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Q10

With reference to forced labour (Vishti) in India during the Gupta period, which one of the following statements is correct? (a) It was considered a source of income for the State, a sort of tax paid by the people. (b) It was totally absent in the Madhya Pradesh and Kathiawar region of the Gupta Empire. (c) The forced labourer was entitled to weekly wages (d) The eldest son of the labourers was sent as the forced labourer Official key: A.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2019 · General Studies · 2 marks · History (Ancient, Medieval, Modern)

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

Explanation**(a) Official key**

(a) **Vishti** as a source of income for the State, a sort of tax. Gupta-period inscriptions list **vishti** (forced unpaid labour) among dues the state and donees could claim, like a labour tax. That reading is the official key.

(b)

(b) Totally absent in Madhya Pradesh and Kathiawar. **Vishti** is in fact attested in those regions of the Gupta world, so absence is not the key.

(c)

(c) Entitled to weekly wages. Forced labour of this type was unpaid *corvée*, not a waged weekly service, so this is not the key.

(d)

(d) Eldest son sent as the forced labourer. No such primogeniture rule is the Gupta **vishti** definition, so this is not the key.

Summary

Official key is (a). **Vishti** in Gupta records is unpaid forced labour treated as a state due - a labour tax alongside grain and cash claims. It is documented in central Indian and Kathiawar grants, not absent there, and it was not a waged or eldest-son levy. Honour the stored letter (a).

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Vishti

Forced labour / *corvée*

Sister due

Bhaga, bhoga, kara in land grants

Region note

Attested in MP and Kathiawar grants

Askable twin

Vetti in South Indian inscriptions

Donee right

Brahmadeya grants often transferred these dues

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