

**Course: Evaluation of Muslim Civilization in the Sub-Continent (6488)****Level: B.Ed****Semester: Autumn, 2019****ASSIGNMENT No. 1****Q.1 Discuss Mehrgarh Civilization and highlight its contribution towards Neolithic revaluation?****Answer:**

Mehrgarh is a large Neolithic and Chalcolithic site located at the foot of the Bolan pass on the Kachi plain of Baluchistan (also spelled Balochistan), in modern day Pakistan. Continuously occupied between about 7000 to 2600 BC, Mehrgarh is the earliest known Neolithic site in the northwest Indian subcontinent, with early evidence of farming (wheat and barley), herding (cattle, sheep, and goats) and metallurgy.

The site is located on the principal route between what is now Afghanistan and the Indus Valley: this route was also undoubtedly part of a trading connection established quite early between the Near East and the Indian subcontinent.

**Chronology**

Mehrgarh's importance to understanding the Indus Valley is its nearly unparalleled preservation of pre-Indus societies.

- Aceramic Neolithic founding 7000 to 5500 BC
- Neolithic Period II 5500 to 4800 (16 ha)
- Chalcolithic Period III 4800 to 3500 (9 ha)
- Chalcolithic Period IV, 3500 to 3250 BC
- Chalcolithic V 3250 to 3000 (18 ha)
- Chalcolithic VI 3000 to 2800
- Chalcolithic VII-Early Bronze Age 2800 to 2600

**Aceramic Neolithic**

The earliest settled portion of Mehrgarh is found in an area called MR.3, in the northeast corner of the immense site. Mehrgarh was a small farming and pastoralist village between 7000-5500 BC, with mud brick houses and granaries. The early residents used local copper ore, basket containers lined with bitumen, and an array of bone tools.

Plant foods used during this period included domesticated and wild six-rowed barley, domestic einkorn and emmer wheat, and wild Indian jujube (*Zizyphus spp*) and date palms (*Phoenix dactylifera*). Sheep, goats, and cattle were herded at Mehrgarh beginning during this early period. Hunted animals include gazelle, swamp deer, nilgai, blackbuck onager, chital, water buffalo, wild pig and elephant.

The earliest residences at Mehrgarh were freestanding, multi-roomed rectangular houses built with long, cigar-shaped and mortared mudbricks: these structures are very similar to

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Prepottery Neolithic (PPN) hunter-gatherers in early 7th millennium Mesopotamia. Burials were placed in brick-lined tombs, accompanied by shell and turquoise beads. Even at this early date, the similarities of crafts, architecture, and agricultural and funerary practices indicate some sort of connection between Mehrgarh and Mesopotamia.

### **Neolithic Period II 5500 to 4800**

By the sixth millennium, agriculture had become firmly established at Mehrgarh, based on mostly (~90 percent) locally domesticated barley but also wheat from the near east. The earliest pottery was made by sequential slab construction, and the site contained circular fire pits filled with burnt pebbles and large granaries, characteristics also of similarly dated Mesopotamian sites.

Buildings made of sun-dried brick were large and rectangular, symmetrically divided into small square or rectangular units. They were doorless and lack of residential remains, suggesting to researchers that at least some of them were storage facilities for grains or other commodities which were communally shared. Other buildings are standardized rooms surrounded by large open work spaces where craft-working activities took place, including the beginnings of the extensive bead-making characteristic of the Indus.

### **Chalcolithic Period III 4800 to 3500 and IV 3500 to 3250 BC**

By the Chalcolithic Period III at Mehrgarh, the community, now well over 100 hectares, consisted of large spaces with groups of building divided into residences and storage units, but more elaborate, with foundations of pebbles embedded in clay. The bricks were made with molds, and along with fine painted wheel-thrown pottery, and a variety of agricultural and craft practices.

Chalcolithic Period IV showed a continuity in pottery and crafts but progressive stylistic changes. During this period, the region split into small and medium sized compact settlements connected by canals. Some of the settlements included blocks of houses with courtyards separated by small passageways; and the presence of large storage jars in rooms and courtyards.

### **Dentistry at Mehrgarh**

A recent study at Mehrgarh showed that during Period III, people were using bead-making techniques to experiment with dentistry: tooth decay in humans is a direct outgrowth of a reliance on agriculture. Researchers examining burials in a cemetery at MR3 discovered drill holes on at least eleven molars. Light microscopy showed the holes were conical, cylindrical or trapezoidal in shape. A few had concentric rings showing drill bit marks, and a few had some evidence for decay. No filling material was noted, but tooth wear on the drill marks indicate that each of these individuals continued to live on after the drilling was completed.

Coppa and colleagues (2006) pointed out that only four of the eleven teeth contained clear evidence of decay associated with drilling; however, the drilled teeth are all molars located in the back of both lower and upper jaws, and thus are not likely to have been drilled for decorative purposes. Flint drill bits are a characteristic tool from Mehrgarh, mostly used with producing beads. The researchers conducted experiments and discovered that a flint drill bit

attached to a bow-drill can produce similar holes in human enamel in under a minute: these modern experiments were not, of course, used on living humans.

The dental techniques have only been discovered on only 11 teeth out of a total of 3,880 examined from 225 individuals, so tooth-drilling was a rare occurrence, and, it appears to have been a short-lived experiment as well. Although the MR3 cemetery contains younger skeletal material (into the Chalcolithic), no evidence for tooth drilling has been found later than 4500 BC.

### Later Periods at Mehrgarh

Later periods included craft activities such as flint knapping, tanning, and expanded bead production; and a significant level of metal-working, particularly copper. The site was occupied continuously until about 2600 BC, when it was abandoned, about the time when the Harappan periods of the Indus civilization began to flourish at Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro and Kot Diji, among other sites.

Mehrgarh was discovered and excavated by an international led by French archaeologist Jean-François Jarrige; the site was excavated continuously between 1974 and 1986 by the French Archaeological Mission in collaboration with the Department of Archaeology of Pakistan.

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### Q.2 What do you know about Indus valley civilization? Discuss its architectural characteristics?

#### Answer:

The Indus or Harappan culture arose in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent. It is called Harappan civilisation because this was discovered first in 1921 at the modern site of Harappa, situated in the province of west Punjab in Pakistan. It is also called as Indus civilisation because it refers to precisely the same cultural, chronological and geographic entity confined to the geographic bounds of the Indus valley.

Sir John Marshall was the first person to use the term 'Indus civilisation'. The Indus or the Harappan civilisation belongs to the Chalcolithic or Bronze Age since the objects of copper and stone were found at the various sites of this civilisation. Nearly, 1,400 Harappan sites are known so far in the sub-continent.

They belong to early, mature and late phases of the Harappan culture. But the number of the sites belonging to the mature phase is limited, and of them only half a dozen can be regarded as cities.

Some of the noteworthy sites which have been excavated are Harappa (1921) by Daya Ram Sahni, Mohenjodaro (1922) by R.D. Banerjee, Dholavira (1967-68) by J.P. Joshi and (1990-91) by R.S. Bisht, Kalibangan by Dr. A. Ghosh, Lothal (1955-63), Chanhudaro, Banawali (1975-77), etc.

### Characteristics of Indus Valley Civilisation:

#### 1. Indus Valley Cities:

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**The excavated Indus cities may be classified into the following groups:**

- (i) Nucleus cities
- (ii) Coastal towns
- (iii) Other cities and townships.

**I. Nucleus Cities:**

**(a) Harappa:**

It was the first Indus site to be discovered and excavated in 1921 by Daya Ram Sahni. The site has two large and imposing ruined mounds located some 25 kms. South-west of Montgomery district of Punjab (Pakistan) on the left bank of river Ravi.

The vast mounds at Harappa were first reported by Masson in 1826. Alexander Cunningham identified Harappa with Po-Fa-to or Po-Fa-to-do visited by Hiuen-Tsang.

- a) The western mound of Harappa, smaller in size represented the citadel, parallelogram in plan and fortified.
- b) Outside the citadel was the unfortified town having some important structures identified with workmen's quarters, working floors and granaries. The workmen's quarters, 10 in number were of uniform size and space (17×7.5 m). Close to these quarters were 16 furnaces, pear-shaped on plan with cow-dung ash and charcoal.
- c) 12 Granary building of 15.24×6.10 m each, arranged systematically in 2 rows (6 in each row) with central passage 7 m. wide
- d) The material remains discovered at Harappa are of the typical Indus character, prominent being.
- e) 891 seals which form 36.32 per cent of the total writing material of the Indus civilisation ,
- f) Two very important stone figurines (not available at any other site) which include one red stone torso of a naked male figure (the prototype of the Jina or Yaksha Figure) and a female figure in dancing pose.
- g) A crucible used for smelting bronze was also found at a slightly higher level.
- h) Dog attacking deer on a pin

Evidence of the disposal of the dead has been found to the south of the citadel area named as cemetery R-37. Excavations have also yielded 57 burials of different types. The skeletons were disposed of in the graves along with the grave-goods.

**(b) Mohenjo-Daro:**

The site of Mohenjo-Daro (or the Mound of the Dead) situated in the Larkana district of Sind (Pakistan) and 540 km. south of Harappa is situated on the right bank of the river Indus. It also has two mounds, the western being the citadel or acropolis and the eastern extensive mound was enshrining the relics of the buried lower city. The mounds were excavated first by Sir John Marshall. The citadel was fortified with big buildings extremely rich in structures.

a. The most important public place of Mohenjo-Daro seems to be the Great Bath, with a bed made water tight by the use of bitumen and a system of supplying and draining away water. This tank which is situated in the citadel mound is an example of beautiful brick-work measuring 11.88×7.01 meters and 2.43 meters deep. Flight of steps at either end lead to the surface. There are side rooms for changing clothes. This tank seems to have been used for ritual bathing.

b. In Mohenjo-Daro, the largest building is the great granary which is 45.71 meters long and 15.23 meters wide and lies to the west of the great bath.

c. To the north-east of the great bath is a long collegiate building, perhaps meant for the residence of a very high official, possibly the high priest himself, or a college of priests.

e. The lower unfortified city displayed all the elements of a planned city. The remarkable thing about the arrangement of the houses in the city is that they followed the grid system with the main streets running north-south and east-west dividing the city into many blocks.

This is true of almost all Indus settlements regardless of size. The main streets in the lower city are about 9.14 metre wide. The drainage system of Mohenjo-Daro was very impressive. These drains were covered with bricks and sometimes with stone slabs. The street drains were equipped with manholes. Houses were made of kiln-burnt bricks as in Harappa.

f. Material remains of Mohenjo-Daro with its richness confirms that it was a great city of the Indus civilisation. About 1398 seals representing 56.67 percent of the total writing material of the Indus cities throws light on Harappan religion.

Important stone images found here includes the torso of a priest made of steatite (19 cm), lime stone male head (14 cm), the seated male of alabaster (29.5 cm), the seated male with the hands placed on knees (21 cm) and a composite animal figure made up of limestone. The bronze dancing girl from Mohenjo-Daro, considered a masterpiece (14 cm) is made by cast wax technique.

### (c) Dholavira:

Situated in Kutch district of Gujarat, Dholavira is the latest and one of the two largest Harappan settlements in India, the other being Rakhigarhi in Haryana. The ancient mounds of Dholavira were first noticed by Dr J.P. Joshi but extensive excavation work at the site was conducted by R.S. Bisht and his team in 1990-91.

It shares almost all the common features of the Indus cities but its unique feature is that there are three principal divisions (instead of two in other cities), two of which were strongly protected by rectangular fortifications.

The first inner encloser hemmed in the citadel (the acropolis) probably housed the highest authority and second one protected the middle town meant for the close relatives of the administrators and other officials.

The existence of this middle town, apart from the lower town, is the unique feature of this settlement. The access to these fortified settlements at Dholavira was provided through an elaborate gate-complex.

### (d) Kalibangan:

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Situated in Ganganagar district of Rajasthan on the southern bank of the Ghaggar river this site was excavated by B.B. Lai and B.K. Thapar (1961-69). This site also has two mounds yielding the remains of a citadel and lower city respectively. Excavations have revealed evidence of pre-Harappan and Harappan culture.

- a. The citadel and the lower city both were fortified.
- b. The citadel had mud-brick platforms having seven fire-altars in a row.
- c. The lower fortified town had two gateways.
- e. The people of Kalibangan used mud-bricks for the construction of houses, the use of burnt bricks has been found only in wells, drains and pavements.
- f. The cylindrical seals found at Kalibangan had an analogy in the Mesopotamian counterpart. The discovery of inscribed sherds clearly suggests that Indus script was written from right to left.
- g. Excavations at Kalibangan revealed the evidence of the ploughed field.

## II. Coastal towns

### (a) Lothal:

It was an important trading centre of the Indus civilisation and situated near the bed of the Bhogavo River at the head of the Gulf of Cambay in Gujarat. Lothal was excavated by S R. Rao which brought to light five period sequences of cultures. It was one rectangular settlement surrounded by a brick wall. Along the eastern side of the town was a brick basin, which has been identified as a dockyard by its excavator.

- a) The house of a wealthy merchant yielded gold beads with axial tubes and sherds of Reserved Slip Ware related to the Sumerian origin indicating that the merchants were engaged in foreign trade.
- b) Metal-workers, shell ornament makers and bead-makers shops have been discovered here.
- c) The discovery of the Persian Gulf seal and the Reserved Slip Ware suggests that Lothal was engaged in the maritime activities.

### (b) Sutkagendor:

Situated at a distance of 500 kms to the west of Karachi on the Makran coast it functioned as a trading post of the Harappans. It was originally a port of Harappan according to archaeologist Dales but later cut off from the sea due to coastal uplift. Excavation at the site revealed the two-fold division of the township into 'citadel' and 'Lower city'.

### (c) Balakot:

Situated at a distance of 98 km to the north west of Karachi this coastal settlement yielded the relics of the pre-Harappan and Harappan civilisation. Baked bricks were used in few drains but the standard building material were the mud-bricks.

### (d) Allahdino:

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The excavations at Allahdino were undertaken by W. A. Fairservis and are situated at a distance of 40 kms to the east of Karachi. These coastal cities have yielded the remains of mud-brick structures.

### III. Other cities and township:

#### (a) Surkotada:

Situated about 270 km. north-west of Ahmedabad in Gujarat the settlement pattern of Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro and Kalibangan was repeated here. As at Kalibangan, both the citadel and the lower town were fortified. There was also an inter-communicating gate between the two.

In addition to mud- bricks, stone rubble was liberally used for construction. In the last phase of this site, bones of horses, hitherto unknown, have been discovered.

#### (b) Banawali:

Situated in the Hissar district of Haryana it was on the bank of the river Rangoi, identified with the ancient bed of Sarasvati River. The excavations conducted by R.S. Bisht have yielded two cultural phases, Pre-Harappan and Harappan, similar to that of Kalibangan.

The Harappan phase showed significant departure from the established norms of town-planning (chess-board pattern as in Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, etc.). The roads were neither always straight, nor are they cut at right-angles. It lacked systematic drainage system, a noteworthy feature of the Indus civilisation.

#### (c) Chanhudaro:

The township of Chanhudaro, situated about 130 km. south of Mohenjodaro, consists of a single mound divided into several parts by erosion. An evidence of material remains clearly shows that it was the major centre of production for the beautiful seals.

The hoards of copper and bronze tools, castings, evidence of the crafts like bead-making, bone items and seal making suggest that Chandhudaro was mostly inhabited by artisans and crafts-men. Excavations have also unearthed a furnace with a brick- floor used for glazing steatite beads.

#### (d) Kot Diji:

Situated on the left bank of the Indus River about 50 km. east of Mohenjo-Daro, the site of Kot Diji excavated by F.A. Khan Yields two cultural phases' pre-Harappan and Harappan civilisation. Material remains discovered at the site are terracotta bulls, five figurines of the Mother Goddess and large unbaked cooking brick-lined ovens.

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### Q.3 Evaluate the role of Arab traders in spread of Islam in sub-continent?

#### Answer:

Muslim conquests in the Indian subcontinent mainly took place from the 12th to the 16th centuries, though earlier Muslim conquests include the invasions into modern Pakistan and the Umayyad campaigns in India, during the time of the Rajput kingdoms in the 8th century.

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Mahmud of Ghazni, the first ruler to hold the title Sultan, who preserved an ideological link to the suzerainty of the Abbasid Caliphate, invaded and plundered vast parts of Punjab, Gujarat, starting from the Indus River, during the 10th century.

After the capture of Lahore and the end of the Ghaznavids, the Ghurid Empire ruled by Muhammad of Ghor and Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad laid the foundation of Muslim rule in India. In 1206, Bakhtiyar Khalji, whose invasion caused the disappearance of Buddhism from East India, led the Muslim conquest of Bengal, marking the eastern-most expansion of Islam at the time. The Ghurid Empire soon evolved into the Delhi Sultanate ruled by Qutb al-Din Aibak, the founder of the Mamluk dynasty. With the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, Islam was spread across most parts of the Indian subcontinent.

In the 14th century, the Khalji dynasty, under Alauddin Khalji, temporarily extended Muslim rule southwards to Gujarat, Rajasthan and the Deccan, while the Tughlaq dynasty temporarily expanded its territorial reach till Tamil Nadu. The break-up of the Delhi Sultanate resulted in several Muslim sultanates and dynasties to emerge across the Indian subcontinent, such as the Gujarat Sultanate, Malwa Sultanate, the Bahmani Sultanate and the wealthy Bengal Sultanate, a major trading nation in the world. Some of these were however followed by Hindu re-conquests and resistance from the native powers, and states such as the Kamma Nayakas, Vijayanagaras, Gajapatis, Cheros, Reddys and Rajput states.

Prior to the full rise of the Mughal Empire founded by Babur, one of the gunpowder empires, which annexed almost all of the ruling elites of the whole of South Asia, the Sur Empire ruled by Sher Shah Suri conquered large territories in the northern parts of India. Akbar The Great gradually enlarged the Mughal Empire to include nearly all of South Asia, but the zenith was reached in the end of the 17th century, when the reign under emperor Aurangzeb witnessed the full establishment of Islamic sharia through the Fatawa-e-Alamgiri.

### Expansion of trade

Islam's impact was the most notable in the expansion of trade. The first contact of Muslims with India was the Arab attack on a nest of pirates near modern-day Mumbai to safeguard their trade in the Arabian Sea. Around the same time many Arabs settled at Indian ports, giving rise to small Muslim communities. The growth of these communities was not only due to conversion but also the fact that many Hindu kings of south India (such as those from Cholas) hired Muslims as mercenaries.

A significant aspect of the Muslim period in world history was the emergence of Islamic Sharia courts capable of imposing a common commercial and legal system that extended from Morocco in the West to Mongolia in the North East and Indonesia in the South East. While southern India was already in trade with Arabs/Muslims, northern India found new opportunities. As the Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms of Asia were subjugated by Islam, and as Islam spread through Africa – it became a highly centralising force that facilitated in the creation of a common legal system that allowed letters of credit issued in say Egypt or Tunisia to be honoured in India or Indonesia (The Sharia has laws on the transaction of business with both Muslims and non-Muslims. In order to cement their rule, Muslim rulers initially promoted a system in which there was a revolving door between the clergy, the administrative nobility and the mercantile classes. The travels of explorer Muhammad Ibn-

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Abdullah Ibn-Batuta were eased because of this system. He served as an Imam in Delhi, as a judicial official in the Maldives, and as an envoy and trader in the Malabar. There was never a contradiction in any of his positions because each of these roles complemented the other. Islam created a compact under which political power, law and religion became fused in a manner so as to safeguard the interests of the mercantile class. This led world trade to expand to the maximum extent possible in the medieval world. Sher Shah Suri took initiatives in improvement of trade by abolishing all taxes which hindered progress of free trade. He built large networks of roads and constructed Grand Trunk Road (1540–1544), which connects Chittagong to Kabul. Parts of it are still in use today. The geographic regions add to the diversity of languages and politics.

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**Q.4 Discuss the policies of Mughal Ruler Akbar that had been criticized by Muslim scholars?**

**Answer:**

The religious policy of Akbar was that of complete toleration. His policy was based on the principle of Suleh-i-kul (universal peace). Akbar was the first among the emperors of Delhi who pursued such a policy.

**Dr R.P. Tripathi writes:**

“A policy of enlightened and active sympathy for, and help to, all truly religious and spiritual movements had sometimes been attempted in provincial kingdoms, but never by the rulers of Delhi and Agra. It was Akbar, who, from the very beginning of his reign, gradually accepted a policy of dynamic toleration and active sympathy for religious and spiritual movements.”

Various factors were responsible for the liberal views and policy of religious toleration of Akbar. His father was Sunni while his mother and his protector, Bairam Khan were Shias. His tutor, Abdul Latif had so much liberal religious views that he was regarded a Sunni in Persia and a Shia in northern India. His career in India began in Punjab where saints like Guru Nanak had preached equality of Islam and Hinduism.

Therefore, Akbar grew up in liberal surroundings which affected his personal views. Besides, sixteenth century has been regarded as the century of religious revival in the world. India also did not remain behind and saints of Bhakti-cult and the Sufis preached religious toleration.

**Dr H.N. Sinha writes:**

“The sixteenth century is a century of religious revival in the history of the world. The grand currents of the reformation compare favourably with the staging up of a new life in India. India experienced an awakening that quickened her progress and vitalized her national life.

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The dominant note of this awakening was love and liberalism— love that united man to God and therefore to his brother man, and liberalism, born of this love that levelled down the barriers of caste and creed, and took its stand on the bed-rock of human existence and essence of all religions— Universal Brotherhood. With glorious ideals, it inspired the Hindu and Muslim alike and they forgot for a time the trivialities of their creed. To the Muslim as to the Hindu, it heralded the dawn of a new era, to the Muslim with the birth of the promised Mahdi, to the Hindu with the realization of the all-absorbing love of God."

Akbar was certainly influenced by that spirit of his age. He became very liberal while he was quite young and even felt the necessity of acquiring spiritual knowledge. In the beginning of his reign, therefore, he abolished slave- trade in 1562 A.D., pilgrim-tax from the Hindus in 1563 A.D. and the Jizya in 1564 A.D.

Akbar was keen to know the truth of religion. He used to remember God, came in contact with saints and went on pilgrimage to Ajmer several times at the mausoleum of Sufi saint Shaikh Muin-ud-din Chishti. He also respected very much Shaikh Salim Chishti of Fatehpur Sikri.

In 1575 A.D., he constructed Ibadat Khana (House of worship) at Fatehpur Sikri in which regular discussions were held on Thursday evenings. In the beginning, only Muslim scholars were allowed to participate in discussions but when Akbar realised that there was no unanimity even among the Muslims regarding principles of Islam, he allowed scholars of all other faiths to participate in the discussions.

Akbar listened to discourses from scholars of all faiths including Hindus, Parsis, Jains, and Christians. He invited Christian missionaries at Goa thrice to his court and, thus, came in contact with Christianity. The Christian missionaries failed to influence Akbar in any way, yet, they were permitted to establish churches at Cambay, Lahore, Hugli and Agra. Jain scholars like Hira Vijay Suri, Jinchandra Suri, Vijaysen, Shantichandra etc. were also invited at the court. Akbar was deeply influenced by the principle of non-violence of Jainism.

In 1581 A.D., he prohibited the slaughter of sheep and horses; himself stopped taking meat for nine months in a year; stopped hunting which was his favourite pastime; and, in 1587 A.D. prohibited slaughter of animals for nearly six months in a year.

Dasturji Meharji, scholar of Persia was also invited by him who developed Akbar's interest in the Parsi religion. Because of its influence Akbar started respecting Sun and fire. Fire was kept burning for twenty-four hours in his palace. He also participated in the festivals of the Parsis.

Hindu scholars, Purshottam and Devi constantly gave him discourses on Hinduism. By coming in their contact, Akbar developed faith in the Hindu principles of Karma and transmigration of soul. Thus, by coming in contact with scholars of all religions, Akbar realised that there was truth in every religion.

Akbar's friends and relatives were also liberal. Abul Fazal and Faizi, his close friends were men of extreme liberal dispositions while his Rajput wives too must have participated in liberalising his views. Besides, his religious policy, no doubt, was also the result of his political motives. Some revolts of Muslims in beginning of his reign convinced him of the

necessity of finding loyal allies elsewhere. Rajputs became his relatives. He was impressed by their loyalty and chivalry.

He attempted to befriend them so as to convert them as loyal servants of the throne. Therefore, it became necessary for him to respect Hinduism. Thus, the necessity of gaining sympathy of the majority of the subjects, viz., Hindus and that of winning the loyalty of chivalrous Rajputs which, put together, helped him in extension and consolidation of his empire, also convinced Akbar to pursue a liberal religious policy.

The policy of Akbar was based on equality of all religions, respect to all of them and faith in truth. This policy of Akbar evolved gradually. It began with abolition of some unjust laws, framing of a few others with a view to put people of all faith on equality and then gradually resulting in the construction of the Ibadat Khana and declaration of the so-called Infallibility Decree, ultimately, culminated in organisation of Tauhid-i-Ilahi or Din-i-Ilahi.

**V.A. Smith explained the aim of Akbar's religious policy in his own words thus:**

"For an empire ruled by one head, it was a bad thing to have the members divided among themselves, at variance one with the other. . . . We ought, therefore, to bring them all into one, but in such fashion that they should be one and with the great advantage of not losing what is good in any one religion, while gaining whatever is better in another. In that way honour would be rendered to God, peace would be given to the people and security to the Empire." Akbar attempted to achieve this aim right from the beginning of his reign. His abolition of pilgrim-tax and the Jizya, construction of the Ibadat Khana etc. were all done with this object in view.

On 22 June 1579 A.D., Akbar read his Khutba which ended with the word Allah-o-Akbar meaning that 'God is great'. It never meant that Akbar, in any way, asserted Godhood for himself. After sometime in September, 1579 A.D., Akbar read Mahzar. It was prepared by Shaikh Mubarak, father of Abul Fazi and many respectable religious Muslims had signed it.

This Mahzar has been described by historians like V.A. Smith and Woosely Haig as the Infallibility Decree of Akbar and they have commented that this meant that 'Akbar desired to become emperor as well as Pope.' But, their opinion is not accepted by the majority of historians. By this Khutba, Akbar simply took over the right to decide the cases of dispute regarding principles of Islam.

The decision, however, was not to be against the Koran. So far this right was enjoyed by Sadr- us-Sadur who was an officer of the Emperor. Therefore, it would be wrong to conclude that by taking over the right of one of his own officers to himself, Akbar had desired to become Pope or the religious head.

Akbar's policy of religious toleration was based on his firm belief that there is truth in every religion.

**To put into practice, he formed the following regulations:**

1. People of all faiths i.e., Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Jains were allowed to construct buildings for purpose of their worship, to propagate their faith peacefully and celebrate their religious fairs and festivals.

2. All these people who were forcibly converted to Islam were allowed to go back to their previous faith.
3. State services were thrown open to people of all faiths on merit.
4. Some religious texts of Hinduism like the Ramayana and the Mahabharat were translated into Persian.
5. Uniform taxation system was applied to all citizens.
6. No social distinction was to be observed among the people on the basis of differences of their religion and everybody was allowed to practise his social traditions and personal values.
7. Akbar personally observed certain practices. He started the practice of Jharokha Darshan and Tula-Dan and celebrated all festivals of the Hindus and the Muslims alike at the court. He stopped eating beef, reduced non-vegetarian diet, kept fire burning in the palace for twenty-four hours, stopped going on hunt, tried to stop unnecessary killing of birds and beasts and practised certain other measures as examples to others.

Thus, Akbar provided equal protection to all religions and the state made no distinction between its subjects in any field on ground of religion. He, of course, tried to check certain social practices i.e., allowed Hindu widows to remarry, stopped forcible sati and marriage among close relatives, fixed marriageable age for boys as sixteen and for the girls as fourteen, tried to check consumption of liquor and provided separate dwelling-places to prostitutes in cities. However, the purpose of these measures was not interference in matters of any religion but to check certain social evils.

The religious policy of Akbar has been criticised by historians like V.A. Smith and Woolseley Haig. They say that while Akbar tolerated every religion, he was intolerant towards Islam. They have formed this opinion because of the writings of the historian Badayuni and certain contemporary Christian missionaries. Badayuni had prepared a long list of all those acts of Akbar which, according to him, were done by him against Islam.

He charged that Akbar legalised muta-marriages; people were allowed to shave their beards in 1580 A.D.; those Mullas and Shaikhs who opposed Akbar were sent to Kandhar in 1581-82 A.D. and, in exchange, horses were procured; copies of the Koran were destroyed by Akbar, the study of Arabic was checked; the mosques were converted into stables for horses; pilgrimage for Haj was prohibited; Muslims were restrained from celebrating their religious festivals, etc.

However, these charges against Akbar have no evidences. Akbar never disrespected either the Koran or Prophet Mohammed, nor he prohibited celebrations of Muslim festivals. Pilgrimage to Mecca continued as before during his rule. Persian, of course, was made the court-language but it did not mean that the study of Arabic was deliberately neglected.

Probably, during the course of wars, vacant mosques were used as resting places by the soldiers but it did not mean that mosques were converted into stables for horses. Muslims kept beards during his rule and added Ahmad or Mohammad to their names. Therefore, there is no justification in accepting the charges of Badayuni against Akbar.

The fact is that Badayuni was one of those bigot Mullahs who were dissatisfied with the liberal religious policy of Akbar. From his point of view, the greatest fault of Akbar was that he neither observed strictly the principles of Islam nor tried to establish the supremacy of Islam in India.

The same way, Christian missionaries expected that Akbar, probably, would accept Christianity. But when they failed in their efforts they tried to prove that he was a hypocrite and a non-believer in Islam with a view to defame him.

There is another controversy among historians regarding Akbar. Whether Akbar remained a Muslim throughout his life or not? Dr A.L. Srivastava has opined, "**Akbar had left Islam . . . . It was, of course, difficult to repudiate completely all elements of Muslim culture in which he had his birth and early training.**"

He argues that as Akbar did not believe in the five fundamentals of Islam, namely, faith in Kalma, five daily prayers, fast of Ramzan, Zakat and Haj, had accepted many Hindu practices and believed in theories of Karma and transmigration of soul of Hinduism, he cannot be regarded a Muslim.

He further writes- "Had the Hindu pandits and princes been broad-minded enough to accept him as a member of our faith and had they made an attempt to rid Hinduism of idolatry and our society of caste-system, Akbar would probably have embraced Hinduism." Contrary to this view, Dr S.R. Sharma says that "Akbar remained the follower of Islam till his death." He argues that when prince Salim revolted against his father he could not charge him of blasphemy.

Even Badayuni who was very much against Akbar wrote that till 1598 A.D. whosoever disrespected Prophet Mohammad in any way was punished by death. Thus, Dr Sharma is nearer the truth. Akbar, of course, did not follow principles of Islam strictly, yet he never felt the necessity of accepting any other religion. He was a liberal man and therefore, was tolerant towards every faith. Yet, he remained a Muslim, rather, a good Muslim throughout his life.

In 1582 A.D., Akbar formed the order of Tauhid-i-Ilahi alias Din-i-Ilahi. It was the logical result of the declaration of Khutba in 1579 A.D. Dr K.S. Lal observes- "Since now the Emperor was supreme in religious matters also, he must give spiritual guidance to his people."

He further writes- "His (Akbar's) problem was how he could bring together into one fold people who believed in his philosophy of Suleh Kul (peace with all), and his answer was Din-i-Ilahi." Abul Fazl became the chief priest of this organisation.

The man who desired to become the member of this order could meet the Emperor on any Sunday and place his turban at his feet. Akbar then used to give him a Shast upon which the name of the God and the phrase Allah-o-Akbar were engraved. He was thus accepted as a member of the order by the Emperor himself.

**The member of this order observed certain following rules:**

(i) They saluted each other with the words Allah-o-Akbar and Jall-e-Jalal- e-Hu.

- (ii) They gave a dinner in their life-time as against the old practice of giving dinner after one's death.
- (iii) They were expected to give a party on their birthday and to practise charity.
- (iv) They had to abstain from eating meat as far as possible.
- (v) They were not to marry old women or minor girls.
- (vi) They were expected to try for salvation by leaving worldly desires, and observing good conduct and purity.
- (vii) They were expected to sacrifice property, life, honour and religion in the service of the emperor. The sacrifice of these things determined the grade of a member within the order. Whosoever sacrificed all the four of them belonged to the first grade; who sacrificed three of them belonged to the second grade; who sacrificed two of them was of the third grade; and who sacrificed only one of them belonged to the fourth or the last grade. The sacrifice of these simply meant that the Emperor was the sole arbiter of making use of the thing that was surrendered to him.

The number of members of Din-i-Ilahi remained limited only to some thousands. Among them only a few were prominent persons. Among the Hindu nobles Raja Birbal became a member of this order while Raja Bhagwan Das and Raja Man Singh refused it. Akbar has been criticized bitterly by some historians on account of establishing the Din-i-Ilahi. Bartoli described it as the result of "Akbar's Astute and Knavish Policy."

**V.A. Smith commented:**

"The Divine Faith was a monument of Akbar's folly, not of his wisdom." But, such criticisms have not been accepted genuine by the majority of historians. In fact, Din-i-Ilahi was not a religious order. It did not have even the basic necessities of a religion, viz., a prophet, a place of worship, a religious text or a priestly class.

Abul Fazl, the chief priest of this order, himself did not accept it as a religious order. Akbar never tried to increase its membership. On the contrary, according to Abul Fazl, he was hesitant to accept new members within the order. In no way Akbar felt displeased with Raja Bhagwan Das and Raja Man Singh who had refused to become its members.

Therefore, Din-i-Ilahi can be accepted only as a social order whose members desired to share their common views, meet with each other for this purpose and cooperate each other in their social life. Besides, the attitude of Akbar was national. He desired that his subjects who belonged to different faiths should learn to live with cooperation and tolerance with each other.

The object of establishing Din-i-Ilahi was simply that one. He, therefore, remained liberal in its propagation. Din-i-Ilahi, of course, failed but Akbar was not responsible for it. The responsibility of its failure went to reactionary attitude of the people of that age.

**Dr K.S. Lal has beautifully summed up the case of Akbar thus:**

"He lived and died a good Muslim, but some books and many articles say that it was Aurangzeb who was a good Muslim, and Akbar was not, and whatever good or bad

Aurangzeb did was due to his religious piety. Now who was a good Muslim one who thought of breaking temples, imposing the Jizya and carrying on war on people of other faiths, or one who thought of uniting people of different faiths in one fraternity? If the former, then it has to be remembered that as love begets love, hate begets hate and good Muslims like Aurangzeb will always produce good Hindus and good Sikhs and good Christians who will answer hate with hate. This is the lesson of medieval Indian history. It was Akbar, a believer in peace with all, that was a good Muslim in the true sense of the word."

The religious policy of Akbar brought out useful results. Only a small minority of his subjects was dissatisfied with it. It constituted of those bigots who expected from Akbar that he would try to establish the supremacy of Islam in India. They propagated against him and charged that Akbar had left Islam.

It resulted in a serious revolt in Bengal and Bihar in 1581-82 A.D. and Mirza Hakim, Akbar's step-brother invaded India in expectation of getting success. But these attempts against Akbar failed miserably. Some Christian missionaries who failed to convert Akbar to Christianity also criticised him but with no serious adverse consequence to him. The majority of his subjects welcomed his policy and Akbar received loyalty from them.

The policy of Akbar, therefore, participated in the extension of the empire and also in providing stability to it. Akbar freed the majority of his subjects from the tyranny of the minority and got the credit of being called as the national king.

**Dr S.R. Sharma observes:**

"Among the rulers of India he occupies a very high place. . . among other things—his having attempted to bring Hindus and Muslims together with some success. If he did not get success in creating a nation, it was because he could not hurry the march of events. It is worth remembering that at a time when Europe was plunged into strife of warring sects, when Roman Catholics were burning Protestants at the stake, and Protestants were executing Roman Catholics, Akbar guaranteed peace not only to 'warring sects' but to different religions. In the modern age, he was the first and almost the greatest experimenter in the field of religious toleration if the scope of his toleration, the races to which it was applied, and the contemporary conditions be taken into account."

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**Q.5 Highlight religious impact of Islam on Hindu Society?**

**Answer:**

Prior to advent of the Islam and after the reign of Harsha, India witnessed a spell of political disintegration and intellectual stagnation. The country was divided into several small states. People developed parochial outlooks and identities. Formalism and authoritarianism dominated religions and cultural life. No innovative religions writings, ideas or commentaries were contributed by the intellectuals. The Shakas, Hunas and Gurjars put an end to the golden age of the Gupta dynasty.

However, these foreigners gradually adopted Hindu religion and culture. These invaders called themselves descendants of the Kshatriyas. This was the beginning of Rajput culture, art, literature, poetry and drama. Malwa, Kanauji, Bengali, Kashmir, Ajmer, Gwalior, Chittor, Ranthambor and Mandu were the places not only of Rajput chivalry but also of new culture, architecture and literature. South India remained stable during this period and therefore, did not experience political disintegration like the North. The Cholas ruled the whole of Peninsular India.

The historian Tarachand, in his book, the Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, observes that social and cultural revivalism in the South was due to the impact of Islamic culture. Muslim Arabs had trade relations with South India for many centuries before the emergence of Islam in India.

Indo-Iranian maritime trade had reached its peak some of these foreign traders had even settled in Srilanka and on the coast of Malabar. Some Arab Muslims also went to Sind and Gujarat, but their impact was limited. However, from the 12th century A.D., one observes a definite impact of Islamic culture on Indian Society.

Hindu and Muslim represent two different cultures, world views and way of life. Islamic and Hindu traditions have interacted, synthesised and also remained insulated. Y Singh mentions three major stages of Islamic traditions in India. These are (1) the duration of Islamic rule in India (2) during the British domination and (3) during the Indian freedom movement upto India's independence and the country's partition.

The first stage is marked by conflict, tension, adaptation and cultural syncretism between the Hindu and Islamic tradition. The Muslim rulers carried out religious warfare (Jihad) with the help of Ulemas.

No doubt Muslims assimilated many Hindu practices. On the other hand Indian society and culture was influenced by Islamic tradition to a very large extent. The impact of Islam on Indian culture was both negative and positive H.V. Srinivas Murthy and S. V. Kamath have highlighted both negative and positive aspects of the impact of Islam on Indian society.

They write, "Islam was indirectly responsible for making Hindu society caste-ridden and exclusive. The Hind woman was veiled and Sati was made more strict. Child marriage became more popular."

### **Negative Impact:**

The Muslim occupation of India accelerated certain undesirable tendencies that had already manifested themselves in the Hindu society on- the eve of the Muslim conquest. As pointed out by K.M. Panikkar Indian society was divided on a vertical basis due to introduction of Islam and Muslim rule. Before thirteenth century, Hindu society was divided horizontally. Neither Buddhism nor Jainism could affect this division but both were easily assimilated. On the contrary, Islam split Indian society into two distinct divisions from top to bottom – Hindus and Muslims.

In due course, these two sections evolved as two separate nations in the same country. Two parallel societies were vertically established on the same soil. The proselyting zeal of Islam

strengthened bonds of conservatism in the orthodox circles of their outlook and practice than what they were in past.

To fortify their position against the propagation and spread of Islam, the Hindus introduced of many social taboos and caste rules were made rigid. Under the impact of Islam continuous progress disappeared from the life of Hindus.

### 1. The Purda System:

Islam and Muslim rule seriously affected the position of Indian women. The birth of a girl was looked upon as an inauspicious event. Consequently, female infanticide spread widely among the Hindu. This was also adopted by the Hindus in order to avoid the risk of losing their chastity by the Muslims.

The Purda System, the seclusion of women from men, unknown in early days of Hindu rule, was introduced in the Hindu society. Women generally lived in seclusion in sphere of their homes.

### 2. Child Marriages and Sati System:

Child marriage was introduced in society. Gradually, child marriage was enforced. Early marriage of the Hindu girls to avoid their kidnapping by the Muslims became the custom. System of Sati was another social evil of this period. During Muslim rule the inhuman practice of Sati, was started. Women were expected to observe strict fidelity in their conjugal life.

The condition of the Hindu women deteriorated considerably. Dependence of women on their male relatives or husbands became the prominent feature of the Hindu society.

### 3. Slavery:

An unhealthy feature of social life that crept into Hindu society due to Muslims was slavery. Slavery was common in the Muslim tradition. It was a practice among the Sultans, Amirs and nobles to keep both men and women slaves. This influenced the Hindu chiefs to keep slaves. Hence, slavery appeared, in India due to Muslims.

### 4. More Rigid Caste System:

The missionary zeal of Islam which aimed at converting the Hindus to Muslims compelled the Hindus to be orthodox in outlook and practice to protect their religion and culture from the onslaught of Islam.

Hence attempts were made to make caste rules more rigorous and daily rules of conduct more rigid. Restrictions regarding caste and marriage had become more stringent among the Hindus. New rules with regard to caste and marriage were also prescribed.

### 5. Conversions:

When Hindu society became more rigid and conservative, the miseries of lower castes increased to a large extent. Due to this reason lower caste Hindus particularly the untouchables converted to Islam.

### Positive Impact:

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The negative aspects of the impact of Islam on Indian society discussed as under:

### **1 Religious Impact:**

Islam brought to India a conception of human equality, pride in one's religion, a legal system which was in many ways an advance on the codes of the time Hindu rulers were influenced to work as the upholders of Hindu religion. Islam gave the message of universal brotherhood, introduced equality in society, rejected caste system and untouchability.

In due course, these ideas began to have a conscious or unconscious effect upon the philosophical Hindu mind and fostered the growth of liberal movements under religious reformers.

The presence of am paved the way for the growth of the Bhakti cult. The saints and reformers of fifteenth and sixteenth centuries like Kabira, Nanak and Srichaitanya preached fundamental equality of all religions. However, medieval Bhakti cult was in some ways a reply to the attack of Islam on Hinduism.

### **2. Impacts on Upper Class Hindu:**

Rich Hindu classes were influenced by the Mohammedan dress, etiquette, recreation and other activities. The art of warfare was also influenced and developed as result of Islamic contact. Food of Muslims like Biryani, Kabab and Palan etc. were adopted by the Hindus.

### **3. Music:**

Indian music and musical instruments were also influenced by Islam. Indian musical instruments were modified and new instruments were produced The Tab la was produced by modification of Hindu musical instrument, Mridanga. Indian Veena was combined with Iranian Tambura and Sitatar was produced.

A fusion of Hindu and Iranian systems of music led to the evolution of light songs like quwwalis. Different classical vocal music of India underwent radical changes as a result of the contact with Muslim singers.

### **4. Architecture:**

Assimilation and synthesis between Hindu and Islamic culture led to evolution of new styles of architecture. According to Dr. Tarachand, "The craftsmanship, ornamental richness and general design remained largely Hindu, the arcaded form, plain doms, smooth-faced walls and spacious interiors were Muslim impositions." In the field of architecture new styles started of which Red Fort, Jama Masjid, Qutab Minar, Taj Mahal etc. are the living examples.

### **5. Art and Craft:**

New art and crafts were introduced in the country; for example, paper-making, enamellings, metals and jewels etc. Many workshops were setup-for gold and silver articles and embroidery. The Mughal rulers, except Aurangzeb, patronised architecture, fine art and paintings. Under Jahangir painting received considerable fillip.

### **6. Language and Literature:**

Hindu-Muslim contact led to linguistic synthesis. Urdu is the outcome of a mixture of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and of ideas with the concepts and languages of Sanskrit

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origin. The Urdu became language of the people. The Hindi language was also influenced by Muslim contact. This is distinct in vocabulary, grammar, similes and styles. Literature in India was influenced by the Turko-Afghans to a large extent. Books like Hassan Nizami's Taj-ul-Moa' Sir, Qazi Minhaz-us-Siraj's Tabakat-i-Nasiri etc. influenced the Hindus. Many good works were composed and written in Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi etc. Many Arabized Persian language words found their way into the local languages.

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