<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ajanta and Ellora – cave temples from last centuries BCE to 8th CE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cave temples show Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism coexisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Wall Paintings display nature of society, everyday life and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Priest dominated society emerged with Aryan migration, rise of Buddhism 6th Century CE, competition between Buddhism and Brahmins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Harappa collapses 1500 BCE, Aryans settle area, Kings claim divine descent, agriculture and clearing of forest changed climate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Complex ritual divisions, restrictions, hierarchies in India with Vedic priests as the dominant force.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## I. The Framework for Indian History: Geography and Formative Period

1. **Buddhist and Brahmin rivalries shaped hierarchies and gender roles, Mauryan Empire (1st empire in India), shaped by Buddhist teachings. Invasions by nomads led to separate kingdoms until Gupta Empire (Hinduism reemerges) – Golden Age of India: science, art, literature, philosophy, architecture**

2. **Contrast with China** – India focus on religion & social structure, Hindu way of life, political structure is less cohesive & important, unique cultural developments: science, religion, economics, family life.

3. **Similarities with China** – Agriculture: survival, village life, patriarchal, great cities with lots of trade, social and economic complexities, and formal intellectual life (schools)

### A. Formative Influences

1. **Geography** – closer to other civilizations than China. Always open to influences from Middle East, Mediterranean and Persia due to proximity.

2. **Topography** – The Himalayas were a barrier to the East, several passes in the northwest linked India to Middle East, and had divisions: Two river regions – Indus and Ganges (agriculture), the North (herding), southern coast (trading, seafaring), and economic/racial/linguistic diversity

3. **Climate** – India: river plains and semitropical, Monsoon rains cause flooding, drought, starvation, but good years supported two harvests and a large population

### B. The Great Epics

1. Vedic Age between end of Indus River Valley and revival of full civilization – Aryans increase agriculture and extend to Ganges River. Impact on social structure.

2. Literary Epics and texts called Vedas form historical record – sanksrit (written language), Riga Veda – first epic (hymn to Aryan gods). Stories – Mahabharata, Ramayana deal with battles, Upanishads more mystical/religious

3. Villages had chiefs, patriarchal, and extended family was important – grandparents, parents and children

4. **CASTE SYSTEM EMERGES** – Kshatriyas (warrior, governing class), Brahmins (priestly class), Vaisyas (traders and farmers), Sudras (common laborers), and Untouchables/Dalits (performed unwanted tasks). Caste is hereditary, intermarriage punished by death, occupations and social status tied to caste birth

5. Aryans brought gods and goddesses to India – gods regulated nature and human like

6. Nature is a divine force in India. Religion is combination of rituals, beliefs and mystical – Buddha built a religion on this mystique.
II. Patterns in Classical India

1. By 600 CE the Aryan period had come to an end – cities/trade grew, sanskrit advanced written culture but was led by priestly class.

2. Political structure was very irregular because of constant invasions due to Northwest border

3. 327 BCE, Alexander the Great invades India, creates Bactria

A. The Rise and Decline of the Mauryas

1. 322 BCE, Chandragupta Maurya seizes power & builds a unified empire – large armies, thousands of chariots and elephant troops, bureaucracy, postal system

2. Chandragupta was autocratic (ruler has all power, controls military), left empire to his son and renounced all pleasures of material world.

3. Chandragupta’s grandson, ASHOKA, extended empire through bloody conquests, but later converts to Buddhism: dharma, promotes Buddhism yet still honors Hinduism, instructed officials in humane treatment, improved trade and communications – roads, inns, wells

4. After Ashoka: his government left no stable roots or impact, Buddhism continued, new Invaders (Kushans) discouraged Indians from religion, empire collapses in 185 BCE

B. The Guptas

1. Kush invaders collapse by 220 CE & Guptas build empire by 4th Century CE – no individual ruler as great as Chandragupta and Ashoka

2. Preferred to have princes intermarry with powerful families to expand culture without fighting, 200 years of stability then overthrown in 535 CE by the Huns. Left impact of economic and cultural advancement.

3. India’s basic political pattern in Classic age – empires alternating with regional rule

III. Political Institutions

1. Persistent political features: regionalism, autocratic kings/emperors, aristocratic assemblies.

2. As a result, empires had shaky foundations. Early Mauryan rulers depended on large armies and feared betrayal. Gupta rulers claimed Hindu gods appointed them, created a demanding tax system and allowed local rulers to keep power. Promoted Sanskrit

3. Guptas promoted public works like road building, uniform law codes, universities, art, and literature – the Golden Age of India.

4. Gupta Empire not known for politics. Kautilya, the Chief minister, wrote treatise on politics (like legalist in China). The religions in India did not make politics very important, because priests were in charge.

5. Castes – interpreted by priests, regulated social relationships and work roles, which is similar to other government structures in other cultures. Public Order

6. Castes became more complex; defined who groups could eat with or marry. Not possible to rise above one’s caste, you could drop if you marry down or work below, upward mobility is possible if you gain wealth within your caste.


8. People were loyal to their caste which regulated behavior, thus political obedience less necessary.

IV. Religion and Culture

1. Indian Civilization large based on shared cultural values. Hinduism was more popular during Gupta empire, became the cultural cement of this society. It did not displace minority religions, and still the major religion of India

2. India left a scientific legacy along with openness to religious diversity
A. The Formation of Hinduism

1. Hinduism developed slowly over time, originating in Vedic and Epic Ages. Combining polytheistic beliefs, rituals, and mystic divine principles.
2. Developments due to reaction to Buddhism and Islam. Hinduism incorporated: rituals and ceremonies, unity of individuals with all embracing god, political/economic goals, worldly pleasures, and many paths to worship.
4. By 1st century CE, Hinduism is a more formal religion. Mystics shared power with brahmans.
5. Several gods are important aspects of brahma, Vishnu, Shiva. The Divine soul is more important than the world of senses. Life’s quest: seek union with divine soul. May take lifetimes, reincarnation, body dies but soul does not
6. Channels for a good life: renounce the world and practice yoga and meditation. Rituals and roles of the brahmans – proper ceremonies, prayers, dietary habits, treating cows as sacred
7. Provided a basic ethic that helped supply unity. Emphasis on moral law dharma, focus on consequences, the need to act – serving family, making a living, armed duties.
8. Far less demanding than Christianity and Islam
9. Hinduism accommodated variety of beliefs, consisted distinction between good and evil behavior, reinforced castes, promising hope to achieve higher level.

B. Buddhism

1. Prince Siddartha Gautama: questioned the fairness of life due to poverty and fairness, lived as a Hindu mystic, after 6 years found the truth. Became ascetic, but believed in Hindu beliefs of reincarnation, but denied the caste system. Buddhism was born: material world was evil that caused pain and suffering.
3. Spread of Buddhism: through the example and teachings of groups of monks. Growth in India due to Ashoka, and Buddha seen as a god. Focus on charity and piety. Brahman opposition was strong especially under the Guptas.
4. Other religions dissenting from Hinduism emerged too
5. Religion to the only development in Classical India: Legal Writing

C. Arts and Sciences

1. Literature: Gupta Period – Epics written in this time period, Sinbad the sailor, classical stories, drama
2. Science and Mathematics: Gupta Period – University, lecture halls, libraries, observatory, dairy, religion, philosophy, medicine, architecture, agriculture
3. The time of Greek conquest improved math and astronomy. Astronomy: length of solar year, math measurements, circumference of the earth, rotation of earth on its axis, eclipses, theory of gravity, found seven planets. Medicine: bone settings, plastic surgery, vaccination against smallpox, cleanliness – sterilizing wounds, and ethical standards
4. Math: Arabic numbering, concept of zero, decimals, negative numbers, square roots, value of Pi
5. Art: Stupas, more representations of human forms, sculptures and paintings – people, animals, nature, religion, imagination

V. Economy and Society

1. Effects of Caste System: low castes few rights, servants easily abused. Upper castes constrained by ethics rather than law. Leader limited interference from landlords
2. Family life: patriarchal, rights of women limited, as agricultural technology improves women’s roles decline, Hindu debate if women become men in reincarnation, arranged marriages done by family for economic reasons.
3. Women were also recognized: Epics recognized women’s contributions, stories of strong women celebrating female emotion and beauty, emphasis on loving relationships, husband and wife should enjoy mutual support. Children indulged in early years, but with increased age, expected to work hard

4. Expectation of helping older family members, family was emotional as well as economic unit

5. Economy – rivaled China in technology and surpassed China’s upper class in prosperity. Developments in Chemistry and had best steel in the world. Most superior iron making until recently. First to manufacture textiles: cotton, calico, cashmere

6. Trade: merchants more important than in China – high caste status, in north traveled across Asia and Middle East, in south with Roman Empire. Traded silks, cotton, dyes, drugs, gold, ivory, and brought back pottery, wine, metals, gold, slaves. Developed caravan trade with China

7. Gupta Empire known for its wealth, religious and intellectual life.

VI. Indian Influence and Comparative Features

1. Classical India had huge influence on other parts of the world, dominated the Indian Ocean, and water of southern Asia. Not looking for political domination. Their influence was by way of goods, intermarriage, cultural ideas and artifacts.

2. Influenced China by expanding art and Buddhism and the Middle East with its Buddhist missionaries (the Greeks)

3. classical Civilization lasted longer than in China or Rome, especially after the Gupta fell, religion, culture social and family network continued

A. China and India Compared

1. Art and Poetry: China was restrained, India was dynamic and sensual. Religion: China – Philosophies and religion were separate, India – unified religion and tolerant of minority beliefs. Political and Social Structure: China – centralized and bureaucratic, India – organized through caste system. Culture: China – more materialistic, India – otherworldly. Science: China – practical, India – went further into mathematics

2. Similarities: Agriculture: both large peasant classes, close knit villages. Cities and merchants were secondary. Political power in hands of landlords, taxed peasants, and patriarchal family structure

3. Differences: China – emphasized restraint, etiquette in family life, village control fell under pressure of landlord, trade advanced by government. India – more emotional expectations in family interactions, village control over land stronger in China, trade advanced by merchants

VII. Global Connections

A. India and the Wider World

1. Most open to influence, central to cross cultural exchanges, produced some of world’s highest forms of art, philosophy, math, science, technology, and urban centers. Population second to China

2. The rise of Buddhism as a world religion, to China and across Asia

3. Impacted political forms, art, architecture, religion, civilizations like Angor Wat, Majapahit, in the Mediterranean – artistic techniques, philosophy, ideas affecting Christianity, expanded the trade network over most of the Eastern Hemisphere, direct trade to the Silk Road, spread of cultural scientific and religious legacies across globe