

S.Y.B.A.
HISTORY PAPER - III
ANCIENT INDIA
(up to 1000 A.D.)

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I

Syllabus **S.Y.B.A. HISTORY PAPER III** **HISTORY OF ANCIENT INDIA** **(From Earliest Times To 1000 A.D.)**

Objectives :

1. To acquaint the students with the different sources and tools of Ancient Indian History.
2. To enable the students to understand the Political, Socio-Economic and cultural Developments of India from Pre Historic times
3. To Enable the students to appreciate the rich cultural heritage of India.

SEMESTER – III

Module 1 : Sources of Ancient India

1. Archaeological Sources
2. Literary Sources and Foreign Travelers Accounts

Module 2 : Indus Valley Civilization

1. Socio-Economic, Religious and Cultural Life.
2. Town Planning, Architecture, Script and Decline

Module 3 : Vedic Age

1. Policy and Economy
2. Socio-Religious life and Education

Module 4 : India in the 6th century B.C.

1. Age of Janapadas; Persian & Greek Invasions, Janism & Buddhism : Teaching & Impact.

SEMESTER – IV

Module 5 : Mauryan & Post Mauryan Period (322 B.C.-320 A.D.)

1. Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka & Mauryan administration
2. Post Mauryan Dynasties – Sungas, Kushanas & Satvahanas

Module 6 : Gupta and Vakataka Age (320 A.D. to 600 A.D.)

1. Imperial Expansion and Administration
2. Classical Age – Literature, Art and Architecture

II

Module 7 : India in the Post-Gupta Period (600 A.D. - 1000 A.D.)

1. Region of Harshavardhan
2. Invasions of Hunas, Arabs & Rise of Rajaputas

Module 8 : Major Dynasties of Deccan & South India

1. Chaukyas of Badami and Rashtrakutas
2. Pallavas and Cholas



III

Reading List

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मराठी संदर्भ ग्रंथ

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२. प्रा. मार्डीकर मदन - प्राचीन भारत, विद्या प्रकाशन, औरंगाबाद
३. प्रा. डॉ. अनिल सिंगारे - दक्षिण भारताचा इतिहास कैलास प्रकाशन, औरंगाबाद
४. आळतेकर अ. स. - राष्ट्रकुट साम्राजाचा इतिहास (इ.स. ७५० ते ९७४ दामोदर सावळाराम आणि कंपनी १९३८)
५. डॉ. प्रभाकर देव - प्राचीन भारत, विद्या प्रकाशन, औरंगाबाद
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७. डॉ. खाबडे दिनकर - प्राचीन भारत, कैलास प्रकाशन, औरंगाबाद
८. डॉ. मोरबंचीकर आर.एस. - सातवाहनकालीन महाराष्ट्र, कैलास प्रकाशन, औरंगाबाद
९. डॉ. समदानी ओ.बी. - प्राचीन भारताचा इतिहास चिन्मय प्रकाशन औरंगाबाद
१०. श. गो. कोलारकर - प्राचीन भारताचा इतिहास
११. कोसंबी डी.डी. - प्राचीन भारतीय संस्कृती व सभ्यता, डायमंड पब्लिशिंग पुणे
१२. डॉ. अ. रा. कुलकर्णी - प्राचीन भारत, स्नेहवर्धन प्रकाशन, पुणे
१३. गायधनी र. ना. आणि राहूरकर व. ग. - प्राचीन भारताचा इतिहास कॉन्टीनेन्टल प्रकाशन पुणे
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हिन्दी

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SOURCES OF ANCIENT INDIA (ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES)

CONTENTS :

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The Archaeological Sources
 - 1.2.1 Importance of the Archaeological Sources
 - 1.2.2 Development of Archaeology in India
- 1.3 Inscriptions (Epigraphic Records)
 - 1.3.1 Types of Inscriptions
- 1.4 Numismatics
 - 1.4.1 Importance of Coins as a Source of History
- 1.5 Monuments Sculptures, Paintings, Pottery and other Antiquities.
 - 1.5.1 Monuments
 - 1.5.2 The sculptural Art
 - 1.5.3 Paintings
 - 1.5.4 Pottery
 - 1.5.5 Other Antiquities
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Questions

1.0 OBJECTIVES

History Paper III, 'Ancient India' at SYBA level aims at studying the History & Ancient period from the Earliest times to 1000 A.D. For this study we need historical sources. The sources of the history of Ancient India are broadly classified into two main categories viz.

- 1] Archaeological Sources.
- 2] Literary Sources

In this lesson, a critical survey of the archaeological sources for the study of Ancient Indian history has been done. At the end of this lesson, you will be able to –

- i) Understand the importance of Inscriptions as a source of Ancient Indian History.
- ii) Describe the contribution of Coins as a source of history.

- iii) Realise the significance of Structural Monuments in understanding the Ancient Culture of India.
- iv) Study the role of Artifacts and other Antiquities discovered in the excavations.
- v) Describe the Socio-Economic life with the help of Ancient Sculptures and Paintings.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The word 'History' comes from the Latin word 'Historia' which means 'finding out'. History is a study of events in the past. It is a record of the achievements of man. For the reconstruction of history of any country or people, we should know the past events. These events are called as the 'historical facts'. The history of any people is known to us by the records left behind by them. These records are known as Historical sources.

The study of Ancient Indian history is important as it tells us how in Ancient times, the people of India developed their culture and civilization. The study of history is very much useful for :

- a) It helps us to know about our past.
- b) It helps us to understand our present in a better way.
- c) It helps us to learn some valuable lessons from our past mistakes.
- d) It also helps us to shape our future in a better way.
- e) It makes us broad minded and we learn to live in peace with people who have views different from us.

The History of any Ancient people is largely conditioned by the authenticity of the source material. In broad terms, sources of Ancient Indian history are classified into three categories. They are:

- 1) The Archaeological Sources,
- 2) The Literary Sources,
- 3) Accounts of Foreign Travellers

In this lesson, we will be studying the Archaeological Sources for the study of Ancient Indian history and their importance.

1.2 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

Archaeology is the science of antiquities. The archaeological sources include in it Inscriptions, Coins, Structural remains, Monuments and other antiquities like Sculptures, Paintings and other artifacts such as the Pottery, Ornaments etc.

The archaeological sources are treated as more authentic than the literary sources because of their contemporarity. These sources have provided immense information of many historical facts about which nothing was known previously. For example, Prehistoric cultures i.e. Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Megalithic Cultures and Protohistoric like the Indus vally civilization.

Archaeology, recently has been developed scientifically and its evidence is regarded most trustworthy. In addition to the scrutiny and close examinations of the monuments such as temples, statues, ruins of the places etc. exavation has been adopted as a means to uncover Ancient cultures. Valuable material concerning both prehistoric and historic civilizations has been discovered during such as Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Kot-Diji, Lothal, Kalibangan, Nalanda etc. Some of the site that have been excavated in Maharashtra are: Jorve, Inamgaon, Diamabad, Paithan, Nevase, Ter, Brahmapuri, Pauni, Sopara etc.

1.2.1 Importance of the Archaeological Sources:

The history of any Ancient people depends on the authentic source materials. The archaeological sources are usually considered as the authentic source materials for the study of Ancient history. The archaeological material is more authentic because it is based on actual finds of the contemporary periods. As a matter of fact, archaeological material is the only source of history for understanding the cultures of 'Proto-historic' period. The best example of this kind is the **Indus Valley Civilization**. Archaeological sources play a vital role in understanding the people and their culture in the historic period. It serves as a valuable supplementary source for a particular period. Many times the gaps found in the literary sources are filled by the archaeological sources. It also corroborates the historical facts mentioned in the literary sources and also reveals the historical facts.

The archaeological sources are treated as more authentic because of their contemporarity and they are not tampered with in the course of time. These are undying witnesses or the evidences of the history and have helped to reconstruct the history of Ancient India.

1.2.2 Development of Archaeology in India:

Recently archaeology, has been developed scientifically in India, and its evidence is regarded most trustworthy. It was during the British Period that a systematic study of archaeology in India began. From the 18th Century onwards, the officers of British East India Company began to take keen interest in the Antiquarian wealth of India. In the year, 1784, under the guidance of Sir William Jones, a Judge of the Supreme Court, the 'Asiatic Society of Bengal' was established in Calcutta for the study of history, the antiquities, sciences and literature of Asia. Due to the efforts made by the European scholars such as Sir William Jones, Dr. Buchanan, Hamilton, James Prinsep, Sir Alexander Cunningham, James Burgess, Sir John Marshall, Aural Stein, Mortemer Wheeler, M.S. Vats, and Hargreaves and the Indian archaeologists such as Rakhaldas Banerjee, S.R. Rao and others have contributed a lot to the development of Indian archaeology.

The British and Indian archaeologists over the past century and more has gathered together an extensive range of architectural, iconographic and inscriptional materials related to the history of Mauryas, Satavahanas, Guptas, Chalukyas, Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas, Palas and Senas and other dynasties. These archaeological sources offer us a wealth of information on Political and even more on Religions, Social, Economic and Cultural history of India.

Let us study all archaeological sources in detail and understand their historical importance.

1.3 INSCRIPTIONS (EPIGRAPHIC RECORDS)

An inscription means an old engraved record. It is also known as 'Epigraph' and therefore, the study of inscriptions is known as Epigraphy. In other words, 'Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions and inscriptions literally means any writing engraved on some object'. Epigraphy forms a branch of archaeology. These are written records on some hard substance.

The objects which were used for engraving inscriptions in India were of various types such as lithic, metallic, earthen and wooden object, pottery, bricks, shells, ivory plaques and other objects. The term inscription also include in it the writing in relief such as legends on coins and seals which are usually produced out of moulds or dies. Even the records painted on the walls or written in ink or on wooden tables are also regarded as inscriptions, although here the letters are not actually engraved but painted.

Inscriptions are found all over the country. Their number run into thousands. Many have to come to light. The earliest records in writing in India are attributed to the Indus valley people. They certainly knew the art

of writing as is seen from their seals and pottery. However this script is still undeciphered. Many scholars and historians are making serious efforts to decipher the Indus Script. If deciphered successfully, the beginning of Indian epigraphy will be pushed back by about three thousand years.

Inscription in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and other languages have been discovered. But most of the earliest inscriptions are in Brahmi and Kharoshthi Scripts. Brahmi Script is written from left to right. Brahmi is the oldest Indian script and dates back between 3rd Century B.C. to 7th A.D. It remained the main script of writing in India nearly for one thousand years. During the reign of Ashoka, we get a clear evidence of engraved records, incised on imperishable rock or stone surface in either Brahmi or Kharoshthi script. During the period between 3rd Century B.C. and 7th Century A.D. Brahmi script underwent some paleographic changes after every two hundred years and hence, the script of different periods came to be known by different terms such as —

- a) Ashokan Brahmi (e.g. Ashokan rock edicts)
- b) Satavahana Brahmi (e.g. Inscriptions of the Satavahanas)
- c) Gupta Brahmi (e.g. Inscription of the Guptas) etc.

Broadly speaking the inscription can be classified into two main groups:

- i) The inscriptions issued by a ruling authority or issued on its behalf. For example, inscriptions of Ashoka, King Kharavela, Satavahanas, Chalukyas etc.
- ii) Inscriptions issued by private individuals or private organizations. In this category, largest number of inscriptions record the donations (endowments) made in favour of religious establishments or installation of images for worship.

1.3.1 Types of Inscriptions :

In general, when we analyse the inscriptions on the basis of their contents, we come across many of its types such as:

1] Commercial Inscriptions:.

The Commercial type of inscriptions provides valuable information to our historical knowledge. The seals of Indus valley civilization are the best example of this type.

2] Magical Inscriptions:

The magical inscriptions are found on the seals of Indus valley. They were used as amulets and contained some magical formulae on them.

3] Religious and Didactic inscriptions:

These inscriptions deal with the religious and moral matters. For example, the inscriptions of Ashoka are the best specimen of this type. His edicts relate to ethical aspects of Buddhism and contained his Dhamma' or law of Piety' or the Moral Codes.

4] Dedicative and Donative Inscriptions:

These inscriptions record the donations or endowments made to the religious establishments. Most of these dedicative inscriptions are engraved on the walls of a temple or religious establishments and the pilgrim centers such as inscriptions found in Buddhist Monasteries at Kanheri, Kuda, Mahad, Sanchi, Vidisha, Nalanda and temples at Bhubaneshwara, Kanchipuram, Thanjavur, Aihole etc. give an account of the endowments made by either royal persons or private individuals and organizations.

5] Administrative Inscriptions:

These inscriptions provide us the information about the administrative system of the Ancient Indians. For example, some of the edicts of Ashoka throw light on his provincial administration. From these inscriptions we come to know that during the time of Ashoka, there were at least four provinces of his empire and their capitals were Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali and Suvarnagiri. Besides, there is a reference to certain officers of the state in these inscriptions, Amatya and Dharmamahatras. These inscriptions provide valuable information regarding the Mauryan Administration.

6] Eulogistic Inscriptions:

The eulogistic compositions are called 'Prasasti'. Usually these inscriptions contain the name and genealogy of the issuing ruler, the early life of a king, his personal accomplishment, his political military and administrative achievements. Some of the examples of this type are-

- i) Eulogy of Gautamiputra Satakarni in the Nasik cave Inscription.
- ii) Eulogy of Samudragupta on Allahabad Pillar Inscription.
- iii) Eulogy of Skandagupta on Bhitari Stone Inscription.
- iv) Eulogy of king Kharavela in Hathigumpha Inscription. etc.

7] Miscellaneous Inscriptions:

Besides the above mentioned types of the inscriptions, there are a number of inscriptions mostly found in South India, conveying laws and legal institutions, crimes and punishment, elections, trade and commerce and on music and dance. These are of the miscellaneous type and throw light on various aspects of the life of Ancient people.

Thus inscriptions are of various types and they throw light on various historical facts. They provide the detailed information about political conditions of their times. They give us the information about the issuing ruler, his achievements, inter-state relations, political ideas and institutions and the administrative set up.

The study of inscriptions is of immense value in relating the social conditions of the times. They provide us information about the social life of the people, especially pointing out the caste system, the Joint family system, the different clans (Gotras) as well as innumerable existing communities etc.

A large number of inscriptions throwing light on the economic life of the people have been discovered in almost all parts of India. Different mercantile professions are recorded in the inscriptions such as Sethi, Nigama and Vanija. Trade and industrial guilds were a common feature of economic life since very early times. Reference to such organizations functioning during the Ancient period are found in a number of inscriptions.

Even for understanding the religious life of the ancient Indian people. Inscriptions have proved to be the important historical source. They are called the dedicative inscriptions as seen earlier. There are a number inscriptions throwing light on Jainism.

Inscriptions in general, throw a welcome light on history of languages and palaeography. They help us mainly for the study of a cultural history. Indian inscriptions found in many of the South-East Asian countries such as Thailand, Burma, Java, Sumatra, certainly give evidence of India's cultural expansion in these countries.

Moreover, the epigraphical sources are more authentic because they are permanent and cannot be tampered with. Thus it is for these authentic historical evidences; the study of ancient Indian history would remain incomplete for want of sufficient information.

1.4 NUMISMATICS

The coins form another important archaeological sources for the study of history. The study of coins of the ancient period gives us valuable information. Such evidence is called Numismatic evidence.

Numismatics literally means "Collection of Coins". It means 'the study of coins as historical objects, as a source of history'. Numismatics form an important branch of archaeology. It contributes wealth of information to our understanding of the past. Coins as a source of history, throw light on various aspects of history. Thousands of ancient Indian coins have been discovered from which an idea about the

contemporary economic condition, currency system, development of metallurgical art can be obtained.

Approximately 2500 years ago, the coins were struck in India for the first time. They were used as a symbol and token of value. With the use of coins, earlier barter exchange was now replaced by coin currency. The stage of minting coin was reached only in the 6th century B.C. These coins have been discovered in large hoards in almost all parts of India. In ancient Indian literary works, instances of transactions in terms such as 'Vimsatika', 'Trimsatika', 'Sana' and 'Karshapana' are mentioned.

However, the earliest specimens of the coins are found from the 6th century B.C. They are made of Silver. These coins bear the stamps of one to five punches. More than one punch was used to stamp the coins. It is because of its manufacturing techniques, these coins are called as 'Punch Marked Coins'. These Punch Marked coins have been found in almost all parts of India and even in Afghanistan, Pakistan. They are found from Kabul-Qandhar region in Afghanistan to Bengal in the east and Coimbatore in the South. It means that there was a common currency almost throughout India before the Mauryas.

The earliest die struck coins have been assigned to the 4th Century B.C. These are found at Taxila and only one side of a coin was used. The other side was plain. Later on, the double die coins were struck by the rulers since 2nd Century B.C. These coins are found at Ayodhya, Kaushambi, Mathura etc. Some of these coins bear some inscription in Brahmi script.

The Indo Greek rulers also issued the coins of their own in India. They followed the Greek model of the coin initially issued by Alexander, to commemorate his victories in 4th Century B.C. The Indo Greeks, the Shakas and the Pahalavas also followed the Greek model and improved upon the coins. The Indo-Greek coins bear figures of the reigning chief with their name and legend. These coins obviously are helpful for understanding history of Indo-Greek rulers.

In the beginning of Christian era, the Kushan rulers became predominant in North India and Afghanistan. For the first time, Gold coinage with legends in Greek, Brahmi and Kharasthi scripts was introduced by the Kushans. Most of the Kushana coins are bilingual, having Greek inscription on obverse and Kharosthi inscription on the reverse side.

The Gupta rulers followed the Kushana coin pattern. The Gupta dynasty founded their empire in the first quarters of the 4th Century A.D. Almost all Gupta rulers issued their own coins. (We are going to study about Gupta coins in the later topic). These coins are very useful for the reconstruction of their history. They issued Gold,

Silver, Copper and also Lead coins. The other dynasties such as the Satavahanas, the Shaka – Kshatrapas, the Chalukyas of Badami, the Gurjara Pratiharas, the Rashtrakutas, the Cholas, the Cheras etc. also issued their own coins.

1.4.1 Importance of Coins as a Source of History:

Coins are an important and authentic sources of history as the inscriptions. By the study of different types of the coins, symbols, inscriptions, portraiture etc. found on coin, we can amass a wealth of information about historical fact. This data is extremely valuable for the study of ancient Indian Political history.

Coins reveal the names of unknown kings. For example, most of the Indo-Greek Kings, who ruled in India are known from their coins. Many rulers of the Kushana dynasty and Satavahana dynasty are also known from their coins only. Coins sometimes give us information about the titles of the kings.

The Coins help us to fix up the chronology. The location of the coins help us to determine the extent of the territory of a king. The coins are of a great value for the study of constitutional and administrative history of scripts and languages of the ancient people.

From the social, economic and cultural point of view also coins are most valuable. They throw light on several aspects of economic history. The coins sometimes give clear picture of the royal amusements, hobbies, furniture, house materials, weapons of war and hunting. The aspects of cultural life such as dress, ornaments, hairstyle etc. also can be studied with the help of coins.

Numismatic evidence furnishes valuable material for religious history. The depiction of deity and symbols on coins help us in determining the association of different cults with different religion. Coins are of a great help in the study of art and chronology.

Thus the coins are useful and authentic sources because they provide detailed information about the Socio-economic cultural, religious and other aspect of the life of the people of Ancient India.

1.5 MONUMENTS, SCULPTURES, PAINTINGS, POTTERY AND OTHER ANTIQUITIES

The structural remains which are seen above the surface of the earth or underground are the monuments and are visible creations of the people of ancient India.

1.5.1 Monuments:

The monuments such as palaces, tombs, buildings, temples etc. are important sources of the history of architectural and artistic development in Ancient India. The ornamental work on the walls, pillars, sculptural remains on the walls of palaces, temples etc. give us an idea of the artistic skill of the time. For example, the pillars of Ashoka, rock-cut architecture such as the caves, stupas, chaityas and the viharas, Gupta temples, Chalukya, Pallava and the Rashtrakuta temples pay glowing tribute to the aesthetic and architectural sense of the creators.

Since 18th and 19th centuries, a systematic study and close examination of the monuments (which are seen above the ground) as mentioned earlier, excavation has been adopted as a means to uncover ancient cultures. Valuable material concerning both, prehistoric and historic civilizations has been discovered in these excavations.

The source material i.e. the archaeological artefacts, pottery, weapons and tools of the ancient people etc. is much valuable particularly for the prehistoric period. In India, a number of sites have been excavated. These sites as mentioned earlier, have yielded a wealth of historical material which throw light on various aspects of ancient civilization.

1.5.2 The Sculptural Art:

The Sculptural art or Shilpakala was a branch of the arts which reached excellent heights in Ancient India. The people of Indus valley also knew the sculptural art as is evident from their stone and bronze sculptures. Ancient sites of Pataliputra, Mathura etc. have yielded numerous terracotta figurines. The sculptural art, since the time of Indus valley to the massive sculptures of later days is the tremendous progress registered by the Indians. In fact, religious zeal combined with artistic talents, resulted in the creation of beautiful images (i.e. Sculptures). These sculptures depict the religious or philosophical concept of the time.

Sculptures are found of various materials such as bronze, terracotta, copper, gold, ivory, wood etc. the Mayurayan Sculptures, shunga sculptures, Andhra-Satavahana sculptures, Gupta sculptures etc. are important and there are various schools of sculptural art such as Gandhara School, Mathura School of art etc.

In south India, highly skilled craftsmen and artisans made extremely beautiful images. The small images were for Private worship and the larger, images were installed in the temples. The finest examples of the Indian bronze castings were made under the God Shiva as (Nataraja" (i.e. the lord of the Dance).

Study of the images of various deities such as Buddha, Jain Tirthankaras, Vedic gods such as Vishnu, Shiva, Kartikeya, Goddesses such as Laxmi, Durga, Uma and other deities throw light on the religious history of the Ancient Indian people.

1.5.3 Paintings:

Painting is the art of producing a picture on a flat surface of wood, Paper, Canvas, Textile, rock etc. in lines and colours. It is a visual art and forms the art of specialised study of Ancient Indian history and culture.

The earliest paintings that are painted on the rock at Bhimbetka in M.P. and Mirzapur and Banda in U.P., give the glimpses of the performance of the proto historic artists. Indus valley people also had developed the art of painting as seen from the Paintings on their Pottery. Excellent Paintings from Ajanta and Ellora, also add to our knowledge. Paintings give us information of the hair style, Dress style, ornaments, jewellery, weapons, flora and fauna etc. of the Ancient people. Naturally, they are very useful sources for the study of Ancient people and cultures.

1.5.4 Pottery:

During Ancient times, most of the people used earthen utensils in their day to day life. Pottery types like the bowls, lids, Plates, Jars and Urns etc. can be found in the excavations. The pottery of earlier period is coarse, but later on it become more and more sophisticated. During the Mauryan period, the refined pottery known as Northern Black Pottery (NBP) was used throughout north India. During the Andhra-satavahana period, Indians imported the refined Roman pottery. The discovery of this pottery on a very large scale in India throws light on the brisk trade relations between the Indians and the Romans. In the absence of any other evidence pottery helps to ascertain the chronology of a particular culture.

The beautiful varieties of pottery and paintings and carvings on them reflect the contemporary Technical and artistic skill. Pottery thus is regarded as the main archaeological source for the study of Ancient history and culture.

1.5.5 Other Antiquities :

Archaeology studies a wide variety of artefact or material remains of human civilization such as the pottery and other antiquities like tools, seals, weapons, toys, clay articles, beads and precious metals, seals, ornaments and jewellery etc. They speak of the ways of living of the people with the help of these sources we can reconstruct the history of these peoples and cultures and therefore are regarded as the most valuable sources of history.

Check Your Progress:

1. Critically examine the archaeological sources for the study of Ancient Indian history.

1.6 SUMMARY

The sources of history of Ancient India are broadly classified in two main categories

- 1) Archaeological Sources
- 2) Literary Sources.

In this lesson, we have studied the types of archaeological sources viz. The inscriptions, Numismatics and the monuments and other antiquities discovered in excavations. We have also studied the importance of these sources for the study of Ancient Indian history and culture.

1.7 QUESTIONS

1. Examine the role of coins and monuments as the sources of Ancient Indian history.
2. Write short notes:
 - a) Inscriptions as the source of history.
 - b) Numismatics as the source of history.



SOURCES OF ANCIENT INDIA LITERARY SOURCES AND FOREIGN TRAVELERS ACCOUNTS

CONTENTS

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- 2.1 Introduction
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 - 2.3.3 The Jain Literature
- 2.4 The Secular Literature
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- 2.6 Accounts of the Chinese Travellers
- 2.7 Tibetan Accounts
- 2.8 Arab and Persian Accounts
- 2.9 Summary
- 2.10 Questions

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The literary works of ancient period form an important source for the study of ancient Indian history. The ancient Indian literature is an indirect but important source of the history of the ancient period. Ancient Indians have left a rich store house of religious and secular literature in Sanskrit and Prakrit languages. In this lesson a close examination of the literary sources has been done. At the end of this lesson, you will be able to -

- i) Understand types and importance of the Literary Sources.
- ii) Study various categories of the Sacred i.e. religious texts.
- iii) Describe the importance of secular literature.

In broad terms, sources of ancient Indian history are classified in two main categories viz. 1) The Archaeological and 2) The Literary sources. The Literary sources are divided into two groups i.e. Indian Literature and Foreign Literature.

In this lesson a review of the Foreign literary sources has been taken. Among these, the Greek, Roman, Persian, Chinese Tibetan and Arab writers were prominent who wrote their accounts on India.

Therefore, at the end of this lesson, you will be

- 1) Able to know about these Foreign travellers
- 2) Able to study their Accounts and their importance as a source of history.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Although, the ancient Indians produced vast and rich literature, they did not produce any regular historical chronicle. According to R. C. Majumdar, "One of the greatest defects of Indian culture which defy rational explanation is the aversion of Indians to writing history. They applied themselves to all conceivable branches of literature and excelled in many of them, but they never seriously took to the writing of history." Al-beruni was also of the opinion that, "the Hindus did not pay much attention to the historical order of things. They were very careless in relating the chronological succession of things, and when they were pressed for information and were of a loss not knowing what to say, they invariably took tale telling." Some writers have gone to the extent of maintaining that 'the people of ancient India had no historical sense in them. However, this view is now being given up and it is accepted even by European scholars like Dr. Keith that "there is certain amount of writing and number of facts attesting a degree of sense of history. In view of the antiquity and the developed character of Indian civilization it would indeed be ridiculous to expect to find India destitute of historical sense.

However, when we analyse and carefully study the available literary works of the ancient period, we find that the ancient Indians did not lack in historical sense. The religious literature such as the vedic texts, as well as writing of the Buddhists, Jains and other religious sects is much useful for the study of Ancient Indian History.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, that the literary sources are divided into two main categories viz.

1. The sacred religious texts and
2. The secular literary works.

The secular literary works are further divided into two parts. They are:

- a) The secular Indian literature i.e. written by Indians.
- b) The accounts or the Foreign Travellers.

We have taken a review of secular Indian literature in the previous unit. In this unit, we are going to study the foreign travellers accounts and their importance as the sources of ancient Indian history.

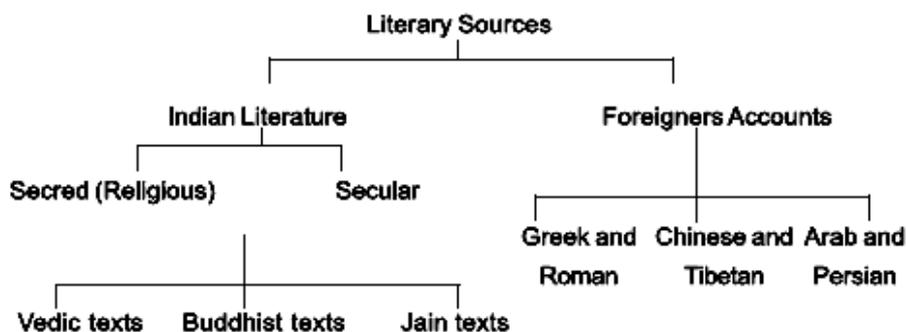
The foreign travellers accounts form an interesting source and have considerable historical value in respect of ancient times of India. Many foreign writers have left their accounts on India. Since ancient times, there has been close contact between India and her neighbours such as the Greeks and the Persians in the west, Chinese in the east and other countries in South-East Asia. Travellers from these countries have left records of their personal experiences and their observations about India. There are also writings of the foreigners, not travellers which contain observations on Indian subjects. There are foreigners those who did not visit India but still wrote about India. Their writings were based on hearsay, very few of such records have remained intact. Only a few fragments and portions quoted by later writers are available. yet, they are valuable as they supplement the evidence of our own literary and other sources of history.

Among the foreign writers, the Greeks, the Chinese and the Arabs are prominent. This literature is more valuable as the sources of history perhaps, more than the Indian literature because these writers had recorded their observations on factual evidences and they had historical outlook.

2.2 CLASSIFICATION OF THE SOURCES

What so ever the controversy regarding the historical sense of the ancient Indians, the fact is that the ancient Indians produced varied and rich literature. This literature is an indirect but important source of the history of the ancient period. These literary sources are classified mainly in two groups i.e.

- 1) Indian Literature and
- 2) Foreign Literature (Foreigners Accounts)



2.2.1 The Indian literature :

Indian literature is further divided into two sub categories i.e.

- a) The Sacred Literature (Religious literature)
 - b) The Secular Literature (Non Religious literature)
- The Sacred or Religious literature is further divided in three parts i.e. Vedic or Brahmanical texts, Buddhist texts and Jain texts.

2.3 THE SACRED LITERATURE

The Sacred or religious literature is not precisely historical in content. But, if studied carefully, they do give us information of the social, religious, economic, cultural, intellectual aspects of the life of the ancient Indian people.

The sacred or religious literature is classified under three categories, i.e. Brahmanical or Vedic, Buddhist and Jain.

2.3.1 The Vedic Literature :

The earliest literature is the vedic literature with all its branches. They are Four Vedas — The Rigveda, The Yajurveda, The Samaveda and The Atharvaveda. They are considered as revealed books, written by the sages (Rishis) under the inspiration from God. The contents of the vedas were handed down orally from generation to generation.

Vedic literature is further divided into two categories, viz. Early and Later Vedic literature.

The Rigveda :

The Early Vedic literature consists primarily of the samhita of the Rigveda, comprising 1028 hymns in praise of various gods, intended to be used as a mean of invoking the deities and soliciting their support. The hymns or (Suktas' are grouped into ten mandalas or books. It throws light on the political, social, economic and religious life of the vedic Aryans. It also gives us historical information relating to the progress of the Aryans in India.

Later vedic literature includes the samhitas of the 'Yajurveda', 'Samaveda' and the 'Atharvaveda'.

The Yajurveda :

It contains the formulas for the religious sacrifices which are borrowed from the Rigveda. It is divided into two parts viz. Shukla 'Yajurveda' i.e. white and Krishna Yajurveda i.e. black. The Shukla Yajurveda is concerned with Samhita and the Krishna Yajurveda deals with Sacrifices. In general, it was meant to be a guide books for priests performing sacrifices.

The Samaveda:

Samaveda is a collection of melodies. It contains information in musical forms. It is the earliest work in Indian music.

The Atharvaveda:

The Atharvaveda deals with spells, magic, charms and is a prayer book of the common people meant for application at the humbler domestic sacrifices. It is a sort of encyclopaedia. It contains information on various topics. These are the primary sources for the history of the early period which is known as the vedic period.

Other vedic literature comprises the commentaries on the vedic hymns. There are three types of commentaries.

1] Brahmanas : The Brahmanas are prose commentaries on the vedic verses. They describe details of sacrifices, religious rituals and practices.

2] Aranyakas : The Aranyakas appearing at the end of the Brahmanas are forest texts to be read by hermits in woods. In fact it is Religious and Philosophical work composed in forest.

3] Upanishadas : The Upanishadas contain the vedic Philosophy. It is Philosophy of very high level. They are the sacred philosophical texts containing principles, which are to be taught by the Acharya to his trusted pupils sitting near him. It deals with the universal problems like God, Soul, Death, Brahman and Atman.

Each veda has the Samhita, the Brahmana, the Aranyaka and the Upanishada as its four parts. The study of these commentaries helps us to understand the development of the Aryan Culture.

Vedangas and Upavedas :

Vedangas and Upavedas form two supplementary sections of vedic literature.

Vedangas – The six vedangas are :

1. Shiksha (phonetics) deals with pronunciation
2. Kalpa (ritual)
3. Vyakarna deals with grammar.
4. Nirukta deals with etymology.
5. Chhanda deals with metre.
6. Jyotisha deals with astronomy.

Out of six vedangas, the shiksha and kalpa are considered to be very important. The vedangas help us to understand the text of the Vedas.

Upavedas:

The upvedas are supplementary vedic literature. These upavedas deal with secular subjects like Ayurveda (medicine), Dhanurveda (Archery art of war), Shilpa (architecture) and Gandharvaveda (Music).

Smritis or Dhamashastras :

In addition to the above literature, an exhaustive literature was produced on rules, regulations and other aspects of society as well as the religious rituals and the vratas. These literary works are popularly known as Smritis or Dharmashastras. They were composed by sages after whom they came to be designated. Some of the prominent smritis are the Manusmriti, Yagnavalkya smriti, Gautama Smriti, Narada Smriti, Brihaspati Smriti and Apastambha Smriti. These smritis provide us a valuable information about the Varnashrama system, duties of different varnas, rights and privileges of the upper castes etc. It was during the later vedic period that marks the beginning of a sort of rigidity and orthodoxy in the socio-religious matter. The smriti literature throws light on the contemporary law.

Epic Literature:

The great epics 'The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are a rich sources of valuable material for history. The social and political conditions of the Aryans are clearly described in these popular works.

The Ramayana was composed by sage valmiki.

The Mahabharata was the work of many composers though it has been regarded by tradition as the products of Vysa's genius only. It is a massive epic of a lakh of verses.

The epics form a good source of information about the manners and customs, religious practices and beliefs, ideals and ideologies of the people in their times.

Puranic Literature:

The puranas are the stories of ancient times. The traditions preserved in the puranic literature form the main source of information for the history of the early period. The puranas contain the genealogies of the contemporary rulers. They are eighteen in number. These puranas throw light on all aspects and phases of Hinduism. The puranas provide us information about the history of ancient cities which existed in their times.

2.3.2 The Buddhist Religious Texts:

Buddhism came into existence in India, during the 6th Century B.C. Consequently, a variety of literature was produced by the Buddhist writers. Most of the early Buddhist literature was written in Prakrita

language viz. Pali. Under Ashoka, Buddhism received an extreme sort of royal patronage. This gave a boost to the revision of old Buddhist literature, known as the Tripitakas.

The Pali canon is divided into three pitakas or parts viz.

1. Vinayapitaka: Deals with the rules and regulations of the monastic life and the conduct of the monks.

2. Suttapitaka : Deals with the principles and the philosophy of Buddhism. It includes the Five nikayas, viz. Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta, Auguttara, Khuddakanikaya.

3. Abhidhammapitaka: Consist of seven texts, which are scholarly works on Buddhist doctrine.

The **Kathavatthu** which is a part of the Abhidhamma Pitaka was composed by Mogaliputta Tissa, a great Buddhist Acharya, during the time of Ashoka.

Therigatha is a collection of poems composed by Buddhist nuns for the purpose of Prayers and **Buddhavamsa** is a collection of Buddhist legends which depict the previous incarnations of Buddha.

Besides this non-canonical Buddhist literature was also produced of which **Netti prakarna, Petakopadesha, Sutta sangha** and the **Milindopanha** are some of the significant works. **Dhammapada** is a collection sayings of the Buddha.

The Jataka Stories of Mahayana Buddhism deal with the previous births of the Buddha. These Jatakas convey Morals. They throw light on contemporary society, religion, economic activities and political life of the contemporary people about 549 Jataka stories have been collected and published. The Jataka have been assigned to the 2nd or 3rd B.C. They give us supplementary information which helps us to check up the information available from the Brahmanical works.

Milind Panha (queries of King Milinda):

The Milinda Panha also is very useful as a sources of history because it is in the form of questions asked to his teacher, by the Greek king Menander. This Greek king was converted in to Buddhism. He had many questions which he asked to his Guru Nagasena. This is a book in form of questions and answers (by Nagasana). It contains a valuable information about the political, socio-economic and religious conditions of the centuries before and after the Christian era.

Some of the Buddhist literary works of this period were written in the Sinhalese language of Sri Lanka. Among these Divyavandana, Dipavamsa, Mahanamsha etc. are the most prominent. They are the religious texts. Nagarjuna, Ashvaghosha. Vasubandhu were the great Buddhist scholar their contributions enriched Buddhism enormously. We may note that all the texts invariably deal with canous, ruler, regulations, Psalms and other matters on the religion.

After the emergence of Mahayana cult, Buddhist writers wrote in Sanskrit also.

Ashwaghosha, who was the contemporary of the Kushans is regarded as top most Sanskrit writer. He wrote '**Buddha Charita**', **Sari Putta – Prakarana** and **Soundarananda** in Sanskrit. The Mahayana canonical works are called **Vaipulya sutras**. The **Lalitvistara**, the **Pradnya Paramita** and **Saddharma Pundarika** are the famous vaipulya sutras. They are important works in Sanskrit dealing with Buddhism. The Lalitvistara contains the story of the life of Buddha. The Vaipulya Sutras deal with Buddhist doctrines in nine books.

The Buddhist literature in also full of mythological and emaginary descriptions but compared to the Brahmanical literature in more authentic, because it was written during the contemporary period and it underwent comparatively less alterations.

2.3.3Jain Literature:

Jain literature also contains a lot of historical information. Prof. Jacobi and Dr. Banarsi das have done a lot of work on Jain literature. Compared to the Buddhist literature, the number of Jain literary work is lesser. It was written in Ardhamagadhi language, one of the Prakait languages. The Jain religious texts are known as the Twelve Angas. They supplement the information of the `Tripitaka', i.e. the Buddhist religious texts.

Mahavira's teachings were passed on from one generation to another by oral tradition. Two Jain Scholars Sthandila at Mathura and Nagarjuna at valabhi made efforts to put the old Jain canon in a form acceptable to all Jains. The second Jain council at Vallabhi in the 5th Century A.D. brough about a final compilation of religious texts.

The Jain canonical texts are classified in to 6 groups:

- 1) Twelve angas
- 2) Twelve upangas
- 3) Ten prakirnas
- 4) Six cheda sutras
- 5) Four mula sutras and
- 6) Four miscellancous texts.

- 1) **Twelve Angas** : explain the Jain Doctrines with the help of legends and stories and prescribe rules of conduct for monks.
- 2) **The Twelve Upanagags** : are dogmatic and mythological Upangas are associated with the Angas texts.
- 3) **The Ten Prakirnas** : which are in verse deal with miscellaneous topics regarding the doctrines of Jainism.
- 4) **The Cheda sutras** : give the rules of discipline in monasteries and also Prescribe Penalties for breaking them.
- 5) **The Mula sutras** : deal with the basic doctrines of Jainism. Mula is the supreme penalty of the cancellation of monkhood.
- 6) **The Miscellancous texts** : deal with religion, economics and other subjects. The Jain monks studied different subjects and these are given in miscellaneous literature.

Besides these canonical literary works, the Jain Monks Produced rich Supplementary literature. For instance, they wrote Niryuktis or Commentaries.

These Jain religious texts contain information about the contemporary Political, Economic, Social and Religions conditions.

2.4 SECULAR LITERATURE (INDIAN)

The literary works other than the religious in nature, form the category of secular literature. It developed side by side with the religious texts and Provide as a Valuable information about ancient India and the Indians. We get different categories of secular literature such as Biographies, Dramas, Local Chronicles, Poetry and Miscellaneous Literature such as books on art, architecture, Science, Medicine, Music Mathematics and many other subjects. Most of these works refer to historical events, socio-economic and cultural conditions of the time.

Kautiliya Arthasastra :

Kautilya was the mentor as well as the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya. Arthasastra is a work on Polity, but at the same time it given us valuable information about the contemporary socioeconomic and cultural life it is divided into 15 Prakaranas, each dealing with separate topic. The king, his ministry, state administration, domestic and Foreign Policy of the State taxation system, laws and punishment and relations between states etc. have been discussed in the Arthasastra. Peticularly it is very important for the study of Political and economic conditions of the Mauryan period.

Shukra Nitisara and Kamandakiya Nitisara :

Shukra Nitisara and Kamandakiya Nitisara also belong to this type of literature. They give an idea of the high standard of Political thought and organisation. These are the works dealing with State-Craft, economic System and Social organisation.

Gatha Saptashati :

Is a collection of 700 gathas or Poems composed by various poets its compilation is attributed to the satavahana ruler Hala (1st century A.D.) and written in Maharashtri Prakrit and is like a folk literature. It throws light on the socio-cultural life of common people and therefore; it has proved to be an important Source material for the study of social history.

Brihatkatha of Gunadhya :

A large body of folk literature also exists in Sanskrit consisting of fables. Stories with morals which have passed down from one generation to another. In this Brihatkatha of Gunadhya is important. This work however, was originally written in Paishachi, one of the Prakrit language. Its translations in Sanskrit are (1) **Brihatkathashloka Sangraha by Buddhaswami** (2) **Brihat Kathamanjiri** by **Kshemendga** and (3) **Kathasaritsagar** by **Somasharma**. Of these, the Kathasaritsagar of Somadeva has produced a great impact. The stories in this work deal with all possible experiences, situations in human life. It has influenced the folk literature in many other languages. There are many other works of this type in Sanskrit language. The **Panchatantra**, written by Vishnusharma is another world famous Sanskrit work which is a collection of fables. In Panchatantra we get stories of animals, reflecting on human nature.

Sanskrit Dramas also were written by several dramatists.

Bhasa wrote many dramas in Sanskrit. His *Swapnavasavdatta* is the best known play.

Kalidasa wrote dramas such as *Malavikagnimitra*, *Vikramorvashiyans* *Abhidhyanashakuntalom*.

Vishakhadatta wrote *Mudrarakshasa* and *Devichandragupta*.

Shudraka wrote *Mrichhakatika* based on Bhasa's romantic play.

Bharata Wrote the *Natyashastra* which is considered to be the most authoritative treatise on Sanskrit dramaturgy.

Emperor Harshavardhana was a great scholar himself he had also written three dramas namely *Ratnavali*, *Priyadarshika* and *Nagananda*.

Bhavabhuti wrote Mahaviracharitam, Malatimadhavam and Ultarramcharitam.

Bhattanarayaan wrote Venisanhara.

Ashvaghosh wrote Saundarananda.

All the above mentioned literary works deal with different subjects like grammar, science, medicine, etc., also process to be the source material which is useful for the study of socio-economic and cultural life.

The Sangam literature :

Under the patronage of the Pandyan rulers of Madura, high standard Tamil literature known as Sangam literature was produced. Tamil tradition mentions about three literary academies i.e. Sangam which met at Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas. The literature was presented in the sangama by the authors and poets and only after it was passed by a committee of the scholars, was accepted as Sangama literature.

There is no any literary work left for us from the First Sangama, all its works have perished. Of the second there survives only the early Tamil grammar Tolkappiyam. The Poets of the third sangama wrote the Ettutogai (eight Anthologies). These contain 200 poems ascribed to 200 authors. In addition, there are Pattupattu (Ten songs) containing 10 longer Poems of similar style belonging to later period. The Kurual contains the didactic Poems composed by Tiruvelluvar, a Jain Poet. Sangam literature is full of information's and a good source of history of the South Indian society economy, religion and culture.

Besides the Sangam literature, early Tamil works of the type of epics such as **Silappadikkaram**, **Manimekhalai** and the **Ramayana** are also important sources of history.

Kavya or Poetic literature : Several important Poets Flourished such as :

Ashvaghosha — wrote Buddhacharita

Magha — wrote Shishupalvadha

Bharavi — wrote Kirtarjuniya

Kalidasa — wrote Raghuvamsha and Kumarsambhava

Banabhatta — Harshacharita

Dandin — wrote Kavyadarsha and Doshakumaracharitra

Bhatti — Ravanavadha

Rajashekara was a poet and also a dramatist.

Bilhana — wrote Vikramankadevacharita.

Besides the abovementioned works. Several other works dealing mainly with different subjects contain valuable historical and cultural information.

The works on Grammar :

The works on Sanskrit Grammar were written by (Panini (Ashtadhyayi) and Patanjali (Mahabhashya) Vararuchi also was a grammarian.

In the field of Medicine : The medicinal Science, traditionally known as Ayurveda, was well developed in ancient India. Charaka wrote **Charakasamhita**, **Vagbhatta** wrote Ashtanga sangraha.

Palakapya wrote Hastyayurveda.

Sushruta was the famous surgeon of ancient India who wrote Sushruta samhita which gives us detailed information of diff aspects of surgery.

Aryabhatta wrote on algebra, acrithmetic and astronomy.

Varahamihira wrote his valuable works on astronomy such as Parchasidhanta, Romaka and Paulisa.

Vatsyayana wrote the Kamasutra on sexology and erotics.

Kamandaka wrote Nitisara.

Kalhana wrote Rajatarangini during the 12th century A.D. It is the most famous among the local chronicles. It deals with the history of Kashmir upto the middle of 12th century A.D.

Check Your Progress:

1. Discuss the importance of the literary sources for the study of ancient Indian history.

2.5 THE GREEK AND ROMAN ACCOUNTS

For a detailed and proper study of ancient Indian history, the Greek sources are very important. It is the fact, that India was known

to the Greeks even before the invasion of Alexander the Great. Some of the Greeks, who have left their accounts on India are mentioned below:

Skylax : was the first to write a book on India. He was sent by Darius in about 515B.C. on a voyage of exploration to find out the course of river Sindhu (Indus). He wanted to astonish his countrymen by the accounts of his adventures.

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher- scientists has quoted from the work of skylax.

Herodotus:

He was a Greek historian who never visited India, but believed in recording everything read or heard. He has also left his impressions about India, which were formed mainly on hearsay. He gives us information regarding the relations between India and Persia during the 5th Century B.C. however, these accounts does not refer to the whole Indian subcontinent. They are limited to only a part of North Western hilly tract. Herodotus has recorded about the trees which gave wool, form which the cloths were made (i.e. cotton). He also gives details of fairy tales. In general, he refers to the conquest of a small part of India by Darius and has also made some useful observations about the peoples of north western borders of India.

Ktesias :

He was a physician of the 5th Century B.C. who wrote his accounts on India. Like Herodotus, he had written about the relations between India and Persia. His information was based on hearsay, heard from the travelers who came to India. However, his writing is not a first hand information and is full of fables, hence not much of value for the study of ancient India.

The historians who came in the wake of Alexander's invasion, give more exact information than the earlier writers. Alexander was a lover of knowledge and he had collected a few scholars around him who accompanied him to India.

Ptolemy, Nearchus, Onesicritus and Aristobulus were some of the scholarly campaigners. They have their accounts about India. A description of the territory from the Persian gulf to the river Sindhu is given in the book of Nearchus. This work is regarded as trustworthy. It was from their accounts that the Europeans came to know about India. Their writing are more exact than the earlier writers.

The intimate relations between the rulers of India, Greece and Persia were maintained by exchange of ambassadors. The ambassadors like **Deimachus** of Syria, **Dionysuis** of Egypt and **Megasthenes**, who came to the courts of Indian rulers, have left their

valuable records. Unfortunately, the works of accounts of all these have been lost except a few extracts from the **Indica of Megasthenes**.

Megasthenes:

He wrote one of the most valuable foreign traveller's records on India. Megasthenes was an ambassador of the Greek king Seleucus Nicator to the court of Chandragupta Maurya. He lived in the city of Pataliputra and wrote his accounts on India which he named as 'Indica'. The original copy of this book has been lost in course of time. However, the other Greek writers have quoted the extracts from Indica in their works, and thus has been preserved only in fragments. On the basis of these extracts, the history of the Mauryan period has been reconstructed. Megasthenes has described the city of Pataliputra. It contains some useful information about the social classes and economic activities during the Mauryan period. It also provides information on our country, its soil, climate flora and fauna, the Mauryan administrative system etc. The Indica of Megasthenes though sometimes, it is not free from exaggerations has been regarded as a good source of information and has a high historical value.

Among the other Greek accounts, a special reference may be made to the classical writers who wrote about India. It has been observed that many of them never visited India but wrote about India on the basis of information which they gathered through Alexander's soldiers. Among these writers, Pliny, Arrian, Plutarch, Justin and Curtius are worth mentioning. Pliny wrote 'Natural History' which gives an account of the Indian flora, fauna and minerals in the 1st A.D. All these writers have mentioned in their accounts about India with special reference to political, social as well as economic condition.

Unknown author of the 'Periplus of the Erythraean sea', also gives us much information about India during the 1st A.D. As a matter of fact, when India developed brisk trade with the Roman Empire during the early centuries of the Christian era, some geographers and navigators visited India and wrote about it. The earliest of them is above mentioned anonymous author of the 'Periplus of the Erythraean Sea'. He was a Greek sailor, settled in Egypt. He made a voyage to the Indian coast about 80 A. D. and has left a record of his whole voyage starting from Red Sea to the Indian coast. In fact, it was a manual for others who wanted to go on a voyage to India. This book gives us a detailed information about the chief ports of the Konkan i.e. western coast of India such as Bharuch, Sopara, Kalyan and Chaul, prominent trade centers such as Paithan, Tagar etc. from the hinterland in Deccan have also been mentioned.

Ptolemy was a Greek geographer and wrote a geographical account of India in the 2nd A.D. His writing is based on scientific method. He also wrote a book entitled as 'Geography'. He has left a detailed account about the Indian ports and marts of the contemporary period.

Kosmos Indikopleustes- was another Greek trader who had lived at kalyan in thane district of Maharashtra during the 6th Century A.D. In his account, he gives us information about the coastal areas, ports, other commercial centers, the trading business etc. which is a valuable account.

Virgil, Diodorus and Strabo also give us information about India's geography and trade practices. Strabo gives more details on the physical geography of India.

Writings of Pliny, Periplus and Ptolemy are more useful sources for the study of ancient's Indian history. They provide us a detailed information about india's geography, maritime trade and merchandise, the people, their behaviour, flora and fauna, Indian industries, and the commodities of import and export etc.

In general, all these Greek accounts are valuable because unlike Indians, the Greeks had historical perspective and they had recorded whatever the observed. However, their writings have to be studied carefully. They were not familiar with the languages and customs of the people about when they wrote and therefore , due to ignorance, their information, observations, sometimes may be wrong. In the light of new evidence, their information can be reviewed again.

Like the Greek sources, we get some Roman documents also that gives us some information of ancient Indian history. **Trogus pompeius** wrote a history titles "Historiae Philippicae". This original work is lost but the extracts from it were taken by another Roman author **Justinus** in his book viz. ' Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum". It throws light on the relationship of selucus with India and also refers to the invasion of India by Bactrian Greeks. **Pomporius Melas** (1st Century A.D.) was another author. Pliny's work Naturalis Historia gives an account of Political Geography of India. **Quintus Curtius, Rufus** (2nd Century A.D) were some other Romans who wrote about India and their writings have become a source of ancient Indian history.

2.6 ACCOUNTS OF THE CHINESE TRAVELLERS

The teachings of Buddha were spread to foreign lands by the efforts of Ashoka. The Chinese accepted Buddhism in large numbers and several Chinese Buddhist devotees visited India on a pilgrimage. Some of them were great scholars who lived here and wandered over a wide territory. These scholars carried with them several

manuscripts of religious philosophical and scientific works. Obviously, the accounts given by these scholarly pilgrims are very useful for reconstruction of the ancient Indian history.

About 60 Chinese pilgrims have left valuable records of their travels in India. The most notable from them were as follows:-

Fa- Hien : (309-414 A.D.):

Fa- Hien visited India during the Gupta period. He has left a valuable account. He was a Buddhist pilgrim. He stayed mostly in Magadhan region. Almost fifteen years he spent in India learning Buddhism and visiting almost all the holy places associated with the life and career of Buddha. His account is titled 'Fa-Kou-Ki' in which he throws light on contemporary political economic and cultural conditions of the period. His account is a very reliable source from the study of the Gupta age.

Hieun Tsang (629- 645 A.D.):

Hieun Tsang visited India during the first half of the 7th Century A.D. He was a great Chinese scholar. He came during the reign of Harshavardhana. Like Fa – Hien, Hieun Tsang also spent more than 16 years in India. He travelled extensively in north and south India and has left a graphic account about the contemporary political, socioeconomic and cultural conditions. He has recorded his observations about Indian kings, capitals, provinces, Buddhist Monasteries and centers of education such as Nalanda. He has also described the various people living in different parts of India. He visited region of Maharashtra, which he called 'Mo-ho-le-cha' and also has described the nature of characteristics of Maharashtrian people during the 7th Century A.D. He had also stayed at Nalanda and gives a detailed information about Nalanda University. He gives interesting information about his royal patron Harshavardhana. His account mainly helps for the reconstruction of Harshavardhana's history. In general, he gives the valuable information about geography, literature, administration and religious life of the people.

His account titled as 'Si-Yu-Ki' i.e. 'Records of the Western world' has proved to be a store house of accurate information about India during the 7th Century A.D. His account is really very useful and a good source of history of 7th C. India and the Indian people.

I-tsing (673- 95 A.D.):

I-tsing was another great Chinese pilgrim who visited India. He has left a very interesting account about Indian Buddhism. He visited India at the end of the 7th Century A.D. He had stayed at the University of Nalanda and gives a graphic picture of the campus of the Nalanda University, the grand buildings, the gardens and lakes, the huge library of Nalanda University, the curious students and the talented and versatile teachers as well as the administration of the university.

I-tsing does not mention names of any ruler in India, but indirect references to the political social and economic conditions of the Indians of that time are found in this work.

All these three Chinese scholars spent a number of years in India and learnt its language. They were all the Buddhist monks whose journey to India was merely a pilgrimage to holy lands. Thus their outlook was purely religious Fa-hein and I- tsing does not refer much to secular matters. Incidentally, we get some information in their accounts. However, Hieun Tsang's account is most important and has proved to be the most valuable of the Chinese accounts on India.

Hwui-li was a friend of Hiuen Tsang, who wrote a biography of Hiuen Tsang. In this book some information about India is found and hence is the source of ancient Indian history.

2.7 TIBETAN ACCOUNTS

The Tibetan accounts on India also are a good source material for the study of ancient India. The works of the Tibetan Lamas Taranath, Dulva and Tangyur etc. can be used for the study of ancient Indian history.

2.8 ARAB AND PERSIAN ACCOUNTS

The Arab travellers, geographers and historians came to India from the 8th Century A.D. onwards. From that times some Arab writers wrote about India. Most prominent among them were Al-Masudi (9th Century ry A.p.) A1 Itak,i and Ibn Haukal (both 10th Century A.D.) and Al- Beruni (12 Century A.D.)

Al-Masudi has left a graphic account about north India during the 9th Century A.D. He and Al-Itakri as well as Ibn- Haukal all were traders and wrote their accounts which deal with the country and its inhabitants. They give us the valuable information about coastal India, ports, trading center and their merchandise.

Al-Beruni The most learned Arab scholar, who visited India was Al-Beruni (1030 A.D.). He mastered Sanskrit language and literature. He was a mathematician and astronomer and wrote his account on India titled 'Tahkik- I- Hind'. It is of utmost historical value because this great scholar travelled throughout India during the 11th C.A.D. and has recorded his observations about ancient Indian religion, philosophy, astronomy, astrology and various other subjects. He has also described the life of common people.

Apart from Al-Beruni, **Al-Biladuri**, **Hasan Nizami**, etc. also give us some information about India during their times.

Firdausi (940 – 1020 AD) was the great Persian writer who has preserved some Indian legends in his famous book, 'Shahnama' (Book of Kings) some other Persian works which have reference to Indian include –

- Jamit- ul – Twarikh (collection histories) by Rashid Uddin,
- Rauzat – us- safa by Mirkhond,
- Tarikh–i–Yamini by Al-Utbi.
- Taj-UI-Masir by Hasan Nizami etc.

An account of India known as "Kisse Sanjan" of Post 10th Century A.D. was written by the Parsis, who came at Sanjan as refugees. This book also provides us a valuable information about the early parsis on the western coaster India and their settlements.

Although the foreign traveller's accounts are useful for the study of ancient Indian history, they have some drawbacks also. They must be used very cautiously while using the sources.

Check Your Progress:

- 1) Evaluate the accounts of the foreign writers in the study of socioeconomic history of ancient India.

2.9 SUMMARY

The literary sources for early history of India may be classified on:

- 1) Indian Literature i.e. sacred and secular.
- 2) Accounts of the Foreigners.

In this lesson, we have studied the literary sources, which give us valuable information about the ancient Indians. The Sacred (religious) literature is subdivided in three parts i.e. Vedic or Brahmanical texts, Buddhist test and Jain texts. All these religions texts contain valuable material for the study religion and culture.

We have also studied numerous works of a secular nature like Kautiliya Arthasastra, Gatha saptashuti, other literary works like those of Bhasa, Kalidas and others all these works contain some historical information and good deal of material for Cultural Study.

During ancient times India had very close commercial and cultural ties with foreign countries, particularly of the western world. Consequently, several foreign writers came to India and wrote their accounts on their personal observations. Among such writers the Greeks, Chinese, Persians writers have left their accounts which has proved to be a major source to reconstruct the history of ancient India. In this lesson we have taken a brief review of accounts these foreign travelers.

2.10 QUESTIONS

1. Critically examine the secular literature as the Sources of history.
2. Write short notes on
 - a) Foreign Traveller's accounts
 - b) The Vedic literature
 - c) The Jataka Stories
 - d) The Jain literature
 - e) The Buddhist literature.
 - f) Accounts of the Greeks
 - h) Accounts of the Chinese pilgrims.



INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS DECLINE

CONTENTS :

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Social life
 - 3.2.1 Society
 - 3.2.2 Ornaments
 - 3.2.3 Cosmetics
 - 3.2.4 Family System
 - 3.2.5 Household articles
 - 3.2.6 Domesticated animals
 - 3.2.7 Sports and Entertainment
 - 3.2.8 Weapons of war
- 3.3 Economic Life
 - 3.3.1 Agriculture
 - 3.3.2 Industry
 - 3.3.3 Trade and Commerce
- 3.4 Religion
 - 3.4.1 Female deity
 - 3.4.2 Male deity
 - 3.4.3 Animal Worship
 - 3.4.4 Tree Worship
 - 3.4.5 Fire Altars
 - 3.4.6 Disposal of the dead
- 3.5 Decline of the Indus Valley Civilization
- 3.6 The Legacy of the Indus Civilization
- 3.7 Summary
- 3.8 Questions

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This lesson will enable you

- 1) To understand the Socioal life of the Indus valley people.

- 2) To understand the Economic life of the Indus valley people.
- 3) To imagine about their religious ideas and the deities they worshipped by studying the archaeological remains excavated from the sites of Indus valley.
- 4) To get some information about the destruction of the Indus Valley Civilization.
- 5) To know the legacy of the Indus Civilization.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

For the study of socio economic life of the Indus valley people, no written records excepting inscriptions on the seals come down to us. These inscriptions have not yet been satisfactorily deciphered. Hence the sources of Indus valley civilization are the archaeological sources in form of ruins of the cities, household articles, seals, toys, statues etc. on the basis of which we have to imagine about their socio-economic life.

On the basis of the ruins that are excavated in the sites Indus valley Civilization, we can imagine to some extent about the Religion i.e. religious ideas of the Indus Valley People.

The time span of the Indus valley civilization extends in general terms from 2500-1500 B.C. covering the beginnings, development and maturation of the civilization manifested in the villages and urban concentrations.

However, recent radio-carbon method of dating antiquities have slightly modified the span which is now placed between 2300 and 1700 B.C. with carry overs going on for another couple of centuries. It seems that by 1900 B.C. the culture had already reached its maturity and had began its period of decline.

3.2 SOCIAL LIFE

Discoveries of cities, buildings of burnt bricks, underground drainage system, household utensils, pottery, toys, seals, articles of jewellery and statuettes clearly show that highly civilized people lived in the Indus valley sindhu valley in the ancient times between 3000 B.C. and 2000 B.C.

Race :-

The skulls and skeletons which are found at the excavations shows that Indus valley people belonged to four racial groups

- Proto - Australoid
- Mediterranean

- Mongloid
- Alpine.

The cities had the cosmopolitan population. However, majority of people belonged to Mediterranean race to which the Dravidians belonged. The average height of a man was 5' * 4 1/2" and of woman 4' * 4 1/2".

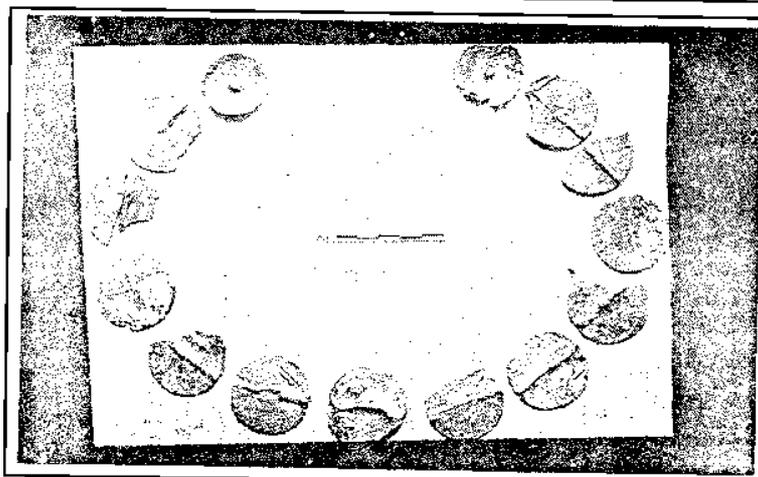
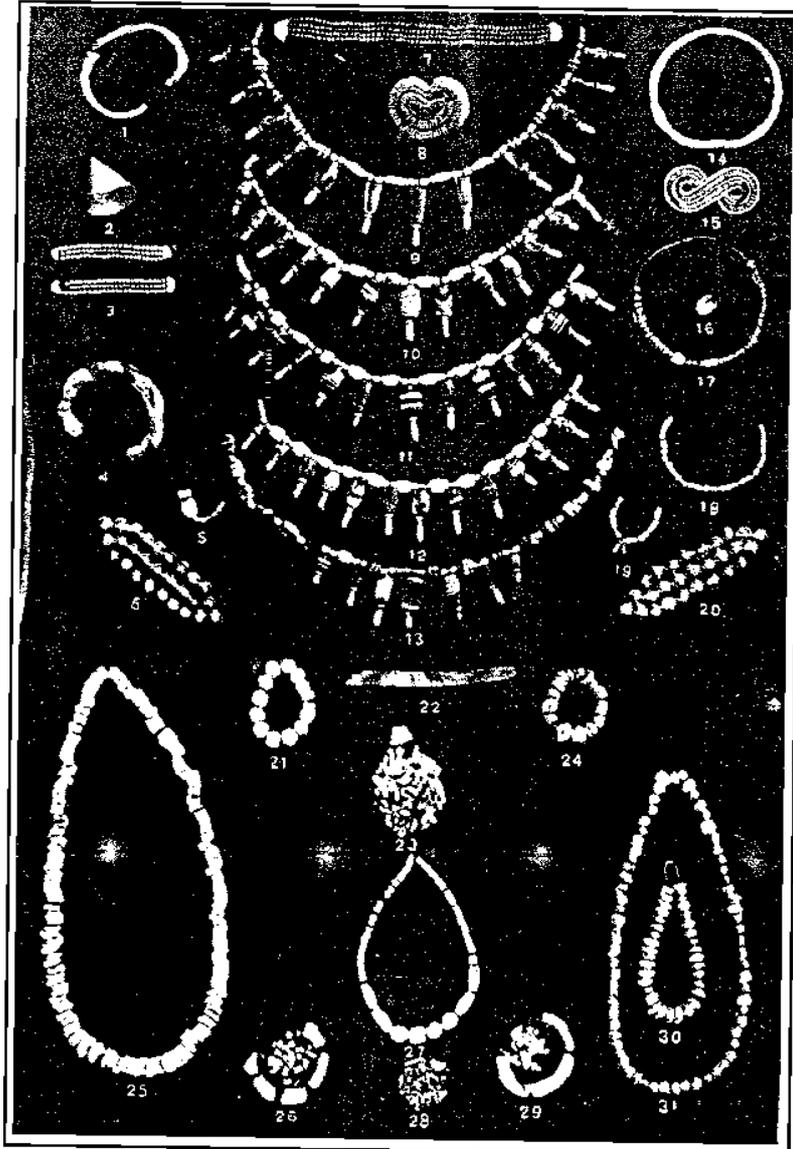
3.2.1 Society:

The excavations at various sites show that the society had 5 social groups such as-

1. Ruling class that lived in the upper part (Citadel).
2. Petty traders and professionals who lived in lower city.
3. Labourers who lived in one room houses near workshops.
4. Farmers who lived in villages surroundings the towns.
5. Roaming herdsmen who roamed from focus to town with their animals and common items of trade.

From the study of the seals some information of the style of their dress can be obtained. It seems that two garments were worn by people made either of cotton or wool. A shawl shows that two garments were worn. A shawl like cloth worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm, so as to leave the right arm free formed the upper garment. The lower garment resembled a modern dhoti. The costumes worn by women. However, women, as it appears from a seal, wore skirts. Their garments were made of cotton or perhaps of wool.

3.2.2 Ornaments :



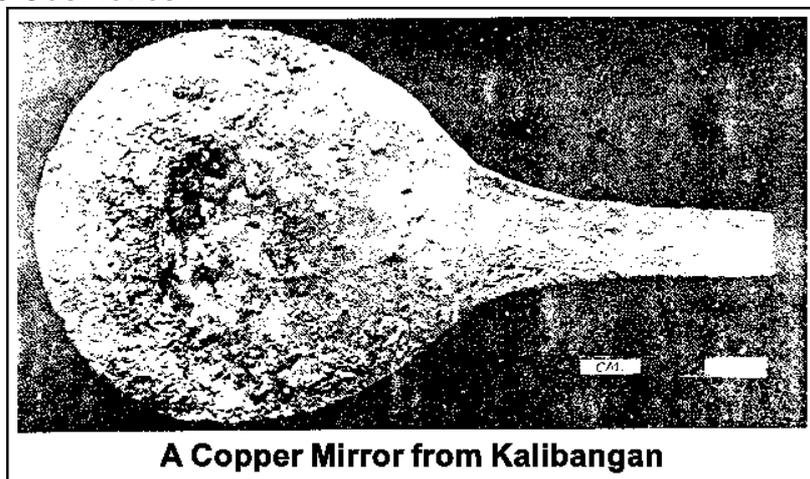
A Golden Necklace from Lothal

Were worn by both men and women of all classes. Necklaces, armlets, finger rings and bangles were worn by both men and women. The girdles, nose studs, ear-rings and anklets were worn by women alone. There was a great variety in the shape and design of these ornaments, and some of them are of singular beauty.

The ornaments were made of gold, silver, ivory, copper and both precious and semi-precious stones like Turquoise, crystals, agate, cornelian etc.

Female statues adorning beautiful hair styles have been found which women wore for shaped headdress. Men wore long hair and collected it in a ring on the top of the head. They sustained short beards.

3.2.3 Cosmetics :

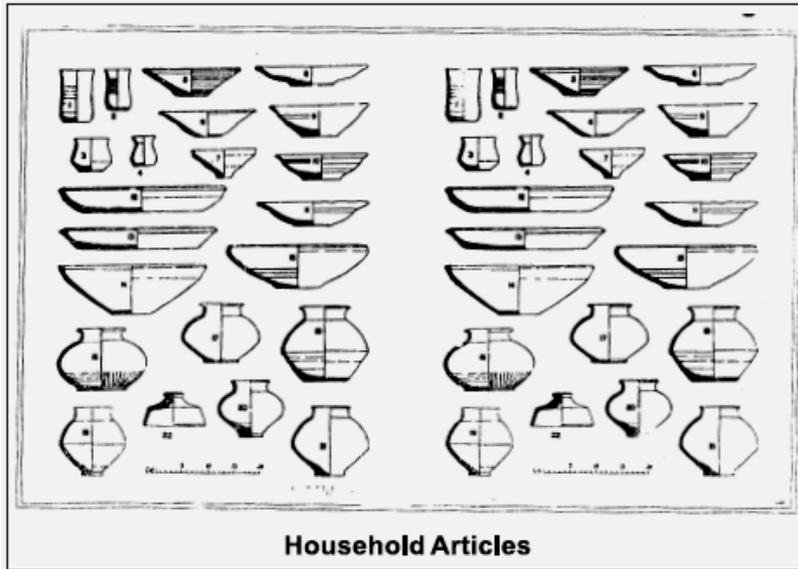


In the excavations, the toilet jars made of ivory, metals and stone were discovered. Women used collyrium in their eyes, a paint on their face and other cosmetics. A Vanity case found at Harappa which aids such as piercers, ear-scoop, tweezers etc are suggestive of the keen interest of women in beauty aids. Round metal rods are used for applying the cosmetics. They had oval shaped mirrors made of bronze. Also there were found fine design and well pointed razors made of bronze.

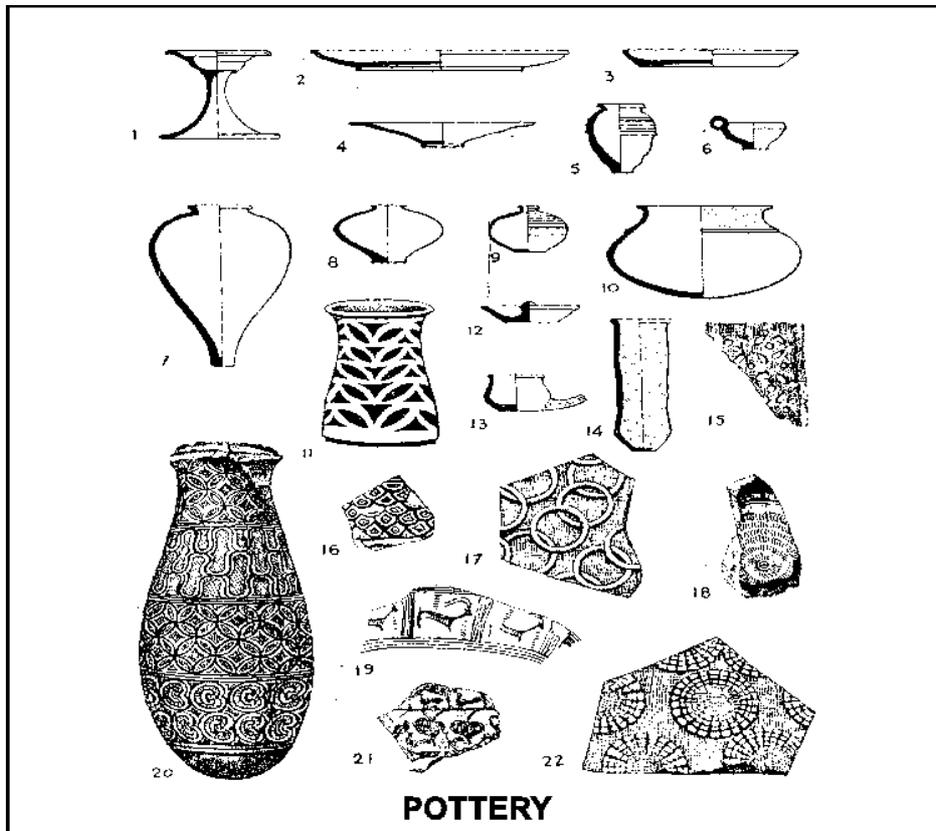
3.2.4 Family System :

The Harappans were a deeply family minded people. The compactness of their private houses accords well with the principle of family privacy. The discovery of numerous types of toys such as dolls, whistles, rattles, toy carts, tiny grain vessels, water jugs, animals and birds models indicate their deep interest in their children and obviously in the family life.

3.2.5 Household articles:



The earthen ware vessels of rich variety were made with the potter's wheel and were glazed vessels of copper, bronze, silver and porcelain were known though very rarely used. No iron and been found and that metal was obviously unknown.



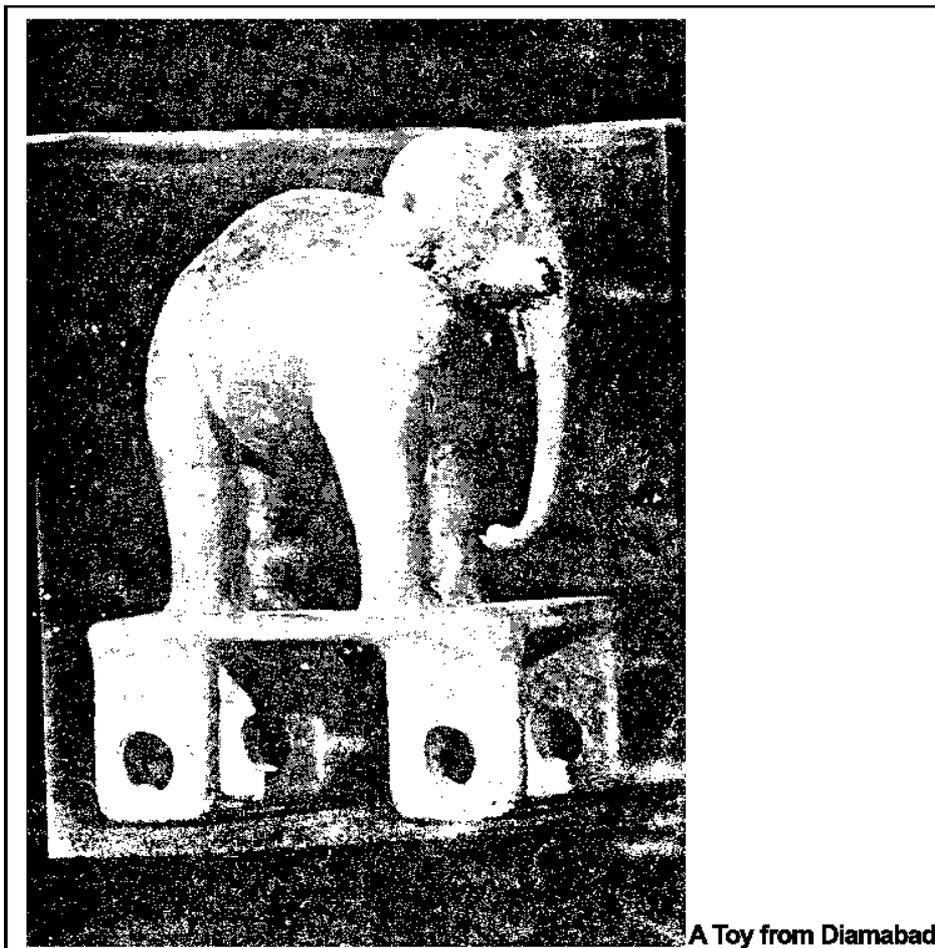
Their homes were well furnished. Among the articles of domestic uses, chairs, beds heads and stools were used to decorate the drawing room. There were lamps of copper, shell and pottery. A pottery candlestick found in the ruins indicate that candles probably made of wax or follow with wicks of cotton played their part in illuminating the houses of Mohenjodaro.

3.2.6 Domesticated animals :

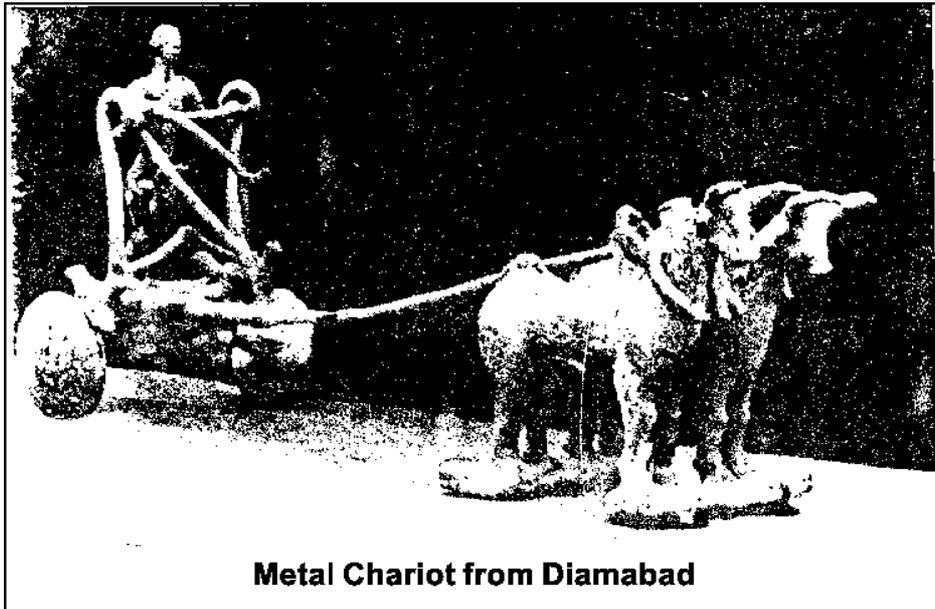
The remains of skeletons prove that the humped bull, the buffalo sheep, elephant and camel were domesticated. The carvings of dogs and children's toys show that dog was also familiar. There are some doubts about the horse.

3.2.7 Sports and entertainment :

This discovery of a large number of dice pieces shows the prevalence of the game. They had several means of indoor and outdoor entertainment. Gambling dance and music were means of their indoor entertainment. They used striged musical instruments and drums. The out door pastime included sports, games and hunting bull fighting was also a part of their pass time.



A Toy from Diamabad



3.2.8 Weapons of war:

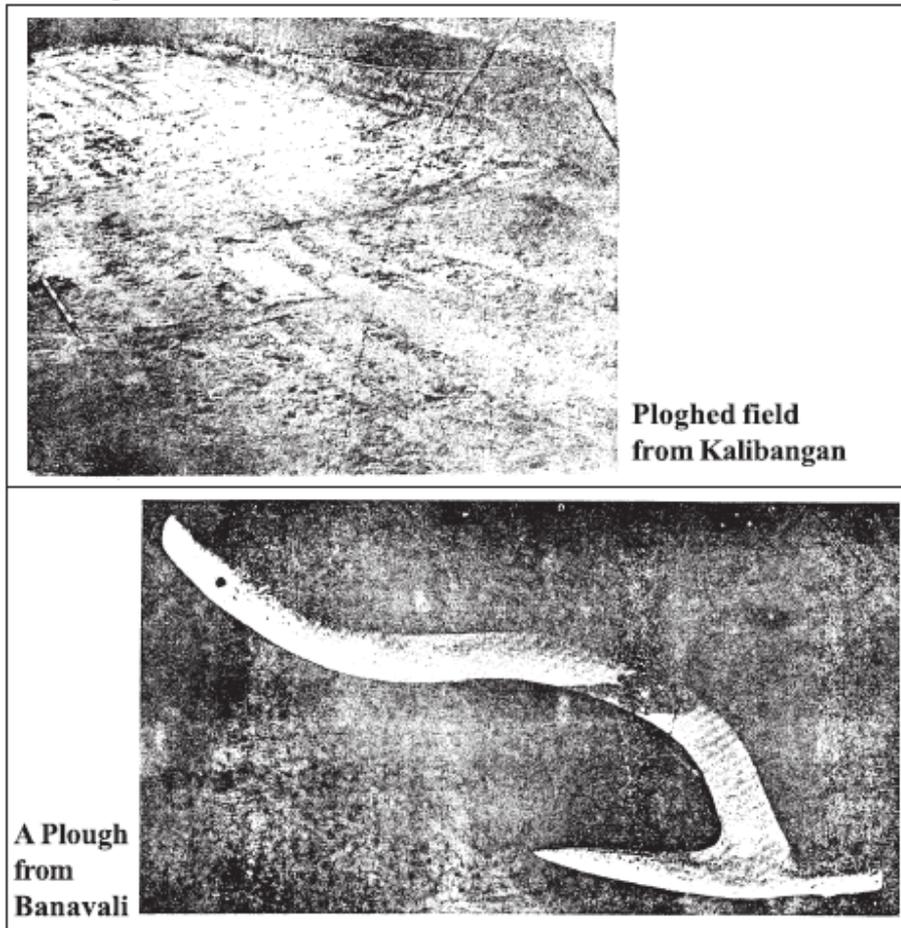
These include axes, spears daggers, maces and sligs with comparatively fewer specimens of bows and arrows. The absence of words is significant. Shields, Helmets or any other defensive armour are conspicuous by their absence. The weapons of war, all offensive in character are usually made of copper and bronze through a few stone implements have also been found.

3.3 ECONOMIC LIFE

The Indus valley people, had developed a multi dimensional economy. The existence of the large cities with big houses, wide roads, and efficient sanitary system indicate that the Indus valley cities were inhabited by a considerably large population engaged in agriculture, trade, commerce and industry.

The life in the cities must have been active and vigorous as is suggested by the wide roads. The roads are big enough for the free movement of large numbers of the people and vehicles. They established commercial contacts with the distant places, within the country and with other contemporary river valley civilizations such as Mesopotamia and Egypt. They were industrious, enterprising, commercial, urban and prosperous, and had developed a distinct way of life.

3.3.1 Agriculture :



Being the river valley civilization Indus people were obviously the agriculturists. Their agriculture was rich the fertile land of the sindhu (Indus) valley, the figures of the bull, on their seals, agricultural implements and other domesticated animals, indicate that agriculture was the main occupation. Wheat, barley, rice, cotton and palm date were grown in abundance. Peas and sesamums were also cultivated in Harappa. Probably paddy was also raised as is evident from the rice husks and spikelet found embedded in clay and pottery at Lothal and Rangpur. A wide range of wild animals were hunted for food. They consumed fish, mutton, beef, pork and poultry.

3.3.2 Industry :

a)



Perhaps the Indus people were the first people in the ancient world to learn and practice the art of spinning cotton and dyeing cloth. The common vocations were that of a potter, weaver, carpenter mason and of metal work. The metals known were copper, bronze, lead, silver and gold.

The pottery of the Harappan people was generally made on wheel. The majority of pottery is plain, but a substantial part is treated with red slip and black painted decoration. The technical knowledge in the preparation of the fine pottery and burnt brick was of a high standard.

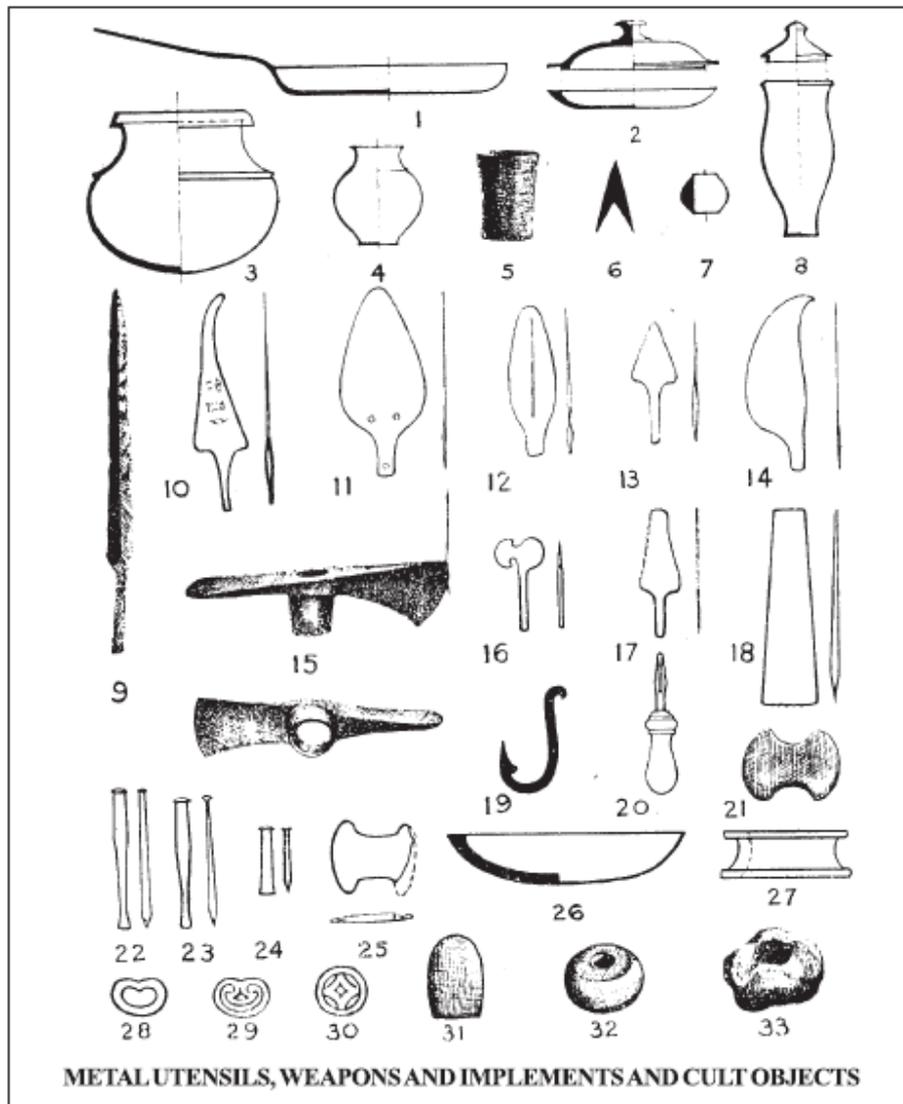
The cotton and **woolen** dresses reveal the advanced stage of weaving.

The **services of carpenter** were essential for a large agricultural and trading community. In the same way, the imposing constructions reveal the high skill of the masons.

Jewellery making was another important vocation during the period as is evident from various types of jewellery and ornaments. Ivory making (articles made from ivory) also must be another business.

b) Metal Utensils, Weapons and Implements and Cult Objects:

There were other **metal workers** busy in making tools and implements such as knives, spearhead, arrowheads, small saws etc.



which were made of copper and bronze, as well as various types of vessels. These were made by simple casting, chiseling and hammering.

Making of **terracotta objects** must have been an important profession as is evident from ample terracotta human and animal figurines, toy carts with solid wheels and cubical dice and a few sculptures.

3.3.3 Trade and Commerce :



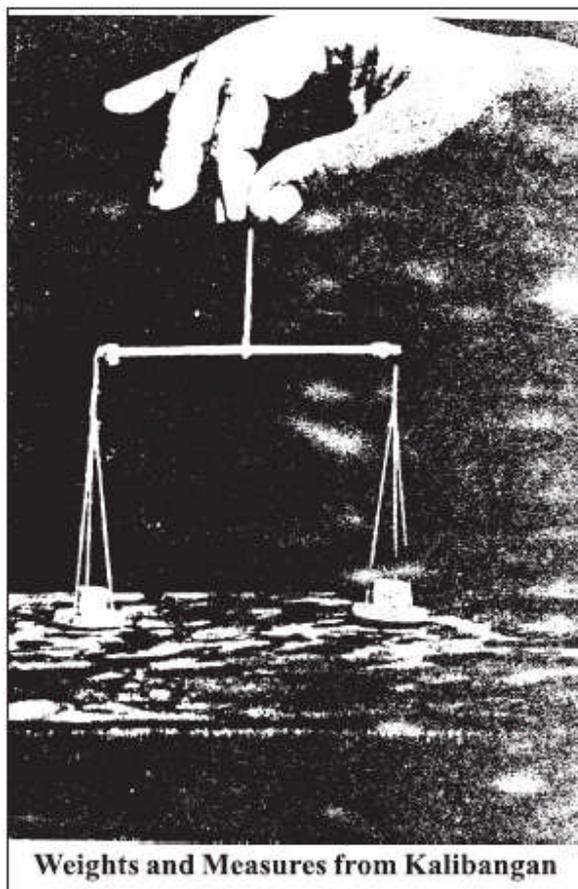
The archaeological discoveries suggests that the people had developed trade and commerce both i.e. **internal** and **external**. Trade and commerce greatly supplemented their economy. It contributes to their economic well being. The existence of wide and long roads, broad streets and the use of wheel points to the existence of brisk internal trade.

The seals were most probably used in connection with trade. Indeed there is abundant evidence that the people traded not only with other parts of India but also with many countries of Asia.

They brought limestone to cover their drains from Rohri and Sukkar; gypsum to use as mortar from Kirthat hills, fine green Amazon stone from Nilgris, gold from gold mines of northern Karnataka; copper from Rajasthan, amethyst from Maharashtra and carnelian from Saurashtra.

The Indus valley people had developed **extensive foreign trade**. They brought silver from Afghanistan or Iran, lapis lazuli from Badakshan; turquoise from Iran and jade from central Asia. There is much evidence about their trade links with the cities of Mesopotamia.

Different types of **weights** and **measures** were used by the merchants. A large number of weights belonging to a uniform system have been found at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa as well as in Chandudaro and other smaller towns. The unit was ratio 16. the find of a broken scale engraved on a shell at Mohenjo daro shows a decimal scale of inches rising to a foot which was, however, 13.2 inches long.



Check Your Progress:

1. Write an essay on the Socio-economic life of the Indus Valley People.

3.4 RELIGION



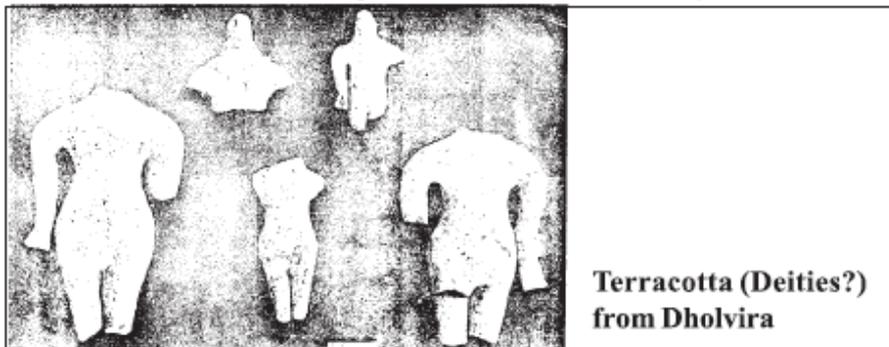
Seals with Bull

Horned God Tree Goddess

Religion has always played a dominant part in ancient India. Very little is known about the religion of Indus valley people because of the absence of written evidence. Lot of seals have been found over which, the inscriptions can be seen. But the script is not yet satisfactorily deciphered. However, from the figures we can imagine about their religious life.

There are no traces of temples or any other structure of religious nature. For the study of religion, we have mainly to rely upon seals, images and figures.

3.4.1 Worship of mother goddess or female deity:



**Terracotta (Deities?)
from Dholvira**

A number of terracotta female figures found at numerous places are described to represent the Earth goddess, the Prithvi or the Mother Goddess. Some of the figures are smoke stained. It is possible that the oil lamp or incense was burnt before them. From this, it can be believed that the cult of the divine mother was widely practiced. It could be probable that they worshipped this goddess for fertility and prosperity. This cult must be very popular as is evident from large number figurines.

The portrayal of a standing seminude figure is the most conspicuous. It has an elaborate, head dress and a girdle and necklace. Another, seal from Harappa shows a nude female figure, turned upside down and a plant rising from her womb. On the obverse side are the figures of a man and a women. This probably symbolizes human sacrifice to the goddess of earth.

3.4.2 Male deity:

The study of the seals and symbols, figures and images give a picture that the later Shiva worship followed it, in direct consequences. The Shiva idea is the most dominant here.

3.4.3 Animal Worship:

Pashupati Shiva : Among the male Gods the most prominent figure is of a deity having three heads, sitting cross legged on a throne with penis standing upright and is surrounded by animals. He is wearing bangles in his hands. On the basis of the three heads, the sitting posture and the association of animals, the deity has been identified with Shiva in the form of Mahayogi and Pashupati.

3.4.3(a) Phallus (linga) worship :



Shiva worship was however, not merely iconic, but also phallic as would appear from the presence of a large number of conical and cylindrical stones. It probably was linga worship.

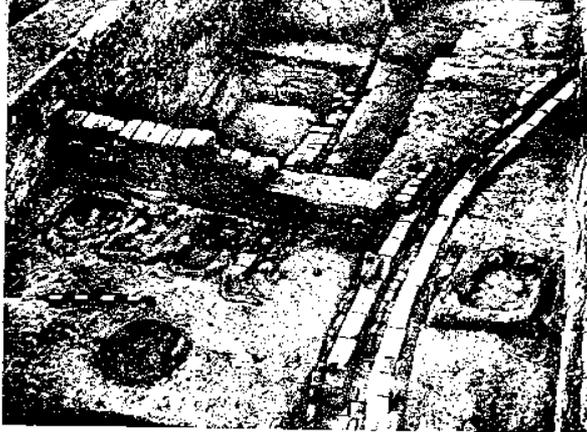
Another male figure with all the details as above has got two horns and bunch of flowers or leaves rising between the horns. This probably is a personification of shiva as the principal of creation or purusha.

3.4.4 Animal and Tree worship:

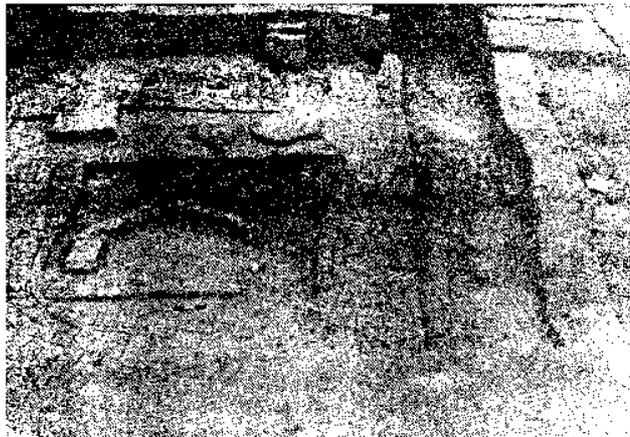
The tree worship was common among the Indus valley people as depicted on their seals. Some sealing from Harappa shows trees enclosed by a wall or a railing. It could be the symbol of tree worship. The Indus valley people also worshipped animals, birds, snakes, trees and fire. It is evident from their seals, sealings and by terracotta and stone figurines.

3.4.5 Fire Altars (Fire Ritual) :

At Kalibangan, have been found series of brick of brick platforms, raised to a considerable height and crowned with 'fire altars', a well, bathing places and brick lined pits containing ashes or animal bones. Some scholars are of opinion that, "this complex must represent a civic ritual center where animal sacrifice, ritual ablution and some sort of fire altar featured." Out side the lower town at Kalibangan several fire altars were discovered in a small brick walled courtyard which could be indicative of domestic fire ritual or worship.



**Fire Altars
from Klibangan**



**Fire Altar
from Banavali**

3.4.6 Disposal of the dead :

As regards the disposal of the dead, there seems to have been three methods:

- 1) Complete burials,
- 2) Fractional burials,
- 3) Post cremation burials.

The complete burial means the burial of the whole body, with some articles and other Offerings.

Fractional burial means the burial of the bones collected after exposing the body to wild beasts or birds. Five such burials have been found.

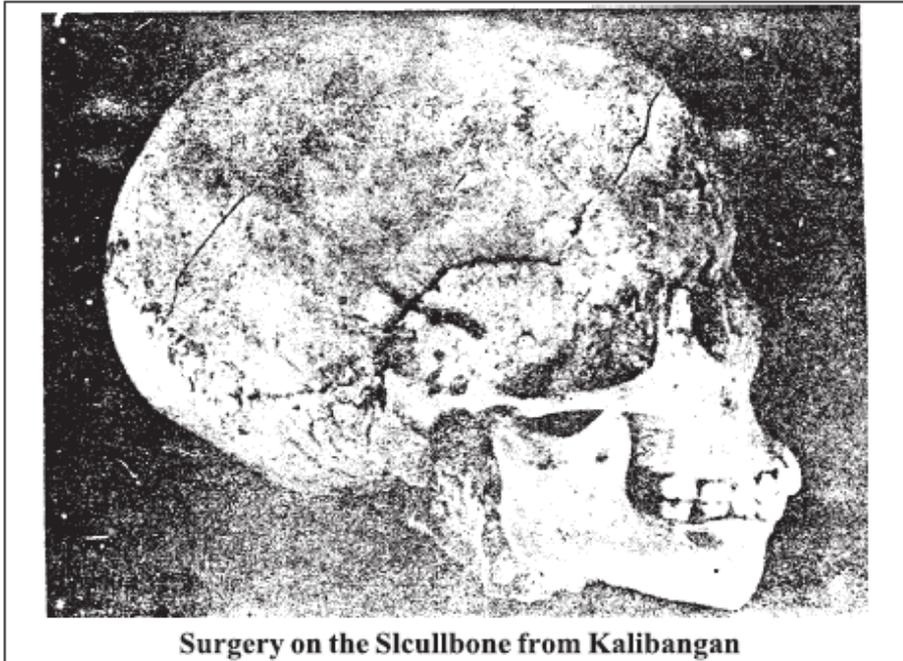


Burial Place and remains of an excavated Site from Kalibangan



Disposal of the Dead Complete Burial

The post cremation burial shows the ashes and the bones collected after burning, buried in urns similar to those used in first and second types of burials.



All these methods of disposal of the dead were in practice during the Vedic age also.

3.5 DECLINE OF THE CIVILIZATION

There seems to be a consensus among scholars that by about the beginning of the second millennium B.C. the urban phase of the Indus civilization came to an end, though signs of its decay are noticeable even earlier when cities like Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Kalibangan began to experience decline in urban planning and structural activity tended to become slum. The Great bath and granary at Mohenjodaro fell into disuse. According to the archaeologists, the city shrank to a small settlement of 3 hectares from the original 85 hectares.

Decline is also evident at Harappa, Kalibangan, Chanhudaro and at most of the Settlements.

This decline of the Indus of the Indus Valley civilization is a problem for the historians. The causes that brought about its decline have remained unexplained. However we can state that this great civilization covering an extensive area must not have declined just by a single cause. A number of causes must have contributed for its decline.

As seen earlier, the disappearance of systematic urban planning and building activity was the visible sign of its decline, which was accompanied by almost sudden vanishing of the Indus Scripts, weights and measures, bronze tools and the red ware pottery with black designs.

The population of Indus valley urban centers either perished or moved away to other areas. The traits of post Indus civilization are found at many places in Pakistan, Central and Western India, in Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Jammu, Kashmir, Delhi and Western Uttar Pradesh during communities in different parts of India.

The progressive degeneration and final collapse of this civilization has been attributed to several factors.

Some scholars suggests that large scale flooding was responsible for the end Indus Valley civilization. It is generally held that that calamitous alterations in the course of the Indus and Ravi rivers led to the desiccation of the larger urban areas which ceased to produce food for the urban centers. This made the major cities weak under the pressure of population which was forced to migrate as seen earlier.

Excavations reveal that Mohenjodaro itself was flooded more than once. Chanhudaro was also twice destroyed by massive inundations. The floods perhaps derived from violent geomorphological changes in the lower Indus region. This must have led to the economic decline of the Indus settlements.

The archaeological evidence shows that by the middle of the second millennium B.C. there was an increase in arid conditions in the Indus cultural zone which dried up the river Ghaggar — Hakra in one of its core regions with disastrous consequences for rural and urban economies.

Some scholars are of the view that the Aryan invaders destroyed the Indus cities. According to a dominant view, the major blow was given by a group of 'Barbarians' who began to migrate into India a little before the middle of the second millennium B.C. The archaeological remains such as thick layer of burning (in Baluchistan), half dozen groups of human skeletons belonging to the later phase of occupation at Mohenjodaro may also indicate that the city was invaded. At many places there is evidence of the superimposition of barbarian life.

Whether these barbarians were from the Aryan stock? Is a question before the scholars? But no final statement can be given in this regard is the fact.

Thus numerous causes, both natural and human were responsible for the end of the Indus civilization.

3.6 THE LEGACY OF THE INDUS CIVILIZATION

The Indus valley people left their imprint on the life of later India in many ways. The idea of Mother Goddess, Shiva and linga worship, the sanctity of the pipol tree, perhaps the Yogic ideas, animal and plant worship, which is regarded as sacred, the ritual role of bathing, weights and measures and the concept of urban life were, the elements of this legacy. The cities disappeared, the villages decayed and the external signs of culture submerged but Indus culture survived and enriched the complex fabric of Indian civilization for ages to come.

Check Your Progress:

1 .Discuss the religious life of the Indus Valley People.

3.4 SUMMARY

In this lesson, we have studied the socio-economic life of the Indus valley people. The ruins that are discovered from the sites of Indus valley include numerous articles of daily use such as pottery and utensils of stone, Shell, terracotta etc., chairs, stools, toys, weapons and seals etc. help us to understand the life of the Indus valley people.

By a careful examination of these ruins, we are able to understand the social and economic life of the Indus valley people. We can make a clear idea about various aspects of social and economic life with the help of the Photographs added in this lesson.

In this lesson we also have studied two important aspects that are :

- a) Religion of the Indus Valley People.
- b) Decline of the Indus Valley People.

On the basis of the archaeological findings, we can emagine to some extent about the religion, religious ideas and the deities the people of Indus valley worshipped. These People worshipped the mother Goddess, Shiva, Animals, Tree and also had developed worship of Fire. Their religion seems to be similar to that of the Vedic People. Their methods of the disposal of the dead too were similar.

There are various opinions about the decline of this Civilization. Some scholars hold the view that these cities were destroyed by Floods. The civilization certainly continued to exist even after the destruction of the cities and the people of the old sites must have shifted to other Places. Recent excavations at several Sites notably at Kalibangan, Rangpur, Lothal, Dholvira etc. have proved a close affinity between Indus Valley and the Vedic Civilizations.

3.5 QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the Economic life of the Indus Valley People.
2. Write Short Notes on :
 - a) Religion of the Indus Valley People.
 - b) Decline of the Indus Valley Civilization.



INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION (TOWN PLANNING, ARCHITECTURE, SCRIPT)

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- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Art of the Indus Valley People
 - 4.2.1 Terracottas
 - 4.2.2 Stone Sculptures
 - 4.2.3 Bronze Sculptures
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- 4.7 The Architects of the Indus Civilization
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4.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To study of different art forms in Sculptures Pottery, Beadmaking of the People of Indus Civilization.

2. To get a knowledge about the town Planning and architectural Skill of the Indus Valley people.
3. To introduce the students the discovery of one of the oldest cultures in the world.
4. To explain the extent of the Indus Valley Civilization and the first of the Sites.
5. To show these sites on a map.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The excavations carried on since 1921 have brought to light the ruins of two ancient cities of Indus Valley. Mohenjo Daro in Sind and Harappa in the Punjab. Many more recent excavations have shown that this civilization had spread over a vast area from Harappa to Lothal in Gujarat.

The most significant characteristics of the Indus Valley Civilization is the tremendous progress made by these people in the field of art, architecture and town planning. The art of this period is depicted through human and animal figures, seals and ornaments.

The Indus valley civilization was distinguished for its high level of town planning and municipal organization. This town planning architecture can be studied from the various sites of Mohenjo- Daro, Harappa, Chanhu- Daro, Lothal etc. Many of these sites now are in Pakistan.

The earliest period of human civilization is known as the stone age as man then used stone as his weapon and tool. This age is again divided into the old stone age and the new stone age, on the basis of the crude and improved implements.

Some of the basic arts of life such as kindling of fire, building of houses and boats, agriculture, construction of vehicle, etc. were discovered during the new stone age, i.e. (Neolithic Age) with the help of these discoveries man settled in a fertile river valley and since then the civilizations began to develop fast. Evidence of an early but fully developed civilization was provided by the Indus Valley civilization.

4.2 ART OF THE INDUS VALLEY PEOPLE

The most significant feature of this civilization is the tremendous progress made by those people in the field of art, architecture and town planning. The art of these people is manifested in the creation of earthen ware, sculpture i.e. terracotta, stone and bronze sculptures, seal engravings (the art of the script engraving) bead making etc.

4.2.1 Terracottas :

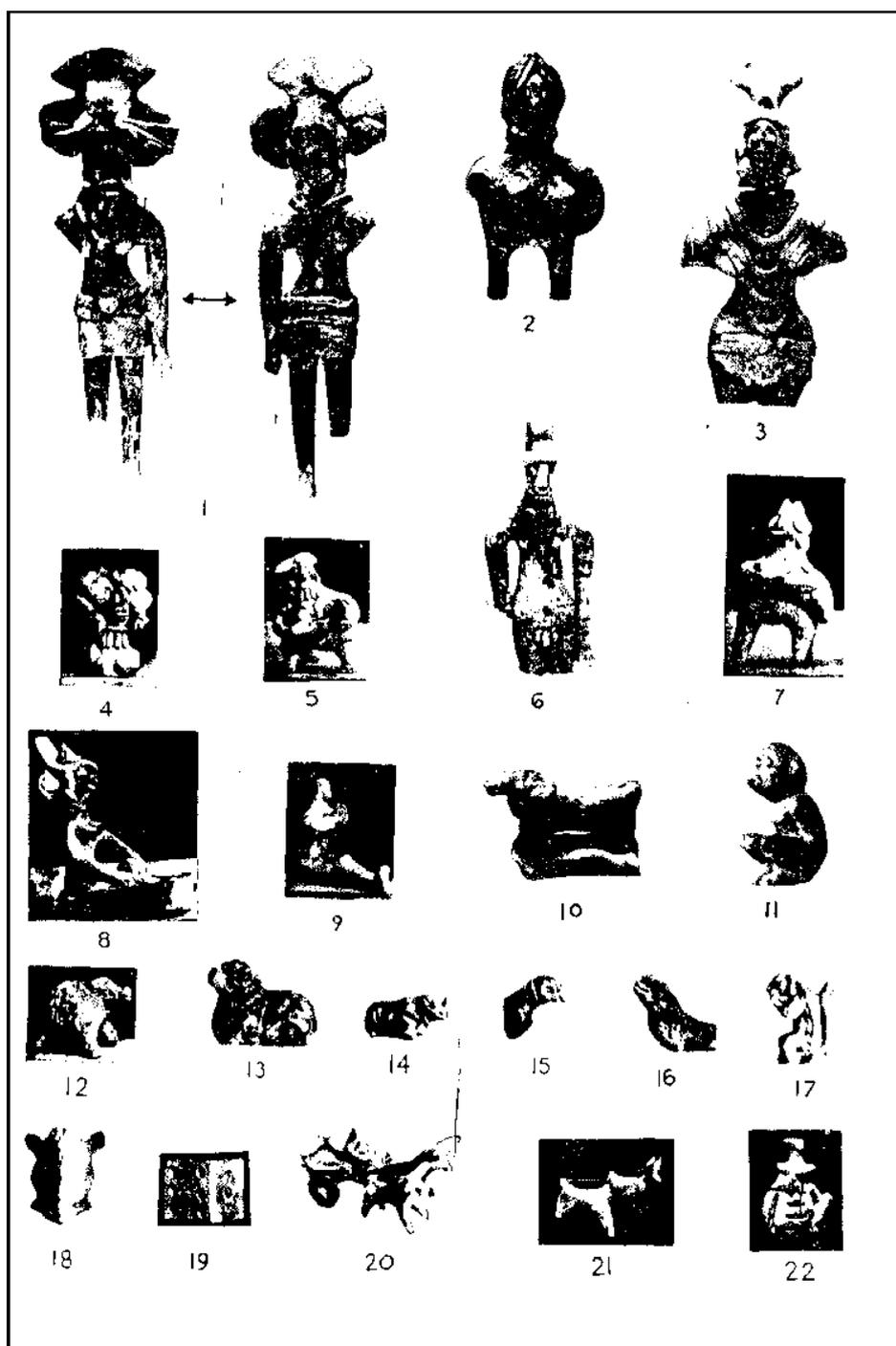
The sculptures of this civilization are to be found of terracottas, stone and bronze. The terracotta female figurines are more in number, are carefully done. Their appearance is primitive. They are hand made and made of pinching up or pressing down the clay. The Eyes are also made of two separate pellets and mouth by a small strip. They are finished with elaborate head- dress and ornaments. Many figurines wear a distinctive head dress of a fan like shape held by a fillet round the forehead. The figures are nude except for a short girdle round the waist.



A Bronze Statue of Dancing girl from Mohenjo Daro

There are also more male figurines. These are to be found more at Harappa than at any other sites where they are extremely rare. Mostly they are shown entirely in nude and the dress is represented is a scanty loin cloth. A few figurines also wear a short beard the technique employed is the same as that used in female figures.

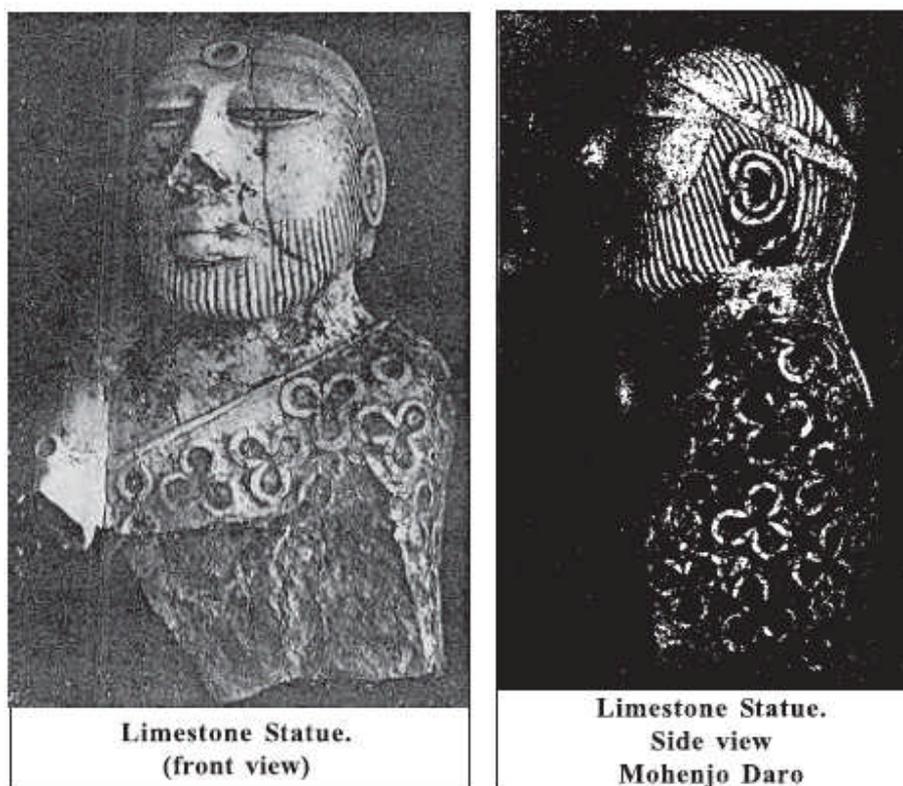
Terracotta animal figurines are found in large numbers. In them there is a greater naturalistic modeling. Besides bull, a variety of animal such as elephants, buffalo, pig, rhinoceros, goat, monkey are found. They are very helpful in reconstructing the climatic conditions of the



FIGURINES TOYS AND OTHER OBJECTS

region during that time. Short horned bull, humped bull, appears very beautiful. There is a very naturalistic representation of a monkey in terracotta from Harappa.

Besides these there are many terracotta toys. Toys of animals mounted on wheels. At Mohenjodaro a toy chariot with the head of horned ram and the body and tail of a bird has been found.



Limestone Statue.
(front view)

Limestone Statue.
Side view
Mohenjo Daro

4.2.2 Stone sculptures:

Many stone sculptures also are found in the excavations at the sites of Indus valley. There are two beautiful stone statuettes and a limestone statue from Mohenjodaro.

The best preserved sculpture from Mohenjodaro is a statue piece representing a head and a bust of a male figure. It shows that an elaborate shawl like garment having repetitive trefoil design, worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm, so as to leave the right arm free, which formed the upper garment. The eyes are long and half closed. The figure wears a short beard indicated by vertical incisions. The hair is parted in the middle and brushed back. A plain fillet surrounds the head and is tied at the back. The nose of the sculpture is damaged. The mouth shows thick lips and the ears are of the shape of double shells. The forehead is extremely low. Many scholars suggest that the eyes are half closed in yogi or mystical contemplation (indicating attitude of meditation and therefore, could be of a priest).

4.2.3 Bronze sculptures:

From Mohenjodaro, we get a bronze statue, of 'dancing young girl'. The workmanship of this statue is rough. It is cast in the round and except for the feet, is excellent preservation. The statue is just four and half inches high. The legs are bent with the left slightly forward. The right hand is on the hip, the left arm covered almost entirely with bangles, hangs loosely. The hair is tucked at the back in a heavy plait

that rests against the right shoulder. There is a naturalness and grace in the modeling and an alertness in the movement. The use of bronze or stone for artistic creation seems to have been extremely limited. Terracottas in contrast, have been found in great number indicating their universal popularity either as toys or cult objects.

4.2.4 Pottery :

The potters craft during the Indus valley civilizations was fairly well-developed and the potters were quite a visible artisanal group. The potters wheel was used and production was on a large scale. The pottery is so well established and varied. It shows great appreciation of the fabric and textures as well as painting of geometric forms and figures of live objects. Although, most of the pottery is wheel- turned, there are specimens of handmade pottery.

Most of the pottery is pinkish in colour. But a substantial part of it, is treated with red slip and sometimes black painted decoration. The pottery was both i.e. plain and simple as well as decorated very rarely the figures of animals, birds or fish appear on the pots. Kitchen utensils were mostly made up of pottery sometimes it was painted.

4.2.5 Seal engravings and the Indus script:

Besides the above mentioned craftsmanship, the Indus valley people practiced numerous other arts and crafts. Seal cutting occupied a place of important.

More than five hundred seals have been discovered at different sites. These are made of terracotta and small in size. Some contain fine representations of animal figures- both mythical and real engraved on them. These are mostly square in shape the side measuring from 2 to 3 inches and were worn on the arm or neck by stringing cord through perforation. Some of the seals probably belonged to the traders. All of them contain a short record inscribed in a sort of pictorial writing which still remains undeciphered. However, they are said to be the alphabets of the Indus script. Nearly 3500 specimens of the Indus script have been discovered from various sites of Indus valley. Several scholars such as Sir John Marshall, Father Heras, Dr. Mahadevan and Dr. S.R. Rao etc. have attempted the reading of the Indus valley script.

Nearly three thousand inscriptions have been found so far, which contain more than 400 signs. A large number of signs indicates that the script cannot be an alphabet, it is probably syllabic. This pictorial



writing still remains undeciphered.

Bead makers craft also was one of the important crafts of Indus valley people. Beads at various sites have been found in abundance. The beads are varied in form and material. Beads of gold, silver, copper fainence, steatite, semi precious stones, shell and pottery have been found at various sites. At chanhudaro and lothal , bead — makers shop have been discovered.

Textile manufacturing was another important craft as is evident from Mohenjodaro, which has yielded a piece of woven cloth. Spindle whorls were used for spinning the cloth of wool and cotton and were woven.

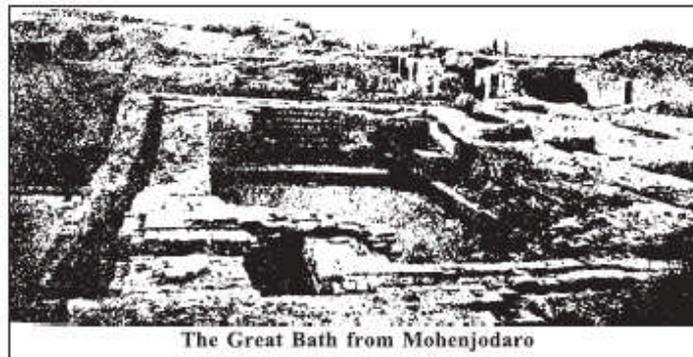
Brick manufacturing and masonry appear to have been important craft. Kiln burnt bricks were used for buildings in places which were ravaged by floods and sun baked bricks in other places.

Boat buildings must be included in the art and craft. There are models of boat in pottery.



4.3 TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

The excavated ruins at Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Chanhudaro, Kalibangan, Lothal, Banawali and Dholavira provide us valuable information about the town planning of the Indus valley civilization other sites include Rangpur, Rajodi, Surkotada, Sutkagendor etc. The best sites which gives us information about the town planning are Mohenjodaro and Harappa, both situated now in Pakistan.



The Great Bath from Mohenjodaro



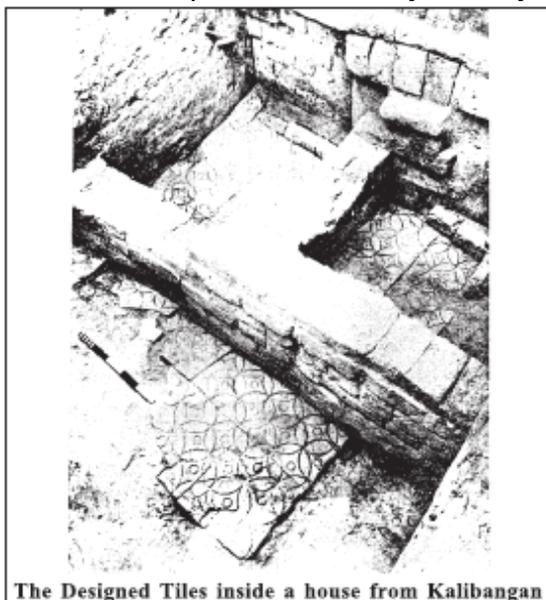
Town Planning of Kalibangan City

The basic layout of the larger settlements such as at Mohenjodaro, Harappa and Kalibangan include two major sections of the city. One, the smaller section is generally located on a high podium of mud-brick, often called the 'citadel or the upper town'. The second larger section, generally located on a slightly lower ground, is called the 'township' or the lower town.

The upper town or the citadel part of the city contains large buildings, including those apparently for public utility, such as the 'granary' and pillared hall'. 'Great Bath'. The lower town contains large and small houses for the common men, both rich and poor.

The important features of the town planning and buildings of Indus valley civilization are as follows:

The cities were well planned. Usually the city was divided by



The Designed Tiles inside a house from Kalibangan

four major roads. The construction of ideal roads is the unique feature of this civilization.

4.3.2 The Streets:

The main street divided the city into large blocks of square or rectangle. The streets had the width of '9 to 34'. Some of the streets ran straight for nearly half a mile. These crossed each other exactly in ninety degree. The streets ran straight intersecting at right angles.

4.3.3 Water supply :

Indus civilization was watered by river Indus and her tributaries. There also existed private and public water supply arrangements. Most of the private houses at Mohenjodaro had wells. Each land had a public well. The wells occur at other sites also.

4.3.4 Drainage system :

The drainage system was a unique feature of these cities. All houses were connected by the drainage. The drainage system consisted of horizontal and vertical street drains and of soak pits etc. Below the main streets and lanes ran a main drain 1 1/2 to 2 feet deep. It was covered with the brick or stone. Periodical cleaning and inspection were provided.

Individual house drains, each with its own sump pit opened into street drains, which turn opened into large brick culverts. The main drain was carried to the river. The underground drainage system shows hygiene and civic sense of the people of the Indus valley. Perhaps no other contemporary civilization gave much attention to health and sanitation like these people.

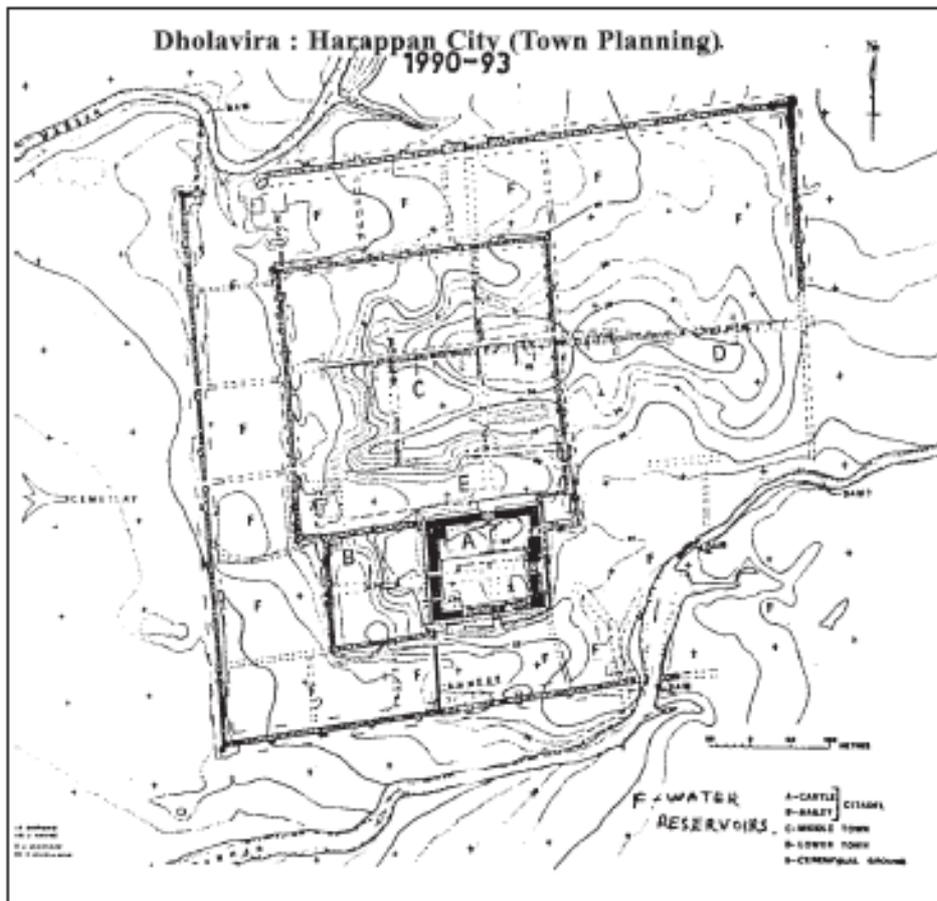
4.3.5 Street lights and Dustbins :

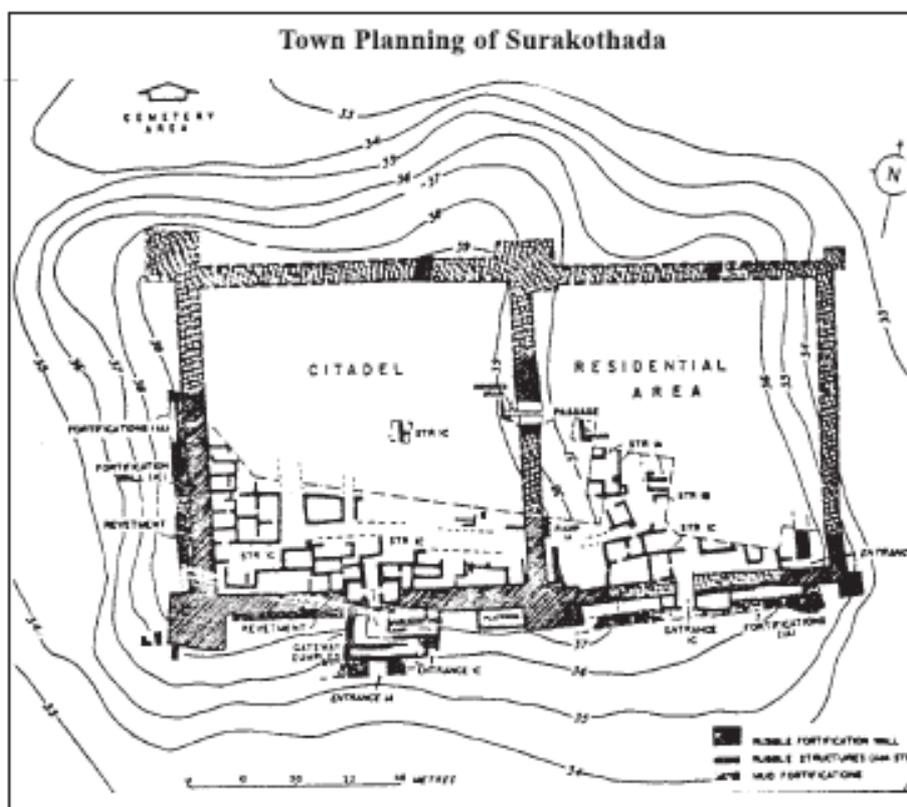
The careful town planning, adequate water supply, and efficient drainage system indicate the existence of a well organized civic institution like the modern municipalities. The existence of the lamp posts on the streets indicate that street lights were provided by the authorities at regular intervals. There were public dustbins used for disposal of waste material.

4.4 BUILDINGS

The buildings at the Indus valley cities were mainly of two types:

- i) Private dwellings
- ii) Public buildings

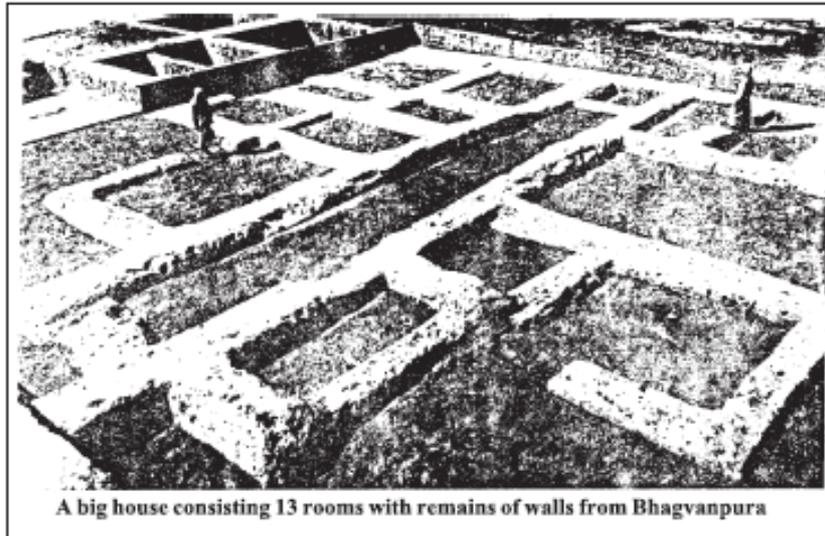




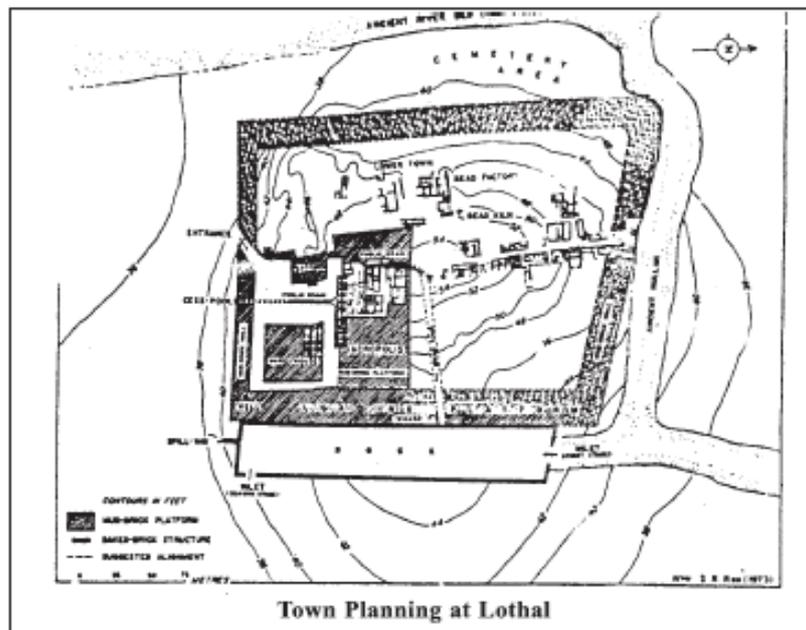
4.4.1 Private Buildings :

The dwelling houses stood on both sides of the streets. At Harappa an Mohenjadaro houses were built of kiln- burnt bricks, where as at Kalibangan and lothal, residential houses were made of sun-dried bricks. An average house had, besides kitchen and bath, four to six living rooms. Considerable variation is seen in the size of houses which range from single room tenements to houses with upwards of a dozen rooms. Generally, these are single storey houses sometimes double storeyed. Most of the houses had wells with them and a drainage system carried the waste water to the main underground drainage of the street.

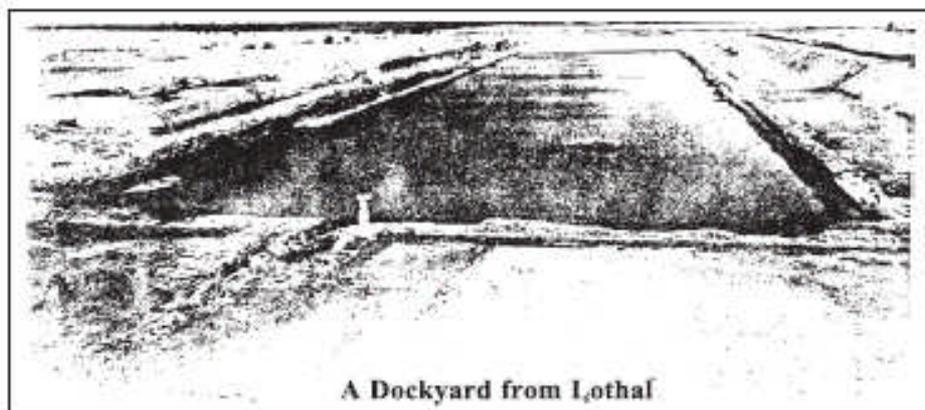
The large houses were meant for the rich and had much. The plan of the house was same a rectangular courtyard surrounded. It was usually paved with bricks laid flat. Every house had a kitchen, bath, well and drains. However, at Kalibangan bathrooms are rarely seen. Sufficient gap was kept between two houses for light and fresh air. The entrance of the houses face the smaller streets and not the main road.



A big house consisting 13 rooms with remains of walls from Bhagvanpura



Town Planning at Lothal



A Dockyard from Lothal

4.4.2 Public Buildings:

Most of the large buildings have been discovered in the citadel or upper towns or in their vicinity. Among the public buildings some important ones are as follows:

The Great bath :

These are of the large buildings that have been so far discovered, the great bath in the citadel at Mohenjodaro is the most striking. The great bath is 180 feet long and 108 feet wide. Its outer walls are about 8 feet thick and has four entrances. It consists of a large open quadrangle in the center with galleries and rooms on all sides. In the center of the quadrangle is a large swimming enclosure, 34 feet by 23 feet and about 8 feet deep. It has a flight of steps at either end and is fed by a well situated in one of the adjoining rooms. The water is discharged by a huge drain with a corbelled roof more than six feet in height. The Great Bath is a specimen of beautiful work.

The Granary :

To the immediate south – west of the Great Bath, was the granary. It consisted of a podium over which stood 27 blocks of kiln-burnt bricks, arranged in three rows. Each row had nine blocks. Between the blocks was a passage, about 1 metre in width, the size of this granary was 55 x 37 m.

Pillared hall :

Another building of great importance at Mohenjodaro was a pillared hall, 80 feet square. It has 20 rectangular bricks piers arranged in four rows of five each which divided the hall from east to west into five corridors. The exact nature and the purpose of this building is not known. It could be the assembly hall.

The Great granary :

Among the public buildings the great granary discovered at Harappa is worth mentioning. It consisted of a series of brick platforms on which stood rows of six granaries. The raised platforms were to protect granary from floods. It measured 169' in length and 135' in width. There were fourteen small rooms which were probably meant for the residence of staff.

- At Kalibangan also have been found brick platforms; which may have been used for granaries.
- At Chanhudaro, baked brick houses and drainages have been excavated.
- At Lothal, remains of a dockyard were excavated; which was connected with the Gulf of Cambay by a channel.
- At Sutkagen-Dor, 48 km from Arabian Sea on the Makran coast, consisted of a formidable citadel and a lower fortified settlement

has been excavated which may have been a sea – port for trading. The coastal settlement served as ports and participated in regular maritime trade with west Asia.

- Town planning and building structures in most of these places appears to be uniform. Burnt bricks, mud mortar, and gypsum was used for construction. Crude brick was generally used for foundations, as also for the packing of terraces and other exposed parts. Walls were made of burnt brick laid in mud or in mud and gypsum mortar combined. The floors were made of bricks.
- At Lothal a bead-making factory was unearthed. There was also a copper – smith's work place.
- At Kalibangan a room containing four to five alters has been discovered, suggestive of some form of fire worship or sacrifice.

Thus we conclude that when we refer to the Indus valley civilization, we mean that cities had emerged as the focal points of economic, social and religious tradition. The people of Indus were great builders. K.M. Panikkar observes on their achievements "A very high stage of civilization had been reached by the people of the Indus valley as evidenced by the excellence of the materials used in the construction of houses, the commodious nature of residences, the planning of the cities and great hydropathic establishments".

Check Your Progress:

1. Describe the Prominent features of the Indus valley Civilization.
2. Review the achievements of the People of Indus Valley in the field of Town planning and Architecture.

4.5 DISCOVERY OF THE CIVILIZATION

The Indus valley civilization was one of the four ancient Civilizations of the world. It flourished 4500 to 5000 years ago in the river valleys of the north-western part of Indian subcontinent. Some of these valleys are now in Pakistan while others are in western India.

Till the beginning of the 20th century there was no certainty about the exact antiquity of Indian history and civilization. Some scholars believed that the Vedic culture was the oldest Indian culture. Due to absence of authentic evidence, the date of this

culture out at Harappa in Punjab and Mohenjodaro in Sind reveal that a great civilization flourished in India about 3000 B.C., before coming of Aryans. This is known as the Indus Valley civilization. This discovery put an end to the uncertainty about the Indian culture that began with the coming of Aryans. It was revealed from the fact that, artifacts and the structural remains (in the excavations) from these sites belong to a very old period. This discovery of the Indus valley civilization had brought a revolution in the art and science of historiography in India.

As a matter of fact, the archaeological discoveries made by Dayaram Sahni at Harappa in Punjab in year 1921 and Sir Rakhaldas Banerjee at Mohenjodaro (Mound of the Dead) in Sind in 1922 proved that about 5000 years ago there was a great civilization in the sindhu valley. Till then nothing was known about this earliest culture in India.

The Indus valley civilization is also known as Harappa culture as archaeologists call it from modern name of the site Harappa. (one of its two great cities).

In 1921-22, Rakhaldas Banerjee of the Archaeological survey of India was working on a mound at Mohenjodaro, Six miles from the rail road station at Dokri in Larkana District of Sind. He had excavated a trench in the 'Stupa' area of the kushana era (1st-2nd Century A.D.) when he came across a 'Seal of Soapstone' bearing a figure of 'one horned quadruped'. At the same time, similar seals had been found at Harappa in the Montgomery District of the Punjab. These finds opened a new and revolutionary chapter in the prehistory of India.

In 1924, scholars and historians were roused by the announcement of Sir John Marshall that his Indian associates particularly Rakhaldas Banerjee, discovered in 1922-23 at Mohanjodaro (in Larkana district of Sind, Now in Pakistan), the remains of a civilization, one of the oldest of the world Civilizations. A few hundred miles towards the north of Mohanjodaro four or five superimposed cities were excavated at Harappa in Montgomery district of Punjab, now in Pakistan.

The scholars were attracted towards this new archaeological site. Since that time, for over half a century, the Indian, Pakistani and the western archaeologists have uncovered some 200 sites affiliated with this civilization named the Harappan or Indus valley civilization.

Archaeological sources form the only source for the study of this Indus valley civilization. These sources i.e. the archaeological evidence have been excavated from many of the sites. Initially R. D. Bannerjee and D. R. Sahani had discovered this civilization in 1921-22. But later on systematic excavations were carried at the sites by sir John

Marshal, E. Mackay and K. M. Dikshit (all archaeologists) which resulted into unvailing of a very rich and antiquarian culture. The discovery of the Indus Valley civilization completely shattered the sequence of Indian History. It was proved that this culture was the oldest culture of India. It was further confirmed that it was as old as the ancient Egyptian and the Mesopotamian cultures of the Middle East.

Unfortunately we have no written records about the Indus Valley civilization comparable to those we possess in respect of the others. A number of seals have been discovered with a few letters engraved on each, but these still remain undeciphered. Many scholars and historians are making great efforts to decipher the Indus script, but till today, the efforts of deciphering the Indus script have not unanimously accepted. We are therefore totally ignorant of the political history of the Indus valley and are not in a position to form an adequate idea of its culture and civilization. Our knowledge of this civilization is entirely derived from a careful examination of the objects unearthed at Mohenjodaro, Harappa and other sites of the Indus valley civilization.

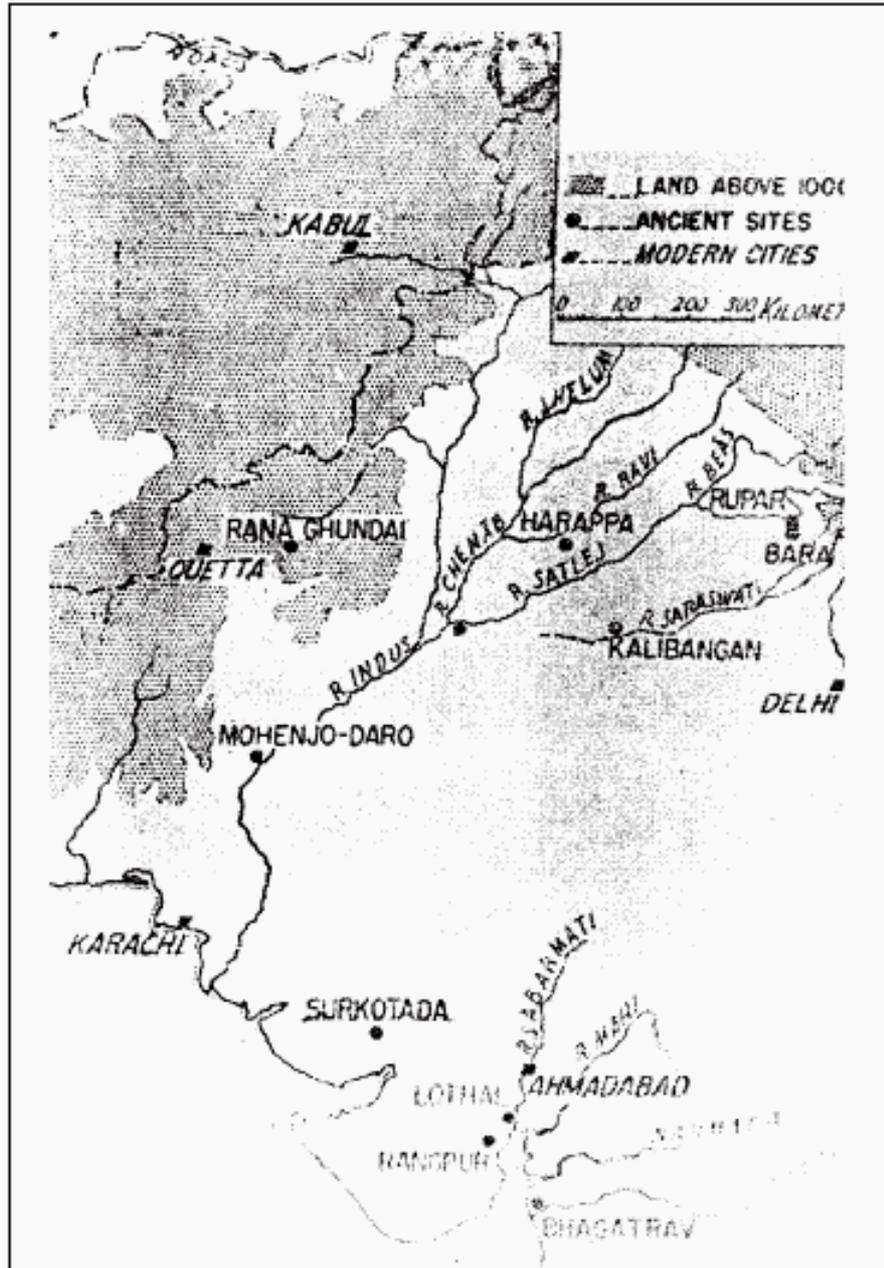
4.6 EXTENT OF THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

This civilization is known as Indus valley civilization because the earliest discovered sites were situated in the Indus valley. But subsequent explorations and excavations have revealed that it had spread over in major parts of India. The important sites of this civilization are:

- 1) Mohenjo Daro in Sind (Now in Pakistan)
- 2) Harappa in Punjab (Now in Pakistan)
- 3) Chanhudaro and Kot-Diji in Sind (Now in Pakistan)
- 4) Rupar in Dist. Ambala in Punjab (India)
- 5) Hastinapur in Meerut Dist. Of U.P.
- 6) Alamgirpur in U.P.
- 7) Kalibangan in Rajasthan
- 8) Banawali in Hissar Dist. of Haryana
- 9) Lothal, Rangpur, Somnath, Amra and Lakhabwal in `Gujraf.
- 10) Suktajen-dor on the sea board of South Baluchistan (Afghanistan)

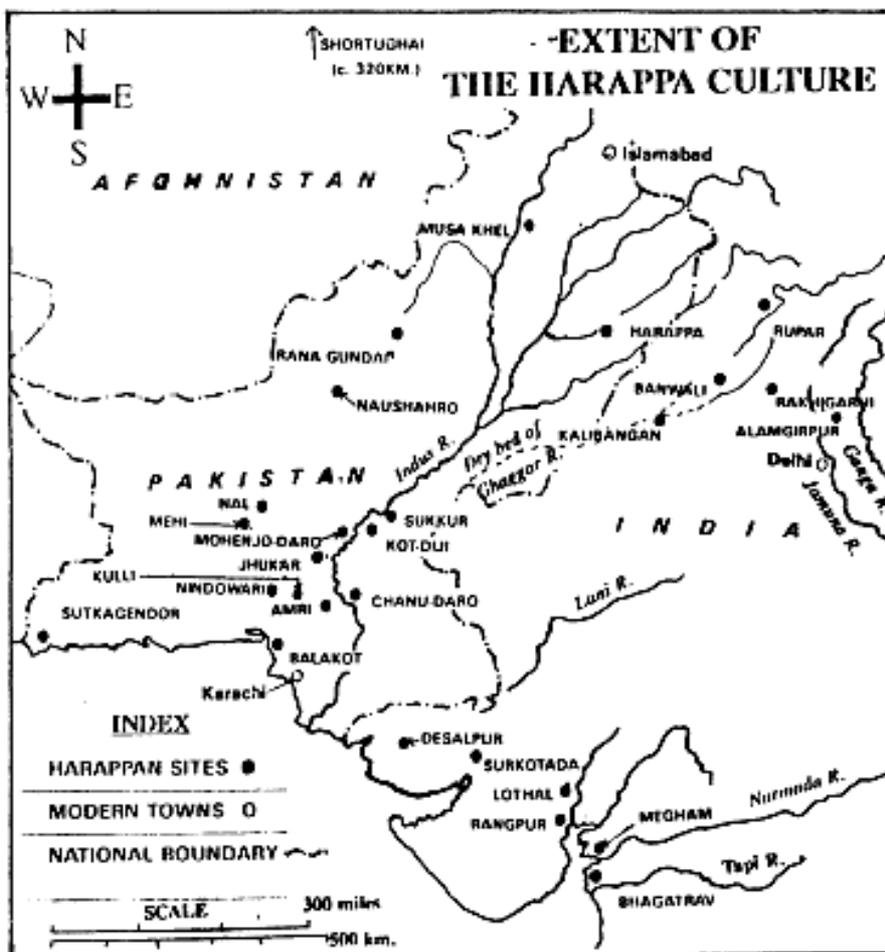
Recent excavations have indicated the extension of this culture even upto Maharashtra. The excavations at Diamabad in Maharashtra have proved that it was one of the centers of valley civilization.

4.6.1 Some of the excavated sites of Indus Valley Civilization:



More than 60 sites in this large area have been located so far.

4.6.2 Extent of the Indus Valley i.e. Harappa Culture :



This civilization belongs to the chalcolithic i.e. copper-bronze age of history. No trace of iron has been found.

From the above mentioned sites of Indus valley civilization we can conclude that this civilization had covered a very vast region that include parts of modern Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. So far nearly one thousand sites of this culture have been discovered in the Indian Sub continent. These sites are spread over the sind, Baluchistan, Punjab, Haryana, Rahasjthan, Gujrat, Uttarpradesh and a site in Maharashtra. They are extended from Rupar at the foot of **simlahills** in the Narmada upto diamabad in Maharashtra. These various sites represent early mature and late phases of this civilization. From a careful study of these sites we can study the different Stages of this culture.

Mohenjo-Daro :

The two prominent cities of the Indus valley civilization were Harappa and Mohenjo Daro. Mohenjo Daro i.e. 'Mound of the dead' is the local name to a high mound situated in the plains of Lakana dist. The surrounding region is so fertile and is called even

today Nakhlistan or 'Garden of Sind'. Here a city was built some five thousand years ago. This city was successively destroyed and rebuilt no less than seven times, the inundation of the river Indus being perhaps the chief agency of destruction, but sometimes, the city remained in ruins for a considerable period before a new city rose upon them. Thus after the foundation of the city, many centuries passed before it was finally abandoned.

Harappa :

Harappa was another important city. These two towns were connected also by land and their town planning was similar. Stuart Piggott is of the opinion that the towns of Mahenjo Daro and Harappa were the two capitals of the Indus Valley civilization. But in absence of more reliable evidence it will not be proper to accept the view.

4.7 THE ARCHITECTS OF THE INDUS CIVILIZATION

The architects of this civilization were mostly of the Mediterranean race to which the Dravidians belonged. The only definite and reliable materials available are the human skeletal remains and the skulls which have been discovered in the ruins of the cities of the Indus civilization. From an examination of the skulls it has been found that the Indus people were the heterogeneous people and comprised Proto-Australoid, Mediterranean, Alpinoid and Mongoloid racial groups. In certain cities, however, one or the other racial type was more predominant than the others. For example, the Mohenjo Daro people were mainly Mediterranean type.

Most of the anthropologists and scholars prefer to name the Dravidians as the authors of the Indus civilization. However according to many other scholars the credit of this civilization was ascribed to groups such as the Dravidians, Brahuis, Sumerians, Panis, Asuras, Daras, Nagar, Aryans etc. However, majority of scholars accept the view that architects of this civilization were the Dravidians.

There are some scholars who try to show that the Aryans were the architects of the Indus valley civilization and link the civilization to the Vedic culture. According to them, the Aryans had entered India while the Indus civilization was at its peak and they also contributed to the advancement of the civilization. Dr. A.D. Pusalkar opines that the Indus valley civilization represented the synthesis of the Aryan and Non Aryan cultures.

In fact, the authorship of the Indus civilization cannot be ascribed to any particular race and the excavations have proved that a various social groups were existing there and the credit should be given to all of them.

Check Your Progress:

1. Write an essay on the discovery and extend of the Indus Valley Civilization.

4.8 SUMMARY

In this lesson, we have Studied about the Art and Architecture of the Indus Valley People. We have discussed about the sculptural art i.e. Terra cottas, Stone and Bronze sculpture, art of Pottery making, art of writing as depicted on the seals, etc. All their arts and crafts indicate high skill as well as advanced knowledge of several Sciences acquired by these People.

We have studied the architectural Skills that were developed by the Indus Valley People, discovered through the excavations. The excavations of various sites including Mohenjo Daro, Harappa, Kalibangan, Dholavira, etc. show that these were built according to well-thought out plans. Roads, streets, houses, underground drainage system found at Mohenjo Daro etc. are indicative of a highly advanced stage of Civilization.

The Big Hall, the Great Granary and the Great Bath are some of the outstanding monuments of these cities.

The excavations carried on Since 1921 have brought to light the ruins of two ancient cities of the Indus Valley : Mohenjo Daro in Sind and Harappa in the Punjab (now both in Pakistan). More recent excavations have shown that this Civilization had spread over a vast area from Harappa to Lothal in Gujarat.

In this lesson, there are maps showing the excavated sites and the extent of the Indus valley Civilization. From these maps the students will be able to get clear idea about the geographical locations of the sites of ancient Civilization in the valley of River Indus and her tributaries and also as far as upto the Lotal and Rangpur in Gulf of Cambay. By Studying this lesson, students will be able to know about the discovery and extent of this early Civilization popularly known as the Indus valley Civilization or Harappa Civilization.

4.9 QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on the Art and Architecture of the Indus Valley People.
2. Write Short notes on :
 - a) The Seals of Indus Valley
 - b) Town Planning of Indus Valley.
 - c) Important Sites of Indus Valley Civilization.



VEDIC AGE

1. Polity and Economy

2. Socio-Religious life and Education

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5.0 OBJECTIVES

In this lesson we will be studying the Vedic Age that followed the Indus valley civilization. This is the period, about which we get the literary sources for the study of history. The Vedic literature is the earliest records of the Aryans.

After Studying this lesson you will be :

- 1) Able to know about the Vedic Aryans, their origin and expansion of their Settlements.
- 2) Able to understand their Polity or Political life.

In this lesson, we are going to study the socio structure of the VedicAryans. The Aryans evolved the social institutions such as family, marriage, varnashrama system etc during the early Vedic period. However, during the later Vedic period it was quite changed. Along with this changed social structure, we are going to study some other aspects of social life such as their food, drinks, dress and ornaments, their sports and pastimes etc.

The aspects economic life such as agriculture, occupations, their industries, trade and commerce etc. also will be discussed in this chapter.

The Objectives of this lesson are as follows -

- 1) To understand the religion and philosophy of the vedicAryans.
- 2) To study the system of education
- 3) To know about the Vedic Literature.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Vedic age is an important period in the history of India. The Vedic culture was evolved by the Vedic Aryas orAryans. The classical civilization of India developed from the early Vedic civilization. The Vedic age can be studied on the available literary sources i.e. the Vedic literature.

According to Romila Thapar, "The Indus valley civilization declined the second millennium B.C. and had almost completely degenerated when (by 1500 B.C.) the Aryans entered the North West of India through the passes in the Hindukush Mountains"

The Aryans in India evolved a distinct culture commonly known as the Aryan culture. It spans over a period from around 1500 BC to around 700 BC and is divided into two viz. the early and the later Vedic period. The social organization existing during the early Vedic period began to change during the later period. Also many changes occurred in the economy from early Vedic to later Vedic period.

The religion of the Vedic Aryans was plain and simple. As a matter of fact, the Aryan civilization developed amidst nature, therefore nature had influenced all aspects of their life including their religion. The Aryans had deep reverence towards the forces of nature as human life was mainly depended on them.

5.2 ADVENT OF THE ARYANS IN INDIA (THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE ARYANS)

The word Arya means 'noble', 'respected', 'high born', 'elderly', 'cultured' etc. The north India was referred as Aryavarta i.e. the country where the Aryans live. Who were these Vedic Aryans? From where did they come to India? What was their original home? These questions have not satisfactorily been answered.

Different scholars have put forward divergent theories regarding the original home of the Aryans. On the basis of striking similarity between the Latin, Zend Avesta and Sanskrit, there is unanimity of opinion about the common origin of these languages. It is believed that this language was spoken by the main Aryan tribe. In the early part of the second millennium B.C. these tribes began to migrate from their original homes and spread in Europe in Greece, eastern Turkey, the Caucasus and finally in to the sapta Sindhu region. Wherever they went they opened new cultural vistas and transformed the life of the lands they settled in.

The Aryans were adventurous, had knowledge of the use of the horses and could use iron. They brought a new language into India i.e. Sanskrit, which was the mother of Indo European languages. This migration must have spread over decades or centuries. The dispersal of the Aryans in India was not a single event. It took place in several stages covering several centuries and involving many tribes.

There are some scholars who do not accept this theory of Aryan migration from central Asia. Various scholars give different theories about their original home. Some of them are as follows :

- According to B.G.Tilak, the Aryans came from the arctic region in around 10,000 BC and gradually migrated to India around 4000 B.C.

- Pargiter believed that they came from Tibet.
- A.C. Das and some other scholars advocate that they were the original residents of Sapta Sindhu.
- Some scholars like Ganganath Jha are of the opinion that the original home of the Aryans was Brahmarshidesha.
- D.S. Trivedi placed it as Multan was their homeland; while L.D. Kalla held that Kashmir and the Himalayan regions may have been their home land.
- According to Mc- Donall the original home of the Aryans was south east Europe.

However the generally accepted theory about the original home of the Aryans as mentioned above is that the Aryans originally lived in central Asia. Great German scholar Max Muller also supports this view. He opines, "during the course of time different Aryan tribes migrated to different parts such as Europe, Asia Minor and persia.

This view is supported by the discovery of an inscription at Bog haz-Koi, dated 1400 B.C.; which throws light on the age of the Rigveda. A treaty of the Hittite king of C.1380 B.C. mentions the rigvedic gods such as 'Indra', 'Mitra', 'Varuna'. This tablet also mentions some term which are in pure Sanskrit. On the basis of this it has been proposed that, the rigvedic civilization was in considerably advanced stage around 1400 B.C. thus the VedicAryans came to India probably via Iran, through Hindukush Mountains about 1500 B.C.

They moved in tribes. They spoke Sanskrit language. The Vedic age spans almost a millennium of Indian history (1500-600 B.C.). It was a period which witnessed crucial changes in north India. These developments are evident in a number of sphere-social – economic, political and religious.

5.3 THE SOURCES OF THE VEDIC AGE - THE VEDIC LITERATURE

To study the history of the early Vedic age, only the literary sources are available. The Early Vedic literature (which pertains to the period 1500-1000 B.C.), consists primarily of the samhita of the Rigveda, comprising 1028 hymns (suktas) in praise of various gods, intended to be used as a means of invoking the deities and soliciting their support. These hymns are grouped into ten Wandlas' or books.

The later Vedic literature belongs to a period C. 1000- 600 B.C. to which belong the remaining Vedas and their branches viz. the Yajurveda, the Atharvaveda, the Samaveda and the Brahmanas (are the explanatory prose manuals) the Aranyakas (forest books) and the Upanishadas (are commentaries appended to the Aryankas).³

The Vedic literature has been traditionally held sacred because it is believed to have divine source. The Vedas, according to popular Indian perception are eternal (Nitya). The various sages (Rishis) who were their authors no more than received from god. The Vedas are transmitted orally from generation to generation.

5.4 EARLY ARYAN SETTLEMENTS AND EXPANSION

The early Aryans knew Sapta-sindhu and the neighbouring region. The geographical area eventually occupied by the Rig-vedic tribes is clearly indicated by the mention of certain rivers. The most important among these are:

The Kubha (Kabul), the Suvastu (Swat), the Krumu (Kurram) and the Gomati (Gomal), the Sindhu (Indus), the Sushoma (Sohan), the Vitasta (Jhelam), the Asikini (Chenab), the Murud Vridha (Maruwardwan), the Purushini (Ravi), the Vipasa (Bias), the Shatadru (Sutlej), the Saraswati, the Drishadvati (the Rakshi or Chitang) the Jumna, the Ganga and the Sharayu.

The above mentioned rivers (in the Vedic literature) shows that the Aryans possessed a considerable portion of the country stretching from eastern Afghanistan to the upper valley of the Ganga. The major part of this area came to be known as Sapta – Sindhu – the Land of the Seven rivers.

Initially Aryans occupied the Punjab and the Delhi region while settling in India, the Aryans had to confront on one side within dense forests and the local inhabitants on the other. Among these non Aryans, the Dasas are frequently mentioned in the Vedic literature who had developed an advanced civilization. They lived in fortified towns or Puras. There are references in the Rigveda to constant conflict between the Aryans and the Dasas. In these conflicts, the non-aryans (i.e Dasas) were defeated and the Aryans extended their settlements towards the east.

Panis were another prominent non-Aryan people who harassed the Aryans by cattle theft. Though, Aryans defeated & forced them to vacate their settlements, could not wipe out their culture which had deep roots in this soil. Consequently a gradual fusion of both these i.e. Aryan and non-Aryan cultures began and out of this synthesis, the Indian culture emerged. Besides their wars against the non-Aryans, inter tribal wars also were fought by the Aryans such as the battle of Ten kings fought between king sudasa of the Bharata tribe and the confederation of ten tribes led by Vishvamitra. The chief Aryan tribes that are mentioned in the **Rigveda** were the **Purus**, the **Yadus**, the **Turvasas**, the **Anus**, the **Drahus**, the **Bharatas** and the **Srinjayas**.

The later Vedic period seems to have witnessed the expansion of the Aryans as is evident from Punjab to nearly the whole of present day western Uttar- Pradesh covered by Ganga-Jamuna Doab. The **Bharats** as and Purus, the two important tribes, came together and formed the kuru people. From the fringes of the doab, they moved to its upper portion called Kurukshetra or the land of the Kurus. Later they coalesced with the panchalas. Together with the kurus, they occupied Delhi and the upper and middle parts of Ganga – Jamuna divide and established their capital at Hastinapur (Meerut District in Uttar Pradesh.)

Towards the end of the later Vedic period, Vedic people moved further east to Koshala in eastern U.P., Videha in north Bihar, and Magadha in south Bihar. Their territorial expansion was accompanied by important changes in the economy, including a shift from a predominantly pastoral to a predominantly agrarian economy, accompanied by changes in the socio political organization as well.

In course of time, they assimilated with some of the factors of the non-Aryan culture. This gave a new impetus to the developments of political, social and religious institutions.

5.5 VEDIC POLITY

5.5.1 Tribal Organisation :

The Aryans favoured a monarchical form of Government. This had emerged through the evolution of the Patriarchal groups of tribal Organizations. The Chief of the tribe was the Patriarch. Due to the growing need for Protection of the most capable patriarch was elected as the Chief who gradually assumed kingship. At the beginning, kingship was elective but later on it became hereditary. In the Rigveda several tribes have been mentioned. There are references to tribal conflicts. The political organization was tribal in the beginning which gradually evolved to territorial state.

Grama : During the Rigvedic period, a group of related families was called grama, meaning village. Grama or village was the lowest administrative unit

Kulapa : Was the chief of family and Gramani was the village chief.

The next higher units of administration were known as **Visha, Jana and Rashtra**. However, the exact nature of the groups such as Jana and Visha are not yet clear.

During the **later Vedic period**, we see the changes that occurred in the political conditions. It was during this period, that the nature of the political organization gradually changed from tribal to

the territorial state. The tendency of expanding the territories increased which led to gradual emergence of territorial states. During this period, the Aryans expanded their colonies in the Central and the Eastern part of North India which is referred to as 'Madhya Desha'. In this land new kingdoms were established such as Kashi, Kosala, Videha and Magadha which continued to prosper till the beginning of the historical period. There were several kingdoms big and small. '**Rajya**', '**Samrajya**', '**Shoujya**', '**Vairajya**', '**Svarajya**' etc. were some of the types ranging from small kingdoms to great empires.

Kingship:

During the **early Vedic period**, the Aryans favoured a monarchical form of government. The chief of the tribe was the patriarch. Due to the growing need for protection in the tribal organizations, the most capable patriarch was elected as the chief of the tribe, who gradually assumed kingship. At the beginning, kingship was elective but later on, it became hereditary. King was called 'Raja' but was not an absolute monarch.

During the **later Vedic period**, the increasing size of the kingdom strengthened than the earlier period. The theory of the 'divine character of kingship' emerged during the period.

The expansion of territories was not only defended but magnified. There are references that the kings assumed various titles such as

Ekrat, Samrat, Sarvabhouman, Maharajadhiraja.

Samrat was a full sovereign, sarvabhauma or ekkrat was the emperor who aspired to be the king of the whole universe. The term Maharajadhiraja denotes that he is the great ruler, having rule over other kings.

Republics or Ganas also existed side by side. But monarchical form of government was accepted widely.

5.5.3 Sabha and Samiti (popular Assemblies):

For the administrative purpose, king was assisted by some popular assemblies. During the **early Vedic period**, provision was made for the tribal councils.

These councils were known as Sabha and samiti.

The Sabha : was a body of the tribal elders. It was an assembly of the distinguished great persons.

The Samiti : was a popular assembly, a representative body of the whole tribe.

Sabhasad was the member of the Sabha was greatly respected. Gramani, the representative of grama was also included in the assembly.

The Sabha and Samiti exerted high influence on the king. Even his accession to the throne was to be approved by them. These bodies worked as powerful checks on the power of the king & protected the interests of people.

During **the later Vedic period** the popular control over the king was still exercised by Sabha and Samiti. They are referred to in the later Vedic literature with more respect. They are described as the twin daughters of prajapati (i.e. the creator). This reference is suggestive of the increasing importance of these two assemblies.

5.5.4 Other officials.

During **early Vedic period**, king was assisted by purohit and senani.

Purohita was a learned man who guided the king and people in all matters of religion, social customs, law, morality etc.

Senani was the leader of the army.

During the **later Vedic period**, the body of administrative officials of the state was also expanded in addition to purohita and senani of the early Vedic period, there were-

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| - Sangrahitri | - the treasurer |
| - Bhagadhuka | - the tax collector |
| - Suta | - herald or charioteers |
| - Ksatri | - chamberlain |
| - Akshavapa | - superintendent of gambling |
| - Palagala | - courier |
| - Gramani | - the chief of the village. |
| - Sachiva | - a minister or head of a department is also mentioned in later Vedic literature. |

Thus there existed a regular system of administration. The king was now assisted by a council of above mentioned ministers who were designated as Ratnins. The Ratnins played a very significant role at the time of king's coronation. Later on the council of Ratnins gave place to the council of ministers.

Administration of Justice was one of the most important duties of king. But usually, the disputes were settled in the village through the arbitrator (Madhyamasi) crimes of theft, robbery, murders etc. were condemned and punished with heavy fines such as vairadeya and shatadaya. Failure to repay debts often resulted in slavery.

During the later Vedic period, the administration of justice was more elaborate. Of course, small cases of village decided by the Village council. A Village judge was appointed for this, designated as Gramyavadin. Arbitration was the usual method in all civil cases. The local assembly usually entrusted the work of judicial administration to small body of its members. Adhyakshas or presidents of the boards of justice were appointed by the king and the final authority in the administration of justice was king (with his Sabha) himself.

Village administration enjoyed the autonomous status. Administration of justice, election, education, police arrangements at village level were all managed by the village councils.

With expansion of the territories, the beginning of a system of provincial administration is found during this period.

Check Your Progress:

1. Write an essay on the Political life of the Vedic Aryans.

5.6 SOCIAL LIFE

Before coming to India the Aryans were pastoral. After coming to the land of Sapta Sindhu' (i.e. valley of seven rivers) they took to agriculture. This resulted into the beginning of a settled life. Now they gradually developed their social institutions. The family was regarded as the primary social and political unit.

5.6.1 Family :

The foundations of the social life of the Vedic Aryans was the 'kula^s or family. It was a joint family in which the patriarch or the eldest male member was the chief. He was referred to as 'Grihapati'. He enjoyed absolute control over his children and exercised full powers over all the members of the family.

The family discipline was strict. Sometimes he had to inflict harsh punishment to wrong doing members. Normally, the Vedic family was quite large, several members of the family along with their children lived under a common roof. They performed their common duties and worshipped in common their family deity. Every house had a fireplace i.e. 'Agnishala', a sitting room and other rooms. The patriarch and his wife performed all religious sacrifices.

The Vedic family was quite large and nearly three to four generations living together in it. The family shouldered the responsibility of looking after the widows and weak persons of the family. This set up of the joint family proved to be very useful for their agricultural occupation.

5.6.2 Marriage :

Marriage came to be an important social institution. Marriage was an important 'samskara'. The boys and girls had considerable freedom in choosing their spouses. During the early vedic period, child marriage did not exist.

Monogamy was the general rule, however, polygamy certainly prevailed and polyandry and intermarriages are also referred to. There are also references of remarriage of widows.

Marriage was regarded as an samskara and the beginning of Grihasthashrama. It was supposed to be the most creative stage of life. Marriage was supposed to be essential because it enabled a person to continue the family line.

There were healthy restrictions on the institution of marriage. Marriage between father and daughter, brother and sister, and mother and son were forbidden. Cases of giving dowry by fathers of disabled girls and high bride price offered by ugly looking men have been referred to in the vedic literature. During the Early Vedic period, The custom of sati was unknown.

During the later Vedic period also the institution of marriage continued to play the same role. But certain rigid conditions were laid down for marriages.

The Smritis i.e. the later Vedic literature had recognized the following eight forms of marriages. The rituals of vivaha were generally followed by majority of people. But in certain circumstances, they could not be followed strictly. Caste marriage had become an important tradition and still inter caste marriages did take place.

These intercaste marriages were approved in two types:-

- a) Anuloma Vivaha in which the groom belong to the higher caste and the bride to lower caste and,
- b) Pratiloma Vivaha in which the bride belonged to higher caste and the groom lower caste.

Legalized marriages in different castes were classified in eight forms which were known as 'Ashtavivaha Prakara'. They were:-

- i) Brahma Vivaha
- ii) Prajapatya Vivaha

- iii) Daiva Vivaha
- iv) Arsha Vivaha
- v) Asura Vivaha
- vi) Paishacha Vivaha
- vii) Rakshasa Vivaha
- viii) Gandharva Vivaha

All these eight forms were recognized but the first four of them i.e. Brahma Vivaha, Daiva Vivaha, Arsha Vivaha and Prajapatya Vivaha were regarded as ideal. The rest were recognized under unavoidable circumstances.

5.6.3 Position of women:

Women enjoyed equal status to men during early Vedic period. A married woman was well respected in the household of her husband. She participated in the sacrificial offerings at home. Girls were educated like boys as is evident from the examples of scholarly women like Apala, Ghosala, Lopamudra, Sikta etc. whose compositions were included in the Vedic texts. Married women had the right over their bridal gifts or parinaya.

Women could move freely and were not secluded from the daily activities. She attended feasts and festivals.

Widows could either remarry or was permitted to co-habit with her brother in law until the birth of a son. This system was known as 'Niyoga'.

During the later Vedic period, the status of women began to deteriorate. Their activities came to be restricted to the household. She was respected as equal with her husband in the performance of social and religious activities, but outside liberties came to an end. She was expected to be obedient and subservient to her husband.

The other factor in lowering the status of women's was Polygamy. The freedom, given to girls to marry at a matured age and their choice in selecting their life partners was withdrawn. Introduction of the evil custom i.e. sati and the general tendency against widow remarriage and Niyoga made their life still miserable. This resulted into increasing preference to get male children. Instances of learned women like Gargi are found in the later Vedic literature but was the exception in general, the restrictions were imposed on female education and their participation in social, political and religious activities. Child marriages came in vogue. During this period, she was confined to the household duties only. Women lost their high social status, as they enjoyed during the early Vedic period, never to get it again, till the beginning of modern age.

5.6.4 Varnashrama Dharma System :

a) The Four Varnas :

During the early Vedic period, the four-fold Varna system was virtually absent. The 'varna' actually denoted colour or complexion. It was initially used to distinguish the fair skinned Aryans from the dark complexioned non Aryans. The society was divided into four strata, based on the occupation and profession of an individual and not on birth. In the Rigveda, we do not find any caste consciousness. There are only fourteen references to Brahmins, nine to Kshatriyas, and one to the Shudras. The first reference to the Varna system occurs in the purushasukta hymn of the tenth mandala of the rigveda. Here, the society is compared to a gaint organism, the Viratpurusha' and the four varnasthe Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the shudra to its organs the head, arms, trunk and the feet respectively.

There was no rigidity in the caste system during the early Vedic period. Any person was free to choose his own profession inter marrying and interdining was common. There were major divisions of society :

- i) **Brahmins**- the prists
- ii) **Kshatriyas**- the Aristocrasts or warriors,
- iii) **Vaishyas** or common people.

These varnas had come into existence on the basis of the principle of divisions of labour.

All these varnas were known as Dvija or twice born. The Varna or caste of a person was determined on the basis of his own profession. Later, another class was added that was the class of **Dasus** or **Dasas** which consisted of persons with dark skin, and were mainly non-Aryans. Therefore, it was regarded as an inferior class.

During the later Vedic period, the Varna system, which was flexible earlier, became rigid. The four varnas i.e. classes of the society, were now taken in the sense of castes. This period witnessed gradual hardening of the caste system and deterioration of the position of the vaishyas and shudras in relation to the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas.

The shudras, who were the conquered non- Aryans, were kept under the state of subjugation. They remained excluded form the '&0' status of the Aryans. The smrities of the later vedic period emphasized on the rigidity of the caste system due to which the evil principles of untouchability crept in to this system. Consequently the two upper castes i.e. Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed a much higher social status than the vaishyas and shudras. They enjoyed several privileges such as exemption from taxes and favourite treatment before law. The functions or duties of the each varna were :

- 1) **The Brahmana** : was the teacher, priest of the sacrifice and receiver of gifts.
- 2) **The Kshatriya**- he was the protector of all within the state. He collected taxes, he had to perform duties of education, offering gifts, ruling and protecting the country.
- 3) **The Vaishyas** : The vaishyas did agriculture, remained engaged in commerce and did all other allied works to raise wealth. These three varnas were the dvijas, the twice born, meaning educated and disciplined.
- 4) **The Shudra** : This class failed in acquiring education and did the work of serving the three upper classes. He worked as washer man, painter or blacksmith etc. against the service charges.

b) **The Four Ashramas** :

The institution of Ashramas is a unique contribution of the Aryan society. The success of the Varna system is based on individuals who are duty conscious. This institution was introduced during the later Vedic period, to regulate the life of an individual.

The aim of the life was described as **Turushartha'** i.e. a four fold principles. Every person was to perform the four purusharthas or noble aims in his life. They were-

- i) **Dharma** meaning righteous way of living and piety.
- ii) **Artha** meaning acquiring wealth by honest means.
- iii) **Kama** means the desire for enjoyment. It means enjoying worldly pleasures and promoting arts.
- iv) **Moksha** means the spiritual freedom, the self realization, the salvation of soul.

To achieve these noble aims during the lifetime, life was divided into the four Ashramas of twenty five years. Ashrama, literally means, "Making an effort" the implication was that at every stage one should do one's best to have the best of the life.

The four Ashramas were :

1) **Brahmacharyashrama** :

This was the first stage of human life which began with the performance of the Upanayana ceremony. It was regarded as spiritual birth, as distinguished from the physical which he had from his parents. He was now a dvija. With it began his educational career. A person was expected to observe celibacy and devote himself to study. During this stage, he lived with his teacher till the completion of education. This stage continued up to the age of 20 to 25 years.

2) **Grihashthashrama** :

The Grihashthashrama of a person began with his marriage. This was the most important stage of life. He was expected to fulfill his

social obligations to gods, parents and to his children. He was supposed to perform three purusharthas of Dharma, Artha and Kama. Every person had to repay the three debts to

- a) Gods,
- b) Rishis and
- c) Ancestors.

He could repay or release himself from the debt to gods by performing yajna (sacrifice), to pitaras (ancestors) by raising offspring's and to the Rishis by observing continence on parvan days.

In this stage material well-being was given due importance. He was to earn money through righteous means, to get children to continue the line of family and observe piety. An individual was expected to lead the life of a pious households.

3) Vanaprashsana:

When man crossed the age limit of 50, after the children needed no further parental care and attention and had settled down, he was expected to prepare himself for retirement from the worldly life by giving up sexual pursuits and living in forests. At this stage of progressive retirement, he lived a simple life and subsisted on corn, fruit and vegetable.

4) Sanyasashrama:

The stage commenced at the age of seventy five. A sanyasi lived a detached social life. He was expected to retire completely from worldly life and lead the life of a seclude. His mission was to impart high spiritual education to all. He was expected to observe complete austerity to get salvation.

This system of Ashramas emphasized the social obligations of the individual. During the course of all four stages, there was scope for individual development coupled with social service. Thus the individual as well as social interests were harmonized.

In the view of K.V.R. Aiyangar, " Indian society was kept from disintegration by the sublime conception of the scheme of varna and Ashrama, which gave its women and men a clear vision of spiritual winning post and showed them how to order their lives and mould their actions in order that they may, in the fullness of time, or even in this life itself, triumphantly reach it."

5.6.5 Dress and ornaments :

During the early Vedic period, people used two garments. The lower garment was known as Vasa and the upper Adhivasa. An undergarment known as Nivi was also introduced during the later vedic period. The garments were made of wool, cotton and silk and

were also dyed. Head- dress, the turban was used by both men and women. Both plaited their hair.

Men wore beards Shaving was also prevalent among men. Both men and women were fond of ornaments. The ornaments of common use were the pravarta (ear- rings) and the Nistika and Rukma were the neck ornaments, rings and jewels, armlets and anklets.

5.6.6 Food and Drinks :

Various dietary preparations of rice, barley, milk and ghee are mentioned in Vedic literature. Meat, fruits and vegetables also were the chief eatables of the early Vedic Aryans. In the later Vedic period, beans and sesamum were introduced. The common intoxicant drink was sura. Its use was often condemned as leading to the quarrel. Another intoxicating drink was soma. Soma was a juice of plant which was consumed even at the time of sacrifices, where as sura was a liquor probably prepared from grains.

5.6.7 Sports and pastimes :

The amusements of the Vedic people included the chariot race, gambling, hunting music and dancing. Dice was a favourite pastime. There are frequent references to musical instruments such as Vina, Dundubhi, flute, lute etc. both men and women could participate in dancing during the early Vedic period. Festive gatherings was a sort of entertainment, and were commonly attended by men and women.

5.7 ECONOMIC LIFE

The Rigvedic Aryans were mostly scattered in villages. The village was the base of early Vedic economy. The Aryan village was a group of families. The family affairs were managed by kulapati. The Gramani was the head of the village, who looked after the affairs of the village both civil and military.

The Aryans cleared forests, cultivated lands and built houses of mud and bamboo. Agriculture and cattle rearing were the chief occupations of the early Vedic Aryans. There are many references to agriculture and the pastoral pattern of life.

5.7.1 Agriculture:

Fields were ploughed with the help of oxen. The art of tilling was considered to be very important. Cultivated fields were known as 'Urvara' or (kshetra these cultivable lands were irrigated by means of canals.

The use of manure was also known. Wheat, barley, rice, cotton and oilseeds were the main agricultural products. The grain was grown on the soil and when ripe, they were cut with sickle, tied in bundles

and threshed on the floor of the granary. Different stages of the harvest such as reaping of the crop, bundling, thrashing and winnowing etc. are all described in the Rigveda.

5.7.2 Domestication of animals:

The cattle breeding or domestication of animals was another important occupation of the Vedic Aryans. Among the domestic animals, mention may be made of the cattle, horse, dog, sheep, goat etc. Cows were held in much esteem and milk, formed an important part of the dietary in the Vedic household. Cattle were daily led to the pasture by the Gopa (Cowherd). The importance of cow made it a medium of economic transaction.

Other useful animals were the draught — ox, the horse, the dog, the goat, the sheep and the ass all were domesticated by Vedic Aryans.

During the later Vedic period, agriculture continued to be the main occupation, and was considerably developed. Implements of agricultural operations were greatly improved. The introduction of manures and improved techniques of agriculture increased the rate and varieties of agricultural products. There are references of the ploughs drawn by six, eight, twelve and even twenty — four oxen. Usually, people belonging to a single family worked together and agriculture was a common enterprise.

Rice, wheat and barley were the chief crops. Cotton, several minor crops and oil seeds were grown. Vegetable, fruits etc. were in abundance.

During the later Vedic period, cattle continued to be the chief source of wealth and were held in much esteem and was most useful and was called a goddess. Bulls also were regarded as sacred animals, buffalo, goat and sheep were other domesticated animals.

The later Vedic period marks the beginning of landed aristocracy. The growing economic prosperity and the increase in man power are another important features of the later Vedic period.

5.7.3 Industries :

The Rigvedic Aryans followed a mixed pastoral and agricultural economy. Being an agricultural community, Aryans had developed all the crafts, necessary for the profession. Many craftsmen are mentioned in the Rigveda. They are the carpenter, the potter, the weaver, the tanner, metal workers, chariot makers etc. their services were essential for agriculture. There were the village industries which produced commodities of agricultural and domestic use. The village was thus self dependent.

Metals like gold, silver, copper and bronze was known to them. The metal workers designed all types of weapons, implements and household utensils. 'A-yas' which in later Sanskrit meant iron is found in Rigveda. However, this A'yas may have been copper, bronze or iron.

Among the cottage industries, spinning, weaving, sewing, making of mats from grass or reeds etc. were chiefly done by women.

During the later Vedic period, there was considerable progress in economic life. Agriculture provided work for several artisans. The number of occupations was fairly large during this period. The village was a self sufficient unit and developed a corporate life. The society was properly organized and therefore, maintained a high standard of efficiency. The production of wealth increased, which added to their prosperity. On the whole, the Aryans in later Vedic period were both industrious and prosperous.

5.7.4 Trade and Commerce :

The Rigvedic hymns clearly indicate that trade and commerce was known to the people of early Vedic age. Commerce was largely in the hands of the people known as VW, who were probably non-Aryans. Generally barter system was followed. Cow was a measure of wealth as well as the medium of exchange. Nishka' a gold coin of later time is mentioned in the Rigveda as a sort of currency. It was used as ornament also.

Whether any maritime trade was carried on during the early Vedic period is a matter of controversy. Barter was still in practice particularly in villages. Cow was used as a unit of measurement of value. Nana' was a weight unit. Trade was carried by both land as well as sea route. The later Vedic period also saw the onward march of internal and external trade. Rich trading centers like Kashi, Mathura, Ayodhya emerged on the riverine routes and formed the rural life into urban.

The chief means of transport by land were chariots (Ratha) and the wagons (anas). The rathas were drawn by horses while the anas by oxen.

During the later Vedic period, people belonging to different professions began to organize themselves into different groups. The 'Guilds' were known as 'Shreni' of artisan craftsmen and merchants are mentioned.

Thus in the later Vedic period, the Aryans began to live an organized and settled social and economic life. As the society expanded, the economic activities increased. A remarkable progress was seen in the field of agriculture, trade industry and occupations. The prosperity led to the rich and varied tests of life, which was reflected in the dress, jewellery, amusements and pastime etc.

Check Your Progress:

1. Write an essay on the Social life of the Vedic Aryans with special reference to the Varnashrama Dharma.

5.8 RELIGION

The Aryans worshipped nature gods representing the forces of nature are mentioned in the Rigvedic hymns. The total number of gods was 33 and they lived in three spheres. These were

1. The Terrestrial Gods,
2. The Aerial Gods,
3. The Celestial Gods.

The Rigveda mentions prayers to Gods such as the Sun, the Moon, the Sky, the Dawn, Thunder and Air.

5.8.1 The Celestial Gods:

The Celestial Gods of the Aryans were the Dyaus, Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Savitri, Pushan, Vishnu, Aditi, Usha and Ashwins etc.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Dyaus | – was the God of vast blue sky, the shining god of heaven. |
| Varuna | – the sky god was regarded as god of truth and upholder of physical and moral values symbolized in Rita. He was the regulator of the whole universe. He controlled activities of other Gods. |
| Vishnu | – is credited to have covered the whole universe in 3 strides. During later period he occupied the prime position of varuna. He was the symbol of swift movement. |
| Rudra and Marut | – were Gods of storm and winds. |
| Solar deities | – Surya was the chief solar deity providing light, life, wealth and energy. He activated the people. The solar God was worshipped in various forms such as Surya, Mitra, Savitri, Ashwins, Pushan and Aditi. |

Mitra	– was God of light
Aditi	– Female deity relieving man from bondage.
Usha	– the dawn, female deity corresponding with beautiful early morning.
Ashwins	– were the physicians of God and were represented by mornings and evening stars.
Pushan	– was the charioteer Surya and protecting deity of roads.

5.8.2 The Aerial Gods :

Among the atmospheric Gods Indra is the most prominent deity. Nearly one fourth of the hymns of Rigveda are devoted for the praise of this deity. He was regarded as the protector of the Gods and therefore occupied the prominent position among the Vedic deities.

Rudra — was the deity associated with thunder and storm and regarded as fierce, mighty and auspicious

Marut and Vayu — were other Gods of storm and wind. **Parjanya** — was the God of rain.

5.8.3 The Terrestrial Gods :

These were Gods on earth also. They were Agni, Soma, Saraswati etc.

Agni:

was regarded as the chief deity among the terrestrial Gods. He was next to Indra. He was treated as a messenger who conveyed the ablutions to heavenly Gods which were offered by the people at the time of sacrifices.

Soma:

is another deity who inspired literary qualities and protected plants and forests. Soma is also identified with Moon who is associated with vegetation.

Saraswati:

at first was regarded as the river Goddess, but later on as Goddess of learning.

Among other deities on the earth mention may be made of Prajapati, Vishwakarma, Dhatri, Vidhatri, Shraddha and Manju.

5.9 THE RITUALS AND SACRIFICES

The Aryans needed the favours from these Gods. They pleased these deities by reciting the prayers. Prayers played an important role during the early Vedic period. Prayers were offered individually and collectively.

The ritual of sacrifice is another important feature of Vedic religion. During the early Vedic period it was simple and could be performed by anyone without the mediation of priests. A number of domestic and public sacrifices are mentioned in the Rigveda. In a simple sacrifice, every Aryan couple offered milk, grain, ghee, flesh and soma to their Gods. Through Agni, for which they used to light sacrificial fire for the sacrifice (Yagna). Chanting of mantras, animals sacrifice, drinking of somarasa were parts of the rituals.

During the later Vedic period great changes took place in the religious life of the people. Religion developed into two different aspects one -towards sacrificial ceremonies and rituals and other towards philosophical thoughts.

5.10 DEITIES

The later Vedic Aryans continued to worship earlier deities and also added some more to the list. Old deities like Varuna and Indra were now replaced by Rudra, Vishnu and Prajapati. Rudra (Shiva, Mahadeva or Pashupati) became a more popular God. The worship and adoration of the trinity Gods namely Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva with their consorts Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati became a common feature. The religion continued to be polytheistic, but the monotheistic tendencies were becoming marked with the passage of time.

Appearance of semi deities such as the Apsaras, Gandharvas and Kinnaras and the adoption of animal worship are another change of this period. Earlier deity Rudra was now accepted as Mahadeva. The acceptance of Rudra as Mahadeva and the introduction of animal and snake worship were probably the impact of the Indus Valley civilizations. Sorcery, witchcraft and superstitions were new elements entered into the Aryan religion. Atharvaveda contains prayers, verses related with these subjects. Mantras or magic charms giving victory in war and relief from diseases are mentioned in the Atharvaveda.

5.11 SACRIFICES AND RITUALS

To win favours or boons of the Gods in order to live a happy, healthy, long and wealthy life, the Rigvedic Aryans worshipped the

Gods by performing prescribed sacrifices under the guidance of learned priests. They offered milk, honey, grains, ghee, flesh and soma to the Gods and sung collectively the hymns of Rigveda in which the power and nature of different gods is praised.

The ritual of sacrifice is an important characteristic of the Vedic religion. During the early Vedic period it was simple and therefore could be performed by anyone without the mediation of the priests. Number of domestic and public sacrifices are mentioned in the Rigveda. In a simple sacrifice, every Aryan couple offered milk honey, grains, ghee, etc. to their Gods through Agni i.e. fire, for which they used to light sacrificial fire for the sacrifice.

During the later Vedic period the institution of sacrifice became very predominant and several rituals and ceremonies were introduced at the time of their performance. Members of the later Vedic society who performed sacrifices needed the guidance of several competent priests. The elaboration of these rituals resulted into the indispensability of the priests for performing sacrifices. The multiplied number of sacrifices and elaboration of their rituals made their performance complicated and expensive. Certain sacrifices lasted for several years and required several priests. Consequently the religion during this period became very costly and monopoly of wealthy priests began.

To guide the life of the people during the later Vedic or Hindu society on the path of morality, the spiritual thinkers laid down nearly 40 rites i.e. samskaras performed by them in course of their life under the guidance of priests.

Some of the most important samskaras are given below.

1. Garbhadhana
2. Pumsamvana
3. Simantannayana
4. Jatakarma
5. Namakarana
6. Anna- Prashana.
7. Chudakarma
8. Upanayana
9. Vidyarambha
10. Vivaha
11. Antesti etc.

For performing the rites and rituals. A priest was necessary. The complicated method of performing rituals increased the importance of priestly class. These priests were known as purohitas. In course of time priests became guardians and protectors as also the guides of

the religion of common people. In addition to rituals several festivals were observed.

5.12 PHILOSOPHY

During the early Vedic period, the Aryans worshipped different Gods. However, they regarded those Gods as manifestations of one God who has created the Universe. In the tenth Mandala of the Rigveda the multiplicity of Gods has been questioned and the ultimate unity of the universe is asserted by one God. Thus initially polytheism prevailed but gradually monotheistic tendencies developed.

The Vedic Aryans were in favour of enjoying the world. But at the same time man was advised to lead a virtuous life leading him after his death to heaven. Ideal moral life according to Rigvedic Aryans was that of offering prayers performing rites and living virtuously. During the later Vedic period, Hinduism achieved all its characteristics. Prayer, worship of God and sacrifices were the chief religious duties. Truth or reality was the goal of life. Everyone was bound by a common search for truth. Purity of life and conduct were stressed. Fourfold purushartas i.e. Dharma, Artha, Karma and Moksha were regarded as the guiding principles of life. The Vedas were authority on religious ideals but experienced through learning and reflection was their real basis.

The theory of relief and doctrine of Karma was also developed. To escape the cycle of life and death, man must realize the nature of 'Brahman'. Sacrifice and rituals were the means of improving of conduct of an individual and conscious approach to religion. Every Aryan had 3 primary duties to be performed :

1. Adhyayana (learning)
2. Yagna (sacrifice)
3. Dana (charity)

A Brahman had 3 more duties to perform. They were

- 1) Adhyapana (teaching)
- 2) Yajana (supervising sacrifices)
- 3) Pratigraha (receipt of gifts)

The Upanishads are main philosophical works. They provided material to all different schools of philosophy developed during the later Vedic period. They evolved the theories of creation of universe and doctrines of Karma and soul. The doctrine of Moksha leading to the state of rebirthlessness and deathlessness in another important development of this period. The important thoughts evolved during this period are Nyaya Vaisheshi, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta. They discuss the philosophical problems raised in the Upanishads and Sutras.

5.13 EDUCATION AND LITERATURE

5.13.1 Education :

The Vedic Aryans had given great attention to learning and education. Education was obligatory to each and every person. In early Vedic period, education was characterized by simplicity. The home of the sage i.e. Rishi was the center of learning, which functioned as a Vedic school. It was known as Gurukula. In fact, the house of the teacher was the first school known to the man. The studentship commenced with the Upanayana ceremony. In the Gurukulas, hymns composed by the Rishis were orally transmitted as the art of writing was not developed. Emphasis was laid on enunciation (purity of speech) and pronunciation proficiency in these was regarded a mark of high culture. The Gurukula system was characterized by strict discipline by the pupils and performance of their duties (Dharma). Some of the duties of the students or pupils were collecting fuel for the sacrificial fire, learning the Vedas, looking after the cattle of Guru, practicing austerities and control of senses etc. A pupil could stay in the Gurukula for twelve years or more. Education was regarded as a continuous process. The student had to serve the teacher and obey him. Due to constant touch with the teacher the students could build their characters and were properly disciplined. Truth speaking, observance of piety, devotion to gods, teachers and parents and charity was supposed to be the essential virtues for students. Besides recitation of the Vedas, there were discussions among eminent touring scholars and learned students, which enlarged the scope of education. Vedic literature, grammar, logic, astronomy, astrology, ethics and archery were the main subjects taught and studied.

The teacher did not charge any fee but those who could pay offered 'Guru Dakshina' to their teacher, at the end of their education.

The subjects taught were "The Veda Samhitas, Itihasa and Purana described as the fifth Veda, Vyakarna, Rasi or science of numbers, Nidhi, explained as mineralogy. Tarka shastra or science of Logic, Bhuta-vidya i.e. biology, Shastra Vidya (Military science) Nakshatra vidya, i.e. astronomy and Ayurveda, i.e. medicine. The aim of education was to achieve success both in secular and spiritual life. Thus it was started to be shraddha (faith), Medha (retention of knowledge acquired), Praja (Progeny), Dhana (wealth) Ayuh (longevity), and Amritatva (immortality).

The higher knowledge in philosophy and religion was imported to a selected few. The education began with the study of Vedas and Upanishadas. Methods of teaching were both interesting and convincing. Several passages in the Upanishadas indicate a high

standard of learning, direct method of instruction, close relations between the teacher and his students and a wide range of subjects taught. The student got a thorough moral and intellectual training by his constant association with his Guru.

The highest position in society was occupied by the intellectual aristocracy. The Brahmins were highly respected for their intellectual work. However, the Kshatriyas also were enjoying the learning of the Vedas. Kshatriya kings like Janaka were famous for their learning and were respected by all including the Brahmanas. Women education was not neglected theoretically at least. Wife was still given a high position in a family. There are also references to women teachers, who possessed the highest spiritual knowledge. Some women like Gargi and Maitreyi were learned and could challenge Yajnavalkya, the greatest philosopher of the age.

There were many centers of Vedic learning, which evolved different schools of thoughts. Vedic scholars exchanged their views by occasional assemblies under the patronage of generous and enlightened kings. Debates were commonly held to discuss difficult problems of philosophy and religion. The teacher was the chief figure in the system of learning, teachers led an ideal life and maintained a high moral character. Instruction was oral and therefore the students were at the mercy of the teachers. Student had to learn by service and observation.

The Student's life was not easy, he had to do all sorts of manual labour as mentioned earlier. The teacher taught the students for many years and when he was satisfied about the attainments of the students gave him last sermon and usually known as Snatakopadesha (advice to the graduate). In this sermon a snataka (a graduate) was told the basic principles of the individuals behaviour in society. He was asked to speak the truth, to live according to Dharma, to regard parents, elders and teachers as gods to practice charity, to observe non violence and such other principles with constitute `Samanya Dharma'.

5.13.1 Vedic literature :

The contribution of the VedicAryans to the growth of literature is most important. The size and quality of their literary works proclaim the greatness of the people. The fact that the literary works were learnt and taught by oral method speaks about their devotion to literature learning and teaching. The Vedic literature is already mentioned in unit no.2 of our book. They are as follows.

The Vedas :

1. The Rigveda
2. The Yajurveda

3. The Samveda
4. The Atharveda

The commentaries on the Vedas:-

There are three types of commentaries:-

- 1) Brahmanas
- 2) Aranyakas
- 3) Upanishadas

Vedangas :

The vedangas were composed to systematic study of the Vedic literature. They are regarded as the limbs of vedas. They are Six in number and are as follows :

- | | | |
|---|----------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Shiksha | – The Science of Phonetics |
| 2 | Kalpa | – Rites and rituals |
| 3 | Vyakarna | – Grammar |
| 4 | Nirukta | – Etymology |
| 5 | Chhandas | – Metres |
| 6 | Jyotisha | – Astronomy |

Out of the Six Vedangas, the Shiksha and Kalpa are considered to be very important. They help us to understand the text of the Vedas.

Upavedas or supplementary Vedas Consist of some more Sciences like -

- | | | |
|----|------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Ayurveda | – Medicine, |
| 2 | Dhanurveda | – Archery, |
| 3) | Shilpa | – Architecture etc. |

Sutra literature :- is divided into 3 groups:-

- a) Shrouta (Ritual)
- b) Grihya (Domestic ceremonies)
- c) Dharma (law). They discuss all social problems several scholars like Manu, Vishnu, Yajnavalkya and Narada have written elaborate commentaries on this. These works form the basis of Hindu law.

Thus Vedic literature is very wide in scope and quite deep in insight and analysis.

Smriti Literature :

The Smritis were the treatises written by different Rishis. The Smritis deal with religion, rituals, Philosophy, and Codes to be observed by the different castes. The Smritis were known after the

author such as Manusmriti, Yajnavalkya Smriti, Narada Smriti and Vishnu Smriti.

Puranas :

The Puranas were the old narratives of the bards to which Brahmanical Priests had made additions from time to time. They received their present form during the Gupta Period. Puranas are eighteen in number and equal number of Upapuranas. In general, the Puranas deal with the evolution of the Universe, genealogies of gods and sages and traditional history of royal families.

The Epics :

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are two great epics. The authorship of these two epics is ascribed to Valmiki and Vyas. The theme of Ramayan is the conflict between Rama and Ravana. It contains the history of the Ikshvaku dynasty to which Rama belonged and deals with Aryan Penetration into South India.

The Mahabharata gives an account of the dynastic quarrel of the Kauravas and Pandavas and its culmination into a war. It also gives us an idea of the mutual rivalries of the Aryan tribes. It contains the Gita, a divine advice of lord Krishna to Arjuna.

Check Your Progress:

1. Write an essay on the religious life of the Vedic Aryans.

5.14 SUMMARY

The People of the Vedic India Called themselves Aryas as distinct from others who did not accept the Vedic Civilization, whom they called Anaryas or Dasyus. In this lesson, we have studied various theories about the original home of the Vedic Aryans, early Aryan Settlements and expansion, their Political life i.e. their Political ideas and institutions.

Families formed the grama (village) and a number of gramas formed the Vish and Jana. Gramani was the head of the Village, Vishapati and Janapati were in charge of the other divisions. The State was governed by Rajan (king) who was usually elected during the early and became hereditary during the later Vedic period. The king was guided by two assemblies, the Subha and the Samiti and assisted in his duties by the Purohita and the Senoni.

In this lesson, we have studied various aspects of the socio-economic life of the vedicAryans.

The Family was the basic unit of Society. Marriage was the basis of Family. It was considered as a sacred bond. Marriage was regarded as an Sanskara and the beginning of Grihasthashrama. Legalized marriages in different castes were Classified in eight forms, were known as 'Ashtavivaha prakara'. Status of women was very high. Women enjoyed several privileges and were highly respected. Some of them were educated and proficient in fine arts.

The Vedic Aryans evolved the Varnashrama Dharma System. The Four varnas were the four classes during early vedic period; During the later period, the varnas were associated with the birth of an individual and since then it became the caste system. The Four castes were : Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.

The aim of life was described as Purushartha, a Four-fold principle, consisting of Dharma (Justice), Artha (Material Prosperity Kama (Satisfaction of emotional interests) and Moksha (Salvation).

A hundred year span of life was divided into Four equal Ashramas or stages, each being devoted for specific functions. They were Brahmacharyashrama for education and training the Grihasthashrama – the most important, the Vanaprasthashrama the period of retirement and the sanyasa, an ashrama of complete renunciation.

The Economic life of the Vedic People during early and later vedic period also is studied in this lesson. Our study throws light on the Agriculture, and related professions. Industries and Trade and commerce of the vedicAryans. During the early vedic period, the Aryans depended upon cattle-rearing and agriculture trade was limited and barter was in vogue. However, during the later vedic period, the land under cultivation expanded and implements were greatly improved. Irrigation was considerably improved. The professional organisation i.e. shrenis (guilds) came into existence. Trade and commerce flourished. They become more industrious and prosperous. The society was properly organised and therefore maintained a high standard of efficiency.

In this lesson, we have studied the religion and Philosophy of the Vedic Aryans. Their educational system and the literature that they produced.

The Aryans worshipped nature gods representing the forces of nature. Prayer and sacrifice were the main religious activities.

The Vedic Aryans had given great attention to learning and education. The home of the sage i.e. Rishi was the center of learning, which functioned as a Vedic school. It came to be known as Gurukul system of education. Here, the education was imported through oral tradition. It is through this oral tradition that the literature that was produced by them, was survived and was passed on from one generation to the other generation. The Vedic literature include the Four Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishadas, Vedanges, Upavedas, Sutra literature, Smriti literature, Puranas and the Epics.

5.15 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the Socio-Economic life of the VedicAryans.
2. Write a detailed note on the education and learning during the Vedic age.
3. Write short notes on :
 - a) Original home of the Vedic Aryans
 - b) Sabha and Samiti.
 - c) Position of the women during the Vedic Age
 - d) Varnashrama Dharma
 - e) Economic life of the Vedic Aryans
 - f) Marriage as an important Samskara.
3. Write short notes on :
 - a) Vedic Deities
 - b) Rites and rituals
 - c) Samskaras
 - d) Gurukula System of education
 - e) Vedic literature.



INDIA IN THE 6TH CENTURY B.C. AGE OF JANAPADAS PERSIAN & GREEK INVASIONS

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6.0 OBJECTIVES

- a) To learn the causes for the rise and growth of Janapadas.
- b) To discuss the contribution - Political, Economic and Social on India.
- c) To Study the conquests of foreigners.
- d) To evaluate the impact of foreign invasions on Indian Soil.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Vedic Age (1500 B.C.-600 B.C.) was a period of raging political instability. It is witnessed that around 600 B.C., North India was dotted with a number of republics and kingdoms with towns as centers of power. Monarchy as well as republican governments were gaining importance. Of the two Systems, definitely monarchy was gaining more grounds and kings were now hereditary and even attributed lot of divine powers, which were repeatedly asserted through rituals and sacrifices such as rajsuya and ashwamedha sacrifices. The rise of small kingdoms and republics was witnessed especially in the

Gangetic plains of Bihar. These small states later paved the way for large empires and came to be called as Mahajanapadas.

In the 6th century B.C. while Magadha was making a successful bid for establishing political supremacy, the North West was seeing a foreign invasion, which was nothing else but a chain of attacks which was soon to be followed along the same areas in the years to come. Among the many who invaded the first worth-mentioning people were the Persians. Macedonians, Sakas, Kushanas, Scythians, Huns and Turks followed them in centuries to come. The Turks who came along this frontier wrought chaos and executed gruesome acts in India. Though one often hears of the good influence of their rule in the classrooms their serious effects are faced in daily life.

6.2 CAUSES FOR THE RISE AND GROWTH

The earlier Aryan societies in India were tribal in context. Tribal chiefs, whose position was not hereditary, ruled these. The key factor of selection of the chief was the number of cattle (cows in particular) a person owned. Clans often fought with each other over the control of herds of cattle. In the course of time as the population of the tribes grew, their needs and desires also began to rise. The one-time small settlements grew into large settlements. It became difficult to manage large tracts of land. Soon these societies saw the rise of a ruling class, which belonged to the Kshatriya (warrior class) caste.

The strength of the early Aryan tribes was derived from the Jana (people) and not the Janapada (land). During the latter part of the Later Vedic Age (1000 B.C.-600 B.C.), a number of changes took place. The Kshatriya (warrior class) caste and the Brahmin caste (priestly class) took control of the society in their hands. The Kshatriyas and Brahmins together began to exploit the people belonging to the subordinate castes.

The period saw the expansion of agriculture as new areas were brought under cultivation. The Aryan society shifted from tribal to a territorial one. Agriculture became the main occupation of the people. As a result they started settling in fixed places. The farmers suffered if there were wars between petty chieftains. It was in their interest that they preferred having larger kingdoms with an able ruler where they could have stability and security.

The growth in agricultural produce resulted in larger number of arts and crafts and consequently flourishing of trade activities. This gave rise to the merchant class, which needed security from thefts and other crimes whenever it passed from one janapada to the other.

The traders felt the need for a strong ruler who would not only protect them but also help them in their material progress.

The period also witnessed an unprecedented religious and spiritual conflicts and the rise of heterodox sects - most powerful of which were Jainism and Buddhism.

All these factors combined to give rise to the so-called 'Second Urbanization of Indian history (Indus Valley Civilization being the first urbanization).

6.3 POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE MAHAJANAPADAS

In course of time, small settlements grew into small kingdoms and republics. A republic is that form of government where the power is held by the people or a group of elected people or elected chief. The concept of hereditary kingship is not present in republics. The main ruling class, which held the power of these republics, was the Kshatriya. Non-Kshatriyas were not a part of the ruling class in these republics. In the 6th century B.C. sixteen territorial states or Mahajanapada.

Anga	Champa
Ashmak	-
Avanti	Ujjain
Chedi	-
Gandhara	Taxila
Kasji	Varanasi
Kosala	Ayodhya
Kuru	Indraprasta
Kamboja	-
Panchala	Kanauj
Malla	Kushinara
Matsya	Viratnagar
Magadha	rajgir
Shursen	-
Vriji	Maithili
Vatsa	Kausambi

Of these 16 states, Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa, and Avanti were powerful.

The Mahajanapadas of Anga, Kashi, Kosala, Chedi, Vatsa, Matsya, Shursen, Ashmak, Avanti, Gandhar and Magadha were ruled by kings or monarchs. The kings in these states had the supreme authority. The Mahajanapadas of Vriji, Malla, Kuru, Panchal and Kamboj were republican states. There were yet other smaller states like Lichhavi, Shakya, Koliya, Bhagga, Moriya. These republican states had a 'Gana-parishad' or an Assembly of senior and responsible citizens. This, Gana-parishad had the supreme authority in the state. This Parishad took all the administrative decisions. The most important states if the times have been discussed below :

Kosala:

Shravasti Kushavati, Saket, and Ayodhya were the well-known cities of Kosala. Ayodhya was the capital. King Mahakosha ruled it at the beginning of the 6th century B.C. His son king Prasenajit was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha. The independent state of Kosala did not last long after Prasenajit. Kosala matches with the modern Oudh.

Vatsa :

Kaushambi of the Present day Bihar was the capital of Vatsa. Vatsa was famous for its fine cotton cloth. According to a legend in the puranas Hastinapur, the capital of Kurus (Kauravas) was destroyed by the floods of the Ganges. Therefore the Kuru tribe migrated to Vatsa and established their kingdom. The Vatsa king Udayana was very brave. He was the follower of Gautama Buddha. The independent status of Vatsa was soon lost after king Udayana.

Avanti:

The kingdom of Avanti comprised the area around the present day Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. Pradyota, the king of Avanti, was a very ambitious ruler. He was constantly engaged in conflicts with Kosala, Vatsa and Magadha. In this constant warfare, the Magadha state ultimately proved superior.

Magadha :

Magadha comprised of the present districts of Patna, and Gaya in south Bihar. Its capital was Rajgriha. Of all the states of the times, Magadha emerged victorious and established itself as the centre of political activity in Northern India, a position which it maintained for some centuries.

Rise of Magadha :

The kingdom of Magadha was spread throughout a large area of the Gangetic plains. This region had large deposits of iron ore and it made ample use of this treasure for making weapons and

agricultural implements. Iron weapons strengthened the Magadha kingdom while agricultural tools were used to extensively clear forests and bring more and more land under the plough. All this added to the material wealth of Magadha. It also took control of large stretches of river Ganga, which was used as a trade route. Ajatshatru was succeeded by his son Udayan (460 bc-444 BC), who established his capital in Pataliputra (present-day Patna).

Bimbisara (542 B.C.-493 B.C.) and his son Ajatshatru (493 B.C.-461 B.C.) gained the upper hand over all other territorial kingdoms of Magadha. The rise of Magadha and the decline of the states with republican supremacy laid the foundation for hereditary system of governance.

The Nandas ruled Magadha between 364 B.C. and 324 B.C. The Nanda kings had set up a good administrative system necessary to run the huge empire. This system continued even during the Maurya period. The Nanda Kings had a huge army, had a good standard of weights and measures, loved art and literature, and provided patronage to many scholars. The renowned grammarian Panini belongs to this period. The last of the Nanda Kings was Dhanananda. Magadha had become a very powerful kingdom during this time. It had expanded up to the Punjab in the West.

In about 321 B.C. Chandragupta Maurya, a determined young man, attacked and occupied Magadha and put an end to the Nanda rule and founded one of most powerful dynasties of Indian history.

6.4 CONTRIBUTION

6.4.1 a) Political :

The position of the king became important during this time. He not only became the protector of people but also the upholder of the sacred Law or Dharma. In the Republics, the people elected the ruler. However, in the kingdoms, the Brahmins (priests) sanctified the rule of the king (who was a Kshatriya) and promoted him not as an ordinary human, but God. The Brahmins endowed the king with God-like powers by performing certain religious ceremonies. The king was surrounded by a group of ministers who helped him in the affairs of the state. The king maintained an army and was responsible for collecting taxes.

6.4.1. b) Economic:

With the rise of kingdoms and republics, more and more villages and towns emerged. The economy of the state depended on the taxes collected from the people. Towns like Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh), Bhargukachchha (Gujarat), Champa, Kaushambi, Pataliputra, Pratisthana (Deccan), Rajagriha (Bihar), Shravasti, Tamralipti (Ganga Delta), Ujjayini (Malwa) and Vaishali prospered

during this time. Towns became the focal points of crafts. They played the pivotal role as capitals of the early kingdoms and republics. Trade and commerce also helped in the rise of towns and barter system was common. River Ganga became an important trade route.

6.4.1. c) Social:

The society was strictly divided on caste lines: the Kshatriyas (warriors) were rulers, the Brahmins (priests) maintained education and religious activities, the Vaishyas (traders) carried out trade, while the Shudras were manual workers and farm workers. Fifth castes, namely the class of untouchables also grew, This group was looked down upon, as it performed menial jobs. The people of the upper caste established their right over the others and did not allow them to grow. Thus the people of the upper caste, the Brahmins and the Kshatdyas, usurped the power in the Kingdoms and did not allow the people of the lower caste to have their say in the affairs of the state.

Check Your Progress:

1. Write a note on the Mahajanapadas.

6.5 PERSIAN INVASION



For more than three thousand years Persia was a melting pot of civilizations and demographic changes between Asia and Europe. Under Cyrus the Great, it became the nucleus of the world's first empire. Persia has been recognized by its people as Iran (land of the Aryans) or "noble people", although it was referred to as Persia (Pars or Fars) by the Europeans, largely because of the writings of Greek historians.

Cyrus founded the Persian Empire 550 B.C. and it dominated the adjoining areas until the time of Alexander the Great conquered the kingdom and established the Persian Empire.

Amongst the foreigners, the Persians were the first to invade India. They came in the 6th Century B.C, At this time north India was scattered into various big and small kingdoms worth mentioning among them being Taxila, Gandhara, Abhiras.

Cyrus, one of history's great leaders, conquered Babylonia and Antholia and ruled Persia from 558 B.C. to 530 B.C. He also seems to have led an expedition to the northwest frontier in India. There is a mention made by the historian Herdotus about Cyrus the upper regions of Asia conquering every nation. Pliny informs that cyrus destroyed the city of Kapisi while Arrian tells that he conquered territories as far as Kabul. However his expeditions are based on vague statements made by the historians, Cyrus seems to have tried to capture the political power of India but was probably defeated in his endeavors.

Cambyses, (530B.C.-520B.C.) who was the son of Cyrus succeeded, diverted his attention towards Egypt and Greece and had no time to launch an expedition towards India. This actually slackened the hold of Persia in the northwest frontiers in India.

Darius I who ruled Persia from 520 B.C. to 486 B.C. reimposed political stability in Babylon and ushered in a period of great economic prosperity. Darius pushed the Persian borders far as Indus River, had the river Indus surveyed by his Greek commander Skylax and constructed a canal connecting the Nile River and the Red Sea. Between 520 and 486 B.C, the efficient and innovative Iranian leader undertook an Indian campaign and he conquered Punjab in the year 518.B.C. His greatest achievements were in road building—which significantly improved communication among the provinces. S. Chattopadhyaya writes that Darius built a fortress in Kapisa and the Susa.

Darius I was succeeded by Xerxes. A thing to be noted here is that Xerxes employed Indian army against the Greeks. Xerxes's successors were weak and incapable. Trade also was greatly reduced during this period.

Other well-known Persian Kings were Ardashir, Shapur, Yazdegerd, Firuz, Khosrau. The last of the Sassanid kings was Yazdegerd III, during whose reign (632-41) the Arabs invaded Persia and replaced Zoroastrianism (Persian religion at the time and still practiced by some Persians in Iran and around the globe) with Islam.

Darius III was the ruler during whose time Alexander fought with the Persians and defeated Darius III in 330 B.C.

The effects of Persian invasions :

The Persian control over the north western part of India had several effects in political, economic and cultural life of India.

- a) The direct impact of the invasions was felt only on the borders of India but its political ideas and court etiquettes flowed into the interior of the country.
- b) Large number of Persian nobles were employed in the courts of the Indian kings.
- c) The Persian coinage system influenced Indian coins.
- d) Kharoshti script widely used in North western India was derived from Aramaic used in Persia. The Ashokan inscriptions are in the Kharoshti.
- e) The royal road of the Mauryas from western frontier to Pataliputra was influenced by its prototype in Persia between Sardis and Susa.
- f) Monuments and palaces during the Mauryan period had resemblance to the Persian art.

The greatest impact of the invasion of the Persians over North Western India according to historians is that it led to the trade relationship between India and Persia and it also encouraged other foreigners to launch invasion over India. As Persians had established their authority over India and India had become a part of their empire, people were free to travel in any part of India or Persia. The Indian traders started trading with the Persians on a large scale.... It encouraged the Greeks and the Bactrians to launch invasions over Indian Territory.

6.6 MACEDONIAN INVASION

The Origin of the Term 'Hellenistic':

The term 'Hellenistic' was first used in the 19th century to describe the era and civilization, which materialized from the conquests of Alexander the Great (330 B.C. to 7 B.C.). During this period Greek culture spread from the Mediterranean eastwards to the Indus River Valley and westwards to the Atlantic. Hellenistic civilization represented the synthesis of Greek and Near Eastern civilizations. The 'founder' of Hellenistic world was Alexander the Great.

6.7 ALEXANDER THE GREAT (CA. 356-323 B.C.)

Little information is available about Alexander's childhood except for his close attachment to his mother and that Aristotle played the role of his instructor between 343 and 341 B.C. His father's name was Phillip and his mother's name was Olympus. He was born in Pella. Alexander rose to throne under doubtful conditions. Philip the founder of the Macedonian empire had left Alexander's mother and

married another man shortly before his death. It is told that Philip was murdered by one of his kinsmen. But whatever his role in his father's death, Alexander either killed or expelled his rivals to get his throne.



"My son, ask for thyself
another kingdom,
For that which I leave is too
small for thee."
King Philip's words to his 16
year old son, Alexander



Alexander was this kind of person; a restless soul, never satisfied with what he had, always longing for more. He had immense thirst for knowledge, amazed at the great sight of the world. His face showed zeal and strength. He was impulsive but had a fervent will to win. He wanted to expand his horizons and enjoy his life to the fullest. He was a very difficult person, a combination of light and shadows, impulsiveness and calm, self-centeredness and an intense need to be loved, accusable vices and unbelievable virtues.

During the historic span of 32 years, he conquered Persia, brought about a revolution in Greece, extended his power and influence up to the Indus valley and consequently was responsible in spreading western culture in the east. Alexander's conquests was a major part of western history but his entry into India for a short while brought dramatic changes here.

6.8 ALEXANDER'S CONQUESTS

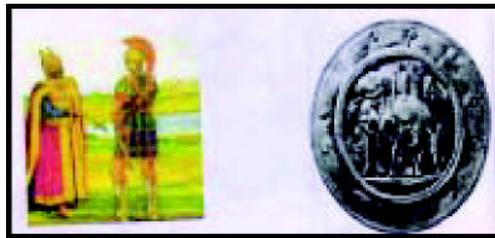
In the fourth century B.C. it is at last possible to give a more or less connected account of a short period in the history of India, or at least of the Indus valley, this we owe to the classical records of Alexander's Indian campaign.

All Greece was taught to fear and respect Alexander. He had imbibed the idea that Herculean blood was flowing through his veins and therefore he was fit to conquer the world. Thus having

brought his own house into order, he resumed his father's war against Persia. In 334 B.C., Alexander led 34,000 troops across the Hellespont into Asia Minor. By 333 he had conquered Syria. Three years later he defeated Darius III of Persia (at Gaugamela) and occupied the Persian capital of Persepolis.

6.9 21 YEAR OLD ALEXANDER INVADES INDIA

Having defeated the Persian ruler, he crossed the Hindukush mountains and strengthened his position in Kabul. He captured the fortress of Massaga and Aornos. Alexander moved through the dense jungles of Ohind. Then having crossed the Indus river he secured the help of Ambi, king of Taxila and marched to Jhelum. The greatest of Alexander's battles in India was against Porus, one of the most powerful Indian leaders, at the river Hydaspes in July 326 B.C.E.



Alexander's army crossed the heavily defended river in dramatic fashion during a violent thunderstorm to meet Porus' forces. The Pauravan king with an army of 30,000 soldiers, horses and elephants provided fierce resistance. But the Indians were defeated in a fierce battle, even though they fought with elephants, which the Macedonians had never before seen. Alexander captured Porus and, like the other local rulers he had defeated, allowed him to continue to govern his territory. When Alexander asked the Puruvan king to bow the latter answered "Act like a king" impressed with Ying Puru's efforts he gave him back his kingdom. Alexander even subdued an independent province and granted it to Porus as a gift.

Alexander had moved further. He wished to capture the Ganges valley, but was stopped by his troops. In 325 B.C. his troops threatened to mutiny. They demanded that Alexander allowed them to return to Macedonia. So with a heavy heart, Alexander retraced his steps to Jhelum and brought his army back to Babylon in 324 B.C. Apparently, he had planned to organize a new army, which would not force him to depend on the questionable loyalty of his Macedonian troops. On his way back to Babylon, he had to undergo terrible sufferings in the deserts of Baluchistan. He was severally wounded while storming one of the citadels of a tribe of Malavas. Alexander died of a fever in 323 B.C., not long after his return to Babylon and much before he was able to put his new plans into action.



6.10 IMPACT OF GREEK INVASION ON INDIA

Alexander is supposed to have invaded the Punjab in 326 B. C. Every schoolboy is taught and is expected to know, that he invaded India's Northwest.

But with regard to the effects of his invasion opinions vary from those who felt that there was no significant impact to those who opine that India was completely helenised. Nowhere did Sir William Jones, (1746-1794), who came to India as a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta and pioneered Sanskrit studies, find any mention of Greeks. British historian Vincent A. Smith, conservatively appraised the impact of Alexander's invasion as follows:

"The Greek influence never penetrated deeply in the Indus valley civilization. On the other hand, the West learned something from India in consequence of the communications opened up by Alexander's adventure. Our knowledge of the facts is so scanty and fragmentary that it is difficult to make any positive assertions with confidence... The notions of Indian philosophy and religion, which filtered into the Roman Empire, flowed through channels opened by Alexander.

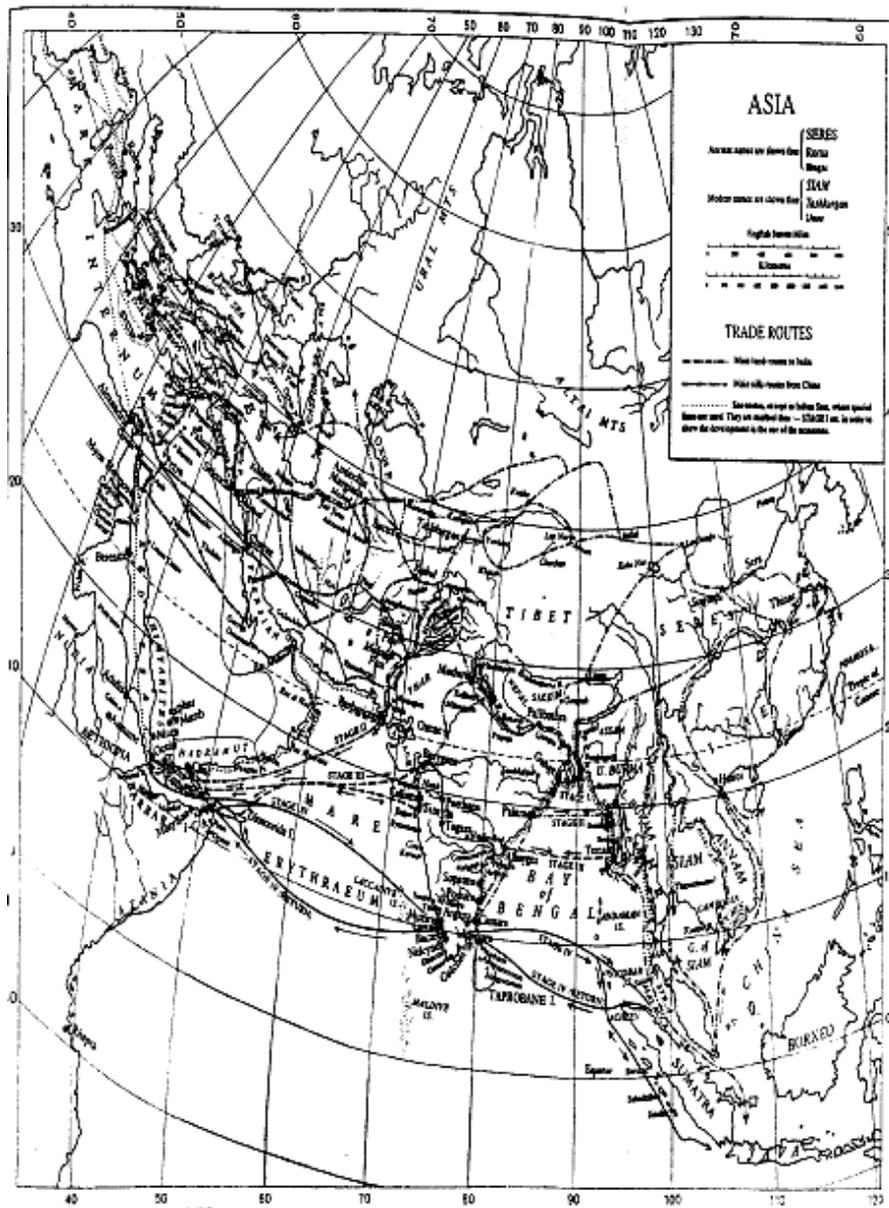
According to Indian historian Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Alexander's military achievement can hardly be called a great military success, as the only military achievement to his credit were the conquest of petty tribes and States by installments. He never approached even within a measurable distance of what may be called the citadel of Indian military strength, and the exertions he had to make against Poros, the ruler of a small district between the Jhelum and the Chenab, do not certainly favor the hypothesis that he would have found it an easy task to subdue the mighty Nanda empire."

H. G Rawlinson, refers to the invasion, " had no immediate effect, and passed off like countless other invasions, leaving the country almost undisturbed."

However there has been very little impact of the invasion the fact that there have been several indirect influences cannot be ignored.

They may be listed as follows:

- a) Communication between India and Greece increased after Alexander's campaign. Trade received an impetus. Alexander followed the Persian route to India and he further extended it to the west. Sea routes also were opened. Greek and oman settlements were seen in both the western and the eastern coast. Greek colonies were established in Afghanistan, Bactria and Northwest frontiers. There was a floating population as a result of the trade routes and trade.
- b) Indian philosophy, religion, astronomy, mathematics was influenced by the Greek invasion. There was Greek influence on Indian astrology and the method of preparing horoscopes. Indians borrowed the concept of the twelve signs of the Zodiac from the Greeks.



Route of Alexander's invasion on India

- c) Another positive influence can be seen in the field of art and literature. Greek sculpture influenced Indian sculpture, giving rise to the Gandhara School of art. The Kushana ruler Kanishka adopted Mahayanism and invited Bactrian artists to make the images of Buddha. This gave rise to a fine blending of Indian and Greek image sculpture.
- d) The Indians adopted the Greek idea of minting well-formed coins of particular shapes. Although the Greeks did not introduce coins here, their coins were designed as works of art. The Sakas, Parthians and others later copied them.

- e) In the political field its impact was felt in the emergence of powerful monarchies like Magaha. Centralized Greek system was absorbed and the smaller and weaker kingdoms were merged into the larger ones. Alexander's General Seleucus took control of many of the provinces of Macedonian empire. He also sent an ambassador called Megasthenese to reside in the court of Mauryas at Pataliputra. The ambassador wrote a detailed account of India, which was useful for the later Classical writers.

Check Your Progress:

1. Give a brief sketch of Persian invasion on India.

6.11 SUMMARY

The sixth century B. C. is described as one of the most remarkable landmark in the history of India. It witnessed a mental effervescence not only is India but also in Greece, Persia and other countries. The age saw the emergence of two masterminds – namely Gautama Buddha and Mahavira. A number of large and small kingdoms and Republics emerged in the northern parts of India. Thus the 6th century B.C. witnessed political cultural, religious changes which were to have far-reaching effects.

Thus, it is true that Alexander's expeditions did not have a direct impact on India but the fact cannot be denied that the invasion broke down the walls of the east and the west and opened up different lines of communication and brought about synthesis in art and architecture.

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6.12 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on the Mahajanapadas.
2. Review the achievements Alexander. Discuss the impact of Alexander's invasion on India.
3. Write short notes on the following
 - a) Rise of Magadha.
 - b) Political history of Mahajanapadas.
 - c) Effects of Persian invasion.
 - d) Alexander's Conquests.



INDIA IN 6TH CENTURY B.C. (JAINISM & BUDDHISM: TEACHING & IMPACT)

CONTENTS

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

Our objective is

- a) To understand the political conditions of the 6th C.B.C.
- b) To learn the influence of Jainism
- c) To study the impact of Jain literature.
- d) To understand the new religious influence.
- e) To learn the teachings and principles of Buddhism.
- f) To evaluate the impact of this religion.
- g) To understand the causes of its decline.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Jainism is essentially one of the oldest living religions of India. It is original, quite different and detached from other systems of Indian philosophy.

In ancient times Jainism was labelled in various ways. They were Saman tradition, the Nirgantha faith or Jina. Factually Jina means a conqueror. A person who has conquered desire, hatred, anger, greed and pride by one's own personal efforts becomes a Jina. He need not necessarily be a supernatural being or an embodiment of the all-powerful God but having conquered worldly passions, he may be viewed as God in Jainism. One more thing to be noted is that every human being has the potential to become a Jina.

Since Jainism believes that any common man is capable of achieving the goal to be a Jina, the very concept of God being the creator, protector and the destroyer of the universe is not accepted in Jainism. Parallel to this idea, it does not believe in the reincarnation of God, as a human being to destroy evil on the earth is also not recognized.

A great religion that originated in India in about 6th century B.C. is Buddhism. Ironically though Buddhism flourished overseas; in the land of its birth it was till recently non-existent. It received a lease of life after independence, when Dr. B.R. Ambedkar decided to embrace Buddhism. A significant section of the scheduled castes followed Dr. Ambedkar and they today constitute an overwhelming portion of the adherents of Buddhism in India today. But they do not form part of the two traditional sects of Buddhism viz., (Mahanayana and Hinayana) and are generally termed as Neo-Buddhists (Nava-Baudha). The history of Buddhism in India starts with that of its founder Gautama Buddha who lived in the 6th century B. C.

7.2 FOUNDER OF JAINISM

The founder of Jainism was Mahavira. According to tradition Jain religion was founded in hoary antiquity and was developed by a series of 24 teachers called as tirtankaras. About 2600 years ago Mahavira widely called Vardhaman (599 to 527 BC), the twenty fourth and the last Tirthankara of this period recharged the Jain philosophy previously advocated by his predecessor Parshva (950 to 850 BC) in India.

Mahavira was born to Siddartha, a wealthy merchant in a suburb of Vaishali called Kundagrama. Trishala his mother was a kshatriya lady related to the ruling families of Vaishali and Magadha.

Very little is known about his early life. He married a princess Yashoda and had a daughter by name Priyadarshana.

Being born in a wealthy family, he was taken by many worldly pleasures, comforts, and services at his command. But a sudden change came about in him after the death of his parents who ended their lives by voluntary starvation. According to Will Durant, his parents looked upon rebirth as a curse. To free themselves from the chain of rebirth they fasted unto death. Vardhamana was thirty years old then. This incident probably was a turning point in his life and he left his family and royal household, gave up his worldly possessions, and became a monk in search of a solution to get rid of pain, sorrow, and suffering from life.

Vardhamana wandered for next twelve years in concentrated silence and meditation to conquer his desires, feelings, and attachments. He found life in inanimate things also. Therefore he cautiously avoided harming other living beings including animals, birds, insects, and plants. He also went without food for long periods of time. He made deliberate attempts to remain composed and peaceful against all intolerable hardships. It is said that during this period, his spiritual powers fully developed and he realized perfect perception, perfect knowledge, perfect power, and total bliss. This realization is known as kevalyajnana or the perfect enlightenment. He was now a kevalin or an omniscient, a Jina or a conqueror and Mahavira or a great hero. The ultimate objective of his teaching is how one can attain total freedom from the cycle of birth, life, pain, misery, and death, and achieve the permanent blissful state of one's self. This is also known as liberation, nirvana, absolute freedom or Moksha. He spent the next thirty years of his life in preaching his new doctrine and establishing a religious community. He roamed as a naked ascetic and travelled in several parts of eastern India.

In recapitulating, the Jainas believe that Mahavira was not the founder of a new religious system. Jainism existed before Lord Mahavira, and his teachings were based on those of his predecessors. Thus Mahavira was more of a reformer and propagator of an existing religious order than the founder of a new faith. He followed the well-established creed of his predecessor Tirthankar. However, he did reorganize the philosophical tenets and codes of conduct to correspond to his time.

At the age of 72, in the year 527 B. C, Lord Mahavira attained nirvana (death) at Pava in south Bihar and his purified soul left his body and achieved complete liberation. He became a Siddha, a pure consciousness, a liberated soul, living forever in a state of complete bliss. On the night of his nirvana, people celebrated the Festival of Lights (Dipavali) in his honor. This is the last day of the Hindu and Jain calendar year.

7.3 JAIN PHILOSOPHY

First and foremost Jainism presumes that the universe is without a beginning or an end, being endless and eternal. There exist six fundamental bodies in the universe, which are eternal but constantly undergo innumerable changes. But nothing is lost or destroyed while changes take place. Everything is recycled into another form. The Six Universal Substances or bodies are as follows:

Soul or Consciousness	Jiva	Living body
Matter	Pudgal	Nonliving body
Medium of motion	Dharma	Nonliving body
Medium of rest	Adharma	Nonliving body
Space	Akasa	Nonliving body
Time	Kal or Samay	Nonliving body

The wheel of time incessantly revolves like a pendulum. Mahavira believed that man is the architect of his own destiny. He further explained that every living being (soul) due to its ignorance is in bondage of karmic tiny parts known as karma. Karma is continuously mounts up by our actions of body, mind and speech. Under the influence of karma, the soul is habituated to hunt for pleasure in materialistic things and possessions. This itself becomes the deep-rooted cause of fierce thoughts, actions, anger, hatred, greed, and such other vices. The result is further amassing of karma.

It is possible to get rid of karma and attain freedom from bonds by following the threefold path of right belief (samyak-darshan), right knowledge (samyak-jnan), and right conduct (samyak-charitra). Proper knowledge of the six universal substances (six Dravya) and the nine fundamental truths (nine Tattva) is called right knowledge and true faith in that knowledge is called right belief. The right conduct includes nonviolence, self-purification, kindness, self-punishment, strictness, and meditation. The result of the three fold path will be that souls will be released from transmigration and finally reach the heavenly abode (siddha sila).

7.4 PRINCIPLES OF JAINISM

There are nine tattvas, which form the most important subject of Jain philosophy.

Without the proper knowledge of these tattvas, a person cannot progress spiritually. Mahavira rejected the authority of the Vedas and sacrificial rites and the existence of God. The universe functions through the interaction of the living souls.

The Nine Principles (Tattvas) are:

Jiva	Soul or living being (Consciousness)
Ajiva	Non-living substances
Asrava	Cause of the invasion of karma
Bandha	Bondage of karma
Punya	Virtue or righteousness
Papa	Sin
Samvara	Stoppage of the influx of karma
Nirjara	Exhaustion of the accumulated karma
Moksha	Complete liberation from karma

7.5 TEACHINGS OF MAHAVIRA

The supreme ideal of the Jain religion is non violence (Ahimsa), equal kindness, and reverence for all forms of life in speech, thought, and action. "Ahimsa Parmo Dharm" (Non-violence is the supreme religion). Ahimsa is a principle that Jains teach and practice not only towards living things but also towards all nature. Jain texts pronounce- Do not harm, exploit, oppress, enslave, insult, torment, torture, or kill any living being. Ahimsa refers not only to noticeable physical acts of violence but to violence in the hearts and minds of human beings. In a constructive sense ahimsa means universal friendliness (maitri), universal forgiveness (kshama) and universal fearlessness (abhaya).

Mahavira added the vow of Brahmacharya. He also lay emphasis on discarding all external things including garments if freedom from bonding was to be attained. It lay down five great vows. They are as follows:

Non violence (Ahimsa)	Not to cause harm to any living beings
Truthfulness (Satya)	To speak truth
Non-stealing (Asteya)	Not stealing other's belongings.
Chastity (Brahmacharya)	Not to indulge in sensual pleasure
Non-possession/Non-attachment (Aparigraha)	Detachment from people, and material things or limiting one's possessions

These vows cannot be fully followed without the acceptance of a philosophy of non-absolutism (Anekantvad) and the theory of relativity (Syadvad). Monks and nuns follow these vows strictly and wholly, while the common people follow the vows according to their lifestyles.

Sallekhana: (The Holy Death)

Jainism is unique in allowing the very spiritually advanced person to gradually terminate his life by certain practices (principally fasting) under specified circumstances and under the supervision of Acharya. The point is to meet death in a state of complete awareness with all of one's faculties functioning properly. Jainism does not advocate suicide (assisted suicide) mercy killing, or removal of life-supporting devices.

Thus, the principles of Jainism if properly understood in their right perspective and faithfully adhered to, will bring contentment and inner happiness and joy in the present life. This will elevate the soul in future reincarnations to a higher spiritual level, ultimately achieving Perfect Enlightenment, reaching its final destination of Eternal Bliss, ending all cycles of birth and death.

7.6 DEVELOPMENT OF MAJOR SECTS

Mahavira categorized his supporters, into a four-fold ranks. They were monks (Sadhu), nuns (Sadhvi), laymen (Shravak), and laywomen (Shravika). This order is known as Jain Sangh. Broadly speaking, a senior and learned Shramana (sadhu and sadhvi) lead the Jain Sangha. Their duty was to impart religious instruction to followers. Laypersons or followers (shravak and Shravika) were known as upasakas and were supposed to take care of their livelihood in the righteous manner.

As time passed Jainism became complex and eventually two major sects were established. They were the Digambaras and the Shwetambaras. In the Digambar sect monks wear no clothes, while the Shwetambar monks wear white clothes. They are relatively more liberal and progressive. The fundamental views of both sects are identical on ethics and philosophy.

Each major sect has many sub-sects. They include idol and non-idol worshipping sects. Later generations almost placed Lord Mahavira and other Tirthankars on the throne of Hindu deities. The Digambaras believed that women couldn't achieve salvation while the Shwetambaras held just a contradictory view.

Jainism advocates six essential rites to be executed by its followers:

Six essential rites of Digambar Institution

Devapuja	Prayer to God
Gurupasti	Devotion and service to ascetics
Swadhyay	Studying of Scriptures
Sayam	Self restraint
Tap	Penance
Dana	Charity

Six vital rites of Swetambar Institution:

Samayik (Meditation)	To remain calm and undisturbed for 48 minutes.
Praying of Tirthankars	To pray and appreciate the qualities of the twenty four Tirthankars.
Vandana	To respect Ascetics
Pratikraman	To repent and confess past bad thoughts and deeds.
Kayotsarg	Non-attachments to the body
Pratyakhan or Pachchhakhan	Religious vows renouncing certain activities for some time to discipline ones self

7.7 JAIN LITERATURE

Lord Mahavira's sermons were orally compiled into several texts (scriptures) by his disciples. These scriptures are known as Jain agama or agama Sutras.

The agama Sutras teach respect for all forms of life, strict codes of vegetarianism, asceticism, non violence, and opposition to war. The scriptures were not recorded in any type but were learnt by heart by ascetics and orally passed on to future generations of ascetics.

In the course of time, many of the Agam Sutras were forgotten, some were custom-made, and additional Sutras were written. About one thousand years after Lord Mahavira's nirvana (death) the remembered Agwn Sutras were written on leafy papers known as tadpatris. It is also an accepted fact that the original doctrine taught by Mahavira contained in fourteen old texts styled as purvas. Towards the end of the fourth century a famine broke out in South Bihar. This

resulted in an important sect under the leadership of Badrabahu leaving the place to migrate to Mysore. Those who remained behind held a council to breathe life into the knowledge of Jain texts. As a result, a compilation of the twelve angas was complete. Thus there were 12 angas, 12 upangas, 10 painnas, 7 chayya suttas, 4 mulla suttas, 1 nandi sutta and 1 anogadara. All these came to be regarded as the important tenets of Jain religion.

Swetambars accepted the Sutras as a valid version of Lord Mahavira's teachings. But Digambars did not accept them as authentic. Digambars follow two main texts called Shatkhand Agam and Kasay Pahud and four Anuyogs, which consist of about twenty texts put in writing by Acharyas (teachers) from about 100 to 800 AD.

In the south the Jains preached in vernaculars. A Jain monk Tiruvallavar wrote a treatise in Tamil called Tirukkural. Tiruttakata Devar, a Jain poet, named Jivika chintamani, composed another great epic. Similarly, Jains also contributed to Kannada and Telugu literature and enriched the languages of south India.

7.8 IMPORTANCE OF SYMBOLS IN JAINISM

The Jain symbol consists of a digit of the Moon, three dots, the Swastika or Om, the palm of a hand with the wheel (Chakra) inset, and an outline figure which includes all symbols.

The Swastika signifies the cycles of births and deaths due to karma, in any of the four forms; heaven, human, tiryanch (animals, birds, and plants), and hell of the worldly (non-liberated) souls. It tells that one should follow the right path and be free from suffering.

The meaning of the Palm of the hand is assurance namely 'do not be afraid', It indicates persons suffering due to karmic bondage need not be saddened and there are ways to come out of it.

The Wheel of Dharma (Chakra) symbolizes the religion advocated by the 24 Tirthankaras.

The outline figure stands for the Jain explanation of the shape of the universe, similar to a person standing with feet apart and arms resting on both hips.

By and large symbol signifies that the living beings of the three worlds suffer from the unhappiness of Transmigratory life. They can follow the path of religion shown by the Tirthankaras. Thus they can bring about goodness for themselves and obtain perfection.

7.9 SPREAD OF JAINISM

Jainism took roots in Magadha and spread to the Gangetic plains, Malwa, Andhra, Gujarat, Tamil territories as a result of the royal patronage. The Mauryas, the Satavahanas, the Shakas, the Chalukyas, the Kadambas, the Gujars, were some of the important dynasties that extended their generous patronage to Jainism. Abhaykumar, son of king Bimbisara of Maurya dynasty was the follower of Mahavira. King Kharavela of Kalinga was patronised Jainism. Bhadrabahu, one of the heads of Jain church migrated to Mysore and was responsible for the establishment of Jainism there. Nevertheless it must be admitted that Jainism did not attract the masses as it should have and centers were established at various places for its spread.

Check Your Progress:

1. Give an account of the life and teachings of Vardhamana Mahavira.

7.10 LIFE STORY OF BUDDHA

On the full moon day of May, in the year 623 B.C., a noble prince destined to be the greatest religious teacher of the world and the founder of Buddhism was born in the Lumbini Park at Kapilavasthu, on the Indian borders of present Nepal. His father was King Suddhodatta of the aristocratic Sakya clan and his mother was Queen Maha Maya. His original name was Siddhartha (meaning one who has accomplished). The beloved queen died seven days after his birth. Her younger sister, Maha Pajapati Gotami, who was married to the King, adopted the child and therefore he was called Gautama.

There is an interesting legend about Gautama turning from a happy go lucky prince to a sage and a universal teacher. An astrologer seems to have foretold his father, the king, that young Gautama would either grow up to be a powerful king, or would give up the throne and luxury and renounce the world the day he happened to face any of the sorrows of life. Keen as King Suddhodhana was to see Gautama to be a successful ruler, he built an exclusive palace for his dear son from where he could set his eyes on none of the world's miseries. Even when Gautama went out for stroll or ride, all unpleasant things were kept far away so as to

stop Gautama's mind from being troubled. He was married at the age of sixteen to Yasodhara. Some days after marriage a son was born to them who was named Rahul.

7.11 THE PROPHECY OF BUDDHA

But the prophesy of Gautama becoming an universal teacher was predestined. He was always inquisitive to know what lay beyond the tall fence of his palace. At the age of 29, Gautama managed to slip out unnoticed from the palace. Riding through the streets of the city he saw for the first time in his life, a lame person, a sick person, a dead body and an ascetic.

The impact of the dark side of life made him restless. He set thinking for hours upon the cause of sufferings and sorrow. Consequently, Gautama began overlooking the business of the State, which his father had assigned to him.

Married life also could not keep him bound to worldly affairs. He became aware of the hollowness of all worldly pleasures. Gautama decided to forsake all luxuries and family life and he sneaked out of his palace accompanied by his servant Chandaka. After moving out of the city, Gautama cut off his hair, removed his royal ornaments and jewels, his rich garments and sandals and gave them to Chandaka and asked him to return to the palace with the news of his (Gautama's) departure.

7.12 GAUTAMA BECOMES THE BUDDHA

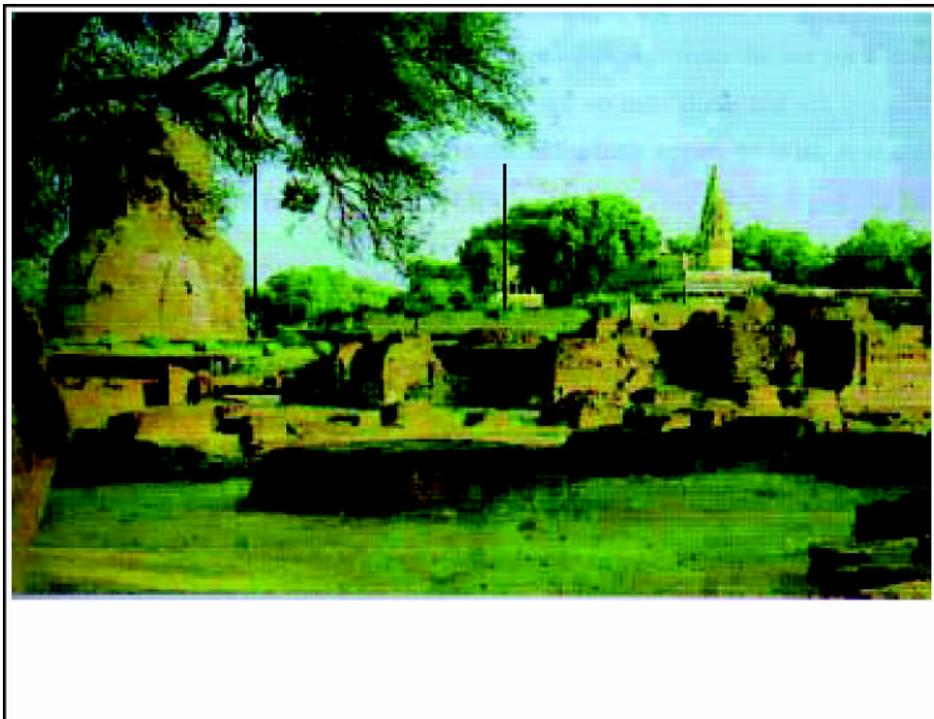
Thus Gautama set out on his search for the cause of sufferings (Klesha). In ancient India, great importance was attached to rites, ceremonies, penances and sacrifices. It was popularly believed that no Deliverance could be gained unless one leads a life of strict asceticism. Accordingly, for six long years the ascetic Gautama made a super-human struggle to practice all forms of the severest austerity. He took to fasting. But fasting and logic practices bore no fruit and his knowledge of truth remained as distant as before. His delicate body was reduced to almost a skeleton. The more he tormented his body the farther his goal receded from him. Realizing that this was not the way to arrive at the truth, he gave up the austerities. Horrified at their Master's escapist policy, the five disciples who had accompanied him left him. But unafraid, Gautama continued his hunt for the cause of sufferings.

Realizing that the path of asceticism was not leading him to his goal, he decided to quietly sit under a fig tree (Mahabodhi tree) at Gaya in Bihar. He decided not get up unless he found answers to his questions. His enlightenment is said to have come suddenly. While

meditating he suddenly saw the light. He discovered the true reality of all happenings and it was all exceedingly simple for him - viz. all pain is caused - by desire, and therefore peace comes when one ceases to crave for anything. Freedom from all desires was said to release a person from the cycle of re-birth and lead to his salvation (Nirvana). Thus he came to be known as the Buddha, which means the Enlightened one.

Having seen the light, Gautama started preaching to people and for this he travelled from place to place. The Buddha traveled to Saranath, in Northern India where he began to offer his teachings based on his experience, to a small group at a place called Deer park. He is said to have delivered his first sermon (Isipatana) setting in motion, the wheel of law (Dharma-chakra or Dharmachakra in Pali).

Later, he spent the remaining 45 years of his life in preaching his new doctrine mainly in Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh. He travelled bare-foot, clean-headed, with nothing more on his self than his saffron robe, walking stick and begging bowl. As his teachings impressed people his followers grew. Among his early converts were Sariputta, Mogallana and Ananda. He even received the patronage of rich traders like Anathapindika (i.e. feeder of poor) and powerful kings of the age like Ajatashatru of Magadha. He died at the age of 80 in the year 483 BC. His death is known as Mahaparinirvana.



**Sarnath This place is also known as Isipatana or "Deer Park"
Situated 5 Kms north of Varanasi,
here the Buddha is said to have preached his first sermon.**

7.13 PHILOSOPHY OF BUDDHISM

This Philosophy of Buddhism is based on three guiding principles. They are

The Buddha
The Dhamma
The Sangha

Buddha was silent about the existence or non-existence of **God**. He did not deny the existence of God. A disciple once asked Buddha whether God exists. He refused to reply. When pressed, he said that if you are suffering, from a stomach ache would you concentrate on relieving the pain or studying the prescription of the physician. "It is not my business or yours to find out whether there is God. Our business is to remove the sufferings of the world". Buddhism provided Dhamma or the "Impersonal law" in place of God.

Dhamma is the teachings of **Buddha Dharma** meaning or the teachings of the awakened one. These teachings can best be followed through an organization which Buddha himself devised namely the **Sangha** or the monastery.

Buddhism did not believe in the real existence of the world either. The ignorant people feel that it exists. For example waves are not different from the sea yet a common man differentiates them. Just the same way there are no individuals and are not different from the world. For the unenlightened, different individuals appear to exist. It is only the spiritually advanced ones who can grasp the truth.

Similarly nirvana cannot be described in limited words. Nirvana' literally means "blowing out" or "extinction". According to Buddhism, this is the ultimate goal of life and can be described in various words. It is a cessation of all sorrows, which can be achieved by removing desire by following the Eight Fold Path. It is only when a man lives a good life, does good, thinks good, without expecting any reward he will free himself from the bondage of self and his soul will escape into a state of nirvana. A.L. Basham writes, ' In nirvana all idea of an individual personality or ego ceases to exist, and there is nothing to be reborn.

7.14 TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA

7.14 a) Four Noble Truths:

The primary teachings of Buddha may be summed up in what the Buddhists call the 'Four Noble Truths' or 'Char Arya

Sattya' -

- 1) There is suffering and misery in life.
- 2) The cause of this suffering and misery is desire.
- 3) Suffering and misery can be removed by removing desire.
- 4) Desire can be removed by following the Eight Fold Path.

**7.14. b) Eight Fold Parth :**

1. **Right view** is the true understanding of the four noble truths.
2. **Right aspiration** is the true desire to free oneself from attachment, ignorance, and hatefulness.
These two are referred to as **prajna**, or wisdom.
3. **Right speech** involves refraining from lying, gossiping, or hurtful talk.
4. **Right action** involves abstaining from hurtful behaviors, such as killing, stealing, and careless sex.
5. **Right livelihood** means making your living in such a way as to avoid dishonesty and hurting others, including animals.
The above three paths are referred to as **sheela**, or morality.
6. **Right effort** Bad qualities should be abandoned and prevented from arising. Good qualities should be carried out and raised.
7. **Right mindfulness** is the focusing one's body, mind, thoughts, and awareness in such a way as to overcome passion, hatred, and ignorance.
8. **Right concentration** is meditating in such a way as to progressively realize a true understanding of imperfection and impermanence.

The last three are known as **samadhi**, or meditation.

Split into Two Sects - Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) and Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle)

During the time of Kanishka, the religion had vertically split up into two schools. They were the Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) school or the northern school of Buddhism and the Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) school stuck to the original character of Buddhism.



Buddha – The Great Master This statue dates back to the 1st Century B.C.E. It was sculpted during the reign of the Kushana Emperor Kanishka.

Hinayana was simple and regarded the salvation of an individual as its goal and prescribed good deeds as the only way to salvation. Mahayana advocated elaborate rituals and ceremonies and relied more on the devotion and worship of Buddha. Nagarjuna, contemporary of Kanishka was a great exponent of the Mahayana.

7.15 BUDDHIST TEXTS

Buddhist Scriptures can be divided into Pali and Sanskrit Literature

Pali Literature:

The early Buddhist canon is traditionally referred to as the "Three Baskets" (tripitaka; Pali: lipitaka). The Hinayana sect of Buddhism dominated the Pali literature.

Tri Pitaka: It is supposed to be the earliest recorded Buddhist literature, which was written in the 1st Century B.C.

The TRI-PITAKA or Three Baskets of law is composed of 3 books:

- 1. Vinaya Pitaka:** "Rules of Conduct": This is a book of discipline and mainly deals with rules of the order.

2. **Sutta Pitaka:** It is a collection of sermons and discourses of Gautama Buddha and the incidents in his life. It is the most important Pitaka.

The Sutra (Pali : Sutta) part of the Pali canon is divided into five "groupings" (nikaya): (1) the long (digha) discourses. (2) the medium length (majjhima) discourses; (3) the grouped (samyutta) discourses, (4) the enumerated (anguttara) discourses, which are arranged according to the enumerations of their topics; and (5) the minor (khuddaka) discourses. It includes stories of the Buddha's former births (Jataka), which report how he gradually perfected the high qualities of a Buddha.

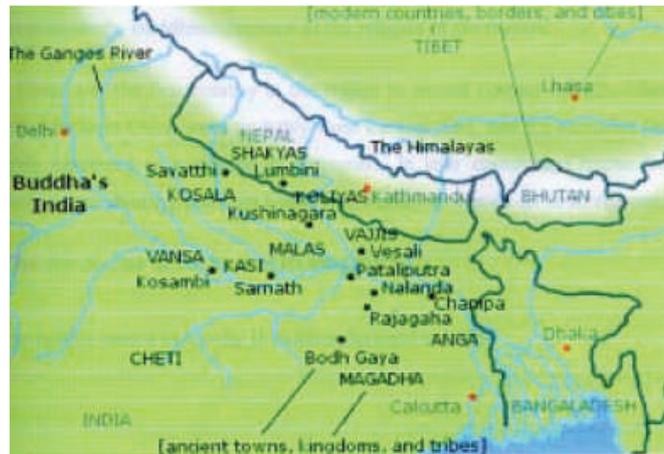
3. **Abhidhamma:** This third basket includes Meta physical principles and is known as Buddhist meta physicals. It is an analytical and logical explanation of the first two pitakas. It contains analysis and exposition of Buddhist doctrine. The Abhidharma (Pali: abhidhamma) section includes seven essays, which organize the doctrines of particular classes of Buddha's discourses. Everything in the world—people, animals, plants, inanimate objects—consists of impermanent groupings of dharmas. Thus nothing possesses an underlying soul or essence. The collections of dharmas are changing in every moment, and so all of reality is viewed as a vast interconnected network of change and interlinking causes and conditions.

Sanskrit Literature :

The Mahayana preferred Sanskrit literature. Much of the original Sanskrit literature has been lost. Some was translated into other languages like Chinese and are now being retranslated into Sanskrit.

1. **Maha vastu:** Mahavastu is the most famous work in Sanskrit which has been restored from its Chinese translation. It consists of voluminous collection of legendary stories.
2. **Lalitavistara :** Lalitavistara is one of the holiest of the Sanskrit literature. It belongs to the first century. It contains the miracles, which the superstitious people have ascribed to Buddha.

7.16 SPREAD OF BUDDHISM



During the third century B.C. the spread of Buddhism was promoted by Ashoka (270-232). He began to preach Buddha's teachings through the edicts inscribed on stone pillars placed throughout his kingdom.

His advocacy of Buddhism was one of the primary reasons for the spread of the tradition into Southeast Asia. He sent missionaries all over the Indian sub-continent, and to Sri Lanka, Burma, and other neighboring areas. His son Mahinda, who traveled to Sri Lanka along with four other monks, led one of the most successful of the missions he sponsored.

Although the growth of Buddhism began to gradually decline it saw the flowering again during Harsha's time around the 7th century A.D. He extended many favours to the religion. During his reign the fifth religious council was held at Prayaga (Allahabad).

The monks who controlled the monastic universities like the one at Nalanda kept its tradition alive. These universities were highly respected as seats of learning and attracted students from abroad. Fa Hien, Huien Tsiang and I-Tsing who came from China were said to have studied at Nalanda and other centres of Buddhist learning. But from the 5th century onwards, Buddhism declined as the religion of the masses.

China was the first country in the region to record contact with Buddhism. The earliest Buddhists in China were probably from Central Asia, and for centuries Buddhism was widely perceived as a religion of foreigners. In later centuries, Chinese Buddhism developed its own identity, and from China Buddhism was passed on to Korea and Japan.

7.17 CAUSES FOR THE DECLINE IN THE LAND OF ITS OWN BIRTH

There are various causes as to why Buddhism declined in India

- a) Buddhist sanghas became centers of corruption. Buddhist monks and nuns got involved in petty quarrels and obviously did not inspire the confidence of the people.
- b) Under the Guptas, Hinduism saw its revival. Moreover Mahayana brought Buddhism nearer to Hinduism and this resulted in Buddhism getting absorbed in Hinduism.
- c) Muslim invasions gave severe blow to Buddhism. Decline of intellectual activity and the development of tantrik or magic form of Buddhism also was responsible for its decline.

Check Your Progress:

1. Give a brief Sketch of Gautama Buddha's life and teachings.

7.18 SUMMARY

Thus, People from all walks of life, rich and poor, kings and commoners, men and women, princes and priests, touchable and untouchable embraced it. Jainism was opposed to caste system. The most significant contribution of Jainism in the social field was the establishment of social equality among the four classes namely Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. Another important thing to be noted is that women were attracted to Jainism. Mahavira proclaimed that in the matters of spiritual progress, both men and women are on an equal footing. Therefore many women followed Mahavira's path and renounced the world in search of ultimate truth and happiness.

In this day and age, there are about six to eight million Jains that live almost exclusively in India. About 100,000 Jains live in North America and other countries.

In the mid 20th Century, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who was one of the architects of India's Constitution, gave Buddhism a fresh life by embracing it. A large number of people who were denied equal rights in the Hindu caste hierarchy also embraced Buddhism. Today an overwhelming proportion of Buddhists in India are these recent converts who term themselves as Nava-Baudha or Neo-Buddhists. A comparatively recent event of significance was the 6th religious council held at Rangoon in 1954 which came 1300 years after the 5th council held at, Prayaga in 643 C.E. in the reign of Harsha Vardhana. The Rangoon council was also the first one to be held outside India.

Buddhism is becoming increasingly popular in Western countries, and a number of prominent Buddhist teachers have established successful centers in Europe and North America.

Thus in Buddhism, India gave birth to a major worldwide religion. Buddhism was the world's first missionary religion and won its success through missionary activity. The ancient Buddhist monks who carried the Master's message of peace, love and universal brotherhood were pioneers in such a mission in Human history.

And whatever its defects, it has unquestionably done much to benefit the human race by introducing and bringing about a higher standard of conduct in life. One is inclined to bow before the Buddha, not in honor to a deity but in gratitude to a finer craftsman in the art of living.



7.19 QUESTIONS

1. Trace the development of Jainism. Bring out the contribution of Jainism to Indian culture.
2. Narrate the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha. Show the cause of the decline of Buddhism in the country of its our birth.
3. Short Notes :
 - a) Teachings of Gautama Buddha.
 - b) Causes for the decline of Buddhism.



MAURYAN AND POST MAURYAN PERIOD (322 BC - 320 AD) CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA, ASHOKA AND MAURYAN ADMINISTRATION

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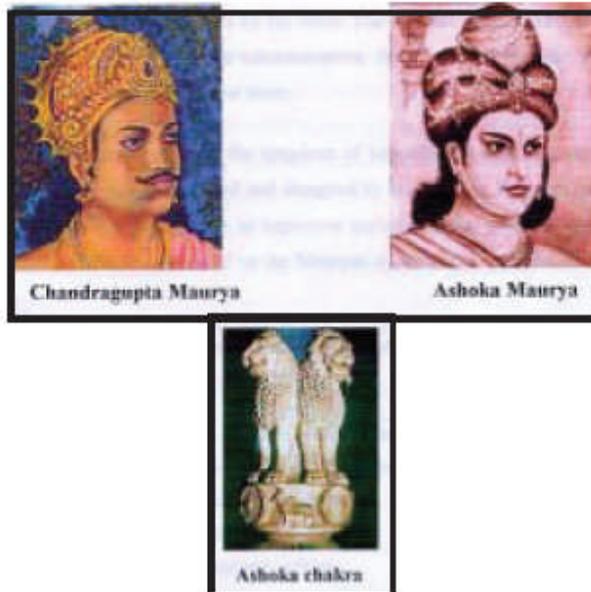
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8.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the chapter is:

- To study the rise of the Mauryan dynasty as a single paramount power.
- To study the achievements of Chandragupta Maurya as the founder of the dynasty.
- To look into the administration, society and economy during this time.
- To study the achievements of Ashoka
- To learner the Spread of Buddhism in and outside India
- To trace the causes of its decline.
- To look into the administration of the Mauryan dynasty.

- To study the society and economy of the times.



THE AGE OF THE MAURYS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

After ruling for about twenty-five years, Chandragupta left his throne to his son Bindusara and became a Jain ascetic. In the year 298 BC Bindusara became the next king of Mauryan Empire. It is stated that Chanakya continued to work as Bindusara's minister.

Mauryan administration was highly centralized. Kautilya the author of Arthashastra had held the royal decree above the law. He also upheld nyaya (Reason) to dharma (Text). The Arthashastra talks about the principles of governance and lays down rules of administration. It also discusses in detail the role of the king, his duties, rate of taxation, use of spying, and laws for governing the society.

Chandragupta carved out an empire of which he was the architect. But he was not an absolute autocrat. The administration was divided into central government, provincial government municipal government.

The Central government consisted of the king who exercised legislative, judicial and executive powers. His powers were extensive. The ruler himself made appointments to the most important offices. The State maintained a huge standing army. The king himself led the army.

The empire was divided into administrative provinces or districts or zones, each of which had a hierarchy of officials. There was a purohita who was a Brahmin to keep an effective check on the absolute powers of the king, Sachivas or Amatyas who were close advisers to the king, the Mantrins or the council of ministers to assist him in military, judicial and administrative duties, the Adhyakshas or superintendents employed in various departments of the state as in-charges.

The viceroys were usually of royal blood, Rajukas or subordinate officers, Yuktas were in charge of revenue, pradeshikas or revenue collectors, Purushas, Vachambikas collected taxes from those who reared cattle, Dharmamahamantras were entrusted with the task of bringing about spiritual welfare of the people, spies acted as secret reporters to the king. The provinces were further sub-divided into Vishayas or Pradeshas. Gramikas or villages were the basic units of administration. The top most officers from these districts or zones, directly reported to the Mauryan ruler. These officials were responsible for collecting taxes, maintaining army, completing irrigational projects, and maintaining law and order.

Taxes were heavy and were collected from various sources. Taxation system was quite burdensome. The people moaned under demanding taxes. The main source of revenue was land revenue. They were the bhaga and bali. The bhaga was the king's share that was 1/6th or 1/4th or 1/8th varying from time to time and bali was the land tribute. There were sales taxes, excise taxes, forest taxes, fines and such others. The only people who did not pay taxes were Brahmins, Buddhist, and Jain monks.

8.2 ORIGIN

The kingdom of Magadha became prominent among the Janapadas from 6th century onwards. Under the able rule of Bimbisara (542 B.C.- 493 B.C.) and his son Ajatshatru (493 B.C.- 461 B.C.), Magadha became strong but soon weakened after the death of Udayan (460 B.C.-444 B.C.) and was conquered by the Shishunaga dynasty in 413 B. C.

Within a span of fifty years, it was replaced by the Nanda dynasty. In the 4th century B. C. the Nanda rulers ruled Magadha, At that time, it was the most powerful state of the northern part of India. The strength of the Nanda kingdom rested on the taxes levied on the farmers and traders by the state. The Nandas maintained a huge army. But as the Nandas were not efficient administrators, they were not popular, and it was not hard for the Mauryas to overthrow them.

The Mauryas took over the kingdom of Magadha by defeating the Nandas. The fall of the Nandas was engineered and designed by one of their Brahmin ministers whose name was Chanakya. Thus began an important period in India, when several regions were drawn together into an empire led by the Mauryan dynasty. (322-185 BC).

8.3 SOURCES

The dawn of the Mauryan dynasty marks the way from darkness to light for the historians because Chronology becomes more definite and almost precise. The history of the Mauryas is based on the study of the

1. Brahminical, Buddhist and Jain literature.
2. The Arthashastra, a Political treatise by Kautilya.
3. Indika, accounts of Megasthenese, the Greek ambassador.
4. The Inscriptions of Ashoka.
5. Other contemporary writings.

The name Maurya probably is a **sanskrit** word Mayura. The Mauryas emblem Mayura seen in their coinage and monuments provides further evidence to it. The **Jain** tradition describes Chandragupta Maurya as a grandson of the chief of village of Peacock tamers. The Brahminical and Buddhist sources in the **Puranas** and **Mahavamsa** respectively throw light on the downfall of the last king Dhanananda in the hands of Chandragupta Maurya. With the discovery of the book on **Kautilya's Arthashastra** (also called Dandaniti) by Shamasastri in 1909, the Maurya chronology became very definite though the dates are still controversial. This important source has fifteen books and a hundred and eighty chapters with 6000 slokas. Another source of information although not found in its original form has proved to be a significant source in the reconstruction of history of the Mauryas is the **Indika** of Megasthenese. Megasthenese has described about the splendor of the palaces, military system, administration of Pataliputra, social classes and the caste system. However his accounts have been subject to criticism on the base that he was unaware of Indian languages and his stay in India was not enough for him to give such detailed accounts on the conditions that prevailed. Another source of information for the Mauryan period is the **Mudrarakshasa**. This gives us clear details of the revolution by

which Chandragupta Maurya overthrew the Nandas. The drama also presents details about the rivals of Chandragupta who were slayed one after the other. The **Inscriptions** of Ashoka have been the most authentic sources available in providing information of the Mauryan dynasty. Its history is uncovered in the two minor rock edicts, fourteen major rock edicts, seven pillar edicts, two commemorative pillar inscriptions, three cave inscriptions.

8.4 CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA, THE FOUNDER : (322 BC- 298 BC)

The Mauryan Empire was established under the leadership of Chandragupta Maurya. He can be considered as the first Indian ruler who built an empire with natural boundaries. He laid the foundation of a strong system of government, which remained long despite several foreign invasions. He gave India a well organized and disciplined administration.

Early rise to power:

The rise of Chandragupta Maurya to power is controversial.

According to **Buddhist** sources, Chandragupta's mother took shelter at pataliputra after the death of his father. His father was the Chief of a village. The child was handed over for safety with a cowherd. The cowherd sold the child to hunter. The boy was always fond of playing king's role while playing with his companions. One day Chanakya was passing by when he was impressed by the boy's personality Chanakya took the boy to Taxila and educated him.

About the rise of Chandragupta, Justin states "India after the death of Alexander had shaken, as it were, the Yoke of servitude from its neck and put his governors to death. The author of this liberation was Sandrocottus. This man was of humble origin but was stimulated to aspire to regal power by super natural encouragement."

The **Mudrarakshasa** describes Chandragupta as maurya putra.

Another source, namely **Vishnu Purana** states that Chandragupta was the son of Nanda whose wife's name was Mura. Mura according to this source, was the daughter of a Sudra king Vrishlamaja.

But the **Mudrarakshasa** deny that the terms `vrishala' as terms of dishonour. In fact, the term has been used to mean 'one who is vrisha among the kings on the best among the kings'.

According to the **Jain** tradition, Chandragupta is described as the son of a barber. It also states him as the son of chief of peacock-tamers.

However it is generally accept that during this time Chanakya was the in service of the Nandas. He was in charge of the Dhanasala, a charity school run by the Dhana Nanda. The manners and features of Chanakya made Dhana Nanda to dismiss Chanakya and the latter took vow to destroy the Nandas. In 322 B.C. he took the help of Chandragupta after training him in the art of warfare and finally succeeded in capturing Magadha after overthrowing Nandas. Thus Chanakya who is also known as the Indian Machiavelli established the Mauryan Empire by using Chandragupta.

Extent of empire:

After the over throw of Nandas, Chandragupta Maurya and chanakya extended the Mauryan Empire far and wide. The dominions of Chandraguptaa included parts of Afghanistan, the ancient Ariana, the Punjab, parts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Kathaiwar. At the time of his death, he was the ruler of India situated to the north of Narbada including Afghanistan.

During his reign, there was Greek invasion under the leadership of Alexander. After the death of Alexander in Babylon (323 BC), India could not be held together. This prompted India to have political unity. It is the same time, Chandragupta Maurya collected recruits from different places and organized them into a powerful army with which he played an important part in the liberation of India from the Greek rule. On the other hand, the ambitious Selucus Nicator, the Greek Viceroy of Alexander, had crossed Indus with the ambition to recover the lost conquests of Alexander. Chandragupta Maurya mutilated his expedition and Selucus entered a treaty with Chandragupta Maurya.

The most important result of this treaty was that Chandragupta's fame spread far and wide and his empire was recognized as a great power in the western countries. Punjab, Kabul, Kandahar, Gandhar and part of Herat and Baluchistan were absorbed into the Mauryan territory through the treaty. Chandragupta Maurya eventually pushed his conquests to as far as Saurashtra in the west and Deccan in the south. Chandragupta thus united the whole of northern India and parts of Deccan under Mauryan rule.

During the rule of Chandragupta Maurya, trade flourished, agriculture was regulated, and weights and measures were standardized. Money first came into use. Taxation, sanitation and famine relief became the concerns of the State.

After ruling for about 25 years, he became a Jain ascetic and left his throne to his son Bindusara (296 bc-273 bc). He adopted Jainism, renounced the worldly affairs, became disciple of Jain Muni Bhadrabahu Swami and followed him to South India (Kamataka). He

spent his last days, (298 B.C.) in the hill of south India that is called after him as Chandragiri, where the Gangas carved the tallest statue of Gomateshwara later during their rule.

V. A. Smith rightly comments on the greatness of Chandragupta and says, *"In the course of some eighteen years, Chandragupta had (i) expelled Macedonian garrisons from the Punjab and the Sindh, (ii) repulsed and humbled Selucus, the conqueror, and (iii) established himself as undisputed supreme lord of at least all northern India and a large part of Arabia. These achievements airily entitle him to rank among the greatest and most successful Kings, known to history."*

8.5 BINDUSARA

Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Bindusara. Not much information is available about Bindusara's rule or administration. However, Bindusara was given the title Amitraghar or slayer of enemies. But, not much is known about how he defeated his enemies, but it is believed that the people of Taxila revolted two times during his reign.

It is also said that Bindusara was a pleasure seeker. He is said to have had many sons. The eldest son was Susima and his second son was Ashoka. The eldest son was in charge of Taxila and the second son was in charge of Ujjain.

Bindusara maintained good relations with Selucos Nicator and the emperors exchanged ambassadors. He also maintained friendly relations with the Hellenic west started by his father. Envoys from Syria and Egypt resided at Bindusara's court. He preferred the Ajivika philosophy rather than Jainism.

The Puranas state that Bindusara ruled for 25 years and was succeeded by Ashoka.

Check Your Progress:

1. Narrate the life and career of Chandragupta as the founder of the Mauryan dynasty.

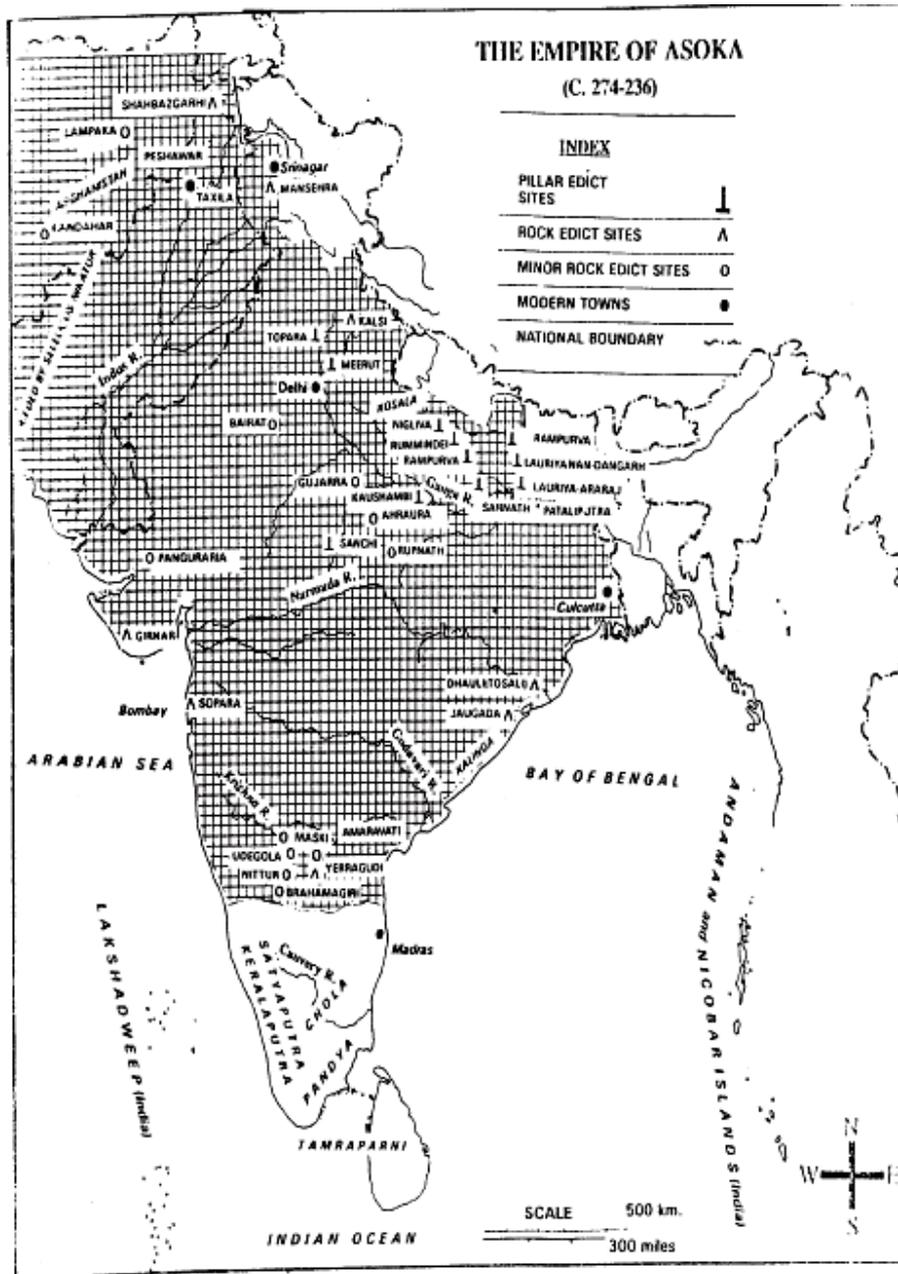
8.6 REGION OF ASHOKA MAURYA (273 BC - 232 BC)

Coronation:

In 273 BC, Bindusara died, leaving the Mauryan throne to his eldest son. However, a younger son, Ashoka meaning '*one without grief*'- was the viceroy of Ujjain and Taxila during Bindusara's reign. Due to untimely death of his father, he had to suppress the rebellion of Taxila.

It is said that Ashoka challenged his brothers for succession, and after four years of brutal warfare, he established his control of the Mauryan empire in 269 B.C. by taking his ministers into confidence. Nevertheless, the fact that his formal coronation was delayed for some years until 269 B.C. due to the bloody dispute with his other brothers (100) for the power, has no reliable evidence. (Until the last few centuries, Western scholars to be more thought Ashoka a legend than a fact. It was only with the discovery of the inscribed pillars stating the principles and laws of Ashoka's reign that his achievements were established as historical fact by the West.)

In spite of these violent and ruthless beginnings, Ashoka would prove to be one of the most influential and cherished political and even spiritual leaders in Indian History. Under him, the Mauryan Empire reached its pinnacle and for the first time, the whole of the sub-continent, leaving out the extreme south, was under royal control.

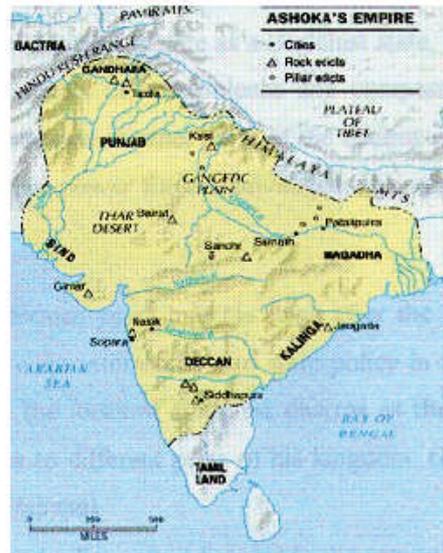


8.7 EXTENSION OF EMPIRE

Very little is known about the early years of Ashoka's control or conquests. However from the way he acquired the throne, it can be safely presumed that he must have continued the aggressive policy.



Ashoka's Empire extended to the whole of non-tamil India and a considerable portion of Afghanistan. It stretched from the land of Yonas, Kambojas and Gandharas in the Kabul valley and some adjoining mountain territory. It included the country of the Andhras in the Godavari-Krishna basin and Isila in the north Mysore. It extended from Sopara and Gimara in the west to Dhuli and Jaugada in the east. The territories of Ashoka seem to have included vales of Kashmir and Nepal.



8.8 THE KALINGA WAR, 261 BC

However, the Kalinga war proved to be the turning point in the career of Ashoka and produced far reaching consequences not only in the history of India but also in south east Asia. In 260 BC, Ashoka was still pursuing the goal of uniting India by pushing control towards south. In the 13th year of his reign, he conquered Kalinga. It is said that during the war of Kalinga 1,00,000 persons were slain, 1,50,000 held captive. The sight of the massacre involved in his conquest deeply troubled Ashoka and affected his mind. Ashoka could not see the sufferings of the people who survived in the war.

The Kalinga war opened a new epoch in the history of Magadha as well as India. Lord Siva seems to have been his favourite deity till then. He renounced war and turned Buddhist and sought peace in Buddha's preachings of love and *ahimsa* (non-violence). The war also developed in him a hatred for all kinds of violence. So he gave up hunting and slaughtering of animals. He became a strict vegetarian. He propagated his new religion by engraving his Dhamma, Law of Piety through the rock edicts throughout his empire.

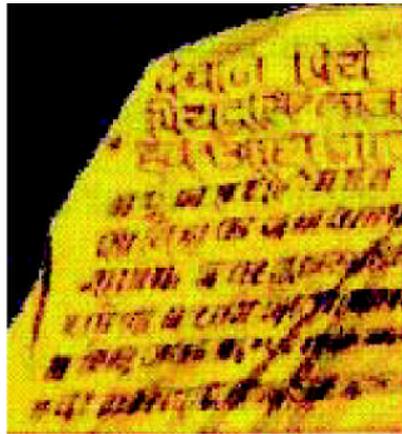
8.9 ASHOKA'S RELIGIOUS POLICY AND SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

Ashoka became a fervent **Buddhist**. From this time till his death in 232 BC, Ashoka attempted to rule the Mauryan empire as a Buddhist state, based on the principles of Buddhist dharma and the ideals of non-violence and compassion. Compared to the political and social patterns followed in other parts of the ancient world, where the aim of the state was mere security and power for the privileged, this was indeed a noteworthy experiment.

Rock edicts and pillars:

Thirteen years into his reign after the Kalinga war, Ashoka's personal Buddhist principles were interpreted into state policy in a number of ways. He began by clearly establishing the ideas of Buddhist dharma as the basis for his rule. He spread his beliefs of *Dhamma* to different parts of his kingdom. (*Dhamma* is the *Prakrit* word for the Sanskrit word *Dharma*).

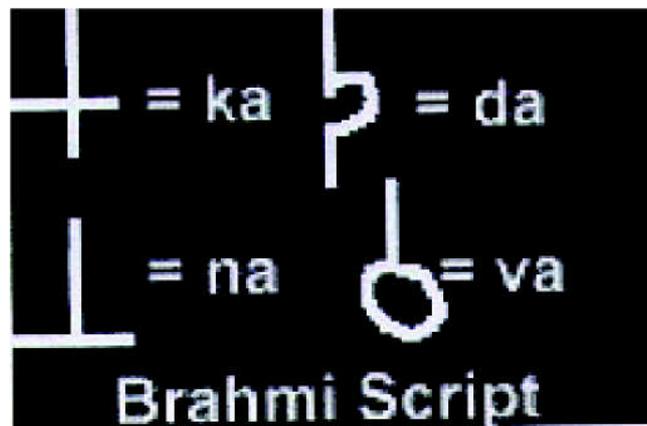
Inscribed on rocks and pillars, the edicts made the ornate structures famous - the rocks were known as stupas, and the pillars as the Ashoka pillars. Although only ten survive, it is estimated that at one time a number of these **pillars** (each weighing about 50 tons and standing



40-50 feet high) were scattered throughout India, as well as modern day Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. These are referred to as the rock edicts.

The edicts had one thing in common - they subscribed to high ideals and they set forth unique political principles of tolerance and compassion. They also contained his ideas on matters such as religion, Government and people's behaviour towards one another. These edicts are in the form of 44 royal orders.

Propagation of the Dhamma: Testifying to *Ashoka's* effort to ensure that people could read and understand the message of peace.



- Usually, the script was *Brahmi* and the language, *Prakrit* - both popular with the public.
- Many edicts were in languages and scripts appropriate to the region of his far-lung kingdom.
- the sites chosen for these engravings were areas where people were went to meet
- The inscriptions were engraved at a convenient height.

The teachings aimed at moulding the general behaviour of the people. Mostly Buddhist teachings counselled obedience to parents

and those older in age; kindness towards employees and slaves; non-violence towards animals - refraining from meat consumption and animal sacrifices.

The minor rock edict stated that,

"Father and mother must be obeyed. Similarly respect for the living creatures must be enforced. Truth must be spoken. These are the virtues of the law of piety, which must be practiced. Similarly the pupil must revere the teacher, and proper courtesy must be shown to relatives. This is the ancient standard of piety. This leads to length of days, and according to this, man must act."

The third rock edict says,

'Abstention from killing animals is meritorious. Moderation in possession and moderation in expenditure are also meritorious.'

Dispatch of Missionaries to different countries:

Ashoka also promoted the spread of Buddhism by sending missionaries to neighboring countries.

1. He himself started touring places and he called them as dhamma yatras.
2. To achieve his goals, he requisitioned state officials such as Rajukas, pradeshikas and Yuktas.
3. He appointed officials such as Dharma Mahamantras and Dharma yuktas whose sole business was propagation of religion.
4. He called for Buddhist councils for expounding Buddhist doctrines.

Although Buddhism had already begun to spread at a slow pace as a result of trade, communication and interaction, the painstaking efforts of Ashoka particularly increased the exposure of other societies to Buddhism, and thus its increasing importance as an Asian, not just an Indian, religion spread to Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Central Asia, Burma during his reign.

8.10 A WELFARE STATE

One of the most notable features of Ashoka's rule was the reforms aimed at creating a more compassionate state. The Mauryan Empire stopped wars of aggression, although the military certainly still defended the empire. Since there were now no more wars of aggression by the Mauryan king, the merger of states ceased. Judicial reform reduced the cruelty and harsh punishments of the legal system. Citizens of the state were encouraged to behave with kindness towards the deprived. In typically Indian fashion, this compassion extended to the natural world. Protection of animals and habitat was given priority. Cruelty to animals was forbidden.

Ashoka attempted a paternalistic society - one in which the state had immense power, but in which it was committed to take care of the people and guarantee a certain quality of life. Increased state power included expanded bureaucratic control and more taxes. The state used these taxes to carry out a number of public work developments. The Mauryan state paid for the digging of wells, irrigation projects, importing of herbs for medicinal purposes and even the planting of trees and creation of rest houses for travelers. State Finances were also spent in constructing sites of worship and preserving the texts of Buddhism.

Policy of toleration:

Even though Buddhism was protected, Ashoka did not repress Hinduism or Jainism. In fact, state funds were also used for improvement of sites for these religions. In his rock edicts, Ashoka expressed his loyalty to religious tolerance - this alone marks his rule as unique in human history. He in fact took delight in being called 'Devanampiya'.

8.11 FALL OF MAURYAS

The great Mauryan Empire did not last long after the end of Ashoka's rule. This characteristic political trial of a state based on generous but powerful control, and a state based on dharnia, collapsed within a few years after his death in 232 B.C. There is a controversy as who was his successor but if Puranic tradition is to be believed, the immediate successor of Ashoka was his son Kunala. But his name is nowhere mentioned in the Chronicles of Kashmir. Most probably the Mauryan Empire broke up after his demise and it was divided among his sons. One thing is certain that the Mauryan country began to fall apart and finally ended in 185 B.C. when Pushyamitra Sunga, Commander in chief of Brihadatta, the last Mauryan king killed him and established the Sunga dynasty in its place.

The decline of this empire may be attributed to many causes.

- Seven kings (some say 10) followed Ashoka within a period of 50 years. Besides this, after Ashoka there were no strong kings to rule such a vast empire.
- According to some historians, the Brahmanas felt antagonized because their privileged position was affected by the policies of Ashoka. However, Ashoka was extremely tolerant towards other religions. There are evidences in the inscriptions that show his royal patronage to Brahmanas, Jains and Ajivikas.
- The two constant features of Indian political instability re-emerged local leaders trying to take back some of their regional and tribal

power, and assaults by outside invaders from Central Asia. Various parts of the Empire became independent and soon the Mauryan Empire gave birth to smaller segments. There was entry of foreign ruling dynasties like the Sungas, the Kanvas, the Kushanas the Satavahanas, the sakas in India through northwestern frontier and Central Asia.

- Ashoka's transformation into a staunch supporter of Buddhism, his belief in the principle of non-violence, also played a role in the decline of the Mauryan Empire. During his reign, Ashoka gave up war and preached peace in the kingdom. It therefore may be assumed that since the later part of Ashoka's rule was devoid of wars, the military were inactive and this weakened them. The state also could not collect taxes properly, which was essential for keeping a vast army and the administrative network working.

Check Your Progress:

1. Trace the Career and achievements of Ashoka Maurya.

8.12 SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

The Indica of Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador at the court of Chandragupta Maurya in Pataliputra, gives a colourful description of the Mauryan society under the rule of Chandragupta. He also expressed his admiration for the efficient administration of the empire. His book 'Indica' also presents a collection of comments of other Roman Greek travelers, speaking of the general prosperity, Megasthenes wrote, "The Indians, dressed in bright and rich colors, they liberally used ornaments and gems." He also spoke of the division of society according to occupation and the large number of religious sects and foreigners in the empire.

He further reported that agriculture thrived, water was abundant and mineral wealth was found in plenty. Most of the people worked on farms. They either had their own lands or worked as labourers on the land owned by the ruler. The state brought new lands under cultivation and developed irrigation facilities. The famous Sudarshana Lake was built during this time. Forestry was another occupation and the superintendent of forests was entrusted with the responsibility of developing their resources. Cattle rearing and

artisanship were popular professions and a large number of people were engaged in activities like animal herding, weaving, pottery making, mining, shipbuilding, shoe making, fishing etc. Irons, copper, silver and gold were available in large quantity. Wood was used for construction purposes.

Traders of all trade were provided state security. Trade was managed by guilds that looked after both internal and external trade. The guilds gave security in their occupation and finance whenever needed. A network of roads, which served as important trade routes, crisscrossed the Mauryan Empire. The merchants and traders took their wares from one part of the empire to another. They carried goods to far-off places by both land and sea. A royal highway connecting Taxila and Pataliputra was built - a road, which survives to this day as the Grand Trunk road. Ships were used for international trade. At this time, India had good trade relations with Egypt, Greece, Syria, south East Asia and China.

A large section of the people worked in the Imperial army. They were employed under various Boards like cavalry, infantry, navy and were well paid and lived a comfortable life.

A few people worked as ministers in the royal court or were high officials, who looked after the various administrative districts of the empire. The society at that time also had Buddhist and Jain monks who generally lived in monasteries. The condition of women was not very good. Birth of a female child was not welcome. However they enjoyed parental property. Although unmarried women were allowed to pursue the study philosophy, they were deprived of the privilege after marriage. Especially the rulers and noblemen practiced polygamy. Prostitution as an institution existed in the society. Prostitutes were taxed and protected against abuse. Accomplished courtesans of the dancing girl class enjoyed a privileged position at the court. Slavery too existed. Slavery as an established institution was not only accepted in the law books but also in the inscriptions. But it appears that slaves were not mistreated. Megasthenes reports that he did not see any slaves in India. Caste system was widespread. However the kings were tolerant towards all religions. Punishments generally were severe. The general principle was that, *'those whose guilt is believed to be true shall be subjected to torture.'*

8.13 ART AND LITERATURE

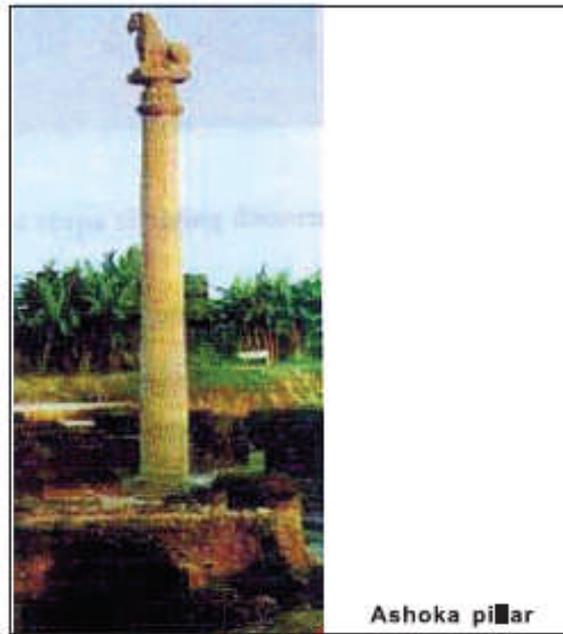
Art and sculpture :

Art flourished during the Mauryan period. The palace of Chandragupta, the rock and pillar edicts, the cave paintings and such other monuments are the living examples of the magnificent art of those days.

The palace of Chandra gupta Maurya at Pataliputra was magnificent with eighty pillars in the royal hall decorated with golden vines and silver birds. The palace had a beautiful park decorated with fishponds, ornamental trees and shrubs.

While perishable materials like wood and bricks were used in the construction of cities and palaces, permanent materials like stone were used for religious structures. The belief probably was that the religious structures being the house of Gods had to remain forever in contrast to the dwellings of the humans, which was transitory in nature. Yet the beauty of the cities was unique in character. According to the writings of the Greek diplomat Megasthenes, Pataliputra, the capital-surrounded by a wooden wall pierced by 64 gates and 570 towers-surpassed the splendors of contemporary Persian sites such as Susa and Ecbatana.

The Mauryans outclassed in the art of stone carving. Mauryan stone sculptures are characterized by a polished mirror-like surface, which has maintained its shine to this day. This is evident in the famous statue of a beautiful Yakshi, or a female figure unearthed at Didarganj in Patna.



The sandstone pillars were highly polished to a mirror-like effect, and crowned by capitals of animal figures. Some bore an elephant, others a bull or a lion. They are made of fine single block (called monoliths) are so well polished that they give an appearance of metallic columns of 40-50 feet in height. Ten of such magnificent monolithic pillars are found in Delhi, Allahabad, Sanchi, Sarnath, Vaishali, and some other places. They were erected to spread the gospel of Buddhism.

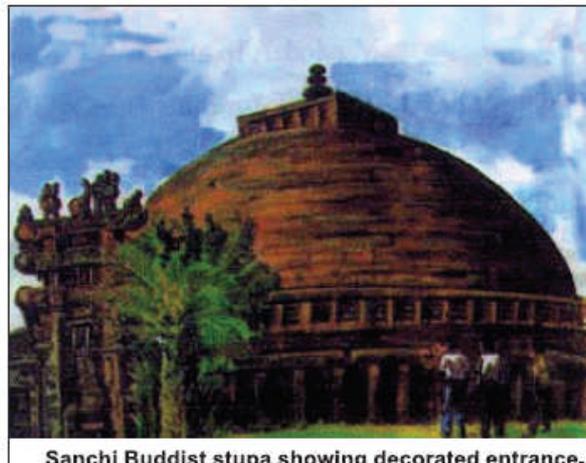
The floral designs on these pillars and the use of pillars themselves show Persian influence. It is said that the Persian palace at Persipolis was the motivation behind these pillars. The animal figures of lion, bull, or elephant, on uppermost part of the pillars also have this well polished exterior.

The Sarnath pillar by far is the best of the series. It is crowned with four lions standing back to back and facing all four directions and has a big wheel of Dharma with thirty-two spokes positioned on their shoulders. This unique pillar at *Sarnath* with four lions was chosen as the national emblem of India upon independence. The *chakra* at the bottom of the *Sarnath* pillar is acknowledged as the *Ashoka chakra* and is part of the Indian national flag.

It indeed reveals an extraordinary skill in art and sculpture. Dr.V.A.Smith commented on the beauty of the pillar thus, *'It would be difficult to find in any country an example of ancient animal sculpture, superior or even equal to this beautiful work of art which successfully combines realistic modeling with ideal dignity and is furnished in every detail, with perfect accuracy.'*

Mauryan artisans also carved out a number of rock-cut caves throughout the empire for the monks to live in. The earliest examples are the Barabar hill caves near Gaya. The caves were the products of immense patience and enormous skill.

The Stupas were built throughout the empire to enshrine the relics of Buddha. The Mahayana Buddhism influenced the stupas. They were the dome like structures made of brick and stone and are also known as chaityas. The general belief is that Lord Buddha ordered one of his disciples to erect a stupa over the remains of his body after cremation. It is said that during the time of Ashoka 84,000 stupas were built in India. Of these, the most famous are at Sanchi and Barhul. The Buddhist caves in the Barabar hills near Gaya in Bihar are famous. They also built a number of Buddhist stupas.



Sanchi Buddhist stupa showing decorated entrance.

Literature :

The main languages of the times were Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali. Some of the important literary works were Kautilya's Arthashastra, Panini's grammar, Bhadrabahu's Kalpasutra, Vatsyayana's Kamasutra. The very fact that Ashoka used writing as a means of medium to spread his ideas shows that the people were literate. The university of Taxila was famous. Usually preliminary education was imparted in the monasteries, gurukulas.

Check Your Progress:

1. Give an account of the main features of Mauryan administration.

8.14 SUMMARY

It is thus found that the rise of mahajanapadas resulted in some dynasties becoming more important than others. In the midst of competition, emerged a single paramount power— namely the Mauryan Empire which laid the foundation of a new rule with a strong government.

It is indeed difficult to explain satisfactorily the causes of the decline of the Mauryan Empire by presenting several occurrences like military inactivity, Brahminical resentment, popular uprisings or economic pressures. Dr. R. K. Mookerji commented on the downfall thus,

"But even if Ashoka's policy brought about the downfall of the Mauryan Empire, India has no cause to regret the fact. That Empire would have fallen to pieces sooner or later, even if Ashoka had followed the policy blood and iron of his grandfather. But the moral ascendancy of Indian culture over a large part of the civilized world, which Ashoka was mostly instrumental in bringing about, remained for centuries, as a monument of her glory and has not altogether vanished even now after the lapse of more than two thousand years ."

The Mauryan empire founded by Chandragupta Maurya and strengthened by his illustrious grandson Ashoka gave the country a much needed political unity, an appreciable system of administration, cultural and commercial contacts with other countries, economic prosperity and above all for preaching ideas of international peace and brotherhood, religious tolerance and nonviolence.

8.15 QUESTIONS

1. Why did Ashoka embrace Buddhism? What efforts did he take for the spread of Buddhism far and wide?
2. Write Short notes on :
 - a) Sources of Mauryan Study.
 - b) Ashoka's Inscriptions
 - c) Kalinga war
 - d) Ashoka and Buddhism
 - e) Causes for the fall of Mauryas.
 - f) Social and economic development during the Mauryan rule.
 - g) Art and architecture.



POST-MAURYAN DYNASTIES (SUNGAS, KUSHANAS AND SATAVAHANAS)

CONTENTS

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction : The age of new Invasions
- 9.2 The Sunga dynasty
- 9.3 The Kanvas and the Satavahanas
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- 9.7 Kanishka and Buddhism
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- 9.9 Importance of the coins
- 9.10 Successors of Kanishka
- 9.11 The Satavahanas
- 9.12 The Sakas
- 9.13 The Indo-Greeks and The Indo-Parthians
- 9.14 Summary
- 9.15 Questions

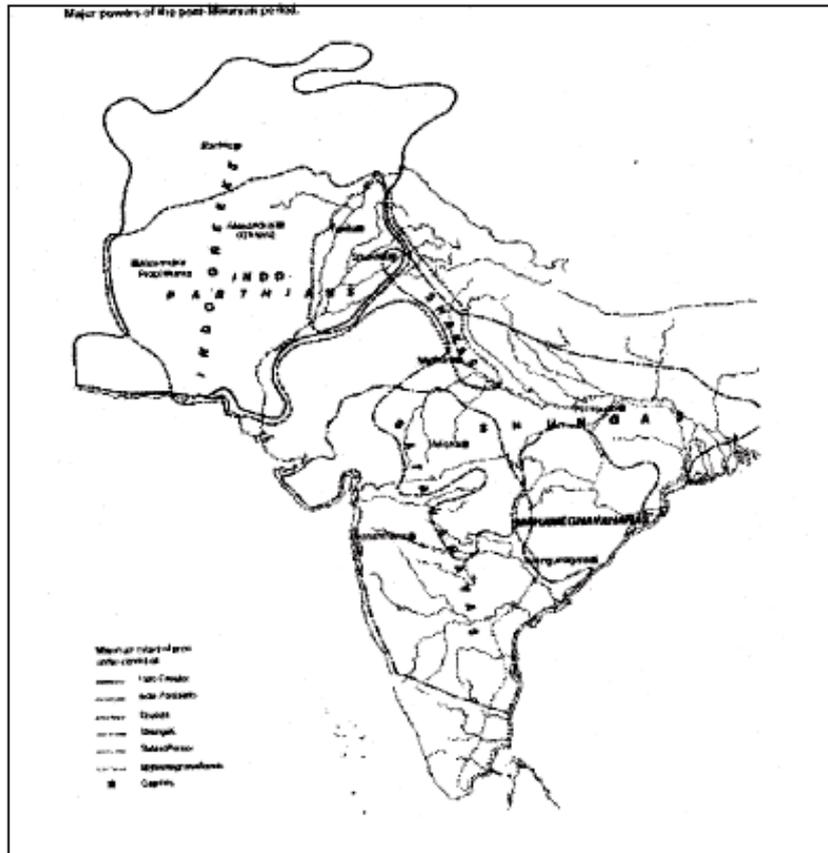
9.0 OBJECTIVES

In this chapter an attempt is made to understand the political, social and economic conditions of India during this period, to assess the interaction of these foreign groups with Indians, to understand the absorption of these foreigners into the Indian society leading to the fusion of culture, An analytical study is made of the cultural achievements of the period.

- a) To study the history of Kushanas.
- b) To assess the interaction of this dynasty with Indians and its spread of Buddhism
- c) To learn the cultural achievements.
- d) To assess the impact of the Satavahanas Indo-Greek and Saka rule on India.

9.1 INTRODUCTION : THE AGE OF NEW INVASIONS:

The emergence of the Mauryan dynasty in India had facilitated the consolidation of political and economic unity. For the first time India had taken the shape of a nation because almost all parts were under the control of the Mauryas except the Southern end of India. But with the closing stages this glorious rule, a brilliant phase of the history of India ended.



After Ashoka, the successors were feeble and the Mauryan dynasty was divided into small principalities. The picture was of instability and insecurity everywhere. There was no strong central authority to control the newly sprung states, which had declared their independence. The internal disturbances offered a golden opportunity for the foreign invaders to seize different parts of India. Among the many foreigners who entered India the outstanding ones were the Sungas, the Kanvas, The Satavahanas, the Indo-Greeks, the Indo-Parthians, the Kushanas. These events on the northwestern borders were to have a profound effect both on her own history but also on that of Asia. A distinctive feature of the coming of the new lot of people here was that they came, adopted themselves to the changed situations, influenced the Indians by theirs and finally were absorbed in the Indian culture themselves. This indeed proves the flexibility and strength of Indian culture.

The sources for the study of the various dynasties are inadequate and not well documented.

The Kushanas :

Kushana Rulers	Era
Heraios	5 – 45 BC
Kujulu Kapdphises	30 – 65 AD
Vima Takto	80 – 95 AD
Vima Kadphises	95 – 115 AD
Kaniishka I	115 – 140 AD
Huvishka I	140 – 180 AD
Vasu Deva I	180 – 210 AD
Kanishka II	210 – 230 AD
Vashishka	230 – 250 AD
Kanishka III	255 – 275 AD
Vaskushana	275 – 290 AD
Vasu Deva II	290 – 310 AD
Shaka	325 – 345 AD
Xandesh	335 – 336 AD
Vashishka	350 – 360 AD
Vasu Deva III	360 – 365 AD
Kipunada	350 – 375 AD

The next important chapter in India's history begins with the a of another wave of Central Asian tribes called the Yueh-chih. The Yueh-Chihs belonged to the pastoral nomad state, which is now known as Inner Mongolia. This nomadic horde was the members of the Xiongnu association. They were China's chief foes during the Han period. The great wall of China was built to defend the territory that the Hans had occupied from Xiongnu.

So, because of the chaotic and unpredictable conditions on the borders of China, The Yeuhchi tribe was forced to leave the country. They moved to Central Asia and settled in Bactria, Paritha and Afghanistan, leaving back the fertile plains of Xiongnu. Here, they came into contact with the Greek culture and steadily but surely lost their nomadic habits and fitted well to this culture. The Yueh-Chih nobles intermarried the local rich women of high status creating several powerful clans.

Gradually they were divided into five branches. One of these branches — Kouel Chougang (Kushans) — was superior to all. About the middle of the first century A.D. one of those tribes, they overpowered the others and founded the Kushan state. The Kushanas, however, did not do away with Sakas entirely, and allowed them to continue to be under the rule of their princes and show loyalty to Kushana rulers.

9.2 THE SUNGA DYNASTY

The important sources for the Sunga period are available in the inscriptions from Ayodhya, Vidisha, and Bharut. The other sources are Gargi Samhita, the Divyavadana, the Puranas, patanjali's Mahabhyasa, Kalidasa's Malavikagnimitra, Banabhatta's Harshacharita.

Pushyamitra Sunga was the commander-in-chief of the last Mauryan ruler Brihadatta. He became the ruler of the Magadha and neighbouring territories after killing the last king in 185 B.C. According to the Vedic texts and the writings of Panini, he belonged to the clan of Bharadwaja Brahmanas. There is a reference to the assassination of Brihadatta by Pushyamitra in the Harshacharita of Banabhatta and the Puranas.

The kingdom of Pushyamitra was extended upto Narmada in the south, and controlled Jalandhar and Sialkot in the Punjab in the northwestern regions. As far as the northwestern boundary is concerned it cannot be stated with reliability that they belonged to him. But tradition acclaims Pushyamitra to be the ruler of these regions also.

The Sungas governed the kingdom with the help of a mantriparishad. This council existed both in the center and the provinces. The Viceroys administered the provinces. During the Sunga rule Brahmanism revived its vigour. The Bhagavata form of religion prevailed. The Bharbat stupa and the ivory works in its fine manner prove the promotion of art. Patanjali's Mahabhashya is an example of the successful literature of the Sunga.

Pushyamitra had to be on guard in the northwest because of the constant Greek threats. He had to fight two wars the first one with Demetrios, king of Bactria and the second one with King Manender. During the first war, Demetrios conquered Taxila and Sindh and left his lieutenants Manender and Appolodotos to look after the regions respectively. The second war was fought between Manender and Vasumitra the grandson of Pushyamitra. The Greek General defeated Vasumitra in the war. Pushyamitra must have been an aged man and his grandson must have looked after the kingdom during the second war with the Greeks.

There is a reference to the two horse sacrifices performed by Pushyamitra in the Ayodhya Inscriptions. Pushyamitra died after ruling for 36 years (187-151 BC). His Son **Agnimitra** succeeded him. This prince is the hero of a famous drama by India's greatest playwright, Kalidasa. Agnimitra used to hold his court in the city of Vidisa, modern Besnagar in Eastern Malwa. Not much is known about the king through either the inscriptions or the coins. The next ruler was his son **Vasumitra** during whose time the Greek invader defeated him on the banks of river Sindhu.

However the power of the Sungas gradually weakened. It is said that the Sunga dynasty had a line of ten rulers, the last of them being **Devabhuti**. **He was supposed to be a luxury loving person who neglected his duties. Vasudeva, the minister of Devabhuti got him killed by a female attendant while he was merrymaking and grabbed the throne.**

Thus the Sunga period though is less reflected as a great role in Indian history yet is significant in the matter of its administration, religion, art and literature. As far as the administration was concerned, they neither contributed much to political unity nor introduce any novel administrative ideas. But the kings to a certain degree succeeded in defending the northwestern frontier against recurring invasions of the Greeks.

The achievements of the Sungas in the field of art are worth mentioning. Some of them are the vihara at Bhaga near Poona, the stupa at Amaravati, the no 9 chaitya hall at Ajanta, Bharut and Bodhgaya monuments. Human figures played a prominent role in the Sunga art. One can see them in the superb figures of Virudha Yaksha, Gangeya Yaksha, Chakravaka Nagarjuna, Sirima Devata, Suchiloma Yaksha and such others.

Hinduism especially, Vaisnavism revived during this Period. Vedic rites were invigorated. The yagnas, which had taken a back seat under the Mauryas, came to be patronized. H.C. Raychaudhari rightly says that, *'they (The Sungas) heralded the dawn of a new Brahminical movement which reached its climax in the spacious days of the Guptas.*

9.3 THE KANVAS AND THE SATAVAHANAS

The last ruler of the Sunga dynasty **Devabhuti** was overthrown Vasudeva Kanva, his minister in 75 B.C. The extent of Kanva territory was confined to the areas of Sunga rule. However, the Kanva ruler seems to have allowed the Sungas to carry on their rule in anonymity in a parts of their four dominions.

Magadha was their main center of power. This period is said to have witnessed the rule of four kings extending to a period about 45 years. **Susarman** was the last ruler of the Kanva dynasty. He was slain by the Andhra prince whose identity is not known.

Check Your Progress:

1. Discuss the contribution of the Sunga dynasty in the History of ancient India.

9.4 KUJULA KADAPHISES

In about 25 AD, they overpowered the Saka- Pahlava or Parthians who ruled Hindu Kush under the leadership of **Kujula Kadaphises** (30 A.D - 65 A.D) and founded one of the greatest empires of India. It was one of the outstanding and illustrious dynasties of ancient India, both culturally and territorially. Kadaphises conquered Gandhara, southern Afghanistan and Parthia. He struck his own coins.

9.5 KADAPHISES II

After his death his grandson Vima Kadphises commonly known as **Kadaphises II** (65 A.D. to 75 A.D.) who made Kushan a paramount power of northern India. His reign saw emergence of Kushan empire when he conquered North western regions, Punjab, and large territories of Gangetic valley also. (Pakistan and modern Afghanistan) and northern India. Vima Kadphises revolutionized the monetary system by introducing gold coins to the existing copper coinage. The issue of gold coins reveals two important things, one the prosperity of his empire and the other his conversion to Saivism. The coins show that he came under influence of Hinduism and took opportunity to proclaim himself Mahishwara, another name for Lord Shiva, on his coins.

The Kushana Empire's trade of rare goods with China, Central Asia, Egypt and Rome explains the wealthy and prosperous monetary economy of Kushanas. Ample evidences of trade are available through coins and inscriptions which made their economy strong and kingdom wealthy and prosperous. Vima mostly used one deity, Shiva standing and with bull Nandi on reverse of his coins.



Kanishka was the most famous of the Kushan kings. The dates of his mounting the throne and his relation with the earlier Kushana rulers both are debatable issues. Some of the historians are of the opinion that Kanishka was never related to Vima Kadphises, Kanishka was not strictly a saka but the term is loosely applied as he is known to have founded an era. It is not also not known how he became the king but according to some scholars he ascended the throne in A.D 78 while according to some others he mounted the throne in 115 A. D and yet others feel that he became the king in 120 A.D. of popular Saka era (78 AD) to Kanishka while some others direct it to Vima. However, present opinions of most competent authorities favour a date as 78 A.D.

9.6 KANISHKA, A GALLANT WARRIOR

When Kanishka rose to the throne, his kingdom consisted of **Afghanistan, Sind, Punjab** and portions of the former **Parithan** and **Bactrian** kingdoms. His empire extended from the northwest and Kashmir, to the large parts of the **Gangetic** valley, Kanishka also defeated the saka ruler **Chastan of Ujjain** who accepted his suzerainty. He seized three territories belonging to the Chinese namely, **Tashkand, Khotan and Yarkhand**. Kanishka also triumphed over the Parthian king Khusru. He subjugated the **Kashmir valley** and is acclaimed of laying the foundation of town, which he named it as Kanishkapura. Kalhan, a poet and historian of Kashmir, who wrote a famous chronicle of Kings of Kashmir, Rajatarangini', a crucial historic document, testified that Kashmir was part of his empire. Thus Kushan Empire was at it's peak in terms of area during his reign.

He maintained two capitals one at Purushpura which is now situated in Pakistan and the second one at Mathura in west Uttar Pradesh. He seems to have endorsed the title of Kaiser or Caesar on himself.

9.7 KANISHKA AND BUDDHISM



Gandhara Bhuddha

Kanishka's father was a saivite and his grandfather was a Buddhist. Kanishka was a patron of Mahayana Buddhism. Kanishka embraced Buddhism towards the middle of his reign. He is said to have been Zoroastrian before he embraced Buddhism. He spent funds in spreading Buddhism. **Mahayana** was the new form of Buddhism that was followed during this period with the essential points of modifications, which were as follows:

Hinayana (the lesser path)	Mahayana (the great Path)
Buddha worshipped by symbols.	Buddha deified as God and worshipped in the form of statue.
No intermediaries in worship.	Bodhisattvas as inter-medddiaries between the Buddha and the followers.
Direct worship to symbols.	Bodhisattvas worshipped with flowers, gifts to attain salvation.
Emphasis on good actions.	Image worship with elaborate rituals like prayers, acts of sacrifice, helping the needy etc.

9.8 SCIENCE AND LITERATURE

Apart from being a successful warrior, Kanishka was certainly a man of great taste and superior knowledge. He was a great patron of art and literature. During his reign, a large number of Buddhist monasteries, sculptures were built in and around Gandhara and Mathura region. Old monastries were repaired and many new ones were built. Inscriptions and coins bear well-expressed evidence to the king's keenness and enthusiasm for the spread of Buddhism.

The most celebrated monument of the many is the great Chaitya (Shah-ji-kidheri stupa) at his capital Purushpur. Chinese travellers Fa Hien and Huan Tsang wrote detailed account of Kanishka's temple building activity in Taxila and Gandhara.

Thus **Mathura and Gandhara** were centres of art. Mathura developed its distinct Indian style of art and the images were based on prototypes of an Indian Yaksha (nature deity). whereas the Gandhara school was influenced by Greco-Roman philosophies. A new form of art — Gandhara Art — was developed. Beautiful images of Buddha were developed in a Greek-Roman style.

The two styles interacted to develop into classical Buddha sculptures of the Gupta period where the hast mudras (hand-postures) symbolised universal piety - preaching law, calling the earth to witness, meditation and bestowing peace and benediction.

His coinage also bear eloquent testimony to his zeal for Hinduism and Buddhism. Lord Shiva and bull, Nandi were commonly portrayed on his gold and copper coins, but the most important numismatic contribution of him is as follows: he was the first ruler who minted coins with the image of Buddha. The coins depicting Buddha are extremely rare. There exist only 5 gold coins in the world having portrait of Buddha. There are some copper coins, which show Buddha, which are also rare. All these coins have been minted by Kanishka, most likely to commomerate building of great stupa of Purushpur. There are two types of Buddha's coins, Standing Buddha, Gautam, and sitting Buddha, Maitraya.



Gautama Buddha as seen in the Gold Dinara of Kanishka

9.9 IMPORTANCE OF THE COINS

Undoubtedly all the Kushana emperors used their coinage for the propaganda of their own superiority and the possession of extraordinary talents. The notion of showing the ruler on the coins was absent in India and all the earlier dynasties minted coins demonstrating only the symbols, which were in the form of punch marked coins. It was the Kushana rulers who popularized this idea. Certainly

their coins are perhaps the finest evidence we possibly will have of this renowned dynasty.

The coins reveal a great deal about the rulers, coins were used as a media to propagate Kings superiority. They reveal how the images of kings wished to be seen, and the religious practise. Coins were the carriers for official propaganda of greatness of Kings and deities of the empire. Kushanas devised their coins with various Gods of culturally, ethnically diverse population of the empire. It is evident through Kanishka's coins which carried images of Buddha in several poses, that he had been a great patron of **Mahayana Buddhism**. Vasudeva's coins reveal that he is a convert to **Hinduism** and a devotee of Mahisvara (Oesho). The motif of the shoulder fire on Vima, Vasudeval, Huvishka and Kanishka-I coins, symbolizes the super natural power of the kings (connection with Athso - the Fire God).

Trade:

During this period, Buddhism spread in China and Central India. Kushanas enriched the cultural ethos of India. They linked Central Asian, Chinese, India and Persian cultures and trade. They opened and protected silk road, a major trade path for caravans carrying silk and other prominent goods from China to India and Middle east (especially, spices, textile, medicines through ships bound for the Roman empire). The inflow to Kushana empire was gold coins, Greek wine and slaves. The Roman history records that ambassadors were sent to the court of Trajan (98-117 AD) by the Indian kings, but it is unclear whether it is by Vima or Kanishka.

Literature:

Kanishka was a, great patron of art and literature. His court was adorned by many scholars like Ashvaghosha, Vasumitra, Nagarjuna and Charaka. Kanishka also patronized contemporary intellectual's sage `Shakya-muni' who had introduced him to Buddhism.

Kanishka summoned a great council of contemporary scholars and philosophers to examine the Buddhist scriptures and prepare commentaries on them. Ashvaghosha was a great poet and a master of music. He has been credited for being the author of three dramas namely, Buddha Charita (biography of the Buddha), Sariputra, and Saundarananda. Charak was a great physician and he wrote a book Charakamhita which is based on the Ayurvedic system of medicine.

Sanskrit became an official language and many works of the Buddhists were composed in Sanskrit. Nagarjuna was a Buddhist scholar, philosopher and a scientist of the time. He wrote Madhyamika Sutra in which he discusses the relativity theory. Susruta was a renowned physician. The other celebrated personalities were Mathara who was a political scientist and Agesilans an engineer.

9.10 SUCCESSORS OF KANISHKA

Kanishka's immediate successor was Vashishka who was then succeeded by Huvishka. Huvishka-I is supposed to have ruled the Kushana empire from 140-180 AD. There is a controversy as the last ruler of the dynasty although the scholars have agreed upon Vasudeva I being the last great king of Kushanas. Probably he was the last powerful king of the dynasty because the lineage of rulers shows that there were successors after him. What is to be noted here is that after Vasudeva, Kushana empire had started declining and soon after his death it completely disintegrated into few small kingdoms.

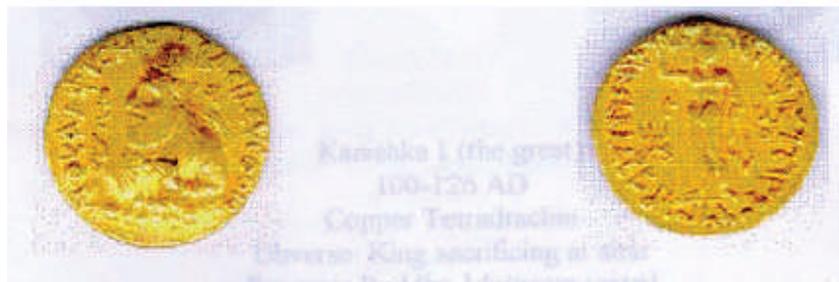
The descendants of Kanishka namely Vashishka, Huvishka I, Vaskushana, Vasudeva-II, Shaka, Xandesh, Vashishka, Vasudevalll, held onto power by holding the Kabul valley, though the Kushana power had declined totally. Kipunada (350-375AD.) seems to be the last king who was the descendent of the little Kushanas. The rule of Kushans ended almost at the same time as that of the Satavahans in the south. By fourth century AD this dynasty went into total obscurity with advent of mighty when the Kushans were overthrown by the Sassanians of Persia in the north-west and the Guptas in the north.

Check Your Progress:

1. Outline the career and the achievements of Kanishka.

Some Kushana coins :

Vima Kadphises



Vima Kadphises 90-100 AD

Gold Dinar, Possibly the First Gold Coin of India

Obverse : King emerging of cluds

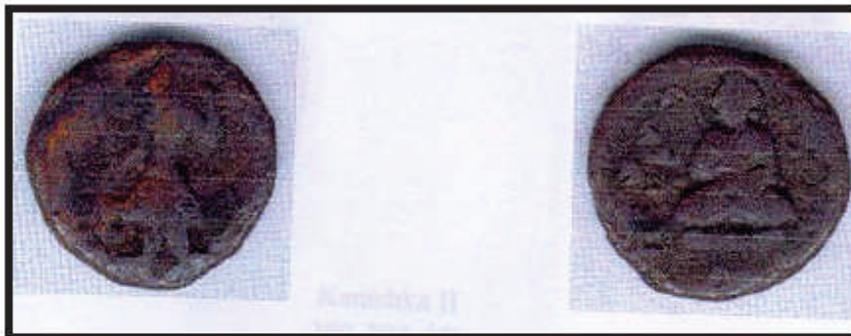
Reverse : Shiva standing holding rident

Weight : 8.0 gm Reference : GK # 19

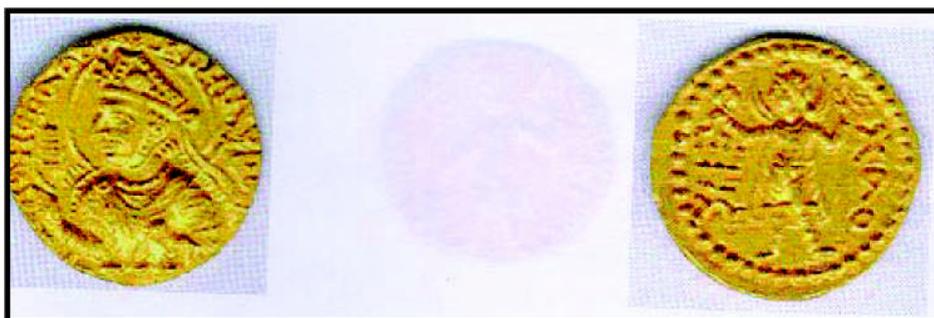
Kanishka (100-126 AD)



Kanishka I (the great) 100-126 AD Gold Dinar, Obverse: King Sacrificing at Altar, Reverse : Four Armed Shiva Weight : 7.9 gm ,GH # 55.



Kanishka I (the great)
100-126 AD
Copper Tetradrachm
Obverse : King sacrificing at altar
Reverse : " Buddha Maitraya seated
Weight : -16 gm.



Huvishka 126-164 AD
Gold Dinar Obverse : Bust of King
Reverse : Lunar god with crescent on shoulder
Weight : 7.9 gm
BMC # 30 Very Rare



Kanishka II
200-222 AD
Obverse : King Sacrificing at Altar
Reverse : Three headed Shiva
Gold Stater
Weight : 7.8 gm.
GK # 635.7



Kushana Coin

Kushana Coin

Vasudeva (164-200 AD)



Vasudeva I
164-200 AD
Gold Stater
Weight : 8.0 gm MAC # 3389

9.11 THE SATAVAHANAS

The Satavahanas were also called Andhras. There is a controversy regarding their ancestry. The Aitareya Brahmana claims the Andhras as, the exiled and degenerated sons of Viswamitra. Scholars are of the opinion that the original home of the Andhras Andhra Bhritiyas was the Bellary district. Others claim their records to be found in the Northern Deccan and central India. Ashokan and Nasik inscriptions mention the Andhras to be Brahmins and as Dravidians who joined the Aryan fold later. While Roy Chaudhari agrees that they belonged to the Brahmin fold Dr. Gopal Charya holds the view that they were Kshatriyas.

Whatever may be the debate, the dynasty lived and ruled in the territories lying between the rivers Godavari and the Krishna. This dynasty was believed to have confined to a large part of the South during the time of the Mauryas. It was supposed to be powerful with a well-built army. As long as the Mauryas were dominant, this dynasty accepted their supremacy. After the death of Ashoka it began to exercise its power because it found that the successors of Ashoka were not in a position to defend the vast kingdom handed down by their ancestors. We come to know from the puranas that the dynasty produced thirty kings and ruled for over four thirty years.

Not much is known about the rulers of this dynasty but from the available sources, especially it is possible to trace some of the names of the kings. **Simuka** was the founder of the Satavahana dynasty who ruled from 235 B.C. to 213 B.C. He seized the power after overthrowing the last Kanva ruler Sushanna. His brother **Krishna or Kanha** succeeded him and ruled the kingdom for eighteen years from 212 B.C. to 195 B.C.

Sri Satakarni was the successor after Simuka, and perhaps the greatest of the Andhra monarchs. He ruled from 194 B.C. to 184 B.C. He is known for his performance of two aswamedha sacrifices.

His reign was followed by the rule of **Gautamiputra satakarni**. (80 AD –104 AD) Gautamiputra Satakarni was the famous king during the Satavahana dynasty. He defeated the Sakas (Scythians), Yavanas (Greeks) and Pahlavas (Parthians). His empire extended upto Banavasi in the south, and included Maharashtra, Konkan, Saurashtra, Malwa, west Rajasthan and Vidharbha.

His son, Vasishtiputra Sri Pulamavi, succeeded him in about 130 A.D. And ruled at Paithan on the banks of Godavari. He extended his rule towards the Andhra country. Two other cities,

Vaijayanti in North Kanara and Amravati in the Guntur district , attained fame during this period. Kings succeeding Gautamiputra lost many of their territories.

But the power of Satvahanas rejuvenated under Sri Yajna Satakarni, who was the last great ruler. After him the weak successors resulted in the decrease of the territory of the Satavahanas. Hostility with the Saka rulers also led to the ultimate decrease in its territories and declaration of sovereignty.

Some scholars say that there were 19 kings in this dynasty and they ruled for 300 years, while others say there were 30 kings who ruled for 456 years. The dynasty came to an end about the middle of the third centuryAD. Their empire at last broke up into small principalities ruled by the Abhiras, Chutus, Ikshvakus, Pallavas. The Satavahana Empire was divided into five provinces in the later years of its rule. The **Abhiras** possessed the western territory of Nasik while the **Ikshvakus** dominated the eastern parts of the Krishna-Guntur region. The **Chutus** triumphed over the southwestern parts and extended their power to the north and east. The southeastern divisions went under the control of the **Pahalvas**.

The Satavahana society revealed the presence of four classes. In the first class were placed the persons who administered the districts, the officials or the nobles belonged to the second strata of society. The Vaidhya, cultivators, followed them. The fourth class was common citizen.

Both Buddhism and Brahmanism were followed during this time. Religious tolerance continued among of various cults of people.

Trade thrived and there existed association of workers undertaking a variety of trades. Broach, Sopara and Kalyan were important trading centers. The Satavahana rulers supported Prakrit, which was the frequently used language of the people.

9.12 THE SAKAS

The Sakas or Scythians were originally the inhabitants of Central Asia at the time of Herodotus (5th century B.C.). They were made up of four chief branches identified as the Massa Gatae, Sacae, Alani, and Sarmatians. They shared a common language, customs and traditions.

Herodotus in the 5th century B.C. wrote after his observation about the Scythians thus: *"they were the most manly and law-abiding of the Thracian tribes. If they could combine under one ruler, they would be the most powerful nation on earth."* Greek and Persian

historians as tall, large framed and fierce warriors who were unrivalled on the horse remember them.

The Graeco-Bactrian rule (200 B.C.-100 B.C.) did not last for more than a century. Continuous warfares and internal splits soon enfeebled them. India was divided into many small Greek Kingdom, which fell an easy prey to the new invasions of Scythians or Sakas about the middle of the first century B.C. They overthrew the Greek rulers and established their dominion as well as settlements all over India.

Before coming to India many of them lived in the Iranian Sakasthan under Parthian rulers. These people were so closely associated with the Parthians that some of the thinkers believe that both the Sakas and the Parthians were of the same race. A.K. Majumdar states that their association with the Parthians resulted in the formation of a composite group known as the Pahlavas. The Saka clans came into northwest India through two important passes, namely, the Khyber Pass, and the Bolan pass. These groups probably moved from their homelands in search of pasturelands. When they came to India they settled down in the lower valley of river Indus from where they proceeded further. They initially settled down in Sindh and later on established their superiority over other parts of India.

Some invading groups went to Punjab, some went to Maharashtra, and yet others moved further east to Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Their influence was felt upto Gadavari, Kathaiwar and Saurashtra.

Sir Cunningham, former Director General of Indian Archeological survey recorded that,

'Me different races of the Scythians which successively appeared as conquerors in the border provinces of Persia and India are the following in the order of arrival :

*Sakas or Sacae (the Su or Sai of the Chinese - B. C. ?)
Kushans (the great Yue-Chi (Yuti) of the Chinese - B. C. 163)*

Kiddarite or later Kushans (the little Yue-chi of the Chinese - A.D. 450)

Epthalites or White Huns (the Yetha of the Chinese - 470 A.D.) "

Once these tribes settled in India, irrespective of the part they settled in, they soon mingled with the residents and adopted Indian ways of life, religious beliefs. They married Indian women also.

Ancient Greek scholars like Herodotus, Pliny, Plotemy, Arrian and Persian writer like Darius throw light on the origin of these inhabitants and show the identified as follows:

Original Name	Name derived
Gatae	Jat
Avar	Ahir
Scythii	Saka
Khazar	Gujjar
Tukharian	Thakur
Sautra Matii	Saurashtra
Sassanian	Sessodia
Medes	Madra

The Saka rulers may be divided under two classes from the administrative point of view. They are as follows:

The northern Satraps.

The western Satraps.

The northern Satraps were more predominant in Taxila and Matura. The first three Saka kings were **Manes** or **Manes, Azes I**, and **Azes II or Azilises**. It is difficult to give the exact dates of their rule. Maues is supposed to have ruled the kingdom from 20 B.C. to 22 A.D. Their numerous coinages seem to throw light on the influence of the Yavana (Greek) ancestors.

The western Satraps mainly occupied Gujarat, Kutch, Malwa and Maharashtra. The first two rulers of the family were Bhumik and Nahapana. Nahapana is known from his silver coins and from his inscriptions. He seems to have ruled from 119 to 124 A.D. Chatsana and Rudraman were the Satraps who ruled Ujjain. After the death of Rudraman the Sakas continued their rule till the fourth century A.D.

9.13 THE INDO-GREEKS AND THE INDO-PARTHIANS

To understand the history of these two ethnic groups it will be worthwhile to take a peep into the earlier history. Since Alexander's invasion, several Greek families had settled down in northwestern India. It was after his death that **Selueus Nicator**, his able General, founded a kingdom in the western and Central portions of India. Seleucus Nicator carried on town construction too. He built many towns all over his vast kingdom, including Alexandropolis in India. Among the several

tribes he established his grip over, in this territory, the most important were the **Bactrians** and the **Parthians**.

These two tribes declared themselves independent during the rule of **Antiochus**, the successor of Selucus. Ashoka refers to his Yavana (Greek) subjects. He seems to have engaged Greek aristocrats in the service of the state. With the establishment of Greek rule, arts and sciences received fresh and dynamic momentum and Taxila, their capital, turned out to be one of the greatest centers of learning. Since then the Yavanas are mentioned from time to time in Indian literature.

The **Bactrians** occupied the north western frontiers in about 140 B.C. The most renowned of the Bactrian kings was Manender (Milinda). He invaded central India and fought a war with Pushyamitra Sunga but was defeated. Menander is said to have become a Buddhist later on.

Sind was also under the authority of the Bactrian rulers. It is probable that both Apollodidus and his successor Menander ruled over Sind for a hundred years. In the ancient and early Indian sources we find reference to cities built by the rulers of the Graeco-Bactrian states in the basin of the Indus Delta. After Manender the dynasty began to decline. The last ruler was **Heliocles** and his territories were taken over by the Saka dynasty in about 125 B.C.

The **Parthians** became dominant in the western frontier of India. They succeeded the Sakas. **Manes** was the ruler of Punjab and Kabul in about 120 B.C. The most important king of this tribe was **Gondophernes**. It is believed from the clerical records that it was during time that Christianity arrived in India when St. Thomas began propagation of this new religion in 52 A.D. In the course of time even this group was absorbed in the Indian culture like the Sakas.

Check Your Progress

1. Trace the history of Sakas

9.14 SUMMARY

Thus, with the fall of this dynasty, the Andhras became powerful in the south. The Greeks established themselves in the west. The history of the period from the fall of Kanvas to the rise of the Guptas is

a confused one. It is true that the Satavahanas also referred to as Andhras, followed the Kanvas.

The Political History of India from 2nd century onwards witnessed political turmoil and instability. There were sudden changes in the administration from the Sungas to Kanvas and to the Anshras. The period also witnessed the reestablishment of the Indo-Greeks in the Punjab and towards eastern parts of India. The history of North west India was influenced also by the coming of new tribal groups, namely the Sakas and Kushanas. Buddhism spread and took a new form during Kanishka's period.

Thus, the various ethnic groups namely, the Satavahanas, the Sakas, the Indo-Greeks and the Indo-Parthians settled in different parts of Indian and got absorbed in the main stream of Indian life and culture. The coming of new groups also led to religious tolerance among various cults of people.

9.15 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Kanishka's spread of Buddhism.
2. Write short notes on :
 - a) The Kanvas
 - b) The Satavahanas
 - c) The Sunga Art
 - d) Pushyamitra Sunga.
 - e) Kanishka and Buddhism.
 - f) Science and literature during Kushana rule.
3. Trace the history of Sakas
4. Write a note on the Indo-Greeks.
5. Give a brief account of Indo-Parthians.



**THE GUPTA AND VAKATAKA AGE
(320 A.D. - 600 A.D.)
(IMPERIAL EXPANSION AND
ADMINISTRATION)**

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- 10.11 Council of Ministers
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- 10.13 Provincial Administration
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- 10.15 Village Administration
- 10.16 Revenue Administration

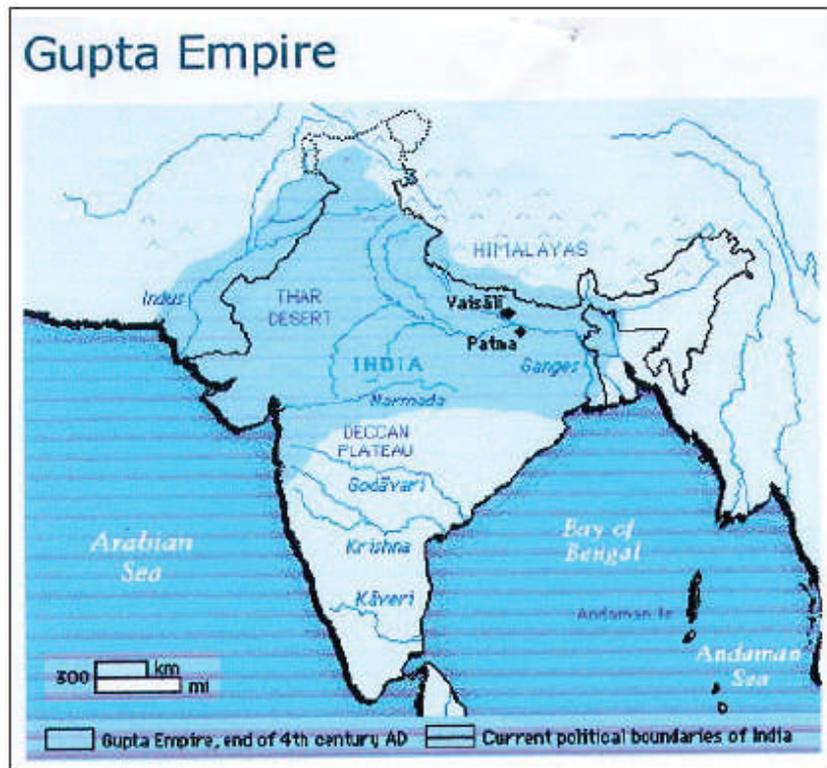
- 10.17 Judicial Administration
- 10.18 Military Administration
- 10.19 Summary
- 10.20 Questions

10.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the students about the era of the Gupta Dynasty.
- To study the Sources and about the origin of the Gupta Dynasty.
- To analyse the role of Chandra Gupta.
- To estimate the conquest of Samudra Gupta.
- To analyse the role played by Ram Gupta.
- To estimate the various policies, conquest, coins of Chandra Gupta I.
- To throw light on the achievements of Kumar Gupta I
- To Estimate Skanda Gupta's carrier.
- To trace the major factors responsible for the downfall of Gupta Empire.
- To study the administration of Gupta empire.
- To analyse the provincial administration, District council, Revenue administration judicial and military administration.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

After the fall of Kushanas, in the period of political disunity, the Gupta rose to paramount power in Magadha. Imperial Gupta once again gave political unity to the country. Under Gupta dynasty India made rapid progress. Although the empire of the Gupta was not as large as the Mauryan empire, it did succeed in keeping north India politically united for more than a century, from about 300 to 450 A.D. Under Gupta India enjoyed economic prosperity. Gupta rulers encouraged art and learning and themselves showed interest in nation's cultural advancement. There was a perfect religious tolerance. This era was a great period of expansion of Indian culture in the Far East.



It was due to this all – sided development that the reign of Imperial Gupta has been called the 'Golden Age' in the annals of Indian history.

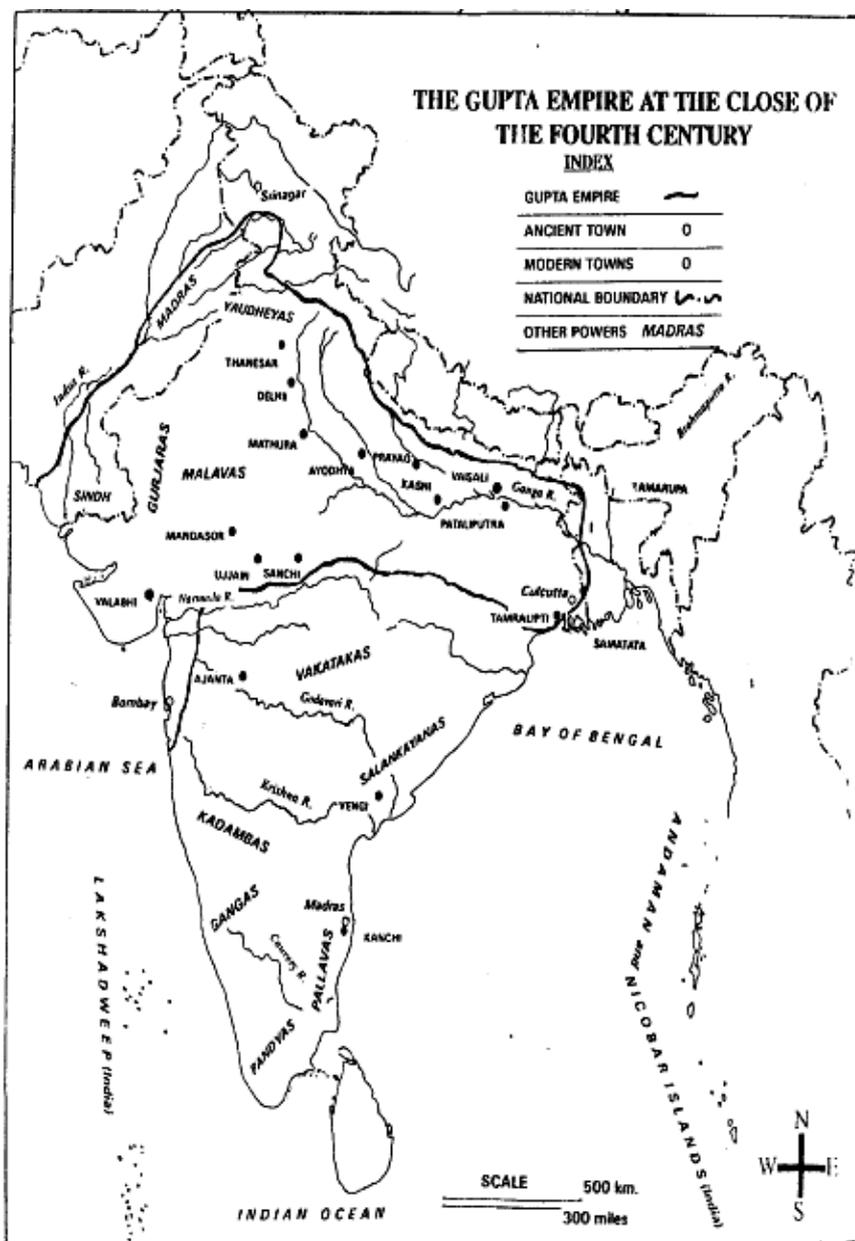
In many respects the Gupta administration constitutes the water shed between its past and future traditions of quality and government. Infact, it will not be exagration to say that Gupta administration provided the model for basic administrative structure both in theory and practise. Due to an all round development in this age European writers have compared it with the age of Pericles in Greek history. Probably ancient India never attempt such high water mark as she did during Gupta period. India became once again united strong and glorious during Gupta period. Cultural unity was combined with political unity. The monarchical states continued to function in the traditional way based on Dharma. King continued to be the center of Government, amusing all supreme powers to himself. Thus at that time India reached the peak of progress in all fields-political, social, economic, religious and culture. Coins, inscriptions, accounts of foreign travellers give us an inside into the administrative structure of the Gupta Empire.

10.2 SOURCES OF GUPTA HISTORY

Both religious and secular literature, accounts of foreign travelers, inscriptions, coins and monuments throw light on the history of Gupta dynasty from various angles.

Literacy sources can be listed as follows

- I. Puranas – most Important are Vishnu, Vayu, Skandha, Siva, Bhavishya, Brahma, Vamana, Maskandeya etc.
- II. Kaumudi Mahotsava (Sanskrit Play)
- III. Devichandraguptam by Vishakhandatta
- IV. Harsha – Charita by Bana
- V. Arya – Maurya – Sri – Mula – Kalpa – (Buddhist chronicle)
- VI. Kamandaka's Nitisastra
- VII. Foreigners accounts – i) Fa-Hien ii) Hien - Tsang



Archaeological sources

- a) Coins
- b) Inscriptions
- c) Allahabad Pillar Inscription
- d) Eran Stone pillar Inscription
- e) Copper plates
- f) Monuments

10.3 ORIGINAL HOME OF THE GUPTAS

Though there are numerous sources available on Gupta period, the fact remains that the early history of the Gupta is obscure. The origin of the Guptas has been the subject of a lively debate among the historians for quite a longtime. The name or surname Gupta is not absolutely unknown to Ancient Indian history. Officials with title of Gupta are mentioned in old records, particularly of the Sunga and Satavahana period. But there are no definite evidences to connect these Gupta with the Imperial Gupta dynasty of the 4th century A.D. Dr. K.P. Jayaswal on the basis of Kaumudi Mahotsava has considered that Guptas were Jats and they originally belonged to the Punjab. Another view has been advanced by Dr. Dodwell. He says, 'It is just possible that the Gupta and Ghatokacha are foreign names, under a Sanskrit guise and that the Guptas were not a Hindu blood. In any case the name Gupta suggest a humble origin'. According to Dr. H.C. Raichoudhary Guptas were Brahmin by caste. On the other hand Dr. S. Chattopadhaya is of the opinion that the Guptas were Kshatriyas. According to Vishnu purana the Gupta belonged to Vaisya caste and it also describes the location of Gupta kingdom, 'The territory along the Ganges (up to) Prayaga will be enjoyed by the people of Magadha and the Guptas'. Thus puranas brings us to the conclusion that the original Gupta territory comprised Magadha, though it may not be original home of Guptas.

10.4 RISE OF GUPTA POWER

Inscriptional evidences at Allahabad pillar proved that Sri Gupta was the founder of the Gupta dynasty. Sri Gupta was succeeded by his son Maharaja Ghatokacha. Sri Gupta, the founder of the Gupta dynasty said to have ruled Magadha from 240 to 280 A.D. His son Ghatokacha ruled Magadha from 280 A.D. up to 320 A.D. In the Gupta records both Sri Gupta and Ghatokacha has been reffered with the title of Maharaja. It is believed by some historians that both Sri Gupta and Ghatokacha Gupta were feudatory chiefs as they styled themselves simply as Maharajas. Since this title was often borne by feudatory chiefs. Probably early Guptas were subordinate rulers. However there is no definite proof about it.

10.4.1 Chandra Gupta I :

Chandra Gupta I was the first Gupta ruler, who assumed the imperial title of 'Maharajadhiraj' meaning 'Supreme king of great king'. Chandra Gupta I was the first important king of the dynasty rose to eminence. Chandra Gupta I was the son and successor of Maharaja Ghatotkacha. He was the real founder of the Gupta power. His career is not fully known but his main achievement consists in having established a stable and strong government within a short period of fifteen years (320 A.D. — 335 A.D.) It is generally accepted that Chandragupta's date of accession was 26th February 320 A.D. To commemorate his coronation date he started a new era known as the Gupta era.

In ancient Indian history there are plenty of instances by which we can say that matrimonial alliances enhanced the status of the rulers. Like several kings of ancient India Chandra Gupta I also strengthened himself by the significant marriage alliance with Lichavis. The Lichavis were a powerful dynasty, who then, controlled considerable portions of Bihar and perhaps even Nepals. Both inscriptions and Chandra Gupta I coinage recorded the marriage of Chandra Gupta I with Lichavi princess, Sri Kamardevi. The coins showed that Kamardevi was associated with the government of Chandra Gupta which included the Lichavi republic. It may be the result of either of these marriage by the way of dowry or may be direct military conquest by Chandra Gupta I. Thus marriage with Kumardevi added to political power and prestige of Chandra Gupta I. It is also possible that Lichavis and Guptas who ruled over the adjoining areas were united by the marriage between Chandra Gupta I and Kumardevi.

Chandra Gupta I secured a paramount position in Magadha and in the neighbouring countries by the means of this matrimonial alliance. Chandra Gupta I ruled over a fairly extensive kingdom, this is obvious by changing the title Maharajadhiraj. On the basis of a verse in Vayu Puran scholars generally accept the view that Chandra Gupta I ruled over Saket (Avadh) Prayag (Allahabad) and Magadha (south Bihar). From puranic verse given below, we get vague idea of the extent of Chandra Gupta's Empire.

'Ahu Ganga Prayagamcha Saketam
Magadhamstatha
Etan Janapadan Servan Bhokshyante
Gupta Vamsajah'

Kings born of Gupta race will enjoy all these territories, namely, along the Ganges, Prayaga, Saketa and the Magadhas.

Thus Chandra Gupta prepared the solid foundation on which Gupta kingdom was erected. An important act of this king was the

holding of an assembly of councilors and members of the royal family at which prince Samudra Gupta was formally nominated successor to the imperial throne of Guptas.

10.4.2 Samudra Gupta (335 A.D. — 380 A.D.) :

Dr. V.A. Smith has described Samudra Gupta as 'the Nepolean of India' due to his conquests in all directions of India. Samudragupta is proverbially known as the greatest conqueror of ancient India. Contemporary epigraphs, such as the Eran inscription, credit him with the overthrowing of 'the whole tribe of kings upon the earth'. The Allahabad pillar inscriptions give full details about him. The Allahabad Pillar inscription refers to the appointment of Samudra Gupta by Chandra Gupta I. Allahabad inscription is generally known as Prasasti (eulogy) because of the superhuman attributes paid to him by the engraver. Inscription, a eulogy of the emperor was composed by Harishena. Harishena was a great official who held the various portfolios in Samudragupta's court. He had composed the poem in praise of his master. Harishena, the author of the Allahabad pillar inscription, says 'In the presence of the full assembly the king embraced his son Samudra Gupta and he overcame with emotions with hairs on his body standing erect, said with tears in his eyes : 'Thou art worthy, rule this whole world'. The poet adds while this declaration caused happiness to the courtiers, the faces of his kinsmen of equal birth became pale. Thus the nomination of Samudra Gupta has been described with a dramatic effect. Inscription also throws light on genealogy from Srigupta, Ghatotkacha and Chandra Gupta I. Special mention is made in respect of Mahadevi Kumaradevi, a Licchavi princess. Inscription also refers to a number of rulers and their kingdoms which were either annexed or conquered by Samudragupta. Along with inscriptions certain copper plates supporting the inscriptions are excellent sources of information. Samudra Gupta also left an extensive coinage. Some important political events of his reign are known from this source and the records of his successors.

10.4.3 Conquest of Samudra Gupta :

The reign of Samudra Gupta is chiefly remarkable for the series of military campaigns which led in various parts of India. Since Samudra Gupta was deliberately selected by his father as the next king, he had to deal with rival princes who coveted the throne. It possibly led to trouble but they were successfully put down to Samudra Gupta. When Samudra Gupta came in power, there was political disturbance in his kingdom but he maintained law and order. All the time of his accession politically India presented a dark picture. Due to lack of a powerful empire and emperor, India was divided and distributed into a number of petty principalities. The Magadha empire was surrounded by powerful and independent rulers like Nagas, the Vakatakas, the Shakas and several

republican tribes. Rajput and was often molested by the foreign invaders. Gujarat was ruled by various Kshatriyas. Bengal was divided into various units. South was ruled by Cholas, Pandyas, Pallavas and Cheras. Therefore it was really a difficult task for Samudra Gupta to bring them under his control.

From the very beginning Samudra Gupta was fired with the idea of conquest. He followed the policy of Digvijay and attempt success in uprooting small states. Dr. Radha Kumud Mukherjee had praised Samudra Gupta as, "A hero of a hundred fights, he was able to make all parts of India acknowledge his paramount sovereignty by a victorious march through them which continued for more than two or three years under the physical conditions of such a march." According to the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta the places and the countries conquered and annexed or liberated, by Samudra Gupta are as follows :-

a) Northern Conquest :

Samudra Gupta twice laid an expedition to North or Aryavarta. Allahabad pillar inscription records the name of following nine kings along with several princess of Aryavarta defeated by him. These kingdoms were incorporated into Gupta empire. The nine kings were :

1. Rudradeva
2. Matila
3. Naga- Dutta
4. Chandravarman
5. Ganpati –Naga
6. Naga – Sena
7. Achyuta
8. Nandin
9. Balavarman

Thus, Samudra Gupta appears to have led his forces as far as the river Chambell. His Campaign was crowned with success and the kingdom of defeated kings were made part of the Gupta empire. Conquest of Samudra Gupta had a profound effect on India, for they brought about her political unification.

Southern Conquest : .

Samudra Gupta's campaign of conquest were not confined to north India along. As regard his conquest's in Dakshinapatha i.e. the Deccan and south India, Samudra Gupta defeated as many as twelve kings for this he had to launched a travel of about 3000 miles. This campaign took him more than two years but his empire was greatly extended. He marched through Vindhya forest, Kaling

and along the east coast up to river Krishna on the banks of which he made successfully a group of south Indian kings, laid by Vishnu gupta and Pallava family. His expedition towards the south also helps us to know the Geographical and Political condition of southern India. The names of the twelve kings in the south defeated by him are :

1. Mahendra of Kosala
2. Vyaghararaja of Mahakantara
3. Mantaraja of Kaurala
4. Svamidatta of Kottura
5. Daman of Erandapalla
6. Vishnugopa of Kanchi
7. Nilaraj of Avamukta
8. Hastivarman of Vengi
9. Mahendra of Pistapura
10. Ugravasena of Pallaka
11. Kubera of Devarashtra
12. Dhananjaya of Kusthalapura

Most of the kingdoms listed about where in the eastern part of the Deccan. Hence, the many ports on the east, coast, carried on lucrative trader probably Samudra Gupta wanted them under his control. Perhaps the ambition of Samudra Gupta was merely to secure recognition of his imperial position in the Deccan and south India. Samudra Gupta is said to have acted as "Dharam Vijayi" in the south India.

Besides this many more kings were subdued by him.

- Kosala, undoubtedly denotes the districts of Bilaspur, Raipur and Sambhalpur.
- Mahakantara, most probably was in the forest region of Gondvana.
- Kaurala was the Sonpur district of south India. Pishtapura is the modern Pithapuram in the Godavari district.
- Kottura was in Ganjam district.
- Erandapalla is identified by fleet with erandol in Khandesh and by Dumbreuil with Eranda, a town in the Ganjam district.
- Kanchi in Canjeevaram in Madras. Avamukta, from Hathi Gumph inscription we learn, existed near Godavari.
- Vengi has been identified with Vegi or Pedd- Vegi, about 7 miles north of Ellora between the Krishna and the Godavari.
- Palakka is probably identical with Palakkada in Nellora. Devarashtra was in Vizagapattam district.
- Rusthalapura probably was kuttalpur in North arcot.

The territories of the defeated rulers in the south were not annexed by Samudra Gupta, as perhaps he thought it was not quite easy to control directly all the distant regions. Only Northern India came directly under Gupta rule, whereas the southern regions paid homage to him as a paramount ruler.

Subjugation of Forest tribes :

Samudra Gupta reduced to the position of serfdom the rulers of forest kingdoms. (Atavika Rajyas's). Harishena state that the border tribes accepted his rule without much resistant. Tribal ruler submitted to him voluntarily.

These tribes were :

1. **Malavas** : In the time of Alexander they occupied a part of the Punjab. In the time of Samudra Gupta, they were most probably in eastern Rajputana.
2. **Arjunayanas** : The Arjunayanas inhabited the eastern portions of Alwar and Jaipur
3. **Yaudheyas** : They were Rajputs and had extended their dominions from Bharatpur to the borders of Bhawalpur.
4. **Madrakas** : The Madrakas had their capital at Sialkot in the Punjab.
5. **Abhiras** : The Abhiras occupied the tract in the lower Indus Valley and western Rajputana, a section of the tribe apparently settled in Central India and gave its name to the Ahirwar country between Jhansi and Bhilsa.
6. **Prarjunas** : Their capital was at Narsimhapur in central provinces.
7. **Sanakanikas** : They were in the neighbourhood of prarjunas.
8. **Kakas** : The kakas is identified with kakupur near Bithur.
9. **Kharaparikas** : The Kharaparikas might have occupied the Damoh district of the Central provinces.

Conquest with Shakas and Kushanas :

Samudra Gupta commanded respect amongst independent rulers of many neighboring states. The Kushanas rulers of north west, the Saka ruler of west India, the ruler of Sri Lanka and rulers of the south east Asia had cordial relations with him and respected him.

Relations with Ceylon :

A Chinese account state that two Buddhist monks, sent to Bodhgaya by Meghavarman a Buddhist king of Ceylon. These monks had faced a great inconvenience for want of accommodation and this they reported to their kings. On this king Meghavarman

sent an embassy with gifts to Samudragupta and obtain his permission to construct a Buddhist monastery at Gaya in Bihar. Samudragupta readily accepted his request. This indicates that Samudragupta had very cordial relations with Ceylon. The king of Ceylon, then constructed a three storeyed monastery, with six halls and three towers, which housed a statue of Lord Buddha, made of gold and silver. Dr. A.S. Altekar had pointed, "It is likely that Samudragupta's courtiers also regarded the rich presents as tribute and constructed the Ceylonese king's prayer for permission for charter confirming him in the enjoyment of his territories one of the forms of homage paid by the category of states into which Simhala or Ceylon is included",

10.4.4 Extent of Samudragupta's empire :

Samudragupta ruled over vast Empire. According to Allahabad pillar inscription. Samudragupta never knew any defeat. He had unified the greatest part of India under him. According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, the empire of Samudra gupta, "Comprised nearly the whole of northern India, with the exception of Kashmir, Western Punjab, Western Rajaputana, Sindh and Gujarat, with the highlands of Chhatisgarh and Orissa and a long stretch of territory along the eastern coast extending as far south as chinleput and probably even further."

10.4.5 Estimate of Samudra Gupta :

The fame of Samudragupta rests not only on his brilliant martial career, but on his achievements in peace. After establishing such a vast empire Samudragupta naturally performed the Ashwamegha ceremony which had been traditionally recognized in India as a symbol of imperialism. The name of Samudragupta deserves special mention in the history of ancient India. He was a great conqueror and efficient administrator, a far sighted statesman and a patron and lover of art and literature.

1) A successful conqueror :

Samudragupta was one of the greatest warrior in the history of India. Harishena his court poet mention, "Samudragupta was skilful in engaging in a hundred battles of various kinds, whose only ally was the strength of his own arm, whose most elegant physique was covered over with all the beauty of the scars caused by the blows of battle arrows, spears, spikes lances, javelins and many other weapons.'

2) Founder of an Empire :

The real founder of the Gupta Empire was Samudragupta. Though Chandra Gupta I laid the foundations of Gupta empire but his empire was not powerful. Hence, the credit goes to Samudragupta. Samudragupta added immensely to the resources of his empire. He is compared with Nepolean and Akbar due to his

sound knowledge of the administration. He was the conquerer who never suffered a defeat.

3) Statesmanship :

Samudragupta was a great diplomat. He was far sighted statesman. He was engaged in a hundred battle, according to the Prasasti. He did not blindly go on conquering one region after another. But he directly governed certain region and from certain state he accepted tribute. He knew it very well that it would be very difficult for him to control the far of areas from Magadha. Samudragupta diplomatically compelled far of state to accept his suzerainty and accepted homage and taxes. In this manner Samudragupta gave proof of been a practical stateman.

4) A great Administrator :

After his campaign Samudragupta settled down to organized the government. He established peace and order and gave good administration. Due to his administrative qualities he could established a powerful empire. There was general prosperity and people were happy. The Allahabad Pillar inscription described his allocation of his duties and responsibilities to a council of minister. His central government very well knit and also very well organized. The administration under him was quite different from that of the Mauriyans. It must be admitted that it was chiefly due to the statesmanship of Samudragupta that the vast empire which he left behind was gradually extended by his successors.

5) Learning and Lover of Art :

As a lover of learning Samudragupta patronize distinguished scholars. He had a great attachment with literature and learning. Harishena and Vasubhandu were the important personality lived in his court. Harishena lays special emphasis upon Samudragupta's learning and wisdom. Samudragupta had a profound knowledge of sacred books. He was also a great musicians which is proved by his coins representing him as a musicians playing on a vina. According to Harishena, he put to shame the preceptor of the Lord of Gods and Tumburu and Narada and others by his sharp and polished intellect and choral skill and musical accomplishments. The testimony of Harisena to his musical abilities finds corroboraiion in lyrist type of coins.

6) Revival of Brahaminism :

Samudragupta coins and inscription throw light on his religious conviction. He was a faithful follower of Brahmanic Religion. He revived the Ashwamegha which had not being performed for a longer time. He brought back Hinduism with full honour which is also reflected through the images of Lakshmi, Durga, Saraswati and Ganga and the symbols like Chakra, Lotus and Garuda found in his gold coins.

7) Tolerance :

Samudragupta was a tolerant king. Though he was patron of Brahmanism. He was free from narrow outlook in religion. Vasubhandu the famous Buddhist scholar was his minister. The fact that he permitted to construct monastery at Bodhgaya Speaks for his religious tolerance.

Thus the synthesis of numerous qualities made Samudra Gupta a unique personality. He was an emperor of intuitive genius. Samudragupta has been described as the Indian Napoleon by V.Smith. R.K. Mukherji regards Samudragupta a 'many sided genius' while R.C. Majumdar regards him 'the great monarch who looms so large in Indian history'. K.N.Munshi has correctly assessed him in the following words, 'A brilliant general, a farsighted state man, a man of culture and a patron of the arts and letters, he became the symbol and architect of a mighty creative urge among the people which while drawing vitality from tradition and race memory took on a new shape and power.

Check Your Progress:

1. What are the main sources of information for the history of the Guptas?

10.5 RAMA GUPTA (375 - 380 A.D.)

Till half century ago it was believed by many historians that Chandragupta II succeeded Samudragupta. But the discovery of a lost dramatic work, 'Devi Chandra Guptam' by Vishakdatta has given birth to almost a new question. Accordingly Samudragupta was succeeded by his eldest son Rama Gupta and not by Chandragupta II. The succession of Ramagupta is evidenced from a lost drama 'Devi Chandra Guptam', fragments of which are preserved in the 'Natyadarpana' by Ramachandra and Guruchandra, Bana's Harshacharita and Kavyamimansa by Rajshekara. By piecing together the scattered wideness the scholars have constructed the following story.

Ramgupta was not a worthy successor of Samudragupta. He had to face an invasion by the sakas. While fighting a war with the Sakas, Ram Gupta was placed in a difficult situation. For the safety of his people, he agreed to surrender his queen Dhruvadevi to the

Saka King. When it was made known there was protest every where. It is said that his younger brother Chandra Gupta II opposed this insulting arrangement. He himself offered to go to the Saka king in disguise of queen Dhruvadevi and killed Saka king. Thus he saved the honour of Dhruvadevi and the family name. This incident must have raised him in the estimation of his subjects as well as of queen Dhruvadevi. Thereafter Chandragupta succeeded in killing his elder brother Ramgupta and not only seized his kingdom but also married the widow of his elder brother. Though the episode of Ramgupta is very difficult to refuse, there is no authentic evidence to prove it. Whatever may be the truth, the fact is that the reign of Ramgupta was short and inglorious.

10.6 CHANDRA GUPTA!! (380 - 414 A.D)

Introduction :

The inscription, coins and writing of Chinese traveler Fa-Hien are the main sources of the information about him. Chandra Gupta was the second great king of Gupta Dynasty. Under Chandra Gupta, Gupta empire considerably expanded. Chandra Gupta is also called Narendra Chandra, Simha Chandra, Narendra Simha and Simha Vikrama. He ascended the throne in 380 A.D. His mother name was Datta Devi, as found recorded in the Mathura stone inscription, which also says that Chandra Gupta II was chosen by his father Samudra Gupta as the next Emperor. Chandra Gupta II followed the footsteps of his father Samudra Gupta. The reign of Chandra Gupta II witnessed the high water mark of the Gupta Empire, as he carried on, with remarkable success, the policy of world conquest. Chandra Gupta inherited the military genius of his father. He perceived both wars of conquest and diplomacy for the expansion of his kingdom.

10.6.1 Policy of Matrimonial Alliance:

Chandra Gupta had Matrimonial Alliance with the powerful ruling families of his times. Matrimonial Alliances occupy a prominent place in the foreign policies of Gupta's. Chandra Gupta I, the Grandfather of Chandra Gupta II had strengthened his imperial position by Matrimonial Alliance with the dynasty of Lichchavis who had controls most of the Bihar and perhaps Nepal as well. Samudra Gupta, father of Chandra Gupta II is said to have accepted the gifts presents of maidens from the courts of contemporary potentates. Chandra Gupta II continued the policy of Matrimonial Alliance followed by his forefather. He married Kubera Naga, of the Naga family and had a daughter by her name Prabhavati Gupta. Later Chandra Gupta II gave his daughter –Prabhavati Gupta in marriage to the Vakataka Rudrasena-I.

According to Dr. V.A. Smith "the Vakataka Maharaja occupied a geographical position in which he could be of much service or disservice to the northern invader of the dominions of Saka Satraps of Gujrat and Sourashtra. Chandra Gupta adopted a prudent precaution in giving daughter to the Vakataka prince and so securing his subordinate alliance".

10.6.2 Conquests of Chandra Gupta :

Chandra Gupta II has extended the Gupta Empire in all the direction. In the East, the whole of Bengal was annexed to the Gupta Empire, in the north west the Punjab became part of the empire, in the west with the acquisition of Gujarat and Saurashtra, the Gupta had reached the Arabian sea. Chandra Gupta II task had already been made easy by his father Samudra Gupta who had extended his kingdom in all the parts of India. But in spite of this Chandra Gupta had to wage mini wars.

1. Defeating the Republic:

The political condition of India had deteriorated at the time of accession of Chandra Gupta II. The kingdom of Kushana and Avanti in the northwest of India and various petty republic in the south of Gupta empire were disunited and disorganized. Chandra Gupta took full advantage of this weakness and he defeated those states and annexed them to his empire.

2. Conquest of Bengal :

Due to local rebellion in Bengal Chandra Gupta was forced to interfere in the matter. The king of Bengal suffered a terrific defeat and this areas were also annexed by him.

War with Sakas :

The greatest military achievement of Chandra Gupta II was the conquest of the Sakas who were ruling in Gujarat and Kathiawar peninsula. There are three inscription which refer to the war with Saka. The Sakas or western Satraps were an important dynasty who had being ruling in were an important dynasty who had being ruling in western India from the later half of the first century A.D. The campaign has been placed between 388 to 409 A.D The Sakas were finally defeated their territories were annexed to the Gupta empire. The conquest and annexation of western India to the Gupta empire enormously enriched it by extension of it limit to the Arabian Sea and establishment of direct over seas trade and commercial contact with the Roman Empire. Thus, the western boundary of the empire became secure and gupta's gained control over the ports of western India.

Commenting on the vitality of the conquest of western India by Chandra Gupta II Dr. V.A. Smith says, "The annexation of Saurashtra and Malwa, not only added to the empire provinces of

exceptional wealth and fertility, but opened up to the paramount power, free access to the ports of the western coast; and thus placed Chandra Gupta II in direct touch with the sea-borne commerce with Europe through Egypt and brought his court and subjects under the influence of the European ideas, which traveled with the goods of the Alexandrian merchants".

Effects of the war with Saka:

1. The empire of Chandra Gupta extended to the natural frontiers of India as he gained the areas of Gujarat and Saurashtra.
2. These areas were quite productive, so they contributed to the prosperity of his empire.
3. The annexation of the Saka territory also led to the incorporation of certain parts of the empire of Chandra Gupta and it immensely contributed to the commercial relations with countries abroad.
4. Not only commercial relations were established with the countries abroad, but cultural relations were also established.
5. Internal trade also received a fillip. The trade was not hampered by any sort of local terminal taxes and goods passed unmolested from one region of the country to the other. Increase in trade led to economic prosperity of the country's main center of trade was Ujjain.

10.6.3 Visit of Fa-Hien :

An outstanding event in the reign of Chandra Gupta II was the visit of Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hien to India. Fa-Hien, though he visited with a religious motive, yet the glimpses of the efficiency of Gupta administration and a progress of the people can be had from his accounts. Though Fa-Hien visited India during Chandra Gupta second time between the year 399 to 414, he has not mention the name of Chandra Gupta II but still the glimpses of Indian culture and political condition are available in his account.

His account tell us that, "the people are numerous and happy, they have not to register their rules, only those who cultivate the royal land have to pay a portion of the gain from it. If they want to go they go. If they want to stay on they stay. The kings govern without any decapitation or other corporal punishment; criminals are simply fined, lightly or heavily, according to the gravity of the case. Even in the cases of repeated attempts at wicked rebellion they only have their right hands cut off. The king's bodyguards and attendants all have salaries. Throughout the whole country the people do not kill any living creature, nor drink intoxicating liquor, nor eat onions or garlic. The only exception is that of Chandallas".

Fa-Hien's accounts throw the light on political, social, economic and religious under Chandra Gupta II. According to Fa-

Hien, the city of Patliputra and royal palace of Ashoka were the excellent piece of art and architecture. He could not believe that it was constructed by human hands according to him it was a miracle on rare device with marvellous architectural design. According to him Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in Bengal, in Punjab and Mathura, both sets of Buddhism flourished side by side. But it was in a decaying state in the middle kingdom, where brahmanism prevailed. He visited many provinces in India and he gives an elaborate description of them. He had given an elaborate account of a monastery in Taxila, Gandhara, Peshawar. He had also described about Buddhist stupas created by Kanishka in Peshawar. The description of Patliputra, Kapilvastu, Kushinagar and Gaya is very interesting.

Fa-Hien had made some interesting observations of the country of Magadha and its civilization. Thus, the description of Fa-Hien is of great historical significance. He had made special mention of charitable inns where shelter with bed, food and drinks were offered to travellers. Free hospitals and dispensaries were instituted by rich people everywhere in the country. It is only from the description of Fa-Hien, we come to know that the political standard of the people of Gupta period was high in comparison with that of Mauriyans. According to Fa-Hien people of Gupta period avoided meat eating, hunting, drinking, gambling etc. And their moral standard was quite high. Thus, we get an insight into the living conditions of the people and the administration under the Guptas from the record of Fa-Hien. However, we have to accept the account of Fa-Hien with certain limitations.

10.6.4 Coins of Chandra Gupta II:

Gupta kings did much in the field of Indian coinage. Chandra Gupta II introduced the most important innovation in the coinage. Along with gold coins of his ancestor, he also struck silver and copper coins. He issued three types of gold coins which varied in weight: it was of 132 Grains, 126 Grains and 121 Grains. His gold coins were as fine as those of his father. His coins are characterized by considerable originality. He had introduced some new types of coin. Such as Umbrella type, horseman type etc. which throw considerable light on his personality and power. It could be classified as under :-

1. Archer type :

In this Chandra Gupta is holding a bow in his left hand while his right is in the act of offering incense at the altar. There are many varieties of this type of coins. The legend 'Chandra', 'Sri Vikram', the symbol on the standards like wheel, garuda, crescent are all profoundly used with different designs.

2. Couch Type:

In this coin the king has been shown sitting on a high backed couch, right leg folded and the left kept hanging. He holds lotus in his hand. The legend is Devasi Maharajadhiraj Sri Chandragupta. On the reverse is goddess Lakshmi is shown. Various legend like Rapakriti, Vikramaditya, Sri Vikramah are used on couch types coins of Chandra Gupta II.

3. Chhatra Type:

In this coin behind the king is a drawf attendant holding Chhatra over him. The legend is Maharajadhiraja Sri Chandragupta' on reverse goddess Lakshmi is standing. She holds Lotus.

4. Lion Slayes type:

In this king has been shown hunting down a lion. The king is dressed as a hunter, he draw an arrow to hit the lion on which he has planted his foot on the lion. There are different varieties of the lionslayes type. In some, the king is shown sending the dart, in other the lion is hit a falls back, in some a retreating lion. On the reverse is shown goddess Durga with his lion as a vehicle. The legends are `Narendrachandra Sinhavikrama, Parama Bhagavata, Bhagavata, Ajitavikrama etc.

10.6.5 Estimate of Chandra Gupta II:

Chandra Gupta II was one of the greatest monarch of Gupta dynasty. Before his coming on the throne there was tendency of political disintigration Chandra Gupta II was the first sovereign of this dynasty to assume the title of 'Vikramaditya'. He is also known as Sakari, Narendr Chandra, Simachandra, Narendrasimha, Simhavikrama, Devaraja, Devagupta and Devashri. He ruled for period of about 40 years, most probably he died in 413 or 414, AD,

1. A Brilliant Administrator:

Chandra Gupta perfected the administrative machinery. He divided his territory into provinces and districts. Officers of these divisions were assisted by the local representative bodies. He paid personal attention towards the administrative details. His administration was based on human principles. He was also assisted by a numbers of ministers. According to Vincent Smith "India was never ruled better than during the regine of Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya".

2. A successful conqueror:

Chandra Gupta by his brilliant conquests not only put an end to foreign domination, but also established peace and prosperity in his vast empire. He defeated many republics and conquered Bengal Western Satraps. He also conquered many territories in north — western India. His empire extended from Himalayas to Narmada. He occupies a unique and prominent position not only in Gupta dynasty but in Indian history also.

3. A Great Diplomat :

Chandra Gupta I was the greatest diplomat of his times. He had strengthened his imperial position by matrimonial alliance with the powerful reigning dynasty. His marriage with Kubernaga, the Naga princess was very important act of his diplomacy. Further his daughter Prabhavati Gupta was married to the Vakataka king Rudrasena II. The Naga and Vakatakas might have been of great help to Chandra Gupta II in his campaign against the Sakas.

4. Religious Toleration:

Chandra Gupta II religious toleration is proved by the fact that the Udaygiri cave inscription are Shaiva and the Sanchi inscription are Vaishnava. Though he himself was a worshipper of Lord Vishnu yet he respected all sects. He appointed his minister's who belonging to other faith such as Virasenasaba, a staunch follower of Shaivism who was his minister of war and peace and his general Amarakarddava was a staunch Buddhist. The Buddhist and the followers of Jainism enjoyed full liberty under him. He is often compared with Ashoka and Akbar. Chandra Gupta I was liberal, to learn and welfare king like Ashoka and was a great diplomat efficient administrator and successful general like Akbar.

5. A patron of Literature:

Chandra Gupta II was a generous patron of art and literature. Being a man of accomplishments himself, he encouraged learning. He had great love for art and education. His court said to have graced by Navartnas or nine gems Kalidasa, a great poet and dramatist, Varahmihira, the greatest astronomer of the period, Vasubandhu, the Buddhist scholar and saint was attached his court. Chandra Gupta I himself was a highly learned person. The period of Chandra Gupta II is known as the period of renaissance in literary sphere.

An able warrior, wise state man, liberal and generous patron, efficient administrator his imperial pomp and power made Chandra Gupta II a greatest monarch of the Gupta dynasty. He occupies a unique and prominent position not only in Gupta dynasty but in Indian history also.

Check Your Progress:

1. Give a critical account of political and military achievements of Chandra Gupta II.

Later Gupta Kings —

- Kumar Gupta I
- Skanda Gupta
- Downfall of Gupta Empire

10.7 KUMAR GUPTA I

Kumar Gupta succeeded Chandragupta II in about 414 A.D., whose known dates range from 415 to 455 A.D. On the death of Chandra Gupta II, his son Kumar Gupta born of his Chief Queen Dhruvadevi ascended the throne. There is no contemporary book or account to have first rate information of his reign but from his coins we learn that he had an efficient organization and complete security in his kingdom. His inscriptions reveal the fact that the country enjoyed peace and prosperity. Trade and Commerce flourished under Shrenis (Guilds). That he was able to maintain the great is evidenced from the finds of his information from north Bengal to Western Malwa. A number of inscriptions of his Governors and feudatories have been found viz the Bilsad stone pillar inscription, Damodarpur copper plate inscription, Gadhwa inscription and Mandasor stone inscription.

Kumar Gupta I had two wives and two sons. The names of his wives were Ananta Devi and Devaki. Purna Gupta was born to Ananta Devi and Skanda Gupta was born to Devaki.

There was a brisk trade during the period of Kumar Gupta. The merchant class had organized themselves under guilds of Western Malwa was famous for cotton and silk clothes in those days. Though he had not fought any famous battle he had performed the Ashwmedha or horse ceremony. And he was recognized as a Chakravarti King of India. After his accession to the throne he adopted the title of Mahendraditya. Kumar Gupta I is known by various names such as Sima Mahendra, Ashvamedha Mahendra, Mahendra Karma, Mahendra Kalpa, Shri Mahendra Simha, Mahendra Kumar, Shri Mahendra Ajita etc. Kumar Gupta I took up the title of Vyaghra-bala-parakrama which means displaying the strength and powers of a tiger. Thus it is obvious that Kumar Gupta was a brave king who with his unflinching courage and inexhaustible strength had extended the frontiers of the Gupta Empire.

The most important source to know more about Kumar Gupta I is his coins. He issued various types of coins which throw a welcome light about his administrative system and also his state officials. His gold coins included archer type, Horseman type, swordsman type, lion slayer type, Tiger slayer type, Elephant ride type, Ashwamegha type and Kartikeya type. Kumar Gupta was a

staunch Brahmanist. He introduced the worship of new God Kartikeya. But Kumar Gupta I continued the worship of other Gods and followed the ancestor's policy of religious toleration. The gold coin with the figure of Kartikeya riding his peacock on the other. Ashwamegha coins must have been issued by him to commemorate the performance of a horse sacrifice. The legend on the observe of these coins is "Jayanti Diwam Kamarah" and on the reverse the legend is Sri Asvamedha – Mahendrah. Silver coins were issued by Kumar Gupta I for circulation in Western India. He also issued copper coins. Kumar Guptas coins shows the vastness of his empire. Many coins of Kumar Gupta have been unearthed at Satara in Maharashtra indicates the expansion of his Kingdom towards South.

His inscriptions reveals some important names of ministers and governors. It is stated that Chiratadatta governed Pundravasdhana Bhakti. Govind Gupta , younger brother of the emperor was in charge of Saurashtra, Chitradatta was in charge of Bengal. Prince Ghatokacha Gupta acted as the Viceroy of the province of Eastern Malwa. Prithvisen, son of Samudra Gupta's Chief Minister, Shikhariswami, was the Chief Minister and later on commander — in — chief of Gupta armies. Another Viceroy named Bandhuvarman ruled at Dasapura. Thus it is obvious that Kumar Gupta was a brave king who with his unflinching courage and inexhaustible strength had extended the frontiers of Gupta Empire.

Towards the end of his regin, the peace of the empire was rudely disturbed and after this he had to face very critical situation and serious problems.the empire was invaded by the Pushyamitra, a tribe of unknown origin. Some scholars do not accept the reading Pushyamitra in the Bhitari inscription as the second syllable of this name is damaged. Recent researches show that they were probably white Huns. Their first attack was in 450 A.D. Kumar Gupta sent his son Skanda Gupta to resist the invasion. The struggle seems to have been severe and long stretched. Kumar Gupta died before Skandagupta defeated the invaders. The Bhitari inscription of Skandagupta records that the victory was achieved after the death of Kumargupta.

Kumar Gupta ruled the country for 40 years with a sound, efficient and stable administration, in peaceful and prosperous conditions. It seems that the liberal religious policy, generous patronage to arts and literature and efficient administration of Chandra Gupta II continued in the long reign of Kumar Gupta I. According to R. C. Mujumdar ' The reign of Kumar Gupta is generally regarded as devoid of interest and importance.

The numerous inscriptions of this age mention only one military campaign towards the very end of his reign, while they all

clearly indicate a peaceful and stable administration from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal under his personal authority.... On the whole, it is not unlikely that more credit is due to Kumar Gupta's administration and personality than is usually given to him by modern historians.'

10.8 SKANDA GUPTA (455 - 467 A.D.)

There is a controversy regarding Skanda Gupta's succession. The Bhitari seal of Kumar Gupta makes Puru Gupta the son and successor of Kumar Gupta. However scholars like Smith, Pannala, Raychaudhari hold that the skanda Gupta was the immediate successor of Kumar Gupta I. Puru Gupta, Ghatotkacha Gupta, sons of Kumar Gupta and Govind Gupta brother of Kumar Gupta were the rivals of Skanda Gupta . However the Bhitari inscription emphasizes that civil war threatened the fortunes of the Guptas and Skanda Gupta defeated his rivals and seized the throne.

The most important source of information about Skanda Gupta and war with Huns is Bhitari Pillar inscription. Bhitari is in Ghazipur district. There is a red sandstone pillar outside the village and it has a long inscription in 19 lines. In addition to Bhitari inscription the Junagarh inscription, Kahaum Stone pillar inscription (Indore), Bihar Stone pillar inscription and gold coins of Arches, Chakra, King and Lakshmi and horsemen types are the sources.

Skand Gupta ruled for a brief period of about 12 years. He defeated his rival claimants to the throne and succeeded Kumar Gupta I. The inscriptional evidences reveals the fact that other princes were not able and only Skanda Gupta was there fit to have the throne. Dr. R. C. Mujumdar suggests that, ' After Kumar's death which apparently took place while the struggle with Pushyamitra was still undecided, there was and fratricidal war in which Skanda Gupta came off victorious after defeating his brother's including Puru Gupta, the rightful claimant and rescued his mother just as Krishna rescued Devaki. After coming on the power Skanda Gupta was surrounded with many problems. He could not regain the peace for a long time. Almost immediately after his succession he had struggle with many enemies. The problem of defending the frontiers was the serious one. During his reign Skanda Gupta had to encounter the invasion of the Humas who had already proved themselves to be a formidable power and terror to both Europe and Asia. While fighting against this barbaric people. He had to sleep on bare floor. In the second century B.C. Humas lived in Central Asia on the western border of China. Soon after his accession to the throne, the Humas made a severe attack on India and they chained into India crossing the river Indus in large numbers. For the Second

time Skanda Gupta's abilities were tested in dealing with the most dangerous enemy. For second time he proved himself worthy as a Great son of Gupta. Skanda Gupta succeeded against the Hunas which was a great achievement for which he might well go down in the history as the saviour of India. On the occasion of this victory he offered sacrifices to the God and laid a statue of Lord Vishnu in Bhitary village of Ghazipur district. After this hard earned victory he took the title of 'Vikramaditya' as his Grandfather.

10.8.1 Administration:

Skanda Gupta inherited certain qualities from his forefathers like other Gupta kings; he also was not only a great warrior but also an administrator of rare caliber. His administration did not become weak even in the face of foreign invasion. He shifted his capital from Patliputra to Ayodya because it was located in the Centre of his Empire. He undertook number of welfare activities to strengthen his Empire.

Skanda Gupta paid great attention to public work. The construction of Sudarshan lake is a notable event of his period. Junagardha Rock inscription informs us that the Sudarshan Lake, built in the time of Chandra Gupta Mourya bridged and burst in the time of Skanda Gupta in 450 A.D. This lake caused a great harm to the people as well as their property. Skanda Gupta got it fully repaired and enlarged within a short period of just two months.

His kingdom was divided into a number of provinces and each province had provincial administrator. Junagardha Rock inscription tells us about administrative spirit of Skanda Gupta. "Having thus conquered the whole earth and the pride of his enemies, he set about organizing his empire by appointing governors in all the provinces and had to spend much thought to find among his officers the most competent of them who could shoulder the burden of administering the whole of the Saurashtra countries newly acquired. Many a day and night did the king spend on this thought till he appointed Parnadatta to rule over the Saurashtra region. Posting Parnadatta on the West quarter, the king was easy at heart, just as the Gods were by appointing Varuna as the guardian of the Western quarter."

10.8.2 Estimate of Skanda Gupta :

Skanda Gupta was the last great emperor of Gupta dynasty. During his period the economic condition was appreciably good, people were happy and prosperous. He issued both Gold and Silver coins. Since under him Empire had to face many problems. Comparatively he had issued few Gold coins. He had introduced a new type of coinage system. And the coin had the picture of King on the one side and Goddess Lakshmi on the reverse. He had issued archer type, King and Lakshmi type and horseman types of coins.

Samudra Gupta was worshipper of Lord Vishnu and a follower of Brahmanism but he was tolerant towards all religion and cults. He did not interfere with the religion of his officers and subjects. The Bihar Pillar inscription refers to the construction of pillar with a circle of temples dedicated to God headed by Skanda and the divine mothers who were Brahmi, Maheshwari Kumari, Vaisenavi, Mahendri, Varahi, Chamunda, Chandi and Charchika. According to the Buddhist Inscription he had recognized Vasubandhu, a Buddhist Saint as his Guru in the rule. The Hindus and the Buddhist had a cordial relation. Thus Skanda Gupta was a great warrior , an able administrator, a benevolent and justice loving emperor.

10.9 DECLINE AND DOWNFALL OF GUPTA EMPIRE

The Great Gupta empire which was founded by Sri Gupta and bravely built up by Samudra Gupta and Chandra Gupta II began to decline and ultimately collapsed completely towards the end of 6th Century A.D. Alongwith the death of Skanda Gupta the imperial rule seemed to have come to an end. Many factors are responsible for decline of Gupta Dynasty.

1. Weak Successor:

Empire building in ancient India was mainly because of an ambitious ruler. It mainly centered upon the individual ruler who could build the empire. Till Skanda Gupta all the rulers were in a position to extend or maintain the kingdom but the later Gupta's who followed Skanda Gupta were Puru Gupta, Narasimha Gupta, Baladitya Gupta, Buddha Gupta who were weak and incompetent and therefore Gupta Power came to an end.

2. Foreign Invasion:

The stability of Gupta Empire was seriously threatened by Pushyamitra in the time of Kumar Gupta I. Though Skanda Gupta beat them but when the Central Government of the Gupta became weak, these foreign forces became more vigorous and soon after the death of Skanda Gupta Hunas brought about the ruin of Gupta Empire. The repeated attacks of Hunas must have exhausted the resources of Gupta empire. Under the leadership of Toramana Hunas established their authority over Punjab, Rajputana, Sindh and Malwa. Thus the foreign invasions gave a serious blow to the Gupta Empire.

3. Absence of Strong Central Authority:

Gupta dynasty had a monarchical type of Government until the rule of Skanda Gupta. Monarchical type of Government was a boon to them, but the Central administration became weak and defective after the death of Skanda Gupta. Many chiefs revolted against later

Gupta rulers. They were successful in setting up an independent kingdom towards the middle of 6th Century. Later Gupta rulers lacked the power to handle the administrative machinery of the Country. They were not competent to hold the empire and being unity and oneness. Thus the Central administration became weak and defective.

4. Change of Religion:

Another cause contributed to the fall of Gupta's was shift from Hinduism to Buddhism. The early king of Gupta dynasty were followers of Brahmanism whereas later Gupta embraced Buddhism. Buddha Gupta, Tothagata Gupta and Baladitya adopted Buddhism. This conversion cause a profound impact on the military enterprises of the country so much as that they could not resist the foreign invasions. Buddhism completely brought a change in their military outlook and the later Gupta were not so powerful as the former ones.

5. Deteriorating Economic Condition :

The system o Tax Collection did not work well after Skanda Gupta. Thus, Economic conditions of the people under later Gupta, deteriorated. Deteirorated Economic Condition is well reflected through Gupta Coin Age. The Superior Gold Coins issued by Chandra Gupta and Samudra Gupta could be continued by their successors. Considerable fall in economic condition has affected the military strength of a country. Thus the financial crisis proved to be a cause of destruction of the Gupta empire.

6. Neglected the Borders of the Empire:

The threat of foreign invasions can be weakened by securing the borders of the empire. The later Gupta did not pay much attention to the borders of the empire. As a result there was always the fear of foreign invasions. This negligence brought about the downfall of Gupta Empire.

7. Vast Empire :

The Gupta Empire was very vast. Avast Empire could only be control by powerful rulers like Samudra Gupta and Chandra Gupta II. But later Gupta rulers were incapable of controlling such a vast Empire. For the convenience and efficiency of the administration, empire was divided into number of provinces. The administration of the provinces was carried on by Governors. Unfortunately all the Governors were not loyal to kings instead of fighting for the empire they fought against it. Thus internal disturbance and mal-administration led to the ruin of the empire.

Check Your Progress:

1. Make an estimate of Kumar Gupta I as an conqueror and administrator.

10.10 MONARCHY : ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

During the Gupta period king was the center figure in the administration. The kings were looked upon by the people as Gods. The kings lived for their subjects. In order to achieve the high ideals of kingship, Gupta kings like Samudra Gupta, Chandra Gupta, Skanda Gupta devoted their whole life for the welfare of people. Though the powers of king was more or less absolute, there were checks and balances as in the Mauryan policy. The Guptas placed before themselves certain ideals, which they tried to reach. The achievements of Samudra Gupta and Chandra Gupta, for instance, prove this. In order to be worthy of power, the princes were trained properly.

The Guptas discarded the modest title of Rajans. Instead they adopted the titles such as Maharajadhiraja, Vikramaditya, Samrat, Prithvipala, Chakravartin, Parmeshvara, Paramadevta, etc. In an inscription at Prayaga Samudra Gupta has been identified with God Indra, Kubera and Vishnu. The Allahabad Pillar inscription has referred Samudra Gupta as 'God dwelling on earth'. The coin legends of the Gupta emperor from the time of Samudra Gupta refers to them as having 'acquired heaven (by good deeds) following their conquest of the earth. The rule of succession in the Gupta Empire was hereditary descent. But many time emperors himself selected his successor. Younger brother of the ruler and elder sons of the ruler were usually appointed to the post of provincial Governors.

Emperors during Gupta period appeared too absolute. He was as usual the center of all military, political, administrative and judicial authority, many times they were thus own commands-in-chief. Samudra Gupta, Chandra Gupta-II, Skanda Gupta personally led their armies. All the official appointments in administration were appointed by King. The King was the sources of all honours and titles. The Secretariat at the capital worked under his personal direction and supervision and the provincial governors and their officers were under their control and guidance. King had a

full liberty to distribute property, titles, recover and remit taxes and give justice loaded with innumeral privileges and rights Gupta Kings were assisted by various officers at and central state, district and village level. All these officials were responsible to the King. They enjoyed their respective positions according to the King's pleasure and could be deprived of their rank at any time.

10.11 COUNCIL OF MINISTER

The Gupta continued the traditional machinery of bureaucratic administration. The King was assisted by a council, which was called as Mantrimandalam. The royal council should not be regarded as a mere advisory body. It must have formed an important organization in the administration machinery. Probably council of ministers consisted of princes, high officials and feudatories. The Gupta Empire had grown fast and extensive. So it was very difficult for the king to govern the country all alone. Thus, the Gupta Kings had a council which rendered advisory functions. The council of ministers was accommodated the officer of the different ministers and heads of department. Each office had its own seal with which its communication were stamped for authentication. Kalidasa had remarked that the important matter were placed before Council of Ministers. The decision of council were conveyed to the King by the Ministers. But the King was not compelled to accept the decision of the Cabinet. Thus duty of the council of ministers was to advice King, but ultimately final decisions were taken by King. The main function of the council was to accept or reject the successor. It was held responsible for making preparation for the coronation of Yuvaraja.

10.12 OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

Kautilya has mentioned various kinds of ministers who were in charge of different departments. The mantri (high minister), whose office is known to Kautilya's Arthashastra, was the head of civil administration. Among the imperial officers were Mahabaladhikarta (commander-in-chief), the Mahadandanayak (general), the Mahapratihara (chief of the palace guard). Pratihara and Mahapratihara were important officer's in the royal court. They regulated and granted the necessary permission for admission to the royal presence. The Mahashvapati (chief of cavalry), Mahapitupati (officer in charge of elephants), Senapati and Baladhikarta, Sandhivigrahika etc were other high ranking, officers. A link between the central and the provincial administration was furnished by the class of officer called Kamaramatyas and Ayuktas. The Ayuktas may be traced back to the Yuktas of the Ashokan inscriptions. Ayuktas were entrusted with the task of restoring the wealth of the kings conquered by the emperor and sometimes

placed in charge of districts or metropolitan town, Kumaramatyas figured prominently in the Central Government Secretariat. Some of the Kumaramatyas worked in the provincial government. Harishena (Samudra Gupta's Minister). Sikharaswami (Chandra gupta II's minister) and Prithvisena (Kumar Gupta's Minister) are the best examples of the designation Kumaramatyas. There are no clear evidences about the mode of payment the officers and minister's during Gupta period. Mode of payment has changed from person to person and different at each rule. It is possible that some officials must have received their salaries in cash. However some officials must have given lands in the lieu of their salaries. They earned their livelihood out of the money obtained through this landed property.

10.13 PROVONCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Gupta had ruled upon a very vast and extenstive territory. For administrative purpose, it was divided into a number of units and provinces called Bhukti which were about the size of the Commissioner's division in modern times. The head of the provinces was called Uparika or Bhagpat. They were related to the royal family. Further each Bhuktis were sub-divided into Vaishyas, roughly corresponding to the modern districts. Vaishya was ruled by a Visyapati. Uparika and Visyapati were allotted many administrative responsibilities. They were assisted by number of sub-officials. Uparika were appointed by and responsible to emperor himself. Visyapati was usually appointed by Uprikas, but sometimes directly by the emperor himself. Lastly the village or grama was under the officer called Gramika. There is also refernce to the 'Ashtakutadhikama' which was a council of 8 leading families in village. This body and Gramika managed the affairs of village.

The administrative divisions of the south differed from that of north. The south was divided into mandals which were further divided into Kohmas. In the south village was the smallest administrative unit. Administration in village was carried out by the village headman, where as in town it was looked after by Nagarpatish'. (n some areas in Central India rural affairs were managed by a committee of five known as Panchamandal. Group of villages formed Vithis' which are mentioned in Gupta inscription and seals.)

The Gupta seals excavated neas Vaisali mention about the following provincial officer.

Kumaramatyadhikarana (Office of Prince's Minister) are

1. Bladhikarna (Head of the Army)
2. Military Exchequer
3. Chief of the Police

4. Chief Censor
5. Chamberlain
6. Chief Justice
7. Minister for Law and Order
8. Head of Infantry and Cavalasy
9. Governor of Provinces

Thus we can state over here that there was no over-centralization of government under the Guptas. Obviously excellent and well set sysem of Administration brought peace and prosperity during Gupta period.

10.14 THE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION

The district administration enjoyed considerable powers. Officers in charge of districts were responsible for maintaining law and order. They was also in charge of collection of government taxes and revenue. As mentioned earlier a province was divided into District called Vishayas, which were under Vishayapati. The term `Adhishtitakarana' seemed to be used for the District headquarter during Gupta period. The Districts officers were large in number subordinate revenue officer seving as link between the district administration and the villages were Yuktas, Ayuktas, Niyuktas, Vyaprilas and Adhikritas. The district administrators always enjoyed considerable power. Central Government always consulted district authorities while dealing with the matters related to district administration. At district cover also there was a council whose members were known as Vishayamahattaras. The Faridpur plate III shows that there were about 20 members, some of whom were non-Brahmana. Seals of Vishayamahattaras have been found at Nalanda. The Chief banker, the Chief traders, the Chief artisan and Chief Kayastha (write) figured prominently in the council. The Damodar copper plates furnish more information of the district administration. The district council consisted of Nagarsrestin or the president of the guilds and main traders, artisans, bankers and Kayastas.

10.15 VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

Gupta period has witness excellent system of administration even at grass root level. As mentioned above the lowest administrative unit was known as Grama. The village (Grama) administration was placed under the change of gramika. The rural council or board known as `Ashtakutadhikarana' was said to be headed by village elders. This council and Gramika managed the affairs of the village. In some areas in Central India, rural affairs

were managed by a committee of five, known as Panchamandal. The seal near Vaisali refer to Pancha Mandali which are equivalent to the Panchayat of later times. These assemblies constituted various committees to look after specific departments, such as tanks, temples, justice etc. Though each village was independent unit of administration, in later period it looked forward to further help from the emperor. Numerous inscription of the Guptas throws welcome light on the grants of villages to the scholars, servants and even for the religious purposes.

10.16 REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

Excellent revenue administration was the backbone of the Gupta Administration. Though taxation system of the Guptas was not as elaborate as that of Mauryas, it was a perfect system of its kind. Unfortunately inscriptions do not give much information regarding the revenue administration of the Guptas. It appears that the traditional number of taxes was 18, but we do not find the names of these taxes in the inscriptions of the Gupta age. The primary source of revenue to the central exchequer was the land tax. Two types of land taxes specifically are mentioned Shoga' a tax paid by private land owners and Sagabhoga', a tax paid on crown lands. Land was also called Bhagakara in some localities and Udranga in other. There was a separate department to collect taxes regularly. The rate of land tax was according to the quality of land have varied from 16 to 25 percent. It was usually collected in kind instead of cash. If the production was poor, the government share automatically became small.

Another source of income was derived from taxes enforced on buffalo milk, curd and also on fruits and flowers. The forests, meadow and salt mines, added to the income of the state. The villagers had to pay occasional levy when officers of the Central Government come for inspection. They had to provide them food, flowers and other necessities and luxuries of life with labour and transportation facilities. During emergency these taxes could be raised and even new taxes could be levied. The state claimed ownership in waste lands, forest, pastures and derived considerable income by farming them out or selling their product. However, other sources of revenue included the custom duty, fine collected from criminals, transport fee for the cattle, slaughtering animals, police tax for security of villagers, fee from guilds, traders, bankers, gold and silver merchants. All these sources of revenue always kept Gupta treasury flooded. And made Gupta period a Golden period of Indian History.

10.17 JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Judicial administration of such a vast empire could not be carried on by the King alone. The King was the highest judicial authority. But for the convenience there were courts at Central and Provincial level. In inscription we come across the name 'Mahadandnayaka', Chief Judicial Officer. He acted as commandant as well as judge. Administration of Justice in important towns and cities was carried on by specially appointed officers. The seals of courts functioning at important provincial and district centers are found at Nalanda and Vaishali which mentions the designations like Nayadhikarana, Dharmadhikarana and Dharmashasanadhikarana. The justice in the village was dispensed by village Panchayat. There were four types of courts namely Kala, Shreni, Gana and Rayakiya. The first three were the public and last was the government court. All the disputes were referred to first three courts in the first instance. There was permission to appeal to higher court.

The Gupta code of punishment was not very harsh. There was no death punishment. Punishment was inflicted according to the nature of crime. But certain scholars have contradicted the above view. According to them there are very harsh and severe punishment during Gupta period. Ordeal by fire, water, poison and by weighing with stone was also rendered to. According to Fa-Hien punishments during Gupta period were very lenient. However, Vishakhadatt describes heavy punishment, including death sentence. Another cruel and barbarous punishment was the scooping out the eyes or crushing the offender under elephant's feet. In the inscription of Skanda Gupta at Junagad we come to know of the torture inflicted on the sinner. The whole purpose behind heavy and brutal punishments was to deter the people from committing crimes.

10.18 MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

The Gupta kings were great warriors and conquerors. The military organization of the Guptas was well knit and efficient. As they followed imperialistic policy, they maintained big army. The army consisted of elephants, cavalry and infantry. In Rajasthan even camels were used in the army. In the South there were some units of navy. The Senapati was the highest official in the army. The imperialistic policy and security of Kingdom was mainly based on the efficiency of military, hence Gupta kings paid special attention towards the army. Numerous references are found about the designation of military officers. Senapati, Mahasenapati, Baladhikrita, Mahabaladhikrita, Dandanayaka, Sandhivigrahik, Mahasandhivigrahika, Gopta etc. The Junagad rock inscription of

Skanda Gupta tells as that he 'appointed protectors (Goptrin) in all countries. In the hour of crises besides king's army there were separate armies in the provinces. Thus military administration of Gupta gave peace, prosperity and solace to the people.

Check Your Progress:

1. Describe the achievements of Imperial Gupta in Administration.

10.19 SUMMARY

Imperial Gupta once again gave political unity to the country. There are sufficient sources of information about the Imperial Guptas. These are literary archaeological and foreign. Much is not known about origin of the Guptas. Scholars had viewed different origin of Gupta family from Vaisyas to foreign blood. It however, appears that Chandra Gupta I was the their first important ruler. He brought name and fame to this dynasty and also founded a new hour. He married Lichchavi princess which brought strength and prestige to his dynasty.

Samudragupta succeeded Chandra Gupta I. At that time India was politically divided and many small kingdom and monarchies existed. Thus Samudra Gupta was faced with the problem of uniting them Samudragupta was a great conqueror. He defeated 12 kings in the north, in the south also he won many territories and subjugated forest and borders tribes. He had very cordial relations with Ceylon. He also performed Asvamedha Yajna. Thus Samudragupta occupies a unique place in Indian history. He was great warrior, successful conqueror, founders of Gupta Empire, great diplomat, good administrator, patronize of art and literature and a perfect religious tolerant.

Samudra Gupta was succeeded by his son Rama Gupta. Chandra Gupta II younger brother of Rama Gupta reached his wife from Saka rulers. Ram Gupta was killed Chandra Gupta. Subsequently Chandra Gupta married his sister– in – law Dhruvadevi. Chandra Gupta II was one of the greatest monarchs of Gupta dynasty. He ruled for a period of about 40 years. Chandra Gupta followed policy of matrimonial alliance to extend his empire. Chandra Gupta defeated many republics and conquered Bengal. The achievement of Chandra Gupta II was his victory over western Satraps. His empire extended from Himalayas to the Narmada.

Chandra Gupta II issued large numbers of gold, silver and copper coins. Fa- Hien was a Chinese traveler who came to India to study Buddhism. His description gives much information about social, economic and political condition of India of that age. Thus Chandra Gupta II was the most glorious king of king of Gupta dynasty. He was a successful efficient administration, patron of art and literature and followed the policy of religious toleration.

Kumar Gupta Succeeded Chandra Gupta II in about 414 A.D. Kumar Gupta ruled the country for 40 years with a sound efficient and stable administration. He had issued various types of coins. His coins and inscriptions reveal some important names of his ministers and governors. Skanda Gupta succeeded Kumar Gupta. He ruled for a brief period of 12 years Skanda Gupta paid great attention to public work. His kingdom was divided into a number of provinces during his period the economic condition was appreciably good, people were happy and prosperous. He was a follower of Brahmanism but he was tolerant towards all religions and cults. Along with the death of Skand-Gupta the imperial rule of Gupta came to an end.

The Gupta administration provided the model for basic administrative structure both in theory and practice. Cultural unity was combined with political unity. During the Gupta period King was the center figure in the administration. The Guptas discarded the modest title of Rajas. Instead they adopted the titles such as Maharajadhiraj, Chakravastin, Samrat etc. The King was assisted by council of ministers which was called Mantrimandalam. Apart from council of ministers there are other officials also such as Mahaboladhikarta, Mahadandnayaka, the Mahapratihara and Pratihara. For administrative purpose Kingdom was divided into numerous units and provinces called Bhakti, Vishaya and Grama. The district administration enjoyed considerable powers. The village administration was under rural council headed by village elders. Excellent revenue administration was the backbone of the Gupta administration. For judicial administration there were courts at Central and Provincial level. The army of Guptas consisted of elephants, cavalry and infantry. Thus Gupta age is rightly called the Golden Age.

10.20 QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about the origin and growth of Guptas? Give brief account of Chandra Gupta I the founders of dynasty.
2. Describe the career and achievements of Samudragupta
3. Write Short notes on
 - i) The origin of the Guptas
 - ii) Chandra Gupta I

- iii) Samudragupta's military expedition.
 - iv) Fa-Hien
 - v) Ramgupta
4. Examine the contribution of Chandra Gupta II to the expansion and consolidation of Gupta Empire.
 5. Describe career and achievements of Chandra Gupta II.
 6. Describe the career and achievements of Skanda Gupta.
 7. Bring out the salient features of the Gupta administration.
 8. Discuss in detail, the imperial administration of the Guptas.
 9. Describe, in brief, the Gupta administration.
 10. What factors led to the decline and downfall of the Gupta Empire.



THE GUPTAAGE (CLASSICAL)

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11.0 OBJECTIVES

- To focus on the religious, Economic and Social conditions during Gupta period.
- To brief survey the progress made in the field of Art and Architecture Science and Technology and coinage.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Many historians has titled Gupta period as 'The Golden Age' of Gupta. An eminent historian A.L. Basham has expressed his view in the following lines:

‘Perhaps the Gupta period was an age when love, in all the senses of the word, was more widely diffused in India than at any other time in her history – love of the gods and love of one's fellow men, love of the things of the spirit and love of the things of sense, love of pomp and splendour and love of simplicity, love of nature and love of life. In almost every relic of the Gupta age this love is apparent, in the Gupta age this love is apparent, in the simple but dignified script of Gupta inscriptions, in the fine design of Gupta. Coinage, in the words of the court poet Kalidasa as in these of the provincial hack-writer Vastabhathi and of the anonymous scribes who drafted in rather in accurate Sanskrit the texts of the Damodarpur title-deeds, taking pains to mention the names of the members of the local council and those of the humble clerks who kept the records of land transactions. This was surely a period of high civilization in every sense, but especially in the truest sense of the term – an age of equilibrium, when human relations reached a degree of kindness rare in the history of the world, and the best minds of India expressed the fullness and goodness of life in imperishable art and literature'. (A.C.Basham)

11.2 RELIGIOUS CONDITION

A distinguish feature of Gupta period is religious freedom and toleration. During Gupta period every citizen was treated equally apart from their religious beliefs. The Gupta King's were quite tolerant towards other religion. People loved one another. Buddhism and Jainism enjoyed all those facilities which were enjoyed by the Brahmins. Consequently Buddhism and Jainism flourished alongwith Hinduism. The Emperor showed the noble spirit of tolerance and did not suppressed or harrassed any religious community. Talent was encouraged without any religious prejudices. In this period, Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism existed side by side.

11.2.1 Hinduism :

The Gupta rulers were the champion of new Brahmanical movement. The revival of Brahmanism had begun during the Sunga period. The Gupta to patronize this religion. Rather it will be correct to say that a new life was infused into Hinduism. The Gupta age was the Golden age of Hindu revival. There are epigraphical evidence to show that Gupta King's revived Ashvamedha sacrifice after their victory. Most of the Gupta rulers supported Vaishnavism.

The epigraphs and coins speak of other God and Goddesses like Laxmi, Durga, Parvati, Shiva, Kartikeya and Surya etc. This period also became famous for Dharma Shashtra literature. The some of Puranas, the epics, the smritis etc. where written during this period. From the inscription we learned that the Gupta's God constructed many temples and made liberal Grants to the religious institution. The Bhakti movement became strong and one over thousands of people to Hindu faith.

11.2.2 Buddhism:

The Gupta rulers were known for their liberal religious policy. They patronized all faiths equally. Buddhism continued flourishing along with Brahminism. Samudra Gupta granted permission to the ruler of Ceylon for the construction of Vihar at Gaya. The Sanchi inscription of Chandra Gupta II referred to a grant instituted by military officer, for feeding the Buddhists. The Buddhist University of Nalanda was a beneficiary of the royal patronage. A large number of Buddha and Bodhisattva images are discovered in different parts of India. Especially in the sites of Nalanda and Mathura focuses on the religious freedom enjoyed by the Buddhists under the Gupta's. During this period Buddhism under went complete transformation and adopted some of the practices of shavism and shaktism. At Sarnath images of Buddha were installed under the supervision of Kumar Gupta II and Buddha Gupta. Thus Buddhism had widely spread during the Gupta age.

11.2.3 Jainism :

The Udayagiri Inscription of Kumar Gupta I in the Kancham Pillar Inscription relates to the installation of Tirthankaras. East Bengal, Mathura, Vallabhi and Punavardhan and in central India Udayagiri, in South Kanchi, Camatic and Mysore were the important places of Jainism. Private and Royal Gifts to the Jain temples and installation of the statues of Tirthankaras are on record. In this age commentaries were written on ancient Jain books. But Sanskrit was dominating language during this period so all the Jain Scripture were written in Sanskrit.

11.3 ECONOMIC CONDITION

Economic prosperity is one of the reasons for the Golden period of Gupta Dynasty. Under Gupta's agriculture, trade and commerce was greatly encouraged. Economic Prosperity was the hallmark of the Gupta age.

11.3.1 Agriculture :

The backbone of Indian Economy is agriculture. It is the basis of economic life in India. During Gupta period agricultural land was owned by individual families and not by State. Land was

inherited and cultivated generation after generation. Agriculture was carried on both with Artificial and Natural irrigation. Canals, wells and huge lakes were constructed for irrigation. The construction of Sudarshan Lake by Skand Gupta is an evidence of these facts. Many inscriptional records referred to the public welfare project like wells, tanks and canals for irrigation purposes. It is believed that some scientific methods were followed for better agricultural produced. There were strict rules and regulation regarding transaction of land. Land was not sold without the permission of the state. Severe punishments were given to those who stole foodgrain or damaged dams or canals. Therefore, during Gupta period there was bumper harvest of not only of foodgrain but also of different varieties of foods.

11.3.2 Industry :

Millions of people earned their livelihood by spinning and weaving. The most important center of cloth industry were at Gujarat, Bengal and some state in the South. During Gupta period initially instituted clothes were used. But later on with the influence of foreigners stitched clothes like coats, jackets were also used. Another flourishing industry of Gupta period was of Jewellery making. During this period ornaments were studded with precious and semi-precious stone. The work of cutting diamonds and polishing of diamond was also done. Many people were engaged in metal, copper and ivory work.

11.3.3 Trade :

During Gupta period India traded with number of foreign countries like Arabia, Egypt, Greece, Persia, Rome, Syria and in the east with Burma, Cambodia, China, Malaya, Ceylon, Siam and Sumatra. There was a very active internal trade. For internal trade there were good means of transportation. Internal trade was carried on through sea as well as by land routes. In those day Ujjain, Banaras, Vaishali, Gaya, Prayag and Mathura were the important center of trade. The Ganga, Krishna, Godavari, Brahmaputra were the rivers utilized for trade. Trade routes were made secure from the robbers on the land and pirates at sea. India exported pearls, precious stone, clothes, scents, spices, drugs, coconut, ivory etc.

11.3.4 Guilds : (Shreni):

Guilds were the association of merchant and traders. In today's term it was like a trade union. There were guilds not only of commercial classes but also among workers and weavers. Some guilds combine banking operation to provide capital for the members. During Gupta period some of the Guilds were consisted of a president and an executive community. The Guild was designated by the name of head man. Guild used to deposit and lend money. The mebers of the Guild got state security and enjoyed social respect. This Guild also imparted vocational and

professional education. The Guilds were very powerful in economic and social life. They could even raise a protective police force of their own. A fully organized Guild gave bonus, leave, pension, provident fund etc. It fixed a fair price according to the quality of product. A minimum wage was fixed by Guilds. They lavishly donated to the charitable institutions, built monasteries, chaityas and temples and promoted education and art.

11.4 SOCIAL LIFE DURING GUPTA PERIOD

11.4.1 Caste System :

During Gupta period the social framework was patriarchal. There are references to the four stages of life. A man was expected to keep balanced among the four Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha). Society was divided among the four castes. Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed a very high status. Different quarters of the city were assigned to different castes, the outcastes living outside. The King granted land and Agrahara to Brahmins. Brahmins were known by their Gotras.

In spite of rigid caste regarding the occupation of each Varna. Inscriptions of the period testify the occupational mobility among castes, Kshatriya merchant and a body of weavers from Gujarat adopting other occupations in Malwa.

11.4.2 Untouchability :

Untouchability existed in the society. Fa-Hien observed "Chandals" are segregated. These people live away from other people and when they approach the city or market place they beat a piece of wood in order to distinguish themselves. Then the people know who they are and avoid coming into contact with them. Fortunately along with other castes Shudras were also permitted to change their occupation. Shudras were Traders, agriculturists and artisans. Shudras were also employed in army and state security. Even Shudras could own property and could take up teaching as a profession.

11.4.3 Marriages :

Monogamy was the cherished ideal but some of the Gupta ruler and rich merchants followed Polygamy. In spite of the laws of Manu, Caste system was still fluid. Marriages with foreigners and inter caste marriages were common. Gupta Kings themselves married with the girls of other dynasties. Chandra Gupta I had matrimonial alliance with the dynasty of Lichchavis, Chandra Gupta II married with Kubera Naga of Naga family. Later Chandra Gupta II gave his daughter Prabhavati Gupta in marriage to the Vakata Rudrasena II.

11.4.4 Joint family system :

Joint family system was very common during Gupta period. The family was managed by the patriarch who was shown profound respect. The ownership of the property vested in the father. However, the Smritis contained rules for the division of property. Rights of sons and brothers to their separate shares were recognized by birthright. Widows got a life interest on maintenance from the family.

11.4.5 Position of women :

The status of women was enhanced during Gupta period. Yagna Valkya Smriti recognizes the right to inherit property for women. Though Kautilya prohibits widow remarriage, Yagnavalkya allows niyoga by which a widow could beget a child. Women were free in social life. But their Upanayana was stopped. The age of marriage for women was lowered during Gupta period. System of Sati was rare. In the late Gupta period position of women had deteriorated. They had no individual liberty. They could not attain higher education. The women were banned from attaining religious education. Admission of women to the Buddhist monasteries was stopped by 500 A.D. The women were trained in dancing, painting and playing musical instruments. Parada system was not common but the women of higher families used veils while going out.

11.4.6 Dress and ornaments :

Economic prosperity, peace and security during Gupta period has its impact on their dress and ornaments. Literary evidences of times reveal the information about the dress of the people. The men wore dhotis and covered themselves with shawls. The rulers and the rich wore gorgeous and costly dress and they set the fashion in the court. The men wore turbans too. Coats, overcoats and trousers became common among the kings and noblemen. Women generally wore blouses, saris and petticoats. Cotton was more common among women but silk clothes were also worn occasionally. Common dress of women Saree and Blouse is also seen in the Ajanta paintings.

Women used cosmetics, perfumes etc. Several styles of hair dressing and use of paints, pastes and lipsticks as well, are depicted in the painting at Ajanta. Both women and men used a variety of ornaments. Rings, bracelets and necklaces were commonly used. The women used jingling ornaments. The ornaments were made of gold, silver and ivory.

11.4.7 Food and Drinks:

According to Fa-Hien the majority of people in Gupta period were vegetarians. But the literary works of Kalidasa and other references proved that on a festive occasion both meat and wine were consumed. Fa-Hien writes that the people did not use wine,

onion, meat and geulic. Only Chandalas ate such things. Probably views of the Fa-Hein were limited to Biddhiists only. Even smritis did not put any restriction on eating non-veg. Smritis did not allow women to eat meat especially whose husband have been out. The smritis allowed meat-eating for the sick persons. Use of batal nut and leaves (Pan) were in practice. People sought happiness in good drinks. In fact the prose and poetic works refers to drinking wine by the queens and other rich ladies.

11.5 LITERATURE

Gupta period has witnessed excellent system of education. The literacy outburst that Gupta age is compared to the golden age of Queen Elizabeth. Gupta kings themselves were highly cultured and liberally patronized art and literature. Samudra Gupta has been described in the Allahabad Pillar inscription as a gifted poet and musicians. Chandra Gupta maintained a magnificent court with the 'Nine gems'. Kalidasa the great poet and dramatist lived in the Gupta age. He wrote number of dramas like Shakuntalam, Malavikagnimitram, Vikramorvashem etc. Poetic works – Raghuvamsha, Kumarasambhava, Ritusamhara and Meghaduta are of rare merit. Bhasa was another great dramatist. Fourteen plays of him has been discovered till today. The important among them were the Urubhanga, the PratimaNataka, the Pratijna Yaugandharayana and the Svapnavasavadatta.

Sanskrit literature greatly flourished during Gupta period. The inscriptions, coins and literacy work of Gupta age are the evidences of the great progress made in the literacy fields. Prose and poetry both were written during this period. All the literature of a very high orders were composed and written in this age. The famous work in Sanskrit called 'Panchatantram' is the creation of Gupta period. It has been translated in almost all the languages of the world. The puranas were re-written during Gupta age. Yajnavalkya, Narada, Kotyagana and Brihaspati Smriti were the religious literature that were rewritten during this age. Ramayana and Mahabharata the two great Epics were rewritten during this age. Kamandaka, the disciple of Kautilya wrote 'Nitisarai' a revised vession of Arthasastra. In this period a commentary was written on 'Sankhya Philosophy' and 'Mimansa Sutra'. Vatsyayan' wrote a commentary on the Philosophy of law. Vasubandhu composed 'Abhidharmakosha' Dignaga wrote 'Pramana Samuchchaya'. Famous Jain Achrya Siddhasena composed 'Nyayavrttra' or 'Nyaya'. Iswara Krishna wrote 'Sanlya Karika', a 'famous work on Sankhya System.'Prasastapada had written Padarthadhasma Samgraha and Vyasabhasya, composed on Yoga Philosophy.

11.6 EDUCATION

Kings, rich merchants and princes all promoted education during Gupta period. Primary education was imparted by family while the vocational education was given by the guilds and the artisans. Generous donations from Princes and rich merchants promoted higher education. Scholars were devoted to teaching and learning. Pataliputra, Ujjain, Vallabhi and Purnavati were the main centers of education. Religious places like Banaras, Mathura, Nashik and Kashi, were also educational centres. For Buddhist education Kanchi was the main city. Fa-hien records that rich monasteries were scattered over the country. Instruction in Vedas, the Puranas, the Smritis, grammar, logic, mathematics, astronomy and medicine was given at the Universities in the traditional manner. Instruction was oral and it was to be received directly from teacher. Even debates and discussions were the popular means of instruction at University level. During this age only literacy, education was not imparted but even technical education was equally important. The students also learnt arts and crafts.

11.7 ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Coins, sculpture, paintings, caves and temples speak in volumes of the high standard of art in the Gupta period. It is rightly said that art entered in the classical phase in Gupta period. The art of Gupta period has reached at climax from the point of view of beauty, ideas and representation. Thus the glories of the Gupta period are partly due to the Gupta art. Some of the most beautiful monuments are a heritage of Gupta period. The center of art during Gupta period were at Mathura, Banaras and Patna. People during Gupta period had a sharp aesthetic sensibilities. Achievements in the field of art and architecture can be studied under following areas.

Architecture :

A new phase began in this sphere under the Guptas. Most of the temples and stupas of the Gupta period has been destroyed, but the few that have survived show remarkable features. Temples constructed during Gupta period had its own prominent features and themes. Temples are decorated with fine sculptured panels. Some of the Gupta temples were built of bricks, especially in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Madhya Pradesh.

Some of the best examples of Gupta architecture.

1. The Siva temple at Khoh.
2. The temple of Lord Vishnu at Tigawa in Jabalpur.
3. A Parvati temple at Ajaygrah.

4. The Buddha temples at Ranchi and Bodh Gaya.
5. The Siva temple at Bhumara in Nagod state.
6. The Dashavatara temples of Devagarh.
7. A temple through devastated has been found on the bank of river Brahmaputra in Darrang district.

This period witness the carving of numerous caves and the construction of stupas. The Stupas at Rajgir, and Sarnath belongs to this period. The caves at Ajanta, Nashik, Karla, Mogulrajapuram and Undavalli are the example of the rock architecture.

Painting :

A unique example of gupta painting can be seen through paintings at Ajanta and other caves. Painting during Gupta period taken the themes from contemporary literature, including the epics.. During Gupta period some of the finest caves in Ajanta (No. 16 and No. 17) were painted. The paintings in those days aimed at depicting the main events of human life and the realities of the world. The beautiful Fresco painting in ajanta insigid and high technical skill in wall painting. Hight of excellence achieved in the field of painting indicates that Arts in Gupta period had received royal patronage. Caves were selected for religious painting may be with scafty poin of view. They know that their act was worth preserving. And most important characterstic of Ajanta painting is that, though painted for religious purposes, the murals of Ajanta bear rather a secular than a religious message. This devotion to art, religion, knowledge was really praiseworthy. Colour used in Ajanta are still fresh even today reveal their knowledge of science. Thus the beauty of the paintings during Gupta period is inaffable.

Sculpture:

Gupta king made great progress in the field of Art of Sculpture. This period was at its zenith in Sculpture representation. The important feature of the Gupta's sculpture is the evolution of the perfect types of divinities both Buddhist and Brahmanical. Patliputra, Sarnath and Mathura were the three main centers of statue making. These status were made of stone, metal and burnt clay. Very beautiful statue of Buddha and images of Vishnu and Shiva were made. Even other hinder Gods such as Sun, Kartikeya have also been found. During this age some innovation were introduced in the statue of Lord Buddha.

Some of them are :

1. Curly hair were introduced.
2. Graceful ornamentation of different kinds introduced in the halo of the Buddha figure.
3. Transparent drapery plains or with folds, clearly revealing the form was a notable distinguishing feature.

4. Large variety of mudras (hand poses and attitudes.)
5. More spiritual Calmness of face and eyes of the Buddha image than is found in Kushana or Gandhara art.
6. The Gupta age was absolutely free from the influence of Gandhara.
It was entirely Indian and free from foreign influences.

Alongwith images of Buddha icons of Kartikeyas, Shiva, the Ganga relief from Bernagar, Shiv Parvati, from Mandor, The Varahavatara relief of Udaygiri are another specimen with difference.

11.8 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Gupta period has witnessed a great progress in the field of science and technology. This proves that the ancient scholars of India were interested in only religion philosophy and imaginative literature. During Gupta Age, Indian Science made great progress. The contribution to scientific knowledge by the ancient Indian scholar particularly in the Gupta age was immense. The University of Nalanda and other institution were not only for religious but peculiar learning also. During Gupta Age, Astrology and Arithmetic too advanced to a considerable stage. Aryabhata was born in 476 was a renowned personality of this age. He proved that the earth is round and it revolves round the Sun. Varahamihira a famous Astrologer made notable contribution through "Panchasiddhanta, Laghujataka, Yogabhasha and Brihatasamhita".

During Gupta Age, Arithmetics also greatly progressed Aryabhata was also a great Mathematician. He regarded Mathematics as a separate branch of knowledge. The Vedic Mathematical literature like Vedanga, Jyotisha and Kalpasutras are the Greatest work in Mathematic produced during Gupta period. It was India that gave to the world the decimal system. Brahma Gupta was also a great Mathematician of this age. Great progress was made in the field of medicine also. A scholar name Nagarjuna invented a new method of curing diseases. He proved that diseases could be cured with the help of Gold, silver, Iron, Copper and like metals. A new system of curing diseases known as "Rasachikitsa" these system made use of various metals as cures for various disease.

In the field of physics also India made valuable contribution. Brahma gupta had found that things fall to the ground not because there is hidden force within them but because of law of Gravity. Thus ancient Indian medicine, surgery, mathematics, astrology, physics are of a higher order than those of modern west.

11.9 SUMMARY

A distinguish feature of Gupta period is religious freedom and toleration. Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism were treated equally. Under Gupta agriculture, trade and commerce well greatly encouraged. There were associations (Guilds) of merchants and traders which were very powerful in economic and social life. Society was divided among four castes. Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed a very high status. Untouchability existed in the society. Monogamy was cherished ideals but some of the Gupta rulers and rich merchants followed polygamy. Marriages with foreigners and intercaste marriages common. The status of women was enhanced during Gupta period. The women were trained in dancing, painting and playing musical instruments Both women and men used variety of ornaments.

Gupta period has witnessed excellent system of education Sanskrit literature greatly flourished during Gupta period. Coins, sculptures paintings, caves and temples speak in volumes of the high standard of art and architecture in the Gupta period.

11.10 QUESTIONS

1. Why the Gupta age is known as the Golden Age of Ancient India?
2. Discuss the social and economic conditions during the Gupta age.
3. Explain the achievements of the Gupta in the field of literature and art.



REGION OF HARSHAVARDHANA

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- 12.11 Questions

12.1 INTRODUCTION

From the decline of the Guptas until the rise of Harsha in the early seventh century the political scene is confused, and there are few records to illuminate it. This was a period when petty kingdoms vied with each other to succeed to the past glory of the Guptas. North India was divided into three main Kingdoms, those of the Later Guptas of Magadha, the Maukharis, and the Pushyabhutis.

After the fall of Gupta Empire and due to Hunas invasion there was political disintegration in the country. Political unity given to the country by the Guptas practically came to an end. Many petty kingdoms sprang up. The small state were always involved in internal Struggle, with the result that the political condition of the country greatly deteriorated. It was an age of darkness. The Pushyabhuti became the most important power after 575 A.D. under PrabhakarVardhana and his son HarshaVardhanas 606 – 647 A.D.

There are ample sources which throw a considerable light on the history of Harsha. They are :

1. Description of Yuan-Chwang.
2. Bana's Harshacharita.
3. Inscriptions of those days.
4. Chinese official records.
5. Coins of Harsha.
6. Works of Harsha:- Ratnavali, Priyadarsica and Nagananda.

According to Harishacharita the Vardhana Kingdom was founded by Pushyabhuti. The City of Thaneshwara between Ganga and Indus became the capital of rising family of Vardhan rulers. The work of Harsha refers to only four of his successor Naravardhan, Rajya-Vardhan I, Aditya –Vardhan and Prabhakar – Vardhan. The first three rulers were given the simple title of Maharaja. It shows that these rulers were initially feudal lords under Gupta Kingdom. The first ruler to assume full imperial title, Parama Bhattaraka Maharajadhiraj was Prabhakar Vardhan. He defeated Hunas, Sindhu kings Gurjara's king, the lord of Gandhara, and Malwa's king. According to the 'a lion to the Huna deer, a burning fever to the king of Sindhus a trouble of sleep to the gurjara King, a billious fever to that scent elephant, the lord of Gandhara, destroyer of the skill of the lotus, an are the creeper, which is the goddess of fortune of Malaya."

Prabhakar Vardhana desire for conquest was eventually carried out by his younger son HarshVardhana. Prabhakarvardhan

was a devotee of his son. Prebhakarvardhan married Yashovati. They had two sons and a daughter namely RajyaVardhana, HarshaVardhana and Rajeshree respectively. The elder son Rajyavardhan was born in 587 A.D. and the younger son HarshaVardhana was born in 590 A.D. Probably Rajeshree was the youngest. She was married to Grahavarman the son of Avanti Varman, the Maukhari ruler of Kanauj.

Being an elder son Rajyavardhan became the crown prince and was initiated in the affairs of the state. This was the time the rulers of Thaneshwar had to face Hunas invasion. Hence Rajyavardhan and Harshavardhana left the capital to solve the problem. But unfortunately they got the news of the serious condition of their father, so Harshavardhan was forced to return to see his father. Prabhakarvardhan died and his Queen Yashovati burnt herself alive in her husband's funeral pyre. Rajyavardhan did not make any haste to return to kingdom till he succeeded in his campaign. By the time he returned his father was already dead. Rajyavardhan was asked to be the ruler by the court of ministers.

A series of tragedies has to befall the kingdom. Within a few days the news came that Grahavarman, husband of Rajeshree was killed by Dev Gupta, king of Malwa. Rajeshree was imprisoned. Rajyavardhan entrusted the government in the hands of Harsha and proceeded with his army. He was able to defeat the ruler of Malwa. But later Rajyavardhan himself was murdered by Dev Gupta's friend Sasanak the king of Gauda. Harsha's inscriptions record that Rajyavardhan gave up his life at the house of his enemy owing to adherence to a promise. Harsha was too young to tolerate tragedies and responsibilities. After the death of elder brothers, Harshavardhan was asked by the council of Ministers to take the supreme command in his hand.

12.2 ASSESSMENT OF HARSHAVARDHANA

Harshavardhan began his reign in A.D. 606. He was sixteen years old when he accepted the responsibilities of kingship, yet at such a critical moment he showed a remarkable energy and military genius on his accession. On the death of his brother he took a firm decision that the enemies be rescued. He decided to rescue his sister from prison and to take revenge of his brother's death. So he sent his general Bhandi against Sasanka of Gauda and he himself went to rescue his sister Rajashree from Malwa. Soon he received the news that Rajeshree has escaped from the prison and fled to the Vindhya forest. Harsha made his way into these Vindhya jungles. He found her when she was about to mount the funeral pyre. Thus he rescued his sister. Rajashree was widow of Maukhari king Grahavarman of Kanauj. Kanauj had been left in a hopeless state of

confusion after the death of GrahVarman. He had left no heir. Hence Kanauj was annexed to the kingdom of Thaneshwar. Now two important Kingdoms Kanauj and Thaneshwar was united under Harshavardhan. Harsha formally transferred his capital from Thaneshwar to Kanauj and declared himself the sovereign ruler of the latter Kingdom also by assuming Imperial titles.

12.3 MILITARY CAMPAIGN OF HARSHAVARDHANA

Harsha extended his empire by conquest. Definite data about military campaign of Harsha is not available. Harsha was a great warrior and conqueror. In the course of the 41 years that Harsha ruled, he included among his feudatories, the kingdoms of Jalandar, Kashmir, Nepal, Vallabhi, Gujarat, Malwa, Sindh, Frontier provinces and Assam. The provinces which he brought under his direct administration were United Province, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Central India, Rajputana etc. The following are some of the major conquests of Harsha.

12.3.1 Campaign against Sasanka:

There is evidence that Harsha defeated Sasanka. The literary work, *Manjushri*, *Mulkalpa* makes a reference to Harsha defeating Sasanka. Sasanka was his deadliest enemy. Harsha was keen to take revenge of the death of his brother. It is stated in Bana's *Harshacharita* that military conquest of Harsha started with elaborate preparations for war against the Gauda king who is probably Sasanka. To defeat Sasanka, Harsha entered into an alliance with Bhaskar Varman, the king of Assam. Then Harsha marched against Sasanka and defeated him. Sasanka in a panic ran away from Yauda. When Harsha returned back Sasanka once again took the possession of Magadha. After the death of Sasanka in 620 A.D. Harsha and Bhaskar Varman divided state amongst themselves. Orissa and west Bengal were controlled by Harsha and Eastern Bengal was occupied by Bhaskar Varman.

12.3.2 Conquest of Assam:

From the available evidences it appears that Bhaskar Varman the ruler of Assam accepted the suzerainty of Harsha. With 20,000 Elephants, he attended the assembly at Kanauj.

12.3.3 Conquest of Sind and Nepal:

According to R.C.Majumdar Harsha was not successful against Sind, since Hsuan! Sang mentions it is independent and strong Kingdom but from Bana's *Harshcharita* we learned that Harsha assumed huge wealth from Sind. The view of Bana cannot be accepted as entirely correct. But there is no denying the fact that PrabhakarVardhana was not having cordial relation with the rulers of Sind and there is a possibility that Harsha might have

conquered Sind completely. Harsha is also credited with the extension of his empire over Nepal. An inscription at Khatmandu says that Amser Verma of Nepal accepted the Harsha era. Harshacharita say that Harsha conquered the difficult Himalayan Kingdom. The regular use of the Nepal route by Chinese and Indian Secular and religious mission and close cultural connection between the two countries may indicate close relations.

12.3.4 War with Pulakesin II :

The war between Harsha and Pulakesin II is regarded very important. After having established his authority over the north, Harsha made heavy preparation for the Southern campaign. He tried to invade the South which was under the powerful Karnataka rulers Chalukya Pulakesin II. Pulakesin had defeated almost all the state in the South and he also defeated Harsha. This war was fought most probably in 634 or 635 A.D. The Aihole inscription states that Harsha's Elephant failed in the battle that took place on the river Narmada. And when Harsha had fled the battlefield. Hsuan Tsang states that Harsha had defeated many countries but could not defeat Pulakesin. The Hyderabad Grant of Pulakesin II reveals that he had assumed the title of Parmeshwar after defeating the Harsha. Defeat of the ruler from the North at the hands of the South was most certainly one of the Greatest event of history of India. To Pulakesin it was certainly a great victory and he had perfectly justified it by assuming the title of Parmeshwara.

12.3.5 Conquest of Ganjam :

This was the last conquest of Harsha. Ganjam was situated on the Western Coast of India. Harsha made many attempt in order to conquer the province of Ganjam. At last in 643 A.D. he succeeded in establishing his authority over Ganjam.

12.4 EXTENT OF HARSHA'S EMPIRE

The Empire of HarshVardhana was very vast and extensive. He was sovereign lord of at most the whole northern India. All the territories under Harsh's control were extensive enough for him to have the title 'The Lord of the Entire North'. Harsh's Empire was extended from Nepal in the north to Narmada in the South and from Brahmaputra in the east of Gujarat in the West. The provinces of Assam, Bengal, Gujarat, Bihar, Orissa, Kanauj and Punjab form the parts of his Empire. His Empire also included the states of Kashmir, Sind and Nepal. Harsha was unable to extend his power in Deccan or south India. Infact he suffered in one major defeat at the hands of Deccan Chalukya king, Pulkesin II. Thus Harsha finally found himself ruling a large kingdom in northern India.

12.5 HARSHAVARDHAN'S ADMINISTRATION

Harsha was not only a great administrator but also the founder of a powerful empire. He resorted to the political unity in India and consolidated it by his successful administration. The accepted title of a great king in Harsha's day was, Param = Bhataraka Mahesvara and Maharajadhiraja means 'the noblest the great lord and the supreme king of kings'. It was inherited from the Gupta Empire. Huan Tsang's record contains a great deal of information on general aspects of administration. According to him Harsha worked very hard and believed in the personal supervision of minute details. It is believed that he forgot sleep and food in his devotion of good works. He took personal interest in every department of the state and was very particular about the welfare of his people. He himself undertook frequent tours of inspection. Administration during Harsh's period finds resemblance with the Mauryan and Gupta administration.

King :

The king was the center of the administration. King enjoyed the supreme position in the state, but Harsha never misused them. Harsha aimed at high ideals of Kingship and worked hard to promote the welfare of the people. Harsha was such a dynamic person always busy in administrative business. He treated his subjects as his children. The King was aided and advised by council of ministers. He made the appointments of all the important officials of the state such as Mantri, Rajjapal etc. To ensure good administration, he conducted tour through out his empire. Contemporary sources mention the different places like Prayaga, and Valabhi, where he camped for the inspection. There are references which reveals the fact that during inspection he made grants in charity and issued official royal orders. Harsha never sat at ease; he expended his energies in the service of his people. Harsha's day was divided into three periods, one part he spent for state purpose and the second for religious and cultural pursuits and third to the care of his subjects. Thus service and sacrifices were the mottos of his life.

12.5.1 Council of Ministers :

There are no definite evidences available of the existence of council of Ministers during Harsha's time. But it is certain that he was assisted by ministers in the task of administration. Bana's Harshcharita mentions various names of the officials. Harsha's cousin brother Dandi was sachiv or Chief Minister. Huan Tsang mentions that minister and official were given land grants and were not paid cash salary. Thus, the practice making land grants, which stated in the Satvahana period, became fairly widespread at the time of Harsha.

Dr. R. S. Tripathi has given us the following list of Harsha's Ministers.

1. Mahasandhivigrahadhikrita (Minister of War and Peace).
2. Mahabaladhikrita (Officer in Supreme command of the area).
3. Baladhikrita (Senapati or commander).
4. Brihadasvavara (Head cavalry officer).
5. Katuka (Commandant of the elephant force).
6. Pathi (Superintendent of Soldier's barracks).
7. Chata-Bhata (Irregular and regular soldiers)
8. Yama –Cetis (Women eaters at night)
9. Duta (Ambassador).
10. Rajasthaniys (Foreign Secretary)
11. Kumaramatya (Counsellor of the Prince)
12. Uparika (Governor of a Province)
13. Visyapati (The head of a visya or modern district)
14. Daussadhanika (Superintendent of Villages)
15. Bhogika or Bhogapati (one responsible for the collection of state produce)
16. Mahapratihara. (Chief warden), Minansak (Justice)
17. Akshpattalika and Dutaka (Keeper of the records)

On the basis of the names of these ministers it can be said that Harsha adopted the administration of Guptas. Almost all the names referred to above are available during Gupta period.

12.5.2 Division of the empire of Harsha:

Harsha's inscription gives us clear picture of division in administration. The province (Desha or Bhukti) was divided into number of district (Pradesha or Vishaya). It was further divided into taluka (Pathaka) and village (Gram). The village administration was in a hand of the village headmen, called the Gramakshapatalika. The Bhukti was governed by Uparikas. The Governors were designated as Uparika Maharaja, Bhojapati Rajasphaniya. Heads of Vishaya were called Vishayapati or Ayuktaka. Self growing institution at the village level perhaps function efficiently. There were also Adhistan Adhikarana (Municipal Board) and the village counsel of elders. Huan Tsang refers to forest Chief who were probably non-aryans. The officers in charge of district (Ayuktaka) and yet a higher provincial official (with the title Kumaramatya) were the link between local administration and the center.

12.5.3 Revenue System:

Land revenue was the main source of income during Harsha's period. From contemporary records we learned that

taxation was not high. The main source of income were :

1. Udranga (a type of land revenue)
2. Uparika (taxes behind regular one)
3. Hirenya (Gold)
4. Ordinances.

The officer called Bhogika was incharge of the Bhoga or the share to be paid to the state. Land revenue was one sixth of the produce. Bhoga was the land tax paid in kind. Taxes were also imposed on goods of daily requirements. Traders and Businessmen also paid taxes for transporting their goods. King also had a claim over mines and busied treasures.

According to Huan Tsang royal land was divided into four categories, assigned to four item of expenditure:

1. Government Expenses and State worship.
2. Endowment to Ministers and officers of the crown.
3. Rewards to main of distinguish ability.
4. Charity to all persons of all sects and creed.

12.5.4 Harsha's Army:

Harsha's army consisted to elephant, camels, cavalry and infantry. In order to established peace and stability in his empire, to check internal rebellions and foreign invaders. Harsha felt the necessity of increasing his military strength. Huan Tsang records that there were 5000 Elephants, 20000 Cavalry and 50000 infantry. After territorial expansion of his empire Harsha came to possessed 1 lakh cavalry and 60000 Elephants. The horses for cavalry were imported from Sind, Persia and Kamboja. The Officers of this elephant corpse were called Pilupati and of the cavalry, Ashwapati. The sthanapala was the stable officer while Mahut was the Mahamatra. All the weapons during Harsha period were sharp and pointed which included battle axes, lances, javelins, bows, arrows and swords.

12.5.5 Crime and Punishments:

Huan Tsang refers to a cruel barbarious, orderals of Harsha's time. The punishments were exemplary in character. The Severity of punishment was perhaps due to the reason that crimes must have been frequent. But Huan Tsang refers, "As the Government is honestly administered and the people lived together on good terms, the criminal class is small." Though the administrator was straight yet the roads were not safe". Crime was rare but roads and river routes were exposed to robbers. Life imprisonment, exile and militation were the penalties prescribed. The Criminals were looked down upon and they had low social statues in the society. Banabhatta refers that on certain festive

occasion such as Kings Birthday the prisoners were released. Minor offences were dealt with fines. Ordeals by fire, water and poison were the instrument to prove the innocence or guilt of a person. For offences against social morality, disloyalty, the punishment was to cut off nose or an ear or a hand or a foot to banish the offender to another country.

12.6 HARSHA'S RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Harsha occupies a supreme place in the Indian History for his religious and cultural activities. Huan Tsang had over emphasized Harsha's devotion to Buddhism, but it must be remembered that he was not a born Buddhist. Pushyabhuti, the founder of Vardhana dynasty was a follower of Saivism. Harsha's father worshipped the sun and his brother and sister had embraced Buddhism. In the beginning Harsha also was the worshipper of Shiva. He was influenced by Buddhist sage Divakarmitra who was a friend of Grahavarman. Initially he embraced Hinayana Buddhism but due to the Huan Tsang he embraced Mahayana form of Buddhism. He became a staunch supporter of Mahayana Buddhism and showered great honour to Chinese pilgrimage, Huan Tsang. Thus under Harsha Vardhana along with other religions Buddhism also flourished. Harsha brought a tooth relic from Kashmir and had it enshrined at Kanauj. Every year he used to invite Buddhist monks for discussion. Harsha gave enormous grants to Buddhist monks. He had erected *punyashalas* for free supply of food and medicine on the high ways.

Huan Tsang records the condition of Buddhism in all the places he visited:

1. "He (Harsha) caused the use of animal food to cease throughout the five Indies".
2. He prohibited the taking of life under severe penalties.
3. He erected thousands of *topes* (Stupas) on the banks of the Ganges and established Traveller's Rests through all his dominion.
4. He erected Buddhist monasteries at sacred places of the Buddhists and adorned the common halls of the monasteries.
5. He regularly held, after every five years, the Buddhist convocation, and liberally distributed in religious alms everything except the material of war.
6. At the royal lodges, everyday viands were provided for 1000 Buddhist monks and 500 Brahmins.
7. The king's day was divided into three periods, of which, one was

given up to affairs of Government, and two were devoted to religious works.

8. In 643 A. D. Harsha summoned a Buddhist assembly at Kanauj and another at Prayag, where alms were liberally given to mendicants, Brahmins, Buddhists and Jains.

12.6.1 Kanauj Assembly (643 A.D.) :

Religious assembly at Kanauj was the landmark event during the reign of Harshvardhana. While returning from Ganjam campaign Harsha met Huan Tsang in Bengal and decided to honour him by holding a religious assembly of all denomination at Kanauj. This assembly was presided over by Huan Tsang.

There were about 3000 Hinayana and Mahayana monks, 3000 Brahmins, 1000 students of Nalanda University, 20 kings and many other people. The Assembly of Kanauj was presided over by Huan Tsang. Harsha himself proposed the name of Huan Tsang to the chair.

It is said that on this occasions a special Tower, 100 feet high with Golden statue of Buddha of the King size was constructed. Harsha also erected a great monastery and a shrine upon the bank of Ganges. Every day a smaller golden image of 3 feet in weight was carried in a procession on a decorated elephants. The canopy was carried by Harshvardhana himself and followed by prince, princes and state officials.

The conference lasted for 23 days. The proceedings of the assembly started with the announcement of Huan —Tsang in the challenging word, "Characteristic of the Age that the master of the law offered his own head as the revolt of a successful reputation of his thesis." No one accepted the challenge for five days but then the Hinayanists tried to plot a murder of pilgrim. Therefore, Harsha issued a stern warning. That if anyone should do the same with beheaded. Thus, further 18 days passed without discussion. Huan Tsang was fully praised Mahayana form of Buddhism and the assembly was dissolved. However on the last day a great fire suddenly broke out in the tower and in the confusion an attempt was made to stab Harsha. Huan Tsang records that 500 Brahmin were arrested and exile on this occasion. This incident reveals the fact that Harsha's religious policy was not acceptable to the people.

12.6.2 The Prayag Assembly :

After the Kanauj assembly was over Harsha also invited Huan Tsang to the assembly at Prayag. This was the another ceremony which king used to hold after every 5 years at Prayag. Harsha had celebrated five such ceremonies and along with the Huan Tsang it was sixth one. This ceremony also attended by 18

kings and people amounting to 5 lakhs. Harsha distributed alms every 5 years. On the first day lord Buddha was worshiped and precious article and valuable were distributed. On the second and third day Tsang and Lord Shiva were worshiped with the same rights and rituals. On the fourth day began the distribution of treasure. Every Buddhist monk was given hundred pieces of gold, one pearl, one cotton garment, various drinks, flowers and perfumes. During next 20 days Brahmanas received the gifts. The next 10 days were reserved for Jains and member of other sects. Then mendants or poor orphan and the destitute received his charity. This distribution exhausted Harsha's accumulated treasury.

12.7 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The most important source which has described elaborately about social condition during Harsha's reign is account of Hsuan Tsang. He has described the people as harsh, trustworthy, gentle, upright and sincere. Even literature in Sanskrit also present an account of the social conditions prevailing under Harsha. People were peace - loving and had a high standard of honesty and morality. Social distinctions were based on caste and governed by its rules. Brahmans are greatly respected. Hsuan Tsang observed that 'Brahmins to be the purest of all castes. The Kshatriyas are described to fair and unostentatious, pre and simple life. The Vaishyas were trading class. The condition of the sudras had comparatively improved. The general impression he gathered was prosperity.

System of sati prevailed in society, this is obvious from the case of Rayashree Harsha's sister was about to burn herself after the death of her husband. Most of the customs and rituals of north were different from those of the south.

Though people during this reign did not wear colourful clothes, Hsuan Tsang had made a mention of beautiful ornaments like bracelets, earring, bangles and neakless. The ladies covered their shoulder with a long cloth hanging down. In prosperous rule of Harsha houses were either single or multi-storeyed. The upper classes lived in the cities in well constructed houses. But the poorer section of the society lived in the houses made of thatch, bamboo and mud. Hsuan Tsang states that houses were built of stone, bricks or wood, with flat roofs. He also mentions painted or carved doors, walls and ceilings. Kanauj the capital of Harsha was tastefully structured with beautiful gardens, tanks of clean water, broad roads, free eating houses.

The main occupation of the people was agriculture. Hunting and metal crafts was carried on side by side. Rice, wheat,

sugercane, Beans, vines and pomegranates were grown. The people observed the purity of diet. Onion and garlic were not used by the people, Meat was forbidden. The common food comprised of milk, ghee, sugar, sugercandy and parched grain with mustard oil. The citizen enjoyed themselves in theaters, musical gathering and picture galleries. Playing chess was another main source of recreation. During Harsh's reign the women led a very peaceful family life. Girls were married at early age. Parada system was in vogue. The life at the court and of the upper classes does not seem to have been so pure and catholic.

12.8 ESTIMATE OF HARSHA

Harsh Vardhana built a vast empire cover almost the entire north. His empire was one of best organized and justifiably administered empires of ancient India. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest kings of ancient India. Harsha died either at the end of A. D. 646 or the beginning of 647. A great general and a just administrator, he was even greater a patron of religion and learning. He came to the throne at a critical moment, yet he built a powerful state reflecting his military skills.

12.9 HARSHA AS A PATRON OF ART

Harsha extended liberal patronage to learning and the learned. He showed a taste for literature and the arts of peace. He gathered around himself some of the finest intellects and holiest sages men like Bana, Maurya, Divakara and Hiuen Tsang. Harsha, himself was the author of three plays – Nagananda, Ratnavali and Priyadarsika. The Banaskhera inscription reveals that he was an accomplished painter. In the Banaskhera inscription is his beautiful signature, which suggests that he was an expert at Calligraphy. Harsha being a scholar also encouraged other men of letters. Banabhatta, a distinguished scholar composed the Parvatiparinaya Chendisataka, the Harsh's Charitra and the Kadambari. Jaideva in his work 'Gita Govinda' had compared Harsha with Kalidasa. Maurya was Bana's brother-in-law was a celebrated poet was also in the Harsh's court. He is the author of Suryasataka, Aryamuktamal, and Mayurastaka.

Hsuan Tsang observed that during the age of Harsha, India had made splendid progress. Harsha used to keep one-fourth of his income for the economic assistance of the scholars. Every temple or monastery served as an educational institution. Nalanda University was the most famous of all. Students from distant lands like China, Tibet and Mongolia come here to receive education. Hsuan Tsang stayed in Nalanda University for a period of two years. The medium of instruction was Sanskrit. According to him, the

famous teachers at Nalanda were Shilabhadra who was Chancellor of the University, Gunamali and Darmapala. Thus Harsha occupy a distinguished place in the annals of Indian History.

12.10 SUMMARY

Vardhana kingdom was founded by Pushyabhuti Vardhan. Harshavardhana was the greatest king of the Vardhana dynasty. He was sovereign lord of at most the whole of northern India. He resorted to the political unity in India and consolidated it by his successful administration. Harsha aimed at high ideals of Kingship and worked hard to promote the welfare of the people. For his successful administration he had divided his kingdom into a number of provinces and districts. Land revenue was the main source of income during Harsha's period. Harsha's army consisted of elephant, camels, cavalry and infantry. In the latter life Harsha became a staunch supporter of Mahayana Buddhism. He brought a tooth relic from Kashmir and had it enshrined at Kanauj. Harsha gave enormous grants to Buddhist monks. Religious assemblies at Kanauj and Prayag were the landmark events during the reign of Harshavardhana.

12.11 QUESTIONS

1. Make an estimate of Harshavardhana as promoter of Buddhism and patron of learning and literature.
2. Examine the circumstances that led to the accession of Harshavardhan.
3. Describe briefly the administration of Harshavardhan.



INVASION OF HUNAS, ARABS & RISE OF RAJPUTAS

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13.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To survey the circumstances led to the Arab invasion of Sind.
2. To critically assess the impact of the Arab invasion of Sind on the history of India.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The history of India is full of rise and fall of empires. India, at the opening of the 8th century presented the sad picture. After the death of Harsha, India had been broken into pieces. There were many petty independent states which were all disunited and weak. There was no central government and as such whole of the country was split up into numerous independent states. At the beginning of 8th century important states in northern India were those of Kanauj, Malwa, Kashmir, Afganistan, Sind, Pandya, Chola, and Chera Kingdom occupied important position. On the eve of Arab invasion

Sind was ruled by King Dahir. Sind was politically weak and divided due to internal differences. Thus Arabs took advantage of the state of disunity and dissensions in India.

13.2 POLITICAL CONDITION OF INDIA ON THE EVE OF THE ARAB INVASION

For about five decades, there was no central government and the whole country was split up into numerous independent states. Kanauj was the most prominent state at the beginning of the 8th century. King Yashovarman ruled over Kanauj. He was a successful administrator and a great patron of letters. Under his kingdom of Kanauj was extended from the Himalayas in the north to the Narmada in the south and from Bengal in the east to the Thaneshwar in the north-west. Another important kingdom was Malwa, which was governed by the Pratihara dynasty of the Rajputs. The kingdom of Pratihara was extended to Marwar, Broach and other neighbouring territories. Bagabhatta I was a powerful king who ruled from 725 to 740 A.D. King Lalitaditya ruled over the independent state of Kashmir from 725 to 755 A.D. A great conqueror and military general, he defeated and killed Yashovarman of Kanauj. Bengal, Afghanistan, Nepal, Assam and Sindh were other important kingdoms on the eve of Arab invasion of Sindh.

13.3 ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN 8TH CENTURY

The head of the administration was the king. King had a number of ministers to advise and assist him. Kingship was usually hereditary. The empire was divided into provinces like Bhukti, Mandal, Desa etc. The province was sub-divided into Vaishyas, each under a Vaishyapati. Villages were governed by Panchayats. The important ministers usually were –

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) Samant | - Minister of foreign Affairs. |
| b) Raja - Purohit | - Minister of Religious Affairs |
| c) Sandhivigrahikas | - Minister of war and peace |
| d) Amatya | - Minister of Finance |
| e) Askstrapataladhikarita | - Minister in charge of Records |

The chief source of income was land revenue, dependent on the capacity of land. Tributes from vassals, duties of excise, fines were other sources of income. The army consisted of infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants. Majority of people were agriculturists but few were engaged in trade also. There were four main classes – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. System of polygamy

was existing particularly amongst the upper classes. The widow could not remarry and the practice of sati was prevalent in the society. There were famous universities like Nalanda and Vallabhi where science, mathematics, astronomy, Vedas and Shastras were taught. Hinduism was the most important religion. Buddhism and Jainism were not popular religions.

13.4 SINDH ON THE EVE OF THE ARAB INVASION

In the beginning of the 8th century A.D. Muslim invaders of India began to attack India. They however, could only succeed in conquering Sindh and Multan. As such the Arab conquest of Sindh did not have any far-reaching effects on India. On the eve of the Arab invasion Sindh was ruled by king Dahir, son of Chacha. His Kingdom included Debal, Nirun, Brahmanabad and Alore. When we peep into the early history of the Sindh we find that Sindh was ruled by the Buddhist Rai dynasty. Rai dynasty ruled from 485 to 622 A.D. Rai Shahi II was the last ruler of the Rai dynasty Chacha, a Brahmin minister of Sindh, set aside the Buddhist rule and established his own Brahmin rule Chacha was succeeded by his brother Chandra. After the death of Chandra nearly for 30 years kingdom was divided and ruled by the two sons of Chacha, Dahir, a youngest amongst all the sons of Chacha brought the whole kingdom under his rule.

It seems Dahir, being Hindu ruler had introduced number of measures against Buddhist. They were neither allowed to wear silk dresses, carry arms, nor to ride on saddled horses. The Buddhist monks who possessed much political power were opposed by the Brahmin regime. All this rendered the king highly unpopular among his Buddhist subjects who welcomed the Arabs. In fight against the Arabs, king Dahir was defeated and killed and his kingdom was conquered by the foreigners.

13.5 ARAB INVASION

In the first quarter of 8th century A.D. the Arab under the leadership of Mohammadbin-Qasim, conquered Sind and Multan. There were various motives behind the conquest of India. Political and territorial ambition of Arabs acquire wealth of India by plunder and spread of Islam are some of the important causes behind Arab invasion. The immediate cause of Arab invasion was the failure of King Dahir to give compensation for certain ships plundered by pirates of the coast of Sindh. In 711 A.D. some Sindhi pirates had plundered a few Arab vessels near Debal port. AL-Hajjaj, viceroy of eastern provinces of khalifa enraged and wrote to king of Dahir of Sind to punish the culprits and compensate for the loss. Dahir replied that the pirates of Debal were not under his jurisdiction and

he was powerless to punish them. Hence expedition was sent in 711 A.D. under the leadership of Ubaidulla against king Dahir but he was killed in the battlefied by Dahir. Again in the A.D. under Budail another expedition was sent, but again Arab were defeated.

Finally Mohammed-bin-Qasim, a blooming youth of 17 years, was sent to conquer Sind. He had about 25,000 troops under him. Fortunately while marching towards Debal many Jats and Meds who were unhappy with Dahir joined Qasim. With the help of 25,000 troops and native support Mohammad conquered Debal and indulged in massacre and forcibly converted people to Islam. Further Mohamad captured Nirun and Sehwan without much resistance. Consequently whole of lower Sind was dominated by Arabs.

13.6 MOHAMMAD-BIN-QASIMS INVASION OF SINDH

In 712 A.D. Mohammad-bin-Qasim a 17 years old boy was send to conquer Sindh. Unfortunately king Dahir did not realized the seriousness of Arabs invasion and he remained inactive. He made no attempt to check the progress of the invading army. From Shiraz, Mohammad reached Maskon which was under the Arab control. Fortunately many Jats and Meds, who were mostly Buddhist joined Qasim and further swelled the number of his forces. Mohammad's army was more than 25,000 troops, on the other hand only 4000 soliders fought from the side of Dahir.

Indian troops fought very bravely in the war at Debal. But at last Arabs captured Debal, for three days Arabs mercilessly slaughtered the Indians. People were asked to choose between Islam and death and most of them 'preferred the latter. It is said that all males above seventeen years were put to death and their women and children were enslaved.

Following the capture of Debal, Kasim moved further, fought a great battle at Rewar in which Dahir lost his life. Further he captured Brahmanabad and Multan also. After the conquest of Multan, Mohammad-bin-Qasim began to prepare for the conquest of Kanauj but his sudden tragic death put a full stop to further conquests of the Arabs in India.

13.7 CAUSES OF FALL OF SIND

1. The Hindu Kings had imposed restrictions on Buddhist subject which antagonized them. They rather welcomed the foreigners as they could provide an opportunity for special charge.

2. Population of Sind was sparse and heterogenous. They did not unite to oppose the conqueror.
3. Sind was isolated in a country which was a cheque-board of small political units.
4. Traitors abounded in sind and quite often the natives got attracted to the temptations offered by invaders.
5. The people did not like king Dahir who was weak and inefficient.
6. On the other hand Mahamud –bin –Qasim was more capable general and more popular among his soldiers.
7. Resources of Sind were insufficient and could not effectively face the enemies.
8. People were governed and led by superstitions and did not depend upon their own strength.
9. King Dahir made many mistakes on the battlefield.
10. Dhair's army were no match to the army of Muhammad-bin-Kasim.
11. The Muslim fought very bravely and enthusiastically due to their religious zeal.

In the battle of Rawar (20th June 712A.D.) Dhair was defeated and killed. His queen Ravi Bai performed the traditional jauhar, preferring death to dishonour. The Arabs thus won a complete victory. The invader also conquered Brahmanabad and Alore. The whole of the lower indusvalley was dominated by the Arabs. Muhammad-bin Qasim found it difficult to control conquered territorier. He followed a policy of partial religious toleration towards the Hindu but the Arab administration did not improve. In 716 A.D. it at the prime of life, Mohammad-binQasim died. One version of the death of Mohammad is that, Mahammad had send beautiful daughter of Dhair, Suraj devi and Parma! Devi to khalifa Walid.To take the revenge of the father's death, they cook the story. Girls told Khalifa that they had already been dishonoured and molested by Qasim. Annoyed Khalifa ordered that Mohammad should be dismissed from Sind. Further Mohammad was sent as a prisoner to Mesopotamia where he was tortured to death.

13.8 EFFECTS OF INVASION

Arab conquest was a mere episode in Indian History as it did not have any permanent effect on any sphere of Indian life. They could only succeed in conquering Sindh and Multan while rest of India remained independent It is rightly considered to be a mere

episode in the annals of Indian History. The Arabs like Turk could not take full advantage of pathetic conditions in India and failed to extend their conquest. If they had acted wisely and taken advantage of the Indian disunity of that time, History of India most probably would have been written in a different manners.

According to Stanley Lahnepool "it was an episode in the history of India Islam, a triumph without result". A close and critical scrutiny proves that Arab conquest did not have any important effect on political, social, religious economic or cultural life of the people. In political sphere Arabs conquered only Sind, a part of India. The other parts of India remained independent under Rajputs. In social sphere also Arabs, due to caste system of Hindus could not influence the customs, traditions and institutions of India. One of the main purpose of Arab invasion was to spread Islam To some extent they were successful. Arab did not spread Islam widely but they sowed seeds of Islam in India. Another bad impact of Arab invasion was that the lands of the Hindus were confiscated and given over to Arabs. Thus Hindus were reduced to poverty and were obliged to accept the position of tillers alone. The Arbas could not influence the culture of Indians because culturally they were far more backward than Indians. They learnt from Indian in the subject of astronomy , medicine, mathematics, music, painting etc. Many Indian scholars were invited by Khalifas to teach lessons of Indian culture to the Arabs. Some important Sanskrit works. Like Brahama Siddhants of Brahmagupta and his Kandyaka were translated into Arabic. Arabs were enriched due to their contact with India. Arab invasion of Sind resulted in the beginning of India's contact with Islam. Thus Arab conquest did not lead to any momentous and permanent effect on Indian History and civilization. But at the same time it is incorrect to hold that Arab conquest was an episode in the history of Islam because the effects of the conquest upon Muslim culture were 'Profound and far reaching'.

13.9 RISE OF RAJPUTAS

The Gurjara Pratihara:

13.9.1 Objectives:

1. To make Students aware of the History of Rajput period.
2. To analyse the rule of Gurjara Pratihara in north India.

13.9.2 Introduction:

After the death of Harsha in 647 A.D. India again witnessed the disruption and disintegration. The period of 7th Century to 12th Century A.D. there was a rise and growth of various Rajput clans in India. It is, therefore called the period of Rajput ascendancy or Rajput period. Origin of the Rajputs is surrounded in mystery.

According to some historians they are foreigners because they love war and worship fire which were the characteristics of foreigners. Dr. Bhandarkar are the opinion that Rajputs were Gurjaras who were foreigners and as such the Rajputs were also foreigners. Some thinkers are of the view that the Rajputs are original inhabitants of India. They have advanced Agnikunda theory, which is more or less not historical. Dr. V. A. Smith has given mixed origin theory. According to him, "The Kshatriya or Rajput group of castes essentially an occupational group, compose of all clans following the Hindu ritual, who actually undertook the work of government, that consequently people of most diverse races were and are lumped together as Rajputs and that most of the great clans now in existence are descended either from foreign immigrants of the 5th or 6th Century of the Christian era or from indigenous races such as Gonds and Bhars."

13.10 PRatihARA EMPIRE (725 A.D. — 914 A.D.)

After Harsh's death in 646 or 647 A.D., his empire collapsed. However his weak successor tried to maintain their hold atleast over Kananj. It was continued till Pratihara dysenty took over Kananj. The Gurjara Pratihara trace their origin to the solar dynasty. The early history of the Pratiharas is to be found in the Gwalior prasasti of Mihirbhoja. In their epigraphic record the Pratiharas claim descent from Kshatriya Lakshmana (brother of Rama) of the solar race famed in the Ramayana and also from a Brahmana name Harishchandra. There are different school of thoughts placing origin of Pratihara. Accordingly some scholars are of the opinion that, Gurjara race played very important role in 6th Century A.D. They established principalities in Punjab, Marwar and Broach. Hence there is a mention of Gurjara in Harsha-Charita, the records of Hiuen Tsang and Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II. About the middle of the eight century A.D. certain Gurjara chiefs are represented as serving a Rastrakuta monarch as a Pratihara (door keeper) at a sacrifice performed at Ujjain. The Pratihara have claim to be descendants of Rama. Since there is a reference to Lakshmana, who acted as Pratihara or door keepers to Rama, it has been suggested that they were palace officials, who rose to power. Another interpretation claims that Gurjara Pratihara said to have begun their political career in Gurjat, hence the dynasty is known as the Gurjara-Pratihara. Western writers, however, have emphasized that they were the descendants of the Pratihara or Parihara, a section of Gurjaras, who come along with Huns in the early sixth century A.D. and established a Kingdom near Mount Abu, in southern Rajasthan. According to R. C. Mujumdar the dynasty was based in Western Malwa and had its capital at Ujjain.

Nagabhata I – (725 – 760 A. D.) :

The earliest known History of Gurjara Pratihara commences with Nagabhata. He has been described as a national hero and empire builder by R. C. Mujumdar, Nagabhata I founded the Pratihara dynasty in 725 A.D. and ruled over his kingdom upto 740 A.D. He is also described as Narayana, appearing in the response to the people's prayer. Nagabhata I defeated Arabs. Arabs who had overrun the Western borders of India in Second quarter of the 8th Century A.D. Arabs army marched through Kutch, Kathiawar, Northern Gujrat and Southern Rajputana and ultimately threatened Western Malwa. Nagabhata I resisted them and sent them back. Thus the whole Northern India was saved from the early invasions of the Muslims. Nagabhat I brought under him a large number of states, which had been overrun by the Arab of the Sind. Nagabhat I kingdom included Bhilamala, Lata, Jalor, Abu and other region in Rajasthan and Central India. R. C. Mujumdar has described him as a national hero and empire builder.

Vatsaraja (775 – 800 A.D.) :

The Gurjara Pratihara could not rule in complete peace but had to fight many wars with Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan. The next important ruler of the dynasty was the fourth king Vatsaraja. His kingdom was comprised of Malwa and Eastern Rajasthan. In Jaina Harivamsha, Vatsaraja is described as a distinguished ruler of a Avanti (Malwa). Vatsaraja, a grandson of Nagabhat I claim to have won the position of Samarat or emperor due to his military conquest. He defeated the Bhattis of Central Rajputana and won a victory against Dharmapala of Bengal. But he was defeated by the Rashtrakuta King, Dhruva. However a struggle for supremacy over Northern India among Gurjaras, Rashtrakutas and Palas defeated and pushed Vatsaraja into the desert of Rajasthan, which become the center of Pratihara power.

13.11 NAGABHATTA II (800 - 833 A.D.)

Vatsaraja was succeeded by his son Nagabhata II. In the beginning of his career he had to face many hardships. He was defeated by Govinda III of the Rashtrakuta, as a sworn enemy of his time. Nagabhata II was very ambitious; his military exploits secured him political prominence. The disturbed political condition of the Ganga Yamuna valley provided him the required opportunity to invade Kanauj. He dethroned Chakrayudha in 816 A.D. and made Kanauj his Capital. His most notable achievement was the defeat of Dharmapala, King of Bengal. He extended his influence from a Kathiawad in the west to the borders of Bengal in the East. According to Dr. R. C. Mujumdar, 'reign of Vatsaraja and Nagabhata II occupy a prominent place in the contemporary history of India. Both of them were remarkable personalities and

had a high degree of military skill and the ultimate reverse at the hands of Rashtrakutas cannot minimize the glory that had been achieved by extensive military conquest from one end of North to the other. They raised a provincial principality into a first rate military and political power and although their dreams of founding a stable empire were not realized, they laid its foundations so well that ere long king Bhoja succeeded in the great task even in the face of very strenuous opposition from his hereditary enemies, the Palas and the Rashtrakutas."

13.12 MIHIRA BHOJA (840 - 890 A.D.)

Pratihara power recovered under Mihir Bhoja, grandson of Nagabhatta II. Mihir Bhoja was another powerful King of this dynasty who ruled from 840 — 890 A. D. He established his authority over the Sutlej, the Punjab, Prayag, Kashi and a territory of Gwalior. Numerous coins of Mihir Bhoja has been traced at several places in North. He assumed the title Adivaraha, which the one of the name of Vishnu's incarnation. This indicates that he was a worshipper of Vishnu. His coins also indicate the external of his Kingdom and the long duration of the rule of Mihir Bhoja. The Arab merchant, Sulaiman visited his empire in 851 A.D., admired his military strength and orderly administration. Dr. R. C. Mujumdar wrote, 'Bhoja had the reputation of a strong rule He stood as a bulwork of defence against Muslim aggression and left this task, as a sacred legacy to his successors".

13.12.1 MAHENDRAPALA (890 — 908 A.D.):

Mihira Bhoja was succeeded by his son Mahendrapala. He maintained his father's empire and seems to have extended it towards the east. He added West Suarashtra and in the East Magadha. Mahendrapalas inscriptions have been found in Haryana, Jhansi district and Ayodya. He had the title Nirbhag raja (fearless king). He was a great patron of learning and patronized his teacher Rajasekhara. Rajsekhara was the celebrated prakrit poet. His famous works are Karpuramanjari, Balaramayan, Balabharat. Rajashekhara has described Mahendrapala as "Maharajadhiraja Aryavarta".

13.13 THE LATER PRATI HARAS

Mahendrapala was succeeded by his son Bhoja II (908-914), followed by his brother Mahipala I in 914. It seems he was the last great Pratihara ruler. Mahendrapala had no good successor. The Pratiharas thus began to be challenged by their rivals. They lost Kalinjar to the Chandelas and Kanauj to Rashtrakutas. Gwalior also becomes independent during the rule of Rajyapala. Finally Ajayapala, another ruler of this dynasty joined the group of Hindu

Kings to oppose Sbuktagin in 991 and 1008. Finally Kanauj was conquered by Mahmud of 1019. Thus the Pratiharas ruled over an extensive territory for more than three hundred years. Pratihara held the Muslim invaders in check. It is said that the Gurjara Pratihara Empire was just as glorious as the Gupta Empire. The sack of Kanauj by the Turks in the early 11th Century ended Pratihara rule.

Check Your Progress:

1. Describe the achievements of the Pratiharas.

13.14 SUMMARY

Arab conquest was a mere episode in Indian history as it did not have any permanent effect on any sphere of Indian life. India since the fall of Harshs had been split up into many petty independent states which were all disunited and weak. Arabs were ambitious and wanted to conquer Indian territories. Immediate cause was that failure of King Dahir to pay compensation to Khalifa for Arab ship looted by pirates of Debal. Consequently Mohammad-bin-Qasin 17 years old boy was sent to conquer Sindh. With the help of 25000 troops. Mohammad conquered Debal and whole of Sind and Multan by 713 A.D. He was, however suddenly called back and tortured to death by the Khalifa. Sind was fall due to various reasons such as unpopularity, inefficiency, incapability of Dahir and vise-a-versa of Mohammad. Arab conquest did not led to any momentous and permanent effect on Indian History and civilization.

Origin of Rajputs is surrounded in mystery. After the death of Harsha, Parihara dynasty took over the Kanauj. The earlier known History of Gurjara Pratihara commences with Nagabhata I. He ruled from 725 A.D. to 760 A.D. Nagabhata I defeated Arab invaders. Vatsaraja was another important King of dynasty. He extended his empire to Central Rajasthan but was defeated by Rashtrakuta King Dhruva. Vatsaraja was succeeded by his son Nagabhata II. He made Kanauj as his capital and defeated Dahrmmapala, King of Bengal. Mihir Bhoj a grandson of Nagabhata II was another powerful king of this dynasty ruled from 840 – 890 A. D. He established his authority over the Suplej, the Punjab, Prayag, Kashi and a territory of Gwalior. He worshipped Lord Vishnu. His son Mahendrapala succeeded him. Mahendrapala maintained his father empire and extended it towards the East. He was a great patron of

learning and patronized his teacher Rajasekhara a great poet. Mahendrapala had no good successor. The sack of Kanauj by the Turks the early 11th Century ended Pratihara rule.

13.15 QUESTIONS

1. Why did Arabs invade India? Give a brief account of Arab conquest in India?
2. Critically examine the effects of Arab conquest in India?
3. Briefly trace the history of Gurjara-Pratiharas.
4. Write short notes on the following
 1. Vatsaraja
 2. Nagabhatta II
 3. Mahendrapal.



THE CHALUKYAS OF BADAMI AND RASHTRAKUTAS

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14.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the History of the Chalukyas of Badami.
2. To analyse the conquest of Chalukya Rulers.
3. To know about the religion and art and architecture in period of Chalukyas.



14.1 INTRODUCTION

In the sixth century the Chalukyas had become very powerful in the south. The Chalukya ruled over south after the

Rashtrakuta. The rule of Chalukyas for more than two and half century constitute a brilliant epoch in the history of south India in particular and the Indian history in general. There were three main branches of the Chalukyas viz. the Chalukyas of Badami or early western Chalukyas of Kalyani or later western Chalukyas. The early Chalukyas ruled from the middle of 6th century A.D. to the middle of 8th century A.D. Towards the end of the later part of the 10th century, the Chalukyas of Kalyani established their rule defeating the Rashtrakutas and rule up to 12th century A.D.

About the origin of Chalukyas any definite evidence is lacking. According to V.A. Smith, the Chalukyas of Solankies were of foreign origin, related to the Gurjaras invaders from Central Asia. Probably the Chalukyas were of the indigenous Kanarese families and they called themselves as Kshatriyas. In the account of Huan Tsang Pulakesin I is addressed as Kshatriyas. Dr. D.C. Sarkar writes that this dynasty was name after the name of the predecessors of Chalukyas, Called Chalak, Chalika or chaluka. We come across such name in Chalukyas inscription. The Chalukyas considered themselves as the sons of God. Some contemporary records reveal that the Chalukyas were worshipers of lord Vishnu.

14.2 HISTORY OF THE CHALUKYAS OF BADAMI

The Chalukyas of Badami, often referred as the western Chalukyas who had held there political sway from the 6th century for more than two century till they over powered by the Rashtrakutas. Jayasimha, was the first Chalukya king. The great work of Jayasimha has not been recorded well. He had defeated Indra, the son of Krishna and reestablished Chalukyas dynasty. But there is no reference of it in the Aihole inscription. The first historical figure emerges only from Pulakesin I onward.

14.2.1 Pulakesin I (540 — 566 A.D.) :

The first ruler who laid the foundation of Chalukya dynasty was Pulakesin I. He was the son of Ranjraja and the grandson of Jayasimha about whom much is not known. The Aihole inscription provided us the genology of the western Chalukya king up to Pulakesin II. The first king mention in the list is Jayasimha. His son and successor was Ranaraja. Nothing more than the names is mention in the inscription. Pulkesin I was the first great king among the Chalukyas. He was the first great independent ruler. Infact he is regarded as the real founder of the Chalukya dynasty. From the inscription we get the information that he had perform number of Yajnas and sacrifices, for eg — Himagarbha, Asvamedha, Agnishtoma, and Vajpaye. He established his capital at Vatapi. According to Badami inscription, he had laid the foundation of Vatapi fort, which is situated near modern Bijapur. He was great

scholar and had thoroughly studied Puranas, Ramayanas and Mahabharata.

He assumed the title of Ranavikram and Shreeprithvi — Vallabha.

14.2.2 Kirti Varman I (566 — 598 A.D) :

Pulakesin I was succeeded by his son Kirti Verman I. He had defeated, Vangas, Angas, Maghda, Keralas Vatamas, Madraka, Gangas, Pandyas, Cholas, Dramila. This information is noted in the Mahakuta inscription, may be with little exaggeration. According to Badami cave record he was also known as Puga Verman and Kattiyarasa. He extended his kingdom both in the east and the west.

14.2.3 Mangalesa (598 — 608 A.D.):

In the year 598 Kirti Verman died. He was succeeded by his brother Mangalesa as he had no son. An Aihole inscription shows that he had secured victory over Kalachurei and Revati island. Mangalesa assumed the title like Ranavikram, Parambhgvata. He was also known as Mangalraja, Mangaleshwara and Bhagavati. A great work of art, a beautiful cave temple of Vishnu was excavated during this time at Badami. His last days were clouded by a civil war between him and his nephew Pulakesin II who finally won in the contest for the throne against his uncle and his sons.

14.2.4 Pulakesin II:

Pulakesin II was the son of Kirti Verman I. He ascended the throne of after killing his uncle Mangalesa in the year 910 A.D. He was the most outstanding among the great Chalukya of Badamin. Pulakesin II not only asserted his claim to the throne but also reduced those powers which tried to assert themselves during the Chalukya civil war. Most of the ruler by taking under advantage of the civil war had established their independent dominious. The Chalukya fendataries like Rashtrakuta, Appayika and Govinda declared independents creative disorder and confusion in the Chalukya Empire. In such a situation Pulakesin took a diplomatic and a tactful step. He adopted the policy of divide and rule. He entered in to a military and political alliance with Govinda, and defeated Appayika.

CONQUEST OF PULAKESIN II :

1. Pulakesin's conquest of North :

After stregthening his power and resource Pulakesin II adopted the policy of aggression. He defeated Kadambas, Mauryas of north Konkan, Alupas of south Kanara, the Gangas of Talakadu and the Latas, Malavas and Gujarat in the north. Pulakesin II extended northern frontier of his kingdom upto the river Mahi. He

conquered Gujarat and appointed his brother Jayasimha as the Governor of Gujarat.

2. Defeat of Harshavardhan :

Aihole inscription depicts his victory over Harshavardhan of Kanauj. It is the most significant and memorable of all the victories of Pulakesin II. Both the king wanted to occupy Gujarat. Pulakesin II defeated Harsha on the bank of river Narmada. Some historians are of the view that Gujaras, Latas and Pallavas of Vallabhi joint hands with Pulakesin II due to the fear of Harsha. After defeating Harsha Pulakesin assumed the title of 'Parameshwara'.

3. Pulakesin other conquests :

According to Aiholi inscriptions Pulakesin II turned to the east and conquered southern Kasala and Kalinga and important fort of Pistapur. Pulakesin had become the head of the three states namely Maharashtra, Konkan and Karnataka. With Cholas, Keralas and Pandayas he had established cordial relation. Thus, he had won many fold victories.

4. Pulakesin defeat and Death:

Pulakesin could not resist Pallavas for long. Narsimha Verman son and successor of Pallava Mahendre Verman I was eager to take revenge of the defeat and death of his father. Narsimha invaded Badami in 642 and defeated Pulakesin II. Probably Pulakesin II was killed in his war.

Pulakesin was the greatest among the Chalukya ruler. His fame spread far and wide. A contemporary Muslim record shows that he had sent his ambassador in the fort of the Persian king Khusruo II. As an administrator he was active and just devoted his personal attention to the details of the administration. Thus he is regarded as the real founder of the Chalukya imperialism. He should be credited with a remarkable share in the advancement of culture, characteristics of his dynasty.

Vikramaditya I:

Pulakesin II was succeeded by his youngest son, Vikramaditya I attained his hereditary throne and crushed his enemies. There were many claimants to the throne of Pulakesin II. Vikramaditya I with the help of his maternal grandfather succeed to get the throne. As Badami had fallen into the hands of the Pallavas, his accession become difficult for quite some time. His primary aim was to regain the lost empire and to destroy the power of the Pallavas. According to the Hyderabad inscription, he conquered the southern part of the Pallavas and restored the state to the Brahmans, which was confiscated by their enemies. He defeated the Pallava king! Narasimhavarman I, Mahendravarman II and Parmeshwar I. He also captured the city of

Kanchi. Vikramaditya I had established his authority on almost whole of the Deccan. He also shattered the power of the cholas, Pandyas and the Keralas, and compele them to accept his overlord ship. But Vikramaditya could not assert his authority for a long period in the south as he was defeated by Parmeshwar I, the rules of the Pallava dynasty Vikramaditya I died in the year 681 A.D.

Later Chlukya Rulers:

In the year 681 A.D. Vikramaditya, son of Vikramaditya I, ascended the throne. He ruled till 696 A.D. He established his authority over the Pallavas, Kalabhras, Kerala Kalachuris, Mallar, Cholas and Pandyas. He was succeeded by his son Vijayaditya in 696 A.D. Vijayaaditya assumed the imperial title of Shri Prithvi — Vallabha. His reign was a peaceful. He got constructed a beautiful siva temple at Kanchi. He had a tolerant religious policy and he gave grants to many Jaina teachers. He was succeeded by his son Vikramaditya II. He ruled from the year 735 to 745 A.D. He had defeated Nandivarman and collected heaps of gold from temples at Kanchi. He also defeated the Pandyas, Cholas, Keralas; the last king of the imperial line of Chalukyas was Kirtivasman II. He ruled till 757 A.D. During his reign the Chalukya dynasty started hastening towards decay and downfall and within a short time and Rashtrakutas became all powerful in southern India.

14.4 RELIGION IN THE PERIOD OF CHALUKYAS

Chalukyas were the followers of Hinduism. This period was an era of the revival of the Hindu culture and spirituality. Chalukya rulers had performed various sacrificies including Ashwamedha yagna. The Vaishnava, Shiva and Shakti cult received full support and encouragement from both the rulers and ruled. Though Chalukyas were staunch patron of Brahmanism, they gave tolaration to other religions. Jainism and Buddhism both got royal support. During the period of Chalukya rule, Jaina religion was practiced by large section of the people. Ravikitri who composed the inscription of Aihole was a general of Pulkesin II. He was a jain and built `Jinendra temple at Aihole. Vijayaditya gave a village for the maintenance of a Jaina temples. He also gave grants to Jayapansita a learned Jaina. Thus Jaina temples and institutions received greaters encouragement and endowments from the members of royal family.

According to Hiuen Tsang there were about 100 Buddhist monastries and 5000 Buddhist monks. However Buddhism was on its decline.

14.5 ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE PERIOD OF THE CHALUKYAS

Art and Architecture flourished during Chalukya period. The Chalukyan monarchs were liberal patron of art, architecture and sculpture. They evolved and developed a new style of architecture known as the Chalukyan style or the Vesara style, which is a combination of the Dravidian (the south Indian) and the Nagara (the north Indian) styles. The structural experiments of the early Chalukyas were confined to their capital Vatapi (modern Badami), Mahakuteshwar and the town cities of Aihole and Patadkal (Bijapur districts).

At Aihole the typical Manadapa temples can be seen at Lad — Khan, Kontgudi and Meguti. The Lad — Khan temple has a simple hall, which is open in the front and enclosed by walls on three sides. The hall contains two square groups of pillars, which are caused with the Kalasha motifs and Ganga and Yamuna images. The Kantgudi complex consists of three temples, two of them facing each other, with a tall open mandapa occupying the open space between them. The mandapa temple has a shrine at its center. In the Meguti, it is a Jaina temple dated 634 A.D. This dating is supported by the inscription at the foundation of the temple. This Jaina temple is having a principal square structure, which is like a closed mandapa on a moulded base, with four central taller pillars walled in between to form the central shrine, closed by peripheral wall on all on four sides.

At Badami and Mahakuteshwar one can witness the early southern Vimana type of structural temples built by Chalukyas.

The important temples are

1. The two temples called the Malegittisivlaya standing on a outer crag in the hills on the northern side of Badami.
2. The sivalaya highes upon the main hill on the same side called upper sivalaya
3. The main temple and the extreme southerly one called Mallikarjuna in the Mahakutesvara group of northern and southern styles temples inside and enclosure at Mahakateswar in the neighbourhood of Badami
4. The temple called Banantigudi on the hill in front of the Mahakutesvara.

The main temple of Mahakuteshwar consists of a vimana, square on plan and with a closed frontal mandapa preceded by an open proch. The garbhagriha has an innercircuam bulatory surrounding it.

The Sangamesvara, Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temple at Patakal exhibit to a large degree the southerly elements in their vimanas. The Sangamesvara, the earlier of the three, built by Chalukya Vijayaditya is nearer to each other in being square on plan from the base to shikhara. The Virupaksha was built by the queen of Vikramaditya. It is the earliest dated temple with the Sukanasika, being by another queen of the same king.

Thus the Chalukya of Badami were able rules and they contributed much to enrich the India's culture. The two centuries of Chalukya rule were benevolent and in all fields progress was registered.

Check Your Progress:

1. Sketch the history of Chaluky as of Badami and estimate its importance.
2. Examine the contribution of western of Badami to Indian culture.

14.6 THE RASHTRAKUTAS

14.6.1 Objectives:

1. To introduce the students to the rule of the Rashtrakutas.
2. To explain about the origin and the rulers in the dynasty.
3. To illustrate the contribution of Rashtrakutas in the field of Religion, Education and Learning and Art and Architecture.



14.6.1 Introduction:

After the death of Harsha, disorders became rampant in northern India. There were many petty kingdoms, that they were always involved in internecine struggles. From the seventh to the twelfth century, the south has altogether a different history. In this period Indian civilization and culture had greatly progressed in deccan. Number of important dynastic were established during that period

- Chalukyas Dynasty
- Rashtrakuta Dynasty
- Yadava Dynasty
- Pallava Dynasty
- Hoysala Dynasty
- Pandya Dynasty
- Chera or Kerala Dynasty
- Chola Dynasty
- Kakteya Dynasty

14.7 ORIGIN OF RASHTRAKUTAS

For about 735 A.D. to 975 A.D. the Rashtrakutas held the political domination over Deccan. They destroyed the Chalukyas supremacy in Deccan. Initially they were subordinates of Chalukyas of Badami. In about 735 A.D. the powerful Rashtrakuta chief, Dantidurga defeated the Chalukya king Kirtivarman II. Thus laid the foundation of Rashtrakuta supremacy in the Deccan. There is a controversy among the Historians about the origin of Rashtrakutas. They themselves claimed descent from the epic Yadavas. But some scholars suggest that they were pure Dravidians. According to Basnel, the Rashtrakutas had some affinity with the Dravidians of Andhra. Dr. Altekar had placed them as a loyal feudatories in Maharashtra. Their original place was Karnataka, because they used the Kannad language. In this inscription they have been addressed as the owner of the beautiful city of Latur. Danti Durga's family originally belonged to Latur situated in the Osmanabad district of Maharashtra. This was on the borders of the Karnataka empire in those days. Many personal names such as Asagavve, Abbalabbe, Revaka etc suggest that they were a Kannada family.

Some scholars have mentioned that the family lived in Maharashtra and was related to the ancient family of Yadu (Yadava). Some regard them as related to Reddi family of Andhra, while few others consider them as Kshatriyas. According to some, the word 'Rashtrakuta' is derived from two words namely- Rashtra meaning a province or a division of a kingdom and Kuta means the master. Thus, Rashtrakutas were originally governors of a province. However, the most accepted view is that they were chief of district administration under the Chalukyas of Badami and their designation was Rashtrakutas from which they derived their name.

14.8 RASHTRAKUTAS RULERS

14.8.1 Danti Durga (753 – 758) :

The earlier Rashtrakutas rulers namely Dantivesman, Indra I Pushakraj, Govinda I, Kaska I and Indra Raj II were the kings of Rashtrakutas dynasty but they were not renowned enough to occupy a significant place in history. According to Dr. Altekar, they had their sway over the principalities of Berar and Gujrat. Danti Durga, a remarkable monarch seems to have been the founder of the Rashtrakutas dynasty. He was the son of Indra and the grandson of Kaska and great grandson of Govindraja who were feudatories of the Chalukyas of Badami. Initially Danti Durga also was a loyal feudatory of Vikramaditya. He accompanied Chalukya ruler in his expedition against Kanchi. Danti Durga was very ambitious, he decided to take full advantages of the experiences he had gained in his campaigns in north and south. He became successful in his

conquest against Pallavas, Arabs, Gurjaras, Malwa, Kalinga, South Kosala etc. By the years 750 A.D. Dantidurga became the master of central and southern Gujarat and whole of Madhya Pradesh and Berar. By 753 A.D. he had become the masters of the whole of Maharashtra. Danti Durga thus destroyed the power of Chalukyas of Badami and laid the foundation of the empire of Rashtrakutas in the Deccan.

Hence Dantidurga can be regarded as the real founder of the Rashtrakutas Empire. He assumed the full imperial titles, Maharajadhiraja, Parameswara, Paramabhataraka. Danti Durga performed 'Hiranyagarbha' ceremony at Ujjain. Thus Danti Durga had patronized Hinduism. He died at the age of thirty six in 756 A.D.

14.8.2 Krishna I :

Krishna I was the ambitious uncle of DantiDurga. DantiDurga left no legal heir; hence he was succeeded by this uncle Krishna I, also known as Kannarasa Ballala in 756 A.D. He continued the policy of his nephew and defeated the Chalukya king Kirti Varman II and practically extinguished their power. Then he proceeded against the Gangas and conquered their capital Manayapuram in state of Mysore. By 772 A.D. the whole of Hyderabad state was incorporated in the Rashtrakuta Empire. He brought under him whole of southern Konkan and whole of Marathi – speaking part of Madhya Pradesh. Krishna I is also remembered for having constructed the famous rock cut temple, Kailasa (Siva) temple at Ellora. Temple is vastly regarded as a marvel of architecture, also proves the high level of skill attained by India in the arts of sculpture and architecture under the Rashtrakuta patronage.

14.8.3 Govind II – (773- 780 A.D.) :

Krishna I was succeeded by his son Govindraja II. Govindraja II was the eldest son of Krishna I. He had been nominated as Yuvaraja by his father. He had distinguished himself on the battlefield by defeating Vishnuvardhan IV of Vengi. But after coming on the throne, as a ruler he proved an utter failure. He became pleasure loving and left the entire administration to his younger brothers Dhruva. Dhruva took full advantage of the situation and dethroned his brother Govinda II and came to the throne.

14.8.4 Dhruva (780 A.D.- 793 A.D.) :

Dhruva was one of the greatest rulers of India. Under him, the power, prestige and glory of the Rashtrakuta reached its zenith. His conquest made him the undisputed overlords of the entire Deccan. He defeated the Gurjara king, Vatsaraja who ruled in southern Rajputra. He also defeated the Pallava king Nandivarman and Chalukya king Vishnu Vardhan IV. Dhruva was not satisfied with

the achievements, he attacked north India with a view to capturing Kanauj, and finally captured it. Dhruva defeated Ganga prince and imprisoned him, Pallava king surrender himself to Dhruva, Vatsaraja had fled and Pala king Dharmapala had been overthrown. There was no power in the country to challenge the Rashtrakuta supremacy. Unfortunately he could not consolidate his conquest of the north due to internal rivalries in his family. Thus Dhruva was undisputed overlord of Deccan and Rashtrakuta was at their zenith during his reign.

14.8.5 Govinda III – (794- 814 A.D.) :

Dhruva had several sons. According to an inscription of the time of Govinda III Dhruva chose Govinda as his successor because he was the ablest and worthiest among his son. Govinda III ascended the throne in 794 A.D. The first known date of Govinda III is May 794 according to Paithan plates. Govinda III had several great achievements to his credit. His elder brother Sthamba (Kamba) who was ruling the Gangavadi rebelled against him with the group of twelve kings. Govinda III defeated Sthamba and he allowed him to continue as governor of Gangavadi. He also appointed his other brother Indra as a governor of Gujarat. Thus Govinda III became the undisputed overlord. In his northern expedition he defeated Nagabhapala of Bengal. Thus the powerful Gurjara, Pratihara and Pala king and other rulers of northern India were also humbled by Govinda III. During the northern expedition, the Pandyas, Pallavas, Cholas, Gangas and Cheras had performed an alliance to attack the Rashtrakuta territory. But Govinda III defeated them and extended his empire upto Kanchi in the south. Govinda III had constructed a Siva temple at Kanchi to serve as a column of victory. The ruler of Ceylon was frightened by this act and surrendered to Govinda III. Undoubtedly Govinda III was the ablest of Rashtrakuta Emperor. The Rashtrakuta reached the climax of their power under Govinda III

14.8.6 Amoghavarsha I:

Next important king in this dynasty is Amoghavarsha. On the death of Govinda III. His son Sarva or Amoghavarsha, a boy of 13, came to the throne and Karka, the nephew of Govinda became regent. Obviously Rashtrakuta had to face many difficulties. Ganga, Pandayas and Eastern Chalukya revolted and declared their independence. Karka brought the situation under control and thus peace was established. The death of Karka brought about discenity in the Empire. And almost continous war was going on between the Rashtrakuta and Gangas during the first 20 years of the reign of Amoghavarsha. Amoghavarsha adopted conciliatory policy towards the Gangas and the Pallavas. He gave one of his daughter in the marriage to prince Bhughta I, son of Ganga and another daughter to Pallava prince Nandi Verma III. Thus both the dynasty remained loyal to Amoghavarsha.

Amoghavarhsa was not born military leader. He had faced many rebellions towards the end of his region. His general Bankesha crushed the rebellion successfully. The most serious rebellion was that of the Gujarat branch of the Rashtrakuta founded by Indra. Amoghavarsha enjoyed reign of 63 years from 814-877 A.D. He founded a new capital city, Manyakheta which still exist under the name of Malkhed. He was a liberal, patron of literature. His court full of many famous Hindu and Jain writers. Jivasen, Mahaviracharya and Sankatayan got patronage from him. He himself was a great writer. He wrote a book of Ethic's called "Kavirajmarga". He became Jain and liberally patronized the Digambara sect.

14.8.7 Later Rashtrakuta Rulers :

Amoghavarsha was succeeded by his son Krishna II (878-914). During his reign Rashtrakuta power gradually declined. It is said that Krishna II had terrified the Gurjaras. But he suffered, defeat both at the hands of Chalukyas of Vengi and the Gurjaras who had conquered Kanauj a few years ago and transfer their capital to the city. Krishna II died towards end of 914 A.D. He was succeeded by his grandson Indra III. He was a youth of 30 at the time of his accession. He had inherited the military dash and daring of Govinda III. He assumed the titles of Nityavarsha, Rattakandarapa. He also captured Gujarat which created a big sensation. Indra died prematurely in 922 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Amoghavarsha II. But he became a victim of the foul play of his younger brother Govinda IV. Govinda IV was a unpopular young ruler. So minister and the federatories requested Amoghavarsha III, an uncle of Govinda to replaced Govinda. Amoghavarsha III 50 years old at the time of his accession. He did not take any active interest in the administration and thus administration was carried by his son Krishna III. Krishna III was one of the ablest ruler of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. He planned an invasion on Chola kingdom. He had an expedition against Bundelkhand, Malwa, and Ujjain. He constructed many temples. His successors who all proved to be very weak rulers, continued to rule a gradually diminishing territory until about 973 A.D. when the last of the Rashtrakuta kings Kakka II was overthrown by Tailapa, the founder of later western Chalukya dynasty of Kallyani.

14.9 ADMINISTRATION UNDER RASHTRAKUTAS

It was under the Rashtrakuta that Deccan took interest in the affairs of North India. They took the whole course of Indian history. All the political institution of the Rashtrakuta we can clearly see the impact of western Chalukya. King was the centered figured in the administration. The kings used to nominate their own successor.

Their existence of council of ministers and a village assembly acted as checks on the absolute authority of the king. Due to the vastness of the empire the kingdom was divided into rashtras or Mandalams, Visayas and Bhuktis. Rashtra was the biggest unit which was governed by Rashrapati. Vaishya was roughly of the size of modern district, was in a charge of Visayapati. Each Visaya was divided into Bhuktis or Tehsil, was governed by officer known as Bhoghpati or Bhogika. The village was the lowest unit of administration and was incharge of Gramapati.

14.10 RELIGIOUS CONTRIBUTION UNDER RASHTRAKUTAS

Three main religion mainly Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism flourished during Rashtrakuta period. Many Rashtrakuta king were worshipper of Shiva and Vishnu. Their inscription begins invocation to these Gods. The royal emblem, Govinda reveals the fact, that Rashtrakuta were Vaishnavas. Jainism seems to have enjoyed royal patronage liberally. Some scholars described Amoghavarsha as a Jain. But Amoghavarsha worship Hindu Goddess Lakshmi and Jain Tirthankara Mahavira as well. Many Jain temple were constructed. Dr. Altekar is of the view that about 30 % of the population in Karnataka during this period must be Jain. Buddhism was losing its hold in Karnataka but Islam was popular in the konkan coast. Rashtrakuta had permitted Arabs to construct their mosques.

14.11 EDUCATION AND LEARNING

The Rashtrakuta were great patrons of education and learning. Rashtrakuta ruler encouraged the education by giving liberal grants to educational institutions. In those days education was imparted through Mathas and Agrahara. The Puranas, Philosophy, literature and works on polity were taught. Malkhed, Paithan, Nasik and Karhad were the main center of higher education.

Rashtrakuta period had witnessed the excellent literary works both in Sanskrit as well as in Kanada. The Rashtrakuta were great patron of Hindu and Jains scholar. Amoghavarsha was himself a scholar who wrote Kavirajamarga. The important Sanskrit work produced during this period are –

1. Trivikrama - 'Nalachampu' and Mandalasachampu'
2. Halayudha - 'Mrita-Sanjivani' and 'Kavirahasya a dhathupatha'
3. Somadevasuri - 'Yashatilaka champu' and 'Neetivaky amrita'
4. Visvarupa - 'Balakrida'
5. Mahaveer - 'Ganithasarasangraha' and 'Shakatayana Amothavritts'.
6. Virasena and Jinasena - 'Dhavala' and 'Jayadhavala'.
7. Jinasena - Harivamasha and Aadipurana
8. gunabhadra - uttarapurana

In Jain literature the famous works are

- a) Sri Vijaya - Kavirajamasga
- b) Chanvundaya - Chavundayapurana
- c) Poona - Shantipurana, Bhuvanaika, Rambhyudaya, Jinakshasamale, Gatapratigata.
- d) Pampa - A dipurana and pam Bharati or Vikramarjuna Vijaya
- e) Pushpadanta - Mahapurana, Jasaura Charju and Nayakumara Charju (Prakrit)

14.12 ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The greatest contribution of Rashtrakuta dynasty in the field of Art and Architecture is rock- cut shrines at Ellora and Elephanta. The Rashtrakuta have a unique position in the domain of art, architecture and sculptue. The temple of Kailasa was excavated by Krishna I in the 8th century. The Kailas temple can be said as the best visible monuments of the Rashtrakuta. The sculptured panels of Dasavatara, Bhairva, Ravana shaking the mountain dancing Shiva, Vishnu and Lakshmi listening to music carved at bas- relief are the excellent piece of the creativity of the artist. Work at Ellora is an example of unrivalled rock architecture. Dashavatara temple is the only Brahmanical example in storeys. It is the largest as well as simplest, depicting both the Vaishnava and Siva temple. Along with this, there we also five Jaina rock shrines. Chota Kailasa, Indra Sabha and Jagannath Sabha are the outstanding structure of Jaina rock shrines.

Elephanta, near Mumbai is outstanding monument of the period. The three faced shiva, sculptured relics of Nataraja and

Sadasiva are excellent. They are the finest sculptures in all India. As regards the Great or main shrine at Elephanta, it is considered to be superior to the shrine at Ellora. Thus no other ruling dynasty in the Deccan played such a dominant role in the history of India till the rise of Marathas as an imperial power.

Check Your Progress:

1. Who were the Rashtrakutas? What part did they play in the history of Northern India.
2. Describe the achievements of the Rashtrakutas in literature, religion, art and architecture.

14.6 SUMMARY

Rashtrakutas were ruling over Deccan before Chalukyas came on the throne. The Chalukyas believed that they were sons of God. Jayasimha was the first ruler of the dynasty. The other important rulers were Pulkesin I, Maharaja Kirtivarman, Mangalasa, Pulkesin II. Under Pulkesin II the country made considerable progress. It was under Kirtivarman II that their hold began to disintegrate. Chalukyas were followers of Hinduism but they gave patronage to Jainism and Buddhism. The Jain temples and institutions got great royal support during the Chalukya period. Chalukya Monarchs were liberal patrons of art, architecture and sculpture. The pieces of art during the Chalukya period have left behind are of two types, a) rock-cut halls and structural temples, wrought in hard sandstone, at Badami, Aihole, Pattadakal and Mahakuteswar.

It is believed that the Rashtrakutas belonged to Karnataka. Dantidurga was their first important ruler. By 750 A.D. he had become master of central and southern Gujarat. Krishna I brought southern Konkan under his control. He was both a great conqueror as well as a builder. Dhruva from the same dynasty was undisputed overlord of Deccan and Rashtrakuta were at this zenith during his reign. Govinda III ascended the throne in 793 A.D. He took his brother as a prisoner. He was also the undisputed overlord of Deccan. He was the best of all the Rashtrakuta kings. Amoghavarsha I's later part of his reign was full of rebellions. He also sent expeditions against the Palas. Important Rashtrakutas

after Amoghavarsha I were Krishna II, Govinda IV, Krishna III. During the reign of Krishna II the prestige of the empire considerably came down. Thus it was under the Rashtrakutas that Art, Architecture and Literature reached at its zenith.

14.7 QUESTIONS

1. Describe the origin of Chalukyas and their contribution to Indian culture.
2. Who were the Chalukyas? Bring out their political and cultural movement.
3. What were the contributions of Chalukya of Badami to Ancient History and culture.
4. Form an estimate of the Chalukya of Badami.
5. Examine the significance of the Rashtrakuta power.
6. Write short note on the following
 - a) Dantidurga
 - b) Dhruva
 - c) Amoghavarsha.



THE PALLAVAS AND THE CHOLAS

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15.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the Origin and rules of Pallava Dynasty.
2. To study about the Administration and Art and Architecture during Pallava period.



15.1 ORIGIN OF PALLAVAS

The origin of the Pallava has remained still in mystery. After the fall of Andhra kingdom the Pallavas were the first to come to powers in the Deccan. The Pallavas were only chieftains during the sangam age. About the origin of Pallavas the historian hold different views. Some of the thinkers are of the view that they belonged to the south, but still their origin is very controversial.

Some historians are of the view that they belonged to the Parthians who had settled down in Kanchivaram. According to them, the Pallavas of south India were Pahlavas or Parthians, who invaded India, settled down in the Indus valley, then moved on to western India and finally immigrated into the Kanchi region during the period of the decline of Satvahanas. The other theory is that Pallavas were of Tamil origin. According to some historians, the Pallavas belonged to the Chola- Naga family. The first Pallava ruler was the son of a Naga princess. According to Jayswal, the Pallavas were the descendants of the high – ranking Brahmins of Northern India. The names of some early Pallava like Simhavarman and Sivaskandavarman are known from a few copper plate charters written in prakrit. It is said that they performed Brahmanical sacrifices and ruled over a well organized kingdom that covered the northern part of the peninsula. The Pallava, may be the product of intercourse between the Brahmin and the Dravidian. There are no unanimous opinion about their origin amongst historians. Historians differ as regards the early history of Pallavas.

15.2 RULERS OF PALLAVA DYNASTY

15.2.1 Sivaskand Varman:

There are different opinions about the earlier rulers of the Pallava dynasty. Some are of the opinion that Bappa was the founder of the Pallava at power Kanchi. The earlier prakrit inscriptions refer that Bappadev, Sivask and Varman and Viravarman were the first three rulers of the Pallavas. It seems Sivaskand Varman was the first great ruler of the Pallava dynasty. He ruled in the 4th century A.D. and extended his empire up to the river Krishna. He was a devoted Brahmin. He had also performed the Ashwamedha ceremony and Vajapeya. He assumed the title of Dharmamaharaja. His administration resembled the administration system of Mauryas.

Vishnu Gopa:

In the fourth century Vishnu Gopa was defeated by Samudragupta. An inscription at Allahabad reveals that he was one of the kings of southern India who were defeated by Samudragupta. The period between 350- 375 A.D. is assigned to Vishnugopa. After his defeat in war, we do not have much information about Pallava dynasty. However, with the reign of Simhavishnu (575 – 660 A.D.), we have clear accounts of the Pallavas.

Simhavishnu:

To him belongs the credit of the grand political and cultural attainments of the Pallavas. He ascended the throne probably in 565 A.D. He had high political deals and won a victory over the

Cholas, Chera, Pandya and Ceylon. His kingdom stretched from Madras to the Kaveri. He was a great Vaishnava. He was also a great patron of literature. Bharvi, the author of Kirtarjuna belonged to this period. Mahabalipuram was the center of fine arts during his period.

Mahendra Varman 1(600- 630 A.D.):

Simhavishnu was succeeded by his son Mahendra Varman I who was one of the ablest among the Pallava kings. He was contemporary of Pulakesin II as well Harshavardhn. The common feature among them was their outstanding contribution to art and culture. From Aihole inscription it is known that the Pallavas had obstructed the path of Pulakesin and consequently Pulkesin marched against Pallavas. As a result Pulkesin defeated Mahendra Varman and thus Pallava lost the province of Vengi. But Pallava sources refers to king Mahendra Varma's victory. It is probable that the loss of Vengi stimulated the Pallavas to push forward the southern frontiers resulting in the conquest of Triuchirapali.

Art, architecture and painting received tremendous encouragement during the reign of Mahendra Varman. He commenced building rock cut shrines. He is regarded as the founders of the novel system of stone structure that has produced remarkable specimens in the course of the centuries. According to some scholars he was a follower of Jainism but later on he embraced saivism. He also patronized Vaishnavism. He constructed cave temples at Mahabalipuram, Pallavasam and other places. He also dedicated temple to Brahma, Iswara and Vishnu. Mahendrarvarman also constructed a Mahendratank near the city of Mahindravadi. He had got constructed many temples of Lord Vishnu. He was also liberal patron of arts like painting, music and dancing. He himself was a poet and a musician. He wrote Mattavillasa – prahasana in Sanskrit. From the inscription we get information about various titles of Mahendra Varman like Mattavilasa, Vichitrachitta, Chettakari, Gunabhara, Avanibhajan etc.

Narasimha Varman I:

Narasimha Varman I succeeded Mahendra Varman in the years 630 A.D. He was the son of the earlier ruler. He carried on the administration probably till 680 A.D. Narasimha Varman continued the hereditary conflict with Chalukyas. He had defeated Pulkesin II, the Chalukyas ruler. After the death of Pulkesin, Pallavas become all- soverign in the south. Victory over Pulkesin had made the greatest of the Pallavas ruler. Pulkesin II lost his life on the battle- field and thereafter Narsimha assumed the title of Vatapikanda means the captor of Vatapi (capital of Chalukay). He had dispatched a naval expedition against Ceylon. In the first expedition he failed but in the second he was crowned with success.

Like his father Narasimha Varman also constructed several rock – cut temples at Pudukotta and Trichinopoly district. The structures during his period were more proportionate and graceful. He built a beautiful sea beach town near Kanchi, called it after his own name Mahamallapuram (Mahabalipuram). During his period Hiuen Tsang visited Kanchi. According to him the capital Kanchi was a large city with monasteries and 1000 monks. Jaina temples numbered 80 and about 100 Buddhist monasteries.

15.2.3 Paresvara Varman I :

Paresvara Varman was the grandson of Narsimhvarman I. Before him his father Mahendra Varman II came to the throne. But he ruled only for a short period of two years (668 – 670 A.D). He was succeeded by his son Paresvara Varman I, who ruled between 670 – 695 A.D. During his period Vikramaditya I, a Chalukya king got hold over Kanchi and destroyed it. To some extent Paresvara Varman succeeded in safeguarding his empire. He was ardent followers of siva and had constructed a siva temple near Kanchi.

15.2.4 Narasimha Varman II (695 – 722 A.D.) :

Narasimha Varman II, son of Paresvara Varman succeeded him. He ruled from 695 to 722 A.D. His period was a peaceful one. That is the reason, during this period, empire made tremendous cultural progress. He had send his ambassador to China. He assumed the titles of Rajasimha (lion among kings), Agamapriya (loves of scriptures) and Sankarabhakta (devotee of siva). He built the Kailsanaath temple at Kanchi. It is believed that the great Sanskrit poet Dandin lived in his period. He was succeeded by his son Pasmeshvaravarman II, who ruled till the year 730 A.D. During his period he had to wage a war with Yuvajraja Vikramaditya, a Chalukya ruler. Paresmshvarman settled the matter by giving money and presents to Vikramaditya-II.

Nandivarman II (730 — 800 A.D.) :

Nandivarman was supposed to be elected rulers of Pallava dynasty. With the death of Paresvara Varman II the imperial line of Pallavas almost came to an end. Nandivarman was defeated by Chalukya emperor Vikramaditya II and occupied Kanchi but Nandivarman II was successful in getting back Kanchi. He also fought against Pandayas and Rashtrakutas. However, it resulted into a matrimonial alliances between Nandivarman the daughter of Rashkuta king Dantidurga. Nandivarman Constructed temple of Kanchi. He gave great importance to religion and literature and himself was a great scholar. Probably he also has performed Ashvamedha sacrifice to declared himself as king Emperor.

Nandivarman was succeeded by his son Danti Varman. From that time onward, the Cholas become supreme and Pallavas

kings sank into the position of mere feudatory nobles and officials in the service of others.

15.3 ADMINISTRATION UNDER PALLAVAS

The Pallavas organized their government well and promoted the welfare and happiness of the people. The benevolent hand of the rulers reached all fields political, social, economic religious and artistic. The king was the head of the administration. The administrative system was patterned, after the administrative system of the Mauryas with some modification. Kingship was hereditary, ran from father to son. Though king was a center figure in the administration he was assisted by council of ministers in day to day administration. The important minister in the council of ministers was Purohit.

Decentralization of power can be seen during Pallava rule. The empire was divided in the provinces called Rashtras or Mandalam. They were governed by princes of the royal blood or a prominent personality of respectable family. Provinces were further divided into Kottam and Nadus had their own officials. Village or grama was the lowest unit. There were village assemblies and their committees to look after the village administration. Brahmins held the great position during Pallava rule. They managed temples, supervised water tanks and other public work such as to supervise the digging of tanks and canals, make road etc.

15.4 ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Under Pallavas art and architecture constitute a brilliant chapter in the history of south Indian art. Pallava art brought a revolution with its different architecture style. The Pallavas were tenderly attached to art and of culture. They got constructed temples manifesting different styles of art, the Guha temples and rock —cut temples. Roughly during Pallavas three of architectural style can be seen. The first is Mahendra architectural style introduced during the Mahendra Varman I period. He introduced rock — cut cave style temples during 600 to 630 A.D. The second style was introduced during the period of 625 to 674 A.D., known as Mamala architectural style. This period was marked by the construction of the famous five rathas named after Dharmaraja, Bhima, Arjun, Sahadev and Draupadi, descent of the Gangas cave temples of the Trimurti, Varaha, Durga and five pandavas. The third architectural style is called Rajasimha architectural style represented by the structural temples at Kanchi in the 8th century. Even in ninth century a style called Apasjita architectural style was famous.

Temples during Pallava times represent art in its true and most sublime form. The temples of Narasimhavarman are well decorated and painted. The Pallava art can be well seen in the Kailasa temple. The well chiselled temples of stone and bricks are highly important from artistic point of view. Besides music dance and painting made great progress.

15.5 LITERATURE AND LEARNING

The Pallavas were equally interested in literature. This capital Kanchi was a famous center of art and literature. There was a lot of literary activity during this period. Kanchi was a great center of Sanskrit learning in the south India. Dandin a great Sanskrit poet was adorned in the court of Narasimhavarman II. Except few inscriptions most of the Pallava inscriptions were written in the Sanskrit. Sanskrit language was greatly encouraged. A provision was made for the recitation of the Mahabharata in a Mandapa at Kurram near Kanchi. The royal patronage was also extended to the Tamil language. In seventh century Mahendra Varman wrote a Sanskrit farce. Dharmapala, the president of the Nalanda University was from Kanchi. The Tamil Kural of Triavalluvar was a rich work of learning.

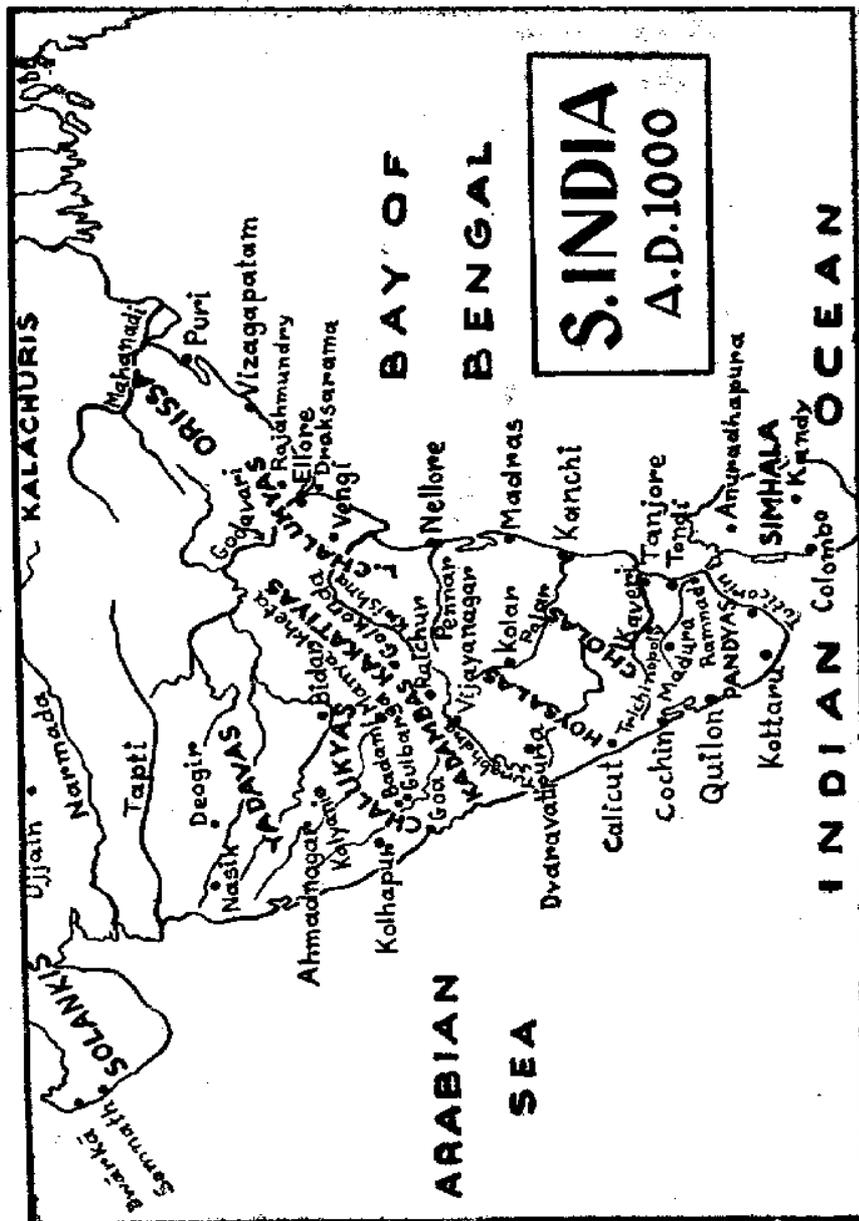
Check Your Progress

1. Sketch the history of the Pallavas and estimate their importance.
2. Describe the origin of Pallavas and write a detailed note on Pallavas art.

15.6 THE CHOLAS

15.6.1 Objectives:

1. To examine the history of the early rulers of the Cholas.
2. To briefly survey the rule of Paratanka I, Rajaraja and Rajendra Chola.



3. To assess the development done by Chola rulers in the field of administration and art and architecture.

15.6.2 Introduction:

Chola country or Chola mandalam between the rivers of Pennar and Velar constituted the modern districts of Tanjore and Trichinopoly and a part of Pudukoty, Uraganur (Uraipur) near modern Trichinopoly, Tanjore and Gangikonda-Cholapuram near Chola capital. The three prominent states in Tamil country were Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas. The Chola kingdom was a very ancient one. Their early history is, however, obscure. Cholas were the most civilized race of the Deccan. Regarding the origin of the Cholas historians hold divergent views. But it is beyond a shadow

of doubt that the Cholas were the original inhabitants of the Deccan in comes of the inscriptions they have called themselves as suryavansi.

The history of Cholas is definitely ancient one. Since they are also mentioned in the account of Megasthenes and inscription of Ashoka. II and XII. Rock Edicts of Ashoka also refer to them. The sangam literature refers to many Chola princes who were models of justice. Chola rulers have been mentioned by the grammarian, katyayana (circa 4th century B.C.). The periplus and the geography of Tolemy further give us some information regarding the Chola country and its inland towns and ports. In sabha and Bhishmaparva of Mahabharata the name of the Cholas occurs. The kingdom of the Cholas included Madras, several other districts and the greater part of Mysore state. In the early medieval age, the Chola kingdom came to be known as Cholamandalam (coromandel)

15.7 CHOLA DYNASTY

Chola dynasty was a Tamil dynasty which was one of the longest-ruling dynasties in southern India. The earliest datable references to this Tamil dynasty are in inscriptions from the 3rd century BC left by Asoka, of Maurya Empire; as one of the Three Crowned Kings, the dynasty continued to govern over varying territory until the 13th century AD.

The heartland of the Cholas was the fertile valley of the Kaveri River, but they ruled a significantly larger area at the height of their power from the later half of the 9th century till the beginning of the 13th century. The whole country south of the

Chola Empire

300s EC – 1219

Capital	Early Cholas Poompuhar, Urayur, Medieval Cholas: Pazhaiyaarai, Thanjavur Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Language(s)	Tamil
Religion	Hinduism
Government	Monarchy
King	
-848-871	Vijayalaya Chola
-1246-1279	Rejendra Chola III
Historical era	Middle Ages
- Established	300s BC
- Rise of the medieval Cholas	848
- Disestablished	1279

Tungabhadra was united and held as one state for a period of two centuries and more.

Under Rajaraja Chola I and his son Rajendra Chola I, the dynasty became a military, economic and cultural power in South Asia and South-east Asia. The power of the new empire was proclaimed to the eastern world by the celebrated expedition to the Ganges which Rajendra Chola I undertook and by the overthrow after an unprecedented naval war of the maritime empire of Srivijaya, as well as by the repeated embassies to China.

During the period 1010-1200, the Chola territories stretched from the islands of the Maldives in the south to as far north as the banks of the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh. Rajaraja Chola conquered peninsular South India, annexed parts of what is now Sri Lanka and occupied the islands of the Maldives. Rajendra Chola sent a victorious expedition to North India that touched the river Ganges and defeated the Pala ruler of Pataliputra, Mahipala. He also successfully invaded kingdoms of the Malay Archipelago.

Today part of

India
Sri Lanka
Bangladesh
Malaysia
Indonesia
Singapore
Maldives

List of Chola kings

Early Cholas

Elara Chola - 235 BC – 161 BC

Ilamcetcenni - Karikala

Chola

Nedunkilli*Killivalavan*

Kopperuncholan

Kocengannan* Perunarkilli

Interregnum (c. 200-848)

Medieval Cholas

848 – 871

Vijayalaya Chola ?

Adityal 871 - 907

Parantaka Chola I 907-950

Gandaraditya 950-957

Arinjaya Chola 956-957

Sundara Chola 957-970

Uttama Chola 970-985

Rajaraja Chola I 985-1014

Rajendra Chola I 1012-1014

Rajendraraja Chola 1018-1054

Rajendra Chola II, 1051-1063

Virarajendra Chola 1063-1070

Athirajendra Chola 1067-1070

The Chola dynasty went into decline at the beginning of the 13th century with the rise of the Pandyas, who ultimately caused their downfall.

The Cholas left a lasting legacy. Their patronage of Tamil literature and their zeal in building temples has resulted in some great works of Tamil literature and architecture. The Chola kings were avid builders and envisioned the temples in their kingdoms not only as places of worship but also as centres of economic activity. They pioneered a centralised form of government and established a disciplined bureaucracy.

Later Cholas

Kulothunga Chola I	1070-1120
Vikrama Chola	1118-1135
Kulothunga Chola	1133-1150
Rajaraja Chola II	1146-1173
Raj adhiraj a Chola II	1166-1178
Kulothunga Chola III	1178-1218
Raj araj a Chola III	1216-1256
Rajendra Chola III	1246-1279

The heartland of the Cholas was the fertile valley of the Kaveri River, but they ruled a significantly larger area at the height of their power from the later half of the 9th century till the beginning of the 13th century. The whole country south of the Tungabhadra was united and held as one state for a period of two centuries and more.

Under Rajaraja Chola I and his son Rajendra Chola I, the dynasty became a military, economic and cultural power in South Asia and South-east Asia. The power of the new empire was proclaimed to the eastern world by the celebrated expedition to the Ganges which Rajendra Chola I undertook and by the overthrow after an unprecedented naval war of the maritime empire of Srivijaya, as well as by the repeated embassies to China.

During the period 1010-1200, the Chola territories stretched from the islands of the Maldives in the south to as far north as the banks of the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh. Rajaraja Chola conquered peninsular South India, annexed parts of what is now Sri Lanka and occupied the islands of the Maldives. Rajendra Chola sent a victorious expedition to North India that touched the river

Ganges and defeated the Pala ruler of Pataliputra, Mahipala. He also successfully invaded kingdoms of the Malay Archipelago. The Chola dynasty went into decline at the beginning of the 13th century with the rise of the Pandyas, who ultimately caused their downfall.

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Check Your Progress

1. Which was the longest ruling dynasty in South India

15.8 EARLY RULERS OF CHOLAS

To trace the chronology of Cholas is a difficult task. The sangama literature throw some light on the early political history of the Cholas. In the middle of the second century B.C. A Chola king by name Elara conquered Ceylon and ruled it over it for about fifty years. Chola gained territory and influence in the region of Karikala who ruled in the 2nd century AD. Accordingly to the Tamil and Telugu legends, the foremost achievement of Karikala Chola was the defeat of his Chera or Kerala and Pandya. Other prominent rulers of Cholas were Songannan Vijayalaya at Tanjore and Aditya. Vijayalaya founded his own dynasty in 850 AD. He was feudatory his own dynasty of the Pallava king. He was succeeded by his son Aditya I (871-907), who defeated the Pallava king. Aparajita, conquered Coimbatore and Salem district. He was a devotee of Shiva. He built many temples of Shiva near Kaveri.

15.9 PARATANKA 1 (907 TO 946 AD)

Aditya's son Paratanka I was the real founder of the Chola supremacy. They had ruled from 907 to 946 AD. He annexed the territories of the Pandya king who ran away to Ceylon for safety. By 930 the Cholas become the master of almost the whole of the south extending from the north Pennar to Cape Common. Paratanka I

assumed the title of Madurajkonda to commemorate his victory over the Pandya king. He also wiped out the remains of Pallava power and conquered the country as far north as Nellore. Chola kingdom received a set back of the hands of Krishna III of Rashtrakuta during Paratanka I. The inscription of Paratanka throw light on the self-governing village communities under Chola kingdom. He was great patron of learning. Paratanka constructed a temple at Tondaimanad in honour of his father.

15.10 RAJARAJA CHOLA (985-1012 AD)

The greatest king of the dynasty was Raja I (985-1012AD). The rule of Rajaraja gave Cholas, the paramount power in India. He was the most famous and important among the Cholas. Rajaraja carried on the administration of his country very efficiently and successfully. As successful conqueror Rajaraja within twelve years of his accession destroyed the independence of the eastern Chalukyas Vengi, the Pandyas of Madurai, the Gangas of Mysore and the chiefs of Malabar coast. Through his inscriptions we get the information that he had conquered the (Ceylon). His conquest established his authority in the Deccan. He built a powerful navy and with its help he was able to bring under his control the Arabian sea and Indian ocean. It is claimed that his conquests included Kalinga and 12000 islands which have been regarded as the Lacadiuves and Maldives. Thus Rajaraja was one of the greatest sovereigns of south India. He was great conqueror and empire builder.

Rajaraja Chola was an able administrator also. His government was humane and benevolent. He made a thorough survey of the country for the purpose of assessing land revenue on a fair basis under him savism was greatly encouraged but he was not intolerant towards other religion. He patronized fine arts and spent lavishly on architectural masterpieces like Rajkarayashwas temple of Siva at Tanjore. He gave toleration to all, as testified by the grant of the village of Nagapatnam for the constructions of a Buddhist Vihara by Sailendra king of Java.

15.11 RAJENDRA CHOLA (1014-1044)

Rajraya Chola was succeeded by his son Ranjendra Chola I. He consolidated the empire built by his father and also extended it. He was a brave warrior and successful ruler he was not only resourceful and powerful in the south but also in north. In the south he defeated Keralas, Pandyas and Simhaldip and in north he had won victory over Orissa, West Bengal and Kaushat. The military campaigns of Rajendra Chola did not enlarge the Chola empire but it proved his martial glory. To commemorate the stupendous

expedition, he assumed the title Gangaikonda. He also had naval fleet and thus could establish his authority over the islands of Andaman, Nicobar and Malaya. About Rajendras expedition against Sailendra king of Java, Dr. R.C. Mjumdard comments, the mighty Sailendra Empire, the biggest naval power in the East lay prostrate before the victorious Chola army and Rajendra Chola had the proud satisfaction of seeing his banner floating from the bank of the Ganga to the island of Ceylon and across the bay of Bengal over Java, Sumatra and the Malaya peninsula.

Rajendra was an efficient administrator and a benevolent king. He maintained peace and order and patronized learning art and architecture. Under him art and literature flourished he constructed his new capital GangikondaCholapuram, in which grand temples and palaces were raised. He also constructed the big irrigation tank sixteen miles long for the welfare of the people.

15.12 SUCCESSOR OF RAJENDRA CHOLA

After the death of Rajraja Chola, his son Rajadhiraja become ruler. He had faced with frequent revolts which broke out in his empire he was the last able ruler, among the Cholas. In 1052, he was killed while fighting with the Chalukyas. But his younger brother Rajendra Deva (1052-1063) who was crowned on the battlefield. He led the battle to final victory and then successfully ruled the empire until his death in 1063 AD. Among the others successor were Vira Rajendra (1063-70) Adhi Rajendra (1070) and Kalottunga I (1070-1122 AD). After his death the Chola empire began to decline many smaller federal barons also asserted their independence. The invasion Malik Kafur uprooted the Chola power in 1310.

15.13 ADMINISTRATION UNDER CHOLAS

The three centuries of Chola rule marked great progress in all fields. The Chola developed a highly effected system of administration. The Cholas developed a highly efficient system of administration. The Cholas are remembered for their innovative and efficient administrative systems. The Chola kings like Rajaraja, Rajendra were great warriors and far-sighted and wise administrator.

15.13.1 Central administration :

The king was the pivot of the whole administration. He was the chief law giver and established peace and order in the country. King gave close attention to the details of the administration. For the convenience of administration the king had appointed ministers and high officials. His orders were recorded by his secretaries who communicated them to the viceroys. A viceroy was appointed to

rule the Mandalam. The Chola ruler always cared for public welfare and travelled through different parts of the country to know about the condition of the people. This they were loved by their subjects and were worshipped as Gods.

15.13.2 Provincial administration :

To achieve the efficient and excellent administration Chola kingdom was divided into six provinces called Mandalam. Each Mandalam or province was divided into a number of kottam, or valanadu. Each kottam again was subdivided into numbers of districts called Nadus. In each Nadus there were many village unions called Kurrams and Tar-Kurram and then there were villages. Each mandalam was under a governor, who mostly belonged to high families the village administration was carried on through the panchayats. They also had legal rights and administered justice. There are ample evidences to show that these divisions had their own popular assemblies.

15.13.3 Popular assemblies :

The unique feature of the Chola administration was the local administration of the villages. Their administration was based on sound democratic principles. The Kurrams were self-governing units. All powers of administration were vested in a general assembly of the union elected by the people. There were numbers of popular assemblies in the state to look after the administration. These assemblies also used to look after the state revenues. Even Nadus or the districts had an assembly that looked after the problems of the districts. The cities had separate assemblies known as Nagarhars. The village assemblies or Kurrams collected the land revenue and dispensed – justice.

The Chola records mention the existence of two types of villages-Ur and Brahmadeya villages. The village assembly of Ur consisted of representatives from all castes of villages excluding the untouchables. It carried out all functions and duties connected to the villages. The Brahmadeyas were the Agraharas. The members of the assemblies in Brahmadeyas were Brahmans. These assemblies made provision for the public education. For teaching Sanskrit and Tamil in the monasteries arrangements were made by the rural assemblies. These assemblies were called as Mahasabhas which were completely autonomous. The Mahasabha even collected the land revenue either in cash or kind and paid to royal treasury. It also administered justice. However, the right to appeal to the king was given to the king. The Sabha had many committees such as committees for looking after gardens, irrigation tanks, cultivated fields, disposal of lands, temples, charities, roads, education, general managements etc. The meetings were held in temples and works of public welfare were given due consideration. Thus popular assemblies almost enjoyed autonomous powers in

the management of rural affairs. The Chola ruler adhered to the democratic principles.

15.13.4 Revenue administration :

The agriculture was the main occupation of the people, so the land revenue was the chief source of income of the Cholas. Usually, 1/ 6 of the gross product was collected as the land tax. During crises and famines it was not levied. It could be paid by the peasants both in cash or in kind. The other sources of income for the state were taxes on trade and professions, salt tax, water cesses and fines, customs duties. Remission were granted where necessary. The currency was the golden kasu, weighing 1/ 6 of the ounce. The main items of expenditure were public administration and public welfare.

15.14 ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Under the Cholas art, in Deccan reached the height of its glory. The Cholas greatly encouraged sculpture, architecture and painting. They founded many new cities and constructed many palatial buildings. The Chola kings were great builders and undertook vast irrigational projects. They constructed wells, tanks, mighty stone dams across the Kaveri and other rivers, cut out channel to distribute water to large areas of land. King Rajendra I built a huge tank near his new capital GangaikondaCholapuram. The Chola also constructed grand trunk roads which was of great help to commerce as well as military expedition.

Cholas beautifully erected temples which also served as the conference houses for the assemblies. The imperial Cholas succeeded to the hegemony in the south in about first half of the ninth century after the displacement of the Pallavas. They continued the tradition of temple — building with many improvements in the technique use of the hard stones and equally good but more embellished sculpture which became bolder. This period marks the peak of temple – building activity. Many earlier temples of brick and timbers were renovated in stone. A typical early Chola temple- unit is the Sundaresvara at Tirukkattalai (Thiruchchirappali District). The temple was built by Aditya I in 873 A.D. It is complete unit built to stone throughout and consists of the main square two- storeyed vimana.

The Korangantha temple at Srinivasanallur (Thiruchchirappali District) is an elegant examples of the time of Parantaka I (907 –55). It is a square vimana with a mandapa in front and contain fine sculpture and rich miniature panels above and below them.

The great temple in Thanjavur, also called Brihadisvara or Rajarajasvara after its builder Rajaraja I (985 – 1014 A.D.) is the most ambitious undertaking of Tamil architecture. It combines all that is mature and best in the temple – building tradition – architecture, sculpture, painting and allied arts. It is a large complex, with an enormous monolithic nandi. It has the loftiest known vimana 60 m. high standing over a basal square of about 30 m side, which forms an appropriately high and amply moulded platform. The temple stands within a walled square 500 feet by 250 feet. The main structure of the temple is 180 feet with a great shikhara or tower, which consists of as many as 14 successive storeys rising to a dome of a single block of stone, 25 feet high and weighing about 80 tones. The entire temple is covered with beautiful sculptures and decorative mouldings. Apart from sculptures, some of them of immense iconographic interest, paintings and illustrations of dance and music of which this temple is a unique. Its long and well – inscribed epigraphs are most interesting and informative of the history of the temples, its builders and donors, and the endowment of jewels, bronzes and other details. The Brihadisvara temple, begun about 1003, and completed by 1010.

Within about 20 years by Rajendra Chola (1012 – 44), in his new capital Gangaikond Chola puram (District Thanjavur) built almost on the same plan and model, a temple also known as Brihadisvara. This temple – complex had only two entrances, a gopura on the east and 9 plain torana- door on the north. It consists of 9 large Mandapa 175 feet by 90 feet and massive Vimana measuring 1000 feet square. The vimana is just 160 feet high. The sculptures are bold and almost cut out in the round, is perhaps of greatest excellence. The Cholas also encouraged plastic art and the metal and stone images cast in their time are exquisitely executed and display wonderful vigour, dignity and grace. The Nataraja and the various images and portraits of the saints and Hindu Gods and Goddesses are considered to be masterpieces of the world. Thus Cholas dynasty made long lasting impression in the annals of Indian history.

Check Your Progress:

1. What were the contribution of Cholas to village administration, art and architecture?
2. Give the brief account of political condition of south India during Chola period.

15.15 SUMMARY

In short the Pallava dynasty was great from cultural as well as political point of view. Under the Pallavas art, literature, architecture, sculptor and painting witnessed great progress. The Pallavas got constructed a number of temples. During the Pallavas, the Indian civilization spread far and wide. They had dispatched two military expeditions against ceylone. Important rulers of Pallava dynasty include Sivaskanda, Vishnu Gopa, SimhaVishnu, Mahendra Varman, Narasimha Varman I, Pasmesavarman I, Narsinhavarman II and Nandi Varman II. Thus Pallava dynasty was great from cultural as well as political viewpoint. Under them culture and civilization considerably progressed and reached far off places.

Cholas were the most civilized race of the Deccan. Regarding the origin of the Cholas historians hold different views. They had many brilliant rulers. Like Elara, Karikala, Vijayalaya Aditya I, Paratanka I, Rajraja I, Rajendra I, Rajadhiraja, Rajendradeva king was central figure, Empire was divided into Mandalas. Each Mandalas was sub — divided into districts. Their system of administration was democratic. Land revenue was their main source of income. The Cholas greatly encouraged sculpture, architecture and painting. They founded many cities and constructed many palatial buildings. The Cholas rules always cared for public welfare. They developed many roads and irrigation projects. Cholas beautifully erected temples which also served as the conference houses for the assemblies. The Brihadisvara temples at Tanjavur is a masterpiece of Chola art. Many metal and stone image in various forms are excellent.

15.16 QUESTIONS

1. Sketch the history of the Pallavas and estimate their importance.
2. Describe the origin of Pallavas and write a detailed note on Pallavas art.
3. Describe the contribution of the Pallavas to the Indian culture.
4. Discuss the achievements of the Pallavas in administration, literature, art and architecture.
5. Examine the role of the leading Cholas in the history of south India.
6. Write a critique on the contribution of the Cholas to the Indian culture.
7. Briefly describe the political career of Cholas and bring out their contribution to Indian history and culture.

