

History - When, Where and How**E. Long-answer questions:**

- 1.** Why do you think burial sites are important? Explain with the help of an example.
- 2.** Discuss in detail the various literary sources of history.
- 3.** Give a brief account of the early settlements in India.
- 4.** How has geography affected the history of India? Discuss.

Solutions

1. The burial sites give a wealth of information. For instance, in Burzahom in Kashmir, the burials that have been found are very interesting. The dead were buried in pits lined with lime. Sometimes, pets were buried with their masters. The association of tools and weapons with the skeletal remains also suggests their belief in life after death.

2. There are many ways of finding out about our past. One way is to read books that were written long ago.

Manuscripts: They were written by hand on palm leaves or specially prepared bark of a tree called birch. These deal with all types of subjects. There were epics, poems and plays written in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Tamil. Though many have been destroyed by insects, many still remain preserved carefully in monasteries and temples.

Biographies: These contribute in reconstructing history. Harshacharita by Banabhatta gives a detailed account of the life and reign of Emperor Harsha.

Religious Texts: Religious texts like Vedas and Upanishads tell us about the Vedic age of India. Other religious texts include the Puranas and Bhagavad Gita. The Mahabharata was written by sage Ved Vyasa and the Ramayana by Sage Valmiki. Historians draw information on the economic, social and religious life of the people from these epics.

Secular Literature: Other texts highlight other aspects of life.

Traveller's accounts: Many foreign travellers have also given good accounts of ancient India. These are called travelogues. These help us understand the past and relate it to the present.

3. Many geographical locations in India were inhabited by the early settlers. Humans began settlements near rivers. This gave them access to water. Historians have identified many such sites. The banks of the River Narmada were inhabited by humans thousands of years ago. They were hunter-gatherers. They hunted wild animals for food. Also, they gathered fruits, leaves and seeds or dug up roots of plants for their food. The Kirthar and Sulaiman Hills are the areas where humans first began growing crops about 8000 years ago. They

grew wheat and barley and also began domesticating animals. The Vindhya in Central India close to the Narmada River and the Garo hills in the north-east show evidence of the development of agriculture. It is here that rice was first cultivated. Humans also lived near the River Indus and its tributaries. In fact, it is here that the first cities came up about 4700 years ago. There is evidence that cities came up near the river Ganga and its tributaries about 2500 years ago. Large kingdoms came up near the rivers. Magadha was a large kingdom which grew near the River Son.

4. The history of a place is shaped by the location and geography of that particular place. The physical features of the Indian subcontinent have greatly influenced its history. India has mountains, plains, plateaus and sea coasts. The Himalayas have acted as a barrier in the north for foreign invaders. Numerous rivers of India led to the rise of human settlements around them. The Harappan Civilization flourished around the river Indus. The Indo Gangetic plains lying between the Indus and the Ganges saw the rise of many powerful kingdoms and empires. The coastal plains have been centre of trade and commerce since ancient times. There was an enormous exchange of ideas, cultures and traditions besides merchandise. This resulted in the development of a unique yet diverse culture.