

Core Course I

History of India- I

Course Objectives:

Being the first paper of the History Honours course, it intends to provide an extensive survey of early Indian history to the students and familiarise them with the tools of studying ancient Indian history. The inter-disciplinary approach of the course provides the students a point of beginning from where they can build an understanding of the discipline of history. Spanning a very long period of India's ancient past – from pre-historic times to the end of Vedic cultures in India – the course dwells upon major landmarks of ancient Indian history from the beginning of early human hunter gatherers to food producers. This course will equip the students with adequate expertise to analyse the further development of Indian culture which resulted in an advanced Harappan civilization. In course of time students will learn about the processes of cultural development and regional variations.

Learning Outcomes:

After completing the course the students will be able to:

- Discuss the landscape and environmental variations in Indian subcontinent and their impact on the making of India's history.
- Describe main features of prehistoric and proto-historic cultures.
- List the sources and evidence for reconstructing the history of Ancient India
- Analyse the way earlier historians interpreted the history of India and while doing so they can write the alternative ways of looking at the past.
- List the main tools made by prehistoric and proto- historic humans in India along with their find spots.
- Interpret the prehistoric art and mortuary practices.
- Discuss the beginning and the significance of food production.
- Analyse the factors responsible for the origins and decline of Harappan Civilization.
- Discuss various aspects of society, economy, polity and religious practices that are reflected in the Early Vedic and Later Vedic texts.
- Describe the main features of the megalithic cultures of the Central India, Deccan and South India.

Course Content:

Unit I: Reconstructing ancient Indian history

- [a] The Indian subcontinent: landscapes and environments
- [b] Sources of historical reconstruction (up to 600 BCE)
- [c] Changing historiography
- [d] Early Indian notions of history

Unit II: Prehistoric hunter-gatherers

- [a] Palaeolithic cultures: sequence and distribution; Tool typology and technology and subsistence pattern
- [b] Mesolithic cultures: regional and chronological distribution; new developments in technology and economy
- [c] The prehistoric mind: funerary practices and art

Unit III: The advent of food production

The regional and chronological distribution of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic cultures; subsistence; patterns of interaction and exchange

Unit IV: The Harappan civilization

Origins; settlement patterns and town planning; agrarian base; craft production and trade; social and political organization; religious beliefs and practices; art; the problem of urban decline and the late/post-Harappan traditions

Unit V: Cultures in transition up to c. 600 BCE

Settlement patterns; technological and economic developments; social stratification; political relations; religion and philosophy; the Aryan question; megaliths

- a) North India
- b) Central India, the Deccan and South India

ESSENTIAL READINGS AND UNIT WISE TEACHING OUTCOMES:

Unit I: This unit aims to familiarise students with the varied sources for, divergent landscapes of and the various approaches to the history of ancient India. **(Teaching Time: 2weeks Approx.)**

- Allchin, B., and R. Allchin.(1997).*Origins of a Civilization: The Prehistory and Early Archaeology of South Asia*. New Delhi: Viking. (Chapters- 1 & 2.)

- Arunachalam, B. (2013). “Geography and Environment” in *Prehistory of India, A Comprehensive History of India*, vol. 1, Part 1. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers. (Chapter 1, pp. 21-28.)
- Singh, Upinder. (2008). *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*. Delhi: Pearson Longman. (Introduction and Chapter 1.) (Available in Hindi)
- Thapar, Romila. (2013). *The Past Before Us; Historical Traditions of Early India*, Delhi: Permanent Black, Part 1, pp. 3-84.

Unit II: This unit aims to familiarise students with the distribution of as well as the economic and technological patterns in the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic cultures of the Indian subcontinent. It also enables students to describe some of their cultural practices especially with regard to their art and funerary practices. **(Teaching Time: 3 weeks Approx.)**

- Allchin, B., and R. Allchin. (1997). *Origins of a Civilization: The Prehistory and Early Archaeology of South Asia*. Delhi: Viking. (Chapters 3, 4 & 5.)
- Chattopadhyaya, U. C. (1996). “Settlement Pattern and the Spatial Organization of Subsistence and Mortuary Practices in the Mesolithic Ganges Valley, North-Central India, *World Archaeology*, vol. 27(3), pp. 461-476
- Singh, Upinder. (2008). *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*. Delhi: Pearson Longman. (Chapter 2, pp. 58-93.) (Available in Hindi)
- Neumayer, Erwin. (2014). “Rock Paintings of the Mesolithic Period” in Shonaleeka Kaul (Ed.). *Cultural History of Early South Asia: A Reader*. Delhi: Orient Blackswan. Pp. 55-88.

Unit III. This unit seeks to understand the beginnings of organized food production in the pre-historic times in the Indian subcontinent. It also explains the ways in which that could leave its impact on other aspects of the life of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic men and women. **(Teaching Time: 3 weeks Approx.)**

- Allchin, B., and R. Allchin. (1997). *Origins of a Civilization: The Prehistory and Early Archaeology of South Asia*. New Delhi: Viking. (Chapter 5.)
- Chakrabarti, D.K. (1999). *India: An archaeological History, Palaeolithic Beginnings to Early Historic Foundations*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. PP. 41-116.
- Singh, Upinder. (2008). *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*. Delhi: Pearson Longman. (Chapter 3, pp. 94- 131.) (Available in Hindi)

Unit IV. At the end of this unit, students shall be familiar with various aspects of Harappan Civilization as well as the varied ways in which the archaeological remains of Harappa and related sites have been interpreted and studied. **(Teaching Time: 3 weeks Approx.)**

- Allchin, B., and R. Allchin.(1997).*Origins of a Civilization: The Prehistory and Early Archaeology of South Asia*. New Delhi: Viking. (Chapters 6,7,8,9 & 10, pp. 113- 222)
- Chakrabarti, D.K. (1999). *India: An Archaeological History*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. (Chapters V and VI. pp.151-261)
- Lahiri, Nayanjot, ed. (2000).*The Decline and Fall of the Indus Civilization*, Delhi: Permanent Black. ('Introduction', pp.1-33.)
- Ratnagar, Shereen. (2001).*Understanding Harappa: Civilization in the Greater Indus Valley*. Delhi: Tulika, pp. Pp. 6-42, 103-115, 122-152.
- Singh, Upinder. (2008).*A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*. Delhi: Pearson Longman.(Chapter 4, pp. 132- 181.) (Available in Hindi)
- Thaplyal, K. K. and Sankata Prasad Shukla.(2003). *Sindhu Sabhyata* (सिंधु सभ्यता). Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan. (In Hindi) PP. 25-107, 157- 226, 262-276, 292- 315, 354-363

Unit V. This unit seeks to understand the post-Harappan patterns of settlement and civilisation up to 600 BC in the Indian subcontinent. It should equip students with the ability to explain the patterns of development in the religio-philosophical, political and technological spheres, and would familiarise them with social, economic, and cultural life of people during this period. **(Teaching Time: 3 weeks Approx.)**

- Allchin, Bridget and Raymond.(1982).*The Rise of Civilization in India and Pakistan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Part III. Pp. 229- 346.
- Sahu, B.P. (ed.). (2006). *Iron and Social Change in Early India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. (Introduction pp.1-31.)
- Sharma, R.S. (1996).*Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas. (Chapters VII-XIV pp.87-196 and XXII pp. 349-370) (Also available in Hindi)
- Sharma, R.S. (1983).*Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*, Macmillan India, Delhi. (Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. Pp. 22- 88) (Also available in Hindi)

- Singh, Upinder.(2008).*A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*. Delhi: Pearson Longman. (Chapter V, pp. 182-255.) (Also available in Hindi)
- Thapar, Romila.(1984).*From Lineage to State: Social Formations in the Mid-First Millennium B. C. In the Ganga Valley*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. (Chapter 2, pp. 21-69.) (Also available in Hindi).
- Trautmann, T.R. (ed.) (2005). *The Aryan Debate*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. (PP. xi – xliii.)

Suggested Readings:

- Allchin, F.R. *et al.* (1995). *The Archaeology of Early Historic South Asia: The Emergence of Cities and States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 6.)
- Chakrabarti, D.K. (2006).*The Oxford Companion to Indian Archaeology: The Archaeological Foundations of Ancient India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Dhavalikar, M. K. (ed.) (2013). *Prehistory of India: A Comprehensive History of India*, vol. 1, Part 1. Delhi: Manohar.
- Habib, Irfan & Faiz Habib. (2012). *Atlas of Ancient Indian History*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Habib, Irfan. (2001). *Prehistory*, Delhi: Tulika.(Available in Hindi Also)
- Habib, Irfan. (2002). *The Indus Civilization*. Delhi: Tulika.
- Jain, V. K. (2006). *Prehistory and Protohistory of India: An Appraisal*. Delhi: Printworld. (in Hindi Also)
- Kenoyer, J. Mark. (1998). *Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Kosambi, D.D. (1956). *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Moorti, U.S. (1994).*Megalithic Culture of South India: Socio-economic Perspectives*. Varanasi: Ganga Kaveri Publishing House.
- Neumayer, E. (1993).*Lines on Stone: The Prehistoric Rock Art of India*. Delhi: Manohar.
- Pathak, V. S.(1966). *Ancient Historians of India: A Study in Historical Biographies*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Possehl, Gregory L. (2002). *The Indus Civilization: A Contemporary Perspective*. Delhi: Vistaar Publications.
- Ratnagar, Shereen. (2015).*Harappan Archaeology: Early State Perspectives*, Delhi: Primus.
- Subbarao, Bendapudi. (1958). *The Personality of India: Pre and Proto-Historic Foundations of India and Pakistan*. Baroda: University of Baroda.

- Thapar, Romila. (2000). *Cultural Pasts: Essays in Early Indian History*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 7, 8 and 16.)
- Wright, Rita P. (2010). *The Ancient Indus: Urbanism, Economy, and Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Teaching Learning Process:

Classroom lecture and discussion method, problem solving method, question - answer method, group discussion method and discussion following student presentations in class and/or in tutorial classes will form the basis of teaching learning process. Presentations shall focus either on important themes covered in the class lectures, or around specific readings. Supporting audio-visual aids like documentaries and power point presentations will be used wherever necessary in order to augment the effectiveness of the methods used in classrooms. Overall, the Teaching Learning Process shall emphasise the interconnectedness of themes within the different rubrics to build a holistic view of the time period/region under study. The process shall consistently underline the ways in which various macro and micro-level developments/phenomena can be historicised.

Assessment Methods:

Students will be regularly assessed for their grasp on themes through debates and discussions covered in class. Two written assignments and at least one presentation will be used for final grading of the students. Students will be assessed on their ability to engage with a sizeable corpus of readings assigned to the theme for written submissions, i.e. being able to explain important historical trends and trace historiographical changes reflected in the assigned readings.

Internal Assessment: 25 Marks

Written Exam: 75 Marks

Total: 100 Marks

Keywords:

Itihas-Purana tradition, Changing Historical Interpretations, Hunting-gathering Stage, Tool Technologies, Food production, Civilization, Culture, Aryan, Social Stratification, Megaliths, Urbanization.