

VERY SHORT QUESTIONS

1. Which traditions are used by the historians in order to understand the social life and the process of changes taking place in society?
2. Who was the original author of the Ramayana?
3. What do you mean by the term 'epic'?
4. Throw light on the central story of the Mahabharata.
5. What do you mean by 'patriliney'?
6. Explain the term 'gotra'.
7. Throw light on the significance of the Manusmriti.
8. Mention two ideal occupations of Brahmans according to Dharamashastras. *(Delhi 2009)*
9. Mention any two ideal occupations of Kshatriyas according to Dharamashastras. *(Delhi 2009)*
10. How were the Shakas who came from Central Asia, regarded by the Brahmanas? Name their best known ruler and one of his contributions. *(Delhi 2009)*
11. Define the system of exogamy. Give one reason for adopting it. *(AI 2009)*
12. Who probably composed the original text of Mahabharata? What else did they do? *(Foreign 2009)*
13. Mention two such populations which were beyond the four varnas and were viewed with suspicion. Give one characteristic of each. *(AI 2013)*
14. How was paternal estate to be divided after the death of the parents, according to Manusmriti? *(Delhi 2012)*
15. Mention any two strategies evolved by Brahmanas to enforce the norms about the ideal occupations for all the four varnas, contained in Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras. *(Delhi 2012)*

ANSWERS TO VERY SHORT QUESTIONS

1. The historians use textual traditions in order to understand the social life and the process of the changes taking place in society. Some texts lay down norms of social behaviour whereas some others describe and originally comment on various social situations and practices.
2. Maharishi Valmiki is considered the original author of the Ramayana. He is regarded as the first poet in Sanskrit.
3. A large poetic text narrating the life and achievements of the heroes or the past of a nation, is known as epic.
4. The central story of the Mahabharata is about a war waged between two families. It tells us about the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas to ascertain their respective access to the throne.
5. Patriliney means tracing descent from father to son, grandson and so on.
6. The actual meaning of gotra is goshtha i.e., the place where all the cows of the community are reared. Generally it is used for a group of persons originating from the same person.
7. The Manusmriti is the most authoritative work on Hindu law. It furnishes significant information about the law and social practices of the contemporary society. It influences the Hindu way of life in different ways even today.
8. The ideal occupations of Brahmins according to Dharmashastras were to study and teach the vedas, perform sacrifices and get sacrifices performed and give and receive gifts.
9. Two ideal occupations of Kshatriyas according to Dharmashastras were (i) To keep themselves busy in warfare; (ii) To protect people and administer justice.
10. The Shakas who came from Central Asia were regarded by the Brahmanas as mlechchas and barbarians. Rudradaman was a well-known Shaka ruler. He got repaired Sudarshana lake at Girnar.
11. Exogamy refers to marriage outside the unit. The high varnas prohibited marriages in the same gotra. Therefore, exogamy was preferred.
12. Perhaps charioteer-bards known as Sutas were composer of the original story. They generally accompanied Kshatriya warriors to the battlefield and sang their victories and achievements through poems.
13. The Brahmanas had not included some people in the social system based on four varnas. Nishadas and Chandalas were two such groups of people.
 1. The Nishadas were forest dwellers. Hunting and gathering was an important means of their livelihood.
 2. The Chandalas were untouchables. They were supposed to live outside the village or town. They wore clothes of the dead and used discarded utensils. It was assumed that even the shadow of a chandala was to pollute the people of the high varnas.
14.
 1. The Manusmriti suggests that after the death of the parents, the paternal estate was to be divided equally amongst sons but the oldest one was to get a special share as well.
 2. The Manusmriti does not recognise women rights in paternal estate. It clearly suggests that women could not claim a share of these resources.
15.
 1. The Brahmanas stressed on divine origin of the varna order. By propagating this theory they made the masses believe that the varna system was created by God. Therefore, the people started doing jobs ascertained to them without any objection.
 2. The Brahmanas encouraged the kings to see that the norms of varna system were followed within their respective kingdoms. The Brahmanical texts laid down that it was the duty of the king to protect varna and varnashrama system.