

UPSC Mains Model Questions [October 1-15, 2026]



This is a dynamic PDF e-book by GKToday. Please note that its content is subject to updates or changes on the GKToday website [www.gktoday.in] to ensure the latest information. You can download the most recent version of this e-book by visiting [this link](#) or by scanning this QR code.

Disclaimer: The authors and publisher have made every effort to ensure that the information in this E-book is correct. However, GKToday does not assume and hereby disclaims any liability to any party for any loss, damage, or disruption caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other cause. This document is a property of GKToday. Reselling, redistribution, or duplication is strictly prohibited.



Contents

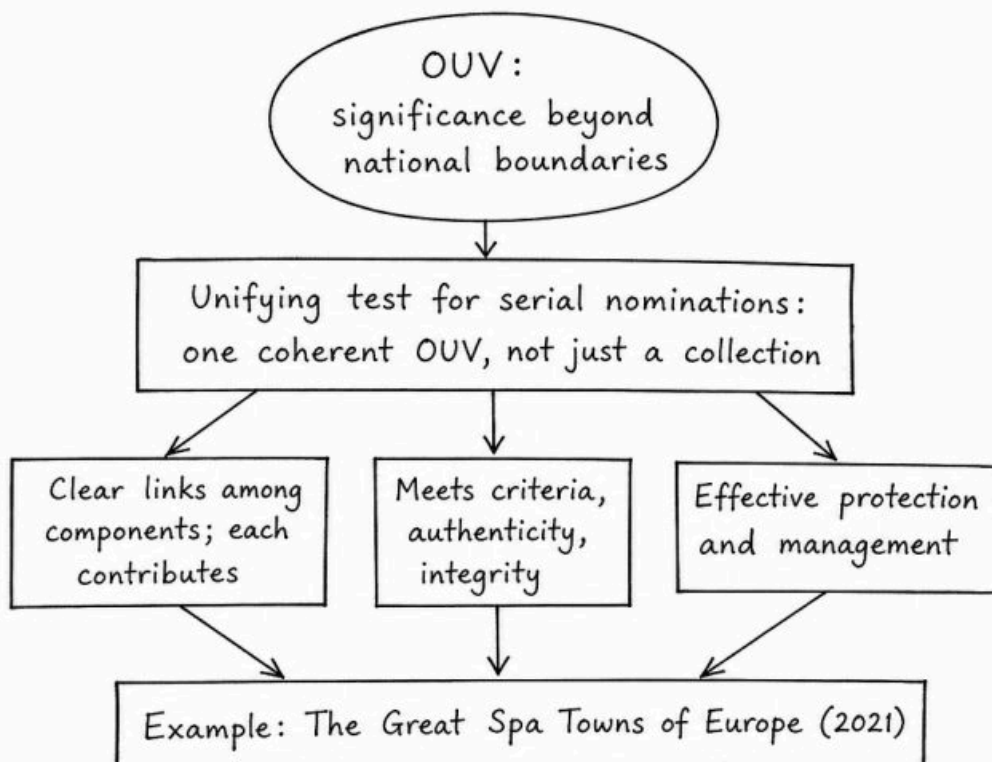
GS-I: Indian Art, Culture & Heritage	3
1. With suitable examples, explain how the concept of 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV) acts as the cornerstone for serial cultural nominations under the UNESCO framework.	
2. Critically discuss how the Kautilyan concept of 'Yogakshema' can guide modern states in balancing economic expansion with social welfare.	
3. How did the Nirguna Bhakti tradition, spearheaded by saints like Sant Ravidas, challenge the prevailing social hierarchies of medieval India? Critically discuss.	
4. Critically analyze how the architectural layout of traditional Mughal-era havelis facilitated socio-cultural interaction and micro-climate regulation in historic walled cities.	
5. Point out how traditional practices like Dhanurvedya have evolved into modern precision sports. Why is preserving traditional indigenous sports crucial for India's cultural heritage?	
6. With suitable examples, explain how the reinterpretation of ancient classical literature can revitalize contemporary art forms. Why is this distinct from mere translation?	
7. With suitable examples, discuss why the preservation of regional cinema is essential for understanding India's post-independence socio-cultural history. How does audio-visual archiving protect local cultural identity?	
8. How do unique agro-climatic conditions contribute to the spatial distinctiveness and quality attributes of Geographical Indication (GI) tagged spices in India? Explain with suitable examples.	
9. Critically discuss how the UNESCO 2003 Convention aids in safeguarding indigenous martial arts like Kalaripayattu and Thang-Ta. Why is preserving intangible cultural heritage vital for national identity?	
10. With suitable examples, discuss how the decline of the traditional Guru-Shishya parampara has impacted classical art forms. Why is formal institutionalization challenging for preserving oral traditions?	
11. Comment on the institutional role of Sangeet Natak Akademi in fulfilling the constitutional duty to value and preserve rich cultural heritage under Article 51A(f) of the Constitution.	
GS-I: Modern Indian History	16
12. Examine how the establishment of the Public Service Commission in 1926 and its subsequent restructuring under the Government of India Act 1935 shaped modern Indian bureaucracy.	
13. How did the establishment of regional parallel governments during the Quit India Movement challenge British authority? Critically examine their operational strategies and long-term socio-political impact.	
14. Why did underground resistance become the primary mode of struggle during the August Kranti? Discuss the operational methods and communication channels adopted by socialist leadership.	
15. Comment on why post-independence India prioritized public sector undertakings like Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited (IDPL). How did subsequent trade liberalisation alter the domestic active pharmaceutical ingredient manufacturing landscape?	
16. Examine how the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company established by V.O. Chidambaram Pillai challenged British maritime monopoly. Why did this economic nationalism struggle to sustain itself?	
GS-I: Indian Society	21
17. Why is the recognition of unpaid care work critical for achieving genuinely inclusive development? With suitable examples, discuss.	
18. Explain why raising the statutory marriage age alone cannot eradicate child marriage. How do deeply entrenched socio-economic factors limit the effectiveness of such legislative reforms?	
19. Analyse how gender-responsive urban mobility policies can address structural barriers to labor force participation for marginalized genders in India.	
20. Point out why a persistent gender gap exists in prestigious global intellectual recognitions. How can modern institutions	



GS-I: Indian Art, Culture & Heritage

1. With suitable examples, explain how the concept of 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV) acts as the cornerstone for serial cultural nominations under the UNESCO framework. (150 words)

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is significance exceptional enough to transcend national boundaries and matter to humanity across generations. It is the essential test for every World Heritage inscription, including serial cultural properties.



OUV as unifying test

Serial nominations group separate components to express one coherent OUV, not simply a collection of notable places. Their cultural, historical or functional links must be clear, and every component must contribute meaningfully. The nomination must demonstrate relevant cultural criteria, authenticity, integrity, and effective protection and management.

Examples

The Great Spa Towns of Europe (2021) unite 11 towns in seven countries to represent the European spa phenomenon; no single town conveys its full social, medical and architectural development. Le Corbusier's 17 works across seven countries collectively demonstrate the Modern Movement's global reach.

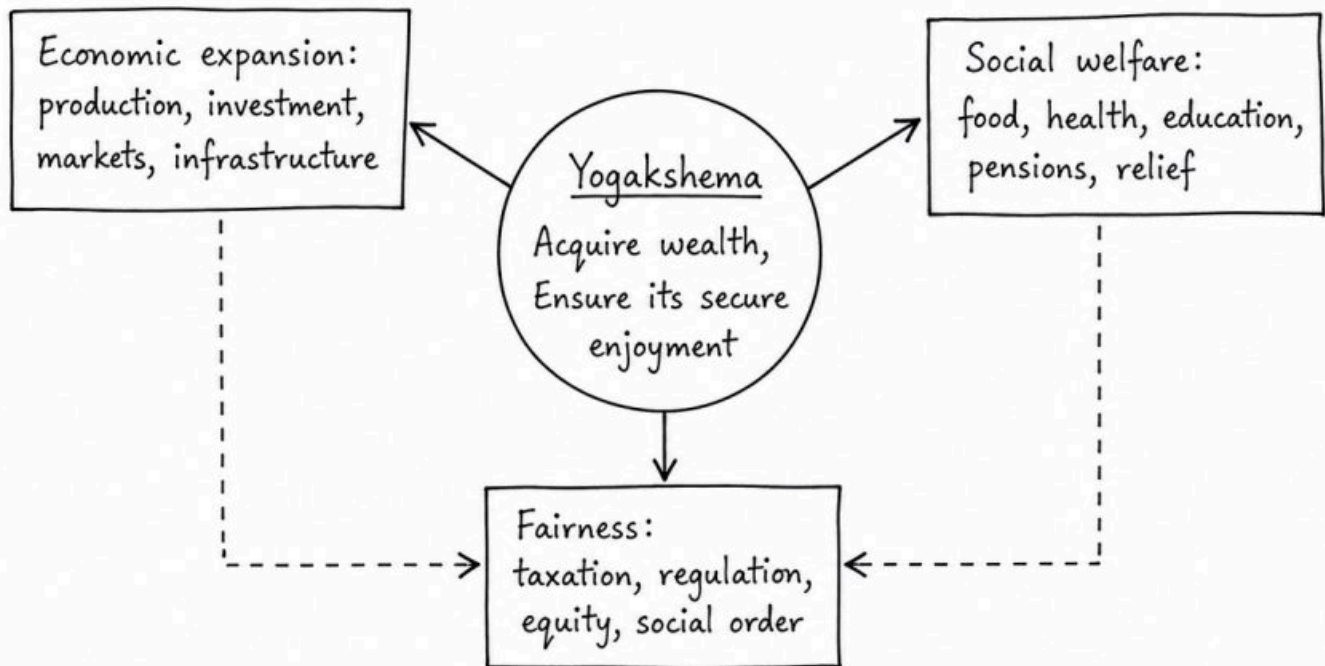
Thus, OUV provides the rationale, while component scrutiny prevents token inclusion. Recognition beyond borders depends on conservation and coordinated management across all sites.

Your Notes:



2. Critically discuss how the Kautilyan concept of ‘Yogakshema’ can guide modern states in balancing economic expansion with social welfare. (150 words)

Yogakshema in Kautilya’s thought means both acquisition of wealth and its secure enjoyment. It asks the ruler to promote prosperity actively, yet protect the weak and preserve social order. This offers a useful lens for modern states facing the growth-welfare dilemma.



- **For economic expansion:** the state must support production, investment, fair markets and infrastructure, as Kautilya saw prosperity as the base of stability.
- **For social welfare:** growth must finance food security, health, education, pensions, legal aid and relief for children, the aged and the infirm.
- **For fairness:** taxation, regulation and redistribution should curb exploitation and reduce inequality, not merely raise GDP.
- **For sustainability:** resource use must protect future security, linking development with environment and public health.

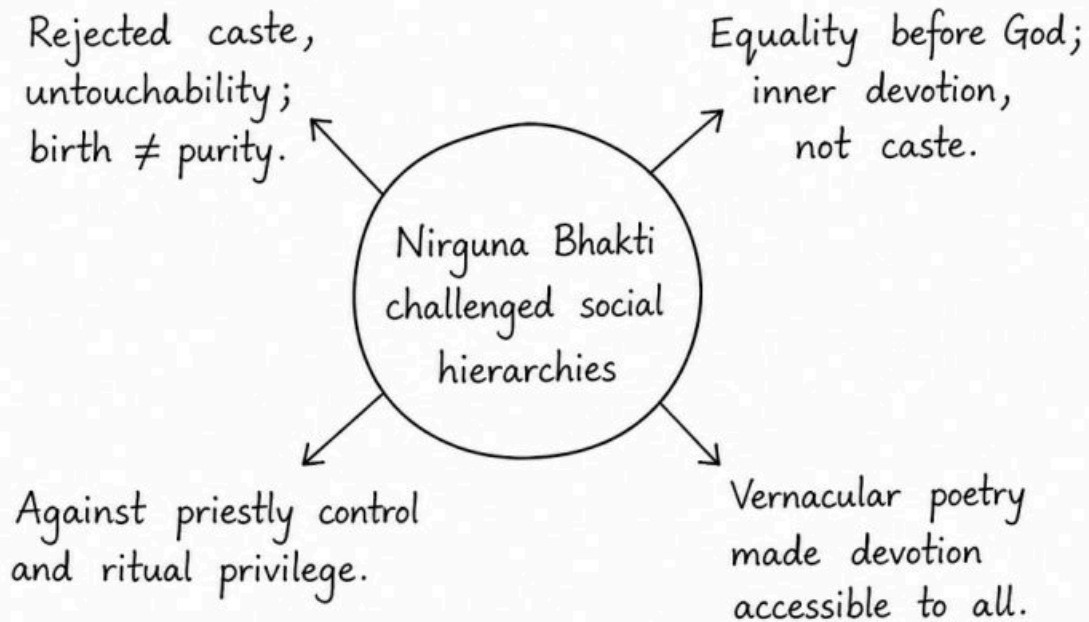
Critically, Yogakshema is not charity but a duty of the state. In a diverse democracy, it can guide balanced, inclusive and humane growth, provided welfare spending remains efficient and fiscally prudent.

Your Notes:



3. How did the Nirguna Bhakti tradition, spearheaded by saints like Sant Ravidas, challenge the prevailing social hierarchies of medieval India? Critically discuss. (150 words)

The Nirguna Bhakti tradition rejected a God with form and turned devotion into a direct, personal path. In doing so, saints like Sant Ravidas questioned caste privilege, priestly mediation and ritual status as the basis of spiritual worth.



- **Attack on hierarchy:** Ravidas, from a leather-working community, denounced untouchability and asserted that birth does not define purity or salvation.
- **Equality before God:** Nirguna saints taught that all are equal before the formless divine, making inner devotion, not caste, the measure of religiosity.
- **Against Brahmanical control:** Their use of vernacular poetry and simple teachings weakened Sanskrit monopoly and widened access to religion.
- **Social vision:** Ravidas's Begumpura imagined a casteless city without sorrow, injustice or bondage.

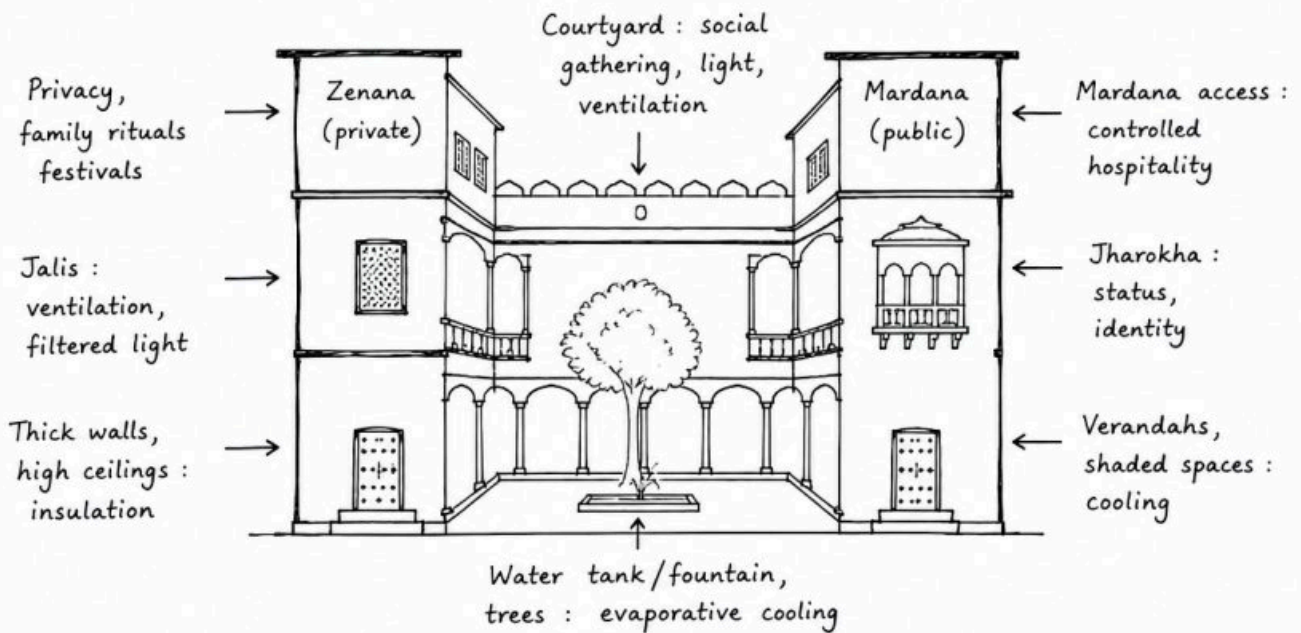
Critically, this was a powerful moral challenge but not a full social revolution. It inspired dignity and protest among the oppressed, yet often left economic structures intact and could be absorbed by orthodox society. Still, its insistence on human equality gave medieval India a lasting language of social justice.

Your Notes:

4. Critically analyze how the architectural layout of traditional Mughal-era havelis facilitated socio-cultural interaction and micro-climate regulation in historic walled cities. (150 words)

Sociocultural role: Mughal-era havelis were inward-looking elite houses that balanced privacy, hierarchy and social exchange. Courtyards, verandas, terraces and multiple gates enabled family rituals, festivals, domestic work and controlled hospitality. The separation of zenana and mardana spaces preserved gendered privacy while jharokhas and carved façades projected rank and identity into the street.

Mughal Haveli : Social interaction & Micro-climate



Micro-climate design: Thick load-bearing walls, high ceilings, shaded courtyards, jalis and ventilated verandas reduced heat gain, promoted cross-ventilation and filtered dust and glare. Water tanks, fountains and trees added evaporative cooling, making interiors livable in hot-dry walled cities like Shahjahanabad and Jaipur.

Thus, havelis were both social institutions and passive climate systems, showing how vernacular planning fused community life, status display and environmental adaptation.

Your Notes: