



Class 9 Social Science – Chapter 5

Important Questions – State and Society up to 1000 CE

Book: *Understanding Society: India and Beyond – Grade 9, Part 1*

Session: 2026–27

These questions are based on **Chapter 5 of the official textbook**. The chapter focuses on political organisation and administration, early Indian states and empires, society, varṇa and jāti, women, education, religion, trade and cultural developments up to 1000 CE. The textbook's own end-of-chapter section contains 12 questions/activities covering these themes.



Very Short Answer Questions

1. What is meant by **state**?
2. What is meant by **society**?
3. What was the role of the **rājā** in early Indian states?
4. What were **sabhā** and **samiti**?
5. What is a **janapada**?
6. What is a **mahājanapada**?
7. Who was **Chandragupta Maurya**?
8. Who was **Aśhoka**?
9. What was the **mantri-pariṣhad**?
10. What is meant by **Saptāṁga**?
11. Name the seven elements of Kauṭilya's Saptāṁga theory.
12. What was the role of ministers in early states?
13. What is **varṇa**?
14. What is **jāti**?
15. What is a **votive inscription**?
16. What was the importance of trade routes?
17. What was the role of women in early Indian society?
18. What was the importance of education in early India?
19. What is meant by **Bhakti**?
20. Why are inscriptions important historical sources?



Short Answer Questions

1. How did political organisation change from the Vedic period to the age of large empires?

2. What role did the *rājā* play in early Indian states?

3. Explain the role of the *sabhā* and *samiti*.

4. How did these assemblies limit the power of the *rājā*?

The textbook specifically asks students to examine how *sabhā* and *samiti* limited royal power and to compare them with institutions performing similar functions today.

5. What was the role of the council of ministers in the Mauryan administration?

The **mantri-pariṣhad** advised and supported the king and included important officials such as the treasurer, chief tax collector, chief legal advisor and commander-in-chief.

6. Explain Kauṭilya's *Saptāṅga* theory of the state.

The seven elements were:



Swāmi – king



Amātya – councillors, ministers and officials



Janapada – territory and population



Durga – fortified towns and cities



Koṣha – treasury/wealth



Daṇḍa – forces of defence and law and order



Mitra – allies

7. Why was administration important for ruling a large territory?

8. What do early Indian texts reveal about political and social life?

9. What is the difference between *varṇa* and *jāti*?

10. What factors may have contributed to the formation of different *jātis*?

The textbook specifically asks students to distinguish varṇa and jāti and consider factors contributing to the formation of various jātis.

11. Describe the role of women in early Indian society.

The textbook gives examples of women participating in governance, religious patronage, agriculture, cattle rearing, spinning, fishing, salt production, trade and cultural activities.

12. Why was education important in early India?

13. Why did early Indian education emphasise both knowledge and moral values?

The textbook asks students to consider how this combination may have benefited society.

14. How did trade routes contribute to the development of early Indian society?

15. How did religion and cultural practices influence early Indian society?



Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the evolution of political organisation in India from the Vedic period to the large empires.

Include:

- 🏠 Early tribal/political communities
 - 👑 Role of the rājā
 - 🏛️ Sabhā and samiti
 - 🗺️ Larger territorial states
 - 👑 Mauryan Empire
 - 🏛️ Administrative institutions
 - 👥 Later regional kingdoms
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2. Describe the administrative system of the early Indian states.

Discuss:

 King



 Ministers and officials



 Treasury



 Army and law and order



 Fortified towns



 Territory and population



 Alliances

The textbook's discussion of the Mauryan administration and Kauṭilya's Saptāṃga framework provides the key concepts for this answer.

3. Explain the role of the king and important officers in governing large territories.

Include:

-  King as central authority
 -  Council of ministers
 -  Treasurer
 -  Tax administration
 -  Legal administration
 -  Military administration
 -  Fortifications
 -  Territorial administration
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4. Explain the structure of early Indian society.

Discuss:

-  Social groups
-  Occupations
-  Varṇa
-  Jāti
-  Role of women
-  Education

-  Religious practices
 -  Economic activities
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5. Explain the difference between varṇa and jāti and discuss the development of social groups in early India.

Varṇa

A broad social classification found in early Indian texts.

Jāti

More specific social groups that developed in association with occupation, community and other social factors.

The textbook encourages students to examine the distinction and the factors that contributed to the formation of different jātis.

6. Discuss the role of women in early Indian society.

Include examples from:

-  Agriculture
-  Cattle rearing
-  Spinning
-  Fishing
-  Salt production
-  Garland selling
-  Literature
-  Governance
-  Religious patronage
-  Cultural activities

The textbook gives examples including **Prabhāvatī Gupta**, **Avvaiyar**, **Vennikuyattiyar** and **Sembiyan Mahādevī**.

7. Explain the importance of trade routes in early India.

Trade routes helped people exchange:

-  Goods
-  Skills
-  Ideas
-  Religious beliefs
-  Cultural practices

The textbook specifically asks students to study the major trade routes and explain how they facilitated exchanges of goods, skills, beliefs and cultural practices.

HOTS / Analytical Questions

- 1. Why was it difficult to govern a large empire without modern communication systems?**
- 2. What advantages did a large empire provide to its rulers and people?**
- 3. What challenges could arise while governing a vast and diverse territory?**
- 4. Why were roads and trade routes important not only for economic activity but also for cultural exchange?**
- 5. Why should historians use different sources to understand early Indian society?**
- 6. What might be the limitations of relying only on texts written by scholars and royal advisers?**

The textbook specifically asks students to consider the limitations of relying only on sources produced by scholars and advisers of kings.

- 7. How can inscriptions provide information that literary texts may not provide?**
 - 8. Why might the experiences of ordinary people be less visible in royal records?**
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Source-Based Questions

Case Study 1 – Nāśhik Cave Inscription

The textbook includes a **2nd-century CE Nāśhik cave inscription of Uṣhavadāta**, which records his donation of a cave to the Saṃgha and a permanent endowment.

Important Questions:

1. What type of historical source is the Nāśhik inscription?
 2. What does the inscription tell us about donation and religious institutions?
 3. Why are inscriptions important for reconstructing early Indian history?
 4. What can such an inscription tell us about the economic position of wealthy individuals?
 5. Why should historians examine inscriptions along with other sources?
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Assertion–Reason Questions

1. Assertion:

The king did not govern completely alone in early Indian states.

Reason: Kings were assisted by ministers and other officials.

2. Assertion:

The mantri-pariṣhad was important in the administration of the state.

Reason: It advised the king and could take decisions in exceptional circumstances.

The textbook cites an Aśhokan inscription showing that the council could take decisions during the emperor's absence.

3. Assertion:

Trade routes contributed to cultural exchange.

Reason: Traders and travellers carried not only goods but also ideas, skills, beliefs and cultural practices.

4. Assertion:

Women played no economic role in early Indian society.

Reason: Historical sources record women's participation in agriculture, cattle rearing, crafts, fishing, salt production and other activities.

Answer: Both the assertion and its implication are incorrect; the textbook provides evidence of significant women's participation.

5. Assertion:

Sabhā and samiti had a role in limiting the power of the rājā.

Reason: These assemblies provided forms of collective participation in political affairs.



Map-Based Important Questions

1. Locate the major kingdoms and empires mentioned in the chapter.
 2. Identify major trade routes of early India.
 3. Locate important centres associated with the Mauryas, Guptas and other major political powers.
 4. Identify important urban and cultural centres mentioned in the chapter.
 5. Explain how geography influenced the expansion and administration of early states.
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Comparison Questions

1. Differentiate between Sabhā and Samiti.
 2. Differentiate between Varṇa and Jāti.
 3. Compare the role of the king and council of ministers.
 4. Compare political organisation in the Vedic period with that of large empires such as the Mauryas and Guptas.
 5. Compare literary sources and inscriptions as sources for reconstructing early Indian history.
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Top 10 Questions for Exam Revision

If students have limited time, prepare these first:

1. ★ How did political organisation change from the **Vedic period to the Mauryan and Gupta periods**?
2. ★ Explain the **administrative system of early Indian states**.
3. ★ Explain Kautilya's **Saptāṁga theory of the state**.
4. ★ Describe the role of the **king and important officers**.
5. ★ How did **sabhā and samiti** limit the power of the rājā?
6. ★ Differentiate between **varṇa and jāti**.
7. ★ Describe the **role of women** in early Indian society.
8. ★ Explain the importance of **education and moral values** in early India.
9. ★ How did **trade routes** facilitate economic and cultural exchange?
10. ★ What are the limitations of relying only on **royal and scholarly sources**?

These align closely with the textbook's own end-of-chapter questions.

Quick Revision Chart

POLITICAL ORGANISATION

Vedic Period



 Rājā +  Sabhā & Samiti



 Larger States



 **Mauryan Empire**



 King + Ministers + Officials + Army + Treasury



 **Later Kingdoms & Empires**

SOCIETY

Varṇa + Jāti + Occupations + Family + Women + Education + Religion



RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL LIFE

Vedic traditions → Religious developments → Bhakti → Cultural traditions



ECONOMY & EXCHANGE

Agriculture + Crafts + Trade Routes



Goods



Ideas



Skills



Beliefs



Culture

The chapter brings together **state, society, economy, religion and cultural developments** to explain the evolution of Indian society up to 1000 CE.