

HISTORY- ARTS & CULTURE UPSC Civil Services Exam Questions (2015-19)

Q1. With reference to the art and archaeological history of India, which one among the following was made earliest?

- (a) Lingaraja Temple at Bhubaneswar
- (b) Rock-cut Elephant at Dhauri
- (c) Rock-cut Monuments at Mahabalipuram
- (d) Varaha Image at Udayagiri

Ans : B

Explanation

- Lingaraja Temple at Bhubaneswar belonged to 11th AD.
- Rock-cut Monuments at Mahabalipuram belonged to 7th century.
- Varaha Image at Udayagiri belongs to 5th century AD.
- **Rock-cut Elephant at Dhauri** belonged to 3rd BC during Ashoka's reign (272-231 BC). Hence, it is the **oldest among the four**.

Q2. Which one of the following was given classical language status recently?

- (a) Odia
- (b) Konkani
- (c) Bhojpuri
- (d) Assamese

Ans : A

Explanation

The status of classical language is provided by Ministry of Tourism & Culture(G.O.I.) As of now, six languages i.e. Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Odia have been given the status of classical languages.

- Tamil-(First Classical Language,2004)
- Sanskrit-(2005)

- Kannada-(2008)
- Telugu-(2008)
- Malayalam-(2013)

- **Odiya-(Latest & Sixth,2014)**

Odia is the first language from the Indo-Aryan linguistic group and the case for making it a classical language was also premised on the fact that it has no resemblance to Hindi, Sanskrit, Bengali and Telugu.

Q3. Kalamkari painting refers to

- (a) a hand-painted cotton textile in South India
- (b) a handmade drawing on bamboo handicrafts in North-East India
- (c) a block-painted woollen cloth in Western Himalayan region of India
- (d) a hand-painted decorative silk cloth in North-Western India

Ans : A

Explanation

- Kalamkari is an ancient form of painting that developed in India over a period of 3,000 years.
- The name Kalamkari originates from Persian words qalam (pen) and kari (craftmanship).
- **Andhra Pradesh** is famous all over for this form of art.
- It is a type of Indian folk textile art that involves free hand drawing and painting or printing on cloth, mostly **cotton**. Hence option A is correct.

Q4. Which of the following has/have been accorded 'Geographical Indication' status?

1. Banaras Brocades and Sarees
2. Rajasthani Daal-Bati-Churma
3. Tirupathi Laddu

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 only 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans : C

Explanation

- A **geographical indication (GI)** is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g., a town, region, or country).
- **Rajasthani Daal-Bati-Churma** does not have the Geographical Indigation tag.
- **Banaras Brocades and Sarees and Tirupathi Laddu** both have the GI tag.

Q5. What is/are common to the two historical places known as Ajanta and Mahabalipuram?

1. Both were built in the same period.
2. Both belong to the same religious denomination.
3. Both have rock-cut monuments.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) None of the statements given above is correct

Ans : B

Explanation

The Ajanta Caves in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra State of India are about 30 **rock-cut Buddhist cave monuments** which date from the **2nd century BCE to about 480 or 650 CE**. The caves include paintings and sculptures described by the Government Archaeological Survey of India as 'the finest surviving examples of Indian art, particularly painting', which are masterpieces of Buddhist religious art, with figures of the Buddha and depictions of the Jataka tales.

Mahabalipuram has a group of sanctuaries, which was **carved out of rock** along the Coromandel coast in the **7th and 8th centuries**: rathas (temples in the form of chariots), mandapas (cave sanctuaries), giant open-air rock reliefs such as the famous Descent of the Ganges, and the Shore Temple, with thousands of

sculptures to the glory of Shiva. The Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram has been classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Both belongs to different period. Ajanta has Buddhist caves whereas Mahabalipuram has Hindu temple. Thus, both Ajanta and Mahabalipuram have rock-cut monuments. **Hence B is the correct answer.**

Q6. With reference to Manipuri Sankirtana, consider the following statements:

1. It is a song and dance performance.
2. Cymbals are the only musical instruments used in the performance.
3. It is performed to narrate the life and deeds of Lord Krishna.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3.
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1 only

Ans : B

Explanation

Sankirtana encompasses an array of arts performed to mark religious occasions and various stages in the life of the Vaishnava people of the Manipur plains. Sankirtana practices centre on the temple, where performers narrate the lives and **deeds of Krishna** through **song and dance**. Hence, **statement 1 and 3 are correct.**

The musical accompaniment for Manipuri dances comes from a percussion instrument called the Pung (a barrel drum), small kartals (cymbals), sembung, harmonium, a stringed instrument called pena and wind instrument such as a flute. Hence, **statement 2 is incorrect.**

Q7. The painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani is one of the most famous and oft-illustrated paintings at

- (a) Ajanta
- (b) Badami
- (c) Bagh

(d) Ellora

Ans : A

Explanation

The painting of Bodhisatva **Padmapani** from cave -1 is one of the masterpieces of Ajanta painting executed in the late 16th century.

Q8. Which of the following is/are famous for Sun temples?

1. Arasavalli
2. Amarakantak
3. Omkareshwar

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans : A

Explanation

- **Arasavalli Sun Temple** is a 7th-century temple at Arasavalli in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Amarkantak** is a pilgrim town also, it is a unique natural heritage area and is the meeting point of the Vindhya and the Satpura Ranges, with the Maikal Hills being the fulcrum.
- **Omkareshwar** in Madhya Pradesh has temples dedicated to God Shiva, but not any Sun temple.

Q9. Consider the following pairs:

Traditions		Communities
1. Chaliha Sahib Festival	—	Sindhis
2. Nanda Raj Jaat Yatra	—	Gonds
3. Wari-Warkari	—	Santhals

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched ?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) None of the above

Ans : A

Explanation

- **Chaliha Sahib:** It is a Sindhi festival regarding Jhulelal.
- **Nanda Raj Jaat Yatra :** Nanda Devi related to festival in Uttarakhand. Gonds are not native to this state.
- **Wari-Warkari:** Wari is a pilgrimage for the Warkari sect related to Pandharpur god Vithoba in Maharashtra, and it's part of Bhakti movement rather than festival of a particular tribal group. Besides, Santhals are not native to this state.

Q10. The well-known painting "Bani Thani" belongs to the

- (a) Bundi school
- (b) Jaipur school
- (c) Kangra school
- (d) Kishangarh school

Ans : D

Explanation

- **Bani Thani** is an Indian miniature painting painted by Nihal Chand from the Marwar school of Kishangarh. Hence, option D is the correct answer.
- **Bani Thani** portrays a woman who is elegant and graceful.
- The painting's subject, **Bani Thani**, was a singer and poet in Kishangarh in the time of King Sawant Singh (1748–1764).

Q11. Consider the following pairs :

- | Tradition | State |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Chapchar Kut festival | — Mizoram |
| 2. Khongjom Parba ballad | — Manipur |
| 3. Thong-To dance | — Sikkim |

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct ?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 2
(c) 3 only
(d) 2 and 3

Ans : B

Explanation

The **Chapchar Kut** is a spring festival of **Mizoram**, India celebrated during March after the completion of the task that is jungle-clearing (clearing of the remnants of burning).

Khongjom Parba is a style of ballad singing from **Manipur** using Dholak (drum). It depicts the stories of heroic battle fought by Manipuri's against the mighty British Empire in 1891. It will emphasise the spirit of patriotism and nationalism among the people at one time.

Thang-Ta represents an ancient and remarkable tradition of **Manipur**. It exhibits the extraordinary technique of combat using the Thang (sword) and the Ta (spear). It symbolises the traditional martial art techniques of the Manipuri's.

Q12. Consider the following pairs:

- | Craft | Heritage of |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Puthukkuli shawls | — Tamil Nadu |
| 2. Sujni embroidery | — Maharashtra |
| 3. Uppada Jamdani saris | — Karnataka |

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 2 and 3

Ans : A

Explanation

- Puthukkuli shawls is the heritage of Tamil Nadu
- Sujni Embroidery is the heritage of Bihar.
- Uppada Jamdani Saris is the heritage of Andhra Pradesh.

Q13. With reference to the cultural history of India, consider the following statements :

1. White marble was used in making Buland Darwaza and Khankah at Fatehpur Sikri.
2. Red sandstone and marble were used in making Bara Imambara and Rumi Darwaza at Lucknow.

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

Ans : D

Explanation

The Buland Darwaza at Fatehpur Sikri is “the most iconic architectural accomplishment of Akbar’s reign. It is made up of Red sand stone. Hence, **statement 1 is incorrect.**

Asaf-ud-Daula’s (nawab/wazir of Oudh) rule saw a devastating famine, which created an economic crisis. The residents of Awadh were self-respecting people, so instead of handing out dole, the Nawab started a food-for-work programme. The famous **Asafi Imambara, or Bara Imambara**, of Lucknow was built to give employment and revenue to the public. Instead of stones and marble, brick and lime were used. Hence, **statement 2 is incorrect.**

Q14. With reference to cultural history of India, consider the following statements :

1. Most of the Tyagaraja Kritis are devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna.
2. Tyagaraja created several new ragas.
3. Annamacharya and Tyagaraja are contemporaries.
4. Annamacharya kirtanas are devotional songs in praise of Lord Venkateshwara.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) 2, 3 and 4

Ans : B

Explanation

Saint Tyagaraja(1767 – 1847), also known as Tyagayya in Telugu, was one of the greatest composers of Carnatic music. **Tyagaraja** and his contemporaries **Syama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar** were regarded as the Trinity of modern Carnatic music. Hence, **statement 3 is incorrect**, eliminate 3, then answer is B.

He himself created several new ragas. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**. He composed thousands of devotional compositions, most in Telugu and in praise of Lord Ram. Hence, **statement 1 is incorrect**.

Annamacharya was a 15th-century Hindu saint and is the earliest known Indian musician to compose songs called sankirtanas in praise of the god Venkateswara, a form of Vishnu. Hence, **statement 4 is correct**.