

NCERT Solutions Class 6 Social Science

(Exploring Society India and Beyond)

Chapter 7 India's Cultural Roots

The Big Questions (Page 105)

Question 1. What are the Vedas? What is their message?

Answer: The Vedas are a collection of ancient sacred texts that form the foundation of Hinduism. They are written in Sanskrit and are considered the oldest and most authoritative scriptures in Hindu religious tradition. The term "Veda" means "knowledge" or "wisdom." There are four Vedas:

1. Rigveda: The oldest of the Vedas, it consists of hymns dedicated to various deities.
2. Samaveda: It consists mainly of verses that are meant to be sung rather than recited.
3. Yajurveda: Contains prose mantras used in ritual offerings.
4. Atharvaveda: It includes a diverse range of topics, including remedies for physical and mental ailments.

Teachings of Vedas: Vedas provide a guideline on living a righteous life, including virtues like truthfulness, charity, and respect for all living beings. They emphasize the unity of the individual soul (Atma) with the universal soul (Brahma). They uphold one's duty and living in harmony with the cosmic order. They advocate for a balanced life that includes fulfilling material needs while also striving for spiritual growth. They provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the universe, human existence, and the relationship between the divine and the mortal.

Question 2. What new schools of thought emerged in India in the 1st millennium BCE? What are their core principles?

Answer: During the early 1st Millennium several new schools of thoughts emerged from Vedas.

- Yoga was one of them which developed methods to achieve one's consciousness.
- Vedanta was another thought which evolved through Upanishads. Upanishads were group of texts which were built upon Vedic concepts like rebirth and karma.
- Vedanta principles believed that everything including human life, nature and the universe is one divine essence called Brahman, the supreme existence.
- Together these thoughts laid the foundation of Hinduism.
- Other school of thoughts also emerged which didn't accept Vedas authority were Buddhism, Jainism and Charvaka School.
- Their core principle was that God is only one. We are the one giving indifferent names to them.



- The core principles of Buddhism was the idea of ahimsa, which is generally translated as non-violence means non-injuring. He also preached sincere inner discipline.
- The core principles of Jain teachings include ahimsa, anekantavada and aparigraha. These ideas, shared to a large extent with Buddhism and the Vedantic school of thoughts are central to Indian culture.
- The core principles of Charvaka School of thought was that there was no life after death. Charvaka School disappeared with time as its principles were not popular.

Question 3. What is the contribution of folk and tribal traditions to Indian culture?

Answer: Folk and tribal traditions have significantly influenced Indian culture through oral traditions and rituals. These cultures frequently revere natural elements including mountains, rivers, trees, plants, and animals. Tribal cultures have unique deities, tales, and rituals, which have affected mainstream Hinduism. Some deities, such as Jagannath and the mother goddess, have tribal origins.

Tribal cultures, like Hinduism, believe in a higher deity or supreme entity. Interaction between tribal, folk, and mainstream Hindu ideas has resulted in mutual enrichment, making tribal and folk traditions a crucial element of India's cultural heritage.

Let's Explore:

Question 1. Do you know the term for a society where people select their leaders? How do you think people can benefit from such a situation? What could happen if they live under leaders that they did not choose? Write your thoughts in a paragraph of 100-150 words. (Page 109)

Answer: The term for a society where people select their leaders is a democracy. In a democracy, leaders are typically chosen through elections, where citizens have the right to vote for their preferred candidates. In such a situation people have the opportunity to choose leaders who represent their interests and values and they are accountable to the public and can be voted out if they do not perform well.

People take part in the political process, that gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility. In a democracy people's freedom and their human rights are upheld, ensuring that citizens have a voice in governance. In such a set-up of governance transfer of power is peaceful through regular, free, and fair elections.

If people have to live under leaders that they do not choose, leaders may not reflect the will or interests of the people and they might act in their own interests rather than those of the public. People may feel disconnected from the political process.



Question 2. Discuss the way the Buddha is depicted in the above panel.



This stone panel, some 1,800 years old, shows the Buddha teaching.

Answer: A stone panel from approximately 1,800 years ago depicts the Buddha preaching. The image highlights his status as a teacher and spiritual advisor, surrounded by followers who value his teachings. This image depicts the Buddha's tranquil and enlightened demeanour, representing wisdom, serenity, and compassion. The artwork depicts the Buddha's teachings and his impact on his pupils, emphasizing the significance of sharing his message of enlightenment and inner peace.

Question 3. Observe the above panel (from a Jain temple in New Delhi). What is striking about it? What messages does it carry?



Answer: The panel depicts a lion and a bull sharing water from a common vessel, a striking symbol of peace and coexistence between traditionally opposing forces. This depicts the Jain principle of 'Ahimsa' or non-violence, emphasising respect and harmony for all living beings, even those seen as natural enemies.

Think About it:

Question 1. Have you heard or read any other story that conveyed an important message? What value did it teach you? (Page 110)

Answer:

- There are many stories and narratives throughout history that have conveyed important messages.

- Yes, I read an interesting story from Panchtantra of, “The Mouse and the Elephant” This story taught me that even a small creature like mouse could make a big impact on life of an elephant.
Similarly, I also read another story from Panchtantra titled, “The Rabbit and the Lion”
- Moral of this story is that knowledge is more powerful than strength.
Hence, few stories which I have read have taught me good moral values in life.

Questions, Activities and Projects (Page 123):

Question 1. If you were Nachiketa, what questions would you like to ask Yama? Write them down in 100-150 words.

Answer: If I were Nachiketa, facing Yama, the god of death, I would seek profound wisdom and clarity about the nature of existence and the path to liberation. My questions would be:

What is the nature of the soul (Atman)? How does it differ from the physical body and the mind?

What is the ultimate reality (Brahman)? How can one realize this truth in their lifetime?

What happens to the soul after death? Is there a cycle of rebirth, and if so, how can it be transcended?

What is the essence of karma? How do our actions influence our future lives and spiritual progress?

What is the significance of living a righteous life (dharma)? How does it contribute to one's spiritual journey?

Can true knowledge (jnana) alone lead to liberation (moksha), or is devotion (bhakti) also essential?

How can one achieve inner peace and overcome the fear of death?

Question 2. Explain a few central ideas of Buddhism. Briefly comment upon them.

Answer: Buddhism's core concepts include the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. The Four Noble Truths describe suffering (dukkha), its origin (tanha or craving), its end (nirodha), and the way to it (maggā).

The Eightfold Path is a practical path for ethical and mental development that aims to free individuals from attachments and delusions, resulting in understanding, enlightenment and the end of suffering. The notion of karma highlights the significance of one's deeds and their impact on future lives. These teachings promote compassion, mindfulness, and ethical conduct.

Question 3. Discuss in class the quotation of the Buddha which begins with “Not by water is one made pure, though many people may bathe here [in sacred rivers] to make sure that its meaning has been understood by all.



Answer: This quotation highlights that physical cleanliness or ritualistic actions, such as bathing in sacred rivers, do not lead to spiritual purity or enlightenment. True purity comes from moral conduct, self-discipline and mental clarity. It emphasises that inner transformation and ethical living are more significant than external rituals.

Question 4. Explain a few central ideas of Jainism. Briefly comment upon them.

Answer: Jainism emphasises three main principles: ahimsa (nonviolence), anekantavada (manysidedness), and aparigraha (non-attachment). Ahimsa advocates for complete nonviolence towards all living beings, reflecting deep respect for life.

Anekantavada teaches that truth and reality are complex and can be perceived from different perspectives, encouraging tolerance and understanding. Aparigraha promotes detachment from material possessions and desires, fostering a simple and content life.

These principles guide Jains towards ethical living, spiritual development, and harmonious coexistence with all forms of life, highlighting the religion's commitment to compassion, humility and self-restraint.

Question 5. Consider and discuss in class Andre Beteille's thought (see page 122).

Answer: Andre Beteille's is an Indian sociologist.

- As per his thoughts, since ancient times, thousands of castes and tribes had great influence on the religious beliefs of Hinduism.
- Each tribe used to follow their own religion influenced by Hinduism. Similarly as per his views, Hinduism as a religion was also influenced by the tribal religious customs and traditions.
- Finally, we could decipher from his views that Hinduism as a religion evolved through beliefs, customs and traditions of different castes and tribes of ancient India.

Question 6. Make a list of popular gods and goddesses in your region and the festivals they are associated with.

Answer: Here is the list of popular gods and goddesses with festivals associated with them:

- Lord Rama and Hanuman: Diwali is celebrated worldwide as on this day Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya after killing the Demon Ravana.
- Lord Ganesh: Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated on his birth anniversary.
- Lord Shiva: Shivaratri is celebrated on his birth anniversary.
- Lord Krishna: Janmashtami is celebrated on his birth anniversary.
- Goddess Durga: The deity of strength and motherhood. Durga Pooja festival celebrates the victory of goddess Durga over the demon king Mahishasura.



- Goddess Laxmi: The deity of wealth and prosperity is worshipped during Diwali festival.
Similarly students could make further list of their regional gods, goddesses and festivals associated with them.

Question 7. As a class activity, list two or three tribal groups from your region or State. Document some of their art and belief systems.

Answer: Gonds, Bhils, Santhal, Munda and the Great Andamanese Tribes.

- The Great Andamanese Tribes are an indigenous people of the Great Andaman Archipelago in the Andaman Islands.
All living things are believed to be endowed with power that affects the human being. The art form depicts the culture and tradition.
- Bhil art is known for its simplicity and use of vibrant colours. The art form is practised on the walls, floors, clothes.
Similarly students could give details of tribal groups from their region.

True or False:

Question 1. The Vedic hymns were written on palm-leaf manuscripts.

Answer: True

Question 2.

The Vedas are India's oldest texts.

Answer: True

Question 3. The Vedic statement ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti reflects a belief in the unity of cosmic powers.

Answer: False

Question 4. Buddhism is older than the Vedas.

Answer:

False

Question 5. Jainism emerged as a branch of Buddhism.

Answer:

False

Question 6. Both Buddhism and Jainism advocated for peaceful coexistence and the avoidance of harm to all living beings.

Answer: True

Question 7. Tribal belief systems are limited to belief in spirits and minor deities.

Answers False

Class Activity:

Question 1. Stage a small play with Yama, god of death, surrounded by several Nachiketas asking him questions about life.

Answer: Under the guideline of the teacher students will be selected in the class to play the role of different characters.

