Q.1) A fascinating treatise on medicine and science exists in India's ancient literature. Illustrate with the help of suitable examples.

Approach

Candidate can start the answer with highlighting how India's ancient literature had fame in the medical and science, how science and practice of Ayurveda are narrated in ancient texts. Explain how great level of knowledge and intelligence cultivated medicine, astronomy, geometry, chemistry etc.

Introduction

Three ancient books known as Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Aryabhattiya, Brahmasphutasiddhanta, Siddhanta-Siromani, written years ago, are considered the main texts on ancient Indian medicine and science.

Body

Medical Science
- First written knowledge about the Indian system of medicine is found in 'Atharvaveda'. The treatment of various diseases is given in Atharvaveda's 'Bhaisjya Sutra'. A detailed description is found on the topics of general medicine and mental medicine.
- The texts of a veterinarian named 'Shalihotra' are available in Ayurveda, 'Ashva Symptoms' and 'Ashwa Praja'. These include the description of diseases of horses and medicines for their treatment.
- These texts reveal ancient natural healers who delved into plastic surgery.

Rational Medical Science:
- Three ancient books known as the Great Trilogy -- "Charaka Samhita," "Sushruta Samhita" and "Astanga Hridaya" -- written in Sanskrit more than 2,000 years ago, are considered the main texts on Ayurvedic medicine.

Field of mathematics:
- By the third century AD, mathematics had evolved into a distinct field of study. The Sulvasutras are thought to be the source of Indian mathematics.
- The knowledge of the description of trigonometry in Varahamihira's 'Surya Siddhanta' (sixth century). Brahmagupta also provided sufficient information on trigonometry and he also constructed a sine table.
- Brahmagupta's Brahmasputa Siddhanta was the first book to mention 'zero' as a number; thus, Brahmagupta is known as the man who discovered zero.

Astronomy:
- The Jyotishvedanga texts established systematic categories in astronomy, but Aryabhatta(499 AD) dealt with the more fundamental issue.
- Varahamihira described all of these observations in Panch Siddhantika, which summarizes the five schools of astronomy prevalent at the time.

Scientific Multi-Disciplinary approach:
- For example, Varahamihira's most notable works was the Brihat Samhita, an encyclopaedic study of architecture, temples, planetary motions, eclipses, timekeeping, astrology, seasons, cloud formation, rainfall, agriculture, arithmetic, gemology, scents, and many other topics.
- Baudhayana discovered Pythagoras at least 1000 years before his birth. He would have had a very high level of education, but he was most likely just interested in using mathematics to support his religious ideas, not for its own purpose.

Conclusion

In the presence of scientists such as Varahamihir, Aryabhatta, and Nagarjuna, ancient India was undeniably technologically advanced in the fields of mathematics, medicine, and physics. Scientifically self-sufficient, and as a Vishwaguru, India was the world's leader.

Q.2) Storytelling through visual means has been a dominant art form in India elucidate.

Approach

In this question candidates need to write about how storytelling through visual means has been a dominant art form in India. Give some examples of it.

Introduction

Storytelling is the social and cultural activity of sharing stories, sometimes with improvisation, theatrics or embellishment. Every culture has its own stories or narratives, which are shared as a means of entertainment, education, cultural preservation or instilling moral values.

Body

Dastangoi:

- It is a mix of two Persian words "Dastan" meaning story and "Goi" meaning telling. A popular source of entertainment in Central Asian countries and Iran, this form of storytelling received patronage in the Deccan region in south India in 16th century.

Yakshagana:

- This form of storytelling emerged from the Bhakti movement in South India between the 7th and 10th century. Performed in a dance-drama style, it blends together classical and folk dance with dialogue.
- He is the key in the entire performance as he is responsible for holding the story together.

Harikatha:

- This is a form of Hindu religious discourse in which the storyteller explores a religious theme, usually based on the life of a saint or a story from an Indian epic. It comprises of storytelling, music, drama, dance, poetry, and philosophy.

Paintings:

- We find many examples of Ramayana and Mahabharata depicted in the form of continuous paintings, for example in Pattachitra of Odisha. Similarly, Jataka stories of Buddha are also found in paintings of Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra.

Rock-cut Architecture:

- The Ajanta cave paintings predominantly narrate the Jataka tales or Buddhist legends describing the previous births of the Buddha.
- Arjuna's Penance a beautiful narrative sculpted onto a single rockface narrating a story from the epic poem, Mahabharata, optimizing the rock fissures and cracks.

Kavad Art:

- Kavad is a portable wooden shrine with visual narratives of Gods, Goddesses, local heroes, saints, and patrons on its panels hinged together.

Puppetry:

- The tradition of narrating stories with the help of puppets has been a great source of entertainment and knowledge. For example Yakshagana Gombeyata, Tholu Bommalata etc.

Conclusion

Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of communication. At its core, storytelling is the art of sharing information and engaging people. Its significance increased in art form because it stimulates people's minds and evokes emotion.

Q.3) If you were to take cultural tour from Madurai to Kashi, what changes would you observe in temple architecture? Explain.

Approach

A simple straightforward question where candidates are expected to write about temple architecture forms of India and how it changes from south to north from Madurai to Kashi.

Introduction

In ancient temple architecture there are Two broad orders of temples in the country are known as Nagara in the north and Dravida in the south.At times, the Vesara style of temples is also found as an independent style, created through the selective mixing of the Nagara and Dravida orders.

Body

From Madurai to kashi temple acrhitecture changes from dravida style to vesara to Nagara.

Dravida Or South Indian Temple Style-
- Unlike the nagara temple, the dravida temple is enclosed within a compound wall.
- The front wall has an entrance gateway in its centre, which is known as a gopuram.
- The shape of the main temple tower known as vimana in Tamil Nadu, is like a stepped pyramid that rises up geometrically rather than the curving shikhara of North India.
- Kanchipuram, Thanjavur or Tanjore, Madurai and Kumbakonam are the most famous temple towns of Tamil Nadu.

Vesara type of architecture -
- Vesara is a combination of Nagara and Dravidian style of temple architecture styles. The term Vesara is believed to have been derived from the Sanskrit word vishra meaning an area to take a long walk. Many historian agree that the Vesara style originated in the what is today Karnataka.
- The trend was started by the Chalukyas of Badami (500-753AD) who built temples in a style that was essentially a mixture of the Nagara and the Dravida styles, further refined by the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta (750- 983AD) in Ellora, Chalukyas of Kalyani (983-1195 AD) in Lakkundi, Dambal, Gadag etc. and epitomized by the Hoysalas (1000-1330 AD)

- The Hoysalas temples at Belur, Halebidu and Somnathpura are prime examples of this style.

Unique features of Vesara style of temple architecture

- Ornamentation: In case of ornamentation of temple walls and pillars, Chalukyan temple shows indigenous quality.
- Transformation of Dravida tower: The Chalukyan builders modified the Dravida towers by minimizing the height of each storey and arranging them in descending order of height from base to top with much ornamentation in each storey.
- Transformation of Nagara tower: Instead of inclined storey here modification is seen in the vertical shape of the tower.

Chalukyan architecture-

- Their architecture consisted of admixture of Nagara and Dravidian styles.
- Temples built during this time can be found in- Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal.
- Temples built during their time period do not have a covered ambulatory path.
- The Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal built in imitation of Kailashnath temple is the jewel of Chalukyan architecture.

Rashtrakuta architecture-

- They were the successors of the Chalukyas.
- Their temples were built mostly imitating the Chalukyan style.
- The Kailas temple at Ellora, built during the time of Krishna II is the representative form of architecture of the empire.

Hoysala temple architecture-

- Kesava temple at Belur built during the time of Vishnuvardhana to commemorate his victory over the Cholas is a representative art of this period.
- In this temple, there are multiple shrines grouped around a central pillared hall and laid out in the shape of an intricately-designed star.
- Such an arrangement could be found in temples during this time in Halebid, Somnathpur and elsewhere.
- Hoysaleswara temple dedicated to Lord Shiva is another famous temple built during this period.

Nagara or North Indian Temple Style-

- In North India it is common for an entire temple to be built on a stone platform with steps leading up to it.Further, unlike in South India it does not usually have elaborate boundary walls or gateways.
- The garbhagriha is always located directly under the tallest tower.
- There are many subdivisions of nagara temples depending on the shape of the shikhara.

Conclusion

Most of the architectural remains that survive from Ancient and Medieval India are religious in nature.In different parts of the country, distinct architectural style of temples was result of geographical, ethnic and historical diversities.