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Q89

With reference to the cultural history of India, the memorizing of chronicles, dynastic histories and epic tales was the profession of who of the following? (a) Shramana (b) Parivraajaka (c) Agrahaarika (d) Maagadha Official key: D.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2016 · General Studies · 2 marks · History (Ancient, Medieval, Modern)

Ancient, medieval and modern Indian history - Prelims GS Paper I.

Explanation**(a)**

Shramana denotes an ascetic striver in the Sramanic tradition (Buddhist, Jaina, Ajivika), not a professional reciter of royal chronicles. This option is not the key.

(b)

Parivraajaka is a wandering renouncer. Memorising dynastic tales was not that vocation. This option is wrong.

(c)

Agrahaarika relates to an **agrahara** (Brahmin settlement/grant), not to the bardic profession named in the question. This option is not the key.

(d) Official key

Maagadha (and the related **suta**-magadha pairing in early texts) designates a class whose profession included preserving and reciting chronicles, genealogies and epic lore at court. That is why (d) is the official key.

Summary

Official key is (d) Maagadha. In the cultural history of India, magadhas and sutas are associated with oral preservation of **itihasa-purana**, royal genealogies and heroic tales. Shramanas and parivrajakas are renouncers; agraharika points to grant villages. The question is about a profession of memory, not about asceticism or land. Only (d) names that professional group.

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Suta

Often paired with magadha as court bards and genealogists

Itihasa-purana

Traditional corpus of epics and ancient lore

Charana / bhat

Later regional bardic communities with similar memory roles

Shramana

World-renouncing seeker; opposite social type to a court reciter

Agrahara

Brahmin village grant in South and Deccan inscriptions

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