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PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

2014-2021

HISTORY-3

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PPSC MAINS PYQ GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 1: HISTORY

2015

1. Analyze the disintegration of USSR and its impact on international politics.

Component	Explanation
Understanding of the Question	Examine why the USSR collapsed and explain its major effects on global politics after 1991.
Directive: Analyze	Break the topic into causes and consequences; show link between events and outcomes.
Keywords	USSR, Cold War, disintegration, Gorbachev reforms, unipolarity, nationalism.
Scope	Causes of collapse, internal factors, external pressures, global impact, changes in power balance.
Common mistakes	Giving only causes or only impacts; ignoring role of nationalism; skipping changes in world order.

Answer:

Introduction

The disintegration of the USSR in 1991 was one of the most important global events of the 20th century. It ended the Cold War, broke a superpower into 15 independent republics, and completely changed the structure of world politics.

Main Body

1. Causes of Disintegration

- **Economic Crisis:** Central planning, low productivity, and huge defence spending created long-term economic weakness.
- **Political Reforms:** Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* opened space for criticism and exposed failures, weakening Communist Party control.
- **Rise of Nationalism:** Republics like Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, and Georgia demanded independence.
- **Failure of the August 1991 Coup:** The coup against Gorbachev collapsed, accelerating the breakup.
- **Loss of Ideological Legitimacy:** People lost faith in socialism and demanded political freedom.

2. Impact on International Politics

- **Unipolar World Emerged:** The USA became the only superpower, ending the bipolar Cold War system.
- **New Independent States:** Fifteen new nations formed, leading to changes in borders and regional politics.

- **NATO Expansion:** East European states moved towards NATO and the EU, shifting the balance of power.
- **Global Power Shift:** International institutions like IMF and World Bank grew stronger as market reforms spread worldwide.
- **Rise of Regional Conflicts:** Ethnic conflicts appeared in places like Chechnya, Armenia–Azerbaijan, and Central Asia.

Conclusion

The fall of the USSR reshaped global politics by ending bipolarity, expanding Western influence, and creating new states and conflicts. It marked the beginning of a new international order dominated by the US and guided by liberal economic ideas.

2. Critically examine the role of Lala Lajpat Rai in the political and social upliftment of the country?

Component	Explanation
Understanding of the Question	Assess Lala Lajpat Rai's political and social contributions, and evaluate both strengths and limitations.
Directive: Critically examine	Present achievements and shortcomings; give a balanced, analytical view.
Keywords	Lala Lajpat Rai, nationalism, social reform, Punjab, extremism, caste reform, education.
Scope	Political role, social initiatives, institutions, movements, writings, criticisms, long-term impact.
Common mistakes	Only praising him; ignoring limitations or controversies like extremist image or factionalism.

Answer:

Introduction

Lala Lajpat Rai, known as the “Punjab Kesari,” was a major nationalist leader who worked for political freedom and social reform. His contributions shaped both the freedom struggle and the upliftment of marginalized groups.

Main Body

1. Political Contributions

- A key leader of the **Lal-Bal-Pal trio**, he strengthened the extremist phase of the national movement.
- Played an active role in the **Swadeshi movement**, promoting boycott of foreign goods and national education.
- Founded the **Servants of the People Society (1921)** to train dedicated workers for national service.
- Led protests against the **Simon Commission in 1928**, where he suffered fatal injuries.

- However, critics argue that his strong nationalist rhetoric sometimes deepened ideological rifts within Congress.

2. Social Upliftment

- Advocated **education reform**, founding institutions like *Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) schools* to promote modern learning.
- Worked for the **upliftment of women**, supported widow remarriage, and campaigned against social evils.
- Actively opposed **caste discrimination** and supported Arya Samaj's reformist ideals.
- Contributed to **labour rights**, heading the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) in 1920.
- Some scholars note that his social reforms were mostly urban-focused and limited in reach.

Conclusion

Lajpat Rai played a vital role in energizing nationalism and promoting social reform. Though his approach had limitations, his dedication, sacrifice, and institution-building significantly shaped India's political awakening and social progress.

3. Explain the role of social reform movements in the creation of political awakening for democratic rights.

Component	Explanation
Understanding of the Question	Explain how 19th–20th century social reform movements contributed to political consciousness and democratic rights in India.
Directive: Explain	Give a clear, connected explanation showing causes, processes, and effects.
Keywords	Social reform, political awakening, democratic rights.
Scope	Reformers, organisations, caste/gender reforms, education, nationalism.
Common mistakes	Only describing reformers; ignoring their link to political modernity and nationalism.

Answer:

Introduction

Social reform movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries transformed Indian society and laid the foundations for political awakening. By challenging social evils, promoting education, and introducing modern ideas, they helped Indians demand democratic rights and self-rule.

Main Body

Major Ways Social Reform Movements Created Political Awakening

- **Promotion of modern education:** Reformers like **Raja Ram Mohan Roy**, **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar**, and organisations like the **Prarthana Samaj** encouraged Western education, which introduced concepts like liberty, equality, and constitutionalism.

- **Challenge to caste inequalities:** Reformers such as **Jyotiba Phule** and later **Periyar** attacked caste oppression, nurturing the demand for social justice and equal citizenship.
- **Women's emancipation:** Campaigns for widow remarriage, female education, and against child marriage made society receptive to rights-based governance.
- **Rise of public opinion:** Newspapers by reformers—*Samvad Kaumudi*, *Kesari*, *The Hindu*—trained people to debate laws, rights, and state accountability.
- **Formation of associations:** Organisations like the **Arya Samaj**, **Brahmo Samaj**, and **Aligarh Movement** created organised platforms, preparing Indians for modern political associations like the Congress.
- **National unity:** Social reformers addressed national issues beyond religion or caste, promoting a shared national consciousness.

Conclusion

Social reform movements broadened social awareness, encouraged critical thinking, and empowered Indians to demand equality, justice, and democratic rights, thus shaping the foundation of India's modern political awakening.

4. What was the place of the Revolutionary movements in the Indian freedom struggle? Throw light on the revolutionary activities of Sardar Bhagat Singh.

Component	Explanation
Understanding of the Question	Discuss the significance of revolutionary movements and specifically highlight Bhagat Singh's contributions.
Directive: Throw light / What was the place	Explain importance + give key examples clearly.
Keywords	Revolutionary movements, Bhagat Singh, freedom struggle.
Scope	Role, organisations, ideology, Bhagat Singh's activities.
Common mistakes	Focusing only on violence; ignoring ideological depth and mass influence.

Answer:

Introduction

Revolutionary movements formed a powerful strand of India's struggle for freedom. Although not the dominant strategy, they played a crucial role in inspiring patriotism, challenging colonial authority, and energising youth. Bhagat Singh became the most iconic figure of this tradition.

Main Body

Place of Revolutionary Movements in the Freedom Struggle

- **Inspired fearlessness:** By challenging British authority through armed resistance, revolutionaries broke the myth of British invincibility.

- **Spread of nationalism:** Their actions generated patriotic passion, especially among students and workers.
- **Ideological shift:** They introduced ideas of socialism, equality, and anti-imperialism, adding depth to the freedom struggle.
- **Complement to mass movements:** Their activism strengthened national morale during phases when constitutional methods seemed slow.

Revolutionary Activities of Bhagat Singh

- **Formation of Naujawan Bharat Sabha (1926):** Mobilised youth on issues of equality, labour rights, and anti-imperialism.
- **Lahore Conspiracy Case:** Along with Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev, he planned to avenge Lala Lajpat Rai's death by killing J.P. Saunders (1928).
- **Central Assembly Bombing (1929):** Threw non-lethal bombs to "make the deaf hear," aimed at awakening political consciousness, not killing.
- **Writings & socialist vision:** In jail, he wrote extensively on revolution, workers' rights, and communal harmony.
- **Martyrdom (1931):** His execution transformed him into a national symbol of courage and sacrifice.

Conclusion

Revolutionary movements, and especially Bhagat Singh's martyrdom and ideology, infused the struggle with unmatched passion and strengthened India's march toward freedom.

5. Write short notes on the following:

a) Chief characteristics of Mughal Architecture.

b) Role of Sardar Patel in the integration of the Indian princely states.

Component	Explanation
Understanding of the Question	Identify and describe the main stylistic features that define Mughal architecture.
Directive: Write short notes	Provide concise but structured points with examples.
Keywords	Mughal architecture, features, domes, arches, gardens.
Scope	Origin → key stylistic traits → examples.
Common Mistakes	Listing monuments without characteristics; ignoring Persian influence.

Answer

Introduction

Mughal architecture represents a harmonious blend of Persian, Central Asian, and Indian design traditions. It evolved between the 16th–18th centuries and produced some of India's most iconic monuments.

Main Body – Key Characteristics

- **Use of Red Sandstone and Marble:** Akbar preferred red sandstone (Fatehpur Sikri), while Shah Jahan popularised white marble (Taj Mahal).
- **Double Domes & Bulbous Domes:** Seen in Humayun's Tomb and Taj Mahal.
- **Arches and Vaulting:** True arches and vaulted ceilings derived from Timurid styles.
- **Charbagh Layouts:** Symmetrical Persian-style gardens (Humayun's Tomb).
- **Decorative Work:** Pietra dura, calligraphy, arabesque, geometric patterns.
- **Emphasis on Symmetry:** Perfect visual balance in structures like Jama Masjid and Red Fort.

b) Role of Sardar Patel in the Integration of Indian Princely States (125 words)

Understanding the Question

Component	Explanation
Understanding of the Question	Explain Patel's political role in unifying over 500 princely states into the Indian Union.
Directive: Write short notes	Provide concise analytical points with examples.
Keywords	Integration, princely states, Patel, diplomacy.
Scope	Challenges → Patel's methods → examples of major integrations.
Common Mistakes	Only praising Patel; ignoring VP Menon's role or complexity of the process.

Answer

Introduction

After independence in 1947, India faced the massive challenge of uniting 565 princely states. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, as Home Minister, led this historic task.

Main Body – Patel's Role in Integration

- **Instrument of Accession:** Patel, with V.P. Menon, persuaded rulers to join India by offering autonomy in internal matters.
- **Diplomacy + Firmness:** Used reason where possible and pressure when required (e.g., Junagadh).
- **Military Action When Needed:** Operation Polo ensured Hyderabad's integration in 1948.
- **Ensuring National Unity:** Prevented Balkanisation and laid foundations of a unified administrative system.
- **Administrative Reorganisation:** Merged small states into viable units (PEPSU, Saurashtra).
- Patel's leadership earned him the title **"Iron Man of India."**

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