



SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Question 1. How did James Mill view India?

Answer: James Mill did not cherish any positive idea about India. He was of the opinion that all Asian societies were at a lower level of civilisation than Europe. According to his telling of history, before the British came to India, the Hindu and the Muslim despots ruled the country. Religious intolerance, caste taboos and superstitious practices dominated social life. He felt that only British rule could civilise India. He suggested that the British should conquer all the territories of India to ensure the enlightenment and happiness of the Indian people. For India was not capable of progress without the help of the British.

Question 2. Historians divide Indian history into ancient, medieval and modern. But this division too has its problems. What are these problems?

Answer: This periodisation has been borrowed from the West where the modern period was associated with the growth of all the forces of modernity such as science, reason, democracy, liberty and equality. Medieval was a term used to describe a society where these features of modern society did not exist.

It is difficult for us to accept this characterisation of the modern period. Here, it is worth-mentioning that Indians did not have equality, freedom or liberty under the British rule. The country also lacked economic growth and progress in that period. It is therefore many historians refer to modern period as colonial period.

Question 3. What did the British do to preserve important official documents and letters?

Answer: The British felt the need to preserve all the important official documents and letters. For this, they set up record rooms attached to all administrative institutions. The village tahsildar's office, the collectorate, the commissioner's office, the provincial secretariats, the lawcourts—all had their record rooms. The British also established specialised institutions such as archives and museums to preserve important records.

Question 4. What do official records not tell? How do we come to know about them?

Answer: Official records do not always help us understand what other people in the country felt, and what lay behind their actions. For that we have diaries of people, accounts of pilgrims and travellers, autobiographies of important personalities, and popular books, etc. that were sold in the local bazaars. With the spread of printing press, newspapers came to be published and issues began to be debated in public. Leaders and reformers wrote to spread their ideas, poets and novelists wrote to express their feelings.

Question: 5. How did the British conquer India and establish their rule?

Answer: The British conquered India in the following ways:

- (a) They subjugated local nawabs and rajas.
- (b) They established control over the economy and society collected revenue to meet all their expenses, bought goods they wanted at lower prices and produced crops they needed for export.

- (c) They brought changes in rulers and tastes, customs and practices.
- (d) Thus, they moulded everything in their favour and subjugated the country very soon.

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