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Q17

With reference to the cultural history of medieval India, consider the following statements: 1. Siddhas (Sittars) of Tamil region were monotheistic and condemned idolatry. 2. Lingayats of Kannada region questioned the theory of rebirth and rejected the caste hierarchy. Which of the statements given above is/are correct? (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
Official key: C.

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)

Siddhas only. **Tamil Siddhas**/Sittars were broadly monotheistic and criticised idol worship, but Lingayat positions on rebirth and caste are also correctly stated. 1 alone is incomplete.

(b)

Lingayats only. **Basava**'s vachana tradition did question rebirth and caste hierarchy, yet statement 1 on Siddhas is also accepted in this item. 2 alone is not the key.

(c) Official key

Both 1 and 2. Siddhas (Sittars) of the Tamil country leaned to one God and condemned idolatry. Lingayats of the Kannada country, following **Basava**, rejected caste hierarchy and questioned the theory of rebirth. That stored letter is the official key.

(d)

Neither. Both medieval cultural statements are treated as correct, so 'neither' is not the key.

Summary

Official key is (c) both 1 and 2. Tamil Siddha monotheism and anti-idolatry sit beside Kannada Lingayat rejection of caste and rebirth. Honour the stored letter (c).

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Basava

12th-century sharana leader; Anubhava Mantapa tradition

Lingayat / Virashaiva

Personal ishtalinga; critique of jati and some karma-rebirth ideas

Tamil Siddhas

Sittar poets such as Sivavakkiyar in anti-idol, yogic veins

Vachanas

Kannada free-verse of the sharanas

Kalyana / Basavakalyan

Centre of the 12th-century movement

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