

GS Comprehensive Test (PAPER – 1)

1. “Prehistoric rock art of India represents socio-cultural milieu of early man.” – Elucidate.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

The candidate is expected to highlight (a) hunting and gathering activities of pre-historic men, (b) the emergence of family organisation; (c) magico-ritual activities.

- (a) The scenes depict such animals as boar, bison, deer etc. either being chased or hunted with large bow and barbed arrows or with long barbed spear of stone. Besides hunting big animals, the daily activities of the people included fishing, honey collection, fruit gathering and mouse trapping.
- (b) The paintings clearly indicate that in Mesolithic period, man was marching ahead towards organised family life. It can be inferred from a painting depicting two women with a small child playing close by. There is also a mourning scene around a dead child.
- (c) It is believed that paintings probably had magico-religious significance. It is suggested by a painting of masked dancers along with animals. Scenes of men and women dancing together either arm in arm or as a group also gives the same indication.

The technique of paintings was not so complicated. The colours used by them were derived from the local minerals such as hematite, lime, etc. It is suggested that the earliest phase (upper Palaeolithic) were represented by linear representation of animals with stick-like human figures, whereas later (Mesolithic period) figures became more stylised with decoration on the body and, in addition to animals, human fights and hunting scene become more prominent.

(227 words)

2. Analyse the chief features of stupa architecture and highlight the significance of Sanchi and Bharhut stupas.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

The Stupas represent the ancient symbols of Buddha worship and are the earliest specimens of Buddhism art and architecture. There are different type of Stupas – Saririka, Paribhogika and Uddesika.

Architecture of stupas includes – base, drum, medhi (terrace) harmika, a pillar bearing Chhatra (umbrella), a railing called Vedika and gateways called Torana.

Sanchi and Bharhut stupas were the earliest of the stupa built by Asoka. These were low circular brick mounds surrounded by a wooden railing with no decoration or carvings. But in later Sunga-Satavahana times, these were converted into big monuments covered with stone and nicely carved gateways.

An important feature of these later stupas is that, unlike the royal patronage during the Mauryan times, these were renovated and sculptured with the help of donations received from pilgrims coming from as distant areas as Patliputra, Kaushambi, Nasik, Ujjain etc. The main architectural glory of Sanchi was the four ornamental gateways carved with symbols associated with the life of Buddha or the Jataka stories. At Bharhut, the important feature is the carved stone railings. These railings too have events of Buddha's life or Jatak stories. Besides this, they also contain numerous figures of Yaksas and Yakshis (protector of natural

forces), a feature that became an important part in later Buddhist art. There is also a sculpture of Lakshmi, which appears to be the earliest image of the Goddess. The compositions at Bharhut are overlapping and crowded but they represent the earliest incidence of narrative art.

(245 words)

3. Discuss the important dance forms of south India and specify the different characteristics of Bharatanatyam and Kathakali dances.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answers:

Indian dances evolved primarily as a part of religious rituals at the temples and involved story telling mainly about gods and goddess, drawn on epics and purana. Expression is the key note of every dance form.

Candidate is expected write about 30-35 words on each of the important dance forms of south India, viz. Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Mohiniattam, Kuchipudi and Yaksagana (last one is not included in list of 8 classical dances of India, but is an important dance.

Difference between Kathakali and Bharatanatyam

In Bharatanatyam, a solo female dancer presents a number of items based on Bhakti Sringar (Divine love) in particular pattern from Alarippu (invocation) to thillana (fast dance). Kathakali on the other hand, is a dance-cum-drama, having predominantly a male dancer.

Costumes of two dance forms also differ. Bharatanatyam dancer's costume is both grand and elegant will radiant jewellery. Heavy hair make up gives special appearance to the dancer. Whereas the Kathakali dancer's dress is noted for towering head gear and wide skirt. Finally, while Bharatanatyam is characterised more by hip movements and bent knee postures along with different mudras/gestures, Kathakali is marked by brisk and swift movements.

(190 words)

4. "Despite some weakness the socio-religious reform movement did pave the way for the national awakening of India." – Discuss.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

The socio-religious reform movement had remained confined to a narrow social base, as the reformist spirit appealed only to a small elite group, who were primarily the economic and cultural beneficiaries of colonial rule. In Bengal, the reform movement involved only a small number of western educated elite who were known by the general term bhadralok (gentlemen).

Reform in practice in any case affected a very small minority. The masses remained nearly untouched by the ideas of the intellectuals. Despite their best endeavours to appeal to the masses, their appeal for all practical purposes confined to the urban middle class particularly the educated sections.

Another limitation of these movements was that some of them had a tendency to look backward, appeal to past greatness and to rely on scriptural authority. These tended to go against the positive teachings of the reform movements themselves.

Contribution

- These movements attacked the caste system, untouchability and other social and legal inequalities.
- These movements were progressive in character for they sought reorganisation of society on democratic lines and on the basis of ideas of individual equality, social equality, enlightenment and reason.

Since many reform movements drew their inspiration from India's rich cultural heritage, these promoted pan-Indian feelings and spirit of nationalism.

(208 words)

5. 'The Ilbert Bill was the most extreme but by no means an isolated expression of white racism.' Critically analyse the statement.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

C.P. Ilbert was the law member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. At the insistence of the Viceroy (Ripon) Ilbert introduced a bill popularly known as the Ilbert Bill in the Legislative Council. The Bill sought to abolish at once and completely every judicial disqualification based merely on race distinctions. Till that time (1881) the provision was that Indian judges could not try Europeans in criminal cases. Ilbert Bill sought to give the Indian judges the same powers and rights as their European colleagues enjoyed. The Bill raised a storm of agitation among the members of the European community and Ripon had to modify it.

However, Ilbert Bill was not the only instance of white racism. Indians were also not given commissioned ranks in the army till late 19th century. In order to discourage Indians in the civil services maximum age for ICS exams was reduced from 21 to 19 years in 1877. The exam was still held in London. The nationalist leaders demanded increase of age and holding of simultaneous exam in India. Finally age was increased from 19 to 23 years in 1892. The GoI Act, 1919 provided for an exam for ICS to be held in India. The first such exam was held in India at Allahabad in 1922, even when Indians in bureaucracy were only 15% of the total strength.

(223 words)

6. Assess the contribution of the Moderates in exposing the "Drain of Wealth" by the British government.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

The most significant historical contribution of the moderates was that they offered an economic critique of colonialism. This economic nationalism became a major theme that developed further during the subsequent period of the nationalist movement and to a large extent influenced the economic policies of the Congress government in independent India.

The contribution of the following leaders is important in this context:

- (a) Dada Bhai Naoroji
- (b) M G Ranade
- (c) R C Dutt

(d) G Subramania Aiyar

- The main thrust of this economic nationalism was on Indian poverty created by the application of classical economic theory of free trade.
- They argued that the British rule had turned India into a supplier of raw materials and a consumer of manufactured goods from the mother country.
- India was reduced to the status of a dependent agrarian economy and a field for British capital investment. The key to India's development was industrialisation with Indian capital, while investment by foreign capital meant drainage of wealth through expatriation of profit. It was argued that direct drainage of wealth took place through payment of Home Charges, military charges and guaranteed interest payment on railway investments. On an average this amounted to at least half of the total revenue income of the British Indian government.
- High land revenue demand led to land alienation and impoverishment of the peasantry, while absence of protective tariff in the interests of British manufactures hindered industrialisation and destroyed the handicraft industry.

(243 words)

7. "Socialism was the core theme of the reforms done by Indira Gandhi." – Explain.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Indira Gandhi succeeded Lal Bahadur Shastri as Prime minister of India in 1966. J.L. Nehru respecting socialism and opted for 5 year plans on the pattern of U.S.S.R while Lal Bahadur Shastri also gave the slogan of 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' with objective to strengthen armed forces and peasantry.

As India was already suffering from poverty and food crisis so, Mrs. Gandhi after coming to the power came out with 10 point programme in 1967 on the ground of socialism. It included nationalization of Banks, nationalization of general Insurance, state trading in import and export trade, ceilings on urban property and income, public distribution of food grains, rapid implementation of land reforms, provisions of housing sites to the rural poor etc.

In 1969, she introduced MRTP (Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices) with the objective to end the dominance and monopoly of big business houses in trade and commerce and in 1970 she ended Privy Purses of princely states. In 1976, she went ahead with the grand 42nd amendment in which Fundamental Rights were indirectly emasculated by being made subordinate to an expanded version of Directive Principles of State Policy.

Lastly, she gave the slogan 'Garibi Hatao.' In this way she was committed to the cause of socialism i.e; bringing the underprivileged in the privileged class.

(216 words)

8. "Nehru laid down a strong foundation of Independent India." – Explain with examples.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

India became independent in 1947 and this infant country was facing troubles from all the sides like economic crisis, aggressive neighbours, communalism etc. In such circumstances

when Strachians (followers of John Strachey's view) were of the opinion that India will not survive as a nation, Nehru proved all of them wrong and gave a strong foundation of India.

In the field of economy he opted for 5 year plans giving priority to agriculture in 1st plan and industries in the 2nd plan. In a situation when zamindari had strong roots he went for supporting Bhoodan movement. In foreign policy he came out with NAM and Panchsheel which was to establish peace, stability and active role in world politics without being involved in cold war. He came out with Panchsheel Tribal Policy which talked about self empowerment through self-contribution. He efficiently and pragmatically handled Kashmir problem and also handled the two wars of 1948 & 1962. Irrespective of all odds India got acceptance in the world community which became evident by India's presence and behavior in Belgrade conference of 1961.

Though he did not get desired result everywhere like Bhoodan Movement failed to attract the zamindar class completely but they created a good base for Independent India.

(206 words)

9. "Russian Revolution proved to be the water divide in the world political order." – Discuss.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Russian revolution of 1917 was an epoch making event in history. For the first time in the history of the world labourers and workers got the power to decide their fate. This revolution was the victory of communism fulfilling the dream of prophet of Communism Karl Marx.

It proved to be the turning point in world history because it became inspiration for all the people suffering from capitalism and imperialism. It became a hope for colonial people and in a country like India Bhagat Singh declared that capitalism and imperialism were his enemies.

Communism and Socialism got promotion and the newly formed nations in Asia, Africa and South America like Vietnam, Cuba, Yugoslavia started giving preference to it. eg; Revolution in Cuba in 1959.

It became a big cause of fear for the proponents of capitalism and the fear rose to such a level that it gave rise to extreme ideological nationalism like Nazism and Fascism. Finally, it divided the world into two groups after 2nd world war leading to cold war from 1945-1991. So, Russian Revolution played an important role in raising the voice of workers and labourers and promoting communism and socialism.

(194 words)

10. "A total and unmitigated disaster." How far would you agree with this comment on the policies of Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist party during the period 1949-1960?

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Mao came into power in 1949 when China was devastated after the long civil war and the war with Japan. The railways, roadways, canals and dykes had been destroyed and there

were chronic food shortages. The industry was backward, agriculture was inefficient and incapable of feeding the poverty-stricken mass and inflation seemed out of control.

In such a scenario the steps Mao took were:

- (1) The Constitution of 1950 by which the whole system of governance was dominated by the Communist Party of China and only the party members could fight elections. This provided China with a strong and centralised type of government after a long time.
- (2) In the field of agriculture, China was transformed from a country of small, inefficient private farms into one of large co-operative farms. Under this, the land was taken away from the private owners and redistributed to Communist Party members by resorting to considerable violence, torture and even executions.
- (3) Industrial changes began with the government nationalising most businesses. China also adopted Five Year Plans concentrating on heavy industries based on iron and steel, and coal and chemicals.
- (4) The hundred flowers campaign was targeted to produce technicians and experts and lastly the Great Leap Forward promoted industry and agriculture simultaneously.
- (5) Finally Cultural Revolution i.e the attempt to keep the revolutions and the Great Leap on a pure Marxist-Leninist course.

But these attempts led to chaos and unrest as they were followed on the lines of strict discipline subsequently leading to a civil war situation once again.

(255 words)

11. "Stalin's power during the 1930's was based almost entirely on terror." – Discuss.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Stalin after coming to power with all his tricks and terror wanted to turn U.S.S.R into a great power. Stalin literally means man of steel. He wanted to achieve in USSR in 10 years what had happened in Rest of Europe in past 100 years, in the field of development.

In economic reforms he took drastic steps in agriculture and industrialization. The problems of agriculture were dealt with by the process known as 'collectivization'. The idea was that small farms and holdings belonging to the peasants should be merged to form large collective farms 'Kolkhoz' jointly owned by the peasants. The policy was launched in 1929 and had to be carried through by sheer brute force.

Five Year Plans were introduced for industries which proved to be a miracle as the industries blossomed and USSR soon turned into an industrial power. Ordinary workers were ruthlessly disciplined, severely punished for bad workmanship, people were accused of being saboteurs or wreckers when targets were not met, and given spells in forced labour camps.

In the political field, Stalin followed the policy of purge. Opposition of any type was unwelcome and dissidents were routinely sent to labour camps to die and any political protest was not tolerated at all. Due to this the time from 1934-38 was termed as a period of great terror. The brutality of Stalin in this entire time period proved very costly for U.S.S.R. in longer run.

(238 words)

12. Discuss the possible correlation of dengue epidemic with 'climate' in general and 'climate change' in particular.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Dengue is a viral disease transmitted by the bite of female mosquito species *Aedes Aegypti* and *Aedes-Albopictus*. Outbreaks of the illness are usually observed in the post-monsoon season when mosquitoes breed in stagnant water and proliferate. But this year dengue lost its seasonality. Mosquitoes that transmit dengue can breed year round. All they need is stagnant water, which was available in plenty throughout the year. This year, India experienced more dry days than wet days during the monsoon season. This created a perfect condition for mosquitoes to breed. The prevailing El-Nino condition this year could be behind this.

Climate Change is going to make the environment conducive for the spread of all vector-borne diseases (dengue, malaria, filaria, Japanese encephalitis and Chikungunya). The temperature rise can lead to floods, and this may lead to an increase in vector-borne diseases. Vector-borne disease risks increase as sea level rises and creates new breeding grounds along the coast. The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) also says Climate Change is likely to expand the geographical distribution of several vector-borne diseases and extend transmission seasons in some locations.

(183 words)

13. Discuss the current aluminium crisis in international market and its effects on India's Aluminium Industry.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

China, which has been expanding its infrastructure over the past decade, is the world's biggest consumer of aluminium. It started overproducing the metal, thanks to cheap land and labour and government subsidies. The country today controls over half of the global production and dominates the estimated US \$ 100 billion aluminium industry that produces the metal for an array of products, including cars, cans, railway coaches, aeroplanes, windmill blades and high technology electronics such as smart watches.

The problem began when the world was recovering from the global financial crisis around 2009. During this time, China started building an inventory for its domestic industry by buying its bauxite from India and Malaysia. This led to an oversupply of the metal in China's domestic market. China's metal demand experienced a crash in the first half of this year after its economy began to slow down – its GDP growth rate has fallen from a peak of 14.2% in 2007 to 7% in June 2015.

This economic turmoil led to a slowdown in Chinese demand, causing a steep drop in metal prices. The crash had global repercussions. The metal has become difficult to trade. It costs US \$ 1800 to produce a tonne of aluminium, while its market price is around US \$1640.

India could not remain immune from this international turmoil. Owing to cheap availability of aluminium in the international market, Indian companies imported the metal, mostly from China and West Asia rather than domestically producing it. The share of domestically produced aluminium in domestic consumption reduced from 66% in 2008 to 44% in August 2015. It is forcing Indian companies to shut down operations and rendering many workers jobless.

(278 words)

14. List the four principal Monsoon regions in the world and account for their tropical latitudinal locations.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

The word 'Monsoon' is derived from the Arabic word 'Mausim' (meaning "Season") and has come to mean a seasonal reversal of winds, a general sea-to-land movement (called on-shore flow) in summer and a general land-to-sea movement (called off-shore flow) in winter.

A. The two major Monsoonal systems are:

- (a) the South Asian monsoon is characterised by a strong onshore flow in summer and a somewhat less pronounced offshore flow in winter.
- (b) In East Asia, the outblowing winter monsoon is stronger than the inblowing summer monsoon.

B. The two minor monsoonal systems are:

- (a) In Australia, north westerly summer winds bring the wet season to northern Australia; dry south-easterly flow dominates in winter.
- (b) In West Africa, summer winds are from the southwest and winter winds are from the northeast.

Monsoon winds essentially represent unusually large latitudinal migrations of normal trade winds and westerly flow. The explanation for such extensive migrations, however, is not fully clear, and we are left with the realisation that the origin of monsoons is still not fully understood, although there is increasing evidence that it is associated with upper-air phenomena, particularly Jet Stream behaviour.

The tropical regions represent the best monsoonal circulations and one major reason may be a significant shift of Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) as seen in South Asian summer monsoon.

(218 words)

15. What are 'Seismic Gaps'? What is their significance?

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

The magnitude of the earthquake depends on the amount of the slip the tectonic plates undergo. Till a major earthquake actually occurs, scientists refer to regions of accumulated potential slip as Seismic Gap.

Seismic Gaps are prone to earthquakes because the accumulated strain beneath the surface has not been released. By identifying seismic gaps, we can get to know the proneness of a region to earthquakes. There are a number of seismic gaps, each spanning 200 km or more, in the Himalayas which can produce earthquakes of greater than 7.5 magnitude.

The knowledge of these seismic gaps' locations in the country can provide us basis for planning. The development plans should be in accordance with their distribution. The presence of a number of seismic gaps in Himalayan region suggests that we should avoid

big irrigation projects as these can trigger off earthquakes of high magnitude leading to catastrophic consequences of entire northern region.

Mapping of Seismic Gaps in the country is the best we can do till the time we reach to a stage where we can predict earthquakes.

(179 words)

16. What are 'Western Disturbances'? How do they influence India's weather?

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Western Disturbances are low-pressure systems (temperate cyclones) embedded in the Westerlies, the planetary winds that flow from west to east between 30° - 60° latitude. These generally originate in the Mediterranean region and travel over Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan to enter India loaded with moisture. The frequency of these systems reaching India increases during winter with the southward shift of pressure belts (with the apparent movement of sun towards the tropic of cancer).

These disturbances generally lead to

- Mild rain during winter (beneficial to the rabi crop)
- Snowfall in Western Himalayas
- Cold wave in the region
- Sometimes hail formation

These disturbances generally affect North-west India but occasionally their effects go farther east and south (upto Central India). But in the recent past, it is observed that this beneficial weather phenomenon is increasingly becoming disastrous. The cloud burst in Leh in 2010, the floods and landslide in Uttarakhand in 2013 and the excessive rain in J&K in 2014 were all linked to these disturbances.

These disturbances originate thousands of kilometres away and travel over countries where data collection is sparse. More of these disturbances are now being observed these days because the technology to detect, monitor and predict has improved. Indian Meteorological Department is now undertaking studies to understand Western Disturbances.

(215 words)

17. What is 'Stupa of Ice', which has recently been in news from Ladakh? What are its advantages for water-harvesting?

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Three decades after 'ice man' Chawang Norphel first harvested water in the form of artificial glaciers in Laddakh, Sonam Wangchuk, a young mechanical engineer, has taken the innovation forward.

To construct these glaciers, river water is brought down the mountain slope in pipes buried underground. The lower end of the pipe is bent to form a nozzle, which juts out of the ground. Water sprinkles out of this nozzle and, since the temperatures in these regions hover around -30°C, it freezes and settles on a wooden frame, taking the shape of a cone.

Science says that the water coming out of the lower end of the pipe attains the height from which it was drawn upstream.

The ice stupa of 20 metres height stores about 20 million litres of water and during summer, it melts to provide water. The distinct advantages of Wangchuk's stupas of ice are –

1. The conical shape of glaciers which resemble Buddhist stupas means minimum surface area with maximum volume.
2. Reservoirs can be constructed anywhere, even at relatively lower altitudes.
3. Design does not require much labour, barring the one-time installation of pipes.

(188 words)

18. Briefly discuss the physiography of the 'coasts' in India.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

The coasts that surround the Indian Peninsula are of the longitudinal Pacific type which border mountain chains. The major portions of the Indian coasts are either stable or advancing, being built into the sea by deltas or estuaries. However, an example of the retreating type of coast is found near Rameshwaram where the land surface connecting the southern tip of India with Sri Lanka was drowned during the Quaternary times.

The East Coast: starts from the edge of the Ganga delta and extends right through to the southernmost tip of the Peninsula at Kanniyakumari facing the Bay of Bengal. The coast is mostly of the emergent type, that is, it is regular in outline and is characterised by offshore bars, fine sea beaches, sand ridges and lagoons. Most of the great rivers of India, barring a few notable exceptions, have their mouths on this coast. The coastal plain on the east is much wider than on the west. Here the narrow strip of beaches is fronted by rows of sand dunes, broken by a number of lagoons.

The West Coast also culminates at Kanniyakumari. South of the Indus delta is the Kathiawar Peninsula, and but for is the western coastline runs straight from the Gujarat Plains to the extreme south. This was formed by faulting. This straight looking coast is however quite jagged by a large number of coves and creeks. The indentations in the west coast are not so prominent as those of other continents (for ex. Australia or Western Europe).

(252 words)

19. Critically comment on the observation that "India continues to follow the colonial forest regime that has alienated communities from their land and resources."

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

At present, the Indian government recognises community rights over their forests under the Forest Rights Act of 2006, and empowers the gram sabha to protect and manage them. But the law remains poorly implemented as forest departments continue to resist ceding control over forests. The Forest Survey of India's report in 1999 shows that 31 million ha of forests lay within revenue villages. This should be the minimum area over which community forest rights need to be recognised. But the government has so far recognised rights over only 2.5 million ha. This makes India a laggard; other countries have made for greater progress in forest governance reforms.

Under FRA, the government allows communities to harvest and trade non-timber forest produce. Yet more than 200 million people including tribals, who depend on forest produce for a living remain neglected and impoverished. Besides, FRA does not provide communities explicit rights over timber, the most lucrative forest resource.

A study by World Resources Institute in 14 forest-rich countries shows that deforestation in community forests is much less than in those outside community control. India should look beyond the idea that only forest department is capable of managing forests. Other departments need to pitch in to support community forestry.

(205 words)

20. Identify the critical elements in biotechnology research and discuss localisation of Biotechnology Firms.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Biotechnology may be defined as the application of molecular and cellular processes to solve problems, develop products and services, or modify living organisms to carry desired traits. Arising after the discovery of recombinant DNA, biotechnology has been a rapidly growing industry worldwide, with extensive linkages to agriculture, health care, energy and environmental sciences.

Venture capital is critical to making basic research in biotechnology commercially viable. Most small biotech firms lose money, given the high costs and enormous amounts of research necessary to generate their output and the long lag between research and development and commercial deployment. The success of biotech firms is closely related to their strategic alliances with universities and pharmaceutical firms.

Because pools of specialised skills and a scientifically talented workforce are essential to the long process of biotech research and development, an essential element defining the locational needs of biotech firms, is the placement of research universities and institutions and the associated supply of research scientists.

(159 words)

21. What do you understand by Large Igneous Province/ Flood Basalt? Explain the formation process with example from India's geology.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Large igneous provinces (LIPs) are defined as voluminous emplacements of predominantly mafic extrusive and intrusive rock.

Many geologists believe that almost all LIPs were created at hot spots/fissure eruptions by mantle plumes. According to this hypothesis, a large, turbulent blob of hot material – a “plume head” - leads the way. When this plume head reaches the top of the mantle, it generates a huge quantity of magma by melting, which erupts in massive flood basalts. These flood basalts are on continents as well as in the ocean basins, for eg;

(a) Columbia River Plateau and Deccan Trap in India (Continent) and

(b) Ontong-Java plateau and Kerguelen Plateau (Ocean)

The Deccan Trap: From the end of the Cretaceous (65 million years ago) till the beginning of the Eocene (57 million years ago), stupendous volcanic outburst overwhelmed a vast area of the Peninsular India. A vast area of about 10 lakh sq. km. was flooded by the out pouring of extremely mobile basalt lava from fissures and cracks covering fully the pre-existing topography.

These volcanic deposits have flat top and steep sides so that they appear as gigantic steps (the word 'trap' in Swedish means a 'step'). It is estimated that the molten rock of the order of 6.5 million cubic meters, exceeding the bulk of the entire Himalaya, was poured out from the interior of the earth to form this volcanic plateau over 1800 mt. in height. The Deccan Trap forms the north-west portion of the Deccan Plateau. The vulcanism is supposed to be the result of the Reunion hotspot.

(259 words)

22. Critically analyze the expanding wildlife crimes. What boosts the illegal trade and suggest ways to check the online wildlife crimes?

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Illegal wildlife crimes have increased to meet the increasing Asian (mainly Chinese) demand for elephant ivory, rhino horns, and tiger products. Controlled by dangerous crime syndicates, wildlife criminals often operate with impunity making the trade a low-risk/high-profit business estimated at up to \$10 billion annually. Illegal wildlife trade is one of the reasons (the major reason being habitat destruction) behind the 52% decline in wildlife populations of vertebrate species – mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish – over the last 40 years.

The current scenario should be tackled by making concrete efforts to reduce the demand of wildlife products through promoting species conservation, empowering people to protect wildlife and promoting and scaling community-based conservation. Some other activities which can be undertaken are pushing governments to protect threatened animal populations by increasing law enforcement, imposing strict deterrents, reducing demand for endangered species products and honouring international commitments made under CITES. Most importantly, a reduction in demand for illegal wildlife parts and products can only happen if the buyers start asking questions and get the facts before buying any wildlife or plant product.

Due to its anonymity, wildlife trade (dependent on wildlife crimes) gets carried out in the cyberspace which can be dealt through a well coordinated global effort to track such trading entities. Strong International Convention with UN backing; Strengthening existing framework (CITES, TRAFFIC, CAWT) and enhancing their jurisdiction; Better cyber architecture to track the criminals online and promotion of ethical hacking to bug and hack the online trading platforms, are some of the other activities which can be performed to ensure a reduction in the illegal wildlife trade and crimes.

(262 words)

23. "Discriminating against women keeps countries poorer." – Critically analyze the above statement.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Women constitute half the world. If 50% of this world's population faces varying level of disabilities in legal and social frameworks which prevent or retard women's economic contribution and development in different countries, the level of output will quite naturally stay sub-optimally below the potential.

This assessment has now also been backed by empirical research data reported by World Bank according to which only 18 countries across the world provide women economic opportunities, at par with men. World Bank found out that there are certain countries where women can't apply for passport in same way as men, in some countries they are denied jobs which their husbands don't approve off (Jordan and Iran), in some there are no laws against sexual harassment at work place and laws against domestic violence.

With respect to India following, economic aspects get hampered because of gender inequality and lack of women empowerment.

- (1) Gender inequality leads to low growth of population with lesser people being added to working age and hence economic growth getting hampered.
- (2) Lack of participation in labour force by women is amounting to income losses of 10% in Europe and 20% in South Asia.
- (3) Even IMF estimates that lack of gender equality is causing 27% loss of GDP and 4% loss of farm output in India.

Considering this India has taken many steps in this direction. The Inheritance law, the reservation for women in various jobs in government sector, instruction of including women members in the boards of PSUs. Other initiatives like Mahila Udyam Scheme, Mahila Vikas Scheme, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Kishori Shakti Yojna, Ladli, Sabla and many more schemes are there to ensure that women contribute to nation's growth at large.

(284 words)

24. "Tribals are the worst victims of development and face extreme form of alienation." – Critically examine the statement in the light of recent High – Level Committee on the status of Tribals.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Tribes are among the poorest and most marginalised sections of Indian society and lack in basic social indicators like health, education, standard of living and others leading to social exclusion.

Problem faced by tribals due to developmental projects are:

- (1) Land alienation - As per the report by committee, headed by Professor Virginius Xaxa, about 40 per cent of all people displaced in India due to development activity have been tribals and only 21.16 per cent of these have been resettled.
- (2) Loss of livelihood - When outsiders exploit the tribal lands and its resources the natural life cycle of tribal ecology and tribal life is greatly disturbed. Forest resources being the tribals' only means of subsistence, deterioration of that increases poverty and indebtedness.

Solution:

- (1) Integration attempts should be made to bring them into mainstream society without destroying their distinctive identity.

- (2) Rights of tribal communities to say 'no' to acquisition of their land and to access and manage forests should be recognized.
- (3) No tribal land should be alienated without the consent of the tribal gram sabha.
- (4) Waste or degraded land must be used for rehabilitation of tribals.
- (5) Cooperative mining by tribals themselves should be encouraged. The report is a cry for adopting tribal ideas of development with a focus on community participation rather than an imposed idea of development from outside which further leads to exclusion.

(231 words)

25. The increasing rate of divorce among the Software Industry employees has become a worrisome trend in India. Explain the causes and consequences of this on women employees.

(10 marks, 200 words)

Answer:

Indian IT industry has helped Indian economy in a profound way. Its imprint can be seen far and wide in the world. However on the personal front the employees suffer from serious inconveniences, especially women.

Causes of divorces:

- (1) Frequent foreign assignments leading to imbalance in work-family time chords. Also the expectation from women diverges.
- (2) Erratic and long working hours in Indian companies makes women the worst sufferers, physically as well as psychologically.
- (3) In India women are still expected to keep themselves away from unknown "men", in IT industry since an interaction platform is present, colleagues become friends leading to creation of false and unnecessary rumours but sometimes leading to illicit relationships outside marriage. Even though this is true for any profession, but it is certainly truer for the IT sector.

Implications for women:

- (1) Indian society still does not take kindly to divorcees /widows.
- (2) Feeling of guilt and lack of confidence in dealing with false rumours is persistent among married women.
- (3) Untoward advances by the patriarchal mindset people/colleagues she faces further hurts the self esteem of women.

Though these are some serious implications for women but the financial security and self worth as a result of the work being done provides many women the necessary courage to face adversities in life.

(211 words)