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UPSC Mains 2020 GS I

Year-wise PYQ pack · WRAP model answers with canonical links

Official UPSC stems in exam order. Each live answer sits on one WRAP URL; this PDF is the year pack, not a second copy of the article. Open the link under a question for the full page.

<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains/gs-1/2020/>

Q1 · 10 marks

The rock-cut architecture represents one of the most important sources of our knowledge of early Indian art and history. Discuss.

GS I · 2020 · Indian Heritage and Culture

Revision summary

Rock-cut work survives as dated sculpture, painting, and inscription.

Ajanta keeps Vakataka murals and Buddhist narrative.

Ellora shows Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain patronage on one hill, including Kailasa.

Mahabalipuram records Pallava rathas and the turn to structural temples.

The caves are a core source, though they under-represent ordinary life.

Introduction

Rock-cut caves and rathas are dated, placed, and still standing. They hold sculpture, inscription, and patronage that early brick and timber did not keep. Ajanta, Ellora, and Mahabalipuram are the classroom of early Indian art and political history.

Body

Why the rock-cut record is a source

- Stone caves survive monsoon and fire better than the wooden halls that texts mention. Plan, pillar, and painting stay as evidence, not only as a verse.
- Donative inscriptions name kings, guilds, and monks. They date styles and show who paid for religion.
- Sequence of chaitya, vihara, and later Hindu and Jain caves maps the shift from Buddhist dominance to a shared sacred landscape.

Art that the caves keep

- **Ajanta** (mostly Vakataka, with earlier Satavahana work) preserves narrative murals of Jatakas, court dress, and trade. Painting that vanished from palaces still hangs on these walls.
- **Ellora** stacks Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain excavations, including the Kailasa (Rashtrakuta) monolith. One hillside shows religious plurality as a fact of patronage, not a later slogan.
- **Mahabalipuram** (Pallava) gives rathas, the Descent of the Ganga relief, and shore temples. It documents the move from excavated cave to structural stone and the state's maritime face.

History beyond the chisel

- Trade and diplomacy appear in dress, ships, and foreign faces at Ajanta; Pallava ports speak through Mahabalipuram's shore setting.
- **Technique itself is history:** chaitya-arch, octagonal pillar, and living-rock temple show craft organisation under Satavahana, Vakataka, Rashtrakuta, and Pallava courts.
- **Limits:** rock-cut art is elite and religious. Village life and perishable crafts remain thinner in this archive.

Flow diagram

Rock-cut caves -> Ajanta painting
Rock-cut caves -> Ellora Kailasa
Rock-cut caves -> Mahabalipuram rathas
Ajanta painting -> Early art and history
Ellora Kailasa -> Early art and history
Mahabalipuram rathas -> Early art and history

Conclusion

Rock-cut architecture is a primary archive of early Indian art, patronage, and religious change. Ajanta, Ellora, and Mahabalipuram together teach painting, plurality, and the leap to structural stone. Discuss them as evidence, not as tourism.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/the-rock-cut-architecture-represents-one-of-the-most-important-sources-of-our-knowledge-of-early-indian-art-and-history-discuss/>

Q2 · 10 marks

Pala period is the most significant phase in the history of Buddhism in India. Enumerate.

GS I · 2020 · Indian Heritage and Culture

Revision summary

Pala kings endowed Nalanda and raised Vikramshila and related mahaviharas.

The phase matured Mahayana and Vajrayana when much of India had other royal cults.

Pala bronze and manuscript painting set an eastern Buddhist style.

Atisha carried this learning into Tibet.

It is the last organised Indian Buddhist university age.

Introduction

Under the Palas of Bengal and Bihar, Buddhism received a last great Indian state. Monasteries, tantric learning, and a Tibetan connection made the phase more than a local revival. Enumeration must name institutions, doctrine, and the later export of the faith.

Body

Royal and monastic institutions

- Pala kings from **Gopala** and **Dharmapala** onward endowed **Nalanda** and founded or raised **Vikramshila**, **Odantapuri**, and Somapura (Paharpur).
- These were universities of vinaya, logic, and Vajrayana, not only shrines. Tibetan pilgrims treated them as the Indian curriculum.
- Bronze and stone Pala sculpture of the **Buddha** and Tara became the eastern Indian Buddhist look that Nepal and Tibet copied.

Doctrine and the last Indian flourishing

- Mahayana and Vajrayana matured in Pala Bihar-Bengal while much of the rest of India had already turned more Hindu in royal cult.
- **Atisha Dipankara** trained in this world and later reformed Tibetan Buddhism. The Pala phase is therefore also a Himalayan chapter.
- Manuscript painting and the cult of the goddess in Buddhist form show a living, not a fossil, religion.

Why 'most significant' as a late phase

- After the Palas, the great viharas declined under political shock and loss of patronage. Indian Buddhism's organised university phase effectively ends here.
- Significance is of a last high watermark and of transmission abroad, not of numerical majority in the subcontinent.
- Enumeration should not deny earlier Mauryan and Kushan peaks; it should say the Pala age is the most significant late Indian Buddhist state.

Flow diagram

Pala state -> Nalanda Vikramshila
Pala state -> Vajrayana art
Nalanda Vikramshila -> Atisha Tibet
Vajrayana art -> Last Indian Buddhist high point

Conclusion

Enumerate the Pala phase as Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vajrayana learning, Pala bronze, and Atisha's Tibet mission. It is the last great Indian Buddhist university age, and the bridge that carried that learning north.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/pala-period-is-the-most-significant-phase-in-the-history-of-buddhism-in-india-enumerate/>

Q3 · 10 marks

Evaluate the policies of Lord Curzon and their long term implications on the national movements.

GS I · 2020 · The Freedom Struggle

Revision summary

- **Curzon pursued efficient empire:** frontier, municipal control, and universities.

The 1904 Universities Act tightened official grip on campuses.

The 1905 Partition of Bengal triggered Swadeshi, boycott, and Extremist politics.

Reunion in 1911 did not erase communal and revolutionary afterlives.

Long term, Curzon expanded the national movement more than he pacified it.

Introduction

- **Curzon (1899-1905) ran a high imperial efficiency:** frontier, university, and a Bengal map. The long-term implication was not a quieter India. It was a wider, angrier national movement.

Body

Policies

- **Frontier and foreign:** Tibet mission, Persian Gulf watch, and a strong-centre ICS style. India was treated as a strategic estate.
- Calcutta Corporation and municipal squeeze reduced Indian voice in the capital of the Raj.
- **Indian Universities Act, 1904** tightened official control over senates and affiliation. Education became a nationalist grievance, not only a degree mill.
- The **Partition of Bengal, 1905** split a politically vocal province on a line that Hindus read as a communal cut, even when Curzon spoke of administration.

Immediate national response

- Swadeshi and boycott, the Calcutta and Bengal press, and Extremists around **Tilak**, **Bipin Chandra Pal**, and **Aurobindo** turned petition into a mass economic weapon.
- Moderates still used Congress, but 1905-07 split the method. Curzon's exit did not cancel the partition until 1911.

Long-term implications

- Swadeshi taught later Gandhians the boycott toolkit; it also fed revolutionary cells that outlived Curzon.
- Communal arithmetic of the Bengal cut entered later League and Congress memory, even after reunion.
- University control made campuses a standing nationalist theatre.
- **Evaluation:** Curzon strengthened the Raj's files and weakened its consent. The national movement became more popular, more divided in method, and more sure that efficiency without voice was still Empire.

Flow diagram

Curzon -> Universities Act 1904

Curzon -> Partition 1905

Partition 1905 -> Swadeshi Extremism

Universities Act 1904 -> Swadeshi Extremism

Swadeshi Extremism -> Wider national movement

Conclusion

Curzon's universities policy and the 1905 partition were the policies that mattered most for nationalism. They professionalised imperial control and, in the same stroke, massified protest. The long term was Swadeshi, Extremism, and a politics that never again trusted viceregal 'reform' as a gift.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/evaluate-the-policies-of-lord-curzon-and-their-long-term-implications-on-the-national-movements/>

Q4 · 10 marks

Discuss the geophysical characteristics of Circum- Pacific Zone.

GS I · 2020 · World's Physical Geography

Revision summary

The Circum-Pacific Zone is the Ring of Fire around the Pacific plates.

Subduction at trenches produces Benioff earthquakes and volcanic arcs.

Andesite volcanoes, island arcs, and megathrust tsunamis are the typical signatures.

Most of Earth's active volcanoes sit on this ring.

It is a plate-tectonic zone, not a single mountain of one age.

Introduction

- **The Circum-Pacific Zone is the Ring of Fire:** a horseshoe of trenches, arcs, and volcanoes around the Pacific. Its geophysics is plate convergence, not a single mountain chain.

Body

Plate setting

- Oceanic plates of the Pacific, Nazca, Cocos, and Philippine Sea sink at trenches under continents and island arcs. This is the world's main **subduction** factory.
- Transform and spreading edges, such as the San Andreas and East Pacific Rise, sit inside the same Pacific frame and add strike-slip and ridge earthquakes.
- The zone is not closed in the south in the same way; Antarctica and the Pacific-Antarctic ridge complete a different edge.

Geophysical signatures

- Deep ocean trenches (Mariana, Peru-Chile, Japan) mark the subducting slab. Benioff-Wadati zones show earthquakes down to hundreds of kilometres.
- **Volcanic arcs:** Andes, Cascades, Japan, Philippines, New Zealand, and the Aleutians. Magma is typically andesitic from hydrated slab melting.
- High seismicity and tsunamis follow megathrust ruptures, as in Chile 1960, Alaska 1964, Sumatra-Andaman 2004 (Indian Ocean edge of the same Pacific-Australian coupling), and Japan 2011.
- Island arcs, back-arc basins, and accretionary prisms are the landform kit.

Why it matters as a zone

- About three-quarters of the world's active volcanoes and a large share of great earthquakes sit on this ring.
- India is not on the ring, but Pacific tsunamis and global climate of volcanic aerosols still couple distant hazards.
- Geophysical unity is the subduction engine; local geology still differs from Andes cordillera to Japanese island arc.

Flow diagram

Pacific plates -> Subduction trenches
Subduction trenches -> Deep earthquakes
Subduction trenches -> Volcanic arcs
Deep earthquakes -> Ring of Fire
Volcanic arcs -> Ring of Fire

Conclusion

The Circum-Pacific Zone is a subduction-and-arc belt with trenches, deep seismicity, andesite volcanoes, and megathrust tsunamis. Discuss it as plate geophysics of the Ring of Fire, not as one rock type.

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Q5 · 10 marks

The process of desertification does not have climate boundaries. Justify with examples.

GS I · 2020 · Geophysical Phenomena

Revision summary

Desertification is land degradation, not only the existence of a desert climate.

UNCCD already includes semi-arid and dry sub-humid lands.

Thar salinity and grazing push barrenness beyond dune cores.

The Sahel and Aral cases show drought plus policy, not a sealed climate wall.

Process follows soil and use, so it crosses climate boundaries.

Introduction

Desertification is the persistent degradation of drylands, but the process does not stop at a rainfall isohyet. Bad land use can desertify a semi-arid margin, and even wetter belts, while good management can hold a desert edge. Climate sets a risk. It does not draw a legal fence.

Body

Why climate is not a boundary

- UNCCD treats desertification as land degradation in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas. The definition already crosses 'true desert' into farm and savanna.
- Overgrazing, salinisation, groundwater mining, and deforestation can push land across a threshold even when rainfall has not become Saharan.
- Conversely, irrigation and enclosure can green a desert margin without a climate-zone change on the map.

Examples

- **Thar:** Rajasthan's arid core is climatic, but canal-side waterlogging and salinity, plus grazing pressure on the Gujarat-Haryana fringe, spread desert-like soils beyond the old dune line.
- **Sahel:** the 1970s-80s famines mixed drought with overcultivation and herd pressure. Recovery and new degradation have both occurred under similar rainfall bands. The boundary moved with use, not only with ITCZ.
- **Aral Sea** basin: Soviet irrigation of cotton in a dry climate collapsed a sea and salted farm belts. The disaster is hydropolitical, not a new Köppen class arriving from the west.
- Himalayan rain-shadow and Western Ghat rain-shadow pockets, plus mined laterite plateaus, show barrenness inside monsoon India.

Justification

- Climate zones are averages. Desertification is a process of soil, vegetation, and people. It therefore leaks across maps wherever the land is pushed.

Flow diagram

Climate risk -> Dryland

Land use water mining -> Dryland

Dryland -> Thar fringe

Dryland -> Sahel

Dryland -> Aral basin

Conclusion

Desertification has climatic preference, not climatic borders. Thar fringes, the Sahel, and the **Aral basin** justify the claim: misuse and water politics can manufacture desert conditions outside the textbook desert.

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Q6 · 10 marks

How will the melting of Himalayan glaciers have a far-reaching impact on the water resources of India?

GS I · 2020 · Natural Resources and Industries

Revision summary

Himalayan ice buffers the Indus, Ganga, and Brahmaputra in the dry season.

Early melt raises floods and glacial-lake outbursts.

Later mass loss cuts late-summer river flow.

Irrigation, hydropower, cities, and groundwater then take the shock.

Shared basins make the impact diplomatic as well as hydrological.

Introduction

The Hindu Kush-Himalaya stores winter snow and glacier ice that feed the **Indus, Ganga, and Brahmaputra**. Melt is not a local trekking problem. It rewrites India's river calendar, irrigation, cities, and power.

Body

Near-term water pulse, long-term deficit

- Initial decades can raise summer melt and flood peaks. Debris flows and glacial lake outburst floods already hit Uttarakhand and Sikkim.
- After peak water, glacier mass loss cuts late-summer baseflow when monsoon rain is also uncertain. The far-reaching impact is a less reliable lean-season river.

Basin-wise reach

- **Indus:** high glacier contribution. Punjab-Haryana canal agriculture and Pakistan's shared waters become more political as snowmelt timing shifts.
- **Ganga:** mountains supply the dry-season spine for the plains' cities, ghats, and tube-well recharge. Less glacier support means harder summers from Uttarakhand to Bengal.
- **Brahmaputra:** ice plus monsoon already flood Assam; more melt variability raises both flood and sediment load, then a later lean-season stress.

Far-reaching couplings

- Hydropower in the Himalaya depends on a predictable hydrograph; silt and flood pulses damage dams.
- Food security of the Green Revolution belt is canal-timed. A changed melt season is a crop-calendar shock.
- Groundwater will be pumped harder if rivers fail in late summer, deepening the alluvial crisis.
- Transboundary politics on the Indus and Brahmaputra tighten when the ice buffer thins.

Flow diagram

Glacier melt -> Floods GLOF

Glacier melt -> Later lean-season loss

Later lean-season loss -> Indus canals

Later lean-season loss -> Ganga plains

Later lean-season loss -> Brahmaputra

Conclusion

Himalayan melt first floods, then starves the lean season of the Indus, Ganga, and Brahmaputra. India's water resources feel it as irrigation, cities, power, groundwater, and diplomacy, not as a single mountain stream.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/how-will-the-melting-of-himalayan-glaciers-have-a-far-reaching-impact-on-the-water-resources-of-india/>

Q7 · 10 marks

Account for the present location of iron and steel industries away from the source of raw material, by giving examples.

GS I · 2020 · Natural Resources and Industries

Revision summary

Early Indian steel sat on ore and coal in the Jamshedpur-Damodar belt.

Imported coking coal and sea freight now favour coastal plants.

Vizag is a shore-based integrated plant for harbour and southern markets.

Hazira shows gas, port, and west-coast demand away from Jharkhand pits.

Mini mills follow scrap and power, further loosening the raw-material tie.

Introduction

- **Classic location theory put steel on coal and ore: Jamshedpur**, Durgapur, Bhilai, Rourkela. Present plants also sit on the coast and in markets. **Vizag** and **Hazira** show why the map moved.

Body

Why the old map was raw-material bound

- Bulk ore, coking coal, and limestone were expensive to haul. The Chota Nagpur-Damodar belt therefore hosted Tata's Jamshedpur and the public-sector plants of the Second Plan.
- Inland steel still matters. It is no longer the only logic.

Why plants now sit away from the pit

- **Imported coking coal** and even ore travel by sea. A port plant pays ocean freight once and avoids a long Indian rail haul from Jharkhand to a coastal market.
- **Vizag Steel** (RINL) was sited as a shore-based plant to use imported coal, Andhra ore, and a harbour, serving southern markets rather than sitting on Jharia coal.
- **Hazira** (Surat) is a gas-based and port-linked complex: energy, imported inputs, and a Gujarat-west-coast market, far from Singhbhum pits.
- Mini mills and sponge-iron plus electric furnaces follow scrap, power, and demand in west and south India, not only the Bokaro coalfield.
- Finished steel is less bulky relative to value than crude ore; market and export docks pull the rolling mill.

Account

- **Location is now a bundle:** port, imported coal, gas, scrap, and consumption. Jamshedpur remains the raw-material classic. Vizag and Hazira are the present away-from-source type.

Flow diagram

Ore plus coal -> Jamshedpur belt
Imported coal ports gas markets -> Vizag
Imported coal ports gas markets -> Hazira
Vizag -> Present location mix
Hazira -> Present location mix

Conclusion

Iron and steel still love bulk inputs, but global coal, coastal shipping, gas, and markets have pulled plants off the ore-coal junction. Account for Vizag and Hazira as port-and-market steel, not as a denial of Jamshedpur's logic.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/account-for-the-present-location-of-iron-and-steel-industries-away-from-the-source-of-raw-material-by-giving-examples/>

Q8 · 10 marks

Has caste lost its relevance in understanding the multi-cultural Indian Society? Elaborate your answer with illustrations.

GS I · 2020 · Social Empowerment, Communalism and Secularism

Revision summary

Caste no longer monopolises Indian social explanation.

Srinivas showed mobility through Sanskritisation and dominant castes.

Béteille saw class rise without the death of caste identity.

Marriage, elections, and atrocities keep jati empirically alive.

Multi-cultural India needs caste plus class, gender, and region.

Introduction

Caste is no longer the only key to Indian society. It has not become a museum piece. **M. N. Srinivas** and **André Béteille** still help: ritual rank changed, inequality and identity did not vanish. Multi-cultural India is language, religion, region, class, and jati.

Body

What has weakened

- Urban occupations, the Constitution, and reservations broke the old legal varna state. A software park does not display a village jajmani chart.
- **Srinivas's** Sanskritisation and dominant caste already showed mobility and politics, not a frozen Manu.
- Inter-caste dining in cities, and class mixing in malls, make everyday caste less visible to the elite eye.

What remains relevant

- Marriage is still largely endogamous. Matrimonial columns and apps filter jati even when the office does not.
- **Béteille** argued that caste as a closed status system was yielding to class, yet caste as identity and network survived. Elections, khap disputes, and caste associations illustrate the second life.
- Atrocities, manual scavenging, and campus exclusion show hierarchy as violence, not as a forgotten custom.
- **Multi-cultural claims of language and religion often sit on a caste base:** a 'Hindu' or 'Tamil' public is still internally ranked.

Elaborate with the right answer

- Caste has lost monopoly as the sole explanation. It has not lost relevance. Class, gender, and region must sit beside it, as Béteille insisted, without a premature obituary.

Flow diagram

Ritual hierarchy -> Weaker in law and city jobs

Endogamy vote atrocity -> Still relevant

Class region religion -> Multi-cultural reading

Still relevant -> Multi-cultural reading

Conclusion

Caste is less total in law and office than in 1950. It remains a primary tool for marriage, vote, and humiliation. Multi-cultural India is misread if caste is declared irrelevant.

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Q9 · 10 marks

COVID-19 pandemic accelerated class inequalities and poverty in India. Comment.

GS I · 2020 · Women, Population and Urbanisation

Revision summary

Lockdown split remote formal jobs from informal daily wages.

Education and health gaps widened along the same class line.

Reverse migration in 2020 sent unemployed workers back to villages.

Relief schemes cushioned hunger later; they did not stop the acceleration.

COVID amplified existing informal-economy inequality.

Introduction

The 2020 lockdown stopped informal wages overnight. Those who could work from a screen kept pay. Those who could not walked home. COVID did not invent Indian inequality. It accelerated it.

Body

How class gaps widened

- Formal salaried and platform-able white-collar work moved online. Informal casual labour in cities lost days with almost no contract cushion.
- School closure hit first-generation learners without devices; elite private schooling continued on screens. The class gap became an education gap.
- Health spending and hospital access split the insured and the cash-poor. Mortality and debt followed that split.

Poverty and reverse migration 2020

- **Reverse migration** from metros to villages in 2020 dumped unemployed workers onto rural households already thin on work.
- Daily-wage poverty became visible on highways. Food insecurity rose even where PDS later expanded.
- Women lost more paid work and took more unpaid care. Class and gender stacked.

Comment, not slogan

- Emergency cash, PMGKY rations, and MGNREGA demand were real buffers, yet they followed the shock rather than preventing it.
- Asset-owning classes gained from cheap money and later asset prices; labour did not.
- **Comment:** the pandemic was a class event in a labour-surplus informal economy. Poverty rose as lost days and debt, even where official lines later moved.

Flow diagram

Lockdown -> Formal WFH kept pay

Lockdown -> Informal wage collapse

Informal wage collapse -> Reverse migration 2020

Reverse migration 2020 -> Deeper poverty and inequality

Conclusion

COVID-19 accelerated class inequality by protecting remote formal work and stripping informal wages. Reverse migration in 2020 is the illustration. Poverty deepened as insecurity, even where relief later arrived.

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Q10 · 10 marks

Do you agree that regionalism in India appears to be a consequence of rising cultural assertiveness? Argue.

GS I · 2020 · Social Empowerment, Communalism and Secularism

Revision summary

Language and identity pride have produced states and regional parties.

Sons-of-the-soil politics uses culture to gate jobs and migration.

Telangana and fiscal federalism show economic regionalism beside culture.

The 1956 linguistic map was cultural state-making with an administrative aim.

- **Agree in part:** culture is a cause, not the only consequence-engine.

Introduction

Regionalism in India is the claim of a language, a homeland, or a state against a centre or a neighbour. Cultural assertiveness is part of it. It is not the whole cause. Economy, federal power, and migration also make regions.

Body

Where culture does drive regionalism

- Language movements - Telugu, Tamil, and later identity politics of script and school - were cultural assertiveness that became states and parties.
- **Sons-of-the-soil campaigns mix pride of culture with jobs:** Shiv Sena's Bombay, or nativist turns in Assam's language and citizenship debates.
- Festival, film, and caste-region pride can harden a 'we' against Hindi or against a migrant 'they'.

Why the thesis is incomplete

- **Regionalism also follows uneven development:** Telangana's complaint was irrigation and jobs as much as culture.
- Federal design - States Reorganisation, **Article 370's** old speciality, **Sixth Schedule**, and GST bargaining - creates regional politics even without a new cultural wave.
- Sometimes culture is the idiom of a class or tribal material fight, not the independent cause.

Argue a balanced yes-but

- Agree that rising cultural assertiveness, in language and identity media, has fed many regional parties since the 1980s.
- Disagree that it 'appears to be' the consequence as a single arrow. Older regionalism of 1956 was linguistic state-making; newer regionalism is also fiscal and urban-job nativism.
- **Best argument:** culture supplies the banner; political economy supplies much of the fuel.

Flow diagram

Cultural assertiveness -> Regionalism

Uneven development -> Regionalism

Federal power jobs -> Regionalism

Conclusion

Cultural assertiveness is a real and rising source of Indian regionalism. It is not a sufficient explanation. Argue for a both-and: language and pride, plus development and federal power.

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WRAP Exams

Q11 · 15 marks

Indian Philosophy and tradition played a significant role in conceiving and shaping the monuments and their art in India. Discuss.

GS I · 2020 · Indian Heritage and Culture

Revision summary

Vastu and the world-mountain idea shape the Hindu temple plan.

Buddhist stupas and Ajanta paintings turn anitya and karuna into circuit and mural.

Jain caves and agama sculpture follow liberation and rasa.

Sufi and Sikh buildings encode baraka and sewa in plan.

Philosophy programmes the monument; stone and patronage still constrain it.

Introduction

Indian monuments are not only engineering. They are philosophy in brick, stone, and plaster. Dharma, mandala, emptiness, rasa, and later Sufi and Sikh ideas decided plan, axis, and the story the wall was allowed to tell.

Body

Cosmology as plan

- Vedic and Puranic **vastu** and the temple as Mount Meru or Kailasa turn a shrine into a diagram of the universe. The garbhagriha is the cave-womb; the shikhara is the world mountain.
- Buddhist stupas at **Sanchi** and cave chaityas at **Ajanta** encode anitya and the path around the relic. Circumambulation is a philosophical walk, not a tourist circuit.
- Jain temples and Ellora's Jain caves stage the tirthankara as a liberated presence; the samavasarana idea shapes assembly and axis.

Narrative and image

- Ajanta Jataka walls teach karuna and the Bodhisattva ideal in colour. The monument is a sermon that illiterate pilgrims could read.
- Hindu temple sculpture at Khajuraho, Konark, and the Chola bronze tradition follows agama and rasa: the deity must be beautiful enough to receive puja, which is a philosophical aesthetics, not decoration.
- Pallava **Mahabalipuram** relief of the Descent of the Ganga is Puranic hydrology carved as public philosophy of kingship and grace.

Living traditions beyond the 'Hindu-Buddhist' frame

- Sufi dargahs organise space around baraka, the grave, and the langar-like courtyard; Indo-Islamic tombs still sit in charbagh paradises drawn from Persian and Quranic garden ideas meeting Indian craft.
- Sikh Harmandir Sahib's lower plinth and four doors translate sewa and openness into architecture.
- Mosque qibla and the empty mihrab are a philosophical refusal of the idol, as binding for those monuments as the linga is for a Shaiva vimana.

Limits

- Patron taste, guild skill, and available stone also shape art. Philosophy is necessary, not a lone cause.
- Folk shrines often simplify the shastra; tradition here is practice, not only the Upanishad.

Flow diagram

Indian philosophy -> Vastu mandala temple
Indian philosophy -> Stupa chaitya Ajanta
Indian philosophy -> Sufi Sikh space
Vastu mandala temple -> Monument and art
Stupa chaitya Ajanta -> Monument and art
Sufi Sikh space -> Monument and art

Conclusion

- **Indian monuments were conceived as walkable philosophy:** mandala temples, stupa paths, Jataka walls, and later dargah and gurdwara ethics. Tradition supplied the programme. Guilds and kings supplied the chisel.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/indian-philosophy-and-tradition-played-a-significant-role-in-conceiving-and-shaping-the-monuments-and-their-art-in-india-discuss/>

Q12 · 15 marks

Persian literary sources of medieval India reflect the spirit of the age. Comment.

GS I · 2020 · World's Physical Geography

Revision summary

Sultanate and Mughal Persian chronicles, the Ain, and royal memoirs are court archives.

They catch political theology, zabt, and Indo-Persian taste.

Barani, Abul Fazl, and Badauni show an age in argument, not one voice.

Peasants and vernacular piety are under-written.

Read them as a true elite spirit, not as all of medieval India.

Introduction

Persian was the prestige prose of the Sultanate and Mughal courts. Chronicles, insha, akhlaq, and memoirs do reflect the spirit of their age: conquest, agrarianism, Indo-Persian etiquette, and a God-fearing kingship. They also reflect the court more than the village, which is the comment's limit.

Body

What the sources are

- **Court chronicles:** Minhaj's Tabaqat-i Nasiri, Barani's Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi, Isami, and later Abul Fazl's Akbarnama and Ain-i-Akbari.
- **Royal self-writing:** Baburnama (Turki, then Persian circulation) and Jahangir's Tuzuk mix hunting, justice, and taste.
- Sufi malfuzat and premakhyan cousins in Persianate idiom show piety beside the throne.
- Insha manuals and farmans capture the bureaucratic spirit of a paper empire.

Spirit they do catch

- **Political theology:** Barani's advice on the ideal sultan, Abul Fazl's sulh-i-kul and divine light around Akbar, Badauni's orthodox unease - these are the age arguing with itself.
- **Agrarian state:** the Ain's zabt, crops, and prices are the Mughal spirit as revenue, not only as marble.
- **Indo-Persian hybrid:** language, garden, and etiquette show a ruling culture that was neither purely Central Asian nor Sanskritic.
- War, famine, and faction appear because the chronicler needed to explain the king's fortune.

Distortions of the spirit

- Women, peasants, and non-Persian speakers enter as types or tax units. The age of the bazaar and the bhakti street is thinner here than in vernacular sources.
- Patronage made praise a job. Defeat is often God's trial, never the author's party loss.
- Later colonial readers treated these texts as full 'Muslim India'. The spirit they reflect is courtly Persianate India, a real but partial age.

How to comment fairly

- Use Persian sources as a primary window on kingship, fiscal mind, and elite piety.

- Pair them with inscriptions, temple grants, and vernacular poetry to hear the rest of the century.

Flow diagram

Persian texts -> Kingship theology
Persian texts -> Revenue Ain
Persian texts -> Indo-Persian etiquette
Vernacular other -> Fuller age
Persian texts -> Fuller age

Conclusion

Persian literary sources reflect the medieval Indian spirit of court, revenue, and Indo-Persian Islamicate culture with unmatched density. They do not exhaust the age. Comment: indispensable mirror, aristocratic frame.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/persian-literary-sources-of-medieval-india-reflect-the-spirit-of-the-age-comment/>

Q13 · 15 marks

Since the decade of the 1920s, the national movement acquired various ideological strands and thereby expanded its social base. Discuss.

GS I · 2020 · The Freedom Struggle

Revision summary

Non-Cooperation and Khilafat turned Congress toward a mass public.

Swarajists and no-changers split method, not always the goal.

AITUC, HSRA, and early communism added class and revolutionary strands.

Peasants, Non-Brahmin politics, and **Ambedkar** widened the social question.

A larger base was the product of many ideologies under and beside the **Gandhi** centre.

Introduction

The 1920s opened with Non-Cooperation and Khilafat. **Gandhi** made Congress a mass address. Around that centre grew Swarajists, no-changers, socialists, communists, revolutionaries, Non-Brahmin and peasant voices. Ideology multiplied, and so did who counted as the nation.

Body

Gandhi, Khilafat, and the new mass

- Non-Cooperation (1920-22) pulled students, lawyers, and many peasants into hartal and boycott. Khilafat briefly widened the Muslim street inside the same campaign.
- Constructive work - khadi, anti-untouchability, village spinning - created a social base that petition-Congress had lacked.
- Chauri Chaura and withdrawal showed both the power and the ceiling of a moral mass.

Constitutional and revolutionary strands

- **Swarajists** (C. R. Das, Motilal **Nehru**) took councils; no-changers stayed with constructive work. Two methods, one nationalist roof.
- Hindustan Republican Association and later HSRA (Kakori, Bhagat Singh's generation) added a revolutionary socialist strand that spoke to youth beyond the ashram.
- **AITUC (1920)** and mill strikes brought labour as a class, not only as a crowd.

Left, peasant, caste, and region

- **M. N. Roy**, the CPI's early years, and later the **Congress Socialist Party (1934)** gave a class reading of swaraj.
- Peasant leagues and **Bardoli (1928)** under Patel showed a landed-peasant base; Eka and other movements showed a poorer agrarian edge.
- Non-Brahmin, Self-Respect (**Periyar**), and depressed-class organising, including **Ambedkar's** independent path, expanded the social question inside and beside Congress.
- Women in pickets and Prabha-style publicity made gender a visible strand, still limited in leadership share.

Thereby the base

- From an urban professional Congress the movement became multi-class and multi-regional, though not equally deep in every jati and princely zone.

- The 1920s template - mass satyagraha plus rival ideologies - fed Civil Disobedience and 1942.

Flow diagram

Gandhi Khilafat mass -> National movement
Swarajists -> National movement
Left labour peasants -> National movement
Revolutionaries -> National movement
Caste gender region -> National movement

Conclusion

From the 1920s the national movement was a coalition of Gandhians, council-entry liberals, revolutionaries, leftists, peasants, labour, and anti-caste voices. Ideological variety was the method by which the social base grew. It also left unresolved class and caste files for the republic.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/since-the-decade-of-the-1920s-the-national-movement-acquired-various-ideological-strands-and-thereby-expanded-its-social-base-discuss/>

Q14 · 15 marks

The interlinking of revivers can provide viable solutions to the multi-dimensional inter-related problems of droughts, floods and interrupted navigation. Critically examine.

GS I · 2020 · Geophysical Phenomena

Revision summary

ILR claims to send flood water to drought land and to aid boats.

Ken-Betwa is the test case and already hits Panna ecology.

Flood, drought, and navigation follow different hydrology.

Climate change makes 'surplus' rivers an unstable idea.

Watershed, zoning, and dedicated waterways are the least-cost complements.

Introduction

The National Perspective Plan for interlinking rivers promises to move flood water to drought districts and to restore inland boats. **Ken-Betwa** is the first living test. Hydrology, ecology, and federal politics say the promise is partial, costly, and not a standalone viable fix.

Body

The case made for linking

- Surplus-to-deficit transfer could, in theory, shave Ganga-Brahmaputra flood peaks and refill dry Peninsular tanks.
- A long navigable contour would cut diesel trucking, a logistics argument the question names as interrupted navigation.
- Ken-Betwa is sold as Bundelkhand drought relief plus a dam that also claims hydropower and tourist water.

Why floods, droughts, and boats are not one pipe

- Flood and drought can occur in the same basin in one year. A canal does not cancel cloudbursts or a failed monsoon on the receiving side.
- Himalayan rivers are silt-heavy and seasonal; Peninsular rivers are monsoon-pulse. Linking unlike hydrographs needs storage that submerges forests and villages.
- Navigation needs assured draft, terminals, and low silt. Interlinking is a water-transfer project first; inland waterways (IWAI, National Waterways) can proceed without a subcontinent-wide plumbing grid.

Ecological and social critique

- Ken-Betwa threatens the **Panna** tiger and vulture landscape and a dry deciduous ecology that is not 'wasted surplus'.
- Delta shrinkage, reduced environmental flows, and the Ganga-Brahmaputra sediment budget are climate-sensitive. Yesterday's surplus is not a treaty with 2050 glaciers and a wilder monsoon.
- Displacement, interstate disputes (Sutlej-Yamuna, Cauvery memories), and huge capital cost fail a least-cost test against watershed, aquifer recharge, crop shift, and urban storm drains.

Critical verdict

- Some local links and storage may help. A pan-India grid as the viable solution to three distinct problems oversells engineering.
- **Viable packages:** floodplain zoning plus reservoirs for floods; rainwater and Atal Bhujal-type groundwater work for drought; dedicated waterways on already navigable stretches for boats.

Flow diagram

River linking -> Claimed flood drought nav
River linking -> Forest displacement silt
Watershed waterways zoning -> More viable mix
Claimed flood drought nav -> Only partial
Forest displacement silt -> Only partial

Conclusion

River interlinking can move some water. It cannot by itself solve drought, flood, and navigation, which have different physics. Ken-Betwa shows the ecological bill. Critically, treat ILR as one optional project class, not as India's water philosophy.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/the-interlinking-of-rivers-can-provide-viable-solutions-to-the-multi-dimensional-inter-related-problems-of-droughts-floods-and-interrupted-navigation-critically-examine/>

Q15 · 15 marks

Account for the huge flooding of million cities in India including the smart ones like Hyderabad and Pune. Suggest lasting remedial measures.

GS I · 2020 · Indian Heritage and Culture

Revision summary

Cities flood because lakes, nallahs, and soils were sealed and encroached.

Hyderabad 2020 and Pune show Smart projects without sponge hydrology.

Design storms are outdated for a warmer, cloudburst climate.

Lasting fixes are legal floodplains, bigger drains, permeable streets, and waste control.

Dashboards do not replace tanks.

Introduction

Indian million-plus cities flood because rain now hits a sealed basin that used to be a lake-and-nallah sponge. **Hyderabad 2020** and repeated **Pune** floods show that a Smart City dashboard does not raise a riverbed or unclog a drain.

Body

Why the water has nowhere to go

- Lakes and tanks - Musi floodplains and lesser cheruvus in Hyderabad, Mula-Mutha corridors in Pune - were built over for layout plots and IT parks.
- Storm drains are sized for an older rainfall intensity; cloudbursts and a warmer atmosphere now exceed that design.
- Hard paving kills infiltration; every parking lot is a tributary.
- Solid waste and construction debris choke nallahs; the flood is often a blocked drain, not only a big river.
- Upstream dams and hard embankments can worsen peak timing when gates open into a city that has no floodplain left.

Smart is not sponge

- Hyderabad's 2020 Musi-nallah disaster and Pune's riverfront-plus-rain events hit cities with cameras, GIS, and Smart Mission projects. Sensors without lake restoration are cosmetics.
- **Chennai 2015, Bengaluru layout floods, and Mumbai's Mithi are the same family:** million-city hydrology ignored in master plans.

Lasting remedies

- Legal lake and floodplain buffers, demolition of obvious encroachment, and a public drain cadastre - not seasonal desilting theatre.
- **Sponge design:** permeable streets, rooftop rain, recharge wells, and restored tanks as in a serious Water-Sensitive Urban Design code.
- Stop building in riverbeds; revise development control rules and make the disaster management plan bind the municipal corporation, not only NDMA PDFs.
- Waste segregation and nallah trash racks; treat solid waste as flood infrastructure.

- Upstream watershed, early warning, and insurance last; the first fix is to give rain a legal path to the river.
- **Finance:** AMRUT 2.0, Smart City funds, and State disaster windows should buy culverts and tanks, not only LED poles.

Flow diagram

Lake nallah encroachment -> Urban flood

Paving waste -> Urban flood

Cloudburst -> Urban flood

Sponge restoration -> Lasting remedy

Floodplain law -> Lasting remedy

Conclusion

Million cities flood because they paved the sponge and pinched the Musi and Mula-Mutha. Hyderabad 2020 and Pune prove Smart branding is not hydrology. Lasting remedy is floodplain law, drain capacity, and sponge streets - enforced every dry season, not only after the next cloudburst.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/account-for-the-huge-flooding-of-million-cities-in-india-including-the-smart-ones-like-hyderabad-and-pune-suggest-lasting-remedial-measures/>

Q16 · 15 marks

India has immense potential of solar energy though there are regional variations in its developments. Elaborate.

GS I · 2020 · World's Physical Geography

Revision summary

India has high tropical solar potential nationwide.

Utility parks cluster in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and the southern Deccan.

Cloud, land, and grid keep the Northeast and Himalaya on rooftop and pumps.

DISCOM risk and net-metering explain urban rooftop lag.

ISA, NSM, and KUSUM are the policy tools to spread development.

Introduction

India sits in the tropics with a huge rooftop and wasteland estate. Solar potential is national. Deployment is regional: the Thar and western parks lead, the humid east and high Himalaya lag. Policy - **ISA**, NSM, KUSUM - tries to close that map.

Body

National potential

- High insolation over most of the peninsula, falling winter sun in the far north, and a long dry season in the west make photovoltaic and, in pockets, solar-thermal plausible at terawatt-hour scale.
- **Co-benefits:** daytime peak shaving, irrigation pumps, and a diplomatic story through the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** that India co-founded.

Why development varies

- **Resource:** Rajasthan, Gujarat, and the western Deccan have more clear-sky kWh/m² than the Northeast's cloud and the Himalaya's slope and snow.
- **Land:** Bhadla-type parks need square kilometres. Kerala, Bengal, and hill states lack cheap contiguous waste land; they need rooftop and agri-voltaic paths.
- **Grid:** Rajasthan parks wait on green corridors and storage; without wires, potential is stranded.
- **Finance and DISCOM health:** states with better payment and open-access practice attract IPPs; others stay on paper targets.
- **Policy stacking:** Gujarat and Rajasthan moved early on parks; some eastern states moved later on rooftop and PM-KUSUM pumps.

Regional picture

- **Leaders:** Rajasthan (Bhadla), Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra, Madhya Pradesh - utility solar plus parks.
- **Middle:** Maharashtra, Telangana - mixed parks and industry rooftops.
- **Laggards in utility scale:** many Northeastern and densely farmed Gangetic districts, where the right technology is rooftop, canal-top, and pumps, not a second Bhadla.
- Urban rooftop still lags its potential even in rich metros because of net-metering friction.

What would even the map

- Storage and round-the-clock tenders so western generation can firm eastern evenings.
- KUSUM and PM Surya Ghar to spread solar as a farm and household asset, not only a desert park.
- ISA knowledge and cheap finance for states that have cloud, not waste land.

Flow diagram

Tropical insolation -> West parks Rajasthan Gujarat

Tropical insolation -> East hills rooftop KUSUM

Corridors storage -> West parks Rajasthan Gujarat

ISA NSM NSM -> National solar

Conclusion

India's solar potential is immense and geographically uneven in ease, not in need. Parks in the west harvest the sun; the east and hills must harvest rooftops, pumps, and a stronger grid. ISA and national missions are the political roof over that regional variation.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/india-has-immense-potential-of-solar-energy-though-there-are-regional-variations-in-its-developments-elaborate/>

Q17 · 15 marks

Examine the status of forest resources of India and its resultant impact on climate change.

GS I · 2020 · Natural Resources and Industries

Revision summary

ISFR cover looks moderate; dense natural forest is uneven and under pressure.

Northeast, Ghats, and Himalaya hold most of the real climate forest.

FRA tenure and diversion politics shape what actually stands.

Loss turns a sink into emissions and worsens local flood-drought-fire.

Quality of forest, not only percentage, decides the climate result.

Introduction

India's recorded forest and tree cover is a little over one-fifth of the land in ISFR-type accounting, but dense natural forest is thinner, uneven, and under pressure. Forests are a carbon sink and a climate shield. Degradation turns them into a carbon source and a hotter, drier local climate.

Body

Status of the resource

- **Geographic imbalance:** dense cover in the Northeast, Western Ghats, and pockets of the Himalaya and Central Indian belt; the plains and western drylands are tree-poor.
- **Quality gap:** rising 'tree cover' can be plantations, coconut, and social forestry while old-growth and biodiversity fall. Open forest and scrub are not the same climate asset as a rainforest.
- **Drivers of loss:** linear projects, mining, encroachment, fire, grazing, and invasive species. Legal diversion under forest law continues even as national targets speak of more green.
- **Forest Rights Act, 2006** recognised community rights; implementation is patchy, yet excluding people has also failed. Status must be read as ecology plus tenure.
- Community and sacred groves, CAMPA money, and Green India Mission are the official repair kit, with mixed delivery.

Resultant climate impact

- Standing forests store carbon in biomass and soil; felling and fire release it and cut future sequestration, working against NDC forestry pledges.
- Western Ghat and Himalayan forests regulate monsoon orography, landslides, and glacier-fed catchment humidity; loss worsens both flood and drought locally.
- Northeast degradation plus jhum gone wrong can raise emissions and silt; well-managed jhum and community forest can do the opposite.
- Urban heat and Gangetic dryness grow when city lungs and ravine forests go. Climate change then feeds back as more fire and pest, a loop.
- Plantation of a single exotic is a weak sink and a weak adaptation tool compared with mixed native forest.

Examine, do not only lament

- India can still use FRA-plus-science community forestry, landscape restoration, and less rubber-stamp diversion to keep forests as a net sink.
- Climate policy that only counts canopy percentage will miss the quality that actually cools and stores.

Flow diagram

Natural dense forest -> Carbon sink
Degradation diversion fire -> Emissions heat
FRA community community -> Natural dense forest
Plantation count -> Weak climate asset

Conclusion

Forest resources are regionally rich and qualitatively stressed. Their climate role is sink, sponge, and monsoon ally. Degradation and fake greening weaken that role. FRA-respecting restoration of natural forest, not only tree numbers, is the climate-relevant status India needs.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/examine-the-status-of-forest-resources-of-india-and-its-resultant-impact-on-climate-change/>

Q18 · 15 marks

Is diversity and pluralism in India under threat due to globalisation? Justify your answer.

GS I · 2020 · Globalisation and Indian Society

Revision summary

Global brands and platforms can flatten language and craft.

Internal politics and caste also threaten pluralism.

GI tags, regional OTT, and diaspora archives use global pipes to save difference.

Hybrid culture is a new pluralism, not only a loss.

- **Stand:** partial threat from globalisation, not a single-cause collapse.

Introduction

Globalisation moves goods, media, and migrants. It can flatten taste into English, mall, and platform. It can also fund GI crafts, regional cinema, and diaspora pride. Diversity in India is under pressure from many forces; globalisation is one, not the only, and not only a wrecking ball.

Body

Threat pathways

- **Cultural homogenisation:** global brands, English-medium aspiration, and algorithm feeds can shrink local tongues and foodways, especially among urban youth.
- **Market concentration:** small weavers, wet-market fish, and neighbourhood cinema lose to chains and OTT catalogues that privilege scale.
- Aspirational sameness can make pluralism look rustic, which is a soft threat to everyday diversity.
- Global Islamist or Hindutva media circuits, which are also transnational, can harden identities and reduce lived pluralism even when the 'global' is not Hollywood.

Why globalisation is not the sole threat

- Majoritarian politics, communal riot memory, and caste exclusion threaten pluralism with or without WTO.
- Official language hierarchy and internal migration stress predate 1991 liberalisation.
- Blaming only 'the West' misses Indian capital and Indian platforms as globalisers.

Counter-currents that justify a nuanced no

- Regional cinema, OTT in Tamil, Malayalam, and Bhojpuri, and GI tags (Darjeeling, Kanjeevaram, Alphonso) use the world market to keep difference alive.
- Diaspora money and digital archives revive scripts, recipes, and festivals.
- Constitutional pluralism ([Articles 25-30](#), [Eighth Schedule](#)) is a domestic legal resource that global human-rights talk sometimes supports.
- Hybridity - Indo-Chinese plates, IPL, fusion music - is a new diversity, not always a death of the old.

Justify the stand

- **Partial threat:** yes, for vulnerable languages, crafts, and attention.

- **Total threat:** no. Pluralism's sharper present danger is often political homogenisation at home.
- **Policy:** protect language in schools, enforce GI and fair trade, keep platform diversity rules, and refuse to treat globalisation as fate.

Flow diagram

Globalisation -> Homogenising market
Globalisation -> GI OTT diaspora revival
Domestic majoritarianism -> Threat to pluralism
Homogenising market -> Threat to pluralism
GI OTT diaspora revival -> Living diversity

Conclusion

Globalisation threatens some layers of Indian diversity through market sameness. It also carries regional culture farther than the district ever could. Justify a qualified yes on crafts and tongues, and a no to the claim that pluralism's only enemy is the global.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/is-diversity-and-pluralism-in-india-under-threat-due-to-globalisation-justify-your-answer/>

Q19 · 15 marks

Customs and traditions suppress reason leading to obscurantism. Do you agree?

GS I · 2020 · World's Physical Geography

Revision summary

Harmful unexamined custom does suppress reason and becomes obscurantism.

Child marriage, honour violence, and ritual humiliation are exhibits.

Craft, grove, and care customs can hold empirical knowledge.

Article 51A(h) asks for scientific temper, not cultural demolition.

- **Stand:** partial agreement, reform the closed custom, keep the arguable one.

Introduction

Custom is inherited practice. Reason is public argument. When custom forbids evidence - witch hunts, child marriage, ritual humiliation - it becomes obscurantism. When custom carries diet, craft, and care, it is social memory. Agreement with the statement should be partial and sharp, not a war on all tradition.

Body

Where the charge holds

- Practices that punish questions - honour violence, khap bans on marriage, superstition as medicine - suppress reason and harm the body.
- Gendered custom has long blocked girls' schooling and widow rights; reformers from Rammohan to Phule, Narayana Guru, and Ambedkar used reason and law against that obscurantism.
- Communal myth as history, and astrology as public policy, are tradition-talk used to avoid evidence.

Where the charge overreaches

- Not every custom is anti-reason. Panchayat water-sharing, sacred grove protection, and craft guilds can be empirical knowledge in another idiom.
- Blind modernism can itself be dogmatic. Scientific temper (Article 51A(h)) is a constitutional duty, not a licence to sneer at every festival.
- Living traditions reform from inside - bhakti critique, Sikh langar, Buddhist reason - which shows custom is not a sealed dark room.

How a republic should stand

- Agree that unexamined custom breeds obscurantism when it claims immunity from harm tests.
- Disagree that tradition as such is the enemy of reason. The enemy is authority that cannot be argued with.
- **Tools:** education, IPC and special laws against harmful practices, and reformers who speak the community's language.
- Courts already balance Articles 25-26 with dignity and public order; that is reason disciplining custom without erasing religion.

Flow diagram

Custom -> Harmful unexamined
Custom -> Memory craft care
Harmful unexamined -> Obscurantism
Reform education law -> Public reason
Memory craft care -> Public reason

Conclusion

Agree that many customs have suppressed reason and produced obscurantism. Do not agree that tradition is only a darkener. Keep the practices that can face evidence; drop those that cannot. That is the constitutional middle.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/customs-and-traditions-suppress-reason-leading-to-obscurantism-do-you-agree/>

Q20 · 15 marks

How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate your answer.

GS I · 2020 · World's Physical Geography

Revision summary

SWAYAM, DIKSHA, PM eVIDYA, and DTH added national education rails.

UDISE and NDEAR improved planning data and interoperability.

COVID proved continuity value and class bias at once.

Teachers and labs still need the physical school.

Contribution is infrastructure plus unfinished equity.

Introduction

- **Digital India did not replace the school. It added rails:** teacher platforms, open courses, TV channels, and data. COVID made those rails a substitute classroom overnight, which revealed both contribution and class divide.

Body

What was built

- **SWAYAM** and NPTEL-type MOOCs extended higher-education courses beyond the college gate.
- **DIKSHA** gave teachers energised textbooks, lesson plans, and a national professional stack aligned to NEP 2020 talk of resources, not only buildings.
- **PM eVIDYA**, SWAYAM Prabha DTH, and radio attempted a multi-mode reach when schools shut.
- **UDISE+ and related MIS improved the functioning of planning:** enrolment, toilets, and teachers became numbers a district could see.
- **NDEAR** (National Digital Education Architecture) aims to keep IDs, content, and assessments interoperable rather than as a jungle of apps.
- Virtual labs, NISHTHA teacher training, and language tools support science and multilingual classrooms on paper.

Contribution to functioning

- **Continuity:** some teaching survived lockdown through these pipes.
- **Teacher support:** a poorly resourced school can still pull a standard lesson, which is a functioning gain if the teacher is trained to use it.
- **Equity attempt:** DTH and radio were meant for the child without a smartphone.
- **Governance:** mid-day meal and scholarship databases, plus online admissions in some states, cut petty gatekeeping.

Limits that still shape functioning

- Device, data, and electricity poverty meant digital school was a class filter, as reverse-migrant children learned.
- Assessment integrity and laboratory skill do not live fully online.

- Teacher workload and surveillance risk if MIS becomes only a dashboard of blame.
- Content quality is uneven; a portal is not a pedagogy.

Elaborate a balanced path

- **Blend:** digital as supplement in normal times, not a permanent substitute for the neighbourhood school.
- Fund devices as public infrastructure, train teachers, and keep PM eVIDYA channels alive for the next shock.
- NEP's three-language and foundational literacy goals still need humans; digital should serve FLN, not distract from it.

Flow diagram

DIKSHA SWAYAM eVIDYA -> Functioning rails
UDISE NDEAR -> Governance data
Device divide -> Unequal functioning
Functioning rails -> Education system
Governance data -> Education system
Unequal functioning -> Education system

Conclusion

Digital initiatives improved the education system's reach, teacher resources, and data functioning. They also exposed a device divide. Their contribution is real as infrastructure. It is incomplete as justice until the school and the smartphone stop being alternative destinies.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/how-have-digital-initiatives-in-india-contributed-to-the-functioning-of-the-education-system-in-the-country-elaborate-your-answer/>

Compiled answer key

Last pages of this pack. Each question links to the WRAP model answer on wrapexams.com.

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Q1 10 marks	Q2 10 marks	Q3 10 marks	Q4 10 marks
Q5 10 marks	Q6 10 marks	Q7 10 marks	Q8 10 marks
Q9 10 marks	Q10 10 marks	Q11 15 marks	Q12 15 marks
Q13 15 marks	Q14 15 marks	Q15 15 marks	Q16 15 marks
Q17 15 marks	Q18 15 marks	Q19 15 marks	Q20 15 marks

Question-wise key

Q1 · 10 marks Solution

Q2 · 10 marks Solution

Q3 · 10 marks Solution

Q4 · 10 marks Solution

Q5 · 10 marks Solution

Q6 · 10 marks Solution

Q7 · 10 marks Solution

Q8 · 10 marks Solution

Q9 · 10 marks Solution

Q10 · 10 marks Solution

Q11 · 15 marks Solution

Q12 · 15 marks Solution

Q13 · 15 marks Solution

Q14 · 15 marks Solution

Q15 · 15 marks Solution

Q16 · 15 marks Solution

Q17 · 15 marks Solution

Q18 · 15 marks Solution

Q19 · 15 marks Solution

Q20 · 15 marks Solution

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