

Q1. Examine the main aspects of Akbar's religious syncretism. (10 Marks, 2025)

Answer:

Answer Writing Blueprint

Introduction:

- Briefly introduce Akbar's religious syncretism as his deliberate policy of inclusion, not just of tolerance.

Body:

- Mention key initiatives like jizya abolition, Ibadat Khana, Din-i Ilahi, translations and inclusive rituals - support each with examples.
- Then, highlight limitations of this policy such as elite focus, orthodox resistance and lack of lasting impact.

Conclusion:

- Conclude by assessing his legacy which was limited in reach but foundational for India's plural ethos.

Introduction

Akbar's reign (1556–1605) marked a significant departure from religious orthodoxy in medieval India. He envisioned the Mughal Empire as a multi-religious state guided by *Sulh-i Kul*—a doctrine of universal peace. As historian **A. Azfar Moin** notes, Akbar sought not mere tolerance but a “political theology of coexistence.”

Body

Akbar's Religious Syncretism: Key Aspects

- **Shift from Islamic orthodoxy to universalist tolerance:** Akbar moved beyond sectarian rule to embrace a pluralistic ideology.
 - **For example**, He abolished the **jizya tax** on non-Muslims in 1564 and incorporated Hindu nobles like **Raja Man Singh** into his highest advisory councils.
- **Institutionalisation of interfaith dialogue: Ibadat Khana** was built in Fatehpur Sikri in 1575 as a space for **theological debates**.
 - **For example**, **Ibadat Khana** hosted scholars from Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and even Jesuit Christians like Father Monserrate.

- **Formulation of Din-i Ilahi (1582):** It was an ethical-spiritual order which synthesized moral elements from diverse faiths. It included elements from Islam, Hindu bhakti and Jainism, with about 19 elite followers like Birbal.
- **Promotion of cultural synthesis through translations:** Akbar established a translation bureau (Maktab Khana) for Sanskrit-Persian cultural exchange.
 - **For example,** The *Mahabharata* was translated into Persian as *Razmnama* and, Ramayana and Vedas were also translated.
- **Adoption of inclusive state rituals and symbolism:** He adopted practices from Hindu traditions to symbolise unity.
 - **For example,** Akbar introduced *Jharokha Darshan*, celebrated Raksha Bandhan and consulted Jain monks like Hiravijaya Suri.
- **Patronage of diverse religious scholars:** Provided financial support (madad-i-maash) to scholars across religious lines.
 - **For example,** He granted tax-free land to Hindu temples and Jain scholars.
- **Incorporation of Rajputs into imperial administration:** Blended political pragmatism with syncretism through matrimonial and strategic alliances.
 - **For example,** Akbar married Rajput princesses and appointed their kin to key administrative positions.
- **State policy of Sulh-i Kul (peace with all):** It served as the **ideological backbone of his inclusive governance** which helped in ensuring neutrality between Sunni, Shia and non-Muslim communities.

While Akbar's policies promoted cultural inclusivity, some critics argue that these policies were limited in **social reach and political continuity**.

Akbar's Religious Syncretism: Limitations and Criticisms

- **Elite-centric nature of reforms:** Most initiatives were confined to court elites and urban intellectuals.
 - **For example,** Din-i Ilahi never spread beyond Akbar's close circle of nobles.
- **Resistance from religious orthodoxy:** Conservative ulema rejected Akbar's innovations as heretical.
 - **For example,** Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi led the ideological backlash under Jahangir and Shah Jahan.
- **Reversibility and lack of institutional depth:** Many policies were reversed by later rulers.
 - **For example,** Aurangzeb reinstated jizya and discouraged public Hindu ceremonies.
- **Symbolic rather than structural change:** While inclusive in spirit, policies didn't address caste or gender inequities.
 - **For example,** Lower-caste and women's participation in administration remained minimal.
- **Blurred theological messaging:** Din-i Ilahi's hybrid character led to confusion and scepticism.
 - **For example,** Abul Fazl himself hesitated to openly promote it in imperial chronicles.

- **Political motivations intertwined with syncretism:** Some argue the moves are aimed more at **imperial stability than spiritual integration**.
 - **For example**, Rajput alliances ensured military and administrative control over strategic regions.
- **Limited regional penetration:** The impact of syncretic policies was mostly seen in North India.
 - **For example**, South and Eastern provinces saw minimal engagement with Jesuits or Brahmin scholars.
- **Absence of lasting socio-religious movement:** Unlike Bhakti or Sufi orders, Akbar's initiatives didn't evolve into a mass movement.
 - **For example**, Din-i Ilahi disappeared shortly after his death.

Conclusion

As **Irfan Habib** noted, Akbar's syncretism was a **“deliberate policy of harmonisation in a divided society,”** but **not a grassroots revolution**. By privileging **dialogue over dogma** and inclusion over imposition, **Akbar laid the foundation for a secular ethos** centuries ahead of its time—a legacy India continues to engage with in its own **pluralistic journey**.



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Q2. Globalization has increased urban migration by skilled, young, unmarried women from various classes. How has this trend impacted upon their personal freedom and relationship with family? (15 Marks, 2024)

Answer:

Answer Writing Blueprint

Introduction:

- You can start with **Ravenstein's migration hypothesis** by linking globalisation to the rising urban migration of young women.

Body:

- Structure the answer **chronologically** (phases of migration) followed by **theme-wise analysis**.
- Under personal freedom, use a **balanced format (gains vs. constraints)** across economic, social, legal and emotional dimensions—each with specific examples.
- For family, highlight **structural and functional changes** (e.g., role reversals, delayed marriage, caregiving from distance).

Conclusion:

- You can wrap up by emphasising the need for supportive policies to ensure this mobility translates into long-term empowerment.

Introduction Ravenstein's migration hypothesis posits that **economic opportunity, rather than compulsion, drives voluntary migration** which is often led by the **young and ambitious**. In post-liberalisation India, this migration is evident in the rise of **urban female labour force participation** which increased from **16% in 1999–2000 to 25% in 2023–24 (PLFS)**.

Trend of Urban Migration Among Young and Skilled Women

Phase	Trigger	Trend Evidence
1990s	Economic reforms+GATS offshoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First wave of call-centre hiring (20 - 29 age group)• Urban female LFPR inches to 16 % (1999-2000) (NSSO)

2000s	Telecom + SEZ Act 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT-BPM workforce touches 30 % women by 2008; Never-married share of female migrants to Bengaluru rises from 13 % (2001) to 22 % (2011 Census) PLFS series shows urban
2010s	E-commerce, gig work and FDI in retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> female LFPR 21 → 25 % (2017-18 → 2023-24); One-in-three female migrants to Gurugram report “professional job” as the reason.
2020s	Remote work + Post-Covid hiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India Employment Report 2024 notes a 38 % jump in single, degree-holding women on internal migration corridors post-Covid. Rise in Urban women registering on National Career Service ~ 52 % (2021-24)

Impact on Personal Freedom: Integrated Gains & Constraints

Dimension	Gains	Constraints
Economic Autonomy	Salaried jobs offer financial control and support for families. For Example , 61% remitearnings – PLFS 2024	Persistent wage gap - Women in IT earn ~78% of men – (NASSCOM 2024)
Mobility & Safety	Women access metros, cabs, and night shifts. For Example , Metro ladies’ coaches improve spatial confidence.	42% avoid late-night travel due to fear (IndiaSpend 2024)
Health & Reproductive Rights	OB-GYN access, counselling, contraception (e.g., Yuva Clinics)	Health insurance often tied to employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PGs often unsafe or unsanitary.
Digital & Social Expression	Freedom in fashion, dating apps, LGBTQ+ spaces and co-living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rise in cyber-stalking - As per NCRB, cybercrime is up by 22% (2023–24)
Legal & Civic Empowerment	POSH awareness, unionisation in BPOs and flexible hour demands	Rental bias, “no single women” rule; Marriage law notice backlash (Special Marriage Act 1954)
Psychological Wellbeing	Freedom from patriarchal control and career-driven identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICMR (2023): High anxiety, stress due to isolation & job uncertainty
Caste & Class Intersectionality	Urban anonymity dilutes visible caste norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dalit and working-class women face layered bias in domestic and gig sectors (Jagori Report 2022)

Impact on Family Structures and Relationships

- **Structural Transformations:** Women live in PGs or solo housing while parents remain rural.
 - **For Example** , “Satellite families” where parents relocate post-retirement to support daughters.
- **Functional Changes**

Function	Transformation	Example
Economic	Daughters become key earners	61% remit income - daughters now co-own urban property – MoRD
Caregiving	Remote coordination of sibling education and parental health	Parents' healthcare funded by daughters
Marriage Norms	Delay in marriage and rise in inter-caste unions	Urban marriage age is now 23 years – NFHS-5
Fertility Choices	Increased control over timing and spacing of childbirth	Rise in voluntary childlessness in metro women – MoHFW 2024

- **Interpersonal Relationships**
 - **Parents:** Close via video calls but also subject to digital surveillance (e.g. GPS tracking).
 - **Siblings:** Women act as role models—accelerating gender norm change among extended kin
 - **Extended kin:** Initially sceptical, but migration success (e.g. Kerala nurses to Gulf) often wins acceptance.

Conclusion Urban migration by young and skilled women is not merely an economic phenomenon—it is a social revolution. As per the *India Employment Report 2024*, these women are reshaping urban spaces, family roles and gender norms. However, the transition remains incomplete without systemic support. To truly unlock their potential, migration must become a launchpad not just for mobility—but for **dignity, choice and transformation**.

Q3. What is sea surface temperature rise? How does it affect the formation of tropical cyclones? (2024) – 10M

Answer:

Answer Writing Blueprint

Introduction:

- You can begin by **linking SST rise to tropical cyclones** to explain how cyclones draw energy from warm oceans.

Body:

- Organize the body **as per cyclone lifecycle**—formation, development, maturity and dissipation. For each stage, explain how SST rise influences cyclone behavior, using **specific examples**. You can add **other meteorological conditions** which **affect the formation of tropical cyclones** to provide holistic coverage.

Conclusion:

- Conclude by **connecting the science to policy**, referencing SDGs and the need for global and local adaptation strategies.

Introduction

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC AR6) states that sea surface temperatures (SSTs) could rise by 1.86°C to 2.89°C by 2100. This rise affects the genesis, intensification and lifecycle of tropical cyclones which draw their energy from **warm ocean surfaces**. As SSTs increase, so does the frequency and destructiveness of cyclonic activity.

Rising Sea Surface Temperatures: Key Factors

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Anthropogenic emissions trap more heat in the atmosphere, which leads to oceanic warming. **For example**, the Mediterranean Sea has warmed by approximately 4°C per decade from 1985 to 2006,
- **Ocean Heat Absorption:** Oceans act as carbon sinks which absorb about 30% of human-emitted CO₂. As CO₂ dissolves in water, it contributes to the warming of surface waters.
- **Increased Solar Radiation:** Enhanced greenhouse gas concentrations trap more heat in the atmosphere, causing oceans to absorb more solar energy and increase surface temperatures.
- **El Niño Events:** Periodic warming events in the Pacific Ocean raise SSTs globally.
- **Melting Polar Ice & Glaciers:** It reduces the Earth's albedo, which enhances ocean heat absorption.

- **Natural Variability:** Volcanic activity, solar cycles and ocean currents can also influence SST patterns.

Impact of SST Rise on Tropical Cyclones: Life Cycle Analysis	
Cyclone Stage	Influence of SST Rise
Formation Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Disturbances: SSTs >28°C enable formation of low-pressure systems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., Cyclone Roanu (2016) • More Arabian Sea Cyclones: Warming has increased activity here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., Cyclone Tauktae (2021) • Enhanced Atmospheric Instability: Promotes stronger vertical convection. • Greater Moisture Availability: Warmer seas fuel evaporation and cloud formation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., Hurricane Katrina (2005)
Development Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid Intensification: Elevated SSTs provide latent heat which hasten intensification. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., Cyclone Ockhi (2017) • Lower Central Pressure: Warmer oceans accelerate pressure drops which strengthen wind speed. • Increased Storm Size: More energy fuels wider storm systems. • E.g., Cyclone Freddy (Indian Ocean)
Mature Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained High Intensity: Cyclones retain strength over longer durations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., Cyclone Fani (2019) • Rising Super Cyclone Incidence: More intense systems now recorded. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., Super Cyclone Amphan (2020) • Higher Storm Surges: Greater coastal flooding risks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., Hurricane Ida (2021) • Secondary Eyewalls: High SSTs support complex eyewall replacement cycles.
Dissipation Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slower Weakening: Cyclones retain strength over longer distances due to extended warm ocean areas. • Inland Penetration: Stronger cyclones now impact areas far from coasts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., Cyclone Titli (2018) • Re-intensification & Erratic Paths: Cyclones may re-strengthen or shift tracks unexpectedly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., Cyclone Gaja (2018); Hurricane Beryl • Extended Rainfall: Increased SSTs prolong precipitation, causing inland flooding.

Other Meteorological Factors Facilitating Cyclone Formation

Parameter	Role in Cyclogenesis
Low Vertical Wind Shear (<10 m/s)	Maintains vertical alignment of the cyclone system; strong shear disrupts storm organisation.
Adequate Coriolis Force ($\geq 5^\circ$ latitude)	Provides necessary spin; absent near the equator, where cyclones rarely form.
Moist Mid-Troposphere	Prevents intrusion of dry air, which ensures sustained convection and storm intensity.
Upper-Level Divergence & Outflow	Aids mass removal from the storm top which allows pressure to fall at the surface and the storm to intensify.
Conditional Instability	A warm, moist lower atmosphere beneath a cooler upper atmosphere fosters vigorous updrafts and storm growth.

Conclusion The rise in sea surface temperatures is unequivocally altering the nature of tropical cyclones which have significant implications for **coastal populations, infrastructure and disaster preparedness**. To mitigate these effects and build resilience, countries must align their strategies with **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)** and **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**. This necessitates a multi-pronged approach to effectively address the mounting risks posed by a warming ocean.

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