Extra Questions Very Short Answer Type Questions:

Q.1. When and where was Al-Biruni born?
Ans: Al Biruni was born in 973 AD, in Khwarizm in present-day Uzbekistan.

Q.2. What did Al-Biruni do when he spent many years in India?
Ans: Al-Biruni spent many years in the company of Brahmana, priests and scholars, learning Sanskrit and studying religious and philosophical texts.

Q.3. Name the book written by Al-Biruni.
Ans: Al-Biruni wrote the ‘Kitab-ul-Hind’.

Q.4. Name the book written by Ibn Battuta.
Ans: Rihla, in the Arabic language, was written by Ibn-Battuta.

Q.5. When did Ibn-Battuta visit Mecca?
Ans: In 1332-33 CE.

Q.6. Who was known as the inveterate traveller?
Ans: Ibn Battuta was known as the inveterate traveller.

Q.7. Who was Duarte Barbosa?
Ans: He was a Portuguese writer who created a detailed account of trade and society in south India.

Q.8. Who was Francois Bernier?
Ans: He was a French man, a doctor, political philosophers and historian who remained in India for 12 years between 1656-1668 CE.

Q.9. Who gave a detailed description of the Caste system in India?
Answer: Al-Biruni.

Q.10. Who disapproved the nation of pollution?
Ans: Al-Biruni.

Q.11. Who described Delhi as a vast city with a great population?
Ans: Ibn-Battuta.

Q.12. With which purpose did the people travel? Write any four objectives.
Ans: The people used to travel:

1. In search of work.
2. To escape from natural disasters.
3. To satisfy their sense of adventure.
4. With multi-purpose objectives as traders, merchants, soldiers, priests and pilgrims.

Ans: Al-Biruni lived in Khwarizm in present-day Uzbekistan. Ghazni’s Sultan Mahmud attacked Khwarizm in 1017 C.E. and took back many poets and scholars to Ghazni. Al-Biruni was one of them.

Q.14. Give any two characteristics of the writings of Al-Biruni.
Ans:
1. Al-Biruni wrote in the Arabic language.
2. He adopted a critical approach in his writings. In each chapter, he began with a question. Then he gave a detailed description. He concluded with a comparison with other culture.

Q.15. “Al-Biruni was capable of translating different texts in other languages.” Give example.
Ans: Al-Biruni was well-versed in many languages which is why he was capable of translating different texts in other languages. He translated many Sanskrit texts in the Arabic language including the grammar of Patanjali. He even translated accounts of a Greek mathematician for his Brahmana friends.

Q.16. How did Al-Biruni know about the works of the Greek philosophers?
Ans: Al-Biruni did not know the Greek language. Even then he was familiar with the works of the Greek philosophers. He had read their translations in Arabic.

Q.17. Name the book written by Ibn-Battuta. What was his observation about female slaves in the sub-continent?
Ans: Ibn-Battuta’s book was entitled ‘Rihla’. According to it, the slaves were engaged to do domestic work. He wrote in his book that not only male slaves but the Sultan also employed female slaves to keep a watch on his nobles.

Q.18. Give a brief introduction of Francois Bernier. How long did he remain in India?
Ans: Francois Bernier was a French traveller. He himself was a doctor, political philosopher and a historian. He remained in India for 12 years from 1656 till 1668 C.E. and was closely associated with the Mughal court.

Q.19. Mention any two characteristics of the cities in the Indian sub-continent, as described by Ibn-Battuta.
Ans: According to Ibn-Battuta:

- Indian cities were very prosperous.
- Indian cities were densely populated.

**Long Answer Type Questions:**

Q.1. Give information about Francois Bernier and other writers who visited India after 1500 C.E.
Answer: The Portuguese came to India after 1500 C.E. They wrote a lot about the social customs and religious practices of India. Roberto Nobili even translated many Indian books into European
languages.

Duarte Barbosa. He was a famous Portuguese writer. He gave a detailed account of trade and society in south Indian. But after 1600 C.E., a lot of Dutch, English and French travellers came to India.

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier. He was a French traveller. He had visited India at least six times. He was fascinated with the trading conditions in India. He compared India to Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Manucci. He was an Italian doctor. He felt so impressed with India that he settled here and never went back to Europe.

Francois Bernier. He was a Frenchman. He was a doctor as well as a historian and a political philosopher. He had come to the Mughal Empire in search of opportunities. He remained in India for twelve years, i.e., from 1656 to 1668. He was a physician to Prince Dara Shukoh, the eldest son of Emperor Shah Jahan. So he was closely associated with the Mughal court. As he was an intellectual and scientist, he also remained associated with Danishmand Khan, an Armenian noble at the Mughal court.

Comparing East and West. Bernier had visited many parts of India. He wrote accounts of what he saw in these parts of India. He compared his knowledge about India with the situation in Europe. He dedicated all his important writings to Louis XIV, the King of France. Most of his writings are in the form of letters written to ministers and influential officials. He painted the situation in India as bleak in comparison to the development in Europe. However his assessment was not very accurate but his works became very popular. They were translated into English, Dutch, German and Italian. Between 1670 and 1725 C.E., his work was reprinted eight times in French and three times in English.

Q.2. Explain giving examples of how the accounts of foreign travellers help in reconstructing the history of India from the 10th to 17th century.
Ans:

1. Most of the foreign travellers came from a diverse social environment.
2. The local writers remained indifferent towards them.
3. They compared the Indian environment and social scenario with the outside world.
4. They laid more stress on those things or statements in their descriptions which looked queer and strange to them. This fact made their description interesting and lively.
5. Their descriptions threw light on the contemporary proceedings of the royal court, religious beliefs and the features of architecture and sculpture. It helps in the writing of history.

Important Foreign Travellers

The three most important foreign travellers who visited India during the Middle Ages were Al-Biruni, Ibn-Battuta and Bernier.

(a) Al-Biruni.
1. The detailed description by Al-Biruni is found in his ‘Kitab-ul-Hind’ which provides information
about the contemporary religion, philosophy and science. His description is very simple and straightforward.

2. Al-Biruni explained that the caste system was not only the characteristic of the Indian society but also of many other societies of the world. In other words, the caste system was prevalent in many countries of the world.

(b) Ibn-Battuta.
1. Ibn-Battuta wrote a book entitled ‘Rihla’. In this book, he declined a beautiful picture of his experiences that he had gathered during his various visits and travels. From his book, we come to know a lot about various aspects of social values and new culture.

2. Ibn-Battuta found paan and coconut very strange. So he made a special mention of them.

3. He also wrote about the cities of India and an efficient postal system.

(c) Francois Bernier.

2. Like the books of Al-Biruni and Ibn-Battuta, the book of Bernier is a gist of his experiences.
3. He especially compared the condition of India with that of Europe. He found the life of the people of India is worst in comparison to the life found in Europe.
4. In all his descriptions, he criticizes the control of the state over all the land. He considers it responsible for the miserable condition of Indian agriculture and the farmers.

Q.3 “Bernier’s accounts influenced western theorists from the 18th century. Give arguments to support the statement.

Or
“Bernier’s description of imperial land ownership influenced western theorists like French philosopher Montesquieu and German Karl Marx.” Justify it with suitable arguments.

Ans:
1. The descriptions of Bernier had a deep impact on many western thinkers. For example, Montesquieu, the French philosopher, used the descriptions of Bernier to develop his idea of oriental despotism. In other words, Montesquieu stated that the rulers in Asia enjoyed absolute authority over their subjects. All the people lived in subjugation and poverty. All the land belonged to the king and there was no private property.

2. Karl Marx further developed this idea as the Asiatic mode of production. He stated that the surplus was taken by the state in India. This led to the emergence of society having a large number of autonomous and egalitarian village communities. The imperial court also respected their autonomy. It was considered as a stagnant system.