was confined, by and large, to a region or other and also was confined to a particular caste and religion. In a nutshell, it can be argued that in the evolution of modern India, the reform movements have made very significant contribution. They stood for the democratization of the society, removal of superstitions and decadent customs, spread of enlightenment and development of a rational and modern outlook. This led to the national awakening in India.

Q. "In the early twentieth century, there came into existence a number of women's organisations, which operated more actively in the public arena and focused more directly on women's political and legal rights."

(CSE-2020)

Ans: In early 20th Century (i.e. 1900 to 1930) women experienced in organizing and working in local women's associations, and convinced that women should take the leadership into their own hands, started provincial and national women's association. The Women's India Association (WIA) was formed in 1917 in Madras. The WIA was a vigorous organization that undertook to widen its scope of activities beyond fund-raising, social service and women's education. It sought to influence government policy on equal rights for women in some areas and was involved with the issues of suffrage, education and social reform.

Role of Women's Organisations during Early 20th Century

The National Council of Women in India (NCWI) was formed in 1925, and the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) in 1927. The AIWC, originally convened only to discuss women's education, became a permanent body. Its emphasis was on unity and women's upliftment through education, and social and legal reform. It also emphasized women's contribution to national development. By 1932, however, the AIWC had become involved with women's political rights and all questions which affected women and children as well as with social problems such as untouchability.

However, with the passage of time the two main actors in the women's movement, the WIA and the AIWC, were swept away by a variety of influences. The women's question had gradually evolved from the perspective of uplift within the traditional framework to that of women's equality.

But involvement in the struggle for freedom led the women's movement into dilemmas and contradictions; it was caught between the middle class character of its membership and the increasing radicalism within the national movement with its transformation into a mass movement from the 1920s onwards.

Conclusion

The early years of the 20th century marked two important landmarks in the history of the Indian women's movement:

- (i) the birth of nationwide women's organizations, and
- (ii) the beginning of women's participation in the national movement.

Certain core ideas surface repeatedly in the proceedings of women's organizations such as the All-India Muslim Ladies' Conference (Anjuman) 1914, the Women's India Association (WIA) 1917, the National Council of Women in India (NCWI) 1925, and the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) 1926.

A key idea was a belief that advancement of a society hinges on the progress of women. To resist the cultural onslaughts of the West and articulate one's own cultural identity it became all the more important to project an image of womanhood, which would symbolize both the strength and distinctiveness of Indian tradition.

Q. "Two important intellectual criteria which informed the reform movements were rationalism and religious universalism. Critically Examine. (CSE, 2019)"

Ans: The reform movements of the 19th century are characterised as the Indian Renaissance. The basic emphasis of the socio-religious reform movements was on Secularism, Humanism, Rationalism and Religious Universalism. Among these, Rationalism and Religious Universalism were two important criteria which informed the reform movements.

The reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, etc. evaluated everything on the basis of logic and reasoning.

Thus, it was the effect of principle of Rationalism that child marriage, for instance, was opposed not only on moral grounds but also based on biological studies which highlighted its adverse effect on the girl.